

# ORGANIZERS

Anne Madelain and Jana Vargovcikova, with the assistance of Jelena Jokić.

This workshop is organized at the CREE (Inalco), in partnership with the GDR Connaissance de l'Europe médiane and with the support of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.



INALCO - Maison de la  
Recherche  
2 rue de Lille  
75007 Paris  
France



## WORKSHOP

JUNE 3 & 4 2025  
INALCO - MAISON DE LA RECHERCHE  
2 RUE DE LILLE  
PARIS, FRANCE

**LA DÉCENNIE 1990 : UNE MUTATION SYSTÉMIQUE ?  
SOURCES ET MÉTHODES À PARTIR DE TERRAINS EN  
EUROPE MÉDIANE**

*REVISITING THE SYSTEMIC CHANGE OF THE 1990S:  
SOURCES AND METHODS FOR FIELDWORK IN  
POSTSOCIALIST EUROPE*





## SUMMARY

The 1990s have long been identified as a period of unprecedented change. Today, the decade following the fall of the socialist regimes is being reinvestigated by sociologists, political scientists and, increasingly, historians, with a view to proposing new readings of its place in the history of Europe and of post-socialist societies, as well as of its legacies. This reinvigorated interest in the 1990s moves beyond the transition paradigm, primarily by emphasising continuities with the 1970s and 1980s, but also by focusing on moments of uncertainty and non-determination. This renewal of research agendas is particularly noticeable in the fields of business history, memory studies and multidisciplinary research into the narratives of “transition”.

This workshop is dedicated to discussing the question of the sources and methods available for research today on the 1990s, a period of technological shifts at a time when Central and Eastern Europe was undergoing ‘regime change’ and experiencing the radical transformation of institutions, public enterprises and other organisations, the emergence of numerous new non-state actors, the involvement of international organisations, and the shifting boundaries between the public and private spheres.

Drawing on ongoing research, the workshop brings together researchers from several disciplines (history, political science, sociology, economics) and generations working on the transformations of organisations (companies, trade unions and associations). The two days of the workshop are organized in two parts: presentations of participants’ ongoing research projects (first three panels on Tuesday 3 June) are followed by roundtable discussions on sources, methods and analytical categories, addressing the following issues, among others:

1. The archiving conditions of the period and the shifts in the legal status and types of organisations, but also the violence of the transformations (including the armed conflict in Yugoslavia, but also hasty privatisations or uncontrolled economic evolutions) that often lead to a hybrid character of the sources (e.g. few archived sources).
2. The second theme of the day will be to reflect on the experience with pluridisciplinary research on this period, that of historians, political scientists, sociologists, and economists, including a re-reading of research carried out in the 1990s and 2000s, as well as on the choices of analytical frameworks and conceptual categories for analysing this period.
3. The workshop brings together scholars working respectively on Central Europe and the Balkans to bring out the epistemic potential of a Central Europe-Balkans comparative perspective, with regard to the two regions’ contrasting “socialist pathways” and the common features of their “post-socialist pathways” (the ‘liberal’ turn, the rise of nationalism, the break-up of federal states).

## RÉSUMÉ

La recherche sur les transformations systémiques de la décennie 1990 en Europe médiane est en plein renouvellement. Après avoir été le terrain des économistes, politistes, anthropologues et sociologues, la période fait l'objet de l'attention nouvelle des historiens. Le renouvellement est d'abord passé par une attention aux continuités avec les décennies 1970 et 1980. Il passe aussi par un retour sur les moments d'incertitude et d'indétermination des années de transformation. Le renouvellement est particulièrement sensible en histoire économique (business history), dans les études mémorielles ou encore dans des recherches pluridisciplinaires sur les narratifs de la « transition ».

IL s'agit ici de discuter des sources et méthodes disponibles pour travailler, avec 30 ans de recul, sur cette période charnière marquée par le début de l'informatisation et de l'internet, alors qu'en Europe centrale et orientale post-communiste « en changement de régime », les institutions, les entreprises publiques et les autres organisations sont brutalement transformées dans des processus où émergent de nouveaux acteurs non étatiques, qui impliquent de nombreuses organisations internationales et rendent mouvantes les frontières entre le public et le privé.

Notre journée d'étude associe des chercheurs issus de plusieurs disciplines (histoire, science politique, sociologie, économie) et de plusieurs générations, qui revisitent les transformations des organisations - en particulier des entreprises, syndicats et associations. Elle est organisée en deux temps : des présentations de recherches en cours (premiers trois panels du mardi 3 juin) sont suivies par des tables rondes centrées sur les sources, méthodes et catégories d'analyse qui aborderont, entre autres, les questions suivantes :

1. Les conditions d'archivage de la période, dont la rupture dans la typologie des organisations. La violence des transformations (dont le conflit armé en Yougoslavie, mais aussi les privatisations hâtives ou les évolutions économiques incontrôlées) induit souvent un caractère hybride des sources.
2. L'opportunité de croiser les recherches d'historiens avec celles de politistes, sociologues, socio-anthropologues et de rediscuter les recherches menées durant les décennies 1990 et 2000, leurs cadres conceptuels et catégories d'analyse.
3. La comparaison de terrains en Europe centrale et dans les Balkans, potentiellement fructueuse et insuffisamment faite, en particulier celle des trajectoires postsocialistes (tournant, libéral, montée des nationalismes, éclatement des États fédéraux).

Langue de travail : Anglais

Cette journée s'inscrit dans le cadre du projet **Écrire, décrire analyser la mutation systémique de la décennie 1990 à partir de nouveaux terrains (entreprises, syndicats, associations)** (Axe 3 du CREE).

# PROGRAMME

## June 3, 2025

Maison de la Recherche de l'Inalco, 2 rue de Lille, salon Borel (1st floor)

**9:30 – 9:45** : Welcome

**9:45 – 11:00** : New readings of the systemic transformations of the 1990s – research projects I/*Nouvelles lectures des mutations systémiques de la décennie 1990 – chantiers de recherche I*

**Vítězslav Sommer** (Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague), *Deindustrialization between central planning and capitalism: The regional economy and Czechoslovak/Czech shoe industry in the 1980s and 1990s*

**Jana Vargovčíková** (CREE, Inalco), *Negotiating the perimeter of democracy: transformations of the Polish, Czech and Slovak Supreme Audit Institutions in the 1990s*

**Jelena Jokić** (CREE, Inalco), *The Serbian Private Sector and the Challenge of Systemic Transformation: A Retrospective on Three Decades of Privatization*

**11:00 – 11:15** : coffee break

**11:15 – 12:45** : New readings of the systemic transformations of the 1990s – research projects II/*Nouvelles lectures des mutations systémiques de la décennie 1990 – chantiers de recherche II*

**Goran Musić** (Research platform “Transformations and Eastern Europe”, University of Vienna), *Post-Non-Alignment through African eyes : Critical depictions of Yugoslav presence in Zambia in the local press of the late 1980s and early 1990*

**Joanna Wawrzyniak** (Center for Research on Social Memory, Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw), *Emotional Afterlives of Industry: Remembering Transformation in Post-Socialist Societies*

**Cécile Jouhanneau** (ART-Dev, Université Paul Valéry Montpellier), *Exploring the Bosnian war and post-war through transnational collective biography.*

**Lucie Raskin** (CREE, Inalco), *Being heard on the international political stage as one's state and society dissolve: Yugoslav non-state actors' lobby towards French and German foreign policies during the breakup of Yugoslavia.*

# PROGRAMME

## June 3, 2025

Maison de la Recherche de l'Inalco, 2 rue de Lille, salon Borel (1st floor)

**12:45 – 14:00 :** lunch break

**14:00 – 15:15 :** New readings of the systemic transformations of the 1990s – research projects III/*Nouvelles lectures des mutations systémiques de la décennie 1990 – chantiers de recherche III*

**Anne Madelain** (CREE, Inalco), *The compound fates of post-Yugoslav publishers in the early 1990*

**Veronika Pehe** (Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague), *Small-Scale Entrepreneurship as Social Practice in 1990s Czech Republic/Slovakia*

**Ivana Spasić** (Department of sociology, University of Belgrade), *Computerization under Sanctions: The Case of the Belgrade University Computing Center*

**15:15 – 15:30 :** Coffee break

**15:30- 17:30,** Roundtable I: Sources for research on the 1990s: archiving conditions, public and private archives, access to actors/ *Table ronde I : sources, archives, méthodes. Les sources pour la recherche sur les années 1990 - conditions d'archivage, archives publiques et privées, accès aux acteurs*

## **Participants:**

**Anne Madelain** (CREE, Inalco)

**Goran Musić** (Research platform “Transformations and Eastern Europe”, University of Vienna)

**Veronika Pehe** (Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)

**Assen Slim** (CREE, Inalco)

**Vítězslav Sommer** (Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)

**Ewa Tartakowsky** (ISP, Université Paris Nanterre – CNRS)

**Chair :** Jana Vargovcikova

# PROGRAMME

**June 4, 2025**

Maison de la Recherche de l'Inalco, 2 rue de Lille, salon de Sacy (2nd floor)

**9:30 – 11:45**, Roundtable II: Confronting analytical frameworks, conceptual categories and research methods between history, sociology and political science: exchanging experiences and perspectives/*Table ronde II : Confronter les cadres d'analyses, les catégories conceptuelles et les méthodes de recherche entre l'histoire, la sociologie et la science politique - échange d'expériences et de perspectives*

## Participants:

**Nadège Ragaru** (CERI, Science Po Paris)

**Cécile Jouhanneau** (ART-Dev, Université Paul Valéry Montpellier)

**Ivana Spasić** (Department of sociology, University of Belgrade)

**Joanna Wawrzyniak** (Center for Research on Social Memory, Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw)

**Chair: Anne Madelain**

**12:00 – 12:30** – Conclusions

**Revisiting  
the systemic change  
of the 1990s**

Sources and methods for fieldwork  
in postsocialist Europe

**WORKSHOP**

**3-4 June 2025**

INALCO- Paris, Maison de la Recherche,  
2 rue de Lille, 75007, Paris

In cooperation with the  
GDR Connaissance de l'Europe médiane

June 12-24, 1992

**Eastern Europe**

War in Yugoslavia: Estimated 1.1 million citizens are homeless

**The New Tent Cities**

By JOEL BRAND

ZAGREB, Croatia—For many the concept is an anachronism from World War II, but becoming a reality as Europe grapples with growing numbers of refugees in the ongoing civil war in Yugoslavia.

But no one seems to have a better solution for refugee housing. Government officials from 30 European Community nations and representatives of several international aid organizations met today in Vienna to discuss the growing flood of refugees, reviewing action plans, and parts of society.

In the war-torn areas of the old Yugoslavia, including Bosnia, that those refugees, most of them Muslims, are not safe. More an effort to reduce the ethnic map than just to return them home, it appears that the Serbs are

Stock Exchange: New offices but the same old place.

**Revitalizing Hungary's Stock Market?**

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l'Europe médiane

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# ABSTRACT

## **Deindustrialization between central planning and capitalism: The regional economy and Czechoslovak/Czech shoe industry in the 1980s and 1990s**

Vítězslav Sommer, Research Scientist, Czech Academy of Sciences

This research project examines the transformation of Central and Eastern European countries from centrally planned to market economies by focusing on the regional level. The research utilizes the Zlin region in the Czech Republic as a case study. The core focus is the deindustrialization of the regional footwear industry, particularly the company Svit (formerly Baťa). The research spans the last third of the 20th century, with a particular focus on the 1980s and 1990s, while also considering longer historical continuities. The aims include understanding how the regional economy changed, how regional actors shaped the new market system, and exploring the fate of large socialist enterprises and the emergence of new businesses. The research also examines the broader social and political implications of deindustrialization, including changes in employment, the gender dynamics of industrial work, and labor migration. By combining local and global perspectives, the project aims to fill a gap in Czech contemporary history research on post-socialist economic transformation and contribute to international debates on deindustrialization in developed industrial countries.

## **Negotiating the perimeter of democracy: transformations of the Polish, Czech and Slovak Supreme Audit Institutions in the 1990s**

Jana Vargovčíková, Associate Professor in Political science, INALCO (CREE)

How can looking at peripheral state actors shed light on the processes of appropriation of democracy during times of regime change? This presentation introduces a starting project focusing on how the state control/audit institutions, as well as controllers as professionals, remodelled their mission and methods in the uncertain times of political and economic transformation. The objective of this project is to deliver a comparative political sociology of the Polish, Czech and Slovak Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) at the beginning of the 1990s (1989-1994), as well as in later times of regime “turbulence”. The SAIs provide a neglected site of inquiry into how previously state security-surveilled bodies routinely controlling state enterprises reinvented themselves as independent auditors stopping (or not) at the gates of the market economy. The project thus looks into how these actors participated in broader negotiations of the perimeter of « the public realm » that they could legitimately control, in the context of the dislocation of the party-state (and of the state itself in the case of Czechoslovakia), of high stakes placed on independent state audit as an indicator of democratic consolidation, as well as of a starting internationalization of audit methods. The common features of the postsocialist cases - as for instance the weakly separated spheres of politics and of the developing market economy - shed light on the uncertainties and grey zones involved in the constant work of fabrication and legitimization of the public/private dichotomy in contemporary democracies.

# ABSTRACT

## The Serbian Private Sector and the Challenge of Systemic Transformation: A Retrospective on Three Decades of Privatization

Jelena Jokić, Doctor of Economics and Associate researcher, INALCO (CREE)

Between 1989 and 1999, Serbia experienced a chaotic transition toward a market economy within a unique national and international context. The 1990s were marked by the end of self-managed socialism, the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), and the resulting international isolation. The first privatization reforms, initiated in the late 1980s as part of Ante Marković's broad economic reform program, aimed to transform "social" ownership. However, under the regime of Slobodan Milošević, these processes were quickly diverted for clientelist and corrupt purposes. In a context of war, economic sanctions, and institutional crisis, privatization became a tool to enrich elites close to the regime. As a result, the 1990s saw widespread impoverishment, a significant rise in unemployment, and the expansion of the informal economy. It was only after 2000 that institutional and structural reforms emerged, enabling new waves of privatization and contributing to the strengthening of Serbia's private sector. This talk aims to shed light on the issues and consequences of this pivotal period for the Serbian economy.

## Post-Non-Alignment through African eyes : Critical depictions of Yugoslav presence in Zambia in the local press of the late 1980s and early 1990

Goran Musić, Research Fellow, University of Vienna

The 1990s did not usher transformations solely within the Eastern European societies, they also reshaped their alliances with developing nations in the Global South. The Non-Aligned Movement is a case in point as one of the prime instances of transnational initiatives for mutual collaboration in the peripheries, which lost its *raison d'être* after the Cold War. As historians of "socialist globalization" have shown, 1989 signaled a "return to Europe" in former Eastern Bloc with oppositional political forces seeing solidarities with the Third World as a geopolitical adventurism of corrupt communist regimes (Mark, Kalinovsky and Marung 2020). However, researchers rarely pose the question of how the actors in the Global South perceived this shift. This presentation will tackle the African views on rupturing relations with the Eastern European countries by presenting the coverage of Yugoslavia on the pages of Zambian press in the early 1990s.

# ABSTRACT

## Emotional Afterlives of Industry: Remembering Transformation in Post-Socialist Societies

Joanna Wawrzyniak, Professor of Sociology, Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw

What happens when memories of working in industry are filtered through the fractured landscape of post-socialist transition? Poland and Lithuania offer a compelling comparison. Although both countries underwent decline of industry, Poland's labor movement remains central to national memory, whereas Lithuania's industrial past is marginal, entangled with continuous desovietization process. In my presentation, I will give an outline of the new project that plans to illuminate the emotions of post-socialist industrial memory through close readings of communicative memory (biographical interviews) and cultural memory (museum exhibitions and heritage activist interventions). The project intends to examine what narratives about socialism and capitalism these memories carry and how they challenge or reinforce dominant political narratives. Rather than discussing nostalgia and trauma, it asks: how do moral emotions – such as pride, resentment, guilt or shame – relate to what is remembered, institutionalised or forgotten? Who has the right to feel, what emotions are remembered and what are considered legitimate? The project introduces the concept of mnemonic emotion narratives – stories that encode moral evaluations of the past through emotional expression. By juxtaposing communicative memory with cultural memory, we plan to reveal the tensions between lived experience and its institutional framing.

## Exploring the Bosnian war and post-war through transnational collective biography

Cécile Jouhanneau, Associate Professor of Political science, University Paul Valéry Montpellier

What does the fate of a group of acquaintances affected by an armed, economic or environmental crisis provide in terms of understanding the changes brought about by a profound social upheaval? The aim of my current research project is to retrace the professional and, more broadly, biographical trajectories of a group of classmates whose schooling was brutally interrupted by the outbreak of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the spring of 1992. In an approach inspired by micro-history, I attempt to retrace, in their context, the professional, migratory and social trajectories of a vocational high school class in a medium-sized town in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina. By collecting private archives (correspondence, photographs, diaries) and conducting individual biographical interviews, I endeavour to reconstruct their practices, the recomposition of their relations and also the social structuring of this group of acquaintances. The exploratory biographical interviews conducted since January 2023 reveal multiple social, spatial and professional displacements, as well as long histories of differentiated relationships to the international, to exile and to the future. The aim of the study is to understand the social conditions under which the comrades were dispersed, during the 1990s and after, as well as the trajectories of those who remained despite the armed violence and the profound uncertainty of the war aftermath. In this way, I hope to shed light on the social decompositions and recompositions produced by the experience of violence, but also on the continuity of certain regulations and institutions, and finally on their links with other major transformations, such as a country's integration into globalised capitalism.

# ABSTRACT

## Being heard on the international political stage as one's state and society dissolve: Yugoslav non-state actors' lobby towards French and German foreign policies during the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Lucie Raskin, PhD student, INALCO (CREE)

From 1991 onwards, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia entered a process of violent state dissolution, intrinsically linked to the break-up of the societies involved in and confronted by the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Against this backdrop of chaos and the collapse of the Communist regimes in Central Europe from 1989 onwards, numerous (post-)Yugoslav non-state actors defending antagonistic positions and interests emerged and participated in the political and societal systemic changes underway. Some of these groups, such as associations and political parties, undertook to defend their cause and their project on the international political stage, with European public players who had the means to act militarily, politically and socially in Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The aim of this research, which is being pursued as part of a doctoral thesis in history, is to understand what is at stake in the interactions between these groups and French and German public actors at a time of upheaval in political and axiological reference points in Yugoslavia and Europe. Therefore, it is interested in the composition and transformations of the international networks of these Yugoslav players since the 1980s, as well as the evolution of their different strategies, their hopes and their influence on French and German foreign policies. This study will be based largely on archival sources and on the analysis of interviews. A transdisciplinary socio-historical approach will be used to map the links between these players, and case studies will also be carried out in order to understand and compare the different issues at stake in these lobbies.

## The compound fates of post-Yugoslav publishers in the early 1990

Anne Madelain, Associate Professor in contemporary history, INALCO (CREE)

In the decaying Yugoslavia of the early 1990s, the book industry was disrupted by the violent fragmentation of the federation and several armed conflicts, but also by the dismantling of the socialist production/distribution system, and the beginning of the technological revolution.

My presentation looks at the diversity of actors involved in book publishing during this crucial period, and the key role played by individuals, whether working for still public publishing groups or new small private companies, institutions, associations, or foreign organizations (such as the Soros Foundation). Examining this moment of brutal transformation and uncertainty, which forces players to improve, invent and experiment, also sheds light on the "recycling" of professional practices and networks.

My presentation aims to introduce a project investigating the reorganization of the post-Yugoslav book ecosystem, first in the constrained and violent context of the 1990s, then after 2000 in a fragmented political, economic, and cultural space, where the circulation of books and authors persists and even renews itself. The book publishing ecosystem is a fruitful microcosm for analyzing more global social and political dynamics, such as the systemic transformation of the 1990s, changes in narratives and the symbolic construction of states.

# ABSTRACT

## Small-Scale Entrepreneurship as Social Practice in 1990s Czech Republic/Slovakia

Veronika Pehe, Research Scientist, Czech Academy of Sciences

This presentation aims to introduce a project investigating the history of small-scale private enterprise in Eastern Europe since 1989. Rather than focusing on economic history, however, the project is interested in small-scale entrepreneurship as a social practice embedded in distinct imaginaries, values and moral justifications. Drawing on biographical and semi-structured interviews with individuals from the Czech Republic and Slovakia who engaged in entrepreneurial activities before and after 1989, the project explores how small-scale entrepreneurs adapted socialist-era informal and illicit business practices after 1989. The continuity of these practices had implications for the business culture of the 1990s, which is associated with criminality in both vernacular memory and public discourse, as well as for the perceived legitimacy of the post-1989 order among a social group that was supposed to be one of the main beneficiaries of postsocialist economic transformation.

## Computerization under Sanctions: The Case of the Belgrade University Computing Center

Ivana Spasić, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Belgrade

The paper provides a sketch of a historical-sociological and institutional analysis of the first years of the Belgrade University Computing Center, created in 1992, just weeks before the introduction of international sanctions against Serbia for its role in the Bosnian war. From the very beginning, the Center was hemmed in between two contradictory trends: the computer and internet revolution taking place globally at the same time; and Serbia's international isolation, enforced from the outside by universally upheld UN sanctions, as well as from the inside by Milošević's authoritarian and xenophobic regime.

On the basis of the initial research results, we may describe the Center's early development as being determined by a series of binaries: closedness vs. openness; academic field (autonomy) vs. political field (control); commercial vs. non-commercial; the public good vs. private gain (corruption); institutional inertia vs. change; older vs. new generations; structural constraints vs. agency of key actors.

# PARTICIPANTS

- **Jouhanneau, Cécile** - Associate Professor of Political science, University Paul Valéry Montpellier
- **Jokić, Jelena** - Doctor of economics and associate researcher, INALCO (CREE)
- **Madelain, Anne** - Associate Professor in contemporary history, INALCO (CREE)
- **Musić, Goran** - Research Fellow, University of Vienna
- **Pehe, Veronika** - Research Scientist, Czech Academy of Sciences
- **Ragaru, Nadège** - Research Director, Sciences Po Paris
- **Raskin, Lucie** - PhD student, Inalco (CREE)
- **Slim, Assen** - Professor of Economics, INALCO (CREE)
- **Sommer, Vítězslav** - Research Scientist, Czech Academy of Sciences
- **Spasić, Ivana** - Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology, University of Belgrade
- **Tartakowsky, Ewa** - Research Scientist, CNRS, ISP - Nanterre
- **Vargovčíková, Jana** - Associate Professor in Political science, INALCO (CREE)
- **Wawrzyniak, Joanna** - Professor of Sociology, Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw, Director of the Center for Research on Social Memory

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!