



International Conference

Monuments for World War II: Memory and Oblivion in the Balkans and Central-East Europe

Memory and oblivion were key factors for moral and social reconstruction and stability in post-war Europe. Managing recent memories was not an easy task, as it was difficult to build a narration based on “Us” and “Others” after the German occupation. Under this light, one of the most delicate issues that soon arose was the erection of public monuments. Which moments of its recent history should each nation forget, and which were worthy of remembering and celebrating in the public domain? Decisions were tough, as recent events affected parts of the population in different ways, even within the same nation. Things were even more complicated in cases like Greece, where World War II was followed by a fierce Civil War (1946-1949), which is seen today as the first act of collision between the two victorious ideologies of Communism and Capitalism. The Cold War dynamics affected not only Greece, but all European countries in different ways. Essentially, the national identity of each state was renegotiated, under the light of the new international political coalitions. The memory of the recent past was central in these procedures.

This conference aims at highlighting the processes of remembering and of forgetting World War II in the Balkans and East-Central Europe by examining public monuments erected since 1945. The conference is addressing, but is not limited to, the following questions:

What were the dynamics for remembering World War II in Balkan countries and in East-Central Europe? Which events/persons were commemorated, in which period and why?

Which specific historical conditions and political necessities fueled the erection of public monuments in each case?

How was the “de-Nazification” of societies reflected in monuments and the public sphere?

When did monuments about the Holocaust begin to be erected, which events/persons connected to it are remembered and which is the preferred style in each case?



How are monuments of the Soviet era about World War II remembered today?

Interested contributors are invited to send proposals (500 words maximum) for a 20-minute presentation, along with a short CV (350 words maximum) in the same document. Proposals should be sent to the organizing committee (warsmonuments@gmail.com) by March 31, 2023. Selected contributors should submit their final manuscript (5.000-7.000 words, footnotes included) and PowerPoint presentation one week before the conference and should have acquired permission for publication of images for an open-access digital publication by January 2024. The conference will be conducted in English. All applicants will be notified by April 24, 2023 regarding acceptance of their proposal.

The conference will take place on November 23 and 24, 2023 in Athens, Greece. It is part of the research project "WaRs: War and Resistance Monuments in Greece: Documentation of and Historical Approach to Public Monuments, 1945-today" at the University of Ioannina (Greece), funded by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation.

Organizing committee:

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