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Contributors

Scott M. Elliott, PhD, JD.
sellriott@KCKCC.EDU

Scott teaches at Kansas City Kansas Community College and coaches a nationally ranked debate team.

Maxim B. Fetissenko, PhD.
fetissenko@hey.com

An organizational development consultant at Fetissenko Consulting in Providence (RI), Maxim has been an AmeriCorps administrator, taught at Northeastern University, and worked as a program director at a Rhode Island state agency.

John T. Ishiyama, PhD.
john.ishiyama@unt.edu

John is University Distinguished Research Professor of Political Science at the University of North Texas. For several years he was editor-in-chief at *American Political Science Review*.

Michael K. Launer, PhD.
mlauner@fsu.edu

Michael is *Emeritus* Professor of Russian at Florida State University. He is an experienced technical translator and interpreter.

Irina E. Likhachova, MA.
ilikhachova@ifc.org

Previously employed at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs in Moscow in the early 1990s as a staff assistant, translator, and interpreter, Irina has worked for the International Finance Corporation/World Bank Group since 1997, where her current title is Lead for Biodiversity Finance, Climate Business.

Alexei M. Salmin (d. 2005),
kand. nauk

Alexei was a leading light at the Gorbachev Fund, head of the Russian Public Policy Center, and president of the Russian Political Science Association.

David Cratis Williams, PhD.
dcwill@fau.edu

David, a recognized authority on Kenneth Burke, is professor of communication and rhetorical studies at Florida Atlantic University, where he also serves as executive director of the International Center for the Advancement of Political Communication and Argumentation (ICAPCA).

Marilyn J. Young, PhD
myoung@fsu.edu

Marilyn is the Wayne C. Minnick Professor of Communication *Emerita* at Florida State University. She has published numerous essays and monographs on the general topic of democratization in Russia.

Note to Readers

To facilitate the reading process—and for economy of space—all citations within the text have been referenced to a numbered comprehensive bibliography placed at the back of this volume. Citations are presented by number alone, by number and page(s), or by author(s), number and page(s).

Also, within the text of the individual chapters, place names (e.g., Moscow), proper names (e.g., Yeltsin), and familiar terms (e.g., glasnost) have been rendered in spellings that are familiar to Western readers.



Alexander Yuriev

Source: Maria Aleksandrovna Yurieva



Alexander Yuriev

Source: Maria Aleksandrovna Yurieva

Dedication

Alexander Ivanovich Yuriev (1942–2020)

We dedicate this volume to our friend, colleague, and collaborator Alexander Ivanovich Yuriev, who passed away November 26, 2020, from Covid-19.

In the preface to this series, reprinted here in Volume Two, we introduced readers to Alexander, or at least to our introduction to Alexander, in the tale of our 1992 visit to what we called “Stalin’s Dacha.” The result of that visit was a years-long collaboration, replete with exchanges, visits, discussions, and affection—a relationship that lasted until Alexander’s death in 2020. We came to know his wife, Valentina Fedorovna, and his daughter, Maria Alexandrovna Konovalova (Masha). And we were devastated by news of his death, especially coming right after what we had hoped would be another opportunity to visit Alexander and his family—a conference in St. Petersburg that had to convert to a virtual format because of the Covid-19 virus.

Alexander Yuriev was an innovative and forward-looking scholar. When we first met him, as we noted in the preface, he was running a training workshop for the regional governors, all newly appointed by Boris Yeltsin, teaching them, among other things, how to interact with the media—something Soviet politicians and apparatchiks had never had to do.

Alexander was born in 1942, in the village of Bolshoe in the Yaroslavl oblast, about 170 miles from Leningrad; his mother, pregnant with Alexander, had evacuated from Leningrad over the ice on Lake Ladoga. Although the German Army encircled Leningrad in the Fall of 1941, some evacuations of women and children continued through March 1943. (346) They returned to the city in 1945, just before Alexander’s third birthday. According to Masha, little Alexander was given a large teapot to take care of during the journey home, something he often talked about. Alexander’s father was an engineer and his mother a teacher.

As a young man, he first worked at a ship-building factory (1960–1962), then was drafted into the Army (1962–1965). During his Army

service, which overlapped the Cuban Missile Crisis, Alexander was sent to Cuba; he worked monitoring US military communications, likely including bases of the Air Defense Command (ADC), the Strategic Air Command (SAC), and radio communications to and from pilots. It was this experience that sparked Alexander’s interest in politics and led him to pursue political psychology.

David learned of this in a roundabout way in 1992, while driving Alexander from Iowa City, Iowa, to Kirksville, Missouri, a route that passes close to a number of current and former US missile silos and other defense-related sites.

After his tour of duty, Alexander worked at the Northern Machine Building Factory (1965–1969), which was part of the Soviet military nuclear industrial complex. Then, in 1969, at the age of twenty-seven, he enrolled at Leningrad State University, graduating from the Faculty of Psychology in 1977. Upon completing his degree, Alexander began working in the area of psychological assessment of professionals and the special psychological preparation of personnel for work under extreme conditions. For this work he received the USSR State Prize. We believe it was during this period that he worked at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Zvezdny (Star City), evaluating prospective cosmonauts to determine their psychological fitness for the program.

In 1982, Alexander embarked on a career in teaching and research at Leningrad State University (after 1992 known as Saint Petersburg State University), focusing on the development of political psychology as a new scholarly field in Russia, and in 1989 he created the first department of political psychology in the USSR. His work gained international attention at this time, and in 1990 he joined the International Society of Political Psychology, wrote the “Ethical Code of the Political Psychologist,” and began serving on the editorial boards of several foreign academic journals. He also wrote a number of monographs, including *Introduction to Political Psychology* (1992) and *Systematic Description of Political Psychology* (1997). In short, he laid the foundation, in the nation’s universities, for the training of specialists in political psychology, consulting for political parties, government officials, and members of the public. He viewed politics as the science for the study, design, formation, and implementation of governmental power; and he understood political activity to be an extreme form of professional work. He believed that the ability to set political goals was the primary basis for obtaining real power.

During perestroika, Alexander began putting his philosophy to work, developing workshops to prepare experts as consultants to government and political parties in the USSR. Beginning in 1986, he developed training workshops for Party and government leaders at the federal and regional levels in the “Diuny” Center (Дюны) outside Leningrad. In 1991 he led the training of the first cohorts of Russian governors and presidential representatives at the “Osinovaia roshcha” (Осиновая Роща) academic center outside Leningrad (which is where David and Marilyn met Alexander in 1992, along with Vladimir Vasiliev. Vasiliev was Director of the center, while Alexander was Chief Scientist).

Upon returning to the United States that January 1992, David, Marilyn, and Michael formed the International Center for the Advancement of Political Communication and Argumentation, based at Florida State University in Tallahassee, with chapters at Northeast Missouri (now Truman) State University and at Saint Petersburg State University in Russia, including—at least initially—the training center at “Stalin’s Dacha.” Later in 1992, David and Marilyn arranged for Alexander and Vladimir to come to the United States on a “speaking tour”; they visited and made presentations at the University of Iowa, Northeast Missouri State University, and Florida State University. In addition, they attended the Speech Communication Association annual convention, held in Chicago that year. An account of their visit follows at the end of this dedication.

From 1993 through 1996, Alexander served as an adviser to the government of the Russian Federation, specifically working with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. For example, he was part of the Russian team for the (Vice President Al) Gore-Chernomyrdin talks in the mid-1990s. It was toward the end of this period that he was the victim of an attack that remains officially unsolved. (An account of the attack follows below.)

Alexander eventually recovered from the assault, resuming his work at the university. In 1999 he joined the Center for Strategic Research in Moscow as an expert consultant; he continued in this position until 2017. Also in 2017, approaching retirement, he and Valentina sold their dacha and bought an apartment in the suburbs; meanwhile, Alexander left the faculty at Saint Petersburg State University and, along with several of his colleagues, transferred to A. I. Pushkin Leningrad State University near Tsarskoe Selo (Pushkin), where he became Director of the Institute for Political Psychology and Applied Political Research. Here he continued

the work he had begun in 1986 and pursued until the end of his life. According to Masha, Alexander even took work with him to the hospital as he made his life’s last journey:

With him to the hospital, he took his summaries and tables, hoping not to interrupt work on them, even when he was sick with Covid. It’s always been like this. He took work with him on all trips and vacations. He couldn’t stop thinking; working was his natural state, not an annoying necessity. He was also an optimist and continued to believe in people despite painful disappointments. He didn’t consider politics a “dirty deed”; he claimed that politics should be scientific, and political activity should be hard work. For this, many considered him a dreamer. But, no, dreamers don’t start their lives with a trade school, army, and factory. He very practically believed that an illiterate political project, made of rotten materials, would inevitably collapse and bury all of us. He loved life and wished everyone well. He did everything he could.

Throughout his life, Alexander Yuriev was also a devoted family man. His wife, Valentina Fedorovna, was by his side throughout; the light of his life, daughter Maria Aleksandrovna Konovalova—who also became an academic, taught with him at Saint Petersburg State University, and transferred with him to Pushkin—carries on his work and his legacy; his great joy was his grandson, “Aleksander II,” also known as “Little Sasha.” Besides his beloved family, Alexander left many devoted colleagues and former students, and friends, such as the three of us.

Two Stories¹

The following are two stories involving Alexander that we recount from personal experience.

The first is both humorous and insightful, while the second, an account of the assault on Alexander, is a sad commentary on the state of politics in 1996 Russia.

From David:
October, 1992
Da!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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