

**Trauma as cultural palimpsests:
(post)communism against the background of comparative
modernities, totalitarianisms, and (post)coloniality**

**Research Center for Postcolonial and Posttotalitarian Studies,
Faculty of Philology, Wrocław University**

2-3 June 2016

Call for papers

The trauma inflicted on societies under communist regimes and post-traumatic symptoms manifesting themselves across the whole spectrum of public discourses remain one of the most painfully under-researched problems in the study of Central and East European (CEE) cultures. The conference aims to investigate the multiple forms of totalitarian trauma and of the (post-)traumatic transition period in the region. The assessment of the totalitarian past has been the object of divisive and partial political debates, themselves, at times, no more than post-traumatic symptoms at the discursive level. The conference aims to investigate the seriality of trauma in the recent history of CEE (from ghettos to gulags to globalization, from Holocaust to communist and postcommunist mass killings, from concentration camps to immigration camps etc.), as well as the palimpsestic interplay between the different historical and experiential layers of cultural distress.

We encourage potential participants to propose inter-/trans-disciplinary approaches and to devise comparative frameworks which may accommodate trauma studies, transition studies, postdependence studies, postcommunist studies, and postcolonial studies. We welcome transhistorical and transregional accounts of massive traumas of the 20th century in CEE and elsewhere, such as the extermination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Turkey in 1915, the Holocaust and Nazi extermination policies in WW2, the Indian Partition, the Balkan War, or the Rwandan genocide, to name but a few. Attention may be given to the ideological foundation of the breakthroughs of 1989/1991, including the role, contribution and importance of oppositional socio-cultural movements and the emigration (for instance, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Polish October of 1956, the intellectual

movements of the 1960s generation in USSR, the Prague Spring, 1968 in Poland (with the ensuing mass eviction of the Polish citizens of Jewish nationality under the umbrella slogan of purging the Party from the Zionist element), the strikes of Polish workers in December of 1970 and June of 1976, Helsinki Accords of 1975, “Solidarity” [“Solidarność”], the announcement of glasnost and perestroika in the USSR in 1985, the Polish Round Table Talks in 1989, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and so on).

Suggested Themes:

- Hidden/forgotten/silenced discourses: topics prohibited or manipulated by the communist regime of /in the official political-social-cultural space including the colonization of Eastern Borderlands (Kresy Wschodnie) by the Second Polish Republic; the politically designed famine in the Ukrainian SSR; the extermination of intelligentsia in the Soviet Union in the 1930s; the Gulags; 1939 and the Second World War confronted with Nazism and Stalinism; collaboration with the Nazis; Stalinist and Nazi crimes; the UPA (The Ukrainian Insurgent Army) from the Ukrainian and Polish perspectives; the post-war massive repatriations/resettlements/expulsions of local populations of diverse ethnicities in the name of mono-national state (and the especially traumatic eviction of the German minorities); the Operation “Vistula”; the Hungarian Revolution of 1956; the Berlin Wall and the political division of Germany; the post-war collaboration of intellectuals with the communist regime; repressions of the Church;
- Mass-media vs. the simulacral totalitarian reality;
- Post-memory: spectral returns of the past in inter-generational transfer;
- Geopolitics of memory and trauma;
- Postcommunist remembrance between reenactment and recovery of cultural trauma;
- Psychological/Psychoanalytical accounts of postcommunist PTS – Pros and Cons
 - Traumarbeit
 - The role of empathy, solidarity, identification, projection in postcommunist trauma cultures
 - Complications of cultural trauma: anachronism, anachronism, and multidirectional memory [Rothberg], triangular suffering, traumatized perpetrators
 - Eastern Europe as a site for double/multiple colonization

- Layers of historical and structural trauma, traumatic loss (event-generated) vs. traumatic absence (environment-conditioned)
- Everyday affections and experience in (post-)traumatic societies
- Epistemological violence and the colonization of critical discourse in Postcommunism/postcommunist studies
- Cultural interference, interpolation, crossways in post-traumatic communities
- Postcommunist hollow (wo)men
- Silence and verbosity in posttraumatic discourse
- The cultural language(s)/discourse(s) of trauma
- Trauma storying and the narratology of trauma recounting
- Victim and perpetrator cultural profiles
- Trauma deviance: trauma queens, the melotraumatic, victimization and conspiracy fixations

Application: Submit a 250-300 word proposal with keywords for an unpublished paper and a bio-note by **31 January 2016**. You will be notified by 15 February 2016.

Conference language: English and Polish

Conference fee: 250 PLN/50 EUR (does not include the hotel accommodation, information on the bank account and accommodation will follow)

E-mail for abstract submissions: cspp.uwr@gmail.com

Organizing Committee:

Prof. Bogdan Stefanescu (English Studies, Bucharest University)

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