

Nations, minorities and human rights during the 20th century – Junior academics' workshop on the history of politics

6th to 9th June 2016, Jena

Call for Papers

The Hungarian historian Iván T. Berend's concept of the “short 20th century” focuses on several central historical phenomena like political upheavals, overthrows and revolutions during WWI, extensive crimes against humanity committed by the National Socialist regime, territorial reorganisation and changing borders in the aftermaths of WWII and transforming societies after the Cold War. According to Berend, epochs can be understood as periodizations along far-reaching events which changed society. Sadly, questions of historical continuity, a- and nonsynchronism, transformation and adaption of perception drop out of focus.

“Age of Extremes”, a term coined by the British Historian Eric Hobsbawm, became a synonym for the timespan between 1914 and 1991. Apart from their chronological correlation, characteristics of the “Age of Extremes” are intertwined and interacting across the borders of nations and of political systems. E. g. dissidents in the Soviet Union were supported by individuals and groups from the Netherlands, Germany and the USA with explicit reference to the past silence in face of Nazi crimes. Furthermore, the separate experiences and perceptions of history, shaped by the two competing systems, go beyond the downfall of the Soviet Union, as can be seen in the current debate about refugees from war-torn Syria. The comparability of biographical experiences of flight and expulsion of Germans during and after WWII is discussed. Biographical parallels, separated from time and place, become a common denominator and a shared biographical specificity.

The focus on dissenters, social and cultural minorities as well as on contemporaneous concepts of efficacy and implementation of human rights allows a detailed portray of concepts of society and nation. By studying this, identity and interpersonal perception, racists' stereotypes, positive self-identification and their transfer into cultural practice come to attention. These perceptions are driven by ideas and concepts from their contemporary and social context and thus they are, despite transfer and communication across borders, specific to their time and place.

The Workshop will take place at the Historical Institute of the Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena and asks about different conceptions of belonging to and forming of communities. How collective identity was constructed cross-frontier by discourse and how exclusion was negotiated? What is the identification point of the New Social Movements? How does the biographical perspective specific to the partition of history affect constituting communities in culture and subculture? Are classical periodisation systems still working within the context of building collective identity? The workshop tries to find answers to these questions by adopting different perspectives.

During the workshop, advanced undergraduate students, students in a Master program and PhD candidates will have the opportunity to present their research projects in 15 to 20 minutes impulse talks. Interdisciplinary discussion will follow each presentation.

To represent the diversity and interconnection of 20th century developments, we are asking for papers from different fields of social studies and the humanities with a specific regional focus in either German or English. The social activities include a guided tour through Jena, a trip to Weimar and an excursion to the Buchenwald Memorial. The accommodation will be in shared rooms on the expense of the workshop. Participation is free of charge.

To apply for giving a presentation, send an abstract of not more than 300 words, a short letter of motivation and a tabular CV by **21st March** to gp20workshop@uni-jena.de (complete and within a **single** PDF file). Acceptance or rejection will be given until 11st April. Lecturers can apply for reimbursement of travel expenses to the organisation committee. For more information see <http://gp20.hypotheses.org>.

Organisation: Svea Lehmann, Robert Pursche, Benedikt Rothhagen (Students of the Master program *Geschichte und Politik des 20. Jahrhunderts*), sponsored by the [Jena Center 20th Century History](#) and the [Ernst-Abbe-Stiftung](#).