

CALL for PAPERS

Nationalizing and democratizing states: Challenges and approaches

Vilnius 08-10 October 2018

The years after the First World War were a time of state building in East Central Europe. States were restored or new ones founded from scratch. It was also a time when nation building reached a new level. National ideas that had been pursued by national elites and movements in 19th century became formative for the new states. However, they faced a number of obstacles. One was the ethnic heterogeneity in East Central Europe. Creating national we-groups always meant to likewise draw lines to groups defined as ethnically different. The challenge of national minorities became one of the central issues of the inter-war years. The second one was the fact, that many people were not inclined to perceive themselves as members of a nation but remained "national indifferent" (Tara Zahra). Accordingly, nation states were not merely products of ethnic thinking. They were also agents of promoting an ethnic group consciousness. Therefore, it seems apt to refer to these states as "nationalizing states" (Rogers Brubaker). How, and in which fields, did the new states further the national idea? Which instruments did they have at their proposal? And what were the limits of their nationalization efforts? Which influence did the imperial legacy exert? These and other questions are to be discussed at the Conference of Young Scholars.

Meanwhile, many national movements had combined their claims to influence and representation with democratic ideas. They were also put into effect in the new states. Democratic ideals were also at the core of the rights for national minorities. Yet, most of these young democracies were affected by the trend toward authoritarianism. Democratic procedures and rights were substantially diminished or completely abolished. Meanwhile, the quest for ethnic unity was stronger than ever. Therefore, the workshop also asks about the interrelation between nationalization and democratization. How were processes of nationalization and democratization combined? In which fields did they reinforce each other and where were they at odds? Did democracy have a chance to survive or was it doomed due to the structural, socio-economic or cultural preconditions of the states? And in which areas and groups of society did democratic procedures and thought remain intact?

The three organizing institutions, the Lithuanian Institute of History (Vilnius), the Herder Institute (Marburg), the Nordost-Institut (IKGN e.V., Lüneburg), invite up to 15 young scholars (up to the age of 35) from various disciplines to discuss their projects.

Any proposal on these and other themes relevant to the topic of the conference is highly welcome. Keynote speakers from the region and other European countries will provide an introduction to the topic. Individual papers should be max. 25 minutes long

with 20 minutes for discussion. The working language will be English.

Travel costs (only within Europe) as well as accommodation will be paid by the organizers. Proposals of 300 words or less with a short biography of the presenter and their area of research should be submitted in a word document by March 31, 2018 to: forum@herder-institut.de

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