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# New Realities: Libraries in Post-Soviet Russia

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## ABSTRACT

The transition away from communism toward a more democratic society and the move to a market economy had profound effects on Russian libraries. Using the main public library in Bryansk, the Bryansk Region Scientific Library, as a case study, this article examines the changes in library service, including information access and the opening of previously closed collections, funding issues, the library's relationship with the government, changes in the professional mindset of librarians, and the information needs of library users in this period of transition.

## INTRODUCTION

The end of the twentieth century saw Russia moving from a highly controlled society to a more open and democratic one. Russia was also transitioning from a controlled economy to a market economy. Both the political and economic transitions have had profound effects on Russia's libraries. Under the Soviets, the library was not free to collect and disseminate any information they wished. *Partiinost*, propagating the ideology of the party, was the order of the day, and collection decisions had to be approved by the government. Nonetheless, literacy was important to the Soviets, book publishing flourished, and it was an accepted ideal that no person should have to walk more than fifteen minutes to get to a library (Kuzmin, 1995).

After *perestroika* libraries were faced with drastic budget cuts and closures, but at the same time they had a new freedom to open access to information. The citizens of Russia were also faced with many changes that created more information needs. Writing in the mid-1990s, Evgeny Kuzmin noted:

“Russia is at a turning point, and needs information as never before to appraise its eventful present and future, and reappraise the past” (Kuzmin, 1995, p. 106). Many libraries created new programs and expanded access to information to meet these needs. In addition to internal pressures and change, Western institutions, including foundations, government agencies, and library associations, became increasingly involved in the Russian library environment.

The political and economic transitions that occurred in Russia affected every aspect of Russian librarianship from collection development to professional values and priorities, to funding, to the new information needs of library users, and necessarily it affected the relationship between libraries and the Russian government. Russian librarians were confronted with a new reality and new circumstances in which to do their work. In this article I will examine the effects of these transitions on Russian libraries in general but will provide examples from the Bryansk Region Research Library (BONUB) that highlight some of the ways this library addressed challenges and took advantage of opportunities created by the political and economic transitions.<sup>1</sup>

Situated in western Russia on the border of Belarus and Ukraine, Bryansk is one of Russia’s eighty-eight regions, and it is divided into twenty-seven districts.<sup>2</sup> In the Bryansk region, as in the other Russian regions, there is a main regional library that manages the region’s public libraries, including centralized district and city libraries and their branches. In the region itself there are 741 public libraries (BONUB, 2004). Although BONUB directly manages only the public libraries, it maintains good relationships—and projects—with all libraries in the Bryansk Region, including special libraries, school libraries, and academic libraries. A young library by Russian standards, BONUB was founded in 1943 during World War II at the same time the region itself was founded (BONUB, 2001a). It is the largest library in the region, serving over 44,000 unique readers during more than 244,000 visits in 2001 (BONUB, 2001b).<sup>3</sup> BONUB has fifteen departments and currently employs sixty-nine librarians.<sup>4</sup>

## FROM CENSORSHIP TO OPENNESS

Although there were hundreds of thousands of libraries in the Soviet Union, they were all under the tight central planning authority and financial control of the government (Greening, 1995). Lenin and his wife, Nedezhda Krupskaiia, a librarian by profession, instituted the Soviet library system (Raymond, 1979).

[Libraries] were to serve as instruments for eradicating illiteracy and for educating the population; an important element was moral education, one which would make for good Marxist/Leninist citizens. Thus, the role of the librarian was not to facilitate access to material which the reader demanded, but rather to guide the reader to material that

was considered appropriate and to keep away from the reader material which was considered inappropriate or harmful. (Thomas, 1999, pp. 114–15)

Three things that informed Soviet librarianship were *partiinnost*; the *spetskhran*, which were closed repositories of restricted material; and censorship. *Partiinost*, “party mindedness,” formed a foundation for Soviet censorship. “In the library, [*partiinnost*] was asserted through book purges, biased collection development, restrictions on access to disapproved information, ideologically manipulated catalogs, and bibliographical services such as ‘recommendatory bibliography’ and ‘reader guidance’” (Kimmage, 1992, p. 56). Only librarians had access to the complete library catalog, so readers could be kept from knowing what the complete holdings of the library were.

The *spetskhran* was made up of the writings of discredited political figures, dissident writers (even if they only authored a forward to an otherwise uncensored book), minority writers, and foreign materials. About 30–40 percent of the Lenin Library, for example, was in the *spetskhran* (Greening, 1995). The opening of the *spetskhran* following the fall of the Soviet system affected all Russian libraries. Not only did this make available new information, it “raised yet another serious concern. Library stocks appeared to be stuffed with myriad copies of ‘morally outdated’ and ‘ideological’ literature (Genieva, 2000, p. 7). While new acquisitions to overcome this situation became a priority, there was no funding from the state for them.

The relaxing of censorship meant that librarians could now criticize the state of libraries and librarianship in Russia. Previously the overall superiority of Soviet libraries could not be questioned. Joyce Martin Greening noted that under *glasnost*, foreign books and journals became increasingly available. This made it possible for Russian librarians to pursue interests in Western librarianship, “not just in its technical aspects, but in its approaches to reader service, freedom of information, and patrons’ right to choose what they read” (Greening, 1995).

## THE LIBRARY-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP

According to Ekaterina Genieva, director of the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow, libraries are one of the forces propelling Russian society forward. In her lecture for the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois in 2000, she stated: “Libraries were among the first to become involved in construction of a new social and cultural environment, and continue doing so today. Thereby, they are implementing the right of every individual to free access to information, one of the basic human rights.” She went on to say:

Libraries are deeply rooted in social life. Readers, citizens and the society as a whole are being shaped by libraries, and this strongly depends on how libraries observe the principle of openness and accessibility. By

practicing various types of activities, libraries actively mediate the feedback between products of culture and their recipients. Readers, in turn, are live participants of historical processes, affecting life and libraries as a part of it. This intercalation is a prerequisite for ascent to an open society, a society open to changes and to the future. (Genieva, 2000, p. 16)

During the Soviet regime, the public library was a governmental organization that reported to the Ministry of Culture. Although the relationship with the government has changed, it remains an important one. While the new Russian government has yet to provide sufficient funds for the adequate support of libraries, the changes in the relationship between libraries and government go beyond funding. As Lahiri has observed:

With the political change, the new Russian Federation adopted the principles of modern democratic government and recognized the value of culture in the society and its importance within the state. The new laws were framed for decentralized management of culture that sought to give more power at the local government level including financial responsibilities for providing non-ideological library services to the community (2001, p. 119).

In 1993 the Law on Culture was passed which, in part, decentralized funding from the federal government to the regional governments. This decentralization meant that many libraries at the regional level were involved with the formulation of cultural policies and that funding levels varied greatly from region to region. The government seemed to recognize the importance of libraries to the emergence of a more open society. At the end of 1993, for example, at a large congress of Russian librarians in the city of Tula, the Minister of Culture stated that the way to an informed society is through a library information network (Sidorov, 1994). In 1995 a Ministry of Culture resolution stated: "As a new Russian community is emerging, libraries are called upon to play a crucial role in the opening of citizens' free and unlimited access to information and knowledge, the unification of Russia into one informational and cultural whole and its integration into the global community" (qtd. in Thomas, 1999, p. 121, resolution no. 532).

Though not without difficulties, BONUB has continued to work with the members of the local government administration both on the regional and district levels. One way in which the library cultivated its relationship with the government was by inviting heads of district administrations to visit the regional library to see the resources the library had. These visits were thought to have an impact on the attitudes of the local officials concerning the importance of the library. According to one Bryansk librarian, "there have been members of the administration who have taken more notice of the libraries in their district after visiting the regional library. Not only does the library benefit but the local communities also greatly benefit."<sup>5</sup> Librarians have also worked with the regional administration to create library legislation. According to an assistant director, Bryansk was the second

region in Russia to secure a local library law. This law states that everything published in Bryansk must be deposited in the regional library.<sup>6</sup>

### FUNDING IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC TRANSITION

Entering a market economy and market-based relationships caused many difficulties for libraries. Guarantees previously made by the state no longer existed. In a 2001 interview with *Library Journal*, Vladimir Zaitsev, the director of the National Library of Russia, was asked: "What do you see as the top three challenges that Russian libraries face?" His answer: "Finances, finances and finances" (Rogers & Oder, 2001, p. 15). This sentiment was echoed at the regional level. In response to the question "Which of the significant changes were related to political changes?" on my questionnaire, one respondent wrote: "Practically all of the changes in the library were connected with economic changes and the transfer to a market economy. In the beginning of the process there was unstable financing so it was necessary to learn to manage the situation, to learn to earn additional funding sources, to create and improve new services."

There are nine federal libraries governed by the Ministry of Culture of Russia that still receive their funding through the federal government. They are generally thought to be better funded than the regional libraries. During the most difficult economic times of the mid-1990s, even the federal libraries did not receive funds on time for important items of expenditure such as salaries. By the end of the 1990s, the federal libraries were generally receiving 100 percent of their salary budget on time from the state; however, other funds—for example, for utilities—were not always funded fully or on time. In the regional libraries funding issues were worse. Many library materials and activities had to be funded through whatever revenues libraries could generate themselves. Librarians turned toward fee-based services and other fundraising activities to cope with the difficulties of the poor economic situation (Kislovskaya, 1999).

In 2001 BONUB received less than 50 percent of its budget from the state. The majority of its budget was obtained through grants, fees for services (such as photocopies, document delivery, creating bibliographies, etc.) and from friends of the library and other sponsors (BONUB, 2001b). As the percentage of funding from nonstate sources indicates, BONUB has been very successful at receiving grants. One of the assistant directors recalled that it was not always the case that librarians were interested in writing grant proposals. "It was a difficult time, 1996, when I first tried to involve people in grant writing. They said 'Oh no, who will give us money?' It was important to have them write proposals and to make sure they would be successful. There were just a few people who believed me, but now there are many."<sup>7</sup>

The public library system in Bryansk has seen the number of member libraries decrease from 777 in 1995 to 741 in 2005, and slightly more than 42 percent of rural libraries are operating with reduced hours. In addition,

many rural and school libraries have been combined (BONUB, 2001b, 2004). This closing of libraries was a nationwide phenomena. The Federal Statistical Committee in Russia, Goskomstat, reports that the overall number of libraries has decreased from 62,700 in 1985 to 50,900 in 2003. This is due in large part to the decrease of state funding (Goskomstat Rossii, 2005).

### NEW INFORMATION NEEDS

The political and economic changes in Russian society have created new information needs for people in areas such as law, economics, ecology, management, electronics and computer technologies, and language teaching, along with the need for more and better textbooks (Genieva, 2000). New needs are reflected in such comments to my questionnaire by Bryansk librarians as “[the library is] acquiring material on questions which were never studied before,” and “The interest of readers changed and new disciplines and new materials on the subjects have appeared.”

BONUB has responded to changes in information needs of its readers in sometimes creative ways. New departments have been created, such as the Law Information Center, the Local Studies Department, the Electronic Hall, which contains computers with Internet access, and the Promotions Department. Other departments have been revamped. The Lenin Hall, for example, became the Socio-Economic Literature Department. The Foreign Literature Department was able to create a German Reading Room as a result of a grant from the Goethe Institute, a German organization that promotes German cultural and educational policy abroad. The library also recently added an “American Corner” reading room, funded by the U.S. State Department. Nearly all of the librarians who answered my questionnaire mentioned the reorganization of the library and the creation of new departments as one of the most important changes undertaken by the library.

Many of the library departments also created new and different kinds of information resources. Responding to user requests, the Foreign Literature Department, for example, developed a special freely available service related to education abroad. The department, in addition to collecting print materials on the subject, mounts exhibitions and collates advertisements sent from study abroad programs. One of the librarians has the job of organizing the information by topic and keeping it current. The department also invites alumni of study abroad programs to present their experiences and discuss the necessary steps to apply and enroll in such programs. The head of the department commented that this kind of first-hand knowledge is valuable for their users. She also noted that “there is a commercial database [on study abroad programs] but it is too expensive so we have to do it ourselves.”<sup>8</sup>

The Local Studies Department created electronic resources to highlight information about the Bryansk Region. One of these is an online database that contains an extensive bibliography of cultural heritage resources. It also

includes pictures of and scholarly essays about architecture, archeological sites, cultural monuments, and other sites of historic or cultural significance to the Bryansk Region. The department has also created an online centralized local studies catalog for the Bryansk Region. Staff at BONUB created original records for any publication or cultural heritage material created in the Bryansk Region since 1945 held at or by other libraries, archives, and museums within the region. As a result users visiting BONUB, or even just BONUB's Web site, can locate materials about the region regardless of where it is held in the region.<sup>9</sup>

An Ecological Information Center was created in response to the Chernobyl disaster of April 1986; it includes a number of environmental and ecological information resources, such as a booklet about the quality of drinking water and an annotated bibliography of articles on the topic.<sup>10</sup> As the assistant director of the library noted, "We started to work very actively in this direction because the environmental situation was not, and is not, good."<sup>11</sup> The director discussed some of the library's extraordinary environmental educational activities in this way:

There are a lot of actions . . . deliberative public forums . . . individual consulting . . . The library is very open so anyone can come to get information about ecology and the state of the environment in the Bryansk Region. We carry out scientific conferences, where we raise current issues that are very urgent in our region. We also try to raise these issues on the Duma level of local government. We make the information available for mass media.<sup>12</sup>

BONUB's Law Information Center was created in January 1999 in response to a presidential order to disseminate law information to the population. It was the third library in the country to create such a center. A major service it provides is to make a lawyer available for two hours a day to discuss legal questions with patrons. The center has a good selection of electronic law resources and a well-developed system of training patrons to use them. Not only does the center help citizens to understand their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, but perhaps more importantly it helps them to navigate ordinary activities, such as renting apartments, that were never required of them during the Soviet period.

Like all regional and central libraries, BONUB has a Research Methods Office that is responsible for staff development and research on library methods. The "Library as a Community Center" project, headed by the Bryansk's Research Methods Office, has as its centerpiece deliberative public forums. These forums bring members of the community together to discuss issues facing it, such as drug use, AIDS, ecology, and juvenile delinquency. An issue booklet that lays out possible policy choices is used to guide the discussions, which are moderated by librarians.

The librarian from BONUB who is a leader in promoting these deliberative public forums stated: "It is in our nature to discuss social and political

problems and to speak, but before, all discussions were not deliberative. Now it's a new form."<sup>13</sup> She believes that the forums are popular because they are versatile in content and they bring together different groups of people, including local government officials, citizens, and journalists.

These innovations in service are designed to make BONUB truly a civic institution. One of the assistant directors elaborated on this changing interaction with their community:

In my library there are a lot of activities for the community, not just for people who read books or who participate in our clubs, but for other organizations. Usually our auditorium is very busy with different kinds of activities, and they are essentially civic activities. We try to be in the middle of these activities. We try to organize different meetings with different people. . . . Sometimes we push our community to discuss very important problems . . . To have open access to these problems many, many groups in our society must be involved.<sup>14</sup>

### COLLECTIONS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Intimately tied to funding are collection development and access to new technology. In a cruel irony, there is freedom to acquire books but no money to buy them. Like many libraries, BONUB is not able to buy all the materials it would like to make available for its users. The Ecological Information Center, for example, does not have enough material geared toward the nonscientific community. Staff in each library department have similar stories to tell about what they would like to purchase for their readers but cannot. Instead the librarians try to find creative ways to serve their readers. The head of the Ecological Information Center remembered how she started the center: "The year the center was founded I had a map and articles clipped from newspapers and magazines . . . that was the basis of the center."<sup>15</sup> This is only one example of how the librarians have not let the lack of funding discourage them from creating new programs and expanding the information available to their users.

Collection development throughout Russian libraries was also affected by the changes in book publishing, including the emergence of many new small publishers and a decrease in production of material by the large state-approved publishers because of a lack of state funds. "From a librarian's point of view, the result of this proliferation has been utter confusion" (Greening, 1995, p. 123). There has been a sharp decrease in the publication of scholarly material and an increase in the publication of pulp fiction. The centrally managed distribution system crumbled, and legal deposit, which requires publishers to submit a certain number of copies to libraries, is no longer enforced.

Access to information technologies has become increasingly important for modern libraries, but funding for it in Russia has been as problematic as funding for acquisitions. BONUB has been successful in securing funding

for several projects designed to improve access to technology from organizations such as the Soros Foundation and Project Harmony, a nongovernmental organization that uses grassroots connections to build community and partnerships. And yet, in 2002 there was only one publicly available computer for the electronic catalog. The library did have a computer lab called the electronic information hall that had eight computers available to users, as well as two to four computers in each department for the use of the librarians. However, they all shared the same connection to the Internet, making the wait for a Web page to load or checking email an exercise in patience.

Most of the librarians responding to my questionnaire mentioned the introduction of new technology as one of the most significant changes they have witnessed. One librarian summed it up: "Electronic databases help a lot in our work. In the Public Service Department it became easier to answer patrons' questions. Our opportunities are greater, our work became more effective."

An example of the introduction of computers and other technology to the library is a project conducted in cooperation with the Unecha Central Library and BONUB. Unecha is a small town in the Bryansk Region. The project, called "Local Communities in the Modern Information Environment," received funding from the Open Society Institute (OSI) as part of the Small Towns of Russia Program. According to BONUB's Web site, the goal of this project was "to intensify the information role of the small town library by establishing and developing partnerships to unify the information resources of the region and provide new information services to the community."<sup>16</sup> The Bryansk Region Scientific Library served as the consultant and methodological center for the project. During the project the Unecha Central Library instituted many new library services and trained more than 100 people to use information technologies. The new services helped the library provide access to information technologies directly to users, but they also involved providing what might be called business services, such as creating business cards and providing access to some types of graphic design. The business services were fee based, with the money collected used for the further development of the library. An equally important outcome of the project was that BONUB gained a methodological basis for teaching other libraries to work with their communities.

## PROFESSIONALISM

With the fall of communism, Russian public libraries had to become civic institutions responsible to their local communities. In other words, libraries needed to serve individuals, not political systems (Kapterov, 1995; Melenteva, 1995). This change necessitated a change in professional values and priorities. As a sign of this shift many of the major library journals changed their names in the early 1990s. For instance, *Bibliotekar* (Librarian) became *Biblioteka* (Library). The January 1992 issue of the newly re-

named *Biblioteka* proclaimed the change in name to signify the change in approach, defining the library not as an arm of any political party, but as a social and cultural institution, and the librarian as a creative personality, not as a bureaucrat. Additionally, a new library association was formed, the Russian Library Association (RLA), which is a member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and is beginning to harmonize Russian cataloging rules with those used in the West (Lahiri, 2001). As part of their new professional identity, librarians began to push for a restructuring of the priorities of Russian libraries to deal with these common problems: "1) the poor physical condition of the libraries, 2) the need to revamp library education courses, 3) the lowly status of the profession, 4) the lack of equipment and computer technology, 5) the breakdown and re-emergence of the book trade, and 6) the need for changes in societal attitudes" (Spain, 1996, p. 89).

The 2001 annual report of BONUB outlines changes to which libraries in the Bryansk region had to respond throughout the decade of the 1990s:

- The market economy changed the conditions of library management.
- The centralized library system disintegrated.
- New library laws were created
- Local self-management of individual libraries emerged.
- New technologies were introduced into libraries.
- International collaborations between Bryansk and Western libraries were developed.
- Bryansk librarians became very involved with Russian and international professional associations. (BONUB, 2001c)

Two additional changes that could be added to this list were reflected in the responses to my questionnaire. First, the mindset of library professionals changed, becoming more oriented toward notions of professional success, self-expression, and career advancement. Second, public relations activities were introduced to encourage the formation of a more positive image of libraries and to increase awareness of the provision of improved services.

The introduction of local management of individual libraries was one of the most significant changes in the post-Soviet library field. Library managers now have to make all the decisions for their libraries. Mandates no longer come from above. As a result, a variety of uncoordinated management plans and styles emerged across the country. Librarians had to choose how to react to their new circumstances. Some chose to take proactive steps to reinvent themselves and their libraries. However, various studies have shown a deep-seated conservatism within the ranks of Russian librarians. For instance, adapting to new technology was difficult for librarians who felt that person-to-person interaction and giving individual service to each patron was a point of pride (Genieva, 2000; Raymond, 1995).

Galina Kislovskaya, who was a head librarian at the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow, divided Russian librarians into two “camps”—those who blame external forces, namely the state, for all the bad that has happened in their institutions, and those who think that their institutions can find the resources they need and that they have the creativity to address the problems they are facing. By the end of the 1990s the failing economy meant that most librarians could no longer wait for the state to solve their financial problems. Today the difference between the two “camps” is not whether or not they are trying to solve problems with the means at hand within their own institutions but rather in their ability to find the resources they need not just to keep their libraries open but to develop and extend their services (Kislovskaya, 1999).

Although there always were laws and government policies in Russia designed to support libraries, they were not always enforced. The accomplishments of Russian libraries throughout the 1990s is the result of the work of exceptional top- and middle-level managers of individual libraries. Kuzmin noted that “enviable results are being obtained in places that have one clever and dynamic manager plus several clever and dynamic officials who know the importance of good libraries in their town or district and see them as a sources of local prestige” (Kuzmin, 1993, p. 570). BONUB is one example of such a place.

The BONUB assistant director for research and automation, for example, took a proactive approach in dealing with the challenges her library faced. She had the opportunity to travel to the United States in the early 1990s to study library practices, and she returned to Bryansk with many new ideas to implement in her library system. She said that initially she met with some resistance from her colleagues because they were depressed about library closures and believed that libraries and librarians would not survive the political and economic transition. She described to me her annual reports to the librarians during that time: “I tried to push them and to say ‘No! You should not cry! We need to understand that we are in a new position and live a new condition. It’s just a new country and a new reality.’”<sup>18</sup> Now the library is forward looking and has met many of the challenges it continues to face positively, creatively, and with considerable success.

## CONCLUSION

Although the economic and political changes made librarians uncertain of their future, the Russian library system remains an important institution in Russia. The opportunities now open to Russian libraries are encapsulated in this quote from Zaitsev, the director of the National Library of Russia: “In the past, library work was based on ideology, because all of life in Russia was based on ideology. Now, a variety of opinions can be expressed; there are fewer restrictions on free speech” (Rogers & Oder, 2001, p. 15). The fall of communism has afforded citizens in Russia new freedoms and

new responsibilities. BONUB provides a good example of how a library in post-Soviet Russia can adapt and grow. There are still challenges to be met, and questions remain about the future of the political and economic environment of Russia, but BONUB is in a strong position to meet any future challenges. And as Genova (2000) argued, libraries are in a unique position to help move society forward.

The public library system itself still has a hierarchical structure that defines the communication and authority relationships among the libraries that are part of the BONUB network. BONUB draws on this structure to disseminate new information and new methods. Strengthening the network is the Research Methods Office, another preexisting organizational arrangement that allows for the transfer of information and training. Thus, the library did not and does not have to find new mechanisms for training. In an ironic twist, the structure of the Soviet library system has become, in this instance, a conduit for innovation and change.

## NOTES

1. The information in this article about the Bryansk Region Scientific Library was gathered from interviews and observations conducted in the beginning of February 2002 when I traveled to Bryansk, Russia, on a research trip supported by the Charles F. Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio. This research trip was to gather data for my master's thesis (see Knutson, 2002). During this two-week period I met with partners of the library, including three schools, three nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and four other libraries in the region, as well as friends of BONUB. At the end of the two weeks I had conducted eighteen interviews with thirteen people. The interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to over an hour; however, the majority lasted 30–50 minutes. Interviews cited in this article use the speakers initials only.

In addition to my observation and interview notes, I also reviewed papers and reports written by the librarians at BONUB. In April of 2003 I sent a follow-up questionnaire to a librarian at BONUB with instructions to distribute it to as many staff members as possible. This questionnaire specifically addressed changes librarians had witnessed in the library and how the changes had affected their day-to-day work. Twelve questionnaires were returned. The length of time that the respondents had been working in the library ranged from three to twenty-five years. Half of the respondents were working at the library before the break-up of the Soviet Union (1991), and each respondent represented different departments in the library.

2. As of December 2006 Russia's 88 administrative divisions are 21 republics, 7 krais, 2 federal cities, 48 oblasts, 1 autonomous oblast, and 9 autonomous okrugs. Bryansk is an oblast. For clarification sake I should note that the city of Bryansk is located in the Bryansk district of the Bryansk region.
3. In 2004 BONUB served 17,400 users; however, due to renovations it was only open half of the year. See BONUB (2004).
4. In Russia all employees of a library are called *bibliotekar* (librarian). However, here I have counted only those staff members who have some education in librarianship. The total number of employees at BONUB is 127.
5. N. IA., personal interview, February 18, 2002.
6. O. K., personal interview, February 9, 2002.
7. O. K., personal interview, February 19, 2002. See <http://www.scilib.debryansk.ru/5program/index.html> (in Russian) for a listing of BONUB projects from 2000 to 2004. Over half of the projects, many of which are mentioned in this article, were funded by the Soros Foundation through the Open Society Institute (OSI) Russia. It will be interesting to see how these projects are sustained and new projects started now that Soros has closed down OSI Russia and spun off the projects to other independent organizations.

8. L. IA., personal interview, February 8, 2002.
9. These two resources along with the other digital resources created by the Local Studies Department can be found at <http://www.scilib.debryansk.ru/3kraeved/index.html> (in Russian).
10. For more information about their resources see <http://www.eco.scilib.debryansk.ru/> (in Russian).
11. O. K., personal interview, February 9, 2002
12. S. D., personal interview, February 17, 2002.
13. N. Le., personal interview, February 7, 2002.
14. O. K., personal interview, February 19, 2002.
15. N. La., personal interview, February 19, 2002.
16. See <http://www.scilib.debryansk.ru/undesign/5program/unecha/1.html> (in Russian).
17. Kislovskaya is currently deputy director of the Russian State Library.
18. O. K., personal interview, February 19, 2002.

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