

**Executive Unit for Financing Higher
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**Romanian Academy, A. D. Xenopol – Institute
of History, Department for History of
International Relations, Iași**

**The Institute for the Investigation of
Communist Crimes and the Memory of the
Romanian Exile, Bucharest**

Call for Papers

The Countryside and Communism in Eastern Europe: Perceptions, Attitudes, Propaganda

Sibiu, 25 to 26 September 2015

Circular no. 1

Generally, studies on communism in Eastern Europe have focused mainly on various political history topics – the establishment of the new totalitarian regimes, the elimination of democratic order, the repression, the anticommunist resistance – while disregarding the many aspects of social and cultural history in general and, in particular, the transformations in the rural world. Among the latter, the collectivization of agriculture holds a central position. The need for historiographical betterment in this sphere of knowledge is all the more urgent as many impressive theoretical and methodological surveys have been published in recent years, dedicated to social and cultural history, and, at the same time, the opening of important archive collections related to the early history of communism in the states of the former “cordon sanitaire” provides the documentary material required for applied research. Given these preliminary findings, the conference organizers seek to provide the framework for discussing issues related to understanding how communist ideology was perceived by the peasants, the interaction between theoretical and ideological Stalinist communist prescripts and the real expectations of the rural world after the end of World War II, understanding the general and specific features of each country of the “Socialist Bloc” from the rural communist transformation point of view. From a comparative perspective, we consider it a matter of priority to research into the manner in which peasants regarded communism, the means of persuasion used, the reactions to the propaganda clichés, the perception of the various “changes” brought by the new totalitarian Soviet regimes etc.

The conference offers a comparative perspective regarding the communist transformation of the rural world within “Soviet Bloc” countries, mainly focusing on:

- Representations of the rural world in the official discourse of the “Eastern Bloc”;
- Political strategies of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe for the rural world; the case of the “comrades”;
- Organization and political practices within the rural areas of the “Eastern Bloc”;

- The image and perception of communism in the rural area;
- Rural elites and communism;
- Party organizations in the rural world; Perceptions of the communist activist in villages;
- Rural mass organizations;
- Political instruments of the communist regimes for transforming the village: between coercion and persuasion. Communist propaganda and agitation in the rural world;
- The propaganda speech; Communist propaganda themes and clichés in the rural world;
- Village political and cultural institutions; Community homes and “cultural” education;
- Social change and rural mentality;
- Work at the kolkhoz: recollections of the everyday life of peasants in Eastern Europe
- Effects of the communist transformation of the rural world.

The presentations at the conference will be in English.

The papers submitted will be subject to a peer-review evaluation.

The papers presented at the conference will be evaluated, peer-reviewed and published in a collective volume by LIT Publishing House in Germany.

The papers, written in English, shall not exceed 15,000 words, and quote rules will be communicated after the paper's acceptance.

Organizers will arrange accommodation and meals, as well as publishing the conference proceedings in a volume.

Please send the details of your papers by 31 January 2015 (title and an abstract not longer than 300 words) at communism.conference.2015@gmail.com. The decision will be notified by 15 February 2015.

The deadline for sending the papers: 30 June 2015.

The contacts are: Sorin Radu (sorin.radu@ulbsibiu.ro), Hans Christian Maner (maner@uni-mainz.de); Flavius Solomon (flavius.solomon@yahoo.de); Cosmin Budeancă (cosmin.budeanca@iiccmer.com).

We look forward to your contributions. Please contact us for any additional information and clarifications.

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