

THE KNOWLEDGE FACTOR: Refugees in Central and Eastern Europe, 1912-2001.

CfP: The 2016 Annual Convention of the Leibniz Graduate School at the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe.

Deadline: 20 June 2016

Date: 8-9 December 2016

Location: Gisonenweg 5-7, 35037 Marburg, Germany.

In arguments about the current refugee crisis, East European heads of state have repeatedly claimed that their countries have never been perceived as desirable destinations; therefore, they shall never be such. We would like to take the occasion of the 2016 Annual Convention of the Leibniz Graduate School at the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe to investigate this claim. "The Knowledge Factor" offers an opportunity to discuss the history of refugees in, not from, Eastern Europe and the role knowledge inherent to or associated with refugees has played in the interaction with host societies. The focus lies on the twentieth century from the Balkan Wars of 1912 until its ultimate end in 2001.

For the purpose of this convention, we consider a refugee a person who involuntarily had to leave home due to political persecution, war, violence, breakdown of a political and social order as well as natural catastrophes. We are interested in the region that was once considered the Eastern bloc, i.e. East Central Europe and the successor states of the Soviet Union. Papers should interrogate the perception, integration, and adaptation of professional, scholarly, scientific, artistic and cultural knowledge and skills. They are not limited to but should seek answers to such questions as:

- When and why is knowledge specific to refugees appreciated, adapted or dismissed? Under which circumstances are refugees recognized – formally and informally – as professionals and experts? Which policies are enacted to deal with such recognition? In how far do these policies reflect geopolitical, ideological and cultural concepts?

- How do relations and interactions with the majority society impact the knowledge of refugees? How did the understanding of knowledge of and by refugees change between their departure and arrival in the host country? To what extent, for instance, were intellectuals seen as 'native informants' about their countries and regions of origin, disregarding the professional knowledge and expertise they had brought with them?
- What strategies do refugees pursue to integrate their knowledge into, adopt practices from or guard it against the majority society? How does knowledge allow refugees to maintain or advance their social status? And, by the same token, when does their refugee status disadvantage them regardless of level of skills and knowledge?
- What are the trajectories of interaction of the refugee knowledge with the knowledge of different groups in the host countries? Does this interaction take place in preexisting spaces or produce new ones?
- Under which circumstances does the refugee knowledge challenge accepted norms, stereotypes and prejudices in their host society? What does the interaction between the majority and refugees say about preexisting knowledge and its norms?

Critical analyzes should emphasize the historical dimension of this topic; the conference aspires to contribute to the history of science, post-colonial studies, and the socio-political as well as cultural history of the twentieth century. Whereas case studies should focus on Eastern Europe as destination and host country, we explicitly welcome papers on the global entanglements of the region and the inherent interdependence of its composing parts.

PhD students and Post-doctoral scholars are encouraged to apply. Please submit an abstract of no more than 350 words and a one-page-CV by **20 June 2016** to **jan.surman@herder-institut.de** and **victoria.harms@herder-institut.de**.

The Herder Institute provides accommodation; travel expenses will be partially or fully reimbursed. Participants, particularly from North America, are encouraged to seek additional funding.