



Dear colleagues,

We are writing on behalf of the Working Group on Post-Socialist and Comparative Memory Studies with the Memory Studies Association (MSA).

Beyond those formally designated as co-chairs, the group has been founded with the active participation of Mykola Borovyk, Olga Malinova, Maria Matskevich, Ksenia Robbe, and Nina Weller. We welcome any and all new members! If you would like to join, please use the form at <https://www.memorystudiesassociation.org/groups/> or email Ksenia Robbe at [ksenia.robbe@gmail.com](mailto:ksenia.robbe@gmail.com). In 2019 we will start sending out a regular newsletter with updates about the group's activities and to showcase new publications and group members.

At the conference in Madrid on 25-28 June, PoSoCoMeS is planning to organize its own stream of thematic panels, as well as a pre-conference on 25 June. We are thus now inviting submissions of

- (a) individual papers for the panels listed below and
- (b) new panels that fit the thematic scope of our working group.

The requirements for each type of submission are specified below. Please read them carefully!

The following thematic panels planned so far have slots left for additional presenters:

1. ***Memories of socialism compared*** (organisers: Ksenia Robbe, [k.robbe@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:k.robbe@hum.leidenuniv.nl), and Mischa Gabowitsch, [mischa.gabowitsch@einsteinforum.de](mailto:mischa.gabowitsch@einsteinforum.de)).

Recent years have seen an upsurge in studies of memory wars between different post-socialist countries, as well as comparative studies of how these countries have dealt with different aspects of their socialist past. However, such studies usually focus on countries with shared and disputed histories: Serbia is compared with Croatia, the former Soviet republics and satellite states in Europe are contrasted with each other, etc. We believe that much can be gained by expanding the scope of comparison to a wider range of (post-)socialist countries, from Cuba to Vietnam and from North Korea to Mozambique. Thus, for this panel, we invite submissions proposing unusual pairings and drawing on the insights of different area studies communities.

2. **Post-Socialist Transitions through Children's Eyes** (organiser: Ksenia Robbe, [k.robbe@hum@leidenuniv.nl](mailto:k.robbe@hum@leidenuniv.nl))

The memory of the 1980-90s political transitions in Eastern and East Central Europe is characterized by notoriously contradictory narratives—"a key element of [the increasing] political and cultural polarization" (Lazsó & Wawrzyniak). While for two decades the varied interpretations were mainly a matter of public debate or private conversation, these periods are now becoming a subject of varied forms, genres, and media of cultural remembrance, including literature, film, exhibitions, music,

theatre, oral history publications, etc. This panel seeks to initiate a conversation about the modes and practices of this emerging cultural memory by addressing one of its prominent aspects—the recall of the turbulent period through the eyes of children. This includes mediated, fictional and non-fictional, accounts of the transitions and conflict (and the broader period of the 1980s and 1990s) focalized through a child's perspective and representing the experiences of those who were children or young adults at that time. How do such memories produce and mediate affect, create new communities and question accepted interpretations? The discussion will inquire into the diverse—and often contradictory—functions of these perspectives and the effects they produce, from ideological manipulation to the creation of more complex visions of the past and the future.  
*We are looking for one more participant to complete the panel.*

**3. De/Fictionalising the Past. The Role of Literature and Film in Postsocialist Memory Cultures** (organisers: Nina Weller, [nina.weller@posteo.de](mailto:nina.weller@posteo.de), Matthias Schwartz, [schwartz@zfl-berlin.org](mailto:schwartz@zfl-berlin.org), Roman Dubasevych, [tyrolko@yahoo.com](mailto:tyrolko@yahoo.com))

Beyond the politics of history, the question of how to deal with the socialist and pre-socialist past in Eastern and East Central European countries has also been addressed in popular culture and works of art (film, literature, graphic novels). The panel will examine the specific artistic devices used to remember the past. Which motives and narrations shape the ideas and images of supposedly traumatic events or heroic deeds? To what extent can we speak of specific post-socialist modes or styles of fictionalising and defictionalising historical events?

**4. *The hardware of memory: new approaches to the materiality of monuments*** (organiser: Mischa Gabowitsch, [mischa.gabowitsch@einsteinforum.de](mailto:mischa.gabowitsch@einsteinforum.de))

Monuments and memorials—the hardware of memory in Alexander Etkind's terms—are often written about as if they were mere symbols—interesting mostly because they lend legitimacy to a certain narrative. This perspective neglects the materiality of monuments. It glosses over the constraints and unintended outcomes that result from the stuff they are made of and the process of production. It also omits the non-symbolic ways in which material objects interact with their surroundings. For this panel we invite submissions that focus specifically on the materiality of monuments, across places and eras, drawing on approaches such as the new materialism in historiography, pragmatic sociology, the notion of non-human/distributed agency, etc.

**5. *Transnational commemorative movements***(organiser: Mischa Gabowitsch, [mischa.gabowitsch@einsteinforum.de](mailto:mischa.gabowitsch@einsteinforum.de))

Memory activism in the post-socialist countries is usually analysed (a) in its relationship with the state and (b) within a national framework. Yet many of the most active initiatives cross old and new national borders, due to pre-existing ties or migration. This goes not only for human rights and victims' activists, but also for groups such as reenactors, volunteer search units, patriotic bikers, etc. We welcome submissions that study such movements from a transnational angle.

How to submit:

- a. Individual papers: Please e-mail your submission to all the organisers for the session you are interested in. State the title of the panel in the subject line. Please include an abstract of no more than 200 words and a short bio of no more than 80 words.
- b. Entire panels (with three or four panelists, a discussant, and possibly but not necessarily a chair): Please e-mail your submission to all three of us (see addresses below). Please include an abstract of up to 200 words for each panellist, and a bio of up to 80 words for each participant.

PoSoCoMeS will NOT consider individual paper submissions unrelated to a thematic panel.

All submissions must be received by 21 September.

Depending on the number of submissions received, we will submit the PoSoCoMeS panels either as a series of regular panels for the convention, or combine some of them into the separate pre-conference on 25 June. The pre-conference is primarily for panels based on relatively advanced joint publication projects. Please note that all panellists must be MSA members by the time of the conference.

Best regards,

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