

# THE COLD WAR AND THE END TIMES

Apocalyptic and Millenarian Themes in Politics, Society and Culture,  
1946-1989

## One-Day Virtual Symposium

Thursday 4th June 2020.

**Deadline for submissions: Tuesday 12th May 2020.**

In the 1970s Ronald Reagan is reported to have told Sen. James Mills that “everything is in place for the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ” and that “Ezekiel says that fire and brimstone will be rained upon the enemies of God’s people. That must mean that they will be destroyed by nuclear weapons” (1985, *San Diego Magazine*). Reagan’s views echoed a widespread and religiously inflected Cold War grammar in the West – what has come to be known as the “religious Cold War” (see Dianne Kirby 2013 in *Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*; Andrew Preston 2012 in *Religion and the Cold War*). Despite *de facto* state atheism, Cold War discourse took on a religious tenor in the Soviet Union as well. For example, Miriam Dobson has recently described a state-sanctioned Soviet peace movement which sought to co-opt religious groups within the Soviet Union, and which found itself in tension with an emerging popular apocalypticism (2018, *Journal of Contemporary History* 53(2)). Alongside these more explicit articulations, apocalyptic and millenarian themes can also be discerned in implicit or covert ways in wider domains: presentations of technology and the space race, perceptions of Marxism, the evolution of architectural and design aesthetics, *etc.* As scholarship extends understanding of the complex interaction of religious thinking and the Cold War, this one-day virtual symposium – **The Cold War and The End Times: Apocalyptic and Millenarian Themes in Politics, Society and Culture, 1946-1989** – brings a particular focus to apocalyptic and millenarian aspects of these discourses during the period between Churchill’s coining of the “Iron Curtain” and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is intended that a broad definition of apocalyptic and millenarian frameworks, including secular formulations which implicitly draw on or encode religious or supernatural themes alongside discourses which are understood in conventional religious terms, should be applied.

Academics working within these themes are invited to propose short papers (10-15 minutes) as the basis for discussion within the symposium. We encourage presentation of early-stage and speculative discussion points as well as more developed material. Recognizing the limitations of the current global situation, the symposium will take place virtually/online. Those wishing to attend without presenting a paper should contact the organizers.

**Paper proposals with a 300-word abstract and details of academic affiliation** should be submitted to the organizers, Prof. James Crossley (St Mary’s University, Twickenham) and Dr. Alastair Lockhart (University of Cambridge), at [conference@censamm.org](mailto:conference@censamm.org) by **Tuesday 12th May 2020**. The event is organized by the Centre for the Critical Study of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements (CenSAMM) [www.censamm.org](http://www.censamm.org). There is no charge for participation.

