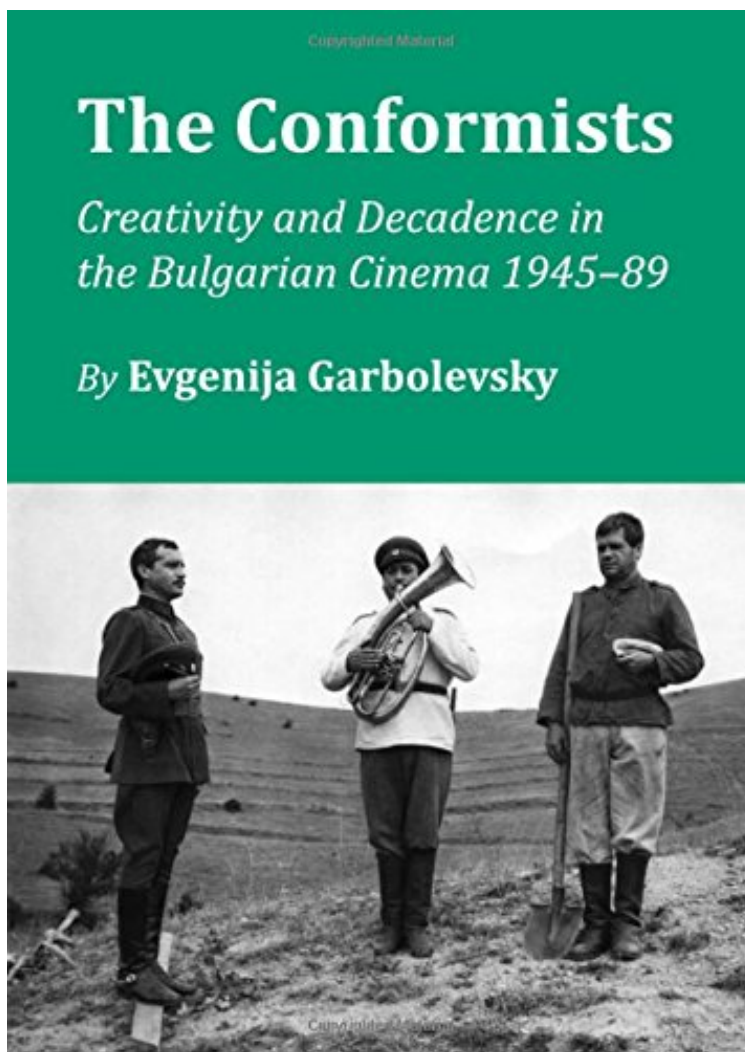


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The Conformists: Creativity and Decadence in the Bulgarian Cinema 1945-89

Evgenija Garbolevsky

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The complexities and paradoxes of the Bulgarian film industry during the era of Communist rule (1945 1989) are explored in The Conformists: Creativity and Decadence in the Bulgarian Cinema 1945 89. This influential industry

was mobilized for the needs of the state. During its creation and development, cultural institutions and those involved in film production operated within a relatively closed system, based on rewards and punishments imposed by the Communist bureaucratic apparatus. Sub-textual content in films produced in Bulgaria during this period highlights the attitude of the elite towards the regime. Understanding this multifaceted relationship helps explain why so many intellectuals found the film industry to be an attractive field in which to work, and decided to remain loyal to the regime instead of leaving or openly rebelling against it. This work challenges the historiographical perception that the arts in the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War were largely unsuccessful vehicles of propaganda and dissent. By using a comparative methodological approach, the cinema arts in the East and West are shown following similar paths despite the 'Iron Curtain.'

"Evgenija Garbolevsky makes an important contribution to the ongoing academic project of rethinking the communist period. In particular, she engages the important and complex issue of the state of the arts, in particular film, under communism. [...] For historians of Bulgaria and communist eastern Europe, *The Conformists* helps contribute to a more layered understanding of the postwar period and state-society dynamics under communism. Garbolevsky details how the Bulgarian Communist Party built a well-funded and vibrant film industry that took on a creative life of its own." - Mary Neuburger, 'Slavic ', 72: 1 (2013), 155-156. About the Author Evgenija Garbolevsky received her BA in History from Framingham State University, and her MA in Women's Studies and Comparative History, as well as her PhD, from Brandeis University (Massachusetts, USA). She was awarded an IREX Fellowship to live and research in Bulgaria in 2006-2007. She has published and presented several articles at conferences including 'The Conferences of Popular Culture' in San Francisco (2008) and 'Turkey at the Crossroads: Women, Women's Studies, and the State' in Istanbul and Bodrum, Turkey (2005). Dr Garbolevsky authored the book *A Church Ossified? Repression and Resurgence of Bulgarian Orthodoxy, 1944-1956*. Since 2005, she has taught European and World History at Framingham State University.