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1968: THE YUGOSLAV SELF-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AT THE CROSS-ROADS: A "CONCRETE UTOPIA" REVISITED IN 2018

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ABSTRACT

*This revisiting of the Yugoslav experience uses concepts of "concrete utopia" and socialism as a conflictive "transitional society" that I first specify and which I share with Darko Suvin (*Splendour, Misery and Possibilities. An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia. *Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2018). Through this lens, I present my interpretation of the driving force of main changes as internal with no predetermined future within conflictive internal and international relations: the emancipatory "triple struggle" or "revolutionary contract" expressed in the founding moments of Tito's Yugoslavia gave it the popular legitimacy (and therefore the strength) to invent an autonomous "road" to socialism resisting both capitalist neo-colonial domination and Stalin's diktats. My thesis is that in the context of the 1960s the status of self-managers recognized to Yugoslav workers had acquired a profound legitimacy associated with more experiences and freedom of criticism than anywhere else, in spite of and within single party rule. Therefore, despite serious Achilles' heels of the system, among them the lack of any clear concept of political economy adequate to self-management, dominant social and intellectual movements could still express the will to reduce the gap between socialist goals and negative effects of reforms – and find significant support within the system. I present the "June 1968" movement as a climax in the expression of such a socialist "concrete utopia" in favor of a self-managed democratic system conflicting with other internal dynamics. I interpret the unknown Autumn 1968 of Workers Councils in Czechoslovakia as concrete evidence of possible extension of what was not and could not be only a "Yugoslav" road to Socialism.*

Keywords: concrete utopia, Ernst Bloch, Darko Suvin, Tito's Yugoslavia, self-management, market reform, June 1968, Praxis

1968: IL SISTEMA DI AUTOGESTIONE JUGOSLAVO A UN BIVIO: UN'"UTOPIA CONCRETA" RIVISITATA NEL 2018

SINTESI

La rilettura dell'esperienza jugoslava utilizza i concetti dell'"utopia concreta" e del socialismo come "società di transizione" conflittuale che intendo inizialmente specifica-

*re nell'articolo e che condivido con Darko Suvin (*Splendour, Misery and Possibilities. An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2018). Attraverso questa lente presenterò la mia interpretazione della forza propulsiva dei principali cambiamenti interni senza un futuro prestabilito nell'insieme delle relazioni conflittuali interne e internazionali: la "triplice lotta" emancipatrice o il "contratto rivoluzionario" che vennero espressi nei momenti costitutivi della Jugoslavia di Tito, ebbero la loro legittimità popolare (e quindi la forza) per inventarsi una "via" autonoma verso il socialismo resistendo sia al dominio capitalista neo-coloniale come pure ai diktat di Stalin. La mia tesi è che nel contesto degli anni '60, lo status dell'autogestione riconosciuto ai lavoratori jugoslavi aveva acquisito una profonda legittimità associata a molte più esperienze e libertà di critica che altrove, nonostante il sistema venisse retto da un unico partito. Pertanto, nonostante seri talloni d'Achille, tra cui la mancanza di un chiaro concetto di economia politica adeguato all'autogestione, i movimenti sociali e quelli intellettuali dominanti potrebbero ancora esprimere la volontà di ridurre il divario tra gli obiettivi socialisti e gli effetti negativi delle riforme – e trovare un sostegno significativo all'interno del sistema. Nell'articolo presento il movimento "Giugno 1968" come il culmine dell'espressione di una tale "utopia concreta" in favore di un sistema democratico autogestito in conflitto con altre dinamiche interne. Interpreto anche lo sconosciuto "Autunno 1968" dei Consigli dei Lavoratori in Cecoslovacchia come prova concreta della possibile estensione di quello che non era stato e non poteva essere solo una strada "jugoslava" verso il socialismo.*

Parole chiave: utopia concreta, Ernst Bloch, Darko Suvin, Jugoslavia di Tito, autogestione, riforma del mercato, Giugno 1968, Praxis

INTRODUCTION: FROM "CONCRETE UTOPIA" TO THE "SOCIALIST TRANSITION"

My revisiting of the Yugoslav socialist experience uses Ernst Bloch's concept of "concrete utopia" that I will first specify. That will allow me to highlight the way I use another concept – "socialism" – as a "transitional society" between capitalism and communism, linked to the emergence of "concrete utopias" within "a field of forces polarized between a congeries of class society alienations and communist disalienation, connoting dynamic and fierce contradictions on all levels" (Suvin, 2018, 17). I will then present my interpretation of the 1960s at the "cross-roads" of alternative possibilities, among them the "concrete utopia" expressed by the June 1968 movement with universal dimensions.

As the German non-orthodox Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch[1] would tell us, "*thinking means venturing beyond. But in such a way that what already exists is not kept under or skated over*" (Bloch, 1954). Bloch's approach of hope is associated with the notion of "concrete utopia", involving a dialectical interaction between human beings driven on by their hunger or suffering and their dreams of overcoming this, with no guarantee of success. In this approach, reality "in-the-being" might be said to include not only what is, but also what might be: alternative real possibilities always lie on the horizon ahead; they may be fought for as "concrete utopias" – in contrast to the merely fantastical "abstract utopias" of compensatory wishful thinking. Such "concrete utopias" are not the implementation of a pre-existing "model" or knowledge – even if different kinds of knowledge can nurture them and be enriched through experiences. Their "utopian" dimension does not mean that they are "impossible", but rather that they evoke a "not yet" fully elaborated and even less realized alternative system. They are nevertheless "concrete" because they are part of a reality based on existing collective struggles and experiences, coming into being on the horizon of an egalitarian future while "no longer" respecting the dominant norms of oppressive systems.

This has been in particular the cases of the Yugoslav and other revolutions in the 20th century. They have opened the fields of *Splendour, Misery and Possibilities*, as Darko Suvin analyses them in his X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia (Suvin, 2018).[2] Their failure can be analysed, examining objective and/or subjective conditions and weaknesses not overcome in a given context (including lack of experience and the use of means which, retrospectively, happened to be in contradiction with the hoped ends). But they could also have failed because of repressive (economic, military, corruptive) measures taken against them by dominant classes and forces, at the national and international levels. The aspect of "concrete utopia", hopes and struggles for "another possible world" that they contained has an uncertain but open future – not to be evaluated only in the short term of *faits accomplis* in a specific historical context: as Walter Benjamin[3] wrote, "*no state of affairs is, as a cause, already a historical one. It becomes this, posthumously, through eventualities which may be separated from it by millennia*" (Benjamin, 1940).

1 Ernst Bloch (1885–1977) was born in Germany to a Jewish family and emigrated to the United States in 1938, where he began writing The Principle of Hope – a three-volume compendium originally to be called *Dreams of a Better Life*. In 1949 he became a Professor of Philosophy in East Germany. He was close to György Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill, Walter Benjamin, and interested in religious and utopian thinkers such as Thomas Müntzer. Under attack because of his defence of freedoms while keeping his Marxian convictions, he went to West Germany when the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, and received an honorary chair in Philosophy at Tübingen. His work became very influential among non-orthodox Marxists, in the student movement in 1968 and in liberation theology.

2 See my review of this impressive book (Samary, 2018).

3 Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was a German Marxist philosopher who, being Jewish, fled Vichy France for Spain in 1940. It is not clear whether he committed suicide or was assassinated by Stalinist agents. His last writings were his *Thesis on the Philosophy of History* often known as *The Concept of History*. Written in the context of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, they express a radical criticism of "historicism" and its dogmatic Marxist variant of "historical materialism". I share Michael Lowy's (2005) interpretation that this represents a critical approach to the "orthodox" Marxists of the Second and Third International and of their linear concept of progress towards a revolutionary future.

Nevertheless, there are many ways to revisit and render interpretations of the past. The issue is not, he says, to recognize how the past "*really was*", but rather "*to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger*" – often leading to catastrophic events. How to evaluate them in historical perspective? As Benjamin stresses, feeling empathy for the losers more than for the winners means to be confronted with "*the task to brush history against the grain.*" (Benjamin, 1940). It means shedding light on historical bifurcations where alternative choices existed and on historical "holes" in dominant historiography where the point of view of losers and subaltern classes are omitted. But that does not mean wishful thinking and an optimistic view. As the French Marxist philosopher Daniel Bensaïd (1990) wrote:

> *The secular messianism of Benjamin is not the passive certainty of the next day, but the watchful concern about the possible.* […] *This permanent availability to the irruption of the possible opposes the positivist tradition which, in France in particular, has contaminated and dominated Marxism since the Second International. It resists the stupid dictatorship of the faits accomplis by giving equal weight and value to the unfulfilled facts. It does not give less importance to the meaning of the virtual than to the sense of the real.*

This is the dual concern of my research and my specific focus on the 1960s in Yugoslavia within the international context. In so doing, I was impressed and moved to discover a deep proximity of concerns and of conceptual approach with Darko Suvin's X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia: he is resisting dominant approaches to the Yugoslav Socialist self-management system which, he writes, are "*not only extrapolating backward from its end*", but writing it off as "*a misconceived or indeed pernicious enterprise*" from the very start (Suvin, 2018, 9). Therefore, like Benjamin, Suvin's reflections re-open history against fatalistic determinism, while expressing explicit empathy for the lived possibilities of workers' self-management and the horizon – in Ernst Bloch's sense of the willed and worked-for future – of democratic communism. Even if I will comment later some points of debates with him, I fully share the main features of his methodology including an important epistemological issue: the use of the term "socialism" on which there is no consensus among different Marxist currents. Suvin (2018, 16) explains:

> *I have strong reservations about the term as used as a historical epoch, both because of the confusion with the ideal and practice of socialism* […] *and – more neuralgically – when the epoch is thought of as a rounded-off, monadic social formation, on a par with feudalism and capitalism.*

Finally, "*renouncing to put everywhere quotation marks for 'socialism' dealing with the Yugoslav experience*", he specifies his global view and use of the notion of "socialism":

> *It is a transitional period (which may last for generations) between exploitative capitalism and communism – with communism defined as a society putting into effect both*

a full feedback democracy and Marx's full slogan. 'From each according to his ability', but then emphatically including to 'each according to her needs'.

Thus, the term "socialism", he concludes,

is useful only if understood as a field of forces polarized between a congeries of class society alienations and communist disalienation, connoting dynamic and fierce contradictions on all levels (Suvin, 2018, 17).

I have used a similar notion of "transitional" society with socialist explicit goals but conflictive trends and no secure future, since my first research on the Yugoslav self-management system and reforms[4] and up to my recent updates on events and debates associated with the revolutions of the 20th century, with perspectives enriched by new emancipatory movements and experiences (Samary & Leplat, 2019). Such a concept of a "socialist transitional society" was first introduced by the Bolshevik Marxists in the 1920s in relation to the social base (subaltern classes) and anti-capitalist dynamic of the Russian revolution and new system. The whole process was rapidly confronted with the bureaucratisation of the single party/state but also with key choices and debates among Marxists about market *versus* planning in such a socialist transitional society. But at the end of the 1930s, Stalin claimed that socialism had been achieved in "one country" on the basis of forced collectivisation and administrative centralised planning associated with party/state repression, censorship and monopoly of power. Nevertheless, against and after Stalin, a broad number of non "orthodox" Marxists like Ernest Mandel (1968), including the Yugoslav ones, used similar interpretations of "socialism" or a notion of "Socialist transition".

Such a concept covering a society opened both to processes of bureaucratisation, socialist democratic advances or capitalist restoration helps break, as Benjamin would wish, with linear concepts of "laws of progress" and a predetermined future. A variant of such determinist approach has produced an opposite Marxist (anti-Stalinist) interpretation of the Soviet Union (USSR) (or any other country of the "communist bloc") as "state capitalism" (Cliff, 1974) whose structure are supposed to be determined by external world market forces. Unkovski-Korica's (2016) main thesis expresses a similar approach:

This book has shown, then, that the external market was definitive of the development strategy the 'Yugoslav Road to Socialism' pursued from its inception. The world market shaped decisively the re-ordering of economic, social and political life after 1948 (Unkovski-Korica, 2016, 230).

4 The title of my doctoral dissertation in Economics was *The Contradictory Logics of the Yugoslav Regime of Accumulation* published in French (Samary, 1988a) as *Le Marché contre l'autogestion, l'expérience yougoslave* (*The Market Against Self-Management, the Yugoslav Experience*) which shed the light on the dynamics of the last phase.

Nevertheless, my disagreement with such analysis and my criticisms of superficial use of the notion of "market" do not prevent me to analyze external and internal capitalist pressures on the Yugoslav society in different phases, in particular the concrete causes of the final debt crisis in the 1980s. Moreover, Unkovski-Korica's extremely rich research on archives often contradicts his own determinist and somewhat dogmatic thesis – as I will show it later: it "tells" us much on real communist internal questioning about the role of market within the Tito-led leadership, not only similar to the first debates among Marxists in SU in the 1920s but deeply enriched by self-management rights and new status of workers changing the socio-political content of economic debates and conflicts, in particular among trade unions.

Finally, my conviction is that "impure concepts" of "no more" and "not yet" kind of society, also help overcome several reductionist (and binary) approaches: either apologetic presentation by the dominant party/state or their supporters, of a "socialism" avoiding, even if not repressing, critical analysis of human and social relations and conflicts; or on the contrary, assimilation of those experiences to the repressive dimension of the single party system or to their failures. But one of the key issues to be discussed while revisiting past Socialist experiences, in particular Tito's Yugoslavia, is of course the role of conscious and organised political and social "actors". There again, I globally share Suvin's dual judgment on the Yugoslav Communist Party (YCP) (Suvin, 2018, 118; underlined in the text):

> *The Party/State government was* a two-headed Janus *(at least in 1945–72). 'It was not only a factor of alienation, but concurrently also the initiator and lever of a real liberation – up to a certain important limit (the liberation is important and the limit is important).'*

This is part of the concrete historical and political analysis of the Yugoslav revolution in its international context. It is within such a historical perspective and with the above-mentioned lens that I will now present my revisiting of the Yugoslav 1960s.

THE YUGOSLAV 1960s WITHIN THE "REVOLUTIONARY CONTRACT" – AT WHICH "CROSS-ROAD"?

My point of departure is what I call the "Yugoslav revolutionary contract" (a kind of variant of the notion of "social contract" used by Michael Lebowitz, 2012).[5]

The Yugoslav Revolutionary Contract

It can be summarized by what Zoran Oklopcic (2017) calls the *"Triple Struggle": "National, Social and Geopolitical Emancipation"*. It takes place historically within what I studied in my most recent research on *Decolonial communism, Democracy & the Commons* (Sa-

5 Michael Lebowitz (2012) analyses the way the "Vanguard Party" as "conductor" of the Socialist system needs to legitimize and stabilize its rule on behalf of the "conducted" workers, through de facto "contracts" assimilated to Socialist gains.

mary & Leplat, 2019). Tito's growing conviction in 1941 that a Socialist revolutionary break was possible out of World War II was, as confirmed by Jože Pirjevec (2017, 90), directly inspired by similar convictions expressed in Lenin's April Theses during World War I. Lenin's support for the right of self-determination of nations, but also (against Stalin's forced collectivisation) for the slogan "*land to those who work on it*" were concretely implemented in the Yugoslav context. The partisans "great slogans" – "*death to fascism, liberty to the people*" and "*brotherhood and unity*" (fundamental for the national question) –" *were destroying the old class system, materially and morally*" on a concrete basis (Suvin, 2018, 26): on the liberated territories, a new self-managed power (inspired by the "dual power" during the October revolution) consolidated mass popular armed mobilisations distributing land and organising new relations. That was the strength of the Partisans-led resistance, not recognised by the Allies who supported the King in London and the Chetnik resistance up to 1943. And this directly conflicted with Stalin's Great Power Diplomacy, sharing "spheres of influence", like the Yalta Agreement according to which Yugoslavia was to be "shared 50/50".

The founding moment of the Tito's regime's legitimacy occurred in two phases: first during the war at the second session of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ)[6] in Jajce in 1943 which was an act of public refusal of any subordination to the Great Power's Agreements on the back of the peoples. As Suvin stresses, the Yugoslav CP-led autonomous revolution was fought as an anti-imperialist war for national liberation and social justice, rather than being restricted to an anti-fascist front – and thereby broke with the Allies' line and Stalin's orders. But such conflicting logics went further: the Yugoslav Communists developed extensive links with the Greek resistance and Tito discussed directly a project of Balkan federation with the Communist Parties of Greece, Bulgaria and Albania – without much care to Stalin's diplomatic choices.

This was the real cause of 1948, more profound than immediate disputes and conflicts (Dedijer, 1971; Perović, 2007). And that was the second founding moment of the Tito-led regime, organically linked to the first one: it was a consequence of the unavoidable conflict between new autonomous revolutions (like the Chinese one also) and Stalin's hegemonistic behavior and strategy of "building socialism in one country". As Vladimir Unkovski-Korica (2016, 67) rightly writes:

> *Even before the Tito-Stalin split, it was clear that the Yugoslav Communist leadership believed it was building a "Yugoslav road to Socialism". Rather than being an isolated project, the development of an efficient competition-state that emerged from the liberation struggle was only a part, but an important part, of the revolutionary struggle being waged by the Yugoslav Communists. By their example and in their foreign policy they would play a vanguard role in a new wave of change that would tip the balance of forces internationally against imperialism; headed by the United States and Britain. Tito's own sense of mission and of independence were clearly in friction with the USSR before 1948. The KPJ's domestic moves and economic plans were never dictated from Moscow. The KPJ leadership sought both to borrow and to adapt Soviet methods to Yugoslav conditions.*

6 Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije.

Nevertheless, the split with Stalin was unforeseen and certainly not wished by the Yugoslav communists. Moreover, up to 1948 any public criticism of the USSR was repressed as "Trotskyite" while Tito claimed to be "the first Stalinist". Whatever the conflicts and disagreements with the Kremlin, the USSR was still for them "the Socialist Homeland" and a key element of world relationships of forces against imperialist policies. They always kept such a view – and fear of dependency on Western loans – which explains their hopes of new relations after Stalin's death and final involvement in the building of the Non-Aligned movement after the Hungarian crisis in 1956 and disillusion: beyond short term "tilts" or pragmatic "zig-zags", my interpretation of "the driving force" (like Suvin's) is not external but internal: the "revolutionary contract" and its communist commitment needed a deepening and extension of the socialist revolution and emancipation from external dependency: the "Triple Struggle" was the "contract" but the difficulties were immense.

If the driving forces of change were internal, this never meant autarky nor nationalism or suppression of external pressures. On the contrary, the Yugoslav Communist leaders were deeply committed to an internationalist concept of their revolution as stressed above. Nevertheless, they understood it on the basis of egalitarian relations which the Stalinist USSR would not accept. The Yugoslav Communists had to find on the "domestic field" the (internal) conditions to resist Yalta's kind of agreements, including Stalin's choice to "build socialism in one country" and hegemonist behaviour: it was only through a real (multi) national revolutionary process in Yugoslavia that they could build a popular-based relationship of forces leading to victory and legitimacy at the national and international levels.

In 1948, they needed to explain a split they did not desire, to find the means to resist its disastrous effects and to build on their own Socialist project. This produced two major changes in the "revolutionary contract". The first one is the most identified with the specific Tito-led system – the introduction of self-management. But before commenting on it, we must stress another consequence of the split, less underlined: the "revolutionary contract" had to become "Yugoslav" only, with the abandonment of the Balkan project. From Tito's point of view, aware and afraid of nationalist conflicts, stabilizing relations with Bulgaria was important for Macedonia; similarly, a confederation with Albania would have permitted Kosovo to be at the same time linked to Albania and to Serbia. The retreat into a "Yugoslav" project was a disaster for the Kosovo Albanians who revolted and were repressed. The creation of the new Yugoslavia would imply granting a status of constituent peoples endowed with the right of self-determination to Slavic peoples only.

I would consider this issue as the first Achilles' heel of the new project. A possible "turning point" occurred in 1968 when Albania, like Yugoslavia, condemned the Soviet intervention against the Prague Spring – which opened a phase of increased rights for Kosovo Albanians and cultural collaboration between the two countries for the establishment of Pristina University in Albanian language. The freedoms and improvements in the standard of living within Tito's Yugoslavia could consolidate a real "belonging", with equal status between Slavic and non-Slav peoples – which a socialist Balkan or European frame-work could facilitate.

The internal dimension of "national emancipation" within the federation was complex and intertwined with other socio-economic and political issues which, together, could

open alternative roads. The first Yugoslavia had been rejected as a "prison of Peoples" with a Leninist conviction that no attractive and stable new union was possible if not based on free and egalitarian relations. "Yugoslavianism" had been hiding a Serb-dominated federation. That is why it was rejected (Jović, 2006). But during the 1950s, it seems that the Yugoslav leaders hoped for the emergence of a workers and socialist "Yugoslav identity" consolidated through self-management rights. In 1953, the Chamber of Nationalities was merged with the Federal Chamber while a Chamber of Producers was introduced up to 1963. Between 1958 (after the first Congress of Workers' Councils) and 1963, the role of communes was enhanced as a basic socio-political structure, while different councils were introduced besides the Federal one, expressing the will to stimulate the emergence of socialist transnational socio-economic and cultural projects and consciousness – which seemed to have been Tito's specific concern, associated, with concerns about market reform (Unkovski-Korica, 2016, 223)[7]:

> *Tito's own belief was that the market was corrosive of domestic affairs. He hoped for slower adoption of market reform and greater international competitiveness through more planned and state-led integration of enterprises across republic borders. Tito's desire was to appeal to worker patriotism and participation to make this breakthrough towards export-orientation. But he quickly realised centralisation in Yugoslavia came with Serbian hegemony. Since he had fought against this in the pre-war period, he gave up on this course, and accepted decentralised, regional specialisation.*

This is a second internal Achilles' heel: the identification of "Yugoslavianism" and federalism with Serb domination, while a new socialist content was concretely emerging, from the commune to the whole federation. But to consolidate such a trend a real democratic political system was needed.

The "economic debate" – and its supposed "objective law", was the third Achilles' Heel, in spite of an immense asset: the unique introduction in the Constitution of self-management rights in relation with social ownership. Both contents would be conflictive and evolutive in all Constitutions, from 1953 up to the final *Law on Associated Labor* added in 1976 to the 1974 constitution, responding to the multifold tensions expressed in the second half of the 1960s. Whatever be its internal weaknesses and contradictions – leading to what I called a real "stalemate" and "neither plan nor market" regulation (Samary, 1988a, 235–273), this Constitutional Law was the last to increase workers' self-management rights and protect the alienation of "social ownership" by state ownership or by group ownership" as a form of privatization: this means that the "market reform" introduced in 1965 was stopped (international market forces were not dominant). But there was the need for "collective" democratically centralized forms of decision-making on the main choices of management of "social ownership" as "commons".[8] That is the interpretation I will now specify.

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7 Which contradicts hopefully his thesis of a "western-led" kind of orientation since 1948.

8 Specifying my approach of that important but ambivalent notion would go beyond the scope of that contribution (Samary, 2017; Samary & Leplat, 2019) but I fully share the approach presented in the collective

A Yugoslav Self-management system with what "market" – that is, what social rights?

The progressive political effect of the 1948 split hopefully limited the Stalinist repressive "culture" against "Cominformists" (Banac, 1988). The introduction of self-management opened a deep transformation in the concept of the Party's role as Communist League associated with the abandonment of a hypercentralized and administrative planning system. On the political and ideological point of view Djilas produced an interpretation of Stalin's hegemonistic policy convincingly putting the emphasis on concrete factors: the defense of a "besieged fortress" against a world coalition, isolation, destruction of the country and the urgent task of rebuilding an exhausted, destroyed and largely backward country: all these factors pushed toward a strong state which would also fit in with "Great Russian" behavior, both internal and external. Against Stalin and statism they mobilized Marx and his support for the Paris Commune, the communist project of the "direct association of producers" and of "withering away of the state" was compatible with the deep communist and Marxist commitment of these leaders, rooted in a long Balkan socialist tradition. This was also a concrete and effective ideological way to fight against isolation within the workers movement. But for what kind of self-management system?

For Suvin (and I support this approach) this was a step forward towards social emancipation, prolonging the revolutionary role of the Communist party in the liberation struggle. Even if it was introduced "from the top" (as opposed to a spontaneous invention, like the Soviets were in Russia) and after the immediate years of centralized control as a way to impel economic reconstruction and consolidate the new power, they were not conceivable and understandable without a revolutionary context, the deep communist commitments of that "top" and emancipatory traditions in the organization of revolutionary struggles.

The impressive patriotic and popular mobilization to reconstruct the country after the experience of the partisan-led "do-it-your-self" on the ground could not but be inspiring for the research of a concrete socialist answer. But according to Unkovski-Korica the introduction of self-management was aimed at channelling the workers under market pressure more than at mobilising them: his Chapter 2 on that issue presents "*self-management at the service of the market*" and he concludes (Unkovski-Korica, 2016, 222) that self-management was "the ideological center-piece of the tilt to the West".[9] This divergence with Suvin is even clearer when Unkovski-Korica considers that globally the driving force was "external dependence" on foreign capital, while Suvin argues that the driving force through which to interpret the main transformations of the system, at least in its first decades, was internal. As already mentioned, I would agree with this second formulation which can be concretized here: self-management was a social relation aiming at consolidating autonomous decisions both against capitalist and Stalinist external pressures. Besides complex theoretical debates, the question of what was the real "driving

paper prepared for the 2nd Balkan Forum that took place on May 12–14, 2013 at the Subversive Forum in Zagreb (The Struggle for the Commons in the Balkans, 2015).

9 Stalin would not have disagreed with such presentation!

force" can be checked on the basis of concrete results: the social structure of the country (in the period covered by Unkovski-Korica, including the choice of "Non-Alignment") were in open contrast with what the first capitalist Yugoslavia was before (and what it would become after) the global phase of the Tito's regime.

The well-known Croatian economist Branko Horvat began his *Requiem for the Yugoslav Economy* as follows (Horvat, 1993, 1):

> *It is sometimes said that Yugoslavia disintegrated because of its economic failures. Those who know a bit more talk about the failure of self-management. Still others say that social property was responsible for the failures. Some economists admit that economic development occurred but maintain that this was because of foreign aid. None of these explanations is correct.*

He stressed that while the pre-war Yugoslavia was "underdeveloped",

> *by 1968, Yugoslavia had surpassed the prewar level of production and consumption of the most advanced European countries. From 1953 to 1965, the annual rate of productivity growth was 4.7%, as compared with that of European capitalist economies (3.3 percent) and statist economies (3%). Productivity growth was probably the highest in the world during that period. At the same time the relative indices of the basic welfare of the population (life expectancy at birth, education, and health services) were much higher than those of capitalist countries, but also substantially higher than those of welfare states. In fact, around 1971 they were the highest in the world.*

For all these reasons, he disagreed with all the quoted interpretations of the final failure and added: "*The causes are political*".

Darko Suvin shares such views, considering the economic and political gains of the first two decades: victory against fascism and national independence, mass upward social mobility for the plebeian classes, "*which changed the life of millions for the better*", with full employment, free social services, and a huge growth of schooling (Suvin, 2018, 37–39 and Part 3). He recalls that training workers was especially acute in a country where before 1945 there were few industrial, managerial or scientific skills available and two thirds of youngsters still had 4 years' schooling or less. A large programme of adult education during the first 15 years received generous financing. In its culmination of 1967/68, there were 236 "Workers" Universities which held almost 10,000 courses with 311,000 participants and over 20,000 lectures with 2 million listeners.

Nevertheless, all this leaves open and complex the debate on the market (even with Branko Horvat) within a socialist project. And Unkovski-Korica does not clarify it at all in his global statement – while he offers rich evidence of the socialist dimension of concrete debates on economic categories, permitted as nowhere else in the world, by the introduction of self-management rights: he even gives evidence of the fact that "market reform" could be defended from the point of view of workers' emancipation and within the trade unions.

As Suvin reminds us in his X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia, Boris Kidrič, a leading revolutionary figure, Marxist economist and member of the new government, was in favour of autonomous socially owned enterprises, seen as the subject, creating income, rather than the object of state administration. Far from having a clear concept, he was hesitant, as Unkovski-Korica quotes him in his debate with another top Communist leader Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo.[10] Therefore, comments the researcher (Unkovski-Korica, 2016, 100): "*The period following the turn towards the market in mid-1950 remained one of uncertainty and ideological experimentation.*"

In fact, hesitations were visible up to the 1970s, each reform increasing self-management rights and transforming the concrete concept of "social-ownership" – therefore changing the role of the "market" (without clarifying it, in my point of view). But increasing contradictions and inconsistencies in the 1970s (therefore before the debt crisis in the 1980s), were not primarily the result of external International Monetary Fund pressures: even more, at the end of the 1960s and up to the end of the 1970s it was the capitalist world order itself which was under internal and external Communist pressures and confronted with its own crisis of profitability and imperialist domination – as much as the single party regimes of the "Communist Bloc" were confronted with specific popular unrest against their own forms of domination and non-satisfaction of increasing needs. 1968 is a "symbolic" year of radicalisation (especially of the young generations) against all relations of domination, in all regions of the world, with a dominant anti-capitalist dynamic.

What were Yugoslav specificities in the 1960s?

As stressed by Sharon Zukin (1975, 4),

> *the discrepancy between theory and practice is common to all political systems. It would be foolish to lash at the Yugoslavs – no matter how grand the claims of their official ideology – on this score.*

Therefore, she adds, it is more interesting to stress "*how*" a "*particular form*" of such discrepancy developed in Socialist Yugoslavia (Zukin, 1975, 4):

> *we may regard socialist self-management in Yugoslavia less as a full-blown ideological or institutional system than as an ever-emerging chain of choice and response under certain conditions. In their choices within and responses to recent historical situations, both Yugoslav leaders and masses have shown a great deal of independence and initiative.* […] *But if we look at the goals and policies associated with Yugoslav socialism over the past twenty-five years, then we find that the choice has remained overwhelmingly the leaders' and the response the masses.*

10 On Kidrič, who died in 1953, see Darko Suvin (2018) and my review (2018); "Tempo" – after governmental responsibilities, was appointed and played a major role at the head of the Yugoslav (Party-controlled) Trade-Unions after 1958 for about ten years.

I have implemented a similar approach in my analysis of the different Yugoslav reforms while stressing a more interactive dialectical (even if hierarchical and non-linear) process. Such analysis is indeed open to different focus and interpretation. Concrete historical research and interpretation are still to be developed about the very "essence" and transformation of such an evolutive "chain" in the different periods of Yugoslav history and the moment and conditions of "the break" of the "chain".

In what happened (retrospectively) to be the middle of the life of Tito's Yugoslavia, in 1968, impressive gains since 1948, already mentioned, were still associated with other strong external and internal sources of popular legitimation of the regime with paradoxical effects: an increased expression of new conflicting expectations and causes of polarisation and dissatisfaction.

Khrushchev's trip in Belgrade in 1955 to apologise for Stalin's slanders and actions had been an historical event: it surprised the whole world and destabilised the pro-Soviet Communist parties. But it also would rapidly open a new phase of conflicts with the Maoist currents which glorified Stalin against Khrushchev's line of "peaceful coexistence". And after Tito's disillusion about his hope for more egalitarian relations with Moscow, in 1956–1958, the "Yugoslav Road to Socialism" would find its external support in the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement, with Third-World and anti-colonial leaders in Belgrade in 1961. This was a source of international prestige but with ambivalent contents between state and party politics, and therefore ambiguous impact: "peaceful coexistence" in state politics could be in conflict with anti-colonial and anti-imperialist radicalisation within the Non-aligned Movement itself (from Bandung in 1955 to the Tricontinental meeting in Cuba in 1966) impacting the world-wide (and Yugoslav) youth radicalisation.

In turn, Tito's international successes combined with the internal logic of constitutional rights associated to self-management in the phase 1958–1963, had opened room for freedoms of criticism: this allowed an increasing expression of conflicts and debates predominantly on the point of view of discrepancies between self-management rights, socialist aims and practice which never existed in the other "brother countries". This was combined with freedom in international cultural and material exchanges, visas for traveling abroad (be it for a negative reason, in order to export unemployment (Woodward, 1995).[11] Altogether, "*From the mid-1960s, reforms fostered market socialism and heralded a new wave of consumer culture (along with increasingly open borders and international cooperation in decolonisation and non-alignment)*" (Archer, Duda & Stubbs, 2016, 8).

I would highlight two unique features of the Yugoslav regime in this phase.

On the intellectual side of the society, polarisations were normal and inevitable. But the very existence of *Praxis*[12] as "loyal opposition" (as Suvin calls it) with its own autonomous initiatives had an important internal influence (among the students) and in-

11 Susan L. Woodward stressed all the mechanisms which permitted a *de facto* increasing hidden unemployment to develop when "alternative" occupations to existing jobs were possible (through emigration, the domestic role of women and private peasants' activities): this was another, non-visible, Achilles Heel of the system.

12 See archives of the international edition of *Praxis* (1965–1973).

ternational impact as highlighted in a recent article (Secor, 2018).[13] It expressed both a radical commitment of well-known intellectuals to self-management rights and sharp criticisms of the concrete experience (from within the system) against all sources of alienation of such rights: from a statist form of socialism to "market socialism", and from open repressive trends to any cult of personality. This would culminate in open support for the June 1968 independent socialist student movement (see in particular on these issues, Stojanović, 1970; 1973).

On the workers' side, the very fact that strikes could be "officially" and seriously analysed by Neca Jovanov (1979)[14] between 1958 and 1969, would illustrate two apparent contradictory truths: on the one hand an obvious discrepancy between self-management rights and the practical power of decision-making, often stressed; but on the other hand, a de facto "right of veto" and extremely rapid success of strikes at least up to the end of the 1970s, reflecting the status of the workers within the system and the support they generally received from leading figures of the regime – a feature lasting enough to influence the logic of strikes even in the 1980s (Musić, 2016). Such ambivalence could not appear in empirical data about stratification or conflicts. They could better be expressed through answers given in enquiries (as Neca Jovanov stressed) according to the way the question was raised: if the issue was how workers could participate in concrete decision-making and control on financial and investment choices, they would say clearly that they had no real power on such issues – and in the late 1960s they could even add they had no competence, therefore accepting the "normality" of the increasing stratification within self-management organs and factories. Nevertheless, if the next question was more general about the self-management "status", they would express a clear support to such status by emphasising the "dignity" it brought them (Musić, 2016).

The recognition of the workers' central role and dignity in the productive process changed the nature of the economic and social procedures in an evolutive and unclear manner. In the phase 1953–1964 the global economic logic was still not *dominated* by market relations and certainly not by capitalist market criteria, as already mentioned and illustrated by the socio-economical structural changes of the society. But the form of planning had to change to be compatible with self-management. I analysed it in my research under the title: "self-management stifled by the plan" (Samary, 1988a, 115–157): my aim was to express the dominant conflicts behind different sub-phases and hesitations. Up to the mid-1950s "*the state could still allot profits and decide on almost all investments in the enterprise*" (Zukin, 1975, 60). Therefore, "*it is not surprising that the First Congress of Self-Managers in June 1957 demanded greater autonomy for enterprises in production planning, spending, and development*" (Zukin, 1975, 60). The introduction of Central Funds channelling two-thirds of the surplus permitted to implement strategical planned aims of industrialisation and reduction of inequalities, compatible with decen-

13 In this article, Laura Secor also analyses the way increasing nationalist views later penetrated and destroyed the Serbian part of *Praxis* and the group as a whole.

14 I am referring to direct discussions I had with him in March 1983 both on this fact and on workers' feelings on self-management.

tralised self-managing of short term and local choices. Instead of administrative planning, "economic" instruments (or "market categories", to be distinguished from a "market regulation") were used: different kinds of "administrative prices", differentiated taxes were compatible with decentralised management of factories. But that did not give any democratic means of decision-making about strategic priorities and criteria; neither did that permit control of the use of redistributive funds, both on social and national points of views. Nor did that give any answer on how to improve "growth" and "productivity"[15]: this was a turning point, a "cross roads" before the choice of "market reform" and confederalisation of the system. Socialist aims and relations could have led to finding an ad hoc stimulant to improve the quality and the result of the "social product" through a better "association of labour" based on self-managed "communities of interest" at all territorial levels and branches. In addition, the investment funds could have been democratized and "socialized" ("communizing" the resources and the criteria for using them efficiently).

Instead, market competition was to become the stimulant, and the funds were suppressed. Their resources were distributed to the self-managed factories (increasing their rights and the amount of net income under their control). A new banking system supposed to implement "objective economic laws" from market criteria instead of "political" ones. This was a real radical "market reform" (1965–1971) which I characterized as "self-management stifled by the market" (Samary, 1988a, 163–165): the decentralised banking system rapidly concentrated more and more resources and its allocation of credits could only increase inequalities instead of efficient and "neutral" logics.

Indeed, as both Suvin and Unkovski-Korica did, I made a radical criticism of the disastrous effects of such "socialist market" competition: increasing horizontal inequalities between regions and between factories and therefore between workers' incomes according to the market and not according to labour; vertical loss of real power for self-management where workers in factories were confronted with "anonymous" market rules and coalitions between managers and the banking system, leading to increasing strikes.

The way such reforms were interrupted, at the beginning of the 1970s, is generally not analyzed whereas this is a key element of judgement about "what were the driving forces"? My point of view is that both the 1965 market reform and its interruption stemmed from a political rationale, which I associate with the Yugoslav socialist "revolutionary contract" between the Communist leaders and the "constituent" actors of Tito's Yugoslavia. Its concrete institutional expression changed from one reform to another; according to the pragmatic evolution of "legitimate" conflicts (according to the leaders' interpretation), the latter reflected the "contradiction of social ownership" and of "pluralist communities of interest" as Kardelj would call them.

The first dimension of such a contract was the increasing of workers' (and working people's) rights – the social basis of the regime. Since Kidrič's initial reflections expressing a communist point of view, the goal of increasing workers' control over the Social Product through self-management procedures was "playing" behind all socio-economic

15 Introducing market material stimulants was the general concern of the debate within all socialist countries in the 1960s, in particular in Cuba, that I present in Samary, 2019, 37–45.

conflicts and debates. It encompassed a new content in the 1960s (with unclear Marxist approach) linked to the extension of "social self-management" to services. But the first practical way to increase workers' control appeared in 1965 to be (or was presented as) the suppression of planning, even under its new form of investment funds.

The second feature of the contract was the other source of political legitimacy of the regime: the recognition of national diversity and rights sensitive to a free multi-national federation. However, it was increasingly expressed in that phase by representatives of the richest republics opposing the redistributionist logic of the plan which, in their view, reduced their efficacy and contribution to the whole system (the Slovenian leader Edvard Kardelj was notably attentive to these questions while nonetheless opposing nationalism).

Finally, a third "internal" component of the contract linking the other within a socialist political rationale was what I would call the uncertain "political economy" of socialism: in other words, the place and concept of the market.

In the 1960s, against the experience of arbitrariness of bureaucratic planning and political choices, the market could appear both as an instrument of "free choices" and secondly of "objective" laws to be "respected" and which were socially neutral. The economists would make theories about this but the workers would (rightly) react pragmatically to the unjust and inefficient effect of such "laws": the rapid increase of inequalities and the implementation of the slogan "to each according to market results" instead of socialist and communist criteria to be updated democratically.

From increasing strikes to the Yugoslav June 1968

In June 1968 students occupied different faculties in Belgrade, demanding "another kind of socialism" as Dragomir Olujić, one of the participants in that movement, recalled in a recent interview (Olujić, 2018). Questioned about who influenced them, he commented:

> *The main intellectual influences came from the group of professors of philosophy and sociology gathered around the Korčula Summer School and the journal Praxis (and Filozofija).* […] *In them we found inspiration, from them we learned how to think, from them we got enormous knowledge, through them we got a window onto the world, our first contacts with the world.*

The *Praxis* current combined radical support for self-management rights against statist alienation and against market alienation. Therefore, the main student demands were denouncing corruption and privileges,

> *but also 'the red bourgeoisie' and 'the transformation of social property into shareholding'. They were 'For integral self-management', and for the 'Student-Worker' alliance. They also demanded better conditions for universities and student life, and especially 'better access to higher education for workers' children. They received*

popular support with money, including from workers. But they were also, significantly, supported by 'political institutions' and top figures of the state apparatus like Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo and General Gojko Nikoliš (we used his car to distribute the newspaper Student in Zagreb and Ljubljana).

Significantly in relation to the regime, on the seventh day, Tito gave a speech which, to the surprise of his collaborators and party nomenklatura, supported the student protests and student demands, reminded Olujić, stressing with humor:

with the 'well known' principle of 90 + 10 percent – namely 90% of students are alright and 10% are not … We knew immediately which 10% were not 'acceptable' (Olujić, 2018).

Contrary both to Suvin and to Unkovski-Korica, I think important to analyse the concrete measures taken by the still dominant Tito's leadership. It combined selective repression (against the "10%" of all independent movement) and concessions along contradictory lines without finding the means of any political and socio-economic stabilisation. Nevertheless, new rights were introduced. They can be analysed with their internal contradictions, but they were still linked to the two internal dimensions of the "contract" (social and national rights) as expressed in the new constitutional reforms of the 1970s (Samary, 1988a, 235–274). Tito's and Kardelj's hope was that the increase of republican and provincial rights (collective presidency, specific Chambers replacing "people Councils") would decrease national tensions. But, besides political dimensions (new official "leading role" of the party and integration of the army within the institution), economic and social dimensions opened new conflicting trends.

The confederalization of the system included the decentralized control on foreign exchange, one of the central demands expressed during the "Croatian Spring" in 1971. That would increase radically the pressures of world market on nationalist basis within the whole economic and political system in the next phase. On the other hand, in the beginning of the 1970s, the autonomous banking system was dismantled and a "cultural revolution" was launched against technocratic powers: the big factories were divided into "Basic Organizations of Associated Labour" which could establish contractual links and forms of planning. Self-management was enlarged to all public services through the form of "SIZ"[16] – "Self-managing Communities of Interest" permitting direct association of users and workers of a given service (in culture, education, health and other spheres).

Globally, "social ownership" was now to belong "to everyone and no-one" as it was said: it was defined in the constitution both against statism and against "group property" that the June 1968 student movement had denounced. Therefore, in order to be allowed to privatise such property in the 1990s, new republican laws would have to be introduced, against that constitution, allowing the dismantlement of social ownership either by the

16 Samoupravna interesna zajednica. Researches are needed on the concrete experiences of such SIZ in the 1970s and 1980s.

new states or through shareholding and the market. A new system of delegation was introduced with new Chambers of "Associated Labour" – but not at the federal level as a major concession to Republican increasing power within the system.

At the Second Congress of Self-Managers organised in Sarajevo in 1971, the future changes were presented by Kardelj and Tito, who explicitly expressed his fears that the new powers given to the Republics could destroy the system: he called on the workers to take care and eventually mobilise against such danger. But the independent youth movement of 1968 as much as the trade union's socio-political strength had been dismantled. The League of Communists had lost its revolutionary dynamism and unity which could not be kept without radical democratisation and transparent pluralist debates. At the Sarajevo Congress, Tito's fear for destructive trends was a call for "discipline" and accepting decisions which were already taken: while a new "constituent" process was needed "*the historical leadership had failed to transform its historical legitimacy into a democratic one*."

The selective repression of intellectual current (be they Marxists or liberals), the real "pro-workers" turn of the new Law on "Associated Labour" and the patriotic use of the intervention of Moscow-led tanks in Prague during the summer of 1968[17] produced dramatic changes in the relations of critical intellectuals and the workers. Therefore, the perception (and reality) of the 1970s was certainly extremely diverse in the context of very differentiated cultural and political contexts within the federation. Olujić's interview expresses the feeling of "victory" among students at least in Serbia – on "short term" (Olujić, 2018) – with cultural freedoms among the youth after 1968 (in particular, like elsewhere, the raise of feminism). A more complex picture if offered by Jure Ramšak (2019) shedding lights on the influence of the Western New Left's ideas among Slovenian students radicalised through *Praxis* Summer Schools international openings. As he stresses, the anti-imperialist commitment of radical students from Belgrade to Ljubljana, triggered by the image of the US war in Vietnam, grew into conflict with the official Tito's foreign policy of "Non-Alignment". Similar than their peers in France and elsewhere, Yugoslav students wondered about the real "subject" of history. Opposing reformist illusions, they found "revolutionary-democratic vision" in Rosa Luxemburg's writings, which were seen as an alternative to both the "established social democracy as well as state-socialism", and therefore "*an ideal basis for criticizing the hated regimes on both sides of the Iron Curtain*" (Ramšak, 2019).

In such a context without credible alternatives, I would like to stress a last evidence of the increasing possible extension of a self-managed Socialist system as a "concrete utopia" to "brother countries" in 1968: what was occurring in Czechoslovakia tells a lot about that – and is generally ignored. The reformist wing of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (the leader Alexander Dubček and the economist Ota Šik) reflected an international debate within the Communist parties in power, from USSR to Cuba,[18] on

17 A new popular "defense" was organized against any potential internal or external aggressor. Tito deprived all leaders of the June 1968 movement from the right to be involved in the organized patriotic military training, meaning de facto that one could not trust them to defend the country. I was a direct witness of such climate.

18 I present the different reforms and debates in Samary, 1988b.

the need to reform administrative planning. The dominant logic was seeking to enlarge the margins of the market and material incentives for the directors. The reforms were not popular among workers (because of their inegalitarian effects, the threat to jobs they represented and lack of self-management rights). In reality, it was to respond to this defiance that the democratic opening against censorship was introduced in favor of "Socialism with human face" supported by the reformist wing seeking to consolidate its social base. The explosion of Spring 1968 did not respect the boundaries of the official reforms, however.

Dominant presentations tend to present binary opposition between market reformists versus "conservatives" – often reduced to (real) neo-Stalinist currents. But they don't say that a third current existed, represented by people like Jaroslav Šabata and Rudolf Slánský Jr. (son of the party leader executed during the "anti-Titoist" purges), much influenced by the Yugoslav experience. This expressed the potential of a concrete extension of that experience in such a phase. This current began to publicly encourage workers to elaborate new proposals of law and rights for workers' councils. The workers of the Wilhelm Pieck Factory in Prague established new statutes in June 1968 and opened their factory to the clandestine congress of the CP during the Soviet-led military intervention in August. And it was during and against such occupation that tens and soon, in 1969, hundreds of workers councils emerged. A survey of 95 councils, in manufacturing and other sectors, found that 83 percent of employees had participated in council elections and about half the council members were also Communist Party members. The trade unions and the council movement met to elaborate a new law proposed to the Parliament (while Dubcek was still in government). Rudolf Slánský Jr., commented in Prače on the council movement's proposals on enterprise ownership:

> *The only possible method of transforming the bureaucratic-administrative model of our socialist society into a democratic model is to abolish the monopoly of the state administration over the exercise of ownership functions, and to decentralize it towards those whose interest lies in the functioning of the socialist enterprise, i.e. the collectives of enterprise workers* (Dolack, 2016).

Which is similar to Kidrič's approach. About a decade later, in Poland, the most impressive democratic workers' movement in Eastern Europe, the free Polish trade union Solidarność, was fighting for a "Self-managed Republic", against the oppressive rule of the one-party state, but with the active support of thousands of its members. As the British Marxist political scientist Peter Gowan commented:

> *The fundamental feature of the Polish upheaval that has been so difficult for socialists (and anti-socialists) in the West to grasp has been the fact that the Polish workers combine a tenacious political opposition to continued monopolistic rule by the Polish Communist Party (PZPR) with a no less tenacious defence of a group of rights never guaranteed by any capitalist state* (MacDonald, 1983).

That would be the last concrete evidence of possible extension of what was not and could not be only a "Yugoslav" road to Socialism nor staying "non-aligned". Further debates (Elson, 1988; Mandel, 1988; Lebowitz, 2016) and their updating (Samary & Leplat, 2019) have stressed the combined need for "socialisation" of the market, of the state and of planning to break from the false dichotomy between bureaucratic centralisation and "market socialism" based on atomized self-management rights and one-party state.

OPEN CONCLUSION AND QUESTIONS FOR NEW RESEARCH

I would have liked to deepen and check my interpretations in at least three directions – needing further research and pluralist debates, both historical and analytical: the first concerns the "political economy" of socialism; the second the articulation of national and social democratic rights within a self-managed political system; the third is linked to the historical interpretation of the different phases of the Yugoslav system within the "chain of choices and answers" as linked to the "concrete utopia" of a socialist self-managed system.

My professional profile as an economist explains why the first issue was the specific focus of my initial research (Samary, 1988a; 1988b): I wanted to deepen and update through the Yugoslav experience the first Marxist debates occurring in USSR in the 1920s about the place of the market in "socialist transitional societies", relaunched in the 1960s in all state-socialist countries. In Yugoslavia and more generally, the rejection of statism gave an emancipatory dimension to self-management while increasing the belief in "objective market laws" to be respected. That is why I considered it as an "internal" issue not to be confused with an external/internal capitalist pressure, even if the latter also existed: I analysed it concretely within conflictive logics in the Yugoslav system, but I considered that it was not (yet) dominant in the 1960s – as illustrated by the "internal" driving forces leading to the interruption of the market reform in 1972–1976. External and internal transformations behind the debt crisis in the 1980s changed the dominant dynamics of the crisis. Therefore, my analysis disagrees with two opposing views: the first considers that the suppression of capitalist private property is sufficient to give to market relations a kind of universal efficiency (therefore socially neutral). The other tends to identify the market and even the use of money and prices with a capitalist-led orientation. I tried to contribute to the up-dating of a third approach (Samary, 2019), sharing much with Ernest Mandel (1974), Diane Elson (1988) or Michael Lebowitz (2016) – which is urgently needed.

The second set of questions is linked to my understanding of the first (political-economic) issue in a concrete manner: my thesis is that economic choices are not abstract and ahistorical questions. Each system needs to elaborate its criteria. Therefore economic categories (like prices) and rights (linked to social ownership and self-management) useful to "evaluate" needs, waste, efficiency, productivity must take into account the explicit socialist aims as decided by a complex diversity of human beings as workers and consumers (or citizens) – but also as men and women of different cultures

Fig. 1: At the gathering place of the Ljubljana hike at the wire in 1975 (Foto: MGML documentation – Muzej in galerije mesta Ljubljane / The Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana).

and nations, working in industry, services or the countryside. The invention of a "radical democracy" adequate to a self-managed system taking into account such diversity is essential for the elaboration of a "political economy" of a socialist self-managed system fighting against all relations of domination – which neither the market nor statist planning would do. The Achille's heels of the Yugoslav experience were linked to the lack of satisfactory answers to such issues. Nevertheless, the 1970s were still open to a new set of "micro-socialist" and impure but rich experiences: from contractual self-managed planning to direct exchange of labour or from "communities of interest" between producers and users of the same service to the system of delegations to different political "Chambers". I had no competence and means to study them and I hope new research (like Archer, Duda & Stubbs, 2016 or Archer & Musić, 2017) can shed precious light on archives and living witnesses of the complex reality of that period, without a consistent self-managed socialist way out of the crisis.

The third set of questions I raised integrates the former ones within the "chain of choices and answers" which structured the different phases of Yugoslav history. In that contribution, my thesis has been that the June 1968 movement influenced by the *Praxis* school was not mainly about "student" unrest but was the climax or the most radical expression of political socialist democratic demands resisting both state alienation and market competition and alienation. This was not only a Yugoslav "concrete utopia".

1968: JUGOSLOVANSKI SISTEM SAMOUPRAVLJANJA NA RAZPOTJU: REVIZIJA "KONKRETNE UTOPIJE" LETA 2018

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POVZETEK

*Pričujoče razmišljanje o jugoslovanski izkušnji se naslanja na koncept "konkretne utopije" in socializma kot konfliktne "družbe v tranziciji", ki ga delim z Darkom Suvinom (*Splendour, Misery and Possibilities. An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2018) in ga v članku tudi uvodoma pojasnim. Skozi to optiko prikazujem svojo interpretacijo gonilnih sil ključnih notranjih sprememb Titove Jugoslavije: emancipacijskega "trojnega boja" ali "revolucionarne pogodbe", ki so bile izražene v temeljnih aktih Titove Jugoslavije in bi se lahko realizirale tudi skozi samoupravni sistem. Tovrstna "konkretna utopija" je transformirala konfliktno polemiko in izbire v zvezi s socialno-ekonomskimi in nacionalnimi pravicami. Medtem ko opozarjam na nekatere šibke točke tega sistema, postavljam tezo, da so samoupravne pravice v šestdesetih letih dobile široko javno podporo, na podlagi katere so lahko tedanja družbena gibanja izrazila težnjo, da bi zmanjšala razkorak med socialističnimi cilji, izraženimi v "revolucionarni pogodbi", in negativnimi učinki reform.*

V nadaljevanju razpravljam o gibanju iz junija 1968 in njegovih že znanih emancipacijskih zahtevah, proti katerim je bila sprožena selektivna represija. Ob tem pa opozarjam tudi na nove samoupravne pravice, z ustavnimi reformami priznane v sedemdesetih letih, a v svoji notranji protislovnosti še vedno vezane na socialno in nacionalno dinamiko jugoslovanske »družbene pogodbe«.

Kot vrhunec dinamike v zvezi s »konkretno utopijo« samoupravljanja predstavljam nepoznano epizodo delavskih svetov jeseni 1968 na Češkoslovaškem kot konkreten dokaz možnega podaljška tistega, kar ni bilo in ne more biti le "jugoslovanska" pot v socializem. Izven prevladujočih reprezentacij tega zgodovinskega procesa kot nasprotja med tržnimi reformisti in partijskimi konservativci imamo namreč opravit tudi s tretjim tokom, ki so ga predstavljali ljudje kot sta bila Jaroslav Šabata in Rudolf Slánský, ml. Ti so začeli delavce javno spodbujati, naj udejanjajo nov predlog zakona o ustanovitvi delavskih svetov po načelih, ki so odzvanjala ideje jugoslovanskih, pa tudi drugih teoretikov samoupravnega socializma, in so ovrgla navidezno dihotomijo izbire med birokratskim centralizmom in »tržnim socializmom«.

Ključne besede: konkretna utopija, Ernst Bloch, Darko Suvin, Titova Jugoslavija, samoupravljanje, tržna reforma, junij 1968, Praxis

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