

5th Conference of the Richard Pipes Laboratory of the Institute of Political Studies PAS

Imperialism, Decolonization, Agency.

Historical and Political Discourses of Power in the Global East

The 5th Conference of the Richard Pipes Laboratory of the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences will be held on **13-14 November 2025** in Warsaw (on-site format). Panel proposals and individual submissions in Polish and English are welcomed.

The theme of this year's conference centers on imperialism, decolonization, and the agency of the postsocialist/postcolonial Global East. We understand the Global East primarily as the space of the former Cold War Second World together with border areas, for example, the former Yugoslavia.

Building on the traditions of Sovietology and Eastern Studies, while strongly encouraging the historical and research experiences of this part of the world, we aim to reflect on the current state and prospects of Global East research and studies.

We aim at the contributions from various disciplines, including memory studies, history (with an emphasis on the history of ideas, intellectual history, and history of historiography), political science, cultural studies, sociology, and other humanities and social sciences. Submissions should explore topics such as imperialism, decolonization, justice (including epistemic justice), agency, and the power structures of the Global East.

Submission Guidelines:

- **Submissions of open and closed panels to 28th February 2025**

Panel submissions should include:

- Panel title
- Abstract (up to 300 words)
- Name, affiliation, email address, and biography (up to 100 words) of the person responsible for the panel.
- For closed panels, include the titles of individual presentations, abstracts (up to 300 words each), names, affiliations, email addresses, and biographies (up to 100 words each) of all panelists.
- **Individual submissions to 31st March 2025**

Individual submissions should include:

- Title and abstract of the presentation (up to 300 words)
- Name, affiliation, email address, and biography (up to 100 words)

Conference fees:

- Full fee: **100 euro/500 PLN**
- Partial fee (for PhD students, and independent researchers): **50 euro/250 PLN**

Contact and submissions: lab.pipes@isppan.waw.pl

Core Thematic Sections

We propose four core thematic sections, with openness to broader perspectives:

1. Power Discourses of the Post-Soviet, Postcolonial and Postimperial Spaces of the Global East

This section aims to address how to develop non-oppressive narratives about regions historically subjected to Russian hegemony. Proposed topics include:

- Great Russian chauvinism and Soviet domination;
- Interrelations of decommunization, demonetization, derussification, and decolonization;
- Post-socialism and the imagined geography of the Global East;
- The transition from anti-imperial transitology to decentralized Eastern Studies;

- o Decolonization of discourse, knowledge production, symbolic violence, epistemic exclusion, epistemology, and creation of (de)colonial narratives of the Global East.

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2. Historical Case Studies and Comparative Perspective of the Global East

The second section - of a historical nature - is dedicated to the analysis of individual case studies and a comparative perspective. We encourage proposals that address the distinct experiences of the Global East from a historical perspective on state and group dimensions. We encourage proposals that engage with historical and metahistorical reflections on the experience of imperialism, colonization, and dependency in the space of the Global East. We will be particularly interested in the following topics:

- o Russian/Soviet imperialism and colonization in historical terms;
- o Policies of subjugation and dependency in the Global East;
- o Empire of the periphery and internal colonization;
- o Practices of power and agency in the Global East;
- o Historical practices of disobedience, resilience, and resistance.

3. Intellectual Biographies of Scholars of the Global East

In this section, we propose to consider the biographies of individual Sovietologists and Eastern scholars and their positioning in the academic discourse on the Global East, which goes beyond imperial/colonial narratives about Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, the Balkans and other subregions of the Global East. Through biographical analyses of scholars associated with the Global East, we want to consider its potential for agency and presence in the global system of knowledge production. Hence, we propose the following themes:

- o Residence in Russia/Soviet Union in the biographies of Eastern scholars and Sovietologists;
- o Symbolic violence in the lives of scholars of the Global East;
- o The perception of the research of Sovietologists and Eastern scholars from subjugated nations;
- o The importance of Russian researchers on the perception of the Global East;
- o Eastern studies and sociological research centers as part of the legacy of prominent Global East scholars.

4. Contemporary Perspectives on the Global East

In the final section, we will focus on contemporary and current events. Based on the

idea of continuity and historical analogy, we invite proposals for research on the contemporary space of the Global East. A transdisciplinary perspective incorporating political, sociological, and cultural studies reflections is intended to indicate the ambiguity of possible perspectives. The ongoing war in Ukraine is a stimulus to discuss, among other things, the future of post-Soviet Russia or the derussification of post-Soviet space in both political and cultural contexts. We therefore propose several related thematic blocks:

- o Decolonization and desovietization in the perspective of the war in Ukraine;
- o International Relations in the Global East;
- o Domestic Politics in the Global East;
- o Global East in the global order of the 21st century;
- o Political agencies of the post-colonial Global East.

About the Richard Pipes Laboratory of the Institute of Political Studies PAS

Established in 2019, the Richard Pipes Laboratory was founded after the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences acquired the personal book collection of Donald-born Professor Richard Pipes, a world-renowned scholar. Comprising approximately three thousand volumes, this unique collection has significantly contributed to increasing the international visibility of Poland's role in Sovietological research and studies of the post-Soviet area. Since its creation, the Laboratory has pursued its mission through a scholarship program, conferences, expert seminars, publications, and collaboration with leading research centers in Poland and abroad.

The project is co-financed from the state budget, allocated by the Minister of Science under the Excellent Science II Programme.



**Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Republic of Poland**
