

NEWSLETTER

CENTRE FOR CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH OF SOCIALISM
CENTAR ZA KULTUROLOŠKA I POVIJESNA ISTRAŽIVANJA SOCIJALIZMA

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Project Microsocialism: new publications

Three new journal articles and an interview were published as results of the research project *Microstructures of Yugoslav Socialism: Croatia 1970-1990* ([Microsocialism](#)). Chiara Bonfiglioli's paper "State socialist women's organizations within Yugoslav factories: a case study of local activism in the Duga Resa cotton mill" was published in the new issue of *Social History*. The latest issue of *Historijski zbornik* brings two articles in Croatian: Tina Filipović wrote on "SUBNOR's policies and practices of remembering NOR in Sisak celebrations", while Anita Buhin's article is titled "Successes and failures of self-managerial transformations of culture in Karlovac municipality (1974-1990)". The daily newspaper *Glas Istre* published an interview with the project's PI Igor Duda. Links are available at the web-pages with project's [publications](#) and the [media coverage](#).

A new series of online lectures to start in March

This year *CKPIS Summer Semester* will bring online lectures by CKPIS members. Announcements will be available through CKPIS-INFO mailing-list, social media and our [webpage](#).

Ljetni semestar CKPIS-a
Ciklus predavanja povodom desete godišnjice rada

15. ožujka 2022.
ANDREA MATOŠEVIĆ
Kako da naš radni čovjek privuče pažnju dokumentarista?
Od trubeničke homoerotike do kolektivnih uspjeha
1960-ih i 1970-ih na dokumentarnom filmu

29. ožujka 2022.
TINA FILIPOVIĆ
Političke prakse SUBNOR-a i lokalni aktivizam
boraca u kasnome socijalizmu

12. travnja 2022.
ANITA BUHIN
(Ne)uspjesi samoupravnog preobražaja
kulture na lokalnoj razini

26. travnja 2022.
SARA ŽERIĆ
Utjecaj gastarbajtera na gospodarski i društveni život
Imotske krajine (1968–1989)

10. svibnja 2022.
BORIS KOROMAN
Mjesto pripovijesti i ne-mjesto stvarnosti

7. lipnja 2022.
IGOR DUDA
Mjesne zajednice: samokritika u završnici
jugoslavenskog socijalizma

24. svibnja 2022.
LADA DURAKOVIĆ
Kako animirati „okorjele neprijatelje teške muzike“?
Iz rada pulskog ogranka Muzičke omladine

utorkom u 18 sati online <https://www.unipu.hr/ckpis>

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SRUŠITE JURIA DOBRIE U PULU

Also in this issue at pp. 6-9: interview with Rory Archer

CKPIS was founded in July 2012 as a new unit of the University of Pula. We will celebrate the Centre's 10th anniversary throughout this year. There will be a series of lectures within the *CKPIS Summer Semester*, a round table and, here on the *Newsletter* pages, short interviews with our researchers. Moreover, in the section *Interview of the Month*, month after month, we hope to present colleagues with whom we have closely cooperated.



TEN YEARS OF CKPIS: ANITA BUHIN

Interview by Sara Žerić

Since 2012, to this day, you are an associate of CKPIS. How would you describe its importance in the context of your academic growth in the last ten years?

I joined CKPIS in November 2012, so just a few months after its foundation, first as a volunteer, and later in various roles, including the one of a postdoctoral researcher on the project “Microstructures of Yugoslav socialism”. It has been a great privilege to join a research centre almost immediately after graduation, for which I can only thank Igor, Andrea, Boris and Lada. In CKPIS I gained first experience in organization of workshops and conferences, first editorial experiences, it provided me first platform to present my research to the academic and general audience and it definitely shaped me as a historian. Not less important, it offered me a connection with local, national and regional academic world while I was doing my PhD abroad. I can say CKPIS served as a

sort of a home base, a place I can always return to.

You also have a lot of organizational experience (student workshops, doctoral workshops and international conference Socialism on the Bench). How did these events develop and what is their significance for young researchers?

While I joined the organizational committee of the Socialism on the Bench a bit later, when I returned to Pula from my Florence where I was doing my PhD, I was one of the founders, on the initiative of Igor Duda, of the doctoral workshop, and eight years later we are still doing it, joined with other younger forces of CKPIS. When we started it, I was in the beginning of my PhD and my research grew with it. I think lots of PhD researchers find it helpful, not only to present their work and network, but I believe they also get useful feedback on their research, methodology and approach. It is a great place

to learn from each other, and hopefully in the upcoming years it will only grow.



Anita Buhin ([read more](#))

You also participate on the current research project "Microstructures of Yugoslav Socialism", and you worked on the previous one "Making of the Socialist Man. Croatian Society and the Ideology of Yugoslav Socialism". What were your topics?

On the "Making of the Socialist Man" I participated with a topic which was closely connected to my PhD thesis, i.e. the role of popular culture in the shaping of Yugoslav society in the first 20-25 years of socialism. On the examples of popular music, television and fashion I tried to find out what was the role of popular culture and entertainment in the making of "new socialist (wo)man", but also how Yugoslav socialism responded to more Americanised and liberal mass culture. On the Microsocialism project, I continued researching culture, but I am focusing on the so-called self-managerial transformation of culture as, I would say, the most radical experiment in the democratization of culture. I believe it is significant, firstly because Yugoslav cultural policies are mainly researched in the period of the 1950s and

1960s, while the late-socialist period is completely neglected. Secondly, once when Yugoslav culture moved from the idea of "culture to the workers", it turned to including workers in the creation of cultural policies, which, of course, had its problems manifested in (lack of) active participation of workers on the one hand, and cultural elitism of cultural workers and artists on the other.

At the center of your interest is popular culture during the socialism. You defended doctoral dissertation Yugoslav Socialism "Flavoured with Sea, Flavoured with Salt": Mediterranization of Yugoslav Popular Culture in the 1950s and 1960s under Italian Influence at the European University Institute, which will soon be published as a monograph. In which direction will your research go in the future?

Hopefully, the book should be out in the upcoming months, first in English, and later in Croatian, both versions with the publisher Srednja Europa. I will most definitely stay within the scope of Yugoslav popular culture and the Mediterranean. Later this year I should start a postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute for Contemporary History in Lisbon where I will be researching the phenomenon of "galebovi" (seagulls), i.e. Yugoslav Casanovas of mass tourism, as I call them. I am interested in romance/sex tourism on Yugoslav coast and the cultural, social, economic and racial meaning behind romantic/sexual encounters of local young man (galebovi) and foreign female tourists, which is typical for all Northern-Mediterranean societies of the time. Hopefully, that project will lead to a comparative study in the future and new international projects. Let's hope it will happen under the organization of CKPIS!



CONFERENCES AND CFP

Dissidents and Exiles from Socialist Eastern Europe and the USSR: History, Archives and Memories (1945-1991), 2-3 June 2022

As a land of refuge for successive waves of immigration from Russia, the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, France was one of the main receiving countries for dissidents coming from the European socialist bloc during the long Cold War. For many, France was a platform of passage toward the United Kingdom, Germany, North America or Israel, while others settled in the country permanently. By virtue of France's active political and associational fabric, dissidents and political exiles could connect to their communities in the diaspora, but also with French institutions, and with other groups or individuals who remained in the East. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 18 March 2022

The Politics of the Page: Visuality and Materiality in Illustrated Periodicals across Cold War Borders, online, 13 May 2022

Illustrated periodicals have played a critical role in disseminating and performing Cold War cultural politics across national and ideological borders. In their entanglement with state or institutional actors, artistic or sports organisations, revolutionary groups and liberation movements, amongst others, periodicals have shaped notions of belonging for diverse readers, expressed in a host of visual and material formats. The workshop will focus on the design and materiality of illustrated periodicals produced and read against the backdrop of the Cold War. We invite contributions that explore aesthetic, historical, theoretical or methodological approaches to the 'politics of the page'. We are interested in periodicals' visual and material strategies as these manifest in the layout, typography, uses of photography, choices of format, ways of production, reproduction or circulation, during the Cold War. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 15 March 2022

"Communist Biographies - New perspectives, sources and discussions", special edition of the journal *Securitas Imperii* 2022/2

More than thirty years ago, the possibility of research on the history of the communist movement and regime opened up in Czechoslovakia as well in other former state-socialist countries. The few attempts to produce scholarly biographies of politicians and other personalities associated with communist ideology and practice stood somewhat apart from the multitude of topics, research areas, and methodological approaches. Rather, the period demand for "filling in the blanks" prompted the rapid publication of the "secrets" hidden in the archives on partial issues and cases. Biography, as a method attempting a comprehensive and at the same time essentially individualized treatment of a person's life set in a broad political and social context, required long-term research, that was often at odds with the priorities of research institution and grant agencies. In the Czech milieu, moreover, priority was given to learning about the lives and fates of democratic and noncommunist personalities who belonged among those famous "blanks". However, the few biographies, which began to be published ten or more years after the political change of 1989, showed the exceptional potential of the biographical method in the study of communism as a fundamental phenomenon in the history of the 20th century. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 31 July 2022

Rosa Luxemburg, Socialist Democracy, and the Periphery, Bodø, 6-8 March 2023

The thoughts and ideas of Rosa Luxemburg have not lost any of their actuality and especially the revolutionary and challenging events of the still young 21st century have reinvigorated a global interest in her writings about capitalism, imperialism, militarism, and revolution. It is particularly interesting to observe that her works gained more attention in the Global South, where translations of her classic writings seem to have become more popular in the last two decades. The organizers invite proposals for papers that would fit for one of the following sections or address one topic related to them: Rosa Luxemburg and the Periphery, Rosa Luxemburg and her perception in Scandinavia, The impact of Rosa Luxemburg's ideas on contemporary progressive mass movements and socialist democracy, and New Insights into Rosa Luxemburg's Life, Work, and Impact. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 15 April 2022

**PUBLICATIONS****Naum Trajanovski, Petar Todorov (ur.): Skopskiot zemjotres od 1963 godina i postzemjotresnata obnova: lični svedoštva (Skopje: Centar za istraživanje na nacionalizmot i kulturata, 2021)**

The book "The 1963 Skopje earthquake and the post-earthquake urban reconstruction: Personal testimonies" (in Macedonian) - edited by Naum Trajanovski and Petar Todorov - is one of the final results of the research project "The 1963 Skopje earthquake. Memories, identities, actions" which was conducted in the course of 2021 by the Center for Research of Nationalism and Culture (CINIK) - Skopje and which was sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of North Macedonia and ALDA. The book contains segments of 51 oral history interviews related to the 1963 Skopje earthquake and the post-earthquake urban reconstruction - a first oral history collection on the topic - as well as a selection of press clippings with personal testimonies over the earthquake and the post-earthquake reconstruction published in the Macedonian media from 1964 to 2013. A total number of five researchers were involved in the research activities for the book working on the interviews on the territory of the city of Skopje. ([Read More](#))

Philipp Ther, Ulf Brunnbauer, Piotr Filipkowski, Andrew Hodges, Stefano Petrunaro, Peter Wegenschimmel: In den Stürmen der Transformation: Zwei Werften zwischen Sozialismus und EU (Suhrkamp, 2022)

Die gigantischen Kräne der Werften in Gdynia und in Pula waren bis vor Kurzem der Stolz dieser Städte. In Polen entstanden 300 Meter lange Ozeanriesen, in Kroatien Schiffe, auf denen Tausende Schafe lebend aus Neuseeland nach Europa transportiert werden konnten - Meerwasserentsalzungsanlage inklusive. Doch all der Erfindungsreichtum und das im Sozialismus eingeübte Improvisationstalent halfen nichts: Bald nach dem EU-Beitritt gingen die Werften pleite, auch weil in Brüssel das Wettbewerbsrecht mehr zählt als eine global orientierte Industriepolitik. ([Read More](#))



INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

by Sara Žerić

Rory Archer is a project leader at Centre for South-East European Studies at the Karl-Franzens University of Graz and a lecturer at the University of Konstanz.
[\(read more\)](#)



Rory Archer

To begin with, where did the interest in researching the history of socialist Yugoslavia come from? How do you approach this topic and what are the biggest challenges you have encountered in your previous research?

I always find it difficult to formulate an adequate reason for being interested in researching socialist Yugoslavia! As a child of the 1990s, the Yugoslav state and its violent dissolution was on my radar growing up in Ireland. By the time I entered university in the mid-2000s I began spending time in Croatia and Serbia through university

exchanges and taking language courses. I reached the conclusion that there was a surplus of scholarship focused on ethnonationalism and war while the kind of knowledge production taking place in other postsocialist states was still lagging in the (post) Yugoslav context. So, I took my cue from social historians and social anthropologists working elsewhere who were tackling questions about what it meant to live in the twilight years of a workers' state and why this matters for our understanding of the state and society. In other words, if we have a country like Yugoslavia predicated on the role of labour, it seemed extremely problematic to me that until well into the 2010s, comprehensive studies of labour were absent in accounts of the country's demise (even though we have a wealth of studies on labour and self-management right up to 1991). What I see as a challenge here is the dominant tendency to consider Yugoslavia as a particularly unique case due to firstly, non-alignment and self-managing socialism and secondly, the brutal wars of the 1990s. Yes, these factors of course matter but should not preclude discussions with colleagues working on other (post) socialist contexts and I think it is extremely valuable to bring comparative perspectives into our research and teaching.

In your previous research, you have dealt with labour and gender history by researching industrial centres in Serbia and Montenegro during the 1980s. This research also has a good link to the current CKPIS's

project "Microsocialism", because there is methodology explaining bigger historical processes using examples from micro-environments. However, researching the socialist industry past, especially of smaller towns, is not always easy. While dealing with these topics, what research methods did you use and what results did you come up with?

I agree, there are definitely methodological overlaps with the CKPIS "Microsocialism" project and the research project on working class communities in Serbia on which I worked with Goran Musić from 2014-2018. I suppose the crux of it is exploring how macro-processes can be interrogated at the micro-level of the municipality or local community. This is of course not always easy. The methodological approach we used was to triangulate sources like local historical and factory archives with oral history interviews and print media, above all workplace periodicals produced by all larger Yugoslav firms. These "micro" sources were read against the existing literature (the macro level) to understand the meaning and interpretation of events in particular communities. Access to these sources is uneven, at times one is simply inundated with the sheer quantity of material while at other points there are glaring absences. In the case of working-class communities in Serbia, the project found that the Serbian nation as a whole was assigned with attributes once reserved for the proletariat. The working class were not simply converted into Serbian nationalists overnight by a charismatic leader – rather, their symbolic capital was used to legitimise that leader. In Serbia, as in other Yugoslav republics, it became increasingly

difficult to criticize Milošević without discrediting the entire working class. The ultimate triumph of the nationalist elites in Serbian working class communities (and likely elsewhere in Yugoslavia) is shown to have been contingent on the integration of several local grievances, the inherited socialist language of class antagonism and anti-elitist sentiments.

Furthermore, you often use oral history method in your research. What, in your opinion, are the advantages and disadvantages of this research method, especially in the research of Yugoslav socialist past?

Yes, I am a strong advocate of oral history work though of course with the proviso that it is not an unproblematic method and needs to be deployed in a very considered way. I consider the key advantage is that the method can uncover perspectives from individuals that are marginalised in other sources. This is very much in line with the broader development of OH from the 1960s onwards which sought to include the voices of "ordinary people" and minorities in what was previously an extremely elite focused endeavour. In Yugoslav socialism specifically I think oral history can help us better understand the meaning of events and processes in the actual lives of individuals. It can also form a dialogue between sources – discussing findings from elsewhere (archives, print media) can be very fruitful. The perennially cited disadvantage is the unreliability of memory (though oral history practitioners like Passerini and Portelli have made convincing arguments that this can be a topic of historical interest in itself). One more

serious risk I do see however, (in researching the Yugoslav case and beyond) is the risk of “ventriloquism”, using interviews selectively to hammer home points the researcher wants to make. The method can also be quite extractive – bagging interviews with little consideration for the narrators and their wellbeing. Therefore, oral history really needs to be engaged with in a way which is both methodologically sound and ethically robust.

You are currently researching the history of intra-Yugoslav Albanian migration during the late socialism. We know that Albanians were the largest non-Slavic population in Yugoslavia. So far in your research, have you come to any conclusions about the views of the government (LCY) and the views of the local population towards them?

I am mid-way through the field research for this project – actually I am responding to these questions from Prishtina – so I am wary of coming to definitive conclusions right now. Also, it depends on which level of government we look at and in which period. For Croatia (which is the focus of my research) I think there is an ambivalent attitude which up to 1981 can be characterised by the institutional invisibility of Albanians in that socialist republic. With the outbreak of student demonstrations in Kosovo in the Spring of 1981 and the federal interpretation that these were “counterrevolutionary” and “irredentist” in nature, in Croatia and elsewhere we can witness the mushrooming of a heavy-handed securitisation. In the documents of the Croatian security services and municipalities there is rush to account for Albanian

communities in terms which are “othering” at best, and decidedly racist at worst. Sources like the local press in Istria and discussions taking place at the municipal level of the League of Communists reveals contradictory and frankly ridiculous attitudes whereby Albanians are presented simultaneously as an anti-communist, deprived underclass and an all-powerful cabal with connections in high places. This shifts again in the late 1980s when the local press being to “discover” and “explain” Albanian communities living in Croatia to their readership, usually emphasising alleged entrepreneurial and “honourable and patriarchal” tendencies divorced from politics. In the research project I am prioritising the views of Albanians in Croatia and their own impressions of how the local population in Istria and elsewhere viewed and engaged them.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the CKPIS. Has the Center influenced your research on socialism, and if so, how?

CKPIS has certainly influenced my research – it has been one of the most important locations for exchange with colleagues about the history of Yugoslav socialism through conferences and other public events. The organisation of events is refreshingly non-hierarchical and supportive for younger researchers. I look forward to the next decade and further collaboration!

Finally, what book would you recommend to a young student who has just started becoming interested in the Yugoslav history or history of socialism, and why?

My recommendations would be to first consult books which can help the student to

get a handle on and access further literature independently. Catherine Baker's *The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s* is an accessible, annotated guide to scholarship not only on the wars of the 1990s but the Yugoslav state and society more broadly. I would also suggest edited volumes so the student can dip into various perspectives and then seek further work by authors they found stimulating. For example, *The Cultural Life of*

Capitalism in Yugoslavia: (Post)Socialism and Its Other, edited by Dijana Jelača, Maša Kolanović and Danijela Lugarić, provides a great overview of topics and approaches.

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