

[Unfinished business? The breakup of the USSR and its aftershocks.](#)

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Call for Papers

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Call for Papers

UEA East Centre weekend symposium:

Unfinished business? The breakup of the USSR and its aftershocks.

Saturday and Sunday, 25 and 26 March 2023

When the USSR ceased to exist at the end of 1991 and fifteen new internationally-recognised sovereign states emerged, many commentators marvelled at how *peaceable* the breakup process had been. The internal borders of the former Union republics had become state borders almost overnight. With the important exception of Armenia in relation to Azerbaijan, the successor states' rulers generally recognised the legitimacy of their own, and their neighbours', borders. Challenges to these borders, from ethnic or religious minorities, came primarily from *within* the new states themselves. Although some of these conflicts were very intense, they generally remained localised. When compared with events in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the ex-USSR appeared calm. For all the region's intractable

economic problems, the prospects for the consolidation of the former Union republics into functional nation states looked promising.

Three decades on, the region remains in deep crisis. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine follows more than two decades of turbulent relations between the two largest successor states. Azerbaijan seeks to recapture territory lost to Armenia in the early 1990s, and other 'frozen' conflicts in Moldova, Georgia and elsewhere are no closer to resolution. Authoritarian rule, corruption, oligarchic economies, gross inequality, weak institutions and underdeveloped civil society are the norm across most of the former USSR. Relations between the states look set to remain unstable, as Russia increasingly seeks to reassert its role as regional hegemon, while in the ex-Union republics various political factions cultivate different geopolitical orientations. Political leaders speculate with nationalist slogans and policies, thereby stoking tensions both within and between the successor states themselves. Across the former USSR, in politics, economics, culture, language policy, education, city planning, social provision, etc., the question remains: how far is the 'Soviet legacy' something to be 'overcome', or something to be built upon?

UEA East Centre is hosting an interdisciplinary weekend symposium on the 'unfinished business' of the 1991 break-up. We are looking for papers of between 5000 and 10000 words to be presented at the symposium. Selected papers will be published in a special issue of *European History Quarterly*. Themes to be discussed may include, but are not limited to:

- Nation-building and minority rights
- Border disputes
- Post-1991 migration and population displacement
- Creation of national historical narratives
- Ethnonationalism versus civic nationalism
- State language policy and education
- A 'post-imperial' Russian identity
- 'Decommunisation', or the lack thereof
- Distinct cultures and the post-Soviet cultural space
- 'Slavophiles' and 'Westernisers' in the 21st century
- Russian literature beyond Russian borders
- Russian – a lingua franca?

- Soviet infrastructure in a capitalist economy
- Economic disintegration and reintegration
- Geopolitics in the former Soviet space

Proposals for papers should be submitted by 23 January 2023 to the organisers, Francis King and Eugenia Kelbert Rudan, on eastcentre.his@uea.ac.uk, or at East Centre, HIS, UEA, Norwich NR4 7TJ. Attendance at the symposium will be free of charge, but space is limited. Please e-mail us if you are interested in presenting a paper or attending as an audience member.

Contact Info:

East Centre, HIS, UEA, Norwich NR4 7TJ

Contact Email:

eastcentre.his@uea.ac.uk

URL:

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