



UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG

International Conference: “Gender, Generations, Communism in Central and South-Eastern Europe: Concepts, Discourses, Practices”

Date: 16-18 November 2017

Venue: Staszic Palace, Nowy Świat 72, Warsaw, Poland

Language: English

Organisers: Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slavonic Studies at the University of Leipzig, The Committee on Literary Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Organising Committee:

Jun.-Prof. Anna Artwińska, Institute of Slavonic Studies, University of Leipzig

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Although research on socialism/ communism/ state socialism, as well as research on generations and gender, is conducted extensively around the world, scholarship that combines these three theoretical perspectives is still scarce. As an academic and intellectual endeavour, this conference originates from the need for a scholarly perspective that conceptualises communism in Central and South-Eastern Europe as a social and political phenomenon within which various social and political actors (including the individuals and groups working within the communist/ socialist states, and the representatives of opposition movements) articulated their identities through gender and generation. It rests on the observation that, seen through



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the analytical lenses of “gender” and “generation”, communism may be articulated as a history of individuals and groups of people who define themselves through certain biological and social and cultural affiliations. These articulations span identities such as: “children of the revolution”, “Bolshevik feminists”, “rebuilding (postwar) generation”, “generation 1968”, “women of Solidarity”, and many more.

The objective of the conference is to provide both an academic and a methodological examination of the extent to which the usage of “gender” as analytical category in research on communism implies the usage of “generation”, and vice versa. We are interested in concrete “case studies” illustrating possibilities of such representations and readings of communism that bring to the fore “generations” and “gender” as distinctive and formative aspects of communism in Central and South East Europe. As analytical categories, both “gender” and “generations” should be approached with caution: as categories that regardless of their undeniable descriptive and explanatory potential, still may serve as analytical tools for the production of the fixed, essentialist identities.

The conference is an interdisciplinary endeavour that combines the literary and cultural studies perspective with that of history, anthropology and sociology. It gathers researchers involved in studies on history, politics and culture of the so-called “people's democracies”, including (but not limited to) Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia. We believe that during the conference we will draw comparisons and parallels that will help us to reframe communism as a diverse social phenomenon spanning various generational and gender identities. We also hope to initiate a debate on new meta-discourses that may help us describe and analyse this diversity. The long-term goal of this event is to search for alternative frames to describe and analyse communism—ones that go beyond the narrative that focus on its “totalitarian” and/ or anti-totalitarian character.

The conference program will follow shortly.