

**CRCEES 3rd Annual Research Methodology
Summer School 2009
'Perspectives on Political Change in Central and Eastern Europe,
Past and Present'
11-25 July 2009**

The Third Annual CRCEES Summer School was organised and led by CRCEES Co-Director Professor David Smith at the University of Tartu, Estonia, in conjunction with the University of Tartu Summer University and local CRCEES collaborators from the Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities.

A total of 14 PhD and 7 Masters level students were in attendance. Of these, 16 were from CRCEES UK and overseas partner institutions in Glasgow, Aberdeen, St Andrews, Newcastle, Ulianovsk, Krakow and Győr; the remainder were from Oxford (CEELBAS), Ankara (Middle Eastern Technical University), Budapest (CEU) and Stockholm (Södertörns Hogskola). Sixteen lecturing staff also contributed sessions during the two weeks of the Summer School, including two CRCEES Postdoctoral Fellows, Timofei Agarin (Aberdeen) and Kristina Uzule (Edinburgh). Overall, staff came from Glasgow, Tartu, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Nottingham Trent, Budapest (CEU) and Washington State, Seattle (CRCEES EC Marie Curie-funded Outgoing Fellow Dr Judit Molnar).

'A fantastic experience both intellectually and personally. ... Working with a new group of people from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds was a really useful experience'. Student feedback, 24 July 2009

The first week of the School consisted for the most part of workshops and lectures around the following broad themes: EU enlargement and external relations, post-communist political and social transformation, sustainable development, ethnicity and societal integration, and researching the communist past (see full programme appended). CRCEES' Estonian-language Lecturer Lea Kreinin also ran a basic beginners' course in Estonian language over the course of the first week, teaching basic 'survival' language skills to the participants.



City Tour of Tartu 12 July 2009



Lectures in Tartu

Students were assigned to one of four groups at the start, and in the course of the first week, each group had to devise a research topic based on one of five broad indicative themes and questions. The second week was then earmarked for supervised group work, during which each group had to come up with a comprehensive design for carrying out their chosen research. The broad themes set were:

- Issues and challenges in researching the socialist past
- Concepts of post-socialist 'transition' / 'transformation' and their implications in terms of political/societal/economic/environmental development
- The enlargement of the European Union to Central and Eastern Europe and its implications for:
 - political/societal/economic/environmental development within the new member states
 - EU cohesion / internal dynamics
 - EU external relations
- The politics of ethnic diversity in Central and Eastern Europe, past and present: what policies/approaches have been pursued at the level of the state, and with what societal implications/responses?
- How are collective identities being constructed and renegotiated within a post-socialist context? How are they being represented within visual culture and inscribed in the urban landscape?

Groups were also given the option of designing their own project, drawing on one or more of the main themes of the Summer School programme.

The topics chosen by the groups were as follows:

- Political discourses surrounding the 'Nordstream' pipeline project connecting Russia and Germany, and the implications of this for intra-EU and EU-Russia relations
- Conceptions of 'diaspora' in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, and the role of the returning diaspora in post-communist political transformation
- The mutual influence and interaction of national identity and democratisation within processes of post-communist political transformation
- Everyday survival strategies in post-communism: specifically, the informal economy of bottle collecting and recycling in central Tartu. This latter project arose out of a participant observation exercise held during the first week. The Centre for Social Research based at the University of Tartu has since expressed an interest in carrying out the piece of research designed by the group

As part of the overall process of designing the research, groups were encouraged wherever possible to conduct small pilot studies that would enable them to try out some of the methods discussed during the opening week of workshops. In this regard, the two excursions conducted during the first 10 days of the Summer School provided excellent opportunities. On the Thursday of the first week, staff and students visited the predominantly Russian-speaking city of Narva, on Estonia's border with the Russian Federation. This excursion gave those a new to Estonia a perspective on the country that was wholly different from that obtained in the Estonian national heartland of Tartu. In Narva the Summer School participants were able to put questions to the Mayor and his advisors during a session at the Town Hall, before meeting teachers and pupils from a local secondary school and representatives of the local HE College over lunch. Following a guided tour of the City Museum, David Smith and Stuart Burch (Nottingham Trent) led a walking tour of the city centre, elaborating further on the issues of memory, identity and landscape raised in their presentation the preceding day.

'Thank you for the Summer School ... It has made a huge impact on me and on my research as well'. Student feedback, 24 July 2009



Walking Tour of Narva 16 July 2009

The students spent the middle weekend of the Summer School in the Estonian capital Tallinn. The extensive programme of events included visits to the Estonian parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where the four student groups were able to put questions concerning their various projects to a Member of Parliament (Head of the European Affairs Committee) and the Undersecretary for EU Affairs respectively. Participants also had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Museum of Occupations, the Estonian History Museum and the award-winning Estonian National Art Museum KUMU, as well as several sites of memory around the city. The three days concluded with a guided tour of the Estonian State Archive, where students had the chance to consult some original NKVD files from the 1950s following their sessions on researching Stalinism during the first week.



Visit to the Estonian State Archive 20 July 2009

The first week was very intensive, but time was also factored in for relaxation. After a city tour of Tartu on the first day, an opening dinner with music and dancing was held on the Monday evening at the historic St Anthony's Guild. The following evening, a city orienteering exercise was organised as an ice-breaker for the groups. In Tallinn dinner was organised by the sea shore at the Viimsi Open Air Museum. There was also time for a couple of hours at the beach in Tallinn and Narva.

'It was useful to see how I and other social scientists judge a country, culture and society about which the majority have very little knowledge. My conclusion is that we need to be far more reflexive'. Student feedback, 24 July 2009

During the second week in Tartu, students worked in their groups from Tuesday through Thursday to prepare their research project outlines, reflecting further on the experiences and insights gained from their visits to Narva and Tallinn. Each group was assigned a tutor, who met with the group first thing in the morning to discuss the work programme for the day and remained available throughout the day for consultation purposes. Groups then returned in the evening to report back on their day's activity and discuss any issues with the designated tutor. On the final day, Friday, each group was assigned a 45-minute slot to present their research outline and take questions and feedback from their peers and the assembled teaching staff. The independent project work in groups was supplemented by a plenary roundtable addressing issues such as doing your PhD, getting published and applying for jobs, and a film showing and discussion that addressed some of the current ethnopolitical issues in Estonia that had become so apparent to many participants during the visits to Narva and Tallinn. CRCEES Postdoctoral Fellow Timofei Agarin also led a walking tour of the Tartu suburbs that illuminated some the environmental and societal issues tackled in his presentation during the preceding week.



A Project Group at Work

A closing dinner in the University of Tartu's White Hall concluded what had been a very intensive but extremely rewarding two weeks for all concerned. Some of the participants already knew one another from previous CRCEES Summer Schools, Research Forums and other events. For all, though, this Summer School was a source of new friendships and new research contacts which will endure into the future. A Facebook page has already been established as a way of keeping in contact, and at least two of the project groups have expressed their intention to write up their research outlines as CRCEES Working Papers.



Summer School Participants at the Estonian National Art Museum 18 July 2009

Departure for most participants was from Riga on the Saturday, and the Scotland-based contingent had the opportunity to spend a whole day exploring the capital of Latvia prior to catching their late evening flight back to Glasgow.

David Smith
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