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Nipa Ghosh, Summer School in Prague on the subject of Crime, Law and Psychology, Prague, (July 2013)

Course: MSc Russian and Eastern European Studies.

Event: Summer School in Prague on the subject of Crime, Law and Psychology, Prague, July 2013.

I recently took part in a Summer School in Prague on the subject of Crime, Law and Psychology. The location of Prague; a historic mediaeval city with a socialist past which had undergone a 'velvet revolution' for me proved an interesting polemic. Although there had been a tour of iconically Bohemian landmarks such as 'Charles Bridge' and 'Prague Castle', the visit could not be completed without visiting 'The Franz Kafka Museum', who one could argue, fundamentally influenced theories on existentialism and whose work also alluded greatly to the human condition; why humans behave the way they do and how society reacts to this.

Although primarily the course had been about Crime, Law and Psychology, seminars had been hosted by a range of NGOs; these included 'The Rubikon Centrum' (an NGO pushing for Penal Reform in the Czech Republic); 'Proxima Soziale' (an organisation facilitating for the integration of socially excluded youths) and the 'People in Need Foundation', a Czech based NGO working to bring about 'Social Integration', 'Human Rights', 'Education' and 'Humanitarian Aid'. What was interesting about this latter NGO was that it had emerged as a result of the 'Velvet Revolution' of the Czech Republic. Its pretext is forwarding democratisation of countries which are themselves facing political transition as well as the fundamental freedoms of individuals who are not permitted a voice in their country.

Academicians had conducted seminars on a variety of subject areas, mirroring their specialisms such as, 'Autobiographical Memories and Memory Distortions', 'Criminal Procedure, Evidence and Proof' and 'The abilities of Child Witnesses, Older Adults and the Mentally Impaired to Provide Evidence and Mediums of Facilitating Evidence'. The course had been incredibly systematic and having been a law student before, I appreciated greatly that I had been somewhat myopic in my understanding of psychology and how this would relate to crime and law.

The summer school engendered a systematic learning of a topic that is not taught traditionally as part of the syllabus of a law degree. Undergraduates, post-graduates and doctoral candidates from all over the world from various disciplines, cultivated an abundance of ideas, discourse and learning styles which would not have been obtainable in any other setting. Given that I would like to work within Research, the Summer School has equipped with the ability to work within a different academic setting and the programme has permitted me to establish contacts with specialists of associated fields.

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