

LIFE IN MOTION

Shifting Spaces, Transcending Times, Crossing Borders - 8th Postgraduate Conference

School of Social Studies, Masaryk University (Brno)

Organized by:
School of Social Studies, Masaryk
University Brno, in cooperation with
the School of Slavonic and East
European Studies, University College
London.

Date: June 28-30, 2007.

Place: Brno, Czech Republic.

Deadline for proposals: January 31,
2007.

Conference language: English.

Proposals should include: 1) a title, 2)
an abstract in English of about 400
words, 3) your name(s), institutional
affiliation and position as well as
contact information.

Proposals should be sent as e-mail
attachments to: Marcel Tomasek,
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Seventeen years after the onset of revolutionary changes in 1989, Central and Eastern European societies are still confronted with their histories. Memories and recollections of the past are contested and the past is painstakingly constituted through the interplay of collective construction, political bargains, reversals, rationalizing of refusals to come to terms with it as well as attempts to recognize the past and cope with it. Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have witnessed unprecedented spatial and population shifts and splits which marked the 20th century globally. Many minorities which were often local majorities or equal in number were left in the aftermath of wars as mere memories that quickly faded due to the rapid intrusion of communism. The process of building societies which are not just ethno-culturally heterogeneous but also open to all diverse groups has been contingent on coming to terms with the past. This process became the arena for opening ways to facing current challenges such as migration, borders dissolution and violation of local social and economic balances.

Since 1989 CEE societies have undergone unparalleled social change. However, the expected reforms in the spheres of law, public policy, culture, media, economy, and social policies have been substantially delayed and compromised. The simultaneous emergence of free-market economies and pluralist politics led to situations in which the state quickly withdrew or collapsed, and distinctions between state, collective, and private domains became unclear. It has been in the interest of those actors that emerged in this initial phase of change to prolong a specifically post-socialist culture between socialism and the free market. This may have decisively contributed to the eurosceptic backlash in the ranks of particular mainstream political forces and in specific cultural segments and sections of societies in some CEE countries. What is in this light the meaning of »The Big European Switch« of 2004 and its upcoming enlargement follow-up? How »Central and Eastern European« have the CEE countries stayed and Western Europe become? What are the reconstituted boundaries?

Possible subjects of conference submissions may include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

1. *Sustaining and Crossing Social boundaries*

- negotiating and symbolizing ethnic identities; European and sub-European identities; multiple identities; spaces and narratives of identity (contestation of space, creation of temporal boundaries)
- exclusion/inclusion of »minorities«; new social and cultural divisions; social exclusion and selective memory; social reproduction, cohesion, identity of the marginalized
- displaced persons, refugees and human rights; reconciliation with traumatic pasts; violence and memory; struggle for recognition
- consuming actors, between desires and disciplines; media culture: from investigative journalism to tabloids.

2. *Time and Society*

- negotiating everyday life under socialism; nostalgia and post-socialism, remembering and forgetting the past; consumption and socialist nostalgia; westernization of life-style
- narration of national memory, textbooks as the spaces of national memory
- cultural trauma and radical social change; cross-generational passage of trauma and memory, narratives of collective trauma
- celebrations and memory (exhibitions, festivals and theatre); new histories of dissent, »stolen revolutions«.

3. *Urban Spaces*

- neo-tribalism in the post-socialist city; differentiation or ghettoization
- post-socialist urban politics and planning, post-socialist time and space; urban visions and life spaces in the era of »laissez faire«
- everyday life in the city between socialism and free-market

- cities between memory, nostalgia and utopias; spaces and sites of memory after communism; symbolical representation of political change in urban environment.

4. *Re-Constructing Gender in the New Europe*

- social change and gender; women and men in urban/rural, public/private space; education and gender during state socialism and after: continuities and discontinuities
- politics, memory and gender; new ideologies, old representations of gender
- feminist debates East-West and East-East; gender studies and the production of knowledge
- historical legacies of gender relations; gender and new technologies; gender and consumption; alternative gender/sexual identities.

5. *Language, Literature and the Arts*

- mimetic representation
- documentaries and the representation of the reality; documenting the past, saving memories, documentaries as the politics of memory
- nationalizing the domestic cinema
- globalization and localization of popular culture.

6. *International Relations, Politics and Political Theory*

- lobbying and corruption – business politicians/political businessmen; overlapping politics and economy; rent-seeking
- from second societies to civil society
- CEE in the age of terrorism – remote events as benchmarks in social and political life
- Euroscepticism in CEE – from the periphery to the mainstream; European integration versus national state cleavage in CEE party systems; Europeanization and CEE after a Constitution for Europe.

7. *Individuals, Institutions and Markets*

- from transition to Europeanization/modernization to globalization; global investments and local consequences; economy – time and space, cultural encounters in the European economy
- economy of post-socialism; culture and socioeconomic development; construction of markets
- institutional culture and governance; economic liberty and the rule of law
- Western-European government and economies in the postwar period and post-socialist transition/transformation/state capture.

The conference continues the tradition established by the previous annually held conferences: *Inclusion/Exclusion* (London 2006), *Beyond Core and Periphery: Towards A New Understanding of Central Eastern Europe* (Warsaw 2004), *Four Empires and an Enlargement. States, Societies and Individuals: Transfiguring Perspectives and Images of Central and Eastern Europe* (London 2003), *One Ring to Rule them All? Power and Power Relations in East European Politics and Societies* (Berkeley, 2002), *Faith, Dope and Charity: Purity and Danger in East European Politics and Culture* (London, 2001), *Eastern and Central Europe: Lessons from the Past, Prospects for the Future* (Warsaw, 2000), *Between a Bloc and Hard Place* (London, 1999).