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If it is in the previous two centuries that their materiality was so significant in the construction of identity, then how things were circulating in that earlier period seems a pressing question. Information on these things, and on the processes of assessment and the domestic knowledge and interactions on which they were based, is buried slightly deeper within the meat of the court depositions themselves of course. While unpicking it would have been a different and even larger project than the one this book represents, a few more developed case studies would have been very welcome. When we read that the widow Joan Ballard had two pairs of sheets, an old chest, and an old rotten bed "so lowsy" that it was "cast out of dores being not worth any thing" when she died (p. 124), but that she had asked the wife of one of the men into whose care she had entrusted her daughters to keep the sheets for them when they came of age, a moving world of why and how goods conferred identity opens up. More such stories will be needed to tell the full tale of a society whose worth was represented by its possessions. In the meantime, this book lays a very significant, much-needed, and most welcome foundation of quantitative and qualitative data for such an enterprise.

Catherine Richardson

University of Kent, Rutherford College
Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX, UK
E-mail: C.T.Richardson@kent.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0020859017000098

UNKOVSKI-KORICA, VLADIMIR. The Economic Struggle for Power in Tito's Yugoslavia. From World War II to Non-Alignment. I.B. Tauris, London [etc.], 2016. x, 294 pp. Ill. $110, £69.

With horrifying images of wars in former Yugoslavia still featured prominently in the world media, the mid-1990s saw a great demand for academic studies trying to make sense of the disorder by tracing legacies of ethnic rivalries, nationalist dissidence, and authoritarian politics in the Balkans. One important book stood out from this trend. Susan Woodward's *Socialist Unemployment*[1] focused on Yugoslavia's peculiar geopolitical position and labour policies. It explained the country's collapse by embedding the workers' self-management system into a broader context of world market pressures and persistent unemployment, circumstances that exacerbated regional inequalities and contributed to national tensions. Originally met with guarded reactions for its alleged oversight of local agency and for the dense style with which it was written, years later this offbeat research found a receptive readership in the new generation of left-leaning academics and activists in former Yugoslavia, eager to go beyond the "ancient hatreds" clichés and to revise the self-management experience.

The Economic Struggle for Power represents the most studious, in-depth historical research produced so far by younger scholars reassessing socialist Yugoslavia through the

1. Susan L. Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment: The Political Economy of Yugoslavia, 1945–1990* (Princeton, NJ, 1995).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859017000104 Published online by Cambridge University Press

prism of political economy, class, and state-society relations.[2] Unkovski-Korica is determined to test the validity of Woodward's principal claims by close examination of the debates taking shape inside the institutions of the party state during the formative period of the "Yugoslav road to socialism", stretching from the early postwar years until the open breaches in the federal bodies and the emergence of the national question in the mid-1960s. The spotlight is on the top communist leadership, whose policies are presented as an attempt at mediation between the need for leaner production, dictated by the international markets, and shop-floor demands for higher living standards. The argument put forward is that the balancing act was hard to maintain in the medium term, causing regional leaderships to embrace nationalism in order to divert pressures from below and different republics to open up to more direct political and economic influence from the opposing sides in the Cold War.

As most researchers working with the sources produced inside the institutions of the party state under Tito would probably attest, studying the Yugoslav political decision-making process is a tricky business. As a rule, the close circle of veteran partisan cadres conceived the most important policies in informal settings. Once the initiatives entered official channels, party cadres discussed them in veiled statements, making sure their speeches gave ground to all factions. The author excels when confronted with these challenges. Unkovski-Korica's impressive knowledge of Yugoslavia's complex institutional architecture and ways in which the local communists appropriated traditional Marxist tropes allows him to identify the carriers of different tendencies and avoid informed generalizations. Yet, this meticulous tracking of constantly altering official policies does have drawbacks. Chasing the breakneck tempo of institutional change, the reader is often left overwhelmed by details. Fortunately, each chapter is accompanied by a few introductory paragraphs, providing a map of the narrative zigzags ahead, as well as the concluding summing up.

Rather than starting from the theoretical premise of a socialist society, struggling to advance the revolutionary project by negotiating long-term ideological goals with immediate everyday concerns, the author approaches Yugoslavia as a developing country, similar to many other post-World War II peripheral decolonization projects, pragmatically experimenting with different paths of catching up with the core. Woodward's controversial claim that Yugoslavia's open model of economic development was not a novelty adopted out of necessity after the break with the Soviet Union, but an extension of economic programmes already considered by Tito and his associates directly after the seizure of power, receives fresh validation in this research. The book maintains that the expectation of Soviet economic support and a string of favourable geopolitical processes in the wake of World War II, such as the anti-fascist alliance with the Western powers, the strengthening of communist parties in Eastern Europe, and the global decolonization wave, led the Yugoslav communists to believe they could count on friendly international relations. In this way, they theorized, it was not necessary to replicate the Soviet model, namely an autarkic economy, exploitation of the peasantry, and insistence on heavy industry. The emergence of the Cold War and Yugoslavia's unexpected expulsion from the Communist International in 1948 halted the hopes of open development, but the rapprochement with the West in 1950 placed the participation in world trade and diversified industrialization back on the agenda.

The Economic Struggle for Power argues that the idea of workers' self-management initially circulated inside the highest political circles as a measure to counter bureaucratization, waste,

2. For a sample of the ongoing research along these lines, see Rory Archer, Igor Duda, and Paul Stubbs (eds), *Social Inequalities and Discontent in Yugoslav Socialism* (Farnham, 2016).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859017000104 Published online by Cambridge University Press

wage increases, and other economic costs associated with the shock-work campaigns. However, as early as 1950, the leadership also seems to have consciously used the concept to spread marketization of the economy and expose local producers to the discipline of the world market. Workers self-management is not presented merely as a cunning tool for enforcing economic restraint on the shop floor and integration into the global economy. Once implemented, the concept had "taken a life of its own" (p. 106), with different fractions in the party interpreting self-management from their respective vantage points and many in the labour constituency taking its participatory promises for granted. As the author points out, various actors, such as the radical intellectuals, maverick partisan cadres, trade unions, and work collectives, were pushing for democratization of economic and political life through the "devolution of power downwards" (p. 126).

Revealing the degree of political leverage exercised by the trade unions during the first two decades of Yugoslav socialism is another important contribution of this research. The archival records indicate that the unions gave expression to workers' resistance to party-state attempts to control the shop floors already in the immediate postwar years by lowering production norms, bargaining for higher wages, and persisting in "backward" political opinions. Indeed, trade union intervention modified the draft proposal of workers' self-management in the second half of 1949, preventing the leadership from implementing the measure as a simple extended arm of the professional management. The trade unions were also one of the main forces behind various drives for more vigorous market reforms during the 1950s and 1960s, as skilled workers joined the political campaigns against the lower echelons of state bureaucracy and fought to remove wage rise limitations. As the self-managed industry went through a crisis in the late 1960s, the trade unions reversed their position, evolving into a channel for expression of more egalitarian sentiments and pushing for an alliance with conservative factions inside the party.

Yugoslav labour was thus capable of defending its interests inside single factories, but it also showed a propensity to enter into alliances with different actors in the party state and to join populist mobilizations, including those with nationalist undertones, when trying to influence broader political issues. The book identifies the 1958 Trbovlje miners' strike in Slovenia as a watershed event, which brought latent divisions inside the federal leadership to the surface and sparked the debate on the national question. The more conservative faction claimed the Slovenian leadership took a benevolent stance toward the strike, using workers' dissatisfaction to push for more decentralization and market reform, favoured by the north-eastern republics. The incident reveals how local leaderships were diverting labour dissatisfaction along nationalist lines in order to demobilize movements from below and strengthen their positions within the federal bodies. According to the author, this became a pattern over the following decades, ushering in cycles of nationalist mobilizations and constant oscillations between central control and decentralization, plan and the market, and reliance on Moscow and Washington.

The recurrence of intra-republic bickering as a way of dealing with the workers' restlessness amidst pushes for increased productivity and cost cuts is a plausible argument. However, the exact mechanism by which factory grievances were connected to nationalist politics remains hidden. Torn between the need to explain how the Yugoslav labour policies were conditioned from above, by the country's international position, and the shop-floor activity from below, the author clearly chooses to emphasize the former. A mere half a page is dedicated to the depiction of the allegedly crucial strike in the Trbovlje mines. The most sophisticated insights into state-society dynamics stem from the intersection of discussions at the highest trade union bodies with the overview of the trade union press and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859017000104 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reports from the local branches, yet this method is not consistently applied. The omissions potentially give a foothold to those views rendering the association of labour mobilizations and nationalism in the Balkans as instinctive. Moreover, they recall the criticism directed at Woodward of downplaying agency on the ground and viewing the Yugoslav party state as a simple transmission belt for international pressures.

His careful inspection of previously overlooked debates related to labour policies inside the Yugoslav party state, as well as his attentiveness to the country's constantly changing relations with Cold War superpowers, enables Unkovski-Korica to present arguably the most comprehensive account of the origins of workers' self-management yet to appear. The book is an important milestone in the study of Yugoslav socialism, showing how workers' self-management and non-alignment, frameworks that might have seemed obvious at the height of the Cold War but which became increasingly out of fashion by the mid-1990s, can indeed prove exceptionally rewarding when applied to newly available archival materials.

Goran Musić
Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz
Schubertstrasse 21/1
8010 Graz, Austria
E-mail: goran.music@uni-graz.at
doi:10.1017/S0020859017000104

MARC BUGGELN. Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014. 334 pp. £60.00.

Husum was hell on earth. In the winter of 1944–1945, 1,500 male concentration camp prisoners were transported from Neuengamme to this northern German town. They were required to dig anti-tank trenches in the vicinity, anticipating a possible Allied invasion from the North Sea. The work was extremely heavy for the already severely weakened and undernourished prisoners. After a ten- to fifteen-kilometre-long march from the barracks to the worksite, the workers had to dig deep trenches in teams of three. As the holes quickly filled with groundwater, many were standing in cold water all day. Within a month of the worksite's establishment, the gruesome working conditions had led to the death of thirty-four prisoners, a further 178 in November, and seventy-nine in December. Around 750 severely ill workers had to be transported back to Neuengamme and replaced with new prisoners. In late December, the Husum camp was closed.

Considering the horrific conditions under which concentration camp prisoners were put to work in Husum and elsewhere, and given the fact that until the last few months of the war their work was of less economic significance compared with that of other labouring groups, many historians drew the conclusion that the Schutzstaffel (SS) deliberately attempted to exterminate the prisoners by working them to death. The construction of buildings and infrastructure, and the manufacturing of goods, was only secondary to the punishment, dehumanization, and terrorization of the millions of prisoners under Nazi control.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859017000104 Published online by Cambridge University Press