

Heritage Protection after 1945 (Exeter, 21 – 22 Nov 17)

University of Exeter, Nov 21–22, 2017

Deadline: Jun 20, 2017

PD Dr.-Ing. Mag Michael Falser, Heidelberg

State Socialism, Heritage Experts and Internationalism in Heritage Protection after 1945

Histories of heritage usually perceive their object of study as a product of western modernity, and exclude the socialist world. Yet, understood as a cultural practice and an instrument of cultural power, and as a “right and a resource”, heritage has played important roles in managing the past and present in many societies and systems. In the postwar period, preservation became a key element of culture in socialist and non-aligned states from China, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Bloc to Asia, Latin America and Africa. Attention paid to the peoples’ traditions and heritage became a way to manifest the superiority and historical necessity of socialist development. However, the contribution of socialist states and experts to the development of the idea of heritage is still to be fully excavated.

The conference aims to understand the rising contributions of socialist and non-aligned actors to the development of heritage at both domestic and international levels. This phenomenon was in part the result of country-specific factors – such as a reaction to rapid industrial development; the destruction of both the Second World War or wars of national liberation; and the necessity to (re)-invent national traditions on socialist terms. But it was also due the growth of a broader international consensus on international heritage protection policies – in which socialist and non-aligned states and their experts played an important role. To this end, the conference will also address the relationship between socialist conceptions of heritage and those found in the capitalist world: to what extent can we discern the convergence of Eastern and Western dynamics of heritage discourses and practices over the second half of the twentieth century? To what degree did heritage professionals from socialist states play a role in the formation of the transnational and transcultural heritage expertise? To what extent did heritage still play a role in Cold War competition? Socialist states claimed that their respect for progressive traditions and material culture distinguished their superior methods of development from that of the capitalist world. Non-Aligned countries often attempted to blend aspects of socialist and capitalist logics of cultural heritage politics.

Conference themes to be addressed in papers include (but are not limited to):

- The rise of interest in, and conceptualisation of, heritage under socialist and non-aligned states;
- the transnational and transcultural circulation of ideas about heritage both within an expanding world of socialist states and across Cold War ideological divides;
- the role of socialist experts in international debates over heritage;
- the role of individual actors as cultural brokers within the cultural heritage field;
- the role of international organisations, such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, UIA and others in pro-

viding a platform for professional communication and knowledge exchange involving the socialist world;

- the role of the Cold War in the development of heritage;
- the role of national traditions, experience and transnational cooperation across the Cold War divide in the creation of concepts and practices of socialist heritage;
- the legacies of the work of socialist states and experts in contemporary heritage practices.

Abstracts of 300-500 words, together with an accompanying short CV should be submitted to Natalie Taylor (N.H.Taylor@exeter.ac.uk) by June 20, 2017.

The selected participants will be notified by July 20, 2017.

Funding opportunities for travel and accommodation are available, but we ask that potential contributors also explore funding opportunities at their home institutions.

This event is organized by the University of Exeter in collaboration with Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe in Marburg. It is kindly supported by Exeter University's Leverhulme Trust-funded project 1989 after 1989: Rethinking the Fall of State Socialism in Global Perspective.

Conference conveners:

- Prof. James Mark and Dr. Nelly Bekus, University of Exeter, Leverhulme Trust-funded project 1989 after 1989: Rethinking the Fall of State Socialism in Global Perspective
- Dr. Eszter Gantner, Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe, Marburg
- Dr. Michael Falser, Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context", Heidelberg University

Reference:

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