

Call for Abstracts

Conference: Dealing with the Past: Social Movements in Kosovo in socialism and 1990s
6-8 October, 2017, Prishtina, Kosovo

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of student demonstration of 1997 in Prishtina, Kosovo, Alter Habitus, the Center for Southeast European Studies (University of Graz) and University of Prishtina are organizing a conference on social movements in Kosovo, during and after socialism. Scholars of social sciences and humanities, civil society activists and artists are invited to discuss and participate in the conference.

After WWII, social movements in Kosovo within the socialist Yugoslavia were mainly organized through underground groups known as *Ilegalja* which articulated the demands of the movement through the distribution of leaflets, organization of meetings and demonstrations. Students also had a significant role in organizing and supporting demonstrations. After the abolishment of Kosovo's autonomy in 1989, while underground groups still existed, public political expression was organized and controlled by the Democratic League of Kosovo (*Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës – LDK*), the dominant political party at the time.

One can trace four waves of demonstrations in Kosovo, which have had a significant meaning in displaying the political disparities but also reflecting the changing ideologies of the periods in question – the demonstrations of 1968, 1981, 1988 and 1997. While the 1968 protests in Yugoslavia were of a more social nature, the 1968 protests in Kosovo were both social and national. In Albanian scholarly literature these protests are given largely only a national dimension, while the social and class element that they had is ignored. When discussed in the Yugoslav frame of social movements, another trend dominates; namely, the social dimension of the protests is highlighted while the Kosovo demonstrations are mainly neglected. Each of the four demonstrations had several layers through which certain goals were attempted to be reached and had a different impact on society and politics. The massive student demonstration of 1 October 1997, apart from requesting the right to education, was also significant because it broke the long status quo of peaceful passive resistance supported and encouraged at that time by President Ibrahim Rugova and LDK.

A discussion about social movements in Kosovo during socialism and 1990s will shed a light to the overall discussion on social movements, as well as social and political inequality in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the discussion will also open spaces for revisiting research methodologies conducted so far in researching social movements and discuss new spaces that would eradicate politicization of history. Questions to be explored:

- What role did social movements play in emancipating people's democratic values in relation to the state?
- How can these demonstrations be compared, what are continuities, what has changed over time?

- How did they relate to the overall Yugoslav developments?
- How were they perceived by other social activists, and dissidents, elsewhere in Yugoslavia?
- What was the impact of social movements in identity construction?
- Is there a social emancipation moment in nationalist motivated activities?
- How were these demonstrations portrayed in the press of these periods?
- How did the main carriers of social movements in Kosovo perceive socialism?
- What were the ideological constraints reflected through demonstrations and how different were they from other territories of Yugoslavia?
- What was the gender dimension of social movements in Kosovo?
- What was the women's contribution in social movements?
- What was the impact of diaspora in social movements?
- What was the aesthetics of demonstrations?
- How do we research social movements in Kosovo?
- How are the demonstrations remembered and shaped within collective memory?

The abstract with paper title and the name of the author, maximum 300 words, together with a short biography of the author, should be submitted to alterhabitus@gmail.com, by 20th of April 2017. Notification for acceptance of abstracts will be on 30th of April 2017.

Reviewing committee:

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