

## Russian Politics from Below

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**Dr David White** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/staff/profiles.aspx?Referenceld=4533>) attended a conference in Edinburgh at the end of April organised under the auspices of UACES. Speakers at the conference came from the UK and Russia.

In the post-Soviet era, a great deal of attention has understandably been paid to the study of formal and institutional politics in Russia, particularly at federal level. Scholars have rigorously analysed the country's evolving constitutional framework, the expanding power of Yeltsin's and Putin's presidencies, the composition of party politics, and the level of control exerted by the regime over the media. Of course, a vast range of 'bottom-up' social movements have also been studied. The aim of this conference, however, was to shift emphasis towards a bottom-up approach in order to examine the complex interactions between social movements, organisations, opinion, and activism on the one hand, and the incumbent regime on the other.

David White presented a paper, 'The Moscow Protests: the Challenge of Mobilisation and the Political-Civil Society Nexus' which focused on the relationship between political actors (primarily from the opposition movement, Solidarity and the Party of People's Freedom (PARNAS) and civil society actors.

The picture shows David attired in a 'Pussy Riot' balaclava together with Olga Nikolaeva, an activist from the French-based organization, Russie Libertés (also in balaclava) and Luke March, formerly of CREES and now Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Edinburgh. As many participants at the conference noted, Luke does bear more than a passing resemblance to the leading Russian political opposition leader and anti-corruption blogger, Aleksei Naavalny!



### More information

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