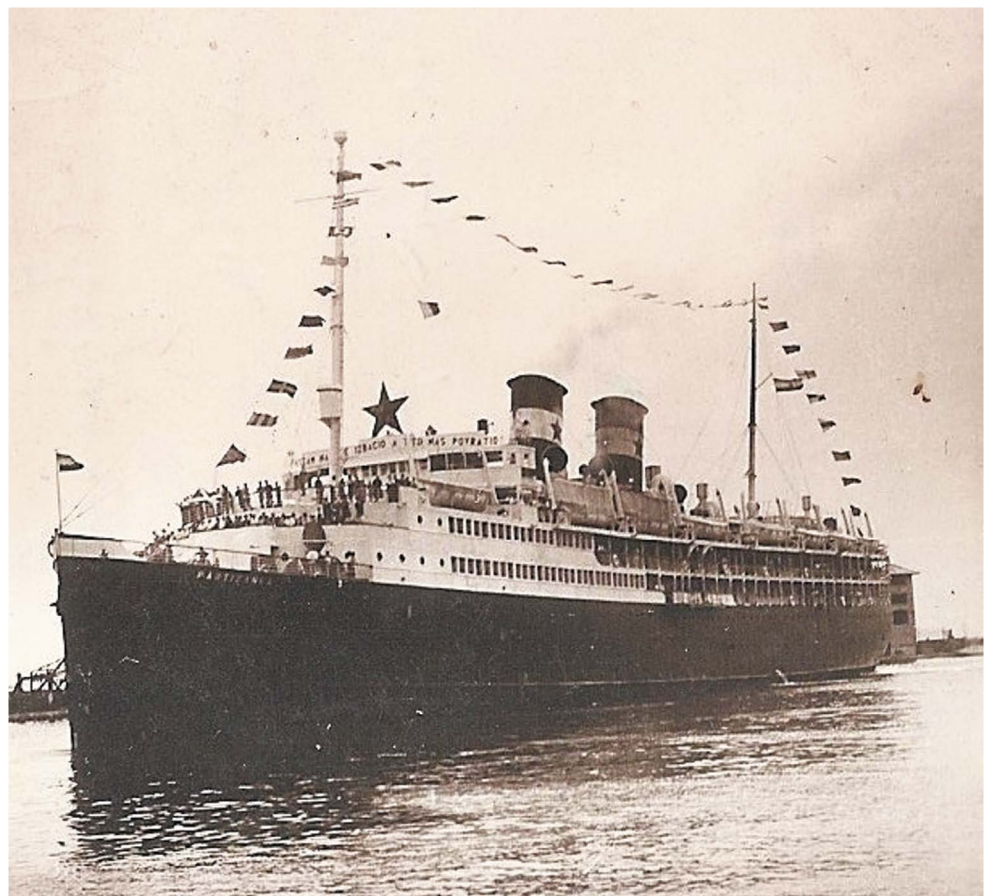


# (De)constructing Yugoslavia: migrants, exiles, refugees

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Workshop at ZRC SAZU

Ljubljana, Slovenia  
18-19 April 2024



ZRC SAZU

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and East European Studies

**(De)constructing Yugoslavia: migrants, exiles, refugees**

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Edited by: Sara Bernard, Miha Zobec

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# About the workshop

Migrations have played a major role in the history of Yugoslavia – its creation, evolution and final collapse. Yugoslavia came into being after the First World War, but émigrés in Europe and communities of settlers of South Slav origins in the Americas played an important role in its creation. New diasporas of considerable size came into being in the Americas and Western Europe, and affected the country’s economic, political and cultural evolution in the interwar period. They once again played an important role in campaigning for different groups vying for political power during the Second World War and after. During the Cold War, policing diasporas became a major challenge for the Communist authorities, who had to combat new diasporas of fleeing political dissidents. To this was added the large worker emigration to Western Europe and Australia from the 1960s, a proportion of whom returned to Yugoslavia following the recessions of the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, other forms of movement came into play, like the transfer of Yugoslav experts and workers to the Eastern bloc and developing countries in the Global South, the so-called Third World, as Yugoslavia navigated the Cold War as a leader of the non-aligned world. Yugoslav developmental aid was a major showcase not just of Yugoslav socialism in the world. The commitment to an alternative world order to the Cold War divisions was, along with socialism and multi-cultural (federal) coexistence, one of the pillars of Yugoslav national identity. Towards the end of the Cold War and during the wars of the 1990s, hundreds of thousands more left, creating new diasporas alongside the old. ‘Yugoslavs abroad’ once again played a major role in the home country, this time in the dissolution of the common state, the wars of Yugoslav succession, and the creation of new nation-states.

This workshop critically discusses how Yugoslav nation- and state-formation were imagined, re-imagined and contested globally by ‘Yugoslavs on the move’. The twelve contributions offer a new understanding of the controversies which have surrounded the evolution of Yugoslavism(s) as the idea(s) of a political unity of the South Slavs/Yugoslavs.

The workshop is hosted by the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and co-organised by ZRC SAZU and the University of Glasgow. It is funded by the research programme National and Cultural Identity of the Slovene Emigration in the Context of Migration Studies, research grants Between the “Tenth Banovina” and the “Seventh Republic” and Slovenian History on a Small Scale (all three financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency under agreements P5-0070, J6-50191 and J6-3143) as well as by the University of Glasgow.

# Keynote lecture

## **Yugoslav migration history and migration research: Slovenia as a laboratory**

*Aleksej Kalc, ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute & University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities*

The territory of present-day Slovenia was among the European regions most significantly impacted by migration during the 19th and 20th centuries. Due to historical ruptures and geopolitical reconfigurations, Slovenian territory has been subject to various ideological orders and migration policies. These factors have played a crucial role in shaping the nature, scope, and orientation of migration processes, as well as influencing attitudes toward migration phenomena and migrants. Although it provides insights into the diversities and complexities of migratory movements in a crucial geopolitical area over an extended historical period, the 'Slovenian case' is largely overlooked, if not entirely absent, in discussions about the history of migration in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Starting from the key moments in Slovenian migration history, this paper will examine the related studies and approaches in the historiography, and discuss the contextualisation of the 'Slovenian case' in Yugoslav and broader migration history.



ZRC SAZU



**Workshop**  
***(De)constructing Yugoslavia: Migrants, Exiles, Refugees***  
**18-19 April 2024**  
**Prešernova dvorana, Novi trg 4, Ljubljana**

**18 April**

**8:45 – 9:00** Arrival of participants

**9:00 – 9:15** Welcome and introduction to the workshop

Sara Bernard, University of Glasgow

Miha Zobec, ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute and University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities

Marina Lukšič Hacin, Director of the Slovenian Migration Institute

**9:15 – 10:15**

**Keynote**

*Yugoslav migration history and migration research: Slovenia as a laboratory*

Aleksej Kalc, ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute and University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities

**10:15 – 11:30**

**Session 1: The establishment of the first Yugoslavia: Adaptation and resistance in migration and exile**

*The Montenegrin Royal Government in exile and Yugoslav unification: A case within the League of Nations, 1920-1922*

Nikola Zečević, Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Montenegro, and Ludwig Maximilian University

&

*An Italian citizen living in Argentina and identifying with Yugoslavia: Rudi Guštin and his travels between Venezia Giulia/the Julian March, Argentina and Yugoslavia*

Miha Zobec, ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute and University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities

Chair: Sara Bernard, University of Glasgow

Discussant: Petra Kavrečič, University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities

15-minute break

**11:45– 12:55**

**Session 2: World War Two and the birth of the second Yugoslavia: Alternative visions of Yugoslavism in emigration**

*Yugoslav emigration to North America and the prospect of a new Yugoslav state (1942-1945) – from acceptance to resentment*

Vesna Djikanovic, Institute for Recent History of Serbia

&

*Yugoslavia and its future through the eyes of leading figures of the Yugoslav exile government during the Second World War and immediately after 1945*

Milan Sovilj, Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague

Chair: Sara Bernard, University of Glasgow

Discussant: Milan Mrđenović, University of Nova Gorica, School of Humanities

Lunch break

**14:00 – 15:10**

**Session 3: The Tito-Stalin split and the emigration question**

*Women Cominform migrants: Those who left and those who returned (examples from the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary)*

Tatjana Šarić, Croatian State Archives

&

*“What happens in Yugoslavia?” Cominformist emigrants in Prague on the development in Yugoslavia in the 1970s*

Ondřej Vojtěchovský, Institute of World History at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague and Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague

Chair: Sara Bernard, University of Glasgow

Discussant: Lev Centrih, University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities and Institute of Contemporary History

10-minute break

**15:20 – 16:30**

**Session 4: Migration and nation building: Domestic migration between regional and (supra)national identities**

*Hej Istrijani, jošte živi – Yugoslavism and Istrianity in light of migration since the 1960s*

Lorena Popović, University of Tübingen and Luca Babić, University of Tübingen

&

*Internal migration and socialist Yugoslav nation-building: The case of Dalmatian colonists in Stanišić (Vojvodina)*

Petar Grubišić, University of Ghent

Chair: Sara Bernard, University of Glasgow

Discussant: Jurij Hadalin, Institute of Contemporary History

15-minute break

**16:45 –18:30 Screening of *Slovenec po izbiri* (Slovene by choice) followed by Q&A with Arkan Al Nawas**

**19 April**

**9:00 – 10:10**

**Session 5: The geopolitics of migration: Yugoslavism and the regulation of international migration**

*Ideological commitment, pragmatism, discretion: Socialist Yugoslavia and refugees against the backdrop of geopolitical and domestic developments*

Francesca Rolandi, Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Arts and University of Florence

*Navigating the international division of labour: Yugoslavs employed abroad between international socialism and the imperative of economic development*

Sara Bernard, University of Glasgow

Chair: Miha Zobec, ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute and University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities

Discussant: David Hazemali, University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts

**10:10 – 11:20**

**Session 6: Imagining (post)Yugoslav futures during and after Yugoslav unity**

*Yes, but what then? Croatian diasporic imaginings of a post-Yugoslav future*

Mate Nikola Tokic, Central European University

*Nema mira bez dijaloga: The peace initiative “Mirovni dijalog/Friedensdialog” in Vienna in the 1990s*

Julia Anna Tyll-Schranz, University of Vienna

Chair: Miha Zobec, ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute and University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities

Discussant: Mladen Zobec, University of Graz, Centre for Southeast European Studies

15-minute break

**11:35 – 12:35**

**Round table: Reflections from other fields**

Participants:

Neja Blaj Hribar, Institute of Contemporary History

Jelka Piškurić, Study Centre for National Reconciliation

Milan Mrđenović, University of Nova Gorica, School of Humanities

Tanja Petrović, ZRC SAZU, Institute of Culture and Memory Studies

Chair: Sara Bernard, University of Glasgow

**Lunch break: 12:35 – 14**

**15:00 – 17:00** City tour: A People's History of Ljubljana (tour guide: Arne Zupančič)



# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

(In order of presentation)



## SESSION 1

### The establishment of the first Yugoslavia: adaptation and resistance in migration and exile

#### **1 The Montenegrin Royal Government in exile and Yugoslav unification: A case within the League of Nations, 1920-1922**

This paper explains the process of national unification and the creation of the Yugoslav state, especially the prologue of this process or the case of the annexation of the Kingdom of Montenegro, as an Allied country, by the Kingdom of Serbia. It analyses the international context regarding the abolition of Montenegrin statehood, particularly the diplomatic activities of Serbia and the Entente Powers concerning the Montenegrin question at the Paris Peace Conference and within the League of Nations. These events articulated the political efforts of the Montenegrin government in exile to act towards the League of Nations, to substantiate the right of national self-determination. The background of this tendency was diverse: it moved from the struggle for the federal status of Montenegro in the newly established Yugoslav kingdom to the complete restoration of state independence. The complex issue of self-determination, often portrayed idealistically, became a point of contention, justifying both Montenegro's independence and its assimilation into a broader Yugoslav state. This ambiguity complicated Montenegro's diplomatic efforts, especially as the principle, following Wilson's withdrawal from international politics, was applied selectively, notably in cases like Upper Silesia but not Montenegro, highlighting inconsistencies in the League's policies. The study describes the tactics employed by the Montenegrin government in exile and the methods it used to draw the attention of the Great Powers to the Montenegrin issue. In addition, it shows how international verification of the annexation of Montenegro affected the understanding of Montenegrin identity and its transformations throughout this period. The paper also analyses various British, American, and French reports regarding the Montenegrin case and how they influenced the formation of political elite opinions in these countries. Furthermore, the research addresses how official Rome thwarted the expectations of the Montenegrin government in the context of its (non)admission to the League of Nations and how this influenced internal political situations in Italy. Additionally, the study highlights that the responses to Montenegrin initiatives within the League of Nations were shaped by lower-level members of various sections. The correspondence within these sections provides insight into how the Montenegrin issue and the representatives of the Royal Government of Montenegro were treated and perceived. Based

on archival materials (interpellations, memoranda, official letters) as part of the correspondence between the Montenegrin Royal Government in exile and the League of Nations, the paper explains why the League ignored the demands of Montenegro for the restoration of its statehood. The study concludes by illustrating Montenegro's gradual marginalisation in post-war European reconstruction, becoming a mere footnote in the larger narrative of the Versailles order.

*Nikola Zečević* is a Research Assistant at the Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Montenegro, and a PhD candidate in history at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. His latest publication is a book chapter 'Europeanising History to (Re)construct the Statehood Narrative: The Reinterpretation of World War One in Montenegro'. In: Milošević A., Trošt T. (eds). *Europeanisation and Memory Politics in the Western Balkans. Memory Politics and Transitional Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland, 2021.

## **2 An Italian citizen, living in Argentina and identifying with Yugoslavia: Rudi Guštin and his travels between Venezia Giulia/the Julian March, Argentina and Yugoslavia**

This article addresses the trajectory of Rudi Guštin, a migrant from Venezia Giulia/the Julian March (a region with a sizeable Slovene and Croat population that was annexed to Italy after the First World War) in Argentina and socialist Yugoslavia. Guštin relocated first from Venezia Giulia to Argentina, then "returned" to Yugoslavia, and eventually re-migrated to Argentina. Drawing on a collection of personal correspondence pertaining mainly to Guštin's sisters at 'home' and in Argentina, an interview, and documents of the Yugoslav Ministry of Labour and the Embassy in Buenos Aires, it examines the way in which Guštin's migrant experience served to negotiate his Yugoslav identity and influenced his participation in trans-state networks. In addition, it assesses his attitude to socialist Yugoslavia in light of contingent events, such as the incorporation of the greater part of Julian March into Yugoslavia (in 1947) or the Trieste issue (the territorial dispute resolved in 1954), and by examining the nexus between the country's ideology and his social status as a manual worker. Finally, the paper discusses the meaning of Guštin's narrative for understanding the diversity of Yugoslav identities among emigrants. While the case presented refers to the Italo-Yugoslav borderland area, it could be also framed by the broader Central and Southeast European context, where state-diaspora relations intersected with issues of border delimitation, citizenship, and ethnic minorities. The paper opts for a biographical approach and, following Bourdieu (2017) attempts to explore social mechanisms which facilitated Guštin's trajectory. It does so by looking at his narrative from three distinct but complementary perspectives: the level of the sending and receiving states ("macro level"), the associational and community level ("meso"), and the level of family ("micro"). It tries to examine each level through a particular

set of documents: material related to Yugoslav and Italian state institutions is used to elucidate Guštin's departure, integration into Argentinian society, link to the socialist homeland, the act of "returning" and re-migrating. Use of personal correspondence is applied to highlight the family level, and both personal and state sources, as well as newspapers, are considered in examining the associational milieu. All three levels are set in the transnational social space, and in particular in the transnational migratory social field which structured and was structured by different social actors, such as states, but also migrant and socialist party transnational associations. In addition, following Winter (2009), different levels are examined in a causal hierarchy, assuming that the macro level set the framework, the meso was constitutive for the social networks in which Guštin operated, and the micro was finally decisive for selecting among the possibilities presented.

*Miha Zobec* is a Research Associate at the Slovenian Migration Institute, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and an Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Primorska. His research interests focus on the relationship between nation-building processes and migrations and on the history of the family in migration contexts. His most recent publications are 'Yugoslav Emigrants in Brazil from the Habsburgs to the Karađorđevićs: Transnational Political Engagement on the Peripheries?' in *Journal of Migration History* (2023) and 'Creating the Unbound Yugoslav Nation: The Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Emigrants from the "Unredeemed" Julian March' in *Nationalities Papers* (2022).

## SESSION 2

### World War Two and the birth of second Yugoslavia: alternative visions of Yugoslavism in emigration

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#### **3 Yugoslav emigration to North America and the prospect of a new Yugoslav state (1942-1945) – from acceptance to resentment**

During the Second World War, Yugoslav emigrants in America once again became an active part of Yugoslav political life, twenty years after the First World War. One of the main reasons for this were the activities of Yugoslav politicians and the Yugoslav Government in Exile (YGiE). After the collapse of the Yugoslav state in April 1941, the YGiE hoped for moral, material, and political support from their compatriots in America. A Yugoslav government mission was sent to the United States, and close contacts were established with individuals and emigrant organisations in the hope of a joint effort to promote the interests of the old country. For their part, the emigrants themselves showed a genuine interest in participating in political activities and debates about the future of the country. However, political life in emigration was burdened by inherited divisions, not exclusively along ethnic lines, and by the continuation of differences within the YGiE. As a result, America became a political battleground, with political disputes and even open hostility between different Yugoslav ethnic groups and between official Yugoslav representatives. In an atmosphere of conflict, space was opened for the expression of different ideas and concepts about the future of the common state. In such an atmosphere, Yugoslav communists in America intensified political work among the emigrant communities resulting in the creation of a respectable network of support for the new Yugoslavia. The question is how marginal political organisations in emigrant life at the beginning of the war managed to create an institutionally based movement that united numerous emigrant organisations and prominent individuals behind the idea of a renewed state under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito. In the attempt to answer this question, it is certainly impossible to ignore the position of the old political forces and the lack of unity within the Yugoslav Government in Exile, which, even in moments of great challenge, failed to reach a minimum of political agreement on the future of the Yugoslav state. In the context of the political orientation of the emigrant communities, the position of the American state also held significance. Bearing this in mind, my argument is that this transformation and the success of the Yugoslav communists in mobilising the support of the emigrants was the result of strict party discipline within the Yugoslav communist movement, intelligent propaganda accompanied by a clear political idea, as well as the result of political pragmatism, reflected in the skilful laceration between the preservation of ideological correctness and the need to create an alliance. In the field of historiography, there are several works that focus on analysing the activities of the Yugoslav

government in emigration, including the analysis of political movements among emigrants in America (Đuretić, Stefanovski, Terzic). Several important works are devoted to Yugoslav emigrant communities during the Second World War (Klemenčič, Lees, Čizmić). A subject of interest were also individuals who left a noticeable mark on the political and public life of the Yugoslav element in America, such as Louis Adamic (Klemenčič, Novak). Certain aspects of the activities of the Yugoslav communists, as well as the involvement of individuals and organisations on American territory, have also been the subject of scientific interest and analysis (Ocak). However, as regards the activities of the Yugoslav communists and the methodology used to rally emigrants behind the idea of a new concept of Yugoslav unity, contemporary historiography does not provide a complete analysis free from the burden of ideological interpretation. The aim of this paper is to identify the main narratives and principles used by Yugoslav communists in their public appearances during the war years which helped to create useful alliances and secure the support of a respectable part of Yugoslav emigrant communities in America. The research presented is primarily based on archival sources and relevant literature.

*Vesna Đikanović* is Research Associate at the Institute for Recent History of Serbia in Belgrade. She is the author of one monograph and several research articles published in domestic and foreign publications. She is a member of the editorial board of *Tokovi istorije* (a peer-reviewed academic journal). Her research interests are focused on migration history, identities, social history, and history of humanitarianism. Her most recent publication is 'Between Humanitarianism and Politics: Some Aspects of the Relief Efforts by Yugoslav immigrants in the United States', *Dve domovini/Two Homelands* 55/2022, 93–109.

#### **4 Yugoslavia and its future through the eyes of leading figures of the Yugoslav exile government during the Second World War and immediately after 1945**

The Yugoslav exile governments that were settled in London during the Second World War (except for one short period, September 1943 – March 1944, when the exile government was seated in Cairo) undoubtedly wished for an early end to war and a return to their homeland and, to a lesser or greater extent, also for the political arrangement which they had been forced to leave behind. The difficult situation in the early stages of the war in Yugoslav territory had a great impact on the activities of the exile representation of Yugoslavia. For example, the Yugoslav exile government experienced problems related to the existence of the Independent State of Croatia and the crimes of the Ustashe regime, which had a detrimental effect on the mutual relations of Yugoslav exile ministers, in particular between Serbs and Croats. Tito's partisans started dominating and replacing the Chetnik movement as the most important partner of the Allies, and at the same

time reports reached the Yugoslav exile government about some type of collaboration between the Chetniks and the German Army; these developments did not contribute to an improvement of the position of the Yugoslav exile government. The issue of Yugoslavia's survival and its future was present in the activities of the Yugoslav exile governments throughout the entire period of World War II. In general, one fundamental idea was the survival of Yugoslavia as a state, primarily within the framework which existed before World War II. However, over time, some politicians and ministers in exile articulated different forms of possible organisation with a greater or lesser emphasis on some of the constituent peoples, i.e. Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Only in the period immediately after 1945, following the major changes brought by the new communist government in Yugoslavia, did some new ideas come forth, but they did not correspond as much to Yugoslavia as a unified state. Based on some Yugoslav archival sources, the study of memoirs and diaries mostly published in exile after the war (e.g. texts by Slobodan Jovanović, Ilija Jukić, etc.) and in Serbia after 1990 (e.g. texts by Milan Grol, Milan Gavrilović, Miloš Trifunović, Kosta St. Pavlović, etc.), and the relevant literature, this contribution aims to show what the starting point of the Yugoslav exile government was at the beginning of its exile with respect to its thinking on Yugoslavia and the country's future. It also aims to show to what extent such an attitude changed during the war and how leading exiled politicians regarded the foundation of socialist Yugoslavia at the end of the war and political life immediately after 1945 from their places of exile that, for the vast majority of them, became their homes forever.

*Milan Sovilj* is Research Associate at the Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. His areas of expertise are Yugoslav-Czechoslovak relations and the political history of the states of Central and Southeastern Europe. He is the author of two monographs, the first one on Yugoslav-Czechoslovak cultural relations from 1945 to 1949 (*U potrazi za nedostižnim: jugoslovensko-čehoslovačke kulturne veze 1945*, Beograd 2012), and a second one on Czechoslovak-Yugoslav Relations in 1939–1941 (*Československo-jugoslávské vztahy v letech 1939–1941: od zániku Československé republiky do okupace Království Jugoslávie*, Praha 2016).

## SESSION 3

### The Tito-Stalin split and its emigration question

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#### **5 Women Cominform migrants: Those who left and those who returned (examples from the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary)**

One of the less-explored facets of Yugoslav emigration lies in the Cominform emigration, particularly the migration of women. At the time of the Cominform Resolution in 1948 and the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR along with the Eastern Bloc countries, these individuals chose the latter. They either found themselves in education or work in the Eastern Bloc countries, migrated after the Resolution, or married Cominform emigrants and thus became a part of this group. Therefore, the authorities and the secret service considered them to be part of the emigration hostile to Yugoslavia. With the normalisation of relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia after Stalin died in 1953, some returned to the country. However, they were under constant surveillance by the state security service. In my research, I investigate the identity and migration patterns of women Cominform migrants, exploring whether their migration from Yugoslavia and, for some of them, their return to Yugoslavia, was independent or linked to existing networks within Eastern Bloc countries. I delve into the gender practices of surveillance employed by the security service, examining how this control influenced women's lives and how these practices are connected to the position of women in Yugoslavia in general. Additionally, I focus on specific women in the Informbiro emigration, shedding light on their unique experiences in this historical context. The research illustrates the varied backgrounds of women Informbiro migrants, drawing a parallel to the perceived roles and positions of women in Yugoslav society. Some of them were highly educated, actively participating in events and the political life of the emigrant community, criticising the Yugoslav order. Others were in a less favourable position, becoming informants for foreign intelligence services in exchange for better living conditions, and some even for Yugoslav intelligence. Foreign citizens married to Informbiro migrants, upon arriving in Yugoslavia with their husbands, were under special surveillance as they were also considered agents of the intelligence services of their countries, which some of them indeed were. Yugoslav authorities deemed all these women significant, viewing them as potentially dangerous and hostile. The paper, constrained mainly to the period up to the early 1960s, but mentioning also some later actions towards women migrants, geographically specifies female Cominform migrants to the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, as well as, for some, their return to Yugoslavia. The primary focus of the investigation relies on original archival records kept in the Croatian state archives, largely untapped and unexplored until now. Therefore, this serves as a preliminary exploration, potentially paving the way for more extensive research. The article aims to enrich migration and gender studies by offering insights into the experiences of women in the

Cominform emigration. While not presenting a comprehensive overview, the research illuminates key moments within this distinct branch of Yugoslav emigration.

*Tatjana Šarić* is a Senior Research Assistant and Archival Advisor at the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. Her research focuses on contemporary Croatian history – socialism, culture, gender, and migration. She edits the journal *Fontes – Sources on Croatian History* and leads *Working Group 1 of COST Action Women on the Move*. She is the author of *In the Vortex of Communism: the Youth of Croatia 1945–1954* (Zagreb, 2017), and she contributes to various journals and edits publications such as *Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia, Vol V-VII*.

## **6 “What happens in Yugoslavia?” Cominformist emigrants in Prague on the development in Yugoslavia in the 1970s**

After the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the so-called Cominformist (Yugoslav Pro-Soviet Anti-Titoist) movement became active again. The Soviet intervention raised the hopes of the radical Cominformists that Moscow might also take active action again against the Tito regime in Yugoslavia. Moreover, they saw the Moscow-led ideological attack on the Czechoslovak reforms as a return to opening the question of the obligatory applicability of the Soviet model to other socialist countries, including Yugoslavia. After the end of the Soviet-Yugoslav split in 1955, the Cominformists never fully accepted the outcome of that agreement. They regarded the reforms carried out in Yugoslavia since the early 1950s as a fraud on the Yugoslav people and Yugoslav foreign non-aligned policy as a betrayal of the interests of the world socialist movement. Since they saw the Czechoslovak reform efforts of 1968 as directly inspired by Titoism, they considered the condemnation of the Prague Spring as an opportunity to renew their activity against the actual Yugoslav regime. The activation of Cominformist groups occurred both on the territory of Yugoslavia and among members of former emigrant centres in the Soviet bloc countries. At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, groups both in the homeland and in exile launched an initiative to form a new Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Emigration to Eastern European countries soon took a leading role in this movement, as the possibilities for illegal networks to operate in the country were very limited. However, the circle of new activists, even in emigration circles, eventually remained very narrow, after most emigrants understood that an open campaign against Tito's regime was contrary to the geopolitical interests of the Soviet Union. The leader of the movement, Mileta Perović, who had to leave the Soviet Union in 1975 and move his activities to the countries of Western Europe, collaborated conspiratorially with small circles of like-minded emigrants in Prague, Warsaw and Budapest until his kidnapping by the Yugoslav secret service to Yugoslavia in 1977. Although it was a marginal current within the Yugoslav anti-Tito opposition, the movement's supposed connection to Moscow made it a relevant alternative to the ruling system in its time. This



article analyses the texts that were produced by a group of Cominformist emigrants operating in Prague and sent to Yugoslavia in the form of leaflets by post to randomly selected addresses. The collection of almost 70 texts distributed in the time span from 1971 to 1976 illustrates the way of thinking and argumentation of radical pro-Soviet Yugoslav communists. It shows criticism of Yugoslav socialist self-management from conservative left-wing positions. The leaflets' critique covered several areas of Yugoslav reality under Tito's regime: socialist self-management as a false façade for the exploitation of workers, the creation of a new exploiting class represented by the economic and political bureaucracy, the constant growth of social and regional differences, the use of nationalism for the power aims of the ruling class, the cult of Tito, and the non-aligned politics that in fact deliberately harmed the interests of the world socialist movement.

*Ondřej Vojtěchovský* is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of World History, Faculty of Arts, Charles University. His research focuses on the history of Yugoslavia, especially in the socialist period, and on various aspects that linked this country with Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries of Eastern Europe. He is the author of a monograph on the Yugoslav Cominformist emigration to Czechoslovakia, *From Prague against Tito* (Prague 2012, Zagreb 2016) and co-author of a book on Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the Period of Late Socialism, 1969–1989 (Prague 2021; Zagreb, 2024).

## SESSION 4

### Migration and nation building: domestic migration between regional and (supra)national identities

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#### **7 Internal migration and self-identity in Socialist Yugoslavia: The case of Dalmatian colonists in Stanišić (Vojvodina)**

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the socialist government in Yugoslavia was actively pushing a policy of brotherhood and unity. The promotion of socialist Yugoslavism, unlike the interwar integralist version, was envisioned as a building block of togetherness. The expulsion of German ethnicity left entire villages abandoned, and the region itself was at a crossroads between Serbian nationalism and multinationalism. The agrarian reform and colonisation, which spanned 1945 to 1948, completely changed land ownership relations and allowed an unprecedented level of social mobility. This paper explores the impact of internal migration on Yugoslav nation-building through the case study of the colonist settlement of Stanišić, located in Vojvodina. The influx of said colonists was from the similarly multicultural region of Dalmatia. The colonisation effort primarily targeted partisan fighters and their families. The settlers officially declared themselves Croats or Serbs and represented the two largest ethnic groups in Yugoslavia, but during the colonisation, they were classified as Dalmatians by the government. Also, their declaration as atheists circumvented the usual separation created by Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Therefore, they are a prime example of blurred lines between regional, national, and transnational identities. The town of Stanišić became one of the locations where the making of Yugoslavs took place. The six organised transports brought the colonists from different places of Dalmatia, and they were later joined by the Dalmatians from Macedonia, settled there by the previous government during the interwar period. The town received approximately five thousand settlers, who ended up being two-thirds of its total population. In the following years, some colonisers, primarily Croats, decided to return to Dalmatia, but the majority remained. This paper analyses the internal migration impact on identity-forming within Stanišić in the following decades and how it correlates with the rest of Vojvodina. It explores the different layers of colonists' identity, their position and influence on Serbian nationalism and Yugoslav multinationalism as well as the fluidity of that stance. Looking at Stanišić's censuses through the existence of socialist Yugoslavia, a process of steady Yugoslavisation is evident. Even though the total number of townsfolk was declining, there was a rise in declared Yugoslavs. It happened at the expense of both Serbs and Croats. However, their sudden drop in numbers at the start of the 1990s calls into question the embeddedness of Yugoslav identity. This paper thus addresses the shaping of colonist identity in the wake of the internal migration and its interplay with their sense of belonging to Dalmatia and Vojvodina.

It questions whether the identity growth was encouraged by the regional government and thus politically beneficial or a natural unifying process that became unwanted with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The question of embedded identity and belonging, their intertwining or mutual exclusion, is explored through semi-structured interviews with the colonists and their descendants and is supplemented by data from local archives and newspapers.

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## **8 Hej Istrijani, jošte živi – Yugoslavism and Istrianity in light of migration since the 1960s**

Istria’s modern history is marked by multiculturalism and migration. Istria was part of five different states and regimes in the 20th century alone, and each change of political system triggered migration movements towards as well as away from the peninsula. With the end of World War II, resulting in the so-called ‘exodus’ of the Italian population, and thus the almost complete loss of one of Istria’s ‘autochthonous’ people, Istria’s demographic structure was permanently altered. As about up to 250,000 people had left newly Yugoslav territories mostly for Italy, Istria suffered from a cultural and an economic vacuum because most of its coastal towns and even entire villages were abandoned. Istria was in urgent need of both skilled and manual labourers. The Yugoslav state as well as local companies soon encouraged people from all over Yugoslavia to fill the vacant places and factories once again. From the 1950s onwards, workers and soldiers from all the Yugoslav republics came, resulting in the extension of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in the region. The non-Istrians’ arrival prompted Istrian writers to discuss the peninsula’s ‘peculiarity’ from the 1970s onwards, depicting a pre-war Istria based on the co-existence (convivenza) of Slavic and Romanic Istrians, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and ethnic tolerance. Simultaneously, Istrian scholars, especially historians, began to engage with Istria’s imperial and more recent pasts, thereby also tracing the migration movements to Istria in the Venetian Empire and the national struggles during the Habsburg Empire. In the end, Istrian intellectuals all diagnosed Istria’s ethnic and cultural diversity that had its roots in Istria’s imperial pasts. The dissolution of Yugoslavia elevated the discourse on Istria’s ‘peculiarity’ to another level. With the Croatian nationalists under president Franjo Tudman constituting the government, the ruling party HDZ

led the newly independent Republic of Croatia to a path of national homogenisation. Concurrently, the regionalist Istrian party IDS successfully rallied against the Croatian nationalist hegemonism, contesting the HDZ with its seemingly inclusive programme, and finally giving a name to Istria's peculiarity: *Istrijanstvo*. The discourse on Istrianity had become virulent and dominated every aspect of everyday life. Yet, the term was not a neologism of the IDS. Instead, Istrianity first appeared at the turn of the century, almost a century earlier, but disappeared with the demise of the Austrian Empire. The turmoils of two wars left Istrianity vanished into oblivion, albeit without ever eradicating Istria's diversity. This paper examines the relations of Istrianity as an order and ideology on the one hand to state-imposed Yugoslavism on the other, in light of migrations. We argue that firstly, ideologies can physically move with the people following them (Yugoslavism) and they can establish an order synchronously to an already existing one (Istrianity). Secondly, in places where another order is established and has a longer tradition, ideologies that are imposed by the state only exist as long as the state itself does. Yugoslavism in Istria did not survive after 1991, whereas Istrianity constitutes the regional order.

*Luka Babić* is a PhD candidate at the University of Tübingen and research associate at the Collaborative Research Centre 923 "Threatened Order: Societies under Stress". His particular fields of interest include contemporary history research such as the Yugoslav disintegration process, Yugoslav guest workers, and post-socialist regionalisms. Since 2020, he has been working on his dissertation as part of the project "A Genealogy of Hybridity", which examines the role and significance of national minorities and other excluded groups in the region building of Istria from 1960 until 2013.

*Lorena Popović* is a PhD candidate at the University of Tübingen and research associate at the Collaborative Research Centre 923 "Threatened Order: Societies under Stress" since 2019. She studied History and English/American Studies in Tübingen and at University College Cork, Ireland, with a focus on Southeastern European History. Her fields of interest include the macro and micro history of Yugoslavia and its successor states, as well as the cultural history of the region. In her dissertation project, she examines the discourse and the practice of the hybrid concept of *Istrijanstvo* and the regional order of the multicultural and multilingual Istrian peninsula since 1970.

## SESSION 5

### The geopolitics of migration: Yugoslavism and the regulation of international migration

#### **9 Ideological commitment, pragmatism, discretion: Socialist Yugoslavia and refugees against the backdrop of geopolitical and domestic developments**

As a reaction against the previous emphasis on a supposed detachment of Eastern Europe from global trends, scholars have recently investigated the multifaceted network of migration routes that have marked the region in modern times. A burgeoning historiography has explored the attitude of Yugoslavia towards labour migration, as well as the impact of diaspora communities on Yugoslavia's domestic developments. Building on this literature, this paper will focus on the policies that socialist Yugoslavia enacted towards different refugee groups. First, it will investigate the policies put in place towards defectors from the neighbouring people's democracies. Second, it will explore the entanglement between the domestic refugee regime and the issue of Yugoslav asylum seekers abroad. Finally, it will give an insight into the humanitarian diplomacy underpinning aid to refugees in other – mostly non-European – countries. In the aftermath of the Second World War, socialist Yugoslavia established itself as a haven for similarly minded refugees, either escaping the Greek civil war or claiming to be persecuted in their own country. As a consequence of the 1948 split with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia hosted political refugees from the neighbouring people's democracies, deploying them as tools of pressure against their own countries. After the normalisation of relations with the Soviet bloc, Yugoslavia reluctantly continued to be a transit country for Eastern Europeans on their way to Italy or Austria. The contacts established with the UNHCR during the Hungarian refugee crisis evolved into a durable cooperation which led to the opening of a UNHCR office in Belgrade in the mid-1970s. This resulted in the establishment of official channels for the resettlement of asylum seekers. In addition, Yugoslavia acted as a country of integration for small contingents of Albanian and Chilean refugees. After joining the 1951 Refugee Convention in 1959, Yugoslavia found itself in the odd position of being both a country of transit for foreign refugees and a country "generating" refugees. In fact, in the 1950s and 1960s, thousands of Yugoslavs each year sought asylum in Western countries. Since the 1960s, as soon as Yugoslavia's prestige increased, Yugoslavia lobbied for its asylum seekers to be increasingly regarded as economic migrants. The issue of Eastern European refugees in Yugoslavia was

discussed within the UNHCR in conjunction with that of Yugoslav asylum seekers in Western countries. In particular, some UNHCR officials advocated for Yugoslavia to allow its citizens to look for work abroad, in order to counter the practice of applying for asylum abroad. A staunch critic of the geographical limitation to the 1951 Convention (committing member states to protect only refugees escaping as a consequence of events occurred in Europe), Yugoslavia was very vocal in its support for Palestinian and Algerian refugees, as well as African refugees, while keeping its financial contribution relatively low. There were apparently some de facto political refugees from the global South in Yugoslavia, although their presence drew on different legal bases (they were workers or students). This paper aims at putting all these threads together in an attempt to analyse how Yugoslavia positioned itself in the international humanitarian arena, what meaning it attached to the term “refugee” internally, and how its refugee regime was made and unmade by refugees themselves.

*Francesca Rolandi* is a Research Fellow at Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Arts and at the University of Florence. Her research interests range from the cultural and social history of the Upper Adriatic and post-Yugoslav area to the history of migration and refugees in twentieth-century Europe. Her first monograph *Con Ventiquattro mila baci. L'influenza della cultrua di massa italiana in Jugoslavia 1955-1965* (Bononia University Press, 2015) was translated into Serbian by Geopoetika (2022). She has also published in *Contemporary European History*, *The Journal of Modern History*, *The Journal of Migration History*, and *The Journal of East Central European Studies*.

## **10 Navigating the international division of labour: Yugoslavs employed abroad between socialist internationalism and the imperative of economic development**

This article examines the challenges posed by employment abroad to the conceptualisation of Yugoslav identity during socialism. It analyses the ways in which narratives about Yugoslavs employed abroad were informed by the different positionalities of Yugoslavia in the international division of labour. Depending on the vantage point, the ‘typical’ Yugoslav employed abroad could be seen as a guestworker employed as cheap labour in a capitalist enterprise in western Europe, or as a highly qualified architect or engineer (expert) employed by a Yugoslav company in non-European developing countries. Both of these forms of labour migration were state-promoted. Both Yugoslav guestworkers and experts were considered an integral part of the Yugoslav working class while abroad. Yet employment in the capitalist west and in the decolonised world responded to different needs of Yugoslav development and entailed two different experiences for the workers involved. In capitalist countries, Yugoslav workers belonged to the lowest socio-

economic classes and their work was subjected to the rules of capitalist accumulation. Their employment was motivated by the Yugoslav need to gather hard currency and reduce growing unemployment domestically, both partly created by Yugoslav economic dependency on the west. In non-European developing countries, Yugoslav experts supervised the work of unskilled and often indigenous labourers in their role as propagators of an alternative economic system which centred around mutual beneficial trade rather than economic profit. How were these different experiences conceptualised in narratives of Yugoslavism? Was there any difference in the ways the socialist enterprise and the state apparatus draw connections between employment abroad and Yugoslavism depending on their employment in the capitalist west or developing south? What notions of Yugoslav identity informed narratives produced by Yugoslavs employed abroad? How and to what extent did Yugoslavs understand employment abroad as a key aspect of their Yugoslav identity? This article explores these questions by comparing articles about employment abroad and letters by those employed abroad published from the late 1960s until the late 1980s in *Novosti iz Jugoslavije*, a magazine published beginning in 1967 by the Federal Office for Labour and widely distributed among guest workers employed in Western Europe, and in the company newspaper published by *Energoprojekt*, a major construction company and the one most involved in the developing countries. By examining how textual and visual language differed in both cases, the article shows that these differences were only in part related to the different positionality of Yugoslavia vis-à-vis the west and the south. Using these findings to revisit the work of sociologists on Yugoslav class relations and self-management reforms, and relying on theoretical insights from the international division of labour, the article examines how positionalities within the Yugoslav working class and as a result of domestic reforms were relevant as well. By doing so the paper's aim is twofold. First, it brings labour migration into debates about the role of self-management reforms since the late 1960s as a contributing factor to Yugoslav collapse. Second, as the first article (to my knowledge) to analyse employment in the capitalist west and in the global south as complementary and interdependent processes, this article suggests new venues of research which, while using Yugoslavia as a case study, intersect with key debates in labour history, migration history and the history of internationalism during the Cold War.

*Sara Bernard* is Lecturer in Societal Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe at the University of Glasgow. She is coordinator of the Working Group Labour Migration History of the European Labour History Network and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. Her research interests lie in European migration history, with a particular focus on the Cold War period and on the former Yugoslav region. She has published a monograph on the return of the Gastarbeiter to socialist Yugoslavia (Harrassowitz, 2019). Her most recent work has appeared in *Migration Letters*, *Labor History* and book chapters published by Palgrave and Routledge.

## SESSION 6

### Imagining (post)Yugoslav futures during and after Yugoslav unity

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#### **11 Yes, but what then? Croatian diasporic imaginings of a post-Yugoslav future**

Throughout the life of socialist Yugoslavia, arguably no faction was more active in their efforts to bring about the destruction of the state than members of the Croatian diaspora. From establishing a Croatian government in exile to convening a worldwide national council of groups calling for Croatian liberation to engaging in acts of political violence and terrorism on a global scale, a significant share of the Croatian community abroad spent the Cold War campaigning—in their parlance—to free the Croatian nation from the fetters of Serbocommunist rule and to (re)establish an independent Croatian state. At the same time, while the various separatist groups and individuals were (mostly) in agreement that Yugoslavia was an illegitimate state and that the Croatian nation both needed and deserved a state of its own, what very often remained open was the question of what any post-Yugoslav Croatia would actually look like, who would belong to it, and how it would be organised politically. This article explores how anti-Yugoslav Croatian separatists in the emigration imagined—if they did at all—what independence for Croatia meant in concrete terms. As it will explore, the answer was almost as myriad as the various groups agitating for national liberation. During the early years of the Cold War, perhaps not surprising, most groups declared that any new Croatian state should be a western-oriented democratic nation-state, clearly with an eye towards garnering the favour of anti-communist warriors in the United States. Other groups, meanwhile, felt that the only realistic path forward for Croatia was as leading partner in a Central European confederation of states that resembled the erstwhile Austro-Hungarian Empire but was modelled on the fledgling European Community. Still others viewed any Croatia in purely national terms with politics secondary to ethnic identity, proposing the formation of a government that brought together figures as ideologically discordant as Tito, Maks Luburić, Miroslav Krleža, and Stjepan Hefer. In one noteworthy case, one of the most prominent separatists in the emigration—Branko Jelić—declared late in his life that the best solution for securing Croatian independence was an alliance with Moscow against Belgrade, arguing that the model for Croatia should be Finland, which remained a neutral country but with strong ties to the Soviet Union. And not a small percentage of groups declared simply that the ultimate political structure of an independent Croatian state was immaterial, declaring that such concerns were irrelevant until after actual national liberation. As these examples show, opposition to the existence of socialist Yugoslavia and support for an independent Croatia were not the simple binaries that both the actors themselves



and academic historiography have often portrayed. Just as “Yugoslavism” was a contested idea, so too were “anti-Yugoslavism” and “post-Yugoslavism” at least when understood constructively rather than simply deconstructively. In unravelling how various actors conceived of any post-Yugoslav Croatian state, we can even further complicate how both politics and identity in the region were imagined and reimagined, expanding our understanding of the spectrum of ideas associated with—even if in opposition to—the Yugoslav idea.

*Mate Nikola Tokić* is Humanities Initiative Visiting Professor in the Departments of History and Public Policy at the Central European University (CEU) in Vienna. His first monograph—entitled *Croatian Radical Separatism and Diaspora Terrorism During the Cold War*—was published with Purdue University Press in 2020. In addition to several articles on political violence and radicalisation among émigré Croats, he has worked extensively on the relationship between social memory and political legitimacy in socialist Yugoslavia.

## **12 Nema mira bez dijaloga: The peace initiative “Mirovni dijalog/ Friedensdialog” in Vienna in the 1990s**

On 18th of October 1991, Melita Šunjić organised a meeting in Vienna to call for peace in the disintegrating Yugoslav space. The event particularly called on Serbs and Croats living in Austria. The meeting took place at a well-known Viennese intellectual institution and was attended by around 200 people. It kick-started the peace initiative “Mirovni dijalog/Friedensdialog” that was active in Vienna and beyond until the mid-1990s. “There cannot be peace without dialogue” was phrased as a central motto of the initiative. For a few years, the members of the peace dialogue created a setting where (post-)Yugoslav actors, among them politicians, journalists, scientists and artists came together and negotiated their perceptions and positions towards Yugoslavia’s violent disintegration. In a first step, I will focus on the internal positionings of the initiative’s activists. I will argue that they harnessed a variety of notions towards “Yugoslavia” as an ongoing frame of reference and controversially discussed these notions within their group. I will show how the initiative, which was initially directed at dialogue between Croats and Serbs, was increasingly framed as an integrative space for people of all national and religious backgrounds of former Yugoslavia. In a second step, I will argue that the “Mirovni dijalog/ Friedensdialog” carefully positioned itself in its communication with the public. While the initiative defined the “Yugoslav space” as its field of focus, Yugoslavia as a political entity was rarely evoked as a point of reference to a broader public. Instead, the dialogue propagated a joint future of all (post-)Yugoslav peoples within a wider European community, idealised as multicultural, prosperous and tolerant. In a third step, I will argue that the integrative character of the initiative was contested by ethno-nationally oriented actors. Navigating confrontations with ethno-national politics thus proved a recurring challenge for the initiative and its members. Reconstructing the history of this initiative can offer

interesting insights into the complexities of dealing with and negotiating the end of socialist Yugoslavia beyond its borders. Based on written records of the initiative, as well as narrative interviews, this article will provide a meaningful contribution to two different bodies of research. First, it will offer an addition to the literature dealing with (post-)Yugoslav anti-war and peace initiatives, by focusing on the activities of (post-)Yugoslav actors abroad. Second, it will expand the research on the role in and reaction to the wars of the 1990s within diaspora communities. In contrast to most existing studies, which deal with ethno-nationally defined groups as separate phenomena, I will focus on an outspokenly anti-nationalist setting where the category of ethno-nationality was not invoked as the relevant marker of difference. In so doing, I want to develop a more differentiated understanding of how the post-Yugoslav wars affected people with a (post-)Yugoslav background living abroad. While the wars certainly caused friction among actors from the (post-)Yugoslav space in Vienna, a fragmentation of migrants' relations along ethno-national lines was not the necessary and only outcome of the wars, but rather a complex and contested process.

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