Not many ideas had such a deep impact on the world as the one of communism. In theory, communism aimed at the welfare of everyone and their equality under the law. Equal treatment and individual freedom were also crucial pillars for the idea of universal human rights. Taking this into consideration, the workshop deals on various levels with the complex relation of communism and human rights: from conceptual debates to the very precise actions of Human Rights Organizations.

Organizers: Janis Nalbadidacis (South East European History, Humboldt University, Berlin)  
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Venue: Centre for East European and International Studies, Berlin (ZOiS)  
Mohrenstraße 60, 10117 Berlin

How to get there?
U Stadtmitte: U2, U6 | Bus M48, 246 | 🚴️

Free and Equal -  
Equal and Free?  
Communism and Human Rights  
in the 20th Century

Workshop, November 23-25, 2017  
in Berlin
Thursday, November 23, 2017

18:00  Panel Discussion
Communism and Human Rights in the 20th Century (German)
with Helmuth Frauendorfer, Christian Halbrock, Ernst Wawra, and Annette Weinke
Chair: Jochen Krüger, Janis Nalbadadacis
reception

Helmuth Frauendorfer, born in Romania, is writer of numerous essays, poems and articles. Due to his publications and his political commitment he suffered repressions by the Romanian secret service Securitate. In 1987, he emigrated to West Germany where he became active in human rights organizations. Today, he works as vice director of the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial.

Christian Halbrock, born in the GDR, had a clerical family background so he was not allowed to attend high school. He was co-founder of the Environmental Library, an initiative to focus on the disastrous environmental damages caused by the GDR industry and to breach the science monopoly. After the fall of the wall he studied history. Currently he is working as a historian at the Stasi Records Agency.

Ernst Wawra is research associate at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. In his PhD-project he deals with the impact of the CSCE-Proceses on the Soviet Union and asks specifically what it meant for upcoming civil rights movements there. He published a number of articles on this topic and dealt with the question how specifically the dissidents are related to the topic of human rights.

Annette Weinke is vice director of the Jena Center, 20th Century History. In her research she dealt on various levels with human rights. Her current project asks for transnational bonds among human rights activists. Recently, she published an edited volume about Human Rights and their use for justifying military interventions. She is also member of the Study Group Human Rights in the 20th Century which promotes in various ways the research on human rights.

Friday, November 24, 2017

10:00  Welcome
1. „All Humans are Equal“. Between Ideal and Implementation
Chair: Stefan Kirmse (Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin)
11:00  Kim Christians (KU Leuven)
Beyond Agitprop? Communist Campaigns on behalf of the Third World and the Rise of Human Rights, 1960s-1980s
Comment: Anais Van Ertvelde
11:45  Elisa Kriza (University of Bamberg)
Utopia for the Chosen? The Soviet Constitution of 1936 in its Context of Hope and Persecution
Comment: Anna Safronova
lunch break

2. Human Rights in Socialist and Inner State Discourses
Chair: Hannes Grandits (Humboldt University, Berlin)
14:00  Ana Devic (Educons University, Novi Sad)
Dissidence in Socialist Yugoslavia: (Blurred?) Lines between the Participatory and Nationalist Perspectives on Human Rights
Comment: Srdan M. Jovanović
14:45  Anais Van Ertvelde (Leiden University)
Disability Rights as Human Rights in Poland after WWII
Comment: Srdan Jovanovic
15:30  Bedrudin Brljava (University of Sarajevo)
Communism and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Between Fear and Freedom
Comment: Eriada Cela
coffee break

3. Precise Actions: NGOs in Socialist States
Chair: Janis Nalbadadacis (Humboldt University, Berlin)
17:00  Srdan Jovanovic (Lund University)
Communists, Europeanists, Sorosites and Eternal Scapegoats: A Short History of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Belgrade
Comment: Bedrudin Brljava

Saturday, November 25, 2017

4. Human Rights as Bargaining Chips in Foreign Policy
Chair: Jochen Krüger (Humboldt University, Berlin)
09:30  Anna Safronova (Panthéon Sorbonne Paris I)
The Right to Food: Use of the Argument for Humanitarian Help in a Struggle for Power by a Group of “old Cooperative Leaders” of Tsentrosojuz against the Bolshevik Regime in 1919-1920
Comment: Ana Devic
10:15  Stephen Westlake (Central European University, Budapest)
Comment: Tetiana Perga
coffee break

5. In the Shadow of Class Struggles - Fights for Women’s Rights in Socialist States
Chair: Elisa Satjukow (Leipzig University)
11:45  Eriada Cela (Aleksander Xhuvani University, Elbasan)
The Right to Education Propaganda in Communist Albania: the War of Classes versus Women’s Emancipation
Comments: Kim Christians, Zsófia Lóránd
short break
12:45  Final Discussion