

Victor P. Petrov

## Victor P. Petrov

Department of History; University of Tennessee, Knoxville; 603 SMC, Department of History;  
Knoxville, TN 37996; USA  
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### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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Aug 2024-Present      **University of Tennessee, Knoxville; USA**  
Director of Inter-Disciplinary Program in Science, Technology,  
Health, and Society

Aug 2024-Present      **University of Tennessee, Knoxville; USA**  
Associate Professor of History

Aug 2018-July 2024    **University of Tennessee, Knoxville; USA**  
Assistant Professor of History

Sep 2017-Aug 2018    **European University Institute; Florence, Italy**  
Max Weber Fellow

### EDUCATION

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2011 – 2017      **Columbia University in the City of New York**  
Ph.D. History, Dissertation: “*A Cyber-Socialism at Home and  
Abroad: Bulgarian Modernisation, Computers, and the World 1967-  
1989*” (with Distinction)

2009 – 2011      **Merton College, University of Oxford**  
M.Phil. Modern British & European History (with Distinction)

2006 – 2009      **Merton College, University of Oxford**  
B.A. (Hons), Modern History (First Class)

### BOOK

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*Balkan Cyberia: Cold War Computing, Bulgarian Modernization, and the Information  
Age Behind the Iron Curtain* (MIT Press; June 2023)  
Winner of the **Barbara Jelavich Book Prize** (ASEEES)  
Co-Winner of the **Marshal Shulman Book Prize** (ASEEES)  
Winner of the **Computer History Museum Prize** (SIGCIS)  
Co-Winner of the **John D. Bell Memorial Book Prize** (BSA)

### PUBLICATIONS (ACADEMIC)

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(co-authored with Michel Christian), “Assisting the Automatic Dream: UNIDO’s Development  
Programs for IT Industry in Bulgaria: the example of the Bulgarian Research Institute for  
Instrument Design (NIPKIP)” in special issue ‘Pan-European Economic Spaces in the Cold War’  
in *Central European History*, accepted and forthcoming

“From Steppe To State: Alternative Histories, Amateur Knowledge, and the Search for Origin  
in Post-1989 Bulgaria” in Jill Massino & Markus Wien (eds) *History Doesn’t Travel in One  
Direction: Real Existing Post-Socialism in Eastern Europe* (Purdue University Press; September  
2024)

“The Rose and the Lotus: Bulgarian Electronic Entanglements in India 1967-1989” in *Journal  
of Contemporary History*, vol. 54, no. 3 (July 2019)

“We Want Information: Bulgarian Technical Intelligentsia and Cyber-Socialism 1967-1989”  
in the edited volume *The Intellectuals of Politics and Politics of Intellectuals* (CNCS:  
Bucharest, 2017)

(with Riley Quinn) *Sheila Fitzpatrick's "Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s"* (London: Macat Library, 2017) (academic guide for undergraduates)

#### **PUBLICATIONS (POPULAR)**

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“Socialist Cyborgs” in *Logic*, issue 14 ‘Kids’, September 2021

- Italian translation in *Internazionale*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (Il lungo sogno del computer bulgaro)

“Sotsialisticheskiyat Kiborg i Novite Zakoni na Robotikata” in *Literaturen Vestnik*, issue 26, 4-10.07.2018 (in Bulgarian)

“Communist Robot Dreams” at Aeon.co (online magazine), April 2018

- Bulgarian translation in *Barikada*, May 2018

#### **PUBLICATIONS (IN PREPARATION)**

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*Star Citizens: A Search for Meaning At the Edge of History* (book project, under preparation)

“Ancient State, Modern Instruments: Interkosmos-22 and the Role of Space Research in Bulgarian Image Making” (academic article; for submittal to *Technology & Culture*)

#### **FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS & AWARDS**

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2023-4	Bulgarian Junior Scholar Fellowship, Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia, Bulgaria
2023-4	Residential Fellowship, New Europe College, Bucharest, Romania
2021	TOME Grant, University of Tennessee
2020-2021	Faculty Research Fellowship; University of Tennessee Humanities Centre
2017	History in Action Project Award, Columbia University
2016 – 2017	Study Abroad Studentship, Leverhulme Trust
2015 – 2016	International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council
2015	Visiting Researcher, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia
2015	Brebner Travel Award, Columbia University
2014 – 2015	Pre-Doctoral Fellow, American Research Centre in Sofia
2013 – 2014	Research Exchange, Department of International History, London School of Economics & Political Science
2011 – 2017	Richard Hofstadter Faculty Fellowship, Department of History, Columbia University
2009 – 2010	Rajiv Kapur Research Award, Merton College, University of Oxford
2008	Collin Matthew Fund Fellowship, University of Oxford
2007	Exhibitioner Promotion (college scholarship), Merton College, University of Oxford

**INVITED TALKS**

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- Oct 2023-Present Various book talks done or upcoming: Yale University Slavic Colloquium; Columbia University Harriman Institute; Ohio State University; University of Texas, Austin; LMU, Munich Germany; History of Science in Central & Eastern Europe Working Group; Critical Infrastructures Working Group at University of Amsterdam; Sofia University, Bulgaria
- April 2022 “Computing For The People” discussion for Master’s students, Sofia University, Bulgaria
- May 2021 “Socialism & Cybernetics” discussion at Minderoo Centre for Technology & Democracy, University of Cambridge, UK
- May 2019 “Welcome to Cyberia: Bulgarian Modernisation, Computers, and the World 1967-1989” at University of Wyoming, Laramie, USA
- December 2018 “Welcome to Cyberia: Bulgarian Modernisation, Computers, and the World 1967-1989” at Faculty & Doctoral Colloquium, University of Regensburg, Germany
- June 2017 “Kiber-Sotsializum: Bulgarskata Kompyuturizatsiya, Avtomatizatsiya, I Obshestvoto, 1963-1989” at Seminar of Section ‘Ethnology of Socialism and Post-Socialism’, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria (in Bulgarian)
- May 2017 “Kiber-Sotsializum: Bulgarskite Kompyutri I Modernizatsiyata 1963-1989” at Seminar for Regional and National History, Sofia University, Bulgaria (in Bulgarian)

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & LECTURES**

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- Nov 2024 (forthcoming) “Paranormal Parastates: Bio-Healing, Energies, and Alternative Science in Post-1989 Bulgaria” at ASEES Convention, Boston, USA
- December 2023 “The Great Conspiracy Against Bulgarians: Amateur Knowledge and Alternative Histories in Post-Socialism” at ASEES Convention, Philadelphia, USA
- December 2023 Book Roundtable Discussion on *Balkan Cyberia*, ASEES Convention, Philadelphia, USA
- June 2023 Presentation of *History Doesn’t Travel in One Direction* volume & discussion, Council for European Studies conference, Reykjavik, Iceland
- November 2022 Chair and Discussant of Book Roundtable on Theodora Dragostinova’s ‘Cold War From the Margins: A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene’, ASEES Convention, Chicago, USA
- June 2022 “A Window To The Future: Technology Transfer As Business

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Strategy between the West, Japan, and Bulgaria” at The 10th Tensions of Europe Conference, Aarhus, Denmark

- June 2022 “Iron Curtains or Silicon Membranes? Intelligence Services, Civilian Oversight, and the Birth of Bulgaria’s Electronic Industry” at Pan-European Economic Spaces in the Cold War Workshop, Geneva, Switzerland
- November 2021 “A Song for Fujitsu: Socialist Bulgaria and the Japanese Model in the Late Cold War” at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies ASEES, New Orleans, USA (virtual presentation)
- November 2021 “A Song for Fujitsu: Socialist Bulgarian Accelerationism and the Japanese Model in the Late Cold War” at Society for the History of Technology, New Orleans, USA (virtual presentation)
- June 2021 “A Forest of Chimneys: Socialist Bulgaria’s Modernisation and the Dream of a Mini-Japan 1965-1989” at Japan’s Multiple Models workshop, Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University, USA
- November 2019 “It’s Not That I’m Lazy, I Just Don’t Care: Office Space, Socialist Bulgarian Style” at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEES), San Francisco, USA
- March 2019 “Access Denied: Bulgarian Scientific-Technical Intelligence and Technology Transfer Between East and West” at Southern Conference of Slavic Studies, Mobile, Alabama
- June 2018 “The Other Information Society: Socialism, The Scientific-Technical Revolution, and the Future” at 12<sup>th</sup> Max Weber Fellows June Conference, Florence, Italy
- May 2018 “We Are The Robots: Bulgarian Computerisation, Utopias, and the New Laws of Robotics” at Science Fiction & Communism Conference, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
- November 2017 “The Porous Curtain: Bulgarian Scientific-Technical Intelligence, Electronics, and Technology Transfer Between East and West 1964-1990” at First Public Workshop of the ERC PanEur1970s Project, Florence, Italy
- November 2017 “The Rose Meets the Lotus: Bulgarian Computers in India and the Global South as a Space of Exchange” at 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEES), Chicago, USA
- October 2017 “The Rose and the Lotus: Bulgarian Electronic Entanglements in India 1967-1990” at ‘Spaces of Interaction Between the Socialist Camp and the Global South’ workshop, University of Leipzig, Germany
- September 2017 “Cybernetic Wars: The Bulgarian Computer Industry, Technocracy,

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and Reform” at Fifth European Congress on World and Global  
History, Budapest, Hungary

- July 2016 “Welcome to Cyberia: The Bulgarian Information Age and the  
Creation of a Socialist Business Class 1970-1990” at ‘A Change of  
Plans: New Perspectives on Bulgaria’s Command Economy’  
workshop, Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia, Bulgaria
- May 2016 “A Socialist Information Age: Bulgarian Computers, Technocrats,  
and the End of Communism” at Seminar on European History &  
Politics, Columbia University, USA
- April 2016 “Entangled Electronics: Bulgarian Computers and the Developing  
World as a Space of Exchange 1967-1989” at the ‘Global Circuits of  
Exchange and the Making of the Post-1945 World’ workshop,  
Weatherhead Institute, Columbia University
- November 2015 “Access Denied: Bulgarian Scientific Technical Intelligence and the  
Making of the Socialist Silicon Valley 1964-1989” at 47<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and  
Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), Philadelphia, USA
- September 2015 “The Missed Chance: The Bulgarian Computer and the Creation of a  
Transnational Technocratic Class 1967-1989” at Technosciences of  
Post/Socialism conference, Budapest, Hungary (accepted but not  
presented due to illness)
- April 2015 “A Cyber-Socialism at Home and Abroad: Bulgarian Modernisation,  
Computers, and the World 1967-1989” at the American Research  
Centre in Sofia, Bulgaria
- December 2014 “A Cyber-Socialism at Home and Abroad: The Bulgarian Computer  
as a Prism for the Cold War 1967-1989” at 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
Interdisciplinary Conference on Totalitarianism, Babeş-Bolyai  
University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- November 2014 “A Cyber-Socialism at Home and Abroad: Bulgarian Modernisation,  
Computers, and the World 1967-1989” at the American Research  
Centre in Sofia, Bulgaria
- October 2014 “A Cyber-Socialism At Home and Abroad: Preliminary Thoughts on  
Bulgarian Modernisation and Its Indian Dimension” at the  
‘Imagining Alternative Modernities: Interventions from the Balkans  
and South Asia’ conference at the Sawyer Seminar, Ohio State  
University, USA
- April 2013 “Narrowing the Nation: Discourse, Celebrations and Politics in  
Socialist Bulgaria” at the ASN (Association for the Study of  
Nationalities) 18th Annual Convention, Columbia University, USA
- November 2012 “Twice There Was a Country: The Break-Up of Yugoslavia”, Lecture  
as part of “Europe since 1945” class, Columbia University, USA

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March 2010 “Three Nations Into One: The Uses of Nationalism in Socialist Bulgaria 1963-1989” at CEELBAS (Centre for Eastern-European Language Based Area Studies) Postgraduate Student Conference ‘Russia and Eastern Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Looking Back, Looking Forward’, University of Oxford, UK

#### **CONFERENCES & PANELS ORGANISED**

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July 2016 ‘A Change of Plans: New Perspectives on Bulgaria’s Command Economy’ workshop (co-organiser), Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia, Bulgaria

Nov 2015 ‘The Not-So-Iron Curtain: Illicit Exchanges and Clandestine Transfers Between East and West” panel (co-organiser), at 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), Philadelphia, USA

#### **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

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Aug 2018-Present Book reviewer for *Isis*, *European History Quarterly*, *East Central Europe*, *Hungarian Historical Review*, *H-Net (Socialism, Russia, Nationalism)*; manuscript review for MIT Press, Routledge, and Bloomsbury Academic; article peer review for *American Historical Review*, *Centaur*, *ISIS*, and *Hungarian Studies Review*

April-Sep 2018 Member of Program Committee for Histories of Computing in Eastern Europe IFIP Working Group 9.7 Workshop, Part of 24th IFIP World Computer Congress, Poznan, Poland

April 2017-Present Vice President of Board of Trustees and Fellowship & Grants Committee Head, American Institute for South-East European Studies

May 2015-Present Historical Consultant for a project to create a “Museum of the Socialist Past” in Varna, Bulgaria

Dec 2010 Interviewer for undergraduate admission to Merton College, University of Oxford; completion of course on admissions from Oxford Learning Institute

#### **TEACHING**

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History of Western Civilization since 1715  
Introduction to STHS  
Contemporary Europe (20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
Global Cold War  
Eastern Europe: From Empires to Nations  
Computers, Automation, and Society  
The Final Frontier: A History of Space  
History of Failure (methods class for undergraduate majors)  
Now or Never: A History of Today (methods class for undergraduate majors)  
Readings in Modern European History (Graduate Level)  
Introduction to Historiography (Graduate Level)

### **HONOURS THESIS SUPERVISION**

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Carson Broadrick, 'Faith In Reason: Soviet Religion Through the Deaths of Vladimir Lenin and the Terror of Joseph Stalin', 2021, for BA (Hons) degree

Mateos Hayes, 'The Soviet Consumer Revolution', 2020, for BA (Hons) degree

### **GRADUATE SUPERVISION**

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Jeffrey Saba, "Soviet Military Spaces and Memory in East Germany, 1948-1994" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Member of Committee; ongoing)

Anamaria Hayden, "Atomic Animals: A Cultural History from 1945 to 1985" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Member of Committee; ongoing)

Kaitlin Simpson, "The Flowers of El Dorado: Gender, Production, and the Cut Flower Industry in Colombia and the United States" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Member of Committee; completed and defended)

Anamaria Hayden, "Atomic Cows: The Almogordo Herd at Oak Ridge 1945-1965" (Master's Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Member of Committee; completed and defended)

Jeremy Long, "41 For Freedom: The Nuclear Submarine Force in Cold War USA" (Master's Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Member of Committee; completed and defended)

Dafina Nedelcheva, "Crossing Imagined Borders: History and Memory of Aegean Refugees in Post-World War II Bulgaria" (Master's Thesis, Columbia University; Second Reader, 2013)

### **OTHER SUPERVISION**

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William Ince (University of Kansas), part of Howard University REEES Think Tank Program to Support Underrepresented Students in Eastern European Studies (ongoing)

### **HISTORICAL OUTREACH & NON-ACADEMIC SERVICE**

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March 2023-Present      Appearances on podcasts in Bulgarian, Spanish, English, German (on the topic of my book); appearances on Bulgarian national radio (Darik) and Austrian national Radio (ORF) to discuss my book

Jan 2020-Present      Part of cooperation between Department of History and local Knox County high schools aimed at updating teacher knowledge; lectures for teachers and visits to classes

Sep 2015-Present      Historical consultant & program designer for proposed Museum of the Socialist Past project in Varna, Bulgaria

Aug 2013-2015      Mouseoin Ltd, London, UK; author of academic guides for undergraduates (Sheila Fitzpatrick's "Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s")

2009-2011      Understood Backwards, contributor and administrator, website aimed at putting current events in historical context, aimed at the general public

2008      The Times, London, UK; work at the International News desk; fact-checking; translation from Russian & Ukrainian

**AFFILIATIONS**

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American Historical Association

Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies

Southern Conference of Slavic Studies

Bulgarian Studies Association

Society for the History of Technology

**LANGUAGES**

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Bulgarian (mother tongue), English (native), Russian (advanced), Macedonian (research capacity), Serbian (research capacity), Greek (reading comprehension), German (reading comprehension)