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**State, Experts and Nature**  
**Engineering the Modern Southeast and Eastern Europe Environment**

Call for papers for an edited volume

Since the nineteenth century the natural environment in the Western world has undergone dramatic change. The rapid industrialization of the economy and the increase in commodity exchange volume in Western Europe and the US has led to interventions by technical experts seeking to ‘improve’ nature by putting it to work. The wave of ‘improvements’ to the environment through technological means and expert interventions hit Southeast and Eastern Europe several decades later. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the nation-state had become established in this region, the role of technocracy started to grow and become central to state formation. Modernization of the state and attempts to build new nations (in the modern sense of the word) entailed tremendous interventions in the natural environment in order to subjugate it or put it to work for the benefit of the people. State development required a bureaucracy and a technocracy to oversee technology, water and forest management, ‘environmental policy’ and agriculture. State experts who offered technological solutions and Nature, as the object of this transformation, developed an intricate relationship.

The environmental transformation of Eastern Europe in modern times hardly benefitted from consistent policies. Political regimes changed radically during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as did the relationship between the state and the natural environment. Social engineering was enabled by means of environmental engineering.

From several points of view this volume is something of a novelty. Firstly, it explores the Southeastern and Eastern European region from a *longue durée* perspective (19<sup>th</sup> century up to the end of the socialist period) describing various instruments, ideologies and technologies that were employed by the state in order to transform the natural environment. It also considers experts (engineers, biologists, geographers etc) commissioned by the state to

engage in environmental engineering using various technologies. Finally, the volume explores how communities involved in these changes have been affected and how they reacted to environmental change. An analysis of the relationship between state, experts, technology and Nature in Eastern Europe and its multiple layers and features, is the subject of this volume.

**Important dates:**

Deadline for receiving the abstracts: 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2017

Selection of the abstracts: 1<sup>st</sup> of November

Deadline for receiving the full papers: 1<sup>st</sup> of February

Internal review of papers: 1<sup>st</sup> of April

Deadline for second submission: 15<sup>th</sup> of June

The volume will be submitted to Yale University Press (The Agrarian Studies Program) or to Routledge (Environmental Humanities series).

All questions and abstracts/papers will be submitted to **both** Stefan Dorondel ([dorondel@yahoo.com](mailto:dorondel@yahoo.com)) and Stelu Serban ([steluserban@yahoo.com](mailto:steluserban@yahoo.com))