EUME
Europa im Nahen Osten
Der Nahe Osten in Europa

Urban Studies Seminar 2014 - 2015

Chaired by Prof Ulrike Freitag and Dr Nora Lafi

Monday, November 24th, 2014, 5 pm

Twice a month, Mondays 5 pm - 7 pm

Containing Urban England: The Green Belt in the Twentieth Century

Venue:
Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

Lecture by Prof. Simon Gunn (University of Leicester)

Please register
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Urban margins are physical, spatial, legal and governmental constructs; they are also discursive and imaginary. Sometimes they can be all these things at the same time. This paper examines the operations of the 'green belt' in twentieth-century England, the insertion of a development-free cordon around English cities dividing the city from the countryside, starting in the 1930s. It looks at the ideas behind the creation of a green belt, particularly the idea of urban 'containment', and the relationship of planning to the imaginary constitution of the nation. It also considers the unintended effects of the green belt, and its place in politics today. Is the green belt a far-seeing piece of environmental planning or, as the late Peter Hall suggested, a 'polite English version of apartheid'.

Prof. Simon Gunn of the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester is the specialist of British urban history. Among his numerous publications, he published with J. Vernon *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, Berkeley: University of California Press (2011); 'The Buchanan report, environment and the problem of traffic in 1960s Britain', *Twentieth-Century British History* (Jan 2011) and 'Between modernism and conservation: Konrad Smigielski and the planning of postwar Leicester' in Rodger, R. ed., *A History of Modern Leicester,* Lancaster: Carnegie Press (2011).

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