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Editorial information

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Deadline for submissions for the April newsletter is Friday 15th March 2024.

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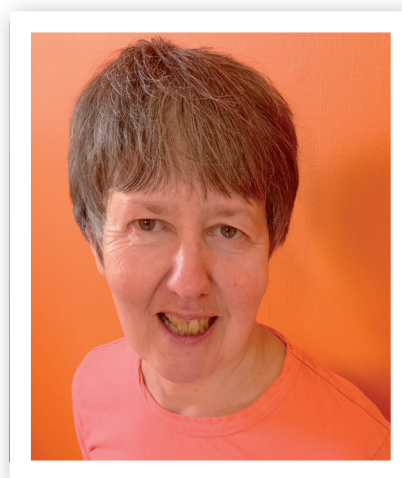
 British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies

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President's Report

Since becoming President I have attended various online meetings as a representative of our association, but at the end of October I was very happy to be able to take part in an in-person event on behalf of BASEES at the University of Vienna.



Professor Miranda Jakiša, who chairs the Austrian Association of Slavic Studies, organised a workshop bringing together representatives of subject associations connected to Slavonic and East European Studies in Finland, Austria, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA. We discussed the role of associations in reshaping our discipline as we respond to the need to reassess what we do in the light of the Russian war on Ukraine, and to the challenges facing the humanities, an area widely perceived to be in crisis. We talked about levels of student interest in our field, whether demand for teaching in Slavonic languages is changing, and which ones were offered in our country's universities, what kinds of changes to the curriculum were being pursued, and the position of Ukrainian Studies. The workshop provided a welcome opportunity to share experience and talk about concerns we have in common. I share with the other participants the hope that this initiative will lead to further discussions about how we might cooperate in future.

The associations represented at this workshop varied considerably in size and scope. In some countries it is the norm to have one (or more) Slavonic Studies association for specialists in language, literature and culture, and another association for those working across the social sciences. BASEES formed in 1989 from a merger of two separate associations, and as such is very much in the minority among the European associations represented in Vienna. Being a larger interdisciplinary association does offer certain advantages in terms of the range of activities we support, for instance, the work of our Study Groups (fifteen of which are currently active).

It might also be argued that because it represents members who research across multiple disciplinary areas, BASEES is well placed to respond authoritatively to the various consultations that crop up from time to time about things that affect the professional lives of our members. All of our members who work in UK academia will be only too aware of the REF (the Research Excellence Framework), and of the fact that the next round of assessment is due to take place in 2028. In early October I responded on behalf of BASEES to the initial decisions published in June, about proposed changes to the assessment ([these proposals can be seen on the UKRI website](#)). Comment was invited from higher education institutions and other groups involved in research, on several potentially significant changes to the process. Given the number of changes put forward, it was reassuring to see that the Units of Assessment for the 2028 exercise would stay as they had been for the 2021 REF. >>

BASEES regrets to announce the death of Professor Stephen White, Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Glasgow, and former BASEES President, on 15 November 2023.

An obituary will appear in the April 2024 issue of the Newsletter.

>> Preparing the BASEES response to the consultation involved email discussions with Committee members as well as attending meetings with other academic associations who were preparing their own responses. The discussions I was involved in made it clear that colleagues across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities, arts, and social sciences share concerns about some of the proposals put forward by UKRI, particularly the plan to break the link between individual members of staff and unit submissions, which is meant to promote inclusivity but which seems fraught with unintended consequences, including for early career researchers and colleagues with protected characteristics.

Part of the response submitted by BASEES was informed by issues that are particularly relevant to our members. We were pleased to see that UKRI plans

to retain the measures used in REF 2021 to take account of the impact of the Covid pandemic, and the recognition that researchers in some disciplines were more severely affected than others. Our response noted that many of our members had been forced, by travel restrictions which made planned fieldwork or archival research impossible, to make fundamental changes to the direction of their research. We also drew attention to the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on the feasibility of members' research projects involving visits to Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, and to the possible disruption that may be caused by escalating tensions elsewhere, e.g. between Serbia and Kosovo, and in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

I shall end by looking ahead, briefly, to our next Annual Conference in early April 2024, when we will be able to share our

work with colleagues and perhaps visit panels that take us outside our disciplinary comfort zones, providing us with new perspectives and unexpected connections. Many of us will by now have received a response to our proposals of panels or papers. Registration will be open soon, and the conference programme will be available in January. I am full of good intentions about having my paper ready before I get on the train to Cambridge. If you are going to be presenting your work next April, I hope you'll have the time and space to prepare, so you can enjoy the occasion properly when it comes.

Katharine Hodgson

BASEES Supported Event

The eighth Annual Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century Conference, held on 28-29 April 2023, featured insights from a diverse range of panel discussions. Dr. Paul Hansbury delivered the accompanying Annual London Lecture.

The conference would not have been possible without the support of BASEES, the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, Professor Yarik Kryvoi, Professor Andrew Wilson, Professor Alé Markova, Paula Borowska, Peter Braga, and Dr. Stephen Hall.

Right: Dr Paul Hansbury (left) preparing to give the 2023 Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies next to Professor of Ukrainian Studies Andrew Wilson (right) at the UCL Institute of Education. Photo credit: the Peter Braga (28 April 2023).

The event convened 23 experts focusing on Belarusian history, politics, society, and culture, including Dr. Vitali Byl, Pippa Crawford, Tadeusz Giczán, and Dr. Anna Shadrina.

Dr. Byl analysed the impact of the current political crisis on academia in Belarus, revealing difficulties in staffing state institutions with loyal academics. The media panel had some particularly interesting papers. Pippa Crawford examined regime-critical social media news outlets, such as Nexta and BelSat TV, and state versus non-state media coverage of the Belarusian 2020 protests and Russia's War in Ukraine. Andrei Kalavur also touched on the regime's creation of clone news organizations, like Tochka.By, a mimic of TUT.BY. Tadeusz Giczán's presentation covered brain-drain in Belarus's tech industry. The regime's crackdown and the war in Ukraine have inspired tech-savvy Belarusian refugees to create the mobile-phone-integrated "New Belarus Platform." The platform aims to create a virtual, civil society-led Belarusian state beyond the control of the Lukashenka regime.

Dr. Hansbury's Annual London Lecture, coinciding with the launch of his book *Belarus in Crisis: From Domestic Unrest to the Russia-Ukraine War*, explored potential outcomes for Belarus in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, including scenarios of Russian annexation or Belarusian partisans' return. The lecture provided a comprehensive view of Belarus's geopolitical situation after the 2020 protests.

This conference presented a thorough analysis of contemporary Belarusian issues. Recordings of panel discussions and the Annual London Lecture are available on the [Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum YouTube channel](#).



Inclusivity in Slavonic & East European Studies

In this, the last of her features exploring inclusion and diversity in Slavonic and East European Studies, Serian Carlyle reflects on the aims, achievements and challenges of those working to advance these areas in their home departments, and draws on recent projects to offer some tips.

I (Serian Carlyle, She/Her) have been compiling these interviews for the last two years. I created the series to provide a forum that could highlight collaborative and group projects in Slavonic and Eastern European Studies.

By sharing these projects, I hoped that we could learn from one another's approaches, avoid duplicating work, and demonstrate the importance of EDI and de-colonisation work to the field. As this is my final column, I wanted to share a little about a project I personally have been working on at SSEES, UCL, in the hope that this may act as a blueprint for similar projects in other departments.

I am a PhD student at UCL, funded by the Wolfson Trust. My research investigates the use of genre in films for young people made at the Gor'kii Film Studio (1963-1982). I have an article forthcoming with *Apparatus Journal* as part of their issue on Decolonising the (Post-)Soviet Screen. Previously, I co-wrote a chapter on the depiction of abortion in Soviet cinema with Dr Rachel Morley, in the edited collection *Gender and Authority Across Disciplines, Space and Time*, edited by Adele Bardazzi and Alberica Bazzoni, and published by Palgrave Macmillan.

Tell us a little about your project

This year, I applied for a small "Changemakers" grant at UCL to run a series of workshops bringing together staff and students from across SSEES to discuss what inclusivity means for us and what we should be doing to ensure we are as inclusive a community as possible. I had several aims: to give students a sense of what goes on "behind the scenes", to gather data for staff on students' experiences and desires, to empower individuals to take up their own projects, and to help us prioritise what we work on first. After the workshops were finished, I collated our conclusions and reported them to the EDI team at SSEES to inform the department's EDI strategy over the next few years. I have been thrilled to see that some of the smaller-scale actions suggested by the participants have already been implemented and extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who got involved and shared their thoughts and experiences.

As inclusivity programmes go, this is a project that is easy to implement - all you need is a space, attendees, two moderators, and (vitality) some snacks. However, such active engagement is also essential if departments want to move beyond vague promises and towards critical action. If you'd be interested in running something similar, here are a few tips and please do reach out to me to discuss this in more detail:

- Accept that you can't make this a totally "safe" space - it requires critical discussion and disagreement. On the other hand, issues are likely to come up that are extremely personal and there are power dynamics between attendees that will affect the interactions of participants. This has to be carefully managed: set very clear expectations and ground rules for all participants.



- Leave space for the personal. First, this allows people to share themselves and reveal what drives them. This, in turn, makes it easier to have respectful debate. Second, speaking in a forum like this can be a cathartic experience - lean into it.
- Find a balance between utopian vision and smaller, more immediately achievable, goals. Both are necessary. We mustn't make false promises or bite off more than we can chew. But equally, belief in a better future is essential for long term progress.

In an ideal world, what would an inclusive and representative field look like for you?

An inclusive field is one in which we all care for and support each other. This probably sounds as though I am suggesting that we transform academia into a commune! But bear with me. Much of what I am suggesting is simply a recommitment to the basic tenets of what academia has long prided itself on: collaboration, willingness to learn, community, and enthusiasm.

For me, an inclusive and representative field requires accessibility - to buildings, to information, to opportunities. It would allow a full discussion of the rich variety in research. It requires us all to support our colleagues and ensure that their contributions are valued and rewarded - for all of our colleagues. The cleaning and security staff are as valuable as the director. It means that we create spaces where people are able to acknowledge their personal experiences - bereavement, ill-health, financial precarity, parenthood, relationships, divorce, etc - without feeling that these may be held against them. It demands that we respect students and learn from them, as well as teach them. >>

Inclusivity in Slavonic & East European Studies

>> It means embracing the potential in ignorance: acknowledging when we don't know something and finding the people to learn from.

All of this is doable, and (if you'll let me be extremely sincere and un-British) a prospect that fills me with joy. I would count myself as proud and truly privileged to be a member of such an academic field.

What are some next steps that would help us in achieving that goal?

We need work on inclusivity, diversity, and justice to be recognised and rewarded. So often, individuals and institutions are apt to make grand promises about

diversity. However, the hard graft that goes towards making this a reality is rarely funded and usually doesn't "count" towards promotion. This has two, inevitable outcomes. First, no matter the good intentions behind the work, the lack of support or accountability means that such projects follow the most elastic of time-frames. The work drops down the priority list; projects stagnate or are rushed at the end of the year. We get discouraged and demoralised. Often, this means that it's the people who are most personally affected by these issues who end up doing the vast majority of the work, without thanks or support. This has huge consequences, both on their personal well-being and on their professional development.

Some necessary changes have to happen at an institutional level. Given the levels of overwork and burnout across academia, it is clear that moral and motivation is already stretched. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless in such an environment. But we all have to acknowledge our own capacity to make change. We can put pressure on our departments, we can bring EDI approaches into our teaching, we can highlight research and projects by marginalised scholars, we can share our expertise and personal experiences, we can reach out to colleagues and offer support... There will be no systemic change without individual action. This is everyone's responsibility.

BASEES Supported Event

Ex Oriente Lux

The international conference "Ex Oriente Lux: Émigré Culture in Interwar Paris" took place on 1-2 September 2023 at Queen Mary University of London.

It was co-organised by QM PhD students Isabel Jacobs and Veselina Dzhumbeva and was generously co-funded by BASEES, London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP) and QMUL. The hybrid conference attracted esteemed guests from around the world, many of them travelling to London. The event was also well-attended by students and researchers from universities across London, as well as guests from other UK universities, such as Oxford and Southampton. With topics as varied as literature, dance, philosophy, visual arts and history, the conference introduced new perspectives to a growing, interdisciplinary research field. We explored both the individual and collective experiences of exile and migration and its reflections across media. Most importantly, we challenged the existing status quo



After-conference refreshments on the terrace of the Graduate Centre at QMUL

of diaspora and migration studies, as reflected in the ground-breaking keynote talks by [Alexandra Smith](#) (Edinburgh), [Maria Rubins](#) (London) and [Leonid Livak](#) (Toronto). Our event also responded to the increasing urge to decolonise our field in the shadow of Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. We shed light on various

marginalisations among East European émigrés, from Yiddish voices to Ukrainian female philosophers. Not least thanks to BASEES, QMUL and LAHP's generous support, the event was a full success. An edited volume with the conference proceedings is already in preparation.

Spotlight on BASEES Non-Residential Fellows

Earlier this year, members' donations enabled BASEES to award eight non-residential fellowships for Ukrainian scholars in the humanities and social sciences based in Ukraine. These fellowships provide a one-time stipend of £1000 to support the intellectual activities of the scholars, and 12 months BASEES membership. In these profiles, we offer insight into the work being undertaken by some of the non-residential fellows.



Dr Ihor Dvorkin, Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute National Technical University

World War II in contemporary Ukrainian discourse

Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022, interest in the history of Ukraine in the broad circles of the Ukrainian public has grown significantly. This of course includes the previous destructive war on the territory of modern Ukraine - the Second World War. This historical event played and continues to play a major role in Ukrainian political, cultural, public, and scientific discourse. After the events of the Euromaidan and the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, especially after the legislative changes of 2015 known as "decommunisation laws", the situation changed in favour of a national approach. The war had a significant impact on the societal sphere in Ukraine, the politics of memory and historical politics. With the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the process of rethinking historical events, including the Second World War, has continued at the state and local levels. We also have relevant ongoing changes in legislation, memorialisation, toponymy, etc.

This project aims to investigate the main trends and changes in the politics

and culture of war memory in modern Ukrainian discourse. In particular, these are changes in legislation, memorial practices, toponymy, teaching the history of war, etc.



Dr Dvorkin will present his research in an online talk entitled 'the Second World War in contemporary Ukrainian discourse' on Wednesday 13th December at 1-2pm (BST). Please see basees.org/events for more information and [Zoom registration](#).



Dr Inna Chernikova, H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University

Ukrainian Cultural Heritage under Martial Law

Ukraine has a centuries-old tradition of preserving historical and cultural monuments, and is home to seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Under martial law which was introduced in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the issue

of saving cultural heritage sites from destruction has been extremely important. The project is aimed at researching, describing, photographing and creating a register of cultural heritage sites of Ukraine that have been destroyed or partially destroyed since the beginning of martial law. Accordingly, the research was carried out in three stages:

1. Assessment of the state of the damaged objects of cultural heritage of Ukraine since the beginning of martial law in Ukraine to the present. The scale of loss of historical and cultural monuments, the degree of damage, the possibility of reconstruction or conservation at this stage of military events, and conservation actions were analysed.

2. Creation of the register of historical and cultural monuments of Ukraine lost as a result of hostilities. Relevant photographs of the objects registered were included.

3. Development of proposals for specific and effective measures to preserve the cultural heritage of Ukraine, involving specialists from the state institutions, the public, foreign representatives, and enthusiastic conservationists.

The key benefit of the project is addressing the urgent necessity to highlight the scale of the loss of Ukraine's cultural heritage in the context of Russian aggression since 2022. The creation of the register of cultural heritage sites of Ukraine, with photographic documentation of the destruction, should be communicated to the world community and become a guarantee of developing specific ways to protect and preserve the monuments of history and culture of Ukraine in today's realities.

As a result of this project, a register of the lost objects of Ukraine's cultural heritage, complete with photo album, was created.



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Spotlight on BASEES Non-Residential Fellows



**Prof Vitalii Hutnyk, Ivan Franko
National University, Lviv**

International law and the conflict in Ukraine

The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine forced the international community to face one of the most daring instances of armed aggression of one state (Russia) against another (Ukraine) since the Second World War. This is certainly a challenge not only for Ukraine as a victim of aggression, but also for the entire international community. The aggressor is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, that is, the body that bears the main responsibility for international peace and security. If the aggressor is not punished, impunity increases the likelihood of new aggressive actions and not only by Russia, but also by other states (China against Taiwan, etc).

The purpose of the study is to develop international legal models of response to the aggression of the Russian Federation, which include excluding the country from the UN Security Council, establishing a compensation mechanism for the aggression committed, as well as to bringing persons who have committed international crimes (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and crime of aggression) in Ukraine to criminal responsibility.

The research project discusses the following issues:

1) The qualification of the armed conflict in Ukraine, and the features of the armed conflict that form obstacles in the application of International Humanitarian Law; 2) Consideration of what should be rethought in application of international humanitarian law in the Ukrainian armed conflict; 3) Individual criminal responsibility for violations of international humanitarian law in Ukraine.

Hutnyk V. The Development of International Criminal Justice: Expectations and Reality. *Teisė*. 2023. Vol. 126 (May). P. 101-15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15388/Teise.2023.126.7>



**Dr Natalia Bulyk, Krypyakevych
Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Lviv**

Yaroslav Pasternak's field archaeology is written with light

During the implementation of the project «Yaroslav Pasternak's field archaeology is written with light», I digitised and catalogued a collection of glass negatives related to the activities of archaeologist Yaroslav Pasternak (1892-1969) and the Archaeology Department of the Shevchenko Scientific Society Museum in

Lviv (1892–1939). The collection includes approximately 300 negatives, preserved in the Archaeology Department of the I. Krypyakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Thanks to Pasternak's field activities, many sites of different periods and cultures appeared on the archaeological map. Indeed, Yaroslav Pasternak is known primarily for having established the location of medieval Halych, which archaeologists have been searching for since the middle of the 19th century. Since 1199, Halych has been the capital of the Principality of Halych-Volhynia, one of the largest cities in medieval Europe. It reached its peak in the second half of the 12th century, during the reign of Yaroslav Osmomysl (1153-1187) and his son Volodymyr Yaroslavovich, and later (in the 13th century) under Roman Mstislavich and his son Danylo Romanovych. The process of archaeological research at sites in Halychyna, fragments of the exposition of the Archaeology Department of the Shevchenko Scientific Society Museum, and individual finds are depicted in the photos. Among the sensational photos in this collection are detailed photos from the 1934–1938 excavations in Halych-Krylos, the skull of a *knyazhna* [noblewoman] with a golden tiara, and a stone sarcophagus from the 1937 excavations. Without exaggeration, this collection is unique and will have considerable resonance in the scientific world.

As part of the project, articles were written, a photo selection was presented at conferences in Ukraine and Poland, and work is currently underway on a monograph on the history of Lviv archaeology in the interwar period.



R&D Funding Report

Four times a year, BASEES opens grant competitions to enable Member postgraduates to apply for funding support for research activity. Here, doctoral candidate Vija Skangale reports back on her fieldwork in Georgia.

Collaborative art practices as a strategy for traumatic experiences in the newly emergent post-Soviet national identity of late 20th-century Georgia.

My research examines the artistic response to traumatic experiences of a politically turbulent environment in the former Soviet republic of Georgia between 1985 and 1995.

The project identifies the collectives that appeared in the mid- 1980s in Georgia and their unofficial collaborative events in Tbilisi in the above timeframe. By interviewing the remaining living members of the collectives and using their subjective experiences, I aim to explore how artistic practice navigated the precarious past, and identify strategies that helped artists deal with these traumatic political experiences. This exploration will be led by the research question: what has helped the artists to live through these experiences, and can similar strategies be applied by artists in future?

This contribution to knowledge will shed light on certain aspects of the resilience of artists in Georgia regaining their national identity. The research is located within a theoretical framework of social and cultural studies. This will be done by placing artists' experiences at the centre of the study to produce new knowledge about engagement with traumatic experiences via artistic collaborations. Various stakeholders can use this

knowledge and contribute to experiential learning.

In my recent trip to Georgia, I aimed to work with archives and the material available to reconstruct the exhibition histories of three underground collectives (*Archivarius*, 10th Floor and *Marjinishvilebi*) between 1985 and 1995. I worked closely with the Propaganda Network Contemporary Art Archive and connected with a few scholars working on similar topics. To my most profound disappointment, it appears that the National Archive of Georgia has a policy of putting in a request as a signed, in-person form, and it would take ten working days to receive an answer to your request. Unfortunately, my trip was shorter than that, so I didn't manage to access the material, and in the future, I should consider going back for a more extended period.

However, I still managed to find relevant information for my research project in the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. In this one of the oldest libraries in Tbilisi, I could see old newspaper and journal clippings which described the politically turbulent context of those times and even a few exhibition reviews. Even though the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia holds an impressive number of books and scientific, cultural and educational resources, I found the archival system outdated, contributing to the challenges of finding relevant information.

I was lucky to obtain a chance to visit the home archive of Karlo Kacharava's home archive. Before his death in 1994, Karlo was one of the most prominent artists, art critics, writers and poets of the 80s and 90s and one of the founders of the *Archivarius* collective. I was impressed at the number of Karlo's diaries, which are guarded



and preserved by his sister, Lika. The 1 *Archivarius*, 10th Floor and *Marjinishvilebi* printed books of his diaries and essays presented to me will significantly contribute to my research.

Despite the unexpected challenges at the National Archive and the National Parliamentary Library, I would like to think of my trip to Georgia as fruitful and productive. After all, I'm at the very beginning of my research journey and I try to embrace the 'hidden bumps' on the way. I will make sure to incorporate the knowledge I gained into my research project, especially when planning the next trip. Next year, in addition to visiting the National Archive and the National Parliamentary Library, I will aim to start conducting interviews with the artists.

About Vija

Vija Skangale is a Georgia-born and London-based interdisciplinary educator, curator, and researcher. She holds an MRes degree in Exhibition Studies from Central Saint Martins (UAL) and has worked at Chelsea College of Arts (UAL) before becoming a PhD candidate. Her research interest is rooted in the pre- and post-Soviet exhibition histories in Georgia. She has participated in numerous projects, including at the Kunsthalle Tbilisi, Tate Modern Late, Tate Exchange, London Georgian Film Festival, Biennial Foundation, Asia House Film Festival, and Asia House Bagri Foundation Literature Festival.

For more information on BASEES grants and how to apply, please see basees.org/baseesgrants.



Both images: Karlo Kacharava's art collection and personal archive