

Call for Proposals

The Socialist 1960s: Popular Culture and the Socialist City in Global Perspective

2010 Fisher Forum, Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, June 24-26, 2010

The 1960s witnessed an explosion of cross-cultural fertilization in a time of world competition for the hegemony of two enduring "systems" - capitalism and socialism. As a moment when decolonization created immense possibilities for liberation movements throughout the world, the 1960s became the heyday of the "Second World" appeals to the newly decolonized societies of the "Third World," as well as the reemergence of a European "First World" as a postwar consumer society in reaction to American hegemony. This was the moment when the "orderedness" of the three worlds was arguably the most prominent in popular discourse and culture, and a moment when that order was contested and destabilized. The patterns that first emerged in the 1960s - cultural contest, political mobility, urbanization and the rise of urban youth movements, women's rights, the hegemony of popular over "high" culture driven by technology - form the bases of today's discussions of globalization, its challenges, dangers, and contestation.

The purpose of this conference will be to use the Second World, the socialist societies of the 1960s, as the center from which to explore global interconnections and uncover new and perhaps surprising patterns of cultural cross-pollination. This forum will be structured around cities as the units of analysis, and it will focus on the arena of popular culture as played out in these city spaces. More specifically, we invite paper proposals that focus on one of three realms of urban popular culture - media (including cinema, television, popular music); material culture (including spaces and their uses as well as commodities), and leisure (including tourism and other activities). We consider these exemplary of the circulation of objects, images, sounds, and impressions on a level different from political programs, literature and "fine arts." Several thematic threads will tie together this consideration of the circulation of popular culture around and through the Second world!

: mobility and cultural transmission; youth cultures and student movements; gender; consumerism and hedonism; the state and cultural exchange; technology and cultural dissemination; cosmopolitan political mobilization. Our aims will be to consider what the "1960s" meant in socialist countries, and to discuss the balance in the 1960s between cultural global integration and continuing political differentiation.

The core of the forum will be the socialist societies of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but the forum would be enriched by participation from scholars who study other socialist societies. We anticipate that the conference will result in a published volume: submissions should be original work, not previously published.

The conference organizers are Diane P. Koenker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (dkoenker@illinois.edu) and Anne E. Gorsuch, University of British Columbia (gorsuch@interchange.ubc.ca). We welcome advance inquiries.

Please send proposed paper title and abstracts to each of the organizers by October 15, 2009. Proposals should indicate which of the conference themes the paper addresses, and the term "Sixties" or "1960s" should be explicit in the paper title. Selection of participants will be made by November 30, 2009, and conference papers should be submitted by April 1, 2010.

The Ralph and Ruth Fisher Forum is held in conjunction with the Summer Research Laboratory on Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia. The conference is made possible by Mary and Hal Zirin's generous gift to the Ralph and Ruth Fisher Endowment Fund in honor of Professor Ralph Fisher and his wife Ruth. Ralph Fisher is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Illinois and founder of the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center and the Summer Research Lab.

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