

### Postdoctoral Research

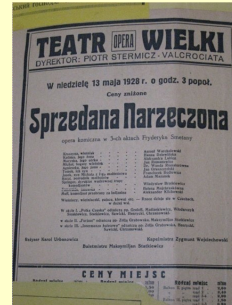
Dr Robert Pyrah is one of seven **Postdoctoral Fellows** appointed by the Centre to develop key research themes: here, 'Cultural Processes in Eastern Europe'. In addition to their research, the Fellows head initiatives to promote cross-disciplinary dialogue. Dr Pyrah's include a Ukrainian Authors' Forum in London (2008), an Oxford conference on Poland's legacies of 1989 (2009), and an international workshop in Ukraine on 'Culture Beyond Nationalism?' (2010, proceedings for publication in 2011).

### Project Summary

This study focuses on the uses and abuses of cultural memory and the role of Arts-based institutions (such as the theatre) in the political construction of identities. It takes as its focus the single urban microcosm of L'viv, now in Ukraine, a city belonging to five different states over the last century (including Nazi occupation and incorporation into the USSR). It examines contrastively L'viv's two post-Imperial flashpoints: (1) Polish rule between 1919-39, following the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy; and (2) the period of Ukrainian independence, 1991-present. The interpretation of ethnic legacies using cultural means is of acute interest in a city like L'viv, where political realities and ethnic hegemonies have shifted radically over the course of a single century.

### Methodology

Cultural history defines the methodology used on this project, which combines the historian's use of archival records and sensitivity to constructed narratives with an Arts-based approach to cultural forms (media, the theatre). Discourse analysis also informs the understanding of discursively constructed identities in the public realm.



### Aims and Objectives

The periods chosen represent case studies in how state governments and local politicians use cultural means (the Arts, media, and narratives of cultural memory) as instruments of identity construction and projection at points of historical rupture. They aim to show: (1) how cultural forms and institutions serve an unstable field for identity construction, taking for instance the interwar Polish theatre, and how its filtering of 'national' concerns through a local lens reflects some of the tensions inherent in the nationalist programme; (2) the use and role of cultural memory, especially after 1991, and how narratives of past 'multiculturalism' are used problematically and selectively to legitimize a monoethnic present.



### Further Research

Dr Pyrah is currently writing up his findings into a monograph, and plans to supplement his research on the cultural policy mechanisms of contemporary L'viv through structured interviews with key local elites in July 2010. He has recently submitted a large collaborative bid to the AHRC on sub-cultural phenomena. This will build on his CEELBAS research by examining aspects of Polish life in contemporary L'viv as part of a wider comparative study.

### Research Outputs

Ed. with Marius Turda, *Recontextualising East-Central European History. Nation, Culture and Minority Groups* (Oxford: Legenda, 2010). ISBN-13: 9781906540876.

'Questions in Urban History: The Case of L'viv, Ukraine', *Antropologicheskii Forum* Vol. 12 (2010)

'Consensus versus Control: The Politics of Culture in Interwar Austria, a Reassessment' in: *Contemporary Austrian Studies* 19 (2011)

Seven essays in: *Discourses Of Collective Identity In Central And Southeast Europe*, Vol. IV: 'Anti-Modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity', ed. by Diana Mishkova and Marius Turda (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010)

*Literature, Criticism and the Theatre in L'viv - Lwów - Lemberg, 1918-1939 and in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2011). ISBN: 3-89821-505-9.

Contributor, *Culture and development 20 years after the Fall of Communism in Europe*, ed. by Jacek Purchla (Kraków, 2010)  
*All the above are confirmed + in press.*



**Pictures (clockwise from top left):** Interwar Polish 'Great Theatre' poster; L'viv Opera House (2007); selective street renaming in the designated old 'Jewish quarter' of contemporary L'viv (2009); gala performance of Ivan Franko's *Moses* (2010). All taken by the researcher.

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