

**ASEEES Committee for Environmental Studies
2021 Annual Convention (in-person & virtual)
Environment-related events list**

IN-PERSON CONVENTION – NOVEMBER 18-21, 2021

Thursday, November 18

Water Resources in the Late Soviet Era: Regional Perspectives

**Thu, November 18, 2:30 to 4:15pm CST (3:30 to 5:15pm EST), Hilton New Orleans
Riverside, Floor: 3rd Floor, Royal**

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

This panel focuses on the role of water, a crucial and contested resource, in shaping the politics of the late Soviet era. Focusing on the period 1950-1970, Mariia Koskina's paper examines how the city of Divnogorsk, built near the Krasnoyarsk Dam on the Yenisei River, catalyzed a kind of environmental consciousness. Surveying the 1970s, Sarah Cameron's paper scrutinizes how Soviet scientists understood dramatic environmental shifts in the Aral Sea and along its shores. Finally, turning to the era of glasnost, Jeff Sahadeo's paper considers how environmental activists in Georgia mobilized to thwart further development of the republic's rivers. By examining the issue of water from three different geographic perspectives (Eastern Siberia, Central Asia and the Caucasus), the panel illuminates commonalities and differences in how water shaped politics across the Soviet Union.

Friday, November 19

Carceral Legacies in Soviet Scientific Expeditions

Fri, November 19, 10:30am to 12:15pm CST (11:30am to 1:15pm EST), Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Floor: 2nd Floor, Marlborough A & B

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

This panel will examine the relationship between the punitive mechanisms of the state and scientific fieldwork, by tracing the experiences of elite and non-elite participants in

scientific expeditions to remote northern regions of the Soviet Union. The papers seek to explore various manifestations of the carceral society and the intertwinement of the Soviet science and Soviet prison – mobilization of geologists by the security apparatus in the Stalinist period; the voluntary labor of the former Gulag prisoners in forestry expeditions during the Thaw; and the reflections of a prominent scientist on his expeditionary experiences within the carceral system. The panel will probe such notions as carceral science, (internal) colonization of the ‘empty’ spaces of the Russian north, the invisible labor of marginalized actors in the Soviet science, and the meaning of ‘archive’ in these contexts.

Featuring: “A Gulag Geologist Addicted to the Taiga: The Environmental Subjectivity of Boris Vronskii” (Andy Bruno, Northern Illinois U)

Saturday, November 20

Searching for Siberia: Interdisciplinary Approaches and Transnational Perspectives

**Sat, November 20, 2:00 to 3:45pm CST (3:00 to 4:45pm EST), Hilton New Orleans
Riverside, Floor: 2nd Floor, Churchill C1**

Session Submission Type: Roundtable

Brief Description

Roundtable members will examine how Siberian studies link history and anthropology, visual and literary studies, and environmental and indigenous studies, exploring how concepts of infrastructure, isolation, connectivity, and the landscapes and timescapes of Siberia all contribute to the directions taken by the field. Participants will address topics associated with the past, present, and anticipated future of the region, from the Russian Empire to post-Soviet Russia and beyond, with special emphasis on imagined geographies, photography, infrastructural projects, and ideologies of modernization. How such phenomena have left lasting effects on the Siberian environment and the identities of its inhabitants—from the builders of BAM to the development of the Arctic—will be discussed through case studies in global perspective.

Orthodoxy and the Natural World

**Sat, November 20, 2:00 to 3:45pm CST (3:00 to 4:45pm EST), Hilton New Orleans
Riverside, Floor: 1st Floor, Grand Salon A**

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

Despite the existence of a rich ethnographic literature on pre-Christian Slavic beliefs and practices regarding the natural world and how this belief system shaped Russian

life and culture, the same cannot be said for studies of the relationship of Orthodoxy to the natural world. Consequently, these three papers attempt to fill that lacuna by examining how Orthodoxy helped shape attitudes toward the natural world in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. In their analysis of horticultural practice, the treatment of animals, and holy spaces in the landscape, the authors seek to provide a fuller account of a specific Orthodox cosmology, how it influenced Russian perceptions of God and nature, and how this belief system operated in daily life.

The Green Price of Red Promise: Literary Representations of the Environmental Impact of Sovietization

Sat, November 20, 4:30 to 6:15pm CST (5:30 to 7:15pm EST), Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Floor: 3rd Floor, Royal

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

This panel explores literary representations of Soviet incursions into and transformation of the natural landscape and cultural memory. Embracing the conference themes of intersectionality and diversity, each paper considers ecological anxieties in a distinct context and medium: Russian verse of the Revolution, Yiddish prose during the First Five Year Plan, and Russian Village Prose of the post-Stalin era and its later theatrical interpretation. Michael Gluck's paper examines poetic narratives of the Russian Revolution that celebrated the birth of a peasant utopia before ultimately giving way to dismay in the face of environmental destruction. Elaine Wilson's research turns to Soviet Minsk, where processes of industrialization under the first Five Year Plan are intertwined with the fate of the Jewish population, most notably its women, and explores the tension between this developing social-political network and the Belorusian landscape. Erin Tupman's paper looks ahead to the post-Stalin Thaw to connect Soviet interference in the Baikal watershed to legacies of environmental harm that continue to inform regional issues to this day. Stretching from the countryside of the Russian interior to the former Pale of Settlement and beyond to Siberia, the diverse people and texts represented in these studies are united in their shared experiences of Sovietization as a paradoxical project whose promises of growth were contingent upon loss.

Sunday, November 21

No Plan(et) B? Cosmism, Marxism, and the Soviet Ecology

Sun, November 21, 9:00 to 10:45am CST (10:00 to 11:45am EST), Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Floor: 3rd Floor, Jackson

Session Submission Type: Roundtable

Brief Description

60 years after mankind's first venture into outer space, the initial enthusiasm for human colonies on other planets has largely waned. As current exploratory missions to Mars provide us with new insights about potential extraterrestrial life, environmental disasters, an ongoing epidemic, and a looming climate catastrophe remind us of the fragility of both built and natural environments. The realization that there is "No Plan(et) B," currently vocalized by activists and scientists, is getting increasingly powerful.

With a focus on Soviet and East European culture after World War II, our roundtable traces this idea of "No Plan(et) B" in the juxtaposition between ambitious human fantasies about colonizing other planets, on the one hand, and the real experience of (oftentimes failed) attempts at radically altering or managing the environment of our own planet on the other. Our discussion will triangulate the philosophical ideas of Russian cosmism, Marxist theories of nature and human labor, and concrete 20th-century attempts in shaping and maintaining the environment. Panelists will address late socialist philosophy, film, literature, art, and concrete projects in terraforming. Individual contributions will focus on transmaterialities and energy interfaces in the films of Tarkovsky; the Virgin Lands campaign in Kazakhstan as a rehearsal for extraplanetary colonization; the Polish architect Stefan Müller's project of relocating Earth's population to a geodesic network in the atmosphere; Eval'd Ilienkov's and Igor' Zabelin's futurological philosophies; and the confluence of agricultural development and cosmic colonization in the work of Stasys Krasauskas and Chinghiz Aitmatov.

Empire, Identity, and Environment: Towards a Geopoetics of Soviet Liminal Space(s)

Sun, November 21, 11:30am to 1:15pm CST (12:30 to 2:15pm EST), Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Floor: 3rd Floor, Commerce

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

This panel is concerned with the collision of the "real and imagined" places and spaces of the Soviet Union's edges as they are expressed through literary content and form. The papers in this panel push the boundaries of Soviet liminality from terrestrial emptiness (Central Asia) to trans-Eurasian airspace (Moscow-Mongolia-China), from the geographical and technological frontier (Siberia) to post-/imperial transition zones (USSR-Turkey). Papers excavate literary locations in terms of their (sociopolitical, geographical, geological, environmental, phenomenological) features and explore the means by which they are mapped onto the linguistic, ideological, and formal elements of literary discourse. Across sites and genres, the papers seek to understand how discourse about and from the Soviet periphery shapes and subverts centrally-driven narratives about Soviet spaces, environments, and identities.

VIRTUAL CONVENTION – DECEMBER 1-3, 2021

Wednesday, December 1

Changing Economies, Transforming Cultures: Cultural-historical Approaches to the post-1989 Transformation in the Czech Republic and Poland

Wed, December 1, 8:00 to 9:45am CST (9:00 to 10:45am EST), Virtual Convention, VR 18

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

The post-1989 transformations in Central and Eastern Europe have been widely studied in terms of political, social and economic change, but culture remains overlooked in these efforts. This panel aims to address this gap by examining the transformation of culture - both in the sense of cultural production and more broadly as a shared set of values and practices - on examples from the Czech Republic and Poland. Applying a historical perspective, the panellists analyse how popular culture and other media contributed to shaping a new economic imagination and legitimating economic change. They examine how changing institutional frameworks impacted the work of cultural producers and informed shared understandings of the free market. Together, the papers show how a cultural-historical approach can reveal much about the myths and expectations associated with the systemic transformations of the 1990s and sheds light on how ideas relating to economic change were rooted and shared in society.

Featuring: “The Nature of Markets: Czech Economic Transformation and Ecological Crisis After 1989” (Martin Babicka, U of Oxford (UK))

Sino-Russian Relations II: Water, Food, and Environment

Wed, December 1, 10:00 to 11:45am CST (11:00am to 12:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR32

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

There has been a growing alignment in Sino-Russian relations in the last decade. The increased cooperation is also clear in the domains of trade in natural resources as well as in water and food security. The Panel will discuss the implications of these increased interactions for regional and global governance. While some scholars suggest that the increased Sino-Russian interactions over food, energy and agriculture create more

incentives for Sino-Russian cooperation, others demonstrate constraints which include the lack of project coordination on the ground and diverging environmental objectives. These underlying differences, not yet clearly visible, may have serious repercussions for Sino-Russian relations as well as for China's plans for regional economic integration under the Belt and Road initiative.

Geopolitics and Strategy in Contemporary Russia and Eurasia
Wed, December 1, 12:00 to 1:45pm CST (1:00 to 2:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR29

Session Submission Type: Individual Paper Panel

Featuring: "Negative Shocks and Positive Actions: Regional Policies for Natural Resource Revenue Decline in Russia" (Delgerjargal Uvsh, New York U)

Thursday, December 2

Bridging Scholarship, Advocacy, & Activism for Environmental Sustainability

Thu, December 2, 10:00 to 11:45am CST (11:00am to 12:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR 4

Session Submission Type: Roundtable

Affiliate Organization: Committee on Environmental Sustainability

Brief Description

This roundtable, organized and sponsored by the Committee on Environmental Sustainability, addresses how to bridge the gap between scholarship, advocacy, and activism for environmental sustainability within Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. How can teacher-scholars advocate for environmental sustainability within the university, through our professional associations, or through public-facing scholarship? How can we best support environmental initiatives in the profession or in the regions that we study? What are the ways in which scholars and activists can work together for environmental causes within the context of Russian, East European, or Eurasian studies? How should scholars and experts balance our other professional obligations and environmental advocacy? This roundtable brings together leading and emerging scholars as well as non-academic professionals working on environmental issues in the region. The participants represent broad interdisciplinary diversity including Slavic languages and literature, environmental studies, history, anthropology, political science, and journalism. These presenters will speak to their experiences bridging the gap between scholarship, advocacy, and activism for the environment informed by these diverse perspectives.

Book Discussion: "Russian Energy Chains: The Remaking of Technopolitics from Siberia to Ukraine to the European Union," by Margarita Balmaceda

Thu, December 2, 10:00 to 11:45am CST (11:00am to 12:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR37

Session Submission Type: Roundtable

Brief Description

Balmaceda's book Russian Energy Chains: The Remaking of Technopolitics from Siberia to Ukraine to the European Union (Columbia U. Press, 2021) starts from the provocative observation that we cannot understand the often-discussed threat of Russia's energy power vis-à-vis its energy-poor neighbors without also understanding the temptation and opportunity Russian energy has meant for many within these states - -from the temptation of corruption-related profits to transportation fee income to subsidized prices- benefits acquired through participation in the value chains of Russian energy exports. To make sense of this tension between energy threat and temptation, the book follows the entire technological and value chain of Russia's three largest fossil fuel exports—natural gas, oil, and coal—from production in Siberia through transportation via Ukraine to final use in Germany, focusing on how the physical characteristics of different types of energy, by affecting how can it be transported, distributed, and even stolen, will also affect what various actors may be able to do with it -- including its possible use as a political weapon. Participants in this round-table will discuss the book from the perspective of their own research on the legacies of the Soviet energy industry (William M. Reisinger), Russia's role in the global energy economy (Peter Rutland), Ukrainian-Russian relations (Paul D'Anieri), and Russia's energy relationships in the entire post-Soviet region (Stacy Closson). The author will offer a brief rejoinder at the end of the session. Reviews of the book are available at <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/russian-energy-chains/9780231197496>.

Eco-Writing: A Reading with Galina Rymbu, Shamil Idiatullin, Evgenia Nekrasova

Thu, December 2, 12:00 to 1:45pm CST (1:00 to 2:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR 17

Session Submission Type: Literary Event

Affiliate Organization: Committee on Sustainability

Brief Description

Eco-Writing: A Reading with Galina Rymbu, Shamil Idiatullin, Evgenia Nekrasova

Material Memories: Buildings and Cityscapes as Agents of Remembering, Reclaiming, Resisting

Thu, December 2, 2:00 to 3:45pm CST (3:00 to 4:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR 2

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

This panel focuses on human spatio-temporal relations with material forms – buildings, cityscapes, and infrastructures. In the post-Soviet contexts, material assemblages produce diverse emotional responses. Buildings and cityscapes may evoke strong memories and cement group formation through the practices of collective remembering. The emptiness of buildings, decline of green spaces, or decaying industrial settlements may be seen as material actualizations of the fall of the Soviet Union. Such buildings and cityscapes serve as a source of nostalgia and disappointment, asserting and reclaiming the affective relations between the residents and material assemblages. At the same time, corporeal – material entanglements may produce counter-narratives to dominant state discourses and become agents of resistance and protest. The proposed panel discusses the variety of memory-making practices in the post-Soviet contexts of Georgia and Northwestern Russia. It centers on the active role of materials in human-nonhuman relations, seeing them as agents of social change.

Featuring: “ ‘Tbilisi Was Once Green...’: Ecological Narratives of a Changing Cityscape” (Paul Manning, Trent U (Canada))

Postcolonial Ecologies in (Post-)Soviet Cinema and Literature

Thu, December 2, 4:00 to 5:45pm CST (5:00 to 6:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR 19

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

The Soviet legacy in a post-Soviet world is an ambiguous symbol of the past, particularly when discussing ecological disasters and degraded national landscapes. How do contemporary cultural producers in the post-Soviet space respond to these ecological problems? To what extent do these artists see the Soviet legacy as a modernizing endeavor that former Soviet national subjects at least partially embraced and owned, and to what as a violent colonizing force that despoiled their ancestral land through gigantic nature transformation projects; contaminated the environment with industrial, military, and nuclear waste; and devastated indigenous people's ways of relating to nature and the environment as previously rural or nomadic populations? How do (post-)Soviet filmmakers employ adaptations of literary plots, as well as camera work, characterization, and music as productive frames for a postcolonial discourse, in which nature acts as an active postcolonial subject?

Friday, December 3

Russian Science Fiction and Cinema: The Limits of Diversity

Fri, December 3, 8:00 to 9:45am CST (9:00 to 10:45am EST), Virtual Convention, VR26

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

In the USSR, at least since the 1930s, science fiction and cinema was treated by official critics as a suspicious genre, regardless of individual authors' ideological preferences or loyalty to the Soviet regime. Nevertheless, since science fiction was extremely popular among general audiences, it exerted manifold significant influences on the Soviet "collective imagination". Besides invented or cutting-edge technologies, it presented a variety of forms of social utopia or dystopia in which the problem of diversity played an important role. How did diversity declare itself in Soviet science fiction and cinema? Where were the limits to ethnic identity, gender, language, etc. multiplicity and so on, to be found, and, consequently, where were the boundaries of tolerance set? How did the concept of diversity and its limits change in this genre after the Soviet Union collapsed? These are the questions this panel will discuss.

Featuring: "After the Fall: Bio- and Human Diversity under Ecological Collapse in Late Soviet SF Cinema" (Tomi Haxhi, Columbia U)

Empire, Identity, and Borders

Fri, December 3, 8:00 to 9:45am CST (9:00 to 10:45am EST), Virtual Convention, VR 23

Session Submission Type: Individual Paper Panel

Brief Description

This is an individual paper panel.

Featuring: "Lost and Found Children in the Sub-Arctic Wilderness" (Natalya Khokholova, Yeoju Technical Institute in Tashkent)

Committee on Environmental Sustainability

Fri, December 3, 12:00 to 1:45pm CST (1:00 to 2:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR29

Session Submission Type: Business Meeting

All who are interested are welcome to join for this meeting and discuss the work of the Committee and what we should focus on moving forward.

Materiality, Memory, and History: Towards New Avenues of Inquiry in Holodomor Studies

Fri, December 3, 12:00 to 1:45pm CST (1:00 to 2:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR 13

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

The history of the Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933, known as Holodomor, is marked by uncertainty and historical erasure. Denied by the Soviet regime until its collapse, the history of Holodomor was preserved in traumatic memories shared by Famine's survivors and their families. For decades they were the only sources of investigating the "haunting legacy" (Schwab 2010) of Famine that kept informing the ways in which the history of Holodomor has been written. The gradual process of the opening of the Soviet archives and growing number of published testimonies contributed to new ways of framing the Famine and understanding its long-term effects. By analyzing the relationship between memory and materiality, this panel will problematize the possibility of new avenues of inquiry within Holodomor studies that stress the need to open the field for new interdisciplinary approaches, rethink existing methodologies, and problematize the nature of sources used for investigating this traumatic past. By focusing on a multilayered relation between materiality, memory, and history this panel will further problematize the meaning of Holodomor as an event that happened on every possible scale, from the most intimate and personal scale of human and community suffering to the institutional, national and global scales of knowledge production.

Featuring: "Material Culture and Environment: New Objects, Spaces, and Landscapes in the Holodomor Studies" (Iryna Skubii, Queen's U)

Sino-Russian Relations I: Energy Cooperation and its Regional and Global Implications

Fri, December 3, 12:00 to 1:45pm CST (1:00 to 2:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR32

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

Since 2016, Russia became China's largest supplier of crude oil, replacing Saudi Arabia. In 2019, Russia opened the Power of Siberia pipeline, delivering natural gas to China's northeastern provinces. Currently, Russia is planning to construct two more pipelines to China. Yet the prospects resulting from this dramatically increased cooperation in the energy sector between the two major powers are not clear given uncertainty around the future of global demand for oil and gas as well as Russia's and China's diverging paths in terms of their long-term economic interests and their environmental commitments. The Panel aims at addressing these dilemmas of Sino-Russian oil and gas cooperation and their global and regional implications.

Featuring: "Sino-Russian Relations Over Energy and Environment: Between Alignment and Discord" (Elena Feditchkina Tracy, U of Illinois)

Elemental Histories: Russian Cultural Conceptions of Soil

Fri, December 3, 2:00 to 3:45pm CST (3:00 to 4:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR26

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

This panel seeks to build pathways for interdisciplinary work across the sciences and the humanities by offering cultural histories of soil and the larger conceptions of nature in which those histories interact. We explore how literary and scientific discourses on soil converged and interacted in mid-nineteenth century Russian journals, how gendered as well as nationalist conceptions of the earth were cultivated in literature in ways that influenced the study of the elements in non-literary discourses, and, in turn, how scientific discoveries challenged as well as developed cultural conceptions of soil. Panelists ask similar questions of water as well as other elements, with the same goal to outline a cultural chronology of changing concepts of the earth's elements that lead up to contemporary approaches to ecological crisis. In the broadest sense, we're interested in a history of the cultural, political, social and literary dynamics that lie behind environmental policy and -- as it were -- within the elements as they are conceived, both within Russia and across the globe.

Papers address what nineteenth- and twentieth- century Russian cultural discourses bring to the lens of ecocriticism, how the elements as cultural symbols interact with

positivistic applications, and focus on the interplay of literary forms and themes of earth, soil, manure, water, rivers, and more.

Soviet Spaces of Confinement

Fri, December 3, 2:00 to 3:45pm CST (3:00 to 4:45pm EST), Virtual Convention, VR29

Session Submission Type: Panel

Brief Description

This interdisciplinary panel investigates the responses of “inmates” to spaces of confinement broadly defined from Dmитлаг to Alzhir to Peredelkino through the lens of politics, history, and cultural studies. Panelists explore how diverse distinctions—gender, profession, prestige—fed into variegated experiences of confinement and surveillance in the USSR in the 1930s. Drawing on concepts of “place and space” broadly defined, we investigate how the subjects of confinement engaged with these emblematic places as distinct material and ideological environments and how they shaped these spaces through their own actions and interactions.

Featuring: “Steppe as Confinement, Steppe as Freedom: Alzhir and the Prisoner/Imprisoner/Nature Relationship” (Steven A. Barnes, George Mason U)