

Minorities in Eastern Europe
Minority Politics and Minority Conflicts in Eastern Europe from the 19th to
the 21st Centuries

Leibniz Universität Hannover Summer Academy
(30 August – 13 September 2009)*

Call for Papers

The powder keg of the Caucasus is not the only situation which demonstrates that the problem of minorities continues to be ever-present and explosive on many borders of Eastern Europe. Although it is currently not as rife with conflict as it has been in the past, the existence of ethnic or religious minorities is characteristic for almost every state in Eastern Europe. Nation states emerged from the ashes of the Russian and Habsburg Empires which nonetheless had the same multiethnic composition as what had gone before. Even the “ethnic cleansing” carried out during and after the Second World War did not create the ethnically homogeneous nation states envisioned by those who had organized the violent expulsion of so-called undesirable groups.

The collapse of the Soviet Block has by no means brought an end to the multiethnic diversity of many nation states in Eastern Europe. From the large Russian populations in the Baltic states to the significant Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Rumania, from the ethnic and religious fragmentation of the Yugoslav successor states to the small but prominent German-speaking population in Poland-- minorities have been and remain a contentious subject in the countries of Eastern Europe.

The integration of minorities has still not succeeded everywhere; conflicts between titular nations and minorities are not events from the distant past, but are still with us today. The events which took place in Estonia in 2007, when the removal of the Soviet war monument led to conflict between Russians and Estonians, show that this is true, as does the smouldering conflict concerning the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and the concomitant rise of Hungarian nationalism. There is as yet no end in sight to the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, and even the era of the Kaczyński brothers demonstrates how easy it can be to exploit threat scenarios of a “minority question” in political rivalry.

The postulated “end of nationalism” in Europe has proven to be little more than wishful thinking. The wars in the successor states to the former Yugoslavia, which were accompanied by “ethnic cleansing”, were exceptional in their brutality. However, they have shown the lasting potential for conflict in national minority politics and ethnic and religious interests

* The summer academy "Minorities in Eastern Europe" has been made possible by the DAAD with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various institutions of Leibniz Universität Hannover.

which exists in the entire historical realm of Eastern Europe. The states of Eastern Europe are, for the most part, still far from seeing themselves as multiethnic communities based on the interaction of citizens with various ethnic or religious backgrounds.

Leibniz Universität Hannover's summer academy *Minorities in Eastern Europe* will make this potential for conflict the subject for interdisciplinary historical and political analysis. The goal is an intensive debate of the historical and political dimensions of diverse ethnic and religious interests, national minority politics and the conflict situations in Eastern Europe.

The two-week program will offer

- practical training in intercultural communication in academic contexts with an international group of participants.
- analysis of minority conflicts from a comparative perspective with special focus on the historical, social and political conditions for the outbreak-- or non-occurrence-- of conflict.
- reflection of the use of crucial terms in minority politics-- terms such as nation, minority, ethnicity, assimilation or acculturation-- in various contexts.

The existence of minorities will be considered not so much as a “problem” rather than as a political enrichment for any nation state based on the principles of citizenship.

Program and Extracurricular Activities

The course will take place from 30 August until 13 September 2009.

Program

Our two-week summer academy offers a variety of learning opportunities organized in cooperation with our Eastern European partner universities.

- **Presentations** and **seminar discussions** with outstanding scholars and experts will broaden the historical and political horizons of the minority question. Among our lecturers and seminar leaders are Prof. Dr. Jörg Baberowski (Berlin), Dr. Daina Bara (Vilnius), PD Dr. Ulrike von Hirschhausen (Hamburg/Leipzig), Prof. Dr. Christiane Lemke (Hannover), Dr. Nils Muiznieks (Riga), Dr. Sören Philipps (Hannover), Prof. Dr. Malte Rolf (Hannover), Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schmale (Wien), Dr. Darius Staliunas (Vilnius), Dr. Katrin Steffen (Lüneburg), Prof. Dr. Theodore Weeks (Carbondale/IL, USA), Dr. Anna Veronika Wendland (Marburg).

- In the accompanying **lectures** and **discussions of seminal works** on minority conflicts and politics, participants will extend their knowledge of ethnic and religious tension, escalation mechanisms and possible solution strategies both past and present. The required texts which correspond to the **introductory seminar** will be made available in an internet-supported **reader** on the summer academy homepage.

- New knowledge will be extended yet further in a **seminar** based on scholarly texts and **oral presentations**. This seminar will be dedicated to the historical strata of minority conflicts in East Europe. Active participation in the seminar will include preparing an oral presentation to discuss one particular historical conflict situation in all its complexity. Suitable **materials** will be available on the summer academy homepage in time for participants to see what interests them.
- At an all-day **international colloquium** for PhD students, participants will present their ongoing research projects. These oral descriptions will be complemented by a plenum discussion concentrating on both methodological questions and content.
- Participants will also take part in the **simulation** of a fictitious minority conflict. As actors in this role play, they will find out about special interests and motivations of conflicting ethnic agencies as well as the political, social and religious complexity inherent in these situations. The goal is to work out a concrete political compromise.
- Viewings and discussions of both historical and contemporary **films** dealing with the subject of the summer academy will expand the spectrum of the approaches which will be presented and practiced. Furthermore, these films will demonstrate the problem of minorities in an aesthetic manner.
- **Excursions** both in and outside Hanover will establish connections to the political and academic sides of the subject and will give participants a view of political fields of action and current areas of research.
- Interesting **extracurricular activities** will round out the program. These activities include a multilingual tour of Hanover which will bring participants closer to the history and present day in the capital of Lower Saxony, an optional excursion into the region surrounding Hanover and a selection of cultural events in the evenings.

Participants and Admission

The summer academy *Minorities in Eastern Europe from the 19th to the 21st Centuries* is directed at PhD students and those in the advanced stages of a master's program.

Candidates will be chosen according to a multilevel selection process. Eligible applicants are PhD students who are carrying out a research project in the same subject area covered by the summer academy. Students in the advanced stages of a master's program, who are at least in their second semester, are also eligible. All participants should have at least an undergraduate degree by the beginning of the summer academy. Ideally, participants will have a degree in the relevant subject areas (historical science, political science) or in a related area (international relations, sociology, social psychology, law). Graduates of other study programs will not necessarily be excluded from participation.

We hope to form an international and interdisciplinary group of approximately 35 qualified participants.

Selection Process

Applications must be submitted to the contact person named below by **15 May 2009**. Along with the completed **application form**, you must submit all required documents: a **letter of application**, a **CV**, a strong **letter of recommendation** from a university teacher and proof of your **skills in German or English** (DSH or TOEFL).

The **letter of application** (max. 500 characters-- see item 4 of the application form) should provide information on why you are interested in participating in the summer academy. Furthermore, it should reveal your willingness to become involved with both the subject of minorities and human rights within the framework of an interdisciplinary approach and, if necessary, to reflect upon previous knowledge and experience from a critical distance.

The **CV** (one page DIN A4 or standard German paper size, with photo) will provide information about your undergraduate studies (subject, main focus, marks) as well as any other qualifications which might be advantageous for the summer academy (stay abroad, intercultural experience, language courses, etc.).

The **letter of recommendation** from a university teacher should, along with your academic qualifications (study subjects and results, research interests), also give some information about your language skills.

Certificates from your university (or a DSH or TOEFL certificate) must be submitted as proof of your sound knowledge of at least one of the languages of instruction. Your language skills must be sufficient for you to take an active part in all discussions. The selection committee reserves the right to refuse applicants whose language skills are inadequate.

The selection will take place by committee at Leibniz Universität Hannover. This committee will make its final decision based on the above criteria by **16 June 2009**. Successful applicants will be contacted by email and their names will appear on the list of participants on the summer academy's **internet platform**.

Participants are expected to **prepare** intensively for the summer academy. Preparation includes **reading** the texts in the reader and writing a 4 - 6 page **essay**. In this essay, participants should reflect on one aspect of the subject of this year's summer academy. Essays are to be written in one of the languages of instruction (German or English) and will serve as preparation for the obligatory oral presentation expected from each participant.

Overview: Official Requirements for All Participants

- a BA at least in a relevant subject area (at the time of participation), MA program in the second semester or above, PhD program
- language skills (English and/or German, TOEFL/DSH)
- application letter including a description of your own expectations and research questions
- letter of reference from a university teacher
- application form with CV

Final Evaluation

Nine ECTS points will be awarded for the successful completion of the summer academy. Your participation will also be recognized in a **certificate** which will be added to your transcript of records. Successful completion of the course will be based on regular attendance (as shown in an attendance list) as well as the inclusion of at least one presentation in the workshop and its publication on the summer academy homepage.

Additional Information

The fee for the course is €100.00. This fee will be reimbursed upon completion of the summer academy. Travel expenses will be reimbursed on request according to the country allowances of the DAAD. Free accommodation has already been arranged (a single room in student housing with a free internet connection). You can obtain an inexpensive health insurance policy through the DAAD.

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Contact

Prof. Dr. Malte Rolf
Leibniz Universität Hannover
Historisches Seminar
Im Moore 21
30167 Hannover
Germany

Tel.: 49+(0)511-762-4201 (Sekretariat)
Fax: 49+(0)511-762-3128
Malte.Rolf@hist.uni-hannover.de

Dr. Sören Philipps
Leibniz Universität Hannover
European Studies
Im Moore 11a
30167 Hannover
Germany

Tel. +49 (0)511 762 19164
Fax +49 (0)511 762 19185
s.philipps@ipw.uni-hannover.de