

Brian Sakevich interviews visiting professor, Csaba Bekes from the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest.

Thanks for arranging to speak with me today, I am looking forward to learning more about your academic and scholarly work and the work of the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest.

In your own words, how would you describe the primary goals of the Cold War History Research Center during its inception and today? How do you feel the use of the internet and website changed the way the Center accomplishes its goals?



In the very beginning, which was the end of 1998, our main goal was to create a Center for the promotion of Cold War history studies *in Hungary*. At that time, we had accumulated a lot of research with just a couple of Hungarian colleagues throughout the 1990's. From this work I understood just how many important primary sources were available in Hungary for Cold War research. However, Cold War studies were not being promoted enough and so very few people were actually doing real work in this field, although there were, and still are, favorable conditions to conduct this research. So, one of the main goals was to create a Center which could harmonize the efforts of Cold War studies researchers and to promote the idea amongst young scholars. At first the website, (www.coldwar.hu) which was started in 2000, had the limited objective of promotion. Nonetheless, we certainly did put important materials on there, but as an English language website in the 1990's it was very expensive to translate the Hungarian content into English, and now, after joining the European Union, it is just terribly expensive. In that sense, the high cost of translation limited our efforts to put as many things online as we would have liked to, and we had a lot of material already, but it was all in Hungarian. That bottleneck still exists today, and we have much more material that simply needs to be translated into English.

In the early 2000s, there was a change in the activity and goals of the Center, we became much more ambitious than we were in the beginning. We realized that what we were doing was not only good for Hungary, but would also be good for all of the former Soviet Bloc countries in East Central Europe. In all of these countries, there were individuals and centers focusing on things related to our field, but no institutions were focusing solely on Cold War studies as a dedicated issue. So we expanded our initial goal from the promotion of Cold War studies in just

Hungary, to the promotion of Cold War studies in the whole region, and today we are functioning as a regional center of Cold War studies while our web site is the only English language Cold War web site in the former Soviet Bloc countries, including Russia. Also, today our website is the second largest Cold War website in Europe.

We are a virtual, website- and project-based center, meaning we do not have researchers employed by the Center as permanent staff, but when we work on an international project, say we need a Middle East, Vietnam or China specialist, we hire them for only the duration of the project. We organize our work by offering individual scholars in the region an opportunity to use our Center and the English-language website as a medium for their articles, documents, chronologies and other research aids. It is important to mention that we cover Cold War history in the Soviet Bloc countries in a very wide context, including international relations, internal, economic and cultural policy. By now we have a researcher database on our website, which will be fully developed to include all the important information about the research institutions and individual Cold War scholars in the region and the work they are doing.

The database of researchers and research institutions located across East Central Europe is a nice feature of the site. It really seems as though the Cold War History Research Center has made great strides in bringing the research being conducted in the region to an English-speaking audience worldwide. How has the Center's collaborative efforts been received by the researchers and institutions in the region?

Well, the international promotion is really very important especially because of the relevance of the Eastern European archival sources and the scholarly work that has been carried out by using those documents in these countries. Originally these documents were to supplement the Soviet sources, but when the Russian archives were again closed off to the public in the mid- and late 1990's, the Eastern European sources became extremely important materials for researching the history of the Soviet Bloc and from this archival revolution in East Central Europe, a "new" Cold War history came into being.

So, the reception has been good, but I feel there could be more collaboration. At this point, our cooperation is still very much based on our personal contacts, with those who we have been collaborating with us for years, or even decades. The next step would be to expand this to new people and institutions who discover this opportunity for themselves. We do everything possible to get the word out, such as sending emails and other appeals for contributions to the website to institutions and individual scholars. It is my expectation to have around 20-30 researchers in our database representing every country. Another great value of the website is that it helps people to network, leading to possibilities for cooperation for those within East Central Europe, and really, for people from any place in the world. English has become the international language of our time, as Latin was in the Middle Ages. So there really are no limitations as most scholars and students at least read English with some level of proficiency.

As a student focusing his studies on East Central Europe, I find that language barriers are often a serious consideration when I'm looking for research sources. As can be expected, many of the leading scholars of East Central Europe write in their native language, and while many students endeavor to broaden their linguistic repertoire, it's still the case that we're often at a loss to "get at the good stuff." It therefore cannot be understated that a very significant characteristic of your site is that it's in English. As you mentioned earlier, that can come with significant cost for translation. The website's archives include English language documents on matters related to Korea, China, Cuba, the Iraq-Iran War, Radio Free Europe and others. Knowing that translation requires a substantial cost and many tedious hours of careful work that considers cultural norms, native expressions and attention to the historical context, can you talk a little about how the Center goes about making these important documents accessible to the English-speaking world?

We have to talk about two different things: what we have already and what we would like to have in the future. What we have today on the website is mostly the result of former international projects. As you mentioned, we have document collections on Korea, Vietnam and Cuba among others, which were all from different international research projects in the late 1990s and early 2000's funded and organized by organizations like the National Security Archive (NSA) or the Wilson Center Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), both in Washington DC, who are our main collaborators in the United States. So the translation of these documents were not funded by us, but by our international project partners. When the CWIHP or NSA still had funding for such projects our Center could hire the researchers and translators so our research became part of the international scholarly community's activities. This benefitted everyone and resulted in participation in a number of international conferences on the Cold War and material for our website. So, by now our site has a lot to offer, but we could produce a lot more with more money, as we are an NGO, having no permanent funding at all, and there are really two directions to go for this. One direction is to try to get more funding through cooperation in new international projects, and we are really open to establishing collaboration with any interested partner. Of course, the present economic situation does not help matters related to obtaining new funding. The other option is our international internship program, which has given us eleven interns from seven different countries in 2009, while this year we will have fifteen interns, including five students from the US, and three of them are from Columbia University. Our intern positions are unpaid, but fortunately the students are able to access funds from other sources, such as special funds at their own universities to come to Hungary, and they have been doing a lot of work for the Center. Our interns do work which benefits the Center, but also gives the students practice and experience in Cold War research, not on a theoretical level, but by conducting research in archives and libraries under my and my colleague's supervision. Thus our mainly graduate-level interns are performing serious active research and their results are published on our website with full credit to them as contributors. An example of this is the historical chronology of the Soviet Bloc from 1945–1991. We have been creating this

chronology since last year and it includes all the Bloc countries as well as Yugoslavia, Finland and Austria, three countries in the region that had a special relationship to the Soviet Bloc. We have been using the history of these countries as a basis to create an extensive and detailed comparative chronology, of which the first part covering 1945–1955 should be available on our website in July or August. This section alone is something like 600 pages long, which should give you some idea of how really big this chronology will be. For the first stage, the chronology has been compiled from public sources, things that were available and public during the time the events occurred. In the second stage, we will include those facts from the tremendous amount of archival material that we have at our disposal, those things that we have uncovered in our research. That is the great thing about publishing online, that we can update and supplement it with new material as need be without worrying about having to print a “second edition.” Once the full chronology is online, I am confident that our readers will agree that this is a very informative resource containing many facts that were simply not known at the time - secrets from politburo meetings, government records, and the like. This is the sort of work our interns are doing currently. Native speaker interns also edit articles language-wise before they go online, while bilingual interns translate documents and articles from Hungarian or other languages of the region into English. For them this is a chance to gain quality experience in Cold War research that greatly benefits themselves in their careers, the scholarship in the former Bloc countries, our website and ultimately the entire world.

Many American students studying and researching the Cold War find themselves utilizing the resources of the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Cold War International History Project and the National Security Archive. Your site has a lot of core information in the form of data compilations: acronyms and abbreviations, bibliographies, chronologies, political figures by state, such as the list of party leaders, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers, amongst others. If I’m not mistaken, many of these features are unique to your site, correct?

Exactly right. In the area of publishing documents, we have no intention to compete with the great Cold War research centers, like the CWIHP, the National Security Archive or the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security. Those institutions can afford from their U.S. funders to contribute in this way to the field, and they already have an enormous number of documents online.

But your Center has its own niche.

Correct. Documents are not our sole priority, rather we cover those sources that these other institutions do not concentrate on. It is difficult to generalize, so for instance the chronology that I mentioned, bibliographies, biographies, research aids, a researcher database, all sorts of tools that researchers need to facilitate their Cold War studies. A good online database allows one to find in five seconds what he or she would have spent two days searching for in a library. Specific information like the dates and venues of the Soviet Bloc multilateral meetings at all levels, or

say, who was the foreign minister of Bulgaria or the military leader of the Warsaw Pact at a certain period of time. We also have a detailed database of what kind of diplomatic missions Hungary had in foreign countries from 1945 to the late '70s. These things make the information easily accessible when you need it and the more people realize there exists a repository for this type of information, the more they will be coming to our website for their research. Another thing which is very important is the online publication portion of the website. We are publishing a lot of articles from scholars in East Central Europe on the history of the Cold War in the former Bloc countries, many of which come from special conference volumes that were printed in English in a small number of copies for the conference participants but most of which copies often end up in the basement of the organizing institution. These are precisely the type of publications which typically do not make it to a wider English-speaking audience. Often these articles do not appear in an English language journal or some other peer reviewed publication because of the strong competition for this type of exposure. Unfortunately, this has proven to be even more difficult for East Central European scholars, even today. Not because their scholarship is poor, but rather because publishing in the world market is very hard, and translation costs, as we have mentioned, are prohibitive, while, at least for the time being, few scholars can write their articles in marketable English. However, these conference publications and articles, in most cases built on archival research may be a valuable resource that people who didn't attend the conference should know about. So individuals come to us to publish these types of materials online, and we happily do so, making them available to the entire scholarly community.

Accessibility seems to be a key word here, accessibility to the region's scholars, to the research they have been doing, to an English-speaking audience, to publishing mediums. A lot of this seems to have come together because of the little miracle we call the internet. As you mentioned, the website is the basis of the Center, and from what I understand the site was completely renovated in January 2009, and I believe there was help from your internship program. Tell us a bit about the website renovation that you undertook and how it resulted in the dynamic site that we see today.

The good news is that interns can do more than research, and many know how to edit websites, which is something I myself do not know how to do. The younger generations are talented in this regard and we were lucky to have two German interns, Linda Richter and Nico Degenkolb in 2008 and 2009, and they did a great job at refurbishing and remodeling the entire website. The earlier version was good, but now the site is something that I am really proud of. The changes that took place were not purely cosmetic, we also added a lot of new material and their names can be found on the website giving them full credit for their contributions. This was a great opportunity for these two young people to receive recognition for these publications from a large audience. I think this is rewarding for them and we are happy to support their scholarship in this way. I hope that the interns from this summer continue to advance the website in this way. You

know, last year we had an intern from Columbia and we will also have three working with us this summer.

Three Columbians, that is great. I am glad to hear we are taking advantage of your program. Let's talk analytics for a moment. What can you tell me about the exposure the website gets from its visitors? Is there any particular page or resource that draws the most interest?

The main figure is that we have close to 200,000 visits since January 2009, and the number of hits is nearly 4 million [June, 2010 figures]. For an academic website, I think these are nice figures. We have other great statistics on downloaded documents, number of page hits and time per page as well.

It really sounds like your having great early success with 4 million hits and 200,000 users. So what are your future plans for the Center and the site, and how are you planning to capitalize on this first year's success?

Our main focus will certainly be the aforementioned chronology. Once we have that online, there will be a qualitative change, and I feel that anyone performing research about the history of the Soviet Bloc or the Cold War will truly need to make use of our site just to obtain basic starting information. You could come to the site at the start of your research to quickly find the pertinent chronological information for those events in which the remainder of your research will focus. I expect that our well edited and broad chronology will become not just a supplement, but a primary research tool for Cold War history in this way. It will be the first comparative chronology for the whole Soviet Bloc. Now you can easily compare the events happening in Bulgaria and Romania in 1946, or say Hungary and Poland in 1956, noticing both the similarities and the differences. Many people know the history of one particular country or another, but now one may perceive all of the countries at the same point in time. As I saw the information take shape, I myself was surprised to see some of the information side-by-side. It was really amazing to see the histories of these countries within the context of what the whole region was doing at the time. This perspective has never been given before quite like this and I feel the popularity of the website will grow tremendously from this resource.

That sounds like a tremendous asset, and I feel that I can even see a trend in history that moves away from the single-country approach, and more of an integrated history. Events are often better understood when considered as part of the larger picture.

Another significant development for the Cold War History Research Center is that it recently became affiliated with Corvinus University of Budapest, how do you see this affiliation as augmenting the goals of the Center and the University?

In 2009, we had negotiated with Corvinus University of Budapest and agreed in December that our Center would become one of the research centers of the Institute of International Studies at Corvinus University. This relationship is something like cohabitation, because we are still an NGO-type foundation and not a formal department of the University. There are many examples of this kind of relationship, such as the National Security Archive at George Washington University. It is close cooperation within the framework of being independent. This is a great model, and the leaders of the National Security Archive are both colleagues and long-time friends of mine and I have learnt a great deal from them. My hope is that our relationship with Corvinus will be as fruitful as NSA's with GW, because Corvinus is not only one of the best Universities in Hungary, but one of the best in the region. Corvinus is something like Hungary's version of the London School of Economics. What I mean is that the model of the original university in the early 20th century was an economics university, and in the 1990's it became a general university with a newly established faculty of Social Sciences. The Social Sciences faculty houses the Institute of International Studies, which is something special in Hungary that has existed since the 1960s when it trained Hungarian diplomats.

We expect that our collaboration with Corvinus will be a fruitful relationship for both the University and our Center, as the University, now eager to invite more and more foreign students to its many foreign language programs, gains an English-language Center and website which is reaching a very wide international student-base, while we expect that the Center will receive professional and also some financial support from the University in the longer term, after the world financial crisis comes to an end. Other than financing, one of the great features of Corvinus University is that its students usually speak at least two foreign languages, including English already at the undergraduate level. Also, the students are of the highest quality, as the school requires the highest level scores to be accepted in Hungary. As a Center, we wish to involve these students in our work and offer them a medium for research and publication and to gain their expertise in our ongoing efforts to improve the website and continue our work.

I understand that the Center grew out of work that was being conducted under the 1956 Institute in Budapest whose primary purpose is the study of the Hungarian Revolution. Your earlier scholarly endeavors were focused on the Revolution as well. What drew you to research and study the Revolution and how did that evolve into your work today?

When I graduated from Szeged University in 1983, several years before the political changes in Hungary, the situation was still quite hopeless. Not many people, maybe some dreamers, but not serious people, could ever imagine that the communist system would be finished in a few years and I was not amongst those dreamers. So the situation was not very promising if you decided to become a social scientist or to do anything with modern history. To my peril I was for some reason interested in international politics from the outset, and in the modern age. If it had been 18th century diplomatic history, it would have been no problem, but I liked post-war.

Which was taboo.

Well, you could do it, but there were strict rules. First and foremost you could not criticize the Soviet Union, and the ruling Communist Party, which, of course, prohibited objective research. In fact, by the nineteen-eighties it became more and more possible to conduct research even in some sensitive areas, but you could not publish your findings if they were not in line with the official policy. I was lucky to be too young, so, fortunately, I did not publish anything during that period, but those who did, had to cope with the existing rules and had to hide any criticism “in between the lines”, if at all. That was the price of being published.

So, after graduation I started to work on the history of the European peace settlement following the second world war, which was basically a relatively approachable topic, though there were limits there too. I wrote my first doctorate thesis on that topic, about the Hungarian peace treaty in 1947. I started working in the National Archives of Hungary in 1983 but after four years I had to move to the National Library since I was regarded persona non grata because of my political views. In 1991, two years after the political transformation, the Institute for the study of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was established. Since previously there had been no bigger taboo than the Revolution, it required its own individual institute to start all the research from scratch. Many suspected that all the materials and documents about the Revolution had been destroyed by the communist authorities, but in fact they were not. All of the documents were available, and are still available, and gave a basis to organize the efforts of the Institute, and fortunately, as a research coordinator with English skills who had already obtained his doctorate, I was hired out of the Hungarian National Library to be the research coordinator and a professional researcher at the 1956 Institute. This was a great advancement in my career that, besides coordinating the research activity of the institute, enabled me to perform at least part time research, and, having my interest in international politics, I began to research the international context of the Revolution, such as the role of the great powers and their various positions. Looking at the international context went beyond looking at the two week period of the Revolution and led to research involving the entire period of 1953–1963, including the pre-history and the aftermath of the revolt. My goal evolved to considering the Hungarian Revolution in the widest international context and I wrote my first book on that topic in 1996, *The Hungarian Revolution and World Politics*. From this beginning, it was a very logical step forward for me to expand my research and to gradually cover the entire Cold War period, which is what I have been doing since the end of the 1990's. My Cold War studies have especially concentrated on the role of the East Central European countries during their inclusion in the Soviet Bloc, how they attempted to and succeeded in shaping the Cold War and East-West relations. I find this a very interesting topic, because it goes against the still prevailing idea that within the Soviet Bloc, with the exception of the Romanians, there was no room for these states to do anything outside of what the Soviet Union dictated or wanted, and this generalization is not founded in the archival evidence. Of course, these countries were not the masters in the relationship, but there are amazing untold stories of contradictions, conflicts and intra-bloc debates such as times when the “bad guy” was

made out to be Poland or the GDR and a virtual coalition of the USSR, Hungary and Romania was working against them! But even today very few people know about these things that were going on behind the scenes, though these events were shaping the policy of the Soviet Bloc, and these are exactly the type of things I am working on. The vast archival materials covering political and economic matters, the materials of the many types of multilateral meetings of the Soviet Bloc leaders such as the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee, the regular meetings of the foreign ministers and the deputy foreign ministers as well as the defense ministers are a lot to digest, but that is what I have been doing as a long-term program and I hope to eventually come up with a good synthesis that better captures the role of the East Central European countries throughout the Cold War.

Something that has come up a couple of times in our conversation is the “new” Cold War history that has and is developing. Since grades are already accounted for this semester, I can say without any concern for being misinterpreted that your East–West Relations seminar demonstrated to me the benefits of learning from a visiting professor. In class I really enjoyed the personal anecdotes which you would share with us. I found that this real-world perspective about life and thinking in the East enlightened my own external/Western views about what was happening “on the ground” on the other side of the curtain so to speak. This also extrapolated to greater realizations about how my own personal experiences shape my understanding of historical events and similarly, how many of the “orthodox” views about the Cold War that were formed in the West before 1989 were also shaped solely by an external/Western perspective. As stated on the website, a focus of the Center has been its contribution to the "new Cold War history" that has been emerging since 1989, which has transformed the one-sided Western approach. As an American student of the Cold War studying under a Hungarian scholar and researcher, I feel our seminar was truly a part of that still transforming historical narrative. Tell me about some of the changes you have witnessed in this evolution towards an international perspective on the Cold War and your and the Center’s role in it.

I’m very glad you experienced this kind of approach in the seminar, because that is what I am doing in my scholarship when I write, and how I organize the Center and when I teach. It’s always the same thing. There are many examples that could be mentioned, but one technical example is the question of the Marshall Plan and the old theory that the Marshall Plan was a kind of watershed in the Cold War to which Stalin reacted by creating a new international Communist organization, the Cominform. Today, if you look at the international scholarship, you will find this sequence and argument a prevailing interpretation, although on the basis of a Hungarian document I was able to prove in the early 1990’s, and published in English as well in 1998 in the Bulletin of the Woodrow Wilson Center Cold War International History Project, that there was clear evidence that the Soviets had the intention of creating the Cominform already in March 1946, one and a half years earlier, that is, well before the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The detailed description of the then prospective organization, as given by Matyas Rakosi,

the head of the Hungarian Communist Party, who had had a secret meeting with Stalin and Molotov on April 1, 1946 in Moscow, was exactly what the Cominform eventually came to be. While the need to implement the Cominform is generally tied to the Marshall Plan, this information about its conception changes the mainstream notion that the Cominform was a simple response. This also ties into the still debated issues of the Sovietization of East Central Europe in the post-war years. Even today there is one school that maintains that originally Stalin did not plan the Sovietization of these countries, but that it occurred only because of cooperation with the West through the Marshall Plan became impossible, and as a response Stalin sought to Sovietize East Central Europe - this is just absolutely not true. Hopefully I was convincing when I explained it in the seminar, that the Sovietization of East Central Europe began with the entry of the Red army, that is, from the outset. This transformation was not going to occur so quickly, as Stalin still needed to maintain good relations with the West even after the end of the war, but it was the plan that sooner or later the total Sovietization of this region would be completed. The proof of the early plans of the Cominform, prior to the Marshall Plan, as shown in one important Hungarian document which I found in the Hungarian archives in 1990 was enough to change the whole concept about the origin of the Cominform and also regarding the process of Sovietization and the whole debate about the existence of Stalin's blueprint. Rakosi's account of his meeting with Stalin clearly states that from the Spring of 1946 a new conception concerning class struggle was introduced, according to which „whenever a country achieves the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat or for socialism, this will be carried out, with no regard for whether the respective country is in a capitalist environment or not. This is also a new perspective, which simply means that in a country where as a result of the work of the communist party these conditions are present, it has to be realized. This is fresh encouragement for all Communist Parties, because now it will principally be dependent on their work whether or not the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat are created in their own country.” This means that we must date the *speeding up* of the Sovietization process in East Central Europe to the Spring of 1946 and not the Summer and Fall of 1947 – what occurred then, was the *completion* of the process of Communist takeover.

This is just one example and there are several more, and not just based on Hungarian documents, but also those of the other East Central European archives. The thing about the documents is that you don't always recognize right away which ones are really valuable. For instance, I only recognized the true importance of the document that I found when Leonid Gibianskii from Moscow, the main expert on the history of the Cominform, who had read my article in a Czech journal, wrote to me saying that he had not known about any such plans at such an early time. Matters like these are complicated enough where one really needs to know everything about the topic and to compare all the new evidence against the old ones to understand the real value of any new information.

I just don't think one can say enough about the value of the primary sources. It was notable in our seminar that each week's readings included the review of primary sources related to that week's topic. Often these sources were directly influential in the remaining readings of the *expert's* analysis. Never before have I had as robust an opportunity to explore the primary sources for myself and it made me realize that, customarily, students are asked to digest the digested. However, your pedagogy

doesn't lend itself towards this common experience, but rather it demands that the student handle the information directly, as a true researcher would do. This directly affected how I went about writing my research paper and I drew conclusions from primary sources *before* letting the experts influence my thoughts, this was a radically new learning experience which I really valued highly. Surely your expertise as a researcher had a hand in this, but please speak about your method of teaching and helping students to write better papers and engage in the material.

Well I am very glad to hear that Brian, and that's exactly what I wanted, to have the student not only use the writings of scholars and their interpretations of a topic, but for the student to become a sort of re-creator of the history, to construct their story *together with* the other scholars and interpretations based on the main primary sources that those other scholars were using as well. Only then does the student become a part of creating history as such. My experience engaging the students at Columbia and NYU and also at Corvinus University confirms that this is a good method, because students at the graduate level, and also at the undergraduate level, really find they enjoy it once they discover that this is not such an impossible task to take up. Of course I need to explain to them how to keep things in context, the importance of being critical of the sources they are reading, how, when you read a certain statement by an important person you don't just believe it because this is a political figure or a famous person. You have to question everything and criticize things on an intellectual basis, and you, as the student, are in a position to decide for yourself. This is what I invite and ask you to do in the reconstruction process, to participate in the discussion in this critical way, and then, of course, support your ideas with the available scholarship, so that you don't posit that everything was invented by you. This is a qualitative change away from the common method of just using other people's interpretations, which in its own way is limiting, as often a student chooses one of two or three main interpretations and supports or criticizes it, and instead this method has the students speak with their own voice, and that allows them to take responsibility for their own created interpretation. I think this is something I focus on, and whenever that works and I hear feedback to that effect, I am very happy. Fortunately, I am finding the student feedback from this semester as well seems to support that it was indeed working.

We have been lucky enough to have you visit and teach at Columbia a couple of times already, and you have also taught at other American Universities. How do you like working here and what do you find most appealing? What sort of differences do you find in the American students learning about the Soviet Bloc countries versus the Hungarian or European students that you teach who actually call these countries "home?"

Having taught at Columbia twice now, I can tell you it is a great experience because the students are very open, responsive and responsible. That is a very good thing because it is not the same everywhere, for many of my Hungarian colleagues are concerned with the quality of the general university's students, which is decreasing in their opinion. So I consider myself a lucky person to

have, at home and abroad, the opportunity to teach at the best universities with the best students, meaning they are studying, they are smart, pleasant, diligent and active - everything a teacher can hope for. This should be the case everywhere, but unfortunately, this cannot be said and I certainly do enjoy how everything happens at Columbia as it should happen, and everyone does their job. Everyone doing what is expected of them is one of my most important expectations for life, and here at Columbia I can say, it is an optimal environment, and while this may be seemingly insignificant, in Eastern Europe, normalcy can still be an issue.

Well thank you for that nice compliment for the Columbia community Professor. It has really been a pleasure to take part in your seminar this semester and it has been great talking to you about the interesting work that you and the Center are doing. I want to wish you good luck with the endeavors of the Center and I am sure I will be making good use of the site in my future studies and I'll certainly be looking in July for the new chronology that's going up. Do know that the student body here at Columbia certainly appreciates all of your efforts in making the Cold War knowledge of East Central European scholars accessible both here in NYC and across the world.

Thank you very much Brian, it was my pleasure to sit with you today.