Today, we invoke the Silk Road as an interconnected antiquity before globalization. Tamara Chin’s talk approaches the Silk Road as a modern idea—as a term that was first coined by a German geographer in 1877, but whose significance lies within a more global history of competing narratives about antiquity. During the Cold War, China resignified the Silk Road as the ancient precursor of its non-aligned diplomacy with the decolonized world. China’s Afro-Asian Silk Road differed from the Euro-Asian Silk Road of the West and Japan.

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