

Double Lecture

Monday, 30 March 2020, 5 pm

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

The Socialist Project in the Soviet and Post-Soviet South: Materiality and Translocality in Central Asia and the Caucasus

Lecture by PD Dr. Stefan Kirmse (ZMO) and Dr. David Leupold (ZMO) as part of the lecture series "Central Eurasian Studies and Translocality: A Debate Unfolding"

This double lecture addresses the materiality and translocality of everyday life in the Soviet and post-Soviet south, paying particular attention to Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. Exploring the link between nationalism and internationalism in the Soviet Union of the 1960s and 1970s, it first tracks regional, transregional and global connectivity and transfer in youth activism. The second part of the lecture then turns to the realm of the material to explore the emancipatory potential of late-Soviet urbanity as physical remainders of a 'failed past' and signifiers of an 'unfinished future'. It seeks to understand how the 'ancien materiality' informed by the visions of Soviet urban planners now inform post-Soviet urbanity three decades later. In addition, the lectures address the benefits and challenges of multi-sited field research and raise methodological questions about the ways in which scholars dealing with the Soviet past often engage with sources and interlocutors.

Stefan Kirmse is a Senior Research Fellow and research coordinator at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin and a senior lecturer in modern history at Humboldt University Berlin.

He gained his PhD in Development Studies from SOAS, University of London in 2009. He is the author of 'Youth and Globalization in Central Asia' (2013) and 'The Lawful Empire. Legal Change and Cultural Diversity in Late Imperial Russia' (2019).

David Leupold is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin. He was a 2018-2019 postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Michigan. Based on his research on contested landscapes of memory, his first monograph 'Embattled Dreamlands – The Politics of Contesting Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish Memory' is in print with Routledge. His research encompasses the politics of memory, mnemonic landscapes and counter-narratives in the post-Ottoman and post-Soviet spaces.