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Title	Robert Kerner and the Northeast Asia Seminar
Author(s)	Kotkin, Stephen
Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 15, 93-113
Issue Date	1997
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/40139
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	15_93-113.pdf

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Robert Kerner and the Northeast Asia Seminar

Stephen Kotkin

Robert J. Kerner (1887-1956) taught Slavic history at the University of California, Berkeley, for almost three decades, from 1928 until 1956, during which time he founded Berkeley's Institute of Slavic Studies. Along with Frank Golder, professor at Stanford University and curator of the Hoover Library (1920-1929), Kerner helped to establish northern California as a world center for the study of the Slavic world. Kerner also directed attention, even more than Golder, to the Asian part of Russia and sought to connect Russian with Asian studies.[1]

Kerner began his career researching Central European or Habsburg history, especially the quest for statehood of the Czechs (western) and Yugo (southern) Slavs as well as Slav relations with Germans.[2] By the end of the 1920s, he moved to Russian (eastern Slav) history, focusing on Russia's interaction with the Turkish world and its ambitions in the southern Slav region of the Balkans, and then on Russian expansion eastward. He eventually took up Russia's position in Asia and relations with China and Japan. In short, Kerner's life work encompassed the entire Slav ecumene: from the Baltic Sea down through the Danubian basin and the Dardanelle Straits; from the Black Sea across the Urals to the Pacific Ocean, and even across the Bering Straits to the short-lived Russian colonization of Alaska and California —not far from where Kerner himself, arriving from the other direction, settled.

Born in the American midwest less than a generation after the formation of Bismarck's Reich to a pair of Bohemian (Czech) immigrants, Kerner studied European history at Harvard. He spent eight months conducting doctoral research in Austro-Hungarian archives during a two-year's stay in Europe (1912-13) which also took him to Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Moscow. In 1914 he obtained a teaching post at the University of Missouri, and in 1917 was appointed to the staff of experts of the Colonel House Inquiry into the Terms of the Peace. In 1918-19 he served on the American Peace Commission, under his Harvard mentor, Archibald Cary Coolidge, who headed the U.S.Special Mission to Vienna.[3] Thus, Kerner came of age intellectually during the epoch-making events surrounding the Great War, the Russian revolution, the defeat of Germany, and the collapse of the centuries-old Habsburg empire. To understand those times of sweeping change he fell back on a nineteenth-century vision of Slavic cultural, and perhaps political, unity. For Kerner, just as for his Czech contemporary Francis Dvornik, Slavic civilization needed to be understood as an interconnected whole.[4]

Kerner welcomed the defeat of a German-dominated central Europe in 1918, and eagerly embraced the formation of a group of small successor states (especially the Slavic federations), but revolutionary Russia presented problems for his Panslavic outlook. "Since the Bolshevik phase of the Russian Revolution," he wrote in 1929, "there has been little talk of a general inter-Slavonic policy of any kind, except in contemplation of

what might be feasible if a liberal Russia as a federation were finally to take the place of Soviet Russia."[5] Of course, with collectivization of agriculture and the Five-Year Plan exactly the opposite scenario ensued, yet as late as 1932 Kerner seemed hesitant to condemn a Slavic country, writing guardedly that "the Russian Revolution has released the energies of the Russian people, as well as of those which live in what is now the Soviet Union. With all of its loss of life and property, it has had at least this result."[6] He was far more leery of the resurgence of German hegemony in central Europe, especially under the Nazis.[7]

In the late 1930s, Kerner seems to have convinced himself that the USSR would of necessity move away from revolutionary goals.[8] During WWII he emphasized to American audiences that it was the Russians who had halted the Nazi war machine.[9] But beginning in 1945, his idea of a common Slav enterprise underwent an unanticipated and ironic realization with the consolidation of Soviet hegemony in eastern Europe. Kerner became a fierce anti-Communist. "It was expected by some," he wrote in an encyclopedia article following Stalin's death in 1953, "that the leadership of Soviet Russia would abandon the objective of Communist rule in the world and act like a Great Power on the basis of national and vital interests. It was also hoped, almost ludicrously, that either the new leadership would 'democratize' the undemocratic totalitarian setup or abandon Communism in the Soviet Union."[10] Following this camouflaged autocritique, he branded peaceful coexistence with the USSR a form of "national suicide."[11]

Spanning a period of more than forty years, Kerner's papers —deposited at the University of California's Bancroft Library —trace a lifetime of crusading, from Wilsonian idealism to cold war vehemence. They reveal much about American intellectual life and America's growing role in the world over the course of the twentieth century, as interpreted by an indefatigable champion of the Slavic world. Four decades after his death, however, Kerner remains a forgotten figure —a result of the sparseness and unevenness of his publications, as well as the unfashionableness of his civilizational and geopolitical approaches to history. Even though he directed more than thirty doctoral theses whose range of topics attests to the breadth of his interests and the sweep of his vision, when Kerner died his influence died as well.[12] Yet at the very least his major endeavor —the efforts in the 1930s -40s to develop a Russia-inclusive seminar on Northeast Asia —may be worth re-examining, particularly in light of the post-cold war reopening of that region.

Berkeley, Not Harvard

Naturally drawn to Russia because of his Pan-Slav inclinations as well as Russia's pre-war encouragement of the Yugoslav movement, Kerner, like most of his contemporaries, became intrigued by the outbreak of the Russian revolution. But he was somewhat exceptional in that he fixed less on internal revolutionary developments than patterns in Russia's external relations. His initial foray into the study of Russia appears to have been a short essay he never published on the hesitancies of Allied policy in 1919 toward the fledgling Bolshevik government (its tentative tone provided a sharp contrast to the certitude that pervaded his instructions for Allied policy toward the Habsburg

Monarchy).[13] Neither this essay nor other modest efforts undertaken by Kerner in the decade following WWI indicated the promise of a future preeminent Russia specialist.[14]

Kerner appears to have begun concentrating on Russian history upon his appointment at Berkeley in 1928. By this time Soviet Russia had recovered from the devastation of civil war and famine, and had again become a major, albeit for many enigmatic factor in world politics. Kerner thought he could provide answers. For an ambitious man, leaving the University of Missouri to lead the study of Russia at the University of California constituted a grand opportunity. But it also involved disappointment. Berkeley was then a young university without the scholarly infrastructure and prestige it would enjoy later on. Moreover, Kerner had apparently set his sights on a triumphal return to Harvard to accept the mantle of his former dissertation advisor, Archibald Coolidge, the founder of Slavic history in the United States (in the 1890s). Coolidge not only occupied a chair at Harvard, where he also headed the Widener Library, but had helped establish the Council on Foreign Relations in 1919, and served as editor of the Council's journal, *Foreign Affairs*, from its inception in 1922. His was a highly coveted position.[15]

Even before Coolidge's death in January 1928, a succession struggle had begun. The battle might be said to have commenced in 1910 (the year Kerner arrived to start his graduate studies), when Coolidge appointed his student Robert Lord to take over one of his courses (on Russian and Polish history) upon Lord's completion of his thesis. In 1926, however, Lord resigned to enter the Roman Catholic priesthood. By this time Kerner had completed his thesis and acquired a decade of teaching experience (at the University of Missouri). Yet it was another Coolidge student, William Langer (who also studied with Lord), who was brought from nearby Clark University, less than fifty miles away from Harvard, as a one-year replacement for Lord. This was not the end of the story, however. In the spring of 1927 Lord was permanently replaced, for Russian and Polish history, not by Langer but by Mikhail Karpovich, former secretary to the Imperial Russian Ambassador Boris Bakhmeteff in Washington, D.C.[16]

At this point, Coolidge became seriously ill, and the need arose for someone to teach his main course (European diplomatic history) on short notice. Langer was again summoned from nearby Clark, this time for good. In his autobiography, Langer assumes an air of nonchalance regarding the seemingly fortuitous circumstances whereby he ended up becoming Coolidge's successor.[17] But a letter from Langer to Kerner dated 26 January 1928, just after Coolidge's death, reveals Langer's preoccupation with the succession and his rivalry with Kerner. Langer alluded directly to the vacancy, writing that "I don't envy the people who have the task of finding his successor, either for the staff here, or for the library, or for *Foreign Affairs*." With perhaps unintentional poignancy, Langer also wrote that Coolidge's "mind was [already] going when I last saw him, and, now that I think back on it, he kept calling me now Langer, now Kerner."[18]

In addition to hiring Karpovich and Langer, Harvard took on another Coolidge student, Sidney Fay, in 1929, to teach German history. That same year Robert Blake, America's first native Byzantinist, was appointed to take over the Widener Library.[19] (The editorship of *Foreign Affairs*, meanwhile, went to Hamilton Fish Armstrong.) In effect, Coolidge was replaced by a team of historians, but that team did not include Kerner and, moreover, one of its members, Langer, was eventually crowned "Coolidge

Professor" (in 1936).[20] In 1928, Kerner received the consolation prize of Berkeley, where he would nurture his resentment toward Langer and strive to build a center of Russian-area scholarship worthy of Harvard, not to mention the Universities of London, Paris, and Berlin, where Kerner had visited.[21]

Near East, Far East

To realize his ambitions, Kerner needed an appropriate vehicle. His principal research project immediately before and after he arrived at Berkeley was a comprehensive study from antiquity to the present (the 1920s) of the Turkish straits. Kerner viewed the straits as a key to understanding the Great War, which was the chief interpretive issue then confronting the corpus of American scholars of Europe. His first major published scholarly research was a long, four-part essay on the diplomatic maneuvering surrounding the wartime German military mission in Turkey led by General Liman von Sanders, followed by a two-part essay on Russia and the straits during the war.[22] Here emerged the enduring themes of Kerner's view that no less than for any other state, Soviet Russia's foreign policy was guided by strategic interests, and perhaps the key interest of Russia had always been the desire for access to the sea.[23]

Kerner's projected overview of the straits question was never completed.[24] Abandoning the straits, he rewrote and published his dormant 1914 doctoral dissertation on Bohemia in the eighteenth century, widely considered at the time an impressive work of scholarship.[25] But if the straits question for whatever reason was not to serve as the vehicle for the full realization of Kerner's ambitions, neither was the history of the Czech lands. Instead, Kerner sought a second approach to Russia, this time not through the Near East but the Far East. The Asia Pacific region, and in particular Russia's neglected role in the Far East, would serve as Kerner's inspiration for attempting to distinguish his work and the University of California. In December 1932, the journal *Pacific Affairs* carried a brief announcement of the February 1931 formation at Berkeley of a Northeastern Asia Seminar. "Its purpose," Kerner wrote, was "to study for a period of five years the Historical, Political, Economic, and Cultural Factors in the Relations of Russia, China, and Japan."[26] It was a visionary leap made by a scholarly entrepreneur.

Whereas by the early 1930s, American study of Europe had become firmly established, boosted considerably by European immigrants as well as the world war and given a permanent outlet in 1928 with the establishment by Kerner and others of the *Journal of Modern History*,[27] American study of the Far East remained more elementary. In the same issue that told of the Northeast Asia seminar, *Pacific Affairs* (also founded in 1928) described an effort by Harvard University in the summer of 1932 to bolster Far Eastern Studies. "Many of our most prominent institutions of learning offer inadequate instruction or none at all," the announcement declared, adding that "a large part of the instruction offered is being given by scholars whose training has been entirely in other fields, who have not visited the countries in question, [and] possess no knowledge of the languages involved." Asian immigrants with Ph.D.s were few in number, while Harvard's own Yenching Institute had just been founded (in 1928), in part owing to the activities of Coolidge, who without knowledge of Asian languages in 1909 had pio-

neered the first course on Asian history at Harvard, as the background to the late-nineteenth-century "Far Eastern Question."

Under Coolidge's guidance, Kerner had become interested in the interaction between Europe and Asia.[28] In that regard, Russia offered no less of a connecting bridge than the much-more celebrated colonial sea-empire established by Great Britain.[29] But rather than as an extension of European diplomacy, Kerner organized his seminar around the *three* Asian powers' expansion, which had brought them into contact with each other. Among the aims to be pursued he listed in first position the "history of the eastward expansion of Russia to the Pacific from its origins to the present time and an analysis of Russia's recent position in Asia and on the Pacific." This was followed by "the problem of China in its relation to Mongolia and Manchuria," "Japan's policy in Northeastern Asia," and finally "the place of Northeastern Asia in the problems of the Pacific Basin."[30] Kerner seemed to be reaching for a regional perspective, which may have inspired his decision to adopt the "Northeast Asia" designation. Also, unlike the primarily cultural notion of "East Asia," Northeast Asia could include Russia.

Kerner was by no means the first outside observer piqued by the strategic implications of Russia's presence in Asia. As Britain's post-Napoleonic drive for world hegemony came up against the Russian empire's continental expansion, a continuous stream of warnings flowed. Russia's definitive push into Central Asia and its construction of the Transsiberian, the Chinese Eastern, as well as other railroads was accompanied by ruminations among British geo-strategists about Inner Asia being "the pivot" of world power. Japanese and Russian competition in the Far East, especially the 1904-05 war and the subsequent Japanese intervention to roll back Russian power to Lake Baikal, also focused considerable attention. In the 1920s, under the spell of Soviet developmentalism, Siberia became an object of German *Lebensraum* envy and of even more exhilarating prognostications. By the 1930s, Russia's forward position in Asia, and the interaction among Russia, China, and Japan —with Mongolia (a Soviet satellite) in the middle —came to appear to some observers as no less momentous than the reassertion of German power in Europe.[31] The latter viewpoint became especially manifest in the pages of *Pacific Affairs*, where Kerner published news of his seminar.[32]

Kerner's drift towards Asia may also have been accelerated by his relocation to the U.S. Pacific coast. In a 1932 essay on the establishment of Slavic history at Berkeley, he wrote that "whether we wish it or not, American foreign policy is likely to be more interested directly in the Pacific and Asia, from the point of view of security, than elsewhere" and that "Russia's presence on the Pacific is a factor" in American policy. For good measure he pointed out that "in the northern Pacific, Soviet Russia in Siberia and we, in Alaska, are neighbors."[33] Such a viewpoint would have been familiar to readers of Frank Golder. A Coolidge student at Harvard, Golder had published the first American scholarly work on Russian history, a reworking of his Ph.D. dissertation on Russian expansion to the Pacific that echoed the story of America's westward expansion and drew upon personal experience teaching native Alaskan school children before graduate school.[34] In 1920 Golder landed a dual position at Stanford University and the Hoover Library. When he died in 1929, the newly arrived Kerner became potential master of Russian affairs in California. The parvenu seized the moment, in effect taking over not

merely Golder's leadership role in California but also Golder's theme —Russian expansion. At the same time, Kerner transformed this theme, making the problem of Russian expansion outward- rather than inward-looking.

Northeast Asian Triangle

In 1930, few American scholars were aware that Russia, China, and Japan had relations worth studying. In essence Kerner set about creating a field of inquiry, whose immediate task he understood to be basic bibliographical work. The first meeting of the seminar took place over dinner at Berkeley's International House in March 1931. Kerner gave a presentation entitled "Russian Sources for the Study of Northeastern Asia." Another session on Japanese sources by Yoshi Kuno, an assistant professor in Berkeley's Department of Oriental Languages, took place in April, after which the seminar was interrupted as Kerner travelled to the Far East (from May until September 1931).[35] Activities resumed in October 1931, when Esson Gale, also in Oriental Languages, reported on Chinese sources. Thus, the seminar's first three sessions covered the problem of sources in what Kerner saw as the three principal languages of the region.

Because the use of original sources was one way Kerner hoped to distinguish the seminar, command of languages was key, and Kerner did his best to assemble the requisite personnel, but he faced an enormous challenge. Of the thirteen University of California professors put forward as original participants in an appendix to a draft of the *Pacific Affairs* announcement, Kerner wrote that five knew Chinese, but only two knew Russian, one knew Japanese (as well as Chinese), and *none* (Kerner included) knew both Russian and Japanese or Chinese. No one knew all three. Specialists of each country were being brought together to educate each other, and perhaps inspire graduate students.[36] Plans were also being made to enhance contacts with native scholars, though various obstacles were noted in that regard.[37]

In a 1932 memorandum summarizing the Northeast Asia seminar's first year, which had been exclusively devoted to discussions of source materials, Kerner enthused that the results "are bound to lead to the recognition of the University of California as the chief center of serious study in the field." In fact, Berkeley's Northeast Asia seminar had little competition, though the "field of inquiry" existed only in an occasional dinner meeting. Kerner was projecting a series of parallel comprehensive studies of Russian, Chinese, and Japanese expansion, and to attract the necessary funding he felt that he needed to make an immediate impression. He announced the publication of the first volume of a multi-volume, multi-lingual bibliography within a few months (by the end of June 1932). It was to have "critical chapters on the evolution of source material and the agencies of research in the Orient and elsewhere."[38] Kerner may have reasoned that a bibliography combining European and Asian languages would bring in resources for monographs.[39]

If Kerner had wanted to make an impression, he was certainly given the chance, for in September 1931, just after he had returned from the Far East, renegade officers of Japan's Kwantung Army staged a bomb explosion on the Southern Manchurian Railway as a pretext for occupying China's three northeastern provinces. By March 1932

Japan had overseen the proclamation of a puppet Manchurian state, Manchukuo, bordering directly on Russia, a turn of events that caused a dramatic reevaluation of Soviet policy in neighboring Mongolia and Asia generally. It seemed a momentous turning point, possibly foreshadowing a world war in Asia. Here was the trumpeted Northeast Asian triangle vividly on display! Judging from the extensive record left by Kerner, however, the Northeast Asia seminar does not appear to have engaged in serious discussion of this watershed, let alone produced any pertinent publications.[40] In fact, five years after the seminar's establishment *nothing* had been published, the bibliography included.

Almost from the start, a sense of haste and urgency pervaded Kerner's progress reports on the seminar. In a handwritten memorandum, evidently drafted in late 1933, he indicated that he would not seek funds for 1933-34, but would try to finish the work of 1932-33. He was still promising the bibliography soon —"in two months." And he wrote of the near completion of two other ongoing projects: a history of Russian eastward expansion to 1728 by Kerner himself, comprising one volume of text and another of documents, as well as a history of Japanese expansion in Asia by Yoshi Kuno. Kerner indicated that he was still looking for someone to undertake a similar study of Chinese expansion.[41] In yet another "progress report" dated 1 March 1937, Kerner again promised that the bibliography was ready for press, and further, that two long-anticipated volumes on Russian eastward expansion were "nearing completion." He needed "perhaps six more months."[42] The bibliography finally appeared in 1939. It contained almost 14,000 items in seven languages (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, English, French, and German), with headings that included: 1) Asia, the Far East, the Pacific; 2) China; 3) Japanese Empire; and 4) Russian Empire and Soviet Union in Asia and on the Pacific. Owen Lattimore wrote perhaps the most positive review, stressing the cognitive map it offered rather than its usefulness as a research tool.[43] As for Kerner's multivolume study of Russian expansion, it never saw the light of day, though a shorter version did come out in 1942. By that time, the seminar as originally conceived had essentially run its course, with very mixed results.

The "Secret" of Russian Expansion to Asia

Kerner's Northeast Asia seminar had as its raison d'etre the recognition of Russia's presence in Asia, a perspective pioneered by Frank Golder only two generations after the sale of Alaska to the United States (a retreat that paradoxically signified Russia's determination to secure its place on the Asian continent). Golder had lived through the construction of the Trans-Siberian railroad (1891-1903) and the accelerated peasant migration into Siberia, as well as the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). Kerner lived to see Soviet development schemes launched in Siberia. Waxing enthusiastic about Siberia's potential became a even more widespread avocation.

In an essay on "Soviet Russia in Asia" published in 1941 (but written before Hitler's invasion of the USSR), Kerner predicted that although infamous as a land of prisons, or terrible cold, and of vast, impenetrable forests, Siberia "will become the very axis of future development of the Soviet Union." More than that, he hailed the Soviet Union as "an important factor in the renaissance of Asia." Looking back over Russian history

since 1917, he argued that the USSR had at first rashly sought world communist revolution at home and in Asia, but that this effort "ended in failure in Europe in 1923 and in Asia in 1927. Soviet Outer Mongolia and Tannu Tuva were its only tangible results." Under Stalin's leadership, the USSR then switched to an emphasis on internal development, which Kerner applauded, noting that the need for "peace and coexistence with capitalist states" had led the USSR to seek "numerous non-aggression and neutrality treaties." He concluded that "without Russia an effective alliance against Germany seems impossible."[44]

Together with many contemporaries (the Soviet leadership included), Kerner greatly underestimated the investment of resources necessary and the obstacles to be overcome for the USSR to realize the potential of its Asian territories. After the war, he would return to this theme, conceding that "Siberia still remains a vast underdeveloped continent," but he still insisted that "the Soviet industrial revolution in Siberia" was being felt "deep in the heart of Asia and beyond, among Asia's half-awakened hundreds of millions."[45] If as Kerner claimed, "the Bolshevik impact on this back yard of Asia is a powerful one and can scarcely be overestimated," the question naturally arose of how Russia had ended up on the Pacific. Kerner had wrestled with that problem in an unpublished 1937 article,[46] which he then elaborated into a book-length essay that appeared in 1942 with the awkward title, *The Urge to the Sea: The Course of Russian History. The Role of Rivers, Portages, Ostrogs, Monasteries, and Furs.*[47]

In the preface, Kerner wrote that *The Urge to the Sea* constituted but "a brief preliminary exposition" of a "series of volumes on Russian eastward expansion, in part monographic, in part documentary, which will cover all phases of this development." At the same time he advertised the slim volume as "laying the groundwork" for "a new synthesis of Russian history." Invoking Kliuchevskii in the first subtitle, Kerner dedicated his study to Kliuchevskii's mentor, Sergei Solov'ev, who had first emphasized the importance of geography in Russian developments.[48] But whereas Solov'ev and Kliuchevskii had merely noted the importance of geography and colonization, Kerner claimed, he was offering an explanation. He seems to have imagined that this book would place him in the Russian history pantheon.

Kerner argued that during their expansion, the Russians early on discovered that mere raids were insufficient and therefore switched to a policy "of planned occupation by river and portage and ostrog backed by a sufficiently numerous group of occupiers of one sort or another." Eliding private and government efforts, he suggested that the successive push from one river system to the next across Siberia to the Pacific demonstrated that "the urge to the sea always dominated." This alleged urge underlying Russian history served as justification for the Russian domination of the Eurasian land mass. "To break up the Russian Empire, as has been considered and attempted in the past, would be to work in opposition to basic forces which are creating a geographical and functional unity," Kerner concluded.[49]

As a narrative of the development of various portages in the spread of Russian territorial control from the area around Moscow across Siberia, Kerner's study made sense. But notwithstanding its claims, the book was more descriptive than explanatory, and the explanatory parts appeared highly questionable. Kerner highlighted the vast

importance of the pursuit of furs, for example, but failed to explain the connection between the scramble for furs and the alleged urge to the sea.[50] Similarly, he noted "the role of the Russian Orthodox Church and its monasteries in the history of Russian expansion, especially its economic and military significance," but did not take up these subjects, instead writing that they awaited "thorough research."[51] Above all, the crowning "urge to the sea" remained enigmatic. Kerner had added the formulation late to the book's title, thereby creating the multiple subtitles and a certain confusion in the argument. It amounted to a restatement, in mystical form, of Russia's nineteenth-century quest for warm water ports, one of many strategic goals it had pursued.[52] Rather than an urge to the sea, however, Russia's conquest of Siberia looked more like half-knowing opportunism that brought out the special qualities of Russia's continentality, which in turn elicited autarkic drives for mastery of the fearful internal expanse.[53]

Appropriating the spotlight on Russia's role in Asia from Golder, Kerner borrowed liberally from Solov'ev, Kliuchevskii, and others, including contemporary theorists of China's hydraulic civilization. One researcher has speculated that Kerner also secretly hoped his *The Urge to the Sea* would be a kind of Turner frontier-thesis blockbuster.[54] This surmise seems plausible. Frederick Jackson Turner (1861/2-1932) had arrived a grand luminary at Harvard in 1910, the same year Kerner enrolled there in graduate school, and the height of Turner's influence was precisely the period 1910-1930, Kerner 's formative years. In a sweeping interpretation of American history first articulated in a paper at a meeting of the American Historical Association in 1893 in Chicago, Turner argued that "the true point of view in the history of the [American] nation" was "not the Atlantic coast," but "the Great West." America was thus not an Anglo-Saxon invention, a nation made in Philadelphia, but a creation of the frontier. The expansion westward toward ever newer opportunities and the constant contact with the simplicity of primitive society "promoted the formation of a composite nationality," as well as the uniquely "American character," coarse and strong, inquisitive, and practical.[55] Above all, the west and the frontier (terms Turner used interchangeably) "promoted democracy."[56]

Painting a picture of benevolent expansion, rather than rapacious conquest (just as Kerner would do for the Russian case),[57] Turner stressed the implications of westward expansion for *internal* American developments: the formation of the national character. For him "the west" was a "form of society, rather than an area." Kerner might have taken a similar approach, but instead chose to focus on the external implications of Russia's eastward expansion: the formation of a geopolitical theater of engagement. A Northeast Asian geopolitical triangle, however, could never have had the same resonance for an American audience as Turner's western frontier society. Even leaving aside the question of relative intellectual prowess, Kerner's institutional and career ambitions for his research agenda were unrealistic. Nonetheless, he did champion the importance of knowing more about Asia, and re-emphasized that Russia formed an integral part of Asia's past and would continue to do so in the future.[58]

Parallel Japanese and Chinese Expansion

Perhaps the most substantial publication to emerge from the Northeast Asia seminar was Yoshi Kuno's *Japanese Expansion on the Asian Continent: A Study in the History of Japan with Special Reference to Her International Relations with China, Korea, and Russia*, the first volume of which appeared in 1937 and the second in 1940 (the author passed away before completing a proposed third volume). A Japanese-American who taught Japanese language and culture, Kuno was encouraged by Kerner and probably also by his own desire to make a statement on recent developments in the land of his ancestors.[59] His book was written not long after Japan's takeover of Manchuria and its appearance coincided with the aggression against the rest of China. Employing sources in Korean, Chinese, and Japanese (ancient and modern), Kuno surveyed 2000 years of Japanese history, guided by the view that from time immemorial the Japanese had harbored a desire to expand beyond the confines of their archipelago —a kind of urge to the land, though Kuno never used such an expression.

Assuming the existence of a primordial Japanese nation, and neglecting to distinguish between the pursuit of profit via commercial ties and policies of colonization (or outright territorial annexation), Kuno asserted that "the advance of Russia on the continent of Asia is a movement of recent centuries, but Japan's desire to expand on the continent has been manifested again and again for more than a thousand years." Of course, precisely the opposite argument could be made. Moreover, Kuno ended his second and (as it turned out) last volume with the Meiji Restoration (1868), at which time Japan remained a largely isolated island country, with even the northern island of Hokkaido (Yezo) having only recently been "explored." In short, Kuno's project, with its impossibly long time-frame, proved to be shamelessly presentist without ever reaching the present, when vigorous expansionism became a reality.

Despite his study's incompleteness and its fundamental flaws, Kuno did bring out much new material (for English-language readers) on the extensive Russian approaches to Japan, as well as on the varied Japanese responses, anticipating the more substantial research of George Lensen (though Kuno did not employ Russian sources). And far more than Kerner's book-length essay on Russian expansion, Kuno's study fulfilled the promise of the seminar: a major historical investigation with present-day implications. It was all the more striking, therefore, that in his preface to Kuno's work Kerner neglected to underscore the supposed lessons to be drawn from Kuno's study —that Japan, unlike Russia, was an aggressive power. Instead, the promoter of a new field of inquiry noted tenuously that "it remains to be seen what will be the future course of events in Northeastern Asia."[60]

What about China? Initially, Kerner had placed his hopes in Esson Gale of the Department of Oriental Languages, but for whatever reasons Gale chose not to undertake the task. Attention was redirected toward Gale's Ph.D. graduate student, Tung-chi Lin. In a draft memorandum probably composed in 1932, Kerner wrote that Lin had "not yet selected the particular subject for his doctor's thesis," but that he was interested in the "Manchurian problem in external and internal aspects." In other words, Kerner appeared to have found his man.[61] Lin outlined a two-part study tentatively

entitled "China and her Borderlands," which he separated into the Northeast (Manchuria and Jehol) and the Northwest (Mongolia and regions West, Turkestan). Chronologically, he divided the work into two periods, before and after the Opium War (1840). Thus, he planned a total of four volumes, admitting that "the project is naively ambitious."

By the time Lin wrote this proposal he had already departed Berkeley to take up a teaching position in China at Nankai University (in the French Concession of Tientsin). From there he wrote a series of letters to Kerner apologizing for his failure to complete the proposed study. In one dated 9 October 1935, Lin claimed he was still carrying out his research, but suffered from the pressures of teaching. On 9 February 1936, he again blamed teaching, citing the need to offer "new courses every semester." On 14 July 1936 he wrote complaining of stomach troubles. All the while, Kerner was trying to secure a fellowship permitting Lin a one-year sabbatical in the United States to complete the study. Then, on 22 August 1937, came a letter from Lin's wife, Adeleine Gray Lin, an American whom he had met at Berkeley, where she had been graduated with a B.A. in Sociology.

"Nankai University was, without warning, ruthlessly and completely destroyed by Japanese bombardments and shellings," Adeleine Lin reported. "It was completely unexpected and hence most professors lost everything they had, even clothes." Her husband was then in the interior of China. "Mr. Lin's books and bibliographies all relating to frontier problems were destroyed, although I have not been able to inform him directly of this," she wrote, claiming to have saved only "a very few of his most important papers in the house." She added that because "there were no Chinese soldiers or arms on the campus, most people are at a loss to explain why the Japanese desired so much to demolish this two million dollar university," noting further that "the Japanese even shot at various professors as they were attempting to leave."[62]

Professor Lin himself soon wrote to Kerner of the Japanese invasion of China on 1 December 1937 from Kunming, where he was serving as Dean of Yunan University's College of Letters and Sciences. He explained that "my wife succeeded in saving a part of my manuscript and notes on frontier history. But all my books which I collected with my meager means in the past five years (in the States and in China) were all burned together with the library books."[63] Lin continued to put his hopes in a one-year fellowship in the United States to complete his work. But the Rockefeller Foundation several times rejected Kerner's request on Lin's behalf, indicating that the proposed work was too historical.[64] The last letter from Lin to Kerner contained in the latter's files was sent 20 October 1938. Japan's nearly nine-year war of aggression in China had only just begun. The work on China's expansion was never written.

In September 1941, Kerner compiled the final extant report of the Northeast Asia seminar. Among its accomplishments, he listed the two-volume bibliography (1939), the two volumes by Kuno (1937, 1940), and his own *Urge to the Sea* (then in press). Since Lin's library had been wrecked by the Japanese (and outside funds could not be obtained to bring Lin to the United States to finish the project), Kerner wrote that he could scarcely be held responsible for the failure of that work to appear.[65] For the first time, Kerner highlighted the research of graduate students associated with the seminar.

Two doctoral dissertations directed by him were said to be in press: one by George Lantzeff on the colonial administration in Siberia in the seventeenth century; another by Raymond Fisher on the Russian fur trade 1550-1700.[66] There would be others, including John Harrison's study of Japanese colonization of Hokkaido and Andrew Malozemoff's work on turn of the century Russian Far Eastern policy.[67] With Kerner's strong support, most of the more than thirty students who completed Ph.D.s under him became university professors (including Lantzeff's hiring by Berkeley in 1947).[68] Their published dissertations on Russia and Northeast Asia constituted a formidable collective research program.[69]

Kerner might have chosen from the start to highlight the long-term production that could be expected from graduate students. Instead, as originally conceived —monumental primary-source based overviews of Russian, Japanese, and Chinese expansion —the Northeast Asia project was unrealizable. Not only did big books take longer to publish than Kerner anticipated, but his insistence that researchers know Chinese, Japanese, and Russian, not just French, German, and English, was highly laudable yet daunting —Kerner himself did not qualify. Native scholars throughout the region might have made up for the dearth of Berkeley-based scholars, but transoceanic cooperation was hindered by formidable obstacles (political, methodological, linguistic). In any case, the project was conceived as a California empire not an international network.

Ironically, the greatest inhibiting factor proved to be the seminar's raison d'etre: Northeast Asia itself. In Northeast Asia the decade of the seminar's existence (1931-1941) witnessed Japan's occupation of Manchuria and the formation of the Manchukuo puppet state, the USSR's security pact with Mongolia, Japan's war in China (1937-1945), and the undeclared war (1938-1939) between Japan and the USSR near the Manchuria-Mongolia border. The trumpeted triangular competition among Russia, China, and Japan was all too real —and deadly. That the seminar's appearance coincided with the turn in international events seems to have been accidental, for Kerner had begun canvassing Berkeley departments for researchers on Northeast Asia in 1930. Still, it was almost as if Kerner's wildest dreams had come true, more than justifying the seminar's establishment, but those dreams materialized as nightmare, rendering that much more difficult the efforts to carry out the seminar's ambitious research aims.

Coda

"On the intimate frontiers between the Russian and the Chinese empires," Kerner wrote in the 1920s, "are face to face the world's largest, fastest-growing white population and the world's largest, ablest and perhaps fastest-growing yellow population." Much the same could be said seventy years later, even if we would disavow the racial categories that provided much of the attraction for Kerner.[70] His focus on Northeast Asia, *blatantly* careerist and overreaching as it may have been, put him ahead of his times. Kerner's insistence, as a Slavic specialist, on the need for increased United States attention to Asian affairs acquired resounding gravity at Pearl Harbor, in ways neither he nor most of his contemporaries envisioned. But his suggestions regarding the alleged equally strong need to take account of Russia's looming economic rise in Asia has

not been borne out by events. What Kerner heralded as the coming economic "renaissance of Asia" was, of course, led by Japan, not Russia, under the postwar U.S. security umbrella. That quest for security, in turn, imposed new and perhaps even more formidable barriers to the understanding of the historical development of Northeast Asia than the visionary yet under-equipped Kerner had faced in the 1930s.

During the cold war Northeast Asia as a region of interaction became largely a matter of tracking and countering the USSR's Pacific's Fleet, as well as movements on the North Korean side of the DMZ. In the 1990s, although the Korean peninsula continues to provoke anxiety, Russia's hypermilitarization has collapsed on itself. Yet the enormous promise of Asian Russia, proclaimed afresh after the fall of Communism, remains blocked by the same daunting infrastructural obstacles as in the days when Kerner dreamed his collective project for the study of a Russia-inclusive Northeast Asia. Asian Russia's enormous unrealized potential continues to attract attention in Japan, China, and lately also in South Korea (for after Kerner's death the regional triangle became something of a quadrilateral). But the dominant element in the future of Northeast Asia may well be neither Russia, as Kerner suspected, nor Japan, as most people have long since come to assume, but China, with its demographic weight and chaotic economic dynamism. Whatever the future may bring, the recent revival of transnational interaction (mostly petty trade and tourist travel), alongside a renewed sense of regional identity, has inspired a collective search for commonality amid cultural and linguistic barriers; a search for modes of cooperation as well as competition, and for lessons from the past.

Notes

1 This essay was originally presented at a conference on the Russian Far East in Khabarovsk in August 1995 organized by David Wolff and funded by the East-West Global Partnership. My research in California was supported by a grant from the Dean's Committee on Research, Princeton University.

2 Kerner, *The Jugo-Slav Movement*, published jointly with Alexander Petrunkevitch et al., *The Russian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1918). Kerner, "Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the Winter of 1915-16 as Revealed by Secret Documents," *Journal of International Relations*, 10 (4), April 1920, pp. 444-470; idem., "Austrian Plans for a Balkan Settlement (1915-1916)," *The New Europe*, 16, 30 September 1920, pp. 280-284; idem., "The Social Beginnings of the Czechoslovak Republic," *The Survey* [Prague], 29 November 1919, 43 (6), pp. 169-172; idem., "Constitutional Development in Czechoslovakia," *American Political Science Review*, 13 (4), November 1919, pp. 652-656; and idem., "Two Architects of the New Europe: Masaryk and Benes," *Journal of International Relations*, 13 (1) , July 1921, pp. 27-43. Many related unpublished memorandums can be found in the University of California, Bancroft Library, Robert J. Kerner Papers, 46 cartons; a bibliography of Kerner's publications is in carton 18.

3 Lawrence Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963). One scholar has written that Kerner's "graduate

school classmates considered him pontifical and 'a bit grim,' and his colleagues in the Inquiry thought him dogmatic... because of his aggressiveness on behalf of Slavs and occasional intemperate charges against those who disagreed." Robert F. Byrnes, *Awakening American Education to the World: The Role of Archibald Cary Coolidge, 1866-1928* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982).

4 Kerner, "The Historic Role of the Slavs," *The History Teacher's Magazine*, 1917, pp. 294-295; idem., *Slavic Europe: A Selected Bibliography in the Western European Languages, Comprising History, Languages, and Literatures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918). See Dvornik's magisterial *The Slavs in European History and Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962).

5 Kerner, "New Tasks before the Slavonic Peoples," *California Czechoslovak* [Los Angeles], 1 (9), August 1929, pp. 1-3. In a five-page memorandum dated 5 March 1919, Kerner had allowed that Bolshevism's containment was a goal equal to the prevention of a German revanche (Coolidge's pet peeve). But rather than military intervention Kerner advocated a coordinated program of economic and social amelioration, citing as his model the Czechoslovak Republic. He appears not to have returned to the theme of Bolshevism's "containment" until after WWII. Kerner Papers, carton 13.

6 Kerner, "The Slavic Peoples," in Vjekoslav Meler (ed.), *The Slavic Pioneers of California* (San Francisco: The Slavic Pioneers of California, 1932), pp. 7-8.

7 In 1938, with the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis, Kerner organized an international conference, the results of which were published as Robert Kerner (ed.), *Czechoslovakia: Twenty Years of Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1940).

8 Kerner, "Utopias and Realities," typescript (3 June 1937), carton 16; Kerner, "Miliukov, the Historian," *Slavia* [San Francisco], 14 (3), March 1939, pp. 1-7.

9 Kerner, "The Slavic Peoples and the Second World War," typescript (23 May 1942), carton 17.

10 Kerner Papers, carton 10.

11 Kerner, "The Cold War," typescript (1955?), carton 12. See also his bitter critique of the use of the word "democracy" in the Soviet satellites of Eastern Europe in the essay "Thomas Garrigue Masaryk: Czechoslovakia's First President and Europe's Greatest Statesman," typescript, carton 16, as well as the warning "Time is on the Side of Moscow," typescript (11 November 1952), carton 16. Additional essays from 1951-53 in carton 16 include "What Next Inside Russia?" "Is Peaceful Coexistence Possible?" "What Is Russia Up To?" "The Cold War, Who Started It?" and in carton 17, "The Communist Menace and How to Meet It."

12 Kerner was replaced by Martin Malia, one of my thesis advisors at Berkeley. Details of the decision, including memorandums by Kerner (14 December 1953) and History Department Chair Raymond Sontag (9 April 1954), can be found in Kerner Papers, carton 27. Sontag frets that the department's first choice, Malia, will be difficult to attract since he was recognized as Karpovich's soon-to-be handpicked successor at Harvard. But just as Kerner "lost" Harvard to Langer, Malia was passed over at Harvard in favor of Richard Pipes, a decision in which Langer

was involved.

13 Kerner did not express a position in the essay on whether to recognize the Bolshevik government. Kerner, "The Bolshevik Government," typescript [early 1920s], carton 14. At the Paris Peace Conference, Robert H. Lord served as an American advisor on Russian affairs; Kerner's was assigned to the successor states of Austria-Hungary.

14 For example, in 1925 Kerner published a brief description of the Prague Institute for the study of Russia founded by emigres (*The Slavonic Review*, 5, December 1925) and four years later he issued a brief review of Lev Tolstoy's philosophy of history (*The University of California Chronicle*, January 1929).

15 Robert F. Byrnes, "Archibald Cary Coolidge: A Founder of Russian Studies in the United States," *Slavic Review*, 38, 1978, pp. 651-667, reprinted in *A History of Russian and East European Studies in the United States: Selected Essays* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), pp. 173-197.

16 Robert Byrnes has written that "after learning that George Vernadsky did not speak English well, [Coolidge] invited Michael Karpovich to Harvard for the spring semester of 1927 to substitute for Lord.... Coolidge wrote in 1926 that Karpovich is not Lord, but he is not unpromising." Byrnes, A*wakening American Education*, p. 108.

17 William Langer, *In and Out of the Ivory Tower: The Autobiography of William Langer* (New York: Neale Watson, 1977), pp. 128-132. Born in 1896 to lower-middle-class German immigrant parents who had settled in Boston, Langer entered Harvard in 1912, taking the subway to school. He received his B.A. in 1915, and for a few years taught at the Worcester Academy. In 1918 he entered the U.S. Army, arriving in France in July 1918 to participate in the Allied victory. In 1919 he enrolled in graduate school at Harvard, and in 1923 began teaching at Clark University. He died in 1977.

18 In a letter dated 13 July 1927, Langer then at Harvard temporarily, mentions a possible conflict with Kerner in that both were exploring similar subjects. Kerner Papers, carton 6. In Kerner's files there are no letters from Langer for the period 1930-1947 or after 1947. (Kerner seems to have kept everything.)

19 Dedicated in 1915, three years after its benefactor, Harry Widener, perished on the Titanic, the Widener benefitted not only from Coolidge's directorship but also from his contribution of more than 30,000 volumes. See Robert F. Byrnes, "Archibald Cary Coolidge and 'Civilization's Diary': Building the Harvard University Library," in *A History of Russian*, pp. 149-172.

20 During World War II, Langer was chosen to head the Research and Analysis branch of the Office of Strategic Services (the CIA's forerunner). Far from Washington, Kerner gave speeches on foreign affairs at places such as San Francisco's Commonwealth Club. Langer in effect bested Kerner a second time, though many of the researchers working for Langer were Kerner students, dubbed the "California boys."

21 See Kerner, "The Teaching of Slavic History at the U. of C.," pp. 69-72.

22 Kerner, "Russia, the Straits and Constantinople, 1914-1915," *The Journal of Mod-*

ern History, 1 (3), September 1929, pp. 400-415; and "Russia and the Straits Question, 1915-17," *Slavonic Review*, 8, March 1930, pp. 589-600; idem, "The Mission of Liman of Sanders," *Slavonic Review*, 6, 1927, pp. 12-27, 344-363, 543-560 and 7, 1928-29, pp. 90-112.

23 Kerner, "Soviet Russia and the Straits Question since 1917," typescript [around 1929-30], carton 11. In 1930 a graduate student he brought to Berkeley from Missouri, Vernon Puryear, completed a dissertation entitled "England, Russia and the Straits Question, 1849-56: A Study on the Diplomatic History of the Crimean War."

24 Several chapters can be found in the Kerner Papers, carton 12.

25 Kerner, *Bohemia in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Political, Economic, and Social History with Special reference to the Reign of Leopold II, 1790-92* (New York: Macmillan, 1932).

26 "A Northeastern Asia Seminar," *Pacific Affairs*, December 1932, pp. 1069-1071.

27 At the December 1926 meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA), which at that time was primarily devoted to the study of the United States, a committee submitted a proposal, which had the approval of AHA President Dana Munro, to form a journal for European history. Chaired by C.P. Higby, the committee included E.E. Earle, Albert Hyma, William Langer, and Kerner. See Kerner, "Memorandum for Journal of Modern History," typescript [1926?], carton 14. In a letter from Langer to Kerner, dated 11 January 1926, Langer, then teaching at Clark University in Worcester, MA, proposed basing the *Journal of Modern History* at Clark. Kerner rejected this suggestion.

28 In January 1911, while a graduate student, Kerner compiled "an attempt at a bibliography of bibliographies on modern Asiatic history," Kerner Papers, carton 15.

29 Kerner typed out notes he took from books covering the relations between Russia and the Islamic world as well as Mongolia in the period after the revolution. Kerner Papers, carton 24. He does not, however, seem to have been much taken by arguments of the contemporary Russian émigré "Eurasianists," who maintained that Russia represented a unique culture neither European nor Asian but Eurasian. By contrast, Kerner assumed that although its territory encompassed both Europe and Asia, Russia was Slavic and therefore culturally European. See the teaching materials in carton 21; and Kerner, "The Importance of Eastern European History," typescript [year?], carton 13.

30 "A Northeastern Asia Seminar," *Pacific Affairs*, December 1932, pp. 1069-1071.

31 See Gerard Friters, *Outer Mongolia and its International Position* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), with a preface by Owen Lattimore. Completed in 1939, the book's publication was delayed a decade following the outbreak of war.

32 In 1933, Owen Lattimore became the journal's editor. He approached the problem from the perspective of China's frontier and the geographic/civilizational "coherence" of Inner Asia. See his *Studies in Frontier History: Collected Papers 1928-1958* (New York: Oxford, 1962).

33 Kerner, "The Teaching of Slavic History at the U. of C.," pp. 69-72.

34 Frank Golder, *Russian Expansion on the Pacific 1641-1850* (Cleveland: A. Clark,

1914). For Golder's life see Harold A. Fisher, "Frank A. Golder, 1877-1929," *Journal of Modern History*, 1 (2), June 1929, pp. 253-256; Alain Dubie, *Frank A. Golder: An Adventure of a Historian in Quest of Russian History* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1989); and Golder's diaries, Terrence Emmons and Bertrand Patenaude(eds.), *War, Revolution, and Peace in Russia: The Passages of Frank Golder, 1914-1927*(Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1992).

35 Kerner promised but failed to publish a book, *Social Sciences in Northeastern Asia: Siberia, China, and Japan*, similar to the slim volume he produced entitled *Social Sciences in the Balkans and Turkey* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930). For the latter, he enjoyed the substantial assistance of Harry Howard, a graduate student transfer from Missouri, with whom Kerner also collaborated on a collection of diplomatic documents, *The Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente, 1930-1935: A Study in the Recent History of the Balkan and Near Eastern Peoples* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936).

36 Kerner, "Memorandum on Northeastern Asia: Historical, Political, Economic, and Cultural Factors in the Relations of Russia, China and Japan. A Research Project," typescript (1931), carton 18.

37 In handwritten notes from his travels to the Far East, Kerner observed that "one of the main activities of the seminar may be in objective evaluation of research... by native scholars." But he had already concluded that "people on the spot [were] less likely to do an objective job of research," in part because of the "importance of Marxist theory in the works of many scholars in the Far East." He also noted that "graduate work and free research is still in its infancy, with only a beginning in Japan and a perversion of it into communist aims in Soviet Russia." At the same time, he insisted that "the University of California should lead in the endeavor to get scholars of the Pacific Basin better acquainted with each other." The trip further impressed upon him serious logistical problems. "Original research by members of the seminar," he wrote, "may be limited for some time largely to primary materials accessible to scholars living at great distance from the Far East." Kerner Papers, carton 26.

38 A bit defensively, he wrote of the bibliography that "if the Northeastern Asia Seminar did not accomplish anything beyond the above-mentioned publication, it would nevertheless have justified its existence and have been worth every penny put into its labors." Alongside the historical expansion of the three protagonists, and instead of the original proposed "place of Northeastern Asia in the problems of the Pacific Basin," Kerner gave as additional issues to be explored: "Economic Conditions in Northeastern Asia (beginning with agriculture as the first topic)" and "Geographical, Ethnographical, and Strategic Factors in Northeastern Asia." But it remained unclear who would undertake the latter two studies. Kerner, "Memorandum of Northeastern Asia Seminar," typescript (16 March 1932), carton 10.

39 Notes, carton 26.

40 No published or unpublished political commentary on these events could be found among Kerner's papers. A stark contrast is provided by Owen Lattimore, "Mongolia

Enters World Affairs," *Pacific Affairs*, 1934, 7 (1), pp. 15-28, among other publications.

41 Untitled Memorandum, Kerner Papers, carton 26.

42 Kerner Papers, carton 10. Kerner had received funding for a research trip to Russia from January to July 1935 in connection with the project on Russian eastward expansion (carton 13).

43 Lattimore noted that for the study of natural resources and history, there was a preponderance of materials in Chinese and Japanese, and then Russian; western languages were said to be valuable primarily for the study of international relations. *American Historical Review*, 45 (4), 1940, pp. 883-884. See also *Journal of Modern History*, 12 (3), 1940, pp. 408-409; *Foreign Affairs*, 18, 1940, p. 597; *Pacific Historical Review*, 10 (1), 1941, pp. 94-96, and elsewhere. During the cold war, Lattimore suggested that Kerner was anti-Russian. Lattimore, *Ordeal by Slander* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950), pp. 164-165.

44 Kerner, "Soviet Russia in Asia," in *The Renaissance of Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), pp. 121-142.

45 Kerner, "The Russian Eastward Movement: Some Observations on its Historical Significance," *Pacific Historical Review*, 17 (2), May 1948, pp. 135-148.

46 Kerner, "The Course of Russian History: A New Interpretation (of the Development and Expansion of the Russian People," typescript (9 February 1937), carton 16.

47 Kerner, *The Urge to the Sea: The Course of Russian History. The Role of Rivers, Portages, Ostrogs, Monasteries, and Furs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942). See the highly critical review by V. Iatsunskii, "Izuchenie istorii SSSR v Kaliforniiskom universitete," *Voprosy istorii*, 1945, no. 5-6, pp. 186-200. Raymond Fisher, a Kerner student, in a letter to Robert F. Byrnes dated 15 November 1977 asserted that Lantzeff had been privately critical of Kerner. Of *The Urge to the Sea* Fisher alleged that "Lantzeff told me that the committee of the UC Press wanted to turn it down, but Kerner more or less bullied the members into acceptance." Fisher further asserted that Lantzeff's name was supposed to be on the title page as a collaborator, but that after seeing the result Lantzeff supposedly wanted no part of the responsibility, ending up with an acknowledgement in the preface. Fisher, who may have had ambitions as a possible replacement for Kerner, solicited damning letters on Kerner and made sure to deposit the materials in the same library that held Kerner's papers. See Raymond Henry Fisher, Papers Pertaining to Robert Kerner, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley.

48 Kerner, *The Urge to the Sea*, pp. 66 n51, x.

49 Ibid., pp. 11, 103.

50 Ibid., p. 75.

51 Ibid., p. 86 n74.

52 Kerner used far less mystical language in elucidating this point in his essay, "Russia in the Far East: National and Vital Interests," *Yale Review*, 38 (4), Summer 1949, pp. 698-711.

53 As Jesse Clarkson pointed out in a restrained review, the Volga, Russia's greatest

river, flowed into the landlocked Caspian Sea, while the White and Black Seas were in effect similarly hemmed in. Siberian rivers, meanwhile, drained into the ice-blocked Arctic. Thus, rather than an urge to the sea, Russian eastward expansion was driven by a haphazard scramble for furs, and the struggle between forest and steppe. *American Historical Review*, 48 (1), October 1942, pp. 62-63. Other problems not mentioned by Clarkson include the fact that the maps were drawn to different scales (with one showing Tomsk on the Trans-Siberian Railroad).

54 Gay Satsuma, "Scholarly Entrepreneur: Robert J. Kerner and Russian Eastward Expansion," M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1989.

55 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Report of the American Historical Association for 1893* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1894), pp. 199-227, reprinted in *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1921), pp. 1-38. A midwesterner, Turner had done his graduate work at Johns Hopkins, where he was a classmate of Woodrow Wilson (another critical influence on Kerner). Turner taught at the University of Wisconsin until his appointment at Harvard 1910, the year he served as president of the American Historical Association. In contrast to Charles Beard, who emphasized the importance of class conflict and focused on the industrial world, Turner put forth a vision of pastoralism, with the farmer as hero and the frontier as safety valve lessening social tensions. Turner's vision derived from the Ohio Valley, with its rich farm land, rather than the desert of the southwest and far west.

56 Turner himself never put together a systematic presentation of Western history that demonstrated and elaborated his argument, but a large group of students took up the task of testing the thesis (in this Turner was like Kerner, as we shall see below). William Cronon has written that Turner, although active in the American Historical Association, library-building, and training graduate students, was "one of the great non-publishing scholars of his generation." Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 18 (1), April 1987, pp. 157-175, quote on page 162. See also George Rogers Taylor (ed.), *The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History* (Boston, 1949; revised ed. 1956); and Ray Allen Billington, *The Frontier Thesis: Valid Interpretation of American History?* (New York, 1966).

57 A copy of the Kerner's report to the first meeting of the Northeast Asia seminar is included in his papers. He wrote that four facts stood out: 1) "to many tribes and inhabitants of Asia Russia has represented a superior cultural power of great attractiveness"; 2) "the historical evolution has brought a great white people to the shores of the Pacific —a people destined to play an important part in the future history of the world"; 3) "in capable hands Siberia —the untouched treasure of the world —may become another North America" (a line he picked up from German Lebensraum exponents); and 4) "the Russians have devoted a great deal of time and effort to the study of Northeastern Asia and have created a knowledge known only to a few —a knowledge thoroughly worth while making known to others." Kerner, "Russian Sources for the Study of Northeastern Asia: Historical Perspective," typescript (1931), carton 10.

58 Kerner served on the advisory board of Berkeley's Institute of East Asiatic Studies, which he helped establish. Kerner Papers, carton 10.

59 Yoshi S. Kuno, *Japanese Expansion on the Asian Continent: A Study in the History of Japan with Special Reference to Her International Relations with China, Korea, and Russia* 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937-1940). Not a professional historian, Kuno neglected much historical scholarship (especially then-recent works), treated many secondary works as primary sources, and often used primary sources uncritically.

60 Kerner, "Editor's Preface," *Japanese Expansion on the Asian Continent*, vol. 1, pp. xiii-xiv.

61 Kerner also wrote that Lin was interested in compiling "a comprehensive and critical bibliography of works on the Chinese border regions such as Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Tibet, etc., written in Chinese, Japanese, English, German, and French." This seems to be the origin of the bibliography. "If a collaborator on Russian works can be found," Kerner added, "the bibliography would gain much in value." Kerner, "Memorandum on Northeastern Asia: Historical, Political, Economic, and Cultural Factors in the Relations of Russia, China and Japan. A Research Project," typescript [date?], carton 26.

62 Kerner Papers, carton 6. Adeleine Gray Lin worked as Secretary of the Nankai *Social and Economic Quarterly*.

63 Lin claimed to have seven-tenths of the manuscript and one-half of the notes. Kerner Papers, carton 6.

64 Kerner Papers, carton 6. Two letters from the foundation, dated 13 November 1937 and 10 January 1939, are contained in carton 7. See also the handwritten seminar progress report, carton 26.

65 He also wrote that he was at work on the first volume of the eastward expansion. He anticipated "a large number of volumes, possibly ten, if funds for typing and assistance in research are forthcoming. The materials are assembled, most of them translated for the appendices of forthcoming volumes." Kerner, "Northeastern Asia Seminar (Report)," typescript (26 September 1941), carton 26.

66 George V. Lantzeff, *Siberia in the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California, 1943); Raymond H. Fisher, *The Russian Fur Trade 1550-1700* (Berkeley: University of California, 1943).

67 John Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier: A Preliminary Study in Colonization and Expansion with Special Reference to the Relations of Japan and Russia* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953); Andrew Malozemoff, *Russian Far Eastern Policy, 1881-1904, with Special Emphasis on the Causes of the Russo-Japanese War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958).

68 Born in Lublin (Russian Poland), Lantzeff (1892-1955) studied at the University of St. Petersburg (1913-1918). In 1918 he traveled to the U.S., enrolled at Stanford University, completed his M.A. in 1922, and taught in American secondary schools for a decade before obtaining his doctorate at Berkeley (1933-38). During 1939-43 he served in the U.S. Navy as a civilian employee, after which he taught at Wellesley until his appointment at Berkeley. Promoted to full professor only in

1955, Lantzeff died of a heart attack on 23 October of that year, having been in ill-health for many years. See *In Memoriam* [University of California], April 1958, pp. 63-64 (Kerner's obituary appears in the same issue, pp. 53-56). Lantzeff was replaced at Berkeley by Nicholas Riasanovsky.

69 Kerner encouraged Ph.D. students to work in Near Eastern and Far Eastern history —even before the university offered regular instruction on the latter —provided they could master the requisite languages. For a flattering portrait of Kerner's role as graduate teacher, see Wayne Vucinich, "Professor J. Kerner," *California Monthly*, November 1950, pp. 12, 37. In connection with the formation of the Slavic Institute at Berkeley in 1948, the University of California recruited Vucinich, who instead accepted an offer from Stanford. See the letter dated 22 June 1948, Kerner Papers, carton 8. At Stanford Vucinich trained Reginald Zelnik, who served as the other of my Berkeley dissertation advisors (alongside Martin Malia).

70 Such racial or ethnic elements in the juxtaposition of Europe and Asia appear to have fascinated other scholars, such as Klaus Mehnert, a Moscow-born German who taught at the University of Hawaii and established a program on Russia in Asia that eventually surpassed Berkeley's. Mehnert, *Ein Deutscher in der Welt: Erinnerungen 1906-1981* (Stuttgart: Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, 1981).