

“Poetry as Political Resistance: in 20th century Eastern Europe and beyond” –

An international and interdisciplinary symposium, Uppsala University

Date: 31 Aug – 2 Sep, 2020

Location: The event will be held online via Zoom. To receive a link to the event, kindly register by sending an email to registration@ires.uu.se

Poetry is the most democratic of art forms. It uses words – which are everyone’s common property – as its material. Poetry is based on limitless imagination, which cannot be restrained or controlled. Poetry is synonymous with freedom. Yet this comes at a price. Poets often get caught in political wars and become persecuted by undemocratic governments, as is evidenced by the fate of many East European poets in the 20th century.

The aim of the symposium is to show that while poets in Eastern Europe faced impossible dilemmas, they also had unique strategies of resistance. The fight for freedom of artistic expression often overlapped with the goals of human rights activism. We will be looking for the meeting ground between the “non-political” artistic resistance and more active forms of dissent.

We believe that in the wake of the global rise of authoritarian leaders, the East European experience of artistic dissent and political resistance in the last century, has again become relevant today.

Organizers: Zakhar Ishov and Karine Åkerman Sarkisian, both at Uppsala University.

Program

31 August – *Day 1. Session 1.* **15:00-18:00** (Central European Time Zone – GMT+1)

Zakhar Ishov (Uppsala), Introductory Remarks: “Poetry and Politics” a historic context

Schamma Schahadat, (Tübingen): “The Politics of Friendship, the Politics of Christ: The Christ figure in Aleksandr Blok’s *Dvenadcat’* and in Andrey Bely’s *Christos voskres*”

James Stotts (Boston), “The Curtain as Spectacle: Deconstructing the Dramatic Narrative of Soviet Censorship from the West”

Lars Kleberg (Stockholm), "Long Live Poland! A poem by Ryszard Krynicki and its contexts".

1 September Day 2. Session 2. **17:30 –18:45** (Central European Time Zone – GMT+1)

Leszek Koczanowicz (Wrocław): "Politics, ethics, and everyday life" – Zbigniew Herbert's Elegy of Fortinbras and The Return of the Proconsul"

Irena Grudzinska Gross, (Princeton) "Miłosz and the War"

1 September Day 2. Session 3. **19:15 –20:30** (Central European Time Zone – GMT+1)

Alissa Valles (Los Angeles), "Poetry, Politics and Myth: Zbigniew Herbert, Aleksandr Wat and W.H. Auden"

Pavel (Polian) Nerler, (Moscow), "Osip Mandelstam: "Razgovor so sledovatelem o poëzii"/ " Osip Mandelstam: A Conversation with an interrogator about poetry."

2 September, Day 3. Session 4. **15.00 – 16:45** (Central European Time Zone – GMT+1)

Gasán Guseinov (Moscow), "Echolalia, or a Flight from the Cloaca Tongue"

Alexandra Smith (Edinburgh), "Natalya Gorbanevskaya: "Russian Non-Conformist Poetry of the 1960s-1990s: Natalya Gorbanevskaya's Poetry of Witness".

Zakhar Ishov (Uppsala), "Joseph Brodsky: from non-political poetry to *poésie engage*: a history of development"

2 September Day 3. Session 5 **17:15 - 20:00** (Central European Time Zone – GMT+1)

Ellen Hinsey (Berlin/Paris), "Truth in Poetry"

Alexei Zhavoronkov (Moscow), "A Citizen-Poet: The glorious rise and the unexpected self-destruction of an intellectual utopia."

Torsten Petterson (Uppsala), "Philosophical Freedom and Political Resistance in Poetry: Two Sides of the Same Coin?"

Presentations will be followed by a roundtable discussion and a Q&A session with breaks.

Researchers and participants involved in the project:

- Irena Grudzinska Gross, Ph.D., Prof. Princeton University, Slavic Languages and Literature, Fellow at the Guggenheim Foundation, New York
- Gasan Gusejnov, Ph.D., Faculty Member, Philology National Research University, Higher School of Economics, Moscow
- Ellen Hinsey, a poet and independent scholar, whose work is concerned with history, ethics and democracy, Berlin/Paris
- Zakhar Ishov, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Ph.D., Ph.D., Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University
- Lars Kleberg, Ph.D., Professor for Russian Literature, Södertörn University Stockholm.
- Leszek Koczanowicz, Ph.D., Professor of Politics, Wroclaw University
- Pavel Polian Nerler, Ph.D., poet and philologist, Professor Higher School of Economics, Director of Mandelstam Center, Moscow
- Torsten Pettersson, Ph.D., a poet, novelist, Professor Chair of Literary Studies, Uppsala University
- Lev Rubinstein, poet, essayist, and social activist, Moscow
- Schamma Schahadat, Ph.D., Associate Professor for Slavic Literatures and Culture studies, Tübingen University
- Alexandra Smith, Ph.D., Reader in Russian Studies, The University of Edinburgh
- James Stotts, poet, Boston, MA
- Alissa Valles, a poet, translator, Boston, MA
- Dr. Alexey Zhavoronkov, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences