

International conference

## SOLIDARITY AND VOLUNTARISM IN STATE-SOCIALIST SOCIETIES

University of Graz, 12-13 September 2023



“Guarding Health, Peace, and Humanism!”

Image by David Pollack Vintage Posters

## PROGRAMME

**TUESDAY, 12 September 2023**

13:30 Opening remarks

13:45 – 15:15

### **PANEL 1: BLURRING LINES BETWEEN STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

*This panel encompasses papers from three different post-war contexts: the Soviet Union, China, and Yugoslavia. Taken together, these papers illustrate how practices of voluntarism serve to challenge distinctions between state and society. While Siobhán Hearne’s work on the Soviet Red Cross argues that the organisation blurred these lines by combining a close relationship with the state while influencing state healthcare policy, Henrike Rudolph shows how the CCP’s “United Front” framework bridges the state-society divide in China. Similarly, Jelena Đureinović’s paper, focusing on the Yugoslav veteran’s association SUBNOR, highlights its ambiguous position between the Yugoslav state and Yugoslav society as well as international networks.*

**Chair: Florian Bieber**

**Siobhán Hearne**, Socialist Solidarities and the Soviet Red Cross in the Post-Stalin USSR

**Henrike Rudolph**, Voluntarism in China’s United Front Framework since 1949

**Jelena Đureinović**, The Anti-Colonial Moment: Practices and Socio-Political Ecosystems of International Solidarity in Yugoslavia

Coffee break

15:45 – 17:15

### **PANEL 2: NON-IDEOLOGICAL VOLUNTEERING?**

*This panel explores practices of voluntarism within socialist societies which appear on the surface as non-ideological, or at least non-socialist practices. While voluntarism in state-socialism is typically associated with an ideologically-infused vision of socialist consciousness or the responsibilities and duties of socialist citizenship, the practices and associations discussed in this panel— the Yugoslav Red Cross, firefighters in Central Europe, and mountaineering associations in Romania—allow for an exploration of non-political voluntarism in state socialism, asking if such an escape or disavowal was possible.*

**Chair: Heidrun Zettelbauer**

**Ana Kladnik**, Solidarity Contested? Women in Volunteer Fire Departments in Central Europe after 1945

**Pavle Antonijević**, The Socialist Concept of Solidarity: the Case of the Red Cross in Yugoslavia during the 1960s and 1970s

**Ciprian Nitu**, Mountaineering as Liberty and Solidarity. Mountain Volunteering Associations and Movements in Socialist Romania

Coffee break

17:45 – 19:15

### **PANEL 3: Socialist Humanitarianism and Medical Internationalism**

*This panel will explore socialist medical internationalism from a variety of angles. Severyan Dyakonov's paper focuses on the Soviet Red Cross' work in India in the 1960s, exploring how the Soviets attempted to present a distinctive left-wing form of humanitarianism. Helen Yaffe's paper explores Cuban medical solidarity with countries in the global South. Here, it is argued that this practice was an extension of Cuba's postcolonial politics of development. Dora Tot's paper zooms in on Yugoslav practices of humanitarian assistance in Algeria during its national liberation struggle. All three papers look at different, arguably disparate international connections, but ask similar questions: what is the relationship between domestic socialist visions of healthcare and international humanitarian aid? Can we easily separate ideology and Realpolitik in these encounters? And can we speak of a unified socialist form of humanitarianism?*

**Chair: Maximilian Lakitsch**

**Severyan Dyakonov**, Socialist Humanitarianism: the Soviet Red Cross in India in the 1960s

**Helen Yaffe**, Cuban Medical Internationalism

**Dora Tot**, Between Propaganda and Solidarity: Yugoslav Humanitarian Assistance to the Algerian National Liberation Front (1958 – 1962)

20:00 Dinner

## **WEDNESDAY, 13 September 2023**

9:00 – 10:30

### **PANEL 4: MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTARISM**

*This panel shifts the focus onto the micro-level, providing a look at community- and municipally-based practices of voluntarism. Kathrin Meissner's paper explores dynamics of social solidarity in a neighbourhood in East Berlin, while Maja Kaninska focuses on a voluntarist municipal organisation formed of the Jewish community of Belgrade. Kathy Dodworth's paper allows for an exploration of community-based health practices in several socialist states, finally showing how they have been "reverse innovated" in by neoliberal governments in recent years.*

**Chair: Katharina Scherke**

**Kathrin Meißner**, With or Without you? Looking for Solidarity within Everyday Voluntarism in Solving Local Housing Problems in GDR Socialism

**Maja Kaninska**, The Jewish Municipality of Belgrade, Joint Activities in Socialist Yugoslavia

**Kathy Dodworth**, Community Health: From Socialist Utopia to Neoliberal Governmentality

Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30

#### **PANEL 5: MOBILISING SOCIALIST CITIZENS: TRADE UNIONS AND COOPERATIVES**

*This panel focuses on how voluntarism manifested in trade unions in the German Democratic Republic, Ghana and Soviet Ukraine. All papers share a focus on organisations and movements that sought to mobilise workers in the construction of socialism. Here, the concept of voluntarism is complicated by the state's imperative to extract labour power from its citizens: Carolyn Taratko's paper focuses on the Ghanaian cooperative movement, which existed as a powerful grassroots force in Nkrumah's Ghana but eventually fell under increasing sway of the state; George Bodie's paper focuses on how the early solidarity movement in the GDR emerged in response to the need for post-war reconstruction; and Elena Kiesel's paper explores ambiguous practices of self-mobilization via the Neuererbewegung in the same period.*

**Chair: Nina Vodopivec**

**Carolyn Taratko**, Voluntary Self-Mobilization in the Cooperative Movement in Ghana, 1957-1966

**George Bodie**, Arisen from Ruins: Exploring the Roots of the GDR's International Solidarity Movement

**Elena Kiesel**, „Der Mangel hat uns geeint“ – Voluntaryees and Solidarity in the GDR's Neuererbewegung as Reflected in Interviews with Contemporaries

12:30 – 13:00 Concluding remarks

#### **CONVENORS / CONTACT**

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#### **VENUE**

ReSoWi Zentrum

Universitätsstraße 15

Part G, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, SR 15.39

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