Academic Authority and the Politics of Science and History in Eastern Europe

The workshop is the fifth in a series of sessions organized by the Erfurt/Leipzig/Moscow working group on Political Epistemologies of (Eastern) Europe and focuses on academic authority and the scholar as the central figure of knowledge production. Observing a basic diversity and continuous transformation of epistemologies along with the emergence as well as destabilization or decline of epistemic authorities, the workshop discusses the history of epistemological shifts in Central and Eastern Europe over the past fifty years. While directing its gaze at a recently contested expert of knowledge production – the scholar, it aims to investigate historical challenges of (academic) scholarship’s role as the paramount producer of scientific truth.

The workshop covers a broad spectrum of topics related to this field. We will analyze challenges, transitions, liminalities, and practices concentrating on the socialist and post-socialist systems of humanities in Eastern Germany, Russia, Hungary, Romania, Czechia and Poland.
Friday, March 20, 2020

14.00–14.45
Welcome and Introduction
Friedrich Cain (Erfurt), Dietlind Hüchtker (Leipzig), Karin Reichenbach (Leipzig)

14.45–16.15
Challenging Epistemologies
Chair: Karin Reichenbach (Leipzig)
Miglena Nikolchina (Sofia): Is Literary Theory Dead?
Andrea Pető (Budapest): Making Illiberal Memory Politics via Creating Alternative Systems and Institutions of Academic Authority
Comment: Jan Surman (Moscow)

16.15–16.45 Coffee Break

16.45–18.15
Academic Authority: Politics and Media Practices
Chair: Friedrich Cain (Erfurt)
Anna Mazanik (Munich): Climate Change Communication and the Soviet Media during the Détente
Doubravka Olšáková (Prague): Who Owns the Knowledge? Travelling »Knowledgeable Bodies«
Comment: Bernhard Kleeberg (Erfurt)

Saturday, March 21, 2020

9.30–11.45
Transitional Authority and Scholars
Chair: Dietlind Hüchtker (Leipzig)
Anne Kluger (Münster): »Honecker’s Vassal« or a Prehistorian in Service of Science? The Concept of »the Scholar« in the Debate on Joachim Herrmann and the Evaluation of Former East-German Researchers in Reunified Germany
Ionuț Mircea Marcu (Bucharest): The Historiographical Field in Post-Socialist Romania: Institutions, Careers and Epistemic Innovations
Ella Rossman (Moscow): Gender and Gender History in Post-Soviet Russia: Depoliticization of Terminology and Disciplinary Marginalization
Comment: Friedrich Cain (Erfurt)

11.45–12.45 Coffee Break with Refreshments

12.45–14.45
Liminalities of Academic Knowledge
Chair: Bernhard Kleeberg (Erfurt)
Michał Pawleta (Poznań): In the Shadow of the Present Past: The New Approach of the Contemporary Poles to the Past
Andreas Langenohl (Gießen): History and the Memory Wars of the Wild 1990s: The Case of Russia
Comment: Karin Reichenbach (Leipzig)

14.15–15.00
Conclusions and Perspectives
Anna Echterhölter (Vienna), Bernhard Kleeberg (Erfurt), Jan Surman (Moscow)