



International Scholarly Conference

STALINISM AND WAR

24-26 May 2016, Moscow

Organizers

International Center for the History and Sociology of World War II and Its Consequences
National Research University – Higher School of Economics (Moscow)

and Friedrich Ebert Foundation

with additional support from Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC), German Historical Institute (Moscow), Blavatnik Family Foundation, French-Russian Research Centre in Moscow and Centre for Russian, Caucasian and Central European studies (Paris).

Call for Papers

How was the Soviet system and Stalinism made and remade by war? This conference seeks to gain new understandings of Stalinism—seen both as a system of rule and an extended era of Soviet history—by interrogating its relationship to war. War signifies both military struggle and militarization, closely tied to political, ideological, and economic phenomena. But also wars and their consequences formed a crucible for the creation and transformation of the Soviet system and Stalinism. We intend to examine this interrelationship by focusing above all on the period of World War II.

World War II remains strangely disconnected from the grand narratives of Soviet history. For decades, historians of Stalinism have focused primarily on the prewar 1930s and, more recently, on late Stalinism. Even as scholars have lately investigated the war years in far more detail, the war remains to be interrogated as a central and unique lens through which to ask big questions about Stalinism itself. The major goal of this conference, therefore, is to bring the relationship between war and Stalinism into the center of international scholarly attention by focusing on three major problems of interpretation. **First**, we ask how war was related to Stalinism as a system of political, ideological, economic, and cultural power that was centrally concerned with reshaping society and mobilizing people. **Second**, we wish to probe how the Soviet system

adapted to the German-Soviet war, an existential threat to the continued existence of the Soviet state, and to which degree the Stalinist system was legitimized by victory. **Third**, we wish to inquire how the sudden removal of Stalin and Stalinism on a huge swathe of Soviet territory occupied by the Nazis profoundly affected the evolution of power and people. In this sense, war was a moment of truth. It exposed the degree of the sovietization, the importance of repressive and promotional strategies of the party-state, and entailed often unintended consequences for social groups, nationalities, generations, and populations. This conference's in-depth investigation of World War II will be placed in the larger context of the relationship between the Soviet system and the wars of the twentieth century. Thus, we also intend to consider how the crystallization, evolution, and apogee of the Stalinist system were intertwined with a series of wars in the first half of the twentieth century including World War I and the Civil War, as well as how the onset of the Cold War after 1945 affected the direction of late Stalinism.

The conference hopes to attract papers that discuss the following questions:

- How did "Stalinism" adapt to meet the wartime crisis, domestically and internationally?
- Which elements of the Stalin system remain constant even under profound challenge, and how did the war alter Soviet state and society most?
- What compromises did the regime make when its existence was in doubt, and how did the tendencies of both unprecedented centralization and de facto decentralization influence the evolution of the Soviet economic, political, and administrative systems?
- How did the service of millions of peasants in the Red Army affect their "sovietization"?
- In what ways did international politics and the Grand Alliance link with or disrupt domestic Soviet policies?
- How was the Soviet rear and wartime Soviet policies "entangled" with what was going on in the occupied territories?
- How do recent advances in the study of the USSR as a multinational state and in the study of Soviet nationalities policy affect our understandings of the war?
- How do Soviet reactions to the Holocaust and the evolution of the "Jewish question" during the war fit in the broader context of the Soviet "imperial" and multinational state?

We invite creative responses to these sets of problems and call on scholars from all disciplines to adapt and interpret the conference's framework imaginatively and in terms of their own original research.

The working languages of the conference will be Russian and English.

The **deadline** for submitting paper proposals (in English or Russian) is **1 November 2015**. Successful applicants will be notified by **1 December 2015**.

Submissions should include (1) the name of the applicant, institutional affiliation, postal and electronic addresses; (2) a brief CV; (3) a short statement explaining how the applicant's research relates to the conference topic; (4) a one-page outline of the paper. Proposals are invited in Russian or English and can be for both individual papers and panels. Proposals and inquiries should be e-mailed to: worldwar2@hse.ru

The organizers will assist international participants with obtaining visa invitations to Russia. Meals (coffee breaks, lunches) will be provided. The conference organizers have limited funds to cover (partially or in full) participants' airfare and accommodation costs for the duration of the

conference. We ask prospective participants who will need financial assistance to indicate this in their submissions.

Program Committee of the Conference

- Alain Blum, Research Fellow, School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (CNRS, Paris) and French-Russian Research Center (Moscow)
- Oleg Budnitskij, Professor of History, and Director of the International Center for the History and Sociology of World War II and Its Consequences, National Research University - Higher School of Economics
- Michael David-Fox, Professor of History, Georgetown University, and Academic Advisor, International Center for the History and Sociology of World War II and Its Consequences, National Research University - Higher School of Economics
- Sheila Fitzpatrick, Emerita Professor at the University of Chicago and Honorary Professor at the University of Sydney
- Yoram Gorlizki, Professor of Politics, Manchester University
- Oleg Khlevniuk, Leading Research Fellow, International Center for the History and Sociology of World War II and its Consequences, and Professor of History, National Research University - Higher School of Economics
- Stephen Kotkin, Professor of History, Princeton University
- Tanja Penter, Professor for East European History, Heidelberg University

This event is intended to build on and extend a series of major international conferences organized by the International Center for the History and Sociology of World War II and Its Consequences of the Higher School of Economics: “World War II, Nazi Crimes, and the Holocaust in the USSR” (2012); “Russia in the First World War” (2014); “Europe, 1945: Liberation, Occupation, Retribution” (2015).