

*CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
cordially invites you to the*

Public PhD Defense by

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on

**Moving Labor Power and Historical Forms of Migration:
The Internationalist Socialist Worker, the Social Benefit
Tourist and the Economic Migrant**

Thursday, December 7 at 3pm

in

**Senate room
(Monument Building)**

Defense Committee

Chair: Andrea Krizsán, Center for Policy Studies, CEU

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Abstract:

This thesis argues that the historic formation of migratory categories is central to understanding the antagonistic relation between migration and capitalism. I substantiate this argument across three sections. I coin the concept of *moving labor power*, which is theoretically conceived in a manner that enables it to explore the moments that take place between the turning of body power into labor power (social reproduction) and the transformation of labor power into labor (production). The first section explores the agreements signed between Bulgaria and Vietnam in the period between 1973 and 1989 negotiating the exchange of labor between the two countries. The migratory category under scrutiny in this section is the internationalist socialist worker (ISW). The section proposes that state socialism framed moving labor power as a complementary and non-antagonistic relation between production and reproduction. I argue that the transition from state socialism to liberal democracy in Bulgaria brought about a situation where the relation between moving labor power, reproduction and production engendered a clear contradiction. Section two deals with the social benefit tourist (SBT): a category whose discursive formation aims at disciplining workers into laboring (production), forgoing any expectations of

social welfare provision (social reproduction). SBT is free to move. Capital accumulation and freedom of movement connect in such a way that labor power depends on freed movement in order to be able to reproduce itself. In this configuration, we witness the creation of a specific type of moving labor power that must travel wide and far in order to ensure the maintenance of its body power. Section three delves into the ideological formation of the differentiation between true refugees and economic migrants. I argue that this differentiation belongs to economic liberalism, which disembods the “economic” from the “political” by detaching coercion from processes of production, distribution and allocation, and which makes “the economy” appear free from violence. The section traces the effects of this ideological presupposition through an analysis of border crossing and detention centers. I show how these effects slow down and tame the movement of labor power into labor markets. The arguments in this dissertation are anchored in the premise that we need to exceed the legal frameworks of migration that are readily available to us and interrogate the very spaces (historical, ideological, and socio-political) of their making in order to understand the relation between capitalism and migration.