

04.11. until 06.11.2020 in Hamburg, Germany

CfP: "In the Streets of Europe. Everyday life in European Metropolises after the First World War"

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Event language: English

Deadline for submissions: 15.03.2020

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Event location: Hamburg

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Out of the ashes of the First World War, a new political landscape of Europe arose with numerous challenges for every European. In the streets of the metropolises people came together, struggling to revive their former lives, but also demonstrating for a better future or even finding their way to other places after being uprooted or disillusioned by the contemporary political and social realities.

European metropolises and their lifelines, the streets, emerged as influential spaces in which Europeans voiced their dreams and hopes, but also found ways to express their frustration and anger. Here, Europeans (re-)created local identities, articulated inclusive or exclusive world views, lobbied for a violent revolution or the reestablishment of an old world order. In pubs and dance halls, clubs and theatres as well as leisure and work places they discussed their visions and lobbied for their understanding of a better future. In such private or semi-private spaces they raised questions of participation and integration or segregation and exclusion and offered different answers to current problems of daily life. Moreover, they began to create a vision of their life after the First World War and by doing so, not only influenced the private, but also the public sphere of the European metropolises.

This conference will explore this specific urban space and highlight the importance of metropolises and their streets in the numerous developments which shaped Europe after the war. It aims to study the daily struggle of the city dwellers and illuminate the different European experiences in the private and public urban spaces of the metropolises shortly after the war. The conference takes to the streets by making them the central starting point for an analysis of local processes as well as individual perspectives on daily life after the 'first catastrophe of the 20th century'.

By studying individual perspectives on a local/urban level, the conference wants to shed new light onto the ideas and visions of the upper class trader as well as the unemployed ex-soldier, the prisoner of war, women, members of ethnic or religious minorities (e.g. the Jewish minority) or other marginalized and/or persecuted

groups. Such an approach will help to generate new insights into the reality of many Europeans and illuminate the local processes, which have not been given much attention in the predominately national and politically-centered historiographies of Western scholarship.

Moreover, by using an intersectional approach, the conference aims to unearth the numerous relations and affiliations/belongings of many Europeans in the aftermath of the war and their relevance in creating new identities, power relations, but also in dealing with the daily struggles in the streets of Europe.

Thus, the conference focuses on the urban level and uses a micro-level approach in order to develop a new way for examining the period following the end of World War I. By studying individual perspectives and analyzing a variety of sources, e.g. autobiographical documents, newspapers and pamphlets, letters and reports, the conference brings peoples' dreams and hopes, but also their disillusionment and frustration to the forefront. This includes competing conceptions of life, the use of power and violence to create social or political order, the struggles to implement equality and emancipation or evolving transnational co-operations and migrations.

Therefore, the conference will reevaluate the impact of World War I, expand traditional research perspectives by focusing on the individual/private and local level, study the experiences and emotions as driving forces of changes or stability and question the traditional image of metropolises as laboratories of modern societies.

Possible topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Overcoming the war: Which possibilities and advantages did the metropolises offer? How did the different developments of the post-World War I era in Europe influence personal life? How did the people remember the war and what kind of conclusions did they draw from it? How were new visions of a better future connected to past experiences and how were they expressed on the streets, but also in the private sphere?
- Establishing/Inventing new identities: When and how were new identities envisioned and created? Were they based on particular conceptions of national or ethnic identity? Did they center on religious beliefs or on the ideas of democracy, Socialism or Communism? How were urban spaces used to create and envision such a new state of mind?
- Holding on to "the good old times": Who wanted to re-establish the pre-war political and social order? Which aspects of former times were missed? Which groups boycott the formation of the new post-war time and a new understanding of modern metropolises? Where did people manage to restore (parts of) the old life?
- Experiencing exclusion and persecution: When did certain groups lose their trust in the new post-1918 order? What kind of experiences of exclusion and persecution did they have? How did the urban spaces influence these processes of exclusion or persecution, or even emigration?
- Creating a transnational sphere: How did Europeans envision transnational cooperation after World War I? Did metropolises become symbols of a new union or an ongoing division in Europe? Or did metropolises and their new networks overcome former battle lines and create a new international arena of politics and culture?

Proposals should include the title, an abstract of 300 words and a short CV/biographical note. They should be sent by March 15, 2020 to the following e-mail: bjoern.siegel@igdj-hh.de and Christina.Lipke@uni-hamburg.de. Travel expenses and costs of accommodation will be reimbursed depending on the approval of pending funding applications.

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