Attempts at settling the legacy of the Cold War have resulted in national Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, prosecution (or attempted prosecution) of state officials, politicians and military officers and the construction of monuments and memorials as sites of memory. They have inspired an outpouring of literary and artistic works, and a flourishing film and documentary industry. They are often marked, however, by on-going dissent and recrimination, as the past ‘refuses to pass.’ This Symposium aims to trace these various ways of judging the past both in the countries at the hot centre of the Cold War and in those that were swept up in the wake of its confrontations. How have we and how can we come to terms with a past that is still so present?

Speakers include

**Phillip Deery** (Professor of History, College of the Arts, Victoria University)

**Tim Harper** (Reader in South-East Asian and Imperial History, University of Cambridge)

**Katherine Hite** (Professor of Political Science, Frederick Ferris Thompson Chair, Vassar)

**Klaus Neumann** (Professor of History, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University)

**Joy Damousi** (Professor of History, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne)

**Ann Curthoys** (Professsor emerita, University of Sydney)

Registration

There are no conference fees. All sessions are open to interested academics. Please contact one of the Organising Committee members (list at end) for further information.

**Sydney Ideas Lecture**

*Politics, Human Rights and the Art of Commemoration of the Americas*

Professor Katherine Hite, Political Science, Vassar College, USA

Monday 28 September, 6-7.30pm

New Law LT 106, Level 1, Sydney Law School Annex

**Book Launch**

Tuesday 29 September at Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Road. 6 for 6.30-7.30pm.

Tessa Morris-Suzuki will launch *Historical Justice and Memory* edited by Klaus Neumann and Janna Thompson, University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.
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ABSTRACTS

‘A profound personal choice, not an abstract one’: reflections on teaching the Cold War, and assessing its pedagogical relevance

Nicholas Brown, School of History, ANU

Eric Hobsbawm’s reflections on his adherence to communism – that his commitment arose from ‘a profound personal choice, but not an abstract one’ – point to one of the core challenges of teaching the Cold War: how, in a time deeply skeptical of ideological conviction, are we to explain the intensity of political engagement on which so much of the polarization of the Cold War drew? And how are we to connect such commitment to the experience and identity of our students? In this paper I will reflect on these issues, drawing in part on my own teaching practice but more on a wider survey of recent initiatives in rendering the Cold War comprehensible in historical education. I will assess to what extent, and in what areas, the Cold War is still seen to connect with questions mattering to a now definitely, even defiantly, post-Berlin Wall generation, and in what areas a more established historiography of the Cold War is being enriched or diminished by these new emphases.

Memory failure: The collapse of sentiment in the US-Australia Alliance, 1968-75

James Curran, University of Sydney

From the late 1960s American diplomats in Canberra began to report that their Australian counterparts were becoming much less sentimental about the US Alliance. The memory of joint military endeavour in the Pacific War no longer cut any ice with political leaders in Australia who were becoming increasingly impatient to project a more independent image of their nation to the world. The rites and rituals that had sustained the Alliance throughout the Cold War, especially those centred around the commemoration of the Battle of the Coral Sea, were also viewed as inadequate for a rapidly changing global strategic environment. At a time when the Americans were bringing great pressure to bear on the government of John Gorton to commit to an Australian military presence in Malaysia and Singapore, there was a growing realisation in Washington that it would have to work harder to win the cooperation of its junior alliance partner. That assessment only deepened with the election of the Whitlam government, when the old Cold War nostrums of the Alliance came under their greatest ever strain. This paper examines the process by which both governments gradually came to shed the slogans that had come to define a shared American-Australian view of the region and the world. It will conclude by briefly examining the resurgence of Cold War interpretative frameworks in contemporary strategic debate.

My Cold War: History and Memoir

Ann Curthoys, University of Sydney

This paper considers the issues that arise when we attempt to understand Australia’s Cold War through history and memoir, through reflecting on my own involvement in studying the Cold War from the mid 1980s. As the daughter of communists, and as a professional historian, I reflect on some personal and ethical issues. I also ask how history and memoir differ, how they inform and contribute to one another, and what happens when you attempt to combine the two.
Revisiting the Cold War: Historians, Communism and Espionage
Phillip Deery, Victoria University
Post-Cold War revelations from the archives of both Cold War combatants – KGB archives in Moscow and National Security Agency files in Washington – have complicated how the Cold War is now viewed. This paper examines one of the central controversies that has swirled through the second half of the twentieth century: the relationship between Soviet espionage and American Communism. The archival revelations have reignited old debates, which are contested with a Cold War-like intensity, and reenergised traditional anti-communism, now infused with a triumphalism spawned by the end of the Cold War. The paper concludes with an analysis of the Alger Hiss case, which for sixty years gouged the American political landscape and whose legacy continues to define how America’s domestic Cold War should be remembered.

Australian Jewish communists and the question of Soviet anti-Semitism: some reflections on my mother, Elsie Docker née Levy.
John Docker, University of Sydney
In his manifesto essay “Is Ego History possible?” Pierre Nora suggests that personal and family histories are interventions into contemporary history; they are both intensive and lead outwards to wider perspectives. In this spirit, I focus in this paper on the historical consciousness of my mother, Elsie Levy, who with her Jewish family migrated from the East End of London in 1926. In the 1930s she and her two younger brothers joined a Jewish branch of the Communist Party in Sydney’s eastern suburbs, and later they helped form a Jewish Youth Theatre. I am tempted to regard my mother and my uncles as Jews who chose to become “conscious pariahs”, to deploy a term from Hannah Arendt’s 1944 essay “The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition”.

Although I do not have a photo of my mother when she was young, or a diary, or letters, I do have some of her books and pamphlets dating from the early 1930s into the 1960s. One of her pamphlets was by the American Communist historian Herbert Aptheker, The Fraud of “Soviet Anti-Semitism”, published by the Australian Communist Party in 1963. I don’t know why she kept it, or whether she agreed with its defence of the Soviet Union in relation to anti-Semitism, though, as a loyal Communist, I think she must have. I would like to reflect on the consequences for Australian Jewish Communists of such loyalty. Did their Jewish internationalism lose moral authority? Did such loss of moral authority allow Zionist nationalism to flourish largely unquestioned in the Australian diaspora?

Politics, Human Rights and the Art of Commemoration in the Americas
Katherine Hite, Vassar
This Sydney Ideas lecture will explore the relationships among art, representation and politics through commemoration and counter-commemoration across the Americas, south and north. Using art and other images, I will argue that memorials provide important conceptual and empirical lenses into deep politics of conflict and as suggesting arenas for imagining twenty-first century democratic praxis.

Disappearance, Exhumation and Reburial: the historical recovery of victims in Argentina, Spain and Bosnia-Herzegovina
Michael Humphrey, University of Sydney, Estela Valverde, Macquarie University
Since the end of the Cold War the recovery of the missing victims of political repression has become an important vehicle to contest dominant historical narratives about the past. The ‘disappeared’ body has become the methodological focus for contesting and rewriting history through identification made possible by new forensic technologies and reconstitution as a human rights subject. This paper examines transitional justice as a mechanism for reconstructing historical violent events through the historical and legal re-signification of the victim of that violence (the disappeared). Transitional justice narratives are ‘sepulchers’, in de Certeau 1988 meaning, used to recover the forgotten and missing dead which by speaking about them ‘resuscitates’ them (de Certeau 1988). The writing of history ‘exorcizes death by inserting it into discourse’ and offers ‘soil and a tomb to the dead of the past’ (Ricoeur 2004). This paper examines the ritual exhumation and reburial of disappeared bodies as part of accountability projects in Argentina, Spain and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It explores whether the transitional justice violence narratives have really served as (re)founding violence national stories, re-establishing inclusive political and moral communities. In Argentina the ‘disappeared’ were the centrepiece of transitional justice initiatives and shaped the shifting official narrative of blame from the ‘two demons’ to the ‘genocide’ narrative. In Spain the ‘disappeared’ emerged as the focus of local social movements to exhume their relatives in post-Franco Spain, officially blocked in the 1977 Amnesty Law. While the Law of Historical Memory (2007) boosted the exhumation movement it has become increasingly fragmented dividing along political and regionalist lines. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the exhumation of mass graves was at the forefront of the transitional justice project for the former Yugoslavia and has emphasised contested significations of the ‘disappeared’ rather than producing a unifying truth. The paper argues that the use of exhumation and reburial rituals by transitional justice to achieve state and national renewal has not been very successful.

The Spectatorship of Korean War Massacres

Su-Kyoung Hwang, University of Sydney
This paper discusses the execution of political prisoners and communist collaborators during the Korean War. After the North Korean occupation of South Korea in 1950, half a million South Koreans had been punished for collaborating with the communist forces. Some of the massacres were well documented. During the past two decades, photographic evidence of the persecutions was released to public and turned into iconic images of the Korean War. This paper discusses the authorship of such photographs and official documentation of the abuses. It also examines the role of UN troops, politicians, diplomats, and human rights groups in overseeing the mistreatment of civilian collaborators.

Memories as Monsters: the 'return of the dead' in post-1989 Balkan cinema.

Danica Jenkins, University of Sydney
This paper explores how the 'reawakening' of latent/suppressed memories of past atrocities has contributed to the resurgence of conflict (not just armed conflict, but also conflict over the dominant narrative of the past) by using the metaphor of a 'return of the dead' - i.e. the refusal to come to terms with the past (or various versions of the past) in the Balkan context has resulted in a continuation of historical 'ghosts' haunting the present. I would like to explore how Balkan directors cinematically perform this 'return of the dead' by narrating that which has been silenced, yet ultimately not forgotten, in the course of Balkan history, and how, as a means of coming to terms with this past (i.e. exorcising the
'ghosts'), such memories are often portrayed using themes of monstrosity. By doing so, these directors encourage a kind of collective self-forgiveness that comes only from confronting/accepting past transgressions, and thus such films help to transform the recurring nightmares of Balkan history into foregone recollections.

Living Hell and Living History: Differing approaches to coming to terms with Swedish support of Pol Pot  
*Perry Johanssen, Hong Kong Baptist University*

As the Cold War came to an end, Sweden faced a similar dilemma as when answering for its assistance to Germany after WWII. Following its exceptional siding with Hanoi and NLF during the Vietnam War, the social democratic regime extended good will also to Cambodia when Pol Pot took power, offering aid and becoming the first western nation to establish diplomatic relations. The Khmer Rouge on their part graciously accepted a number of Swedish observers to bear witness to the revolution being carried out: all delivered positive reports from what they were presented. When the murderous regime came to an end and its atrocities were revealed, Sweden’s first reaction was to keep quiet and forget about its involvement. However, in 2009 the responsibility of having praised a genocidal regime is discussed through an exhibition by the Swedish public authority Living History Forum. A former Maoist also returned to Cambodia that year touring the country with another exhibition. Discussing these two attempts at reconciliation the paper will question how and why the official political support for the Khmer Rouge has been downplayed in place of the personal responsibility of some former individual Maoists. We also ponder the fact that, in orientalist fashion, Cambodian, Chinese, and Vietnamese agency is still disavowed. It was after all they who influenced, fooled and won over the Swedes to their cause.

**Picasso, Nogun-ri and an Examination of Korea’s ‘dirty war’**  
*Judith Keene, University of Sydney*

The Korean War raised the temperature of the Cold War. In 1951, in response to what left wing commentators always called ‘the dirty war’, Picasso painted the large canvas, *Massacre en Corée* and a year later in *Guerre*, from the twinned murals, *Guerre* and *Paix* in the Vallauris Temple of Peace, he also referenced the Korean conflict. In this paper I discuss Picasso’s painterly responses to Korea and the contemporary and recent rereading of the massacre at Nogun-ri that took place in the first months of war on the Korean Peninsula.

**Ismail Kadare and the Case of Albania**  
*Peter Morgan, University of Sydney*

Albania represents a unique case in the environment of ‘truth and reconciliation’ after the end of communism and the Cold War. Despite having hosted the most closed and ruthless of the Eastern European dictatorships under Enver Hoxha, the country has undertaken relatively little by way of coming-to-terms with the past. While there are signs that a younger generation of scholars and historians is beginning to look back with clearer eyes, Ismail Kadare, Albania’s great spokesman and novelist under the dictatorship continues to be the dominant and highly controversial voice of retrospection and judgement. Kadare has spent the postcommunist years coming to terms with the legacy of his country, of a history that began badly in the year of national liberation, 1913 and suffered during the war years. Under long-time dictator, Enver Hoxha, the suffering continued, but in different
ways. And yet there were also achievements here as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, at least during the foundation years of the fifties. As a product of the immediate post-war period, Kadare recognized this. Plucked from his native Gjirokaster as a precocious talent, he was sent to the Gorky Institute for World Literature in Moscow to learn the ways of the writer under communism. However, at the time of the Pasternak trials he learned more than his leaders expected, and he returned to Albania apprised of the workings of power and sceptical about the limitations of freedom under the communist system. If Kadare’s work under the dictatorship represented a sustained attempt to retain the memory and the image of an alternative Albania to that of the dictatorship, his work since the fall of the regime can be viewed as an ongoing engagement with the Albanian past since his childhood during the war. It is characterized by a deep recognition of the difficulties of Albanian history and the challenges posed by the dictatorship. Since the end of the dictatorship he has subjected the past half century to sustained critical scrutiny in novels recognizing the human aspects of loss and detailing their political and social consequences for a nation battling to emerge from its traumatic past. In my paper I analyse and interpret Kadare’s postcommunist literary output in terms of its unique and nuanced engagement with his nation’s “past that refuses to pass.”

**Instrumentality of the ‘Enemy within’ in the Neo-colonization of the African Mind:**

**Judging the Past in a Post Cold War Nigeria**

*Ndu Life Njoku, Dept. of History & International Studies, Imo State University  
Linda Chijioke Ihenacho, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria*

This paper is concerned with the scramble for, and partition of, the African mind or consciousness during the post-War era. This *third scramble* resulted from the struggle for world dominion between the West and the Communist States of the East, led by the now defunct Soviet Union. This contest, more generally code-named “the Cold War”, became the very substance and tissue of world politics after World War II, and thus was attaining its acme about the decade that saw the African colonies of Europe emerge as independent nation states of sorts. In the belief that these states were going to alter the balance of power in the United Nations and other world bodies, and concerned to have unhindered access to their resources, each of the two blocs set out to ‘capture’ and keep as many of the new nations of Africa as possible in its ideological camp through the instrumentality of ‘the enemy within’. Using Nigeria as a unit of analysis, the paper argues that, a link exists between the ideological domestication or conquest of post-War Africa and ‘the enemy within’ in the character or nature of Africa. The cleavages resulting from inter and intra-group rivalries, personality clashes, religious and cultural divergences and other adverse situations, which promoted instability and the near absence of public order in some African communities, made many Africans ready instruments for the propagation of foreign ideologies, thereby emerging as ‘the enemy within’. The paper concludes that, it is within this context that one appreciates not just how and why the third scramble and occupation resulted, but also how colonial rule in post-war Nigeria was successfully reconfigured in the future interest of the neo-colonialists.

**Debtors and Creditors**

*Klaus Neumann, Swinburne*

Earlier this year, the Greek government announced that Germany owed Greece a total of €278.7 billion in reparations. This amount includes €10.3 billion to account for a loan which Germany allegedly took out while Greece was under German occupation. At first
sight, the Greek demand seemed to be a response to Germany’s insistence that Greece repay its current debts and meet the conditions imposed on it by its creditors. However, Greece has long maintained that the injustices suffered by Greece and its people at the hands of Nazi Germany need to be redressed; while the timing of the Greek demand and the calculation of the amount of money sought from Germany may have been influenced by the negotiations between Greece, on the one hand, and the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund on the other, the vexed issue of reparations for injustices suffered during the Second World War predates Greece’s current financial difficulties. Developing ideas which I first presented in an essay published in April this year (http://insidestory.org.au/debts-and-other-legacy), I use this case to explore broader issues of justice for wrongs committed in the name of Nazi Germany.

The Quest for Justice: one man’s story
Betty O’Neill, UTS
This paper explores the impact of the cold war through a micro-history - my father’s experience as a political prisoner, WWII concentration camp survivor and an immigrant to Australia unable to return to post-war communist Poland, seeking recognition and justice for his suffering and loss. To this end he spent the cold-war years in Australia gathering documentation with the aim of compensation and eventually returning ‘home’. Like so many survivors, he never spoke to his family about his experiences. My second generation knowledge has come from research into his life and a field trip to Poland in 2013 resulting in the unexpected inheritance of a family archive. It consists of letters, postcards, official documents and certificates, photos and material artefacts, providing documentary evidence of my father’s experiences and his attempts at redress. Additional information has been gathered from archives in Auschwitz, Mauthausen/Gusen, ZBoWID (Office for War Veterans and Repressed Persons, Warsaw), the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust and the Polish Institute in London. This diversity of sources has retraced the steps of my father’s ultimately successful thirty year quest for justice. This paper will examine the implications of an individual’s attempt at redress and how we come to terms with a past that continues to reverberate through subsequent generations.

Cross-Cultural Challenges in Collaborative Research
Peter Read (ANU), Marivic Wyndham (UTS)
Our collaborative research conducted over the past 20 years in two key Latin American Cold War battlegrounds - Cuba and Chile - has focused on custodianship of place and memorialisation of sites of conscience. That different approaches to our research should sometimes emerge is part and parcel of the collaborative project. That these approaches should be so culturally bound proved an unexpected dimension. In our paper, we discuss particular case studies - three in Cuba and one in Chile - in which the cross-cultural nature of our collaboration underscored the richness and complexity of post-Cold War Latin American research work.

Why the War in Cameroon Never Took Place
Elizabeth Rechniewski, University of Sydney
Over the last fifteen years or so the Algerian War (1954-62) has been the subject of extensive research and public attention in France. In December 2012 President François Hollande’s spoke before the Algerian parliament of the ‘unjust’ even ‘brutal’ nature of
France’s 132 year-long occupation. However France is far from recognising the ‘brutal and unjust nature’ of the colonisation of her other African colonies nor the strategies and occasionally armed interventions to ensure that pro-French elites would be installed or maintained in power on independence in 1960. This paper looks at one example of the process and aftermath of independence, that of French Cameroun, a territory that was placed under French tutelle by the United Nations after WWII. Here accession to independence was accompanied by a bitter war that involved French troops and officers both before and after 1960. After a brief recall of the turbulent years from 1955-1971, the paper examines the multiple factors that explain the silence that surrounded and still surrounds the period of decolonisation, and suggests why it is important to remember it now. What does the end of the Cold War enable us to better understand about the conflict in Cameroon? And what can studying this period reveal about the ongoing impact of political and military strategies that were adopted (and made possible) in the context of the Cold War?

Writing the Return from Exile: “Mayéutica” (1997) and “La ex exiliada” (2005) by Teresa Gracia
Wendy-Lyn Zaza, University of Auckland
Following the Allied victory in World War II in 1945, Spanish Republicans in exile were confident that the western democracies would agree to precipitate the downfall of Francisco Franco and the Francoist regime in post-Civil War Spain. The ensuing division of Europe into the Western and Eastern blocs and Spain’s isolation from the international community dashed all prospect of that happening. Republicans in Spain and in exile did not, however, have to wait until the end of the Cold War for democracy to be reinstated in Spain. For the demise of the dictator in 1975 heralded in the transition from authoritarian rule to a democratic form of government, albeit on unequal grounds. This was particularly so for the returning exiles: at the end of the Spanish Civil War, exile had been decreed not to exist, and the exiles equated with the dead (Abellán). Their coming back from that historiographical death was no easy task. While they had collectively fled Spain and were collectively written out of Francoist history, the return was not an organised en masse affair, but a gradual return, largely as individuals or families. Hence they were too easily ignored by the unaccommodating government of the day and recriminated against by individuals who had survived the Francoist regime. This paper explores the perspectives put forward by Teresa Gracia (1932-2001) in two short plays, “Maieutics. Play in One Act for the Witness Stand” (1997) and “The Ex-Exile” (2005), in which the author, who crossed the Hispano-French border into exile as a seven year old in 1939, draws upon her own encounters following her return to Spain in 1980.

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