

CfP:

From Below and In Between – Narrating and Practicing the Cold War in South East Europe



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Deadline for Applications: 05.02.2017

Venue: Berlin

The Cold War as a global geopolitical order after World War II had a profound impact on the comparatively small area of South East Europe. Ideological fault lines divided various countries from one another and resulted in an exceptionally fragmented political landscape: Rumania und Bulgaria joined the Warsaw Pact under Soviet influence, Greece and Turkey became members of the NATO, and Yugoslavia held a leading position in the Non-Aligned movement. Furthermore, Albania broke bonds with the Soviet Union in 1962 and became increasingly isolated. Not only in a Cold War-context, South East Europe is often seen as a periphery to the global centers. The workshop will challenge this perspective. Instead, we will approach the region as a center of ideological fractions during the Cold War, therefore treating it as a “burning glass” of geopolitical orders.

Up until now, research on Cold War South East Europe has predominantly been state-centered, with diplomatic history prevailing as a privileged approach. Cold War Studies are increasingly adopting current historiographic innovations that emphasize both micro-historical and actor-centered as well as transnational approaches. By asking about the implications and consequences of global configurations on a local level and how such patterns were perceived and appropriated, a general trend can be identified that aims at writing a social and cultural history of the Cold War. In this vein, it has been argued that the Cold War is to be studied beyond geopolitical constellations and state actors’ strategies. Instead, emphasis is to be put on the field of the production of cultural and social meaning and on scrutinizing the relevance of binary Cold War representations for the shaping of peoples’ everyday realities over time. Following this perspective, we are interested in investigating to what extent practices and narratives became informed by respective “Cold War frames of reference”. This approach, however, would not be sufficient without taking into consideration individuals’ agency and conflictive sets of representations that complemented or even undermined normative visions of Cold War order. For instance, did imperial legacies or age-old trans-border practices in South East Europe challenge such normative visions of Cold War?

This way, the workshop not only intends to make a contribution to the regional history during this period but, at the same time, to further general insights on the Cold War. We especially welcome local and actor-centered contributions as well as comparative approaches, which contrast their respective topic with cases from other regions.

To this end, we encourage the presentation of research which addresses one of the following overarching question sets:

1) The Making of the Cold War. The Construction and Perpetuation of a “Cold War Mindset”

How did various actors on various levels participate in the process of establishing the Cold War as a frame of reference in South East Europe? How did referring to the Cold War influence their perceptions and expectations? Was the Cold War order consciously mobilized in order to pursue their interests and agendas?

2) Contesting the Cold War. Alternative Visions of World Order

Which competing local and regional narratives of world order existed? How did such alternatives challenge Cold War patterns? Who were the representatives of such alternative views and what was their relation to official discourses in South East Europe?

3) South East Europe and the World. How Encounters and Exchanges Shaped Cold War Realities

How did transnational projects and globally circulating ideas take shape in South East Europe? Did they correspond with regional conditions and developments?

Accommodation will be provided, travel expenses will be covered up to an amount of 100 €. Papers will be pre-circulated and participants are expected to read the workshop’s material and respond to presentations. Please submit your paper abstracts (up to 500 words) accompanied by a short CV to janis.nalbadidacis@geschichte.hu-berlin.de and matthias.thaden@hu-berlin.de by February 5, 2017.

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