



Transformation Group Newsletter

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A LETTER FROM BREMEN

Katsu writes: A year ago, I never thought I would be writing an e-mail from Bremen, as I am doing now. Germany is in fact an interesting land. There is more punctual public transport (than in Britain!). They have four kinds of values with particular reference to individualism and the values shift. I have been even reading some articles on psychology (!). However, I believe that this will have a direct bearing on the social and political spheres. With survey data as my empirical resource, I am together. As it is one of their research interests, I am currently focusing on the study of values with particular reference to individualism and the values shift. I have been even reading some articles on psychology (!). However, I believe that this will have a direct bearing on the social and political spheres. With survey data as my empirical resource, I am

hoping to produce intellectually stimulating academic contributions. (In addition, I have become a member of the organising committee of a forthcoming Peace Psychology Conference, although I still regard myself as a political scientist!).

hard. I have been indeed impressed with the famous German sense of precision and diligence. Nonetheless, I sometimes miss the British (actually, Scottish) way of life, which is to be content and satisfied with what is necessary. I will never forget the delicacy of fish and chips with Irn-bru, which I ate under orange lights on the cold streets at night.

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Above: Sam

The BIGSSS (Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences) and Jacobs University Bremen are vibrant institutions, where people from various disciplines and nationalities work



PUBLICATIONS

Anke guest edited a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, vol. 4, issue 2, 2008. Entitled "Energy Supply in the 'New Europe': Critical Perspectives on the European Union's External Energy Policy", the issue is made up of a selection of four research articles (including one by Valentina) and a guest commentary, each of which address a key aspect of the dilemmas EU policy-makers are facing in the development of a common external energy policy. In addition, it also provides reviews of three recent contributions to the literature on energy security. The special issue is the outcome of a workshop organised by Valentina and Anke, entitled

"Security of Energy Supply in the New Europe - A Challenge for the European Neighbourhood Policy?", which was held at the University of Glasgow in September 2007 and sponsored by the Department of Politics and the Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences as well as UACES, the Scottish Jean Monnet Centre, and the Centre for Russian, Central and East European Studies (CRCEES).

She also published an article "All for One? EU Member States and the Union's Common Policy Towards the Russian Federation", in the *Journal of*

Contemporary European Studies, vol. 16 (2), 2008.

Chris is awaiting publication of his contribution to the Coloured Revolutions conference, 'Contested Sovereignty: The International Politics of Regime Change in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia', in the *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* (and, we hope, in a Routledge edited volume). He spent the Christmas holidays in Sisak, Croatia, working on transforming his thesis into a monograph.

Stephen published "It's the economy, comrade!" Parties and voters in the 2007 Russian Duma election' (with Ian

McAllister) in *Europe-Asia Studies* 60:6 (August 2008), and 'Belorussiya, Ukraina i Rossiya: vostok ili zapad?' (with Ian McAllister) in *Mir Rossii* no. 4 (October-December 2008). He also published, in both cases with Ian McAllister, 'Russia and its neighbours: east or west?' in *Irish Studies in International Affairs* vol. 19 (2008), and 'The Putin phenomenon' in *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 24:4 (December 2008) – a special issue on 'Putin and Putinism' that will also be appearing in book form.

PRESENTATIONS

Bill gave an invited presentation on "Muslims and Multicultural Nationalism in Scotland" at the University of Notre Dame (London Centre) Conference on "European identities? Regionalism, Nationalism, and Religion" in October 2008.

Daniel presented a paper at the Provincial China Workshop in Tianjin, reported elsewhere in this issue. The paper was based on findings during his last fieldtrip to China in

2007 and was entitled "Local Variations and Failure to Transfer Nationally in Urban Social Assistance Policy". It dealt with the emergence of local variations in urban social assistance in Dalian City and why some of these move onto the national agenda and become national policy whilst others do not. The paper was well received and the session dedicated to it saw some lively discussion and challenging questions. The workshop (Daniel writes) "was the first of this intensive format that I have attended and was

enjoyable as both a forum to discuss a diverse range of work by China specialists and Chinese academics, have my own work scrutinised by those familiar with the area I work in and meet a lot of new people. It was also pleasant to return to Tianjin and Nankai University again after spending both my first fieldwork trip and a period of my Masters there".

Jane presented a paper on 'Health Politics in China: Explaining State

PRESENTATIONS

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Retrenchment, 1978-2002' to the Centre for Chinese Studies and Department of Politics of the University of Manchester in October 2008. And she gave a presentation on contemporary China to the First Conference on "The Teaching of China in Scotland's Schools", held by the University of Strathclyde and Scotland-China Education Network in November 2008.

Sarah has been expanding her work on the internet, state power and Russia. Over the past year she presented three papers on the Internet (in addition to a presentation at the Coloured Revolutions conference in May here at Glasgow): "The Russian Internet: Formed More by International or National Media Norms?", Post-Soviet Media Research Methodology Workshop, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, March 2008; "From Political 'Surf' to Political 'Turf'? : Developing Website Analysis to Better Understand the Internet as a Political Catalyst", a paper presented at the 6th Annual Pre-Conference on Political Communication at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts, August 2008; and "Comrades Online?: How the Russian Case Challenges the Democratising Potential of the Internet", a paper presented at the Politics: Web 2.0 International Conference, New Political Communication Unit, Department of Politics and International Relations, Royal Holloway, University of London, April 2008.

She has meanwhile been busily working on grant proposals to fund a study of the Russian Internet, particularly given the growing concern about Russian cyber-

attacks (as in the recent Georgian conflict). "Hopefully" (she writes) "there will be a happy announcement about funding here one day". Meanwhile she continues to collect papers and other writings about the Internet and the former Soviet sphere. Her 2008 textbook, *Introduction to Media and Politics*, rather unusually uses Russia as a key case study.

Vikki attended the 8th Annual Aleksanteri Conference at the University of Helsinki in December 2008 where she presented a paper entitled "The privatisation of welfare in contemporary Russia and 'new' forms of women's agency: a case study of letters to legal advice columns". This paper will form the basis of her forthcoming West Coast Seminar presentation taking place at the University of Glasgow in February 2009. Vikki also co-organised a panel for the BASEES Study Group on Contemporary Societies that was held at the University in January, which was concerned with an exploration of the adaptation and transformation of concepts used in the study of politics and society when analysing the contemporary Russian case. Vikki will also be giving a lecture to the Chevening Scholars taking part in a three-month residential post-graduate course based at the University of Glasgow entitled "Government Relations with NGOs and Civil Society" in February 2009. The lecture will be based around Vikki's work on the processes of accessing and claiming rights in contemporary Russia and will

feed into a workshop session on rights, society and the state to facilitate exchange of insights and expertise among the participating scholars.

Valentina received a Founder's Award from the British International Studies Association (BISA). She also presented a paper "Russia as an Energy Supplier: Constructing Russia's Image in the West" at the annual BISA conference that took place at the University of Exeter in December 2008. She is planning to turn her paper into an article for a special issue on Russian foreign policy of *Europe-Asia Studies* which will be published in late 2009.

Stephen introduced, chaired the opening session of and closed a conference on 'The Russian State and the State of Russia' at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs in Helsinki in October 2008. A set of papers based on the conference is being considered by publishers; Stephen's, coauthored with Ol'ga Kryshtanovskaya, deals with the increasingly close links between big business and the Kremlin's leading officials.

He also spoke at the Contemporary Russian Culture Study Group at Cambridge University in November on "Political engagement – or disen-

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PRESENTATIONS

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-engagement", making early use of a series of focus groups conducted in a variety of Russian locations earlier in the year. Later the same month he addressed the AAASS in Philadelphia on "Ukrainian elections between east and

west", and took part in a round table assessing the career of Boris Yeltsin.

In December he gave a presentation to the Centre for Socialist Theory and Movements at Glasgow on "The political iconography

of postcommunist Europe", and in January he will be visiting Nottingham to speak on the 'TASS Windows' that appeared during the Second World War as part of an exhibition of the University's remarkable collection.

Chris presented a paper at the Strathclyde Conflict and Resolution conference in September 2008 on the international legal obligations of peacekeeping missions.

GRANTS

Stephen had two further awards, on top of his Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship and the Bilateral Australia grant that was reported in the last issue. An award from the ESRC of £269k on 'Crafting Electoral Authoritarianism: the Russian Case' will allow a close examination of recent changes in Russian electoral legislation and practice, including (through Ol'ga Kryshtanovskaya) interviews with many of those directly concerned; Valentina has been appointed to a two-year research assistantship in this connection.

A separate grant from the ESRC deals with 'The Putin Succession' (the final details have still to be agreed); it will also involve close collaboration with Ol'ga Kryshtanovskaya and a couple of Moscow-based research assistants.

TIANJIN WORKSHOP

Jane and the Scottish Centre for Chinese Social Science Research organised a workshop, 'Social problems and the local welfare mix in China: Public policies and private initiatives', in Tianjin in October 2008. The workshop was organised with Dr Beatriz Carrillo of the University of Technology, Sydney, and its China Re-

search Centre, and with Professor Guan Xinping of Nankai University. It was attended by over 30 scholars from the UK, US, China and Hong Kong, and Australia. Daniel's paper on Dalian's social assistance programme (Jane writes) "was very well received. The workshop is an intensive event, with all partici-

pants expected to have read papers in advance. Authors do not present their papers but respond to discussant comments and questions from the workshop participants. The workshop was a particularly lively and enjoyable one, and Nankai University did a wonderful job of making us feel welcome as well

as making sure that the whole event ran very smoothly. Our final evening at the local 'Goubuli' dumpling restaurant was thoroughly enjoyable". The workshop will result in a book, edited by Jane and Beatriz, *China's Social Welfare Mix*, to be published by Routledge in early 2010.

VISITS

Dr Taikang Choi visited the Department in October, in the course of a sabbatical year at Oxford. He completed his thesis on the linkages between domestic and foreign policy under Gorbachev: the case of Korea under Stephen's supervision; his book on the same subject (in English) was published in 2008 and may be consulted in the University Library.

Tania has been appointed to a nine-month research assistantship in the Department, funded by the Bilateral Australia research grant that is directed by Stephen in association with Ian McAllister of the Australian National University.

She writes: "I would like to start my brief introduction with words of gratitude to the University of Glasgow. I am happy to have an opportunity to study and work here.

I am originally from Belarus where I graduated from the Belarusian State Economic University; I continued my studies in Italy at the University of

Turin. I have completed a Master's in Economics programme there and currently I am a PhD student on the Institutions, Economics and Law programme. My thesis examines the contractual basis that exists between European Union and CIS countries and its impact on the legal and economic development of those countries.

As part of my PhD studies, I have been a visiting researcher in the Department of Central and Eastern European Studies. When the research assistantship comes to an end I will join Accountancy Firm Deloitte in Edinburgh for a permanent job in October 2009 to train as an auditor.

I would also like to mention what a favourable impression I have after visiting some marvellous places in Scotland. In particular I am fond of Edinburgh, Scottish nature and cultural heritage.



Above: Tania in Edinburgh

CONGRATULATIONS

To Mervyn Bain (our former PhD student) on the publication of his Russian-Cuban Relations since 1992 (Lexington Books, 2008)

To Alison, who submitted her dissertation on the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and acquitted herself with distinction at the oral examination in January 2009.

To Valentina, on her appointment (when the work permit paperwork has been completed) to a two-year research assistantship in the Department.

To the TG's Dublin representative, Derek Hutcheson, on the arrival of a son.

And to Tania, on her appointment (noted above) to a nine-month research assistantship in the Department.

THE TRANSFORMATION GROUP: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Transformation Group was established in 2004 as a framework for co-operation among those in the Department of Politics, University of Glasgow, who work wholly or in substantial part on political change in Eastern Europe, the Former USSR and China. It includes staff members of the Department in various capacities, and research students. Its co-convenors are Professor Stephen White and Dr Jane Duckett and its other members and associates are:

Staff: Professor Bill Miller, Dr Sarah Oates.

Graduate Students: Ayse Artun, Valentina Feklyunina, Katsuto Furosawa, Daniel Hammond, Tom Johnson, Ariel Ko, Eero Mikenberg, Sam Robertshawe, Anke Schmidt-Felzman, Alison Swain.

Associates and former staff and students: Dr Yulia Korosteleva, Dr Derek Hutcheson, Dr Caroline Hoy, Dr Chris Lamont, Dr Guohui Wang.



Dr Sarah Oates (above)



Professor Bill Miller (right)