

The 7th International Balkan Studies Conference

BALKAN EXPRESS BALKAN EXPRESS

Between Orientalism and Occidentalism

Date: November 10–11, 2023

Conference venue: Faculty of Humanities,
Charles University, Pátkova 2137/5, 182 00, Prague 8

Key note speaker:

Hariz Halilovich

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Book presentation:

Peter Handkes Jugoslawienkomplex

Clemens Ruthner

Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland

BE23

Conference program

Organizing committee

& participating institutions

Dana Bittnerová

Faculty of Humanities, Charles University

Markéta Slavková

Prague Security Studies Institute

Ivana Skenderija

Faculty of Arts, Charles University

František Šístek

Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences

The conference is organized by the **Faculty of Humanities, Charles University** and the **Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences** in cooperation with the **Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences** (Zora Hesová), the **Czech National Committee of Balkan Scholars — Czech Association for Slavonic, Balkan and Byzantine Studies (ČSSBBS)**. The conference has been supported by **Strategy AV21 — Top Research in the Public Interest**, a research program of the Czech Academy of Sciences and also the **Czech Association for Social Anthropology (CASA)**.

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The 7th International
Balkan Studies Conference

Prague, Czechia
10→11 November 2023

BALKAN EXPRESS
BAΓKANI EXPRESS

Between Orientalism and Occidentalism

Conference program



Portrait: Nikolay Stanev

*The conference is dedicated to the memory of **Mirjam Moravcová** (1931-2023), ethnologist and Balkan scholar from the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, co-founder (2013), and a member of our organizing committee.

About the conference

In 2023, the 7th International Balkan Studies Conference "Balkan Express" aims to rethink the Balkans through concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism from the 19. century to the present day. In a broader sense, at the center of attention are the mechanisms of integration and disintegration, the social construction of local, national, and European identities in Southeast Europe, and the discourses that further shaped these processes.

Orientalism is a term coined by Edward Said, and it refers to the asymmetrical Western perception of the East (i.e., the Orient). Maria Todorova proposed an alternative term, Balkanism (Balkanization), which critically examines similar attitudes in Southeast Europe. In these biased orientalizing perspectives, the East has been typically constructed at large as "non-European" and as radically different from other parts of the old continent. It is believed that this region had been deeply influenced by the Ottoman heritage and also by oriental religious and cultural norms.

This is not merely the case of the Western discourse and Western representation of this region. The orientalizing prejudices and stereotypes were, since the 19th century, shared to a large extent also by the elites of the emerging Balkan nations, namely, in relation to the modernization process. The attempts of diminishing or even getting rid of the oriental heritage have had different forms: starting with the Europeanization of local cities, continuing with suppressing of the oriental elements in fashion, purification of the regional languages (generally from the expression coming from Turkish) and finishing with the ethnic cleansing of various social groups, most prominently the Muslim origin inhabitants (e.g., Turks in Bulgaria in the 80s of the 20th century, the Bosnian War including the Srebrenica genocide in 1995).

Occidentalism, or in other words, the stereotypical and distorted image of the West (Occident), is also present in the Balkans from the 19th century to the present day. In this region, occidentalism represents, to a large extent, unsuccessful modernization attempts and also a latent effort to "catch up" with a more developed Western Europe. Nowadays, occidentalism manifests as the refusal of European integration processes and, at the same time, an attempt to construct a seemingly independent orthodox Christian civilization inclined towards Russia (prominently in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro).

Uniting motive is the opposition against the allegedly "rotten and decadent" West and its values, and another motive might be "defense" against the spread of radical Islam in the areas with a higher percentage of Muslim inhabitants.

The 7th "Balkan Express" conference would like to revisit the notions, practices, and discourses of orientalism and occidentalism from the interdisciplinary perspective (historical, anthropological, political, and economic perspectives). The goal of the interdisciplinary approach is to improve the communication between the individual disciplines and, thus, enable different fields of knowledge production. Last but not least, the conference aims to provide an innovative perspective on the region, which at present (as well as in the past) becomes an unstable and potentially explosive space where Europe (West), Russia, and the Islamic world compete for political, economic and cultural influences.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Discourses and concepts of Orientalism and Balkanism (asymmetrical Western perception of the East/Orient)
- The Europeanization of the Balkans and processes of Westernization
- The process of formation and purification of the regional languages
- Ethnic cleansing and discrimination of social groups
- Discourses and concepts of Occidentalism (stereotypical and distorted images of the West/Occident)
- Refusal of European identity, the EU integration, and anti-Western and anti-EU discourses, groups, and practices
- Constructing "Orthodox Christian Civilization" in the Balkans, Russian influence, pro-Russian groups, and discourses
- Orientalism and Occidentalism in everyday practices – discourses and field research
- The Balkans at the defense of the West from the real or imagined threat of radical Islam

Conference language

English

Contacts

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Conference fee

All conference participants are obliged to pay a **conference fee of 300 CZK** (approx. 12,7 EUR) in cash upon registration on site.

GDPR

All conference participants will be asked to sign a standard GDPR form as required by Czech institutions.

Lunches (optional)

On Friday, you can preorder lunch in the cafeteria at the faculty building for 130 CZK (22 CZK for a soup). In the cafeteria, additional options are available in limited capacity (salads, sandwiches, pastries).

On Saturday, it is possible to reserve a lunch menu in a nearby Castle restaurant

Květinářská 755, Prague 8,
www.castle-restaurant.cz for 200 CZK.

The additional lunch fees are to be covered upon registration in CZK (cash only).

To reserve your lunches, please use the following online form.

Please fill in this form by Wednesday, November 8, 9am.

Contact us at: konference.balkan@gmail.com

BALKANEXPRESS

БЪЛГАРИЯ ЕКСПРЕС

Between Orientalism and Occidentalism

Friday 10. 11. 2023	Room 1 Faculty of Humanities, Charles University	Room 2 Faculty of Humanities, Charles University
8:30—9:30	Registration	
9:30—9:50	Conference Opening	
10:00—11:30	Panel 1 (3 presenters)	Panel 2 (2 presenters)
11:30—11:45	Coffee break	Coffee break
11:45—13:15	Panel 3 (3 presenters)	Panel 4 (3 presenters)
13:15—14:30	Lunch break	Lunch break
14:30—16:00	Panel 5 (3 presenters)	Panel 6 (3 presenters)
16:00—16:15	Coffee break	Coffee break
16:15—17:45	Panel 7 (3 presenters)	Panel 8 (3 presenters)
19:30—22:00	Informal networking at café LASTAVICA (Opletalova 16, Prague 1)	
Saturday 11. 11. 2023	Room 1	Room 2
9:45—10:15	Registration (late arrivals)	
10:15—11:45	Panel 9 (3 presenters)	Panel 10 (3 presenters)
11:45—13:45	Lunch break (Hotel Castle Residence)	
13:45—15:15	Panel 11 (3 presenters)	
15:15—15:30	Coffee break	
15:30—16:00	Book presentation 1 Mirjam Moravcová	
16:00—16:30	Book presentation 2 Clemens Ruthner	
16:30—16:45	Coffee break	
16:45—18:00	Keynote Speaker - Hariz Halilovich	
18:00—18:30	Closing speech by the organizing committee (small refreshment)	
18:30—19:30	Aida Mujačić (live music)	
20:30	Informal dinner & networking in the PUB (Veleslavínova 3, Prague 1)	

Program overview (list of the panels)

Friday, November 10

8:30—9:30 – Registration

9:30—9:50 – Conference Opening

10:00—11:30 (Room 1)

Panel 1 – The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage

Ugur Özcan

The settlement of blood feuds in the Ottoman Balkans: The Activities of the Müsalaha-i Dem Commissions in the Sanjak of Debre as a Case Study (1880-1912)

Branko Banović, Marko Pisev, Miloš Milenković

Exploring Controversies Surrounding Ottoman Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Western Balkans: The Potential of Tamburitza-Playing as a Mediator among Local Communities

Lenka Jakoubková Budilová, Marek Jakoubek

Depopulation of the Bulgarian countryside:
an Ottoman heritage or a Europeanization of the country?

10:00-11:30 (Room 2)

Panel 2 – Contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina between East and West

Katarzyna Wasiak

Between Western and ethnic narratives - second generation memory of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Jelena Božović

Writing is (not) aligning:
Understanding script choices in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

11:45-13:15 (Room 1)

Panel 3 – Yugoslavia: Images and Narratives

Alenka Bartulović

The Ambivalence of Peripheral Orientalism: Imagining Yugoslavia

Anna Herran

"That Good, Old Democratic Yugoslavia:
"Peter II Karađorđević commemorates T.G. Masaryk in Toronto, 1954.

Sanja Lukić

Balkanism That Prevails? Life and Time Magazines
'Depiction of People in Tito's Yugoslavia

11:45-13:15 (Room 2)

Panel 4 – European and Balkan Identities

Krasimira Marholeva

Discourses on George Bernard Shaw's Comedy "Arms and the Man"
- British, Bulgarian and Czech Perspective

Elena Marchevska

Balkan is not Dead:
Staging passing of time and European identity from the periphery

Otilia Ilie

The anti-Balkan discourse in Brussels
- a human perspective based on my life story

14:30-16:00 (Room 1)

Panel 5 – Occidentalism and Anti-European Discourses

Luka Nešković

Eastern Question in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Writer's Diary

Dragan Bakić

“The Soul of the Balkans”: Identity Construction in the Discourses of Serbian Radical Right-Wing Intellectuals in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

Piotr Mirocha

Constructing Europe-in-crisis in Serbia: corpus-based analysis of discourses on European crises in the Serbian broadsheet press

14:30-16:00 (Room 2)

Panel 6 – Religion and Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rosa Meyer

Puzzling the Pieces – Working on a Playground Ethnography on the Salafi Scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Franziska Singer

Negotiating belonging: Sarajevo, Europe, and the global ummah

Mario Katić

Orientalist narratives and perceptions of Bosnian Croat sacred sites

16:15-17:45 (Room 1)

Panel 7 – Czech Representations of the Balkans

Gabriela Fatková

«In the Mountainlands» by photographer Ferdinand Bučina: Eastern Europe exposed and developed

Davor Pavičić

Between “Ours” and “the Other”: Balkans in Czech Travel Writing (1848-1918)

Pavol Száz

The Balkans in Hašek – Hašek in the Balkans

16:15-17:45 (Room 2)

Panel 8 – Montenegro: Culture, Images, Religion

Dejan Batrićević

“How Western and Eastern culture defined the innovation of Montenegrin medieval illuminated manuscripts”

Ana Živković

Representations of Montenegro in nineteenth-century British writing: ‘A small people against a sea of Turks’

František Šístek

The Earthly Life and Afterlife of the False Messiah Sabbatai Zevi in Ulcinj (1673-2023)

19:30-22:00

Informal networking at gallery café Lastavica

Address: “Lastavica” café gallery, Opletalova 16, Prague 1
Refreshments will be provided, please bring cash (CZK) to cover your drinks.

Saturday, November 11

9:45-10:15 – Registration (late arrivals)

10:15-11:45 (Room 1)

Panel 9 – Europe and the Balkans in the Time of Empires

Kyrillos Nikolaou

The Balkans seen by the Occident: How a French diplomat saw Thessaly and its people – political, economic, social situation – in the mid of the 19th century

Margit Kőszegi

The Balkans is our East
(The imagined empire in the 19th century Hungarian Geography)

Bálint Varga

The National Appropriation of the Empire:
Hungarian and Czech Claims to Civilize Habsburg Bosnia

10:15-11:45 (Room 2)

Panel 10 - Modernization and Europeanization in the 19th and 20th Century

Alin Burlec

Exploring the Routes towards Modernity: The Impact of Exclusionary Nationalism and the Working Class in Romania between 1900-1914

Božica Slavković-Mirić

Europeanization/modernization of cities in Kosovo and Metohija in the years approaching the Second World War

Vanja Petrović, Đermana Kurić

AFŽ, Deveiling, and Contemporary Orientalising Narratives

13:45-15:15 (Room 1)

Panel 11 – Democratic Backsliding and Russian Influence in the Balkans

Jakub Stepaniuk

Serbian foreign and internal policy between the West and the East

Miklós Teszáry

Montenegro-Russia relations in the shadow of the Ukrainian-Russian war 2014 - 2022

Boban Batrićević

«Rotting West and The Holy Mother Russia“:
Pro-Russian Propaganda in Montenegro about the War in Ukraine

15:30-16:00

**Book presentation 1 – Mirjam Moravcová,
*Ethnic Diaspora Festivities in the Czech Republic.***

***Cultural Traditions between Isolation, Integration and Hybridization*, Prague: Karolinum, 2023.**

Krasimira Marholeva – Dana Bittnerová

16:00-16:30

Book presentation 2 – Vahidin Preljević - Clemens Ruthner (Hrsg.),

***Peter Handkes Jugoslawienkomplex*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2022.**

Clemens Ruthner

16:45-18:00

Keynote lecture **Hariz Halilovich**

Global Echoes of the Balkans War Tunes:

Popular Culture and (Self-)Orientalism of Imagined Enemies and Real Victims

18:00-18:30

Closing speech by the organizing committee

(small refreshments will be provided)

18:30-19:30

Aida Mujačić (live music)

20:30

Informal dinner & networking in the PUB

(Veslavínova 3, Prague 1)

A full conference program including the abstracts

Friday, November 10

Panel 1 – The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage

Ugur Özcan

Friedrich-Schiller University of Jena

Presentation title: The settlement of blood feuds in the Ottoman Balkans: The Activities of the Müsalaha-i Dem Commissions (Blood Settlement Commissions) in the Sanjak of Debre (Debar) as a Case Study (1880-1912)

Abstract

Blood feuds as a phenomenon and the question of their resolution have existed for centuries in tribal societies in different parts of the world, as well as in the Ottoman Empire. In the history of the Ottoman Empire, it is believed that the most effective method of resolution was the formation of Musalaha-i Dem commissions. The first institutionalization of these commissions, which provided for the reconciliation of hostilities between families and clans belonging to different tribes, nationalities, religions or sects in the vilayets of Kosovo, Shkodra and Manastir (Bitola) through mediation, coincides with the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid (1876-1908) and continued until the decline of the empire. Although they achieved some positive results in the Balkans and set an example for similar conflicts in other regions of the empire, they were also the focus of controversy over various abuses, corruption and dereliction of duty. This paper discusses the functioning of these commissions, the activities of the institution and the difficulties it faced at the end of the 19th century and in the first quarter of the 20th century in the Sanjak of Dibra (Debar) as a 'case study' and will be conducted in the light of Ottoman archival documents with a historical perspective.

Branko Banović, Marko Pisev, Miloš Milenković

Branko Banović – Institute of Ethnography, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts;

Marko Pisev – Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Belgrade;

Miloš Milenković – Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Belgrade

Presentation title: Exploring Controversies Surrounding Ottoman Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Western Balkans: The Potential of Tamburitza-Playing as a Mediator among Local Communities

Abstract

UNESCO plays a substantial role in raising awareness about the vital need to preserve intangible cultural heritage (ICH) worldwide, irrespective of its origin. However, the profound influence of Ottoman culture on the Western Balkans notwithstanding, research indicates a significant underrepresentation of Ottoman ICH in the region's National Registers of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This study delves into the theoretical and practical dimensions of this issue, employing Montenegro's National Register as a case. ICH is inherently tied to cultural identity, often sparking debates among local communities and even whole nations. The presentation concentrates on the potential of collectively disputed ICH to serve as a bridge for reconciliation, surpassing its conventional role as a mere subject of appreciation or contention. In the midst of challenges related to asserting local identities, Pljevlja, the northernmost city of Montenegro, emerges as a compelling case study,

underscoring the latent potential of ICH as a catalyst for peacebuilding. The exploration centers on tamburitza-playing (the art of performing traditional folk music on a stringed instrument called the tamburitza, popular in various Balkan and Eastern European cultures), highlighting its capability of bridging divides between local Bosniaks/Muslims and Serbs, thus embodying the prospect of unity through shared heritage.

Lenka Jakoubková Budilová, Marek Jakoubek

Lenka Jakoubková – Faculty of Humanities, Charles University

Presentation title: Depopulation of the Bulgarian countryside:
an Ottoman heritage or a Europeanization of the country?

Abstract

Depopulation of rural and peripheral regions is one of the urgent problems of contemporary Europe. Accelerating urbanization, changes in global economic flows, geopolitical ruptures, climate change and second demographic transition have all contributed to depopulation of the European countryside. Among the most affected countries are the Southeastern European countries that have suffered, mainly since the 1990s, massive out-migration and population decline. In our contribution, we analyze the processes of depopulation throughout Europe, focusing on the differences between the East and West. The questions we address are: Are the depopulation processes different in the Balkans and in Western Europe? Is it still possible to see an imaginary Iron Curtain between the European East and West? Using some local examples from Northwestern Bulgaria, we would like to discuss how depopulation affects local communities, how the locals perceive it and what can be done to face rural depopulation. Finally, we will address the question whether the depopulation of the Bulgarian countryside is rather a kind of an Ottoman heritage or a result of the Europeanization of the country.

Panel 2 – Contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina between East and West

Katarzyna Wasiak

Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz

Presentation title: Between Western and ethnic narratives
- second generation memory of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract

British theorist Bill Ashcroft noted that “the lives of more than three-quarters of the people living in the world today were shaped by the experience of colonization”. Various influences have passed through Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Balkans as a whole, over the centuries. It was a space of a struggle between East and West or Past and Present. Although, as historian Maria Todorova notes, the Balkans have never been a colony in *sensu stricto*, in the sense of at least the African countries, however, as the Palestinian orientalist Edward Said points out, it is not necessary for colonies to be geopolitical creations, for colonialism is primarily a mental terror based on cultural repression. As Todorova notes, the West defines Otherness in Western terms, while the Others define themselves in Western terms – “the West is the standard against which all Others are defined”. It should come as no surprise, then, that Bosniaks not infrequently refer in their narratives to the discourse developed by international opinion. And in this article I would like to show how the perception of the second generation is influenced by the Western discourse. Also I'd like to present how the narration shows its anti-Western nature.

Jelena Božović

Charles University; CEFRES

Presentation title: Writing is (not) aligning:
Understanding script choices in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract

Though ethno-national criteria today play a decisive role, the sociolinguistic makeup of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina is often portrayed as (once) the site of co-presence and overlap of the so-called Eastern and Western variants of the previously shared standard language. The Eastern/Western dichotomy is in fact often invoked in discussions about ethnolinguistic and social boundaries. The discourses of Orientalism and Occidentalism, nowadays coupled with nationalist discourses and discourses of (in)tolerance, are particularly prominent in debates concerning the use of the Latin and Cyrillic scripts. The tension surrounding the country's two official scripts is also manifest in the linguistic landscape, usually by means of erasures or exclusions of one or the other. My paper examines this tension from the perspective of language conflict studies. I analyze the most recurring discourses from an online media dataset as well as practices and strategies deployed by different categories of actors in the linguistic landscape of Brčko District, based on ethnographic field research.

Panel 3 – Yugoslavia: Images and Narratives

Alenka Bartulović

Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Presentation title: The Ambivalence of Peripheral Orientalism: Imagining Yugoslavia

Abstract

This paper examines the social and political implications of alternative perceptions of Ottoman heritage in the Yugoslav space, and the processes of othering and integration of Muslims into the Yugoslav political entities, reflecting on the complexity of Yugoslav Orientalism. By analyzing the works of two authors, the Croatian-Yugoslav philosopher, psychologist, and characterologist Vladimir Dvorniković (1888–1956) and the Slovenian architect Dušan Grabrijan (1889–1952), the author shows how the transformation of Ottoman legacy into Yugoslav heritage functioned as a mechanism for integrating Muslims into the emerging Yugoslav states. Muslims were often burdened by various combinations of othering discourses that made them one of the most stigmatized parts of the emerging Yugoslav community. The advent of alternative views of Ottoman legacy was therefore crucial for the radical changes in the perception of Muslims, even if these discourses were never fully freed from their essentialization and stigmatization of 'other' communities, who apparently did not belong to the imagined Yugoslav future. In the writings of Dvorniković and Grabrijan, the representations of Ottoman legacy and Muslims combine affective reactions, peripheral orientalism and calculated strategies that essentially contributed to the formation of the Yugoslav political community and Yugoslavia's active role in the Non-Aligned Movement in the second half of the 20th century.

Anna Herran

Department of History, University of Toronto

Presentation title: "That Good, Old Democratic Yugoslavia":
Peter II Karađorđević commemorates T.G. Masaryk in Toronto, 1954.

Abstract

The proposed paper sets to explore understandings of democracy tied to interwar Yugoslavia and interwar Czechoslovakia during the Cold War. Specifically, the paper explores how expatriate Yugoslav and Czechoslovak communities in the West (particularly in Canada) used narratives of "democracy" during the interwar period as expressions of anti-Communism and loyalty towards their new homeland. To illustrate how these narratives were used, the paper focuses on a monument to first Czechoslovak President T.G. Masaryk unveiled by Peter II Karađorđević of Yugoslavia in Toronto in 1954. By tracing the history of this monument and its unveiling, the paper looks at how expressions of anti-communism reshaped understandings of the interwar period among certain circles of Czechoslovak and Serbian communities in Cold War Canada.

Sanja Lukić

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Presentation title: Balkanism That Prevails?
Life and Time Magazines' Depiction of People in Tito's Yugoslavia

Abstract

An image represents an interpretation of an external cultural reality through which the individual shaping it reveals and interprets the cultural and ideological context within which they themselves are situated. It is precisely for this reason that depictions of nations, regardless of their creator, are commonly neither objective nor intricate, but rather subjective and simplified. Stereotypes are thus the primary association when discussing representations of the Other, although there are disagreements about the extent of their actual prevalence. Newspapers, as «gatekeepers and filterers of ideas», create the «history» that will «be cemented in the consciousness of the people». The American weekly magazines, Life and Time reached the pinnacle of their success during the Cold War era and engaged with a spectrum of subjects, spanning politics, economy, religion, medicine, and everyday issues, thereby exerting an influence over the formation of their readers' perspectives. This research will focus on the identification and analysis of a series of discourses about the people of Yugoslavia, their customs, and everyday life that manifested within these two periodicals from the conclusion of the Second World War up until the death of Yugoslav President Tito. The narratives these magazines created will subsequently undergo comparison with the Yugoslav-American relations in this period.

Panel 4 – European and Balkan Identities

Krasimira Marholeva

Journal Bulgari

Presentation title: Discourses on George Bernard Shaw's Comedy "Arms and the Man" - British, Bulgarian and Czech Perspective

Abstract

The conference paper concentrates on the G. B. Shaw's comedy "Arms and the Man" (1894), dedicated to an event of modern Bulgarian history. Its plot caused bitter polemics after its performance in Prague during the 1920s because Bulgarians were depicted in a ridiculous way. In my paper I will focus on its interpretation from three different perspectives – West European, East European and Central European. More precisely, I will present the author's motives that stood behind the writing of the play as well as on the Bulgarian and Czech reflections on it.

Elena Marchevska

Performance Studies, London South Bank University

Presentation title: Balkan is not Dead:
Staging passing of time and European identity from the periphery

Abstract

This paper will question how theater is used as a medium to discuss local and regional tension between European belonging and Balkan identities. I will analyze both the cultural and social practices of Europeanization and how they are manifesting in the plays of the Macedonian playwright, Dejan Dukovski. I am particularly interested in how Dukovski challenges and questions Europeanization in his work produced between late 1990s and early 2010. And how their process has been influenced by the political and social changes triggered by the accession negotiation with the European Union. My focus is on scoping and highlighting the alternative imaginary forms of identification proposed by the artist. The paper's argument is shaped around the following objectives: 1. To discover imaginary hybrid forms of identity formation in the region in relation to Europe (in-between Occident and Orient ideas) 2. To elaborate on historical relations and to ascertain why these narratives are perpetuated in the current process of Europeanization (inter-generational symbolic transfer of concepts and values; as an example ideas of pan-Slavic left activism). The paper particularly focuses on the entanglement between the process of re-ceding and decolonial practices on the peripheries of Europe.

Otilia Ilie

University of Manchester

Presentation title: The anti-Balkan discourse in Brussels
- a human perspective based on my life story

Abstract

In the presentation I intend to give, I would like to tell a story: my life story. I am a Romanian citizen who had to fight hard (academically and personally) to arrive in Brussels and develop a career, despite being judged and stereotyped as "coming from the Balkans". The main points I would like

to talk about include: *My childhood in a village in Romania; *My studies and the Soros scholarship in the UK; *My traineeship in the European Parliament; *My constant struggle against the real and not imagined threat of «the other», in Brussels. *Highlights on discrimination, identity and a continuous reminder of my origin as a negative angle throughout my career.

Panel 5 – Occidentalism and Anti-European Discourses

Luka Nešković

Eötvös Loránd University

Presentation title: Eastern Question in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Writer's Diary

Abstract

The aim of this presentation is to analyze F. M. Dostoyevsky's relationship to the Eastern Question, current in Russian politics during the seventies of the nineteenth century, primarily through the prism of his journalistic activities from the period of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). The writer, as a prominent representative of Pan-Slavism in Russian literature, advocated the idea of Slavic unification under the patronage of Russia, which should bring a "new word"; to Europe and the world. The enthusiasm he showed during the crisis, documented in Writer's diary, points us to idealistic conceptions of unification, which were not possible in the diplomatic and political sense of Europe at the time. Using the methods of analysis and synthesis, we will look at Dostoyevsky's ideological disagreement with Leo Tolstoy, regarding the interventionism of Russian volunteers in the Serbian-Turkish war, as well as "prophetic" predictions about the resistance of the southern Slavs to the political union with Russia in the future. In conclusion, we will draw a parallel with modern political events in Europe, showing to what extent and in what way Dostoyevsky's predictions are relevant today in political and ideological terms.

Dragan Bakić

Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Presentation title: "The Soul of the Balkans": Identity Construction in the Discourses of Serbian Radical Right-Wing Intellectuals in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

Abstract

As a new entity, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia created in 1918 was a country in search of cultural identity that would harmonize diverse traditions inherited from pre-1914 Serbia and the South Slav provinces of the defunct Habsburg Empire. For Serbian (and integral Yugoslav) radical right-wing intellectuals (Vladimir Velmar-Janković, Vladimir Vujić, Svetislav Stefanović, Vladimir Dvorniković and others) convinced in what they perceived as a crisis of Western European culture and imbued with the anti-Enlightenment thought, it was imperative to find an authentic cultural expression. They were heavily influenced by Oswald Spengler, who's *The Decline of the West* Vujić translated to Serbian in 1936, and Dostoyevsky, especially appealing to radical Serbian right-wing intellectuals because of their positive assessment of the Slavic world which they considered a future bearer of a great religious mission. Contrary to Serbia's dominantly Francophile liberal political and cultural elite, they argued that a way forward was not to put on a veneer of Europeanism and serve as a colony of the West and its capitalism, but rather to be part of the truly liberated Balkans. In a series of texts, they claimed that "we are not Europe and we are not Europeans," insisting on a home-grown perception of the world and a tendency to realize that vision.

Piotr Mirocha

Jagiellonian University

Presentation title: Constructing Europe-in-crisis in Serbia: corpus-based analysis of discourses on European crises in the Serbian broadsheet press

Abstract

The study focuses on the discursive construction of Europe, increasingly depicted in media discourse as deeply crisis-stricken since the global financial crisis, the subsequent Eurozone debt crisis, and the 2015 refugee crisis. The study employs corpus-based discourse analysis to gain synthetic insights from a collection of 16 000 articles published in two Serbian broadsheet newspapers (*Politika, Danas*). The choice of broadsheet press facilitates the reconstruction of what is presented as authoritative 'common sense'. Collocation analysis provides insights into events discursively framed as European crises by the Serbian broadsheet press during the transitional period of 2007-2017. Specifically, through the examination of loaded collocates, the research investigates the role of superficially neutral genres in constructing the concept of Europe-in-crisis. Statistical analysis of collocates emphasizes the impact of the Western reaction to the 2015 refugee crisis, while concordance analyses highlight the role of local journalists and politicians. Furthermore, the study evaluates the significance of the 2014 Russian aggression on Ukraine within the analyzed discourses, revealing its relatively low impact. This is attributed to a limited understanding of Europe confined to the European Union and a reserved reaction mirrored from Western ('core') European discourses. Finally, future research agenda will be sketched.

Panel 6 – Religion and Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rosa Meyer

Goethe-University Frankfurt

Presentation title: Puzzling the Pieces – Working on a Playground Ethnography on the Salafi Scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract

My doctoral research on the Salafi movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has led me to reflect on how the concept of playground ethnography has transformed a (so-called) closed and securitized field into an open one, by perceiving the community in question as part of society and by letting go of the focus on a security perspective in my research. In the course of this research, I have gained experience in (sub)urban playgrounds in Sarajevo. Linked to my concept of playground ethnography are aspects of positionality within the playground context. As a (foreign) mother, I connected with other caretakers and gained general insight into the role of parenthood in BiH and, more specifically, in the Bosnian Salafi scene. I also experienced a shared foreign perspective with my interlocutors. This article therefore touches on the issue of access and positionality in relation to a (so-called) closed field. Using the role of a mother, my concept of playground ethnography helped me to enter a field that is considered closed and radicalized in most of the literature.

Franziska Singer

Independent Researcher

Presentation title: Negotiating belonging: Sarajevo, Europe, and the global ummah

Abstract

I will present how twenty- to thirty-five-year-old Muslim working women and students in Sarajevo position themselves, specifically with regards to Europe and the global ummah. I draw on qualitative data collected using mixed methods. Methods used include semi-structured interviews, participant observation during ethnographic fieldwork and, in a less comprehensive way, (social) media reading. I will outline how Sarajevo is seen and navigated by the women I spoke to. I will also analyze how these women view and position themselves with regard to Europe and, finally with regard to the global ummah. A frequent narrative around religious practice and the situation of being a young Muslim woman in Sarajevo was around choice. My interlocutors stressed the importance of not being forced to be religious or to practice again and again when recounting key situations. The importance of choice also came up in imagining a distinction to Muslims of the Middle East or other regions of the world. Another key finding is the importance that women in the field place on being a 'good person', which is seen as more relevant than adhering strictly to religious doctrine.

Mario Katić

Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Zadar

Presentation title: Orientalist narratives and perceptions of Bosnian Croat sacred sites

Abstract

By taking a closer look at descriptions of, and narratives connected to, a particular Bosnian Croat sacred and pilgrimage sites such as: Madonna of Kondžilo in Usora region and Diva Grabovčeva on Kedžara, Vran mountain, I will try to explain and address how the identity of a site is being constructed by orientalist perception of the religious and national "Other". Because of close historical connections between different religious and national communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, many Catholic sacred sites have in their foundational narratives the presence of religious Other that, sometimes, plays a decisive role in establishment and formation of the sacred site and pilgrimage practice. Using two above-mentioned case studies, I will problematize how and why these narratives are characterized by orientalist perception and how that perception influenced the development of the sites and contemporary narratives?

Panel 7 – Czech Representations of the Balkans

Gabriela Fatková

Department of Anthropology, University of West Bohemia

Presentation title: «In the Mountainlands» by photographer Ferdinand Bučina: Eastern Europe exposed and developed

Abstract

While analyzing the orientalist motives in the Carpathian travelog of the renowned Czech photographer Ferdinand Bučina, the related concepts of «allochronism» and «imperialism of the imagination» are favored over Maria Todorova's «balkanism.» Bučina's text and images provide a nuanced perspective that departs from the typical orientalist stereotype of portraying the people in Eastern Europe as sly, crafty, and deceitful. Within Bučina's narrative, we observe the simultaneous presentation of «the other» and the observer, akin to two sides of the orientalist coin. Bučina's depiction of the region aligns with the prevailing orientalist thinking of his time, characterizing it as in need of development and situated somewhere between «on its way to us» and «not yet ready for civilization.» Simultaneously, he casts himself as the «solitary heroic traveler,» unintentionally rendering invisible the contributions of those who collaborated on his work. These paired domination textual strategies work in unison, reinforcing each other throughout his travelog. In conclusion, we propose a subversive reading of Bučina's travelog as an intriguing approach. This interpretation takes into account not only the prevalent depictions of «Eastern people» in his era but also recognizes the significant role of his often-invisible wife in his work, thus shedding light on the collaborative nature of most travelog production.

Davor Pavičić

Faculty of Humanities, Charles University

Presentation title: Between "Ours" and "the Other": Balkans in Czech Travel Writing (1848-1918)

Abstract

This study delves into Czech travel writings on the Balkans from the second half of the nineteenth century, emphasizing the framing of Czech perspectives on the Balkans within the dichotomy of «Ours» and the «Other.» Utilizing a range of analytical methods, the research scrutinizes Czech travelers' travelogues, offering a nuanced understanding of various Balkan regions during this era and their influence on overall Czech perceptions of the Balkans. The analysis underscores how diverse social, cultural, and political contexts encountered during their journeys molded Czech travelers' experiences and viewpoints. A notable interplay emerges between national identity, political environment, and cultural perspectives, leading to varied outlooks on different Balkan regions. This variation often hinges on the travelers' ability to resonate with local Slavic cultural elements. The study's findings shed light on the distinctiveness of the Czech experience in the Balkans, particularly highlighting the influence of individual, cultural, and political context on travelers' narratives. Contributing to both history and anthropology disciplines, this research presents an in-depth comprehension of Czech views on the Balkans during a pivotal time in history, emphasizing the continual juxtaposition of «Ours» and the «Other» in shaping these perceptions.

Pavol Száz

Department of Hungarian Language and Literature, Comenius University Bratislava

Presentation title: The Balkans in Hašek – Hašek in the Balkans

Abstract

The paper will focus on the writings of Jaroslav Hašek (who celebrates his double anniversary this year) inspired by his travels and wanderings, and which are set in, or have significant connection with the Balkans. The paper explores whether Hašek's Balkan travels can be reconstructed at all. Further examines the contextual reading of Hašek's Balkan-related narratives, satires, humoristic sketches, and other articles. The relation of the Austro-Hungarian bureaucracy and the local context of Bosnia-Herzegovina reappearing in these writings are interpreted in context of political and public discourses. The contextual reading will analyze Hašek's satire by placing it in a historical context, such as the Ilinden Uprising, the annexation crisis of 1908, the First and Second Balkan Wars, and the Sarajevo assassination and the First World War.

Panel 8 – Montenegro: Culture, Images, Religion

Dejan Batričević

Graphic designer and independent researcher

Presentation title: "How Western and Eastern culture defined the innovation of Montenegrin medieval illuminated manuscripts"

Abstract

The political and cultural flourishing of the principality of Duklja began in the 10th century, and especially in the 11th century, when it completely separated from the Byzantine administration and began to act independently. In that period, until the very end of the 12th century, some of the most representative manuscripts were created: Codex Marianus, Priest of Duklja's Kingdom of the Slavs, Life of St. Vladimir, Prince Miroslav's Evangelist, etc. For this presentation, it was necessary to thoroughly explain the cultural and historical context, compare the influences of the West and the East — a rich legacy of both manuscripts and the development of the script itself, illustrations and graphic design of illuminated manuscripts, which influenced the formation of authentic artistic creativity in the territory of today's Montenegro.

Ana Živković

University of Brighton

Presentation title: Representations of Montenegro in nineteenth-century British writing: 'A small people against a sea of Turks'

Abstract

My paper will demonstrate how responses to Montenegro, from early nineteenth-century travel writing, naval and diplomatic accounts, to Gladstone's essays and Tennyson's poem just before the Congress of Berlin in 1878, are rarely determined by Montenegro itself, but primarily by cultural climate at home and wider geo-political factors. My analysis will show how cultural and geopolitical contexts contribute to the fluctuations in representations of Montenegro during this period. Thus, the true determinants of perceptions can be found in the tradition of Romantic sensibility

and its views of otherness, as well as in a specific perspective that places Montenegro against a changing backdrop of further and larger 'others', such as Islam and the Ottoman empire. My paper will show how discourse on Montenegro changes and how denigratory representations amount to glorification and heroization, and as such only survive as long as there is an additional factor, i.e. an 'other' that is regarded as an alien or threatening to the British. In addition, writers' responses to Montenegro reveal a pattern in British perceptions of the Balkans generally, one that has much to do with the historical, political and geopolitical context within which the looking takes place as it has with the characteristics of its immediate object.

František Šístek

Institute of History – Czech Academy of Sciences

Presentation title: The Earthly Life and Afterlife of the False Messiah Sabbatai Zevi in Ulcinj (1673-2023)

Abstract

The paper, based on the analysis of historical sources and my field research, focuses on the stay of Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676), the most famous false Messiah of Jewish history after Jesus, in Ulcinj (Montenegro). Sabbatai Zevi, after his conversion to Islam in 1666 known as Aziz Mehmed, lived in the fortress of Ulcinj, where he was banished by Ottoman authorities, in 1673-1676. He received visitors, maintained contacts with followers, became a widower, re-married, died and was buried in Ulcinj. For centuries, his grave represented a discreet place of pilgrimage for his crypto-Jewish followers (dönme). Today, the exact location of his final resting place cannot be established with certainty but it is most often identified with the turbe (Muslim grave) of a holy man known as Murat Dadaj, located on private land owned by an Albanian Muslim family. I will present a new hypothesis, based on a local tradition that a small dönme community has been living in Ulcinj for centuries, and its members might have served as guardians of Sabbatai's grave. I will also discuss the possible traces of Sabbatai's presence in the Balšić Tower (Kula Balšića), new hypothesis regarding the contested location of his grave and the circumstances surrounding the erection of the statue of Sabbatai Zevi in Ulcinj in 2020, the first in the world, which has been serving as a new place of memory.

Saturday, November 11

Panel 9 – Europe and the Balkans in the Time of Empires

Kyriillos Nikolaou

University of Nicosia

Presentation title: The Balkans seen by the Occident: How a French diplomat saw Thessaly and its people – political, economic, social situation – in the mid of the 19th century

Abstract

The aim of my paper is to evaluate the information provided by the French diplomat with the rank of vice-consul in Volos, B. de Tramasure, in an unpublished report of 110 pages to the French Foreign Office, December 1855. By evaluating the information that the diplomat in question gives us about the political situation, justice, economy, robbery, etc., we will study whether and to what extent the diplomat's subjective views could influence French foreign policy or whether they reflect the views of French (and by extension Western) government about the local communities in Balkans. In fact, since in this historical period the conflicting aspirations of the great Powers in the Balkans are sharpening, the study of the information provided by the consular reports is a necessary condition for the writing of the political and socio-economic history of this region. When evaluating the reliability and accuracy or inaccuracy of foreign diplomats' information, we must consider their subjective criteria, their possible stereotypes or prejudiced positions about local societies, the breadth of their knowledge about the issues that concerned them, as well as the interests of the foreign governments they represented.

Margit Kőszegi

Institute of Cultural History, Eötvös Loránd University

Presentation title: The Balkans is our East
(The imagined empire in the 19th century Hungarian Geography)

Abstract

The national identities of the eastern part of Europe were in a unique position in the 19th-century process of creating a nation-state. They see themselves as East compared to Western Europe, but at the same time as West compared to the rest of the world. The defining elements of the Hungarian national image of the 19th century is also the backwardness compared to the West and the common destiny with the peoples of Europe against the East. This duality defines the various aspects of modern nation-state existence in the eastern half of Europe, including the institutionalization of scientific thinking. Emerging national geographies simultaneously adopted the Western scientific framework and became involved in the self-conscious external study of the East. The Hungarian Geographical Society, founded on the Western model, launched its journal, *Geographical Review* in 1873, which is still in use today. The writings published in *Geographical Review* present the special location of the 19th century Hungarian nation and its relationship with the Balkans. I specifically highlighted the works that can be considered as specific Hungarian representations of Western colonial self-consciousness. Their theme was the Balkans. These articles constructed the Balkans as the East and as the goal of Hungarian geopolitics.

Bálint Varga

University of Graz

Presentation title: The National Appropriation of the Empire:
Hungarian and Czech Claims to Civilize Habsburg Bosnia

Abstract

Between 1878 and 1918, the Habsburg Empire occupied and annexed the erstwhile Ottoman province of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The k.u.k. administration was justified by civilizational differences between the progressive and dynamic Habsburg Monarchy and the backward and passive, Oriental Bosnia. Based on this differentiation, the Habsburg administration termed and publicly displayed its activity as a civilizing mission. The ubiquitousness of civilizing mission serves as one of the most significant arguments that make current historical scholarship classify the Habsburg rule in Bosnia as colonial. In its early phase, the occupation of Bosnia was rebuked and ignored in Hungary. From the 1880s on, due to mainly the activity of the Joint Minister of Finance and governor of Bosnia, the Hungarian Benjamin Kállay, the Hungarian public started to claim part in the imperial civilizing mission. By the end of the 19th century, Hungarians took pride in being contributors to the civilization of Bosnia and saw that as proof of the Europeaness of Hungary. From the late 1900s, Hungarian positions in Bosnian matters radicalized and Hungarian business and political circles attempted to supplant Austrians and appropriate the Empire for their own needs. Their ambitious (though failed) goal was to turn Bosnia into an exclusive Hungarian colony – this included taking over the civilizing mission from the Empire. A similar, but less extensive phenomenon unfolded in the Czech lands. Most Czech observers accepted the imperial rhetoric of the civilizing mission but they increasingly claimed a special Czech contribution to the uplifting of the fellow Slavic Bosnians. The Czech rhetoric sometimes even bordered on contemporary colonial discourse by juxtaposing the advanced metropole Bohemia with the backward Bosnia that awaited salvation. The Czech claim to uplift Bosnia was also instrumental to demonstrate the Czech nations' belonging to Europe.

Panel 10 - Modernization and Europeanization in the 19th and 20th Century

Alin Burlec

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

Presentation title: Exploring the Routes towards Modernity: The Impact of Exclusionary Nationalism and the Working Class in Romania between 1900-1914

Abstract

This paper presents the argument that nationalism was part of the process of Westernization, with workers being the second social group to embrace it after the middle class. While foreigners were not uncommon in Wallachian, Moldavian, and later Romanian cities, the gap between the political discourse in favor of an ethnic-based nation and the economic reality, where foreigners and Romanian-born Jews played a significant role, widened in the second half of the 19th century. Signs of exclusionary nationalism among parts of the working class first emerged in the 1850s, but it appeared in an organized fashion in 1900 with the emergence of the Tradesman's Movement. Made up of workshop owners and skilled workers employed in small and medium industries, it initially fought for legislation to protect its economic interests against foreigners and Romanian-born Jews. Taking advantage of the 1899-1901 economic crisis and the dissolution of social-democratic organizations, the Tradesman's Movement expanded across multiple Romanian cities, creating a nationalist alternative to socialist working-class associations. Although the Movement's objectives overlapped with those of the political elites, workers used a radical discourse and even attempted to force politicians to vote for a law that would have restricted the access of foreign workers to Romania.

Božica Slavković-Mirić

The Institute for Recent History of Serbia

Presentation title: Europeanization/modernization of cities in Kosovo and Metohija in the years before the Second World War

Abstract

Until 1912, the cities in southern Serbia were, according to Jovan Cvijić, «Turkish-Byzantine or true Balkan type». In the interwar period in Kosovo and Metohija, there was progress in the arrangement of towns. They tried to get rid of the oriental influence from the period of the Ottoman Empire, but they still had remnants of the Turkish «bazaar» (čaršija). Cities were a transition between towns and villages. Prizren, Priština, Peć and Kosovska Mitrovica could be singled out. Nevertheless, water supply and sewage systems were built, electrification was done, buildings for schools and hospitals were built and repaired, hygienic conditions for housing were better, and parks were built. The national costume, which represented a way of dressing, under the influence of modernization and industrialization was replaced by more practical clothes for maintenance and wearing, but still remained in the villages and among the Muslim part of the population. Workers abroad (pečalbari) also influenced the change in lifestyle. I did the research based on the available literature and press from that period. I can conclude that despite the state investments, before the beginning of the Second World War, the cities were a combination of traditional and modern, and the oriental way of life in some cities in Kosovo and Metohija has been preserved to this day.

Vanja Petrović, Đermana Kurić

Vanja Petrović – Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade;

Đermana Kurić – University of Sarajevo

Presentation title: AFŽ, Deveiling, and Contemporary Orientalising Narratives

Abstract

After WWII, the political and social elites in the newly-established socialist Yugoslavia introduced numerous laws, policies, and campaigns directed at the formation of the ideal socialist citizen. Such “modern” and “emancipatory” efforts focused on breaking down social, cultural, and religious codes, norms, and identities deemed “backward”. One such instance is the post-WWII “veil lifting campaign” which focused on social stigmatization and legal prohibition of “oriental” and Islamically-inspired clothing worn by Muslim women (i.e., *zar*, *feredža*, *peča*, etc.). The campaign was led by the Women’s Antifascist Front (AFŽ) and although it had support among Islamic religious leaders and some Muslim women, it initially went largely ignored by the wider community. Crucially, the campaign (and later legal ban) neglected the bodily autonomy and preferences of traditional and/or religious women wishing to continue dressing as they always had. This content analysis of academic texts about this topic published after the dissolution of Yugoslavia until today in Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, or Serbian languages finds that attitudes have not changed. We demonstrate how the women whose voices were ignored then remain invisible in contemporary orientalis-ing narratives.

Panel 11 – Democratic Backsliding and Russian Influence in the Balkans

Jakub Stepaniuk

University of Graz

Presentation title: Serbian foreign and internal policy between the West and the East

Abstract

The presentation will be based on the material gathered during fieldworks spent in Belgrade and Brussels in Spring 2023 that involve 22 interviews with policy experts and institutional representatives. The research for the MA thesis was focused on a broad topic of the EU integration of Serbia in the prism of the fully-fledged invasion of Russia against Ukraine, consequences of the so-called sanctions pressuring for Serbian foreign policy and conditionality used in issues sensitive to national identity. This presentation would be focused on a topic of mythologized friendship between Serbia and Russia, ways how discourses are constructed when it comes to relations in the Brussels-Belgrade-Moscow triangle, imagined and actual influences of Russia in Serbia as well as the perspective of Russian expats in Belgrade. The topic of Serbo-Russian friendship perceived from the point of the arrival of Russian expats to Serbia and their reception by the local population serves as the part of the PhD proposal on the topic of mythologized international friendships seen by the interactions between locals representing one side of the friendship and migrants representing the other side.

Miklós Teszáry

Mathias Corvinus Collegium

Presentation title: Montenegro-Russia relations
in the shadow of the Ukrainian-Russian war 2014 - 2022

Abstract

The research presents the changes in Montenegrin-Russian relations over the last eight years. Although for Moscow, Podgorica has been a traditional ally in the Western Balkans, in the past decade the relationship between the two countries has been affected by a number of key issues. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Podgorica's accession to the sanctions regime foreshadowed the slow drift that has characterized relations between the two countries in recent years. The most crucial point in the relationship between the two countries has been Montenegro's accession to NATO over the last decade. Although the process of NATO accession had been on the agenda since 2006, for Russia, preventing the country's integration became a key issue by the 2010s. The context of the Kremlin's motivation can be fully understood by examining Russia's presence in the Mediterranean and the 2016 coup attempt in Montenegro. As well as the so-called 'Church Law' of 2019, one of the supposed intentions of which was to reduce Russian influence in the Black Mountain country. However, Moscow's influence has been significantly reduced following Montenegro's accession to NATO, while the country remains a haven for many Russian citizens since the Russian invasion in 2022, thanks to its 'golden passport' system. During the 2010s, extremist paramilitary groups, often linked to Russia, such as the Serbian Honour, the Night Wolves, or the Balkan Cossack Army, whose (re)formation was held in Kotor, Montenegro, have been increasingly active in the Western Balkans.

Boban Batrićević

Faculty for Montenegrin Language and Literature - Cetinje

Presentation title: «Rotting West and The Holy Mother Russia“:
Pro-Russian Propaganda in Montenegro about the War in Ukraine

Abstract

The paper will focus on pro-Russian propaganda in Montenegro since the outbreak of Russian aggression against Ukraine. Montenegro, a member of NATO and a candidate for EU membership, is a country affected by extremely strong Russian influence, which is realized through the media, religious organizations, cultural societies and political parties. Although Montenegro has formally harmonized its policy with the European Union regarding the introduction of sanctions against the Russian Federation and the condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine and the sending of aid to Ukraine, the potent presence of Russian malign influence is felt in the country affecting the overall social and political life. Propaganda campaign is actively and successfully carried out through the pro-Russian media, the narratives of the pro-Russian political parties and the activities of the Serbian Orthodox Church as the strongest religious organization in Montenegro, and creates a binary image of the world - about the rotting and insidious West that wants to destroy Russia and Orthodoxy and thereby «Traditional Orthodox Montenegro», through Ukraine. The action is largely planned and based on local historical themes, themes of identity and values, which further destabilizes and burdens the already complicated situation in multinational and multicultural Montenegro and promotes the Russian strategy of «Balkan chaos». In the presentation we analyze speeches, columns, radio-television shows and literary-documentary material in which the tendency to create a desirable image of the (Russian) East as more moral, spiritual and freer than the West is evident.

Special program

Book presentation 1

Krasimira Marholeva – Dana Bittnerová

Mirjam Moravcová, *Ethnic Diaspora Festivities in the Czech Republic.*

Cultural Traditions between Isolation, Integration and Hybridization, Prague: Karolinum, 2023.

Biography

Dr. Mirjam Moravcová (March 22, 1931 – March 10, 2023), ethnologist from the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Prague, was a doyenne of Czech ethnology and Balkan Studies. She was a co-founder (2013) and member of the organizing committee of the Balkan Express conferences.

Born in Turnov in 1931, Moravcová studied ethnology and history at the Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University in Prague, in 1951-1954, and also at the University of Sofia. Her stay in Bulgaria triggered her lifelong interest in the peoples and problems of the Balkans. She worked as a researcher at the Slavonic Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1954-1964), the Institute for the History of European Socialist Countries of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1964-1969) and the Institute of Ethnography and Folkloristics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1969-1993).

The three decades after the Velvet Revolution (1989) were the most fruitful and rewarding period of her academic career. Mirjam Moravcová belonged to a relatively large group of scholars who were granted their first opportunity to teach and influence young generations directly only after the fall of the Communist régime. Instead of retiring, she joined the brand new Institute for Liberal

Education at Charles University, transformed into the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in 2000, where she taught and actively participated in academic duties until the end of her life.

Dr. Moravcová's main research interests evolved around urban anthropology, minorities and diaspora communities in the Czech Republic and their festivities. Her new major contribution to the topic – an English language monograph entitled *Ethnic Diaspora Festivities in the Czech Republic: Cultural Traditions between Isolation, Integration and Hybridization* (Praha: Karolinum, 2023) – appeared on the shelves of Czech bookstores just a few days after her passing. The book, based on the results of the author's long term field research, focuses on several immigrant groups which have created a more permanent and distinct diaspora in the post-Communist Czech Republic, with emphasis on the processes and strategies of abandonment, hybridization and various transformations of public festivities in the new environment.

Book presentation 2

Clemens Ruthner

Trinity College

Vahidin Preljević - Clemens Ruthner (Hrsg.), *Peter Handkes Jugoslawienkomplex*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2022.

Biography

Prof. Clemens Ruthner is a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin and Director of its Centre for European Studies. His research focuses on Austrian literature and culture of the late Habsburg Monarchy, Central European history (nineteenth and twentieth centuries), Bosnia and Herzegovina under Habsburg rule, Otherness (e.g. gender, ethnicity, monstrosity), and cultural theory in general. His latest publications include the monograph *Habsburg's Dark Continent: Postkoloniale Lektüren zur österreichischen Literatur und Kultur im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Francke, 2018) and the edited volume *Bosnien-Herzegowina und Österreich-Ungarn: Annäherungen an eine Kolonie* (Tübingen: Francke, 2018, co-editor Tamara Scheer) on Bosnia-Herzegovina under Habsburg rule.

Keynote lecture

Hariz Halilovich

RMIT University

Presentation title: Global Echoes of the Balkans War Tunes: Popular Culture and (Self-)Orientalism of Imagined Enemies and Real Victims

Abstract

'Ko pjeva zlo ne misli'. *Those who sing, don't mean evil*. This is an old saying in the region that once made up Yugoslavia. It implies that singers are usually good people whose true intentions are to entertain and make connections with and between people. Although this folk wisdom could be supported by several examples of how music, singers and songs have sustained a shared cultural space during and after the violent break-up of Yugoslavia, this paper focuses on the songs and musicians who explicitly use(d) songs and music to promote hatred and evil. In this paper, I discuss how ethno-nationalists have used and continue to use songs and music to "orientalise" and "self-orientalise" both their enemies and their own actions before, during and after the 1992–5 war

in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I argue that the semiotics of lyrics of popular nationalist songs have been an integral part of the nationalist discourse, and continue to have political implications within and beyond the region, inciting hatred and violence against the ethnic Other.

Biography

Hariz Halilovich, an award-winning anthropologist and author, is a Professor of Global Studies at RMIT University, Melbourne. His research has focused on place-based identities, politically motivated violence, forced migration, memory studies, and human rights. His publications include the books *Places of Pain: Forced Displacement, Popular Memory and Trans-local Identities in Bosnian War-torn Communities* (2013); *Writing After Srebrenica* (2017); and *Monsters of Modernity: Global Icons for Our Critical Condition* (co-authored with Julian C.H. Lee *et al*) (2019). In addition to academic writing, he has also produced multimedia exhibitions, works of fiction and radio and TV programs.

Accompanying program

Aida Mujačić (live music)

Biography

Aida Mujačić, a gifted singer and pianist, hails from Bosnia and Herzegovina, where she received her classical training. Her musical journey has been a fascinating evolution, as she transitioned from classical influences to an exploration of the traditional music of her homeland. This transformation has led her to embrace a modern-to-postmodern approach to world music, evident in her work with bands like Korjen, Džezvica, and Fes. Additionally, she has delved into the realm of avant-garde free jazz, collaborating with the quartet Free Time and Straka's Mobile Circus.

In her capacity as a musicologist, Aida Mujačić is deeply engrossed in the research of Ludvík Kuba, who meticulously documented the musical heritage of the Bosnian region. Aida's performances resonate with a profound connection to this heritage, particularly in her rendition of Slavic and Sephardic songs collected by Kuba in 1893. Notably, Aida's respect for the historical context is apparent as she carefully considers the concert settings, which often take place in synagogues or Christian religious buildings. In such venues, she showcases her vocal prowess either a cappella or with her own skillful accompaniment on the piano, harmonium, organ, or percussion instruments.

The program may be subject to change.

Practical information

Transportation to the conference venue

Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Pátkova 2137/5, 182 00, Prague 8

1. Bus 187 from "Nádraží Holešovice" (C red line) to "Pelc Tyrolka" bus stop (Mon-Fri only)
2. Bus 201 from "Nádraží Holešovice" (C red line) to "Kuchyňka" bus stop
3. Tram 1, 12, 14 from "Nádraží Holešovice" (C red line) to "Trojská" tram stop

[Google maps](#)

Friday dinner venue

LASTAVICA, Opletalova 16, 110 00, Prague 1 (metro C red line stop: Muzeum)

[Google maps](#)

Saturday lunch venue

Restaurace Castle restaurant s.r.o., Květinářská 755
(end of the street Nad Rokoskou), 182 00, Prague 8

[Google maps](#)

Saturday dinner venue

The Pub, Veleslavínova 3, 110 00, Prague 1 (metro A green line stop: Staroměstská)

[Google maps](#)

[Prague transportation fares](#)

Money exchange service

EXCHANGE s.r.o., Kaprova 13/14, 110 00, Prague 1 (metro A green line stop: Staroměstská)



Ukažte pokladníkovi před uskutečněním směny.

SLEVOVÝ KUPÓN = VIP KURZ

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Institutions

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Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences
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Czech National Committee of Balkan Scholars – Czech Association for Slavonic,
Balkan and Byzantine Studies (ČSSBBS)
Prague Security Studies Institute

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Conference Logistics

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