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IDEOLOGY OF ANARCHO-LIBERAL DISSIDENTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE YUGOSLAV STATE SECURITY SERVICE (1965–1985)

ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, scholars from the social sciences and humanities have detected and begun to extensively study a unique trend among the leftist groups involved in demonstrations that marked the late '60s. This phenomenon was an ideological transformation from the positions of far-left ideologies towards the position held by either right or left-wing liberals, who gained prominence in the early '80s. A certain number of those who took part in university movements of 1968 in Yugoslavia followed what appeared to be a global trend, and gradually abandoned their former anarchist, Trotskyist or democratic socialist ideas in favor of those that today can be defined as early neoliberal ideas. Dissident actions and ideological development of radical leftists who became liberals were closely observed and described by agents and associates of the Yugoslav secret service and later analyzed within the analytical departments of State Security Service. The aim of this article is to convey new findings discovered by analyzing thus far available historical sources created by the security service analysts, which will help reconstruct a perception of the secret service about the ideological changes among the dissidents. Also, it is necessary to bring these research results into the appropriate social and historical context, and try to assess how much the trends recorded by Yugoslav secret service had in common with the paths of evolution of the leftist intellectual and ideological thought in the Western Europe and United States. Results of the studies previously published by scholars from various fields of social sciences and humanities were compared with the results provided by this archival research.

KEYWORDS

Anarcho-liberals,
socialism,
neoliberalism, far-left,
State Security Service.

Who were anarcho-liberals in socialist Yugoslavia?

Before a discussion about anarcho-liberal groups among Yugoslav dissidents, it is necessary to observe the manner in which State Security Service (SDB) produced historical sources that bear testament to one of the most remarkable ideological changes in Yugoslav history. Security service employed different practices in gathering intelligence about the different groups of those who made up the opposition towards the socialist government from the mid-60s to the mid-80s. In the case of the dissidents who were coming from the circles gathered around the Universities in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, secret service relied heavily on information acquired through collaborators within observed groups.¹ Reports of the secret service mention various code names that indicate the traits or academic affiliations of these collaborators, such were “comrade historian,” “sociologist,” “associate philosopher,” etc.² These people provided data which was then processed by the analytical departments within the security service. Little is known about the analysts who composed the reports about activities and beliefs of those who they referred to as “anarcho-liberals,” and most of them remain anonymous to this day. However, based on the extensive historical, sociological and philosophical elaborations that can be found within analytical reports about dissident groups, it can be assumed that the authors of the analytical reports held extensive education in the field of social sciences and humanities.³

At first glance, it could appear as the term anarcho-liberals is implying an existence of a connection between ideas that are originating from the vast group of anarchist ideologies, and the ones that are coming from the group of liberal ideologies. Such assumptions are bound to come across as rather confusing, since it is hard to find any similarities between the two conflicting positions on the ideological spectrum, beside from those ideas in regard to the concept of freedom. Even in that regard, we find crucial disagreements between putting an emphasis on freedom as a collective or an individual notion (Ignazi 2006: 4–19, Bakić 2019: 15–25). Further adding to existing confusion that is bound to arise from utilization of such a complex and seemingly vague label is the fact that some modern scholars, mainly coming from the United States, have recently started to use the term anarcho-liberals in order to describe a fraction of the libertarians (Modrzejewska 2009: 49–59). New movements of

1 State Archives of Serbia, fond of the Security-Informative Agency, Reports on activities of students and professors of the University of Belgrade involved in the protest of 1968, files I to VII, in further text: AS, BIA, Reports from protests of 1968, I-VIII.

2 State Archives of Croatia, fond 1561, State Security Service, RSUP of Federal Republic of Croatia, and State Archives of Slovenia, fond 1931, RSNZ of Federal Republic of Slovenia, in further text: HDA, fond 1561, SDS RSUP SR Hrvatske, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, and ARS, 1931, SDV RSNZ SR Slovenije, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981.

3 State Archives of Serbia, fond of the Security-Informative Agency, Federal Secretariat for the Internal Affairs, in further text AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985.

the libertarians, however, have not thus far shown a significantly visible connection either with anarchists or liberals (Geloso and Leeson 2020: 957–974).⁴ However, numerous sources imply that, within the frames provided by the social and political context of Yugoslav history, term anarcho-liberals was used by state security analysts and party officials, as well as a certain number of Marxist philosophers, in order to describe a state in-between the two distant groups of ideologies. This was done with presumptive emphasis on the long-term process of change that afflicted attitudes and ideological affiliation of individuals and entire groups during the latter half of the twentieth century.⁵

Term anarcho-liberals was frequently used by the analysts employed by the security service when writing about dissident⁶ activities in Socialist Yugoslavia from the mid-60s to mid-80s. Authors of the analytical reports commissioned by SDB utilized this example of what modern scholars would referee to as an “umbrella term”⁷ in order to commonly define all those dissidents whose ideology evolved from the spectrum of radical left-wing ideologies, mainly anarchism or Bolshevism, towards more moderate, centrist ideologies. In most cases these ideologies were left-wing liberalism and social democracy, but some former radical leftists even became right-wing, conservative liberals or/and accepted nationalist ideas.⁸ A vast majority of the dissidents who followed this path of ideological change came from the ranks of those who participated in university movements and student demonstrations of the late '60s.⁹ Some

4 Certainly, an argument could be made that radical libertarians are merely escalating the basic ideas of liberal ideologies, such as freedom of the market and emphasis on the freedom of the individual. However, it needs to be taken into account that that majority of liberal movements have never, even in the age of neoliberalism, completely abandoned their institutionalist ideals nor advocated for a completely boundless freedom of the market.

5 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 10–14.

6 It is important to note that definition of the term “dissident” is still contested within the frames of scholarly discussion. The main dilemma seems to originate over disagreements over the relation between the terms “dissidents” and “oppositon.” Could all those who opposed the regime be considered dissidents, or are dissidents just those, as Todor Kuljuć would argue, who criticized the regime from the viewpoint of an ideology close to the one that was being presented by the regime as its formal ideology (Kuljuć, 2023).

7 It still remains unclear whether or not was the term anarcho-liberals coined by analysts employed by the secret service, but its common acceptance within party institutions certainly could have been aided by the enthusiasm that security service showed for the usage of the term from the late 1960s until the second half of 1980s.

8 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 4–7, ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 11–17.

9 For example, among them were famous Praxis philosophers from Croatia like Gajo Petrović, Milan Kangrga, Rudi Supek, etc. Among their Belgrade counterparts, stood out the group that was later removed from the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, including Dragoljub Mićunović, Ljuba Tadić, Zagorka Golubović, etc. However, among both the intellectuals from Belgrade and Zagreb there were many who later approached the party and cooperated with the regimes of Milošević and Tudman, notable examples

of them later played a significant role in the formation of the first major opposition parties in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia in the late '80s and early '90s (Cvetković 2011: 39–56).¹⁰

This model of ideological transformation was recognized in later autobiographical works and interviews of numerous former far-left dissidents and later leaders of the major liberal right-wing or centrist left-wing parties of the Serbian opposition towards the regime of Slobodan Milošević and acknowledged as one of the most common paths followed by the former leftist participants of 1968 university movements (Mićunović 2019, Đinđić 2010, Čavoški 2022). Whether or not the authors perceived themselves as protagonists of the aforementioned evolution from the far-left towards liberal beliefs, major political players of the 1990s such were Dragoljub Mićunović, Zoran Đinđić, Ljubomir Tadić, Nikola Milošević and Kosta Čavoški, all described this form of change as the most common path taken by those who were engaged in the student rebellions of 1968 (Dimitrijević and Filipović 2024: 372–380). However, almost all writers of the reports left behind by both Serbian, as well as Croatian and Slovenian branches of the security service testified that the change from the ideological proximity of anarchists towards different spheres of liberal center was a wider social phenomenon, that was not only encompassing the dissidents of late '60s, but came much closer to representing a “generational change.”¹¹

A global trend or a local phenomenon? Similarities and differences between Yugoslav anarcho-liberals and those who will evolve from radical leftists towards liberals in the West

The idea that the aforementioned transformation of ideological affiliations could be considered as a phenomenon that afflicted an entire generation of young leftists in the countries of the Western Europe and the United States of America has been widely researched and discussed in numerous books and articles published by scholars and journalists (Walzer 2018: 85–97, Freeman 2018: 21–27). When studying historical sources created during the time of socialist

being Mihajlo Marković and Stevan Letvica. Some, like Vojin Milić and Predrag Matvejić, later took critical stances towards both their former allies from the 1968 movement and towards the rising nationalist forces. The main difference between the Belgrade and Zagreb group among those who security service defined as the first generation of anarcho-liberal intellectuals was the fact that philosophers from Zagreb mainly remained on the margins of political life in the 1990s, while their Serbian counterparts became the leading members of the Democratic Party, together with the so called right-wing anarcho-liberals, like Kosta Čavoški, Nikola Milošević, Vojslav Koštunica, Gojko Đogo etc. More about all those, and many other personalities defined as anarcho-liberals can be found in the book *Anarcholiberalism: Security Service and Ideology 1967-1985* (Dimitrijević and Filipović, 2024).

¹⁰ AS, BIA, Reports from protests of 1968, files I-VIII.

¹¹ AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 10–14.

Yugoslavia, it is unavoidable to ask the question of whether and to what extent, were the Yugoslav anarcho-liberals part of the larger international process, which encompassed mainly capitalist countries of the Western Bloc under “welfare state” economic and social policies.¹² Certainly, there were quite a few leftists who would not fit the dominant left-wing parties of Western European countries and Yugoslavia during the economic peak of the “welfare state” and Yugoslav economic model (Filipović 2023: 161–173). But did those leftists, who left their most permanent mark on politics and culture during the turmoil at the universities in late ’60s and early ’70s (Stojanović 2015: 279–283), face similar challenges that arrived from the related changes of political situation and social reality? And was a number of those who followed the trajectory of long-term modification from the far left towards neoliberal sectors on the ideological spectrum similarly significant in Yugoslavia as it was in the countries of Western Europe and in the United States?

However, before looking at how the historical sources fit in the existing scholarly discussion, what deserves mention is that potential ideological influences from the countries of Western Europe and from the United States on Yugoslav students represent just a small fraction of the overall exchange of ideas and cultural trends between socialist Yugoslavia and the countries of Western Bloc in the ’50s and ’60s (Vučetić 2016: 79–83, Dragišić 41:59). Members of the ideological commissions of the Yugoslav party later estimated that overall proximity of the ideological and cultural trends followed by the students in Yugoslavia and their Western counterparts was one of decisive factors that allowed for the transformation from radical leftists towards liberals to become acceptable within circles of Yugoslav dissidents as it was in the West.¹³ Reports of the secret service claim that final stages in this ideological transformation took place after economic crisis of the USSR came in the picture in the early ’80s, coupled with the picture of economic success of the early neoliberal governments in Western media, which represented an especially compelling argument for the same people who were already used to appropriating new ideas from the West for 20 or 30 years already.¹⁴

Analysts employed by the security service in the late ’60s assessed that it was the perception of similarity between social changes in Yugoslavia and in the countries that have adopted the “welfare state” model that had contributed towards the attraction of Yugoslav students and professors to the writings,

12 AS, BIA, Reports from protests of 1968, files I-VIII.

13 Archives of Yugoslavia, fond 507, Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of League of Communists of Yugoslavia, in further text AJ, 507, SKJ, Ideological Commission, II/2-b-(244-252), transcripts from sessions on student engagement in public life, 1974. Archives of Serbia, fond 121, Ideological Commissions of Central Republic Committee of League of Communists of Serbia, in further text AS, 121, Ideological Commissions, Commission for democratization of social and political life 1968–1972.

14 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 54–58.

art and new ideological ideas of their Western counterparts.¹⁵ Subsequently, the conclusion to be drawn is that the aforementioned sources testify to a hypothesis that theories about “attraction of the forbidden,” as well as about long-term effects of globalization, which are often used to explain why students and professors in Eastern Europe were trying to “appropriate” ideas and culture of their Western colleagues, cannot sufficiently explain why Yugoslav students did the same (Horten 2022: 54–87). Unlike in most Eastern bloc countries, it was only after encountering the effects of so called “Westernization” of Yugoslav youth, as well as of the social circles encompassing artists and university professors, back in 1964, that members of the LCY Ideological commissions started debating the possibility of expanding policies of censorship towards books, movies and music arriving from Western countries, and ended up voting against it.¹⁶ Later expansion of censorship policies, which came in the early ’70s, could be explained as a consequence, rather than cause, of LCY leadership encountering an attempt to refine existing ideological theories as well as a substantial opposition towards their ideas about the evolution of Yugoslav socialist model during the student demonstrations of the late ’60s.¹⁷

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that in 1968, some members of the Italian and French communist parties, including future Eurocommunist leaders Enrico Berlinguer and Georges Marchais, described Yugoslav university movement as being “much more socially aware” than it was the case with the similar movements in Italy and France. Same Italian and French communists assessed that most significant similarities between the Yugoslav and the Western European student rebellions arrive from their shared anti-authoritarian agenda, while the differences arrive from their dominant stances on social inequalities (Filipović 2023: 161–173). Reports of the Yugoslav secret service attest in favor of such assumptions, claiming that, unlike their Western counterparts, Yugoslav university movements were much closer to explaining the presumed failure of state policies to reduce the continuous reproduction of social inequalities through materialist philosophy, rather than by using the

15 Italian and French communists gave similar assessments during conversations with their Yugoslav counterparts. Members of Italian and French communist party leadership often remarked that Yugoslav students do not only act in a manner similar to the participants of the contemporary university movements in Italy and France, but also probably see themselves as much closer to their Western European colleagues than with those active in student rebellions in Poland or Czechoslovakia. Although, these statements should be critically analyzed in regard to the fact that implying closeness (as well as similarities in social structures and cultures) between Yugoslavia and countries of the Western Mediterranean was a custom of Eurocommunists during conversations with LCY leadership (Filipović 2023: 161–173).

16 AS, 121, Ideological Commissions, Commission for the ideological work and development of ideas (1964–1968), sessions held in preparation for V Congress of League of Communists of Serbia, 1964.

17 AS, 121, Ideological Commissions, Commission for ideological education (1972–1974), transcripts of the speeches about Western influences on Yugoslav youth, 1974.

“new age” ideas about inherent cultural phenomena.¹⁸ Todor Ćuk, one of the authors employed by the security service to produce analytical reports about dissident activities, claims that it was precisely the fact that students and professors at the University of Belgrade were dominantly devoted to the idea of a Marxist utopia that lead them to accept neoliberalism more full heartedly than their Western counterparts, once they got disillusioned in the “Marxist idealism” of their youth.¹⁹

Incomplete revolution and an unfinished state – Students who asked for “more socialism”

Records produced by the Yugoslav secret service about the events that took place at Universities of Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana during the summer of 1968 testify that some of the first demands defined by recently formed student movements focused on the questions of social inequalities and corruption²⁰ within the new “bureaucratic class,” including the highest state officials and party leadership (Marković 2023: 250–264). Analysts employed by the same service who later produced reports on the ideological evolution of the student movements crafted a term “completing revolution” as a mean to present what students initially demanded from their government, which was increasingly seen by younger generations as being socialist more in name than in policy making.²¹ Professors and students interviewed or/and interrogated by the agents of the service on numerous occasions testified the initial goal of the university movement was to finish the revolution of 1945 by putting an end to reproduction of class differences.²²

18 AS, BIA, Reports from protests of 1968, files I-VIII.

19 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 10-14, 89-95.

20 It is important to note that traditionally, right-wing or conservative parties and movements tackled the question of corruption before the question of inequality. This tendency, which can, according to some authors, be seen as early as during the first debates of Optimates and Populares in ancient Rome, is explained by certain scholars as being a natural consequence of the fact that parties which strive to preserve the system have a need to find that utopian, imaginary version of the same system is not flawed, but it is political practice that prevents the “utopian vision of the present” from materializing in reality, thus we need to remove the “human error,” not the system itself (Bobbio 1996:67-84). Subsequently, an argument could be made that university movements of 1968 in socialist countries had conservative, or “reactionary” tendencies because they heavily criticized corruption within the nominally socialist government, but an even stronger argument can be made that students in Yugoslavia were not “reactionary” because majority of them perceived corruption as an anomaly of the socialist system whose utopian version they strived to see implemented within the frames of material reality.

21 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 19-21.

22 AS, BIA, Reports from protests of 1968, files I-VIII.

Achievement of this goal was inseparably intertwined with the idea of taking the decision making power away from the party, and establishing a way of “self-governance” that would allow for more egalitarian participation of all Yugoslav citizens.²³ Subsequently, analysis conducted by historians confirmed the assessments first made by the contemporary analysts of the Yugoslav secret service, who concluded that most participants of the university movements of 1968 were on the ideological positions which can be considered to be situated left on the ideological spectrum from the position of LCY party ideology at the time (Klasić 2018: 49–57). Certain amount of those who participated in student demonstrations in the late 60s have, in their later autobiographical also openly defined themselves or many of their colleagues as being former anarchists, Trotskyists or radical democratic socialists (Dimitrijević and Filipović 2024: 348–352). In this way they affirmed the claims made by the authors of the secret service reports, who used the same terminology to describe rebellious students from the left-wing of the university movement in 1968.²⁴

Immediately after the famous speech of Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito from 9th of June 1968, the university movement in Belgrade started to disintegrate, as numerous moderate rebels accepted never formally defined, but implied terms of a “historical compromise” with the LCY. In doing so, they were leaving only the far-left part of the university movement (mainly concentrated around the Faculty of Philosophy) and liberal right-wing students and professors (mainly concentrated around the Faculty of Law), to continue with the demonstrations.²⁵ Those leftists who refused to accept the idea that their demands, recognized by the president of the republic, would be solved within the frames of LCY party institutions and ideology (with supposed help of the official student representatives, most of whom were close with the party), started to organize secretive meetings in their apartments or in student dormitory in order to plan future protest activities.²⁶ It was those leftists who took part in formation of the new informal dissident groups that became the main subjects of those reports of the secret service in which the activities of anarcho-liberals were described.²⁷ Already during the summer of 1968, and especially after the events in Czechoslovakia, the Yugoslav secret service radically increased actions partaken for monitoring activities of the similar groups in Zagreb and Ljubljana, stating that the most important similarity between these groups and with the one in Belgrade derive from the fact that they refuse to accept the compromise with the party.²⁸ Further radicalized by the failure of demonstrations in June of

23 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 4-7.

24 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 71-82.

25 AS, BIA, Reports from protests of 1968, files I-VIII.

26 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 19-21, 33-41.

27 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 2-10.

28 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 83-89.

the same year, they were, according to the authors of the aforementioned reports, already striving to create their own political programs, with some even expressing desires to define a new ideology, and were no longer contented just with the concept of completing the revolution of 1945, but have developed the idea of “finishing” the process of creating a Yugoslav state.²⁹

The idea of Yugoslavia as “an unfinished state,” later the inspiration for the title of a book written by future Prime Minister of Serbia Zoran Đinđić (Đinđić 2010: 5–15), was at the time recognized by the analysts employed by the Yugoslav secret service as an expected continuation of the idea that revolution of 1945 was “betrayed” and needs to be finished in order to achieve a true socialist society.³⁰ Therefore, a new Yugoslav socialist model would need to be defined in order to gradually create an utopian society that would not suffer from class inequalities and corruption, while having a democratic system which would allow for equal participation of all the economically, ethnically and culturally diverse social groups in Yugoslavia. During the turbulent period of late '60s and early '70s, constantly expanding groups of left-wing dissidents in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana engaged in long debates about reforming Yugoslav socialist model and creating a new far-left ideology that would help completing the process of state-building in Yugoslavia.³¹ Even at this stage of developing “anarcho-liberal” ideas about “finishing the unfinished” state, analysts employed by the Yugoslav secret service noted their concerns about a possibility that those who they described as “far-left extremists” would, if disappointed enough by the contrast between social and political reality in Yugoslavia and their ideal version of Marxist, anarchist or democratic-socialist utopia, turn towards right-wing ideologies.³²

Stages of the ideological evolution undergone by far-left dissidents who gradually accepted liberal ideas

Reports by the local branches of security service provide detailed explanation of the gradual shift from radical leftists to right-wing liberals, which occurred in multiple stages during a long and complex process that lasted almost two decades. In 1985, that is, towards the end of that period that lasted from the early '70s through the '80sd, analysts employed by the secret service assessed that the term anarcho-liberals is no longer accurate enough, and thus should be replaced by the term “civil right-wing,” which emphasized the end of a long transitional phase during the transformation from radical leftists to right-wing liberals.³³ At

29 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 17-24.

30 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 3-10. 17-19.

31 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 35-39.

32 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 2-10.

33 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 62-70.

that time, according to the estimations made by mostly anonymous scholars, who were employed by the security service, there were very few ideological differences remaining between the former anarchists, Trotskyists and democratic socialists in Yugoslavia, and neoliberal parties and movements that entered the administrations of Ronald Regan and Margaret Thatcher in the United States and Great Britain.³⁴

Thus, the question remains, how such a radical ideological change managed to occur over time in rather small circles of former left-wing dissidents, mainly located in the largest urban and university centers of Yugoslavia? Reports left by the secret service distinguish three main phases of the ideological evolution from the radical leftists towards moderately right-wing liberals: 1) the years of philosophical wondering after the collapse of the 1968 movement, starting from the late '60s and encompassing the early '70s, 2) gradual abandoning of the reformist ideas, from the mid to late '70s, and 3) the period of accepting the New Right ideas, from the early '80s onwards.³⁵ Though chronological order of the phases is presented, drawing a clear border between the stated periods is almost impossible. Analysts from the security service claim that this is due to the fact that all circles of former left-wing dissidents in socialist Yugoslavia did not go through the same changes of the dominant beliefs within the same time periods, and even among the circles of close friends, ideological evolutions of individual anarcho-liberals were significantly different.³⁶ A different conclusion could hardly be expected, when having in mind what is known about Western anarcho-liberals from thus far published scholarly literature (Herzog 2007: 313–333). However, a large number of those who were marked by the secret service as being far-left dissidents in Belgrade completed all three distinctive phases of ideological change by the mid-80s.³⁷ By that time, they were already positioned in a much narrower ideological spectrum, ranging from the left-wing to right-wing centrists, while encompassing most ideological positions that would later be occupied by the largest opposition parties in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia during the early '90s (Dimitrijević and Filipović 2024: 376–380).

During the years of wondering, former leading members of the 1968 student demonstrations faced the slow disintegration of the former university movements, increased prosecution from the government, and abandonment of the reformist cause, which was, for almost a decade already, a decisive factor in bringing the party ideology of LCY closer towards the attitudes of its left-wing critiques (Bešlin 2023, Žarković 2024, Dimitrijević 2023). Disillusioned by the growingly authoritarian policies of the regime, especially after the turbulent

34 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 41-55.

35 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 97-103.

36 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 41-55.

37 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 97-103.

events of 1972 and 1974–1975, such were the fall of so called “liberal wing” of the LCY republic committees for Serbia and Croatia and expulsion of professors from Faculties of Philosophy and Law in Belgrade during preparations for establishment of a new Yugoslav constitution, anarcho-liberals started slowly abandoning their own reformist ideas.³⁸ Experimenting with the ideas of those New Left movements in the countries of Western Europe and United States of America which were in the process of reforming their ideologies towards a more moderate path, former radical leftists entered a period of de-radicalization.³⁹ Both authors of the reports that were circulating among the secret service offices in Belgrade and Zagreb and authors of later scholarly analysis agree that one of the main factors that influenced Yugoslav anarcho-liberals to turn away from the more radical New Left groups was a reaction towards rapid increment of terrorist activities conducted by far-left groups in the West during early and mid-70s (Dimitrijević 2023: 15–17, Ronchay 1979: 921–940).⁴⁰

Analyst Todor Ćuk questions the extent to which acceptance of the moderate ideas of the New Left thinkers from the academic circles of the Western Europe and US helped set a precedent for openness of Yugoslav anarcho-liberals towards those ideas that were, as time went by, growingly distant from the original radical left-wing of the 1968 university movement.⁴¹ Reports about activities of former far-left dissidents are indicating that, from mid to late '70s, a large number of Yugoslav anarcho-liberals started experimenting with some ideas that were arriving from the spectrum of New Right ideologies.⁴² At the same time, various groups of anarcho-liberals started to become increasingly distant. We already see the foreshadowing of what is about to occur in dissident circles, as divisions between nationalists and those in opposition towards the perceived rise of nationalism slowly start to gain importance as defining factors of the internal divisions among anarcho-liberals. At the same time, the growingly distant ideas about how a new economic model of the “finished” Yugoslav state should look like slowly started to take a back seat in comparison to increasingly popular national questions. Different national ideas among different anarcho-liberal groups in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia were all, to

38 Numerous members of the newly established Ideological Commission of League of Communists of Serbia, *Commission for Ideological Education*, which auspiciously replaced the *Commission for Democratization of Social and Political Life* in 1972, noticed a sudden change in attitudes dominant among the left wing dissidents on the eve of the famous purges of professors conducted on the faculties of law and philosophy in Belgrade, during the course of the events that followed preparation for adopting a new Yugoslav constitution in 1974 (AS, 121, Ideological Commissions, Commission for ideological education 1972–1974).

39 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 27–38.

40 AS, BIA, Reports from protests of 1968, files I–VIII.

41 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 97–103.

42 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 55–57.

a lesser or a higher degree, connected with the idea of unequal development of Yugoslav republics, and deepening gaps between rural and urban areas, as well as more or less industrialized regions, which became a rallying point of articulating the ever-growing ethnic tensions.⁴³

Analyzed sources show that the turning point for most anarcho-liberals came sometime in the late '70s until the early '80s, when they completely abandoned the idea of reforming the socialist system and accepted the concept of rebuilding a new national state within the frames provided by the ideas of liberal institutionalism and neoliberal capitalism.⁴⁴ When the main agenda of former anarcho-liberals who gradually became protagonists of the “civil right-wing” is defined in the previously stated manner, then the most obvious question remains – upon which national ideology will the future liberal, national state be constructed? This question provided a cause to finally bring closure to the long-term process of distancing among Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian anarcho-liberals, but also, between the fractions already formed within the circles of former left-wing dissidents in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana.⁴⁵

It is, however, important to note that records left by the secret service indicate that almost none of the aforementioned groups shared the ideas of ethnocentric nationalism with the new far-right movements in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, or nominally socialist politicians who started adopting nationalistic rhetoric in the late '80s. National ideologies accepted by those who fought for a “world without nations” in 1968 still shared an idea of patriotism that strived to include cosmopolitan values and ideas similar to the future EU ideals of respecting (upholding) differences but promoting cooperation, while at the same time viewing nationalism as a progressive force behind the success of the first European national states in the twenty-first century.⁴⁶ In a similar manner, the idea of creating a national state did not necessarily involve dissolving Yugoslavia. This idea was still, by numerous former anarcho-liberals, interpreted as rebuilding Yugoslavia “from scratch,” while turning away from the “failed socialist experiment” towards liberal ideas from century ago, mainly those concentrated around the concepts of free market (which served as a rallying point for promotion of a capitalist economic model), institutional independence and the rule of law.⁴⁷ Lastly, later analysis showed that majority of the previous anarcho-liberals took an active in opposition to the regimes of Milošević in Serbia and Tuđman in Croatia during the '90s, as well as in the anti-war movements, and in the case of the Slovenian branch, developed nostalgic sentiments towards Yugoslavia and even pro-socialist attitudes after

43 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 41-55.

44 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 19-21, 33-41.

45 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 47-55.

46 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 64-71.

47 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 41-55.

supporting secession and neoliberal economic reforms.⁴⁸ Though a significant minority compared to those who became the leading members of the opposition towards wartime administrations of Yugoslav successor states, there were, however, those who cooperated with the government of Franjo Tuđman in Croatia. And in the case of Serbian anarcho-liberals, it was mostly those who accepted a form of a compromise with the local LCY structures at some point from 1968 to 1985 that ended up as supporters of the Milošević regime.⁴⁹

The belief in the end of history and the end of collective ideologies – An ideological change that would not have been acceptable before or after the historical moment when it occurred

Authors that wrote about the transition from far-leftists of 1968 to liberals of the late '70s and early '80s in the countries of Western Europe and United States often emphasize two significant factors that allowed for this ideological change to become a unique trend of its historical era. The first important factor was the social acceptability of the aforementioned transformation during the turbulent last decade of the Cold War, which marked the end of the welfare-state and the rise of neoliberal governments.⁵⁰ Second was the internal structure and culture of the groups which went through this change, and their specific relations towards the wider society, which almost became, in the words of one author of the reports arriving from the Yugoslav secret service departments, “an outside world” for the formerly young rebels, now adults clinging to their rebel identity.⁵¹

What followed the commotion at the Universities and political changes of the late '60s was an era some scholars described as ‘calming of the tensions’ both in regard to development in geopolitical situation, marked by the beginning of the *détente*, as well as in domestic affairs in most countries of both Eastern and Western Bloc (McMahon 2021: 121–141). The period later referred to as political crisis of the '70s in Italy, France, Britain and United States was, according to historian Eric Hobsbawm, probably the first and only political crisis that was not followed by a visible decline in living standard, but on the contrary, by the further expansion of welfare state policies (Hobsbaum 2014: 157–165). Later findings of French sociologist Laurent Mucchielli indicate that early neoliberal propaganda capitalized on the moral panic arriving from the fears of terrorism, new age occultism, drug abuse and supposed rise of crime in the '70s and early '80s, but in the historical period in which contemporaries

48 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 55-57.

49 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 83-89.

50 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 42-46.

51 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 97-103.

feared them most, these phenomenon were only expanding on the margins of the social habitat from which most New Right thinkers came (Mucchielli 2001: 103–132). However, numerous Yugoslav anarcho-liberals later testified that the previously mentioned “new age” phenomenon, somehow related to strengthening of far-left movements and parties, along with cultural changes they deemed to have “gone too far,” motivated them to abandon revolutionary ideas from their youth, which they increasingly viewed as “innocent” in comparison with “extremism” of their rebellious counterparts in the late ’70s and early ’80s.⁵²

First being a self-proclaimed radical leftist and later becoming an enthusiastic neoliberal was a global trend. It was especially acceptable in the circles of academic elites, upper-middle employees of developing international corporations, lower ranking state bureaucracy, and moderately successful artists (Letwin 1992: 97–114). In short, those who had both reasons to fear losing their position if they retain radical leftist views of their youth and to aspire to gain something from becoming liberal converts. Reports of the Yugoslav secret service indicate that a vast majority of Yugoslav anarcho-liberals came from among these circles, and in regard to their social lives, stick to even smaller circles of immediate friends and fellow participants of the student movements in the late ’60s.⁵³ In this time marked by many social and cultural changes, when, to quote historian Eric Hobsbawm, “*musical or cultural preferences were considered at least evenly, or more important than ideological affiliations,*” small circles assembled from those who came from the same social habitat. In the case of some Yugoslav anarcho-liberals, often even from the same profession. They were subsequently expected to be concerned much more about the inner workings of their small social or business circles than with their relations towards wider society. In such circumstances, it is easy to imagine how an entire group could gradually replace radical leftist beliefs with liberal ideas, while continuously clinging to the idea that they are still “different,” still “rebels.” Hobsbawm extensively elaborates how many Western leftists who became liberals still listened to rock and roll, were still reading the same newspapers and watching Hollywood movies, and still held beliefs about social values that, though more conservative than two decades ago, could still be considered more progressive than what they viewed as dominant patterns (Hobsbaum 2014: 157–165). Authors of the reports created by the Slovenian branch of the Yugoslav secret service claim that the aforementioned attitudes were crucial in creating a certain social climate, especially in the inner circles of anarcho-liberals, in which a transition from a full-fledged radical leftist to left, or even right-wing liberal became socially acceptable.⁵⁴

52 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 35–39.

53 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 83–89.

54 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 55–57.

Reports assembled by the Serbian branch of the Yugoslav secret service indicate a significant change in dominant attitudes of anarcho-liberals towards the issue of ideological change itself. From the mid towards the late '80s, authors of the aforementioned sources noticed a considerable increase in number of the former far-left dissidents who started to express an idea that ideological divisions from the past should be criticized, deconstructed and gradually surpassed in a certain way.⁵⁵ Among those anarcho-liberals, there had been an influential current of thought that went as far as to declare traditional definitions of the distinction between left and right wing ideologies to be no longer applicable in modern times due to the increasing complexity of social reality. Thus, they concluded that individual ideas should be analyzed separately from those often rather presumed than openly stated hierarchies of priorities and values, which are created by necessity as soon as ideological constructs are consciously or subconsciously adopted.⁵⁶ Thus, some Yugoslav anarcho-liberals followed a similar path to the one that was later described by scholars as being characteristic for numerous participants of 1968 student movements in the countries of Western Europe and United States (Herzog 2007: 313–333). That path took anarcho-liberals from the ideas of New Left about questioning and relativizing traditional leftist dogmatism, up towards ideas of postmodernist deconstruction, which gained prominence in social sciences and humanities at the same time as neoliberalism became a new globally dominant ideology.⁵⁷

In the late '80s, as the Cold War was approaching its end, observations of the secret service started to indicate the increasing influence of ideas we would today define as Fukuyamist among the former far-left dissidents in Yugoslavia (Held 1993: 293–404). Preserved records attest to the increasing influence of the notion that, with the eventual replacement or reformation of socialist systems in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans, both the radical left and radical right ideologies would gradually lose their following, until eventually disappearing at the margins of history.⁵⁸ Reports produced by the security service testify that numerous anarcho-liberals who accepted the idea that liberal capitalism will be the final ideology of human history still viewed themselves as being leftists, both due to the fact that once being on the left end of the spectrum of the 1968 student movement became a decisive factor in their political identity, as well as because they perceived neoliberal left-wing as the only left-wing ideology that would survive the expected conclusion of Cold War.⁵⁹ After accepting the idea that there would be no alternative to the neoliberal

55 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 97-103.

56 HDA, 1561, RSUP, *Praxis* Group and anarcho-liberalism in Croatia, 1987, 41-55.

57 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 27-30, 89-94.

58 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 42-46.

59 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 64-71.

economic model, they increasingly started to give up discussion on social policies, deeming them to be far less important than the newly arising problems such as the rise of nationalism, or freedom of press and media. Some anarcho-liberals went as far as to completely deny any importance to the question of class inequalities in political agenda, and, already in the late '80s, started to differentiate left from right parties and movements solely on their attitudes towards nationalism and “progressive” or “conservative” stances in regard to social norms.⁶⁰ This occurrence, that will later be recognized by scholars as one of the patterns which defined the new trend in development of political ideas and ideologies in the countries of Western Europe and United States, was already present on the eve of the wars for Yugoslav succession among former left-wing dissidents who gradually turned towards liberalism.⁶¹

Disappearance of anarcho-liberals from history of ideas and their importance in historical research of the Yugoslav secret service

Despite becoming part of an extensively studied global phenomenon that involved far-leftists from the late '60s accepting neoliberal ideologies by the early '80s, and expressing many uniquely local traits while following what social scientists described as a worldwide trend, Yugoslav anarcho-liberals mostly remained on the margins of other subjects explored by Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian historiography.⁶² We often encounter articles and books written by authors who studied ideologies followed by far-leftist fractions of the student movement of 1968, and those who studied the ideas of first Yugoslav neoliberals in the late '80s and '90s, but we rarely find literature that emphasizes the fact that these two groups shared a significant number of protagonists. The fact that historians tend to devote their attention towards what they view as “critical turning points” in history makes it easier for readers to focus on the turbulent events that marked Yugoslav history of the late '60s, late '80s or early '90s, and thus overlook the development of the same ideologies, political groups or social phenomenon during “inter periods.” However, it is within what historians today perceive as “inter periods” when structural foundations for the future dynamic and turbulent escalation are created and fostered, when animosities that will be articulated in the distant future are accumulated, and

60 ARS, 1931, RSNZ, Genesis and some cases of anarcho-liberal activities in Slovenia, 1981, 55-57.

61 AS, BIA, SSUP, Reports on activities of the enemy from anarcho-liberal positions, 1985, 97-103.

62 With a few notable exceptions, such can be found in the research of Praxis philosophers and their later critics, and in later scholarly discussion about the influence that historical circumstance may have had on the development of the ideological trends of the era during which anarcho-liberals rose to prominence and disappeared. For more information on the issue, see the research of Aleksandar Miletić on the ideological conceptions of the time that occupied the attention of Zoran Đinđić through his youth, academic career and later political engagement (Miletić 2023).

when contemporaries have time and resources to further develop ideas and perceptions they will be later expressed.

Foundations of the ideological changes that contemporaries later noticed during the formation of new movements and declarations of new party ideologies are often created during the times of “wondering” and “soul-searching,” as well as forming a lasting impression about the political, social and cultural changes thus far witnessed. Ideological transformation from far left towards liberal ideologies, which was experienced by some groups and individuals that took part in the student movements of the late '60s, was a long-term process that lasted almost two decades and in some cases more. Reports of the Yugoslav secret service used the term anarcho-liberals to emphasize the importance of the transitional phase in ideological development of future Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian neoliberals. Yet, there is still a certain risk that future historians and sociologists from the former Yugoslav republics will, carried away by visible ideological and social changes of the late '60s and early '90s, overlook the important political and economic circumstances that contributed to an ideological change that would hardly be imaginable to be as common and socially acceptable as it was in its own time. This is why it is important to remember that some important ideological changes were noticed and at least partially put into the appropriate social and historical context by the security service analysts at the same time as they occurred.

This is an especially important example to have in mind when researching the inner workings and history of the Yugoslav secret service. If we were to look just at field reports submitted by the service associates on the ground, we could be misled towards confirming an existing stereotype that agents of the secret service lacked interest, diligence or educational capacities to understand both the current agenda and changes in ideological orientations of those whose actions they presented as a “great danger” to Yugoslav communist party and existence of the Yugoslav state (an example can be found in the field reports about the actions of the students in 1968). However, contrary to the assumptions made common by popular culture representations of the Yugoslav secret service and reinforced by historiography which only analyzed field reports, we could come to a completely different conclusion if we were to look upon the analytical reports produced by the scholars, possibly from various fields of social sciences and humanities, who were employed by the Yugoslav State Security Service. These reports contain extensive historical, philosophical, sociological and anthropological explanations. This is yet another example of why it is crucial for historians to look at a same problem from multiple perspectives and not exclude scenarios where two seemingly contradictory occurrences are happening simultaneously, as it is indeed often the case in social reality, whose laws never follow “black and white” divisions created by ideologically influenced perceptions of the past.

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Ideologija anarholiberalnih disidenata iz perspektive službe državne bezbednosti (1965-1985)

Apstrakt

Tokom prethodnih nekoliko decenija, u društvenim i humanističkim naukama došlo je do uočavanja i početka istraživanja jedinstvenog novog trenda ideološke tranzicije sa pozicija onih grupa krajnje levice koje su učestvovala u studentskim demonstracijama koje su obeležile kasne šezdesete godine, do pozicija koje su držali liberali ranih osamdesetih godina. Izvestan broj onih koji učestvovali u studentskim pobunama u Jugoslaviji 1968. godine sledili su ovaj globalni trend, i postepeno napustili svoje ranije anarhističke, trockističke ili demokratsko-socijalističke ideje u korist onakvih ideja kakve bi danas mogli definisati kao neoliberalne. Služba državne bezbednosti pažljivo je pratila i dokumentovala akcije i ideološka kretanja među levim disidentima koji će postati liberali. Cilj ovog članka je da prezentuje rezultate istraživanja istorijskih izvora koje je ostavila tajna služba, kao i da ih dovede u odgovarajući društveni i istorijski kontekst. Rezultati do sada istraživanja do sada objavljenih od strane stručnjaka iz različitih oblasti društvenih i humanističkih nauka upoređivani su sa rezultatima dobijenim tokom ovog arhivskog istraživanja.

Cljučne reči: Anarholiberalizam, socijalizam, neoliberalizam, krajnja levica, Služba državne bezbednosti.

