

TRANSFORMATION GROUP NEWSLETTER

JULY 2009

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The Transformation Group is primarily based on the staff and research students in the Department of Politics whose work is largely or entirely concerned with the process of change in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet republics and China. But we are part of a wider 'family' of academics who have recently been in Glasgow and maintain regular contact. In this issue we include 'postcards' from three members of this wider community: Kenneth Wilson, now in Korea, who took a master's degree at Glasgow and is an honorary research associate in the Department of Central and East European Studies; Christian Collina, of Turin University; and Tom Johnson, who completed his PhD this year and is now at the City University of Hong Kong.

A POSTCARD FROM KOREA

Kenneth writes: "In March of this year I took up the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Diplomacy at Dongguk University in Seoul, South Korea. Dongguk is a top ten university in Korea and its main campus is located in central Seoul. The structure of higher education in Korea is very different from that in the UK. The academic year consists of two 16-week semesters (surely a blatant violation of some kind of inalienable human right!). Students typically take 5 or 6 courses per semester, and each course requires 3 hours of lectures a week; a degree usually takes 4 years. The standard teaching load for professors – the US system of rank and titles is used here – is 3 courses per semester, meaning 6 different courses per academic year. (Mercifully, I am currently only required to offer 2 courses a semester.) All in all both faculty and students have significantly heavier loads than in the UK. My first impression is that this system guarantees students a broad-based education and compels students to work, but leaves inadequate time for independent reading. Professors have an even more difficult job of balancing teaching and research than their equivalents in the UK.

The employment of academics to teach courses in

English reflects student demand for more exposure to the language – good English is a sine qua non on the graduate job market – and a government policy to internationalize South Korea – 'globalization' is a buzz word here – and its education system. Studying political science in English obviously presents a challenge to non-native speaking undergraduates. Some of the students have fluent English, others much less, but almost all are earnest and hard working, and some are extremely bright. Overall I have really enjoyed teaching Korean students and hope to continue to do so for some time.

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Above: Kenneth with Glasgow PhDs Yeongmi Yun, Ik Joong Youn and [Seongjin Kim](#)

A POSTCARD FROM KOREA

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A recent highlight away from work was meeting with some of the Korean scholars who completed their PhDs on various aspects of Russian politics at Glasgow University under the supervision

of Stephen White. Three of them (Seongjin Kim, Ik Joong Youn and Yeongmi Yun) graciously treated their Scottish visitor to a lunch of traditional Korean dishes. The food was delicious, varied and plentiful (we had the 'light' menu and I still rolled

out of there) and the opportunity to meet new colleagues and reminisce about Glasgow a real pleasure. Hopefully a later postcard will provide more news of their activities post-Glasgow...."

A POSTCARD FROM TURIN

Christian writes: "In February 2009 I completed my PhD in Political Science at Turin University. My dissertation concerned Russia-West relations since the end of the Cold War. More specifically, I investigated the evolution of Russian elite

approaches to Western countries and international organizations (EU and NATO) from Yeltsin to Putin. Apart from the previous literature and the press I worked on documents, elite interviews and other primary sources. I applied a common scoring system to the inter-

views in order to display the position of each interviewee on the various dimensions of Russian-West relations. I can say that these years spent on my PhD dissertation have been really interesting and productive, thanks also to my cooperation with Glasgow scholars and colleagues.

A POSTCARD FROM HONG KONG

Tom has now left Glasgow and is working in Hong Kong – but is glad to continue to be a part of the Group and contribute to the Newsletter. He writes: "In March, I successfully defended my PhD on Extending Environmental Governance: China's Environmental State

and Civil Society. In May I moved to the Department of Public and Social Administration at the City University of Hong Kong. As well as continuing with my research on environmental governance, I'm going to be teaching on courses related to comparative politics, public policy, and environmental protection. If

anyone in the Transformation Group ever finds themselves in Hong Kong, please look me up!"

POSTCARD FROM NEW LANARK

In a way, there is also a POSTCARD FROM NEW LANARK. Because when Olga and Tanya were in Glasgow in late April Stephen took them and others down to New Lanark, a lovely place and site of the famous cotton mill at which Robert Owen pioneered his then-enlightened methods of workplace organisation. Owen's autobiography, published in 1857, provided unexpected evidence of a Russian con-

nection with this part of Scotland.

"Among the more distinguished of the thousands who came to see, examine, and criticise these previously unheard-of proceedings [wrote Owen] were the late Emperor of Russia, with nine or ten of his nobles and attendants, and among them his favourite friend and physician, Sir Alexander Crichton.

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Above: Visiting New Lanark: Valentina, Tatiana Sidorina, Stephen and Tanya

A POSTCARD FROM NEW LANARK

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They remained my visitors for two nights. The Emperor was much pleased with my two youngest sons, who were then at home. At his meals he always would have one on his right hand and the other on his left, and he had one at each hand while going through the establishment, and while viewing the various beautiful natural scenes immediately around the establishment, including the now celebrated falls of the Clyde..."

The Grand Duke was keen to offer Owen's two sons his own patronage and protection at the imperial court. Not only

this, he offered to bring Owen himself to Russia, with "two millions of population", and to "provide for you all in similar manufacturing communities". Owen, in the event, being "much attached to New Lanark and its population, now so much of my own creation", declined the "most liberal imperial offer". But who knows what might otherwise have happened? Later, under the Bolsheviks, he was hailed as one of the pioneers of socialist thought and his statue was one of the first to be erected under the new regime, although Lenin continued to insist

that the "plans of the old cooperators, from Robert Owen onwards, [were] fantastic" in that they forgot about "such fundamental questions as the class struggle, the capture of political power by the working class, the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class" ("On Cooperation", 1923).

POSTGRADUATE PROGRESS

Sam writes that he is "continuing to work on his thesis and is planning a fieldwork trip to Moscow for the end of the year. He recently attended a conference on regional Russian politics at Dundee University with Stephen, Tania and Valentina. He has also had a panel - 'contemporary perspectives on Russian military culture' - accepted for the ICCEES world congress at Stockholm next summer."



Above: Sam in Nice following in famous footsteps

INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS

Tom Lundberg and Chris Thornhill have become members of the TG. Chris "is currently researching for a book on processes of constitutional formation in European societies at different historical junctures. He has an expanding interest in the constitutional dimensions of transitions, and for his next project he intends to write a book on contemporary constitution writing and the transformation of the nation state."

Tom writes that he has "just presented a paper at the conference Martin Steven and Murray Leith organised ('Scotland: Ten Years On') on the topic of continuing tensions between constituency and regional Members of the Scottish Parliament. I continue to be interested in how politicians and voters come to terms with the institutions introduced with Scottish devolution, and to make

comparisons with other countries. I'm also interested in the SNP not just as a nationalist party, but as an anti-political establishment party. So, there is plenty of transformational activity here in Scotland to explore, and I do this in a comparative perspective."

FIELD TRIPS

Jane made a trip to Hong Kong in the second week of June. She is a member of the Humanities, Social Sciences and Business Studies Panel of the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong and the main purpose of her trip was to participate in meetings to assess research proposals for 2009. While in Hong Kong, Jane also visited

the City University of Hong Kong, where she is an external academic advisor.

Stephen was in Russia in April, for library work and consultation with Olga Kryshtanovskaya, and had the opportunity to take part in a conference organised by the Independent Institute of Elections. In May he was in St Petersburg at

the annual Likhachevskie chteniya (Likhachev Readings), which are sponsored by the city's Humanitarian University of the Trade Unions.

PUBLICATIONS

Jane has recently completed the manuscripts for two new books. One, *The Chinese State's Retreat from Health*, is a research monograph that explains why the Chinese state between 1978 and 2003 dramatically reduced its role in financing health care at the same time as allowing state-backed health insurance programmes to disintegrate. This is an important topic because inadequate health insurance provision is a major cause of poverty in China today and problems in the health system have become a source of widespread popular dissatisfaction. The second book, edited with colleague Beatriz Carrillo Garcia, is called *China's Social Welfare Mix: Local Perspectives*, and is the first study of the local variation in the mix of state, private, non-profit sector and family-based welfare provision across China.

Tom published 'Post-communism and the abandonment of mixed-member electoral systems' in Repre-

sentation, vol. 45, no. 1, 2009, pp. 15-27.

Stephen published *Rethinking the 'Orange Revolution'* (with Ian McAllister). Aberdeen: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, Studies in Public Policy No. 455, 2009; 'The Duma election in Russia, December 2007', *Electoral Studies* vol. 28, no. 1 (March 2009), pp. 171-3; and 'Conventional citizen participation' (with Ian McAllister), in Christian W. Haerpfer et al., eds., *Democratization* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 186-200.

Developments in Russian Politics 7, co-edited with Richard Sakwa and Henry Hale, is currently with the copyeditor; a special issue of the *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, coedited with David Lane, will appear in September, and subsequently (we hope) as a book. The contributors include Chris Lamont, Elena Korosteleva and Vlad Mykhnenko (formerly of Glasgow, now at Nottingham).

Elena herself published a paper on "The

Limits of the EU Governance: Belarus' Response to the European Neighbourhood Policy" in *Contemporary Politics*, Vol.15(2), June 2009, pp. 229-45, and (with Giselle Bosse) on "Changing Belarus? The Limits of EU Governance in Eastern Europe" in *Conflict and Cooperation*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2009, pp. 143-65.

GRANTS

Together with colleagues Ian Taylor and Marc Lanteigne at the University of St Andrews, Jane was awarded a Carnegie Trust Research Grant to study 'Chinese Special Economic Zones in Africa and their Potential as Catalysts for Development'. The grant of £27,000 will enable field trips to Beijing and Africa.

Stephen secured another grant from the ESRC, this time to examine 'The Putin Succession'. It's worth about £140,000, and is tenable from 2009 to 2012. He writes: 'This is an award that will allow me to continue the

work on the Russian political elite that I have been conducting with my long-term collaborator, Olga Kryshatanovskaya of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Among other things, we will be concerned with the degree of change in the composition of the elite since Dmitri Medvedev's accession to the presidency, and (for instance) whether the powerful *silovik* defence-security contingent has retained its influence. The grant will fund Olga herself on a part-time basis, and two Moscow-based research assistants, and will also cover an extensive programme of elite inter-

viewing. We hope to present some of our early conclusions in a paper that has been commissioned by the US journal Post-Soviet Affairs, and a panel that has been included in the 8th International Congress of Central and East European Studies in Stockholm next summer.'

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Jane gave a presentation on 16 May at a University of Oxford colloquium on 'Building a Harmonious Society in China: Reducing Poverty and Improving Public Services'. The colloquium was organised by the University of Oxford China Centre and Contemporary China Studies Programme in conjunction with the World Bank. It examined the current policy challenges that China faces in reducing poverty and inequality and improving rural public service provision and focussed on in-depth analytical work completed for two recent World Bank reports on China: *Public Services for the New Socialist Countryside* (2008) and *From Poor Areas to Poor People: China's Evolving Poverty Reduction Agenda* (2009). The colloquium brought together leading scholars internationally who work on poverty,

inequality and public services in China, including Vivienne Shue, Christine Wong and Albert Park (all at Oxford), Wang Sanggui (Renmin), Sarah Cook (IDS), and David Dollar (World Bank). Jane's presentation, on the 2008 report, was entitled 'New Public Services: Context and Motivation'.

Jane presented a research paper, 'The Chinese State's Retreat from Health: Retrenchment Politics, 1978-2003', to the Department of Politics seminar at Glasgow in January, and again at the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, in March. In February she presented a paper on 'Health Policy in Post-Mao China: Explaining the Collapse of the Cooperative Medical System' at the Centre for Chinese Studies, SOAS, University of London.

Bill presented a paper on 'Culture, Con-

text and Behaviour: The Law-Breaking, Law-Abiding Public' at the International Political Science Association Congress at Santiago in early July. He writes: "It will be based on approximately 1000 interviews with the general public, plus 200 with a Muslim 'booster' within each of England, Poland, Bulgaria and Ukraine (approximately 4800 interviews altogether), plus some additional material from focus groups with 'Euro-migrants' - that is, people born in one European country but now living in another, especially north and west Europeans living in Ukraine, and conversely, with Ukrainians and Poles living in England (we did

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LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

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a total of 84 two-hour focus groups, though most were with the general public, or with Muslims, and relatively few with Euro-migrants)." The paper stems from Bill's large-scale project on 'Legal Cultures in Transition', which is funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

The full text is available on the IPSA website. A revised version of the paper, including data from Norway as well as England, Poland, Bulgaria and Ukraine, will be available as soon as the interviews in Norway have been completed.

Stephen lectured on "The Soviet War Posters in their Historical Context" at Nottingham University in January, as part of an exhibition of their large collection of TASS Windows. In March he spoke to Dundee University Politics Society on "Is Russia a Democracy? (And if Not, What?)". He chaired and presented

to a panel at the BASEES conference in March on "Does Russia Have Free and Fair Elections?", with Derek Hutcheson, Cameron Ross and Ian McAllister; it is intended that these and other contributions will in due course be offered to Europe-Asia Studies as a special issue and subsequent book.

In May he presented "A dialogue of democracies?" at the Likhachevskie chteniya in St Petersburg, to be published in Russian and English. And in June he presented a paper on "Looking Back: Russians and the USSR in Retrospect" at a conference on "Ghosts of the Past: Everyday Twenty Years after the Fall of Communism" at the University of East London (the paper will subsequently appear in an edited conference volume).

Elena Korosteleva (these days at Aberystwyth) spoke at a roundtable on "The EU, Russia and Central South-east Europe (Ukraine, Belarus and

Caucasus)" at the Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies in April, and presented a paper on "Europe-in-between: coping with volatilities of geopolitical interspaces". She also spoke at a roundtable on "The EU and Belarus six months after: Achievements and Challenges Ahead" at the Centre for European Reform in London in March.

POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the China Centre's outreach activities, Jane in February gave a presentation on China to Learning and Teaching Scotland. In June she gave evidence to the Europe and External Relations Committee of the Scottish Parliament on the Scottish Government's 'China Plan'.

VISITORS

Over the past six months we were glad to meet, discuss and sometimes lunch with a variety of visitors to Glasgow, including once again Tatiana Sidorina of the Higher School of Economics, and Aleksei Rutkevich and Dmitrii Nosov of the Higher School of Economics, who are developing an exchange agreement headed at the Glasgow end by the Philosophy Department.

Former Alec Nove Professor John Löwenhardt visited Glasgow in May,

and Stephen's Australian collaborator Ian McAllister was here in June.

Our Honorary Professor and long-standing collaborator, Olga Kryshtanovskaya, was able to visit Glasgow in April.

Dr Seongjin Kim, one of the little 'family' of Koreans with Glasgow PhDs, visited Glasgow with his family at the end of June. His current interests include trends in UK political science.

In May we had a visit from Professor Ken Jowitt of the Hoover Institution and UC Berkeley, with his wife, accompanied by our long-standing collaborator Professor Ron Hill of Trinity College Dublin, and his wife. Ken presented the first 'Mackenzie Memorial Lecture' to the Department.

CONGRATULATIONS

- to Elena on receiving a Teaching Excellence Award at Aberystwyth University 2008-9
- to Yulia and Pasha (in London) on the arrival of Liza
- to Anke on her success in obtaining a lectureship at the University of Maastricht
- and to Alison on completing her PhD oral examination

NEXT SESSION

Advance notice that Jane and Stephen are planning to take things a little further next session, we hope with your support. The preliminary idea is to have two workshops, one in each term, with perhaps three or four short contributions to each of them. Stephen will take charge of the first, and Jane of the second. Members of the Group will, we hope, be willing to volunteer a short contribution on what they are currently working on, for the benefit of the TG and the Department as a whole. We may consider a more conventional arrangement in future sessions, focusing on the discussion of a precirculated paper.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Transformation Group was established in 2004 as a framework for cooperation 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 Professor Jane Duckett. The other members and associates are:

Staff: Dr Tom Lundberg, Prof Bill Miller, Prof Sarah Oates and Prof Chris Thornhill.

Research staff: Tanya Biletskaya and Valentina Feklyunina

Graduate students: Valentina Feklyunina, Daniel Hammond, Ariel Ko, Sam Robertshaw, Anke Schmidt-Felzman and Alison Swain.

Associates and former staff and students: Dr Katsuto Furusawa, Dr Caroline Hoy, Dr Derek Hutcheson, Dr Tom Johnson, Dr Elena Korosteleva, Dr Yulia Korosteleva, Dr Chris Lamont and Dr Guohui Wang.