

Murlin Croucher, 1941–2011

Murlin Croucher, Slavic Librarian emeritus at Indiana University, Bloomington, died in his home on 31 July 2011, just shy of his seventieth birthday. For 25 years, Croucher worked diligently to help students and scholars in their research and to develop the Slavic collections at Indiana. Today, due in large part to his dedicated work, these holdings (including Albanian-, Baltic-, Hungarian-, and Romanian-language holdings) are one of the larger Slavic research collections in the western hemisphere. He was also responsible for strengthening the prestigious Central Asian and Tibetan collections for the Indiana University libraries. Croucher's influence was and continues to be felt beyond the confines of Bloomington as he trained several Slavic librarians who continue to be active in the profession, and he assisted academics worldwide in their scholarly pursuits.

Croucher was born on 24 August 1941 and raised in Rochester, New York. He attended the University of Chicago and the University of Montreal before entering the United States Army in 1963. While in the military, he studied Russian at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. Upon finishing at Monterey, Croucher was posted to West Germany, where he spent the remaining years of his service, leaving active duty with an honorable discharge in 1967.

After leaving the military, Croucher enrolled at Arizona State University and completed his BA in Russian in 1968. That fall he entered the graduate program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, earning his MS in the School of Information and Library Science in 1971 and completing his MA in Slavic languages and literatures in 1972.

In 1971, Croucher began working as a Slavic cataloger at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in the Academic Affairs Library, and within a few years he became the Slavic bibliographer. In 1980, he moved to Indiana University, beginning there as the Slavic bibliographer and rising to the rank of associate librarian. Through buying trips and book exchanges with both major and minor libraries throughout the Soviet bloc, Croucher worked tirelessly to acquire publications for the library, a very difficult task given the political climate of the Cold War.

During his tenure at Indiana, Croucher served on numerous library and university committees, working closely with the Russian and East European Institute and numerous academic departments. As an adjunct assistant professor of library science and an affiliated faculty of the Russian and East European Institute, he taught a course on Slavic bibliography that provided library science and other interested students the opportunity for in-depth study of the information and literature sources of the Slavic area. Many scholars and librarians received their first detailed introduction to the world of Slavic reference resources by taking Croucher's course. One might think that a class dedicated solely to the review, or perhaps more accurately "show and tell," of Slavic reference tools and bibliographic resources would be tedious at best. But Croucher's light-hearted yet serious-minded approach to the discussion of each resource made the classes extremely enjoyable and revealed his thorough knowledge of the bibliographic tools of the Slavic studies trade.

While at Indiana, Croucher was also instrumental in the library's receiving a \$164,000 Andrew W. Mellon grant to prepare Slavic librarians and a \$240,000 Department of Education grant to digitize a 20-year run (1956–75) of *Letopis' zhurnal'nykh statei*. This project converted citations from the Soviet index of journal articles into digital form, producing a keyword-searchable bibliographic database.

Croucher was also a productive scholar. He published articles, translations, and numerous book reviews and regularly presented papers at national and international conferences. His most important work remains the two-volume *Slavic Studies: A Guide to Bibliographies, Encyclopedias, and Handbooks* (1993). Even in the age of the Internet, this remains an essential reference work for any student or scholar seriously studying the region. Zdeněk V. David of the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, in his review in *Slavic Review*, noted that Croucher's bibliography is "the largest and most comprehensive reference work in its field. . . . The two volumes do represent a unique and most welcome contribution to the

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area of Slavic reference work and should be used profitably by both scholars and information specialists for years to come" (vol. 53, no. 1 [Spring 1994]: 296–98).

Croucher retired in August 2005, after 25 years as the Slavic bibliographer at Indiana University and nearly 35 years in Slavic librarianship. *Books, Bibliographies and Pugs: A Festschrift to Honor Murlin Croucher* (2006) was published to honor his professional accomplishments.

Due to his expertise in the field, countless librarians, scholars, graduate and undergraduate students, and just ordinary people consulted him. Their inquiries covered a broad range of disciplines and an almost unlimited range of Slavic studies topics. One of Croucher's great professional skills was the ease and accuracy with which he ably answered reference requests. Once in a while a reference title would not come to mind, so he would simply take the student or faculty member to the appropriate resource within the library stacks. His excellent work, as well as firm dedication to the profession, earned him widespread respect from Slavic scholars and librarians alike. Croucher took the stereotypical image of a stuffy and bookish bibliographer and reshaped it, giving it a truly human face. His legacy will continue through the wonderful collections that he developed and through the work of all the librarians whom he taught and inspired, as well as through the many students and scholars he ably assisted. Surviving Croucher is his longtime partner, Fred M. Clark, professor of Portuguese at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

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Andrei Ivanovich Pliguzov, 1956–2011

With the death of Andrei Pliguzov in Moscow on 26 March 2011, Russian historians lost one of their most brilliant and independent minds. Following in the footsteps of his teachers Nikolai N. Pokrovskii and Aleksandr A. Zimin, Andrei represented the best tradition of Russian critical scholarship. His profound expertise in the study of manuscripts, intimate familiarity with Russian archives and library collections, courage in asking provocative questions, and passion for historical inquiry, writing, and teaching inspired many in Russia, Europe, and the United States. Andrei's most important scholarly legacies are his studies of medieval Russian church history and his prodigious publication of sources from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Andrei's engagement and impact went far beyond his specialization, however: he was a facilitator, organizer, and editor of scholarship, an outspoken critic of the Marxist and nationalist discourses of Russian historiography, and a charismatic individualist who won the admiration and affection of many colleagues and friends.

In his scholarly publications—which comprise twenty authored, edited, co-edited, and translated books as well as countless articles—Andrei constantly invoked past generations of Russian scholars. Much of his work can be understood as a resumption and continuation of scholarly endeavors that had been interrupted, thwarted, or suppressed by the Soviet regime. For example, he greatly admired the researchers at the Imperial Archeographic Commission, most notably P. M. Stroev, A. S. Pavlov, V. G. Druzhinin, and S. A. Belokurov. Following their paths through Russian archives and libraries, Andrei reexamined the manuscripts they had studied and published. As editor in chief and principal author of *Russkii feodal'nyi arkhiv XIV–pervoi treti XVI veka*, vols. 1–5 (Moscow, 1986–92), republished as a cohesive whole in 2008, Andrei took up a very significant unfinished research agenda: the reconstruction of medieval church archives, particularly the lost archive of the Moscow metropolitans. His articles and commentary in this work comprise a masterpiece of extensive research and codicological analysis based on a wide array of manuscripts from collections all over Russia, especially the metropolitanate's epistolary, "formulary" codices. Andrei likewise helped publish the invaluable *Sochineniia: Kniga glagolemaia Fotios* (Moscow, 2005), a collection of Metropolitan Fotii's writings.