

## Special Issue: Focus on Books and Publishing

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### Editorial information

Please send any news, comments,  
or contributions to the editor,  
Muireann Maguire  
(muireann.maguire@exeter.ac.uk).

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for the March newsletter is  
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British Association for Slavonic and  
East European Studies



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## President's Report

**This editorial took shape last month during a 21-hour train journey with Julie Curtis from Perm', in the Urals, to Moscow. We had been representing Oxford University at Perm' State University's centennial celebrations.**



Julie and I last shared sleeping space thirty years earlier, when we drove a group of Oxford students on a camping-trip in European USSR and had to share a rather small ridge tent. That was 1987 and although our freedom to roam was limited (for example, a 'guide' was attached to us at the border), there were hints of coming change, soon to open many more opportunities to travel in both directions across the East-West divide. Meanwhile in Europe, the European Union was already benefiting scholarship. The Erasmus Programme (now Erasmus+) launched in 1987 and has since enabled well over three million students to study abroad. Since then, many other Europe-wide initiatives have facilitated academic exchanges and research collaborations; not least the joint funding opportunities provided by the European Research Council (founded in 2007).

Sadly, the fear which I expressed in my last newsletter - that the UK would vote to leave the EU - has been fulfilled. British academe is grappling with the consequences of Brexit. Amid much uncertainty, we already know that collaborative research between the UK and European partners is threatened, which will negatively affect general access to funding and inhibit recruitment of non-UK nationals to all levels of HE. Most disturbingly, colleagues born outside the UK have been made to feel unwelcome and to question their commitment to staying here. On the train from Perm', and over shots of vodka and red caviar kindly gifted us by a Perm' colleague (though, as we discovered, consumption of alcohol in railway carriages is no longer permitted), Julie and I discussed the probable impacts of a 'hard Brexit' on students. Most undergraduates studying Slavonic and East European languages also take French, German and other European languages; the reduction in opportunities, funding and flexibility for their Year

Abroad in Europe will discourage them from committing to long stays in Russia or Eastern Europe. For graduates, the loss of easy access to European universities will reduce the numbers proceeding to higher research in social studies and the humanities involving the countries of East Central Europe and the Balkans.

The challenge for BASEES will be to maintain the upward trend in the number of multi-national panels at the annual conference, while growing our membership from outside the UK. But since our association represents the interests of anyone involved in teaching and research in Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia regardless of nationality, we will work to identify new opportunities for joint initiatives with our neighbours. One such initiative is the forthcoming BASEES regional conference in Budapest on December 5-8, 2016, marking sixty years since the Hungarian Revolution (see p. 2). Meanwhile, individual UK members of BASEES can help to minimize Brexit's impact by supporting their universities' lobbying of government; by flagging specific problems for Russian and East European studies provoked by Britain's departure from Europe; and by taking every opportunity to keep European channels of communication open.

One common scholarly activity where we can continue to interact in a borderless world is research publication. Through international (often online) academic publishing, research in Russian and East European area studies, history, languages and literature reaches a global audience. BASEES's happy association with Routledge has created the BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies with international authors and contributors. Few BASEES members in social studies have not submitted manuscripts to >>

## Conferences and Calls for Papers

The registration deadline for the conference **60 years since 1956: the Hungarian Revolution and its aftermath in East and Central Europe** (December 8-10, 2016, Budapest), jointly organised by BASEES with the Hungarian Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, has been extended to Dec 1, 2016. Paper proposals may be submitted up to Nov 20, 2016. See [basees2016budapest.org](http://basees2016budapest.org) or email [info@basees2016budapest.org](mailto:info@basees2016budapest.org) for more information.

Paper proposals are invited for the **XVI International Congress of Slavists** (Belgrade University, Aug 20-27, 2018) by end Dec 2016. For more information on application and registration, see [basees.org](http://basees.org) or contact Mary MacRobert at [catherine.macrobert@lmh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.macrobert@lmh.ox.ac.uk).

Paper proposals are invited by Jan 15 2017, for a postgraduate symposium on 'Writing and Screening of Violence in Russian Culture' at the University of Oxford on May 19, 2017. Email [violenceinrussianculture@gmail.com](mailto:violenceinrussianculture@gmail.com) for more information.

Proposals for papers and panels are welcomed for a postgraduate conference on 'Gender and Sexuality in Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia: Past and Present', on March 8, 2017 at the University of Nottingham. Please send abstracts of 250 words and a brief bio-note to the organiser Siobhan Hearne at [siobhan.hearne@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:siobhan.hearne@nottingham.ac.uk) by Jan 9, 2017.

### OTHER PROFESSIONAL NEWS

A new AHRC Open World Research Initiative (OWRI) project, 'Cross-Language Dynamics: Reshaping Community', has just launched, with former BASEES President Professor Stephen Hutchings (Manchester) as Principal Investigator and Dr Andy Byford (Durham) leading one of the major research strands. See more at <https://goo.gl/sDz6vQ>.

As part of its collaboration with the Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership (M3C DTP), the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies at the University of Nottingham is inviting applications for PhD studentships from UK/EU students whose research interests include Russian literature and culture (medieval, 19th-, 20th- and 21st-century); Russian film; Russian popular music; Serbian/Croatian literature, culture and film; comparative literature; and Byzantine studies. The deadline for M3C funding applications is 16 Jan 2017. See more at [midlands3cities.ac.uk](http://midlands3cities.ac.uk) or contact [enquiries@midlands3cities.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlands3cities.ac.uk).

>> *Europe-Asia Studies*, a Routledge imprint. Amidst the anxieties about Brexit's impact (not to mention breaking Russian news, with both Memorial and the Levada Centre now deemed 'foreign agents'), I applaud this newsletter issue's focus on publishing as a celebration of border-free scholarship in our field. It also reminds us to encourage and help our post-graduates and early career scholars struggling to publish their research.

I might have ended by reassuring non-UK national scholars to that 'you are still welcome', but to do so would be to pander to the repulsive 'us' and 'them' opposition that has surfaced in public discourse since June (I am more inclined to beg for our European colleagues not to abandon us). My colleague Philip Bullock recently expressed the deeper importance of cosmopolitanism in an excellent blog post (<https://goo.gl/2SaBQZ>) on Oxford University's Creative Multilingualism website. He challenges Theresa May's troubling insistence at the Conservative

Party conference that 'if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what the very word citizenship means.' After dissecting why these words contradict everything that immersion in foreign language and culture does to engage students' (and, I would add, their professors') experience, Philip concludes: 'perhaps Theresa May was closer to the truth than she realised. To be a citizen of the world - quite literally a 'cosmopolitan' - is indeed to be citizen of 'nowhere'. In Greek, nowhere is utopos, and a utopia is a place that doesn't or cannot exist. But utopia is also a *good* place, an *eutopos*, a kind of ideal to which we should always strive, and an experiment in being better versions of our existing selves. Perhaps, through learning what it feels like to speak another language, to live another life, we can help to build that place, even if that's only nowhere for the time being.'

Judith Pallot

## Book Reviews | Special Feature

### Svetlana Stephenson, *Gangs of Russia: From the Streets to the Corridors of Power*

Cornell University Press, 2015. x + 207 pages. ISBN: 9781501700248. £15.50 ppbk  
This is one of those rare scholarly books which is hard to put down. Reading it is a real pleasure; Svetlana Stephenson writes clearly, sometimes lyrically, without jargon or disciplinary obfuscation. The reader is rewarded with original, sometimes startling insights. A new and powerful light is shone onto the deep structures of contemporary Russian society, and on the thought processes and modes of discourse of many of its leaders. The book results from a decade's research and thought. Stephenson conducted her original study in Kazan in 2005. She conducted interviews with gang members, all males aged 17-35 (gang rules explicitly prohibit female membership). These young men are the *patsany*, or in her translation, "lads". She also interviewed former gang members, young people who did not join gangs, teachers, school psychologists, police and prosecutors. This was the world in which the young President Putin was formed. One Russian commentator, Stanislav Belkovsky, has described the annexation of Crimea in 2014 as "lads' logic" (*patsanskaia logika*). In her remarkable book, Stephenson explores and illuminates phenomena deeply rooted in recent Russian history, which exert a pervasive influence on contemporary society and its leaders, especially its present

figurehead, Mr Putin.  
Bill Bowring (Birkbeck College)

### Jason C. Vaughn, *A Socio-Political Model of Lies in Russia: Putin Against the Personal*

University Press of America: 2016. 218 pages. ISBN: 9780761867630. £47.95 hdbk  
The current surge in interest in Russia's use and abuse of information has direct and immediate policy relevance for defence and national security. Western governments are seeking both to defend themselves against Russian "information warfare", and to counter it by communicating directly with the Russian population. Jason Vaughn's examination of the nature of "truth" in Russia, and the social and political value of truthfulness, responds to many current policy questions, earning a readership far beyond academia. Exploiting a wide range of Russian sources, Vaughn examines how attitudes to truth and lies in Russia differ from Euro-Atlantic preconceptions. His subtitle, "Putin Against the Personal", draws on his tripartite model of institutionalised deception in Russia - the state deceives the individual, the individual deceives the state, and individuals deceive each other (Russia's so-called "everyday war of everybody against everybody else"). His findings make uncomfortable reading for Western planners of counter-disinformation measures; Vaughn clearly shows the limitations of any approach based on counterposing "truth" to Russian lies. This book suffers from >>

>> inadequate editing and proofreading, with malapropisms and infelicities like references to “Vladimir Sukhov” for (almost certainly) Vladislav Surkov, and nonsenses like scrambling a whole chapter of online citations by replacing all hyphens with quotation marks throughout. These, and the poor quality of the graphics and tables, are unfortunate distractions from Vaughn’s important and topical findings.

**Keir Giles (Conflict Studies Research Centre)**

**Mark Harrison, *One Day We Will Live without Fear: Everyday Lives under the Soviet Police State***

Hoover Institution Press, 2016. xxi + 280 pages. ISBN: 9780817919146. £20.95 hdbk

This is a highly readable book of remarkable humanity, appealing to a wide audience but based on very serious scholarship.

Mark Harrison is Professor of Economics at Warwick University, but also a Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He has published previously on wartime economies, and the Soviet planned economy. He first visited Russia on a school exchange in 1964, and many times since. This new book was made possible by the Russian Archives Preservation Project. Between 1992 and 1996 (a window of opportunity during Yeltsin’s presidency) the Hoover Institution and the State Archival

Service of Russia cooperated to microfilm documents of the Soviet Communist Party and State, resulting in more than 7,000 reels of microfilms. From this rich raw material Harrison has drawn stories of everyday life in a police state, with particular emphasis on Soviet Lithuania, especially the Kaunas riots of 1972. Each of the seven chapters tells an absorbing human story. I first visited the USSR in 1983, in the context of town twinning, and was therefore especially interested in Chapter Six, “A Grand Tour”, on KGB control of Soviet citizens travelling abroad as tourists from 1955, and of foreigners visiting the USSR. While I recognised some phenomena described in this book, I also learnt much that was new to me. Harrison correctly points out that modern Russia has not broken from its KGB past. He also notes, chillingly, that the KGB remained a relatively small organisation right up until 1991. The modern FSB is much bigger, with at least 200,000 employees on its payroll according to Andrei Soldatov.

**Bill Bowring (Birkbeck College)**

**Josef Jedlička, *Midway Upon the Journey of our Life*, trans. by Alex Zucker**

Karolinum Press and University of Chicago Press, 2016. 192 pages. £17.50

Josef Jedlička (1927-1990) was a Czech essayist and novelist, who after emigrating in 1968 worked for Radio Free Europe

in Munich. He observed at first hand the catastrophe of the Stalinist industrial transformation of Czech society. This book’s Dantean title clearly signals the ‘hellish’ nature of the new environment, with the modernist Collective House (Kollektivní Dům) in Litvínov at its centre. Composed between 1954 and 1957, the novel was published in Czechoslovakia only after censorship relaxations at the time of the Prague Spring (even then with significant cuts). A freewheeling first-person narrative in which the ‘present’ time of the 1950s loops back to 1948 and earlier, *Midway Upon the Journey of Our Life* constitutes a dark, bitter and unrelenting assault on the Stalinist project, its human cost and particularly the intellectual self-deception which sustained it. While thematically anticipating later Czech ‘texts of disillusion’, Jedlička’s original writing style deliberately confronts the Soviet 1920s ‘literature of fact’ of the 1920s (here parodied as the ‘poetics of a policeman’) with elements derived from Czech Poetism and Surrealism. Alex Zucker’s excellent translation captures all of this, while Rajendra Chitnis provides a useful afterword. Despite the lack of notes to clarify some of the frequent and sometimes obscure cultural references, this is nevertheless a valuable addition to the catalogue of modernist Czech writing in translation.

**Justin Doherty (Trinity College Dublin)**

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## Interview with Peter Sowden, Routledge Editor for Asia, Russia and Eastern Europe



**Q. How long have you been involved in publishing? What attracted you to this career?**

**A.** I began working in publishing in Nov 1976, for Croom

Helm, one of four academic publishers that merged in 1987 to create Routledge in its current form as an academic-only publisher. Academic publishing is very interesting, as you work in both a scholarly and a commercial environment. Growing up in Cleckheaton in industrial West Yorkshire and then studying history as an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford, I was drawn to social history (of which Croom Helm was a major publisher in the 1970s). I share, still, Fernand Braudel’s approach to history, which argues that the world is shaped by interactions between geography, economy, technology, ideas, culture, religion, and the structures of society and government – you need to study all these things to get a full understanding. My current publishing work in Russian and East European Studies, and other areas, fits well with this.

**Q. When and why did you begin working with Russian and East European subject area authors?**

**A.** One of the first books I published was Judith Pallot’s and Denis Shaw’s *Planning in the Soviet Union* (1981), which analyses in detail how the centrally planned economy was managed. Before that, working in marketing, I had promoted many books on Russia and Eastern Europe, including Michael Kaser’s *Health Care in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (1976). Another early Croom Helm book in the field was Richard Sakwa’s 1989 *Soviet Politics: An Introduction*. For a social sciences editor, Russia and Eastern Europe is a subject area that can’t be ignored.

**Q. Tell us about the history and highlights of the BASEES Routledge series.**

**A.** When I became a post-corporate freelance editor in 1999, I worked for Curzon Press, a small publisher later bought by Routledge. Curzon published Asian studies, including a strong list on Central Asia, which naturally led into Russia from the Asian side. Exploring what might be made of this opportunity, I came to the BASEES conference in 2000, and over Sunday roast beef heard (from Judith Pallot), that

Cambridge University Press wished to reduce the number of books in their BASEES series. We at Curzon bid to take over the series, successfully. The highlight is publishing over 100 books in this series, many of them first books by young scholars who have gone on to become leading academics.

**Q. Your favourite BASEES anecdote?**

**A.** One of the many interesting papers I have heard at a BASEES conference was on camels in Kievan Rus. Three references to camels, unearthed by the presenter with considerable difficulty, demonstrated that trade was not just north-south, Scandinavia to Byzantium, but also east-west, by the Silk Road, as well. Brilliant!

**Q. What challenges lie ahead for current and would-be authors in our field?**

**A.** In my view the challenge for authors is the same as it has always been, to uphold the “eternal values of scholarship” to the very highest standards, keeping going with this no matter what the circumstances, if necessary barefoot, in sackcloth, by candlelight, like the scholar monks who abandoned Oxford in the thirteenth century to set up the radical, alternative, excellent University of Cambridge. ■



## 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.

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### DID YOU MISS?

Valerie Pacer, *Russian Foreign Policy under Dmitry Medvedev, 2008-2012*  
See [bit.ly/2eh10z8](http://bit.ly/2eh10z8)

Dae Soon Kim, *The Transition to Democracy in Hungary: Árpád Göncz and the Post-Communist Hungarian Presidency*  
See <http://bit.ly/2dCb9BP>

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We asked Madeleine Reeves, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester and author of *Border Work: Spatial Lives of the State in Rural Central Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2014), 2016 winner of the BASEES Alexander Nove Prize, to share her experiences and advice about placing a first book with an American University Press.

Read her advice here: [basees.org/commentary](http://basees.org/commentary)

## Russian and East European Humanities Publishing

New and early career literary humanities scholars within the field of Russian and East European Studies may struggle to find the right publisher for their first book.

UK options include the BASEES/Routledge series, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, Peter Lang's Russian Transformations series, and Legenda. A welcome overseas addition is Academic Studies Press, a USA-based humanities publisher, currently welcoming new titles in literary and cultural studies from UK scholars. ASP supports junior scholars by providing quicker review turnaround and reducing publication delays; they also offer a series targeted at first-time academic authors, Liber Primus. New Russian and Eastern European series with their editors include:

### Czech Studies

Malyne Sternstein, University of Chicago

### Liber Primus

David Bethea, University of Wisconsin-Madison

### Lithuanian Studies without Borders

Darius Staliunas, Lithuanian Institute of History

### Polish Studies

Halina Filipowicz, University of Wisconsin-Madison

### The Unknown Nineteenth Century

Joe Peschio, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

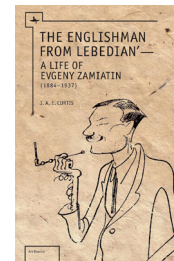
### Ukrainian Studies

Vitaly Chernetsky, University of Kansas

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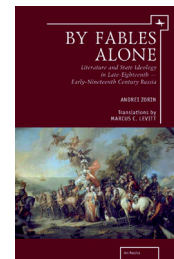
J.A.E. Curtis, *The Englishman from Lebedian, A Life of Evgeny Zamiatin* 2015

ISBN: 9781618114853  
\$29.00 ppbk

"A welcome and significant contribution

to the scholarship on Evgenii Zamiatin. Weaving together a detailed account of his dual career as an engineer and a writer with insights into his complicated personal life, Curtis creates a narrative fabric that is both comprehensive and nuanced. This book will be useful to students getting acquainted with Zamiatin and to scholars who have known him for many years."

Karen L. Ryan, Stetson University



Andrei Zorin, *By Fables Alone: Literature and State Ideology in Late Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Russia* 2014

ISBN: 9781618113467  
\$63.00 hdbk

"Informed by archival discoveries, by a daunting range of scholarship, and by the author's mastery of more than one European literary canon, *By Fables Alone* is a brilliant interdisciplinary study. Focusing on the hidden ideological agenda of Russian foreign policy, Zorin triumphantly demonstrates the importance of literature in Russian political culture, highlighting both the literary foundations of politics and the political subtext of literature."

Simon Dixon, University College London

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## Update on the Cambridge Courtauld Russian Art Centre (CCRAC)

CCRAC co-director Dr Rosalind Polly Blakesley has been appointed Head of the Department of History of Art at the University of Cambridge, from Oct 1, 2016.

Dr Louise Hardiman has received a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (London), where she will work on her book project, 'The Firebird's Flight: Russian Art in Britain, 1851-1917'.

Academics from CCRAC and Moscow Lomonosov State University recently participated in an international conference

on 'The Role of Printed Media in Forming National Identity in Russia and Britain' at P. G. Demidov Yaroslavl State University on Sept 11-13, 2016, generously supported by the In Artibus Foundation and Yaroslavl State University. The conference was part of an ongoing initiative to increase collaboration and dialogue between CCRAC scholars and specialists in Russian and Soviet art at leading Russian universities.

Four CCRAC Advisory Board members were awarded the PhD degree in 2016. See here for more details and latest news: [ccrac.hoart.cam.ac.uk](http://ccrac.hoart.cam.ac.uk).