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# SCII Agenda Newsletter

*February 2023 Issue*

*The mission of the Schoolcraft College International Institute (SCII) is to coordinate cross-cultural learning opportunities for students, faculty, staff and the community.*

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## Keith Gave's *Russian Five*: History and Understanding Beyond Hockey

by Alec Thomson



Even a cursory scan of the news reveals a steady dose of stories centered around Russia and its actions. Most of that coverage is quite negative and includes items such as the systematic doping of Olympic athletes, efforts to sabotage American elections, and more recently the invasion of Ukraine. Today's animus towards Russia's behaviors is reminiscent of the Cold War era in which the adversarial relationship between the United States and Soviet Union served as a lens by which all other actions were viewed.

In his book, *The Russian Five*, Keith Gave takes readers back to a pivotal time in history when the fissures in the Soviet system were widening to the point that the Cold War was coming to an end. The tearing down of the Berlin Wall (1989) gave way to the collapse of the Soviet Union, but the newly formed Russian Federation's (1991) transition to creating a more open society was characterized by fits and starts.

Coinciding with the Soviet collapse was a rebuilding effort within the Detroit Red Wings organization that recognized the immense talent trapped inside the Soviet hockey system. At the time, the names Fedorov, Konstantinov, Kozlov, Larionov, and Fetisov were little-known in the United States, but they would become the driving force behind the restoration of glory to a proud sports organization.

Keith Gave deftly guides readers through the legal, political, social, and emotional challenges that stood between the Detroit Red Wings extricating these players from behind the Iron Curtain and putting them on the ice here in the United States. While each player's situation is different, there are common themes to be found in their stories. For example, it is important to remember that these men were not only hockey players but were also members of the

Red Army. As soldiers, their defections had to be delicately handled so as to not have their actions characterized as traitorous and thus jeopardize the lives of family members who remained within the country.

Additionally, the cultural gap between the players experience in Russia and the lives they came to in the United States was immense. Keith's discussion on the Russian success in Detroit is, in part, connected to the assembling of Russian players together as unit to provide them with a familiarity and structure that helped to maximize the skills they possessed.

Keith's writing takes the reader directly into lives of these players and personalizes the larger global changes that were unfolding. In my interview with Keith, he stated that while the Stanley Cup victories were a big deal in Detroit (it was the first time Detroit had won the Stanley Cup in 42 years), it was also a big deal in Russia; "In Moscow people were staying up to 3 o'clock in the morning, or middle of the night, to watch their Russian or Soviet hockey stars play the Red Wings and win that big trophy that they didn't know much about, but it was a pretty cool looking trophy." When he was there in 1994, he noticed that the country was changing, but when he returned in 1997, accompanying several of the Russian hockey players to show off the Stanley Cup, there was a completely different feeling. In that moment, it felt like "sports were being a bridge of culture."

Obviously, the historical record tells us that the Red Wing's efforts were a huge success. Aside from their Stanley Cups victories and individual accolades the infusion of these players transformed the National Hockey League (NHL). While today's NHL is still predominately filled with North American players, Russian players accounting for only about 6% of the league, current players such as Alexander Ovechkin , Evgeni Malkin, and Nikita Kucherov are superstars who continue to shape and define the way the game is played.

Outside the reshaping of hockey, one should ponder the larger legacy of this exciting adventure. Near the end of his book, Keith describes discussing the matter with Slava Fetisov and quotes Fetisov, "We need to build more bridges than weapons...That's my deep feeling about what should happen between our countries." What are the possibilities and limits of sport as a bridge to reach across cultures and countries? Today, Fetisov is no longer a hockey player, but serves within the Russian Federation Council (the upper chamber of Russia's legislature). In light of the relations between the US and Russia today, one would be curious as to how much of this old vision Fetisov embraces from his current post.

The book is an enjoyable, insightful, and engaging to read. Keith's intimate access to the players and direct role in bringing Sergei Fedorov to the United States make the book worth reading. Red Wings fans looking to build on the excitement of the team's current playoff push while looking to connect with the late 90's Stanley Cup runs will find great details and stories. Finally, the book is a worthwhile read for those non-hockey fans too. Specifically, while those individuals intrigued by US and Russian relations can find strong parallels in the way that these challenges were navigated then and maybe today.

Keith Gave is coming to campus on March 30th from 2:30pm to 4:30pm in MC 100 B&C. All staff, faculty, students, and community members are invited to this [Meet-the-Author Event](#) sponsored by [SC Pageturners](#); questions can be directed to Pageturner Coordinator and English Professor [Denise Schell](#).

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# Reimagining Resilience

by Helen Ditouras



On Friday February 17th and Tuesday February 21st, Columbia Teachers College faculty and staff, Dr. Amra Sabic El-Rayess, Vik Joshi, and Tina Keswani delivered an important training to Schoolcraft College on the subject of

hate prevention. Specifically, the workshops included the importance of storytelling to build resilience to hate and focused on the power that educators hold to interrupt educational displacement and radicalization in disconnected students. Moreover, the trainings covered the stages of radicalization/educational displacement and reviewed the differences between cultural violence, structural violence, and its final manifestation: direct violence.

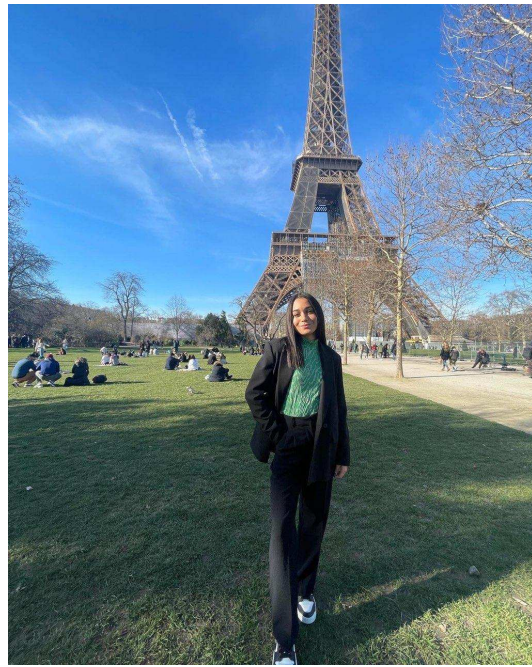
According to the workshop, educators can build community in their classrooms and instead of displacement can foster open dialogue, critical thinking, social connectedness, self-reflection, self awareness, perspective seeking, and overall engagement. All of these competencies are important in preventing educational displacement, radicalization, and the final byproduct, targeted violence. Both of these workshops were supported by the Schoolcraft College Foundation and co-sponsored with the International Institute Focus Series, Student Activities, and the Center for Experiential Learning.

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## Reasons to Talk to Your Students about Studying Abroad

by Janice Ford



Meet University of Miami (FL) senior, [Sydney Hawkins](#). The Florida native will graduate this spring as a journalism major with a focus in journalism law. She plans to take a gap year to prepare for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) before matriculating at a northeastern law school. As part of her college experience, Sydney decided to experience European culture by enrolling in the university's Study Abroad Program (SAP). She enjoyed it so much that she did it twice!

Before beginning her freshman year at the University of Miami in 2018, Sydney chose to spend a semester in Rome, Italy to fully immerse herself in the culture. More recently, she returned from Barcelona, Spain, where she began her final year of undergraduate studies. Sydney shared that she wanted a deeper experience than the conventional tourist encounter. So what did Sydney think of her Eurocentric education? Read on...

### **Let's start with the big question, would you recommend the study abroad program to other college students?**

"Absolutely! You really get to experience the true culture of a country and not just what happens during the week you would experience on a vacation. While I was based in Rome during my first SAP, it is so much more than the Sistine Chapel, or the Colosseum and the Pantheon. And while those things are great, I wanted more. It's hard to explain but it was really important to me to see how locals treat Americans when they are not fueling the economy as tourists."

### **Did you find the approach to education different in Europe from the U.S.,**

## **and was there a difference between your educational experience in Italy and Spain?**

“I definitely found the approach to teaching **very** different in Europe than in the United States. I also had a very different experience in Italy than I did in Spain. During both semesters I carried a full class load as if I were attending college in the U.S. My professors were local academics who gave us a more immersive experience than if I had been taking classes at Miami. There were lots of practical experiences where we would actually walk around the city to see what it was that we were learning about. The U.S. educational systems is a more conventional (and dated) paradigm, with the majority of teaching take place within the classroom or lab. That was not my experience in Rome or Barcelona. We spent a great deal of our time experiencing what we were learning about, not just reading about something in a book and/or memorizing information for a test. I have to say that I like that way **much** better!

In Italy the professors were older, stricter and less lenient than my Spanish instructors; while my Spanish teachers were somewhat contemporaries and treated the students more like peers. The Spanish professors were not as modest and less conservative. In both countries I felt like the teachers make the effort to get to know the students—that’s not something that I can say I have experienced a lot at Miami.”

### **Any last observations or final words?**

“I encourage everyone to take advantage of their university’s study abroad program. It’s a great opportunity to live the culture and appreciate how others live. There is some pressure to assimilate to the culture you’re living in so that you don’t come off as the entitled American, but that is a healthy motivation to embrace your surroundings. And don’t let the cost of the program scare you away because most schools have financial aid for SAP too.”

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Please consider registering for the upcoming workshop titled [Education in Post-COVID](#) World with our Midwest Institute partners which will take place on March 24 from 10am until 3:30pm.

This workshop will discuss the increasing importance of information technologies, especially the Internet impacting education. We will explore various learning challenges and strategies of pedagogy that faculty could use with their students and possibly revise their teaching.

Questions about this [workshop and other MIIIE events](#) can be directed to Professor [Theo Sypris](#) at [Kalamazoo Community College](#).

## Teaching Resources

This is a screenshot of the United Nations website. At the top left is the United Nations logo and the text "United Nations | UN75 2020 AND BEYOND". To the right is the slogan "Shaping our future together". Below this is a search bar and a link to "A-Z Site Index". A navigation menu contains links for "Home", "UN75", "Our Common Agenda", and "News and Events". The main banner features a photograph of a young girl in a light blue headscarf looking directly at the camera, with other people and tents in the background. Below the photograph is the text "A New Era of Conflict and Violence".

### A New Era of Conflict and Violence



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