

SOUTH-WEST UNIVERSITY "NEOFIT RILSKI"
BLAGOEVGRAD, BULGARIA

The International University Seminar
for Balkan Studies and Specialization

XXXII

International Conference

PRIVILEGED AND DEPRIVED

20 - 21. 04. 2023

ABSTRACT BOOK

Blagoevgrad, 2023

Edited by

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Vodenichavov

Dr. Milena Angelova



HONORER BOARDS

Prof. Dr. Irada Bagirova, National Academy of Sciences, Azerbaijan
Prof. Dr. Marinela Mladenova, South-West University, Bulgaria
Prof. Dr. Marine Aroshidze, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia
Prof. Dr. Evelina Kelbecheva, American University of Bulgaria, Bulgaria
Prof. Dr. Nadege Ragaru, Sciences Po, France
Prof. Dr. Marek Jakoubek, Charles University, Czech Republic
Prof. Dr. Maria Papathanas(s)iou, University of Athens, Greece
Prof. Dr. Margareth Lanzinger, University of Vienna, Austria
Assoc. Dr. Olivera Dragišić, Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Serbia
Assoc. Dr. Kristina Popova, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurie Muratova, South-West University, Bulgaria
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zaur Hasanov, National Academy of Sciences, Azerbaijan
Assoc. Dr. Claudia-Florentina Dobre, Romanian Academy of Sciences, Romania

CHAIR OF ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Assoc. Dr. Petar Vodenichavov, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Vodenicharov, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Prof. Dr. Tamas Putkaradze, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia
Prof. Dr. Irada Bagirova, , National Academy of Sciences, Azerbaijan
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anastasiya Pashova South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Assoc. Dr. Claudia-Florentina Dobre, Romanian Academy of Sciences, Romania
Assist. Prof. Dr. Milena Angelova South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

SCIENCE AND REFEREE COMMITTEE

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kristina Popova, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Vodenicharov, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariyana Piskova, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anastasiya Pashova, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Prof. Dr. Marinela Mladenova, South-West University, Bulgaria
Assist. Prof. Dr. Milena Angelova, South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

SECRETARIAT

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurie Muratova, nmuratova@swu.bg

CONTACT

Symposium Website:

<https://bforum.weebly.com/conference.html>

E-mail:

bforum1922@gmail.com



Plamen Doynov
New Bulgarian University
[pdojnov@nbu.bg]

The Speech as a Crime: Writers under Attack by the People's Court. About the Second Wave of Terror after September 9, 1944

Abstract: *The article examines the grounds, mechanisms and effects of the People's Court, through which the literary and media publicity in Bulgaria was transformed immediately after September 9, 1944, which led to a complete remodeling of the literary field. The general framework of prosecution through the institution of the People's Court is outlined, emphasizing how the written or spoken word becomes a criminal act and turns the writer and/or journalist into a criminal, and in the context of „people's justice“ turns its author in „public enemy“. Various cases of writers and journalists who were killed „without trial and sentence“, examples of writers who were convicted as ministers, as well as intellectuals who were brought before the Sixth Chamber of the People's Court were cited. The total number of convicted writers and journalists in Bulgaria in the winter and spring of 1945 is estimated at 150-170 people. Entire groups of authors disappear from the literary and media fields, and several ideological-thematic tendencies and genre-stylistic characteristics of literature fall into the zone of prohibition.*

Keywords: *People's Court; Bulgarian writers and journalists; socialist realism; literary and media field; murders „without trial and conviction“.*

* * *

Evgenia Ivanova
New Bulgarian University
[j_lubivanova@abv.bg]

Disadvantaged Balkans. Trauma "Berlin Peace Treaty" in the Memory of Bulgarians and Serbs

Abstract: *The text further develops the author's earlier thesis about the typologies of Bulgarian and Serbian nationalism as dependent on collective memory – heroic or traumatic. And – to some extent – gets into an argument with her. The article examines the reactions of Bulgarian and Serbian society to the decisions of the Berlin Treaty (1878), which proved traumatic for both sides – regardless of the differences in the status of the one and the other.*

The Berlin Treaty — if it did not cause, it — legitimized four wars, became the starting point for aspirations for the redistribution of the peninsula and a source of traumatic memory. Although the subsequent victories and battles alternate with different intensity, the core elements of national identity remain the series of "Golgotha" (in the Serbian case) and "national catastrophes" (in the Bulgarian). Collective memory, of course, can undergo reversals – depending on the needs of a particular political situation and on the "invention of tradition" to serve this situation.

Keywords: *Berlin Treaty; Serbian nationalism; Bulgarian nationalism; memory culture*

* * *

Roman Hadzhikosev
South-West University "Neofit Rilski"
[romandizel@gmail.com]

Resetting the Ideological Clock: How the Russian-Ukrainian Issue Was Part of Bulgarian Discourse a Century Ago

Abstract: *This article examines the discussion, which took place in Bulgaria shortly after the beginning of the First World War, between the Austrian deputy of Ukrainian origin Longin Tsechelski and Nikola Bobchev and Yaroslav Romanchuk. At the end of 1914, Tsechelski arrived in Sofia to campaign for the support of the Ukrainian people in the struggle for independence publishing a pamphlet "How Russia "liberates" Ukraine?". It accuses Russia of having provoked the war by deceiving Serbia; of using pan-Slavic propaganda promulgating the idea of a single Slavic race; of denying Ukrainian nation the right to self-determination because it is conceived as being part and parcel of the Russian people; of not accepting Ukrainian language and Ukrainian literature as different from the Russian language and Russian literature but were instead considered to be their adjuncts, and some other similar arguments.*

Russophile circles in the country were immediately prompted to take action, which resulted in a response to Tsechelski with an article by Nikola Bobchev and a brochure by Romanchuk, a Ukrainian living and working in Bulgaria. Naturally, they try to refute the claims by using well-known arguments, talking about the liberating role that Russia played in fighting against Ottoman slavery, the Slav solidarity and the commercial interests of the West and more specifically of Austria during that historical moment.

In the following year, a new answer followed in a book of more than a hundred pages by Tsechelski and another one by Romanchuk.

Keywords: liberation; war; Slavism; race; nation; people; independence.

* * *

Georgeta Nazarska
State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia
[nazarska@abv.bg]

Lustration in the Social Change of the Bulgarian Transition (1990-2007)

Abstract: *The article examines the political subjects of social change during the Bulgarian transition from totalitarianism to democracy (1990-2007): the subcultures of 'former communists' and of 'anti-communists' formed in the early 1990s. The research question is about their attitudes in the past and presence to lustration – a point of intersection for the ideology, ideologemes, political rhetoric and practice of the 'left' and 'right', and an example of the divergence of the social projects of the main political forces – the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). The research is based on a historical analysis of act and archival materials, periodicals, memoirs and surveys, as well as socio-anthropological analysis of in-depth interviews and focus groups.*

Keywords: lustration; decommunization; post-communist transition; subcultures; Bulgaria.

* * *

Maya Angelova
St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo
[maiangelova@abv.bg]

Feminism and altruism at the front: Privileges and propaganda after 1944 in two cases of war veterans.

Abstract: *The article juxtaposes normative sketches written during the time of the NRB, which build a collective image of the volunteers of the Second World War, and authentic life stories, in which literary raw moments captured in archival materials (letters, memories, diaries, tapes) are discovered, or interviews published in the 21st century. The collective essay model, created in the prism of social realism by Dimitrina Shtereva, published in the two representative books popularizing the exploits of military women in the 1960s, has been accepted as the norm. In the second part, the archived essay of the well-realized Zdravka Hristova processed in the prism of social realism is closely examined. Comparatively, to these collective and individual images, the literary silhouette of the military correspondent Frülinka Novachkova, who has no other biography than what was said in the obituaries on the occasion of her supposed death, is close.*

Keywords: *World War II; Bulgaria; women's volunteer movement; modeling normative narratives; collective and individual heroic models; gender emancipation; traditional and progressive gender patterns.*

* * *

Mirela Kyuchukova
South-West University "Neofit Rilski"
[m.kuchukova@swu.bg]

The uncanonized new martyrs of Communist Bulgaria

Abstract: *In the present study I try to answer the question: Why does the Bulgarian Orthodox Church did not canonize martyrs and confessors from the time of communism, thirty years after its end? Why does the Bulgarian society did not insist on their canonization? Is there a necessity to commemorate their feat in the context of the postmodern? We assume that today the issue of canonizations is an important topic because it is connected with the projection of sanctity in the modern world, moral positions in society, collective memory, making sense of the past. I researched the reasons for the above through the example of some holy people. The canonization validates their feat and is an occasion for rethinking the social public roles, it is directly related to the recovery of the collective memory, in which the martyrs, as well as the torturers, are visible.*

Keywords: *Bulgarian Orthodox Church; communism; new martyrs; victims of communist repression.*

* * *

Maria Pileva, Angel Pilev
Institute for Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
[marywinny@abv.bg], [angel_pilev@abv.bg]

Privileged agents VS repressed "spies"

Abstract: *The paper examines the problems faced by evangelical ministers condemned in the so-called Pastoral Trials (1948–1985) and their families. At the same time, the Bulgarian State Security managed to launch its own cadres to take the places*

of uncomfortable ones on the pulpits and push state policy following the KGB models. And they succeeded in converting even some of the pastors who have been caught up in the judicial processes and declared unjustly. Attention is paid to the instigated opposition against highly educated and erudite clergymen enjoying authority in society, by officials obedient to the new authority, ready to sell their faith for some silver coin.

Keywords: clergy; Protestantism; Pastoral Trials; State Security agents; repressions; benefits.

* * *

Milena Angelova
South-West University "Neofit Rilski"
[mangelova74@yahoo.com]

Privileges instead of public assistance: "fighters against fascism" in the social policies of communist Bulgaria, 1944–1951

Abstract: *This article analyses the formation and institutionalisation of the system of privileges in communist Bulgaria. Right after September 1944, the establishment of a system of privileges was initiated, a system that created special categories of citizens opposed in this way to the rest of society. From 1944 on, former partisans became part of the ruling elite and granted themselves and their relatives many privileges, transforming themselves into a specially privileged caste. The analysis is based on the archive documents of the Union of the People's Guerrilla Fighters and the Union of the Fighters against Fascism – institutions existing in the period 1945–1951. The activities of the 'fighters' were aimed at substituting in very short terms after the take over the vectors of the public memory in order to legitimize the new power resources. The social system of total control and caste privileges discredited the idea of modern society, social freedom and equality. The author analyses both legislation as well as the ways in which privileges were constructed in social policies in communist Bulgaria.*

Keywords: Bulgaria; communism; Fighters against Fascism; privileges.

* * *

Elena Azmanova-Rudarska
South-West University "Neofit Rilski"
[elena_azmanova@swu.bg]

The privileges of Bulgarian writers in the second half of the 20th century. Resorts, literature and culture.

Abstract: *The article examines the formation of the special resort as a topos in which the processes of construction and functioning of literary texts were activated in the time of social realism, when privileges and benefits were created for special category of writers. The process began with the formation of the Union of Fighters Against Fascism and Capitalism and grew with the special writers' awards given out on various occasions. The preferential use of recreational areas in Bulgaria also creates a kind of zoning - Borovets, Sozopol, Hisarya (Villa "Petrovich"), Varna, "Golden Sands" and others are assigned to Union of the Bulgarian Writers. In this context, literary collections of short stories, novels, literary legends, etc. are compiled. The main thesis of the research is that resort-themed works combine ideology and literature while seemingly maintaining their tolerance for dominant socio-ideology. At the same time, they form a layer of relative freedom and are a peculiar escape from the cruel reality of the totalitarian state. For the purpose of the report, the normative base (laws, rules, regulations, etc.) for the period 1944-1965, as well as memories, letters, journalistic materials, archives, works of fiction, are studied.*

Keywords: Bulgarian writers; privileges; Union of the Bulgarian Writers; literary history; literary criticism; poetry; memories; archives; socialist realism in literature; resorts.

* * *

Sadik Hacı
Ankara University, Turkey
[shaci@ankara.edu.tr]

Deletion of Turkish culture in Communist Bulgaria

The dehumanization of Turkish culture in Bulgaria begins very early, from the very creation of the country as an independent state. The Turkish community is not allowed to realize its potential in the fields of education, science, culture, art, sports, commerce, industry, so that it lags behind and is easily manipulated. The state policy in this direction is expressed most strongly in destroying the economic independence of some of its representatives by nationalizing or allowing ethnic Bulgarians to illegally appropriate the property of Turkish landowners and drive them out of the country. The confiscation of real estates of Muslim waqfs, which finance some activities and provide scholarships for talented youth, is a very common practice. The activity of civil initiatives and companies is prohibited. The development of Turkish education, which is not financed but controlled by the state, is limited by various methods. The diplomas of the graduates of the private schools of the Turkish minority are not recognized. In addition, Bulgarian schools are closed to Turkish children. Young people who managed to enroll and graduate from Bulgarian schools in the cities are not admitted to the Bulgarian state high schools and universities. The isolation of the Turkish population from Türkiye, Turkish culture and the literary Turkish language also applies. However, in the period up to 1944, one cannot speak of a consistent policy in the field of depersonalization of Turkish culture. The political struggle between the parties, leading to frequent changes of governments, in some periods weakens the control and provides an opportunity to mobilize the energy of the community on the preservation and development of its cultural heritage.

After the coup on the 9th of September, 1944, and especially after the establishment of communist power in the country, a targeted policy had been adopted against all areas of the Turkish culture. In order to deny their belonging to the Turkish ethnicity, traditional culture and their mother Turkish language, the young intelligentsia, which began to be educated according to communist ideology, underwent ideological processing. The policy of belittling Turkish culture and glorifying the Bulgarian in the initial period of communist Bulgaria had a strong influence among a large part of the Turkish youth who was admitted to state educational institutions. Convinced that the state policy aimed at creating a Turkish elite loyal to the party and the country, the majority of the youth enthusiastically accepted the decisions and through education, the press and literature became involved in their implementation. Thus, the newly created intelligentsia is involved in the politics of the gradual depersonalization of the Turkish culture, traditions, religion, way of life. It does not realize its orientation towards the Turkish identity, towards the gradual assimilation until the complete fusion of the Turkish population with the Bulgarian nation.

The present study aims to identify the most essential stages in the policy of the totalitarian communist government towards the Turks and the methods of depersonalizing their culture.

Keywords: Turkish culture, communist Bulgaria, State policy, the field of education, science, culture, art

* * *

Ana Luleva
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
[analuleva@gmail.com]

Labour as a Right, Duty, Matter of Honour and Repression in State-Socialist Bulgaria

Abstract: *The idea of labour free from exploitation has a fundamental place in communist ideology and was a constant slogan in the public rhetoric of the 'peoples' democracies'. This paper aims to examine how labour is defined in the official discourse of state-socialist Bulgaria, how it is associated with the ideas of freedom, coercion, the new communist moral order; and how labour is used as a repressive measure for annihilation of the political opponents immediately after the seizure of the political power by the Fatherland Front on September 9th, 1944 until the closure of the labour camps in 1962. The juxtaposition of the official state discourse of free labour without exploitation of workers and the people's accounts reveal whether the ideologemes imposed by the state-party propaganda were accepted and became part of the people's thinking and vernacular memory. My thesis is that the ideologemes of free labour are accepted or at least not problematized in the narratives of the majority of 'ordinary' people who lived during the communist regime without being subjected to political repression. The other group, however - the victims of such repression - challenges the regime's propaganda ideologemes of freedom and free labour under socialism, and do so by recounting their own lives and speaking from the undeniable position of witnesses. Thus, in terms of remembering labour, freedom and coercion,*

the generation born in the 1920s and 1930s is divided into two 'generational units' (using Mannheim's term), that remain on irreconcilable opposing positions.

Keywords: labour; coercion; labour camps; vernacular memory.

* * *

Claudia-Florentina Dobre

`Nicolae Iorga` Institute of History, Romanian Academy of Science

[cfdobre@iini.ro]

Between Deprivation and Privilege: (Former) “Enemies of the People” in Communist and Postcommunist Romania

Abstract: *Communism everywhere it settled aimed to create a new society and the 'new man' in the shortest possible time. In order to put into practice such social engineering, it was necessary that those social categories refractory to change to be annihilated. Therefore, the former politicians, the landlords, the wealthy peasants (the kulak), the bourgeois, the intellectuals, the artists were methodically and constantly repressed. Laws, institutions and people were summoned to effect change through repressive methods. The beginning of the process of building the communist society created many 'enemies of the people', as the communists described them, victims of the class struggle, but also of their own ideals. Belief in the 'Arrival of the Americans', and in the short duration of Communism led them directly to prisons, hard labor and deportation camps. Many perished, but most escaped and returned to the society that was reconfiguring itself on new bases and with new values. The fall of communism brought their recognition as 'victims' of the totalitarian regim's politics. In order to acknowledge their suffering the postcommunist Romanian state offers them compensations, granted them the label of 'anti-communist fighter', and eventually condemned Communism as 'illegitimate and criminal'. My paper discusses all these issues while pointing out what was at stake in organized repression during communism as well as in recognizing the suffering of the repressed in the first postcommunist decades.*

Keywords: *enemies of the people; repression; communism; Romania; postcommunism; anti-communism; recognition; rehabilitation; compensation; off-spring; privilege.*

* * *

George Gotsiridze

Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University, Georgia

[giagotsiridze67@gmail.com]

The Caucasus in the 1920s – 1930s: the First Clash of the Democratic World with Russian Bolshevism and Its Consequences

Abstract: *The paper analyzes the historical processes taking place in the Caucasus in the 1920s-1930s, which reflect the destruction of the democratic states of the Caucasus by Russian Bolshevism and the efforts of the political elite of the Caucasus to restore the independence through the unification of the Caucasus. The work highlights the actors of these dramatic events and shows the influence of domestic and foreign factors on the mentioned processes. It is emphasized that the first confrontation between Russian Bolshevism and Western-type democracy took place in the Caucasus, which ended with the defeat of the latter.*

Based on the critical analysis of rich primary sources, emigrant press, and the records of eyewitnesses, the paper explains the reasons for the victory of Russian Bolshevism, on the one hand, and, of the defeat of the independent democratic states of the Caucasus, on the other hand, the importance of the unification of the Caucasus to achieve common Caucasian goals is highlighted, the indifferent attitude of the Western states (with some exceptions) to the ongoing processes in the Caucasus and their negative role in the victory of Russian Bolshevism is shown. It is emphasized that the pursuit of a pragmatic policy, devoid of values, which was carried out by the Western World in relation to Bolshevik Russia/Soviet Union, is disastrous even for pragmatists, that collaboration

with totalitarian and autocratic regimes threatens the democracy and world order based on the basic principles of the international law. Based on the reconciliation of historical events, the paper draws parallels between the political processes going on in the period under investigation and the modern world, it is demonstrated the psycho type of Russia, which does not change historically, on one hand, and the mistakes of the Western world, which contribute to its militarization, on the other hand.

Keywords: *Caucasus; Russian Bolshevism; Western world; Caucasian Union; winners and losers.*

* * *

Maria Mateoniu-Micu
The Museum of the Romanian Peasant
[mariamateoniu@gmail.com]

Miners - a Privileged Category of the Working Class? Valea Jiului (Romania) in Socialism and Post- Socialism

Abstract: *This article addresses the dynamics of social inequalities in socialist and post-socialist Romania, following the particular situation of Valea Jiului miners (in Romania), from the creating the image of the working-class heroes to the loss of preferential status, together with the post-1989 transition from communism to capitalism and from the planned economy to the market one. Therefore, the article includes the way in which the miners' class identity was built over time, highlighting rather a preferential status of a psychological nature than a material one, the practices of disciplining their masculinity with the help of state propaganda and how this image of a homogeneous, disciplined and solidary group was diluted after the fall of communism.*

Keywords: *Valea Jiului; miners; preferential status; work cult; propaganda; strike; "mineriade".*

* * *

Arsim Sinani
University of Pristina, "Hasan Prishtina", Pristina, Republic of Kosovo
[arsim.sinani@uni-pr.edu], <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9854-9306>

Veli Kryeziu
University of Pristina, "Hasan Prishtina", Pristina, Republic of Kosovo
[veli.kryeziu@uni-pr.edu], <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8426-7145>

Yugoslav Totalitarian Society, Discrimination Against Albanian and Bulgarian Minorities in Macedonia

Abstract: *The Balkans as a region of Southeast Europe is one of the most sensitive regions of Europe; this is where the sparks of war arose from the time of the Ottoman Empire until 2001 when a political solution was finally given to each context of nationalities and inequalities in this region. The former Yugoslavia as an artificial creation of a state, lacking nationality, is one of the sources of conflicts which erupted with bloody wars caused by Serbia. The Yugoslav federation which gained political power after World War II consisted of 6 republics and 2 provinces. According to the Federal Constitution of Yugoslavia, all peoples must be integrated into Yugoslavia. Unfortunately within Yugoslavia there were privileged peoples, and others who were treated as secondary-class people.*

Albanians in Yugoslavia, most of whom belonged to the Autonomous Province of Kosovo, did not experience the status of equal population in Yugoslavia; Bulgarians were treated the same, most of whom lived in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. The Republican government in Macedonia influenced by the Federal one has directly influenced Macedonia in the manner of

discrimination against national minorities such as Albanians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Roma, Ashkali, Turks, etc., while the Serbian, Montenegrin, Macedonian people have been the most privileged ones within the Republic, as well as in the Yugoslav Federation.

The communist regime in Yugoslavia denied any minority efforts for equality and prosperity. The most vocal in the quest for rights were Albanians and Bulgarians, who faced torture, draconian punishments, internment, and even murder in Yugoslav concentration camps. Yugoslavia, namely the Socialist Republic of Macedonia from 1945 until 2001, was the most dictatorial regime in the history of Southeast Europe for Albanians and Bulgarians; unfortunately the Bulgarian community in Macedonia, even with the new constitution, has not resolved its political, cultural, educational status etc...

Keywords: Yugoslavia; Macedonia; totalitarianism; Albanians; Bulgarians.

* * *

Zeynep Zafer
Ankara University, Turkey
[zzafer@ankara.edu.tr]

Belene Concentration Camp and Muslim Communities (1964-1987)

Abstract: The imprisonment of Muslims in the Belene concentration camp, subsequently called forced settlement of a new residence, as the punitive measure in a more mitigated form, was applied against opponents of assimilation policy almost until the fall of communist power in Bulgaria. The article summarizes data on Turks and Pomaks who opposed the state decisions and repression, sent to the second division of the Belene concentration camp in the first two periods (1949-1953 and 1956-1959) of its history. Then we consider in more detail the imprisonment of Pomaks in relation of the change of names in the almost unexplored by this aspect 1960s and 1970s of the concentration camp. Finally, brief parallels are drawn between the internment in these two decades, and the last, largest forced internment of Turks (1984-1987) in the concentration camp in the name change campaign of 1984-1985 and the subsequent years of repression.

Keywords: Belene Concentration Cam; Muslim communities; Pomaks; Turks; 1960s; 1970s; 1980s.

* * *

Harun Koçak
Kastamonu University, Turkey
[hkocak@kastamonu.edu.tr]

Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu
Istanbul University, Turkey
[nurcan.ozgur@istanbul.edu.tr]

Fair Trial for Transitional Justice: The Case of Belene Trial

Abstract: Inspired by the 32-years long Belene trial, the article investigates the impact of deprivation from the right to justice on reaching transitional justice in aftermaths of crimes against humanity. Through bottom-up victims-centered perspective the article digs into the Belene victims' oral history narratives to find out the impact of this deprivation on the societal contract, victims' trauma, justice perception of the society and the rule of law. Based on textual analysis of open-ended interviews and narratives of the Belene victims, the article highlights the adverse consequences of neglecting the victims' right to fair trial and transitional justice and perpetuating impunity, not only impeding justice and healing but perpetuating victimization and corroding societal trust.

The sustained denial of victims' rights to a fair trial and access to justice exacerbates historical wounds, erodes the

foundations of the justice and collective perception of fairness in the whole society. Beyond legal implications, the deprivation from right to justice affects individuals' psychological and social well-being and overall societal peace. The article emphasizes that transitional justice is a moral imperative, enabling the rebuilding of a peaceful and democratic society on principles of accountability and empathy, especially in the complex and sensitive aftermath of ethnic-based crimes against humanity.

Keywords: transitional justice; crimes against humanity; Belene trial; fair trial.

* * *

Magdalena Kostova-Panayotova
South-West University "Neofit Rilski"
[panayotova@swu.bg]

По следите на световната литература – победители и победени

Abstract: The report focuses on trends in 21st-century literature and the ways in which canonical notions of what is high literature are changing, who is the author of the canon, whether there is a canon today and whose it is, what it means to be victorious or vanquished, can we announce we're talking about winners. Also, against the background of all the more severe requests of authors in world literature with a hybrid identity – the article rethinks the place of ideas such as multiculturalism and political correctness; whether they offer wider horizons or limit the dialogue, whether literary means also have literary value or are imposed only by extra-literary factors, etc. Today, key novels of 21st century literature ask questions such as what it means to live between cultures; who learns in the process of this cross-cultural communication – only the migrant writers or also the host culture, is communication effective with different backgrounds and cultures. Among other pressing questions is how effective is multiculturalism today? Who is the winner and who is the loser, who is dominated and who is dominant...

Keywords: world literature; cross-cultural; hibrids; multiculturalism; postcolonial criticism.

* * *

Kristiyan Yanev
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
[kijanev@slav.uni-sofia.bg]

The Marginal Other in Post-Soviet Space (Observations on Polish Literary Reportage Concerning the East)

Abstract: The paper analyzes Polish literary reportage as a trend evolved from a rather marginalized position of a hybrid genre to a prized form of literary expression in the last decades. More often than not, the genre's main focus is the unprivileged, problematic or unknown marginal Other, which is visible in the journalistic fiction about Poland's eastern neighbors. At the same time, the imagining of the Other can be problematic and biased, which is a major concern for the authors, whose position between the belletristic and the journalistic poses different demands on the texts about Russia. The major political, cultural and economic post-1989 transformation in the countries of the former USSR occupy a privileged place among the topics of the genre. The text compares the representation of post-Soviet reality in the literary reportages of Ryszard Kapuściński, Jacek Hugo-Bader and Jędrzej Morawiecki, focussing on the depiction of the marginalized groups in the postcommunist society. The text argues that each decade after the Soviet Union's collapse brings forth a different type of marginalization (ethnic and political in the 1990s; social and cultural in the 2000s; religious and ideological in the 2010s).

Keywords: Polish literary reportage; marginalization; post-Soviet; postcommunist society.

* * *

Nikolay Papuchiev
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
[papuchiev@gmail.com]

Language of Hate – Strategies for Manipulation: Discussion on Dunav Most / Serial Movie (1999) in Bulgarian Newspapers

Abstract: *The focus of the article is on the language of derogation and hate in Bulgarian newspapers published between 1990 and 2000. The study centers around one of the most famous and most discussed serial movies, “Dunav most” (The Danube Bridge). The 7-series visual project is based on Georgi Mishev’s novel and was sponsored by the Bulgarian National Television. Soon after the projection of the first episode started discussion provoked by the most popular newspapers in the country, in which many journalists, experts, political leaders, and citizens took part. The language of publications is a language of derogation and hate directed towards the movie and the “pornography” shown on it. So-called pornography is expressed in a few scenes with naked actors and one – very popular and most argued - two men in a bed. One of them – a religious man living in a monastery. Bulgarian newspapers manipulated the discussion pointing at that fact and hiding or diminishing the fact that this person had been an officer of former Secret services of the fallen totalitarian regime. The language of hate is paralleled with “the traditional Bulgarian values,” and in that way mass media present the distortion of a post-totalitarian society. Homosexuality is considered as a huge problem of the modern nation, and that is why it must be pointed at and rejected. This language, in fact, provokes readers’ emotions and turns aside attention from economic and social issues controlled by people of former totalitarian police.*

Keywords: *Dunav most; Bulgaria; TV show; newspapers; time of transition; newspaper; secret services; homosexuality; language of hate.*

* * *

Dena Popova
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
[Dena.d.popova@gmail.com]

The Lost in Transition: History in Pictures site as a possible liberating narrative of the Transition

Abstract: *The paper addresses the potential to challenge the dominant narrative of the official memory of the Transition period in Bulgaria through live archives. The specific website, Lost in the Transition: history in photos, is studied as an example of live space for memory reconstruction that could provoke authentic reflection about the recent past and provide a shared space for reflexive dialogue in the contemporary Bulgarian society. This dynamic process can result in a critical attempt to better understand the period and cocreate a liberating and empowering narrative.*

Keywords: *official memory; dominant narrative; liberating narrative; Transition period; communicative memory.*

* * *

Nina Debruyne
State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia
[n.debruyne@unibit.bg]

From Being Deprived to Bestowing Privileges – Artistic Reflections of the Wrestlers /Mutri/ Subculture in The Novels by Georgi Stoev

Abstract: *One of the most characteristic phenomena of the Transition in Bulgaria in the 1990s were the so-called Wrestlers’*

brigades. Their emergence and rise left a lasting imprint on the social fabric and provided the initial impetus for the formation of the so-called 'Wrestlers/ Mutri' subculture. In a situation of rapidly changing public, economic and social environments in Bulgaria after the fall of the totalitarian regime in 1989, the Wrestlers' brigades gave young men with modest family backgrounds the opportunity to become part of a set enjoying a progressively privileged economic and social circumstance. In the aftermath of the state's abdication of its regulatory and adjudicative functions, these groups and their individual members gained access to various power levers and transformed from privileged to privileging — granting privileges — both to in-group members (family, friends, etc.) and outsiders such as politicians, business people, artists, etc.

This process of transformation from disadvantaged to privileged in this context has not yet been fully explored. The available documentary and archival information is currently limited and difficult to access. Fiction as a parallel source allows us to consider these processes from a different angle. The purpose of the proposed paper is to analyse the novels of Georgi Stoev — admittedly a former member of a Wrestler's group, as a source of information about the process of transformation from disadvantage to privilege and of specific subcultural traits. By comparing the information in the eight books in the 'Witnesses of the Times' and 'BG Godfather' series with publicly available documents, studies and publications, a deeper understanding is obtained of the values and dynamics of the Wrestlers/ Mutri subculture in Bulgaria at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.

Keywords: wrestlers; mutri; subculture; transition; Bulgaria.

* * *

Pavel Krejčí
Masaryk university, Brno
[pkrejci@phil.muni.cz]

The Czech Verb Tunelovat and Its Derivatives – a Symbol of Economic Crime Since the 1990s in Czechia

Abstract: The change in social and political conditions in Czechoslovakia and then in independent Czechia after 1989 caused significant dynamics in the creation of new words and expressions or the expansion of the meaning of already existing words. A symbolic representative of the emergence of new words and meanings is the verb tunelovat and its derivatives (tunelování, tunelář, etc.), which began to be used to describe a certain way of realizing economic crime, through which privileged individuals from the time of the communist totalitarian regime become a privileged layer of society and in the new conditions of freedom thanks to their connections, financial security from the past and their entrepreneurial cynicism. The article presents a linguistic analysis of this expression and its derivatives from the point of view of lexical semantics, word formation and frequency of use. The analysis is based on both the relevant scientific literature and data from the Czech National Corpus.

Keywords: Czech language; semantics, transition, Czech verb tunelovat.

* * *

Tamila Davitadze and Nana Mazmishvili
Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Batumi, Georgia
[tamila.davitadze@bsu.edu.ge] [nana.mazmishvili@bsu.edu.ge]

Writer Fighting against Discrimination and Eastern Reality

Abstract: Discrimination against women and girls — including gender-based violence, harmful traditional practices — is the most common form of inequality. Giving preference, privileges to sons and underestimating girls, which is the main cause of the harmful practice of sex selection based on gender, is still a widespread practice in some countries. Against this background, the role and contribution of those politicians, writers and people interested in this issue, who, at the risk of their lives, fight to improve the situation, is invaluable. Among the people with their priceless input in promotion of the above mentioned issue, we would distinguish Jean Sasson, the modern American writer and researcher who considered the request of an Arab woman and turned her notes about

real stories into an artistic reality. In the novel “The Princess’ Diaries,” the victim of discrimination asks for help, as there is no other way for her to change anything; however, she hopes the situation in her country will change for the benefit of women and as it is believed, fighting always makes sense. The objective of the given paper is to bring to light the form of expressing the protest against unfair reality by the victim herself. Moreover, we aim to draw a parallel between two women and the ways they communicate the harsh reality to the rest of the world.

Keywords: Jean Sasson; novels; discrimination; gender; victim.

* * *

Nadezhda Stalyanova
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
[nadezhda_stalyanova@slav.uni-sofia.bg]

Gender Marked Phraseologisms in Bulgarian – Aspects of their Semantics and Stylistic Marking

Abstract: The paper explores the language-society relationship in the context of gender-neutral language, a part of inclusive communication that aims to avoid referring to a person's gender while inappropriately highlighting or attributing positive or negative characteristics exclusively associated with one gender. The analysis is situated in the linguistic aspect of so-called gender-sensitive language or gender-neutral language. The text studies the semantics of two phraseologisms in Bulgarian perceived as discriminatory, negatively marked and suggesting gender stereotypes. In order to investigate and analyze the reception and use of the phraseologies мъжка дума (man's word) and мъжко момиче (man like girl) by school-age youth, we conducted a survey among respondents between 15 and 17 years old. The aim of the study was to analyze to what extent young people perceive the connotative meaning of the phraseologisms, whether they realize their semantics as evaluative and characterizing a certain type of behavior. The questions in the survey are devoted to the stylistic and connotative meaning of the studied expressions. The findings of the study show that phraseologisms with a component indicating a person's biological sex and expressing a certain attitude towards its stereotypical perception in society are not part of the active vocabulary of the Bulgarian students. Young people experience difficulties in defining their semantics. The text predicts that their reduced use in the near future will not be the result of policies enforcing the principles of inclusive communication. These phraseologies will naturally pass into the passive part of the lexical system due to ignorance of their semantics.

Keywords: gender inclusive language; semantics; phraseology.

* * *

Zhuzhuna Gumbaridze
Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University
[zhuzhuna.gumbaridze@bsu.edu.ge]

Zeinab Gvarishvili
Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University
[zeinab.gvarishvili@bsu.edu.ge]

On Politically-Driven Language Discrimination in Post-Soviet Space (from the Example of Occupied Abkhazia)

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to reflect the policy of the government of Georgia towards creating higher education opportunities for the youth residing in Abkhazia and outline the supporting measures taken by the Georgian side that contribute to Abkhazian youth's integration into the mainstream of academia locally and worldwide. Accordingly, as the background of the issue,

we start with a brief description of the language ideology in the occupied area and then move to a discussion of the factors which demonstrate the opportunities that ensure and simplify access to higher quality education in Georgia as well as abroad for the targeted group. There are two substantive issues: first, Russian language ideology imposition on Abkhaz youth and, second, the benefits of acquiring a degree in Georgia.

We argue that the collapse of the Soviet Union and Georgia's recent pro-Western politics have paved the road to new possibilities for cultivating a linguistically diverse, multiethnic, and tolerant society throughout Georgia. Young people living in both the occupied region and Georgia represent the generation that should cohabitate and find a common path of understanding and peace in order to build a common better future. However, the initiatives aimed at enhancing educational opportunities hardly serve as a trigger to fill the gap. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many residents are forced to choose which side of the de facto border to stay on. The case is escalated by the fact that a Georgian diploma is not recognized in Abkhazia. Whereas an Abkhazian diploma is accepted, if one goes to study in Zugdidi or Tbilisi, the diploma received there will not be recognized in Abkhazia. Options for the Abkhaz college applicants are not diverse either. They can continue their studies in either Abkhazia or Russia. In this respect, the problem is particularly acute in the Gali district (the southernmost district of Abkhazia) where the ethnic Georgian population finds themselves non-privileged, discriminated against and vulnerable.

Keywords: conflict-affected; Abkhazia; higher education; unified exams; university.

* * *

Elena Krejčová
Masaryk university, Brno
[elena.krejцова@gmail.com]

Regulation of gender neutral communication in the academic world – recommendations and methodological documents and their application

Abstract: *The text examines gender-correct communication in the context of the recommendations of the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic and of Czech universities on the use of gender-neutral language in academic settings. Individual recommendations for the use of preferred words and constructions in order to emphasize the role of women in public and academic life, to express respect for persons with non-binary gender, and to reduce the masculinization of language are considered. The text also presents a contrasting view of the language situation in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria and the specifics of the sociolinguistic situation in the two countries. The potential possibility of linguistic realization of the principles of gender inclusive language in Czech and Bulgarian is observed, and differences are found, although both languages have the same word-formation patterns and are genetically related Slavic languages.*

Keywords: *gender neutral language; gender inclusive language; academic communication; feminization of language.*

* * *

Antony Hoyte-West
Independent scholar, United Kingdom
[antony.hoyte.west@gmail.com], ORCID: 0000-0003-4410-6520

The twilight of a Habsburg idyll: Portraits of privilege in Gregor von Rezzori's *The Snows of Yesteryear*

Abstract: *Born in imperial Czernowitz, the noted German-language author and man of letters Gregor von Rezzori (1914–1918) was acclaimed for his fictionalised depictions of post-Habsburg Romanian Bukovina in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. As the second child and only son of parents who were part of the former German-speaking Habsburg social and*

economic elite, von Rezzori's 1989 autobiographical memoir The Snows of Yesteryear (originally published in German as Blumen im Schnee) chronicles his childhood recollections as a member of this once-privileged group. After providing the requisite historical and sociocultural context, this article adopts an interdisciplinary approach to explore portrayals of privilege in the book. This is done through selecting, presenting, and examining various events, observations, and personalities which are contained within the work as a whole. Subsequently, these are interpreted from the perspective of elite sociology, employing the notion of elite resource areas and institutions outlined by the American scholar Shamus Khan as an analytical framework of reference. In doing so, this study offers literary and historical perspectives on the upper echelons of a vanished world, providing insights into the last vestiges of the once-privileged Habsburg elite in the new and evolving post-Habsburg reality of the interwar Kingdom of Romania.

Keywords: imperial elite; nobility; Bukovina; Habsburg Empire; memoir; German literature.