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Producing Ideology in Yugoslavia During the 1960s and 1970s. PhD Project

That socialist Yugoslavia was in many ways a highly ideologized society is a common assessment.¹ Yet, studies focussing on the intricate realities of ideology in Yugoslavia are rare.² This is especially the case regarding the League of Communists of Yugoslavia's hallmark policy of worker's self-management. In recent years, detailed historiographical studies have added to the thorough engagement of contemporary observers, improving our understanding of a range of topics, including worker self-management's origins.³ However, as a mainstay of the ruling party's ideology and preferred research subject of the nascent social sciences, the increasingly complex theory of worker self-management remains insufficiently well illuminated.⁴

I wish to shed light on the question of how party ideology was created and contested in Yugoslavia. To do so, I focus on the debates of the 1960s and 1970s that shook both party and society and resulted in a reform process that culminated in the 1974 Constitution and the accompanying Law on Associated Labour of 1976. Apart from purporting to structure the present constitutional framework and economic order, they promulgated the vision of a society that would ensure economic development, personal autonomy and, ultimately, the withering away of the state.

One part of my research attempts to depict how particular elements of this system were developed, the socio-economic knowledge the debate was founded upon and how the debate was publicly staged. Second, I analyse how actor groups conceptualized, negotiated and accepted different visions of self-management and how they in turn were also constituted by them. My aim is to reconstruct the field in which a plethora of actors engaged in authoring this blueprint for a socialist society. Furthermore, I ask what the every-day development of Yugoslav socialist theory can tell us about the inner workings of the League

¹ Ideology has even been called the prime factor contributing to Yugoslavia's disintegration, see Dejan Jović: *Yugoslavia. A State that Withered Away*, West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 2009.

² Studies that do not restrict themselves to discussing ideology solely as a factor shaping policy or impacting a social sphere do exist. See, as an example, on the development of the personality cult of Tito: Marc Halder: *Der Titokult. Charismatische Herrschaft im sozialistischen Jugoslawien*, München, Oldenbourg, 2013.

³ Still, the historiographic standard work is more than two decades old, see: Susanne L. Woodward: *Socialist Unemployment. The Political Economy of Yugoslavia 1945–1990*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995. For the newer historiography, consider for example on the origin of worker self-management: Vladimir Korica-Unkovski: *Economic Struggle for Power in Tito's Yugoslavia. From World War II to Non-Alignment*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2016.

⁴ On how Yugoslav experts engaged with the economy's consumer and market attributes, see Patrick Hyder Patterson: *Bought and Sold. Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2011; and the chapter on Yugoslavia in Johanna Bockman: *Markets in the Name of Socialism. The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011.

of Communists of Yugoslavia, the practices of politically crucial actors and the relationships between them. What, in the end, was ideology in Yugoslavia?

My research is mainly based on documents of pertinent party and state bodies on the federal level, memoirs and contemporary professional, academic and party publications dealing with self-management.

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