

# Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires: The Soviet War

June 22 – September 17, 2017



The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan which began on the 27th of December marked the beginning of 10 years of bitter warfare. Only a decade later, following the Geneva Accords signed during the spring of 1988, did the Soviet troops finally leave the country, on the 15th of February 1989. During the military retreat the Soviet army had to withdraw about 110,000 soldiers, 500 tanks, and 2,000 guns and mortars. The symbolic end to the military intervention came when the last Soviet soldier, General Boris Gromov, Commander of the Fortieth Army, walked across the Amu-Darja bridge.

The new historical exhibition in the Galeria Centralis depicts this deadly decade, an era known as "the Soviet Vietnam", with the help of hitherto unseen photos, objects and films.

This will be the first time that the most unique pieces of the Zammis Schein Afghan collection, unrivalled in Europe, will be exhibited in the Galeria Centralis, revealing a far-away land to the ordinary visitor. This colorful collection of artifacts provides a surprisingly intimate view of the daily struggles of the conflict stricken country and the Afghan customs and traditions of the era, as well as the traditional costumes and everyday objects – a glimpse back through time to a way of life and a period which were deeply interwoven with the war. The naive, vernacular visuality of this time of conflict appears in war rugs, camel bags, wall carpets and everyday objects.

Besides this unique collection, photos, films, posters and propaganda materials from the Afghan Center of Kabul University offer an interesting insight into the political history of the conflict, introducing the main political actors from both sides. The photos of the Museum of Yekaterinburg offer a terrifying close-up of daily life during the war, while documents from the Oriental Collection of The Library of the Hungarian Academy of Science – belonging to the legacy of the famous Hungarian Orientalist, Ármin Vámbéry, give glimpses of the 19th-century antecedents of this 20th-century tragedy.

**VERNISSAGE: June 21, 2017, 6:00 p.m.**

Opening Remarks by:

**András MINK**, Historian, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives  
**Zammis SCHEIN** (Sándor Mesterházy), Private Collector

The exhibition is open between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. every day except Monday from June 22nd until September 17th, 2017. Free admission.

in cooperation with

ZAMMIS SCHEIN COLLECTION

AFGHAN CENTER FOR KABUL UNIVERSITY (ACKU)

MUSEUM SHURAVI, YEKATERINBURG

ORIENTAL COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

curated by:

**DOBROVITS Mihály, MINK András**

advisor:

**Zammis SCHEIN**

**Galeria Centralis, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives** 1051 Budapest, Arany János utca 32.

Full program: [www.osaarchivum.org](http://www.osaarchivum.org)

Further information: **Nóra BERTALAN**, [bertalan@ceu.edu](mailto:bertalan@ceu.edu), +36-30-271-2709