

**The Last Yugoslav Generation – Youth Cultures and Politics in Late
Socialism**

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Abstract

The thesis examines the role of the 'last Yugoslav generation' in rethinking Yugoslav socialism and the very nature of Yugoslavism. It focuses on the way in which the elite representatives of this generation - the publicly prominent and active youth actors in Yugoslav late socialism from the spheres of media, art, culture and politics sought to rearticulate and redefine Yugoslav socialism and the youth's link to the state. This thesis argues that the Yugoslav youth elite of the 1980s essentially strove to decouple Yugoslavism and dogmatic socialism as the country faced a multi-level crisis where old and established practices and doctrines began to lose credibility. They progressively took over the youth infrastructure (the youth media, the cultural venues and the League(s) of Socialist Youth) and sought to hollow out their dogmatically understood socialist content, by framing their artistic, media or political activism as targeting specific malfunctions of socialist self-management. Hailed as 'a new political generation', they sought to re-invent institutional youth activism, to reform and democratise the youth organisation and hence open up new spaces for cultural and political expression, some of which revolved around anti-militarism, environmental activism, and issues around sexuality.

A progressive wing of this generation essentially argued that Yugoslavia could be reformed and further democratised. Two dominant strands become obvious: a line of argumentation which targeted the ruling elite, exposed its responsibility for the poor implementation of socialist self-management and the necessity to thoroughly revise the socialist model without abandoning its basic principles; and a later trend in which experimentation with liberal concepts and values became dominant. The first type of critique - reform socialism - was almost completely abandoned during the very last years of the decade, as more and more dominant players in the youth sphere started to turn away from socialism and came to appropriate the discourse of human rights, pluralism, free market and European integration.

In this rejection of the socialism of the older generation and search for new values – some liberal, some leftist – they were also trying to re-imagine what being a young Yugoslav was about. The thesis maintains that this generation embodied a particular sense of citizenship and framed its generational identity and activism within the confines of what I call 'layered Yugoslavism', where one's ethno-national and Yugoslav sense of belonging were perceived as complementary, rather than mutually exclusive. Whilst many analyses have focused on the powerful tensions that would lead to Yugoslavia's dismemberment, this work reminds us of the existence of countervailing forces: that until the moment of collapse, a series of alternatives continued to exist,

embodied most powerfully in the political and cultural work of a young Yugoslav generation.

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Abbreviations

SAWPY – Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia

GPD and SS – General People's Defense and Social Self-protection

LCY – League of Communists of Yugoslavia

LSYY - League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia

RC – Republican Conference

SAP – Socialist Autonomous Province

SFRY – Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia

WW2 – World War Two

Introduction

Why study youth and the 1980s?

'Post-Yugoslav culture' has been fascinated by the generational story of those who left their mark on the last Yugoslav decade. As an illustration, in what was hailed as the ultimate Balkan road (documentary) movie *The Long Road through Balkan History*,¹ two writers, a Croat and a Serb, born in 1966 and in 1975, drove a YUGO car along the former 'Brotherhood and Unity' highway. In Zagreb, they met former Croatian president and member of the last Yugoslav federal presidency Stjepan Mesić and one of them posed the following question: 'Mr. President, since I come from Belgrade and I belong to the last generation of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia, I will ask you an unpleasant question: what did you mean when you said that your task was finished because Yugoslavia had ceased to exist?'² A number of documentary films, books, exhibitions, and theatre plays have been produced over the past ten years which in one way or the other deal with the popular youth culture of the last Yugoslav decade and with the generation which experienced the violent dissolution of the state in their late twenties and early to mid-thirties.³ The need for self-reflexivity could be interpreted as an urge to reflect back on the last Yugoslav decade and make sense of the social rupture/historical trauma of the break-up of socialist Yugoslavia.⁴

¹ *Dugo putovanje kroz istoriju, historiju i povijest* (Željko Mirković, 2010).

All translations hereafter are mine, unless stated otherwise.

² Referring to Stjepan Mesić's statement from December 1991 upon his return from Belgrade to Zagreb: 'I think I did my task - Yugoslavia doesn't exist anymore. Thank you very much.'

³ Documentary films such as *Srijetno dijete* [Happy child] (Igor Mirković, 2003), *Orkestar* [Orchestra] (Pjer Žalica, 2011), *The Last Yugoslavian Football Team* (Vuk Janic, 2000), *Once Brothers* (Michael Tolajian, 2010); series dedicated to various aspects of post-WW2 Yugoslav popular culture and everyday life, such as *SFRJ za početnike* [SFRY for beginners] (Radovan Kupres, 2012) or *Robna kuća* [Department Store] (Igor Stoimenov, 2009); the 'NEXT YU' season at Belgrade theatre Atelje 212 and plays such as *Rodjeni u YU* [Born in YU] (Dino Mustafić, 2010) and *Zbogom SFRJ* [Goodbye SFRY] (Kokan Mladenović, 2011); and scholarly and non-scholarly books which have dealt with particular cultural phenomena of the 1980s, such as Pavle Levi's *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema* (Stanford University Press, 2007); Dalibor Mišina's, *Shake, Rattle and Roll: Yugoslav Rock Music and the Poetics of Social Critique* (Ashgate, 2013); Ante Perković's *Sedma republika: pop kultura u YU raspadu* [Seventh republic: pop culture in the Yugoslav dissolution] (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011) or Mitja Velikonja's and Vjekoslav Perica's *Nebeska Jugoslavija: interakcije politickih mitologija i pop-kulture* [Heavenly Yugoslavia: the interaction of political mythologies and pop-culture] (Beograd: XX vek, 2012).

⁴ Alexei Yurchak in his seminal study on the 'last Soviet generation' identifies one crucial 'inaugural event' around which the identity of this generation was formed – the collapse of the Soviet Union. Alan Spitzer similarly underlines this point of disjuncture, which determines a

This thesis addresses the experiences and work of the activists and the more prominent representatives of the last Yugoslav generation within the broad framework of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia [Savez socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije/Сојуз на социјалистичката младина на Југославија/Zveza socialistične mladine Jugoslavije/Lidhja e rinisë socialiste të Jugosllavisë]. By combining oral history interviews and archival and other primary material the thesis seeks to map both the institutional youth sphere and the lived histories of the last Yugoslav generation. The generational lens is used to provide new insights into the decline of socialism and the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia. It shows that the youth's challenge to the socialism of the older generation was an important feature of 1980s' Yugoslavia and that there was a deep commitment to the reforming (and not the dismantling) of the federation, based both on leftist and liberal principles.

Scholarly literature on Yugoslavia views the 1980s primarily as the prelude to the violent dissolution of the country and has generally dealt with the end of Yugoslavia as a *fait accompli*. The political trajectories of the major actors in the break-up, as well as the major political events, are well mapped and have been subject of a range of studies and approaches,⁵ as scholars were initially interested in uncovering the roots of the demise of the country. However, few academic works have shifted the focus away from the institutional/political sphere and attempted to explore the inner dynamics of parts of 1980s' Yugoslav society on its own terms without necessarily framing it within the dissolution narrative.⁶ As Jasna Dragović - Soso rightly noted, 'there

generation by referring to it as a 'social trauma', 'historical trauma' or a 'Great Divide' (a World War or a Depression generation). See: Alan B. Spitzer, 'The Historical Problem of Generations', *The American Historical Review* 78/5 (1973), 1353-1385.

⁵ Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995); Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford University Press, 1998); Dejan Jovic, *Yugoslavia: A State That Withered Away* (Purdue University Press, 2009); Paul B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: C. Hurst, 2000); Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: the design and the destruction of socialism and the state* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: the disintegration of Yugoslavia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993); V. P. Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Cornell University Press, 2004).

⁶ For one of the rare analyses that dwells on the intellectual realm in the 1980s, see: Jasna Dragović-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' – Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002). On grassroot mobilisation in the late 1980s, see: Nebojša Vladislavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution: Milošević, the Fall of Communism and Nationalist Mobilization* (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Where scholars have dealt with alternatives, they have mostly focused on the 1990s. See, for example: Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of*

has been a tendency to “read history backwards”, ignoring alternatives that did exist to the dominant nationalist discourses and policies throughout Yugoslavia’s history’.⁷ Indeed, the existence of alternatives and other attempts at rethinking of the Yugoslav framework have been overshadowed by an imperative to explain the violent break-up and establish the major reasons behind it. However, more recently the field has begun to expand beyond the dissolution/ethno-nationalism paradigm, although the majority of authors choose to analyse only one of the former Yugoslav republics or regions.⁸

This will be one of the first attempts to explore this alternative world of the Yugoslav 1980s through a generational lens, taking the variety of political and cultural projects that sought to redefine – but not destroy – the Yugoslav project. Focusing on the politically and culturally prominent amongst this younger generation, the thesis addresses how the Yugoslav youth in the 1980s attempted to rearticulate, question and rethink Yugoslav socialism and the very notion of Yugoslavism.⁹ Contestation and negotiation were intricately mixed,¹⁰

Alternatives (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999) or Bojan Bilić, *We Were Gasping for Air: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Activism and Its Legacy* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012).

⁷ Jasna Dragović-Soso, ‘Why Did Yugoslavia Disintegrate?: an Overview of Contending Explanations’ in Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* (Purdue University Press, 2008), p.28.

⁸ See: Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (eds.) *Resisting the Evil: [Post] Yugoslav Anti-War Contention* (Baden Baden: NOMOS, 2012); Jelena Obradović Wochnik, *Ethnic Conflict and War Crimes in the Balkans: The Narratives of Denial in Post-conflict Serbia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); Igor Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje. Svakodnevni život i potrošačka kultura u Hrvatskoj 1970-ih i 1980-ih* (Zagreb: Srednja Evropa. 2010).

Studies on everyday life and social and cultural history have become more prominent in recent years. See, e.g. Patrick Hyder Patterson, *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Cornell University Press, 2011); Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (eds.), *Yugoslavia’s Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)* (Central European University Press, 2010) and Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik (eds.), *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington: New Academia, 2010).

⁹ The thesis takes into account the ‘recognition that the experience of age is shaped by social conditions, including the operation of the state (among other facets such as civil society and globalizing processes), and that both individuals and the state actively contribute to its meaning.’ See: Johanna Wyn and Dan Woodman, ‘Generation, Youth and Social Change in Australia’, *Journal of Youth Studies* 9/5 (2006), 495-514, p.497.

¹⁰ In her study of ‘Stalin’s last generation’, Juliane Fürst touches upon the fine line between youth oppositional attitudes/cultures and conformism. By arguing that ‘the more an individual was exposed to Soviet ideology and integrated in the framework of Soviet education, the better he or she was equipped to voice criticism’, Fürst develops an argument similar to some of the conclusions from a 1983 study on the Yugoslav youth and the societal crisis which stated that ‘the youth is particularly sensitive to the growing incompatibility between the theory and the practice [...] If, during the classes in ‘Marxism and socialist self-management’ and in the media they listen to what our society should really look like, in practice they encounter just the opposite [...]’ See: Mihailo V. Popović, ‘Sadašnja društvena kriza, omladinski konformizam i bunt’ in Dobrica Vulović (ed.), *Omladina i društvene krize* (Beograd: Centar za marksizam Univerziteta u Beogradu, 1983), p.19.

as the Yugoslav youth elite of the 1980s essentially strove to decouple Yugoslavism and dogmatic socialism. They framed their artistic, media or political activism as targeting certain prescribed norms, particular malfunctions of the system, or the older elite - rather than as strictly anti-institutional or anti-Yugoslav. The thesis refers to several theories/notions which are closely related to the phenomena it engages with: space, identity and citizenship. The citizenship lens might be useful for accounting for social and political activism and its relation to space in late socialism, as it elucidates one significant dimension of the youth's engagement with the state in the 1980s – negotiation, pragmatism and challenge from within.¹¹

This thesis also seeks to provide a pan-Yugoslav perspective. Most work which has dealt with late socialist culture has done so through case studies of particular republics – an approach which has often been the product of a post-socialist and post-Yugoslav 'methodological nationalism'.¹² Studies which have dealt with youth politics and culture in late socialist Yugoslavia have tended to focus on Slovenia¹³, generally internalising the narrative of the developed,

Lines of comparison are also to be found in the disillusionment with the reality which appeared incompatible with the promoted socialist ideals, the critique which targeted the new 'red bourgeoisie', but did not necessarily question the basic premises of socialism and the fact that the main critique which went beyond the Soviet frame was coming from the artistic milieu. In the Yugoslav context the student movement 'in the late sixties and early seventies, for example, criticized the ruling party for inefficiency in carrying out the socialist revolution – that there was not enough egalitarianism, self-management, or solidarity with other revolutionary movements'. Gregor Tomc, 'The Politics of Punk' in Jill Benderly (ed.), *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements, Prospects* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp.113-135.

On the 1968 student protests in Yugoslavia, see: Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavija i svijet 1968* (Zagreb: Ljevak, 2012).

¹¹ In this context, the concept of *Eigen-Sinn* as employed by Adolf Lütke and Thomas Lindenberger appears as particularly relevant, as it 'consists of the plethora of interpretations and patterns of behaviour by the individual confronted with political, social and cultural structures [...] explores the rich space created by the citizens' own personal negotiations between public and private demands and opportunities'. See: Jan Palmowski, 'Between Conformity and *Eigen-Sinn*: New Approaches to GDR History' (Workshop Report), *German History* 20/4 (2002), 494-502; T. Lindenberger (ed.), *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Cologne, 1999); A. Lütke, *Eigen-Sinn. Industriealltag, Arbeitserfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis zum Faschismus* (Hamburg, 1993).

In the context of East Germany, Anna Saunders has similarly underlined 'the importance of interaction between the ruling elite and the masses, in the form of negotiation, bargaining and the pursuit of one's own interests'. See: Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children*, p.10.

¹² Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, 'Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences', *Global Networks* 2/4 (2002), 301-334.

The authors' observation that 'The social sciences have become obsessed with describing processes within nation-state boundaries as contrasted with those outside, and have correspondingly lost sight of the connections between such nationally defined territories' might not ring true for all area studies, but it is a valid observation in the context of Yugoslav studies.

¹³ See: Blaž Vurnik, *Med Marksom in punkom* (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2005); Milan Balažic, *Slovenska demokratična revolucija 1986-1988* (Ljubljana: Liberalna akademija, 2004).

democratic North and the undeveloped, conservative South and the peculiarity of the Slovenian case in comparison to the other parts of Yugoslavia.¹⁴ By taking a broader frame, this thesis seeks to engage with important questions about the evolution of Yugoslav youth culture and politics as a whole in the 1980s. It addresses, for instance, the extent to which there was a fragmentation of the institutional youth realm at the end of the decade along national/republican lines. Did political and cultural divides within republics, or links across republican borders, remain equally important? Did the *de facto* confederal institutional set-up of socialist Yugoslavia, which meant that most of the youth did not for the most part engage with the federal level, imply that republican centres remained heavily bounded spaces for activism, and that attempts at rethinking Yugoslav politics, culture and identity were always limited by the reality of the particular republic? Or were trans-republican reformist or liberal networks, which cut across those ethno-national divisions remain important? Certainly these questions are worth considering: acts of ‘trans-national cross-fertilisation’¹⁵ have generally been overlooked or over-shadowed by an emphasis on growing friction and inability to reach any type of consensus in the 1980s. The same is valid for the various articulations of Yugoslavism (see below) in a context where the Yugoslav identification was politically and practically discouraged. Hence, the thesis explores the idea that comparisons across republican lines and a pan-Yugoslav approach enables us to trace the mutual influences, interactions and debates in the youth sphere seen through its wide institutional network of the League of Socialist Youth, especially in the light of the various attempts at youth reform across the different federal units.

Studies which have taken a Yugoslav approach to late socialist Yugoslav popular/music culture focus on the social critique embedded in the lyrics of some of the prominent musicians and bands. See: Dalibor Mišina, *Shake, Rattle and Roll: Yugoslav Rock Music and the Poetics of Social Critique* (Ashgate, 2013).

One of the rare earlier works which took a cultural perspective focused on Serbia in the 1990s: Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia*.

¹⁴ As it has been argued, ‘Not only a gap was widening in Yugoslavia between the north, which was slowly entering the post-industrial age, and the south, which was remaining or drifting back into premodern times, but a similar gap was emerging between the urbanites and the peasants, workers, and petty bureaucrats.’ See: Aleš Erjavec, ‘Neue Slowenische Kunst-New Slovenian Art: Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Self-Management, and the 1980s’ in Aleš Erjavec (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art under Late Socialism* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2003), p.154.

¹⁵ Anna von der Goltz, ‘Introduction: Generational belonging and the ‘68ers’ in Europe’ in Anna von der Goltz (ed.), *Talkin’ ‘bout my generation’: Conflicts of generation building and Europe’s ‘1968* (Wallstein Verlag, 2011), p.12.

The challenges of writing a generational history: the generational lens

Why use a generational lens to study the alternative ways of rethinking the Yugoslav socialist project? As I will explore in the thesis itself, the idea that this challenge to established notions of the Yugoslav project was generational was noted at the time both by youth and external observers. For instance, the idea of a new generation that would bring forward significant changes was current in contemporary international and domestic political/scholarly discourse. As the 1980 UNESCO report on youth noted,

‘Finally, it should be recalled that the youth of the 1980s are the children of the youth of the 1960s... The new generation faces a considerable challenge in carrying their parents’ hopes and dreams into an economically inhospitable future. Many argue that the new generation is more realistic and less utopian than the generation that came before it. It may be suggested, however, that the sobering tasks and even the defeats that confronted their parents never eclipsed a belief in real progress towards justice, equality and peace.’¹⁶

New ideas about the socialist project, about the extent of media freedoms, and notions of Yugoslavism were for the most part concentrated in critiques advanced by a younger age cohort who had been socialised in the 1960s and 1970s, and within an institutional space devoted to socialisation of the young – the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia (LSYY). The thesis maintains that a generational approach provides new insights into the processes of remaking/rethinking and decline in late socialism. The younger generation was not central to negotiating the dissolution, yet some of its representatives were at the forefront of trying to rethink Yugoslav socialist federalism. The stretching of the boundaries of media freedom – a phenomenon led by the youth press - is one among many examples of the inner dynamics of transformation of late socialist Yugoslav society led by a younger cohort. Furthermore, a generational lens would provide insight into new forms of political expression in the 1980s, some of which found shelter within the different parts of the Youth League and (re)shaped youth journalism and the youth press as a space for debate and contention.

In this sense, this thesis draws upon the work by Karl Mannheim, who advanced new understandings of how generational cohorts form. All reflections

¹⁶ *Youth prospects in the 1980s: Synthesis report presented to the General Conference of Unesco at its twenty-first session* (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), p.29.

on generation depart from the seminal essay by Mannheim which posits generation as 'nothing more than a particular kind of identity of location, embracing related "age groups" embedded in a historical-social process'.¹⁷ Later studies proposed that the problem of generations could be summarised as one of the 'linkage of personal time (the life cycle) and social time (history)',¹⁸ i.e. that one sociological (or what one may call historical) generation may in fact encompass many biological generations, since age groups¹⁹ are not to be identified with generations. Given that 'generation' is a subject of study in history, sociology, anthropology, and politics, it is often an elusive, slippery concept that requires more precise definition depending on the context of analysis.

Few scholars have drawn on Mannheim's insights – whether explicitly or implicitly – in framing Yugoslav history in generational terms (see below). From this outlook, socialist Yugoslavia becomes a generational project of a combined revolutionary and partisan generation²⁰ – the older cohort (born at the end of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century) which led the underground communist movement in the interwar period and the revolutionary liberation struggle during the Second World War and drafted the socio-political contours

¹⁷ Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations' in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1964), p.292.

The seminal study on youth - John R. Gillis' *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present*, deals in a *longue durée* perspective within the realms of social and institutional history with various 'traditions of youth'. Criticised for its shortcomings precisely because it spans a long period, the book 'is dedicated to the proposition that youth makes its own history, a history linked with and yet analytically separable from that of the family, the school, and other adult institutions with which it is usually associated'.

John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1981), p.ix.

The concept of 'youth culture' first appears in a 1942 essay by American sociologist Talcott Parsons ('Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States', *American Sociological Review* 7/5 (1942), 604-616). He approaches youth culture from a functionalist perspective, emphasising youth culture's 'important positive functions in easing the transition from the security of childhood in the family of orientation to that of full adult in marriage and occupational status', in contrast with the later British cultural studies approach (the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) with a greater focus on class, as established in the seminal 1975 study edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*.

¹⁸ Philip Abrams, 'The Conflict of Generations in Industrial Society', *Journal of Contemporary History* 5/1 (1970), 175-190.

¹⁹ Age cohort, like age group can denote 'a grouping of individuals who share the same significant event, especially their birth, at or within a given period of time'. Jane Pilcher, *Age & Generation in Modern Britain* (Oxford University Press, 1995), p.134.

²⁰ Every twenty-year interval in the history of the Yugoslav peoples in the twentieth century a major change occurred that engendered polarisations and generational dividing lines: 1928, when five members of the Croatian Peasant Party were shot in the Assembly; 1948, the year of Yugoslavia's split from the Cominform; 1968, the year of the student upheavals and 1988 could be considered points of disjuncture, or a generational defining axis.

of the new federation; and the younger cohort of revolutionaries who joined the partisan guerillas led by Tito as youths (see Annex 2). Although few of them were still active in the late Yugoslav political scene in the 1980s (such as Minister of Defense and first general of the Army Veljko Kadijević, born 1925), the positions of power were in general held by the 'post-war generation', that is the first Yugoslav generation of individuals who did not have any conscious personal experience of the Second World War.²¹ Indeed, what has been referred to as 'a generational shift within the regional party leaderships'²² took place gradually in the second half of the 1980s in different federal units and at the level of federal leadership. Beside Slovenian Milan Kučan (born 1941), Azem Vllasi (born 1948) also came at the helm of the League of Communists of Kosovo in 1986, and Slobodan Milošević (born 1941) took over the Serbian Party branch in 1987. A number of scholars have attempted to build these generational frames into their understanding of politics in the 1980s. As Lenard Cohen observed, for example:

'The ascendancy of the post-partisan elite generation to the highest level of the political hierarchy received striking recognition at the 13th Congress of the Yugoslav League of Communists in June 1986. Thus, while 58 percent of the former Central Committee elected in 1982 had participated in the National Liberation War, this was true of only 24 percent of the 1986 Committee [...] Forty years after founding the communist regime, Tito's "younger" comrades-in-arms were relinquishing the country's highest positions to a new political generation.'²³

In addition, Cohen underlined 'the juxtaposition of different generational cohorts, with different formative experiences and different levels and types of skills'.²⁴ Nebojša Vladislavljević also used these generational frames to make sense of political change in the 1980s:

'members of the younger generation had very different formative experiences, values and skills from the old guard, which inevitably affected the general direction of policy, relations within the political class

²¹ In the Introduction to his 1987 study, William Zimmerman observes that 'In the mid-1980s, the era in which the World War II Partisan generation ruled the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was coming rapidly to an end [...] Other members of the elderly Yugoslav political elite are almost certain to pass from the political scene in the near future, and Yugoslavia will be governed in the relatively near future by a new political generation made up, not of Partisans, much less *prvoborci* (the first fighters in World War II), but rather of persons raised and socialized almost entirely in the Tito era.'

William Zimmerman, *Open borders, nonalignment, and the political evolution of Yugoslavia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

²² Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia: Tito, Communist Leadership and the National Question* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p.318.

²³ Lenard Cohen, *The Socialist Pyramid: Elites and Power in Yugoslavia* (Oakville/New York/London: Mosaic Press, 1989), p.423.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

and state-society relations. Unlike members of the old guard, most were well educated, with a background in administration, business or local politics [...] priorities gradually shifted toward economic reform, more open intra-party debates, the relaxation of repression and more autonomy for low- and middle-ranking party and state officials.²⁵

Nevertheless, in the Yugoslav political and public/media scene in the second half of the 1980s, three different political generations were present, more often than not with different and conflicting visions. Although there was a shared consensus that the Yugoslav socialist framework needed reform, consensus on the way it should be achieved, the scope of reform and the particulars of it could not be reached. This research seeks to offer insight into the most junior of the three generations, which was at the forefront of trying to rethink the Yugoslav project, attempted to reform certain aspects of the system and believed in its reformability much longer than members of a young cohort in other parts of Eastern Europe. By ushering in new grievances, envisaging new solutions and a new understanding of the polity the previous two generations had built, it searched for both liberal and leftist models to do so. Thus, the thesis seeks to reinforce the idea that alternatives did exist in the 1980s.

This thesis does not overlook the diversity of outlooks within a particular generation. Mannheim also developed the notion of a 'generational unit', as a sub-category of a generation: 'Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generational units'.²⁶ In the context of the last Yugoslav generation, the 'professional' youth functionaries within the League of Socialist Youth, the punk youth, the young sportsmen, the military youth, the university youth, may be said to have formed separate generational units. The ensuing chapters look both at the divisive and the cohesive points among some of them. In this sense, the idea of generation does not simply describe an age cohort shaped by similar life experiences, but also the emergence of a consciousness of belonging to an age-determined group, even amongst groups with seemingly different political or social views.

²⁵ Nebojša Vladislavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, p.45-46.

²⁶ Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', p.304.

For the use of 'generation' and 'youth rebellion' as explanatory frames, see: Detlef Siegfried, 'Understanding 1968: Youth Rebellion, Generational Change and Postindustrial Society', in Axel Schildt et al. (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola. Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies* (Berghahn, 2006), pp.74-76.

Here the thesis draws on more recent constructivist work in generation studies, which explores the construction of the feeling of belonging to a generation within groups over time to a far greater degree than Mannheim attempted.²⁷

While acknowledging the essential fact that there were prominent differences in social status, education, ethnic/religious belonging, gender and/or profession, the thesis departs from the idea that this generation was marked in different ways by the 'historical trauma' of the Yugoslav collapse and the subsequent wars, while in their earlier or later formative years they were all exposed to the omnipresent discourse and reality of a multi-level crisis. Broadly, the thesis explores the last Yugoslav generation during the last Yugoslav decade 1981-1991 within the broad framework of the institutional youth realm – the extended network of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia. It focuses on individuals born between 1954 and 1969, who belonged in the category of youth (16-28) at some point during the 1980s, born to parents who belonged to the 'first Yugoslav generation', themselves raised and socialised in post-WW2 Yugoslavia. Although the last Yugoslav generation is approached as a socio-political generation that spans several biological generations,²⁸ the members of which experienced the 1991-1992 historical juncture as young adults, it is evident that there are two distinct cohorts within it: the older born in the mid to late 1950s and the younger born after 1960.

Secondly, a generational lens is important because *generational discourse* was a central feature of public and political understandings of youth, as well as of the Yugoslav research on youth in general. In the 1980s, this was constructed by academic and public discourse as a 'crisis generation', or, indeed, as a generation that will bring changes.²⁹ It is important to note that the

²⁷ On combining these approaches, see: June Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner, *Generations, Culture and Society* (Open University Press, 2002). On the construction of generation, see: Mark Roseman, 'Introduction: Generation Conflict and German History, 1770-1968', in Mark Roseman (ed.), *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany, 1770-1968* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 4-5; Thomas Burgess, 'Imagined Generations: Constructing Youth in Revolutionary Zanzibar' in Jon Abbink and Ineke van Kessel (eds.), *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth Politics and Conflict in Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Stephen Lovell, 'Introduction' in Stephen Lovell (ed.), *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.13.

²⁸ As Mary Fulbrook observed, 'The notion of social generations allows us to explore the extent to which, and the ways in which people are shaped by their times, and in turn affect the times through which they live.' See: Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence Through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.6.

²⁹ The concluding remarks of the last all-Yugoslav study on the youth entitled 'A confusion in the head and fear in the heart' read: 'As for the crisis, the young most often react emotionally – they are worried, anxious and fearful, but also want to do something'.

generation lens was appropriated by many, if not all scholarly studies on the youth in socialist Yugoslavia (the terms used were (*mlada*) *generacija* or *pokoljenje*). It has been observed that the generation concept was one of the preferred analytical lenses among Yugoslav scholars because it was understood as oppositional to the Marxist class paradigm.³⁰ Even the 1986 all-Yugoslav *JUIPO* research clearly referred to Mannheim's terminology and stated as one of its goals the description of the 'characteristics of the different *generation units* which might exist within this generation'.³¹ Nevertheless, few have taken up this conceptual apparatus to analyse the story of post-WW2 Yugoslavia. Many studies which have dealt with youth and generation originate from the socialist period. Yugoslav sociologist Djordjije Uskoković³², for instance, argued that one can observe the existence of three dominant generations in socialist Yugoslavia: the war generation – which took part in the antifascist revolution and began the rebuilding of the state; the post-war generation, which mainly came of age in the 1950s and was modeling self-management according to its own interests - which is also the generation that, because of the general lack of educated professional cadres after the Second World War managed to establish itself in all of the key positions in the spheres of politics, economy and culture. Finally, according to Uskoković, there is the 'young' generation – coming of age in the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s, facing the contradictions between the proclaimed values and norms and the day-to-day reality they faced.

Thirdly, this generational discourse has also continued in popular memory, and continues to shape the way in which people from this generation understand the 1980s and the (post)socialist decline.³³ This is largely due to the impressive cultural production and creative output (alongside the significant

Srećko Mihailović et al. *Deca krize: Omladina Jugoslavije krajem osamdesetih* (Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka/Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnjenje, 1990), p.320.

³⁰ Smiljka Tomanović et al. *Mladi – naša sadašnjost. Istraživanje socijalnih biografija mladih u Srbiji* (Beograd: Čigoja/ Institut za sociološka istraživanja Filozofskog fakulteta, 2012), p.30.

³¹ Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje mlade generacije Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Centar za istraživačku, dokumentacionu i izdavačku delatnost Konferencije SSOJ/Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta, 1986), p.14.

³² Djordjije Uskoković, 'Neke najčešće teorijsko-metodološke teškoće i jednostranosti empirijskih istraživanja društvenog položaja i svesti mladih u Jugoslaviji' in *Mlada generacija, danas: društveni položaj, uloga i perspektive mlade generacije Jugoslavije* (Beograd: NIRO Mladost/Predsedništvo konferencije SSOJ, 1982).

³³ On tracing the construction of generation in 'memory', see: Anna von der Goltz, 'Introduction. Generational belonging and the '68ers' in Europe', in Anna von der Goltz (ed.), *'Talkin' 'bout my generation': Conflicts of Generation Building and Europe's '1968'* (Wallstein Verlag, 2011), pp.9-32.

achievements in sport) from young Yugoslavs in their late teens or in their twenties throughout the 1980s. This generational self-identification has persisted mainly because the majority of those cultural products have preserved their prominence in the post-socialist context (in particular in popular culture, sport and cinematography) and the actors continued their careers within the same spheres after the Yugoslav dissolution.³⁴ Hence, a generational lens is chosen to deconstruct a generation which has featured prominently in post-Yugoslav music and culture, as well as in order to demonstrate the effect of the systemic crisis of the 1980s on a particular group which contributed to many of the debates, but did not have a real stake in the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis. Moreover, the concept has remained important as it has been capable of taking on new meanings, particularly amongst the liberal-left who came to understand themselves as a generation defined by a failure to stop the older cohort destroying the country. Post-Yugoslav works have sought to find 'our generation' within late Yugoslav literature, music, media, sport, politics or theatre.³⁵ This was a generational consciousness solidified for some by the

³⁴ It is worth noting that the survival and the trans-generational transfer of the music tastes of the 1980s and the cultural products and achievements of the youngsters of late socialist Yugoslavia has a lot to do with the profile of what has been termed in a more global context the Generation Y, or the Hipster generation – their retro cultural preferences, turning to the past for inspiration and a general sense of nostalgia.

³⁵ Aleš Debeljak (born 1961), a well-known Slovenian poet, essayist and cultural critic in his book *Twilight of the Idols: Recollections of a Lost Yugoslavia* (1994) refers to his generation of young Yugoslavs who were marked by Yugoslavia's physical and cultural geography. He also reflects on a generation of young Yugoslav writers in the 1980s who did not align themselves with the older generation in the articulation of anti-communist, nationalist grievances:

'But we sensed that by defending our introspective verses we were in a way defending the very idea of freedom. The social prestige of an ever-growing army of hacks, whose impoverished imaginations were the currency of their short-lived political fame, constantly forced us to respond to the cheap reproach that we were escaping from reality, that we were retreating into infinite cosmologies and philosophical paradoxes in the style of Borges's short stories, the popularity of which had condemned a whole generation of young Yugoslav writers to the pejorative epithet "Borgesian"...

Our older colleagues had won much-deserved applause by using critical distance and the merciless scalpel of truth to expose "socialism with a human face" for what it was. Our aesthetic imagination, however, had been shaped by a different theater. We summoned our creative talents around a problem that may not have been publicly attractive but was, and continues to be, privately challenging. Instead of socialism and its spectacular burial, we focused on the scars, nicks, creases, and grimaces on the faces of individuals. We felt our way around the depths of the human soul in the agonized silence during a wake, when the reign of death begins to relent but hasn't yet vanished altogether and the soul can so easily stray amid the shadows of paranoia and anxiety. The poet can give testimony to his time only if his metaphors are freed from external necessity, regardless of the ideological camp where they originate. This was our tenet, and we kept repeating this minor revelation in all the languages of what was once Yugoslavia. But it did not mean that our "generation without

experience of war, the breakup of Yugoslavia and the loss of geo-political and international status. The violent break-up of Yugoslavia also had a lot to do with the veneration and even the mythologisation of the Yugoslav 'new wave' music scene, for example. It should be noted that some are reluctant to use or appropriate the generational mould, or are prone to refuse it outright. The skepticism towards identifying as a part of a generation is generally a result of a deep sense of disappointment and bitterness towards the eruption of violence and the subsequent destruction of the state, often related to the political or even intimate splits between former colleagues and friends. The concept of 'generation' has been also rejected by many of those who became successful nationalist or anti-Communist figures, and who did not wish to define themselves according to their cultural or political projects of the 1980s.

Moreover, embarking on a generational study makes a pan-Yugoslav approach both inevitable and viable. Work conducted in the post-Yugoslav period has tended to focus on the experience of particular republics or groups: using the generational frame enables us to tell a pan-Yugoslav story. This does not necessarily mean a homogenisation of a diverse set of experiences – rather, we can use the concept of 'generation' to address how far activists worked across national boundaries as young people, or how they interacted within the institutional youth sphere, noting both the divides and connections that emerged. The youth, of course, was a vast heterogeneous category that the system identified as a potential guarantee for its future preservation and, consequently, invested a lot in shaping it into a progressive force and a unique front that carried the labels of 'socialist' and 'Yugoslav'. Hence, a generational lens would also provide insight into the very making (and unmaking) of Yugoslav supranationalism (referred to throughout as 'Yugoslavism'). Although the sense of supra-ethnic/Yugoslav belonging³⁶ was conceived of, acted out, internalised, passed on, propagated in different ways by different groups and individuals, it essentially embodied an additional layer of identification, as well

charismatic mentors," as it was often called in the press, closed its eyes to the social and historical reality around it.'

³⁶ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper propose the use of the notions of identification and categorisation (self-identification vs. external identification, with the state as the powerful 'identifier'), self-understanding, commonality, connectedness or groupness. They plausibly argue that what needs to be kept distinct is external categorisation vs. self-understanding, objective commonality vs. subjective groupness. The authors recommend a greater focus on the particular stories of self-identification and self-understanding, particular affinities and connections. See: Brubaker, Rogers and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "Identity"', *Theory and Society* 29/1 (2000), 1-47.

as an additional sphere of interaction and convergence, which this research aims to dissect and illuminate, in particular with regard to those who experienced the 'crisis decade' as youngsters or young adults. Supra-nationalism is often used by political scientists and historians to describe institutional arrangements typical for multi-national or multi-cultural federations, confederations or federation-like entities and unions (from the USSR to the European Union). This research does not use the notion in its strictly institutional dimension, but rather employs it to refer to a new 'sense of citizenship' and (political and cultural) membership in late Yugoslav socialism.

Finally, adopting a generational lens gives fresh perspectives on the decline of state socialism, as in the realm of post-socialist studies there has been an increased interest in examining the rise and fall of socialism in Eastern Europe in generational terms.³⁷ By analysing a particular social group, it is possible to view the exit from socialism in other ways and challenge the teleological accounts of Yugoslavia's collapse. More specifically, it enables us to examine the experience of crisis. This thesis embeds the 'last Yugoslav generation' within the discourse of crisis that marked Yugoslav late socialism. It designates three most prominent generational markers of the 'crisis generation' (*generacija krize*) - the multi-level economic and political crisis, internationalism/Europeanism, and a new understanding of Yugoslavism as citizenship in its dimensions of rights and identity.³⁸ The 1986 all-Yugoslav research on the youth noted that Yugoslav society is witnessing the proliferation of a 'non-classical political generation' [*neklasična politička generacija*], 'a generation which desires and brings along changes'³⁹, while a 1988 study referred to it as a 'new political generation'.⁴⁰ This underpins the notion that a generation which rose to prominence as the new decade and the post-Tito era

³⁷ See: Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton University Press, 2005); Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford University Press, 2010); Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester University Press, 2011).

³⁸ Christian Joppke, 'Transformation of Citizenship: Status, Rights, Identity', *Citizenship Studies* 11/1 (2007), 37-48.

³⁹ Jordan Aleksić, 'Mlada generacija i Savez Komunističke Jugoslavije' in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje mlade generacije Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Centar za istraživačku, dokumentacionu i izdavačku delatnost Konferencije SSOJ/Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta, 1986), p.190.

⁴⁰ Jordan Aleksić et al. *Omladina i politika: jugoslavenska omladina između političke apatije i autonomnog političkog subjektiviteta* (Split: Marksistički centar Međupćinske konferencije SKH za Dalmaciju, 1988), p.28.

were dawning had been socialised differently and was bound to bring change in advance of that actually materialising. I map the first level - the generation of the crisis - as something that occurred as a process of external labeling, the second level - Europeanism/internationalism - as a generational consciousness, a dominant way of self-narration and self-perception within European/international frameworks, and finally the third level - layered Yugoslavism - intricately related to the second as a form of self-definition, i.e. what I observe as this generation's new 'sense of citizenship'⁴¹ and differently conceptualised activism which sought to rearticulate socialism and Yugoslavism. Hence, the first generational pillar as identified here which revolves around the notion of 'crisis' reflects the dominant scholarly/sociological observations with regard to the Yugoslav youth dating from the period under scrutiny, i.e. the 1980s; the second generational pillar relates to this generation's own sense of Europeanism/cosmopolitanism/internationalism as conveyed at the time by its representatives and as construed by its members a posteriori in the post-socialist period; the third generational pillar complements the previous two with my own reading of this generation's new forms of youth activism and engagement with/perception of the state.

As was mentioned above, the thesis addresses a generational challenge that focused above all on rethinking Yugoslavism and socialism. The thesis seeks to provide a different perspective on these debates in the 1980s. The way in which the young generation in the 1980s was, for the most part, positively rethinking Yugoslavism was a question which had its roots in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A 1971 study on the political integration and attitudinal consensus in Yugoslavia⁴² provided valuable insight into what was that same year a new addition to the Yugoslav census: the category of the 'Yugoslavs'. The author convincingly argued that 'these individuals may represent a new element within Yugoslav society' and that 'the individual claiming a Yugoslavian nationality represents a unique citizen in that society'.⁴³ The study concluded that 81% of this population had completed at least a gymnasium or middle school

⁴¹ Pamela J. Conover makes a distinction between the affective (identity and meaning one gives to their membership in a particular political community) and the cognitive pole (the understanding and framework of beliefs one develops about their relationship to the state and to other citizens). See: Pamela J. Conover, 'Citizen Identities and Conceptions of the Self', *Journal of Political Philosophy* 3 (1995), 133–165.

⁴² Gary K. Bertsch, *Nation-Building in Yugoslavia: A Study of Political Integration and Attitudinal Consensus* (Sage Publications, 1971).

⁴³ Gary K. Bertsch, *Nation-Building in Yugoslavia*, p.24.

education, 85% were under 45 years of age, 88% were Atheists, and 70% were Communists. Thus, it outlined patterns which would be addressed by subsequent studies: namely, that those choosing to declare a supra-ethnic belonging were mainly individuals of mixed parentage ('defensive Yugoslavism'), the urban, educated, young, mobile strata ('demographic Yugoslavism'). In addition, Yugoslav sociology also took into consideration the category of 'Yugoslav' as preferred national identification, or the so-called 'latent Yugoslavism'.⁴⁴ However, the 1971 study also underlined the cleavages and divides in terms of values and perceptions between 'the multination orientation of the Yugoslav population' and other segments of the population.⁴⁵

The 'sharp rise in supranationalist sentiment'⁴⁶ that became particularly prominent after the 1981 census⁴⁷ was in line with 'the personal recollections of many foreigners, who found that young people from Belgrade or Zagreb were as likely to identify themselves as Yugoslavs as anything else in this period'.⁴⁸ This is intrinsically related to what Ana Dević designates as the 'Yugoc cosmopolitan cultural habitus'⁴⁹ when talking about the younger generation of

⁴⁴ The author underlines the distinction between 'jugoslovensko izjašnjanje' [Yugoslav identification/declared Yugoslav belonging] and 'jugoslovenska preferencija' [preferred Yugoslav belonging]. See: Sergej Flere, 'Vojvođanska omladina, jugoslovenstvo i stavovi prema etnosu', *Ideje — časopis za teoriju suvremenog društva* 2-3 (1987), 150-165, p.152.

⁴⁵ The author notes that while only 48% of the Yugoslavs agreed with the statement 'It is important for a man to speak his own dialect', 91% of Montenegrins and 100% of Albanians agreed; or, whereas 29% of Yugoslavs agreed that 'Nationality is important in our country', 74% of Macedonians and 82% of Albanians did so.

⁴⁶ Andrew B. Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*, p.196.

⁴⁷ The population in the 1981 census was divided into two groups – those who declared their national belonging and those who did not. The latter was further divided into three sub-groups: those who didn't declare any belonging according to article 170 of the Yugoslav constitution; those who declared Yugoslav; and those who declared regional belonging (Istrian, Dalmatian, etc.) See: *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1985* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku), p.28.

In the 1981 census (the last properly conducted Yugoslav federal census) 1.219.045 people declared their nationality as 'Yugoslav', 4.5 times as many as in 1971 when their number was 273,077. *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1985* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku), p.114. Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia were the regions where this increase in numbers was most prominent. In Croatia, the 1971 census recorded 84,118 'Yugoslavs' (1.9% of Croatia's total population), while in March 1981 their number rose to 379,057 (8.2%). In Bosnia-Herzegovina the number of 'Yugoslavs' rose from 43,796 to 326,280 – i.e. 7.91% of the total population in that republic. Out of the 271,326 'Yugoslavs' in Serbia proper (excluding Kosovo and Vojvodina), 162,127 lived in Belgrade alone. See: Slobodan Stankovic, 'Yugoslavia's Census – Final Results', *Radio Free Europe RAD Background Report/59*, 10 March 1982, *Open Society Archives*. The author of the report rightfully raised the question of 'Who are these people?' and inferred that one should take into consideration the external circumstances at the time of the census (the Kosovo crisis and the supposed fears that the country might disintegrate), as well as the phenomenon of mixed marriages – or what he calls 'the natural process of amalgamation'.

⁴⁸ Andrew B. Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*, p.197.

⁴⁹ Ana Dević, 'Anti-War Initiative and the Un-Making of Civic Identities in the Former Yugoslav Republics', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 10/2 (1997), 127-156.

the last Yugoslav decade and the fact that due to the rising unemployment, the youth profited from an unlimited leisure time and hence an expanding trans-Yugoslav cultural space. The studies focusing on the notion of Yugoslavism, on the common identity and on the ethnic composition of Yugoslavia point to the fact that the categories which were most likely to identify as Yugoslav were the urban residents, *the young*, those from nationally mixed parentage, the Communist Party members and the minorities.⁵⁰

The debates concerning the reform and future of Yugoslav socialism which unfolded in the political realm in the 1980s have been mapped by the numerous authors (some of whom were quoted above) who chose to engage with the political history of late socialist Yugoslavia. This thesis seeks to elucidate both the similarities and the differences between the debates on the future of Yugoslavia and Yugoslav socialism in the youth and the political realms. Essentially, it addresses the specificities of what was seen as a generational challenge to an 'aging' socialist system embodied by an older elite.

Other conceptual frames: rethinking dissidence, civil society and space

This thesis provides contribution to the literature on late Cold War challenges to state socialism, in that it examines a case in which nearly all of the dissenting political and cultural projects were contained within institutional structures. Amidst a rich body of literature dealing with late socialist Yugoslavia and its eventual demise, few depart from the realm of high politics and even fewer scrutinise the ways the multi-level crisis affected a particular group – in this case the youth and young adults, and how it shaped its understanding of the state and of its role in it. The thesis attempts to blur the line between what is considered 'alternative', 'oppositional' and 'institutional' or 'official', by shedding light on the intricacies in the youth's interaction with the state and on the inner dynamics of the wide youth infrastructure, which was a product of the particular Yugoslav institutional arrangements and the doctrine of self-management. Hence, it maintains that the League of Socialist Youth still represented a

⁵⁰ Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey and Randy Hodson, 'Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia', *American Sociological Review* 59 (1994), 83-97.

location for real meaningful politics. Consequently, research focusing less on dissidence and resistance and more on adaptation within existing institutional structures would provide new insights and open up new venues within the field of socialist studies. Furthermore, the thesis seeks to deconstruct labels such as 'anti-Yugoslav' and contextualise particular acts, demands and initiatives.

The thesis critically engages with the actors themselves to establish how they saw their relationship with the state and the envisioned reform. While many authors situate such actors within the framework of dissidence⁵¹ and civil society, this study, by contrast, questions the utility of the uncritical application of both notions, by arguing that the opposition to the political elite and the malfunctions of Yugoslav socialism within the youth realm did not transform into an outright opposition to the system as such, i.e. into demands for 'an exit from socialism', until very late in the decade. Rather, it will explore why there was a genuine belief amongst many of the critical actors that they could still work within the system to reform it in such a way that it would preserve its progressive and Yugoslav dimensions. They neither withdrew nor opted out of the institutional/public space and culture; rather, they met the state in its own 'official' territory and challenged it there. In this sense, this particular case study of youth politics and culture, and reinvention of space in late socialist Yugoslavia, could offer an excellent platform from which to approach the complexity of the period and transcend some of the established approaches in

⁵¹ As Mastnak observes in the context of the youth 'alternative scene' in Slovenia, 'it was free from the figure that played a central role in other socialist countries: the dissident. The alternative understood its own action as the production of the social sphere, the creation of social spaces of otherness, and would refuse to be characterized as dissent or opposition.' Tomaž Mastnak, 'From Social Movements to National Sovereignty' in Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft (eds.), *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements, Prospects* (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 94-95.

Furthermore, echoing Betts' analysis of the East German 'citizen petitions' and the specific 'complaint system' they engendered, Bojan Bilić plausibly suggests that 'by taking recourse to signature collection, Yugoslav activists were gaining ever more leverage in extra-institutional political engagement while not overtly threatening the existing regime.' Bojan Bilić, *We Were Gasping for Air*, p.65.

Indeed, even press reports intended for a non-Yugoslav audience at the time did not fail to stress that petitioners were in no way seeking to topple the regime or the state: 'These dissidents can certainly not be described as hostile to the post-Tito regime. On the contrary, their loyalty to "self-management socialism" is beyond doubt. They do differ from the ruling "professional politicians", however, in their interpretation of what "self-management socialism" should be'. Slobodan Stankovic, 'Intellectual ferment in Yugoslavia', *Radio Free Europe Background Report*, 11 November 1980, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

This resonates with Anna Saunders' observation in the context of the GDR that 'Ironically, many who demonstrated against the regime revealed surprising patriotic potential, for they were engaged in the public debate and often believed in the basic principles of socialism; their aim was to improve the GDR rather than to overthrow the state.' Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children*, p.226.

the field of state-society relations in both socialist Yugoslavia and the socialist world.

Which concepts can we use to make sense of this relationship between state and society? Some scholars have used the term 'socialist civil society'.⁵² This term does capture aspects of the progressive liberalisation of the public sphere after 1980 that allowed the young to utilise the youth infrastructure for channelling novel demands and to act as one of the 'main promoters of the spontaneous modernisation',⁵³ i.e. of the process of progressive democratisation from within. Arguably, 'the society looked at itself on a big, pluralist screen, covered with different images, icons and discourses'.⁵⁴ Yet, for others, this term is problematic because, in the literature, the very notion of civil society is conceived as a force that inevitably undermines socialism.⁵⁵ 'Civil society' was indeed being used at the time both in the Yugoslav and in other Eastern European contexts. The Polish dissident movement in the late 1970s, for example, was hailed as 'the rebirth of civil society'.⁵⁶ Yet, 'the elevation of civil society meant not so much a new relationship between state and society as their virtual uncoupling'.⁵⁷ In the Yugoslav context, this relationship was much more dynamic and the public/private or state/society dichotomies were not as apparent and straightforward. Considering propositions that different concepts could meaningfully address the same phenomena as civil society does (namely curtailing state power, promoting and upholding pluralism, and securing the right for contesting the status quo and political action), a consensus had been reached that 'the concept therefore needs to be broadened, relativized and

⁵² Danica Fink Hafner, *Nova družbena gibanja: subjekti politične inovacije* (Ljubljana: FDV, 1992), p.19; Tomaž Mastnak (ed.), *Zbornik Socijalistična civilna družba* (Ljubljana: RK ZSMS/UK ZSMS, 1986).

The authors in the Introduction to the *Zbornik* argued that there are three fundamental conditions for the existence of civil society: political pluralism, an independent public sphere and rule of law. They underlined that by political pluralism they do not necessarily understand a multi-party system, but 'the possibility of political expression and activism within the framework of an independent Socialist Alliance'.

⁵³ Mirjana Ule, 'Stoletje mladine' in John R. Gillis, *Mladina in zgodovina* (Ljubljana: Aristej, 1999), p.279.

⁵⁴ Obrad Savic, 'Concepts of civil society in former Yugoslavia' in Dane R. Gordon and David C. Durst (eds.), *Civil Society in Southeast Europe* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2004), p.78.

⁵⁵ Gregor Tomc, 'Civilna družba pod slovenskim socializmom', *Nova revija* 57 (1987), 144-150.

⁵⁶ Rupnik (1979) in Krishan Kumar, 'Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term', *The British Journal of Sociology* 44/3 (1993), 375-395, p.386.

⁵⁷ Krishan Kumar, 'Civil Society'.

adapted to local conditions'.⁵⁸

In order to address the issue of activism/activist citizenship, I borrow the notion of 'acts of citizenship'.⁵⁹ Particularly useful for addressing the subtle and pragmatic ways of dialoguing, interacting with and navigating the youth institutions and the institutions of the state, i.e. for addressing the fact that the activist core of this generation was essentially working to reshape the idea of participation in the system, acts are those that 'rupture or break the given orders, practices and habitus. Creative ruptures and breaks take different forms that are irreducible. They can, for example, take forms of resistance or subservience'.⁶⁰ Beside political - 'in so far as these acts constitute constituents (beings with claims)' - acts could also be ethical, cultural ('carnavalesque'), sexual or social. They are 'those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle'.⁶¹

The thesis also brings together the concepts of generation and space. It focuses for the most part on the institutional youth sphere – i.e. the one contained within the spaces of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia, both at federal and republican level. Unlike studies on other Eastern European countries, this work will focus on how a new generational challenge came from within the institutions of the system. Accounting for youth activism and its relation to space in late socialism would not only help transcend the prism of 'binary socialism',⁶² but it would also provide us with a valuable secondary

⁵⁸ Chris Hann, Caroline Humphrey and Katherine Verdery, 'Introduction: Postsocialism as a topic of anthropological investigation' in Chris Hann (ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, ideologies and practices in Eurasia* (Routledge, 2001), p.9.

⁵⁹ Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen (eds.), *Acts of Citizenship* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Engin Isin, 'Citizenship in flux: the figure of the activist citizen', *Subjectivity* 29 (2009), 367–388.

⁶⁰ Engin F. Isin, 'Theorizing Acts of Citizenship', in Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen (eds.), *Acts of Citizenship*, p.36.

⁶¹ Engin F. Isin, 'Theorizing Acts of Citizenship', p.39.

⁶² Yurchak proposes this notion in order to deconstruct the often taken for granted assumptions that socialism was 'bad' or 'immoral', i.e. 'the use of binary categories to describe Soviet reality such as oppression and resistance, repression and freedom, the state and the people, official economy and second economy, official culture and counterculture, totalitarian language and counterlanguage, public self and private self, truth and lie, reality and dissimulation, morality and corruption, and so on.' See: Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, pp.4-5.

Indeed, there has been a tendency in regional scholarship and media discourse to paint a black and white picture by insisting on the 'dark' side - the ideological dogmatism, the political trials, the reality of a one-Party system, etc., or solely on the opposite one which views the federation through the distorted lens of commercial nostalgia and focuses on its 'bright side' - market socialism, relative material wellbeing, consumerism, free travel, etc. It is at the intersection of

framework through which to study the inner dynamics of socio-political change in late socialist Yugoslavia. In this context, Francesca Polletta's argument that 'Counterhegemonic ideas and identities come neither from outside the system, nor from some free-floating oppositional consciousness, but from long-standing community institutions'⁶³ seems particularly relevant. The thesis addresses space through the notion of a youth sphere/youth realm. In particular, it will focus on the range of spaces – from the ones associated with the 'liminoid'⁶⁴ settings relevant for youth politics and culture in the 1980s – the youth media, the student cultural centres, etc., to the political arenas of the LSYY and its role as a 'socio-political organisation'. The wide network of the League of Socialist Youth as a form of public space which accommodated both mainstream and 'alternative' politics and cultures is analysed in Chapter 1.

The thesis does not aspire to tell an exhaustive story of the last Yugoslav generation. It engages with its 'public face', i.e. with a progressive, predominantly urban elite which was socially, politically or culturally engaged and publicly present in the youth realm. The majority of these individuals came from the big urban Yugoslav centers and appropriated urbanity as a prominent trait of their image and self-perception. The 1986 *JUPIO* research revealed some striking differences along the lines of urban/rural residency and social origin. It showed, for instance, that those whose parents were functionaries, highly educated and well positioned within society displayed a higher extent of discontent with the socio-political reality when compared to the rural or less educated youth.⁶⁵

One cannot help but consider the question of how legitimate it is to treat these particular individuals as representatives of a generation and what the

the 'dogmatic' and the 'liberal' pole where the intricate web of relations, practices and experiences could begin to reveal itself.

⁶³ Francesca Polletta, "Free spaces" in collective action', *Theory and Society* 28 (1999), 1-38.

⁶⁴ A distinction Victor Turner makes is the one between 'liminal' and 'liminoid' phenomena. While the liminal is strictly speaking related to more primitive societies, to rites of passage and is about obligation, the liminoid is about play and choice. Liminoid phenomena are individual, though with collective or mass effects; they are part of social critiques, exposing injustices or inefficiencies of mainstream economic, political and social structures. Spaces such as bars, pubs, cafes, social clubs, etc. are considered to be permanent 'liminoid' settings. See: Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: the human seriousness of play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982).

⁶⁵ Mirjana Ule, 'Odnos omladine prema mladosti, odraslosti i budućnosti' in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, pp.101-113.

Similarly, Dave Laing in *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Open University Press, 1985) showed that many punk musicians (43%) actually came from middle-class families.

possibilities and limits are of such an approach. It should be emphasised that venturing outside of the realm of political history of late Yugoslav socialism is a step into largely uncharted territory. There has not been a study of the youth in Yugoslavia comparable to those quoted above dealing with generations and youth in the Soviet Union or East Germany. Not all archives are accessible because of the 30-year rule and events have to be reconstructed through other types of material (interviews, media accounts, etc.) Departing from the institutional youth framework and tracing the 'official' youth representatives and those who claimed to speak on behalf of a new generation of youth, is, simply put, easier and a more viable goal for a research project of limited duration and for a research topic which has not been studied in any depth. However, taking the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia as a framework – because of its decentralised and flexible network which accommodated many non-political and non-mainstream initiatives, individuals and groups – allows us to incorporate wider segments of the youth population. What it does not offer is an insight into other more marginal groups which began to gain prominence at the very end of the decade, such as various groups of religious youth, football fans and those who converged around the newly formed political parties after 1990. Also, the thesis does not specifically reflect on what could be considered separate generation units: the last Yugoslav sports generation, or the last Yugoslav literary generation, for instance. Last but not least, it is almost impossible to acknowledge and take into account the entire set-up of the institutional youth network, as almost every factory, army barrack, secondary school, municipality, town and every faculty and university had their LSY branch and some sort of a youth bulletin or newspaper. Rather, this thesis has carefully selected a range of youth 'case studies' through which we gain access to a range of generational experiences and challenges in the youth sphere.

The individuals who in the 1980s were involved at different levels in the Youth League constitute an undeniably heterogeneous group. Yet, two more or less clearly delineated groups emerge: one constituted by the youth functionaries which at that time were openly criticised for the numerous privileges they enjoyed, and the other camp of more non-conformist, intellectually oriented youngsters who were part of the wide range of related youth organisations and bodies (magazines, newspapers, cultural clubs and centres, publishing and research centres, etc.). Many of those who held

important positions within the Youth League would pursue their political careers after 1991. Although, as it has been noted above, the principal carrier of the dissolution and the post-socialist transition was the 'post-war generation' of older socialist elites, there were some of the younger youth functionaries who joined the reformed communists (in Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) or entered politics through newly-established parties (like in Slovenia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina). The 'progressive' stream, which both within the youth organisation and in culture embraced different liberal, civic ideas or articulated a-political voices of rebelliousness and anti-war activism generally remained marginal and side-lined during and after the dissolution. Nevertheless, they were visible in the political youth sphere at the end of the 1980s and especially prominent in the realm of 1980s' youth media and culture.

The voices of the shadow elite: methodological considerations

How can we capture the multiple debates that occurred in these official and semi-official spaces across the different republics that demonstrate the experiences of this last Yugoslav generation? It has been done partly through the official records of the LSYY, the transrepublican nature of which allows for a comparative approach. Yet, institutional histories can elucidate only a certain aspect of the political and cultural activism of the youth in the 1980s. Rather, drawing both on published material and on oral history testimonies would provide a sense of a range of responses in different parts of the youth sphere and acknowledge the voices of multiple actors. This is supplemented with the many studies of youth attitudes by state supported institutions - surveys that reveal how youth and generational challenge were conceptualised at the time and provide important material to contextualise that challenge. Oral history testimonies, on the other hand, provide insight into patterns of meaning making – into how these actors have made sense of their experience and how they construct and reflect on 'generation', generational responsibility/failure retrospectively.

Embedded in qualitative research, the thesis combines oral history and archival research, supplementing it with survey data from larger quantitative research projects conducted in the 1980s on a pan-Yugoslav sample. The oral history interviews in this research are used in combination with archival and

other primary material (such as newspaper/magazine articles, visual material) in order to fuse what I have referred to elsewhere as ‘the Yugoslav project’, i.e. the political and institutional framework which has so far dominated scholarly works, with ‘the Yugoslav experience’.⁶⁶ The latter relates to the socio-cultural fabric, but more importantly to the lived experiences, perceptions and narratives within the framework of the Yugoslav project, i.e. the flash, the ‘thickened’ time that Bakhtin refers to in his definition of the chronotope.⁶⁷ A turn towards the life stories/lived histories of the defunct country provides the field with a venue not only for the *normalisation* of Yugoslav history, but also for a departure from the ‘dissolution’ paradigm, towards more substantial engagement with different social groups, periods, events or places in Yugoslav history, without the inclination to retrospectively detect anomalies and reasons which led to the violence and the break-up. While official sources offer only a limited perspective concerning the functioning of socialist institutions, oral history provides insight into the ways in which people negotiated with power from below and into the complexities of that interaction. The oral history approach to research essentially tries to provide space for the voices of ‘non-hegemonic classes’⁶⁸ and ‘give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place’.⁶⁹ This thesis seeks to emphasise the diversity of voices and include those that have been left out of historical accounts – such as, for example, those of young army officers. Above all, this approach that departs from a conventional choice of either archival research or oral history, allows the researcher access to the subtleties of interaction between the individual activists and the state, or, to the different interactions taking place within the framework of the League of Socialist Youth.

One of the challenges of putting together oral history testimonies and archival sources lies in the fact that they represent two very different genres of material fulfilling different functions. Indeed, this is a challenge faced by all scholars. Yet, these different source genres provide important different

⁶⁶ Ljubica Spaskovska, ‘The Yugoslav Chronotope – Histories, Memories and the Future of Yugoslav Studies’ in Archer, Rory, Armina Galijas and Florian Bieber (eds.), *Debating the Dissolution of Yugoslavia* (London: Ashgate, 2014).

⁶⁷ ‘Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.’

Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel’ in Michael Holquist (ed.) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p.84.

⁶⁸ Alessandro Portelli, ‘The Peculiarities of Oral History’, *History Workshop* 12 (1981), p.99.

⁶⁹ Paul Thomson, ‘The Voice of the Past: Oral History’, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.22.

perspectives on the problem, as they are often embedded within a range of discourses and agendas. Therefore, the scholar needs to display an awareness of these clashing discourses and embed them within the analysis. Furthermore, matching archival/primary sources with corresponding oral history material was not always possible as some archives were not accessible, but it was possible to supplement it with media reports from the time, for instance. Also, the fact that many of the interviewees were publishing their own texts in the media or were interviewed as holding positions within the Youth League, made it easier to compare their past and present views and locate any distortions in the narrative or 'selective' remembering. Indeed, 'rather than replacing previous truths with alternative ones, however, oral history has made us uncomfortably aware of the elusive quality of historical truth itself'.⁷⁰ Undoubtedly, self and self-experience are not given, monolithic or invariant, but dynamic, changing and plural.⁷¹ Furthermore, the thesis implicitly draws upon the concept of 'registers of self and self-experience'⁷² which implies that there are 'many stories of self to tell, and more than one self to tell them.' The thesis, for instance, juxtaposes views and experiences which were significantly shaped by the dissolution wars when it analyses the image of the Yugoslav People's Army and the initiatives for conscientious objection, as it takes into account testimonies both by young officers and young activists.⁷³

It is not surprising that the testimonies often bridged the Yugoslav dissolution and reflect on the present or through the present upon the past. Considering the profound changes which occurred after the Yugoslav dissolution, the oral history interviews reveal a very prominent 'relationship

⁷⁰ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (SUNY Press, 1990), pp.viii-ix.

⁷¹ Paul John Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

⁷² *Ibid.* p.xi.

⁷³ From a rather uniform, homogenous group which upheld a strictly defined public ideology, the Yugoslav People's Army officers were scattered after 1991 in disparate ideological, professional, military, socio-cultural milieus, as some left the Army, some joined the newly established post-Yugoslav armies - either of their 'own' nation-state or of the one where they found themselves at the time of the break-up, while some emigrated abroad. Because of the use of the Yugoslav People's Army resources by the Serbian military forces in the armed conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia, the public image of the YPA acquired predominantly negative connotations, while the Army's legacy and the very symbol which was reminiscent of socialism and Yugoslavism became something the newly established regimes sought to banish to the dark pages of communist history. In fact, many former YPA officers were prematurely retired by the new armies of the Yugoslav successor states.

between self-concept and cultural norms'.⁷⁴ However, if we take into consideration that oral history is 'a living record of the complex interaction between past and present within each individual and in society',⁷⁵ the thesis does not take the oral history testimony at face value. When using interviewees' words as 'history' it is essential to have in mind the dialectical relationship of past and present. In that sense, it is important for the oral historian to strive to understand why individuals are inclined to talk about particular issues and what motivates their narratives. Relatively comprehensive knowledge of the context and of the contemporary socio-political situation and the debates that surround the interviewee might help in understanding the insistence on certain comparisons or aspects of the past and the present. Where possible, the thesis relies on primary material to provide the framework for the testimonies and maintains that both bodies of source material are mutually illuminating. However, this is not done in order to shed light on the patterns of remembrance, but rather because the study seeks to account for a greater range of voices as a way of being sensitive to individual perspectives and lived experiences. Undeniably, 'Oral history is a *dialogic* process; it is a conversation in real time between the interviewer and the narrator, and then between the narrator and what we might call external discourses or culture'.⁷⁶ Although this work is predominantly concerned with reconstructing a historical era, rather than exploring the dynamics of memory, remembering is addressed where it appears to shape testimony profoundly – albeit mainly with the view of reflecting on how an account of the period can be best obtained.

The first corpus of primary material consists of archival documents. I consulted parts of the collections of the respective 'League of Socialist Youth' in the state archives in Skopje (Macedonia), Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Ljubljana (Slovenia), as well as at the Archive of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, which holds the collection of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia (subject to the 30-year rule).⁷⁷ In Macedonia, Bosnia and Slovenia I had access to the

⁷⁴ Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, 'Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses' in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.166.

⁷⁵ Alistair Thomson, 'Unreliable memories: the use and abuse of oral history', in William Lamont (ed.), *Historical Controversies and Historians* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.27.

⁷⁶ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.19.

⁷⁷ The Serbian state archive in Belgrade initially directed me to seek permission from the Socialist Party of Serbia 'as the legal successor', but those I spoke to at the seat of the Party regarding a permission for access to the collection of the League of Socialist Youth of Serbia

entire decade, although this particular collection in Sarajevo was not catalogued after the 1992-1995 war and I had to resort to an arbitrary selection of material. The archive in Skopje had a restrictive policy on copying the material, in contrast to the one in Ljubljana where photographing was free and unlimited. Considering the fact that only the collection of the LSY of Slovenia is accessible in its entirety, it does not come as surprise that the Slovenian youth sphere is the one most thoroughly studied so far. In order to ensure a broader range of sources, in Slovenia I was helped by the thematic catalogue of the collection of the LSYS and I chose to consult the sub-collections on the 1986 and the 1990 congresses, on the peace movement, the Youth Day celebrations, the voluntary work, some of the Radio Student archive, etc. In Bosnia-Herzegovina I picked boxes from 1982 until 1990, while in Macedonia I chose to focus on 1989 as the year when the debates on reform and change gained momentum.

The collections contained a range of materials produced at the various levels of the LSYY – from meeting minutes, internal reports on various issues (voluntary work, Youth Day, participation in the delegate system, finances, reports on the work of the different commissions – such as, for example, the commissions for political system), programmatic documents, congress materials, speech transcriptions, to domestic and foreign correspondence. The advantage of having access to these particular institutional archival sources is that they help the researcher gain a sense of the different debates at republican and at federal level. They proved crucial in analysing the language and the different ways in which contention and negotiation with the state were framed. However, being sensitive to the limitations of any archival material remains of paramount importance. After all, documents were drafted by individual authors, or by smaller groups of individuals within the various commissions of the LSYY; hence, in no way they could be taken as absolutely reflective of the multitude of attitudes and voices within the LSYY, or of the respective LSY as a whole. Therefore, supplementing this material with a range of contemporary sociological data (see below) and with the oral history testimonies could bridge certain gaps and illuminate the subject of the thesis from different angles.

The thesis draws upon a wealth of sociological and statistical material produced throughout the 1980s. The questions posed in the surveys and the

were adamant that that was not the case, that there weren't any restrictions from their part and directed me back to the Serbian state archive. Eventually, I did not manage to gain access to it.

themes and subjects around which they were conceptualised clearly convey a sense of the major social and political concerns of the time: 'anti-system' activism and attitudes, decline in membership in the Party and in the self-management bodies, sentiments of Yugoslav/European/national/regional belonging, attitudes towards religion, support for the constitutional changes and the programs of political/economic reform, etc. The research studies also shed light on the scholarly elite in this field in late socialist Yugoslavia, which was apparently sympathetic with the youth. More often than not it was the LSYY, its branches and/or the respective publishing/research centers, which initiated or published the various youth studies. While all-Yugoslav comprehensive youth research projects were rare, if not nonexistent until the 1980s, studies whose primary focus was the youth in the separate federal units or even cities (such as Belgrade) were more abundant.⁷⁸ The spectrum of scholarly studies dealing with the Yugoslav youth in late socialism convey a belief on the part of the authorities and intellectuals that this generation was or had the potential to be unique because it had come of age and lived its youthful years at a time of profound crisis. At the same time, their importance could be also located in that this scholarly (as well as media and political) discourse dealing with the youth produced the very idea of a generational experience.

The studies, although lacking sound theoretical framing, detect the diversification and the social differentiation of the young generation. It is from the beginning of the 1980s that empirical sociological studies really began to engage with the reality of the crisis. Indeed, the very expansion of sociology in the 1980s in Yugoslavia reflected this broader sense of crisis in the socialisation of youth. As Nebojša Popov, a leading Yugoslav sociologist and activist noted in 1988: 'The new upswing of sociology happens in the 1980s, above all with the awareness of the scope and the depth of the roots of the crisis; which led to an immediate conflict with the dogmatic ideologues and politicians, who at the time

⁷⁸ See: *Omladina Beograda: statistika i istraživanja* (Beograd: Marksistički centar organizacije SK u Beogradu, 1983); *Omladina SR Srbije u brojkama* (Beograd: Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1986); Dragomir Pantić, *Vrednosne orijentacije mladih u Srbiji* (Beograd: Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1981); Dragomir Pantić et al. *Interesovanja mladih* (Beograd: Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1981); Snežana Joksimović et al. *Sadržaj i oblici neformalnog okupljanja mladih u Beogradu* (Beograd: Centar za idejni rad SSO GK Beograd, 1986); Mirjana Ule, *Mladina '85* (Ljubljana: Institut za kriminologiju pri pravni fakulteti, 1985); *Mladina Slovenije '82* (Ljubljana: Republiška konferenca ZSMS, 1982); Mirjana Ule, *Mladina in ideologija* (Ljubljana: Delavska enotnost, 1988).

even refused to admit that it was possible to talk about a crisis, but very soon accepted it...⁷⁹

In 1983 the first Yugoslav-wide youth research was launched under the name *JUPIO – Jugoslovenski program za istraživanje omladine* [Yugoslav program for research of the youth]. It was initiated by the Presidency of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia in 1983 as a 'long-term continuous program for scholarly research on the contemporary questions and problems experienced by Yugoslavia's young generation', offering a framework for 'interdisciplinary empirical and theoretical research on Yugoslav youth'.⁸⁰ The *JUPIO* study, beside certain flaws (it was meant to be a long-term project which was in its early stages in 1986), provided a valuable overview of the Yugoslav youth in the mid-eighties, recalling the findings of other empirical studies dealing with the youth which showed that 'it is a profile of youngsters who by no means consent to formal participation, to being disciplined participants in the conventional forms of political life...'⁸¹

This becomes even more visible in the last all-Yugoslav youth research conducted in 1989 and published in 1990. Curiously, the publication bears an introductory note that the research was commissioned by the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia (as in the case of *JUPIO*), but, 'preoccupied with its own disappearance',⁸² the LSYY eventually renounced the project and declined to publish the findings. The editors underlined that the research is illustrative only of 'one slice of time' and that if it was to be repeated again, it is likely that different results would be obtained – considering the incongruous developments on political level and in everyday life. Illustratively entitled *Deca krize: omladina Jugoslavije krajem osamdesetih* [The children of crisis: the Yugoslav youth at the end of the eighties], the study reflects the change in

⁷⁹ Benjamin Perasović, 'Razgovor: Nebojša Popov, predsjednik Jugoslavenskog udruženja za sociologiju. Sloboda je nedjeljiva', *Studentski list 2* (966), 27.1.1988, p.5.

⁸⁰ Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.7.

⁸¹ Jordan Aleksić, 'Mlada generacija', p.188.

The analysis was done on a sample of 6,215 respondents between the ages of 14 and 27 (29 for the young farmers), consisting of five principal contingencies: secondary school youth, university students, unemployed youth, employed youth and young farmers. The summary report published in the form of an edited volume consists of separate chapters with elaborate data on different themes ranging from the 'values of the young generation' to the 'attitudes of the young towards nation and religion' and generally reflects the major themes and preoccupations of the time (proliferation of the religion in public, decline in the membership of the young in the League of Communists, decline in support for self-management, proliferation of the North-South divide, etc.), as well as some 'frozen narratives' tending to represent the youth as a victim of a system which did not allow enough space for the realisation of its potentials.

⁸² Srećko Mihailović et al. *Deca krize*.

socio-political discourse which occurred between 1985 and 1990 (most notably the hopes for accession to the European Communities) and in addition examines additional aspects of the young generation.⁸³

While it is important to have in mind that official sources on youth reflect a particular understanding of the role and position of youth within a given society and that they operate with categories which might be no longer relevant, they, nevertheless, do detect certain important trends among the young, as well as important perceptions on the part of the state and the intellectual elite which produced them. Studies that originate from international organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) also might be said to reflect the particular views of the number of states whose representatives were involved in the creation of the report. The idea that the youth was going through a crisis and that this would reshape the expectations of a new generation was a worldwide phenomenon of the early 1980s. UNESCO published a synthesis report entitled *Youth prospects in the 1980s*, prepared 'on the basis of a survey carried out in every region of the world'.⁸⁴ Beside indicating some core issues which have persisted well beyond the decade of the 1980s, such as youth unemployment ('the most serious issue for the coming years'⁸⁵) and the fact that 'young people are taking on growing importance as a social group',⁸⁶ the report among other things helps situate socialist Yugoslavia in a wider, global context and offers a solid basis for transcending Yugoslav particularity. True to its nature as a policy paper, the report also makes certain predictions for the upcoming decade which indeed proved to be true:

'The key words in the experience of young people in the coming decade are going to be: 'scarcity', 'unemployment', 'under-employment', 'ill-employment', 'anxiety', 'defensiveness', 'pragmatism'; and even subsistence and survival itself. If the 1960s challenged certain categories of youth in certain parts of the world with a crisis of culture, ideas and institutions, the 1980s will confront a new generation with a concrete, structural crisis of chronic economic uncertainty and even deprivation'.⁸⁷

⁸³ Namely, there is a chapter dedicated to the (dis)content of the youth with regard to democracy in Yugoslavia, several chapters on the attitudes of the youth towards the new social movements, a separate chapter on its views on the Kosovo issue, as well as a rather frequent comparison with the recent Eurobarometer findings or with different Western European surveys on youth.

⁸⁴ *Youth prospects in the 1980s*, p.7.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p.9.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p.10.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p.17.

As has been argued, 'a concept of generation that locates young people within specific set of economic, social, cultural and political conditions offers a way beyond seeing generations as a series of birth cohorts because age alone is no longer the defining feature'.⁸⁸ Hence, here, this group of sources is used to outline a broader setting for the study of the last Yugoslav generation.

The third corpus of primary material consists of the oral history testimonies. I conducted forty semi-structured oral history interviews, which lasted from forty minutes to four hours. Most of them were one-hour long. The interviews were conducted in Skopje (Macedonia), Prishtina (Kosovo), Belgrade (Serbia), Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Zagreb (Croatia) and Ljubljana (Slovenia)⁸⁹, initially through referral-sampling and later through direct contacts. The sample was selected from a range of groups who were active in the youth realm and/or contested the system from a variety of positions and from across the different republics. Few interviews were conducted with individuals who did not belong to this generation, but were closely following the events or worked in the youth realm at more senior positions. It also seemed important that the interviewees demonstrate a range of post-socialist trajectories and that they belong to groups that have been left out of mainstream accounts (e.g. army officers). I decided to focus on five groups: young musicians/artists, young journalists, young peace/feminist/gay activists, young army officers and young political functionaries (see Annex 1).

I approached individuals whose names I had encountered in the youth press or in the archives and many were happy to respond. Two interviews were conducted via Skype. The interviewees were young journalists, musicians, artists or professionally involved with the League of Socialist Youth in the 1980s. My goal was to achieve a relatively balanced representation of the different federal units and the different sub-groups, although the research was principally structured according to a preliminary list of historiographical data in terms of better known events and places from the 1980s. For instance, in Belgrade I found it important to talk to people who were involved with the youth media, the Belgrade alternative rock scene and the youth venues such as the

⁸⁸ Johanna Wyn and Dan Woodman, 'Generation, Youth and Social Change', p.499.

⁸⁹ Because of time restraint and limited resources, I did not conduct fieldwork in Montenegro and in the province of Vojvodina. However, I did have a look at the available youth press from Vojvodina and Montenegro at the National Library of Serbia in Belgrade. Due to linguistic constraints, I could not examine the Kosovan/Albanian youth press.

infamous Student Cultural Centre. In Skopje I chose to speak to more individuals gathered around the Youth League and the youth press because there has not been any scholarly studies that analytically engage with what was referred to in media and in personal accounts as 'the Macedonian spring' in the late 1980s. I was led by the goal of dissecting and adding complexity and nuance to this narrative. In Bosnia-Herzegovina I wanted to follow-up on the story of the League of Socialist Youth that later became the Liberal-Democratic Party. I also chose to speak to people who were involved in the well-known Bosnian youth media scene and especially reflect on the effects of the tragic violent conflict on this generation. To compensate for the fewer number of interviewees I managed to speak to in Croatia, I collected a large sample of the Croatian youth magazines *Polet*, *Studentski List* and *Val* which reported on many of the debates within the institutional youth realm of the time. Although the Slovenian is by far the best studied case, I interviewed some of the well-known actors in 'the Slovenian spring' in order to obtain their reflection on the events in a broader Yugoslav framework. As mentioned earlier, I also decided to include a few testimonies of young Yugoslav Army officers, whose life stories and views have generally been left out of academic accounts.

The oral history interviews revolved around a pre-drafted set of questions, although the format adopted was in general 'semi-structured'. The interviews usually commenced with a general, open-ended question, such as 'What was it like to be a young person in the 1980s?' I did not interrupt the interviewees if they seemed particularly keen to speak about a certain issue. The questions differed among different activists in order to address the specificities of their particular public engagement. Some of the questions I most often posed related to some of the major themes of the research, such as, for instance, becoming an activist; the relation to the institutional youth space(s); the understanding/self-perception or critique of Yugoslavism; the perception of and participation in official youth rituals, such as the Baton of Youth or the voluntary work camps; perceptions and experiences of the Yugoslav People's Army and military service; the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Chapter outlines

The last Yugoslav decade saw a challenge to established norms and practices in late Yugoslav politics, media and culture unfolding within the institutional youth sphere. The first chapter maps the wide, decentralised youth infrastructure of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia, outlining some of the major debates which occurred within its strictly speaking political/institutional core, as well as in its peripheral sites, i.e. its media and cultural realms. It argues that a process of negotiating new forms of youth activism (in the youth press), of questioning the inherited traditions and creating venues for democratisation of the youth organisation were made possible by the advancement of a new young political, media and cultural elite which generally sought to target the malfunctions of the system and undermine dogmatic socialism. The first half of the decade, i.e. the period immediately after Tito's death saw different oppositional ideas and new youth cultural streams and styles were progressively invading the youth realm. Expressed reluctantly in official contexts, novel ideas and contestations were being voiced - still within the institutionalised vocabulary of Yugoslav self-managing socialism.

The second chapter focuses on the way in which parts of the youth articulated a specifically anti-regime critique and through it questioned some of the values embodied in contemporary politics and culture. In particular, it examines how older forms of political discourse and ritual - embodied by Tito's personality cult and the Baton of Youth relay race - were critiqued in both political and new cultural forms. It argues that, for the most part, this critique was not reduced to a demand for outright abolishment of Yugoslav socialism, but that it was rather about challenging the norms of an older generation and re-inventing socialism through the state's youth institutions.

The third chapter reflects on new youth activism within the wider context of what has been termed 'the new social movements' [*nova družbena gibanja/novi društveni pokreti*]. It addresses the broader transnational influence of movements abroad, and shows how new areas for political expression opened up around peace, anti-militarism, environmentalism/nuclear disarmament and sexuality. The chapter argues that late socialist Yugoslav society witnessed the proliferation of a youth arena of civil initiatives and activist citizenship, albeit fragmented and often discordant, which found shelter and

support within parts of the existing youth institutional framework. Although the federal Youth League did not explicitly endorse all of the initiatives stemming from the new social movements, it did provide spaces for some of them and increased the visibility of their demands in the public space.

The last chapter looks at the ways the Youth League initially sought to reform and re-invent its role and mission and was later subsumed in and divided by the wider Yugoslav political debates and developments in the country. The proposed statute changes which came out of the public debate organised by the LSYY in 1989 reflected both the gap between the Slovenian, on the one hand, and the Serbian, the Montenegrin and the YPA youth leagues, on the other, but also shed light on a spectrum of shared visions and values which existed among the other branches. The chapter reflects upon the (lack of) consensus about the dilemma of how to modernise Yugoslav society and the sphere of institutional youth politics and culture and argues that by the end of the decade the consensus on change and reform and the discourse of 'pluralism of self-managing interests' was almost entirely replaced by a new discourse of human rights and liberal values which foreshadowed the 'exit from socialism'.

Historical framework

The crisis decade

Historically, Yugoslavism was closely related to what was considered to be 'progressive' ideas: 18th century Enlightenment (reason, secularism, tolerance, anti-traditionalism), democracy and revolutionary/socialist radicalism: 'Whereas both Croatian and Serbian nationalisms were turned too much towards the past, the Enlightenment and Yugoslavism were excessively turned toward the future'.⁹⁰ Tracing the historical development of Yugoslavism, the author underlines that it was originally conceived as a form of supra-tribalism, i.e. a supra-tribal (*nadplemenska*) national consciousness, mainly restricted to the intelligentsia during its beginnings in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, and was intrinsically linked with the roots of social democracy (the Yugoslav Social Democratic Party) before 'in a Communist version, it appeared to many as the only way out of extreme denationalizing pressure and intranational massacres'.⁹¹

The Second World War in Yugoslavia, beside the presence of the Axis forces saw fierce clashes between mainly Croat and Serb ultra-nationalism and nationally-conscious, pro-Yugoslav anti-fascism. The complexity of the war context in Yugoslavia was enhanced by the high number of actors and warring parties and the relationships they had among each other. The beginning of the war in April 1941 saw the formation of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) by the Nazis, with the involvement of returned exiled Croatian fascists in Italy; the breaking of the royal army into guerilla units; and the establishment of the partisan liberation anti-fascist movement. The partisan resistance movement provided the only supranational, all-Yugoslav platform which aimed to unite representatives and anti-fascists from all of the Yugoslav 'tribes'. As Dennison Rusinow observes,

'That this rebirth of the Yugoslav idea was not merely widely accepted but a powerful recruiting slogan for the Partisan armies is explained by the course of the war itself [...] the lesson seemed to be that if the Yugoslav peoples did not hang together they would end by hanging each other in a

⁹⁰ Aleksa Djilas, *The contested country: Yugoslav unity and communist revolution, 1919-1953* (Harvard University Press, 1991), p.16.

⁹¹ Ibid.

paroxysm of mutual genocide. The force of this lesson generated a widespread propensity to try again a new formula.⁹²

Although anti-fascism was indeed one of the ideological building blocks of socialist Yugoslavia, the place and meaning of the antifascist ideology was significantly different from the one it occupied in the GDR or the Soviet Union.⁹³ If in the GDR antifascism was perceived through the lens of 'a twofold victory over both fascism and Germany',⁹⁴ in the Yugoslav context it was understood as a twofold victory over both external (German) and internal or domestic fascism, embodied primarily in the *Ustasha* and the *Chetnik* movements. Moreover, with the missing dimension of a Soviet 'occupation', but with the pronounced civil war aspect, Yugoslav antifascism was what one could call an indigenous antifascism, which might partly explain its strong presence and relatively preserved relevance in the post-socialist context. However, it is of an utmost importance to underline the fact that Yugoslavia's *raison d'être* revolved around plural state identities and multiple self-perceptions, all of which assumed some sort of institutional endorsement/protection: ethno-national, supranational, socialist, antifascist, federal, non-aligned, anti-Stalinist, pro-Western... Once in 1991 'the *axis mundi* has shifted'⁹⁵ and even more radically so than in Central and Eastern Europe, all of those layers of identity (save the ethno-national) generally lost their relevance.

After the end of WW2, organised on the principles of an 'ethnoterritorial federation',⁹⁶ socialist Yugoslavia included 'the newly enfranchised groups' such as the Macedonians, the Bosnian Muslims and even the Albanians, who 'found their opportunities for access to the system's rewards enhanced'.⁹⁷ Indeed, the wartime liberation struggle, the bold break-up with the Cominform and the unique socialist model 'had all provided the Yugoslav elite with a level of

⁹² Dennison Rusinow, *Yugoslavia: oblique insights and observations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), p.302.

⁹³ See: Dan Diner and Christian Gundermann, 'On the Ideology of Antifascism', *New German Critique* 67 (1996), 123-132; Nuri Schleifman, 'Moscow's Victory Park: a monumental change', *History and Memory* 13/2 (2001), 5-34; Anna Krylova, 'Dancing on the Graves of the Dead: Building a World War II Memorial in Post-Soviet Russia' in D. J. Walkowitz and L. M. Knauer, *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space* (Duke University Press, 2004), pp.83-102.

⁹⁴ Dan Diner and Christian Gundermann, 'On the Ideology of Antifascism', p.125.

⁹⁵ Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: reburial and postsocialist change* (Columbia University Press, 1999), p.53.

⁹⁶ Alexander J. Motyl, 'Thinking about Empire', in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds.), *After Empire: multiethnic societies and nation-building* (Perseus, 1997), p.21.

⁹⁷ Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: denial of a nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p.146.

political legitimacy and cohesion rarely found in communist regimes.⁹⁸ When in the spring of 1967 the Center for Public Opinion Research in a survey asked respondents: 'In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, mainly satisfied, or unsatisfied with your family's prospects for the future?', 77% or more in every republic and province except Slovenia (where the percentage was 61%) answered that they were 'satisfied'.⁹⁹ Hence, upward progress until the late 1970s and an improved quality of life worked to strengthen the loyalty to the state.

One should always have in sight the crucial fact that Yugoslavia was a fluid federation, undergoing several constitutional changes. As it has been argued, 'As an idea, federalism points us to issues such as shared and divided sovereignty, **multiple loyalties and identities**, and governance through multi-layered institutions'.¹⁰⁰ During its existence, Yugoslavia believed to be building and developing an original Yugoslav model of federalism whose primary aim was to resolve the nationality problem¹⁰¹, reconcile or level down disparate ethnic narratives from the past, and thus promote a system of ethnic and social justice.¹⁰² In a similar vein, Sabrina Ramet asserts that 'socialist Yugoslavia evolved a particular system of conflict regulation and social integration through devolution, seeking to assure communal loyalty through the abandonment of nation building and the provision of far-reaching autonomy to the federal units.'¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Lenard Cohen, *The Socialist Pyramid*, pp.440-441.

⁹⁹ Steven L. Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia: political decision making since 1966* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp.49-50.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Simeon and Katherine Swinton, 'Introduction: Rethinking Federalism in a Changing World' in Karen Knopp et al. *Rethinking Federalism: Citizens, Markets, and Governments in a Changing World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995), p.3.

¹⁰¹ See: Viktor Knapp, 'Central and Eastern European Federations: Communist Theory and Practice' in Karen Knopp et al. *Rethinking Federalism*. The author uses the notion of 'socialist federalism' underlining the unique role the Communist Party played in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the USSR.

¹⁰² As Yugoslav federalism went through many different phases, it is possible to argue both its positive and negative features and implications. Dennison Rusinow, for example, emphasised the fact that Yugoslav federalism established a framework for the republic-based corrupt party elites, preventing the population from effectively exercising self-government, which became especially obvious in the late 1980s. See: Dennison Rusinow (ed.), *Yugoslavia: A Fractured Federalism* (Washington: Wilson Center Press, 1988).

On Yugoslav federalism, see: Mihailo Markovic, 'The Federal Experience in Yugoslavia' in Karen Knopp et al. *Rethinking Federalism*; Mitja Žagar, 'The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism' in Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (eds.), *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

¹⁰³ Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p.16.

The constitutional changes of 1974¹⁰⁴ which further decentralised the Yugoslav federation engendered a proper supranational sphere which was simultaneously clearly delineated and separated from the local republic-based socio-political contexts, but it was also connected through subtle threads of exchange and communication to the narrower federal units and allowed for co-existence and cross-fertilisation in many spheres. The post-1974 political landscape of a weakened federal center, empowered regional and communal elites vested with considerable decision-making powers, was described as 'consociational authoritarianism'¹⁰⁵ or "feudal socialism"¹⁰⁶. However, the amended Yugoslav constitution from 1974 had a clear statement in its introductory part outlining the 'Main principles' on the political dimension concerning education and socialisation:

'Education and schooling stand on the basis of achievements of modern science, and particularly on the basis of Marxism, as the foundation of scientific socialism, which serves to train workers for working process, self-government and their education in the light of the victories of socialist revolution, socialist ethics, self-management democratisation, socialist patriotism, brotherhood and unity and equality of nations and nationalities and socialist internationalism.'¹⁰⁷

Five years later, Josip Broz Tito was admitted to hospital shortly after the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 and he passed away in May 1980. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan sparked a wave of reactions in the Yugoslav press and among the political elite and caused a sharp divide within the non-aligned movement, leaving Yugoslavia rather isolated and opposed to the pro-Soviet camp led by Cuba. Moreover, the fact that the Soviet military engagement in Afghanistan somewhat overlapped with the passing away of Tito in 1980 and the Polish events of 1980-1981 around the Solidarity

¹⁰⁴ The amended 1974 Yugoslav constitution defined the federal republic as 'a state based on sovereignty of nations, the authority and self-management of working people and all workers...' The federal arrangement in place was further decentralised, weakening the federal bodies and allowing the constituent republics to act as de facto sovereign nation-states. Although the 1974 Constitution provided that Yugoslav citizens have a single citizenship of the Federation, the republics were free to draft their own citizenship legislation, thus engendering a specific two-tier citizenship regime.

¹⁰⁵ William Zimmerman, *Open borders, nonalignment, and the political evolution of Yugoslavia*, p. 51.

Vladisavljević plausibly argues that in the Yugoslav context 'Authoritarianism only amplified an important drawback of all consociations, that is, excessive dependence on leaders of the plural society's segments for its normal operation, thus leaving the fate of the multi-national state squarely at the mercy of unaccountable regional leaders.' Nebojša Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, p.49.

¹⁰⁶ Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.81.

¹⁰⁷ See: *The Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* (Belgrade, 1974).

movement and the introduction of the martial law, helped resurrect the old Yugoslav fears of a Soviet intervention or interference in Yugoslav internal affairs. The Yugoslav press vigorously followed the Polish events and generally upheld the Polish anti-Sovietism and the struggle led by Solidarity, while the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade hosted a week-long event 'Young Polish culture' in November 1981 and the renowned rock band *Azra* at its 1981 album *Sunčana strana ulice* [The Sunny side of the street] sang one of their greatest hits entitled 'Poljska u mom srcu' [Poland in my heart].

The beginning of the decade was also marked by the Kosovo riots. They began as a student protest against food quality and student accommodation standard¹⁰⁸ at Prishtina University, allegedly by a student of Bulgarian nationality.¹⁰⁹ From 1981 until 1984, 585 individuals (143 students) were imprisoned.¹¹⁰ In a series of trials, young Albanians from Kosovo were tried for belonging to 'hostile' groups – 'Marxist-Leninist Youth of Kosovo' or 'Group of Marxist-Leninists of Kosovo' – which aimed to achieve republican status for Kosovo and hoped to see it eventually united with Albania.¹¹¹ The focus of the debate was the involvement and responsibility of neighboring Albania for the Kosovan 'counter-revolution'. The students launched protest slogans such as 'Revisionists' or 'Down with the red bourgeoisie', reflecting ideological influences from Marxist-Leninist circles close to the Albanian regime of Enver Hoxha and hence raising legitimate concerns about the involvement of Albania's intelligence service.¹¹² These slogans were followed by more

¹⁰⁸ It should be noted, however, that student protests against food quality or life standard were not a novelty at this point. As early as 1959, soon after the opening of the 'Student Center' in Zagreb, which was hailed as the most modern student complex in the country (consisting of dormitories, restaurants, cinema, etc.), the students organised a protest against food quality which later moved to the streets, sported some anti-regime slogans and was stopped by an intervention from the police. The protests in Zagreb sparked similar demonstrations in Skopje and Rijeka.

Tomislav Ćorić, *Polu stoljeća Studentskoga centra u Zagrebu (1957.–2007.)* (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu/Studentski centar u Zagrebu, 2007).

¹⁰⁹ See: Ramadan Marmullaku, 'Albanians in Yugoslavia: a personal essay', in Dejan Djokic (ed.), *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1992* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

¹¹⁰ Dušan Bilandžić, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije: glavni procesi 1918-1985* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1985), p.495.

¹¹¹ See: *Yugoslavia: Prisoners of Conscience* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1985).

For an insightful analysis of Kosovo's status within socialist Yugoslavia, see: Aleksandar Petrović and Đorđe Stefanović, 'Kosovo, 1944-1981: The Rise and Fall of a Communist "Nested Homeland"', *Europe-Asia Studies* 62/7 (2010), 1073-1106.

¹¹² Momčilo Petrović, *Pitao sam Albance šta žele, a oni su rekli: republiku... ako može* (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1996).

exclusively and nationalistically formulated demands such as 'Kosova-Republic!', 'Unification with Albania!' and 'We are Albanians, not Yugoslavs!'¹¹³ The crucial issue, however, seemed to have been the rapid expansion of education in Kosovo which had created 'an academic proletariat with rising expectations'.¹¹⁴ Domestic scholars have also pointed to an 'autarchic economic politics and a tendency of political-cultural closure towards Serbia and Yugoslavia'.¹¹⁵ The prominent Kosovan communist leader Fadil Hoxha assumed a rather ambiguous stance towards the students when at the 12th provincial session of the League of Communists he stated that 'we must act and demand greater responsibility from the professors, educators and students. We must seek this from the students, since the majority of them, comrades, are with us. We must go to them, talk with them, and explain things to them. At the moment they are offended, because some of their comrades have been injured...'¹¹⁶

Despite its relative linguistic isolation and lack of visibility with regard to the rest of the Yugoslav political, media and cultural space, this generation of young Yugoslav Albanians was by no means cut off from the Yugoslav youth realm. On the contrary – the period after the establishment of the University of Prishtina in 1970 saw the emergence of many young actors, musicians, artists and youth functionaries. In the political youth realm, the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia was presided over by a Kosovan twice in the period 1974-1990: Azem Vllasi was its President for two mandates and Hashim Rexhepi for one. Because of the 'ethnic key' and the strict rules on proportional representation, young Albanians were present at all levels in the youth leagues in the federal units where they lived in significant numbers. Although the cultural and the media realm were indeed part of a separate 'Albanophone' sphere,

¹¹³ Ramadan Marmullaku, 'Albanians in Yugoslavia', p.305.

The 1981 slogans echoed many of those present on the streets of Kosovo in 1968.

¹¹⁴ Patrick Moore, 'The Kosovo Events in Perspective', *Radio Free Europe* Background Report, 28 April 1981, *Open Society Archive*, Budapest (digital archive).

In June 1977, in an address to the Kosovan communists in Prishtina, Edvard Kardelj stressed the importance of changing the current educational policies 'because if you keep going without a sense of limit or focus on the expansion of the highly educated cadre, you will not be able to employ them and they will not be able to find a job anywhere in Yugoslavia, so in the end you have to expect that these people will react in a nationalist way'. As cited in: Aleksandar Petrović and Đorđe Stefanović, 'Kosovo, 1944-1981: The Rise and Fall of a Communist "Nested Homeland"', p.1096.

¹¹⁵ Dušan Bilandžić, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije*, p.497.

¹¹⁶ Louis Zanga, 'The Kosovar Dilemma', *Radio Free Europe* Background Report, 20 May 1981, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

writing about the Albanian rock scene in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and the 1980s, Gëzim Krasniqi observed that quite a few rock musicians of Albanian origin were part of some of the most popular Yugoslav bands (Nexhat Macula from YU grupa, Shefqet Hoxha from Vatrene poljubac [Fiery kiss], Seat Jakupi from Konkord, etc.), many Kosovan bands had Serb, Bosniak or Turkish instrumentalists and they regularly played in front of mixed audiences.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, he argues, 'by being integrated into the (sub) cultural scene of Yugoslavia, this generation of artists from Kosovo reaffirmed both their Yugoslavness and Albanianness, as Yugoslavism in Tito's Yugoslavia meant above all Yugoslav citizenship, something which was not in contradiction with the particular ethnonational identities'.¹¹⁸

While the beginning of the decade saw the violent riots in Kosovo along with an intervention by the Army, its end saw the violent disintegration of the country. As it has been astutely observed: 'Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1980s featured two characteristics apparent to virtually everyone: the economy was in shambles, and the centre was reduced to little more than a battleground among the warring republican elites'.¹¹⁹ During the first half of the decade the country seemed to have lost not only a symbolic, but also a very crucial centre of gravity, a 'generally respected arbiter';¹²⁰ indeed, this 'syndrome' of the absent leader was echoed in many of the public debates where intellectuals, politicians and ordinary people reflected upon the contemporary crisis through the lens of the question 'What would have Tito done today?', as a 1987 issue of the daily *Borba* asked. A sense of looming uncertainty and impending change was present from the moment he was admitted to hospital, when 'the panegyrics have expressed in lofty and often poetic language not only the sincere love Yugoslav Communists cherished for their great leader but also their unconcealed fear about changes after his death'.¹²¹ A widely spread sentiment of uncertainty was illustratively conveyed in a post-socialist

¹¹⁷ Gëzim Krasniqi, 'Socialism, National Utopia, and Rock Music: Inside the Albanian Rock Scene of Yugoslavia, 1970–1989', *East Central Europe* 38 (2011), 336-354.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.340.

¹¹⁹ Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: the design and the destruction of socialism and the state* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.88.

¹²⁰ Bogdan Denitch, *Limits and Possibilities: The Crisis of Yugoslav Socialism and State Socialist Systems* (University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p.109.

¹²¹ Slobodan Stanković, *The End of the Tito Era: Yugoslavia's Dilemmas* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), p.121.

documentary: 'There was a collective feeling of being lost in a supermarket, or of having lost our parents while walking around a toy store.'¹²²

Yet, the decade of the 1980s was arguably also one marked by a 'politically and culturally permissive climate'¹²³ and it was certainly a time when already established codes of public debate and political communication began to change. The 1980s were also marked by shifts in already established patterns of political socialisation. While in 1984 from the total of 2,041,270 members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) 649,428 (32%) were younger than 28,¹²⁴ three years later the daily *Borba* published an article revealing that the membership of the LCY is rapidly aging and that only over the past two and a half years 4,100 students left the Belgrade branch of the LCY.¹²⁵ The same article underlined that over the past ten years the participation of young people below the age of 27 had decreased by 18,851. Arguably, 'The early 1980s appeared to be marked by a lack of confidence not just in the party itself, but generally in the future'.¹²⁶

The thesis explores the above-mentioned themes within the time-span of two crucial 5-year periods: 1981-1986 and 1986-1991.¹²⁷ The discourse of crisis permeated every pore of the social and the political life and one could indeed term the last Yugoslav generation – a crisis generation (see below). It took two years - from 1979 until 1981 for the political elite to 'finally acknowledge the state of crisis and to form a federal commission of around 300 politicians and scholars (the so-called Craigher commission, according to the name of the then President of the collective federal Presidency) which worked on the lengthy *Long-term Program for Economic Stabilisation*'.¹²⁸ Yugoslav society displayed a rather surprisingly large dose of self-criticism, genuine interest for the different manifestations and potential solutions for the all-encompassing crisis, allowing

¹²² In: 'Dossier Skopje – Chronicle of a City: the Decade of 1971-1980', documentary series directed by Darko Mitrevski.

¹²³ Ana Dević, 'Anti-War Initiative', p.150.

¹²⁴ Slobodan Bjelajac and Stojan Obradović, 'Omladina u Savezu komunista', in *Klasno-Socijalna Struktura Saveza Komunista Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Izdavački centar Komunist, 1984).

¹²⁵ 'Ко кога напушта', *BORBA*, January 1987.

¹²⁶ George Schopflin, 'Political Decay in one-Party Systems in Eastern Europe: Yugoslav Patterns', in Pedro Ramet (ed.), *Yugoslavia in the 1980s* (Westview Press, 1985), p.320.

¹²⁷ With regard to the unfolding of the political crisis in the 1980s, Sabrina Ramet outlines three temporal frames: 1981-1983 characterised by a denial of crisis and attempts to reform the system; 1983-1987 when there was an acknowledgment and acceptance of the crisis and an elevation of reform efforts to the constitutional plane; and 1987-1989 characterised by the proliferation of virulent nationalism. See: Sabrina Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Indiana University Press, 2006).

¹²⁸ Dušan Bilandžić, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije*, p.474.

for the appearance of many open platforms for debate and exchange. As has been noted in a 1980 Radio Free Europe report: 'Three main features are characteristic of post-Tito Yugoslavia: first, the country's economic difficulties have been piling up on a daily basis; secondly, unlike other communist countries – with the exception of Poland – the Yugoslav information media in general, and Tito's successors in particular are openly discussing the existing problems with almost no attempt made to embellish or hide anything...'¹²⁹ This preparedness to openly engage with the pending questions of reforming the system was essentially an attempt to make Yugoslav self-managing socialism viable and functional, all the while 'genuinely aspiring to create political democracy within communism'.¹³⁰

The main structural and discursive pillars of Yugoslav society - non-alignment, self-management, the revolutionary legacy and brotherhood and unity began to show the first signs of erosion and public questioning immediately after Tito's death and the public political and media discourse was marked by political phraseologies or indeed genuine debate and reflection upon 'reform' and 'economic stabilisation'. Arguably, the 'simultaneity' of all of these processes, coupled with Tito's death, 'has resulted in an accumulating systemic crisis, affecting a variety of areas at a variety of levels made worse by the way in which they interlocked causally, so that a remedy for one problem immediately raised the solution of others'.¹³¹ Other authors have similarly observed that 'multiple crises which faced Yugoslavia in the eighties [that] took their toll on public confidence in the system and led to an erosion of belief in the founding myths of the state and the inherent superiority of self-management socialism'.¹³² The decade was indeed marked by a deep sense of uncertainty and instability, as everything could and oftentimes was publicly questioned – from the constitutional order to the war crimes of the Second World War. What has been intelligently pointed out as the 'disappearance of confidence on the part of the general population that current problems can be resolved using

¹²⁹ Slobodan Stanković, 'The Yugoslavs openly discuss the country's problems', *Radio Free Europe* Background Report, 20 November 1980, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

¹³⁰ Pedro Ramet, 'Contradiction and Reform in Yugoslav Communism: A Conclusion' in Pedro Ramet (ed.), *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, p.326.

¹³¹ George Schopflin, 'Political Decay in one-Party Systems', p.314.

¹³² Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience 1945-2001* (Indiana University Press, 2003), p.145.

existing political formulas and social practices¹³³ was clearly identifiable in the Yugoslav late socialist context.

What external analysts have observed as a system undergoing a 'process of decay'¹³⁴ was indeed recognised within the Yugoslav public discourse as well. Closely related, the notion of 'apocalypse culture'¹³⁵ appears as relevant in the realm of late socialist youth culture. 'Apocalypse culture' is associated with social crisis and essentially refers to a

'culture which is inward-looking, absorbed in a quest for meanings, and prepared to question the fundamental political and social values of the society. Associated with normlessness and anomie, it is therefore symptomatic of deep social insecurity, and is peculiar to developed societies in decay [...] Contributors to 'apocalypse culture' view themselves, thus, as social critics, voices warning of dangers ahead, even as prophets offering new visions and new formulas.'

The last Yugoslav generation had a lot to say on the societal crisis and its most prominent representatives indeed acted as social critics, while many in the alternative, artistic circles assumed the role of prophets. The way in which the 1980s' generation rethought Yugoslavism is a central question. This was a question that had its roots in the late 1960s when students in the major Yugoslav cities, especially in Belgrade, publicly confronted the state during the 1968 student protests. A 1971 study on Yugoslav youth pointed to its 'litmus-paper-like nature', i.e. its ability to act as a 'sensible indicator' for various societal phenomena or anomalies, assuming 'an a priori criticism towards the ruling structures.'¹³⁶ Sociologists preserved this lens of observing the youth as potentially rebellious. By the second half of the 1980s it was openly admitted that the critique of the new generation had shifted from the 'ruling structures' to the very 'ideological labels': 'In the eyes of the ideologues and the institutions, the young individual acts as a subject whose "desires" are already known to society and which the society tries to satisfy, while in his/her own eyes s/he acts as subject which often 'doesn't know what it wants', which is in search of him/herself, entangles him/herself in conflicts with the representatives of 'society', which less and less identifies him/herself and the rest of the youth with

¹³³ Pedro Ramet, *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, p.4.

¹³⁴ George Schopflin, 'Political Decay in one-Party Systems', p.312.

¹³⁵ Pedro Ramet, *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, p.3.

¹³⁶ Stanko Posavec, 'Politička ideologija i omladina' in Stanko Posavec, Vladimir Veselica et al. *Omladina i socijalizam – ostvarenja i mogućnosti* (Zagreb: Centar za društvene djelatnosti omladine, 1971), pp.27-29.

the ideological labels of our society'.¹³⁷ In the second half of the 1980s, a process of moving away from the institutionally-coded socialist youth movement signaled an attempt for the creation of a new form of politics/culture, one that did not necessarily reject Yugoslavia or progressive (liberal or center-left) politics, but searched for a new version of it.

Despite the various political and geostrategic polarisations within the Cold War context, cultural borders appeared to be porous, in particular in the realm of youth culture. For instance, Yugoslav-British trajectories of cultural influences were visible in the sphere of music production as many Yugoslav bands travelled to Britain and some even recorded their albums in London, while the *New Music Express* and *Melody Maker* in the 1980s published articles on the Yugoslav scene and its up and coming bands. While punk youth in the USSR existed at the margins as an informal sub-culture, Yugoslav punk rock bands not only had their albums released by major state record labels, but they also frequently visited London and imbued the adopted 'form' with Yugoslav content. Consumer socialism in this context is an essential piece in the mosaic of the period and of late socialist youth cultures, mainly reflected in the consumption of cultural products, most notably through music and travel/mobility. Namely, in the period between 1987 and 1991, the number of trips abroad by Yugoslav citizens increased from 20,013,000 in 1987 to 36,290,000 in 1990.¹³⁸ A large number of these travellers were young people who travelled to Western Europe and perceived their own identity through the prism of an incipient Europeanism:

'The recognition that much of Yugoslavia was less prosperous than the rest of Europe – an observation often reflected in Yugoslav popular culture – encouraged a Yugoslav identity as a reflection of hopes for greater integration into the European Community. An important step in this direction was the abandonment of particularistic, traditional notions and movement toward a vague notion of 'Europeanism.' Yugoslav identification seemed closer to this ideal than more narrow ethnic or national identifications'.¹³⁹

Yugoslavia's geo-political position meant that in terms of lifestyle and culture it was absorbing, importing and adapting cultural content and products

¹³⁷ Mirjana Ule, 'Odnos omladine prema mladosti, odraslosti i budućnosti' in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.104.

¹³⁸ Derek R. Hall, 'Tourism Change in Central and Eastern Europe', in Armando Montanari and Allan M. Williams (eds.), *European Tourism: Regions, Spaces and Restructuring* (John Wiley & Sons, 1995), p.229.

¹³⁹ Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey and Randy Hodson, 'Who Were the Yugoslavs?', p.86.

and other influences from both East and West, all the while producing its own indigenous lifestyle patterns and practices. Different perceptions and understandings of Yugoslavism intersected and merged at different points. Hence, a notion of 'layered'¹⁴⁰ Yugoslavism could prove more useful. Although the cultural products the members of the last Yugoslav generation consumed originated both from the Eastern Bloc countries and from the West, one could argue that they were socialised in an internationalist rather than in a specific Yugoslav spirit. Hence, the thesis partially aims to discern whether such a sense of internationalism or cosmopolitanism, openness to both Eastern and Western culture was indeed one of the most prominent features of late socialist youth culture and of the image this generation wanted to create of itself and for itself.

After the initial 1981 spontaneous 'Yugoslav boom', the 1980s saw an intensification of the debate over the Yugoslav identification: should it be treated as a declaration of one's national belonging, or should it remain within its socialist political non-national frame? Often a subject of 'stigmatisation'¹⁴¹ in public discourse, 'discredited' and 'compromised'¹⁴² because of historical associations with interwar integral Yugoslavism, *jugoslovenstvo* and the 'Yugoslav nation' entered the centre stage of a prolonged battle of opinions and debates throughout the 1980s. Referring to Article 170 of the Yugoslav Constitution which guaranteed the freedom of expression of one's national belonging, a Montenegrin lawyer submitted an initiative to the Yugoslav Constitutional Court asking for the 1981 census to be annulled at the point which refuses the right to declare a Yugoslav identification in the sense of national belonging.¹⁴³ The numerous publications¹⁴⁴ on the other hand, engaged with the elusive concepts of 'Yugoslavism' and the 'Yugoslav nation', only to acknowledge the complexity of the notion and to conclude in line with what Predrag Matvejević observed - that it is easier to define what Yugoslavism

¹⁴⁰ With regard to India, Sunil Khilnani argues that federal arrangements were to embody the idea of a '**layered Indianness**'. See: Sunil Khilnani, *The idea of India* (London: Penguin, 2003). In the Soviet context with regard to the post-WW2, Juliane Fürst identifies a similar phenomenon by referring to it as '**multiple notions of Sovietness**'. Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, p.30.

¹⁴¹ Sergej Flere, 'Vojvođanska omladina', p.158.

¹⁴² Nikola Dugandžija, *Jugoslavenstvo* (Beograd: NIRO Mladost, 1985), p.8.

¹⁴³ Maksim Korać, 'Jugosloveni su nacija', *Omladinski pokret* (mart 1987), p.7.

¹⁴⁴ See, e.g., Nikola Dugandžija, *Jugoslavenstvo* (Beograd: NIRO Mladost, 1985); Prvoslav Ralić, *Jugoslovenstvo danas i ovde* (Beograd: OOUR Borba, 1986); Dušan Ičević, *Jugoslovenstvo i jugoslovenska nacija* (Beograd: IRO Naučna knjiga, 1989).

is not, rather than what it is or what it should be.¹⁴⁵ Author of one of the more prominent studies on the meaning of Yugoslavism, he asserted that the type of Yugoslavism which has the Slavic heritage as its main attribute is outdated and hence proposed a more inclusive understanding of Yugoslavism with regard to Yugoslavia's many non-Slavic nationalities and minorities. Matvejević claimed that there were many different types of Yugoslavism or reasons to feel/be a Yugoslav. Similarly, in 1987, Sergej Flere observed that Yugoslavism cannot be reduced to South-Slavism due to the fact that in the 1981 census 3,3% of those who spoke Hungarian as a mother tongue declared themselves as Yugoslav in the national sense.¹⁴⁶ In view of the partially conducted 1991 census and the overall political developments in the disintegrating federation, Yugoslavism came to be identified with anti-nationalism¹⁴⁷ in the ideological battle with the newly enthroned nationalist elites which sought to do away with the Yugoslavs and *jugoslovenstvo* as 'supra-tribal phenomena'.¹⁴⁸ The Bosnian student magazine *Valter*, for instance, referred to those citizens who 'nourish a sense of Yugoslavism' as 'Balkan Palestinians', who 'know very well where and how far the territory which should be their homeland stretches, but, unfortunately, it is nowhere to be found.'¹⁴⁹

The crisis generation

As was the case with other socialist states, the youth was considered one of the most important pillars of Yugoslav society. The widely popular slogan *Tito-Partija-Omladina-Armija* [Tito-the Party-the Youth-the Army] points to the importance given to the youth, as a separate pillar in the socialist order. In order to contextualise the developments within the formal youth realm in the 1980s, it should be noted that there was a major re-structuring of the youth organisation in the previous decade at the initiative of the political elites. The League of Socialist Youth was one of the five 'socio-political organisations' in socialist Yugoslavia alongside the Socialist Alliance of Working People (SAWP), the Union of Fighters of the National-Liberation Struggle, the Alliance of Trade

¹⁴⁵ Predrag Matvejević, *Jugoslovenstvo danas: pitanja kulture* (reprint) (Belgrade: MVTC, 2003).

¹⁴⁶ Flere, 'Vojvođanska omladina', p.154.

¹⁴⁷ 'Jugoslovenstvo kao antinacionalizam', *Republika* 17 (1991), p.12.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Goran Todorović, 'Zbogom Jugoslavijo!', *Valter* 24, 9.2.1990, p.3.

Unions and the League of Communists. As such, it was formally part of the political system, in particular through its delegates to the SAWP and to the various chambers of the municipal, republican and federal assemblies.¹⁵⁰ However, not all members of the LSYY were members of the LCY. Membership in the LCY was voluntary and in the 1980s the number of young below the age of 28 in the LCY began to decrease (see Chapter 2).

Mainly directed against the independence of the Student Unions and the events of 1968, the decision to reform the Youth League reflected a growing concern with the role of the major Yugoslav universities as relatively autonomous breeding grounds for oppositional ideas and critical thought (in particular within the fields of philosophy and sociology). Consequently, as it has been argued, in the period from the student protests in 1968 until 1974 'the [Belgrade] University became the focus of cultural and political events. A dialogue developed on the ideas of counter-culture and the 'new left' in frequent public discussions, magazines and periodicals, far more so than in the regular classroom sessions'.¹⁵¹ While the Youth League was generally criticised 'for its lack of purpose and inactivity' even by Party officials, the Student Union 'moved into a position of more open conflict with the League of Communists than any other political organisation during the period 1966-71'.¹⁵² More vocal and articulate, the membership of the student unions was less reluctant to voice discontent with the policies of the Youth League. For instance, as a sign of protest, the student unions in Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia refused to send delegates to the congress of the Youth League at the end of 1968. In October 1970, 6,000 students at Belgrade University staged another strike in protest of the sentencing of Vladimir Mijanović to a twenty-month prison sentence for 'hostile anti-state propaganda'.¹⁵³ However, the decision of the political elite to

¹⁵⁰ For example, the 'basic organisations' of the LSYY in the various companies, factories and educational institutions used to delegate members to the chamber of associated labour in the municipal assembly, which then sent delegates to the same chamber in the republican parliament and to the federal chamber of the federal assembly. The 'municipal conference' of the LSYY delegated members to the socio-political chamber of the municipal assembly, while the 'republican conference' of the Youth Leagues had its delegates in the socio-political chamber of the republican assembly.

¹⁵¹ Nebojša Popov, 'The University in an Ideological Shell' in Nebojša Popov (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), p.311.

¹⁵² April Carter, *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia: The Changing Role of the Party* (London: Frances Pinter, 1982), p.172.

¹⁵³ Mijanović was the chairman of the Student Union's committee at the Faculty of Philosophy and was accused, among other things, for publicly opposing the electoral lists proposed by the

curb the autonomy of the student unions was also related to two major events on the Yugoslav political scene at the beginning of the 1970s: the 1971 Croatian 'mass movement' (MASPOK) and the purge of its 'nationalist' leaders and the 1972 removal of Serbian 'liberals'. As Pavlowitch argues, 'the response of the Yugoslav leadership to opposition from outside and inside the Party had been to cleanse the political elite of all those who had acquired a genuine audience, and who were accused of 'nationalism', 'liberalism' and 'technocratism'.¹⁵⁴ The Croatian case exposed the porousness of the borders between the political and the youth/student realms, as the propagated ideas resonated with a significant number of students at Zagreb University who took part in the demonstrations.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, not only it provided pretext for more decisive backlash against open critique, it also 'served as a backdrop for return to Leninist symbols in the early 1970s [as] democratic centralism and the dictatorship of the proletariat were stressed...'¹⁵⁶

As a consequence, the Third Conference of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in December 1972 was entirely dedicated to the youth. A resolution was issued entitled 'The Struggle of the LCY for a socialist orientation and active participation of the young generation in the development of the socialist self-managing society'.¹⁵⁷ The adjective 'socialist' was added to the official name of the youth organisation at its ninth congress in 1974: from the 'Yugoslav Youth League' [*Savez omladine Jugoslavije*] it became the 'League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia' [*Savez socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije*]. That was also the moment when the Yugoslav Student League ceased to exist as a separate youth organisation, as it was merged with the Yugoslav Youth League to form the new 'League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia'.¹⁵⁸ This attempt at political and organisational homogenisation of the youth could be

Socialist Alliance in 1969, distributing leaflets calling that Yugoslavia stops exporting its workers to West European capitalists and urging the Bosnian miners from Kakanj to continue their strike. See: Slobodan Stankovic, 'Belgrade Student Unrest', *Radio Free Europe* Background report, 29.10.1970, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

¹⁵⁴ Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia: The History behind the Name* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 2002), p.178.

¹⁵⁵ See: Jill Irvine, 'The Croatian Spring and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia' in Jasna Dragović-Soso and Lenard J. Cohen (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2007), pp.149-178.

¹⁵⁶ William Zimmerman, *Open borders, nonalignment, and the political evolution of Yugoslavia*, p.135.

¹⁵⁷ Marko Lolić, *Revolucionarni omladinski pokret u Jugoslaviji (SKOJ-SSOJ, 1919-1984)* (Beograd: Radnička štampa, 1984).

¹⁵⁸ See: *Statut SSOJ* (Belgrade: NIRO Mladost, 1986), p.8.

interpreted as an attempt to control the relatively independent university-based student organisations. Indeed, 'the student organisations have tended to be articulate, active, and autonomous'.¹⁵⁹ Azem Vllasi was elected president of the newly consolidated LSYY in 1974 and remained at the post for two mandates until 1978. According to him, prior to the merging, there were de facto two separate youth organisations and the decision was an attempt to reinforce the coherence of the institutional youth sphere. Indeed, it could be viewed as an attempt to bridge the increasing gap between the urban, intellectual, University-based student youth, on the one hand, and the working class/rural youth, on the other. The attempted unification of the youth organisation under the banner of 'socialism' appeared effective, at least until the first years after Tito's death. The youth organisation in the early 1980s, for instance, ardently pursued the main aspect of Yugoslav foreign policy: non-alignment and cooperation with Third World countries.¹⁶⁰

This was the institutional setup of the youth realm as the new decade dawned. From the beginning of the 1980s, the omnipresent discourse of a multi-level (political, economic, social) crisis coincided with the emergence of a scholarly discourse within the social sciences revolving around the 'crisis generation'. This rise in youth studies/sociology of the youth could be interpreted as an evidence of a general concern for the lack of integration and political alienation of the youth. A practice of observing the youth through a prism of crisis or as an indicator of serious flaws in the society has not been alien in socialist Yugoslavia. Seen as a critical pillar of the Yugoslav socialist project, the state invested in the youth both symbolic and economic capital with the hope that the sense of 'Yugoslav socialist patriotism' would supersede and/or replace narrower circles of belonging or ethnic and class divisions. It was

¹⁵⁹ Bogdan Denis Denitch, *The Legitimation of a Revolution: the Yugoslav case* (Yale University Press, 1976), p.80.

¹⁶⁰ In a bold display of commitment to Yugoslav non-alignment, the federal youth organisation between the two international youth seminars in Kumrovec in 1980 and 1981 left the Prague-based and Moscow-sponsored International Union of Students (IUS). Although local problems concerning student standard and employment were always on its agenda, the LSYY chose to finance the participation of fifty delegations (out of 99 in total) at the 1981 Kumrovec youth seminar, including different socialist or leftist youth unions from Australia, Brazil, Ghana, Honduras, Congo, Madagascar, Malta, Seychelles, Sierra Leon, Uganda, Palestine, South Africa, with what could be interpreted as an intent to preserve and comply with the state politics of commitment to the non-aligned movement.

'Pregled organizacija kojima PK SSOJ plaća putne troškove za učešće na međunarodnom seminaru omladine i studenata', *Savez socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije*, Archive of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, SSOJ 114/folder 298.

in particular after the 1968 student riots that there was an increase in the number of scholarly studies of the youth. Perceived both as a potential problem and as a resource, the youth was put under scholarly scrutiny throughout the 1970s and the 1980s with the aim of 'establishing the reasons for its discontent, but also of proving its attachment to socialism'.¹⁶¹ For example, in his speech at the 1986 congress of the League of Socialist Youth of Macedonia, Vasil Tupurkovski, member of the presidency of the Central Committee of the LCM said:

'Throughout history generations of young people forcefully affirm the continuity of the progressive and revolutionary aspirations. The most convincing and most glorious example of that is the people's liberation struggle and the socialist revolution [...] The revolutionary and progressive spirit of the young generations is intertwined with the historical progress and the interests of the working class in the forging of new and humane consciousness...'¹⁶²

The notion of the 'crisis generation' persisted throughout the 1980s in scholarly and media discourse. Stating that there is awareness among the young that the current crisis is part of a 'crisis of global character',¹⁶³ towards the end of the 1980s the notion of a crisis generation was supplemented by a new derivative: 'crisis of a generation'. Not abandoning Mannheim's terminology, at a conference entitled 'The Yugoslav youth of the eighties between political apathy and autonomous political subjectivity' and in the conference proceedings it was inferred that one can observe a process of '(de)homogenisation of the generation units'.¹⁶⁴

Strikingly, the *JUPIO* report noted that the personal predictions about one's individual future or the future of the society were 'preponderantly optimistic',¹⁶⁵ as 82,9% of the respondents stated that they believe their personal future will be much better or somewhat better than the present, while

¹⁶¹ Smiljka Tomanović et al. *Mladi – naša sadašnjost*, p.129.

¹⁶² *XII конгрес на Сојузот на социјалистичка младина на Македонија* (Скопје/Кочани: Републичка конференција на ССММ/Младост, 1986), p.32.

Similarly, a 1982 publication entitled *The Young of Yugoslavia: a general overview* published by the LSYY, underlined that the youth comprised ¾ of the Yugoslav People's Liberation Army during WW2 and that 100,000 young people and members of the Communist Youth fell as victims. Dušan Davidović (ed.), *Mladi Jugoslavije: opšti pregled* (Beograd: Centar za istraživačku i dokumentacionu-izdavačku delatnost Predsedništva Konferencije SSOJ, 1982), p.53.

¹⁶³ Jordan Aleksić et al. *Omladina i politika: jugoslavenska omladina između političke apatije i autonomnog političkog subjektiviteta*, p.13.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p.21.

¹⁶⁵ Vladimir Obradović, 'Društveni položaj omladine u Jugoslaviji' in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.49.

62,8% stated that they believe this was true for the future of the society/state.¹⁶⁶ Only 5,8% said that they expect their personal future to be much or somewhat worse. The pessimistic view on the future of the society was clearly dependent on the federal unit in a way that the youth from the most developed Yugoslav republics, such as Slovenia, was the most pessimist and the youth from the least developed region of Kosovo expressed the highest level of optimism: 43,5% of the Slovenian respondents and 11% of the Kosovan youth thought the future of the society will be worse. This led sociologists to term this particular phenomenon ‘the optimism paradox’. However, as far as the view on the personal future was concerned, the figures were strikingly lower: only 6,4% of Kosovans and 11,3% of Slovenes thought their personal future will be worse than it was. The ability to clearly dissociate one’s personal experiences from the perception of the political and the social condition of the state implies that the majority of the respondents possessed the ability to critically reflect on the socio-political reality, without perceiving things through their own subjective experience.

This sense of optimism that permeated the report led the author to conclude that ‘the contemporary youth – socialised in a way suited to idealise certain values through the schooling process and protected within family life – had radicalised its personal expectations from society to such an extent that it is neither prepared for the time and situations of social trouble, nor able to accept the “psychology of renouncement”...’¹⁶⁷ This expansion of the horizon of expectation¹⁶⁸ was, for instance, visible in the debates on the distribution of socially owned housing/flats to young people/young families, as the state organs were repeatedly reproached in the youth media and in various debates within the youth organisation for the lack of housing for the young and for the long waiting lists. The ‘conformist optimism’¹⁶⁹ was without doubt closely related to a sense of geopolitical stability in the context of the Cold War and a perception that Yugoslavia and its institutions were relatively strong, likely to

¹⁶⁶ Mirjana Ule, ‘Odnos omladine prema mladosti’, p.111.

¹⁶⁷ Vladimir Obradović, ‘Društveni položaj omladine’, p.49.

¹⁶⁸ In the realm of consumer culture, Patrick H. Patterson observed that ‘in Yugoslavia, the “inflation of desire” came not from unending frustration and scarcity but instead from the fulfillment of desire – from the lived experience of abundance.’ Moreover, ‘The apparent success of government policy in the 1950s, 1960s, and most of the 1970s built up huge popular expectations that the good times would continue and that the future would, in fact, be even brighter.’ See: Patrick Hyder Patterson’s *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Cornell University Press, 2011), pp.314-317.

¹⁶⁹ Jordan Aleksić et al. *Omladina i politika*, p.22.

last for another one hundred years, as Gregor Tomc (born 1952), member of the punk band Pankrti and sociologist put it. Indeed, there was a shared perception similar to the one in the Soviet context that ‘everything was forever’.¹⁷⁰ This partially explains why in 1986 politics, national history/relations and religion were ranked quite low on the list of interests and topics of conversation:

Figure 1: Subjects of verbal communication among the young

	“Often”	“Never”
Film	63,4%	3,5%
Work/study	63,3%	3,5%
Living standard	58,4%	6,8%
Music	53,2%	4,3%
Life	55,8%	9,2%
Sport	53,3%	9,9%
Science/technology	26,3%	18,3%
Domestic politics	25,8%	17,9%
International politics	23,9%	18,4%
Art and literature	21,4%	26%
National history/relations	13,8%	37,1%
Religion ¹⁷¹	9,3%	51,3%

Considering the fact that this generation and the decade of the 1980s in popular memory in general feature principally as an embodiment of the phenomenal musical/cultural/artistic, i.e. non-political output, one could infer that culture was of particular importance for this generation. On the other hand, the fact that this type of question was asked in the survey may be indicative of a fear that the young were becoming depoliticised and more culture-oriented.

¹⁷⁰ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything was forever*.

¹⁷¹ Religion-related books and religious literature were at the bottom of the list of favourite literature genres with only 1.9%. World and domestic classics/fiction (24.8%) and comics/strip (25.4%) were at the top of the table. A separate chapter within the research was dedicated to religion. It demonstrated a high level of secularisation among Yugoslav youth – 64.2% said that they never visit a place of worship/prayer. There were, however, big differences among the separate national groups: while 86.9% of the Montenegrin youth, 84.5% of those who declared Yugoslav, 77.7% of the Serbian youth and 66.8% of the Albanian youth said that they never went to a church/mosque, only 34.7% of the Croat youth, 44.3% of the Macedonian youth and 47.8% of the Slovenian youth claimed the same. Srđan Vrcan, ‘Omladina osamdesetih godina, religija i crkva’ in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.161.

Indeed, other sections of the survey found that ‘the number of the youth interested in politics and political events has been gradually decreasing over the past two decades’.¹⁷²

A paper presented at the academic conference entitled ‘The societal position, role and perspective of Yugoslavia’s young generation’ that took place in Kumrovec in September 1982 echoed one of the arguments of the 1980 UNESCO report that ‘the present crisis is structural’ and that ‘It strikes at the abundance-oriented optimism that things will somehow work out’.¹⁷³ The paper noted that ‘The new generation of the young becomes progressively sensitive since it is exposed to the ‘aggression’ of a society experiencing increasing bureaucratisation and multiplication of economic problems. It turns into a ‘crisis generation’, having a potential to transform itself into a *key critical societal grouping*’.¹⁷⁴ Srđan Vrcan, one of the most prominent Croatian and Yugoslav sociologists, similarly observed that the contemporary youth was ‘a generation which lives and acts in a society caught in serious difficulties, permanent stagnant state of affairs and crisis-related processes [...] It is aware that it lives in a society that belongs to a world that is in a deep and long-lasting crisis, the end of which is not visible...’¹⁷⁵ Similarly, other scholars pointed to the socio-political state of affairs as conducive to the emergence of a ‘*disabled, hampered generation*’,¹⁷⁶ stating that the crisis is ‘progressive-functional’ since it forces Yugoslav society to re-direct itself towards anything that would help create solid basis for a more prosperous future. In a similar vein, Slovene sociologist Mirjana Ule named the youth of the 1980s ‘the generation of the shocked’,¹⁷⁷ explaining that unlike the ‘carefree generation’ of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which experienced both economic growth and social improvements, as well as witnessed Yugoslavia’s increasing international role and prestige, the present generation is primarily experiencing a reality of a social and an economic crisis, a decline in living standards, risk of unemployment and decrease of the international prestige of Yugoslavia. This generation, Ule

¹⁷² Srećko Mihailović, ‘Odnos omladine prema politici’ in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.175.

¹⁷³ *Youth Prospects in the 1980s*, p.21.

¹⁷⁴ Jordan Aleksić, ‘Zagonetka društveno-političkog aktivizma mlade generacije’ in *Mlada generacija, danas: društveni položaj, uloga i perspektive mlade generacije Jugoslavije* (Beograd: NIRO Mladost/Predsedništvo Konferencije SSOJ, 1982), p.75.

¹⁷⁵ Srđan Vrcan, ‘Suvremeno pokoljenje mladih – novo i osobito pokoljenje’ in *Mlada generacija, danas*, p.137.

¹⁷⁶ Gojko Stanić ‘Generacijsko i klasno’ in *Mlada generacija, danas*, p.42.

¹⁷⁷ Mirjana Ule, *Mladina in ideologija* (Ljubljana: Delavska enotnost, 1988), p.64.

claimed, was suddenly awakened from the optimistic dreams of its childhood years.

Finally, a prominent marker of youth culture and identity was the perception of urbanity or rurality. The rural-urban divide¹⁷⁸ among the young was a well-established fact which surfaced in the comprehensive surveys conducted in the 1980s. The sense of urbanity was a prominent component of the overall feeling of proximity to Europe and the modern world. What is particularly striking is the internalisation of the urban/rural dichotomy in a large part of the personal testimonies. This does not come as a surprise when taking into consideration the fact that the cultural institutions within the youth infrastructure were gradually taken over by a young, educated and ambitious urban strata which embraced the novel trends in journalism, music and arts. The principal youth magazines were indeed at the helm of promoting what was considered to be 'urban' culture. As it has been argued: 'This continuous commitment of the editors to "urban" model of newspapers was instigating cultural production that used referent frames of city scenes, which did not take into account the national context of culture and its ethnic definitions, which will become so important not even a decade later'.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, throughout the decade, official youth bodies and forums were complaining and expressing concerns that the youth press was not representative of the rural and the working class youth. Even the federal youth magazine *Mladost* at a meeting of its publishing council was advised to 'deal more with the problems of the rural and the working youth'.¹⁸⁰

The reality of the economic crisis which hit Yugoslavia from the early 1980s, the appropriation of a crisis discourse by the media and the political elites and, finally, a sympathetic scholarly discourse within Yugoslav youth studies/sociology of youth in the 1980s, all contributed to the proliferation of a

¹⁷⁸ For analyses of the rural-urban dichotomy in the Yugoslav context, see: Xavier Bougarel, 'Yugoslav Wars: The 'Revenge of the Countryside' between Sociological Reality and Nationalist Myth', *East European Quarterly* XXXII/2 (June 1999), 157–75; John B. Allcock, 'Rural-Urban Differences and the Break-Up of Yugoslavia', *Balkanologie*, 6 (2002) 1/2, 101–25. On perceptions of urbanity and antinationalism in the post-Yugoslav context see: Stef Jansen, *Antinacionalizam: etnografija otpora u Zagrebu i Beogradu* (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2005); Stef Jansen, 'Cosmopolitan Openings and Closures in Post-Yugoslav Antinationalism' in Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco (eds.) *Cosmopolitanism in Practice* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp.75-92.

¹⁷⁹ Dejan Kršić, *Mirko Ilić: Fist to Face* (New York: F+V Media, 2012), p.52.

¹⁸⁰ Boško Grbić, 'Omladinska štampa: položaj, delovanje, tretman', *Mladost* 1277, 22.03.1982.

generation defined through the all-pervasive Yugoslav late socialist crisis. This was a process of external labeling, which took place primarily within sociological research dealing with the youth, and especially due to the fact that the two big all-Yugoslav research projects on youth were conducted in 1985 and in 1989. The somewhat hyper-production in literature dealing with the youth reflects a classical Yugoslav (or for that matter, socialist) preoccupation with the young which in times of crisis should stand at the helm of (progressive) change. Hence, it is not surprising that often authors were recalling the fact that the absolute majority of those who carried out the antifascist liberation struggle were young under the age of 30. Indeed, due to the fact that the young had played an essential role in carrying out the revolution and in rebuilding the country in the post-war period, the older generation stuck to an unwavering conviction that the youth was crucial for the development and survival of the Yugoslav socialist project and that under the right circumstances and guidance, the seeds of progressiveness and revolutionary potential it carries would grow as desired.

1. 'Pockets of freedom' – the youth sphere and its spaces of negotiation and dissent

*Moje su nebo vezali žicom
Po mome mozgu crtaju šeme
Žele još jednu kopiju svoju
Da njome vrate nestalo vreme.*

*Al' ne dam svoje ja ideale
I ješču snove umesto hleba
Ja svoju sreću nosim sa sobom
Ona je parče slobodnog neba.¹⁸¹*

'Nebo', Električni orgazam (1981)

In the 1980s, the voices of dissent coming from the young Yugoslav generation were not, for the most part, expressed within a clearly delineated alternative sphere, but rather within the wide framework of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia. Whilst most work on political alternatives in late socialism has focused on the rise of alternative spheres or parallel societies, contention and negotiation from within official institutions has seldom been studied in detail.¹⁸² Addressing the last Yugoslav generation through the ways it articulated its generational specificities and preoccupations in the institutional youth sphere - more specifically in media and culture - this chapter maps the wide, decentralised youth infrastructure of the LSYY as a form of public space. It outlines the processes of change in the late socialist youth institutional realm and reflects specifically on the ways contestations nested, became voiced or accommodated within the existing framework of the LSYY. It argues that the very existence of its decentralised network allowed for novel youth cultures and politics to emerge and develop - through the venues, events and in particular

¹⁸¹ 'They tied my sky with wire
They are drawing schemes on my brain
They want another copy of them
To help them bring back the long gone times.

But, I am not giving up my ideals
and I will eat dreams instead of bread
I carry my fortune with me
It is a piece of the free sky'.
From the song 'Sky'.

¹⁸² An obsession with anti-communist resistance, separate from the values of the state, was the product of post-communist nationalist historiographies - approaches that are still dominant in the work of e.g. institutes of national memory or institutes for the investigation of communist crimes. However, challenges to this approach that stress the embeddedness of late socialist dissent within regime discourses and practices, are growing. See e.g. Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children Youth and Patriotism in East Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester University Press, 2011); Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

through the youth media/press network. In addition, the chapter reflects on the limits of toleration, the appropriate forms of expression, and the acceptable boundaries of freedom and criticism.

The sense of a multi-level crisis and the decline of trust in the Party and in the LSYY in the first half of the 1980s led many young activists to argue that the institutional youth sphere had to be reformed. In the early 1980s, youngsters who wished to express alternatives found possibilities in the 'peripheral' parts of the LSYY, i.e. in the cultural realm and the youth media. It was in particular the decentralised nature of the LSYY which allowed 'pockets of freedom' to be created or (re)claimed by a new generation of political activists, journalists, musicians and artists, within its very institutional infrastructure - consequently producing cross-fertilisations of ideas and initiatives that did much to promote a burgeoning music/media scene. By the late 1980s, most of the major youth magazines contained hardly any trace of what was their originally conceived role of acting as official organs of the Leagues of Socialist Youth. While differences between federal units and regional variation have to be acknowledged, a new pan-Yugoslav network of alternative voices was created through the LSYY's cultural and media infrastructure. Yet, in the first half of the 1980s, these challenges remained on the periphery: it was not until the second half of the decade that the LSYY began to reinvent itself as a space where *political* alternatives could be articulated and where a more pronounced challenge towards the institutional set-up as a whole emerged (see Chapter 4).

The processes of contention, negotiation and change unfolding within the youth sphere were certainly embedded within the larger societal and political developments and the all-pervading discourse and sense of crisis. A history of a relatively liberal youth culture and a semi-free press coupled with on-going processes of freer public debate and a consensus on political reform contributed to the creation of the youth media as an arena for various articulations of demands for freedom of speech and critical reflection on the contemporary socio-political reality. Essentially, this chapter engages with the ways the last Yugoslav generation chose not to withdraw or completely opt out of the institutional framework, but met the state in its own 'official' territory and challenged it there.

The first part addresses the debates and changes which ensued in the institutional youth sphere as a consequence of the crisis and explores how the

organisation sought to re-invent itself, deal with withdrawal in active membership and participation and respond to increased criticism both from without and from within. The principal question this part engages with is how the transformation of the official rhetoric, politics and practices within the institutional youth sphere unfolded. How did the Youth League engage with and respond to the wider socio-political crisis and its own internal crisis in terms of cadres, democratisation and reform? The second part introduces the 'peripheral' parts of the youth infrastructure (the youth cultural venues) which were the most porous and open to alternative culture and new forms of expression. The third part engages with the ways the youth press - the most vocal, popular and visible part of the youth institutional framework - progressively carved out new spaces for debate and re-thinking of the socio-political reality and articulated demands for freedom of speech, all the while navigating a series of bans, court cases, pressures and public stigmatisation.

1.1. The youth organisation in the 1980s

The 1980 UNESCO report on youth noted that 'Schools, political parties, trade-unions and governments enter the 1980s under the threat of massive withdrawal of confidence by the younger generation'.¹⁸³ Furthermore, youngsters 'seem to find little reflection of those goals of social progress and justice in day-to-day workings of governments and political parties'.¹⁸⁴ In a similar vein, the 1986 *JUPIO* report in its introductory notes underlined the fact that

'the contemporary youth is living in conditions of relatively wide-spread democratisation of social life [...] Hence, the youth lives in a context where it is no longer possible to implement some earlier mechanisms of prohibition of certain aspects of the socio-political reality, through systematic institutional closures or limitations of people's existential and spiritual horizons [...] Ultimately, the youth lives in a general context where it is absolutely no longer possible to achieve the desired socio-political goals through a comprehensive, consistent and limited political indoctrination, as well as through occasional virulent ideological campaigns'.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ *Youth prospects in the 1980s*, p.21.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.40.

¹⁸⁵ Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.11.

Writing about the Yugoslav political realm of the early 1980s, Haug notes that ‘The seeming inability of the SKJ¹⁸⁶ leaders to deal with the crisis seriously shook public confidence in the Party. This led the SKJ to immerse itself in a large-scale self-criticism exercise.’¹⁸⁷ Archival material from the League of Socialist Youth branches in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia and Macedonia, as well as official reports from the League’s congresses demonstrate a replication of the extensive ‘self-criticism exercise’ within the multi-level structure of the Yugoslav youth organisation. Internal documents emphasised that ‘the LSJ lacks a long-term and well-planned activity for [its] engagement in the Socialist Alliance [of Working People]’.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, the LSYY was reproached at different levels and resorted to self-critique concerning the low numbers of youth delegates to the SAWP and the other organs of the political system.¹⁸⁹ Studies on the institutional youth structures in other socialist states have pointed to similar, yet context-specific phenomena. Writing about the Hungarian youth organisation, Laszlo Kürti notes that ‘the most serious wound to the youth organisation was self-inflicted by its self-preoccupation and political pressure to maintain a hegemonic status quo over its youth through participation in its activities’.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, ‘self-preoccupation’ resonates with the above-mentioned observation by Haug and is visible in debates within the LSYY from that time.

It was at approximately the same time that a more vibrant discourse on the necessity for ‘democratisation’ emerged. In April 1983, the presidency of the ‘conference’ of the LSYY at its eighth session decided to initiate a country-wide discussion on ‘Some questions on the democratisation of relationships within the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia’.¹⁹¹ Among other things, the existence of widespread discontent was acknowledged and it was concluded

¹⁸⁶ Refers to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia – *Savez komunista Jugoslavije (SKJ)*.

¹⁸⁷ Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, p.309.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Ostvarivanje ustavnih funkcija socijalističkog saveza /teze za raspravu/, Beograd, maja 1983.godine’, *Republička konferencija SSOBIH*, Archive of Bosnia & Herzegovina, ‘Komisija za društveno-politički sistem’/box 108.

¹⁸⁹ Statistical data shows that the number of youth delegates to the workers’ councils rose progressively: from 9.175 in 1953, to 31.578 in 1968 and 53.566 in 1983. However, out of the total number of 484.784 delegates, only 53.566 belonged to the category of ‘youth’. In 1982, of the 1.431 delegates to the republican assemblies and the 308 to the federal assembly, only 121 and 6 respectively came from the youth. *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1985* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku), pp. 79/106-108.

¹⁹⁰ Laszlo Kurti, *Youth and the State in Hungary: Capitalism, Communism and Class* (Pluto Press, 2002), p.179.

¹⁹¹ ‘Program vođenja javne rasprave o materijalu “Neka pitanja demokratizacija odnosa u Savezu socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije”’ (Republička konferencija SSOBIH, Sarajevo, 7. maja 1983. godine), *Republička konferencija SSOBIH*, Archive of B&H.

that the youth organisation cannot become a genuine social actor as long as there are different types of “benevolent mentors”, tutors, techno-bureaucratic structures [which] would be able to impose work content, to create politics and even impose leaderships.¹⁹² In compliance with the guidelines, the LSY of Bosnia-Herzegovina launched a program of ‘broad discussion’ round-tables and public debates in May 1983 within all of its associated branches and youth bodies, with the aim of ‘assessing the basic causes which lead to the slowing down and weakening of the development of democratic relations in a number of organs and organisations of the League of Socialist Youth...’ However, four months later, once the deadline for the organisation of public discussions passed, the Presidency of the Bosnian LSY concluded that the discussion ‘was not implemented well, nor it had the breadth and the mobilising component, as it had been outlined’.¹⁹³

As it has been noted above, the Yugoslav youth sphere in the 1980s was permeated by such ongoing debates taking place at the official political level, by various youth-related phenomena coming from below, as well as by issues central to the maintenance of the LSYY as a mass youth organisation.¹⁹⁴ During the first half of the 1980s, criticisms were voiced and debates were articulated with certain reluctance and in a manner that was still tailored to fit the socialist self-management discourse. Although there was public acknowledgement that the number of young people in the different self-managing organs and decision-making bodies was decreasing and that the Youth League had not managed to engage and mobilise enough young people, publicly the focus was the economic decline and the possible ways of improving the existing political and socio-economic framework. Domestic debates revolved exclusively around the Yugoslav crisis and the malfunctions of self-management.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless,

¹⁹² ‘Izveštaj o radu Konferencije SSOJ, njenih organa i tela za period decembar 1982-decembar 1984 (predlog)’, Beograd, novembra 1984’, *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 334.

¹⁹³ ‘Informacija o provedenoj javnoj raspravi, Sarajevo, 19. oktobar, 1983. godine’, *RK SSOBIH*, Archive of B&H.

¹⁹⁴ According to the 1981 census, 4.858.425 belonged to the category of youth (21.7%). In 1984 the LSYY officially had 3.703.658 members. *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1985*, pp.111-113.

¹⁹⁵ In the Yugoslav context, self-management was not limited to the notion of workers’ control over the means of production. It was a principle around which all political and social life was structured. The 1974 federal Constitution was an attempt to extend self-management even in the realm of high politics: the federal Assembly was referred to as ‘a body of social self-management’ and the federal chamber consisted of 220 delegates of self-managing organisations/communities and socio-political organisations. However, the sheer complexity of the system, in particular in the sphere of elections and delegations, made it dysfunctional and

youth unemployment and deprivation was a global problem, as demonstrated by the 1980 UNESCO report which underlined that 'What is scarce, therefore, and will become scarcer, is not only energy, investment capital, and domestic and international credit, but the jobs that carry with them the adult rights and responsibilities that the young expect'.¹⁹⁶

The opening speech of the 11th Congress of the LSYY in December 1982 by its President Bogić Bogičević was in line with the inherited political rhetoric and conveyed the sense of determination to pursue self-management and preserve the legacy of Tito: 'At this occasion too, we clearly underline that we are resolutely against anything that is anti-self-management and anti-socialist, that is contrary to the ideology and the politics of the LCY...'¹⁹⁷ He reminded that that was the first youth Congress 'without Josip Broz Tito, the most cherished friend and teacher.' The question of the extent to which this already presented only a formalised discourse versus a genuine articulation of political values remains open. While lauding the role and legacy of Marshal Tito, the official stance of the federal Youth League critically targeted and denounced the various flaws and abuses of self-management (corruption, lack of discipline at the work place, failure to attend meetings and effectively participate in self-managing organs, social gaps). In the years immediately following Tito's death, there was a tacit consensus among the political elites for pursuing a discourse of unity and perseverance on the road paved by the old revolutionary generation, as much as the socialist parlance in its specific Yugoslav variant had functioned as a sort of a frozen narrative or political correctness which began to fade away progressively - especially in the second half of the decade.

The first signs that the LSYY could become a site for voicing critique targeting the system came from a critique denouncing entrenched party interests, abuses and corruption. For most of the first half of the decade, the official youth milieus at federal level engaged in a debate that revolved around the discourse of the economic crisis, unemployment and the malfunctioning of self-management. The LSYY appears to have demanded more socialism, i.e. strengthening of the self-management system in all of its complexity and more

prone to abuse. See: Adam Roberts, 'Yugoslavia: the constitution and the succession', *The World Today* 34/4 (1978), 136-146, p.139.

On the practical malfunctions of socialist self-management in the 1980s, see: Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

¹⁹⁶ *Youth prospects in the 1980s*, p.18.

¹⁹⁷ *Jedanaesti kongres SSOJ* (Beograd: NIRO Mladost, 1983), p.23.

discipline in all social spheres through a status quo with regard to the existing political framework and the established social values. Denouncing the reality of a 'red bourgeoisie' through a radical leftist critique, the President of the Youth League targeted the 'fraudulent behaviour or privatisation of socially owned property, bribe and corruption. The LSYY is going to uproot those and similar phenomena, exposing the hypocrisy of those who "sacrifice themselves in the struggle for socialist progress" while unjustifiably amassing and acquiring material wealth with no great effort and refusing to share the fate of the working class'.¹⁹⁸ Although it was not clearly stated in his speech, this criticism also targeted the youth officials and high functionaries within the branches of the LSYY, who enjoyed a considerable number of privileges and often turned into permanent and not so young position holders. Even two years earlier, there was a manifest awareness within the official youth circles that the LSYY promotes conformism, careerism and materialism through its personnel policy, rather than progressive action. At the end of his mandate as president of the LSYY in December 1980, Vasil Tupurkovski, aged 29 at that time, voiced unsparing criticism: 'Many youth functionaries believe they are irreplaceable, so we have arrived at a strange situation in which to discuss the problem of rejuvenating the youth federation's leadership'.¹⁹⁹ As an illustration, the average age of those employed in the municipal branches [*opštinska konferencija*] in the Bosnian Youth League was 27.4, in the city branch [*gradska konferencija*] – 28.4, while at republic level [*republička konferencija*] the average age was 33.5.²⁰⁰ This was an indicator that the higher levels of the Youth League were in a way usurped by career-seeking individuals whose activism was formalised and represented a mere stepping stone on their way to political careers in other 'socio-political organisations' and bodies at republican or federal level.²⁰¹ The problem of

¹⁹⁸ *Jedanaesti kongres SSOJ*, pp.14-15.

¹⁹⁹ Slobodan Stanković, 'Changes in the Yugoslav Communist Youth Federation', *Radio Free Europe* Background Report, 5 January 1981, *Open Society Archive*, Budapest (digital archive).

²⁰⁰ 'Prostorni i materijalni položaj opštinskih, gradske, medjuopštinskih i republičkih konferencija Saveza socijalističke omladine Bosne i Hercegovine i organa društvenih organizacija koji okupljaju mlade na nivou opština, grada i republike (interno), Sarajevo, februara 1984 godine', *RK SSOBIH*, Archive of B&H, box 108.

²⁰¹ A more creative and cynical response to the same problem was voiced in the 1980 LP *Dolgcajt* [Boredom] by the Slovenian punk rock band Pankrti [Bastards]:

'He always knows where the wind is blowing
where it did and where it will.

He also likes to awaken memories
of the times when he was not yet alive.
Else he likes to argue about things

position-seeking cadres appears to have persisted throughout the decade. Research conducted on the subject of youth functionaries in Serbia in 1984 demonstrated that the high positions in the branches of the youth organisation were held by people with questionable academic or professional skills: 3/4 had only finished secondary school and 80% of those who were enrolled at universities had failed one or more years of study, their main motivation for taking up the position being the relatively high salary.²⁰²

Igor Vidmar's testimony (born 1950) reveals this perception that the young political elite/the youth functionaries in the LSY were purely conformist, acknowledging that, after all, that was an individual, rather than a generational trait:

They were always careerist – from the very beginning. First, they were orthodox Marxists, then, they were entrepreneurs, then they were the liberal youth organisation guys, and then they were the civic movement guys, and then [Igor Bavčar] the Minister of Interior... I mean... It's that kind of people. Very ambitious, very opportunistic... But that is a matter of individual character.

Nevertheless, after a decades-old practice of generally acting as junior branches of the Party, the Youth League was indeed facing a decline in membership. As it was observed, 'The young more visibly manifest distrust and even *enmity* towards their own youth organisation which de facto has lost its members and artificially constructs its leadership pyramid.'²⁰³ Indeed, there was a widespread sentiment of contempt among the youth, in particular among those from the alternative cultural circles, towards the 'little bureaucrats' in the LSYY, as several of my interviewees had referred to them. This excerpt from the interview with Petar Janjatović (born 1956), journalist and rock-critic, confirms this wide-spread perception, or a stereotype which existed among the urban youth:

Firstly, it was only the least intelligent and the most appalling, slimy students which got involved in the youth organisation at school. They

about which he has no clue
and because these are very common
at least that he does well

17, 17, young perspective cadre

17, 17, instead of a head a radar'

See: Oskar Mulej, "'We are Drowning in Red Beet, Patching Up the Holes in the Iron Curtain': The Punk Subculture in Ljubljana in the Late 1970s and Early 1980s', *East Central Europe* 38 (2011), 373-389.

²⁰² Milan Bečević, 'Krvna slika predsednika - omladinski kadrovi: kontinuitet prosečnih?', *NON - List mladih Srbije* 497, 4.11.1984.

²⁰³ Jordan Aleksić, 'Zagonetka društveno-političkog aktivizma mlade generacije' in *Mlada generacija, danas*, p.79.

knew it was the way to forge a career – literally from seventh grade onwards, they were like – I'll be the president of the class, I'll join the League of Communists, me this, me that... We had an aversion towards that. In general, they were fools. But once I started moving around the redactions of the youth press, I saw that the people who sit on those editorial boards are perfectly normal.

By 1985 a more elaborate discourse of the crisis penetrated the Youth League, as it began to organise round-tables addressing its impact on the younger generation. The LSYY was progressively opening up to critical thought and began to act as a forum for different debates. For instance, the proceedings from a public debate entitled 'Close perspective on Yugoslavia with a focus on the societal position of the youth' began with the following statement:

'Over the past few years our society has found itself in a socio-economic crisis which manifests itself in different ways: dropping rates of economic growth and stagnating production, growing unemployment, decrease in income levels, extreme debt [...] dying out of self-management and strengthening of polycentric etatism, disorder, idleness, lengthy meetings, erosion of the moral and the legal system, rise of nationalism, irresponsibility, corruption and increase of criminal activity [...] If we want to leave the crisis behind, we need to get rid of the dogmas [...] we must adjust the definitions of socialism and self-management to our objective circumstances and possibilities.'²⁰⁴

It is worth noting that this and many other similar public discussions were not only organised by the federal Youth League, but the publication of the proceedings in a book format (i.e. not only as a report or an addendum in a youth newspaper) was financed and undertaken by the LSYY itself. Since debate was systematically and institutionally encouraged, the battle of opinions and visions therefore progressively intensified.

After stepping down as president, Tupurkovski also pointed to the lack of democracy in the decision-making process within the LSYY, its inability to appeal to and mobilise the university student population, and most intriguingly – to the existence of 'two sorts of young people: those in the forums and those outside them'.²⁰⁵ This was indeed one of the most prominent division lines within the youth sphere: the youth that gravitated around the alternative cultural spheres or was associated with the vibrant youth press was generally apolitical, indifferent and/or inimical to the official youth organisation and its

²⁰⁴ Dragoje Žarković, 'Aktuelni problem našeg društva (posebno omladine) i putevi njihovog rešavanja' in *Bliska perspektiva Jugoslavije s posebnim osvrtom na društveni položaj omladine* (Beograd: Predsedništvo konferencije SSOJ, 1985), pp.5-6.

²⁰⁵ Slobodan Stanković, 'Changes in the Yugoslav Communist Youth Federation', *Radio Free Europe Background Report*, 5 January 1981, *OSA Archive* (digital archive).

functionaries. As an illustration, in a survey conducted at the University in Skopje (Macedonia) in 1981 only 5.4% of the students considered themselves politically 'very active'. 23.2% saw themselves as politically 'not active at all'; 28% 'little active'; 24.4% 'average'; and 16.9% 'active'.²⁰⁶

By 1990, the trend of distancing and retreat from the political institutions was a well-established fact. However, the results from the 1989 all-Yugoslav survey showed a striking difference between the attitude towards the youth organisation and the Party. While only 15% said they were members of the LCY and more than half (52%) are not and would not like to become members, 65% said they are members of the LSYY, 18% are not, but would like to become, and only 17% are not and would not like to be members.²⁰⁷ By integrating many of the alternative/new social movements and groups within its structure and by consensually abolishing the grand celebration of Tito's birthday in early 1988 (see Chapter 2), the League of Socialist Youth was reforming faster than its original senior sibling – the League of Communists. This is captured by following excerpt from the interview with Janjatović:

When you look back now, you realise that the entire rock, punk and new wave at the time was financed by the League of Socialist Youth! [...]

In the summer of 1982, we organised a two-day festival of new punk bands which was called ABRS – Alternative Belgrade Rock Scene. You know the ARA album – Artistic Work Action. So, the idea was to promote those bands. Our guest bands were Idols, Electric orgasm and Šarlo Akrobata, along with the pile of those new bands. The organisation went smoothly, because they gave us the money for it. We commissioned the best sound engineer from Zagreb, we got Tašmajdan [hall] or we rented it, I can't remember, but nothing was complicated. You would submit a project proposal and they'd say – yes, here's the money.

Today, if [a governmental body] gives you the money, you'd be forced to make a lot of compromises. At the time they didn't ask us to do anything in return, no speeches, no flags. [...]

What is crucial is that absolutely no one made us get involved into any type of propaganda. That's the key story. And what's more, you didn't have anywhere a big sign or a logo saying – 'The League of Socialist Youth'. Nothing. Once or twice they asked us to organise a round-table, a public lecture along the lines of the creativity of the youth in the socialist something. But later they realised it doesn't make sense and it never happened again.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Dr Vladimir Goati & Dr Dimitar Mirčev, 'Društveno-političko i samoupravno delovanje omladine' in *Mlada generacija, danas*.

²⁰⁷ Bora Kuzmanović, 'Socijalni i politički aktivizam omladine' in *Deca krize*, p.81.

²⁰⁸ Rock music became progressively embraced by the youth organisation mainly as a response to wider societal developments within culture and the domestic music industry. Namely, 70 per cent of the authors in the area of pop and rock music at one of the largest music production companies in Yugoslavia *Jugoton* were younger than 30. Only in 1983, *Jugoton* received 300 rock demo recordings. The Youth League followed suit and different branches found different

Similarly, Igor Vidmar noted in an anecdotal manner that ‘they’ in the Youth League eventually had to join ‘us’, change their course sometime in the middle of the decade, which allowed the League of Socialist Youth to recover its legitimacy and support among the young:

The Youth Socialist League sometimes helped, sometimes tried to hinder, control things, but without much success - they were hopelessly behind with their ‘official’ youth culture, until they joined ‘us’ by the mid-eighties.

So, despite a general withdrawal in trust from political institutions which could have exacerbated the decline of the LSSY, it forced its reinvention, as a place where multiple communities and spheres could interact. Hence, scholars were right to observe that ‘there is an impression that in certain parts of the country [...] the interest for this [youth] organisation has been revived, alongside the confidence in it.’²⁰⁹ Dejan Jović (born 1968), himself younger than Vidmar and Janjatović, witnessed the liberalisation and de-ideologisation of the Youth League in the second half of the decade. He testified to the unravelling of the strictly socialist ideological frame of the institutional youth realm:

Over time, the criteria for being chosen [to work] at the youth organisation stopped being of ideological nature. Only in extreme cases, for example - not allowing someone to become a President unless one was a Party member [...]

I think the majority of the people [in the LSY] were progressively oriented and very successful at what they were doing, as was proven later [...]. After all, you had to win some sort of elections [in order to move up the hierarchy, starting from primary school and the elections for president of the class]. At least there was one additional candidate [...]. For example, I lost the election for the city [youth] organisation, but it was a fair battle [...]. You had to have the ability of persuasion and lobbying and that is the thing I personally think I learned in that organisation. You see politics from the inside. I found it immensely boring to sit at those meetings [...]. However, you saw it was real politics. You couldn’t impose anything [...].

Although the progressive transformation of the official youth rhetoric, politics and practices reflected the wider societal debates and calls for reform, it was essentially a product of internally generated debates and concerns, some of which were penetrating the higher political levels of the LSYY from the League’s ‘peripheral’ domains, such as the youth media and the new music

ways of accommodating the new music cultures. For instance, the LSY branch in the Croatian town of Rijeka had a sub-commission for rock music within its Commission for culture.

Borislav Knežević, ‘Crnci u produkciji’, *Polet* 273/274, 3.8.1984, p.28.

²⁰⁹ Bora Kuzmanović, ‘Socijalni i politički aktivizam omladine’ in *Deca krize*, p.81.

cultures. Questioning of the inherited traditions and reflecting upon venues for democratisation and re-invention of the youth realm were made possible by the advancement of a young political elite which internalised the critique of the youth organisation and the youth cadres.

1.2. Mapping the youth infrastructure

An observation from the 1980 UNESCO report that 'In the more desperate structural crisis of the coming years, the young may turn to the camera and microphone in order to protest against the economic and social limitations impinging on their lives'²¹⁰ proved true in the Yugoslav context. Because of its complex structure which also included 'collective members' such as the organisation of the Red Cross, the Scout Union, the Music Youth, the Literary Youth, etc., as well as a network of youth newspapers, magazines and scientific/research and publishing centers, the LSYY directly or indirectly involved hundreds of well-educated, creative young people who did not even distantly fit the stereotypical profile of the conformist, careerist young functionary. Hence, the youth organisation was far from a monolithic structure; on the contrary, it provided platforms for critical re-thinking of political dogmatism and exposure of counter-cultural styles and alternative standpoints. In the early 1980s, political change in the LSYY's elite echelons was still blocked; however, within culture, and at the youth sphere's peripheral locations, the LSYY's infrastructure encouraged the emergence of new political and cultural alternatives.

The complex youth infrastructure which stretched beyond the narrow confines of the LSYY (see Tables 1 and 2) consisted of event venues, publishing houses, weekly and scholarly magazines, student centers and radio stations. It was ideally positioned and equipped to channel creativity, alternative and novel approaches to art and journalism, *post festum* facing bans of whole magazine issues or public criticism for certain events or attitudes. Although there were apparent manifestations and consequences of regional variation and of what has been termed 'republicanization of sovereignty'²¹¹ - since the youth

²¹⁰ *Youth Prospects in the 1980s*, p.38.

²¹¹ Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions*, p.51.

infrastructure did function along the lines of the federal units – nevertheless, a pan-Yugoslav cultural sphere and a media space gained strength, linking progressive groups in different cities. Senad Pećanin (born 1965), former editor-in-chief of the Bosnian daily *Dani*, was part of the team which worked in the Youth Program [*Omladinski program*] at Radio Sarajevo and was actively involved as a young journalist in the Bosnian youth magazines *Naši dani* and *Valter*. As he recalled:

We had an excellent cooperation with Radio Index [from Belgrade]... For example, every Wednesday I had a program called 'Youth YU media', which used to give an overview of the youth press – from Novi Sad's *Stav*, to Belgrade's *NON*, Yugoslav *Mladost*, *Mladina*, Maribor's *Katedra*, *Polet*, the radio stations like Index, B92, Radio 101, Radio Študent. That program ran from 1988 until 1990. Definitely there was a supranational sphere, we had great cooperation.

Petar Janjatović similarly recalled this arena of young journalism and youth media cooperation:

At the moment when rock n' roll became very intriguing, and through writing about music I realised that one can write about everything – politics, literature... and then we began to sneak around the different music festivals and to meet people who did the same in other cities. I started writing for [Slovenian] *Mladina*, for *Naši dani* in Sarajevo. Between *Jukebox* and [Croatian] *Polet* there was a natural cooperation. The youth press gave an additional layer of freedom, one was totally... disburdened. [...] As if the network of the youth press was composed of very like-minded people. At one point when *Polet* was very famous, almost the entire editorial board was bought out and moved to [Croatian weekly] *Start*. Even today those people are the journalist elite of Croatia.

An urge for greater freedom in cultural expression which had been growing within the youth realm since 1968 was to play an important role in creating the possibilities for alternative expression in the 1980s. The youth realm provided many venues which were meant to cater for the various cultural/artistic and media interests of the young. In addition, the network also consisted of publishing houses related to the youth organisations, such as the Center for Research, Documentation and Publishing Activity of the Presidency of the Conference of the LSYY [*Centar za istraživačku, dokumentacionu i izdavačku delatnost predsedništva Konferencije SSOJ*], the Research and Publishing Center of the Serbian LSY [*Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije*], the Center for Social Activity of the Croatian LSY [*Centar društvenih djelatnosti SSOH*]. Beside the weekly magazines, most of the republics' Youth

Leagues and their associated publishing centers, also published journals. These often featured academic articles and more in-depth analyses of different social phenomena²¹² (for example, the journal of the federal Youth League 'Ideas – journal for the theory of contemporary society' [*Ideje – časopis za teoriju suvremenog društva*], the journal of the Croatian Youth League 'Questions – journal for theoretical and social questions' [*Pitanja – časopis za teorijska i društvena pitanja*], or Bosnian 'Faces – youth review for social questions, culture and art' [*Lica – revija mladih za društvena pitanja, kulturu i umjetnost*]).

The Student Cultural Center in Belgrade is certainly one of the most iconic student venues which had acquired by this period an almost mythological status. The cultural officers' venue of pre-WW2 Yugoslavia and the home of the Yugoslav secret police from 1945 until 1968, the building was handed over to the students of Belgrade University after the student riots in 1968.²¹³ It is a predominant perception that the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade was not only the cradle and safe haven for alternative and progressive youth culture – from art, to debating, publishing and music – but also a space which embodied internationalism/cosmopolitanism and provided a platform for all the new global developments:

'SKC from the very beginning was an important and cult place, and remained one until today. It was completely normal to encounter there Bob Wilson, to have a drink in the late hours with Sam Peckinpah, to have a chat about modern art with Joseph Beuys, with Luigi Ontani about the Italian situation and Sandro Pertini, with Oriana Fallaci about politics, or with Petra Kelly about ecology and the Green Party...'²¹⁴

Dunja Blažević was director of the Belgrade Student Cultural Centre Art Gallery from 1971 to 1980 and editor-in-chief of the visual arts program at TV Belgrade from 1981 to 1990, where she presented a famous program – 'Fridays at 10pm' [*Petkom u 22*]. This excerpt from a published interview is illustrative of the discursive obsession with freedom and the somewhat occupation of the

²¹² For example, one 1987 issue of *Ideje* featured articles on the 'European stagflation', on the history of socialism, the relationship between socialism and democracy and the Serbian youth movement in the 19th century. Another 1987 issue was dedicated to 'Contemporary Albania and Yugoslav-Albanian relations'.

²¹³ For an in-depth analysis of the Yugoslav 1968, see: Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavija i svijet 1968* (Zagreb: Ljevak, 2012); Đorđe Malavrazić (ed.), *Šezdeset osma - lične istorije: 80 svedočenja: objavljeno povodom 40 godina od velikih studentskih demonstracija u Beogradu* (Beograd: Radio Beograd 2/Službeni glasnik, 2008).

²¹⁴ Slavko Timotijević et al. *Ovo je Studentski kulturni centar/This is the Students Cultural Center: prvih 25 godina: 1971-1996* (Beograd: BMG, 1996).

major cells of the youth infrastructure by people who perceived themselves as non-conformist and willing to stretch the boundaries of permitted critique:

‘SKC of that time was truly a micro-territory of freedom. It offered programmes that were pushing the borders of the perception of art as well as the borders of social thought. Our projects and events had that innovative component and, in parallel, they were in line with what was called for in those days in contemporary arts and culture worldwide. [...] ... and [it was the time when I had] also complete freedom! I was given carte blanche to create this programme [Fridays at 10pm] according to my poetics and beliefs. Thus I had the opportunity to explore continuously that which was my primary and lasting interest: the historical avant-garde and neo-avant-garde. It was precious for me to be able to create a certain climate and provide substantial information on the tendencies in world contemporary art for such a wide audience.’²¹⁵

The lead singer of Belgrade band Električni orgazam [Electric orgasm] Srđan Gojković-Gile (born 1961) talked at length about the importance of the Belgrade Student Cultural Center, referring to it as ‘a big factory’ with regard to its wide scope of activity, but also as ‘a vent pipe’ which was one of the ‘gains’ from what initially seemed to be a successful 1968:

I think SKC was a compromise dating back to the student revolt in 1968, when the students got some concessions from Tito and one of those concessions was SKC. It was allowed to be some sort of a vent pipe for some silly young people - they could entertain themselves in there so that they don't protest on the streets [...] SKC in a way was simultaneously an educational institution for us and also for the new generation which was educated through our work. This is the place where we first watched the French new wave, many Yugoslav censored films [...] some exhibitions by avant-garde artists, different performances - there were all sorts of things in SKC [...] It was like a big factory. We used to practise in the basement and we would then just climb upstairs and play a gig. It was the only place and the main one for the first two-three years, for the Belgrade alternative scene...

The Ljubljana Student Cultural Center was also one of the most prominent places on the map of youth venues. As Barbara Borčič (born 1954), artistic director of ŠKUC from 1982-1985 recalled:

‘Backed by an abundance of new theory we entered into opposition to institutional culture; we were to radicalise the relation, and the gallery took up a progressive stance. We began systematically to present alternative art production from the (former) Yugoslavia. Surprisingly, the Škuc Gallery was the first to present the most important (conceptualist) artists (for

²¹⁵ ‘Pioneering As a Lifestyle: A Conversation with Dunja Blažević’, <http://www.bifc-hub.eu/interview/pioneering-as-a-life-style-a-conversation-with-dunja-blazevic> (last accessed 1 July 2012).

example, R. Todosijević, G. Đorđević, M. Stilinović, T. Gotovac, V. Delimar, and others) and their radical views to the Slovene public.

ŠKUC became a meeting point of youth, and in addition it was opened for exhibitions of works by young authors not attending art academies. Its audience was specific - very critical and without any prejudices. ŠKUC became a focal point of ideas and inspirations; people gathered to plan joint projects... A whole new generation of photographers was formed [...]. The border between art and life, between public and authors, faded - they were all included in the process, one way or another. The gallery began to publish cassettes, fanzines...

The programme in that period - in contrast to the programme before and after that - was devised according to exclusion: the Škuc Gallery organised the projects which were not admitted to other galleries, but at best to some club (FV 112/15²¹⁶, for instance). This stimulated atypical, unconventional exhibitions, special installations, multi-media projects, art performances - events that in other galleries were not possible.²¹⁷

The 'unusually decentralised' nature of the socio-political system was replicated on the level of the institutional youth arena. This, of course, was closely related to the practical implications of the system of socialist self-management and in particular the Law on Associated Labour²¹⁸ from 1976. The 1974 federal constitution reaffirmed the doctrine of self-management which was an all-pervasive principle of social and political organisation, 'a means of restricting the accumulation of political power at the center, a guarantee against the abuse of power, and a device for making compatible the seemingly incompatible demands for a stable one-party state on the one hand, and for genuine democracy on the other'.²¹⁹ For instance, in 1989 the Student Center [*Radna organizacija Studentski centar*] in Zagreb was composed of five 'Basic organisations of associated labour' [*Osnovna organizacija udruženog rada – OOUR*]: Student dormitories [*Studom*], Social student alimentation [*Društvena prehrana studenata*], Culture [*Kultura*], Student service [*Student servis*], Graphic service [*Grafički servis*] and Working association of common services [*Radna zajednica zajedničkih službi*].²²⁰

²¹⁶ The FV 112/15 theater took its name from France Verbinc's *Dictionary of Foreign Terms* page 112, heading 15, which read: *C'est la guerre*. They drew inspiration from the historical avant-garde and the American beatniks. In 1981 the group took over the organisation of the Tuesday disco nights at the student dormitory and through 'Disco FV' the FV brand was established. See: Nikolai Jeffs, 'FV and the "Third Scene", 1980-1990' in *FV – Alternative Scene of the Eighties* (Ljubljana: International Center for Graphic Arts, 2008).

²¹⁷ 'Barbara Borčić 1982-1985', <http://www.galerija.skuc-drustvo.si/textborcic2.html> (last accessed 27 February 2014).

²¹⁸ See: *Zakon o udruženom radu* (Zagreb: Vjesnik, 1976).

²¹⁹ Adam Roberts, 'Yugoslavia: the constitution and the succession', *The World Today* 34/4 (1978), 136-146, 139.

²²⁰ Tomislav Ćorić, *Polu stoljeća Studentskoga centra u Zagrebu*.

The Student cultural center in Zagreb (SKUC) was located at the 'social pavilion' [*društveni paviljon*] which opened in 1979 in the student settlement 'Stjepan Radić' and it was under the larger institutional umbrella of the Student Center. As each working unit [*radna jedinica*] or basic organisation was free to expand its network of activities, or, according to the provisions of the Law on Associated Labour it could leave the larger working organisation which it was part of, the youth infrastructure was indeed prone to expansion and diversification.²²¹ Thus, it was the Student service which was financing the Zagreb Youth Radio [*Omladinski radio*] founded in 1982 at the initiative of the Zagreb city branch of the League of Socialist Youth. In 1989 the Student service also initiated a school for foreign languages, a computing workshop and facilitated student job placements abroad. OOUR Culture, on the other hand, was the initiator of the student television STV [*studentska televizija*] in 1987-1988, first as an internal media outlet and later as part of the Croatian state television.²²²

In the Macedonian capital, despite the lack of an official 'student cultural center', it was the Youth Centre '25 May' [*Дом на млади '25 Мај'*] which acted as the principal venue for youth culture. It consisted of concert halls, cinemas, exhibition spaces and performance halls. Personal testimonies confirm that like the other youth venues across Yugoslavia, it featured as an epicentre of alternative culture which was nested within and hence promoted by the institutional youth infrastructure. Toše Filipovski (born 1969) was actively involved in the post punk and hard-core scene in the 1980s. He recalled a concert by Slovene punk band Pankrti at the Youth cultural centre and an atmosphere which in his view resembled more the streets of London than what was considered to be a socialist youth event:

Everything was happening at MKC [...] One of the things that got me infected was the last concert of Pankrti in Skopje, the promotion of their Red Album – 'Rdeči album' in 1984. As a fifteen year-old kid I happened to be visiting relatives in Skopje and my older cousins took me to this concert. What I saw left a lasting imprint on my memory. That was the first time I saw so many punks in one place – a classical scene from King's

²²¹ For example, following a referendum in 1987 the working unit 'Cinema and bookshop' decided to leave the OOUR 'Kultura' and form a separate OOUR 'Cinema Student Centre', but the decision was annulled by the District Court in Zagreb. In 1990 the Student Radio left the institutional framework of the Student Centre and formed a separate joint-stock company 'Radio 101'.

²²² Tomislav Ćorić, *Polu stoljeća Studentskoga centra u Zagrebu*.

Road in London – punks with Mohawk hair, chains, all that punk iconography in one place. That was the last time I saw that in Skopje [...] The hall was packed and I have never again seen such a packed punk concert.

Apart from the main youth cultural centers which were widely known and frequently used for concerts, debates or exhibitions, the youth infrastructure network had many other subsidiary venues, both in the capital cities and in smaller provincial towns, some of which were equally important in providing platforms for the production of alternative culture. The sheer number of those made it almost impossible for the mainstream media or the LC branches to follow every event or censor every transgressive initiative. One of those smaller venues was recalled by Petar Janjatović:

Dadov, the youth amateur theatre, was also very important. They had a small, phenomenal venue which could take around 200 people. Someone had an idea, probably the director of the theatre, who was also related to the Youth League, to organise concert gigs of unknown bands every Monday. Dragan Kremer was in charge for a while, through *Jukebox* [magazine]. So, every Monday night one could drop by, knowing that there would be at least ten people you knew. There were three bands playing and by definition at least one of them was great. That was the ideal place for us – you go out, have a beer, hang out, and you hear what's new. It was there that I saw for the first time the unknown band Partibrejkers, for example [...] That was also all within their budget, you know, the equipment, the person who took care of it, none of that was cheap. Kremer was also paid for his job. There were tickets which cost the price of a beer, 100 dinars, symbolic price. That lasted for a couple of seasons, it was really important.

Certainly, it was the availability of funds for the vast youth infrastructure which was one of the main factors for the phenomenal output and cultural and media production. As it has been recalled by a former editor of the Croatian weekly *Polet*,

'What is so different today from that time is the amazing amount of money that used to be invested in students and youth culture. Every youth organisation in Zagreb had its own newspaper, magazine, or theater; some even started radio stations or sponsored rock festivals. *Polet* created the punk scene and helped invent those bands. It was not private money, all if it was pumped in by the state into that scene. Youth activities, then, were sponsored at the highest level. In fact, the amount of money invested at the time was probably equal to the entire amount allocated to arts and culture by the government today'.²²³

The pluralisation and fragmentation of the youth sphere was surely not a phenomenon typical of the late socialist era. With the emergence of jazz and

²²³ Dejan Kršić, *Mirko Ilić*, p.49.

rock n' roll in the late 1950s and in the 1960s, the public outlook of Yugoslav youth culture was profoundly transformed.²²⁴ Although Yugoslavia shared many socio-political traits with other European socialist countries, from consumer socialism to censorship and one-party politics, by virtue of being open to Western culture and cooperation with both sides in the Cold War, it was clearly a very different place for a young person in the 1970s and the 1980s compared to the rest of the socialist world. However, at the heart of this lay the fact that Yugoslavia was a highly de-centralised, de facto confederal state where levels of control and censorship varied among the federal units and by virtue of the fragmented nature of federal institutions (including the Party) and the doctrine of self-management, the exercise of coercion and power was diluted. Often, what was unacceptable for publication in one federal unit could pass in another. Srđan Gojković-Gile reflected on this:

L: Did you experience censorship?

No, we never had that problem [...] Actually, [Belgrade-based record label] PGP did not allow us to record the album with the songs 'Crocodiles are coming', 'Sky' and 'You', whose lyrics were considered problematic, but we could do it in Zagreb [...] I think by the mid-1980s it [censorship] was all gone. There were a couple of affairs, like 'Marshall's dead' with [Sarajevo band] Zabranjeno pušenje.

However, as control and acts of banning were still a reality in the first half of the 1980s, adjusting to the confines of tolerated freedom was also present, along with a practice of self-censorship and pragmatism. Gregor Tomc's testimony illustrates the willingness to compromise and an awareness that if one wanted to pursue one's artistic/musical activity, one had to step inside what was considered to be the institutional space:

We made fun of them [the official Youth League] publicly, we would always speak of them as 'official youths' - they were the official youth, we were 'unofficial'. We would always call them 'uradna mladina' – people who are youth by profession, for making money. But, in actual life, we needed them. I mean, if you wanted to organise a concert, you had to do it through the youth organisation. Although we were pretending to be in a separate world, in a communist country it was impossible to be in a separate world. You always needed the state, for anything – organising a concert, publishing a record. We didn't really care about the verses, they could change the verses. Because this was not what punk was all about. It was about the community. So, if they would say – change the words 'throwing bombs', we would change them and we would be throwing cakes, it was not a big deal. But it was a big deal for the communists because they believed in the power of the word. Their whole concept of

²²⁴ See, for example: Radina Vučetić, *Coca Cola Socialism: The Americanization of Yugoslav Popular Culture in the 1960s* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2012).

rule was that whoever controls the word is in control of authority. So, if somebody speaks out of line, that's very dangerous. So, when punks were speaking out of line, you had to censor that. We had no project, we didn't believe in the magic power of the word, so we changed words without any problem. And people later would say – that was a compromise. Of course it was, I mean... That was the only way you could function. If you were a completely principled person you would never have a concert.

Yugoslav socialist youth culture in many respects mirrored the unique form of socialism applied in Yugoslavia at the central state level. Due to the fact that it was highly porous to influences from the West, all the while preserving ties with the youth organisations in the Eastern Bloc and pursuing the discourse of non-alignment, there was an emergence of a rather unique Yugoslav socialist youth culture. The diversification of styles, themes and public outlooks became especially apparent during the 1980s. As an illustration, in the official book of the proceedings from the 1982 congress of the LSYU there was a full-page photograph of a young delegate wearing a black biker-style leather jacket with many badges, John Lennon style sunglasses and finger rings. A global outlook and a sense of internationalism, an ambition to engage with global, extra-Yugoslav cultural developments, styles and standards was a prominent feature of Yugoslav youth culture in the 1980s.²²⁵

The punk, rock and New wave bands more often than not had the Youth League as their patron, and were invited and paid to play concerts during youth congresses, Baton of Youth²²⁶ celebrations or at the youth voluntary work camps. One could argue that there was a two-way process of co-optation, since both sides were exposed to the influence or the interest of the other. The Youth League pragmatically tried to appeal to its membership and appear in harmony with the contemporary trends in music and culture, while the young musicians, many of them openly a-political and indifferent to the espoused ideology, were happy to profit from the infrastructure and the funds of the youth organisation. Vlatko Stefanovski's band *Leb i sol* [Bread and Salt], Zoran Predin's *Lačni*

²²⁵ Doubtless, this was also due to the computer and video phase of the technological/digital revolution which was underway during the decade. As it has been observed: 'It is important, especially in the context of the nineties events, to stress again that the then evolving cultural scene was developing without respect for national borders [...] Even if they could not reach the production standards of the West, the authors were imposing global standards of thinking to their own work'. Dejan Kršić, *Mirko Ilić*, p.51.

²²⁶ Officially known as *Štafeta mladosti* [Baton of youth], the main event was held every year on 25 May at the stadium of the YPA in Belgrade – officially celebrated as the Day of Youth [*Dan mladosti*] and Tito's birthday. It was preceded by a Yugoslav-wide relay race held every year from 1945 until 1987.

Franz [Hungry Franz] and Gregor Tomc's Pankrti [Bastards] were all awarded the prize 'Seven Secretaries of the LCYY'²²⁷ by the Croatian Youth League. The prize was introduced in 1964 and was awarded by the 'city conference' [gradska konferencija] of the League of Socialist Youth from Zagreb to young artists, writers, musicians, journalists, scientists and sportsmen below the age of 30. Senad Avdić (born 1960) was editor-in-chief of the federal youth magazine *Mladost* in 1987-1988 and was also active in the LSY in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Like other interviewees, he referred to the professional youth functionaries in a sarcastic, if not derogatory manner, underlining that 'even' they had realised that the old concepts and ways have lost their appeal:

It was a pretty confusing time [...] The [new] times had already prevailed over the old matrix [...] Even the 'small youth communists' had understood that those times are gone. At that time Pankrti got the 'Seven secretaries of SKOJ' award, which was shocking! So, a thaw was commencing [...] though it took them some time [to realise change was needed].

Vlatko Stefanovski (born 1957) similarly reflected on what he perceived to be a pragmatic attitude by the youth political elites within the LSY:

That mainstream youth-functionary scene, the young little bureaucrats, they understood that things are turning sour, that there is no joking any more, and they were trying to fuse the Youth Baton with rock 'n' roll. And they were successful in it... We were playing concerts which reconciled those two principles – young socialists and young rockers. The authorities realised that you can't leave rock 'n' roll on the margins. [...] I know that those youth organisations were trying to reconcile the rock musicians with the rest of the youth.

Zoran Predin (born 1958) was leader of the Slovenian band Lačni Franz [Hungry Franz]. He was blunt about his band's own pragmatic relationship with the youth organisation:

So, we charged a fee every time we performed at youth congresses. When they would ask us why we perform for a specific congress, we would say – no, we perform for money. That's why we weren't so popular [with the regime], there were those other so-called regime bands, such as *Plavi orkestar*, or *Bijelo dugme*.

²²⁷ The League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije* – SKOJ) existed under that name from 1919 until 1948, when it changed its name into People's Youth (*Narodna omladina*) and kept it until 1963. The 'seven secretaries' refer to the seven young people who held this position within the underground communist youth organisation in the interwar period in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. They were all brutally killed at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s.

Young journalists and researchers were similarly paid by the same organisation which they openly targeted for its malfunctioning and were employed by the functionaries whose competence they publicly questioned. This could be interpreted as an indicator of the latent and gradual democratisation of Yugoslav society in the 1980s.²²⁸ Described as 'schizophrenic' (see below), the outlook and content of the official youth print media in the 1970s and in particular in the 1980s was eclectic to the extent that on one page it would feature a report from a session of the Party, an interview with a legal theorist on the contested 'verbal crime' article, and on the next a critical review of the new album by David Bowie, or an article on female orgasm and the G-spot!²²⁹ Although by the late 1980s it was taken for granted that the majority of the main youth magazines hosted polemical views, debates, open critique and did not reflect the official policies and politics of the Youth Leagues which financed them and figured as their founders, as early as the beginning of the decade the official bodies and institutions publicly acknowledged the fact that 'in some cases [there is] even complete alienation of the magazine from the organisation it belongs to'.²³⁰ This and similar observations were expressed at the one-day round table dedicated to the youth press of the Commission for information of LSYY and the Section for information and public opinion of the federal Socialist Alliance of the Working People (SAWP).²³¹ Petar Janjatović emphasised this aspect and the phenomenon of a bi-polar youth media space:

When the youth press begins to open up towards non-conventional topics, which you have probably noticed, they begin to appear totally schizophrenic. On the first ten pages – workers, miners... after that come the music and pop culture pages and there you have f*** sakes and going to hell, boobs and bums, funny comics, totally Frankenstein-like! We can only guess what happened there. My take on it is that at some point, within those structures, there began to appear people who were not only careerist, but were talented and figured out that the structure of the League of Socialist Youth should be used for doing something original, individual. Vlada Bajac, a well-known writer and the owner of the publishing house *Geo-poetika*, at the time was an editor of the weekly program 'Young, crazy world' [Mladi, ludi svet] at Studio B, a program which was financed by the Belgrade League of Socialist Youth. Then

²²⁸ Bunce has rightly observed for the socialist countries of Eastern Europe that 'while these dictatorships had enormous resources to control their publics, they also transferred – quite by accident – significant resources to those publics.' See: Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions*, p.30.

²²⁹ Dragan Todorović, 'Ženski orgazam G-tačka', *NON - List mladih Srbije* 497, 4.11.1984, p.37.

²³⁰ Boško Grbić, 'Omladinska štampa: položaj, delovanje, tretman', *Mladost* 1277, 22.03.1982, p.3.

²³¹ Ibid.

someone decided that the program should be aired five times per week and Vlada Bajac asked me to be the music editor. The program changed its name into 'Ritam srca' [Rhythm of the heart] and that was the first time I began to encounter the presidents of the youth organisation, the president of this or that commission and I realised that half of those people are actually okay. The other half was real imbeciles, but, all of a sudden, you see people who really know what they're doing...

Similarly, the Research and Publishing Center of the Serbian Socialist Youth League (*Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije*) among its mainstream publications featuring sociological analyses of the youth or documents and reports from the youth congresses, also financed high quality journals and edited volumes dealing with the new (sub)cultural phenomena. Most prominently these included the remarkable 1983 edited volume entitled *Drugom stranom – Almanah novog talasa u SFRJ* [The Other Side - Almanac of the New Wave in SFRY], featuring essays on graffiti, fanzines, photography and lyrics from the acclaimed Yugoslav New wave bands; as well as the extraordinary journal *Potkulture* [Subcultures] published from 1985 until 1989, approaching the phenomenon in a broader and more scholarly manner. The journal featured translated articles by British scholars and experts on youth sub-cultures such as John Clarke and Tony Jefferson, texts by Polish and Russian authors on sub-cultures in Eastern Europe, or by Yugoslav theoreticians and young intellectuals on gay counter-culture, lesbian literature and the Yugoslav artistic alternative scene, for instance.²³² Trans-national cultural flows, gazes directed at both East and West and appropriation of the youth venues as 'spaces of freedom' were not phenomena which were unique to the decade of the 1980s. However, while one of the main novelties in youth culture in the late 1960s and the 1970s was conceptual art, the scope of the notion of subcultures in the 1980s was so wide that it could include anything from new music trends such as punk, new art forms, photography, or new literary trends. Velimir Čurgus Kazimir was the editor of the Research and Publishing Centre from 1979 until 1988. His testimony reveals some astounding trans-generational patterns of identification and attitudes:

It was an institution which had a political roof, but inside people worked on many serious and interesting things which had little to do with the official establishment. One stream was the research on the value orientations of

²³² Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* was translated and published in Yugoslavia in 1980, only one year after its appearance in Great Britain.

the youth, and the second was the publishing stream. I think we published around 150 titles [...] After all, it was us who published the first book by Zoran Đinđić *Subjectivity and violence*, along with other titles which dealt with Trotskyism, democratic pluralism. [...] And, of course, there was our pioneering attempt to deal with subcultures. *Potkulture* was the first journal to deal with subcultures from various aspects [...] Those were texts by our young sociologists who were at the beginning of their careers. There was no other space where they could publish such texts. We also made the *Almanac*, the story about the New wave and its impact, which at that time was not recognised as being political. One of the main criticisms, also coming from our circles, was that the music is totally a-political, not engaged. Later it became apparent that that music was a very direct, political answer to the situation of the 1980s. That represents an interregnum which marked a certain kind of a liberalisation of the state which primarily did not unfold in a political, but in a cultural way [...] It was extremely exciting [...] That was a time when we shed light on something which existed, but was concealed and we said – we have to deal with this in a serious way, it's here, we can't pretend that it doesn't exist.

Most of us were leftist, but we were not communist. That's the big difference, in particular [relevant] today, when one speaks from an anti-communist position which assumes that everyone who belongs to the Left deep inside is a Stalinist. And here we come to this paradox, when talking about 1968, and I belong to that generation, that we were the critics of what we were calling the 'red bourgeoisie', the undemocratic nature of the system, the manipulation of the press. One of our primary demands was freedom of speech and freedom of the media. [...] We never perceived the Soviet Union as a place where we would like to live, that was rather the West, Scandinavia, even the USA.

Petar Janajtović also recalled the initiative for the publishing of the *Almanac*:

He [Velimir Čurgus Kazimir] proposed that we compile an encyclopedia of Yugoslav rock 'n' roll, provided it was ready in five months' time. I told him that was impossible. Not only it was impossible, it was also stupid, because there was so much going on, almost every week a new album was released. We suggested that we do something dealing with punk and New wave and we got a complete support from the publishing house! You saw it, it's huge and it materialised thanks to Kazimir. Kazimir also had to answer in front of someone, he had to convince someone to assign a budget for that, but it seems all of those structures realised that something significant was going on.

Apparently, more senior figures in the management of the youth publishing houses and media outlets took a decision to promote, support and protect these and many other similar initiatives. As Senad Pećanin noted:

In essence, there were no real consequences, I can't say there were. At work we didn't suffer any serious consequences because we had Boro [Kontić], he protected us, he took upon him everything, we didn't feel anything.

Boro Kontić (born 1955), although not significantly older, was higher on the institutional ladder in terms of professional seniority and as an editor of the youth program at Radio Sarajevo, he acted as the main mediator between the governing organs who had to make sure programs do not stray away from the Party line and the young journalists and comedians at the radio:

I was fined several times because of TLN²³³ or PRIMUS and those fines were usually in the amount of 10% of the [monthly] salary. It was awful [...] Once they removed the entire show [TLN] without my knowledge [...]

He was also fined several times 'because of the Slovenes' in 1987: 'I say - by virtue of playing Laibach music I certainly deserved to have a Slovenian passport'.

In the 1980s, the peripheral parts of the youth sphere - the numerous youth and student cultural venues and media outlets - hosted and promoted novel forms of youth culture which progressively worked to pluralise and modernise the organisation. As has been observed, 'Under socialism you could (mis)use the socialist infrastructure and framework in order to establish your own "free territories"'.²³⁴ The political core of the LSYY and the professional youth cadres were initially perceived as out of pace with the popular trends in youth culture and journalism. A process of negotiation, compromise and reform from within gradually replaced an initial sense of mutual distrust and hostility between the youth functionaries and the young journalists, musicians and artists. Through what could be interpreted as a reluctant, pragmatic, if not populist move to neutralise growing criticism from within and from without the Youth League and appeal to its 'base', the peripheral parts of the youth infrastructure opened up the LSYY to new trends in culture, journalism and publication.

²³³ *Top Lista Nadrealista* [The Surrealists' Top Chart] was a widely popular comedy show which aired on TV Sarajevo from 1984 until 1991. It was originally part of the youth radio program. At the end of the 1980s it ridiculed the absurdity of the rising conflicts in Yugoslav politics. It is mostly remembered for its political satire and some of its sketches which dwelled on the prospect of war and the ensuing divisions have been seen as 'prophetic'. One of its leading characters – Nenad Janković (Nele Karajlić) fronted the band Zabranjeno pušenje [Smoking forbidden]. Their first album *Das ist Walter* was released in 1984 in 3,000 copies by Zagreb's record label *Jugoton* (after being refused by Belgrade's PGP-RTB) and eventually sold around 100,000 copies. The show and the band form the core of the Novi primitivizam [New primitivism] movement which based its aesthetics on local Bosnian humor and urban/youth Sarajevo subculture. On New Primitivism and The Surrealists' Top Chart, see: Pavle Levi, 'Yugoslavism without limits', *Disintegration in Frames*, pp.57-85.

²³⁴ Rajko Muršič, 'Punk Anthropology: From a Study of a Local Slovene Alternative Rock Scene towards Partisan Scholarship' in Laszlo Kürti and Peter Skalnik (eds.), *Postsocialist Europe: anthropological perspectives from home* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), p.199.

Table 1

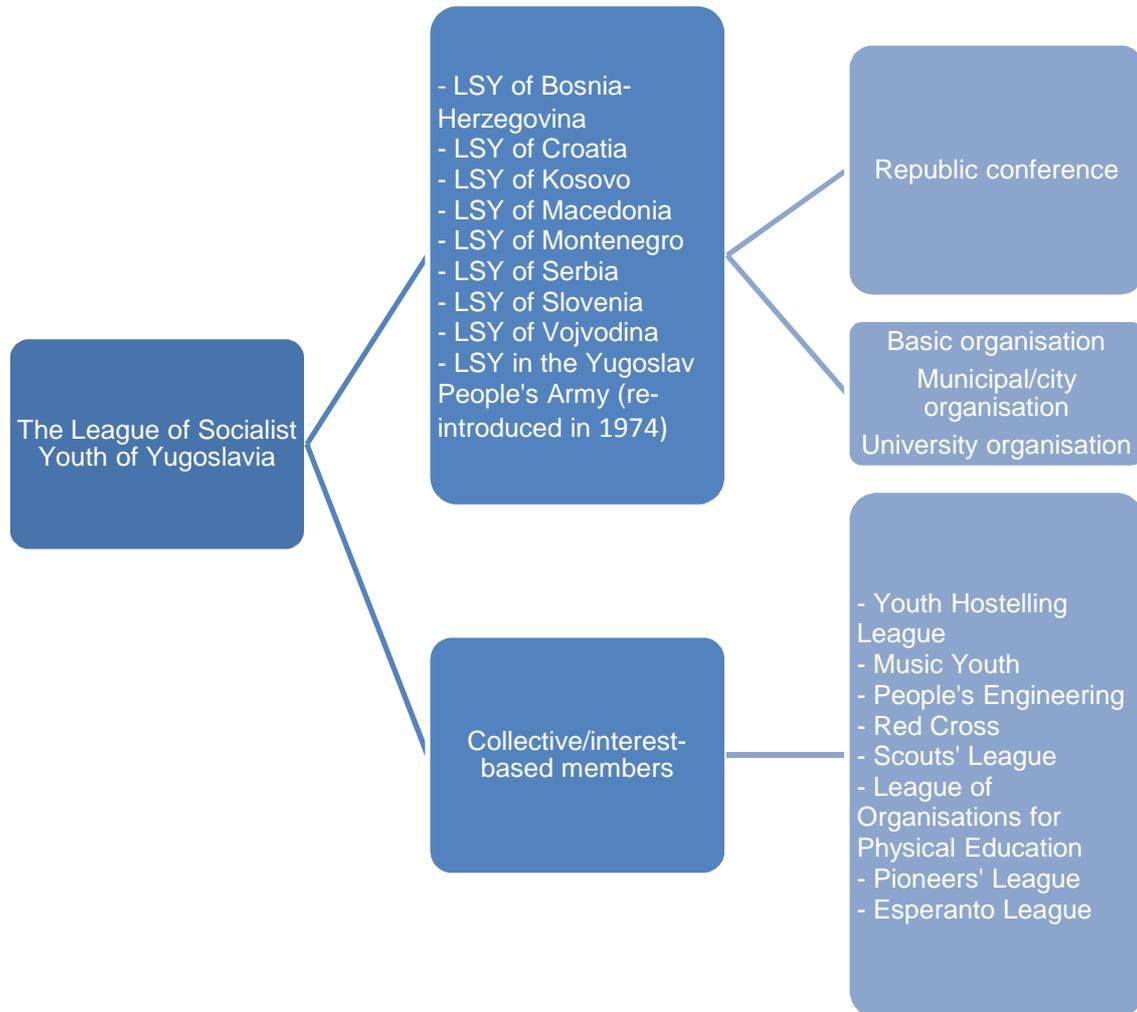


Table 2

Federal unit	Magazine of the League of Socialist Youth (LSY)	Magazine of the University of the LSY in the capital	Local youth radio station/program	Principal youth venues
SR Slovenia	<i>Mladina</i>	<i>Tribuna</i>	Radio Študent	ŠKUC - Ljubljana
SR Croatia	<i>Polet</i>	<i>Studentski list</i>	Omladinski radio/Radio 101	Studentski centar (SC) - Zagreb
SR Bosnia-Herzegovina	<i>Naši dani</i>	<i>Valter</i>	Omladinski program/ Omladinski radio	Dom mladih (Skenderija) - Sarajevo
SR Serbia (proper)	<i>Omladinske novine/Nove omladinske novine (NON)</i>	<i>Student</i>	Radio Index	Studentski kulturni centar (SKC) Dom omladine - Belgrade
SR Montenegro	<i>Omladinski pokret</i>	<i>Univerzitetska riječ</i>	No data ²³⁵	Dom omladine 'Budo Tomović' - Podgorica
SR Macedonia	<i>Млад борец</i>	<i>Студентски збор</i>	Клуб 100	Дом на млади „25 Мај„ - Скопје
SAP Vojvodina	<i>Glas omladine (Stav – from 1987)</i>	<i>Index</i>	/	Kulturni centar mladih 'Sonja Marinković' - Novi Sad (from 1984 : Kulturni centar Novog Sada)
SAP Kosovo	<i>Zani i rinisë/ rinisë (1968-1986)/ Zëri</i>	<i>Zëri i Novi svet/ Bota e re</i>	/	Pallati i rinisë, kulturës dhe sporteve 'Boro dhe Ramizi' - Prishtina
SFR Yugoslavia	<i>Mladost</i>	<i>Ideje – jugoslovenski studentski časopis</i>	/	/

²³⁵ I did not manage to find data on the existence of separate youth radios or specific youth radio programs in Montenegro, Kosovo and Vojvodina.

1.3. The youth press and freedom of expression

In November 1980, the editor-in-chief of *Polet* Zoran Franičević wrote: 'It is apparent that in the context of the crisis of the youth organisation, the state of the economy and the socio-political relations, as they are, the youth press has an opportunity and space for a more decisive and more concrete action [...] We know the enemy, as well as their means [...] It seems that our (youth) press is preparing to become more open, more engaged and more protruding than the organisation which is paying us. For that battle of ours we should not, of course, expect to have our housing question solved, [to receive a] better pay and nice office space, but some possible bruises – yes!'²³⁶

Indeed, throughout the 1980s the youth press sought to expose the contradictions within the Yugoslav legal framework with regard to freedom of speech and freedom of expression. This led foreign scholars to observe that 'Of all the periodical publications appearing in Yugoslavia, it is the youth press which has proven the most consistently nettling to the authorities. Outspoken to the point of rebelliousness, the young editors [...] have repeatedly ignored even the most fundamental taboos'.²³⁷ Yet, this was not without a precedent. In the late 1960s the youth and student press displayed a similar level of outspokenness and were therefore subject to political pressure, public critique and bans.²³⁸ A 1970 Radio Free Europe report dedicated to the youth press observed that 'Criticism is usually merciless. The youth press shows no respect for any social or political elements in the country.'²³⁹ The subsequent federal Constitution nominally guaranteed freedom of thought and freedom of expression in the public and the media space, as article 166 of the 1974 Constitution stipulated that 'Freedom of thought and deciding shall be guaranteed' and Article 169 guaranteed that 'Scientific and artistic creation shall

²³⁶ Zoran Franičević, 'Uvodnik', *Polet* 141, 12.11.1980, p.4.

²³⁷ Pedro Ramet, 'The Yugoslav Press in Flux', in Pedro Ramet (ed.), *Yugoslavia in the 1980s* (Westview Press, 1985), p.111.

²³⁸ Writing about the freedom of the press in the 1960s and the 1970s, April Carter argued that 'journalists and writers often did show considerable independence of mind and party leaders were far from united in the desire to impose timid conformity.' See: April Carter, *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia: The Changing Role of the Party* (London: Frances Pinter, 1982), p.200.

²³⁹ Zdenko Antic, 'Yugoslav youths' rebellious press', *Radio Free Europe Background Report*, 29.5.1970, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

be free.²⁴⁰ On the other hand, however, Article 133 of the Penal Code proscribed any type of 'hostile propaganda':

'Whoever in an article, leaflet, drawing, speech or in some other way calls on or incites the overthrow of the government of the working class and working people, the unconstitutional change of the socialist self-management social system, breaking-up of the brotherhood and unity and equality of nations and nationalities, overthrow of the organs of social self-management and authorities and their executive organs, resistance to decisions of competent organs of authorities and of self-management which are significant for the protection and development of socialist self-management relations, the security or defense of the country; or whoever maliciously and untruthfully represents the social and political situation in the country, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year but not exceeding 10 years.'²⁴¹

Article 133, along with article 157 which related to 'Damaging the reputation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia'²⁴² and article 134 which prohibited 'Inciting national, racial or religious hatred, discord or hostility'²⁴³ represented the core of what was considered non-negotiable and hence inviolable in political/constitutional terms. In the wider public sphere the struggle for change and greater freedom of expression had begun earlier in the decade with several petitions which targeted this part of the legislation. Serbian

²⁴⁰ Article 167 related to the freedom of the press: 'Freedom of press and other forms of informing and public expressing, freedom of associating, freedom of speech and public coming out, freedom of gathering and other public gathering shall be guaranteed. Citizens shall have the right to express and publish their opinions through the means of informing', as well as article 168: 'Press, radio and television and other means of public informing and communicating shall be obliged to inform public truthfully and objectively, and also to publish opinions and information of bodies, organisations and citizens which are of interest for public'. In November 1990 the federal government led by Ante Marković permitted private ownership of the press (including foreign participation) and practically did away with all existing limitations concerning freedom of expression.

²⁴¹ In June 1984 the Federal Public Prosecutor reported that of the 545 individuals charged with political crimes in 1983, 76 per cent were charged with 'verbal crime' [*verbalni delikt*]. See: *Yugoslavia: Prisoners of Conscience* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1985).

²⁴² 'Whoever brings into derision the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, its flag, coat of arms or national anthem, its highest authorities or representatives thereof, its armed forces or the supreme commander, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term exceeding three months but not exceeding three years.'

²⁴³ (1) Whoever by means of propaganda or in some other way incites or fans national, racial or religious hatred or discord between peoples and nationalities living in the SFRY, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year but not exceeding 10 years.

(2) Whoever, by insulting citizens or in some other way, incites national, racial or religious hostility, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term exceeding three months but not exceeding three years.

(3) If an act referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article has been committed systematically or by taking advantage of one's position or office, as part of a group, or if disorder, violence or other grave consequences resulted from these acts, the offender shall for an act referred to in paragraph 1 be punished by imprisonment for not less than one year and for an act referred to in paragraph 2 by imprisonment for a term exceeding six months but not exceeding five years.

The complete text of the Penal Code is available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5fe0.html>

lawyer Srđa Popović, who was engaged in many court proceedings defending individuals accused of ‘verbal crimes’ and ‘hostile propaganda’ in 1980 submitted a formal request with the federal Presidency demanding amendment of article 133 – a petition which bore the signatures of 103 intellectuals and public figures predominantly from Zagreb, Belgrade and Ljubljana.²⁴⁴ That same year in Zagreb 43 public figures (including former rector of Zagreb University Ivan Supek, the future Croatian nationalist President Franjo Tuđman, the personal physician of Croatia’s Party leader Vladimir Bakarić and representatives of the Catholic church) also petitioned the Yugoslav Presidency asking for a new amnesty law that would free all political prisoners.²⁴⁵ In 1981 the President of the Federal Court in an article in the law journal *Naša zakonitost* acknowledged that the formulation of article 133 was not precise, while at the 1983 conference of Yugoslav criminologists several professors of law called for the repeal of the article.²⁴⁶

When in 1984 the Croatian youth magazine *Polet* commissioned film, conceptual and performance artist Tomislav Gotovac (born 1937) to take part in a marketing project on the streets of Zagreb, acting as a ‘colporteur’ and dressed up as anything from a mummy, Superman, a worker with a hammer and a sickle, or Santa Claus, it was not the first time that non-conformist art, performance and photography was being transplanted from print media and the conventional confines of the gallery space onto the public cityscape. Yet, it was without a precedent that an official youth magazine stepped into a provocative event intelligently fusing marketing and art - Gotovac was detained by the police almost on every occasion, while the City Secretariat for Internal Affairs received more than 200 complaints from disturbed citizens.²⁴⁷ The awareness that there was a space which allowed for the claiming of freedom of expression in the youth media, albeit with certain risks, was present in the absolute majority of the testimonies I collected. They were all aware that there were ways to navigate a spectrum of restrictions and were not reluctant to take up certain risks. Dragan

²⁴⁴ ‘Član 133’, *Studentski list* 7 (970), 24.2.1988, pp.14-15.

²⁴⁵ Slobodan Stankovic, ‘No permission for Yugoslavia’s first “free and democratic magazine”’, *Radio Free Europe* Background Report, 2 December 1980, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

²⁴⁶ *Yugoslavia: Prisoners of Conscience*, p.29.

²⁴⁷ Milena Dragičević – Šešić, *Umetnost i alternativa* (Beograd: Fakultet dramskih umetnosti, 1992).

Kremer (born 1960) was a music critic and journalist in several youth media in the 1980s. He recalled that sense of limited liberty:

It was indeed possible to push certain attitudes through those media which were indeed alternative in outlook. The media themselves were not alternative per se, however. There was that level of tolerated freedom [dopuštene slobode] – there was a line which could not be crossed, but also a space beyond that line where one could do whatever one wanted.

Sašo Ordanoski (born 1965) was a young journalist in Macedonia. He similarly recalled:

Yugoslavia was not a dictatorship, but it was a communist state and the public debate on certain issues had a significant effect. At the same time, the youth press in Macedonia and in Yugoslavia was living its renaissance. I was a correspondent for Belgrade's *NON*, I was also writing for [youth federal magazine] *Mladost* and I was employed for several years in [Macedonian] *Mlad borec*. All of these magazines were at the forefront of promoting those novel ideas which would later in a way produce the cadres and the platforms of the nineties... I was twenty-something, with no other obligations, no family, well-paid... We used to read a lot – it was still the time of books... we travelled a lot, we were very mobile, especially within Yugoslavia, which was one boiling scene [вриечка сцена].

Senad Pećanin related the loosening of 'the communist bondage' with the rise of a generation of young journalists who dared 'shift the boundaries of freedom':

Working for the [Sarajevo] Youth Program was a brilliant experience, it was the last time there was such a generation, an entire generation of exceptional journalists... My generation and I were lucky to make a start in the period when the communist bondage began to loosen and not to feel a real pressure of censorship. There were certain problems here and there, but Boro [Kontić] was managing it brilliantly and reduced the damage. He took upon himself all those pressure, fines, salary cuts, while protecting us. We thought that is a normal way of communicating - talking freely. We were really shifting the boundaries of freedom.

As the decade wore on, the overall public debate on freedom of the media was intensifying. For instance, a book by professor Mihajlo Bjelica published in 1985 entitled *Велике битке за слободу штампе* [Great battles for the freedom of the press] raised questions about auto-censorship, the prospect of establishing private newspapers in Yugoslavia and the ways to fight for freedom of the press in the context of a societal and economic crisis. However, the Yugoslav reality of a semi-free media space and a relatively permissive post-1968 youth sphere did not necessarily imply an absence of arbitrary clamp downs or strictly enforced boundaries of expression. Pećanin also recounted at length a close encounter with 'the regime' on the occasion of the withdrawal of the candidature for a member of the federal Presidency by politician Nenad Kecmanović:

No one knew why he did it, he didn't say anything, while everyone was speculating that it was under pressure, that was a Yugoslav topic... In the media we were all trying to find out the reasons, since we knew he didn't do it willingly [...] I remember it was Saturday. I called him [Muhamed Berberović, President of the Council for the protection of the constitutional order] and asked if I can drop by – I was already working as a journalist for the Youth Radio. I asked him why Kecmanović withdrew and he said: 'You know, he cooperated with the English information agency, we had all that on file, we warned him that if he doesn't withdraw voluntarily we'll publicise that.' Aha! Then I went straight to Boro and told him everything... The program was on at 2pm, we announced that at 2:15, I read it, of course we didn't reveal the source... That was a blast. At 2:17 the director of the radio called Boro to stop the program, because we used to have live phone calls in the program without censorship, which was revolutionary for the time. We had to stop the program and the next morning at 5am there was a knock at the door – I used to live in the student dormitory with my girlfriend... The guy showed his ID from the state security agency and said I had to go with him. I told my girlfriend to call Boro if I don't come back. And then there were 5-6 hours of questioning, threats, yelling – I endangered I-don't-know-what, I put into question the relations between Yugoslavia and Great Britain...

Negotiating the boundaries of freedom was thus a prevalent practice in a context where public debate on certain issues was limited and where there were acknowledged, yet navigable restrictions in the public space. Hence, in order to embed one's non-conventional artistic or media practice within the existing infrastructure, one had to work with the conventions and find a way through the institutional set-up to carve out 'spaces of freedom'. Individuals used different strategies in what sometimes resembled a process of delicate bargaining, a complex web of practices, or simply 'a game' of testing the boundaries. Oral history gives us important evidence from below concerning the changing rules over public expression and the new spaces available within the youth press for discussion of public issues.

Miha Kovač (born 1960) was editor-in-chief at Ljubljana's Radio Student and later at the Slovenian youth magazine *Mladina*. He was also member of UJDI – the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative formed in 1989. Like many other interviewees, he stressed his one month work experience in London in 1988 - at Simon & Schuster where he was 'learning book publishing'. He underlined the art of negotiating one's way within the formally proscribed boundaries of youth journalism, as well as the fact that conflicts with the authorities for the most part did not materialise into legal prosecution or imprisonment:

All the time we were playing a game with the authorities [...] After being banned, I sometimes took a problematic text to the print shop three days in advance and if I got a call – ‘You will be banned!’, I would remove it and I would publish it two weeks later [...]

I mean, we never took the system seriously. So, the bottom line is that in those days in Slovenia the communist system was already somehow disintegrating. Although there were conflicts all the time, they never took us to prison, or whatever. They were yelling at us, pressuring us, but we were, you know, negotiating, making two steps back and one step forward, as Lenin would say.

L: What kind of pressure was that? They would summon you to the Party?

Yes... They would call us... There were some funny things. For example, May the 13th was the official day of the Yugoslav police. And on that day we played the Lili Marlene tune and we said we are testing how long the police needs to come and arrest us. They needed about half an hour (laughs). We were released very quickly, in a few hours. There were some hard-liners in the Party who were trying to close down the radio station, but the soft line in the Communist Party defended the radio-station. We always somehow survived. The bottom-line is that the situation was not black and white, in the sense that on one side there was an opposition and on the other side there was the Communist Party. There was very... how to say... It was a kind of web of very strange relations and everybody was playing his or her own game. I would say that for most of us who were involved in this movement, we were to a certain extent very, very pragmatic, willing to make compromises, but pushing the limits of the possible further on all the time.

This excerpt reaffirms the fine line which existed between transgression/contention and calculated negotiation within the existing political and institutional boundaries.²⁴⁸ The navigation of the institutional and political boundaries oftentimes required intelligent manipulation and improvisation, as Boro Kontić recalled:

After we had done the montage, I knew exactly which parts could be problematic – the fifth, the eighth minute, after this and that line... Now it might seem ridiculous, but that was the way it was. I play the tape, we sit down with him [the editor], we keep silent and listen to the program. Precisely when that part approaches... I mean, I swear, I didn't do it because someone had told me [to do it], it was pure instinct [...] During that sequence I ask him if he wants a cigarette and he replies yes or no. The sequence is over and later I start coughing and ask him to open the window [...] And so on, the program ends, he tells me – ‘Well you've got one boring program there’, I reply - ‘The next one will be better’, and so on. I mean, hilarious stuff, but that was the only way...

Cross-republican influences were also crucial in shaping attitudes and media activism. Kovač emphasised the importance of the trial of the six

²⁴⁸ Jo Shaw argues that in general ‘Citizenship’s public face conceals a good deal of private choice and even strategic behaviour’, hence a phenomenon which is not particular to authoritarian or one-party systems, yet rings especially true for the context of Yugoslav late socialism. Max Weber Lecture at the European University Institute, Florence, November 2012.

Belgrade intellectuals arrested in 1984 and charged with counter-revolutionary activity:²⁴⁹

Actually, many things in Slovenia started to happen because of the 'Belgrade Six' [...] Radio Student and *Mladina* were writing a lot about this trial [...] We were claiming that we will not solve the Yugoslav economic crisis by arresting people who think and discuss about what's going on. This trial helped form quite strong links between Ljubljana and Belgrade [...] So, for a while, we were quite close. But those disintegrative pressures finally destroyed UJDI too.

Robert Botteri (born 1963) was appointed editor-in-chief of Slovenian *Mladina* in 1987 after having worked as an editor in the student magazine *Tribuna*. He recalled that he began working for *Tribuna* at the time of the 'Free University' affair in Belgrade in 1984, i.e. the above-mentioned 'trial of the Belgrade six' and, like Kovač, he emphasised its importance in enhancing the debate on article 133 and freedom of speech:

Mladina and *Tribuna* were the only media in Yugoslavia which dared report about that trial in a non-conformist way. They labeled us counter-revolutionaries, to which we replied that we are professionals and we only report about the court case and [we asked] whether that was a 'crime'. It turned out that they are tried for 'verbal crime' and that goes against freedom of speech. So, we immediately initiated a campaign in the student press [...] We made badges with the number 133 crossed out. That was one way how the idea of freedom of speech was being spread around. Things then came one after the other. First it was freedom of speech, then the petition against the death penalty, a petition for the liberation of all political prisoners, for civil military service, for the rights of homosexuals, and at the end came the Youth Baton. We said that seven years after the death of the Marshal it is [...] idolatry, carrying the Baton and bowing to a dead man was anachronistic. All our actions were condemned, while the real confrontation happened around the Baton and the Army, it was where it climaxed [...]

Indeed, over time the struggle for greater freedom of expression worked to expand the scope of the debate and the range of demands. The Slovenian youth press was at the forefront of these debates and acted as a model for young journalists in the other republics. Eventually, the spectrum of demands and debates which were voiced in the youth press, boiled down to the questions of democratisation/pluralisation in general and freedom of expression, in particular. There is a consensus among the interviewees who were active in the youth media that an aspiration for the democratisation of Yugoslavia was what underpinned their activism. Its formulation in these precise terms could be equally interpreted as a posthoc construction. Botteri summarised it thus:

²⁴⁹ For the links between Serbian and Slovenian intellectuals in the 1980s see: Jasna Dragović-Soso, 'Saviours of the Nation' – *Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*.

From the mid-eighties we were constantly advocating democratisation. To us, human rights were sacrosanct. That is why we were signing the petitions for the release [from prison] of Vojislav Šešelj, Vladimir Šeks and Alija Izetbegović [...] That is why we also published interviews with all of them. With Šešelj in particular we had many problems, the interview was banned, then we published only the questions, and later the answers [...] That is where we located the only chance for that state, the chance of its democratisation [...] I still believe that everything could have been solved like in the Czech case. Had the ruling party accepted that model of democratisation and had it put a halt to nationalism in the beginning... If Serbia had a liberal leadership things would have turned out differently.

Because of the very nature and political organisation of socialist Yugoslavia as a highly decentralised ethno-territorial federation, comprehensive analysis of the response of the authorities is quite challenging. Dealing with the elite discourse on ‘tolerated freedom’ in the youth realm would necessitate an analysis of the separate republics’ contexts and the responses of the respective Party branches and the republics’ political/legal authorities. Although Yugoslavia was arguably the ‘cutting edge of East European socialist theory and practice, the most open and liberal society in the region, the socialist country with the region’s highest per capita income, and deemed most likely to join the European Community’,²⁵⁰ until the final days of the federation the Party played the central role in almost all spheres of social and political life in what was a de facto ‘confederal party-state’.²⁵¹ Nevertheless, by the mid-1980s the federal Party, no matter how fragmented and far from being unanimous, was arguably dominated by reformist forces.²⁵² Moreover, by the end of the decade there was a shared sense among federal circles that Yugoslavia’s future lay with an indispensable ‘europeanization’, as ‘[...] there was a consensus within the federal government (including the army) in favor of westernization and liberalization’.²⁵³

However, factions within the republics’ Party branches were a reality, and although cleavages along ‘reformists vs. conservatives’ lines were not always easily discernible, shifts in policies towards the Youth Leagues, the alternative cultural practices and the youth media were largely conditioned by party factionalism and/or changes in the Party’s top echelons. The responses of the republics’ political authorities to the various ‘affairs’ in the youth domain differed

²⁵⁰ V.P. Gagnon, ‘Yugoslavia in 1989 and after’, *Nationalities Papers* 38/1 (2010), 23-39, p.23.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.26.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Susan L. Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment: The Political Economy of Yugoslavia 1945-1990* (Princeton University Press, 1995), p.350.

from republic to republic. More often than not it was local, republican media outlets which channelled the critique and different form of public discrediting aimed at what was perceived to be subversive youth behaviour. For example, in 1984 Sarajevo-based band Zabranjeno pušenje was attacked in the Bosnian press in an article entitled 'The toxic fumes of "Smoking Forbidden"', which was followed by the band being temporarily banned from performing and from radio and television shows. The so-called 'Crk'o Marshall' [The Marshall's croaked] affair was taken up by the media and the local authorities after a concert in the Croatian town of Rijeka, where the band leader's comment after their Marshall amplifier had broken was interpreted as an act of ridiculing, a distasteful allusion to (Marshal) Josip Broz Tito. The journalist concluded that 'This short period of time was enough for the youth eager for fun and spectacles to be imbued with new thoughts, with continuous underestimating of everything we have achieved so far and the banal, vulgar ridiculing of the fundamental slogan from the People's Liberation Struggle "What belongs to others we don't want, what is ours we will never surrender"'.²⁵⁴

Dejan Jović was involved both in the youth press and in the Croatian LSY. He raised the issue of Party faction impact on the youth media and the youth organisation, as he recalled the removal of the editor of Croatian youth weekly *Polet*:

I was angry when [editor Mladen] Babun was removed, to me that seemed inappropriate [...] We regarded that as an intra-Party conflict which was reflected upon our editorial staff. He [Mladen Babun] was indeed close to [Stipe] Šuvar's²⁵⁵ [Party] faction, as all of us were, but we didn't like the way the faction led by Mika Špiljak transferred the intra-Party conflict onto the youth organisation. And that happened quite often. Not only in *Polet*, but also in the daily press. The intra-Party conflicts were always reflected there [...] There were big conflicts and from that you can conclude that there was proto-pluralism, huge conflicts in the media...

²⁵⁴ Pavle Pavlović, 'Otrovni dim Zabranjenog pušenja', http://www.media.ba/mcsonline/files/shared/Pavle_P.pdf (last accessed 27 February 2014).

The famous slogan was often purposefully and sarcastically (mis)quoted as 'What belongs to others we (don't) want, ours - we don't have'.

²⁵⁵ Stipe Šuvar (1936-2004), one of the leading Croatian and Yugoslav politicians in the 1980s, who was also a University professor of sociology. Openly critical of the rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia, targeted by nationalist forces and Party factions in Serbia and Croatia after he came into conflict with Slobodan Milošević, 'he was perhaps the last outstanding non-Serbian politician who seriously tried to create a common Yugoslav political and cultural space.'

Andrew Wachtel and Predrag J. Marković, 'A Last Attempt at Educational Integration: the Failure of Common Educational Cores in Yugoslavia in the early 1980s' in Jasna Dragović-Soso and Lenard J. Cohen (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe*, p.215.

In a similar vein, Botteri located a major shift in the Slovenian youth realm after the 1986 Krško congress of the Slovenian LSY, which coincided with a change in the Party leadership and a new liberal camp. At the same time, a younger generation took over the youth organisation and over *Mladina*. Outside of the official framework, he claims, they had normal, good interaction and communication even with the federal youth president Hashim Rexhepi (originally from Kosovo):

Even the politicians in private conversations used to tell us – ‘We know that, but it is still not the right time, wait a little...’ Everyone shared the opinion [...] It was becoming clear that some sort of democratisation is indispensable. Those waves were already underway in Eastern Europe as well.

Yet, court cases and bans on specific issues of youth magazines persisted throughout the decade. Often, the bans followed the legal framework which regulated the press and were not necessarily related to the federal Penal Code and the infamous article 133. From 1950 practices of pre-censorship had been abolished, the ‘Law on prevention of abuse of the freedom of the press and of other types of information’ [*Zakon o sprečavanju zlorabe slobode štampe i drugih vidova informisanja*] from 1976 provided the legal framework and it was the public prosecutor who could act ‘only ex-post facto, after a broadcast, publication or film presentation’.²⁵⁶ It is what happened on 16 March 1988, when the public prosecutor in Ljubljana ordered the confiscation and a ban on circulation of the eleventh issue of the youth weekly *Mladina*. The article in question was the editorial signed by the ‘Counter-revolutionary editorial staff’ and entitled ‘In the name of the people – to the defenders of the Revolution’.²⁵⁷ The editorial was addressed to the Yugoslav leadership and appears to have summed up the main points of contention and debate, as it accused the elite of wasting time dealing with the youth press and suggested that it should rather focus on financial affairs and corruption; on the public debt of more than 20 billion dollars which was spent on elite villas and privileges; on a foreign policy which diminished Yugoslavia’s reputation abroad; and an inhumane and greedy

²⁵⁶ Gertrude J. Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media: Politics of Mass Communication in Yugoslavia* (University of Illinois Press, 1977), p.62.

By the mid-1980s, the Yugoslav media network was significantly fragmented, decentralised, yet numerically impressive. In 1987 Yugoslavia had 2,825 newspapers and 202 radio and TV stations. The 1985 press law did not effectively neutralise the decentralising tendencies. See: John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, p.292.

²⁵⁷ ‘Mladinu su (opet) zaplenili’, *Studentski list* 10 (973) 1988, pp.4-5.

sale of arms. In addition, the text outlined 14 'counter-revolutionary demands' among which the establishment of a market economy, direct elections, doing away with the monopoly of the Party and public control of the Army.²⁵⁸ Although many of these points overlapped with the views reflected in the other Yugoslav youth media, *Mladina's* approach and articulation were sharper and hence more prone to criticism and controversy. Also, what set them apart in this case was the demand for a public control over the Army and a halt to the arms sale. The precedent to this was a highly controversial and debated article entitled 'Mamula go home' which labelled the federal defense secretary a 'merchant of death' [*trgovec s smrtjo*]:

'the guilt of the Yugoslav commander of the armed forces is even bigger because he is selling rifles with roses of non-alignment in the barrels and with fake smiles about non-interference in interior affairs [...] It was damn clear to Mamula why and against whom the Yugoslav arms in Ethiopia and Uganda are going to be used: in the civil wars, i.e. against the domestic guerrilla'.²⁵⁹

Although Slovenian *Mladina* was most of the time in the focus of what was seen as controversial youth journalism, the bans and court cases were in no way unique to the Slovenian youth press. The prosecutor's office on 28 January 1988 issued a temporary ban (upheld by the District Court) and on 2 February issued a permanent ban for issue number 3 of Zagreb's *Studentski List* from 27 January 1988, quoting a number of problematic articles among which 'We are condemned to a status quo', 'Oasis of fake liberty' and 'Media courtesans'.²⁶⁰ The first article reported on a lecture by Dr. Marijan Korošić in Ljubljana's Student cultural center SKUC and quoted a comment and a question from the audience which implied that a coalition between Stipe Šušvar and [Serb Party leader] Slobodan Milošević was hampering the process of democratisation, calling it a 'military-police-party lobby'.²⁶¹ Another problematic argument was from an article entitled 'Oasis of fake liberty', which dealt with the attacks on the magazine of the students of Maribor University in Slovenia and similarly targeted the Party as 'a factor that progressively deepens our crisis

²⁵⁸ Milan Andrejevich, 'A Challenge from Slovenian journalists', *Radio Free Europe Situation Report*, 2 May 1988, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

²⁵⁹ The following year *Mladina* again raised the same issue in its editorial – this time related to a visit of a Yugoslav delegation to Chile: 'Of course, we can only rhetorically wonder which weapons Yugoslavia sold to the Chilean dictatorship...'

'V imenu ljudstva! Mamula go home!', *Mladina*, 12.2.1988.

Robert Botteri and Suhadolnik, 'Eskadroni smrti, go to hell', *Mladina* 14, 14.4.1989.

²⁶⁰ 'Odgovor SL-a na prijedlog javnog tužioca o privremenoj zabrani lista: Mirno more, dobro zdravlje', *Studentski list* 4 (967), 1.3.1988.

²⁶¹ Zoran Oštrić, 'Osuđeni smo na status quo', *Studentski list*, 27.1.1988, p.7.

and uses national hatred for the protection of its own interests'.²⁶² The editorial staff replied by publishing part of the poem 'To those who follow in our wake' by Bertold Brecht²⁶³, in addition to a reprint of the official decision of the public prosecutor and a reply which qualified the act of the ban as 'civilizational anachronism' and quoted a number of official figures, politicians and other statements in mainstream newspapers and magazines which raised similar issues regarding the inefficiency and disunity of the Party without being criminalised or banned.²⁶⁴ Not long afterwards, the public prosecutor issued another ban for the issue number 9 for the article 'The dictator is coming' dedicated to the visit by Congolese (Zaire) president Mobutu Sese Seko. The prosecutor's decision quoted 'the offensive claims [which damage] the honour and reputation of the Republic of Zaire and its President Mobutu Sese Seko', as well as the friendly relations between the two countries.²⁶⁵ After the ban, the magazine published an overview of the recent history of Congo and more

²⁶² Igor Mekina, 'Oaza lažne slobode', *Studentski list*, 27.1.1988, p.18.

²⁶³ 'Truly, I live in dark times!

An artless word is foolish. A smooth forehead
Points to insensitivity. He who laughs
Has not yet received
The terrible news.
What times are these, in which
A conversation about trees is almost a crime
For in doing so we maintain our silence about so much wrongdoing!
And he who walks quietly across the street,
Passes out of the reach of his friends
Who are in danger?
It is true: I work for a living
But, believe me, that is a coincidence. Nothing
That I do gives me the right to eat my fill.
By chance I have been spared. (If my luck does not hold,
I am lost.)
They tell me: eat and drink. Be glad to be among the haves!
But how can I eat and drink
When I take what I eat from the starving
And those who thirst do not have my glass of water?
And yet I eat and drink.
I would happily be wise.
The old books teach us what wisdom is:
To retreat from the strife of the world
To live out the brief time that is your lot
Without fear
To make your way without violence
To repay evil with good –
The wise do not seek to satisfy their desires,
But to forget them.
But I cannot heed this:
Truly I live in dark times!

²⁶⁴ 'Odgovor SL-a na prijedlog javnog tužioca o privremenoj zabrani lista: Mirno more, dobro zdravlje', *Studentski list* 4 (967), 3.1.1988, p.5.

²⁶⁵ 'Zašto je zabranjen SL? Kako smo zaboravili Lumumbu', *Studentski list* 12 (975), 6 April 1988, p.6.

strikingly, a series of quotes by President Tito dating from 1960 and 1961, where he had openly attacked the overthrow of Patrice Lumumba: 'Since all manner of expression of our own opinion about [our] friend Mobutu, [including] the quoting of foreign sources or even quoting from our own press could lead us again into a situation where SL could be banned, we decided to look into what was said about our friend Mobutu by the man whose opinion, although sharper than ours, could help us avoid a ban...'²⁶⁶ The 'publishers' of the magazine - the University assembly [*skupština Sveučilišta*] and the city branch of the Croatian LSY renounced their right of appeal and the Council of the magazine (presided by a delegate from the city conference of the Croatian SAWP) called for the resignation of Ivica Buljan, the magazine's editor [*odgovorni urednik*] and attacked the magazine for not being representative of the city youth it was meant to address. On 27 April 1988, after the appointment of a new editor, the magazine published a statement by the 'former' editorial board following its collective resignation entitled 'The limit of political compromise':

'Our intention was to initiate a serious and well argued dialogue about the most sensitive questions and problems of Yugoslav society. Our efforts, however, were declared politically illiterate and irresponsible. It was said, in one way or the other, that 'the time is not yet ripe' for whatever we were attempting [to raise] [...] without doubt the times that are coming are going to be even worse if we don't start discussing about it today [...] We wish the new editorial board both courage and knowledge, and of course, less political wisdom than the times require.'²⁶⁷

This episode offers an illustration of the common, often arbitrary legal obstacles the youth press used to encounter throughout the 1980s. It also points to a specific way of 'disciplining' young journalists in a context where the mainstream media were openly discussing many of the sensitive issues which the youth press was often sanctioned for. For instance, that same year at the end of May, the LCY held its first conference (a smaller forum between two congresses) where party leaders and delegates formulated an openly expressed critique addressing the very issues which were subject to criminalisation upon appearance in the youth press: 'corruption in the party, the possibility of leadership changes and the party's relinquishment of the monopoly

²⁶⁶ 'Tito o Mobutuu: eksponent, agent, zločinac...', *Studentski list* 12 (975), 6.4.1988, p.7.

²⁶⁷ 'Saopćenje bivše redakcije "SL-a": Granica političkog kompromisa', *Studentski list* 14 (977), 27.4.1988, p.4.

on power, and the need for different opinions to be recognised...²⁶⁸ In essence, the youth press was attacked and subject to temporary or permanent bans because it was seen as overstepping the boundaries of its prescribed scope of topics in this sphere. Political critiques did occur (semi-) publicly at different political levels, but the youth press was not considered an appropriate venue for such discussions: rather, the authorities often argued that the youth press should focus on issues of importance for the young and the student population, by which they meant a focus on culture and entertainment. Indeed, political developments in the country, social and economic issues, i.e. 'high politics', did come to occupy a significant portion of all of the main youth magazines in the 1980s.

Articles appeared which exposed the socio-economic structural inequalities and the many forms of corruption, especially among the top Party officials, linking these phenomena as the products of the authoritarian traits of Yugoslav socialism, in particular the Party's monopoly on power. In December 1984 *Polet* published an ironic call for the 'Big, bigger, the biggest Yugoslav competition for the photograph of the most beautiful, richest, most luxurious and most unavailable house for the working class on the territory of the former Yugoslavia', printed over a black and white photo of a big mansion.²⁶⁹ It also noted that 'precedence will be given to the photographs which will also supply information about the location, the size, the owners and their occupation'.²⁷⁰ Similarly, an article published in the main Bosnian youth magazine *Naši dani* addressed a big public debate which exposed the practice of building summer villas by high Bosnian political officials at the sea-side resort of Neum.²⁷¹ The article unreservedly attacked high ranking politicians and named them individually: 'To nationalise what had been robbed. To take away once and for

²⁶⁸ Milan Andrejevich, 'An assessment of the party conference', *Radio Free Europe Yugoslavia Situation Report*, 7 June 1988, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

²⁶⁹ 'Veliki, veći, najveći', *Polet* 292, 21.12.1984, p.10

²⁷⁰ As Paul Betts observed in the context of the GDR, 'nasty sarcasm was much more typical of the 1970s and 1980s [...] Yet the shift in tone can also be seen as a changed idea of citizenship, in that people addressed the state less as supplicants than as equal and deserving citizens. They were more demanding of their socialist rights [...] and often brazenly pointed out misuse of resources in the public interest.'

Paul Betts, *Within Walls*, p.189.

²⁷¹ A 1969 issue of *Naši dani* which raised a similar issue was banned by the public prosecutor after it published an article entitled 'Comrade Boss' which claimed that the working class is being exploited. For this and other bans in the youth and student press in the late 1960s, see: April Carter, *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia: The Changing Role of the Party* (London: Frances Pinter, 1982).

all from the red bourgeoisie and give to the working class'.²⁷² Finally, a similar affair burst into the open when Slovenian *Mladina* accused Minister of defense General Branko Mamula²⁷³ of having a summer villa being constructed for him by army recruits in the sea resort of Opatija.

These acts by the youth press, however, need to be seen as embedded within the context of the time, i.e. within the public debates on the economic and political crisis which were already under way both in the mainstream media and in politics.²⁷⁴ From a contemporary perspective, however, those acts might appear naïve, as Senad Pećanin reflected on their attacks in the press targeting late socialist functionaries:

It's ridiculous – we would publicly destroy them for having roast lamb for lunch, for eating on invoice. Today I feel like the biggest idiot for doing that... This post-war Bosnian elite here, and I could see some evidence – millions of marks were spent. I spoke to [former president of the Yugoslav Presidency] Raif Dizdarević a couple of years ago and he told me about his neighbour who was the Federation's Prime-minister, a notorious criminal – every morning he could see a governmental car coming to pick up his son, take him to school and back. That was unthinkable at the time. Raif says [...] as member of the Presidency he had a car and a driver, a flat for temporary use while on the post, two phone lines - the bills for one of which he had to pay himself [...] at the first or second Presidency meeting he proposed and the comrades agreed that the cost for the food at the restaurant at the Presidency building would be deducted from their salaries at the end of the month. Oh! - I am thinking – f***, what are we talking about? These [post-socialist elites] swept away hundreds of millions... And we brought down that elite at the time [...] for a weekend house in Neum. The man worked for forty years, he was a revolutionary, held all kinds of offices – and we asked why he owned a weekend house in Neum and a 40 square meter flat!

Although the *JUPIO* report underlined the limiting of the spaces for autonomy and free initiative of the young, as well as societal tendencies which

²⁷² Radmilo Milovanović, 'Neum ili dolje crvena buržoazija', *Naši dani* 949, 2.9.1988, p.7.

The issue was a subject of discussion at many political forums and the critical tone was not exclusive to the youth press. At the above-mentioned party conference in May 1988, Zvonimir Hrabar, the president of the trade union confederation demanded an official investigation into the mismanagement of public money for the construction of seaside villas in Neum by Milanko Renovica.

²⁷³ Born in 1921, Admiral Mamula was one of those on the late Yugoslav political scene who belonged to the 'partisan generation' (see Annex 2). He joined the partisan units under Tito's command in 1941 and by the end of the war acted as the political commissar of the Naval Headquarters for the Northern Adriatic.

²⁷⁴ A wave of workers' strikes swept the country throughout the decade. In 1986 alone there were 851 registered strikes and in 1987 that number increased to 1685! The strikes were a display of inter-ethnic solidarity and the protest slogans used by the workers reflected the same anti-regime sentiment which prevailed in the youth press: 'Down with the red bourgeoisie!', 'You betrayed Tito', 'We want change'. See: Goran Musić, 'Jugoslovenski radnički pokret 1981-1991' in: Đorđe Tomić, Petar Atanacković (eds.) *Društvo u pokretu: novi društveni pokreti u Jugoslaviji od 1968 do danas* (Novi Sad: Cenzura, 2009), pp.160-168.

aim for 'maximal politicisation and ideologisation of everything',²⁷⁵ the youngsters active in the peripheral parts of the youth infrastructure - the cultural and media circles - found ways to navigate the system and carve out spaces of independent initiative and alternative art and media culture. As it was already mentioned, these phenomena were not particular to the decade of the 1980s. As Valerie Bunce notes, 'The result was that socialist Yugoslavia was, by regional socialist standards (especially from the late 1960s onward) unusually decentralized, unusually liberalized, and unusually situated with respect to East-West economic and political-military rivalries'.²⁷⁶ This came not only as a result of the unique Yugoslav political and theoretical takes on classical Marxist/Leninist theory – most notably the concept of the withering away of the state²⁷⁷ – but also as a result of the existence of a critical mass of young people who took advantage of the resources and the spaces of the youth sphere.

This chapter introduced the wide, decentralised network of the LSYY, outlining some of the major debates which occurred within its strictly speaking political/institutional core, as well as in the peripheral, i.e. its media and cultural realms. Although its political elite was not challenged until later in the decade, its cultural and media spheres within a very decentralised structure increasingly provided prominent outlets for alternative expression. The first half of the decade, i.e. the period immediately after Tito's death, was the time when different oppositional ideas and radically new youth cultural streams and styles were progressively invading the youth realm. Expressed reluctantly at official level and still within the institutionalised vocabulary of Yugoslav self-managing socialism, novel ideas and contestations were fermenting under the shrinking layer of the politically correct discourse of socialist self-management. The internally engendered critique aimed at careerist and position-seeking cadres and at the alienation of the LSYY was upheld by the youth press which began to drift away from its originally conceived role as a media platform of the Youth League(s). The increasing involvement of the youth media in contemporary political debates was met by a range of obstacles – from bans and dismissals, to public attacks. In the context of progressive liberalisation of an already highly

²⁷⁵ Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.13.

²⁷⁶ Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions*, p.53.

²⁷⁷ See: Dejan Jović, *Yugoslavia: A State That Withered Away* (Purdue University Press, 2009).

decentralised federation and a youth infrastructure, young musicians', artists' and journalists' acts in the public sphere frequently cut across the fine line between negotiation and dissent.

2. 'Comrades, I don't believe you!' – youth culture and the rethinking of historical legacies

*The image of freedom changes over time;
The freedom that is possible in a period of plenitude
is no longer viable when want reigns.
Our freedom is the freedom of those who think alike.*²⁷⁸

Laibach (1982)

This chapter focuses on the way some representatives of this new generation articulated an unprecedented critique in the realms of culture and youth commemorations. Indeed, they conceived of their challenge in explicitly generational terms, questioning some of the values embodied in contemporary politics and culture, but above all in an older generation which was seen to perpetuate inherited rituals and rhetoric without being able to respond to the contemporary challenges and crises. Without doubt there was a parallel process of 'cautious political liberalisation'²⁷⁹ unfolding at the institutional/political plane and the atmosphere of open public debate and acceptance of the reality of the crisis fed into the debates within the youth realm.

However, for the most part, this critique was not reduced to a demand for outright abolishment of Yugoslav socialism, but it was rather about challenging the norms of an older generation and reinventing socialism through the state's youth institutions. This critique often manifested itself in cultural forms. Hence, this chapter will address some of those cultural responses as sites for generational contestation. In particular, it will focus on how mainstream political discourse and inherited youth rituals were questioned in debates over the personality cult and the Baton of Youth relay race, and will explore how mainstream socialist youth culture was critiqued through new music trends.

The first part looks into what was defined in the Introduction as the second generational marker – a new 'sense of citizenship' which manifested itself through a new way of articulating conceptualisations of 'rights' and 'identity'. It examines how, despite a sense of crisis, fundamental aspects of Yugoslav identity and belonging survived. Indeed, surveys confirmed that most

²⁷⁸ As cited in Aleš Erjavec, 'Neue Slowenische Kunst', p.144.

²⁷⁹ Nebojša Vladislavljević, 'Institutional power and the rise of Milošević', *Nationalities Papers* 32 (1), 183-205, p.19.

still believed that change could be engineered through institutional forms. The second part examines the changing role of the inherited youth rituals such as the voluntary work actions and the celebration of 25 May - the Day of Youth and Tito's birthday. The last part of the chapter offers insight into the debates provoked by the rise of new youth music scenes, some of which were seen as contesting Yugoslavia's antifascist legacy. Overall, the chapter reflects on the anti-regime critique which sought to expose the authoritarian traits of the Yugoslav socio-political system and to stretch the discursive boundaries of rights and freedom(s).

2.1. A new sense of citizenship

Surveys and interviews from the 1980s show a degree of crisis of faith in the status quo. However, they also demonstrate, especially amongst the younger generation, a fundamental faith in the Yugoslav project, both in terms of national/ethnic identifications, and with regard to the future of a form of socialism. Indeed, even some of the most critical voices believed that change could be engineered through institutional forms. Below I will examine this phenomenon – demonstrating that although the rights and identities that constituted citizenship were being rethought, this was nearly always done within a Yugoslav framework.

Respondents in the 1986 *JUPIO* study expressed a high dose of pessimism concerning the future of the Yugoslav society. Nevertheless, few could envision a radical transformation or a disappearance of the Yugoslav framework: rather, 'the main concern of the vast majority of the population was their economic well-being in the face of the economic crisis.'²⁸⁰ When asked what were the most important problems the society was facing, the majority of respondents in the *JUPIO* survey located the core problems with the economic sphere – most prominently youth unemployment and the representatives of the state bureaucracy who in the eyes of the young generation failed to live up to their roles and could not be held accountable for political or economic decisions.

²⁸⁰ V.P. Gagnon, 'Yugoslavia in 1989 and after', p.35.

Figure 2: The most important problems the society is facing

	SLO	CRO	VOJ	SRB	BIH	MKD	MNE	KS
Economic problems	41,3	52,3	55,7	47,9	52,9	44,9	60,5	50,3
Unaccountability	33,1	26,8	21,8	26,5	19,7	23,5	17,6	15,9
Political system	17,3	/	/	/	/	/	7,3	/
Social gap	15,6	13,7	22,2	14,0	12,2	12,0	13,7	17,1
Unemployment	13,0	37,1	33,7	38,3	50,0	51,5	49,4	47,8
Financial crime	/	8,5	/	9,7	9,8	7,8	/	/
National problems	/	/	7,7	/	/	/	/	/

Figure 3: The most important problems the youth is facing

	SLO	CRO	VOJ	SRB	BIH	MKD	MNE	KS
Unemployment	41,8	67,2	64,0	70,4	76,1	72,5	73,8	72,0
Housing	17,8	14,3	16,0	15,2	9,0	12,5	/	12,1
Economic independence	16,9	18,1	17,1	17,9	14,9	19,7	27,0	20,9
Moral crisis	15,4	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Alcoholism/drugs	/	16,7	11,7	22,0	22,5	14,9	/	/
Social gap	/	/	/	/	/	/	12,9	10,9
Education system	/	/	/	/	/	/	10,3	/

*According to data from Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*.

The *JUPIO* research also demonstrated a relatively high degree of identification with Yugoslavia. The part dedicated to the ‘national attachment’ [*nacionalna vezanost*] among the youth revealed a rather low interest and identification in ethno-national or religious terms:

Figure 4: National attachment

Absence of national attachment	11,9%
Weak national attachment	43,8%
Medium national attachment	41,9%
Strong national attachment	2,3%
Extreme national attachment	0,1%

*According to Sergej Flere in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*.

By summarising the results according to the federal units and taking into account the last three degrees (medium, strong and extreme), the research revealed that the highest degree of national attachment is among the youth in Kosovo (72.5% + 5.7% + 0.4% = 78.6%) and in Macedonia (60.2% + 3.7% + 0% = 63.9%), while the lowest was found among the young of Bosnia-Herzegovina (30.3% + 1.5% + 0 = 31.5%).²⁸¹ The results according to the 'contingency strata' showed that the level of national attachment is lowest among the students (30.4%) and highest among the farmers (the rural youth) – 57.5%. The survey also showed a high percentage of acceptance of nationally mixed marriages, which echoes the tendency of valuing individual (as opposed to cultural/ethno-religious) traits when choosing a marriage partner or a friend.²⁸²

**Figure 5: Nationally mixed marriages are doomed to fail
(percentage of those who agree)**

Yugoslavs – 10%	Members of the LSY – 15%	University students – 11%
Croats – 12%	Non-members of the LSY – 43%	Employed – 15%
Slovenes – 14%	Not sure of their LSY membership status – 23%	Students (high school) – 19%
Montenegrins – 15%	Members of the LCY – 14%	Unemployed – 20%
(Bosnian) Muslims – 15%	Non-members of the LCY – 19%	Farmers – 27%
Serbs – 17%		
Macedonians – 29%		

²⁸¹ The results for the other republics were as follows: Slovenia (51,8% + 5,6% + 0,2% = 57,6%); Montenegro (40,9% + 0,4% + 0% = 41,3%); Vojvodina (40,0% + 1,3% + 0% = 41,3%); Croatia (33,3% + 1,9% + 0,1% = 35,5%); Serbia proper (34,7% + 0,7% + 0% = 35,4%).

Sergej Flere, 'Odnos mladih prema etnosu' in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, pp.131-149.

In the 1989 survey, *Deca krize*, the preparedness to engage for the interests of Yugoslavia as a whole was above the average among respondents from Montenegro (66%), Bosnia-Herzegovina (65%), Kosovo (60%) and Serbia proper (59%). Although the percentage of the Slovene respondents who expressed 'very high' preparedness for the interests of Yugoslavia as a whole was lowest – 17%, when combined with those who expressed 'average' (31%) and 'high' interest (18%) it came up to 66%.

²⁸² The *JUPIO* study noted a tendency of valuing individual (as opposed to cultural/ethno-religious) traits when choosing a marriage partner or a friend: moral values (80.5%), understanding of life (62%), intelligence and sense of humour (61.8%) mattered the most, while religion (19.5%) and social origins (16.7%) were at the bottom of the list, confirming a tendency of 'modernisation of the value system'. Furio Radin, 'Vrijednosti jugoslavenske omladine' in Vrcan et al., pp. 63-64.

Similarly, 88.7% of the respondents said they agreed with the statement that 'the biggest value of the youth is that the young are not slaves to habits and patterns, but are capable of establishing and developing new relations'. Mirjana Ule in Vrcan et al. p.109.

As the majority of the 5.4% of the Yugoslav population who declared 'Yugoslav' in the 1981 federal census were young people, scholars among other things sought to measure the levels of national and Yugoslav attachment. In order to map certain conclusions on the sentiment of Yugoslav belonging as supranational or national, the *JUPIO* research posed several different questions. The percentage of those who agreed with the statement 'The feelings of Yugoslav belonging and my national belonging are not the same, but I care about both of them' was 61%. The highest percentage was among the Macedonians (69%) and the lowest among the Albanians (56%) – although in all of the cases that meant that the majority espoused a Yugoslav identification as a supplementary, supra-national sentiment, where the ethno-national and the Yugoslav were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, this points to the fact that this generation embodied what I call 'layered Yugoslavism', i.e. it had internalised the basic postulates of the Yugoslav polity – its parallel ethno-territorial and its supra-national character. Having been born and socialised within the quasi-confederal political framework of Yugoslavia, where the separate national/federal units and identities publicly and institutionally coexisted with the Yugoslav level/sense of identity and citizenship, it had internalised a two-tier sense of belonging and self-perception, where the national/republican, on one hand, and the Yugoslav dimension, on the other, were perceived and appropriated as complementary rather than exclusive. Secondly, coming of age and being active in the 1970s and 1980s, this generation was particularly exposed to the tension between the strong centrifugal and weakening centripetal forces and tendencies at institutional and everyday level.²⁸³ Nevertheless, the research concluded that 'there is a very

²⁸³ In addition, the research quoted the 'surprising finding' of 72% of young people across the entire survey who declared that they agree with the statement 'I am a Yugoslav and I can't give priority to any other affiliation/belonging'. The highest percentage was among the Bosnian Muslim youth (80%), the Macedonians (78%) and the Serbs and Montenegrins (76%), while the lowest among the Slovenes (49%). The fact that even the lowest percentage implies that half of the respondents demonstrated a surprisingly high level of 'Yugoslav orientation' is very telling of the way this generation perceived Yugoslavism and self-identified in broader terms, beyond the traditional ethno-national framework. Although it was predominantly among the Bosnian youth that the Yugoslav was adopted as a 'primary identification', even the youth belonging to the other national groups which demonstrated a relatively high level of national

high potential for Yugoslav identification [*opredeljivanje*] among the young [...] which is not a matter of fashion and transience, but of more profound integrative processes'.²⁸⁴

The testimony of Sašo Ordanoski offers a synthesis of all of these points by reflecting on what Yugoslavism represented and meant at individual level:

First of all, there was a sentimental dimension to the Yugoslav identification. A sentiment related to the fine, decent life which certain social strata nowadays can only long for. There was also a political platform within it – no matter how caricature-like it sounds today, the idea of brotherhood and unity did not sound like a pamphlet... Ultimately it appealed to a core human emotion and that is the fundamental need for security. That idea allowed people to feel safer and engendered a need to preserve that union, which consequently resulted in the large number of people who declared Yugoslav [in the census]. In any case, the feeling of being Macedonian, Serb, etc. came a little later, when the conflict intensified and when eventually the people were pushed into their national corrals and forced to identify according to their primary ethnic belonging. The Yugoslav idea was a synthetic idea, a more cosmopolitan idea, hence it could not be negative in itself. It didn't however imply an erasure of the consciousness of ethnic belonging, but a desire to pluralise that ethnic belonging and to integrate it with other ethnic belongings into a new quality – more powerful, bigger, more comfortable... The instigators of the events which destroyed this proved to be more powerful than the instigators of the integrative idea – 'and the rest is history'.

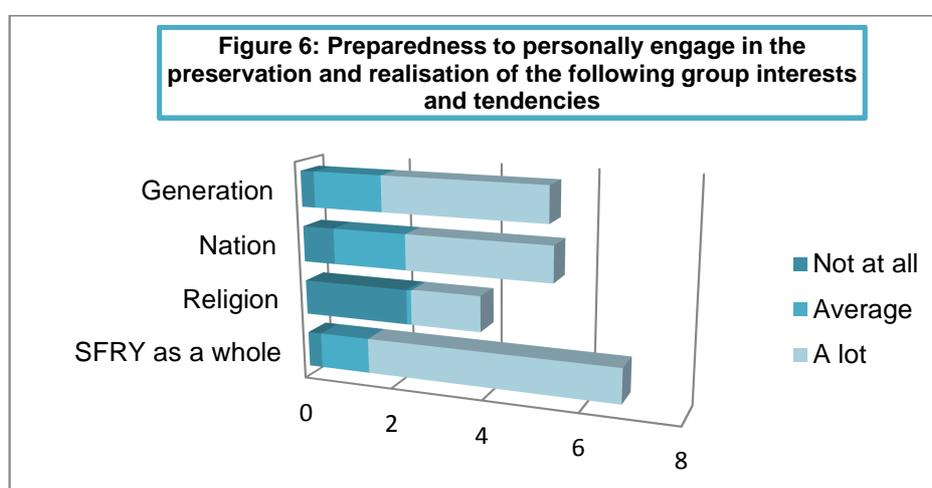
The idea that Yugoslavism was not understood as an attempted 'erasure of the consciousness of ethnic belonging', but it was rather a 'cosmopolitan idea' which essentially helped to 'pluralise' and raise the ethnic onto a higher level, echoes the finding of the *JUPIO* study. The majority of my interviewees spoke of 'togetherness' as a way to avoid using the notion of 'brotherhood and unity' which might appear 'caricature-like' nowadays. It is also important to note the capacious quality in both spatial and abstract terms, raised in many testimonies, implying that Yugoslavism allowed plurality and was able to accommodate difference. Yugoslavia, in this sense, was understood both as a spatial framework which was bigger and hence more commodious than the narrower national/federal unit, and as a wider identity framework which offered more freedom and an extended scope for self-identification.

In an atmosphere where scholars were observing a trend of a progressive increase in the ethnic distance from the 1960s onwards, the last all-Yugoslav research on youth published in 1990 revealed some astounding

attachment/ethnocentrism (such as the Albanians, Macedonians and Slovenes), accepted the Yugoslav as an additional (civic, political, cultural) layer of identification and sense of belonging.

²⁸⁴ Sergej Flere, 'Odnos mladih prema etnosu' in Srđan Vrcan et al., pp.147-149.

results which echoed those from 1986. When asked to declare whether and to what extent they are prepared to personally engage in the preservation and realisation of the following group interests and tendencies, the majority (54%) chose 'SFR Yugoslavia as a whole'.²⁸⁵ Although the authors noted that there were differences along national/regional lines, the research found that the preparedness for engagement for the interests of one's nation and the interests of Yugoslavia as a whole are actually connected as 'for the majority of the young these two attitudes **do not appear as incompatible**'.²⁸⁶ Indeed, an ethno-national and a Yugoslav sense of belonging seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive persisted until very late into the decade.



*According to data from Srećko Mihailović et al. *Deca krize*.

Although the survey revealed that 86% of the respondents declared preparedness for engagement for the interests of Yugoslavia, with generational interests (82%) and national interests (74%) ranked just below that, it concluded that the youth mostly identified with the social-class group it belonged to.²⁸⁷ The sense of belonging to a socially, culturally or generationally defined group with a

²⁸⁵ Mirjana Vasović, 'Percepcija društvenih sukoba' in Srećko Mihailović et al. *Deca krize*, p.68.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Srećko Mihailović, 'Zbrka u glavi i strah u srcu: omladina Jugoslavije krajem osamdesetih' in Srećko Mihailović et al. *Deca krize*, p.282.

Another part of the 1989 research on the 'national consciousness of the youth' concluded that the ethnic distance among the young had increased between 1985 and 1989. In 1989, the majority of the respondents understood Yugoslavism as a 'sense of togetherness' [osećanje zajedništva]. The Slovenian youth was the only exception – for 43% of them Yugoslavism represented 'citizenship', while for 14% - an expression of unitarism and centralism. Ljiljana Bačević, 'Nacionalna svest omladine' in *Deca krize*, pp.147-172.

relative disregard for the ethno-national aspect indeed surfaced in many of the interviews I conducted. Robert Botteri's testimony is particularly illustrative:

I have to say I never identified as Yugoslav. I was at the age when I would rather identify as a punk than a Yugoslav. I used to claim that I have more in common with a punk from Belgrade, than with someone who is into folk music from Ljubljana (laughs). So, we had a rather internationalist understanding/outlook. We felt closer to the punks in England. So, we never perceived it in a nationalist way. Moreover, being a Yugoslav at that time was also some kind of nationalism. It was an antipode. We saw 19th century remnants in all of the nationalists. We thought they wouldn't be able to re-surface, we thought the world was becoming global and it didn't matter what you were. We probably underestimated the power of nationalism. Especially with those who were not supposed to be nationalist... Because the top echelons of the communist parties were always describing themselves as internationalist. If there was anything valuable in Marxism, it was internationalism.

The sense of multiple layers in one's identification with Yugoslavia is evident in the majority of the testimonies I collected. The awareness of one's ethno-national belonging is clearly present and discernible, whereas the Yugoslav identification is present, but stripped of national content. Dejan Jović's testimony provides an illustration of this:

Formally I never declared Yugoslav [...] In the student index there was a box for 'nationality', which I left blank. I enrolled in university in 1986. And that is how I felt. The student index is the evidence. First of all, I considered that question inappropriate, intrusive. It was completely incomprehensible for me why one is asked to declare their nationality. It made you wonder – what is the purpose of that question? On the other hand, as I have dual national belonging, Croatian and Serbian, I found it difficult to decide and I simply never wanted to decide. If I had to, I used to say I have dual belonging, Serb and Croat, to be fair to both. Formally I was 'undeclared', but not 'Yugoslav' at the censuses. Why? Because I think I bought in, I followed the dominant politically correct logic, which was that Yugoslavs in the ethnic sense do not exist. That was what we were taught in school, that Yugoslav is not an ethnic category. Yes, all of us are Yugoslav, that's how we feel, but in the ethnic sense we are Serbs, Croats... So, I was not that big of a rebel in that sense to dare say – 'I am an ethnic Yugoslav, precisely because everyone says they don't exist', as many people actually did...

Culture played an important role for this generation in the 1980s, in how they made sense of Yugoslavism. The majority of my interviewees identified Yugoslavism in broad cultural terms. Gregor Tomc drew a line between the political and the cultural poles of the Yugoslav project, pin-pointing, as did the majority of the interviewees, 1987-1988 and the rise of Milošević as the turning point:

For me it was a cultural concept. [...] I wrote a text in *Nova revija* 57 where I said that I don't feel as Slovenian, but I feel much more as a

citizen of Ljubljana and a fan of my football team, and I like Yugoslavia as a multicultural event, but I really hate the political system. So, I always hated Yugoslav politics, but I had no problem with Yugoslav culture. But, unfortunately, we had such incapable politicians that messed up the whole project and it can never be revived.

But this was never translated into secessionism until Milošević. Milošević had to come up with this very aggressive nationalism for people to start thinking – look, maybe we should redefine this cultural idea into a political concept. [...] Later everybody became anti-Yugoslav because we simply... when you watched those generals threatening you on TV... these are not the kind of people I want to be in the same country with.

This was also a generation that was defined in terms of a crisis in political socialisation by contemporaries. The beginning of the 1980s saw an emergence of debates about the ideological fragmentation of the youth and its disillusionment or lack of support for socialist self-management. New Left ideas or ‘ultra-left radicalism’ mainly penetrated the youth through intellectual circles and university professors associated with the Praxis group and its journal which was banned in 1975. Sociologists noted the emergence of various ideological streams among the youth – ‘liberal, statist-bureaucratic, ultra-left, and other, along with a worrying trend of a growing number of young people turning to *careerism, opportunism, conformism, egoism, etc.*’²⁸⁸ At the beginning of the decade, in November 1980, Ratko Butulija, the Secretary of the Belgrade Party Committee complained that young people are behaving ‘in a liberalistic manner’ and that ‘ultraleftist radicalism’ has become ‘sort of the fashion’.²⁸⁹ Similarly, an earlier research from 1977 on conformism and political behaviour found that younger Party members with a shorter membership history prove to be more conformist than older ones, especially when compared with the most senior ones who fought in the Second World War.²⁹⁰ This observation points to a crucial gap which ran along generational lines – i.e. the fact that unlike those who fought in the liberation war, for the generations born in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, the liberation struggle of the Yugoslav partisans was often reduced to the narratives from the history textbooks or the fictional films. As one foreign scholar observed in the mid-1980s, ‘We find that the legitimating effect of the

²⁸⁸ Jordan Aleksić, ‘Zagonetka društveno-političkog aktivizma mlade generacije’ in *Mlada generacija, danas*, p. 77.

²⁸⁹ Slobodan Stanković, ‘Changes in the Yugoslav Communist Youth Federation’, *Radio Free Europe* Background Report, 5 January 1981, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

²⁹⁰ Ivan Šiber, ‘Konformizam i političko ponašanje’, *Naše teme* 2/1077.

wartime liberation is less effective for those for whom that war is no more than the memory of their parents' generation'.²⁹¹

Moreover, throughout the decade scholars and politicians sought explanation for the rapidly declining number of young members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The number of the youth in the LCY, like the total number of party members, was steadily increasing from 1969 until 1980: from 295,115 (23,3%) to 614,106 (32,6%) in 1979. In 1980, 32% (649,428) of the 2,041,270 members of the LCY were young people below the age of 28. However, in 1985, the number was already down to 504,368 (23%).²⁹² By 1989, 43% of the respondents in the last youth survey thought that the work of the LCY (referred to as a 'senior organisation' [*seniorska organizacija*] or 'the locus of control' [*lokus kontrole*]) is unacceptable and 42% said that the LCY should be only one of several political parties.²⁹³

What is particularly intriguing is the fact that only 25% of the activists in the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia were at the same time members of the LCY. In 1982, a study on the involvement of the youth in the political system, noted that 'one can conclude that a huge number of young people is to be found outside of the active participation in the structure of the political system'.²⁹⁴ This turned out to be the beginning of an irreversible process. In 1989 the percentage of those who declared that they are members of self-management bodies in 1985-6 dropped from 20% to 7%, while the percentage of those who said they would not like to be members increased from 33% to 56%.

However, the discontent with the functioning of the system and with the political elite did not imply an outright refusal of the Yugoslav model of socialism. In the 1989 survey, more than half of the respondents (53%) declared their acceptance of socialism as a theory, while socialism in practice (i.e. as implemented in Yugoslavia) was not acceptable to 41% of the

²⁹¹ George Schopflin, 'Political Decay in One-Party Systems', p.312.

²⁹² Jordan Aleksić, 'Mlada generacija i Savez komunista Jugoslavije' in *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.190.

²⁹³ Srećko Mihailović, 'Zbrka u glavi i strah u srcu', pp.239-240/280.

The *JUPIO* report in the chapter on 'The young generation and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia' outlined similar tendencies:

1. The membership of the young in the LCY is in a noticeable and continuous decline;
2. The motivation for membership deviates in a conformist-pragmatic direction;
3. The identification with the actions of the LCY is weakening.

²⁹⁴ Dubravka Velat, 'Omladina u političkom sistemu' in *Mlada generacija, danas*, p.54.

respondents.²⁹⁵ As it was observed, ‘Despite seven or eight years of increasing economic crisis, there are no immediate signs of complete loss of confidence in the system. But there is a growing sense of disillusionment.’²⁹⁶ The following testimony by Zemira Alajbegović (born 1958), one of the leading members of the FV 112/15 theater group and the Borghesia band, famous for its video art and multimedia performances, is illustrative of this:

There is an inherent contradiction: on the one hand, it was normal to criticise a system which was fossilised, it ran out of ideas, and was endlessly repeating certain phrases – we portrayed that well in our videos, for example. On the other hand, it was very important for us and our activism and we believed in the socialist postulates of art and culture for the masses, in the fact that it’s not necessary to go either in some sort of a bourgeois art or towards a consumerist model which we now live. That’s why we were basing our work on the Russian activist art. That was a utopian project. It seems to me that back then we were all utopians – not only us in FV, but all of us believed that things can change only for the better. In that situation one didn’t think that once socialism is transformed into capitalism, capitalism will be here to stay (laughs). So, on the one hand, one was critical towards the socialist system, the project, but on the other hand we genuinely believed in some of those ideas.

Senad Pećanin similarly underlined that their activism was not inspired by an anti-socialist outlook:

We were not anti-communist, especially not anti-fascist. No, no. We were socialised in that spirit and antifascism was never put under question. On the contrary. What we found unthinkable was censorship. The regime, freedom of expression, multi-party system, why wouldn’t it be possible?

Beside an apparent discontent with the state of affairs in the society and with the functioning of the state, it is striking that nearly half of the respondents in the 1986 survey said that social change could be achieved in an institutional way. However, 42,9% reported that they had not thought about the issue, which echoed concerns about the ‘depolitisation’ of the youth.

Figure 7: Modes of realisation of social change

‘Social change can be achieved above all through...’	%
Working within the institutions of the socio-political system (LCY, SAWP, LSY, etc.)	40,9
Working outside of the institutions	10,2
Working against the institutions	4,1

²⁹⁵ Srećko Mihailović, ‘Zbrka u glavi i strah u srcu’, p.280.

²⁹⁶ Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.217.

I haven't thought about it	42,9
No response	1,8

A new sense of Yugoslav self-identification understood in non-national, but, rather, in broader cultural or civic terms, and often synthetic and inclusive in nature, was a dominant generational marker. The rapid decline in membership in the LCY and the decline in support for 'really existing' self-management, on the one hand, and the acceptance of the Yugoslav framework, on the other, informed this new generational 'sense of citizenship'. Many wanted a decoupling of dogmatic socialism and cultural Yugoslavism and believed that such a move was viable. In essence, the generational critique which targeted the inherited norms and values of an older generation and the functioning of the political system they had built, conveyed the need for new forms of political legitimacy and the re-invention and democratisation of Yugoslav socialism and the Yugoslav state.

2.2. Under Tito's shadow – rethinking youth rituals

A significant part of the budget of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia was dedicated to the organisation of a number of traditional youth events – commemorative, competitive and cultural. 25 May - the Day of Youth - was considered the main event which carried the most symbolic weight, commemorating the legacy of the liberation struggle and Tito's leadership, and celebrating the achievements and the role of the youth in Yugoslav society. Competitive events such as the 'Festival of work of the youth of Yugoslavia' [*Festival rada omladine Jugoslavije*]²⁹⁷ were designed both to foster a competitive spirit and endorse the doctrine of self-management. A large portion of youth took part in a range of cultural and art festivals in cinematography,

²⁹⁷ Other events which were organised at federal level and embodied some of the core political values of Yugoslav socialism were the 'Championship of knowledge Tito-revolution-peace' [*Šampionat znanja Tito-revolucija-mir*], the youth march 'On Tito's paths of the revolution' [*Titovim stazama revolucije*], the 'Week of youth solidarity' [*Nedelja omladinske solidarnosti*] organised on the occasion of 21 March, the international anti-apartheid day. The cultural event 'The youth of Sutjeska' [*Mladost Sutjeske*] gathered young artists from all over the country at the place of the infamous WW2 Sutjeska battle. The most famous and widely accepted event which the LSYY organised traditionally every year was the youth festival in the Vojvodinian town of Subotica [*Festival 'Omladina'-Subotica*] which gathered young pop and rock bands and musicians.

theatre, literature, music and science that were – at least in an institutional sense - devoid of politics. The second most important youth event for the LSYY, which embodied these commemorative, competitive and cultural dimensions, was the so-called ‘voluntary work action’ [*omladinska radna akcija - ORA*]. Young brigadiers were introduced to the practices of self-management as the actions were organised as small self-managing enterprises, but also preserved certain elements of the revolutionary past (the headquarters, the commanders of the brigade and the action, etc.). An excerpt from a report on the ‘Neretva ‘87’ work action sums up their role: ‘...at “Neretva” young people from different national, social and age strata took part. The mass participation and this [diverse] structure allowed the spread and development of the legacy of the socialist revolution, development and nurturing of brotherhood and unity of the nations and nationalities, strengthening of friendship and solidarity, the creative spirit and enthusiasm’.²⁹⁸

However, as of the late 1970s, the youth voluntary actions had lost almost all connection to its post-war ideological moorings and progressively came to represent and embody ‘a youth tourist culture’²⁹⁹ – in which the young were distanced from the ideological content and saw it as an opportunity for travel. What remained one of their main features throughout the socialist era was their supranational dimension, i.e. their role as spaces where youngsters with different ethnic and social backgrounds could socialise, get to know each other and explore the country. Dragan Kremer recounted his experience of going to a summer voluntary camp and remembered the slight cultural shock of meeting a young miner from a small Serbian town:

The first time I went to a work camp I met a guy who was two years older than me and who was a miner by profession, from Aleksinac. What did you know until then about miners? That a miner is the guy from the banknote, that miners are in the history textbooks, and sometimes in the news when an accident occurs. But a miner was never represented as a 22-year old guy. You meet this guy and he turns out to be very nice, funny... Probably I would have never met him.

With time, the majority of participants came to be secondary school students and youth from less well-off families. For instance, of the 789

²⁹⁸ ‘Izveštaj o ostvarenim radnim i društvenim aktivnostima na ORA “Neretva ‘87”’, Mostar, septembar 1987, *RK SSOBIH*, Archive of B&H, box 124.

²⁹⁹ Dragan Popović, ‘Youth Labor Action (*Omladinska radna akcija, ORA*) as Ideological Holiday-Making’ in Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (eds.), *Yugoslavia’s Sunny Side a History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)*, p.283.

participants at the youth work action 'Neretva '87' in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 442 were pupils, 257 were young workers and only 32 were university students.³⁰⁰ As funds became scarce in the midst of the economic crisis, the whole concept began to be reconsidered. Yet, the so-called 'federal youth work actions' [*Savezna Omladinska Radna Akcija- SORA*] gathered a larger number of participants even in the second half of the 1980s, when their popularity generally began to decline. As an illustration, at the federal work action 'Youth railway Tuzla-Zvornik' in 1987 there were more than 3,100 participants in 73 brigades,³⁰¹ while only in Macedonia 4,348 work actions with 431,822 participants were organised between 1982 and 1986.³⁰²

Dragan Kremer's testimony captures very effectively the social divisions among the youth, and the role of these events as platforms for pan-Yugoslav youth encounters. The memory of these events is almost always underpinned by subjective retrospective statements, in this case that no matter how futile and unattractive they might have seemed at the time, they had a utilitarian value in having taught teenagers practical work skills and habits:

I am sure that I am among the few who have gone several times to a youth work action – to the shock of many of my friends. But, my reasoning was – I would spend as much of my summer holidays as I can far away from my parents. There were maybe three other people from our high-school who went as well. But we found out where the signing up takes place [...] and you encountered a completely different circle of young people from the secondary vocational schools [...] It wasn't about an exclusivist attitude – 'I don't want to hang out with people like that' – simply, the majority of the kids from your street, from your primary school went to a gymnasium, in the city centre [...] And then you meet those young people whom you had heard about from the stories of your parents when they'd say to you: 'You know, there are children who can't go to the seaside for holidays, their parents don't have the money'. And you realise that [the work action] is their only opportunity for summer travel. At the work action itself there was an additional, wider circle of people you met. You saw people from some places you've never been to, people you've never had a chance to meet before [...] When you went to the Army, you met yet other people who lived in your country, belonged to the same generation, but were significantly different and you would have never come across them unless you came to the Army or you travelled a lot... It was rare for gymnasium kids to go to work actions, it was almost looked upon with contempt – like, that was only for those who have nothing better to do. It was great for me – first I went with my parents [to the seaside], then at my grand-parents', and finally at a work action – four additional weeks without the parents over your head. Plus, it turned out to be fun

³⁰⁰ 'Izveštaj o ostvarenim radnim i društvenim aktivnostima', Archive of B&H.

³⁰¹ 'Bilten br. 1, ORA Omladinska pruga Tuzla-Zvornik, Zvornik, maj 1988', *RK SSOBIH*, Archive of B&H, box 124.

³⁰² *XII kongres na Sojuzot na socijalistichka mladina na Makedonija* (Skopje/Kochani: Republička konferencija na CCMM/Mladost, 1986), p. 83.

and not hard at all - that was abundant socialism [bogati socijalizam], it wasn't work that would kill you [...] I realised it was actually very useful, as I learned what it means to dig a two-meter trench with a shovel [...] you simply see what you can do with your own two hands, something which proved helpful in the most critical moments of my life – in times of political pressures, etc. [I realised] I don't have to be always a journalist, I can do other things, even physical work... it's not beneath me [nije mi ispod nivoa]. I'd rather do that than to compromise myself, my attitudes and views.

By the end of the decade, the LSYY through its commissions for voluntary youth work, was attempting to modernise the concept of youth volunteering. International volunteering camps with specific foci on ecology or archaeology, for instance, youth scientific research camps and opportunities of volunteering abroad came to supplement the classical model of the 'youth work action'. For example, in 1988 the Macedonian LSY committed to organising, beside the classic highway work action 'Skopje '89', a youth scientific research camp 'Youth '89', two international youth camps on ecology and applied art and four Yugoslav youth work camps.³⁰³ Thus, the vocabulary had changed as well: in addition to the traditional 'youth work action' [*младинска работна акција*], 'international/Yugoslav youth work camps [*меѓународни/југословенски младински работни кампови*] were referred to and were included in the program. This implied reinvention of the concept of youth volunteering, as the Slovenian and the Vojvodinan LSYs in 1987 and the Macedonian in 1988 introduced the possibility of travelling abroad to take part in international youth volunteering camps. The newly conceptualised 'youth work camps' in Macedonia were meant to gather smaller number of volunteers (from 10-35), both from Yugoslavia and abroad, to be self-financed and to do away with some of the features of the old forms of volunteering, such as salaried members at the work action headquarters and the construction of a separate settlement for the volunteers.³⁰⁴

However, the single most important youth-related event was the Day of Youth. In January 1980, the jury of the federal board for the celebration of 25 May concluded that they had only received five scenario proposals for the final stadium event [*sleŕ*], none of which satisfied the criteria: 'The response to the

³⁰³ 'Информација за текот и степенот на подготвеност на формата и облиците на доброволните младински активности за 1989 година', *Републичка конференција на ССММ*, Archive of Macedonia, box number 1/1989.

³⁰⁴ 'Правци на развој на формите на доброволните младински активности во СР Македонија во 1989 година', *ПК на ССММ*, Archive of Macedonia, box 1/1989.

call for proposals was very small, while the quality of the received works was such that none qualifies for the award. The Jury suggests that the Presidency of the LSYY establishes a working group for the drafting of a scenario for the final Day of Youth event'.³⁰⁵ The single most important youth event began to appear anachronistic and incapable of inspiring youth from below, even before Tito passed away. However, understandably, in an atmosphere of a somewhat Soviet-inspired paranoia after the invasion of Afghanistan and Tito's illness and subsequent death, there was reluctance in the very early 1980s to openly pose these questions at an official level. Not only did this commemorative and festive occasion fail to spark genuine interest or to mobilise the youth as it had done twenty years before, it also consumed a significant part of the League's budget. Millions of dinars were spent not only on the organisation of the final event on 25 May at the Belgrade Yugoslav People's Army stadium, but throughout the year in related events all over the country.

Challenges to earlier conceptions of the Youth Day, however, need to be put in the context of changing debates over Tito's role. The unraveling of Tito's mythical aura began not long after his funeral on 8 May 1980 in Belgrade. Vladimir Dedijer's *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita* [New contributions for the biography of Josip Broz Tito] was published in 1981 and Dedijer, Tito's official biographer, was hailed as someone 'who began reducing Tito's personality cult to human proportions'.³⁰⁶ Although the text did not radically challenge Tito's stature, its publication sparked controversy since it was seen as 'eroding many of the myths officially fostered in Yugoslavia during the last three and a half decades'.³⁰⁷ Dedijer was quoted saying that 'one does a disservice to such a great personality by writing of him according to protocol, like a Pharaoh, extolling him to the sky and hiding his faults'.³⁰⁸

Two years later, in 1983, after the main event commemorating 25 May at the Belgrade stadium, a wave of reactions from senior officials and political

³⁰⁵ 'ZAPISNIK sa sednice žirija Saveznog odbora Dana mladosti za Konkurs scenarija završne priredbe Dana mladosti '80', *Savez Socijalističke Omladine Jugoslavije*, Archive of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, SSOJ 114/folder 235.

³⁰⁶ Slobodan Stankovic, 'Tito and his personality cult reduced to human proportions', *Radio Free Europe Background Report* 309, 11 November 1981, Open Society Archive (digital archive).

³⁰⁷ Stephen Clissold, 'Review: *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita* by Vladimir Dedijer', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 60/4 (1982), 632-634, p.633.

³⁰⁸ Slobodan Stankovic, 'Tito and his personality cult reduced to human proportions'.

bodies swept the media space. Stana Tomašević-Arnesen³⁰⁹, a WW2 veteran and at the time president of the SAWP Committee for commemorating Tito's legacy, insisted that 'It is intolerable that, under the pretext of praising Tito, a personality cult, religion, and mysticism have been allowed to develop [...] At the central celebration Tito descended on clouds that stayed in place like the "throne of the Almighty," while bluish light filtered through the backdrop'.³¹⁰ It is thus important to note that among both the most senior political officials and youth circles there was a shared sense of disapproval regarding the nine-metre figure of Tito which rose among clouds of smoke at the one end of the stadium. This ushered in a new, 'modernised' form of celebrating the Youth Day the following year, where in addition to the revolutionary and socialist slogans, rock 'n' roll was prominent as a music background both at the final celebration at the stadium and on the streets of Belgrade, which in 1984 also hosted the 'Yugoslav meetings of the youth' [*Jugoslovenski susreti mladih*].³¹¹

Thus, the overall critique of the celebration of 25 May was essentially based on an attempt to modernise youth events by ridding them of classical/excessive Yugoslav socialist iconography and of the postwar cult of Tito, as well as to allow greater diversity of cultural expression. The voices within the youth realm which first engaged publicly in a more substantial critique of the Day of Youth celebrations appeared in the Slovenian youth magazine *Mladina* in June 1983, where, in an article entitled 'Human or Deity' [*Človek ali božanstvo*] the author questioned its meaning and relevance.³¹² In a similar text the same year in the Slovenian daily *Delo* the author concluded that the imagery at the Belgrade stadium represented 'the climax of socialist kitsch'.³¹³ However, this did not mean that there was a uniform attitude among the youth. The 1986 *JUPIO* study included questions on the Youth Day celebration, the forms of which reveal that even official analysts were concerned that these commemorations had lost their power through being considered out of date. The answers revealed discrepancies between the Slovene and the rest of the

³⁰⁹ I am grateful to Professor Dejan Jović for drawing my attention to this.

³¹⁰ Zdenko Antic, 'Yugoslav officials criticize Tito's personality cult', *Radio Free Europe* Background Report 144, 24 June 1983, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

³¹¹ Mladen Babun, 'Dan mladosti 1984: hoćemo teret na svoja leđa', *Polet* 267, 1.6.1984, pp.12-13.

³¹² Igor Mekina and Silvo Zapečnik, 'Somrak štafete' in *Kompendij za bivše in bodoče politike* (Ljubljana: ZSMS, 1989), pp. 105-106.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

Yugoslav youth; yet, at the same time, these showed significant overlaps. Namely, while only 18.8% of the Slovenian respondents declared that 'the celebration is good as it is', 47.2% of the other Yugoslav respondents did so. Almost the same number of respondents agreed that 'There should be some modifications': 30.4% of the young Slovenes and 28.5% of the remaining Yugoslavs. That 'It is outdated and it should be completely changed' thought 17.4% of the Slovenian youth and 8.1% of the Yugoslav, while 22.9% Slovenes versus 5.7% Yugoslavs said that 'We don't need that type of celebrations'. Almost an identical percentage - 10.4% (Slovene) and 10.6% (Yugoslav) - did not have an opinion or were not interested. These statistics point to the emergence of several camps in the debate around the Youth Baton, as well as to the fact that there was not a clear division line between those who argued for its abolishment and those in favour of its preservation. In Slovenia, the division ran along old youth institutional lines: it was the Ljubljana University branch of the LSYY which argued for abolishing the event, while the 'reformist' stance was advanced by the Republic's branch of the LSYY. Although the University branch put forward legitimate arguments concerning the cost of the entire event and its disputed symbolic meaning, the referendum it organised in December 1986 at Ljubljana University had a relatively low turnout of 43%, out of which 92.4% voted against the Youth Baton.³¹⁴ The idea that change was necessary was upheld by almost all and was a central part of the debate within the youth sphere in the middle of the decade. Disagreements revolved around exactly what form that change should take.

Although there was a shared sentiment that the inherited models of youth commemoration had to change, not all branches of the LSYY were equally vocal on the matter. Senad Avdić reflected on the 1987 local Day of Youth celebration in the Bosnian town of Zenica:

I don't know what role I played there – politician, manager, what not. I told [the director of the event] – 'You have to modernise it entirely'. What purpose using bodies for saying yet again that we love comrade Tito? [...] So, I told the director that it is very important that those patriotic songs disappear [...] and, believe it or not, we brought Pankrti in Zenica who sang [he sings] 'Bandiera rossa la trionfera' [...] We also brought Plavi orkestar, Zabranjeno pušenje, and the 'Surrealists' and it was also broadcast live [...] It was equally important for those bands [to take part in the event], as it was important for the youth organisation [...] Until then it was some yuck pop, folk singers that were performing at the youth

³¹⁴ Igor Mekina and Silvo Zapečnik, 'Somrak štafete', p.109.

voluntary camps. I said – why, why some folk singer would get the money instead of Zabranjeno pušenje, Elvis J. Kurtović? [...] We were making fun of the Youth Baton events where for the one thousandth time you had [pop singer] Zdravko Čolić, you know, ‘Godine su prošle pune muka’ [laughs], I mean, ridiculous [...] The whole idea was passé. Bowing to a dead man, that was all stupid... But, apparently it had to take time, it couldn’t happen overnight. Eventually, it resolved itself. Many things were tested [through the youth baton], in the political, social sense. *Mladina*, for instance, was not one, but two steps ahead of what we would do later [...] The Slovenian organisation made a farce, a caricature out of the Baton.

The debate on the traditional celebration of the Youth Day reached its climax in 1987 with the so-called 'poster affair'. This example illustrates the ever growing tensions between the desire to create a more diverse Youth Day and a continuing practise from the centre to preserve a degree of control and unity. Following a rotation principle, it was the turn of the Slovenian LSY to organise the main event, as well as to select a poster and a design for the baton. The winning poster was signed by the *Novi kolektivizem* [New collectivism] graphic design studio (Dejan Knez, Miran Mohar, Darko Pokorn, Roman Uranjek), which was part of the NSK (*Neue Slovenische Kunst*) network. The poster represented a male figure holding the Yugoslav flag in one and a torch-like baton in the other hand (see Annex 3). However, the whole matter did not explode into an affair until 28 February 1987, when the Belgrade daily *Politika* revealed the original precedent of the poster – a 1936 Nazi painting by Richard Klein entitled *The Third Reich*, in which the symbols were merely replaced. Once revealed and announced, it was interpreted that the artists were making an equivalence of Nazism and communism. This caused a heated public debate, becoming the topic which animated the media, the social and the political sphere in the months that followed. Igor Vidmar was on the committee which had the task to select the poster:

They assigned me a place on the board which was to decide about the poster design. The others were designers, architects, artists, etc. I was the only ‘insider’, so to say. I was shown both the final product and the original – the Nazi poster, and it happened right here, in Café Union, because they didn’t have any offices. I sensed that there would be trouble. But, I said: ok. The idea is good, the argumentation is coherent and precise, it’s also theoretically valid, so – hey, who am I now to start raising some fears? But, then, it happened what happened. You know what happened.

L: Was there a consensus?

Yes, everybody was on the side of Laibach, there was no polemic.

The Slovenian LSY found itself under double pressure: both from the Slovenian League of Communists which expected it to condemn the *Novi Kolektivizem* design studio and distance itself from the matter, and from the social movements and the alternative scene which wanted to see it defend the principle of freedom of artistic expression. The Slovenian Youth League took a rather neutral stand and eventually distanced itself from the concept, claiming it was not aware of the original motive, subsequently attracting criticism from all sides.³¹⁵ An internal document reveals the sense of being torn between its role as a formal socio-political organisation and its increasingly diversifying 'base'.³¹⁶ The document stresses that their space for negotiation at federal level was seriously restrained by the 'poster affair'. It also reveals the in-between position of every republican branch of the LSYY, the Slovenian in particular, that had to negotiate both with the federal level and its own republican branches. The document concluded that 'we understand the Baton of Youth as an element of connecting the Yugoslav young and their symbolic expression of commitment to self-management, democracy and progress. A different way of celebrating the Youth Day could be a result of a consensual decision in the conference of the LSYY, a consensus which must be marked by patience and willingness of everyone involved.'³¹⁷

Nonetheless, as Alexei Monroe argues, 'The new designs were a major factor in ZSMS's reinvention of its image and its identification with alternative culture, and the opening up of a generational and cultural conflict in Slovenia.'³¹⁸ The NK design studio issued a *Proclamation!* in the form of a poster, explaining the principles of a political poster and their 'retro method', by claiming that 'the creative processes of reversed perspective, metaphors, hyperboles, time and space warp, unite and link everything that mankind has squeezed from its veins until now. Content and form are only tools which combine themes and symbols into dynamicism, tension, excitement and

³¹⁵ See: Blaž Vurnik, *Med Marksom in punkom*.

³¹⁶ 'Poročilo o štafeti (material za razpravo)', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 387.

³¹⁷ 'Poročilo o štafeti', Archive of Slovenia.

³¹⁸ Alexei Monroe, *Interrogation Machine: Laibach and NSK* (MIT Press, 2005), p.110. ZSMS refers to the League of Socialist Youth of Slovenia.

drama.³¹⁹ The scope of the debate was at that point enlarged to include questions about the undemocratic principles imposed upon artists and the limited freedom of (artistic) expression.³²⁰ However, in February 1988 the public prosecutor of Ljubljana dropped the case against the authors of the poster quoting the notion of artistic expression.³²¹

As it has been pointed above, the Yugoslav youth sphere was not univocal on the issue of the Youth Baton. On the surface, the debate was indeed about the relevance of old myths, the place and role of Tito's figure after his death and the outdated format of an event which started to appear out of pace with contemporary youth trends. However, essentially, the sensitivity and the longevity of the debate were due to the fact that it raised the question of the entire Yugoslav socialist project as it was imagined forty years earlier. Precisely because the event embodied all of the values socialist Yugoslavism stood for - brotherhood and unity, self-management, Titoism, the revolutionary legacy of WW2 - any voice or initiative for its abolishment inevitably inferred a more substantial contestation of the political framework and the essence of the Yugoslav state. The controversial poster was replaced by a new one which featured a green leaf on a red background with a missing, cut out part in the shape of a red star (see Annex 3). In hindsight, the empty, missing red star anticipated the end of the Youth Day celebration and the beginning of the end of Yugoslavia.

The official message delivered every year on the occasion of the Youth day – *Poruka Štafete mladosti* [Message of the Baton of Youth] in 1987 echoed the sense that something is irretrievably lost. It had a requiem-like appeal:

'We are at future's threshold and it depends on us what it will be like. We grew up with the crisis, witnessing its every turn. Our first social experiences after the primer and the partisan stories were the inherited debt, the divisions, the endless lists of the employment agencies [...] From individuals insecure in themselves and in society, we became a generation uncertain of its own future and of the future of the society. Now, when it is needed to defend Yugoslavia, brotherhood and unity, self-management and this Baton of ours, we often feel powerless, stuck in other people's mistakes and in our own doubts. Where are the signposts? We refuse to always repeat that we are strongest when it is the hardest

³¹⁹ 'Plakatna afera', <http://www.slovenskapomlad.si/uploads/e-Plakat%20NK-Razglas.%201987.jpg> (last accessed 28 April 2014).

³²⁰ A letter in support of the group, calling on 'all democratic forces in Yugoslavia' to do everything in their power so that the 'processes of democratisation are not hampered' was signed by many Slovenian intellectuals and published in *Mladina* on 13 March 1987. Available at: <http://www.slovenskapomlad.si/1?id=22>

³²¹ 'Plakatna afera', <http://www.slovenskapomlad.si/1?id=199> (last accessed 27 February 2014).

and thus console ourselves with the past. The victory which we hold dearest is the upcoming one. We want to get involved in history. To support the Revolution means – building it! To be in favour of self-management means – developing it! We cannot afford anymore to be a generation which shrugs its shoulders. We are proud of having our own critical way of re-thinking the socialist world and our self-managing reality. The future won't blame us for that. Do not blame us either – you, who are still hesitating whether to listen to our voice. Are we storming the sky? Of course, the sky is conquered at onset!³²²

Yet, as it has been discussed above, for a significant part of the youth and of the Yugoslav public the event indeed had symbolic weight and still appeared relevant. That same year the mainstream media still reported on the Youth Day celebration in the conventional way, while representatives of the YPA branch of the LSYY were received by the federal secretary of defense Branko Mamula. He congratulated all the soldiers and young officers on their holiday and urged them to make 'Yugoslav socialist patriotism' grow and develop.³²³ For a large portion of the youth which was not directly involved in the debates, it was hard to imagine that the Youth Baton was already nothing more than a museum artifact.

Namely, on 26 January 1988, eight years after the federal Jury for the celebration of 25 May concluded that there was a surprisingly small interest in submitting scenario proposals for the central stadium event, at its meeting in Belgrade, after three rounds of voting, with 83 votes 'for' and 6 'against' the LSYY decided to abolish the classical youth baton relay and lay what some called the 'baton of absurd' to rest. This was a major decision which was (rather unusually for this period) reached consensually, and which above all represented a definite break with a significant part of the socialist Yugoslav heritage and political values. Although the event was most fervently and persistently critiqued by Slovenian youth, it was in fact the regional LSY of Vojvodina which formally submitted the proposal for its abolition in October 1987. Their original initiative was entitled 'Concept for the celebration of the Day of Youth 1988' and foresaw a celebration without a baton relay. According to the established practice, the initiative was then forwarded to all levels of the LSYY for discussion and feedback. The opinions were highly divided, especially in Vojvodina and Croatia, while in Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo and Bosnia-

³²² 'Poruka Štafete mladosti '87', Museum of the History of Yugoslavia, Belgrade (permanent exhibition).

³²³ 'Јединствени симбол', *BORBA*, 25 May 1987.

Herzegovina the youth (or the youth leadership which sent feedback on the proposal, like in the case of Kosovo) was predominantly in favor of preserving the Baton. The LSYY branch in the Army was, perhaps unsurprisingly, the most outspoken defender of the Baton and the most 'orthodox' in its views.³²⁴ On the day of the vote, of the twelve present members of the presidency of the 'conference' of the LSYY, eight were in favor of the Vojvodinian proposal. However, it was the 'conference' and not its presidency which by the 'Statute' of the League was the highest organ allowed to take such decisions. The first two rounds of voting did not reach the required majority of 77 delegates. After 'a long debate full of pathetic calls for unity and demands for the "minority" to join the "majority"',³²⁵ the 'conference' approved the proposal of a Youth Day without a baton and a relay race. The Slovenian delegates already raised the question of the format of the final stadium event, which that year, without the baton, was the last. Although the decision did not reflect a unanimous shared sentiment among the Yugoslav youth, it was seen as necessary in preventing further disagreements, arguments and erosion and denigration of the Baton and what it stood for. There was a sense that it had to be 'saved from ourselves' and that it left an empty space, a need for a search for a new symbol: 'What is the new symbol? Those who claim that we don't have one and that the abolishment of the Baton is a rejection of the last value framework around which there was a quasi-consensus, are right [...] It is difficult to promote this as a BIG AND HISTORICAL DECISION, when it is much closer to a sad necessity'.³²⁶ This turned out to be one of the rare consensually taken major decisions in the realm of youth politics and institutional youth culture. Dejan Jović put it this way:

In essence, it was a huge hassle for the youth organisation, because it had to put up with the organisation of the event. So, the Youth League here did not have many regrets when it all came to an end [...] The Baton and the voluntary work actions were the only two things where the Youth League had to demonstrate certain organisational skills - failure was not allowed. At one moment it all became too complicated and they didn't complain...

Although the majority of my interviewees referred to the Youth Baton celebration in a negative way, the fact remains that a significant part of the youth saw it as an elite decision which was taken without wider consultations.

³²⁴ Borislav Vasić, 'Dosije "Mladosti": Spas od žalosne nužnosti. Štafeta: simbol kojeg više nema', *Mladost* 59, 8.2.-21.2.1988.

³²⁵ Borislav Vasić, 'Dosije "Mladosti": Spas od žalosne nužnosti', p.28.

³²⁶ Ibid.

What everyone agreed on was that the event had to be subject to change, although some did not wish to see it abolished outright. Nataša Sukič (born 1962) was among the founders of the first Slovenian lesbian group/movement. Her testimony conveys the awareness that the old, inherited ritualistic event did no longer make sense. In her account there is also a retrospective reflection that these events nevertheless embodied some positive values which have since been lost:

When you're young and rebellious, you joke about those things. What can I say? In primary school we even took part in a 25 May celebration and we were very proud of our outfit [...] and we were very disappointed that we didn't go to Belgrade so that Tito can see our performance. That's my first memory of it. In high school, naturally, you are critical of all of that, you laugh at it, you rebel, but you would, anyhow, in any system. When I look at it now, I look with nostalgia. Yes, it looks as if one big dictator had his own ritual, but it was really something which was connecting people. The work brigades as well – people were making friends, hanging out together. It was great. And they even managed to do something useful for all of us, for the common good – I don't see what is wrong with that. Solidarity was something normal back then. Today I think people have no clue what solidarity means. The concept of solidarity today is [extinct] like dinosaurs. People don't know what it means theoretically, let alone in practice.

2.3. The specter of Nazism – contention, provocation and the relationship with the past

New, subtle forms of anti-regime critique shaped by generational divides were also emerging within the new music scenes. This section focuses on the re-articulation of the antifascist legacy through certain case-studies which managed to scandalise the Yugoslav public at the time. It is without doubt that one cannot trace a common voice through which these youngsters conveyed their artistic or journalistic practices and sensibilities. Although I would be hesitant to put the heteroglossic youth cultures and politics of the 1980s under the umbrella of a 'youth movement', it is tenable that 'The pan-Yugoslav youth movement's critique was aimed at exactly the structures, ideology and mentality represented by conservatives in the ruling party organisations'.³²⁷

Nowhere was the generational critique more apparent than in artistic products, where a new cohort of artists challenged some of the central aspects of the value system of the first post-war Yugoslav generation. One of the major

³²⁷ V.P. Gagnon, 'Yugoslavia in 1989 and after', p.35.

transgressive trends in the sphere of young artistic production in the 1980s was the attempt to break symbolically with some of the taboos of post-WW2 Yugoslav society. To be more specific, they were questioning the symbols of the state which had been portrayed as sacred and were contesting mainstream memory of Nazism, wartime occupation and German culture. While there were many cases of appropriating the symbols of the state or of socialism – most notably the Yugoslav flag and the hammer and the sickle for artistic/installation purposes³²⁸, reviving the traumas of the Nazi occupation through clear references to German language/culture or the Nazi ideology itself was something which, before the 1980s, had been clearly outside of the boundaries of possible public expression.

Laibach, one of the rare bands which did not come from a capital city, but from the small industrial/mining town of Trbovlje in Slovenia, were the first who managed to destabilise the consensus on the political memory of the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia. In the eyes of the authorities, the band was indeed one of the most controversial. With their name coming from the German name for the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, reminiscent of the German occupation years during WW2, from the very beginning the band was predestined to be perceived as a stunning provocation to the political and the social order. Banned from using the name 'Laibach' and hence forbidden to perform under that name from 1983 until 1987, Laibach was an unprecedented artistic and musical phenomenon in late socialist Yugoslavia, part of the NSK (*Neue Slovenische Kunst*) network.³²⁹ Their use of Nazi and communist/Yugoslav iconography, shocking video performances, political speeches, frequently provoked reactions from the authorities. The principle of 'over-identification'³³⁰ with the prevalent

³²⁸ Sven Stilinović's (born 1956) installation *Flag* from 1985 consisting of densely arranged razor blades, which 'turn the iconography of the most important state symbol into a field of pain'. See: <http://www.avantgarde-museum.com/hr/projects/standstill/umjetnici/1980-1989/4330-Sven-Stilinovic#id-4330/>.

³²⁹ Apart from Laibach, the network was composed of a group of graphic artists Irwin, the Theater of the Sisters of Scipio Nasica and the Red Pilot Cosmokinetic Theater and the design group New Collectivism. The initial core was formed in 1984, with artistic eclecticism and the historical/early Soviet avant-garde as a shared platform. Cross-referencing at Yugoslav level, especially between the Irwin artists and other Yugoslav art scenes included using the works of Dragoljub Raša Todosijević (whose seminal 1977 performance was titled 'Was ist Kunst?') and Goran Đorđević from the Belgrade conceptual art scene of the 1970s.

³³⁰ Alexei Yurchak, 'Mimetic Critique of Ideology: Laibach and Avia', <http://chtodelat.org/b8-newspapers/12-51/mimetic-critique-of-ideology-laibach-and-avia/> (last accessed 25 February, 2014). See also: Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (Verso, 2009).

discourse and political ideology is visible from their 1982 'Ten Edicts of the Convention' which read:

'(1) Laibach works in a team (collective spirit) modelled after industrial production and totalitarianism, which signifies: it is not the individual that speaks, but the organisation. Our work is industrial and our language political...

(3) Every art is subjected to political manipulation [...] except that which speaks with the language of this manipulation itself. To speak with a political expression means to reveal and admit the omnipresence of politics [...] Ideology is the locus of authentic social consciousness.'³³¹

The lifting of the ban, however, was not solely decided by the authorities. In fact, it was the Slovenian LSY that decided to support it and advance an official demand for it at its 12th Congress in 1986. The fact that Laibach resorted to the Youth League and received support from a body which was part of the official institutional political framework yet again throws light on the complex interplay of what was considered to be alternative and institutional. As it has been argued by Monroe, Laibach's aesthetics, like self-management, carries out some sort of demystification of its inherent ideological contradictions, covering ideology with a layer of its own reality. Without the Yugoslav context, Monroe argues, *Laibach* would have surely acquired a very different form.³³² Igor Vidmar worked with Laibach and highlighted the role of the youth organisation in this case:

Laibach was the next big scandal. The youth organisation behaved a bit better, but, still, they were very uncertain about what it meant, they were scared. By the mid-eighties, there was a crisis in Yugoslavia and it was clear that things would be changing... The youth organisation was opening up, they realised there would be some changes and they wanted to be part of that. Basically, quite a bit of careerism and opportunism. However, there were some authentic new, young people who wanted things to liberalise. So, in '86 they supported the legalisation of the use of the Laibach name, which was forbidden after a scandal in Zagreb in '83. But the ban happened in Slovenia, because Laibach were Slovenian, the republics had their jurisdiction and they couldn't be sanctioned in Croatia.

From their establishment in 1980 Laibach assumed an ambiguous reflective and performative standpoint. Their aesthetics escapes precise categorisation, essentially reflecting the relationship between art and politics,

³³¹ Aleš Erjavec, 'Neue Slowenische Kunst', p.147.

³³² Alexei Monroe, 'Laibach: Made in Iugoslávia' in Fernando Oliva and Marcelo Rezende (eds.), *Comunismo da forma* (São Paulo: Alameda Casa Editorial, 2007).

and “rendering audible” of the hidden codes and internal contradictions of a series of artistic, musical, political, linguistic, and historical “regimes”.³³³ What Alexei Yurchak refers to as a ‘mimetic critique of ideology’ seems to be the closest to an accurate label for their work. Indeed, this way of formulating critique implied the use of a ‘secondary discourse in the form of the primary ideological discourse’.³³⁴ As Robert Botteri observed: ‘I always saw them as having the same function as *Mladina* - the opening, the sensitisation of a certain space. They were a mirror of the society, showing things which the society wanted to hide from itself, they revealed the totalitarian image of the society which the society didn’t want to see for itself.’ Yurchak’s notion and Botteri’s observation are both reflected in Laibach’s song ‘Država’ [State] which reproduces official state rhetoric by repeating ‘Oblast je pri nas ljudska’ [Authority here belongs to the people]³³⁵ and also features original excerpts from one of Tito’s most well-known speeches on the importance of brotherhood and unity: ‘We spilt a sea of blood for the brotherhood and unity of our peoples and we are not going to allow anyone to touch, to uproot from inside or to destroy in any way brotherhood and unity’.

Slovenian band Borghesia³³⁶, known for their video art in the 1980s, used similar artistic devices for framing their own version of political art. The title

³³³ Alexei Monroe, *Interrogation Machine: Laibach and NSK* (MIT Press, 2005), p.7.

³³⁴ Aleš Erjavec, ‘Introduction’, p.10.

³³⁵ Laibach was not the only collective resorting to these discursive strategies. The song ‘Maljčiki’ by Belgrade-based New wave band Idoli [Idols] and especially the video for it released in 1981 featured socialist realist iconography, verses in an improvised Russian and a plot which presented an enthusiastic proletarian who is a factory worker. The St. Petersburg band Pop Mekhanika staged concerts in the 1980s dressed as a military band and often passing for an official Soviet orchestra.

The lyrics of ‘State’ by Laibach read:

‘The state is responsible for
 The protecting
 Elevation
 And exploitation of the forest
 The state is responsible for
 The physical education of the people
 Particularly of youth
 In order to raise standards of national health
 Labour
 And defense potentials
 It is becoming more and more lenient
 All freedom is allowed
 Authority
 Here belongs to
 The people!’

³³⁶ They started off as a theatre group in 1980 first under the name ‘Theater Group’ and later as FV 112/15. Some of their productions until the group disbanded in 1983 included: ‘The Big May Show – How Nice It Is to Be Young in Our Country’, ‘Nothing Should Surprise Us’ and ‘Who

video for the VHS cassette 'Tako mladi' [So young] featured marching Nazi soldiers, with excerpts from Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, while many of their videos used excerpts from political speeches, documentary scenes and montage to articulate visually a critique targeting the regime. Their 1983 video entitled 'Socialism' features one phrase - 'Socialism in the world is gradually becoming a prevailing force' - pronounced by an old Yugoslav politician, the endless repetition of which is stretched to its maximal limits bordering absurdity towards the end of the two-minute video.³³⁷ Zemira Alajbegović stressed that Borghesia and Laibach represented two different artistic concepts and approaches, yet she underlined the 'solidarity' which existed among the different factions at the young Slovenian alternative scene when it came to their 'common enemy' embodied in dogmatic socialism:

We all felt a sort of solidarity, because we all had a common enemy, which was that socialist regime we were surrounded by. At that point perhaps it was less repressive, but it was equally boring and omnipresent [...] There were opposing views, we sometimes had conflicts, but there was a sense of general solidarity and we all felt part of the Ljubljana subcultural scene [...]

We could all feel, it was in the air, that the regime was not as repressive anymore, and probably the regime itself no longer believed in all those socialist empty phrases – as passionately as it once did [...]

The [socialist] iconography was very powerful, it was ideal both for theatre and video. We used it a lot, we joked with it, with the partisans and that revolutionary poetry. It was ideal for video art, with those kilometers of recordings and speeches. It's a very powerful iconography. Not all iconography is as well arranged, disciplined and straightforward as the socialist and the communist iconography. So, it was an excellent material to work with (laughs).

The fact that the early punk wave and both Laibach and Borghesia came from Slovenia contributed to a wide-spread popular perception that the most northern republic was a hotbed of revisionist and hence anti-Yugoslav tendencies. However, in early 1987 Yugoslav public and media were overtaken by another youth-related scandal with a Nazi overtone which did not come from Slovenia - the Sarajevo 'Nazi party' at the home of now famous Serbian writer Isidora Bjelica (born 1967). Organised as the host's birthday party in December 1986, it gathered people who were considered to be part of the young aspiring cultural elite of Sarajevo. Some of the 19-20-year-olds wore Nazi uniforms and finger

Turned Out the Light?' See: Neven Korda et al. *FV – Alternative Scene of the Eighties* (Ljubljana: International Centre of Graphic Arts, 2008).

³³⁷ Video available at: <http://www.ljudmila.org/scca/ip/zanka/angl/Sub.html>

food decorated with mayonnaise swastikas was served.³³⁸ The LC Sarajevo city branch accused the youngsters of siding with the Slovenian youth which requested abolishment of the Youth Day celebration: 'In that (fascistic) decor the idea of sending written support to the group of the university youth in Ljubljana was pondered, [the group] which organised the incident-provoking event demanding the abolishment of Tito's Baton and the introduction of civilian military service. They even talked about organising public demonstrations in Sarajevo as a sign of support for this "initiative"'.³³⁹ Amid a wave of accusations, part of the youth press claimed that

'For those [generations] who come, the swastika does not have the same meaning like for the previous generations, i.e. it has a lesser significance. If it wasn't banned and seen as a taboo, the swastika would have no useful value for the young angry individual who is protesting and breaking the bans. Thus, he is not using it as a symbol which in itself reflects and affirms a political idea, but as a sign of moving away from the societal [trends of] symbolisation, as a signifier of a simple act of refusal'.³⁴⁰

Unlike Laibach's acts which were public, this one-off incident which included the display of Nazi symbols took place in a private space, but nonetheless sparked an attack by the mainstream media and a series of acts of public discrediting of the involved, which was vigorously condemned in the youth press. One journalist posed the rhetorical question of how long these youngsters will have to repeat 'that unfortunate [phrase]: "I am not a fascist"'.³⁴¹ What is striking is the link with the Slovenian youth which was implied by the Party city branch as a means to launch an attack on the teenagers by associating them with the 'counter-revolutionary' Slovenes. More importantly, this hints at a connection, a sense of camaraderie and shared ideas and values which is overlooked in historical accounts which tend to focus on the Slovenian context as the liberal northern republic and leave out the southern Yugoslav regions as bastions of dogmatic Party rule. The majority of my interviewees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia mentioned that they held the Slovenian youth initiatives in high regard and looked up to them with a sense of admiration, trying to copy or transplant some of those ideas. Senad Pećanin recalled the link with the Slovenian youth circles around *Mladina* and NSK in his testimony:

³³⁸ Senad Avdić, 'Krakasti od kečapa', *Polet* 360, 30.01.1987.

³³⁹ David Tasić, '(Relativno) dugi marš', *Polet* 360, p.6.

³⁴⁰ Jasna Babić, 'Đavolji dodir', *Polet* 360, 30.01.1987, p.7.

³⁴¹ David Tasić, '(Relativno) dugi marš'.

At the time of the debates about the Youth Baton, I was a secretary of the 'University Conference' of the Youth League in Sarajevo [...] I also organised a public roundtable discussion in CDA. I invited [Robert] Botteri, the editor of *Mladina*, Tone Anderlič was president of the youth organisation, Igor Vidmar from *Neue Slovenische Kunst*. We came up with an occasion - 4 April, the Day of Students. Actually 4 April was the day of students of Belgrade University, it has nothing to do with Sarajevo, but nonetheless, I spread the word that it's the Student Day, no one asked me anything. We put up posters around and the City Committee of the Communist League jumped out and insisted we cancel the event. We refused. I said – 'No! You can ban it, but I'll announce that it was banned.' They demanded that we cancel it ourselves. I refused, so on the day the hall was packed. I was still a young, inexperienced journalist and I was looking around for one of the more senior colleagues to chair the event – no one accepted, no one dared. I found that bizarre, I couldn't understand why, so I thought – ok, I'll do it. That was in 1988. There were many people from the state security agency inside... The themes were the Youth Baton, multi-party system, the slogan 'Slovenija, moja dežela' [Slovenia, my homeland], freedom of expression, article 133, civil military service. Then, Saša Hemon [writer Aleksandar Hemon] and I made an interview with [Igor] Vidmar, we broadcast it along with some Laibach music and that was a reason for me and Hemon to get a three-month suspension from the Radio, while Boro lost some 30% per cent from his salary...

It is apparent that there existed a consensus among the urban, educated activist youth all over Yugoslavia in that they tended to view the official rituals, the frozen historical narratives of the antifascist struggle, or Youth Baton celebrations as superfluous or as unnecessary exaggerations. Although their acts of critiquing the form and the unchanged discourse used to publicly endorse Yugoslav socialism were for the most part interpreted as direct attacks on the core values of the state, their alleged anti-Yugoslavism was often a media construct or a result of the often exaggerated fears of an older generation.

New music trends in the 1980s also sparked fear, controversy and debate in broader society over the development of contemporary youth. Punk not only managed to scandalise Yugoslav society; it also incited lengthy debates which transcended the initial narrow focus of punk music as a cultural form and grew to incorporate other key issues considered to be sensitive and off-limits. The late 1970s saw the emergence of the new punk youth sub-culture, initially completely outside of the institutional youth sphere, then evolving on the margins and eventually becoming a legitimate fragment in the late socialist mosaic of youth cultures. From an exclusively sub-cultural phenomenon in the late 1970s, punk quickly reached the agendas of meetings at the LSYY. When, in 1982 at the 11th federal congress of the LSYY in

Belgrade a member of the Slovene delegation reacted against the negative connotations associated with punk that arose during a discussion within the commission for culture, members of the Yugoslav Army delegation reacted. A young Army officer's reaction to the statement that punk was not against the system, but against the anomalies of the system, summed up one of the most prominent lines of division among youth: 'I am obliged, in the name of the coal miners' children, who do not have the time to eat because they dig coal for our new wavers, punkers and other idlers to keep warm; we applauded a discussion which is out of place. Please, let's be politically conscious and united since we made an oath to our beloved comrade Tito, that we will never, under no circumstances abandon his path. I am not educated enough to express myself in foreign words, but I only know that I would give my life for brotherhood and unity, for the defense and development of our beloved non-aligned socialist Yugoslavia'.³⁴²

The exchange provides an excellent illustration of the type of political and lifestyle gaps and fragmentations which existed between people of the same generation and members of the same youth organisation.³⁴³ This also exposes a core aspect of this generation's media and cultural elite's self-perception and identity: an urban outlook, i.e. strong identification with one of the bigger Yugoslav cities.³⁴⁴

Originally coined to describe punk in the British context, the assertion that 'Punk was a response to the power of social consent'³⁴⁵ seems highly applicable in the Yugoslav context, as institutional/socialist Yugoslavism began to be contested at the porous boundaries between institutional and alternative youth politics and culture. Srđan Gojković-Gile connected the socio-political atmosphere of the initial post-Tito period with the emergence of punk and new

³⁴² '11 kongres ZSM Jugoslavije' in *Punk je bil prej: 25 let punka pod Slovenci* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2002), p.169.

³⁴³ The 1986 *JUPIO* research observed 'a certain cultural de-homogenisation of the Yugoslav youth' (Vlasta Ilišin, 'Interesiranja i slobodno vrijeme mladih, p.129), even 'polarisation' (Mirjana Ule, 'Odnos omladine prema mladosti', p.113) among those who generally had a positive attitude towards the adults, the society, their future and the future of the state, versus those who held critical, even negative outlook.

³⁴⁴ Vjekoslav Perica, a US-based scholar of Croatian origin in an interview self-identified as belonging to the 'post-partisan generation', i.e. the 'urban generation' which is now best remembered through the rock music and the sport of the 70s and the 80s. See: 'Vjekoslav Perica: Za mene je Tuđmanova država bila druga endehazija', <http://abrasmedia.info/content/vjekoslav-perica-za-mene-je-tu%C4%91manova-dr%C5%BEava-bila-druga-endehezija> (last accessed 27 February 2014).

³⁴⁵ David Pottie, 'The Politics of Meaning in Punk Rock', *Problématique* 3 (1993), 1-21, p.15.

wave and curiously related the reality of their well-off middle class background with 'the fake prosperity in socialist Yugoslavia':

Yes, [the music] was directed against the system, but only in the sense that it was about some kids who wanted a different way of life which of course did not coincide with that self-managing socialism... That socio-political moment is very interesting. We as a band were formed during that vacuum period, when the level of concentration of some sensors decreased, some people got tired... It was the end of Tito's rule and his life and they probably dealt with other more serious problems than with us. So, we managed to slip through a crack... And when that crack had split to such an extent (laughs), it couldn't be mended [...] I think it was a philosophy of some kids who were actually the children of that middle class which existed in the fake prosperity in socialist Yugoslavia, in the period of the sixties and the seventies when we were growing up.

As it has been observed, 'Punk obscenities [...] were justified as testing the boundaries of what society defined as socially acceptable. In this sense punk was deemed unusually political for the rock genre in terms of its lyric themes, song structures, subcultural style and aesthetic of boredom in mass society'.³⁴⁶

This echoes Gregor Tomc's way of explaining 'the political' in their music and overall outlook:

Absolutely, we [in Pankrti] were political. Using politics was the easiest way to shock. When in 1977 you say 'Comrades, we don't believe you' – I mean, nobody said that before. Of course, we were doing this partly because we were bored by these people, no one was taking seriously the Communist Party. For me at the time it was like looking at Indian chieftains, Indian tribes. They were completely irrelevant. So, you don't talk seriously about that. But, you use them to provoke, you really want to annoy people. That's the easiest way to do it. If you sing about love, nobody is going to notice that. I think we were political in another sense, not in the sense that we had ideas about changing society – we had no ideas about that. But in the sense that we said – we don't care about this. I'm not interested in your socialist self-management. Do it for yourself, I'm doing my own thing. That was a very political thing to say, because, again, no one said that before. Everyone was pretending to be part of the system. We said – we don't want to be part of the system. So, this was very political. When I was writing – I'm not anti-Nazi, I'm not anti-anti-Nazi, I'm not anything, people didn't understand that. 'What is this, is he a Nazi?' I was just saying I don't care about any ideology, you know. And this was provocative. I think people understood it well, this was a political statement. But it was not a political statement in the sense that we had any positive goals. To be a punk, you had to be indifferent towards everything. That was the attitude – I don't give a f*** about anything. But, saying that in a communist country was political.

It was rightfully argued that 'the political relevance and impact of art [...] was also dependent on the political critique it engendered, and even on its

³⁴⁶ David Pottie, 'The Politics of Meaning in Punk Rock', p.6.

prohibition'.³⁴⁷ Although initially perceived and portrayed in the media as an insult to socialist morality, as recalled in Tomc's testimony, punk rock bands did not have an explicit political agenda. The desire to shock,³⁴⁸ to appear different through wit and irony and to attempt to destabilise and hence question the overpowering 'social consent' was what shaped the polysemic poetics of late Yugoslav youth culture. In addition, the importance of material conditions and socio-political context for the appearance of the new music scenes in late socialist Yugoslavia cannot be over-emphasised. Like in the British context where 'cheap rent, good book stores, squats and record shops'³⁴⁹ and 'the long decline of the 1970s'³⁵⁰ played an important role in the proliferation of punk, similar social circumstances shaped the new Yugoslav music scenes. Srđan Gojković – Gile referred to this aspect when talking about the accessibility of the youth venues in his testimony:

At the beginning everything was for free, all the bands were playing for free [...] That is why that nest was formed where we as kids could idle away without having to spend money – you would show up at SKC, you could stay there for hours and no one would chase you if you didn't buy a drink. People who were similar to you came there and different ideas started to boil.

Punk rock bands eventually became part of mainstream youth culture, or what was referred to as 'subversive pop art'.³⁵¹ Although their records appeared and sold in significant quantities and received public recognition – both in the youth press and by awards established by the youth organisation, their music was often labeled as 'šund', i.e. kitsch or of little or no real artistic value. A commission for music records in each republic's Committee for Education and Culture made the selections, which in practical terms meant that the records labeled as 'šund' were not exempt of VAT, thus being more expensive and consequently selling less.

One event that took place immediately after the death of Tito and managed to scandalise the Yugoslav public at the beginning of the new decade

³⁴⁷ Aleš Erjavec, 'Introduction' in *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, p.47.

³⁴⁸ 'We ridiculed politics because that was the easiest way to shock. [...] To the new leftists this did not appear ambitious enough. They wanted to reform socialism. They claimed we sold ourselves. If only... Our attitude towards politics was best expressed by the band S.D.A.: 'Communism, Ha, Ha, Ha, Socialism, Blah, Blah, Blah'. Rade Dragojević, 'Jugu nisam osjećao kao tamnicu naroda nego tamnicu pojedinaca' (Interview with Gregor Tomc), *Novosti* 605, <http://www.novosti.com/2011/07/jugu-nisam-osjecao-kao-tamnicu-naroda-nego-kao-tamnicu-pojedinaca/> (last accessed 28 December, 2011).

³⁴⁹ David Pottie, 'The Politics of Meaning in Punk Rock', p.10.

³⁵⁰ Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming* (Faber & Faber, 2005), p.110.

³⁵¹ David Pottie, 'The Politics of Meaning in Punk Rock', p.10.

was the so-called 'Nazi-punk affair'. One year after the death of Tito, in a state of general insecurity and apprehension of hostile activities coming from outside and from within, the Yugoslav state did not hesitate to suppress any sign of 'counter-revolutionary', anti-socialist or anti-Yugoslav activity. The Nazi-punk affair, designated as a manifestation of 'political paranoia',³⁵² helped release out of the Yugoslav Pandora Box what were considered the two principal historical demons – nationalism and fascism. In the media and in the Slovene LC heated debates were sparked by the trial and imprisonment of members of the '4R' band, whose name allegedly alluded to the Fourth Reich.³⁵³ Eventually, the debates moved within the framework of the LSY and popular youth culture, up until the 1986 'fascist birthday party' and the 1987 'Poster Affair' scandal which again reinvigorated wider public debates on youth and Nazism.

Gregor Tomc reiterated the existence of a 'moral crisis' and a 'moral panic' on the part of society which was prone to perceive the new youth alternative scene around punk not as a real, but rather as 'a symbolic threat'. Interestingly, he reflected on the relative impotence of the 'federal level' and the importance of 'personal taste':

It was completely fabricated. There was absolutely nothing to it. It was a typical example of a moral crisis [...] And people later went to court and were found innocent. But, anyway, this moral panic was picked up by the media, blown out of proportions and after that I think the punk scene in Ljubljana was never the same. Up until then we always had problems, but somehow you had the feeling that the state was acting towards the punk subculture as a symbolic threat. They weren't really taking us as a real threat to the political system. After that, people had serious problems. And it all had to do with the fact that the Party leader of Slovenia France Popit decided that there was enough of punk. Before that it was really tolerated. After that you still had concerts, but it was very hard to rediscover that

³⁵² Gregor Tomc, 'Škandal v rdečem baru' in *Punk je bil prej: 25 let punka pod Slovenci* (Ljubljana: Cankrajeva založba, 2002), p.86.

³⁵³ The debate was initiated by a newspaper article in a Ljubljana daily entitled 'Kdo riše kljukaste križe?' [Who draws swastikas?]. The article carried a photograph of an English punk adorned with Nazi insignia and the author of the article Zlatko Šetinc was attacked by the Slovene youth media and members of the alternative scene for drawing a link between punk, on the one hand, and juvenile delinquency and Nazism, on the other. In his letter to the newspaper, Igor Vidmar wrote at length about British punk, the 'Anti-Nazi League' and the 'Rock Against Racism' campaign. Igor Vidmar, 'Dead Kennedys: "Kdor je fašist, ni punk – kdor je punk, ni fašist"', *Nedeljski dnevnik*, 29.11.1981 in *Punk pod Slovenci*, pp.235-237.

In December 1981 the Slovenian republican secretary for interior affairs Tomaž Ertl told the Belgrade press that 'Above all it is necessary to stress that we think and we know that not all punks are neo-Nazis. It is really only about one small group, in fact individuals.' Stevan Zec, 'Uspon i pad Četvrtog rajha', *Ilustrovaná politika*, 1.12.1981, in *Punk pod Slovenci*, pp.237-240. The three members of the 4R band were held in custody for three months and two were accused on the basis of article 133. The trial, however, did not commence until 1984 and the charges against the two were dropped due to lack of evidence. See: Gregor Tomc, 'Spori in spopadi druge Slovenije' in *Punk pod Slovenci*, pp.9-27.

spontaneity – the places where you could meet, associate freely, and so on. People started to be afraid, because you would never know when the police would pick you up. [...] All the graffiti writers were arrested, for example. It was like a police state at that time. So, from then on, the whole scene became more... sort of artistic, you know. There was not so much of that spontaneity and the fun.

The federal level was very dissatisfied with how the Slovenian level was dealing with it. I don't know about this, but there had to be pressures. But, the pressure came from the Slovenian level, because the federal level could do nothing in Slovenia. It was Popit. Basically, Popit was a big fan of our country music, you know. So, he hated rock 'n' roll. And he especially hated punk (laughs). So, that had something to do with it as well. I think also it was a question of personal taste.³⁵⁴

In response to the events, in April 1981 the Slovenian LSY organised a roundtable discussion entitled 'Some actual questions concerning the cultural politics of the LSYS and the youth activity in the sphere of culture'. Young participants from the youth music circles such as 'Radio Študent' journalists Igor Vidmar and Samo Hribar argued for a change in the public attitude towards punk rock, i.e. demanding that it is accepted as part of popular culture and not as an excess or a political project. Pursuing repressive measures against the punk rock youth, they argued, would expose the weaknesses of the youth organisation and the entire society, which in that way 'a priori launches a conflict with its own members using the power argument'.³⁵⁵ The debate which lasted more or less until 1984 mainly revolved around the way in which punk was presented in the mainstream media – as a cradle of anarchism and Nazism, which was strongly refuted by people who were closely related with the scene and were attached to the Youth League through its publications, magazines, cultural centers, etc. Igor Vidmar in his radio show *Rock Fronta* in November 1981 problematised the public stigmatisation of punk and attempted to defend it publicly by saying that his colleagues in Radio Student and himself have on so many occasions thus far emphasised the anti-Nazi and anti-racist content of

³⁵⁴ Rajko Muršič argues that 'punks had established their own scene exactly along the boundary which sharply separated their own and the previous generations' musical preferences [...] They were not confronting "totalitarian" socialism per se, but the "old guard", without offering any alternative political programme, except to reject the state power and to advocate human rights.' Rajko Muršič, 'Punk Anthropology: From a Study of a Local Slovene Alternative Rock Scene towards Partisan Scholarship' in Laszlo Kürti and Peter Skalnik (eds.), *Postsocialist Europe: anthropological perspectives from home*, pp.188-206.

³⁵⁵ 'Kulturni plenum ZSMS' in *Punk pod Slovenci*, pp. 190-193.

In 1982 Igor Vidmar spent 30 days in prison for wearing 'Nazi punks fuck off' and 'Crazy governments' badges. In 1984 Radio Študent organized another public debate entitled 'Fascism at the Ljubljana alternative scene'. Zoran Medved, 'Slovenačka alternativna scena – fašizam u Jugoslaviji', *NON-List mladih Srbije* 498, 11.11.1984, p.37.

British punk, while in the lyrics of the domestic bands or the behavior of the fans there is no trace of Nazism or nationalism. Although by the end of 1981 a consensus was reached within the Slovenian Youth League that punk rock was a legitimate stream of youth popular music and that the sensationalist disqualifying media reports linking it to nationalism were unfounded, throughout the decade young musicians continued to encounter obstacles mostly related to lyrics that were seen as problematic. Although the new music scenes around punk rock could certainly not qualify as youth mainstream/pop culture, they enjoyed striking visibility and presence in the media which significantly surpassed their popularity and numerical relevance. Nevertheless, having the youth media as their allies and as platforms where they could promote their work and concert activity, they left a significant imprint on 1980s' youth culture.

The reiteration of socialist slogans appeared anachronistic to a generation which witnessed their pure rhetorical, performative use and hence used them to challenge the official socialist discourse through various cultural forms. With the mainstream media and the political establishment often on the opposing side, the young resorted to acts of (self) justification, distancing themselves from an alleged espousal of the Nazi ideology. Pečanin's testimony in this sense reads as a summary:

What mattered for us was the sense of freedom [osječaj slobode]. We took great pleasure in smashing whatever was considered to be a taboo. Making jokes about Tito, everything that was forbidden – we really enjoyed that. Everything that was official politics, communism... But not in the way that we detested communism or we had some big ideology behind what we were doing – we just felt the need to do it and we considered freedom of speech as the most normal thing: someone's right to express their opinion which doesn't represent a call to violence, it has nothing to do with fascism, hatred, nationalism – why not? It seemed perfectly normal to us, generationally speaking [generacijski gledano]. We could in no way understand or accept that it was not allowed to speak. That was our basic motif and we enjoyed it.

Throughout the decade the youth sphere witnessed a number of debates concerning the future of the inherited socialist framework of values and commemorative practices and the ways Tito's legacy should be carried forward following his death. The critique which generally stemmed from the youth cultural realm sought to re-think the performative and the discursive dimension through which the different levels of the Yugoslav post-war consensus were

manifested. Although frequently reproached for an alleged appropriation of far right ideologies, the actors themselves defended their 'acts' as manifestations of freedom of expression. Although openly targeting the form of the inherited youth rituals and the socialist rhetoric which began to appear anachronistic in the context of a multi-level crisis, the different cultural acts cannot be reduced to a straightforward contestation of Yugoslav socialism. Rather, they challenged the norms and discourse of an older generation, essentially seeking to re-invent socialism and youth culture through new cultural tendencies and through the state's youth institutions.

3. 'The phantom of liberty' – new youth activism

*Gdanjsk osamdesete, kad je jesen rekla ne
Gdanjsk osamdesete, držali smo palčeve
Rudari, studenti, brodogradilište svi mi*

*Gdanjsk osamdesete uzazvrele tvornice
Dvaput se ne šalju tenkovi na radnike
Nisu se usudili pobijediti smo svi mi
Poljska u mome srcu...³⁵⁶*

'Poljska u mome srcu', Azra (1981)

The League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia was not simply an arena where a younger generation critiqued an older order and value system - it was also a space where new political languages and forms of youth activism could develop. This indeed stands in contrast to the institutional youth sphere in many other European socialist countries, where these organisations no longer generated new forms of political expression and where environmentalist or peace groups emerged outside of the formal youth structures.³⁵⁷ In Yugoslavia, many youth actors still believed in the capacity of the institutional youth sphere to be an incubator for new types of politics, and sought to shape a specifically Yugoslav youth political realm where new 'social movements' emerging from the bottom up could be integrated into the LSYY. This echoed the findings of the 1980 UNESCO report on youth about 'an issue-oriented style of youth action'.³⁵⁸ It also revealed, as I shall explore below, a tendency to look to Western Europe for new forms of politics in evolving 'social movements', rather than within the Eastern Bloc. Illustratively, Slovenian sociologist Tomaž Mastnak (born 1953) argued that

'We should not try to repeat what Solidarity tried – and failed – to do. We should try to invent new forms of democratic activity appropriate to our particular situation... Inventing the single issue-oriented political campaigns common in Western European democracies would be a very good start... we lack a democratic tradition and popularly shared

³⁵⁶ 'Gdansk 1980, when the autumn said no
Gdansk 1980, we kept our fingers crossed
Miners, students, shipyard, all of us
Gdansk 1980, boiling factories
You don't send twice tanks against the workers
They didn't dare, we won, all of us
Poland in my heart...'

From the song 'Poland in my heart'.

³⁵⁷ See: Padraic Kenny, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton University Press, 2003).

³⁵⁸ *Youth Prospects in the 1980s*, p.23.

memories of a strong and independent civil society. Issue-oriented campaigns – involving women, opponents of nuclear power, gays, pacifists and others – are crucial for filling this gap, and for producing a democratic culture in Yugoslavia'.³⁵⁹

This chapter addresses how new areas for political expression opened up around issues of peace, anti-militarism, environmentalism/nuclear disarmament and sexuality and how the League of Socialist Youth brought these issues into its orbit. Linking this with a generational sense of 'Europeanness', the chapter maps the emergence of social and political issues which older generations had not previously defined as arenas of political contestation. Focusing on rather divergent issues such as military service and sexuality that illustrate both the broadening out of political language in late socialism, and the ways in which they nested within the LSYY, the chapter explores how a new generation shifted the boundaries of the political and argues that late socialist Yugoslav society witnessed the proliferation of a youth arena of civil initiatives and activist citizenship which, although fragmented and often discordant, eventually found shelter and support within parts of the existing youth infrastructure. Although they carried the seeds of the processes of socio-political reformation and democratisation which were already underway, for the most part they were significantly embedded within the dominant political/socialist rhetoric - in particular within Kardelj's notion of the 'pluralism of self-managing interests'.³⁶⁰ For example, in the 1986 official congress materials, the LSYY argued that it was necessary to accommodate the new movements and their demands within the youth organisation: 'It is

³⁵⁹ 'Yugoslavia' in *From Below – Independent Peace and Environmental Movements in Eastern Europe and the USSR* (Helsinki Watch Report 1987), p.186.

Not only Solidarity and the events in Poland provoked a widespread media attention, they were also the subject of several publications, among which: Vladimir Lay (ed.), *Društveni pokreti i politički sistem u Poljskoj 1956-1981* (Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka, 1985); Biserka Rajčić (ed.), *Poljsko pitanje: članci, eseji, polemike* (Beograd: Radionica SIC, 1985); Dana Mesner and Stane Andolšek, *Solidarnost v poljski krizi: 1980-1982* (Ljubljana: Republiška konferenca ZSMS/Univerzitetna konferenca ZSMS, 1985).

For an analysis of the reaction to Solidarity in Western Europe, see: Idesbald Goddeeris, *Solidarity with Solidarity: Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980-1982* (Lexington Books, 2010).

³⁶⁰ Edvard Kardelj, one of Yugoslavia's principal theoreticians and legalists. In his book *Roads of Development of the Socialist Self-Management Political System [Pravci razvoja političkog sistema socijalističkog samoupravljanja]* he argued that '[...] this does not mean that we are or should be hostile to every form of democratic political pluralism. On the contrary, because of the multitude of interests in society arising from class, economic, political, social, and other considerations in the life, work, and creativity of people, it is clear that there can be neither democracy nor human freedom if man is not able to enjoy free expression of his interests and his ideas, of his aspirations and creative views.' As cited in: Slobodan Stanković, *The End of the Tito Era: Yugoslavia's Dilemmas* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), p.33.

impossible to realise the affirmation of the idea of pluralism and democratic “youth politics” [...] without the acknowledgement of the right of independent existence of the social movements [...] the LSY should create space for the work of the feminist, the peace, the ecological movements, as well as for the other progressive movements among the youth’.³⁶¹ Moreover, the 1986 draft documents for the federal congress stated that ‘If the youth organisation does not take up the challenge which the new social movements are offering, it will suffer grave consequences, it will close itself up and renounce the essential struggle to become mass and front organisation.’³⁶² Hashim Rexhepi (born 1958), President of the LSYY upheld this vision the following year in an interview given for the daily *Borba* by stressing that ‘We want the [new social] movements to become an integral part of the LSY. After all, socialism, too, is a movement’.³⁶³ In that same ‘congress’ year, the Slovenian LSY at its 12th (so-called Krško) congress, put forward slogans such as: ‘Let’s legalise the new social movements’, ‘Let’s democratise political culture’, ‘For an independent and responsible Youth League’, ‘For workers’ democracy’, ‘For pluralism of self-managing interests’, ‘For the word not to be an offense’.³⁶⁴

The goal of this chapter is not to account for the broader frame of Yugoslav socialist civil society, nor for the entirety of ‘acts of citizenship’ related to the new social movements. Its aim is to offer a closer observation of the process of the nesting of a range of youth ‘acts’ within the wide framework of the LSYY, turning parts of the youth infrastructure into ‘new sites of struggle’ and constantly testing and stretching its boundaries. Some of the issues raised by youth activists combined and echoed both the ‘inner’, that is Yugoslav-specific contestations of the socio-political framework and ‘outer’ challenges resulting from developments at international level, i.e. demands and initiatives which did not possess a specifically Yugoslav outlook, but had a trans-national or global identity. These included youth initiatives regarding different political and institutional matters such as the abolishment of the death penalty³⁶⁵, de-

³⁶¹ *Predlog dokumenti dvanaestog kongresa Saveza socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije, Beograd 12-14 juna 1986* (Beograd: Konferencija SSOJ/Službeni list SFRJ, 1986), p.93.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ Mirko Mlakar, ‘SSO ipak nije siv’, *Borba*, 17-18.01.1987.

³⁶⁴ ‘12 kongres ZSMS, Krško’, *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 383.

³⁶⁵ In 1984 a petition for the abolition of the death penalty signed by 866 individuals was submitted to the federal assembly and published in *Mladina*. 39 death sentences were carried

militarisation, conscientious objection, anti-nuclear and ecological claims, feminism and the rights of sexual minorities.

The chapter will address several of a range of issues where these new forms of activism were articulated. The first part maps what was referred to in the Introduction as the second generational pillar, which relates to this generation's own distinct sense of Europeanness which mirrored in many ways Yugoslavia's peculiar geo-political positioning in the context of the Cold War. The second part reflects on the ways the myth of (gender) equality was challenged by youth activists within a social ambience of proliferation of various feminist, lesbian and gay groups within the Youth League and its media outposts. The third part engages with the narratives of anti-militarism³⁶⁶, the conscientious objection initiatives and petitions that all the while challenging one of the major pillars of Yugoslav socialism – the Yugoslav People's Army and its stature in the political and public life, found ways to reach institutional forums and incite public debates.

3.1. Facing east, looking west – new transnational identities

The new social movements that were to challenge the official political values/language within the LSYY framed their issue-oriented acts in response to the specific Yugoslav context. Nevertheless, many of them in fact were inspired by similar campaigns and groups from outside the country. The late socialist period, in particular after 1975 and the Helsinki Accords where Yugoslavia played a prominent role, saw the establishment of a trans-national European network of actors and groups voicing various demands concerning civil liberties, environmental/anti-nuclear anxieties in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster.³⁶⁷ As it was pointed above, the Yugoslav urban youth attentively followed the events in Poland at the beginning of the decade, and in particular those from Slovenia forged links with some of the Central/Eastern

out in Yugoslavia between 1970 and 1979. See: *Yugoslavia: Prisoners of Conscience* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1985), p.87.

³⁶⁶ See also: Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (eds.), *Resisting the Evil: [Post] Yugoslav Anti-War Contention* (Baden-Baden: NOMOS, 2012).

³⁶⁷ For a trans-national approach in studying the grass-root social movements in Central Europe, see: Gerd-Rainer Horn and Padraic Kenny (eds.), *Transnational moments of change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); Padraic Kenny, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*; David Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (London/New York: Zed Books, 2012).

European groups which converged around issue-oriented campaigns such as conscientious objection and nuclear disarmament.³⁶⁸

The relative openness of Yugoslavia, alongside its noted presence at the international sports' arena and its remarkable cultural scene which fed into a sense of superiority at the European music/cultural scene, contributed to the sense of internationalism/Europeanness of this generation, i.e. widened the horizon of expectations, references and lines of identification. There has been little work on what Europeanness meant in socialist Yugoslavia, or indeed how individuals understood Europe and Europeanness and how their lived experiences were moulded into a wider European frame. The latter of the two major youth surveys from the 1980s revealed certain attitudes of the young towards the European Community of the time - in particular in the context of support for a potential accession. For instance, 59% chose the sense of European belonging as primary, second in rank under the sense of Yugoslav belonging ranked as primary by 73% of the respondents,³⁶⁹ while 50% chose their republican belonging and 44% their regional one. Asked about the changes in the economic system, the youth in this last survey declared preferences for a market economy ('like the one in the West'), private property and an accession to the European Economic Community: for 64% of the respondents joining the European common market was a preferential option. Yet, pinning down the sense of Europeanness could be best achieved 'from below' through oral history testimonies. Hence, the individual recollections analysed below offer a useful perspective on this generation's understanding of transnationalism, internationalism and Europeanness.

Not strictly belonging to the Eastern European world under Soviet domination, and having the opportunity to travel freely across the continent and interact both with the East and the West, was crucial in instilling a different sense of transnational/European belonging. As it was observed in the late 1980s, 'The right to travel is defined as a fundamental attribute of being a Yugoslav by many Yugoslavs, especially, but not only, in Slovenia and

³⁶⁸ Marko Hren maintained links with the War Resisters' International office in London. See: Marko Hren, 'The Slovenian Peace Movement: An Insider's Account' in Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (eds.), *Resisting the Evil: [Post] Yugoslav Anti-War Contention*, pp.63-83.

³⁶⁹ Srećko Mihailović, et al. *Deca krize*, p.282.

Croatia.³⁷⁰ The geopolitical positioning of Yugoslavia had significant impact on the way the youth conceptualised and articulated its self-identification and sense of belonging in wider European/international terms. Vlatko Stefanovski's testimony underlined this awareness of being neither East nor West, but also taking a certain pride in the fact that Yugoslavia was not part of the Eastern Bloc. Indeed, 'Yugoslavia's peculiar position with regard to the Cold War divide in Europe had thus allowed Western-supported retrospective self-positionings of superiority towards those who had been considered "really Eastern" Europeans (i.e. citizens of Warsaw Pact states).³⁷¹ A sense of superiority towards the countries of the Eastern Bloc is common place in many personal narratives. In this case it serves as an example of how it worked to feed into the sense of dignity, pride and relative Yugoslav patriotism:

As young people we were very, very lucky to live precisely in-between two principles, two blocs... and we were the 'best of two worlds', I would say, because we had a pretty stable social system which, I think that, after all, functioned very well. We enjoyed enough freedom, as well as civil and human rights. By human rights I understand the right to food, the right to healthcare and the right to education. All social strata enjoyed these rights... Each and every one could reach high academic status and titles. The more that period becomes distant, the more I look upon it with a justified nostalgia [оправдана носталгија], as I look now how the Western world crumbles down, and the Eastern world is wondering [...]

In 1988 we went on a one month tour to the USSR. It was an exhausting tour because there was not enough food, there were no restaurants. There were only some little shops with vodka and sausages or cigarettes in front of which there was a one hundred meter line... When we came back I kissed the runaway, if you can believe it [...]

I had a cultural shock when I first arrived in London after a three-day train journey, I arrived at Victoria Station. And I saw this Mecca of rock 'n' roll... I was totally blown away when I first saw London. I was going to concerts every night, to the clubs – to the iconic Marquee Club, the 100 Club, London Astoria – every night there were excellent concerts by top musicians and top bands... On the other hand, there were charter flights from Belgrade to London almost every day and we could fly pretty cheap to London, we used to buy equipment, guitars, amplifiers, clothes. We used to come back home inspired by what we had seen, we lived our dream.

This excerpt paints a contrasting image where a young Yugoslav is fully mobile on the international scene of divided Europe, welcomed to perform and travel

³⁷⁰ William Zimmerman, *Open borders, nonalignment, and the political evolution of Yugoslavia*, p.70.

³⁷¹ Stef Jansen, 'After the Red Passport: Towards an Anthropology of the Everyday Geopolitics of Entrapment in the EU's 'Immediate Outside'', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15/4 (2009), 815–832, p.828.

both in the East and the West, but thoroughly enchanted only by the West – which eventually led to a rather wide-spread tendency which allowed them to ‘see themselves as the West to the Soviet bloc’s East’.³⁷² In Stefanovski’s testimony London is *the* topos of reference for this generation, as most of the interviewees who spoke about travelling, or indeed about their work/activism did not fail to mention London or Britain.

Neven Korda (born 1956) was a member of the band Borghesia and the FV group. Echoing Mastnak, he reflected on another level of distancing from the acts of dissidence and opposition in the countries of the Eastern Bloc:

For me, that rebellion of theirs against the Soviet Union, and the way I saw Lech Walesa – it was reactionary... I said to myself – Well, if I have to choose, then the Soviet Union is better (laughs) than their type of Christianity, 19th-century type of traditionalism [...] The Czechs, too. They were more... sort of bourgeois. We didn’t cherish that vision of going back to some type of bourgeois democracy. We looked forward.

An excerpt from Slovenian writer Aleš Debeljak’s book links the narratives of distinct Yugoslav political and cultural identity, cosmopolitanism and mobility in the West to a new generational consciousness:

Throughout the time I was growing up - the late 1970s and early '80s — I shared with my peers the easy feeling that we didn't have it bad at all. We were different from our counterparts in the Soviet empire's East European satellites by way of the nonaligned politics of Tito, the great guru of the "third way," who discovered the trick of playing West and East off each other so that both sides would generously contribute money to build his Potemkin villages of self-management. But those were issues of high diplomacy that for a long time we neither understood nor cared about. Our interests lay elsewhere.

Most of all, we wanted to know in what European town Oscar Peterson would be playing next summer and when John Fowles's newest book would hit the bookstores in nearby Trieste, Vienna, or Munich, if not Ljubljana. We traveled widely and unhindered, both within Yugoslavia and abroad. We made pilgrimages to jazz and rock concerts as far afield as Moers, Florence, and Montreux. We believed that mass culture gave us more in common with youth in London than with our parents. In their novels and literary reviews, our older colleagues had told unsettling stories of suffering in the clutches of Titoism, of the communist regime's brutality, but we understood these then as a far-removed allegory that no longer defined us in any significant way.³⁷³

³⁷² Wendy Bracewell, ‘Adventures in the Marketplace: Yugoslav Travel Writing and Tourism in the 1950s-1960s’ in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (eds.), *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (Cornell University Press, 2006), p.264.

³⁷³ Aleš Debeljak, *Twilight of the Idols: Recollections of a Lost Yugoslavia* (White Pine Press, 1994).

There is a cynical distancing at three levels in this excerpt: from 'our counterparts in the Soviet empire's East European satellites', from 'our parents' and from the older generations' denunciatory stories about Titoism and communism. At the same time, there is a tension between the acknowledgement (and an implicit appraisal) of the fruits of Yugoslav 'high diplomacy' on the one hand and the remark referring to the 'Potemkin villages of self-management', on the other. The ability to travel 'widely and unhindered' is yet again emphasised, along with the proximity in cultural preferences, tastes and worldviews with 'the youth in London'.

Igor Vidmar, although older, was part of the punk movement and the vibrant Slovenian youth alternative scene in the 1980s. To him, as someone who worked for a long time in Radio Študent, the link with Britain was a reciprocal one:

We in Radio Študent were subscribed to New Musical Express, Melody Maker Sounds, and we travelled there - myself for the first time in 1974, then in 1979, etc... It was also the other way around – the first article on Slovenian punk was in Melody Maker by Chris Bohn in 1980 or so.

For a different segment of the youth, however, Western Europe embodied another set of values and opportunities. For those who became active in the peace or sexual minorities groups, visits to Western European countries appeared to be a decisive experience. Marko Hren (born 1959) was at the helm of the peace movement in Slovenia in the 1980s. He self-identifies as a pacifist whose initial interest lay with the New Age movement and he claims he drew his ethical code from the Buddhist teachings on non-violence: 'My inspiration for engagement was radical pacifism and my motivation was fuelled by international pacifist movements – War Resisters International, London-based. I met them sometime in 1974 in Switzerland.'³⁷⁴

Nataša Sukič was among the founders of the lesbian activist core in Slovenia and is still actively involved in the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA Europe). Her testimony reflects the

³⁷⁴ In Switzerland, youth groups with similar demands for de-militarisation, civil service, cuts in the military budget and non-violent forms of resistance managed to gather the minimum of 100,000 signatures required to secure a popular referendum on the issue of the abolition of the Swiss Army in April 1987. The initiative was rejected by popular vote both in 1987 and 1989. On the parallels between the Swiss and the Yugoslav defense policies, see: Pierre Maurer, 'Defence and Foreign Policy: Switzerland and Yugoslavia Compared' in Marko Milivojević, John B. Allcock and Pierre Maurer (eds.), *Yugoslavia's Security Dilemmas: Armed Forces, National Defence and Foreign Policy* (Oxford/New York: Berg Publishers, 1988), pp.97-125.

importance of the trans-national aspect, i.e. the exposure to similar events unfolding in Western European countries, as well as the pan-Yugoslav, anti-nationalist dimension of the Yugoslav feminist movement:

Everything started in the eighties within the framework of the new social movements and alternative cultures, which were quite prominent in Ljubljana. They were all - how shall I put it? – interconnected and had an impact on our own [lesbian] activism. Especially the video art and Borghesia influenced us significantly, because they questioned the media representations of sexuality and for the first time sexuality began to gravitate in the social space as a political question... Borghesia's videos were totally radical for that time and they certainly had an influence on us. Later came the MAGNUS [gay] festivals, the feminist movement, the peace movement – it was very vibrant and it was only a matter of time for the lesbian movement to get established. First I was part of the feminist group and later when I went to Holland and for the first time saw a pride parade that left a huge impression on me. I thought – if they can have it all, why couldn't we? So, I met Suzana Tratnik and together we founded the group [LL – Lesbian Lilith] – that's how it all began.

Western Europe was the space which the small lesbian activist core appropriated as a reference point and a source of inspiration for their activism and where they travelled and liaised with fellow activists. Before the foundation of LL, they cooperated closely with the group of gay activists 'Magnus' and had contacts and meetings with activists from the Vienna-based 'Homosexuelle Initiative' (HOSI). LL became part of ILGA as of 1987, got involved with the International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS) and took part in many international events that year: from a semi-legal gathering in Budapest in November under ILGA's patronage, to the 'Gay and Lesbian Pride' in the Netherlands in June, and at the 'Lesbenwoche' in Berlin in October. In August 1988, after having become an independent 'lesbian section LL' under the umbrella of ŠKUC, they organized an 'international lesbian camp' on the Croatian island of Rab which gathered activists from both Yugoslavia and Western Europe (Italy, Germany, England, Ireland, Austria, Portugal, the Netherlands).³⁷⁵

As the socio-political situation started to worsen in the late 1980s, one could observe a rise of a self-ironical, self-critical discourse and a bitterness caused by the onslaught of nationalist euphoria and its contribution to the increasingly negative perceptions of Yugoslavia abroad. For example, in

³⁷⁵ Different individual activists have pointed to different European countries/cities as decisive in their socialisation as activists. For Mojca Dobnikar it was the encounter with Berlin that was decisive. See: 'Mojca Dobnikar: Ne bom dala miru, dokler ne bom imela Berlina v Ljubljani' in Suzana Tratnik and Nataša S. Segan (eds.), *Zbornik o lezbičnem gibanju na Slovenskem 1984-1995* (Ljubljana: ŠKUC, 1995), pp.100-104.

October 1988 the London reporter for *Polet*, the youth weekly magazine of the LSY of Croatia, reported among other things on an article in *The Guardian* which described an atmosphere in Yugoslavia where foreign journalists were being attacked (quoting an incident of a Reuters journalist being beaten up by the police at a rally in Titograd, Montenegro's capital) and concluded: 'Yugoslavia is these days a typical example of Balkan backwardness, of repressed, basic nationalist instincts which furthermore corrode the otherwise corroded union - at a time when Europe is forging economic and other alliances in order to make its population richer, more content, happier...'³⁷⁶ As Yugoslavia drifted away from a peaceful solution of its political crisis at the end of the decade, a growing sense of alienation from the European space and the European values was detectable in the youth media. This was then carried forward in political and media discourse to the post-Yugoslav era - most prominently in Slovenia and Croatia - as a way of distancing from the Yugoslav space and the Yugoslav past.³⁷⁷

The possibilities of mobility across the European continent and the experiences of travel both in the East and in the West put this generation of young Yugoslavs in a unique position of exposure to the two sides of the Cold War. A sense of solidarity with the East emerged at crucial points such as the military dictatorship in Poland, for instance; yet, it was coupled with a sense of superiority toward the Eastern Bloc countries and with a sense of belonging to the cultural realm of Western Europe. Indeed, it was non-state socialist Europe which acted as a source of inspiration both with regard to culture and new forms of activism, as social movements from the West were crucial in shaping expectations of what could be possible under Yugoslav socialism.

3.2. Gender (in)equality and sexuality

Yugoslav feminism and the subsequent gay and lesbian movement of the 1980s were significantly impacted by Western European theoretical and activist developments. Predominantly composed of intellectuals and hence well

³⁷⁶ Gordana Milijašević, 'Domovina sa naslovne strane – što ovih dana o Jugoslaviji govore i pišu Englezi?', *Polet* 396, 14.10.1988, p.13.

³⁷⁷ Slovenia was said to have 'asserted its Central European identity forcefully' when it rejected an invitation to the Balkan Summit in Crete in November 1997. See: Geoffrey Swain and Nigel Swain, *Eastern Europe Since 1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.243.

acquainted with international academic feminism³⁷⁸, an older cohort of Yugoslav feminists who were involved in the public debates with the political elites in the 1970s and organised the international conference 'Comrade woman' at the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade in 1978,³⁷⁹ formed the core of a pan-Yugoslav network of feminists whose theoretical and subsequent activist engagements played a decisive role in the intellectual and academic identities of the younger generation. Although most of the concrete problems which preoccupied the feminists and the young gay and lesbian activists were primarily rooted within the Yugoslav reality, they were for the most part eclectic and international in their theoretical expertise and their gaze was almost permanently directed beyond narrow national confines. For instance, some of the participants at the first Yugoslav meeting of feminists [Prvi jugoslovenski susret feministkinja] that took place in 1987 in Ljubljana insisted on the importance of the notion of solidarity and quoted positive examples of dealing with family rape and violence from Peru, Nicaragua, Britain and Canada.³⁸⁰ In a similar vein, the demands of the Magnus section of gay activists from Ljubljana presented at the festival of the new social movements in the Slovenian town of Nova Gorica in August 1986 reflect comparable manifestations of transnational solidarity: not only did they demand, among other things, the removal of the legal provisions which criminalised homosexuality in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo,³⁸¹ they also insisted that the Yugoslav

³⁷⁸ Dubravka Zarkov, 'Feminism and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia: On the Politics of Gender and Ethnicity', *Social Development Issues* 24/3 (2002), 59-68.

³⁷⁹ In October 1978, the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade hosted the international conference entitled 'Comrade Woman: The Woman's Question: A new Approach?' [*Drugarica žena. Žensko pitanje: novi pristup?*], which sought to explore the issue of inequality between men and women and challenge the myth of gender equality in socialist self-management. The attendance of feminists from France, Italy, Britain, West Germany, Poland and Hungary made it a unique initiative of second-wave feminism in Eastern Europe. See: Chiara Bonfiglioli, "'Social equality is not enough, we want pleasure!': Italian feminists in Belgrade for the 1978 "Comrade woman" conference', *ProFemina* (2011), pp.116-122.

³⁸⁰ Staša Zajović at al. 'Ženske akcije sad i ovde', *Student* 25-26, 25.12.1987, p.8.

³⁸¹ Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and Vojvodina decriminalised homosexual relationships in 1977. The different republican penal codes had different wordings and age-limits – for instance, in Slovenia the age of 14 was taken as the minimum age of consent, while in Croatia it was 18. See: Dean Vuletić, 'Gay i lezbijska povijest Hrvatske od Drugog svjetskog rata do 1990', *Gordogan* 1/45 (2003), 104-123.

For comparison, homosexuality in England was decriminalised by the Sexual Offences Act 1967 (both men had to have attained the age of 21), while in Scotland it was decriminalised in 1980 and in Northern Ireland in 1982.

In the realm of popular culture, Croatian rock band Prljavo kazalište [Dirty theater] released the first gay-themed song 'Some boys' [*Neki dječaci*] in 1979, followed by Belgrade New wave band Idoli [Idols] in 1980 and their widely popular song 'I rarely see you with girls' [*Retko te viđam sa devojkama*]. Serbian pop rock artist Oliver Mandić introduced the drag look/cross-dressing

government lodged a note of protest with the governments of states which discriminate and imprison homosexuals, such as Romania, the USSR, Cuba and Iran.³⁸²

With the exception of the women's groups within the sociological associations of Croatia and Slovenia [*'Sekcija Žena i društvo pri Sociološkom društvu Hrvatske'* and *'Ženska sekcija pri Sociološkom društvu Slovenije'*], all the other groups which gathered feminist and gay activists found an institutional shelter within the youth infrastructure: the women's section 'Lilith' formed at the Student Cultural Centre in Ljubljana (ŠKUC) in April 1985 hosted the lesbian group 'LL' [*Lezbična Lilif*] until it became an independent group under ŠKUC's umbrella in 1988; the Belgrade-based feminist group 'Women and society' [*Žene i društvo*] which sprung from a series of open discussion events at the Student Cultural Centre (SKC) in 1982 continued to hold its meetings there; while the feminist group 'Trešnjevka' was founded in 1987 as Division for women's social activity at the League of Socialist Youth municipal Zagreb branch 'Trešnjevka' [*Sekcija za društvenu aktivnost žena OK SSO Trešnjevka*]. It was the women's group within the youth organisation in Trešnjevka that initiated the first telephone line for women and children victims of violence. The institutional umbrella of the youth sphere provided activists with a sense of distance from the realm of official politics: 'We do not want to define ourselves a priori theoretically or institutionally, what we want is a free space for development'.³⁸³ Some of the texts reveal the ambiguous relationship which existed with the institutions of the system – at the same time denouncing them and their approach to the 'unprivileged groups' and victims of violence and suggesting different ways of improving women's and children's positions through cooperating with the institutions of the state: 'The cooperation with the relevant institutions (in social work, health, justice, legislative, police, etc.) is particularly important and therefore we will dedicate special attention to it'.³⁸⁴ Although they did not receive institutional funding and the work was done by

through his show on Belgrade Radio-Television 'Belgrade at night', which won the 1981 Rose d'Or award for entertainment television. Croatian band Xenia released the lesbian-themed song 'My girl-friend' in 1983, while Slovenian Borghesia experimented with explicit references to homosexuality in their video art.

³⁸² 'Festival Magnus', <http://www.slovenskapomlad.si/1?id=168> (last accessed 28 February 2014).

³⁸³ Jasenka Kodrnja and Katarina Vidović, 'SOS telefon za žene i djecu žrtve nasilja', *Žena* 46 (1988), 68-77, p.69.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.74.

volunteers, the line was supported in terms of space and logistics by the LSY branch of Trešnjevka municipality and the city of Zagreb and the activists insisted on the principle of solidarity, which was normally upheld as one of the official postulates of Yugoslav self-management:

‘The institutions protect the patriarchal order by trying to make the individual adjust to his/her role. The institutions have this attitude towards all individuals who experience problems (the unemployed, the ill, those receiving social benefits...) [...] The SOS telephone line is something different: it is autonomous from institutional influence and possesses its own *raison d’être* [...] Institutional changes are indispensable, above all in the preliminary contacts of the officials with the victims of violence with the aim of preventing further victimisation. We are thinking about cooperation with the SIZ [Self-managing interest community] for employment...’³⁸⁵

This not only sheds light on the complex relationship which existed between the activists who had found shelter in a de facto institutional space and the official politics and institutions of the state, it also demonstrates that although their activism embodied something that was novel and alternative when compared to the official political discourse and established social practices, having chosen a semi-institutional setting they inevitably had to engage with the state and challenge it on these issues from within. These new groups themselves later acted as infrastructural umbrellas. Thus, in 1989 ‘Lila’ - the first lesbian initiative in Croatia was launched as a subgroup of the Trešnjevka Women’s section, ‘encouraged by the organising of lesbians worldwide, particularly in Slovenia’.³⁸⁶ Most of its members were aged between 25 and 35 and the gay and lesbian activists in Slovenia were looked upon and often recalled as a positive example to be followed. As was observed in a youth press article, ‘Progressive ideas were always initially encountering fertile ground in Slovenia [...] Today, when we all publicly declare in favour of democracy and pluralism, the Lila Initiative should present a form of concrete action that will receive understanding and support on the part of society.’³⁸⁷

The trend of accommodating new youth initiatives and groups within the framework of the LSYY became especially pronounced after 1986, when the League first tacitly and later openly endorsed the inclusion of these new groups within the institutional youth sphere. In her testimony, Sukič underlined the importance of the student and the youth organisation, the ‘huge support’ the

³⁸⁵ Jasenka Kodrnja and Katarina Vidović, ‘SOS telefon’, pp. 76-77.

³⁸⁶ Sanja Sagasta, ‘State of the Art: Lesbian Movements in Former Yugoslavia’, *The European Journal of Women’s Studies* 8/3 (2001), 357-372.

³⁸⁷ Nataša Lalić, ‘Totalno relativni spol’, *Polet* 422, 26.1.1990, p.30.

activists received and the opening up and liberalisation, which, in her view, does not comply with the post-Yugoslav arguments that seek to stress the dictatorial nature of the system:

ŠKUC had a very strong tradition since 1972 and a very progressive student scene and it came as natural that it provided space for the new social movements – the feminist, the gay and later the lesbian [...] I could not think of any more natural space for all of them than ŠKUC. We cooperated a lot with the peace movement, with the League of Socialist Youth of Slovenia, who gave us huge support and I think they even issued a declaration saying they support the politicisation of the homosexual question [...] I say, those were really open times. Today I can't believe how people can get easily manipulated [...] in terms of saying that those were terrible times, that it was a one-party dictatorship, I don't know what... What dictatorship, please? OK, maybe it was in the immediate post-war period, but from the seventies onwards – certainly it wasn't. I mean... and in the eighties – of course not!

The existence of a rather open youth infrastructure that appeared welcoming to new forms of art and activism was also crucial for the development of a conflated feminist/lesbian circle of activists. Indeed, it was the 'peripheral' parts of the youth infrastructure, such as the youth press and the cultural venues that contributed the most to the raising of their visibility in the public sphere. For instance, while LL still acted as part of the feminist/women's group Lilith, a range of their activities were hosted by ŠKUC in 1986 - from presentations on the lesbian scenes in Berlin and London to exhibitions and performances such as Austrian Krista Beinstein's exhibition *Obszöne Frauen* [Obscene Women]. Later, ŠKUC Gallery would also host the 'Week of lesbian film'³⁸⁸ in December 1988. A crucial moment for the lesbian movement not only in Slovenia, but also in Yugoslavia was the appearance of a special annex to the youth weekly *Mladina* in October 1987 entitled 'Ljubimo ženske' [We love women/Let's love women], which featured anthropological and psychological articles on homosexuality, alongside the programmatic goals of the International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS), a call from Amnesty International for the reporting of cases of imprisonment based on sexual orientation, an excerpt from the book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and the 'public inauguration' (or what some of the activists referred to as 'the coming out') of the LL group. It outlined their program and invited those interested to get in touch via the group's official address and

³⁸⁸ The festival of gay and lesbian film began in 1984 and became a traditional annual event, with the exception of 1987 when it was banned after a launch of media allegations that it was in fact an international congress of homosexuals. The full list of films - predominantly from Western Europe and the USA, is available at: <http://www.ljudmila.org/sigrd/fqjf/20/20let.php>

telephone number. Speaking as a representative of the women activists from Belgrade at the first Yugoslav meeting of feminists in Ljubljana, Lepa Mlađenović spoke about her excitement upon seeing the *Mladina* supplement: 'When we saw the supplement in *Mladina*, which we didn't know was being prepared, we were very impressed. Of course, the coming into existence of the first lesbian group in Yugoslavia for us is a historical event which we celebrate [...] What some of us [in Belgrade] dreamed of and wished for was realised by our comrades from Ljubljana and we were really impressed/enthused.'³⁸⁹

From all the new social movements which found nesting ground within the youth infrastructure, the feminist and lesbian movements were the ones which had framed their activism within a Yugoslav framework, beyond the confines of the federal units. Referring to Yugoslav feminism³⁹⁰ of the 1980s as 'a small beacon of opposition to nationalism', Jill Benderly rightly argued that 'Womens' solidarity above and beyond national identity made feminism a fairly unique social movement in the period when most other movements had, to varying degrees, become nationalized by 1991'.³⁹¹ Sukič's testimony lends legitimacy to this argument. Although the Slovenian gay/lesbian scene was the most prominent and recognisable in Yugoslavia, they remained open for cooperation and forging of trans-republican ties:

Ours was the first lesbian group in Eastern Europe, not only in Yugoslavia. We established connections in the Yugoslav context through the feminist movement, through Lepa Mlađenović, for example. The first Yugoslav feminist festival took place in Ljubljana. During the festival Suzana and I presented this initiative. Soon afterwards, there was a similar lesbian-gay initiative in Croatia. We were always in communication with the rest of the Yugoslav space... Even today we are well connected, recently maybe even more.

Hence, Ljubljana seemed as a logical choice for a host city of the first Yugoslav meeting of feminists that took place in December 1987. The conclusions of the meeting reflect the initial conflation of the lesbian and the feminist cause:

'We, the women who gathered at the first Yugoslav meeting of feminists that took place in Ljubljana from 11-13 December 1987, conclude:

³⁸⁹ 'Predstavitev ženskih skupin v Ljubljani' in Suzana Tratnik and Nataša S. Segan (eds.), *Zbornik o lezbičnem gibanju na Slovenskem 1984-1995* (Ljubljana: ŠKUC, 1995), p.29.

³⁹⁰ A conference entitled 'The social position of women and the development of family in self-managing socialist society' was organised by the Communist Party between the 18th and 20th of March 1976. Having provoked a polemic debate between the party hard-liners and the feminists, it is considered as the feminist 'coming out' in Yugoslavia.

³⁹¹ Dubravka Zarkov, 'Feminism and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia'.

- That all feminist initiatives and groups in Yugoslavia are legitimate and legal.
- That we call upon women to join the existing feminist groups or to establish their own.
- That violence against women is widely spread in our country: marital and extra-marital rape, physical abuse of women and children, sexual blackmailing and many more. We agreed that we will work on organised help and self-help for the women victims of violence through the S.O.S. telephone lines, counseling, shelters, etc. We demand that the relevant institutions join these actions because so far they haven't responded adequately to this problem.
- We demand that [...] lesbianism becomes publicly visible; we invite all lesbians to establish their own groups throughout Yugoslavia; we intend to organise the first Yugoslav lesbian festival. We demand a constitutional amendment that will guarantee the equality of all women and men regardless of their sexual orientation. [...]
- The Yugoslav feminist meetings become one of the modes of our common actions and exchange.³⁹²

One of the issues raised at the Ljubljana Yugoslav feminist meeting was that of elitism. This example is illustrative of the Yugoslav-specific traits of some of the debates. Lydia Sklevicky (born 1952), a feminist from Zagreb, recounted an event where a lesbian couple of highly educated and socially well-established lesbian friends – a poet and a historian of art – ‘who could afford to carry the stigma of lesbianism’ because ‘they were in a way part of the social elite’, did not show solidarity for a lesbian from a less privileged background who worked as a typist. She raised the question of whether they as feminist activists have managed to raise awareness about the class question: ‘We are not reaching to other women who are less privileged and who do not have enough free time to be raising awareness about their problems.’³⁹³ This demonstrates a certain degree of self-awareness about the actual degree of ‘elitism’ among the feminist activists which, after all, was distinct from the perceived elitism of those women who worked for the official women’s institution - the ‘Conference for the social activity of women’ [*Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena*] within the Socialist Alliance of Working People.

Nevertheless, socialist theory and in this case the issue of class, were important in forging activist identities. As ‘benevolent dissidents’³⁹⁴ in late

³⁹² Lepa Mlađenović, et al. ‘Ženske akcije sad i ovde’, *Student* 25-26, 25.12.1987, p.9.

³⁹³ ‘Predstavitev ženskih skupin v Ljubljani’ in Suzana Tratnik and Nataša S. Segan (eds.), *Zbornik o lezbičnem gibanju na Slovenskem 1984-1995* (Ljubljana: ŠKUC, 1995), p. 30.

³⁹⁴ Arguably, ‘Since the state was not the primary addressee of their demands, because it enabled the institutionalisation of equality, feminists did not question the state apparatus. Socialist system, on the other hand, promised to work towards the full emancipation of the human being, and feminists saw themselves rather as the allies than the foes of that cause [...] A self-managing socialist state was necessary, but not sufficient for the full emancipation of the

socialism, they were involved in debates over socialist theory and practice, recognising that the legal framework (family law, the right to abortion, etc.)³⁹⁵ provided women with full emancipation, but which in reality did not amount to full equality. Indeed, 'The feminist movement in Yugoslavia did not, of course, speak of overthrowing socialism, but it did speak of the need to overthrow patriarchy and of the failure of socialism to do so.'³⁹⁶ Patriarchy was seen to embody not only the causes for the unequal treatment of women, but also of all other groups, alternative lifestyles and individuals who were discriminated by virtue of being different: 'What feminism is against is patriarchy and its system of values based on violence and disrespect for human rights, it is against all who sustain that system regardless of their gender [...] Homosexuality is an alternative lifestyle which is equally valid and legitimate as heterosexuality [...] Patriarchy does not allow any alternative...'³⁹⁷

Theoretically eclectic and international in their outlook, feminist and lesbian/gay activism was nevertheless significantly defined by its rootedness in the Yugoslav context. Institutionally sheltered by parts of the Youth League, these groups and initiatives gained visibility and voice through the youth press and the youth cultural venues. This position allowed them to distance themselves from the sphere of official politics and forge alternative identities and demands; yet, it also provided them with enough leverage to channel their critique more effectively and challenge the state from within.

3.3. Peace and anti-militarism

As in many parts of socialist Europe and the developed world, the 1980s saw the emergence, or in some cases, the re-invigoration of peace and anti-

human being, regardless of its gender.' See: Adrijana Zaharijević, 'Being an Activist: feminist citizenship through transformations of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav citizenship regimes', *CITSEE Working Paper Series 2013/28*.

³⁹⁵ Žarana Papić quotes the right to education, the right to work, the right to divorce and the right to abortion as 'essential women's human rights' which women enjoyed under socialism. She argues that by granting these rights, the male-dominated patriarchal socialist order worked actually to silence and disempower women. See: Žarana Papić, 'Bivša muškost i ženskost bivših građana bivše Jugoslavije' in Zaharijević, A., Duhaček D. and Ivanović, Z. (eds.) *Žarana Papić. Tekstovi 1977-2002* (Beograd: Centar za studije roda i politike, Rekonstrukcija ženski fond i Žene u crnom, 2012).

³⁹⁶ 'Feminism in Yugoslavia' in Sabrina P. Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Consequences of the Great Transformation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p.226.

³⁹⁷ Slađana Marković, 'Feminizam – alternative ili ne', *Student 25-26*, 25.12.1987, p.8.

militarist activism. Yugoslavia was no exception: here, these initiatives mainly focused on conscientious objection/civilian service, although other issues such as the public control of the Army and arms sales abroad were also addressed. What set Yugoslavia apart, especially compared to other state socialist countries, was the fact that the Youth League was still seen by a majority of activists as the forum for articulating these demands. Moreover, these new debates, especially those that concerned conscientious objection, used the language of Yugoslav socialism. For example, documents from the 1980s show that the initiators of the conscientious objection initiative were still prepared to couch their activism in the language of socialist self-management (see below), convinced as they were in the capacity for state institutions – who might respond to such language – to be the carriers of change. They tried to demonstrate that conscientious objection was part of a democratic society, that it is connected with Marx's understanding of human society and human freedom and argued that such a position does not stand in opposition to the concept of 'general people's defense and social self-protection' [*opštenarodna odbrana i društvena samozaštita*].³⁹⁸

The 1980 UNESCO report on the youth foresaw trends in peace and anti-nuclear/environmental activism, claiming that 'They [the young] protest against threats to the environment and against so-called progress [...] They also are troubled by the resources and knowledge squandered on a highly destructive arms race. This ecological awareness is of an utmost importance [...] the crucial factor of ecological issues is not properly speaking ecological [...] so much as political'.³⁹⁹ Indeed, anti-nuclear/environmental activism became especially prominent in Yugoslavia in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster.⁴⁰⁰ As it was noted at the time, 'Yugoslavia is the only East European state nation where protests after Chernobyl have been continuously massive [...] Yugoslavia's peace and ecology protest is probably the best example of the

³⁹⁸ On the organisation of the Yugoslav defense system – the YPA, as well as the 'Territorial Defense', see: Marko Milivojević, John B. Allcock and Pierre Maurer (eds.), *Yugoslavia's Security Dilemmas: Armed Forces, National Defence and Foreign Policy* (Oxford/New York: Berg Publishers, 1988); Zvezdan Marković, *Jugoslovska ljudska armada (1945-1991)* (Ljubljana: Založba Defensor, 2007).

³⁹⁹ *Youth Prospects*, p.36.

⁴⁰⁰ The debate revolved around issues of cost, environmental damage, and prospective divisions of the country into Western and Eastern 'nuclear spheres'. On some of these debates, see: Slobodan Stankovic, 'Nuclear Energy: A Political Pandora's Box', *Radio Free Europe Situation Report*, 27 March 1986, Open Society Archive (digital archive); Maurizio Olenik, 'Zelena ZSMS' in *Kompandij za bivše in bodoče politike*, pp.125-142.

way in which independent protest is infused into existing officially-established organisations or agencies, in the process making them less dependent on the state'.⁴⁰¹ In the youth realm, the 1986 federal youth congress was the platform where nuclear power and the issue of civilian military service became the subjects of vigorous debate. While both the (anti) nuclear and the military service debate were significantly informed by similar initiatives and developments in Western Europe and in the Eastern Bloc,⁴⁰² they had specificities conditioned by the Yugoslav context. The congress of the LSYY had a specific session dedicated to the new social movements and it was said that 'this is a time when new social actors appear on the social and the political scene [...] which are embodiment of a critique of the classical social movements and political institutions'.⁴⁰³ Despite the numerous disagreements, the congress accepted the initiative to ask for a more precise formulation of the contentious article 133 and almost unanimously upheld the anti-nuclear argument⁴⁰⁴, enhanced by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster that took place in April that year. The congress adopted a resolution demanding moratorium on the international tenders for nuclear technology Yugoslavia had initiated, termination of all activities for construction of nuclear plants and public presentation of what had been invested thus far.⁴⁰⁵ Accompanied by the delegates' applause, Žarko Bokanović, one of the congress delegates, even handed out a bunch of anti-nuclear badges to the congress guests seated in the first row, among who was the president of the Party Presidium Vidoje Žarković. After the Yugoslav federal

⁴⁰¹ 'Yugoslavia' in *From Below*, pp. 191-193.

⁴⁰² In the academic sphere, a Croatian university professor called for re-examination and a reversal of the decision for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Prevlaka, Croatia, quoting a range of international – American and Western European scholars and sources that landed credibility to the anti-nuclear argument. Inge Perko-Šeparović, 'Alternativni interesi', *Politička misao* XXIII/1 (1986), 90-100.

⁴⁰³ Marijan Grakalić, 'Kako se dogodio kongres omladine Jugoslavije', *Polet* 352, 20.6.1986, p.6.

⁴⁰⁴ The anti-nuclear sentiment was not a novel thing. In the late 1970s, parts of the Yugoslav music scene formulated a creative response to the global concerns related to nuclear threats and the Cold War. For instance, the band *Atomska Skloništa* [Nuclear Shelter] in the cover song of their 1978 album *Ne cvikaj, generacija* sang: 'Što te panika hvata/Neće biti, neće biti trećeg svjetskog rata/Nećemo valjda biti mi ta nesretna generacija/Na kojoj će se izvršiti velika posljednja racija' [Why are you caught up in panic/There won't be a third world war/Hopefully we won't be that unlucky generation/That will suffer the last big raid]. Similar concerns were espoused by the early 1980s British punk scene, where groups from the second wave of punk gave proliferation to concerns of the youth ranging from police brutality, conscription and unemployment, to a looming nuclear crisis. As Worley notes, 'between 1980 and 1984, countless punk songs gave vent to rage at the prospect of war and/or revelled in the gory detail of the nuclear aftermath'. Matthew Worley, 'One Nation Under the Bomb: The Cold War and British Punk to 1984', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 5/2 (2011), 65-83, p.77.

⁴⁰⁵ Maurizio Olenik, 'Zelena ZSMS' in *Kompendij za bivše in bodoče politike*, p.127.

government had declared support for a moratorium on the construction of nuclear power plants in 1987, in June 1989 the Yugoslav federal assembly passed a law banning future constructions of nuclear power plants or facilities for processing or storing nuclear waste.⁴⁰⁶ At the end of 1989, the anti-nuclear movement was rightfully labelled 'the last all-Yugoslav movement.'⁴⁰⁷

One of the new groups which followed a vaguely defined 'green' politics and upheld the demands of the Slovenian peace groups was 'Svarun' from Zagreb. Dejan Jović recalled the difficulties they faced while trying to incorporate them under the institutional umbrella of the LSYY:

'Svarun' from Zagreb was the first group of greens constituted in Croatia, a group which gathered the peace and the green movements. They wanted to join the League of Socialist Youth, but, of course, the dogmatic elements in the youth organisation said – 'No way'. But I was very much in favour of that. I said – 'Excellent, if we are a pluralistic organisation, let's welcome them'. I was in the minority in that respect, but they found an open door at the city level, in the youth organisation in Zagreb, they were allowed to use some space and were closely working with the student organisation and *Studentski List*.

More importantly, it was not only activist youth who used the institutional youth sphere for channeling their initiatives and demands.⁴⁰⁸ The LSYY was the realm where the professional young army officers and the recruits had a chance to interact with the 'ordinary' youth and the representatives of the new social movements, i.e. with those who began to question the setup of the military sphere in the country. Milan Lišanin (born 1960) was a YPA officer who was schooled at the Sarajevo military high school and began his military career in 1979 in Postojna, Slovenia. He took part in the 1986 LSYY congress, where most of the amendments and proposals regarding conscientious objection put forward by the delegates from the Slovenian LSY caused fierce debates and a consensus could not be reached. As Lišanin recalled:

As an active member of the youth at the time I participated at the last, twelfth congress of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia in Belgrade in 198... I have the documents, I can check [...] There it was already obvious that there are different camps [...] As far as I remember, it was Slovenia which was sticking out and all the delegates who were discussing... but you could already see that something needed to be defended. At that point I could not even conceive of the idea that what

⁴⁰⁶ 'Yugoslavia nuclear chronology', *Nuclear Threat Initiative*,

<http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/yugoslavia_nuclear.pdf?_id=1316466791>

⁴⁰⁷ Maurizio Olenik, 'Zelena ZSMS' in *Kompendij za bivše in bodoče politike*, p.130.

⁴⁰⁸ Studies of the 'peace movement' in the 1980s have been done before, mainly in Slovenia. See: Blaž Vurnik, *Med Marksom in punkom*.

happened could ever happen. It would not even cross my mind. Not only back then, but even in 1990, up until the moment the end was really there.

In addition to the LSYY, the youth and the Army principally overlapped in three realms: the obligatory conscription, the military education system (see Table 3) and the compulsory military education for all students⁴⁰⁹ as part of the doctrine of GPD and SS. Lišanin reflected on the close-knit relationship the Army had with the local community, in particular with the youth:

The secondary military school in Sarajevo actively cooperated with the other secondary schools in the city [...] The cooperation of the cadets of the military schools with the local youth was very dynamic. Likewise, in Slovenia, since I worked at the reconnaissance unit, we cooperated with the scouts from the town, we organised technical shows [...] functions, quizzes... The police youth was also involved, even though later we were in conflict, while we were 'normal' we used to cooperate [...] Also, when the Postojna youth used to organise an excursion to, say, Plitvice Lakes, to the town of Jajce - 'On the Paths of the Revolution', we went with them. There was cooperation in the field. That cooperation existed everywhere. Later... it was different.

This section addresses the Slovenian branch of the LSYY as it was the most vocal on this matter - which in itself reinforces the argument of the importance of the decentralised nature of the institutional youth sphere, but it also seeks to broaden the established narrative⁴¹⁰ by adding nuance and telling new stories. Undoubtedly, all of the projects and events of interaction between

⁴⁰⁹ In 1987 the Slovenian LSY and its Ljubljana University branch initiated several round table discussions with the aim of reforming/abolishing the compulsory military classes in the secondary schools and at University level. Referring specifically to the education of pre-school and primary school children which included frequent encounters with military content, a 1989 issue of *Mladina* asked if it is not the time 'to put an end to the terror of the Revolution against the children?' 'Vzgoja oboroženega ljudstva', *Mladina* 14, 14.6.1989, p.6. See also: Blaž Vurnik, *Med Marksom in punkom*.

⁴¹⁰ Without trying to undermine the argument which posits Slovenia at the forefront of these debates, it is indispensable to paint a more nuanced picture and consider the facts which might counter the already taken for granted anti-YPA/anti-Yugoslav tendencies among the Slovenian youth. A classified military report produced by the Slovenian Secretariat for National Defense in August 1984 noted that, overall, the number of applicants from Slovenia for the military secondary and higher educational institutions decreased by 10% as compared to 1983, while the overall number of applicants from the rest of Yugoslavia increased by 20%. ('Informacija o odzivu za vojaške šole v letu 1984', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 364.) At the end of 1986, it was again emphasised that the claim that the attitude of the Slovenian youth towards the Army is negative is unfounded, since one can't equalise a critical attitude with a negative one. The document quotes a survey where 86% of secondary school pupils said that a strong army is needed in order to preserve peace and confirmed the above-quoted conclusions that the number of Slovenian applicants to the military educational institutions is not decreasing, on the contrary ('Spontana družbena gibanja. Gradivo je interno. 3.11.1986'). The report concluded that the military high school in Ljubljana and the Air Force High School in Mostar attract 4/5 of all Slovenian applicants. Considered to be the elite military educational institutions, the air force high school and the air force academy were indeed the most competitive and the most attractive.

the army and the local youth were not equally successful and did not target the youth which held firm beliefs and who perceived the army through its most senior figures, rather than through their military coevals.⁴¹¹ For instance, at 24 per cent, the percentage of young officers who were members of the Party was relatively small, compared to 31 per cent of the overall officer corps and 33 per cent of the civilian employees in the YPA.⁴¹² These overlaps were indeed ignored at the time and are overlooked in scholarly literature nowadays, leading to a restricted view of youth culture and activism.

The unique role of the Yugoslav People's Army as a 'politically important factor' and one of the principal pillars of socialist Yugoslavia indeed contributed to its image as 'Yugoslavia's ninth province'.⁴¹³ Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 1980s the Army still enjoyed a rather positive reputation in public life and in the youth media. A 1982 article entitled 'Some strange army' underlined the unconventional, social/community oriented role of the YPA:

'Seven thousand kilometres of roads. Seven hundred kilometres of railway lines. Five thousand flats a year. Three hundred thousand [trained] cooks a year. Four hundred thousand [trained] drivers a year. This is only a small part of the gift by the YPA to our society. While in some parts of this crazy planet the army 'convinces' its people that they haven't chosen the best road towards a better future, another army takes part in film and series shoots. While in some parts of this planet divided into blocs the army leaves the barracks in order to demonstrate its 'great concern' for its people, the same army from the first sentence leaves the barracks only when it needs to save its people from natural disasters...'⁴¹⁴

The realm of the obligatory military service was a diverse space that gathered youngsters from all strata and all parts of Yugoslav society, and it was what provided the peace groups with their most powerful argument – the right to conscientious objection. Article 172 of the federal Constitution from 1974 stipulated that the 'Defense of the state shall be inviolable and inalienable right

⁴¹¹ Simo Spaskovski (born 1954), a retired colonel, was a junior officer who began his professional service in 1978. He studied at the air force gymnasium in Mostar and recounted an organised visit to a lecture by a yoga guru who was touring Europe in the early 1970s, something that proved decisive for him – he has been practicing yoga ever since. He maintained that the YPA was pretty liberal in that sense, as they had a rock band in the gymnasium and people were free to have long hair. Indeed, although social, class and lifestyle divisions were real, there was also a sense of shared values and shared fashions and styles, regardless of whether one was a military school student or a young urban rock musician or peace activist.

⁴¹² See: Florian Bieber, 'The Role of the Yugoslav People's Army in the Dissolution of Yugoslavia: The Army without a State?' in Jasna Dragović-Soso and Lenard J. Cohen (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe*, pp.301-332.

⁴¹³ Adam Roberts, 'Yugoslavia: the constitution and the succession', *The World Today* 34/4 (1978), 136-146, p.145.

⁴¹⁴ 'Čudna neka vojska', *Mladost* 1268, 18.1.1982.

and the highest duty and honour of every citizen' and the evasion of the call for the military service was criminalised.⁴¹⁵ Hence, a refusal to respond to conscription entailed imprisonment and military service was strictly confined to the YPA. Although the army was perceived and critiqued by peace activists as one homogenous, unanimous body that was conservative and unwilling to compromise, in reality, a slow process of negotiation and change was underway, as individuals who refused to carry arms were appointed to serve their military duty in parts of the military where carrying of arms was not required. Simo Spaskovski testified to the existence of a rather informal practice of accommodating individual cases of refusal of carrying arms:

'In 1979, as lieutenant of the Yugoslav People's Army, I was the commander of the platoon in the logistics educational battalion in Skopje. Despite the training for logistical duties, the soldiers also had to undergo combat training, which means they were given weapons. That year for the first time I had a soldier in my platoon who was a professional musician, who did not want to carry a weapon, did not want to be trained in shooting, but was willing to perform all other tasks. In that situation, since there was no legislation, I got approval from my battalion commander that the soldier can serve without arms. So, he was deployed in the 'Military Club' to be in charge of the cultural and entertainment programs for the troops [...] So, this practice existed before being legally regulated.'⁴¹⁶

Marko Hren also confirmed that he was allowed to serve the army without a weapon. Yet, his testimony also serves as an example of the often subjective criticism towards the army officers seen as inferior - significantly conditioned by the subsequent armed conflicts and the role of the YPA in the Yugoslav dissolution:

⁴¹⁵ Article 214 of the federal Penal Code read:

(1) Whoever, without justifiable cause, fails to report for military conscription, for the war assignment or reception of arms, or for the compulsory military service, military training or any other military duty at the appointed time, even though he has been summoned by an individual or general call-up, shall be fined or punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.

(2) Whoever has hidden himself in order to evade military conscription referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, even though he has been summoned by an individual or general call-up, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term exceeding three months but not exceeding five years.

(3) Whoever escapes abroad or without authority remains abroad with a view to evading the recruitment, statutory obligation as to military service, drill or any other military duty, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year but not exceeding 10 years.

This is not to say that the contradiction between the principle of strict discipline and hierarchical relations, on the one hand, and the implementation of the postulates of self-management, on the other, was not a subject of discussion and concern in military circles. For instance, at the fourth conference of the party branch of the LCY in the YPA in 1970, 'the position of the individual in the army of a self-management society' was under scrutiny. It was underlined that 'military discipline and personal freedom do not conflict [...] a man is truly disciplined and responsible only to the extent that he is free.' As cited in: Slobodan Stanković, *The End of the Tito Era: Yugoslavia's Dilemmas* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), p.47.

⁴¹⁶ E-mail correspondence, 19 November 2013.

I did serve the army and I did not want to carry weapons, so I was working in culture. I was in the cultural department, I was playing in a band and I was organising cultural events.

L: *This was allowed because you objected?*

I don't know. Now when I had an insight in the intelligence service archive, I saw they were following me before the military [service]. They immediately asked me if I would translate for them the papers I received from War Resisters International. So, I did. So, I think they had a plan. They wanted to know what our intentions are. They allowed me actually to be there without really being a soldier [...] And they continued following me.

L: *Was it a negative experience, would you say?*

Being in the military for me was a decisive experience. I faced a ship of fools.

L: *Where did you serve?*

In Belgrade. In the elite barracks. I was in the headquarters as a coordinator of news, for example. I did different things for the general staff. I was for example at the manoeuvres of the heavy artillery and I really saw that this is a pathological institution. People recruited in the head-quarters were from the poor areas of Serbia and they were crazy [...] completely disorganised.

L: *You mean the officers?*

Yes! I've seen that as a pacifist, I was there. I was inside [...] I saw them rehearsing the battles [...] I saw these drunkards... The whole battle was completely planned, but they made millions of mistakes [...] When I came home I said – this is really, literally crazy institution. Some semi-literate officers from the poorest parts of Serbia, who now have a position in Belgrade, ideologically completely biased [...] So, I came back ten times more pacifist than I was. I saw the enemy (laughs). Although it was not only an enemy – a sick enemy!

L: *But, the Yugoslav Army had a very big education system – academies...*

So-called academies. These guys coming out of those academies were still intellectually the lowest part of society. Most of them on alcohol. I was shocked by the enormous quantities of alcohol in the military. And that's what happened then in Sarajevo on the battlefields – drunkards around Sarajevo...

Indeed, conscription was not embraced enthusiastically by many from the cultural realm – on the contrary. The absolute majority of my interviewees - in particular those from the cultural milieu - expressed strong views on the futility of conscription and generally described it as an absolute waste of time. Zoran Predin underlined the often-quoted description of the YPA as the 'cemetery' for

Yugoslav rock bands and 'the darkest side' of the country – through the prism of its subsequent role in the Yugoslav dissolution wars:

The YPA was a cemetery for Yugoslav bands. The YPA destroyed so many good bands. It was the darkest side of the former Yugoslavia. If the politicians were smart enough to decrease the influence of the Army in time, probably history would have turned out to be different. What should have been the forgery of brotherhood and unity, turned into the very opposite. The command cadres were more or less of Serb origin. I served the Army in 1981 in Zagreb, after Tito's death – they were pretty nervous. I was sent to the anti-terrorist division. Today all of that makes me laugh. After a couple of months I decided I've had enough, so I initiated an action which ended up with a diagnosis of *psychoneurosis nuclearis*, they let me go and I never came back. The entire Yugoslav project had potential to survive only if it was democratised – at the right time, in the right manner. But it's easy to be smart now.

Senad Avdić, although formally a member of the Bosnian branch of the LSY, did not hesitate in describing the army as a 'stupid, inert, sluggish, dogmatic structure which was defending something that no one was attacking, as it turned out at the end, and was attacking something that no one defended':

L: What was your experience in the YPA?

Ever so beautiful! (laughs) It is one repressive mechanism [...] An absurdly wasted year that I spent in Prishtina. 1986-1987. They were preparing us for something without you knowing for what. The entire society in the mid-eighties entered a state of an unrelenting atrophy [...]

Although the debates on the role of the military and the right to conscientious objection reached their climax towards the end of the decade, there is a much broader story to be told regarding the issues of military conscription and the perception of the YPA among the youth in the 1980s, which begins well before the often quoted events. Namely, in December 1983 the federal assembly, through an expedited procedure, approved the amendments to the Law on military service. The amendment foresaw a continuous 15-month period of military service for students replacing the previous system of 12+3 (likewise introduced through amendments in 1980). The Presidency of the LSY lodged a request against the mode of approval through an expedited procedure, while the presidency of the Slovenian LSY sent 'substantive comments' and conclusions from the public debate they organised. Both of these requests were ignored.⁴¹⁷ The perception of the

⁴¹⁷ 'Zadeva: ugotavljanje odgovornosti za nepravilnosti v postopku sprejemanja Zakona o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o vojaški obveznosti', *Republiška konferenca Zveze socialistične mladine Slovenije, 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/ technical unit 364.

Slovenian LSY as more progressive and hence exceptional and different from the other Yugoslav branches is omnipresent among the interviewees and accepted as a well-established fact in the scholarly literature. While it cannot be denied that the Slovenian LSY was more outspoken on these issues, it is also worth pointing out that there were cases, such as this one, when the federal Youth League took the same line and upheld the demands of its Slovenian branch. In all of its written communication and complaints from the second half of 1983 sent to different political bodies regarding the lack of institutional debate on the Law amendments and the 'expedited procedure' for their approval, the Slovenian LSY referred to the fact that this 'is also the position of the Presidency of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia'.⁴¹⁸ The demand by the LSYY that the Law be amended in a regular procedure after all the open questions are resolved was even supported by the YPA delegate to the LSYY.⁴¹⁹ The different local organisations of the Slovenian Youth League forwarded their official conclusions and opinions on the proposed amendments. The arguments which in this case came from the official youth bodies and were signed by the local youth functionaries have striking resemblances to the later demands and to the language used by the activists of the 'peace movement'. For example, a letter signed by the secretary of the municipal conference of the LSYS in Ilirska Bistrica from 21.10.1983 states the following: 'As a humanist society we must strive to reduce the amount of weapons and to fight for peace. That is why we advocate the reduction of the military service [...] which would be particularly effective and would imply a reduction in the costs of the YPA,⁴²⁰ which apparently consumes huge resources that in the contemporary difficult economic situation could be spent more wisely'.⁴²¹ The Koper branch of the LSYS stated that 'It is very encouraging that the youth can have a debate about

⁴¹⁸ 'Zadeva: ugotavljanje odgovornosti'.

⁴¹⁹ 'Informacija o postopku sprejemanja zakona o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o vojaški obveznosti', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/364.

⁴²⁰ The Army's budget was reduced progressively from 1976. While for the period 1976-1980 it was allocated 6.17 per cent of national income, it received only 5.39. Although in 1980 the new five-year plan foresaw a budget at 5.8 per cent, during the first two years it reached 4.79. In addition, the YPA was reduced from 252,000 soldiers in 1981 to 210,000 at the end of 1986. Professionalisation of the military was undertaken with amendments of the Law in 1985 and recruiting professionals in 1987. See: James Gow, 'Legitimacy and the Military: Yugoslav Civil-Military Relations and Some Implications for Defence' in Marko Milivojević, John B. Allcock and Pierre Maurer (eds.), *Yugoslavia's Security Dilemmas: Armed Forces, National Defence and Foreign Policy* (Oxford/New York: Berg Publishers, 1988), pp.60-94.

⁴²¹ 'Razprava o "vojaški obveznosti"', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia.

these amendments today, which was not possible in the years 1980 and 1981, a right which we have guaranteed by the Constitution...'⁴²²

Although there was a widespread consensus that the 15-month obligatory military service should be replaced by a 12-month period, most of the letters from the regional Slovenian LSY branches openly stated that a longer period does not in itself guarantee an effective Army and well-trained youth, and that, on the contrary, there should be continuous exposure to military knowledge and training. One could argue that this was a strategically framed argument which in no way reflected the genuine attitudes of its authors, since it stands in stark contrast with the contentious argumentation against the Law in question. This echoes Paul Betts' claim with regard to the context of the GDR that 'People were good at exploiting the system using socialist civil rights language to extract concessions from state authorities'.⁴²³ On the other hand, it is equally arguable that at this point in time the concept of national defense, the YPA and Yugoslav self-management were still not subject of severe criticism, nor were they discredited in the public eye to the same extent like in the late 1980s. There is a telling parallel to be drawn between the East German 'peace movement' initiated in 1981, which was 'the campaign for a community 'peace service' as a real alternative to military service... Whilst protesters of all kinds had to expect possible and sometimes severe punishment, the group's rejection of militarism did not necessarily mean that they rejected the GDR and all it stood for...'⁴²⁴

In October 1986 the Presidency of the Republican Conference of the LSY of Slovenia drafted 'theses' regarding the initiative about an alternative (civil) military service for the upcoming discussion within the Commission for General People's Defense and Social Self-Protection (GPD and SS) at the Republican Conference of the SAWP. Interestingly, although the document advanced demands and propositions which were in opposition to some of the core postulates of the Yugoslav socialist defense system, it posited the initiative within the mainstream discursive framework:

'We are aware that safety is one of the fundamental values of every society. We are also aware that we have to fight for freedom over and over again and that it is not won forever and never again jeopardised [...]

⁴²² 'Stališča Komisije za SLO in DS pri OK ZSMS Koper', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia.

⁴²³ Paul Betts, *Within Walls*, p.186.

⁴²⁴ Anna Suanders, *Honecker's Children*, p.67.

We do not find the present way of dealing with the conscientious objectors (repetitive sentencing) appropriate and in accordance with socialist humanism as one of the fundamental orientations of our society [...] Our conception of GPD and SS is based upon the individual as a decisive factor in our defense capabilities. Our opinion is that we must not give up in advance any category of the population (in this case the objectors), nor turn them into potential enemies of the system (usually the objectors are very loyal citizens) [...] The [Second World War] liberation front of the Slovenian people included all kinds of people in its ranks who were ready to fight for the freedom of the people [...] There were those among the partisans who never carried arms. But they carried the wounded [...] thus the society and more specifically the YPA would make an exceptionally positive political move by recognising the right to conscientious objection [...] Complaints about repression against the objectors would no longer be possible, while the society would have more benefit from them [...] The sense that they are beneficial to society and that the society has not given up on them in advance would be important. An appropriate solution to the problem of conscientious objection would increase the reputation of socialist self-management worldwide.⁴²⁵

Indeed, 'Activists' vocabularies of protests are shaped and limited by ostensibly non-cultural political, economic and legal structures'.⁴²⁶ In this case, the youth bodies were impelled to frame unconventional political demands using the institutional vocabulary of Yugoslav socialism. Similarly, an internal document about the new social movements in Slovenia and in Yugoslavia noted that

'The Yugoslav attitudes about the demands the movements advance and which were presented at the youth congresses, belong to two extremes: that those are the real concerns of the contemporary times, to those that see them as an outright penetrations of liberalism and counter-revolutionary attitudes [...] In Slovenia we have publicly expressed our opinion in certain [institutional] spaces that the movements raise questions which are also questions [relevant] for socialist self-management and that because of that their interests are an integral part of the pluralism of self-managing interests, and which in this way can gain prominence within the socialist alliance as a front of progressive forces. In this framework the movements would have to respect the rules of the game and eventually succumb to the will of the majority. Having said this, we can't ignore the fact that within these movements there are individuals or groups close to the positions of the bourgeois right, as well as that there were attempts of abusing the spontaneous movements for anti-

⁴²⁵ 'Teze za razpravo: Ob pobudi za civilno službo, 20.10.1986', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 364.

In 1986 the federal youth magazine *Mladost* published a 'dossier' on the request for civilian military service written by Mirjana Križman, where the argumentation similarly draws upon Marx, Kardelj and Yugoslavia's doctrine of mass participation in the system of all-people's defense and the formal dedication to the pursuit of peaceful conflict-resolution in international relations. It also called for democratic resolution of such conflicts, strengthening of democratic institutional mechanisms and doing away with 'authoritarian-repressive forms of decision-making'. Mirjana Križman, 'Civilna vojna služba: Prigovor savesti protiv naoružanog naroda', *Mladost* 23, 28.7-10.8.1986.

⁴²⁶ Francesca Polletta, "Free spaces", p.17.

socialist or anti-communist aims (certain slogans during the protests, certain articles in *Mladina*).⁴²⁷

The document further noted that within the Yugoslav People's Army circles there were different views on the matter and that there were signs of readiness to accept conscientious objection for religious reasons, but only if conscripts remained within the military. Although the official line of the Army on the matter was well-known, this didn't prevent the process of consultation and negotiation to continue. For instance, in May 1986 the federal defense secretary met with representatives of the Slovenian LSY to discuss the issue.⁴²⁸ Robert Botteri similarly recalled his participation at a round-table discussion they initiated with the Army, where military representatives who took part agreed that reform was necessary, but, later, when the official reports were published, it was on a completely different note: 'They had to write that they don't agree with us.' A year later, at its 24th session in July 1987, the presidency of the Slovenian LSY adopted several conclusions pertaining to the conscientious objection initiative. In an official correspondence addressed to the Federal Secretariat for National Defense, it requested that the Secretariat provides information on the progress of the initiative (commenced in December 1985 within the SFRY Presidency) for the annulment of the recurring court cases and verdicts against the conscientious objectors.⁴²⁹

These examples demonstrate how the formal youth structures chose to diplomatically articulate the demands and concerns coming from its 'base' or indeed from without its narrower membership body and to navigate and pave the space between the youth discontents and activists and the higher political/institutional realm. Not surprisingly, in order to add more argumentative weight, activists also referred to Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1987/46 of the UN Commission on Human Rights, which recommended 'to States with a system of compulsory military service, where such provision has not already been made,

⁴²⁷ 'Spontana družbena gibanja. Gradivo je interno. 3.11.1986', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 391.

⁴²⁸ Blaž Vurnik, *Med Marksom in punkom*.

⁴²⁹ Official correspondence by the League of Socialist Youth of Slovenia addressed to the federal secretariat for defense, signed by President Tone Andrelič, *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 391.

The letter also requested information on a particular individual – theatre director and member of the NSK network Dragan Živadinov, noting that since he was a public figure and all kinds of speculative information was circulating in the public, this 'could unnecessarily dishonour or damage the reputation of the YPA'.

that they consider introducing various forms of alternative service for conscientious objectors which are compatible with the reasons for conscientious objection, bearing in mind the experience of some States in this respect, and that they refrain from subjecting such persons to imprisonment'.⁴³⁰ The fact that Yugoslavia was among the 14 countries which abstained during the vote (and not one of the 2 which voted against) lends legitimacy to the argument that in the second half of the 1980s the Yugoslav state and its Army were already in the process of changing their policy on the potential venues for accommodating the different demands for civil military service. Hren's testimony echoes these developments. He emphasised that the peace activists were 'legalists' and confirmed their interaction with the different political organs and institutions of the system:

Our interlocutors were institutions, both federal and republican [...] We were in these terms legalists [...] We were a human rights movement. Conscientious objection was a human right in the understanding of the UN. So, we were legalist. We have the UN, which is the supreme framework for human rights and Yugoslavia was not following [...] The moment we came into conflict with the Yugoslav regime was the moment when Slovenian policy makers, starting with the LSYS, supported our ideas, and the Yugoslav didn't.

The first battle was won when in December 1985 a decision by the federal Presidency provided legal basis for the avoidance of repetitive prison sentences for conscientious objectors in a way that upon their second call they would be deployed in the army without an obligation to carry arms.⁴³¹ In August 1986 the decision was incorporated within the military legal system.⁴³² This did not satisfy the demands of the peace activists, as essentially it did not decriminalise conscientious objection. As a 1987 Helsinki Watch report noted: 'In short, in Yugoslavia, as in Poland, the tactic will probably continue to be one of accommodating protesters but not fully institutionalising and legalising conscientious objection and alternative service'.⁴³³ However, in April 1989 the

⁴³⁰ UN Commission on Human Rights, *Conscientious objection to military service*, 10 March 1987, E/CN.4/RES/1987/46.

⁴³¹ Marko Hren, 'Svoboda misli je sicer vsem zagotovljena, kar pa še ne pomeni, da je izražanje te misli tudi vedno dovoljeno' in *Kompendij za bivše in bodoče politike* (Ljubljana: ZSMS, 1989), pp.45-68.

⁴³² Ivan Čečko, a Jehovah's Witness from the Slovenian town of Maribor who spent fifteen years in prison (in a series of repetitive sentencing) was released in November 1987. From 1972 until 1987, 152 individuals were sentenced for refusing to carry arms on religious grounds – most of them were Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists and Nazarenes. See: 'Yugoslavia' in *From Below*.

⁴³³ 'Yugoslavia' in *From Below*, p.203.

federal Parliament adopted amendments to the 1985 Law on the military service duty to accommodate those refusing to carry arms due to religious beliefs: 'The soldier who refuses to receive arms due to religious beliefs serves the military duty term without arms for the period of 24 months.'⁴³⁴ Considering the fact that the regular military service was 12 months, this amendment was also generally seen as unsatisfactory, in particular because it did not foresee the option of a service outside of the military. Marko Hren labelled it 'an attempt to mislead public opinion.'⁴³⁵ Nevertheless, this legal change indeed decriminalised conscientious objection and demonstrated that even within the Army – seen as a bastion of political conservatism – there were processes of reform underway which ran counter to some of the core doctrines it embodied.

The event that sealed the possibility of any further negotiations with the Army, cemented the anti-Yugoslav image of Slovenia and effectively paved the way for Slovenia's secession from Yugoslavia, was the so-called JBTZ affair, or 'the trial of the four'.⁴³⁶ The event has been hailed as the milestone event leading to Slovenian independence and the single most important event of the 'Slovenian spring'. Following the arrest of the four on 31 May 1988 on suspicion of disclosure of military secrets, the ensuing trial at the military court in Ljubljana sparked mass protests, shook the Yugoslav political scene to the core and led to a relative homogenisation of the Slovenian public. The 'Committee for the defense of Janez Janša', which was later renamed into 'Committee for the defense of human rights', came to represent all oppositional voices - the main points of contestation being that civilians were tried at a military court and the trial was conducted in Serbo-Croatian language. However, the indictment was not in breach of the existing legal and constitutional framework. Article 221 from the 1974 federal Constitution stipulated that criminal offences committed by military personnel and certain criminal offences committed by other persons

⁴³⁴ 'Указ за прогласување на законот за измени и дополненија за законот за воената обврска', *Службен лист на Социјалистичка Федеративна Република Југославија* 26/1989 (21 април 1989); 'Pravilnik o vršenju vojne obaveze', *Službeni vojni list* 21/1991 (25 septembar 1991).

⁴³⁵ By 1990 the demand for conscientious objection and 'civilian military service' had transformed into a demand for de-militarisation and abolishment of the Army: Zoran Oštrič, 'Marko Hren: Vojsku treba ukinuti', *Polet* 422, 26.1.1990, p.13.

⁴³⁶ JBTZ stands for the surnames of the four indictees: journalist and former youth functionary (Janes) Janša, YPA sergeant major (Rajko) Borštner, *Mladina* journalist David Tasić and *Mladina* editor (Franci) Zavrl. Eventually, Janša and Zavrl were sentenced each to one and a half years in prison, Tasić to five months and Borštner to four years.

relating to the national defense and security of the country, as well as other legal matters relating to disputes in connection with the service in the Yugoslav People's Army will be decided upon by military court. It was article 224 of the federal penal code that the indictment was based on: 'Whoever without authority communicates, confers or otherwise makes accessible to another information which constitutes a military secret, or whoever compiles such information with a view to convey it to an unauthorised person, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term exceeding three months but not exceeding five years.'⁴³⁷ The trial came as a convenient occasion to fuse the different types of anti-regime critique, as the protests were not so much about the defense of Janša or the other three in particular. Indeed, they presented an opportunity to articulate a deeper and more serious type of critique of the entire existing state, political and legal order. This event could also be considered 'the point of no return' where an anti-regime, but pro-Yugoslav sentiment was irreversibly dissipating and losing any Yugoslav content that was left, and where all hopes for the democratisation of Yugoslavia began to wither away. Although the 'opposition', including *Mladina*, became openly and unanimously antagonistic to the Army and the politics of the Serbian LC, reflecting back on the event occurs through a different lens, as Robert Botteri's testimony shows:

Janša used to write for *Mladina*, he even ended up in prison because of *Mladina*, which was some kind of repression against *Mladina* [...] In that phase of the struggle for democratisation we were on the same side. Later, when he turned into a nationalist and a professional politician, we quickly parted ways [...] Especially because even before the war, in 1990, we proposed that Slovenia unilaterally de-militarises and thus sets an example for everyone in Yugoslavia – 'Look, we stand for a society without an army, we call upon you to do the same and solve this peacefully'. But, Janša sabotaged that action, they labelled us 'traitors' and they chose a war. Later he turned into the politician who uses all means just to stay in power.

The role of the army in the Yugoslav political system, in society and in public life was first put under scrutiny in the official youth media in Slovenia, while the Slovenian Youth League decided to uphold the initiatives for conscientious objection of a relatively small group of peace activists and hence incite an all-Yugoslav debate. As one of the 'socio-political organisations', it initially framed the demands within the vocabulary of Yugoslav socialist self-

⁴³⁷ *Yugoslavia: Criminal Code of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, 1 July 1977, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5fe0.html> (last accessed 28 April 2014).

management. The debate on nuclear disarmament was similarly taken up by the LSYY and produced greater consensus at federal level. As the decade wore on, the socialist rhetoric was dissipating and the differences in the political and public arena deepened, but at the same time there was an increasing awareness within the political and the Army leadership that some of the demands put forward by the youth organisation should be accommodated. To refer back to Isin's definition of 'acts of citizenship', these initiatives sheltered by the different branches of the LSYY managed to transform the established forms/modes of being political through re-creating and using parts of the youth infrastructure as legitimate, institutional sites and channels of struggle, requiring the state to respond and engage.

This chapter argued that despite the fact that the federal Youth League did not explicitly endorse all of the initiatives stemming from the new social movements, it did provide spaces for some of them and increased the visibility of their demands in the public space. While the youth bodies were borrowing from the state vocabulary in order to frame and articulate their initiatives and demands more successfully, the institutions of late socialist Yugoslavia were reluctantly, but slowly consenting to the various calls for democratisation and doing away with certain taboos and subjects which so far had not been considered as legitimate arenas for political expression. The appropriation of some of the socialist/self-management values and vocabulary both by the Youth League and by the activists themselves reflected an implicit support for some of the postulates of Yugoslav socialism – above all the concepts of solidarity, equality and emancipation. The way they framed their 'acts of citizenship' and articulated their demands conflated their particular identity as stemming from the Yugoslav context, with a trans-national/international realm which served both as a personal inspiration and a platform for meaningful exchange and interaction. Thus, Helsinki Watch was right in drawing a line of distinction between the young activists sheltered by the youth organisation and the more visible nationalist dissidents, when it observed that 'the young people infused the official organisations with their enthusiasm, to "keep the system going, but, at the same time, to change it for the better" – thus by-passing the route of

repression and preoccupation with personal defense that became the lot of Yugoslavia's civil rights and nationalist dissidents'.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁸ 'Yugoslavia' in *From Below*, p.195.

Table 3

Secondary military schools	Military gymnasiums/high schools	Military academies
Secondary Military School of Land Forces – Sarajevo [SVŠ KoV – Sarajevo]	Air Force High School 'Marshal Tito' – Mostar [Vazduhoplovna gimnazija]	Technical Military Academy of Land Forces – Zagreb
Music Secondary Military School [Muzička SVŠ – Sarajevo]	'Brotherhood and Unity' – Belgrade	Military Academy of Land Forces – Belgrade
Procurement Secondary Military School – Sarajevo [Intendantska SVŠ – Sarajevo]	'Ivo Lola Ribar' – Zagreb	Air Force Technical Military Academy – Rajlovac
Technical Secondary Military School of Land Forces – Zagreb [TSVŠ KoV – Zagreb]	'Franc Rozman Stane' – Ljubljana	Air Force Military Academy – Zadar
Naval Technical Secondary Military School – Split [Mornaričko-tehnička SVŠ – Split]		Naval Military Academy - Split
Medical Secondary Military School – Novi Sad [Sanitetska SVŠ – Novi Sad]		
Air Force Technical Secondary Military School – Rajlovac [Vazduhoplovno-tehnička SVŠ – Rajlovac]		

4. The eighty-eighters – the arena of youth politics and the break-up of Yugoslavia

*Socijalizam sinova ne može
u svojoj konkretnoj viziji i oličenju biti
socijalizam očeva.*⁴³⁹

Milan Kučan (1986)

The early 1980s witnessed the growth of cultural and journalistic challenges to the institutional youth sphere (see Chapter 1). By the late 1980s, the entire set-up of the LSYY was being challenged, primarily due to its takeover by a new generation of political activists whose political views converged around socially liberal⁴⁴⁰ concepts. Political cleavages among 'liberals' and 'conservatives' powerfully crystallised around 1988, creating divides that would become influential in shaping the politics of a post-Yugoslav era. These new elites would play pivotal roles in negotiating the changing role of the LSYY, some trying to maintain a trans-republican organisation, some increasingly turning to republican-based units that foreshadowed the break-up of the country. This chapter seeks to add new perspectives to current narratives of youth and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, through the inclusion of republics other than Slovenia, and through bringing a new angle to late Yugoslav politics by uncovering an overlooked trans-republican convergence around progressive, loosely defined liberal values.

The chapter addresses the ways the Youth League initially sought to reform and re-invent its role and mission and was later subsumed in, and divided by the wider Yugoslav political debates and developments in the

⁴³⁹ 'The socialism of the sons cannot be in its concrete vision and embodiment the socialism of the fathers.' As cited in: Siniša Dimitrijević, 'Socijalizam sinova ili socijalizam očeva', *Polet* 347, 11.4.1986, p.4.

⁴⁴⁰ Refers to some basic tenets of social liberalism which came to be associated with 'liberalism' more generally in late socialist Europe. See below, footnote 454.

As has been observed in the Croatian context based on a 1996 survey, which could be said to have relevance for the wider (post)Yugoslav space, 'Persons more favourably disposed to liberalism are likely to be those involved in entrepreneurial activity, working in the private sector or with job skills in high demand in the restructuring economy. **Because it is often attached to images of Western Europe and North America, liberalism has symbolic significance for groups looking to the West. This is especially the case for the urban young.** Intellectuals and other professionals, the better educated and people with a more secular orientation should be the backbone of support for liberalism.' While the research found that the majority of the people are in fact liberal nationalists, it also argued that liberals 'are predictably better educated, younger, urban and least religious.' See: Garth Massey, Randy Hodson and Dusko Sekulic, 'Nationalism, liberalism and liberal nationalism in post-war Croatia', *Nations and Nationalism* 9/1 (2003), 55-82, p.63.

country. Nevertheless, there was a range of shared values and beliefs across the LSYY, as suggested by the fact that several of its branches were transformed into liberal political parties after 1989.⁴⁴¹ The chapter presents the events of 1988 (the ‘anti-bureaucratic revolution’, the abolishment of the youth baton relay, the ‘trial of the four’), as the most important tipping point. In addition, it focuses on the debates over the future of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia and its eventual demise. The chapter seeks to analyse the outcomes of the debates which unfolded within the late socialist Yugoslav youth realm in the second half of the 1980s and some of the solutions which emerged and were proposed by different actors considering the future of the LSYY. Essentially, it reflects upon the (lack of) consensus about the dilemma of how to modernise Yugoslav society and the sphere of institutional youth politics and culture.

The first part engages with the question of how the internally generated debate on the reformation/self-abolishment of the youth organisation developed. It traces the shift in rhetoric and in the way reform was envisioned. The second part offers a perspective on the 1988 events ‘from below’, through the experiences of the political activists who worked for the LSYY and/or happened to be in Belgrade during the political upheavals. The last section sheds light on the process of disintegration of the institutional youth sphere, through the debates concerning its future and the future of the country on the eve of Yugoslavia’s break-up. At the end, it reflects upon the question of why this generation’s sense of multilayered citizenship and vibrant activism failed to materialise into a viable pan-Yugoslav political alternative.

4.1. Attempts at reinventing institutional youth politics in the second half of the 1980s

A determination for change which, as late as 1986, had not stretched beyond the scope of the ‘pluralism of self-managing interests’, was transformed by 1988 into platforms, initiatives and demands which were almost entirely

⁴⁴¹ The second half of the 1980s, especially in the aftermath of the economic reforms of the federal government, saw the emergence of a new ‘managerial/entrepreneurial’ youth elite within the LSYY, which was essentially part of the liberal camp. They upheld the abolishment of the organisation and ushered in the new era of market economy, many of whom went on to becoming successful businessmen.

stripped of their original socialist shell. Members of the youth political elite initially argued for a more assertive role of the LSYY, while later in the decade the central issue of contention and debate became the very redefinition of the role for the LSYY. A shift away from the vocabulary of self-management and the pluralism of self-managing interests and towards a broad interest in human rights and freedoms, rule of law and political pluralism in the second half of the 1980s, unfolded both as a result of internally initiated debates within the LSYY, but equally so in response to deepening political polarisation within the Yugoslav political scene. After 1987, these new political cleavages clearly affected different levels of the Youth League. A national fracturing also saw greater divergence developing within the republican Youth Leagues, as what had once been a shared culture was gradually being lost.

In the above-cited 1989 essay entitled 'The twilight of the youth baton', the young authors concluded that 'With the abolishment of the Youth Baton we lost an archaic ritualistic practice, but in return we obtained nothing. In other words, we obtained an empty space, within which democratic struggles could commence'.⁴⁴² Indeed, the space which throughout the 1980s was cleared of what was perceived to be outdated Yugoslav socialist rubble by the various reformist youth and student initiatives, was only partially filled with new progressive and democratic content. The withering class/Marxist paradigm by the end of the 1980s was being replaced by an ethno-national one, while in the more dominant political and cultural arenas the different voices coming from within the youth sphere were outperformed or overshadowed and did not have the vigor to counter the ones coming from more senior actors. The radical political decentralisation of the state, which in the 1980s opened the way for the emergence of many pockets of opposition (liberal, reformist, nationalist) was understood by some as the implementation of the Marxist notion of the withering away of the state⁴⁴³, which the Yugoslav political elites were committed to and upon which they sought to build unity after WW2. More

⁴⁴² Igor Mekina and Silvo Zapečnik, 'Somrak štafete', p.116.

⁴⁴³ The preliminary documents for the 12th congress of the League of Socialist Youth of Slovenia in the section entitled 'For democratisation of political culture' underlined that the struggle for the withering away of the state is not a struggle directed against the consolidation of the state apparatus, but it is a struggle for the democratisation of socialist self-management, for a tolerant treatment of the independent initiatives which although are not established within the system are in their essence democratic and self-managing.'

'Dokumenti 12. Kongresa Zveze socialistične mladine Slovenije, Ljubljana, 15 november 1985', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 383.

crucially, however, as Dejan Jović convincingly argues, it was the progressive ‘breakdown of the elite ideological consensus’⁴⁴⁴ after 1974 that eventually brought the country to a collapse. It was in particular during the second half of the 1980s that the fractures along what has been referred to as Yugoslavia’s ‘natural cleavage lines’⁴⁴⁵ started to become more exposed, during a period of intensified intra-party struggles and weakening federal institutional framework. Different actors began competing for the space which was gradually emptied of the doctrine of socialist self-management. In this context, with the exception of the youth leadership in Serbia (proper) and Montenegro, the political youth realm realigned mainly around reformist and liberal ideas. Although, in hindsight, the dominance and superiority of ethnic politics and nationalist parties is often taken for granted and as a *fait accompli*, the state of affairs at the end of the 1980s was such that there were many potential venues for other outcomes of the crisis. A consensus that change and doing away with the old was necessary, albeit without a common platform about the content and the manner in which change was to be achieved, was a dominant discursive stream within the volatile late Yugoslav public sphere. At the same time, reformed communists and ardent nationalists were competing with a range of liberal and social-democratic platforms and actors, some guarding hope that they would be able to triumph at the federal elections that never materialised. In this context, it is important to re-emphasise the heterogeneity of the youth leaderships both at republican/provincial and at federal level and the fact that different individuals within the same presidency or ‘republican conference’ of the LSYY could hold disparate views.

1986 can be considered a pivotal moment for the LSYY in this regard. It was the year of the 12th Congress of the Slovenian League of Socialist Youth – the so-called Krško Congress, where members of the League pioneered a new vocabulary, new demands and forms of youth activism. The ‘liberalisation’ in Slovenia arguably coincided with the stepping down of conservative Party leader France Popit in 1986 and the rise of a new younger leadership headed by Milan Kučan. It was Kučan who at the 27th session of the Central Committee of the LCY in March 1986 said something which would become an often-quoted statement: ‘The socialism of the sons, cannot be in its concrete vision and

⁴⁴⁴ Dejan Jović, *Yugoslavia*, p.3.

⁴⁴⁵ George Schopflin, ‘Political Decay’, p.316.

embodiment the socialism of the fathers [...] Departing from what is already achieved, they search for materially and spiritually richer socialism, freer, more democratic and more humane. Every generation gives its own creative contribution...⁴⁴⁶

It was also the moment when the federal congress of the LSYY for the first time abandoned mainstream socialist vocabulary and, in contrast to the report from its 1982 congress, produced a critical, analytical text outlining its position and mapping out the socio-political state of affairs. The period before and after the congresses was characterised by a partial fulfillment of the long-argued for change in the role of the youth organisation as a mere observer and passive participant in the system. Silvija Žugić-Rijavec, the only female President of the LSYY in the 1980s, signaled this change and the subsequent reactions on behalf of the state and Party organs in her speech at the 27th session of the Central Committee of the LCY in March 1986, when she accused certain forces within the League of Communists of acting in a 'paternalistic' manner not only towards the youth organisation, but also toward other socio-political organisations:

'As long as the youth organisation dealt only with different actions and demonstrations, apart from criticisms addressed to the League of Socialist Youth, there were no other problems. Since the XI congress and especially during the preparations for the XII congress, we emphasised the demand for democratisation of the relations within the youth organisation, for its vertical independence [...] But, certain problems and conflicts have already appeared [because of that].'⁴⁴⁷

Although the official discourse still revolved around the paradigm of responsible self-management, the formal report of the 1986 federal congress addressed certain concerns in a straightforward manner: 'The animosity which the young generation rightly feels towards the bureaucratised "all-political representatives" would soon be interpreted as a refusal of socialist self-management'.⁴⁴⁸ The report abounds in calls to 'de-bureaucratise' the youth organisation and society and in attacks on the 'bureaucratic-technocratic ideology' and the 'youth bureaucracy'. Interestingly, the report begins with a quote by Edvard Kardelj which reads as an attempt to relativise the superiority of socialism: 'Socialism cannot preserve the aureole of historical

⁴⁴⁶ Siniša Dimitrijević, 'Socijalizam sinova ili socijalizam očeva', *Polet* 347, 11.4.1986, p.4.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ *Predlog dokumenti dvanaestog kongresa*, p.71.

progressiveness only because it is called socialism in name, but only if it increasingly expands the dimensions of his [the working man's] freedom and democracy in society'.⁴⁴⁹ The federal level of the LSYY argued that new political forms were needed to keep the country up to date with contemporary technological developments: 'to the challenges and demands [encountered] at the point of transition into the era of informatics, microelectronics, robotics, i.e. the third scientific-technological revolution, [the socio-political organisations] responded with weapons from the past' and that 'in a system where decisions about the most important questions of social development are mainly made in two ways – through the state and the party, there is no space for the development of the youth organisation as an independent political subject'.⁴⁵⁰ The congress program also announced the incipient changes in the organisation and functioning of the LSYY, by targeting the 'subjective forces [which] compile lists of societal changes without doing much to change themselves' and expressing a commitment toward 'radical change of the means of [our] struggle – the [youth] organisation itself'.⁴⁵¹ This commitment began to materialise with a marked change in the vocabulary of some of the official youth representatives – such as the already quoted statement by its President from 1987 that the inclusion of the new social movements is necessary, as well as the debate on the Youth Baton which culminated in its abolishment in early 1988. The former was in line with the 1986 congress materials' call for the 'creation of space' within the youth organisation for the women's, the peace, the ecological and other 'progressive movements'. An attempt on the part of the federal leadership of the LSYY to somehow reconcile and acknowledge the different grievances and visions is visible not only in the congress documents, but also in the subsequent attempts to strike a balance between those who sought radical change and those who argued for minimal change or the preservation of the existing norms and practices.

The different republican branches espoused 'change' within what was seen as a flexible institutional and political framework which had already undergone several constitutional changes and was susceptible to yet another reform. Yugoslav socialism had to be reformed, but not entirely abandoned.

⁴⁴⁹ *Predlog dokumenti dvanaestog kongresa*, p.7.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.* pp.13-14.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.69.

However, the way change was embraced and articulated differed significantly between Slovenia, for instance, and Macedonia or Serbia. Although certain individuals among the new Macedonian youth leadership who were elected at the 1986 congress of the Macedonian LSY would become vocal opponents of the regime and the status quo after 1988 and would shift their rhetoric and demands to match their Slovenian counterparts, the 1986 congress materials bear witness to an organisation which had not significantly departed from its previous congress framework. Although the congress was hailed as a congress of ‘unity, action and change’ and voiced most of the already established complaints such as youth unemployment, careerism, insufficient inclusion of the young in the delegate system and calls for effective ‘de-bureacratism’, the congress stage was adorned with the slogan ‘On Tito’s path – in Tito’s manner’ [*На титовиот пат титовски*].⁴⁵² The Serbian LSY similarly organised its 1986 congress under the banner of ‘change’ [*Мењајмо да нас не промене*]. Zoran Anđelković, the President of the Serbian LSY, concluded his speech by reiterating how indispensable change was: ‘This congress must be a congress of change [...] Let’s change the relationships within our organisation – let’s make it more democratic, more open, more courageous [...] Let’s change those who oppose change.’⁴⁵³ However, besides talking about the main problems facing the youth, he also referred to the ‘forced emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo’ as ‘the biggest political problem in the country’.⁴⁵⁴

Thus, under the aegis of reform and change, 1986 saw the beginning of what would become an irreversible process of fragmentation of the LSYY. The Slovenian LSY launched more concrete demands which were articulated as slogans and printed on stickers on the occasion of its 1986 congress. Demanding the democratisation of political culture, a more genuine worker’s democracy and freedom of speech, it also hinted at the inherited, rigid forms from the past by outlining that ‘we are not primarily interested in the “internal and the external” enemy, but in the democratic self-managing decision-making which advances social development, because we want to live in the present that

⁴⁵² *XII конгрес на Сојузот на социјалистичка младина на Македонија* (Скопје/Кочани: Републичка конференција на ССММ/Младост, 1986).

⁴⁵³ *Омладина, чинилац друштвених промена: реферат Зорана Анђелковића, председника РК ССОС* (Београд: Републичка конференција ССО Србије, 1986), p.16.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.6.

Zoran Anđelković (born 1958) remained influential in the LSYY after 1986 and joined the camp of Slobodan Milošević within the Serbian LC. He remained in politics when the LC rebranded itself into the Socialist Party of Serbia and was appointed in different political roles.

we will co-create.⁴⁵⁵ The concluding remarks of the speech of the President of the Slovenian LSY read as a generational manifesto:

‘For us there is no way back. A way back is a way to a slow, but certain death. It is a departure towards historical oblivion. We want to be a generation which decides and not only obeys. We want to be a generation of knowledge, new technology, flexible and effective economy, we want to be a generation of open culture and social fantasy, a generation which is allowed to think with its own head and express those thoughts freely, a generation which is not and will not be satisfied with what had already been achieved; in brief, we want to be a generation of freedom and human dignity.’⁴⁵⁶

Although the core of the 1986 congress program of the Slovenian LSY dealt with domestic issues, Zoran Thaler (born 1962), former activist in the LSYS and later a member of the Liberal Party, the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs and an MEP, underlined the importance of the international context and in particular the political developments in Eastern Europe:

L: How did ZSMS conceive of the 1986 platform?

I think one should consider the global context. Solidarity and the putsch on 13 December 1981 in Poland had a big impact upon me, my generation. I had just returned from the military and I remember well that during the first year at University I wore a Solidarity badge [...] I organised an action of sending post cards to Jaruzelski [...] We were also fascinated by the 1972 student movement. At that time the ‘Library of revolutionary theory’ [Knjižnica revolucionarne teorije - KRT] appeared [...] There, a book was published on the student movement 1968-1972 and it was a revelation for us [...] The main weapon was irony, sarcasm, cynicism [...] [The congress in] Krško was a litmus for the new time. It was also a resistance against the militarisation which developed after the 1981 Kosovo riots.

Some of the new political stances articulated by some members of the Youth League in the late 1980s transcended the mainstream (conservative vs. reformist/liberal) discourse. After 1986, as it was becoming clear that the ideological status quo was no longer tenable, different voices began to invade the political realm. Parts of the youth sphere demonstrated a relatively high degree of openness, creativity and imagination, as ideas ranged from democratic multi-party federalism, liberal democracy or hybrid variations of democratic socialism, as shown in this 1988 statement by Miha Kovač:

‘We, in the circles around *Mladina* and the alternative movements, argue that you can have both economic and political democracy. We believe that self-management should remain as the institution of enterprise

⁴⁵⁵ ‘12. Kongres ZSMS: predlog gradiva za kongres. Izhodišča za ključne usmeritve’, *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/383.

⁴⁵⁶ ‘Referat Predsednika RK ZSMS R. Černeta dan SJO ob 12. Kongresu ZSMS’.

democracy, only the political bureaucracy should be removed from power – which could be accomplished by changes in the electoral system and by the creation of free trade unions, etc... Our idea is to change this body (the Chamber of Socio-Political Organisations) into a democratic political assembly, without any leading role for the party. It would be elected directly, not on the basis of a classical multiparty system – which we think would be a regression – but on the basis of citizens organizing themselves in various political movements expressing various interests'.⁴⁵⁷

In the same interview Kovač asserted that the position of the Slovenian LC of not being interested in propagating democratisation for all Yugoslavia - a position which might lead to a confederation or establishment of independent states - is 'neither desired nor realistic'. This not only shows that the range of alternatives for filling the increasingly unstable and withering ideological space was immense, but also that this polyphony of political visions for the future of the institutional set-up could easily implode or turn into a cacophony.

Against this background, the LSYY increasingly became involved in wider societal issues and in new debates over rights and citizens. It progressively abandoned the older rhetoric of socialist self-management from 1988 onwards. In particular, certain branches became involved in rethinking the role of the citizen within socialism and drew on newly emerging political languages of human rights. One example was a decision of the LSYY from 1988 to open up a public debate on the subject of 'The liberties, rights and duties of the man and citizen in the socio-political system of the SFRY'. The project was meant to 'bring to the surface a range of questions about the non-conflictual character of Yugoslav society', noting that the 'sanctioning of the duties in our, as in many other societies, is far more developed than the respect and the advancement of human rights...'⁴⁵⁸ The numerous affairs, incidents, and instances of popular unrest which occurred during 1987 and 1988 and required intervention by the police acted as the impetus for the youth organisation to use the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for initiating the debate. The numerous strikes, protest marches and the intervention of the police were said to have raised the awareness about citizens' rights, about their violation and 'the need for their development and advancement in our country, which implied a rupture with the

⁴⁵⁷ "The Slovene Spring" – an Interview with Miha Kovač, *New Left Review* 177 (1988), 115-128, p.121.

⁴⁵⁸ 'Predsedništvo konferencije SSOJ, Komisija za politički system: Ljudska prava i slobode. Beograd, mart 1989 godine', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/391.

old way of thinking about the once-and-for-all given and guaranteed rights and the perfection of the existing system and state of affairs.⁴⁵⁹ The Presidency of the LSYY commissioned two young legal scholars – Goran Svilanović⁴⁶⁰ (born 1963) and Vojislav Stanimirović (born 1964) to write short summaries on the state of human rights and freedoms in Yugoslav constitutional and criminal law and offer recommendations. The shorts texts they produced, where ‘verbal crime’ article 133 and the freedom of thought and expression were pinpointed as needing urgent attention and amending, were to serve as initial basis for a wider debate.

This particular example illustrates a crucial shift in the way the LSYY envisioned its social and political role, as well as in the very form and content of its politics and engagement both in the youth realm and in the wider public sphere. The shift away from the dominant vocabulary of self-management/pluralism of self-managing interests and a shift towards an interest in human rights and freedoms were certainly not the result only of an internally generated debate. It should be observed within the contemporary context of the various citizens’ initiatives and groups which converged around different demands framed in the discourse of human rights.⁴⁶¹ Yet, as a formal institution and part of the political system, the Youth League acknowledged the existence of serious human rights violations and by putting the burden of responsibility on the state organs and discarding ‘the old way of thinking’ which saw the existing system as perfect, it symbolically initiated the severing of ties with its long-time senior political sibling.

4.2. 1988 – a point of no return

The period 1987-1988 has been embedded in political histories, which tend to focus on elite stories around the ascent of Slobodan Milošević, the rise

⁴⁵⁹ ‘Predsedništvo konferencije SSOJ, Komisija za politički system: Ljudska prava i slobode’.

⁴⁶⁰ Svilanović worked as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade and was dismissed in 1998 for publicly opposing a controversial University law. He presided over the ‘Civic Alliance of Serbia’ that later merged with the Liberal Democratic Party. He served as Minister of foreign affairs from 2000-2004.

⁴⁶¹ In 1987, the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights was created in Serbia, alongside a similar committee in the Writers’ Association. The following year saw the creation of the Yugoslav Forum for Human Rights and the Slovenian Committee for the Defense of Human Rights on the occasion of the ‘trial of the four’. See: Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation*.

of Serbian nationalism under the guise of what has been termed 'ethno-technocratic populism'⁴⁶² and the internal splits within the Serbian LC. Mass workers' protests which wrapped their discontent with the socio-economic situation in the classical symbols of Yugoslav socialism, additional austerity measures, protests of the Kosovo Serbs, the resignation of the Montenegrin leadership, the dismissal of the Kosovan-Albanian leadership, the 'yoghurt revolution' in Vojvodina, the 'trial of the four' in Ljubljana and the subsequent protests, were some of the events which posit 1988 in historical, but also in subjective, autobiographical terms as the turning point in recent Yugoslav history.⁴⁶³ This section addresses an unexplored question of how this impacted on activists and the local republican youth realms. It seeks to bring to light the diversity of experiences and offer a perspective on the 1988 events 'from below'. Indeed, nearly all interviewees maintained that 1988 was the turning point and this was particularly prominent among those who happened to be based in Belgrade at the time. Moreover, the events of 1988 had real impact on the tone of debates within the youth sphere, as this moment shifted discourse, limited the scope of what was possible in terms of change and reform and forced the different republican LSYs to take new positions.

The political crisis which began to throw Yugoslavia's existence into question brought the Youth League and its media outlets into the debate. The events which were unfolding with an ever increasing speed initiated a process of fragmentation along republican lines, but also a convergence across national lines. The rifts became more visible as the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' was gaining momentum and the debate on the constitutional changes which sought to restore the political and judicial powers of Serbia proper over its provinces was nearing its end. Different republican LSYs began to take divergent positions. The Serbian LSY openly sided with the Serbian Party when in 1988 it launched a propaganda campaign in support of the Serbian constitutional amendments, calling on the young to vote at the referendum and to express

⁴⁶² Lenard Cohen, *The Socialist Pyramid*, p.444.

For a detailed account of the 'antibureaucratic revolution' and the role of industrial workers and other non-state actors in the events of 1988, see: Nebojša Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*.

⁴⁶³ See, for instance, Raif Dizdarević, *From the death of Tito to the death of Yugoslavia* (Sarajevo/Zagreb: Šahinspahić, 2009). In his memoir, Dizdarević observes that 'Realistically speaking, the process of orchestrated destabilization of the country began during that "hot summer" of 1988' (Chapter 5, 'The months of Yugoslavia's destabilization', pp.185-247).

support for the republic's leaders.⁴⁶⁴ Furthermore, it progressively appropriated the official political discourse on Kosovo - among other things advocating a new 'population politics which will lead to the decrease in birthrates'.⁴⁶⁵ The decision of the Montenegrin youth officials to side with the protesters and join in their demands for the resignation of the old Montenegrin political leadership could be interpreted in a twofold manner: both in light of the previously upheld rhetoric on 'de-bureaucratisation', and as a pragmatic choice in advancing their career prospects.⁴⁶⁶ As a response to the act of aligning of the Serbian LSY with the politics of Slobodan Milošević and of the Serbian League of Communists, the LSY of Vojvodina launched its own set of materials, a document entitled 'For Yugoslavia – my country' [*Za Jugoslaviju – moju domovinu*]. The demands the material posed were more or less those which would later be upheld by the new liberal/reformist camp across the LSYY: abolishment of the national economies and introduction of a market economy, opening up of Yugoslavia for foreign investment and inclusion in the European integration perspectives, consolidation of a system of rule of law, accountability of all political bodies, direct elections for political positions and a new short, concise and efficient constitution fit for a modern polity.⁴⁶⁷

These events could only aggravate the already fragile consensus which was built upon a loosely defined need for change. They also induced an atmosphere where it was difficult for individuals and the Youth Leagues to stay neutral. The polarisation at federal level between Serbia and Slovenia (primarily over Kosovo and the political restructuring of the federation) the following year further destabilised the political structure of which the Youth League was part.

⁴⁶⁴ Tihomir Ladišić, 'Avanti popolo: ova zemlja je ipak dom', *Polet* 396, 14.10.1988.

⁴⁶⁵ *Izveštaj o radu SSO Srbije između 11. i 12. Kongresa* (Belgrade: RK SSO Srbije, 1990), p.9.

The 'exodus' of Serbs from the province of Kosovo came to occupy a central place in political debates after the 1981 riots. The high birthrate of Kosovan Albanians was often portrayed as a 'conscious decision on the part of Albanians to reproduce rapidly in order to change the demographic picture of Kosovo'. By the end of the decade, the migration of the Kosovan Serbs and the birth rate of Albanians became some of the issues that featured prominently in Serbian nationalist discourse and in the debates on the constitutional amendments of the status of the two autonomous provinces on Serbia's territory. See: Momčilo Pavlović, 'Kosovo under autonomy, 1974-1990' in Charles W. Ingrao and Thomas Allan Emmert (eds.), *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies: A Scholars' Initiative* (Purdue University Press, 2009), pp.48-82.

⁴⁶⁶ Momir Bulatović (born 1956) held various positions within the LSYY. He became leader of the League of Communists of Montenegro after the old republican leadership was overthrown. He served as the President of Montenegro from 1990 until 1998. Milo Đukanović (born 1962) was a youth functionary at republican and at federal level. He was the Montenegrin Party's secretary after 1988 and in 1991, aged 29, he was elected Prime Minister of Montenegro.

⁴⁶⁷ Tihomir Ladišić, 'Avanti popolo', p.12.

The 'particular system of conflict regulation and social integration through devolution'⁴⁶⁸ was called into question by Serbia's demands for re-centralisation and revision of the autonomy of the provinces. The federal level of the Youth League could not stay immune to these and the accompanying debates. Moreover, an inherited consensus on curbing nationalist discourse - 'Yugoslav communism's strong antipathy to overt nationalist tactics'⁴⁶⁹ – began to unravel.

This moment is mentioned as the central turning point in many biographies. It was often linked with changes in urban environment - especially in Belgrade. Risto Ivanov (born 1960) was delegated to the LSYY in Belgrade from Macedonia during 1986-1988. Ivanov reflected on one prominent division which ran along the lines of loyalty vs. competence and the consensus which existed among 'the liberal camp':

What is interesting, however, and might be relevant for today is the fact that the more liberal camp was dominated by highly educated individuals who had some professional experience behind; on the other side, for example those who were advancing the politics in Serbia and Montenegro, did not have a university degree and entered politics as a token of loyalty, not competence. They were easier to control. So, even when there were arguments in the organisation, if it was for this other camp I call 'advantage of competence, not loyalty', it was possible to reach an agreement, there was a chance for agreement [...] It became obvious that loyalty would trump competence and rationality. The seams began to break. At the end, everyone went where they came from. So, when you came back home [after your mandate], they could easily find fault [да те начекаат на нож] and that wasn't pleasant at all. For example, people used to meet me on the street and say: 'What is it, you are plotting something with the Slovenes? You're trying to please them, eh?' That wasn't pleasant [...]

The idea at the time was to open up certain spaces and that competent individuals come to the fore. But, apparently, the working class paradigm was replaced with that of nationalism. One group was simply replaced by a different one where the same rules apply – loyalty, not competence. That's when the seams began to break and everyone retreated to their own national group - no connecting thread was left.

Rasim Kadić (born 1960) was delegated to the presidency of the LSYY in Belgrade in 1986 as a full-time professional employee in the department for education and student standards. Kadić became the focus of media attention because he publicly labelled Mirko Ostojić - member of the presidency of the SAWP as 'a political advocate of Slobodan Milošević in B&H'. He recalled the infamous 8th session of the Serbian LC's Central Committee which took place in September 1987:

⁴⁶⁸ Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism*, p.16.

⁴⁶⁹ Lenard Cohen, *The Socialist Pyramid*, p.445.

I remember very well when the 8th session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia was taking place, there was a football match Yugoslavia-Italy. It was the first time that instead of watching the football game I watched the broadcast. Of course we were against Milošević, many of my friends in Serbia were also against that rigid form of nationalism backed by the YPA [...] After Milošević won, I gathered everyone on the 22nd floor, bought them coffee and told them – ‘Guys, this is my farewell coffee, I’m going back to Bosnia because this is no longer my country’ [...]

The moment Milošević won was that point for me. The moment he won I was 27. I can’t say I knew, but I could feel intuitively that it was the end. I could see it was simply something that can’t be saved [...] I could have gone for a second mandate in Belgrade, but I left it, I left a girl behind, a good salary, privileges, friends [...] I almost did not notice that Yugoslavia disappeared. Because for me Yugoslavia was not a grand, abstract notion [...] For me Yugoslavia was the friends, the people with whom I communicated and with whom I still communicate. So, in that sense, Yugoslavia did not disappear at all...

Ivanov’s testimony echoes Kadić’s and those of the other youth functionaries who worked at the LSYY in Belgrade during the last years of the 1980s:

As far as the break-up of Yugoslavia is concerned, I can say that the period I spent in Belgrade was the beginning [of the end of Yugoslavia].

L: So, one could sense it?

Yes. It wasn’t anticipated, but the key moment was when Dragiša Pavlović was removed from the position of President of the City Committee of the Party in Belgrade and from then on one could feel that the whole atmosphere began to change [...] After that, everything changed. Namely, before that, Belgrade was a city that left you fascinated. Whoever went there, they felt ‘European’, welcome, the way of life, the communication... It literally had the appeal of a world metropolis. Only few months later it became obvious that Belgrade is no longer hospitable to everyone. That was the key moment and it later reflected in the youth organisation and all other bodies.

A sense of being taken by surprise by the radical change in public discourse and in what was considered to be a social and political consensus thus far was so prominent precisely because the public display of nationalism – in particular of the two ‘big nationalisms’, the Serbian and the Croat – was actively discouraged in post-WW2 Yugoslavia and perceived as politically incorrect. Dejan Jović located a feeling of ‘uneasiness’ during those years: ‘It’s the end of the 1980s - 1986-87-88, when it all began feeling uneasy. [National belonging] began to matter. It was shocking for me to hear “Slobo Srbine, Srbija je za tebe” [Slobo, you Serb, Serbia is behind you], that concept was completely unacceptable and frightening to me.’

A sense of 'shock' was echoed by interviewees with very different backgrounds. Simo Spaskovski told me about his own 'shock' when he first saw people adorned with 'chetnik' symbols on the streets of Belgrade when he visited the city on several occasions in 1988 and 1989 while attending lectures at the Command-staff academy of the YPA. Miha Kovač, who was doing his army service in Serbia in 1987, similarly underlined that he was 'quite shocked' by the shifts in the Serbian media discourse. His testimony echoes the significance of the socio-political consensus which sought to stigmatise and ban public manifestations of nationalism through his conviction that anyone who espoused such views in public would be dismissed:

I strongly disliked Milošević, he was a disgusting person for me. I was serving the Yugoslav Army in 1987, when he was starting to rise. The army was boring for me. They knew that I am a dissident, they knew that I am coming from a good socialist family, so they didn't know exactly what to do with me. So, they put me in a warehouse, where I had to take care of Party flags and I was basically sleeping there. I spent a lot of time reading [Belgrade daily] *Politika*. I was quite shocked, you know. In the letters by the readers appeared letters which were extremely chauvinist and nationalistic. When I saw them, after a few weeks I said [to myself] - 'They will remove the editor of *Politika* in a few months' - because no decent Communist Party would allow something like that. But, then, the content of these letters started to move to the regular text in the paper. So, when I came back from the army I was much more aware than other Slovenians about what's going on in Serbia. My theory was that it was a fascist movement [...] But then, at a certain point I became very sceptical about people who were around [Slovenian journal] *Nova revija*, who claimed that we need national freedom first and democracy second [...] If you ask common people in Slovenia, they will say - 'Oh, our state, we were dreaming for a thousand years about this.' But this is bullshit [...] For a very long time Slovenians were dreaming not about independence, but about a more democratic Yugoslavia. The clue about the destruction of Yugoslavia is definitely in Belgrade. To put it very simply, Serbs made Yugoslavia and Serbs destroyed Yugoslavia.

Indeed, media reports and editorial politics became increasingly divergent and irreconcilable.⁴⁷⁰ In a similar vein, Senad Avdić, the editor-in-chief of the federal youth magazine *Mladost* underlined the fragmentation of the media space. He recounted a trip to Kosovo during the *Stari trg* miner's strike in early 1989. He followed Stipe Šuvar into the mine and had a chance to speak to the miners. Avdić recalled the existence of completely disparate media reports on the events, claiming that the Serbian one in no way corresponded to what he

⁴⁷⁰ On the role of the media in inciting ethnic antagonism, see: Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan media in war and peace* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2003).

had actually seen: 'You've got millions of details like that, which are not details, but big things [...] It told you that some sort of madness had prevailed.'

The realm of the youth press was not immune to the radical changes and realignments across the political scene. Although the various youth magazines naturally differed in their approach, editorial style and the level of boldness and critique, the majority of them shared an openly critical attitude towards the increasingly aggressive politics of the Serbian LC headed by Milošević. In an issue of Bosnian *Naši dani*, the editorial board of the magazine published a letter addressed to Stipe Šuvar, at the time chair of the Party Presidium, demanding from him, from the Presidency of the Party's Central Committee and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia 'a decisive settling of scores with the anarcho-nationalist processes threatening to shatter us all into ashes' - alluding to the rise of Serbian nationalism and the mass rallies organised by the Serbian Party.⁴⁷¹

The youth media based on the territory of Serbia came under increasing pressure in 1988 when the Serbian LC began to purge Serbian media of those who were not willing to compromise and adjust their editorial line. Petar Janajtović's testimony is illustrative of these context-specific developments and of the change in the manner of navigating the permitted boundaries of public critique after 1987:

Even at the time when [Dragan] Kremer and I were working on the 'Rhythm of the heart', we instated that mode of talking about politics through rock 'n' roll. We also had a show on the second program of Radio Belgrade that was called 'This is only rock 'n' roll'. We started it in 1987. When the entire madness with Milošević began, the focus was on the first program of Radio Belgrade. The censors hardly ever listened to the second program. We were spitting on [Vojislav] Šešelj, on Sloba [Milošević], we were playing Rambo [Amadeus], [the song by Croatian band Film] 'E moj družo beogradski', until they figured it out and threw us out. As I said before, through writing and talking about rock 'n' roll one can talk about anything. Especially when the times are screwed.

Print media were more visible and the youth press experienced increasing political pressure. The editorial board of the magazine of the students of Belgrade University *Student* was replaced⁴⁷² and the Belgrade

⁴⁷¹ 'Otvoreno pismo Stipi Šuvaru', *Naši dani* 949, 2.9.1988, p.8.

⁴⁷² The magazine had a history of dissent. In January 1970, 159 out of the 230 delegates of the Belgrade University Student Union after a seven-hour meeting decided to dissolve the editorial board of the magazine which openly sided with the students during the 1968 riots and was accused of being Stalinist, anarcho-liberal and nationalist. Nevertheless, the magazine

public prosecutor initiated a case against the magazine of the Maribor students in front of the court in Belgrade for a regular supplement entitled 'Beograjska priloga' [Belgrade supplement]. This was without a precedent, since magazines were considered to be within the scope of the regional legislature. But, as the Maribor magazine was partially written in Serbo-Croatian and openly critical of the Serbian political elite, it was presented as a legitimate target.⁴⁷³ Eventually, it was the federal youth magazine *Mladost*⁴⁷⁴ which also came under pressures from the Serbian LC. The pressures were channeled through by youth functionaries who were simultaneously active in the federal Youth League and in the Serbian Party.

In 1987 *Mladost* was voted 'youth magazine of the year' under the editorial leadership of Vlastimir Mijović (born 1956). Although officially the magazine of the LSYY, it pursued a rather independent editorial policy and did not hesitate to encourage critical writing. For instance, in 1986 it published a 'dossier' on the initiatives for conscientious objection and the peace movement, while Mijović in his editorials openly targeted the LSYY and its leadership, arguing that 'It is necessary, first of all, to say openly that the Yugoslav youth has an incompetent, sloppy, self-sufficient and in some cases unfair/foul leadership'.⁴⁷⁵ Mijović was not granted a second 2-year mandate and after the legally prescribed six-month period of 'acting editor' expired, the procedure for the appointment of a new editor was purposefully administratively delayed or hampered. 'In whose interest is it to obstruct the federal youth magazine?', asked the editorial staff of *Mladost*.⁴⁷⁶ They pointed to the secretary of the presidency of the LSYY – Zoran Anđelković, an active member of the Serbian LC: 'In this case, it seems, what is decisive is pure political (ill) will of the organs of the LSYY who, by the way, are often manipulated by their most senior

continued to spark controversy – for instance, a 1972 issue that re-published an interview with economist Branko Horvat where he targeted the system, was banned.

Zdenko Antic, 'Belgrade students still resisting', *Radio Free Europe Research*, 14.01.1970, *Open Society Archive* (digital archive).

⁴⁷³ Svetlana Vasović, 'Katedrine satelistske zabrane', *Studentski list* 8 (971), 9.3.1988.

⁴⁷⁴ *Mladost* had assumed the role of a vocal critic as early as the 1960s. During the 1969 elections it openly criticised the elitist nature of the candidate lists: 'Stories for good and obedient children – it can now safely be said that this is what all those convincing promises made by the Socialist Alliance in January have amounted to: promises that a new chapter would open and room be found for more workers, youth and women'. See the subchapters on the 'Youth Federation' and the 'Student Union' in April Carter, *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia*, pp. 161-184.

⁴⁷⁵ Vlastimir Mijović, 'Riba smrdi od glave', *Mladost* 21, 13.6.1986, p.1.

⁴⁷⁶ Redakcija, 'NJ.V.V.D. Kome treba gužva oko Mladosti?', *Mladost* 58, 18.1-31.1.1988, p.7.

political functionaries'.⁴⁷⁷ This was a clear allusion to the top echelons of the Serbian LC and its leader Slobodan Milošević. The editorial staff and other youth magazines also raised the question of why the Youth League through Anđelković (and some other functionaries such as Goran Milinović and Milan Janjić) sought an advisory opinion on the matter from the Serbian Committee for Information and not from the corresponding federal body.⁴⁷⁸ It was Avdić who succeeded Mijatović as editor. However, he also located the break-up of the common professional and socio-political space during that period: 'I experienced [the break-up of Yugoslavia] two or three years before it actually happened. I experienced it in Belgrade [...] As an editor of a federal magazine, I tried to reflect all type of interests - republican, provincial, so that no one had monopoly [...]' Thus, *Mladost* and *Student* were in a pool of media that came under pressures reflecting the new realignments on the volatile Yugoslav political scene, as Milošević 'simultaneously extended personal influence over the most influential media and shifted their supervision from the City to the Central Committee [...]'⁴⁷⁹

The narrative that Belgrade was changing beyond recognition in those years might have been reinforced by the subsequent events and the role of Serbia in the Yugoslav wars. Yet, individuals from different parts of the country and with very different biographies tend to share a similar sense of a major rupture and change. Indeed, 1988 features as the crucial year in Yugoslav late socialism, the 'point of no return', where a sense of personal disempowerment and disappointment was enhanced by novel, often shocking developments and claims made on behalf of individuals, groups and nations. The events of 1988 caused irreparable rifts at different levels within the LSYY, including the youth press. This paved the way for the final debate on the future of the institutional youth sphere.

4.3. The demise of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia

By 1990, many different positions regarding the future of the LSYY were put forward. As political debates on the future of the Yugoslav federation were

⁴⁷⁷ Redakcija, 'NJ.V.V.D. Kome treba gužva oko Mladosti?'

⁴⁷⁸ Miroslav Višić, 'Dokle seže ruka Slobodana Miloševića: Lov na vještice', *Studentski list* 3, 27.1.1988.

⁴⁷⁹ Nebojša Vladislavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, p.72.

intensifying, the Youth League was not only preoccupied with its own future, but also with the future of the entire Yugoslav institutional and political set-up. The 'constitutional crisis'⁴⁸⁰ of the late 1980s, as well as the first multi-party elections in 1990 led parts of the LSYY to transform into political parties and effectively put an end to the organisation which was founded in 1919 as the youth wing of the Yugoslav Communist Party. This section explores the debates concerning the future of the LSYY and Yugoslav federalism on the eve of the Yugoslav dissolution and seeks to shed light on the process of disintegration of the institutional youth sphere. This period saw both the growth not only of political and ethnic division within republican LSYs, but also a short-lived process of linking up across national lines – a development which was prematurely interrupted by the eruption of violence and the disintegration of the state.

In July 1989, the LSYY took part in the international youth gathering in Paris organised as one of the events to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the French revolution. Each of the republican branches saw the international context of the event as an ideal space for promoting its program or its (unofficial) agenda. The Greek youth from the New Democracy party, for instance, noted an increasing turn towards nationalism among some Yugoslav branches of the Youth League, and found itself provoked by what they saw as 'aggressive Macedonian propaganda' of some of the publications placed on display by the Macedonian LSY. However, a report by the Bosnian LSY noted that 'The Yugoslav youth organisation [...] was, after all, more united than it could be realistically expected, considering the actual and perhaps sometimes even dramatic differences which exist in the country.'⁴⁸¹ Indeed, the report reflected a wider sentiment that the changing nature of Yugoslav socialism might require a fundamental rethinking of the 'common umbrella' of the LSYY. It

⁴⁸⁰ The wider public and political debates on the constitutional reform at federal and at republican level were on the agenda of the youth organisation and significantly animated its leaderships after 1987. For instance, the Slovenian youth organisation was actively involved in the constitutional debates in Slovenia and was part of the so-called 'Zbor za ustavo' [Assembly for the constitution], initially led by the president of the youth organisation Jožef Školč (born 1960). The Slovenian LSY, however, did not endorse or sign the 'Slovenian declaration 89' of the Slovenian Democratic Union (later the Slovenian Democratic Party) led by Dimitrij Rupel and later by Janez Janša. The entire spectrum of visions between the demand of the non-institutional opposition groups in Slovenia for a confederation and market economy and the proposals of the communist leadership for an asymmetric federation and party pluralism within the framework of the SAWP, reverberated throughout the youth institutional realm. For an overview of the political debates within Slovenia, see: Božo Repe, 'Slovenci v osemdesetih letih (drugi del)', *Zgodovinski časopis* 3 (2000), 413-448.

⁴⁸¹ 'Izveštaj o učešču delegacije SSOJ na skupu Pariz 89', *Republička konferencija SSOBIH*, Archive of B&H, 'Materijali sa sjednica predsjedništva SSOBIH, 1990'/box 82.

stated: 'The concept, according to which the youth organisation of our country is once and for all ideologically determined, [seen] as a logical segment of a false conflict-free society, it seems that [such an organisation] definitely belongs to the past [...] a homogeneous society, compressed into one ideology in an unnatural way cannot be happier than an open and authentically pluralistic one.'⁴⁸² This quote captures the state of the youth institutional realm on the eve of the disintegration of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at its 14th extraordinary congress in January 1990⁴⁸³ and the first multi-party elections.

Branko Greganović, delegate of the Slovenian LSY in Belgrade and the next-to-last president of the LSY was seen as an embodiment of a loosely defined 'Yugoslav option':

I think there was a certain urban environment, an urban circle of people who felt Yugoslav not in the national sense, but saw it as an urban idea – 'why would I identify as anything else?' In my case my mixed origin is an additional reason, but I think no one saw the Yugoslav identification as problematic at the time [...] After all, that is something we do not choose, you don't choose your place of birth, the place where you grow up [...] My Yugoslavism was not a political stance [...] Those of us who felt Yugoslav in the urban, neutral sense, nationally neutral, although not in the sense of being nationally undeclared, but simply civically neutral, we did not realise that actually we are the instrument of a certain politics [...] It was a genuine feeling, healthy vital feeling of belonging to a certain space. The rock 'n' roll and everything that was going on in the eighties is an expression of that [...]

My biggest support came from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, while Croatia and Serbia were much more critical towards me personally [...] What I argued for did not necessarily include the survival of the [Yugoslav] state. That should be clear [...] At the time, I was perceived as a Yugoslav, as a representative of the Yugoslav option, although de facto that was never my fundamental goal. The fundamental goal was peace [...] So, that perception was context-dependent, rather than a result of my own intimate goals and desires. In my own perceptions, I never argued that the state must survive, especially not if the price to pay for that survival is totalitarianism, war... So, in that sense, I was not 'the Yugoslav option'. I was above all for democratic change and intimately for the preservation of peace. Objectively, in that context, it was what it was. One can't run away from what it objectively was.

The demise of the LCY, however, did not result in an immediate institutional break up. A reformist, pro-Yugoslav and pro-European political platform most ardently represented by federal Prime Minister Ante Marković,

⁴⁸² 'Izveštaj o učešću delegacije SSOJ na skupu Pariz 89'.

⁴⁸³ The title of the declaration of the 14th congress was 'New project for democratic socialism in Yugoslavia'. On the debates within the republican/provincial branches of the LCY and within the political realm in general in advance of and during the 14th extraordinary congress, see: Davor Pauković, 'Poslednji kongres Saveza Komunističke Jugoslavije: uzroci, tijek i posljedice raspada', *Suvremene teme* 1/1 (2008), 21-33.

was met with considerable approval in the youth realm, especially in the youth press. In December 1989, *Polet* organised a poll where it asked its readers to identify the most positive and negative events/individuals in Yugoslavia for 1989. Slobodan Milošević was voted the most negative, while Ante Marković the most positive. The editorial board of the Macedonian youth magazine *Mlad borec* was also asked to cast its vote – it pointed to Slobodan Milošević as the most negative and to the program of Prime Minister Marković and his cabinet, the successes of the Yugoslav football and basketball national teams, the foundation of alternative political organisations, the opening of the first sex shop in Zagreb and the federal daily *Borba* as the most positive.⁴⁸⁴ Similarly, the Bosnian student magazine *Valter* also maintained that

‘the promises given by the opposition fighting for power are not realistic and can hardly compare to [the Prime Minister’s] achievements so far, which have caused - in a completely a-national manner - a level of support unseen before. We should not have any doubts that this is a period where we’ll see a formal change of government, accompanied by strong disillusionment of manipulated voters. Because exclusive anti-communism does not imply automatic creativity; on the contrary, the motives are quite banal and easily recognisable – taking power.’⁴⁸⁵

This reflected a wider appeal of the reformist (pro-Yugoslav and pro-European) option among the youth.⁴⁸⁶ The youth press voiced the widespread opinion that the political vacuum is being filled by a new exclusivist, ethno-national doctrine. Even in Macedonia, where nationalism was rather tame, young journalists were warning of the impending dangers. In one of his editorials from 1990, the editor-in-chief of *Mlad borec*, Nikola Mladenov (1964-2013) targeted the rise of nationalism, both at Yugoslav and local level: ‘As if it became a civic duty to propagate national tragedy and vulnerability. In place of one collectivity – the class, we are being offered another one – the nation, the easiest way of manipulation with the emotions of tomorrow’s voters. The propagating of one’s one history – always the most bloody and most difficult – hasn’t bypassed us either [...]’⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Vesna Jurić Vurušić and Vlado Rukavina, ‘Poletov izbor ’89’, *Polet* 419-420, 22.12.1989, p.3.

⁴⁸⁵ Goran Todorović, ‘Sveti Ante’, *Valter* 28, 17.4.1990, p.2.

⁴⁸⁶ Srećko Mihailović et al. *Deca krize*.

⁴⁸⁷ Nikola Mladenov, ‘Народе македонски’, *Mlad borec* 1971, 07.03.1990.

Mladenov died in a car accident in March 2013. He was the founder and editor-in-chief of the Macedonian weekly *Fokus* and an ardent critic of the Macedonian political elites, their involvement in various corruption affairs and the curbing of media freedom by political influence. The weekly was sued for slander in 2006 in a major legal battle it eventually lost.

The European future for Yugoslavia which was espoused by federal Prime Minister Ante Marković indeed struck a chord with the new youth leaderships at the end of the 1980s, although the Slovenian youth organisation was the most vocal on the matter. Zoran Thaler was responsible for the sector of foreign cooperation at the Slovenian LSY in 1989 and initiated the drafting of a 'European declaration': 'In four points we determined what we are and what Europe means for us. Namely, that we are citizens of Europe and that we have had enough of the economic crisis and the inter-tribal conflicts and of the isolation of Yugoslavia from its natural historical surroundings and that we demand that Yugoslavia joins Europe'.⁴⁸⁸ The fact that Thaler declared a 'liberal socialist',⁴⁸⁹ could be partially explained by the argument that in the late stages of European socialism, liberalism became synonymous with a political system responsive to pluralism, respect for human rights, equality before the law and rule of law, and 'for the majority of the people in East-Central Europe it was closer to what in the West has come to be called social liberalism'.⁴⁹⁰ Azem Vllasi, who presided over the LSYY between 1974 and 1978, emphasised in his testimony that even in the second half of the 1970s,

... We nurtured the seed of social democracy. At times we even ridiculed the rigid, communist idea and the way the generation of our parents or the members of the veterans' organisation defended the League of Communists as something eternal [...] One can say that the seed of the social-democratic idea almost everywhere in the former Yugoslavia was born within the youth organisation.

The platform of the federal Prime Minister also overlapped with that of the anti-regime pro-Yugoslav intellectuals who gathered around UJDI (the League for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative).⁴⁹¹ Sarajevo-based *Valter*, for instance, published lengthy interviews with almost all of the prominent members of UJDI: from Predrag Matvejević, Rudi Supek, and Branko Horvat, to Shkëlzen Maliqi and Zagorka Golubović.⁴⁹² UJDI had a trans-generational appeal and activist core and its civic-based, pro-democratic and pro-Yugoslav platform struck a chord with numerous young activists, be it from the media or the

⁴⁸⁸ Vladimir Spasić, 'Zoran Thaler: želimo politički pluralizam', *Polet* 403, 24.2.1989, p.6.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ See: Sabrina P. Ramet and Danica Fink-Hafner, 'Values, Norms, and Education' in Sabrina P. Ramet and Danica Fink-Hafner (eds.) *Democratic Transition in Slovenia: Value Transformation, Education, and Media* (Texas A&M University Press, 2006), p. 20.

⁴⁹¹ See: Ljubica Spaskovska, 'Landscapes of Resistance, Hope and Loss: Yugoslav Supra-Nationalism and Anti-Nationalism' in Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (eds.), *Resisting the Evil: [Post] Yugoslav Anti-War Contention*, pp.37-61.

⁴⁹² *Valter* 23 (interview special), 26.1.1990.

political realm. For instance, at the helm of the Kosovan branch of UJDI formed in December 1989 stood the twenty-eight year old journalist Veton Surroi (born 1961).⁴⁹³ Considering the fact that the political space by 1990 had become considerably fragmented, even pan-Yugoslav initiatives such as UJDI had different local specificities which stemmed from the particular political context of the federal republics. Minutes from a meeting of the leadership of the Bosnian LSY, for instance, reveal that the meeting and cooperation with some of them was seen as problematic.⁴⁹⁴ Senad Pećanin recalled this period of forming new political alliances:

Of course we cooperated with UJDI – with Puhovski, Horvat, Žarko Korač, Vesna Pešić, Grebo... Crazy [Zdravko] Grebo had posters printed with the inscription 'People's Liberation Movement – we will die together' and him, Peđa and I were putting up these posters just before the war, at 2-3 am. HDZ and SDA had the slogan 'We will live together', so we went out that night and flooded the walls around the city with the posters – 'PLM-we will die together'.

Rasim Kadić credited the 'tolerant' and democratic character of UJDI's politics and brought up the 'non-partisan' character of the organisation:

UJDI was one noble idea of noble, highly educated, tolerant, democratically oriented people, but numerically totally insignificant [...] Since we in the LSY had our own space and finances [...] we served as a kind of logistical base for UJDI in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I remember meetings taking place on our premises, conferences [...] We once even invited [Serbian nationalist politician] Vuk Drašković [...] Why was UJDI important? Because it was a non-pretentious form [which allowed] for the hearing of a different opinion [...] It was the answer of smart people to the situation in which we found ourselves [...] We were somehow caught in between the non-partisan, non-political character of UJDI and our own ambitions to become a political party. That is why I could not really find my place, but I still think we were of some use for that idea [...] Of course it was clear that Yugoslavia can't exist without any of its parts. Let's be frank, that was one wicked game of the Slovenians and Milošević, where Milošević was acting as if he was trying to keep Slovenia in [...] while the Slovenes were playing the game eager to leave and pass the problems down south [...] No matter how liberal they were, they were nationalist.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ Gëzim Krasniqi, "'For Democracy – Against Violence": A Kosovar Alternative' in Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (eds.), *Resisting the Evil*, pp.83-103.

⁴⁹⁴ Đorđe Latinović: 'The fact that we are secretly or on the margins meeting with Abdulah Sidran, Gajo Sekulić, Zdravko Grebo is also [seen as] problematic...' 'Magnetofonski snimak sa 37. sjednice Predsjedništva RK SSOBIH održane 7.2.1990.g.', *Republička konferencija SSOBIH*, Archive of B&H, box 82.

⁴⁹⁵ This observation echoes certain scholarly arguments which similarly emphasise the fact that the violent conflicts essentially stemmed from Slovenia's unilateral exit from the federation. Shoup, for instance, argued that 'Slovenia's move to assert her independence, as subsequent events proved, played the role of the first falling domino from which the wars in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and finally Kosovo, were to follow.' See: Paul Shoup, 'The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and Western Foreign Policy in the 1980s' in Jasna Dragović-Soso and Lenard J. Cohen (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe*, p. 348.

In the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the LCY, reforming the Yugoslav institutional and political framework became an imperative. A view which saw the Socialist Alliance of Working People as the initial framework where political reform should commence was shared across the youth sphere.⁴⁹⁶ For instance, it was espoused by the Bosnian LSY, which maintained that a sudden shift from a mono-party to a multi-party system could be dangerous and even ruinous. Hence, it was argued that there should be a transitory period until the adoption of a new constitution: 'Potential solutions should be sought after in the independence of the existing socio-political organisations, their autonomy, the systemic reform of the SAWP which must become a modern pluralist organisation in the framework of which all the political interests of its existing and new members and parts could be articulated'.⁴⁹⁷ Miha Kovač, as a member of UJDI, represented the moderate line which did not put Slovenian independence from Yugoslavia over the priority of democratisation. Two decades later, he sees it as their attempt at the time to sideline the hard-liners:

You must understand that what I thought in those days was that the best solution is parliamentary democracy. But, in the Yugoslav context, we were thinking how to make this move slow enough in order to crush the hard-liners, who were much stronger in Belgrade and in the Yugoslav Army than in Slovenia or in Zagreb. So, the idea was to use the Socialist Union [SAWP] as a kind of a democratising movement [...]

On the other hand, I somehow liked Yugoslavia, because it was a crazy mess of very different cultures. And I actually felt very good when I was talking in Sarajevo or in Zagreb or in Belgrade with the people of my kind. And I saw Yugoslavia as a kind of a small picture of Europe [...] So, I had this theory that if Yugoslavia is going to fail, then, at a certain point, Europe will fail too. So, I became close to some people in Zagreb and Belgrade [from UJDI] who thought about how to democratise and at the same time preserve Yugoslavia.

The loosely defined framework of Europeanisation and democratisation for Yugoslavia appeared acceptable to the majority who were active in the Youth League and in the media at the end of the 1980s. Nowadays, however, in retrospective testimony one finds a high level of disapproval of Ante Marković's politics, mainly in light of his indecisiveness *vis-à-vis* Milošević and the hard-

⁴⁹⁶ Igor Lavš (ed.), *Prilozi iz javne rasprave o opštim načelima Statuta SSOJ* (Beograd: Predsedništvo Konferencije SSOJ, 1989),

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p.11.

liners within the Army. Rasim Kadić's opinion evokes a particular Bosniak perspective, reflective of a sense of disillusionment and betrayal:

Ante Marković is a noble man, modern and very important in the history of Bosnia and he did what he did from the noblest and best of reasons. But, the consequences of what he did are catastrophic for Bosnia and Herzegovina, terrible, immeasurably terrible [...] We trusted him like small children [...] That's why Ante Marković is one of the biggest malefactors of Bosnia [...] He totally neutralised us, pacified us, misled us, did nothing to help us [...] and did not want to speak until they invited him at the [International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia in] Hague. So, he didn't even want to speak against Milošević, after [the genocide in] Srebrenica [...] Regardless of the fact that he had noble, good intentions and ideas [...]

Zoran Thaler shared a similar type of critique:

As far as Marković is concerned, he formed the wrong alliance in the key moments. He had a chance to form an anti-Milošević coalition with the support from Washington and Brussels, and he didn't [...] Lončar and Marković were in the position to bring Yugoslavia into the EU in a very short time [...] The old-fashioned ideological camp prevented them from undertaking radical reforms.

By the end of 1989 there was a consensus among the majority of the republican branches of the LSYY that the organisation needed to undergo fundamental reforms, while the youth media did not shy away from portraying it as 'a sinking ship'.⁴⁹⁸ Zoran Kostov, currently university professor of journalism and media, was editor-in-chief of the main student magazine in Macedonia and active member of the LSY. As he put it,

The big difference between the federal youth organisation and the other federal bodies is that the former went through a controlled dissolution. It dissolved consensually [...] 'Dissolution' perhaps is not even the right term. The federal Youth League went through a controlled process of transformation.

The widespread recognition that the LSYY could not continue in its current framework was reflected in the fact that at the beginning of 1989 the federal level of the LSYY initiated a 'public debate' [*javna rasprava*] about the main principles of its Statute.⁴⁹⁹ That meant opening up a discussion which foreshadowed fundamental changes to the mission and the aims of the organisation. In June 1989, the LSYY published an edited volume consisting of

⁴⁹⁸ Hajrudin Redžović, 'Rasim Kadić: Neću da mi netko puca iznad glave', *Polet* 413, 29.9.1989, p.15.

⁴⁹⁹ Igor Lavš (ed.), *Prilozi iz javne rasprave o opštim načelima Statuta SSOJ*.

I am grateful to professor Dejan Jović for drawing my attention to this and for allowing me access to the material from his personal archive.

the summaries of the discussions and conclusions in the different branches of the League (for a more detailed overview, see Table 4). In addition to their views on the future of the organisation, the local Youth Leagues also outlined their visions of the future of the Yugoslav political system. Although nominally all of the republican branches of the LSYY referred to the democratisation of the organisation and that of the state as the sine qua non of any future statute or constitutional change and a new political agreement, the views were diverging. The debate unfolded, sandwiched between two extremes: that the organisation should be immediately abolished because it had ceased to function at a local level (in particular after the abolishment of the Youth Day relay), on the one hand,⁵⁰⁰ and that it should keep its socialist orientation, on the other. Whilst there was seemingly still a shared language around terms such as democracy, pluralism, rule of law, accountability, and free elections, the implication of these terms meant very different things to different groups and individuals. One of the major points of contention was the 'generational' character of the LSYY. Voices which questioned the generational principle of political organisation were most prominent in Slovenia, Croatia, as well as in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For instance, in 1989 Rasim Kadić was elected president of the Bosnian LSY with a program which proposed the creation of a completely new youth organisation, rather than its reform: 'Do we need a political organisation on a generational principle at all? Political organisations of the generational type are very rare in the world'.⁵⁰¹ The Bosnian, Croatian and the Macedonian LSYs argued for 'an interest-based' organisation with voluntary membership, proposing an abandoning of the hierarchical model in favour of a network-based one, independence and abolishment of the 'paternalistic' role of the League of Communists. Within this camp there was a consensus that the LSYY in its present conception (as a socio-political organisation and a mass, unitary and educational organisation) and form is obsolete. This view was not shared by the LSY in the YPA, the Serbian and the Montenegrin LSYs. Although the Serbian LSY maintained that the new youth organisation should be liberated from 'programmatic dogmas', it also argued that the new Youth League should preserve its socialist orientation and should not be organised on national/republican basis. The latter stood in stark contrast with the demand of

⁵⁰⁰ Dejan Jović, 'Kad bi SSOJ postojao, trebalo bi ga ukinuti (1)' *Polet* 402, 10.2.1989.

⁵⁰¹ Hajrudin Redžović, 'Rasim Kadić', p.15.

the Slovenian LSY that the Youth League should not strive for 'unity', as it expressed its disapproval of the role of the 'conference' as an arbiter and a 'supranational body'. The views of the different LSYY branches on the future of Yugoslav socialist federalism similarly differed and could be said to reflect the views of the respective republican leaderships. For instance, the Serbian⁵⁰² and the Montenegrin LSYs argued for 'socialist political pluralism' and the YPA's Youth League for 'pluralism of self-managing interests'. The Macedonian LSY did not entirely abandon the socialist framework and advanced a vision of 'multi-programmatic political pluralism'⁵⁰³, while the Slovenian LSY advocated 'complete affirmation of political pluralism' and parliamentary democracy.⁵⁰⁴

Indeed, the debates about the new statute and role of the LSYY became overshadowed by the more narrow republican debates on how to reorganise the Youth League, particularly as the republican congresses used to precede the federal one in the Yugoslav political calendar. A sense of new beginning and enthusiasm was prevalent as the republican branches of the LSYY embarked on the preparations for their last congresses in 1990. For example, the video clip for the last congress of the Macedonian Youth League had the slogan 'Let's make the world ours [*Да го направиме светот наш*]' and featured an egg on a naked actress – as a symbol of a new beginning, according to Risto Ivanov. He explained that in the Macedonian tradition the egg is also put on ill, wounded spots of the body and the intention was to symbolically convey the message of detecting the existing anomalies and exposing the 'naked' truth. Moreover, the leadership of the Macedonian LSY repeatedly expressed sympathies and

⁵⁰² The Serbian LSY was not uniform either. The camp that did not want to join the Socialist Party of Serbia under Milošević's leadership established the 'Social-democratic alliance of youth of Serbia' which in July 1990 was registered as the 'New Democracy' party, whose program was 'based on the liberal ideas in the field of economy and on the social-democrat ideas in the social sphere'. Its leader was Dušan Mihajlović (born 1948), a former youth functionary from the older generation. The party was in opposition during the first half of the 1990s, but later joined a coalition led by the Socialist Party. In 2003 the party changed its name into 'Liberals of Serbia' [*Liberali Srbije*]. It ceased to exist in 2010.

⁵⁰³ The Macedonian Youth League maintained that 'political pluralism' is the opposite of the existence of a political monopoly, i.e. a one-party system. However, the concept also 'transcends the narrow framework of party pluralism'. They foresaw the SAWP as a 'political parliament' and demanded a new type of socialism 'that guarantees material and spiritual progress, socialism that encompasses all the progressive achievements of the modern civilization, socialism of rich people, motivated for work and creation, where individual innovation, creativity, initiative and ability would be affirmed and stimulated [...] where all human rights and liberties would be respected...'

'Сојузот на социјалистичката младина на Македонија и реформата на политичкиот систем, март 1989 година', *Републичка конференција на ССММ*, Archive of Macedonia, box number 1/1989.

⁵⁰⁴ Igor Lavš (ed.), *Prilozi iz javne rasprave o opštim načelima Statuta SSOJ*.

support for 'the Slovenian orientation', whilst also insisting on the significance of a vaguely civic, as opposed to an ethno-national concept of political organisation. Olivera Trajkovska, now a well-known journalist, was then presiding over the city of Kumanovo LSY branch. In an interview from 1990, she summarised this attitude: 'I still perceive Yugoslavia from Sežana to Gevgelija and I don't understand the Slovenian orientation as an attack on Yugoslavism. It might be an attack on our understanding of Yugoslavism, but, nevertheless, that is an absolutely legitimate option [...] The program of the RC LSYM is not burdened by the nation, it does not offer national salvation in any respect and reasons in a completely different way...'⁵⁰⁵

In Croatia, related symbolism emerged as the Youth League chose a stork for its pre-congress marketing materials (see Annex 3) and promoted 'pluralism, tolerance, compromise and creativity'.⁵⁰⁶ The message reflected the 'liberal' values it stood for, as Dejan Jović pointed out:

If you look at the posters for the last congress, you'll see a stork, which was the symbol of that congress [...] He [Srećko Pantović] made versions [of the poster] with four messages – tolerance, freedom, justice, something like that. And when you look at them, they are generally speaking liberal values. That was the direction. After all, that was a pluralistic organisation which was not nationalist, wasn't Yugoslav, wasn't an organisation which aspired to state-building [...] The organisation was really divided into two – the liberal camp and the 'state' one. Many people from that state apparatus camp later joined the national parties, the police, the intelligence services [...]

Some republican Youth Leagues used the congress to announce a more consolidated platform. At its congress in Portorož in 1989, the Slovenian LSY put forward the slogan which followed its original acronym: ZSMS - *Za Svobodo Mislečega Sveta* [For freedom of the thinking world/For freedom-minded world]. At his opening speech, Jožef Školč - the president of the organisation targeted 'the language of new Serbian communism', and announced the transformation of the LSY into a political party 'as a responsible and clearly articulated

⁵⁰⁵ Antonio Dimitrievski, 'Оливера Трајковска-првиот човек на кумановската младина: Не сме „бижутерија„!', *Mlad borec*, 20.04.1990, p.13.

⁵⁰⁶ The congress was scheduled for 30 March – 1 April 1990. However, at the seventh session of the 'Republican Conference' of the LSYC in February 1990, there was a friction over the future re-organisation of the youth organisation. One group formed 'Autonomni demokratski savez Hrvatske' [The autonomous democratic league of Croatia - ADLC] and its delegates left the session in protest, leading some journalists to compare them to the Slovenian Party delegates at the last congress of the Yugoslav League of Communists the previous month. The ADLC later joined the Social-Democratic Party of Croatia (SDSH) which in 1994 merged with the Social-Democratic Party (SDP) which came out of the League of Communists of Croatia. Snežana Dragojević Harapin, 'Burevjesnik u našim redovima', *Polet* 424, 23.2.1990, p.8.

integral part of the Slovenian and Yugoslav political scene'.⁵⁰⁷ The change was reflected in the amended Statute which described the Slovenian Youth League as an 'independent, open political and social organisation and part of the youth political movement'. In addition, the Congress program documents emphasised the demand for the end of 'political monism'.⁵⁰⁸

The new leadership of the Macedonian youth at the end of the 1980s also embraced a spectrum of liberal concepts and values. Like Rasim Kadić in Bosnia, Risto Ivanov, the last president of the Macedonian LSY from 1988 until 1991, represented 'a moderate liberal option', according to Kostov's testimony. He enjoyed considerable popularity for his support of change and what were considered at the time non-conventional values and political practices. Slobodan Najdovski (born 1961) worked at the LSY in Belgrade from 1986 until 1988 in the agro-industrial sector. He later joined the successor-party of the LSYM, which later became the Liberal Party. He located the germination of the processes of democratisation within the political elite of the Youth League and in particular with the leadership of Ivanov. It is telling that, yet again, the 'Slovenian' demands became established as the model against which progressive politics was measured. For instance, the Macedonian Youth League also adopted a new acronym for the title of the organisation similar to the above-named Slovenian one: 'LSYM: Freedom for creation, thought and change' [*CCMM – Слобода за создавање, мислење и менување*]:

Risto brought in new freshness and the Slovenian wave significantly impacted on the [Macedonian] youth organisation [...] Risto gathered many professionals and he was more popular than [politician] Vasil Tupurkovski [...] I think that the conception of democracy in Macedonia unfolded within that core of the youth organisation which demanded societal changes.

The Slovenian LSY was renamed the 'ZSMS-Liberal Party' and at the first multi-party elections in 1990 it won 12 mandates in the new Slovenian Parliament, but remained in opposition against the Government led by the DEMOS coalition. While in 1989 the idea of Yugoslavia still figured prominently in the Congress documents, at the 14th congress of the ZSMS-LP in 1990, it

⁵⁰⁷ 'Uvodni govor Predsednika RK ZSMS Jožeta Školča', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/ technical unit 387.

Between April and December 1990, 202 political parties were registered throughout Yugoslavia. As cited in John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, p.276.

⁵⁰⁸ 'Predlog dokumentov XIII. kongresa ZSMS, Portorož, 3-5 novembra 1989', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 387.

was Slovenia which was the focus and the principal frame of reference. Yugoslavia at that point was perceived and portrayed as a problem that requires a solution, albeit in a constructive manner: 'We believe that it is possible to solve the inter-ethnic problems in the Balkans through negotiation; because it is in our core interest that those problems are solved, as Slovenia can't exist peacefully with a civil war on its borders, we will cooperate with all those political forces in Yugoslavia which would advocate dialogue, tolerance and compromise, irrespective of their political orientations'.⁵⁰⁹ Zoran Thaler reiterated the mission of the Slovenian youth organisation initially as one of democratisation, where the 'national question' did not figure prominently, to one of 'exit from socialism' as things began to deteriorate at federal level after 1989:

The national question initially was none of our concern, us – students and youth, that was the story of DEMOS and *Nova revija 57*. What we were interested in was democratisation, civil rights, the question of the verbal crime, civil service, new social movements, the greens, gay, lesbians, death penalty [...] When I came back from Belgrade in 1988, the atmosphere, the tension was much worse compared to 1986 [...] When we simplified our program (from 1990) it boiled down to – we no longer need the reform of socialism – Gorbachev was popular at the time, perestroika and glasnost - we need an exit from socialism.

A somewhat different type of path of institutional transformation was pursued by the Macedonian LSY. It eventually had three legal successors: the 'Young democratic progressive party' [*Млада демократска прогресивна странка*], the Macedonian Youth Council [*Младински совет на Македонија*] and the Student Union [*Сојуз на студенти*]. After the Slovenian Youth Council [*Mladinski svet*] joined the Council of European National Youth Committees (later 'European youth forum') in 1991, it was assisting the Macedonian Youth Council until it was admitted in 1993. The political successor of the LSYM, which later merged with the Liberal Party, went to the first multi-party elections as part of Ante Marković's Alliance of Reform Forces [*Savez reformskih snaga/Сојуз на реформските сили*]. They won five MPs, in addition to the nine from the Alliance of Reform Forces, which eventually obtained fourteen seats. Ivanov pointed to the importance of the economic platform of the federal Prime Minister's electoral agenda:

⁵⁰⁹ 'Programski dokumenti za 14. Kongres ZSMS-LS. Predlog. Manifest liberalizma', *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 391.

L: *Why did you decide to go with Marković?*

Because everything here boiled down to political frustrations. From the very beginning of my political engagement my only goal was the improvement of the condition of the individual in Macedonia. It could only improve through economic measures, not politics. Marković was the one who focused the most on that problem [...] Secondly, I feared the severing of all ties and communication with the rest of the Yugoslav space, because in that case it was clear who would dominate here.

New political platforms which echoed the broad demands for democratisation and Europeanisation of Yugoslavia similarly marked the formation of the Liberal Party (later Liberal-Democratic Party) of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Stemming from the Bosnian LSY, it was originally established in 1989 as a party under the name SSO-DS (Socialist Youth League – Democratic League). During the electoral campaign for the first multi-party elections, they went ahead with the slogan ‘liberty, democracy, harmony’.⁵¹⁰ In the highly fragmented political space in 1990, this platform did not find great support among the electorate. Nevertheless, they were aware of the fact that a platform based on the sovereignty of the citizen (as opposed to the nation), would not attract much support when they rebranded themselves as liberals in 1991. Kadić argued that the ‘salvation’ of Bosnia-Herzegovina lies in ‘the beginning of the demise of the nation-based political parties.’⁵¹¹ Martin Raguž (born 1958) was also one of the leaders of the young Bosnian liberals. He reiterated the generational, the trans-national and the civic dimension of their liberal platform:

‘This attitude of ours has a biological-generational aspect, the fact that we were born and brought up without, with very little or at least with an insufficient amount of communist indoctrination; also taking into account the communication aspect – CNN and MTV. Today we don’t want to compare ourselves only with what is happening in this country, but also with developments at global level, in any sphere – music, culture, politics, sports [...] Of course, we know that our Liberal Party won’t become a major power in society, as is the case everywhere in the world [...] But, we hope that it will be an influential political option [...] which would attract those who don’t perceive their national belonging as their profession.’⁵¹²

⁵¹⁰ Neven Andjelić, *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The End of a Legacy* (Taylor & Francis, 2003), p.183. The non-political successor of the Bosnian LSY was the Alliance of Youth Organisations [*Savez omladinskih organizacija-SOO*]. It was meant to unite the former interest-based units of the LSY.

⁵¹¹ Senad Pećanin, ‘Intervju: Rasim Kadić, predsjednik Liberalne stranke BiH’, *Naši dani* 1017, 7.6.1991, p.9.

⁵¹² Predrag Kojović, ‘Dobro došli, liberali’, *Naši dani* 1016, 24.5.1991, p.15.

As late as September 1990, certain individuals and circles within what used to be the LSYY still worked on the creation of a new youth body for the envisioned democratic, multi-party Yugoslav (con)federation, even after the LSYY self-abolished itself at its last federal congress in Ljubljana in 1990.⁵¹³ Namely, the Coordination Committee for the establishment of the Yugoslav New Forum [*Jugoslovenski Novi Forum – JNF*], on an old letterhead bearing the logo of the LSYY invited all newly established organisations and parties – successors of the old Youth League to attend the meeting of the Committee and deliver an opinion on the ‘draft codex’.⁵¹⁴ The letter also included an invitation for a round-table discussion entitled ‘The Yugoslav Community (working title)’ [*Jugoslovenska zajednica (radni naslov)*]. The Yugoslav New Forum was envisioned to act as an umbrella organisation, i.e. a ‘programmatic coalition of political parties stemming from the former League of Socialist Youth organisations’. Among other things, it stated ‘a reaffirmation of the civic status of the individual in politics’, ‘preservation of the Yugoslav state as a parliamentary republic’; ‘for a realistic and tolerant debate about a confederal arrangement as a legitimate proposal during the constituent process’; and ‘a state founded upon the sovereignty of the citizen’.⁵¹⁵ The majority of the platforms articulated within the broad network of the LSYY on the eve of its demise overlapped with the ideas and visions put forward by the intellectual and political front of the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Alternative (UJDI) and the above-mentioned party led by federal Prime Minister Ante Marković. This polyphonic reformist, pro-democratisation, liberal, pro-European camp envisioned Yugoslavia as a democratic (con)federation, part of the European Community.

Nevertheless, the question remains as to why this generation’s new sense of layered citizenship failed to materialise into a viable, pan-Yugoslav political alternative at the end of the decade. Indeed, why their political, cultural and media activism did not translate into a more coherent and politically articulated ‘Yugoslav option’ with the advent of multi-partism at the end of the

⁵¹³ Azem Vllasi was invited to the last congress in Ljubljana as a former president of the LSYY and also as a symbolic political gesture, since he had just left prison after his conflict with the Serbian political leadership and the abolishment of Kosovo’s autonomy. He described the way the LSYY put up with the dissolution of the socialist institutions as ‘civilised’: ‘It was unbelievable. If only everyone else followed the example of the Youth League [...] In a nice, peaceful way they announced the end of the LSYY... very civilised.’

⁵¹⁴ ‘Kordinacioni odbor za osnivanje Jugoslovenskog Novog Foruma, Beograd, 4.09.1990’, *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 391.

⁵¹⁵ ‘Prednacrta Kodeksa Jugoslovenskog Novog Foruma’, *RK ZSMS 1974-1990*, Archive of Slovenia, AS 538/technical unit 391.

1980s? The answer is threefold. The first aspect relates to the general context and the role of the older generation in the events of the late 1980s, while the other two relate more specifically to the generation under scrutiny here. Firstly, the answer to the question about the reasons for the Yugoslav *Sonderweg*⁵¹⁶ could be partially found in the argument about the multi-level crisis. To paraphrase the question about why Germany - unlike comparable countries in the West and North - turned to fascist and totalitarian perversion: 'why did Yugoslavia - unlike comparable countries such as Czechoslovakia - turn to violent conflict and nationalist perversion?' The thesis that 'three basic developmental problems of modern societies came to the fore at about the same time' and 'the temporal overlap of and interaction among these three crises [formation of a nation-state, constitutional decision on parliamentarisation and the social question]' which led to their incomplete resolution and National Socialism, seems equally plausible if transposed to the Yugoslav context. The fact that an international and a domestic economic crisis coincided with a political/constitutional one at home and a major post-Cold War reconfiguration in international relations meant that several critical developments had to be handled at the same time by elites belonging to different biological and political generations which held very different views on the future. Moreover, the individuals who held the real positions and bastions of power and in the second half of the 1980s fought hard to bring the 'republicanisation of Yugoslav politics'⁵¹⁷ to a definite conclusion, generally belonged to the older, what was described as the second dominant Yugoslav generation – the 'post-war generation', which 'to a large extent managed to build its own egoism/self-interest into the social and political system'.⁵¹⁸ Andrew Wachtel similarly argued that the conflicts and wars throughout the 1990s 'were led, not by the generation that grew up on 'soft' Yugoslavism from the mid-1950s to the 1970s, but by a group who had come of age during or just after the ethnic slaughter that had riven the country during World War II'.⁵¹⁹ Zoran Thaler echoed this view in his testimony by blaming the older generation for the tragic outcome: 'Yugoslavia was destroyed by the generation which was 50 at the time, or

⁵¹⁶ Jürgen Kocka, 'Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: the case of the German *Sonderweg*', *History and Theory* 38/1 (1999), 40-50.

⁵¹⁷ George Schopflin, 'Political Decay in one-Party Systems', p.316.

⁵¹⁸ Djordjije Uskoković, 'Neke najčešće teorijsko-metodološke teškoće', p.162.

⁵¹⁹ Andrew B. Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*, p.197.

rather, between 40 and 60 [...] None of us was in a position of power so that one could seriously do or prevent something.'

Secondly, the layered sense of citizenship where the ethno-national and the Yugoslav dimensions coexisted harmoniously and complemented each other was contingent upon the inherited political consensus and the existing social context, where this sense of layered Yugoslavism was encouraged and provided with the space to develop and exist as such. Towards the end of the 1980s, as the prominence of the ethno-national grew in every sphere, the tension between these different identities grew as well to the point that the multilayered citizenship began to fracture. As I have argued elsewhere, the notion of 'fractured citizenship' relates to a 'segmented political life and cemented ethno-national identities', where the fractures could be either healed, so to say, or they could deepen and produce a 'fragmented citizenship with more neatly delineated and segregated identities, institutions and forms of political and cultural belonging'.⁵²⁰ As it has been shown in this chapter, with the pronounced polarisations in the public sphere in the second half of the decade, and as the existing Yugoslav political/ideological consensus was being destabilised, individuals were compelled to make political choices in a political space which was being predominantly realigned along ethno-national lines. Moreover, with the disappearance of the League of Communists and the abolishment of the League of Socialist Youth at the end of the decade, the common political institutional platforms which provided the space for supra-ethnic convergence and pan-Yugoslav debate, were irretrievably lost.

Finally, the role the young Slovenes had played throughout the decade in pioneering new models of cultural, media and political youth activism proved to be critical at the end of the decade as well. As has been underlined on several occasions, activists in the other Yugoslav republics took inspiration from and often modelled their own activism upon what was unfolding in the Slovenian youth realm. However, as it was shown above with regard to the congress materials of the Slovenian youth league in 1989-1990, there was a dramatic shift in priorities and frames of reference, to the extent that there was an evident sense of distancing from the rest of the Yugoslav space. Hence, the consolidation of a 'Yugoslav' political option at the end of the decade failed

⁵²⁰ Ljubica Spaskovska, 'The Fractured 'We' and the Ethno-National 'I': the Macedonian Citizenship Framework', *Citizenship Studies* 16/3-4: pp. 383-396, 384.

mainly because at the critical juncture of 1988-90 it was not pursued by those who had been at the forefront of this generation's political organisation. Instead, subsumed by the developments on the Slovenian political scene and the growing internal divisions in the youth realm among leftist/liberals and conservative nationalists, they shifted their focus on Slovenia and abandoned any attempts at forging a pan-Yugoslav alternative. This explains the sense of betrayal and disappointment present among the interviewees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Rasim Kadić's testimony is particularly illustrative of a common narrative which faults the Slovenian elites for abandoning the project of democratisation for the whole of Yugoslavia, for embracing nationalism and choosing to step out of the federation without carefully considering all the consequences it would entail:

ZSMS for me were genuine democrats who spoke in a completely new manner. I was supporter of that [...] Few years later, when Yugoslavia really began to disintegrate, I actually realised that all of them generally acted primarily as Slovenes and only secondly as liberals, social democrats, conservatives [...] At the beginning maybe they were for democratisation of Yugoslavia, but since that was impossible with Milošević, they quickly transformed their demands into demands for independence [...] They are my friends, democrats, but nevertheless they were nationalist [...] Now, Branko Mamula was saying this about them from day one. Who was right? (laughs) But, you can't halt the flow of history with force. I was the only politician from Bosnia who, when the conflict in Slovenia started, wrote a letter that the Slovenian journey to independence can't be stopped forcefully, that the YPA lost its credibility because it acts as a Serb and not as a Yugoslav army and that I absolutely oppose the use of force for political aims.

The period from 1986 until 1990 saw a radical change in the way the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia articulated its politics and defined its role. From a relatively strong consensus on the need for change and reform within the framework of socialist self-management in 1986, after 1987 it was caught in the prevailing political debates which worked to polarise Yugoslav public opinion. The fragmentation along republican lines simultaneously engendered internal de-homogenisation, as the political upheavals in 1988 forced everyone to take a stand. When the wide anti-regime, anti-bureaucratic frame which initially united overlapping demands from industrial workers, students and ordinary citizens shrank to the point of accommodating demands which were perceived as particular to Serbia and the Kosovan Serbs, the youth infrastructure and the shared programmatic goals of the LSYU began to lose their cohesiveness. A sense of shock in front of the drastic change in the

publicly acceptable discourse, imagery and the forging of a new ethnocentric consensus was present in the majority of the personal memories of those who happened to be in Belgrade and Serbia during the last years of the decade. The proposed statute changes which came out of the public debate organised by the LSSY in 1989 reflected both the gap between the Slovenian, on the one hand, and the Serbian, the Montenegrin and the YPA youth organisation, on the other, but also shed light on a spectrum of shared visions and values which existed among the other branches. The particular blend of Serbian nationalism, socialism and Yugoslavism espoused by Slobodan Milošević dealt a decisive blow to any viable socialist vision. By the end of the decade the 'pluralism of self-managing interests' was almost entirely replaced by a new discourse which experimented with a range of social democratic and liberal concepts and values and which foresaw 'an exit from socialism', without necessarily envisioning an outright exit from Yugoslavia. Democratic, pro-European Yugoslavism remained a credible and desirable political framework for most of the activist youth in the LSYY and in the youth media who chose not to side with the politics of the new ethno-nationally defined parties.

Table 4

League of Socialist Youth of Bosnia-Herzegovina	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest and project-based youth organisation• Independence and abolishment of the 'paternalistic' role of the League of Communists• Individual accountability and responsibility• Rule of law and democracy/direct elections
League of Socialist Youth of Montenegro	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For democratic socialism/socialist political pluralism• Against the inter-dependence among socio-political organisations and the youth organisation as a transmission belt with regard to the Party• The Socialist Alliance of Working People as the main platform for political pluralism
League of Socialist Youth of Croatia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest-based organisation /abolishment of the classical political forms of organisation and of the LSY as a socio-political organisation• Decentralisation of the decision-making process, instead of consensual/collective decision-making
League of Socialist Youth of Macedonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For a socialist legal (not party) state/against political monopoly/'multiprogramatic political pluralism'• The Socialist Alliance of Working People as the main platform, 'political parliament'• An interest-based youth organisation, instead of exclusively territory-based• Abandoning of the hierarchical model in favour of a network-based one• Voluntary membership• The definition of the LSY as mass, unitary and educational organisation is no longer tenable
League of Socialist Youth of Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The League of Communists should become one of many political parties/parliamentary

	<p>democracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Complete affirmation of political pluralism' • Nationalism as a consequence of the inadequate political system • Depolitisation of all state organs/decentralisation of federal institutions • Optional political convergence at federal level • European accession • The youth organisation should not strive for 'unity' and its 'conference' should give up on the role of ultimate arbiter and a 'supranational body'
League of Socialist Youth of Vojvodina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LSY lacks legitimacy • For democratic socialism/rule of law/federative union of equals citizens • The new Youth League as an independent political organisation
League of Socialist Youth of Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LSY as a pale copy of the other socio-political organisations • The new youth organisation should be liberated from 'programmatic dogmas' • For 'socialist political pluralism'/one citizen-one vote • The new Youth League should preserve its 'socialist' orientation/abolish the 'congress' • It should not allow convergence on national basis • Socialist, federative, non-aligned Yugoslavia
League of Socialist Youth in the YPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main principles outlined in the Statute should not be changed, only supplemented • 'Pluralism of self-managing interests' • The Youth League should remain a unitary organisation, 'open and democratic' • Differences and divisions should not be 'glorified or absolutised'

*Adapted from Igor Lavš (ed.), *Prilozi iz javne rasprave o opštim načelima Statuta SSOJ* (Belgrade: Predsedništvo Konferencije SSOJ, 1989).

Conclusion: Rethinking youth politics and culture in late socialist Yugoslavia: the lens of the last Yugoslav generation

*Moja prva i najveća želja bi bila da se probudim
i da ustanovim da je 1990 godina i da kažem
'Uh, al' sam nešto ružno sanjao...'⁵²¹*

Milan Mladenović, EKV

The thesis reflected on a generational challenge to Yugoslav socialism, in which socialist self-management was not necessarily rejected, but rather seen as capable of reform within the existing Yugoslav federal framework. It showed how an urban trans-republican network developed that expressed novel ideas in politics and culture and engendered issue-oriented activism, in addition to a new 'sense of citizenship', where the Yugoslav and the ethno-national line of identification were seen as complementary and not mutually exclusive. Although significantly conditioned by the republican contexts, debates, exchanges and interactions took place across republican borders. This realm of youth politics and culture which had the wide decentralised network of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia as its institutional umbrella broke down only very late in the decade once the physical dissolution of the country began to materialise. The thesis addressed the publicly prominent/active youth of the 1980s against the background of Yugoslav late socialist research that dealt with 'the crisis generation'. It also addressed the ways in which the actors themselves mobilised the rhetoric of youth/generation to challenge the mainstream, establishing new political languages through cultural acts, journalistic writing or issue-oriented activism.

The thesis focused on the reinvention of the institutional youth sphere and the new concepts of freedom members of this generation put forward through the youth media and through their various 'acts of citizenship'. The first chapter elaborated on the notion of space - both in physical terms and as a form of public platform where the boundaries of permitted critique and 'tolerated freedom' could be challenged and tested. In addition, it addressed the subtle border between negotiation and dissent in the rapport these youngsters had

⁵²¹ 'My first and biggest wish would be to wake up and realise that it is the year 1990 and say: "Uh, that was one bad dream!"

with their youth organisation and with the state. The LSYY was perceived as capable of reforming and acting as a conduit for new forms of politics and culture, whether derived from internal sources or taken from new developments, particularly in Western European countries. In this sense, representatives of this generation - for the most part - still believed in a 'Yugoslav way'. A more daring style of journalistic writing, new forms of music and art and new forms of political expression and activism found shelter within the institutional youth sphere. As a state 'socio-political' institution that was nevertheless decentralised in form, relatively distanced from the realm of high politics, and full of 'experimental' peripheral spaces, the LSYY was perfectly positioned to channel and support new ideas and forms of cultural and political activism with its considerable material resources and infrastructure. At the same time, it had to maintain a balance between 'the new' and 'the old'. In addition, the federal level of the Youth League often faced the challenge of reconciling the disparate attitudes and views coming from its diverse 'base' all over the country. Moreover, being part of the political system, it had to frame the new demands and aspirations in the politically acceptable vocabulary, although internal debates about 'the democratisation' of the LSYY began soon after the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980. Hence, a closer look at the internal dynamics, internal debates and changes over time within socialist institutions provides a venue for studying socialist societies beyond the often taken for granted paradigm of 'binary socialism'.

The concept of 'freedom' was central to this generation's cause: it was primarily associated with freedom of thought, speech and expression, which became particularly prominent during the bannings of particular issues of youth magazines, the contestations of article 133 and the elusive definition of the crime of 'enemy propaganda', as well as during the rise of the new issue-oriented campaigns around peace, environmentalism and sexual freedom. However, freedom for many of these activists did not mean the end of Yugoslavia and socialist self-management, at least until the very late 1980s: for most, Yugoslav socialism was still capable of reforming itself and accommodating these demands. The second chapter reflected on the debates concerning the future of the inherited socialist framework of values and commemorative practices and the ways Tito's legacy was going to be carried forward following his death. Although frequently reproached for an alleged

appropriation of far right ideologies, the different cultural acts (punk music, the controversial Youth Baton poster) essentially challenged the norms and discourse of an older generation and sought to re-think the performative dimension through which the various levels of the Yugoslav post-war consensus were manifested.

Until the late 1980s, the young activists involved in the different issue-oriented campaigns that used the institutional youth realm as a platform to gain visibility in the public space, still operated within the discourse of socialist self-management, social justice and solidarity, seeking to put under scrutiny the malfunctions of the system and the corrupt elites. As it was demonstrated in Chapter 3, new areas for political expression opened up around issues of peace, anti-militarism, environmentalism/nuclear disarmament and sexuality and it was the League of Socialist Youth that brought these issues to public attention. What was unique to this generation's understanding of the socio-political context was an acceptance of the Yugoslav institutional framework and an identification with Yugoslavia in a political, or civic sense, as they essentially sought to correct, criticise or ridicule the regime, thus drawing a rather clear line between their anti-regime activism and the overt anti-Yugoslavism which began to dominate in the late 1980s, in particular among the intellectual circles in Serbia and Slovenia.⁵²² The way they framed their 'acts of citizenship' and articulated their demands conflated their particular identity as stemming from the Yugoslav context, possessing Yugoslav-specific contestations of the socio-political framework with challenges resulting from developments at international level, as the latter served both as a personal inspiration and a platform for meaningful exchange and interaction.

One of the prevalent debates both within the political realm and the sphere of institutional youth culture up until 1987 was how to maintain but rethink and reform Yugoslav socialist federalism. After 1987 the clashes intensified, the envisioned responses to the crisis further diversified and the ideological gaps widened to the extent that one could observe more conflicting approaches rather than constructive debate. This was particularly visible during the debates for the amendment of the Serbian republican constitution in 1988 and the emerging anti-Albanian discourse which would eventually lead to Kosovo being stripped of its constitutional autonomy in 1989. In Chapter 4, the

⁵²² See: Jasna Dragović-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation'*.

thesis provided new perspectives on this moment from the point of view of the young generation and the youth sphere. The period from 1986 until 1990 saw a radical change in the way the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia articulated its politics and defined its role. In the late 1980s, the political debates and their framing in hostile and exclusivist terms started to migrate to the youth political and cultural realm, engendering conflicts, statements or observations which did away with the previously established codes of public debate and political communication. At the same time, however, an intra-republican diversification among the young political and media elite occurred, accompanied by a convergence on individual or group basis across national lines and mainly around reformist and liberal values.

Like the majority of the anti-nationalist liberal and leftist intellectuals in the second half of the 1980s, some of the vocal representatives of this generation advanced a vision of Yugoslavism/Yugoslav citizenship that could stand apart from dogmatic socialism and ethnic nationalism. Born and raised in socialist Yugoslavia to parents who were also educated and socialised in the post-1945 Yugoslav context, these youngsters had internalised to a certain extent the proclaimed notions of freedom and peace, equality and solidarity and thus openly campaigned through the youth media against public hypocrisy when it came to the proclaimed values and their actual implementation.⁵²³ However, a prominent caesura detected by the absolute majority of my respondents was indeed the rise of Slobodan Milošević and Serbian nationalism after 1987. Hence, during the last three years of the decade there was an apparent discursive shift within the youth realm as hopes for amelioration of the system of socialist self-management and the federation in its current form were abandoned, debates which openly questioned accepted history were initiated and although generally speaking the youth press and the youth political elite preserved an anti-nationalist/reformist line, they embraced the 'liberal turn' and a moderate discourse of national emancipation, eventually relegating Yugoslav socialist federalism to the past. Moreover, with the disappearance of the League of Communists in January 1990 and the abolishment of the League of Socialist

⁵²³ From the list of twenty statements using the Thurstone scale where respondents were asked to pick two, the highest ranked were: 'The most important thing is to raise your children to become honest men' (32,2%) and 'The most important is to fight against any type of injustice' (24,0%). Ratko Dunđerović, 'Samoupravna orijentacija i (ne)zadovoljstvo pojavama u društvu' in Srđan Vrcan et al. *Položaj, svest i ponašanje*, p.85.

Youth of Yugoslavia the same year, the common political institutional platforms which provided the space for supra-ethnic convergence and pan-Yugoslav debate were lost and the formation of the new supra-national democratic institutions never took place. The multilayered sense of citizenship this generation was the embodiment of, where the ethno-national and the Yugoslav dimensions complemented each other, could only exist under the specific political consensus and the post-war social context. At the end of the 1980s, as the ethno-national became an omnipresent identity-marker and frame of reference, the tension between these different identities increased to the point that this multilayered citizenship began to fragment irretrievably. Last but not least, the Slovene activists - those who stood at the helm of this generation's political, media and cultural activism, at the end of the decade decided to retreat, shift their focus away from the rest of the Yugoslav space and abandoned any attempts at forging a pan-Yugoslav alternative – which might explain why a viable Yugoslav political option failed to consolidate within the Yugoslav youth realm.

This thesis opens up new questions and hopes to suggest new ways of studying late socialism – from a critical rethinking of the concept of dissent, processes of domestication of Western social movements in a socialist context, to approaching the youth sphere more seriously and providing a history of alternatives. Moreover, since the thesis only analysed a limited group of individuals who have classified as an elite both in late socialism and today, other units of this generation remain unaccounted for in historical research, as well as many other groups who were ascribed similar importance and status within Yugoslav society – workers, miners, children/young pioneers, army officers, war veterans.

The last Yugoslav generation has been generally remembered through its achievements in culture and sport in the 1980s.⁵²⁴ It has been often represented as a generation which epitomises urbanity, cosmopolitanism, non-conformism and late Yugoslav culture. In reality, individuals who were actively involved in late socialist youth politics, media or culture followed diverse trajectories – some pursued their 'non-conformist' engagements in the realms of media and culture, some remained wholly or partially faithful to their liberal/progressive youthful ideals, while some chose to abandon/erase their

⁵²⁴ See footnote 3.

socialist past and redefine their politics. Indeed, individual professional trajectories and the different post-Yugoslav trajectories of the federation's successor states prove to be determining of the ways individuals reflect on their generational experience, on the 1980s and on the Yugoslav past. Narratives of loss of 'geo-political dignity' and disillusionment with the post-Yugoslav reality and post-socialist politics were intertwined among my interviewees with wider reflections on the Yugoslav past, as well as with evocations of a sense of cosmopolitanism, a different way of engaging with both the Eastern and the Western world and a somewhat generational obsession with freedom.

Annex 1: Interviewees

Culture:

1. Zemira Alajbegović (Slovenia). 19 March 2012, Ljubljana.
2. Aleš Debeljak (Slovenia). 15 March 2012, Ljubljana.
3. Toše Filipovski (Macedonia). 12 October 2011, Skopje.
4. Srđan Gojković-Gile (Serbia). 30 October 2011, Belgrade.
5. Bojan Hadžihalilović (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 9 March 2012, Sarajevo.
6. Nikolai Jeffs (Slovenia). 16 March 2012, Ljubljana.
7. Neven Korda (Slovenia). 4 May 2012, Ljubljana.
8. Milčo Mančevski (Macedonia). 6 September 2012, Skopje.
9. Zoran Predin (Slovenia). 16 November 2011, Ljubljana.
10. Vlatko Stefanovski (Macedonia). 19 December 2011, Skopje.
11. Goran Tanevski (Macedonia). 24 August 2012, Skopje.
12. Gregor Tomc (Slovenia). 17 November 2011, Ljubljana.
13. Igor Vidmar (Slovenia). 13 November 2011, Ljubljana.

Media:

14. Senad Avdić (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 24 February 2012, Sarajevo.
15. Velimir Ćurguz-Kazimir (Serbia). 10 April 2012, Belgrade.
16. Petar Janjatović (Serbia). 27 October 2011, Belgrade.
17. Ljupčo Jolevski (Macedonia). 6 October 2011, Skopje.
18. Predrag Kojović (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 2 March 2012, Sarajevo.
19. Boro Kontić (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 7 March 2012, Sarajevo.
20. Miha Kovač (Slovenia). 4 May 2012, Ljubljana.
21. Milomir Kovačević-Strašni (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 20 June 2012, Paris.
22. Zoran Kostov (Macedonia). 30 April 2012, Skopje.
23. Dragan Kremer (Serbia). 1 November 2011, Belgrade.
24. Sašo Ordanovski (Macedonia). 7 October 2011, Skopje.
25. Senad Pećanin (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 7 March 2012, Sarajevo.

New social movements:

26. Danica Fink Hafner (Slovenia). 15 March 2012, Ljubljana.

27. Marko Hren (Slovenia). 19 March 2012, Ljubljana.

28. Nataša Sukič (Slovenia). 16 March 2012, Ljubljana.

Politics:

29. Branko Greganovič (Slovenia). 26 September 2012, via Skype.

30. Risto Ivanov (Macedonia). 30 April 2012, Skopje.

31. Dejan Jović (Croatia). 11 June 2012, Zagreb.

32. Rasim Kadić (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 22/24 February 2012, Sarajevo.

33. Slobodan Najdovski (Macedonia). 26 April 2012, Skopje.

34. Martin Raguž (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 01 March 2012, Sarajevo.

35. Hasib Salkić (Bosnia-Herzegovina). 29 February 2012, Sarajevo.

36. Zoran Thaler (Slovenia). 18 March 2012, Ljubljana.

37. Azem Vllasi (Kosovo). 4 September 2012, Prishtina.

Military:

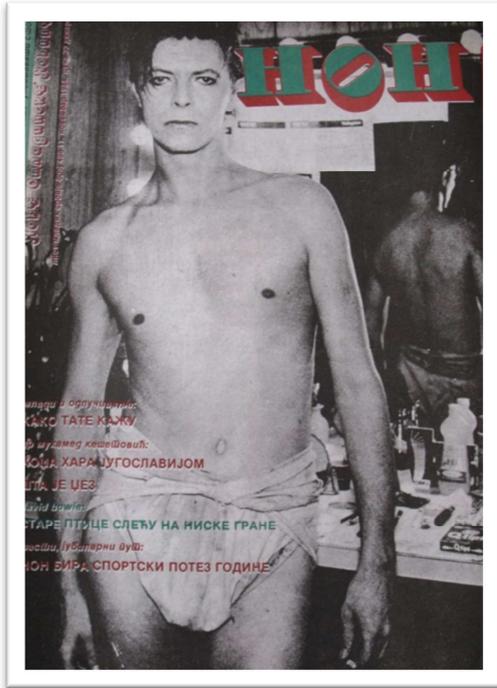
38. Milan Lišanin (Serbia). 25 August 2012, via Skype.

39. Vladimir Rajtar (Croatia). 13 June 2012, Zagreb.

40. Simo Spaskovski (Macedonia). 22 November 2011, Skopje.

Annex 2: Generations

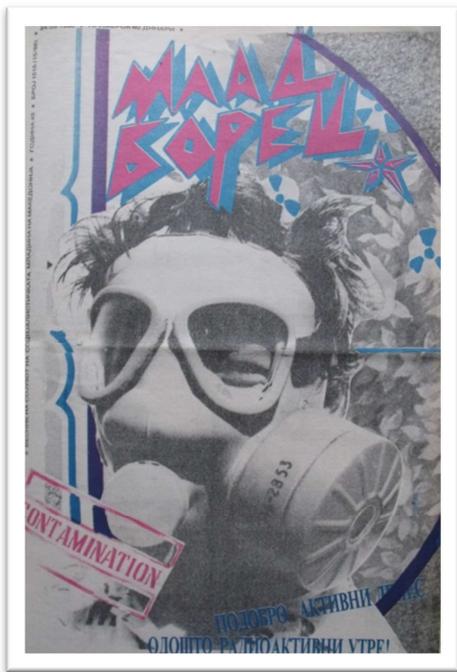
<u>The Partisan generation</u>	<u>The first socialist/post-war generation</u>
The older cohort	The older cohort
Josip Broz Tito (b.1892) Vladimir Bakarić (b.1912) Stevan Doronjski (b.1919) Dušan Dragosavac (b.1919) Fadil Hohxa (b.1910) Jovo Kapičić (b. 1919) Edvard Kardelj (b.1910) Lazar Koliševski (b.1914) Sergej Kraigher (b.1914) Nikola Ljubičić (b.1916) Cvijetin Mijatović (b.1913) Miloš Minić (b.1914) Petar Stambolić (b.1912) Mika Špiljak (b. 1916)	Mahmut Bakalli (b.1936) Stipe Mesić (b. 1934) Nebojša Popov (b. 1939) Ivan Stambolić (b. 1936) Stipe Šuvar (b. 1936) Aleksandar Vasiljević (b. 1938)
The younger cohort	The younger cohort
Angel Čemerski (b.1923) Raif Dizdarević (b. 1926) Veselin Đuranović (b.1925) Stane Dolanc (b.1925) Ivan Dolničar (b.1921) Aleksandar Grličkov (b.1923) Veljko Kadijević (b. 1925) Budimir Lončar (b.1924) Branko Mamula (b.1921) Ante Marković (b. 1924) Branko Mikulić (b.1928) Lazar Mojsov (b.1920) Milka Planinc (b.1924) Franc Popit (b.1921) Hamdija Pozderac (b.1923) Franjo Tuđman (b. 1922) Vidoje Žarković (b.1927)	Radovan Karađić (b. 1945) Milan Kučan (b. 1941) Slobodan Milošević (b. 1941) Ratko Mladić (b. 1942) Rahman Morina (b. 1943) Dragiša Pavlović (b. 1943) Ivica Račan (b. 1944) Azem Vllasi (b. 1948)



NON, Serbia



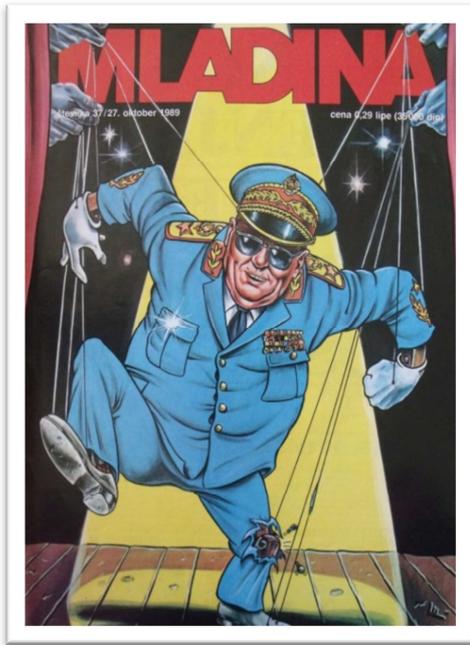
Student, Serbia



Mlad borec, Macedonia



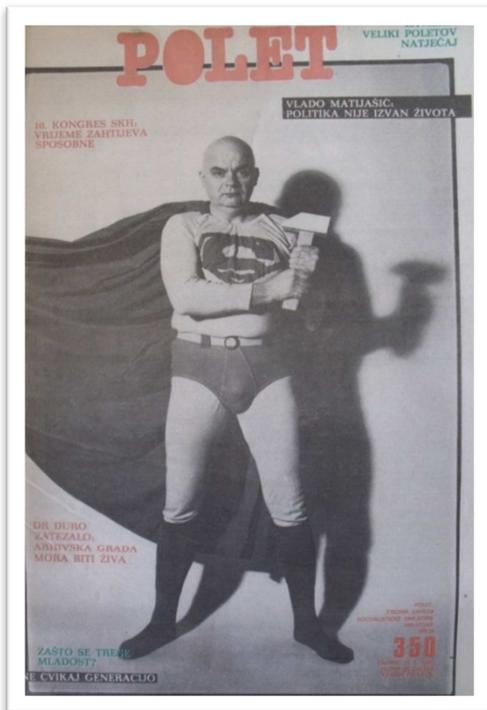
Studentski zbor, Macedonia



Mladina, Slovenia



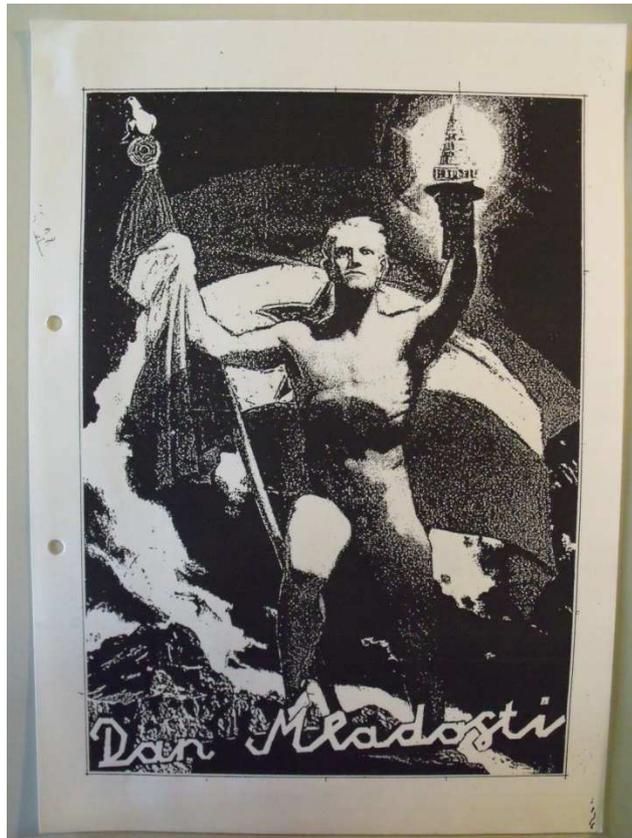
Tribuna, Slovenia



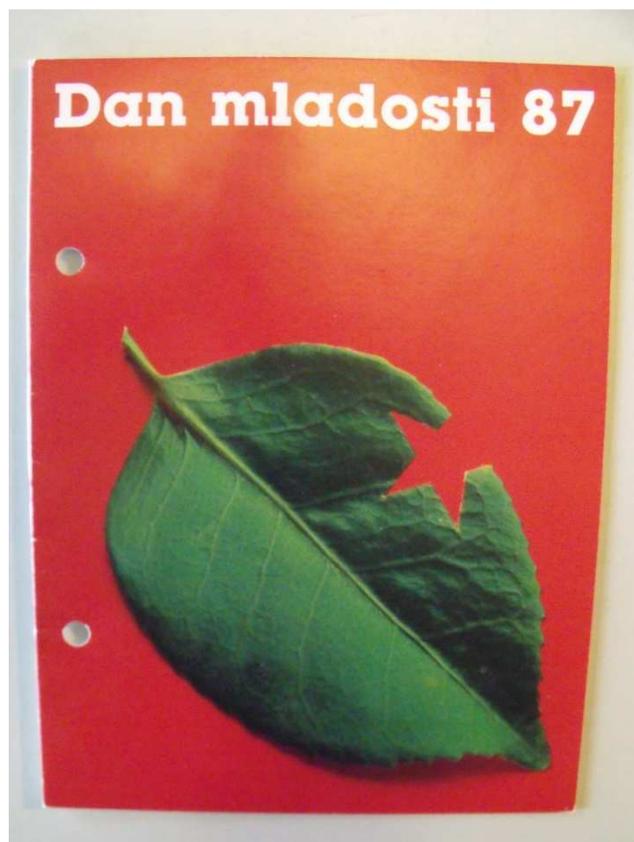
Polet, Croatia



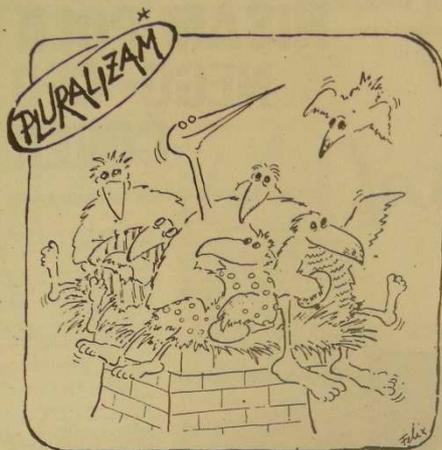
Studentski list, Croatia



The controversial Youth Day poster, 1987 (State Archive of Slovenia)



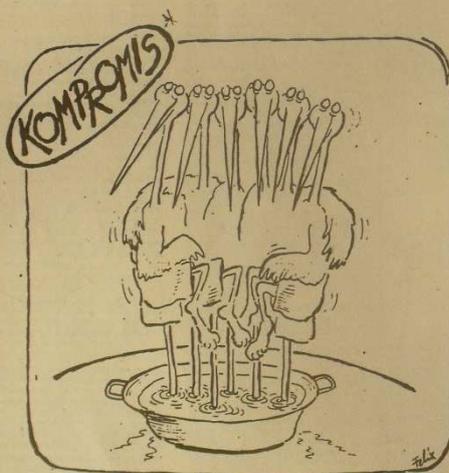
The Youth Day poster that replaced the previous one, 1987 (State Archive of Slovenia)



PLURALIZAM – svjetonazor što priznaje više principa shvaćanja svijeta koji ne mogu biti svedeni jedan na drugi.



TOLERANCIJA – obzirnost prema tuđim mišljenjima.



KOMPROMIS – uzajamno obećanje, nagodba, suglasnost među različitim mišljenjima, postignuti uzajamnim ustupcima.



STVARALAŠTVO – donošenje nečeg novog ali uvijek sa sviješću o povjesnosti čovjekovog djelovanja i s odgovornošću za budućnost ljudskog roda u svakom pojedinačnom činu.



SSOH

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(National Library of Croatia)

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Print media

Borba

Mlad borec

Mladina

Mladost

Naši dani

NON

Omladinski pokret

Polet

Republika

Student

Studentski list

Studentski zbor

Valter

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