

WORKSHOP

International Friendship within and beyond the Iron Curtain

18.-19. 4. 2024

Institute of Contemporary History
Ljubljana



International Workshop
**INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP WITHIN AND BEYOND THE IRON
CURTAIN**

Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana
18. and 19. April 2024

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The workshop is held as part of the project *Prospects and Boundaries of International Friendship: Polish-Yugoslav Relations between 1956 and 1968* and the research programme *Political History*, both funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

This workshop aims to explore relations among countries both within and beyond the Iron Curtain through the lens of international friendship. In diplomatic and political history, as well as in public discourse, the term 'friendship' is often employed casually to describe various types of interstate relations, ranging from partnerships lacking close bonds to special relationships with dense institutionalized ties. In recent years, however, international relations scholars have acknowledged the analytical and explanatory value of international friendship, recognizing it as a relationship extending beyond conflict-free interstate dynamics. In this regard, international friendship is interpreted as a bilateral relationship that emerges from intersecting collective identities and revolves around shared projects. A friendship bond is marked by a high degree of trust and affect, embedded in close cooperation at different levels of state and society, and expressed in a range of friendship practices (Koschut and Oelsner, 2014; Berenskoetter and Van Hoef, 2017).

The intention of the workshop is to expand the research on international friendship from international relations into the realm of history, particularly by broadening the predominantly Western-focused studies within socialist and Cold War contexts. Scholars are invited to employ conceptual content on international friendship to investigate the processes of formation, maintenance, reproduction, and dissolution of friendship bonds, and to assess their impact on interactions, behaviors, and decision-making at different political and social levels. By examining specific case studies, scholars are encouraged to add valuable empirical insights to the expanding field of (international) friendship studies.

The main objectives of the workshop are to explore the identity- and trust-building processes between states and their peoples, to examine the (de)integrating and (de)mobilizing power of international friendship, and to analyze the interaction between normative factors and strategic or material interests in interstate and transnational relations.

DAY 1, Thursday, 18 April 2024

8:45-9:15 – Registration and Morning Coffee

9:15-9:30 – Opening remarks

9:30-11:30 – KEYNOTE LECTURES

- **Yuri van Hoef** (Erasmus University Rotterdam) – *Mobilizing Narratives and Grand Projects: Making sense of Friendship in International Relations*
- **Ruža Fotiadis** (Humboldt University of Berlin) – *United against 'The Horsemen of the Apocalypse' and 'The Chessmen of the Devil': The Greek–Serbian Friendship during the 1999 NATO Intervention in Yugoslavia*

11:30-12:00 – Coffee Break

12:00-14:00 – PANEL 1

Friendship as diplomacy: Between normative and instrumental

Chair: Szabolcs László (Institute of History, Research Centre for Humanities, Budapest)

- **Mateja Režek** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Friendship at the Service of National Interests: Yugoslav-Israeli Secret Relations during the Cold War*
- **Žiga Smolič** (University of Ljubljana): *Long live the Friendship of Egypt and Yugoslavia! Between Idealism, Political Friendship and Patronage*
- **Jure Ramšak** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Debts: Killers of the Yugoslav-African Non-Aligned Friendship?*
- **David Ilmar Lepasaar Beecher** (University of Tartu): *Imagining a Post-Soviet World Order: Dzhokhar Dudayev, Linnart Mäll and the Post-Stalinist Friendship of the Peoples*

14:00-15:00 – Lunch Break

15:00-17:00 – PANEL 2

Friendship in the battle for hearts and minds

Chair: Jelena Đureinović (University of Vienna)

- **Oleksandr Avramchuk** (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin): *How to Befriend an Enemy: A Strange Case of Polish-U.S. Intellectual Entanglement*
- **Charlotte Murphy** (University of Freiburg): *West German foreign policy goes 'underground': Friendships between West German diplomats and unofficial Soviet artists (1970s–1980s)*
- **Nicoleta Șerban** (University of Bucharest): *Mihnea Berindei, a human rights activist acting outside the Iron Curtain (1977–1989)*
- **Zala Pavšič** (Democracy Institute, Central European University, Budapest): *"Neither Friend nor Foe!" Taras Kermauner's Letters to a Serbian Friend*

18:00 – Dinner (Lajbah Pub)

DAY 2, Friday, 19 April 2024

9:00-9:30 – Morning Coffee

9:30-11:00 – PANEL 3

Friendship foundations: Shared identities and common projects

Chair: Nina Vodopivec (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana)

- **Maja Lukanc** (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana): *Brothers in Arms, Friends in Peace: Legacy of WWII in the post-war Polish-Yugoslav relations*
- **Borut Klabjan** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Friends will be Friends: Italo-Yugoslav town twinning and transnational friendship in the Cold War and beyond*
- **Jelena Đureinović** (University of Vienna): *Military Traditions of Our People: Narratives of Common History and Channels of Friendship between Socialist Yugoslavia and Postcolonial Africa*

11:00-11:30 – Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 – PANEL 4

Friendship communities: Epistemic and ideological networks

Chair: Zala Pavšič (Democracy Institute, Central European University, Budapest)

- **Szabolcs László** (Institute of History, Research Centre for Humanities, Budapest): *Transnational Friendships across the Iron Curtain: Hungarian and American Music Teachers Promoting the Kodály Method (1960s–70s)*
- **Ondřej Holub** (Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences): *Searching for Socialist Humanism in Kafka's Lands: On Bonds and Friendship of Czech and Austrian Communists in the 20th Century*

- **Georgia Taygeti Katakou** (European University Institute, Florence): *Comradely Intimacies and the Greek Communist Left (1974–1989)*

13:00-14:00 – Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 – PANEL 5

Friendship as experience: Academic and student exchange

Chair: Kornelija Ajlec (University of Ljubljana)

- **Jason Lemberg** (University of Wuppertal): *Foreign Currency for a Glass of Munich Beer: Contact and Exchange between Mathematicians and Mechanics from Socialist Countries and the FRG*
- **Derya Bozat** (University of Bern): *From Nigeria to New Friendships in the Soviet Union: Educational Mobility during the Cold War (1960–1991)*
- **Dragomir Bondžić** (Institute of Contemporary History, Belgrade): *The International Friendship Clubs at the Yugoslav Universities during 1950s and 1960s*

15:30-16:00 – Coffee Break

16:00-17:00 – FINAL DISCUSSION

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Mobilizing Narratives and Grand Projects: Making sense of Friendship in International Relations

Yuri van Hoef (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

This lecture offers scholars of friendship a theoretical framework to interpret friendship in international politics. Drawing upon my previous research, friendship is identified through five key elements: (1) affect (2) grand project(s) (3) altruistic reciprocity (4) moral obligations (5) equality. This framework is deployed and demonstrated to make sense of several high profile personal friendships between state leaders near the end of the Cold War. Through making sense of friendship, it becomes apparent that the friendships between Kohl and Mitterrand, Bush and Gorbachev, Major and Bush, played a crucial role in ending the Cold War. Thus, scholars of foreign politics, historically and contemporary, have much to gain by not only studying occurrence of friendship but by further pinpointing what exactly makes a close personal relationship in politics a powerful friendship.

In the second part of the lecture, examples drawn from the friendships of Kohl and Mitterrand, Bush and Gorbachev, Major and Bush, illustrate how these different groups of friendships dealt differently with the challenges of friendship, especially when it comes to questions of power and security. Thus, in the second part of this lecture attention is also given to the negative sides of friendship in politics, which include such issues as exclusion and othering. In the end, scholars will come away with both a comprehensive understanding of what friendship in politics is, and with a concrete theoretical framework of how to study friendship in international relations.

United against “The Horsemen of the Apocalypse” and “The Chessmen of the Devil”: The Greek–Serbian Friendship during the 1999 NATO Intervention in Yugoslavia

Ruža Fotiadis (Humboldt University of Berlin)

The notion of a Greek–Serbian friendship as a traditional bond evolved in the public discourse of both Greece and Serbia during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Based on alleged commonalities, feelings of threat and experiences of marginalisation, the sentiment of a special kind of solidarity and proximity between the two nations gained traction, especially in Greece. This holds particularly true during the 1999 NATO intervention in Yugoslavia. The Greek public vehemently opposed the bombing, which was interpreted as an unjustified war against the Serbian people. Both Greece and Serbia were perceived as “underdogs” in the “machinations of the Great Powers”.

The paper investigates the phenomenon of Greek–Serbian friendship against the background of the 1999 NATO intervention, focussing particularly on the strong anti-Western sentiments that mobilised the Greek public at the end of the 1990s. Based on recent scholarship in the field of international relations, “friendship” is used as an analytical category instead of merely as a metaphor and applied to the historical study of Greek-Serbian relations during the Yugoslav Wars. This approach allows us to perceive the Greek-Serbian friendship of the 1990s as symbolically and affectively charged by defining moments that are ritualised and integrated into the national narratives of both sides. Going beyond the realm of bilateral relations, it shows how the actors involved in the making of the Greek-Serbian friendship created a shared space of communication in which they narrated their history, interpreted the present and anticipated the future. However, this exclusive space of shared perceptions, mutual affirmation and special solidarity ultimately led to self-isolation in the international arena, the distortion of information and the legitimisation of violence, as the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo have dramatically shown.

Friendship at the Service of National Interests: Yugoslav-Israeli Secret Relations during the Cold War

Mateja Režek (Science and Research Centre Koper)

From the late 1950s onwards, Yugoslavia pursued a high-profile policy towards the Middle East, characterized by the support for the non-aligned Arab countries, particularly Egypt, and subsequently, the Palestinian liberation movement. Concurrently, this policy manifested in a resolute rejection of Israeli expansionism and manifestations of US imperialism. During the Six-Day War in 1967, Yugoslavia even severed diplomatic relations with Israel as a demonstration of solidarity with Egypt and did not re-establish them until its dissolution in 1991. However, clandestine contacts between Yugoslavia and Israel persisted.

The paper will examine the covert interactions between Yugoslavia and Israel spanning from the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine in 1948 until the 1980s. Key figures in these secret contacts were a high-ranking official of the Yugoslav State Security Service Edo Brajnik and Israeli agent Shaike Dan, who forged enduring bonds of friendship over decades of collaboration. Focusing on Yugoslav-Israeli relations, the paper aims to investigate, on the one hand, the impact of intelligence services in fostering inter-state cooperation, and on the other hand, the complex interplay between friendship and national interests, seeking to understand whether the friendship acted as a mere instrument subordinate to state interests or played a co-formative role in shaping national policies.

“Long live the Friendship of Egypt and Yugoslavia!”: Between Idealism, Political Friendship and Patronage

Žiga Smolič (University of Ljubljana)

The proposed presentation would focus on the diplomatic connections between Egypt and Yugoslavia in the early 1960s, a period seen as the broader peak of their bilateral relations. The aim is to outline the disparities between the officially promoted narrative in Yugoslavia (related to the great personal friendship between President Josip Broz Tito and Gamal Abdel Nasser) and the challenges that have accompanied the efforts that were made to strengthen the ties between the two nations.

The paper will shed light on different aspects of the challenges associated with mutual ideological and institutional cooperation that were aiming to meet political expectations, and try to clarify the discourses that sought to explain these relations in an abstract ideological, or historical manner, both within Yugoslavia and – to a lesser extent – in Egypt.

Debts: Killers of the Yugoslav-African Non-Aligned Friendship?

Jure Ramšak (Science and Research Centre Koper)

As recently demonstrated by Nemanja Radonjić (2023), the Yugoslav quest for an “alternative to the colonial discourse” (Todorova) found its most fertile ground in Africa, often referred to as “the non-aligned continent”, where numerous political friendships were forged, based on newly identified commonalities and the establishment of political, economic, and cultural connections. The Yugoslav politicians, while not entirely divorced from the global discourse of “Afropessimism” in the 1980s, were among those prominent figures of the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 who maintained a steadfast belief that individual national interests could be reconciled with the shared objectives (such as collective self-reliance) within this progressively

diverse coalition. The debt crisis of the early 1980s marked a watershed moment for Yugoslavia and its partners from the least developed African countries, as it contributed to the recognition of a common normative framework that could potentially reform the global financial architecture. However, the issue of overdue receivables resulting from large-scale Yugoslav economic projects carried out in these countries soured even the comradely meetings at the highest levels. Analysing the records of meetings between post-Titoist leaders and their counterparts from Zambia and Tanzania, my paper will show how the shared narratives of a joint anti-colonial path from the 1960s and 1970s, along with the trust in the future of the North-South dialogue, were employed as discursive strategies to overcome this impasse. Nevertheless, as these manoeuvres often only led to short-term debt rescheduling, without addressing the structural reasons for the imbalanced exchange between Yugoslavia and its sub-Saharan partners, the issue became increasingly disturbing not only for the political and economic elites but also for Yugoslavia's general population, whose scepticism towards the non-aligned foreign policy grew in proportion to the decline of international and domestic socialism.

Imagining a Post-Soviet World Order: Dzhokhar Dudayev, Linnart Mäll and the Post-Stalinist Friendship of the Peoples

David Ilmar Lepasaar Beecher (University of Tartu)

Estonia's first Buddhologist Linnart Mäll (1937-2010) and Chechnya's first president Dzhokhar Dudayev (1944-1996) were unlikely friends. There was very little to link the Lutheran-born Estonian academic to the Red Army's Muslim commander of the secret Soviet Raadi airfield on the outskirts of Tartu, except for two things: (1) the brief time their paths crossed in Tartu on the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union and (2) the infrastructure, ideology and language of the Soviet Friendship of the Peoples in which they came of age. Mäll got to know Dudayev at the family's apartment on Friendship Boulevard just across Friendship Bridge

in the most Soviet part of Tartu (Annelinn) where they conversed in Russian and lamented their inability to speak one another's native languages. As a cofounder of the international Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization at the Hague in February 1991 and the first chairman of its General Assembly, Mäll helped Dudayev join the organization on behalf of Chechnya. This was just at the time that Dudayev was elected to the Chechen presidency following the hardliner coup in Moscow that marginalized Gorbachev, brought Yeltsin to power, and led to the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union a few months later. This paper uses the life stories, political worldviews, and friendship of these two remarkable figures to examine the structural possibilities and conceptual limits of the Post-Stalinist Friendship of the Peoples. At stake is the complicated relationship between official policies and private experience, especially the private experience of figures like Dudayev and Mäll, who thought of themselves as ardent anti-Soviets. Ultimately, it argues that friendship (more than class struggle) became the most important doctrine of Soviet world building and global integration in the postwar years, giving rise to a shared Herderian language of decolonization that stood in appreciative if sceptical relation to all the promises and ideals of First World Liberalism and Human Rights at "the end of history." At its most ambitious, one might argue that the language of the Friendship of the Peoples became for Soviet apparatchiks and dissidents alike a Second World alternative to First World Human Rights in the battle for the hearts and minds of the Third World in postwar global history.

Panel 2

FRIENDSHIP IN THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS

How to Befriend an Enemy? A Strange Case of Polish-U.S. Intellectual Entanglement during the Cold War

Oleksandr Avramchuk (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin)

This paper explores the intricate dynamics of the relationship between the United States and Communist Poland during the Cold War. It focuses on the impact of academic exchanges on the post-Communist environment, highlighting the strategies U.S. policymakers adopted after 1956 to improve relations with Poland's Communist regime and simultaneously prepare for a future post-Communist government. These strategies involved discreetly supporting the opposition without antagonizing Communist authorities, a method of gradual engagement intended to utilize the influence of technocrats crucial in modernizing Poland's economy. These technocrats, often connected to the West, emerged as agents of change, fostering economic development and a pro-Atlantic stance among political and cultural elites. American efforts in Poland included collaborative projects in various fields, such as sociology, history, and American Studies, engaging with technocratic elites while keeping ties with independent intellectuals. This approach aimed to win over the moderate elements within the establishment and forge a pragmatic alliance with the Polish elite, what Daniel Aaron, an early Fulbright scholar in Warsaw, described as a "Transnational Republic of Spirit."

Academic exchanges served as vital channels of communication during conflicts, leading to the emergence of "America's Fifth Column"—a group of pro-American academics and politicians advocating for Poland's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. While U.S. public diplomacy sought to soften Communist regimes, exchange alumni inadvertently acted as a "Trojan Horse" within Communist Poland, a phenomenon not seen in other Warsaw Pact nations. This project aims to elucidate how the U.S.

successfully cultivated friendly relations with former adversaries and the friendship practices used to forge alliances with dictatorial regimes. These intellectual ties cultivated a distinctive imagined geography of Polish-American friendship, shaping the viewpoints of today's Polish elites on global alliances and establishing Poland as the world's foremost pro-American nation.

West German foreign policy goes 'underground': Friendships between West German diplomats and unofficial Soviet artists (1970s–1980s)

Charlotte Murphy (University of Freiburg)

In the 1970s and 1980s, against the backdrop of the Cold War and the 'Neue Ostpolitik', West German foreign policy in the Soviet Union was marked by support not only for Soviet dissidents but also for the 'cultural opposition', among them so-called 'unofficial artists' or 'non-conformists' who opposed Socialist Realism and were forced 'underground' by the authorities. As I will argue in my paper, this support was based on a number of personal encounters and friendships between diplomatic staff and unofficial artists which developed within intellectual circles and at unofficial gatherings in Moscow. I will take a look at the two artists Vadim Sidur and Boris Birger and their personal ties to diplomats such as West German ambassadors to the Soviet Union Helmut Allardt and Hans-Georg Wieck and their diplomatic entourages. These friendships did not remain in the underground with the artists being invited to soirées and special events at the West German embassy in Moscow in the role of the embassy's favoured "dissident artists" as they were referred to. The case of these friendships illustrates the new ties that were created across the 'Nylon Curtain' (G. Péteri) which served the interests of both parties: The diplomats exerted soft power through their contacts and secured channels of informal cultural information and access to important networks of dissidents and non-conformists. The artists in turn received support and new opportunities to advance professionally and gain international recognition while experiencing an

increase in relevant 'social capital' (P. Bourdieu) through their expanding networks. This contribution therefore focuses on the 'micro-agency' of the individuals involved in these friendships 'across the blocs' and analyses how these friendships were perceived by the respective actors and which benefits they expected to derive from their mutual interactions.

Mihnea Berindei, a human rights activist acting outside the Iron Curtain (1977–1989)

Nicoleta Șerban (Institute for the Investigation of the Crimes of Communism and the Memory of Romanian Exile)

Mihnea Berindei (1948–2016), had the power to influence behaviour and decision-making across various political and social levels, through the relationships he knew to attract and cultivate. Historian by profession, he left Romania in 1970, settled in Paris, where he had a rich political activity denouncing the violation of human rights in communist Romania. He is the founder of the "League for the Defense of Human Rights in Romania", based in Paris. All his actions were based on the friendships he had within the large international organizations for the defence of human rights, in the French left-wing political environment where he knew many people, in the French unions. Also, he had close friends in the editorial office of the great French publications such as *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Le Figaro*, managing to influence these newspapers, because he provided the journalists with information about his country. Therefore, through the connections he had, he managed to influence the image of the Ceaușescu regime in France. He also had friends from the Romanian exile in other countries, so he had "antennas" in other European countries. He also had friends from exile from other Eastern Bloc countries (Poles and Hungarians), with whom he organized various political actions. Absolutely everything he undertook was through his social flair. He had many friends even in Romania, who kept him informed of the general situation, but also friends among the opponents

of the regime, whom he supported from exile (he saved their life, by making them notorious cases in France!). At the Radio Free Europe, he had friends who always provided him with recent information, the information itself being extremely valuable in the 80s. Because he knew how to approach people, they trusted his word, being appreciated for his enormous capacity for documentation. He was also a good organizer of demonstrations and events to popularize cases of human rights violations, therefore a very active man in several directions.

"Neither Friend nor Foe!" Taras Kermauner's Letters to a Serbian Friend

Zala Pavšič (Democracy Institute, Central European University, Budapest)

This paper presents the dynamics of the interaction between Serbian and Slovene intellectuals during the period of the 1980s in socialist Yugoslavia. Special emphasis is put on a set of open letters by Taras Kermauner, Slovene essayist, dramaturgist and critic who was publishing his contributions containing his political views on open issues in Yugoslavia (e.g. the Albanian question, the emergence of (Serb) nationalism and specifically Slovenia's prospective path towards pluralism) in the Slovene journal *Dnevnik* while parts of these letters are translated and published in Serbian journals *Nin* and *Borba*. In 1989, his letters were published under the title Letters to a Serbian Friend. While his writings caused a fair amount of dismay among Serbian intellectuals and readership, this paper also deals with the mark his letters left in academic scholarship, especially in Milica Bakić-Hayden's reading and conceptualization of nesting orientalisms. Finally, this paper engages with the notions of friendship and brotherhood as used and interpreted by Kermauner and the way both concepts correspond to the broader historical tradition of friendship.

Panel 3

FRIENDSHIP FOUNDATIONS: SHARED IDENTITIES AND COMMON PROJECTS

Brothers in Arms, Friends in Peace: Legacy of the Second World War in Polish-Yugoslav relations, 1945–1968

Maja Lukanc (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana)

Poland and Yugoslavia shared a similar wartime experience during the Second World War, characterized by significant atrocities, occupation, and heroic resistance. In the subsequent decades, the collective memories of the struggles carried powerful emotional and symbolic weight for both Poles and Yugoslavs. This paper focuses on the role that the common wartime legacy played in Polish-Yugoslav bilateral relations. It draws on the concept of friendship in international relations, highlighting that shared collective narratives can significantly shape diplomatic practice and transnational interactions. While negatively perceived overlaps in the collective narratives of two political entities can lead to tensions, positively perceived overlaps, such as participation in a jointly fought war, can provide fertile ground for fostering shared identifications, enhancing mutual recognition, and strengthening the bonds of friendship between nations.

The paper delves into the impact of common wartime legacy on Polish-Yugoslav diplomatic practice, its promotion in cultural exchanges, and its integration into transnational encounters. It examines the perpetuation and evolution of the narrative of shared wartime experience: who were the narrators, how did the narrative evolve over time, and did frequent recollections of the common wartime legacy foster a sense of mutual belonging and friendship between Poles and Yugoslavs. By examining how this the narrative of shared wartime experience was shaped across various political and social strata, the paper seeks to underscore the impact of interactions and the agency of diverse actors in shaping bilateral relations within communist regimes.

Friends will be Friends. Italo-Yugoslav town twinning and transnational friendship in the Cold War and beyond

Borut Klabjan (Science and Research Centre Koper)

International friendship is often studied through bilateral agreements between states, mutual visits of presidents, and through the inclusion of individual countries in international networks. However, analysing forms of intense cooperation at the subnational level help us reconsidering the role of the State as the only generator of international relations. Regions, towns and grassroots civic initiatives not less than State institutions play their own role in shaping transnational politics. As emphasized by Antoine Vion, analysing sub-national entities, and municipalities in particular in their international activity is not of secondary importance, but instead represents a privileged viewpoint to study the social history of Cold War Europe. The Iron Curtain, however, often limited cooperation to countries with similar socio-political systems.

The case of Italo-Yugoslav relations after World War II shows us how historical resentments left ground to a more nuanced relationship, which often included multiple forms of cooperation, in which non-State actors such as regions, municipalities and towns played a crucial role. If State-to-State relations often followed rigid Cold War logics meetings between governors, mayors and town councils enabled Italy and Yugoslavia to cooperate beyond ideological restrictions. In many cases, personal contacts between ex-combatants played a central role, with this encouraging the formalization of relations at the institutional level. Those who fought side by side against the fascists and the German army during the war would often advocate for various types of co-operation after the war. Over time, such contacts were enriched by cultural and sporting themes, and often also by economic co-operation, making these meetings a springboard for twinnings between Yugoslav and Italian cities and municipalities, while in the 1990s they represented a platform for multiple forms of transnational solidarity during the Yugoslav wars.

Military Traditions of Our People: Narratives of Common History and Channels of Friendship between Socialist Yugoslavia and Postcolonial Africa

Jelena Đureinović (University of Vienna)

This paper explores the role of memory and legacies of the People's Liberation War in the context of Yugoslav non-alignment and decolonisation, focusing on actors, narratives and channels of friendship between Yugoslavia and the postcolonial world. The agency of the Yugoslav Partisans, the veterans, and their exchanges with the anti-colonial liberation movements are the focus of the paper, which combines the approaches of transnational history and memory studies. The paper centres on the narratives of the common struggle for liberation and the sharing of the Yugoslav experience of the NOR and the postwar building of state socialism in the postcolonial world. The Partisans constitute a valuable lens of analysis as key political actors in socialist Yugoslavia, leading agents of the culture of war remembrance and as women and men with a direct experience of war and revolution. Their agency in the decolonisation context transpired through, on the one hand, SUBNOR as a socio-political organisation involved in all solidarity initiatives and, on the other, individually as the Partisans occupied leading positions in state institutions, embassies, and other socio-political organisations. By investigating memories, legacies and veterans of the NOR during decolonisation, the paper probes a connected, or entangled, history of antifascism and anti-colonialism.

Panel 4

FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITIES: EPISTEMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL NETWORKS

Transnational Friendships across the Iron Curtain: Hungarian and American Music Teachers Promoting the Kodály Method (1960s–70s)

Szabolcs László (Institute of History, Research Centre for Humanities, Budapest)

In my presentation I will explore an example of international friendship from a micro-history perspective, focusing on educational collaborations across the Iron Curtain. Specifically, I will examine the transnational network of Hungarian and American music educators, centered on the worldwide promotion and adaptation of the “Kodály method” during the 1960s–70s. The Hungarian composer and musicologist Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) conceived of a novel approach to education with the aim to democratize the access to music through achieving universal musical literacy. Music teaching based on his ideas was implemented in the Hungarian educational system after 1945, generating a growing international interest by the 1960s, especially among pedagogues from the US. My research explores the rich web of interactions between Hungarian and US music educators that bridged the geopolitical divides of the period. Sharing the intention to make music comprehensible to all members of their societies, they forged professional ties through participation in the International Society for Music Education (ISME). Furthermore, they went from creating an informal voluntary network to producing formal international forums (like the International Kodály Symposium, 1973) and an umbrella organization (the International Kodály Society, 1975). Built from the bottom up by non-state actors, this transnational network was more than an ordinary epistemic community and a professional interest group, held together by intellectual, financial, and institutional ties. Reliant on various friendship practices; on trust, amity, cooperation, and respectful interchange; on the shared project of promoting the Kodály method; and the intersecting identities emergent from this shared vision,

this group coalesced into a cross-cultural and trans-continental affective community. I will argue, moreover, that the concept of transnational friendship can be used as a framework to better understand the dynamics and motivations of trans-systemic collaborations and knowledge transfers in the context of geopolitical antagonism.

Searching for Socialist Humanism in Kafka's Lands. On Bonds and Friendship of Czech and Austrian Communists in the 20th Century

Ondřej Holub (Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences)

The international communism as a political phenomenon of global importance should not be considered exclusively in terms of geopolitical "power games" or solely as a matter of oppressive power apparatuses, as it may appear through the lenses of the traditional Cold War dichotomy. The contradictory project of communism also refers to a multi-layered, heterogeneous social organisms of the communist parties. A political bodies that consisted of many personal and collective perspectives, shared within the mutual framework of the comradeship. As such, international communism framed a mental space of transnational political identity, where experiences, visions, and concepts were formulated during the mutual exchange of ideas and then transferred across the Iron Curtain. This was especially the case in the second half of the 1950s onwards, when international communism was going through a serious crisis of legitimacy. Various communist intellectuals across Europe, both in East and in the West, participated together in a process of a political reform, to restore the original idea of socialist humanism.

In my paper, I intend to address the origin, character, and significance of mutual bonds between the leading communist intellectuals in Austria and Czechoslovakia, particularly concerning the ideas and strategy that stood behind their shared political participation during the so-called post-Stalinist period. I aim to define the political and social praxis of their

mutual relations in the 1960s, which contributed quite significantly to the reform process of the Prague Spring in 1968, as well as to the emergence of Eurocommunism. Thus I aim to outline the transnational and transcultural intellectual universe of communism and Marxist humanism, as it developed in Central Europe during the sixties, to point out the significance of transnational communism for the intellectual history of European politics.

Comradely Intimacies and the Greek Communist Left (1974–1989)

Georgia Taygeti Katakou (European University Institute, Florence)

'There are other moments, moments of rage,' admitted Vaso, a 22-year-old Greek woman. The moments of rage — 'when my cousin shows me her wardrobe full of her dowry, even if she hasn't yet found her groom, [...] when I see tens of lonely and scared young girls waiting for an abortion'— are immediately followed by moments of 'happiness and joy when we catch up with my women's group, when we have a good time with my friends, when we sing in the protest'.² In this paper, I will focus on the Greek Communist milieu in the Metapolitefsi era and the ways in which political actors experienced and reflected on friendship, both within Greece and during moments of encounter with Communists from abroad. Examples of the transnational friendships that developed in this context are given by Zogia Chronaki, a member of the Greek Eurocommunists (KKE Interior). Indicatively, her personal archive contains notes from her 1979 trip to Italy and her interactions with the PCI and the *Unione Donne Italiane*. Her handwritten notes offer an abundant source of information both political and deeply personal.

Drawing on oral history interviews, as well as archival material from the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), I will focus on the emotional communities developed and nurtured within this political milieu. I will argue that friendship was a source of emotional reproduction, with radical and liberatory potential. Friendship, as a more expansive understanding of intimacy, provided an alternative framework

for relationships of care. Furthermore, I am interested in discussing the spatial constructions of emotional life in urban settings, as remembered by my interlocutors. This includes memories of organisational headquarters, cafes, festival spaces, streets, and living rooms. I propose a study of intimacies as interwoven with the political architecture of the spaces these political actors were welcomed in, as a way to write a history of emotions within the European Left in the 1970s and 1980s.

Panel 5

FRIENDSHIP AS EXPERIENCE: ACADEMIC AND STUDENT EXCHANGE

Foreign Currency for a Glass of Munich Beer: Contact and Exchange between Mathematicians and Mechanics from Socialist Countries and the FRG

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Personal contact and exchange. The joy of seeing each other again. Shared experiences. These and similar emotions are part of scientific networks. They appear again and again as motives in the correspondence of the heads of the Society for Applied Mathematics and Mechanics, especially in connection with the annual conference organization. The challenges, obstacles and disappointments that arose in this respect were particularly evident during the Cold War. This is of particular relevance for a Society whose leadership and membership were largely made up of representatives from both German states.

The silence of colleagues from the GDR was seemingly forced upon them. This was never quite clear in the centers of applied mathematics and mechanics in the FRG and a cause for uncertainty and frustration. While attempts to establish contacts were never abandoned, the Society seems to have paid particular attention to other socialist countries in what became a kind of evasive internationalization: The number of members from these states increased while members from the GDR left the Society. Encouraging and welcoming invitations were sent to young scientists from the Eastern Bloc states like ČSSR, USSR and Yugoslavia – often enough together with money to ensure their participation.

But what approaches and strategies did mathematicians and mechanics use in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s to get in touch with each other? Descriptions of personal contacts and exchanges with researchers in (internal) conference reports and in the related correspondence will be used to outline the experience of alienation and to find out more about the related assumptions, explanations and hopes involved. Special attention will be paid to the question of friendship: What was the effect

of long-term relationships and shared experiences? And what about the advice to take enough foreign currency for a Munich beer?

From Nigeria to New Friendships in the Soviet Union: Educational Mobility during the Cold War (1960–1991)

Derya Bozat (University of Bern)

Between 1960 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, more than 43,500 students from Sub-Saharan Africa graduated from Soviet universities, with Nigerians comprising approximately 12 percent. Their Soviet-sponsored studies constituted a crucial component of the educational "charm offensive," playing a pivotal role in Moscow's cultural diplomacy. The overarching goal was to establish a socialist and Soviet-friendly intelligentsia in postcolonial Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite three decades of educational mobility from the South to the East, the perspectives and agency of Nigerian students have received little attention. In particular, there exists a noticeable research gap regarding cultural encounters, such as friendships or experiences of racism. For the Workshop at the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, I will examine the developed friendships for Nigerians with Soviet and other international students. The daily lives of Nigerian students were intricately woven with interpersonal encounters, driven by housing arrangements and language barriers. Placement in student residences made contacts inevitable, and the deepening of Russian language skills was vital for living and learning behind the Iron Curtain. Consequently, international friendships have developed. To capture the personal experiences of former Nigerian students in the Soviet Union, I use conducted oral history interviews about their memories of interpersonal encounters and the dynamics of (absent) friendships. This comparative micro-level approach will offer new insights into the significance and limitations of international friendships forged behind the Iron Curtain.

The International Friendship Clubs at the Yugoslav Universities during 1950s and 1960s

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In the 1950s, the Yugoslav socialist state launched an ambitious education and scholarship project for foreign students as part of its foreign policy. The main features of this policy were manoeuvring between the competing blocs of the Cold War, advocating peace, disarmament and decolonization, as well as the rights of small and underdeveloped nations and states, from which the Non-Aligned Movement emerged in the early 1960s. Accordingly, the majority of foreign students in Yugoslavia came from Asian and African developing countries that had just freed themselves from colonial rule and had been involved in the Non-Aligned Movement since the early 1960s. The number of these students was constantly increasing, which raised questions about their social and everyday life, integration into a new environment, getting to know the country and people of Yugoslavia and building cooperation and friendship with local students and teachers, among other things.

An important role in this area was played by the International Friendship Clubs, which were founded at all Yugoslav universities, especially in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, but also at the newly founded universities in Sarajevo, Skopje, Maribor, Rijeka, Zadar and Niš. The clubs worked within the framework of the Union of Students of Yugoslavia and the National Youth of Yugoslavia. The clubs' activities were diverse: hosting and accommodating foreign students, holding occasional meetings, organizing lectures, discussions, cocktails, concerts, performances, New Year celebrations, organizing trips around Yugoslavia, etc. Based on archival material and press reports, the book traces the founding and work, the basic goals and tasks, as well as the fundamental difficulties and problems in the work of the International Friendship Clubs at Yugoslav universities, especially in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, in the 1950s and 1960s.



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