

# SEASONS OF REVOLUTIONS

TRANSNATIONAL LIVES OF  
NATIONALIST REVOLTS

2-3 DEC 2021

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ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
National University of Singapore

20  
YEARS

The self-immolation of a Tunisian street vendor in 2010 became the first swallow of the Arab Spring. Under pressure from reinvigorated national publics, decades-long, strong-fisted regimes in the Middle East and North Africa fell one after the other, like a set of dominos. While the protests initially triggered by domestic issues, the drama that ensued quickly became transnational. As precarious states and protestors alike mobilized critical life-support from neighbors and allies afar, a broader transnational infrastructure of human mobility came into sharp relief. The Sunni Al-Khalifa regime in Bahrain, for example, recruited riot police through networks of diasporic Baloch soldiers, just as protestors sought moral and political support from exiled Shia leaders in Iran. The label of ‘Arab Springs’ suggesting that revolt was just in season, overlooks the role mobile populations play in amplifying local unrests into transnational waves capable of remaking both state and society across a broad region.

Serial revolutions have been a recurring feature in Asia across the twentieth century. At the turn of the 20th century, constitutional currents across Eurasia, inspired by the Russian revolution (1905), set ablaze similar revolutions in Iran (1906), Turkey (1908) and China (1913). Later in the mid-20th-century, as one independence movement succeeded, others grew in strength, together overthrowing the colonial yoke from across the Global South. Just as in the Arab Spring, these national revolts hopped across the region on the back of mobile populations, be they merchants, scholars, pilgrims, soldiers, exiles, laborers, refugees, and diasporas.

Bringing these mobile societies, or Mercurians as Yuri Slezkine calls them, to the forefront of these world-historical events, this conference invites participants to rethink how ideas and ideologies travel and find force in unexpected places. We specifically focus on three key instances of local rebellions cascading into serial revolutions in Asia: (1) constitutional revolutions from the early 20th century that led to the rise of republics in Russia, Turkey, and Iran; (2) mid-20th-century independence movements that ended centuries-long colonial rule and resulted in sovereign nation-states across the Indian Ocean; and (3) early 21st century Arab Spring protests that spilled across the Middle East toppling decades-old military dictatorships. In centering the role of peripatetic societies in spreading these revolutions, we look to develop a new “mercurian” lens on political history that is often compartmentalized into national literatures.

## **WORKSHOP CONVENORS**

### **Dr Yang Yang**

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

### **Dr Ameen Lutfi**

Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

### **Dr Serkan Yolaçan**

Department of Anthropology, Stanford University

### **Dr Nisha Mathew**

School of Law, Mahindra University

SINGAPORE  
STANDARD TIME

## THURSDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2021

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- 16:30 – 16:50 **OPENING & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**  
**TIM BUNNELL** | National University of Singapore  
**NAOKO SHIMAZU** | National University of Singapore, and Yale-NUS College  
**YANG YANG** | National University of Singapore
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- 16:50 – 18:00 **PANEL 1**  
 CHAIRPERSON **YANG YANG** | National University of Singapore
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- 16:50 Political Mobility and Transnational Lives of the Overseas Vietnamese (Việt Kiều) in Thailand during the Cold War Period  
**MORRAGOTWONG PHUMPLAB** | National University of Singapore, and Thammasat University
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- 17:00 The Networked Margins: Transnational Ties Across Decades in the Karen Revolution  
**TERESE GAGNON** | University of Copenhagen  
**TOMAS COLE** | Stockholm University
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- 17:10 Komagata Maru and Ghadr: The Ship that Set Off a Transnational Revolution  
**ANJALI GERA ROY** | Indian Institute of Technology Kharapur
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- 17:20 **COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT**  
**SERKAN YOLAÇAN** | Stanford University
- 
- 17:30 **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**
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- 18:00 **END OF PANEL 1**
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- 20:00 – 21:10 **PANEL 2**  
 CHAIRPERSON **DONGXIN ZOU** | National University of Singapore
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- 20:00 Anticolonial or Pan-Asian Solidarity? Ottoman Sephardic Reinterpretations of the Philippine Revolution (1896-1902)  
**JORGE BAYONA** | National University of Singapore
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- 20:10 The Monarch's or the People's Glory? Two Global Waves of Political Transformation and the Young Turk Revolution's Role in Chinese Discourse, 1908-1912  
**EGAS MONIZ BANDEIRA** | Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory
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- 20:20 The Maghribi Roots of the 2011 Syrian Uprising: Revolutionary Sufism in Diaspora  
**DAANISH FARUQI** | Duke University
- 
- 20:30 **COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT**  
**AMEEM LUTFI** | National University of Singapore
- 
- 20:40 **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**
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- 21:10 **END OF DAY ONE**
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SINGAPORE  
STANDARD TIME

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## FRIDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2021

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20:00 – 20:50

### PANEL 3

CHAIRPERSON **YUANHAO ZHAO** | National University of Singapore

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20:00

Revolutionary Patrons or Anti-Imperialist Oppressors?  
The Tribal Communities of the North of Iran Facing Bolshevik Expansionism

**ALISA SHABLOVSKAIA** | Sciences Po Paris

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20:10

From Autonomy to an Asian Revolution: Koreans and Buryat-Mongols between  
the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Empire 1917-1926

**IVAN SABLIN** | Heidelberg University

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20:20

COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT

**NISHA MATHEW** | Mahindra University

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20:30

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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20:50

END OF PANEL 3

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20:50 – 21:00

SHORT BREAK

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21:00 -21:45

### CONCLUDING SESSION

METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS ON RESEARCHING REVOLUTIONS

**NAOKO SHIMAZU** | National University of Singapore, and Yale-NUS College

**GERARD MCCARTHY** | National University of Singapore

**YANG YANG** | National University of Singapore

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21:45

END OF WORKSHOP

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## Political Mobility and Transnational Lives of the Overseas Vietnamese (Việt Kiều) in Thailand during the Cold War Period

### **Morragotwong Phumplab**

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and Faculty of Liberal Arts,  
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The emergence of the Cold War relocated geo-politics in the initial stages and had a profound impact not only on foreign relations but also on people on the ground. The geographical connection and immigration of the Southeast Asian people since the pre-colonial state preserved relations between their homeland and the new settlement. In their anti-French colonialism and anti-American operations in Indochina, Vietnamese nationalists and communists used Thailand as a major geographical conduit. Overseas communities were inadvertently transformed into political middlemen. Because of the network built by overland Vietnamese migration, Vietnamese nationalism and communism were successfully strengthened in political movement during the Indochina war due to the development of a regional network from Southern China to mainland Southeast Asia. The majority of Overseas Vietnamese in Thailand had close ties to the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Since the 1920s, Thailand has served as a central stronghold for anti-French colonialist Vietnamese nationalists. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the Cold War was not just about the proxy war between the two bipolar political ideologies. Instead, this was a hot war between the people on the ground. The Thai government was concerned about the Overseas Vietnamese (Việt Kiều) in northeastern Thailand, who were predominantly pro-Communist and had strong ties to the anti-colonial struggle. As a result, in the view of the Thai government, these individuals were communist spies and sympathizers who posed a security threat to the country. This paper examines the history of the Cold War from below through the transnational lives of the Overseas Vietnamese, their political activities for the nationalist mission, politics within their community, and Thailand as a sphere of the Overseas Vietnamese' political mobilities, using Vietnamese and Thai archival sources as well as oral history.

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**Morragotwong Phumplab** is a PhD student in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. She is an assistant professor in Southeast Asian Studies at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Thailand. Her interests include diplomatic history, a socio-political and cultural history in Southeast Asia, especially Vietnam and Thailand. She is currently working on her dissertation entitled "Making Cold War Alliance: Regional Anti-Communism for Nation-building between Thailand and South Vietnam, 1955 – 1975."

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## The Networked Margins: Transnational Ties Across Decades in the Karen Revolution

### **Terese Gagnon**

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and Department of Political  
Science, University of Copenhagen

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### **Tomas Cole**

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In 1948 the Burmese independent movement succeeded in throwing off the yoke of British and Japanese colonial rule to forge a new sovereign nation, the Union of Burma. However, just over a year after independence the union collapsed in on itself as the frictions between multiple competing independence movements erupted into civil war. As the new government of the Union of Burma became increasingly violent and isolationist, the competing independence movements, which had always been transnational, became highly mobile and globally networked. Transnational connections of various kinds—including religious, educational, and economic—shaped and helped to sustain these independence movements, some of which are now considered to be the longest wars in the world.

In this paper we focus on the fortunes of one such independence movement in Burma, the Karen revolution. We trace out three moments of mobility and transnational entanglements: the colonial and missionary ties that first forged this movement from 1888 to the 1960s; the cross-border traffic as large numbers of Karen were forced to flee, and the revolution forged closer ties with Thailand and anti-communist movements 1960-2000; and diaspora ties as the displaced were resettled in third countries. We place special emphasis on this third and final moment of mobility, continuously tying it back to earlier moments, as it has become instrumental in the current political crisis in Myanmar. Importantly, we highlight the role of seemingly unlikely transnational connections between rural spaces in facilitating the Karen revolution and the unfolding anti-authoritarian struggle in Myanmar.

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**Terese Gagnon** is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies and Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Syracuse University. Her research examines Karen food, seed, and political sovereignty across homelands and diaspora. She is co-editor of the book *Movable Gardens: Itineraries and Sanctuaries of Memory*.

**Tomas Cole** holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from Stockholm University, where he is currently employed as a lecturer and researcher. Tomas works ethnographically on the intersection of environment, politics, and cosmologies and had done fieldwork in Myanmar, Thailand, and USA.

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## Komagata Maru and Ghadr: The Ship that Set Off a Transnational Revolution

### **Anjali Gera Roy**

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In 1914, Gurdit Singh Sarhali, a Singapore based entrepreneur, chartered a Japanese ship called Komagata Maru that carried 376 passengers to Canada. Other than returnees and a few others, the passengers were not allowed to disembark on its arrival in Vancouver on grounds of a newly introduced regulation called the “Continuous Journey” that prohibited Asians from landing in Canada unless they had made a continuous journey from their place of origin. The ship was detained for two months and passengers, after a prolonged legal battle reported by the world media, were forced to return to Budge Budge near Kolkata where they were accused of being seditious and forced to return to Punjab on a special train that waited at the Budge Budge station. Those who refused to board the train were fired at and imprisoned.

Many of the passengers, some of whom were discharged soldiers of the British Indian army, were suspected to have become converted to the Ghadr cause following the privations they underwent in the course of the journey. The Komagata Maru episode that played a key role in South Asian migration to Canada and ignited the Ghadr movement in addition to the Singapore Mutiny was erased or marginalized in the history of Indian nationalist resistance. The Ghadr revolution began with the support of the transnational networks of ordinary Sikh workers, soldiers and revolutionaries. This examines the letters, oral histories, interviews of the passengers and songs from Ghadar di Ghoonja along with Gurdit Singh’s diary *Zulmi Katha* and the Ghadar leader Bhagwan Singh Gyaneer’s biography *Jeevan Natak* to foreground the role played by ordinary Sikhs, including soldiers, students and revolutionaries, in mobilizing a transnational revolutionary movement that has been suppressed in official histories of the Indian national movement.

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**Anjali Gera Roy** is a Professor in the Department of Humanities of Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. She is the author of *Memories and Postmemories of the Partition of India* (Routledge 2019), *Imperialism and Sikh Migration: the Komagata Maru Incident* (Routledge 2017) and *Bhangra Moves: From Ludhiana to London and Beyond* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2010). She has edited *Imagining Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabiat in the Transnational Era* (London: Routledge 2015), *Magic of Bollywood: At Home and Abroad* (Sage 2012), *Beyond the Metros: Anglo-Indians in Smaller Towns in India* (Primus 2021) with Robyn Andrews, *Diaspora and Transnationalisms: the Journey of the Komagata Maru* (Routledge 2017) with Ajaya K Sahoo and *Travels of Bollywood Cinema: From Bombay to LA* (OUP 2012) with Chua Beng Huat.

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## Anticolonial or Pan-Asian Solidarity?

### Ottoman Sephardic Reinterpretations of the Philippine Independence (1896-1902)

#### **Jorge Bayona**

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This paper seeks to explore what the Ladino-language coverage of the Katipunan Revolution in the Philippines (1896) can tell us about the transnational life of nationalist revolts in Asia. With most of the foreign coverage of the Sephardic Jewish press of the Ottoman Empire focusing on Western Europe, the Philippine Revolution remained mostly out of sight in its pages. When it converged with the larger Spanish-American War, however, the revolutionary struggle of the Philippine nationalists was progressively reassessed, with at least one Ladino-language newspaper beginning to empathize with Filipino resistance against Spanish and United States Empire. This paper seeks to tease out the different valences at play in this shift by resorting to close readings of very fragmentary sources and trying to distinguish between “baseline,” “factual” coverage and the portrayals of revolutionary Filipinos that emerged in the more editorializing commentary on the events taking place on the other end of the Asian continent. This analysis shows that animosity against Spain due to the events of 1492 does not appear to play a role in how this revolution was covered; any solidarity shown towards the Filipino revolutionaries was more the result of the personality of the editor of one of these newspapers rather than any larger historical motivation. In tracing these lineages, this paper seeks to find connections that take different paths than the more studied Islamic solidarities emerging between the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim peoples of Southeast Asia in general and in the southern Philippines in particular.

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**Jorge Bayona** is a historian by training, having earned his PhD at the University of Washington, Seattle. His research is transnational, with his dissertation putting into conversation two countries that are rarely studied comparatively: the Philippines and Peru. While at ARI, he will revise and expand the dissertation into a book manuscript and carry out research for a second project in which he will study transnational linkages and parallels across the Pacific in the contexts of the Mexican and Cuban Revolutions. Furthermore, he will send out several articles for peer-review dealing with coverage of the Russo-Japanese War in the Philippines and Dutch East Indies, Peruvian Orientalist perspectives of Southeast Asia in the 1920s, and understandings of the Philippine Revolution (1896-1902) among the Sephardic population of the Ottoman Empire.

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## The Monarch's or the People's Glory? Two Global Waves of Political Transformation and the Young Turk Revolution's Role in Chinese Discourse, 1908–1912

### **Egas Moniz Bandeira**

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Both the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 are often seen as part of the same global revolutionary wave which led to profound political transformations across the globe, along with the first Russian Revolution of 1905, to Persia (1906), the Ottoman Empire (1908), Mexico (1910), and Russia again (1917). (Lenin 1912, Karl 2007, Zürcher 2019) This paper examines the various contemporary Chinese perceptions of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, exploring the role it played in Chinese political discourse. The situation of the Ottoman Empire, which was suffering from heavy imperialist pressures and had lost much of its political power, was relatable to Chinese actors and accordingly elicited substantial interest there. Interpretations of the Young Turk Revolution varied considerably, ranging from pessimistic or apprehensive voices to enthusiastic support. Most notably, the ambiguous character of the Young Turk Revolution meant that all sides in the Chinese political spectrum were able to identify with and appropriate this event, for while it had drastically limited the Sultan's powers, it also left him on the Throne. Accordingly, while some revolutionaries could praise the revolution's 'popular spirit,' it was monarchist reformers in particular who pointed to the fact that the Ottoman Empire was now a constitutional state. The reinstatement of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 thus became an important incentive for the Qing Empire to follow suit, in the hope that the establishment of a constitutional monarchy would solve the country's political and economic woes and help it catch up to the major imperialist powers of the time. Thus, from the Chinese perspective, the Young Turk Revolution was, at the same time, part of two overlapping, but not identical global waves of political transformation: a constitutional wave introducing constitutions as basic instruments of modern statehood, and a revolutionary wave that swept away the imperial monarchies of Eurasia and led to the establishment of republics in their stead.

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**Egas Moniz Bandeira** is a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory in Frankfurt, Germany, where he is working as a member of a comparative research project on the emergence of modern legal practices in Japan, China, and the Ottoman Empire. After studying Law and East Asian Studies at the University of Heidelberg, he completed his PhD program at the Universities of Heidelberg and Tohoku with a dissertation on late Qing constitutional history. His main research interest is global intellectual history with a focus on its refractions in modern East Asia. He is co-editor of the volume *Planting Parliaments in Eurasia, 1850–1950: Concepts, Practices, and Mythologies* (with Ivan Sablin) and published in the *Journal of Transcultural Studies*, *Global Intellectual History*, the *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, and others.

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## The Maghribi Roots of the 2011 Syrian Uprising: Revolutionary Sufism in Diaspora

### **Daanish Faruqi**

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This paper is a study on the influences of North African religious and spiritual thought in giving rise to the 2011 uprising against Bashar al-Assad in Syria. It does so through investigating the career of Shaykh Muhammad Abul Huda al-Yaqoubi, the first of the Syrian religious scholars to support the uprising in its early phases, and a prominent Sufi master of the Shadhili tradition from Damascus. This paper investigates Shaykh Yaqoubi's mobilization of Sufism as a vocabulary of resistance and revolt in contemporary Syria, from his leading Sufi battalions on the battlefield to establishing Sufi-themed revolutionary organizations in exile to lead the uprising. From there it explores Shaykh Yaqoubi's own diasporic origins in North Africa, having come from an originally North African family that migrated to Damascus in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Upon arrival, his family played a major role in promoting a specifically North African Sufi tradition, the Shadhili-Fasi way, among the scholars of Damascus. This paper argues that diasporic existence continues centuries later to inform contemporary spiritual politics. Throughout the twentieth and into the twenty first century, Shaykh Yaqoubi's Shadhili-Fasi spiritual path played a formative role in insurrectionary politics in Syria, drawing on distinctly North African spiritual idioms in the process. More specifically, it weaponized geographical proximity to the Prophet Muhammad, an otherwise distinctly Maghribi spiritual trope, as a basis of political authority. The story of the 2011 Syrian Revolution, then, is simultaneously a story of North African spiritual politics.

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**Daanish Faruqi** is currently completing his PhD (November 2021) in History at Duke University. An ethnographic historian, his work deals with transnational Islamic political thought, with specific emphases on Syria, the Maghrib, and Egypt. His work has been funded by several international grant organizations, including the Fulbright Program and the Andrew Mellon Foundation. His last book, co-edited with Dalia Fahmy, is *Egypt and the Contradictions of Liberalism: Illiberal Intelligentsia and the Future of Egyptian Democracy* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2017).

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## Revolutionary Patrons or Anti-Imperialist Oppressors? The Tribal Communities of the North of Iran Facing Bolshevik Expansionism

**Alisa Shablovskaia**

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Both Soviet and Western historiography condemned the Bolshevik attempt to mobilize the tribes of the North of Iran during the immediate post-revolutionary period and the Civil War as a failure. Most of the historians who have worked on this period argue that the Soviets were only interested in frontier tribes as a military force to push the British out of the former tsarist zone of influence and overthrow the Qajars. As this scholarship is predominantly based on Russian sources, it tends to repeat the Soviet stance on frontier tribes who were, allegedly, incapable of understanding communist ideology and took the regional revolutionary upheaval as an opportunity to engage in raiding. Yet, such narratives tend to disregard tribal agencies, agendas and strategies. Tribal chiefs played an important role in the Iranian Constitutional Movement and Civil War, often acted as intermediaries between British or Russian representatives and Iranian authorities and population, and were actively involved in regional transnational circulations. During WWI the Turkic tribes of the North of Iran (notably, the Turkmen and the Shahseven) were targeted by the German and Ottoman propaganda which extended the political imagery of tribal chiefs and permitted them to imagine new forms of political autonomy, international alliances and patron-client relations. This paper argues that it was the politization of tribal communities in the North of Iran by the end of 1910s which provided the rationale for the Bolshevik expansionist designs in the area and which enabled the consolidation of transnational anti-imperialist networks under the Bolshevik auspices in Iran.

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**Alisa Shablovskaia** holds her doctoral degree from the Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 University and specializes in the Modern and Contemporary History of Iran. Her thesis, entitled *Russians in Iran: Multiform Diplomacy in a Period of Transition, 1914-25*, focuses on the crossed history of Russo-Iranian encounters viewed through the prism of diplomacy. She has published a series of articles concerning the place of clientelism, orientalism and transnationalism in the history and historiography of the Russo-Iranian relations. Her current focus is on the role of transnational circulations in the geopolitical imagery of Eurasian empires.

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## From Autonomy to an Asian Revolution: Koreans and Buryat-Mongols between the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Empire, 1917–1926

**Ivan Sablin**

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Focusing on the engagement of Korean and Buryat-Mongol intellectuals in the Russian Revolution and early Soviet politics, the paper explores the use of the right to self-determination in the attempts to export socialist ideas to East and Inner Asia and to build the informal Soviet empire. The Koreans and Buryat-Mongols were among the largest non-Russian groups in Asiatic Russia. Their respective connections to the Koreans in Korea and to the Mongols and Tibetans in the former Qing Empire made these two groups especially important for the Bolsheviks' transnational project of the World Revolution. When the Russian Empire collapsed, Korean and Buryat-Mongol nationalists sought recognition from the Paris Peace Conference, thus aligning with the Wilsonian Moment of anticolonial nationalism. The neglect of Asian nationalisms in Paris, the refusal of the Japanese to support a Mongol state, and growing anti-Japanese sentiment among Koreans made many Koreans and Buryat-Mongols more receptive to Bolshevik ideas about the socialist decolonisation of Asia and World Revolution. Since 1920, many of them began cooperating with the Communist International to connect decolonisation within the former Russian Empire – by granting autonomy to non-Russian groups – to the promotion of socialism and the Soviet government in East and Inner Asia. The Buryat-Mongols were eventually granted autonomy and continued to transmit revolutionary ideas to neighbouring Mongolia, which became a Soviet dependency in 1921, while the Koreans were denied autonomy and eventually excluded from transnational Soviet politics. Using the concepts of the “imperial revolution” and the “new imperialism,” the paper demonstrates how the attempts to reconfigure the ethnic hierarchies of the Russian Empire through self-determination contributed to the alliance of non-Russian intellectuals with the Bolsheviks and how the logic of the Russian imperial transformation was projected onto neighbouring East and Inner Asian regions to be included in the new Communist empire.

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**Ivan Sablin** leads the Research Group “Entangled Parliamentarisms: Constitutional Practices in Russia, Ukraine, China and Mongolia, 1905–2005,” sponsored by the European Research Council (ERC), at Heidelberg University. His research interests include the history of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, with special attention to Siberia and the Russian Far East, and global intellectual history. He is the author of two monographs – *Governing Post-Imperial Siberia and Mongolia, 1911–1924* (London: Routledge, 2016) and *The Rise and Fall of Russia's Far Eastern Republic, 1905–1922* (London: Routledge, 2018) – and research articles in *Slavic Review*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Nationalities Papers*, and other journals. Ivan Sablin also co-edited *Planting Parliaments in Eurasia, 1850–1950: Concepts, Practices, and Mythologies* (London: Routledge, 2021).

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## About the Chairpersons, Discussants and Organisers

**Ameem Lutfi** is a historical anthropologist specializing in transnational mobility and military-labor markets. His current book project titled 'Conquest Without Rule: Baloch Portfolio-Mercenaries in the Indian Ocean' looks at state-building in the region from the perspective of a diasporic group which has maintained a strong presence in the military infrastructure of various states in the region since at least the 16th century despite not having a state of their own. Lutfi holds a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University. Prior to joining Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Oriental Institute at the Czech Academy of Sciences.

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**Dongxin Zou** is a historian of modern China. Her research studies the connections between medicine and decolonization in China and its global health networks. She is writing a book on Chinese medical missions to postcolonial Africa, focusing on the case study of Algeria. Her articles will appear in the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* and *Technology and Culture* in 2022. Dongxin received her PhD in History from Columbia University. She is now a Postdoctoral Fellow in Science, Technology, and Society Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

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**Gerard McCarthy** is Postdoctoral Fellow at National University of Singapore's Asia Research Institute where he leads a range of projects on political and socio-economic dynamics in Southeast Asia, especially in the wake of COVID-19. He specialises in the politics of social policy and inequality, especially in Myanmar where he has conducted political ethnographic and survey research on authoritarian legacies since 2013. He was previously Visiting Fellow at Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore and Associate Director, Myanmar Research Centre at Australian National University (ANU). He co-edited *Myanmar Transformed? People, Places, Politics* (ISEAS, 2019) and his writing and commentary has been published in outlets including *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *The Straits Times*, *Conflict, Security and Development*, *The New York Times*, *The Economist* and *The Washington Post*. In 2017, he was a visiting scholar at St Antony's College University of Oxford, and in 2015-2016 was visiting fellow at University of Yangon's Department of International Relations.

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**Naoko Shimazu** is Professor of Humanities (History) and Associate Dean of Faculty at Yale-NUS College, and Professor at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Her major publications include *Imagining Japan in Post-war East Asia* (co-editor, Routledge, 2013), *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), *Nationalisms in Japan* (editor, Routledge, 2006), *Japan, Race and Equality: Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (Routledge, 1998). She is currently working on the cultural history of diplomacy, focusing on the Bandung Conference of 1955, as well as exploring methodological issues.

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**Nisha Mathew** received her PhD in History from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in 2014 where her research explored the methodological possibilities of Indian Ocean studies in the making of a contemporary urban space as Dubai. She is currently working on her book titled *24 Carat Cities: Gold, Smuggling and Mobility in the Western Indian Ocean*. It tells the story of Dubai's rise to prominence as a 21st century global city with gold as the protagonist.

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**Serkan Yolaçan's** research broadly focuses on the interplay of past and present in the lives of individuals, diasporas, and states. His book project, *Time Travelers of Baku: Conversion and Revolution in West Asia*, weaves the modern experiences of Turkey, Iran, and Russia through the lens of a mobile, diasporic people from the region of Azerbaijan. By placing mobile Azeris at the center of three major states, he ties together their near-synchronous transformations from constitutional revolutions at the beginning of the twentieth century to expansionist agendas in the twenty-first.

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**Yang Yang** is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Human Geography from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research focuses on transnational religious networks and the politics of ethno-religious identity in northwestern China. Her dissertation thus adopts an ethnographic approach to analyzing the impacts of Hui Muslims' grass-roots connections to non-Chinese Muslim communities in Southeast Asia and the Middle East in the Hui's everyday lives in Xi'an, China. Her current research examines how the Hui diaspora in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia contributes to grass-roots connections between China and Malaysia, and how Malaysia becomes Hui's new Muslim role model through serving as their preferred destination for halal tourism and their style references for Muslim fashion. Notably, this project analyses how ethno-religious identities and mobility intersect in the contexts of migration and the recentering of Islamic teachings in both cultural and political contexts on a global scale.

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**Yuanhao Zhao** is a folklorist with his research interest in material culture, narrative study, and folk life in general, and especially among Muslim minorities in China. He received his PhD (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures/Folkloristics) from the Ohio State University. His current research projects include Chinese Muslims' death-lore, Chinese Muslim identities in narratives, and discursive struggles around on-going public hygiene campaigns in China.

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