

CAS President's Report, 2015

21 May 2015

Address by Dr. Elena Baraban, President of the Canadian Association of Slavists

Dear Colleagues, Members and Friends of the Canadian Association of Slavists,

This is the first time I am addressing you as President of the Canadian Association of Slavists. I would like to start my address with what has been on my mind for the last eighteen months and what has been on the minds of most members of our association and across communities in Canada, – the Ukrainian tragedy. For many of us, whose ties to the epicenter of this crisis are very tangible, the past year and a half has been the time of emotional intensity and sadness. The challenges we face in our daily interactions, both on personal and professional levels, are serious. I hope, however, that when called upon to provide our expertise and our professional advice on the region, we can all remember our responsibility with regard to doing our best in nearing the eventual resolution of this crisis and also with regard to preserving and advancing Slavic Studies in Canada.

As is clear from the current Newsletter, quite a few Canadian universities have offered multiple venues for discussing and analyzing the situation in Ukraine, the new divisions in Europe, and the refueled Cold War between the West and Russia. These initiatives have included not only symposia, talks, press releases, and CAS members' numerous public appearances on television and radio, but also the newly developed university and community courses. It is obvious that the need for our input will continue. In the current political and academic climate, our will and ability to approach complex situations professionally, to listen to each other while allowing for each other the benefit of the doubt, and to initiate a productive dialogue are crucial.

The past year, even more so than the previous years, has demonstrated the need in specialists who know the region, its Slavic and non-Slavic languages, cultures, politics, and history. While the urgency for such expertise seems to be recognized, the climate of increasing budget cuts in Canadian universities continues to shape the composition of undergraduate and graduate programs in Central, East European, and Eurasian Studies. The best we can do in this situation is to continue educating new generations of specialists whose competence on the region, I believe, will be in demand in educational institutions, government, NGOs, science, business, and other professional fields.

In the year that has elapsed since the CAS Annual Meeting at Brock University, our Association has undertaken several important and exciting initiatives. I am pleased to announce that the CAS's bid to host the 10th World Congress of The International Council for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES) in 2020 in Canada has been accepted. On behalf of the entire Association, I express my deep gratitude to all who prepared the bid and especially to Professor Andrii Krawchuk (Sudbury University) who has represented the CAS in ICCEES since 2009 and

continues to spearhead our cooperation with this extremely representative international institution. Thanks to the efforts of the Preliminary Working Group (Andrii Krawchuk (Sudbury University), David Schimmelpenninck (Brock University), Maxim Tarnawsky (University of Toronto), Tristan Landry (Université de Sherbrooke), Daria Dyakonova (Université de Montréal), Katie Rose (Harvard), and Janick Roy (University of Toronto), the CAS can now move onto the next stage of organizing the Congress. It is a great honor and responsibility for our Association to help prepare the 10th ICCEES World Congress. No doubt, this work will serve to advance our profession internationally and will raise the CAS's profile in Canada.

Once again thanks to the efforts of Professor Andrii Krawchuk, the CAS has been able to provide travel support to participate in the IX ICCEES World Congress in Makuhari, Japan in July 2015 to Antony Kalashnikov (University of Oxford), a CAS graduate student member.

Another very important development for the Canadian Association of Slavists was the signing in August 2014 of a seven-year agreement with the British publisher Taylor & Francis (a division of Routledge) to publish our national journal *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes* beginning on 1 January 2015. The CSP Editor Dr. Heather Coleman (University of Alberta) has been essential in preparing the agreement with Taylor & Francis and we all thank her for her work on this document. We hope that this cooperation will be beneficial to CAS and will assure financial stability and greater international reach of the journal.

As always, the excellent work of Dr. Svitlana Krysz, the CSP's Assistant Editor, has been crucial for CAS. I wholeheartedly thank Svitlana on behalf of the entire Association for many years of diligent and professional work that has helped our association. Svitlana will be leaving the CSP office as she has accepted a tenure-track position at MacEwan University, beginning 1 July 2015. We congratulate her on her success and wish her all the best in her academic career and, of course, look forward to seeing Svitlana serve the CAS in new roles in the near future. Ms. Oksana Vynnyk (University of Alberta) will take over as editorial assistant at the CSP office.

Special thanks also go to the CSP book review editors, Christina Kramer, University of Toronto and Elisabeth Elliott, Northwestern University (Language and Linguistics), Mark Conliffe, Willamette University (Literature and Art), and Alison Rowley, Concordia University (History and Social Sciences).

Another important step undertaken by the CAS in 2014 was the establishment of the Canadian Association of Slavists' Taylor and Francis Book Prize. Canadian Association of Slavists' Taylor and Francis Book Prize recognizes outstanding scholarship in our field and, like other recent initiatives we have undertaken, will serve to further profile our academic disciplines in and outside Canada. Many thanks to the work of the CAS book prize committee, David Schimmelpenninck (Brock University), Nigel Raab (Loyola Marymount University), Gust Olson (independent scholar), Megan Swift (University of Victoria), and to all members of CAS who worked on the final wording of the document. We are excited to have received an enthusiastic response to the first book prize competition and look forward to hearing the results from the book prize jury (Nigel Raab (Loyola Marymount University), Donna Orwin (University of Toronto), Tatiana Rizova (Christopher Newport University)) later this year.

The committee on the updating of the CAS Constitution, which is comprised of Megan Swift (University of Victoria), Mark Conliffe (Willamette University), Maxim Tarnawsky (University of Toronto), and Elena Baraban (University of Manitoba), will continue its work in 2015.

In the past year, the membership of the Canadian Association of Slavists rose slightly. We hope that this growth will continue.

I am pleased to note that a worthy initiative by Dorota Lockyer (Ph.D. candidate, University of British Columbia) on improving graduate student participation and presence in CAS works very well and that the "Graduate Student Corner" webpage/blog, housed on the CAS/CSP website at <https://casgradcorner.wordpress.com/tag/cas-graduate-student>, is duly updated and provides much useful information for CAS members.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all of my colleagues on the CAS Executive who have supported me and helped me in my first year as President of the Association. I am very grateful to past presidents of the CAS, Megan Swift, Zina Gimpelevich, and Maxim Tarnawsky, who have all given wise advice on a variety of issues. Special thanks go to Volha Isakava (Central Washington University) and Arkadi Klioutchanski (University of Ottawa) who have worked very hard to organize this year's annual conference in Ottawa, Ont. It has been truly a pleasure to be part of the CAS team this year and I look forward to the coming months with enthusiasm and hope.

With best wishes,

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