

Call for papers for an international conference “Human Rights/Social Rights: The Twentieth-Century Predicament”

Time and place: 2-4 December 2010 Berlin/Potsdam

Organizers: Małgorzata Mazurek (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam) in conjunction with Sandrine Kott (Université de Genève), Paul Betts (University of Sussex), Andreas Eckert (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (ZZF)

Keynote: Frederick Cooper (New York University)

By examining competing traditions and shifting meanings of human rights, this conference seeks a critical understanding of social rights in the making of the contemporary world. It explores historically the ways in which regimes of social rights converged with the concept of human rights as a result of wartime and postwar experiences. At the same time it seeks to understand when, how and why social rights were defined, pursued and applied as a concept on its own terms in diverse political orders and spaces (democracies, dictatorships, empires and nation-states).

The conference aims to explore the multiple uses of the concept of rights in the context of the internationalization of the social, and throughout such key moments of social rights institutionalization as, for example, the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944 or the adoption of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966. In particular, it focuses on social rights as an important case of interaction between histories of socialism, the demise of colonial empires and the rise of international organizations. It seeks to historicize the engagement with notions of rights by empires, states, transnational and local actors in an era of ideological divisions and emerging forms of state interventionism. The aim of the conference is to interrogate how social rights, as a concept and a political currency, were historically distinguished, used, internationalized and challenged within (and outside of) the human rights discourse.

Our intention is to bring together scholarship on histories of (state) socialism, welfare-states, international organizations as well as colonialism and post-colonialism, while stressing different historical lineages of human rights.

Possible topics include:

Economic and social rights

Women's rights

Children's rights

Minority rights and group rights

Consumer rights

Labor/organizations

Education

Disability

Social entitlements and social provisioning

Standard of living

Race

Development

Social justice

The workshop will be held in Berlin/Potsdam. The costs of travel and accommodation of the participants will be covered by the sponsoring institutions.

If you are interested in presenting a paper, please send a short abstract of your proposed paper (max. 500 words), an abstract of your ongoing research related to the subject of the conference (max. 1000 words) as well as your curriculum vitae. The deadline for submissions is February 15, 2010.

Conference participants will be asked to submit article-length (max. 10 000 words) original papers in English no later than October 1, 2010. The papers will be pre-circulated among all participants to leave room for discussion at the conference.

Please address all queries and abstracts to:

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