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Blurred Lines and Gray Areas: Official and Unofficial Culture in Late Socialism

Time: Sat, November 21, 8:00 to 9:45am

Place: Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 409

"This panel reflects on the meaning of unofficial art and culture in the Eastern Bloc contexts. While traditional historiographies have emphasized the private nature of any artistic production that existed outside of the state-regulated art industries, we explore the pockets of experimental culture that existed within the official public sphere. Relying on archival documents to recreate the perspective of artists, public figures and state bureaucrats, we analyze case studies from **East Germany**, Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union that stretched the margins of officially sanctioned art, media and grassroots activities, to form a vast gray area between the poles of the official and the underground.

*'Please Advise, We Are Very Confused': Grassroots Cultural Officials in Poland and **East Germany*** - Kyrill Kunakhovich, College of William & Mary

*'Please Advise, We Are Very Confused': Grassroots Cultural Officials in Poland and **East Germany*** - This paper considers the practices and problems of local cultural officials in two major cities of the Soviet Bloc: Krakow in Poland and Leipzig in East Germany. In the absence of clear instructions, officials constantly struggled to decide which artworks were appropriate and which were not. As a result, they came to judge art by viewer response: excessive popularity or unruly behavior often convinced officials that an artwork should be banned."

Cacophonous Commemorations: The 25th Anniversary of the 1989 Revolutions in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania

Time: Thu, November 19, 1:00 to 2:45pm

Place: Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 309

"Cacophonous Commemorations: The 25th Anniversary of the 1989 Revolutions in **East Germany**, Czechoslovakia, and Romania"

Cold War Holidays: Touring across the Iron Curtain

Time: Sat, November 21, 1:45 to 3:30pm

Place: Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 401

"Tourism as Usual: Selling the Eastern Bloc to Scandinavian Travellers - This paper scrutinizes the development of the Eastern bloc as a tourist destination for westerners during the Cold War. It analyses the emergence of a mass tourism industry, selling the East European destinations to westerners in guidebooks and travel catalogues. The Scandinavian market was a frontrunner in this process. The paper traces the foundation of popular Scandinavian guidebook series to Yugoslavia (1957), Czechoslovakia (1962), Hungary (1967), Romania (1969), Bulgaria (1969), Poland (1970), and **East Germany** (1970). Longitudinal studies of the guidebooks and comparisons with their West European counterparts are used to identify the synchronic variations and diachronic changes in the selling of the East to the West. The paper argues that the Scandinavian guidebooks avoided political allusions and presented the Eastern bloc as perfectly normal destinations."

Collecting Facts about the Other: Russia and the East, the East within Russia

Time: Fri, November 20, 1:45 to 3:30pm

Place: Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 303

"Who Lost Iran? Socialism and Islamism in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 - This paper uses Soviet and **East German** sources to examine the strategy of the Tudeh, along with its Soviet and East German supporters, during the crucial years of the Iranian revolution from 1978 to 1983 to determine what role this strategy played in the rise of Khomeini's regime. It argues that, contrary to the conventional view of a Soviet Union on the March in the late 1970s, the Soviets and the Tudeh pursued a cautious wait-and-see attitude that fundamentally misunderstood the appeal and resilience of the Islamist program, enabling Khomeini and his allies to destroy the Left in Iran in stages, and to defeat socialism with Islamism ultimately not merely by force and appeal to sentiment, but with a superior modernizing ideology that answered the tasks of anti-imperialist revolution."

Communist Comparisons: New Approaches to Comparative History in the Soviet Bloc**Time:** Fri, November 20, 8:00 to 9:45am**Place:** Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 413

"This roundtable considers the past, present, and future of comparative approaches to the study of the Soviet Bloc. During the Cold War, most research on the Bloc was comparative in nature, but this methodology has become less common with the rise of microhistory and transnational studies. At this roundtable, five young historians of the Bloc will reflect on the goals, methods, and challenges of comparative research today. What are the pitfalls and perspectives of comparative inquiry? What questions best lend themselves to comparative analysis? How does comparative history relate to transnational, regional, and global studies? All of the presenters have carried out archival research in multiple countries of the Soviet Bloc. Specifically, all have compared communist Poland to some of its neighbors, including **East Germany** (Elizabeth Wenger), Czechoslovakia (Mark Keck-Szajbel), Hungary (Anna Cichopek-Gajraj), and the USSR (Patrik Babiracki). By coming together at this roundtable, they seek to look beyond their particular research agendas to consider the methodology of comparative research – as well as its role for the future of Soviet Bloc studies."

East-Central European Emigre Identities: Interpretations, Treatment, Reception, and Self-Representation**Time:** Fri, November 20, 3:45 to 5:30pm**Place:** Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 413

"Building the 'Wall in the Head': The Portrayal and Perception of **East German** Migration in the Federal Republic, Summer 1989-October 1990 - Bethany Hicks, Ouachita Baptist U

*Building the 'Wall in the Head': The Portrayal and Perception of **East German** Migration in the Federal Republic, Summer 1989-October 1990* - This paper discusses the perception of East German migrants in West Germany (Federal Republic) from the period immediately preceding the fall of the Berlin Wall until German reunification in October 1990. Obviously, the perceptions changed over time."

Faces of Death in Socialist Culture**Time:** Sat, November 21, 8:00 to 9:45am**Place:** Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 309

"*Preparing a Funeral is a Task in Educating the Public Taste*': Louis Fűrnberg's *Death Mask and Sepulchral Culture in the GDR* - When the poet and distinguished member of the Academy of Arts Louis Fűrnberg died in 1957, the **East German** state buried him with great pomp. To preserve Fűrnberg's memory the state also commissioned the sculptor Theo Műller to prepare a gypsum cast of the poet's face (death mask) and his hands. Focusing on this funeral and the history behind the death mask, the paper explores the development of secular funerary culture in East Germany and its role in the experimental phase of what came to be called "socialist culture," as well as the dynamics of building a socialist cultural canon and the specific aesthetic functions of the death mask in 1950s East Germany."

Hollywood's Insidious Charms: The Impact of American Cinema and Television on the Soviet Bloc**Time:** Fri, November 20, 3:45 to 5:30pm**Place:** Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 410

"This roundtable is devoted to the memory of our dear friend, a Philadelphian, a great historian of Soviet popular culture and films, Richard Stites (1931-2010). This roundtable will discuss the paradoxes of the cultural Cold War in the countries of the Soviet bloc in "socialist" consumption of the American visual media – films and television from the United States - after Stalin. Using their recent research findings, the participants of this roundtable will explore the facts and fiction about the role of American visual media in a creation of the new movie genres, television shows, films festivals, "visual technologies" of mass manipulation and mass mobilization in the Soviet bloc, concentrating mostly on the Soviet Union, **East Germany** and Poland."

How Facts become 'Justice' and 'Truth': Tribunals and Truth Commissions in Eastern Europe**Time:** Sat, November 21, 8:00 to 9:45am**Place:** Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 302

"A 'Scholarly Oriented Political Investigation': The Bundestag 'Study Commissions' on the **East German** SED Dictatorship - Andrew H. Beattie, U of New South Wales (Australia)

*A 'Scholarly Oriented Political Investigation': The Bundestag 'Study Commissions' on the **East German** SED Dictatorship* - Two 'Study Commissions' in the 1990s sought to provide official recognition of the 'truth' about East German history and thus to achieve justice for the victims. Yet producing such a truth, especially in a parliamentary body, raised numerous questions, such as whether politicians can and should be involved in the production of history, and whether history can be decided by majority vote."

Visual Culture in Late Socialism**Time:** Thu, November 19, 1:00 to 2:45pm**Place:** Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Meeting Room 401

"This paper analyzes the rise of psychopharmaceuticals across Eastern Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. Despite not facing the same pressure to create profits for shareholders, East European pharmaceutical houses promoted their products with the same vigour as their Western counterparts. Based on an analysis of Yugoslav, Czechoslovak, and **East German** pharmaceutical producers and their advertisements, the paper contributes to emerging historiographical discussions about advertising in the Communist context. It suggests that East European marketing techniques both attempted to replicate Western advertising trends and also forged new marketing strategies that reflected the unique socio-political conditions of their domestic markets. Ultimately, the paper argues that the study of