

The Long Perestroika from Afar: Making Peripheries Central

Organisatoren

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The international conference *The Long Perestroika from Afar: Making Peripheries Central*, held at Kloster Seeon in Bavaria, brought together scholars working across a wide geographical and disciplinary spectrum to reconsider one of the most consequential periods in late twentieth-century history. Rather than treating perestroika as a short-lived reform project confined to the second half of the 1980s or as a prelude to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, participants approached it as a much longer process whose origins, trajectories, and consequences extended well beyond conventional chronological boundaries. The conference formed part of the ERC-funded project Perestroika from Below and contributed to an upcoming collective volume that seeks to move discussions of perestroika away from Moscow-centric narratives and toward a broader examination of the transformations that unfolded across the Soviet and post-Soviet regions and republics.

The category of the “afar” occupied a central place in the discussions from the very beginning. It refers to locations physically distant from Moscow, communities separated from

political power, groups positioned at the margins of dominant narratives, diasporic actors operating beyond Soviet borders, or even temporal distances from the reform era itself. This broad understanding encouraged participants to examine how new political, cultural, and social centers emerged during and after perestroika, challenging established hierarchies and conventional center-periphery models. The conference, therefore, deliberately embraced multiplicity, presenting perestroika as a mosaic of overlapping experiences whose meanings varied across regions, social groups, and historical contexts.

The first panel, “Out of Centre: Media-Making in and about Peripheries,” explored how media institutions and cultural production both reflected and shaped the long perestroika. Focusing on Ukraine, Latvia, and Slovakia, the presentations demonstrated how changing media and cultural practices opened new spaces for participation and experimentation before formal political transitions were completed. Opening the panel, ANDRII PYKALO (Toronto) examined amateur television in Kharkiv between 1985 and 1991. Focusing on factory-based video studios operated by workers and enthusiasts, he challenged simplistic assumptions about Soviet media. Initially devoted to exemplary workers and industrial achievements, these studios gradually moved beyond factory walls as *glasnost*’ created new possibilities for public discussion. They documented shortages, urban problems, social grievances, and youth culture. Street interviews captured spontaneous reactions from local residents, while examples ranging from consumer shortages to skateboarding demonstrated how amateur video made previously neglected experiences publicly visible. EVA EGLĀJA-KRISTSONE (Riga) examined the transformation of the influential Latvian newspaper *Cīņa*. Rather than viewing the collapse of Soviet media institutions as an abrupt break, she traced the interaction of ideological change, professional conflict, and market pressures. Founded in 1904, *Cīņa* had survived several political regimes and became one of Soviet Latvia’s most important newspapers. By 1990, however, disagreements between party authorities and editorial staff produced a split over its future direction. While Communist Party officials sought to retain political control, many journalists regarded themselves as defenders of the newspaper’s intellectual and symbolic legacy. The emergence of *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* illustrated how perestroika transformed the media through both democratization and commercialization. Newspapers had to compete for readers and develop new economic strategies while redefining their political roles.

The panel concluded with SANDRA PLASKONOVA’s (Bratislava) examination of independent cultural initiatives in late socialist and post-socialist Slovakia. Focusing on experimental theatre, she argued that developments often associated with the post-1989 transition had originated during the final decades of state socialism. Her case study of a youth

theatre in Trnava showed how relatively weak ideological supervision enabled practitioners to challenge established cultural norms. Through manifestos, experimental performances, and new forms of audience engagement, they emphasized personal experience, collective responsibility, and creative autonomy. These practices anticipated principles later associated with independent cultural institutions. Yet the transition to market conditions also made it difficult for many experimental initiatives to survive despite their new political freedoms.

The conference's first discussion panel, "Was There a Perestroika for Women?", shifted attention from institutional change to gender, representation, and social agency. Participants explored the uneven and contradictory ways in which women navigated the changing late Soviet and post-Soviet landscape. The discussion centered on visibility, exclusion, and the relationship between formal political change and everyday experience: if perestroika created new opportunities, who could make use of them, and under what conditions? TIMOTHY NUNAN (Regensburg) approached these questions through Azerbaijani women's magazines, examining how ideas about gender, sexuality, and international belonging were reformulated between the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Earlier Soviet narratives had presented Azerbaijan as a model of socialist modernity for women across the East. The erosion of Soviet ideological frameworks encouraged new identifications with Turkey, Iran, and transnational Muslim networks. Nunan did not present this as the replacement of one model by another, but showed how competing visions of modernity coexisted and interacted. Changing representations of women thus reflected wider debates about national roles, geopolitical orientations, and cultural belongings in the South Caucasus.

ELLA ROSSMAN (Leipzig) focused on women's self-organization and feminist politics in the RSFSR during the long perestroika. Drawing on extensive archival research, she challenged the idea that feminism emerged as a coherent or unified movement. Women's organizations operated largely outside mainstream political institutions and received limited attention from elites and the media. Some employed explicitly feminist language, while others pursued nationalist, conservative, socialist, or neo-Bolshevik agendas. Despite these differences, many sought to redefine motherhood, family, and women's social roles. Rather than abandoning socialist frameworks, activists often reinterpreted and repoliticized them to formulate alternative visions of citizenship and participation. Rossman thus demonstrated that women's activism followed trajectories that cannot be easily accommodated within Western definitions of feminism. LIĀNA IVETE ŽILDE (Riga) examined intimate family spaces in the work of Latvian photographers Inta Ruka and Ina Stūre. Moving away from political institutions and public activism, she showed how photographs of families, homes, and everyday

interactions captured slower and less visible forms of historical change. Material environments, generational relationships, and emotional worlds revealed continuity as much as rupture. The photographs recorded gradual adjustments and subtle reconfigurations of daily life. Photography therefore offered a perspective on temporalities of the long perestroika that often escape conventional political narratives.

Questions of temporality remained central in the following panel, “Perestroika in the Village.” The speakers examined rural experiences that occupied peripheral positions in both Soviet modernization projects and post-Soviet memory cultures. Their presentations showed that villages were not only recipients of reforms initiated elsewhere, but also sites where competing visions of modernity, memory, and social order were actively negotiated. KATERYNA MALAIA (Utah/Kharkiv) examined rural housing during the period of *perebudova* in Soviet Ukraine. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing into the reform era, planners developed experimental settlements intended to narrow the perceived divide between urban and rural life. These projects exposed the limitations of state planning as much as its ambitions. Standardized designs, shortages of materials, and regulations governing private construction often conflicted with residents’ needs. Villagers responded by adapting official plans and adding features, including bathrooms, that planners had not initially prioritized. Malaia also observed that many supposedly outdated rural homes proved resilient during the current Russo-Ukrainian war, raising questions about the longer-term consequences of Soviet modernization.

VIOLETA DAVOLIŪTĖ (Vilnius) approached the village through Lithuanian memory politics. Focusing on the writer Justinas Marcinkevičius and the politician Algirdas Brazauskas, she explored how representations of the countryside became intertwined with debates over national culture, historical trauma, and socialism’s legacy. The village occupied a powerful position in Lithuanian cultural memory as a site of suffering, authenticity, and resistance. Narratives formed in the late Soviet period continued to shape post-Soviet political debates, revealing unresolved conflicts over memory. The long perestroika, Davoliūtė suggested, was therefore not only an institutional transformation but also an ongoing struggle over historical interpretation. NATHALIE MOINE (Berlin) concluded the panel with a study of a Moldovan village described as a “double periphery.” Through a microhistorical reconstruction, she traced how the dissolution of collective agriculture and wider economic changes reshaped local life over an extended period. Her analysis challenged chronologies ending perestroika in 1991, showing that social and economic restructuring continued into the mid-1990s and beyond. Residents experienced the village as peripheral within larger political

structures but central to networks of agricultural production and exchange. This tension between marginality and centrality highlighted the value of local perspectives for understanding large-scale transformations.

The panel “Empowerment of the Marginals?” focused on groups often neglected in Soviet and post-Soviet historiography. The question mark in the title was crucial: instead of presuming that perestroika empowered marginalized communities, the speakers examined the contradictory forms of agency that emerged under conditions of political uncertainty and social change. MARIA CRISTINA GALMARINI (Williamsburg) opened the panel with an examination of disability activism in the late Soviet Union. Focusing on dissident organizations established by disabled activists, she showed how disability provided a language for broader claims about legality, citizenship, and human rights. Challenging portrayals of disabled people as passive recipients of state policy, Galmarini highlighted their participation in public debates and transnational networks. Through samizdat publications and contacts with international human rights movements, activists sought both to improve conditions for disabled citizens and to expose wider deficiencies in Soviet governance.

JENNIFER RAMME (Graz) turned to unofficial music scenes in late socialist Poland to examine how women, queer individuals, and people of color challenged dominant cultural norms. Alternative musical networks in Gdańsk and elsewhere created spaces in which assumptions about gender, race, and belonging could be questioned. Female-led bands and Black musicians gained new visibility but continued to encounter discrimination and stereotyping. Ramme thus emphasized the coexistence of cultural experimentation and social exclusion, revealing the ambiguities of empowerment during the long perestroika. JEKATYERINA DUNAJEVA (Budapest) examined how Roma communities in Hungary remembered the transition from socialism. Drawing on oral histories, she challenged narratives portraying Roma populations as victims of post-socialist change. Interviewees described economic decline and exclusion after 1989, but also recalled experiences of security, dignity, and social recognition under late socialism. In addition to usual nostalgic narratives, these memories expressed concerns about inequality, uncertainty, and the loss of social protections. Dunajeva’s presentation demonstrated the importance of marginalized perspectives for assessing the legacies of both socialism and its collapse.

The next panel, “Professional Perestroikas: Continuity and Rupture at the Workplace,” shifted attention to everyday professional life during and after the Soviet collapse. The speakers examined how workers and specialists experienced the erosion of established structures and the uncertain emergence of new ones. Their papers suggested that the long perestroika

transformed professional roles, workplace cultures, and systems of expertise as profoundly as it changed political institutions. POLINA GUNDARINA (Leipzig) analyzed cultural workers employed in Soviet Houses of Culture, one of the largest sectors of non-industrial employment in the Soviet Union. Despite their importance in organizing leisure and cultural life, these workers were relatively poorly paid and often lacked benefits available to industrial workers. Perestroika promised greater autonomy and economic flexibility but also exposed cultural institutions to market pressures. Commercialization generated opportunities for experimentation alongside precarity, corruption, and financial instability. Nevertheless, many directors, often women, preserved these institutions through the 1990s despite declining resources and state support. Gundarina thus complicated narratives of institutional collapse by emphasizing continuity and adaptation.

ELENE NABAKHTEVELI (Tbilisi) examined Georgian physicists through oral history interviews, reconstructing the collapse of the Soviet scientific system from the perspective of a republic distant from Moscow and Leningrad. Perestroika transformed science administratively, socially, and morally: laboratories ceased functioning, funding disappeared, and professional hierarchies were destabilized. Scientists relied on informal exchanges and personal networks: in one memorable example, a technical service had to be paid for in bottles of vodka. As scientific prestige declined, international organizations such as the Soros Foundation became important sources of support, while emigration often appeared to be the only viable career strategy. Nabakhteveli showed how infrastructural collapse exposed the fragility of systems of expertise that had previously seemed permanent. IULIA SKUBYTSKA (Potsdam) explored debates over the future of the Pioneer movement. Newspapers, surveys, and public discussions invited children to express opinions about institutions that had previously spoken for rather than with them. Many criticized the organization's formalism and ritualism, but their criticism did not necessarily imply rejection. Children instead proposed alternatives based on initiative, sincerity, and meaningful participation. Skubytska suggested that one of perestroika's important innovations was the creation of communicative spaces in which traditionally marginalized voices, including those of children, could enter public debate.

The second discussion panel "Perestroika of (for) the Soul?" addressed the transformation of spiritual, religious, and emotional life. Moving beyond institutional histories of churches, the speakers examined how individuals and communities renegotiated belief and morality amid weakening ideological certainties and proliferating alternative worldviews. CHOI CHATTERJEE (Long Beach) examined the growing influence of Vedanta philosophy in late Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Situating Russia within global circulations of religious

and philosophical ideas, she traced connections extending back to the late nineteenth century and figures such as Nicholas Roerich. During perestroika, these older intellectual pathways acquired new significance as alternative spiritual traditions gained visibility and legitimacy. Chatterjee interpreted this development as part of broader processes of elite self-reform and experimentation accompanying the weakening of Soviet ideological monopolies. NADEZHDA BELIAKOVA (Bielefeld) approached religious change through minority communities in Kazakhstan and the Volga region. Networks that had survived beneath the surface of Soviet society re-emerged as restrictions were relaxed. Greater mobility and communication allowed dispersed communities to reconnect after decades of separation. Yet these freedoms also encouraged migration, sometimes weakening the communities they had helped to revitalize. Beliakova therefore emphasized the ambivalent relationship between emancipation, mobility, and communal cohesion.

ANCA MÂNDRU (Sibiu) focused on the relationship between time, space, and religious practice. Communist states, she argued, sought to monopolize citizens' time through work schedules, rituals, and public celebrations. Religious life survived through individuals' ability to create moments and spaces for spiritual practice within everyday routines. From this perspective, perestroika appeared less as sudden liberation than as a gradual renegotiation of temporal and spatial boundaries. Mândru shifted attention from institutions to everyday practices and lived experience. ALEXANDRA KOLESNIK (Bielefeld) concluded the panel with an examination of vernacular memorials to Viktor Tsoi across the post-Soviet world. Through oral history and memory studies, she explored how local communities created emotional spaces of belonging around the musician's memory. Unlike official commemorations, these memorials emerged from below and took highly localized forms. Kolesnik connected Tsoi's continuing presence in public memory to the historical moment of his death, which coincided with widespread uncertainty and expectation. The emotional communities surrounding him revealed the enduring cultural and affective dimensions of the long perestroika.

The conference's final day began with "New Communities – Old Values," a panel examining how emerging collective identities interacted with inherited ideological frameworks. The papers challenged assumptions that the collapse of Soviet institutions produced entirely new political cultures, showing how new movements drew upon existing languages, practices, and organizational experience. ALEXANDRA KOROLEVA (Paris) examined the emergence of the movement *Pamyat'* in *Akademgorodok* during the late 1980s. Public discussions initially focused on education, health, and computerization but gradually

became intertwined with nationalist and conspiratorial narratives. Debates about computer technology shifted from technical questions to arguments about national decline, cultural authenticity, and external threats. Koroleva demonstrated that *glasnost* created spaces not only for democratic participation but also for ideas that later became central to nationalist and reactionary movements. MARINA APTEKMAN (Boston) focused on Soviet-Afghan War veterans and their efforts to establish collective identities in post-Soviet industrial cities. Challenging portrayals of veterans primarily as traumatized victims, she showed how their organizations became significant social and political actors in the 1990s. Particularly beyond the Urals, these associations provided solidarity, economic assistance, and political influence, while also becoming entangled with criminal structures and informal economies. Through examples from Sverdlovsk and its cultural representations, Aptekman traced how memories of Afghanistan were reinterpreted within wider struggles over the Soviet past and the legitimacy of the post-Soviet order.

The third discussion panel “Commercialisation and Transnationalism” addressed the relationship between expanding opportunities for agency and the structural forces reshaping late socialist and post-socialist societies. As the discussion emphasized, causality, informality, and commercialization rarely operated separately but formed interconnected dimensions of the long perestroika. SIOBHÁN HEARNE (Manchester) examined these processes through the history of the Soviet Red Cross. Humanitarianism was fundamentally reconfigured by reforms begun during perestroika. Traditionally operating as an extension of the state, the Red Cross emphasized mass participation and defined itself against Western humanitarian organizations. Natural disasters, declining state resources, and growing international cooperation forced it to rethink its mission and methods. Particularly significant was the reversal of established aid flows: a state that had presented itself as a donor increasingly became a recipient. Hearne showed how institutional reinvention developed alongside the exposure of structural limitations. JULES SIRAN (Geneva) examined foreign students in Hungary during the 1980s and 1990s. He emphasized the continuity of transnational student mobility across 1989–1991 while showing how its conditions changed. Recruitment previously organized through party structures gave way to more market-oriented arrangements. Expanded opportunities were accompanied by new forms of linguistic, social, and racial exclusion. African and Asian students in particular experienced growing isolation and racism despite official commitments to internationalism. Siran’s presentation demonstrated how globalization dismantled some hierarchies while producing others.

ALEXA VON WINNING (Tübingen) approached commercialization through the Soros Foundation's activities in Belarus during the early 1990s. Drawing on grant applications from across the country, she examined efforts by international actors to promote entrepreneurial values and reshape economic behavior. Local applicants, however, frequently appropriated these opportunities for purposes that differed from donors' intentions. The spread of market principles was therefore neither uniform nor uncontested but emerged through negotiations between international institutions and local communities. STEVEN HARRIS (Fredericksburg) concluded the panel with a study of S7 Airlines and the transformation of the Soviet aviation sector. He argued that the company's success in Novosibirsk was rooted in opportunities created during perestroika: the fragmentation of Aeroflot, changing regulations, and growing engagement with international markets. Commercialization, however, did not eliminate informal practices. Relations with regulators, security structures, and political authorities remained crucial. Marketization therefore reconfigured informality rather than replacing it.

The following panel, "Religious Practices on the Edge," returned to questions of belief and morality among communities occupying marginal positions in Soviet and post-Soviet religious landscapes. The presentations showed that religious revival was not only the recovery of forgotten traditions but also a negotiation among competing claims to authenticity, legitimacy, and historical memory. KATERYNA BUDZ (Edinburgh) examined the legalization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church during *perebudova*. Reconstructing protests, petitions, and public campaigns, she showed how religious activism became intertwined with struggles over national identity and historical justice. The church's emergence from the underground challenged official narratives about religion, nationality, and the Soviet past. Legalization was not just granted from above but resulted from sustained mobilization by believers who used the opportunities of *glasnost* to expose decades of repression. Therefore, religious revival became both a spiritual and political project connected to debates over Ukrainian sovereignty and memory. ABIGAIL SCRIPKA (Potsdam) examined *baqsylar* (healers, shamans, and spiritual practitioners) in Kazakhstan. Complicating narratives of national revival, she explored a religious landscape in which Tengrism, Islam, alternative spiritual movements, and local healing traditions competed for authority. Oral histories revealed significant regional and social variation, while questions of authenticity, certification, mobility, and state recognition grew more important as spiritual practices entered public life. Perestroika therefore produced not a unified revival but a complex field of competing roles and images that continues to shape contemporary Kazakhstan.

The conference concluded with its most explicitly historiographical discussion panel, “Perestroika as Decolonisation?” The speakers considered how coloniality, marginality, memory, and inequality might illuminate transformations in different parts of the former Soviet space. FARUH KUZIEV (London) examined the Sharora earthquake in Tajikistan as a lens through which to reconsider Soviet internationalism, disaster response, and colonial hierarchies. Emergencies, he argued, exposed inequalities that remained less visible under stable conditions. The uneven distribution of resources, responsibilities, and vulnerabilities revealed deeper structures of power. Kuziev preferred the concept of coloniality to colonialism, emphasizing enduring asymmetries without reducing complex relations to binary categories. His presentation demonstrated the importance of everyday experience and local perspectives in discussions of Soviet decolonization. ASEL DOOLOTKELDIEVA (Potsdam) and ELMIRA NOGOIBAEVA (Bishkek) examined grassroots activism in Kyrgyzstan. Challenging accounts of political mobilization as sudden or externally inspired, they traced its roots in conflicts over language, housing, memory, and cultural recognition. Newspapers, public meetings, demonstrations, and campaigns allowed local actors to criticize center-periphery relations and demand recognition of their experiences. Everyday grievances thereby developed into broader claims concerning sovereignty, identity, and justice.

STEFANIE EISENHUTH (Potsdam) studied letters sent from Lviv to the Ukrainian popular movement Rukh. Correspondents described linguistic discrimination, russification, and cultural marginalization through a language of colonial domination. Eisenhuth emphasized that these concepts were not retrospectively imposed by scholars but appeared within the sources themselves. Her paper consequently raised methodological questions about the relationship between contemporary analytical frameworks and historical actors’ own interpretations. KSENIA ROBBE (Groningen) examined representations of violence in contemporary Russian autofiction, tracing continuities across Soviet, post-Soviet, and contemporary experiences of crisis. JEFF SAHADEO (Ottawa) explored environmental activism in Georgia through conflicts over rivers, dams, and energy production, showing how ecological concerns intersected with national and regional mobilization. Both presentations demonstrated that the consequences of perestroika extended well beyond formal reform and continued to shape social, cultural, and environmental conflicts decades after the Soviet collapse.

The concluding discussion returned to themes that had surfaced repeatedly throughout the conference. Participants debated the usefulness of concepts such as decolonization, coloniality, commercialization, and informality, while also reflecting on the strengths and

limitations of the “long perestroika” framework itself. Although consensus was neither expected nor achieved, several common observations emerged. First, perestroika appeared less as a discrete historical event than as a prolonged and uneven process whose temporal boundaries varied across regions and social groups. Second, the experiences of actors located outside political centers proved indispensable for understanding these transformations. Rather than passive recipients of change, communities in villages, industrial towns, minority regions, religious networks, and cultural margins actively shaped the trajectories of reform and its aftermath. Finally, the conference demonstrated the value of moving beyond Moscow-centered narratives by examining the diverse spaces in which late socialism was contested, adapted, and reimagined.

Taken together, the presentations revealed the remarkable analytical potential of approaching perestroika from the peripheries. Whether discussing media production in Kharkiv, rural housing in Ukraine, domestic photography in Latvia, religious revival in Kazakhstan, veteran organizations in Sverdlovsk, or environmental mobilization in Georgia, participants consistently demonstrated that many of the most important developments associated with the late Soviet and post-Soviet transformation unfolded far from traditional centers of power. By placing these experiences at the center of analysis, the conference not only expanded our understanding of perestroika itself but also raised broader questions about historical agency, temporal change, and the production of knowledge about the Soviet and post-Soviet worlds.

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Conference overview:

OUT OF CENTRE: MEDIA-MAKING IN AND ABOUT PERIPHERIES

Moderator: Kelly Smith (Georgetown University)

Andrii Pykalo (University of Toronto) — Kharkiv Amateur Television and Perestroika (1985–1991): Media Practices and Everyday Experiences of Change

Jānis Oga, Eva Eglāja-Kristone (University of Latvia) — From “Cīņa” to “Neatkarīgā Cīņa”: Media Transformation, Marketization, and the Long Perestroika in Latvia

Sandra Plaskonova (Slovak Academy of Sciences) — Revolution from Below: The Birth of Slovakia's Independent Culture

DISCUSSION PANEL: WAS THERE A PERESTROIKA FOR WOMEN?

Moderator: Dina Fainberg (University of London)

Timothy Nunan (University of Regensburg) — Contested Modernities: Azerbaijani Women's Magazines and the Geopolitics of Gender and Sexuality, 1985–1997

Ella Rossman (GWZO, Leipzig) — Between Waves: Women's Organising and Feminist Politics in the Long Perestroika

Liāna Ivete Žilde (Art Academy of Latvia) — Domestic Peripheries: Intimate Family Spaces during Perestroika in the Work of Latvian Photographers Ina Stūre and Inta Ruka

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES ON THE EDGE

Moderator: Veronika Pehe (Czech Academy of Sciences)

Zilola Khalilova (Centre of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan) — Islamic Learning under Late Socialism: Reformist Visions in Soviet Uzbekistan

Kateryna Budz (University of Edinburgh) — On the Path to Legalisation: The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church during Perestroika

Abigail Scripka (ZZF) — “Men Kommunistka Boldym”: How Long Perestroika Shaped the Lives of Baqsylar in Kazakhstan

EMPOWERMENT OF THE MARGINALS?

Moderator: Bradley Gorski (Georgetown University)

Maria Cristina Galmarini (William & Mary) — Dissenting Invalids: A Disability History of the Long Perestroika

Jennifer Ramme (University of Graz) — From Image to Action: Women, Queers, and Black & People of Colour Performing Alternatives in Unofficial Music Scenes during Late State Socialism in Poland

Jekatyerina Dunajeva (Corvinus University of Budapest) — Narrating Transformation: Roma Experiences of the Last Socialist Decade and Regime Change

PROFESSIONAL PERESTROIKAS: CONTINUITY AND RUPTURE AT THE WORKPLACE

Moderator: Irina Gordeeva (ZZF)

Polina Gundarina (University of Leipzig) — Working with Socialist Fun: Organising Leisure in Soviet Doma kul'tury Before and After 1991

Elene Nabakhteveli (Ilia State University) — Lived Perestroika: Georgian Physicists at the Margin of the Soviet Scientific System

Iuliia Skubytska (ZZF) — “Pioneer Organization is Outdated!”: Children Demanding Change Within Perestroika's Framework

DISCUSSION PANEL: PERESTROIKA OF (FOR) THE SOUL?

Moderator: Juliane Füst (ZZF/CEU)

Choi Chatterjee (California State University) — Vedanta in Late Perestroika and Post-Soviet Russia

Nadezhda Beliakova (University of Bielefeld) — Faith on the Margins: Reassembling Religious Minority Communities during Perestroika in Kazakhstan and the Volga Region

Anca Mândru (Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu) — Etatization of Time vs. Churchification of Space: Secular and Religious Ritual during the Long Perestroika

Alexandra Kolesnik (University of Bielefeld) — Singing Perestroika from the Margins: Vernacular Memorials to Viktor Tsoi and Emotional Communities Beyond the Centres in the 1990s

NEW COMMUNITIES – OLD VALUES

Moderator: Corinna Kuhr-Korolev (ZZF)

Alexandra Koroleva (Sciences Po) — Akademgorodok in Novosibirsk and the Transformations of Local “Pamyat”: “Hidden” Actors, Commonalities and Conflicts in the 1980s

Marina Aptekman (Tufts University) — “Comrades, Let's Remember Afghan”: Veteran Unions of the Soviet–Afghan War in Peripheral Industrial Cities in the 1990s

Ivan Lavrentjev (University of Tartu) — Workers' Struggle Against Restoration of Estonia's Independence in the Late 1980s

DISCUSSION PANEL: COMMERCIALISATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Moderator: Alisa Lozhkina (ZZF)

Siobhán Hearne (University of Manchester) — Perestroika and the Reconfiguration of Soviet Humanitarianism: The Soviet Red Cross between Reform and Disaster

Jules Siran (University of Geneva) — Foreign Students in Hungary during the Long Perestroika: Marketization of Student Mobility and Experiences of Exclusion (1980s–1990s)

Alexa von Winning (University of Tübingen) — Seeds of the Market: The Soros Foundation’s Support for Regional Economic Change in Belarus

Steven Harris (University of Mary Washington) — Air Perestroika: Aeroflot’s Breakup and the Rise of Russia’s Regional Airlines

PERESTROIKA IN THE VILLAGE

Moderator: Francis Kirk (ZZF)

Kateryna Malaia (University of Utah / Kharkiv School of Architecture) — Perebudova (Ukr. for Perestroika) in Rural Homes

Violeta Davoliūtė (Vilnius University) — From the Long Thaw to the Long Perestroika: Justinas Marcinkevičius, Algirdas Brazauskas, and the Defense of the Post-Soviet Village

Nathalie Moine (Centre Marc Bloch) — State Farm in Ruins, Disrupted Lives: Perestroika in the Double Periphery of a Moldovan Village

DISCUSSION PANEL: PERESTROIKA AS DECOLONISATION?

Moderator: Franziska Davies (ZZF)

Faruh Kuziev (Centre for Information Resilience) — Sharora Earthquake: A Soviet Pompeii. Natural Disasters, Decolonisation, and Nationalism in Tajikistan during the Long Perestroika

Asel Doolotkeldieva (University of Potsdam), Elmira Nogoibaeva (Research Center Esimde) — “Sudden” Activism During Perestroika in Kyrgyzstan: Logical Yet Surprising?

Stefanie Eisenhuth (ZZF) — Rewriting the City: Competing Memories and the Cultural Politics of Transition in Lviv

Ksenia Robbe (University of Groningen / Goethe University Frankfurt) — The “Peripheral 1990s” and Their Slow Violence in Contemporary Russian Autofiction

Jeff Sahadeo (Carleton University) — Rivers as Terrains of Contest in Georgia’s Perestroika