

Workshop **PARAPSYCHOLOGY UNDER SOCIALISM II:**
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES IN CHINA AND THE USSR

January 29-30, 2026

Building D1, Hartmannstrasse 14, Erlangen

Centre for Advanced Studies “Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective” (CAS-E), Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU)

Organizer: Birgit Menzel, Michael Lackner

Thursday, January 29

16.00 Reception

16.30–18.00. Panel 1. Practices to (de)legitimize parapsychology in China

Moderation: Michael Lackner

Yanlin Lu (Princeton University/USA) Somatic Science and the Post-Mao Quest for Scientific Legitimacy

Luis Fernando Bernardi Junqueira (University of Cambridge/UK)

Travelling in Spirit: Science and Trance States in Republican China

Dr. He Hong (Beijing/VP China)

The failed official testimony on whether Psi is a genuine existence

A three-year effort from 1996 to 1999 trying to find an authentic answer

18.30–20.00. Panel 2. Parapsychological discourses and debates in China

Moderation: Birgit Menzel

Leping Zha (Wuhan/PR China)

Are the Chinese Psi Claims Real? Why the Arguments Never End

Dr. Lennert Gesterkamp (Leiden University/NL; Shandong Normal University)

Crazy Zhou, the Most Famous Unknown Psychic of Chinese Official History

Dinner

Friday, January 30

9.30–11.00. Panel 3. Parapsychology in the USSR

Moderation: Birgit Menzel

Dr. Anna Ozhiganova (Independent Researcher/Bielefeldt/CAS-E)

Soviet Extraordinary Science: The Alliance of Parapsychology and Cybernetics

Dr. Svetlana Tambovtseva (Independent Researcher/Cyprus)

When Alphabets Generate Energy: From Soviet Parapsychology to Post-Soviet Linguistic Nationalism

11.30–12.30 Panel 4. International Collaborations and Comparative Perspectives

Moderation: Gerhard Mayer

Yuan Jin (Ryazan/University of Northampton/UK/ Sofia-University (US/VPChina; Beijing/VP China)

Dr. Lennert Gesterkamp

13.00–14.30. Discussion. Diverse Parapsychology? Paradoxes and Relevance from a Contemporary Perspective

Moderation: Michael Lackner

Participants: Gerhard Mayer (IGPP), Anna Ozhiganova (CAS-E FAU), Svetlana Tambovtseva (Cyprus), Yanlin Lu (Princeton), Luis Fernando Bernardi Junqueira (Cambridge), Zha Leping (Wuhan), Hong He (Beijing), Yuan Jin (Ryazan/ Beijing), Birgit Menzel (CAS-E FAU);

Dr He Hong (Beijing/VP China)

Dr Leping Zha (Wuhan/VP China)

Luis Fernando Bernardi Junqueira (University of Cambridge/UK)

Yanlin Lu (Princeton University/USA) zoom

Yuan Jin (Ryazan/University of Northampton/UK/ Sofia-University (US/VPChina; Beijing/VP China)

Dr. Anna Ozhiganova (Moscow/Bielefeld (CAS-E))

Dr .Svetlana Tambovtseva (Cyprus)

Dr. Gerhard Mayer (IGPP)

Prof Michael Lackner

Prof. Birgit Menzel

Tentative Questions:

- What common discourses and practices have characterized parapsychology under socialism?
- What were the differences of parapsychology in different socialist countries: in status, development paths, topics and applications?

- Did socialist parapsychology develop in the context of Western parapsychology, or did it go its own way?
- What are the reasons for the current growth of interest in parapsychology among researchers from various disciplines? What are the actual approaches to its conceptualization?