

Call for Papers: ‘Leisure in Central and Eastern Europe: An Object-Centred Approach to a Century of Political, Social, and Cultural Crises’ (workshop and virtual exhibition)

Leisure is seen as the opposite of work, as the counterpart, or supplement – the conceptualisations of leisure are manifold. What researchers agree on, is that leisure as a legally defined category is primarily a phenomenon of the late 19th and mainly the 20th century. Thus an integral part of everyday life, leisure activities increasingly attracted the attention of governance, commerce, and political organisations. Not only did contentious debate revolve around morally correct ways to spend free time – the increasing institutionalisation of leisure had an immense impact on the spatial and temporal organisation of societies.

But what the history of the twentieth century in Central Eastern Europe shows more is that leisure is a resilient aspect of life that persists even in times of severe crises and demonstrates the will of people to survive and build a life. Living testimony to such crises is the legacy of leisure — historical artefacts that transport the observer to their function and context. For example, how the bandura, a musical instrument secretly brought by Ukrainians during the forced deportation to Soviet Siberia, serves as a reminder of a lost home. Or what handwritten posters or poorly printed tickets to censored films shown semi-secretly in socialist countries tell us about underground resistance. Personal diaries, musical instruments, handmade sewn or knitted toys — these are all artefacts of leisure that emerge, adapt and reappear even in the most difficult times.

The aim of this workshop is to explore the impact of political regimes and ideologies on leisure, and the shifting perceptions and discourses surrounding leisure time throughout the 20th century in Central Eastern Europe. These topics are to be uncovered through specific objects or artefacts related to leisure.



Leisure in deportation: Mykola Tsvyk (third from the right) is playing accordion for his friends in Tomsk, 1950s

Source: Private archive of Vira Tsvyk (Borovets), After Silence ©

We invite researchers to contribute by presenting their ideas: **participants should choose on one or two artefacts, as outlined in the examples above, and provide their historical context.** We welcome proposals for presentations that fall within three main themes:

1. *Political and Ideological Impact on Leisure Artefacts.* What can we learn about the changing practices of leisure in CEE by considering the effects of war(s), revolution(s), deportation(s), and shifting ideologies on leisure in the region?;
2. *Survival and Adaptation of Leisure during Crises.* How leisure activities and associated artefacts served as a form of resistance or resilience during challenging times? What is the role of leisure in maintaining cultural identity and providing a sense of normalcy during crises?
3. *Changing Perceptions and Discourses(s) on Leisure.* How leisure activities were portrayed, restricted, or promoted over time and the implications of these changes on the cultural and social fabric of the region?

The outcomes of the workshop include an on-site event in Leipzig, Germany, scheduled for May 23, and a subsequent virtual exhibition planned for the second half of 2024. To participate, please submit an abstract of your proposal, limited to 500 words, along with a brief bio to Polina Gundarina (polina.gundarina@leibniz-gwzo.de) and Daria Rezyk (dariakinzer6@gmail.com) **by January 31.** The results of the selection process will be announced no later than February 15. Selected participants will receive accommodation for one night and have their travel costs to Leipzig covered. The on-site workshop is scheduled for May 23.

The workshop is organised by the junior research group *Contrasting East Central Europe* of Leibniz Institute for History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO).



Organisers:
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