

International Workshop

Conflict and the Senses in the Global Cold War. From Propaganda to Sensory Warfare

*Berlin Center for Cold War Studies of Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ)
in cooperation with Stiftung Luftbrückendank, Stiftung Ernst-Reuter-Archiv Berlin
and the Centre for Digital History (C²DH) of Université du Luxembourg*

Date: 13-16.10.2020; **Place:** -online/internal-

Although a conflict in which military strategies and weapons of mass destruction were always on the “horizon of expectation”, the Cold War was to a large degree carried out by non-lethal methods. It was also a war of culture, politics, and (visual and sonic) propaganda. Therefore, it can be understood to a great extent as a war not only on the senses, but as a war through the senses. In recent times, sensory aspects of domestic and international conflicts have become a field of interest in both sensory studies and conflict studies, with their methods and questionnaires intertwining in fruitful cooperation.(1) Historiographical approaches include the study of conflicts from the American Civil War to the Russian Revolution to both World Wars, and these examine how wars as the most extreme form of conflict were perceived—and how war changed contemporary perception.(2) The central conflict of the second half of the 20th century, though, is still a blatantly unexplored area in terms of sensory approaches.(3)

Steve Goodman has described how sound was used to carry out conflict—in propaganda, crowd control, and even in military practice and torture. (4) Extending his term “sonic warfare” to “sensory warfare”, the workshop aims to discuss sensory aspects of the global Cold War—from sonic and visual propaganda to military forms of conflict in the “hot” wars of the Cold War in Korea or Vietnam. What techniques were developed to attack the enemy with non-lethal and lethal weapons, ranging from irritation to the deadly use of chemicals aimed at the respiratory organs of the enemy? How were the senses trained to motivate the masses into a state of alert, for example, through sonic signals? What sensory methods were used to gain intelligence and information? What were the “micro politics” and affective measures used to influence people unconsciously, with the aim of dividing them into political communities of different perceptions, for example, in gustatory preferences? How did the Cold War not only use but also change perception as a result of division?

(1) See, for example, Nicholas J. Saunders, Paul Cornish, *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, London/New York: Routledge, 2017.

(2) See Mark M. Smith, *The Smell of Battle, the Taste of Siege: A Sensory History of the Civil War*, Oxford: OUP, 2015; David Howes (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Modern Age, 1920-2000*, Bloomsbury Acad., 2014; Santanu Das, “Sensuous Life in the Trenches”, 29.01.2014, Online: <https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/sensuous-life-in-the-trenches>.

(3) Michael Bull, Paul Gilroy, David Howes, Douglas Kahn, “Introducing Sensory Studies”, in: *The Senses and Society* Vol. 1, no. 1 (March 2006), pp. 5–7; David Howes, “The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies”, August 2013, Online: <http://www.sensorystudies.org/sensorial-investigations/the-expanding-field-of-sensory-studies/>.

(4) Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare. Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear*, Cambridge, MA/London, 2012.

Program

Tuesday, 13th October, 16-19.00 h MEZ

1. Bodo Mrozek (Luxembourg/Berlin): Introduction: Global Cold War and the Senses

2. **Keynote: MARK M. SMITH (Columbia) 'Redux: Time, Desire, Horror.'** ([Video](#))

I. Warfare through the Body: Intersensory Perceptions

Chair: Bodo Mrozek

3. Cyril Cordoba (Lausanne): 'Bring China Home.' Sensory Experiences of Maoist Propaganda, 1964-1978

-- Break --

4. Carsten Richter (Berlin): To Inform and to Deceive. Sensory Approaches in Military Propaganda in Cold War Germany

5. José Manuel López Torán (Castilla-La Mancha): From Korea to Cuba: NO-DO as sonic and visual propaganda of Cold War in Francoist Spain

Wednesday, 14th October, 16-19.30 h MEZ

II. A Taste of the Other: Incorporating Cold War through Food

Chair: Viktoria von Hoffmann (Liège)

1. Kaete O'Connell (Dallas): Hearts, Minds, and Stomachs: Food Fights in Divided Germany

2. Victoria Phillips (New York): Seeing, Hearing, Tasting Revolt: Balloons, Radio, and Food for East Germany, 1953

III. Weapons of Touch: Objects and Surfaces in Art and Design

3. Joshua Simon (Philadelphia): High-Modernism in Art and Design as Anti-Communism

-- Break --

Chair: Jan Plamper (London)

4. Raphaëlle Auclert (La Roche-sur-Yon): Sense Twenty. Smashing the Art at the Crest of the Cold War

IV. Images of Competition: Envisioning Political Difference

5. Paul Wombell (London) Michael Wesely (Berlin): Panorama Books. Geopolitics, Propaganda, and Photography

6. Philipp Nielsen (New York): The 'Built View' in East and West Germany: How to See Socialism and Democracy in Urban Spaces

Thursday, 15th October, 16-19.30 h MEZ

V. Smelling Conflict: Scents of the Cold War

Chair: Érika Wicky (Lyon)

1. Stephanie Weismann (Vienna): Olfactory frontlines between 'Soir de Paris' and 'Red Moskow'. Polish perfumery positioning
2. Christy Spackman (Tempe): Sniffing the unseen masses: Charismatic chemical Detection abroad and at home during the Vietnam War
3. Bodo Mrozek (Luxembourg/Berlin): The Smell of the Berlin Wall: Olfactory Warfare at the Border and transnational Smell Conflicts

-- Break --

VI. Brain Washing, Torture, Drugs, and Mind Control: Sensory Deprivation Experiments

Chair: Robert Jütte (Stuttgart)

4. Pavel Vasilyev, Anastasia Chirkova (St. Petersburg): A Miracle Drug for the Soviet Superhuman: Inquiring into the Early History of Meldonium
5. Walter E. Grunden (Bowling Green): MKULTRA and the Making of an American Zombie: CIA Human Experimentation in Hypnosis, Hallucinogens, Sensory Deprivation, and Mind Control
6. Marcel Streng (Düsseldorf): From Cold War Science to Salt Water Therapy: 'Floating,' Brain Stimulation and 'Sensory Deprivation' since the early 1950s

Friday, 16th October, 16-19.00 h MEZ

VII. Listening in Times of Conflict: Speeches, Phone Calls, Radio.

Chair: Daniel Morat (Berlin)

1. Dayton Lekner (Vancouver): One China – Two Speakers: Hearing Yourself and Your Enemy in Cold War China
2. Alexander Gogun (Berlin): Voices of the Apocalypse. The Speeches of the Leaders of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Songs in 1946-53 as a Harbinger of the World War III
3. Andreea Deciu Ritivoi (Pittsburgh): The Voice of the Proxy: Political Exiles and American Democracy

-- Break --

4. Mark Fenemore (Manchester): Sensual Sirens: Gendering Berlin's Cold War Telephony
5. Final discussion

Due to the current situation, the workshop will be held in form of a strictly internal author's workshop. The keynote, though, will be made publicly available on the BKKK website.

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