Jane writes: The launch conference of the Scottish Centre for Chinese Social Science Research was held at the University of Glasgow on 6 June 2008. It was attended by around 80 scholars and students from Scotland and the wider UK, and members of the community beyond the University and was a very lively and stimulating day.

The Centre has been established to bring together academics doing research on China across a range of social science disciplines in Scottish universities. Its aims are to: foster high-quality social science research on China and promote multidisciplinary research collaboration among centre members; build strategic research capacity in the social sciences of China for Scotland and the UK; promote understanding of China by disseminating research and making expertise on contemporary Chinese economy, politics, governance and society accessible to the wider community; and develop and support research links with Chinese scholars, universities and research institutes. It will be an important platform for promoting academic exchanges and research collaboration in the social sciences between Scotland and China.

The Centre’s members conduct internationally excellent research on China across the various social sciences on issues of strategic importance to Scotland and internationally, including: Chinese energy policy and the environment, competition law, foreign relations, governance, politics, the media, health policy, housing, poverty, Hong Kong banking and finance.

The 6 June conference, ‘China as a Global Player: the Beijing Olympics and Beyond’, was organised to launch the Centre. It brought distinguished internationally specialists on contemporary China from Australia and China and across the UK to speak on the implications of China’s growing global influence. In line with the Centre’s mission to disseminate expertise to the wider community, the conference was free and open to all and was widely advertised beyond the University. There were opportunities for members of the audience to ask questions of the keynote speakers in the morning session and to join in the discussions of the afternoon roundtable panels.

The Centre was formally launched by Professor Click to continue page 2
Steven Beaumont, the University of Glasgow’s Vice-Principal for Research. Three short morning lectures examined aspects of China’s emerging global presence. The keynote speaker, Professor David Goodman of the Sydney University of Technology, gave a fascinating and illuminating lecture on ‘China as Global Culture’. Two further speakers, Professor Guan Xinping of Nankai University and Professor Ian Taylor of St Andrews, spoke on ‘Social Change in a Globalising China’, and China’s ‘Changing International Relations’. These lectures considered the nature of contemporary China in its historical context, looking at China’s global reach while stressing the diversity of what we today refer to as ‘China’.

In the afternoon, there were two roundtable panels, one on ‘The Beijing 2008 Olympics’ and another on ‘China’s Energy and Environmental Politics’. These each began with four short presentations and were followed by questions and discussion. Both generated very lively debate.

The conference was supported financially by the University of Glasgow’s Department of Politics and Chancellor’s Fund, as well as by the Universities China Committee. The Centre is grateful to all these bodies for their generous support. The China-Britain Business Council, Scotland-China Association and China Now In Scotland (based at the Confucius Institute at the University of Edinburgh) all kindly advertised the conference, for which we are also thankful. A special thanks should also go to Wang Guohui, who was administrator for the launch. Without his dedicated work it would not have been possible. Many thanks also to Tom Johnson, Daniel Hammond, Ariel Ko and Chen Yu, all of whom provided extremely valuable support for the conference and gave generously of their time.

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Support from the Centre for Russian, Central and East European Studies, the Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics and BASEES made possible a workshop-style conference on ‘Rethinking the “Coloured Revolutions”’, held in Glasgow on 2-3 May with several members of the Group attending and contributing (Sarah, Stephen and Chris) as well as others from elsewhere in the University, the UK and further afield. Valentina assisted with the administration and the weather assisted as well – we even saw the sun when we took a coach out to Loch Lomond! It is intended that a version of the papers, edited by David Lane and Stephen, will appear as a double special issue of the JCSTP next year, and as a book.

The JCSTP assisted with the funding of another workshop-style conference on ‘Russia under Putin and Beyond: Elites and Power’ at the Università degli Studi di Napoli ‘L’Orientale’ on 8-9 May. The contributors included Vladimir Shlapentokh of Michigan State University, Ken Jowitt of Berkeley, Olga Kryshantanovskaya from Moscow, Ottorino Cappelli of the Orientale, and Stephen; the papers, suitably edited, are expected to appear in a special issue of the Journal this coming December (2008). Stephen spoke at another conference in June (pictured above) in Bialystok, eastern Poland, on ‘Relations between the New Countries of the European Union and the Russian Federation’.

Presentations

Tom presented a paper entitled ‘Extending Environmental Governance: Public and Private Interest Activism in China’ at the 2008 Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference in Atlanta on 4 April.

Jane made a presentation on ‘The Domestic Political Impacts of the Beijing Olympics’ to the Roundtable Panel on the Beijing 2008 Olympics at the launch conference of the Scottish Centre for Chinese Social Science Research, University of Glasgow, on 6 June 2008. She also gave a talk on ‘Who Runs China?’ to the Scottish Parliamentary Cross-Party Group on China, Holyrood, Edinburgh, on 14 May 2008. In April she gave a talk on ‘Political Science Perspectives on Environment and Health in China’ at a workshop on ‘Environment and Health in China’ organised by the US Social Science Research Council and held at Hong Kong University.

Anke attended a conference on ‘The European Union in International Affairs’ (24-26 April), organised by the GARNET network in the Palais Egmont in Brussels, where she presented a paper on ‘Common or Conflicting Foreign Policies? Member States’ Struggle for Unity in their Relations with Russia’. She also participated in a workshop at the University of Maastricht on ‘Values vs Security? The Future Choice for the EU and its Neighbours’ (5-6 June), where she presented a paper entitled ‘The Member States in EU Energy Security Policy towards Russia: Strategic National Interests versus ‘Shared’ Values’.

Valentina gave several conference and seminar papers, including one on ‘(Un)Reliable Energy Supplier? Constructing Russia’s Image in the West’ at the annual conference of the British Association of Slavonic and East European Studies that took place in Cambridge on 29-31 March. Then she made a presentation entitled ‘Russia’s Image in the West and Its Role in the Country’s Foreign and Domestic Policies’ as part of the West Coast Seminar Series in the Department of Central and East European Studies, University of Glasgow (4 June). She also presented her research findings in a paper on ‘Russia as a Besieged Fortress: The Use of Russia’s International Image at Home’ at the 2nd Annual CRCEES Research Forum which was held at the University of Nottingham on 17-18 June. The paper was part of the conference panel ‘Perspectives on Russian Politics: Changing Patterns, Continuing Trends’, which she organised and which was chaired by Stephen. Her article ‘Battle for Perceptions: Projecting Russia in the West’ was published in Europe-Asia Studies in June.

Sam also presented at the CRCEES 2nd Annual Research Forum, on ‘Russian Civil-Military Relations: A Research Plan’, and Stephen contributed to a final plenary session on ‘Medvedev’s Russia’ (much like Putin’s Russia, was the general conclusion).

Stephen also made a presentation on electoral politics to the EU Institute of Security Studies conference in Paris in January 2008 on ‘Elections in Russia: Back to the Future or Forward to the Past?’ (our visiting professor, Olga Kryshantanovskaya, was also a contributor), and presented papers on Ukraine’s ‘Orange revolution’ at the conference in Glasgow on Coloured Revolutions, and on Putin’s ‘friends and foes’ at the conference in Naples, both in May. There was time afterwards to take a trip out to Capri, which included a visit to Lenin and Gorky’s old home on the island – no photograph unfortunately, but it is of course painted red...

Stephen also spoke at the 8th Likhachev Readings in St Petersburg in mid-May, on Russia and the West, which provided an opportunity to catch up with our recent PhD Atsushi Ogushi who is spending time at the European University in the city; on ‘Russia’s managed democracy’ at the Politics Department seminar at University College Dublin (Derek Hutcheson chairing); and on ‘Putin and his supporters’ at the annual conference of the St Andrews Centre for Russian, Soviet, Central and East European Studies in March.
Tom published an article entitled ‘New Opportunities, Same Constraints: Environmental Protection and China’s New Development Path’ in the May 2008 issue of Politics.


Stephen published Belarus, Ukraine and Russia: East or West? (with Ian McAllister) in the Aberdeen-based Centre for the Study of Public Policy series in March, and brought out two edited books, both stemming from the 2005 Berlin Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies: Media, Culture and Society in Putin’s Russia (Palgrave, 2008) and Politics and the Ruling Group in Putin’s Russia (Palgrave, 2008). He published ‘Voting “against all” in postcommunist Russia’ (with Ian McAllister) in Europe-Asia Studies, January 2008; ‘A wider Europe? The view from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine’ (with Julia Korosteleva and Ian McAllister) in the Journal of Common Market Studies, March 2008; ‘Bez eiforii’ (Without euphoria) in the Russian Guardian-ish daily Nezavisimaya gazeta on 23 April 2008 (composed in Russian, which was a first); and ‘Russia and its neighbours: east or west?’ (with Ian McAllister), in Marek Rutkowski, ed., Relacje nowych krajow Unii Europejskiej z Federacja Rosyjska (Relations between the New Countries of the European Union and the Russian Federation), in a Bialystok conference volume.

Tom has been helping to organise a workshop together with the Department of Central and East European Studies that will take place in September entitled ‘Climate Change Post-Kyoto: Insights from BRIC Countries’. We have been given £2500 of Roberts money to assist us.

Jane was supported by the Chancellor’s Fund of the University of Glasgow for the launch conference of the Scottish Centre for Chinese Social Science Research, (£2,500) and by the Universities China Committee with a grant to bring a visiting speaker to the UK for launch conference (£900).

Stephen has just begun his three-year collaborative award under the ESRC-Australian Research Council scheme (£82k), with Ian McAllister of the Australian National University. The theme is ‘crafting electoral authoritarianism’, with particular but not exclusive reference to Russia, and we hope it will give rise in due course to a significant book on The Russian Voter (and much else). The award runs in parallel with his Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship, which starts in October; over three years it will pay for a Russian post-election survey (already conducted) and for other forms of visits and collaboration. Subject to negotiation, we hope the research assistant position will be held at Glasgow, from the autumn.

Stephen is otherwise busy advising four RAE panels on submissions that fall within the field of Russian politics: Politics and International Studies, Business and Management, Russian, Slavonic and East European Languages, and Middle Eastern and African Studies.

Stephen was in Moscow for a couple of weeks in March, for library research and continuing discussions with Olga Kryshtanovskaya.
**A NEW COLLEAGUE**

Vikki Turbine will be joining the department from Glasgow Caledonian University in September to take up the post of Lecturer in the Politics of Transition and Democratisation. For the coming academic year Vikki will be teaching the Honours option Communist and Post Communist Politics and will be working on the development of new undergraduate and postgraduate options that reflect and intersect her research interests in justice in transitional societies, human rights and gender for 2009/10. Vikki is currently working on a book based on her doctoral thesis, which explored women’s perceptions of human rights and use of rights based approaches in everyday life; it is provisionally entitled ‘Accessing human rights and rights-based approaches in contemporary Russia: gender, transition and empowerment’. In addition, she is co-editing a special issue of *Europe-Asia Studies* with colleagues from the department of Central and East European Studies at Glasgow exploring the impact of location on forms of agency in contemporary Russia. She was awarded her PhD at the ceremony in June.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

To Katsu, who was awarded his PhD at the degrees ceremony in June. He writes: ‘Katsu has been accepted for a post-doc fellowship (for one year) in Bremen, Germany, which will start from this September. The institution is called the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS), which is an inter-university institution based on the University of Bremen and Jacobs University Bremen. He will conduct research on ‘Values Shift Reconsidered’ while participating in one of the five thematic fields of the BIGSSS: ‘Attitude Formation, Value Change, and Intercultural Communication’. One of the field’s co-chairs is Professor Christopher Welzel, who plays a significant role in the World Values Survey that Katsu has been closely examining in his thesis. In addition, one of common interests among those in the thematic field seems to be the study of ‘happiness’ or ‘subjective well-being’, which has been increasingly recognised as an element that has crucial implications for political and social phenomena.’

To Guohui, who successfully defended his dissertation on village elections in China, and was awarded the degree at the same June ceremony. Still more important, he became a father for the first time!

To Eero, who was awarded his PhD on Russian regional economic relations with particular reference to Pskov at the degree ceremony in June.

To Chris, for the successful defence of his PhD on ‘The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Domestic Politics of War Crimes’.

To Sarah, on her promotion to a personal professorship.

**SOME JOKES (A NEW FEATURE)**

Try these Brezhnev-era examples (from Ben Lewis, *Hammer and Tickle*, 2008):

Brezhnev is reading a speech: “Who says that I only ever read from a piece of paper? Ha-hyphen-ha-hyphen-ha-hyphen-ha.”

A guy is hopping across Red Square. “Hey”, a friend calls. “Have you lost a shoe?” “No, I found one!”

“Q: Why is it not possible to control the birth rate in Soviet Bloc countries?
A: Because the means of production remain in private hands.”
Dear Professors, colleagues and friends,

It is a pleasure for me to join your Newsletter. When I decided to come to Glasgow the first time in 2004, it was not so easy to reserve a flight back home. Probably it was the sign that part of me would have been got caught there: in the rich (and always open!) library, the good and modern standards of teaching, the friendship and the humanity of the faculty and the colleagues and even the pro and cons of a big rainy city so different from my small sunny hometown in Italy. Today I am glad to stay in contact with your departmental communities, sharing with you my interest on Russia and East Europe. However it’s not easy to start a correspondence when you have to write from Italy to Scotland about Russia. The mix of passion, interest and love linking you to each of these realities is such that you don’t know where to start from and you don’t want to make hierarchies. Therefore I will try to focus on what made me link together these three countries: Russian and East European studies.

When I applied at University in Naples (Italy), in mid-90s, Soviet and East European studies had been well rooted and long supported until the collapse of USSR and the general failure of so-called “real socialism”. From that point on, East European studies entered a deep crisis that eventually culminated with the termination of the academic branch. This story is not extraordinary and with different features it was repeated all over the European academic world. Hence, the young as well as the old generation of scholars dealing with Russia and East Europe are challenged by the need to answer the same question: “why do we all still need Russian and East European studies?” As I made it in time to complete my degree in Political Sciences – Branch East Europe before this areal branch was definitely dismantled, I feel it as one of my main tasks to provide, or at least to look for, some answers to this question.

Perhaps this happens because each time I introduce myself as a researcher dealing with Russian affairs people ask me: “why still Russia? Why not USA, China or the Middle East?” Moreover I think that if a young researcher in our field can address this question, he will then be able to accomplish his tasks more accurately and to face the many challenges to his work more efficiently. Let us think for example of a researcher studying vegetation or diseases, knowing that his efforts are essential to save the planet or to care for suffering people. Or even let us think of a researcher who deals with drug smuggling knowing that his work will help reduce the number of drug victims and persecute the smugglers. Unfortunately the case of Russian and East European studies is very different from these examples: at least in most cases, they can save neither the planet nor human lives. Nonetheless the effort to legitimise our work at the cultural, political or economic level should be a shared and constant one. Of course my purpose here is more about posing the question than providing a comprehensive answer to it, hoping to stimulate a debate in these pages from which each of us can enrich his viewpoint. Some scholars are debating this issue better than I could do and on the web there are some papers on this topic. What I am doing here is arguing you something on my life in Italy with the above issue in the background.

Over the last years I have been working on domestic and foreign aspects of Russia politics and the deep turns introduced by Putin. For better or for worse the “Putin factor” contributed, even in Italy, to stimulate the public debate on Russia for many reasons: for the surprising economic growth and the opportunities for investors and exporters, for the energy issue and the need to establish a partnership with Russian corpora-tions and for the developments in home politics and the shocking waves of political murders.

Quoting the number of contributions on magazines and journals on this topic is almost impossible. Recently a Western columnist has defined those scholars and reporters dealing with Putin’s Russia “Putinologists”: I think such a definition is not rewarding towards the long tradition and intellectual contribution of Russian and East European studies. My undergraduate dissertation was on Putin’s Russia and developments in the Russian defence industry and I am still working on the same Russia. However as other hundreds of young and senior researchers and scholars around the world, I am not a “Putinologist” but a student engaged in Russian and East European studies.

However a part from this unhappy definition this growth in interest on Putin’s Russia is better than the silence and indifference experienced over the nineties and till mid 2000 and deserves our attention. We should hope that by the time this debate might prompt a new interest in (read support for) Russian Studies also at the academic level. Meanwhile the unhappy definition of “Putinologists” mirrors a doubt linked to this wave of interest: is it just a result of Putin’s assertive leadership or is it a demonstration that we all still need Russian studies?

Again, this question is not easy to address but this wave of interest on Putinism is the current context we have to face while still looking for a reason for Russian and East European studies. So let see briefly how this wave of interest has led to in Italy and what it appears to suggest.

I want to discuss shortly three small academic/political events I took part in during the last two months respectively in Naples, Bologna and Turin: three different cities and political-economic contexts proposing different approaches to post-soviet Russia and post-soviet affairs in general.

In Naples there was a seminar where Professor White from Glasgow and other foreign academics argued about Putin’s double presidency, its political meaning and its legacy. Most of the contributions were on domestic politics and the kind of political regime introduced under Putin. Many interpretations have been discussed; from the variety of adjectival democracies, to the concept of managed democracy up to Vladimir Shlapentokh’s feudal theory. The climate of the seminary was friendly while the approach to the question was definitely a theoretical and scholar one: with interesting comparisons with past Russian and European regimes and other post-Soviet experiences.

In this case the initiative seems to propose that we all still need Russian and East European studies because, contrary to the theories and expectations of a linear transition, post-communist change has been more complicated and needs to be re-investigated and partly re-interpreted. Moreover the legacy of the failed transitions seems to affect not only Russia but also other former communist countries and perhaps even those recently integrated into the EU and NATO.

In Bologna the attention moved from domestic to international aspects of Russian rebirth. More specifically the seminar dealt with Italy-Russia cooperation and its relevance in both bilateral and European perspectives. It was an occasion to present my work on this topic but also an occasion
A LETTER FROM ITALY

Continued from page 6

to compare views and perspectives on Russia from academic, business, and diplomatic points of view. Since the most of the Italian financial and industrial resources is based in the north of Italy, in Bologna economic cooperation and opportunities were the main aspects considered and also the approach was empirical more than theoretical.

Gas, its production and distribution and the need to endorse a bilateral and multilateral partnership have largely been the leitmotiv of all papers. Nonetheless some papers have been devoted to the development and the definition of the current Russian economic system. The question here was: at which point of the transition from plan to market did Russia stop and what is coming next? Some attention has also been paid to the implications of Russian economic role for the Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics.

From this perspective, Russian studies are relevant because, for each European country and the same EU, Russia appears as an indispensable partner whose economic and industrial structures are growing and changing more quickly and less predictably than expected with regional and global short-cuts.

Finally, I want to report a meeting in Turin, properly about these regional/global aspects of Russian new course. Like (and probably more than) Bologna, Turin is one of the main Italian financial and industrial cities. By and large it is a typical Western capital with plenty of think tanks, foundations and study centres standing at crossroad between academy and policy community and willing to develop knowledge and proposal for good policies.

In the intention of the organisers the nature of the event was explicitly non-academic and to be honest this limited rather than encouraged the general success of the conference. Lecturers have talked about Russia’s role in Europe and its policy on single and interrelated questions like gas distribution, Kosovo, terrorism and so on. The Russian representatives offered an interesting insight on current Russian leadership’s views of the declared independence of Kosovo – they think it’s not in line with international law and may constitute a precedent for international instability – and on the renovation of Russia-EU cooperation agreement – they argued that the new version should take in greater consideration Russian economic interests. Some attention has been paid to Russian interests and initiatives in the East European countries and its role in the CIS. Even here economics prevailed on politics with papers on financial cooperation, the Russian bank system and the role of Italian companies.

This conference, completing the one in Bologna, seems to suggest that Russian and East European studies are still required not only for the bilateral aspects of Russian international projection but also for general European progress. In fact there is a common (European) need to understand Russian priorities and strategies in Europe and work out new interpretative frameworks and theoretical paradigms to analyse them.

Of course suggesting reasons why to develop and support Russian and East European studies was not the main target of the three events at least in the last two cases. Nonetheless I made an endeavour in this direction for the reasons explained above and I wanted to submit my reflections to you with this letter. Summarising, in my opinion what keeps together the many reasons for Russian and East European studies is the issue of change (or transformation if you prefer) that touches both political and economic structures and has both national and international implications. We need to understand this change as properly as we can, drawing lessons from failures whenever our expectations or theories are refuted by empirical developments and expanding rather than limiting the debate.

I hope your community will keep on cooperating on this task and I wish everyone good success.

Buon Lavoro!

Christian

THE TRANSFORMATION GROUP: 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 and its other members and associates are:

Staff: Professor Bill Miller, Professor Sarah Oates, Dr Vikki Turbine.


Associates and former staff and students: Dr Yulia Korosteleva, Dr Derek Hutcheson, Dr Caroline Hoy, Dr Elena Korosteleva.

PREVIOUS ISSUES

You’ll find electronic versions of earlier issues of this Newsletter at http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/politics/research/researchcollaborationgroups/#d.en.30473