

Politics and Society in Early Soviet Russia: View from the Hoover Library & Archives

During the winter quarter of 2023, Hoover Research Fellow and Lecturer Bertrand M. Patenaude taught a class that focused on the American relief mission to Soviet Russia during the famine of 1921 to 1923. The course delved into the early history of Soviet Russia (1917-1924) using archival collections, digital records, and rare books and periodicals from the Hoover Library & Archives, with particular emphasis on the papers of the American Relief Administration and the Soviet famine of 1921. Students enrolled in the course were provided with boxes containing archival materials sourced from Stanford's Hoover Institution Library & Archives. The course offered students a unique opportunity to explore a forgotten chapter of US-Russian history and develop an understanding of working with primary documents and the inner workings of an archive. According to Patenaude, the students were so engaged in their exploration of the materials that he had difficulty convincing them to close the boxes, as reported by the [Stanford Report](#). Anna Pikarska, a first-year student majoring in History, noted the exceptional nature of the course, stating, "This class was different because we saw the entire operation of the Hoover Institution." Similarly, Sorcha Whitley, a senior studying International Relations, highlighted the intimate perspective

gained from working in the archives, noting that it offers a more personal view of a historical period compared to reading a textbook. The Bread + Medicine project, which includes an exhibition, a speaker series, a directed reading course, and a course introducing students to archival research, now showcases some of the students' research.



Inoculation of children with the tetra vaccine at the ARA kitchen on Gagarin Street in Petrograd, spring 1922. From the ARA Russian operational records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives

New Yugoslav Studies

This academic year saw the inauguration of the New Yugoslav Studies Reading Group, an interdisciplinary group of Bay Area students and scholars interested in the study of the socialist Yugoslavia. Bringing together faculty, students and affiliated scholars from UC Berkeley and Stanford, the group meets monthly, alternating between the two campuses. At its meetings, the group focuses on the analysis of a single text which members select collaboratively and in advance, sometimes with the author in attendance. Group members also participated in a range of related events hosted by Stanford CREEES and UC Berkeley's Institute for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ISEEES), including film screenings and guest lectures. In 2022-23, the group organized and participated over 15 events, including those focusing on the work of Stanford scholars Jelena Batinić, Branislav Jakovljević, Srđan

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– Filip Sestan, Graduate Student, Slavic Languages and Literatures, UC Berkeley

Keča and Pavle Levi. The "new" in the "New Yugoslav Studies" refers not only to the renewed scholarly interest in the country that no longer exists, but also to a methodological orientation shared by many of its members: an unwillingness to accept the fall of Yugoslavia as the only lens through which its history is to be viewed.

As an outgrowth of these activities, spearheaded by Djordje Popović, Assistant Professor of South Slavic Studies at UC Berkeley and Bojana Videkanić, Assistant Professor at

University of Waterloo, a new Yugoslav Studies Association will be inaugurated at the upcoming Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) annual convention in November 2023. This interdisciplinary organization will be dedicated to the study of Yugoslav state, culture, and society from a transnational perspective and to the facilitation of critical scholarly inquiry and exchange of knowledge about Yugoslavia among researchers, teachers, and students of Yugoslavia from across diverse academic, national, and linguistic backgrounds.

New Yugoslav Studies 2022-23 Events

- **Reading group:** Darko Suvin, *Splendour, Misery, and Possibilities: An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia*
- **Reading group:** Pavle Levi, *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema*
- **Film screenings:** Cinematic Homelands
- **Film screening:** Filip Sestan and Zach Hicks, "Politics and Praxis in New Yugoslav Film: *Early Works* by Želimir Žilnik"
- **Reading group:** Branislav Jakovljević, *Alienation Effects: Performance and Self-Management in Yugoslavia, 1945-1991*
- **Reading group:** Branko Horvat, "Yugoslav Economic Policy in the Post-War Period: Problems, Ideas, Institutional Developments"
- **Reading group:** Miroslav Krleža, "Speech at the Writers' Congress in Ljubljana"
- **Guest Lecture:** Bojana Videkanić, "Yugoslav People's Art: Alternative Artistic Practices in Socialism"
- **Reading group:** Katja Praznik, *Art Work: Invisible Labour and the Legacy of Yugoslav Socialism*
- **Film screening:** Srdjan Keča, *Museum of the Revolution*
- **Panel at the Berkeley-Stanford Conference:** Branislav Jakovljević, Blaze Joel, and Djordje Popović
- **Reading group:** Susan Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment: The Political Economy of Yugoslavia, 1945-1990*
- **Reading group:** Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance*
- **Reading group:** Patrick Patterson, *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*

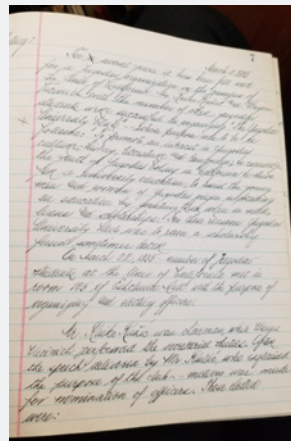
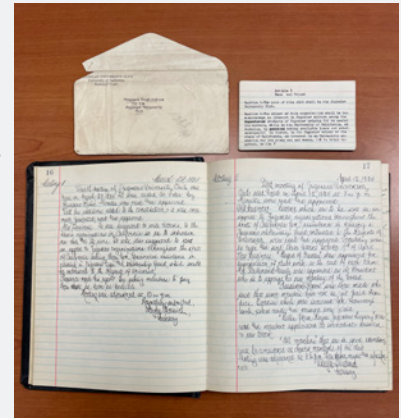
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– **Filip Sestan**, Graduate Student, Slavic Languages and Literatures, UC Berkeley

Futures Past

As our Spring Semester was ending and I was reflecting on the burgeoning energy behind the New Yugoslav Studies initiative at our two universities, a graduate student librarian at Berkeley Slavic reached out with a remarkable discovery she had just made. In the back of an old filing cabinet in the Slavic library, she discovered a leather-bound notebook from 1935 containing bylaws and handwritten minutes of a new-

ly-formed organization called the Yugoslav University Club. In the first entry on March 11, 1935, the club's secretary, Wayne Vucinich — then a 22-year-old graduate student at Berkeley and, from 1946, a member of Stanford faculty and director of CREEES (1972-1985) — introduced the new organization:



"For several years it has been felt need for a Yugoslav organization on the campus of the Univ. of California. Mr. Raiiko Ružić and Wayne Vucinich, with [a] number of other Yugoslav students were successful in organizing 'The Yugoslav University Club' — whose purpose was to be as follows: 'To promote an interest in Yugoslav culture, history, literature, and language; to encourage the youth of Yugoslav Colony in California to strive for a university education; to assist the young men and women of Yugoslav origin in obtaining an education by granting them, when in need, loans and scholarships.'"

The Club appears to have met for four years, 1935-1939, the record of its activities ending just as the first Yugoslav state itself was about to disappear. Almost 90 years have passed and a lot has changed since Vucinich recorded his first minutes. As I hold his old journal in my hands at the end of a momentous year for New Yugoslav Studies at Berkeley and Stanford, I can't help but wonder how Vucinich would react today knowing that a Yugoslav working group has emerged anew, and that it's taking root in the same halls and with support from the departments and institutes he belonged to and helped to build.

— **Djordje Popović**, Assistant Professor of South Slavic Studies, University of California - Berkeley in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures