HARRIMAN INSTITUTE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Edward Kasinec

Columbia Center for Oral History

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Edward Kasinec conducted by William McAllister on May 25, 2016. This interview is part of the Harriman Institute Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

ATC | Session: 1

Interviewee: Edward Kasinec | Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: William McAllister | Date: May 25, 2016

Q: My name is William McAllister. I'm here today on May 25, 2016 at Columbia University, talking with Edward Kasinec, who is currently a research scholar and staff associate at the Harriman Institute here at Columbia. And he is also—since 2014—a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Welcome, Edward.

Kasinec: Thank you.

Q: I thought to begin our conversation by talking about how it is that you came to be interested in Slavic, Russian, Eastern European studies. And I noticed in one of the biographies that you grew up in the Czechoslovak and Rusyn neighborhood of Manhattan. So, I had two questions. One is, where is that or was that? Is it still around? As a New Yorker myself, I was kind of curious about that. And then, wondering if your interest came out of your family background.

Kasinec: The area in which I was born and reared, in the immediate postwar, World War II period, is generally called Yorkville. And it's the area from, let's say, Second Avenue to the river—to the Riviera—and from about Sixty-Second to the high Eighties. And I spent my youth and adolescence there, my parents having emigrated from Eastern Europe and settled in a tenement building in 1937. Three-eighteen East Seventy-Third Street.

And very recently, a couple of weeks ago, I gave a presentation there to the Upper East Side Historic District, to a rather tony crowd that has displaced the immigrants that I grew up with.

And I want to stop for a moment and just say something about it. This is a kind of repetitive pattern, like an ouroboros, in my life of always returning, turning and turning to places that I knew in previous iterations. And a classic example of that is, of course, my present situation, fifty years later, returning to the building, which I knew as a graduate. Actually, SIPA [School of International and Public Affairs] was only opened in ’72 when I returned from a year in Soviet Russia. And also, along the same lines, every time I’m in the seminar room at Harriman, I look out the window. And I see The High School of Music & Art, or what was The High School of Music & Art, on 135th Street and Convent Avenue, which I attended during the early ’60s.

So the atmosphere during the, essentially late ’40s and early ’50s in Yorkville, was that of a village writ large, or let me say, a kind of Eastern European village transposed to Manhattan, with Czech, Rusyn immigrants, Slovaks, Hungarians, some a mixture of Irish people, Germans, of course. And one of the most vivid memories that I have was, as a young child, sitting out on the stoop of the building, which was directly opposite the Bohemian National Hall [Česká Národní Budova], which had been built in the nineteenth century as a kind of cultural center for the Czech and Czech-Bohemian community. And seeing the legionnaires march, a couple of them, five of them, that had fought on the side of the White Armies against the Bolsheviks in 1918—and I’m now working with some of

their archival collections at the Hoover Archives. And they would always sing in Czech Hasler's marching song. Of course, to me then, this was meaningless. But I was very impressed with the outfit that they wore, the leather uniforms and the pheasant feather hats—and so on.

Q: You were like, five to ten at the time?

Kasinec: Yes, exactly. Maybe six. So the important thing—you asked about how this influenced subsequent interest. You must remember that this was a period where families were divided. The area from which my parents had emigrated before World War I was part of the "Crown of Saint Stephen," part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During the interwar period, it was a constituent part of the Czech Republic, First Republic under [Tomáš Garrigue] Masaryk. And then, in 1945, when Soviet power came to that area, it became part of Ukraine. So actually, there were some intermediate periods during the war, when the Hungarians, who were allied with the Germans, re-occupied the area and dealt very severely with those individuals who had been part of the Czech establishment, including my Uncle Joseph.

In any case, I could not but help being conscious of the political circumstances in which I was growing up. Because every Saturday, it was almost a ritual. My father would go to an agency—Union Tours—on Thirty-Sixth and Fifth Avenue, which would prepare relief packages to be sending to relatives in the homelands who were just devastated, of course, by the war and all of the circumstances in the late '40s, '50s. And also, letters were

censored, *et cetera*, *et cetera*, *et cetera*. So that is the kind of political background for subsequent interests.

I have a very existential feel for some of these cultures, particularly the religious culture, which was very important. Going to religious services on Thirteenth Street in the Eastern Rite Catholic Church, listening to Church Slavonic before the Latinization of the Eastern Rite churches in America. It was a time of tremendous transition, both in that neighborhood, which was becoming rapidly highly desirable to live in. For example, when I go there now, in this iteration, "turning" of my life, I go to Sotheby's on York and Seventy-Second. At that time—'50s—it was a Polaroid processing plant. And before that, it was a cigar factory in which the Czech immigrants would roll tobacco into cigars, the Czech immigrants. So there are very few remnants. On the next block, on Seventy-Fourth, George Stephanopoulos's father, Rev. Robert was later the rector of the Greek Orthodox cathedral, Holy Trinity.

So, by the '60s, much of that was beginning to erode. And actually, the intermediate school that I attended was already kind of "WASP-ish." In other words, it didn't have a heavy immigrant component. It was Senator Robert F. Wagner Jr., now Secondary School For Arts & Technology, which was on Seventy-Sixth, in between Second and Third Avenues. And that had a very different kind of flavor to it, much more cosmopolitan, less homogeneity than what I had encountered before at PS 82 on 70th Street, or my first IS on 67th.

I Go to Music & Art in the early ’60s, and really encountered, again, a very different—because people at Music & Art, like at Stuyvesant [High School], Bronx Science [The Bronx High School of Science], Brooklyn Poly Tech—where some of childhood friends attended—were drawn from all over the city. It was not a regional or a neighborhood high school. And brilliant people, extremely talented, some of whom I’m still in contact with who went on to distinguished careers in academic life, or music, or in the arts, and so on. And that was an important stage, because it was an institution that was very avant-garde, politically avant-garde. I remember some of the civil rights leaders, for example, James Farmer, Bayard Rustin, *et cetera*, these people who were associates of [A.] Philip Randolph and other pioneers in the African American community, coming and speaking to the group, many students who were immigrants, the children of immigrants or themselves immigrants from Eastern Europe. For example, Leon Botstein, who’s now still president of Bard [College], was one of my classmates. And I was placed in a remedial speech class—very humiliating—to purge all vestiges of the foreign accents that I had accumulated. And was placed in a class with Israelis and other Eastern European immigrants. It was an interesting three or four years, l960 - l963, whatever I spent there.

Then, went and got a small scholarship to go to St. John’s [University], because obviously I didn’t have the financial means to do this, given my familial circumstances. Went to St. John’s and encountered a rather interesting clergyman. I see him very vividly in my mind’s eye. Actually, two religious people, one of whom, A. Axel Norius, who was from Estonia and was commissioned at St. John’s to be a preceptor in Russian. And I somehow, thinking that my roots were “Russian” I enrolled—they of course were not,

definitely not, although among the immigrants, you must remember that there was a kind of, almost idealization of this "great" power that was Soviet Russia. Although they suffered—some of them suffered, the immigrants—still, you could not but "admire"—admire!—[Joseph V.] Stalin, the power, which subsequently we learned was mythical.

So I somehow fell into his class. And he was a Columbia graduate, as was another Balt-Lithuanian, a man named, I shan't even ask you to write it—Leonidas Sabaliunas—lovely young guy who had just completed a PhD at Columbia and was a kind of instructor, I think, in history, political science, whatever. There were other individuals there, of course, that were charismatic teachers. But I want to dwell on another person, Mary Therese Johnson who also had a significant influence on me, religious woman, who was a Maryknoll missionary in China and subsequently in Hawaii. She lived in Hawaii, knew during the war some of the pioneers in Russian studies like Klaus Mehnert. Now, these two people, I took some classes with them and became absolutely fascinated with particularly Asian cultures.

When I completed—I completed St. John's in a kind of contracted period or an abbreviated period, I applied to Columbia. And I got a N.Y. State Herbert H. Lehman Fellowship, which was a godsend. And so the first two years of my studies were covered. And I so came to this place that I had heard about, first at The High School of Music & Art. Why? There were a number of kids at High School of Music & Art, my contemporaries—and I remember their names, but I shan't bore you with them—who ritualistically would trek from 135th, where Columbia now has a campus. I forget the

name of this new campus, but all of their businesses and so on, offices are there. And they would trek down to the Columbia campus to hear some of the distinguished faculty that had open lectures at that time. I don't know whether they snuck into the class or what they did. But [Richard] Hofstadter was in his prime at that time, and others—Barzun, Trilling, Kristeller—who were holding forth on the campus.

Q: This is in the history department.

Kasinec: In history, but probably in other departments that they had special interest in. And so I had heard about this place already, you know, from Music & Art, but also from particularly Axel Norius. And he particularly—I remember his phrase so vividly. He idolized a faculty member who had just come to Columbia at that time from Clark University, Marc Raeff, who subsequently was [Boris] Bakhmeteff Professor [of Russian and East European Studies] here at Columbia, and died probably six or seven years ago. I put earth on his coffin. Now, he would always say, "Is there such a person as Professor Raeff anywhere?" He just idolized him, thought he was the greatest. And indeed, he was!

So I come to the campus, and I remember there—this is the fall of '66, and remember vividly a kind of soiree that took place in one of the introductions. And here again, you made the point, Bill, earlier: Institute and studies and departments. These are, of course, very different things. I never was—although I received monies from the Institute, then Russian Institute in the late '60s, I was never really enrolled in one of their regional programs. My interests were really departmentally based.

And so I come to this reception. And there are, I don't know, twenty graduate students, of whom I'm just *inter alia*. Some of them had come from very distinguished academic families or backgrounds, and some didn't, and were committed to Russian and Soviet studies. And also, some of the faculty members are there, particularly, and here again, I go back to this notion of continuously circling back. One of the people in attendance was the young Loren R. Graham. And a couple of weeks ago, I'm going to the lift at Harriman. And who is walking down the hall but Loren R. Graham, much stooped, much changed. And I shouted, "Loren!" And he turned and immediately recognized me. And the same graciousness, the same elegance that he had then was with him. He was my MA [Master of Arts] advisor, subsequently. Turned out to be my MA advisor, in very difficult circumstances of the '68 riots.

So we come to the reception, and I'm flabbergasted by the number of students, and also the faculty that are there, some of the names that you iterated. And really felt a bit uncomfortable because of the kind of atmosphere that permeated the room. There was almost a kind of competition, as if one was on display, like in a horse show or something like that. And people trying to impress and so on and so on. I thought to myself, this is going to be an interesting ride.

Columbia, of course, was at that point at the apogee in the overall arc of Russian studies in America, which essentially begin in perhaps the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century, with some of the pioneer translators, the early exchanges between the American

Academy of [Arts &] Sciences, founded by [Benjamin] Franklin, and the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences [Arts]. And then really began to pick up the interest in Russia during the [Abraham] Lincoln administration, the reign of Alexander II [of Russia]. And then, the late nineteenth century, with the pioneer translators like Isabel [Florence] Hapgood, brilliant Episcopalian lady. And then, particularly during the First World War, and the 1905 Revolution, when many people came to the [United] States, many of them Jewish. The first reader "Papa David" Shub to enter the New York Public Library [NYPL] when the doors opened on May 23, 1911 was a Russophone. The first book given to a reader at the New York Public Library was a book in Russian.

Q: Did not know that.

Kasinec: Yes, on [Friedrich] Nietzsche and [Leo] Tolstoy. So by the '60s, Russian studies in America was already—had an organized structure, an establishment. You had a dozen or so major centers: Cambridge, Washington, Berkeley, Palo Alto, Stanford, the Hoover Institution—

Q: Harvard [University] had a center.

Kasinec: —Harvard.

Q: Right, right.

Kasinec: Columbia, Library of Congress, which was not a teaching institution but essentially performed that function. So you had Title VI [National Resource] Centers. Columbia was then, I would say, at its apogee, perhaps.

Q: In the late ’60s.

Kasinec: In the late ’60s. When I hit the campus, this was a major institution in Slavic Studies, and this is extremely important, I think. You had large immigrant communities here surrounding you. You also had incredible resources in the New York area. Many of the immigrant groups had their own libraries. I shouldn’t say immigrant. I should say émigrés and immigrants. These are very different things. You had the New York Public Library, where the Slavic and Eastern European collections had been founded in 1898 as an organized unit. So you had these astonishing resources, which were much relied upon in the previous decades to the ’60s, because one could only have printed text. One could not travel and use archives and manuscript repositories in the homelands. It was not, not done. People worked from printed textual sources, however censored they might have been.

And the Columbia faculty at that time—and here, I’m going to be perfectly frank—was very much divided. Divided politically, and divided in terms of how they dealt with their students. Some on the faculty, who were very desirous of having access—kind of privileged access—to the repositories that were beginning to open up in Soviet Russia during the ’60s, archival access, and somehow get the edge over their academic peers,

and began to see their graduate students as auxiliary research assistants. The dissertations often were in the supervisor's interest—academic interest, professional interest—to direct.

And in a highly politicized atmosphere that was the late '60s, because again, the movement for civil rights, the Stonewall gay liberation, all of that, the Vietnamese war, was all coming to a head. And you had individuals who were drawn into this vortex who were students of Soviet Russia, but got drawn into the vortex and mixture of American campus politics. And I remember some of them, some of whom are still with us, and have gone on to business careers, have become investment bankers.

And also, what's very important about the faculty, they would create camps. So there were the acolytes of this professor or that professor. And it would spill over into personal relations, among the students. Well, you're a student of X, so therefore your political views are slightly to the right. You therefore sympathize with the émigrés who are working on the campus and "who are devious." They are not telling the truth about the reality of the political situation in Eastern Europe. And they should be avoided. And some of the faculty members would, "We don't need the evidence of the émigrés. What can they tell us? We have access to the archives there, because of our political connections."

Q: So the political divide that you experienced when you were here was not just about having to do with, say, relations with the Soviet Union, although that was part of it. It was also all the domestic politics that was at the time—

Kasinec: Yes. Absolutely.

Q: —but people tended to kind of line up in terms of having certain kinds of political interests domestically, would also line up with their Soviet-American interests.

Kasinec: Exactly. All of this was brewing kind of in the vortex of other issues on the campus that I remember very vividly. The issue of unionization of the nonprofessional staff, which became very acrimonious, around ’68, ’69, in that period.

So, you have on the Columbia campus a tradition of Russian studies going back at least to the beginning of the twentieth century, with the visit in 1905 of Count [Sergei] Iu. Witte, the imperial minister who came here for the Portsmouth Peace Conference with [Theodore] Roosevelt and gave the first significant donation of Russian material to Columbia. It was given to the degree LLD, *honoris causa*, and so on. You have, by the ’60s, an establishment of Russian studies throughout the United States, and to some degree in Canada and in other Western countries. You had incredible resources, and a large, by today’s standards, constituency of graduate students who were here because they felt that Columbia, its faculty, would be a springboard to a professional career in

academia. I think very few of them were thinking in terms of using their academic background for the nonprofit sector or government, whatever. That was not on the table.

Q: Would they have thought about it in terms of going to policymaking positions and that sort of thing, or was it more just academic?

Kasinec: I don't think so, although some of them may have. Let me make a caveat. I'm sitting in a hotel room in Prague a couple of weeks ago, turned on the Russian international programming. And who do I see but Gilbert Doctorow, who was my colleague here at Columbia during the late '60s, debating with Russian politicos—or Russian political commentators—on some new film that had been made on Afghanistan. Gil was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant people here at that time. Very complex person. I think he had come from Harvard. And he clearly, after completing his research work, which I think he completed with honors on some abstruse subject—Kryzhanovskii and the Russian State Council?—went on to policy and consulting.

Well actually now, come to think of it, in the library, the graduate students—I was on the first floor of Butler Library—we all had desks. And at the very end of the row of desks was sitting an army officer. And we got to chatting, because very often, these graduate students would be sitting there late into the evening working. It turned out to later to be Brigadier General William Eldridge Odom, who subsequently went on to head the National Security Agency. I don't recall meeting his wife at that time, but we subsequently became very close friends and colleagues. Anne Odom, who was the

curator of the [Marjorie Merriweather] Post estate in Washington [D.C.], the Hillwood Estate [Museum & Gardens]. Both now lie at Arlington.

Now, Brigadier General William Odom, he was coming down from West Point. I don't think he was a colonel then, perhaps a lower rank. And I also got drawn in a little bit into his circle with other West Point faculty members, some of whom were Slavs. I remember one particular officer, Col. John S. Kark, a Ukrainian. And so clearly, there were others that were going on a different path. But most of my contemporaries were really thinking of academia—Roberta [T.] Manning, Robert Edelstein, Sandra Schekert Korros—Gregory [Lee.] Freeze, who I think is still teaching at Brandeis [University], also a brilliant person.

So you had Professor [Alexander] Dallin, of course, whose father I would see regularly in the Slavic and Baltic division, the old Menshevik David Dallin, where I went to study as a graduate student].

Q: He was a Menshevik?

Kasinec: Menshevik, exactly. And again, ouroboros, "turning and turning round." Later on, at a party at Professor Dallin's home in 1983 in Berkeley, Vartan Gregorian—later my "boss" at NYPL, l984 - l9—was being interviewed for the chancellorship of [University of California,] Berkeley. And I was invited to this party because Dallin, at

that time, was at Stanford, but living in Berkeley with his wife, Gail Warshovsky Lapidus, who was one of my great mentors at Berkeley [l980 - ‘84].

And so Dallin was this very formidable, even physically, very formidable person. And by that time, the so-called Russian Institute had moved from some brownstone that was near the law school, I think on 116th Street, on that block between the park and Amsterdam, on the north side. And they had moved to 113th Street, between the river and so—and I would go there from time to time, although my interests during the late ’60s were beginning to turn—like around ’67.

And I mentioned East Asian studies. Like Russian studies, East Asian, at that time, at least I perceived it as such, was at its apogee. Ted [Wm. Theodore] de Bary, Donald [Lawrence] Keene, C. Martin Wilbur, who was an old operative in China, Hans H.A. [Henrik August] Bielenstein, one of the most brilliant teachers I ever had, was teaching the ancient period, the Han Dynasty. You had this incredible Pléiades of faculty, both in history and in Chinese studies. And I tended to gravitate—began taking courses in Chinese and East Asian studies. And also to the east of the Soviet Union, in other words, Turkic studies, these kinds of things, Ottoman.

And Edward [A.] Allworth—2016—who was the greatest figure in what is called today nationality studies or regional studies, was then in his heyday. He’s 94, lives on Cabrini Boulevard. And today, my former employee, who is now the curator here at Columbia,

Robert [H.] Davis, [Jr.], is having lunch with him. I attended his memorial seminar in January 2017 at Harriman.

So, I'm beginning to straddle Asian and Russian studies. And some of the great figures in Russian studies, both historical figures and figures of the so-called ancien régime, are still here. So for example, and this is, again, very important—and one of the reasons why I'm doing this interview is that people today are so present "in the moment," especially the graduate students and the faculty, so obsessed with their own peculiar interest, that they forget what or who went before.

And so, for example, still alive he may have retired in the late '60s, was Professor [Michael T.] Florinsky. And why do I focus on him? He was the author of a two-volume history of Russia long before anyone on the Columbia campus had really written anything comparable. His father, Timofei was a professor at Kiev University. But in the histories of Russian studies at Columbia, he's kind of written out of the picture. His father, I should say, was extremely to the right. And Professor Florinsky was a page in the Kiev Opera, standing behind Prime Minister [Pyotr Arkadyevich] Stolypin when Prime Minister Stolypin was assassinated in 19, what, 11? [Alexander Fyodorovich] Kerensky, the leader of the—

Q: Social Democrats.

Kasinic: —Social Democrats, was still walking around campus after having been a Fellow at Hoover. He died in 1971 in New York, was laid out at Campbell's [Frank E. Campbell Funeral Chapel] on Madison Avenue. So these people—Boris [Ivanovich] Nicolaevsky, whose collection ended up at the Hoover Institution, and his wife, Anna Bourguina, still held offices at the Russian Institute, I remember vividly, on 113th.

Q: Speaking of history and remembering it, and making sure not to forget, I was interested in something that you said earlier about when you came here and you—well, before you came here, you drew a picture that research was carried on through books in the libraries that were here, or manuscripts, one sort or another. And then, in the late '60s, it became possible to travel to the Soviet Union, I gather, as well as other parts of Eastern Europe. And as a result, that kind of changed the sources that were then available—

Kasinec: Yes. Very important.

Q: And I was wondering, did you experience that shift here at the Russian Institute? Were there faculty who wanted to stay with one approach, and others who kind of took to the new approach?

Kasinec: Let me say the following. And let's talk about concrete people. Professor Raeff was born in Moscow in 1923. Then immigrated to Berlin with his family, and then to Paris. And came to Columbia from Clark probably in the mid-'60s as full professor. A man of consummate kind of sophistication. Of course a polyglot, fluent in German,

French, English, Russian. And was mostly focused on the imperial period. He was very textologically based. In other words, would focus on the text and the deep analysis of a historical text. [Leopold] Haimson, with whom he was not in good relations, in later years, I think they broke relations—

Q: They broke off.

Kasinec: —broke off relations. Professor Haimson had his own kind of circle of students, many of them liberally minded. And Professor Haimson would regularly travel to Soviet Russia, cultivated relations with Soviet faculty, worked in archival collections on his various books. But in terms of his manners and his way of dealing with people, he would often smoke a pipe or cigar, which would kind of droop in his mouth. It was not my kind of thing. He managed to convince me that I knew nothing in prep for my doctoral orals.

Raeff, on the other hand. But when he retired, he adopted the Public Library where I worked—l984 - 2009—as his pet project, along with some of the other faculty members here at Columbia with whom I was close. Professor [Richard M.] Wortman, who is still teaching, although he's in his late seventies, teaching one seminar. So Professor Raeff and I became much closer than even when I was at Columbia.

But just to dwell on this, being a bibliographer, someone who is consumed with sources and with archives and with libraries and so on, at that point in Soviet-American relations, there was already established in the late '60s what they called the IUCTG, the Intra-

University Consortium on Travel Grants, which at that time was headed by Robert Francis Byrnes, who was a student of William Langer at Harvard. Was at Indiana, and was a powerhouse in the field at that time. But was a conservative Catholic. I first met him in 1970, when I did some library work at the University of Illinois [at] Urbana-Champaign, and went to Indiana for a day. Charismatic man. I remember his last public appearance when he debated Cardinal [Joseph Louis] Bernardin of Chicago in a famous debate over contemporary Catholic religious issues.

In any case, Byrnes was "criticized " by many of the exchanges, because they felt he was somewhere over here, on the right, politically. And there was a famous anecdote where, you know, they have guest—sign-in—books in Soviet institutions. People would forge his signature, making him appear illiterate in Russian in these guest books. And these guest books would be there for all subsequent visitors to see.

Q: That's a wonderful story.

Kasinec: I greatly admired Professor Byrnes. He came to see me at the Public Library because our scholarly interests were not, I daresay, even our worldviews were not dissimilar. And so, yes, the question of sources.

Q: Was this happening, this kind of divergence, that kind of aligned with politics, both what was happening here in the States as well as relations with the Soviet Union and how one thought about the Soviet Union and U.S. relations? Was this in the history

department, or was it in the Russian Institute as well? Was it more general, or was it more located in the Russian Institute? And as a student, could you really see these tensions?

Kasinec: Absolutely. Let me say that it was personalized and projected onto the Institute and onto the personalities who headed the Institute, who were perceived by some their colleagues in departments as being "light in the ass." Some of the individuals you mentioned were described to me as "Uriah Heep" and were looked upon as not really knowing anything, but creating models of how things should unfold, and being individuals that had no existential knowledge of these areas. And were directing these resources—money—and so on, from which some of the faculty might have been excluded.

Q: And it was in some sense more a departmental versus Harriman kind of split?

Kasinec: But also colored by personalities and by politics, and individuals who had some kind of place in the policy world or in the political world, were looked upon as, as not really serious. I mean, scholars don't do this.

And also, the whole issue of Russia kind of tire Soviet Union, or let's say, Russia equals Soviet Union. But what about the other parts of Eastern Europe: the Poles, the Czechs, the other constituents, the Slavic constituencies? Where do they figure in this? And so there were so many tensions going on the campus, only some of which I was fully aware of at that time.

So, for example, Ukrainian versus Russian. Today, there's a Ukrainian studies program. But in the '60s, and I remind my colleagues of this, there were Ukrainians on this campus—Stephen Chemych, Head of the Ukrainian Studies Fund—that wanted to raise money to fund a Ukrainian studies program. And they had one of the most distinguished people in the Ukrainian community as a faculty member here, Professor [George Yurii] V. Shevelov, the great linguist who was president of the Ukrainian Academy of [Arts and] Sciences [in the U.S.A.]. Brilliant guy, distinguished linguist. But he would not go to bat for Ukrainian studies because it was politically difficult—who would support you? The "Russians" on the twelfth floor of IA? And that's why the Ukrainian studies program went to Harvard during the late '60s and early '70s. Because they couldn't get any traction here.

Q: How did the Vietnam War, and the U.S. as a proxy for both domestically here, conflict here in the States about it, but also a proxy for U.S.-Soviet interaction, as well as the specific events around Columbia. How did those impact these kinds of tensions that you've been talking about?

Kasinec: As I warned you in advance, and may become even further apparent here, politics is not my thing. As a matter of fact, Marc Raeff, when we became closer, would often remark, "I would see you on the campus, and we would be talking and walking through some barricade, and you were completely oblivious." And that's probably true.

However, it had an immensely disruptive effect on my entire life. Why? When I turned twenty-one, you get a I-A status, draft status. And so during these years, during the ’60s, they had a lottery. So every week, you would be watching the boob tube and seeing whether your number would be selected—or your range of numbers, whatever—would be selected to go to Vietnam.

And some of the individuals in the Russian studies program—I remember one in particular that was at the forefront of these protests, lockdowns, shutdowns, whatever you choose to call them. And the faculty had to choose, would you come on campus? Would you hold your classes? Or would you sit home, hold your class at your apartment? I remember Professor Allworth holding his classes in Kent Hall who demonstrations we talking place on the Low Plaza—who’s now 94, 95. I remember sitting in a class. It must have been ’68, ’69, with him. I was already taking the doctoral courses. The MA had been finished. Very difficult, because no one was in a position to read my MA thesis. I was in jeopardy of not getting the MA degree.

Q: No one was in a position because of the protests?

Kasinec: Incredible protests. This is 1968. And the only person that came to the fore was “the blessed” Loren Graham, the gentleman I saw a couple of weeks ago. He said, “Fine, I will read it. I will have it in two weeks. And you’ll get your degree.” For me, this was very important. Incidentally, the theme was also telling, because I wrote on the beginnings of Sinology in the Russian Empire and one particular figure, who was the

pioneer of Sinological research in the late eighteenth, nineteenth century. So, the critical year, ’68. My Lehman Fellowship runs out, and I turn to the Institute for some money, for some support. And they said, “Fine, we have a work studies program. We pay you to work somewhere.” What did I choose, but the library. I come to the library, and there’s a whole department that deals with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, which was housed on the very first floor of Butler Library. At the extreme end of Butler Library, there’s a large room there. Double room and a basement under the room, a staircase. And all of the staff devoted to building the Eastern European collections here. The first Slavic curator at Columbia, Simeon Bolan was appointed in the ’50s.

Q: Even though the teaching department had been here since 1915 or so.

Kasinec: Exactly. But the first Slavic curator was a man named Simeon [J.] Bolan, who used to be a book dealer. And dealt with nationalized and confiscated collections from Soviet Russia, and was selling them here in the United States with Israel Perlstein, and other New York book dealers like H.P. Kraus. [Unclear]. Long story.

In any case. I come to this department, and they say, “Well, you’re going to be searching things, and you’re going to be unpacking boxes, and you’re going to be going to Four Continents Book Corporation on lower Fifth Avenue to bring parcels of books up here.” I look around the room, and sitting at one desk is a man named Mikhail Shatoff, who was one of the soldiers that fought with the Germans against the Soviets in the so-called Russian Liberation Army [ROA]. Tough, tough guy. Sitting next to him was a man

named Azamat Altay [Azamat Bey], who was a Kazak, who also had a very interesting history during World War II. The lingua franca in the room is Russian. And there's another graduate student in Slavic who had been assigned there. He's now, I think, also an investment banker living Princeton, Alan Lapez Morillas. Lovely guy. We got along very well. And others who are now unfortunately no longer with us like the Prof. Stan Beljwas.

This was my baptism of fire. I took to this almost immediately. I just loved being there and working with a variety of materials. There wasn't one thing that interested me. Many things interested me. And at the same time, the Institute was paying me to do this. And also using some of my interest and talents for other things.

So they [the RI] were compiling a two-volume—which no one, I think, can find today—a two-volume directory for graduate students as to how to conduct research in the Russian field. And they said, "Well, Kasinec, why don't you, as part of your work study, go to this place, this place, and write short entries on libraries for this handbook," which was edited by the publications director, a woman named Constance Bezer, at that time. "And we'll circulate it." It was two large volumes [*Russian and Soviet Studies: A Handbook*]. "In mimeographs, so that your colleagues and graduates and others can have this kind of guide to research."

So I go to New York Public Library, wrote a blurb on them. And that was, again, critical for me. Because I began to realize, hey, look at these incredible rarities: eighteenth

century, sixteenth century books and manuscripts. Where did this come from? How did this appear? I'm going to the Columbia stacks, looking at the marginalia on some of the books in the Presniakov collection. And very shortly, my perception—and this may sound very odd—shifted from the substance of what's written in the book, to the book and the structures which housed them, as a separate area of study. The physical entity: its provenance, its history, its migrations, *et cetera.* And that set me off, with some encouragement from the faculty.

Harold [B.] Segel, who was director of the Eastern European Institute [Institute on East Central Europe], Rado [L.] Lenček, with whose daughter Lena I'm in continuous touch now. She's an emeritus at Reed College in Oregon. Lenček was one of the linguists here. And they're encouraging me now.

And that results in my first show, exhibition, at New York Public Library. It was a corridor show, 1969, on the eighteenth century Russian printed book. And they published a catalogue of it. By that time, I'm slowly moving into bibliography, into librarianship. Into 1970, I had chance to study at the University of Illinois for a summer, the first Department of Education library institute. I meet everyone who's anyone in the field of Slavic curatorship, or area studies curatorship.

And then, in spring of '71, I had finished the doctoral coursework. The doctoral orals came, which were traumatic. Five examiners. I thought I knew nothing. Thanks to Haimson. I'll never forget it. I came to him. I walked out of his office convinced that I

knew nothing. Of course, the period that he was interested in, I did indeed treat very lightly. It was not my area of interest. Get through the doctoral orals. Will never forget walking out of that room, in Fayerweather Hall, was just like the weight of the world had fallen.

Q: This is in the history department?

Kasinec: Yes, exactly. By that time, really, I was in Slavic and Russian studies. And I think they had language exams too that you had to complete. You had the exams, and you had all the coursework. Then the big question: who would sponsor me, because this was all the thing. You were nothing if you didn't go to study in Soviet Russia on the official exchange. There were only twelve slots for the entire country. So Raeff, I think Professor Raeff, agreed to be one of my sponsors. I think there may have been someone else, [William E.] Harkins, whatever. So I go for the IREX [International Research and Exchanges Board] interview. This is the spring of '71. The interviewers were Theofanis Stavrou, University of Minnesota and Seymour Becker, then at Harvard.

I should mention one other thing, very important. As a result of this publication in the New York Public Library *Bulletin*, two publications actually, I get a letter that was sent to the library but was forwarded to me. On the letterhead of All Souls College, [University of] Oxford. And the letter was from one of the fellows at All Souls, J. S. G. [John S. G.] Simmons. It said, "Dear Mr. Kasinec, I saw your article in the *Bulletin* of the New York Public Library. Could you send me some more prints of this, because I would like to send

it to Soviet colleagues." I didn't know of All Souls College. So, you know, I packed it off and sent it to him.

And so, I did get the grant to go to Russia, and left in late spring, early summer of '71 for the entire year. And so at that time, you had to travel on an American carrier in order to get to Soviet Russia. So you had to travel on Pan Am [Pan American World Airways] to London, and then travel on to Soviet Russia on British Air [British Airways]. And so I found myself in London. It was my first European trip. And I phone All Souls College. I may have written Mr. Simmons ahead of time. And said that I would be coming. And he said, "Yes, please come and spend the day," and so on.

So I end up in Oxford at All Souls College. And he has a suite there. And the fellows of All Souls College are among some of the most prestigious people in the field of academia. And so he entertains me there in the afternoon. And he realizes that I'm going on to Russia, where he has a Rolodex of contacts that is unparalleled. He was a bibliographer, and he was also a fellow, but also head of The Codrington Library at All Souls, this distinguished library. Previously, he had been at The Bodleian [Library] and at the Taylorian [Libraries]. And he housed me there for the day, and then the subsequent day.

But the evening was just one of the most excruciating experiences of my life. I was sitting at High Table. This raw grad student. Presiding at the High Table was Quintin

[McGarel] Hogg, Lord Chief Justice of England, several Nobel laureates, and such. You can imagine the scenario.

And so, armed with this set of contacts in Russia, and in other countries of Eastern Europe, I find myself in Moscow. And I've written about that year in a kind of memoiristic article, "A Soviet Research Library Remembered."

And as a matter of fact, sometime in the probably '80s, I was already in New York. The graduate students at the Russian Institute organized a symposium on research during the Cold War. And they invited me, because I was at the public library and the individuals knew me from that context. Reprise that atmosphere of what it was like to spend a year in Soviet archives, manuscript collections and so on. And again, my own perspective by that time was a very peculiar one. Because I was already not so much an academic scholar, but someone who was concerned with library structures, with bibliography, and so on and so on. A very different kind of perspectives. Maybe a unique American perspective for that time].

So I don't want to dwell on that year, but I want to return to Columbia. I come back to Columbia in summer of '72. And by that time, the IA building is up and functioning. And that whole concept of international studies, the international studies library, and so on, I saw being born in the late '60s when I was working as a student assistant in Slavic acquisitions. Why? Because sitting down the hall in some "broom closet" in Butler Library was Luther [Harris] Evans. Former Librarian of Congress, who had been

hounded out by Senator Joe [Joseph Raymond McCarthy]. Ended up as librarian of UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization], and then was hired by Columbia sometime in the mid-'60s to develop the concept of its international studies collection.

His deputy and my patron was the Slavic curator in the late sixties, a man named Dr. George Lowy, a Hungarian, who had fled in '56. An economist, a man of consummate elegance and really incredible people skills. Quintessential kind of Hungarian gentleman. And he was Evans' camerlengo; in other words, the one who actually implemented the whole concept of international studies collections. And was the first librarian, I think, in the IA [International Affairs] Building. And so I come back in summer, and the building has just opened. Or it may have been open for a year. But the library was just in its seminal form. Marshall [D.] Shulman is the director. I remember him vividly, with his visor. He would sit there like in a casino.

Q: A croupier.

Kasinec: Croupier. And his deputy was a man named Jonathan [E.] Sanders, who subsequently was at NBC [National Broadcasting Company], or one of the broadcasting stations in Moscow. But Jonathan was a young man at that time, and was a kind of administrative head of The Russian Institute. He's now with Stony Brook [University]. I see him sometimes around. I think he's not at all involved with this program at all.

So I come back, and I'm faced with, well, how are you going to earn a living and pay for tuition? And so I turn to George Lowy. And he says, "Well, you know, we just opened this library. Why don't you get a part-time job? You'll have to join the union." It was unionized by that time. "And you can do some work here, paraprofessional work." Because I didn't have a library degree. "And at the same time, I'm going to offer you an office on the balcony, so that you can continue your dissertation work in the evenings and so on." Incredible bonus. He subsequently became my neighbor when I lived in Forest Hills, in Queens; he had a home a couple of blocks from me. We would sometimes socialize. This is in the '80s already.

Q: So if I understand right, the library was moved from the library that you knew over at Butler, to International Affairs?

Kasinec: A separate collection was created called International Studies Collection, which didn't exist as such. It was a construct created by Dr. Evans. I suppose things were pulled out of the stacks, and some that were relevant to social and political science policy. And that is the basis of the Lehman [Social Sciences] Library in the International Affairs Building [IAB].

Q: In some sense, this mirrors the difference between, in terms of the library that existed between the Institute, and the departments. The people from the departments would continue to do their research over at Butler, and the RI [Russian Institute] people would use the one at IA.

Kasinec: Very much so. And these were very different kinds of collections. And the area studies people—oh, this is important, also. The separate department devoted to Russian, Eastern European, Central Asia, which had a staff of a dozen people was no more. A dozen people devoted to this one area, in a separate space [Slavic Acquisitions], and also connected with the Bakhmeteff Archive [of Russian & East European Culture] on the eighth floor. The so-called archives of Russian and Eastern European culture, which had been created by the founders of the Russian Institute, particularly by Philip [E.] Mosely, or as he was called in Russian, Philip Arturovich Mosely, who was married to a Russian émigré woman, Tatiana Terentieva. And he was the architect of this important archival collection. By the way, Terentieva was the Russian typing assistant in the "Slavonic" Division of the NYPL when I first came there as a grad student.

Q: When you first came or even when you came back, did you have much interaction with Mosely? He was a big deal at the time.

Kasinec: No. None. He had already passed away in '72. You know who I did see, though, this legendary figure. G. T. [Geroid Tanqueray] Robinson. He was decked out in this remarkable white suit with the watch fob like Luther Evans, the really old school. And I would see him coming into the Butler stacks. This was the pioneer of Russian historical studies at Columbia. Geroid Tanqueray Robinson, who left his entire fortune to create an endowment for the Russian collections here. He was still around. Mosely may have passed on, although his widow, [Terentieva], worked at the public library.

Q: There were a couple of threads I wanted to pick up on. One thing that was interesting to me is that you were talking about part of the difference between, say, if I just put it in organizational terms, the Russian Institute or the departments. It seemed that the people in the departments in this area were two things. One was that they were perhaps more expansive in the sense that they were interested not just in Russia or the Soviet Union, but they were interested in perhaps Slavic culture more generally, but other countries as well. And that they had—the language you used was existential. It had an existential meaning for them. And I assume that means that partly it came out of their lives, and was integral to their lives in a way that perhaps the people in the Russian Institute more saw it as a—it was concentrated on the Soviet Union & Russia and not on the area or the culture. And in particular, they viewed it more in terms of big power interaction, perhaps, between the United States and Soviet Union. So it wasn't, in that sense, coming out of their own lives. Is that a fair distinction?

Kasinec: I think, to some degree, that's a correct characterization. Both Haimson and Raeff were part of the department. But Haimson was much closer, for whatever reason, to the people that directed the Institute. Perhaps politically, but maybe there were also questions of support that he received, and support for his students, and so on.

Raeff was very much based in Fayerweather. And the people in the Slavic program, the Russianists, including the eminent theologian Aleksandr Shmemann. were based in Hamilton Hall. And some of them, Rado Lenček, was a Slovene. George Shevelov was

Ukrainian and President of the Ukrainian Free Academy. Others in the department may also have been of various Slavic groups, non-Russian. Or the Russians that were in the Slavic department were émigrés, and very conscious émigrés, and religious émigrés.

I remember very vividly Nick Ozerov, who was a preceptor. Professor Marina Ledkovskay—then Astman. These were people that were part of an integral Russian émigré community, that were in bitter opposition to Soviet Russia. I think that Madame Ledkovskaya, she was actually related to Nabokov, to Vladimir Nabokov and to Nicolas Nabokov, who incidentally, was head of one of the anti-Bolshevik cultural organizations. So again, all of this was related. Many of them communed at Saint Seraphim, the Russian Orthodox church here on 108th Street, pastored by Father Alexander Kiselev founder of Saint Seraphim Foundation, and so on.

So I think that there may have been a little bit of distance between the Institute on the twelfth floor dominating the campus, and the departments, the textologically oriented scholars that were there. And this is important for how the field has evolved. It is now dominated by the departments. When you are hired here, you have to stand the test of a department. You're not in regional studies, or area studies. This has now been in some sense discredited. As a matter of fact, and this is almost unbelievable, two or three years ago, Columbia lost its Title VI status. It's no longer a Title VI center.

Q: Right. At the time, or even thinking about how it's happened now, there's always been this conflict between area studies. What is it, and how should it exist, and its emphasis on multi-disciplinarity—with its language proficiency and on-site research experience. And I wonder, aside from the other tensions that we've talked about, at the time, when you were here with the Russian Institute, even just talking about how the departments were in different places. Hamilton, Fayerweather, as opposed to IAB, where the Russian Institute was. Did the people in the departments feel that something was being lost by creating some kind of area studies with multi-disciplinarity, intellectually lost, for example?

Kasinec: I'm not sure. Perhaps some of them did feel that. But it was more a question of maybe more pedestrian issues, of the personalities involved, the connections that people may have had or were perceived to have had in government, or, for example, their bias towards one of the ethnic groups within the former Soviet Union. Again, this was, what, twenty years after the war and in the high arc of the Cold War.

Q: Not that long.

Kasinec: Yes, not that long. Less than a generation. And people were still hurting and still fighting old battles. Russian studies, at that time, was perceived as something quite in mode, something quite attractive, something "sexy" to study. Asian studies, on the other hand, was not yet seen as quite that—Islamic studies, certainly not. So the whole gestalt of the world, the way regional, area studies related to disciplines, the whole academic and

political environment has changed so dramatically that it's difficult to what it was actually like at that particular juncture.

Q: The Russian Institute was, you may have used the word "sexy." It was kind of modern. It was playing with the big boys.

Kasinec: Yes, exactly. That kind of thing. And maybe some of the individuals in the department who were specializing in linguistics, or in the cultures of other Eastern European—for example, there were younger people here on campus, younger meaning people in their thirties. Jaroslav B. Pelensky, a Ukrainian, Andrzej Kaminski, a Ukrainian and Pole respectively, who were also attempting to get tenure-track positions here at Columbia. It was not to be. It was not to be.

And also, one other very telling incident that I must share with you. I was not at Columbia any longer. I was already working in Cambridge at Harvard. I get a phone call from Robert Maguire, who then was then Chair of the Bakhmeteff Committee professor. He was a major figure in the literary studies, a lovely guy, died before his time. I get a phone call. I'm sitting at Harvard. And he said, "You know, I would like to propose the following to you. We have a problem here at Columbia. The Bakhmeteff Archives, which have been housed on the eight floor"—this vast collection of émigré material, perhaps second largest archive dealing with Eastern Europe and Russia in America, after the Hoover, there's nothing comparable. He said, "We have a problem. Mr. Evgenii Magerovsky Lev Florianovich—" who I remember very vividly from my student days.

His assistant was Madame Denikina, the second wife of the army general who led the forces against the Bolsheviks. She was much younger than the general, so lived on and was Magerovsky's assistant.

"He has left the university." He said it very elegantly. Actually, he was forced out. "And now, we're looking to open up the Bakhmeteff Archive, because we have no idea what's there." And this fell to Maguire and to Professor Harkins—who has just passed away, in his nineties—to clean up the thirty years of documents that had accumulated on the eighth floor, and to try and deal with an evolving scandal. Because Magerovsky said, "Okay, you forced me out, Columbia. But I want my son [Evgenii] or a representative of the Russian émigré community to head this archive."

Columbia said, "No way. This is not an inherited position." I think the son subsequently had connections with the security agencies in the United States. Evgeny Magerovsky. And many people applied. The children of émigré aristocrats like Masha Trubetskaya, Princess Trubetkaya. And this turned into a major scandal that went on the pages of the émigré press, you know, that Columbia had "forced this old man out." And that they were going to be divulging the secrets of the emigration that were being housed in this fortress of Butler Library.

So he calls me and he says, "Would you be interested—" And I had just started going to library school, Simmons College, and started working at Harvard in the winter of '72-'73, in a new area for me. I said, "This is impossible. I can't do it, as much as I would

like it." Because I dreamed about getting this position at some point, even during my graduate student days. So that again was a very telling incident, because subsequently, Professor Raeff, when he became Bakhmeteff professor, this went on through the '70s, this scandal. There were veiled anti-Semitic attacks on him in the press. He really suffered psychologically from these attacks.

So, I leave Columbia in late '72, '73, when I'm offered the second or third candidate, as the second candidate this position up at Harvard. And then my life changes very dramatically, because in order to get a corporation appointment at Harvard, you had to get a library degree from Simmons College, so really become a full-fledged member of the library and bibliographical profession.

Q: Speaking of people who are at the Russian Institute at the time that you came, I was wondering if the students had, would you have much interaction with Shulman or Dallin or John [N.] Hazard, for example. And I don't know if Ernest [J.] Simmons was around at that time?

Kasinec: I think that Ernest Simmons was probably gone by that time. I think the major literary scholar at that time was probably one of his students, Rufus [W.] Mathewson. But the Slavic department was really not the center of my focus at that time. I was really oriented towards East Asian, towards history, towards Russian history, and that immediate group. With Shulman, I may have had some interaction. But he again was not the person that I would really be looking to.

Q: Intellectually.

Kasinec: Intellectually, emotionally, on any level. He was perfectly correct towards me. The endowment came when? Much later, in ’83, the Harriman endowment, certainly in the ’80s. And I was just about on the cusp of returning to New York in ’84. And then, of course, renewed my contact with all of the people here. So the subsequent twenty-five years, from ’84 to literally the present day, I’ve been an observer and interacted with all of the subsequent people, with Mark von Hagen who was director at one point, with late Professor [Catharine Theimer] Nepomnyashchy, Tim Frye, Kim Martin and Alex Cooley. We had collegial relations.

Because it was in my interest, financial also, because some of the subsidies that I received from various programs at the public library came from Harriman at that time.

Clearly, that period of the ’70s, I was really observing this from a distance, and corresponding with Professor Raeff, and with maybe one or two of the other faculty members here. But not really engaged, because I was so tremendously busy. And then in the early eighties, would periodically come back to New York, when I was at California. But really not focused on this.

Q: As an observer from afar, but interested because the Russian Institute plays such an important role in Russian studies in general. It used to be Soviet studies. And I know this isn’t quite where you are now, as an antiquarian. But I was wondering what your major

thoughts were, having observed it as it was before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and then over the—what are we up to now—twenty some-odd years since the collapse of the Soviet Union. And how the Russian Institute—I mean, it's interesting to have your perspective as somebody who's aware of its history, participated in its history, but not there any longer, but continues to follow it, to get your sense of how it's responded to or been impacted by this change from the '80s, into the '90S and 2000s.

Kasinec: First of all, I mentioned that in terms of the research support, the auxiliary services, the library, the separate Russian, Eastern European library program of collection development [Slavic Acquisitions Department] was really done away with, probably around '72. And the area studies bibliographers were moved to that IA building. So kind of chipping away at the infrastructure. The East Asian library, separate library, remains in Kent Hall, now with a new endowed name [C.V. Starr East Asian Library]. So that has remained strong and vibrant. And the bibliographers are in that physical library. In terms of the faculty, everyone tends to glorify the period when they were here as being a kind of golden age. But the faculty here does not, I think, have the same sense of stability. The term that I very often hear, which I first heard actually in recent years, is "term" professor. Someone who is here on a kind of limited, one year period.

Q: For a period of time.

Kasinec: For a limited time. And I've seen, in recent years, just as a kind of observer, not part of this struggle, of very talented people being here for six years. They publish a

book. They do everything by the rules. And then, they're gone. And gone where? You know, you're damaged goods, in a sense.

Q: So this lack of continuity.

Kasinec: Lack of continuity and instability, and almost a kind of frenetic quality. People are almost wired here, trying to engage with their Eastern European colleagues—which was not possible in the '60s to this degree. Whenever a Russian scholar would come here in the '60s, this was an "event." I remember even in the '80s. The distinguished scholars would come from Russia to Berkeley—Lu're, Robinson, both medievalists—and they were courted and lionized, *et cetera*, *et cetera.* Today, this is a common occurrence.

Q: And they're able to come and go so much more easily because of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Kasinec: Sure, absolutely. Unprecedented. Now, the whole question also of access to information. And I'm not talking about this immediate day, because this is a separate scenario under the [Vladimir V.] Putin administration, the last two years. There's a moratorium on sending any material from Russian museums to the United States. This affects me directly, because my interests now gravitated towards art and that area. This is devastating. The question of colportage of print material. During my time in the '60s—and Columbia was one of the pioneers in this—book exchanges were prevalent. In other words, you send books from here there, and they send you print material from there here.

But getting back to the changing patterns, the Russian Institute, in the late ’80s and early ’90s, was fortunate to have very flexible young academics at its head. Particularly, I want to focus on Mark Von Hagen, who I think was director during the early ’90s. And his successor, Catherine Nepomnyashchy, now deceased, unfortunately. Died before her time. These people, first of all, Mark Von Hagen underwent a kind of mind change. I remember him as a graduate student, when I would go down from Berkeley to Hoover. And he was a graduate student in Russian, Russian studies at Stanford.

And when I came back to New York in ’84, he had got an appointment at Columbia, and then worked his way up to being director of the Russian Institute. And underwent a kind of metamorphosis to becoming a Ukrainianist. I think he became the first head of the International Congress of Ukrainianists, when Ukraine became free, the Yellow Revolution and so on. And became very catholic in his interests. And similarly, with Catherine Nepomnyashchy. Incredible energy. Although she was a Russianist, she began cultivating the Central Asianists and so-called nationalities people, hired people who were Turkologists. Going back to some of the initiatives that Professor Allworth launched in the late ’60s.

Q: Just to make sure I understand. So, it’s a very interesting suggestion, which is that because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, people were more free to pursue not just studying the Soviet Union or even Russia, but rather were free to pursue other interests in the Eastern European area.

Kasinec: These are independent states, right? Independent sovereign countries, headed, in some cases, by charismatic individuals. This is the era of the papacy of J.P. II [Pope Saint John Paul II], who I met first as Cardinal Archbishop of Kraków at Harvard in ’78, when he was a Visiting Professor in the Philosophy department. Not that he’s a head of state, but is credited with a kind of—

Q: Well he actually is a head of a state. The Vatican.

Kasinec: Well yes, the Vatican. But [Lech] Wałęsa, who I met at New York Public Library came, [Václav] Havel, who came to the Library twice. These are charismatic figures. And so there’s a kind of opening up where Russian begins to be ratcheted down. And then, also very important, and this is also connected with the Institute.

One of the graduate students that used to sit in the reading room at NYPL—and I used to observe him from time to time—was a man named Paul Klebnikov, a student of my colleague Dom Lieven now in Cambridge but then at LSE. And Klebnikov, there’s now an endowment at the Institute named after him. Klebnikov was a Russian émigré. Not aristocracy, but almost, descended from a very good family, notable family.

Q: Twenty-fifth in line.

Kasinec: Yes. You got it. And so he’s sitting in the reading room. And like many émigrés, when the Soviet Union collapses, they are the first to go there to work on behalf

of that Russia that they've lost, that they lost under the Bolsheviks. "We're going to reconstruct and do good—" he goes, and murdered coming out of a tube station. He was working for Forbes at that time. This is an incident going back to the '90s. This talented and energetic young guy. I know his widow, [Helen] "Musa" [Train] Klebnikov. And so there's a disillusionment on the part of some émigrés as to what they encountered in the homelands.

And I should mention this to you. Sitting with émigrés as a graduate student here at Columbia, in that Slavic acquisitions department, I had a notion of Russia that was completely illusionary. It was a kind of imagined Russia. I go there as a graduate student, and I see, this is a country with a vibrant culture, with living people. Not some kind of fairyland that I had heard about from maybe even some of the faculty and some of the people with whom I was working. And this also maybe the kind of rude shock that the émigrés should have received when they actually were confronted with this reality. And American policymakers were looking at this country that in reality was like some areas of the United States—Appalachia or some of these depressed areas. And so—after l991 people in the establishment here are turning to so-called "policy pundits" and saying, "Hey, where the hell was your head? You've been feeding us. And maybe what the emigration was telling us had some "truth."

Q: Some meaning, yes.

Kasinec: —meaning—

Q: And should have paid attention.

Kasinec: —and should have paid attention.

Q: Right, right. I'll just pick up on two things, and then I'll let you go. We've kind of run over a little bit.

One is that you were mentioning policymaking. Do you have any sense from when you were at Columbia in the '60s, or even kind of observing over the '80s, and even perhaps since the collapse of the Soviet Union, that the Russian Institute played—and I know this isn't your area, but just as an intelligent observer—whether you saw that the Russian Institute seemed to play much of a direct role in U.S. policymaking towards the Soviet Union, or since the '90s, Russia. This is a perennial question. Or do you think that it maybe just contributed to some dialogue, but really was not that integral to policymaking?

Kasinec: I think it very much depended on the administration in Washington, what the kind of interrelationships were, the career paths were of some of the individuals in the political science department who may have had an adjunct status or affiliation with the Institute. But as far as I can determine, that perhaps direct policy impact may well have ended sometime in the '70s, or even perhaps early '80s.

The last person that I vividly recall was of course Professor [Zbigniew K.] Brzezinski, who was both here and in D.C. There may have been people on the advisory board, for example, someone that I know personally, Professor [William H.] Luers, who was later president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art that was a career diplomat. He was chairman of the national oversight committee for Harriman. And also other individuals. For example, the outgoing head of Harriman's national oversight committee is Grace Kennan Warnecke.

Q: [John Carl] Warnecke and George F. Kennan.

Kasinec: And the daughter of George Kennan, who I was privileged to know, and had a tremendous respect for That Grand man. And I of course know her, as well. So my feeling is that that kind of ended, because Mark Von Hagen and Cathy Nepomnyashchy, the directors of Harriman during the time that I was back in New York, were really scholars. Mark a historian, Cathy a literary scholar of Vladimir Nabokov. But very able to adjust to the reality of the '90s and this millennium and able to reconstruct the curriculum in such a way that it was sensitive to the present time. Bringing in the Ukrainian studies program, bringing in the Serbian studies program Njegoš [Serbian Studies Endowment Fund], the Polish program, negotiating with these various governments and trying to create a more holistic approach to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Q: So become, in some sense, more of an area studies program than it had been previously.

Kasinec: Yes, but deeply grounded in departments, be it literary or historical. And with the present faculty being parts of those departments.

Q: One final question. Earlier, when you were talking about the transition from before the collapse of the Soviet Union to after, and you were talking about the frenetic nature of careers, it seemed, among academics. So do you think that the collapse of the Soviet Union and how it caused the relationships, say, with the Russian Institute or political science, say, to change—how did you think that might produce this kind of frenetic-ness of careers?

[INTERRUPTION]

Q: So what I last wanted to ask you was that you had mentioned that one of the things you had observed in the period from before the Soviet Union to after the Soviet Union, Russianists, if you will, or maybe Eastern Europeanists at Columbia was that their careers had seemed to become more frenetic, from before the collapse of the Soviet Union to after. And I was wondering if you had any thoughts as to how you might think that the relationship between the Russian Institute and the Soviet Union/Russia, as a result of this collapse of the Soviet Union, might have affected that frenetic quality. Or perhaps this frenetic quality came from someplace else.

Kasinec: Let me clarify what I was attempting to say. During the late ’50s, ’60s, into the ’70s, there was a rather predictable pattern for people to follow, who were either teaching or aspiring to teach and to write and to do research, a certain pattern that they would follow. They would finish their dissertation. They would get a teaching appointment. And very often, the teaching appointment would be a lifetime appointment. In other words, they would remain there for their entire careers, at that institution.

That initial generation, the people who were trained in the late ’30s, ’40s, the pioneers of Russian studies, were few in number. And they generally ended up at prestigious places. Their epigones, Mark Raeff, Richard [E.] Pipes, Martin [E.] Malia, Nicholas [V.] Riasanovsky, all of the major figures. And also in literature, major figures. They were trained at prestigious institutions and went on to teach at prestigious Ivy League quality. By the ’70s, very few of my colleagues ended up at the ivies—and this is one of the reasons why I looked around me and thought to myself, can I emulate the career of a Mark Raeff, or some of the other teachers that I had? I came back saying, No, I cannot match them. But there may be areas in which I can be very good and make a career of my own.

Now, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, that path has been broken. The likelihood of your getting employment as an academic professor, teacher, and so on, after having completed a doctorate at Columbia after X number of years of study and writing, *et cetera*, is probably marginal. At the best, you may get a position at some state university,

at some less well-known, less prestigious institution. On the other hand, there are many other career paths that people are now—for example, some of the individuals who are in the administration of Harriman, of Eastern European Institute, have had their careers in business, in think tanks, in some sort of human rights work, and such. There's a diversity now of career paths which would have been impossible to think about during the so-called Cold War.

Q: That's great. Thank you very much. I appreciate your talking with me today.

Kasinec: Thank you.

Q: This has been really interesting. Thank you.

[END OF SESSION]

ATC | Session: 2

Interviewee: Edward Kasinec | Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: William McAllister | Date: December 15, 2016

Q: My name is William McAllister, and today I'm speaking with Edward Kasinec for a second time concerning his thoughts and reminiscences about the Harriman Institute. Originally when Edward was associated with it, it was the Russian Institute. Thanks Edward, for coming by for a second time.

Kasinec: Thank you.

Q: I appreciate it. So, first—as I mentioned before we started recording, the first topic area I'd like to talk about is the Harriman Institute and your sense of possible directions it could go in in the past, whether it missed some opportunity.

So, in our first conversation you remarked how Mark von Hagen and Cathy Nepomnyashchy ably—former directors of Harriman Institute—ably adjusted to the post-Soviet reality of the '90s and the 2000s, specifically about their constructing the curriculum so that it was sensitive to the moment, and then bringing in new programs: Ukrainian studies, Serbian studies, Polish programs. I wonder if you could say more about what you mean about the curriculum being sensitive to the moment, what they—the changes that they brought in at Harriman at that time.

Kasinec: You know, this is a very interesting question. Much depends on the ability to innovate and to create new programs, interesting programs, interesting offerings. Much depends on funding and the energy of the support staff and of the ambitions of the administration, of the directors. And, the events of ’89 to ’91 were remarkable and so far reaching that they had a very propitious set of circumstances to fulfill with their various initiatives. The breakup of the Soviet Union, the resurrection of national states and traditions in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the post-Soviet period, meant that they were able to tap into sources of funding within these newly created nation-states that were anxious to assert their national visibility. And also, in Central Asia, states such as Kazakhstan, which had, or which have, significant mineral/oil wealth were able to feed into some of the activities at Harriman. So it was—those years, the ’90s in particular, and then even into the 2000s, were very propitious for both Mark and Cathy.

However, the circumstances of the last three, four years are again very different. And when I reflected on this question that you posed of new directions, we’re in a period where the resources at the disposal of Harriman, and I’m talking even about physical plant, are increasingly being cut by the overall international affairs/SIPA [School of International and Public Affairs] administration, which has other world areas and other interests—be it environmental or the business community or public health, human rights and so on—on its agenda. And at the same time there is a graying and a diminution of the so-called regional, intra-Slavic regional interests on this campus.

So for example, let’s take some of the humanistic disciplines: Slavic languages and literatures. There have been deaths—Cathy’s, a very tragic death two years ago, a year and a half ago—and

individuals are not being replaced. For example, I doubt that her position at Barnard [College] has been filled by a line, tenure track position. And ditto in the Slavic department on the Columbia campus. Everywhere I see a kind of contraction in humanistic programs, particularly in the Slavic field, in the Russian field, and too—and this is being ceded to individuals that are in line departments where you're either—you're not a regional specialist any longer; you're a political scientist, you're a historian, and your career is made in these departments. So now the Harriman program is dominated by individuals who are social scientists, political scientists, who have their roots in the politics of their positions, if you will, in a particular department.

Now, the fortunate thing in this is that Harriman, beginning in '82, received a fairly significant endowment of Governor [W. Averell] Harriman, Ambassador Harriman, and his wife, and this has kind of floated them. But that endowment, which perhaps casts off a couple of million dollars in revenue per year—it's about $45 million let's say, $2. 2 million in annual payout—is when you calculate the staff that has to be maintained, such stipends, such public programming they have, it's not a lot. And, the individuals who are at Harriman, unlike some other institutions—for example the Davis Center and Library, which has many affiliates that have contracts and their funding is coming from outside corporations. They're on contract, on consultancies that are doing business in Middle Asia, in Eastern Europe, in Russia to some degree. With Harriman, there's a sense, or there was a sense that, Well, we have the money, here's a check, here's a stipend.

Now clearly there's going to be a problem given the attitude towards—political attitudes towards Russia today, most especially the most recent events of the election, that color people's attitude

also and their generosity towards this program. The sanctions are likely to still remain in place, which will hamper all sorts of economic development and exchanges. And so the circumstances in which people found themselves twenty-five years ago are very different today.

The period perhaps that was the most, when I reflect on it, that was the most creative in a way for this program, was the first decade or so—decade-plus—and after that, already in my time in the ’60s, while you had the student enrollments—and even into the early ’70s—the job market was beginning to erode. And I can give you some examples. Most recently I encountered, quite by chance in San Francisco, another graduate student of that period; a Richard G. Robbins, who was a talented, capable person, I think a Williams College undergraduate, and he was one of Professor Raeff’s students. He ended up—I think his first position and he remained there for his entire career—was in Albuquerque in New Mexico. Probably in the decade before, this would have been unthinkable for a Columbia grad—and now when I look at my colleagues, individuals of the late ’60s, early ’70s, they ended up and remained for their entire career holding on to their initial position. For example, I just saw at a convention recently other individuals of the [Susan] Heuman/Kasinec generation, Sandy Scheckert Korros. They ended up at small Catholic colleges, at some Midwestern institution and remained there their entire career.

So, what are the concrete possibilities for Harriman today? And particularly for a director such as Alex Cooley. He has a staff that has—many of them have been there for decades in positions where they were autonomous. For example, one great blow in recent years was the loss of National [Resource] Center status, Title VI. They lost their grant because of the reviewer’s comments. And this is important because it supported a lot of library activities, Mr. Davis’—in

part some of Mr. Davis' work, and also student stipends. And in general I would say if you look at what has been happening over the last decades, you see a kind of pulling in of let's say publications, of outreach initiatives because all of this requires psychic energy and a kind of willingness of the staff, the administrative staff at Harriman, which consists of about, I don't know, a dozen people, perhaps a little bit less, to really go beyond their routine work.

And one also sees an increasing bureaucratization on the part of Columbia where they are being fitted—that is to say, Harriman—into a kind of existing fiscal administrative structure where things have to be vetted on levels much higher than just that Harriman director's level.

Q: Is there—thinking about the several things that you've talked about, one of the things clearly—I mean, you've nicely identified the three elements that have to be in place in order for centers, institutes, to really succeed, and one of them that you were talking about is the availability of funding. And I was wondering if you thought that the Davis Center, for example, with its—having people bring in contracts and consultancies and funding that way—is a potential model for Harriman, and also whether you think it's possible for Harriman to make changes to regain its Title VI status.

Kasinec: That, again—with regard to the latter. There are people who specialize, as you well know, in studying governmental funding patterns. The likelihood of those programs being refunded to the levels that would permit a reapplication, I'm skeptical of this. With regard to the first issue of outside contract—yes, sure. But again, how will this work within the present structure of Harriman? Who will be the oversight person within Harriman? What will this entail

in terms of Columbia's oversight over these relationships that develop? I'll give you one absolutely outlandish example. I'm being asked—and I will have to fill this out—a RASCAL [Research Compliance and Administration System] form to—you, I'm sure, also do this—to ensure that I'm not behaving in some kind of unethical—because I do have a small appraisal/consulting business I suppose, and have done some brokerage for Columbia of collections they've purchased.

But you can imagine when you're dealing with corporate entities and so on, and using Columbia's facilities, its databases, its physical space and so on, and do they even have the physical space to allocate? Just recently there was a renovation in Harriman where offices had to be created in a former mini-atrium. So now, a space that was relatively open, has been compartmentalized much to the chagrin of the neighbors because now it's like being in a—almost like being in a cell.

So, this is a problem. And you have these conferences that they try to sponsor. One major one that began I think in 1970: the Association for the Study of Nationalities, which is now based at Columbia. But when this takes place in the spring it's a zoo. Getting people from floor to floor because of seven or eight hundred participants, they don't have the facilities for this. They don't have the auditorium space, they don't have the plenary rooms for this, and even the building itself. To get on the lift in the IA building is a major challenge because it's—there's so many regional institutes that it's problematical.

So, there are real issues that have to be considered, and one of the difficulties, I would surmise, is that the individuals who are the faculty overseers of Harriman, beginning with the director, they have a personal and a professional agenda that also has to be satisfied. What would be ideal is to have a director that is purely focused on oversight, program development, and that really is someone that is connected internationally. So, one has to both satisfy one's obligations towards Harriman as director, but also one's personal and professional—

Q: I was picking up on that. I was wondering when you were referring to the departmentalism of careers, or specific professionalism in terms of political science and sociology, economics, history, whatever. I was wondering if you had some thoughts about how to counteract this. This sounds like one thought, which is to have a director who is focused on Harriman rather than having to worry so much about specific departmental—

Kasinec: Politics.

Q: —and even professional responsibilities.

Kasinec: Sure.

Q: Right. Is there any other thing that you think that Columbia or Harriman could do to try and deal with this issue of people's careers being much more oriented towards their departments? Towards their specific professions as opposed to something that is more area studies? It's a tough question. I appreciate that.

Kasinec: It is, because the pendulum, it seems to me—in other professional fields, including my own area of librarianship and bibliography as so on—has been moving in the direction of what I call regularization. So for example, now in research libraries one is no longer a regional specialist. One is part of a collection development department, one is part of a cataloguing department where you may have some expertise in a particular area, but you're—it's all functionally or arranged by discipline, by your—and similarly in academic departments today. People are trying to make a career and theoretical insights in specific disciplines, not as a Slavisist. And I think that this is a very difficult trend to combat.

And I think that if you would speak with some of the younger faculty who have been taken on within the list five or six years, they'll bear me out on this, that they're—and incidentally, there were periods—if you look at the historical roster of Harriman's, Harriman tiré Russian Institute's "faculty," a lot of this is a fiction. Marc Raeff, for example, and there may be other examples, is listed as a Harriman faculty member, as a Russian Institute member. He despised the Institute. He would never—and purposefully said, "I will never step foot in there." He was a European, cultural, intellectual historian. And his peers were Fritz Stern or Peter Gay, whomever. And his mind was in a completely different space. Yes, he did some work in Russian studies, was a Russian émigré, and—but not Russian Institute. It would be interesting to look at some of the historical documentation that the Harriman or Russian Institute has put out to see who they listed as their faculty, whether these people actually would have considered themselves as faculty. And even today, I wonder.

Q: Moving off the funding issue about Harriman's future and kind of thinking about it as an intellectual enterprise. And, one of the senses I got from the way you were talking for perhaps various reasons, was this kind of maybe intellectual pulling in of Harriman, that it wasn't kind of as intellectually expansive as it might be. Is that a fair characterization and do you have any thoughts about where it could be more intellectually expansive, assuming there was funding for this, that there are more—there are intellectual directions that it might go in? I know it's picked up in the last twenty years or so in nationality studies and on human rights. Is there other areas that you think it might go in?

Kasinec: I think that—well, let's take our lead from even today's headlines, namely the whole IT [Information Technology] area, computerization. One of the most important figures in the Russian émigré community is a man named Leonard Blavatnik, who is a Columbia graduate, the founder of Access Industries and Lenovo computers and recently was in London just the other week and having a conversation with colleagues at the V&A [Victoria and Albert Museum], and they said he's become now one of their greatest funders. As a matter of fact, he now funds shows on Broadway; he funds major exhibitions. He just did one at the National Portrait Gallery in London. So, people there—he has a residence in London, but he also has a—his foundation I think is her in New York. So, the whole issue of IT and relationships with whomever I suppose in the business school is involved with this area would certainly be one that would be, I think, a way to go.

The whole issue of the Earth Institute [at Columbia University] and what they're doing in terms of environmental studies. There have been articles on the issues of environment in the Aral Sea,

in the former Soviet Union. In other areas of the Urals, we're also facing these problems—well, actually all societies are facing these issues of environmental—I found on my recent trip to London, it's impossible to breathe there because of the incredible pollution. It's far worse than New York, in my view. The only saving grace is that I was staying near Hyde Park so I was able to go out in the morning to take a couple of breaths.

So, these are areas that I think would be productive. And then again, the whole issue of the humanities. In the present gestalt of Harriman, as far as I understand it and perceive it, there is one representative or ombudsman for humanities, and that's Professor [Alan H.] Timberlake, who is my age. And he is the kind of—on this administrative panel of three political scientists, There are others number of individuals who are Slavicists who are term professors, meaning that they're here on an annual or two year contract, and then they're out. So what kind of stake do they have here when they know that they're—it's essentially a kind of temporary engagement.

And a number of people have been let go who are people who've gone on to significant careers —for example, in art history. They don't have an art historian, save Elizabeth [Kridl Valkenier], who is a mature lady. And this I think is a tremendous failing, and I've indicated this. There are auction houses here in New York: Christie's, Sotheby's, Gene Shapiro Auctions [LLC], Doyle's, Swann's [Swann Auction Galleries], which should be drawn into this community. Christina Kiaer was the last. She's now at Northwestern [University], where she has tenure.

So there are areas that really have to be given attention. Language teaching is another area that has suffered very dramatically. I don't know whether some of the Eastern European languages

are even being taught. The only reason Ukrainian has come to the fore is because of the generosity of a particular donor, Mr. Jacyk, late Petro Jacyk. But, the humanities again, also has to be looked at very seriously, because I'm afraid that it's going to kind of get lost in the shuffle, and areas of the humanities like art history need particular attention, given where we are.

Q: From the initial interview, you mentioned that there was a Serbian studies program and this had not come up in our previous other interviews, and I was wondering if you could say more about this, how it came about? Do you know who funded it? What its purpose was?

Kasinec: Okay. There is a small Serbian community here in New York and there was a faculty member, now emeritus, who spearheaded the so-called Njegoš, named after one of the political leaders of the nineteenth century, [Petar II] Petrović-Njegoš in the Serbian lands, an attempt to create an endowed chair for Serbian studies. Now, this faculty member, very energetic, is now retired and because of the politics of the Balkan wars and the kind of renommée that the Serbians received, I think the fundraising for this did not go well. There were also administrative changes. One of the people within Harriman who left under rather difficult circumstances, was a gentleman named Gordon N. Bardos, a Serbian. And he was the kind of liaison with these individuals on the faculty and also in the community, that I think in the end they may have raised one hundred, two hundred thousand, something like that.

There have been also blows to the community here in New York. As you well know, there was a major fire on 23rd [Street] of the Serbian Cathedral, which was actually a daughter church of Trinity [Church at] Wall Street. It was an episcopal foundation. Matter of fact, Edith Wharton, I

believe, was married there. And there had been traditional—traditionally close relationships between the Episcopal Church and the orthodox world. You go, for example, into the Cathedral of St. John the Divine [Cathedral Church of Saint John], in their sacristy, many encolpions, panagias, that were given by the orthodox hierarchs to the bishops of New York. So this is a long—I've written on this subject, so I'm really very much interested in it.

In any case, there are also local situation that creates problems for that chair, and to my knowledge the Polish history chair was finally filled after many years of kind of going round and around, but that was funded by the Polish government and not by the community.

Relations with the various expatriate communities is another area that would require attention. I think it was last year, last October, I did an exhibition in the Harriman atrium on a photographer that worked during the 1920s and did a particular study of the ethnic cultures, the popular cultures of Eastern Europe, Subcarpathian Ruthenia. And at the opening reception many individuals from this small community came. It was probably the first time that many of them had been on this campus, at Harriman. I think the people at Harriman were amazed; you know, Where are these people coming from?

But there are religious communities, there are learned societies, there are community centers that the Baltic groups have that the other Eastern Europeans have, that could—to draw these people in. And we did some of this in the two institutes that we did: NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] institutes at Harriman on the Russian community in America and the Eastern

European communities in America, but that was only a start. It was only a start. The whole question of what—the communities that surround us.

I invited, for example, to one of our luncheons, the mayor of Fort Lee, New Jersey Mark Sokolich, Esq. This poor fellow, who was the victim of [Christopher James] Christie's political machinations on the bridge. A lawyer, a very articulate Croatian-American. And if you remember the characterization that Christie made of him, "this little Serb." He didn't get it right, he didn't get it right. He's actually Croatian, and he characterized him as a "little Serb."

So, I think that this is an area that requires attention, maybe even wealth within the ethnic communities. Now, a little bit of this has been done with the Ukrainians, but the problem is that the Ukrainians have the Harvard Institute, which is their major focus of philanthropy, and the Columbia program is kind of not really able to get fully off the ground because of the presence of the Harvard program: three endowed chairs, endowed institute.

Incidentally, and this goes to the history of this program. During the '60s, the man who created the Ukrainian Studies Fund, a gentleman named Stephen Chemych, was an undergraduate here at Columbia. A man of tremendous drive and ambition, now deceased. I knew him well. And he was trying to get a Ukrainian studies program launched here at Columbia during the mid-'60s. He didn't get anywhere. That's why it ended up at Harvard. And the reason being the politics of the campus. Realize that many of these ethnic communities, during the period of the Cold War, were considered the "lunatic fringe." And I remember very vividly working as a student in the Slavic acquisitions department, next to individuals who were the second wave of the Russian

emigration, those that came after World War II and that in some cases had connections with the anti-Soviet movements that were involved with the Germans. These people were considered absolutely taboo by many of the senior faculty. The only person that really, I could say, had a kind of sensibility to this, was Marc Raeff. When he came here he must have come, perhaps ’65 or so, from Clark, and eventually became a great student of the emigration, principally the European emigration. But it was a very different atmosphere.

Q: Let me ask my kind of final question about your thinking about the future of Harriman. You’ve given us some really interesting ideas and insights, but I think I might be remiss, given the recent election, if I don’t ask you about how you—and the potential relationship between Putin and Trump or Trump administration—whether you think that this informs in any way, or should inform in any way, how Harriman thinks of itself going forward.

Kasinec: Clearly the attitude towards the President-elect, a number of the individuals who he considered or has actually nominated for significant positions, is very hostile, I would say, in many academic communities. This is going to be a very dangerous kind of—and also, the whole now question of what is unfolding in Russia, and just most recently I’ll share with you an anecdote.

The present Minister of Culture is conducting a kind of purge of many of the liberal, or perceived liberal, forces within the library and museum administrative world in Russia, within cultural institutions, putting in top positions within museums, within cultural institutions, within libraries, figures of his own creation that are very much in the kind of Putin mold. And this has all kinds of

consequences for the colportage of research materials, the accessibility of research material from Russia. As you know, there's a moratorium on sending any museum objects to America, which is why—my colleagues in London and Ireland and so on are reveling in the fact that they have access to these—[the State] Tretyakov Gallery, [the State] Russian Museum and so on—whereas we don't.

So you have, within Russia, a tightening up within the cultural institution, and also some individuals on this campus have teaching positions, appointments, joint appointments. How will they react when a rector, hardline rector, is appointed to head let's say the Higher Economics Institute [National Research University Higher School of Economics], or European University, Central European University in Budapest which has close relations with a number of faculty members here that are influential, tenured faculty members, here at Columbia. And will the tendency be to kind of accommodate to this? And what will be the reaction of your professional colleagues here on campus? What will be the consequences of what may be a closer relationship between Russia and the United States, political relationship? What will be the consequences on some of the area studies programs that have developed with community funding like the Ukrainian studies program? The Baltic area? Some of these individuals are really quaking at what may transpire with the loss of support by the United States of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and its—and how will they—what will be the public face of some of the Harriman political scientists in all of this? I'm, like everyone, deeply concerned about the future.

And also the economics of all of this: the stock market, in recent weeks, has exceeded all sorts of historical records, but this may also be very shaky. And what will be the consequences on revenue from endowments?

Q: Thank you. Let me turn to asking you about, if I may, about your work and who and what's influenced you in your thinking. You're a librarian and bibliographer interested in sources, and as an antiquarian, your field is the books and art—as you said, the object itself rather than the substance of the object.

Kasinec: Mm-hmm.

Q: And you're also interested, in your polymathic ways, in the institutional arrangements of how these objects are maintained, made available for research and so forth.

Kasinec: Mm-hmm.

Q: I was wondering in this regard—and I know you particularly have been focused on East Asia, or at least at one point, and how they were part of the Sinology of the Russian empire. Could you tell us who are your influences and how you thought to do your work? You mentioned for example, that Gail Warshovsky Lapidus was a mentor at Berkeley, but I'm sure there were other people as well. And who they were and how they influenced you?

Kasinec: I think someone who really influenced me at a very early stage in my career—not only influenced me but also actually supported me, was John Simmons at All Souls College at Oxford. One of my digressions in the late ’60s was doing an exhibition of what they then called corridor exhibitions at the New York Public Library. It was an exhibition of eighteenth century printed books. I was then in my twenties and the head or one of the curators of the New York Public Library said, “Yes, we would want your support.” It was a study of the eighteenth century of the historic rare books collections at the public library. And they issued one fascicle of a catalogue for this exhibition—I think it was published in ’69. Then I receive a letter from All Souls College, from J. S. G. Simmons and it was addressed to the library but they forwarded it to my home address. And the letter said something to the effect, you know, I am so-and-so and interested in book history and would you be kind enough perhaps to send me some offprints of this article or this catalogue and I will forward it to my Russian colleagues. So, you know, I, being very raw and not—what did I know? All Souls College. I packed off some offprints and sent it off.

The following year I had an opportunity—it was my first trip to Europe, 1970, to actually visit All Souls College, an excruciating experience. Excruciating. Never forget it. Here is this very raw American graduate student, and Simmons by that time had been already a fellow at All Souls; he was elected a fellowship. He was also director of their library. And so, that was my entrée into a kind of international brotherhood, sisterhood, of curators of the top level. And when I was ready to go to Russia as a graduate student, Simmons said, “Well here is the address, here is the number of such—”

Now, this is still during the Cold War. And so, you're presented with letters of introduction from a person who was very highly respected by the Russians, by the Soviets, and given this kind of entrée. And that had—that was the start of a kind of relationship that extended over probably—John died about ten years ago—extended through the rest of my professional career. So whenever I would think about a project, whenever I would even write something, he would vet it, he would support me in what I was doing.

And so, the Columbia years were critical for me because within that—working as a stipendiary from the Harriman, then Russian Institute, where I'm listed as a student, but I was not a student in that program, like some of these phantom faculty. But they did provide me with a stipend and encouraged me to write up collections, collections that were for a student handbook. So I did little descriptions of the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] historical archive, and so on and so on.

So, it was my introduction to really collection development, because I was sitting in the Slavic acquisitions department, and down the hall in Butler—I don't know whether I mentioned this—was sitting Luther Evans, the former librarian of Congress who had been kind of ousted during the McCarthy era, and he was consulting on the international affairs library. And I began to realize, you know hey, look, this is really an interesting discipline. And given my own, you know, kind of turn of mind, which is that of really someone who's very eclectic and someone who likes to experiment in many different areas, I could never understand or could never fully appreciate someone devoting a lifetime to writing one monograph. And when I look at the list of some of the Harriman Institute's previous publications where someone had spent decades

researching some topic that I consider—it's archeology, it's no longer of relevance. And I always found that creating an atmosphere for others to be able to pursue research in many different areas was really the best thing that I could do academically.

And this was encouraged by a couple of people on the faculty; Loren R. Graham introduced me to Fritz [T.] Epstein at Indiana University, Rado Lenček with whose daughter I just had a lovely lunch fifty years after we first met, who's a former professor at Reed College, Lena [M.] Lenček. So, some of these contacts—and some of the faculty actually wrote introductions to subsequent works that I did, for example, Harold Segel, who was head of the Eastern European Institute, just passed away I believe this year, wrote an introduction, very gracious introduction to something that I published.

So all of this really was a seminal period for me in kind of trying to identify my own voice. I now in retrospect really feel it was an extremely rewarding professional career path. When I compare myself to some of the others of my generation who spent a lifetime bereft of resources at some provincial place, trying to create a career with a Columbia degree and a Columbia background in a place that was not the proper fit, but because of economic circumstances were forced to do this. And so many are even to this day. And I always, you know, Harvard, Berkeley, Columbia, now Hoover, and still feel that I can contribute something.

Q: You mentioned that the work is rewarding, and I wonder if I can just probe on that and get you to convey to us what is it that you find deeply rewarding about this? About your work?

Kasinec: Deeply rewarding in the sense that it's allowed me to really have relationships with many different individuals throughout I would say Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Russia, the United States, Canada, and it gives me tremendous pleasure to be able to say something to them that they may not know or a source that they may not be aware of, or a contact that they may not have.

It's just that because of my—and Davis, incidentally, who worked for me for twenty-three years at the public library and started his entire career there, essentially is the kind of individual that has also moved in that direction. And there are a number of others who I have mentored over the years who are now in prominent places in this country and moved from traditional academia into librarianship, and I'm very pleased with that. I have my own, you know, kind of group of students, so to speak.

Q: Yes. As somebody who's mentored students myself, it is incredibly rewarding.

Kasinec: Yes, sure.

Q: And deeply rewarding. When you were talking about your move kind of into East Asia, intellectually, at Columbia in the '70s—

Kasinec: Late '60s, early '70s, yes.

Q: —late ’60s. You mentioned a couple of people and I was wondering if you could maybe talk to how they perhaps had some influence on you, like Theodore de Bary, Donald Keene, Martin Wilbur. How would you characterize how they influenced you?

Kasinec: The one who probably I was so taken with was Bielenstein. Hans H. A. Bielenstein. A very kind of aristocratic in his manners as some of the Columbia faculty at that time. Another one was the Ottomanist, Tibor Halasi-Kun. His bearing, his presence within a classroom, and his meticulous preparation for that encounter with students. Martin Wilbur and some of the others who were there at that time—and they had an entire Pleiades of very distinguished Asianists at that time—Karl [August] Wittfogel, the one who developed the Hydraulic Society. So he was here. He may not have been a faculty member but he was at an institute that he was involved with, Martin Wilbur, also as an Orientalist, Nina Garsoian, who was the first holder of the Armenian chair here at Columbia. These were remarkable individuals who had both existential governmental experience, and also personal experience within these societies. I think Donald Keene also fell into that group. He may have lived longer periods of time in Japan. Bielenstein was the child of missionaries, Swedish missionaries in China. And so these people had not only the academic prerequisite—linguistic, academic—but also the existential grounding, and in some cases governmental.

And incidentally, you asked earlier about Harriman and so on—one of the things that is interesting is the fact that individuals now that I see are less connected than they perhaps were in the past with the U.S. government, with the intelligence agencies or with the—

Q: Policy makers?

Kasinec: —policy makers, and so on. They might like to be, but they're not. They're academic figures. Whereas in the past, certainly during the incunabular years of Russian studies here, these people were deeply connected with—whether it was advertised or not—with the governmental agencies and so on. Even Prof. Shulman, who was the director during my time, certainly had such ties. But that is passé.

Q: Thinking about your field or your fields: librarianship, connoisseurship of books and objects—how would you say that your field has changed over time in how people go about doing—you alluded a little bit to this earlier—about doing librarianship for example, or how people think of books, of rare books, of books from the seventeenth and eighteenth century? And in particular, insofar as we're talking about the Sinology of the Russian empire, how would you say that this has changed over time, if it has?

Kasinec: I'm very much under the impression, as we speak, of my recent visit to Dublin and particularly to the Chester Beatty Library. [Alfred] Chester Beatty began his career—he was an American actually—and a graduate of the Columbia School of Mining [School of Mines, Engineering and Chemistry]. Yes, there was such a place. And he was a business partner of Herbert Hoover in Russia before World War I. They would travel to the Urals to places that subsequently became closed cities. And, Sir Chester, he was later knighted, after the end of the First World War, developed a huge mining consultancy. Had a huge fortune, bought a great mansion. As a matter of fact, I was just passing it the other day, next to Kensington Palace,

called Baroda House. Began fanatically collecting the rarest books. I'm talking papyri, Old Testament—excuse me, New Testament manuscripts. During the '20s, '30s, dealt with all the great book dealers, with all the great auction houses, and so on. Also collected art. Had incredible means.

Eventually donates this entire collection. The paintings go to National Gallery of Ireland, the books—one percent of which is shown in the galleries of the Chester Beatty Library, which are in the Dublin Castle. Right in the center of Dublin. These type of figures, Willie [William Randolph] Hearst, to some degree Armand Hammer, Herbert Hoover, but Herbert Hoover was doing it for collecting, but collecting with the purpose to create a great center of documentation on the war and revolution and peace.

These are figures that I don't see today that kind of book men and women: the Rosenbachs, the Krauses, de Costa Greene—even those that dealt with Russian antiquities, the first Slavic curator here at Columbia was a man named Simeon Bolan. He was appointed probably in the '50s. And Bolan worked for Israel Pearlstein, who was the all-time king of the rare antiquarian trade when Russian books, Eastern European books were being dumped on the Western market, particularly the rarest imperial association because the Soviets were anxious to purge themselves of this kind of—what is the English term? Detritus?

Q: Detritus, yes.

Kasinec: Detritus of the imperial regime. So that was the first curator. Bolan would be unimaginable in today's library world. He was an amateur. He had no library degree. He was a practicing bookman, developed his own erudition because of his work with Israel Pearlstein. Everything now has become very regularized. You're a cataloguer, you're a collection development specialist, you're a preservation specialist. You are this or that. You're marketing whatever. As a matter of fact, I wonder whether someone like myself, who already—and this is important—in 1973 I was told by Phil [Philip E.] Leinbach, the personnel librarian at Harvard, "You don't have a Chinaman's chance here of getting a corporation appointment without getting a library degree." Whereas, my teachers: Bill [William H.] Bond, the curator of Houghton [Library at Harvard University], Rodney [G.] Dennis, the curator of manuscripts, Roger Elliot Stoddard—they had no library degree, they had no library training. Philip Hofer, the great bookman—no library training. It was already beginning then, so I had to drop everything, spend a year and a half or two whatever it was, to get a library degree at Simmons College so that I could get a corporation appointment at Harvard as a librarian. I had to undergo a kind of professional transformation, probably the first in my life. Now in retirement there's another undergoing transformation.

So, it's the regularization that I alluded to that is really very pronounced. And a character like myself would have great difficulties in a highly bureaucratized library system today. That's why I decided when the library [NYPL] reorganized in 2009, it was my twenty-fifth anniversary, I decided to retire. And it was a brilliant timing for me and perhaps for them, because I could not see myself reporting and losing my autonomy, which I've always enjoyed in all of the—my previous life. So things are changing for everyone.

Q: And in your characterization, which I think rightly as I've seen in other fields, the university is implicated in its attempt to kind of say, Well you need to come to us to learn how to do this and get certified.

Kasinec: Yes.

Q: So yes, the university plays a role in this process that you described so nicely. So one of your interesting insights from our previous interview was about the relationship between the changing modes of accessing information relative to U.S.-Soviet relations and academic training and knowledge. And I was wondering in this regard if you've given any thought to this relationship in terms of the, perhaps historically dramatically different mode, of the internet, as a mode of accessing information and its impact on academic training and knowledge, and perhaps particularly in the context of U.S.-Russia relations.

Kasinec: During the period—well essentially the beginnings of Russian studies, Slavic studies, Eastern European studies, going through probably the early, mid-'80s, the library—the great research libraries in the West—were the principle repositories for materials that would serve as the building blocks for research, particularly things like the collected works of major literary figures which were—the academic editions of which were subject to a kind of almost biblical exegesis on the part of literary scholars because they simply did not have easy or sustained access to the archives of these literary figures in the homelands. So you can see it in the themes of the books and of the research that was carried on in the West, which was very conditioned by

what you had available to you at New York Public, Library of Congress, Harvard College Library, the Hoover—*et cetera*, *et cetera*.

Sometime late ’80s into the ’90s and so on, one began to see a changing role for both the librarian and a changing role for the library collections, particularly those in the West, and the West meaning from BL, Helsinki, the Staats Bibliothek in Berlin, west. And, what happened was that libraries in Eastern Europe, particularly in Russia, were very hard up during the early ’90s, were willing to disgorge their collections. In some cases there was theft from these collections; books ended up on the antiquarian market here in the West, some of which was offered to me and to other of my colleagues, with stamps rubbed out, collections.

But also extraordinary access that became available, so much so that scholars here in the West. We’re not interested in printed material that you have at Forty-Second and Fifth. We want to go on a study trip to Tbilisi, we want to go to Warsaw, we want to go to Yerevan, wherever, and we want to do our research in the archives with material of great true value, as if the printed sources that were available in the West or printed sources that were available in the library, had no” truth” value. Some of my colleagues—albeit half jokingly—suggested “selective euthanasia” of redundant Soviet imprints. We’re interested in going to—manuscripts, archives. And to some degree this continues to this day, where people ignore entire bodies of newspaper periodical literature, book material that is in a kind of side tray, not catalogued, not processed, because there’s no lobby for this material.

Now, what's very important, in the '90s and into the 2000s, you begin to get an incredible proliferation of material—print material that's being scanned and put up on the internet, newspapers, databases, documenting the most obscure journals that are being digitized and with all sorts of very sophisticated search mechanisms that are embedded in these databases. Very costly material. And at the same time, print material from Eastern Europe is becoming astronomically expensive, whereas in the past, in the communist period, the material was heavily floated; franking was floated, postage was floated. There were exchanges so that, you know, you exchanges books you didn't—there was no financial transaction. We were living in a kind of fantasy land where stuff was coming in and was being catalogued and so on by specialized departments, Slavic departments, that all felt very, you know, great about themselves. Like at Columbia, there was a separate Slavic acquisitions department, and who knew what they were doing there. There was a kind of air of mystery, Cold War mystery, about these people that were sitting in Room 204 or whatever, in their own space, and dealing in languages that no one knew or really had any inkling of. All of that now is passé. You're part of a cataloguing department, part of a global studies department, collection, whatever. Nothing "special" about what you're doing.

So things have been kind of leveled down, but at the same time, the role of the librarian and the curator has become even more critical in a way because what you now need is a kind of oarsman, a kind of Charon, to lead you through these labyrinthian databases, and the tremendous proliferation of sources and of multidisciplinary material. So now you have these fields developing, kind of culturology, which combines film studies and art history and museum and connoisseurship and so on—and so now you—the curator is performing, or potentially is

performing, an even more important role as a gatekeeper than they performed before because in the past you come into the library, there's a card catalog standing there, so you look through the card catalog, you select what you want, they bring you the books, plop it down, no worries. You're sitting in a kind of hermetic environment.

Now, you have to be aware of a multitude of disciplines, literally hundreds if not thousands of people who are working in this field. For example, I would be embarrassed to tell you when I look at my address book, there are six or seven thousand names in it that is now, and you know, people with whom I've had dealings over the years. And they're people in a variety of fields that I've had to have some—whether they're in business, whether they're in law, whether they're in art appraisal, whether they're in art law, whatever. My point is that the curator is both under-esteemed, underfunded, at a point in time where potentially—and this goes not only for the Russian field, but also for *mutatis mutandis* and other East Asian studies and so on, where their talents should be even more prized.

And it's interesting, I sometimes have brief discussions with some of my colleagues at Harriman and say, Is anyone looking at what's going on in the library world in Eastern Europe? Is anyone aware of what present information access policies are in place? When they talk about these societies they're talking about the political decision makers, because these are the individuals they're most focused on. But that other part of society, the gatekeepers, my professional colleagues in Eastern Europe, somehow again are not—have no place at the discussion, except within the narrow circles of the library community here in this—

Q: I was actually going to ask you exactly that about—as you were talking I was wondering whether you thought that there was—thinking about Harriman and things it might kind of intellectually engage in, whether this was something that they could think about taking on, especially insofar as it's important as you say for the gatekeeping through the internet, which has got massive amounts of information but researchers can be overwhelmed by that.

Kasinec: Yes, absolutely. I occasionally get referrals from young people that are connected with Harriman, young students who are beginning to—will you introduce me to, or will you introduce me to this, or can you talk with me about this or that? And that's gratifying. So, one is also seeing this: the conflation of collections, the ganging together of collections. I particularly was concerned with this this morning, and in telling my client that now Frick Art Reference Library, Museum of Modern Art, Brooklyn Museum, they're all part of one consortial relationship, so they buy one item for all of these three or four institutions within the consortium, and ditto Columbia and Cornell. So, one has to rely on ILL [Interlibrary Loan] or whatever.

Q: Let me conclude our interview, if I may, by just asking you about any kind of encounters, any stories, reminiscences of some other people that you mentioned in the initial interview. You talked very much about Marc Raeff and Loren Graham, and I just wanted to kind of get your—and you mentioned also the fact, which is true, that we forget people too easily and I wanted to kind of, in that way, try and get your sense on record of how you—what your reminiscences are of several people. So, for example, Alexander Dallin, who was head of the Institute for awhile.

Kasinec: Dallin, yes. You know, the—I always remember him as being an—his presence. He was a fairly large man and very forceful kind of personality. He began his career—his father, who was a Menshevik, a political figure, and David Iulievich Dallin, and Dallin began his career as a page in the New York Public Library before World War II. As a matter of fact, his name is on a plaque in the lobby of the New York Public Library as one of those who went to war and returned. Those who did not return were indicated with a star [*]—he was considered an employee that went to war. So I remember him very vividly from his headship of the Institute when it was on 113th Street, just after it moved from this brownstone on 116th. Major figure in the area of political science history, and interestingly, I reencountered him in California because he married Gail Warshofsky Lapidus and their home was in Berkeley, or her home—although he was a professor at Stanford, a colleague of the young Condi [Condoleezza] Rice, who is now an old Condi Rice and at Hoover.

So, it was at a cocktail party at their home in their Berkeley hills that I first met Vartan Gregorian, who was then a candidate for the chancellorship of the University of California, and he was going around the room and when he came to me he said, "Well what do you do here at the University of California?" And said, "Oh, well I'm curator for the Slavic-East European collections." He says, "Oh, that's incredible. We're looking for a curator at New York Public." And I blurted out, and said to him, "Well, I will apply," because I was desperate to leave California, much to the amazement of the faculty—or some of the faculty.

And in any case, that took place at Alex and Gail's home. And then when he passed on—he was older than Gail—she called me and said, "Would you be willing to do an evaluation of his

library?" which eventually went to Notre Dame. This was already—I was retired by that time so I was able to do it. But clearly, one of—and also his name just came up the other day it and was a Stanford colleague of mine was saying, "I was just at the Alexander Dallin Memorial Dinner, where I encountered such and such," and he was telling me about some mutual colleagues. So, he's a figure who has certainly intersected in many ways in my life, and certainly a very respected and critical figure at a certain point in the development of Sovietology and Russian studies in America.

Marc Raeff, very different. Marc Raeff was also a candidate for the paging position in Slavic and Baltic, but lost out to Dallin because I think his politics or the politics of his family was not to the liking of the curator at New York Public. In any case, Marc Raeff went to war, served probably in some intelligence function. He then, when he returned, he went to Harvard and studied with the great Michael [Mikhail M.] Karpovich, the diplomat and scholar who was the mentor of [James H.] Billington, of [Richard E.] Pipes, of [Martin E.] Malia, all of these figures in that critical generation in Russian studies in America.

Raeff I knew probably best of all. Why? Not when I was a student here, although he was unfailingly gracious and kind to me, but he was kind of apart from the Russian studies community. His office was in this aerie in Fayerweather Hall on the sixth floor. And, when I was leaving Columbia to get my first job at Harvard, I even left some of my books here in his office and he was gracious enough to storage my stuff. Imagine this—the arrogance of it, my arrogance.

And then we got into a kind of correspondence with Raeff over the following matter: there was an old émigré who was head of what was the major Russian studies resource on this campus—the Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian & East European Culture. And when this old émigré retired, who had the entire archives in his head—in other words, you were to go to him, not to any kind of record, to learn what was in this archival collection.

And so Raeff, whose parents were Jewish, he never really identified as being Jewish, although at his burial, which I attended—actually, I was one of a dozen or so that attended his interment in Valhalla, he was buried in an absolutely plain coffin. And I will never forget the markings on the coffin. It was a kind of a—looked like it had been constructed out of, you know, just boards. And the undertaker had written "head first" or something like this, on the coffin. It was completely unadorned. And I realized this was kind of very much in the Jewish tradition. Not the writing, but the simplicity of the service. He died in 2008, the year of my retirement from the library and the memorial service was here in '09.

He was an absolutely remarkable figure for me because of the lightness of his personality, the sense of play, the sense of kind of always with a slight, you know, sense of irony, of fun, and the European kind of connection. I think they left France—he was educated in Germany and in France, although born in Moscow '23, but emigrated through Lisbon in Portugal, which was a kind of entrée point. He came to the United States, and as I say, would try to get a job at New York Public and then went into the army and went to Harvard. And for many years, he was kind of in the desert. He was at Clark University, and only later when he had a number of books under his belt, was he brought to Columbia as the Bakhmeteff professor and so on.

And so this went on to the ’70s, through the ’70s, and he was attacked viciously in the émigré, Russian émigré press, as having “torn the veil on the temple,” that all of the secrets of the emigration were being revealed to the public because of his headship. And then we got to be even friendlier, I would say, on a first name basis, when he retired from Columbia. And he made the New York Public Library kind of his second home, and I, in my usual fashion, tried to pull in as many people: a Dick Wortman, anyone who I could recruit, a Cynthia [Hyla] Whittaker, who is also a faculty member. I assembled a whole group of people around the division to help me with what I felt was a massive task, of trying to exploit this collection to make it available to an international public. The same kind of a thing that I did both at Harvard, in a more limited way, and also the University of California. So he was of inestimable help in this. I remember just automatically, whenever I would have a problem, I remembered his phone, virtual autodial. So I would call him and we would discuss it, and eventually his private library I managed to place in another institution [Seton Hall], not at Columbia. I still miss him very much.

Q: One of the people that you mentioned briefly in the previous interview and I was wondering if you had any more thoughts and memories about, Robert Maguire.

Kasinec: Bob Maguire, yes. He also was involved in the Bakhmeteff affair, but after Professor Raeff. When Professor Raeff retired, Maguire—a violinist. No small talent. Very elegant man. A specialist on Soviet literature. I even invited him to my home on a couple of occasions. He had a sprawling place somewhere in Queens [New York], Jackson Heights. I lived in Forest Hills

[New York] at that time. He died very tragically in a hospice environment in Calvary [Hospital] Hospice in—

Q: In the Bronx [New York].

Kasinec: Yes, in the Bronx. A good man. Again, one of these figures of that kind of middle generation. Also Gustafson was part of that, Richard, who was at Barnard. Solid scholars who spent their careers working on one or two figures. The kind of textological work that I was referring to.

Q: You mentioned George Lowy as a mentor. What was he like?

Kasinec: Lowy. Lowy, one of the most elegant, Hungarian gents that I—he was an economist, came here after ’56. As a matter of fact—this is funny—in a car that he seized from István Deák, the history professor who’s still with us. Evidently he appropriated his car and went across the border to Vienna. And Lowy ended up at Columbia, went to Columbia library school [School of Library Science], and by the time I encountered him he was already fairly high up in the administration here, was the deputy to Luther Evans in planning the whole new, international affairs library. And, very politic, knew how to brilliantly handle people and had a number of hats that he wore. But he was the kind of camerlengo for the library director Richard Lodgson, or Warren Haas. He would send him on, you know, more sensitive missions that needed attending to. And we later ended up as neighbors in Forest Hills; I lived on Seventieth Road and George had a home somewhere a couple of blocks down. Always very kind to me, particularly during

these years of instability. Am I going into history? Into Russian studies? Am I going into librarianship? Very difficult years of searching. Always very supportive of me.

Q: And let me conclude our interview by just asking you about William Harkins, who was a director here at Harriman.

Kasinec: Yes. Harkins, also very subtle sense of humor, fairly catholic interests. I remember him more as a collector of Japanese erotica, of shunga, of the kind of floating world wood cuts, of which I think he had a sizeable collection. He died relatively recently at advanced old age, sometime in his 90s, although maybe it's not too advanced, given Professor Allworth '96. So, I think that Harkins also did work on early Soviet literature, but also on Czech, which was his kind of second interest. So he was a bit more ecumenical than most of the people of that generation.

The one that I just want to conclude on is perhaps Professor Shevelov, who interestingly enough I really didn't know well, or really at all, when I was here at Columbia. The first time I met him was in Cambridge around 1973, and here was one of the giants of Slavic studies, also very controversial because of his acrimonious relationship with Roman [O.] Jakobson. But here I was, asked by someone at Harvard, will you go with me to visit Professor Shevelov at Cambridge Hospital because he had petite mal, falling sickness. And when he came for a visiting committee meeting to Harvard, he fell ill and ended up in the hospital.

And so, I come into the hospital room with this other faculty member who is a friend of Shevelov's, and he said, "Ah yes, Kasinec, I remember you. You were a student working in

Slavic acquisitions at Columbia." I said, "Yes, this is me." And he said, "It's interesting. You know, I"—and he didn't mean it to be this way, but he said, "Oh, I always thought you were from Pennsylvania, that you were kind of first generation immigrant," you know, from some—Johnstown, Penn. or whatever. And I said, "No. I was actually born here in Manhattan." And he was just to the end, and I would come whenever I was in New York, either at Berkeley or at Harvard, would always come then to visit him here on Claremont Avenue—he had this incredible apartment right down the block. But he was just a very solitary, very aloof figure, very much in himself, but enormous erudition in art, in literature, in linguistics of course, which was his major. I remember him with tremendous fondness. I even attended his last public talk, which was here at the faculty club. A wonderful man. And he attended my—in '79, I have a picture of him at High Table when I was leaving Harvard to go to Berkeley, so there was a kind of farewell reception lunch and he attended.

Q: Wonderful. Before I conclude, before we conclude, is there anything that we haven't touched on that you thought that you wanted to make sure that we touched on?

Kasinec: I think that in one way or another we've covered the field. I was particularly anxious to put across the changing politics, the changing environment on this campus. The late '40s, '50s, '60s, late '60s, then of course the post-Soviet period, and how the external forces with the funding and so on has affected the programs here. But very important, you know, when I look at the people who were swirling around Harriman today and a lot of what I've said—and perhaps a lot of what some of my colleagues have said, particularly Susan and individuals of my generation—may seem to them as archeological evidence that has no bearing or relationship to

what they're doing. But one always should be conscious that all of this did not come from nothing. That whatever programs, whatever facilities, whatever resources—academic resources they have, are really—were built by individuals whose—some of whose talents we may not easily match, either their linguistic or the level of their culture or their level of just lived experience. And it's sometimes very disturbing when I see this kind of lack of historical perspective on the field. So, thank you for the opportunity of sharing.

Q: Thank you. Well thank you very much, again, for just a scintillating interview.

Kasinec: Thank you.

Q: I've enjoyed it enormously. Thank you.

Kasinec: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]