

International Workshop

“Relicts of the Ancien Régime – Socialist & Imperial Legacies and the City”

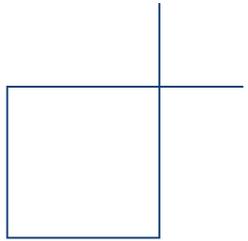
(Berlin, Germany – September 14-15, 2023)

Whether the controversial reopening of the Hagia Sophia as the *Ayasofya* mosque in Istanbul or the toppling of Soviet landmarks across cities and towns of Latvia and Lithuania in the wake of the war in Ukraine – in cities across the world, a fierce struggle is unfolding for the renegotiation of the *urbanscape*, whose iconographic and utilitarian structures come to embody competing visions on the past (*Geschichtsbilder*) and the future (*Zukunftsbilder*). At the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, the research unit "[Representations of the Past](#)" is particularly dedicated to this thematic cluster as it investigates wider questions on the role of historical experience and imagination as a mobilizing force in the present.

In the upcoming workshop *Relicts of the Ancien Régime – Socialist & Imperial Legacies and the City*, to be held **14-15 September, 2023, in person** at our institute in Berlin, we want to explore together with the William H. Sewell Jr Distinguished University Professor of History Ronald G. Suny (University of Michigan) and international participants how materializations of past polities – from the bygone empires of Habsburg and the Ottomans to the now defunct regimes of state socialism – continue to shape experiences with urbanity in the present. Proposing to understand these materializations as *relicts of the ancien régime* the workshop strives to explore the totality of remains – both physical and immaterial – that have survived the demise of the very political entities to which they owe their existence.

Holding that these *relicts* reify themselves in the present simultaneously as external objects and internalized practices, we want to shed light on how the past discontinued

- **conditions and curtails processes of urban spatialization and transformation**
- **informs everyday life within the city**
- **inspires artistic and creative forms of representation**



- **elicits practices of (re-)appropriation (from re-politicization, memorialization and creative reclamation to commodification, revaluation and physical erasure).**

Explicitly welcoming researchers from a wide range of disciplines – from urban sociology, anthropology and comparative literature to history, architecture and urban planning – that explore urban phenomena in a vast and versatile set of geographies from Central and Eastern Europe to Western and Central Asia, the workshop seeks to synthesize different disciplinary and regional prisms in an effort to unveil the cross-temporal mechanisms through which the multiple pasts congealed in the palimpsest of today’s city come into motion, opening up pathways to different, at times, competing urban horizons.

Please submit, latest by March 31, 2023, a short abstract of your paper (300 words) and a short bio (200 words) to david.leupold@zmo.de. For all invited participants accommodation in Berlin will be provided for a maximum of two nights. In order to enhance participation from the Southern Caucasus, Central Asia and Southeastern Europe, limited travel funds are available to support participants with narrow financial possibilities. The workshop is realized within the framework of the DFG-funded research project “[Relicts of \(Another\) Future? – The Afterlife of the Socialist City in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus](#)” (2022-2024).