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Special issue:

TIME, SPACE AND AGENCY IN (POST)SOCIALIST FESTIVE CULTURE

Guest editors:

Ludmila Cojocari, ProMemoria Institute of Social History, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
&
Jennifer R. Cash, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Salle, Germany

CALL FOR PAPERS

As historical studies have shown, the socialist state attempted to mobilise citizens to make new nations, as well as construct of socialist modernities, through festive culture. More than just a means “to bring cultural and social enlightenment to the people” (Petronne 2000), public holidays were opportunities “to temporarily empower the participants by drawing them into the network of Soviet existence” (Chatterjee 2002). Amid often violent transformations and rapid changes, the celebratory discourse was intended to provide relaxation, entertainment, education and ideologisation, and was expected to improve quality of life, industrial productivity, state legitimacy, and national and socialist collective identities (Binns 1979, Lane 1981). Despite these efforts, the Communist Party’s ideologues were not able to fully supervise the narratives, symbols and images perceived and selected by collective conscience from the official rhetoric they created and, subsequently, articulated by the social memory of several generations. Sometimes the entrepreneurs of festive culture pursued aims that were clearly at odds with official state intentions, but, as Yurchak (2007) has shown, even key agents of social change were not always aware of the potential effects of their actions.

This themed issue of *Interstitio* focuses on the complexity of official celebrations through the dimensions of time, space and agency. The aim is to reveal the multiple voices of memory, strategies of building/contesting new collective identity, emotional feelings of political fear/loyalty, nostalgic remembrances and, especially, the silent experiences that emerged in the relationship between “political leaders” and “ordinary people”, as they are reflected in the ambiguous process of building (post)socialist festive culture. The editors invite prospective authors to consider how celebrations offered space and created time for resistance, loyalty or escape; how they served as frames for hope, solidarity and remembrance; how socialist performances changed people’s views of their own pasts and identities; and how the propagandistic traits of festive culture have been revived, forgotten or marginalised since 1991.

We thus encourage the submission of papers that explore the images, symbols and meanings of public holidays through a concrete focus on the historical emergence of holidays, and the individuals who created, implemented, celebrated or ignored them. Papers should focus on the use of holidays by official governments and/or other agents, and their motivations and effects, and should be based on ethnographic fieldwork and/or historical sources. The editors are also interested in innovative approaches to the methodological complexities posed by the historical-comparative nature of this theme, and encourage authors to consider how (post)socialist festive culture compares with those found outside the region.

Suggested focus questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *What were/are the limits of festive culture in shaping social realities?*
- *How did either the producers or the consumers of festive culture adapt to the limits imposed by (post)socialist cultural policies?*

- *How did/do ordinary people perceive the festive culture products sanctioned and promoted by the (post)socialist regimes?*
- *What practices of adaptation, negotiation or resistance can be discerned, and how influential were they in undermining the legitimacy of (post)socialist nation-building?*
- *What historical narratives and systems of memory have supported the on-going formation of (post)socialist festive culture?*
- *What were the (post)socialist transformations in the case of religious or traditional feasts?*
- *How did folklore and folklorists transform socialism and the socialist state?*
- *How can the revival of soviet ideological patterns in the festive culture after socialism be explained?*

Important dates:

- Submission deadline for abstracts: **6 April 2012**
- Submission deadline for papers: **31 May 2012**
- Target publication date: **10 September 2012**

How to submit:

Manuscripts should be submitted electronically as an email attachment in MS Word format at interstitio@promemoria.md.

Instructions to prospective authors:

Submissions should follow the author guidelines available on the journal's website <http://promemoria.md/publicatii/interstitio/>.

About the journal:

Interstitio. East European Review of Historical and Cultural Anthropology (ISSN: 1857-049X) is a peer-reviewed journal published by the "ProMemoria" Institute of Social History at the Moldova State University, in cooperation with the Institute of History of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Silesia. The journal provides a forum for discussion on topics of mutual interest to scholars from the field of historical and cultural anthropology, and aims to foster interdisciplinary research at the crossroads of history, culture and anthropology. Editors welcome papers (empirical research and/or theoretical reflection) concerning Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the perspective of historical and cultural anthropology.

Contact:

For any queries, please email the guest editors at lcojocari@gmail.com and cash@eth.mpg.de.