

## URIS NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2021

**We are pleased to welcome our eight URIS fellow Prof Dr Viktoriya Sereda to Basel!**

The fate of the approximately two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the war in eastern Ukraine is only slowly beginning to capture the attention of social scientists. When it does turn to these issues, migration research concentrates primarily on IDPs as passive victims and those who suffer as a result of the war. In her current research project **“The power of the disempowered: civic activism of Ukrainian IDPs”**, Prof. Viktoriya Sereda, our eighth URIS fellow, shifts the perspective and looks at the agency of the Ukrainian IDPs. To what lengths do they go to become integrated in their new environment? How do they manage to draw strength from their own experience of displacement and flight for civic engagement? Viktoriya Sereda’s interview-based research is situated at the interface of the sociology of everyday life and the history of identity. She addresses one of the greatest challenges Ukrainian society has faced since the outbreak of the war in the east of the country.



*Picture by: Ostap Sereda*

In her course **“Migration and belonging. Ukraine in glocal perspective after 1991”** at the University of Basel, Viktoriya Sereda invites students to examine selected Eastern European migration processes and debates on belonging, multiculturalism, and integration, with a special focus on the case of Ukraine. For the last decade Ukraine was among the top ten countries supplying highest number of migrants in the World. Not less important are internal migrations that were often caused by military conflict and violence, and became a key factor of societal transformations as well as discussion on belonging. Another important theme of the course is the impact of migration from Ukraine and Eastern Europe on European and American history, and on the current global trends. Therefore, the course participants will engage in the interactive collaborative discovery of several key problems such as Ukraine’s place in the care chain, gender aspects of migration, trans-Atlantic intellectual migration, global diasporas, migrants as important transnational development agents, artistic representations of migration, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prof Viktoriya Sereda studied in L’viv, Budapest and Edinburgh and obtained her doctorate in 2006 with a study of the influence of regionalism on the formation of sociopolitical identity in Ukraine. She has served as Professor of Sociology at the Ukrainian Catholic University in L’viv since 2015. She was recently the MAPA Research Fellow at the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University, where she used sociological data to develop a digital atlas of social changes in Ukrainian society.

Further information on Viktoriya Sereda and contact information on our [website](#)

## REPORT ON THE DIGITAL URIS & CEES WORKSHOP 20 NOVEMBER 2020

### **“How to React to Crisis, Secessionism and War – Protest, Peace Activism, or Emigration? South Caucasus & Ukraine in a Comparative Perspective”**

On 20 November 2020, the research initiatives “Ukrainian Research in Switzerland” (URIS) and the “Center for Eastern European Studies” (CEES) presented their digital workshop. Those invited included young visiting scholars from Ukraine and the South Caucasus who had been researching at the Universities of Bern, Zurich, St Gallen, Geneva and Basel in the 2020 autumn semester. The workshop addressed the (frozen) conflicts between Abkhazia and Georgia and between Ukraine and Russia. These conflicts are confronting the people in the region with difficult political and social choices: Should they join the secessionist movements, support peaceful solutions through cultural and social engagement, or escape the conflicts through emigration? The [report](#) sums up the highlights of the panel discussions led by Prof Dr Benjamin Schenk, Prof Dr Jeronim Perović and Prof Dr Ulrich Schmid.

## APPLY FOR THE SUMMER SCHOOL: UKRAINE – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR DIALOGUE, BASEL 21-25 JUNE 2021

Learn about conflict and dialogue in the context of Ukraine.

- Understand the conflict in and around Ukraine and the current status of the settlement process.
- Analyze key actors, drivers and layers of conflict in the context of Ukraine.
- Assess opportunities and challenges for dialogue in Ukraine at the local, national and international level.
- Learn about key concepts from peace studies and how they apply to Ukraine.
- Exchange experiences and become part of a community of practice.

More information about registration can be found on our [website](#)

## NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Official History in Eastern Europe

Korine Amacher / Andrii Portnov / Viktoriia Serhienko (eds.)

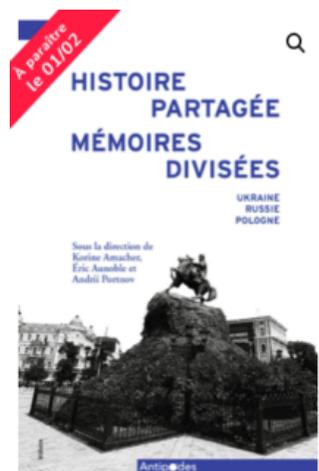
“Official history” is generally understood as the state-sponsored and ideologically-inclined construction of the past which serves the particular political aims of mostly non-democratic regimes. The optimistic belief that it would end up with the collapse of the Soviet Union has proved rather naive. As Pierre Nora argued, over the last thirty years we have experienced a “*general politicization of history*” – the process of transforming what historians produce into an ideology. How are the intellectual choices made by historians today influenced by the long twentieth-century experiences of Eastern Europe? What could “official history” mean for a stateless nation or a self-proclaimed “republic”? How did Ukrainian historiography become or how was it forced to become Soviet? What spaces for individual research initiatives or even for modest disagreement with obligatory planned research existed in the official history institutions of Soviet Ukraine and socialist Poland? How were Russian textbooks on history re-written during the post-Soviet years? What role do literature, film, monuments, holidays or rituals play in the politics of history? How have memories of the Second World War been instrumentalised in the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict and how have images of the ongoing war in the Donbas influenced memory debates in neighbouring post-Soviet states?



### HISTOIRE PARTAGÉE, MÉMOIRES DIVISÉES: UKRAINE, RUSSIE, POLOGNE

**Amacher Korine, Aunoble Éric, Portnov Andrii**

Déboulonnement de statues de Lénine en Ukraine; réhabilitation du passé impérial et stalinien en Russie; nouvelle « politique historique» officielle en Pologne: depuis la chute du communisme en 1989-1991, les questions mémorielles sont au centre de l'actualité polonaise, ukrainienne et russe. Elles alimentent les batailles géopolitiques en cours autour de l'ancrage européen de la Pologne ou de l'Ukraine, de l'annexion de la Crimée ou de la guerre dans le Donbass. Or, la Russie, l'Ukraine et la Pologne sont liées par une histoire commune où les conflits font disparaître les cohabitations et la diversité humaine de ces territoires. En éclairant des espaces, des événements et des figures qui ont été l'objet de récits historiques divergents, voire conflictuels, cet ouvrage montre comment, de l'histoire à la mémoire, des « romans nationaux» antagonistes sont écrits.



*Бажаю Тобі гарних вихідних і хорошого настрою! Anne Hasselmann*