

Yugoslav students occupy University of Belgrade for democracy and human rights, 1968

- [\(mainly or initiated by\) student participants](#) [1]
- [an example of paradox of repression](#) [2]
- [included participation by more than one social class](#) [3]

Timing

3 June

1968

to:

10 June

1968

Location and Goals

Country:

Serbia

Location City/State/Province:

Belgrade

Location Description:

Belgrade was the capitol city of the Soviet Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during this campaign

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

The initial demands of the campaigners were:

"The rapid solution of the employment problem facing new university graduates, most of whom have to go abroad if they want to find any sort of employment; The suppression of the great inequalities in Yugoslavia; The establishment of real democracy and self-management relations; The immediate release of all arrested students; The resignation of the chief of police; Convene the Parliament to discuss the demands of students;

The resignation of the directors of all Belgrade newspapers, radio and tv for having deliberately falsified the events of the June 2nd." [2]

Statement issued by striking students and professors from the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade on the second day of the occupation on 4 June 1968: "We do not have our own program. Our program is the program of the most progressive forces of our society- the program of the LCY and the constitution. We demand that it should be put consequently into practice."

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 062. Student strike
- 097. Protest strike
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 062. Student strike
- 097. Protest strike
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 062. Student strike
- 097. Protest strike
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 4th segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings
- 062. Student strike
- 097. Protest strike
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 5th segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 062. Student strike
- 097. Protest strike
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 6th segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 062. Student strike
- 097. Protest strike
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Segment Length:

Approximately 1 day

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Economic Justice

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- Sociology and Philosophy Faculty
- professors
- students

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Vladimir Mijanovic

The Student League

Partners:

University Committee of the Communist League

External allies:

Students in Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Ljubljana

Artists and writers
Involvement of social elites:
Not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:
Groups in 2nd Segment:

- University Committee of the Communist League

Groups in 3rd Segment:

- Sarajevo
- Zagreb
- and Ljubljana students

Groups in 4th Segment:
Groups in 5th Segment:
Groups in 6th Segment:
Segment Length:
Approximately 1 day

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Yugoslavian President Tito

City Committee of the Communist League

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

Prior to the beginning of the nonviolent student campaign, students on 2 June broke windows, set fire to fire truck, and made some retaliation to police brutality. These clashes led to the nonviolent campaign beginning on 3 June.

Repressive Violence:

2-3 June 1968 over 100 students injured and beaten by police

arrests

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Total points:

3 out of 10 points

Notes on outcomes:

President Tito agreed to meet the demands of the campaigners, but in actuality he continued to repress the students.

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) wanted to situate Yugoslavia in a balance between the Soviet dominated Eastern Europe and US dominated West. In order to ensure this global placement, Yugoslavians exercised an economic reform program during 1964-65. LCY utilized market mechanisms to overcome stagnation and stimulate economic growth, but employment and a growth in wage disparity ensued instead. Members of the Yugoslavian Student League as well as professors and editors of dissonant magazines established spaces for critique and set the stage for nonviolent action.

On 2 June 1968 a free theater performance was planned for 'Youth' Action' workers in a small theater outside Belgrade. The location was not large enough for all of the audience members and when police turned noncompliant students away, up to 8,000 students retaliated. The students stormed the theater, broke windows and set fire to a fire truck. Students defended themselves from police brutality with barricades of overturned cars and stones. Students eventually retreated to their dorms and planned for further action.

On 3 June 1968, the students re-emerged under a campaign against the Yugoslavian federally endorsed violence. Up to 4,000 students marched to Belgrade and initiated negotiations with the President of the League of Communists. Before any progress could be made police opened fire on the students and wounded up to 70 individuals.

That afternoon, 10,000 students met to organize the continued campaign, demanding:

- The rapid solution of the employment problem facing new university graduates, most of whom have to go abroad if they want to find any sort of employment;
- The suppression of the great inequalities in Yugoslavia;
- The establishment of real democracy and self-management relations;
- The immediate release of all arrested students;
- The resignation of the chief of police; Convening the Parliament to discuss the demands of students;
- The resignation of the directors of all Belgrade newspapers, radio and tv for having deliberately falsified the events of the June 2nd [3].

This same day, the Belgrade University Council announced the initiation of a seven-day strike. Several thousand campaigners congregated outside the Rector's building and campaigners voiced protest speeches and demands. Several hundred students and professors initiated a seven-day occupation of the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty at the University of Belgrade. During the occupation, police blockaded entrances from the outside and students blockaded entrances from the inside. Police cut electricity and telephone lines to prevent communication between the occupiers and the outside world. Campaigners were only able to communicate to those beyond the blockade through occasional leaflets and bulletins. The general public showed their support for the campaigners by providing food, drink, and money. The media did not support the students. Only groups of Philosophy and Sociology Professors, writers and artists publicly supported the student movement.

Student groups in Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Ljubljana organized to protest and demonstrate in solidarity with the Belgrade University occupiers. On 5 June police attacked Sarajevo student protesters. During this time, the University Committee of the Communist League began negotiating with the City Committees of the Communist

League on behalf of the students.

On 10 June President Tito announced his support for the students and assured them he would resolve the issues and it was safe for them return to their studies. Students celebrated in assumed victory and the campaign dispersed. However, President Tito did not take any measures to meet the demands of the campaigners. He instead strategically repressed and confined the extent of student influence over the course of the Yugoslavian student movement with continued unemployment and the banning of films, magazines, newspapers, theater productions, books, and science gatherings.

Research Notes

Influences:

- 1) The movements at Universities across the world which were holding governments accountable to their promises and pressing for democracy and advancement.
- 2) Future campaigns in the Yugoslavian student movement

Sources:

[1] Doder, Dusko. "Chapter 9: Nation in Arms." The Yugoslavs. Random House New York 1978.

[2] Kanzleiter, Boris. "Chapter 5: 1968 in Yugoslavia." Between Prague Spring and French May. Accessed 17 Feb 2013.

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[3] Plamenic, D. The Belgrade Student Insurrection. New Left Review I/54, March-April 1969. Accessed 17 Feb 2013. <http://newleftreview.org/I/54/d-plamenic-the-belgrade-student-insurrection>

[4] Popov, Nebojsa. "Belgrade, June 1968." 1968 Revisited Issue 7. Accessed 17 Feb 2013. http://www.boell.eu/downloads/mai_68_uk.pdf

[5] Popov, Nebojsa PhD. "40 Years/ Student Demonstrations 1968-2008." 3 June 2009. Accessed 17 Feb 2013. http://www.arhiv-beograda.org/PDF/40_years_students_demonstration.pdf

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