

## **VI.2: CONFERENCE REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Call for Papers:**

**Radical Americas (Institute of the Americas, University College London,  
28-29 January 2013)**

"To be a radical is no more than... to go to the roots".  
José Martí, "A la raíz" in *Patria* (26 August, 1893)

In recent years, a significant body of research has been undertaken into the various historical, political and social contexts in which political radicalism has developed throughout the Americas. However, little effort has been made to highlight the benefits of comparative or transnational approaches to these developments.

This event (at UCL's new Institute of the Americas) will seek to address this problem by bringing a range of disciplinary and geographical perspectives to bear on the issue of radicalism in the Americas. It will consist of a two-day symposium designed to promote the existence of an international community of researchers whose work ranges in disciplinary focus from political science and international relations to history, literature, and cultural studies. A selection of papers stemming from the symposium will be submitted for a planned edited volume. In addition to the academic papers, there will be films, poetry and songs.

The proposed definition of "radicalism" is a broad one, encompassing both political radicalism as an object of study, and radical analytical approaches to societies and cultures of the Americas - in essence, any group or standpoint advocating fundamental change or reimagining of the status quo. We aim to begin with the democratic and republican radicalisms of the nineteenth century; to then move through the socialist, anarchist, communist, populist and social-democratic radicalisms of the early to mid twentieth century; finally, to confront identity politics, the New Left, social movements and contemporary state radicalisms.

The symposium aims to include papers ranging both geographically and temporally, and will encourage conversation between scholars working on specific national topics and those whose focus is comparative or transnational. Subjects might include:

- State and non-state radicalisms
- Anti-imperialism and solidarity movements
- Radical populism in contemporary and historical perspective
- Race and radicalism
- Radical art, literature, music and architecture
- The Cold War
- Feminist and LGBTQ activism

- Anti-radicalism and the contested nature of radicalisms
- National and transnational labour movements

If you wish to give a paper, please send a proposal of no more than 300 words along with a short CV to the contact details below. Papers should be of 20 minutes duration. There will be a number of travel bursaries available for postgraduate presenters, and information about accommodation options will be available shortly.

The deadline for abstracts is 30th September 2012 but we strongly encourage an early response.

Email: [radicalamericas@gmail.com](mailto:radicalamericas@gmail.com)

Twitter: @radicalamericas

Conference Website: <http://www.community-languages.org.uk/radical-americas/>

### **Call for Papers:**

**International Conference "Crisis and Mobilization since 1789" (*International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 22-24 February 2013*)**

Organized by the International Scholars' Network "History of Societies and Socialisms" (HOSAS)/H-Socialisms.

Organizers of the 2nd HOSAS conference, to be held in Amsterdam in February of 2013, welcome proposals from all fields of the social sciences and humanities from around the world that consider socialism and its relation to the conference theme – CRISIS AND MOBILIZATION SINCE 1789.

The political Left – mainstream socialists above all, but also anarchists, communists, feminists, and others – has played a central role throughout modern history in giving ACCESS TO DEMOCRACY and its benefits to ever widening portions of society. Socialists-especially those organized in Marxist-oriented European social democratic parties-proved adept at mobilizing popular support during political, economic, and other crises to push forward agendas aiming to combat the social inequalities created by industrial capitalism, to broaden citizenly enfranchisement in order to include formerly excluded groups (for example, wage-earning workers and women), and to pursue many other reformist or revolutionary goals. Geoff Eley's landmark study *Forging Democracy* (2002), is among the strongest recent arguments for the importance of the socialist Left in shaping and democratizing modern European history, particularly through its capacity for mobilizing in response to crisis. We are pleased that Eley will be present at the conference to give a key-note address and engage in a discussion of his theses.

Alongside impressive successes, resounding defeats and setbacks have characterized socialism's record in modern Europe and around the world. But until the late 1960s, conventional socialist or social democratic parties stood at the center of this drama and self-consciously led the European Left, while more revolutionary variants held sway in the "developing" world. Since the late 1960s, however, the socialist Left has declined in INFLUENCE due to the rise of identity and one-issue movements (for example, feminist and environmentalist movements), the changing geographies and modalities of the global economy and labor, the concomitant weakening of trade unions that had constituted socialism's traditional base of support in many countries, the final discrediting and collapse of

Soviet-style "real existing socialism" in Eastern Europe, the growing power of NEO-LIBERALISM as the ideology of the political mainstream, and other structural and contingent changes. These developments have challenged conventional socialist politics' claims to leadership of the political Left and have led many to question socialism's very relevance.

Since the 2008 onset of the current ECONOMIC CRISIS, critiques of capitalism-many of them invoking Marx and/or the socialist mobilizations of previous eras-have re-entered mainstream political debates in Europe and around the world. Scholarly discussions about this legacy and its contemporary relevance have also profited from a surge in interest. Not least, socialist parties have won some significant electoral contests, as they recently did in France. Yet in many places, conventional socialist or Leftist political parties still remain on the defensive and some of the most recent popular MOBILIZATIONS that challenge the political and economic status quo (for instance, the Occupy Movement) generally reject alliances or identification with established socialist politics.

In this climate, we think it timely to consider the HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF SOCIALISM – in all its diverse forms-through crisis and mobilization. We understand crisis in the broadest sense of the word, encompassing not just economic downturns, but also political, social, cultural, and environmental crises as well as war, famine, natural disasters, and other disruptions. Crises vary in scale too, from the global or continental level down to the local. By bringing together scholars from multiple disciplines who specialize in various time periods and places across the globe, and by opening broad temporal, comparative, and transnational vistas, we hope to update and enrich the scholarly conversation about socialism(s). Among the CORE QUESTIONS that we aim to address are:

- How have socialist politics developed historically as a response to crisis, broadly defined, and through mobilization?
- Why have certain people and movements in history self-identified as "socialist," and which theories and concepts have they drawn on?
- How and what did these people and movements learn from their activist experiences, and what are the memories and legacies of mass mobilization in times of crisis?
- What lessons - if any - do present-day activists and movements draw from the past, and how are various memories and myths appropriate to current debates and actions?
- To what extent have socialist mobilizations that respond to crisis displayed unique characteristics in the non-European/western or developing world?
- What have socialist mobilizations accomplished (or not accomplished) in attempting to redefine the relationships between the state and society and between society and capitalism?
- How has the recent economic crisis contributed to, or changed, socialist politics as well as our understanding of socialism as an aspect of European or global modernity?
- How have socialists (of any sort) stood in relation to other Leftist political groupings and/or non-Leftists in responding to crisis, both historically and today?
- To what extent does "socialism" remain a useful category for animating/galvanizing or studying mobilizations of a certain kind?

In addition to papers that address one or more of these questions, we invite papers or panels dealing with any of the following broad thematic areas in any part of the world that have relevance to the central conference theme:

- I. CAPITALISM IN CRISIS: Experiences, diagnoses and solutions, past and present
- II. RIOTS, REVOLTS, REVOLUTIONS: Violent reactions, street activisms, and their outcomes
- III. PARTIES, MOVEMENTS: Organisations, networks, and institutions
- IV. IDEAS, PROGRAMS: Analyses, ideologies, and remedies
- V. REBELS, LEADERS: Who is in charge, why and how?
- VI. ELITES, MASSES: Interests, alliances, and encounters

We invite both junior and senior scholars to present results of research, works-in-progress, or polished papers concerning these issues and others related to the general workshop theme. We are interested in receiving individual paper proposals and proposals for panel sessions. The organizers will consider publishing some of the contributions following the conference. Conference presentations will be 15 minutes in length.

Please email your proposal (English, 250-300 words) along with a brief (100 words max.) academic bio, to [H-SOCIALISMS@H-NET.MSU.EDU](mailto:H-SOCIALISMS@H-NET.MSU.EDU) by September 30, 2012.

Keynote speaker:

GEOFF ELEY (University of Michigan): Forging Democracy: On the history of the "Left", 1850-2000

The ORGANIZERS are:

Giovanni Bernardini, German-Italian Historical Institute - FBK, Trento, Italy

Christina Morina, Friedrich-Schiller University Jena, Germany

Jakub S. Benes, University of California, Davis, USA

Kasper Braskén, Abo Akademi University, Finland

For more information on HOSAS/H-SOCIALISMS, visit: [www.h-net.org/~socialisms/](http://www.h-net.org/~socialisms/)

### **Historical Materialism Conference 2011: Panels on the History of Communism.**

At the 8<sup>th</sup> Historical Materialism conference (London, 10-13 November 2011) a whole stream has been dedicated to the history of the communist movement in the interwar period. There were panels on different periods and policies of Comintern history, particular Communist leaders and movements in various countries, as well as ideological controversies within the movement. Speakers have included, amongst others, Paul LeBlanc, Lars T. Lih, Ben Lewis, Bryan Palmer, Ottokar Luban, Brigitte Studer, John Riddell, Kevin Morgan, Ian Birchall, Reiner Tosstorff, Florian Wilde, Marcel Bois, Bernhard H. Bayerlein, and several other distinguished scholars of interwar communism. A detailed report of the discussions by John Riddell can be read at <http://johnriddell.wordpress.com/2011/11/25/communist-history-debated-at-historical-materialism-london-conference/>.

### **Conference on the "Praxis School": Materials Online**

The Praxis School was a philosophical school of thought in 1960s-70s Communist Yugoslavia that tried to pursue an unorthodox, humanistic variant of Marxism against the essentially Marxist-Leninist Yugoslav mainstream. On 13-15 October 2011, the Southeast

Europe Office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation held a conference on the history of Praxis at the Croatian isle of Korčula, the historical place of the famous summer school that the Praxis group organised from 1963 to 1974 before having to succumb to the Communist Party's pressure. The conference, which brought together researchers of different generations as well as contemporary witnesses, is very well documented – the conference reader, single papers, and photo-/video-footage are available (in Croatian and German) at <http://korcula.rosalux.rs>.