

SOCIALIST COMPETITION FROM SOVIET UNION TO YUGOSLAVIA

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The author presents first year of rule of the Communist Party in the new Yugoslav state. This period was marked by efforts to establish the value and administrative order that has already been developed in the USSR. The single-party system, the planned economy, the control of public opinion were techniques taken from Soviet practice. It was important for the Yugoslav communists, to use those methods to achieve it. In the desire for the rapid development of the lack of industry, primarily of machinery, raw materials and labour, the socialist competition method was applied.

Key words: socialist competition, Croatia, Yugoslavia, USSR

Introduction¹

The purpose of this paper is to explain the system of socialist competition in relation to the context in which it appeared, presenting at the same time

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¹ Most of data and the references from this article could be found in following bibliography: archives sources: Hrvatski državni arhiv (Croatian State Archive), Savez sindikata Jugoslavije, Vijeće Saveza sindikata Hrvatske (SSJ VSSH), periodicals: *Borba*, 1946, *Glas rada*, 1945, 1946, 1947, *Naprijed*, 1946, *Rad*, 1945, 1946; books: Gerl Friderik, Fran Podrbrježnik, Milan Vučo, *Uvod u radne norme*, (Beograd: Komisiona naklada Međunarodne knjižare, 1946), Zoran Bujas, *Osnove psihofiziologije rada (Uvod u industrijsku psihologiju)*, (Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1968), Frederick Winslow, Taylor, *Naučno upravljanje*, (Beograd: Rad, 1967), Georgij Nikolaevič Evstaf'ev, *O socijalističkom takmičenju*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1946), Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Silke Satjukow, Rainer Gries, ed., *Sozialistische Helden – Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2002)., on which this work is based.

geopolitical, historical and psychological elements. In order to reach conclusions following questions will be considered: what was the meaning of socialist competition in psychological sense, how did it appear in the USSR and, finally, its implementation in Yugoslavia after a Second World War (WWII). For those reasons, special emphasis will be made on competition's psychological aspect, theories on socialist competition, creation of the work cult, attitude of Yugoslav communists towards the socialist competition, socialist competition in Yugoslavia, and working norms as prerequisites of competition. Socialist competition movement was a novelty that begun to be implemented into industrial production by leaders of Yugoslav unions after taking over the political power. Shortage of resources, tools and skilled workforce posed a great difficulty for normal functioning of the economy, so socialist competition represented a substitute for most of shortages.

The Psychological Aspect of Competition

During the establishment of power, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) started an intensive propaganda campaign for the glorification of labour, work achievements and a new working method, socialist competition. The latter measure was adopted from the Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics (USSR) theory and practice, having sound foundations in psychological aspects of competition, i.e. emulation. Psychologically speaking, competition is an important motivational factor used to improve and exceed the results of previous work.

Work psychology defines competition as one of the conditions which particularly affect human motivation². According to psychological analysis, the degree of human work performance depends largely on the effects of self-expectation and achievements of other people doing the same job. Precisely this interrelationship, in which fair division of labour and effort is the most prominent element, in fact represents a form of spontaneous competition both with oneself and with work colleagues as well. In order to compete with oneself, it is necessary to enable access to personal achievements for each individual as research has shown that self-awareness regarding one's success is a sufficient motivational factor affecting individual production.³ It is, however, not in close relationship with financial or any other types of reward. It stays the same even when there is no special prize as an additional stimulus for the work done.⁴ Competition with others, on the other hand, produces significantly better results as the value of success is increased as there is a common goal. Competi-

² Zoran Bujas, *Osnove psihofiziologije rada (Uvod u industrijsku psihologiju)*, (Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1968), pp. 58 – 63.

³ Dušan Anđelković, ed., *Očigledna agitacija*, (Beograd: Rad, 1948), pp. 7-41

⁴ Ibidem.

tion among groups of the same product assortment and production process represents organization system of competition that best fits the purpose. However, if this type of competition is to prove efficacious, there must not be wide individual discrepancies among participants, especially concerning individual characteristics such as abilities, skills, knowledge and motivation. The absence of similar characteristics might ultimately lead to frustration and depreciation of others: "Perception of small differences, in favour of one group and then the other, causes internal tension that positively affects collective efforts of each group."⁵ Wide discrepancies lead to decrease in motivation of both the group that always wins due to its confidence in success, and the group that always loses as it works convinced in the unattainability of the former group as well.

Competition, had a formative influence in establishing a new political system in that it was an extremely valuable and important model for the formation of the archetype of a new, socialist man. Methods used in the USSR were therefore inevitable in Yugoslavia as well, with some minor exceptions primarily conditioned by different work, cultural and social heritage.

Based on numerous economic analyses, many societies of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century start with the presumption that any society considered "modern" or "industrial" makes progress only with labour organization that adheres to two general rules: first, using new, contemporaneous technologies and, second, relying solely on machine-based production. The most efficient industrial societies in both the capitalist world and the USSR in the 1930s were essentially alike.⁶ In practice, Soviet industrialization model was in fact an imitation of Taylor's capitalist model, whereas the Bolsheviks were more than content with the adoption of the latest invention of capitalist production technique and labour organization with which to build their new, socialist society. Taylor's system of factory management was adopted in its entirety by the Soviets.⁷ The only difference between the two was in relation to the outcomes. In the USSR, companies built their success on maximization of products, while the Western economy rested on maximization of profit.⁸

In 1903 Frederick Winslow Taylor started developing the model of scientific labour management by investigating labour organization in factories, which he implemented in his book *Shop Management*. In the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a significant level of interest in different ways of increasing labour productivity. In the light of that, eight years later, in 1911,

⁵ Zoran Bujas, *Osnove psihofiziologije rada (Uvod u industrijsku psihologiju)*, (Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1968), p. 61.

⁶ Don Von Atta, "Why Is There No Taylorism in the Soviet Union?", *Comparative Politics*, vol. 18 (1986), no. 3: 327.

⁷ Charles, Bettelheim, "State Property and Socialism", *Economy and Society*, vol. 2 (1973): 395 – 398.

⁸ Don, Von Atta, "Why Is There No Taylorism in the Soviet Union?", *Comparative Politics*, vol. 18, (1986), no. 3: 327.

Taylor conceived his idea of rationalization of human labour in his book *The Principles of Scientific Management*, considered as one of the first systematic studies of labour in general. Introducing the concept of labour management, Taylor saw its ultimate goal in rationalization of labour to maximise efficiency in the shortest possible time. Taylor started his systematic approach to investigating labour management by timing work pace and workers' movements in different phases of the work process. Due to his systematic observations, Taylor reached the conclusion that the limitations of the production capacities stemmed from workers' deficiencies in working skills and abilities, inadequate working positions that caused superfluous motions, workers' frequent use of inadequate and improvised working tools and, above all, workers' lack of motivation for work.⁹ Rationalising labour management, Taylor formulated three basic principles of labour management, also known as *the basic principles of Taylorism*: a) it is imperative to choose the most appropriate, i.e. the most competent workers for each job; b) it is necessary to select the most skilled workers and teach them *the one best way* model of labour, ultimately leading to a more rational work method with optimal allocation of work, use of the most efficient motion and specialised tools for each worker; c) it is necessary to ensure appropriate rewards for the best workers.¹⁰ The former two principles are aimed at adapting workers to the job, whereas the latter is aimed at tailoring the job to workers.

Taylor hypothesized that *the one best way* model could be applied to any job, which he investigated in numerous instances. Research was conducted using a stopwatch to time a worker's every motion in order to determine the optimal work pace. The best result was set as the standard for other workers. A major setback of this approach was in that the required standard was the best worker's time. There was a general presumption that the idleness of an average worker was a force of habit, ignoring the fact that some workers just simply could not keep up with the best ones. This kind of approach was possible in the early days of capitalism when a large proportion of the workforce was unemployed. This kind of selection was ruthless to all those workers who could not reach the set production goal. The most illustrative example of his concept must be the example of enhanced performance in coal unloading/unloading of the coal in one steel mill where a work effect of 120 workers was achieved by 35 redistributed workers who were given bigger shovels of better quality. His movement soon spread all across America, earning him the name of "the father of scientific management." However, Taylor's theory was criticized on several grounds. The main objection went against the technical and technological aspects of labour that neglected workers. According to this model, a worker is merely an extension of a machine and as such has to adapt to it. His movement soon spread all across America, earning him the name of "the father of

⁹ Frederick Winslow, Taylor, *Naučno upravljanje*, (Beograd: Rad, 1967), p. 112.

¹⁰ Zoran Bujas, *Osnove psihofiziologije rada (Uvod u industrijsku psihologiju)*, (Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1968), p. 71.

scientific management.” However, Taylor’s theory has been criticized on several grounds. The main objection went against the technical and technological aspects of labour that neglected workers. According to this model, a worker is merely an extension of a machine and as such has to adapt to it. The chief preoccupation of Taylor’s theory is increase in productivity. As a result, the social needs of workers have been disregarded. However, what has been most severely criticized is the definition of the required standard in terms of the best result, consequently meaning that only the “work athletes” can achieve it. No consideration for individual differences amongst workers has been precisely what supported arguments against Taylor’s model.¹¹ His call for rationalization that is in line with mechanical engineering perspective only, i.e. only with improving industrial efficiency, consequently disregards psychological and physical characteristics of each worker. Notwithstanding the criticism, the basic principles of Taylorism kept their initial importance, significance in decades that followed, these including promotion of professional selection, promotion of professional training and ergonomics and promotion of systematic rewards for the job done.¹² The model that was, ideologically speaking, fundamental for capitalism was taken over by its ideological communist opponents.

The Theory of Socialist Competition and the Stakhanovite movement – creation of labour cult in the USSR

The period that followed the October Revolution saw the establishment of the Soviet state apparatus by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the Bolsheviks), the CPSU, relying on unprecedented techniques in the process and placing crucial importance on socialist competition. Firstly, competition was a vital motivational factor resulting in increased productivity of each individual worker, particularly when it came to quantity and quality of tools workers had at their disposal in the first years of the USSR. Secondly, each accomplishment could be used for propaganda purposes and, ultimately, was of great propaganda value to creating an image of success of the regime and the state. Lenin continued to develop what was already an elaborate theoretical concept of state system establishment in his article entitled *How to organize competition?* According to Lenin, with the ascension of the CPSU (the Bolsheviks) to power, for the first time in history socialism allows for employing competition “on a really wide and on a really mass scale, for actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and reveal those talents, so abundant among the people whom capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.”¹³

¹¹ Frederick Winslow, Taylor, *Naučno upravljanje*, (Beograd: Rad, 1967), p. 115

¹² Gerl Friderik, Fran Podbrežnik, Milan Vučo, *Uvod u radne norme*, (Beograd: Komisiona naklada Međunarodne knjižare, 1946), p. 10.

¹³ “Socijalističko takmičenje u Sovjetskom Savezu”, *Rad*, 25 May 1946, p. 7.

In its narrow definition, socialist competition is the movement of “the people” for securing growth in productivity of both individual and collective work, found only in socialist societies. An important feature characterizing socialist competition, as stated by Lenin, is that workers no longer have “the sole aim of ‘snatching the biggest possible piece of the pie and clearing out.’ All the class-conscious, honest and thinking peasants and working people will take their place in this fight by the side of the advanced workers.”¹⁴

Individual and shared interests of the workforce were to be aligned with socialist competition, which was eventually to result in success of the regime and the state. Similar or almost identical arguments were used to explain general differences between socialism and capitalism. The given era also marked the birth of the famous motto, widely used in communist states ranging from the Baltic to the Adriatic, not just in the Soviet Union: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his contribution.”¹⁵

During the Russian Civil War in May 1919, Moscow workers undertook their own initiative for unpaid work on weekends, as a contribution towards fighting against the complete economic disorder. Their example was followed by other workers across the USSR, primarily workers from Petrograd (Saint Petersburg). The aforementioned initiative led to the emergence of the communist *subbotniks*, which provided the Soviet propaganda machinery with myriad ideas. The Soviet press reported widely about the huge success of the communist subbotniks which put themselves without reserve at the service of the people and the Soviet state. In his 1919 article entitled *The Grand Initiative*, Lenin assessed the work heroism of the subbotniks, claiming that: “simultaneously with this task, another task comes to the forefront just as inevitably and ever more imperatively as time goes on, namely, the more important task of positive communist construction, the creation of new economic relations, of a new society.”¹⁶

The idea of socialist competition truly took off after the Bolsheviks’ establishment of power. During the Soviet reform and industrialization, socialist competition was used as a means to underline the importance of labour enthusiasm in order to incorporate as large a number of people as possible. The basis of competition in districts, towns, regions and republics was to exceed production targets. Socialist competition thus expanded into factories, enterprises, railways, mines and machine facilities who signed contracts about organizing socialist competition within their respective sectors. Stalin was particularly keen on the concept of socialist competition as he claimed that, since the beginnings of the Soviet Union, it had become “a matter of honour, glory, valour, and heroism.”¹⁷

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵ *Ibidem.*

¹⁶ Georgij Nikolaevič Evstaf’ev, *O socijalističkom takmičenju*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1946), p. 49.

¹⁷ “Socijalističko takmičenje u Sovjetskom Savezu”, *Rad*, 25 May 1946, p. 7.

In November 1929 Stalin defined socialist competition as “the communist method of building socialism, on the basis of the maximum activity of the vast masses of the working people.”¹⁸

Competition was to boost the workforce to the position of economic and cultural initiators and reformers of the state, laying foundation for socialism and providing the basis for further progress.

As stated by Lenin, only the class-abolishing socialism is capable of turning competition into a widespread phenomenon by liberating the “enslaved masses.” Lenin also claimed that the transition from capitalism to socialism was much easier when it came to politics than it was when it came to economy, the latter being indispensable to the social organization of a state. The implementation of this concept was possible only by ensuring a great deal of publicity for socialist competition. The press played a central part in this sense. The Soviet Union made use of the press in its initial stages, encouraging newspaper articles about industrial production and everyday economic obstacles fundamental for attainment of industrial targets and ideals. It is for this reason that in April 1918 Lenin wrote: “We must set to work systematically to create a press that will not entertain and fool the people with political sensation and trivialities, but which will submit the questions of everyday economic life to the people’s judgement and assist in the serious study of these questions.”¹⁹

This need to approach competition in a crowd-pleasing fashion originated from the fact that every competition was accompanied by an array of numbers that in turn served as bases for newspaper articles and radio reports in the majority of cases, thus open to diverse interpretation. After the rise to power and the “expropriation of expropriators”, Lenin switched from a rich theoretical phase to more practical, social and political action: “Force of example for the first time is able to influence the people.”²⁰

Whatever the manner in which socialism was built, one of the key questions still needed to be answered: how will the population accept socialism? In this respect, the press assumed an important role, both in the USSR and in Yugoslavia. Newspapers controlled by the Party became the “tools of socialist emergence”, used to paint the world black and white, the world as a place where profiteers and idlers were juxtaposed with innovators, rationalizers and shock workers. Popularization of heavy manual labour and the heroics of blue-collar workers was used so that the need for arduous work would enter the national consciousness. Self-initiative was often accentuated as an essential and sole prerequisite for building the new society and the regime. Each period that turns the tables does not go without shaking the foundations of a society, as Lenin notes as well: “When a new class comes on to the historical scene as the

¹⁸ Georgij Nikolaevič Evstaf’ev, *O socijalističkom takmičenju*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1946), p. 136.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 136.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 39.

leader and guide of society, a period of violent ‘rocking’, shocks, struggle and storm, on the one hand, and a period of uncertain steps, experiments, wavering, hesitation in regard to the selection of new methods corresponding to new objective circumstances, on the other, are inevitable.”²¹

In comparing capitalism and socialism, Stalin accepted Lenin’s ideas on socialist competition. He drew a parallel between competition as the basis of capitalism and competition as the basis of socialism. Thus, according to Stalin, the basic principle of competition is the “defeat and death for some and victory and domination for others,” and, he continues, to “destroy the laggards so as to establish your own domination.” On the other hand, the basic principle of competition is the “comradely assistance by the foremost to the laggards, so as to achieve an advance of all.” The general tenor of competition is that “some work badly, others work well, yet others best of all,” thus each group of workers catching up with the next best group in order to ensure progress of all.²² Establishing a new social and political system is characterized as an introduction of “relations of co-operation and mutual help between people who are free from exploitation.”²³

The role of competition was to mobilize millions of workers, consequently levelling the quality of all products by spurring unskilled workers to a higher level of work performance. According to some ideologues of communism, capitalism surpasses feudalism in that, with its production, it enables a society to access considerably greater amounts of products. It is for this reason that the reorganization of production and a new approach to labour were emphasized. Lenin claimed that increase in production at any cost was imperative if socialism was to overtake capitalism. Therefore, socialism has to offer a substantial number of products to the society to make it more prosperous. This would ultimately imply the triumph of socialism over capitalism. Lenin believed that, in order to increase production, the capitalist method of wealth accumulation involved competition that effectively suppresses any initiative of the broad masses in order to maintain the existing social status and enrich a small social stratum of privileged people. The basis of a socialist economy should be the initiative of the broad masses. This ideal can be attained only if weaker workers reach the level of the more advanced workers. In socialist theory, labour is held an important social construct and, as such, is a matter of the entire community. The new government thus planned and organized labour in specific industrial segments, first and foremost paying attention to production of products aimed at building the economy, and only then of products aimed at consummation. Some ideologues of socialism were convinced that workers had an interest in steadily increasing overall industrial production and in improving and

²¹ *Ibidem*, 40.

²² *Ibidem*, 137.

²³ Hrvatski državni arhiv (HR-HDA), Savez sindikata Jugoslavije Vijeće Saveza sindikata Hrvatske (SSJ VSSH), *Što je socijalističko takmičenje?*, 1946, box 236.

speeding up productivity in order to produce everyday necessities. The workforce is therefore materially interested in building the socialist economy, in continuously increasing industrial production and in speeding up the production process. The only means to mobilize people was through socialist competition. Stalin saw socialist competition as “the material source, the productive source, the foundation of socialism – [it] calls for absolute and strict unity of will, which directs the joint labours of hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of people. The technical, economic and historical necessity of this is obvious, and all those who have thought about socialism have always regarded it as one of the conditions of socialism.”²⁴

This understanding of the concept proved as a good paradigm for Yugoslavian communists to copy and to adhere to, especially in the years of ideological idolatry.

Socialist competition grew into an extremely important factor in building the socialist system. Further use of competition, together with the development of tools and machines, is what in 1935 turned into the Stakhanovite movement.

The Stakhanovite movement marked a new stage in the development of socialist competition in that it differed from the original movement primarily in respect of its relation to technical progress and the use of technical innovations in production, and not so much to increase in work intensity. The introduction of pneumatic hammers greatly facilitated coal mining in relation to old hand tools. In addition to using and applying new techniques, another important feature of the Stakhanovite movement was the goal of exceeding earlier technical standards in technology, quality of tools, mechanics and professional standards. Its plan was to change the old views on technical standards and old production plans in order to establish new technical standards in line with contemporary developments in the industry. Stalin believed that, with such a concept, the Stakhanovite movement was meant to carry out a revolution in industry.²⁵ The Soviet propaganda used the aforementioned movement as a means of challenging capitalism, and Stalin was its pioneer who worked out the basis for further use.

In the fall of 1935, Stalin illustrated the way in which socialism should surpass capitalism: “Some people think that Socialism can be consolidated by a certain equalisation of people’s material conditions, based on a poor man’s standard of living. That is not true. That is a petty-bourgeois conception of Socialism. In point of fact, Socialism can succeed only on the basis of a high productivity of labour, higher than under capitalism, on the basis of an abundance of products and of articles of consumption of all kinds, on the basis of

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ Georgij Nikolaevič Evstaf’ev, *O socijalističkom takmičenju*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1946), p. 222. – 223.

a prosperous and cultured life for all members of society.”²⁶ To achieve this goal, Stalin claims that socialism must make the Soviet society affluent and “our country must have a productivity of labour which surpasses that of the foremost capitalist countries. Without this we cannot even think of securing an abundance of products and of articles of consumption of all kinds.”²⁷

The development of the Stakhanovite movement was closely connected with the improvement of material circumstances of the workforce.²⁸ It is the aforementioned fact that served the glorification of the Soviet system: “If there had been a crisis in our country, if there had been unemployment - that scourge of the working class - if people in our country lived badly, drably, joylessly, we should have had nothing like the Stakhanov movement.”²⁹ The success of socialism in the USSR, Stalin continues, stems from the fact that, unlike the capitalist world, it is built on the concession of material goods to the people. The Marxist theory of social order that divides the society into exploiters and the exploited could not attain the ideal of equal distribution of social goods. However, socialism intended to bridge this gap with its basic principle of proper social distribution: “That is why labour in our country has social significance, and is a matter of honour and glory.”³⁰

One of the major priorities of the Soviet system was to create a sense of respect for the average worker and his achievements. In most cases, there was a need for highlighting how the worker was a free citizen, and as such represented a public worker. One’s efforts and achievements in the workplace were made not just for oneself, but also for the entire society. Any worker who gave the company more than required could become a hero at work and come under the spotlight for one moment. Socialist competition raised the work standards once or twice, but the development of technical innovations and new tools enabled the rise to a higher stage of competition named after the most famous Soviet work hero: Alexey Stakhanov. In 1935, technical innovations played a major role in improving work standards as they allowed an increase in work standards approximately five to six times. The process of industrialization, plants’ modernization, modernization of tools and finding new techniques are just some of the elements which enabled the emergence of the Stakhanovite movement. Notwithstanding these innovations, the main role was carried out by workers who were more or less successful in attaining these standards. The most successful workers were used for propaganda purposes, but often the result of their work was fatigue taking toll on the workers themselves. The

²⁶ *Ibidem.*

²⁷ *Ibidem.*

²⁸ Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, (Barkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), p. 152.

²⁹ Georgij Nikolaevič Evstaf’ev, *O socijalističkom takmičenju*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1946), p. 228.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 228. – 229.

Party (CPSU), as the main initiator of construction of new facilities crucial for further industrialization, formed a significant driving force for change in industry by paying close attention to recruiting new staff trained to perform new tasks. One cannot dispel the impression that the Party was the main initiator of the Stakhanovite movement, albeit there have been different theories attempting to explain it.³¹

There are two interpretations of the relationship between Stakhanov's achievement and the phenomenon that brought glory to his name. Many historians emphasize the role of the CPSU (the Bolsheviks) in general acceptance of Stakhanov's methods that were used primarily for application to other industrial branches, resulting in increased production and proving of great propaganda value to the regime.³² On the other hand, there are reports of several Stalin's explicit claims about the emergence of the Stakhanovite movement: "[it] spread over the whole of our Soviet Union not gradually, but at an unparalleled speed, like a hurricane." Mixing various metaphors, Stalin goes even further with his description of the movement: "And if, in spite of this, the match thrown by Stakhanov and Busygin was sufficient to start a conflagration, that means that the Stakhanov movement is absolutely ripe."³³

The aforementioned concept was to be put into action. Even before the emergence of the Stakhanovite movement, the Peoples' Commissar of Soviet Heavy Industry Sergo Ordzhonikidze³⁴ advocated that the economic department of Pravda find new people among the working class and turn them into heroes. Bearing in mind above all capitalism as the biggest political rival of socialism on a global level, Ordzhonikidze noted that, in capitalist countries, nothing could compare to the popularity of gangster Al Capone, and moved on to claim that, in a socialist country however, heroes of labour had to be praised.³⁵

As already mentioned, the goal of the Stakhanovite movement was to exceed existing standards. The second half of the 1930s saw the rise of a new form of the Stakhanovite movement characterized by the need for every worker to adopt a variety of techniques in the execution of various operations. Intensive advancements and constant promotion of socialist competition and

³¹ Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Francesco Benvenuti, *Fuoco sui sabotatori! Stachanovismo e organizzazione industriale in Urss 1934 - 1938.*, (Roma: Valerio Levi, 1988), Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization: the Formation of Modern Soviet Production Relations, 1928 - 1941*, (London: Pluto Press, 1986)

³² Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR*, (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 233.

³³ J. V. Staljin, *Pitanja lenjinizma*, (Zagreb: Kultura, 1946), 469-489.

³⁴ Oleg Khlevniuk, *In Stalin's Shadow: the Career of "Sergo" Ordzhonikidze*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995)

³⁵ Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 67.

the Stakhanovite movement led to systematic discoveries of improved work techniques and an increase in production.

Stakhanovism functioned on the “celebrity for a day” principle and only the most famous and successful Stakhanovite workers, including Alexey Stakhanov himself, would become “immortal”, be delegated as deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, have books written about their experiences and achievements and would attend national holidays celebrations and major anniversaries. In this way, workers would cut ties with the social milieu from which they originated. The basis of Stakhanovism was the praise of workers’ achievements celebrated through newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, posters, books and brochures. The motto for all those workers who did not become “the celebrities of labour” was: “Under the old regime, work had been an exhausting, soul-destroying chore; under socialism, it was the thing that filled life with meaning.”³⁶

The closest connection between the Stakhanovites and the political leadership was evident in the Stakhanovites’ perception of their leaders, particularly Stalin and Ordzhonikidze, as strict, but at the same time caring fathers. At the celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution in the Bolshoi Theatre in 1936, Stakhanov saw “our own (...) comrade Stalin” for the first time and said: “I could not take my eyes off [him] and very much wanted to get closer to him.” A while later, at the All-Union conference Stakhanov observed that Stalin: “looked down on us with the eyes of a father and teacher.” On the other hand, at the commemoration of the third anniversary of his record Stakhanov referred to Stalin as “the father of the Stakhanovite movement” and to Stakhanovites as “Stalin’s students.”³⁷ In the spring of 1936, Ordzhonikidze invited Busygin to Moscow and greeted him “as a father would lovingly look on his grown up children whom he had not seen for a long time.” Less than a year later, Busygin learned of Ordzhonikidze’s death and noted that he felt as if his own father had died: “there was no day in my life more bitter than February 19, 1937.”³⁸

During the Great Patriotic War from 1941 to 1945, socialist competition took effect in encouraging increase in production and emphasizing patriotism needed in times of war. In May 1942, Kuznetsky Metallurgical Plant *Stalin* extended all workers of ferrous metallurgy an invitation to competition and, given that the invitation came “from above”, caused a chain reaction and brought forward workers from other industries, such as planes and tanks production, etc. The CPSU (the Bolsheviks) also had to meet the enormous need for food, both of the army and of the population. Socialist competition played a major

³⁶ Sheila, Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 75.

³⁷ Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 150.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

role with its organization of competition in production and in gathering food in the country. Due to this form of organization of war production in both the city and the countryside, socialist competition covered almost all parts of the Soviet Union. The main goal was to maximize production with high quality finished products and with reduction in production costs. Socialist competition was of great propaganda value during the war as it was one of the main sources for encouraging people. Newspapers were full of articles about the workers, peasants and the USSR intelligentsia who, by fulfilling their competing commitments, contributed to the collapse of Nazi Germany.³⁹

The reward system was based on awarding flags, and after the WWII monetary awards were included as well. competition assumed the character of an anniversary so that competitions were organized for each public holiday in order to give an even greater contribution to building the society.⁴⁰

Whether the Stakhanovites influenced the improvement of and an increase in production is extremely difficult to determine because of the two most obvious reasons: the report on the number of Stakhanovites and the required standards they had to reach in order to become part of the “working elite.” Companies sent arbitrary reports on the number of people involved in the movement, thus the numbers are unreliable. Their reported numbers are the most illustrative example. By the end of 1935 and beginning of 1936, there was a huge increase in the number of declared Stakhanovites. At that time in Leningrad, the number of Stakhanovites grew from 12,534 in October 1935 and from 107,313 in January 1936 to the number of 163,076 Stakhanovites in April of the same year. In Moscow, in the twenty-two of the largest industrial companies that number grew as follows: 6 % in November 1935, 18.9% in January 1936, 26.1% in February 1936, 27.7% in March 1936 and 29.7% in April 1936. There are several reasons for this, but the main reason is that the old standards were maintained, notwithstanding new labour techniques and tools in the production process and the transition from manual to machine production. The entire situation was almost paradoxical. In July 1936, a third of the total employees in industrial enterprises in Leningrad were Stakhanovites. After the reform the percentage decreased, but in February 1937 it was still around 25%.⁴¹

During and after the WWII, in the 1940s, Stakhanovism was a movement for achieving and exceeding the established targets of production unchanged from the time of its emergence. In the forthcoming years, neither Stalin’s death couldn’t change this practice. In the mid-fifties, the term Stakhanovism was

³⁹ HR-HDA, SSJ VSSH, Što je socijalističko takmičenje 1946, box 236.

⁴⁰ “Socijalističko takmičenje u Sovjetskom Savezu”, *Rad*, 25 May 1946, p. 7.

⁴¹ Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 156.

replaced with the term *communist attitude toward labour*.⁴² This was closely connected to the de-Stalinization policy. More specifically, it went against supporting *the cult of personality* phenomenon, strongly opposed by the official policy of the Soviet Union.

Stakhanovism was used as a means to advertise and preserve the unity of the nation in all phases of the USSR: the pre-war, wartime and post-war. Most industrial achievements cannot be attributed primarily to Stakhanovism. The number and quality of tools and equipment brought about significant advancements in the economy even before September 1935. The effects of Stakhanovism were short-lived. Its relevance started to decline as early as 1936. The reason behind this was the introduction of new work standards.⁴³ However, it should be mentioned that it was a concept largely devised for propaganda purposes and that its intensity slowly began to fade.

Finally, based on the analysis of the present studies, it can be concluded that the Stakhanovite movement did not produce considerable changes in the USSR's economy. Nevertheless, it was an extremely important element in creating the labour cult. Although it existed long before Stakhanov's achievements in autumn 1935, it began a new trend in terms of media's behaviour towards workers in times when the best workers would become contemporaneous heroes.

Stakhanovism was not just a phenomenon associated with the Soviet Union, it stood for just one of many social novelties, exported elsewhere from its country of origin. The campaign for the popularization of Stakhanovism was an innovation that did not stop at the borders of the Soviet Union. After WWII and during the Soviet domination, Stakhanovism was exported to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, covering the area from the Baltic to the Adriatic, and bringing along most of the revolutionary methods necessary for switching to communism, especially confiscation, nationalization, collectivization and industrialization. In the Soviet Union and in Central and Eastern Europe, in a campaign organized to promote the adoption of unprecedented manufacturing techniques, socialist competition took the form of a binding contract, while the term Stakhanovism was used for propaganda purposes.⁴⁴

The German Democratic Republic was founded on October 7, 1949. It started with the praise of work heroes from the very beginning of its existence, and immediately made Adolf Hennecke into a hero of the Soviet type, just eight days after its foundation.⁴⁵

⁴² *Ibidem*, 306 – 307.

⁴³ R. W., Davis and Oleg Khlevnyuk, "Stakhanovism and the Soviet Economy", *Europe – Asia Studies*, vol 54, (2002), no. 6: 896. – 898.

⁴⁴ Silke Satjukow, "Früher war das eben der Adolf... - Der Arbeitsheld Adolf Hennecke", *Sozialistische Helden – Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, ed. Silke Satjukow, Rainer Gries, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2002), pp. 115 – 132.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

In Hungary, the Communists ascended to power in 1948. Only a year later, blacksmith Imre Muszka was hailed as a hero on Stalin's seventieth birthday.⁴⁶

In Poland, the communists came to power in 1947 and immediately began the process of social reorganization.⁴⁷ The peculiarity of the Polish case was that, in the initial formative period, praising labour and workers was done through the praise of collectivism, i.e. in the existence of a considerable number of heroes. Some researchers have characterized this phenomenon as the birth of a "pantheon of socialist heroes"⁴⁸ that manifested as a strong propaganda tool of expression in all art forms of painting, film, music and literature.⁴⁹

The communist ascension to power in Czechoslovakia was carried out in early 1948.⁵⁰ As in most countries of the socialist bloc, socialist competition was organized to celebrate Stalin's birthday. Jaroslav Miška, a miner from Ostrava, became their socialist hero.⁵¹

The first country outside the Soviet Union that began with a radical application of Stalinist methods, including socialist competition, was Tito's Yugoslavia.

Communists of Yugoslavia on socialist Competition

On First Land Union Congress for Croatia which was held in Zagreb from 26 to 28 May 1946, while talking about competition, the president of Unique Trade Unions of Working People of Yugoslavia (JSRNJ) Đuro Salaj accentuated it is impossible to talk about successes gained through the new socialist labour method because the data based on which conclusions could be made were missing. "Main Board (GO) were unable to receive the reports

⁴⁶ Sándor Horváth; "Der ungarische Stachanow", *Sozialistische Helden – Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, ed. Silke Satjukow, Rainer Gries, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2002), pp. 214 – 219.

⁴⁷ Andrzej Paczkowski, *Pola stoljeća Poljske:1939-1989.*, (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2001.), pp. 121 – 168.

⁴⁸ Marcin, Zaremba, "Das Heldenpantheon der Volksrepublik Polen", *Sozialistische Helden – Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, ed. Silke Satjukow, Rainer Gries, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2002), pp. 173 – 182.

⁴⁹ Thorsten Smidt, "Über die Geschichte eines Bildmotivs – Der Polonische Arbeitsheld im Spiegel der Kunst", *Sozialistische Helden – Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, ed. Silke Satjukow, Rainer Gries, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2002), pp. 183 – 192.

⁵⁰ R. J., Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century--and After*, (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 255 -275.

⁵¹ Stefan Zwicker, "Eine Heldentypologie der Tschechoslowakei – Zur Einführung", *Sozialistische Helden – Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, ed. Silke Satjukow, Rainer Gries, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2002), pp. 244 – 255.

on competition results from land boards, and they have not received them from lower union forums.” Continuing his address, Salaj said that in spite of all disadvantages the competition will not cease as it needs to be a constant in building a socialist state. According to him only new methods may be revealed “(...) and this would continue until a new society is created in which organization of labour will be unnecessary, because every member of the society will be aware of the fact that a greater contribution to the society means greater gain for each individual.”⁵²

At the same congress, in his address titled “Reports on Roles and Tasks of Unique Trade Unions in the New Social Reality of Our State”, Marko Belinić, the president of Land Committee JSRNJ for Croatia, (First Land Union Congress for Croatia, held from 26 to 28 May 1946) confirmed that competition plays the main role in the increase of production. At that time, he once again referred to Stalin’s theory saying that development of socialism is impossible without the competition. Looking back at previous competitions he pointed out their weaknesses and omissions. The system of competition was primarily based on increased physical and overtime labour of workers which, according to him, threatened workers’ health, and which ultimately caused increased production costs. As an example of improper competition, he mentioned Siverić coal mine and Sušak paper mill where some workers had to be hospitalized after spending 12 or 16 hours working. It was therefore necessary to make efficient use of working labour within 8 hours working day, Belinić said.⁵³

Highest political hierarchy was not directly involved in the process of organizing the competition. Therefore, we can presume there were no direct mentioning of socialist competition in public speeches and addresses by Boris Kidrič, Edvard Kardelj and Vladimir Bakarić. In numerous speeches by Josip Broz Tito socialist competition is mentioned only twice.

In his address to the workers of Rade Končar company in Zagreb in May 1946, Josip Broz Tito said following:

“I wish that in the very near future you should complete your goals and make good results. What we are now taking about general competition aimed at increase of production, as this is the only way to make our living conditions better. Our industry is now working under different conditions and our workers work under different prospects of future as compared to those before the war.”⁵⁴

⁵² “Prvi sindikalni kongres Hrvatske – Govor Đure Salaja: Sindikati i narodna vlast učinit će sve, da poboljšaju životne uslove radnika i namještenika”, *Glas rada* May 3, 1946, p. 3.

⁵³ Zdenko Radelić, “Prvi kongres Jedinstvenih sindikata Hrvatske”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 20 (1998) no. 1 – 2: 125.

⁵⁴ “Pozdrav radnicima fabrike Rade Končar”, Zagreb, May 16, 1946, *Josip Broz Tito, Govori i članci*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1959), knj. II, p. 218.

Probably most accurate observation on socialist competition Josip Broz Tito made in his speech held for the workers in Skopje in August 1949. Five years after its introduction, highest governmental bodies perceived competition as ineffective method of increasing labour productivity. It was regarded as a propaganda platform used to glorify working achievements of socialist Yugoslavia which, after failing to yield expected results, failed to afford results that were expected.

“Competition is closely related to shock work and represents a way of collective shock work labour, mass shock working labour. Also, it has a huge importance for our speedy development in completion of Five-Year Plan and building of socialism.” According to him, competition was an important method for a faster industrial development. However, he stressed its heavy bureaucratization which in itself negated its point in a way that “(...) it seemed unreal and pointless.”⁵⁵

Socialist competition in Yugoslavia was mostly discussed by union leaders. Theoretically, their discussions were in no way different from theories set by soviet ideologists Lenin and Stalin. Socialist competition therefore represents yet another proof of Yugoslavia copying the soviet model of governmental rule. One of the first definitions of socialist competition was made in January 1947 by Marko Belinić, the president of The Main Board of the Unique Trade Unions of Croatia. While creating the Constitution of NRH, in his discussion Belinić presented the state as the “asset in the hands of the working people.” Proof for such thesis he found in the organization of socialist competition. “Through socialist labour competition we set into motion our plan-driven economy, unlike capitalist competition that leads to anarchy and inevitable crisis that hinders a wide scale initiative of working masses.”⁵⁶ Belinić’s definition of socialist competition is almost an exact definition of socialist competition given by Stalin. The only difference is that instead of using the word “Soviet”, Belinić used the word “our”.

At that same time, while talking about unions’ role in increase of production, Drago Gizdić said following on socialist competition: “Thanks to competitive labour and enthusiasm of the working people of Yugoslavia, which means Croatia, too, we are heading forward with an increasing pace towards the better life of our workers in general. Competition is inevitable method for the building of socialism.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ “Iz razgovora sa skopskim udarnicima”, Skopje, September 3 1949, *Josip Broz Tito, Govori i članci*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1959), knj. IV, Zagreb 1949, p. 234.

⁵⁶ “Radnička klasa nije ušla u borbu radi svojih sebičnih interesa. Ne! Njeni interesi bili su interesi cjelokupnog radnog naroda, oni stu to i danas”, *Glas rada*, January 24, 1947, p. 2.

⁵⁷ “Govor druga Gizdića”, *Glas rada*, January 24, 1947, p. 2.

Socialist competition in Yugoslavia

Main characteristic of competition in Yugoslavia, as it was in USSR, was insistence on increased production, higher labour quality and lower production costs. Basic elements of socialist competitions were achieved by stronger labour discipline, introduction of working norms, through improvement of labour methods, tools and machinery, and rationalized consumption of resources and production materials. The very point of competition may be reduced to three main elements: firstly, socialist competition aimed at creating a new relationship between the working class and technical intelligence, it was supposed to create a new relationship between workers, and finally it should have created a new attitude of workers towards labour, regardless whether they be engineers, technicians, workers, clerks or any other segment of employees. Socialist competition was supposed to create a new man, with a desire that a worker shaped in such a way should become a mechanism aimed at the improvement of new social relations and new social system. Competition served as a mean to achieve material welfare which was a primary goal of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ). The president of the government and General Secretary of the KPJ Josip Broz Tito was very aware of that, as can be seen from his speech held in front of workers from Rade Končar factory in May in Zagreb.

“It is my wish that in a very near future you should complete the set goals, and that you should achieve good results. General competition for the increase of production is now the issue, because it is the only way to improve our living conditions. Our industry now operates under different lookouts for the future as compared to those before the war. Before the war the workers were afraid of increased production because stockpiling meant unemployment. You do not have to make such fears. We need large production to build our country. Even later we should continuously increase our production and develop our industry, so there should be no fear of unemployment regardless of who large the production may be.”⁵⁸

Forcing of labour enthusiasm through maximum personal engagement was a constant in years after the war, and Josip Broz Tito mentioned this in his numerous speeches including the one he gave in Novi Sad in January 1946.

“Our country is still unable to provide our workers with everything they need. Many times so far we said we need to create preconditions for a better life of workers, their greater welfare. We are now in the process of creation of such preconditions and the workers are aware of it. The point here is a need to equip our factories regardless of how many working hours that takes, so that we may produce more and cheaper means of livelihood, regardless even of how high the salaries may be. Sacrifices and production enthusiasm of our workers are a

⁵⁸ “Pozdrav radnicima fabrike Rade Končar”, *Borba*, May 18, 1946, p. 2.

guarantee that our Yugoslavia will very soon become a prosperous country for workers, farmers and national intelligence, a country where everyone will live a life worthy of a human.”⁵⁹

This goal served to promote an entire plan to build socialism, among other things it promoted nationalization of private property. By referring to the omissions of former “reactionary cliques”, the Third Plenum of The Main Board of the Unique Trade Unions of Yugoslavia (JSJ) held in June 1946 stated as follows: “Fields, forests, ores, factories, banks, means of transportation and all other important means of production should become a national property, so as to serve the people.”⁶⁰

Economic policy of Yugoslavia after WWII was displayed as diametrically opposite to economic policy advocated in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Reconstruction and labour chiefly embraced mass organizations such as JSRNJ followed by Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ), League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ) and Peoples Front (NF). Main goal set by The Unique Trade Unions of the Working People of Yugoslavia was ultimate assistance to the government and all its activities during reconstruction, development and production improvement. According to the plans set by the unions, these three elements belonging to a new system of social values were achievable exclusively through organization of socialist competition among the workers and the employees. Through increased working norm the competition was supposed to increase economic accumulation, creating thus basic prerequisites for the procurement and utilization of better technical equipment and production methods that were supposed to replace manual labour and provide a technically more proficient labour hat, at that time, enabled a five times higher productivity. Finally, socialist competition had to create technical production conditions where production of goods was achievable with a relatively low labour input.⁶¹

With USSR as a role model, competition had a significantly important role. Many times, it was described as the “ultimate task in bringing change to our economy”.⁶² Socialist competition hence became “one of the main rules of socialist development, and a mean that moves and provides a gigantic power of a complex efforts coming from millions of labourers.”⁶³ It was perceived as a “lever” that helps the “labouring force” make a shift in economy and culture

⁵⁹ “Ostvarimo što hitnije preduslove boljeg života, govor prilikom otvaranja mosta u Novom Sadu”, *Borba*, January 21, 1946, p. 2.

⁶⁰ “Kroz takmičenje stvaramo nove ljude koji će stalno razvijati naše nove društvene odnose”, *Rad*, July 12, 1946, p. 2.

⁶¹ “Kroz takmičenje stvaramo nove ljude koji će stalno razvijati naše nove društvene odnose”, *Rad*, July 12, 1946, p. 2.

⁶² HR-HDA, SSJ VSSH, f. 1286, Odjeljenje za takmičenje i plaće 1949. Referat Kako prići novim metodama rada za visoku produktivnost u našim poduzećima! box 250

⁶³ Ibidem

based on socialism. As a method, competition started to be used even during the war on the territories controlled by the Partisans (while collecting food). After the war, all parts of Yugoslavia, including Croatia, commenced with intensive preparations for the overall competition in order to create conditions needed for the shift towards creation of a planned socialist economy as soon as possible. The main goal was socialism, while competition acted as an important method of planned economy. Even though in its organizational sense the competition was entrusted to the unions, glorification of Communist party. Two years after the WWII were spent in a frantic race to provide basic prerequisites for the shift towards the planned economy. An omnipresent problem of famine, speculations and black market had to be overcome or brought to a minimum, in order for the country devastated by war and former underdevelopment may finally start to grow.

Introduction of working methods in accordance with the Soviet pattern was headed towards the creation of the cult of the labour. Labour was destined to become a unit according to which a person's standpoint towards the country, then company and ultimately his family could be measured. Divergence with set criteria was considered a subversive activity "bordering with hostile action".⁶⁴ Competition, rationalization and innovations became elements of stronger connections of workers with the state and new order. Attitude towards labour conceived in such a way was an expression of communist government's desire to proceed with swift development of a socialist type state, but such attitude was only possible in large scale industrial companies. In smaller companies where labour distribution was non-existent such attitude was less if at all applicable.

In years, immediately after the war the government strictly monitored the realization of set goals. Due to numerous aggravating circumstances (e.g. lack of workers, inadequate amount of machinery and/or materials), JSRNJ as an enforcer of such policy was unable to become an efficient organization as anticipated by the Party. Union saw its main role as an organization intended to prepare the workers based on educational, ideological and organizational plan. In his New Year speech, the president of the government and General Secretary of the KPJ Josip Broz Tito joined in the call for working achievements:

"In 1946 we need to further expand working and creative enthusiasm. By investing maximum efforts and voluntary labour we were able to achieve miracles in constructing our country. This enthusiasm and volunteering must not weaken in this year, on the contrary it must strengthen."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Zdenko Radelić, "Jedinstveni sindikati Hrvatske (1944.-1948.)", (Master thesis, Zagreb, 1988), p. 134.

⁶⁵ "Učinimo sve da 1946. godina bude godina velikih pobjeda u obnovi naše zemlje", *Glas rada*, January 1, 1946, p. 1.

Mobilisation of the working force was intensively executed through all daily, weekly and monthly newspaper, radio and posters. The Union hence assumed the role of an instigator regarding competition and shock work, with an ultimate purpose to increase production which would consequently increase the standard of “the working class and entire nation”.⁶⁶

Measures for increase of working discipline and labour productivity were particularly important, while union organization represented an important and supporting element of the state. Considering this problem, it must be said that increase of labour productivity was based on the mentioned Taylor’s model. Even though he was a founder of increased capitalist productivity and an originator of scientific work process management, he was an unavoidable element in creation of a socialist Yugoslavia.

Working Norms as a Presumption of Competition

Organization of socialist competition was impossible without the establishment of working norms. Even though the entire concept of scientific work process organization was applied in an early phase of capitalism, Taylor’s principles presented a beneficial foundation for the construction of socialist Yugoslavia. Yugoslav theorists of working norms justified the utilization of Taylor’s system by saying that “they were misused by his contemporaries and their followers in capitalist economy.”⁶⁷

The term of scientific organization of work process was forged during the early capitalist phase, following the explanation that author’s original idea was misused and has hence become acceptable to Yugoslav communists. According to the authors of the book “Uvod u radne norme” (Introduction to Working Norms), conditions after WWII in Yugoslavia facilitated the achievement of Taylor’s original idea, and they were hence acceptable for realization. Since Soviet economy, too, had in part its foundations on the said theoretical premises, the explanation was that their use in socialism should result in much greater production because “this new and more sophisticated form of labour organization will provide society with more produce, hence making the society richer than that of capitalist system.”⁶⁸

Even after the WWII working norms, as a basis for labour efficiency, were used as a foundation for every further organization of work. The main idea was

⁶⁶ “Razvijmo inicijativu i požrtvovnost na svim poljima našeg djelovanja”, *Naprijed*, January 11, 1946, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Gerl Friderik, Fran Podbrežnik, Milan Vučo, *Uvod u radne norme*, (Beograd: Komisiona naklada Međunarodne knjižare, 1946), p. 6.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 7

that well-organized norms as well as proper remuneration of workers could successfully contribute to a well-organized socialist competition, which would result in increased productivity and lower prices of final products. All these elements influenced the speed and scale of post-war reconstruction. It was believed that a failure to properly set working norms would “cause failure of the working class in their endeavour to rebuild and reconstruct the country, causing the results to be different of those set by the enthusiasm of the working masses and set goals”.⁶⁹

The circular of the Federal Ministry of Industry headed by Andrija Hebrang in July 1945 ordered all industrial companies to immediately start setting up norms according to the The Basics of Norms from 1939. The problem was that most of the companies rigidly adhered to the said rules, failing to take into consideration the current circumstances and production capabilities. Therefore, the Third Plenum GO JSRNJ held in June 1946 stated that working norms set in 1939 “should only be used as an orientation when setting the current, valid norms.”⁷⁰ Working norms were set by company boards in cooperation with technical staff and union organizations. After their decision, the companies formed a commission comprised management representatives, engineering management, worker commissioners, shock workers and company’s union representatives to set up and control the norms. The circular of the Federal Ministry of Industry headed by Andrija Hebrang in July 1945 ordered all industrial companies to immediately start setting up norms according to the The Basis of Norms from 1939. The problem was that most of the companies rigidly adhered to the said rules, failing to take into consideration the current circumstances and production capabilities. Therefore, the Third Plenum GO JSRNJ held in June 1946 stated that working norms set in 1939 “should only be used as an orientation when setting the current, valid norms.” Working norms were set by company boards in cooperation with technical staff and union organizations. After their decision, the companies formed a commission comprised management representatives, engineering management, worker commissioners, shock workers and company’s union representatives to set up and control the norms. Norms were conditioned by: quality of resources and consumables, degree of equipment development, technical utensils and tools at company’s disposal, degree of their tear, overall condition of technological processes and production organization. But after all, the most important factor was workers’ motivation in production processes. Due to its complexity, the setting of the norms required specially trained estimators or quota workers. In larger companies this complexity required particularly thoughtful approach, so the issue of norms was delegated to specially formed commissions comprised of quota worker, representative of company’s union, and one of company’s managers. Commission members were: a) president, b)

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 7.

⁷⁰ “Proizvodne norme u takmičenju”, *Rad*, July 22, 1946, 4.

management team comprised of 1. manager's tariff commissioner and 2. estimators, c) working group, 3. skilled craftsman tariff commission, and 4. workers' tariff commission. Commission president was responsible for its proper functioning, giving advice and clearing out any misunderstandings, but had no voting right in setting the norms. Estimators were responsible for technical preparations and suggestions on setting the norms, with detailed explanation.⁷¹ Ministry of Industry determined that many factories worked with losses, and as a rule those factories had issues with disordered, self-will and wastefulness. The leading personnel, primarily directors, managers and department heads paid no attention to rational personnel management and profitability. Their responsibility was regularly shifted to management sector, while most usual irregularity included mutual payment of wages, disregard of labour efficiency, excess number of workers, payment of wages to workers with unjustified absence from work, payment of illegally positioned delegates, commissars and officials. When setting the norms, the leading personnel rarely or never took into consideration the co-relation between productivity and performance. Results were thus worse as the socialist Yugoslavia worker's productivity was only half of that of capitalist Yugoslavia. In 1945 it was difficult, or even impossible, to recreate the production from 1939, before the war.⁷²

After a significant amount of issues in production and organization has been detected, it was necessary to make certain changes that would void such conditions. The Federal Ministry of Industry therefore ordered all factories to introduce norms in order to restore order, increase productivity, lower the production expenses and turn to profits. In order to achieve that, the Ministry has set elements that every factory had to align with. The regulation included following elements: determination of wages, calculation of production expenses and product price in accordance with production tasks, payment of wages based on the past labour, strict cutbacks on materials and wages for workers in order to lower the expenses to the minimum, material and criminal liability of directors for the company's management and its profitability.

Setting up the norms in companies was faced with lots of resistance from the workers. "(...) when the norm is to be set, the same thing that occurred in capitalism happens again – the workers perform passive resistance and work less if they know the time needed for them to complete a production of a single product is being measured."⁷³ This example was recorded in factories "Rade Končar" in Zagreb and "Tivar" in Varaždin, and was used as an example on conference for representatives of Main boards and Central administration of

⁷¹ Gerl Friderik, Fran Podbrežnik, Milan Vučo, *Uvod u radne norme*, (Beograd: Komisiona naklada Međunarodne knjižare, 1946), p.15.

⁷² HR-HDA, SSJ VSSH, f. 1286., Osnovne naredbe o uvođenju Normi u industrijska poduzeća, kabinet – Ministarstvo industrije FNRJ, July 12, 1945, no. 1780, box 238.

⁷³ Zdenko Radelić, "Jedinstveni sindikati Hrvatske(1944.-1948.)", (Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Master thesis, Zagreb, 1988), p. 337.

JSJ. According to the conference conclusion, union leaders were supposed to tackle such phenomenon because introduction of norms was supposed to be beneficial for the entire society, as well as individually.

According to the accessible data from economic ministries of Yugoslavia at the beginning of May 1946, only 14% of industrial workers did their work under the set technical and labour norms, while the rest worked under provisional norms or no norms whatsoever. This was considered unsustainable and required a thorough revision. During May Day competition, the number of industry workers from all over Yugoslavia who worked under the set technical norms increased for 38%. During the discussion about May Day competition and its results on the Third Plenum Main Board of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia held from 8 to 9 June 1946, it was concluded that working norms in most of the companies are unrealistic. The working norms were usually exceeded by 20% to even 100% which serves as a proof how low they were actually set.⁷⁴ Low working norms caused difficulties for entire industrial production and created an illusion of success. KPJ was very much aware of it, but on the other hand such approach enabled the propaganda to present to the public the success of industrial organization and production, hence also success of the communist rule.

After the implementation of the Fundamental Law on Workers' Governance over State Economic Companies and Higher Economic Societies (Osnovni zakon o upravljanju državnim privrednim poduzećima i višim privrednim udruženjima od strane radnih kolektiva) 1950, the companies were formally conveyed to the workers. Because of this, it was considered that the system of socialist competition became unnecessary. After that the purpose of the socialist competition has become questionable.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Socialist competition had a formative influence in establishing a new political system in that it was an extremely valuable and important model for the formation of the archetype of a new, socialist man. Methods used in the USSR were therefore inevitable in Yugoslavia as well, with some minor exceptions primarily conditioned by different work, cultural and social heritage.

The period that followed the October Revolution saw the establishment of the Soviet state apparatus by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the Bolsheviks), the CPSU, relying on unprecedented techniques in the process and placing crucial importance on socialist competition. Firstly, competition

⁷⁴ "Proizvodne norme u takmičenju", *Rad*, July 22, 1945, 4.

⁷⁵ Tomislav Anić, "Radništvo i propaganda: 'Socijalističko takmičenje' u Hrvatskoj 1945. – 1952.," (Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Ph. D. dissertation, Zagreb, 2010.), p. 286.

was a vital motivational factor resulting in increased productivity of each individual worker, particularly when it came to quantity and quality of tools workers had at their disposal in the first years of the USSR and Yugoslavia. Secondly, each accomplishment could be used for propaganda purposes and, ultimately, was of great propaganda value to creating an image of success of the regime and the state.

Individual and shared interests of the workforce were to be aligned with socialist competition, which was eventually to result in success of the regime and the state. The given era also marked the birth of the famous motto, widely used in communist states ranging from the Baltic to the Adriatic, not just in the Soviet Union: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his contribution."

Low working norms caused difficulties for entire industrial production and created an illusion of success. KPJ was very much aware of it, but on the other hand such approach enabled the propaganda to present to the public the success of industrial organization and production, hence also success of the communist rule.

Zusammenfassung

Sozialistischer Wettbewerb: von der Sowjetunion bis Jugoslawien

Im Prozess der Bildung des neuen politisch-gesellschaftlichen Systems hatte der Wettbewerb eine formative Rolle als ein äußerst wichtiges Modell, aufgrund dessen der neue Mensch sozialistischen Typus gebildet wurde. Eben deswegen wurden die in der Union der Sowjetischen Sozialistischen Republiken verwendeten Methoden auch in Jugoslawien unvermeidbar, jedoch mit gewissen kleineren Abweichungen, die vor allem durch verschiedenes Arbeits-, Kultur- und Sozialerbe bedingt waren.

Unmittelbar nach dem Ende der Oktoberrevolution begann die Kommunistische Allunions-Partei (Bolschewiki) den Prozess des Aufbaus des sowjetischen Staatsapparats und bediente sich dabei der bisher nicht verwendeten Methoden bei der Bildung eines neuen politischen Systems. Der sozialistische Wettbewerb war eine wichtige Methode in diesem Prozess und zwar auf zwei Ebenen. Erstens, im Sinne der Motivation, indem er zur besseren Produktion jeden Arbeiters beitrug, was in Bezug auf die Qualität und Quantität der zur Verfügung stehenden Werkzeuge in den ersten Jahren außerordentlich wichtig war. Zweitens, jeden Erfolg konnte man mit propagandistischen Zwecken verwenden, und er wurde schließlich wirklich so gebraucht, was unermesslich

nützlich bei der Bildung der Vorstellung vom erfolgreichen politischen System und Staat war. Mit dem sozialistischen Wettbewerb wollte man persönliches und allgemeines Interesse der Arbeiterschaft in Einklang bringen, was zuletzt mit dem Erfolg des Systems und des Staates resultieren sollte. In dieser Zeit wurde auch das bekannte und nicht nur in der Sowjetunion, sondern auch in allen kommunistischen Staaten vom Baltikum bis zur Adria benutzte Motto geprägt: "Jeder nach seinen Fähigkeiten, jedem nach seiner Leistung".

Diskrepanz zwischen dem Gewünschten und dem Erzielten war riesig. Das zeigte sich vor allem in niedrigen Produktionsnormen, die die ganze Industrieproduktion erschweren und einen falschen Schein des Erfolgreichseins geben, dessen sich auch die Kommunistische Partei Jugoslawiens bewusst war. Auf der anderen Seite aber ermöglichte dieser Zugang, die Organisation der industriellen Produktion und die kommunistische Macht seitens der staatlichen Propagandamaschine als erfolgreich zu zeigen.

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