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## Editorial information

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Deadline for submissions for the March newsletter is 16 February 2018.

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## Stay in touch

 British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies

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## President's Report

**2017 has proved an exceptional year for scholars of the Russian Revolution, though I do wonder whether Dan Orlovsky, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, Boris Kolonitsky, Chris Read and Sarah Badcock have anything left to say to one another on the subject.**

2018 will mark a half-century since 1968, an iconic year in the lives of people who came of age in the 1960s. In the summer of 1968, I set off youth hostelling around South-West England after completing my A-Levels. In one hostel, I chatted to a Czech student who, enjoying the new freedoms of the Prague Spring, was hitching around Europe and the UK. It was 22nd August, the day after Soviet tanks had rolled into Prague. That student faced an existential decision – to return to Prague or stay in the UK, with the inevitable consequence of never seeing his family again. My encounter with this student had a profound impact on me. I now realise that it greatly influenced decisions I would make about my own future. Arriving at Leeds University to read geography, I chose “The History of Russia and the USSR” as my subsidiary subject, a pathway which led (among many other adventures) to becoming President of BASEES.

Next year's 1968 anniversary will commemorate a pivotal event in the struggle for democracy in Communist Europe. On 25th August 1968, four days after the Soviet invasion of Prague, eight protesters entered Red Square in Moscow. They had barely unfurled their banners, which read “For Your Freedom and Ours” and “Hands off Czechoslovakia”, before being attacked and arrested. The poet Natalya Gorbanevskaya, who was breast-feeding her three-month-old, was released that day but re-arrested in December and committed to Moscow's Serbsky Institute, where she was diagnosed with the syndrome “sluggish schizophrenia” (unique to Soviet dissidents), the symptoms of which included “reformist delusions”. Protests against Communist rule in East Central Europe and the Balkans had occurred before August 1968, nor was this the first time that Soviet troops had “restored order” in a satellite state, but the



dissent and protest voiced in 1968 was never completely silenced by the regime. The two decades after August 1968 witnessed the illicit compilation of the *Chronicle of Current Events* (co-founded by Gorbanevskaya), cataloguing the arrest, trials, imprisonment and psychological sectioning of dissidents, the circulation of subversive literature through national versions of *samizdat*, and the proliferation of protest throughout the region, from underground philosophy seminars in the Czech Republic to the rise of autonomous trade unions in the shipyards of Gdansk.

The recent unfolding of deeply troubling events in the former Soviet sphere means that many members of our Association have been drawn into studying the countries of the “BASEES region” for deeply personal reasons, just like my own choice in 1968. Many of us have been affected by recently created obstacles to research, but our frustrations dwindle compared with legal attacks against the foundations of knowledge, political discourse about “foreign agents”, and resurgent nationalism facing our colleagues in the region. Once again, scholars must think carefully about what they write, decide whether their research findings might fail the “patriotism test”, and weigh up the risks of international collaboration. Some have lost their positions or faced arrest because of their activism and/or refusal to self-censor. Both individuals and some higher education and research institutions (like Hungary's CEU and the EUStPb) are under attack. This must concern all scholars in Slavic Studies, regardless of our individual focus.

Now is a particularly apposite moment for our Association to turn its attention to the question of human rights. The 2018 BASEES Conference will revisit the events of fifty years ago and follow the story of the >>

## New Books in the BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies

The BASEES/Routledge Series on Russia and East European Studies comprises 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. Visit [www.routledge.com/series/BASEES](http://www.routledge.com/series/BASEES) for more information on all the titles below, and many more.

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Paweł Surowiec and Václav Štětka (eds), *Social Media and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*

Eleanor Bindman, *Social Rights in Russia: From Imperfect Past to Uncertain Future*

Meliha B. Altunışık and Oktay F. Tanrisever (eds), *The South Caucasus – Security, Energy and Europeanization*

Nat Moser, *Oil and the Economy of Russia: From the Late-Tsarist to the Post-Soviet Period*

Irina Ghaplanyan, *Post-Soviet Armenia: The New National Elite and the New National Narrative*

### NEW IN PAPERBACK:

Andrew Foxall, *Ethnic Relations in Post-Soviet Russia: Russians and Non-Russians in the North Caucasus*

Balázs Szent-Iványi and Simon Lightfoot, *New Europe's New Development Aid*

### 20% DISCOUNT OFFER:

Enjoy 20% discount on all titles from this series! Simply enter the code FGT07 at checkout to receive a 20% discount\* (\*N.B. the discount code is valid on our website only, until 31st December 2018 and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer).

struggle for democracy to the present day. Among our guest speakers will be Budapest historian János Rainer who has provoked his government's ire for analysing the revision of history in contemporary Hungary; Sergey Golubok, one of the new generation of lawyers defending human rights cases in the Russian courts and at Strasbourg; Amnesty International's Heather McGill, author of a recent report on human rights violations in prisoner transports in Russia; Irina Flige, Director of the St Petersburg Memorial Research Centre, a prominent figure in the campaign to support academic Yury Dmitriev; Professor Dalia Rienarte from Lithuania, member of CEDAW (the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women); and, we hope, Petr Pithart, a participant in the 1968 resistance and first prime minister of post-communist Czechoslovakia.

We will also welcome journalists from *Radio Svoboda* who will play some of their unique collection of the "bards" protest songs in the after-dinner slot on Saturday. At the Women's Forum, the 2018 panellists are young scholars who will share their experiences of leaving their homelands to pursue careers in higher education and research in the UK (which may make for uncomfortable listening at the present moment). Finally, an Experts' Roundtable will update us on cultural, economic, political and IR developments across the BASEES region in the previous twelve months. The conference will take place from 13-15 April 2018, at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, as usual.

A great pleasure of this past year has been visiting the numerous exhibitions which commemorate the revolutions of 1917, each illuminating a different aspect



Valentina Kulagina (1902-87), private watercolour (graphite on paper)

of that year's events and potentials. Most recently, while attending the 2017 ASEES Conference, I saw the Chicago Art Institute's "Revoliutsiia! Demonstratsiia! Soviet Art Put to the Test". The curators in Chicago provisioned the aftermath of 1917 in a single watercolour sketch Valentina Kulagina made of the arrest of her husband, propaganda artist Gustav Klutskis, on the morning of January 17, 1938. Much of Klutskis's work was included in the exhibition, including posters, sketches and the installation "Radio-Orator 7". Sadly, it is Kulagina's drawing, rather than the innovation and imagination displayed in the majority of works on display, that connects 1917 to the 1968 anniversary we will commemorate at next April's BASEES Conference.

Professor Judith Pallot  
Email: [judith.pallot@chch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:judith.pallot@chch.ox.ac.uk)



The Routledge BASEES series book stand at the 2017 ASEES conference, Chicago [shared with permission of ASEES]

# News from the Profession

## Conference Reports

Exceptionally high numbers of BASEES members from all disciplines of Slavic Studies attended the 49th Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) in Chicago from November 9th–12th 2017. Several received prestigious awards (see below). The convention theme was 'Transgressions'.

**'Translations and Dialogues: The Reception of Russian Art Abroad'** was a joint conference involving the Centro Studi sulle Arti della Russia (CSAR), the Society of Historians of East European, Eurasian, and Russian Art and Architecture, Inc. (SHERA) and the Cambridge Courtauld Russian Art Centre (CCRAC), held at the University Ca' Foscari in Venice from October 25th–27th. Uniting scholars from Europe, the US, and Russia, the conference successively discussed the European reception of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian art in Europe and America; the final day featured an experimental combination of scholars, museum curators and private collectors in two roundtables, discussing the implications of collecting contemporary Russian artworks, and summarizing international engagement with Russian art today.

**'Dimensions and Challenges of Russian Liberalism'**, an international, multi-disciplinary conference at the University of Turin organized in partnership with Reset DOC, George Washington University (IERES), and The College of William & Mary, took place on October 26th–28th 2017. Panellists debated "Russian" versus "Western" liberalism, evaluating the legacy of 1990s and the future of liberalism in Russia, without deciding whether the liberal opposition or liberals in the existing government were more capable of transforming Russia.

The BASEES Study Group for Digital Media and Cultures held a workshop called **'Sex, Power, Love and Money: Media and Sexualisation of Everyday in the Post-Soviet spaces'** at the University of Leicester on 15th June 2017, with a keynote talk by Professor Feona Attwood (Middlesex University). Overall, the workshop stimulated critical reflection on the role of non-heteronormative images, sexualities, desires, and identities in the post-Soviet media, cultural and philosophical landscapes. It also provoked critical reflection on the interaction

between media, sexuality, politics and culture in post-Soviet Russia and beyond. More information here: [www.digitalicons.org/latest-news/sex-power-love-and-money-media-and-sexualisation-of-everyday-in-the-post-soviet-spaces](http://www.digitalicons.org/latest-news/sex-power-love-and-money-media-and-sexualisation-of-everyday-in-the-post-soviet-spaces).

A postgraduate symposium on **'The Writing and Screening of Violence in Russian Culture'**, organized by Philip Chadwick and Erik Vlaeminck, was held at St Edmund's Hall, Oxford, on May 18th – 19th 2017. The three panels explored the aesthetic treatment of violence in imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russia respectively, and institutions represented included Harvard, Columbia, Leiden, the Sorbonne, Manchester, Sheffield, Oxford, Edinburgh, and Exeter. Approximately 30 graduates participated, in addition to established scholars like the keynote speaker Mark Lipovetsky (University of Colorado), who also delivered Oxford's annual Ilchester Lecture on May 18th. The organizers thank the BASEES Research and Development Committee for funding.

## Other Professional News

**Jakub S. Beneš** (University of Birmingham) has won the 2017 Barbara Jelavich Prize at the 2017 ASEEES Annual Convention for his book *Workers and Nationalism: Czech and German Social Democracy in Habsburg Austria, 1890-1918* (Oxford University Press). This prize is awarded annually for a distinguished monograph published in the previous calendar year on any aspect of Southeast European or Habsburg studies since 1600, or nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ottoman or Russian diplomatic history.

**Rebecca Gould** (University of Birmingham) has won both the 2017 Heldt Prize (awarded by the Association for Women in Slavic Studies) and the 2017 USC Book Prize in Literary and Cultural Studies (sponsored by the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Southern California and awarded annually for an outstanding monograph published on Russia, Eastern Europe or Eurasia in the fields of literary and cultural studies) for her book *Writers and Rebels: The Literature of Insurgency in the Caucasus* (Yale University Press, 2016). Professor Gould's book also received an Honorable Mention by the judges of the Davis Center Book Prize in Political and Social Studies, sponsored by the Davis Center at Harvard University and awarded

annually at ASEEES for an outstanding monograph published on Russia, Eurasia, or Eastern Europe in anthropology, political science, sociology, or geography.

**Galina Miazhevich** (Cardiff University), a co-convenor of the BASEES Study Group in Digital Media and Cultures, has been awarded an AHRC Leadership Fellowship called "A Quiet Revolution?" Discursive representations of non-heteronormative sexuality in Russia (2018-2020). This study unites approaches from Cultural, Gender, Media and Area Studies; it will explore the last 20 years of non-heteronormative sexuality mediation in Russia. Key research questions include: How is non-heteronormative sexuality constructed in post-Soviet Russia? What is the role of mainstream and alternative media in this process? How have discursive representations of non-heteronormative sexuality in Russia evolved over time? Research beneficiaries will include academics, media practitioners, policy-makers, human rights organisations, LGBT networks, and the general public. A new Post-Soviet Sexualities Forum will provide a sustained collaborative space for areas of research and impact after the project is completed.

## Publishing News: New Books and Calls for Proposals

**Lexington Books** at Rowman & Littlefield Publishers have just launched a new book series 'Studies in Slavic, Baltic, and Eastern European Languages and Cultures' and invite proposals for monographs and edited volumes in the new series. Further information can be found here: <https://rowman.com/Action/SERIES/LEX/SBELANG#>.

**Richard Sakwa** (University of Kent) has published a new book, *Russia against the Rest: the Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, October 2017). See more here: [www.cambridge.org/9781316613511](http://www.cambridge.org/9781316613511)

**Emily Lygo** (University of Exeter) is the new Slavonic Editor of *Modern Language Review*. Proposals for articles of up to 8,000 words on cultural and literary (but not linguistic) topics should be sent to [E.F.Lygo@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:E.F.Lygo@exeter.ac.uk).

# Book Reviews

**Daphne Skillen, *Freedom of Speech in Russia: Politics and Media from Gorbachev to Putin*. Routledge: 2017 (BASEES/ Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies). 364 pages. ISBN: 9781138743267. £26.99 pbpbk.**

The concept of 'freedom,' and even the word itself, has been variously interpreted and misappropriated throughout Russia's long history. In this excellent book on 'freedom of speech,' Daphne Skillen examines Russian understandings of 'freedom' up to the present day.

Her book is divided into two parts: the first half explores what could be called the 'theory' of freedom of speech, such as past definitions of 'freedom' by luminaries like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, then applies this theory to current perceptions in Russian society. As Skillen rightly points out, when you ask an ordinary Russian whether they have 'freedom of speech,' the thinking behind their reply would probably prove remote from Western definitions of the same idea.

The book's second half is contemporary in focus. It documents the development, or indeed decay, of the idea of freedom of speech by studying elites, events, media, and how these can be related to eras in Russia's recent past. This section begins with an in-depth analysis of freedom of speech under Gorbachev, by discussing *glasnost*, before considering the failed military coup, the Yeltsin era, and the Putin years, with the corresponding re-establishment of restrictions on journalism, including the re-emergence of 'self-censorship' (p. 307), and the degradation of 'free speech' after the relative chaos of Yeltsin's government. I found this part less illuminating than the ground-breaking first section of Skillen's book; but, overall, *Freedom of Speech in Russia* is a brilliant and thought-provoking analysis of its topic, exposing the fragility of the entire notion of uncensored communication in Russia.

**Jason C. Vaughn**

**Egle Rindzeviciute, *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World*. Cornell University Press: 2016. xiv + 292 pages. ISBN: 9781501703188. \$49.95 hdbk.**

Both before and after 1991, Westerners' attempts at *cooperation* with 'Moscow' could easily provoke accusations (justified or not) of *collaboration* with their main Cold War adversary. (The author of this ground-breaking, well-researched and well-organised study uses the two nouns italicised above, and their cognate verbs, as synonyms.) With the Pugwash movement, for instance, it sometimes seemed as though the Soviet 'partner' knew English and understood the West better than the Western side knew Russian or comprehended the political system prevailing in the USSR. The deliberately low-profile International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Austria was an American initiative intended to further the attempts of scholars and scientists to tackle serious 'universal' and 'global' (this distinction was sometimes made – see p. 111) problems such as acid rain, trans-border pollution and a possible 'nuclear winter' which affected or might affect both 'East' and 'West' in identical ways. Thanks mainly to Dzhermen Gvishiani and his father-in-law, Aleksei Kosygin, the USSR not only responded to the Lyndon Johnson administration's proposal to found what became known as the IIASA but agreed to finance it at the same level as the Americans. Why? It seems that, having had to study 'scientific' historical materialism (not discussed in this book), which 'proved' that capitalist countries would inevitably (unless a nuclear world war occurred) eventually become socialist, cooperating (or collaborating?) with the West in certain areas would help to modernise and therefore, on balance, strengthen rather than weaken the 'Soviet' system. Peaceful coexistence was good, but ideological coexistence and convergence were officially out of the question. Some Western participants in the IIASA's activities may have thought otherwise, but if they did, this was a completely taboo subject. This volume's Introduction may challenge those not yet *au fait* with System-Cybernetic Governmentality or even OR (Operations Research), but do please persevere – the book gets easier to read and understand with each of the following seven chapters. Besides the Notes, there is a splendid Bibliography. For me, the book's heroes are Howard Raiffa and Nikita Moiseev, who finally get some well-deserved recognition in this excellent monograph.

**Martin Dewhirst (University of Glasgow)**

**Judith Pallot and Elena Katz, *Waiting At The Prison Gate: Women, Identity and the Russian Penal System*. I.B. Tauris: 2017. 252 pages. ISBN: 9781784536602. £69.00 hdbk.**

From the *dekabristki* to the Soviet women punished for marrying 'enemies of the state', Russia has long been preoccupied with prisoners' wives. In this welcome intervention in the existing literature of (largely US-focused) prison sociology, authors Pallot and Katz explore the world of prisoners' wives, girlfriends, mothers and – to a lesser extent – mothers-in-law, daughters and sisters. The authors offer a thoughtful and insightful analysis into these women's 'secondary prisonisation' and how they negotiate questions of relationship and personal identity, relative to both the prison system and society at large.

The small number of interviewees might trouble the more quantitatively-minded, but these rich interviews allow a richly qualitative exploration of the narratives deployed by female relatives of a wide variety of prisoners – first-time convicts, repeat offenders, career criminals, and political prisoners – as the women attempt to make sense of their experiences. The interviewees include wives legally married before their husbands were incarcerated; common-law wives who had lived with their partners long before their arrest; partners who become wives in colony weddings; and interestingly, *zaochnitsy* – women who seek out long-distance relationships with prisoners. The authors analyse how the tropes and mythology of the *dekabristki* and *matreshki* are constructed, deconstructed, reinforced and reproduced by these wives and mothers as they narrate their lived experiences as relatives of prisoners in Russia.

*Waiting at the Prison Gate* will interest Russianists and carceral geographers alike. Russia's unique penal tradition and rich cultural mythology of prisons and prisoners make these women's experiences a complex and important field for study. This highly original book illuminates women's roles in Russian society even beyond the confines of these 'prisoners-in-law' and the prison context.

**Tessa Frost (University of Birmingham)**

# We interview...

## Isabel Stokholm, 3rd year PhD student in History of Art at the University of Cambridge



Isabel Stokholm

### What inspired your current PhD research?

I grew up in a house with framed pictures of Nicholas II on the wall, and shelves upon shelves of Soviet books that smelled oddly unlike the rest of our library. My mother studied Russian and lived in Moscow for a time in the early eighties. Almost thirty years later, I lived and studied in the same language institute, where virtually nothing had changed apart from the lack of separate dormitories for 'socialist' and 'capitalist' students. Once I decided to visit a painting in the Tretyakov Gallery that was on the cover of a Tchaikovsky CD we had at home. It was 'The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy' (1881) by the Siberian painter and member of the Peredvizhniki, Vasilii Surikov – an immense and powerful work that had fascinated me as a child. I remembered Surikov when choosing a theme for my undergraduate dissertation. Surikov's letters, interviews and memoirs reveal a very different (and much more positive) story about his relationship with younger artists from that which I had read in the literature. My interest in intergenerational relationships developed from there, including Ilya Repin along the way – another Peredvizhnik whose position among modernist and avant-garde artists is both complex and neglected.

### Your research is partly funded by a Leverhulme Grant. Tell us more.

I was very fortunate to be awarded a Study Abroad Studentship by the Leverhulme Trust, which allowed me to undertake a year of archival research in Russia and Ukraine as a visiting scholar based at Moscow State University. This brought me to state archives and museums in Moscow, St Petersburg, Kiev and Krasnoyarsk. My focus was on finding personal documents, especially letters and memoirs, which reveal the reality of artists' everyday interactions and guide us away from the sometimes misleading, rhetoric-soaked public realm of the art world. I was particularly interested in materials post-1899, as very little has been written on the Peredvizhniki after this point. My search dug up diary entries written in code, revelations about a secret wife, and touching exchanges between teacher and protégé separated by war and closing borders. Unfortunately, I also discovered that Surikov's handwriting is near-illegible...

### What's it like researching in Moscow?

Frustrating, but rewarding! As with anything in Russia, there are many hoops to jump through. Access can be tricky. As one director of a small St Petersburg museum said to me, "You can't just waltz in and see whatever you like" – a line I often recall and wonder at, thinking *Why*

*not?* Conducting research here calls for time and patience. Only once have I been denied access outright (by a regional museum that "for technical reasons" could not receive me, not now, not later). Each institution is different and often it comes down to the individual archivist. I've been lucky enough to meet incredibly friendly staff who were delighted to help me. Others have been cold, even suspicious or confused as to why on earth I should want to see something in their keeping. The culture in Kiev, I must add, was completely different, and doing research there felt like a holiday compared with Russia!

### What's next, after the PhD?

I adore Moscow and plan to stay, continuing with my research. There is still much material to be rediscovered, translated and de-sovietised. I would also love to work with the Tretyakov Gallery, and expand my current work in Digital Humanities by finding collaborators for a project that uses Social Network Analysis and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to systematically map the cultural worlds of Moscow and St Petersburg in 1870-1917. But what excites me most is writing. Russian art predating the avant-garde is virtually unknown outside of Russia. I plan to write a book – based on long-term research but aimed at a wider readership – that will open up the Peredvizhniki and pre-revolutionary art world, placing these artists among the composers and writers we know so well. And, eventually, I dream of writing a biography of Repin! ■



Vasilii Surikov, *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy* (1881). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

# Reframing Russia: First comprehensive research project on RT (Russia Today) launched



**October 2017 saw the official launch of a £720,000 AHRC-funded collaboration between the University of Manchester and the Open University, "Reframing Russia for the Global Mediasphere: from Cold War to 'information war?'. This project provides interdisciplinary insights into the post-Cold War global media environment through an in-depth case study of one of its most controversial actors, RT (formerly Russia Today).**

Described by Principal Investigator, Professor Stephen Hutchings (Manchester), as an "open and objective approach to understanding RT, its goals, content and audiences", the project represents the first in-depth investigation of how effectively RT's broadcasting modes, multiplatform audience strategies and institutional culture work to mediate and legitimise the Kremlin's foreign policy agenda, and reshape Russia's external image.

At the University of Manchester, Professor Hutchings, Co-Investigator Professor Vera Tolz, and Research Associate Dr Precious Chatterje-Doodly will examine RT's content and how it covers news stories, supported by Administrator Kat Lowe. At the Open University, Co-Investigators Professor Marie Gillespie and Dr Alistair Willis and Research Associate Dr Rhys Crilley will analyse RT's audiences and online engagement.

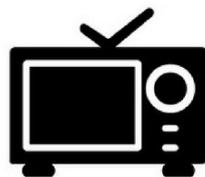
The project was launched at the Frontline Club in London on 12th October, and live-tweeted under the hashtag **#RRlaunch**. A roundtable of experts – academics, policy influencers, and journalists – discussed Russia's role in the global information war. Contributions from Prof. Ellen Mickiewicz (Duke University), Prof. Tomila Lankina (LSE), Prof. Ben O'Loughlin (Royal Holloway), James Nixey (Chatham House), and Mary Dejevsky (*The Independent*) all highlighted particular aspects of the 'information war' debate. They also proposed vastly differing responses

to it – prompting vigorous debate that continued when the floor was opened to the audience. Over 80 attendees came to the Reframing Russia launch, including prominent journalists, members of global think tanks, NGOs, academic and journalistic institutes, as well as a representative from the Russian Embassy in London and interested members of the public.

Discussions of the controversial topic lasted well into the wine reception that followed the formal close of the event, and spilled over onto social media: event attendees used the hashtags **#RRlaunch** and **#ReframingRussia** to post their highlights; and several of RT's most prominent journalists joined the ensuing debate on Twitter – in particular questioning whether the research team will be able provide the nuance and objectivity that is their aim.

The Reframing Russia project will run until September 2020. Research highlight and events are publicised on the **@ReframingRussia** Twitter feed, and project members' academic, media and conference outputs are uploaded to the project website: [www.reframingrussia.com](http://www.reframingrussia.com). For further details, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact [reframingrussia@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:reframingrussia@manchester.ac.uk).

**Dr Precious Chatterje-Doodly**  
(University of Manchester)



## REFRAMING RUSSIA

FROM COLD WAR TO 'INFORMATION WAR'?

✉ [ReframingRussia@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ReframingRussia@manchester.ac.uk)  [@ReframingRussia](https://twitter.com/ReframingRussia)

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**#RRlaunch**

# In 2017 the BASEES Research and Development Committee awarded a travel grant to Nottingham MA student Dawn Hazle, enabling her to attend a conference in Canada. Here is her report...

## Dawn Hazle, MA (Res) Russian Studies, University of Nottingham

I was awarded a BASEES Postgraduate Research Grant to present my research at the International Society for Metal Music Studies (ISMMS) biennial conference, 'Boundaries and Ties: the Place of Metal Music in Communities', held in British Columbia, Canada, on July 9th–11th 2017. Never having presented my research beyond my own University, nor left Europe in my life, this was an exciting experience! The conference featured keynotes from Keith Kahn-Harris, a founding member of ISMMS, and Brittney Slayes, lead singer of local power metal band 'Unleash the Archers'. Panels included categories such as local and global metal communities, performance, resistance, scene construction, and ethics. Presenters came from backgrounds in cultural studies, musicology, anthropology, religious studies, and history, besides independent scholars and industry professionals.

My research concerns the first album of Russia's leading heavy metal group, Aria, and I presented a basic overview of late Soviet cultural history as well as insights into my research on themes and influences in the album. My paper, "'Made in Russia": Western Influences and Local Themes in Soviet Russia's Emerging Metal Scene' was the only presentation on

Russia, but other researchers presented on cultures as disparate as Japan, Madagascar, Austria, and Indonesia, proving that metal music and culture is a global phenomenon. I connected with researchers in Birmingham who hope to extend their 'Home of Metal' study out from there to other 'homes' of metal across the world.

On the first evening delegates could attend 'Unleash the Archer's' album release gig in downtown Victoria, and on the final day there was a special screening of the documentary film 'Blekkmetal' about the origins of Norway's black metal scene. This was followed by a Q&A session with two of the producers. The local metal scene could be experienced that evening in an 'all-ages' gig at a local community centre. The ISMMS AGM was also held during the conference and I participated in this as an ordinary member. There were many opportunities for networking and sightseeing; on one occasion I happened upon one of the locals down at the beach, a North American River Otter.

I was heartened by the interest in my research, and impressed by the range of different approaches and projects to metal scholarship. I was also in charge of live-tweeting the conference using ISMMS' official Twitter profile (@ISMMSOfficial), which was challenging but very useful for making me think differently about the papers being given.

Overall, I think the conference was a very valuable experience: not only was it an excellent opportunity to present my research to the 'metal' side of my field, but it was also an exceptional chance to travel well beyond my comfort zone! I made many new academic friends at the conference, who are researching new and exciting things and who responded positively to my research. I have opened up some opportunities for my future research and I hope to become more involved with the administration and promotion of ISMMS, once my MA is finished. I also pushed my boundaries by experiencing music I don't generally associate with (extreme metal) and research that is unusual and innovative, at the edges of academic thought (especially the paper on self-mutilation in performance by Gemma Antonelli (University of New South Wales, Australia)).

**Thank you, BASEES, for granting me the financial opportunity to undertake this ground-breaking trip!**



North American River Otter, © Dawn Hazle

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## The Russian Phoenix: Art and Literature in the Era of the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions – Sixth Annual Moffat Russian Conference

**The 6th Moffat Russian Conference took place at Moffat House Hotel on 20-22 October: for a full delegate list, see our 2017 programme at [www.moffatrussianconferences.com](http://www.moffatrussianconferences.com).**

Part academic festival, part relaxed house-party, Moffat's Russian conferences are a collaboration between Moffat Book Events and three Russian bodies: the State Library for Foreign Literature, the Institute for Translation and the State Literary Museum. Both the Institute's director, Evgeny Reznichenko, and the head of the Literary Museum, Dmitry Bak,

attended this year; Ms Svetlana Gorokhova represented the State Library. A four-minute video on the MRC's Facebook page gives a flavour of our proceedings.

David Elliott, a museum curator whose career has taken him from running the Oxford Museum of Modern Art to his present office in China, reminded us in his wide-ranging talk that the 'revolution' in art had started long before the October Bolshevik coup. Dmitry Bak talked about the categorization of literature in Moscow's State Literary Museum. Lesley Milne introduced her book *Laughter and War:*

*Humorous-Satirical Magazines in Britain, France, Germany and Russia, 1914-1918* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016). The 'general' at our wedding, was a real, if retired Major-General, Mungo Melvin, whose talk on naval revolutions in the Black Sea fleet was based on his new book *Sevastopol's Wars: Crimea from Potemkin to Putin* (Osprey, 2017). The theme for MRC 2018 (Oct 19-21) will be Turgenev: 200. All ideas and suggestions welcome!

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