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University Education: A Shortcut to Modernity or a Blind Alee? Student Political Activism as an Agent of Modernization

Abstract: In this paper the author tries to analyze connections between the development of the university education, student political activism and modernization. It seems that university education is among the first spheres of society that has been "modernized/westernized" in the 19th century. As for the role of the student political activism, it has been an ambivalent one. Student political activists were more radical in the countries where they were isolated from the rest of the society. Even the greatest student rebellion of 1968 had no undisputed consequences upon the social development. Generally speaking, the main problem with universities since the 19th century has been the bureaucratic orientation of the entire education system, and the belief in "national/political mission" of the politically active students. Instead of becoming professionals, they rather became identity/political entrepreneurs.

Why a Shortcut?

The universities were important agents of profound social and cultural changes since their beginnings. The same is true for the student activism that emerged almost simultaneously with universities. Already in the 13th century, students in Paris and Bologna clashed with the church or with the city magistrates demanding more freedom.[1] Furthermore, universities were not only the bastions of the free political thinking. They have been crucial institutions for the overall modernization of a society. As Diana Mishkova wrote it, "Education was one of the first, if not the very first, modernized social sphere where the Western standards were adopted and institutionalized; thus education and universities themselves were among the first 'modern' and 'European' institutions in the Central and

1 J. Le Goff, *Intelectuels au Moyen Age* (Oxford: English edition, 1993), pp. 68-69.

South-Eastern Europe."[2] They really came before other modern institutions and social categories. Many societies developed universities before the modern social structure. Universities were decisive for the creation and social reproduction of the *Bildungsbürgertum.* The more eastward one went in Europe, the more important was a role of this subgroup within the *Bürgertum.*[3] Actually, one could claim that the professionals with university degrees resembled their Western counterparts more than any other social group. We could even paraphrase professor Kocka and say that they were *Ersatzbürgertum,* or a functional equivalent to the middle class in the Western sense of the word.

East-West Differences within Europe

Mishkova also pointed out the significance of universities as principal channels not only for academic and cultural transfer, but also for the transfer of all other features of the Western/ modern societies (until recently, for the most of the South-Eastern Europe, and perhaps for the most of the world, Westernization and Modernization were practically synonyms). It has been much easier to accept Western political, scientific, cultural and artistic ideas, especially when the intellectual elite was concerned, than to import some less transferable "items", such as technology, work ethic, etc. The more remote had "intelligentsia" been from other parts of the middle class, the more radical students' political movements were.[4] It seems that political activism of the students was reversely proportional to the level of development in certain societies. Nowhere could one have found greater contrast between the general level of a society and educated "intelligentsia" than in Russia during the 19th century.

In the Western Europe, students were active participants in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Victor Hugo immortalized the student revolutionaries of 1830 in *Les Miserables.* Their leader, Enjolras, was the only son of rich parents, from the South, "a priest of ideals".[5] According to John Plamenatz, students started the revolution of 1848 in Paris. In Germany they were only "a voice in the great chorus of the revolutionary movement" (Jarausch).[6]

However, nowhere was the student radicalism so widespread and as ardent as in the Tsarist Russia. It has been a good example for the hypothesis made

2 See the Mishkova's contribution to this volume.

3 J. Kocka, *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1995); J. Kocka, "The Middle Classes in Europe", *The Journal of Modern History,* 67, December 1995, pp.783-806. Herafter J. Kocka, "The Middle Classes in Europe".

4 About distance between the ‚inteligentsia' and oth re parts od the middle class see J. Kocka, "The Middle Classes in Europe", p.974.

5 It is from chapter "ABC friends" from fourth book within the third volume differently paginated in different editions.

6 J. Plamenatz, *The Revolutionary Movement in France 1815-1871* (London, 1953), p.63; K. H. Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten 1800-1970* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984), p.51. Herafter K. H. Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten.*

above in the text that radicalism of the students grows with the distance from the rest of a society (especially from the middle classes). Alexander Herzen wrote that nowhere else did the contrast between the "common life" and "education" reach such proportions as among the Russian nobility.[7] Actually, most of this "nobility" were declassed small aristocrats, noble only by name, but living from poorly paid administrative and intellectual professions. The curious fact is that the percentage of priests' sons among student activists was proportionally high.[8] However, one should not jump to the conclusion that radicalism of the Russian students was somehow connected to the eschatological and millenarian traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church. Neither should their revolutionary zeal be reduced to the social frustrations, as the author from the previous footnote (Feuer) implied by accentuating an origin from declassed families. Some of the most famous Russian student revolutionaries came from the very top of the society. (Sofia Perovskaya, for example, was a daughter of the former military governor of the Saint Petersburg). Furthermore, one could find a faith in a social mission among many student activists coming from privileged social groups, from the above mentioned Hugo's Enjorlas to the students of both Americas in the 1960s. Not to mention the first generation of the post colonial Third World leaders, who had very often been the descendants of political elites educated in Western capitals. It seems that in the 19th century Russia, like in many 20th century developing societies, students believing in their special social role tried to find a 'shortcut' to a bright future, a way out from the backwardness, injustice and poverty. The Russian students mixed the quasi religious sense of the mission with a "scientific" worldview, like Bazarov, the hero of Turgenev's novel *Fathers and sons.* Therefore, they were the first to accept Marxism, organizing commemoration at the time of Marx's death in 1883. Marx himself was surprised by the fact that the first translation of the *Kapital* was in Russian, noticing thereafter that Russian aristocratic students educated in the West were inclined to the most extreme Western ideas.[9]

However, Russian students anticipated the future activities of all student political radicals in several ways. For example, a specific dressing code designed to stress the rebellion against the system, such as long hair "patented" by German students *Burschenschaften,* or the acceptance of the lower classes "fashion" that resembles *blue jeans* fashion also initiated by American students one century later. "Going to the people" movement organized by *Narodniks* in 1870s had some similarities to the Freedom Summer of the elite American students in 1964.[10]

7 A. Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts:The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen, Vol. 2* (London, 1924), p. 141.

8 L. S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations. The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (London, 1969), pp.113-116. Hereafter L.S.Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations.*

9 L. S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations,* p. 119; K. Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelman* (New York, 1934), pp. 77-78.

10 L. S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generation,* pp. 97-98, p. 128; for blue jeans see E.Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (New York, 1996), p.331. Hereafter E.Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*; for Freedom Summer in A. Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford-New York, 1998), pp. 565-569.

On the other hand, the unique trait of the Russian students' political activism was violence demonstrated by both sides in this war of terror. From the first student protest in Harkov in 1858 to the 1905 revolution, students and the Tsarist regime were engaged in a literally mortal combat. In 1861, 43% of the St. Petersburg university students were arrested, while in the 1870s, 2.5% of the Moscow students were jailed every year. On the other hand, nowhere else did students kill so many state officials. The tsar Alexander II himself had been a target of several assassination attempts (1866, 1879, 1880, 1881) before he was murdered in 1887. Most of the assassins were ex- students.[11]

The 19th Century Serbian Experience: "Pale, Young Men with Long Hairs"

The quotation comes from Slobodan Jovanović who continues "....they went in groups always discussing something."[12] Even before the real University was established (in 1905), the Belgrade students had been restless. The first prohibition of a student organization occurred in 1851, the first "students" strike in 1858, a year of the liberal St Andrew Assembly. Then they rioted regularly every few years. Some of the riots were in a dominant, liberal spirit of the time. For example, in 1861 students protested against the regime's attempt to force students to go to the church on Sundays. In a petition they asked for a religious freedom and for a rule of law. Two years later, Belgrade students demonstrated in support to two professors who had proposed Garibaldi as a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

During the 1870s, the Serbian students were influenced by Russian *Narodniks* and nihilists. Jovan Žujović, a scientist and a politician, claimed that in this decade, almost all students knew and read Russian. According to Jovan Skerlić, a famous Serbian literate and a critic, Serbian students "admired" Chernysevsky. During the 1890s, Belgrade intellectuals could have read direct references to Marx and Engels in the magazine *Delo*, and not from Russian translations as before.

After 1900, the significance of the student activism grew, with the legitimacy crisis of the Obrenović dynasty. The students went on a successful strike that lasted throughout the spring semester in 1902. They decisively contributed to the overthrow of the Obrenović dynasty in 1903, because the students were the organizers of the March demonstrations, when several participants were killed by the police. These demonstrations finally discredited the Obrenović regime, which was overthrown two months later.[13]

11 L. S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generation,* p. 127; J. N. Westwood, *Endurance and Andeanour. Russian History 1812-1912 (*Oxford, 1993), pp. 99,112, 116-118.

12 Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića* (Beograd, 1931), p. 261.

13 P. Marković, "Predistorija studentskog pokreta- uporedna pesrpektiva" [a History of Student Movements- a Comparative Survey up to World War II], *Istorija 20.veka,* 1, 2001, pp. 19-32.

The students enjoyed a high esteem in the Serbian society. After one clash with police in 1902, the police officially expressed regret because their officers had been forced to treat students "as any other rascals, at the expense of the prestige of our highest educational institution."[14]

Students themselves were sensitive to their public image. Several riots broke out because they felt insulted. In 1882, students interrupted a theatre play *Rabagas,* which allegedly mocked the radicals and socialists. Twelve years later, in 1894, they attacked and destroyed several coffeehouses, for the singers there had made ironical couplets about students.[15]

Turn to the Right in Europe after the WWI

In the interwar time, the political mood of students changed in line with the general crisis of the middle classes and liberal values in this period. In almost all European countries, students became more nationalist and more right wing oriented. The nationalism of the students' movements was not a novelty, for the first *Burschenschaften* at the beginning of the 19th century in Germany had been nationalist organizations.[16] The same is true for the revolutions of 1848. The novelty of the interwar period was that, at least in Europe, nationalism lost its connection with liberal and emancipatory ideology. It was especially the case in the countries frustrated with the outcomes of the Great War. So, the German revolution of 1918 was in Meinecke words, "a revolution without students", which was in a dramatic contrast to 1848. During the Weimar Republic, German students mostly disapproved of the parliamentary regime. From 5% to 10% of German students were NSDAP members as early as 1930. In Italy, 13% of the fascists were students, even before the fascist rise to power.[17] In Serbia, the situation was the opposite.

"The Red University"

It has been a common position in the Yugoslav historiography after the WWII that the Belgrade University was a "cradle of the Communist cadres" in the interwar Yugoslavia. The political activity of differently oriented students has been mostly neglected. However, the very fact that out of 1322 "people's heroes",

Hereafter P. Marković, "Predistorija"; From the same author, "Die Vorgeschichte der serbischen Studentenbewegung im europäischen Kontext" , *Comparativ* 14, 5/6, 2004, pp. 173-198. Herafter P. Marković "Die Vorgeschichte".

14 M. Vojvodić,"Demonstracije velikoškolaca u Beogradu 1902.godine", in *Univerzitet u Beogradu 1838-1988, (*Beograd, 1988), pp.774-786.

15 P. Marković, "Predistorija", p. 24.

16 K. H. Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten,* pp. 35-38.

17 K. H. Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten,* pp. 118-214; E.Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, p. 122.

313 or 23.68% were students (mostly from the Belgrade University) shows the importance of students in the Yugoslav Communist movement and in the partisan resistance.[18] The proportion of students among the "people's heroes" was almost 230 times bigger than the proportion of students in the general population (in 1939, there were 16,978 students in approximately 15 million of Yugoslav population).[19] Furthermore, the majority of the student participants in the Communist movement and resistance came from the Belgrade University.

The left oriented students changed their political agenda during the interwar period. During the 1920s, before the abolishing of the parliamentary regime in 1929, the main student's objective had been the autonomy of the University. Thereafter, one of the first signs of the limited liberalization of the regime was the demonstration around the biggest students' dorm in 1931. In this and the following years, students tried some of the tactics used in later periods by students all over the world, such as an occupation of lecture halls and dorms. Student leftist activists attracted more public attention and sympathy during the Popular Front phase (1935-1939), for they were the most vocal antifascist group within the society. They temporarily abandoned antifascist rhetoric after the sudden reversal of the Soviet foreign politics after August 1939.[20] But eventually, students regained the leading role within the Communist resistance after the occupation in 1941.

Why the Belgrade students joined the ranks of the Communist Party in such numbers? And more to the point, how did they obtain the leading role within the Communist wartime resistance, concerning that the Communist Party had in principle been suspicious of intellectuals? Similarly to all other student movements, Belgrade students in this period were not children of the poor. If not from the elite, they came from middle class families. Although, the statistics of the interwar Yugoslavia is very deceptive, for it tracks the occupation rather than social status. This means that the statistics does not differentiate between the rich and the poor "peasants" or "artisans". Nevertheless, the proportion of the students coming from peasants' and workers' families grew faster than the proportion of the other social groups in the period 1930-1940.[21] Even so, the students coming from villages were mostly children of wealthier peasants. Their origin from the respected peasant families became extremely important during the WWII, when many of them became leaders of the resistance fighters in their village communities. In addition, the politics of the occupying forces and some quislings ("ustashas" in the first place) unintentionally cleared the social ladder. Namely, Germans took the majority of officers and middle aged soldiers as war prisoners. "Ustashas" simply exterminated or forced to emigration the

18 Lj. Petrović, "Narodni heroji u jugoslovenskom društvu 1942–1980. godine, Prilog istraživanju položaja boračkih elita u posleratnoj Jugoslaviji", *Vojnoistorijski glasnik,* No. 1–2, Beograd, 2001.

19 *Jugoslavija 1918-1988.Statistički godišnjak (*Beograd, 1989), p. 368.

20 P. Marković, "Die Vorgeschichte", pp. 173-198.

21 *Statistički godišnjaci Kraljevine Jugoslavije,*1930 (pp. 346-347); 1935 (pp. 320-321); 1940 (pp. 364-365).

traditional Serbian elite in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, creating a social and generational vacuum. It opened an additional political space for the younger leaders, especially students and ex-students. After the literal destruction of the old society, their vision of the new society became more convincing.

Educational Explosion

After the WWII something that could be named „educational explosion" took place. Before the WWII even Germany, Britain and France had no more than 150,000 university students (one student per one thousand inhabitants). After the WWII, number of university teachers in these countries surpassed this number. In Germany, the percentage of students tripled between 1937 and 1957 (from 0.72% to 2.38% of the generation cohort), rising to 4.2% in 1960. Even in the USA, which already in the 1940s had the biggest proportion of students, the so called "G.I. Law", which enabled free university education for the war veterans, produced millions of students. This „educational explosion" was even more dramatic in the developing countries. In some of them, such as Ecuador, the percentage of university students among the general population grew to 3.2%.[22] A greater demand for jobs changed the ways of life and education everywhere. University education was not a privilege of the rich anymore. Hartmuth Kaelble compares this process without a precedent with the *Alphabetisierungprozess* in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century.

This educational explosion was by no means an undisputed process. In some countries the university education rose faster than other kinds of education. In Egypt, for example, the percentage of the university students within their generation cohort in 1960 was bigger than in Germany. On the other hand, the percentage of children in the age 6-11 attending school was only 40%.[23] This disproportion deserves a special attention. We are going to address this issue later in this text.

Apolitical 1950s?

In the beginning, democratization of the university education did not increase a political engagement of the students. On the contrary, everywhere social scientists complained about the indifference, egoism and conformism of students in the 1950s. David Riesman ironically called this generation "cool student". In Italy one coined for them a name "3M Generation" (Mestiere-Maccina-Moglie; Workplace-Automobile-Wife).[24] Even at the beginning of the 1960s, two "experts" from two different ends of the world agreed about the non

22 E.Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp. 295-296; K. H. Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten*, p.215; M.A.Jones, *The Limits of Liberty. American history 1667-1992* (Oxford-New York, 1995), p. 588.
23 *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8 (Cambridge, 1984), p.180.
24 Quoted by: G.Stassera, *Death of an Utopia* (New York, 1975), p. 4.

to make money in this country. Contrary to the regime intentions, most of the scholarships went to the children of state officials.[28]

In spite of the efforts of the government, students were frustrated by the low living standards. They rioted in 1954 against an increase in prices in the biggest dormitory of the region (Studentski grad – the Student City, where several thousand students lived). Despite the clashes with the police on horses, the highest Party officials Aleksandar Ranković and Veljko Vlahović (the latter was a leader of the student movement in 1930s) suggested mild punishments for rebellious students. Only few students lost scholarships, even fewer were temporarily expelled from the University. The riots of 1959 were much more interesting, for they broke out in several cities almost simultaneously (Zagreb, Rijeka, Skopje, and Belgrade). They were called "Cafeteria riots" for they were triggered by the bad quality of the food in the students' cafeterias.[29] These demonstrations would have stayed curiosities, had they not indicated a broader issue. Namely, the rising expectations did cause frustrations among the growing body of students, in spite of the all pampering of the generally benevolent regime. It was going to have more serious consequences in the connection with other frustrations, such as the nationalist ones.

1968: a Year of Global Dreams

There are few better researched topics in the social history of the 20th century than the '68 student rebellion. The new books emerged periodically, mostly in the jubilee years (1978, especially 1988 and 1998 when the 68ers were fully established, somewhat less in 2008). Even in the underdeveloped Serbian social history research, this topic got more attention than most of the other issues of the period (actually, no other topic from the period after the 1950s is so well covered). 2008 was particularly fruitful in Serbia, when the aged 68ers were in the very hearth of the establishment.[30]

The results of the 1968 were ambivalent. The rebellion failed to produce political change, it in some cases even frightened middle class voters to vote

28 D. Bondžić, *Beogradski Univerzitet 1945-1952* (Belgrade, 2004), pp. 329-339. Hereafter D.Bondžić, *Beogradski Univerzitet*; D. Bondžić, *Univerzitet u socijalizmu* (Beograd, 2010), pp. 449-484. Herafter D. Bondžić, *Univerzitet u socializmu.*

29 D. Bondžić, *Univerzitet u socijalizmu,* pp. 428-430.

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for right wing politicians (In France and the USA). But, it put in motion a far reaching cultural revolution.[31] This year changed everything in the realms of counter culture (that later became a main stream culture), gender relations, identity politics, ecological consciousness, etc. In a word, in almost all areas but the politics itself.

The student revolt of the late 1960s was global not only because the ideology of the revolutionary tradition from 1789 to 1917 was universal and internationalist, but because the world, or at least the world in which student ideologists lived, was genuinely global for the first time. The same books appeared, almost simultaneously, in the student bookshops in Buenos Aires, Rome and Hamburg (in 1968, almost certainly including Herbert Marcuse). The same tourists of revolution crossed oceans and continents from Paris to Havana, from Sao Paolo to Bolivia. The first generation of humanity to take rapid and cheap global air travel and telecommunications for granted, the students of late 1960s had no difficulty in recognizing what happened at the Sorbonne, in Berkeley, in Prague, as a part of the same event in the same global village in which, according to the Canadian guru Marshall McLuhan (another fashionable name of the 1960s) "we all lived."[32]

Despite the criticism, the '68 movement still occupies the minds of its contemporaries, as well as various scholars and artists for its essential romantic and idealistic nature. The basic fact about 1968 is that in this year, a most privileged generation in entire humane history rebelled for higher causes. Namely, the baby boomers generation which came to universities in the late 1960s had less reasons to be angry than any other previous or next generation. They were used to living better every year, to expecting good and secure jobs. And yet, they rebelled because of the Vietnam, because of human rights and social injustice. This was a rebellion of the people who were hungry for freedom and justice, not for bread. We could have hardly imagined such an agenda deprived of any rational "interest" in any other period than in 1968.[33]

1968: A Yugoslav Experience

The outbreak of the 1968 rebellion in Yugoslavia, first in Belgrade, then in almost all university centres, deeply shocked the Communist nomenclature. Although the first reaction of the police had been brutal, later developments show a very peculiar approach to the student protesters. Already in the first days, a highest delegation of the state officials visited students (Miloš Minić, Veljko Vlahović, Stevan Doronjski and Branko Pešić). One could have hardly

31 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp. 444-445.

32 Ibid., pp. 446-447.

33 P. Marković, *Godina kada je svet sanjao zajednički san, a Beograd bio svet (introduction to the catalogue of the exibition Juni '68), Studentski protest u Beogradu* (Beograd,2008).

imagined such a high profile visit anywhere else, from Berkeley to Sorbonne, not to mention Prague or Warsaw. Perhaps their own past in 1954, being themselves student leaders played its role in such a relatively benevolent attitude. In the end, on 9 June, came the most surprising official reaction. Tito himself seemingly supported students. He said how he was happy "that we have such mature youth", but implicitly he also accused "foreign elements" (he mentioned various enemies in a single sentence; Djilas, Ranković and Mao followers) who had tried to "infiltrate." Anyway, it was not only internal, but also an international triumph. Even the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote that Tito had shown more political wisdom than De Gaulle.[34] The repression came later.

As for the nature of the student rebellion in Yugoslavia, it resembled the Western student movements more than those in Poland and Czechoslovakia. In fact, the Polish students who were chronologically among the first who raised (in March 1968) and who inspired many others in Europe, from Daniel Cohn-Benditt to Belgrade student organizations, demanded intellectual and artist freedom too, but their principal request was a patriotic (a nationalist?) one. Their rebellion was triggered by a ban of the Mickiewicz's play *Dziady* (Ancestors), because of its anti-Russian message.[35] Even one of the most prominent Western student movements, the German one, was perhaps not a nationalism free movement. One of the veterans, Rabehl, claimed in the late 1990s, that he and Dutschke had fought for the German independence from the USA. Such an attitude caused an avalanche of revolts, as the other German '68ers accused Rabehl of right wing extremism.[36] In Yugoslavia, situation was exactly the opposite one. As Dennison Rusinow remarked: "It was perhaps the first (we would add the last as well, P.M.) time in the fifty years since the creation of Yugoslavia that ethnicity played no role in an important political event."[37] Therefore, more nationalist oriented politicians, such as the leaders of the Croatian Spring, tried to downplay 1968 in Zagreb, claiming that the student strikes of 1971 were much more popular among the Croatian students. The first exclusively nationalist student movement in Yugoslavia occurred among the Albanian students in November 1968. There were no social demands among their slogans (except maybe about "colonialist politics toward Kosovo"). These demonstrations actually belonged more to the Croatian students' demonstrations of 1971, than to those of 1968.[38]

34 "Kaiser, Volk und Adel", *FAZ,* 12.06.1968.

35 J. Eisler, "March 1968 in Poland", in C. Finke-P. Gassert-D. Junker, *1968: The World Transformed* (Washington, 1998), pp. 237-253; *Jun-Lipanj 68,* pp. 35-42.

36 P. Marković, "Studentski pokret u Jugoslaviji 60-ih godina 20.veka: između nacionalizma i internacionalizma, između reformizma i dogmatizma", in .H. G. Fleck-I. Graovac (eds.), *Dijalog povjesničara/istoričara 7* (Zagreb, 2003), pp. 393-414. Hereafter P.Marković, "Studentski pokret u Jugoslaviji 60-ih godina".

37 D. Rusinow,*The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (London, 1977), p. 234.

38 S. Dabčević-Kučar, *71-hrvatski snovi i stvarnost* (Zagreb, 1997), p. 88; P.Marković, "Služba državne bezbednosti i albanske demonstracije 1968. godine", *Istorija 20.veka,*1-2, 1999, pp. 169-180.

There is another ambivalent issue concerning the student demonstration of 1968 in Yugoslavia. Were they too much influenced by the fashionable New Left ideas, and hence against the painful market reforms of 1965? Already on 30 September 1968, members of the Central Committee Commission for the Ideological and Political Work at their session accused the students for ultra-radical and ultra-leftist thinking. This attitude has been accepted by some historians. John Lampe claims that the student demands for social justice and equality allowed Tito and Kardelj to more easily abandon market reforms.[39] Truly, many student demands were aimed against inequality, against the privileges of the "red bourgeoisie" ("a wheel of a Mercedes is not a wheel of history", said one of the slogans). One could compare student protesters with religious dissenters in the Middle Ages. They both had to conceal their basically subversive ideas by quoting "holly texts" and by claiming that they only defended the purity of "original" faith. The students also criticized the establishment for abandoning the official socialist ideals. Such ideological "purism" included a psychological component. Namely, among the protesters there were many children of the pre-war political activists and the WWII veterans. This generation had often been patronized by their parents, criticized by newspapers and teachers, for their "easy" and "spoiled" life. Rebellion gave them an opportunity to prove a real revolutionary spirit, tacitly abandoned by the parent generation.[40] And of course, they were willing to abandon the ideals, even for the sake of a career. It happened everywhere, especially in poorer countries, where jobs in the state and party apparatus were the most desirable jobs. Like in Mexico, where "the more revolutionary they were as students, the better jobs they were likely to be offered after graduation."[41] This dependence from the state hides one of the principal weaknesses of the student activism as an agent of the modernization.

"The More Students, the Better"?

One of the stereotypes concerning students is that an increase of the university education automatically brings progress and modernity. We have already mentioned the case of Egypt, where the percentage of university students rose faster than percentage of those attending primary schools. Such a development resembles a hydrocephalus with a big head and a small body. Something similar happened in Yugoslavia. A percentage of illiterate dropped modestly. For example, from 1948 to 1971, it dropped from 25.4% to 15.1%. In central Serbia these percentages were 27.3 and 17.7%, respectively. The more backward a region

39 P. Marković, "Studentski pokret u Jugoslaviji 60-ih godina", p. 406; J. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 295-296.

40 Such an attitude is frequent among interviewees in Đ. Malovrazić, *Šezdeset osma.Lične istorije.*

41 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp. 299-300.

was the bigger was the jump in university education, but also the gap between those with university degrees on the one side, and those without any education on the other. The latter did not decrease as it had been expected. In Kosovo in the period from 1948 to 1971 the percentage of illiterate not even halved, i.e. from 62.2% to 32.2%.[42] The percentage of university educated people in Kosovo rose in the period from 1953 to 1981 by amazing 33 times, from 0.1% to 3.3%. In the most developed Republic of Slovenia this rise was modest 7.37 times (from 0.8 to 5.9% of the population). In 1981, within the generation cohort from 25 to 34 years, there were 10.6% students among the Kosovo Albanians, and 9.9% among Slovenes.[43] At the same time, the number of people without any education sunk in Slovenia 4.2 times (from 15.2% to 3.6%) and in Kosovo only 2.7 times (from 71.2 to 27.9%).[44] In 1978, the number of students per 10,000 inhabitants in Kosovo was bigger (299) than in central Serbia (237), Slovenia (158), Germany (81), USSR (190), Romania (77) and even the USA (290).[45] According to these percentages, Kosovo should have become a knowledge based prosperous society. It did not happen. Why?

Why Growth of Universities does not Inevitably Launch Modernization?

The case of Kosovo is only the most absurd one. Many other societies in the region had a similar problem with university education. It is, roughly speaking, in the effectiveness and the purpose of the university education. As early as in the 19th century, the universities were oriented to produce people for state apparatus in the whole region. That meant too many lawyers and philosophers and too few engineers and physicians. This has been proven by the contributions of Trgovčević and Preshlenova in this conference. What is wrong with that? Were not Prussia and France built upon educated bureaucracy?

We are coming to the core of the issue. What is a personal and a social purpose of the university education? The most politically and socially active students in the region have rarely wanted to be only professionals and experts. Their surrounding also did not want them to be "mere" specialists. They were meant to be the "leaders". And this led to such an imbalance between production-oriented and politically-oriented professions. In these backward societies, where politics has decisively determined most of the personal and social gains, intellectual career has often been only a waiting room for the political/national work. That

42 *Jugoslavija 1918-1988. Statistički godišnjak,39; Yugoslavia 1945-1985,* Federal Statistic Office, pp. 112,114,118. Hereafter *Yugoslavia 1945-1985*; *Društveno ekonomski razvoj Socijalističke republike Srbije 1950-197* (Beograd, 1972), pp. 8-10.

43 M. Blagojević,"Obrazovna struktura jugoslovenskog društva", *Socioliogija 1-2*, 1986, pp. 43-62.

44 *Yugoslavia 1945-1985,* p.198.

45 B. Prpa, *Moderna srpska država 1804-2004.Hronologija* (Beograd , 2004), p. 369.

was especially the case in the communities that lived in foreign or multinational states. Their intellectual members often became identity/political entrepreneurs. By building and defining their national identity and/or political community, they could also secure their existence.