Session at East Central Europe-1st half of 20th century (Leipzig, 14-16 Jan 16)

University of Leipzig, Jan 14–16, 2016
Deadline: Jul 30, 2015

Beata Hock, GWZO an der Universität Leipzig

Call for Papers for the panel on Art and Cultural History of the interdisciplinary conference

"East Central Europe in the First Half of the 20th century: Transnational Perspectives"

(The link at the bottom of this email redirects to the entire Call with relevant information on the other panels - Economy, Migration, Internationalism, Territorialisation.)

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Panel on Art and Cultural History:

The section on culture inquires into the continuities and ruptures in cultural history. As some would argue, the Great War and the concluding peace treaties marked such an emphatic geopolitical caesura that no true cultural continuity could possibly survive it. The (re-)emergence of individual nation states on the map of Europe nevertheless did continue to bestow a politicized role on the arts and artists in shaping national identities and elaborating the cultural bases of how nations see themselves. At the same time, this approach to cultural expression had to face its emergent rival in the form of avant-garde movements with their pronounced cosmopolitanism and apolitical self-referentiality. Beyond the sphere of arts, an intense circulation of intellectual goods also persisted in the broader sociocultural field on the level of social practices and the institutionalization of these practices.

Presentations are invited to address the various branches of the arts, visual and popular culture and the printed press, as well as the relationship between social change and cultural practices as mirrored in lifestyle issues, material culture, or knowledge production.

Possible themes include:
- cultural expression as a contested field between national identity and cosmopolitan abstraction, and as a projection screen for other identities (e.g., gender, minority, Jewish);
- processes of cultural transfer and observable exchange in the domain of fine arts (also including exhibition practice); literature; theatre and modern dance; music (classical, experimental, and popular); and the internationalism of modern architecture and design;
- the emergence of, and early co-productions between, national film industries;
- the ideological trajectories of artists: artists' political affiliations, including their relations to, and

involvement in, wars and revolutions, militarism, and peace movements;
- club and association culture as sites of an emerging civil society transcending the nation;
- the effect of social modernization on various social groups (e.g., women suffrage, and the working class and the socialist international).

General description of the conference:

The conference of the project group “Transnational Contemporary History” at the GWZO Leipzig aims at approaching the history of the first half of the 20th century in East Central Europe from a transnational perspective. Taking traditional national historical narratives, these decades appear to be a period of nationalization and deglobalization, which holds true for the region. (Nation)states such as Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia were (re)established after the monarchies of the Habsburgs, Hohenzollerns, and Romanovs fell apart. Wilsonian idealism, promoting national self-determination, gained a fertile ground in East Central Europe. As a by-product of the “principle of nationality”, national minorities started to play an increasing role in the region’s inner and outer relations. Not least, the 1930s were dominated by the Great Depression as well as autarkic economic policies and nationalist ideologies of many regimes. In an ex-post perspective, these “national” lines of development are made more prominent with the knowledge following World War II, resulting in all processes during this period to be reduced to a history of “inter-war”. In this reduction, however, other aspects of social development are marginalized by this dominant perspective: the continuities across the apparent historical breaks of 1914/18 or 1939/45, the openness of the moment felt by contemporaries after World War I, and the sense of the beginning of a “New Europe” in a “New World” after the break-up of the empires. A transnational perspective may help to see the region and the period in another light.

Our conference focuses on the multiple changes of conditions under which people migrated; enterprises gained new markets; cultural exchange was revived; and territorialization processes were globalized. In the League of Nations, many specialists, organizations, and state institutions from the region took part in the formation of new supra-, inter- and transnational organizations; and the global interconnectedness of social and economic arrangements became apparent with the worldwide economic crisis. Processes of nationalization and globalization were not exclusive to each other but highly intertwined, as can be seen, for example, with the global regulation of the national minority issue – a problem that had been produced by the nationalization of states.

In an attempt to grasp these transnational and global dimensions of East Central European history, we have developed five dimensions that we have already applied to the region’s late imperial history up to the First World War: economy, culture, international organizations, territorialization, and migration.

Proposals should fit into one of these sections. Papers combining comparisons with the study of mutual entanglements and operating with a narrative framework larger than a single country are especially welcome. We are also interested in contributions addressing methodological issues of writing a transnational history of East Central Europe.

Comprehensive CfP:
http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~cas/events-news/news/detail/east-central-europe-in-the-first-half-of-the-20th-century-transnational-perspectives/

Reference:

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