

СЕКЦИЯ «ЛИНГВИСТИКА И МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ»

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THE CULTURAL RELATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND FINLAND

The cultural relations between Russia and Finland are of great interest for the researchers. Occurrences typical for good cultural exchange such as appearance of various streams in art, their perception as well as internationality of the culture as a whole can be seen in cultural relations between Russia and Finland. The cultural exchange between Russia and Finland consists of wide spectrum of various events related to the spheres of science, art and public education.

Since the old times Russian and Finnish spiritual life developed in an interaction of cultural occurrences that transformed in certain historical periods with different levels of intensity. Approximately since the end of the eighteenth century Suomi land has taken a noble mission of a mediator in rapprochement of Scandinavian and Russian cultural customs. First attempts of mutual contacts were made in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Some Finnish writers-educators perceived an addition of Finland to Russia on the rights of autonomy in 1809 as a positive event that was the basis of further peaceful existence of the country. Many educated Finns placed great hopes on the nation revival with the help of an “educated” Russian tsar. Emperor Alexander I felt the strategic importance of the north-west territory and declared liberal political course with respect to Finland. He gave Finnish people a privilege to participate in political life of Russian society, an opportunity of equal rights to study Finnish, Swedish and Russian languages. Lack of language knowledge was an obstacle for direct acquaintance with the culture of each other: people who knew Russian in Finland and Finnish in Russia were rare.

The translation of Pushkin’s poem “Caucasian prisoner” by F. Platen in 1925 to Swedish stimulated the awakening of Finnish readers’ interest to Russian literature. Ethnographer and linguist A.Sherger was one of the first to propose an idea of Russian-Finnish cultural partnership. The explanation of vital necessity of Finnish and Russian “joint brotherly labor” in the sphere of literature and scientific research for Russian country was put forward by Sherger for the first time in history. Russian poets-romantics E.Baratynsky, V.Kuhelbeker, F.Glinka did very much to stimulate interest to Finland.

During the time of joining Finland to Russian empire a lot of Finns willingly joined Russian army. As a rule, they were of high origin. There were more than three thousand Finns in Russian army. K.Mannerheim, a hero of the First World War, a coordinator of the unique military-scientific expedition to Central Asia and China (1906-1908), General A.Ramsai, a coordinator of Finnish rifle battalion and Fleet crew achieved the greatest success in Russian army. In the first half of 19-th century the tsar’s government interested in decrease of Swedish influence in Finland made some attempts to support Finnish national culture. Finnish press began to work; Literature (1831) and Art (1846) societies were founded to assist the studying of Finnish national poetry, music and painting; literature devoted to national folklore and grammar was actively published.

An outstanding role in rapprochement of Finnish cultural figures with their Russian colleagues was played by philologist and academician Y.Grot, who spent 14 years (1838-1852) in Finland. Russian-Finnish scientific connections developed actively during 1830-40. Grot helped Kastern to get resources for holding two ethnographical expeditions to Siberia for gathering material about life of Finno-Ugric nations from Russian Ministry of education. Professor of botany I.Sihovsky performed an expedition to Finland (1846).

In the beginning of the second half of the 19-th century tsar's government worried about possible spreading of revolution ideas among lower classes of Finnish society carried out a number of repressive actions that caused a great strengthening of anti-Russian moods.

A search of new ways of interaction in the area of cultural connections was held in the second half of the nineteenth century on the background of social-political rise. Young Finnish bourgeoisie and a part of gentry with the support of Russian liberals managed to get reorganization of public education and weakening of censorship restrictions. Finnish and Swedish with the equal rights became the official language of the principality. State's expenses related to education increased up to four times. The government let education in Finnish at schools. The translation activity devoted mainly to publishing Turgenev. The book "Traveling to Finland" by Z.Topelius contained new facts about the nature and the society of Finland.

Russian literature played an important role in Finnish literature of 1880-90s. As far as Finnish people got familiar with Russian prose their notion of Russian society cultural life changed. They were attracted by realistic contents of the works of Russian writers-realists that were directly connected with the tasks of progressive social and political transformations. A number of talented native Finnish translators appeared (M.Vuori, A.Yarnfelt, O.Oalto, K.Ahoniemi, Y.Mykkinen, and S.Suomalainen).

First Finnish-Russian theatre connections were established in 1870s. Finnish national theatre fulfilled its tour in Petersburg. As well as European classics and modern Finnish drama the director of the theatre K.Bergbom included plays by Russian authors to the repertoire. Russian theatre founded by general-governor N.Adlerberg began to work in 1868 in Gelsingfors. The plays were performed in Russian up to 1918.

The awakening of interest to spiritual life of the northern land that was giving birth to talents of the world level during that "golden period" of its history in Russia happened when the cultural aspect of "Finnish question" became actual under the influence of intensified during the change of centuries political crisis. A number of joint actions of Russian and Finland liberal figures were made.

A necessity to organize excursions to exotic places in the Great Finnish principality appeared in the end of the 19-th century when Petersburg became a millionaire city. Tourists were attracted to Suomi land by good climate, a great number of forests and lakes, order and a beautiful waterfall Imatra that became famous in Russia after its visiting by Katherine the Great in summer 1772. From 1870 when the railroad between Vyborg and Petersburg was built natural beauties of Finland became the constant source of income. Hotels serving reach men from Petersburg were famous for their first-class service and delicious cuisine. Citizens of Petersburg with less income preferred to have a rest on the Karelian neck in cottages. In the beginning of the 20-th century writers L.Andreev, S.Esenin, V.Korolenko, N.Rerih, K.Chukovsky, V.Mayakovsky, V.Hlebnikov, O.Mandelstam, V.Shklovsky, artists V.Serov, I.Repin, Y.Annenkov lived or stayed there.

On the boundary between nineteenth and twentieth centuries connections between Russian and Finnish masters of graphics and musical art appeared. A process of intensive development of art schools based on original customs took place in both countries. Fruitful contacts with Russian culture were of great importance for group called "Young Finland" that had A. Gallen-Kallela, A. Yarnfelt, Y. Rissanen, and P. Halonen as its members. In that time a striving for active studying of folklore and building national style in art was common for artists of Russia and Finland. The centers for studying folk creation were opened almost simultaneously.

A national-liberation rise in Finland and mature art culture in the beginning of the 20-th century gave birth to a world-level composer Y.Sibelius. A hearty welcome was accorded to Sibelius during his appearance in Petersburg and Moscow (1906-1907) as a conductor. Musical society of Russian rated the art activity of Sibelius highly.

A remarkable role in the development of Russian-Finnish cultural relations was played by

M.Gorky. Creativity and personality of one of the world's most popular Russian writers were of great interest in the circle of democratic intelligence of Finland. His true delight of the talent, determination in struggle for freedom of Finns he expressed in personal letters and during meetings with A.Yarnefelt, A.Lejno, H.Vuolijoki, and Y.Sibelius.

Revolutionary events of 1917 in Russian created preconditions for forming an independent Finnish state. The Finnish Republic was acknowledged on the basis of declared by Soviet power principle of nation self-determination. Having separated from Russia, the country got right to build its own future. Further political events caused a great decrease in Russian-Finnish cultural relations. But despite the difficulties in international contacts and sufficient decrease of Russian literature translation interest to Finnish culture was saved. Soviet government found opportunities for keeping Finnish language and literature in Northern Karelia and Leningrad district.

Scientific contacts were developing. A Leningrad society of Finno-Ugric people culture researchers was founded in 1924. In June an international agreement about returning of the archives was signed. Celebrations in Petrozavodsk devoted to 100 anniversary of the first publication of "Kalevala" in 1935 became a great holiday of Finnish culture.

As a result of Commission of scientists life improvement active actions that were created in 1920 in Petrograd and "Finnish university committee aimed to help suffering Russian scientists" headed by pedagogy professor V. Ruin there was established an international center to help scientists of Russia in Gelsingforce. A lot of goods, food and books as well were sent to Petrograd and Moscow. That was the beginning of regular literature exchange between Russia and Finland that could be considered as a continuation of the tradition from the time of Alexander I when he ordered Gelsingforce University to receive a copy of each published book in Russian Empire.

Erroneous actions of both country politicians in the end of 1930s had a great influence on creating bad, unfriendly atmosphere that later transformed into war. After the end of the Second World War because of strict determination of Soviet Union to get friendly relations with its northern neighbor, mutual trust and confidence were reached to make the second half of the twentieth century the time of peaceful collaboration of our nations.

The Friendly pact about collaboration and mutual aid between USSR and Finland that was signed on 6 April 1948 created a good base for building warm relations between our countries that were not affected by international political instability and "cold wars" a bit. Since that time our relations including the area of cultural ones are a rare example of profitable collaboration for both countries that are so different in scale in social life. People in Russia talked about northern nation that was able to guarantee itself a neutral, safe state near the great country with respect. As a development of the Friendly pact there was signed a number of different agreements (about scientific and technical collaboration (1955); about cultural collaboration (1960) that strengthened connections between people of art). In 1970-1980 the agreements about collaboration in the area of tourism, about creating and functions of the Center of Soviet culture and science in Finland, about mutual exchange of professors between Moscow and Helsinki Universities were signed.

Cultural collaboration continued during the newest stage of our countries history when "perestroika" and later democratic reforms were started in Russia. Days of Finland in Russia devoted to commemoration of 80 years of Finland independence were one of the most remarkable events. Various programs of the Days gave opportunity to show the success of Finland in developing nation's spiritual life and to reveal new possibilities for cultural connections with new Russia. A month ago it was very remarkable event in St-Petersburg – the week of Finland. There were presented a lot of very interesting and creative exhibitions and project, approached Russians to Finland culture.

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