

Ethnical, Linguistic and Historical Aspects of Identity in the East-Central European Intellectual History

Seminar organised by the IFiS PAN, Warsaw and the HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy, Budapest

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Venue: Institute of Philosophy, 1097, Budapest, Tóth Kálmán Street 4. Floor 7, Room 16.

Rafał SMO CZYŃSKI
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Modernization and Moral Boundaries Rearticulating Identity in Semi-Peripheral Poland

This paper examines the post-1989 revival of Jewishness in Poland – including symbols, institutions, and self-reported narratives related to Jewish or Polish-Jewish identities – among select subgroups of the contemporary Polish intelligentsia. Utilizing a moral community framework, this study offers a nuanced perspective on the Jewish revival in post-communist Poland, particularly emphasizing the collective identity-building processes that are often non-institutionalized and fluid. The analysis focuses on the informal rules governing the intelligentsia's status positioning, with particular attention to their strategic engagement with Jewishness as a symbol of “modernization” and “social innovation.”

László Gergely SZÜCS
(Budapest City Archives, Budapest)

Ágnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér on the possibilities of the transformation of the Soviet bloc in the 1980s

One of the most complex post-emigration writings of the two members of the Budapest School, Ágnes Heller and her husband Ferenc Fehér, is the 1986 volume *Eastern Left, Western Left*. One of the important themes of the volume is the possibility of political change in Central and Eastern European societies. My question concerns how the authors imagined political changes in Eastern and Central Europe in the near future. It is very interesting to look back at Heller and Fehér's prognoses from the perspective of the great shift of the following years: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the changes of regimes in Eastern European countries. Now, I rather will ask the question in what theoretical frameworks they examined the movements observed in Eastern and Central Europe and the lasting social tendencies that had defined these changes. I argue that two radically different analytical perspectives emerge in the book: an “elite sociological” and a “utopian-philosophical” one. I argue that the two analytical perspectives are in tension with each other, and they result sometimes in a radically different diagnosis.

Béla MESTER
(HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy, Budapest)

Language, Religion and National Identity in East-Central Europe Lazaro Ludoviko Zamenhof's Theoretical and Utopic Reflections

The founding father of Esperanto, Dr. Zamenhof was born in a typical multi-ethnic area of East-Central Europe, in the city of Białystok. However, his *mother tongue* was Yiddish; he had another first language, namely his *father tongue*, the Russian, he went to a German secondary grammar school, and his language command of Polish and classic Hebrew was good, as well. Besides his proposals of artificial languages – it remained four of them, including Esperanto – he formulated utopic manifestoes for the solution of the identity crisis of both the Eastern-European Jewry – focussed on the Jews in the Russian Empire – and the whole of the humanity. This paper is focussed on two manifestoes; *Hillelism* (1901, in Russian) and its continuation, *Hillelizmo – Homaranaismo* (1906, in Esperanto). Both of these manifestoes are focussed on the socio-cultural consequences of the bilingual or multi-lingual communication of a community and its effects to its identity; and offer a definitely opposite solution than Theodor Herzl's “language-blind” utopia.