

The Nature of the Cold War: GDR Nature Conservation Policy during the East-West Conflict from 1945 to 1990 (Fellowship an der Georgetown University)

Initiative: Postdoctoral Fellowships in den Geisteswissenschaften an Universitäten und Forschungsinstituten
in Deutschland und den USA

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As well as establishing government nature conservation organizations in support of civic nature conservation efforts, the GDR took its first legislative, political and scientific measures in the nature conservation area much earlier than the Federal Republic of Germany. The internationalization and ecologicalization of nature conservation since the 1970s resulted in a perceptive environmental movement in the GDR and led to lasting changes, not only in this policy area but also in the nature of the GDR itself. Time and again, dependence on international political processes and Cold War developments, such as decisions taken by the Allies (particularly the USA) and developments in the Federal Republic of Germany, provided the frame of reference for the GDR's nature conservation policy decisions. The study investigates the question whether nature conservation was a contributing factor in the GDR's erosion, similar to the erosive effect ascribed to the GDR environmental movement, or whether it actually had a stabilizing effect on the system. With little research being conducted into GDR nature conservation, the literature often draws incorrect and controversial conclusions. In the context of its nature conservation focus, the research project examines the East German system and society from a fresh perspective and analyses the international roles played by the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR during the Cold War era. This interdisciplinary and transnational study raises questions in the fields of sociological as well as political, economic and socio-historical research.

Projektbeteiligte

Dr. Astrid Kirchhof

Humboldt-Universität Berlin
Philosophische Fakultät I
Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften
Lehrstuhl für Neueste und Zeitgeschichte
Berlin

