

Call for Papers!

Central Europe and Colonialism: Migrations, Knowledges, Perspectives, Commodities

Seminar of the Academia Europaea and the University of Wrocław

21-23 September 2016, Wrocław, Poland

The Academia Europaea Knowledge Hub Wrocław and the University of Wrocław invite young scholars (PhD candidates and postdocs), to take part in the Seminar **Central Europe and Colonialism: Migrations, Knowledges, Perspectives, Commodities**, to be held in **Wrocław (Poland)** on **21-23 September 2016**.

Central Europe has not yet been an object of keener interest in (post)colonial studies. However, not only did large numbers of Central Europeans migrate to the (former) colonial world, but Central Europeans also provided personnel to occupy, administer and police colonial empires, and reflected on colonial experiences at the levels of high and popular culture. Even if largely excluded from colonial politics at an international level, Central Europeans played an important role in generating new discourses based on data gathered in the colonial contact zone. Publications on exotic worlds circulated widely in Central Europe and inspired new conceptions of world history, world literature, and cosmopolitanism, in conjunction with new concepts of human nature (esp. a division of humanity in races) and ecology, with wide ranging consequences for world history.

A closer look at the role of Central European actors in imperial domains can contradict the supposed consistency of colonial discourses. Although Central Europeans in colonial territories blended into the colonial ruling class and acted in a transnational capacity as 'Europeans', they nevertheless preserved shades of difference. Focussing on these differences might put the supposed sameness of colonisers into perspective.

In addition, their in-between position brought Central Europeans into contact with both the West European imperial powers and Russia, which made the Central European experiences and perspectives in many ways richer than those of the colonial powers themselves, where close contacts with specific territories tended to marginalise perceptions of other parts of the world. Therefore, an important point to discuss would be the role Central Europe played in developing notions of globalism.

On the other hand, large parts of Central Europe experienced a similar fate at the hand of the great powers (recently from the Soviet Union) as countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Just as (post)colonial studies examines the colonial past of these areas, scholars have recently started to explore the same processes in Central Europe.

Finally, increasingly global trade networks, brought about by the expansion of European colonialism, impacted on material culture, whether via the importation of new commodities to Central Europe, or the export of manufactured goods. The conference also aims at furthering investigations in this field.

The themes of the conference will be covered in four panels:

- **Migrations** deals with both permanent migration from Central Europe to (erstwhile) colonies of the West European powers and Russia, and with temporary labour migration of colonial soldiers, missionaries, technicians, colonial civil servants and, in the case of Russia, of convicts and political prisoners.
- **Knowledges** explores the genesis of various discourses that developed in relationship with the colonial world, to which actors from Central Europe made important contributions, such as geography, social and cultural anthropology, physical anthropology, Oriental studies, (world) history, and thinking on cosmopolitanism and globalism. Furthermore, knowledge production relating to coloniality in Central European travel writing and literature will be considered.

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- Within **Perspectives**, insights from (post)colonial studies are applied to the history and culture of Central Europe, with a special focus on ambiguities ensuing from complex situations of dependence and domination. We invite reflection on methodologies of conceptualizing Central Europe (its history, self-identity) vis-à-vis Western Europe (a contentious term as it is) and Russia (and the Soviet Union); the role of nationalism in developing anti-imperial counter-discourses in the region and transitional states (postcommunist, post-World War I and II) as opening up revisionary insights into the past and new visions of the future.
- **Commodities** examines the exports of manufactures from Central Europe to the New World and the imports of products from the Americas and Asia to Central Europe. In this respect, especially, the reception and the impact of cultural “colonial” commodities on the material culture in everyday life of the region will be considered.

We understand Central Europe as an area stretching from the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the East and to the German speaking regions in the West. The time range covered by the conference stretches from Early Modernity to the post-World War Two period and involves the colonial history of both the West European powers and Russia.

The conference will be held in Wrocław, Poland, 21-23 September 2016. It is a joint venture between the European Academy of Science/Academia Europaea (Knowledge Hub, Wrocław) and the Faculty of Philology of the University of Wrocław. A selection of papers will be published. The conference is the last in a series of four symposia, which bring together established scholars with early career researchers, particularly from East Central Europe.

APPLICATION: The registration is available at: www.acadeuro.wroclaw.pl. Submit a 300-word proposal, a curriculum vitae with a list of publications by **30 September 2015**. All applicants will be notified about the selection of participants before **31 October 2015**.

REQUIREMENTS: Presenters are required to submit a 3,000-5,000 word description or excerpt (i.e., chapter, article, etc.) to be circulated among participants by **March 1, 2016**. All workshop participants are asked to read these submissions prior to the workshop. The paper should be an unpublished one. Presenters who do not meet the submission deadline will not be able to present their work.

THE SEMINAR LANGUAGE will be English.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The organizers will cover the conference fee and the costs of accommodation (up to 4 nights), travel (up to a certain maximum: Western Europe – up to 100 EUR; Central and Eastern Europe – up to 150 EUR) and insurance.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

Pieter Emmer (History, Leiden)

Siegfried Huigen (Dutch and South African Studies, Wrocław)

Dorota Kołodziejczyk (Postcolonial Studies Centre, Wrocław)

Michael North (History, Greifswald)

Aleksandra Nowak (Knowledge Hub, Academia Europaea, Wrocław)

Renate Pieper (History, Graz)

Dorota Prasałowicz (American & Migration Studies, Krakow)

All correspondence, including submission of proposals and final papers, must be addressed to: Katarzyna Majkowska – Kolyzsko (majkowska@acadeuro.wroclaw.pl) or via www.acadeuro.wroclaw.pl

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