

## ***Global Easts: Entangled Histories and Memories***

*January 19–21, 2023*

**Organizers:** Warsaw Centre for Global History (WCGH, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw); Critical Global Studies Institute (CGSI, Sogang University), Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO, Leipzig), Center for Research on Social Memory, (Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw).

The Global East is the trans peripheral problem space where the East remains underdeveloped compared to the developed “West” in the trajectory of global modernity. The supposed solution for this problem space is to become a “West.” This co-figuring of underdeveloped East and developed West has regulated our historical imagination echoing Eurocentric Orientalism. Viewed from the East as a trans peripheral problem space, the divide between East and West does not equal the boundary of Asia and Europe. Neither is geographically fixed. The strategic location of each is constantly in flux in historical discourse. Each is a relational concept that takes shape and gains coherence only when configured in relationship to the other in the discursive context of the “problem space.” When Lech Wałęsa’s pledge to make Poland “a second Japan” subverts our imaginative geography, Poland ended up assigned to the East, Japan to the West.

Once our historical imagination is placed in the global chain of national histories, the fluidity of the East and the West as imaginative geography becomes clearer. German historical imagination pits German Kultur against French civilisation, Germany as the East vis-à-vis France as the West. However, Germany became the West vis-à-vis Poland, as the Ost in Ostforschung of Polish studies implies. In turn, Poland considered itself the West vis-à-vis “Asiatic” Russia. Japan went so far as to Orientalize Russia, positioning itself as the West after victory in the Russo-Japanese War. In Wałęsa’s 1980 address, Poland became Japan’s East/Asia and Japan Poland’s West/Europe. Far from fixed locations, “West” and “East” are adaptable categories whose fluidity can be understood through investigating entangled histories and memories of Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and East Asia in conjunction with one another.

If the West theorized the Orient by essentializing Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African societies as static and underdeveloped, it invented Eastern Europe as “an intellectual project

of demi-Orientalization.” Even before Asia, Eastern Europe became the West’s “first model of underdevelopment.” In turn, the nineteenth-century Polish intelligentsia defined Western Europe by contrast and positioned themselves as mediators between Europe and the Orient. The conceptual gradation of Oriental and demi-Oriental was determined by its distance to “West.” The shorter the distance, the less Oriental. Neither nationalist nor Marxist historians of Global Easts broke free from the Eurocentric discourse of historicism that projected the West as “History” scale, which feeds Eurocentrism and Orientalism. National histories of Global Easts became the epistemological twins of the Eurocentric national histories of the West by sharing the Orientalist value-code in the form of “anti-Western Orientalism.”

This conference will be focused on commonalities shared in experiences of modernity, in their transition from dictatorship to democracy, and in the shaping of collective memory in the Global Easts. It may shed new light on the fluidity of East and West, the global complexity of historical memory and imagination, and the boundaries between democracy and mass dictatorship.

This conference will host papers focusing on the following topics:

1. Historical Imaginations: (Self-) Orientalism in Global Easts.
2. Making the East: Political Movements and Self-Identification.
3. Global Memories of the East: power and opposition in the Cold War memory spaces, memory of modernization and development in the post-war Easts.
4. Entangled and Comparative Memory of Dictatorships and Genocides: International transfer of memory and of denialist discourses.
5. Displaying the Global Easts: collections, museums, and heritage about and within the Easts.
6. Poland and the Global Easts: theory and practice.

## Provisional program

---

**19 January**     **9.30 am-10 am**

**Opening remarks**

Prof Marek Pawełczak (WCGH)

Prof Dr Jie-Hyun Lim (CGSI)

Prof Dr Maren Röger (GWZO)

Prof Joanna Wawrzyniak (CRSM)

**10 am – 11.30 am**

**Panel 1: ‘East’ and ‘West’ Theoretical Approaches**

**Chair: Prof Dr Maren Röger**

Prof Dr Jie-Hyun Lim

“Global Easts: Tactical Essentialism or Heuristic Juxtaposition?”

Prof Dr Dominic Sachsenmaier

“‘East’ and ‘West’ in Chinese Visions of World Order - Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.”

Prof Dr Frank Hadler and Prof Dr Matthias Middell

“New Europe’s East after 1917 and the Attempt to change the Post-War World.”

**Coffee break**

**12 am – 1.30 pm**

**Panel 2 : Cold War Mnemoscapes beyond borders towards Global East**

**Chair:**

Prof Hyun Kyung Lee

“The eclectic heritagescape of a tense border in the DMZ: Remaking national victimhood for peacebuilding. ”

Prof Nayun Jang

“Capturing the Temporal Complexity of Borders: Remembering Korean State Villages through Photography. ”

**Lunch break**

---

**2.30 pm – 4 pm**

**Panel 3: Otherness, Race, and Memory**

**Chair:**

Prof Hoi-eun Kim

“Imagining Koreans as a Race: German Physical Anthropology, Japanese Colonialism, and Post-colonial Korean Nationalism.”

Dr Mikko Toivanen

“East as Identity: the 1885 debate around De Oosterling in the Dutch East Indies.”

Prof Takashi Fujitani

“Troubling the East/West Binary: W.E.B. Du Bois on the Japanese, Jews, and Others.”

**Coffee break**

**4.30 pm – 6 pm**

**Panel 4: PhD Candidates Seminar**

**Chair:**

Mr Intaek Hong

“Socialist Care” or “Socialist Humanitarianism”: Transnational Formation and Practice of the Narrative of “Care” toward Children of War in the Socialist World

Mr Hee Yun Cheong

“The Birth of the Other Human Remains”

Mr. Sebastian Żbik

“East turns into West. The attitude of Zanzibar’s Arab elite towards modernity and development.”

**Dinner 7.00 pm**

---

**20 January** **10 am – 11.30 am**

**Panel 5: Entangled Memories of Communism**

**Chair:**

Dr Thuc Linh Nguyen Vu

“Capturing Decolonization: Polish Socialist Travelogues from Vietnam.”

Dr Jennifer Altehenger

“Entangled in Style: Designing life between East and West in the People’s Republic of China.”

---

Dr Igor Iwo Chabrowski

“Feasting during the famine: upturning notions of East and West in the cultural exchanges between China and Poland during the Great Leap Forward (1960).”

**Coffee break**

**12 am – 1.30 pm**

**Panel 6: Post-War East and West**

**Chair:**

Prof Cheehyung Kim

“Machines of the Quotidian: Entangled History and Subsumption of Memory in North Korea's Architecture and Technology. ”

Prof Dr Stefan Berger

“Remodelling the West via the East? Transitioning from Communism to Capitalism in Eastern Germany in the 1990s and the Effects of such Transitioning on West Germany in the 2000s – a Case Study from the Ruhr Region of Germany. ”

Dr Maya Vodopivec

“Women, War and Violence in International Relations: On the Exclusive Narrative of Victimhood in Case Studies of South Korean ‘Comfort Women’ and Bosnian ‘Mothers of Srebrenica’.”

**Lunch Break**

**2.30 pm – 4 pm**

**Panel 7: Museums as agents of Memory between East and West**

**Chair:**

Dr Laura Pozzi

“Decoloniality in the Global East(s): Problematizing Decolonial theories and practices through the analysis of museums’ exhibitions in Poland and China.”

Dr Zuzanna Bogumił

“Endless East between martyrdom and civilization success: On Russian Siberia in Polish memory culture.”

Prof Joanna Wawrzyniak

“Cultural Memory in Overlapping Peripheries: Insights from Armenian and Polish Museums.”

---

**Coffee break**

**4.30 pm – 6 pm**

**Panel 8: Challenging the borders of ‘East’ and ‘West’**

**Chair:**

Prof Wasana Wongsurawat

“From Anglophile to Sinophile: The transformation and survival of royal hegemony in Thai politics from King Vajiravudh to HRH Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.”

Prof Jong-ho Kim

“Negotiating ‘Global East’: Overseas Confucianism, Mainland Modernism, and struggle for seeking ‘Chineseness’ in the early 20th century.”

Prof Paul Corner

“Italy as North or What happens when you are part of the West but it doesn't feel like it. ”

**Dinner 7.00 pm**

---

**21 January**

**10 am – 11.30**

**Panel 9: Memory of the Empire in East-Central Europe**

**Chair: Dr Katja Castryck-Naumann**

Dr Elżbieta Kwiecińska

“A Civilizing Relay. The Concept of The Civilizing Mission as a Cultural Transfer in East-Central Europe, 1815-1919. ”

Prof Dr Małgorzata Głowacka-Grajper

“The West of the Eastern Empire. Heritage of Russian Rule in Poland.”

**Coffee break**

**12 am- 1.30 pm**

Concluding remarks, discussion possible collected volume.

**Lunch**

**GUIDED visit to POLIN Museum and Dinner**

---

## **Panel 1: 'East' and 'West' Theoretical Approaches**

**Chair: Professor Dr Maren Röger, Director of the Leibniz Institute of the History and Culture of Easter Europe (GWZO).**

Professor Dr Jie-Hyun Lim

Professor/Director, Critical Global Studies Institute, Sogang University

### **Global Easts: Tactical Essentialism or Heuristic Juxtaposition?**

The Global East is the trans peripheral problem space where the East remains underdeveloped compared to the developed “West” in the trajectory of global modernity. This co-figuring of the underdeveloped East and developed West has regulated our historical imagination. Viewed from the East as a transperipheral problem space, the divide between East and West does not equal the boundary of Asia and Europe. Asia is in Europe, and Europe is in Asia. The idea of Global Easts was serendipity. As a historian and memory scholar wandering in the global space between Seoul and Warsaw, I realised East and West are fluid categories depending on their relational positions. The geographical categorization of Polish studies in Germany, labelled Ostforschung (Eastern Studies), is “East,” while German studies in Poland, called Studia Zachodnie (Western Studies), is “West.” Germany as the East vis-à-vis France as the West became the West vis-à-vis Poland as the Ost. Likewise, Japan was positioned as East of England, France, and the USA. Vis-à-vis Korea, China, and even Poland, Japan’s imagined geography shifts to West. In this global chain of historical imagination, East and West imply a sequential order of evolution in a linear developmental scheme. In refining “Global Easts,” I won’t posit strategic essentialism as a methodological mainstay. In contrast to Spivak’s strategic essentialism about an oppressed group intentionally taking on stereotypes about itself to disrupt the dominance in the realm of activity, tactical essentialism in imagining Global Easts denotes an inversion of the East-West linear order. It continues Eurocentrism in an inverted form. Inversion does not negate the invention of Global Easts as the West’s first model of underdevelopment and intellectual project of (demi-)Orientalization. In this speech, I will try to heuristically juxtapose East Asia and Eastern Europe in the global history of modernity and entangled memories of the Holocaust, Stalinism, and colonialism. ‘Heuristically’ is probably better than ‘scientifically’ in exploring Global Easts beyond the East-West divide.

Professor Dr Dominic Sachsenmaier

Professor of “Modern China with a special Emphasis on Global Historical Perspectives”,  
Georg-August-University Göttingen

**“East” and “West” in Chinese Visions of World Order - Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**

The talk takes as its point of departure some visions of the “East” and the “West” during the aftermath of the Great War. It will mainly focus on Chinese intellectual circles who interpreted the events in Europe as a warning sign not to embrace iconoclastic forms of modernization and who often conceptualized an “East” (with varying geographical connotations) as a source of alternatives. In an effort to situate their viewpoints in broader social and intellectual historical contexts, the talk will particularly highlight transcontinental networks of intellectuals. The second part of the talk will compare the situation a century ago with some notions of “East” and “West” in China today. Taking a comparative perspective, it will reflect upon today’s social carrier groups, shifting patterns of world order, and other factors that condition the current debates on these terms.

Professor Dr Frank Hadler

Head of Department Entanglements and Globalisation, Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), Leipzig

Professor Dr Matthias Middell

Director of the Global and European Studies Institute, University of Leipzig

**New Europe’s East after 1917 and the Attempt to change the Post-War World**

The region this paper is dedicated to is located in the East of what was called „The New Europe“ after the defeat of the Central powers in WWI. Dealing with the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy - belonging as well to the winners (Poland and Czechoslovakia) as to the losers of the war (Hungary and Austria) - the focus is laid on East Central Europe and the global consequences caused here by the triple overlap of (a) Anglo-American attempts to govern a world „made safe for democracy“ with a League of Nations, (b) Soviet-Russian attempts to initiate a world revolution with a Communist International, and (c) Nazi-German attempts to gain Weltherrschaft with a new World War.



## **Panel 2: Cold War Mnemoscapes beyond borders towards Global East**

Professor Hyun Kyung Lee

Critical Global Studies Institute, Sogang University

### **The eclectic heritagescape of a tense border in the DMZ: Remaking national victimhood for peacebuilding**

The Paju area of the DMZ provides the only public window through which this forbidden area can be glimpsed. First opened to international visitors in the 1990s, as a so-called “security DMZ tour”, amid the mood of peace that prevailed after the first inter-Korean summit in 2000 it was increasingly promoted to both domestic and international visitors, and was newly renamed “peace and security DMZ tour”. Tracing the route of the tour in Paju, this paper examines the formation of the Cold War heritagescape to understand the role of the border heritage in Korea today. The paper pays particular attention to the heritagisation of historic sites and memorials from 1954 to the present, according to the political climate changes between North and South Korea as well as in the broader international context. While analysing the visual messages of cultural heritage sites, this study discusses how this heritagescape has acted as a Cold War mnemoscope by imagining Korea’s victimhood in the passage of time, and to what extent the entire heritagescape of the Paju DMZ contributes to the representation of peace and reconciliation that the tour aims to convey.

Professor Nayun Jang

Critical Global Studies Institute, Sogang University

### **Capturing the Temporal Complexity of Borders: Remembering Korean State Villages through Photography**

This paper examines two photographic series of Kang Yong Suk (b. 1958, Incheon), which capture the landscape and the lives of residents of state villages near the Korean DMZ. Modelled after Kibbutz, the villages were established within the Civilian Control Zone (CCZ) under the military regime for agricultural, military and propaganda purposes. Since their construction in the early 1970s, the villages have gone through constant changes in their political and economic status as the country’s political climate evolved. By analysing the ways in which Kang’s works highlight the transforming tempo-spatial characteristics of the villages, especially by emphasising the everyday, smaller-scale memories in play, the paper explores

the villages meaning and significance as a Cold War mnemoscape where the multiplicity and complexity of border temporalities can be revealed.

### **Panel 3: Otherness, Race, and Memory**

Professor Hoi-eun Kim

Department of History, Texas A&M University

#### **Imagining Koreans as a race: German Physical Anthropology, Japanese Colonialism, and Post-colonial Korean Nationalism**

At its most basic core, colonialism is predicated upon creating differences and perpetuating them with available (and often violent) means and resources. As such, it is not surprising to find that modern medicine in general and physical anthropology in particular stood at the forefront of colonial endeavours in accentuating differences in the hundred years from the 1850s. What is intriguing though is an unexpected outcome that the global entanglement of the 20th century inadvertently created in an unlikely location. In my presentation, I will discuss the long-term legacy of physical anthropology that originated from German physician-anthropologists in Meiji Japan, was mediated and relayed by Japanese progenies in Imperial Japan, and found its unexpected utility in postcolonial Korea in supporting a discourse of a homogeneous ethnic Korean society through measurable (and therefore seemingly irrefutable) scientific evidence. Through my discussion of German-originated physical anthropology in colonial and post-colonial Korea, I want to illustrate the significance of moving beyond the conventional binary of the colonized and colonizer, for Japan's use and development of physical anthropology was conceived in the larger context of Japan's own 'Westernization' process and therefore unexpectedly limited its practical utility. Indeed, Japan's desire to be a bearer of science (the only functioning 'West' in East Asia) made its physical anthropologists surprisingly cautious in their interpretation of racial data, a trait that was easily and readily upended in post-colonial Korea.

Professor Takashi Fujitani

Dr David Chu professor in Asia-Pacific Studies, University of Toronto

#### **“Troubling the East/West Binary: W.E.B. Du Bois on the Japanese, Jews, and Others”**

Modern Japan has been in an uncomfortable relation with the East/West binary that emerged out of Europe's self-making as the Other of the “Orient.” On the one hand, Japanese liberals

dating back to the late nineteenth century tried to align themselves with the West, meaning Europe, while distinguishing themselves from what they considered backward Asia. Similarly, Europeans and Americans have sometimes sought to include Japan in the “West,” but strictly when convenient and too often only as an “honorary” white people who could be counted on to support their empires and wars. During the Cold War, the idea of Japan as “the Far West” was mobilized by modernization theorists in a concerted drive to reincorporate Japan into the U.S. led capitalist postwar order. This paper troubles this East/West contest by approaching it through the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois, the great Black historian, philosopher, writer, and commentator on global affairs. In many of his writings he attempted to draw the Japanese along with Jews into a different formation of people—those on the “darker” and poorer side of what he famously called “the color line.” While this author agrees with critics who have pointed out that Du Bois was unable to criticize Japanese imperialism, and while we must recognize the absence of Palestine in his empathy toward Jews and his support for a Jewish homeland in the aftermath of the European holocaust, this paper argues that working through the way in which he troubled the East/West colorline through the figure of Japan, Asia and to some extent Jews, may offer paths for rethinking racialized cartographic imaginaries and for forging new formations of solidarity that criss-cross the categories of East/West and North/South.

Dr Mikko Toivanen

Warsaw Centre for Global History, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

### **East as identity: the 1885 debate around De Oosterling in the Dutch East Indies**

This paper examines the ambiguities and politics of the rhetoric of East and West in the late-nineteenth-century Dutch Empire through the lens of a single case study: the debate, in late 1885, around the proposed (and eventually cancelled) launch of the newspaper *De Oosterling* (‘The Easterner’) in the city of Semarang in Central Java. The publication was intended by its initiators to represent the interests of the city’s mixed-race Indo-European community, from which they themselves also hailed, and which they saw as being unfairly marginalised by the ‘pure-blood’ Dutch who dominated colonial society. The project met with widespread resistance from the cultural establishment, although some sympathetic voices were also raised in support. My paper will analyse the debate that raged on the pages of Java’s newspapers throughout December 1885, which brought to stark relief the enduring centrality and active policing of racial categories in Dutch colonial society, but also the inherent ambiguity of the boundaries supposedly enclosing those categories. That this debate turned around the geographically determined term ‘Easterner’ reflected, in part, a general discomfort

with explicit acknowledgments of the largely mixed nature of the colony's European community; but also a notable, determined attempt from below to build a distinct Indo-European group identity as separate from the 'pure-blood' colonisers by utilising a term that was more commonly used in both legal and everyday language to refer to the empire's Asian subjects. As such, the word came to embody both the contested geography of empire in the Southeast Asian context as well as a potential vision for a new kind of colonial citizenship that threatened the established order, leading to the publication's eventual suppression from above through administrative means.

#### **Panel 4: PhD Candidates Seminar**

Mr Intaek Hong

Ph.D Candidate, The University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA.

#### **“Socialist Care” or “Socialist Humanitarianism”: Transnational Formation and Practice of the Narrative of “Care” toward Children of War in the Socialist World**

State Educational Center (SEC) no. 2 was an educational institute established in Poland by the North Korean and Polish governments in 1953. It accommodated 1,000 orphans from the Korean War to nurture productive future socialists for war-ravaged North Korea. More than 30,000 North Korean orphans received education and accommodation in institutes like SEC no. 2 in other socialist states, including Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, East Germany, Mongolia, and China during the 1950s. The case of SEC no. 2 and the North Korean orphans highlight global entanglement of socialist states during the Cold War across the continents (East-East entanglement) in making, propagating, and practicing the idea of “socialist care” or “socialist humanitarianism.” Starting from the previous research on SEC no. 2, this new project argues that the examination of the idea of “socialist care” or “socialist humanitarianism” needs to be done in a wider span of historical time and space. International circulation of children dislodged by war in socialist world started to appear in the 1930s and continued up to the 1960s: children from the Spanish Civil War and sent to the Soviet Union in the 1930s; children from the Greek Civil War and sent to socialist states in East/Central Europe in the 1940s, and children from the Vietnam War and sent to Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and the 1960s. While different in specific historical context and interests of participating parties, these cases altogether illuminate how the idea of “socialist care” or “socialist humanitarianism” was globally formulated and continuously developed. Juxtaposing and

analyzing those cases in the framework of “alternative globalization” and “socialist internationalism,” this paper attempts to investigate how the idea of “socialist care” or “socialist humanitarianism” was placed against the notion of “care” and “humanitarianism” in non-socialist world. In addition, this paper further raises the question on transnational formulation of the idea of “socialist care” or “socialist humanitarianism.” While it emphasized its trait of being international, how did participating parties (i.e. socialist states and educators) formulate and practice the idea with their own interests and perspective? For example, how did each socialist state’s narrative of “national motherhood” and “national care” support or conflict with the formation of the global narrative of “socialist care” or “socialist humanitarianism?” Through these questions, this project attempts to explore how the narrative and idea of “socialist care” or “socialist humanitarianism” continued to be contested and formulated in the East itself.

#### Mr Hee Yun Cheong

Ph.D Candidate, Department of History, UMass Amherst

#### **The Birth of the Other Human Remains**

This paper tracks down this transnational network of human remains in Germany-Japan from 1879-1920, which entails not only the global trafficking market for human remains but also the human interactions of medical scientists and circulations of knowledge among them. What collected/ enclosed/ moved these human remains? What was expected of these collections? How did the idea of Race evolve around race scientists in Germany and Japan in their interactions? How did the human remains mediate in the course? In response to these questions, I shed light on the trajectory of a skull specimen labelled “RV33” which was repatriated by the Berliner Society of Anthropology (BGAEU) to the Ainu community in Hokkaido in 2017. The Ainu skull was looted by a German traveller in 1897, was bought by the German scientist Rudolf Virchow, and was researched and archived by the BGAEU. Following the “lifespan” of this Ainu remains “born” in 1897 and was labelled and “housed” in Berlin, this paper intersects with 1) global demands on human remains of colonial subjects and its circulation in Imperial institutions of Germany-Japan, and 2) a co-configurations of race discourse among German and Japanese scientists. By investigating the interactions between “RV33” in the Bone Rooms of Pathological Museum in Berlin, and the race scientists discussing upon the genealogy of the Ainu people, I argue that the imagery of “Japanese” and “Ainu” race is co-figured by reciprocal interactions between the scientists of two empires.

Mr Sebastian Żbik

PhD Candidate, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

**East turns into West. The attitude of Zanzibar's Arab elite towards Modernity and Development.**

When the British took Zanzibar under their protectorate in 1890, they considered it a typical representation of the East, an undeveloped country with no organised government. Accordingly, they began to modernise it by building the institutions of a modern state and implementing social and economic measures based on capitalism. The intention of the British was not to develop Zanzibar but to consolidate their power over it. The colonial authorities introduced solutions known to them from Europe that allowed them to rule Zanzibar efficiently and effectively. The British civilising mission was to demonstrate the superiority of the West over the disordered East and to make the local population into obedient subjects. Although initially, the actions of the British were opposed by a section of Zanzibar's elite, by the beginning of the 20th century, the Arabs themselves began to embrace and accept a process of modernisation based on the European model. The purpose of my paper is to indicate the nature of the support of Zanzibar's Arab elite for modernity and development. I will show that this was due to the influence of colonial administration and education on the local population, as well as the result of anti-colonial motivations, primarily Arab nationalism. For Zanzibari nationalists, development was a tool that would allow them to rid the country of foreign rule. However, in their vision, it was neither inclusive nor egalitarian, as it was reserved only for Arabs and the elite. Moreover, it was linked to the need to modernise and raise awareness of the less developed countries, including their country of origin, Oman. As a result, Zanzibar's Arab elite adopted from the British not only the achievements of modern civilisation but also the notion of the backward East that required modernisation.

**Panel 5: Entangled Memories of Communism**

Dr Thuc Linh Nguyen Vu

Research Center for the History of Social Transformations (RECET) University of Vienna

**Capturing Decolonization: Polish Socialist Travelogues from Vietnam**

Alongside and despite the restricted capital flows during the Cold War the transfer of culture between the Second and the Third World played an essential role in forging global socialist

connections and in shaping grassroots imaginaries. Along with visual arts and music, literature helped bring closer to the readers in Eastern Europe the far away Cold War conflicts and developments such as decolonization in Southeast Asia. As part of the then newly established political contacts between Poland and Vietnam Polish professionals were delegated to Vietnam and that led to the publication of books, memoirs, and reportages covering the situation on the ground in Vietnam. In my talk I will analyze the largely forgotten travelogues that were published in state socialist Poland by journalists, translators, and diplomats who had spent time in Vietnam amid and subsequently after decolonization. Without doubt, literary work dealing with cultural and societal transformation has the power to reveal, obscure, and construct the perception of national liberation struggles. Rather than negatively casting the work by, inter alia, Monika Warneńska, Jerzy Chociłowski, and Mirosław Żuławski as mere literary socialist propaganda or treating it as a “pure” documentary, my talk will unpack how decolonization—especially the First and Second Indochina War—was presented and understood in these publications. Vacillating between different political sympathies, the travelogues point to shifting boundaries of strongly context dependent travel literature. The talk will examine how far the books used the power of literary narrative to humanize the experience of prolonged wartime violence and hardship, and the challenging period of postwar modernization. This also involves addressing how literary representations and misrepresentations contribute to or undermine global socialist awareness of decolonization and postcolonialism—whether it is in line or against the intentions of the authors and their political sponsors. Were these overtly political yet empathetic accounts really immune to Orientalizing gaze and framing? Is the empathy towards the war-torn Vietnamese society stemming from the socialist brotherhood enough of a tool for self-validation? Shrouded in empathy and political rationale the stories told by the books warrant asking: how exactly did the Vietnamese version of the story matter?

Dr Jennifer Altehenger

History Faculty, Merton College, University of Oxford

### **Entangled in Style: Designing life between East and West in the People’s Republic of China**

Modern Chinese design has always been embedded in global imaginaries of modern life. In the decades after the People’s Republic was founded in 1949, questions about how people should live and what material life and material culture should look like became part of the party’s larger project of figuring out how to make Chinese socialism a reality. Searching for

inspirations, Chinese “designers” (a label understood in the broadest terms), state planners, engineers, and many others looked to the USSR, to European countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and to Asian countries such as Japan and later Hong Kong and Singapore. This paper surveys how they engaged with “modern life” in some these countries in their work and publications between the 1950s and 1990s -- from the GDR’s P2 Plattenbau to “Czech-style furniture” and other Eastern European and Soviet interior design, glass and ceramic art, or Japanese craft and product design, to name a few examples. In their search for affordable solutions to an ongoing mass housing and resource crisis, these designers wanted to create objects and ‘lifestyles’ that would be both Chinese and socialist, marking China as a leading power in the anti-imperialist world revolution. In this world of design, boundaries of “East” and “West” were fluid -- the USSR and Eastern European states could be the socialist brethren East or (former) colonizing West while Japan was often industrially part of a perceived West yet aesthetically also part of a traditional East. In addition to highlighting these amorphous boundaries, this paper traces how material culture and design have become anchors for collective memories. For many in China today, to preserve and write the history of modern Chinese design is to decouple China’s trajectory from a deterministic master narrative of “design” as emanating from the capitalist West.

Dr Igor Iwo Chabrowski

Warsaw Centre for Global History. Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

**Feasting during the famine: upturning notions of East and West in the cultural exchanges between China and Poland during the Great Leap Forward (1960)**

My paper will analyze a curious boom in mutual cultural exchanges between the nominal East and West that took place in 1960 represented by the People’s Republic of China and the People’s Republic of Poland. This sudden, lavish, and productive explosion of mutual contacts happened in the context of the Great Leap Forward campaign (1958-62) in China. By reading two types of documentation, one produced during the grand tournee of the prestigious State Ensemble of Song and Dance “Mazowsze” [Państwowy Zespół Pieśni i Tańca “Mazowsze”] and other, published in the upstart high quality journal China [Chiny], I am going to demonstrate how in the midst of these exchanged both participating sides constructed their self-representations and built memories of the cultural contact. I will demonstrate that in the 1960, through performances, mass events and state-sponsored / state-directed publications the notions of East and West were upturned by a narrative of victorious communism that held an ability to both overcome all historical and structural handicaps. China served as an



exemplar not only in its model of economic growth, but also as a country of prosperity, high quality of services and available conspicuous consumption. At the same time, this achieved communism emanated with the essence of traditional (though highly rectified) culture, which gave the best language for mutual cross-national, cross-continental communication. Such constructions (or rather falsifications in context of the Great Leap's tragic results) of reality were also appropriated and reproduced through practices of memory production both on the institutional and personal level. Whereas official stories blasted with images of success and declared adoration of one other (however uncomfortably trotting between national essentialism and internationalist brotherhood), the personal memories were hedonistic and self-aggrandizing. In fact, through acts of feasting during the famine residing in luxurious hotels, and flying across China, all frequently done by the touring "Mazowsze" Ensemble, the artists touched on the consumerist cornucopia. They expressed a dream of exceptionality, fame, fashion, and luxury that at the same time was recreating popular artists' life in that other, not communist, West. Paradoxically, then, China, submerged under the highest wave of the radical communist socio-economic experimentation, stood for Polish artists as a surrogate of Western lifestyle and career achievement.

### **Panel 6: Post-War East and West**

#### Professor Cheehyung Kim

Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Hawaii

#### **Machines of the Quotidian: Entangled History and Subsumption of Memory in North Korea's Architecture and Technology.**

#### Professor Dr Stefan Berger

Director of the Institute for Social Movements, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

#### **Remodelling the West via the East? Transitioning from Communism to Capitalism in Eastern Germany in the 1990s and the Effects of such Transitioning on West Germany in the 2000s – a Case Study from the Ruhr Region of Germany.**

This paper analyses how the post-communist society of East Germany was shaped by West-German practices. Questioning Philipp Ther's influential thesis about an alleged 'co-transformation' between east and west, the paper subsequently asks whether we can talk about such processes of co-transformation in one of the key regions in West-Germany

undergoing processes of structural transformation since the 1960s – the Ruhr region of Germany. In particular it will explore the question to what extent the West perceived transformation processes in the east as innovative and pathbreaking, showing also new ways of transitioning for the west. Alternatively: did ideas of the East prevent the reception of transitioning processes and to what extent was the transition in the east rejected in the west.

Dr Maya Vodopivec

Assistant Professor, Leiden University

**Women, War and Violence in International Relations: On the Exclusive Narrative of Victimhood in Case Studies of South Korean ‘Comfort Women’ and Bosnian ‘Mothers of Srebrenica’**

### **Panel 7: Museums as agents of Memory between East and West**

Dr Laura Pozzi

Warsaw Centre for Global History, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw.

**Decoloniality in the Global East(s): Problematizing Decolonial theories and practices through the analysis of museums’ exhibitions in Poland and China.**

In the last ten years, decoloniality has emerged as a popular term in theoretical and political domains, taking the form of decolonial scholarship and activism. Decoloniality owes its popularity to a group of Latin American scholars led by Walter D. Mignolo, who criticised postcolonial studies for being apolitical, too theoretical, and inherently Eurocentric proposing a more practice-based mobilisation to dismantle what he called the ‘colonial matrix of power’ (Mignolo 2007). Mignolo tends to divide the world between the West, seen as the perpetrator of epistemic colonisation, and the rest, paying special attention to the case of Latin America. Other scholars who worked on decoloniality selected different theoretical axes such as Global North/Global South, West/non-West, or West/East. In the case of the West/East division, scholars tend to analyse East Asia (intended as Japan, Korea and Japan) as a special case (Barlow 1997, Chen 2010). While decolonial theories are now under the scrutiny of scholars (Moosavi 2020, Rosenthal 2022), there has been no attempt to problematize the borders between West and East, generally understood as Western Europe/Eastern Europe or Europe/East Asia. Furthermore, decolonial theory and practices often overlook the theoretical and historical impact of Communism on postcolonial countries, dismissing it as yet another

creation of Western epistemology. In this paper, I attempt to problematize decoloniality's epistemic borders by shifting the common reference point by comparing how history museums in Poland and in China, two countries generally considered part of two different Easts, deal with decoloniality. In modern times, both countries have been victims of colonisation and colonisers on their own terms. Furthermore, they share the experience of Communism. Through the analysis of museums' history exhibitions and their (sometimes failed/non-existent) decolonial practices, I problematize the axis West/non-West and colonisers/colonised that is at the centre of decolonial theories, showing also how, if misused, decolonial practices can inadvertently propelled nationalism and fundamentalism.

Dr Zuzanna Bogumił

Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Social Sciences

**Endless East between martyrdom and civilization success: On Russian Siberia in Polish memory culture**

The Russian Siberia has very ambivalent place in the Polish memory culture. It is not simply wide and underdeveloped East, but unhuman endless territory, where many Poles disappeared during four centuries of forced displacement and exile. On the other hand, it is perceived as a land of "Poles' civilization success", as Antoni Kuczyński, one of the leading researchers of Siberia stressed: "One cannot ignore the problem of Poles in Siberia without showing what the Poles have given to Siberia, despite their captivity, exile and hard labour. They gave their toil, knowledge and skills, contributed to the cultural development of this region, and to promotion of the knowledge and the culture of the people living there". These two perspectives on Siberia function separately. In classical, so-called Siberian literature, no attempts were made to decolonial Polish perspective on Siberia by critical analyses of the role of the Polish noble exiles who even if suppressed of their political rights, still were the subjects of high economic and cultural capital, and actively engaged in the colonisation of the Siberia. During my presentation I will briefly describe the features of these two classical perspectives on Russian Siberia. Then, I will analyse the permanent exhibition of the Museum of Memory of Sybir in Białystok, which tells the centuries old history of Poles in the Russian Siberia. By analysing this exhibition I will try to establish how much this exhibition is affected by "classical" Polish martyrologic and progressive perspectives on Siberia and how much/ if at all by frames of some global memory regimes. The aim of my presentation is to establish a frame in which the Endless East is framed in contemporary Polish memory culture as displayed in the Museum of Memory of Sybir.

Prof Joanna Wawrzyniak

Director of the Center for Research on Social Memory, Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw.

**Cultural Memory in Overlapping Peripheries: Insights from Armenian and Polish Museums**

**Panel 8: Challenging the borders of 'East' and 'West'**

Professor Wasana Wongsurawat

Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University

**From Anglophile to Sinophile: The transformation and survival of royal hegemony in Thai politics from King Vajiravudh to HRH Maha Chakri Sirindhorn**

In the century between the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and its centenary anniversary in 2021, China went from being an underdeveloped and chaotic revolutionary threat to an economic and political world superpower and great ally in the eyes of the conservative Thai elite. The Oxford educated King Vajiravudh Rama VI (r. 1910 – 1925) was not only a well-known Anglophile, but also an outspoken critic of China, the Chinese Revolution (10 October 1911) and so-called 'yellow peril.' He was the author of the infamous *Jews of the Orient* and an extensive collection of anti-Chinese writings, both fictional and non-fictional. A century later, his grand-niece, HRH Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, third offspring of the late King Bhumibol Rama IX (r. 1946 – 2016) and younger sister of the ruling monarch King Maha Vajiralongkorn Rama X, a well-known Sinophile and recognized great friend of the People's Republic of China, has penned and published thirteen travel memoirs to China and translated over a dozen works of Chinese literature. The process through which the Thai monarchist elite transformed their model of political domination from the colonialist and modernity of the British Empire to the third world Maoist personality cult and authoritarian economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping, within the centenary lifetime of the Chinese Communist Party, is rather intriguing and deserves more serious investigation. How did the monarchist elite of the Chakri Dynasty manage to maintain royal hegemony above consecutive undemocratic regimes for the past century despite the many major global upheavals in both the political and economic arenas? Perhaps more importantly, how did they manage to do so while switching political role models that appear to be from two different ends of the political

spectrum—from the pre-World War British Empire to the post-Cold War People's Republic of China?

Professor Jong-ho Kim

Institute for East Asian Studies, Sogang University

**Negotiating 'Global East': Overseas Confucianism, Mainland Modernism, and struggle for seeking 'Chineseness' in the early 20th century**

When confronted with Western advanced modernism, the Confucianism, a political thought that had been a symbol of Chinese imperialism and regulated everyday life of ordinary Chinese for thousands of years, was a main subject to be attacked by a new wave of anti-traditionalism in China. This New Culture Movement, led by college students and modern intellectuals, was a powerful force in freeing the Chinese people from Confucius thousands-year-long shackles. While this shift in perspective on Chinese traditional values was rapidly and widely spread to mainland China from Beijing and Shanghai during the 1910s and 1920s, one overseas Chinese intellectual insisted on the revival of Confucianism and the integration of East and West in Singapore and Xiamen (Amoy). Dr. Lim Boon Keng (1869-1957), one of the most famous Chinese diasporas who majored in Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, was respected by Chinese descendants of Singapore and British Malaya, and he participated in a variety of activities for the overseas Chinese community. With his study abroad experiences, he was constantly trying to revive Confucius ideas and combine them with Western modernism to shape Chinese-adjusted modernity. When he met Chinese college students and intellectuals as president at Xiamen University, they rejected and resisted his idea, even threatening to expel him. Lu Xun, a professor at this university and a major leader of the New Culture Movement, officially condemned him for his poor Chinese and collaboration with Westerners. The clash between a Chinese diaspora intellectual who could not speak Chinese but insisted on the revival of Confucianism and a mainland Chinese intellectual who insisted on acceptance of modernism but criticized Western collaborators clearly reveals the struggle for finding the Chinese modernism and one aspect of 'Global East' in East Asia during the modern era.

Professor Paul Corner

Professor of European History, University of Siena

**Italy as North or What happens when you are part of the West but it doesn't feel like it.**

Italy – united Italy, post 1861 – had many neighbours in the Mediterranean basin. Greece, Spain, Libya, Tunisia, not to speak of the Balkans or those countries further afield in the Near East. But none of these countries provided a model for the new nation. Instead the young Italy looked to France, to Britain, and, above all (and after 1870), to Germany for inspiration. This was not East looking West; if anything, it was South looking North. But the 'hegemonic mirror' of European superiority in which Italy saw itself reflected was at work all the same. Italy had to become like its northern neighbours. The work of the mirror was accentuated by the fact that, in the minds of its founders, the new Italy was born to greatness; it had not been created to become a European backwater such as Portugal had become. Italy was to resume its position as a world leader, previously exemplified in Ancient Rome and in the Renaissance. The problem was that no one else recognised this potential greatness. On the contrary, many foreign observers linked Italy to all the characteristics of the 'South' – characteristics that were often sufficiently orientalist. Italy was romantically colourful but prone to the defects of the underdeveloped 'South', that is, to laziness, dirtiness, dishonesty, and – above all – disorganization. Italian aspirations and European perceptions often clashed violently, therefore. It was in this context that the struggle for international respect began, with Italy constantly aware that that respect was lacking. To achieve it Italy had to become less 'South' and more 'North'. Consequently successive Italian governments followed the path of their northern models – industrialisation, colonial expansion, even arriving at (an unnecessary) participation in the First World War. This last was the classic case of a country trying to join a club that had, up to that point, refused it entry. It was 'South' knocking at the door of the 'North'. The Versailles settlement – the 'mutilated victory' – stung Italians badly because it was a sign that, despite all their very costly efforts, the application for entry to the club of the Great Powers had not been accepted. Aspirations to become part of the 'North' had been frustrated. Fascist dictatorship would grow from this, replicating so many of the attitudes of the previous fifty years – attitudes which stressed Italian modernity and pushed the neighbouring Mediterranean countries into the category of the inferior and uncivilised 'East'. Fascism's 'imagined geography' put Italy at the centre of the world and, for a time, some were even disposed to believe that geography. But it was an illusion that could not last; such 'imagined geography' was an excellent example of the trick of the old Venetian cartographers – to please their masters they would make Italy bigger and the rest of the world smaller.

### **Panel 9: Memory of the Empire in East-Central Europe**

**Chair: Dr Katja Castryck-Naumann, Research Fellow at the Leibniz Institute of the History and Culture of Easter Europe (GWZO).**

Dr Elżbieta Kwiecińska

Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

#### **A Civilizing Relay. The Concept of The Civilizing Mission as a Cultural Transfer in East-Central Europe, 1815-1919**

The appropriation of the concept of the civilizing mission in East-Central Europe had a compensatory character and acted as a way to prove one's belonging to the West. East-Central European "enlightened" elites developed a hierarchy of inferiority and superiority in relation to the West; accordingly, Eastern Europe became a single unit only in the eyes of Westerners. The talk will be a presentation of my PhD dissertation which I defended last year at the European University Institute and now I am turning it into a book. In my thesis, I demonstrate how the colonial concept of the civilizing mission was transferred and appropriated in East-Central Europe as both an intellectual idea and a tool for legitimizing political power. I will demonstrate various strategies through which members of the German, Polish, and Ukrainian intelligentsia transferred, appropriated, contested and internalized the civilizing missions directed towards them by other European empires. In order to distance themselves from Eastern backwardness and identify themselves as Western, members of the German, Polish and Ukrainian intelligentsia constructed their own personal "Easts" to make themselves Western: within their Eastern neighbours (Germans saw the "East" in Poles, Poles in Ukrainians, Ukrainians and Poles in Russians) or peoples of the same ethnic origin. I show how the German civilizing mission to Poland and Slavdom was transferred and reinterpreted as the Polish civilizing mission to Ukraine and kresy, and then, how there were formed the Polish and Ukrainian civilizing missions to free Russia.

Professor Małgorzata Głowacka-Grajper

Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw

#### **The West of the Eastern Empire. Heritage of Russian Rule in Poland**

There has been a long-lasting discussion in the social sciences on various types of colonialism and on defining the situation of East-Central Europe as a postcolonial condition. The perspective of "internal European colonization" points to analogies between the policy pursued

by colonial empires in their overseas colonies and the policy towards subordinated European nations. By analogy, such arguments share an (often inexplicit) assumption that postcolonial theory helps to highlight issues overshadowed by more conventional notions used by the historiography of the region, such as foreign occupation, nation-building, totalitarianism, (post)communism, (post)socialism, and others. A large part of these discussions covers the imperialism of Tsarist Russia and of the Soviet Union. In my paper I will present – within the colonial and post-colonial studies framework – how tangible heritage associated with the times when parts of Poland were under the rule of Russian Tsarist empire was protected, silenced, (re)interpreted and (re)used during communist and post-communist times. To this day objects such as Orthodox churches and cemeteries, military facilities (forts and citadels), public buildings and urban infrastructure facilities that were built during the tsarist rule have remained in the landscape of Polish cities. In some places, the memory of the tsarist past and the Russian communities that used to inhabit Polish cities was also preserved. Heritage can be analysed as a form of discourse, in which power relations and social actions determine what will be considered “the heritage” of a nation or local community (what is forgotten and hidden, and what is mentioned, and how). The vision of heritage at the state level is dominated by the idea of single national history. In such a situation, the presence of “foreign heritage”, especially when defined as the heritage of colonizers or occupying forces, is a challenge to the narrative of historical policy and may be seen as “negative heritage”. Researchers using the post-colonial perspective in relation to Eastern Europe also point to the “anticolonial nationalism” and “hybridity” that appear in social practices. I will analyse social practices regarding the post-imperial heritage of Tsarist Russia in Polish cities such as Warsaw – the capital city and the westernmost metropolis of the Russian empire, which went through modernisation during the Russian rule and which nowadays is the place of many national commemorations while the Russian heritage in the city is generally silenced, Łódź – one of the main industrial cities during the Tsarist times and currently promoting itself as “the city of four cultures” (i.e. Polish, Jewish, Russian and German) and Białystok – the town which flourished economically during the Russian rule and which is currently a local cultural centre in the culturally and religiously diverse eastern Podlasie region and which, at the same time, is the central place for national commemorations of the deportees to Siberia during Tsarist and Soviet times through the Museum of the Memory of Siberia Deportations.