

Proofread

ISHD-Session: Progressive Narratives in the Post-Cold War Era
Organizers: Prof. Dr. Markus Furrer & Prof. Dr. Barnabás Vajda

Proposal:

With the end of the Cold War the supporting narratives of progress collapsed – the liberal-capitalistic one and the one of a communist planned economy. The commitment to modernize the world was practically a norm without alternative in the era of the Cold War which was now dissolving (Aleida Assmann). As dichotomous as the contrasts between the two systems appeared to be, both ideologies were oriented towards a modernization theory. From there the points of contact between both ideological conceptions originated in the Enlightenment (Eric Hobsbawm). With the collapse of the (real)-socialist model, the way the Soviet Union and the states under its dominion embodied it; the Eastern option of the modernization paradigm was abruptly devalued. Post-modern views also afflicted the liberal-capitalistic model and shed fundamental doubt on its teleological orientation. In the post-phase of the Cold War the narratives of progress were replaced by a confusing multiplicity of histories and partial narrations, which helps explain the current boom for memory and history. Closely linked to this is a crisis of modernity, of orientation and also of identity within which action-guiding maxims were searched for, since the up to now valid rules had lost their matter-of-factness.

We have to ask if “progress” in history has petered out. But we also know that “progress” as a figure of thinking is a social reality (Jörn Rüsen). For young people progress is combined with personal hope for a better life with chances in the future. It becomes a stimulus for living. Therefore by teaching history in classes it can't be neglected that historical experience and knowledge is combined with the idea of progress.

For this session we ask for contributions (basing on content analyses of textbooks and teaching materials and also analyses of lessons) dealing with the following questions:

- How do actual textbooks deal with the end of progressive narratives since the end of the Cold War?
- How do textbooks deal with the actual phenomenon of crises (natural disasters, climate changes, wars, economic crises, poverty ...)
- How is progress used as a historical category?
- And how is progress connected with educational concepts like agency (capacity to act)?

Please send your proposal (max. 500 words) with title and contact details to the organizers until 10 January 2020 (at the latest): markus.furrer@phlu.ch and/or vajdab@ujv.sk