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British Association for Slavonic
and East European Studies



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President's Report

AGM 2015

1. The association has continued to be fortunate in the group of people who have been prepared to commit their time and energy working on the national committee and contributing to the organisation of the annual conference and other BASEES events. I am most grateful to my fellow committee members for their good humour and effectiveness: it is a great pleasure to work with them. At this year's AGM, the association's secretary, Sarah Hudspith, and information officer, Claire Shaw, stand down at the end of their terms of office. Both have been instrumental in promoting the work of the association, even when they have had heavy commitments at their own universities. Allan Sikk has ably organised the politics stream for the BASEES annual conference over the past four years, and has helped it grow to become one of the largest parts of the conference programme. BASEES owes each of them a debt of gratitude for their efforts.

The organisation of the annual BASEES conference has become increasingly complex and time-consuming over the last few years as the number of delegates has grown and the programme has expanded. Matthias Neumann has been the central figure in the success of the conference, organising it with great skill and flair. The conference is now the largest annual meeting of its kind in Europe, enhancing the reputation of the association and making a significant contribution to our finances. Matthias's formal period of office as conference organiser comes to an end this year, but I am very grateful that he has agreed to continue to organise the conference as a co-opted member of the committee.

2. BASEES has continued its work to promote the study of our region through its regular activities. The 2014 annual conference was again a great success, attracting more than 430 people to Cambridge for three days of discussions and lectures. Fitzwilliam College and Churchill College have continued to provide a



congenial setting for our annual gathering, and I am most grateful to the Fellows and staff of both colleges for their hospitality. BASEES has continued to develop its relationship with Taylor & Francis through the publication of the BASEES/Routledge monograph series on Russian and Eastern European Studies and Europe-Asia Studies. We are very grateful to Taylor & Francis for their sponsorship of the drinks reception before the conference annual dinner. This year marks a milestone in the monograph series, with the publication of the 100th volume in the series. The stewardship of the series by Richard Sakwa and Peter Sowden has made it both an academic and commercial success, and the series continues to publish work from both established experts and new scholars. At a time when the publication of monographs is becoming increasingly difficult, the BASEES/Routledge series is a model of its kind.

The Association has continued, through its R & D committee, to make small grants to postgraduate students to assist them in carry out research abroad and to present papers at conferences: this is one of the most important ways in which BASEES can help to develop new generations of scholars. Financial support has also been provided to study groups that specialise in particular aspects of our area; this year, BASEES has welcomed the establishment of a new study group on Czech and Slovak Studies and I look forward to it making an important contribution to the association's work. >>

Workshops, Conferences and Calls for Papers

Workshop: Gender, Nationalism and Citizenship in Anti-Authoritarian Protests in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine
Robinson College, Cambridge
20 June 2015

A one-day workshop bringing together scholars, activists and experts working on Belarus, Russia and Ukraine to discuss recent and ongoing protest movements, with a particular focus on gender, nationalism and citizenship. The programme is online at: ceelbas.ac.uk/ceelbas-news/events/workshops/gender-nationalism-citizenship
Free admission, but places must be reserved in advance via Eventbrite. For further information, contact Olesya Khromeychuk: ok251@cam.ac.uk.

CFP: Globalising the History of Revolutions

University College Dublin
23-24 October 2015

We are especially interested in receiving proposals from historians working on a diverse range of cases including those of Russia (1904-07). Interested participants should send paper abstracts and a short CV to mark.jones@ucd.ie by 15 June 2015. Limited funding for travel and accommodation is available and applicants who require such funding should state so in their application.

CFP: Scientific Utopias in Soviet Union: Fiction, Science and Power (1917-1991)
Paris
23-24 September 2016

If you are interested in presenting a paper at this conference, please send a 300 word abstract and a short bio, by 30 November 2015, to: sovietscienceandfiction@gmail.com. The working languages of the conference are French, English and Russian.

CONFERENCE: Musical Legacies of State Socialism: Revisiting Narratives about Post-World War II Europe

Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade

24-26 September 2015

For more information, contact Srđan Atanasovski (srdjanatanasovski@music.sanu.ac.rs) and Ivana Medić (dr.ivana.medic@gmail.com).

CONFERENCE: 15th Aleksanteri Conference Culture and Russian Society
Helsinki

21-23 October 2015

The preliminary programme can be viewed at: helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/conference2015/

BASEES Annual Conference 2016

Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge
2-4 April 2016

3. The committee regularly engages with other organisations to which we are affiliated, or which play an important role in the teaching and research of our members, and which regularly take up important issues affecting our scholarly community. BASEES has been represented at meetings organised by the Academy of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Arts and Humanities User Group and the British Academy at which the views of subject associations and learned societies have been sought on a variety of topics.

This year, the association nominated its immediate past president, Professor Stephen Hutchings, for fellowship of the Academy of Social Sciences. Fellowship is conferred upon individuals to mark their eminence in their field of study and BASEES was delighted that the Academy agreed to confer the title of Fellow on Stephen Hutchings.

The association has made representations to the University of Amsterdam in support of its department of Slavic Languages and Cultures, and has also supported the

campaign to allow the scholar Alex Sodiqov to leave Tajikistan.

4. The continuing international tensions in our area of study present both opportunities and challenges to BASEES members. A recent report by the UK parliament's foreign affairs committee has noted the lack of expertise in Russian language and studies in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the government has responded by announcing that it is seeking to increase its numbers of experts on Russia. At the same time, there have been problems for foreign scholars in Russia itself, with a number of instances where academics have experienced difficulties over visa issues. BASEES will be seeking to engage on both topics over coming months, with the aim of promoting the study of our region and emphasising the importance of maintaining scholarly and academic links even at times of international stress.

Peter Waldron
President, BASEES, and
Professor of Modern History,
University of East Anglia

BASEES Conference 2015

The annual conference was held on 28-30 March 2015 at Fitzwilliam College and Churchill College, Cambridge, welcoming 417 delegates from across the world. Over the course of three days, 104 panels were convened to discuss a wide variety of new research relating to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The BASEES conference marked two significant anniversaries with keynote lectures. Opening the conference, Jeremy Hicks examined the Holocaust from the Russian perspective, using Soviet film documentaries of the Nazi atrocities to examine the construction of a distinctly Russian Holocaust narrative. On Sunday evening, Viken Cheterian spoke about 'Genocide Denial and Consequences: 100 Years after the Armenian Holocaust'. Both lectures linked historical narratives to current politics, exploring how the stories we tell about the past have their impact today.

The conference also showcased theatre and film from the region. On Saturday evening, delegates had the chance to watch a screening of 'Letters to Trotsky', a German theatre production based on newly discovered materials from the Russian archives, and to discuss the play with director Yuri B. Anderson, actress Alina Tinnfeld and historian Gleb J. Albert. During the conference, 'Sport, Sport, Sport', a programme of Soviet-era films and artist moving image on the theme of sport, was presented by the curator Tiffany Boyle.

Alongside the panels and papers, the weekend gave many a chance to network and socialise with colleagues. Sunday evening saw the official conference dinner, which began with drinks sponsored by the Taylor and Francis Group, publishers of the Routledge/BASEES book series. During the dinner, BASEES president Peter Waldron presented the BASEES prizes. Saturday evening saw the launch of the BASEES Women's Forum, which was marked with a roundtable on 'Women in Soviet, Slavic and Eurasian Studies', at which Mary McAuley, Rosalind Marsh, Mary Buckley and Barbara Heldt discussed their early experiences of studying and working in the region.

Thanks, as always, must go to Matthias Neumann, Suzy and Charlie Howes, and the subject stream editors for their tireless work on the conference. We look forward to welcoming delegates to Cambridge again on 2-4 April 2016.

Claire Shaw

BASEES Postgraduate Conference 2015: 'Peripheral Histories?'

Overview

'Peripheral Histories?' was the first postgraduate conference dedicated to historical research conducted in the Russian provinces, localities, and post-Soviet republics. The conference was a resounding success, fulfilling all of its principle goals and bringing together around twenty-five postgraduates and recent graduates. It provided a lively and thoroughly good-natured forum for postgraduates to discuss their research as well as providing the basis for extensive networking.

Postgraduate Participation

Throughout, there was a firmly postgraduate 'feel' to the event. A total of ten papers were delivered during three separate panels by postgraduates and early-career scholars based in eight different universities in five different countries (Britain, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, the USA, and Canada), prompting enthusiastic and friendly discussion. The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion led by Sarah Badcock, Jon Waterlow, and Jo Laycock on the practical experiences of conducting research in Russia. In light of recent events in the Russian provinces, the roundtable discussion was particularly timely and produced further engaging and good-natured discussion. All sessions, including the roundtable discussion, were chaired by postgraduate students, providing valuable experience of conference chairing.

Networking

During the conference, a mailing list was established as the basis for future work amongst the conference participants, with a total of twenty individuals signing up. This can provide a platform for future events, including conferences, individual conference panels, and the circulation of ongoing postgraduate research in the field.

Archival Database

Conference participants were invited to contribute to the documentation of archives and research institutions in the former USSR. An archival guide hosted by CEELBAS, which is being continually expanded, was publicised and the suggestion of contributing new information about as-yet undocumented archives to this project was very well received by participants. Plans are already being made to organise submissions to this project through the 'Peripheral Histories?' mailing list and it is hoped that over a dozen new archives can be added to the guide as a result.

Alistair Dickins

The Annual Conference saw the launch of the BASEES Women's Forum, established to further the interest of women in Slavonic and East European Studies and to promote research about women and gender in the region. The launch consisted of a panel discussion about the role of women in the development of Slavonic and East European Studies. In the first of a series of extracts from this discussion, Barbara Heldt describes her experiences of US academia.



BASEES Women's Forum Launch

In conversations over the years with British colleagues about where was worse for women in academe, North America or Britain, I became convinced that the US excluded women from higher positions in a more thorough and obvious way, and also that it was only with the intervention of the federal government that so-called private universities had to shape up. Hence, we needed a women's group within the AAASS at a relatively early date.

I saw this myself when I was fired from the University of Chicago in 1971, and enlisted the aid of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under Title IX of the Education Act. I discovered in the process of my appeal that a male colleague hired at the same time as me at a higher rank had a much higher salary and no PhD. The big picture was that nearly half of this 'private' university's funding derived from government grants, especially in the sciences. I had called a meeting of faculty women to discuss this issue, and only two brave souls showed up. But I did get hate calls from scientists' wives, who were hired as lab assistants by their husbands on the husbands' federal grants. Apparently unmarried female scientists were doubly discriminated against.

In the smaller picture of the field of Russian literature, I naturally looked for role models. The only name I could conjure that had not at one time been married to or the mistress of a prominent Russian scholar was a lady married to an equally famous man in an unrelated subject. Against this abject backdrop, rose the glorious gender achievements of the USSR in which I believed up until the time I actually spent several months there in 1961 and again in 1965, and discovered that, in the Motherland too, women had problems, performing femininity, while also performing all the housework chores, while also holding down perhaps not the most high-level or the most interesting jobs.

When my postgraduate and working life began, scholarship in the Slavic field excluded women, as did most panels at the scholarly meetings. But, beginning in the late seventies, all that began to change. Barbara Engel, Barbara Clements, Brenda Meehan, Christine Worobec and Linda Edmondson in History, Gail Lapidus and later Mary Buckley in Politics, and Mary Zirin and myself in literature were all getting busy presenting our findings. Mary was collecting the names of all women writers in Russia, names once prominent but now forgotten. Meeting her at an AATSEEL conference in 1979 was a major event for me. Until then, I thought I had been writing in a vacuum.

At the 1987 Boston AAASS convention, we decided that we would form a separate organization outside, if not recognized within. Ellen Mickiewicz, the first woman president-elect of the AAASS, commissioned Gertrude Schroeder to write up the dire statistics of the status of women in the profession, and, after calling several bluffs, we were funded. An orgkomitet was established headed by Rochelle Ruthchild, and the Association for Women in Slavic Studies was founded within the AAASS.

British scholars have always been a part of it. The two most prominent scholarly organizations in the US and the UK will soon both be headed by British women: Catriona Kelly and Judy Pallot. The founding of this Forum will do much to encourage future generations of feminist and women scholars. It is a different era now. No longer do we have to impose quotas, like the American Historical Association once did, requiring women on all panels. Policy guidelines for what constitutes sexual harassment are generally in place in universities. Nevertheless, time sometimes marches in reverse. We all have strange histories to relate, topics to discuss, new statistics to uncover, and younger scholars to mentor. There is plenty of work ahead.

BASEES/Routledge Series

BASEES members are entitled to a special members' discount of 20% on any Routledge/BASEES books. Browse the series at routledge.com/u/routledge/basees/15 and enter the discount code BASEES15 at the checkout.

New Europe's New Development Aid

By Balázs Szent-Iványi & Simon Lightfoot

This book examines the international development policies of five East Central European new EU member states, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Putin's Preventive Counter-Revolution Post-Soviet Authoritarianism and the Spectre of Velvet Revolution

By Robert Horvath

This book examines the 'preventive counter-revolution,' a programme of reforms and repression that transformed the face of Russian politics during Vladimir Putin's second term as president.

Russia-China Relations in the Post-Crisis International Order

By Marcin Kaczmarski

The book explores developments in Russia-China relations in the aftermath of the global economic crisis, arguing that the crisis transformed their bilateral affairs, regional liaisons and, crucially, altered the roles both states play on the international arena.

Eastern Europe and the Challenges of Modernity, 1800-2000

By Stefano Bianchini

This book presents a concise and comprehensive overview of the mainstream flows of ideas, politics and itineraries towards modernity in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans over two centuries from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end of the Gorbachev administration.

Nation, Ethnicity and Race on Russian Television Mediating Post-Soviet Difference

By Stephen Hutchings & Vera Tolz

Through an analysis of a wide range of news and other television programmes, the book shows how the covert meanings of discourse on a particular issue can diverge from the overt significance attributed to it, just as the impact of that discourse may not conform with the original aims of the broadcasters. Throughout, this extremely rich, well-argued book complicates and challenges received wisdom on Russia's recent descent into authoritarianism.

Series Editor: Richard Sakwa

BASEES Prizes

The following prizes were awarded at the 2015 Annual Conference.

Alexander Nove Prize, 2013

Awarded to David Moon (University of York) for *The Plough that Broke the Steppes: Agriculture and Environment on Russia's Grasslands, 1700-1914* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

'David Moon has produced a path-breaking and highly original work that opens up new perspectives on the history of Russia. Based on original research in archives, field work in the steppe region and little-known public sources, Moon traces the complex changing relationships between the environment and different groups of people in the making and reshaping of the steppe. It is a landmark study for all those interested in the history of Russia and is a worthy winner of this year's Nove Prize.' (Jury: Prof Terry Cox and Prof Stephen Hutchings)

George Blazycza Prize, 2012

Awarded to James Krapfl (McGill University, Montreal, Canada) for *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989-1992* (Cornell University Press, 2013)

'This analysis of Czechoslovakia's "gentle revolution" and the role of citizens' movements in the changes that followed is based on painstaking original research of contemporary material from a variety of sources throughout Czechoslovakia. Twenty-five years on, as politicians and political scientists have to address the contemporary distrust and disillusionment towards

established political elites throughout the region, this is a timely reminder of how different politics looked when communism first fell.' (Jury: Dr Karen Henderson and Dr Katarina Wolczuk)

BASEES Postgraduate Prize 2014

Co-awarded to Gleb J. Albert (University of Zurich, Switzerland) for "'To Help the Republicans Not Just By Donations And Rallies, But With the Rifle": Militant Solidarity with the Spanish Republic in the Soviet Union, 1936-37' in *European Review of History* 21(4):501-518.

'Gleb Albert's study of the involvement of Soviet volunteers – and Soviet public opinion more broadly – in the Spanish Civil War is an important, timely and intriguing contribution, well worthy of special mention.'

Co-awarded to Ilya Yablokov (University of Manchester), for his contribution to Elisabeth Schimpfoss and Ilya Yablokov, 'Coercion or Conformism? Censorship and Self-Censorship among Russian Media Personalities and Reporters in the 2010s', *Demokratizatsiya* 22 (2014): 295-312.

'This article's main angle is a series of elite interviews with members of Russia's state media stratum. It makes a very weighty contribution to contemporary understandings of the Russian media realm, dominant political discourses, national identity and Russian governance.' (Jury: Dr Sam Greene and Dr Luke March)

The 2015-2016 BASEES prizes are now open to receive nominations. The deadline for receipt of nominations for the 2015-16 prizes is 1 JULY 2015. Please be aware that the submission deadline is slightly earlier than in previous years. For more information, see www.basees.org.

Conference Report

'The Black Sea in the Socialist World', 6-7 February, 2015

'The Black Sea in the Socialist World' workshop brought together historians working on both the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc. Coinciding with the seventieth anniversary of the Yalta Conference (4-11 February 1945), the conference highlighted the unique position of the Black Sea in the history of medicine and health in the USSR and the Eastern Bloc, as well as its position as an international meeting place of the socialist world. The "Black Sea in the Socialist World" sought both to place the medical history of the Black Sea region in the burgeoning scholarship on global and transnational history, and to problematize both comparative and connective perspectives on the region. Participants agreed that thinking more broadly in terms of the region as an 'inter' or 'trans-national space, united by medical approaches to nature and rest, albeit one ideologically divided at specific moments along nationalist

lines, was enriching for scholars of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. However, many participants also felt that it was important to remember how national boundaries were also reified at various points in the twentieth century, and processes such as cultural, economic and population exchange could sometimes serve to concretize imagined notions of essential difference, rather than break them down. The workshop led to a productive discussion about the possibility of developing a new sub-field of history: Black Sea studies.

Dr Johanna Conterio, Research Associate at Birkbeck, University of London, who organized the workshop, is currently editing a special issue of *Slavonic and East European Studies*, scheduled for publication in January 2016, in which selected papers from the workshop will be published.