

## [CFP: \(Online-Konferenz\) GDR Today VI - Minority Experiences of the GDR \(28.05.2021\)](#)

Discussion published by Matthew Hines on Thursday, April 1, 2021

Im Folgenden finden Sie den Cfp der britischen Konferenzreihe *GDR Today*. Interessenten wenden sich bitte an Matthew Hines (University of Birmingham) und Sam Osborn (University of St. Andrews), die Organisatoren der Konferenz. Bewerbungen sollten ein Abstract (ca. 2.000 Zeichen inkl. Leerzeichen) und eine Kurzbiographie enthalten und müssen bis zum 28. Mai eingegangen sein. Die Konferenz findet auf Englisch statt.

As part of the GDR Today series, we welcome abstracts from doctoral candidates and early-career researchers for an online conference in September 2021, co-hosted by the Universities of St Andrews and Birmingham with a focus on the experience of minority groups in the GDR, in particular the inflection of discursive participation, statecraft, and citizenship, with ability, migrant status, race, gender, age, and sexuality. This conference will offer young academics working in GDR Studies a platform to present research that, in particular, uncovers new aspects of experience in the GDR and participates in the steady expansion of the field. As previous iterations of the series have shown, the field has contributors all over the globe; its platform, especially in a time of increased online scholarship, allows for even greater international participation from a growing audience than has been possible to date. As has been the case at previous GDR Today conferences, the organisers welcome an interdisciplinary pool of papers including history, literature, politics, and sociology. The conference will consist in pre-recorded papers delivered as part of their respective panels, followed by live Q&A, a plenary discussion, and a keynote speaker.

As the sixth in the series of 'The GDR Today', which was launched in 2014 and last held at the University of Birmingham in 2019, this colloquium is designed as a forum to discuss the state of scholarship on the GDR and identify areas for future research. Papers might respond to the following thematic questions:

- What was the state's response to calls for greater inclusion of minority groups (those living with disability, age, experiences of racial minorities, migrants, people of minority genders, sexualities)?
- How can we challenge the false dichotomy between the 'people' and the 'state' through the lens of minority experience?
- Who had the right to inclusion in the GDR? To what extent did the state actively work to include minorities? How did the relationship between minorities and the state change throughout the life of the GDR?
- How do texts, film, and other forms of media or cultural production attempt to document a minority experience of the GDR?
- What do minority experiences offer the broader, more general histories/established history of the GDR?
- How has scholarship on the GDR depicted or contributed to minority experience in the GDR, for example with taboos? Where has scholarship since 1989 perpetuated discrimination or othering?
- In what ways did cultural practices in the GDR normalise the experiences of minorities and in what ways were they further othered? Did greater representation for a minority group equate to greater

chances of acceptance from society?

- How do we explore the concept of evidence, what constitutes evidence of one person's experience and how do we, as researchers, validate that experience in our work?

The organisers hope to challenge the opposition of 'the people' and 'the state' from the perspective of those who attempted to integrate themselves or not into the system. In addition, and as a means of incorporating minority experience into the dynamics of authority within the state's political system, we are interested in papers that examine how minority identity influenced one's recognition in public discourse, tempered one's ability to participate in society, and even shaped resistance or opposition movements. The conference does not primarily aim to 'diversify' scholarship on the GDR, rather to look through the lens of minority experience in order to ascertain the extent to which the state propagated a singular acceptable identity as coherent with the socialist project, and therefore implicitly or explicitly blocked from participation those that deviated from that norm.

Comparatively little scholarship exists on minority experiences in the GDR, with many ongoing projects led by early-career academics, hence explorations of the state's response to disability, sexuality, generational difference, and the experience of migrants, racial, and gender minorities are emerging as important spaces for future debate. Whilst scholarship has now established the participative, flexible, and welfare-oriented aspects both of SED authority and citizens' experience, studies have yet to explore fully the idiosyncrasies of these in minority experience. Where a binary division between 'people' and 'state' implies steady resistance - whether active or passive - to SED rule on behalf of all individuals, this notion itself also depends on repeating the state's own narrow definition of the acceptable citizen. As such, this conference aims to recast the debate around authority and participation in the GDR through the lens of minority experience, so as to distinguish further the complexities of opposition, resistance, private and public spheres, alternative or counter-discourses, and complicity.

**To register your interest for the conference, please send an abstract (ca. 300 words) and a short bio (ca. 150 words) by 28 May to:**

Matthew Hines (University of Birmingham, [MXH1085@student.bham.ac.uk](mailto:MXH1085@student.bham.ac.uk)) and  
Sam Osborn (University of St Andrews, [so50@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:so50@st-andrews.ac.uk))

---

Redaktion: Constanze Baum - Lukas Büsse - Mark-Georg Dehrmann - Nils Gelker - Markus Malo - Alexander Nebrig - Johannes Schmidt

Diese Ankündigung wurde von H-GERMANISTIK [Nils Gelker] betreut - [editorial-germanistik@mail.h-net.msu.edu](mailto:editorial-germanistik@mail.h-net.msu.edu)