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'Through its regionally oriented mission, the Centre is able to rouse the interest of international academic partners and have an impact on public debates in the societies of transition. With its informal and tolerant academic environment, the Centre will create conditions for intense and creative communication among younger scholars and intellectuals, thereby contributing to the innovation of local systems of science and research. Thus, it will foster the establishment of a transnational, European, and regional network among academics, future opinion leaders, and decision makers in the region.'

From the Memorandum
of the Centre for Advanced Study
Conference
26-28 April 2002



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The Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia (CAS) is an independent non-profit institution set up for the promotion of advanced scholarship and academic cooperation. It provides financial and institutional support for post-doctoral research and for research programmes in the Humanities and the Social Sciences.

The idea of creating a small 'centre of academic excellence' in Sofia draws upon the traditions and the practices of the Institutes for Advanced Study in the US and Europe. CAS has emerged in response to specific national and regional context-generated needs, especially the drastically diminished influence of academia in the public sphere and the lack of intellectual agency to carry out authoritative critical self-reflection in the societies of the region. In the context of European integration, on the other hand, the Southeast-European countries need to develop a new regional network for academic and intellectual co-operation and facilitate their regional and European opening. There is thus a clear need to foster the production of knowledge and innovative ideas about the region as a step towards a fundamental reconsideration of the notion of European belonging.

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Shaping the Future of the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia: CAS Conference, Sofia, 26-28 April, 2002

For the Centre for Advanced Study, the CAS Conference in April 2002 was arguably the most important institution-building event of the year. Its significance was twofold: on the one hand, it demonstrated the Centre's achievements before a distinguished international audience, on the other, it generated support for the Centre's future development.



The international guests' programme started with a visit to Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski' on 26 April. There, they met Prof. Boyan Biolchev, Rector of Sofia University and Fellows of the Centre. They also attended a reception hosted by the Rector. Present at the reception was Mr. Vladimir Atanassov, Minister of Education and Science, who gave a welcoming address.

The following day, 27 April, began with a visit to the Centre for Advanced Study, where Prof. Alexander Shurbanov, Head of the Department of English and American Studies at Sofia University and Chairman of the CAS Executive Board, acquainted the international guests with the Centre's aspirations. Next, the participants walked the several hundred metres to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to meet Prof. Naum Yakimoff, General Secretary of BAS and Vice-Chair of the CAS Executive Board.

In the first part of the Conference those familiar with the Centre presented their views on its various *raison d'être*.

Prof. Alexander Shurbanov explained the place of CAS within the Bulgarian academic context. He painted the institution as a concerted, conscious **attempt to resist the Westward brain-drain** away from Bulgaria and the region by trying to turn Sofia – and, possibly, other university

For the conference, the members of the CAS Executive Board, the CAS Fellows and representatives of Bulgarian academic institutions and funding organizations were joined by the following international participants (in alphabetical order):

Dr. Katharina Biegger, Secretary,

Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Germany

Dr. Maria Couroucli, Chargé de recherche, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), France

Prof. Yehuda Elkana, Rector of Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Dr. Rainer Faupel, Ministerium der Justiz und für Bundes- und Europaangelegenheiten, Germany

Dr. Claudio Fischer, Gruppe für Wissenschaft und Forschung, Bern, Switzerland

Dr. Fred Girod, Secretary, Collegium Budapest – Institute for Advanced Study, Hungary

Dr. Wouter Hugenholtz, Executive Director, Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS), The Netherlands

Ms Anoeek Jeuken, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, The Netherlands

Janos Kovacs, Permanent Fellow, Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (IWM), Austria

Dr. Mary Ellen Lane, Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), USA

Dr. Wolfgang Levermann, VolkswagenStiftung, Germany

Dr. Joachim Nettelbeck, Secretary, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Germany

Dr. Klaus Segbers, Freie Universität Berlin, FB Politische Wissenschaften, Germany

Dr. Olga Spilar, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, France

Mr. Andrew Sors, Socio-Economic Knowledge Base Unit, European Commission, Brussels

cities too – into well-equipped and lively attractive international centres for the intellectual and professional advancement of young academics. Prof. Naum Yakimoff referred to the Centre as a **partner to the Academy of Sciences in promoting excellence, interdisciplinary and international co-operation** in the region and within Europe. Dr. Wouter Hugenholtz, Chairman of the CAS Board of Trustees, summarized the history of CAS, defining it creatively as ‘short but sweet’. In conclusion, he claimed that ‘after one year of preparation and one year of operation, the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia has become **a magnet for new research initiatives and a popular address for international collaboration**. The remarkable speed with which the Centre has developed and the number of successful activities, illustrate how convincingly the Centre has proven its value and justified its existence. However, it is now our task to look forward and secure the Centre’s future.’

Afterwards, in detailed presentations, Dr. Diana Mishkova and Dr. Alexander Kiossev discussed the Centre’s mission and distinctive profile.

Alexander Kiossev pointed out that the Centre had so far tried to give hope, good working conditions and the heuristic atmosphere of a real intellectual community to some of the best local young scholars by **creating chances, links, and financial and intellectual opportunities** for them. ‘Part of our mission’, he said, ‘is to attempt to open the Bulgarian academic community towards

public and social problems ... [and] ... **enhance the social impact of scholarship and research**’. Next, he stressed the Centre’s ambition to serve as a **link with the Bulgarian intellectual and academic diaspora** abroad.

Diana Mishkova revealed the Centre’s distinctive profile, the features and functions that evolved in response to specific local needs. She described CAS in Sofia as falling within the category of **small and flexible coordinating centres** for interesting regional and larger international projects undertaken either unilaterally or in conjunction with other academic institutions. She also stressed its **regional role in breaking the boundaries of self-centred national traditions** in research and education and promoting a new – positive – vision of regional belonging, hence the Centre’s dependence on operating in a vigorous **network of similar and related institutions**. Further, she expressed the Centre’s ambition to act as a link between academia and the institutions engaged with the current social and political problems of Bulgaria. Finally, Dr. Mishkova described CAS’s **educational aspect**: on the one hand, its ambition to serve as a ‘nursery’ for bright young Balkan scholars and academics; on the other, its co-operation with the Southeast European Academic League, i.e. its participation in curriculum development in the social sciences.

The second part of the Conference, entitled *Visions from Within and Without*, addressed the Centre’s future ambitions.

Initially, Diana Mishkova summarized the Centre’s functions as a response to specific local needs: its regional function in acting as the **host and coordinator of regional projects** from Turkey and Greece to Slovenia and Hungary, its function in promoting **intellectual mobility and mobile professorship** and its function in the **dissemination of knowledge**. A specific and vital educational need that CAS was facing, the speaker pointed out, was that of **motivating young people for research and an academic career in their own country**. Finally, the most obvious need that CAS met was that of **collaboration with the network of advanced study institutions abroad**.

Alexander Kiossev set out the Centre’s priorities and vision. In the future, it would continue to follow the model of analogous advanced study centres: **maximum research quality in an elite intellectual community**. Concerning the Centre’s public image and social impact, it would continue pursuing an **intelligent and well-advised applicability of its elite intellectual product** while steering clear of two traps: engaging in primitive activism or following a political agenda. The main social and political role of the Centre would be that of a catalyst for creating a small, yet active academic community of critically thinking intellectuals in a region where critical “voices” were marginalized during the transition period and the public sphere was conquered by the commercial press and the electronic media. As concerns the



Centre's partnerships, there would be a balance sought between **closer co-operation** with local universities and academia and increasing involvement in the network of centres for advanced study in the region (the New Europe College and Collegium Budapest) and across Europe.

Specific future initiatives for the next five years were presented by Diana Mishkova. These included an **individual fellowship programme** to promote independent research by Bulgarian scholars in conditions similar to those in the West; **short-term visiting fellowships** for Western and regional scholars for lectures and workshops at CAS; regular **public lecture-series** co-organised by CAS and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to serve as a forum for regular meetings of local intellectuals and dissemination of advanced research among the broader public; **new international research projects**. Dr. Mishkova spoke also about the planned publication of a **working-paper series** edited by an international board solely on the basis of the publications' intrinsic scholarly value and potential to be used as reference literature. Future efforts on building up the **CAS Library**, the speaker said, should be aimed at turning it into a major reference and Balkan-bibliography database centre, delivering normally inaccessible library services to local and foreign academics working on the region, and providing links to the major Balkan libraries and their Balkan-Studies databases. The **CAS News-letter** would become a major source of information about the Centre and an instrument for keeping the CAS communal spirit alive.

In the third, final part, the participants offered their advice and recommendations for the future development of the Centre.

Dr. Wouter Hugenholtz, NIAS, Dr. Joachim Nettelbeck, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and many others were of the opinion that the most important priority for CAS now should be to secure its institutional sustainability and financial support for the next five years. Most participants stressed the need for financial support, however humble, by the Bulgarian government as a token of approval and support.

One crucial point, Dr. Nettelbeck suggested, was the need for CAS to build, on the basis of the expertise and quality generated by the NEXUS and Identity Reader projects, another long term core project, building upon regional issues, but aiming at an intellectual agenda with a universal significance. Such a project, bringing together national, regional, European and global aspects, could contribute to the elaboration of the right profile of the centre and could facilitate its international visibility and recognition. CAS should continue to sustain its major achievement so far – the building of an intellectual community of young regional academics, and to initiate smart and delicate re-link programmes.

Prof. Yehuda Elkana, Rector of the Central European University, Dr. Klaus Segbers from the Freie Universität Berlin, and many other participants suggested that the intellectual base of CAS be broadened with other disciplines through the election of new permanent fellows with expertise in, for instance, law, economics or social sciences. Dr. Wolfgang Levermann from Volkswagen Foundation and others pointed out the importance of the Centre's specialization and building of a distinct profile to distinguish it from similar institutions, the need for CAS to differentiate itself from Collegium Budapest and NEC and develop research projects promoting its distinctiveness as a regional advanced study centre.

There was general support for a scheme of individual fellowships for both Bulgarian and international scholars and consensus on the need for a more assertive PR approach and more visibility for the Centre. Mr. Andrew Sors, representing the European Commission, expressed satisfaction with the impressive portfolio of CAS, and proposed that, in order to secure European funding, CAS should open up towards the European programmes (such as CORDIS). He said that the Centre's ambition to play an intermediary role between research and policy matched one of the priorities of the European commission.

One crucial point is the need for CAS to build another long term core project, upon regional issues but aiming at an intellectual agenda with a universal significance. Such a project, bringing together national, regional, European and global aspects, could contribute to the elaboration of the right profile of the centre and could facilitate its international visibility and recognition. CAS should continue to sustain its major achievement so far – the building of an intellectual community of young regional academics, and to initiate smart and delicate re-link programmes.



An interview with
Prof. Dieter Grimm,
Rector of the
Wissenschaftskolleg
zu Berlin and Member
of the CAS Board of
Trustees.

Intellectuals can play a complementary or corrective role in public affairs – first of all by reminding politicians and people of the long-term effects of short-term decisions, second, by controlling whether the decisions of politicians are taken on correct factual assumptions.

Dieter Grimm

The Future Roles of Scholars and Advanced Study Institutions

Prof. Grimm, why does the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin support Eastern European scholarship? What is the motive behind your involvement with Collegium Budapest, the New Europe College in Bucharest and now the Sofia Centre for Advanced Studies?

The right person to answer this question would be my predecessor, since it was his idea, but I think it was an excellent idea. After the events of 1989 and 1990 it was necessary to bring academics and academic institutions from East and West into closer contact with each other. Not in the sense that the West should teach the East, but to create a forum for the exchange of ideas. Another motive was that one could observe how many, very promising, scholars from the former Socialist countries left and took up opportunities in other parts of the world – the United States, the United Kingdom. This is an unhealthy development, at least as long as it remains unidirectional, and thus our involvement was also an attempt to reverse this outflow.

In what way do you expect the future co-operation between this Centre and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin to develop? Is there anything in particular that you are looking forward to?

I think that one of the most important tasks in this part of the world is creating the basic structures for the development of civil society – this is an area in which the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin is very much interested and here I see possibilities for co-operation. On the other hand, our knowledge of the developments and

cultural history of this part of the world has to be enhanced. We always blame the Americans for knowing too little about Europe, but we don't know enough about the Balkans either.

Do you have any impressions of the South-east European fellows at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin?

This was my first year as Rector, and I do not know the fellows who were there before I arrived, so it is a bit difficult to answer that question. However, where similar institutions were created this was done mostly by former fellows of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin such as Diana Mishkova from Sofia. So they are certainly an important link, and apparently their stay was fruitful and stimulating.

In the future, how do you see the role of such advanced study institutions as the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and CAS?

My impression is that the university is no longer the place where one really finds time to reflect and to open oneself up to new ideas and other traditions of knowledge. The university could be such a place, because all disciplines are represented there, and universities are a little more international than they used to be in the past. However, in most countries academics in universities are overburdened by administrative tasks, teaching, enormous numbers of students, all of which is very demanding. Thus even scholars who are creative and could develop new ideas do not find sufficient time to do so. The most important role of centres of give scholars the opportunity, at least for a preexcellence of this type is that they give schol-

ars the opportunity, at least for a period of time, first to develop new ideas and then, second, to test these ideas vis-a-vis the experience of scholars from other fields or other cultures.

As a constitutional lawyer, do you participate in public affairs and politics a lot?

I feel free to write in newspapers and periodicals. I did this even while I was a member of the German Constitutional Court, although not on matters pending in the court, of course, that would have been inappropriate. But when I saw a development coming up, which I thought was detrimental to constitutionalism or political culture, I felt free to speak about that. Also, there is a tremendous demand for interviews by journalists from the press, radio and TV. I accept them only when the subject matter is important, when I have to contribute something, and when I get sufficient room or time to develop my own ideas. I also engage in discussions with politicians when I have the impression that they are open to an exchange of ideas and do not only expect an academic confirmation of their ideas. I do it regardless of party affiliation; I am not a member of any political party myself.

Do you believe academics in general should get involved in politics or otherwise seek more active involvement in the outside world?

It depends on the conditions and on the way it is done. In general I think they should, because there is a certain likelihood that, in the field of specialization, they have a more solid knowledge and a longer-term perspective than politicians. One cannot blame politicians for taking a short-term view because they are under certain constraints, the most important one being the next election coming up. Intellectuals can play a complementary or corrective role in public affairs - first of all by reminding politicians and peo-

ple of the long-term effects of short-term decisions, second, by controlling whether the decisions of politicians are taken on correct factual assumptions. I would always encourage them to do that.

But there is also another temptation for intellectuals, not only to contribute to political discourse or to give advice, but to become influential in politics themselves. This entails the danger of being abused by politicians and of corrupting science. Not all politicians look for scientific knowledge. Many look for academic support of their political purposes and tend to select the academics according to party affinity. One should not lend oneself to that sort of abuse.

Do you believe that the state should fund research, do you believe it has a duty to do this or should scholarship be left to private donors?

I think that the production of knowledge and the creation of a state of affairs where people can criticise political and economic developments from independent points of view is a public task, and knowledge and science is a public good. So I think the state is under an obligation to provide the basic means for that. Which does not mean that I would exclude private funding. Both public and private funding have their advantages and disadvantages: the disadvantage of private funding is that the private sector wants immediate return. They want something that is useful in developing products and rationalising economic behaviour. The danger of public funding, of course, is that it gets under political imperatives. So funding, whether it is public or private, should be done in a neutral way - I think one needs intermediate organisations that are not under direct political or economic control to take care of that.

Interviewed by the Editor



Anca Oroveanu on the New Europe College and CAS

*Interview with
Anca Oroveanu,
Scientific Director,
New Europe College,
Bucharest
Representative of the
NEC at the meeting of
the CAS Board of
Trustees*

Could you describe for our readers the function of the New Europe College (NEC) in Romanian academic and public life?

It is slightly different from the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia. It was modelled on the more traditional institutes for advanced study, that is to say, its core programme and most other programmes offer individual fellowships. You choose from among a number of applications and form a group that meets regularly to discuss each individual's work, it is an interdisciplinary group and there may be fellow is coming from a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. What distinguishes NEC from other institutes of the same kind is that it has been targeted at local (Romanian) scholars, instead of being international, as the others are. This is no longer altogether the case: starting with last year, we added to our other fellowship programmes a Regional Fellowship, open to applicants from South-Eastern Europe and Moldova.

Does NEC have a Balkan focus like CAS in Sofia?

No, it has no thematic focus. We thought about this a lot and we chose, rather than to fix the focus in advance, to use the opportunity to see the natural priorities of the people who want to do research. We felt pre-selection of topics might interfere with our concern for quality, that is, when you have a focus, you are obliged to take on people that fit in better with that focus and leave out interesting and worthy projects which don't. So the core programme consists of ten fellowships in the Humanities and social sciences, taken by people who are



increasingly younger, a multidisciplinary group meeting for an obligatory weekly seminar, moderated by the Rector (Prof. Andrei Plesu) or by myself, or by both of us, where fellows present their work.

We had several aims in mind when opting for this model. One was to compensate for the fact that people working for institutes or university departments are not necessarily encouraged to work on projects which do not come into the general research concept of the institute's director or department head. Another was to create bridges between disciplines, something that does not happen at all within the conventional academic life in Romania. The third was to develop a culture of open, critical intellectual debate.

We also have additional programmes. For instance, the Higher Education Support Programme of the Open Society Institute helped us to do 'Relink', a programme aimed at facilitating people with international degrees who found coming back to Romanian academia difficult. This programme gives them incentives to come back and helps them keep the research habits and contacts they have built in the academic world outside Romania.

Yet another programme, designed with the help of the Getty Institute, targets art historians or people interested in visual arts. The idea is to bring visiting scholars from the outside to

acquaint the Romanian public with new methodologies and approaches in Visual Studies, and to offer a number of fellowships attached to that.

We also have a continuous programme of visiting scholars from abroad. They can come from any discipline within the social sciences and the humanities. People like Jacques Derrida, Stephen Greenblatt, Marjorie Perloff, or Tony Judd, the Director of the Remarque Institute in New York, to mention only a few, have been among our visitors.

Do you have a high profile in Romanian society?

We do have a high profile in intellectual circles, especially since we have larger premises and are able to organize large events for greater audiences. The college has become quite visible. Our public events are truly public, and we try to invite people from the research institutes and universities.

Do politicians come to those events?

Occasionally, depending on whether the event in question is interesting from their point of view, e.g. if we have a talk by a specialist in international relations or a prominent figure such as Adam Michnik, who did come. If the talk is about the Romanian economy, for instance, we would on occasion invite politicians who might make interesting contributions. We are trying to be visible and raise in our public's view issues that are relevant, but we are not trying to be closely connected to the political world. (Nor do we try to isolate ourselves from it.) We want to remain independent. There are so many contexts in which politicians appear – it is the fashion now on all television programmes to have talks with politicians, and they lend themselves to that with the greatest of ease – we don't want to make the College into an annex of such political (not to say electoral) debates.

Do you have the feeling that, if you so wished, you could influence a political decision?

Frankly, not, nor is this our immediate aim. This can happen indirectly in some cases. Some of the alumni have become civil servants, and have perhaps taken the spirit of the college and of its community with them. In a longer term perspective certain attitudes, certain approaches, or ideas might come to have a wider influence. But to say that there is a consistent policy on the part of the College to influence political decisions would be wrong. There is a delicate balance between addressing questions of relevance, even urgency in a context like the Romanian one, while maintaining a scholarly approach, and encouraging political activism. The role we have set for ourselves is to promote good scholarship rather than political activism.

Do you see any ground for co-operation between CAS and the New Europe College?

Specifically, because we share a regional perspective, I think many of the questions that concern them will match questions that interest the people that are close to the College. Also, since we developed a regional programme which is different but complementary to theirs, we could look for ways of co-ordinating these programmes. In general, since the Bulgarian and Romanian context and experiences are in many ways similar, it seems to me, it is worthwhile thinking together about how to be of use to our respective societies.

What specific problems do you think you would have in common?

It seems to me that both the research and academic settings may suffer from the same shortcomings and the role played by our institutions may be in a way similar. It would seem to me surprising NOT to find ways of collaborating.

Since the Bulgarian and Romanian context and experiences are in many ways similar, it is worthwhile thinking together about how to be of use to our respective societies.

“Short but Sweet...”

Dr. Wouter Hugenholtz on the History of CAS and... “Land Rent” in Indonesia



Interview with
**Dr. Wouter
Hugenholtz,**
Executive Director
of NIAS and Chairman
of the CAS Board
of Trustees

Dr. Hugenholtz, what did you mean when, at the April Conference on the future of the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia, you said that the history of CAS was ‘short but sweet’?

“Short but sweet” was perhaps not the right expression but what I wanted to emphasize was the speed and triumph with which CAS took off. The institute’s record is certainly one of extraordinary success. What began as a casual idea quickly became an exciting reality. People liked the idea of an institute for advanced study in Sofia from the very start but were not sure how it could ever come about. Then, very soon, only one year later, an unexpected opportunity to set up such a Centre presented itself. Another half year passed and CAS became a legal reality, and now, two years later, it is an active, dynamic Centre with a series of very successful activities. Reporting on the history of such an institute is indeed a rewarding task.

What was the most important outcome of the April Conference? Can you give our readers an idea of its significance?

This was, in fact, the first time that the Centre presented itself to the outside world and, in particular, to leading figures from both Bulgarian and international academia. The Centre was presented so convincingly that people were struck by its potential. In fact, they fell in love with the Centre. What they saw was a small group of people working on a number of very interesting projects of high quality. CAS is a good initiative, launched by good people, which deserves full support. Such support, however, has yet to materialize.

Another important outcome is the institute’s international profile. If academic institutions abroad need a partner in Bulgaria, they will now turn to the Centre for Advanced Study. We took an important step forward in getting CAS recognized as the Bulgarian representative in the international network of institutes for advanced study.

How do you imagine the Centre ten years from now? Have you actually thought thus far?

No, the framework we are now working in is five years. After the Conference, there is another crucial step to be taken; that is, to find funding for the institution. It is always difficult to find money to set up and run an organisation. If we are successful in finding sponsors for an institutional grant, I see a wonderful future for the Centre. However, such a grant is by no means secure yet, this will be the task for the coming months. If we find money for those first five years, my guess is that in ten years time CAS will be a much larger Centre. My feeling is that the present location is already too small. Once you have an institutional budget, you can expand the number of projects and programmes, and get another building. By then, hopefully, CAS will have taken up its own distinct position in Bulgarian academia.

Just joking, I’ve always thought CAS should be housed in the Gallery, the Former Palace. Usually institutes for advanced study are located in nice buildings because they need to provide an inspiring environment for the fellows who work there. The Collegium Budapest is beautifully located in an old Council

The Centre was presented so convincingly that people were struck by its potential. In fact, they fell in love with the Centre.

Hall at the top of the hill in Buda. But this is not really a pressing need until the Centre starts offering its own individual fellowships.

What is the difference between the function of CAS and that of NIAS in the Netherlands?

NIAS was the first centre for advanced study in Europe. It was inspired by Princeton and modelled after Stanford, as such it is a traditional institute. We are able to invite about forty fellows a year, both Dutch and scholars from abroad.

CAS is starting the other way round. It cannot offer individual fellowships because that is too costly. It has started as a Centre for projects and is more focused on the younger generation of scholars. It is also involved with SEAL (the Southeast European Academic League), which addresses education rather than research. Through the Blue Bird project, CAS has become active in policy-making as well.

Does NIAS in the Netherlands have political clout? Is it a high-profile institution?

No, it doesn't. It has always kept a low profile. In the past it was known in academic circles, but little known outside academia. This low profile was deliberately chosen – in the 1970s and early 80s an elitist institute in a democracy was more likely to be criticized than appreciated.

At present, things are different. NIAS has been given due recognition as a unique institution within Dutch academia. People have realized that we have high levels of expertise, including eminent professors from abroad. So, now we are going public, trying to attract more attention for our research topics. We have developed a policy of informing journalists who our NIAS fellows will be during the year and if they are interested there will be interviews in the papers. We have also invited politicians and prominent public figures such as our Prince of Orange,

for instance, to informal dinners of 12 to 15 people, to acquaint them with the Institute. To 'open the curtains' was a deliberate choice.

CAS has been like that from the very beginning. That is its charm – it is involved in drafting an agenda for a civil society in the Balkans. People like Sasho are in the newspapers. In that respect it is unique. If CAS develops a fellowship scheme, it will become more like NEC in Bucharest, but right now there is not another CAS in Europe. To come back to your first question – from a daring dream, something unique has developed very quickly. Moreover, it has gained the approval of governmental and academic circles remarkably quickly. By contrast, in Budapest, the Collegium had a very tough time gaining approval. People have realized the value of such an institute for Bulgaria: The Minister of Education has agreed to sign a co-operation agreement and the Rector of Sofia University has agreed to join the board. In the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences there is no jealousy, only the combined will to co-operate. This is remarkable.

Does the world need advanced research?

Over the last 10-15 years almost every country in the West has established an institute for advanced study. NIAS, the oldest in Europe, was set up in 1971. There is an ever increasing need within the university system for separate institutes for advanced study and that, perhaps, has to do with the arrival of mass education. The importance of an institute such as NIAS is that it provides scholars with an environment that gives them time to think and to write. It is a place that relieves them from all kinds of administrative burdens. It is also a place where people from completely different disciplines have the opportunity to exchange ideas; where they are confronted with unexpected reactions, frameworks, theories or academic paradigms. University life

has changed so much that if you work, for instance, in the psychology department, you only talk to your colleagues and you don't "have access" to anthropologists or sociologists, people from other disciplines. The really original thoughts, nowadays, are conceived in institutes for advanced study or similar environments. In Bulgaria, CAS cannot offer individual scholarships, but at least it can pay young scholars to participate in projects and do research, rather than go into consulting or whatever else they may have to do to earn a living. It can also offer facilities (such as a specialized library), and connections with the other institutes. It will be, for instance, easier to approach NIAS through CAS.

It would be interesting to know something about your own research? How did you develop your interest in colonial history?

I was born in Indonesia and became interested in colonial history during my student years. At that time I also developed an interest in the Dutch institutional history of the 18th and 19th century. At a certain point, I had to choose between the two, and then luckily I found a very good topic with an institutional aspect in colonial history. I started work on the colonial administrative system, which was fascinating, in that it was a dual system: it had a European level and, as it was called, a Native level. From then on, I became interested in a tax called "land rent", which was introduced by the British under Thomas Raffles, and, subsequently, continued by the Dutch. The huge variety of ways in which this tax was levied in Java became, for me, a way to unravel the enormous socio-economic variety of that island. Later the Dutch policy was to harmonize the levying of this tax, so that land rent then became an instrument of state formation.

Interviewed by the Editor

CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY CONFERENCE

April 26-28, 2002, Sofia

MEMORANDUM



At the conclusion of an international conference dedicated to the critical discussion and assessment of the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia and its plans for the future, the participants* agreed that the creation of such a Centre was a timely and important initiative that deserved – and needed – further support. The Centre's achievements so far were considered impressive and heading in the right direction, answering the needs of the Bulgarian system of higher education and research. The Centre's policy was particularly well received for:

- targeting researchers who are young, exceptionally bright, active, and responsible,
- bringing together experts from the entire Balkan region,
- representing a broad range of academic disciplines and scholarly traditions, and
- working on projects of topical scientific interest,
- without neglecting dimensions of social and political relevance.

Impressed as the conference participants were with the achievements so far, they fully supported its plans to develop further as an independent institution. The Centre was strongly encouraged to continue its endeavours. With a view to the Centre's future academic activities, the participants recommended broadening the range of disciplines and strengthening the contribution of scholars of law, econom-

ics, and the social sciences in general. It was also stated as a clear desideratum that permanent research staff (full time or part time) should be appointed who would represent these other disciplines of scholarship. This naturally would enlarge the core budget. However, this was taken into account and formally recommended.

The Centre already has working agreements for cooperation with the University of Sofia, the Bulgarian Academy of Science, and the Ministry of Education and Science. So far, it has received substantial intellectual and financial support from an international network of sponsors and research institutions. It now needs the means to sustain a small but solid infrastructure from which it can administer projects funded by other sources. The international sponsors expect that the Bulgarian state will express its commitment by contributing to the institutional operating costs.

The conference participants were convinced that, through its regionally oriented mission, the Centre is able to rouse the interest of international academic partners and have an impact on public debates in the societies of transition. With its informal and tolerant academic environment, the Centre will create conditions for intense and creative communication among younger scholars and intellectuals, thereby contributing to the innovation of local systems of science and research. Thus, it will foster the establishment of a transnational, European, and regional network among academics, future opinion leaders, and decision makers in the region.

Letters in Support of CAS from the Minister
of Education and Science, the Minister for European
Matters and the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Republic of Bulgaria
Ministry of Education and Science

Sofia 1000, Knyaz Dondoukov Blvd. 2A,
Tel. 921 75 07, Fax 987 12 89

Ref: 33715/24.07.2002

Mr. Milen Velchev
Minister of Finance
Mr. Solomon Passy
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ms. Meglena Kouneva
Minister for European Matters

Dear Madam and Sirs,

In November 2000 in Sofia, a non-governmental organization - the Centre for Academic Study – was founded. Its mission is to enhance the quality of academic research and assist talented young Bulgarian researchers financially and in organizational terms. It is headed by a team of established Bulgarian scholars in the sphere of social sciences and humanities. The Board of Trustees is composed of renowned European scholars – including ex-officio the Rector of Sofia University, the Rector of Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Prof. Andrei Plesu - former Romanian foreign minister and minister of culture etc.

Since its inception the Centre has been regarded by the Ministry of Education and Science as a promising non-governmental organization in the academic field, built according to a tried and tested European model and filling a major gap in Bulgarian academic life. In its first two years, this organization has demonstrated considerable capacity in the sphere of academic research and in assisting talented young researchers. Compared to the humble amounts that the state budget can set aside to fund academic research, CAS has won, over the period 2000 – 2002, more than \$500,000 in funding for international projects, funding which came to Bulgaria through educational and research programmes. More than 90% of this has been disbursed as scholarships to young Bulgarian scholars (ca. 30 scholarships have been awarded so far to young scholars from this country and the Balkan region). However humble, that has constituted a step in the effort to control the brain drain from Bulgaria. These specific achievements have persuaded the Ministry of Education and Science that the Centre's contribution is timely and useful; so has the Centre's cooperation

with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", the National Library, and the serious international support for the Centre by the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS), the House for Human Sciences in Berlin, Collegium Budapest, the New Europe College in Bucharest etc. Therefore, the Ministry signed a framework cooperation agreement with the Centre on 10.11.2001. Meanwhile, similar agreements have been signed between the Centre and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", and the National Library (some of these concern also the development of specific projects).

Currently the Centre for Academic Study is in the second phase of its institutional development. In April 2002 it organized an international conference, attended by representatives of similar centres abroad and representatives of some of the most important sponsoring organizations supporting the development of European scholarship. At this conference the Centre's work won unanimous approval and support. It was recognized as an equal member of the European network of such centres and received concrete recommendations for its future development. In the concluding Memorandum, which we enclose together with a list of the distinguished guests, both Bulgarian and international participants voiced the opinion that at this stage the Centre needs to be financed not only from abroad but also partially by the Bulgarian state. Such financing would demonstrate to foreign sponsoring and assisting bodies that the Centre is in touch with the governmental educational and academic policies, that it has good partners on the national level and that its successes are appreciated, and that its activities are considered useful and worthy of support by the Bulgarian Government.

The Ministry of Education and Science is of the opinion that currently the Centre for Academic Study is a serious organization with international experience and influence and that it contributes to the positive image of Bulgaria in the process of integration into international academic research. Therefore we subscribe to the opinion of the international sponsors and would like to ask the Ministry of Finance to consider the possibility of extending financial assistance to the Centre. We would also like to turn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of European Integration with the suggestion for them to support our opinion that the Centre deserves financial assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Atanasov
Minister

23.07.2002

*Letters in Support of CAS from the Minister of Education and Science,
the Minister for European Matters and the Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Republic of Bulgaria
The Minister for European Matters

Ref: 04-19-459/07.08.2002-08-20

Mr. Milen Velchev
Minister of Finance

Republic of Bulgaria
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The Minister

Mr. Milen Velchev
Minister of Finance

Dear Mr. Velchev,

I consider the suggestion of the Minister of Education and Science Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Atanassov for partial financing of the Centre for Academic Study in Sofia to be an appropriate and timely suggestion. The serious international support – both academic and financial – that the Centre has received by now from prestigious foreign organizations and foundations proves that in its field it is a serious partner to its international colleagues. What the Centre has done so far demonstrates that it not only carries out its specific scholarly research successfully, but also initiates regional cultural and scholarly contacts, affirms European values and contributes to the positive image of the civic, social and institutional changes in Bulgaria. Assistance for such useful civic organizations should be part of state policy. It can and must become part of a complex process of introducing European norms and practices to Bulgaria, a process in which our country demonstrates effective cooperation between state institutions and the organizations of civil society. Therefore I recommend that the none-too-great subsidy suggested by the Minister of Education be given to the Centre. That would tell our European partners that the Bulgarian state takes a serious interest in the institutional development and stabilization of successful civic organizations with an international reputation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Meglena Kouneva
Minister for European Matters

Dear Mr. Velchev,

I am writing to support the suggestion of the Minister of Education and Science Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Atanassov concerning financial assistance for the Centre for Academic Study in Sofia. The Centre is a prestigious organization which may serve as the representative of Bulgarian scholarship in the emerging network of such research centres in Europe. Its recognition by international academic and sponsoring institutions is also a recognition that Bulgaria is an equal European partner in academic scholarship and in large international research projects. The regional focus of its activity is part of the Bulgarian effort to sustain Balkan cooperation and a step in our efforts towards European integration. The Centre is capable of acting as a link between Bulgarian scholarship and education and the large Bulgarian academic diaspora abroad.

A financial commitment by the Government to the existence of this organization, however humble, would convince the Centre's European partners that the Bulgarian Government appreciates and supports the efforts of this organization.

Yours sincerely,

Solomon Passy
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sofia, 06.08.2002



Maria Todorova

University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign

By focusing on the process of remembering, this project lays stress on two facets. On the one hand, addresses a dynamic and changing process, in which there are constant and consecutive reassessments and rearticulations of the communist experience. On the other hand, by favoring the term remembering, rather than memory, it emphasizes lived experience but one inflected by the exigencies of the present moment at which the act of recollection (remembering) takes place.

Over a decade after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, “transitology” has had an almost complete life cycle: from hopeful birth through turbulent exploration to a deep epistemological crisis and virtual death. One of the many reasons for the failure of the transition model was that it never paid due attention to the question of what these societies were transiting *from*. The existing image of “real socialism” is still crucified between the completely delegitimized discourse of official state socialism, and the no less inadequate but surviving cold-war models. Ironically, with the pronounced death of ideology, the understanding of the experience that shaped the lives of three to four generations in Eastern Europe, and even more in the Soviet Union, is still frozen in an ideological straightjacket.

While the critical attitude toward the transitology enterprise and the existing state of interpretations of really lived communism (to distinguish it from the body of high-quality works dedicated to communism as an intellectual/ideological endeavor) inspires this project, it is not propelled by any epistemological hubris aiming to substitute the paucity of a manichaeian view of communism with the “true,” “correct,” “objective” or simply new model of what communism was. Rather, by focusing on the process of remembering, it lays stress on two facets. On the one hand, it ad-

Remembering Communism

Maria Todorova

dresses a dynamic and changing *process*, in which there are constant and consecutive reassessments and rearticulations of the communist experience. On the other hand, by favoring the term *remembering*, rather than *memory*, it emphasizes lived experience but one inflected by the exigencies of the present moment at which the act of recollection (*remembering*) takes place.

The proposed broad theme on remembering communism is manifold and multidisciplinary. It seeks to involve practically all social science disciplines – sociology, political science, anthropology, and history in the rich variety of its subfields – and give an impetus for a renewed dialogue across disciplines. The research goal is broadly comparativist: to address the problem of how communism is remembered today in view of contributing to the better understanding of the legacy of a past system which had shaped the everyday lives of considerable numbers of people in several generations around the globe. How does subjectivity (here memory and remembering) help pluralize the experience of socialism among separate nations? The project is based on the conviction that there is no single idea and practice of communism. The communist experience was extremely diverse not only along a geographic but also on a diachronic scale. How is the communist experience pluralized across national borders, and by looking at different ethnic groups and/or minorities, social strata, professional groups, across the gender divide, at discrete age clusters, etc.?

In the past couple of decades work on memory has been growing to the point of becoming so fashionable that some authors have diagnosed the notion as “depreciated by surplus use.” It has produced a large and contro-

versal body of scholarship based on often mutually exclusive theoretical premises. Memory's *doppelgänger*, identity, is equally a ubiquitous cliché, an inseparable part of the memory discourse. While this project is methodologically informed by the variety of theories underlying the bulk of memory and identity studies, theoretical options are kept open, instead of setting rigid parameters from the outset. In a very broad sense, however, the project positions itself at the center of the debate over the relationship between personal memory and what some define as collective/public/social memory. Others (I among them) are skeptical about the indiscriminate application of the category memory to the collective (which is different from Halbwachs's insistence on collective memory, in the sense that each individual memory is suspended in a social web, i.e. is social, and thus collective, by definition). Without being its main goal, theoretical issues on memory will be discussed and notions refined in this project.

Since subjectivity is at the center of our interest, the stress will fall mostly on collecting and interpreting personal memories, without, of course, precluding the support for parallel or ongoing research on different forms of creating and sustaining group perceptions and attitudes. Subjectivity here is used in the sense introduced and practiced by Luisa Passerini, as "that area of symbolic activity which includes cognitive, cultural and psychological aspects." By putting a premium on subjectivity, it may seem that we privilege entirely the tradition of *Alltagsgeschichte* which itself is closest to social and cultural anthropology. It is not that the project favors exclusively social history with a powerful "everydayist" and "oralist" appeal, to the detriment of political and, broadly speaking, intellectual history. Jürgen Kocka in particular has warned of the dangers of completely side-track-



ing global structures and processes, the preferred domain of traditional social history, in favor of individual and group subjectivities and their response to outside structures. Insofar as the project would like to focus on these aspects, it is not because it wants to make a methodological point in favor of this approach to the detriment of others, but that simply, as far as the study of the lived communist past is concerned, these aspects have received minimal attention. The approach does not imply a hierarchy of interviewed and analyzed "remembrancers" in which the "common man" is necessarily privileged over politicians and intellectuals. While situated differently, and with different access to power and articulation, as well as different strategies of adaptation or resistance, they all have their part in the *Alltagsgeschichte*. In this project, the subjectivities of the elites (including the former nomenclatura) are a central object.

The bulk of existing and ongoing work on memory in Eastern Europe focuses on memories of repression and human rights violations, and the subsequent juridical and institutional framework to overcome them, i.e. the

coupling of remembering and retribution. While these aspects are extremely important, we would like to broaden the investigation to other facets of the communist experience. What are the memories not only of extraordinary situations but of everyday life? What accounts for the phenomenon of the so-called postcommunist nostalgia and how is it articulated? What are the links between individual memories and shared knowledge, group perceptions or collective myths, in a word what is the relationship between individual memory and the production of official normative assessments designated as public memory? In addition, it is not simply about the public/private divide but about trying to capture memory which is publicly denigrated at the present time. In some of its aspects, this problem can follow the direction and methodology of *Alltagsgeschichte* as it was applied after World War II first to the interwar history of Germany, but also increasingly to postwar developments. It is, in a word, an attempt to understand the mechanisms of creating existential normality in what, otherwise, has widely been agreed to be an abnormal political climate: an authoritarian and, in several of its episodes, a totalitarian experience. More importantly, this project responds to or, rather, apprehends a public demand to be aware of the peculiarities of transformation of 'objective' reality into a subjective one and to take it seriously.

In contrast to the German case, however, it has a wider and more immediate practical relevance than the attempt to reach social catharsis. Fascism's significance in the postwar period was mostly as a traumatic aspect of experience and memory to be abruptly and radically overcome; the much longer and more diverse communist episode has actually had no *Stunde Null*, and has been fading away at a different pace, but essentially in a

gradual way. As a problem, the legacy of communism and how it is perceived retrospectively, has practical bearings on at least two aspects of contemporary developments. One is the process of European enlargement on which much energy and funds are going to be focused in the coming decades. The other concerns the growing problems with the world-wide reception and reactions toward/against globalization. In addition, a project on remembering communism has a far wider relevance than solely for the East European region which experienced it in practice. To mention but a couple of other European examples, research on these lines is beginning in Greece and has been going on for some time in Spain, countries which have lived through civil wars, and where the communist alternative was stifled and muted much like the obverse case in the communist countries. In a long term perspective, this project should draw on world-wide comparisons with the experience and memories of Asian, Latin American, and African communism. Last, but not least, it can be seen as part of the memory of the left alternative (social democratic, anarchist, communist, etc.) in Western Europe and North America, something which will highlight in a proper comparative perspective the place of the communist experience as one of the major (the evaluative component quite apart) reformist and modernizing drives of modernity.

Alongside the intellectual reasons set out in the preceding paragraphs, there is an existential urgency about this project. Simply put, people who “remember” the beginnings of commu-

nism in Eastern Europe as a lived experience are quickly dying out. The ones who were born under communism, and have spent all their formative years under the regime — the 40 to 60 years old — are busy adapting or actively forgetting. At the same time, in the societies that in the past dozen of years have come out and are moving away from communism, there is little if any support for serious research on the communist past, apart from the understandable focus on the oppressive side of the system. This makes the scholars’ task to rescue from oblivion or from disappearance the artefacts, but especially the thoughts about this past, rather pressing.

To my knowledge, at present there is no systematic research covering and coordinating the whole Eastern European/Eurasian area or even a smaller part outside national boundaries. On the national level, on the other hand, there have been initiatives in a number of countries to create repositories for materials from the communist period, to publish source material, and to organize research groups around a variety of problems: the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland; the Open Society Archives of the Central European University in Budapest, which house the archives of the RFE/RL Research Institute; the Institute for Contemporary History in Prague; other national institutes for contemporary history or sections at the appropriate institutions. In Germany, the Bunderstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur concentrates on the communist period, as does the Institute for History and Biography at the

Fernuniversität Hagen. The Yale project on publishing communist documentation from the Soviet archives could be added to this list. There are also a number of shorter or longer-term collaborative projects between scholars from the region and their western counterparts researching different aspects of life under communism.

This project is at its initial planning phase. It was first proposed by me and accepted as a current theme of the Regional Advisory Panel for Eastern Europe and Eurasia at the Social Science Research Council. As a long-term project, it has the potential to cover the whole communist and post-communist world in a global setting. The task, however, is so enormous that it is practical to start with a smaller pilot-study, preferably in one particular country, and then expand regionally and in a comparative perspective. Bulgaria was selected as the first pilot-study of the broader research project. To this end, we organized a training seminar on memory and an extended international workshop in Sofia in June/July 2002. The workshop, in particular, discussed the concrete aspects of the research project (identifying the sources, methodology and thematic emphasis), and resulted in forming four interdisciplinary research teams. This fall, and for this part of the project, we are looking for funding agencies to support our project with the active help of the SSRC.



History and the Self: Autobiography, Biography, and Oral History

Hanna Schissler



In her talk at the Remembering Communism Workshop,

Prof. Hanna Schissler
(Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research) suggested a model for understanding and making sense of the 20th century, based on Charles Maier's idea of the end of what he calls 'territoriality'. Then she considered the place of biographical research and oral history within the larger context of history as an academic discipline, and examined the setting in which biographical research and the work of the oral historian unfold in order to elucidate the connections between "the Self" and "History." The following is an excerpt from the introduction and the second part of her talk.

In our lifetime (or in the life-time of our parents) we have experienced war and genocide, growth and decline, multiple ruptures, processes of decolonisation and mass migration. Some of us have experienced the Second World War and/or its aftermath with the massive displacement of millions of people, and the establishment of a precarious Cold War stability. We have all experienced the watershed of 1989, the demise of the Soviet Empire, the reorganization of states as well as supranational units, and the renewed ethnicization of politics. We have also witnessed cultural breaks, strife for civil rights of minority groups and women's rights. We watch the ongoing globalisation without the analytical tools to make sense of the complex developments and processes involved. We stand helplessly before the ever growing gap between rich and poor countries.

Since 1989 the world has become *one* again and we are connected to each other, but the "one world" is more fragmented than ever. Our lives unfold in a time of rapid social change, rupture and loss of traditional orientation. Zygmunt Bauman has characterized this condition as postmodernity, a condition that occurs when "the center no longer holds."

Human behaviour and actions have their own signature, their specific meaning, and they all have their biographical right. We carry our lives in a kind of mental backpack. Much of the time we hide the content; occasionally we cannot prevent the content from jumping out, and sometimes we stuff the backpack so tightly that it breaks at the seams and the content spills uncontrollably. If we are about to engage in a

project on biographical research, it is a good idea to be aware of this and to accept our own diversity as part of a common experience, which we will also explore as we engage in our project.

Contemporary History and Oral History Research

In the historical sciences, oral history has been something of an outsider, tolerated as an exotic approach rather than happily embraced. Yet I believe that oral history, if done wisely, has enormous potential for our understanding of the world, and of the world of the people we are going to interview.

Oral history is always contemporary history, since its subject is personal memory, a personal memory, which also reveals collective memory – that is at least what oral historians believe, following Maurice Halbwachs' assumption that in individual memories traces of collective memory can be found. However, oral history constitutes a special case, uneasily received by mainstream contemporary history. Why? Contemporary history has established itself (in Germany and elsewhere) as a particularly "objectivist" way of doing history, which means it has been reluctant to adopt methodological innovations, and it is not particularly prone to introspection. Where does this reluctance come from? German historiography might serve as an example.

In 1953, the re-migrant Hans Rothfels established the field of contemporary history in Germany as dealing with the epoch of contemporaries. According to him, this field required special self-discipline: one's own involvement



needed to be contained, because only “critical distance” and “rigorous methodology” (skrupulöse quellenkritische Methode) could counteract the widely criticized tendency towards unscholarly presentation. Rothfels’ approach was very influential in Germany. In arguing for a strictly “objectivist” approach, Rothfels traded in methodological innovation for the academic recognition of contemporary history. Today, “critical distance” continues to be the magic formula and many contemporary historians stick to this methodological orthodoxy. Needless to say, critical distance is indispensable for scholarly work. However, it is also true that “critical distance” has frequently translated into disconnectedness and pseudo-objectivism.

In many ways such disconnectedness is problematic, since we, as practitioners of contemporary history, are sometimes poignantly confronted with our own life stories or with the life stories of our parents or grandparents. However, we usually make no appearance at all in our narratives. Scholars write about issues that have touched them very personally, yet they tell the story as if it were something completely removed from their own lives. What nearly every branch of historical research has overcome by now, i.e. a mechanical subject-object-relation, seems, for the most part, alive and well in contemporary history. However, in no other branch of historical research is the *circular character* of our research more obvious than in contemporary history and in no other branch is a purely objectivist approach more problematic. Thus, contemporary history requires a tremendous amount of introspection and critical self-reflection not just as a field but also on an individual level. As the psychologist Jerome S. Bruner, who has written about historical narratives, states:

“That the formation of historical narratives so far has not yet been researched as a psychological phenomenon, has probably less to do with an oversight, but constitutes a blind spot resulting from the old conviction that history is just ‘there’ and does not need to be [reflected upon] and constructed.”



However, by introspection and critical self-reflection, I certainly do not mean personal confessions, which can only lead to embarrassment and a self-serving validation of one’s own life.

If we engage in biographical research and oral history, we contribute to changing contemporary history at the same time, which, in my opinion, no longer needs to trade in self-reflexivity for its academic acceptance.

From Structural Social History to Finding/Giving a Voice to Ordinary People

Oral history has established itself not only as a subjective countermovement against the objectivist stance of contemporary history and as a movement to counter the widespread focus on high politics and important men. It also grew out of social history. Here, again, the relationship has not always or automatically been amicable and mutually supportive. This is not the place to relate in detail the emergence of a new social history, which was mainly directed against history writing that focuses on decision-making processes and “great men”. This new social history started to look at processes and big social agglomerates, like estates and social classes. In Germany it also had a special agenda, which was to find out the structural reasons for the emergence of Nazism. It was thus concerned with “big questions” and it was heavily teleological (see the debate on a supposedly special path of German development.) It wanted to turn away from an elitist view on what counts as history and adopt a more democratic stance than the traditional national history. It tried to achieve this goal through a change in historical focus and through concentrating on ordinary people as the moving forces of the historical process and in shaping social structures. Yet, with all its democratic credo and embrace of ordinary people as moving forces in history, giving these ordinary people a voice and establishing them as historical agents was exactly what the new social history or *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, did *not* manage to do.



Estates and social classes, elites, workers and peasants, came into view, but neither concrete men and women, nor children, nor old people. Actual human beings were merely seen as representatives of their social agglomerates, but they carried no individuality, they had no faces. Social historians of a certain generation saw processes and structures, but not the lived lives of real people. A Weberian or Marxist construction of how these groups related to each other led to grave misrepresentation, e.g. of women, who could only come into view as dependents of men, who represented the classes or other social agglomerates. The first to point out this gap between programmatic credo and actual misrepresentations was women's history, followed by *Alltagsgeschichte* (everyday history), other forms of micro-history, and oral history.

As a field of research which takes seriously people's experience and the ways in which they attribute meaning to their lives, oral history was and continues to be shunned by many; especially by structuralists and those historians who are still entangled in the illusion of some kind of objectivity "out there" in the historical world and in the belief that we can have unproblematic access to historical "truth" if we only faithfully follow a clearly defined historical method.

Oral History

However, some developments in recent decades have helped to loosen the constraints on history writing which accompany structural and other "objectivist" approaches. Oral history is clearly the frontrunner here. But the memory boom, the historians' debate of the mid-1980s in West Germany on the role of Nazism, the Waldheim-controversy in Austria, the Goldhagen debate, and in particular "1989" as a world-historical event have, to a certain degree, all contributed to an increase in methodological self-reflection among historians of contemporary issues.

Since the 1980s we have seen an abundance of biographical research. Alexander von Plato has defined oral history as an experience-based historical research, as

"the ways in which people come to terms with historical events and processes; it investigates consent and dissent in a society and looks at changing self-interpretations of people. More generally, it thematizes the role and importance of the subject in history."

Von Plato makes his case for oral history by stating that the change in the self-construction of people will be able to tell us more about the inner processes of a society, the mechanisms of consent and dissent, and about the meaning of experience for subsequent phases of history.

However, oral history needs to position lived lives in a broader framework and be aware of what memory is and can accomplish. It needs to connect the inner view with the historical structures. It must know how reliable personal recollections are, what people retain, what they suppress, and it must extrapolate from personal memory to what Maurice Halbwachs has called "collective memory" or even the "cultural memory" which Jan and Alaida Assmann have analyzed.

This also pertains to our project "Remembering communism." What we hope to do is to give real people a voice and to listen to their stories. We hope to contribute to research on the demise of communist societies, to do research which takes seriously internal differentiation, objections, subjective constructions and the ways in which people made sense of the past and do so in the present. This is all the more important since Marxist-Leninist thought paid little attention to individuality and personal experience and sacrificed the individual to the broader cause.



Seteney Shami on the Social Science Research Council and the 'Internationalization' of Social Science

Dr. Seteney Shami is Director of Eurasia Programmes at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), New York, an independent organisation that funds scholarship by acting as a link between donors and the scholarly community.

I asked Dr. Shami to tell our readers something about the nature and function of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), and wondered whether it was a specifically American institution. “Actually, to insert myself into the narrative,” she said, “when I was a post-graduate student in the US, I didn’t know anything about the SSRC, because it was geared very much towards American academics and its resources were only available to US citizens. It is quite an old institution, established in the early Twenties, and quite a prestigious institution, which I didn’t know then. It was established to promote interdisciplinary studies at a time when the disciplines themselves were still very young. It was also an institution which from its early days not only undertook what it saw as cutting-edge academic and intellectual projects but also promoted certain methodological approaches. At one point it was Culture and Personality, at another it was Comparative Politics, at yet another point it was Area Studies. It functioned as an institution that really announced to the American scholarly community what the wave of the future was going to be, and, of course, since one of its functions from its very early days was to give out research grants and fellowships, it was putting its money where its mouth was, and therefore was shaping social science not just in terms of intellectual agendas but in terms of funding particular kinds of research.”

“What is relevant to our meeting here in Sofia is the experience of the SSRC with the so-called Area Studies, which was an artefact of the Cold War, when the interest towards other parts of the world did grow but was conceptualised in terms of the United States’ re-

lationship with these parts of the world. The way Area Studies grew in the US followed the division of the world along Cold War logic, so there was a committee for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, for example, set up in the early Fifties, which gave out fellowships and grants to US scholars but also tried to promote intellectual exchange with scholars in the region.”

“What I want to stress more than its history are the changes taking place at SSRC now, over the last decade, which again reflect changes in the world. The discussion at SSRC now can be summarized by the phrase ‘Internationalising Social Science’. One of the things I appreciate most about SSRC (I am a relatively recent member, I have been there for three years now) is that it is a very self-reflexive organization. This is what impressed me even when I went for my interview. People sit and talk about what the function of this organization is, what its mission is. Another admirable characteristic of the institution is that its programmes change, there’s a lot to be said for long-term programmes (there are some, such as the fellowship programme on the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that’s been around for seventeen years), but the topical programmes change a lot, you don’t get bogged down into ‘the way we do things in East European studies, the tradition, the way we’ve always done it’.”

How did Seteney manage to combine the role of a scholar, an anthropologist, with that of a manager? Did she feel her present position to be an ideal mix of the two? “I feel it could be an ideal mix of the two but it’s a bal-

ance that is not easy to achieve. The SSRC does support our research. The idea is that we should be producing, we should be researching; we do get financial support and time off. For some people and some disciplines it works better than for others. As an anthropologist I need extended periods of field study and it isn't easy to take what could become three or four months off – what would happen to my programmes then? We are experimenting with, say, ways of co-directing programmes, so that three people are involved and when someone is away another can take their place. We work always through committees, so that even though I am the director of Eurasia programmes, I do not personally direct every activity. We work through advisory committees but then once a project is under way, we would have a steering committee for that, and these committees have chairs and members that are actively involved, so presumably I could even be absent from a meeting; the committee would meet and the chair would report what I need to know. That is the theory, at least. In reality it takes about three years to figure out what you want to do. I am just at the stage where certain ideas are beginning to come into fruition, so at this point I get frustrated that I am unable to do my own research. 'Remembering Communism' is very close to my interests, but not all projects are like that. I do not choose my projects according to my personal interests but follow the guidelines of the Advisory Committee."

I asked about her own scholarly interests. "They are quite varied," she told me. "After I finished my PhD in Anthropology in the US, having worked on Circassian minorities, particularly in Jordan, I went back to Jordan and started teaching at a very new university which had no department of Anthropology, so I got involved very quickly in setting up such a department. It was a wonderful experience, but it took me into administrative issues at a very early stage in my career, which would be very unusual in the US, and I was chairing the Department two years after my PhD. My degree had prepared me to undertake research and intellectual projects but it had not really prepared me for rethinking Anthropology in a new setting. This experience matured me as a scholar but it meant I could not design a research path for myself, or think of a project that answered my interest and then move on to another project. I had to develop projects, even my personal research, based on whether they would be suitable for our students and whether they would bring funding to our institution. I worked on Ethnicity, Identity, Nationalism, but also on Urban Poverty, Urban Planning and notions of Modernity, and then on Rural Development. Then, ten years on, I thought, 'What do I work on, how do I write a CV that shows some coherence?' and I realized it was the experience of displacement that intrigued me in all of these project, whether it was the

displacement from a traditional to a modern village a few miles away, or from the Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire - what displacement does to individuals and communities, issues of identity and history."

Somewhat cynically, I inquired after the current fashion in Social Science. What projects did get funded? There are fashions in academia ... She agreed: "There are fashions. This is a difficult question, because the situation differs so much by discipline. For this part of the world, it would probably be ethnic conflict, you see a lot of proposals on that, but I think one thing about the US is that it has a multiplicity of organizations, with a multiplicity of interests, offering many funding opportunities. It is true that certain topics seem to get fastened onto certain regions. In the case of Southeast Europe it is ethnic conflict, transition, democratisation, civil society. These are catchwords if you want to get funding for this part of the world. But since the SSRC is such an influential organization, it can negotiate between the interests of the donor and the interests of the scholarly community. That is why working through committees, rather than me and the institution deciding on the programmes, is a good way to work – then you can then go to the donor and say 'Look, this committee of prestigious scholars in the field say these are the issues', and the donor will say 'Oh, but I am interested in this and this', and then we shall try to find a formula. What we are very conscious of, especially in giving out research money, is that there should be a transparent process of competition and independent evaluation, which is not to say it will be always perfect in every way. And when the topic of the competition is Democratisation, people will find ways to do what they are interested in within that topic, and the Committee would take a decision based on the academic merit of the proposal. These are the rules of the game. Donors who want more immediate control will not come to us, they will go directly to some NGOs, top researchers and scholars and fund directly what they want to fund. I feel quite sanguine about, and committed to, the process I see at SSRC. The outside world thinks that donors have very particular interests, and it is true on the macro-map of interests, but when you come to the micro-management of those interests, you see that there is space for individual interests. I think in this respect the role of scholars based in the region is really important – to voice what they think are the issues and the interesting ideas. I interpret our role partly as providing a space where those very different approaches to what the issues are can meet. We do not see ourselves as representing the US scholars or the regional scholars, but as fostering the interaction between them."

Last, I wanted to know what other question Seteney would advise me to ask, in her capacity as a professional

interviewer. She replied: “I would say ‘What do you mean by ‘internationalisation’ of Social Science? Is this just a reassertion of US hegemony in a masked way?’ I think it is seen by some in that way, but at SSRC we do not approach it with this intention at all. Nor do we mean a kind of a bilateral (but often unequal) relationship between US and ‘local/regional’ scholars. Nor are we trying to give regional scholars the moral ground to stand and say ‘I am the voice of authenticity’ and what those US scholars say is not quite so’. And here I speak as someone whose career has been as a ‘regional’ and not US-based scholar. Rather we are trying to shape truly international arenas where positionality is respected but the dialogue and exchange of ideas is genuine. This idea of an international negotiation of scholarly agendas and approaches is not comfortable ground: there are inequalities and different languages, and such dialogue is not an easy thing to achieve honestly and well; you can always do it formally and say ‘Yes, we’re sitting around a table with people from all these different countries’ but the way I would phrase it is that such dialogue should be uncomfortable to everybody in the room. Everybody should feel challenged or insecure about the way they are thinking of the topic or planning the research project and that would be a productive tension. I’ve seen it work. But it all depends on whom you bring into the dialogue and how you choose the people that you work with. For this we rely on our committee members, like Maria Todorova, and on people we meet through meetings such as this one in Sofia. I would rely on their advice of what institutions to work with, and what the changing landscape of academic production in Bulgaria is. This is what I have to assess. And that is why the current aims of SSRC are very different from the older ones, which were to set the methodology on a particular theme for the next twenty years. The aims now may not be conventional publications at all; they may be working papers or research agendas or training workshops. Even for this project, even if the research was never done, coming up with a research agenda would in itself be an achievement.”

Interviewed by the Editor



Bruce Grant,
Swarthmore College

‘This is my first time in Eastern Europe. I am struck by the degree to which accidents of geography and culture oblige people to be much more multiplex and cosmopolitan in their leanings and their affiliations than one is used to in England or North America. What I am struck by as someone who thinks about anthropology and history is what this means for a scholar who has to live plurality on a regular basis and what it means for people’s scholarly work when plurality is already a theme of life, rather than just something you reach for intellectually.’

Communism Peak (7495 m) climbing.

Route: Moskvina Field – Borodkin Spur –
Pamir Neve Plateau – Dushanbe Peak.



After The Accession ...

The Socio-Economic Culture of Eastern Europe in the Enlarged Union: an Asset or a Liability?

The project focuses on strategic problems of the post-accession period: the cohabitation of "Eastern" and "Western" socio-economic cultures in the enlarged EU and the likelihood of their convergence. It examines current cultural encounters between 'East' and 'West' in an attempt to predict future patterns of cultural compromise.

The project '**After the Accession ... The Socio-Economic Culture of Eastern Europe in the Enlarged Union: An Asset or a Liability?**', initiated by the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen in Vienna, attempts to imagine the post-accession cohabitation of 'Western' and 'Eastern' cultures in the European Union.

The Bulgarian contribution to this project began with a workshop on **Understanding Socio-Economic Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe - Methodological Challenges**, held at the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia on 28–29 April 2002. Participants included Haralan Alexandrov (New Bulgarian University), Roumen Avramov (Centre for Liberal Strategies), Tanya Chavdarova (Department of Sociology, Sofia University), Georgi Dimitrov (Department of Sociology, Sofia University), Georgi Ganev (Centre for Liberal Strategies), Ilia Iliev (Department of History, Sofia University), Petya Kabakchieva (Department of Sociology, Sofia University), Janos Matyas Kovacs (IWM, Vienna), and Mila Mineva (Department of Sociology, Sofia University).

The project focuses on strategic problems of the post-accession period: the cohabitation of "Eastern" and "Western" socio-economic cultures in the enlarged EU and the likelihood of their convergence. It examines current cultural encounters between 'East' and 'West' in an attempt to predict future patterns of cultural compromise. The research fields - from the shop floor, through business and government administration to social sciences and policy advocacy - are being explored in several Central and East European countries by focusing on entrepreneurship and governance, with special attention to the problem of informality. Instead of insisting on a simplistic scheme, in which the 'strong' culture devours

the 'weak' one, the project expects to examine the emergence of peculiar blends of economic and social behaviour, norms, habits, values etc. In so doing, it will go beyond the world of the *acquis communautaire* to discover forms of cultural co-existence in the enlarged EU which are not, and cannot be, regulated *ex ante* through agreements on institutional/legal systems and policies.

The project has four research objectives. First, to identify the types and estimate the frequency of cultural conflicts in economic and social matters in the enlarged EU and contribute to the resolution of those conflicts. Second, to predict the patterns of convergence and the extent of diversity within the 'European Social Model'. Third, to map those fields in which the new entrants can contribute to the rejuvenation of socio-economic cultures in the EU. Fourth, to bring the cultural problématique back from populist rhetoric into the socio-economic discourse of Enlargement. Additionally, the project will help re-assess the procedures for the ongoing accession process, and enable the European Commission to draw lessons for future accession rounds, in particular for the one including the Southeast European ex-communist countries, which are excluded from the current round.

The research activities of the national teams are coordinated by Prof. Janos Kovacs (IWM Vienna), the intellectual driving force of the project. The Bulgarian research is supported by, among other sponsors, the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs within the framework of a project on the "'Included' and the 'Excluded' Economic and Social Culture in Central and Eastern/Southern Europe".

The Bulgarian team's effort is coordinated by the Centre for Advanced Study (coordinator: Ms Denitza Lozanova) and is composed of social scientists from different research fields to achieve an interdisciplinary perspective. Planned research includes in-depth interviews

with Western managers working in Bulgaria, Bulgarian entrepreneurs, high-ranking officials and NGO leaders dealing with Bulgaria's European integration. Bulgarian participants will address the following topics:

Dr. Haralan Alexandrov, Anthropology and Organizational Consulting (New Bulgarian University): *A Case Study of Changing Organizational Cultures in Bulgaria in the Context of EU Accession*. This work will involve the development of case studies taken from several Bulgarian business organizations working closely with Western partners, and explore any changes which have occurred in their organizational culture as a result of the intensified interaction with international business.

Dr. Roumen Avramov, Economic History (Centre for Liberal Strategies): *Economic Legacies and Cultural Encounters*. This study attempts a large-scale retrospective examination of previous cultural shocks in Bulgarian economic life. The aim is to outline an 'inventory' of the historically sensitive areas of socio-economic encounters. The principal points of pre-communist cultural conflicts have re-emerged with the recent transformations of the Bulgarian economy and may be taken – in a different format – into the enlarged EU.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tanya Chavdarova, Economic Sociology (Department of Sociology, Sofia University): *Formality-Informality in Economy and Society*. The study will analyse the formality-informality dimension of socio-economic culture, addressing questions like: To what extent can the culture of informal entrepreneurial action be changed by lowering or eliminating the barriers for entering the formal sector of the economy such as high taxes and social security payments, high transaction costs etc.? Would these barriers disappear after the accession or would they increase? How would the strong clientelism (the traditional concubinate between economic and political actors) in the East, which is governed by reci-

procity, interact with the trend towards spreading institutional corruption (market-governed) in the West?

Prof. Dr. Ivaylo Dichev, Cultural Anthropology (Department of Cultural Studies, Sofia University): *Social Rights in the Perspective of Promised European Citizenship*. The study will test the following hypothesis: The process of EU enlargement in multiplying circles of real or promised citizenship produces identitarian setbacks: in not obtaining what they conceive to be equal (universal) citizen rights East Europeans tend to exalt identitarian particularity. On the one hand, the differences between circles of citizenship are real (as in the case of social mobility and visas or human rights), on the other, they are the result of expectation and projection (as in the case of social rights). This research will try to find out what these expectations are, what their origins are and to what extent they produce identitarian effects – new forms of occidentalism and orientalism.

Dr. Georgi Ganev, Economics (Center for Liberal Strategies): *Mental Models of the Economy and of the Nature of Economic Interaction of Bulgarians and of Representatives of the Bulgarian Entrepreneurial Class*. The project will adopt a game-theoretic perspective in addressing questions about the way in which people (nationally representative samples) perceive some basic rules of economic interaction, such as whether it is a zero-sum game, and will explore some fundamental time preferences in an attempt to establish a proxy for a discount factor.

Dr. Ilia Iliev, Anthropology (Department of History, Sofia University): *The Parallel Use of Different Currencies in Bulgarian Households During the Last Ten Years*. The project will analyse the parallel circulation of different currencies emerging in Bulgaria, based on the US dollar and the Bulgarian Lev, each of them related to specific representations, with special attention to the emerging image of the Euro.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petya Kabakchieva, Sociology (Department of Sociology, Sofia University): *The Process of European Enlargement – Does Culture Matter? Culture, Cultures and Change*. The project claims that it is important to keep in mind the 'diversified cultures' hypothesis, and thus, alongside the reconstruction of the image of a specific national (or post-communist, or Balkan) socio-economic culture look for groups characterised by different socio-economic cultures. If culture concerns the *legacy of the past* (what type of past/pasts matters/matter), *cultures* concern the *mechanisms of change*. The emphasis will be on mechanisms of changing socio-economic culture towards 'Western' culture; on the main actors of change; and on future potential.

Ivan Krastev, Political Science (Centre for Liberal Strategies): *Corruption Discourses – West and East*. The project analyses the construction of corruption as a global problem and the construction of the anti-corruption discourse.

Mila Mineva, Cultural Studies, Media Analysis (Department of Sociology, Sofia University): *The Images of Entrepreneurs in the Bulgarian Newspapers*. The project focuses on images of 'successful' people constructed as popular images in the two biggest dailies: *24 Hours* and *Troud*, as well as images in two weeklies representative of nationalistic and 'Western-oriented' audiences respectively (*Monitor* and *Capital*), in order to trace the construction of nationalistic and "European" images of entrepreneurship and governance.

Dr. Daniel Smilov, Law, Political Science (Central European University, Budapest): *A Culture of Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law: Laying the Foundations*. The project studies the jurisprudence of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court in relation to economic issues, such as tax policy, privatisation and restitution, as well as the equality of economic subjects.

The First International NEXUS Conference

The Balkans: Mapping Identities (18th – 21st century)



Do + agree!
Proudly B
What a brilliantly
successful conference!
I've learned so much!
Thank you for including me
Larry Wolff

What a brilliant
conference!
I've learned so much!
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Thank you for including me
Larry Wolff

"A positive, although critical, discussion of Balkan issues that did not set out with the ... prejudices and negative presuppositions of Balkanism ... We attempted to use 'Balkan' as the point of departure for a serious discussion in a whole range of disciplines over a region whose outlines can be mapped in so many different ways." This is how **Prof. Larry Wolff**, one of the keynote speakers, described the intellectual significance of the **First International NEXUS Conference** that took place in Sofia on 18 – 20 October, 2002. The Sofia Conference Hall in the Interpred Building at 36 Dragan Tsankov Blvd. hosted this lively interdisciplinary exchange of views on Balkan identities.

The Conference presented the first results of the NEXUS research project. (NEXUS is a CAS-hosted project on 'How to think about the Balkans: Culture, Region, Identities', and is described at length in this Newsletter's previous issue.) The event was an opportunity for the NEXUS team to discuss its results with a group of distinguished international scholars who had little or no knowledge of the project to this moment. At the end, there was general agreement that NEXUS was developing in a promising and inspiring way.

The list of participants and their papers' titles reproduced below should convey some sense of the richness and profundity of the issues addressed. The proceedings and debates will be described in the Newsletter's next issue.

First section:**General problems of Territory and Identity.
The Balkans in Time and Space**

Chair: John Neubauer:

Călin-Andrei Mihăilescu – Globalbalkanism**Klaus Dammann** (co-author **Rossitza Ivkova**) – Observing Observers Using a Balkan/West Scheme. A Look from Niklas Luhmann's Sociology on the Historiography of Collective Killing in Anatolia, Bulgaria and Serbia**Larry Wolff** – Balkanism and "Morlacchismo": Slavic Identity in the Mountains of Dalmatia**Ulf Brunnbauer** – Mountains and National Myths in the Balkans**Monica Spiridon** – A Balkan Chronotope: The Romanian "Orient"?**Drago Roksandic** – Constructing and Mapping Borders in the Balkans (16th – 18th c.)**Second Section:****Imaginary Geography, Narrated Space,
History of Space**

Chair: Monica Spiridon

Marco Dogo – The Nation's Map in the Minds of Jovan Palikuca and Mateja Nenadovic (early 19th c.)**Ognyan Kovachev** – Mapping Images–Writing (Hi)Stories–Moving Pictures**John Neubauer** – Mapping Stories and Narrativizing Space**Nikolai Aretov** – Imagined Geography of the Ottoman Empire in the Memoirs of Three Rebels (Stoyan Zaimov, Zahari Stoyanov and Mincho Kanchev)**Albena Hranova** – Boundaries, Bridges, Roads, Crossroads. An Approach to a Balkan Figurative Map**Maria Nikolopoulou** – Space, Memory and Identity: The Memory of the Asia Minor Space in Greek Novels of the 1960s**Blagovest Zlatanov** – Mapping a "Holy" Territory: The Kosovo Case**Third section:****Mapping Economic Cultures**

Chair: Ulf Brunnbauer

Roumen Avramov – The Twentieth Century Bulgarian Economy: Producing Symbolic Codes and Identity**Rumiana Preshlenova** – Frontier Revisited. Building up Identities in the Context of Balkan Economic Development 1878 – 1912**Tanya Chavdarova** – Small Entrepreneurs in Sofia and Skopje: Between Individualism and Collectivism**Fourth section:****Shifting Identities and Minorities****Stefanos Katsikas** – Muslim Minorities in an Orthodox World: Socio-economic and Organizational Changes of the Muslim Communities in Thessaly 1881 – 1912**Aleksej Kalionski** – Bulgarian Karakachans about their Past**Svetla Rakshieva** – Space, Time and the Construction of Sense of Belonging among Aromanians in the Balkans**Plamen Bochkov** – The Emigrant: A New "Other" on the Balkans**Fifth Section:****Making of Identities: Political Projects,
Political Reforms**

Chair: Klaus Dammann

Emilia Salvanou – The Making of the Greek National Identity in Greek Speaking Orthodox Communities of Eastern Thrace: Aspects of Modernization Process**Yonca Koksall** – Local Cooperation and Conflicts – The Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne (1839 - 1878)**Eyal Ginio** – General Conscription and the Invention of Ottoman Identity – The Non-Muslims in the Ottoman Army during the Balkan Wars (1912 - 1913)**Roumen Genov** – Bulgarian National Identity (the American religious missionaries' perspective)**Ludmilla Kostova** – The Balkans and the Ethnological-Culinary Victorian Imagination: Food in Writing by Nineteenth-century British Travellers to the Region**NEXUS Panel**

Chair: Vintila Mihăilescu

Slobodan Naumović – "Neither Left Nor Right. Straight!" Mapping the Paradoxical Shifts in Serbian Political Topography after 1989**Dessislava Lilova** – Bulgarian Names of the Balkan Peninsula in the Nineteenth Century**Alexander Kiossev** – Mapping the City. The Multicultural Plovdiv of the Nineteenth Century versus the Imaginary Territories of National Literatures**Sixth Section:****Multiple Identities**

Chair: Ivan Ilchev

Ioannis Manos – Visualizing Culture – Demonstrating Identity: Dance Performances and Identity Politics in a Border Region in Northern Greece**Leyla Neyzi** – Prehistories of Nationalism: Cosmopolitanism and the Spaces of Nostalgia. The Life History Narrative of an Elderly Native of Smyrna/Izmir**Nadejda Alexandrova** – Mapping the Image of the Harem in the Nineteenth Century Bulgarian Literary Texts**Laura Sakaja** – Stereotypes of the Balkans among Zagreb Youth: A Contribution to the Study of Imaginative Geography**Stefan Detchev** – Between "Slavic" and "Bulgarian" - Russophile and Russophobic Discourses and Bulgarian Identity (1886 - 1894)**John Ashbrook** – Re-visiting and Revising Bakic-Hayden's "Nesting Orientalisms": The case of Istria in the 1990s

great conference!
many thanks,
Larry

Best wishes!
[Signature]

NEVENA DAKOVIC

NEXUS Fellow 2002

Associate Professor of Film Studies/ Film Theory, University of Belgrade/ University of Arts, Belgrade. Born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1964. **B.A.** in Comparative Literature (1987) and Film and TV Production (1985). **M.A.** (1988) in Filmology, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. Ph.D. in Filmology, University of Belgrade (Thesis: Hollywood Melodrama: 1940-1960- formula of the Genre), 1992. Taught at Istanbul, Ankara, Riga, Oxford, Warwick etc. Head of the Department of History and Theory; Professor and Coordinator of Interdisciplinary Studies of the University of Arts (Art and Media Studies Group); teaches at AEEN.

CINEMATIC BALKANS (BALKANISM IN CINEMA)

The project *Cinematic Balkans* explores the cinematic imagining of the Balkans as part of the culturist discursive construction of the region. It is concerned with the cinematic construction of the Balkan identity(ies) as well as with the mapping out of the region, of interregional boundaries, with secular national images and their interaction. The project thus investigates cinematic codes that formulate the projected identity(ies); and characteristics of the possible Balkan genre as the narrative correlative of the "Balkanness". It outlines their interdependence with the ideological, political and historical context. The project deals with five carefully chosen case studies.

Stojanovic, Dusan/Dakovic, Nevena, *Dictionary of the Film Theorists* (multimedia edition, Belgrade: FDU/CSUB, 2002).

Dakovic, Nevena, Deniz Derman and Karen Ross (eds.), *Media(ted) Identities*, 2001).

Dakovic, Nevena, *Melodrama nije žanr* (Beograd: Prometej/Jugoslovenska Kinoteka, 1994).

IVAN ELENKOV

NEXUS Associate Fellow 2002

Associate Professor of History, Sofia University. Born in Montana (North-West Bulgaria) in 1956. **M.A.** History, Faculty of History, Sofia University, 1982. **Ph.D.** 'Social Policy of the Bulgarian Governments in the Beginning

of the 20th Century (1903-1912)'. Taught Modern Bulgarian History at Sofia University, Faculty of History 1982-1989. Teaches History of Bulgarian Culture at the Department of Cultural Studies at Sofia University since 1989.

BASIC INSTITUTIONS GENERATING KNOWLEDGE OF HISTORY IN BULGARIA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

The project's main idea is that the Orwellian rewriting of Bulgarian history was at the core of the structuring of the institutions generating knowledge of history, and directly impacted on this knowledge itself throughout the communist period.

Elenkov, Ivan, *The Eastern-Rite Catholic Church in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000.

Elenkov, Ivan, *Native and Right-Wing. A Contribution to the Unfulfilled Right-Wing Project in Bulgaria from the Interwar Period*, Sofia, 1998.

Elenkov, Ivan, Daskalov, Rumen, eds., *Why Are We What We Are? In Quest of Bulgarian Cultural Identity*, Sofia, 1994.

TODOR HRISTOV

NEXUS Associate Fellow 2002

Assistant Professor of Literary Theory, Sofia University. Born in Shoumen, Bulgaria in 1973. **M.A.** Bulgarian Philology, Sofia University, 1996. **Ph.D.** 'The Problem of Literariness in 20th c. Literary Theory', Sofia University, 2002. Teaches Literary Theory at Sofia University since 1999.

STAGING THE BALKANS: THE BALKANS ON THE 19TH CENTURY WORLD EXHIBITIONS

We cannot understand the constitution of the traumatic Balkan identity without taking into account the function of the Other. The Other functions as a gaze (in Lacanian terms) enabling one to show one's identity. And identity is exactly what one shows being exposed to this gaze. But showing Balkan identity always takes place in already predetermined settings and so – on a predetermined stage (understood as a network of spatial positions). Thus Balkan identity is always a kind of staging.

This project intends to study its staging in a condensed form – the way the Balkans

were presented at the World Exhibitions in Vienna 1873, Paris 1889 and Chicago 1893 (including its discursive dimension). It explains the trauma of Balkan identity with the double bond of desire and surveillance its staging generates and tries to mark the point where this traumatic bond can be escaped – a process involving the questioning of some crucial topics of the current discourse on and in the Balkans (normality, underdevelopment, modernization etc.).

Hristov, Todor, 'Discipline and Punishment in Bulgarian 19th c. Literature', in *Kultura, identichnost, predstaviane* (Sofia, 2002, forthcoming).

Hristov, Todor, 'The Dialogic Imagination of Paisy Hilemdarski, in *Damislir drugoto* (Sofia: Kralitsa Mab, 2001), pp.35-50.

Hristov, Todor, 'The First Versificators, or Literary Theory in Practice', in *Krayat na hilyadoletieto: nostalgii, razdeli, nadezhdi* (Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2000), pp. 186-191.

DAMIR JELIC

NEXUS Associate Fellow 2002

Ph.D. student, Department of Economic and Social History, Leicester University, UK.

Editor of The European Association for Banking History Bulletin. Born in Cazma, Croatia in 1965. **B.A.** degrees in Mechanical Engineering and History and Philosophy from Zagreb University, study of Economics. **M.A.** Leicester University, UK, 1999. Ph.D. in progress 'Financing Local Economy in Interwar Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia'. Main interest – the historical determinants for the economic development of Central and Southeast Europe.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE, 'OFFICE SEEKERS' AND THE PRODUCTION OF THE BALKAN IDENTITY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

This project studies the economic background to the complex Balkan identity. The mentality and the social and political habits of Southeast Europeans have been profoundly shaped by the economic struc-

ture of the region during the last centuries. The claim is that Balkan identity is, to a significant extent, the result of the perception and ideological activities of 'office seekers' – educated elites unable to use their knowledge and education in an economically-productive way. Crucified between useless education (macro-economically speaking), underdeveloped and inert economic reality and competition for positions in a weak superstructure, they developed some important segments of the Balkans' reality and identity:

- A strong public sector which produced a domination of politics in society
- Domination of different populist ideologies in political and cultural life
- A negative perception of the Balkans as a 'forever-backward and doomed' region

The research will assess the economic background to the formation of intellectual elites in Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina from the 1870s to the Second World War.

Jelic, Damir, *The Importance of Foreign Capital within Inter-war Yugoslavia*-MA dissertation, Department of Economic and Social History, University of Leicester, 1999

Jelic, Damir, *Sailing with the Nationalist Wind - The Case of the Serbian Bank in Zagreb (1895-1918)*-paper from the workshop 'The Creators and the Creation of Banking Enterprises in Europe from 18th to 20th centuries', Corfu, 2001 – in print.

VANGELIS KECHRIOTIS

NEXUS Associate Fellow 2002

Ph.D. candidate at the department of Turkish Studies, University of Leiden, the Netherlands. Dissertation on 'Political Activity and Cultural Representations of the Greek-Orthodox Community in Izmir, 1897-1912', supervised by Prof. Eric Jan Zürcher and Prof. Antonis Liakos. Born in Athens, Greece in 1969. **M.A.** in Comparative History, School

of Comparative Studies and History Department, University of Essex. Member of the editorial board of the historical review *Historein*. Fellow, 'Regional Identity Reader for Central and South-east Europe' project.

GREEK-ORTHODOX DEPUTIES IN THE OTTOMAN PARLIAMENT (1908-1912): A COMPARATIVE APPROACH OF THE MAJOR URBAN COMMUNITIES OF THE EMPIRE THROUGH THEIR OWN REPRESENTATIVES.

The Greek-Orthodox deputies who participated in the Ottoman Parliament during the second constitutional period (1908-1912) as representatives of the three major urban centers of the Empire (Istanbul, Izmir, Salonika), came from diverse social, political and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, they did not share the same political culture. This project will investigate the ways their specific conditions impacted their performance within the Parliament but also their broader political and social activity. A comparative approach will seek to challenge the simplistic view of the unanimous action of the Greek-Orthodox deputies and demonstrate the inconsistencies and omissions of nationalistic discourse. It will also map the geographical, administrative and cultural links among urban centers located within the Ottoman Empire, transcending the scholar-established entities of the Balkans on the one hand, and Anatolia on the other.

Kechriotis, Vangelis, 'From Trauma to Reflection: Greek Historiography and the Young Turks' 'Bizarre' Revolution', in *Clio in the Balkans*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (CDRSEE, 2002).

Kechriotis, Vangelis, 'Greek-Orthodox, Ottoman-Greeks or just Greeks? Theories of Coexistence in the Aftermath of the Young Turks Revolution', in *New Approaches in Balkan Studies* (proceedings of workshops by the Kokkalis Program on South-Eastern and East-Central Europe, Harvard University, 2002) forthcoming, 2003.

Kechriotis, Vangelis, 'Between Professional Duty and National Fulfillment: the Smyrniote Medical Doctor Apostolos Psaltoff (1862-1923)', in *Elites urbaines et savoir scientifique dans la société ottomane (XIX-XX siècles)*, ed. by Meropi Anastassiadou, forthcoming, 2003.

BOYKO PENCHEV

NEXUS Associate Fellow 2002

Senior Assistant Professor of Bulgarian Literature, Sofia University, Bulgaria. Born in Karlovo, Bulgaria in 1968. **M.A.** Bulgarian Studies, Sofia, 1994. **Ph.D.** 'The Modeling of the Self in the Modern Circles and Movements in the Bulgarian Literature of the First Quarter of XX Century', 2001. Editor at *Literaturen Vestnik*, a national weekly for literature, art and culture since 1994. Taught History of the Bulgarian literature at Sofia University 1995-2002

TSARIGRAD/ISTANBUL AS A SYMBOLICAL HETEROTOPY OF INTERSECTING IDENTIFICATION STRATEGIES (1870-1913)

The project addresses the function of Tsarigrad as a symbolic locus and a pivotal point around which the discourses of the 'high' national identity and the 'low', non-official identities revolve. If we accept the idea of the 'social construction of space' (Edward Soja), then we can see how for the Bulgarian culture Tsarigrad stands not simply as the capital of the Ottoman Empire (or modern Turkey), but as a symbolic centre of different overlapping 'maps' within which the identification acts take place. My theoretical framework is based on the concepts of 'heterotopy' (Michel Foucault), 'strategy' and 'field' (Pierre Bourdieu) and 'cultural memory' (Jan Asman). The research addresses three types of discursive operation with Tsarigrad:

- Tsarigrad as a metonymy for the Ottoman Empire from which the newly established national state and national culture have to demarcate themselves - Tsarigrad as the alien, hostile, Oriental, bestial Other of the 'truly Bulgarian' identity.
- Tsarigrad as the hidden centre of the Bulgarian community, non-coinciding with the administrative borders of the Bulgarian state.
- Tsarigrad as the object of desire as far as it symbolizes 'the secret places' of the hedonistic cosmopolitan culture, marked in this period as 'promiscuous', carnal, luxurious etc.

Penchev, Boyko, *The Sorrows of Fin de Siecle. Studies in Literary History and Criticism*, Sofia, 1998.

Penchev, Boyko, 'Die bulgarische Literatur der 90er Jahre', *Neue Literatur*, 1999/1

Penchev, Boyko, 'The Language of the Sublime and the Language of the Everyday', in *SUMPOSITION or Antiquity and Humanities*, Sofia, 2000.

KRISTINA POPOVA

NEXUS Associate Fellow 2002

Associate Professor of Bulgarian History, 'Neofit Rilski' University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. Born in Ihtiman, Bulgaria in 1955. M.A. History, University of Veliko Turnovo, 1976. Ph.D. History, 'The Youth Movement of the Dobrudzha Refugees in Bulgaria 1919-1934', Sofia, 1986. Editor at the Balkanistic Forum, an interdisciplinary annual for history, anthropology and literature of the Balkans since 1992.

"THE CARE ABOUT THE OTHERS" – PLACES, IDEOLOGIES AND LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE BALKANS (END OF THE 19TH CENTURY – FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY)

This research focuses on the emergence of social care as a free civic initiative in different places in the Balkans, much earlier than any governmental social policy. The emergence of social care is considered an important aspect of the development of the idea of self-reflection in modern society. The project's main task is to analyze the way the new social welfare practices related to the traditional networks of support and contributed to the development of the modern social-care establishment and modern civil society. What was considered foreign and what - native? How were different social groups – strangers, refugees, emigrants, minorities, homeless and abandoned children, sick aged people - treated? What were the common ideologies of social care in the Balkans? What stereotypes and concepts influenced the formation of the collective image of the people who needed support? How did local and national identities influence the care of others? Who and why started the social care institutions?

Popova, Kristina, *Ein roter und ein weisser Zwirn. Jugend auf dem Balkan* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar: Böhlau, 1996).

Popova, Kristina, 'Men of Generation 20', in D. Koleva ed, *Talking History*, Sofia, 2000.

Popova, Kristina, 'An Impure Person Has No Success in Life and That is Why One Starves: The Ideology of the Union for Child Protection in Bulgaria and the Appearance of Health-educating Rhetoric About Children in Bulgaria /1930s-1940s/', in St. Naumovic, Miroslav Jovanovic eds, *Childhood in South East Europe: Historical Perspectives on Growing Up in the 19th and 20th Century*, Belgrad – Graz, 2001.

A Library in the Making

Meeting of Directors of Balkan National Libraries at the Centre for Advanced Study

Marina Encheva

Librarian



On 16 November 2002, the Centre for Advanced Study hosted a meeting of directors of Balkan national libraries and presidents of library associations in the region. The Bulgarian participants included Prof. Boryana Hristova – Director of the National Library 'S.S. Cyril and Methodius', Assoc. Prof. Alexander Dimchev – Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University, Vanya Grashkina – President of the Union of Library and Information Workers in Bulgaria, staff from the National Library and staff and fellows of CAS.

The guests from Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey were acquainted with the joint project of CAS and the Bulgarian National Library for building a 'Balkan Bibliography' database and publishing a bibliography on 'The Balkans and Inter-Balkan Relations in Bulgarian Scholarly Publications 1985-2002'. The project is in its final phase and one part – a database covering the period 1992-2002 – is already accessible through the Centre's local computer network. After earlier information is added retrospectively, the database will become accessible through the Internet and will be used as the basis for the printed bibliography.

After a short presentation on this bibliographical project and a demonstration of the electronic database, the Centre for Advanced Study and the Bulgarian National Library proposed the initiation of a collective international project for constructing a larger Balkan Bibliography. The ambitious aim of such a project would be to fill the existing gap in bibliography on the Balkans in the last 15 years through cooperation between the national libraries in Southeast Europe and the publication of the results in print and as an electronic database. The Bulgarian database and bibliography covering the period 1985-2002, due to be published in March 2003, suggested the hosts, could be the first step towards this goal, a model subject to adaptation and amendment. The international participants expressed their keen interest in the proposed international project and negotiations on future cooperation are already under way.



At the suggestion of the Centre for Advanced Study, in the second semester of the academic year 2001-2002 a series of Chamber Poetry Readings was organized. After talks with the administration of the Centre, the poet Ani Ilkov was given the freedom to experiment with the organization within the following format: every last Thursday of the month there would be a session of poetry reading; Ani Ilkov was assigned the enjoyable task of selecting six poets only, who would be principal authors of the six monthly readings; they, in turn, would select one other poet each and share the reading on an equal footing.

And this is what happened. First, there was a poetry evening shared by Ani Ilkov and Kiril Vassilev. Then came the turn of Georgi Gospodinov and Toma Markov. Third came Boyko Penchev and V.B.V. Fourth came Marin Bodakov and Georgi Tenev. Fifth – Yordan Eftrimov and Father Mario Koev. All these poetic evenings were different but good – good because they were different. But there was also a fine twist, a dizzying, folly-inducing attempt to present one's poetry in full awareness of the entertainment industry that had settled all over the near vicinity. The poetry readings series ended with an evening dedicated to the unforgettable Georgi Roupchev – the leader of the middle generation of Bulgarian poets, whom we lost at the end of 2001. All those who loved him read aloud our favourite works of his.

The Centre for Advanced Study and the audience that gathered at these poetry readings seemed happy with the result, which suggests that next academic year the readings will continue or rather develop into forms that weave together discreet communicativeness and continuing meaning.

A.I.

On 18.09.2002, Dr. Krassimir Stoyanov (University of Hamburg, Germany) shared his new ideas on **Personal Identity and Cultural Belonging** with twenty-odd professors and students from various Bulgarian universities. The lecture was largely philosophical but the lively discussion following the lecture spanned a range of disciplines. The speaker criticized the widespread idea that identity is a product of cultural belonging and offered an alternative explanation, according to which a stable personal identity understood as the construction of access to oneself as an independent and unique personality is created on the basis of processes of translation between various cultural contexts.

Only three days later, on 21.09.2002 the Centre hosted yet another public lecture by Prof. Rastko Mochnik from the University of Ljubljana on the subject of **Universalist Idiom and Identitary Strategy**.



Together with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société in Sofia (MSHS), CAS organized a preparatory **seminar on the work of Reinhart Koselleck**. It was designed as a run-up to the conference 'Around Reinhart Koselleck' on Historical Time and Regimes of Temporality, 24-25.11.2002. The seminar was chaired by Prof. Christo Todorov.

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CALENDAR OF CAS

(September 2002 – January 2003)

September 2002:

18 September: Krassimir Stoyanov's lecture:

"Personal Identity and Cultural Belonging".

21 September: Rastko Mochnik's lecture:

"Universalist Idiom and Identitary Strategy".

October 2002:

16, 24 October: Seminar on Reinhart Koselleck's work.

18 - 20 October: First International NEXUS Conference:

"The Balkans: Mapping Identities (XVIII-XXI c.)".

November 2002:

7, 14, 21 November: Seminar on Reinhart Koselleck's work.

14 - 16 November: International Balkan Library Conference.

22 November: "After the Accession" project meeting.

28 November: "Peignoirs and Boats": Opening of the poetry seminar.

30 November - 1 December: NEXUS Fellows' project presentations.

30 November: Presentation of Blagovest Zlatanov's book:

"Intention and Meaning of Verse Text".

December 2002:

5, 19 December: Boyan Manchev's seminar: "The Phantasm, the Subject and the Sense".

6, 13, 19 December: "After the Accession" project meetings.

12 December: Vladislav Todorov's lecture:

"The Intellectuals: Identity. Legitimacy. Authenticity."

18 December: NEXUS Fellows' project presentations.

January 2003:

8-14 January: "Identity Reader" final meeting.

9, 23 January: Poetry seminar.

10, 17, 24, 31 January: "After the Accession" project meetings.

16 January: Boyan Manchev's seminar: "The Phantasm, the Subject and the Sense".

"Remembering Communism" workshop: (date to be specified).