

# Crossing Boundaries. Human-Animal Relations from Post-Petrine Russia to the Soviet State (1725–1991)

The study of human-animal relations is one of the most promising fields in historiography. We suggest taking a *longue durée*-view on the interplay of human and nonhuman actors that ranges from post-Petrine Russia to the fall of the Soviet Union with a spatial scope from western Russia to the Pacific Ocean, and from the steppes of Central Asia to the ice shelves of the Arctic Circle.

This motivates us to re-evaluate established narratives of internal colonization (as in the example of the fur trade), culturalization (in pet-keeping and the emergence of livestock farming), and conflicting agencies (as in the rather macabre tales of polar bears and Arctic explorers). Considering the lasting inaccessibility of Russian archives, this also presents us with alternative avenues and opportunities in finding and interpreting historical sources.

Our workshop brings together scholars from such varied backgrounds like environmental, social and cultural history in order to discuss new approaches to an old relationship.

Images:

Wellcome Library, London, L0022519 Dogs with their keepers at the Physiology Department, Imperial Institute of Experimental Medicine, St Petersburg (1904). Copyrighted work available under Creative Commons Attribution only licence CC BY 4.0.

Eleazar Langman (1895–1940), Camel Caravan, Kazakhstan, 1934/35, taken from: Helena Holzberger, *Picturing Central Asia in the Early Soviet Union*, in: *Picturing Russian Empire*, edited by Valerie Kivelson, Sergej Kozlov, Joan Neuberger (Oxford, 2023), 359.

**The Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO)** focuses its research on the region between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic from late antiquity to the present day in a comparative perspective. We examine transformations and entanglements in a globalizing world. The institute thus seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of political, economic and social developments in East Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe.

[www.leibniz-gwzo.de](http://www.leibniz-gwzo.de)

## Venue

GWZO, Specks Hof (Entrance A, 4th floor),  
Reichsstraße 4–6, 04109 Leipzig

## Concept

Helena Holzberger (LMU München)  
[h.holzberger@lmu.de](mailto:h.holzberger@lmu.de)  
Timm Schönfelder (GWZO, Department »Humans and Environment«)  
[tim.schoenfelder@leibniz-gwzo.de](mailto:tim.schoenfelder@leibniz-gwzo.de)

## Event Management

Julia Kuhre ([julia.kuhre@leibniz-gwzo.de](mailto:julia.kuhre@leibniz-gwzo.de))  
Ines Rößler ([ines.roessler@leibniz-gwzo.de](mailto:ines.roessler@leibniz-gwzo.de))



This measure is co-financed by tax revenues as set out in the adopted budget of the Landtag of Saxony.

# GWZO

## Workshop

**Crossing Boundaries.  
Human-Animal Relations  
from Post-Petrine Russia to  
the Soviet State (1725–1991)**

**Leipzig, June 29–30, 2023**





## Thursday, June 29, 2023

**9.30–10.00** Welcome and Get-together

**10.00–10.40** Thematic Introduction  
Helena Holzberger (München)  
Timm Schönfelder (Leipzig)

*10.40–11.00 Coffee Break*

**11.00–12.30**  
**Panel I: The Killers and the Killed**

Andreas Renner (München)  
White Bears, White Men and the Rule over the North-east Passage

Anton Kotenko (Helsinki)  
The Great Dog Massacre: Cities of the Russian Empire, 1860s–1914

Tanya Bakhmetyeva (Rochester)  
The Russian Bear: Animals, Masculinity, and Power in the Soviet Union

*12.30–14.00 Lunch Break*

**14.00–15.30**  
**Panel II: Plagues and Sickness**

Anastasia Fedotova (St Petersburg)  
Anti-Locust Service as a »Soft Power« of the Empire:  
The Case of the Moroccan Locust in Central Asia and  
the Caucasus in the 20th Century

Tatsuya Mitsuda (Berlin)  
In Search of Cattle Plague in the Steppes: Imperial  
Russia as Epizootic Source in 19th-Century Europe

Vera Smirnova (Almaty)  
Human-Animal Relations in Times of Crisis: Epidemic  
and Epizootic of Brucellosis in Soviet Kazakhstan

*15.30–16.00 Coffee Break*

**16.00–17.30**  
**Panel III: Companion Species Manifested**

Matthew Adams (Brighton)  
Pavlov in St Petersburg: Human-Animal Relations in the  
Kingdom of Dogs

Tracy McDonald (Hamilton, Ontario)  
Robert Kindler (Berlin)  
Being Tit Mal'kovich: Being Otter

*17.30–18.00 Break for Refreshments*

**18.00–19.30**  
**Keynote Lecture**  
**Ryan Tucker Jones (Eugene, Oregon)**  
**Of Russians and Whales: Writing the History of  
the Cetacean Genocide**

**20.00** Discussion over Dinner at Ratskeller,  
Lotterstraße 1, 04109 Leipzig (not covered)

## Friday, June 30, 2023

**10.00–10.30** Warm-up and Get-together

**10.30–11.30**  
**Panel IV: From Farm to Table**  
Anna Olenenko (Edmonton, Alberta)  
Working Animals in Black Earth Agriculture:  
Traditions and Experiments (Second Half of the 18th  
to Early 19th Century)

Julia Malitska (Stockholm)  
Dietary Reform and the »Meat Question« in the  
Modernizing Russian Empire

**11.30–12.30**  
**Panel V: Animals at Play**  
Moritz Florin (Erlangen)  
Dress and Dressage: Animals as Humans in the  
Socialist Circus

Anke Hilbrenner (Düsseldorf)  
Hitler's Alligator in Moscow: Zoos in the Russian Empire  
and the Soviet Union in Times of War and Peace

*12.30–13.30 Lunch Break*

**13.30–14.30** Concluding Discussion

**14.30** Farewell