

(Post)Socialism as a Global Resource

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Keynote Speaker:

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Is socialism back? It's hard to ignore a certain shifting of the political and discursive tides around the globe. Even in the US and Russia—exemplars of the “West” and the “former Soviet Bloc” *par excellence*—invocations of “socialism” are returning to popular political discourse as indices not merely of an irredeemable past but, increasingly, of mainstream political imaginaries. Historically, scholarship has explored a “postsocialist” condition wherein the “post-” often signifies a rupture from the socialism that preceded it, the burden of the past, and/or a transition to liberal normalcy at the “End of History.” Extremely portable, that idea of the “postsocialist” has been operative in analyses of Lula’s political demise, Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, Special Period Cuba, post-Ujamaa Tanzania, Chile after Allende.

Today, it may be productive to reevaluate what “postsocialism” is—stressing its organic *link* to socialism—rather than merely a *rupture* from it. Using the term (post)socialism, we take seriously this link. Neither simply a specter nor nostalgia, we imagine the “post-” in (post)socialism as a placeholder and a pause, a moment of opening for a space of inquiry, a site for the re-appraisal of socialism. Could (post)socialism provide a *vantage point* from which we might open ourselves up to forms of life, ways of thinking, and modes of being in the world that become more apparent in light of the 1989 collapse of Soviet state socialism? Could (post)socialism, with its political, philosophical, and/or affective attachments to socialism, itself be a generative analytic? A methodology? The impulse of our conference is not to toss out “postsocialism” as a triumphalist fantasy but to reclaim (post) socialism, and its link to socialism, as a position and a resource for genuine critical engagement—both in terms of analysis and political praxis.

Focusing on these new possibilities for (post)socialism, this conference brings together young scholars to take (post)socialism as a global resource for imagining alternatives (political, cultural, economic, etc.) to our present. While these topics are certainly of interest to students of the former USSR/socialist bloc, we do not limit our understanding of post-socialism to its usual geography. We invite submissions that engage these questions from across the globe—in/on “Western,” “non-Western,” and other contexts—as well as a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives including, but not limited to anthropology, area studies, critical theory, geography, history, literary studies, new media, performance studies, political theory, sociology, and science & technology studies.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Global (post)socialisms, Internationalism and its legacies; post-socialism as a global condition
- Critiques of neo/late liberalism, historicizing “the End of History,” (Post)socialist studies of globalization
- Alternative democratic futures drawing on (post)socialism, the free market and socialism
- Engagements between “2nd” and “3rd World;” Third-Worldism, the Non-Aligned movement, African Socialisms, Arab Socialisms, Latin American Socialisms
- (Post)socialism and the black radical tradition, Afro-futurism, Afropessimisms, and/or the Black Atlantic traditions
- (Post)socialist subjectivities, socialities, theologies, theories of life
- (Post)socialist mobilizations of memory, nostalgia, resentment, revisionist histories of the Cold War;
- (Post)socialist Feminisms; sex and sexuality in the socialist world
- Homosocialism, queer communism, queer optimism
- Eco-socialism, environmental histories of (post)socialism, terraforming/infrastructural projects of socialism
- (Post)socialist science and technology studies, histories of science from a (post)socialist perspective

Interested graduate students, post-docs, and junior faculty members are invited to submit a 250–300 word abstract along with a short bio to postsocialism2020@berkeley.edu by **January 15, 2020**. Participants will be **notified by February 1**. Limited funds are available for **travel grants**. Please email postsocialism2020@berkeley.edu with questions.

Sponsors: Institute for Slavic Eastern European and Eurasian Studies; The Townsend Center for the Humanities