

Abstracts

Manuel Sarrazin

German-Greek History Policy: No Future without a new Approach to History

80 years after the German invasion of Greece, war and occupation are still an important topic for the German-Greek bilateral relations. Especially the question of war reparations is broadly debated and discussed among and between the societies. Especially after the German-Greek clashes over the right politics regarding the so-called Euro-crisis after the 2009 Greek bailout, the topic became relevant for headlines in both countries again. While German governments for decades were only roughly neglecting the Greek claims for a financial compensation of the state, now it is time to rethink this approach and to find a new way for a German-Greek rapprochement in history politics and to solve the historical and morale duties of Germany in a better, but realistic way.

Maria Todorova

Southeast European Studies between Debates and Trends

This text is an edited version of a keynote delivered at the Fritz Exner Colloquium at the Vadrina University in October 2021. The article, conceived as a brief state-of-the-art survey, is structured in the following way. It first tackles the discrepancy between the concepts Balkan and Southeast European as well as how their understanding inflects the respective Balkan or Southeast European Studies. Secondly, the text focuses on the gradual institutionalization of teaching and research about the region, on the balance between internal and external factors, and on the dominant constellations that are the object of lively scholarly involvement and re-interpretation. Thirdly, it deals with some of the explicit and implicit debates that have fueled the study of the region.

Wolfgang Höpken

Southeast European Studies: Usurpation and Scientification – Theories and Paradigms

From its onset, Southeast European Studies (Südostforschung) have always been a “political science”. Serving and mobilizing political interests stood next to its claims as an academic discipline. When “Südostforschung” was re-institutionalized after World War II, by and large under the auspices of personnel and conceptional continuity, it defined itself as an independent discipline. Only since the 1970s did it start to free itself from the Procu-

stean bed and the isolation of “regional studies”. Having increasingly integrated itself in the theories and concepts of the general Historical and Social Sciences, Southeast European Studies have become much more pluralized in its conceptional approaches to the region and its history. Due primarily to the influence of a post-structuralist and post-colonial critique this development contributed to a neglect of “society” as a conceptional category while questions of Southeast-European “path-dependencies” as a European “history-region” were overlooked.

Barbara Törnquist-Plewa

Populist Memory Discourses in Contemporary East Central and Southeastern Europe – Their Roots and Main Features

The article discusses the nationalist right-wing memory discourses in contemporary East Central and Southeastern Europe. It points out their main features such as: nationalization, re-nationalization, securitization, victimization, and weaponization of the Communist and post-Communist past. The focus is to explain the historical and cultural roots of these memory discourses, which are of vital importance for understanding the rise of the right-wing populism in the region. Moreover, the article shows that the right-wing memory discourses include a number of elements that are typical for populism as political style, such as the appeal to “the people” put against “the elite”, the Manichean vision of the world and strategic soliciting of emotions.

Ferenc Laczó

Outrageous History – Historical Visions, Emotional Regimes, and Right-Wing Populist Hegemony in Hungary

The paper offers thoughts on the regime debate that has been pursued in Hungary throughout the 2010s and draws conclusions regarding the logic of Viktor Orbán’s rule; briefly elucidates three key pillars of a new-old historical-political vision that Hungary’s current rulers have endorsed and propagated to establish right-wing populist hegemony; and zooms in on the specific emotional regime this new-old historical vision helps to foster. It argues that Fidesz’s rule is better understood as a specific manner of doing politics than a fixed regime type. It shows that the new-old vision of history that has come to acquire ever more symbolic and institutional support in the country points to a restoration of national pride and sovereignty, ethnic nationalism across borders, and an anti-leftist and anti-liberal cultural crusade of sorts. I suggest that propagating visions of injustice contributes to a right-wing populist emotional regime revolving around moral outrage. I also claim that Fidesz’s method of doing politics has a radicalizing logic. As the party’s hegemonic rule increasingly turns into monopolistic control, the right-wing populist identification with the people appears to become less persuasive.