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# Rethinking Intellectual History in East-Central Europe: Capitalizing on Eclecticism (An Introduction)

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## Abstract

IVANČÍK, Matej. Rethinking Intellectual History in East-Central Europe: Capitalizing on Eclecticism (An Introduction).

This overview provides insights into the articles featured in the thematic issue, accompanied by additional elaboration on the theme of rethinking intellectual history in the East-Central Europe region. The period covered stretches from the first half of the nineteenth century to the history of post-communist transformation and within that time span, an extended conversation with global history, philosophy, sociology and other fields runs through the phenomena scrutinized here. The articles presented in this issue aim to both enrich and contribute to the intellectual history tradition of the region. Simultaneously, they actively participate in ongoing debates on de-canonizing political thought, traditionally more inclined towards the examination of great philosophical and scholarly traditions. While such endeavours are not unprecedented, the current issue seeks to communicate new perspectives, introduce lesser-known actors and concepts, and position them within the current and developing activities that have recently emerged in the field of intellectual history in East-Central Europe.

Intellectual history as a discipline has been building—with its lumps and downs—since the late 1960s. Although an independent category, one tends to consider the genre as part of a larger field that includes history of political thought, history of ideas and history of philosophy, however vigorous an opposition intellectual historians may wield to prove otherwise. One point remains clear: intellectual history has predominantly focused on Western political thought, an elite form in particular. It is equally true that the historians of East-Central Europe have been trying for a relatively short time to counter—or balance, at the least—the Western-ness of political thought. As for the elite aspect, a somewhat less focused endeavour has been underway to elevate social thought to a similar prominence.

Evoking the increasing demand for a more context-sensitive rethinking of European political thought, Balázs Trencsényi, Michal Kopeček, Maciej Janowski, Monika Baár, Maria Falina, and Luka Lisjak Gabrijelčić put together an impactful, double-volume monograph that has since decidedly shaped the debate on East-Central European

political thought.<sup>1</sup> Although focused more on the history of political thought, the work's utilization of historicizing concepts such as modernity, statehood, progress, economy and nation-building places it on par with the intellectual history methodological toolkit. Indeed, to say this collective work has become a definitive account of focused endeavours as a way to establish the given region rather as a subject than a mere object of Western thought would be an overstatement. However, it is well worth acknowledging the authors' intention to shift the debate from problematizing the idea of East-Central Europe as a cradle of distinctive thought to analysing the thought itself. A similar, yet more particular endeavour that intertwined social, cultural and intellectual history was materialized in the *Routledge History Handbook of Central and Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, with the third volume devoted to *Intellectual Horizons*. Balázs Trencsényi examines the approach to political thought in the analysed region as situated between East and West in the majority of works, which results in an oversimplified, binary perception of pro-Western and autochtonist discourses.<sup>2</sup> Such an understanding only reflects the nationalist utilization of ideas. Trencsényi introduces a more fitting methodology, that of a "soft regionalist narrative." This approach, while rejecting essentialist definitions of East-Central Europe or the quest for a set of "original characteristics" of political thought in the region, seeks to identify certain local factors. While these factors might not be unique solely to the region, their combination nonetheless imparts a recognizable physiognomy to the political discourses originating from this part of the world.<sup>3</sup> That said, it is important to contextualize this academic endeavour within the tradition of inventing East-Central Europe.

Artur Banaszewski and Isabel Jacobs have recently co-authored two virtual issues on East European intellectual history for the *Journal of History of Ideas* blog. In an attempt to prove the liveliness of the region's importance which, according to the authors, has been bolstered by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, they revive the very idea of seeking for Eastern Europe. Drawing on Larry Wolff's *Inventing Eastern Europe*, Banaszewski and Jacobs yet again emphasize how the idea of the region had been produced through and by the enlightenment thinkers and utilizers, and how in Eastern Europe, the "enlightened West" found its own "Orient."<sup>4</sup> The idea of Orientalizing one's eastern neighbour played an important role in constituting the image of an enlightened self within the broader geographic region of East-Central Europe.

1 TRENCSENYI, Balázs et al. *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe. Volume I: Negotiating Modernity in the "Long Nineteenth Century"*. Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 2016; TRENCSENYI, Balázs et al. *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe. Volume II: Negotiating Modernity in the "Short Twentieth Century", Parts I. – II.* Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2018.

2 TRENCSENYI, Balázs. Thinking Dangerously: Political Thought in Twentieth-century East Central Europe. In BORODZIEJ, Włodzimerz – LACZÓ, Ferenc – PUTTKAMER, Joachim von. *The Routledge History Handbook of Central and Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century. Volume 3: Intellectual Horizons*. London; New York : Routledge, 2021, p. 129.

3 TRENCSENYI 2021, pp. 129–130.

4 BANASZEWSKI, Artur – JACOBS, Isabel. East European Intellectual History – "East" meets "West": Virtual Issue 2.1. In *Journal of the History of Ideas Blog*, 7 September 2022, <https://www.jhiblog.org/2022/09/07/east-european-intellectual-history-east-meets-west-virtual-issue-2-1/> (last accessed 12 December 2023).

Similar to Wolff, Milica Bakić-Hayden developed the idea of “nesting orientalism,” which has not only helped impose the notion of backwardness onto the respective Balkan nations—the article was written in 1995, in the midst of the Balkan wars—but eventually essentialized nations’ particular qualities.<sup>5</sup> Maria Todorova adopted this idea and introduced her interpretation called “nesting Balkanism” to more subtly perceive the region’s internal dynamic as well as criticize the Western Orientalizing gaze.<sup>6</sup>

Very recently, a thorough and original approach to understanding the position of East-Central Europe as subject has been developed by Anca Parvulescu and Manuela Boatcă. In *Creolizing the Modern. Transylvania Across Empires*, the authors applied a world-system theory approach and presented the case of modernizing Transylvania from the perspective of inter-imperiality. Instead of analysing the region, the authors pose a question: what does the world look like from the standpoint of a small village in Transylvania, a region in East-Central Europe? The inter-imperial development of many regions in East-Central Europe is surely something that should attract attention, in particular due to a focus on intellectual and cultural production. As Parvulescu and Boatcă state, when modernity emerges in and through a land with inter-imperial attributes, a rural territory, the conventional view of capitalism as a linear process of urbanization and industrialization is challenged.<sup>7</sup>

Intellectual historians often vividly engage in philosophy and the history of philosophy. Within this endeavour, German philosophy in particular has played an important role in shaping the intellectual life of East-Central Europe. Although not an intellectual historical account *stricto sensu*, John Connelly’s *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* opens up an examination of the so-called nation-building process<sup>8</sup> with an analysis of German philosophical influence—Johann G. Hamman and Johann G. Herder particularly—in the ideational frames of local intellectuals.<sup>9</sup> Marci Shore points out that Eastern Europe is a place where, at least in the past two hundred years, intellectuals truly lived ideas. They were doing so by self-consciously rejecting the public-private divide as a bourgeois artifice.<sup>10</sup> The task of an intellectual historian, she continues, is then to understand the lives of those intellectuals who lived their respective ideas. It may be a bit of a stretch to claim exceptionality in the region’s living the ideas. Moreover, this approach might posit the question of how much and what kind of decolonizing of East-Central Europe is required in order to transcend the superficial

5 BAKIĆ-HAYDEN, Milica. Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia. In *Slavic Review*, 1995, vol. 54, no. 4, pp. 917–931.

6 TODOROVA, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 2009.

7 PARVULESCU, Anca – BOATCĂ, Manuela. *Creolizing the Modern. Transylvania Across Empires*. New York : Cornell University Press, 2022, p. 3.

8 On the issue of nation, nationalism and “nation-building” in East Central Europe in connection with intellectual history and the social role of intellectuals, see: BUZÁSSYOVÁ, Barbora – VÖRÖS, László. Intellectuals and the “National Question” in Post-1918 Central and Eastern Europe (An Introduction). In *Forum Historiae*, 2022, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 1–5.

9 CONNELLY, John. *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*. Princeton; Oxford : Princeton University Press, 2020.

10 SHORE, Marci. Can We See Ideas?: On Evocation, Experience, and Empathy. In McMAHON, Darrin M. – MOYN, Samuel (eds.) *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*. Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 202.

readings of local ideas as being mere derivatives of the Western canon. We can thus come to the simplified conclusion that giving voice to the region is a way of evading the burden of double imperialism. This was expressed in the *Journal of History of Ideas Blog* and the aforementioned virtual issue on Eastern European intellectual history as follows:

Future scholarship about Eastern Europe must not strive to upgrade it to the club of historically privileged subjects, but to break the club from within. Only then will East European Intellectual History have a chance to move beyond the conditions of double hegemony and become an integral part of a wider project of Global Intellectual History.<sup>11</sup>

From this point of view, Marci Shore's *Caviar and Ashes* has been instrumental in putting the region on the map regarding modern thinking in that she emphasizes the importance of continuity of local traditions of thought, namely the long life of the Polish Marxist tradition from 1918 to 1968.<sup>12</sup>

Intellectual history's task is to excavate intellectual traditions or streaks of thought that might have gotten lost under the later trajectories of those very streaks. Such an effort has been systematically carried out by the founders of the so-called Cambridge school, namely Quentin Skinner and John G. A. Pocock, when uncovering the origins of modern concepts and their historical meanings, and East-Central European historiography has vigorously followed in similar footsteps. The Polish Marxist tradition, a very Central European one indeed, is hardly the only one to transcend the borders of this loosely geographically defined region. Several works point out the role of Central Europe—or more precisely its experience with the First World War and subsequent dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—in establishing schools of economic thought. In this sense, the pioneering work by Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists*, brings a rather different history of neoliberalism; a historically conditioned thought stemming from a scholarly environment directly influenced by the perceived tragedy of the Habsburgs' economic internationalism's fall.<sup>13</sup> Such economic thought internalized fear caused by both the economic protectionism unfolded by the successor states as well as the improving social and economic rights of the newly democratically imagined communities and eventually spread across the Atlantic Ocean, impacting what later became known as neoliberalism. Similarly, Natasha Wheatly's research into understanding state and sovereignty and the idea of the post-1918 world order elevates the region in terms of the sprawl of juridical and legal expertise that intrinsically grew from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire's worrisome perception of how to tackle the issue of legitimate governance in a multi-ethnic and multi-national commonwealth.<sup>14</sup> Surely, previous works

11 BANASZEWSKI – JACOBS 2022, <https://www.jhiblog.org/2022/09/07/east-european-intellectual-history-east-meets-west-virtual-issue-2-1/>

12 SHORE, Marci. *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918–1968*. New Haven; London : Yale University Press, 2006.

13 SLOBODIAN, Quinn. *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, Mass.; London : Harvard University Press, 2018.

14 WHEATLEY, Natasha. *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe & the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty*. Princeton; Oxford : Princeton University Press, 2023.

paved the way for this conceptualization of statehood in the region.<sup>15</sup> However, besides the so-called canonical grand narratives, less prominent yet more lively traditions of thought have been uncovered by intellectual historical endeavours in the discipline. Among a host of others, intellectual history has dealt with the political languages of monarchist imaginaries adapting novel democratic realms within the region.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the tradition of organic societal order and disciplining the bodies of nations belongs to the historiographical excavations of the ideas negotiating nationality, modernity and statehood.<sup>17</sup>

In reference to Trencsényi's "soft-regionalist" narrative, intellectual history in and of East-Central Europe has been trying to upend more traditionalist interpretations of women's history and the history of feminism. Within this understanding, for example, liberal interwar feminism or the late socialist feminist thought and practice is not considered to be a mere copy of the Western paradigm. Instead, intellectual historians look for authentic, regionally contextualized manifestations of the genre, thus decolonizing the canon of history of political thought.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, we are witnessing ever more urgent calls to de-canonize the very concept of political thought, and the knowledge production of scholars coming from the region is centre stage.<sup>19</sup> The present issue seeks to build on this tradition, one that is enriching the field of study by engaging in communication with other disciplines and historiographical schools, a tradition that deems the region of East-Central Europe and the political and social thought of and on the region important in pushing the field towards greater academic and societal impact.

Moving away from the intellectual historical canon yet still aiming for enrichment, Piotr Kuligowski takes an illuminating excursion to a utopian intellectual adventure carried out by Polish exile Kazimierz Tomkiewicz. The Polish Democratic Society and the so-called Hôtel Lambert circle of Polish influential émigrés followed the footsteps of many revolutionaries and democratic politicians and thinkers to a large extent, whose domestic conditions made it unbearable to pursue their ideals, in particular after the 1848 revolutions.<sup>20</sup>

15 BORODZIEJ, Włodzimerz – FERHADBEGOVIĆ, Sabina – PUTTKAMER, Joachim von (eds.) *The Routledge History Handbook of Central and Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century. Volume 2: Statehood*. London; New York : Routledge, 2020.

16 INGLIS, Cody James. The Languages of Monarchism in Interwar Yugoslavia, 1918–1941: Variations on a Theme. In *History of European Ideas*, 2023, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 1–17.

17 On the phenomenon of Sokol movement, see the special issue: BALIKIĆ, Lucija – NEWMAN, John Paul – POJAR, Vojtěch. The Sokol Movement between State and Society in Interwar East Central and Southeastern Europe. In *East Central Europe*, 2023, vol. 50, no. 2–3, pp. 143–154.

18 LÓRÁND, Zsófia. *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; GRUBAČKI, Isidora. The Emergence of the Yugoslav Interwar Liberal Feminist Movement and the Little Entente of Women: An Entangled History Approach (1919–1924). In *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*, 2020, vol. 4, no. 2, article nr. 27.

19 LÓRÁND, Zsófia et al. (eds.) *Texts and Contexts from the History of Feminism and Women's Rights: East Central Europe, Second Half of the Twentieth Century*. New York; Budapest; Vienna : Central European University Press, 2024 (forthcoming).

20 For a better examination of the issue, see: TRENCSENYI 2016, p. 247; and BROCK, Peter. *Polish Revolutionary Populism: A Study in Agrarian Socialist Thought from the 1830s to the 1850s*. Toronto; Buffalo : Toronto University Press, 1977; for the Hôtel Lambert's involvement in the East-Central European affairs, see: ZAJAC, Oliver. Hôtel Lambert Contra the Austrian Empire. The Affair of František Zach's Employment at the French Consulate in Belgrade in 1845. In DINACCI, Marcelo – MAIONE, Domenico (eds.) *Il mondo in subbuglio: Ricerche sull'età delle rivoluzioni (1789–1849)*. Napoli : Federico II University Press, 2022, pp. 171–184.

Yet the Polish case is quite unique. Not only does the chronology of the 1846 revolutionary moment seem ahead of the major events in Europe, the profound globality of the “Polish question” renders it important for analysing neighbouring affairs. Piotr Kuligowski’s text goes beyond the traditional intertwinedness of the Polish case and say, the Belgian revolution of 1830 or the French revolution of 1848. Focusing on Kazimierz Tomkiewicz also pushes East-Central European intellectual history towards global historical predicaments, as the utopian project that he presented suggested a settlement, *Osada*, to be built in California, USA. What makes the Tomkiewicz case even more intriguing, Kuligowski writes, is the fashion in which the proposed Polish settlement was meant to counter the majority of European utopian projects concerning the engagement in the society of technological progress. California, thus, was chosen to garrison the Polish countrymen while offering a life at the genesis of a promising technological and commercial crossroads.

Drawing on social history, mostly the former Sovietological critique of the Cold War understanding of the history of the so-called Eastern bloc, as well as on other intellectual historiographical traditions, local historiographies began to immerse into more nuanced explanations of the ideational world of intellectuals under state socialism, ones stretching from the regime protagonists, through the so-called grey zone, to the dissidents. In fact, the very lines separating these spheres of thought appeared to become rather blurry as the research dug deeper. Recently, contemporary Czech historiography mainly—although not solely—has delved into a better understanding of the ideational world of state socialism and Marxist thought in particular. Drifting away from more regionally traditional political history and the study of the oppressive regime practices, Michal Kopeček squares the most influential forms of post-Stalinist legitimization tropes across the region of East-Central Europe.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Pavel Kolář attempts to analyse the ideational world of communism beyond the totalitarian interpretation and rather as a distinctive thought caged between legacies of the past and anticipating the future.<sup>22</sup> The fact that more nuanced interpretations of Marxist thought resonate within the regional historiography is evidenced by the present communication. In response to Kolář, Jan Mervart and Jiří Růžička proposed a different reading of post-Stalinist thought. Instead of grasping it as a kind of inter-mezzo or a semi-stage thinking of bridging Stalinism and reformism, the authors understand post-Stalinism as a self-standing search for new horizons within the Marxist thought.<sup>23</sup> Along these lines, other authors also recognize the autonomous qualities of East-Central European Marxist traditions, albeit infused with phenomenological and otherwise

21 KOPEČEK, Michal. *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: Zrod a počátky marxistického revizionismu ve střední Evropě 1953–1960*. Praha : Argo, 2009.

22 KOLÁŘ, Pavel. *Soudruzi a jejich svět. Sociálně myšlenková tvářnost komunismu*. Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny; Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2020.

23 MERVART, Jan – RŮŽIČKA, Jiří. „Rehabilitovat Marxe!“ *Československá stranická inteligence a myšlení post-stalinské modernity*. Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2020.

humanist strains.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in connection to the present issue, an attempt to perceive Marxist and Catholic thought as two strands of mutually interwoven strands—instead of mere opponents—has been previously established in Czech historiography.<sup>25</sup> Ondřej Holub's contribution adds to this existing line of thought, excavating the intellectual connections between Austrian Catholic left-wing thought and Czech Catholic dissent, namely through Jiří Němec. Following a spiritual and intellectual revival of Catholic thought connected mainly with the second Vatican council opened up debates that trespassed the borders of the Iron Curtain. Holub's pursuit of a detailed mapping of novel inspirations within the Czech intellectual context represents a valuable contribution to the intellectual-historical endeavour resonating within the historiographical community, providing a regional enrichment of some of the existing canonical works, namely those of John Connelly and Samuel Moyn.<sup>26</sup>

Intellectual historians and historians of political thought have long engaged in understanding post-communist development through concepts that seemed to gain traction in the process of establishing liberal democracy in the region. In this pursuit, the focus on the pre-1989 lives of the concept has been vital. Such is the case of human rights,<sup>27</sup> ideologies and politics of history,<sup>28</sup> or in general, the ever-reviving importance and self-assertion of intellectuals from dissident times through the democratic or negotiated revolutions of 1989. Balázs Trencsényi highlights the permanent crisis of identity characterizing intellectuals in the region, which prompted them to seek out different frameworks of identification that could weave the divergent threads of the past, present and future into one coherent narrative.<sup>29</sup> As Jonáš Jánky's contribution demonstrates, this intellectual conundrum of sorts appeared to be at the centre of utilizing the concept of "positive deviance." Being a sociological concept of rather distant origin, Slovak sociologists and political scientists that oscillated between the so-called grey zone and dissent world in the times of late state socialism employed this analytical concept, a term of expertise, in order to analyse the crisis of a stagnating Czecho-Slovak society. Yet, through the moment of democratic upheaval and a consequent ascent to power by the former dissidents,

24 BLAGOJEVIĆ, Una. Phenomenology and Existentialism in Dialogue with Marxist Humanism in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s. In *Studies in East European Thought*, 2022, vol. 75, no. 3, pp. 417–436; HĚNCU, Adela. Social Science and Marxist Humanism beyond Collectivism in Socialist Romania. In *History of the Human Sciences*, 2022, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 77–100; ANDĚLOVÁ, Kristina – SUK, Jiří – ZAHRADNÍČEK, Tomáš. *Pro nás dějiny nekončí: Politická práce a myšlení českého levicového exilu (1968–1989)*. Praha : Argo; Ústav pro soudobé dějiny, 2023.

25 MERVART, Jan – LANDA, Ivan et al. *Proměny marxisticko-křesťanského dialogu v Československu*. Praha : Filosofia, 2017.

26 CONNELLY, John. *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution on Catholic Teaching on the Jews 1933–1965*. Cambridge, Mass.; London : Harvard University Press, 2012; MOYN, Samuel. *Christian Human Rights*. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

27 RICHARDSON-LITTLE, Ned. *The Human Rights Dictatorship: Socialism, Global Solidarity and Revolution in East Germany*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2020; BRIER, Robert. *Poland's Solidarity Movement and the Global Politics of Human Rights*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2021.

28 KOPEČEK, Michal – WCIŚLIK, Piotr (eds.) *Thinking Through Transition: Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe After 1989*. Budapest; New York : Central European University Press, 2015.

29 TRENCSENYI 2021, p. 132.

the concept of “islands of positive deviation” took on a different meaning, living a life in the post-dissident legitimation framework.

The history of neoliberalism has only recently been approached from the perspective of intellectual history. The abovementioned work of Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists*, takes a *longue dureé* approach to a distinct line of thought that originated from a very East-Central European experience. However, there is a particular need to explain the ideational worlds of neoliberalism in the region, which is predominantly embodied in the studies of post-socialist or post-communist transformation. Here, intellectual history lags behind economic history, social sciences or anthropology. Sociological accounts and social-economic history approaches often provide a necessary stepping stone for intellectual historians to utilize. Here, a pioneering work by Johanna Bockman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism*, stands out.<sup>30</sup> Building on the premise of neoliberalism’s entrenchment originating from the dialogue between the West and the East instead of merely imposing Milton Friedman’s or Friedrich Hayek’s ideas on the post-communist societies, local historiographical production has engaged in studying the late state socialist experts and their role in establishing liberal democracy and neoliberalism in East-Central Europe.<sup>31</sup> Besides Bockman’s monograph and further examinations of the East-Central European’s experts’ influence on global capitalism,<sup>32</sup> Mitchell Orenstein’s and Hilary Appel’s *From Triumph to Crisis*<sup>33</sup> and Kristen Ghodsee’s and Orenstein’s *Taking Stock of Shock*<sup>34</sup> are some recent examples of the scholarly interest in neoliberalism’s establishment in the formerly socialist states. From the perspective of translation and the embeddedness of ideas, however, this field remains deeply under-scrutinized. A minor exception is found in Cornel Ban’s *Ruling Ideas* and Thomas Biebricher’s *The Political Theory of Neoliberalism*.<sup>35</sup> Florian Peters’ piece provides valuable engagement in the dialogue between the social and intellectual history of neoliberalism. Peters introduces a predicament that the intellectual historical approach to understanding the “neoliberal takeover” in the region has played a large role in keeping alive—or providing a building block even—both the liberal master narrative of justifying the social hardships that accompanied the economic transformation as well as the right-wing revisionist plots depicting treacherous democrats selling the democratic revolution to communists in return for favours in building capitalism. Similar to Kopeček’s arguments,<sup>36</sup> through examining Polish economic transformation,

30 BOCKMAN, Johanna. *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*. Stanford, Cal. : Stanford University Press, 2011.

31 KOPEČEK, Michal et al. *Architekti dlouhé změny: Expertní kořeny postsocialismu v Československu*. Praha : Argo; FF UK; ÚSD AV ČR, 2019.

32 WEBER, Isabella M. *How China Escaped Shock Therapy: The Market Reform Debate*. London; New York : Routledge, 2021.

33 APPEL, Hilary – ORENSTEIN, Mitchell A. *From Triumph to Crisis: Neoliberal Economic Reform in Postcommunist Countries*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2018.

34 GHODSEE, Kristen – ORENSTEIN, Mitchell A. *Taking Stock of Shock: Social Consequences of the 1989 Revolutions*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2021.

35 BAN, Cornel. *Ruling Ideas: How Global Neoliberalism Goes Local*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2016; BIEBRICHER, Thomas. *The Political Theory of Neoliberalism*. Stanford, Cal. : Stanford University Press, 2018.

36 KOPEČEK 2019.



Peters calls for revisiting the multifaceted social and economic dynamics that drove the revolutions of 1989, eventually putting an emphasis on the local social support for neoliberal imaginaries.

Barbara Falk distinguishes dissident agenda from dissident legacy. According to her, agenda suggests applicability going forward, whereas legacy suggests a revisiting of the past. More specifically, not only looking at the past *as past*, but how have we changed our narratives of the past through the lens of the present.<sup>37</sup> Within the existing intellectual history tradition, the distinction between “agenda” and “legacy” is often intentionally blurred and can be subsumed under the term “post-dissident narratives” or “discourses.”<sup>38</sup> Falk continues that dissident legacies are manifold and include the very idea of revolutionary yet non-violent change, something that Adam Michnik called “new evolutionism” and János Kis termed “radical reformism.” In his contribution, Piotr Wciślik contemplates the phenomenon of revolution from the position of conflict within the revolutionary camp. As the representative figure of the former regime gradually faded away, the post-dissident actors employed their moderate positions against the revolutionary radicals as a new threat to the very legacy of the revolution. Hence, Wciślik assigned the position of “preemptive thermidorians” to the representatives of “new evolutionism” or “radical reformism,” whose ideas gained new meanings as the revolution could, in their eyes, take a Jacobin turn. A thermidorian anxiety, Wciślik concludes, along with a perceived inability to reconcile democracy with the political culture appropriate to a democratic order, appears to be the most lasting element of the dissident legacy in contemporary Polish liberalism.

37 FALK, Barbara J. Legacies of 1989 for Dissent Today. In LACZÓ, Ferenc – LISJAK GABRIJELČIČ, Luka (eds.) *The Legacy of Division: East and West After 1989*. Budapest; New York : Eurozine; Central European University Press, 2020, pp. 187–188.

38 KOPEČEK, Michal. From Narrating Dissidence to Post-Dissident Narratives of Democracy: Anti-totalitarianism, Politics of Memory and Culture Wars in East-Central Europe 1970s–2000s. In BARŠA, Pavel – HESOVÁ, Zora – SLAČÁLEK, Ondřej (eds.) *Central European Culture Wars: Beyond Post-Communism and Populism*. Prague : Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2021, pp. 28–83.