



Centre for Advanced Study Sofia

**“WE, THE PEOPLE” –
VISIONS OF NATIONAL PECULIARITY
AND POLITICAL MODERNITIES
IN THE “EUROPE OF SMALL NATIONS”**

Center for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS)
Collegium Budapest (ColBud)



Funded by

The German Foreign Office
within the Framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe,
the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Sweden
and the VolkswagenStiftung, Germany



2005 Academic Year

FINAL REPORT

(01 March 2005 – 31 December 2005)

The We, the People Final Report covers the period from 01 March 2005 to 31 December 2005 and summarizes the most important results, achievements and activities of the project in the course of its final phase.

CONTENTS:

1. PROJECT RESULTS
2. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS
3. ANNEX: LIST OF ACTIVITIES

1. PROJECT RESULTS

General Results

History and History Teaching is one of the six priority areas of the Task Force "Education and Youth" of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, and within those priorities the development of teaching resources has been given special importance. In line with this the project "We, The People" – Visions of National Peculiarity and Political Modernities in the "Europe of Small Nations" has proved to be a successful cross-border initiative in history education which aims at encouraging greater mutual and comparative understanding of the history of the region from a multiplicity of perspectives and pursues a multi-dimensional approach to history.

The project unique features as a separate module for South Eastern and Central Europe of a greater research framework, encompassing the processes of identity and nation building in the "Europe of small nations" during its whole length has been focused on strengthening the regional cooperation in the history research and education, not only within the region itself, but also on a larger European level. The aims of the project in fostering negotiated and comparative understanding of the historical processes through the creation of a scholarly team of 11 young fellows, coming from 6 different Balkan countries and affiliated with 9 institutions of higher education, stemming from different cultural, national, academic and religious backgrounds, organized in two research groups, one based in Sofia, dealing with the topic of the ottoman Empire legacies and its descendent nations and states, the other one in Budapest, whose interest lies respectively in the problems of the Austro-Hungarian heritage, have been successfully implemented within the course of the project. They have been developed even further in the regularly organized internal working sessions of the fellows of the project and on the workshops attended also by prominent senior and junior scholars in the field from both the region and Western Europe. Thus, a wide and efficient network of researchers from South Eastern and Central Europe has been established, encouraging an strengthening to an even greater extent the impact of this collective research project and educational initiative in respect of regional and wider European cooperation, educational quality enhancement, academic excellence, cross-cultural and cross-national understanding and sharing of expertise and experience, the main asset for sustainable development and stability.

In this respect the fruitfulness of bringing together scientists from various fields, different cultural backgrounds and national traditions from the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe within a common research framework and providing them with the means to do independent research has proven to be a successful strategy to counter the brain drain from the universities and other academic institutions in the region.

The publication of the research papers of the We, The People fellows and its dissemination will contribute even further to the promotion of the regional academic and educational cooperation in the removing historical nationalistic stereotypes, fostering good neighbourly relations and mutual interest and understanding of the identity and nation building processes and creating self-awareness of the region within the region and in a wider European perspective.

One of the shortcomings of the We, The People project were the difficulties experienced in the effort to raise awareness and interest in the project from young scholars and researchers from the countries of the Western Balkans, the main focal point of the German Foreign Office within the Framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which is presented in details in the next section of the report.

The project even from its starting phase yielded in scholarly terms a number of important results. The research framework based on the intensive interaction among representatives of different academic cultures exposed the necessity of creating a more coherent methodological framework for dealing with questions of collective identity and the institutionalization of national discourse in the context of 'late-coming' nation-state projects. Thus, a crucial task of the participants during the discussions was to agree on a set of common principles in dealing with their otherwise rather divergent types of source-materials. Furthermore, the intense interaction among the members of the group created an opportunity for deeper 'cultural negotiations' and methodological transfers. On the one hand, this meant the 'trading' of classic 'Western' methodological paradigms relevant for studying political ideas and discourse (such as the British 'contextualist' intellectual history, the German *Begriffsgeschichte*, or the French history of *mentalités*), but also the unique opportunity of measuring the relevance of new historiographical trends stemming from Central and Southeast-Europe in view of the needs of a complex cross-cultural research environment.

In addition to the methodological discussions, the project highlighted a number of substantial points which lay beneath many of the research projects but which became visible due exactly to the joint discussions and comparative aspiration of the team members. The starting point was to map the main discourses and 'actors' of the respective fields. Thus, the fellows in the course of the project have elaborated on the key concepts occurring in their research materials, related to the thematization of collective identity (such as nation, people, folk, race, fatherland and/or motherland, state, tradition, ancestors, language). In the ensuing discussions this helped us locating certain ideological constructs diachronically (e.g. testing the hypothesis whether the moment when the concept of "race" becomes a common reference in the national discourse signaled a paradigm-shift or not), and also comparing the different temporalities of different Southeast-European cultures to each other. Second, the fellows have developed a "mental map" of the external (Western, but not only) discursive and theoretical influences on the intellectual networks they were studying. Once again, the comparative setting already yielded important new results in establishing the cross-cultural mechanisms of reception of certain scholarly paradigms coming from Western Europe and also identifying some of the almost completely neglected intra-regional cross-fertilizations (for example the Ottoman cultural mediation of French ideas towards Balkan elites, which eventually became 'nation-state builders', such as in the case of Bulgaria or Albania). Third, the fellows have devised an interpretative framework locating the major ideological traditions at play in their context – what were the ideological options for constructing their national 'ideologems', and also, whether the labels commonly used in the scholarly literature for certain configurations (such as populism, liberal nationalism, racism, etc..) could be used in these contexts or one had to develop an alternative conceptual framework for dealing with these phenomena.

After developing their individual research projects in view of these three focal points in the last months, the members of the team had been able to come up with something more than the usual collection of unrelated research papers but a coherent vision of the main lines of the history of

political ideas in Southeast-Europe between 1850 and 1945, thus providing an example of a new type of “negotiated” historiography in the region. The final result of the project – the foreseen publication of the collection of the eleven research texts, developed by the individual We, the People fellows within the framework of the collective project can be seen as an example of development of valuable history teaching resources, both for the region in itself and also in a wider European perspective.

Publication of the research results

As of today, all the eleven fellows under the We, the People project had submitted their research papers. The following texts were submitted to CAS (in alphabetical order of the names of the fellows):

Alexander Vezenkov, Bulgaria: “The Reconciliation of the Spirits and the Fusion of the Interests: Inventing, Promoting and Translating Tanzimat Ottomanism”

Artan Puto, Albania: "The Idea of Nation in Faik Konitza's writings, 1897-1912"

Balázs Trencsényi, Hungary: “National Characterology in the Romanian Political Discourses of the Nineteenth-Century”

Bojan Aleksov, Serbia and Montenegro: “Great People’s Poet: Jovan Jovanović Zmaj in Serbian Literature and History”

Bülent Bilmez, Turkey: “Texts of Shemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850-1904) Contributing to the Discursive Construction of both Turkish and Albanian Nations”

Călin Cotoi, Romania: “The Imagining of National Space in Interwar Romania. Geopolitics, Geohistory and Regionalism”

Dessislava Lilova, Bulgaria: “Barbarians, Civilized People and Bulgarians: Definition of Identity in Textbooks and the Press (1830-1878)”

Kinga-Koretta Sata, Romania: “Transylvanian Romanian National Liberalism, 1838—1848”

Levente Szabó, Romania: “Narrating’ the People’ and ’Disciplining’ the Folk: the Constitution of the Hungarian Ethnographic Discipline (1850s-1900s)”

Stefan Detchev, Bulgaria: “Who are the Bulgarians? (Imagining the “ancestors”) – Ethnogenesis, “Race”, Science and Politics in fin-de-siècle Bulgaria”

Tchavdar Marinov, Bulgaria: ““We, the Macedonians”. The Paths of Macedonian Supra-Nationalism (1878-1912)”

Because of the specificity of the project organization and the envisaged submission of the fellows’ research papers at its end, the publication as the material result of the We, The People project cannot be finished within the timeline of the project and will be concluded by the end of 2006. Along with it, the project team is preparing also the second volume, containing the selection and translation in English of the identity building texts of the respective national traditions, “excavated” and researched by the fellows of the project, which will be funded separately.

Presently CAS is in a process of preparing the research results for publication - first as a We, the People working-paper series on the CAS web site and then as a printed collection. Although all We, the People fellows had in very good command of written English, none of them was a native speaker. Thus the texts still need editing by a professional editor. The procedure for the

copyediting and pre-publication preparation of the research texts has started already in December 2005, immediately after their submission to the project management.

Because a part of the budgeted sum (a part from the savings from 2005) could not be transferred to the project budget for 2006, the reduction inevitably affected the sum envisaged for publication. Accounting for the high value of the planned publication and despite its tight budget, the Centre for Advanced Study will provide for the remaining sum needed for the edition, as was foreseen in the project application.

On 13 November in Budapest, after the conclusion of the final conference of the project, a follow-up project of the We, the People was discussed with the participation of Sverre Bagge (Norway), Wouter Hugenholtz, Henk de Velde and Dirk Jan Wolffram (The Netherlands), Gábor Klaniczay (Collegium Budapest and CEU), Uffe Ostergaard (Denmark), Diana Mishkova, (Bulgaria) and in February 2006 an application for it, again as a collective project of CAS and Collegium Budapest has been submitted to the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Sweden (Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond) and the results of which will be known by April 2006.

Difficulties Experienced:

▪ The Insufficient Representation of Fellows from the Countries of the Western Balkans

With the starting of the procedure for the Call for applications for the We, The People project the management has made special efforts to promote the project and disseminate the information along with the Call to all of the partner organizations and institutions of CAS and ColBud and their respective academic and scientific networks. This was made also with the strong focus and emphasis on the countries in South Eastern Europe and especially on the Western Balkans as the main target region of the German Foreign Office within the Framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Notwithstanding, and this happened maybe due as to the belated approval of the project application, as also to the specific period for submission of the applications (which coincided with the summer break, 15 July - 15 September 2004), only a small number of scholars from the from the countries of the Western Balkans have applied for a fellowship within the We, The People project. We have received two applications from Serbia and Montenegro, one from Albania, one from Croatia and none from FYROM, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo¹. The We, The People team has made an effort with the help of its partners, both from the region and from the European Union to further activate their contacts and networks, but to no avail. The main reasons for this shortcoming of the project are probably as follows: the financial conditions of the fellowship, somewhat modest compared with other initiatives and projects targeting the countries of the Western Balkans have played a role in this situation on the one hand, and on the other – it appears that the young postdoctoral scholars from this region (at least in the field of the humanities and social sciences) tend either to focus their scientific interests on the recent and ongoing processes in their countries or to prefer to apply for scholarships and fellowships in academic institutions from the Western Europe and USA. Nevertheless, the difficulties experienced by the organizing institutions could be utilized as a marker for raising awareness and understanding that despite the efforts made the Western Balkans could not be included in such a cross-border initiative in history education stemming from South Eastern and Central Europe aiming at encouraging greater mutual and comparative understanding of the history of the region.

¹ Three from these four candidates were selected in the first pre-selection phase of the project and after the final selection made in the course of the workshop, held in Budapest in October 2004, two of the were selected as We, The People fellows – Artan Puto from Albania and Bojan Aleksov from Serbia and Montenegro.

- **The Planning for Fellows In-residence Fellowships and the Resulting Budget Cut**

One of the major difficulties that the project management had to cope with was the practical impossibility to foresee, from the outset due to the approval of the application only in October 2004, the actual in-residence periods which the fellows had the right to choose. Originally a bigger number of fellowships were planned for the 2004 phase than actually materialized which was why both CAS and Collegium Budapest could not utilize the full amount of the budgeted resources for the academic year 2004. Since the unutilized sum was not transferred to 2005, it led to a reduction of the overall budget for the second academic year when most of the fellows had preferred to take their fellowship grants. Despite the savings that the We, the People management at the two institutions were able to accumulate from almost all other budgeted items provided in the application, including the final conference, the sum for the publication of the final results of the project remained by 1.150 Euro less than budgeted in the application. The Centre for Advanced Study Sofia will try to secure the missing funding in order to fulfill its obligations to the fellows and its responsibility to the project.

- **The Relocation of the Final We, The People Conference from Dubrovnik to Budapest**

The workshop was originally planned to be held in Dubrovnik. During its preparatory phase it was found that the communications to Dubrovnik during the off-holiday season (both by air and on land) were far more expensive and time consuming than expected. For that reason the We, The People team and the guest senior and junior scholars had to reckon with the circumstances and a more generally acceptable decision has been made. With the strong support of the Collegium Budapest staff, the whole organization of the event was transferred to Budapest. From all the possible alternatives, the reason for this particular choice lies in its central position providing an easy transport access but most importantly in academic terms considering the underlying idea for a final conference, namely presenting the results of the collective research to a wider and diverse academic public. In this regard, the role of the Central European University in Budapest as the focal point for MA and PhD students as well as professors from most of the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe was crucial for the final decision on the venue of the event. The representativity of the Central European University, especially in terms of national diversity of students and teaching staff, is by far greater than in any other university in the Western Balkans.

- **Fellows**

In July 2005 Bülent Bilmez won a position as a lecturer in the Bilgi University, Istanbul, one of the leading universities in Turkey. Two of the remaining three fellowship months, to which he was entitled, were therefore utilized by Levente Szabó, while his last stipend was withheld until the submission of the final version of his research.

Due to a terminal illness of a close relative Artan Puto had to discontinue his last-month fellowship in Sofia in November 2005. His last stipend was delivered upon submission of the final version of his research.

- **Virtual discussion**

In December 2004 two We, the People web forums, one open and one password protected, were created at the CAS website. The web forum did not prove to be very efficient channel for exchange and debates. The project management in CAS in the last year has experienced similar

difficulties in the course of other projects and activities of the organization, where the forum based communication between the fellows has proved to be inefficient. There are two important reasons for this shortcoming. In the first place the forum as such is devised as a tool for free association and communication for larger groups of people and the implementation of it for the 11 fellows of the project was more or less a substitution of the already going internal communication via e-mails and in this regard only supplementary. Second, any forum for its efficient working requires a moderator and a continuous generation of interest for its participants to be active, which has been tried, but for such a specific and highly specialized group it has proved to be inadequate. However the virtual discussion between the fellows via e-mails continued all throughout the year, taking on a more personal and free mode, including commentaries on fellows' ideas and methods, sharing bibliographical information, etc. With the starting of the joint meetings and working sessions of the two research groups and later the final in-residence period in Budapest (September – November 2005) there was no great need for continuing the virtual discussions, because of the regularity of the fellows' meetings in the respective organizations.

2. DISSEMINATION OF THE RESULTS

Press Coverage

One of the highlights of 2005 for the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia was the publication of an article on CAS - “The Contribution of Europe of Small Nations – a Project. South East European Self-research” (in German) in Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Switzerland, one of the most influential newspapers in Europe, from 24 January 2005 by Andreas Oplatka². Although the article covers the whole scope of projects and activities of the Centre, its main focus, as seen also from title, is the We, the People project and the support of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

On 21 December 2005 the Bulgarian Internet news portal Mediapool published the article “The Centre for Advanced Study – an organization for academic exchange and post doctoral research” (in Bulgarian)³. The article presents the Centre and its projects, including We, the People.

Information about the project and its on-going activities were presented on a regular basis on the websites of the two co-hosting institutions – CAS (www.cas.bg) and Collegium Budapest (www.colbud.hu).

The We, the People project was thoroughly presented also in the last three newsletters of CAS (Fall 2004, Spring 2005 and Fall 2005)⁴ – a publication widely distributed for free both in Bulgaria and abroad.

With the press conference planned to be held on the occasion of the issuing of the publication, the results of the We, the People project will reach even wider and more diverse audience.

Press Conference

It has been decided that the planned press conference presenting the outcome of the We, the People research should be postponed until the publication of the collective volume and it was scheduled to be held on 22 – 24 September 2006 in CAS, Sofia. This was found necessary since, without the material evidence of the final results of the project, a press conference would have to a great extent repeated the concluding conference in Budapest. Furthermore, we believe that a press conference for a new and interesting publication could generate a far greater interest, would trigger a wider response and reach a wider public. It will undoubtedly motivate a bigger number of journalists, both in the academic and in the popular media, to disseminate the news to diverse publics in Central and South Eastern Europe, which is one of the core ideas underlying the We, the People project and the whole framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Dr. Diana Mishkova – Research Coordinator, Director and Permanent Fellow of CAS Sofia

Balázs Trencsényi – Research Associate at Collegium Budapest

Assen Kanev – Administrative Coordinator at CAS Sofia

² The article can be accessed online at <http://www.nzz.ch/2005/01/24/fe/page-articleCIF0A.html>

³ The article can be accessed online at <http://www.mediapool.bg/show/?storyid=112495>

⁴ The newsletters will be send out together with the report

3. ANNEX: LIST OF ACTIVITIES

The planned activities during the second reported period of the We, the People project followed those already established during the first months and greatly intensified the teamwork of both research groups, based respectively in Sofia (in CAS) and in Budapest (in Collegium Budapest). The 11 fellows participated in various types of working sessions: workshops, public seminars and joint meetings in CAS and the Collegium.

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Working sessions of the Sofia based fellows (April – June 2005)

The Sofia based group was composed of six fellows, whose research projects were to a greater extent connected with the topics of the Ottoman Empire and its legacies.⁵ The regular joint meetings of the We, the People team in CAS started already in April, and since May the working sessions had been organized on a weekly basis. At these sessions each fellow presented his/her research text in front of the group and the research coordinator Dr. Diana Mishkova. The organization of the sessions, as already established in the work of the Budapest group in the previous year, was the following: each fellow's text was distributed to all the fellows one week in advance and two commentators were appointed, whose role was to critically assess the individual research within the framework of the collective project and to provide their comments, different perspectives, suggestions for improvements.

Workshop 1: *Modernities and the Romantic Construction of the Folk*

with the participation of the We, the People fellows (11 – 12. June 2005, CAS Sofia)

Funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Sweden (Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond).

The focus of the workshop was directed towards more precise questions formulated in the course of the preceding We, the People workshops with the purpose to create coherence among the individual research agendas - the modalities and typology of nationalism in Central and Southeast-Europe; the relation of confessional and national identities; mapping the 'paradigm-shifts' of the national discourses; the ideological function of popular representation and its institutions; the itinerary of various theories of ethno-genesis and of race, kinship, etc.

The workshop was structured along the model of the previous sessions with two appointed commentators for each text. In general, it had confirmed the original expectation that this kind of scholarly interaction presents, on the one hand, a cross-border exercise in history education encouraging greater mutual and comparative understanding of the history of the region from a multiplicity of perspectives and, on the other hand, a tool for individual scientific, analytical and methodological sophistication.

⁵ They all started their in-residence fellowships in April 2005, with the exception of Stefan Detchev, whose fellowship period in Sofia actually ended in April, but nevertheless he participated in all sessions and joint meeting with the other fellows.

Working sessions in Budapest for all fellows (September – November 2005)⁶

In September 2005 the last phase of the project started when almost all of the *We, the People* fellows spent some time at the Collegium in Budapest. The regular meetings and discussions were continued together with the finalising of the individual papers and the preparation for the final conference in front of a broader and international scholarly audience. The unique academic climate of Collegium Budapest and the up-to-date library facilities of the Central European University provided the excellent milieu for the intensive last period of the research work.

Workshop 2: *Autochthonist Constructions of the ‘National Self’ Between the Two World Wars.*

with the participation of the *We, the People* fellows (23 – 24. September 2005, Collegium Budapest)

Working Session co-funded by The German Foreign Office within the Framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Sweden (Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond)

The idea behind this workshop was to provide for the last joint internal discussion for all fellows before the November conference and for final coordination of the individual papers. It demonstrated once more the overall progress of the researchers and the growing dialogue between the different topics, disciplines and approaches presented. This last internal session of the *We, the People* fellows lent sufficient reassurance that the members of the team will be able to come up with something more than the usual collection of unrelated research papers and that their research outcome will serve as an example of a new type of “negotiated” historiography in the region.

Workshop 3. *The State of Scholarship (Historiography)*

We, the People Final Conference with the participation of the project fellows, senior and junior scholars in history from South Eastern, Central and Western Europe (11 – 12 November, Collegium Budapest)

Funded by The German Foreign Office within the Framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

The final conference of the *We, the People* project was held in Budapest on 11-12 November. The meeting was designed to complete the programme and present the results of this fifteen-month research before an audience of distinguished specialists in the field. Keynote speakers included Nathalie Clayer from Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales de Paris, who spoke about the role of nation and religion in the construction of Albanian nationalism, and Prof. Uffe Ostergaard from the Department of History at the University of Aarhus, who talked on political culture and nation-states in the Northern countries. Vintila Mihailescu from the Bucharest University, Gábor Klaniczay from Collegium Budapest and Henk de Velde from the University of Groningen commented upon the final stages of the fellows’ work and led the discussions. The quality of the work of the CAS fellows participating in *We, the People* was very highly appreciated.

⁶ At that period almost all the *We, the People* fellows had their in-residence periods at the Collegium Budapest with the exception of Bülent Bilmez. In that period also the Project leader Dr. Diana Mishkova has been in Budapest and was able to attend and coordinate the sessions.

The presentation of the final results of the fifteen-month research period proved that the underlying goals of the project - provoking a wider academic response and interest and encouraging greater mutual and comparative understanding of the history of South eastern Europe from a multiplicity of perspectives – have largely been achieved.

B. WORKSHOP PROGRAMMES

See attached files:

1-WTP Workshop 11-12 June 2005 Sofia Programme.doc

2-WTP Workshop 23-24 September 2005 Budapest Programme.doc

3-WTP Workshop 11-12 November 2005 Budapest Programme.doc

C. PRESS RELEASES

(To be included)