Final Report

INTAS GRANT AGREEMENT

INTAS Strategic Workshop Nr. 04-86-946

Community Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Era

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1   Background and objectives

This is the final report on the results of the strategic workshop 'Community Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Era' that was supported by the INTAS programme under grant 04-94-846.

The objective of the strategic workshop, as laid down in the proposal, was to bring together EU and NIS scholars to learn and discuss about community conflicts in the post-Soviet era. The NIS scholars attending the workshop were recruited through an open call for papers; the EU scholars were members of the PEACE-COM consortium working on a 6FP project on community conflicts in the EU and neighbouring regions.

In this final report we describe how the workshop was organized and how participants were selected; subsequently we report on the findings of the workshop. The dissemination chapter provides information about how we expect to exploit the workshop outputs and finally the management chapter outlines the workshop expenditures.

The papers presented at the workshop as well as the latter's agenda can be read / downloaded at:
http://www.iccr-international.org/events/intas.html

2   Approach and Results

2.1   Workshop organization and evaluation procedures

The workshop took place in Lefkosia, Cyprus at the beginning of June 2005. It was organized in the framework of the PEACE-COM meeting on 'Peace processes in community conflicts'.

The workshop organization was launched in February 2005 with a call for papers inviting papers :

> that deal with community conflicts in Russia, the NIS as well as Romania and Bulgaria – as case studies or from the comparative perspective. Particular attention should be given to the following issues: the historical background; the dimensions of the conflict as presented in distinct narratives by different actors – paying attention on whether and how the conflict is constructed in terms of a 'contested territory', political power sharing or representation, population politics, identity, security, ancient hatreds, and socio-economic differentials; the role of different actors – such as political elites, religious institutions, the media, neighbouring states and the diaspora; peace or accommodation policies and the role of international actors such as the EU or the UN.

The call also invited for papers dealing more generally with the theory and practice of research on community conflicts, ethnicity and nationalism in the NIS and how this developed over the years.

Interested applicants were asked to submit an abstract of 1,500 words. The deadline for submission of abstracts was the 15th March.

The call for papers was distributed through the INTAS Secretariat, the distribution list of the 'Nationalism, National Identity and Ethnicity' project / summer school of the St. Petersburg State University, the PEACE-COM project and partners and the mailing lists of various European and national sociological / political science associations. It was also made available on the Web both of the ICCR and INTAS.

A total of 44 abstracts were received. These were evaluated by a panel of five evaluators :

- Liana Giorgi, scientific person in charge of the strategic workshop
- Elise Feron, coordinator of the PEACE-COM project
- Andrei Rezaev, Professor at the St. Petersburg State University and project coordinator of 'Nationalism and Ethnicity' project / summer school;
- Ronald Pohoryles; director of research at ICCR
- Alessia Bursi, Scientific officer for social sciences at DG-Research.
- Gulnara Roll, Scientific officer for economics, social and human sciences at INTAS

The evaluation criteria were as follows:

1. Theoretical and methodological approach
- Does the paper define the research question and design clearly and is this sufficiently justified with reference to theory and methods?
- Is the abstract 'promising', i.e. does it promise to result in a good paper?
- In this connection, please also consider the comprehensibility of the abstract. Please show understanding to the fact that practically none of the applicants is a native English-speaker, nevertheless comprehensibility is an issue.

2. Background knowledge and positioning
- Does the author display knowledge of the key / background issues relevant to the topic addressed?
- Does the author display a balanced view of the topic addressed (i.e. does the paper promise to be scientifically robust as opposed to ideologically-tainted?)

With regard to the grading of the papers, evaluators were instructed to give each abstract a mark from 0 to 5 as follows and globally, i.e. not for each evaluation criterion separately.

0: out of scope
1: outstanding
2: excellent, very good
3: standard good application, should be invited if numbers allow
4: not convincing
5: poor

Additionally, evaluators were asked to justify the mark in five to ten lines.

The application of this evaluation procedure led to the selection of 14 papers for presentation. Selected participants were notified by the middle of April and asked to submit their full paper by the middle of May.

The remaining of the time was devoted to making travel and accommodation arrangements for all participants, including instructing them on issues such as visa requirements. The travel was in most cases directly organized and paid by the ICCR so that participants had only to pick up their ticket. Only in a few cases and only after they had requested it themselves, were participants allowed to make their own travel arrangements. In the latter case they were reimbursed in cash during the conference. Accommodation arrangements were also made and paid directly by the ICCR.

2.2   Agenda

The papers were presented during one full day on the 1st of June. There followed the PEACE-COM project meeting on the 2nd and 3rd of June to which NIS participants participated. The meetings of the first and second day took place at the University of Cyprus, in Lefkosia. The third day meeting was combined with an excursion to the North of Cyprus where participants had the opportunity to visit the EMU University and also the ancient city of Famagusta.

The first day meeting was organized in four sessions as follows (see also: http://www.iccr-international.org/events/intas.html)

Session 1 dealt with cross-cutting or generic issues impacting on contemporary community conflicts and included three papers:

- *Nikolay Trofimov*. Ethnic Dimension of Conflict Studies and the Conception of the Historical

- *Boris E. Wiener*. Explaining the Choice of Religious Denomination

- *Aleksei Medvetsky*. Shaping Social Imagination in the Post-Soviet Belarus

The second session dealt with community conflicts in Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine and Poland:

- *Maria Bakalova*. Politics of Ethnic and Nationalist Confrontation in Retreat in the Bulgarian Transition: The Violent Ethnic Conflict that did Not Take Place

- *Natalia Cojocaru*. Identity and Nationalism in Transnistria

- *Georgyi Kasianov*. Burden of Past: The Ukrainian-Polish Conflict of 1943-1944 in Contemporary Public, Academic and Political Debate in Ukraine and Poland.

- *Sergiy V. Kurbatov*. Repatriation as a Source of Community Conflicts; The Case of Crimean Tatars in Ukraine

- *Ksenia Viktorova*. Identity Conflict in the Roumean Community: The Elite vs. the Public

The third session addressed community conflicts in Caucasus and Central Asia:

- *Nana Sumbadze and George Tarkhan-Mouravi*. Abkhazian-Georgian Conflict and Internally Displaced Persons.

- *Alexandur Balas*. The Effectiveness of Third Party Intervention into the Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict

- *Anahit Mkrtchyan*. Tolerance and Regional Peace Building; Comparative Analysis of Survey Results in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan

- *Juldyz Smagulova*. Language, Identity and Conflict in Kazakhstan

Finally, the fourth session looked at community conflicts in Russia and Ukraine:

- *Alla Yazkova*. Russia and its Minorities: An Outlook of Existing and Potential Ethno-Political Conflicts

- *Alexander Davydov and Galina Mijajlova*. The Nenets People and Oil; Community Conflicts on the Island of Kolguev in the Post-Soviet Era

Discussants to the papers were assigned per session: the discussant for the first session was Elise Feron, Liana Giorgi discussed the papers of the second session, Andrei Rezaev was the discussant of the third session papers and Ronald Pohoryles discussed the papers of the fourth session.

2.3   Results

2.3.1   Cross-cutting issues impacting on contemporary community conflicts

Three generic issues impacting on contemporary community conflicts were addressed by the presentations of the first workshop session: the historical dimension of ethnic conflicts; the role of religion and the function of social imagination.

Nikolay Trofimov argued that ethnic conflicts in the NIS today cannot be adequately understood without considering historical developments. However, it is important in this respect to make a distinction 'between history as a collective memory and multitude of perceptions' and history as an objective process. The distinction is clearly not easy to make, especially from the parties involved in a conflict. This is because history is often used (or abused) as an intermediary between culture and ideology. Subsequently, democratic societies must aim at 'cultivating national and social strata resistant to ethnic intolerance and equipped with unbiased historical notions and symbols, basic civil rights and solidarity'. The social sciences have a key role to play in this respect, yet often fail by reason of their own ideological underpinnings in the discourse on the nation-state. In the NIS this problem is all the more complex considering that nation-state building processes were both interrupted and supported in variable ways under the previous Soviet regime.

Under the Soviet era, religious identification and practice was officially suppressed. Following the fall of the Iron Curtain, religion has again began to revive and this often stands in close relation to the revival of ethnic or cultural identity. In his contribution, *Boris Wiener* examined these processes from the individual social-psychological perspective by focusing on conversions, including those non-characteristic or congruent with ethnic forms of belonging. Wiener's research shows that there are four types of 'believers' according to their involvement in religious conversions: 'traditionalists' include believers who have their ancestors' religious faith, have never belonged to any other religion, and have never been agnostics; 'repentants' are persons who have not confessed to any religion in the past, but now belong to a denomination of their ancestors; 'apostates' are people who have been adherents of their ancestors' religion in the past, but who have later switched to another religion; finally 'neophytes' have not belonged to any religious faith in the past, but have joined denominations non-specific for their ancestors over time. Conversions, Wiener argued, are often part of an individual assimilation

strategy in view of changing socio-cultural but also societal-structural conditions.

Aleskei Medvetsky looked at the way in which in contemporary Belarus, the state government is attempting to create top-down a Belarussian national consciousness through educational material as well as the media. Social and political scientists and, more generally, the intelligentsia corroborate with the state in 'imagining' (following Benedict Anderson) this national ideology. Special institutions have been set up to support this process. This is the case, for example, of the Academy of Management that lies under the direct control of the Belarus president. This national consciousness project which presents itself as 'patriotic' promotes the Russian rather than the Belarussian language and constructs a specific historical past for Belarus centring around the war of 1941-45.

2.3.2   Community conflicts in Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine and Poland

The five papers presented during the second session looked into the community conflicts affecting Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine.[1]

Maria Bakalova's paper dealt with the situation of the Bulgarian Turks and explained why and how it was possible during the transition process and shortly afterwards to avoid an escalation of this conflict. Turks in Bulgaria were forced to change their names in 1984-85 and following peaceful protests in 1989, shortly before the transition, issued with passports for leaving the country. The exodus stopped following the removal from power of the communist leader Zhivkov and the 'name change' policy was reversed shortly thereafter. There are different reasons for this. One was the fact that the Turkish minority could successfully mobilize and organize peaceful protests. Moreover, the call of civil rights of / for the Turkish minority coincided with the more general call for a transition to democracy by the opposition: 'The unambiguous renouncement of the previous policies was an adequate legitimating strategy for the new-old Party leadership and helped it to better differentiate itself from the pre-1989 regime (…) Secondly, this complete turn was meant to deprive the then emerging opposition of the opportunity to get advantage of the 'Turkish issue' and mobilize political support on that basis'. This change of policy led to a nationalist backlash among Bulgarian nationalists. This was managed through the establishment of a national council involving all parties, including those of the opposition, thus marking the transition of Bulgaria to democracy.

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[1] For lack of time, the paper of Ksenia Viktorova, even if relating thematically to this section, was dealt with during the last session.

Natalia Cojocaru talked about the conflict surrounding Transnistria in Moldova. In response to Moldova's declaration of sovereignty in 1990, and opposing the breakdown of strategic alliance with Russia, Transnistria declared its own independence. There followed a short armed conflict in the Spring of 1992. Negotiations have since been underway for the resolution of the conflict, however the two opposing sides have conflicting views as to the status of Transnistria. Transnistria favours a loose confederation model; Moldova accepts only that Transnistria is granted regional autonomy. For this reason, the Transnistria conflict is best described as a 'frozen' conflict. In her presentation, Natalia Cojocaru explored the evolution of self-perceptions with regard to national and ethnic identity among Transnistrians.

Georgy Kassianov's presentation dealt with the debate in the Ukraine and Poland regarding the Ukrainian-Polish conflict of 1943-44 in the Volyhnia-Polissia-Galicia region of the Ukraine. This region was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1939, occupied by Nazi Germany in 1941 and reclaimed again by the Soviets in 1944. The area of Volyhnia-Galicia has been multi-ethnic for centuries: Ukrainians have been the numerical majority; the Poles were the minority but represented the nobility. During World War II, there was a tendency among the Polish nobility to collude with the Nazis in further repressing the Ukrainian majority. In 1943-44 and in anticipation of the end of the war, there was a violent escalation of the conflict, culminating in massacres during which around 100,000 people were killed on both sides. Since the onset of transition there have been attempts by both sides to 'settle' this conflict of collective memory. In 2003 Poland and Ukraine sought to commemorate together the events, however this gave rise to a heated debate on both sides, showing that the memory of these events is still quite different and forgiveness has far from been achieved. This is despite the set up of historical commissions on both sides to analyze the events in an 'objective' fashion.

The fourth paper in this session, namely that of *Sergiy Kurbatov*, dealt with the emerging conflict in Ukraine of the Crimean Tatars. The Crimean Tatars were deported from Crimea in 1944 following the end of the Second World War (among else for collaborating with the Nazi regime). In 1989 and under the influence of perestroika of Gorbachev the Soviet Union recalled the relevant Stalin decree and, subsequently, Crimean Tatars have been returning to Crimea. Their return in today's Ukraine has been the source of various conflicts regarding land property as well as political representation.

Finally, *Ksenia Viktorova* discussed another smaller-scale community conflict in Ukraine, namely that of Roumeans, living in Priazovye. Unlike the conflict regarding the Crimean Tatars, the conflict of the

Roumeans is more internal and relates to the divisions between the elite and the members of the community. The elites seek a closer link with Greece while at the same time maintaining loyalty to Ukraine. Members of the community, however, oppose loyalty to Greece by reason of the discrimination vis-à-vis Roumeans and the Roumean Greek dialect in Greece itself.

2.3.3   Community conflicts in Caucasus and Central Asia

The presentations in this session addressed the Abkhazian-Georgia conflict, the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict, and the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. The last presentation looked at contemporary language policy in Kazakhstan which is a multi-ethnic country with Russian still being the dominant language.

Nana Sumbadze presented a paper written by herself and *George Tarhan-Mouravi*. Abkhazia is one of two regions in Georgia where there are ethno-territorial conflicts (the second one being South Ossetia). The conflict in this region escalated into violent confrontations during the transition period in the late eighties / early nineties, and this resulted in the massive exodus of ethnic Georgians from the region. Today Abkhazia is ethnically more homogenous, albeit at the price of numerous refugees or displaced persons at its borders. Georgia is calling for the return of the refugees and for the re-integration of Abkhazia into the Georgian state. The Abkhazian political elite is however only willing to accept a political settlement based on a confederation model and does not wish to see all refugees returning. Abkhazian citizens enjoy support from Russia and this includes access to Russian passports.

The situation in South Ossetia is not very different except that here refugees went to North Ossetia and obtained Russian citizenship and thus no longer live in Georgia. *Alexandru Balas* talked about this region in his presentation focusing especially on the effectiveness of third party intervention in the conflict (such as of Russia, OSCE and UN). He argued that third parties have been completely ineffective in resolving this conflict in a sustainable way. They have only been successful in achieving de-escalation and avoiding the eruption of violence. In part the reasons for this failure are procedural and relate to the lack of coordination or agreement among the intervening parties. The main reason for failing to find a solution to the conflict is nevertheless that the views of the conflicting parties (and their allies) are quite contradictory and none of the parties involved is, as of yet, interested in a compromise. As in the case of Abkhazia, Russia has a major role to play in this conflict by following its specific geo-political interests.

An equally difficult problem is that between Armenia and Azerbaijan. *Anahit Mkrtchyan* reported on the results of an attitudinal survey carried out in the two countries as well as in Georgia in 2004 which show that the levels of mistrust remain high and intolerance still dominates.

Finally, *Juldyz Smagulova*, in the last presentation in this session, gave an overview of the development of language policy in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic country and Kazakh is still a minority language as a result of the diffusion of Russian during the Soviet time. However, not least as a result of friendly relations between Kazakhstan and Russia, the language problem did not evolve into a conflictual one. Instead, the Kazakhstan government is following a bilingual policy: 'the fact that Kazakhstan was historically and actually a bilingual and multiethnic country along with necessity to maintain good relations with Russia and retain the loyalty of the ethnic Russians and other minorities living in Kazakhstan, encouraged the acceptance of bilingual ideology. Moreover, bilingual ideology was motivated by the need to comply with European linguistic rights requirements to be perceived as a democratic state by international organizations and by the western countries'. However, civil servants and indeed political positions are increasingly only open to those speaking Kazakh.

2.3.4   Community conflicts in Russia

The last two papers of the workshop dealt with community conflicts in Russia.

Alla Yazkova gave a comprehensive overview of all community conflicts facing Russia today. Russia remains a multi-ethnic country where regional / administrative divisions do not always coincide with ethnicity (not least as a result of Stalin's policies of forced migration) and where the degree of regional autonomy is not always acceptable to the populations on both political and ethno-cultural grounds. According to Yazkova, the national minorities in the Russian Federation can be divided in two groups: first, there are those minorities that have a territorial autonomy (in form of a national republic or an autonomous region); second there are minorities deprived of territorial autonomy. Community conflicts are breeding or explicit – often in violent form – in Sakha-Yakutia, Tuva, Tatarstan, Chechnya as well as Ingushetiya and North Ossetia. Even though the Russian Federation has been successful in avoiding civil war in many of these regions, the problems are far than resolved in most and, according to Yazkova, cannot be resolved without social and economic support in addition to cultural recognition.

Finally, *Alexander Davydov* presented the conflict surrounding the Nenets people at the island of Kolguev. Davydov reported on research carried out by himself and his colleague *Galina Mihajlova*. This a rather different type of conflict than the previous ones concerning a small indigenous group of people facing extinction by reason of the use of their territory by the oil industry. This is a situation faced also by other Arctic regions of Russia.

2.3.5   Conclusions

The papers presented at the INTAS strategic seminar on 'Community Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Era' provide a unique overview of the situation in the NIS in this respect.

Seen from a comparative and analytical perspective, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Community conflicts in the NIS are numerous and diverse. The dominant form is that of community conflicts involving contested areas as well as ethno-political recognition. Those in Russia involve at the same time a centre-periphery component; in contrast those in the NIS entail a rather dangerous geo-political dimension with Russia playing an ambivalent role. However, newly formed NIS states are equally difficult partners with regard to the resolution of these conflicts, not least by reason of their weak democratic status.

The community conflicts found in the NIS are not significantly different from those existent in Europe. Indeed there are many similarities between community conflicts in the NIS and European community conflicts such as those in Cyprus, the Basque country or former Yugoslavia. This speaks in favour of furthering comparative research in this field, but also comparative policy analysis for the benefit of international organizations like the UN or the EU intervening to resolve these conflicts.

However, what renders the community conflicts in the NIS distinct and more dangerous than those in the EU with regard to violent escalation is the overall low level of socio-economic development in the region coupled with extensive political corruption and indeed, in the latter respect, the absence of solid democratic institutions.

3   Dissemination

The quality of the contributions made to the INTAS strategic workshop 'Community conflicts in the post-Soviet era' has encouraged us to embark on a publication project. We plan an edited book dealing with this subject (edited by Liana Giorgi, Niki Rodousakis and Ronald Pohoryles). The proposal was welcomed by the Austrian Passagen Verlag (see www.passagen.at) and currently a contract is under negotiation.

The edited volume will include the revised and edited papers presented at the workshop. The process of revising the papers took place during the summer and followed detailed guidelines. Of the 14 papers presented at the workshop, 12 will be included in the edited volume. Two authors were not able to revise their papers following the guidelines provided.

In addition to the 12 papers from the INTAS workshop, the edited volume will include a synthetic introduction as well as select contributions (3-5) from other participants to the workshop, namely, scholars representing the PEACE-COM consortium and writing about comparable conflicts in the European Union.

The resulting volume will be unique in that it will be the first to provide a comprehensive overview of community conflicts in the NIS and compare these to community conflicts in the EU.

It is expected that the manuscript for the book will be ready during the summer of 2006, thus we hope that the book will appear on the market in the Fall of 2006.

4 Management / Financial Report

The table below displays the expenditures on the INTAS strategic workshop 'Community Conflicts in the post-Soviet era'. As set out in the grant agreement, the funds were used primarily for covering the travel, accommodation, visa, and subsistence expenses of the participants at the workshop. An overhead lump sum of 2000 was charged by the ICCR for organization. An additional 1000 is charged as a contribution to the printing costs for the publication of the book (see section 3) in order to have enough copies for distribution for free to the NIS.[2]

The travel of most participants was arranged and paid directly by the ICCR. Accommodation was likewise arranged and directly paid by the ICCR. The ICCR also paid for the participants the lunch and dinner for the main day of the workshop; for the remaining days participants received daily allowances. Participants were also reimbursed in cash for additional costs such as those concerning visa and transport to and from the airport. The transport to the Northern Cyprus was also directly arranged and paid by ICCR.

The documentation relating to the expenditures (in copy) is attached as separate documentation to this final report.

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[2] A copy of this invoice can only be supplied once the contract has been signed (in March 2006).

			Overview of Expenditures for INTAS Strategic Workshop	
Date	Nr.	Accounting account	Text	Amount in EURO
15.04.2005	5120	3730	Travel Giorgi / Pohoryles	852,66
29.04.2005	5121	3740	Travel Balas	590,02
29.04.2005	5146	3740	Travel Kurbatov	467,34
29.04.2005	5146	3740	Travel Trofimov	231,87
29.04.2005	5146	3740	Travel Yazkova	231,87
12.05.2005	5146	3740	Travel Viktorova	494,61
12.05.2005	5146	3740	Travel Wiener	509,61
12.05.2005	5146	3740	Travel Rezaev	494,67
19.05.2005	5146	3740	Travel Sumbadze	480,83
19.05.2005	5146	3740	Travel Bakalova	640,30
01.06.2005	5303	32025	Local taxis for experts	472,65
01.06.2005	5305	30211	Subsistence Bakalova	200,00
01.06.2005	5306	30212	Subsistence Balas	230,00
01.06.2005	5307	30311	Subsistence Cojocaru	210,00
01.06.2005	5308	30353	Subsistence Davydov	403,00
01.06.2005	5309	31106	Travel / subsistence Kassianov	624,67
01.06.2005	5310	31108	Subsistence Kurbatov	225,00
01.06.2005	5311	31309	Subsistence Miadzvetski	180,00
01.06.2005	5312	31310	Subsistence Mkrtchyan	783,00
01.06.2005	5313	31823	Subsistence Rezaev	236,76
01.06.2005	5314	31916	Travel / Subsistence Smagulova	875,00
01.06.2005	5315	31918	Subsistence Sumbadze	225,00
01.06.2005	5316	32024	Subsistence Trofimov	170,00
01.06.2005	5317	32204	Subsistence Viktorova	170,00
01.06.2005	5318	32305	Subsistence Wiener	170,00
01.06.2005	5319	32381	Subsistence Yazkova	170,00
17.08.2005	5257	3740	Airport taxes on experts' tickets	675,00
02.06.2005	5150	3730	Accommodation participants	9.932,11
01.06.2005	5149	3730	Dinner Participants 01.Juni 2005	572,57
31.01.2005	426	2201	Dinner with Discussants 31.01.2005	70,45
30.01.2005	428	2201	Dinner with Discussants 30.01.2005	59,10
01.06.2005	427	2201	Coffee Break - 01.Juni 2005	101,85
03.06.2005	429	2201	Bus transfer to EMU - 03.Juni 2005	347,04
02.06.2005	430	2201	Coffee Break - 01.-02.Juni 2005	148,53
03.06.2005	431	2201	Insurance	17,35
			Publication / printing costs (Passagen)	1.000,00
			Overhead lump sum: Organization costs	2.000,00
				25.262,86

Enclosures

Copies of invoices / payments