

## Call for Papers

### *Seventy Years since World War II - Seven Decades of Shifting Boundaries in Eastern Europe*

Tel Aviv University – December 16-17, 2015

Organized by the Inter University Partnership in Russian and East European Studies

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The Cummings Center for Russian and East European Studies

The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism

The year 1945 denoted the victory of good over evil, of humanity over cruelty, of hope over ultimate suffering. Maintaining peace, security and respect for human rights was the goal of the victors, as declared in the charter of the new international body - the United Nations. Yet, quite soon after this triumph, and some would say even before May 1945, the war-time boundaries between “us” and “them” started shifting rapidly. Nowhere was this process more apparent than in East-Central Europe: countries which belonged to the Axis joined the NATO pact, while the USSR, recently an Ally, cast its domination over East European states, where “people’s democracy” regimes were established under Soviet aegis. Moreover, post-war agreements shifted state boundaries and displaced whole populations to suit the new geo-political map, thus complicating even more the already tense inter-group relations. The Jewish population, once a significant share of Central European populace, practically disappeared from the map. Alongside changes in political borders, there emerged new economic and cultural boundaries, as with the formation of the Communist bloc two different social systems established themselves one next to the other in the middle of Europe (and elsewhere in the world). Indeed, the Communist Bloc was not only about politics, but represented a set of distinctive social and economic norms, where relations between “citizen” and “state,” “person” and society” played completely different roles from the ones the same relations played west of the “Iron Curtain.”

The war also redefined other, more subtle areas of human activity, such as science, art, memory and identity. The long wartime years influenced age and gender boundaries, as women

and young people joined work and combat forces, while men who spent years in a male environment returned to altered communities. The war affected every group in society and simultaneously drew all of them to participate in it. When the war was over and people returned home, it became clear that it was not enough to restore peace, security and respect for “human rights” - states and leaders were called to ensure health, housing and old age support, as part of dealing with the personal and collective trauma their people experienced. It was also apparent quite early on during the war that technology played a central role in the battle, and the struggle for technological superiority continued and even intensified during the Cold War years.

This conference aims to reexamine the impact of World War II on national, political, economic, social and conceptual boundaries, focusing on events in East-Central Europe. It wishes to bring together researchers from different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and a variety of perspectives and viewpoints on the study of Eastern Europe during and after WWII, in order to look into long-term and deep changes that occurred in this region as a result of the war. While the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc did erase some of the old borders, a wide range of demarcation lines remain, and they affect the way those countries deal with the challenges they face today.

If you are interested in presenting a paper at this conference, please send a 250 word-long abstract and a short C.V. to the following e-mail address: [iuap@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:iuap@post.tau.ac.il).

Deadline for applications: November 1, 2015.

\*The conference will be held in English