

IARCEES Annual Conference

Russian-East European Relations: From Tsarism to Gazprom

University College Cork, 4-5 May, 2012

Friday 4 May

Session 1: Post-1918 geopolitics

09.30 Registration & Friday meal reservations

10.00-11.15 Roundtable: **Stalin's control of Eastern Europe**

Chair: Jerome aan de Wiel, UCC

1. **Michael Hannigan:** How Stalin conquered Poland, the rise of the Polish Workers (Communist) Party.
2. **Ioan Bodnar:** Romanian Propaganda against Russia in Bessarabia and Bukovina during the Second World War
3. **Bozena Cierlik:** Soviet foreign policy towards East Central Europe 1944-1948
4. **Balázs Apor:** Exporting Charisma: Stalinist Leader Cults in the Soviet Bloc

11.15 Coffee Break

11.45-13.00 Roundtable: **Military intervention**

Chair: David Fitzgerald, UCC

1. **Steven Balbirnie:** "Intervention in Northern Russia, 1918-1919: The International Element"
2. **Jonathan Murphy:** 'A Soviet friendship that knows no bounds:' The 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia
3. **Francesca Brufani:** The Cold War and the case of the "little Berlin" of Gorizia: exploring the longest-lived dividing wall in Europe
4. **Katrin Van Cant & Idesbald Goddeeris:** Central European memories of Russia after the Cold War

13.00-14.00 Lunch

Session 2: Cultural & intellectual history

14.15-15.45 Roundtable: **Cultural history from Enlightenment to Interwar**

Chair: Geoff Roberts, UCC

1. **Andrej Riazhev:** The Constantinople Orthodox Patriarchate and the papacy in the diplomacy of Russian "enlightened absolutism" in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the second half of the XVIIIth century
2. **Richard McMahon:** Mongoloid Slavs: Images of the east in nineteenth and early-twentieth century race science
3. **Sergey Mikhalechenko:** Interethnic relations in Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries (from the unpublished memoirs of E. Spektorsky)
4. **Rayla Tadjimatova:** Re-evaluating Vakhtangov's legacy

15.45-17.00 Panel: **The Transfer of Soviet Knowledge to Central Europe -- And Beyond -- During the Communist period 1948-1990**

Chair: Valentina Fava, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies

1. **Doubrovka Olšáková:** Making Science Popular: Central-European „Daughter“ Societies of the All-Union Society for Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge and the Soviet Concept of Popularisation of Sciences in Central Europe after 1948
2. **Ludek Vacin:** How to Preserve the Body of an Allied Leader: The Export of Soviet Embalming Expertise to Czechoslovakia
3. **Isabel Izquierdo:** Attracting Soviet Scientists to Mexican Universities

17.00-18.30 Guest Speaker: ‘Moscow and the Changing “Eastern Europe”, from Gorbachev to Putin: Withdrawal and Resurgence?’ **Peter Duncan**, Senior Lecturer in Contemporary Russian Politics and Society at UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies. Chaired by Geoff Roberts, held at the **Boole Lecture Theatre 2**.

19.30 **Conference Meal:** Stir Restaurant, Maldron Hotel, 1 John Redmond Street Shandon, Cork +353 (0)21 4529200 **NB Please reserve a place at the IARCEES desk on Friday morning. €18**

Saturday 5 May

Session 3: South-Eastern Europe

10.00-11.15 Roundtable: **Black Sea Geopolitics**

Chair: Richard McMahon, UCC

1. **Emanuel Ploeanu:** Unexpected failures in the South: The USSR and Turkey (1939-1946)
2. **Mioara Anton:** The battle for the sea: Soviet strategies in the Black Sea region (1939-1947)
3. **Alexandra Gerota:** Soviet geopolitics in East-central Europe and their consequences for today's European foreign policy: the case of the Republic of Moldova and the Transdnistrian conflict
4. **Creanga Claudiu:** Russia's foreign policy towards Moldova

11.15 Coffee Break

11.45-13.00 Panel: **Romania and the Soviet Union**

Chair: James Ryan, Warwick University

1. **Silviu Miloiu:** Romanian policy towards the Soviet Union at a crossroads (1932-1936) and Foreign Minister Nicolae Titulescu's concept of accomplished idealism
2. **Cezar Stanciu:** The Advent of National Interest: Romanian Opposition to Soviet Plans for Communist Bloc Reform (1960-1964)
3. **Elena Dragomir:** Balancing with China against the USSR. Romania's opposition to CMEA integration, 1962-1963

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.00-14.30 IARCEES AGM (ORB 156)

Session 4: Eastern Europe since 1980

14.30-15.45 Roundtable: **Energy Relations**

Chair: Jonathan Murphy, UCC

1. **Bai-Ku Wei:** Energy Relations between Russia and the Near Abroad: Comparative Studies of Conflicting and Cooperative Models
2. **Evan Thompson:** The changing energy dynamics in the Baltic region: Gazprom's loosening stranglehold?
3. **Paolo Sorbello & Ludovico Grandi:** From Concentration to Competition: The Struggle for Power between the Kremlin and Gazprom through the Study of TNK-BP and South Stream
4. **Cosmin Popa:** Marketing and geopolitics in Russia's gas trade in Central and Eastern Europe

15.45-16.45 Panel: **Poland**

Chair: Gabriel Doherty, UCC

1. **Patryk Pleskot:** Defining the Unknown: The Polish transformation of 1989 in the political discourse of the Soviet, Western and Polish authorities and of Solidarity.
2. **George B. Soroka:** Between Katyń and Smolensk: Polish-Russian Political Discourse and the Kaczyński Presidency (2005-2010)

16.45 Concluding remarks

Panels: Paper presentations of 20 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for discussion at the end.

Roundtables: Paper presentations of 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for discussion at the end.

Session 1: Post 1918 geopolitics

Roundtable: Stalin's control of Eastern Europe

Paper 1: How Stalin conquered Poland, the rise of the Polish Workers (Communist) Party.

Michael Hannigan

NUI Maynooth

This paper concerns the emergence of the Lublin government and the rise to prominence of the Polish Workers Party. It is part of a doctoral thesis on the establishment of communist rule in Poland, 1944-1953. This paper challenges simplistic interpretations of the establishment of communist rule in Poland. Previous historians, such as Antoni Z Kaminski and Bartłomiej Kaminski, and Richard F. Staar, portray the Polish communist party as mere Stalinist stooges. It challenges this by asking several questions. Was there substantial dialogue between the communist party and the Soviet leadership? How could Poland, after years of resistance to the Nazis, simply accept “Stalinist rule”? What might induce someone to support the communists? Did the communist party help or hinder its own ascent. Previous examinations of this topic have been guided by two factors: an ideological imperative to criticise the takeover; and limited access to material. The former was a product of the Cold War whilst the latter resulted from the secretiveness of the communist regimes, as well as practical linguistic factors.

Paper 2: Romanian Propaganda against Russia in Bessarabia and Bukovina during the Second World War

Ioan Bodnar

“Valahia” University of Târgoviste

This study is about Romanian and Russian Propaganda during the Second World War in Bessarabia and Bukovina. Bessarabia and Bukovina stood at the time at the core of the dispute between the Soviet Union and Romania. Passing from Romanian administration to Soviet control and back into Romanian hands, the divergent interests of the two states clashed in these provinces – with large military, cultural, social, political, religious and economic implications. The Romanian government campaigned against communism and Russian Pan-Slavism by appealing to the arguments of Romanian nationalism and emphasizing themes such as the Latinity of the Romanian people and the continuity of Romanian habitation in these territories. The Romanian propaganda emphasized that these provinces belonged to the European space and set Russia aside from Europe, imagining a dividing line situated somewhere alongside the Dniester River. The core of this research is the most widely held themes of this propaganda, the key-symbols that it used, how history and political geography were employed, how propaganda was implemented and how successful it was. Although Romanian propaganda in Bessarabia and Bukovina against Russian expansionism had only a temporary and local importance, because of the international geopolitical context at the end of the Second World War, it constituted the high-point of Romanian resistance against Russian territorial expansion to the Balkans. The survey relies on both descriptive and analytical methods. The most important sources for this study come from the Romanian National Archives.

Paper 3: Soviet foreign policy towards East Central Europe 1944-1948

Bozena Cierlik

History Dept., UCC

The Second World War defined Soviet foreign policy towards countries of East Central Europe. In 1940 USSR strategic aims remained the same -enlargement of the imperium, but we can see the establishment of the new idea of 'external imperium' – creation of 'dependent' countries around Soviet borders. It seems that there was no particular plan to define the external and internal borders of the imperium. It was an outcome of military conflict, bi-lateral political agreements and strategic international arrangements. The military, political and economic situation persuaded Stalin to cooperate not only with UK and US, but also to establish relations with Polish, Czech and Yugoslav governments in exile. This political re-orientation in the second half of 1941 led to a crystallisation of Soviet plans regarding East Central Europe. This paper will look at mechanisms of political transformation in the countries of East Central Europe in the light of Soviet conceptions of foreign policy, the development of the concept of Soviet domination and its application between 1944 and 1948 in East Central Europe through the establishment of 'external imperium'. This particular time frame was chosen as it brackets the implementation of this concept of Soviet foreign policy. In June/July 1944 Soviet troops crossed their country's western borders, and in February/March 1948, Czechoslovakia brought the process of setting up Communist governments in East Central Europe to a conclusion.

Paper 4: Exporting Charisma: Stalinist Leader in the Soviet Bloc

Balázs Apor

Trinity College Dublin

The paper will provide a comparative assessment of Stalinist leader cults in the countries of the Eastern bloc (excluding the Soviet Union) after the Second World War (1945-1956). It will focus on the creation of satellite leader cults as part of the post-war Sovietisation project in the region. Apart from the copying of Soviet institutions and policies, the adaptation of the leader cult to the national environment was also an integral part of this process. Despite the fact that the cults of satellite leaders mostly recycled the essential building blocks of Stalin's imagery, they also displayed a substantial amount of specificity. The problem of adoption vs. innovation, or more precisely: the extent to which such cults were based on the mechanical copying of the Soviet model vs. the degree to which they were rooted in local national traditions, enriching them with national characteristics, will be in the main focus of the paper.

Panel: Military intervention

Paper 1: Intervention in Northern Russia, 1918-1919: The International Element

Steven Balbirnie

UCD

When Civil War erupted in Russia in the wake of the October Revolution, international intervention was embarked upon on a substantial scale across a wide variety of theatres. This paper shall specifically examine the Allied intervention as it took place in the North Russian theatre. Originally intended as a concentration point for troops from the Czechoslovak Legion, this theatre instead saw Allied action being carried out by British, American, French, Canadian, Italian, Finnish, Polish and Serb soldiers. The paper will explore the actions and effectiveness of this polyglot force; as well as how its mission was complicated by the aftermath of the Civil War in neighbouring Finland, as well as its relations with the local Russian civil and military authorities.

Paper 2: A Soviet friendship that knows no bounds: 'The 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia

Jonathan Murphy

Dept. of History, UCC

Czechoslovakia was the only communist nation with a strong democratic tradition and demands in the late 1960s for reform were viewed in Moscow with trepidation and uncertainty. As this paper discusses, Alexander Dubcek's reforms had an impact beyond Czechoslovakia's borders which Moscow and other hard-line allies could not ignore. The Soviet response took its most explicit form in the so-called 'Brezhnev Doctrine,' a term coined in the West to refer to a series of authoritarian statements by Leonid Brezhnev and other officials justifying the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

This paper argues that Moscow was more concerned with the Communist party's loss of monopoly control than military security as had been the case during the 1956 invasion of Hungary. As Czechoslovakia ended censorship and became a window on the West, Brezhnev rejected Dubcek's argument that the Communist party was winning public support and therefore strengthening its position. In addition, Moscow knew that the invasion would not risk a war with the West since it had just concluded a Treaty of Nuclear Non-proliferation with Washington. This paper concludes by reflecting on the two main consequences of the invasion; Moscow had shown that Eastern European states had only a limited sovereignty, and demonstrated that any lapse in the Communist party's monopoly of power could result in intervention. Although deeply unpopular both in the Communist and non-communist world, it would ensure stability until Mikhail Gorbachev overturned the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' in the late 1980s.

Paper 3: The Cold War and the case of the “little Berlin” of Gorizia: exploring the longest-lived dividing wall in Europe

Francesca Brufani

Università degli Studi di Perugia, Italy

Described by the Bohemian historian Czering as the “synthesis of Europe”, the Italian city of Gorizia was once considered a truly international city. Eighteenth century chronicles used to mention the threefold soul (German, Italian and Slovenian) of the town, which was completely immune from any form of ethnic strife. During the nineteenth century however, its uniqueness was eroded by growing nationalism and the city became a victim of Italian domestic policies against foreigners. Italians and Slovenians simultaneously became both victims and executioners, and the post-Second World War Allied policy resulted in the building of a Wall along the Yugoslav border that split the city in two. Unlike Berlin, Italians and outsiders alike remained largely oblivious of the divided city’s fate.

The “Gorizia Wall” survived both the events of 1989 and the Balkan Wars intact, but the recent EU enlargement to Slovenia in 2004 shed new light on the city, divided and forgotten for 57 years from its Slovenian counterpart Nova Gorica. After the demolition of what was considered in Italy to be the last Cold War symbol, this paper seeks to explore the various arguments concerning long-lasting reconciliation between the sides through local newspapers, satire and use of symbols and it concludes by tracing the basis for a common narrative.

Paper 4: Central European memories of Russia after the Cold War

Katrin Van Cant & Idesbald Goddeeris

Katholic University Leuven, Belgium

Central European countries are supposed to have a very hostile memory of Russia. Conflicts and controversies make headlines, for instance regarding the Bronze Soldier of Tallinn (2007) or the tensions between Moscow and Warsaw about Katyń. However, a closer look reveals that reality is much more complex.

This contribution aims at analyzing and comparing the memory of Russia and the Soviet Union in three Central European countries (Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine) in the first fifteen years after the fall of Communism (1989/91-2004). It will do so by means of an analysis of weekly journals in those three countries. Since these periodicals are moderate and can be located in the centre of the political spectrum, they may be considered as representative.

The contribution will argue that memory of Russia was very varied and was largely dependent on broader historical contexts and narratives. Poland clearly has the strongest anti-Russian feelings. Even regarding the Second World War, Russian evil gains much more attention than German crimes. This is explained by a historical polarization with regard to Russia, which has rooted the anti-Russian element in the national Polish identity. Slovakia, by contrast, deals with issues other than Russia. First and foremost, it must work out the proper Slovakian position, for instance on the Slovak National Uprising in WWII and the Prague Spring of 1968. Ukraine, finally, is a divided country, and readings of Russia depends on a journal’s political and geographical position.

Session 2: Cultural & intellectual history

Roundtable: Cultural history from the Enlightenment to the Interwar

Paper 1: *The Constantinople Orthodox Patriarchate and the papacy in the diplomacy of Russian "enlightened absolutism" in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the second half of the XVIIIth century.*

Andrej Riazhev

Togliatti (Russia).

The paper focuses on the relationship of Russian diplomacy with the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople and papal diplomats with regard to the religious and political contradictions in Eastern Europe, on the Danube and in the Balkan region in the second half of the XVIII century. I mainly concentrate on the reign of Catherine II. The paper outlines the key issues of this relationship: the fate of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Uniatism in Ukrainian, Belorussian, Moldavian, Romanian and Serbian lands, the position of Catholicism and the Uniate Church in the Russian Empire, and Russian financial and diplomatic support to allow the Patriarchate to maintain a certain independence and reinforce its anti-Uniate activity in South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. My research also shows the importance of these relationships for Russian diplomacy in the Polish Rzeczpospolita and the Austrian monarchy, and for the formation of a union between two "enlightened" rulers – Catherine II and Joseph II. The study is based on unpublished documents from the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire (Arhiv Vneshnej Politiki Rossijskoj Imperii, abbreviation: AVPRI) and the Russian State Archive of Ancient Charters (Rossijsky Gosudarstvenny Arhiv Drevnyh Actov, abbreviation: RGADA).

Paper 2: *Mongoloid Slavs: Images of the east in nineteenth and early-twentieth century race science*

Richard McMahon

Dept. of History, UCC

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the classification of European races was a respectable scientific project. It combined biological measures of skull shape, hair colour and so on, with the romantic nationalist historiography of modern ethnic groups as direct descendents of ancient tribes. As a result, the scientific and political agendas of race scholars became entangled in complex ways and scientific debates interacted with developing political narratives outside science. Drawing especially on research on Polish and Romanian race science, this paper examines one particularly important identity narrative that race scientists devised. This narrative associated the Slavic and French peoples with an eastern racial group, related to 'Mongols'. I trace the evolving relationship in scientific race theories between this group and the highly prestigious category of Aryan. I also argue that whereas Central and Eastern European scientists, including Germans, generally saw east-west distinctions in skull shape as crucial, scholars further west tended to emphasise a north-south distinction based on pigmentation.

Paper 3: Interethnic relations in Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries (from the unpublished memoirs of E. Spektorsky)

Sergey Mikhailchenko

Bryansk State I.G.Petrovsky University, Russia

Evgeny Vasilyevich Spektorsky (1875-1951) was an outstanding Russian scientific and public figure. His works were devoted to a wide spectrum of social sciences. The public and state activity of Spektorsky took place within the framework of the higher education system. By emigrating in 1920, Spektorsky not only continued active scientific work abroad, but became one of the organizers of research and educational activity of the Russian Diaspora (in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Prague and New York). The author has studied Spektorsky life and activity for several years, investigating numerous archival funds from different archives of various European countries and the USA. Special attention was paid to documents at the Institute of Eastern Europe (Bremen University, Germany). This houses "Memoirs", which for long years were considered lost. Recently found and gradually being subjected to scholarly analysis, Spektorsky's "Memoirs" contain rich information on the multinational population of Eastern Europe, from the point of view of a Russian intellectual. The text chronologically embraces Spektorsky entire life, from birth and family origins to the beginning of the 1930s. Spektorsky characterizes ways of life, employment and religious traditions of Poles, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Serbs, Czechs and Slovenes. These characteristics do not always fit with our concepts of tolerance, but it is important to introduce them to the scholarly debate and scientific criticism.

Paper 4: Re-evaluating Vakhtangov's legacy

Rayla Tadjimatova

UCD

The historical and political changes in Russia in the last twenty years have increased interest in Russia's historical and cultural past. The first decades of the twentieth century, when the historical avant-garde was flourishing in Russian arts, literature and theatre, have attracted significant attention within contemporary scholarship. This period has not yet been fully studied and critically analyzed by Western scholarship. This was not historically possible because of the ideological censorship, information control and cultural isolation of the Soviet system that limited access to sources and documents. Therefore, it could be said that Western scholars were dependent on the Soviet interpretation of the history and the documents that were available to them. The names of some artists were deleted from the official history of Soviet theatre; evaluation of their contribution to the development of the Russian avant-garde theatre was distorted by ideologically pre-conditioned censorship. This led, for example, to misinterpretation and undervaluation of the work of such Russian avant-garde theatre directors as Evgeny Vakhtangov and Nikolay Evreinov. This paper invites an investigation and re-evaluation of their role in the historical avant-garde theatre by bringing attention to some recently published and unpublished documents and articles. This will help reconsideration of the role of Vakhtangov's legacy in the history of 20th-century European theatre.

Panel: The Transfer of Soviet Knowledge to Central Europe -- And Beyond – During the Communist period 1948-1990

Chair: Valentina Fava, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies

This panel will map various kinds of knowledge transfer from Soviet Union to Central Europe during the Communist era and beyond, in particular to America and Mexico, after the collapse of Communist regimes. The goal of the panel is to prepare and open the ground for three principal axes: the transfer of structure (Doubravka Olšáková's paper on the structure of societies for dissemination of political and scientific knowledge in Central Europe), the transfer of special know-how that was foreign to the cultural background of Central-European societies (Ludek Vacin's contribution on the beginnings of a new culture of embalming the bodies in Czechoslovakia), and the 'brain-drain' from the Soviet Union to America after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Isabel Izquierdo's presentation on the immigration of Soviet researchers to Latin America). The panel will be chaired by Valentina Fava, fellow of the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, who is currently on maternity leave but still involved in various ongoing research projects.

Paper 1: Making Science Popular: Central-European „Daughter“ Societies of the All-Union Society for Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge and the Soviet Concept of Popularisation of Sciences in Central Europe after 1948

Doubravka Olšáková

Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

In early 1950s, scientists and researchers occupied a very privileged and very fragile position within the new concept of Communist society. According to Marx's and Lenin's teaching, scientists had knowledge that was to be distributed to the people. As specialists, therefore, they were not seen as part of the working class, yet their knowledge made them indispensable to it. The notion of popularisation and increased accessibility of science also had a privileged position because it was seen as an instrument leading to the ultimate goal of Communism, i.e., the use of progress by the working class and for the good of the working class. The paper examines the status of three societies that were created in post-war Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East-Germany with the aim of making science popular among the working class. To what extent was this concept influenced by the Soviet society for the popularisation of science, the All-Union Society for Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge? Within the topic, special attention is paid to the early years of 'collaboration' between Central Europe and Soviet Union, i.e., the period 1948-1957, and to relations between societies for dissemination of political and scientific knowledge and national academies of science in all three states.

Paper 2: How to Preserve the Body of an Allied Leader: The Export of Soviet Embalming Expertise to Czechoslovakia

Ludek Vacin

Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin

Embalming of the bodies of deceased communist leaders and putting them on public display belongs among the most bizarre instances of science in the service of ideology. Beginning with the preservation of Lenin's body in 1924, this practice became an established tradition in the Eastern bloc by 1953 when the body of Klement Gottwald, “the first workers' president” of Czechoslovakia, was displayed in a mausoleum in Prague. As all the relevant sources from Czech archives have been declassified in the wake of the “Velvet Revolution”, the case of the Gottwald mausoleum provides a fine opportunity to explore various aspects of this phenomenon which in the course of the past century spread to four continents and took particularly deep roots in North Korea, as shown by the recent decision of the North Korean leadership to put the embalmed body of Kim Jong-il on permanent display in the mausoleum of his father. This talk will scrutinize the ways and means by which the team of Soviet embalmers shared their top secret - so to speak esoteric - knowledge with their Czechoslovak colleagues, who took over the care for Gottwald's body in 1955. Further, available archival sources, interviews which I have made with some of the Czechs in charge of the maintenance of Gottwald's body, and published memoirs of staff members of the Soviet and Bulgarian mausolea make it possible to assess how this particular kind of Soviet expertise - hailed as one of the showcases of Soviet science in the USSR proper - was handled and perceived by personnel in those satellite countries which had made use of it by 1953.

Paper 3: Attracting Soviet Scientists to Mexican Universities

Isabel Izquierdo

National Autonomous University of Mexico

The Soviet Union put great emphasis on the training of scientists. In the 1990s, many of these scientists started to migrate to other countries, including Mexico. So far, this immigration has been little studied because most ex-Soviet scientists headed to North America, that is, the US and Canada. However, with the help of World Bank funding (and Mexican counterpart funding), the Mexican government in the early 1990s implemented a program aimed at attracting scientists to this country. Within a decade, hundreds of ex-Soviet scientists arrived, bringing with them the scientific culture in which they trained as scientists. This paper is a work in progress, part of my PhD Thesis. I am studying ex-Soviet scientists and their immigration to Mexico, focusing on those who arrived here through an institutional program that was run by the Mexican Science and Technology Council in the nineties. In my presentation, I describe the history of this program. The main objective of this initiative was to attract foreign visiting professors who showed interest in teaching and research at Mexican universities, had the potential to open up new research lines in Mexico, were qualified to strengthen existing research groups, and could thus contribute to training high-level human resources. In the 1990s, Mexico joined numerous other countries and became part of the Soviet ‘brain gain’.

Session 3: South-Eastern Europe

Roundtable: Black Sea Geopolitics

Paper 1: Unexpected failures in the South: The USSR and Turkey (1939-1946)

Emanuel Ploeanu

Ovidius University, Constanta, Romania & "N. Iorga" Institute of History, Romanian Academy

Long time enemies (in their respective imperial periods) interwar Russia and Turkey seemed to surpass their old rivalry and approach one another, as it is shown by their treaties of 1921 and 1925. However, the Soviet Union rapidly replaced its proclaimed long-term friendship with aggressiveness, manifested at various intensities. This paper examines two cases of this: in the autumn of 1939 and summer of 1946.

In the first of these periods the Soviet Union tried to close the Black Sea and prevent potential French and British incursions into this area. Obviously, this plan was intended to help Germany too and Turkey's response was the Tripartite Treaty (with France and Great Britain). This Soviet initiative was a clear failure.

The second case is more complex, because an entire preceding year of tensions between Moscow and Ankara lay behind the Soviet Note of August 7, 1946. In a new international relations environment, in which former Allies, such as US and USSR, became more and more hostile to one to another, Turkey's position was seen as highly important and the intensity of the reaction consigned the Soviet initiative to oblivion.

The goal of our paper is to highlight two cases in which Soviet intentions failed, the context of these failures, the third parties involved and the effect on Soviet foreign policy in this region.

Paper 2: The battle for the sea: Soviet strategies in the Black Sea region (1939-1947)

Mioara Anton

'Nicolae Iorga' Institute of History, Romanian Academy

The signature of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact considerably altered the fragile balance in Central and Eastern Europe. Competition for supremacy in the Black Sea region was opened up, the Great Powers beginning a complicated diplomatic game which had at stake the drawing of not only Balkan, but also Near Eastern spheres of influence. Even if only from a historical perspective, one can speak of a constant in Russian/Soviet policy concerning the Balkans and Black Sea regions. What becomes clear in the Second World War period is the fact that the strategies of Moscow were directly influenced by the development of military operations. Soviet ambitions manifested themselves explicitly in the course of 1942-1943, as the Kremlin emphasised in the tripartite negotiations the strategic and military importance that it attributed to the Black Sea region and the Straits. At the Yalta Conference, Stalin expressed his discontent with the administration of the Straits and the control exerted by Turkey over them. In the course of 1946 the Black Sea region found itself the object of a conflict whose causes were to be found in the reopening of competition for control of the region. The outbreak of the Cold War left the Straits out of Soviet control and announced the beginning of new stages in the shaping of centres of power and domination in the Balkans and the Black Sea region. The aim of this paper is to provide new available information from British and Romanian archives concerning the Soviet strategies in Black Sea region.

Paper 3: Soviet geopolitics in East-central Europe and their consequences for today's European foreign policy: the case of the Republic of Moldova and the Transdnistrian conflict

Alexandra Gerota

CHCS, Université de Versailles, France

Twenty years after the Soviet Union fell apart, the consequences of the Ribentropp-Molotov pact are still visible at the eastern border of the European Union. Considered recently to be the success story of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the East (lead by Poland), the Republic of Moldova is a unique case . Here, for 40 years, Marxism-Leninism was the instrument of Soviet and Russian imperialism; the present-day republic, the shape of its territory, its political status and ethnocultural identity are the result of Soviet policies of national (de)construction. Linguistic policy can be one edifying example : the Soviet ideology imposed the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet, but presented it as being not a subordination to Russian culture, but a proof of 'international unity of the soviet people'. All these policies had previously been experienced between 1924 and 1940 in what was to become after 1991 the separatist region of Transdnistria. During Soviet times, all the investments made in the former Socialist Soviet Republic of Moldova were concentrated in this region; consequently, at present, 80% of Moldovan industry and the main power producing facilities are under the control of the self-proclaimed state. As in the case of other former Soviet republics, Russian encouragement of separatism allows the presence of Russian troops in the region and prevents the Republic of Moldova from joining the international community, as it appears to be a failed-state. Thus, the paper will try to explore ideological and political strategies applied during Soviet times that prevent today's democratic reforms and the settlement of the frozen conflict in the Moldova region.

Paper 4: Russia's foreign policy towards Moldova

Creanga Claudiu

University of Bucharest

The relations between Russia and Moldova are asymmetrical because they involve an aspiring great power and a small country. Moscow generally views its relations with Moldova from the vantage point of geopolitical schemes, where the sheer size of Russia predetermines its dominance in the entire post-Soviet territory. Russia's geopolitical ambitions, based on a shaky foundation of repeated and unconvincing references to common historical memories, are not very welcome in Moldova. The re-actualization of the experience of the Soviet Union makes Russian identity conceptually trapped in a Soviet past that is not only rejected by the majority of Eastern and Central European nations but also increasingly unattractive for the European-oriented segments of Moldovan society. As far as the realist perspective is concerned, the Kremlin has been very slow to give meanings and aims to its relations with Moldova. It is usually taken for granted that these interests are well established and understood within Russia's political community, but this is far from the case. The question of what Russian interests are in Moldova is, in fact, open to debate. One possible articulation of these interests is the maintenance of Moldova as a sovereign and independent state. In practical terms, this argument implies a need to prevent Moldova from becoming a potential member of the EU and NATO. The main reasons for Russia's policy disorientation in Moldova are to be found in the sphere of identity politics (including perceptions, expectations, and interpretations of foreign relations). Unfortunately, Russia appears to have underestimated the importance to Moldova of identity, involving debates on reunification with Romania and the choice of a European future, as well as a rethinking of relations with Russia. As a result, Russia is unsure how to proceed in its policy toward Moldova. It is now stuck between relatively traditional geopolitical approaches and the application of soft power tools. In this paper I will underline Russia's misconceptions about Moldova's politics, its identity and its regional role. Also, I will analyze how the Kremlin has recently tried to recalibrate its policy instruments in order to address these misconceptions. Finally, I will show that Russia's attitude towards Moldova raises important questions about Russian interests in Europe and where possible conflicts will arise.

Panel: Romania and the Soviet Union

Paper 1: Romanian policy towards the Soviet Union at a crossroads (1932-1936) and Foreign Minister Nicolae Titulescu's concept of accomplished idealism

Silviu Miloiu

Valahia University of Targoviste

The Romanian foreign policy towards the Soviet Union was heavily influenced throughout the interwar period by the paradigm of realism. The eastern neighbour was regarded as a security threat to Romania due to both its policy of exporting revolution and/or due to its claims to the province of Bessarabia, which was united with Romania in 1918. Even when the country embarked on a course of departing from the premises of realism as regards its European policy, centring its foreign affairs on the League of Nations, the area situated east of the river Dniester continued to be seen through the lenses of realism. This space was seen as lawless, threatening, unpredictable and lacking any possibility of integration into the Geneva spirit. This started to change soon after Nicolae Titulescu (1882-1941), Romania's permanent delegate to the League of Nations (1920-1936), member of the League of Nations Council (1927-1930 and in 1935) and twice President of the General Assembly of the League (1930 and 1931) assumed the office of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania (1932-1936). Titulescu defined himself as a "Realisierenden-Idealisten" and emphasized in his speeches two important concepts: the indivisibility of peace and the spiritualization of frontiers. How these new concepts affected the country's foreign policy conduct towards the Soviet Union is the core of this research, which is based on Romanian and foreign archival material.

Paper 2: The Advent of National Interest: The Romanian Opposition towards Soviet Plans for Communist Bloc Reform (1960-1964)

Cezar Stanciu

"Grigore Gafencu" Center for the History of International Relations in Targoviste (Romania)

De-Stalinization policies undertaken by Moscow after 1956 had a dramatic impact on the East European Communist elites and are generally considered as the basic source for Romania's pursuit of autonomy in the Soviet bloc. The party leadership in Romania, led by Gheorghiu-Dej, sought to reduce its dependence on the USSR in order to increase its stability in power. The economy was a major component of this policy, given the fact that Romania's foreign trade was largely with Communist bloc countries. Romania relied on them as primary sources of raw materials and as markets for its newly developed industry. This situation became more complicated at the beginning of the 1960s, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev initiated a series of reforms at CMEA aimed at increasing the integration and specialization of member countries, so as to reduce the economic pressures exerted by the satellites on the Soviet economy. Gheorghiu-Dej strongly opposed this policy. His goals were to reduce Soviet economic influence in Romania by pursuing protectionism and a program of intense industrialization. In order to achieve this, he had to undermine Soviet reform plans as well as pressures from other industrialized East bloc countries. The GDR and Czechoslovakia for example opposed Romania's policy of protectionism and industrialization and encouraged Khrushchev to impose integration and specialization, hoping to ensure long term markets for their industries. In this way, the beginning of the 1960s witnessed the emergence of the first economic disputes in the Communist bloc in which Romania played the card of economic nationalism, as a way stabilizing both domestic and international politics.

Paper 3: Balancing with China against the USSR. Romania's opposition to CMEA integration, 1962-1963

Elena Dragomir

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki

In the early 1960s the Romanian leadership, through a series of tactics, successfully opposed perceived Soviet pressures for CMEA integration. Using the 'Chinese factor' to deter the Soviet CMEA integration attempts was one of the tactics the Romanian leadership formulated in 1962 and employed especially from 1963 onwards. In their relations with the Soviets, the Romanian representatives initially made allusions that Romania might consider 'some' of the 'Chinese theses' correct and that China and other 'socialist states' should have become members of the CMEA, in the 'common interest' of the 'socialist world system'. According to the Romanian leadership, the Soviets did not want Romania to take the Chinese side in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Therefore, the Romanian allusions were intended to indirectly pressure the Soviet leadership to accommodate Romania's views regarding integration. Later, the Romanian leaders tried to persuade China to ask to become a member of the CMEA. As the archive documents of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party reveal, the intention of the Romanian leadership was to find in this way an ally in opposing Soviet attempts to integrate the CMEA – which were perceived by the Romanian leadership as threats. The aim of this paper is to examine the emergence of this tactic in Romania's relations with the USSR in 1962 and to describe how it was applied for the first time during the March-June 1963 secret Romanian-Soviet negotiations regarding bloc integration.

Session 2: Eastern Europe since 1980

Roundtable: Energy Relations

Chair: Jonathan Murphy

Paper 1: Energy Relations between Russia and the Near Abroad: Comparative Studies of Conflicting and Cooperative Models

Bai-Ku Wei

Graduate Institute of Russian Studies, National Chengchi University (NCCU)

This paper analyzes energy relations between Russia and countries of the “near abroad”, including cases of conflict and cooperation. Since the year 2000, and Putin’s presidency, energy diplomacy has become more active. Energy diplomacy plays an important role in Russia’s foreign policies. As one of the world’s main exporter of oil and natural gas, Russia uses energy as a new diplomatic tool to impact upon the foreign relations of republics of the near abroad. This article contends that carrots and sticks are two tools used by Russia when it engages in energy diplomacy with states of the near abroad.

Paper 2: The changing energy dynamics in the Baltic region: Gazprom’s loosening stranglehold?

Evan Thompson

Monash European and EU Centre, Australia

Recent changes in the Baltic region are set to have important consequences for their energy security. In particular, the changes necessitated by the EU’s Climate and Energy Package (CEP) are mandating a dramatic shift in the energy mix of the member states away from fossil fuels. In conjunction with this, is the beginning of a substantial shale-gas industry in Poland and the establishment of a North-South gas pipeline corridor, both facilitating EU energy market integration and greater diversity of supplies for Central and Eastern European (CEE) states. However, in the face of these changes, Russia is also seeking to maximise its presence in the EU gas markets via acquisition of EU infrastructure companies. Furthermore, it is planning additional large-scale pipelines into the EU, potentially undermining EU diversification. What this paper seeks to argue is that intra-EU changes will mitigate excessive dependence on Russian gas, and create a more equitable interdependence scenario between the Eastern EU Member States and Russia. In presenting this point the paper proceeds firstly by looking at the role of Russian gas in the CEE energy mixes and the overall energy market. From there it incorporates the changes in the EU system, highlighting Poland as an energy bridge and energy supplier in its own right and the changing energy mix in favour of renewable energy sources. It then proceeds with Russian attempts to further penetrate the EU and in particular Eastern markets to come to a conclusion about the role of Russian gas in the CEE.

Paper 3: From Concentration to Competition: The Struggle for Power between the Kremlin and Gazprom through the Study of TNK-BP and South Stream

Paolo Sorbello

Portal for Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans (PECOB)

Ludovico Grandi

University of Bologna

This paper deals with the progressive concentration of power in the hands of Gazprom. Although triggered by Putin's surge to power, over the past ten years Russia's gas monopolist has turned into an autonomous subject within the Russian power structure. We argue that Russian resource nationalism, while present and influential, is divided into poles of power. Despite Moscow's drive toward centralisation, aimed at enhancing Russian national interest through strong monopolies in the transportation and distribution of national resources, Gazprom has evolved into a power oligopoly whose influence is projected on Russia's foreign policy. Gazprom, although tightly connected to the central administration, now fights for its own agenda, which does not necessarily coincide with Kremlin energy policy positions. Two case studies will outline how one power evolves at the expense of the other. The first is related to the TNK-BP case, clear example of the conflicting visions dividing Moscow and St. Petersburg where cooperation with foreign energy actors is concerned. The second regards the alleged use of energy as a "weapon" in the negotiations on the South Stream natural gas pipeline, when the high level of political rhetoric, matched by Gazprom's business concerns, created a tug-of-war between central and peripheral foreign energy policy decision-making. The main outcome is a picture of Russia's inner power mechanisms, the functioning of which demonstrates that the concept of national champions (so dear to the Kremlin's desires) is far from reality.

Paper 4: Marketing and geopolitics in Russia's gas trade in Central and Eastern Europe

Cosmin Popa

History Institute "Nicolae Iorga", Bucharest, Romania, Academy of Sciences

Russian energy strategy is based on the idea of the direct connection between the source of oil and the big oil consuming nations, especially Germany and Italy. Moscow is trying to "punish" some of the transit countries for their support for alternative western routes such as Nabucco and to push them out of the price formation equation for oil and natural gas. Russia's quest for alternative routes in the Black and Baltic Sea is not just an attempt to set better business conditions. It also promotes an idea of a new European political system based on Russia's vision of a directorate of the European great powers. This is in fact an alternative to the Euro-Atlantic system. While claiming that this would make a safer and more efficient energy system, Russia is ready to spend more than at present to simplify the political equation of resources policy. But already, this new policy conflicts with the old Russian policy of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Russia has a new dilemma. How can Moscow minimize the role of Ukraine as a transit country but also maintain political influence over her? Are these two objectives compatible? Is South Stream a political and economic reality or just a threat to surround Central and Eastern Europe? Is Germany ready to accept the Russian bargain and get oil and gas for a good price in exchange for a Russian gold share in European policy? What can stop this new alliance between German technology and Russian resources? Are Germany and Russia really so compatible? Is this the end of the Euro-Atlantic system and the beginning of a Eurasian one? The paper offers a view on these issues and tries to describe the role and place of New Europe in the context of the European Great Powers' so-called "energy policy".

Panel:Poland

Chair: Gabriel Doherty

Paper 1: Defining the Unknown: The Polish transformation of 1989 in the political discourse of the Soviet, Western and Polish authorities and of Solidarity

Patryk Pleskot

Institute of National Remembrance, Poland

The Polish political transformation, initiated in February 1989 by the Round Table negotiations between communist authorities and „Solidarity”, was overshadowed by concern about Russian reactions. Polish structural changes began earlier than in other Eastern European countries . Extreme anxiety and insecurity were the price to be paid for this precedence. Polish authorities were able to use these sentiments in their fight to save power, underlining the threat of a negative Soviet attitude. Even after the parliamentary elections of June 1989, won by „Solidarity”, the communist minister of internal affairs threatened Poles with a revolt by the security apparatus’ and possible Russian invasion. Interestingly, the „Solidarity” leaders took these exaggerated threats very seriously. After the elections they begun to slow down the process of change for fear of Moscow’s reaction. This tendency had an astonishing effect: in July, thanks to the indirect support of „Solidarity”, General Jaruzelski (author of martial law in 1981) was elected president of Poland. The very cautious attitude of Solidarity leaders was followed by the Western politicians. French President François Mitterand, during his visit in Poland in June, exhorted Poles not to „throw off socialism”. One month later, American president George Bush was persuading Gen. Jaruzelski to accept the presidential post. Generally, in Western politicians’ views the uncontrollable acceleration of Polish transformation could escalate tensions in the region and force Gorbachev to react. Paradoxically, the most measured attitude was formulated by Moscow. The Kremlin did not criticise the Round Table negotiations. Even the defeat of communists in the June elections incited relatively calm reactions from the Soviet authorities. Moscow even started to make suggestions that the Soviet Union could eventually accept non-communist types of government in Poland – providing that Poland would stay within the Warsaw Pact. On July the 5th Gorbachev expressed opinions of this sort in official way during his speech in Paris. He accepted – at least in declarative way –the right of Poles (and Hungarians) to freely choose their political and social system.

Paper 2: Between Katyń and Smolensk: Polish-Russian Political Discourse and the Kaczyński Presidency (2005-2010)

George B. Soroka

Government Department, Harvard University

More than two decades after the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc, a fundamental puzzle of post-communism concerns the remarkable degree to which prevailing political discourses in the region are attuned to symbolic and ethical, rather than more overtly interest-based, considerations. Disputed historical legacies have represented significant loci for contestation within and among the erstwhile Warsaw Pact and Soviet successor states ever since regime transitions commenced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but rather than attenuating over time, the association of proximate pasts with contemporary political realities has only strengthened in recent years. Poland is at the forefront of ensuing debates. That the post-WWII communist seizure of power and subsequent establishment of the Rzeczpospolita Ludowa left a complicated past for Poles to grapple with in the aftermath of 1989 is incontrovertible, and there remains in Polish politics a palpable focus on the moral discontinuities arising from this event. Much the same holds true (albeit more indeterminately) in contemporary Russia, a country still coming to terms with the Soviet era. As a consequence, both Polish and Russian politicians today exhibit a curious preoccupation with “getting history right,” which translates into understanding proximate legacies in oftentimes conflicting ways. Employing the Kaczyński presidency and attendant controversies centering about the 1940 Katyń massacre in the aftermath of the 2010 Smolensk disaster as a conceptual frame, this paper examines, both theoretically and empirically, the polarization ensuing from the historical moralization of post-communist politics.