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Editorial information

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Deadline for submissions for the summer newsletter is 16th June 2023.

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 British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies

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President's Report

Dear colleagues,

This will be my last editorial as BASEES President. At the [annual conference in Glasgow](#) I will be handing over the presidency to Professor Katharine Hodgson from the University of Exeter.

It has been a difficult and challenging four years for academia in general and our field in particular. As we emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic, which brought significant disruptions for research and fieldwork, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 put our area studies both in the spotlight and at a crossroads. Context matters, and the war in Ukraine has shown it matters more than ever. We are all experiencing the major geopolitical implications of the war, and we are seeing the region under the spotlight, with academics and policy makers without regional expertise often dominating the public debate. This should really be a rallying moment for area studies. It is area studies, positioned at the intersection of the local and the global, the macro and the micro, spearheading multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, that is uniquely equipped to examine, interrogate, and explain political, cultural and social contexts.

It is fair to say that the war has also forced our field to reflect critically on internalised hierarchies and inequalities in area studies, compelling us to reassess theoretical conceptions, approaches and methodological frameworks. This process of decentring, rebalancing, and decolonising approaches to the study of the region, as well as the addressing of structural inequalities in area studies, is ongoing. The challenge for our field and organisation will be to embrace this process in a self-critical and constructive way, accelerating the important work that has been done particularly by many ECRs in our field and giving it the attention it deserves. The decentring is much needed, and local-specific context is important, but as area studies engages in this process it is critical to recognise that our area is defined through transregional

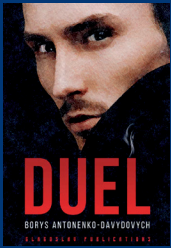


entanglements. We should avoid rigid compartmentalised approaches by positioning regional actors, Polish actors, Serbian actors, Ukrainian actors, Kazakh actors, or Russian actors, within wider global processes. The upcoming BASEES annual conference in Glasgow will provide an important forum to discuss these challenges, but also opportunities, to our area studies. In the opening keynote, Professor Gwendolyn Sasse, Director of the Centre of East European and International Studies (ZOiS) in Berlin, will ask 'Quo vadis Area Studies amidst Russia's War against Ukraine?' – a question that I am sure will be central to many conversations throughout the event.

BASEES 2023 will be the first time in our history that the conference moves north of the border. The initial idea to take our annual conference on tour was the brainchild of my predecessor, Professor Judith Pallot. It took many years of planning and a lot of hard work to make it a reality and I want to thank the University of Glasgow, as well as the city of Glasgow, for their unwavering commitment and support, especially once the original conference planned for 2021 fell victim to the Covid-19 pandemic. Having finally managed at the second attempt to make it happen, it is only appropriate to give Professor Pallot the floor in our Saturday evening 'in-conversation' keynote. Professor Sarah Badcock will invite Professor Pallot, who has been a real trailblazer in and for our field, to reflect on the development of Soviet/Slavonic and East European studies from the Cold War to the current war, and upon her own personal academic journey in area studies. Both keynotes will be live-streamed and recordings will be made available on our [YouTube channel](#) after the conference. >>

New Books

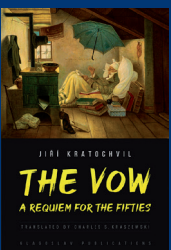
New titles from Glagoslav Publications



Duel by
Borys Antonenko-
Davydovych
(translated by
Yuri Tkacz)
September 2022

The central character in the gripping, psychological novel *Duel* is the Ukrainian intellectual Kost Horobenko. Set in the first years of the new Soviet Ukrainian state, the period of militant Communism, Horobenko, is forever duelling with his alter ego, the Ukrainian nationalist. This novel is one of a number of early works from the 1920s by Borys Antonenko-Davydovych, in which the writer tries to analyse the fate of intellectuals during the revolution in the Russian Empire, in particular the fate of those who were initially active in the Ukrainian national revival, and later, because of changed circumstances, were forced to switch to cooperating with the Soviet authorities. Of Antonenko-Davydovych's works devoted to this question, it is the largest and most profound, according to the literary critic Hryhoriy Kostyuk, and is psychologically complex and multifaceted. The works by Antonenko-Davydovych were welcomed for his rather sharp, satirical view of life.

<https://glagoslav.com/shop/duel/>



The Vow
by Jiří Kratochvíl
(translated
by Charles S.
Kraszewski)
December 2021

Set in 1950s Brno, at the height of Gottwald's Stalinist reshaping of Czechoslovakia into a Communist prison, and partially in today's independent Czech Republic, Kratochvíl, alternating between the dry Czech humour of Jaroslav Hašek and the uncanny, chilling otherworldliness of Edgar Allan Poe, takes the reader on a journey such as they have never been on before: to geographic areas in the beautiful Moravian city where no foot has set since the Middle Ages, and... places deep inside all of us, where most of us would rather never venture...

<https://glagoslav.com/shop/the-vow-a-requiem-for-the-fifties/>

>> Finally, I want to thank all our members for their generosity during our recent fundraiser for the **non-residential fellowship scheme for Ukrainian scholars** in the humanities and social sciences based in Ukraine. These fellowships provide a one-time stipend of 1,000 GBP to support the intellectual activities of the scholars. Initially, we had funds to support five fellowships, but a fundraiser amongst our members raised more than £3,000 to support another three fellowships. The real need for continuous support for Ukrainian colleagues has been highlighted by the sheer number of applications we received – well over 200. It has been a monumental task by our R&D Committee to read and assess all applications, and it

is heart-breaking that we were not able to make more awards. We hope that the awards will make a real difference to our non-residential fellows, and we will invite them in due course to showcase their research in a BASEES Talks series.

The last four years as BASEES President have been a real rollercoaster and the challenges for our field and BASEES have only increased. But our community is strong, and I hope that I have helped to create a more resilient, membership-facing, and agile organisation that will allow us to look to the future with confidence.

Matthias Neumann

Support to Scholars

BASEES is pleased to announce the recent awarding of eight non-residential fellowships for Ukrainian scholars in the humanities and social sciences based in Ukraine.

Dr Ihor Dvorkin (Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute) researching World War II in contemporary Ukrainian discourse.

Dr Bohdan Stasiuk (V. Vynnchenko Central Ukrainian State University, Kropyvnytsky/Kirovohrad) researching the works and translation of Volodymyr Vynnychenko.

Dr Natalia Bulyk (Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Lviv) researching photography of Yaroslav Pasternak's field archeology.

Dr Diana Hrynuyk (Taras Shevchenko National University, Kyiv) researching the preservation of Kyiv's museum heritage during the current war.

Prof Vitalii Gutnik (Ivan Franko National University, Lviv) researching the international law aspects of the armed conflict in Ukraine 2014-2022.

Dr Oksana Diadechko (Ancient Chernihiv National Architectural and Historical Reserve) researching early medieval musical instruments of Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

Prof Oleksandra Visych (National University of Ostroh Academy) researching the place of Crimea in Ukrainian literature.

Dr Inna Chernikova (H.S.Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University) researching the destruction of Ukrainian cultural heritage since the intensification of military operations on 24 February 2022.

Ukrainian Scholars at Risk: Fellowships in History and Slavonic and East European Studies

In 2022 BASEES launched the Ukrainian scholars at risk fellowship scheme. BASEES, the Royal Historical Society and other learned associations came together to support eight short-term fellowships in History and Slavonic and East European Studies. The aim was to provide a place of academic refuge for scholars from Ukraine at higher education institutions in UK, the EU or elsewhere in continental Europe. Matched by funding or in-kind assistance from the host institution, the fellows are provided with the necessities to support their integration in the academic community there for the duration of their stay (minimum three months).

The following scholars have participated in the scheme to-date:

Ms Alla Dubrovyyk-Rokhova
(Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen)

Dr Juliana Matasova
(University of Roehampton)

Dr Tetyana Zabolotna
(University of Sheffield)

Dr Nadiia Akulova
(University of St Andrews)

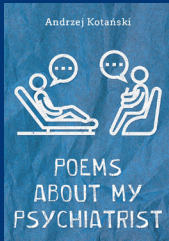
Dr Kateryna Budz
(School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh)

Dr Natalia Gromakova
(University of Aberdeen)

Dr Tetiana Ostapchuk
(University of the West of England)

New Books

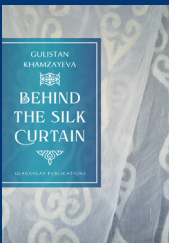
New titles from Glagoslav Publications



Poems about my Psychiatrist by Andrzej Kotański (translated by Charles S. Kraszewski) November 2022

Kotański's work is a bestseller in Poland — a status of which few, if any, collections of poetry may boast. Kotański's incisive, bare-bones approach to poetry, which savours of the best compositions of Tadeusz Różewicz and Zbigniew Herbert, presents to us an unnamed anti-hero. Kotański's anti-hero is a neurotic sort, a jumble of complexes, who can be best compared to the twitchy protagonists of Woody Allen's films. If we, as readers, identify with him, what does this say about ourselves, and our culture, now in the third decade of the twenty-first century? Here, reader, in the English translation of Charles S. Kraszewski, we present you with a mirror. Open your eyes, if you dare.

<https://glagoslav.com/shop/poems-about-my-psychiatrist-by-andrzej-kotanski/>



Behind the Silk Curtain by Gulistan Khamzayeva April 2022

This book is about multiculturalism, adapting to new environments, socialising with people of different cultures, linguistic integration, gaining experience, and facing challenges. It is about friends and family, Kazakh traditions and the country's mentality, charity and weddings, and the many other fascinating contexts in which Gulistan Khamzayeva, wife of a Kazakh diplomat and chairwoman of the Kazakhstan diplomats' wives community, was involved.

<https://glagoslav.com/shop/behind-the-silk-curtain-by-gulistan-khamzayeva/>

Support to Scholars



Dr Kateryna Budz:
Fellow at the University of Edinburgh researching the clandestine Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the USSR.

Having annexed the West Ukrainian region of Eastern Galicia during the Second World War, the Soviet regime abolished the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) at the pseudo-council of Lviv (1946). Under state pressure, the majority of Greek Catholic clergymen joined the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), with those who refused facing persecution.

My research focuses on the strategies of survival and resistance employed by Ukrainian Greek Catholics who went underground. The study seeks to demonstrate how the clandestine community balanced upholding its theological beliefs and ritual practices on the one hand with ensuring physical survival and institutional continuity on the other. Oscillating between survival and resistance, the clandestine Greek Catholics preserved their national and religious identity in the underground up to legalisation of the UGCC in 1990.



Dr Tetiana Ostapchuk:
Fellow at the University of the West of England, literary scholar researching Ukrainian American émigré writings, trauma and memory in migration narratives, borders and border crossings in contemporary art projects.

Awarded in August 2022, the grant firstly gave me a chance to finalise several projects successfully, mainly due to the renewed access to library and database resources, which I lacked because of the war and fleeing to the UK. Secondly, I could share some of my inquiries into Ukrainian graphic novels on war and migration with a wider audience during the Global Migration Network online research seminar. Thirdly, I can now benefit from BASEES membership while participating in its 2023 annual conference in Glasgow, where I intend to present my paper on migrants' memory, identity and belonging. This has also provided the opportunity to receive news concerning Slavonic and East European Studies from all over the world; and to visit numerous online events organised by the association.

All in all, the grant gave me a good start, paved the way for me to be involved in further projects, and provided me with opportunities to engage in close dialogue with the UK academic community. I'm now a Visiting Researcher at the Department of English Language and Literature, UCL.

News of the Field

UTREES enters its fifteenth year with 200 new theses listed

UTREES, the bibliographical database listing British and Irish doctoral theses in Russian and East European studies, began its fifteenth year with an update that added records for another 200 theses. The total has now reached 6,578, almost doubling since the launch of UTREES in 2009. The database is supported by the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA) and is free to view at www.utrees.mhra.org.uk.

The 200 new entries come from 61 institutions (including three in the Irish Republic). The range of topics treated remains as varied as ever, extending from organised crime in Romania to an analysis of Russian sign language, and from the music of Slovak Roma to the sexual revolution in Poland. There are eleven theses dealing with Ukraine and – rather surprisingly – twelve with Kazakhstan. Nearly all the entries from British universities provide a link to the British Library's EThOS database, allowing access to an abstract and/or the full text of the thesis.

In February 2023 Dr Olga Topol of the British Library succeeded Dr Gregory Walker as Editor of UTREES. She can be contacted at Olga.Topol@bl.uk.

BASEES Prize Winners

BASEES is delighted to announce the winners of (and honourable mentions for) the 2023 annual George Blazyca, Women's Forum, SGMH and postgraduate prizes...

George Blazyca Prize (Judges: Dr Alison Long [Keele University] and Dr Nigel Swain [University of Liverpool])

Winner:

Roland Clark (University of Liverpool) for his work *Sectarianism and Renewal in 1920s Romania: The Limits of Orthodoxy and Nation-Building* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021).



Citation:

Roland Clark's *Sectarianism and Renewal in 1920s Romania* presents a compelling case study of nation-building and both organized and "unofficial" religious faith in a country developing its own identity in the post-First World War period. The judges felt that Clark knitted together the changes in Romanian civil society with an expansion of sectarianism in religion, encompassing schisms within the Romanian Orthodox Church and influences of Protestantism and Catholicism outside it. The author paints a vivid picture of vibrancy and variety, and his argument that the Orthodox Church could only 'renew' by taking on the ideas of its critics is well made. The effective and engaging style of this work leads the reader through the different sects, influences and personalities involved, from the Repenters and Missionaries to The Lord's Army and The Stork's Nest, offering a spiritual panorama across a multiplicity of sects more variegated than the well-known dominance of the Orthodox Church and its proximity to government would lead one to expect. The judges felt that this was a scholarly, well-researched and well-written work, and a worthy winner of the Blazyca Prize.

BASEES Women's Forum Prizes (Judges: Dr Rachel Morley [UCL SSEES] and Dr Elizabeth White [University of the West of England])

Winner:

Siobhán Hearne, *Policing Prostitution: Regulating the Lower Classes in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford University Press, 2021)

Citation:

This meticulously researched, highly engaging and eminently readable book provides an original examination of the regulation of commercial sex in the final decades of the Russian Empire and of the experiences of those connected to it. In addition to offering a social history of prostitution, it is fascinating about the broader lived experience of lower-class women, not only as prostitutes or madams, but also as co-workers, mothers, friends, sisters, and possibly lovers. It tells us a great deal about lower-class urban life in general and the spaces it took place in, as well as offering insights into topics as varied as migration patterns, leisure, medicine and policing. The book takes an innovative approach to the question of the efficacy and reach of the Tsarist bureaucracy, without being a history of bureaucracy. A particular strength is its decentering of the Russian Empire. In addition to drawing on archives in the Imperial capitals, St Petersburg and Moscow, it includes archival material from the Arkhangelsk region, as well as from Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine. It contains stimulating reflections on the use of sources for lower-class urban life and the role of 'performance' in appeals to the Tsarist state. The judges agree that this wide-ranging book is a truly excellent scholarly achievement that could also be widely enjoyed by general readers.

Honourable mention:

Suzanna Ivanič, *Cosmos and Materiality in Early Modern Prague* (Oxford University Press, 2021)

This absorbing book reveals how the spiritual world of the seventeenth-century inhabitants of Prague can be traced through an empathetic study of their material world. A range of material objects, including prayer beads, rosaries, amulets, books, glasses, knives and spoons, are skilfully analysed to build a picture of an early modern cosmos, in which the divine presented itself in the natural world and social environment across confessional divisions between Catholic and Protestant. Beautifully written and carefully researched, Ivanič's book shows how religion was experienced as 'part of the everyday' and also offers a new portrait of a much-described city.



Women's Forum Article Prize (Judges: Dr Katy Turton [University of the Highlands and Islands] and Professor Mary Heimann [Cardiff University])

Winner:

Elana Resnick, 'The Limits of Resilience: Managing Waste in the Racialized Anthropocene' *American Anthropologist*, 123.2 (2021), pp. 222-236



This article is a precise, fascinating and timely examination of the way in which the EU manages its waste and – more importantly – how it treats those who work in the waste-management sector. Based on months of fieldwork in Sofia, where the author joined a mainly female, Romani Bulgarian street-sweeping team, the article highlights the racialised nature of environmental policies and practices. This article stayed with both judges, transforming their perspective and understanding. It has that rare quality, in common with the best works of scholarship, of bringing to light an argument or aspect which was hiding in plain sight.

Honourable mention:

Polly Jones, 'The Thaw's Provincial Margins: Place, Community and Canon in Pages from Tarusa', *Slavic Review*, 80.4 (2021), pp. 792-815.

This is an elegantly written and deeply researched article which evokes an entire world. Highly polished, refined and assured, it captures in microcosm the struggle of writers against the heavy hand of Soviet literary policy and the regime itself.

The BASEES Study Group for Minority History (SGMH) prize for best first book proposal

Winner:

Vita Zalar (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana) for *The Political Economy of Antigypsyism: Habsburg and Post-Habsburg Perspectives*.



Jen Vander Heide

Citation:

Vita Zalar's forthcoming monograph, *The Political Economy of Antigypsyism: Habsburg and Post-Habsburg Perspectives*, breaks new ground by >>

BASEES Prize Winners

>> offering a historical materialist reading of the imperial and post-imperial forms of structural racism against Roma and Sinti in the late Habsburg Empire and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Spanning the period between the two global economic crises of 1873 and 1929, this highly original study makes an invaluable contribution to several specialist literatures: that on Romani history, where accounts stretching back in time beyond the 20th century remain few and far between; to Habsburg historiography, where, despite the attention given to minority politics in that eminently multi-national space, the history of the Roma remains a marginal and marginalised subject; and to interpretations of Romaphobia, historical and contemporary, frequently characterised by what the author identifies as a constitutive antinomy of 'Gypsiness' oscillating between socio-economic and biologized understandings of the concept. The historical materialist reading informed by Koselleckian conceptual history / Begriffsgeschichte provides a fresh, insightful perspective that allows the author to unpack the nexus of criminalized poverty, (real or imagined) mobility, and labour hierarchies that operated at both micro and macro levels of governance as a mechanism of structural impoverishment of Roma populations. Grounded in impressive archival research on Habsburg, Yugoslav, Swiss, and League of Nations collections, as well as published sources in numerous languages, and giving due weight to Roma agency and self-articulations, the monograph is not only a most welcome addition to the growing and diversifying scholarship on the area of Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe, but has the potential to engage with and contribute to global debates around structural racism. Its methodology helps deconstruct essentialist notions of 'race', 'class', or 'ethnicity', revealing the political economy of anti-Gypsyism as always-already historically determined and rooted in specific temporal, spatial, and economic circumstances. The focus on the materiality of anti-Gypsyism as a historical phenomenon can act as a safeguard against essentialisms and perennialisms that will be useful not only to scholars of minorities, but potentially to policy makers as well.

Honourable mentions:

Dr Thomas Loyd (University of Cardiff): *Black in the USSR*.

Dr Elżbieta Kwiecińska (University of Warsaw): *A Civilizing Relay. The Concept of the Civilizing Mission as a Cultural Transfer in East-Central Europe, 1815-1919*.

Postgraduate prizes

The co-winners this year are **Tadeusz Wojtych (Cambridge)** and **Bohdana Kurylo (UCL)**.

Tadeusz Wojtych, 'Politics, Community, and Entertainment: The Reception of Soviet Guitar Poetry in Poland', *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 69.2 (2021), pp.183-208.



Wojtych's article offers an insightful analysis of an important, if rarely discussed, aspect of twentieth-century Polish culture: the reception of Soviet guitar poetry (avtorskaia pesnia). Based on extensive interviews, Wojtych's excellent study brings this part of Polish musical culture into dialogue with similar phenomena in other post-communist countries. Combining sensitive use of oral history with astute understanding of its limitations, this piece draws our attention to the importance of local and personal perspectives on transnational political history as represented in popular cultural practices. The jury was especially impressed with the care and deep self-awareness demonstrated in the analysis of the oral history sources, as well as with Wojtych's command of a wide range of theoretical and historical sources. Elegantly written and clearly structured, Wojtych's article poses important questions, relevant for several overlapping fields: musical, public and political history; memory, counter-culture, and national identity studies; and cultural anthropology.

Bohdana Kurylo, 'Counter-populist performances of (in) security: Feminist resistance in the face of right-wing populism in Poland', *Review of International Studies*, 48.2 (2022), pp. 262-281.



In this rigorous and well-researched article, Bohdana Kurylo puts forward an original argument that feminist activists can resist right-wing populist constructions, namely on (in)security, by selectively and strategically appropriating them. Her case-study examines how feminist movements in Poland subverted the dominant, elitist, and exclusionary constructions of (in)security exemplified during the Independence March through introducing their own counter-populist discourses and aesthetics of security around the 2020-

21 Women's Strike pro-choice protests. Kurylo convincingly shows that they did so by establishing 'the feminist people' as an alternative collective political subject of security, and by presenting society's marginalised groups, among them the LGBTQ+ community and disabled people, as the real 'people in danger'. Building on Judith Butler's theory of embodied and plural performativity, Kurylo makes her own impressive contribution to critical theory by expanding existing frameworks for analysing the interaction of populism, security and feminism. The article thus holds significance to several fields including Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, Social Sciences, International Relations, and Gender Studies.

Highly commended (runner up):

Lovett, Jessica, 'The Fate of the Nation': Population Politics in a Changing Soviet Union (1964-1991), *Nationalities Papers* (2022), pp. 1-20.

The jury would like to officially commend this impressive article that builds on extensive archival work and skilfully examines the contradictions of Soviet population control policies in various parts of the USSR.

About the Prizes

The George Blazycza Prize is offered annually for scholarly work of high quality in East European studies (including those countries of Eastern Europe that were formerly under communist rule but not part of the Soviet Union).

The BASEES Women's Forum offer annual prizes for scholarly work of high quality either produced by a woman or which furthers knowledge about gender and diversity relevant to the East European, Russian and Eurasian region.

The BASEES Study Group for Minority History (SGMH) launched the biennial Prize for Best First Book Proposal in Minority History in September 2022 to recognise scholarly excellence among early career academics seeking to publish original research dealing with any aspect of minority history (broadly defined) relating to Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

Finally, the postgraduate prize is offered annually for a scholarly, peer-reviewed article of high quality in any of the disciplinary and geographical areas which fall within the BASEES remit.

Inclusivity in Slavonic & East European Studies



In the latest instalment of a continuing series, Serian Carlyle (UCL SSEES) speaks to scholars and activists working to diversify and decolonise the Slavic Studies field...

Dr Jelena Čalić is Associate Professor (Teaching) at UCL, where she teaches courses at both the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) and the School of European Languages and Cultures (SELCS). Her research sits within the fields of sociolinguistics and critical language pedagogy. Her chapter, co-authored with Eszter Tarsoly, 'Language Studies as Transcultural Becoming and Participation: Undoing Language Boundaries across the Danube Region' was published earlier this year in the edited collection *Liberating Language Education*.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I teach at two departments at UCL. At SSEES I teach courses in Serbo-Croatian (Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian) language and I also contribute to couple of linguistics courses. At SELCS I teach Swedish language and culture and topics on immigration to the Nordic region and migrants' integration into Nordic societies.

My research is broadly concerned with the study of languages with similar type of internal variation as Serbo-Croatian (BCMS), the so-called pluricentric languages, language standardisation and ideological strategies of differentiation, and attitudes to language change and variation. I am also interested in how linguistic diversity is addressed by various non-specialist stakeholders ranging from policy makers to educational institutions. More specifically, how education training in language skills involves the inclusion or disregard for critical language awareness and reflection on social, political, and economic factors that shape the context of teaching and learning.

Tell us about decolonising curriculum practices for teaching and learning (about) East European languages and cultures (Bulgarian, Czech, Finnish,

Estonian, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovene, Serbo-Croatian (BCMS), Ukrainian) within SSEES Languages and Cultures Programme.

Decolonising curriculum practices have been adopted in the creation of new, and revision of the established language and linguistics modules for quite some time now. For example, the modules Minority Languages of Russia and Languages in Contact along the Danube: Intercultural Frictions and Flows have been running since 2015 and 2014 respectively.

In our linguistics and language modules we strive to present the languages we teach (about) as not bounded to the national states they naively tend to be linked to; to present minority groups and diasporas that speak these languages beyond borders of the nation states; to include linguistic and cultural practices of minority groups in the countries where languages we teach are predominantly in use (are official state languages). These groups include Roma, Sámi, Jews, newly arrived migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, sexual minorities...

In both linguistics and language courses, the notion of the standard language is problematised. Students learn about the internal language variation and speakers' attitudes to and social implications of the use of one or the other language variety. They also gain a basic understanding of the degrees of similarities and differences between languages in our region as well as of historical and present cross-linguistic and cross-cultural frictions and flows.

All the above-mentioned aspects of language use may be politicised to a lesser or greater degree, depending on a specific sociolinguistic situation, historical period, etc. These aspects are discussed often in a comparative perspective (offering insights from other similar/different linguistic scenarios) inviting students' voices to be heard and their linguistic and cultural experiences shared. Equally, students are invited to critically reflect on the differences in knowledge production inside and outside of the SSEES region and contexts from which these emerge.

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

In order for the field of language teaching within Modern Languages departments to be more inclusive and representative, firstly the peripheral status of disciplines such as sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics within Modern Languages and area studies programmes should be acknowledged. Then it must be followed by elaboration of and critical engagement with the reasons for their disciplinary and institutional marginalisation. In an ideal world, this could lead to an enhanced awareness of how language learning and linguistic methods open the way for a broad range of enquiries, including not just linguistic but also literary, cultural, social, political, and historical studies. Secondly, the discussions about the future and the transformation of the Modern Languages departments and curricula should not limit themselves to global languages (which historically spread through various forms of colonisation) but be inclusive of and attentive to the voices from the field of teaching (about) less-widely taught languages and cultures too. The achievements from the 'shadowy corners' (Nakata, 2007: 2) should be taken on board and acknowledged in order to prevent further marginalisation of voices from the periphery.

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

Institutional practices need to change. The economic value of the teaching of less-widely taught languages and the (low) income it generates should not be equated with its scholarly and humanistic value. The teaching of the less-widely used languages should be protected through a resolute institutional commitment and establishment of the university minority subjects funding.

Nakata, M. N. (2007). *Disciplining the savages, savaging the disciplines*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

In July 2022, the BASEES R&D fund granted £800 towards the translation from the Russian of Nikolai Medvedeff's letters. The letters (of which carbon copies remain) were written to friends in Russia and outline Medvedeff's youthful musical beginnings in Russia, his life as a POW and, more significantly, provide a rare and valuable insight into the working life of a Russian musician in the British light music industry (as conductor, composer/arranger, broadcaster, balalaikist and founder of several balalaika ensembles) from 1921 to 1963.

BASEES R&D Grant Fund

Two translators were engaged to provide a working document in English and an analysis now forms a major component of David Alcock's PhD research at the University of Southampton Music Faculty where he examines the activities of Russian musicians in the UK between 1900 and 1945, the effects of displacement on their professional careers and their contributions to the light music industry.

Composers leave scores which can be examined – evidence of the work of instrumentalists and performers is more ephemeral and elusive. Apart from newspaper reporting, an analysis of which provides an assessment of the reception of balalaika music by British audiences and critics, there is virtually no formal documentation (other than anecdotal reminiscence and some early sound recordings) of the activities of resident, performing, Russian musicians in British musical society between 1900 and 1945, nor is there any assessment of the effects of displacement on such musicians. The present research seeks to address this deficit.

Medvedeff's letters are valuable in that they betray the difficulties faced by such musicians – their financial and contractual dealings, the formation of ensembles and securing of engagements, the work and acceptance of other Russian musicians in London (Chaliapin, for example), working environments, operations of the Russian Red Cross and the formation of artels to support Russians, dealings with theatrical and musical establishments such as the BBC, and survival during the war years – and suggest much of the struggle to forge a musical career within the British musical establishment can be attributed to the effects of displacement.

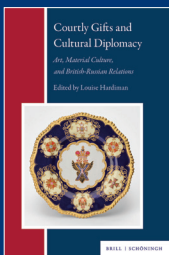
Vasily Andreeff had visited England three times with his balalaika orchestra to huge acclaim in 1909, 1910, 1913, and initiated a balalaika craze in the country. The formation of balalaika ensembles and Russian folk music became immensely popular. Medvedeff sought to emulate Andreeff and formed his own ensembles performing in popular Variety Theatres, in hotels and restaurants, in cabaret and vaudeville, charity events, in public parks and, during the Second World War, for the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA). He broadcast regularly for the BBC with his own programme which sought to introduce Russian folk music to British audiences.

The research brings together other rarely documented musicians such as Eduard Soermus (*Die Rote Geiger*), a Bolshevik violinist who lived and worked for a time in Wales; Prince Tschagadaeff, a balalaikist in Andreeff's orchestra who promoted the balalaika in small communities such as Cheltenham where Alice Gardiner had formed a popular balalaika ensemble; the Wolkowsky Family ensemble who promoted balalaika music and folk dance within Variety Theatre; and Vladimir Rosing (tenor) who contributed to opera production. It also traces Andreeff's presence and influence in England as balalaika 'reformer' and conductor. Much of the information about these musicians has been gleaned from newspaper reporting, unpublished autobiographical accounts, interviews with surviving family members, programmes, self-promotion pamphlets (advertising), contemporary journals and other ephemera. Medvedeff's letters thus provide a unique and substantial primary source (a 'lost history') which also documents his thoughts on Russian folk music and the balalaika, reveals an underlying nostalgia for pre-revolutionary Russian life and proclaims a fierce preservation and promotion of Russian folk music within a foreign environment.

The letters came to light when gifted to David by Bibs Ekkel, a staunch balalaika player and promoter, who received Medvedeff's musical scores and letters upon the death of Medvedeff's wife. Much of Medvedeff's extensive collection of Russian folk music was sent back to his friends in Russia in the 1960's. Medvedeff despaired of the state of light music in Britain, balalaika music in particular, and feared for their preservation. What remains amongst Mr Ekkel's Medvedeff scores are three rare scores for balalaika – Glazunov's Opus 86 *Russian Fantasia*, and Andreeff's *Welcome to England* and *Le Papillon*.

The translation of these letters into English, with the assistance of BASEES, will facilitate future research and contribute to our understanding of Russian musicians within the Russian diaspora in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. Once my research is complete it is my intention to lodge the letters and other ephemera, together with the translation, within a reputable and safe Russian archive in the UK making them available for further study.

New Books



Louise Hardiman, ed., *Courtly Gifts and Cultural Diplomacy: Art, Material Culture and British-Russian Relations* (Paderborn: Brill Ferdinand Schöningh, 2023).

Courtly Gifts and Cultural Diplomacy explores the history of British-Russian state relations from the perspective of art and material culture. This richly illustrated book presents manifold practices of courtly gift-giving and vivid case studies of British-Russian artistic diplomacy over the centuries.

It traces a visual and material history of cross-cultural dialogue that starts with an early English map of Russia made in the sixteenth century and ends with gifts of Fabergé art objects and domestic photographs exchanged between the British royal family and the family of Tsar Nicholas II in late imperial Russia. Twelve expert authors from academia, the arts, and the museum sectors in Britain, Russia, Australia, and the United States present new narratives and critical interpretations based on material from previously unexplored archives. Their diverse approaches reveal the importance of artistic diplomacy and the agency of gifts of art and material culture in courtly and state relations.

For more details, see:
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