

INTRODUCTION

The World Forum on Social Sciences (WSSF) 2018 “Security and Equality for Sustainable Futures” was dedicated to topics concerning security, one of the world’s most urgent problems today. During four eventful days, participants reviewed and discussed various dimensions of security and, specifically, how the natural need for security concerns and affects societies in their desire to live in conditions of equality and sustainability. Numerous contributors and discussants presented their innovative approaches, trends and answers from different sectors, fields and socio-geopolitical regions. The forum allowed identifying critical research priorities in the thematic diversity of the subject matter, as well as gaps in relevant data and knowledge across the world and in various regions.

Organizing a series of global forums in the social sciences is one of the leading activities of UNESCO’s International Social Sciences Council (ISSC)¹. At these events, researchers, funders, policymakers and other stakeholders from around the world gather to discuss important societal challenges, to reconsider the contribution and capacity of the social sciences, and to make recommendations for future research, practices and policies. The four forums held over the past nine years, have achieved considerable success, making this format especially prestigious and influential.

The Fourth World Social Sciences Forum was hosted by Kyushu University, Japan. This was the first time an Asian institution was the organizer of such an immense meeting of scholars. Since its founding as the fourth Imperial University in 1911, Kyushu University, of all major Japanese research universities, has maintained the strongest ties with Korea, China and the rest of East Asia. It was perfectly natural for this university, located in the southwestern Japanese city of Fukuoka (an important trading center for the region since the 7th century) to host the prominent event. According to some scholars, it was in Fukuoka that foreigners first established contact with the Imperial family of Japan.

The modern city of Fukuoka was founded on April 1, 1889 through the merging of the former towns of Hakata and Fukuoka. Historically, Hakata was the port and trade center, and was associated with the culture of the region; it still remains the main trade area today. In the past, many Samurai lived in the region of Fukuoka. When Hakata and Fukuoka decided to merge into one, a meeting was held to choose

a name for the new town. The name Hakata was suggested as more recognizable overseas, the town being an international harbour; but a group of Samurai interrupted the meeting and forced the participants to choose the name Fukuoka. The ethnonym Hakata is still used for the Bay area, the railway station and the Hakata-Ben dialect. Fukuoka is bordered on three sides by mountains and is open to the north of the Genkai Sea, which is part of the Sea of Japan. The city is located 1,100 km from Tokyo.

In 2014, Fukuoka was selected by the Japanese Government to be a national strategic area for “global start-ups and job creation”. The hosting of the first World Forum for Social Sciences in Asia confirmed the role of Kyushu University as an academic and socio-economic center of integration of Asian countries in the 21st century.

The chosen subtopics to the main theme indicate the forum’s ambitions and guidelines:

- Stability and security
- Cyber security, cyber attacks and hybrid wars
- Human security
- Security and Agenda 2030
- Globalization, diversity and cultures of origin
- Development and inclusion in urban and rural areas
- Gender equality and security
- Health, safety and biosecurity
- Freedom, democracy and security.

This large scale scientific event was attended by over a thousand scientists from 80 countries; the greatest number – nearly 300 participants – were from the host country, Japan; Kyushu University provided the presence of its whole teaching, administrative and student personnel as participants in the discussions or as technical assistants. By a rough estimate, there were 25 speakers from the United States, 20 from Australia, 18 from Britain, 15 from China (plus four from Hong Kong), 13 from South Africa and more than ten from India and Indonesia each. It is quite natural that Asia was strongly represented, but the Forum demonstrated a significant extension of the geography of similar assemblies to countries we usually call developing, or Third World states. We are not accustomed to seeing at such forums

representatives of Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, and we tend to underestimate their research capacity; yet, the participants from these countries were at a level with their colleagues from the “developed” world. This, of course, is quite positive. By contrast, the complete absence of the people from the well-established academic communities of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, which for more than one hundred years have set high standards of research in sociology and related sciences, is a matter of concern. Hungary, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina had only one participant each. Only three participants came from Russia, despite the relative proximity of academic centers like Novosibirsk and Vladivostok. The reason for these absences is trivial: the lack of funding and the generally great disregard of government authorities in Eastern Europe for science. The consequences of this disregard will be extremely negative for the region, which in a number of areas of social life is seriously lagging and relegated to low positions in rankings and ratings. A small consolation is that Bulgaria had two representatives, both from the Department of Communities and Identities at the Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. They were Associate Professor Dona Pickard, PhD, and myself, the author of this introduction. Both of us were session organizers.

I put great effort in seeking funds to cover the travel expenses of the colleagues who were to take part in the particular World Forum session for which I was responsible. I approached the Japanese Ambassador in Sofia, His Excellency Masato Watanabe, as well as businesspersons in Bulgaria and in Japan, and other potential funders. They excused themselves for not being able to help, giving various explanations for their refusal; ultimately, my efforts were in vain (I am not offended; it is chiefly my own fault that I did not promote my cause well enough. For example, after being received at the Japanese Embassy with a courtesy I have rarely encountered on such occasions, I was told this was an international, not a Japanese, event, which made it ineligible for funding – a very clear statement of their policy). Finally, when I had already paid for my plane ticket, accommodation and registration out of my family budget (the registration fee alone, 300 €, amounts to the monthly salary of a researcher at my institute), I decided to write to several Bulgarian institutions dealing with the management of science – the Minister of Education and Science and

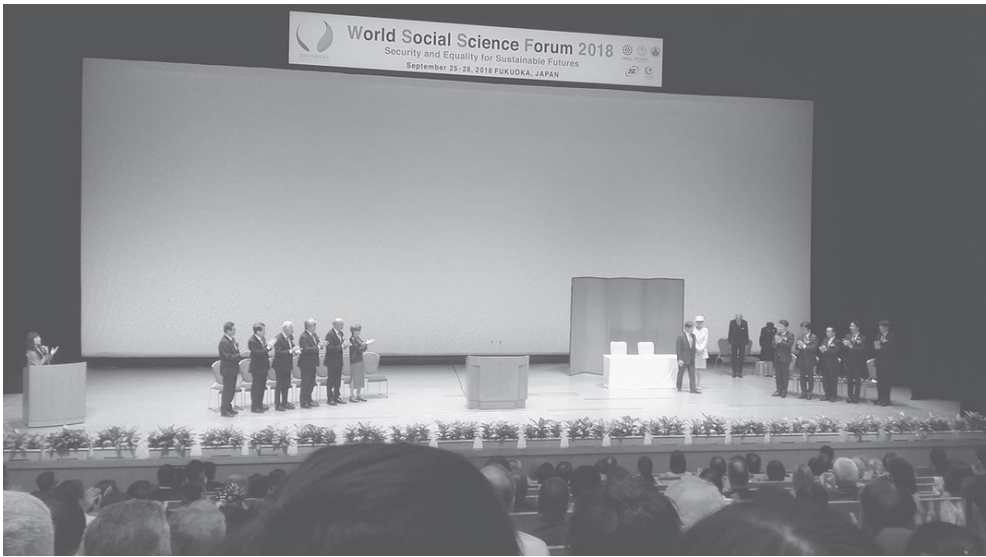
his Deputy responsible for the science portfolio, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science, and the President of the Bulgarian Academy of Science. I received a reply only from the Director of the Directorate Science at the Ministry. After greeting me with a banal copy-pasted phrase, she wrote:

“I truly admire and appreciate your work as a scientist. Active participation in international scientific congresses undoubtedly has an essential role for the presentation of the achievements of Bulgarian science and research at the international level. Unfortunately, the Ministry of education and Science (MES) has no established practice to carry out the financing of such participations. The functions of the Minister of Education and Science are to implement the policy of the State and to develop strategies for the development of education and science in accordance with the rules of procedure of the MES.”

I can only imagine the Minister of Sports sending such a letter to sports federations or a national team, suggesting that they pay the travel expenses for their next competition out of their own resources because “the functions of the Minister of Sports are to carry out the State policy and to develop strategies for the development of sports” – not to mention here the significant difference between the incomes of elite professional athletes and the no less elite scientists...

One fact testifies to the high level and prestige of the Forum, as well as to the general attitude towards science in Japan. The opening ceremony was personally attended by the Crown Prince Naruhito, as well as by his wife, the Crown Princess of Japan Masako. On April 30, 2019, after the unprecedented abdication of his father, Prince Naruhito would ascend to the imperial throne. When Their Imperial Highnesses entered the hall, we were told to please remain seated and silent; this was in curious contrast with the standing ovations customary in our part of the world on such occasions. The Imperial couple stepped to the center of the stage and bowed to the several hundred scientists present there. His Imperial Highness Naruhito then greeted the guests with a short speech, wishing success to the Forum. Greetings and good wishes were also presented by Professor Daya Reddy, President of the International Science Council, Professor Juichi Yamagiwa, President of the Scientific Council of Japan, Professor Chiharu Kubo, President of Kyushu University, followed by the greetings of H. I. H. Crown Prince Naruhito, Mr. Masaji Matsuyama, Minister of

State for Special Missions, the Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture Mr. Hiroshi Ogawa, the Mayor of Fukuoka City Mr. Soichiro Takashima; an address by the Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe was read before the assembly. The ceremony ended with words by Professor Eliza Reiss (Brazil), Chairperson of the Committee on Scientific Program of the World Forum and Vice President of ISC.



WSSF Opening Ceremony

The presence of the Imperial couple involved certain inconveniences – strict security measures were maintained throughout the first day, and the venue was full of young men whose well-tailored vests were not able to conceal an athletic build untypical for such a scholarly event. Only participants who had pre-registered online were admitted to the International Convention Center. There were baggage checks as at the airport. After the opening ceremony, the doors of the Center were locked until the high-ranking guests had departed. This situation suggested to me a comparison with totalitarian society: why were our hosts so cautious about a group of scholars, isolated from society, discussing presumably urgent social issues.

It is impossible even to list all the topics discussed at the plenary sessions (*Existential Risks, Securing Co-evolution of Human and Artificial Intelligence: the Role of Social Science and Humanities for SDGs², Inclusive Wealth and Security, Regional Leadership and Security in a Neo-Nationalist Era: A Focus on Southeast*

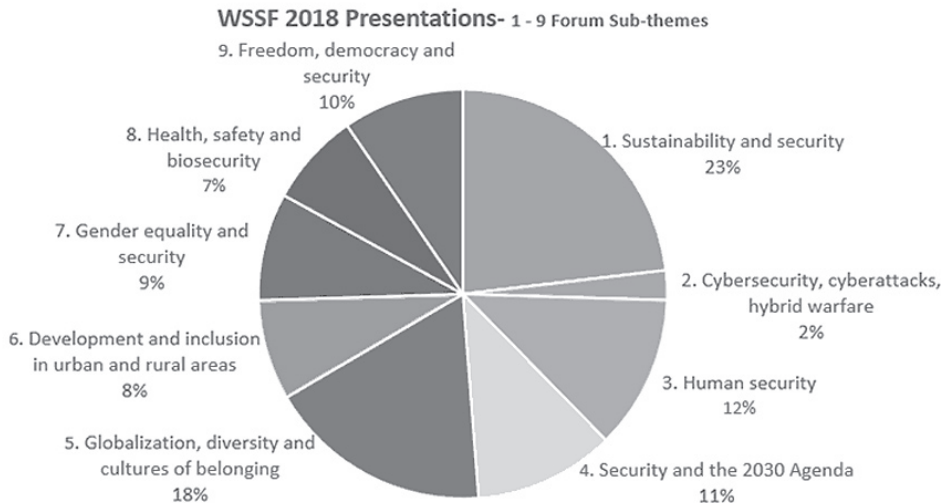
Asia, etc.), the nearly 200 parallel, topical, poster, etc., sessions. In fact, the only session dedicated to the problems of the former Socialist/Communist countries, entitled *Post-communism - Reload or Revert: Case Studies from Russia, the Balkans and Central Asia*, turned out to be limited to the Balkans alone, due to the non-arrival of the scholars from Russia and Uzbekistan, who had submitted their applications. The session was held with the participation only of Assoc. Prof. Dr Stephan E. Nikolov (ISSK), Assoc. Prof. Dr Aneta Cekikj (ISPPI-Skopje), and Assist. Prof. Dr Dona Pickard (ISSK). In their papers, these participants reviewed issues of ethnic transformations, the resettlement of large active age groups of the population outside their native country, civil society in the new democracies, the opportunities for civic participation and its realization considered on the basis of examples from urban agriculture. Problems related to the Balkans were also discussed at a session dedicated to structural analysis of the results of a survey in the so-called “negotiated states” – Syria, Iraq and Bosnia. A paper presenter there was Damir Kapidžič, Associate Professor in comparative politics at Sarajevo University; he also presented a report on democratic attitudes and political participation of young people in South East Europe at a session dealing with the challenges to democracy. Assoc. Prof. Dona Pickard chaired a session addressing the contribution of urban agriculture to sustainable and inclusive urban communities; participants at this session were researchers from Zimbabwe, Hungary, Canada, and Japan.

Even Hurricane Trami, which passed near Fukuoka, devastating the nearby islands of Ryukyu and Okinawa, spared us during our three days of active discussions that enriched the participants with new ideas and experiences. Kazuo Miyamoto, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the 2018 WSSF, expressed his conviction that the participants in the Forum had held timely and energetic discussions and had provided an exciting international and interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and research findings on the general theme of Security and Equality for Sustainable Futures.

At a transit stop in Seoul, 30 years after my first visit there, I met with an esteemed colleague, Prof. Doo-Seung Hong, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Seoul National University, whom I invited to be the honorary editor of this issue. A little remark concerning our Bulgarian approach to international cooperation: the Bulgari-

ian Sociological Association refused to provide me with a congratulatory letter to him, which would have allowed me to broach the topic of cooperation between the Bulgarian sociologists and the far better resourced Korean colleagues. Prof. Hong accepted my invitation to be the honorary editor of the special English-language issue of the journal *Sociological Problems* that includes articles on the subject of the World Forum session *Post-communism: Reload or Revert: Case Studies from Russia, the Balkans and Central Asia*. The purpose of this issue is not only to spread the ideas and spirit of the Fukuoka Forum to areas that remain detached from it, to present at least some of these ideas to readers of the journal and to political decision-makers (who are usually deaf to expert opinions), but also to go beyond the scope of the Forum.

Statistical Summary of WSSF2018 Presentations:
“Presenters from 71 countries/areas”



Source: WSSF site

The session *Post-communism: Reload or Revert: Case Studies from the Balkans, Central Asia, and Russia* was approved by the WSSF Program Committee, as confirmed by a letter from Prof. Elisa Reis (Brazil), the Scientific Program Chair. This approval was an excellent step, but only the first step on the long road to faraway Fukuoka. None of the five paper presenters was provided funds by his

or her institution to meet travel expenses or the registration fee (quite a serious sum for scholars from most East European countries). As I mentioned, all prospective sources I approached declined giving support. The WSSF Local Organizing Committee provided scholarships only for “early career social scientists”, mainly from the Global South, to participate and present papers at the Forum. Applicants were selected through a competitive process by the WSS Forum Programme Committee. We are proud that Assoc. Prof. Aneta Cekikj was among the 37 people awarded such a scholarship, which enabled her to attend³.

Our session was held on September 26 from 4:30 pm local time. Contributions were made by the associate professors Aneta Cekikj, Dona Pickard, and S. E. Nikolov⁴.

Thus, the initial team of authors for this Special Issue consisted of the five (actually, six, since one of the presentations was co-authored) prospective participants in that session. Their research work had to be properly publicized – especially the articles of those that failed to come to the WSSF in Fukuoka. For such an issue, however, five articles are not enough, and I had to invite more authors to contribute to the chosen topic. Again, as at the initial drafting stage of the session, I approached a number of colleagues, from whom this set of authors emerged – many others were not ready to present appropriate texts, due to their busy work schedule. I believe that, despite the difficulties, we came up with an impressive team of authors from seven different countries, some of whom, through this issue of *Sociological Problems*, are presented for the very first time to a wide international academic audience. Prof. Alexander Sungurov (Russia), who came to political science and sociology after an initial education in physics, and who even got a taste of practical politics during the 1990s, an unsettled time not only for Russia, but also for the whole of Eastern Europe. He has contributed an analysis of the models of interaction between the government and the expert functions of the Russian expert community.

- Prof. Mirjana Maleska discusses the power-sharing model as applied to post-conflict Macedonia.

- Assoc. Prof. S. E. Nikolov analyzes the prospects of the depopulation of Bulgaria, and describes the likelihood that ethnic pockets of Bulgarian emigrants, detached from the Bulgarian state, may emerge in foreign countries.

- *Assoc. Prof. Aneta Cekikj* examines civil society in the new democracies and the relationship between the state and civil society.

- Two young female scholars from Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Assoc. Prof. Valida Repovac Nikšić* from The University of Sarajevo and *Assoc. Prof. Maja Savić-Bojanić* from Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, deal with ethno-national populism in their war-torn country – a phenomenon that is characteristic for almost all Eastern European countries, but also for the “old democracies” in Western Europe.

The next two articles, co-authored by supervising professors and their PhD students, address a central problem of our time, terrorism (especially religious terrorism):

- *Prof. V. S. Baturin* and *Dr. S. Y. Shakirov* (Kazakhstan), analyze religious terrorism in the context of conflictological discourse.

- *Prof. Tatyana Dronzina* and *Dr. Yavor Raychev* present a study of Kosovo women involved in ISIS.

The initial lack of contributions from Central Asia was remedied, after intensive search, by a mixed set of articles, including

- *Detecting Power in Power Projection: the Case of Uzbekistan*, by *Dr Farkhad Tolipov*, head of a research-oriented NGO; *A Modern Interpretation of National Policy* (on the example of the issue of the national minorities of Uzbekistan, by *Assoc. Prof. Dr Kamola Saipova* and *Assoc. Prof. Dr Usmonzhon Butaev*,

- *Internet Addiction among the Youth of Uzbekistan*, by *Dr Azamat Seitov*.

- This section of the issue ends with the article by *Assoc. Prof. Petar Cholakov* devoted to another important problem – the Roma, crime and politics in contemporary Bulgaria.

All this confirms that we are covering here a large range of topics pertinent to our changing global world, where no trends are specific and typical only for single remote corners of the world. A bitter proof of this was the recent terrorist attack in as remote a place as Christchurch, New Zealand, where a fanatic, inspired to some extent by certain Balkan hostilities and conflicts, killed innocent people who were praying in their mosque. This proved once again that, despite different approaches, the same problems are stimulating research in regions as far away from each other as the Balkans and Central Asia; we see these countries have a common legacy of

problems coming from their shared past under the Communist system.

I must express my disappointment that three colleagues, who had submitted papers for the Forum in Fukuoka, failed to send in their texts for this journal in due time. These are Professor Dr Vladimir V. Poddubikov from Kemerovo University in Russia, who wrote an overview on deprivation among indigenous ethnic groups in Siberia, and Professor Nigora Safarova and Ms. Nigina Aslanova, M.A., co-authors of an overview of constructive solutions to environmental issues and ecological security in Uzbekistan.

Part II of the collection of articles is vigorously shaped and distinct. It is devoted to Korea, a country that remains divided as a result of WWII (while Germany was reunited almost three decades ago). This series of articles was edited with the invaluable assistance of Prof. Doo-Seung Hong. The Korean section of the collection has been sadly complemented by a tribute to Prof. Alexander Fedotov (1956–2018), who passed away last year and will be sorely missed. During his life, he made abundant contributions to Oriental Studies in Bulgaria, some topics of which he initiated from scratch; importantly, he was the founder of the discipline of Korean Studies in Bulgaria. While an actor is sent off with a round of applause, it is appropriate to say farewell to a professor – far less loudly, indeed – by an academic collection of articles. He was certainly not a sociologist, but his contributions went far beyond his primary vocation, linguistics: he gave us a deeper grasp of the social history and culture of the Eastern Asian peoples, societies and countries.

For those who might ask whether the Korean topic fits in the “jigsaw puzzle” of this collection and matches the topic of the issue, let us recall that there are still two Koreas, North and South, separated decades ago by geopolitical maneuvering after WWII, but also by the insistent effort of the Communist North to subjugate the whole peninsula (just as all Communist leaders and thinkers have dreamed of the world-wide victory of their doctrine and of a global Communist state). The stark contrast between the two Koreas – one Communist, the other democratic and market oriented; one impoverished and dependent on foreign subsidy, the other, despite its relatively small territory and population, representing the eleventh strongest world economy – is more than persuasive. Furthermore, the South Korean experience may demonstrate to the post-Communist countries that their advance to a developed and

affluent status is achievable, but only under two conditions – a definitive break with the past, and the pertinent endeavors of the people. Let us not forget that the Republic of Korea is burdened with the need to maintain an expensive defense system, and that the country is currently absolutely deprived of ground access (by car or railway) to the rest of the world.

Both Prof. Doo-Seung Hong and I have tried to achieve an enormously demanding task – to formulate a tribute to Prof. Alexander Fedotov. Here, we included meaningful texts that throw a bridge between Korea and Bulgaria, two very distant cultures that are surprisingly close in some respects. The late Sasha Fedotov was an important figure embodying the effort to bridge distances between the two countries.

In his acceptance speech for the title of Doctor Honoris Causa awarded him by Sofia University, Professor Jae Kyo Jin, Director of Academy of East Asian Studies (AEAS), Sungkyunkwan University (spelled Chin Che Kyo in the official information), traced some parallels in the historical development of Bulgaria and Korea:

On the territory of Bulgaria in the third millennium BC, there flourished the golden Thracian civilization. It corresponded to the Chosun state established by Tangun in 2400 BC. In the 9th century, the two brothers Cyril and Methodius created the Cyrillic alphabet, and in the middle of the 15th century, king Sejong created an independent system of writing called “hangul”. This is also a similarity in the historical experience of the two countries.

He also mentioned that both states had been occupied and dominated by powerful neighboring countries, the suffering undergone by the two nations, and the powerful legacies of the periods of foreign domination. There is also a clear connection regarding the relations Bulgaria maintained with the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War period (Professor Chin Che Kyo, 2018).

- *Professor Doo-Seung Hong* presents the past and present of Korean sociology.

- *Lyudmila Atanasova*, a Bulgarian preparing her Ph.D thesis at Seoul National University, who also teaches Bulgarian literature at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, has made a contribution on an enormously resonant topic. Her article is entitled “The Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) as a Liminal Space and Heterotopia”. The DMZ is difficult to imagine for those who have not seen it – it is very similar

to the *Zone* depicted in the Russian (Soviet) film *Stalker*⁵. Though it is a place seemingly outside the field and interest of sociology – as society itself is missing there – it is, nevertheless, a symbol and metaphor of the liminal that humans sometimes impose upon our planet.

- The theme of a dreadful, and quite possible, scenario for the future of humanity is continued by *Assoc. Prof. Rumiya Tangalycheva*, who has contributed a sociological analysis of the film *Train to Busan*, discussed as a scenario for the future of modern society.

- While we were preparing this issue, another prominent person left us. *Rumiana Yosifova* was a devoted interpreter, a colleague from the earlier times of the former Institute of Sociology, and a great woman. In her memory, I have included a brief, but extremely touching text she wrote upon being diagnosed with a terminal disease. This text somehow carries on the subject matter of the preceding two texts, but conveys a definitely optimistic message – that a person may overcome even the grimmest circumstances.

Acknowledgments

My main acknowledgments are due to Prof. Doo-Seung Hong, a Korean sociologist of international renown, and to Ms. Kamelia Georgieva, Manager of the Humanities Research Center. Without their efforts, this issue would never have appeared. Prof. Hong went far beyond the initial idea of allowing the token use of his name. His tacit, but decisive, role as reviewer, mentor, and author was indispensable. Ms. Kamelia Georgieva offered the necessary funding (roughly 1,500 €) for pre-printing and printing. She did so after dozens of prospective funders, mainly foreign, but also Bulgarian, failed to give support. On the rough road to accomplishing this patchy publication, I must mention some of the many who provided assistance and support for consulting with the universe of Eastern and Central Asia, including providing contacts with prominent colleagues from the region: Dr. Botagoz Rakisheva, Director of the Research Institute “Public Opinion” (Kazakhstan), Arustan Joldasov, Executive Director, Fikri Konsalting (Uzbekistan). Valuable consulting and other assistance was extended generously by Prof. Dr Richard Tempest, one of the most renowned experts in Russian literature, history and culture, a man fluent in Russian

and Bulgarian, by Prof. Dr Tatyana Dronzina, who is one of the authors here, by Prof. Dr Svetla Karteva-Dancheva, Head of the Korean Studies Chair at the Centre for Eastern Languages and Studies, Department of Classical and Modern Philology, St. Kl. Okhridski Sofia University, by Ms. Tanya Svechnikova, by Assoc. Prof. Dr Atanaska Cholakova from Southwest University, Blagoevgrad, and by Ms. Maya Tsoi.

I was eager to find additional Korean contributors to this issue, but my efforts to do so were in vain. I looked for possible contributors from the Korean Institute for International Studies, which hosted a remarkable conference in 1988, to which scholars from Eastern Europe were invited (I had the honor to be part of this small group of foreign guests that year). At that time, South Korea was still a blank spot on the map in our part of the world: my daughter's geography textbook in those years stated that, "South Korea is a backward, semi-colonial country" (as to how far from reality this statement was, see Nikolov 2018). Regrettably, after the passing away of the KIIS Founder, Prof. Chongki Choi, this Institute went through a period of crisis. At the very end of my work on this issue, I was astonished to find a Korean author literally round the corner here in Sofia – Associate Professor Dr Soyoung Kim, a visiting lecturer at the Korean Studies Chair at the Center for Eastern Languages and Cultures of Sofia University since 2005⁶. However, I received no response from her.

Although the language of these articles is not native to any of the authors, the texts published here are in proper English. For this, topmost praise and credit must go to Vladimir Vladov, who did the hard work of language editing. The texts originally came written at various levels of English – few articles by younger authors who had graduated from universities or colleges in English-speaking countries, were nearly excellent as to the quality of the language, other texts were at a relatively good level, but some were in need of serious editing, which Vlado undertook. Rumiana Yossifova, may she rest in peace, before her death was also helpful in consulting me on the accurate use and meaning of many specific terms.

Finally, without the amazing contributions of the authors, this publication would have been impossible – it would have been just a pile of blank sheets of paper. My gratitude to all of you!

Stephan E. Nikolov, Editor

Notes

1 ISSC convened the first World Forum for Social Sciences in Bergen, Norway, 10–12 May 2009, on the topic “One Planet – Worlds Apart?” The second global forum on Social Sciences, “Social Transformations and the Digital Era” was held in Montreal, Canada in October 2013. The third World Social Sciences Forum, “Transformation of Global Relations for a Just World”, was held in Durban, South Africa, on 13–16 September 2015. The ISSC is the main body representing the social, economic and behavioral sciences at the international level. ISSC is an independent non-governmental organization, founded by UNESCO in 1952 with the mission to strengthen the social sciences for resolving problems of global priority. In July 2018, the ISSC merged with the International Council for Science (ICSU) to form the International Science Council, creating a single unified council as the global voice for all sciences.

2 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030. The SDGs are part of Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly: “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

3 Moreover, another prospective presenter, Miss Nigina Aslanova from Uzbekistan, was also approved for a scholarship, but she had to turn it down as her University did not permit her traveling during the academic year. This is another example of the multiple obstacles to participation in international academic life that scholars face. It is worth mentioning the funding bodies that contributed to these scholarships: The Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC), Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), The Resona Foundation for Asia and Oceania, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS), Egusa Foundation for International Cooperation in the Social Sciences, ISC ROAP – The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ISC ROLAC – the Employer Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, the WZB Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), and Kyushu University.

4 My trip to Fukuoka was paid for entirely by myself. I am mentioning this because when I was filling in the documents at my Institute’s office, mainly to arrange my leave from work, the administrator informed me that the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences prohibited using the words “at my own expenses” with regard to the funding of travel, accommodation and related expenses. The only options were “with funding by the Academy”, or “with funding by the organizers”. This is useful for the statistics, but it is not true! To be truthful, I will add that during my more than 40 years of tenure at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and for more than 100 academic forums attended abroad, I recall having received partial funding by my employer only three times.

5 *Stalker* is a 1979 Soviet science fiction art movie made by the director Andrei Tarkovsky, screenplay written by Boris and Arkadiy Strugatsky, loosely based on their novel *Roadside Picnic* (1972). The movie combines elements of science fiction with dramatic philosophical and psychological themes. It depicts an expedition led by a figure known as the “Stalker” (actor Alexander Kaidanovsky) to take his two clients – a melancholic writer (Anatoly Solonitsyn) looking for inspiration, and a professor (Nikolai Grinko) seeking scientific discovery – to a weird restricted site known simply as the “Zone”, where allegedly is a room that grants a person’s innermost desires. The three stroll through scary areas filled with the dumped debris of modern society while engaging in many arguments.

6 In 2011, Dr. Soyyoung Kim was appointed as an Overseas Member of the National Unification Advisory Council of Korea. In the last decade, she has published as co-author several books and articles in Bulgarian, Korean, and English on 20th century Korean history and Bulgarian-Korean relations. Among

them are *Korea after the Japanese Colonial Rule* (co-authored with Alexander Fedotov et. al.); (with John Harbord) “A Disparity between Faith and Actuality: A Story of North Korean Political Defectors in Bulgaria”, *Wiener Beiträge zur Koreaforschung* (2014); *Bulgaria and the Korean War (1950-1953)* (co-authored with Alexander Fedotov, Svetla Karteva) (2016); (with Evgeni Kandilarov) “Bulgaria and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) during the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s – between Beijing and Moscow”, *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 2016.

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- Professor Chin Che Kyo (2018): Professor Chin Che Kyo Was Awarded a Doctor Honoris Causa Honorary Degree by Sofia University, 10/26/2018 https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/eng/news/news_and_events/professor_chin_che_kyo_was_awarded_a_doctor_honoris_causa_honorary_degree_by_sofia_university
- WSSF site: <http://www.wssf2018.org/>