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newsletter

2012–2013

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NOVEMBER 2012 – JUNE 2013



Institutional Impetus: CAS Permanent Fellow

The Centre for Advanced Study Sofia is delighted to welcome Dr Roumen Avramov, a renowned Bulgarian economist, economic historian, and a long-standing friend of CAS, who joined our staff in January 2013 as CAS Permanent Fellow.

R. Avramov is a former CAS Fellow who participated in the Sofia Academic NEXUS Project, 'How to Think about the Balkans: Culture, Region, Identities' (2005), and the Advanced Academia Programme (2013). He has a long research experience in the fields of economic history, economic culture, monetary economics and central banking. During his career he has held the positions of Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Economics of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, Economic Advisor to Bulgarian President Jelyu Jeleu, Deputy Director of the Agency for Economic Coordination and Development of the Bulgarian Government, and Member of the Board of Governors of the Bulgarian National Bank. Before joining CAS he served for many years as Programme Director at the Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia. Since 2004, Dr Avramov, together with Dr Martin Ivanov, has been the convener of the Seminar *Bulgarian Economic and Social History: the Future through the Culture of the Past*, organized at the Red House, Centre for Culture and Debate, Sofia. Amongst his best known historical publications are *The 20th Century Bulgarian Economy* (2001); the three-volume *Communal Capitalism. Reflections on the Bulgarian Economic Past* (2007); *Money and De/Stabilization in Bulgaria, 1948–1989* (2008); and *'Salvation' and Abjection. Microeconomics of State Anti-Semitism in Bulgaria 1940–1944* (2012). He is the editor of the five-volume series *Bulgarian National Bank. Selected Documents, 1879–1990* (1999–2009), as well as of the selected works of the eminent inter-war Bulgarian economists *Stoyan Bochev* (1881–1968) and *Asen Christophoroff* (1910–1970).

As CAS Permanent Fellow, Roumen Avramov will support the scientific and institutional activities of the Centre, contribute to the design of its scientific curriculum, and initiate and coordinate research projects.





Our Interview with Roumen Avramov, CAS Permanent Fellow

What inspired the transformation of the economist Roumen Avramov into the historian Roumen Avramov?

Roumen Avramov: These are not two different hypostases, but it has been rather a movement over the years to the point of intersection between two disciplines. The movement was gradual, prompted from one side by my long-standing personal interest in history. However, the adoption of the past as a professional field was also the result of a reconsideration of the nature of the economic problems

which Bulgaria has been confronted with since the early years of the Transition. As it emerged, numerous and essential issues may find their correct formulation from a perspective where the *long durée* does matter, and where the legacies in the economic behaviour, in the thinking about the economy and in the hierarchy of values are of importance. After years of studying economic life with the positivist instruments applied to large-scale statistical databases, I progressively embraced a standpoint whose target became the less tangible 'economic culture', while

archival documents turned into its major raw material. There have been other economists too who have embarked on a similar journey. The 'new institutionalism' for example has been trying for years to bypass the narrow axiomatic frame of neoclassical economics.

Your historical research bears the charge of non-traditionalism and frequently challenges the canonical narrative in Bulgarian history. What is the generator behind your unconventional reading of established historical texts?

R.A.: Non-traditional results may frequently be the consequence of the adoption of more varied points of view, of broader spatial and temporal frameworks. Pressing economic problems and decisions change their outlook if the specifics and development of particular institutions are taken into account; if the interests and ideological paradigms of the 'elites' are considered; if the intricate and subtle aspects of the external economic conditionality are acknowledged. The picture may be significantly altered if we cease to consider it as a unique concurrence of circumstances, but instead place them in the context of a long-term cyclic economic development, where periods of growth and sharp convulsions recur. A further enriching dimension is provided by the comparative perspective. It helps us realize the similarities in patterns which, due to our traditionally nation-centered vision, are perceived as exceptional.

How does Bulgarian history unfold through the eyes of an economist? What new and unexpected sides do we learn about our past?

R.A.: Inertia is strong in economic life. Hence the value-added in the economist's perspective is its particular sensitivity to continuity. In his/her eyes Bulgaria's history ceases to be fragmentized by those most visible political events which draw the traditional periodization. What come to the fore are the legacies which associate even overtly antagonistic pe-

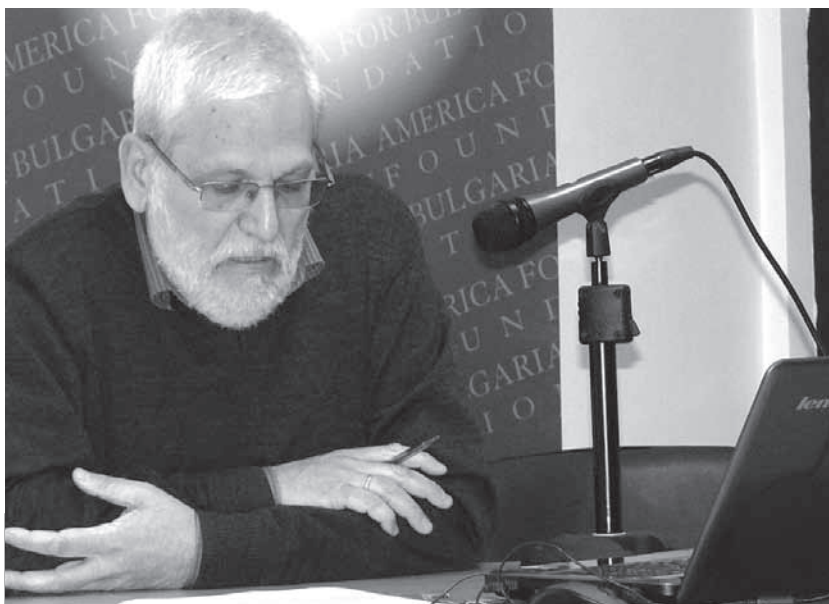
riods. Thus, for example, the 1930s and the post-World War II years evolve as a continuum marked by similar trends: *étatisation* of the financial and overall economic system; mounting government control in economic life; spreading of the 'automatic lending' which leads to inflation ... Communism took over as the ground was ripe, further hypertrophying existent or incipient practices. Continuity can be observed in the early 1990s too. It was only the financial collapse of 1996–1997 that charted the start of a deep systemic change. Until then the Bulgarian economy displayed many essential traits proper to late Communism, such as a promiscuity of the official (state) sector and the (informal) market, a lack of strict regulation of the spontaneously mushrooming markets, a pervasive financial 'black hole' generated by the state which permanently engendered unmanageable imbalances...

Yet there is also continuity in the micro- and macro-behaviour, which I refer to as *communality*. The label summarizes the systematic preference for collectivistic and redistributive decisions/solutions and the generalized antipathy to competitive capitalism prevailing ever since the formation of the new Bulgarian state in the late nineteenth century. The liberal principles have always been marginal in the country and this has its economic reasons. One explanation is to be sought in the chronic deficit of capital which demanded constant state intervention

to have its accumulation secured (namely through foreign loans) and distributed. Bulgaria never truly experienced the 'liberal nineteenth century' of the West; her economic development was *a priori* conceived as a catching-up trajectory whose economic priorities were subject to state design and protection. My narrative of Bulgaria's economic history follows the multifaceted manifestations of this dominant characteristic: in the evolution of the Bank of issue (the Bulgarian national bank); in the structure and flows of the banking system; in the obsessing presence of collectivistic economic structures like the cooperatives; in the intimate practices of private entrepreneurship and banking; in the interaction with the global economy or in the preferences of the politicians and the conceptual sympathies of the academic establishment.

How then can we interpret Bulgaria's contemporary economic development from the perspective of a historian? Are there any particularly stable or recurring tendencies in the social structure that breed continuity (or perhaps, continuities) in the country's economic history in the pre-1944 and post-1989 period? Have you established any factors that would explore Bulgaria's difficult transition to a market-economy society in the twenty-first century?

My primary motivation to turn to history in the mid-1990s came precisely from the difficulties I faced in understanding





through the economist's analytical tools why the rebirth of Bulgarian capitalism is such a hesitant and controversial development. To simply blame the communist heritage did not seem enough. Going further back to Bulgaria's 'first capitalism', I encountered a plethora of problems that conveyed striking similarities to her 'second' one. I came across unexpected bridges spanning the pre-World War II and the post-Communist economic histories, where Communism exceeded its deserved image of a totalitarian aberration and appeared as a consistent link. In the 1990s, at the time of the liberal Washington Consensus, Bulgaria's economy stood in many respects away from the mainstream, as it had in the 1878–1944 period. Thus the widespread nostalgia for the pre-1944 past fostered a misleading stance. An unbiased look at pre-communism detected the resilient roots of 'communal principles', rather than a well established and smoothly functioning market system.

However, now the Transition itself is almost a quarter of a century old, with numerous, both local and global, twists and turns. The 2008 crisis has brought radical changes in social perceptions worldwide, with fierce militant anti-capitalism taking

over. Ironically, the world is heading in a direction which has always appealed to Bulgarian mass consciousness. Moreover, the crisis of the Eurozone revealed how close are the traditional ways of 'consuming' the economy to those of other South European countries (though we may also look beyond these confines) and in particular to the Greek model. Such attitudes were indirectly enhanced by the accession to the European Union, which was identified as the next version of the *etatist* 'ideal'. Bulgarian society was mostly attracted by the government-distributed Eurofunds and much less by the 'free market' face of Europe, with its stringent criteria and requirements. And once again, the return to the past seems justified. The 1930s hold the key to understanding two crucial components of the current situation: the ways in which economic policy deals 'technically' with a deep global financial crisis; the manifold soft intellectual channels through which the society is charmed by state interventionism and diverted from what just recently appeared as a broadly accepted market-oriented vision for the economy.

What is your current novel topic of research and is there a new book in the pipeline?

R.A.: Inevitably, after the publication in 2007 of *Communal Capitalism*, which presented a holistic view of the philosophy of Bulgaria's economic past, my subsequent research had to take a more concrete and specific shape. Yet much of it was instigated by the three-volume study and elaborated on some of the topics commented there. Such was the case of my monograph on the monetary history of Bulgarian Communism. Similarly, four years ago, I was intrigued by the economic aspects of the interethnic conflicts in Bulgaria, which I had succinctly commented upon when dealing with the historical roots of corruption. The anti-Greek movement of 1906, the anti-Semitic legislation of the Bulgarian state in the early 1940s, and the 'Revival process' (a violent attempt to assimilate the ethnic Turks in the country) during the final stage of the Communist regime appeared as case-studies worth pursuing. I have already published findings regarding the former two, and have a few more steps to go to complete the entire triptych. The first one is an offshoot of the 'Jewish' issue: together with Prof. Nadia Danova we have prepared a two-volume collection with documents shedding light on the deportation in 1943 by the Bulgarian authorities of the Jews from Western Thrace and Vardar's Macedonia. Actually, by the end of July the book is already out from the press. Henceforth I will dedicate myself to completing the last, 'Turkish' plot. It is probably not by chance that I started my work on it in the framework of a fellowship at the Centre of Advanced Study, which eventually became my permanent academic habitat.

Interviewed by the Editor



Ewa Klekot is a Polish scholar working in the field of anthropology of art, and specifically on art's powers of distinction in Modernity: historical heritage monuments and kitsch. She is particularly interested in the meaning of materiality, the social practices of its creation, its emotional appeal to human desire and sense of ownership, as well as its link to the human need for veneration. She has been guest researcher for the Project *Erinnerungskultur* [Culture of Memories] at Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas, Leipzig University, Germany (2008). Amongst her academic awards are the Rector's award of the University of Warsaw (2006, 2008) and the Medal of the National Education Commission (2010).

Dr Klekot has also gained a name as a distinguished translator of anthropological and cultural historical literature, and since 2008 has been member of the Editorial Board of *Ethnologica Europaea*, the Journal for European Ethnology.

A holder of two MA degrees in archeology and ethnology, and a doctoral degree in the Humanities from Warsaw University (2002), Dr Klekot favours the interdisciplinary approach, which she successfully demonstrated in her public lecture, *Can a Non-Existant District be a Heritage Place*, at CAS on 25 February 2013.

Ewa Klekot: Can a Non-Extant District be a Heritage Place?



Muranów and Mirów are two central districts in Warsaw which used to be part of the largest wartime ghetto in any Nazi-occupied territory during the Second World War, and where over 500,000 Polish Jews were forced to live. Following the defeat of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April–May 1943, which opposed the Nazis' final attempt to transport the remaining Jewish population to Treblinka extermination camp, both neighbourhoods were utterly destroyed. Beginning in the late 1940s and continuing until the early 1970s, a large-scale new housing estate was built on the rubble and *literally* with the rubble of the Ghetto, obscuring almost every trace of the area's Jewish past. Only a few material expressions remained to recall the memory of the former wartime Jewish inhabitants, their suffering and the events of brave resistance they had been involved in. All in all, under socialism the myth of 'Poland, the Christ of nations, the eternal martyr'¹ was substantiated. It was only the decades after 1990 that witnessed a proliferation of commemoration activities of both material and immaterial form meant to revive the memory of Polish Jews.

However, how were the material interventions in the space of the two districts realized? What kinds of commemoration sites were constructed, and

what monuments were erected? How did Warsaw's inhabitants welcome the sudden blossoming of a spot of greenery in Grzybowski Square, in the centre of the city in the midst of a hot summer 2007, and how did they respond when the cooling lake and mini-park green were gone, replaced by a stone-covered fountain square? Last but not least, how did the local population of Muranów face the idea of a new Museum of History of Polish Jews² in the neighbourhood, especially as its creation radically changed the image of a green playground?

In an exciting, nearly two-hour tour of the history and art of the former Warsaw Ghetto and its post-Second World War past, Dr Ewa Klekot familiarized her audience with the ways its material heritage was constituted – a process that she referred to as the 'heritagization' of sites and architecture. Her lecture reflected on the oblivion and memory of the Warsaw Jewish past, the heritagization process underway in the two districts, its main actors as well as their relationship to the local inhabitants. Her central argument focused on the fact that what eventually became 'heritage' were not the existing buildings and artifacts, but rather the empty space left by the non-existing ones.

* The phrase was popularized by Omer Bartov in his monograph, *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

** The Museum building was formally opened on 19 April 2013 but its core exhibition is still under construction. For a glimpse of its website, access <http://www.jewish-museum.org.pl/en>.

Memory accommodating different layers of human lives cut through by the thick deposit of ashes...

An Interview with Ewa Klekot

Under socialism, it was widely believed that righteous tribute was paid to the victims of the Holocaust, in Poland in particular, both by scholarly research and commemoration sites. What engendered this new interest in East European Jewish history; what new aspects have been unearthed?

Ewa Klekot: In The People's Republic of Poland the memory of WWII was constructed in the situation of immense demographic, geographic and political change: the country had lost over a quarter of its pre-war citizens, and roughly one third of its territory in the east and literally moved to the west to the territories previously belonging to Germany; plus it entered the Soviet Bloc, which meant violent political and social transformation. On one hand, the national past had to legitimize this new political, demographic and geographic order, on the other, ethnic violence during WWII in Eastern Europe (the Baltic states, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine), of which the Holocaust programmed by the Nazi state had become part and parcel, was a trauma which was not going to be easily overcome. Described recently in detail by Timothy Snyder in his thorough book *Bloodlands*, these painful experiences had to be dealt with by the national memory; and add the Soviet war crimes, the Nazi racism and persecutions, the underground resistance, the uprising... The Polish memory of WWII constructed from the perspective of a Soviet ally had to silence most of the topics and – to quote a Polish social scientist, Annamaria Orla-Bukowska – ‘for decades the German occupation was the exclusive focal point of the official national memory’ (Orla-Bukowska 2006:

177)*. However, as Orla-Bukowska points out, the discourse of official memory was not the only one constructed in postwar Poland, and the presence (or absence) of memory of Polish Jews and the Holocaust in both of them is a complicated issue which she has extensively and interestingly discussed. Obviously, the transformation of the 1990s made possible, and desirable to speak about the topics relegated before to the unofficial sphere, however it was not until the early 2000s, after the book *Neighbours* by J. T. Gross had been published, that the responsibility of Polish citizens for killing their Jewish neighbours in the village of Jedwabne opened a new dimension in public debate on Polish-Jewish relationships, a debate that is still going on. For me the important thing is that it is not only a topic for academic discussions, and that its results materialize in the form of places of Polish Jewish memory.

How did you personally get involved in the topic of Muranów and Mirów as places of historical heritage?

E.K.: I was born in Muranów, and when I was ten, we moved to the nearby Mirów; for fifteen years I lived almost exactly in the same place where the Nazis had constructed the infamous bridge over Chłodna Street that allowed communication between two parts of the ghetto. I went to a primary school named after Ludwik Zamenhof, but I was not told at that time that he was a Jew, although I

knew he was a doctor who had invented the Esperanto language. I had to discover on my own the history of the districts I inhabited, and for some time as a tour guide I took an active part in constructing the memory of these places – memory that accommodated different layers of human lives cut through by the thick deposit of ashes. In Muranów you actually live on the ruins: the houses were built on the moulds made of them, as there was no room to remove the rubbish – over 80 percent of the city was in ruins. When you walk the streets of south Muranów, you are in a valley: the houses stand on embankments, usually covered with greenery. And the houses themselves were constructed of ground old bricks from the ruins; it was the substance the builders used for new bricks. The material of the new walls was supposed to remind the living about the recent past. That was the idea of the architect, Bogdan Lachert. However, the living came to live, which meant to forget the traumatic past, like the people selling and buying lemons in Campo de' Fiori in the famous poem by Czesław Miłosz cannot remember the burning stake of Giordano Bruno.

Why is it deemed necessary to readdress the traumatic history of the Holocaust today? And what justifies the current need to separate the Second-World-War experience of Polish Jews from that of Poles in general? How do these two experiences differ?

* Orla-Bukowska, Annamaria (2006), “New Threads in an Old Loom: National Memory and Social Identity in Postwar and Post-Communist Poland, in: R.N. Lebow, W. Kansteiner, C. Fogu eds., *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, pp. 177–209.

E.K.: The answer can be very simple: if you were an ethnic Pole in a Nazi-occupied Poland, you could die, either by being executed or in a camp, just for being a Pole; but if you were an ethnic Jew you were sure you were going to die. The only way to survive was pretending you were not a Jew, or pretending you didn't exist – I mean to hide.

Why should we readdress the history of Holocaust? I think it is a question of identity – not only Polish identity but European identity. The memory of the Holocaust is a part of European identity. I think every generation should readdress the history of Holocaust in order to make sure we haven't got used to the way we talk about it.

Has the post-1990 era generated new approaches to what you call the process of 'heritagization' of sites and architecture if compared or perhaps, contrasted to the socialist period? If so, how does the pre- and post-1990 way of handling Polish and especially, Polish Jewish commemoration sites differ?

E.K.: Of course, as there are substantial differences in the content of official memory between pre- and post-1989 Poland, especially in what relates to the Polish–Soviet and Polish–Russian relations, there are differences in places and objects getting heritagized, and there is much more grassroots initiative in the process now. But still official forms of heritagization can be same boring as they used to be: when I went to school we had to attend classes with WWII veterans speaking about their experiences to teach us patriotism and other virtues, and we always got very bored; now the schoolchildren have to listen to the veterans of the Solidarity struggle, and get bored in a very similar way. I would say, however, that as in our times taste is the main social classifier, we can really see that the form and style of a heritagized place or a monument is a very good indicator of social origin of the initiator of the whole process. Under communism they were stylistically more similar and uniform. Now, the difference becomes immediately visible when we compare, for example, the style of different recent commemorations of the Jew-

ish past in Muranów that have different initiators; or even more, if we compare all the formally different commemorations in Muranów with equally or even more recent commemorations of the late President Kaczynski and his wife who died in a plane crash in 2010.

What are your current and future research plans? Are they linked to 'heritagization', or would you like to venture into a new field?

E.K.: Since autumn 2012 I have been working on Fruška Gora in Serbia. In the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Warsaw, where I work, the Centre for Anthropological Studies of Orthodox Christianity has been founded, and within this framework I got funds for studying heritagization in Fruška Gora. It is a solitary mountain range in flat Vojvodina landscape, on the bank of the Danube. There is a national park established in Yugoslav times, frequented by trekkers and tourists, and sixteen monasteries, mostly still inhabited by the monks and nuns, and visited by pilgrims. I would like to research different modes of heritagization related to nature and culture, and see how the concept of religious heritage is being constructed on the spot. I have done only a pilot study so far but am planning fieldwork in the summer and autumn of this year, and then two more years of studies, both in the field and in the archives.



Interviewed by the Editor



CAS Discussion Series: Existential Policies under Socialism Love under Socialism (2012–2013)

Annual Programme

First Workshop (15 January 2013)

Love, Institutions and Ideologies, I

Diana Ivanova

*"Traitors" Love: The Language of the State Security Files
(The 'Laterna' Case of Radio Free Europe)*

Ina Dimitrova

*The Family as a Bio-Political Target:
Genetic Prophylactics in Socialist Bulgaria*

Bilyana Raeva

Love for Factories and Love for the Profession

Second Workshop (15 February 2013)

Love and Institutions, II

Todor Hristov

(together with Darin Tenev and Lilyana Deyanova)

*'He failed to act as a man and a communist':
Three Interpretations of a Schoolgirl's Diary from the 1960s*

Momchil Metodiev

*The Instrumentalization of Sexuality:
The Files of The Committee of State Security*

Third Workshop (29 March 2013)

Love and Eroticism in Socialist Literature

Boiko Penchev

The National Eroticism of Socialism

Nadezhda Aleksandrova

*"Our Ana's" Love: Ana Ventura's Conspiratory Love
as Depicted in Her Biographies*

Violeta Decheva

Love and Drama: Dramaturgical and Stage Versions

Galina Goncharova

*Love for the Poet and Poetry in Letters:
The Socialist Dimensions of a Rising Poet Star*

Fourth Workshop (19 April 2013)

Love and Socialist Gender Construction

Nadezhda Galabova

A Sea of Love: Narratives about/of Doncho and Julia Papazovs

Ivaylo Aleksandrov

*The Image of Woman's Love in Bulgarian Socialist Commercials:
The Transformation of the Public into the Private
(A Case Study of Otechestvo, a 1970s–1980s Journal)*

Anelia Kasabova

*The Portrait between Two Epochs:
Visualization of Gender Relations and Roles*

Fifth Workshop (17 May 2013)

The Socialist Sexual Revolution, I

Krassimira Daskalova

*Love, Sex and Other Demons under Socialism
(Tsola Dragoycheva)*

Vivian Pramataroff

*Sex, Pregnancy and Abortions
(A Case-Study from Bourgas Municipal Hospital)*

Anton Angelov

Popular Dance Culture under Socialism: The 1960s

Sixth Workshop (14 June 2013)

The Socialist Sexual Revolution, II

Georgi Gospodinov

Sex under Socialism; (Self)Education and Pathology

Nikolai Vukov

Personal Ads in Socialist Mass Media, 1980s

Love under Socialism

After the highly successful seminars “Childhood under Socialism” (2008) and “Death under Socialism” (2011–12), a new round of collective discussions on existential policies under socialism continued with the theme of love. *Love under Socialism* was begun as a further attempt to reconstruct the existential conditions situated at the interface of a political and ideological system and life-world, and to capture the divergences of ideological models and lived experiences under socialism. The dominant ideologies were either altogether absent from the everyday practices of the population or modelled in ways alien to them. Juxtaposing ideological, institutional and biographical perspectives, the workshops set to find out how ideologically scripted roles were played by individual agents in these existential situations. The discussion series was conditionally divided into two categories: love and sexuality. The major focus is on the following topics: Conceptualizations of love: love for the motherland and the Communist Party; Transformations and re-conceptualization of Christian love; Institutionalizations of love: marriage, family, parenting, and procreation politics; The theme of love in socialist literature and drama, as well as in autobiographical genres and personal documents. Additionally, the workshops centered on certain socio-psychological topics, such as: Management of emotions: love, sex and communist morality, love as dissent; Intimate worlds of socialism: love, sexuality, sexual education; “Sexual revolution” of socialism; Mechanisms of modelling and control of (inter-)sexual relations, the theme of sex in State Security files.

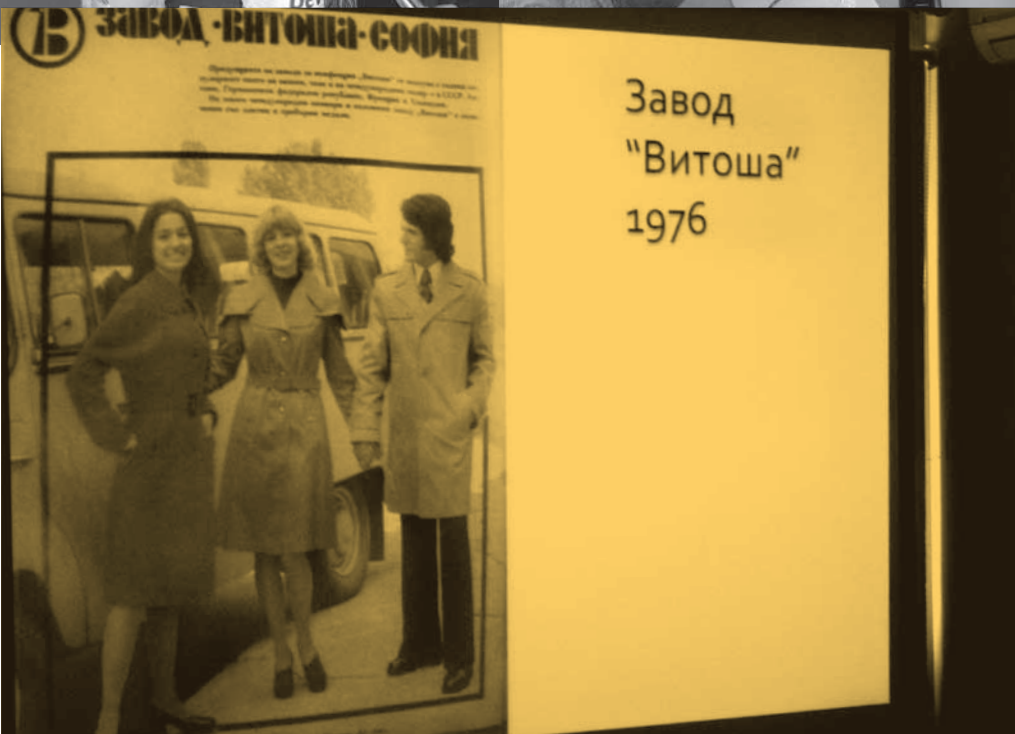
The second round of workshops, *Love under Socialism*, was initiated at the beginning of 2013 and took place in five consecutive sessions on a monthly basis from January through May. Each of the workshops included at least four presentations by both



prominent and early-stage Bulgarian scholars coming from different universities or institutions across the country, as well as with different disciplinary backgrounds.

Love under Socialism deploys a range of interdisciplinary methods and methodologies derived from history, sociology, anthropology, art and cultural studies, psychology and medicine to outline a frightening yet less familiar face of the Communist regime, to add a new perspective on everyday life in Bulgaria's recent past, and to make audiences re-think forty-five years of socialist experience.





At the Finale

Negotiating Modernity: Rethinking the History of Modern East Central European Political Thought

2008–2013

The end of the CAS 2012–2013 academic year also marked the finale of one of the Centre's most long-standing and intellectually assiduous projects, namely *Negotiating Modernity: Rethinking the History of Modern East Central European Political Thought*. The project was supported by a European Research Council *Starting Independent Researcher Grant*, and sought to chart the history of East Central European political thought from the late eighteenth to the early twenty-first century. Paying attention to both intra- and extra-regional interferences, and breaking the essentialist duality of Western 'core' and Eastern 'periphery', its ultimate objective was to produce a synthetic volume on the history of modern political thought in the region based on a diachronic analysis especially attentive to transnational discursive phenomena, and equally open to supra-national and sub-national (regional) frameworks, where different national projects interacted. The project sought to reconsider the history of the 'negotiation of political modernity', shifting from 'moral ethnocentrism' and oversimplification towards a more comprehensive appreciation of the manifold components comprising Europe's intellectual heritage.

The concluding project conference took place in Sofia on 14–18 March 2013. Bringing together a number of prominent specialists in European political thought, as well as in Central and Southeast European culture and history, the conference

sought to assess the results of the research conducted for five years. The key topics of the conference were organized around clusters of chapters of the book manuscript stemming from the project. The conference aimed at creating a more synthetic view of the internal and transnational dynamism of political thought in Europe. The conference also sought to contribute to the rethinking of the European canon of thinkers and influential ideas on the basis of examining the reception process of "central" paradigms on the peripheries and semi-peripheries. Rejecting the one-directional models of cultural transfer, each of the participants in the closing conference looked at examples of the trans-national impact of Eastern European cultural paradigms that influenced Western discussions, such as the case of exile communities in the 19th century, or in the interwar and postwar periods.

At the finale, we invited Dr Balázs Trencsényi, principle investigator of the *Negotiating Modernity Project*^{*}, to comment on the project's achievements and challenges, on its sudden twists and unexpected findings, but also on its overall contribution to help us appraise the region's past and present state of affairs.

^{*} For further details on the Negotiating Modernity Project, its objectives and stages of progress, see *CAS Newsletter 2008/2*, pp. 10–12, and *CAS Newsletter 2010*, pp. 26–29.



A Talk with **Balázs Trencsényi,** Principle Investigator of *Negotiating Modernity*, on the Project's Twists and Findings, and More...

After an intense, five-year period of research the project is at its end; hence we are interested in learning more about its attainments and overall evaluation as seen by the researchers themselves. The project's original intention was to break the duality of traditional conceptualization of a West European core versus an East European periphery. Now that the results are at hand, have the goals been achieved? Do the conclusions live up to the team's initial expectations?

Balázs Trencsényi: The overall assessment of the project's success is linked to the publication of our final results. It is only by the follow-up feedback to a printed version of our research findings that we will be able to evaluate the scope of novelty introduced to traditional conceptualization practices. We have already published some articles as part of the project; yet the complete manuscript has not 'hit' the academic market yet. However, clearly our research outcome does not support a distinct East-West divide as an analytical category for Southeastern and Central Europe. Our scholarly team knew from the beginning that the West could not be approached as a homogeneous unit of investigation. Nevertheless, it was exciting to trace how its perception had changed over time. For example, at certain moments, Germany was claimed be the part of the West, while at others it was left outside the western framework. Also, we faced incidents in the Balkans when what would normally be considered the East assumed

the function of a Proxy West, in particular when western influence was channeled through Russia or the Ottoman Empire. This raises the question of what the East was then. From the project's very beginning, our team was painstakingly selective of which countries to place at the centre of research. Instead of focusing on mighty states such as Russia or the Ottoman Empire, we preferred to focus on the small countries in the Region. This in itself was a fruitful decision, as soon it became clear that small countries may fall into different macro- and meso-regional and post-imperial categories over time. Sometimes it made sense to view them in opposition, as 'lands of the former Russian Empire' versus 'lands of the former Habsburg Empire', or 'lands of the Ottoman Empire'. Their categorization proved flexible as it was subject to change in history. While the big empires were firmly positioned on the map, their post-imperial legacies and heritages were tailing off. This left its imprint on the cultural transfer of western

influence in the region. Western influence was not necessarily disseminated through imperial centres, but could be transmitted through cultural groups interested in certain aspects of the European project. In such cases the language of cultural diffusion might not have been the lingua franca of a great western power, but local languages – both context-bound and part of a different setting. Hence the need for a more concept-sensitive analysis of our sources. An interesting fact that emerges from our conclusions is that there seems to have been different processes of synchronization of cultural transfer in Europe. Obviously, in the nineteenth century, if compared to the Habsburg Empire or Central Europe in general, the Balkans were set in a diverse historical and temporal framework. This was particularly true in terms of reception and can be illustrated with the case of a French text derived from the late seventeenth century. Taken as a handbook for enlightened kings, it was translated into Hungarian in the late eighteenth century, and finally reached Bulgaria in the mid-nineteenth century, i.e., almost two hundred years after its origin. Yet the geographical time lag on Europe's map waned with time, and in the interwar period there was no longer any delay in intellectual transmission. Physically, in the 1920s and 1930s, Southeast European and Central European intelligentsia read and discussed the same ideas, and this renders any talk about a temporal lag between them void of meaning. Curiously enough, we sensed a tendency for Southeast Europeans to be especially quick to pick up certain 'cut-



ting edge' European discourses. This can be partly explained with the absence of established intellectual traditions, which actually facilitated the integration of novelties into the local frame. However, under communism, the logic of intellectual transmission changed again, just as the historical and political context of the countries under examination diversified. Serbia may have been part of the Balkans in the interwar period; however, in the second half of the twentieth century, Yugoslavia was much more Western-oriented than Bulgaria or even Hungary. Such dependencies on a specific time segment cannot be neglected and we took them fully under consideration in our analysis.

Moving on to the twenty-first century, what tendencies of intellectual transfer did you manage to locate in our present-day world?

B.T.: This is an interesting issue in itself. Originally, we thought of addressing the post-1989 period as an epilogue rather than a separate research chapter, as we believed it would be too early for its analysis. However, we soon came to realize that the post-1989 era deserved special attention too, the more so in that the project's realization coincided with the onset and spread of the latest European crisis. This generated a feeling – felt very acutely in the Hungarian context, although it may also apply to Bulgaria – that the transition period is over and what we are entering is a new historical period, with a new type of politics that we are in no position to describe adequately yet. One thing is certain: its mood differs radically from the 1990s and their historical epoch.

Let me take you back to your earlier note about East Europeans' swiftness in singling out trends in European political thought and thus preceding the West in their digestion. Could you expand on your point?

B.T.: I would not necessarily go in the direction of maintaining that East Europeans were extremely original in the intellectual field. However, they – and especially those of them who moved in

and out of the region – gained access to ideas that were part of the European channel of thought and hence they easily integrated into the transnational field. Take the research on totalitarianism during and after the Second World War, which was dominated by East European émigrés. At the same time, the potential of those intellectuals who were restricted in travelling abroad was limited. When reading István Bibó*, his London publisher was puzzled not to have heard of him before. Yet, how could Bibó have been popular in the West, when he had been serving a political sentence in Hungarian prison since 1957? Only very few East European oppositionists like the Czech playwright and essayist Václav Havel** or the philosopher Jan Patočka*** had the opportunity to join the transnational circulation of ideas. Hence our team abstained from hasty conclusions about East Europeans' pioneering contributions to the history of political thought. Actually, East Europeans were far more likely to borrow paradigms from the West, but in a specific way. Such was the case of Bulgaria in the 1860s, when many discussions were adopted from Enlightenment culture. Yet, at the same time, Europe was already beyond Romanticism. This temporal inconsistency forced writers to become more self-reflexive, as they had to consider their own position and European belatedness, as well as their rather complicated relation to the European

channels of transfer on the whole. This intricate situation fuelled their creativity, as they were confronted with issues that didn't exist in the original western texts. Furthermore, they had to deal with questions that the original texts had never raised. A dialogue developed with the West that shaped the East European frame of thought. Take another example: interwar Prague, where modern nationalism studies originated from intellectuals such as Hans Kohn*, Eugen Lemberg**, Karl Deutsch, or Ernest Gellner***. Although they had been forced by political circumstances to emigrate, the intricate Czech-Slovak-German-Jewish context is conveyed throughout their writings.

How was western thought, once infiltrated into the region, integrated in the local environment? And importantly, did it ever lead to radicalization in its new setting?

B. T.: The term that best describes the process of intellectual reception is *hybridization*. There are various processes of reception and intellectual association of ideas. Usually, notions are adjusted to the new context and in this process, the connotations of words are subject to change, albeit unconsciously. Although the link to the original paradigm is never severed, it loses its initial reference. This issue was brought forth in our discussions of Voltaire's, Rousseau's or Montesquieu's

* István Bibó (1911–1979), Hungarian lawyer, politician and political theorist. During the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, he was Minister of State for the Hungarian National Government. In May 1957, he was sentenced to life imprisonment for his political activities, yet was released by the 1963 amnesty.

** Václav Havel (1936–2011), Czech playwright, essayist, poet, dissident and politician, last president of Czechoslovakia and later, first president of the Czech Republic.

*** Jan Patočka (1907–1977), one of the most important contributors to Czech philosophical phenomenology.

* Hans Kohn (1891–1971), Prague-born philosopher and historian, who left Central Europe in 1925 and eventually emigrated to the USA in 1934. He is known for his studies on nationalism, Pan-Slavism, German thought and Judaism.

** Eugen Lemberg (1903–1976), sociologist, a graduate from Charles University, Prague, in German and Slavic Studies and History, closely connected to the Sudeten-German movement. After the 1950s, he was active in Munich and Frankfurt/Main.

*** Ernst Gellner (1925–1995, British-Czech philosopher and social anthropologist, whose family emigrated to Britain in 1939. Gellner was particularly creative in the field of nationalism studies and social modernization, and exhibited a distinct multicultural perspective in his work.



translations in Eastern Europe, used both for legitimizing the 'ancient liberties' of the nobility and the efforts of the rulers to curb these liberties. We wondered whether they had been intentionally manipulated to support rather different projects than the French ones or were just part of East Europeans' genuine reading that followed its own, diverse path of logic. Throughout our research, we kept reminding ourselves that we were not psycho-historians; we were not exploring the subconscious of these people; neither were we discerning their real claims behind the general arguments. Finally, we decided to take at face value the fact that they might have believed in what they were saying, and while their interpretations obviously aimed to legitimize certain power claims, they were not just cynically abusing these texts. Rather than 'falsifying' them, East Europeans read certain potentials in their western sources which could be actualized in their particular East European infrastructure, and which tended to facilitate, or even generate, other possible readings. These potentials might not have been realized in the West but they were recognized by audiences outside the original context. In this sense it is problematic to separate authentic reading from fake, manipulative reading in such a binary way. For us as researchers, these were some of the strongest methodological guidelines to deal with.

Did you discover any particular continuity in intellectual history which would be sustained over the last two hundred years? Has a past idea principally gained in prominence today?

B.T.: We were struck by the fragility of the liberal consensus, by its quick upsurge leading to political reform, institutionalization of democracy and liberal practices, which, however, would suddenly wither. There were a few instances in East European intellectual history when liberal thought was celebrated as the most up-to-date and enlightened set of ideas, shared almost universally. Then, suddenly, the liberal consensus waned, replaced by radical anti-liberalism. This was true for the 1870s and 1880s, with the onset of the Long Depression in 1873, when the Vienna Stock Exchange collapsed and populism took over. A similar instance can be found in the immediate post-WWI context, especially in the context of the 'winning' side, where liberal democracy and national self-determination seemed to go hand in hand. Sadly, the post-1989 period exhibits similar traits; there is obvious continuity here that should not be overlooked.

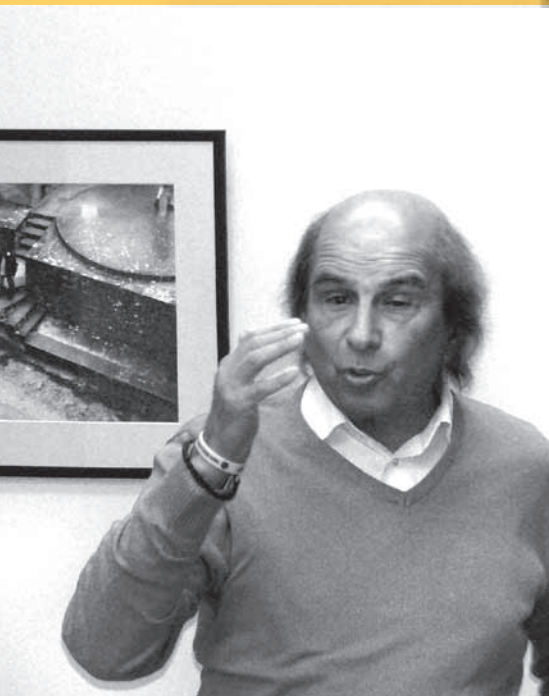
Also, what was equally striking and reminiscent of the past was that even nominal liberals in acknowledged political positions framed themselves along anti-liberal values. These intellectuals and politicians claimed to share the legacy of liberal traditions, yet they propagated numerous values of a rather populist understanding of democracy. Some other problems, too, remained surprisingly constant in the region. While working on the late eighteenth century, we identified recurring issues of concern, such as the question of multiethnic composition, or the growing disparity among the social layers in terms of European standards of living and consumption. Nor should the

complex, often hierarchical relationship to Western Europe be ignored. This was expressed by means of symbolic geography. Yet another key dilemma concerns the relationship of politics and religion, or how religious and political norms may either co-exist or contradict each other. These issues have been extremely persistent over the last two hundred years, though the emphasis on their components shifted. A hundred years ago, religion was still of prime importance. Nowadays, religious diversity is often couched in the problem of multiethnicity. Nonetheless, it continues informing modern discussion.

With the project almost behind you, what are the plans for the future?

B.T.: The project has generated numerous ideas for further projects. We have become increasingly interested in examining the post-1990s context, the more so in that there is no pre-existing synthesis for this period. There are also new intellectual traditions, like environmentalism or technocracy, which have not yet been placed in the current context. Apart from liberalism, conservatism and social democracy, there are other, nonconventional political views that await their scholarly attention. And finally, there is yet another objective to pursue, namely, to convert our results into an educational experience by turning our conclusions into proper teaching material. We are looking forward to creating a coalition of institutions for transnational political cooperation. While discussing our findings, we discovered that numerous issues were raised for the first time even in our local historiographies. Our team members would frequently joke that when the big work is done, we will all sit down and write separate books about the same story, but telling it to different audiences and focusing on different key issues. Thus some of the side issues may develop into separate projects of their own value. I think there is a point in this worth considering...

Interviewed by the Editor



Ivo Hristov (ed) The (Un)Established Rule of Law in Bulgaria

CAS/Riva Publishers, 2012



The book launch was held at the CAS venue on 13th November 2012, to a 'full house', with Mihail Nedelchev, Professor in Literature, History of Literature and Culture, and Georgi Kapriev, Professor in Medieval Philosophy, presenting and reviewing the volume. It was generally acknowledged that *The (Un)Established Rule of Law* fills a substantial void in modern Bulgarian social, legal and historical literature, and raises thought-provoking questions related to the last two decades of Bulgaria's painful transition to a market-orientated and democratic law-abiding society. For the audience, the presence of Prof. Nedelchev – an emblematic public intellectual of the 1990s and member of the former Leadership of the Union of Democratic Forces – carried the emotional charge of nostalgia for the post-1989 dreams for a just and lawful social, political and economic future. Hence, the very nature of what has emerged as an endless transition (where to?) in Bulgarian socio-economic life was placed under the scrutiny of the public.

Genealogically, the idea behind *The (Un)Established Rule of Law in Bulgaria* is linked to *The Shaken Order Project: Authority and Social Trust in Postcommunist Societies – Case Studies in Law*, as well as the subsequent Discussion Series *Consolidation / Disintegration of Public Institutions and the Political Process*,* both initiated by the Centre of Advanced Study Sofia in the period 2007–2009. The collection dissects the 'sore' issue of failing legal order that has been plaguing all aspects of modern Bulgarian society, both at a 'high', political, and everyday level. This adverse legal conjuncture holds its manifestations in a ceaseless transition period whose prolonged continuity is symptomatic of deeper, fundamental problems persistent in Bulgaria's social structure. Rather than approaching the dilemma by deploying resources of 'purely' legal theory or everyday consciousness,

the volume offers a broader socio-historical reflection on the (un)established rule of law, turning to an analytical examination of the phenomenon of the legal society in history, and to a critical overview of the social conditions and factors behind the variety of European modernities that spurred the emergence of the legal state.

The compiler and editor of the collection is Dr Ivo Hristov, team leader of *The Shaken Order Project*. The volume features nine original research articles by leading Bulgarian scholars in the areas of Modern and Contemporary Balkan History, Law, Comparative Constitutional Law, Sociology of Law, Political Science, European Studies, Classics and Literature, intellectually active at home and abroad.

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* For further details on *CAS Shaken Order Project* and the subsequent *Discussion Series*, see *CAS Newsletter 2007/1–2*, pp. 4–5; *CAS Newsletter 2008/2*, pp. 3–5, 13–19; *CAS Newsletter 2009/1–2*, pp. 5–13.

Ivan Elenkov

Labour, Joy, Recreation and Culture.

An Introduction to the History of Ideological Modeling of Everyday Life under Communism

CAS/Riva Publishers, 2013

Prof. Ivan Elenkov teaches at the Department of History and Theory, Faculty of Philosophy, at Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'. He is a distinguished name in the field of Cultural History and is also well-known to CAS and its public, thanks to his insightful and highly enjoyable participation in the Centre's academic seminars and discussion events. In 2010–2011, Prof. Elenkov held a CAS Fellowship in the Advanced Academia Programme, where his research focused on *Popular Culture in Bulgaria in the Era of Communism*.^{*} His current monograph, *Labour, Joy, Recreation and Culture*, takes his topic of scholarly interest onto a higher level. Its appearance in print has been supported by the CAS Academic Council following the Council's decision to award with publication one of the projects under the Advanced Academia Programme that has served as a basis for and has been developed into a monograph.

Labour, Joy, Recreation and Culture aims to fill in significant gaps in Bulgaria's twentieth-century history. Drawing on a large pool of understudied archival materials, journals and legal documents, and abundantly illustrated with drawings, pictures and photographs from the periods under investigation, the research falls into the category of the history of free time and the history of labour. The topic connects the pre-Communist and Communist eras, and stretches to the 1980s, i.e., the last decade of State Socialism.



The work embraces two interrelated studies that define the metamorphoses of the state's approach to its labour force, the attempts to regulate the work and leisure activities of its citizens, and the attempts to mobilize broader, marginalized social layers. The first study examines the activities of the state-run 'Labour and Joy' Unit, institutionalized in the period 1941–1944, and its transformations under the Fatherland Front's rule into the 'Workers' Recreation and Culture' Unit between 1945 and 1948. Although overtly similar, those two state projects emerge as essentially different, and Prof. Elenkov's critical analysis explores the deconstruction of the social structure and the obliteration of the principles of social policy in mid-twentieth century Bulgaria.

The second study is dedicated to the phenomenon of the 'Cultural Calendar' of the same era and dissects its main function – to centralize processes of cultural exchange in socialist society. A common thread linking the two studies is the ideological modeling and shaping of everyday life in Communist Bulgaria.

* For further details, see *CAS Newsletter 2010*, pp. 12–13.

Mihail Gruev and Diana Mishkova (eds) Bulgarian Communism – Debates and Interpretations

CAS/Riva Publishers, 2013

Bulgarian Communism – Debates and Interpretations is dedicated to the current state of research on the Communist rule and the public reflection on the two decades after the collapse of the regime. It is the intellectual output of a broad round-table discussion that took place in November 2011, organized by several influential non-governmental organizations and academic circles in Bulgaria: The Open Society Institute, the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, the Institute for Studies of the Recent Past, and the Centre for Liberal Strategies. Its contributors come from various fields of academic life, involving established academics from state institutions and independent scholars. Their background and approaches can be described as broadly inter- and multi-disciplinary, combining history, ethnology, sociology, cultural studies, psychology, and economics, thus producing different standpoints and adding up to a versatile, multifaceted analysis of Bulgaria's Communist past.

Twenty years after the historical watershed of November 1989, Bulgarian scholars prove divided in their interpretations of what Communism actually was, while (part of) Bulgarian society is still infused with nostalgia for State Socialism. The collection combines a discussion of both the historical *and* ethical implications of this phenomenon by focusing on different historical, psychological and cultural incentives behind the complexity of interpretations of the recent past, and presenting a series of micro-historical analyses of important yet less known aspects of the Communist era. Bridging the past and the present, it also addresses the post-Communist period with respect to Communism's subsequent mutations into economic, political and administrative corruption practices, collective memory, media and educational policies.

* A phrase borrowed by CAS Newsletter editor from Katherine Verdery's monograph, *What Was Communism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton University Press, 1996).



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Calendar of CAS Public Lectures

Venue: Sofia City Library

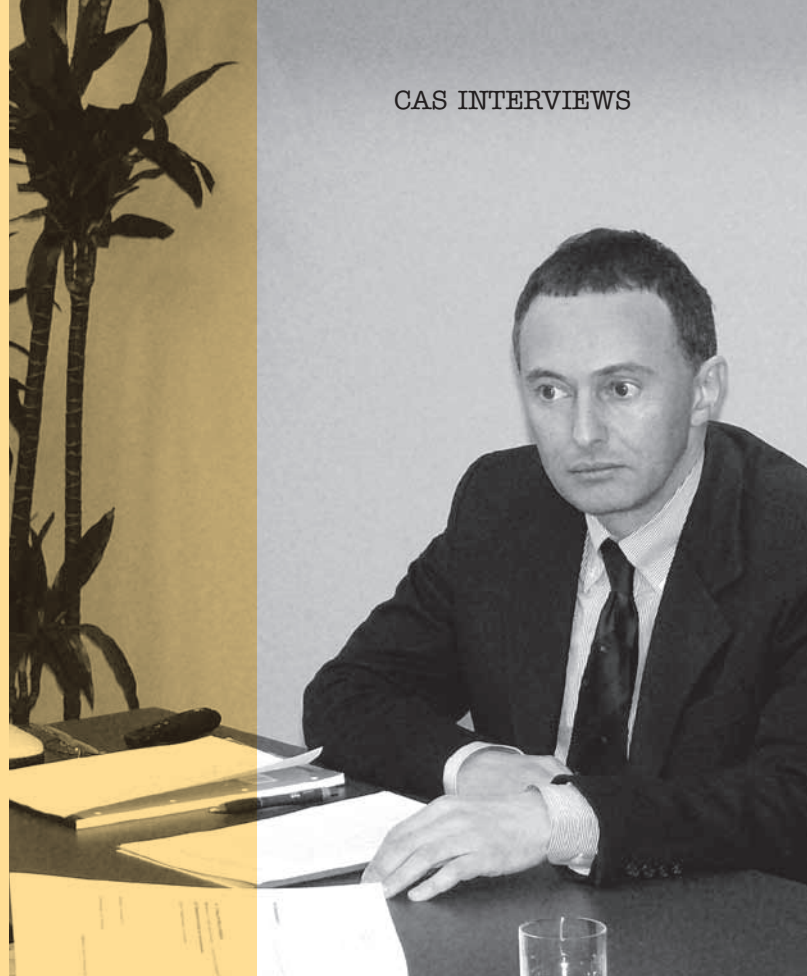
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- 5 March** **Dr. Metodiy Rozhdestvenskiy:**
The Barbarian Rhetoric: 5th Century BC - 6th Century AD
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- 16 April** **Assoc. Prof. Tsvetelin Stepanov, Sofia University:**
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- 23 April** **Prof. Roumen Avramov,**
Centre for Advanced Study Sofia: The Economics of the Revival Process

An Interview with

Jaro Stacul

International Fellow
of CAS Advanced
Academia Programme



Jaro Stacul obtained an MA degree in History from the University of Trieste, Italy, and was later awarded a PhD degree in Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, UK. He has been a Research Associate at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge; a Lecturer at the University of Wales, Swansea, and at Roehampton University, London, UK; and an Assistant Professor in Anthropology at the University of Regina and at Grant MacEwan University, both in Canada. In 2012, Dr Stacul participated in the CAS Advanced Academia Programme: Individual Fellowships, where his research focused on *The Making and Unmaking of Political Subjectivities in Post-Socialist Poland*.

Amongst Jaro Stacul's publications are the monograph *The Bounded Field: Localism and Local Identity in an Italian Alpine Valley* (2003), the edited collection (with Christina Moutsou and Helen Kopnina) *Crossing European Boundaries: Beyond Conventional Geographical Categories* (2006); chapters in collections: 'Class without Consciousness: Regional Identity in the Italian Alps after 1989' in Don Kalb, Gábor Halmi (eds), *Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class* (2011); 'Integralist Political Engagements in Italy at the Turn of the Millennium' in André Gingrich, Marcus Banks (eds), *Neo-Nationalism in Europe and Beyond: Perspectives from Social Anthropology* (2006); as well as articles in specialized magazines, such as 'Natural Time, Political Time: Contested Histories in Northern Italy', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, v. 11, 4 (2005).

Was your CAS Fellowship your first visit to Bulgaria? Did you find your stay at CAS Sofia useful and stimulating for your work? Did the discussions at the Centre bring forth some surprising issues for considerations?

Jaro Stacul: My CAS Fellowship was my first visit to Bulgaria. Overall, I found my stay at CAS extremely useful and stimulating for my research on political subjectivities in contemporary Poland. CAS events are unique opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with scholars from a wide range of disciplines, including (but not limited to) Sociology, History, and Political Philosophy. My participation in the lively discussions at CAS seminars helped me refine ideas and gain a much needed comparative perspective to make sense of what is going on in a country, like Poland, which has undergone dramatic political and economic changes since the demise of Socialism. The opportunity to establish contact with colleagues who have conducted research on post-Socialist transformations in Bulgaria has been

crucial for the success of my research project. I must also stress that CAS has a very rich library, which includes volumes I would not have been able to locate in other academic libraries, particularly publications by scholars based in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, Sofia is a vibrant and lively city, and is home to several academic and cultural institutions (the Polish Cultural Institute, for example) which turned out to be invaluable sources of information. Interestingly, I happened to be in Sofia when anti-government demonstrations were just starting.* My limited knowledge of Bulgarian prevented me from appreciating all the subtle messages that political slogans and chants encode; nevertheless, witnessing the events on the streets gave me at least a sense of the different meanings people attach to the 'nation', and particularly of the contradictions with which Bulgaria's 'transition' to a market economy is rife.

You are a social anthropologist, yet your field of study crosses the borderline between anthropology and political sciences. How does an anthropologist's perspective differ from that of a political scientist? What novel contribution can an anthropological analysis add to problems linked to political identity or say, the nature of modern political -isms, neo-nationalism included?

J.S.: Well, traditionally anthropologists cross the boundary of their own culture to study putative 'exotic' groups, their customs, religion, social organization, and values. When the sub-field of political Anthropology came to the fore in the 1940s, anthropologists were trying to make sense of forms of political organization which lacked a centralized state, and their main objects of research were tribal groups and small villages. However, even in those days it was necessary to cross the boundary of the discipline to understand

what was going on in faraway settings. What has characterized Anthropology since its establishment as an academic discipline has been a dialogue with other fields of the social sciences. Nowadays an increasing number of anthropologists carry out archival research and make use of 'hard' data such as statistics or voting patterns. In this sense, it is true that my field crosses the boundary with Sociology, History, Political Science, and other disciplines. However, Anthropology's perspective is different, in that ethnographic fieldwork is a fundamental part of anthropological practice. By spending a long time in a chosen field site, and by gaining a deep insight into 'local culture', the anthropologist finds out, for example, how nationalist ideologies are accommodated to local-level discourses, or why state-sponsored development projects fail. The process of 'accommodation' is often unpredictable, and the introduction of 'democracy' in post-Socialist Europe is a case in point: for western economic advisers or development agencies, 'democracy' is something that comes with the introduction of private property and free markets; yet people living in a rural village or in a post-industrial town in Bulgaria or Poland may attach to the term completely different meanings. Sometimes it is precisely different understandings that are at the root of the failure of certain schemes to improve the human condition. In this sense, because access to the 'field' entails a deeper understanding of culture and of qualitative data that would otherwise stay undiscovered, social anthropologists make a significant contribution to the understanding of social, political and economic processes in a global era.

Why has it become increasingly difficult to discern between what used to be polarly shaped and identified 'left' and 'right' in politics? What changes have political ideologies undergone at the turn of the millennium? What are the reasons behind these transformations?

J.S.: Let me say that the emergence of 'left' and 'right' as distinct political categories is largely a twentieth-century

phenomenon. They make sense within a political context, such as the state, which represents the dominant framework controlling the economy. With the demise of Socialism and the rise of neo-liberal globalization such categories had to be redefined, even though they still remain significant. Clearly, such changes have effaced old forms of identity, and have altered the ways people constitute themselves as political subjects. What we are witnessing in present-day Europe is the emergence of a political discourse centred on the notion of culture. This is expressed by a rhetoric predicated on cultural diversity and incommensurability, which essentializes differences in cultural heritage. Some theorists have interpreted this phenomenon as the expression of an increasingly individualized society, and as the result of the separation of power from the state. What makes a distinction between 'left' and 'right' increasingly difficult is also the fact that today's political 'ideologies' combine apparently incompatible elements of political thought. Thus, for example, the protection of workers' interests is no longer on the top of the agenda of formerly leftist political forces, and the term 'class' has virtually disappeared from their rhetoric. The Solidarity (*Solidarność*) movement in Poland is a case in point: when it was created, in the late Socialist era, it had a strong working-class identity, yet as soon as it came to power it advocated Poland's adoption of a market economy, and workers were the main victims of the economic reforms it promoted. On the other hand, nationalist parties promise to protect the interests of those who have been hit by the economic crisis. In countries like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, and even France, such parties receive considerable support from the working classes, the unemployed, the retired, and cast the European Union, Muslim minorities, Gypsies, immigrants, and so forth as the main causes of social and economic problems. Yet if we shift our focus from political rhetoric *per se* to the ways many people understand political messages and slogans, we will notice that 'left' and 'right' still represent important foci of identification, despite claims to the contrary.

* Dr Stacul refers to the Bulgarian anti-monopoly protests at the beginning of 2013 that ended with the resignation of the GERB government on 20th February 2013.

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Jaro Stacul

CAS Fellow Seminar

anced Study Sofia, December 20th, 2012



Your work initially centred on Italy and its post-peasant communities. Yet your current work at CAS envisaged Poland in the post-1989 period. What motivated your change of interest in the location of research? And does your former study experience provide a fertile ground for comparative research between Southern and Eastern Europe? Actually, can these geographical definitions be still employed as analytical categories?

J.S.: When I undertook research on regionalism in the Italian Alps, in the 1990s, regionalist parties such as the Northern League* had just come to the fore, and had made big inroads in many Alpine communities, so I wanted to find out how the 'ideologies' of such parties were understood by their supporters. After the publication of my first book, *The Bounded Field* (2003), I decided to start something

new, and conduct research in an urban setting in post-Socialist Europe to explore how people cope with the challenges posed by their country's adoption of a market economy. I chose the Polish city of Gdańsk, on the Baltic Sea, because it was the cradle of the Solidarity movement that questioned the legitimacy of the Socialist regime in the 1980s. Let me stress the fact that Italy and Poland are Catholic countries. There is also a common thread that unites the two countries' recent history: when the Northern League entered the political arena, it promised to wage a 'moral battle' against a putatively corrupt and inefficient Italian state. However, later on it formed an alliance with Silvio Berlusconi, one of the most controversial political leaders in Italy's recent history. Similarly, when Solidarity was formed, it was a trade union whose mission was the protection of workers' rights against an increasingly authoritarian Socialist state. Yet as soon as Solidarity became a political party and came to power in 1989, it focused on the formation of market economic classes, and turned against the workers it was expected to protect. What unites my research projects, then, is a focus on the ways in which discourses

derived from a tradition of opposition to the structural constraints of the state may be well adapted to the demands of neo-liberal globalization. In this respect, my former study experience certainly provided fertile ground for comparative research between Southern and Eastern Europe. Whether 'southern' and 'eastern' still represent useful analytical categories is a different matter. Being part of a larger, encompassing unit such as the EU means that 'Southern' and 'Eastern' Europeans now cope with similar challenges. However, as the economic crisis has shown, categories such as 'southern' and 'eastern' still loom large in popular discourses and even in those of some EU officials who look for 'cultural' explanations of the economic disparities between different European countries.

What are your further academic plans? Are they linked to CAS in any way? And last but not least, would you recommend the academic environment of the Centre to colleagues of yours?

J.S.: I thoroughly enjoyed my stay in Sofia, and would definitely recommend the academic environment of CAS to my colleagues. My future academic plans are linked to CAS in the sense that I intend to capitalize on the intellectual exchanges I had during my Fellowship. Having been able to devote a significant amount of time to the analysis of ethnographic information collected in Poland in the last few years has been a unique opportunity. However, although my project has made considerable progress thanks to the Fellowship, more fieldwork needs to be done, so the road ahead is still long. Currently, I am working on a few articles summarizing the findings of my research so far, and I hope that these will be the basis for a scholarly monograph on *The Making and Unmaking of Political Subjectivities in Post-Socialist Poland*.

Thank you so much for your cooperation and all good luck in your career.

Interviewed by the Editor

* The Northern League (Lega Nord) is a federalist and regionalist political party in Italy, founded in 1991 as a federation of several regional parties of Northern and Central Italy, and aimed at promoting autonomy and federalism for Northern Italy. It is known as a multi-ideological catch-all party, with an ideologically diverse electorate that embraces all political spectra.

An Interview with

Elena Tzelepis

International Fellow
of the CAS Advanced
Academia Programme



Elena Tzelepis works on political and social philosophy, focusing on the intersections of ethics, politics and art, critique and social change, and the politics of difference. She completed her PhD in Philosophy at the New School for Social Research, New York. She has taught at Columbia University, New York and held visiting positions at the American University in Cairo, Egypt and the University of the Aegean, Greece. She was a Fellow of the *Advanced Academia Programme* at the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS) in 2012–2013. She is the co-editor of *Rewriting Difference: Luce Irigaray and “the Greeks”* (State University of New York Press, 2010) and editor of *Antigone’s Antinomies: Critical Readings of the Political* (Ekkremes, in Greek, in press).

Your research interests span an impressively broad area, ranging from the multiple genealogies of the European political programme and what they may signify for contemporary practices, to feminist reading and rewriting of ancient Greek texts. Which particular field or subject is closest to your heart and would you like to pursue with greater detail in the future?

Elena Tzelepis: I am interested in mobilizing the Ancient Greek intellectual traditions for a critical theory of the political, one that is concerned primarily with the question of the other. Revisiting and re-interpreting the primary philosophical texts of Western representation involves for me the question of what and who is rendered unintelligible in this economy of origination, what configurations of the feminine, racialized Others, and other unspeakable modes of humanness are produced as sites



of constitutive impropriety and exclusion. Such a philosophical critique is not grounded on the ontology of opposition, but rather on an engagement with the philosophical text that seeks to disrupt the primacy of sameness, open up the possibility of questioning and alteration, and eventually produce difference, or let difference emerge and work in the text.

The ethical, political, and theoretical implication of these textual practices of deconstruction and performative re-enactment and re-metaphorization is precisely the possibility of exposing the founding violence involved in the production of the 'origins' of 'Western' intelligibility. From this gesture of intersecting philosophy and difference, new kinds of refigurations of the theoretical and the political emerge; we learn how to engage textually with the canon of intelligibility from a position of the critically unintelligible.

Ultimately, this kind of critical reception of Western metaphysics does not merely bear upon textual questions, but signals new ways to rethink self, relatedness, experience, subjectivity, and the body, as well as to create a space for a fresh discussion of the politics of identity and the politics of difference. Hopefully, then, a critical reading of past philosophies can mobilize the critical possibility of the present.

My current research lies in tracing new and renewed enactments of cosmopolitan and cosmopolitical epistemic legacies in current struggles for democratic polity. I am especially interested in unraveling new enactments of civic dissent and configurations of the right to human dignity in present contexts of crisis and agonistic democracy at the margins of Europe. In his celebrated 1784 essay, Kant defined the lack of Enlightenment as people's inability to think for themselves due not to a lack of intellectual capacity, but lack of resolution and courage. Critically engaging with Kant's emblematic question 'What is Enlightenment?', Michel Foucault, in his seminal 1984 essay, reflected on the contemporary appropriations and enactments of the project of Enlightenment, and significantly concluded that Enlightenment requires 'work on our limits'. Challenging modernity's exhortation to grand narratives, Foucault recommended, 'we have to move beyond the outside-inside alternative; we have to be at the frontiers.' It is precisely these limits, limitations and delimitations that I seek to trace in events of human courage, claimed dignity, and social transformation. This pursuit requires us to turn to the historical experience of difference as well as the experience of different histories. In this regard, at the centre of my research pre-occupations lies the question of human agency, framed not in terms of pure reason but rather in terms of an ethos of agonistic subjectivity, which engages with the limits imposed on it and opens to the contingent possibility of going beyond them.

As for current research interests that I am drawn to, I am working on contemporary art that moves in between 'East' and 'West', an art that expresses otherness, that appears and speaks through the body, that translates between different cultural imaginaries, and moves beyond the hegemonic formation of fixed identities and 'common/places'.

Going back to your dissection of the Enlightenment Project that you undertook during your stay at CAS Sofia, how did it implicate the East in contrast to the West, and what impact does it bear in current contexts of transnational citizenship?

E.T.: Despite common idealizations of universal citizenship, the right to have rights is at stake in various contemporary contexts of unevenly distributed human vulnerability and humiliation. Putting the question of the democratic right to dignity at the centre of the political philosophy of cosmopolitanism, I am interested in exploring multiple encounters, interactions, and divisions between societies in the East and West, as they manifest themselves in the social dramas of contemporary Europe. How do these encounters and intersections, I ask, inform diverse acts, gestures, and enactments of democratic subjectivity? How do they affect the sense of epistemological and political boundaries between self and other? How do they work to draw and redraw public space as space for democracy? How are they mediated by forces of identity and differentiation such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, geographic location, as well as economic and educational privilege? What kinds of identification and belonging, difference and relatedness, citizenship and nationhood, democracy and dissent are produced and (re-)imagined by the East-West polarity?

Relevant to such divisions between the East and West are the workings of the prevailing stereotype of the Balkan experience as the European alterity: the 'troubled margins of Europe' or the Eastern ambivalent Other within the West. Such widely

circulating representations of the Balkans have been organized around hierarchical polarities such as centre/periphery, East/West, civilization/barbarism, Christianity/Islam, secularism/religion, modernity/tradition, cosmopolitanism/provinciality and rational/irrational – terms that seem to reduce particular histories and cultures to homogeneous abstractions. Greece, for instance, a country at once subsumed under the ambiguously redolent appellation of ‘the Balkans’ as the bridge between the East and the West and stereotypically celebrated as the ‘cradle of Western civilization’, can play a particularly critical role in the workings of such reductive and restrictive conceptual regimes. In speaking of the ‘borders of Europe in Greece’, political philosopher Etienne Balibar significantly takes border areas to be central, rather than marginal, to the constitution of contemporary European public space. In rethinking the divisions between

societies in the East and West, I think it is also critical that we be alerted to the radically new perspectives on the open-ended, contingent and agonistic meaning of democracy offered by the people’s revolts in North Africa and the Middle East.

What is your interpretation of the rise of strong neoliberalism in some parts of Europe, and how has it radicalized societies? Can we foresee its recession now that Europe has been suffering from an overwhelming economic slump and a deeper socio-political crisis too? If so, what is to be expected next?

E.T.: As neoliberal governance is being established as the dominant imaginary all over Europe and the globalized world at

large, at the same time, new epistemologies of the crisis and new conceptualizations of active democratic citizenship are emerging in different parts of the world. In the context of the European sovereign-debt crisis, we have been experiencing different ways of inhabiting the public space, and different topologies where these enactments are being performed, such as the urban streets and squares of Madrid, Rome, Athens, New York, Sofia, and Istanbul. As economic hardship, de-



privation, and disparities are escalating amidst harsh austerity measures with particularly adverse effect on equality and democracy, new subjectivities, collectivities, connectivities, alliances, imaginaries, modes of action, and possibilities of democratic change are emerging. People are seeking alternatives to the rampant liberalization of the markets and the shrinkage of public space and services (i.e., education and health). Recently, the sudden decision of the Greek government to shut down the national public broadcaster (which, despite its flaws, represents the only noncommercial forum of public discourse) in order to meet demands for public-sector cuts, led to a surge of democratic resistance that almost took down the government. People realize that the policies imposed

upon Europe’s periphery are worsening the crisis and jeopardizing democracy. In this sense, I think that the current and ongoing crisis provides the ground and calls for a critical re-engagement with, and a critical re-imagining of, the political. At the same time, the violent logic of crisis has brought to the fore the contingencies of everyday life, such as a growing precariousness. Furthermore, it has instigated new articulations of what it is to be ‘European’, as questions are posed about belonging, marginality, and the contested boundaries of Europe.

Dominant approaches used by European countries today, which focus on bailing out troubled banking industries and private bondholders while socializing losses, generates tremendous social injustices. At the same time, in the case of Greece, which I happen to know better, more than 80 per cent of the rescue package is going to creditors, that is, to banks outside of Greece and to the ECB. So the politics

of extreme liberalization of markets and simultaneous shrinkage of the social welfare system has already shown its limits and, more importantly, its anti-democratic implications and repercussions. The authoritarian doctrine of ‘There Is No Alternative’ (TINA), which seems to be the foundational logic of neoliberal governance, cannot be fostered in democracy, however; it is, in fact, profoundly anti-democratic. So I think that the time for alternative, non-neoliberal, democratic socio-political configurations has come.

Feminist studies used to be particularly prolific and powerful in the last decades of the twentieth century. How do these writings read now, in the twenty-first century? Do they still carry a galvanizing charge or are they

to be viewed as part of the past, and hence 'history'?

E. T.: Over the past three decades, feminist studies have travelled across time, geography, various epistemologies and fields of scholarship. Through wide-ranging and multi-layered itineraries, the dynamic and innovative area of feminist theory has been attuned to multiple identities and representations emerging under different class, racial, national, political-economic, colonial and postcolonial regimes. It has addressed, and continues addressing, the ways in which race, class, sexuality, and colonial history intersect particular ways of doing and undoing gender (to recall Judith Butler's apt phrase).

From the time when feminism tended to assume a stable and homogeneous category of women, to the critical consideration of 'women' as the subject of feminist representation and politics, feminist theory has travelled a long way. Through these itineraries, feminist theory has significantly inquired into how its subject is produced, demarcated, signified, and constrained by various structures of power – racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional.

So, yes, in a way, feminist studies are 'history', as you said; a thick, embodied, and power-fraught 'history of the present'. But they are also, at the same time, still – and always – in the making. In that respect, the field is attuned with its object of reflection: prevailing gender and sexual conceptions and regulations, doing and undoing one's gender, embodying the gender norms

that forcefully situate us as intelligibly human, and new kinship enactments – they are all marked by a constitutive fluidity and volatility. This openness to contingency, volatility, and polyvalence is one of the most powerful aspects of feminist scholarship. It is through such polyvalent openness that feminist theory offers today a powerful range of perspectives on processes of gendering and gender/sexual matrices, but also state power, transnational formations, racial constructions, and political economies, opening up and deepening our understanding of issues that are central to contemporary scholarship, such as subjectivity, power, affect, embodiment, discursivity, precariousness, performativity, normativity, as well as collective struggle and transformation.

In fact, the field of feminist studies has set a remarkably high standard for contemporary social and political theory. The challenge that feminist theory and gender studies face today is how to resist their domestication within the established norms and forms of the academy, and how to maintain their critical edge. But, in all, I do believe that feminist theory, in all its different engagements and plural reflections, has entered the twenty-first century as a remarkably powerful and innovative addition to the assemblage of new or critical humanities.

On a more personal level, how did your fellowship at the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia support and promote your own research? What memories from your stay at CAS did you take back home?

In a time of scarcity of funds for research projects in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the independent fellowship programme at CAS promotes intensive and focused research on such areas and, even more importantly, emplaces these pursuits of funded research in Sofia, thus offering a foreign fellow like myself the enabling opportunity to interact and think through the Bulgarian locality. And that is a topos under the spectre of lost socialist revolutions and ideologies which, as Miglena Nikolchina eloquently discusses in her recent book *Lost Unicorns of the Velvet Revolutions: Heterotopias of the Seminar*, led to social movements on the street and heterotopic visions of the world with a renewed sense of materialism. CAS's pulsating intellectual community and the cultural fervour of the city of Sofia, with its progressive contemporary art scene, have been a constant source of stimulating input formative to my research and theoretical reflections. I had the privilege to engage in inspiring conversations with, and have as points of reference, Diana Mishkova, Miglena Nikolchina, Svetla Koleva, Orlin Spassov, Dessislava Lilova, Dimitar Vatsov, Darin Tenev, and Daniela Koleva. It was a pleasure to explore Sofia with my co-fellows Tonka Kostadinova, Jaro Stacul, and Matthias Erdbeer. Overall, it has been a very rich academic experience, its highlights being the intellectually stimulating setting, the very competent and nurturing staff and the remarkable directorship.

Interviewed by the Editor



Advanced Academia Programme: October 2013 – February 2014

Bulgarian Module

March – July 2013



Ivan Biliarsky

MA (Law, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'), PhD (Medieval Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Science)

Affiliation: Professor, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Institute for Historical Research

Field of study: Anthropology, History

Project Title:

**The Legitimizing Figure:
Women and Power, Women
in Power in Pre-Modern Times**

The main objective of the proposed project is to present women as a legitimating figure of power in pre-modern times. In this époque power was legitimised through reference to the sacred. Thus, we can find the figure of the king-god (i. e. direct divinisation of the person in power) or of the divinely chosen king (i. e. the person in power in monotheistic religions is a bearer of special grace due to divine choice). We find a clear relation between the sacred and the profane that is usually actual-

ised by a woman – a mother, a wife or simply a source of holiness.

The classical legitimization of power in the pre-modern period is not by heritage but by election. Heritage based on the fortuitousness of birth was regarded as too uncertain and dangerous, and hence people trusted in the choice of God or some divinity. The latter were the true holders of power and they chose their terrestrial incarnation or lieutenant. The figure of woman is basic in the establishment of the relation that served the basis of the choice.

The proposed project will study the different manners in which this relationship was created. It will follow mainly two ways of power legitimization by the figure of woman: marriage and birth. Marriage appears in two forms – as hierogamy (i.e. the ritual of royal marriage of the king to a chthonic deity of fertility viewed as a maintenance of cosmic harmony and sacred order in some pagan societies), and as a form of relation between the ruler and the state (people) that appears mainly in Christianity. Birth is to be presented as a type of divine choice revealed by the mother's womb. The project's working hypothesis revolves around the idea of the presence of God – seen as the source of every power and of whole power – among people via the figure of woman. To test this hypothesis, the project resorts to methods derived from various academic fields, such as history, cultural anthropology, religious studies, gender studies, philosophy and juridical/political studies. The comparative approach is recognized as a necessary tool in a study of different cultures and civilizations for analyzing the character of the heterogeneous sources from diverse viewpoints. The overall project's novelty lies in its attempt to investigate women's role in the pre-modern past, not simply through historical facts, but also through a careful study of their religious, ideological and intellectual interpretations.



Ekaterina Nikova

MA (International Economics, Higher Institute of Economics, Sofia, Bulgaria), PhD (International Economics, Moscow State Institute for International Relations)

Affiliation: Associate Professor, Institute for Balkan Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Science, Department 'Bulgaria after WWII' (Head of Department), *Etudes balkaniques* (Editor-in-Chief)

Field of Study: Modern History, Economic History

Project Title:

**The Withering Away
of the Balkan Village**

After years of studying the modernization of the Balkans, I have come to the conclusion that the single most important phenomenon in the region in the second half of the 20th C. has been the withering away of the Balkan village. This is, I believe, one of the key factors in explaining its long-term historical change and its political, economic, demographic, social and cultural development. I am convinced that the agrarian question remains central to the explanation of Balkan communism, of its rise and fall, as well as of the so-called transition. Despite the societal preoccupation with industry, it was the agrarian modernization of the Balkans that was more profoundly disturbing and problematic.

Up to the very middle of the 20th century the Balkan countries were overwhelmingly rural and poor, with the share of peasant population amounting to 75–85% of the population, Greece being the only exception with 50%. Massive rural exodus has sharply diminished this share.

The village was the arena of the region's most dramatic and traumatic events: two civil wars



(the Greek and the Yugoslav), collectivization, de-collectivization and currently – the dictate of the EU's CAP.

In a more general way, what happened to the Balkan village and villagers was not something extraordinary. After all, isn't the gradual withering away of the village the quintessence of modernization? It is the speed, the scope and the ruthlessness, unusual even by the standards of Eastern Europe, that make the revolutionary agrarian transformation of the Balkans in the second half of the 20th century so unusual.

This project, which most broadly is focused on analyzing the course and consequences of the crash transformation of the Balkan village in the second half of the 20th century, takes an original approach. It stands out against the sea of similar scholarship for its time span (the second half of the 20th C.), scope (the Balkan region), genre (economic history) and methodology (comparative, interdisciplinary).

Is this a "chronicle of a death foretold"? For the time being it is only in Bulgaria, the most urbanized Balkan country (73% of the population is urban), where the socialist transformation of agriculture was probably the most drastic and distortions most grave and irrevocable, that we speak flatly about the "death of the village". In sharp contrast, in other parts of the Peninsula the village is quite alive. Economic activity in many rural areas is rising in response to better road access and tourism, and ultimately to the opportunities offered by EU subsidies. Thus the Balkan village appears to face mixed fortunes and we may hope that the reports of its death will be, like Mark Twain's, greatly exaggerated.



Svetla Kazalarska

MA (International Tourism, University of National and World Economy); MA (Cultural Tourism, George Washington University, USA), PhD (Cultural Anthropology, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski')

Affiliation: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Field of study: Cultural Anthropology

Project Title:

The Taming of the "Charming Dictatress". The Predicaments of Socialist Fashion in Bulgaria (1960s - 1970s)

The project will inquire into the paradoxical status of fashion under socialism, and more specifically of fashion in clothing in socialist Bulgaria. Socialist authorities had a rather ambivalent relationship to fashion throughout the regime – on the one hand, fashion was ideologically incompatible with socialist ideals, and was considered a repugnant and unwanted remnant of the decadent, bourgeois, capitalist society; on the other hand, it was deliberately employed as an ideological tool in the shaping of the 'new socialist man', inculcating socialist moral values and virtues. Fashion was subject to the pragmatic considerations governing the centrally planned economy of production and distribution and its deficiencies; at the same time, it played an instrumental role in promoting socialist 'consumer culture', especially from the 1960s onwards, and, unwittingly, in encouraging some black market practices. Fashion under socialism in Bulgaria, even if tied to the Soviet fashion model, was struggling to emancipate itself from Western fashion by resorting to the invention of a specific national style in accordance with the formula 'national in form, socialist in content', incorporating motifs borrowed from the 'traditional' folk costume. All the same, the popular imagination remained fascinated with Western fashion and commodities, as a result producing a variety of alternative fashion practices, some of which were persecuted by the authorities.

The project will pursue a historical reconstruction of the changing dynamics of the 'system of fashion' in the years of socialist rule in Bulgaria (1944–1989) by critically examining the various agencies shaping fashion and the complexity of institutional, ideological, economic, social, and cultural factors brought into play. The project will furthermore attempt to uncover how the system of official and unofficial (or alternative) fashion practices functioned in socialist Bulgaria. In this way, it will shed light not only on how the ideological guidelines were set and imposed from above, but also on how they were adopted and 'domesticated' from below.

The project will apply an interdisciplinary methodology, combining an array of methodological tools borrowed from cultural anthropology and ethnography, visual studies, semiotics, and historical analysis. A large part of the empirical fieldwork will be archival. I will examine and discuss the history of the major institutions involved in the ideological

construction of fashion, and will look into the archival files documenting the activities of the leading so-called 'fashion houses' (*Valentina, Rila, Ruen, Perun, Yanitza*, etc.) which set the 'high fashion' trends for that period. In addition, I will examine the visual representations of 'socialist fashion' in popular fashion magazines, as well as their verbal explications there, by applying critical discourse analysis and visual analysis. Popular feature films, popular books on fashion, and memoir literature will also be subject to research, complemented by in-depth anthropological interviews with former fashion designers, models, shop assistants, private dressmakers, and ordinary citizens.



Bilyana Kourtasheva

MA (Bulgarian Philology, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'), PhD (Theory and History of Literature, New Bulgarian University)

Affiliation: New Bulgarian University, Department of New Bulgarian Studies

Field of study: History and Theory of Literature and Translation, Social History of the Recent Past

Project Title:

Totalitarian (Quasi-)Translatability: The Case of 1970–1980s Bulgaria. Institutions, Mechanisms, Consequences

According to *UNESCO (Index Translationum)*, from 1979 until today, the most translated Bulgarian author has been ex-communist party leader, Todor Zhivkov. Similarly, according to the same *Index*, Bulgaria used to be the most active country in producing translations into other foreign languages. Once again, Todor Zhivkov's case is representative as, with few exceptions, all his foreign-language translations turn out to be 'home-made' and printed by Sofia-Press Publishing House. In contrast, in other ex-communist countries, a worthy combination of contemporary and classic authors (Stanislaw Lem, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Imre Kertesz, Sandor Marai, Milan Kundera, Bohumil Hrabal, etc.) dominated translations abroad.

Having this statistical picture in mind, the idea of the project is to outline a more complete and conclusive social history of literary translation from Bulgarian into foreign languages in the 1970–1980s. The questions to be addressed are: How did translation and (literary) exchange function during the totalitarian period, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, when the Bulgarian regime made various attempts to open up and build an attractive image abroad? What were the mechanisms and institutions ruling these processes? What literature was translated and how was this done; where were the translations distributed and to what extent? In other words, how was the communist 'export canon' created, and was it actually exported? To what extent was literature an aim and to what extent a means for cultural and propaganda policies of the late communist regime? And what are the consequences in the post-totalitarian period, when the ex-communist leader, Todor Zhivkov, still remains the most translated Bulgarian author (although in the native, Bulgarian market)?

These problems have been under-addressed so far. The last comprehensive bibliography of foreign translations was published in 1964, while the post-1989 period has been the focus of recently published independent research. In my work as a co-author of this research, I came across many unknown facts concerning the previous two or three decades. The field of (literary) translation from Bulgarian into other foreign languages from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s remains fragmentary and chaotic. These were the times when the communist propaganda machine was working at full speed, and heavily financed cultural projects were developed, backed by aggressive, image-making ambitions for the country and the regime abroad. Concurrently, the cultural export remained quite simulative, clumsy, nationalistic, and out-of-date – something typical for Bulgarian institutions up to the current day.

In methodological terms, the project envisages a study of the archives of Sofia-Press (1967–1990) at the Archives State Agency, of the Copy-rights Agency (1961–1993), as well as of the Committee for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Additionally, it will rely on questionnaires completed by native Bulgarian and non-native translators, editors and writers. These will address the practices of translation and publication policy under socialism.

October 2013 – February 2014



Martin Belov

LL.M (Law, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'), PhD (Constitutional Law, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski')

Affiliation: Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski', Faculty of Law; New Bulgarian University, Law Department

Field of study: Constitutional and Comparative Constitutional Law

Project Title:

The Development of the Executive Power in Balkan Constitutionalism

The idea of the project is to comparatively analyze the historical development of the executive power in the states located in the Southeastern corner of the European continent. I will explore the constitutional development of the executive of the Balkan states from the start of their constitutional statehood to the present moment. The idea is to grasp the process of formation of the national executive institutions and the main trends of their development. The substantial scope of the research will concentrate on the central institutions of the executive power – the head of state, the government, the ministers and possibly some other state organs belonging to the national executive. The executive power institutions will be examined not only as isolated phenomena. The typical institutional interactions permitted by the constitutions, that is to say the constitutional dynamics, will also be explored.

There are four main initial hypotheses on which the project is based. First, the constitutional design of the executive power of the Balkan states is shaped predominantly by the reception of foreign prototypes, as well as by their functional adaptation by the ruling local elites. Second, the separation of powers is imbalanced in favour of the head of the executive power in political practice. Third, the establishment of strong and even autocratic executive power is perceived as a strengthening of the state authority. Fourth, the modernization of Balkan societies is imposed from above by the ruling elites, where the key role is played by the executive power institutions.

The general purpose of the proposed project is to create a comprehensive and scientifically verified picture of the institutional design and the political performance of the executive power of the Balkan states. The need to focus on the executive power is predetermined by the fact that the head of state and the government are the driving forces behind the modernization and authority building of the Balkan states after the emergence of their national statehood.

The study will contribute to the development of a better understanding of the process of reception of western prototypes in peripheral European jurisdictions. The fact that the better understanding of the evolution and the current status of the national executive power institutions also possesses a European dimension is emphasized because the national prime ministers, ministers and in some cases also the heads of state are key veto players in the executive multilevel constitutionalism of the EU. Hence the institutional design and the political attitudes of the national executives of the Balkan EU member states (Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and in the near future, Croatia, too) moulded in the national history have an impact on the policy-making processes in the European Union.


Nevena Dimova

BA (University of Southern California, Anthropology and European History), MA (University of Pittsburgh, Anthropology), PhD (University of Pittsburgh, Anthropology)

Affiliation: New Bulgarian University

Field of study: Anthropology

Project Title:

**'Be Yourself, Become a Peasant':
Economic Practices and Social Relations
in a Bulgarian Eco Community**

In the past ten to fifteen years, there has been a worldwide resurrection of social movements promoting ideas of slower living, less work, more time for loved ones and self-management of one's personal life. Those movements are grounded in anti-market, environmentally oriented attitudes directed against neoliberal capitalism, the 'rat race', and its endorsed values and needs. Recently, this 'shifting down' phenomenon has gained serious support in Bulgaria too, best illustrated by the relocation of young, educated city dwellers to rural areas in an attempt to create communities and live off the land, 'independent from the changing social, religious and political systems'. Worldwide, 'shifting down' has attracted scholarly attention predominantly focused on motivation, renegotiation of identities, and the creation of new social spaces. However, hitherto little

attention has been paid to the actual survival strategies which migrants employ to support their life in rural settings.

In this project I propose to study the economic practices and the supporting social mechanisms that facilitate individual and household survival in an eco-community of Bulgarians located near the town of Svoge in northwestern Bulgaria. The main questions to be addressed in my research are: What kinds of survival strategies are employed by former city dwellers with little or no previous experience in rural life to maintain themselves? How do these migrants integrate in their new local community when they differ from it so visibly? Do they resort to any alternative support networks? Do their anti-materialist and anti-consumerist ideas lead to some form of self-sustainable existence? Or, alternatively, are market mechanisms and relations intertwined with self-provisioning in some new forms?

While a study of the survival strategies of an anti-capitalist community has its own merits, in Bulgaria it also taps into current public debates related to ecology and nature, individual and public values, as well as issues linked to European funds for regional development. Hence it provides a better understanding of the recent arrival of anti-materialist ideologies into a political and social space that still bears the legacies of former state socialism and is marked, as at present, by a relatively new and brief encounter with consumerist culture and neoliberal capitalist values.

Methodologically, the project is based on ethnographic fieldwork sustained by participant-observation, in-depth structured and semi-structured interviews amongst young Bulgarian members of the *Artecolonia* commune, and the monitoring of the community's website in order to establish the community's participation in a wider network for active promotion of alternative lifestyles. The collected data will be qualitatively analysed to discover connections between anti-materialist discourses, ideas of 'green' production and consumption, and actual ways to make one's living.


Gergana Dineva

BA and MA (Philosophy; Medieval Philosophy and Culture, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'), PhD (Philosophy and History of Philosophy, Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski')

Affiliation: Sofia University, Faculty of Philosophy

Field of study: Philosophy, History of Philosophy

Project Title:

**The Birth of the Concept of 'Personality'
and the Problem of Identity, and Their
Impact on the Transition from Medieval
Ontotheology to Modern Critical Theory**

The proposed research binds two main issues differently presented in the recent development of history of philosophy. On the one hand, we have the problem of genealogy of the concepts of 'person' (traced back to Antiquity) and 'personality' (of more recent origin dating back to the fourteenth century) which has not been subject of special research within the field of history of medieval philosophy yet. On the other hand, there is a vast majority of comprehensive studies, devoted to the development of medieval transcendental metaphysics. Amongst them, Ludger Honnefelder's *Scientia transcendens. The Formal Definition of Entity and Reality within the Metaphysics during the Middle Ages and the Modernity* (1990), is of outstanding importance for understanding the transformation of the ontotheology of the scholastic of the High Middle Ages to the ontology of Duns Scotus, and later to the transcendental philosophy of Kant's critical theory of knowledge.

The project requires the clarification of the positions of the traditional medieval scholars (Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure) and their comparison to the specific Scotistic approach in order to explicate the distinction between the two epistemological positions and observe the impact of the idea of human entity and cognition on the notion of the limits of human knowledge and the identity



of the reasoning subject. It aims to resolve the transitional path which the conception of examination of possibilities of the human intellect, as determined by the nature of the reasoning subject itself, initiates. Hence the project's objective is to establish the existence of a direct relation between the reconstruction of the concept of the knowing subject itself and the transformation of the definition of the main subject of philosophy.

My goal is to identify dependency between the new way of understanding the single unique human being not just as an individual real representation of a finite created nature, but also as a self-conscious cognitive subject capable of knowing *being qua being* as cognizable, independently from knowledge of God's existence, yet nevertheless dependent upon him for its being – as far as it is not being *per se*, and the transition from the traditional ontotheology of the scholasticism to transcendental ontology and its later transformation into Immanuel Kant's transcendental philosophy based on the notion of transcendental apperception. In particular, I will examine the major transformation within the epistemological theories of late scholasticism and the early modern critical philosophy, attempting to prove that this shift has been the result of essential differences between the two concepts of the *self*. I will claim that the important transition is linked to the fundamental reversal described as how and when the guaranteed by God finite identity and unity of the knowing subject was transformed into self-sufficient self, independent of any absolute infinite ontological guarantee. I assume that the great change in epistemology from ontotheology to transcendental philosophy lies not in the methodological turn, but rather was produced by the redefinition of the concept of person and the new idea of identity and unity of the self which one can clearly distinguish within Kant's theoretical framework, in opposition to Scotus whose ontology addressed an intellectual being fully depended on the absolute being of God.

Methodologically, the project will follow the principles of hermeneutics to facilitate the reconstruction of medieval and later thinkers' ideas as consistent with their own cultural and philosophical context. In order to avoid any 'hyperinterpretation', I will stay close to the primary sources, and my main argumentative line will be supported by the original works of the considered thinkers.



Anna Krasteva

MA (Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'), DESS (University Claude Bernard, Lyon, France), PhD (Bulgarian Academy of Science)

Affiliation: New Bulgarian University, Department of Political Sciences, Director of Centre for Refugees, Migration and Ethnic Studies (CERMES)

Field of study: *Migration and Border Studies, Globalisation and Balkan Studies*

Project Title:

Bordering the Balkans

'Bordering, ordering, othering', to cite Henk van Houtum and Ton van Naerssen (2002), insightfully synthesizes border politics. The project articulates three of its main characteristics: the ambition of this new field to express and to affirm itself as one of the leaders of the spatial turn in social sciences; the determination of borderland studies to address the crucial concepts of power, sovereignty, de/re/territorialization, difference, alterity; as well as the constructivist pathos of this new vision, in which borders lose their geographical grammar and political solidity, and become competition and fights for meaning, significance, and power.

All three characteristics are crucial for the analysis situated at the crossing of the overproduction of borders, on one hand, and the overproduction of representations, meanings, imaginaries of boundaries, on the other; as well as for understanding the effacement of borders by globalisation and the construction

of new ones. The objective of the study is to analyse the Balkans as an intensive whirlpool of politics of bordering, ordering, and othering. The project aims to examine the de/re/constructions of borders at four interconnected levels, which encompass political and intellectual discourse, representation, and art as a bridge builder, (mis)used by politics and artists.

The novelty of the project transpires in both theoretical and epistemological directions. Traditionally, Balkan academia studies borders in terms of national borders related to security, sovereignty, nationalism and ethnicity. The present study will diversify borders by including new types – mental, symbolic, esthetic – and will shift the focus from the objectivity of borders to their construction in the interplay with power, symbols, imaginaries in the dynamic processes of bordering, ordering, and othering.

The paradox of borders is that the concept emerges at the same moment as its opposite – globalization and the 'deborderization' of the world. The vanishing of state borders goes hand in hand with the explosion of new borders, their multiplication and diversification – biometrical, internal, functional, temporal, and the creation of borders beyond borders, smart borders, and symbolic boundaries...

Bordering the Balkans will follow two lines of study: the overproduction of borders – state, ethnic, cultural, etc., and overproduction of constructions, meanings, interpretations. It embraces a complex methodology for multidimensional research of border re/de/constructions by deploying the method of mental maps comparison (Fabienne Leloup, Catholic University of Mons, Belgium), critical discourse analysis of (re)definition of borders in the Bulgarian political and intellectual discourse to highlight the new definitions and policies following Bulgaria's integration in the EU, as well as critical discourse analysis of art events to disclose potential political (mis)uses. The study will critically analyse and utilise the empirical results of thirty interviews (with immigrants and expats in Bulgaria, Bulgarian emigrants, returnees and mobile individuals) on their conception of borders and the place of border crossing in their experiences and shifting identities.

International Module

March – July 2013



Sara Barbieri

BA (International Relations and Diplomatic Sciences, Faculty of Political Sciences 'Roberto Ruffilli', University of Bologna, Forlì Campus), MA (East European Research and Studies, Faculty of Political Sciences 'Roberto Ruffilli', University of Bologna, Forlì Campus), PhD (Contemporary History, Advanced School of History of the University of San Marino)
Affiliation: University of Bologna
Country: Italy

Field of study: Political Thought; Contemporary History; Diversity Management

Project Title:

Discussing Non-territorial Arrangements in a Territorialized World: Historical Models and Contemporary Debate

There is a shared consensus in the international community about the difficulties encountered by the Nation-State in guaranteeing effective democracy in multinational polities. A set of research activities and joint projects has been initiated in the last years with the aim of debating alternative socio-political arrangements able to address the problem of socio-political inclusion of National Minorities/Communities. To achieve this aim, different forms of Non-territorial autonomy arrangements were addressed both in Central-Eastern Europe and worldwide. Particularly relevant in this trend of investigations is the new momentum gathered by the debate on the possible use of the National-Cultural Autonomy Principle as a feasible alternative to the territorialization of ethnicity. The Principle was first conceptualized by the Austro-Marxist School of Thought – and in particular by Otto

Bauer and Karl Renner – at the end of the nineteenth century, and it rests on three components: Non-territoriality, determined by a clear distinction between state and nation; Personality, defined as the personal decision of individuals to govern his/her national belonging; Subject of law, based on the recognition of both individuals and nations/groups as depository of rights and duties vis-à-vis the state. In Renner's view, the modern state rests on the *territorial principle*, while the nation rests on the *personality principle*. Putting into question the 'centralist-atomist' organization of liberal democratic states, National-cultural autonomies are based on the recognition of nation/groups as juridical persons acting within the framework of state institutions (E. Nimni, 2008).

Until today, the literature towards the study of Non-territorial autonomies has maintained a strong Euro-centric attitude, and analyses are still lacking an exhaustive investigation of the Ottoman Millet System and its capacity to favour the protection of differentiated rights accorded to specific groups independently of their relation with the territory. However, the Ottoman Millet System stood on the principle of cultural autonomy in the same way as the institutional arrangements conceptualized by Austro-Marxists at the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, it has been argued that the Ottoman Millet System for religious communities was the closest precedent to Renner's conceptualization of cultural autonomies for linguistic communities (R. Bauböck, in Nimni, c.2005).

My research wants to investigate the structure and functioning of the Ottoman Millet and to debate it in relation to the idea of National-cultural autonomy advanced by Austro-Marxists at the end of the nineteenth century. The specific objective of the analysis is to underline the similarities and differences of the two models, and to address their conceptual foundations and structural organization. The Millet System and National-cultural autonomy will be examined and assessed in relation to the idea of segmental/functional autonomy advanced by Lijphart in his definition of Consociational Democracy. The result of this comparison will be discussed within the broader framework of the above-mentioned debate on Non-territorial arrangements as instruments of management of diversity in multinational states. In order to make my investigation more concrete and take the most advantage of my stay at CAS, I aim to conduct specific research on the

functioning of the Ottoman Millet System in Bulgaria by using secondary sources written both in English and Bulgarian and, to the extent possible, archival materials as well.



Raluca Grosescu

BA (Journalism, Bucharest University); MA (Political Science, University of Marne La Vallée, Paris, France); PhD (Political Science, University of Marne La Vallée, Paris, France)
Affiliation: The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile, Bucharest
Country: Romania

Field of study: Political Science

Project Title:

Retrospective Justice in Post-Communist Societies: Bulgaria, Germany and Romania in Comparative Perspective

This lecture presents the legal discourses concerning retroactive justice within the context of transitional accountability in post-communist Bulgaria, Germany and Romania. It analyses the different legal narratives that framed trials regarding state crimes that were committed before 1989, i.e. under communist rule. The presentation explores the reasons for the different approaches toward the notion of retroactive justice. It specifically focuses on those cases where the application of retroactive law was necessary in order to prosecute, namely: Bulgaria, the Lovech camp trial [1959–1962]; Germany, the Border Guards' trials [1961–1989]; and Romania, the cases concerning political crimes committed in the 1950s. While most of the scholarship on post-communist transitional justice has emphasized "the nature of the former regime", "the politics of the present" or "the strength of the civil society" as the main factors that influenced judicial accountability after 1989, I argue that the legal culture and education of the judicial officials, in particular international human rights law, played a major role in adopting or rejecting retroactive accountability measures after the dictatorship.

The lecture comprises three parts. The first part discusses the dilemma of retrospective justice in transition, where the general tendency in the post-World War II period was to abandon legal positivism when applied to mass atrocity and political repression. The second part considers the legal culture regarding human rights and the nature of legal interpretation of the law in the three countries before 1989. As most of the judges involved in trials against former communist leaders in the reunified Germany were West German jurists, while in Bulgaria and Romania they belonged to the former communist justice system, the comparison specifically focuses on the differences between the Eastern European socialist and the Western German legal culture. Finally, the third part analyses the legal frameworks and debates with regard to the application of retrospective accountability in the three countries and shows how they were influenced and shaped by the legal education of the judicial body in terms of human rights and positivist interpretation of the law.



Maria Ivanova

PhD (Philosophy, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 2012), MA (Cultural Studies, Saint-Petersburg State University)

Affiliation: independent scholar

Country: Russia

Field of study: History of Philosophy, Slavic Studies

Project Title:

Early Modern Ruthenian Art of Dissimulation: Central European and Byzantine Perspectives

The problem of *ars dissimulandi* in Slavic cultures has long remained on the margin of research interest. Whereas prolific work has been carried out on dissimulation in French, English, and Italian cultures, there is only a limited amount devoted specifically to dissimulation in Slavic cultures in the early modern era. American, Polish and Ukrainian scholars have made a most valuable contri-

bution to the tradition of studying the art of dissimulation; yet until now, there has been no work devoted specifically to dissimulation in early modern Slavic thought.

The goal of the project is to examine the art of dissimulation in early modern Ruthenian intellectual thought on the verge of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to study the causes which brought it to life in Ruthenia, and to show its peculiarities as well as its impact on the development of later philosophical and theological thought in Russia, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, as well as Central Europe. Although my project addresses several important aspects of the art of dissimulation – theological, political, cultural – my major concern is its philosophical aspects.

In particular, I examine how the concept of dissimulation was thematized and treated in certain authors' (Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Jean Calvin, Immanuel Kant) works. This broader philosophical perspective helps me find an appropriate interpretation model for 'Ruthenian dissimulation' as placed in a philosophical context. Next, I denote the key features of dissimulation in early modern Europe, which could also be detected in 'early modern Slavic dissimulation'. I look more closely at the prerequisites of the emergence of the views on dissimulation and the need to dissimulate in Eastern Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century by studying the links between the notion of dissimulation and practices of mental reservation (*reservatio mentalis*), and *nicodemism*. Refraining from explaining Ruthenian dissimulation merely by portraying it as a set of social-political actions ('expediency' discourse) or a multitude of moral cases (ethical discourse), I am thus interested with the rhetoric of dissimulation, with dissimulation as a means of organizing a narrative.

To illustrate this philosophical and rhetorical dimension of dissimulation, I recourse to the Byzantine impact on concealment theory. I demonstrate that Eastern Christian principles of apophaticism and hesychastic silence shaped early modern dissimulation techniques and discourse to no lesser ex-

tent than Protestant nicodemistic practices or Catholic doctrines of equivocation and licit lying. I also deal with the phenomena of amphoteroglossia and cryptopaganism as Byzantine instances of dissimulative rhetoric and dissimulative behavior. This helps me prove that the Byzantine context is as crucial for understanding Ruthenian art of dissimulation as the Western European one. Finally, I demonstrate that early modern Ruthenian scholarship of the seventeenth century became widely recognized not only in Russia and Eastern Europe but also in Central European countries. I prove that seventeenth-century Ruthenian grammatical thought influenced the development of the intellectual cultures of Croatia, Serbia, and Bulgaria.



Konstantina Zanolu

BA (Performing Arts, National School of Dramatic Art, Greece), BA (History and Archeology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), MA (Modern History, Birkbeck College, University of London), PhD (History, University of Pisa)

Affiliation: University of Nicosia, Cyprus

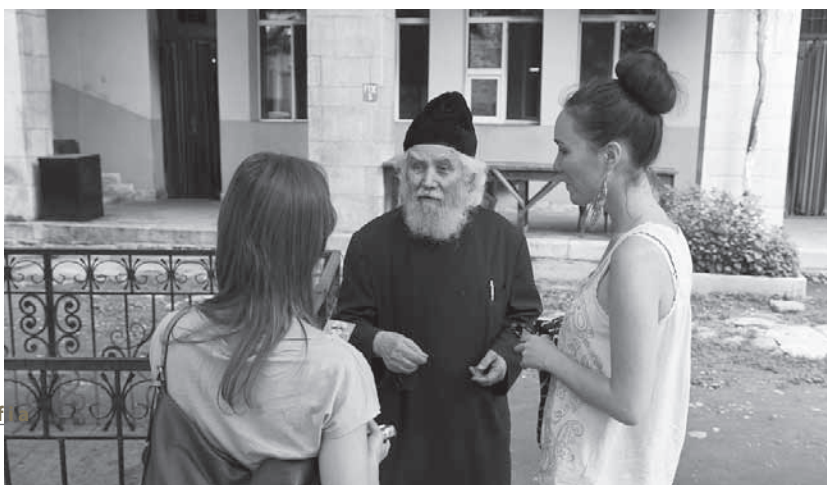
Country: Cyprus

Field of study: History

Project Title:

Between Two Patriae. Greek Intellectuals in Italy and the Shaping of a Peripheral National Consciousness, 1800–1830

My project studies the last generation of Ionian intellectuals who were born and raised within the world of Venetian imperial culture



that had united for centuries the two shores of the Adriatic, a world that ended during their lifetime. The collapse of the Venetian Empire and the emergence of a series of antagonistic nationalisms amounted to the dissolution of the common Adriatic space and the breaking up of its Venetian cultural continuum. The project presents a story of the transformation of the sea from a bridge into a border, and of intellectuals adjusting to a changing world by repositioning themselves in a reality of rapidly shifting loyalties between empires and nation-states. It is also a story about the development of nationalisms, Greek and Italian, and of the alternative to the French Enlightenment paths taken by a portion of Southern European and Balkan national patriots.

The project aims to contribute to the recently reinvigorated discussions on diasporas and nationalism, and particularly on the role of exile communities in shaping national consciousness during the nineteenth century. By approaching the nation as a historical product of transnational movements and subnational contestations, the project aspires to eschew the teleology and linearity of earlier readings and point to the polycentricism and asymmetries of the national phenomenon. Its subject, approach and methodology place it within the framework of transnational intellectual history and history of cultural transfers in the Mediterranean. It is also highly informed by recent studies on borderland identities, multi-ethnic patriotisms and the circulation of ideas on a peripheral/regional level.

The project's objectives are to enhance knowledge of the cultural/ideological production of this neglected part of the Greek intellectual diaspora; to unearth forgotten paths towards national consciousness alternative to those developed by the 'Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment' project; to investigate the ways in which these intellectuals and patriots acquired national consciousness and explore the unevenness of this process. Amongst the project's goals are also to enquire into the ways pre-modern regional cultural loyalties were consolidated into state-national; to examine the process through which old symbolic cultural centres and geographical unities were replaced by a series of new and usually conflicting points of national reference; and to study the phenomenon of 'exilic nationalism' and elucidate how distance from home, nostalgia and philhellenism interacted with each other in order to stimulate a sense of 'displaced' national belonging.

October 2013 – February 2014



Grigory Benevich

MSc (Leningrad Polytechnic Institute), PhD (Theory and History of Culture, University of Culture and Art, St. Petersburg)

Affiliation: Russian Christian Academy for the Humanities, St Petersburg; St Petersburg School of Religion and Philosophy

Country: Russia

Field of study: *Cultural Studies, Patristic and Byzantine Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy*

Project Title:

A History of Providence from Plato to Maximus the Confessor

'Providence' was one of the most important concepts in the philosophy and culture of Late Antiquity, and it was shared by both pagan and Christian philosophers and thinkers. Although its importance is widely acknowledged and there are a significant number of studies dedicated to the concept of providence and fate in the writings of the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity, so far there has been no comprehensive comparative study of Pagan and Christian teaching on God's providence. In order to conduct such a study, one needs to choose an efficient strategy for clarifying the most interesting and important problematic questions relevant to this theme. The present study has chosen to focus on the teaching on providence of Maximus the Confessor (a prominent Christian thinker of the seventh century), and especially on the philosophical and Patristic tradition written in Ancient Greek as the most relevant aspect of Maximus's thought.

Maximus's synthesis is rightly regarded the greatest achievement in Christian thought of Late Antiquity, and his teaching could serve as a new perspective for reconsidering the entire history of teaching on providence in

Late Antiquity. Therefore, the principal goal of the present study is to make a systematic analysis of providence in Maximus the Confessor, whose creative synthesis included and transformed the most important ideas of a preceding Christian tradition engaged in fruitful dialogue and polemic with pagan schools of philosophy. While Maximus's teaching on providence has already been analyzed, this has not been done in the context of a full-scale comparative study that would systematically investigate his sources, their historical context, and finally Maximus's own teaching as well as the fate of this teaching in Byzantine and Orthodox Christian thought. The methodology of history of ideas as well as a philosophical and hermeneutical analysis of the texts within a cross-cultural research project will broaden the study and give a deeper understanding of the character of interaction between Christian and Pagan thought. It will also contribute to a better understanding of the philosophical systems and worldviews of many important thinkers of Late Antiquity.

The starting point of my research will be an overview of the teaching on providence and fate in Ancient Greek thought beginning with the pre-Socratics and Plato, with special emphasis on Plato's philosophical transformation of mythological thinking and his influence on both pagan and Christian teachings on providence. Secondly, attention will be paid to Gnosticism and early Christian Orthodox authors and to various approaches to the notion of fate in different Orthodox Christian authors as compared to approaches to Gnosticism by Pagan philosophers. The issue of prayer, too, will be investigated, as the latter was rejected by many Stoics and Middle Platonists on the grounds of the existence of providence and fate.

An important aspect of the project is to provide an overview of the Neoplatonists' theories of providence and fate (especially those in the sixth century), which will be analyzed and compared to the teaching of Christian authors from the same period. In this context, issues related to providence and astrology, predestination, predetermination, free will, theodicy and the role of 'fate' and 'providence' in it, as well as the Neoplatonists' understanding of the ethical and ontological dimensions of fate and providence will fall in the limelight, too.

Finally, the project will comparatively focus on the teaching on providence of Christian authors who were the main sources of Maximus's inspiration. Maximus's own theory of providence will be carefully analysed by examining how his concepts were purified and assumed a meaning of their own. Last but not least, the study will investigate Maximus's legacy in the later Orthodox tradition.



Ada Hajdu

BA and MA (Art History, National University of Arts Bucharest, Department of History and Theory of Art); PhD (Visual History, National University of Arts Bucharest, Department of History and Theory of Art)

Affiliation: National University of Arts Bucharest, Department of History and Theory of Art

Country: Romania

Field of study: Architectural History

Project Title:

The First Attempts to Create a Bulgarian National Style in Architecture - the Last Decade of the 19th Century

It has become a common trope in academic literature to mention a relationship between the national architectural styles of Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia and their Byzantine heritage, but this relationship has not been thoroughly investigated. Even if architects in these countries view themselves as inheriting and continuing Byzantine architecture in their work, it seems that there are important nuances in what they understand under 'Byzantine architecture', especially in a period when the term 'Byzantine' itself was a rather elusive notion if linked to the perception of the 'national'. While the Serbian and Romanian cases have received scholarly attention by and large, the

Bulgarian case (with few exceptions) remains under-researched. Consequently, my research proposes a closer look at the beginnings of the national style in Bulgarian architecture, focusing on the end of the nineteenth century, when the idea of a local Byzantine and a Neo-Byzantine style prevailed.

Controversies about the 'invention' of a national style, linking it to Byzantine heritage, emerged in Bulgaria during the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the guild faced the need to construct a funeral monument for Alexander Battenberg, the first prince of modern Bulgaria. This was followed by criticisms of the Bulgarian pavilion at the Paris World Fair, 1900, which did not live up to native expectations of 'Bulgarian-Byzantine' architecture. However, what did the envisaged 'Bulgarian-Byzantine' style look like? The question is all the more interesting in that the Byzantine, Romano-Byzantine, and Romanesque styles had been of rather recent concern to French and German art historians in the later nineteenth century, while their characteristics – as well as their 'Oriental' or 'European' orientation – had yet to be defined.

My research addresses this issue, using an analytical reading of both primary and secondary Bulgarian sources (period publications, specialized journals) of the period under investigation. I intend to study the extent to which architects' plans and projects, regardless of their implementation in practice, were consistent with their writings. I will also utilize my stay in Sofia to directly evaluate the visual evidence of this architectural style, compare buildings still existent to their initial projects, and locate period images of buildings now lost. Being part of a broader comparative study of the Bulgarian, Romanian and Serbian cases, I hope my research will open new paths for questioning the relationship between architecture and nationalisms in Southeastern Europe.



Pawel Marczewski

MA and PhD (History of Ideas, Sociology; Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw)

Affiliation: Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw

Country: Poland

Field of study: History of ideas

Project Title:

Political Hybridity – Polish Liberal Republicanism Between the West and the Past

Republicanism often figures as a rhetorical tool for criticizing current public life in Polish contemporary political debates. Right-wing intellectuals tend to refer to the example of *Rzeczpospolita*, the First Polish Republic (or the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) to stress how Poles should revive their half-forgotten traditions of political liberty, civic engagement, and patriotism. On the other side of the political spectrum, the so-called Republic of Nobles is treated as a source of deeply rooted maladies and linked to inequality, disregard for underprivileged classes, or lack of a strong welfare state. In practice, the political thought of Polish republicanism has become hostage to the struggle between 'traditionalists' and 'modernizers', and a subject of nostalgia and scorn, too, while drawing from the language of postcolonialism. Interestingly, however, both 'traditionalist' and 'modernizing' readings share the assumption that Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and its variant of republicanism, was incapable of reforming itself. Traditionalists interpret the reluctance to reform as a virtue and a guarantee for *Rzeczpospolita* to remain a reservoir of impeccably local political ideas and institutions. For 'modernizers', it is proof of backwardness and a starting point of the Polish path to dependence.



In my project I would like to question this shared assumption. The term 'hybridity' suggests that the political thought of Polish republicanism drew from two sources of influence. On the one hand, it incorporated some ideas of modern liberalism, like the rights of the individual or the value of free commercial activity. On the other hand, it tried to retain some of its core concepts in the new context of social equality, political challenges of absolutist states, and the necessity of transforming an agricultural economy into one capable of industrial production. The result was a 'hybrid', i.e., a set of political conceptions inspired by old traditions that were modified in the process and adopted to local political frameworks. The meeting of 'the West' and 'the past' produced a new political discourse of liberal republicanism, which was far from being a simple sum of certain concepts taken from two different sources.

The concept of hybridity rests on the assumption that in a world of many cultures and political traditions inherited from the past, negotiated in the present, and projected onto the future, differences can be understood as something *in-between*, as a point where the past is not merely 'the beginning', and the present is not merely 'temporary' (Bhabha 1994). Therefore, in my project discussion of political hybridity of Polish liberal republicanism focuses on a particular point in the development of political tradition when the past met the present and the future, i.e., the long parliament of 1788–1792 and the Kosciuszko insurrection of 1794. Hybridization of Polish republicanism will be illustrated with the political writings of thinkers advocating reforms and the extension of political rights beyond nobility. I aim to show how the older, republican tradition was transformed under the impact of new, liberal ideas, and how it influenced them in turn, resulting in the creation of a hybrid political discourse.

The project does not aim simply to propose a novel interpretation of a crucial development in Polish political thought. Taking under consideration political and rhetorical uses of republicanism in contemporary Poland, it may prove fruitful to use a 'hybrid' interpretation of Polish republicanism to challenge the nostalgia for an illusionary paradise of Polish *libertas*, as well as the fatalism concerning the Noble Republic's backwardness.



Stephanie Spoto

BA (English, University of California, Irvine, USA), PhD (English Literature, University of Edinburgh, UK)

Affiliation: Independent scholar

Country: USA

Field of Study: *English Literature*

Project Title:

William Lithgow (1582–1645) and Early Modern Scottish Journeys to Eastern Europe

This project looks at perceptions of Islam and the Middle East in early modern England and Scotland, focusing on John Selden's *De Dis Syris* (1617) as a work of comparative religion, which incorporates ancient eastern philosophies, religions, and ideas into contemporary comparisons between Christianity and Islam. At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, increased exploration into northern Africa and Asia – along with the recent expansion of the Ottoman Empire – meant that there was increased contact between English and Scottish Christians and Muslims. Scottish travellers William Lithgow and James Hepburn journeyed to the Middle East and Southeastern Europe, and documented their observations of the language, culture, and religion. I will investigate how English and Scottish explorers experienced eastern culture and Islam, and how this was influenced by their own relationship with Christianity and their identity as English, Scottish, or British, and where they understood similarities – rather than differences – between their faiths.

This is a new project, which builds on my doctoral research on John Selden and the semiotic transition of near eastern philosophy and ideas into Western Europe. Selden's *De Dis Syris* (1617) – an early work of comparative

religion – chronicled the transformation of near eastern gods and goddesses, philosophies, and theologies, through to their Greek and Roman counterparts, and drew parallels to Biblical figures and stories. Though this work has been little studied, it is one of the earliest examples of a theory of Indo-European language and culture. Working from the original Latin, this project will examine a growing awareness of an occidental debt to oriental ideas, looking at the linguistic focus in Selden's writing. The project will then place the work within the context of contemporary early modern interest in the ancient and the early modern middle east, looking at English perceptions of Islam, and how that potentially influenced Christian identity.

The aim of this project is to give a background for Christian and Muslim relations after the rise of Istanbul and how ideas of the Middle East, and knowledge of Middle Eastern philosophies, faiths, languages and cultures, had an impact on both Christian identity and British identity. Selden's theories of comparative religion will be compared to first-hand accounts of Islam in the works of Richard Wragge (1598), John Cartwright (1611), Sir Henry Blount (1636), and Edward Webbe (1590), in order to create a coherent framework through which to examine Christian identity and East-West relations in the early modern world. This will be a rare opportunity to look at the variations between Scottish and English perceptions of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East, as the post-Crusade histories were being re-written not only through a Christian lens, but also with a heavy English nationalism. The recent Union of the Crowns under James VI and I affected how Scots understood their place in the larger world, and I hope to have the opportunity to study how this influenced their interaction with the east and non-Christian cultures.

The research will also include an investigation of James Hepburn (1536–1578), about whom very little is written. In his work on eastern languages, I hope to find a precedent to John Selden's semiotic understanding of linguistic similarities between Semitic language groups and western European language groups in Hepburn's linguistic scholarship.

Overall, this project will seek to research instances where Christians felt a continuation of belief extending geographically from east to west, and in particular will look at moments where Christians felt themselves to be part of a larger faith that extended from Europe into Asia, and that had a common history, but varied paths of evolution.

CAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2012–2013

November 2012 – June 2013



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November 2012

13 November 2012

Book Launch:

Ivo Hristov (ed), *The (Un)Established Rule of Law in Bulgaria*

15 November 2012

Fellow Seminar:

Dr Tonka Kostadinova, *International Community's Policy Dilemmas in the Post-Conflict Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage as a Society-Building Model in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

29 November 2012

Fellow Seminar:

Prof. George Dimitrov, *Constantly New: Studies in Discontinuities and Transformations in Social Science*.

December 2012

13 December 2012

Fellow Seminar:

Dr Matthias Erdbeer, *The State of the Game: Aesthetic Modelling and the Ontology of Fiction*.

20 December 2012

Fellow Seminar:

Dr Jaro Stacul, *The Making and Unmaking of Political Subjectivities in Post-Socialist Poland*.

January 2013

10 January 2013

Fellow Seminar:

Dr Svetla Koleva, *Everyday Citizenship as a Social and Cognitive Challenge: East-West Perspectives*.

11 January 2013

CAS International Workshop:

Conceptual History Of European Regions And Boundaries: Second Session.

15 January 2013

CAS Discussion Series:

Existential Socialism: Love under Communism: First Seminar.

17–21 January 2013

Negotiating Modernity Project:
International Conference.

24 January 2013

Fellow Seminar:

Dr Darin Tenev, *Possibility and Negativity*.

February 2013

07 February 2013

Fellow Seminar:

Dr Elena Tzelepis, *The Cosmopolitics of Art: Borders and Feminist Resistances Beyond the 'East' – 'West' Binary*.

15 February 2013

CAS Discussion Series:

Existential Socialism: Love under Socialism: Second Seminar.

25 February 2013

CAS Guest Lecture Series

Dr Ewa Klekot, *Can a Non-Existant District be a Heritage Place?*

March 2013**05 March 2013**

Advanced Academia Public Lecture
Dr Metodi Rozhdestvenskiy, *The Barbarian Rhetoric: 5th Century BC– 6th Century AD.*
(Venue: American Corner of Sofia City Library)

12 March 2013

Advanced Academia Public Lecture:
Dr Darin Tenev (Sofia University), *Possibility and Negativity.*

15–16 March 2013

Negotiating Modernity Project:
Concluding Conference.

19 March 2013

Advanced Academia Public Lecture:
Prof. Miglena Nikolchina (Sofia University), *The Humanism-Antihumanism Divide: the Concept of 'Man' Between the End of World War II and the Fall of the Berlin Wall.*

26 March 2013

Advanced Academia Public Lecture:
Assoc. Prof. Svetla Koleva (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), *Everyday Citizenship as a Social and Cognitive Challenge: East-West Perspectives.*

29 March 2013

CAS Discussion Series:
Existential Socialism: Love under Socialism: Third Seminar.

April 2013**02 April 2013**

Advanced Academia Public Lecture:
Dr Tonka Kostadinova (Institute for Security and Defence Analysis, Athens), *International Community's Policies in the Post-Conflict Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage as Society-Building Model in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

09 April 2013

Advanced Academia Public Lecture:
Prof. Georgi Dimitrov (Sofia University), *Constantly New: Studies in Discontinuities and Transformations in Social Science*

11 April 2013

Fellow Seminar:
Dr Konstantina Zanou, *Stammering the Nation. Transnational Patriotism in the Ionian Islands and the Adriatic, 1800–1830.*

16 April 2013

Advanced Academia Public Lecture:
Assoc. Prof. Tsvetelin Stepanov (Sofia University), *Invading in/from the 'Holy Land': Apocalyptic Metatext(s) and Sacred and/or Imagined Geography, 950–1200.*

19 April 2013

CAS Discussion Series:
Existential Socialism: Love under Socialism: Fourth Seminar.

18 April 2013

Fellow Seminar:
Prof. Ivan Biliarsky, *The Legitimizing Figure: Women and Power. Matrimony and Power.*

23 April 2013

Advanced Academia Public Lecture:
Assoc. Prof. Roumen Avramov (Centre for Advanced Study), *The Economics of the Revival Process.*

25 April 2013

Fellow Seminar:
Dr Sara Barbieri, *Discussing Non-territorial Arrangements in a Territorialized World: Historical Models and Contemporary Debate.*

May 2013**09 May 2013**

Fellow Seminar:
Dr Bilyana Kourtasheva, *Totalitarian (Quasi-) Translatability: The Case of 1970–1980s Bulgaria. Institutions, Mechanisms, Consequences.*

16 May 2013

Fellow Seminar:
Dr Svetla Kazalarska, *The Taming of the 'Charming Dictatress'. The Predicaments of Socialist Fashion in Bulgaria (1960s–1970s).*

17 May 2013

CAS Discussion Series:
Existential Socialism: Love under Socialism: Fifth Seminar.

June 2013**7 June 2013**

Fellow Workshop:
Simulation and Dissimulation in European Philosophical and Theological Thought (a workshop convened by CAS fellows: Dr Maria Ivanova and Dr Gergana Dineva)

13 June 2013

Fellow Seminar:
Dr Maria Ivanova, *Early Modern Ruthenian Art of Dissimulation: Byzantine and East-Central European Perspectives.*

14 June 2013

CAS Discussion Series:
Existential Socialism: Love under Socialism: Sixth Seminar.

20 June 2013

Fellow Seminar:
Dr Raluca Grosescu, *Retrospective Justice in Post-Communist Societies: Bulgaria, Germany and Romania in Comparative Perspective.*

27 June 2013

Fellow Seminar:
Dr Ekaterina Nikova, *The Withering Away of the Balkan Village.*



Research Forum **series**

CAS Sofia / Riva Publishing

