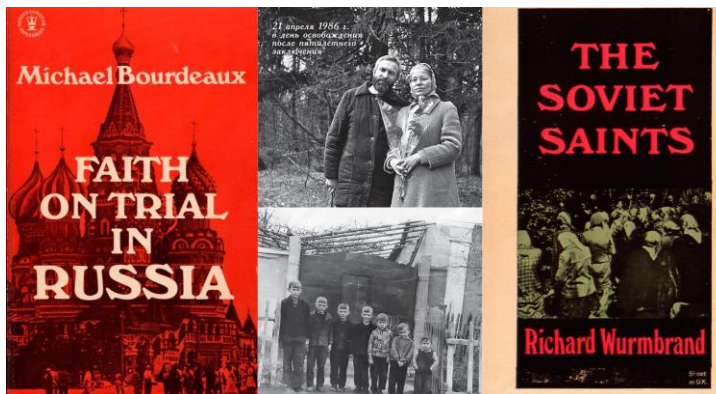


Workshop

The 'Underground Church' in Transnational Perspective: Soviet Baptists and the Cold War



May 10th, 2019

16.30

Institute of East European
History, Seminarraum

DISCUSSANT:

Prof. Wolfgang Mueller

Since the mid-1960s the concept of “underground Church” existing in the countries of the communist block has attained an international resonance. The focus of attention of the Western general public concentrated on the representatives of one of smaller groups of Soviet Christians with a puzzling name “Evangelical Christians-Baptists” known as “Initiativniki” also. How the stories of persecutions/sufferings of Christians were crossing the Iron Curtain and were refracted through the lens of the Cold War is going to be discussed during the workshop.

Dr. Miriam Dobson (University of Sheffield) in her paper 'Writing about the Russian Baptists in North America: The activism and fiction of Myrna Grant and Anita Deyneka' will talk about some of the undertakings of the two American female activists, who decided to support Baptists in the Soviet Union. **Dr. Nadezhda Beliakova** (Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences) in her talk 'The first official visit of Danish Baptists to the USSR in January 1971' is going to examine reports of the soviet Baptist leaders on a tour of international Baptist activists and its political sense, presented to Soviet bureaucrats. The proposed micro-plots on religious activism will provide an opportunity to look at some of the marginal religious minorities in the transnational context of the Cold War and raise the issue of the peculiarity of information refraction in the course of its crossing the Iron Curtain.

The workshop is organized as part of a research project of Dr. Nadezhda Beliakova on “Religious Encounters through the Iron Curtain. The role of Neutral States in religious contacts during the Cold War” supported by the JESH. With kind support by the “Joint Excellence in Science and the Humanities” program of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.