

One of the central issues of Soviet history, and especially of late Soviet society – the main focus of this workshop – is the quality of societal fabric, that is, of social cohesion and disintegration. The conference will address this central issue by focusing on integrative and segregative functions of secret knowledge (Georg Simmel). By introducing significant limits on information circulation, Soviet authorities structured and governed society from the very beginning, balancing loyalty and privilege in ideal and material terms. The governmental and party practice of “total secrecy” (Alain Blum) became one of the main levers not only of Soviet political life, but touched upon nearly all aspects of everyday life. Regimes, rituals, and practices of secrecy that evolved from these politics became an integral part of social interaction that can be conceptualised as a Soviet “cult of secrecy”: a set of practices, discursive frames and institutional structures that could develop its own dynamics.

It is not only state politics, propaganda, and censorship that have constituted Soviet society but the ways of appropriation and re-definition of those structural and discursive frames by individuals and groups that have contributed to a unique fabric of simultaneous cohesion and segregation by reproducing loyalty to the state, to the local community or friends and family via access, possession, imagination, and communication of sensitive information. In a broader sense, it is an issue of balancing agency and submission and the ways of performing the “Soviet way of life”. Important questions will be raised with a debate on Soviet secrecy about continuities of Soviet practices and stability of the post-Soviet society.

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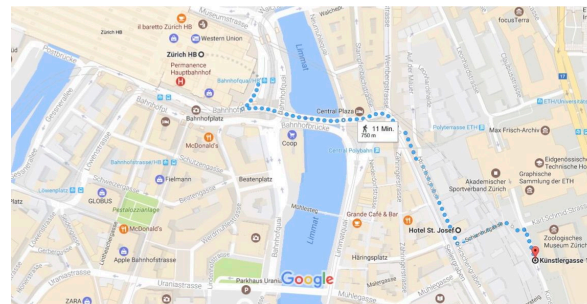
### Organizers

Ekaterina Emeliantseva (Zurich)  
 Nada Boškovska (Zurich)  
 Julia Richers (Bern)

Department of History  
 University of Zurich/  
 Department of History/  
 University of Bern

### Venue

University of Zurich, Room KOL-G-212  
 Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich  
 (Entrance also from Künstlergasse 12)



### Further Information

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Guest auditors are kindly requested to register in advance with Regina Klaus: oeg@hist.uzh.ch.



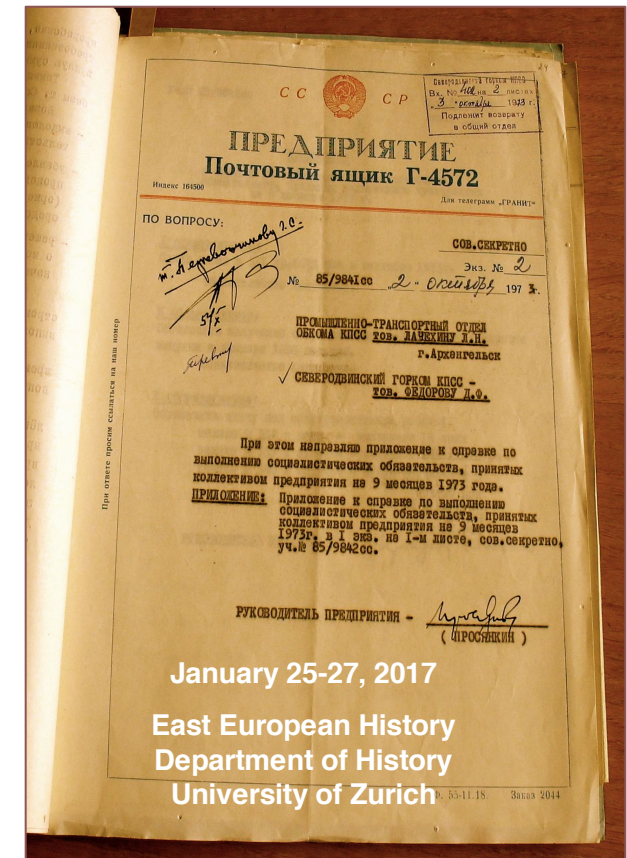
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UNIVERSITÄT  
 BERN

# CULTURES OF SECRECY IN SOVIET LIFE

International Conference



January 25-27, 2017

East European History  
 Department of History  
 University of Zurich

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## Wednesday, January 25

9:00-9:45

### Workshop registration and welcome address

Nada Boskowska (Zurich U)

9:45-10:30

### Introduction

Ekaterina Emeliantseva (Zurich U) and Julia Richers (Bern U)

11:30-11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00-13:00

### Panel I: Secrecy regimes and experts' cultures

Chair: Jeronim Perovic (Zurich U)

- Asif Siddiqi (Fordham U): Secrecy, Science, and the Soviet State
- Mark Harrison (University of Warwick): What price Soviet secrecy? The benefits and costs of conspiratorial government
- Sergei I. Zhuk (Ball State U): "Soviet Americana": Knowledge Production in Two Soviet "Secret" Cities, Dnepropetrovsk and Kuibyshev

Discussant: Kate Brown (University of Maryland)

13:00-15:00 *Lunch Break*

15:00-16:30

### Panel II: Secrecy regimes, environment, and knowledge production

Chair: Carmen Scheide (U of Bern)

- Kate Brown (University of Maryland): The World's Worst-Kept Secret: Chernobyl and the Failure of Truth even when True
- Paul Josephson (Colby College): Heroism and Secrecy Across the Arctic: Building Industry in the Dark and Cold

Discussant: Klaus Gestwa (U of Tübingen,)

16:30-17:00 *Coffee Break*

17:30-18:30

### Evening lecture: Survival Cell - Territory - Dreamland. The Bunker in Cold War Switzerland and beyond Silvia Berger (Zurich U)

19:30 *Dinner*

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## Thursday, January 26

8:30-10:30

### Panel III: Secrecy practice, censorship, and cultural production

Chair: Ulrich Schmid (U of St. Gallen)

- Isabel Lane (Yale U): "Genre and the Missile Gap: Western Realisms and Soviet Science Fictions"
- Tarik Cyril Amar (Colombia U): Cold War narratives and representations of spying, secrecy, and multiple identities
- Alexander Markin (Zurich U): The Cult of Intelligence in late Soviet Film Production

Discussant: Assif Siddiqi (Fordham U)

10:30-11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00-13:00

### Panel IV: Secrecy, space, and community in closed cities

Chair: Nada Boskowska (Zurich U, CH)

- Laura Sembritzki, (Heidelberg U): White Spots on the Soviet Map: Perceptions of Closed Areas around the Secret City Chelyabinsk-40 in the Southern Urals
- Ekaterina Emeliantseva (Zurich U): Urban planning, secrecy, and community cohesion in a closed city: The case of Severodvinsk
- Roman Khandozhko (RANEP/Moscow): Community-Building under Conditions of Nuclear Secrecy: Communist Party Membership and Corporative Culture of Soviet Atomshchiki, 1968–1991

Discussant: Stefan Guth (Bern U)

13:00-15:00 *Lunch Break*

15:00-17:30

### Panel V: Secrecy rituals and Cold War encounters

Chair: Ekaterina Emeliantseva (Zurich U)

- Julia Richers (Bern U): Censored Cosmos. Visualisation Strategies in the Early Soviet Space Program
- Andrew Jenks (California State U): The Apollo-Soyuz Test Project and Regimes of Secrecy and Openness
- Stefan Guth (Bern U): 'Eventually, we stopped lying...' Soviet regimes of secrecy and nuclear technodiplomacy across the Iron Curtain, 1965–1991

Discussant: Sergei I. Zhuk (Ball State U, USA)

19:00 *Dinner*

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## Friday, January 27

9:00-10:30

### Panel VI: Secrecy regimes, rumours, and everyday

Chair: Mark Harrison (University of Warwick)

- Steven Harris (National Air and Space Museum; U of Mary Washington, USA): Not Knowing Before Going: The Culture of Secrecy and the Passenger Experience in Soviet Civil Aviation
- Fabian Lüscher (Bern U): "Did you hear about the nuclear aircraft?" Secrecy, bluff and the dosage of facts about Soviet nuclear propulsion projects (1957–1977)

Discussant: Slava Gerovitch (MIT)

10:30-11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00-13:00

### Panel VII: Secrecy and Memory in Soviet and post-Soviet personal Narratives

Chair: Paul Josephson (Colby College, USA)

- Galina Orlova (Rostov-on-Don U/RANEP, Moscow): Romance with Secrecy: How to Perform and to Exotize Up the Soviet Nuclear Science During and After Research Interview (the case of the Obninsk project)
- Slava Gerovitch (MIT): That-Which-Must-Not-Be-Named: Remembering Secrecy in the Soviet Space Program

Discussant: Ekaterina Emeliantseva (Zurich U)

13:00-13:30

### General discussion and future cooperation

14:00 *Lunch and end of workshop*