

Czech Association for Social Anthropology
is pleased to Invite you to

LADISLAV HOLÝ LECTURE

Saturday 27 January 2024 at 5 p.m.
Ground floor seminar room,
Institute of Czech literature, CAS, Na Florenci 3, Prague 1

David N. Gellner

Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford

Liberalism and Hierarchy: A Tension-filled Relationship as seen from Social Anthropology



Ladislav Holy made the distinction between representations, ideals, and behaviour central to his theoretical and methodological reflections. That distinction underlies many of the political and ecological problems that humankind faces today, including the problems currently faced by liberalism. Using an understanding of hierarchy derived from Louis Dumont, and ethnographic case studies of attempts to impart the ideals of liberalism around the world (including in eastern Europe), I argue for a liberalism that takes fraternity and equality as seriously as liberty, while incorporating the anthropological virtue of empathy.

David N. Gellner is Professor of Social Anthropology and Fellow of All Souls College at the University of Oxford. He undertook his first fieldwork in Nepal where he focused on Vajrayana Buddhism of the Newars. As a leading scholar on Nepal and specialist on Buddhism and Hinduism, he authored and co-authored innumerable articles on religion, nationalism, ethnicity, or politics, trained generations of students, and contributed significantly to the development of anthropology. Among his many publications are *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual* (1992), *The Anthropology of Buddhism and Hinduism: Weberian Themes* (2001), or *Rebuilding Buddhism: The Theravada Movement in Twentieth-Century Nepal*, co-written with Sarah LeVine (2005).



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