

Program

The First Day, Thursday, April 21, 2016
Conference venue: Ośrodek Nauki PAN /
The Center of Science of the Polish Academy of Science
Wieniawski Street no. 17/19, 61-713 Poznań

9:00-9:10: Otwarcie / opening

Session I: The Ecological Dimensions of Communism

Chair: Krzysztof Brzechczyn (the Institute of National Remembrance, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

9:10–9:35: Yulia Khmelevskaya (South Ural State University, Chelyabinsk), *The Atomic Snowball in the Fall of 1954 in the South Urals: the Nuclear Weapons Test on the Totsk Polygon in the Local Memory and the Agenda of Public Activity*

9:35–10:00: Robert Balogh (Hungarian Academy of Science), *Cold War and Beyond: Border Crossing and Ecology in Forestry 1960–1980*

10:00–10:25: Serhiy Choliy (National Technical University of Ukraine, Kyiv), *People Had a Voice: Individual Initiative and the Population Relocation Process in the Late Soviet Union (1986–1991)*

10:25–10:50: Natalia Leshchenko, *The Chernobyl Accident as a Social Distress. Based on the Interview with Refugees from the Alienation Zone.*

10:50–11:30: Dyskusja / discussion

11:30–12:00: Przerwa kawowa / coffee break

Session II: Ecological Dimensions of Communism

Chair: Krzysztof Brzechczyn (the Institute of National Remembrance, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

12:00–12:20: Piotr Chmielewski, Piotr Matczak (Institute of Sociology, Adam Mickiewicz University), *Nature Conservation Transition – a Comparison of the Communist and Post-Communist Legislation*

12:20–12:40: Małgorzata Praczyk (Institute of History, Adam Mickiewicz University), *Nature and Ruins. The Ecological Dimension of Human Negligence in Post-war Poland*

12:40–13:00: Xawery Stańczyk (Institute of Polish Culture, Warsaw University), *Practices of Orientalism Inside the Ecovillage Movement in Poland of State Socialism*

13:00–13:20: Irina Gordeeva (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia), *The Ecological Agenda in the Activities of The Group to Establish Trust Between East and West, 1986–1989*

13:20–14:00: dyskusja / discussion

14:00–15:20: przerwa / break

**Session III: organized by the Network for the Environmental History of Dictatorships
Chair: Viktor Pal (Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Institute of History)**

15:20–15:40: Laurent Coumel (Centre national de la recherche scientifique et de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales CERCEC CNRS-EHESS in Paris), *Environmental Conflicts at the Source of the Volga: a Real-Size Test for Nature Protection in the Late Soviet Union*

15:40–16:00: Michel Dupuy (Institut d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, Paris), *The French Media and the Environmental Problems in the Communist Countries During the Cold War*

16:00–16:20 Elena Kochetkova (National Research University Higher School of Economics, St Petersburg/University of Helsinki), *Soviet Environmental Politics in the 1950s–60s and the Cold War.*

16:20–16:40: przerwa kawowa / coffee break

**Chair: Agnieszka Delis-Szeląg
Platform of European Memory and Conscience**

16:40–17:00: Viktor Pál (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of History), *From Chernobyl to Gabčíkovo. The Environment and Public Opinion Surveys in the State-Socialist Hungary in the 1980s*

17:20–17:40: Arnost Stanzel (Ludwig-Maximilians University at Munich), *Water Pollution in Romania, 1948–1989: On the Way to the Second Modernity and Back Again?*

17:40–18:40: dyskusja / discussion

**The Second Day,
Friday, April 22, 2016**

**Session IV: Ekologiczne wymiary historii komunizmu
/Ecological Dimensions of History of Communism
Chair: Karolina Bittner (Institute of National Remembrance, Poznań)**

9:00–9:20: Dmitriy Panto (Muzeum of the Second World War in Gdańsk), *Jak ZSRR wypił Morze. Zagłada morza Aralskiego / How the Soviet Union Drank a Sea. The End of the Aral Sea.*

9:20–9:40: Dariusz Jarosz (Institute of History, PAN), *Zanieczyszczenie środowiska w Polsce w latach 1956–1970 jako problem władzy i społeczeństwa (wybrane problemy) / Environmental Pollution in Poland in 1956–1970 as a Problem of the Authorities and Society (Selected Issues)*

9:40–10:00: Jarosław Dulewicz (UJK Kielce), *Zanieczyszczenie środowiska naturalnego w Polsce w świetle materiałów Służby Bezpieczeństwa (1971–1989) / The Pollution of the Environment in the Light of the Sources of the Security Service (1971–1989)*

10:00–10:20: Przemysław Ruchlewski (ECS), *Ochrona środowiska w polityce KW PZPR w Gdańsku / The Protection of the Environment in the Policy of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Gdańsk*

10:20–10:40: Mieczysław Kopeć, *Ochrona środowiska naturalnego w świetle aktów prawnych okresu Polski Ludowej / The Protection of the Environment in the Legal Regulations in the People's Republic of Poland*

10:40–11:20: Dyskusja / discussion

11:20–11:40: Przerwa kawowa / coffee Break

**Session V: Ekologiczne wymiary historii komunizmu w Polsce
/Ecological Dimensions of History of Communism in Poland**

Chair: Agnieszka Łuczak (Institute of National Remembrance, Poznań)

11:40–12:00: Arkadiusz Majewski (Institute of History, Warsaw University), *Ekologiczne aspekty polityki przeciwpowodziowej na rzece Wiśle w okresie Polski Ludowej na przykładzie budowy stopnia wodnego we Włocławku / The Ecological Dimensions of the Flood Prevention Policy on the Vistula River in the Polish People's Republic. The Case of the Building of the Barrage in Włocławek*

12:00–12:20: Agnieszka Laddach (UMK Toruń), *Historia i teraźniejszość Elektrowni Jądrowej Żarnowiec. Propozycja projektu badawczego / The History and the Present State of The Żarnowiec Nuclear Power Plant. A Proposal for a Research Project.*

12:20–12:40: Renata Knyspel-Kopeć, *“Na terenie całego kraju nie było zagrożenia dla zdrowia ludności”. Katastrofa ekologiczna w Czarnobylu w świetle polskiej prasy. Wybrane przykłady / “There was no threat to the health of the people.” The Ecological Catastrophe in Chernobyl in the Polish Press. Selected Examples.*

12:40–13:00: Aleksandra Brylska (Faculty of Artes Liberales, Warsaw University), *Dobra energia, która zabija. O propagandowej roli energii atomowej w PRL-u / The Good Energy that Kills. On the Propagandic Role of Atomic Power in the People's Republic of Poland*

13:00–13:20: Zuzanna Grębecka (Institute of Polish Culture, Warsaw University), *Dzieciństwo w cieniu nuklearnego zagrożenia / The Childhood in the Nuclear Shadow*

13:20–13:40: Paweł Nowik (Institute of National Remembrance, Białystok), *Ostatnia taka katastrofa w PRL / The Last such an Ecological Catastrophe in Poland.*

13:40–14:00 dyskusja / discussion

14:00–15:00:przerwa / break

**Session VI: Kwestie ekologiczne w działalności opozycji
/Ecological Issues in Activity of Opposition**

Chair: Miklós Mitrovits (Hungarian Academy of Science)

- 15:00–15:20: Krzysztof Łabędź (Akademia Ignatianum w Krakowie), *Problematyka ekologiczna w prasie drugiego obiegu wydawniczego w latach 80-tych / The Ecological Issues in the Independent Press in the 1980s*
- 15:20–15:40: Mateusz Flont (UJ), *Czy kultura alternatywna w PRL zauważała zagrożenie ekologiczne? Subkultury i (fan)ziny [1978-1989] / Did Alternative Culture in the People's Republic of Poland Recognize Ecological Problems? Subcultures and (fan)zines (1978–1989)*
- 15:40–16:00: Marcin Tunak (Institute of History, Adam Mickiewicz University), *Protesty społeczne przeciwko budowie elektrowni atomowej w Klempiczu / Social Protests against the Construction of a Nuclear Power Plant in Klempicz*
- 16:00–16:20: Jakub Kufel (ECS), *Postulaty ekologiczne w kampanii wyborczej Komitetu Obywatelskiego przed wyborami czerwcowymi 1989 / The Ecological Postulates in the Election Campaign of the Civic Committee (Komitet Obywatelski) during the June Elections of 1989.*
- 16:20–16:40: Zbigniew Bereszyński (independent researcher), *Problematyka ekologiczna i aktywizacja środowisk opozycyjnych w ostatnich latach PRL na przykładzie województwa opolskiego / Ecological Issues and the Activation of Opposition in the Opolskie Voivodeship*
- 16:40–17:00: przerwa kawowa / coffee break

**Session VII: Transnarodowe wymiary problematyki ekologicznej w komunizmie/
Transnational Dimensions of Ecological Issues in Communism
Chair: Przemysław Zwiernik (Institute of National Remembrance, Poznań)**

- 17:00–17:20: Wieńczysław Nowacki, *Wielkopolskie Forum Ekologiczne. Program i działalność, 1986-1989 / The Ecological Forum of Greater Poland. Program and Activity, 1986–1989.*
- 17:20–17:40: Paweł Sekuła (UJ), *Wpływ katastrofy czarnobylskiej na proces kształtowania ukraińskiej opozycji antykomunistycznej w ZSRS / The Influence of the Chernobyl Catastrophe on the Proces of Shaping the Anti-Communist Ukranian Opposition in the Soviet Union.*
- 17:20–17:40 Małgorzata Świder (Instytut Historii Uniwersytet Opolski), *Wpływ Czarnobyła na politykę i społeczeństwo Niemiec Zachodnich / The Impact of the Chernobyl Catastrophe on the Policy and Society of Western Germany*
- 17:40–18:20: dyskusja / discussion
- 18:20–18:30: Miklós Mitrovits (Hungarian Academy of Science), *Cultural Opposition – Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in Former Socialist Countries: a Presentation of the New Horizon 2020 Research Project*
- 18:30: Zamknięcie konferencji / The closing of the conference

Abstracts

Robert Balogh

Hungarian Academy of Science

Cold War and Beyond: Border Crossing and Ecology in Forestry, 1960 –1980

This paper seeks to understand the role of a techno-scientific quasi-NGO of the Eastern Block in making and unmaking the Cold War. By using memoirs and the archive of the National Forestry Association of Hungary I first analyse how foresters organized border crossing events, such as study trips and international exhibitions. I will also look at how foresters of the same organization participated in international meetings of world organizations such as World Forestry Congresses during the 1960s and 1970s, and how they contributed to setting agendas.

In the second section of the paper I will place the appearing personalities in the context of Hungarian institutional (administrative and party) hierarchies and locate forestry itself within the national regime as well as the Soviet-dominated zone of Europe.

I argue that techno-scientific language opened up opportunities for exchanges beyond the Iron Curtain in the period under investigation. When the idea of conservation gained more ground in international discourse and dialogue, it constituted a new area of competition between the camps. At the same time, ecological perspectives provided national schools of forestry with more room for influencing global agendas. In the last section I assess whether these developments were in tune with of the agents modifying the rhythm of the Cold War and of the internal patterns.

Zbigniew Bereszyński
Independent researcher, Opole

Ecological Issues and the Activation of Opposition in the Opolskie Voivodeship

In the first half of the 1980s there was a radical change of the aims and forms of the activity of political opposition in Poland. After the amnesty of July, 1986 communist authorities withdrew, in principle, from the strict repressive policy against the opposition and restricted the sanctions to, mainly, penal-administrative ones. It became possible, then, to gradually develop various forms of open oppositional activity. However, the widely understood circles of the Solidarity movement were undergoing a clearly distinguishable moral crisis which made it difficult to take advantage of the weaker position of the ruling party. Many people quit the union and oppositional activity, having become tired and frustrated by the inefficiency of its current forms. With time, however, that attitude was replaced with a fresh wave of activism. That was very much related to the introduction of a new topic to the sphere of the interests of opposition, namely, ecology. Both activists from the Solidarity movement and the representatives of the younger generation, who became adults after the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" has been delegalized, began to include that topic in their considerations. Ecology became especially attractive for the youth, which fostered the development of new forms of oppositional activity, outside of the union formula. The development of the situation in the Opolskie voivodeship can serve as an excellent illustration of that trend. In October, 1986 the Temporary Regional Board of the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" of Śląsk Opolski, which acted openly, was founded. Soon after a comprehensive report on the ecological threats in the Opolskie voivodeship was prepared by that organization. It was published in February, 1987 by an underground publisher, "Solidarność Opolska" (English: "The Opole Solidarity"). In autumn, 1987 representatives of the younger generation inaugurated the activity of a regional chapter of the Freedom and Peace Movement (Polish: Ruch Wolność i Pokój, abbreviated to WiP). Local WiP activists organized many demonstrations, especially against the construction of nuclear power plants. In 1988 and at the turn of 1988 and 1989 those demonstrations were the most spectacular actions organized by the opposition in the Opolskie voivodeship. In 1988–1989 local structures of pro-independence opposition gradually emerged from the WiP circles in Opole. They contested the Polish Round Table Agreement.

Aleksandra Brylska

The Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw

**The Good Energy that Kills. On the Propaganda Role of Atomic Power
in the Polish People’s Republic**

An atomic bomb was present in the consciousness of Poles from the time right after the bombings of Hiroshima. From the start it became a symbol of weapons of mass destruction eternally threatening the world, however, the effects of that catastrophe were never shown or talked about. Although it was an unusual weapon, it quickly became included in the traditional and well-known military arsenal of Western countries – next to Coca-Cola, biological weapon, and the ten-lined potato beetle. Since 1949, when the Soviet Union conducted the first test of nuclear weapons, nuclear energy and the methods of using it began to be presented in different ways according to the owner. The narrations about the successes of the Soviet Union and the whole block of communist countries foregrounded nuclear energy itself. It was presented as beneficial for development and the possession of a nuclear reactor became an obvious goal of each communist country. The construction of the power plant in Chernobyl and the consequent plans of creating one in Żarnowiec were accompanied by propaganda pictures of nuclear energy as the main tool of progress. However, the situation changed after the explosion of the Ukrainian reactor.

In my paper I intend to examine how the political situation influenced the presentation of nuclear power as, initially, the greatest discovery of mankind and, later, as the greatest threat. I would like to show that the duality of the discourse on nuclear energy had been present in the communist propaganda in Poland much earlier than the time of the Chernobyl catastrophe, namely, since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Piotr Chmielewski

Piotr Matczak

The Institute of Sociology, Adam Mickiewicz University

Nature Conservation Transition– a Comparison of the Communist and Post-communist Legislation

After the Second World War, by introducing basic political and economic changes, including a land reform and the nationalization of most forests, the state authorities established a new context for nature conservation in the Polish People's Republic. Some aspects of environmental protection in the Polish People's Republic constitute crucial moments in the history of Polish environmental protection. At that time, the understanding of the meaning of nature and the scope of nature conservation evolved. Some general trends can be observed, despite the distinctive features of the political and legal systems of the Polish People's Republic.

The second (following the 1934) Act on Nature Conservation (April 7, 1949) expanded the concept of nature conservation, by shifting the focus from scientific and idealistic considerations to economic interests.

Foundations for landscape protection were created in the 1970s. New forms of nature conservation – landscape parks and areas of protected landscape – were established and paved the way for the concept of a large-scale system of protected areas. This paper aims to describe the nature of the conservation legislation of the Polish People's Republic and its rules, and to compare it with the earlier, interwar period legislation as well as with the later post-communist regulations. The objective of this publication is to outline how the internal (socio-economic system) and external factors (international law) influenced the evolution of nature conservation law in Poland. Especially, I discuss the changes concerning the protection of biodiversity and the system of protected areas. This paper also aims to identify the most remarkable periods and facts in the Polish communist environmental history. The evolution of the legal framework and legal culture of environmental protection in Poland is analysed.

In particular, I investigate whether the old (communist) law was more effective than the post-communist one (e.g. with respect to the execution of the law and to criminal responsibility for crimes against the natural environment). I also aim to compare the legal innovations to the interwar period regulations concerning nature conservation. Next, the issue of centralisation is analysed, and the participatory possibilities of the inhabitants, as well as landscape protection, and the impact of the international public law (the Aarhus, Bern, Bonn, Espoo, Ramsar, and Rio conventions). This paper is also an attempt to define and systemize the innovations in nature conservation introduced in the communist times. I argue that although the communist era brought about a significant deterioration of the environment, the legislation itself was adequate in many respects. That paradox is discussed in terms of the execution of the law.

The methodology of the paper is based on the analysis of the legal documents (acts), legal and historical literature, media sources, and regulations of the interwar period, the communist time, and the post-communist time.

Serhiy Choliy

National Technical University of Ukraine, Kyiv

**People Had a Voice: Individual Initiative and the Population Relocation Process
in the Late Soviet Union (1986–1991)**

This paper is devoted to an investigation of the population relocation processes after the Chernobyl disaster, which, in many cases, could be recognized as symptoms of democratization, the rise of the public initiative, and the loss of the governing authority by the Soviet power.

The Chernobyl disaster became a great challenge to the Soviet Union; it is even recognized by some scientists as a key point in its dissolution (Priester). Its economic effects are estimated to be higher than all profits from the nuclear power industry in the post-WWII Soviet Union. One of the integral components of the liquidation of the consequences of that disaster was the population relocation from the contaminated territories. Such measures affected up to 200 thousand people and stretched in time for decades.

The investigation of the process of the population relocation and the questioning of the relocated people document two main stages of the relocation: 1986–1987 and 1988–2004. During the first stage the state controlled all processes of the relocation, trying to make it as fast and effective as possible. During the second stage the relocation became a part of the administrative routine and plan economy, often fraught with difficulties. At the same time, the organized and mostly forcible resettlement of the first stage changed when the population of the contaminated areas were able to influence their fate, increase the speed of resettlement, acquire better living conditions at the place of resettlement, etc. The analysis is made on the basis of two case studies: of Zhovtneve area (contaminated territory) and Novosilky (resettlement place), both in the Kyiv region of Ukraine.

Laurent Coumel

Centre for Russian, Caucasian and East-European Studies, Paris, France

**Environmental Conflicts at the Source of the Volga: a Real-Size Test
for Nature Protection in the late Soviet Union**

“Nature conservation” persisted for decades as an important movement in Soviet Union, even if the scientists who acted as its main promoters did not succeed in giving it a real role in the decision-making process at the state level (see Weiner and Josephson). Beginning in the 1960s, it was used as a central concept – and slogan – in many official discourses of all forms: speeches, publications, documentary films, TV and radio broadcasting. At the same time, tourism became a mass phenomenon in the Soviet society, a tool in the relaunching of the ideological project, thereby contributing to new Soviet patriotism (Koenker). Promoted as a popular vacation destination in the early 1960s, lake Seliger, a natural hydrographic system located near the source of the Volga River, gained national fame and became the symbol of environmental deterioration by mass tourism in the early 1970s. The response of the authorities to that conflict of use was ambiguous: on the one hand, they took into account some constraints of ecological balance and tried to reduce various forms of pollution (abusive logging, the lack of sewage treatment, local overfishing), also giving more space to ecological criticism in the public and semi-public sphere. On the other hand, the lack of independent ecological control and of economic incentives for environmental efficiency weakened the impact of the measures taken or planned (especially concerning water sewage treatment and the regulation of individual motorized navigation). Thus, the failure of the creation of a “National Park” in that area shows the limits of the “environmental turn” in Russia during the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras, both regarding the established powers and the civil society. This paper, based on the primary archival material in Moscow, Tver, and Ostashkov, and on printed sources including the press, specialized literature, guidebooks, other tourist items, films, and interviews, sheds a new light on the following paradox: although official environmentalism was very mediatized in the late Soviet Union, it was not efficient enough to modify the high-modernist dimension of communism. Ecological protection existed but contributed rather to the patrimonialisation (heritage building) of some places: its effect was more cultural than ecological, for it aided identity building at various levels and, in that way, strengthened the patriotic conception of nature.

Jarosław Dulewicz

Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce

**The Pollution of the Environment in the Light of the Sources
of the Security Service (1971–1989)**

In my paper I will try to analyze the relationships between the process of industrialization and the condition of natural environment in the Polish People's Republic in 1971–1989. At that time the authorities undertook to develop industry but did not take into account the potential ecologic threats related to that endeavor. As a result, the ecosystem began to deteriorate quickly.

Environmental pollution by industrial plants was the subject of interest of the Security Service. In the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance there are many preserved documents concerning the operational verification and the cases of various facilities, the main topic of which was the harmful impact of industry on the local ecosystem. There are also cases regarding the actions of local communities and environmental organizations. The documentation, then, is a precious source for the research on the process of the degradation of the natural environment in Poland in the last two decades of the Polish People's Republic.

The environmental aspect of the social and economic history of post-war Poland is especially interesting and worth more extensive studies, the more so as so far it has been neglected by the researchers of the modern history of Poland.

Mateusz Flont
Jagiellonian University

**Did Alternative Culture in the Polish People's Republic Recognize Ecological Problems?
Subcultures and (fan)zines (1978–1989)**

In recent years there have been many publications on the engagement of the youth (for example, the Freedom and Peace Movement, Polish: Wolność i Pokój, and the Alternative Society Movement, Polish Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego) and their protests against the ecological threats in Poland but there has been no publication on the reaction to those threats expressed by the representatives of various subcultures, especially as regards the lyrics of punk rock music, zines, and fanzines, that is, independent publications of those subcultures.

In this paper I try to answer the question whether the alternative culture in the Polish People's Republic recognized ecological problems. My analysis is based on the zines stored in the archives of the online Zinelibrary and the unpublished "Katalog polskiej prasy alternatywnej (trzecioobiegowej)" (English: "The Catalog of Polish Alternative Press ('the third circulation')") prepared by Włodzimierz Chorążki's team in the 1990s.

Irina Gordeeva,
Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow

**The Ecological Agenda in the Activities
of the Group to Establish Trust Between East and West, 1986–1989**

The independent peace movement in the Soviet Union appeared in 1982, when the Group to Establish Trust between USA and USSR (later – “...between East and West”, or Trust Group) was organized. The Group became a unique phenomenon of the late Soviet dissident movement. It based its activities on the ideas of pacifism and the practices of transnational nuclear activism. The members represented different social groups, including but not limited to scientists, refuseniks of Jewish and non-Jewish origins, religious minorities, hippies, nonconformist artists, and disabled men. The members of the Trust Group in the eighties were probably the only dissident group which practiced an open protest and at the same time was oriented towards dialogue with the authorities.

The Trust Group had an ‘open’ membership, so everybody who had ever signed its letters or participated in its actions could be regarded as a member of it. The network of the group spread to several Soviet cities, for example, Dolgoprudnyi, Novosibirsk, Kuibyshev, Leningrad, Lviv, and Kiev.

The agenda of the Soviet independent peace movement was diverse, they fought for international peace and mutual trust between the people of the USSR and the USA (East and West), and protested against the militarization of everyday life and education. The agenda also included such important issues as defending human rights. Their approach to ecological problems is of particular interest. The Group, representing the peaceful grass-root movement, advocated for personal responsibility for world issues. The group members were of the opinion that life on the planet depended on coordinated efforts of common people.

This paper aims to investigate the way in which different ecological problems were represented in the activities of the group. Those issues had always been present in the agenda but they became extremely important after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. After the accident the Trust Group started to cooperate with the Soviet and foreign environmental organizations, organized and participated in various actions (including meetings and rallies), covered environmental issues in its newsletter (“Day by Day”), providing information about environmental actions all over the country. Additionally, they published articles on environmental problems. The academics from the Group organized a series of scientific seminars (entitled “Peace and Social Studies”) on ecology.

The problems of nuclear energy and its use became very important for the Group. The Chernobyl accident raised awareness among pacifists about the necessity to include in their program the issues of the superiority of alternative forms of energy, non-nuclear power plants, environmental technologies, and the optimization, with respect to ecology, of the entire economy.

The research is based on the *samizdat* materials, most of which can be found in the OSA Archive (Budapest), as well as on oral history interviews with the activists of the Trust Group.

Zuzanna Grębecka

Institute of Polish Culture, Warsaw University

Childhood in the Nuclear Shadow

In the 1980s, in the Polish People's Republic there was a re-escalation of the propaganda connected with a potential nuclear conflict. It was associated with the tense internal situation (the martial law in 1981–1983, the deepening economic crisis), the “Second Cold War”, the American Strategic Defence Initiative, also known as Star Wars, and the military policy of the Soviet Union. The image created by the communist propaganda was obvious: the Eastern Bloc was a defender of peace and the USA were responsible for a nuclear arms race. However, many people in Poland had opposite feelings: Americans were allies and Soviets were invaders. The insecurity and fear of nuclear power increased after the catastrophe in Chernobyl on April 26, 1986 and were closely connected with the Soviet Union. In my paper I would like to discuss the outcome of my ethnographic research based on interviews with the people who were children in the 1980s and who tell about their fears and images related to nuclear power (including children's folklore, like jokes and songs).

This paper constitutes a continuation of the research the first results of which were presented at the IPN and IH PAN conference “The History of Health and Sickness in Central and Eastern Europe after 1945” (Warsaw, October 14–15, 2015, paper: “Searching for the Beginnings of the Discourse on the Degradation of Natural Environment in Poland after World War II”) and in an article which has been accepted for publication in *Roczniki Dziejów Społeczno-Gospodarczych* (English: *The Journals of Social and Economic History*) in 2016, titled “The Problem of Water Pollution in Poland in 1944–1961: an Introduction to Research”.

Dariusz Jarosz

The Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences

**Environmental Pollution in Poland in 1956–1970 as a Problem
of the Authorities and Society (selected problems)**

Apart from press materials and scientific articles, the sources for my paper are unused archival materials from the central archives (Archiwum Akt Nowych, the Institute of National Remembrance, TVP Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Zbiorów Programowych). On their basis I am going to present the following problems, with respect to 1956–1970:

- discussions about the legislation concerning environmental protection,
- the discourse of party and political institutions on the problems of environmental pollution,
- the condition of natural environment in the light of the files of the institutions created to protect it,
- Polish problems regarding environmental protection in discussions with the neighboring countries and within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance,
- the problems of the research on the attitude of the society as regards the issues of environmental protection (sources, criticism of those sources),

At the beginning of my paper I will also review the situation, as regards ecology, in the period of time from 1944 to 1956, on the basis of contemporary source materials.

Yulia Khmelevskaya
Centre for Cultural History Studies
South Ural State University, Chelyabinsk

The Atomic Snowball in the Fall of 1954 in the South Urals: the Nuclear Weapons Test on the Totsk Polygon in the Local Memory and the Agenda of Public Activity

In my presentation I intend to problematize the story of the Totsk nuclear exercise – a military test undertaken by the Soviet army to explore defensive and offensive warfare during a nuclear war, on September 14, 1954. Conducted under the code name “Snowball” (“Snezhok” in Russian), it involved an aerial detonation of a nuclear bomb twice as powerful as the bomb used in the US nuclear strikes on Hiroshima and an army of 45,000 Soviet soldiers and officers who marched through the area around the epicentre soon after the nuclear blast. At that time, the army, both in Russia and in the US, still imagined that atomic bombs could be used as a tactical weapon, like the artillery. After the atomic bomb explosion, the area should be taken over by the soldiers so the goal of the operation was to demonstrate that nuclear weapons could be used on the battlefield and that they could play a part in a winnable nuclear war. However, unlike the previous Soviet tests that were mostly carried out in the desert area near Semipalatinsk (today Semey in Kazakhstan) and the American tests done in the deserts of Nevada, the test of 1954 took place in the military field training area in Totskoye, 200 kilometres from the city of Orenburg, which had been used as a military camp since the end of the 18th century and was closely surrounded by many local villages.

The play with nuclear snowballs resulted in health problems persisting through several generations, in the case of both the ordinary soldiers who were the immediate participants of the test and of the village residents of the Totsk area who had not been properly warned about the danger. The tightening regime of secrecy was loosened a bit only in 1993 when the whole story was publicly discussed for the first time. Most of the documentary sources on this case, especially military or medical ones, are either still unavailable for research or destroyed. However, the collapse of the USSR and the expiry of the agreements of non-disclosure of the information regarding the Totsk test made it possible to interview the survivors and witnesses, collect their personal memories, share their problems, and establish local associations for the recognition of the status of the Totsk survivors as analogous to that of the sufferers of the Chernobyl accident. Since the second half of the 1990s there appeared a lot of published personal accounts, investigative journalism pieces, amateur books, websites, oral history projects, pictures and improvised places of memory which in many respects can be qualified as ego-documents. Using these “open” sources, in my paper I will try to explore the repertoire of the interpretations of the Totsk test and its consequences, the ways the images of the catastrophe are constructed, represented, transferred and contextualized in the local and globalized discourses, and the strategies of their engagement with political and social justice agenda.

Renata Knyspel-Kopec

There was no threat to the health of the people. The Ecological Catastrophe in Chernobyl in the Polish Press. Selected Examples

After the explosion of the nuclear plant in Chernobyl, Ukraine, in 1986 there was radioactive pollution over the areas of some Polish voivodeships. That is why the measurements of the level of radiation were done in the whole country and, as reported by "Dziennik Polski" (English: "The Polish Daily"), as of Thursday, May 29, 1986, only an increase of the concentration of active iodine in the air was detected. "Such an increase could only be harmful for health if it prevailed for a longer period of time. However, because of its temporary nature, it does not constitute a threat to health." Moreover, specialists confirmed the falling trend of the level of the concentration of iodine since May 30. The daily systematically published statements of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, appeasing the public and convincing citizens that complex technical works were still being conducted in the area of the nuclear power plant, aimed at deactivating the contaminated areas. Moreover, information was given that the injured parties were being helped on a continuous basis and that all spring vegetables could be eaten if they had been washed. Supposedly, there were no contraindications to consuming other food products, including cows fed with green fodder. The publication also informed that the Soviet daily "Komsomolskaya Pravda" expressed surprise at the rumors, irresponsibly circulated in the media in the USA, that there were thousands of deaths caused by the catastrophe and that people living in the area around Chernobyl were panicked. The newspaper stressed that "sensible people in the whole world understand that a failure happened which could have occurred anywhere". "Dziennik Polski" (English: "The Polish Daily") also published the statements of the Polish government commission concerning the progress in eliminating the harmful effects of the explosion. From those statements one could learn that only three people died as a result of the catastrophe, that the threat posed by the radioactive pollution was decreasing fast, and that the people living in the vicinity of the power plant were evacuated and properly examined but "obviously" no harmful effects of radiation were detected in them. "Dziennik Polski" continued to present that false picture of the tragic events in Chernobyl for many days after the explosion.

Elena Kochetkova

National Research University Higher School of Economics, Saint-Petersburg, Russia/
University of Helsinki, Finland

Soviet Environmental Politics in the 1950s–60s and the Cold War

Although a lot has been said about the early (the Bolsheviks') and late Soviet environmentalism, the 1950s–60s still remain marginalized in historiography. In my presentation I argue that that decade was remarkable in two ways for the Soviet environmental history. First, it witnessed the first attempts (earlier than many scholars have presented) of environmental protection, undertaken at the state and grassroots level. Second, there was some cooperation between small agents – engineers, scientists, and politicians – in the field of ecology.

To illustrate that statement, I will focus on the discourses on water pollution and protection in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. My paper explores the discursive practices which sprang up related to two paper and pulp plants, one located on the shore of the Baikal Lake and the other in Svetogorsk. Those two discourses provide a deep insight into the arguments for and against that industry in the context of environmental protection, present in the Soviet discourses on water pollution and protection in the 1950s and 1960s. I will illustrate how the discussions about the Baikal area were influencing the conditions in other, distant regions, on a practical level. On the one hand, I will consider the first attempts at introducing water protection in the industrial city of Svetogorsk, in terms of the implementation of instructions and changes in the industrial policy, initiated at the state level. On the other hand, I will study some practical implementations of prevention measures focusing on water pollution, done with the help of a technology transfer from the West. I will consider how the state established environmental policies and how that process was perceived on the local level. Thus, the paper will focus on the interplay among different actors, namely, scientist, engineers, citizens, and state officials. It will address different kinds of knowledge, images of the environment, and visions of the future management of the Soviet rivers and production.

Mieczysław Kopec

**The Protection of the Environment in the Legal Regulations
in the People's Republic of Poland**

Environmental protection in the period of the so-called Polish People's Republic was established by means of a number of legislative acts. However, it ought to be noted that initially that subject was only covered by the legislative acts of the interwar period. In my paper I will focus on the legislation passed by the communist authorities in Poland, until 1989. First, I will discuss the definitions of the subject matter and the scope of environmental protection established at that time, as well as the authorities and bodies responsible for environmental protection which seemed to be a priority issue after the devastating war. Not all fresh regulations, though, constituted a *novum*; many of them were only partially new and some old regulations remained valid. The approach described above was a continuation of the earlier policies of the state in that regard. In this way, not only the institutional continuity of the environmental protection was preserved but also, in a way, the general continuity (generality being understood as the democratic form of government) because some acts of the Second Polish Republic remained valid until the fall of the Polish People's Republic or even longer. Such a position was a part of the pragmatic attitude of the authorities after the war. They emphasized the legalism of the form of government created after World War II, within the new geographic borders. The interesting issue of protected resources did not only encompass the areas untouched by civilization but also the so-called ornamental parks as resources with great historical and cultural value for the nation. The many aspects of ecology were handled by the legislature. The legislative changes introduced in the subsequent periods of time make it possible, if contemporary policies are taken into account, to conduct an equally interesting analysis of the studied material with respect to the changes of the attitudes of the state authorities to the issues of environmental protection in the so-called Polish People's Republic.

Jakub Kufel

The European Solidarity Centre, Gdańsk

The Ecological Postulates in the Election Campaign of the Civic Committee (Komitet Obywatelski) during the June Elections of 1989

Ecologic postulates constituted an important part of the program of the candidates of Komitet Obywatelski (English: Citizens' Committee) before the elections in June, 1989. That fact has often been omitted or neglected by historians and political scientists. My paper is based on an analysis of the election campaign materials of Komitet Obywatelski, which are stored in the collections of the Europejskie Centrum Solidarności and the Documents of Social Life of the main library of University of Gdańsk and Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. I undertake not only a historical reconstruction but also an analysis of the materials, with the use of politological (political marketing) tools.

Agnieszka Laddach

The Chair of the Methodology of History and Knowledge about Culture

The Faculty of History

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

**The History and the Present State of the Żarnowiec Nuclear Power Plant.
A Proposal for a Research Project**

The basic aim of this paper is to present the proposed research project on holistic studies concerning the history and the present of the nuclear power plant in Żarnowiec. I would like to point out the need for conducting extensive, interdisciplinary research on that topic. They ought to be done with the use of the methods of and state of research in many fields of study, and, most importantly, unify the researchers from those fields: geography, history, ethnology, medicine, economy, tourism, building, and environmental protection.

The main part of the paper will be an outline of the history of the nuclear power plant in Żarnowiec, followed by a detailed discussion of particular aspects of research on that topic.

Those aspects include the preparation of the information about the geography of the terrain, the history of the vicinity, the political context and the history of the construction of the nuclear power plant, the direct influence of the construction of the plant on the inhabitants of the area, the changes in the landscape and the infrastructure resulting from the construction works, the influence of the explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant on the construction of the Żarnowiec one, the differences and similarities between the structures and the planned activity of the plants, a description of the direct reactions of the authorities responsible for the construction of the Żarnowiec plant to the information about the explosion in Chernobyl, and a presentation of the reactions of the authorities to local protests.

The second part of the paper includes a discussion of the long-term effects of the construction of the Żarnowiec nuclear power plant: the influence of the construction on the environment, on the infrastructure of the area, and on the health of the construction workers, as well as the research on the knowledge of the present inhabitants of that area and of tourists about the old Żarnowiec plant and about the projects concerning the attempts at repurposing the remnants of the construction. Apart from indicating detailed research problems I will present the key sources for that research. It is my intention to make listeners interested in the topic and, possibly, to initiate research conducted by a research team, as it would be, at the present moment, outside of the scope of my scientific and organizational abilities to conduct such research on my own.

Natalia Leshchenko

The Chernobyl Accident as a Social Distress. Based on the Interview with Refugees from the Alienation Zone

The Chernobyl accident forced many people to move from their permanent dwelling places. Due to strong emotional pressure, the Chernobyl issue remains current. In this paper we analyse narrations which refer to that tragedy. The refugee narrations were recorded in the time period from 2004 to 2015.

It was noticed that even after 30 years the emotional effects of the tragedy are still very strong and painful. The catastrophe has divided refugees' lives into 'before' and 'after' the event. In time, their memories of the home place have gained sacred meaning. The main subjects of conversation for the refugees are parting with their homes, folk legends about radiation, and legends about the explosion at the Chernobyl Atomic Station. They also talk about their emotional state, living in the new locations. Right after the accident the Soviet government concealed the information about the effects of radiation, which led to improper actions of the people of that area.

Krzysztof Łabędź
University Ignatianum in Kraków

The Ecological Issues in the Independent Press in the 1980s

In this text I present the principal directions of the discourse on ecology conducted in the clandestine ('secondary') circulation of the press in Poland, especially in the second half of 1980s, in the period after the Chernobyl explosion (although those issues had been touched upon even earlier, in 1980–1981). I will take into account, then, both publications specifically on the topic, of which there were about 20, and other in which that topic was covered among other issues (e.g. "KOS"). Those publications contained descriptions of the threats to the natural environment and criticism – usually thorough – of the policies of the authorities in that area, and presented the basic directions of the necessary changes. There were also protests against political decisions which entailed, according to the authors, further risks (e.g. related to the construction of a nuclear power plant in Żarnowiec). Most of the time, ecological issues were one of the arguments raised in the ongoing political struggle, an argument useful especially in the context of the danger resulting from the failure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and convenient because of the behavior of the authorities after that event. At the end of the 1980s the problems of ecology also became a pretext for the creation of a few initiatives of founding independent (and more or less official) party-like organizations. It is also worth noting that ecology was one of the spheres of the activity of the Freedom and Peace Movement (Polish: Ruch Wolność i Pokój), although the publishing efforts of that movement will only be briefly mentioned in my speech, as there exists a comprehensive paper on that topic written by Monika Litwińska.

Arkadiusz Majewski

The Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw

**The Ecological Dimensions of the Flood Prevention Policy on the Vistula River
in the Polish People's Republic. The Case of the Building of the Barrage in Włocławek**

The issue of flood control policies in the period of the Polish People's Republic has not been described in a monograph so far because it is difficult to recreate a clear state policy on that matter. However, historians are trying to fill in that gap. One important aspect of the flood control policies seems to be ecology. On the one hand, there were great investments, the reasonability of which was always questioned by environmental activists. The question is: were they right? What fate, given the above, is awaiting, for example, the barrage in Włocławek?

It also seems reasonable to begin to fight ecological myths, not to mention the fact that a false ecological lobby would like to block any changes of the Vistula River. They often attempt to defend the false thesis that the Vistula River is a natural river, untouched by human hand, and that hydrologists want to fill it with concrete and change into a canal which would destroy biological life in it. That claim is obviously nonsensical. Neither is the Vistula River a natural river (it has been changed by people for ages, for example, the valley of the river used to be a forest area and nowadays there are hardly any woods near it), nor does hydrology constitute a threat to biological life. A question arises, then, if the protesting environmental activists are just unlearned ignoramuses, as regards the influence of the barrage on the environment, or maybe they represent the coal lobby which is the most endangered by hydropower?

I would like to talk, then, about the emerging issues concerning environmental protection within the framework of the flood control policies of the state, with the use of source materials.

Paweł Nowik

The Institute of National Remembrance, Białystok

The Last such an Ecological Catastrophe in Poland

Chlorine is a very toxic substance. As it is widely used in industry, there is a huge risk of poisoning. In the 20th century there were many car and train accidents in which vehicles transporting that substance crashed and chlorine caused the death of several hundred people.

Probably the greatest such event in Poland was on March 9, 1989, when a night transit train passed through Białystok on its way from the USSR to the GDR. The train had 32 carriages, including 6 cisterns with liquefied chlorine. At 2:25, 100 meters from the overpass at ul. Poleska some carriages got derailed, including one cistern with chlorine, and 3 cisterns toppled. A 120-meters section of the railway embankment was completely destroyed. The inhabitants of the city were only informed about that event at 11:00 a.m. Few had learned about the catastrophe earlier, from families living in Sweden. The event was discussed in the whole country.

In my paper I would like to present the reasons for the catastrophe and the actions undertaken to remove the effects of the accident. I will analyze the threats and examine the social moods associated with them.

My sources are the SOS files with cryptonym "Chlorine" created by the Security Service and the materials from the rescue actions kept in the headquarters of the State Fire Service in Białystok. I also use the literature on the subject and the reports of witnesses, including those responsible for the rescue action.

I will illustrate the materials with photographs of the catastrophe and a video containing fragments of the reports.

Viktor Pál

Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava

**From Chernobyl to Gabčíkovo. Public Opinion and the Environment
in State-Socialist Hungary in the 1980s**

The history and politicization of the infamous Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Barrage System, a monolithic river regulation project proposed by the Czechoslovak and Hungarian state-socialist regimes in the 1970s–1980s, have been analysed in a large number of social sciences and historical accounts. In the 1980s, the construction of dams related to the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project led to nationwide protests in Hungary. These environmental protests offered an opportunity to criticize the political and economic structure of the state-socialist Kádár regime, and for many people the Nagymaros dam of the barrage system, supposed to be built in the vicinity of Budapest, evolved to be a symbol of monolithic socialism and of political oppression.

The protests against the Nagymaros dam and the entire project were unique, in a way, because environmental issues challenged local and central political cultures and posed a threat to the existing power relations, for the first time under Kádár.

Why was the Nagymaros dam important for a large number of Hungarians? Why did environmental protection evolve to be an important agenda in late-state-socialism? Were environmental concerns still important when ranked along with economic and social problems?

This paper aims to cover these questions by utilizing the archive files of the Hungarian Institute for Public Opinion Research, created in the 1980s. The analysed quantitative and qualitative data taken from public opinion surveys are mostly related to the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Barrage System, but a portion of surveys focused on other environmental issues, such as the nuclear tragedy in Chernobyl.

Dmitriy Panto

Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk

How the Soviet Union Drank a Sea. The End of the Aral Sea

In the 1960 the Aral Sea was the fourth greatest lake on the earth. Since then, the lake has been continuously shrinking due to the redirection of water from the inflowing Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, for the purpose of irrigation. As early as 1918 the Soviet authorities decided that the dry areas of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, along the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers were to be used for growing cotton on a large scale. Cotton was to become the 'white gold', the basis for the economy of those republics. Soon, as a result of those actions, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic became the greatest exporter of cotton in the world. However, it was also the time when one of the greatest ecologic catastrophes in the history of mankind happened there.

Large-scale construction of channels going across the Karakum Desert was conducted from the 1930s. During the first decades of the construction works they were done in violation of all principles of the art of hydrology. As a result, from 30 to 70% of water taken out of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers soaked into the earth or evaporated irretrievably, and never reached either the farmlands or the lake. It is estimated that until 1960 from 20 to 50 km³ of water soaked into the earth instead of flowing into the lake. Even today only 12% of the length of the irrigation channels are sealed and secured against water loss. Moreover, a part of the water from the Amu Darya river flows to the Sarygamysh Basin, to the west of the river, where it fills the salty Sarygamysh Lake, formed there in the 20th century..

Since 1960s the level of water in the Aral Sea began to fall systematically, at the rate of about 20 cm a year. In the next decade the rate was 50–60 cm a year. Later it accelerated and nowadays it may even be over 80–90 cm. In 1960 the area of the lake was 68,500 km². By 2009 it decreased by $\frac{4}{5}$, to 13,500 km². In 1960 the lake was the fourth greatest lake in the world. Now it is the sixteenth. The disappearance of the water of the lake led to one of the greatest ecological catastrophes in the area of the former USSR, which was, incidentally, not at all surprising for the Soviet authorities which had been presented with the reports about the predicted drying out of the lake years earlier. The fish industry foundered in Aralsk already in 1980s. Almost all organisms living in the Aral Sea died out due to the drastic increase of the salinity.

Małgorzata Praczyk
Institute of History,
Adam Mickiewicz University

Nature and Ruins. The Ecological Dimension of Human Negligence in Post-war Poland

The end of World War II was not only marked by tremendous political, social, and cultural shifts but it was also a turning point in terms of environmental issues. In Central and Eastern Europe it was even more important, both because of the inclusion of those countries into the Soviet sphere of influence (and, consequently, into the Soviet paradigm of human domination over nature) and because of the enormous, post-war destruction of urban, rural, and natural environment. Nonetheless, what meant total destruction of the material environment for humans did not necessarily mean the same for different natural species.

In my paper I will investigate the ruined and destroyed spaces which became dominated by nature (both flora and fauna) as a result of the warfare in Poland. Due to political decisions as well as the lack of appropriate measures, many places were not rebuilt immediately after the war or were not reconstructed at all. Those places were characterized by the very interesting and intensive process of being brought back to nature. However, that natural comeback was strictly bounded by previous human actions which often determined the growth of particular species (ruderal species, synanthropes). The natural succession was thus associated with the process of the ruination and recomposition of relics.

For the most part, that ecological vindication of specific sites and spaces took place without precise human intervention and, rather, thanks to the inescapable negligence caused by the overwhelming number of matters to be resolved after the war. Thus, particular sites were captured by nature and lived their own lives, increasing the biodiversity of the area, alongside people's actions. In spite of human activity, which was often negative, some of those places have grown rapidly, even to the extent of ecosystems worth protection (for instance, the National Park "Ujście Wart"). It was, then, not the political decision to protect specific areas but the process that took place despite the exploitative policy towards nature in Poland during the communist regime that facilitated the creation of such ecosystems. That process will be the key issue of my presentation.

Przemysław Ruchlewski

The European Solidarity Centre, Gdańsk

**The Protection of the Environment in the Policy of the Voivodeship Committee
of the Polish United Workers' Party in Gdańsk**

In 1980s there was an important change of the policies of the central and regional authorities regarding the necessity of protecting the regulations on environmental protection and the limitation and removal of the sources of contamination. First of all, people began to talk openly about the fact that overexploitative economy had led to an ecological catastrophe in some places in Poland. One such place was, undoubtedly, the Bay of Gdańsk, mentioned in the report from September, 1989, titled "The Condition of the State" (Polish "Stan Państwa"), prepared for Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. In this article I will discuss the state of the natural environment in the Gdańskie voivodeship and describe the attempts at preventing an ecological catastrophe of that area. I will present interesting statistics and talk about the attitude of the authorities toward environmental protection. It is also worth noting that the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" also intervened with regard to ecological issues, which is why the authorities often avoided those problems, associating them with the subversive ideas of the solidarity movement.

Paweł Sekuła

The Division of Ukrainian Studies
The Faculty of International and Political Studies
Jagiellonian University

**The Influence of the Chernobyl Catastrophe on the Process of Shaping
of the Anti-Communist Ukrainian Opposition in the Soviet Union**

The article contains a discussion of the influence of the Chernobyl catastrophe on the creation of the Ukrainian anti-communist organizations and the development of patriotic communities in 1986–1991. I evaluate the reaction of the Ukrainian society to the propaganda of the Soviet authorities after the nuclear explosion and the attempts at imposing the state-approved evaluation of the Chernobyl disaster. Political methods of conducting oppositional activities turned out to be very important for the social-national activation of Ukrainian citizens. Attention was paid, especially, to the interpretation of the catastrophe by the representatives of the organizations which tried to minimize the effects of the catastrophe, by their families, the injured parties, and the members of ecological and cultural movements the creation of which was spurred by anti-nuclear protests. In the conditions of the continued repressive state policies, with selective terror used by the authorities against the opponents, the scope of the oppositionists' influence on the Ukrainians' environmental consciousness was equal to the medical and ecological challenges related to the catastrophe, especially the protection of Ukrainians' health of and social well-being, and the level of radiological safety in the republic.

Arnost Stanzel
LMU Munich

**Water Pollution in Romania, 1948–1989:
On the Way to Second Modernity and Back Again?**

In my talk on Romanian environmental history between 1948 and 1989 I will focus on water pollution. How did the communist regime in Romania tackle this problem? To answer this question, I will follow the development of policies to protect water resources over 40 years of communist rule. I will show that, contrary to common beliefs, the communists in Romania had an interest in environmental protection and will also explain why their approach failed. Based on archival sources and newspaper articles, I will track the development in that field. Beginning in the 1950s, we will see how the rapidly developing and formerly agrarian country first had to set up the necessary institutions to notice water pollution and how this process finally resulted in the implementation of several laws protecting nature and water resources in the 1970s. However, the beginning economic crises in Romania at the end of the 1970s, combined with Nicolae Ceaușescu's ever more authoritarian regime, led to the failure of the first steps to protect the environment despite those promising initial efforts. In my concluding remarks I will connect those findings with the broader picture of water resource management in Romania and Eastern Europe. With my talk I hope to paint a more colourful picture of Eastern European environmental history during state socialism, overcoming the still prevailing black-and-white-accounts.

Xawery Stańczyk

Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw

Practices of Orientalism Inside the Ecovillage Movement in Poland of State Socialism

Alternative culture in Poland was created by various individuals, groups, collectives, and movements. Underground artists, poets and musicians, anarchist and pacific activists, young culture animators and music promoters found themselves in a similar socio-economic situation. Thus, they began to cooperate and work together. The emotional community emerging in these practices was based on ideas of spontaneity, authenticity, creativeness, living together, and the art of living. When, in the late 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s, members of the underground society started to settle in rural peripheries, the same ideas led them to the construction of new lifestyles. The first Polish ecovillages were, in fact, established by alternative artists, activists, and other young outsiders who wanted to create their own world beside the regime they called 'Babylon'.

One distinctive feature of these first alternative settlements was the practice of orientalism. On the one hand, it drew on Polish peasants' traditional way of living, still practiced far away from the modernisation processes – small farmers were sentimentalised as good, poor, frank people who knew their own roots and looked after them – on the other hand, ecovillage founders orientalised themselves as 'savages' and 'barbarians' who escaped from spoiled, rotten civilization. The aim of my presentation is to present the ways in which these two types of orientalist practices functioned.

Małgorzata Świder

The Institute of History, Universitas Opoliensis

The Impact of the Chernobyl Catastrophe on the Policy and Society of West Germany

The explosion of the Chernobyl reactor did not only have a strong influence on the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block but also on the society and politics of the Western world. On the 20th anniversary of the catastrophe, Gorbachov called it a deadly blow to the USSR (“Die Welt”, April 20, 2006). For the FRG it was an impulse for the introduction of a series of new legal regulations associated with the protection of the environment, including new technologies. That was because no-one had been prepared for Chernobyl. None of the political parties in the Bundestag had a serious interest in environmental protection (apart from the Green party which entered the parliament only in 1983). As a result, government structures were unprepared for such a catastrophe. Unified measures did not exist, nor even norms of radiation for, for example, grocery products. Until 1986 there were no procedures for or exchange of information about the possible ways of protecting against the effects of a nuclear catastrophe. Public opinion was not sufficiently informed about the contamination or the threat to life and health, which caused serious unrest and chaos in the society. There were social protests, the main slogan of which was: “Tschernobyl ist überall”. The press wrote massively about the catastrophe; members of the Bundestag discussed the situation.

In June, 1986 the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Environmental Protection, and Nuclear Safety was created, directly as a result of the event the foundation, and later a series of legal regulations on the environment was introduced. The explosion of the reactor made anti-nuclear power movement, in existence since 1970s, more active and it stirred discussions about the use of nuclear power. Some projects were discarded and, in the end, no new nuclear power plants were built in the FRG since that time.

Marcin Tunak,
Institute of History at University Adam Mickiewicz

Social Protests against the Construction of a Nuclear Power Plant in Klempicz

In 1987 it was decided to build a second nuclear power plant in Poland, in Greater Poland (the first one, Żarnowiec, had been built in 1982, in the village of Kartoszyno, but was never completed and in 1990 a decision was made to abandon the construction site). The first location chosen in Greater Poland was Skoki on the Vistula River. It was given the name Nuclear Power Plant Karolewo. However, as a result of social protests the authorities decided to move the plant to the Klempicz village. The new project was called Nuclear Power Plant Warta. However, plans to build a power plant in Klempicz led to protests by the residents of Klempicz and to the decision to abandon the construction. The aim of this paper is to present the plans to build a nuclear power plant in Klempicz and to discuss the social protests in the village and its surroundings, which resulted, on April 22, 1989 in Prime Minister Mieczysław F. Rakowski's decision to abandon the nuclear power plant in Greater Poland.