



Call for Papers

STATE OF NATURE

2nd international workshop of the Nature&Nation network

Bucharest, Romania, 02-04 December 2011

Deadline: 20 September 2011

Website: www.natureandnation.eu

Conveners:

Valentin Nicolescu

(Nicolae Titulescu University, NSPSA and CeSIP, Romania)

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Nature&Nation: The Network

Nature&Nation is a grassroots network of scholars interested in the study of the relationships linking nature and nations. The main aim is to exchange information and ideas among its members and promote common projects. Our ambition is to go beyond the disciplinary borders of environmental history, trying to engage 'other' historians in thinking about the traditional issues of their expertise taking into consideration nature and the environmental historical approach. If you want to join the Nature&Nation network, please send an email to info@natureandnation.eu.

Introduction

Nature&Nation's first workshop, held in Trento, Italy, in September 2010 was mainly focused on the first part of the nation-state combine. In fact, the main issues of discussion on that occasion have been related to the role of nature in national identity discourses and rhetoric and vice versa. With this second workshop we want to look instead at the state, and at its role in transforming, representing and even creating nature.

States have had a significant role in the modification of

landscapes and natural environments that has occurred during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Good part of this change may be ascribed to what James C. Scott has defined the high-modernist tendencies within modern nation-states. States, both under democratic and totalitarian rule, have thus attempted to simplify, as to make more legible and manageable, both the landscapes and the systems of relationships, construed over centuries of settlement, that human communities had with these natural environments.

Modern states have thus proceeded at an appropriation of nature, in both its physical and symbolical facets, and attempted repeatedly to monopolize, beside other social systems of relationship, also the way society has interpreted nature. Both nature itself and the society/nature relationship have in fact been radically modified over the last two centuries by state-driven engineering projects, economic policies, propagandist rhetorics and legal systems. Determining property rights, planning urban and industrial development, implementing public/private transportations, building national parks, fighting malaria or other, and bloodier, wars have definitely played a major role in shaping the natural environment.

Aims and scope

This workshop focuses on symbolical and physical appropriation of nature by the State in the 19th and 20th centuries. As in its first edition, the general aim of the workshop is to obtain a good overview of the role of the modern nation-state in the structuring, management and showcasing of nature/society interactions. The main issues at stake are:

- resource use and management;
- nature conservation;
- the role of states in front of natural disasters and calamities;
- environmental impact of state-driven engineering, forestation and reclamation projects;
- rhetorical and symbolic uses of the natural world;
- war and nature;
- totalitarian appropriation of nature.

In occasion of this 2nd workshop we are interested not only in the European context but also in the ways in which national states have included imperial/colonial natures and environments into the national framework.

We want to gather a variety of scholars, not only specialists in environmental history, but also political, cultural and social

historians, historical geographers and historical anthropologists with an interest in nationalism, nature perception and/or symbolic politics. During the selection process both comparative analyses at the transnational level and specific case studies able to give new insights in the mechanism of state management of natural resources and symbolic uses of the natural world will be equally considered.

Practicalities

The workshop is limited to 20 participants. The working language is English. Each selected participant will prepare a draft text that will be pre-circulated to workshop attendees in mid-November 2011. Each paper will be briefly presented by the author in a short talk (10 min.) and then fully discussed by all the workshop attendees. After the workshop, all participants will be asked to revise their papers for possible inclusion in an edited volume to be submitted to an international academic press or as a journal special issue.

Prospective schedule

02 December 2011 – Arrival and first session;

03 December 2011 – Further sessions;

04 December 2011 – Roundtable, conclusions and departure

Funding and benefits

This event is funded and supported by the 'Nicolae Titulescu' University, the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (NSPSA) and The Center for the Study of Political Ideas (CeSIP), Bucharest, Romania. Workshop attendees will be granted free lodging in college accommodation and meals for the duration of the workshop. Unfortunately, we will not be able to cover travel expenses. More details will soon be available on the network's website.

Application

To be considered as a workshop participant please post an abstract of up to 300 words and a very brief CV (1 page) on the application form on the website by 20 September 2011. For further information please feel free to contact us via email: info@natureandnation.eu

