

NEWSLETTER

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

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Photo Sa(n)jam knjige u Istri



ZBORnik PRAKSA at the Pula Bookfair

The volume *ZBORnik PRAKSA aktivističkoga pjevanja. U povodu 10. obljetnice rada Zbora Praksa*, edited by Ana Hofman and Lada Duraković, and published in the book collection *CeKaPISarnica* a year ago ([Download PDF](#)), was part of the programme at the Pula bookfair *Sa(n)jam knjige u Istri*, on

2 December. The practice of activist singing was the topic of Eric Ušić's conversation with Ana Hofman and Edna Strenja, the leader of the Pula-based Praksa choir.

Round table on socialist heritage

On 8 December, a round table was held in Pula on the the topic of *Socialist heritage and the collectivity of labour*, organised by the County of Istria through the SOCRAT project and INTERREG VI-A Italy – Croatia 2021–27 programme. Participants included CKPIS members Igor Duda, Boris Koroman and Andrea Matošević, as well as Alen Sinkauz,

Nenad Sinkauz, Eric Ušić, and Davor Sanvincenti, with Vladimir Torbica acting as moderator. The project's goal is to encourage the collective memory of the local community in order to create more



Photo Glas Istre

Photo Istra24



authentic cultural and tourist experiences resulting from the triangular cooperation of artists, cultural and creative industries, and civil society organisations. The round table also announced the audio-visual performance titled *Ho-Ruk! Hop-Jan! Kompozicije kolektiviteta rada*, by Matošević and the Sinkauz brothers, which followed at the Istrian People's Theatre in Pula ten days later.

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH: Senna Šimek (pp. 8-9)

Photo S.B.



Schoolchildren at CKPIS

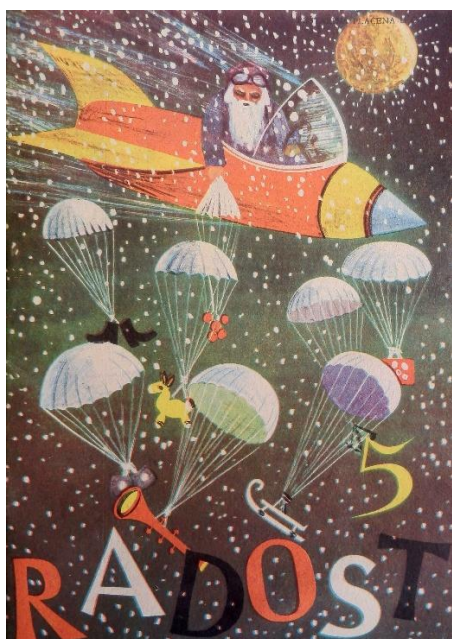
Shortly before the winter break, on 19 December, pupils from the History Group at Stoja Elementary School in Pula, led by their teacher Sonja Bančić, visited the Faculty of Humanities, the Department of History, and CKPIS. Igor Duda spoke to them about contemporary history research.

On shipbuilding in Pula and Gdynia

A few months ago, Srednja Europa from Zagreb released *U olujama transformacije. Dva brodogradilišta između socijalizma i Europske unije*, the Croatian translation of the book published and titled in English as *In the Storms of Transformation: Two Shipyards between Socialism and the EU*, and written by Ulf Brunnbauer (Regensburg), Philippa Ther (Vienna), Piotr Filipkowski (Warsaw), Andrew Hodges (Edinburgh), Stefano Petrunaro (Venice) and Peter Wegenschimmel (Hannover). On 22 December, as part of the public events programme of the Department of History in Pula, hosted and co-organised by the City Library, Brunnbauer and Igor Duda talked discussed the book and recent history of the shipbuilding industry in Pula and Gdynia, Poland.



Photo Pula City Library



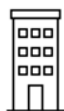
Best wishes for
the year ahead

CKPIS

Illustration: Radost, Zagreb, 1959/60

LOOK FOR CKPIS.UNIPU ON INSTAGRAM





HOUSING.YU

by Antun Dulibić

Busy December

In December 2025, the Housing.yu team brought the year to a close with lectures, media outreach, and internal knowledge exchange. This month's activities underlined the project's central aim: to approach mass housing in socialist Yugoslavia not only as an architectural and planning question, but as a field shaped by political contexts, economic constraints, institutional reforms, and everyday cultural practices.



A key highlight was the guest lecture by Professor Miles Glendinning (University of Edinburgh), delivered on 3 December 2025 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb under the title [*A Modern Vernacular? Mass Housing as a Place-specific European Heritage*](#). Framing large-scale post-war housing as



an under-recognised yet important aspect of Europe's everyday built heritage, Glendinning's talk constituted a first in the project's lecture series and provided a strong

comparative perspective on how "ordinary" residential environments become sites of memory, identity, and contested heritage and future. The visit also extended into the public media sphere: on 9 December 2025, Professor Glendinning appeared on Croatian Television's Third Channel in the cultural show [Art](#), widening the conversation beyond academic audiences and situating Housing.yu themes within contemporary public debate.

The month also featured the first internal Knowledge Transfer Workshop, held on 5 December 2025 at the Institute of Art History. Led by Centre member prof. Igor Duda, the workshop consisted of three lectures on the political, economic, and social history of socialist Yugoslavia, followed by an in-depth discussion. The workshop strengthened the project's shared conceptual vocabulary and ensured that historical context remains closely connected to the analysis of housing production and everyday life.

Finally, on 15 December 2025, the Institute of Art History hosted the public presentation of [VANIS](#) (Visual Artists Networks Information System) – a new open digital resource supporting relational research and data visualisation in the field of modern and contemporary visual art. This system will be upgraded and extensively used by the Housing.yu team in order to create a database of housing estates and many different actors interconnected to them.

Last but not least, this month brought about welcome news. Saša Vejzagić, PhD, a long-standing member of CKPIS, joined Housing.yu as a postdoctoral researcher. His work will examine the economic and political reforms that shaped housing construction, helping the project track how changes in governance and economics translated into the built environment. We warmly welcome Saša and wish him every success in this new role.



CONFERENCES AND CFP

Mobilisation and Community Formation in Minority and Diaspora Contexts: The “We” in Central and Eastern Europe, Freiburg, 30 September – 2 October 2026

The “We” is a commitment. Attributions and appropriations of belonging play a central role in the creation of community – they serve as markers of (self-)assurance, facilitating internal identification but also external demarcation. This community building effect has an inherent explosiveness: it is capable of emphasizing what ‘we’ have in common (Scheer 2022), but this demonstrative attitude also harbours populist potential. Initially broad and vague in conceptual terms, we therefore pay particular attention to communities, when they are called upon: war and crises, but also the need to find orientation after migration and to plan for the future to negotiate belonging(s). ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 1 March 2026

Performing Imagined Communities on Stage: On the Revival of Popular Music and Comedy in East-Central and Eastern Europe, Potsdam, 25-26 June 2026

The democratisation process and gradual opening of East-Central and Eastern European societies from the 1980s onwards enabled the comeback of a popular culture formerly marginalised, regimented, and repressed in socialist societies. Now, it broadly flooded the newly emerging commercial market economies. With its expressive and entertaining use of uncensored words and emotion, fostering experimentation, cross-border circulation, and cultural exchange, this revival of popular culture enabled the emergence of new local and transnational trends, actors, and audiences. New genres of folk music (Disco Polo in Poland, nomadic tunes in Hungary, or post-Yugoslav Turbo-Folk) and comedy formats enthused a large and broad public. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 10 January 2026

ASN European Conference: Reconfiguring National Identities amid Multiple Crises, Belgrade, 18-20 September 2026

The conference invites a broad range of papers and panels on ethnicity, ethnic conflict, national identity, nationalism, and related topics, with a geographic focus on Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Eurasia. As an interdisciplinary event, the conference welcomes contributions from anthropology, cultural studies, economics, geography, history, law, literature, political science, gender studies, psychology, sociology, and related fields, as well as interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies employing diverse methodologies. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 15 February 2026

Economic Changes Through War and Conflict, Florence, 25 May 2026

This year, the Economic History and Ideas Working Group's Workshop aims to unpack the impact of war in various historical contexts, digging deep into the consequences of conflict from the early modern to the contemporary period. Whether it is Randolph Bourne's assertion of "war as the health of the state" or Antonio Gramsci's famous characterization as "interregnum of morbid symptoms", war has long been recognized as a combination of destructive and creative processes that fundamentally alter socio-economic life. From a historical perspective, the economic footprint of war has always created significant change within affected societies across realms such as labor, budget, finance, gender dynamics, and many others. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 28 February 2026

Coping with Disappointments. Female Mobility between Expectations and Experiences (17th to 20th Centuries), Paris, 28-29 May 2026

It is indisputable that experiences of mobility and migration have been part of the reality of life for many women and girls – not only in recent history. The mobility of women, whether as daughters, wives, or widows, as workers, nuns, entrepreneurs, or activists, was associated not only with gender-specific expectations, but often also with specific experiences that varied depending on factors such as social and geographical origin, status, age, religious, ethnic, and family affiliation. The planned workshop at the German Historical Institute in Paris picks up on this and asks how historical actors reflected on, interpreted, and communicated experiences of mobility that contradicted previous expectations. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 31 January 2026

New Histories of the "North-South Conflict", Vienna, 7-9 July 2026

The popularization of the ciphers "North" and "South" for discussing global relations can be traced to a very specific historical moment: the 1970s "North-South dialogue", in which "developing countries" engaged "industrialized countries" in discussions over a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and associated projects. The demands that poorer countries articulated in this context were not necessarily new in this age of decolonization. Yet the richer countries' willingness to engage in discussion and make (limited) concessions on certain issues was unprecedented. While much recent scholarship has rightfully focused on this peak moment of the "North-South dialogue" in the 1970s and especially the intergovernmental networking and negotiations that surrounded it, the conference invites papers that explore its broader history, including prehistories and especially "legacies" in the 1980s to 2000s. ([Read more](#))

Application deadline: 15 January 2026



PUBLICATIONS

Sanja Petrović Todosijević, Martin Pogačar (eds.), *Peace, unconditional! Peace policies and practices in Yugoslavia and beyond* (Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije – Založba ZRC, Institut kulture i sećanja ZRC SAZU, Belgrade-Ljubljana 2025)

Today, peace is rarely discussed. It is not taken seriously. At best, it is understood as an insignificant and marginal “by-product” of political and economic processes, or indeed an obstacle to these very processes. In a culture that normalises violence and warfare – against people, animals, plants and the entire planet – and in a culture of endless exploitation of resources, both organic and inorganic, of space and time, peace has become decentralised and delegitimised. Essentially, it is portrayed as an obstacle and hindrance to “freedom, democracy and progress”. Peace is always conditional. The demand for the unconditional nature of peace should be understood as a key element in creating a world worth living in. This book-story is a contribution to the quest for such a world. ([Read more](#))

Elena Messner, Cristina Beretta, Goran Lazičić, Markus Gönitzer (eds.), *Women and Partisan Art. Aesthetics and Practices of Resistance in Yugoslavia and Carinthia* (transcript, 2025)

The resistance by partisan women in Yugoslavia and Carinthia (Austria), and particularly their artistic production, have not been acknowledged in the historical accounts of World War II. Their art was both a form of resistance and a culturally subversive practice, ranging from avant-garde aesthetics to traditional forms of folk art and handicraft. The cultural production by and subsequently about the Yugoslav and Carinthian women partisans includes literature, visual arts, film, photography, comics, textiles, press, theater, dance, and monument architecture. The contributors to this volume present this groundbreaking research to mark eighty years since the victory over Nazism and Fascism in Europe. ([Read more](#))



POSITIONS, GRANTS AND STIPENDS

Fellowships for Doctoral Students, Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz

The Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG) in Mainz awards fellowships for doctoral students in European history, the history of religion and other historical disciplines. The IEG funds PhD projects in European history from early modern to contemporary history. We are particularly interested in projects with a comparative or cross-border approach, on Europe in its relation to the wider world, on topics of intellectual and religious history, with digital tools and methods, or on environmental history. ([read more](#))

Application deadline: 15 February 2026

Two Part-Time Pre-Doctoral Researchers, Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg

With its primary regional focus on East and Southeast Europe, the Graduate School collaborates across the following disciplines: History, Literary, Language and Cultural Studies, Social Anthropology, Law, and Area Studies. Research at the GS OSES focuses particularly on interrelations and interdependencies between East and Southeast Europe and other parts of the world. The fixed-term contract is limited to 6 months, an extension for a further six months is intended. The successful candidates will be expected to develop an innovative PhD project and to write a funding application, to be submitted during the employment period, to securing the means to pursue a doctoral degree. ([read more](#))

Application deadline: 15 January 2026

PhD Position: The Cultural Vanguard of Workers' Movements: A Social History of East Central European Avant-Garde between the Two Wars, CEU, Vienna

This five-year ERC-funded research project examines how avant-garde art contributed to the formation of a workers' movement counterculture in East Central Europe and beyond. This project argues that East Central European socialist, including avant-garde periodicals, groups, and figures were instrumental both in shaping the avant-garde and the local branches of transnational workers' movements. Focusing on the newly formed nation-states after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including Austrian, Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, Yugoslavian, and Romanian lands, as well as parts of Poland and Italy, and related diasporas, the project highlights the shared imperial history that influenced subsequent counter-hegemonic tendencies and ongoing changes and departures in the interwar period, including avant-garde and socialist movements. ([read more](#))

Application deadline: 4 February 2026

KWI International Fellowships, Essen

The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in Essen is an interdisciplinary research institute for the humanities and social sciences in the tradition of institutes for advanced study. The KWI fellowship program is designed for excellent researchers from the humanities, cultural studies, and the social sciences. The institute provides fellows with modern infrastructure, office space, technical support and offers a library service, event and research management as well as administrative and communicative support. The programme is open to individual researchers only; applications from groups or teams will not be considered. ([read more](#))

Application deadline: 28 February 2026



LOOK FOR CKPIS.UNIPU.HR ON FACEBOOK



INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

by Tina Filipović

Senna Šimek is a PhD student at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb ([read more](#))



Senna Šimek

This summer, you caught our attention at the Doctoral Workshop with your presentation on the post-socialist transition in Croatia. From which perspective did you analyse the Croatian case of the 1990s?

I approached the Croatian post-socialist transition through the framework of competitive authoritarianism. Rather than assuming that Croatia immediately shifted toward liberal democracy after independence, I examined the 1990s as a decade shaped by a hybrid regime in which formal democratic institutions existed but were systematically undermined. My analysis focused on the key political, institutional, and societal factors that contradicted the narrative of an early democratic breakthrough – ranging from executive dominance and media repression to electoral

manipulation and constrained judicial autonomy. I argue that this was not merely a transitional phase, but a distinct regime type that persisted until the political turnover of 2000, which marked the formal end of competitive authoritarian practices and opened the path toward democratic consolidation.

Speaking of post-socialism, what instrumental role does the legacy of socialism play in contemporary Croatian politics of memory, and why?

I would say that the legacy of socialism functions as a kind of symbolic alterity in Croatia's dominant, state-supported politics of memory. Any engagement with the socialist past that is positive, or even insufficiently critical, often becomes a delegitimising label for scholars, activists, artists, journalists, or politicians. Socialism is routinely invoked as a buzzword to evoke the “dark days” allegedly left behind with the arrival of freedom in 1991. In this sense, the strong symbolic rejection of the socialist period operates as a convenient fig leaf – one that obscures many of the problems facing contemporary Croatian society, problems whose roots cannot be located in socialism or were, in fact, more effectively addressed during that very period.

Could you tell us more about the topic of your doctoral research? What makes it important to you personally and professionally?

In my doctoral research, I focus on the discourses about Croatia's policy toward the

war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the functions these discourses have. I am primarily a political scientist who has “specialized” in contemporary history, so my main research interest is to examine how interpretations of certain events are formed and how they are politically instrumentalized. In addition, I have worked quite a lot on the legacy of the ICTY, whose archive is excellent but relatively underused in Croatian historiography. Finally, Croatia’s policy toward the war in BiH is a rather taboo topic, and I’m personally inclined toward precisely those.



At the 11th Doctoral Workshop (Pula, 2025)

How has your work in an organization directly engaged with questions of dealing with the past and memory politics influenced your choice of research topic and approach to your doctoral studies?

The common perception is that young people are not interested in the 1990s. To some extent, that’s true because they are often overloaded with “prescribed memory” imposed through school and politics, and questioning that

memory can feel like a thankless task that they’d rather avoid. At the same time, even though some young people’s parents were very young or not even born during the war, the consequences of the war – and even more so, the consequences of Croatian policies in the 1990s – are still felt today, and they don’t care whether you were born in 1985, 1995, or 2005. Many realize this at some point and look for extra learning opportunities to help answer questions they don’t get addressed in school. Moreover, the point is not only to learn the exact chronology of the war events, all perpetrators of war crimes, or statistical data on the wartime economy. Topics related to the war and the post-war period are an excellent opportunity to study constitutional democracy, minority rights, media freedoms, political mobilization based on religious or national identities, alternatives to war, civic engagement, etc. Working with the Youth Initiative for Human Rights mainly made it easier to access information about the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s, which I had little exposure to at university. It also allowed me to connect with colleagues from the region, which helped me develop that famous multiperspectivity. Finally, the activist work that came with the Initiative helped me spot the sensitive – and sometimes unexplored – aspects of contemporary Croatian history that are worth studying.

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<https://www.unipu.hr/ckpis/en/newsletter>