

VI.2: CONFERENCE REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cardiff: Conference on Local Communisms.

A two-day international conference entitled "Local Communisms, 1917-1989" has taken place from June 30 to July 1, 2011, at the University ATRiuM campus, Cardiff, UK. This conference, the first annual conference of the journal *Twentieth Century Communism*, aims to address the extent to which national and sub-national political, social and cultural traditions and developments, crises and continuities shaped the character of 'world communism'.

The following presentations have been given. Some of the papers will be published in one of the forthcoming issues of *Twentieth Century Communism*.

- Andreas Wirsching (Institute for Contemporary History, Munich), 'Comparing Local Communisms'.
- Bernhard H. Bayerlein (Potsdam): Project Announcement, 'Digitising Communist Studies and organising a resource sharing network: The International Communist Studies and Archives Portal Project (ICSAP)'.
- Eryk Martin (Simon Fraser University, Canada), 'The Communist Left and the Politics of Nature in British Columbia'.
- John Manley (UCLAN), 'North of McCarthyism: Canadian Communists, Anti-Communism, and the Cold War, 1945-1957'.
- Mike Dennis (Wolverhampton), 'The Stasi and Sport in Communist East Germany'
- Paul Maddrell (Aberystwyth), 'The Stasi and Counter-intelligence, 1952-1989'.
- Alison McClean (Harry Ransom Centre, Texas), 'Artists, Poets, Spies and Assassins: The People's Graphic Workshop and the Comintern in Mexico 1936-1940'.
- Nicholas Barnett (Liverpool John Moore University), 'British Representations of Communism in the Khrushchev Era'.
- Paul McNamara (Galway), "'Little Stalins" in Post-War Poland: The Role of Local Officials in Securing the Baltic Recovered Territories, 1945-56'.
- Sevet Akyildiz (SOAS), 'Would the Soviet Central Asians rebel against Moscow circa 1980-1991? State multiculturalism and the internalization of civic values'.
- Andreas Stergiou (University of Crete), 'Anatomy of a paradox. The Communist Party of Cyprus (AKEL)'.
- Katherine Nastovski (York University, Toronto, Canada), 'Revisiting the Macedonian Question in the history of the CP of Greece: Revolutionary Politics and Ideologies of Oppression'.
- Lev Centrih (Ljubljana, Slovenia), 'Ideological split as the precondition for the political unification. Communist People's Front strategies in the late Kingdom of Yugoslavia'
- Kimmo Rentola (University of Turku, Finland), 'Generations of Finnish Communism'
- Ole Martin Rønning (Labour Archives and Library, Oslo, Norway), 'The communist movements in Norway and Sweden - a comparative approach'.
- Tauno Saarela (University of Helsinki), 'The challenge of Finnish communism 'White Finland', 1918-1930'.

- Ben Fowkes (London), 'Communists and Muslims. I: The Years of Alliance'.
- Bülent Gökay (Keele), 'Communists and Muslims. II: After the Communist International'.
- Bernhard H. Bayerlein (Potsdam), 'Local Communisms in Spain and the strikes and uprisings in Estremadura and Asturias 1933/1934'.
- Tim Rees (Exeter), 'Catalan and Communist? The Spanish Communist Party and Regional Identities'.
- William Booth (London), 'Hegemonic Nationalism, Subordinate Marxism: The Case of Mexico'.
- Bill Pelz (Chicago), 'German Communism during Weimar, 1918-1933: Perspectives, Problems and Approaches'.
- Sebastian Zehetmair (University of Augsburg), 'Disputed commemoration: the Bavarian Council Republic, the experience of local militants and the politics of the history of the KPD'.
- Alix Heiniger (University of Geneva), 'The guidelines came from Moscow but the battlefield was in the West, German communists in France and Switzerland during WWII'.
- Axel Fair-Schultz (Potsdam, USA), 'The Kuczynski-Brandeis family between NY and Germany'.
- Sharif Gemie (Glamorgan), 'Peasants, Populism and Breton Culture'.
- François Prigent (Rennes University), 'Socialist and communist networks in Brittany: a comparison on the Twentieth Century (1920-1989)'.
- Willie Thompson (Socialist History Society), 'Scottish Communism 1962-91: from re-growth to extinction – a personal account'.
- Steve Hopkins (University of Leicester), 'Constructing a Communist Party from Revolutionary Nationalism? The Workers' Party of Ireland'.
- Doug Jones (Aberystwyth), 'The Communist Party of Great Britain and the Welsh Language 1936-1989'.
- Kevin Morgan (Manchester), Closing Address on the Conference and the journal *Twentieth Century Communism*.

Norwich: Conference on Reform Communism

"Reform communism" since 1945 in Comparative Historical Perspective. 22-23 October 2011, School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich. Organised by UEA School of History in conjunction with the journal "Socialist History". Venue: Room 3.26, Arts Building II, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ.

The collapse of the USSR and the Eastern bloc in the wake of Gorbachev's perestroika seemed to show that communism was essentially unreformable. It could be preserved, dismantled, or overthrown, but it could not be reconstructed as a viable alternative to capitalism, free from the defects of its Leninist-Stalinist prototype. Prior to 1989-91, however, reform communism was a live political issue in many countries. At different times in countries as diverse as Yugoslavia, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Western Europe, Japan, and China, the leaderships of communist parties themselves sought to change direction, re-evaluate their own past, correct mistakes and so on with the aim of cleansing, strengthening and improving communism, rather than undermining or dismantling it. In countries ruled by communist parties this process usually involved political relaxation and an easing of repression, and was often accompanied by an upsurge of intellectual and cultural ferment. The aim of this conference is to consider reform communism as a distinct phenomenon, which can usefully be distinguished from, on the one hand, mere changes of line or leader without any engagement with a party's own past and the assumptions which underpinned it,

and on the other, dissenting and oppositional activity within and outside parties which failed to change the party's direction.

Selected papers will be published in 2012 in a special issue of Socialist History (<http://www.socialist-history-journal.org.uk>) devoted to the subject.

Attendance of the conference will be free of charge, but we ask that anyone wishing to attend registers in advance by emailing Francis King on francis@socialisthistorysociety.co.uk and/or Matthias Neumann on m.neumann@uea.ac.uk at School of History, UEA, Norwich NR4 7TJ. Any enquiries should be addressed to us.

Conference programme:

Saturday 22 October

10.30 registration, coffee

11.00 – 12.45 Session 1.

- Francis King, UEA, Socialist History Society: Welcome and introduction, and survey: "Defining 'Reform Communism'".
- Marina V. Khmel'nitskaya, Oxford: "Housing policy in the late Soviet period: ideational transformation, the policy process and the struggle for power".
- Graham Taylor, London: "Reform communism compared with 17th century movements".

12.45 – 1.45 lunch

1.45 – 3.30 Session 2.

- Marko Fuček, Zagreb: "Tito's Youth: Titoism and its Application through People's Youth Organization, 1948-1952".
- Jana George, Jena: "Socially critical films in the 1960s/70s in Yugoslavia from a historical perspective".
- Katalin Miklossy, Helsinki: "Interactive Socialism: Institutional reformism in the Eastern Bloc".

3.30 – 4.00 coffee

4.00 – 5.45 Session 3.

- Hans Asenbaum, Vienna: "Reform Communism from below - Alternative Democratic Ideas of the Russian Informal Movement during the Perestroika Period".
- Vasil Paraskevov, Shumen: "The Decline of Socialism in Bulgaria: Mikhail Gorbachev, Todor Zhivkov and the Soviet Perestroika, 1985-1989".
- Nevena Stoyanova Vlaykova, Oxford: "The Prague Spring and the season that never came - Bulgaria's reflection of the invasion in Czechoslovakia in 1968".
- Dieter Segert, Vienna: "Communist reformers as a major driving force of changes in late East Central European Socialism - a comparison".

Sunday 23 October

9.00 coffee

9.30 – 11.15 Session 4.

- Bálint Mezei, Budapest: "The ideological birth of Eurocommunism – the Prague spring in Czechoslovakia and the new economic mechanism in Hungary".
- György Péteri, Trondheim: "'Acquisitive Society' and State Socialism. Lifestyle Issues and Consumerism in the Policies and Discursive Practices of Kádár Hungary".
- András Pintér, Budapest: "How theory and practice interact in socialism".
- Nigel Swain, Liverpool: "Research Institutes in Late Kádár-Era Hungary".

11.15 – 11.30 coffee

11.30 – 1.15 Session 5.

- Daniel Gordon, Edge Hill: "The French Communist Party and Immigration, 1961-1981: Failure or Success?"
- Sebastian Seng, Mainz: "The Relations between the East German (SED) and Spanish Communist Parties (PCE) from 1971 to 1978".
- Hugo Radice, Leeds: "Marxist dissidents in Eastern Europe and their critical analyses of 'actually existing socialism' in the 1960s and 1970s".

1.15 – 2.15 lunch

2.15 – 4.00 Session 6.

- Pat Devine, Manchester: "Reform Communism: A Personal Memoir from within the CPGB".
- Andrew Pearmain, Norwich: "The uses and abuses of Gramsci".
- David Purdy, "Transforming and Transcending Capitalism: Reflections on the Eurocommunist Experience".
- Mike Waite, Rossendale, SHS: "Was reform communism possible?"

4.00 – 4.30 Summary and conclusion – Matthias Neumann