

analysis

From the German (article) and the Russian (lyrics) by Christopher Gilley

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FROM THE EDITORS: *KULTURA* SAYS GOODBYE

The current issue marks the end of the project 'Russian Cultural Review', produced by the Research Centre for East European Studies. It augmented the Russian Analytical Digest's examination of Russian politics and economy with a glimpse into the cultural life of the country. Unlike its sister publication, however, it could not, in the opinion of the editors, simply follow current events. The editors chose four broad areas that covered important post-Soviet changes in culture from which the material for the individual issues of *kultura* was chosen: cultural trends, public discourse, infrastructure and media, and, lastly, norms, values and symbols. In this way, the period under analysis often extended back into the Soviet era – as is the case in this issue – and the authors could explore the momentum of these processes for those abroad who were interested in these developments.

Nevertheless, unforeseeable associations with current events repeatedly cropped up: an attack on an activist of a nation-wide youth organisation just as *kultura* was presenting the group, the German opening of the 'Watch' films at the same time in which half an issue of *kultura* was devoted to them, the renewed discussion about alcohol legislation shortly before the appearance of our 'alcohol' issue, the choice of Sochi as an Olympic host city while we were planning our issue on sport etc. etc.. *kultura* can therefore, even after 2009, be seen as a form of 'monitor' of the important cultural developments of their time. The archive will continue to be accessible through the old URL or the Research Centre's homepage.

As the founding editor, Isabelle de Keghel was responsible for the beginnings; in February 2005, Hartmute Trepper joined her and, following I. de Keghel's departure in 2006, has led the project in cooperation with guest editors until the present day, in between supported for almost a year by Judith Janiszewski. At different times, Irina Prokhorova (Moscow) and Birgit Menzel (Mainz) have advised us; for a long time, Mischa Gabowitsch (now at Princeton), too, was an author, translator and the most reliable of consultants in all questions. I would also like to name Christopher Gilley (GB) as the much-praised translator into English, Hilary Abuhove (USA) as the creative proof-reader and Matthias Neumann as the tireless technical editor from the very first to the very last issue.

kultura first appeared in October 2005. It was planned as a monthly publication and was financed until the end of 2006 by extraordinary funds of the University of Bremen. After a half-year dry spell, the Gerda Henkel Foundation took over the financing of six bimonthly issues for one year, and then six further issues up until summer 2009. We are grateful for these two years and also that we were granted the remaining money from the second stage for the current issue.

Over 2009, our search for new funding was unsuccessful. However, we are convinced from the feedback that we have received that a medium for culture based on solid academic knowledge, written for laypeople, above all in two languages, has a firm audience – not only in Europe, but also the USA and, surprisingly, in some universities in Russia and the Ukraine. We express the firm hope that *kultura* will someday provide the inspiration for a new project.

Hartmute Trepper