



THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR
SLAVONIC AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

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BASEES Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2011

President's report



Stephen
Hutchings

I am pleased to be able to begin
this editorial with two pieces of
excellent news that I am sure you
will want to join me in celebrating.

First, Professor Phil Hanson of the University of Birmingham (emeritus) was awarded the OBE in the last Queen's Honours lists. Phil has long been very active in BASEES and this is a tremendous accolade for him. I would like to congratulate him on behalf of our organisation and all of its members. Secondly, I am delighted to report that our recent nominations to the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS) were all successful. The title of academician has now been bestowed on Professor Rosalind Marsh, Professor Hilary Pilkington and Professor David Lane (again, all very prominent BASEES members). We offer our sincere congratulations to the three of them. There are two rounds of AcSS nominations each year – one in December and one in June. I would welcome suggestions from BASEES members as to whom we might nominate in future rounds. There have been relatively few scholars in our field to have been put forward of late, and I am keen that we should be better represented in influential bodies of this sort. For details of the criteria for election to the Academy, please visit its website at www.acss.org.uk/members3.php.

There is, however, another group of BASEES activists deserving of our respect and admiration. I refer, of course, to those unsung heroes working tirelessly behind the scenes on the BASEES Executive Committee. Since I became President last year, the level of commitment shown by these colleagues has been a revelation to me. Without them our annual conference, our membership system, our research and development and postgraduate activities, our website and newsletter, our email list, our records, our finances, and much else besides, would simply cease to operate. And all of this must be maintained at a time when the pressures put upon academics by their own institutions have never been greater. Many other similar professional organisations benefit from permanent (and sometimes full-time) administrative assistance. The most that we have been able to afford thus far is occasional, part-time assistance for discrete tasks. These other organisations also, of course, charge much higher subscription rates to their members. In a round-about way, this brings me to the crux of the issue I wanted to focus on in my editorial.

At our last AGM in April 2010, we sought and gained approval to work on a proposal to raise our subscription rates for members. This is not something we undertake with much pleasure but I am afraid it is long overdue. Quite apart from the growing pressures on our officers, the BASEES 'structural deficit' (to use a term that will be familiar to those who have been following our hard-pressed nation's economic travails) has now grown to £ 6.1K per year and we have had to dig ever deeper into our depleted reserves in order to cover those sudden and unforeseen expenses which inevitably arise from time to time. This, I suppose, is not surprising, given that we have not

Conferences and Calls for papers

Public Relations of the Cold War
CRASSH/University of Cambridge,
Mill Lane Lecture Room
1-3 December 2011

Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia
2012 Annual Meeting
High Leigh Conference Centre,
Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire
4-6 January 2012

Trust/Distrust in the Soviet Union
University College London
17-18 February 2012

BASEES Annual Conference 2012
Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge
31 March – 2 April 2012

The French Language in Russia
University of Bristol
12-14 September 2012

The Alexander Men Conference
This conference is inspired by the life and work of Alexander Men, to seek a shared ground via dialogue, debate and question. Join leading thinkers from a variety of faith and cultural traditions to tease out Men's legacy and open up a contemporary conversation.
St Andrew's Church in Moffat, Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland
14-17 September 2012

XV International Congress of Slavists
Minsk (Belarus)
20-27 August 2013
Applications to give individual 15-minute papers in thematic sessions are invited to meet the organizational deadline of 15 December 2011. Contact: Mary MacRobert, catherine.macrobot@lmb.ox.ac.uk

increased BASEES subscription rates for well over ten years. Whilst a modest rise in the current rates will not buy us that permanent administrator, it will, we hope, deal with the deficit. It will also bring our rates a little closer to those of some of our sister organisations. It will help us pay, too, for some of the enhancements that we hope members will have noticed in the last few years: increased sums made available to them for research and development; new BASEES Facebook and Twitter accounts; a members' email list; a redesigned and, we hope, rather more appealing, BASEES Newsletter. Work on the proposal is almost complete and I will announce the new rates in the next (January 2012) issue of this newsletter. Along with a number of related small changes to the BASEES constitution which I shall also present in the January edition of the newsletter, these will need to be approved at the next AGM in Cambridge in April 2012.

One of the extra costs which are affecting our finances particularly significantly is that of printing and posting this newsletter. There are further projected rises in the cost of postage further down the line and printing is now much more expensive than it used to be. I assume that the environmental issues surrounding the printing and posting of 600+ paper copies on a tri-annual basis do not need to be elaborated upon. For these reasons we decided at our last committee meeting to move from January onwards to a PDF-version of

our newsletter mailed out electronically to members' email addresses and available on our website. We will do so, I should stress, on a trial basis. If there is an outcry against it, we will, naturally, reconsider, but we hope that you will appreciate the reasons for our decision. In due course, a fully-online version of the newsletter will allow for much more flexible, attractive and extensive content.

To conclude this, perhaps unusually circuitous editorial, and to return to the 'unsung heroes' theme, I ought to emphasise that serving on the BASEES Executive Committee comes with numerous benefits as well as commitments. We are a very close-knit team and all of us (myself included) are, together, learning vital new skills and acquiring valuable new experience which I am certain will be transferable to other contexts. Service on the committee is an excellent way of gaining privileged, yet perfectly legitimate, entry into some of the all-important networks on which all scholarly fields thrive, and of meeting interesting (and often influential) people. We have a number of vacancies coming up on the committee and I would urge anyone, no matter how junior or senior, who wishes to try their hand to contact me at their earliest convenience. I look forward to welcoming new committee members to the AGM in April!

Stephen Hutchings
29 October 2011

BASEES Study Group on Religion and Spirituality in Russia and Eastern Europe

Visions of the Future: Religion, Apocalypse and Dystopia in Slavic History and Culture

The BASEES Study Group on Religion and Spirituality in Russia and Eastern Europe (RSREE) recently organised a symposium on 'Visions of the Future: Religion, Apocalypse and Dystopia in Slavic History and Culture', held at the Humanities Research Institute at the University of Sheffield on 8 October 2011. It addressed apocalypticism in Slavic history and culture and,

in particular, the interplay between literary texts, theological doctrines, and folkloric traditions in shaping visions of the end of the world. There were two keynote addresses, the first by Professor Steve Smith (European University Institute, Florence) on 'Apocalyptic Narratives in Soviet Russia, 1917-30s' and the second by

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BASEES Study Group for Russian and Eastern European Music Annual Conference 2011

Denis Arnold Hall, Oxford University Music Faculty



On Saturday 15 October 2011 the Annual conference of the BASEES Study Group for Russian and Eastern European Music took place in the Denis Arnold Hall at the Oxford University Music Faculty. This sixth annual meeting of the REEM Study Group concentrated on music theory and criticism, following past conferences on 'Eastern European Musical Relations', 'Music in Russia and Eastern Europe after "The Thaw"', 'Russia's Musical Revolutionaries', 'Musical Nationalism and Modernism in Russia and Eastern Europe', and Central and Eastern European music as musical crossroads. The conference theme encouraged a significant number of responses by

scholars from both ends of Europe and both sides of the Atlantic. Although the Czech Republic was the only country other than Russia to be represented in the conference programme (through Leoš Janáček) the conference covered a long time-span – extending from the nineteenth century until the very end of the twentieth century – through a great variety of case studies: critics, theorists and composers.

The morning sessions were dedicated to music critics and theorists both in pre-Revolutionary Russia as well as the Soviet Union. Marina Lupishko (Le Havre) analysed the narratological aspect of Yakov Druskin's (1902-1980) theoretical work – he is primarily known as the key member of the group of avant-garde poets and philosophers called the *chinari* and brother of the well-known Soviet music historian Mikhail Drushkin. Ildar Khannanov (Peabody Conservatory, Johns Hopkins University) discussed the theoretical thought of the eminent musicologist Yuri Khlopov (1932-2003) underlining its holistic nature. Rebecca Mitchell (Miami University) concentrated on a

significant trend in music criticism in late imperial Russia, which, inspired by Symbolism, sought to identify a musical 'Orpheus', who would assume a redemptive role for the Russian nation. Janna Kniazeva (Russian Institute for Art History, St Petersburg) presented an overview of her recently published monograph on Jacques Handschin (1886-1955) with an emphasis on his early twentieth-century music criticism. Anne Marie Weaver's (Eastman School of Music, Rochester) paper focused on César Cui's (1835-1918) ideas on song composition, juxtaposing them with his actual approach to composing songs. The ingeniously perceived and performed keynote speech by David Fanning (University of Manchester) and Michelle Assay (Sorbonne) on theoretical and analytical approaches to Russian music continued the 'tradition' of their radical keynote talks, integrating interludes of conversation with the audience.

The already energetic conference atmosphere livened up even more when Ildar Khannanov, wishing to problematise the term nationalism, suggested its elimination from musicological practice, a suggestion towards which the audience was not particularly sympathetic. The afternoon session explored the musicological work of two twentieth-century composers. Ivana Medic (Open University and University of Manchester) discussed Alfred Schnittke's (1934-1998) writings on Luciano Berio. Makoto Nakamura (St Antony's College, Oxford University) analysed an episode in Leoš Janáček's (1854-1928) ethnographical work with regard to reviews of his ethnographical publications requested by the Czech Ethnological Institute. The conference closed with a concert of Serbian and Russian songs by the soprano Verica Grmusa (Goldsmith's College, London) and Dada Toksic (piano), who performed songs by Petar Konjović, Miloje Milojević, Modest Mussorgsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Katerina Levidou

Books



CELEBRITY AND GLAMOUR IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA: SHOCKING CHIC, ED. BY HELENA GOSCILLO AND VLAD STRUKOV, ROUTLEDGE 2011

This is the first book to explore the phenomenon of glamour and celebrity in contemporary Russian culture, ranging across media forms, disciplinary boundaries and modes of inquiry, with particular emphasis on the media personality.



New Eastern Europe (NEE) is a new quarterly journal of Central/Eastern European Affairs presenting in-depth analyses and stimulating reports from Eastern Europe. NEE contains some translated articles from Nowa Europa Wschodnia, but it also includes original material unique only to NEE. More info can be found here: www.neweasterneurope.eu

BASEES/ROUTLEDGE SERIES ON RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

Routledge is proud to publish this series on behalf of BASEES. The primary aim of the series is to publish original, high-quality, research-level work by both new and established scholars, on all aspects of Russian, Soviet, post-Soviet and East European Studies in humanities and social science subjects. Works of synthesis, reference books, and student textbooks will also be considered. Submissions from prospective authors are welcomed, and should be sent in the first instance to the series editor: Professor Richard Sakwa (R.Sakwa@kent.ac.uk), Dept. of Politics & International Relations, University of Kent, Canterbury CT2 7NX.

BASEES Study Group on Religion and Spirituality in Russia and Eastern Europe

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Professor Maureen Perrie (University of Birmingham) on 'Apocalypse and Insurrection: Old Belief among the Don Cossacks in the 1680s'. The panels considered the topics 'Apocalypse and Eschatology in Late Imperial Russia' and 'The End Times: Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Discourses'. Papers were presented by postgraduate students and scholars from Britain and beyond, working in a range of disciplines. Delegates considered why visions of the 'end' become particularly powerful at certain historical moments and how the language and form of apocalyptic fears have evolved over time. The panels prompted lively discussion which generated debate across disciplines and historical periods.

About 25 attendees travelled from across the country and from abroad to attend. In keeping with the Study Group's commitment to making its activities accessible to postgraduate students, students had their travel expenses reimbursed. The symposium was organised by the RSREE Study Group's convenors, Miriam Dobson (Sheffield) and Zoe Knox (Leicester). They are very grateful to the University of Sheffield and to BASEES for funding which made the day possible. For further details about this event, as well as the other activities of the group, please see RSREE Study Group's home page at www.basees.org.uk/sgrsree.shtml.



Zoe Knox

BASEES Postgraduate Conference

Cultural Exchange: Russia and the West

The University of Bristol hosted the BASEES Postgraduate Conference on 11 April 2011 in the Graduate School of Arts and Humanities.

The conference brought together current research students working on various topics related to cultural exchange between Russia and the West.

Apart from academic goals, the aim of the conference was to encourage *esprit de corps* among the students from different universities and disciplinary backgrounds. The conference was attended by research students from a number of UK universities, as well as several undergraduate and masters' students from the University of Bristol.

The conference began with a keynote lecture from Mike O'Mahony, which examined Soviet and Western cinema during the 1920s and set out the theme for the day of cultural exchange between Russia and the West through the medium of film. Conference papers looked at a wide range of topics – from the Ballets Russes to censorship of Western literature in the Soviet Union. The papers were organised into three panels that covered three broad areas of Russian studies: visual culture; exhibitions and display; and cultural production in the Soviet Union.

The first session, on Cultural Connections: Russia and the European Avant-Garde, included papers by Natalia Murray (Courtauld Institute), who discussed the critic Nikolai Punin's role in promoting the French Post-Impressionists in Russia with a focus on Cézanne; Cinthia Willaman Baltaxe (Cambridge) examined the Delaunays' relationships with Russian artists in Paris; and Louise Hardiman (Cambridge) explored British portraits of Anna Pavlova and Vaclav Nijinsky.

The second session on Art, Patronage and Display: Cultural Exchange between Russia and the United States offered papers by Annie



Theodora Clarke

Blood (Courtauld Institute) on cultural exchange between Russia and America during the 1920s, looking at exhibitions in Moscow and New York; Theodora Clarke (Bristol) examined Katherine Dreier's patronage of Wassily Kandinsky and the Russian art in the collection of the Société Anonyme; and Julia Bailey (UCL) discussed the display of Socialist Realism in America during Khrushchev's Thaw.

The third session concerned the topic of Stalin and the West: Interpretation and Representation of the Soviet Union and consisted of papers by Samantha Sherry (Edinburgh), who explored censorship of western literature in the Soviet Union; Maria Starkova (Courtauld Institute), who examined illustrations of internationalism in children's periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s; and Ariane Galy (Edinburgh), who discussed the Soviet Union and the West and ways in which a Western historiography of Stalin had been created.

A highlight of the conference was the closing lecture by the leading scholar on Russian art Professor John Milner from the Courtauld Institute of Art, who spoke on his major re-hanging and re-interpretation of the extensive collection of works by El Lissitzky in the collection of the Stedelijk an Abbemuseum in Eindhoven.

*Theodora Clarke
Conference convenor*