

CALL FOR PAPERS:

Central Europe and Balkan Muslims: Relations and Representations

Prague, October 2-3, 2017

LOCATION: Villa Lanna
V Sadech 1
Prague 6

ORGANIZER: Institute of History – Czech Academy of Sciences
in cooperation
with the Institute of Ethnology – Czech Academy of Sciences

LANGUAGE: English

The inhabitants of Central Europe have a long and rich history of encounters and relations with the geographically closest Muslim populations – the Muslims of the Balkans (Bosniaks, Turks, Albanians and others). The early modern era was marked by the Habsburg-Ottoman wars as well as coexistence in the border areas of the two empires. In the 19th century, the anti-Ottoman uprisings and wars, leading to the establishment of Balkan national states, were closely followed in Central Europe. In arts and literature, this was a period of Orientalism and romanticism, of increasing popularity of travelogues as well as intense scholarly research. The Habsburg presence in Bosnia and Hercegovina after 1878 in many ways represented a culmination of encounters between the inhabitants of Central Europe and Balkan Muslims. Relations between Central Europe and the Muslims of the Balkans remained intense even after the break-up of the Habsburg monarchy and the establishment of new national states. After the Second World War, immigration of Balkan Muslims, along with other populations of the region, caused by economic as well as political factors, represented a new development. At the same time, with the rapid spread of mass tourism, citizens of Central European countries on both sides of the former "Iron Curtain" gained first-hand experience of Balkan Muslims and their culture. This rich history and present has been mirrored by the existence of abundant and diverse representations of Balkan Muslims in literature, visual arts, media, folklore and popular imagination. However, research of various aspects of these relations and representations has been often marked by insufficient communication between various disciplines (political history, art history, ethnology etc.) and the prevailing self-centeredness of national academic environments. Most recently, the long-established links between Central Europe and Balkan Muslims are being increasingly overshadowed and misrepresented by stereotypical and emotionally charged debates about radical Islam, terrorism and immigration.

The aim of our conference is to bring together a group of scholars from various fields (primarily historians, ethnologists, social anthropologists, literary scholars, art historians and sociologists) and several Central European countries in order to stimulate an interdisciplinary debate. It should contribute to the awareness of similarities between representations and discourses evolving around Balkan Muslims which can be labelled as "shared" and "typical" for much of Central Europe as well as highlight the specificities characteristic for particular national environments and disciplines. The main focus is on modern history (late Habsburg empire, 20th century) and present. However, attention will also be paid to the time of Habsburg-Ottoman wars and coexistence in the early modern era as a formative experience.

The terms "Central Europe" and "Balkan" are used for practical purposes, in a non-dogmatic way. The Balkans can stretch anywhere between the Black Sea and the Adriatic, Bosphorus and Danube. When referring to Central Europe, we primarily have in mind the post-Habsburg space (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland). The Muslims in question are Bosniaks, Albanians, Turks and smaller groups such as Pomaks, Roma and others, living in Southeastern Europe. For our purposes, the term "Balkan Muslim" is not limited only to those who practice Islam as a religion but also includes secular people of Muslim family and cultural background.

POSSIBLE TOPICS OF INTEREST INCLUDE, BUT ARE NO LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

- Legacy of the Habsburg-Ottoman conflicts and coexistence in the Early Modern Era
- The Habsburg presence in Bosnia and Hercegovina
- Bosnian Muslims before 1918 as "Turks", "loyal Habsburg subjects" and "Slavic brothers"
- Representations of Balkan Muslims in Central Europe (travellogues, literature, arts...)
- Central Europe and its inhabitants in the eyes of Balkan Muslims
- Relations and Representations in times of conflict (e. g. WWI, WWII, the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina in the 1990s)
- Gastarbeiters and Refugees from the Balkans in Central Europe
- Post-1989 images and stereotypes of Balkan Muslims in Central Europe
- Instrumentalisation of history and the idea of "antemurale" in recent debates on Islam, immigration crisis and "the fortress of Europe"
- New Research on Balkan Muslims conducted in Central Europe
- Theoretical and methodological debates

Contributions will be published in an edited volume by the Institute of History –
– Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, in 2018.

Application should include name, academic title or titles, institutional affiliation and abstract (cca 300 words).

There is no participation fee. Selected participants will be informed about accommodation details soon after the deadline.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION: May 15, 2017.

Send your proposal to:
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