

# The CRCE Newsletter

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## News

Published July 4: *European Rule of Law in Danger* a web-paper by the IEA by Ljubo Sirc, [http://www.iea.org.uk/record.jsp?type=bo ok&ID=415](http://www.iea.org.uk/record.jsp?type=book&ID=415)

## CRCE Meetings

Luke March, Senior Lecturer in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics at Edinburgh University, gave a fascinating talk on *Political Opposition, Youth and the Future of Democracy in Russia*.

Estonian MP, Igor Gräzin, spoke at the CRCE in early June on the subject of *Estonia and Russia Today*. Philip Hanson was Chairman. See over excerpts.

The Centre's latest talk, *An Outsider Inside Kosovo's Government* was held under Chatham House Rule. The speaker advises Kosovo's Prime Minister. James Pettifer was in the Chair. His wide knowledge, and that of experts in the audience contributed to a highly informed discussion.

## Publications

Two new Briefing Papers available:

*Western Broadcasting in the Cold War and After* by Elisabeth Robson, former head, BBC Russian service & *Political Opposition, Youth and The Future of Democracy in Russia* by Luke March.

The June issue of *Post-Communist Economies* is out. Contact the CRCE or: [www.tandf.co.uk/journals](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals)

## External Meetings

Ian Redding represented the CRCE at a CIVITAS discussion on 'What prospects for a liberalised Europe?' Speaker Syed Kamall, MEP for London, gave little reason for optimism.

On 31 May, Lisl Biggs-Davison met up with John O'Sullivan again at a CPS lunch to launch his book: *The President, the Pope, and the Prime Minister: three who changed the world*, Regnery, £14.99

From Charles Moore's review, *Sunday Telegraph*, 20.06.07: "All three leaders rejected decline. 'Be not afraid' was the text of Pope John Paul II's first homily, and by the time Reagan left office in 1989 the West had recovered prosperity and confidence. When Mrs Thatcher left Downing Street in 1990 we had won the Cold War. John O'Sullivan eloquently reminds us that the Pope, President and Prime Minister were highly un-orthodox. The prevailing doctrine in the Western elites was of containing the Soviets, of balancing power, not a victory for either side. As early as 1977, Reagan confided to an adviser 'my theory of the Cold War is that we win and they lose'. This was such a naughty thought at the time that it could hardly be said in public. For saying something similar, Mrs Thatcher had been dubbed the Iron Lady by the Red Army

newspaper. In the era of detente, this was intended as an insult but she turned it to her advantage. In the case of the Pope, the Soviets could see the threat that he posed so clearly that they tried, through proxies, to assassinate him.

### **Estonia & Russia Today**

Extracts from Igor Grazin's talk:

Inter-ethnic issues are fundamentally not problematic in Estonia, and have not been for centuries. As an ethnic Russian myself I am more than content to live in Estonia. The human rights complaints come down to one issue: prison conditions. This is improving, but not fast enough. This is not an inter-ethnic issue at all.

The Bronze soldier, officially dedicated to the Soviet liberators in 1944 is famous worldwide. Until recently the statue was in central Tallinn. In 1949, capitals of the Soviet Republics were forced to erect such monuments as part of a propaganda campaign. The Soviet army was seen by many as an occupier rather than a liberator, and was much crueler than the regime it replaced. In 2002, when Putin started to change the Russian regime, the previously unknown soldier became a symbol for young Russian fascists, neo-political groups and teachers with their classes started paying respects at the site.

9<sup>th</sup> May is Russia's Victory Day, and this was likely to be a fuse for trouble. The statue has been moved to the Estonian National Military Memorial, which has thousands of war graves from many different armies. The position of the Soviet monument was well designed. A crowd, including hooligans, turned up to watch the removal. The hooligans attacked the Estonian police, which acted extremely professionally. The press reports were exaggerated; the events were worse

than Estonia is used to, but were by no means a riot.

The Estonian Government's response to the events was prompt and efficient. A delegation from the Duma responded with an unrealistic precondition to talks on the issue of the statue; the immediate resignation of the Estonian Government. It was clear that the behaviour of the Russians was influenced by the forthcoming elections. This is no way to negotiate with a partner you consider seriously. A very important issue for the Russian delegation was whether or not the statue was cut during relocation.

One looter was killed during the disturbance. He was buried in Estonia under the Russian flag, and his mother requested that the Russian Federation did not use the event for political gain. The Russian response against Estonia was most improper.

The event demonstrated to Estonia that the EU would fulfil its obligations, and support a member state. It acted quickly, as did NATO, presenting an extremely strong protest against Russia's actions. This has a practical economic result; the Estonian population has been rather eurosceptic, but now is grateful. There is the fear that Russia's ambition is to make a special deal with Germany, and divide Europe, in the long-run increasing energy insecurity. Estonia is considering changing its maritime borders to protect itself from undesirable energy projects, and now may have to consider the opinions and interests of the partners that have proved so supportive recently.

**Note: the author's views are his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the CRCE.**