



September 13, 2007, Convo Hour
Collins Center, Faculty Lounge

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**Memories of World War II:
Bridging the Divide between Tatars and
Russians Through Communist Student
Organizations, 1968-1989**

Stories of the Soviet war effort often begin with harrowing tales of extreme cold in Arctic-like conditions and then focus on the slow but heroic movement of Soviet divisions as they crept from village to village, liberating citizens of the communist state from Nazi rule. These dramatic images from 1941-1945 encouraged the sons and daughters of veterans in Kazan' to retrace the steps of a previous generation. Twenty-five years after the end of World War II, students from the Kazan' State University in Tatarstan went from village to village to resuscitate the meaning and memory of the war. These were members of a student organization called Snezhnii Desant, or loosely translated "Snowy Paratroopers." Snezhnii Desant has played an instrumental role in defining local memories of the war. For the last thirty years, the Desantniki have been recovering and reburying the remains of Soviet soldiers abandoned on the battlefields of World War II. It is ideally suited to enhance our understanding of civil society from Brezhnev to Gorbachev as this volunteer association adjusted to a changing political climate and fought to establish itself in the public sphere. Finally, the talk will link to current issues of expansionist government under Vladimir Putin.

Please **RSVP** by Sep 6, 07: dherreiner@lmu.edu

For more information, check out: <http://myweb.lmu.edu/dherreiner/junfacseminar.html>

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