



Extractions from authoritarian socialism, from 1945 to the present

Moscow, 25-31 August 2014

Summer school for young researchers

After the end of World War II and the collapse of the colonial empires, the second half of the 20th century saw the rise, then more or less rapid fall of authoritarian socialist regimes, in which the state was ruled by a single political party, claiming allegiance to socialism and managing an economic system largely based on state or collective property. The summer school will be devoted to the processes of their demise and to the legacy of this authoritarian and socialist past, which may still persist through various institutions, dynamics, structures and practices. The summer school shall bring together young historians, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, researchers of literature, arts and culture, working on the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc from 1945 onward, as well as on the Arab, African and Asian experiences, so as to foster fruitful exchanges beyond traditional disciplinary and geographic boundaries and to open the way for a global understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny.

The institutional or political end of an authoritarian system occurs on different time-scales and takes various forms. It can result from attempts at internal reforms, whether carried through or not (after Stalin's or Mao's death, Fidel Castro's withdrawal, the Soviet-Yugoslav split, the perestroika etc.), or be linked to a sudden key event – the leader's death, a coup, a revolution, a military defeat. These circumstances do not however suffice for the system to effectively and totally disappear. They only mark the beginning of a specific era, variously designated according to the context as “transition”, “liberalization”, “democratization”, “thaw”, “de-stalinization”, “desovietization” and other “post-“ eras – an era that we propose to analyze as being a process of “extrication” from authoritarian socialist regimes. This expression aims to capture the slow process that unfolds beyond the disappearance of the most visible markers of the old regime. In this process, societies reorganize themselves; power structures, institutions, legal and economic systems, as well as social relations and culture undergo complex transformations. Sometimes, these can be based on head-on score-settling, the indictment of a part of the old elites, the blaming of the former political or institutional powers that be; lustration or purges are thus part of these processes. They can also unfold through a slower transformation of the sources of authority, or be based on reconciliation policies, on strategies of oblivion of the past, and on elite reconversion. The participants to the summer school are expected to be especially attentive to the visible and less obvious legacies, enduring traits, forms of resistance and reaction that appear in the “extrication process” from authoritarian socialist regimes. In this perspective, we also welcome submissions analyzing the thwarted attempts at exiting from authoritarian socialism, especially within the Eastern bloc before 1989.

These extrication processes can be analyzed from various angles, which the summer school will explore; especially, but not only:

- the institutional changes and transformation of political practices, elite changes or replacement. The main focus here will be put on the political system itself, the role and transformation of the police, security and military forces.
- the redefinition of national, ethnic, religious relations and identities, especially in the cases when the collapse of an authoritarian regime challenges the power of a group or of a foreign power in the country.
- the reorganization of social relations and hierarchies, reinsertion of people who had been repressed or isolated under an authoritarian system; cohabitation, confrontation with and integration of opposing social groups, seen as victims or beneficiaries of the former system.



- the transformation of the economic structures; decollectivization, privatization, liberalization policies, changes in the concept of property rights; the perception and appropriation of such policies by local actors; the emergence of new economic elites.
- remembering, judging and forgetting: trials or other forms of condemnation or stigmatization of those perceived as being responsible for the past; setting up mechanisms for forgiving and forgetting; silence and oblivion.
- the reassessment of cultural values, which entails at first lifting taboos, rejecting and subverting the cultural canon of the former regime, as well as returning to that past, either through pure nostalgia, or through a reflexion on the past; evolution of the forms, themes, goals and role of culture in the new social context.

The summer school will be devoted to the collapse of authoritarian socialist systems and their aftermath since 1945, but we also wish to compare these processes with those accompanying the end of other forms of authoritarian rule, from the end of Nazi Germany to the collapse of colonial rule. Those will be among the areas of expertise covered by the senior researchers invited to chair and guide the discussions. We also welcome submissions that include a comparative approach, be it across space or time. The goal of the summer school is not to focus solely on the years that immediately follow regime change, but to analyze its long-term consequences. Finally, this summer school will emphasize interdisciplinary approaches that combine perspectives and methods drawn from all social sciences and humanities.

The summer school is co-organised by the French-Russian Research Centre (CEFR, Moscow) and the Russian State Archives for Social and Political History (RGASPI, Moscow), in partnership with the Centre Marc Bloch (Berlin), the Institution of International Relations and European Civilizations (Paris I – Paris IV – CNRS), the Slavic History Research Centre (Paris I), the Centre of 20th Century Social History (Paris I – CNRS), the Centre for Russian, Caucasian and Central European Studies (CNRS – EHESS), the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, in Paris, and the Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU, Moscow), with the financial support of the Laboratory of Excellence Tepsis and heSam University (program Paris – New Worlds). It will be held on August 25th-31st, 2014, in Moscow. Senior researchers from France, Germany and Russia will be invited to discuss the papers submitted by young researchers. Moreover, the participation of the RGASPI will allow young researchers working on various countries to receive a thorough introduction into Soviet archival funds, including those not in Russian language and pertaining to the relations between the Soviet Communist Party and foreign governments, parties and organizations. One of the goals of the summer school is to make those archival funds widely known and to open them to as large a public as possible.

PhD. students and young researchers are invited to send their submissions, including a curriculum vitae and a proposal (2,000 words max.), to etemoscou2014@gmail.com before May 25th, 2014. The selection committee will inform the candidates of the results by June 15th, 2014. The candidates whose submission is accepted are expected to send a full-length paper by August 15th, 2014. All expenses will be covered by the summer school.

The texts and oral presentations can be in French, English or Russian. No knowledge of Russian is necessary.