

WORKSHOP

PARAPSYCHOLOGY UNDER SOCIALISM: EXPECTATIONS, AMBIGUITIES, AND ECHOES IN GLOBAL ESOTERIC PRACTICE

Centre for Advanced Studies "Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective" (CAS-E),
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU)

Organizer: Anna Ozhiganova

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23

16:30 Reception

16:45-18:15

Panel 1. Practices to (De)Legitimize Parapsychology

Moderation: Anna Tessmann

Andreas Anton (IGPP, Germany)

*Occultism in the GDR? The Paranormal as Heterodoxy
of Scientific Worldview*

Pavel Horák, online (University of Vienna/Institute of Ethnology
of the Czech Academy of Sciences)

Institutionalization of the Czechoslovak Psychotronics

Ulrike Lang (TU Dresden Institute of Slavic Studies, Germany)

*Strategic Rationalizations: Yoga, Psychotronics, and the Cultural
Imagination of the Paranormal in Socialist Poland*

18:30-20:00

Panel 2. Parapsychological Discourses and Debates

Moderation: Monika Bednarczuk

Anna Ozhiganova (CASE-E FAU, Germany)

*The Construction of the Paranormal in Soviet Media Discussions
and Popular Science*

Nemanja Radulović (University of Belgrade, Serbia)

Varieties of Parapsychology in Yugoslavia (1945-1990)

Ina Schmied-Knittel (IGPP, Germany)

Beyond the border: Near-death experiences in East and West Germany

OCTOBER 23-24, 2025

BUILDING D1, HARTMANNSTRASSE 14
ERLANGEN

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24

9:30-11:00

Panel 3. International Parapsychological Collaborations

Moderation: Nemanja Radulović

Viktoria Vitanova-Kerber (University of Fribourg, Switzerland)

*Suggestology and the West: A Parapsychological Network
Beyond the Borders of the Cold War*

Anna Tessmann (Ruperto-Carola University Heidelberg, Germany)

*Viktor Iniushin's Laboratory in Soviet Alma-Ata: History, Experiments
and Collaborations*

Vojtěch Márc (Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, Czech Republic)

*Pyramid Power to the People: Czechoslovak Pyramidology
and Its Global Reverberations*

11:15-12:45

Panel 4. Surveillance and Political Control of Parapsychologists

Moderation: Viktoria Vitanova-Kerber

Monika Bednarczuk (University of Białystok, Poland)

*Parapsychology between Academia and the Church (with the Security
Services in the Background): The Case of Communist Poland*

Ivan Souček (Matej Bel University, Slovakia)

*Psychotronics Under Surveillance: Czechoslovak Secret Police
and the Control of Paranormal Research*

Tomasz Krok, online (Institute of National Remembrance, Poland) /

Zbigniew Łagosz (AGH University of Science and Technology, Poland)
*The Surveillance Case "Esoterists". The Actions of the Communist
Security Service against Polish Esoteric Circles (1960)*

13:00-14:30

Discussion. Diverse Parapsychology: Paradoxes and Relevance from a Contemporary Perspective

Moderation: Anna Ozhiganova

Participants: Birgit Menzel (CAS-E FAU), Ehler Voss (University of Bremen),
Monika Bednarczuk (University of Białystok), Andreas Anton (IGPP), Ina
Schmied-Knittel (IGPP)

Tentative Questions:

- What common discourses and practices have characterized parapsychology under socialism?
- What were the differences of parapsychology in different socialist countries: in status, development paths, topics and applications?
- Did socialist parapsychology develop in the context of Western parapsychology, or did it go its own way?
- What are the reasons for the current growth of interest in parapsychology among researchers from various disciplines? What are the actual approaches to its conceptualization?