

THE CONTOURS OF LEGITIMACY IN CENTRAL EUROPE: NEW APPROACHES IN GRADUATE STUDIES

Call for Papers

by Larissa Douglass (Oxford)

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The idea of Central Europe rests, paradoxically, upon ambiguous boundaries and essential definitions. This heartland remains a contested area in terms of overlapping and competing conceptions of territorial boundaries, political authority, economic trading blocs, ethno-linguistic communities, and cultural development. Nonetheless, the region retains a genuine and unique character whose expression extends far beyond the terms of nationalist myth-making. In an effort to identify the workings of this paradox, and consequently the nature of the region itself, the Conference Committee of Postgraduates in *Central European Studies* at the University of Oxford is calling for papers in the field which focus on the concept of legitimacy.

The notion of legitimacy embraces Central Europe's uncertainties and certainties: it is a model both of justification and vindication, based on a mixed historical legacy. On the one hand, Central Europe shares the same instances of great socio-political change as Western Europe, from the Reformation to the European Union. On the other hand, the dynamics of these changes were and are different in Central Europe. Thus, from the Early Modern period, varied relationships between the spiritual and secular spheres combined with alternative forms of social-economic hierarchy, absolutism and imperialism to produce different founding principles for future state development. From these processes and principles we can trace varying subsequent patterns of ethnic diversity and national identification. This legacy ironically pushes the region to the periphery of Europe, even as its relations arguably provide the key to the continent's affairs.

We are calling for interpretations of legitimacy that address this essential contradiction. As a starting point, we refer to Max Weber's definition of legitimacy as any one of three different ways of exercising power: by tradition, by charisma and by rational legal authority. We aim to draw from these three concepts of authority as we debate legitimacy in language, culture, history, economics, and politics in Central Europe. We hope that the ensuing discussion will bridge the methodological gaps in different academic disciplines, whose respective approaches have come to reflect cleavages in the subject matter itself. Panel sessions will follow a chronological framework, from the Early Modern period to the present.

The boundaries of 'Central Europe' for these purposes remain broad and can include the region as it has been and is defined in relation to either Western Europe or Eastern Europe. In addition, we welcome papers on minority (e.g. Jewish and Roma) communities within the region.

The Committee suggests the following possible topics for papers from the Reformation to the present. However, proposals need not be limited to these suggestions:

- The Integrity of Community Life and Domestic Continuities
- Religious Authority and the Process of Secularization
- Nobility, Aristocracy, Intelligentsia: The Maintenance of Hierarchy
- Folklore in Relation to Definitions of High Culture
- Hegemony and Language – Dominant Linguistic Traditions
- Historical Construction as the Foundation of Ideology
- Regionalism Versus Cosmopolitanism – The Pressures of Modernization
- National Identities, Civil Society and the Determinants of Citizenship
- Journalism – Representation of Social and Political Change, the Public Voice, and Literary Licence
- The Problem of Common Critical Consensus – The Establishment of 'Legitimate' Forms of Art and Culture
- Party politics and the Co-opting of Culture
- Constitutionalism, Legal Transformation and the Problem of Institutional Reconstruction
- Shifting Paradigms of National Inclusion from the Interwar Period to the Present
- Broadcasting and the Media – The Location of Independent Viewpoints
- Central Europe – Contested Bloc of European Security Architecture
- Cinema and the Projection of Self-Conscious Identity
- Patterns of Economic Interdependence
- From Revolutionaries to Politicians – A Troubled Path?
- Redefining Left-Right Cleavages in Transition Politics
- Devolution in Central Europe – Balancing the Centre-Periphery Relationship
- Redefining Central Europe on the Eve of EU enlargement

The Committee invites Post-Doctoral, Graduate, and final-year Undergraduate students in the Humanities and Social Sciences to submit original research papers for discussion. A one-page abstract of the paper (including title), along with a curriculum vitae, and contact information (e-mail, telephone, post) should be submitted no later than February 1, 2002. Read papers in their final form should not exceed 20 minutes in length and must be in English.

Please send submissions by post or e-mail to:

Conference Coordinator:

Larissa Douglass, St. Antony's College, Oxford, OX2 6JF United Kingdom
ce_conf@yahoo.co.uk (D.Phil. European History, St. Antony's)

For full details, please see the conference website:

<http://ce-conf.5er.com>

Keynotes:

Mr. Timothy Garton Ash (St. Antony's College, Oxford)

Dr. Eva Hahn (Oldenburg)

Dr. Martyn Rady (SSEES, London)

Professor George Schöpflin (SSEES, London)

Conference Committee:

Monika Baar (D.Phil. Candidate, European History, Brasenose)

Martin Benedek (D.Phil. Candidate, Politics, St. Antony's)

Adam Fergus (M.St. Candidate, European Literature, New)

Michael Fleming (D.Phil. Candidate, Geography, Pembroke)

Katya A. M. Kocourek (M.Phil., Russian and East European Studies, St. Antony's; M.Phil./Ph.D. Candidate, SSEES, London)

Stefan Szwed (M.Phil. Candidate, European Politics and Society, St. Antony's)

Wanda Wyporska (D.Phil. Candidate, European History, Hertford)

Assisting Panel:

Deborah Holmes (Junior Research Fellow in Medieval and Modern Languages, The Queen's College)

Timotheus Noetzel (M.Phil. Candidate, European Politics and Society, St. Antony's)

Vanda Pickett (D. Phil. Candidate, Czech Literature, Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, St. Hugh's)

Robert Pyrah (D. Phil. Candidate, Austrian Cultural History, Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, Magdalen)

Marius Turda (Ph.D. Candidate, Central European University)

The senior academic advisor to the conference committee is Mr. Timothy Garton Ash, Kurt A. Körber Senior Research Fellow in Contemporary European History, *European Studies Centre*, St Antony's College. The conference is held under the auspices of the *European Studies Centre*, St. Antony's College, Oxford (<http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc.htm>).

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Closing date: Februar 1, 2002.