

Introduction: Towards Yugoslav Studies

In 2016 the Centre for Yugoslav Studies (Centar za jugoslovenske studije /Cejus) was founded at the Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, Belgrade. The primary goal is the networking of researchers from different disciplines and creating a research platform in transdisciplinary academic and media space enabling further exploration of the political, social and cultural aspects of Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav space. The objective of the centre's founders was to gather to create a starting point for further joint collaboration that would transcend the boundaries of our own research fields (which include musicology, literature studies, philosophy, sociology, history, art history, anthropology and ethnology) and institutional affiliations. It is relevant to mention that the founders and current members of the centre hail from different institutional, disciplinary and professional backgrounds: Srđan Atanasovski (Institute of Musicology SASA, Belgrade), Dubravka Đurić (Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, Belgrade), Andrija Filipović (Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, Belgrade), Ivan Manojlović (Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade), Ana Panić (Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade), Ivana Pantelić (Institute of Contemporary History, Belgrade), Ana Petrov (Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, Belgrade), Sanja Petrović Todosijević (Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade), Srđan Radović (Institute of Ethnography SASA, Belgrade), and Lada Stevanović (Institute of Ethnography SASA, Belgrade). With such diverse researchers, we sought to embark upon the task of problematizing a phenomenon with which we have all dealt, and which we have decided to label "Yugoslav studies", implying that there is a need to constitute a discipline which deals with the multifarious perspectives from which Yugoslavia can be analysed.

Why Yugoslav studies?

One focal point of the discussion regarding the definition of the centre's activities and its goals is the question: "Why Yugoslav studies"? Is post-Yugoslav academic space ready for a new field that would not solely be marked as "the studies of Yugoslavia" but rather specifically "Yugoslav studies"? Does it imply a new discipline?

Drawing on a wide range of research in the field of socialist and post-socialist studies, we have come to the conclusion that Yugoslavia has become a relevant subject of investigation that should have its own discipline(s), i.e. a field of expertise that would specifically deal with Yugoslav issues in a broad spectrum of topics.

From this perspective, the activities of Cejus were thus defined: The centre's members deal with the entire historical period in which the Yugoslav state existed (1918–1991), as well as with current post-Yugoslav issues, regarding the remembrance of Yugoslavia today, as well as general social, political and cultural issues in post-Yugoslav time and space. In accordance with the members' various disciplinary backgrounds, Cejus is open to various research topics and fields, such as history, art history, musicology, cultural studies, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and socialist and post-socialist studies.

Under the umbrella term “Yugoslav studies” we wish to emphasize the relevance and specificity of the political, social, cultural and art practises in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav states. We also wish to suggest the possibility of founding a new field of scholarly research in social sciences and the humanities, having in mind current trends in socialist and post-socialist studies and attempting to join a burgeoning tendency in post-Yugoslav academia to go beyond the dichotomies in the paradigms that has marked the discourses on Yugoslavia: the “totalitarian” and the “Yugonostalgic” examples. Rather, we would like to illustrate the complexities and ambivalences that characterised Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav societies. Hence, this issue of the journal could be read as a sort of a manifesto of the Cejus team.

From the beginnings to cyber Yugoslavia: issue contents

In order to explore a broad issue of dealing with Yugoslavia, with this topic issue we hope to address certain aspects of current trends in the transdisciplinary field that might be labelled ‘Yugoslav studies.’ We did not intend to dwell upon one specific thematic focus or to establish and promulgate one firm theoretical and methodological platform, but rather to present many aspects of our research. Our intention was to present our current fields of interest, to point to some of the readings of Yugoslavia and to make a starting point for further research topics, theoretical, and methodological perspectives.

Sanja Petrović Todosijević deals with the role of authorities in the extermination of Jews in Šabac during the Second World War in her article “Holocaust With(out) Bullets. The Public and Property of the Jewish People from Šabac and the Kladovo Transport 1941–1944”. She demonstrates that there was a certain process of “normalization” of exceptional circumstances of the occupation, as well as confiscation and, ultimately, extermination. Todosijević pays particular attention to the implication of “ordinary citizens” in the normalization of such processes through anti-Semitic propaganda, the usurpation of property of Jewish people, buying their moving property

after they were sent to camps, etc. Todosijević concludes her article by claiming that such usurpation and confiscation were phases of the Holocaust, and that collaborationist authorities normalized the crimes by presenting them as a part of everyday life under the occupation. Through this topic the author seeks to remind readers that the issues of relation of society with the collaborationists during World War II is recognized as one of the issues by which the relation to Yugoslavia from 1941 to 1945 is defined, as well as to the entire socialist Yugoslav period and various strains of fascism in modern society.

In his article titled “Channeling the Country’s Image: Illustrated Magazine *Yugoslavia* (1949–1959),” Srđan Radović writes of the aforementioned magazine, and analyzes the ways in which it served to produce a certain image of Yugoslavia at a time of great changes, both locally and internationally. Edited by Oto Bihalji-Merin, the magazine *Yugoslavia*, as Radović demonstrates, is a rich source when it comes to the research that focuses on the issues of presentation, self-presentation, and the production of cultural, political and other identities. The magazine projected a certain image of what it meant to be a Yugoslav, for both the domestic and foreign publics, as well as what it meant to be a modern society in international context – specifically, a socialist society with an autochthonous modernity characterized as “the third path”.

Srđan Atanasovski writes about mass songs in “Socialism or Art: Yugoslav Mass Song and Its Institutionalizations”. Therein he pays particular attention to this genre as an important phenomenon in the practice of socialist realism, and reconsiders the ways in which mass songs were institutionalized, practiced and disseminated in socialist Yugoslavia. Atanasovski also gives us several classifications and categorizations of mass songs that offer insight into how they were produced and received across Yugoslav society, paying close attention to the historical context of their production and reception. Atanasovski concludes his article with a short overview of contemporary performances of mass songs by self-organized choirs in Croatia, Slovenia, Austria and Serbia, reading them as an openly political participatory activist practice.

Ana Petrov analyses the work of Yugoslav rock band Bijelo Dugme in her text “In Search of ‘Authentic’ Yugoslav Rock: The Life and Afterlife of Bijelo Dugme”. She writes about how Bijelo Dugme was founded and how it captured the attention of the whole of Yugoslavia during the period of its existence, from 1974 until 1989. The particularity of Bijelo Dugme, according to Petrov, is to be found in what was thought to be the authenticity of the band as a Yugoslav product, its relation to popular music, cultural politics and political engagement as such. Bijelo Dugme has enjoyed a certain afterlife in post-Yugoslav space, through the variety of documentary films, books, texts and performances starting from 2005. Petrov concludes her text with a reconsideration of post-Yugoslav *Dugmemania*, a process through which Yugoslav values and products are re-actualized in post-Yugoslav space by listening to the music.

Andrija Filipović, in his article titled “YugoQueer: Technologies of Spatialization, Temporalization and Universalization in Discursive Formation of Sexuality from the Late 19th Century until Today,” explores the ways in which queer sexualities were

discursively formed in three periods of Yugoslavian and Serbian history. He pays particular attention to what he calls technologies of spatialization (differentiation within the category of the human until the middle of the 20th century), temporalization (the biopolitics of population through repro-futurity during Tito's Yugoslavia) and universalization (the merging of claims to universal human rights and neoliberal capitalism at the end of the 20th and beginning of 21st century). The main aim of Filipović's paper is to present a sort of genealogy of the present in order to map the possible spaces for different forms of queer politics not based on identity claims.

In "Cyber Yugoslavia from the World of Nations to the World of Cyber Countries" Lada Stevanović deals with a web-based, virtual state called Cyber Yugoslavia, and critically approaches the topics of nation, nation state and the ideology upon which nation states are based. Reading Cyber Yugoslavia as a ludic and parodic creation, Stevanović argues for a deconstruction of the essentialized conception of nation, especially since this virtual state was made after the dissolution of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As such, it serves as a strategic approach to the problematization of the naturalized conception of nation in its use of national symbols, rituals, languages and territories, which is based on humor, laughter, irony and, finally, on acceptance and affirmation.

Ana Petrov and Andrija Filipović