

Global History Seminar Series 2015

by the Institute of Historical Research and the University of Notre Dame, with the collaboration of the Centre for Global History, University of Oxford



Manchurian Candidates: Brainwashing, the Cold War, and the History of the Psy Professions

by Daniel Pick
(Professor of History, Birkbeck)

Thursday, February 12, 2015
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

How did 'the talking cure' contribute to understanding politics, especially the extreme right and the idea of totalitarianism, in the middle decades of the last century? What were the enduring legacies of this Freudian 'mobilization' in the Allied struggle against Germany and in the Cold War? Daniel Pick will think aloud about encounters between psychoanalysis and fascism, before turning to the brainwashing furore that emerged during the Korean War and suggest some of the outcomes in culture, clinical knowledge and political thought. He will also consider how the psy profession helped shape contemporary understanding of totalitarianism, especially in its various contributions to group psychology, and suggest how these professions were also significantly reshaped by this history.

Professor Pick is a psychoanalyst and cultural historian. Alongside his private clinical practice, he is Professor of History at Birkbeck College, University of London, where he co-runs an MA program of Psychoanalysis, History and Culture, leads undergraduate courses, and supervises a variety of doctoral projects. He is a fellow of the British Psychoanalytical Society and of the Royal Historical Society, and was recently awarded major funding and a senior investigator award by the Wellcome Trust for a project on the Cold War, the human sciences and the psy professions. He is also an author, editor, advisor, and historical series consultant.

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