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"DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM'' REASSESSED: INSIGHTS FROM YUGOSLAVIA'S EXPERIENCE TO GLOBAL TRENDS

„DEMOKRATSKI SOCIJALIZAM" NA ISPITU: OD JUGOSLOVENSKOG ISKUSTVA DO GLOBALNIH TRENDOVA

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“DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM’’ REASSESSED: INSIGHTS FROM YUGOSLAVIA’S EXPERIENCE TO GLOBAL TRENDS

„DEMOKRATSKI SOCIJALIZAM“ NA ISPITU: OD JUGOSLOVENSKOG ISKUSTVA DO GLOBALNIH TRENDOVA

EDITORS' NOTE

Ivica Mladenović and Petar Žarković

"DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM" REASSESSED: INSIGHTS FROM YUGOSLAVIA'S EXPERIENCE TO GLOBAL TRENDS

In an era increasingly defined by economic inequalities, pressing environmental crises, and widespread political instability, the socialist thought, particularly its "democratic variant", garners heightened interest as a potential counter to the limitations inherent in neoliberal capitalist frameworks. This collection of papers, enriched by diverse scholarly insights and perspectives, embarks on a thorough exploration of democratic socialism, a notion often perceived as elusive and occasionally dismissed as inconsequential. The collection delves into its historical underpinnings, analyzing both its genesis and evolution, and critically evaluates its internal contradictions and theoretical complexities. It further investigates its tangible implementations across various global contexts. The overarching objective of this scholarly endeavor is to intricately decode and dissect the nuances of democratic socialism. This involves a critical assessment of its historical efficacies and failures, a probing analysis of its present-day challenges, and informed speculation about its potential impact and trajectory in the future. Ultimately, this concerted effort seeks to underscore the persistent significance and adaptability of socialist ideologies, affirming their relevance and potential for innovation within the contemporary sociopolitical landscape.

In this collection of papers, the historical path of socialism is meticulously examined, tracing its roots from the foundational principles laid out by Marx and Engels to its various forms that emerged throughout the 20th century. This evolution is a tapestry woven with strands of theoretical progression, marked by significant political shifts and a series of pragmatic changes adapting to the times. A focal point of this exploration is the Yugoslav experiment, which stands out as a distinctive embodiment of socialism. Characterized by its approach to worker self-management and a policy of non-alignment during the

tense Cold War period, the Yugoslav model presented a stark contrast to the Soviet interpretation of socialism.

This unique Yugoslav version of socialism, with its emphasis on decentralized control and workforce empowerment, challenged traditional notions and offered a fresh perspective on socialist governance. It played a pivotal role in expanding the global comprehension of what socialism could achieve and where it might falter. The lessons drawn from Yugoslavia are particularly instructive in understanding the intricate balancing act required between upholding socialist ideological principles and managing the practical realities of governing a diverse, multi-ethnic population. These insights are crucial in appreciating the complexities of socialist governance and its capacity for adaptation and reinvention in varying socio-political landscapes. This comprehensive historical overview not only charts the journey of socialism through various epochs but also underscores its dynamic and evolving nature in the face of global changes and challenges.

The examination of China's unique "socialist experience" in this collection of articles offers an invaluable perspective for understanding the broader landscape of global socialism. This analysis looks at the innovative fusion of socialist principles and market-oriented approaches, a strategy that has not only reshaped China's economy but also had far-reaching repercussions on the world stage. It explores how China's unique path, often described as "socialism with Chinese characteristics", testifies to the adaptability and versatility of socialist thinking in the modern world. Furthermore, the interaction between China and the former Yugoslavia is a focal point that highlights the diverse applications of socialist principles in different political and cultural environments. This comparison between the Chinese model and the Yugoslav experience provides a rich context for understanding the flexibility of socialism. It highlights how these two distinct approaches – market-integrated Chinese socialism and the Yugoslav model of worker self-management – have navigated the complexities of their respective socio-political landscapes.

The papers in this collection offers a vital reexamination of classical socialist models, calling for updated adaptations that effectively tackle the challenges of the 21st century. The authors collectively underscore the necessity of participatory and inclusive approaches, pushing for a democratized form of socialism that extends beyond mere state-centric control of resources. This perspective advocates a shift in social dynamics and the empowerment of workers, steering towards a socialism that is more attuned to current societal needs and inclusive in its approach to decision-making. These critical analyses and forward-looking proposals underscore the continuous transformation of socialist thought, striving to enhance its relevance and impact in the contemporary era.

Within these discussions, the papers in this collection delve deeply into the multifaceted ideological aspects of socialism, with a particular emphasis on the unique Yugoslav interpretation. In Yugoslavia, socialism was not a monolithic concept; instead, it integrated aspects of liberalism and conservatism, creating a hybrid political model that challenges conventional ideological categories.

This blend resulted in a distinctive political ecosystem that stood apart from the standard socialist frameworks prevalent in other parts of the world. The evolution of socialist thought in Yugoslavia is particularly illustrative of the ideology's inherent adaptability. It showcases how socialist principles could be dynamically reinterpreted and reshaped to align with varying political ideologies and cultural contexts. This capacity for transformation is a testament to the fluidity and versatility of socialist thought, proving that it is not confined to a rigid set of doctrines but is capable of evolving and accommodating a range of political perspectives and societal needs.

The underlying premise is that all the articles in this collection deepen our understanding of the complexities of the concept of democratic socialism, illuminating its rich historical lineage, the breadth of its theoretical constructs, and the subtleties of its practical applications. Collectively, these studies portray democratic socialism not as a rigid, unchanging doctrine but as a living, evolving ideology that deftly responds to the changing tides of socio-economic circumstances. This evolution underlines the ideology's theoretical diversity, showing how the socialist idea has been continually reimagined and redefined in response to different historical epochs and societal needs. These insights demonstrate the complexity of implementing democratic socialism in real-world scenarios. They highlight the myriad ways this ideology can be adapted to suit specific cultural and political environments, emphasizing the importance of considering each society's unique historical, economic, and social contexts. This adaptability is key to addressing contemporary challenges, as democratic socialism offers a spectrum of strategies and solutions that can be tailored to meet the distinct needs and aspirations of different communities.

Looking to the future, the relevance of reflection on "democratic socialism(s)" in tackling current socio-economic challenges is increasingly evident. These papers argue that socialism provides a framework for building more equitable and sustainable societies, advocating for policies and practices that prioritize social welfare, environmental sustainability, and economic fairness. In summary, this collection of papers adds to the ongoing discourse on the role and potential of socialism in the modern world. By providing a comprehensive overview of socialism's historical evolution, theoretical diversity, and practical challenges, these studies offer synthetic perspectives and insights, contributing to a richer, more informed understanding of how socialism can effectively shape a fairer, more equitable future.

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Filip Balunović and Ivica Mladenović

REFLECTING THE PAST, ENVISIONING THE FUTURE: THE JOURNEY OF "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM"[1]

ABSTRACT
This article examines the evolution of socialism as a political ideology, from its primitive origins in past societies to its contemporary incarnations. It opens with an overview of the foundational and universal principles of socialism concerning equality and common welfare, which can be established as the historical vertical of socialism from its inception to the present. The focus then shifts to the Industrial Revolution, with special emphasis on the significant contributions of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who envisioned a classless society as a product of revolutionary engagement. The 20th century, marked by key events such as the Russian Revolution and the Cold War, witnessed the practical implementation of two versions of socialism: a hybrid one existing as "real-socialism", a competitive project to Western capitalism, and the other – also hybrid but in a different way – existing within Western capitalism, as part of a concession to dominated classes, in the form of the "welfare state." As a result of the global strength and desirability of the socialist project, this period was marked by many social and civilizational achievements, in both the West and the East, but also confronted with challenges of authoritarianism, economic crises, and democratic dysfunctionality. On the other hand, by the end of the 20th century, the socialist project – with the fall of the USSR – experienced a complete delegitimization in the West, while in China it was maintained in a perverted form. At the beginning of the 21st century, growing dissatisfaction with economic inequalities and political disillusionment, especially after the financial crisis of 2007/2008, reignited interest in an alternative socialist model, particularly in something vaguely and theoretically underdeveloped called "democratic socialism." The authors in the text argue that this renewed interest should be transformed into a theoretically and strategic-politically fruitful maneuver, constructing a new, radically democratic socialist project as the only project that emerges as a sustainable alternative to today's socio-economic-ecological challenges.

KEYWORDS
socialism, democratic socialism, real-socialism, socialism for the 21st century

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Introduction

Within the complex framework of political ideologies that have historically shaped societal structures and dynamics, socialism emerges as a particularly notable and divisive element. This ideology, deeply rooted in principles of egalitarianism and communal welfare, has persistently engaged intellectuals, political figures, and the general populace with its envisagement of a societal construct wherein resources and authority are distributed with equitable consideration for all constituents. However, the notion of socialism is frequently enveloped in conceptual vagueness, provoking a diverse spectrum of reactions that oscillate between idealistic visions of a utopian society and apprehensions of a dystopian downfall. To adequately decipher the nature of socialism, with its layered aspects and its evolving influence within socio-political discourse, it is imperative to undertake a thorough examination of its historical progression, engage in a critical analysis of its present-day expressions, and formulate thoughtful hypotheses about its potential paths forward.

The genesis of socialism, although the term gained its semantic identity around the 1830s in England and France, has its roots well before this period.[2] Pre-modern civilizations, engaged in proto-socialist practices characterized by communal habitation and the collective stewardship of resources. These historical formations represent archetypes of societies where the means of production were communally held within cooperative collectives. The evolution of socialism into its current ideological manifestation coincided with the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. This era, marked by rapid mechanization and industrial expansion, also engendered pronounced socio-economic stratification and labor exploitation. It is within this historical milieu that seminal theorists such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels authored "The Communist Manifesto", articulating the ideological tenets of socialism as an ideological counterpoint to rampant capitalist expansion. Their vision encompassed a classless society, emerging from the proletariat's overthrow of the bourgeoisie, to restructure societal relations devoid of class hierarchies.

The twentieth century represented a critical juncture for the pragmatic analysis of socialism as an ideological construct. Initiated by the Russian Revolution in 1917, which marked the emergence of the world's inaugural socialist state, this era was significantly defined by the binary ideological confrontation characteristic of the Cold War. In this milieu, socialism, particularly its Marxist-Leninist manifestation, was positioned in stark opposition to the capitalist ethos predominant in Western countries. During this period, various states, including China, Cuba, and a number of Eastern European countries, adopted socialist paradigms, each distinct in its specific adaptations and contextual modifications. Despite this, the implementation of socialism within

2 In the June 1948 edition of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, issued by the College of the City of New York, Arthur E. Beston Jr. presents a thorough study. He highlights that the earliest documented usage of the term [likely "socialism" or a similar word] is identified in the November 1827 issue of the *Co-operative Magazine* (Gans 1957: 79).

these geopolitical entities was marred by various conflicts and inconsistencies. Though there were considerable advancements in sectors such as education, healthcare, and the enforcement of fundamental human rights, these countries have faced the challenges of democratic dysfunction, economic malaise, and, above all, the perpetuation of class-based societal structures. The crumbling of the Berlin Wall in 1989, followed by the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, significantly contributed to the questioning and delegitimization of socialism as a doctrine capable of delivering economic, political, and social egalitarianism (Mladenović 2013).

In the contemporary landscape of the 21st century, the discourse surrounding socialism is undergoing a significant transformation. The era dominated by the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of socialism has given way to a more nuanced and varied understanding of the concept. Globally, modern iterations of socialism frequently incorporate aspects of capitalist structures, resulting in the emergence of hybrid models. Notable examples include the social democracies of Scandinavia and the distinct framework of "socialism with Chinese characteristics". These models are characterized by the state assuming a pivotal role in ensuring social welfare, while concurrently allowing for the operation of private enterprises and market forces.

The present-day challenges, encompassing the escalating issue of economic inequality and the looming existential crisis posed by climate change, have rejuvenated interest in socialist tenets, particularly among the younger demographic. In an increasingly globalized context, there is a notable re-examination and expansion of socialist thought, reflecting on its potential manifestations in the 21st century. Crucially, this includes a deeper exploration of the interplay between socialism and democracy, especially informed by historical experiences with "real socialism". This re-evaluation represents a pivotal shift in the understanding and application of socialist principles today, aligning them with contemporary "democratic needs" and global challenges.

As we stand at the precipice of unparalleled technological advancements, with automation and artificial intelligence set to revolutionize the nature of work and the broader economic landscape, the question arises: what is the prospective trajectory of socialism in this new era? The foundational tenets of socialism, encompassing ideals of equity, collective ownership, and shared responsibility, may gain heightened relevance in addressing forthcoming challenges. These include, but are not limited to, the scarcity of resources and the potential surge in unemployment attributable to automation. Conversely, these technological advancements may also pose novel challenges to socialist frameworks, necessitating unprecedented adaptations.

It is crucial to recognize that socialism, as an ideological construct, has consistently exhibited a dynamic and evolving nature. Its historical evolution, spanning from early communal societies to its current iterations in the digital epoch, is a testament to its persistent allure and capacity for adaptation. This review article aims to embark on a comprehensive exploration of socialism, traversing its historical roots, analyzing its current manifestations, and

contemplating its future prospects. Through this examination, we endeavor to present a nuanced and holistic perspective of socialism, elucidating its successes and hurdles, and contemplating its potential role in sculpting the future trajectory of human society.

Socialism: The Origin and Meaning of the Concept in the 19th Century

The concept of socialism, though distinctly shaped in the 19th century, has roots stretching back to earlier philosophical ideas. Plato's "Republic" and Thomas More's "Utopia" are seminal works providing early conceptualizations of societies anchored in common ownership and equality. These texts laid a philosophical groundwork that would later be instrumental in the development of socialist thought. Prior to the crystallization of socialism as a structured ideology, several early 19th-century thinkers, including Robert Owen in Britain, Charles Fourier in France, and Henri de Saint-Simon, also in France, proffered diverse models of utopian socialism. These theorists proposed idealized societal constructs as antidotes to the disparities and adversities engendered by burgeoning industrial capitalism (Taylor 1992; Leopold 2005). While their propositions were, in many aspects, divergent, contradictory and in some ways unusable, they ignited a consequential discourse, fostering an exploration of viable alternatives to the prevailing capitalist paradigm.[3]

The genesis of socialism is deeply intertwined with the transformative changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, commencing in the late 18th century. This epochal shift marked a transition from primarily agrarian economies to those dominated by industrial production, a transformation characterized by the proliferation of factories, rapid urbanization, and the advent of novel technologies. The Industrial Revolution catalyzed extraordinary economic expansion and technological progress, yet it simultaneously engendered profound social and economic inequalities. The emergent industrial society witnessed the ascendance of a distinct working class, which bore the brunt of this new economic order. Laborers in these industrial settings were frequently subjected to extensive working hours, meager wages, and perilous working conditions. This stark exploitation and the resultant socio-economic stratification served as a catalyst for widespread discontent among the working classes. It was within this context of industrial strife and inequity that the foundational tenets of socialist thought began to coalesce.

The burgeoning socialist ideology was a response to the systemic inequities perpetuated by industrial capitalism. Early socialist thinkers sought to address the grievances of the working class by advocating for more equitable economic systems, which included proposals for the redistribution of wealth, improved

3 Utopian socialism played an important role in defining the early contours of socialist ideology, contextualizing its evolution as a response to the socio-economic dynamics and social balance of power of the time (Droz 1996; Becker, Cander 2005).

labor conditions, and the establishment of social safety nets. These ideas were a direct rebuttal to the laissez-faire capitalism that dominated the economic landscape of the time, which largely neglected the welfare of the labor force in pursuit of industrial and economic growth. Thus, the Industrial Revolution, while a period of significant economic and technological advancement, also laid bare the stark realities of capitalist exploitation. This period not only transformed the economic and social landscape of the time but also sowed the seeds of socialist ideology, which sought to rectify the imbalances and injustices that became increasingly apparent in this new industrial world. The dialogue and movements that emerged from this period of industrialization laid the groundwork for the development and evolution of socialist thought, shaping it into a considerable force in the subsequent centuries.

The mid-19th century marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of socialist thought, primarily through the contributions of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who exerted a profound influence on the trajectory of the socialist movement. Distinct from their predecessors, the utopian socialists, Marx and Engels pursued a decidedly more empirical and analytical approach to socialism, underpinned by a comprehensive critique of capitalist systems. This approach was methodically encapsulated in their seminal texts, notably "The Communist Manifesto" (1848) and "Das Kapital". Marx and Engels' intellectual endeavor was characterized by the development of a framework that they termed "scientific socialism." This framework was grounded in the analysis of historical and economic processes, standing in contrast to the "idealistic" and often "speculative" nature of "utopian socialism". The core of their theory was historical materialism, an innovative perspective positing that the material conditions of society – its economic and productive structures – fundamentally shape and determine the course of societal development, including its political and cultural aspects.

A critical element of Marx's analysis was the concept of class struggle, which he viewed as the driving force of historical change (Losurdo 2016). According to Marx, the inherent conflict between the proletariat (working class) and the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) was an inevitable outcome of the capitalist system. He posited that this struggle would ultimately culminate in a proletarian revolution, overthrowing the capitalist system and leading to the establishment of a classless, communist society. Marx and Engels' contributions provided a theoretical backbone to the socialist movement, offering a more structured and robust critique of capitalism than previously seen.[4]

The establishment of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA), commonly referred to as the First International, in 1864, represents a pivotal

4 While the social science legacy of Marx and Engels was very rich, and self-proclaimed socialist movements emerged in drove in the second half of the 19th century, the notion of socialism in the social sciences was very often confused with the notion of the "social question", and there was a cacophony of different meanings given to this concepts by sociologists, philosophers and other social science thinkers of the time (Mladenović 2018; 2019).

event in the annals of socialist history (Droz 1966; Julliard 2012; Winock 2006). This organization symbolized a unifying platform for diverse socialist, communist, and anarchist factions, providing a fertile ground for the exchange and synthesis of ideological perspectives and tactical methodologies. The IWA's formation was a significant step in the consolidation and dissemination of socialist ideologies on an international scale. The Paris Commune of 1871, though short-lived, was a pivotal event in the history of socialism (Lefebvre 1965; Marx 1973). It represented the first instance of the working-class seizing power, albeit briefly, and implementing socialist policies. The brutal suppression of the Commune by the French government highlighted both the potential and the challenges of socialist revolution.

Despite its promise, the history of the First International was beleaguered by internal schisms, notably the ideological divide between Marxists and "anti-authoritarians," i.e. anarchists (Musto 2014). This disagreement, focused on key differences regarding the function and essence of governmental authority and the ways to attain socialist objectives, led to the disbanding of the group following the Paris Commune. Anarchism, championed by figures such as Mikhail Bakunin (Михаил Бакунин), represented a radical strand of socialism, vehemently opposing all forms of state power. Anarchist theorists advocated for the immediate dismantling of both the state and capitalist structures, envisioning a society based on voluntary associations and mutual aid. In contrast, Marxism, as articulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, assigned a critical, albeit transitional, role to the state. Marxists posited that the state was a necessary instrument in the progression towards a communist society, envisaging a phase of "proletarian dictatorship" that would eventually pave the way for a stateless, classless society.

Mikhail Bakunin was ousted at The Hague Congress in 1872, and the First International ceased to exist in 1876. However, its legacy continued with the formation of the Workers' International, also known as the Second International or Socialist International, in 1889, which united the social-democratic parties of that era. The historical significance of the First International lies in its facilitation of a broader dissemination and cross-pollination of socialist ideas throughout Europe and beyond. By the end of the 19th century, socialism had significantly impacted European politics and society. Socialist parties began emerging across Europe, gaining considerable support among the working classes. These parties varied in their approach, with some advocating revolutionary methods and others pursuing reformist strategies. Socialism also influenced other social movements, including the women's rights and labor movements, contributing to broader struggles for equality and justice.

Karl Marx and Social Democracy

Social democracy emerged as the hegemonic theoretical and political force within late-nineteenth-century socialism. The conceptualization of social democracy has undergone significant evolution since its nascent stages, a transformation

deeply entwined with the revolutionary ideologies of Karl Marx. The influence exerted by Marx on this political and ideological movement is particularly discernible during the tumultuous epoch of the 1848 revolution. This period was instrumental in fostering a novel interpretation of socialism, one that was embedded within a democratic infrastructure. The 1848 revolution in France, which culminated in the overthrow of the July monarchy, marked a decisive turning point in the development of social democracy. In this era of political ferment, an array of political factions, encompassing embryonic socialist groups and bourgeois republicans, coalesced in opposition to a mutual adversary: the monarchy.

Marx's analysis of this confluence delineates it as the foundational moment for social democracy. He construed this alliance as a pragmatic conglomeration, wherein the proletariat and the "petit-bourgeois" – moderate republicans by definition – converged in their interests. This convergence was not merely oppositional to the royalist forces but was also a collective stance against the broader bourgeoisie. Such an alignment, as perceived by Marx, was not solely an intersection of varied political aspirations but a strategic unification, signifying a critical juncture in the development and embodiment of social democratic ideals.

At the heart of comprehending social democracy as envisioned by Karl Marx lies the principle of compromise, a concept he meticulously expounds in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte". Marx portrays social democracy as a product of the proletariat's imperative to form an alliance with the "petit-bourgeois": "As against the coalesced bourgeoisie, a coalition between petty bourgeois and workers had been formed, the so-called Social-Democratic party" (Marx 1969: 32). This alliance, as Marx delineates, was not merely a coalition of convenience but a deliberate attempt to amalgamate the establishment of a democratic regime – a core republican ambition – with the social demands emanating from the working-class milieu. Marx's analytical framework postulates that social democracy arose from the need to defend and actualize these convergent but distinct demands, particularly in the context of opposing monarchical forces.

Marx's critique of social democracy is grounded in his perception of it as a dilution, or perhaps an adulteration, of pure proletarian aspirations. He contends that the requisite compromises, integral to the symbiosis between the proletariat and the "petit-bourgeois," precipitated a diminution of the revolutionary zeal that originally fueled these groups. Marx views the resultant form of social democracy as a deceptive amalgam, one that submerged the authentic demands of the workers beneath a veneer of democratic governance devoid of true revolutionary impetus. This synthesis, in Marx's eyes, constituted a strategic misstep, aligning the proletariat's objectives with a bourgeois democratic system intrinsically averse to profound alterations in the fabric of production relations. For Marx, such a system was incapable of truly representing or advancing proletarian interests, as it was fundamentally anchored in the preservation of existing capitalist structures. This critique reflects Marx's broader

skepticism about the capacity of social democracy to enact meaningful systemic change within the constraints of a capitalist framework.

Despite his pointed criticisms, Karl Marx's analytical discourse serves as a foundational bedrock for conceptualizing social democracy as an intricate synthesis of democratic and social aspirations. The terminology "social democracy" itself succinctly embodies this fusion, signaling an endeavor to meld the pursuit of a democratic system with a suite of policies expressly tailored to enhance the welfare of the working class. This amalgamation, as envisaged in Marxian thought, represents a concerted effort to navigate the complex interplay between democratic governance and social equity. However, Marx postulated that this synthesis, while aspirational, was intrinsically flawed. In his view, the amalgam of social democracy struggled to harmonize the defense of bourgeois democracy with the proletariat's vested interests. Marx's critique hinges on the argument that bourgeois democracy, by its very nature, is tethered to the capitalist order, thereby predisposing it to perpetuate existing power structures and economic disparities. The crux of Marx's contention lies in the assertion that the fundamental ethos of bourgeois democracy – with its inherent capitalist underpinnings – stands in stark contradiction to the proletariat's quest for socioeconomic emancipation.

Accordingly, Marx perceived this attempted synthesis as a well-intentioned but ultimately ineffectual endeavor. It was, in his analysis, a venture that could not truly reconcile the inherent dichotomies and contradictions between a democratic framework rooted in capitalist ideologies and the proletariat's pursuit of radical, systemic change. This viewpoint underscores Marx's broader philosophical and ideological stance, which advocates for a revolutionary overhaul of the capitalist system as a prerequisite for genuine proletarian liberation. Karl Marx's interpretation of the beginnings of social democracy provides a pivotal critical insight, indispensable to the analysis of the movement's late trajectory and metamorphosis. His skepticism, particularly regarding the efficacy of social democracy in effectuating substantive change within the confines of a capitalist framework, has persisted as a significant area of debate. Contemporary discourse on social democracy frequently contends with this inherent tension, striving to navigate a course that harmonizes progressive social policies with the extant political and economic infrastructures.

Marx's exegesis of social democracy, especially in the context of the 1848 revolution, presents a nuanced and incisive perspective on this political and ideological paradigm. His analysis is anchored in a deep examination of the principle of compromise, a hallmark of the social democratic movement. This focus brings to light the complexities involved in balancing the divergent interests and aspirations of various social classes. Furthermore, Marx's critique extends to the perceived dilution of proletarian objectives, a process he viewed as an inevitable consequence of the compromises necessitated by social democracy. This critique underscores the challenges inherent in synthesizing the ideals of liberal democracy with the social agenda of the working class.

Marx's legacy, as far as social democracy is concerned, remains profoundly influential on contemporary discourse. His ideas continue to prompt a theoretical-critical examination of the role and potential of the social-democratic approach in the 20th century (Zavadski 1975; Mladenović 2013; 2014). Despite the fact that Karl Marx was unaware of the development of parliamentary democracy and the social ascendancy of left-wing parties, the relevance of his critique is particularly evident in current debates on the feasibility and desirability of integrating egalitarian ideals into the existing capitalist framework. His analysis prompts a reassessment of how social democracy can be effectively implemented to meet the needs and aspirations of the dominated classes, without succumbing to the limitations imposed by dominant economic and political systems.

In essence, Marx's contributions to understanding the social-democratic strategy of his time provide a fundamental framework for examining its evolution and impact. His critical approach offers valuable insights into the challenges and possibilities of achieving a harmonious integration of social and democratic goals within a capitalist society. This ongoing commitment to Marx's legacy reflects the enduring relevance of his ideas for understanding social-democratic praxis and its limits in the 20th century, as well as the current state of this political current.

Social-democratic Marxism versus Leninist Marxism: The History of a Dispute

Social democracy, in its most sophisticated incarnation towards the latter part of the 19th century, after Karl Marx's death, was epitomized by The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). This party, embodying the ethos of the era, adopted Marxism as its foundational theoretical lens for interpreting and responding to the complexities of the social milieu. This adoption was not merely an ideological stance but represented a commitment to a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic structures and dynamics of the time, aligning closely with Marxist principles. The intellectual and political dominance of Social-democratic Marxism in the European left was unchallenged until the onset of the First World War. This period was marked by a burgeoning confidence in the gradualist, reform-oriented approach of Social Democracy, which sought to reconcile the aspirations of the working class with the existing parliamentary democracy framework.

The SPD, in particular – but not only the SPD, as with other social-democratic or socialist parties, including the French Socialist Party, then called SFIO (The French Section of the Workers' International) – became the beacon of this ideology, advocating progressive social change through electoral politics and legislative reform (Droz 1966; Becker, Cander 2005; Winock 2006). The concepts of socialism and social democracy have become synonymous, used as generic words according to national traditions, but the theoretical content of

the dominant political fractions is quite similar: adoption of Marx's idea that class struggle is the central generator of history and that the working class is the only one capable of overcoming class society, but at the same time, the revision of certain points made by Marx, given the evolution of capitalism and parliamentary democracy. Jean Jaurès, the French socialist leader and theorist of the time, formulated this idea as follows: "Class struggle is the principle, the basis, the very law of our Party. Those who do not accept class struggle may be republicans, democrats, radicals, radical-socialists at best, but they are not socialists" (Hariou 1960: 19).

Social-democratic Marxism, firmly anchored in the intellectual tradition of theorists such as Eduard Bernstein, presented a nuanced and reformist trajectory towards the realization of a socialist society. Bernstein's critical work, "Evolutionary Socialism," stands as a cornerstone in this ideological edifice. Contrary to Marx's prognosis of an inevitable collapse of capitalism, Bernstein posited a different vision. He argued that capitalism was not inexorably destined for downfall; rather, it possessed an inherent capacity for reform and adaptation. This perspective marked a significant departure from classical Marxist thought, suggesting that socialism could be achieved not through abrupt, revolutionary ruptures but via a progressive, evolutionary process. Bernstein advocated for the attainment of socialism through democratic engagement, leveraging parliamentary mechanisms, labor union activism, and a series of progressive social reforms (Bernstein 1961).

However, the dominance of this vision of social change underwent a radical change with the collapse of the Second International, an organization that had served as a unifying platform for socialist parties. The outbreak of World War I created deep fissures within the International, as national allegiances and the support for war efforts by certain member parties contravened the fundamental internationalist and anti-war principles of socialism. This rupture was a pivotal moment, highlighting the limitations and contradictions inherent in the reformist Social-democratic approach. The paradigmatic shift was further catalyzed by the October Revolution in Russia in 1917. This revolution marked the emergence and rise to power of a new Marxist vision, "Revolutionary Marxism", a force that had already existed within the social-democratic movement since the end of the 19th century, but as a fragile force poorly articulated by the revolutionary fractions of social-democracy.

Moving away from the social-democratic approach dominant within the socialist/social-democratic movement, Leninist Marxism, under the aegis of Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, advocates a resolutely different path.[5] Lenin, through seminal texts like "What is to be Done ?" and "State and Revolution", mounted a robust critique of the gradualist approach espoused by the

5 The Bolsheviks, a term derived from the Russian word 'bolshinstvo' meaning 'majority', were a radical left-wing group within the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). Under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, they emerged as a distinct faction, diverging from the Mensheviks during the Second Party Congress in 1903.

old social-democratic parties. Leninist Marxism posited the necessity of a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system, eschewing the gradualism characteristic of Social Democracy. It emphasized the role of a vanguard party to lead the proletariat, a stark contrast to the mass-based, democratic approach of the SPD and similar parties. This perspective was significantly shaped by the socio-political milieu of Tsarist Russia, characterized by nascent democratic institutions and a prevalently repressive state apparatus. In such a context, Lenin viewed the prospects for gradual, reformist change as untenable, advocating instead for a more immediate, radical overthrow of the existing socio-political order.

The ascension of Leninist Marxism marked a pivotal juncture in the evolution of socialist ideology, heralding a profound shift in the theoretical and practical dimensions of socialist thought. This reorientation was characterized by an urgent call for revolutionary change, diverging from the prevailing European leftist norms which predominantly leaned towards a more moderate, reformist approach. Leninist Marxism brought forth a radical interpretation of Marx's theories, challenging the existing orthodoxy and advocating for immediate, revolutionary action as a means to achieve socialist ends. This ideological metamorphosis not only reshaped the theoretical landscape of Marxism but also prompted a realignment of political strategies and objectives within the global socialist movement.

The authoritarian direction of Russia's revolutionary socialist government, partly shaped by the Bolsheviks' strategic, political, and theoretical stance and partly due to the existential threat the regime faced from capitalist forces both domestically and internationally, marked a critical moment for examining the interplay between socialism and democracy. Before the October Revolution, various forms of socialism were universally regarded as a radical extension of democratic principles. Rosa Luxembourg, a prominent figure in the SPD's left-wing faction, criticized the opportunistic behavior of German social democratic leaders (Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky) and the Russian Mensheviks, particularly their imperialistic tendencies. While she supported Lenin's Bolsheviks, she simultaneously voiced concerns over the erosion of political democracy occurring in Russia:

> Without general elections, without unlimited freedom of the press and of assembly, without a free struggle between opinions, life dies out in all public institutions; it is transformed into a fictitious life wherein only the bureaucracy remains the active element. [...] The fundamental error of the Lenin-Trotsky theory is precisely that, like Kautsky, they oppose democracy to dictatorship. (Luxembourg 1970: 187)

This era, therefore, stands as a pivotal chapter in the evolution of socialist thought, underscoring the intricate and dynamic synthesis of theoretical perspectives and practical implementations in the pursuit of socialist objectives. The ascendancy of Leninist Marxism and its ensuing ideological confrontation with Social-democratic Marxism precipitated a fundamental realignment

in the course of global socialist and communist movements. In the epoch following the Second World War, these divergent socialist ideologies found expression across an array of political systems and governance methodologies. Europe, in this period, gravitated towards a Social-democratic model, emphasizing progressive social reforms within a capitalist framework. Concurrently, in the Global South, the landscape witnessed the rise of revolutionary states, whose foundations were deeply rooted in the principles of Leninist Marxism.

The Social democratic paradigm, characterized by its focus on incremental social reforms situated within the confines of parliamentary democracy, garnered widespread acceptance among the populations of Europe, fatigued by the ravages of war. This model offered a vision of serene and progressive social transformation towards a "democratic socialist society". The term encapsulating this ideology was formally conceptualized in 1959 by the SPD during the seminal Bad Godesberg Congress. This historic congress marked a pivotal moment for the SPD, as it decisively distanced itself from its Marxist roots, renouncing its previous identity as a class-centric party. Instead, it redefined itself as a *Volkspartei*, or a people's party, signifying a fundamental shift in its ideological orientation and political strategy (Droz 1966: 315–321). This repositioning of the SPD not only reflected a broader reevaluation within the party but also symbolized a significant transformation in the landscape of European socialist movements, signaling – as Karl Marx well predicted – a move towards more centrist political approaches and reconciliation with bourgeois tendencies.

As revolutionary Marxism, in its practical political implementation, shifted towards Stalinist authoritarianism,[6] Western social democracy has increasingly distanced itself from Marxism and, to some extent, from the socialist agenda itself, despite continuing to identify as socialist. This historical phase culminated in the dissolution not only of the Leninist revolutionary states, but also of the traditional social-democratic project, marking a critical turning point in the history of socialist endeavors. Although all socialist/social democratic parties abandoned the reformist socialist project a few decades ago, during which time they pursued center-right policies on the economic front, today's Socialist International, as well as its members, have all kept "democratic socialism" on their agenda as their main objective. This expression was longtime associated with social-democratic parties, but from a theoretical and politico-strategic

6 It should be highlighted that the socio-economic structures influenced by Leninist-Marxist principles, commonly referred to as "real socialism" – the practical form of socialism in place until 1990 – demonstrated a significant diversity in their variants, evolutions, and national expressions. For instance, Yugoslav self-management socialism, even though it operated under a single-party system, incorporated various layers of democratic elements that were not typical in Western frameworks (see in: "La commune yougoslave", UNESCO, Revue international des sciences sociales, XIII (3), 1961). Regarding the connection between the Yugoslav model and the Eurocommunism movement in Western Europe, which sought to create a new communist approach devoid of the authoritarian aspects of the Stalinist approach, further information can be found in Filipović 2023.

point of view, it was totally emptied of meaning. But for some time now, and particularly since the 2007/2008 crisis, there have been theoretical and political attempts to articulate and revitalize the concept of "democratic socialism", linking it to the socialist project of overcoming capitalism.

Democratic Socialism and Critique of Capitalism in Contemporary Theory

Democratic socialism in theory today is inevitably building on the left tradition and combining it with new tendencies and challenges. Among the most serious challenges is neoliberalism and the social, economic and democratic "ruins" (Brown 2021) it has left behind. The neoliberal attack on democracy that followed the so-called "neoliberal turn" (Brown 2013), prompted authors like Colin Crouch (2000) to proclaim the begging of the post-democratic era. In return, the Marxian thought has taken a pro-democratic side, by arguing that socialism is democratic – unlike (neo)liberal capitalism. In his book "Why Marx Was Right", Terry Eagleton demystified the Marxian heritage and sought to defend Marx from unjustified accusations for authoritarianism. Contrary to the dominant narrative about Marx as an enemy of democracy, Eagleton elaborated the Marxian radical democratic position. Marx was critical of the bourgeois state because it was not class-neutral, whatsoever. Instead, he was not agitating for a strong state, but a state with an administrative, rather than oppressive role. He was in favor of substantial peoples' democracy (as seen in the Paris Commune) – not the rule of the political oligarchy as established in the representative bourgeois model. The contemporary theory of democratic socialism most definitely takes this Marxian position into account. It seeks true democracy. As put by Brie and Spehr (2012: 81), the general formula of "democratic socialism" in the 21st century could be allowing free and universal development of individuals through solidary development of all.

In terms of the class struggle, between the class of capitalists and the class of workers, Erik Olin Wright argues that democratic socialism is not defined as centralized state ownership of the means of production (like in the 20th century socialism aut. rem.) but as working-class collective control over capital (Olin Wright 2015: 219). For the contemporary, 21st century era, he nonetheless argues, we cannot proceed with the critique of capitalism or proposition of alternative socio-economic models without understanding what he calls "contradictory locations within class relations". The basic idea, Olin Wright argues, is "to identify a series of locations within the class relations of capitalism that were in some sense simultaneously in more than one class. More specifically, with respect to relations of domination and exploitation, some locations can be simultaneously dominated and dominating or exploiting and exploited. In the present context, this implies that with respect to material interests defined in terms of the games of capitalism versus socialism, such locations have contradictory interests – interests pointing in opposite directions (ibid.: 168). Such a set-up makes the socialist project way more complex than before.

Opposing the prevalence of the so-called "cultural turn", which explains the contemporary complexities and resilience of 21st century capitalism in terms of "non-material values", meaning ideology, culture, discourse etc., another author scales up the complexity of the project of democratic socialism. Vivek Chibber, in his "The Class Matrix", defends the hypothesis that workers' consent does not decisively affect the stability and durability of the system of exploitation under capitalism. The more fundamental mechanism for capitalism's stability, Chibber argues, is workers' resignation coming out of their situation. He thinks that workers resign themselves to it because of the constraints on class formation:

> [...] the myriad obstacles to collective action incline workers to resist as individuals, and not through mutual coordination, which sometimes improves the situation of particular workers but does little to alter the structural inequality in capacity between the two classes." [...] (In turn) "They accept their class position, even though they may not deem it desirable or legitimate. (Chibber 2022: 80)

The general trend of resignation and absence of efficient and politically potent collective action is, nonetheless, not without exceptions. In many parts of the world, collective and well-organized resistance takes place. As difficulties with conceptualizing resistance, at the same time, spillover to the theorization of the new democratic-socialist subject, progressive mobilizations around the world incentivized thinkers to restore the search for new conceptualizations of resistance. As every system has its own characteristics and means of reproduction, every social/systemic change starts from conceptual delegitimization of the status quo, before it develops conceptual and political/economic strategies for the future. If feudalism was challenged by the Enlightenment; early industrial capitalism by utopian and scientific socialism; late capitalism and "consumerist culture" by the Critical theory – one inevitably wonders about contemporary neoliberalism and the substantial critique from the left. Firstly, it took a long time for neoliberalism to become the main object of criticism, as it has been analyzed so thoroughly in order to be criticized aptly.

The American theorist, David Harvey and his "Brief History of Neoliberalism" (2005) contributed greatly in this respect. Elsewhere, he argued against the right-wing propaganda which claims that socialism is the enemy of individual freedom. The exact opposite is true, he claims, "socialists work to create the material conditions under which people can truly be free, without the rigid constraints capitalism imposes on their lives" (Harvey 2020). Other Harvey's concepts, in a way, operationalize or concretize the idea of democratic socialism. His "right to the city" (Harvey 2008) represents the key conceptual pillar of municipalism which fueled the idea of "rebel cities" (Harvey 2012). These "rebel cities", or "critical cities" as called by some authors (Naik, Oldfield 2012), have become the platform for plausible critique under circumstances of globalized neoliberal capitalism. Local "laboratories" of democratic socialism can, nonetheless, "never be an end in itself, even if it increasingly looks to be

one of the most propitious paths to take" (ibid.: xviii). Municipal struggles, instead, should not be "an end in itself", but connect with other local, national or international struggles.

Interestingly enough, some authors argued, more than a century ago, that democracy should be the final aim of socialism – but not necessarily the mean. It was Robert Michels, the author of the famous "iron law of oligarchy", who thought that "socialism does not signify everything by the people, but everything for the people" (Michels 2001: 58). The experience of socialism of the 20th century went mostly in this direction. The 21st century socialism, on the other hand, mostly undertook a different path, insisting on democracy both as an end and as a means. Contemporary socialist-democratic thought, is hence preoccupied with the reinvention of a (new) radical subjectivity and the search for a social actor who could successfully challenge the ruling paradigm, with democratic means. As argued by Michael Lebowitz:

> Despite the intensification of capital's class war against the working class, despite capital's insistence that workers must bear the burden of capital's own failures, the working class sees no alternative other than to try to say 'no' – no to cutbacks, no to austerity, no to new user charges, no to the destruction of our lives and our environment – but not 'yes' to a socialist alternative. (Lebowitz 2013: 117–118)

This is why thinkers have started building new concepts on the ashes of 20th century ideologies and their conceptual backgrounds. In this regard, there were two concepts which have managed to attract more attention than others and contribute to what Hugo Chavez urged for in 2005 in Porto Alegre when he said "We have to re-invent socialism" (Lebowitz, ibid.). The first concept is populism or a populist subject, followed by the concepts of "radical democracy" (Laclau, Mouffe 1985) and the "populist reason" (Laclau 2005). Within such, the so-called "post-Marxian tradition", the field of contestation has been shifted away from materially determined class struggle, and pointed towards a discursive field of articulation. The idea of "left populism" thus introduced social demand as its central category and, among many unfulfilled social demands, Laclau argues, there should be one which is capable of articulating all other demands. This demand Laclau calls an "empty signifier". Considering that each unfulfilled demand is carried by an actor, gathering social demands into one which is "emptied of meaning", signifies, by the same token, a convergence of different actors. What appears as crucial in Laclau is that all these demands and actors are pointed against a "common enemy".

At the dawn of the 21st century, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri formulated the new emancipatory actor: multitude. They defined it in a radically democratic sense, as a class concept that resolves the tension between unity and plurality. They find the presumable necessity of choosing between these two seemingly contradictory positions false. "The mandate to choose between unity and multiplicity treats class as if it were merely an empirical concept and fails to take into consideration the extent to which class itself is defined

politically" (Hardt, Negri 2004: 104). From there, they define class as being determined by class struggle (ibid.). A similar track is chosen by other thinkers, including the above-mentioned Michael Lebowitz. Like Laclau and Mouffe, as well as Hardt and Negri, Lebowitz also sees class as an actor that can potentially become more radically democratic through action.

While arguing that workers rebel mostly when the bottom line of their existential needs is threatened (the concept he uses is the one of E.P. Thomson "moral economy of the poor" or "moral economy of the working class"), Lebowitz sees the potential in such action: "Even though the moral economy of the working class as such is not an immediate challenge to exploitation, it can be the basis for a process by which workers themselves change in the course of struggle" (Lebowitz, ibid.: 122). The general tendency of radical democratic, socialist thought in the 21st (and for the 21st) century is clear. It seeks to accommodate radical socialist ideas from the past into the new era and it offers new conceptualizations of radical subjectivity in the contemporary context. It critically reflects on the heritage and the defeat of the political left in the 20th century, while, at the same time, offering a plausible critique of neoliberal capitalism of today. The effort is there and the question of the objective political effect of this effort still needs to be addressed.

The 21st Century "Democratic Socialism" in Action

The 21st century socialism "in action" was fueled by the global economic crisis of 2007/2008. Since then, it has had several important tasks. Firstly, it needed to regain support and legitimacy after the defeat of the "real socialism" of the 20th century. Secondly, it sought to reclaim its democratic essence, as opposed to the reactionary, anti-democratic or post-democratic political tendencies promoted by most of the liberal and conservative political forces. Thirdly, its task was to react to the revisionist political practice of the so-called "third way" social democracy. Finally, it had to be innovative, in both ideational and practical political senses.

When Robert Michels talked about oligarchic tendencies in democratic socialist parties already in the early 20th century, he somewhat criticized and absolved the left at the same time. Namely, he argued that the sociological "iron law of oligarchy" holds for every organization, be it democratic or not. "Who says organization, says oligarchy" (Michels *ibid*: 241). The 20th century socialist experience, in this sense, complied with an inevitable force within every organization, including socialist political parties. The 21st century socialism has aimed at overcoming these limitations. Such attempts were usually tightly associated with branches of contemporary critical socialist theory, which had a decisive effect on the new social and political actors on the left.

In Europe, among the most well-known cases is Spanish social movement Indignados or "M15" and Spanish movement-party Podemos, whose "populist strategy" closely followed the new socialist conceptualization developed by Lacalau and Mouffe (see: Mouffe and Erejon 2016; Valdivielso 2017; Eklundh

2019). Instead on the working class solely, as in the traditional left, the focus was on the formation of a wider social base and creation of a "populist" and radically democratic political subject called "the people" or in Spanish *pueblo*. On the opposite pole, the role of the main political enemy of the people, there was the so called *casta*, or the political class. After gaining an envious level of social and later, political support, Podemos lost the momentum which resulted in decline in both political power and popular support.

Another political breakthrough from the Left happened in the second decade of the 21st century in Greece. Similar to Podemos, Syriza's rise to the position of a relevant political actor and later, its rise to power, owed much to the world economic crisis of 2008 and the wave of anti-austerity contentious politics from below (Della Porta 2015). Therefore, the contemporary left managed to bypass the heavy burden of the 20th century defeat: not necessarily by distancing from its historical legacy, as much as by focusing mostly on the contemporary economic and social challenges which made the 20th century type of ideological debates taking the back seat. Syriza, unlike Podemos, was the strongest partner in the Greek government elected in 2015, and came into the position to offer a socialist future for its country. It turned out that the anti-socialist and anti-democratic international financial institutions and governments of the strongest EU countries were more powerful. Eventually, the Syriza project ended ingloriously.

Other European countries have seen new socialist actors as well, though not so paradigmatic and successful as Spain and Greece. When saying democratic socialism, one inevitably thinks of the British Labor Party under Jeremy Corbyn. At least temporarily, this leader managed to cancel out the legacy of the "third way" pro-capitalist agenda of social democracy. This process generally referred to as revisionism, as argued by Donald Sassoon, accelerated in the late 1950s with the German SPD Bad Godesberg Congress and got its culmination with Tony Blair's New Labour in 1997 (Sassoon 1996: xiii). Corbyn, unlike Pablo Iglesias from Podemos or Alexis Tsipras from Syriza, is an experienced politician who became the symbol of radical resistance for the younger people in the UK. He inspired youngsters to create a new vision of socialism for the 21st century and get more involved both in voting and in day-to-day politics (Young 2018). For Corbin, the relative weakening of the Left and the labour movement was not the reason to move to the right, but to patiently rebuild (Seymoure 2017: 6). In spite of the defeat, mainly due to the backlash within his own Labor Party, Corbyn remained one of the most vigorous politicians who pushed the idea of "democratic socialism" way beyond the limitations imposed by the *status quo*.

Another politician, or better said, political movement mostly compounded of young, enthusiastic people, significantly contributed to the project of 21st century socialism. Bernie Sanders, who ran twice and lost the race for democratic nomination in the US, in 2016 and 2020, empowered social movements with socialist ambitions. The emergence of socialism into the mainstream of American politics (Sunkara 2019), was announced by social movements such

as "Occupy Wall Street", which came as a consequence of the economic crisis of 2007/2008. The reason was that the crisis hit the economically disadvantaged the most, thereby opening space for the "revival of democratic socialism" (Panitch, Gindin 2020). The political movements behind Sanders significantly helped with regard to the "spiking" popularity of socialism in the United States and a record 43 per cent of all Americans who now believe that "some form of socialism would be a good thing for the country as a whole." (Solty 2020: 37; in Maher, Khachaturian 2020). In a way, the new democratic socialist tendencies hit very strongly in the "heart of the neoliberal project", namely in the Anglo-Saxon world. For now, such tendencies have been "pushed back" before managing to come to power. On the other hand, the latest crisis of capitalism is not even close to coming to an end, which still leaves space for regrouping of the socialist political forces from the past decade. Contrary to diminishing, the complexities and depths of global issues are intensifying with each emerging ecological, economic, and geopolitical challenge. This evolving landscape raises a critical question: How probable is it for a resurgent socialist perspective to assume a more influential position in shaping the world's future?

Conclusion

The evolution of socialism as a political, economic, and philosophical doctrine, both as an ideology and a tangible political endeavor, has shed light on its possibilities and constraints in the 21st century. Up until recently, the socialist project was heavily weighed down by its 20th-century political legacy, coupled with a profound crisis of legitimacy and challenges within socialist thought itself. However, in the last fifteen years, particularly since the onset of the 2007/2008 financial crisis, these barriers have become increasingly surmountable. This shift is not so much a result of the resurgence of socialism's inherent strength, but rather due to the profound crisis afflicting the prevailing capitalist system. This crisis has opened new avenues for socialist ideas, allowing them to gain traction and re-enter mainstream discourse as viable alternatives. The current scenario calls for a re-examination and adaptation of socialist principles to contemporary challenges, suggesting that socialism could offer relevant solutions to the systemic failures of capitalism, especially in addressing issues of inequality, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

The resurgence of socialism, much like its historical "takeoffs," has been contingent on its ability to intervene and leverage the crises of capitalism to establish its validity. This pattern was evident in the late 2000s and early 2010s when socialist ideologies and actions re-emerged as significant intellectual and political forces. This revival occurred after nearly two decades of the prevailing paradigm's dominance, marked by an alliance of liberal and conservative thought. However, socialism still faces numerous challenges, though their nature has evolved compared to two or three decades ago. These challenges, while significant, do not completely incapacitate the socialist agenda. Instead, they maintain the typical level of difficulty that socialism has historically encountered

in establishing itself as a viable alternative. This implies that the path forward for socialism is not blocked but is as arduous as it has traditionally been, requiring adaptation and innovative strategies to navigate the new landscape of global politics and economics.

The contemporary challenges faced by the socialist project in the 21st century are twofold. Firstly, there are the formidable forces committed to maintaining and reproducing the capitalist system. These forces have always been influential, exerting their power even during post-revolutionary periods and following socialist revolutions in the 20th century. Their influence is even more pronounced in non-revolutionary times, such as the present era. This enduring strength of capitalist structures and ideologies represents a significant obstacle to the advancement of socialism.

Secondly, the socialist project itself grapples with its own internal complexities and contradictions. Like any theoretical or political endeavor, socialism is not immune to internal disagreements and conflicts. These internal challenges are evident in the difficulties progressive forces face in uniting different strategies and approaches. This struggle for cohesion and direction is apparent both on a global scale and within individual political communities. Even during periods of acute capitalist crises, when the failures of the existing system are most visible, progressive social and political forces often find it challenging to present a unified front and agree on a coherent strategy for change. This internal discord within the socialist movement complicates its efforts to present itself as a viable and attractive alternative to the prevailing capitalist paradigm.

These limitations highlight the need for a nuanced approach within the socialist framework, one that can effectively address and navigate the external pressures from entrenched capitalist interests while also resolving internal ideological disputes and practical challenges. The task involves not only presenting socialism as a viable alternative to capitalism but also ensuring that it remains adaptable and responsive to the evolving socio-economic landscape. This requires a careful balance between maintaining the core principles of socialism and adapting them to the current global context, which includes addressing issues like environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and global inequalities. As such, the future of the socialist project hinges on its ability to evolve, innovate, and present coherent, practical solutions that resonate with the needs of diverse populations.

The potential of socialism in the 21st century is rooted in the growing disillusionment and discontent among people who lost faith in the system following the 2007/2008 financial crisis. Despite promises, political and economic elites have largely failed to provide social and economic security to the majority. This reality has intensified the struggle to conceptualize and mobilize resistance against the domination of ruling classes. Unlike the relatively obscure nature of this struggle in the 1990s and early 2000s, it has now become not only visible but also significantly relevant, both socially and politically. The emerging capacity of socialism is in its ability to counteract the anti-democratic tendencies of the elite. This resurgence has led to a renewed emphasis on

"democratic socialism", highlighting the political significance of socialism in contemporary times. Socialism is positioned not only against the anti-democratic practices of liberal and conservative groups but also against the rise of extreme right-wing movements, such as the "alt-right". In the current context, the concept of socialism is gradually reclaiming its significance and re-emerging as a potent force, lending renewed importance to Rosa Luxemburg's assertion, "Socialism or barbarism".

In a world rife with conflict and growing disparities in social and economic realms, socialism shines as a beacon of hope. This hope is anchored in the belief that socialism can present a more equitable and just alternative to the prevailing systems. However, the journey to realizing these socialist aspirations is not solely fueled by hope. It necessitates the development of effective political strategies and potential mobilization, forming a theoretical and political vision that appeals to the broader population. The path to socialism in the 21st century is an active process that transcends the simple revival of past ideologies. It involves considerable effort to thoughtfully adapt and evolve these ideologies to be relevant in the complex and diverse context of the contemporary world. This process entails, as Herbert Marcuse and György Lukács suggest, not seeking new utopias through the mere opposition of abstract ideals against real-world realities, but rather building these utopias within the framework of these realities, engaging with the forces at play in the current class struggle. This approach requires a deep understanding of current conditions and a commitment to shaping a future that is both visionary and grounded in the practicalities of today's world.

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Filip Balunović i Ivica Mladenović

Razmišljanje o prošlosti, zamišljanje budućnosti: put „demokratskog socijalizma"

Apstrakt

Ovaj članak razmatra evoluciju socijalizma kao političke ideologije, od njegovih početaka u drevnim društvima do savremenih inkarnacija. U njemu se najpre istražuju polazni i univerzalni principi socijalizma o jednakosti i zajedničkoj dobrobiti, koji se mogu ustanoviti kao istorijska vertikala socijalizma, od njegovog nastanka do danas. Zatim se fokus premešta na Industrijsku revoluciju, s posebnim naglaskom na kapitalan doprinos Karla Marksa i Fridriha Engelsa, koji su zamišljali besklasno društvo kao produkt revolucionarnog angažmana. XX vek, obeležen ključnim događajima poput Ruske revolucije i Hladnog rata, svedočio je praktičnoj implementaciji dve verzije socijalizma: jedna koja je u vidu real-socijalizma postojala kao konkurentski projekat zapadnom kapitalizmu, i druga – isto tako hibridna, samo na drugačiji način – koja je postojala u utrobi zapadnog kapitalizma, kao deo koncesije dominiranim klasama, u vidu „države blagostanja". Zahvaljujući globalnoj snazi i poželjnosti socijalističkog projekta, ovo razdoblje je obeleženo mnogim socijalnim i civilizacijskim dostignućima, i na Zapadu i na Istoku, ali i izazovima autoritarizma, ekonomske krize, demokratske disfunkcionalnosti. S druge strane, krajem XX, socijalistički projekat je – s padom SSSR-a – doživeo potpunu delegitimaciju na Zapadu, dok je u Kini *pro forme* održan kao pervertiran režim. Početkom XXI veku, rastuće nezadovoljstvo ekonomskim nejednakostima i politička deziluzija, posebno nakon finansijske krize 2007/2008. godine, ponovo je rasplamsala interesovanje za alternativni socijalistički model, posebno za nešto što se maglovito i teorijski nedovoljno razvijeno naziva „demokratskim socijalizmom." Autori u tekstu brane stav da je potrebno ovu obnovljenu zainteresovanost pretočiti u teorijski i strateško-politički plodan demarš, konstruišući novi, radikalno demokratski socijalistički projekat kao jedini projekat koji se javlja kao održiva alternativa današnjim društveno-ekonomsko-ekološkim izazovima.

Ključne reči: socijalizam, demokratski socijalizam, real-socijalizam, socijalizam za XXI vek

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Milivoj Bešlin and Petar Žarković

THE RISE AND FALL OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM IN YUGOSLAVIA 1948-1972.[1]

ABSTRACT
This article examines the complex trajectory of democratic socialism in Yugoslavia from 1948 to 1972, a period characterized by groundbreaking experimentation and subsequent retreat from socialist ideals. The study begins with Yugoslavia's 1948 break from Stalin, marking the inception of its independent socialist path, distinct from the Soviet model. It highlights the implementation of innovative policies, particularly the model of worker self-management, reflecting Yugoslavia's endeavor to marry socialist principles with democratic practices. These policies, initially successful in fostering economic growth and a unique Yugoslav identity, faced internal challenges of ethnic and national complexities and external pressures owing to its non-aligned stance during the Cold War. The article delves into the internal political dynamics and leadership strategies of Yugoslavia during this transformative period, which is a domain that has received less scholarly attention compared to Yugoslav economic and foreign policies. It scrutinizes how Tito and his contemporaries navigated the challenges of maintaining a socialist state while balancing the ideals of democracy with the practicalities of governance. Special attention is given to the interplay between domestic policies and international influences, offering a comprehensive view of the Yugoslav socialist experiment. The decline of democratic socialism in Yugoslavia, culminating in the political shifts of 1972, is portrayed not as an abrupt collapse but as a gradual process, marked by changes in both policy and ideology. The authors conclude that the Yugoslav experience provides valuable insights into the complexities of implementing socialism in a diverse and multifaceted society, illustrating both the potential and limitations of merging socialism with democratic principles.

KEYWORDS
Yugoslavia, socialism, self-management, democratization, League of Communists, Josip Broz Tito, Marko Nikezić.

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The history of democratic socialism in Yugoslavia, particularly from 1948 to 1972, is a fascinating episode in the broader narrative of the 20th-century socialist experiment. This period stands out due to Yugoslavia's unique position during the Cold War era, marked by its break from Stalin and the subsequent pursuit of an independent path towards socialism. This article aims to unravel the complexities and nuances of Yugoslav experimenting with democratic socialism, situating it within the larger context of socialist governance and Cold War politics.

The existing body of research on Yugoslav socialism offers a comprehensive analysis of its economic and foreign policy dimensions. A significant portion of this scholarship has been dedicated to exploring Yugoslavia's groundbreaking economic policies, especially the model of worker self-management, which emerged as a distinctive feature of this socialist experiment (Rusinow 1978; Petranović 1988; Benson 2002; Bešlin 2022; Duda 2023). This model, characterized by workers' councils and decentralized decision-making in enterprises, represented a radical departure from the centralized economic structures prevalent in other socialist states and has been the subject of extensive academic scrutiny. Scholars have examined its origins, evolution, and impact on the Yugoslav economy and society, thus offering valuable insights into the possibilities and limitations of economic democratization in a socialist framework. In terms of foreign policy, Yugoslav socialism has been studied extensively regarding its non-aligned stance during the Cold War (Bogetić 2006; Jakovina 2011; Dimić 2014). Yugoslavia's role as a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement and its efforts to chart a course independent of the two major power blocs of the era have been well-documented. This aspect of Yugoslav history has been pivotal in understanding the country's international positioning and diplomatic strategies in navigating the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War. However, despite the productivity of this scholarship, there remains a notable gap in the examination of Yugoslavia's internal political dynamics and leadership strategies, especially during the turbulent period of 1968-1972. The intricate interplay between ideological shifts, political decision-making, and leadership tactics that contributed significantly to the rise and subsequent decline of democratic socialist ideals in Yugoslavia has not been thoroughly explored.

Positioning itself at the intersection of political history and socialist theory, this study adopts a multidimensional approach. It scrutinizes the political decisions, ideological shifts, and leadership dynamics that shaped Yugoslavia's socialist trajectory. By doing so, it contributes to a deeper understanding of how the Yugoslav leadership navigated the challenges of implementing socialism in a diverse and complex national context. The analysis also pays particular attention to the interplay between domestic policies and international pressures, thus offering a comprehensive view of Yugoslav socialism. The research problem at the heart of this study is the exploration of the factors that led to the rise of democratic socialist aspirations in Yugoslavia and the factors that contributed to their decline. This involves a critical examination of the ideological foundations of Yugoslav socialism, the policy decisions made

by its leadership, and the socio-political context that influenced the making of these decisions.

The paper is structured as follows: it begins by exploring the ideological and political landscape of post-1948 Yugoslavia, setting the stage for the country's departure from Stalinist orthodoxy. It then delves into the key reforms and policies implemented during the height of Yugoslav democratic socialism, highlighting their impact on the political and social fabric of the nation. Following this, the paper examines the factors leading to the gradual decline of democratic socialism, culminating in the political shifts in 1972. The conclusion synthesizes these findings, reflecting on the broader implications of the Yugoslav experience for understanding the dynamics of socialist governance in general, together with the challenges of implementing socialist policies in a diverse and complex society.

The Conflict with the Soviet Union 1948: The Starting Point for Democratization

During World War II and the consequent socialist revolution in Yugoslavia (1941–1945), the Communist Party emerged as the central force driving political processes. It actively engaged the masses and the entire Yugoslav populace to secure its legitimacy and establish new sovereignty. This engagement was pivotal in forging a popular consensus and a sense of collective participation in the revolutionary process. The creation of the first national liberation committees, which functioned as "provisional organs of people's governance," underscored the fundamentally democratic underpinnings of the Yugoslav revolution, integrated within the broader anti-fascist movement (Bešlin 2023: 9–46). While Soviet models exerted some influence during the war and more prominently in the immediate post-liberation period by establishing the Communist Party of Yugoslavia's (CPY) monopolistic rule, their applicability and relevance had their limits. These Soviet-inspired approaches were adopted to an extent in the early stages of the CPY's governance, reflecting the initial alignment with Soviet policies and administrative methods. However, the reliance on Soviet models and their perception as ideological beacons and sources of legitimacy went through a significant shift following the Informburo Resolution 1948. This resolution, which condemned the Yugoslav government and led to the country's expulsion from the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau), marked a critical turning point (Banac 1990; Dedijer 1978).

The initial major rift within the socialist bloc had profound implications for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) and its societal structure, leading to significant changes in Yugoslav society. While some international observers, particularly American sources, were surprised by the conflict – perceiving Yugoslavia as "the most loyal Soviet satellite" – its roots lay in internal dynamics and Stalin's ambition for uncontested authority over the states and societies within his sphere (Jakovina 2003: 232–242; Lis 2003: 17). This quest

for hegemony met with opposition in Yugoslavia. The CPY, credited with leading a victorious liberation war, and Yugoslavia, renowned for its robust anti-fascist movement and independently-driven socialist revolution, refused a subordinate role. Their stance, originating from a movement for social and national emancipation, independent from the Soviets, was inherently incompatible with any form of external dominance. Yugoslav burgeoning socialist patriotism, reinforced by global acclaim for its role in defeating fascism, was evident in its early resistance to unequal Soviet-Yugoslav partnerships. By mid-1946, Yugoslavia had objected to forming joint Soviet-Yugoslav companies and declined to establish a mixed bank. The Yugoslavs' critique of Soviet military and civilian advisors in the FNRJ (Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia) particularly aggrieved the Soviets. Such insubordination was at odds with the expected unwavering compliance to Stalin and risked setting a negative example for other Eastern Bloc nations. As a result, aligning Yugoslavia swiftly with Kremlin directives became a Soviet imperative. Conflict seemed inescapable. When subtler tactics proved ineffective, Stalin employed direct coercion and attacks on Yugoslavia's state and party leadership, erroneously believing this would precipitate their swift downfall and the installation of a puppet regime. Stalin's strategy, underestimating the CPY as merely an adjunct of the Soviet party, failed to acknowledge its pivotal role in the anti-fascist struggle and revolution. He assumed that by undermining the CPY, Yugoslavia would capitulate and conform to Soviet imperialistic policies. The Informburo, designed as an instrument for Stalinist imperial ambitions, mirrored the roles of the now-defunct Comintern. This strategy became glaringly apparent during the final meeting of the Yugoslav delegation (including Milovan Đilas, Koča Popović, and Edvard Kardelj) in Moscow in February 1948. Stalin subjected them to severe coercion and humiliation, treating them as subordinate satellites and striving to impose a policy of "subordination". As recounted by Milovan Đilas, a delegation member, this meeting sought to demote Yugoslavia to the status of other Soviet-occupied Eastern European countries (Đilas 1990: 110–119).

The decisive rejection of Stalin's demands by Yugoslavia's party authorities in March 1948 signified a pivotal moment in the history of the international labor movement, eliciting an immediate reaction from the Kremlin. Stalin criticized the CPY's foreign and domestic policies, attributing this rebuke to the perceived spread of anti-Soviet attitudes and the reinforcement of capitalist elements in Yugoslavia. Subsequently, he declared that the CPY no longer qualified as a communist party. Nonetheless, Tito's approach, framing the conflict as a matter of Yugoslav sovereignty and inter-state relations rather than internal party dynamics, enabled the CPY leadership to articulate a vital thesis: despite their commitment to the USSR as the forefront of socialism, Yugoslav communists should not "in any case love their country less, which is also endeavoring to establish socialism" (Đilas 1990: 357; Štaubringer 1980: 41–43). This perspective distilled the crux of the conflict to a fundamental question of the nature of relationships between socialist nations. Should these relationships be defined by deference to the Kremlin or mutual respect, allowing for

distinct models of socialism? This difficulty would remain a critical issue in Yugoslav-Soviet relations in the following decades.

The confrontation with the Soviet Union posed an immense challenge for Yugoslav communists and their leaders. Yet, their staunch defense of national autonomy laid the foundation for the evolution of unique Yugoslav socialism and the establishment of independent foreign and domestic policies. Yugoslavia's resistance against Stalinist imperialism significantly boosted its international stature, a prominence akin to its role in the anti-fascist struggle. This episode marked Stalin's initial major post-war defeat on the global stage, heralding the fragmentation of the Soviet bloc and initiating shifts within the Eastern Bloc with extensive international ramifications. This development catapulted Yugoslavia into the spotlight of global politics, amplifying its influence and prestige beyond what its inherent capabilities, size, and resources would ordinarily suggest. These events profoundly impacted the international labor movement, especially the European left. Stalin's authoritarian approach had stifled any alternatives or efforts towards a more humanistic socialism, primarily by obstructing reforms and democratization. In this milieu, Yugoslavia's pursuit of self-managed socialism, a direct result of the 1948 rift, was an inspiration and a blueprint for democratic socialism. This model resonated with left-wing, socialist, and communist parties and movements across both East and West, in Europe and globally, in their search for a feasible and democratic socialist framework.

The schism between the Yugoslav communists and the Soviet paradigm was crucial in promoting a reformist and democratic inclination within the CPY, later evolving into the LCY (League of Communists of Yugoslavia). For advocates of this direction, 1948 represented the inception and primary source of inspiration and legitimacy in their efforts to democratize both the party and society. This era highlighted the imperative to distinguish the Yugoslav model of self-managed socialism from the Soviet model, which was initially totalitarian and later, post-1953, state socialist. While for the CPY's revolutionary old guard, severing ties with Stalin and breaking free from the Soviet mode was a difficult transition, for the younger, reform-oriented factions within the CPY, as well as the increasingly liberal segments of the movement, the events of 1948 – and the ensuing period of de-Stalinization and democratization in various sectors – held profound formative importance. This epoch not only established but also consistently inspired their initiatives.

Self-Government – the Yugoslav Model of Socialism

The defense of Yugoslavia's independence in 1948, coupled with its resistance to the aggressive maneuvers of the Soviet Union and its allies, forged a foundation for an alternative socialist concept. Initially, Stalin's allegations inadvertently intensified Soviet traits within the Yugoslav framework (Petranović 1988: 216–227; Popov 2003: Pirjevec 2012: 234–290). However, by 1949, this model proved increasingly unsustainable. Repudiating Stalin's supremacy and

infallibility while adhering to his version of socialism as the definitive approach became an untenable contradiction. A realization gradually emerged, later serving as the cornerstone for Yugoslav reforms, that only through the transformation and democratization of its society, distancing from the Soviet totalitarian, Stalinist mold, could Yugoslavia's sovereignty be sustainably preserved.

In the early 1950s, the quest to formulate an alternative Yugoslav socialism commenced. Amidst profound crises, the solution emerged from the Yugoslav War of Liberation and the socialist revolution – precisely, the popular masses. Additionally, rather than clinging to a distorted Stalinist doctrine, a re-engagement with the original works of Marx and Engels took place. In 1949, a symbolic gesture of de-Stalinization occurred in Yugoslavia – thousands of Stalin's portraits were removed from public spaces and discarded, along with the Short Course of History of the CPSU (b), the epitome of Stalinism. This marked the beginning of ideological emancipation from Soviet influence and the search for a unique framework for constructing socialist social and economic relations. Embracing Marxist classics, the LCY was progressively diverging from the Soviet model, transitioning from a defensive stance and validation of its legitimacy to a critical and contentious phase, accusing the CPSU (b) of straying away from Marx, fostering state capitalism in the USSR and devolving into a "bureaucratic caste governance" that maintained a nationalist-dominated occupation of "six civilized European countries" (Đilas 1950: 4). The Yugoslav communists rapidly evolved; by 1950, Stalinism was identified as the labor movement's most formidable threat. Figures such as Tito, Edvard Kardelj, and Boris Kidrič, in resisting Stalin and orchestrating Yugoslav de-Stalinization and socialist democratization, shaped Yugoslavia's socialism.

In 1950, Kardelj contended that socialism could not be constructed by any bureaucratic system, regardless of its leadership, but only through the initiative of the masses, guided by the proletarian party. This assertion directly challenged the Soviet system's core principles. Boris Kidrič's "Theses on the Economy of the Transitional Period" laid the groundwork for socialist socio-economic relations, offering initial guidelines for practical changes and amalgamating market and administrative-economic mechanisms. In addition to the initial propositions and the works of Marx and Engels, the experiences from the revolution, which included specific segments of self-governance through the national liberation committees, were given due consideration (Milosavljević 1983: 30–33; Petranović 1988: 288–291; Bešlin 2023: 9–46). Kidrič acknowledged the necessity of accommodating "spontaneous action of economic laws," asserting that socialism, neither complete nor final, encompassed capitalist elements while fostering new socialist ones. The central challenge was integrating commodity production and market mechanisms within the socialist framework – a foundational dilemma for every Yugoslav reform. In the early 1950s, Kidrič envisioned a progressive solution through companies' economic and legal autonomy, tempered by the state's centralization of accumulation (profit) through investment funds – federal, republican, and local – to prevent capitalist anarchy (Kidrič 1985: 133–134). These anti-Stalinist

tenets underpinned a non-dogmatic approach to the Yugoslav socialist path. The economic and social democratization efforts were envisioned to pave the way for political democratization as well.

Rooted in the principles previously established, Boris Kidrič, the President of the Economic Council, and Đuro Salaj, the leading trade union figure, enacted the 1949 Instruction on establishing and operating workers' councils in state-owned enterprises. This guideline was circulated to all trade union representatives and the initial 215 collectives designated for the implementation of workers' councils, signaling the inception of workers' self-management. Following the success of these initial efforts, on June 27, 1950, the Federal Assembly passed the *Basic Law on the Management of State Enterprises and Higher Economic Associations by Labor Collectives*. Also known as the *Law on Handing Over Factories to Workers or the Law on Workers' Self-Management*, this act marked a pivotal departure from the Soviet state-centric model (Petranović, Zečević 1988: 1017–1027). During the assembly session, Tito elaborated on the CPY's near-complete framework for establishing socialist socio-economic relations that starkly contrast the Soviet state system. The Yugoslav communists embraced the non-dogmatic concept of the "withering away of the state", advocating for its immediate and gradual realization. Tito critiqued the previously unquestioned adoption and replication of Soviet methods, which resulted in an undesirable amalgamation of party and government structures, with the party evolving into an instrument of oppression rather than a representation of the proletariat. As a response, the CPY sought to extricate itself from the bureaucratic system, converting state ownership into social ownership under the stewardship of the direct producers (Petranović 1988: 291–294; Istorija SKJ 1985: 373–378). The delegation of factories to workers was seen as the first step in the transition from a state-centric to a socially self-administered system. While workers' councils, elected by the workforce, managed these enterprises, the establishments remained state property. The state continued to collect all profits, precluding the labor collectives from governing these resources. This maintenance of a centralized and state-oriented component, though markedly progressive in comparison to the Soviet Stalinist model, represented just the initial phase of a broader socio-economic and political evolution.

Throughout 1952, Kidrič further enhanced this system. By the time of the CPY's Sixth Congress, the reforms transforming the state-centric to the self-managed system had culminated, and enterprises momentarily engaged in the market, freed from state planning mandates and entrusted to the management of labor collectives, despite the state's ongoing control over most profits. This innovative socio-economic model spurred additional democratization in Yugoslavia. The brisk advancement and practical implementation of the Yugoslav communists' theoretical concepts stand as a historically singular occurrence. This rapid transition from an ultra-centralist and hyper-statist framework to one encompassing the "three D" – Decentralization, De-bureaucratization, and Democratization – illustrates a significant stride in the country's socialist development (Bilandzić 1999: 321–329; Petranović 1988: 296–299).

Reform of the Party as a Presumption of the Democratization of the System

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, held in Zagreb from November 2-7, 1952, epitomized the pinnacle of reform and de-Stalinization in Yugoslavia. Notably referred to as the "renaming congress" for a significant transformation marked it: the Communist Party of Yugoslavia renamed itself as the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), a gesture symbolizing a recommitment to the foundations of Marxism, particularly to Karl Marx, whose organization was known by the latter name. At the Congress, the Soviet statist-bureaucratic social relations model was resoundingly rejected, setting the stage for the rapid evolution of the new Yugoslav socialism, anchored in self-management. This model was designed to enhance and deepen the rights of direct producers in the distribution of surplus, national income, and new investments (Šesti kongres KPJ 1952: 263). The Congress encapsulated four years of de-Stalinization and democratization, offering a comprehensive critique of Soviet practices. It characterized the initial worker-peasant government in the USSR as having degenerated into a "bureaucratic counter-revolution", resurrecting the "tsarist-despotic regime", instituting slave labor systems, suppressing non-Russian ethnic groups, and engaging in imperialistic endeavors reminiscent of Russian emperors. The Soviet regime, in an unparalleled censure, was equated with fascism, which represents the peak of the condemnation of Stalinism. However, these stark assessments of the Soviet system were later softened or omitted in the party's historical narrative. The renaming of the party and the intense critique of the USSR highlighted Yugoslavia's self-governing approach to socialism. The rebranded party was expected to shift from a commanding to a guiding role, focusing on ideological and political leadership and stepping back from direct governance to support self-management. Despite these changes, the political monopoly of the LCY remained unchallenged.

The comprehensive social and economic reforms warranted a parallel transformation within the party. Emerging and surviving under the conditions of the monarchist regime's prohibition and severe repression, the LCY evolved as a tightly-knit, cadre-based party, emphasizing secrecy and trust (Dobrivojević 2006; Bešlin 2014: 199–222). The development of the Yugoslav socialism concept necessitated restructuring the LCY into an "ideological vanguard" for both the working class and society at large. To meet these requirements and to unite the masses against Stalinism, the LCY substantially increased its membership by 63% from 1948 to 1952, reaching nearly 800,000 members. In line with these changes in the party, other mass organizations underwent restructuring. The People's Front of Yugoslavia transitioned into the Socialist Union of Working People in 1953, indicative of a wider social diversity, and the Women's Anti-Fascist Front was reformed into the Union of Women's Societies of Yugoslavia (Petranović 1988: 302–308; Bilandzić 1999: 342–343). Thus, the Sixth Congress of the LCY set a precedent for all future party reform structures. However, in subsequent years, Tito occasionally referenced

it negatively, attributing its influences to Đilas and associating it with a period of party weakening and attempts at its "liquidation". Criticism of the Sixth Congress became notably pronounced following the 1972 crackdown on democratic and reformist factions within the party and the subsequent campaign (Marković, Križavac 1978: 30–33).

The extensive political, social, and economic reforms initiated in Yugoslavia between 1949 and 1953 were formally entrenched and legally endorsed by the Federal National Assembly in January 1953. The promulgation of the Constitutional Law on the Basics of the Social and Political Organization of the FNRJ superseded the 1946 Constitution. This new constitutional structure aimed not only to consolidate the reforms already implemented but also to encourage further changes aligned with the ideology of the Sixth Congress. It confirmed the social ownership of means of production and the self-management of direct producers, marking a notable transition in the nation's economic and political realms. The constitutional law reformed the political system as well, introducing councils of producers as a secondary chamber in both federal and republican assemblies. In addition, the role of the President of the Republic was instituted, with Tito, formerly the Prime Minister, assuming the inaugural head-of-state position. Simultaneously, the Federal Executive Council was reorganized under this new framework (Petranović, Zečević 1987: 351–354). These constitutional alterations established the groundwork for self-governing socialism in Yugoslavia, delineating it as a distinct third path divergent from Soviet Stalinist totalitarianism and Western liberal capitalism.

Yet, the momentum of these democratizing reforms soon encountered limitations and a temporary suspension. Stalin's death in March 1953 reduced the existential menace to Yugoslavia, leading to a détente with the new Soviet leadership, which in turn influenced domestic reforms and democratization efforts. The same year saw the loss of Boris Kidrič, a principal architect of socio-economic transformations and de-Stalinization. This period also witnessed the dramatic expulsion of Milovan Đilas, a prominent Yugoslav critic of Soviet state socialism (Stanić 2008). In response to these developments, along with growing apprehensions about potential Sovietophobia and excessively liberal inclinations stemming from the reformist ambiance of the Sixth Congress, Tito convened the Second Plenum of the Central Committee of the C in the Brijuni in mid-June 1953. This assembly released a directive to all communists, critiquing the emergence of "anti-Marxist theories", rebuking "bourgeois-liberalist tendencies", and reproving a perceived inertia among communists. Đilas, who opposed the deceleration of democratization, became increasingly marginalized (Istorija SKJ 1985: 396–397; Đilas 1983: 251–253). As Yugoslav-Soviet relations improved and anti-Western sentiment heightened, partly due to Western signals of transferring Trieste to Italy, Đilas began publishing critical essays on ideology, politics, and morality in *Borba* in October 1953. His writings, especially the article "Anatomy of a Moral" in *Nova Misao*, garnered public attention but eventually precipitated his political demise. The Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the LCY in January 1954 repudiated Đilas's

concepts and political conduct as anarchistic, as characterized by Tito. This clash and the subsequent exclusion of Đilas from the party leadership significantly stalled the advancement of democratization and reforms (Kovačević 2006: 321–387; Pirjevec 2012: 357–370; Đilas 1983: 267–280). The conservative stance established by the Second Plenum intensified, resulting in a closer association with the Soviets, though without intentions of rejoining their bloc. Party forums intensively debated Đilas's case in the ensuing months, concentrating on Tito's and Kardelj's reports that denounced Đilas's political ideology. This era marked the introduction of 'liberalism' as a derogatory term in public discourse, along with the pejorative 'đilasovština'.

The dynamic, unpredictable, and often paradoxical defining Yugoslav socialism reached its climax with the constitutional revisions and the confrontation with Đilas. Following these events, further changes and deeper reforms were temporarily paused to stabilize, fortify, and solidify the accomplishments. This phase was characterized by a prudent stance towards additional Western engagement and the initial normalization of relations with the USSR. The latter half of the 1950s evolved into a period of consolidating order, where the fundamentals of Yugoslav self-governing socialism were entrenched. These foundations, distinct from the Soviet state-socialist model, also received acknowledgment in Western theoretical discourse. While the USSR sought to build socialism through a strong state apparatus, Yugoslavia strived for the dissolution of the state. The Soviet model centralized ownership of production means, contrasting with Yugoslavia's emphasis on workers' management of socially owned assets. The methodologies to achieve these objectives varied markedly between the two socialist frameworks. The Soviet model depended on a hierarchical state structure, whereas the Yugoslav approach leveraged autonomous enterprises. There were pronounced differences between the state-socialist and self-management systems. The former operated on state ownership, centralized planning, and administrative distribution of goods, with wages and economic activities being centrally dictated within a unified state budget. Conversely, the Yugoslav system underscored social ownership, social planning, market economic mechanisms, financial tools for management, and a decentralized state architecture. Within certain boundaries, workers' councils influenced wage determination, and consumption was regarded as an autonomous priority and a factor in development (Sekelj 1990: 244; Rusinow 1978: 47–107). Notwithstanding these theoretical distinctions, both systems exhibited deviations from their ideal archetypes in both theory and practice, with the Yugoslav model perhaps displaying more instances of voluntarism and deviation.

The Party Program from 1958. The Magna Carta of Democratic Socialism in Yugoslavia.

Yugoslav socialism, initially conceptualized as reformist during its foundational phase from 1949 to 1953, maintained a degree of dynamism, even in times lacking significant alterations. Despite occasional conservative tendencies, the

ethos of reform and democracy endured within both the societal fabric and the party's structure. This enduring spirit continued to foster opposition to Stalinism and nurtured an increasing recognition of the necessity for further democratization of Yugoslav socialism. This was seen as the only assurance of a definitive break from the Soviet model. The democratic sentiment within the LCY actively embraced every chance to influence the party's reformist agenda, particularly notable in the program of 1958. This was achieved through a combination of Tito's strategic initiatives and the societal demands for continued transformation. The party's approach was characterized by an astute balance between its foundational principles and adapting to evolving internal and external pressures. This adaptability was crucial in steering Yugoslav socialism on its unique trajectory, distinct from both Soviet and Western models. The commitment to reform and democratization within the LCY underpinned these efforts, reflecting a conscious determination to evolve and refine the Yugoslav socialist model continually.

The 1958 LCY Program emerged as a pivotal instrument in establishing more enduring coordinates for the evolution of Yugoslav socialism, with the gradual dissolution of the state identified as a key objective. It underscored the importance of liberating labor to transform Yugoslavia into a free community of producers, accentuating the ongoing expansion of personal, economic, cultural, and artistic freedoms. The Program enshrined the pursuit of individual happiness as the paramount goal of socialism, advocating that it should not be subordinate to any overarching objectives (Sedmi kongres SKJ 1958: 1100–1103). A significant portion of the Program was devoted to the principles and objectives of socialism construction in Yugoslavia, asserting that socialism must emerge from a country's inherent conditions and resources and cannot be externally imposed without internal proponents and mechanisms. The architects of the Program perceived socialist democratization and the transformation of the state under social ownership as essential for the advancement of socialism. This perspective represented a distinct break from the Soviet model of socialism and established a foundation for broadening the reform base and further democratizing society.

The Program dismissed both the bourgeois democracy model, seen as a facade for capitalist exploitation, and the Communist Party's political monopoly, highlighting the unsustainability of a perpetual "transitional" phase, which could result in an excessive fusion of the state with the party, leading to conservatism and bureaucratization. Advocating for democratic socialism, the Program proposed novel democratic forms within socialist social relations, focusing on reinforcing these relations in tandem with the state. It repudiated the maintenance of the LCY's monopolistic status, warning that it would lead to bureaucratization and undemocratic practices. The Program formalized and systematized the self-governing model of socialism, foreseeing the further strengthening of communes, social property, social policy, and a deeper humanization of society. It also delineated the relationships among different government tiers – federation, republics, and provinces—and defined the

party's role with mass organizations representing societal diversity. The Program promoted the demonopolization of power and advocated ideological and political contestation over repressive actions against political adversaries and "anti-socialist phenomena". It championed "genuine freedom" from inhibiting influences for science and art, stipulating that these fields should not become subservient to day-to-day political interests. The Program's authors viewed religion as a manifestation of backward consciousness, to be countered not by administrative means but through scientific enlightenment and elevating consciousness, as well as ensuring "true freedom" for every individual. It supported secularism and the firm separation of church from state and education (Sedmi kongres SKJ 1958: 1100–1103).

In essence, the Program's goals encompassed enhancing living standards, promoting self-management and social ownership of means of production, deepening socialist democracy, enabling more effective expression of social consciousness, and augmenting public participation in political processes. It underscored the necessity for Yugoslav communists to practice self-critique, maintain creative fidelity to Marxism, and resist all forms of dogmatism while aspiring for continuous progress, movement, and ideological vibrancy. The Program envisioned the creation of a society devoid of state, class, and party distinctions, characterized by perpetual evolution and self-reflection: "In order to perform our historical role in the creation of a socialist society in our country, we must devote all our energies to that goal, be critical of ourselves and our work, be irreconcilable enemies of all dogmatism and faithful to the revolutionary creative spirit of Marxism. Nothing created must be so sacred to us that it cannot be surpassed and does not give way to something more advanced, more free, and more human." (Sedmi kongres SKJ 1958: 926–1105).

The Program, while delineating boundaries on the extent of democratic orientation, showcased a distinctly modern, reform-focused, and dynamic character. It embodied the conviction that a socialist society must perpetually strive for "constant progress, constant movement, constant reckoning with ideological conservatism and any tendencies towards stagnation". This aspiration to cultivate a free individuality and a society devoid of state, classes, and parties, inherently self-critical, epitomized the evolved essence of Marxist thought and the concept of Hegelian dialectical belief in unceasing, linear, and purposeful human advancement. The Program's inherently modern and democratic spirit was frequently referenced in subsequent years by the reformists within the party to justify their stance and fortify their positions amidst the ongoing internal conflict between differing currents within the monopolistic party. Consequently, it drew significant criticism from Moscow, being branded as revisionist and anti-Marxist, precipitating the second major crisis in Yugoslav-Soviet relations. The Soviet critique labeled the new LCY Program as national communism, urging Yugoslavia to renounce it (Bešlin 2019: 11–13; Žarković, Bešlin 2023: 18–19; Bogetić 2004: 123–153).

A year after adopting the LCY Program at the Ljubljana Congress, inspired by its resolutions and the increasingly apparent economic stagnation, Yugoslav

leaders initiated the so-called small economic reform in 1961, grounded in market principles. Proponents of this reform aimed to diminish centralist inclinations, while the conservative faction at the party's apex preferred to maintain the existing state of affairs. The 1961 reform raised a critical question: who should control the means of extended reproduction, the state or the producers and their organizations? Demands from lower tiers, including unions and local offices, advocated for leaving the funds predominantly with the companies, believing them to be the most rational investors. The reform measures concerning the distribution of the social product between economic organizations and the state were viewed as the most significant and fundamental shift in the Yugoslav socio-economic system since the introduction of workers' self-management in 1950. For the first time, the allocation of income-generated funds became an autonomous right of labor collectives, devoid of any legal mandates on its distribution (Bilandžić 1999: 407–412; Lempi 2004: 246–247). This marked a significant step in the evolution of the Yugoslav socio-economic model, further distancing it from centralized state control and aligning it more closely with the principles of self-management and market-oriented socialism.

Following the swift failure of the 1961 economic reform, Yugoslavia grappled with an economic downturn and the crisis of the 1960s, prompting state and party leaders to embark on a more comprehensive economic reform in 1965. This reform initiative was foreshadowed by the Eighth Congress of the LCY in 1964 and gained momentum following the ousting of the conservative Yugoslav vice-president, Aleksandar Ranković, at the Brijuni meeting in 1966. The dismissal of Ranković opened the door for broader reforms, extending into the realms of the party and political system. This led to the establishment of the Party Reorganization Commission, which produced the Theses for the Reorganization of the LCY in 1969 after three years of deliberation. In these Theses, the Party articulated a clear stance, declaring that "it is not a political party in the classic sense of the word, and it does not have any special party interests of its own". A critical element of the Thesis was the emphasis on "Democratism in the internal life of the LCY", which was identified as a fundamental prerequisite for the successful fulfillment of the communists' progressive social role. Democratization was defined as the active participation of all members in decision-making processes, not merely in their execution. This approach involved the entire membership and organizations in continuous party activities. The Theses advocated for building unity through discussion, analysis, and dialogue, encouraging the confrontation of opinions in a context of democratic relations, as opposed to achieving "mechanical unity" through unchallenged discipline. Key aspects of the Theses included the democratic constitution of leadership and party bodies, the replaceability of leadership, equal participation in elections, equitable national representation in leadership elections, separation of state and party functions, and activities in other socio-political organizations. Furthermore, the Theses anticipated the decentralization or federalization of the party. Although Tito viewed these proposals with skepticism, concerned about the potential erosion of the LCY's

monopolistic position, the Theses represented the zenith of reform efforts aimed at democratizing the party. Many of these proposals were later incorporated into the documents of the Ninth Congress in 1969 (Bešlin 2022: 238–253). Subsequently, these changes catalyzed transformations in state organization within the federalist framework, a political shift in party generations, and the rise of reformist leaders in the republican parties, notably in Serbia and Croatia. This period marked the peak of democratic tendencies within Yugoslav socialism, reflecting an era of significant transition and transformation within the socialist framework of Yugoslavia.

Reforming Leadership in Serbia, 1968-1972: The Highest Level of Democratic Socialism in Yugoslavia

The era of Marko Nikezić's leadership in Serbia, from late 1968 to October 1972, stands out as a particularly significant phase in the evolution of democratic socialism in Yugoslavia. This period is often regarded as the top and most comprehensive realization of the democratization of Yugoslav socialism. The significance of this phase is attributed not only to Serbia's status as the largest and most influential republic within Yugoslavia but also to the clarity, determination, and substance of the reform agenda pursued by its political elite. Ultimately, the political downfall of Nikezić's leadership in Serbia in October 1972 marked a turning point, leading to the broader defeat of the concept of democratic socialism throughout Yugoslavia. From 1968 to 1972, Yugoslavia experienced a period of intense political, social, economic, and cultural development. This era was characterized by accelerated reforms, modernization, and an incomplete yet steady democratization of the unique Yugoslav integration model. The rise of Marko Nikezić and his team to the leadership of the League of Communists of Serbia (LCS) represented the culmination of ongoing reform tendencies within the party, which had become increasingly dominant in Yugoslavia and the LCY during this period.

The election of Marko Nikezić, a former head of Yugoslav diplomacy, as the party leader in Serbia and Latinka Perović as secretary marked a significant shift from the previous party leadership in Serbia. Until July 1966, the largest Yugoslav republic had been under the strong influence of the conservative Yugoslav vice-president, Aleksandar Ranković. With the suppression of Ranković and other dogmatic cadres, who represented the war generation and were resistant to the need for democratization, ideological and political legitimation, and alignment with the socialist and revolutionary movement, a new path was opened for the party leadership in Serbia. The new direction under Nikezić and Perović was supported unreservedly by prominent reformists from the older generation, including figures like Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović, Milentije Popović, Predrag Ajtić, Mirko Tepavac and initially Petar Stambolić (Vuković 1989; Perović 1991; Nenadović 1989; Tepavac 1998; Bešlin 2022: 505–537).

The leadership of Marko Nikezić and his associates during this historical period in Serbia and Yugoslavia was anchored in the principle of democratization. Their approach revolved around a vision for modern Serbia and Yugoslavia, where reforms were directed toward empowering various societal segments at the expense of centralized state control and party oversight. This vision entailed a significant reduction in the party's role as the overseer of social movements and a robust emphasis on the self-governing concept, advocating for the autonomy of diverse sectors ranging from the economy and media to provinces, local self-governments, and state institutions. The new leadership, notably youthful with an average age not exceeding 40, initiated a practice of decentralization, symbolically stepping outside the confines of Belgrade. This approach, referred to as "demetropolization", was demonstrated through regular interactions with secretaries of municipal and city committees and inter-municipal conferences of the LCS in various regions. It also involved ongoing dialogues with business leaders and trade unions, secretaries of university LCS committees, university representatives, cultural figures, army officials, and media personnel, including newspapers, radio, and television editors, as well as local publications. An essential aspect of this approach was the introduction of frequent press conferences and interviews with journalists, emphasizing transparency and a modern approach to public relations in their governance. The essence of socialist democratization under Nikezić's leadership was the horizontal and vertical liberation from party control, fostering independence and equipping all sectors of society for autonomous operation. This was envisioned as a form of direct democracy, integral to the self-governing concept that underpinned the political integration of the Yugoslav community. By encouraging autonomy and self-governance across various societal layers, the leadership aimed to create a more dynamic, responsive, democratically-oriented socialist society in Yugoslavia (Nikezić 2003; Nenadović 2003; Perović 1991.)

Marko Nikezić and his team brought two types of complexities into focus in Serbia, the most heterogeneous of the Yugoslav republics, through the concept of democratization. The first complexity revolved around the expression of societal diversity through the plurality of interests represented by various social groups. This aspect acknowledged the multifaceted nature of society and aimed to give voice to its numerous interests. The second complexity involved recognizing and valuing Serbia's national, developmental, historical, and other disparities. This recognition encompassed acknowledging the developmental unevenness, diverse social structures, national heterogeneity, and the complex constitutional character of Serbia. Embracing these complexities was a crucial component of the reformist leadership's approach to democratizing Serbia. This appreciation of complexity was also extended to the broader understanding of Yugoslavia as a complex state. Under Nikezić's leadership, Serbia moved away from being perceived as a center resistant to change, reform, and decentralization and as a bastion of centralist and conservative forces. Instead, it embraced a role more conducive to progressive transformations. A key area of focus was the media, which underwent significant professionalization and

liberalization. The leadership's approach towards the media reflected a departure from merely transmitting political will. Instead, there was a concerted effort to support media expansion and democratization, encouraging a shift in political patterns and fostering a culture of dialogue. This approach was evident in the frequent interactions between the political leadership and media representatives and in the regular press conferences held by Serbian political leaders. Similarly, cultural and scientific institutions, traditionally strongholds of critical thought, experienced a change in atmosphere due to new, non-repressive methods. The leadership systematically worked towards modernizing solutions for various issues, spreading reformist ideas, and creating a cultural alternative aimed at limiting the influence of nationalism. In essence, the leadership of the LCS pursued a unique approach to reconcile and address the contradictions within Serbian society. This approach steered clear of authoritarian political culture and outdated dogmatic solutions, which typically veered towards power centralization and oversimplified responses to societal complexities. Instead, Nikezić's leadership aimed to establish a more inclusive, open, and dialogic political environment, fostering an atmosphere where diverse interests and perspectives could coexist and contribute to the broader societal reform and development process (Bešlin 2022; Nenadović 2003).

Marko Nikezić's reformists, in their political agenda and democratization efforts, strongly emphasized strengthening the institutional framework of Yugoslavia, particularly in Serbia. Their approach was grounded in the belief that political life should operate within a predictable rule-of-law framework characterized by a clear division of responsibilities. This stance was compatible with their rejection of the direct exercise of power by the Communist Party, advocating instead for operational tasks to be carried out by system institutions as established by the constitution and laws. The reformists underscored that democratization, a prerequisite for any modernization effort, necessitated respect for the institutional structure of society. By adhering to this principle, they aimed to eradicate authoritarianism, demagoguery, and oppressive political culture. A key aspect of this approach was the emphasis on transparency and public engagement in the political process, fostering a political orientation in Serbia that would align with the roles and functions of various institutions within the political system. These institutions included the Assembly, the Executive Council, the Socialist Alliance, the Trade Unions, the Youth Alliance, and the League of Communists, which was envisaged as the ideological and political foundation of the system. Focusing on these institutional structures, the reformists sought to move away from extra-institutional agreements and close the door to political voluntarism and arbitrariness. This approach also meant limiting extra-institutional influences, including those of the Yugoslav President, Josip Broz Tito. As such, the Socialist Republic of Serbia, under Nikezić's leadership, vigorously advocated for the efficient and legal functioning of constitutionally defined and parity-based Yugoslav institutions. They saw these institutions as crucial for the sustainable survival of the federation, offering an acceptable and viable framework for equitable decision-making and

the representation of Yugoslavia's diversity and complexity (Perović 2003: 53–79; Bešlin 2022).

Under Marko Nikezić, Serbia's reformist leadership introduced a new political model that significantly involved bilateral talks with representatives from other Yugoslav republics. This approach was a practical manifestation of the LCS policy, which viewed Yugoslavia as a complex, multi-national state. According to this perspective, Yugoslavia was not merely a platform for agreements or confrontations between the largest national groups but a community of equals (Bešlin, Žarković 2021: 791–818). Decision-making was to be inclusive, considering the interests of all constituents, and carried out in legitimate federal institutions designed for this purpose. Central to the democratic concept of Yugoslav socialism under this model was the rejection of nationalist ideologies, which were seen as incompatible with the political system of a nationally diverse community. Therefore, dialogues with representatives of other Yugoslav republics were not only crucial for understanding and cooperation but also served as an opportunity for Serbia to shed its historical image of dominance. These interactions allowed Serbia to reposition itself as an equal participant, renouncing any claims to superior rights. In these bilateral talks, Serbian authorities conveyed their commitment to genuine national equality and the equality of all Yugoslav peoples and national communities. This stance represented a significant break from the centralist model that had long been associated with Serbia and its political establishments. By advocating for a democratic, socialist Yugoslav federation, Nikezić's reformists sought to establish a constitutional and legally sound framework to serve all its people optimally. This approach was a modern counter to the nationalist critical intelligentsia's intentions, which often harbored territorial ambitions as a substitute for democratization and modernization (Bešlin 2022: 314–348).

Marko Nikezić's reformist orientation, particularly evident in economic aspects, was a defining feature of his leadership in Serbia. The LCS viewed its essential role in the economic realm as fostering the development of self-governing relations and ensuring the genuine participation of workers in enterprise management. A key focus was on the independence of the economic sector from political constraints, its modernization, and the integration of economic entities into large, competitive systems on the world market. Nikezić and his team were dedicated to constructing a system where various social actors would make key economic decisions, from labor organizations to trade unions. This approach aimed to shift the decision-making center from the state and party to the economic entities. This shift was seen as a fundamental distinction between the reformist Yugoslav model of socialism and the Soviet authoritarian state-socialist model. Additionally, the leadership supported capable and successful businessmen who operated on a reform platform, contributing to Serbia and Yugoslavia's development and economic growth in the early 1970s. The concept of integration in the economy and the creation of large economic systems were central to the program foundations of Marko Nikezić's reforms. This integration was understood in a broader context, aiming to overcome

closure and autarky at local, regional, and republic levels. It was seen as a step towards connecting the Yugoslav economy with the world market (Nikezić 2003; Vuković 1989).

Nikezić perceived the Soviet Union as the ideological stronghold and source of conservatism in Yugoslavia, especially in Serbia. He often highlighted that Serbian nationalism, communist dogmatism, national unitarism, state centralism, conservatism, the policy of national exclusivity, and ultimately, what he saw as the most dangerous for Yugoslav independence – imperialism – all found their roots in the Soviet political system. Under Nikezić's leadership, the LCS significantly contributed to the expansion of individual and institutional freedom in Serbia and indirectly in Yugoslavia. This was achieved within the existing framework of social-property relations and the mono-party system. The leadership advocated for modernization, against conservatism and oppression, promoting dialogue, system reforms, and a new political culture. It also supported the plurality of different social interests, thus embodying the highest expression of the ideas of democratic socialism in Yugoslavia (Đukić 1990; Perović 1991; Bešlin 2022).

Epilogue: Defeat of Democratic Socialism in Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia's break from Stalin in 1948 set the stage for an independent socialist path, diverging significantly from the Soviet model. This period saw the implementation of innovative policies, particularly the model of worker self-management, which exemplified Yugoslavia's commitment to integrating socialist principles with democratic practices. The success of these policies was evident in the initial years, as they fostered economic growth and a distinct Yugoslav identity, albeit with underlying ethnic and national complexities. However, as the evolution progressed, it became clear that the challenges facing Yugoslavia were multifaceted. Internally, managing a diverse multi-ethnic state posed significant hurdles, often leading to regional disparities and ethnic tensions. Economically, the limitations of the self-management model began to surface, highlighting the difficulties in sustaining economic growth and social welfare within this framework. Externally, Yugoslavia's position as a non-aligned state during the Cold War presented both opportunities and challenges. While it allowed some degree of diplomatic maneuvering between the East and West, it also exposed the country to pressures and influences from both blocs, impacting its internal policies and international standing. The culmination of these internal and external pressures became increasingly evident in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The peak of the democratization of the Yugoslav model of socialism can be traced to the years 1970 and 1971, a period marked by notable advances in political and media freedoms, societal autonomy and strength, the separation of economic power from political influence, and vibrant public debates in a culturally and nationally diverse society. However, these developments simultaneously engendered instability and insecurity among the more conservative

elements within the political leadership. As a response, President Josip Broz Tito, the federal political center, and the dogmatic factions within the party apparatus moved to resolve the dichotomy within the LCY. They sought to consolidate the party's monopoly by establishing a singular concept for the development of socialism, thereby ensuring the indivisibility of the party's power. Between the end of 1971 and throughout 1972, faced with a choice between decentralization and democratization, Tito and the party's conservatives opted solely for the former. They operated under the belief that the combination of decentralization and democratization generated excessive instability. Unprepared for the profound liberalization of society that could potentially weaken the monopolistic party's position and concerned that the blend of decentralization with strong reformist leadership in the republics would undermine Tito's role as an unchallenged authority and arbiter, the Yugoslav president, backed by conservative party members, exerted significant pressure on the respective republican parties. This pressure led to upheavals within the party structures in Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Macedonia, aiming to replace democratically-oriented leaderships. The crucial moment in this conservative turn occurred in Serbia. In October 1972, amid intense pressure and sharp attacks, the leaders of the LCS resigned, effectively withdrawing from the political and public sphere. This event marked a critical juncture, signaling not only the closing of the historical perspective of the Yugoslav community but also the definitive defeat of its democratic socialism concept. This concept has been variably influential but consistently present in party structures and the political scene since the break with Stalin in 1948. Following the defeat of democratic socialism in Yugoslavia post-1972, the self-governing system gradually began to take on characteristics more akin to the Soviet model. By the 1980s, Yugoslavia increasingly resembled the Eastern Bloc countries, shaping the trajectory of the post-socialist unraveling of the Yugoslav crisis during the collapse of European socialism and the end of the Cold War. This historical evolution highlights the complex interplay of political dynamics, leadership decisions, and ideological shifts that ultimately influenced the fate of Yugoslav socialism and the nation's subsequent dissolution.

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Uspon i pad demokratskog socijalizma u Jugoslaviji 1948-1972.

Apstrakt

Ovaj članak istražuje složeni razvoj demokratskog socijalizma u Jugoslaviji od 1948. do 1972. godine, što je period koji se odlikuje pionirskim eksperimentisanjem i kasnijim odstupanjem od prvobitnih socijalističkih ideala. Studija počinje jugoslovenskim raskidom sa Staljinom 1948. godine, čime počinje njen nezavisni socijalistički pravac razvoja, različit od sovjetskog modela. Naglašava se implementacija inovativnih politika, posebno modela radničkog samoupravljanja, koji odražava jugoslovensku težnju da spoji socijalističke principe sa demokratskim praksama. Ove politike, prvobitno uspešne u podsticanju ekonomskog rasta i stvaranju jedinstvenog jugoslovenskog identiteta, suočile su se sa unutrašnjim izazovima etničke i nacionalne složenosti i spoljnim pritiscima zbog nesvrstanog stava tokom Hladnog rata. Članak se bavi unutrašnjom političkom dinamikom i strategijama liderstva Jugoslavije tokom ovog transformacijskog perioda, domenom koji je bio manje zastupljen u akademskim istraživanjima za naznačeni period, naročito za period druge polovine 1960-tih. Analizira se kako su Tito i njegovi savremenici upravljali socijalističkom državom, balansirajući između ideala demokratije i ideoloških zahteva. Posebna pažnja posvećena je preplitanju domaćih politika i međunarodnih uticaja, čime se nudi sveobuhvatan pogled na jugoslovenski socijalistički eksperiment. Pad demokratskog socijalizma u Jugoslaviji, koji kulminira političkim promenama 1972. godine, prikazuje se ne kao nagli kolaps, već kao postepeni proces, obeležen promenama u politici i ideologiji. Studija zaključuje da jugoslovensko iskustvo pruža dragocene uvide u složenosti implementacije socijalizma u jednom raznolikom društvu, ilustrujući i potencijale i ograničenja spajanja autoritarnog socijalizma sa demokratskim principima.

Ključne reči: Jugoslavija, socijalizam, samoupravljanje, demokratizacija, Savez komunista, Josip Broz Tito, Marko Nikezić.

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WHO WERE THE LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES IN YUGOSLAVIA IN THE LATE 1960S AND EARLY 1970S? CONFLICT BETWEEN CENTRIST FACTIONS

ABSTRACT
The article challenges conventional political classifications, arguing that real-world politics defy simplistic labels due to pragmatic factors, internal and external influences. In the Yugoslav context of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the terms "conservatism" and "liberalism" were complex, entangled in Cold War dynamics and intra-party struggles. The article explores the intertwined nature of nationalism and socialism, suggesting that even communism as ideology historically stemmed from collectivist nationalism. It delves into the liberal-conservative entanglement (mostly in Serbia, with some reflections on the other Yugoslav Republics) during this period, highlighting the blurred lines between these labels. The article discusses a political centrism that emerged, reflecting not only on the Yugoslav position, but possibly also a deeper Central European tendency. In so doing, it refrains from definitive answers, presenting a complex picture of events, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of historical causality and human identity within the socialist prism.

KEYWORDS
nationalism, democracy, socialism, liberalism, conservatism, Yugoslavia, centrism

If we had no problems, we'd invent them to reassure ourselves that we exist.

U. G. Krishnamurti

The conventional political divide, encompassing labels such as liberal, conservative, left-right, and the like, proves insufficient in capturing the intricacies of real-world politics. Political positions frequently converge due to pragmatic considerations and external, or even internal, influences. It is conceivable to adopt a more skeptical stance regarding the imperative for social scientists to rigidly define and categorize political attitudes. Advocacy for a nuanced and

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context-dependent approach becomes pertinent, contending that inflexible definitions and categorizations may constrain our comprehension. Instead, fostering a critical and interdisciplinary perspective that challenges established norms and encourages a profound analysis of complex social phenomena is advisable.

In the Yugoslav socialist context, the terms "conservatism" and "liberalism" were used within the framework of Cold War dynamics, when the former sounded pejorative, or within intra-party currents and power struggles where it was opportune to avoid both labels. During the 1960s and 70s, the Cold War vocabulary was still largely ideological. It was crucial to identify oneself as a liberal or a conservative, a socialist (Eurocommunist) or a dogmatist (Stalinist), a Western sympathizer or a Sovietophile (Russophile) etc. In the Western imagination, it was easier to explain one's ideological position and economic interests rather than delve into ethnic, national, linguistic, and other cultural and historical differences. The West encouraged such rigid dichotomies within the Eastern Bloc, and even the communist ideological-Manichean worldview didn't hinder this. This ultimately prevented agreement and convergence between these sides, some kind of liberal-conservative socialism (Leszek Kołakowski) and establishing a position akin to a political center. However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Yugoslavia entered an experimental phase that sought to reconcile both components, both on an ideological and national level. It seemed as if lasting, almost final, interethnic and ideological compromises and agreements were within reach. So, the chosen time period is indicative of significant developments within the Yugoslav context, and it sheds light on the challenges and dynamics inherent in socialist systems.

The relevance of the topic is reflected in the attitude toward several elements. Firstly, in regard to Yugoslav socialism's unique model**.** Yugoslavia, From the 1950s onward, Yugoslavia, led by Josip Broz Tito, pursued a distinct form of socialism known as "self-management socialism". This model aimed to decentralize economic and political decision-making, giving more autonomy to workers and enterprises. Understanding the ideological and political divisions within Yugoslavia helps illuminate the complexities of this unique socialist experiment. Secondly, in connection to liberalization and pluralism, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a period of relative liberalization in Yugoslavia. In addition to the market-oriented economic reforms of 1965, this era witnessed heightened political and cultural openness, characterized by a relaxation of state control. Examining the liberals of this time provides insights into the extent of political pluralism and the boundaries of dissent within a socialist system. On the other side, the same period also witnessed a conservative backlash against the perceived liberalization. Certain prominent figures within the Yugoslav leadership and society were uncomfortable with the increasing openness and sought to reassert control. One might also assume that the conservative stance gained prominence in opposition to the processes of decentralization of state and Party organization within Yugoslav socialism in the period under review. However, the dynamics between

liberals and conservatives in Yugoslavia were not unequivocal or unidirectional, reflecting broader trends within socialist systems. Socialist states often grappled with issues of centralization, ideological conformity, and the balance between state authority and individual freedoms. By studying Yugoslavia, one gains insights into how these challenges manifested in a specific context. Finally, as Yugoslavia was a multi-ethnic and multi-national state, the tensions between liberals and conservatives were closely related and intersected with issues of nationalism and state unity.

Nationalism, Modernity, Communism

Firstly, in this article, we start from the assumption that it is wrong to view nationalism and socialism as opposed and competing ideologies (Mevius 2009: 377; Van Ree 2000: 25–26; Van Ree 2015: 10). Modern nationalism historically preceded socialism and communism. Disagreements can exist only regarding whether nationalism is the birthplace of modernity, and simultaneously non-Western modernity (Liah Greenfeld, Partha Chatterjee, partly Anthony D. Smith), or whether modernity produced nationalism (Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, etc.). In both cases, all modern ideologies (socialism, communism, liberalism, conservatism, fascism, Nazism, etc.) have emerged from a combination of both.

In any case, all these modern ideologies would be unthinkable without the first and fundamental (national) premise that the people and the nation are sovereign, and that the nation is basically a sovereign community of fundamentaly equal members, however the membership is defined (Greenfeld 2019: 54). From this vantage point, it can be posited that communist regimes in power were, fundamentally, a manifestation of the collectivist (multi)ethnic nationalism paradigm. Communism (and communism in power even more) is, in fact, an ideology and practice that varied the primary ideas of nationalism and attempted to extract some socio-economic maximum from concrete historical experience while syncretically combining and mixing old ideas in new conditions.

This, of course, does not mean that the so-called "national question" was not a burning issue throughout the existence of socialist Yugoslavia (as well as earlier) and that various conceptions, ideas, personal, and political fates were not decided on it.[1]

In general, the notion that ethnic nationalism was purportedly expelled from the communist world in 1945, only to abruptly re-emerge in 1989, has already been challenged. Namely, communists everywhere, from Cuba to North Korea, sought national legitimacy and, to a certain degree, ethnic legitimation. Moreover, communism is an ideology that during its entire duration (also in the *realpolitik* sense) from 1848 to 1989 developed within the era of nationalism that gave birth to all other modern ideologies (Mevius 2009: 378).

1 For an overview of the national question and political conflicts in socialist Yugoslavia, see Burg 1983; Ramet 1992; Haug 2012.

Historically speaking, liberalism spread between collectivist civic (France) and individualistic civic nationalism (England), while communism oscillated between collectivist ethnic and collectivist multi-ethnic nationalism. Conservatism remains a sort of enigma there. More a reflex than an ideology.

In all areas of Yugoslav social life, the Yugoslav communists wanted to create a discontinuity with the past, but in the national question, they were still conservative. Even if the ultimate goal was the withering away of the state, nations were not intended for extinction. This duality burdened Yugoslavia both as an ideological concept and as a state (Jović 2004: 284).

The liberal-conservative entanglement came to the forefront in Serbia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There, qualifications like "liberals" (or "anarcho-liberals") and "conservatives" were perhaps most consistently used. Often, conservatism was simplistically equated with the *status quo*, while liberalism was seen as almost revolutionary reformism.

Another problem, from contemporary perspective, is that political conflicts in Yugoslavia throughout its existence are often viewed through the prism of permanent state of emergency and crisis, as if there was never any "political normalcy". Hence, the relationship between liberals and conservatives becomes a pivotal issue. Later events, wars, and conflicts in that region confirmed such a belief, but it still doesn't mean that everything always led to such an outcome. That implies writing history from the end, not from the beginning.

Nevertheless, even if that is the case, there is nothing precluding us from retrospectively examining the Western hemisphere, which Eastern Europe later endeavored to emulate. Did not the West emerge victorious in the Cold War, among other factors, due to the successful fusion of liberal and conservative ideologies (with Ronald Reagan being the most conspicuous manifestation of that fusion) against the communist adversary – a dynamic that was absent in the East? Was there ever a prospect for a comparable convergence in the Yugoslav context, not to mention the Eastern Bloc?

It is a common belief that in 1972, the so-called conservatives in Serbia clashed with the liberals, although those very liberals had previously paved the way for them. Of course, these conservatives were just the battering ram of Josip Broz Tito (Đukić 1990: 6). But did the liberals merely pave the way for those conservatives, or were they somewhat conservative themselves? On the other hand, were those considered conservatives also liberal? In the end, Marko Nikezić himself, as the president of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Serbia (1968-1972) and the leader of the liberal faction among Serbian communists, said: "I had no idea how vast the conceptual differences were between us" (Nikezić 2003: 7). Perhaps because these conceptual differences were not so great, until the moment when the actual conflict took place. Only post-festum, on both sides, everything wanted and had to be explained so strictly causally. Causality in history is always a question of identity. Identity is a fiction composed of fragments of information that serve no purpose other than to hold that causality together. Logical explanations derived from this causality are just tools in the conflict that thoughts and ideas inevitably

produce. This question delves into the very nature of historical material and the possibility of historical research or explanations of everything through logical and prolonged cause-and-effect relationships. Here, we won't delve into the potential (a)causality of all events but attempt to provide a more complex picture of events and potential convergent elements that existed back then and pulled the nature of the Yugoslav political system at the time toward the center. We do not intend to offer answers, especially not definitive answers, to why centrifugal forces eventually prevailed.

On the other hand, besides all liberal and conservative labels, we assume that all those who belonged to the League of Communists, even the majority of those who did not but had a share in the contemporary public space, looked at the world through the prism of socialism. In that context, socialism did not function as an ideology or tendency but as a basic frame of reference, a social and mental (cultural) process that was almost taken for granted, as Miroslav Krleža once stated: "Socialism is not a program but history being realized" (interview for *Politika*, January 1, 2, and 3, 1967) (Štajduhar 1993: 368).

"Liberal Conservatives" and "Conservative Liberals"

In his existential-absurdist novel *Ferdydurke* (published in 1937), Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz warned about a crucial change that occurred in the 20th century. Until that point, human society was distinctly divided into two factions: those advocating for the status quo and those advocating for change. However, an unprecedented historical acceleration rendered this division obsolete. History began moving beneath people's feet. Suddenly, both the status quo and change embodied movement. It became conceivable to be simultaneously conservative and progressive.

This implied that, even within the political sphere, liberals and conservatives could converge. Merely stating that some advocated for change and progress while others opposed it was no longer sufficient (Proch et. al. 2019: 2–3.).

However, the nature of human thoughts and ideas perpetually seduces towards divergence, division, and segregation, the need to distinguish, on any basis. How did this look in the context of Yugoslav politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s?

In the early 1970s, Latinka Perović (secretary of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, 1968-1972) explained to Belgrade journalists that the League of Communists had become so "generationally differentiated" that between these generations, "whole worlds exist" (Bešlin, Žarković 2021: 793).

In a speech at the extended session of the Belgrade University Council on December 9, 1970 (later published under the title "The Identity of Serbia"), Nikezić succinctly summarized his blend of conservative-liberal views. The national question was an opportunity for him to ask: "[W]hether everyone will need a party, national, or local visa, or will a person be valued as much as they contribute to society" (Nikezić 2003: 202). It was an individual-focused

perspective. Also, one of the fundamental premises that characterized these Serbian liberals was their opposition to traditional equating Serbia with Yugoslavia and the belief that Serbia had its own politics, identity, and interests (ibid.: 203).

However, it turns out that he did not harbor illusions about any historical shortcuts in social development: "[O]ur limitations in most areas now are more a matter of development, of level, than of institutions and regulations. There are tons of these regulations, and also the same number of institutional solutions" (ibid.: 206). So, despite the nominal desire to overcome tradition, the recognition that it cannot be defeated by institutional reorganizations and legal paragraphs falls under a conservative reflex.

Something similar was said earlier, at the Commission for Interethnic Relations meeting in January 1969, regarding the shift of the political decision-making focus, questioning: "[I]s this a bit too simplified, will everything disappear with the new Constitution, with these amendments?" (AJ, A.CK SKJ, XXII-IA-K.4/9: 25.).

On the other hand, in Zagreb (capital of the second biggest Yugoslav republic of Croatia) during those days and years, the prevailing sentiment could have been somewhat different. In the early 1970s, a delegation from the Italian Communist Party (PCI) visited Yugoslavia, including Zagreb and Belgrade. On this occasion, they met with both younger figures (Savka Dabčević-Kučar, Miko Tripalo, Pero Pirker) and older politicians (Vladimir Bakarić, Edvard Kardelj, Veljko Vlahović). A comprehensive account of these meetings was provided by the Italian communist Giancarlo Pajetta, generally well-informed observer of Yugoslav affairs. He says he encountered a vibrant atmosphere in Yugoslavia, but observes that, in terms of "loudness and polemical tone", the older politicians did not differ from the younger ones. On the contrary, nominal conservatives such as Kardelj and Bakarić were actively engaged in the process of constitutional reforms aimed at further decentralization and democratization of the Yugoslav state and society (APC, FG, Esteri 800. (Jugoslavia), 1971: 1).

However, Pajetta emphasizes being particularly struck by the sharpness of Pero Pirker and the exaltation of Savka Dabčević-Kučar. Dabčević-Kučar addressed the generally inadequate degree of reforms in contemporary socialist countries. Specifically, she expressed concern that they should not be complacent with a situation in which there is a perception that nothing more was accomplished but "the chain has loosened, and the collar no longer tightens as much". She argued that socialism must once again become desirable, even in the most developed capitalist countries. According to her, Yugoslavs had regained faith in individual freedom but had also realized that institutional solutions lagged behind social development (ibid.: 8).

This last part represents almost a complete contrast to the views of their Serbian counterparts and politically aligned figures of the same generation. The latter argued that, although solutions may appear excellent on paper, they do not automatically translate into a change in social reality. Clearly, the Croatian leadership was then in a state of almost revolutionary sentiment. At the

same time, not only Marko Nikezić and Latinka Perović but also personalities like Mirko Tepavac, a politician from the autonomous province of Vojvodina (who served as the assistant minister of foreign affairs until 1969 and as the minister of foreign affairs of Yugoslavia from 1969 to 1972), asserted that certain issues, such as the national question, could never be conclusively resolved, remaining perpetual: "In fact, there is no way for it to be finally resolved in the sense that a set of measures and achieved changes is declared as a state of complete resolution of this problem, after which it would no longer reappear".[2]

In this regard, were Serbian liberals perhaps more inclined toward conservatism, exhibiting greater skepticism than their counterparts in Croatia, especially through the conviction that socialist self-management and constitutional changes would not magically solve deeply rooted societal problems? Yugoslavia, in its political leadership, was otherwise torn between two almost archetypal motives: the desire to base itself as a complex state on the principles of moderation, balancing, caution, and conciliation and, on the other hand, to ensure some permanent, principled solutions through rational legislation. One of the main architects of this Yugoslav constitutional-legal laboratory was above mentioned Edvard Kardelj, who, in maneuvering between these two principles, seemed to want to simultaneously be both Plato (searching for the formula to impose order and structure, as in his *Republic*) and Aristotle (harmony of interactions, accepting reality as it is). Ultimately, we can say, in the national sense, Yugoslav communists generally behaved more like Aristotle, and in the social sense, like Plato.

Also, Nikezić regarded the enduring relationship between the ruling party and the intelligentsia with a rather detached perspective: "Personally, I don't believe it will ever change completely. Regarding the workers' movement, especially the communist parties, this segment of the intelligentsia, unlike the technical part, is much more inclined towards radical movements. In socialist countries, if we look at what happened, not the impressions but the facts confirmed by history, for a while, they are apologists, and afterward, they are mostly in opposition" (Nikezić 2003: 207). Here, he even admits that this oppositional intelligentsia is inclined towards the new (radical), while those in the League of Communists, due to the nature of their position, lean towards maintaining the old. Yet, this was part of the overall dynamics of the 20th century where it was unclear what was new, what was old, or one could simultaneously be for both the old and the new.

Ultimately, he defined himself as a "revolutionary democrat", wherein "revolutionary" could be interpreted as a link to the party's history and revolution - again, a conservative reflex, and "democratic" indicating a preference for evolutionary changes. Undoubtedly, the leading figures of the Serbian leadership, who were oriented towards reform and were in contrast with much of the tradition and the "mentality of the milieu", were not inclined towards repression and authoritarianism personified in the monolithic and mass Party

2 „Samoupravnost i nacionalno pitanje", Borba, 20.1.1969.: 4.

(Bešlin, Žarković 2021: 799; Bešlin 2022: 313). But of course, just because they were considered liberal, it doesn't mean that, at least for a time, they didn't genuinely rule and did everything to push forward their ideas and visions.

Later, in early 1972, during a meeting with directors and chief editors of newspapers, radio, and television, Nikezić would vary his thesis, actually his skepticism, about the impossibilities of democracy in underdeveloped conditions: "Persistently continuing the self-management and democratic course, we must realistically assess the possibilities of democracy in Yugoslavia, possibilities that can only grow with industrialization. In our revolution, its plebeian character is certainly its driving force. But, for democracy, in addition to that, culture is needed. It requires more than explosions" (Nikezić 2003: 247).

He then expressed the essence of the problem: "There were talks that we don't have theoretical answers. There is no straightforward answer – to categorize everything as progressive or conservative. First, it's very complex. [...] Additionally, here, the national question enters obliquely and diagonally cuts across all our social problems. I won't say it changes them fundamentally, but it certainly makes them even more complex" (ibid.: 246). Nationalism, therefore, isn't just one of the ideas or ideologies; it is like a diagonal that cuts across everything, with ideologies as vertical, and the reality of life and the flow of time as a horizontal line.

Consequently, for Nikezić, conservatism, provisionally speaking, was simply: looking back and embellishing the past and backwardness (ibid.: 260). This should be partially read as self-criticism because, in relation to its (embellished) recent past, communism could then be considered a conservative order. However, even nominal opponents of the "liberal course", members of the older generation of Serbian communists like Petar Stambolić and Draža Marković, thought similarly.

Draža Marković noted in his diary: "I don't have the strength to take responsibility for everything we're entering into, but I also don't want to remain indifferent to what I've lived for and fought for. I am determined to the end. I am not a conservative, and I cannot become one. However, I don't agree with unrealistic daydreaming and abstract, schematic, dogmatic democratization" (Marković 1987 (1): 98). Later he adds: "As dangerous and harmful as liberalism is, in our conditions of still relative backwardness, conservative bureaucratism, primitive dogmatism, is equally dangerous" (ibid. (2): 163.).

This is a somewhat elitist shared position between Nikezić and Marković. In outcomes, it stems from conservatism. On the other hand, Draža Marković was aware that from another perspective, he himself could be considered a liberal. After the showdown with the liberals in 1972, he said: "Had I not been one of the key figures in the clarifications at the time, and in a way an introductory speaker in the meeting with Tito, which had significant political weight in the first 'post-liberal' period, the dogmatists from Vojvodina would have included me in the list of 'liberals'" (Đekić 1990: 240).

Reportedly, Petar Stambolić defended the liberals for a long time, even in front of Tito: "Comrade Tito, apart from the people you have in these republics

and this leadership, the rest are nothing but bureaucratic rags and leftovers" (Glišić 2010: 113).

Yet, this simultaneous distancing from both "liberalism" and "conservatism" reminds one of the politics of the complex center, which is mostly inclined towards the rhetoric of "neither this nor that" and which takes into account the enduring human imperfection that prevents any utopianism and settles for possible approximations (Soltan 2002: 22). So, the formula was "neither liberalism nor conservatism", negative determination instead of the reverse, "both conservatism and liberalism", which would be closer to what Leszek Kołakowski later, in the late 1970s, termed "liberal-conservative socialism".[3] This was the formula for a kind of centrism.

But where did Kołakowski get that from? Possibly, these tendencies, which implicitly or explicitly always circulated in the political-ideological space, can be seen as a kind of deeper Central European reflex, in which a blend of ideological and geopolitical center arises. When carefully examined, all the things Yugoslavia prided itself on – self-determination of nations, federalism, self-management (derived from the idea of self-government), and non-alignment (neutrality) – were mostly Central European concepts, as a response to internal complexity and pretensions from both the East and the West (Johnson 1996: 10; Mark et. al. 2019: 5–8). However, during the period when Central Europe, as part of the Eastern Bloc, was "kidnapped" (Milan Kundera), Yugoslavia could be considered, if not small Europe, at least small Central Europe, a kind of reserve position of Central Europe, a continuation of the hope that was once placed in the Habsburg Monarchy or its transformation into some Danube-Adriatic-Balkan federation, where nations had, to begin with, their cultural and economic self-government. These ideas found their continuation in Austromarxism, then in the Second and Half-International (the so-called Vienna or centrist International), but they didn't stop there; they evolved both politically and later geopolitically. Austromarxism ultimately influenced ideas about the self-determination of nations in both the Wilsonian and Leninist variants (Balikić 2020: 197–198).

The political development of Yugoslav communists, who were fundamentally Leninists, Bolsheviks, and children of the Third International, shifting towards ideas they had previously rejected, can be illustrated through the example of the

3 Friszke, Koczanowicz, Internet. Here is how Polish historian Andrzej Friszke summarized the influence of Kołakowski's text: „His article 'How to Be a Conservative-Liberal-Socialist', published in the late 70s, was somehow humorous but shaped the way of thinking of my generation. This is more or less how we all thought at the time. Those three components of our views were kept in balance, none of them had a priority. I mean, of course, there were people who were more liberal and those who were more socialist, but this balance was somehow present. Kołakowski has shown that those views and values are not mutually exclusive. He also advocated that recognising all of those elements can prevent us from treating any one of them as an absolute, as a dogma. This text speaks for the dominant intellectual current of the 70s, the 80s and the 90s, and Gazeta Wyborcza was one of the mediums for those ideas".

relationship between the Slovenes Henrik Tuma and Edvard Kardelj. Henrik Tuma, was a member of the Yugoslav Social Democratic Party as early as 1908 (founded in Slovenia and emerged as a breakaway from the Social Democratic Party of Austria). After World War I, he was no longer politically active but continued to write from the position of left-wing socialism, defending young Slovene communists, etc. However, in the early 1920s, he rejected Russian communism as a model and advocated for its own path to socialism.[4] Kardelj later criticized him in his *Razvoj slovenačkog nacionalnog pitanja* (1937), mainly due to Austromarxist and social democratic views on the national question as purely a matter of cultural autonomy (Kardelj 1979: 75–76). Nevertheless, the 1948 break with Moscow represented a partial vindication of Tuma's early views and social democracy in general, which was considered reactionary by the communists. In the decades after the late 1940s, geopolitical centrism in Yugoslavia (called the Non-Aligned Movement), as well as its separate internal (self-management) path, became subjects of fundamental agreement, and consensus. The space of conflict, in this center, was initially methodological, eventually evolving into conceptual conflicts.

It would be oversimplified to say that this smaller, narrower center (the older generation) pragmatically based itself on balancing interests, balancing power relations, while the younger center believed that things could still be resolved on a principled basis. In reality, both sides combined both principles, with the crucial difference being that the younger generation of liberals wanted to govern without resorting to repression. However, liberalism penetrated Yugoslavia for other reasons as well. As Vladimir Gligorov said: "Various experiences of socialist injustice led the citizens of Yugoslavia, especially intellectuals, to discover liberal principles. The Yugoslav system (self-management) did not a priori reject pluralism and the market, and part of the defense of that system relied on essentially liberal arguments" (Gligorov 2014: 15).

The basic political trope is that "left" and "right" are polar opposites, and their agendas always exclude each other. According to this logic, the left always seeks more equality and economic redistribution, and the right seeks more freedom, a smaller bureaucratic apparatus, privatization, etc. This remains the case when social sciences use the language of technical rigidity and definitionism. As Samuel T. Coleridge once said: "A dull mind distinguishes things only by dividing them". However, social and humanistic sciences, through their rigidity, actually manipulate all the elementary facts of human psychology (and even biology), encouraging all artificial compartmentalizations in both the present and the past (Alvesson et. al. 2017). After all, the human biological and psychological foundation does not know the concepts of "left" and "right", "liberal" and "conservative", "progressive" and "regressive". This, of course, does not mean that society and culture do not cause and bear the consequences of such divisions, but it also means that if we approach them only structurally and in

4 A more comprehensive biography of Henrik Tuma (by Dušan Kermavner) in *Slovenski biografski leksikon* at: https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi732812/

a purely constructivist manner, we can miss some important facts and possibilities related to human responses to crises, bridging gaps, and converging between such constructed positions (Bakker et. al. 2020: 613–612).

The implications of this can be much broader than just situationist ones, those that by the nature of things and the power relationships of the ruling political party, over time, necessarily approach the center, something akin to the median voter theorem (Downs 1957). In summary, while the traditional median voter theorem might not directly apply in non-liberal societies with limited political competition, the underlying principle of strategic positioning in response to public sentiment can still be relevant, although in different and often more complex ways. Yugoslavia, perhaps with its "market socialism", was a good testing ground for such a theorem. They wanted to tread the middle path. However, to preserve this middle path, a dose of conservatism as a reflex was necessary, although not necessarily conservatism as an ideology (Okutan 2013: 128). There was no definitive answer to the question of what to utilize more on the path of reform and problem-solving: accumulated experience or the power of rational solutions? In the long term, communists were not conservatives, but in the short term, within their own era, as a kind of historical microcosm in which everything, the beginning, the process, and the end, were compressed, they leaned towards conservatism. They increasingly relied on their historical experience rather than ideology and abstract ideas generated by reason. All generations that survived World War II could not extinguish the conservative thread within them because they were faced with potential outcomes of human nature and actions that did not suggest that every progress was solely and exclusively a positive thing. Much later, Latinka Perović summarized it like this: "[...] [B]ut, you know, they were mature people and what I deeply respected about them - they knew the people and were very cautious. Now it will be said that their conservatism was largely motivated by their self-love. But they also feared what could come out of that people. [...] It's not just a matter of political will, how to motivate that people to move, to go towards something better, more civilized" (Milosavljević 2010: 39–40).

Yugoslav communists, generally speaking, relied on an almost Burkean principle (Edmund Burke), according to which a social organism seeks change like any natural organism, but preferably so that individual organs and the whole organism develop harmoniously. The nature of power and rulers is such that they never favor sudden changes but gradual reforms (Okutan 2013: 132). So, Yugoslav reforms meant a constant attempt to harmonize individual organs (e.g., republics) and the entire organism.

The Common Fate of Communist Liberals and Conservatives

Marko Nikezić and Latinka Perović, as leading Serbian communists during the brief period from 1968 to 1972, shared the belief that Yugoslavia belonged to everyone, that it was not just an extension of Serbia, and that, at least for the time being, it represented the common interest of all its components. However, during

discussions within various bodies and committees within the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia regarding interethnic relations, one could sense their maneuvering between a broader democratic and more skeptical, even elitist approach. During one of the discussions in the Commission of the CC LCY for interethnic and interrepublic relations in January 1969, Perović expressed her intolerance towards the usual populist dramatization in party documents. For example, when a paragraph in the document related to the fight against political opponents read, "[...] the League of Communists calls on all organizations and all its members to be vigilant and uncover attempts, tendencies [...]" she would add, "I think we need to relieve the Party of some obligations that should be the responsibility of the security service" (AJ, A.CK SKJ, XXIIIA-K.4/9: 8). Such a stance, suggesting that certain matters should be returned to institutions and not necessarily managed by party committees, was enough to label them as liberals. She also demanded that parts mentioning "reactionary and conservative forces" be removed, leaving only "nationalistic and chauvinistic" elements (ibid.: 53). In the end, she somewhat elitistically concluded: "We had principles and good policies regarding national relations, but a relatively small number of communists understood these policies" (ibid.: 82).

Significantly, Nikezić was also against "dogmatic democratic" formulations, such as those stating "that a community cannot survive, let alone develop successfully, without complete equality of all nations and nationalities, etc." (ibid.: 20).

His rhetorical strategy, however, often went in a different direction. He could express the most revolutionary ideas but aimed to bring them back to reality: "Precisely because our ambitions are so great in terms of social transformation, we should say that we have inherited age-old antagonisms [...] civilization, cultural, national [...]. For example, Serbs and Albanians have been competing for centuries, and suddenly we accept the entire bill. We need to uproot these roots, bear the consequences; in a historically short period, we need to resolve the issue of relationships where almost all tradition is against us" (ibid.: 21). This articulation of views is significant not because Nikezić pretended to support change while in a defeatist manner invoking centuries-old traditions that prevent it, but because he consciously or unconsciously posed a dilemma: either effect almost instantaneous change in consciousness or the alternative is withdrawal from a society that shows neither the desire nor the capacity for such change. Thus, this perspective is both realpolitik and utopian, negating itself, and condemning itself to failure and isolation. His words could be perceived as mere deception, empty words, or equivocation, although his desire for change was genuine and authentic.

A similar genesis is found in his attitude towards Yugoslavia: "Perhaps I am a statist, perhaps I am wrong, but right now I do not see the disintegration of Yugoslavia as something that would be realistic, let alone something progressive or serving the interests of any of its nation" (ibid.: 23).The key here might be the word "now", suggesting a stance towards Yugoslavia not based on some fraternal internationalism but rather on *realpolitik* because "we are small and

struggling for survival [...] and now you will start to slice up Yugoslavia like salami and want to maintain the independence and sovereignty of each nation. So, it doesn't seem realistic [...]" (ibid.: 24).

The thing with the Yugoslav doctrine was that from the start, it was considered *per se* as something that had disrupted the original communist (Soviet) doctrine, raising difficult questions and offering its answers. This led to the formation of a counter-doctrine that created its own dogmas, unquestionable beliefs, and boundaries. After that, creating an alternative within this alternative became challenging.

According to some viewpoints, the Serbian and Croatian reformist leaderships couldn't agree because they lacked awareness that they represented a political alternative. They couldn't admit to themselves that they were an alternative (Lakićević 2011: 137). Perhaps, this means that genuine alternatives could never have existed. There could only have been another vision of the center, conceptually different from figures like Draža Marković, Edvard Kardelj, Vladimir Bakarić, and even Tito himself. Such balancing led to a form of centrism, perhaps not consciously explicit but where you attempted to achieve a creative blend of certain moderation and the extremism inherent in your origins as a revolutionary authority, where you couldn't escape your own shadow.

This interplay of light and shadow manifested not just between people but also within the individuals. One could say that, at one point in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were two kinds of (communist) liberals: monologue liberals (actually liberal conservatives) like Edvard Kardelj, Vladimir Bakarić, and Draža Marković, who were nominally liberal but only for themselves, with a considerable reluctance to share that liberalism with others, fearing what others might do with that freedom. Therefore, *selfish* liberals seemed destined to end up in conservatism. Serbian liberals (Marko Nikezić, Latinka Perović, Koča Popović, etc.) were examples of dialogical liberalism (conservative liberalism). However, almost paradoxically, any kind of moderation within the Yugoslav social(ist) alternative, which by default persisted on the principle of movement, divergence, new paths, etc., could also be perceived as a weakness, a mirror image of subversiveness. In Yugoslavia, both liberals and conservatives, as they couldn't agree on stability, perpetuated change. Ultimately, the only one who could retain the privileged role of stabilizer was Josip Broz Tito. He remained the only Yugoslav ("a Yugoslav by vocation", as he once expressed) and the only centrist (at least as the center of power), while all others had to be defined differently, struggling with various labels: nationalist, unitarist, conservative, liberal, progressive, dogmatic, etc. Such Tito's position can also be linked to his Bolshevik genesis and, in general, the Soviet model of establishing intra-party opponents along a similar model: rightists, leftists, Trotskyists, anarchists. However, all these categories were fluid and had their developmental dynamics that depended on the current or accidental circumstances in which the regime found itself.

Being an equilibrist didn't help others, and it couldn't preserve their political positions. Tito himself admitted this, saying about Serbian liberals just

before their removal: "I must admit that I was surprised how they maintained balance in Serbia during the Croatian movement" (Milosavljević 2010: 164). But they weren't rewarded for it.

The question remains whether Yugoslavia was inherently defined as a community and state where the *status quo* was possible and desirable. Certainly not ideologically, but politically it was. Kardelj expressed this essence at that time when Ljubomir Veljković, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Ekonomska politika*, asked him why there were accusations of anarcholiberalism, technocratism, etc., when it was known that this wasn't true. Kardelj replied: "You know what, what you advocate and popularize leaves no room for us. What are we supposed to do within that", referring, of course, to the role of the Party (Lakićević 2011: 44). Such an approach didn't drastically differ from the rest of the Eastern Bloc. Kolakowski summed it up best in 1966. in his speech at Warsaw University, marking the tenth anniversary of the 1956 events, provocatively stating that it might not be as bad as it was before 1956, but, at the same time, it was not as bad only because the authorities didn't want it to be that bad – not because some kind of institutional safety valves were put in place (Friszke, Koczanowicz, Internet).

In the same year (1966), Desimir Tošić, a Yugoslav emigrant in London, wondered whether Bakarić and Kardelj were for real liberalization or for the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Lakićević 2020: 334). It did not occur to him to put the conjunction *and* instead of the conjunction *or*.

The problem was that all major personnel and political changes during socialist Yugoslavia were always interpreted as defeats. The dismissal of Aleksandar Ranković in 1966 was a defeat for conservatives and Serbs, the removal of the Croatian leadership in 1971 was a defeat for reformists and Croatia, and the replacement of Serbian liberals in 1972 was a defeat for liberalism and Serbia, etc. In reality, these were defeats not just for certain currents, republics, or nations but above all of political fusionism. Fusionists were pushed to the margins. The voices of fusion could only be heard in opposition. For example, a great fusionist was Milovan Đilas, then a dissident, who was opposed to multi-party systems but said that democratic forces should operate within the League of Communists (ibid.: 351). Nobody within the Party could take this seriously, possibly considering it a clandestine maneuver similar to the one in the 1950s when Đilas was dismissed under the accusation of introducing multi-party systems through the back door.

Therefore, the task of fusion was transferred to the next generation, which ultimately resulted in a toxic convergence – in the form of Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević.

In the latter half of the 1980s, Milošević finally dealt with the generation of Serbian communists epitomized by Draža Marković, Petar Stambolić, and Stambolić's nephew Ivan Stambolić, with whom he had been closely associated. The slogan that Serbian liberals had given space to conservatives who later beheaded them came back as a boomerang. Now, the young and seemingly technocratic generation led by the relatively young Slobodan Milošević dismissed them.

Certainly, the old generation of recentralizers shared with Milošević a general critique of "statism" at the republican and provincial levels, demands for the restoration of the diminished statehood of SR Serbia and its unsustainable legal and political status, along with criticism of the principle of consensus in decision-making at the Yugoslav level. However, they never advocated for the violent imposition of solutions; instead, they wanted decisions to be accepted by everyone, even if it meant accepting the principle of outvoting, which they supported (Miletić, internet; Kamberović et al. 2021: 320–328).

On the other hand, the irony of political fate is that some of those who had been considered dogmatists since the 1970s and hadn't contributed to bridging the gap between conflicting factions spent a long time trying to coexist with Milošević's new and more aggressive syncretism in the late 1980s. One such figure in the Yugoslav leadership was the Croatian politician Stipe Šuvar.

Šuvar and his pamphlet *Prodor tuđih ideologija* (1973) are exemplary case of reflexive conservatism, even with elements of a more coherent ideological position of conservatism. In this text, Šuvar attacked practically everything a conservative could attack: "technocrats" and the "technical civilization", "statism", "neo-Stalinism", which he termed political conservatism, and "liberal democracy" (Šuvar 1973: 7–13). He was, of course, against "nationalism" too, as he saw it as a toxic combination of massiveness and bureaucratism. He introduced a distinction between "old" (traditionalist) and "new" bureaucratic nationalism, although the only apparent difference among them was that the old nationalists, whether they were members of the traditionalist intelligentsia or defectors from the revolution and the Party, were identified and removed from positions of power, while some "new" ones might still exist in the power structures (ibid.: 15). From this the conclusion can arise that the only alternative could have been a sort of socialist ideological aristocracy, a Party *juste milieu*. Nominally, Šuvar spoke of the revolutionary nature of the League of Communists and the reactionariness of all others, but historically, it was evident that the League of Communists was for conservation, gradual evolution, while all others were for more dramatic changes. Šuvar concluded: "The League of Communists paid dearly for neglecting the theoretical, ideological offensive against nationalist ideology in the past period and for not conducting it decisively, openly, and persuasively in all nations and environments. It seems that this weakness has not yet been overcome today" (ibid.: 15–16). Obviously, Yugoslav communist, at that point, fought that battle more through historical experience, and nationalists, in the meantime, had exploited dominant ideology for their purposes. Partially, an attempt was made to counter this with a kind of Vladimir Bakarić's concept of the Croatian socialist self-managing nation, which Šuvar also supported, and which would ultimately depoliticize and relocate national identity into the sphere of private life (Đurašković 2022: 1113, 1124-1125). However, the chances that such a self-managing nation would dissolve inter-ethnic conflicts through a sort of depoliticization were similar to those of the socio-political clash of ideas and concepts dissipating into what Edvard Kardelj later termed the "pluralism of self-management interests",

intended to be a surrogate for a multi-party system. Both concepts, intricately developed from the 1960s, experienced defeat by the end of the 1980s.

The pattern of changes in Yugoslavia in the 1960s and early 1970s, roughly speaking, was that the broadest front of moderate reformers (initially comprising both older and younger generations) wanted to mobilize the masses against the old dogmatism (Constitution of 1963, economic reform of 1965, the removal of Aleksandar Ranković, etc.). Then these masses, in some places (such as Croatia), further propelled reformers by seeking their own revolutionary moment. Due to this "dramatic dialectical dance" reformers were divided again into conservatives and those who wanted to continue and perpetuate changes, even at the cost of eventually losing control over the masses. It's essential to note that at that time, both leftists (Praxis) and liberals (like some kind of "red aristocracy") and more conservative communists shared skepticism towards the masses. It seemed that only the syncretic Croatian leadership (*proljećari*) was in favor of a mass movement. However, it was more logical to expect an agreement between such elitist Serbian and populist Croatian leadership, as, in the old Yugoslav tradition, only interethnic agreements, especially Croatian-Serbian ones, had weight and calmed tensions. But in the given situation, it would be more rational to expect liberals and conservatives within one republic to agree (Marko Nikezić and Draža Marković). The downfall of the Croatian Spring at the end of 1971 and the removal of liberals in 1972 were, in fact, Tito's ironic version of this unattained historical agreement, only instead of following the principle of "both-and", in his organization, it happened in the manner of "neither-nor".

Consequently, Nikezić's assertion that only Croatian communists themselves and their democratic course "can beat the nationalists in Croatia and anywhere among us", and that bureaucratic centralism and conservatism could never achieve this, was seen as clear support for the accused Croatian leadership (Bešlin, Žarković 2021: 816). It was both a principled and tactical statement, understandable in the context of an all-out (*en bloc*) confrontation with part of the Croatian leadership. Still, it revealed the strategic inconsistency and unconvincing nature of Serbian and Yugoslav communists, as it must have been evident that nationalism couldn't be defeated by democracy, especially considering that they were nearly synonymous concepts. A certain fuse was needed, sort of a safety valve, preferably a conservative-liberal one. This fuse was never established. The centrist position was nominally denied but continued through other means. Serbian liberals went into historical isolation, and conservatives or recentralizers (in this context, this term can be understood in multiple ways) remained halfway. So finally, they ended up the way political Centers usually do, ever since the time of the French Revolution and the National Assembly: "Notably, those in the middle or the center, who did not make up their mind one way or the other, were called 'the swamp'. It is vital to remember that both those of the left and those of the right were nationalists" (Greenfeld 2019: 53).

Milošević's "Antibureaucratic Revolution" in the late 1980s was precisely presented as a typical reckoning with this "swamp". But at that moment, it was

only once again confirmed that revolutions, whether genuinely historical (tragic) or merely farcical, were essentially just reevaluations of the societal value system. Every revolution (and "revolution") led to the need for some new future revolution, which would be declared both completed and incomplete. This seemed to be the Serbian and Yugoslav "closing of the circle".

Conclusion

The political upheavals that Yugoslavia experienced in the late 1960s and early 1970s confirmed their far-reaching consequences only two decades later in the war and dissolution of the country. The existence of differences regarding the state and social structure of Yugoslavia was not specific to that period alone; it was something that characterized the Yugoslav community from its very beginning, including the first Yugoslavia from 1918. However, one might question whether it's a mistake to put everything on the same plane of continuity. Does not history, political life, and even human life consist of many separate moments, and discontinuities, which we only later put into perspective and give them a coherent explanation? As Marko Nikezić used to say: "Participating in movements, a man does not know exactly what he is participating in" (Nikezić 2003: 245). The other part of that duo, Latinka Perović, in the decades that followed the split of 1971-72, would be more definitive in her assessments. Perhaps the nature of her historiographical profession, to which she dedicated herself after her political resignation, directed her towards seeking clearer cause-and-effect relationships, establishing continuity, etc. In such a causal perspective, fragmentation and division must first exist, and only then can an inevitable conflict arise. But perhaps it's the other way around. An open conflict had to first occur for any awareness of fragmentation to arise at all. To use a parable, a young and healthy organism is never aware of its individual parts; it functions as a more or less harmonious whole. Only with time and years, when individual organs or joints begin to manifest themselves through sensations of pain or stiffness, does a real awareness of their existence emerge. However, these fragmentary discomforts actually say something about the state of the entire organism. Conflict, therefore, in a way, was necessary for the younger generation in Yugoslav politics to emerge, and for the older generation to prove that they still exist and are relevant. Fragments (reformist currents in republican leaderships) that wanted (or could) become the center were doomed to perish. The center (Josip Broz Tito) that they wanted to turn into a fragment resisted. To confirm himself as the center, he needed to take control and restore coherence, precisely through a conflict with the fragments. He did not realize that he himself was acting from a position of a fragment. Every "new course" proclaimed from then until the dissolution of Yugoslavia (or even later) represented an attempt to stretch the original utopianism that danced on the edge (or over the edge) of tyranny, a combination of forcing particularities and imposing various kinds of "liberation" (class, national, religious, civil, etc.). These two poles, universality and particularity, seemed no

longer reconcilable. A balanced, so-called common-sense approach seemed to be out of trend. Such a social and political constellation had to spill over into the fields of science, thought and analysis, which themselves followed the internal fragmentation on one side and the final, often rigid, even moral and idealistic interpretations of the nearer and further past on the other side. Instead, it is hoped that, to achieve a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of political attitudes and behaviors, researchers can adopt more flexible and critically reflective methods when studying political ideologies and behaviors, both in the past and present.

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Marino Badurina

Ko su bili liberali i konzervativci u Jugoslaviji krajem 1960-ih i početkom 1970-ih? Sukob između centrističkih frakcija

Apstrakt

Članak dovodi u pitanje konvencionalne političke klasifikacije, tvrdeći da stvarni politički događaji izmiču pojednostavljenim oznakama, što zbog pragmatičnih faktora, što zbog unutrašnjih i spoljnih uticaja. U jugoslavenskom kontekstu kasnih 1960-ih i početkom 1970-ih, pojmovi „konzervatizam“ i „liberalizam“ bili su kompleksni, uslovljeni hladnoratovskim dinamikama i unutarpartijskim borbama. Također, članak ističe povezanu prirodu nacionalizma i socijalizma, sugerišući da se čak i unutar okvira vladajućih komunizama razvijao kolektivistički etnički nacionalizam. Bavi se složenom naravi liberalno-konzervativnih odnosa (uglavnom u Srbiji, s nekim osvrtima i na druge republike) tokom ovog razdoblja, ističući zamagljene granice između tih oznaka. Članak se suzdržava od definitivnih odgovora, predstavljajući kompleksnu sliku događaja, naglašavajući višeslojnu prirodu povesne uzročnosti i ljudskog identiteta unutar socijalističkog okvira. Članak raspravlja o svojevrsnom političkom centrizmu koji se pojavio, odražavajući ne samo jedinstveni jugoslavenski položaj, već moguće i dublji srednjoevropski refleks.

Ključne reči: nacionalizam, demokratija, socijalizam, liberalizam, konzervatizam, Jugoslavija, centrizam.

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Luka Filipović

YUGOSLAV COMMUNISTS AND EUROPEAN FAR-LEFT – FROM FIRST SUPPORTERS OF ITALIAN EUROCOMMUNISTS TO LAST ALLIES OF FRENCH NEO-STALINISTS (1965-1985)

ABSTRACT
Complex structural changes of social realty in SFRY and Western Europe during post-war decades have created the need for the largest Marxist parties of Europe outside Eastern Bloc to accommodate their party policies to new political challenges and social circumstances. Gradually, communist parties of Mediterranean started to contemplate creation of a new Marxist ideology for the welfare state era, which in practice meant seizing attempts to adjust principles of Bolshevik socialist model to their unique local circumstances, and moving away from the influence of Soviet party. League of Communists of Yugoslavia supported the reformist fractions of Italian, French, Greek and Spanish communist parties, which opened the path for further expansion of international influence and prestige of the Yugoslav communists. However, historical evolution of SFRY state policies and Yugoslav party ideology eventually took a different course than the reforms of party policies and ideologies of early Eurocommunist parties. The purpose of this article is to contribute to further understanding of the long term social and historical process which created a drift between the leading reformist parties of Europe. This is to be achieved by applying comparative method to the results of archival research conducted on historical sources that testify about the cooperation between Yugoslav, Italian and French communists at various time points during the twenty year long period, while using the findings of numerous historical, sociological and philosophical books and articles in order to bring the research results in the appropriate social and historical context.

KEYWORDS
Eurocommunism, democratic socialism, League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, Enrico Berlinguer, Georges Marchais

The Long Search for the Third Path of Socialism in Europe and Gradual Creation of Yugoslav Socialist Model

Long aftermath of the Second World War was marked by the constant rise of popularity and political influence of the far-left parties in the countries of Western Europe and especially, of the Mediterranean (Pons 2001: 3–27; Macdonald 1996: 152–188). Researchers from the fields of social sciences and humanities are

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still debating about the structural causes of the events that later became known as the Red Spring (*Primavera Rossa*) of Europe (Brogi 2018: 134–157; Sassoon 1992: 139–169), starting from the civil war in Greece, and ending with the series of strikes and rebellions in Italy and France.[1] While some are attributing more contribution to factors of economic and social circumstances, destruction or conversion of European heavy industry, post-war unemployment, homelessness and poverty, others are emphasizing the psychological consequences of the war, long lasting collective feelings of depression and guilt, which can be seen to this day in the contemporary art of the period (Moynihan 1964: 594–606; Salt 1969: 93–103; Testa 2012: 343–354; Morand 1960:167–192). However, it should be also noted that defeats of far-right forces in the war might had an influence on the rising popularity of European socialists and communists, especially in Italy and France, where Marxist resistance movements played a crucial role in war efforts against both foreign and domestic forces of the far-right.[2]

Numerous debates have also been waged among the authors of various historical and sociological studies in regard to possible extent of the influence that „Red Scare" in Western Europe and in the United States of America might have had on the creation of the *welfare state* policies in the countries of the Western Bloc (Weller, Sant'Ana 2019: 2–30; Obinger and Schmitt 2011: 246–270; Petersen, Mioni 2022: 43–59). Almost two decades later, Italian communists have argued that *welfare state* in Western Europe wasn't a collection of social and economic reforms, but rather a circular process during which labor unions and leftist parties pressured the governments into expanding welfare policies, state subsidies and changes of the labor legislation, which led to the further strengthening of unions and parties on the European far-left, which were then able to organize larger initiatives in order to gain even more concessions from the governments, thus repeating the whole circle.[3] Italian com-

1 For example, in France, it was only after the governments of United States and Great Britain threatened military intervention that French provisional government decisively engaged in efforts to put down the revolts and strikes led by the French Communist Party, while the American role in pyrrhic victory of the anti-communist coalition in Italy, as well as the previous expulsion of the Italian communists from provisional governments, remains to this day a subject of various debates, conspiracy theories and new historical researches of the early Cold War period (Drake 2004: 47–63).

2 Moral and popularity of Italian Communists, as well as the international prestige of Italian Communist Party were greatly increased by the victories of the red brigades (witch, according to modern estimations, outnumbered the forces of the official allied Italian government in the ratio of at least 3 to 1) in the North of Italy against the fascist forces and their German allies. On the other hand, French Communists were growing bitter and resentful towards De Gaulle, French post-war governments and Western allies for the way communist resistance was integrated into De Gaullist movement or/and disarmed, while the war achievements of the communist resistance were to a certain degree neglected in the early years of the Fifth Republic (Pons 2001: 3–27; Kriegel 1967: 253–268; Raymond 2005: 40–63).

3 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-490-525, Recorded conversations with Italian Communists about the social and political situation in Italy, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-597, Reports about the important attitudes of PCI leadership.

munists would later recognized the constant renewal of "welfare state circle" as a necessary condition for the gradual evolution of economic and political system from capitalist reality towards socialist utopia, thus justifying the decision of Italian Communist Party (PCI) to abandon the efforts to appropriate principles of Bolshevik socialist model when defining new party policies in Italian circumstances.[4]

Both contemporary social surveys and later sociological analyses agree that introduction of *welfare state* reforms in the countries of Western Bloc brought forward dramatic changes in the social structures of the Western European countries, while various authors of historical literature have declared the period of great social changes (followed by political and cultural turmoil that became apparent to the contemporaries during the late 50s and early 60s) that started after the creation of new economic and social policies in the West to be one of the fastest and most radical "times of change" in the entire human history (Goldthorpe 1967: 11–37; Crewe 1986: 620–638). According to many Yugoslav, Italian and French communists, social changes that followed increasingly global economic reforms created necessary conditions for the creation of the new human rights movements, cultural and artistic waves, new ideologies and political philosophies, as well as later famous rebellions of students and labor unions in the countries of Western Bloc.[5] Testimonies of many French and Italian philosophers that visited SFR Yugoslavia during that period imply that structural changes caused by *welfare state* policies influenced the formulation of new Marxist ideas while simultaneously creating material circumstances for questioning the dominant doctrines of European communist parties, thus creating foundations for the future "great schism" on the European far-left.[6]

During the fifties and sixties of the 20th century, large parts of the party leadership of the Italian Communist Party, as well as a certain number of prominent French communists, have openly declared themselves in favor of changing their approach to defining party policies, and ultimately, of creating new Marxist ideology that would be able to incorporate both the historical problems of Italian and French provinces and their local communities, and the new needs of the increasingly more politically and financially influential European working class of the *welfare state* era.[7] However, analyzed sources show that Italian and French reformists were fully aware that the road towards

4 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-429, Reports of the Yugoslav delegation present at XII Congress of PCI in Bologna.

5 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

6 AJ, KPR, I-3-a/27-18, About the visit of Jean Paul Sartre to Josip Broz Tito on 13.05.1960, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-237, Information about the stay of Roger Garaudy in Belgrade, August of 1969.

7 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-439, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX,30/I-213, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCF.

creation of a new Marxist ideology for the communist parties of the Western Block will inevitably lead to radical changes in relations between the powerful Soviet party leadership and its "*growingly independent clients in the Western Europe*", as some Yugoslav communists would define the relations between the "*Hegemon of the socialist world*" and the parties of the European far-left outside of the Eastern Bloc.[8] Reports from various League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) party offices testify that contacts between Yugoslav communists and their Western European counterparts were continuously becoming more frequent in the period in which Italian and French communists begun their long search for the *Third Path of Socialism* in Europe.[9]

During progressively more common visits to SFR Yugoslavia, many Italian and a certain number of French communists were slowly beginning not only to criticize the policies of the Soviet party with the members of LCY, but have openly stated their intentions of changing their party ideologies and introducing a new socialist model.[10] When Leonid Brezhnev rose to power in Soviet Union in 1964 and subsequently promised to change attitudes of the Soviet party towards the reformist tendencies of other communist organizations in both Eastern and Western Bloc, Palmiro Togliatti, Luigi Longo, Waldeck Rochet and Santiago Carrillo have conveyed to Josip Broz Tito their estimations that League of Communists of Yugoslavia have more than two decades long advantage over the other Marxist parties of Europe in the experience with the problems of abandoning the principles of Bolshevik socialist model and creating a new party ideology.[11] Left out from the currents of complex relations between communists parties of Western and Eastern Europe after the split with the Soviet party in 1948, Yugoslav Communists were at the same time forced to create their own socialist model and free to conduct all the endeavors necessary for the creation of new state policies and party ideology without the interference form the Soviets and those international communist institutions which upheld the Bolshevik socialist model to be universal and timeless pattern for achieving the state of socialist transition on the road from capitalist reality towards utopian Marxist society.[12]

8 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

9 AJ, SKJ, Ideological Commission, II/2-b-(244-252), Documents for preparation for the sessions of the Ideological Commission, AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International Cooperation, Reports on cooperation with PCI and PCF.

10 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-439, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX,30/I-213, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCF.

11 AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-59-62, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/27-96, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-4, Information about the visits of general secretaries of PCI, PCF and PCE, Recorded conversations between party delegations.

12 On several occasions, Italian communists stated that Yugoslav party returned to the Marxist thought of Antonio Gramsci much sooner than the leadership of PCI did the same. In his famous letters to communists of Torino, Gramsci defended the opinion

Development of the Yugoslav socialist model was a very complex and multidimensional historical and social process, often shaped by the internal clashes of Yugoslav communist and structural struggles for power within the party bureaucracy of Yugoslav party, as well as the changing role of SFR Yugoslavia in the international relations of the bipolar Cold War world, and followed by numerous structural changes of the Yugoslav society. For example, recent historical research have brought new arguments in favor of the hypothesis that the inter conflict between centralist and decentralist faction of Yugoslav communists, which started almost immediately after the war and formally ended only with the famous Fourth plenary session of Central Committee of LCY, became at some point during the fifties related with the different attitudes of Yugoslav communists towards the social changes that were caused by the process of industrialization, modernization and urbanization in Yugoslav republics (Dimić 2014: 33–67; Dimitrijević 2020: 286–365; Bešlin 2012: 1–24; Sekelj 1990: 11–59). The constant strengthening of Yugoslav economy was followed by the expansion of Yugoslav influence in the international relations, the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement, eventual renewal of cooperation with the Eastern Block, and the growing presence of Yugoslavia in the currents of Western European politics.[13]

Long term success of Yugoslav carefully planned and methodically executed approach to the foreign affairs resulted in the growing influence of the Yugoslav Communist Party (later LCY) in the sphere of changing relations between the far-left parties, first among the new anti-colonial movements and Marxist parties of Middle East, Africa, East Asia and South America, and later, among the socialists and communists of Western European countries (Mijatov 2019: 58–91; Miletić 2022: 289–333). According to the later testimonies of the Italian communists, Yugoslav party have already during the late fifties and early sixties became a fierce competition to Soviet party in terms of providing ideological guidance and financial aid to young Marxist parties of the former European colonies, and Italian party leadership was expecting "*a new force of the*

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that "*there is no magical formula*" for defining party policies of Marxist parties in order to change social values and political balance of power and thus influence the transition from capitalist reality towards socialism, but that every single local party leadership has to find a way to achieve those goals in a manner that is suited to its own social and cultural habitat, historical traditions and economic circumstances (AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-439, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership).

13 As the newest analyses of the previously scarcely research historical sources indicate, Yugoslav communists started approaching the socialist and social-democratic parties of Europe almost immediately after braking relations with the communist party of Soviet Union. Although initially unsuccessful in during 50s due to shifting political circumstances in Western Europe and changes in SFRY, Yugoslav approachment towards the parties of European moderate left eventually resulted in formation of close and long lasting cooperation between Yugoslav communists and European socialist and social-democratic parties, especially in the case of Italian and French socialists, who represented the main leftist political competition of Italian and French communists (Mijatov 2019: 13–19; Miletić 2022: 21–52).

socialist world" to establish itself as an alternative to Soviet influence among the far-left parties of Western Europe in the near future.[14] Simultaneously, rising financial capabilities of constantly growing economy of the Yugoslav state provided ample means for Yugoslav party to offer financial support to European Marxist and organize abundance of activities for the European communists and socialists, including paid vacations to Yugoslav Adriatic shore, research-visits of leftist academics, international conferences and seminars of leftist parties and labor unions, as well as many sponsorship contracts for supporting the publishing leftist newspapers and books in the countries of Western Bloc.[15]

Paving the Way for Eurocommunist Reforms – The Role of Yugoslav Communists

Almost immediately after the formal renewal of the relations between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and communist parties of Western Europe in 1956 and 1957, delegations of the PCI Central Committee started to visit Yugoslavia almost regularly every year, while it was not uncommon for the individual members of the Italian Communist Party leadership to make more than a few visits to their Yugoslav comrades during the course of the same year.[16] At the same time, Italian Marxist papers started to gradually increase the number of articles dedicated to the questions related with the problems and successes of Yugoslav economy, foreign policy, and most frequently, about the evolution of Yugoslav party ideology and development of the Yugoslav socialist model.[17] Already in the late fifties and early sixties it became common for Palmiro Togliatti and Luigi Longo, as well as for other members of the PCI leadership, to openly criticize the policies of the Soviet party in their increasingly frequent conversations with Josip Broz Tito, Aleksandar Ranković or Edvard Kardelj, and to propose such changes of PCI policies that would be simmilar to the principles of Yugoslav conceptions of self-governance, internal democratization and decentralization of the party.[18]

Although not as enthusiastic about the possibilities of researching the Yugoslav socialist model nor as willing to risk damaging the relations with the

14 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-439, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

15 AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports about cooperation with the workers parties and sydicats in Italy and France, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/1-433, Analyses of the drafts concerning financial aid to PCI, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-113, Analyses of the drafts concerning financial aid to PCE.

16 AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-59-62, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/27-96, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-4, Information about the visits of general secretaries of PCI, PCF and PCE, Recorded conversations between party delegations.

17 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-374-665, Reports about the articles concerning Yugoslavia published in PCI party press.

18 AJ, KPR, I-3-a/27-15, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-7, Conversations with the delegations of PCI and PCF party leadership, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-7, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/100-8, Reports about receptions of S. Carrillo and D. Ibarruri.

Soviet party as their Italian counterparts, French communists were also begining to propose expansion of the cooperation between PCF and LCY from the late fifties, but have been reluctant to engage in real endeavours, other then in the very cordial correspondence with their Yugoslav comrades, in order to realize their formaly often stated desicion to work on streanghening relations between the three largest and most influencial European communist parties outside the Eastern Bloc.[19] Analyzed sources testify that Italian and Yugoslav communists were also, on their behalf, rather reluctant to include the French Communist Party in their increasingly complex and ambitious plans of organizing international conferences of the European and Mediteranean far-left parties which will be held outside the sphere of Soviet influence.[20]

It is important to note that until the ,,great split" on the European left of 1968 and 1969, almost every major conference of the European Marxist parties was held either in Moscow or in the countries of Eastern Bloc, and exlusively ended with the unanimous conclusions, which were, according to later testimonies of Santiago Carrillo and Dolores Ibarruri, sometimes even drafted inside the walls of Kremlin before the opening of the conference, and almost always preceded by friendly exchange about the general affairs in Europe and the world, instead of the actual debate.[21] Party leaderships of LCY and PCI planned to organize a series of leftist conferences, starting with the great conference of the Marxist parties of the Mediterranean, which will be held outside the ,,iron curtain" and will not only allow, but emphasize the exchange of different oppinions and party attitudes defined by various communist, socialist and other leftist parties of Southern Europe, Middle East and North Africa.[22] It was exactely during the conference debates that Italian communists planed to inform other parties of Mediterranean far-left about the development of their reformist ideas and about their new conceptions of defining party policies and ideologies of different Marxist parties in accordance with their current needs and local socio-historical habitat, while Yugoslav communists agreed to finance and organize these and other gatherings of the communist parties outside the Eastern Bloc.[23]

19 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

20 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-439, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

21 AJ, KPR, I-3-a/12, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-10, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-3, Reports about receptions of S. Carrillo and D. Ibarruri, Recorded conversations between the delegations of LCY and PCE in 1965, 1968 and 1976.

22 AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, Recorded conversations with Italian communists about the possible organization of Mediterranean conference, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-59-62, Recorded conversations of J. B. Tito and L. Longo.

23 However, plans of Italian and Yugoslav communists didn't manage to achieve the desired results in 1967 and 1968, when they have been for the first time formally drafted during the meetings of Josip Broz Tito and Luigi Longo, and to a large degree,

Almost immediately after the renewal of the cordial relations and cooperation between League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) in the early sixties, and defining the first financial policies of LCY towards the Spanish party in 1965, Spanish communists have eagerly joined the efforts of Yugoslav and Italian party leaderships to prepare the international conference which will discuss the possible changes of policies and party ideologies of Mediterranean communists.[24] Two years later and during the split in the Greek Communist Party (KKE), the newly formed Interior Greek Party have also joined the unformal iniciative of reformist parties in Western Europe, which was already informaly called the *Reformist Bloc* of the European communist parties by the leftist press in Italy and France.[25] Reports of numerous Yugoslav state institutions and LCY party offices imply that policies of financial aid towards Spanish and Greek communists, defined during the process of reastablishing relations between two European "parties in exile" and Yugoslav communists, started to be expanded exponentialy after the LCY analysts declared changes of PCE and KKE party ideologies to be certainly expected in the near future.[26] The same sources also showcase that, despite the hostile relations or unspoken animosities of Yugoslav governments towards the military junta in Greece and Frankist regime in Spain, Yugoslav communists stoped providing support for the anti-reformist fraction of Greek party in exile, and have later denied financial aid to new Spanish Communist Party that have split from the reformist leadership and decided to keep close relations with the state and party institutions of the Soviet Union.[27]

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unsuccessfully implemented during the following year. Analysists from the departments of LCY concluded that it was the fear of the Soviet reaction which prevented Italian Communists from fully engaging in the discussions about reforms of party ideologies on the European far-left, and this made Yugoslav communists reluctant to provide necessary organizational support. Later during the year 1968, when Italian communists came to terms with the fact that antagonizing the Soviet party became imminent after the events in Prague, the Italian party leadership formally apologized to LCY leadership for abandoning the original plans agreed upon by Broz and Longo, which now had to wait until early seventies to be successfully implemented (AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-38, Information on the conversations between delegations of LCY and PCI in January of 1967).

24 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-81-110, Reports about cooperation and communication with Spanish Communist Party.

25 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-728, Informations about the internal conflicts in Greek Communist Party, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-723, Reports about formation of the new United Central Committee of KKE.

26 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-82-110, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-1-710-736, Analyes of the drafts concerning financial aid to Spanish communists in exile and representatives of the Interior Greek party.

27 Furthermore, the communication between the official institutions of LCY and Greek party in exile have almost completely ceased to exist during the months that followed the events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia, despite the hostile relation between Yugoslavia and the governments of Greek military junta, and active involvement of Exterior Greek party members in resistance movements against the military dictatorship in Greece (AJ,

Thus, in the beginning of the crucial year 1968, Communist Party of France (PCF) was left standing alone as the only major communist party of Western Europe that still refused to join the informal gruop led by Yugoslav and Italian communist, and opted to maintain close relations with the parties of *Antireformist Bloc*, whcih was led by communist parties of East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia.[28] After Brezhnev opted to support the reformist fraction in the Czechoslovakian party, which led to the downfall of Novotny's leadership and later, to the acceptance of the Dubček's reformist program by Czechoslovakian communists, reformist fraction in the French party finally decided to revolt against the party leadership which strived to preserve close relations with Moscow and continue with the traditional practice of defining party policies, which consisted of moderately unsuccessful attempts to apply the principles of Bolshevik socialist model in regard to economic, social and historical circumstances of different French regions.[29] However, analyzed sources show that even after French reformists started openly criticizing the conservative fraction and the Central Committee, which was forced to balance between the two powerful fractions while itself wavering, a certainly large number of French communists still remained indecisive while facing the possibility of the future split in the party. This may have influenced the decision of LCY leadership to propose talks about expanding cooperation with the French party, introduce new policies of financing the vacations and research-visits of French communists, and even to consider braking the tradition of not providing financial aid in cash, but instead in other means to those communist parties that were operating legitimately and as the first or the second largest opposition parties in the countries of Western Bloc.[30]

In the late summer of 1968, which was filled with the civil unrest and political turmoil all around Europe and United States of America, authors of the reports submitted to Central Committee by Department of International Relations and Connections of LCY claimed that "*the lines of the future conflicts on the European left have been clearly drawn even before Soviet divisions entered Czechoslovakia*".[31] After the military intevrenvtion of the Eastern Bloc troups in Czechoslovakia, parties of Western European far-left found themselves pressured to condemn the actions of Soviet Union by the general public of ther countries, other political parties, and also by the reformist fractions whose

SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-1-722-736 Information on the activities of Exterior Greek communists, corespondance with Greek party in exile).

28 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, Reports on cooperation and communication with the French Communist Party.

29 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-279-310, Reports concerning the writing of the PCF party press about Yugoslavia.

30 AJ, SKJ,507-IX, 30/I-213, Information about proposal for expanding cooperation with French Communist Party.

31 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

influence was almost constantly on the rise during the last decade.[32] Reports of the LCY commissions confirm that most Western Marxists were fully aware that condamnation of Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia will neccessary lead to decline, or even braking of the relations between communist parties of Western Block and the party who held udesputed control over the international communists institutions and International Workers Movement.[33] Amnog the parties of Wester European far-left who were going through "*never after the war seen state of shock, doubt and fear*", Italian communists were the first to act, not only by criticizing the role of the Soviet party in the outcome of the events in Czechoslovakia, but also by declaring their intentions to reform the party policies and ultimately, change the party ideology.[34]

New ideology of the Italian Communist Party, defined on the „historical" XII Congress of the Italian communists (*congresso storico*) was offically named "*Italian road to socialism*" and was classified as one of the ideologies of *democratic socialism*, while the term *Eurocommunism* was formally accepted by the PCI leadership only during the early seventies.[35] Alongside communist parties of Spain, Belgium, England, Denmark and Japan, League of Communists of Yugoslavia was among the first communist parties in the world to recognize the new ideology of Italian communists, and it remained for a long time the only Marxist party in power to offer its support for the reforms conducted by the Italian Communist Party.[36] Already in the first months following the official introduction of the new PCI party ideology, Yugoslav communists have defined new policies with the aim of providing financial aid to Italian Eurocommunists and formally confirmed the already apparent decision to use the international influence of Yugoslav party in order to establish new connections between various communist and socialist parties outside the Eastern Bloc and the Italian Communist Party.[37]

32 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-449-489, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-250-235, About the political situation in Italy and France.

33 AJ, SKJ, Ideological Commission, II/2-b-(244-252), Documents for preparation for the sessions of the Ideological Commission, AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International Cooperation, Reports on cooperation with PCI and PCF.

34 It is important to note that by the late 1968 only Yugoslav and Italian communist openly criticized the ideology of Soviet party ant emphasized the possible connections between Bolshevik socialist model and the results of the events in Czechoslovakia, while other communist parties of Europe were contempt with criticizing just the current policies of the governments of Soviet Union, thus enhansing the possiblity of improving their relations with the Soviet party in the future (AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, Recorded conversations between delegations of LCY and PCI).

35 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-427, Most important thesis for the upcoming congress of PCI in Bologna.

36 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-429, Reports from the Yugoslav delegation present at XII Congress of PCI in Bologna.

37 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-432, Information about the requests of PCI to gain financial aid from LCY.

Winds of Change – Evolution of the Relations between Yugoslav Communists and the Western European Far-left During Political Crises of the Last Welfare State Decade

During the years that followed the change of PCI ideology, League of Communists of Yugoslavia continued to develop cooperation with the Communist Party of Italy, while the increasingly closely connected Yugoslav and Italian communists worked together on organizing new collective political initiatives of European Marxist parties and lobbying in the international communist institutions in endeavor to secure wider support of the numerous far-left parties for the new Eurocommunist ideology.[38] Analyzed sources show that in this period Italian and Yugoslav communists often engaged in long disputes with the communist parties of the Eastern Bloc, and clashed with the leaderships of Soviet and Chinese parties over many different questions, from the debates about the influence of Soviet party on the European far-left, to the joint efforts of Italian and Yugoslav communists to support king Sihanouk against the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.[39] Notes taken during the conversations between delegations of Italian and Yugoslav communists in the early seventies show that Enrico Berlinguer and others members of the Italian party leadership openly promised to follow the path of Yugoslav party in the affairs of international communist institutions, while Josip Broz Tito and members of LCY Central Committee promised that Yugoslavia will continue to provide financial aid to all the plans of Italian communists in regard of expanding their new ideology through Europe and the world, expand the policies of financing activities of Italian communists in Yugoslavia[40], while providing "*every possible form of protection*" for the Italian communists against possible retribution of the Soviet party leadership.[41]

38 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, Reports about cooperation and communication with Italian Communist Party.

39 During the conversation with Enrico Berlinguer, when Josip Broz Tito was informed about the newest arguments presented by both sides in the later famous debate on the European left about the ethical implications of supporting the Khmer Rouge rebellion, Yugoslav leader stated the following: "*Even a democratic, institutional monarchy like Great Britain is far more closer to us both now, hopefully* (refereeing to the recent changes of PCI official party ideology), *than any leftist regime who had regressed into betraying democratic principles*" (AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-48, Reception of the general secretary of PCI, Enrico Berlinguer).

40 Which included, among other expenses, covering the significant part of the expenses for filming scenes directed by famous Italian film directors in Yugoslavia, providing all the life expenses and salaries for the Italian journalists living in Yugoslavia, giving scholarships to Italian students, giving financial aid to numerous Italian artists and inviting syndical representatives of Italian labor unions for long vacations in Yugoslavia (AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, Reports about cooperation and communication with Italian Communist Party).

41 AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-48, Reception of the general secretary of PCI, Enrico Berlinguer, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-59, Recorded conversations between Josip Broz Tito and Enrico Berlinguer.

According to analysts from the various departments of LCY, the decisive conflict between two leading parties of the Reformist Bloc and Soviet party happened during two year long preparations for the international conference of the European communist and socialist parties that was supposed to be held in Berlin, in 1976.[42] In the course of the conference preparations, Yugoslav and Italian communists determinately refused to accept Soviet ideas about the themes of discussion and goals of the conference, going as far as threatening not only to abstain for participating, but also to influence other smaller European parties into boycotting the conference in East Germany.[43] In the end, Soviet party reluctantly agreed to formally recognize the new Eurocommunist ideology as a valid approach to applying Marxist philosophy in the 20th century, just as Soviet leadership has accepted the Yugoslav socialist model years earlier, and in turn Yugoslav and Italian communists agreed to sign the joint declaration of the parties involved in the Berlin conference. Analysts from the party offices of Yugoslav and Italian communists defined the joint declaration of the Berlin conference as detrimentally important to Soviets, since it showcased both their renewed influence on the powerful leftist parties of Europe, and their willingness to restrain from using that same influence in accordance with agreements with the United States of America in the times of *détente*.[44]

Interestingly or ironically, the only party insisting that certain changes be implemented in the joint statement of the communist parties from the Western and Eastern Europe after the agreement was reached between Soviets and Yugoslav-Italian Bloc, as well as for the further theoretical justifications of the jointly stated Marxist ideas, was the Communist Party of France.[45] After overcoming the internal conflict between conservative and reformist fraction of French communists, French party have slowly been implementing moderate reforms of party policies since the rise of new party leadership of Georges Marchais in 1972, while trying to maintain the fragile compromises between the two main interest groups within the party structure and to prevent an open rebellion of those French communists who still opposed the abandonment of the Bolshevik principles.[46] Italian communists judged that remaining influence of the conservative French communists comes from the specific political position of the PCF in France, which had much less ground for potential political

42 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

43 AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Reports about prepartaions for the conference of European communist parties in Berlin.

44 AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Analyses of the conclusions of International conference of communist parties in Berlin.

45 AJ, SKJ,507-IX,30/I-213, Information about proposal for expanding cooperation with French Communist Party.

46 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-331, Information about the internal changes in French party and changes of PCF attitudes.

compromises than parties of those Mediterranean countries who faced the strong far-right competition at home.[47] On the other hand, Yugoslav communists thought that the French party is forced to retain the political identity of the radical, revolutionary and uncompromising party with mesianistic rethoric that heavily implied Bolshevik zealotizm of the earlier historical periods in order to atract those voters that remained unsatisfied even with the economic reforms of the *welfare state*, and many groups that remaind on the margins of French society despite the overall improvements in labor legislation and the general rise of living standard of the French working class.[48]

In the early seventies, Italian, Spanish and Interior greek communists have on multiple occasions conveyed to the Yugoslav communists their fears that French Communist Party will never come to truly accept Eurocommunist reforms, but will rather remained content with official proclamations of reformist attentions which will continue to keep the reformist fraction of the party from creating internal unrest.[49] On the other hand, authors of various reports that circulated around LCY party instutions claimed that French party leadership was constantly becoming more open towards expansion of reformist policies while facing the chaning political landscape and balance of power in France during the turbulent last decade of the *welfare state* in Western Europe, and that "*political opportunism will sustain French Eurocommunism*", even if reformist enthusiasim within the leadership of PCF remains as scarce and temporary as presented by Italian communists, greatest allies and rivals of the French party within the international communist institutions.[50] Almost immediatelly after the "historical" success of Italian Communist Party in the 1976 elections in Italy, French communists have made arangements to organize XXII Congress of PCF, during which they had offically defined new party ideology.[51] Soon after the successfull negotiations of Yugoslav and

47 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-439, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

48 Especially since the creation of New Left and after those reforms of the PSF policies which brought the French Socialists very close to De Gaulists. New Let movements created a new form of competition for the PCF on the French left, with rivalries over political and social influence between PCF and New Left organization resulting in violent clashes, while the French Socialists and socialist led labor unions, especially the fraction created by future president François Mitterrand, threatened to isolate PCF from the institutional politics in France by creating an informal political alliance with the powerful De Gaulists, who still controlled most of the government and state institutions (DA, SSIP, F-41, France, year 1980, Analyses of current political situation in France).

49 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-135-155, Recorded conversations between delegations of LCY and members of PCE and KKE party leadership.

50 AJ, SKJ,507-IX,30/I-213, Information about proposal for expanding cooperation with French Communist Party, AJ, SKJ, Ideological Commission, II/2-b-(244-252), Documents for preparation for the sessions of the Ideological Commission, AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International Cooperation, Reports on cooperation with PCI and PCF.

51 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-315, Reports about XXII Congress of the French Communist Party.

Italian delegations with the Soviets in Berlin, and a few weeks before the later famous meeting of Western European communist party leaders in Madrid, a certain amount of reports arriving from the LCY party officess were devoted to the fact that Marchais and French party leadership have finally adopted the term Eurocommunism.[52]

However, it was not until mid seventies that development of cooperation between Yugoslav and French party reached the level which could be, according to Yugoslav and Italian communists, comparable with the cooperation between Yugoslav and Spanish, or Yugoslav and Interior Greek party.[53] Analyzed sources show that miled conflicts between Yugoslav and French official party institutions remained almost a constant occurance during the years in which PCF remained undecisive about the possibility of changing party ideology and political practices, even though these conflicts were constantly becoming shorter and less passionate after 1972, while numerous philosphical and ideological disputes between PCF and LCY members and redactions of party newpapers only ceased in the aftermath of conference in Berlin.[54] Despite the lack of closeness in relations of LCY and PCF, both conservative and reformist fractions of French communists used Yugoslav socialist model as an example during their long debates in party newspapers and various leftist gatherings in France. While the conservative fraction saw social turmoils in Yugoslavia and internal conflicts in LCY as an exemplar case of consequences that must neccessary follow the abandoment of Bolshevik ideological doctrine and practices, the reformist fraciton upheld certain aspects of Yugoslav reformist policies to be the possible role models for the expected changes in the structures and political practice of the French Communist Party.[55]

On the other hand, during the late seventies, first signs of distancing were beginning to appear in already traditionally close relations between Yugoslav and Italian communists, as some authors of the articles in Italian Marxist papers started to question Yugoslav devotion to reformist cause in the emerging international institutions of the European far-left, and for the first time, they haven't managed to provoke the response from the Italian party leadership, which was usually swift to act in order to distance itself for all the possible critics of the Yugoslav socialist model among Italian Marxists.[56] The possibility that PCI leadership might harbour hidden animosities towards LCY only

52 AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Analyses of the conclusions of International conference of communist parties in Berlin.

53 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

54 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-331, Information about the internal changes in French party and changes of PCF attitudes.

55 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, Reports about the debates in PCF press about Yugoslav socialist model.

56 AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, Reports about cooperation with leftist political parties and labor unions in Italy.

occurred to members of Department for the International Relations of the Yugoslav party after Berlinguer and his colleagues failed to extensively inform their Yugoslav counterparts about their new plans to create joint political initiatives of Mediterranean communists with the help of Spanish and French party.[57] Still, very rare and temporary Yugoslav doubts about the sincerity of the cordial relations with their oldest and closest ally in the European sphere of the International Workers Movement were quickly disregarded as the two leading reformist parties of European far-left resumed their close cooperation and forged new plans about expanding the Reformist Bloc and further increasing the international influence of both LCY and PCI.[58]

According to analyses submitted to LCY departments by Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Italy, ambitious plans of Yugoslav and Italian communists became destined to remain outside the sphere of practical realization after the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, which have marked the beginning of a sudden reduction of the intensity at which party institutions of Yugoslav and Italian communist parties conducted the written correspondence.[59] After the death of Josip Broz Tito, the visits of Berlinguer, Carrillo and Interior Greek party leadership suddenly disappear from historical sources, while Yugoslav delegations travelling to Italy and France were almost exclusively received by less important and influential members of Central Committees of Eurocommunist parties (with the exception of Interior Greek party).[60] It was only after the beginning of the financial crisis in Yugoslavia in early eighties that leadership of the Italian Communist Party openly revealed that a certain number of Italian communists were becoming increasingly worried about the course that development of Yugoslav state and party policies took after the events of 1972 in Yugoslavia and the adoption of new Yugoslav constitution in 1974.[61]

57 Even then, authors of the Reports produced by the Department for International Relations of LCY restrained themselves from openly criticizing the actions of PCI, possibly having in mind close personal relationships between certain Italian communists and Yugoslav party leadership, and remained rather satisfied with just issuing a note to Central Committee stating that they advise further inquiries on international policies of PCI (AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, Reports on the attitudes and activities of Italian communists).

58 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-634-694, Information on cooperation and communication with the Italian Communist Party.

59 DA, SSIP, F-65, Italy, year 1980, Information on attitudes and activities of Italian communists, AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, PCI, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-613-665, Correspondence between LCY and PCI.

60 AJ, SKJ,507-IX,122/I-110-162, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-688, AJ, SKJ,507-IX, 30/I-290-356, Information on the meetings with the representatives of PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

61 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-634-694, Information on cooperation and communication with the Italian Communist Party.

Invisible Distancing between the Yugoslav and Eurocommunist Parties – Yugoslav Support for the Authoritarian Coups in Marxist Parties of Europe

Even in the aftermath of great student rebellions in Yugoslavia of 1968, while the early Italian Eurocommunists and members of the reformist fraction of French communists painted in their articles almost astonishingly lavish pictures of Yugoslav socialist model and the party that was "*strong and at the same time, flexible enough*" to break the opposition while at the same time incorprating its political agenda into its own party ideology, among the former Blosheviks and now democratic socialists of Europe there were some who cricized the authoritarianism of the LCY leadership, and spoke openly about the supposed corruption in the institutions of SFRY.[62] And while Berlinguer and the rest of PCI leadership praised the Yugoslav economy, with the market that represented, according to the Italian communists, a perfect balance between socialist and welfare state policies, between aspects of free market and state given ashurances against the creation of monopolies and exploitation of workers, and as such was able to become "*the fuel of the political engine behind the Yugoslav international influence*", some among the Italian and even French reformists spoke about the constant rise of economic and social inequalities in Yugoslavia, followed by growing insecurities of those who were left at the margins of the Yugoslav "economic mirracle" and the subsequent process of urbanization and many culutral changes that followed.[63] It is important to note that analyzed sources don't show any cases in which early Eurocommunists during the years 1968 and 1969 went as far as some members of liberal circles at the European Universities or some organizations of the New Left who asked the question – Would Yugoslav communists implement or even tolerate the proposition of conducting at home the same reforms they support in Czechoslovakia?[64]

After the removal of the "liberal wings" of local party leadership in SR Srbia and SR Croatia in 1972, and the replacement of the rebelious university professors at Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, those who were politically prosecuted in Yugoslavia received vocal support from warious left and right wing liberals, socialists, anarchists and some organizations of the New Left, while

62 DA, SSIP, F-41, France, year 1968, Information about the writing of French press about the events in Yugoslavia.

63 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

64 While Eurocommunists insisted on the idea that LCY was the first reformist party of Europe which financed and inspired reforms of political practice and party ideology in other Marxist parties of Europe, some socialists, liberals, anarchists and New Leftists argued that Yugoslav reforms are, though in the spirit similar to policies of Czechoslovakian new government and earlier ideas of democratic socialism, in practice far less extensive than those reforms proposed by Dubček under the concept of "Socialism with the Human face" (AJ, SKJ, Ideological Commission, II/2-b-(244-252), Documents for preparation for the sessions of the Ideological Commission).

Eurocommunist party leaderships remained silent about the events in SFRY.[65] It is very hard to estimate to which degree were the leaderships of Eurocomunist parties aware of the new currents in interior affairs of SFRY, while it also needs to be noted that alayzed sources also don't showcase the instances in which influential Eurocommunist leaders invested more than symbolic efforts to defend the policies of Yugoslav government and party against those critics that mainly came from the parties and organizations which presented a competition for the Eurocommunists on the European left. However, at that time Yugoslav party was constantly expanding its policies of providing financial aid to Eurocommunist parties, while using its international influence to gather wide support for the reforms of their party ideologies, thus it can be concluded that Eurocommunist parties had a certain interest to ignore those changes in SFRY that went against those values of democratic socialism that LCY promoted in the sphere of turbulent relations of European communist parties.[66]

Documents produced by numerous party offices of LCY show that it was only after the death of Josip Broz Tito that Yugoslav party started to decrease the efforts that Yugoslav communists invested into supporting the initiatives of former president's "*dearest and closest friends in Western Europe*", Santiago Carrillo and Enrico Berlinguer, in the international communist institutions, and that it was only after the beginning of economic crisis in SFRY that Yugoslav communists started to lessen the extent of their financial policies towards the Eurocommunist parties.[67] At the same time, recorded conversations between Yugoslav communists and their Italian and Spanish counterparts became noticeably shorter and far less cordial than before, visits from the delegations of Italian and Spanish party leadership to SFRY almost ceased to exist, while the first open critics of Yugoslav socialist model appeared in the ranks of influential Italian and Spanish communists. Then, as two Eurocommunist parties of Western Mediterranean began to distance themselves from the LCY further and further, the new generation of the Yugoslav party leadership and state bureaucracy became the target of ever more frequent accusations of authoritarian conduct, corruption and disregard for the affairs of the international communist institutions, made by the new generation of European Marxists and published in the party journals of Italian and Spanish communists.[68]

65 AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International Cooperation, Reports on cooperation with leftist political parties and labour unions of Italy, France, Grecee and Spain.

66 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/1-433, Analyses of the drafts concerning financial aid to PCI, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-113, Analyses of the drafts concerning financial aid to PCE, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-731, On financial aid to KKE.

67 AJ, SKJ,507-IX,122/I-98-155, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-556-667, Information on correspondence and meetings conducted with members of PCI and PCE party leadership, AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Analyses of conversations between Josip Broz Tito, Santiago Carrilo and Enrico Berlinguer, AJ, SKJ, Ideological Commission, II/2-b-(244-252), Documents for preparation for the sessions of the Ideological Commission.

68 AJ, SKJ,507-IX,122/I-110-162, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-688, AJ, SKJ,507-IX, 30/I-290-356, Information on the meetings with the representatives of PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

Contrary to course of development in relations between Yugoslav party and communist parties of Italy and Spain, political successors of Josip Broz Tito and the old leadership of LCY were starting to approach French communists, especially after the fallout between socialists and communists in the first government of François Mitterrand, and other smaller communist parties of Europe that gradually moved away from the Reformist Bloc and its original goals.[69] After the rebellion of new conservative communist and neo-Bolshevik youth of the French party, Georges Marchais and the party leadership abandoned Eurocommunist reforms in the early eighties, while simultaneously braking the earlier compromises and agreements with more moderate parties of the French left, prosecuting and banishing leading reformists from the PCF, and initiating the process that would be later become known as *Re-Stalinization* of the French Communist Party.[70] New leadership of LCY did not only failed to provide even a formal protest against the new political practice of French communists, which went against almost all previous joint statements and agreements of the three leading parties of the Reformist Bloc (PCI, PCF and LCY), but also initiated talks about possible expansion of cooperation between the party institutions of Yugoslav and French communists.[71]

Subsequently, Georges Marchais revealed his plans to start his world tour of visits to socialist countries whose ruling parties were friendly towards Communist party of France with the visit to SFRY, and also asked LCY leadership to finance travel expenses of numerous French communists that wanted to visit Yugoslavia for the purpose of conducting research on the Yugoslav socialist model.[72] It is important to note that leader of French party openly stated that he is embarking on such a world tour in order to protest the debate about the possible neoliberal economic reforms in France, and to show his support to those communist parties who, like PCF, will even refuse to argue in favor of the *welfare state* policies, for it was, according to new ideological doctrine of French communists, "*just a defense of one form of capitalism against another, sutable for social democrats, socialist reactionaries and Italian reformists, not for the real Marxists*".[73]

69 AJ, SKJ,507-IX, 30/I-366, Reports on cooperation and communication with French Communist party.

70 DA, SSIP, F-41, France, year 1980, Information about the attitudes and activities of the French communists.

71 Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in France reported that Marchais have on several occasions stated that Yugoslavia under the governments that came to power after the death of Josip Broz Tito represent the last "*stronghold of try socialism*" outside of the Eastern Bloc and that he is ready to forget all the previous differences with the Yugoslav communists "*since they remain the only party that refuses to compromise with current capitalism in fear that future capitalism may inforce upon us something that we haven't already seen in two hundred years of capitalist oppression*" (DA, SSIP, F-41, France, year 1980, Analyses of current political situation in France).

72 AJ, SKJ,507-IX, 30/I-290-356, Recorded conversation with the members of the French Communist Party.

73 AJ, SKJ,507-IX, 30/I-366, Reports on cooperation and communication with French Communist party.

While the question of weather the absence of PCF support was a defining factor in Miterrand's decision to accept negotiations with international monetary institutions and to begin to offer larger and larger reforms of the French labor legislation remains the matter of debates until this day, analyzed sources show that new leaderships of growingly distant Central Committees of Yugoslav republics in the mid 80s supported the decision of PCF to refuse even to contemplate showing resistance to early neoliberal reforms in continental Europe in fear of being accused of relativizing the flaws of the current form of capitalism in Western European states.[74]

The late and unexpected rapprochement of Yugoslav and French communists came after PCF left French government, and at a time of constantly decreasing political power and popularity, as well as the international influence of French communists, thus it can be concluded that there wasn't really anything for Yugoslav communists to gain by investing financial and other resources in the renewal of the cooperation with the Communist Party of France.[75] On the contrary, Yugoslav governments and party bureaucracy were risking the permanent loss of their previously achieved favorable position in relations with French government, increasingly influential socialist party of Miterrand, and with other parties of the European far and moderate left, which weren't sympathetic towards the conservative coup within the French party nearly as much as it was the case with the new establishment of growingly distant local Committees of Yugoslav party.[76] Soon after the death of Enrico Berlinguer in 1984[77], Italian Communists concluded that it was "*no longer appropriate nor useful*" for the Italian party leadership to cultivate close relations with the authoritarian and neo-conservative Marxists in the institutional structures of LCY and PCF, who were at the time working together on reestablishing and nurturing relations with the communist parties of China and North Korea[78], while refusing to join the efforts of other European leftist parties who were trying to contain the spread of neoliberal economic reforms in continental Europe.[79]

While the Italian and Spanish communists continued the reforms of their party ideology and contributed to the further development of Eurocommunism and other ideologies of democratic socialism, the evolution of the party

74 DA, SSIP, F-41, France, year 1980, Information about the attitudes and activities of the French communists.
75 AJ, SKJ,507-IX, 30/I-290-356, Reports on political and social situation in France.
76 AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International Cooperation, Reports on cooperation with leftist political parties and labour unions of France, AJ, SKJ, Ideological Commission, II/2-b-(244-252), Documents for preparation for the sessions of the Ideological Commission.
77 About the last encounters of Josip Broz Tito and Enrico Berlinguer, see Živković 2022: 273–300.
78 About the Yugoslav role in renewal of the relations between PCI and CCP see Živković 2021: 273–300.
79 AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-656-688, Reports on cooperation and communication with the Italian Commmunits Party.

ideology and political practice of League of Communists of Yugoslavia took an almost completely opposite direction. The consequences of abandonment of the LCY reformist course were not clear in the sphere of the relations between Yugoslav communists and Eurocommunist parties for almost an entire decade after the events of 1972 and 1974 in Yugoslavia. When the cooperation between LCY and Eurocommunist parties reached its peak in the latter half of the 70s, Yugoslav party was still largely perceived by the leaderships of European far-left parties as the leader of the reformist movement among the Marxist parties of Europe and the world. It was only after the death of Josip Broz Tito and the beginning of economic crises in Yugoslavia that analyzed sources indicate first signs of LCY declining influence in the Reformist bloc, such as the distancing of Yugoslav communists and PCI. At the same time, Yugoslav party started to reform close cooperation with the French communists who were also in the process of abandoning reforms that can be associated with democratic socialism. It remains the task of future historians and sociologists to determine to what extent this path may have influenced those events and structural changes that eventually led to the collapse of former Yugoslavia.

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Luka Filipović

Jugoslovenski komunisti i evropska krajnja levica – od prvih pristalica italijanskih evrokomunista do poslednjih saveznika francuskih neostaljinista (1965-1985)

Apstrakt

Složene strukturne promene društvene realnosti u SFRJ i zapadnoj Evropi tokom poslerat-nih decenija stvorile su potrebu da najveće marksističke partije Evrope van istočnog bloka prilagode svoju partijsku politiku novim političkim izazovima i društvenim okolnostima. Po-stepeno, komunističke partije mediteranskog područja počele su da razmišljaju o stvaranju nove marksističke ideologije za eru države blagostanja, što je u praksi značilo prigrađivanje pokušaja da se principi boljševičkog socijalističkog modela prilagode njihovim jedinstvenim lokalnim prilikama, kao i udaljavanje od uticaja sovetske partije. Savez komunista Jugoslavije podržao je reformističke frakcije italijanskih, francuskih, grčkih i španskih komunističkih

partija, što je otvorilo put daljem širenju međunarodnog uticaja i prestiža jugoslavenskih komunista. Međutim, istorijska evolucija državne politike SFRJ i jugoslovenske partijske ideologije na kraju je krenula drugačijim tokom od reformi partijske politike i ideologija ranih evrokomunističkih partija. Svrha ovog članka je da doprinese daljem razumevanju dugoročnog društvenog i istorijskog procesa koji je stvorio zaokret između vodećih reformističkih partija Evrope. Ovo se postiže primenom komparativne metode na rezultate arhivskih istraživanja istorijskih izvora koji svedoče o saradnji jugoslovenskih, italijanskih i francuskih komunista u različitim vremenskim periodima tokom dvadesetogodišnjeg perioda, uz korišćenje saznanja brojnih istorijskih, sociooloških i filozofskih knjiga i članaka kako bi se rezultati istraživanja doveli u odgovarajući društveni i istorijski kontekst.

Ključne reči: evrokomunizam, demokratski socijalizam, Savez komunista Jugoslavije, Josip Broz Tito, Enriko Berlinger, Žorž Marše

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Anastas Vangeli

GLOBAL CHINA, (FORMER) YUGOSLAVIA, AND SOCIALISM

ABSTRACT
This article grounds the study of socialism in the People's Republic of China (PRC), in a critical analysis of power, capitalism, and hegemony. The governance of the Communist Party of China (CPC) is riddled with paradoxes in shaping a distinct socialist model that observers from the West frequently find challenging to digest. It is characterized by both inclusive institutional innovation and authoritarian coercion; leveraging the power of the state in achieving more just economic outcomes while reproducing unfair capitalist social realities; and devising alternatives to the hegemonic neoliberal globalization, while working on safeguarding the status quo and the institutions upon which such hegemony rests. This complex Chinese model is a product of experimentation and learning; some of the lessons that have shaped it originate in the interaction with and reflection on socialist Yugoslavia, whose example has been pivotal in how China has navigated geopolitical complexities and implemented reforms. Finally, the article discusses the contemporary interactions between Yugoslav successor states and China, examining the nature of the impact of Global China and examine any implications for the reflection on socialism in former Yugoslavia.

KEYWORDS
China, Yugoslavia, socialism, globalization, interactions

Introduction

Progressive audiences often ask, "to what extent is China socialist?", as the guest editors of this issue did to the author of these lines. Such provocative questions require analytical thinking and critical reflexivity because what matters is not only what we (think we) know about China's trajectory but also our own perspective and relationship with it. The question of whether China is socialist is deeply political and subjective, intersecting with normative debates on political values and global geopolitical and geoeconomic uncertainties. It requires examining our preconceptions of the world and what it should look like. In addressing this challenge, I embrace my positionality as a Global China scholar, whose perspective has been shaped by diverse sources, including

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social justice activism, think tank work, and business school curricula, originating from and operating in former Yugoslavia, having worked on (post-)Yugoslav-China relations, and having tried to understand China from the perspective of its global integration. Knowledge produced at these intersections can contribute to discussions on several ancillary topics that are rarely discussed together: China's socialist trajectory, socialist Yugoslavia's legacy and the trajectory of former Yugoslav countries, and theoretical and practical debates on socialism, past, present, and future.

The last question – the one of defining socialism – is perhaps the most challenging one and it is therefore useful to get it out the way early on. The goal here is not to open the Pandora box of what is, in fact, socialism, in both ideological, as well as policy and practical terms, and explicitly not to provide definitions and benchmarks against which we would then measure others (including China). Yet, some orienting points for the discussion that follows are due. My own understanding is closest to the one of the "business school socialist" Paul Adler (2023) that democratic socialism is the most feasible utopian vision that can help us overcome capitalism's profit-seeking myopia that harms humanity and the Earth. Thus, idealistic socialism reconciles the contradiction of democratic (or participatory) decision-making in all aspects of society and the economy and strategic management of institutions and enterprises toward "well-being for people and sustainability for the planet" (Adler 2023). "Liberation of the working people from exploitation" and "mastery over production by the producers" are central to socialism (Chomsky 1986). Socialism is "a situation where the workers gain the upper hand in the class struggle and put in place institutions, policies and social networks that advantage the workers" – "the immense majority of humanity". Successful socialist policies would turn the social surplus toward ending hunger and illiteracy and addressing fundamental global social and economic problems (Prashad 2019).

Moving on from the question of socialism, in the remainder of the paper, we are left with the daunting and ultimately, ungrateful task, of interpreting and evaluating the complex socio-economic and political reality of China, and then deciding to what extent does it conform to our definitions of socialism, while taking into account the historical relevance of Yugoslavia.

Such discussion requires contextualization, both in terms of comparing China to historical socialist models and assessing its development and impact in the current Zeitgeist of extreme uncertainty, or "polycrisis". An article, book, or lifetime of work cannot adequately address these questions. Therefore, I must use different heuristics, simplify complexities, and speculate, while remaining satisfied with only partially addressing some of the key contradictions that underpin these questions and formulating ambiguous answers that may not satisfy the most demanding readers.

When considering whether and how socialist contemporary China is, I refer to ongoing debates (Bolesta 2014; Losurdo 2017; Whyte 2012; Zhao 2008; Dirlik 2017; M. Li 2009; Mihályi, Szelényi 2020; Mulvad 2019; M. Liu, Tsai 2021; So, Chu 2015) that offer different interpretations. The great Immanuel

Wallerstein (2010) once noted that there is no (prospect for) consensus on China – including what kind of system does it have (socialist or capitalist?) and what kind of global role does it play (imperialist or anti-imperialist?) both within the Left and the Right. Recent geopolitical shifts – commonly termed a New Cold War – add polarization and urgency to such questions. Positions on China and socialism vary in the extremes – some laud it as the most advanced socialist country in the history of humanity, others deride it as a dystopian authoritarian capitalist country antithetical to the ideal of socialism (Žižek 2007). While entertaining these points, the paper tends to raise questions, rather than to render verdicts.

The Yugoslav angle in the second part of this inquiry comes handy. First off, a focus on Sino-Yugoslav historical crossroads helps additionally contextualize China in a different manner than predominant "rise of China" or "China threat" metanarratives. Historically, Yugoslavia and China had intertwined trajectories and cross-referenced each other in ideological debates – in both negative and positive light (Stopić et al. 2023). However, this historical relationship has been defined by a significant asymmetry – during the Cold War – and up until today, Yugoslavia and its experience have played a far more significant role in defining China's trajectory than vice versa (Vangeli, Pavlićević forthcoming). On the other hand, as China – which has learned from the positive examples provided by Yugoslavia, while by all means avoiding repeating its mistakes – has emerged as a global actor in the 21st century, it has an ever growing significance for the former Yugoslav countries – not only because of the growing linkages between the two sides in which the asymmetry is obvious – but also because it reshapes the global and regional context and debate in which the post-Yugoslav region exists (Vangeli 2020). The vantage point of the post-Yugoslav semi-periphery is unique, as one can still take critical distance from the big power struggle between China and the US and offer a more impartial view.

The paper then proceeds as follows. It first discusses China and its (claims to) socialism, by looking at three key questions: power, capital and global impact. It then turns to Yugo-Chinese relations and Sino-Yugoslav intertwined search for (better) socialism, which included navigating stormy Cold War geopolitics, pursuing bold and unconventional reforms, and, for China, witnessing and learning from the trauma of Yugoslavia's dissolution. In the final section, the paper turns to the impact of Global China in the post-Yugoslav space, where geoeconomic considerations overcast socialist ideals, but nevertheless, still make China somewhat of a distinctive actor in a region where the legacy of socialism is still present even if only playing a marginal role.

The Questions of Socialism (with Chinese Characteristics)

China is one of the few countries in the world where the rule of a communist party has survived the tumultuous events of 1989-1991 (together with Vietnam, North Korea, Laos and Cuba). The CPC has monopolized power in China since 1949 (even though it officially leads a United Front coalition with several junior

partner parties), making it the longest-ruling communist nation in history, surpassing the CPSU (1922-1991). China is more economically powerful than any other country that has claimed to pursue socialism – including the Soviet Union. China's global impact, both due to its centrality in the global economy and its growing global proactivity, is unlike any (nominally) socialist country before it. China, unlike the Soviet Union, has not openly challenged the hegemonic West in a global Cold War, pursuing pragmatic global networking and conciliatory interdependence as strategic tools instead of ideologically-driven and military-charged confrontation.

The Chinese economy's sustained growth, the CPC's persistence and "authoritarian resilience" (Nathan 2003; Fewsmith, Nathan 2018), and "CPC Inc."'s global rise (Blanchette 2020) are interconnected. China's economic rise would not have been possible without the CPC's "directed improvisation" (Ang 2022) that empowered the bottom-up reform process in which the tenacity and perseverance of Chinese labor played a key role; the economic growth has legitimized the CPC while expanding its power through integration in the global political economy.

Here, we must acknowledge how disruptive such developments have been for mainstream Western social and political thought, which has continuously expected China to follow in the footsteps of former socialist countries and collapse or dissolve (Jin 2023). And yet, despite China's sustained success disproving teleological prophecies, Western thought has not revised its theories. Rather, it has rendered China an abnormal, anomalous case that defies Western common sense, serving as a "metaphor for difference" defined not by what it is but by what it is not (Breslin 2011). Sebastian Heilmann (2018) calls China a "Red Swan" that "represents a significant deviant and unpredicted case with a huge potential impact not only for the global distribution of political and economic powers but also for global debates on models of development".

As we are yet to see a mainstream Western social and political theory, or reference system that in some way, would consider China's system as "normal" or to fit within existing taxonomies, China challenges such taxonomical thinking, and the teleological and universalistic zeal of Western liberal democracy [i.e. encapsulated in the "end of history" approach and its echoes in the present (Godehart 2016)]. It is within this context of defiance that the question of China and socialism is particularly relevant: could a China that is "deviant" from liberal perspective be recast as a modern socialist country? Or is it also a "deviant" from a socialist perspective? We thus turn to discussing three elements that can help us make better sense of where China as a proclaimed socialist country stands today: political power and the state, its economic order, and its global context.

The Question of (State) Power

The question of who holds power and to what end uses this power is at the core of debating socialism in practice (Poulantzas, Hall 2014; Quirico, Ragona 2021; Milliband 2009). Boer (2023) proposes a new approach that distinguishes between revolutionary socialism, which is often thought of in the West as an

engaged intellectual and activist endeavor associated with knowledge production, protest movements, or political parties usually not in power, and socialism in power, which is concrete, institutionalized socialism as a programmatic policy agenda embraced by a national government decisively led by a socialist political party (Losurdo 2017). According to this view, China today is only the latter type of "concrete" socialism in power and practice, which is different from revolutionary socialist reflections in societies where socialism is on the margins and cannot overthrow the system or mobilize voters (and when it does, it is crushed, like SYRIZA in Greece).

Put like this, China's case for socialism is too different from mainstream socialist debates in the West; it should be studied as part of the long lineage of 20th-century socialist states, a few of which survived 1989. Boer calls China the most successful because it has developed "the most advanced" socialist system of governance that has dramatically improved the social well-being of the vast majority of its population and a "whole process people's democracy" based on the 20th century's long-term anti-colonial and revolutionary struggle and the People's Republic's trajectory. Instead of "democratic socialism", Boer calls China a "socialist democracy".

However, Boer's enthusiastic view is based mostly on official documents without ever critically examining the harsh realities of CPC's power to stabilize its power, enforce its agenda, and neutralize its opponents. To claim that China is an advanced socialist democracy, one must normalize (or ignore) the fact that China often uses violence, surveillance, censorship, or re-education to advance its socialist agenda, sometimes in a systematic manner, as in Xinjiang, where the CPC claims to fight religious extremism and ethnic separatism (Tobin 2020). Normalizing China's authoritarian system requires elevating collective social well-being (as defined by the CPC and accepting that the CPC is its representative) as a top political priority over individual or minority rights, i.e., that it is moral to sacrifice the few for the many. This normalization often follows a whataboutist logic of highlighting state power transgressions in nominally liberal Western societies, such as violent protest crackdowns, mass incarceration, proven mass surveillance, and other systemic and structural ills that are part and parcel of the Western landscape, to relativize concerns about authoritarianism in China (Franceschini, Loubere 2020). Statistics showing mass support and legitimacy for the CPC can be used to refute criticism, but only if they are taken at face value without critically examining their reliability. And there is certainly truth in the claims that criticism of authoritarianism in China is often motivated by geopolitical considerations of external actors. Yet, any debate on socialism in China cannot simply ignore the well-documented role of coercion in securing Party rule and social stability.

However, while acknowledging that China is an authoritarian state that sometimes displays its power in brutal ways, we must also agree with Boer that its governance innovations that empower masses are often overlooked in Western debates, whether liberal or socialist. These efforts move the debate beyond the accounts on "performance" or "eudemonic legitimacy", i.e. the

understanding of a Chinese social contract that foresees trade-off between dramatic improvements in citizens' socio-economic well-being and the CPC's strong monopoly of power, towards a more holistic account of popular legitimacy (Gilley, Holbig 2009; Holbig, Gilley 2010). Considering inclusivity-oriented innovations also helps overcome culture-based reductionism that the Chinese people's collective psyche is conditioned by ancient Chinese traditions, such as Confucianism, that makes authoritarianism more culturally acceptable – in reality, it is not tradition, but rather the agility and inventiveness of the state that offsets the effects of authoritarianism.

The CPC has in fact invested heavily in making the system more predictable, professional, and above all, efficient (Gilley 2008; Zeng 2014; Wang, Vangeli 2016). It has also opened institutions for public participation, e.g. through consultation, public hearings or local-level elections, while developing a responsive political culture that often acknowledges and in some cases deals constructively with protest and petitioning (Wang et al. 2013; Wang, Liu, Pavlićević 2018; Ergenc 2014; 2023; Pavlićević 2019). CPC has embraced experimental approaches on the local level, to generate best practices to be diffused on the national level – testifying for an improved system of governance (Lejano et al. 2018; Heilmann 2008). It has worked on transforming its cadres into an agile grassroots force that can fulfill public service based on need – e.g. from organizing matchmaking for singles, to helping out with personal and professional issues (Thornton 2017; 2013). Finally, the Party has learned how to back off when public discontent morphs into political risk, notwithstanding it has started to demonstrate less tolerance for dissent after 2013 (Jay Chen 2020). In sum, all these factors have served to legitimize the rule of the CPC, although they still co-exist with, rather than supplant authoritarianism (e.g. surveillance, censorship and coercion).

The Question of Capitalism

Contemporary Chinese society exhibits many capitalist traits; this has led to endless debates and opposing views, with some calling China "capitalism without democracy" (Tsai 2011). Others see China as a socialist economy that will end global capitalism (M. Li 2009). This contradiction can be gut-wrenching and unsettling, requiring an immediate verdict, but a longer explanation is needed first. Especially since "Sinified Marxism" rests upon contradictions (Boer 2017). A 'good (Chinese) socialist' must approach them in a systematic and ideologically sound manner, discerning between their different weights and prioritize them accordingly. Different political eras have a central contradiction that requires the most attention and energy to resolve first. Under Mao, CPC faced simple principal contradictions, such as "CPC vs KMT," "United Front (of CPC and KMT) against the Japanese occupation", "the people versus imperialism, feudalism and the remnants of KMT forces" and ultimately "proletariat versus bourgeoisie" (Yamei 2017).

In 1978, the CPC famously declared that the key contradiction that the CPC must address was between the ever-growing needs of the people and

the backward production system in China that has been unfit to satisfy those needs (Chang 1996). In other words, CPC recognized the twin predicament of having a hungry population and not having the means to feed them, which is essentially a socialist turn.

This principal contradiction was solved in a disruptive way: China was about to embark on the path of Reform and Opening Up, incrementally and experimentally building a socialist market economy that would be integrated into global capitalism without dismantling the political system that gave the CPC monopoly of power, to generate economic growth and improve the material well-being of the people. Deng's pragmatic justifications (e.g., "black cat or white cat, doesn't matter, as long as the cat catches mice") often unnerved orthodox socialist voices in China and beyond, making it easy to dismiss Dengist ideology as a veil for China capitulating to global capitalism (Kerswell, Lin 2017). This was perhaps the most daring ideological spin: China actively engaged with global capitalism to use it to achieve its socialist, or at least realpolitik, goals: to attract technology, knowledge, and capital to fuel its development, rebranding itself as forward-looking and business-friendly, tapping into Western aspirations for the Chinese market, and effectively ascending within the global capitalist framework to turn Western rivals into stakeholders in China's success (So, Chu 2015; Gabusi 2017).

Since 1978, successive Chinese leaderships have fine-tuned the economy, playing up and down state and market forces in different sectors and often in different geographies (e.g., by the 2010s, China had a paradigmatic debate between the state-led and socialist Chongqing model and the more liberal and market-oriented Guangdong model. However, China's economy has been based on "great international circulation" – export-led, investment-fueled growth. In response to the GFC, China issued a massive stimulus package that shifted its growth engine to debt-backed state investment, which arguably caused saturation and overcapacity in the construction and related sectors, which have been addressed through recent economic policy changes. Under Xi Jinping, facing global uncertainties (e.g., trade war with the US, COVID-19, hot wars and sanctions), China has adopted a dual circulation strategy, pursuing domestic and international circulation in parallel, with the former being at the core (Lin 2021). China has intensified its international partnerships with the Global South and diversified away from developed nations.

Westerners who took advantage of China's opportunities also promoted "Wandel durch Handel" (change through trade), but they were baffled a few decades later when China didn't follow their expectations. Whyte (2009) wrote about the "four paradoxes" of China's economic miracle, which have defied mainstream economics thinking in the West. First, China overcame a century-long decline and failures. Second, it implemented socialist market reform without a big bang (as in other socialist economies). Third, while facilitating market and state fluctuations, the CPC never relinquished control of the economy. Paradoxically, the CPC has integrated China into the global economy by forcing global capital to be a junior partner (e.g., via majority Chinese-owned

joint ventures and containing liberalization in Special Economic Zones). Fourth, China explicitly rejected Western-led institutional reforms (the Washington consensus) and the primacy of private property rights.

Nevertheless, China's success has come at a high cost: inequality has worsened, labor standards have dropped, the environment has deteriorated, and crony capitalists and corrupt officials have flourished. Any socialist government would be tarnished by these events. Successive Chinese leaders have tried to address them, but the Xi administration has taken the most explicit and consequential steps. For the first time since ROU, the CPC has framed China's principal contradiction as "unbalanced and inadequate development" vs "the people's ever-growing needs for a better life" (Wei 2018), acknowledging that while China has met the population's basic needs, its way of doing so has caused many other issues.

Instead of deciding on capitalism vs. socialism in China, Naughton (2017: 22) suggests that "even those who judge that the Chinese system today is not socialist might consider that the socialist ideal is still influential". He argues that it is obvious that CPC has the resources and intention to shape economic outcomes, whereas, while far from the proclaimed goals, China has been increasingly demonstrating that it is serious when it comes to tackling poverty and reducing inequality and becoming genuinely inclusive and representative of the majority of the Chinese people – even if it still has a long way to go to meet its proclamations (Naughton 2017). In recent years, the CPC has taken on emerging IT tycoons and monopolistic behaviors by tech giants, and has grappled with the unbridled agenda-setting power of the financial sector, while reigning in the speculative real estate sector, even at the risk of destabilizing the domestic economy. All of that has been coupled with an ever closer scrutiny of foreign capital in the country (partially driven by geopolitical shifts) and ceasing to sacrifice the well-being of its people for investment (McGregor 2021). In conventional business terminology, China has lost some of its international competitiveness – but this entails improvement of the livelihood of its people (e.g. global investors complain about the wage increase in China, but higher wages are great news for Chinese workers).

Global China

The emergence of Global China has touched upon two interesting and somewhat contradictory tropes pertaining to socialism: the question of imperialism and hegemony-seeking, and the question of changing and transforming the global order.

In the 1960s, China broke with the Soviet Union because it saw it as an imperial force that brutally interfered in socialist states' internal affairs. Deng once said that if China becomes hegemonistic, the Chinese and other peoples should overthrow it. Though explicit anti-imperialism has been abolished, Chinese leaders still base their policies on anti-hegemonism and non-interventionism. However, China is a global actor with ever-denser relations with an

ever-growing number of countries, including under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and its size affects others in different ways. Debates on its impacts are diverse (Pavlićević, Talmacs 2022). In Africa, many welcome China's presence and contrast it to the legacy of Western (neo) colonizers, while others argue that China is exploiting developing countries and is a neocolonizer itself. It is often seen as a rising global superpower and an aspiring hegemon seeking to overthrow the incumbent one, the US.

More importantly, the US itself has embraced a perception of China as an aspiring rival, which has led Washington to pivot from engagement with China to extreme strategic competition, reinterpreting many issues in the world as part of this global power struggle (Chang 2023). In mimetical manner, China has been portrayed as a transgressor that threatens the liberal, rules-based order, which the US claims to uphold (Breuer, Johnston 2019). Paradoxically, as the US and other Western actors have taken anti-globalist positions (notably during the Trump presidency), China has vocally supported globalization, which has been linked to American supremacy.

But before even discussing globalization, the US-China relationship has a (hard) security component that is hard to overlook. The US is the world's leading military superpower with global alliances and strategic partnerships. China's rapid military buildup in the US and West is viewed with trepidation and as a call for strategic response. China's buildup is framed by a difficult regional landscape and US primacy; Beijing sees an incomplete territorial unification process (the Taiwan question) and unresolved territorial disputes (including with India and in the East and South China Seas). The US military has been physically present in the Pacific since the 1940s, bolstered by alliances and partnerships with China's maritime neighbors, and more recently, in response to perceived rising Chinese assertiveness, by global partnerships like the "Five Eyes" and the AUKUS. Beijing sees the US strategy in the Pacific (with India added in recent years, renamed "Indo-Pacific" by American diplomats) as encirclement, including the building of "island chains" around China (Erickson, Wuthnow 2016) and inducing all kinds of pressures. China's growing power in the region reinforces Western alarmism and hegemonistic behavior in countries with conflicting territorial claims. This makes China's neighborhood a flashpoint, especially given global instability after the Ukraine and Middle East wars 2022-2023. China is a hot geopolitical issue beyond its borders, as the Trump administration has labeled it a threat to US national security and called for the world to choose between Washington and Beijing, with the Biden administration following course.

US-China power struggles are more complex and unpredictable due to blurred and intertwined interdependence beyond geopolitical division. Since the 1972 rapprochement, leading American and other multinationals have raced to enter the Chinese market. China's strategic "keeping a low profile" after 1989 gave the impression that it would be content with being a successful "player" and not change the rules of the game. Up until the 2010s, China prioritized business relations with Western capitalist economies and integration into

global capital networks and institutions, with its 2001 accession to the World Trade Organization having a major impact. In fact, this period of China 'constructively' integrating in global capitalism have been so consequential, that the contemporary shifts in thinking in the West retrospectively reframe them as naive mistakes on its behalf (Rosen 2018) – the belief, for a long time, has been that global capitalism will change China as, the opposite has taken place – China has changed global capitalism and has changed the West – e.g. today, in reaction to China, Western countries talk industrial policies and propose their own infrastructural megaprojects to compete with Beijing (Van Apeldoorn, De Graaff 2022). In this sense, China even though growing through and into the system of Western globalization, has also managed to transform it.

The 2008-2009 global financial crisis (GFC) was the inflection point. Given the performance of China and other emerging economies in Asia, it is clear that the crisis was more Western than global. GFC's material and ideational effects in the West have been felt ever since, possibly forever changing Western politics and societies. China launched a new pro-active global agenda aimed at developing, post-colonial, transitional, and crisis-struck countries (i.e., the majority of the world), inspired by its successful handling of the GFC and seeing openings as the West has gone into economic retreat (embodied by austerity) and the Western narrative of globalization has faced legitimacy crisis (Vangeli 2018). China has tangible economic interests to do so, from diversifying its economic partnerships (the fruits are borne today, as China first traded more with developing countries in 2023) to exporting overcapacity and globally integrating Chinese political and economic actors that have not had such opportunities before. Loosely coordinated while often competing with each other, the flock of Chinese actors that have participated in the new pro-active foreign policy have been cautiously viewed, and China's true motivations have been questioned.

In retrospect, many BRI endeavors were pre-existing (Pantucci 2016), and China's state-led economy was already globalizing, but the BRI's grandeur and boldness changed perception. China's global narratives changed from "keeping a low profile" to "striving for achievement" as Chinese actors embraced the role of "responsible stakeholders" (Pu 2016). Chinese leaders have begun to market their development experience as a source of lessons for others (Gitter 2017; An 2017), voice opinions on global issues and conflicts, and signal an end to self-containment and a bid to make globalization more "inclusive" (W. Liu, Dunford, Gao 2018). This is coupled with calls for multipolarization and empowering the Global South, home to most of the world's population, by launching the three Global Initiatives for Development, Security, and Civilization in 2022. China had created a variety of mechanisms and institutions, including the BRICS+, which counterbalances the G7, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security pact in Eurasia, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and New Development Bank, which seek to create a new global financial order. By making international transfers in renminbi instead of dollars and promoting it as a foreign reserve currency, China has been globalizing

its currency. China, a rising global power, has maintained close ties with Russia during the Ukraine War (while remaining nominally neutral and offering a peace plan) and emerged as an unlikely but successful peace actor in the Saudi-Iran dispute, while vocally supporting a ceasefire and two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.

A socialist country, in that sense, is expected to work towards changing the status quo. Yet, despite how disruptive of an actor it has been, China has simultaneously worked through the institutions of the established order and even guarded it when its founders challenged it. As Trump was inaugurated in January 2017 and waging war on globalism (by promoting an America-first agenda), Xi Jinping spoke to the world business and political elite in Davos about the shared destiny of humanity and China's stakes and role in safeguarding globalization, despite globalization's shortcomings. China has embraced the UN and wants to grow its role. Though it is often accused of unfair trade practices, it relies on the World Trade Organization to protect trade relations and calls for upholding international law (as opposed to the "rules-based order", the meme spread by US diplomacy). It has worked closely with Bretton Woods's institutions as a shareholder, not a junior partner. These developments cast China in a less revolutionary light than it may seem. While working to transform the global landscape, its strategy to build socialism is a continuation of its historical trajectory of rising "into the global system" (Wang 2015) and being heavily dependent on the structures the West has built, which had paradoxically helped dismantle state socialism elsewhere.

Lessons Learned: Yugo-Chinese Intersections

China's agility and ability to learn and draw lessons have helped it rise under CPC rule. The learning-based experimental trial-and-error approach made CPC a keen observer of global affairs and a student of foreign lessons, which it adapts to the Chinese context (Shambaugh 2009). CPC adopted Marxism-Leninism from abroad and Sinified it. Soon after the People's Republic was founded in 1949, China became a Soviet student. Other socialist and non-socialist countries became important sources of knowledge after the Sino-Soviet split, especially during Reform and Opening Up (Halpern 1985; Marsh 2003; Gewirtz 2017). CPC had invited foreign experts from all over the world and from all ideological backgrounds to share their insights and advice, including the neoliberal guru Milton Friedman, and had sent its cadres on learning trips around the world to share their knowledge with their comrades at home. Under Hu Jintao, the Central Committee started having regular study sessions with leading experts. Under Xi Jinping, China has been strengthening its research capacities, particularly the role of think tanks and research institutes that study global affairs and other areas (Menegazzi 2018).

Among the many sources of knowledge, Socialist Yugoslavia has been one of the most important but also most overlooked objects of study and reference of the CPC. After all, Yugoslavia was distant, and much smaller, and much less

consequential actor than the Soviet Union. Yet, if China is a contemporary "Red Swan," then one could also argue that socialist Yugoslavia, in its own right, resembled a form of exception and deviation that had defied common sense back in its heyday; with the provision that given its minuscule size, it had an outsize impact on global affairs. Yugoslavia's autonomous liberation struggle, its emergence as standalone socialist state outside the Eastern Bloc, and the pursuit of a sui generis developmental and geopolitical trajectory have had an impact beyond its borders, with its example reverberating across Global South countries (Stubbs 2023), but also Western social democracies – and in particular, in China. Then, the sad demise of Socialist Yugoslavia and the tragic wars in the 1990s, and the unraveling of its leftovers (including the 1999 NATO military intervention) left a deep imprint on how the global public – including China – has came to understand global affairs.

While from a contemporary Chinese vantage point Yugoslavia stands primarily as a metaphor of negative lessons and fate that needs to be avoided by all means (Brusadelli 2023), it is also seen with a great deal of sympathy which echoes selected historical episodes when Yugoslavia was considered a fraternal nation and a positive role model in building modern socialist system. There is, after all, a good reason why former Yugoslav countries are becoming more appealing for Chinese "red tourism" (Talmacs, forthcoming) – that is, tourism in historical sites of importance for the global socialist struggles – and why cultural linkages are being restored. Anecdotal evidence of everyday interactions in China also corroborates the notion that older Chinese generations speak fondly of Yugoslavia, with a certain dose of their own version of Yugonostalgia (which, importantly, sometimes conflates SFRY and FRY and contemporary Serbia). But ultimately, the Yugo-narrative in China is political. As China deals with the challenge of refining its "socialism in power" and navigating the contradictions of its socialist market experiment, the legacy of Yugoslavia's experience remains a reminder of the immense difficulty of striking a balance between agility needed to reform and stability needed to survive, between centralization of power needed to streamline and coordinate and local autonomy needed to implement policies. The Chinese understanding of Yugoslavia's dissolution has instilled in the CPC a deep sense of anxiety about the complexities of governing multi-ethnic society, but also fears about potential malicious foreign involvement, while also disillusioning Beijing about the nature of the post-1991 global order.

Historically, Yugoslavia has emerged as an object of interest for the CPC due to the resemblance and intersections between the Yugoslav and the Chinese revolutionary trajectories and national liberation struggles. It is no accident that "Walter brani Sarajevo" is one of the most popular foreign movies to be ever shown to Chinese movie-goers, which still is an important cultural reference in China today (Yee 2020). However, initially, the story started the other way around: it was China who played a particularly inspiring role of the Yugoslav national liberation struggle and socialist revolution, as Tito and the comrades had looked with particular fondness and interest towards China (Pirjevec,

2023). Yet, as the Sino-Yugoslav relationship became ever more complicated in the period 1949-1977, Yugoslavia's interest in China decreased; by the time Chinese reformers flocked to Yugoslavia in the late 1970s, the relationship was asymmetrical with the Chinese side being the driver of the interaction.

Yugoslavia was a consequential actor for China ever since 1948, shaping its understanding on geopolitics, hegemony and empire (see Stopić forthcoming). The Yugo-Soviet split has been one of the most significant external political events that has shaped the global outlook of the CPC, and as such a subject of great reflection in China. From the vantage point of today, the Yugo-Soviet split paved the way for China to follow in Yugoslavia's footsteps and embrace an anti-imperial, anti-hegemonistic stance towards Moscow in the 1960s, as Yugoslav diplomats had foreseen that sooner or later it would happen (Pirjevec 2023). However, the initial reaction of China at the time was the opposite, as in the 1950s it had been highly critical of Yugoslavia while doubling down on its partnership and reliance on the Soviet Union, encapsulated in the "leaning on one side" grand strategy (that, among other things led to its involvement in the Korean war). Such decision combined pragmatism with ideology – as in the aftermath of the Yugoslav rejection the Soviet Union was becoming belligerent towards traitors in the socialist world, Mao had a reputation of potentially becoming an Asian version of Tito (Y. Li 2023); thus Mao had the incentive to provide a different example and prove loyalty to Stalin. Ideologically, much of the internal developments in China were geared towards avoiding Yugoslav-style revisionism and corruption, which was later one of the main targets of the Cultural Revolution. Yet, the Sino-Soviet split had helped bring China and Yugoslavia together. A full rapprochement however, only took place with the two landmark bilateral visits, of Tito to China in 1977, and Hua Guofeng to Yugoslavia in 1978. As the two countries were also pursuing parallel relations of non-aligned cooperation with the Global South, competition and learning were intertwined.

By the late 1970s, Chinese public discourse treated Yugoslavia primarily as a bold geopolitical actor and an ally in the anti-imperial struggle against the Soviet Union; however, just as China was to start reforms, it gradually reframed Yugoslavia as a successful case of economic transformation (Zhou 2023). China started to pursue intense relations at all levels of the hierarchy and across different policy sectors, taking note of how Yugoslavs ran their economy. The idiosyncratic nature of the Yugoslav system was an important asset; the conceptualization of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" has echoed Tito's 1948 position that each country has the right "to proceed on the path to socialism according to its own experiences, traditions and needs" (Pirjevec 2023: 74). However, Yugoslavia was never seen one-dimensionally and uncritically: as Chinese got to know it better, they also saw some cautionary signs, too.

Like in Yugoslavia, Chinese market reform was to be achieved by "devolving authority and resources to local officials", although unlike in Yugoslavia where the legislature was a key policymaking arena, in China policymaking competences remained firmly anchored within the party-state bureaucracy; in China

there was also awareness about potential negative trends towards hyper-localism (Shirk 2023). Workers' self-management was particularly appealing, until *Solidarność* emerged in Poland – after which, China looked to strengthen the role of managers (Shirk 2023). However, one of the key voices in the reform and opening up, Jiang Yiwei was arguing for enterprise-based economy based on the Yugoslav example, although it was Deng himself who look to empower managers rather than workers (Naughton 1995: 101–108).

As the CPC also sought a way to redefine socialist governance and socialism in power, its internal debates on relationship between central authority and local autonomy mirrored Yugoslavia's own dilemmas; which in effect is one of the key questions for any socialist state and the practice of socialism in power (i.e. where should this power be located, and how concentrated it should be). Initially, the rather decentralized Yugoslav system – both of political and economic governance – seemed to offer promising solutions, but as Chinese policymakers got more acquainted with the realities of Yugoslavia including internal disparities and quarrels between different federal units, decentralization lost its appeal. Preserving the concentration of power at the center had been a key pillar of what has been termed a "neo-conservative" stream of thinkers within CPC as of the 1980s, which has included Wang Huning (Chen 1997), one of the closest confidants of Xi Jinping and a member of the current Standing Committee – who had been an outspoken critic of Yugoslav extensive decentralization (Wang as cited in Brusadelli, forthcoming). The question of where power is located also concerns the role of the leader – the uncertainty following Tito's death was a reminder that orderly leadership succession must be achieved. There were lessons drawn also in terms of transgressions of state power - Djilas's *New Class* despite its harsh criticism of China has been part of the anti-corruption curriculum of Xi's anti-corruption czar in the 2010s, Wang Qishan (Chou Wiest 2014).

Notwithstanding ideological criticism, since the rapprochement and until its dissolution, Yugoslavia was seen with a degree of kinship. Therefore, the end of Yugoslavia – and the descending into the civil wars of the 1990s – was a highly traumatic event for China, and in particular, for the generation of scholars, policymakers, cultural workers and managers that were part of the exchanges in the 1980s. Yet, the manner in which Yugoslavia dissolved only added weight to the negative lessons learned: Yugoslavia was too decentralized, inequalities between republics were high; the federation lacked a strong sense of national identity while being lax on ethnic nationalisms and separatism, and the League of Socialists was too weak (Brusadelli, forthcoming). However, in the dissolution of Yugoslavia, China also saw that external pressures and impulses can have a major destabilizing effects. This line of thinking intensified by 1999 when the NATO intervention against FR Yugoslavia took place, during which the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was bombed as well, and the subsequent secession of Kosovo. The CPC saw these events as a violation of international law, and a display of American hegemonism as well as belligerence; the bitter experience served as a wake-up call and prompted a much more serious reflection on how

China will handle its relationship with the US that seemed poised to sooner or later, lead to friction, if not conflict (Doshi 2021; Gries 2005).

In sum, some of the key aspects of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" today, without taking into account the parallels and learning experiences from Yugoslavia. China's boldness to experiment with socialist market economy has drawn on both the positive and negative lessons from Yugoslavia. Fine-tuning decentralism was crucial for unleashing the economic potentials while at the same time, China has tried to avoid the political consequences of decentralizing too much. Its anti-hegemonism coupled with pro-active but reform-oriented work through the global system echoes the Yugoslav thinking beyond bloc politics. The cautionary tales of the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation have been important factors in developing a rather firm approach of matters of ethnic diversity. And the geopolitical reading of the dissolution of Yugoslavia has greatly shaped China's view of the post-1991 world. The impact of Yugoslavia, not be exaggerated, provides valuable and novel context for understanding the global diffusion of socialist ideas and practices.

Global China's Footprint in the "Desert of Post-socialism"

Yugo-Chinese history also provides an additional context and backdrop that helps in understanding the burgeoning contemporary relations between China and the Yugoslav successor states in the aftermath of GFC. The former Yugoslav countries have since 2011 been involved in the landmark China-led platform for cooperation with Central, East and Southeast Europe (CESEE) dubbed 16+1 (then expanding to 17+1, and finally shrinking to 14+1), that was in 2013 subsumed as a leg and laboratory of the BRI (Vangeli 2017; 2020). All indicators of economic cooperation has since increased substantially, and so have interactions between the two sides – which at times had glowingly referred to the interactions in the past. Of course, the context today is much different than ever before – the former Yugoslav countries are just small states at the global landscape that do not carry the weight that Yugoslavia once had, and despite their varying degrees of prosperity, they are all dependent capitalist economies (even Slovenia, after the GFC, had moved towards such trajectory) (Magnin, Nenovsky 2022). Nevertheless, they offer an important insight in how "socialism with Chinese characteristics" operates overseas, and helps add context on the question of China and globalization.

Global China in the former Yugoslav region has emerged as somewhat disruptive actor, or at least as an agenda re-setter. As the numerous reports on "Chinese influence" in the post-Yugoslav countries have been piling up, it is safe to say that no one could not have predicted only a decade ago that China would play such a significant role in the debate on the Balkans today. Its endeavors in the region have been aimed at creating conditions and pursuing economic cooperation, and imbued with an element of amity not least due to the fact that Beijing perceives countries from the (semi)periphery differently than it perceives countries from the global core (Vangeli 2020). Moreover, how

Beijing has approached the former Yugoslav countries is different than how the EU and the US have done so: within Chinese-led initiatives, they had received an equal treatment and a distinguished seat at the table, in contrast to being seen as pupils that to improve their performance by the West; this also goes for the post-Yugoslav EU member states as well (although the pressures have been much more visible and consequential in the EU candidate countries).

More substantially, while socialist overtures are not immediately identifiable in how their cooperation has been framed, China has engaged the former Yugoslav countries in a context that is based on the idea of remedying the shortcomings and injustices of the Western-led globalization parentheses, which is a cause that many socialists would in principle sympathize with. In practice, China has promoted a state-led approach to economic cooperation that has diverged from the post-1991 liberal pro-free market blueprints accepted in the region, but nevertheless, as centered on the state, has put ruling political elites as primary stakeholders of the cooperation. From a socialist theoretical standpoint this idea holds merit, however given the propensity for transgressive behavior of post-Yugoslav elites, its application into practice has not led to extending the fruits of the cooperation towards the broader society, while raising numerous potential corruption and governance risks. This is accompanied by the mantras of "mutual benefit" and "win-win outcomes" proliferated by Chinese actors – however, it is important to note that the Chinese win-win framework has a very distinctive transactional logic, rather than a socialist one: while value for the host country is to be generated through different forms of economic cooperation, China also has to have a clear benefit from the cooperation. Thus, transactionalism has helped China move forward in the region, as post-Yugoslav countries today speak the language of transactionalism much better than the one of socialism. They have embraced the narrative of the economic opportunities that China presents, but have sanitized it from any ideals of building a better world as put forth by China (Vangeli 2021). China has been only seen as a supplementary source of capital to aid them in their chosen trajectories. China itself has had no problem with this, as long as the pragmatic cooperation has been deepening.

The tangible outcomes of the economic cooperation between the former Yugoslav states (and in the first place here, "Western Balkan" countries) and China, nevertheless, tell variegated stories. The Zijin copper and gold mines in Bor, as well as the acquisition of the Smederevo steel mill by Hebei Steel in Serbia have been lauded as economic success stories that have boosted economic activity and created jobs (in the way transforming formerly losing companies into successful cases) – but have had grave environmental effects that have contributed to the rise of an environmentalist movements (Prelec 2021). Such investments, despite their profitability, also do not contribute significantly to economic upgrading and moving up the value chains. In the context of Chinese M&As Chinese managers and local workers have frictions (there have been complaints by Chinese managers that local workers behave as if they were still in Yugoslavia). The case of Shangdong Linglong's FDI in Zrenjanin,

on the other hand, has been accompanied by labor issue scandals regarding to the abuse of posted workers from Southeast Asia (Matković 2022). Furthermore, thermal power plants in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been lauded as important steps towards energy security, but this has meant burning more coal in the most polluted regions in Europe – although more recently, China has vowed to discontinue such practices; while we have seen the first Chinese wind farm being built in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the largest in the country (Žuvela 2023). These and other similar examples suggest that while some outcomes have been achieved, they have not gone against the trajectory of peripheralization of the Western Balkan countries.

China has also notably emerged as a key partner in upgrading the connective infrastructure in all Western Balkan countries (railway in Serbia, and highways in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia) and in Croatia (Pelješac Bridge). While in some cases Chinese companies won competitive international finance tenders, in others Chinese financial institutions funded projects that no one else wanted to fund. The political condition was that Chinese SOEs, with their successful track record, would lead the implementation of these projects. The infrastructure gap in the region is one of the key reasons for the underdevelopment and marginalization, recognized under any paradigm of economic development, be it liberal or socialist. While Sino-Balkan cooperation raised issues typical for infrastructure development on the project management side, there have been additional major concerns about potential "debt traps" – although the concept has been thoroughly debunked (Brautigam 2020). Yet, the lack of financial prudence and the emergence of corruptions scandals, while not negating the value and achievements of these projects, have cast a shadow on the integrity of the cooperation. Most importantly, however, there has so far not been a visible domestic agenda on how to utilize the new infrastructure towards sustainable growth, which would effectively mirror China's own example of synergizing infrastructure development with industrialization. This, when we speak about China in the region we still speak of scattered projects rather than of having moved forward with the Chinese vision for regional development (Vangeli 2020b).

The cooperation between former Yugoslav countries and China, nevertheless has been met with intense resistance by the US and the EU, both in terms of rhetoric and actual policy maneuvers. Significantly, in response to China, they have pivoted to brick and mortar development and tired to offer competing packages. They have been more successful however in areas where they could use their restrictive potential, such as in technological cooperation, which is now a subject of national security discussions. Therefore, new Post-Yugo-Chinese relations, just like the ones during the Cold War, have unveiled against a backdrop of complex geopolitics, which at this point it seems will be somewhat of a constraint on future developments.

The state-led approach promoted by China and the normative charge aimed at remedying the injustices caused by Western-led globalization, in their own right, could be interpreted as having an underlying socialist tendency. Yet, the

impulse by the governments in the region and the modalities through which ideas translate into practice on the Chinese side, rather reflect pragmatic approach – it is for instance, the overt pragmatism, rather than any ideological component of socialism of the relationship, that has triggered geopolitical backlash. And while the support of infrastructure development could be seen favorably from a socialist perspective, the net effect of Chinese FDI is still problematic.

In sum, under the complex geopolitical and geoeconomic considerations that accompany the debate on the role of China in the Balkans, are there any visible traces of socialism in the Post-Yugo-Chinese relations today? China, with all the risks it brings to the region, provides an additional option and opportunity for the former Yugoslav countries, and establishes itself as a force that helps partially counterbalance the ills of neoliberal development, which, if handled properly – meaning, if consolidated domestic institutions can get China to invest in renewables rather than in coal, invest in value-added rather than cheap and dirty industries, and provide a sustainable vision for how to utilize infrastructure projects, then China can contribute to common goods and common well-being in the region. Given the socio-economic predicaments the Yugoslav successor states face, a somewhat Dengist approach towards China could be perhaps the way forward: regardless if it is red or not, if the cat can help them catch some mice, post-Yugoslav progressives and socialists should engage with it. However, some early Mao common sense needs to be brought for a good measure: before dealing with any guests, they need to put their house in order first.

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Anastas Vangeli

Globalna Kina, (bivša) Jugoslavija i socijalizam

Apstrakt

Ovaj članak utemeljuje proučavanje socijalizma u Narodnoj Republici Kini (NRK) kroz kritičku analizu moći, kapitalizma i globalnu ulogu. Upravljanje Komunističke partije Kine (KPK) obiluje paradoksima u oblikovanju posebnog socijalističkog modela koji posmatrači sa Zapada često smatraju izazovnim za shvatanje, karakterišući ga kako inkluzivnim institucionalnim inovacijama, tako i autoritarnom prisilom; iskorišćavanje moći države u postizanju pravičnijih ekonomskih rezultata i reprodukovanje nepravednih kapitalističkih društvenih stvarnosti; te osmišljavanje alternativa hegemonoj neoliberalnoj globalizaciji dok radi na očuvanju postojećeg stanja i institucija na kojima počiva. Ovaj kompleksni kineski model proizvod je eksperimentisanja i učenja; neki od naučenih lekcija potiču iz interakcije i razmišljanja o socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji, čiji je primer bio ključan u tome kako je Kina navigirala kroz geopolitičke kompleksnosti i sprovela reforme. Međutim, u kontekstu interakcije između Globalne Kine i globalne (polu)periferije, kao i na primeru savremenih odnosa Kine sa zemljama bivše Jugoslavije, materijalne ishode oblikuju pre geoekonomska razmatranja nego socijalistički ideali.

Ključne reči: Kina, Jugoslavija, socijalizam, globalizacija, interakcije

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THE ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM – DEMOCRATIC PROTAGONISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

ABSTRACT
The paper explores the possibility of creating a positive vision of post-capitalist society and economy, a blue-print for future society with reminiscence to the existing valuable drafts such as Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto*. Also, it focuses on shortcomings of that blue-print that became evident through the experiences of 20th-century real socialisms. Following Canadian Marxist Michael Lebowitz, the paper elaborates on how the vision of socialism for the 21st century should place central emphasis on the importance of changing the social relations of production. The central problem is located in the "vanguard relations of production", the central power and hierarchical authority in the hand of the party vanguard. The paper stresses the importance of the communist party as central to the articulation of the interests of the proletarian class as a whole, a class whose central interest is the overthrow of capitalism. However, the project of overthrowing capitalism must include the recognition of the practical comprehension of the importance of the democratic protagonism. Workers cannot be subordinated as passive observers of the system change. A change in social circumstances should simultaneously mean a change in the actors themselves – the socialist protagonists.

KEYWORDS
Manifesto of the Communist Party, democratic protagonism, avant-garde party, socialisms of the 20th century, anti-capitalist left, real socialisms

A Positive Vision of the Future Socialist Society/Theoretical Compasses

The anti-capitalist left today is in a deep crisis, frightened or confused, in any case unsure of what to do. The defeat of the real socialisms of the 20th century left it speechless, as if it did not know how to approach these historical attempts, what lessons should be drawn from them for the current and future of anti-capitalist struggles. A critical return to Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* reminds us that the fundamental determination and task of communists is to articulate the interests of the proletarian class as a whole, a class

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whose central interest is the overthrow of capitalism, the overthrow of the ruling capitalist class and its socio-economic function (Marx and Engels 1967).

This interest is not always evident in the particular historical struggles of workers and the disenfranchised, often they are not in the line with the class interests of the proletariat as a whole, and it is the task of communists to understand and theoretically articulate general interests in the form of a vision for proletariat in a way that it can still be constituted into a class. Such vision is important because it is necessary to give positive determinations of the goals of the fight against capitalism, and thus to enable the consideration of more concrete programmatic, organizational and strategic steps for the purpose of reaching these goals. The conflict is surely between "hope and resignation", as Søren Mau stated, between giving up the hope and believing in "the actual possibility of organizing our shared life in an entirely different and better way" (Mau 2023). Overcoming capitalism without positive vision of post-capitalist society and economy, remains only a negatively defined goal reduced to indefinite abstraction of its own demand or slogan.

175 years after the publication of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* communism was not fought or reached as "historical inevitability", and the specter of communism is no longer haunting Europe and does not worry the ruling forces of the capitalist world, as the introduction of the *Manifesto* depicted the social and political climate in the heated Europe in 1848 with militant optimism, pregnant with concrete Utopian hope. Today, 175 years after the *Manifesto* and after unsuccessful real socialist attempts, what can we say more concretely about the positive vision of post-capitalist society and the process of achieving it? In order to consider possible answer to that question, it is useful to look at the programmatic part of the *Manifesto*, that is, the ideas articulated in it about what steps are necessary and what conditions need to be met in order to overthrow the 'bourgeois relations of production'.

From today's historical perspective, it is clear that the issue of *abolishing private property*, which the *Manifesto* emphasizes as a fundamental political goal and the theory of communists summed up in one phrase (Marx, Engels 1967: 235), is by no means sufficient (even if it is still necessary) to ensure a society of "free and associated producers" (Lebowitz 2010: 109) beyond the class relations of hierarchy and domination. Also, organizing the proletariat into a political force that will conquer the state and implement the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to "wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to in crease the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible" (Marx and Engels 1967: 243) turned out to be flawed in the form of an avant-garde party that lead the construction of real socialism in 20th century. Today we know that such a strategy for overthrowing "the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms" (Marx and Engels 1967: 244), where it was implemented, did not lead to an association "in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Marx and Engels 1967: 244). Instead of the free association of

producers and the free and all-round development of all people, real socialist attempts led to the continuation of hierarchical rule in the form of a party-bureaucratic apparatus, the alienating atomization and dominance of the self-interested orientation of the working masses, and the absence of conditions for protagonist action and democratic participation of people in all key decisions that concern them – as workers, producers and members of the local community and society (Cockshott 2012; Lebowitz 2012).

Among the few theoreticians who approached the consideration of a positive vision of a future socialist society (Itoh 1995; Devine 1988; Albert 2003; Saros 2014; Hudis 2012), against the background of criticism of historical attempts to build socialism in the 20th century and the inadequate or one-sided theory by which they were guided or justified, recently deceased Canadian Marxist Michael Lebowitz stands out. Therefore, we will briefly repeat some of his theses in which he explains what was theoretically wrong, one-sided or overlooked in understanding the key conditions for overthrowing capitalism and building socialism.

To begin with, Lebowitz points out that if you don't know where you want to go, than any road will get you there (Lebowitz 2010: 26). In other words, we need a vision of the future society and an adequate, therefore materialistic and historical, understanding of its conditions. Today's nominally anti-capitalist left avoids theoretical consideration of a systemic alternative to capitalism and focuses almost exclusively on criticizing the political economy of capitalism. The reluctance to articulate a positive vision or a blueprint of a socialist alternative is justified by referring to Marx, who also did not present any detailed blueprint of the future society and who criticized such conceptions as Utopian, stressing that an alternative mode of production must arise from concrete historical dynamics, and not from the imagination and designs of some isolated individual, however ingenious he may be. "Theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer" (Marx, Engels 1967: 235). Nevertheless, both in the *Manifesto* and in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and in many other places in his various writings, Marx laid out a whole series of concrete steps that reflect his vision of the path towards the abolition of the "bourgeois relations of production", decades before the first historical attempts to build a socialist economy. Before we go through some examples it should be emphasized how important it is to keep in mind the importance of the concrete vision of the socialist alternatives.

Today, after the historical experience with the real socialisms of the 20th century, their overthrow and the restoration of capitalism, the anti-capitalist left must offer a much more concrete vision of the socio-economic system with which it wants to replace capitalism than it could before the mentioned real socialist attempts. This vision must, on the one hand, by presenting a draft of its own political economy and political constitution, answer the question of how it will overcome or avoid repeating the unquestionable failures and limitations of real socialism, but on the other hand, and much more importantly

– it must return to the fundamental reasons for justice and the desirability of the new socialist society.

Such a vision should be a 'theoretical compass' in relation to the concrete historical struggles of workers and the disenfranchised, while a political party guided by such a vision must recognize and be aware of interests and needs in workers' struggles that can only be satisfied through a radical change in the ruling relations of production. In the context of the general weakness of today's anti-capitalist movements and organizations, such a vision is apparently rightly criticized in the *Communist Manifesto* for critical-utopian socialism and communism – that are a "fantastic pictures of future society, painted at a time when the proletariat is still in a very undeveloped state [...]" that "correspond with the first instinctive yearnings of that class for a general reconstruction of society" (Marx, Engels 1967: 255). And indeed, today the conditions of class domination are blurred again, the majority of the disenfranchised recognized it "in their earliest indistinct and undefined forms only" (Marx, Engels 1967: 255).

Therefore, the propositions of a positive vision of the future socialist society can and should provide "the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class" (Marx, Engels 1967: 255), as the contributions of critical-utopian socialism and communism were positively evaluated in the *Communist Manifesto*. However, in contrast to the historical time of the creation of the *Communist Manifesto*, its authors, especially Marx, left us with an unsurpassed critique of the political economy of capitalism, its forms and fundamental structural laws and tendencies, and thus enabled us to objectively see the necessary conditions for overcoming its systemic logic. Articulating the vision of the future socialist society, which will be based on Marx's and Marxist criticism of political economy and on the critical appropriation of the experiences of historical real socialisms, certainly reduces the unsustainable or unfounded aspects of the positive vision of socialism for the 21st century.

Nevertheless, Marx's project remained unfinished and in some aspects problematic from today's perspective, and it is precisely on his critical appropriation that the Marxist left should theoretically shed light on the class logic of subjugation and alienation in current capitalism and historical real socialisms and develop a vision of a future socialist system in which such negativities will be overcome. Michael Lebowitz embarked on just such an undertaking – the correction and supplement of Marx's unfinished theoretical project, the criticism of the actually existing socialisms of the 20th century and the formulation of a vision of socialism for the 21st century.

Socialism for the 21st Century

Lebowitz's vision is based on the so-called socialist triangle. These are three interrelated conditions, the fulfillment of which is necessary in order to build socialism as an organic socio-economic system whose *raison d'être* will be the full and comprehensive development of all people. Those three key conditions

for future socialism are social ownership of the means of production, social production organized by workers, and production focused on jointly determined communal needs and purposes (Lebowitz 2010: 86–87).

Let's briefly consider why these three conditions are crucial according to Lebowitz. Social ownership of the means of production is important so that social production can be directed towards the creation of material conditions that will enable the free development of all, instead of being used to satisfy the private interests of capitalists, different groups of producers (as in Yugoslav market socialism, where social ownership was reduced to group ownership in individual enterprises) or state bureaucrats and partitocracy (as in administratively planned Soviet-type economies with the state as the owner of the means of production).

In all three cases, that is, in capitalism and the historical variations of real socialism, social ownership has not been effectively established. One of the reasons is that in none of these systems is social production generally organized by the workers, so the second condition or the second side of the 'socialist triangle' is not fulfilled. In order for social production to be effectively organized by workers (associated producers), it is necessary to overcome the social division into intellectual and manual labor, i.e. to overcome the functional fixation and stratification of workers according to such a division. Only when all workers in their fulfillment of socially necessary work combine thinking and doing to an equal extent, will they all be able to develop capacities for equal participation in organizing production. Therefore, one of the foundations of the socialist transformation is the concretization of the vision of how to gradually end the social division into intellectual and manual work (and into intellectual, management and executive positions).

In addition to Lebowitz, the central importance of overcoming the division into intellectual and manual labour is emphasized by some other theorists of the participatory economy, such as Robert Hahnel and Michael Albert, who designed the so-called balanced job complex as a concept of operative combination of different work tasks - where no worker would be fixed only on intellectual or exclusively manual tasks (Albert 2003; Hahnel, Wright 2014). This is important in order to ensure an even combination of relatively empowering and less empowering jobs for all workers, which would only develop capacities for effective worker organization of production.

The fulfillment of the third condition – social production aimed at satisfying jointly determined communal and social needs – is necessary in order to overcome the self-interested and 'compensatory' orientation as structurally encouraged by capitalist and real socialist relations of production (Lebowitz calls them: vanguard relations of production because the central power and hierarchical management authority was held by the party vanguard (Lebowitz 2012)).

The central concept that Lebowitz points out was neglected by the Bolsheviks and other revolutionary parties when they led the construction of real socialisms is Marx's materialistic insight from his *Theses on Feuerbach* that people will not develop capacities for democratic protagonism if someone else 'from

above' changes their social circumstances in which they live and work. On the contrary, Marx points out in *Theses* that only when people actively participate in changing the social circumstances in which they live and work, can they also change themselves and develop their own capacities in that process (Marx, Engels 1976). Marx defines this double and simultaneous change as the formula of revolutionary practice – "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing" (Marx, Engels 1976: 4).

The coincidence of the changing social circumstances and of human activity or self-change is, after all, the essence of Marx's view of 'the self-creation of man as a process' (Lebowitz 2003: 181). The worker as outcome of his own labor, indeed, enters into discussion not only by young Marx but also in *Capital* – where Marx discusses that the worker "acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature" (Marx 1977: 283). Lebowitz therefore concludes "every labor process inside and outside the formal process of production (that is, every act of production, every human activity) has as its result joint product – both the change in the object of labor and the change in the laborer herself" (Lebowitz 2010: 52).

Unfortunately, Lebowitz points out, this other side – the change in the people themselves and their capacities – was neglected or suppressed in the construction of real socialisms (Lebowitz 2016). Although the ultimate nominal goal of the vanguard party in real socialism was "system change", "the responsibility of organizing, guiding, and orienting the working class, all working people, and social organizations" was on the vanguard party (Lebowitz 2012: 69) (as Stalin put it, "the Party must stand at the head of the working class" (Lebowitz 2012: 70)), the working class was represented and led by the party. Workers did not have the possibility to exercise the management over the productive forces, but where only passive observers of the system change.

In this sense, the twentieth century has clearly shown that the rule of the working class (proletariat) is not ensured by winning elections or 'conquering the state', the real battle for democracy as the rule of 'ordinary people' and workers implies the creation of institutions that will provide space for members of society to develop capacities through protagonist action. Real socialism of the Soviet type, after the slogan under which the revolution was conducted – "all power to the Soviets" – completely subordinated the mentioned "protagonistic" institutions to the domination of the communist party and the bureaucratic apparatus, while the introduction of Yugoslav self-management was also a positive step, but especially after 1965 and the liberal reforms, it was limited by the market coordination of production and the orientation of companies to achieve the highest possible income on the market. There was no democratically planned production to meet communal and social needs, so the market mechanism of production regulation encouraged the petrification of hierarchical structures within companies and made it impossible to end the division into managerial (intellectual) and executive (manual) jobs. This resulted in the divergence of interests between management (technocratic) structures and manual-executive labor.

Lebowitz criticizes the vanguard Marxism who enthroned in real socialism vanguard state ownership and vanguard planning (Lebowitz 2012: 132), the real-socialist exclusive focus on the development of productive forces and on the issue of distribution (distribution according to work), while neglecting and postponing for a later stage the issue of changing relations of production (which, for example, marked the establishment of the soviets as a body of workers' control and management, Lebowitz 2016). Namely, the new socialist society starts from the inherited elements of the old society. Marx saw socialism as a process by which the elements of the old, capitalist society are systematically subordinated to the new socialist mode of production, and in the process, the 'missing organs' are built in order to develop the new system into an organic whole that by itself creates the assumptions of its own reproduction (Lebowitz 2016). The Bolsheviks and other revolutionary parties that led the construction of real socialism in the 20th century, faced with major problems of an underdeveloped production base, a hostile environment and domestic reactionary forces, distorted Marx's theory of social transformation based on revolutionary practice (Lebowitz 2016).

Socialism is no longer theoretically interpreted as a process of changing relations of production, but the construction of a post-capitalist society is divided into two phases – lower socialist and higher communist. In the lower phase, according to the theory of the Bolsheviks (Lebowitz 2015), the primary focus should be on the rapid development of the productive forces with the acceptance of the inherited elements of the old society – the historical and moral structure of needs and the way they are determined, the technological-production structure (Lenin's elevation of Fordism; Lenin 1918/1972) as well as the acceptance of the labor power as an individual ownership for the disposal and use of which an exchange equivalent is required in the social product (distribution according to work). Only in the future, indeterminately distant phase, when the enormous development of productive forces and the increase in labor productivity will ensure universal material abundance, will the communist phase be reached, in which everyone will contribute according to their abilities, and appropriate from the social product according to their needs.

However, such acceptance of the inherited elements of the old society meant neglecting the importance of revolutionary practice – the insight that a change in social circumstances should simultaneously mean a change in the people themselves - the socialist protagonists. Along with the inherited treatment of labor power as the individual property of workers, it was accepted that socialism should be built on the inherited foundations of people's self-interested orientation. If people in the lower, socialist stage are inherently oriented towards equivalent compensation for their own work contribution then it is most important to provide material incentives to encourage them to do well. Such logic is followed by the already mentioned focus on the rapid development of productive forces and the growth of labor productivity, where in an uncertain communist future, material abundance would enable people to work voluntarily according to their own abilities, and appropriate from the social

product accordance with their own needs. In other words, the new socialist man and his structure of needs would not be the result of a change in the social relations of production, but a mere consequence of the development of the productive forces.

Lebowitz points out that such an approach and theory completely departs from Marx's understanding of revolutionary transformation (Lebowitz 2016). Namely, Marx nowhere suggested that it is possible to reach a future state of material abundance, state of satisfaction of the principle "to each according their own needs", by building on the defective legacy of capitalism. On the contrary, ignoring the change in relations of production and relying on the unquestionable individual ownership of labor power as the basis for materially compensating workers meant that the starting point was that workers demand as much as possible from society in exchange for the disposal and use of their property – labor power. Workers within such relations of production view labor as a mere means of obtaining goods – alienated labor for the acquisition of alienated products of labor, alienated from the means of production and in relations of alienation with other workers and members of society. Lebowitz asks a rhetorical question – can the stage of material abundance ever be reached under such conditions? If alienated labor leads to an insatiable compensatory need to own objects/commodities, can scarcity ever come to an end (Lebowitz 2016)?

Lebowitz believes that the vision of socialism for the 21st century must place central emphasis on the importance of changing the social relations of production (Lebowitz 2016). This includes, among other things, the creation of an institutional framework for protagonist action aimed at jointly determining the needs and purposes of social production. This process of joint determination of needs and purposes, according to which the structure of social production and division of labor will be planned, was missing in the real socialisms of the 20th century, that is, it was not participatory and protagonist-based. For this reason, the needs and desires of the atomized working masses and in real socialisms tended to be more and more determined by the consumerist standard of individual commodity ownership or personal ownership and consumption. The referent for comparison was capitalism and its consumption structure, while production technology was transferred or copied from advanced capitalist countries (Khrushchev's announcement and projection at the party congress held in the early 1960s that the USSR would reach and overtake the capitalist West and especially USA already in the 1980s (Spufford 2010)).

In such a situation of atomization of the working masses, underdeveloped institutional forms for the joint (collective) determination of the needs and purposes of social production, and the capitalist consumer standard as a norm, real socialism increasingly lost its progressive social-transformative meaning and legitimization by such a mission in relation to capitalism. Even more, the institutions and mechanisms of regulation of production and allocation of resources in real socialisms – from administrative central-planning to hybrid administrative-market – led to increasing technological backwardness, economic

inefficiencies and irrationality and decreasing satisfaction of the adopted consumer norms as directed by the developed capitalist world with which comparison was made and one's own achievements were evaluated. All this, together with political authoritarianism, the privileges of the party nomenclature and the bureaucratic apparatus, and the lack of civil liberties, contributed to the loss of ideological legitimization of real socialism.

Socialist Party

One could say that the focus on the democratic protagonism, revolutionary practice of development of capacities through protagonist action, on double and simultaneous change – of circumstances of changes of the conditions of production and changes of the workers themselves are in conflict with the previous conclusion that it is the party that should shape a positive vision of the future socialist society. The attitude of the anti-capitalist left towards democracy is, indeed, ambivalent.

On the one hand, the anti-capitalist left sees the basic condition for the success of a democratic rebellion in the awareness of disenfranchised social groups about the class character of their disenfranchisement, and at the same time expects and calls for a spontaneous democratic rebellion and resistance of the disenfranchised, who themselves must develop the capacity to act. Spreading this class awareness of the disenfranchised and directing their 'democratic impulse' is seen as the task of organizations that should be mediators of the 'advanced class consciousness'[1]. They have yet to enable the constitution of the disenfranchised into a class political subject ('for themselves'). Marx described this ambivalent situation where workers are not yet political subject for themselves, not yet a class for itself. "Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The domination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle [...] this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests" (Marx 1956: 145).

Unfortunately, 'advanced class consciousness' is determined by adequate knowledge of the class dynamics of capitalist relations. This knowledge is not evenly spread among members of disenfranchised social groups. Its bearers are, above all, those more advanced individuals who, as the 'class vanguard', lead the political organization and raise class awareness of the disenfranchised. To this extent, it is assumed that anti-capitalist organizations, above all political parties, use the 'democratic impulse' and the energy of resistance and

1 For the debate on democracy and the role of avant-garde principle in party organization, see for example Paul Cockshott's essay "Ideas of Leadership and Democracy", in *Arguments for Socialism (*pp. 137–160); also, at more general level those questions are raised by Jaques Ranciere in *Hatred od Democracy* (2006) and by Alain Badiou in *The Communist Hypothesis* (2010).

rebellion of the disenfranchised, but as long as 'advanced class consciousness' and knowledge are not evenly spread among the 'class base', it is not rational for the aforementioned organizations to function and decide democratic in the 'full' sense.

Otherwise, it is said, it is not possible to secure the political strength and unity that are necessary to successfully work to abolish the social conditions of disenfranchisement. According to this logic, 'full' democracy in anti-capitalist organizations would mean the leadership of class-unconscious or insufficiently conscious people, which would paralyze or weaken its action or direct it in the wrong direction. Because of this, some anti-capitalist organizations both call for and limit democracy. The leading role of the 'class vanguard' is emphasized as necessary until the social and material conditions for 'full' democracy are established. The 'class vanguard', the best, most determined and most conscious individuals, supposedly know how to reach that goal, that's why they should be chosen to lead and decide on behalf of the disenfranchised base that they organize politically. Once the goal is reached and the social conditions of class domination are abolished, then the need for a 'class vanguard' will cease and 'full' democracy as the rule of 'ordinary people' will be possible.

However, past historical experiences have shown that all anti-capitalist parties (but also trade unions and reformist, social-democratic parties), which were organized according to the representative principle of the 'avant-garde', ended up as oligarchies or autocracies. Thus, they ended up as the rule of a small elite and/or one leader, where the democratic base remained a mere object. The initial difference in class consciousness, where the party vanguard consisted of the best (initiators, chosen as the best), with the institutionalization of their leadership role began to materialize more and more as a difference in interests in relation to the base. The basis for the development of different interests arose from the institutionalized asymmetry of power, which was materialized by the formal leadership position of the 'avant-garde' based on the authority to rule, that is, the authority to lead the class struggle. At the same time, there was no essential difference regarding the fact whether the anti-capitalist party won power and established a one-party system or was just one of the actors of the struggle within or outside the ruling framework of capitalist parliamentarism. In both cases, the power asymmetry and interest gap between the party's vanguard and the party's base was reinforced, rather than reduced or abolished.

Anti-capitalist parties are often led by the vanguard, which believes that the "transmission" of "advanced class consciousness" from the vanguard to the democratic base will be facilitated and at the same time will not lead to obstructions of insufficiently developed class consciousness and reactionary opinions of the democratic base, if "class-advanced individuals" are formally elected as the governing (representative/executive) body of the party. Then the real informal authority of their "advanced class consciousness" gets formal confirmation to be an authority whose views and proposals should be taken as authoritative in determining what is politically correct and true and which should thus become the basis of a common position (consensus), decisions and

direction of the organization. Namely, if the authority to lead is formalized on the basis of 'more advanced class consciousness', then those who lead (the 'party vanguard') are not only placed in the position of educators in relation to those brought up in the democratic base, but this difference is structurally strengthened through different evaluation of experiences and knowledge arising from the different formal position of those who lead and those who are led (regardless of the fact that it is declaratively emphasized that educators must also be educated).

The leading perspective and experience acquired by the 'party vanguard', as the 'conductor' of class organization, is on the one hand different from the perspective, experience and knowledge of those it leads, and on the other hand, by the very fact of formalization, it is confirmed as correct and true. This means that the party vanguard, and not the democratic base, is the true subject of political change, which, by changing social circumstances, allegedly enables the democratic base to constitute itself as a political subject capable of democratic rule.

However, if those who make up the democratic base do not change social circumstances themselves, but the party vanguard does it instead of them and in their name and 'in their interest', they remain the object and not the subject of political changes, the changes come to them 'from above', and they are not changed or trained for democratic government. The democratic base (workers, disenfranchised) can become a political subject only if it participates equally and actively in common changes in social circumstances. This means that it is not acceptable to institutionalize the asymmetry of decision-making power between the party vanguard and the democratic base, where the party vanguard will be selected according to the criteria of 'the most advanced' and 'the best'. If someone is better and more advanced, his or her influence on the democratic base must be 'horizontal' and informal, so his/her position must not be institutionalized and formalized as the position of a 'subject supposed to know'. Only then are truly more advanced class consciousnesses not reduced to the position of supposedly more advanced class consciousness, because the 'assumption of advancedness' by the very act of its formalization turns into the power of structural domination.

Conclusion

Today, when the anti-capitalist left is weak and when 'it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism' (Jameson 2003: 76), overcoming the ideological "prohibition to think", *Denkverbot* (Žižek 2002: 3) is necessary for anti-capitalist politicization to gain a clear direction and a positive idea of what to fight for when fighting against capitalism. Therefore, it is necessary for the left to start articulating a narrative in which the vision of a socialist alternative for the 21st century will be outlined. This vision should not be understood as blueprint of final and definitive historical destination, but as a possible route (future routes towards socialism will necessarily differ with

regard to the different historical contexts or different socio-economic formations). It must show people the possibility of a much more desirable way of organizing economic activities than is the case with capitalism. In other words, it must be inspiring.

Also, it must answer well-founded doubts as to whether the stated vision is a real possibility or just a fantasy – therefore, it must show how it will concretely answer the questions that must be answered in every economic system (what, how and for whom to produce?) and how it will solve problems that will inevitably arise and that can be anticipated. In addition, it must ultimately challenge popular misconceptions and ideologemes about what is inconsistent with the fundamental goals of the vision of future socialism.

Unfortunately, today's left is blocked in articulating a vision of a socialist alternative. One of the more important reasons is that the ruling capitalist forces managed to ideologically impose as a matter of course such an interpretation of the failure of real-socialism, which was also accepted by the left - that any new attempt to build a socialist alternative will inevitably lead to the repetition of everything that has already been historically "tried" and ultimately failed and rejected. However, the anti-capitalist left must not agree to such a verdict, but must critically redeem the real socialisms of the 20th century and the egalitarian inspiration that caused them to be created and sustained for so long. Of course, at the same time, he must critically expose their indisputable contradictions, failures and limitations, and clarify which necessary conditions need to be taken care of so that they are not repeated in a future attempt.

If, on the other hand, the left continues to agree to ideological judgments regarding historical real socialisms and the (im)possibility of different future socialisms, the only thing left is the bad utopia of "repairing" capitalism and an alibi orientation towards social democratic solutions that have already proven to be unsustainable because they accept the subordination of the realization of socialist goals and values to the needs of capital reproduction or the 'health' of the capitalist 'economic machine'.

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Katarina Peović

Alternativa kapitalizmu – demokratski protagonizam u 21. veku

Apstrakt

Rad ispituje mogućnosti stvaranja pozitivne vizije post-kapitalističkog društva i ekonomije, nacrt budućeg društva uz evociranje vrednih nacrta kao što je *Komunistički manifest* Marksa i Engelsa. Također se fokusira na nedostatke tog nacrta koji su postali očiti usled realsocijalističkih iskustava dvadesetog veka. Sledeći kanadskog marksistu Majkla Lebovica, rad obrazlaže kako bi vizija socijalizma za 21. vek trebala staviti snažan naglasak na važnost društvene promene proizvodnih odnosa. Središnji problem je lociran u „avangardnim proizvodnim odnosima", centralnoj moći i hijerarhijskom autoritetu u rukama partijske avangarde. Rad naglašava važnost komunističke partije kao ključne u artikulaciji interesa proleterske klase u celini, klase čiji je glavni interes svrgavanje kapitalizma. Međutim, projekat svrgavanja kapitalizma mora uključiti delatnu spoznaju važnosti demokratskog protagonizma. Radnici ne mogu biti podređeni kao pasivni promatrači sistemske promene. Promena društvenih odnosa mora simultano značiti i promenu samih aktera – društvenih protagonista.

Ključne reči: *Manifest Komunističke partije*, demokratski protagonizam, avangardna partija, socijalizmi 20. veka, antikapitalistička levica, realni socijalizmi

II

STUDIES AND ARTICLES

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Aleksandar Pavlović

THE SPECTRES OF THE YUGOSLAV WARS: MINORITIES' RESPONSE TO STATE DISINTEGRATION[1]

ABSTRACT

This article discusses minorities' responses to conflicts in post-1989 Eastern Europe that focuses on them embracing violence to cede from their original state and join their motherland or gain independence. The discussion focuses on the actions of minorities in the contested areas in the former Yugoslavia at the peak of the country's 1990s crisis, described as a drive towards ethnic self-determination. Faced with political crisis, disintegration and/or oppression, most ethnic groups opted for confrontation, secession and armed revolt/resistance with maximalist independence claims instead of cooperation, integration or compromise.

Furthermore, I discuss some possible implications of the grim Yugoslav experience. As I argue, to understand why minorities reverted to war in the former Yugoslavia and beyond, we perhaps need to recognize that post-1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe were predominantly the expressions of nationalist revolt and not democratic revolutions. In conclusion, I discuss some general conditions required for a minority to rise to arms, following Jenne's theory that stresses the role of external patrons in spurring internal conflicts. I emphasize this synergy of ethnic nationalism, external support by the kin state and/or international actors and minority's oppression as decisive for the eruption of ever-present antagonisms into a larger conflict and war.

KEYWORDS

Yugoslavia, Yugoslav wars, Minorities, Serbs, Croats, Albanians, Bosniaks

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Introduction

Why do minorities in political conflict choose to advocate independence, even at the cost of waging war? In order to provide a tentative answer(s) to this question, I will focus on the dissolution of Yugoslavia to illuminate the position of minorities during the political crisis and war. I argue that Yugoslav minorities focused their efforts on gaining independence and joining their kin republic/ (emerging) state, even at the cost of war. In particular, I will discuss in some detail all three major ethnic groups in Bosnia – Bosniaks (Muslims), Croats (Roman-Catholics) and Serbs (Eastern-Orthodox), Serbs in Croatia and Albanians in Serbia (Kosovo). Then, I will pose some more general questions about the possible implications of the Yugoslav case on the Eastern/Central Europe and former Soviet Union in general: does Yugoslav minorities' experiences perhaps make us think about the post-1989 revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe as expressions of nationalist revolt rather than fundamentally democratic revolutions driven by the belief in the idea(l)s of the Western democracy? If so, then the today's proverbial rise of right-wing sentiments in Central and Eastern Europe is merely the continuation and rearticulation of that same sentiment, which, unless systematically prevented, will proceed until the last part of our political space receives a properly national homogenous shape, with minorities fighting to be contained within the borders of their kin state, or within a separate state-let the carved for themselves.

The caveats of Yugosplaining and Yugodenying

Yugoslavia reached the height of its crisis in the late 1980s as a federal state with 6 republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia. Serbia had 2 autonomous provinces with significant levels of autonomy: Vojvodina, where over 1/2 of the population were Serbs and the rest were Hungarians, Croats, Slovaks etc., and Kosovo with 80% Albanians and 10% Serbs. Other republics also had diverse ethnic structure: Croatia had 78% Croats and 12% Serbs, Macedonia had 65% Macedonians and 22% Albanians, and Bosnia & Herzegovina was the most diverse of all, with 43% of Muslims/ Bosniaks, 34% of Serbs and 17% of Croats (Popis 1991, see: Picture 1 below).

Since the death of its charismatic, lifelong President Josip Broz Tito in 1980, Yugoslavia was ruled by a complicated collective federal presidency comprising 9 members: each republic and autonomous province provided one member, and the ninth was the president of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. After an introduction of multiparty system, elections were held in all republics and democratically elected representatives assumed their positions. After a rather formal, unsuccessful negotiations between the republics' leaders in early 1991, one by one, 4 out of 6 republics declared independence: Slovenia and Croatia on June 25, 1991, Macedonia on September 25, 1991 and Bosnia & Herzegovina on March 3, 1992. The Serbs claimed these acts were the acts of secession, maintaining the union with Montenegro and

Picture 1. Ethnic map of Yugoslavia in 1991 (source: Wikipedia commons)

continuing to call this union Yugoslavia until 2003, when it was renamed to the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. The others, however, claimed that it was a dissolution and the 1991 International Arbitrary Commission (known as Badinter's commission) and the subsequent UN Security Council resolution 777 ruled in this direction (there is a whole library of books on the breakup of Yugoslavia; for a useful overview, see Silber and Little 1996; for the most concise debates, see: Ramet 2005; Bieber, Galijaš, Archer 2005). Finally, the Montenegrin independence from Serbia proclaimed in 2006, which brought an end to the short-lived State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence, presented itself as the final steps in the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Now, what – if any – implications can be drawn about other comparable cases of state dissolution in the early 1990s in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union? On the one end of the debate is the *sui generis* position, that assumes that the Yugoslav case in general and Kosovo case in particular are specific examples and thereby ultimately not applicable and essentially irrelevant to other cases in the world, be it Nagorno-Karabakh, Pridnestrovie/Transnistria, Crimea etc (for a critical analysis of the Kosovo case as *sui generis*, see: Ker-Lindsay 2013).[2] It seems to me that, essentially, most of the mainstream scholarship falls into this category. Namely, according to the standard explanation, advanced for decades from Fukuyama's 1992 *The End of History* to Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes' 2019 *The Light that Failed*, post-1989 revolutions in the former communist countries were fundamentally democratic revolutions, driven by the belief in the idea(l)s of Western liberal democracy such as liberty and equality, the rule of law, the freedom of speech, expression and conscience, inextricably bound with late capitalist principles of the free market. Fukuyama even argued that liberal democracy constitutes the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" and famously proclaimed the end of history, describing the last man from the title of his book *The End of History and the Last Man* as the modern man who enjoys Western liberal democracy as the freest of all systems of government: "The end of history would mean the end of wars and bloody revolutions. Agreeing on ends, men would have no large causes for which to fight. They would satisfy their needs through economic activity, but they would no longer have to risk their lives in battle." (Fukuyama 1992: 311)

Seen from this light, it was the Yugoslav political elite, and chiefly the Serbs, that "missed the boat", failing to grasp the full consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the changing ideological and geo-political tide in Europe and the world. Simply put, they remained on the wrong side of history and ended in an ethnic war, whereas the others in mixed areas: Czechs, Slovaks, the Baltic nations were/are on the right side and peacefully entered/will enter the prosperity of the European Union as a model Western democracy.

However, in his recent critique of Fukuyama, Branko Milanović sees fundamental similarities between the events in the former Yugoslavia and in other countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s:

> the revolutions of national independence and self-determination that were essentially nationalist revolts were proclaimed by Fukuyama and other *maîtres à penser* of the time to be the revolutions of democracy. This was a puzzle to me from the onset. If these were the revolutions of democracy, liberalism and multi-nationalism, why were all three communist federations broken up instead of just being democratized? Why, to use a contrast, was Spain democratized

2 "Yugosplaining", in distinction, aims to discuss the usefulness of the Yugoslav lenses for understanding world politics, that is of potentially seeing other conflicts and minority strivings elsewhere through the Yugoslav experience. A group of scholars from the former country even launched a project *Yugosplaining the World* with the objective of making sense of "our lived political experience elsewhere" (Hozić, Subotić, Vučetić 2020).

> and kept as a democratic, ethnic-based federation, while all communist ethnic federations were broken-up? Clearly, there was something more than just democratization, and that more was ethnic self-determination. This was the key feature of East European revolutions; democracy was contingent.
>
> The entire ideology of 1989 sidestepped that question. It is a fundamental question, because answering that question not only highlights the true nature of the revolutions, but answers the question of what motivated a number of wars, including the current one, that we have witnessed since 1989. There were 12 wars in the so-called transition countries. All of them were fought in the former communist federations, and 11 out of these 12 wars were the wars about borders. (The only war that was not about borders was the civil war in Tajikistan.) Thus the answer about what motivated these revolutions must be obvious to all – but to the most dogmatic minds. (Milanović 2022)

This number of wars fought in the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union can even be higher than 12 depending on the line that we draw between, on the one hand, a war and an armed conflict, and, on the other hand, between *one* war or *several* wars if involving the same territory and/or belligerents (for instance, we could speak of one or three wars in Chechnya between 1993 and 2009). In my understanding, a comprehensive attempt at listing the wars and conflicts fought from 1990 in the former Yugoslavia should include: The Ten-Day War in Slovenia (1991), The Croatian War (1991-1995), The Bosnian War (1992-1995), The Kosovo War (1998-1999), Insurgency in the Preshevo Valley in Serbia (1999-2001) and Insurgency in Macedonia (2001). Arguably, the list of wars and conflicts in the Former Soviet Union should include: The Transnistria (Moldova) war (1990-1992), The South Ossetia war (1991-1992), The Georgian civil war (1991-1995), The Tajikistani Civil War (1992-1997), The Abkhazian War (1992-1993, 1998), The East Prigorodny conflict (1992), The Chechen Wars (1993-2009), The Armenian-Azerbaijani War (1994-2023), The Dagestan War (1999).

All the differences and specificities notwithstanding, it seems evident that the previous list strongly supports Milanović's claim that all the aforementioned cases, except the war in Tajikistan, were ethnic conflicts motivated be the attempt at redrawing the borders. Perceived from that vantage point, in the abovementioned cases, the behaviour of national minorities in contested areas in the time of crisis is best described as a nationalistic drive towards ethnic self-determination. Faced with the political crisis and possible disintegration and objective – real or potential – oppression, they typically opted for confrontation instead of cooperation, disintegration and secession instead of integration, armed revolt/resistance with maximalist independence claims instead of a compromise. Thus, violent response towards ceding and/or joining their national state has been almost exclusively the only perceived way by the minorities to survive, that is, to protect themselves and their vital interests. To exemplify this point further, I will provide some details about the response of various ethnic groups in Yugoslavia to the crisis and dissolution of the country, and then address briefly the issue of the general conditions and reasons that drives a minority towards a conflict and war.

Yugoslav minorities' (and majorities') quest for self-determination and independence

In facing the crisis of the state, the Yugoslavs turned to the newly introduced multiparty democracy, supporting the freshly founded nationally minded parties and elites that organized referenda about their nation's status in the country at the brink of dissolution. The first referendum on self-determination was held in Slovenia in the late 1990, with 90.83% turnout and 95.71% votes for independence. Other republics followed suit: Croatia in May 1991, with 94.17% voting "in favour" (78.69% of the total electorate), followed by Macedonia in September 1991, with 96.46% voting for independence (75.72% turnout). Croatian Serbs boycotted the referendum in Croatia, as the independence would seal their fate of losing the status of a constitutive nation and being reduced to a national minority. Namely, the Socials Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was composed of six constitutive nations (*narodi*) plus minorities (narodnosti). In legal terms, nations, not the republics, were constitutive political subjects. Practically, it meant that Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonias, Montenegrins and Muslims/Bosniaks had potentially the same status irrespective of the republic in which they lived/resided. However, with the rise to power of the nationalist oriented Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica in Croatia in 1989, the Serbs were swiftly reduced to the level of national minority in the new Croatian constitution, which they effectively saw as being reduced to the rank of the second-class citizens. In response, they organized their own referendum already in August 1990, proclaiming autonomy, and later went on to proclaim the independence of the Republika Srpska Krajina from Croatia. In the next step, they strove for the unification with Serbia, which Serbia, however, never ratified (see: ICTY Indictment to Milan Martić, art. 56 to 64 et passim).[3]

3 The timeline provided in the indictments goes as follows: "56. In advance of the 1990 elections, the nationalistic Serbian Democratic Party ('SDS') was founded in Knin, advocating the autonomy and later secession of predominantly-Serb areas from Croatia.

57. On 25 July 1990, a group of SDS leaders established the Serbian National Council ('SNC'), adopting a Declaration on Autonomy and the Position of Serbs in Croatia, and on the Sovereignty and Autonomy of the Serbian Nation.

58. On 30 July 1990, during the SNC's first constituent session, a plebiscite, which would confirm the autonomy and sovereignty of the Serb nation in Croatia, was scheduled.

59. On 17 August 1990, the Croatian government declared the referendum illegal. The Croatian police moved towards several Serb towns in the Krajina region. Serbs, organised by Milan Martić, put up barricades.

60. Between 19 August and 2 September 1990, Croatian Serbs held a referendum on the issue of Serb 'sovereignty and autonomy' in Croatia. The vote took place in predominantly Serb areas of Croatia and was limited only to Serb voters. Croats who lived in the affected region were barred from participating in the referendum. The result of the vote was overwhelmingly in support of Serb autonomy. On 30 September 1990, the SNC declared 'the autonomy of the Serbian people on ethnic and historic territories on which it lives and which are within the current boundaries of the Republic of Croatia as a federal unit of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia'".

According to Serbian sources, 756.549 voted for the Serbian autonomy, against was 172, plus 60 votes being irregular. Predictably, Croatia declared that referendum to be illegal and tried preventing the referendum from being held at all with its police forces; the Serbs put the barricades to prevent the police from entering the areas populated mostly by Serbs, which was a prelude to the war that ended with the defeat of the Serbian self-proclaimed statelet and the expulsion of some 200,000 people that remained on that territory by the end of the war in 1995, most of whom came to Serbia.

The referenda in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro were not organized in 1991. As mentioned, Bosnia had a complex ethnic structure with three big ethnic groups, none of which had the majority, and also the Bosnian Serbs opposing the independence. In Serbia and Montenegro, Milošević's regime still hoped to retain some form of a lesser Yugoslavia, and thus a referendum made on independence made no sense at the time. Eventually, however, a referendum on the independence of Bosnia & Herzegovina was held on March 1, 1992. The total turnout of voters was 63.4%, 99.7% of whom voted for independence. In other words, out of the three main ethnic groups in Bosnia, Bosniaks and Croats overwhelmingly voted for independence. Similarly to Croatia, Serbs in Bosnia pre-empted this referendum by holding their own already on 10 November 1991 in the parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a significant Serb population. Remaining within Yugoslavia was approved by 98% of votes, and Republika Srpska was subsequently established on 9 January 1992. It was clear that Bosnia is heading towards a bloody civil war. After unsuccessful attempts of the international community to secure a peace plan that would prevent it, a full-fledged civil war broke out in Bosnia ending in a Dayton agreement in late 1995 that left it as a dysfunctional country with two largely independent parts and three constitutive nations: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. To this day, Bosnia remains divided and politically separated according to ethnic lines.

Montenegro organized their referendum on the same day as Bosnia, on March 1, 1992, but as Montenegrins at the time felt a strong bond with Serbs, they voted overwhelmingly to remain in Yugoslavia (96.82% with 66.04% turnout). However, in 2006, Montenegrins held another referendum, this time voting 55% for the dissolution of their state union with Serbia. Serbia did not dispute this referendum and Montenegro has been an independent country since 2006, though interestingly with a rather dynamic ethnic structure where people

61. On 21 December 1990, Croatian Serbs in Knin announced the creation of a "Serbian Autonomous District" ("SAO") of Krajina and declared their independence from Croatia.

64. On 1 April 1991, the Executive Council of the SAO Krajina passed the decision to incorporate the SAO Krajina into the Republic of Serbia. At the same time the SAO Krajina recognised the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the SFRY constitutional-legal system, and decided that the laws and regulations of the Republic of Serbia applied throughout the territory" (ICTY Indictment to Milan Martić, 2002).

have arguably been declaring both Montenegrin and Serbian interchangeably in the past censuses.[4]

Serbia and its Minorities in the 1990s

Throughout this period, Serbia remained the only republic – and later, state – which did not offer a referendum to its citizens, Serbs and minorities alike. If it did, its minorities would surely express dissatisfaction with the new political order. Namely, both Hungarians and Albanians, the two largest national minorities (*narodnosti*) in Serbia, enjoyed considerable autonomy in the Yugoslav times. They lived in the two autonomous provinces in Serbia – Vojvodina and Kosovo, respectively, which had almost equal rights to the republics. For instance, autonomous provinces were able to independently issue laws and voted differently from those of the Republic of Serbia. The Serbian scholars tend to be rather critical of such an arrangement that "gave to the republics and provinces prerogatives of the state, which endangered the federal state" (Pavlović 2009). The Hungarian scholars tend, however, to see these political arrangements, and the overall climate in Yugoslavia in a positive light, especially in comparison with the later authoritarian and nationalistic policy of Milošević's regime in the 1990s (see: Varady 1997), seeing it as "a more favourable situation than their compatriots in other countries in the Carpathian basin, even including Hungary" (Arday 1996: 478).

In March 1989, Milošević made constitutional changes that effectively abolished these autonomous rights. In response to Milošević's abolishment of Vojvodina autonomy, Hungarians in Vojvodina formed their national party – Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians (*Vajdasági Magyarok Demokratikus Közössége*) in 1990, and adopted the *Memorandum*

4 During the Socialist Yugoslavia, Montenegrins almost exclusively declared officially as Montenegrins and the number of Serbs thus stood at around meagre 3% at population censuses from 1948 to 1981. However, since the breakup of Yugoslavia, Montenegrins apparently started declaring more as Serbs. Thus, the past pre-war census in 1991 saw 62% of Montenegrins and 9% of Serbs in the country, while 2003 census recorded 43% of the population declaring as Montenegrins and 32% as Serbs, and the last 2011 census of Montenegrins recorded 45% of Montenegrins and 27,8% of Serbs, as well as 1% of Croats, 3,3% of Muslims, 8,6% of Bosniaks, 4,9% of Albanians and 1% of Roma. Moreover, in 2003, 63% of the population said that they spoke Serbian, with only 22% describing their language as Montenegrin. In the last census of 2011, 43% said that they speak Serbian and 37% that they speak Montenegrin. Most Montenegrins belong to the historical and canonically recognized Serbian Orthodox Church, with a tiny minority adhering to the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, while Croats and some Albanians are Roman Catholics and Roma, Muslims and Bosniaks are Muslims. So, instead of a fixed identity, we have a rather shady and shifting situation in Montenegro: only a portion of those declaring as Montenegrins are firmly on either pole, being consistently either *Montenegrins who speak Montenegrin and adhere to the Montenegrin Orthodox Church*, or *Serbs who speak Serbian and adhere to the Serbian Orthodox Church*. Quite often, it is a mix of people declaring as Montenegrins, but considering their language to be Serbian and being the adherents of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

on the Self-Governance of Hungarians Living in the Republic of Serbia. The Hungarians focused on minority rights, demanding personal autonomy with the rights in the areas of education, culture, media and the use of language, territorial autonomy for the majority of Hungarian municipalities, and special local autonomy for municipalities with a Hungarian majority. However, the Milošević regime showed no intention of granting collective rights to Hungarians, despite their arguably more cooperative approach to his rule (Beretka 2019; see Pavlović 2021) After the fall of Milošević in 2000, Serbia adopted several key laws on minority protection in cooperation with the Hungarian minority representatives in particular. This resulted in a lasting positive trend in Serbian-Hungarian relations and minority rights, which, according to the recent scholarship, 'could potentially offer a template for addressing ethnic tensions in other Central and East European countries' (Smith, Semenyshyn, 2016).

Kosovo Albanians, being much larger in numbers and constituting an absolute majority in Kosovo, openly opted for independence from Serbia. Responding to their autonomy abolishment which Kosovo Albanians considered to be unconstitutional, Kosovo Parliament declared Kosovo to be a Republic, equal to other Yugoslav republics, on July 2 1990. Serbia responded by abolishing the Kosovo Parliament and removing editors of all main Albanian media in Kosovo, and stopped financing Kosovo institutions. Kosovo Albanians responded by building parallel institutions. In September 1990, MPs met in secret to adopt the Kosovo Constitution and held an informal referendum on independence and went on to proclaim Kosovo independence from Yugoslavia, which Serbia deemed illegal and rejected its validity and results. This proclamation did not get international support as Kosovo was recognized only by the neighbouring, kin country of Albania. In reality, until 1999 Kosovo functioned as a parallel system with official Serbian institutions of the autonomous province Kosovo and Metohija and Albanian institutions of the "Republic of Kosovo" which Serbian authorities considered illegal and tried to prevent by police force. After years of fragile peace and essentially non-violent resistance, some Albanians embraced a violent struggle and founded the UÇK (*Ushtria Çlirimtare* e *Kosovës* or Kosovo Liberation Army). In 1998, conflicts between the Albanian insurgents and Serbian police intensified, leading to NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and the withdrawal of Serbian establishment from Kosovo. On February 17, 2008, Kosovo declared independence (again), this time gaining considerable international recognition (for a short overview, see Pavlović et al. 2021: 364–367).

What is more, even Albanians that constituted majority in regions outside of Kosovo, from the Preshevo valley and Western Macedonia (see Picture 1) rose to arms. After the NATO bombing, the Albanians from the Preshevo valley in Southern Serbia replicated the Kosovo Albanian armed units and demanded unification with Kosovo – their political representatives still occasionally make this claim – but were eventually demilitarized with the assistance of NATO forces in June 2001 (for a detailed overview on Kosovo, see Mehmeti, Radeljić 2016; Bieber, Daskalovski 2003; for a discussion focusing on minorities, see:

Ćeriman and Pavlović 2020). Moreover, essentially the same military formation (UÇK – *Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare* or National Liberation Army) waged a warlike campaign with the Macedonian state forces throughout 2001, which ended with the Ohrid Agreement that significantly increased rights of Albanians in Macedonia and a disarmament brokered by the NATO.

Ultimately, even Muslims/Bosnians from Sandžak, a region in south-western Serbia bordering Bosnia, at the time opted for independence and organized their referendum in late October 1991. They constituted a majority in 3 municipalities and significant minority in the other 3, comprising in total cc. 280 000 people of close to then 10 million people in Serbia overall (inclusive of Kosovo Albanians). However, despite numerous complaints, cases of persecution during the Bosnian war and arrests of their representatives, and attempts at internationalizing their position, they never declared independence, likely due to their relatively low numbers and a lack of infrastructure and support to see it through (see *Chronology for Sandzak Muslims in Yugoslavia*, 2004).

Croatia		Bosnia and Herzegovina		Serbia		Montenegro	
Referendum on independence	May 19, 1991	Referendum on independence	March 1, 1992	Not held		Referendum to remain	March 1, 1992
Proclamation of independence	June 25, 1991	Proclamation of independence	March 3, 1992	Proclamation of "lesser" Yugoslavia	April 27, 1992	Proclamation of "lesser" Yugoslavia	April 27, 1992
Croatian Serbs referendum on autonomy	August 17, 1990	Bosnian Serbs referendum on remaining	November 10, 1991	Hungarians from Vojvodina referendum	Not held	New referendum to leave	May 21, 2006
Croatian Serbs declaration of independence	December 21, 1990	Bosnian Serbs declaration of independence	January 9, 1992	Kosovo Albanians referendum on independence	September 26-30, 1991	Proclamation of independence	June 3, 2006
				Kosovo Albanians declaration of independence	September 22, 1991		
				Muslims/Bosniaks from Sandzak referendum	October 25-27, 1991		

Chart 1. Referenda and declaration of independence by Yugoslav nations and nationalities

What can be derived from this survey? Effectively, at the first democratic, multiparty elections held in 1990, practically all Yugoslav nations and nationalities voted overwhelmingly for their national parties, and later went on to even more overwhelmingly vote for their independence on the referenda. Moreover, minorities had a proactive approach and most of them pre-empted the moves of the majority by forming their own national parties, organizing separate referenda and declaring autonomy or full-fledged independence before their more numerous compatriots or "com-republicans" did. All differences notwithstanding, it is plausible to say that – faced with state dissolution – practically all Yugoslav communities that were (or were to become) minorities clearly wanted independence, and most of them actually went on to declare it, even at the cost of war.

To be sure, diving deep into particularities of the Yugoslav case in the early 1990s would provide a detailed insight into the fabric of these ethnic conflicts, actions and roles of internal and international players, and thereby certainly offer a more nuanced picture of each minority in question as well as possible alternatives. However, that the Yugoslav nations and minorities (*narodi* and *narodnosti*), led by the nationalist rhetoric of the leaders they elected, strove towards their national independence based on ethnic principle rather than the principles of liberal democracy, seems difficult to dispute.

Implications (?): Minorities and War

I provided here a relatively brief survey of actions undertaken by practically all nations and nationalities in the former Yugoslavia, and argued that, faced with political crisis and (possible/likely/emerging) conflict, both the majorities and the minorities swiftly proclaimed independence as the sole and ultimate response to their situation and as the exclusive solution to their problems. Arguably, even those minorities that did not officially proclaim and pursue it, such as Hungarians in Vojvodina and Muslims/Bosniaks in Sandžak, did desire/prefer such an option, but refrained from it due to their relatively low numbers and the lack of means and support.

Ultimately, are there any broader implications and explanatory potential of the Yugoslav case to the question of minorities' responses to the crisis and conflicts in general? One possible line of reasoning follows from the claim that, indeed, the conflicts in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were essentially revolutions in the name of national independence rather than ideological revolutions in the name of liberal democracy. Hence, it recognizes that the nationalism and right-wing sentiments in Eastern Europe are not being on the rise only recently, but that nationalism was already there in 1989 and held its unimpeded presence ever since. Thereby, it appears that both majorities and minorities in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union behaved somewhat similarly in the times of crisis: inasmuch as the latter was pulling towards a unified, homogenous, mono-national state, the

former was pushing away from it, especially if it has a kin state nearby providing logistics and support.

Arguably, this is still not sufficient to cause a clash between the minority and the majority. According to Erin K. Jenne's theory that stresses the role of external international factors in spurring internal conflicts, only "when the minority's external patron credibly signals interventionist intent, minority leaders are likely to radicalise their demands against the centre, even when the government has committed itself to moderation" (Jenne 2007: 2). In the Yugoslav case, military support of Milošević's regime in Serbia – or, rather, his early rhetorically professed readiness to provide it, was such external agent for Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia, while unilateral support of international powers, Germany and Austria in the first place, and international willingness to arm Croatian government, was such external agent in the Croatian case. Kosovo Albanians in the early 1990s had neither arms nor the resources from the weak and poor Albania, nor did they have full support for independence from the international powers. However, the international situation changed in their favour after 1995, with the US government openly supporting Kosovo Albanian armed resistance. Last but not least, the central governments in each of these cases immediately assumed a hard line towards the minorities; Serbs in Croatia were reduced from a constitutive nation to a national minority, Bosnian Muslim-ruled government proclaimed independence despite the Bosnian Serbs' protests and inevitable ensuing conflict, and Milošević's regime ruled over Kosovo through a perpetual state of exception and apartheid.

To be clear, I believe that the previous discussion shows that a violent conflict and wars were all but inevitable. The Yugoslav example, as well as other wars in the former communist countries, could also be instructive in the sense that even when the crisis occurs, there is still a huge space between the two radical positions of assimilation and independence to comfortably accommodate both centrifugal and centripetal forces. Unfortunately, the grim reality is that it is rarely pursued and that the actions – or lack thereof – of the political elite in the former communist countries and international factors consisted in pushing it until it breaks.

Still, while Yugoslavia, Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia all broke down between mid-1991 to the end of 1992, not everywhere did that involve violence and conflicts between ethnic groups and between majority and minority. Thus, while the dissolution of Yugoslavia resulted in some 2 000 000 refugees and over 130 000 dead, the breakup of Czechoslovakia had 0 casualties. In comparative analyses, authors emphasized that, actually, both countries had many similarities, but blame poor leadership and "centralist attitude of Serbian leaders, unwilling to compromise and play by the rules of a consociational regime" for the violence occurring in the former Yugoslavia (Kennedy 2020: 5). Thus, while Vaclav Havel mediated between the two sides and contributed to calming tensions and coming to a bureaucratic accord for peaceful dissolution, Milošević in Serbia as well as Tuđman in Croatia both spurred national sentiments of their electorate and discussed the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Other

factors contribution to war were "the particularly unhelpful international community's response to the problem" in Yugoslavia, and more democratic strands in elite circles and the general population in Czechoslovakia (Kennedy 2020: 9). Bookman adds that Yugoslavia had a greater economic crisis in the 1980s, longer legacy of inter-ethnic conflicts, and that the Great Powers contributed to war by premature recognition of the secessionist claims. Most importantly, Czechoslovakia had a far more homogenous ethnic structure, with Czechs and Slovaks constituting 94% and 86% of population in their parts, and with only 1-3 of Czechs living in Slovakia and vice versa before the breakup (Bookman 1994: 184). Thus, the question where to draw the border was a pacifying issue in the Czechoslovakian scenario, but a tantalizingly antagonizing issue in the Yugoslav case. In summarizing the arguments supposed to offer distinctions between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia vs Yugoslavia that would provide the explanation for the violence, Bunce thus claims: "All of this leads to one conclusion: Yugoslavia, at least with respect to these considerations, does not emerge as distinctive" (Bunce 1999: 219).[5]

Thus, rather than admitting that warlike outcome is inevitable, I emphasize this synergy of ethnic nationalism, external support by the kin state and/or international actors and the irresponsible behaviour of the central government as decisive for a minority reverting to war. What is more, even when violence occurs, as long as this rift between minority and majority does not completely crack, full-blown conflicts can be avoided, and wounds can be somewhat patched and healed – as was arguably the case in Macedonia. But if this is let to escalate to a point of no return, then it is likely that the conflict will persist until ethnic homogeneity is achieved, either by successful independence claim, or defeat and ethnic cleansing, or subjugation (unless, as it usually happens, foreign/international intervention disrupts such "natural" development).

5 According to Bunce herself, "Yugoslavia ended violently because the federation had been for so long decentralized; because Serbs were less powerful than their numbers (and their history) would indicate, yet empowered at the same time by the institutions of the Serbian republic; and because the Yugoslav military had long been a domestic political actor and was opposed, by mission and interest, to the dismantling of the state" (Bunce 1999: 233). As plausible as it may seem, the problem is that the army first intervened in Slovenia, only to withdraw after ten days. Again, we are forced to go back to the question of drawing the borders – homogenous Slovene population left little room for the army or any other party to maintain the conflict. But in the ethnically mixed Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia minorities refused to accept the previous republican borderlines as state borders even at the cost of a war. Without attempting to overgeneralize this case, the borders between ethnicities in the former Soviet Union were drawn by some consideration, which contributed to velvet dissolution. But it suffices to look at the case of Ossetians, who were divided between Russia and Georgia, and also contained Ingush lands in their territory; or of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with Nagorno-Karabakh being an enclave of Armenians in Azerbaijan, and Armenia cutting Azerbaijan proper from its exclave Nakhichevan. In such cases, it is much more difficult to maintain a peaceful political breakup and prevent conflicts.

Conclusion

This article offered a perspective on minorities' responses to conflict in cases when they embrace violence to cede from their original state and join their motherland or gain independence. The discussion focused on the minorities in the former Yugoslavia from the early 1990s onwards, i.e. at the peak of the country's crisis. As I argued, the behaviour of national minorities in the contested areas in the time of crisis is best described as a drive towards ethnic self-determination. Faced with political crisis and possible disintegration and objective – real or potential – oppression, most ethnic groups opted for confrontation instead of cooperation, disintegration and secession instead of integration, armed revolt/resistance with maximalist independency claims instead of a compromise. Thus, violent response towards ceding and proclaiming independence and/or joining their national state has been almost exclusively the only perceived way by the minorities to survive, that is, to protect themselves and their vital interests. I exemplified this point by illustrating how most Yugoslav minorities reverted to war to achieve national unification/independence: all three major ethnic groups in Bosnia – Bosniaks (Muslims), Croats (Roman-Catholics) and Serbs (Eastern-Orthodox), Serbs in Croatia and Albanians in Serbia (Kosovo).

In the second step, I discussed some possible implications of the grim Yugoslav experience. I argued that in order to understand why minorities reverted to war in the former Yugoslavia – and why they revert to war beyond this specific space – we perhaps need to recognize that post-1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe were predominantly the expressions of nationalist revolt and not primarily democratic revolutions. Namely, a popular view, advanced from Fukuyama's 1992 *The End of History* to Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes' 2019 *The Light that Failed*, saw post-1989 revolutions essentially as democratic revolutions, driven by the belief in the idea(l)s of Western democracy. In line with this argument, the current rise of right-wing sentiment in Eastern Europe should be understood as the consequence of the failing belief in democracy. In opposition to this view, Branko Milanović (2022) recently asked a simple question: „If these were the revolutions of democracy, liberalism and multi-nationalism, why were all three communist federations broken up instead of just being democratized?", pointing out that 11 out of 12 wars fought in the former communist federations were about borders.

Furthermore, I discussed some general conditions required for a minority to rise to arms as the only and ultimate solution to its status, in particular Erin K. Jenne's theory that stresses the role of external international factors in spurring internal conflicts. I emphasize this synergy of ethnic nationalism, external support by the kin state and/or international actors and oppression of a minority as decisive for the eruption into a larger conflict and war. Still, the main concern of this article is not to offer a theoretically solid and universally applicable answer to the question when will a minority revert to war. Rather, I wanted to emphasize the responsibility of all actors involved in a conflict

to act in the way to prevent and avoid armed conflict and war. For centuries, Serbs and Albanians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Ukrainians and Russians lived together, intertwined, in the same states and empires. Bringing them back together under one banner and country name they would give allegiance to, seems impossible today, but it is easy to imagine them fighting quite literally to the last, with that last man being precisely the opposite of Fukuyama's one – the ultimate survivor of an ethnic conflict. Their national sentiments could have remained benign, were it not for external and internal agents determined to ruthlessly exploit them. Sadly, while war crimes are punishable by international law, war-mongering is not, even though it is no less soaked in blood.

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Aleksandar Pavlović

Bauci jugoslovenskih ratova: Kako manjine reaguju na raspad zemlje?

Apstrakt

Ovaj članak razmatra pitanje – kako manjine u Evropi posle 1989. godine reaguju kada su zahvaćene konfliktom i/ili raspadom zemlje? Diskusija se usredsređuje na manjine u bivšoj Jugoslaviji od početka 1990-ih, dakle na vrhuncu državne krize. Kao što tvrdim, ponašanje nacionalnih manjina u spornim područjima u vreme krize može se najbolje opisati kao težnja ka etničkom samoopredeljenju. Suočene sa političkom krizom i mogućim raspadom i *objektivnom* - stvarnom ili potencijalnom - represijom, većina etničkih grupa se odlučila za konfrontaciju umesto za saradnju, raspad i ocepljenje umesto integracije, oružanu pobunu/otpor s maksimalističkim zahtevima za nezavisnost umesto kompromisa.

U radu se takođe razmatraju i neke moguće posledice sumornog jugoslovenskog iskustva. Kako se tvrdi, da bismo razumeli zašto su se manjine u bivšoj Jugoslaviji okrenule ratu ili ga prihvatile, možda je najpre potrebno prepoznati da istočnoevropske revolucije posle 1989. godine nisu bile prevashodno demokratske revolucije, već pretežno izrazi nacionalnog bunta.

U zaključku se osvrćem i na neke opšte uslove potrebne da bi manjina posegla za oružjem kao jedinim i krajnjim rešenjem za svoj status, posebno teoriji Erin Dženi (2007) koja ističe ulogu spoljnih međunarodnih faktora u podsticanju unutrašnjih konflikata. Naglašavam ovu sinergiju etničkog nacionalizma, spoljnje podrške od strane matične države i/ili međunarodnih aktera i represije prema manjini kao odlučujućima za erupciju (inače uvek prisutnih) antagonizama u širi konflikt i rat.

Ključne reči: Jugoslavija, Jugoslovenski ratovi, manjine, Srbi, Hrvati, Albanci, Bošnjaci

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Romilo Aleksandar Knežević

SOCIAL FREEDOM AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON ACCORDING TO NIKOLAI BERDYAEV

ABSTRACT
Contemporary European democracies, and liberalism in particular, are established upon the foundations of humanism. Humanism, as its name entails, denotes the elevation of the human being and setting up of the person to the centre of the universe. Humanism was a reaction against the mediaeval view of the omnipotent and omniscient God, and seeks an understanding of the human being that would fulfil his/her intuitive desire for genuine human dignity. What kind of freedom would be sufficient and adequate for true human dignity? Faced with this radical understanding of freedom, which originates from, and is dictated by, the deepest realms of the human being, most humanist thinkers chose to reject both God and the idea of the divine icon. Humanism denied man's divine sonship and proclaimed that man is the son of nature. Hence, Humanism not only declared man's self-confidence, but it also debased him, by defining him as a product of natural necessity. Liberalism, argues the Russian philosopher Berdyaev, has created a 'single-plane' being, it has separated the citizen from the integral personality, by refusing to admit the spiritual dimension of the human being. Berdyaev stresses that true freedom cannot be simply a formal self-defence, but that it must rather lead to creative activity. This is why the transition is inevitable from formal liberty, which protects us and defends us, to true freedom capable not only of creatively transforming the human society but also of creating a new world.

KEYWORDS
Freedom, humanism, liberalism, God's omnipotence, imago Dei, human dignity, person, individual

Prologue

Because of the event of the Incarnation, it is probably not so difficult to accept that God is *in* time, as much as it is challenging to admit that time is *in* God. We can imagine without difficulties God *in* time because he is eternal and he can abide in history without being mixed with it. However, it is far more challenging to imagine time *in* God – to accept that time is one of God's essential qualities without which God cannot be what he is.[1]

1 About different concepts of time see more in Knežević 2011 and Knežević 2020a.

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By the same token, it is less unimaginable to think that God is *in* human being, because God can share his grace with the creature without having to participate in the created nature. But it is more daring to consent that human being is *in* God, because why God, who is perfect and omnipotent, would need human person in his being?

Time is movement, but the perfect and self-sufficient God – and we talk here about the God of theism – is immobile. God of theism is also a God of monism and subordination. Since theism cannot find motive for movement in God it has confined itself to monism, because begetting of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit represent a theogony, a movement in the innermost life of God. It inevitably follows that the Son and the Spirit are subordinate to the Father. If movement is by definition unthinkable, even if as a result it now has two other Hypostases, how to explain the movement towards the creation of the multiple worlds? Monism therefore leads to monophysitism and acosmism. For monism, this world is nothing but an appearance and illusion, and it has no real, ontological existence. Monism associates movement only with the plural and illusory world and leaves the divine life unaffected by it. This bears grave consequences both for the concept of God and the notion of the human being. God is depicted as the creator of delusions whilst the human person is only a victim of his heartless experiment.

How are we to explain the origin [of the plural world] in this so-called absolute life to which no form of human movement [...] is applicable? Neither the pantheistic monism of the Hindoo type [...] nor Parmenides; nor Plato, who was unable to bridge the dualism of the unique-immobile and the plural-mobile world; nor Plotinus; nor, finally, the abstract monism of German idealism, were able to achieve it. It remains an insoluble mystery to them all. (Berdyaev 2009b)

Humanism and Concept of the Individual

Contemporary European democracies, and Liberalism in particular, are established upon the foundations of Humanism. Humanism, as its name entails, denotes the elevation of the human being and setting up of the person in the centre of the universe. Humanism was a reaction against the mediaeval view of the omnipotent and omniscient God of theism and monism that we have just described. Humanism searches for an understanding of man that would fulfil man's intuitive desire for self-confidence and self-esteem – genuine human dignity. What kind of freedom would be sufficient and adequate for true human dignity? What is the 'myth' that would embody the ultimate fulfilment of our inmost desire for dignity?

Whilst affirming human self-respect against the theistic image of God, humanism contained an opposed principle, that of man's abasement. Humanism found itself in a major philosophical cul-de-sac: how to reconcile the all-powerful and perfect God with the dignity of the human person, i.e., the doctrine of the omnipotent God with the teaching of *imago Dei*. It seems that classical teaching on divine omnipotence is irreconcilable with the idea of *imago Dei.* As

we know, the Church Fathers describe God's icon as the *autoexousion* (Knežević 2020b: 62). That one is created according to the divine image means that one is bequeathed with absolute power of self-determination. Nothing and nobody determines my freedom, not even God. As Nikolai Berdyaev, a renowned Russia religious philosopher explains, "personality determines itself from within... and only determination from within and arising out of freedom is personality" (Berdyaev 2009a: 24.).[2] Although human personality is created, it possesses the capacity for autonomous self-determination. "Personality is emancipation from dependence upon nature, from dependence upon society and the state. It opposes all determination from without, it is a determination from within. And even within, the determination is self-determination, not even God can do it" (Berdyaev 2009a: 26). In addition, Berdyaev maintains that we cannot say that the suprapersonal is higher than human person.

Man as a personality cannot be a means to God as Personality. The theological doctrine that God created man for his own glory and praise is degrading to man, and degrading to God also (Berdyaev 2009a: 39).

Faced with this radical understanding of freedom, which originates from, and is dictated by, the deepest realms of the human being, most of the humanistic thinkers chose to reject both God and the idea of the divine icon. Within the framework of the omnipotent God, the doctrine of *imago Dei* seemed to be nothing but a flamboyant metaphor, a consolation for the redundant and unneeded creature. Humanism, therefore, denied man's divine sonship and proclaimed that man is the son of nature. Hence, Humanism not only avowed man's self-confidence, but it also debased him, by defining him as a product of natural necessity, as a being that shares all defects and limitations of nature. The natural man was divorced from the spiritual. The Christian view of man began to lose its strength, but instead of leading to the liberation, the death of the Christian doctrine only gave rise to a self-destructive dialectic within humanism.

European democracy, in Berdyaev's view, rests upon the humanistic principle of sociological positivism according to which true freedom has a social origin. Even the most liberal of all democracies have never known the spiritual bases of freedom. Liberalism, argues the Russian philosopher, has created a 'one-planed' being, (Berdyaev 2009b: 50.) it has separated the citizen from the integral personality, by refusing to admit the spiritual dimension of the human being. Freedom of the individual, as defined by Liberalism, is about atomistic, particular liberty, mainly depicted as freedom *from* the oppression of society. But freedom *for* or positive freedom of Liberalism is by definition confined to the subjective or psychological level. It is a 'leave me alone' type of freedom, freedom the essence of which is self-defence of the individual from the collective subjects of society, state or nation (Berdyaev 2009b: 45). Defining him as a completely natural creature, Liberalism forever sentences the individual to one-plane enslavement by the natural and sociological necessities.

2 For Berdyaev's concept of the human person, see Knežević 2020a, especially pp. 160–179.

Liberalism is exclusively a social philosophy: the liberals are social-minded and for them, liberty means only a form of political organisation for society, whereby society grants certain subjective rights to its citizens. Liberalism is a one-planed world-concept: it fails to see that man belongs to two planes of being (Berdyaev 2009b: 48).

Berdyaev stresses that true freedom cannot be simply a formal self-defence, that it must lead to creative activity. This is why the transition is inevitable from formal liberty, which protects us and defends us, to true freedom capable not only of creatively transforming the human society but also of creating a new world. (Berdyaev 2009b: 46) The problem of freedom, therefore, is vastly deeper than that of Liberalism. (Berdyaev 2009b: 45) It concerns the question of the origin, the meaning, and the destiny of the human being.

Humanism has given birth to the notion of *the individual*, which resembles very much a windowless, Leibnitzian *monad.* For Leibnitz, a monad is a simple substance, "it is closed, shut up, it has neither window nor doors", explains Berdyaev (Berdyaev 2009a: 22). One may even argue that the structure of the monad is akin to the perfect and self-sufficient, immovable and changeless God of theism. As we know, theistic God is *actus purus,* God who does not change because his entire potential is equal to his actuality.[3] God-*actus purus* is perfect and he cannot become 'more perfect'. He is free because he does not have to move. He is free because he does not need, and will never need, to create something new. He is free not to have to create and move. Movement is considered as a sign of imperfection, it does not have an ontological value, and is reserved solely for the realm of the created world. The movement towards the creation of the world, therefore, has no ontological consequences. By creating the world, God does not add anything to his being, nor would he lose anything should the world cease to exist. In this sense, God *does not need* the world.[4]

Individual or monad is a being with no ontological potential or implication. Freedom of the individual cannot be conceived of as uniqueness or ontological otherness. To be unique, or to have "absolute ontological otherness",[5] implies that there is in one's identity something that does not exist in any other identity, including God's. But how can there be something that does not exist *in* God, something that God does not have, if He has created everything that is? Or, perhaps, there *is* something that God *did not create*?

Freedom of the individual is therefore illusory as much as his ontological otherness. One is free to dwell in a temporary redundancy, and one is free to be "saved" from it. But "to be saved" means here to jump from the frying pan into the fire, that is, to exchange historical and fleeting redundancy for the eternal one.

3 More about God conceived as *actus purus* in my essay Knežević 2020a.

4 For more about different views of the meaning of creation, and in particular about the concept of *analogia entis,* in case of Sergius Bulgakov and Nikolai Berdyaev, see my Knežević 2022.

5 For John Zizioulas, freedom means to be other in an absolute ontological sense (Zizioulas 2006).

Fleeing from the theistic God, who expresses his omnipotence by the absolute power of determination and control, Humanism chose to entirely reject God as well as the idea of the divine image. Nietzsche rejected God on the same grounds. He "burned with creative desire" but "knew only the law and the redemption in neither of which is the creative revelation of man", and hated God because he believed that if God exists man's creativeness is impossible (Berdyaev 2009: 106).[6] As a result, Humanism embraces the notion of the individual, which connotes a "one-planed" being, being that belongs only to the realm of nature and is limited by natural laws.

Christian Concept of Personality

Berdyaev claims that Christianity, on the other hand, found a way to resolve the problem of human freedom by creating the concept of personality. Personality belongs not only to nature but also to the spirit. In Berdyaev's vocabulary, nature denotes determination whereas spirit signifies freedom. To be free means to be created in the divine image, that is, to possess radical power of self-determination. Berdyaev is, of course, aware that the conventional notion of God's omnipotence is in stark conflict with the concept of *imago Dei*. Why, then, is he promoting Christianity as a religion of freedom?

Well, he is not. He discerns between two types of Christianity: between historic Christianity, which is "the work of man" – and this "work has been both bad and good" (Berdyaev 2009b: 118) – and the renewed and transfigured Christianity. Historic Christianity is not fit to be the leader of the revolution for the sake of personality because it has betrayed God's very idea *of man and His image, as has that of the God-man and Divine-human life* (Berdyaev 2009b: 122). This Christianity, in Berdyaev's words, "has not yet revealed itself as a religion of freedom" (Berdyaev 2009e: 158).

He believes that history now judges Christianity in all the domains of human life and culture. This is essentially judgement upon false *monism* and false *dualism*, upon extreme immanentism as well as extreme transcendentalism. The divine has been torn apart from the human. (Berdyaev 2009b: 120). Christianity has been all too often anti-human, insisting more on the commandment to love God than to love the human being (Berdyaev 2009b: 122).

"Christian piety all too often has seemed to be withdrawal from the world and from men, a sort of transcendental egoism, the unwillingness to share the suffering of the world and man. It was not sufficiently infused with Christian love and mercy. It lacked human warmth. And the world has risen in protest against this sort of piety, as a refined form of egoism [...]" (Berdyaev 2009b: 123).

Christians have drawn false conclusions from the doctrine of original sin and have denied human creative capacities. As a result of an unseemly concept

6 Berdyaev probably here has in mind Nietzsche's assertion, "Away from God and gods this will lured me; what would there be to create, after all, if there were gods?" (Nietzsche 2006: 67).

of asceticism, Christianity has been antagonistic to cultural creativity. It was too late when Christianity decided to endorse creativity in culture, and hence – human creative culture got out of Christian hands. (Berdyaev 2009b: 123).

In short, Berdyaev detects a fundamental setback in Christian teaching, which is responsible for the debacle of historical Christianity.

Most of the deformation and clouding of Christianity has come about because man found it difficult to take in *the full truth of God-manhood*. Now man has turned to God and away from man, now toward man and away from God. [...] The problem of *Christian anthropology, the religious question of mankind, is the basic problem of our epoch*. And *only the fullness of Christian truth* can fight successfully against dehumanization, and prevent the final destruction of man. (Berdyaev 2009b: 125)

In spite of two-thousand years-long history, Christianity has so far failed to produce the fullness of truth about the human being. In other words, Christianity has not yet produced an *ontological justification* of the human being, and this is because it could not absorb the full truth of God-manhood.

"In the Christianity of the early Fathers, there was a *monophysite tendency*, a hesitancy about the revelation of *Christ's human nature* and hence of the *divine nature of man*, his oppression under sin and his thirst for redemption from sin [...]. And the task of humanity's religious consciousness is to reveal the Christological consciousness of man [...]" (Berdyaev 2009e: 81).[7]

The Church Fathers, indeed, write about the deification by which the human being becomes, in the words of Maximus the Confessor, "without beginning and end"[8] or – in an even more daring expression of Gregory Palamas – "without origin" (Palamas 1983: 3.1.31). But even in this teaching on *theosis*, which aims at describing the glorified and deified character of human nature, it is not clear what would be the specific difference of created nature in comparison with divine nature.

The teachers of the Church had a doctrine of the *theosis* of man, but in this *theosis*, there is no man at all. The very problem of man is not even put. But man is godlike *not only because he is capable of suppressing his nature and thus freeing a place for divinity*. There is godlikeness in human nature itself, in the very human voice of that nature. Silencing the world and the passions liberates a man. God desires that not only God should exist, but man as well. (Berdyaev 2009e: 84)[9]

What would be, in Berdyaev's view, the full truth of God-manhood? This is the question the renewed and transfigured Christianity needs to answer to reveal the Christological consciousness of man.

7 Emphasis mine.
8 Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 10, PG 91: 1144c.
9 Emphasis mine.

The Full Truth of God-manhood

Berdyaev writes that Christ was God-man from all eternity. There was never a "moment" in the life of the Divine Being when Christ was not both God and the human being. Berdyaev avers that "the creation took place in eternity as an interior act of the divine mystery" (Berdyaev 2009f: 198). Furthermore, "through the birth of the Son in eternity the whole spiritual race and the whole universe comprised in man, in fact, the whole cosmos, responds to the appeal of divine love" (Berdyaev 2009f: 198). Therefore, the creation of human personality must have taken place in meta-history or theandric time-eternity, which are synonyms for the traditional term eternity.[10]

One can penetrate the mystery of the creation only if one grasps the inner life of the Divine Being. Traditional affirmative theology has been closely confined within rational concepts and that is why it has been unable to grasp that *inner life of the Divine Being, solely in which* the creation of the world and man [that is to say, the attitude of God towards His other self] can be understood (Berdyaev 2009f: 190).[11]

There is a strong parallel between the reasons why God is the Trinity – why the Father begets the Son and makes the procession of the Spirit – and the creation of the human. Although the human person is created, God needs her almost in the same way as the Father needs the other two Hypostases.[12] And since God needs his creature, the traditional concept of the creation has to be rejected.[13] Berdyaev claims, "rationalistic and exoteric religious thought is obliged to maintain the cruel idea that God created the world capriciously, without necessity, and entirely unmoved from within" (Berdyaev 2009c: 190).

10 "But it is absolutely impossible to conceive either of the creation of the world within time or of the end of the world within time. In objectified time there is no beginning, nor is there any end, there is only an endless middle. The beginning and the end are in existential time" (Berdyaev 2009c: 207).

11 Emphasis mine.

12 Berdyaev is aware that due to the limitations of human language it is difficult to express the exact character of God's 'need' for man. He writes, "in the depths of spiritual experience there is revealed not only man's need of God but also God's need of man. But the word 'need' here is an inexact expression, as indeed are all human terms when applied to God" (Berdyaev 2009c: 210).

13 If we again take Maximus the Confessor as an example of the Patristic teaching, we find that, despite his teaching on the human as microcosm and mediator, he does not understand the creation of the person as 'necessary' for God, or as a part of the interior life of the Divine. Maximus emphasizes that God is immovable and that movement pertains only to creatures. The goal of the creation is that creatures find rest in God's immobility. Although this rest is conceived as "perpetual striving" (ἐπέκτασις), it is clear that only creatures strive towards God whereas God Himself is utterly immovable vis-à-vis His creation. See Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 60, CCSG 22:73–81; *Amb. 7*, PG 91:1069A–1077B.

If the creation was unnecessary for God, the world and the person, the entire creation, is without significance and is going to perish, contends Berdyaev.[14] To secure a genuine basis for human liberty, we need to see the mystery of creation "as the interior life of the Divine". We can grasp what human freedom is only if we understand that we are intrinsically connected with the life of the Trinity.

Just like a human person is a part of the inner life of the Trinity, time is not essentially different from eternity. In a mysterious sense, eternity *is* history. God is *in* time. On the other hand, if history is more than a mere external phenomenon, if it holds absolute significance with absolute life, if it is, moreover, based upon a true *ontological* principle, then it must have both its origin and its fulfilment in the inmost depths of the Absolute. (Berdyaev 2009d: 44). Time is *in* God.

In his often criticised prophetic style, Berdyaev maintains that God the Trinity and God-Man are inseparable to such an extent that God without the human would not be God the Trinity. "God without man, an 'inhuman' God, would be Satan, not God the Trinity" (Berdyaev 2009f: 189). This is the answer to the ultimate philosophical question, "why there is something rather than nothing", or why the primordial Nothing yearned to become something?[15] God became God only for the sake of creation. (Berdyaev 2009f: 194). Both God and the human being originate from the same source, from the primal void of the divine nature or Nothingness where, before the first movement, they existed in an undifferentiated union.

In the primal void of the divine Nothingness [of Godhead], God and creation, God and man disappear, and even the very antithesis between them vanishes. "Non-existent being is beyond God and differentiation". The distinction between the Creator and creation is not the deepest that exists, for it is eliminated altogether in the divine Nothingness that is no longer God. (Berdyaev 2009f: 194)[16]

The human being, therefore, is a part of the inner movement of the divine life. Anthropogonic and the theogonic process started together and neither of them had ontological primacy over the other since the Son was never conceived otherwise but as God-Man. The idea of God-humanity requires a

14 It is clear that for Berdyaev we cannot ground human freedom solely on the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, that is, on the doctrine according to which the creation of the world was not an act of necessity. If God creates freely, His creation, according to Patristic teaching, also possesses freedom and is even "equal of honour" (ὁμὸτιμος) (Lampe 2004: 209–210).

15 Jacob Böhme poses a unity that in its absolute lack of distinctions, is Nothing, *ein Ewig Nichts*, the *Ungrund*. But this *Ungrund* possesses an inner nisus, striving for self-realization, which establishes itself as a dialectical force to the primal Nothing, and sets the otherwise static unity in motion. In this way, the Nothing is transformed into Something and the source of all existing things (Abrams 1973: 161).

16 Using Whitehead's terminology, this would mean that in the divine Nothingness the antithesis between God's conceptual nature and derivative nature disappears (see Whitehead 1985: 345).

literal interpretation of *perichoresis*: the two natures in Christ ought to be seen as ontologically reciprocal, equally enlarging each other, mutually dependent. This is why Berdyaev stresses, "God exists if man exists. When a man disappears, God will also disappear [...]". And quoting Angelus Silesius he adds, "I know that without me God could not endure for a moment. Were I brought to nought He would yield up the Ghost for lack (of me)" (Berdyaev 2009f: 194). [17]

Dignity of a Metaphysical Factor

During his second sojourn to the US, C. G. Jung visited a village of Pueblo Indians in New Mexico. He had a conversation about religion with an elderly member of the tribe. The Indian told him: We are the sons of Father Sun and with our religion, we daily help our father to go across the sky. We do this not only for ourselves but for the whole world. If we were to cease practising our religion, in ten years the sun would no longer rise. Then it would be night forever. (Jung 1995: 281)

Jung straightaway realised on what the "dignity, the tranquil composure of the individual Indian, was founded. It springs", the Suisse writes, "from his being a son of the sun; his life is cosmologically meaningful, for he helps the father and preserver of all life in his daily rise and descent" (Jung 1995: 281). After this discussion, Jung envied the elderly Indian, "I had envied him for the fullness of meaning in that belief, and had been looking about without hope for a myth of our own. (ibid.)

It seems that, eventually, Jung found out what the myth he was looking for was about: man is indispensable for the completion of creation. He is the second creator of the world, in the sense that he feels capable of formulating valid replies to the over-powering influence of God. (Jung: 1995: 282, 285) He can render back something essential even to God.

That he can render back *something essential even to God*, induces pride, for it raises the human individual to *the dignity of a metaphysical factor*. "God and us" [...] this equation no doubt underlies that enviable serenity of the Pueblo Indian. Such a man is in the fullest sense of the word in his proper place. (Jung 1995: 282)

Epilogue

In Berdyaev's view, monophysite deviations of the Christian teaching were directly responsible for the raise of Humanism with its rejection of all-powerfull God who, unlike the God of the Pueblo Indians, did not need human being. Humanism turned its back to God and declared that human being is the son

17 One of the meanings of the death of God is the multiplication of life. See Knežević: 2020a, 8. God's death implies the descending of the Son of God into the original void of freedom (Berdyaev 2009f: 135). By descending into meonic freedom, the New Adam empowers and resurrects human nature without acting as nature's determining cause.

of nature. But to be the son of nature means to be fundamentally determined by natural laws, having no impact on cosmic developments. How can today's humanity find its way to "the dignity of a metaphysical factor"?

The only way for Christianity to rectify the tragic results of its tendency towards monophysitism and to imbue human kind with a true dignity is to preach that "God without human being would be Satan, not God the Trinity" (Berdyaev 2009f: 189). Perhaps now we can understand better Berdyaev's dictum "God exists because human being exists"; "when a human being disappears, God will also disappear [...]".

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Romilo Aleksandar Knežević

Društvena sloboda i dostojanstvo ljudske ličnosti po Nikolaju Berđajevu

Apstrakt

Savremene evropske demokratije, a posebno učenje liberalizma, počivaju na načelima evropskog humanizma. Humanizam se javlja kao reakcija na srednjevekovno učenje o božanskoj svemoći koja je u suprotnosti sa dostojanstvom ljudskog bića kao ikone Božije. Posledica reakcije je da se sada ljudsko biće postavlja u središte Univerzuma. U potpunosti se odbacuje metafizička dimenzije ljudskog bića koje sada postaje sin prirode a time i nužnosti. Humanizam pokušava da stvori novi pojam ljudskog dostojanstva, ali dok uzdiže ljudsko biće istovremeno ga i unižava budući da je rob prirodnih nužnosti. Po ruskom religioznom filozofu Nikolaju Berđajevu, istinsko dostojanstvo dolazi od istinite slobode koje se ne sastoji samo u moći da se preobrazi društvo već i da se stvori novi svet.

Ključne reči: Sloboda, humanizam, liberalizam, Božija svemoć, imago Dei, ljudsko dostojanstvo, ličnost, individua.

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Jelena Pavličić and Ivan Nišavić

EPICUREAN VIEW ON THE VALIDITY OF SENSATION: ON THE CONTEXTUAL READING OF THE CONTENT OF THE PERCEPTION[1]

ABSTRACT
Scholars have argued that we have good reason to defend the Epicurean view of the validity of sensation on the basis of a contextual reading of the content of perception. More specifically, it has been suggested that we can respond to skeptical challenges by acknowledging the contextual character of perceptual content and by linking its truth to the conditions under which it occurs. By examining these proposals, we identify some sources of concern and point out the limitations in providing an adequate framework for the Epicurean idea that the senses are capable of providing the ultimate criteria of truth. In particular, we argue that we should be wary of a contextual reading of perceptual content, not only because this is not a viable model for reliably distinguishing truth from falsity, but also because it is not adequately supported by the available textual evidence of Epicurean empiricist epistemology. Finally, we point out further problems for the Epicurean viewpoint by drawing on some later considerations in the history of the philosophy of perception.

KEYWORDS
eidola, perception, empiricist epistemology, context, conflicting judgments

I

A characteristic feature of Epicurus' epistemology is that it contains the radical empiricist idea that perception is an infallible method of establishing the truth about the external world. According to Epicurus, perception unfolds in such a way that external objects emit very subtle images (εἴδωλα [*eidola*]) that reach and penetrate our sensory apparatus as a constant stream with great velocity.

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The nature of *eidola* is twofold. On the one hand, as images, they bear the appearance and form of the object from which they flow upon us. On the other hand, they are applicable and comprehensible to our sensory apparatus, that is, they are designed to be received and accepted by our senses and processed by our minds.[2] By acting as intermediaries between "internal" and "external" worlds, the *eidola* play a crucial role in enhancing our understanding of the latter. They achieve this by accurately representing the objects in our environment through appropriate causal relations.[3] The explanation of how our senses and the objects of our sensations are related is further strengthened when we move to the physical level: External objects and images they represent, on the one hand, and the sensory system, on the other, are distinct but ontologically cognate atomic arrangements. Corporeal by nature, *eidola* are released from the surfaces of objects, retaining their atomic configuration (cf. DRN 4.323–330; Ep. Hdt. 49–50) and acting as external stimuli. They rearrange the atoms within our body, which in turn leads to the reception of stimuli (Leone 2012: 1149/993 col. 38).[4] In other words: By fully reflecting the atomic structure of the objects from which they emanate, *eidola* act as their pure representation and ensure a reliable correspondence with the object from which they are released. Since nothing happens during the process of perception except the reception of information from the external world (DL 10.31), false beliefs about some facts always arise through the exercise of reason, which depends on the evidence provided to us by the senses (cf. Ep. Hdt. 32; DRN 4.483–485). Thus, while falsehood and errors are always a result of supplementary opinion (Ep. Hdt. 50) or of inferences "added by our own minds" (DRN 4.465), all sense impressions (αἴσθησις [*aistheseis*]) are an accurate reflection of what has reached us from the external world.[5] In other words, they were considered

2 This explanation encompasses three central elements: first, the object itself that we perceive; second, the images *eidola* of the given object that reach our sense organs; and finally, the conception that we form in our mind. The mind is conceived in Epicurean theory as a sixth sense organ that shares sensations with the body in addition to its other activities (belief formation and inferential propensities) (cf. DRN 3. 558–591). See (Németh, 2017 and Tutrone, 2020) for a recent discussion of Epicurus' philosophy of mind and related points.

3 These arguments were, in fact, first grouped by Sextus' predecessor (1st century AD) and restorer of the Pyrrhonian school, Aenesidemus. More on this Pyrrhonian thinker: Brochard 1969; Hankinson, 2010.

4 *Epoche* (ἐποχή) is seen above all as an indispensable companion to *ataraxia* (ἀταραξία) and as essential for the elimination of tensions in thinkers prone to dogmatism (cf. Striker 1983: 116). Indeed, there have been many attempts to show that the modes cannot be understood as merely employing a rhetorical strategy, but that there are good reasons to understand them as demonstrations. One such view can be found in (Woodruff 2010).

5 Indeed, such a conclusion, even if formulated as a negation, would be dogmatic in nature. Therefore, Sextus explicitly states that his rhetorical strategies are not aimed at refuting the existence of the above truth criterion, cf.: Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 2.79, Sext. Emp. *Math.* VII 443. For a more in-depth discussion on how Sextus can refrain from making a judgment on certain topics such as the standard for determining truth and consistently challenge different theories proposed on these matters, see (Palmer 2020).

from the Epicurean point of view as fundamental criteria for establishing the truth of all our knowledge claims. In what follows, we examine the viability of the Epicurean perspective on the trustworthiness of sensation. In §II, we begin by exploring the conceptual connections between Epicurean tenets and related skeptical claims, as well as the role of the objections raised by the ancient skeptics (Pyrrhonist objections) to the claim regarding the dependability of the perceptual process. Subsequently, in §III, we identify and assess some defences against these objections, particularly those grounded in a contextualistic interpretation of the content of sensory impressions. Finally, in §IV, we contend that adopting a contextual reading of the content of perception should be approached with caution. In §V, we conclude with some insights that underscore the necessity for a more refined understanding of the influence of context on perceptual content.

II

There are numerous examples cited by skeptics to problematize the thesis of the reliability of the perceptual process. The most significant among them have been systematized as The Ten Modes of Aenesidemus (DL 9.78–88, 9.107; Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. I.36–163)[6], which are most often associated with the examples of alleged conflicts in appearances and, consequently, contradictory but equally credible perceptual judgments. They refer in part to cases in which the same thing appears to possess perceptual properties – from different angles, under different conditions, and for different human and animal perceivers – that cannot be true of the same object (DL 9.82). For example, a single object such as a tower that appears to be rectangular up close may lose some of the sharpness of its edges when viewed from a distance and appear circular (Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. I 118; DL 9.85–86). Moreover, the perceptual reports of our various sense organs may be in direct contradiction: An oar submerged in water appears visually to be curved. Yet if we tried to reach for it, it would appear straight (DL 9.81; Sext. Emp. *Math*. VII 206). Similarly, contradictory situations may arise in which the same thing appears to different observers in opposite but equally credible ways (Sext. Emp. *Math*. I 79; DL 9.80–81). For example, whereas most healthy people would tend to attribute aromatic properties to certain foods, persons with anosmia would not be able to agree on these attributions. For them, unlike for us, a bouquet of roses would not be fragrant. And for people with the visual disorder pronotopy, the same bouquet would not appear red.

Using numerous examples such as the one above, the Pyrrhonian skeptic will easily find that we are unable to give a definite answer to the question of which of the aforementioned conflicting perceptual accounts is trustworthy. Healthy people are in a state that is natural for the healthy and unnatural for

6 These arguments were, in fact, first grouped by Sextus' predecessor (1st century AD) and restorer of the Pyrrhonian school, Aenesidemus. More on this Pyrrhonian thinker: Brochard 1969; Hankinson 2010.

the sick. Consequently, the sick is in a state that is unnatural to the healthy, that is, natural to the sick (Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. I. 103). Moreover, an appeal to the majority opinion is not possible, because to determine what the majority opinion is, one would have to question each individual observer (Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. I 89; II 45; Sext. Emp. *Math*. VII 327–334). If, on the other hand, one switches from the collective to the individual level and asks for the opinion of the wise man or philosopher, the problem remains, for philosophers disagree among themselves on how to identify one person as wiser than all others (Sext. Emp. Pyr. I.88). Similarly, reason cannot be the instrumental criterion because, as we learn from Lucretius, it depends on sense impressions (reason cannot be "in opposition to the senses" because "if they are not true, all reason is false" (DRN 4.483–485). Ultimately, there is no way to settle disagreements, since every point of view can be seen as a source of distortion, and it is impossible to draw conclusions without belonging to a group that is always in a certain state of mind or body.

Given that sense-impressions seem equally credible to those involved and that disagreements cannot be resolved based on authority, it seems impossible to determine which perspective is the correct one. Sextus' elementary strategy, which he readily combines with the arguments in the modes mentioned above, is an appeal to the equipollence (ἰσοσθένεια [isostheneia]) (DL 10.31-2), i.e., to the problem of undecidable conflict arising from equally plausible points of view, which in turn should lead us to a state of suspension of judgment (ἐποχή [*epoche*]) on the question of which point of view is the correct one (Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. I 8, 10).[7] Given the absence of reasons that could shift the balance decisively in favor of one of the two conflicting positions, the goal of *epoche* is the complete absence of belief (being ἀδόξαστος [*adoxastos*]) (Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. I 226) and thus of belief in the impossibility of determining the criterion for truth (Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. I 13, 226 and II 79).[8] This should not be surprising, for from the dogmatic perspective that includes that of the Epicureans, it was common to point out that skepticism necessarily refutes itself when it leads to such a negative epistemological conclusion. If we cannot know anything, this means that we cannot know the proposition that we cannot know anything, as well as the claim that it is beyond our epistemological capacities to find a rigorous criterion for knowledge. Nevertheless, these insights might have had the required destructive force under the condition that skeptics claim that some of

7 *Epoche* is seen above all as an indispensable companion to *ataraxia* and as essential for the elimination of tensions in thinkers prone to dogmatism (cf. Striker 1983: 116). Indeed, there have been many attempts to show that the modes cannot be understood as merely employing a rhetorical strategy, but that there are good reasons to understand them as demonstrations. One such view can be found in (Woodruff 2010).

8 Indeed, such a conclusion, even if formulated as a negation, would be dogmatic in nature. Therefore, Sextus explicitly states that his rhetorical strategies are not aimed at refuting the existence of the above truth criterion, cf. Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 2.79, Sext. Emp. *Math*. VII 443. For a more in-depth discussion on how Sextus can refrain from making a judgment on certain topics such as the standard for determining truth and consistently challenge different theories proposed on these matters, see (Palmer 2020).

those perceptual reports were false, which, as Tim O'Keefe notes, no cautious skeptic would ever do (O'Keefe 2010: 88). Affirming a negative conclusion, or determining which of the conflicting judgments is false, is not at all something that Pyrrhonists should be concerned with, nor is it something they are least interested in since the mere existence of conflicts in appearances would be sufficient to show that the thesis of the truthfulness of all sense impressions is untenable (cf. Striker 1983: 117; Warren 2019: 10). Thus, if we allow that the Pyrrhonist asserts the existence of two contradictory sense impressions, it cannot be that both are true, which calls into question the thesis that was a constitutive part of Epicurus' defense of the criteria of knowledge in a rather obvious way (see also: Pavličić and Nišavić, 2023: 134). So how can Epicurus deal with these proposed counterexamples in his theory?

III

James Warren has proposed a solution to resolve the conundrum related to sense-impressions. He distinguished between sense-impressions that are different and those that are mutually inconsistent. When the contents of Φ1 and Φ2 are different, these sense-impressions are not necessarily mutually inconsistent (Warren, 2019: §2). The contents of such sense-impressions are context-dependent and are a result of an internally consistent set of causal factors (Warren 2019: 20; see also: Striker 1983: 121; Vogt 2016: 175–176). Therefore, what may appear to be two conflicting sense-impressions may not be so once the context has been considered. Many other epistemologists also believe that the problem of contrary appearances should not affect the foundation of Epicurean empiricist philosophy. They take the conflict between mutually inconsistent judgments about perceived facts to be only apparent, not real (Long, Sedley 1987: 85; Gavran Miloš 2015: 175; Everson 1990: 177). In summary, by indexing the truth of sense-impressions to the conditions under which they occur, the apparent conflict in sense-impressions can be resolved (see also: Aikin 2020: 194).

Such a view is supported by the fact that Epicureans try to give a coherent explanation for the differing phenomenon by explaining how it can lead us to think that sensations are in conflict. As we learn from Lucretius, the Epicureans hold that two main factors can cause objects to exert different effects on the senses: (a) atomic forms and (b) the response or reaction of the subject of perception (DRN 2.398–407; 4.668–671; cf. Plutarch Adv. Col. 1109D). This explains why some people enjoy spicy foods while others prefer to avoid them, or why the same bottle of wine tastes sweet to one consumer and sour to another. Just as the atomic structure manifests itself as the temperature and texture of a wine, so too the sense organs and the mind endowed with pores (see: DRN 2.381–477; Ep. Hdt. 47) cause different perceivers not to have the same, equally intense, or uniform experience of its taste. Both factors must be considered to explain why we are drawn to describe different perceptual appearances as if they were in conflict with each other. And from an Epicurean point of view, this is precisely why it is important to include physical investigation

in the effort to explain the supposed conflict between different perceptual impressions. When wine is perceived as sweet and sour simultaneously, our sensations depend entirely on how the atomic dispositions of the various wine tasters are mediated in the act of observing. Similarly, in the case of the different appearances of the rudder (or the tower), our sense impressions inform us only about the dispositions of the perceived objects to appear one way or another in light of the given circumstances (i.e., position and location of the receivers). False beliefs, as Lucretius puts it, are usually the result of "inferences added by our own minds" (DRN 4.465) and arise as soon as we move from the evidence provided by the senses to judgment. Accordingly, it can be stated that the mistaken belief that the sensory impressions of the tower contradict each other is a consequence of our hasty assumption that the tower would appear identical from any angle or point of view. To complement this, we can say that the mistaken belief that the sensory impressions of wine contradict each other is a consequence of the expectation that all wine tasters would experience wine in exactly the same way. And, as James Warren points out:

> A full understanding of the mechanism involved in the complex interaction between the properties of the wine and the states of respective perceivers should be able to mitigate the chances of my making a similar mistake in the future. (Warren 2019: 26)

This point is worth elaborating on because the task of explaining the basic features of the perceptual process in the Epicurean tradition has two aspects. First, it is a physical explanation, already discussed above. Second, it could be understood in terms of a distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of the objects with which we come into contact. Primary qualities are those qualities of a body that things possess at the physical level, such as 'tangibility, shape, size, and weight, which are essential to it qua body,' i.e., by virtue of their atomic nature (see also: Long, Sedley 1987: 36). Secondary properties are those that exist only at the phenomenal level, such as the temperature or color of the body, and are in some way related to various dispositions (perceptual constitution) of sentient beings. Certainly, relational predicates or secondary qualities play a role in explaining how false beliefs – that sense impressions are incompatible – are formed. But while disagreements about the properties of wine can be explained as a consequence of the mistaken belief that perceived predicates-sweetness or acidity-apply to the thing perceived in an absolute sense (as intrinsic or non-relational predicates), this kind of explanation is inadequate to explain the diversity of accounts in the case of the tower, given that shape was not conceived of as a non-relational property in the Epicurean tradition. The question, then, is: to what extent is the variability of the Tower's (or the Rudder's) sensations susceptible to the same, contextualist explanation? As we will see in the next section, if one is to pursue a contextualist argument for the case of the rower, one needs a different notion of how perceptual content is influenced by contextual factors and what would explain the object of contextual variation well.

IV

Indeed, when we think about the perceptions of 'sour wine' vs. 'sweet wine', it seems that we do not face the problem when we read the content in context. There seems to be no contradiction in the judgment of the senses since both the impression of sour wine and the impression of sweet wine are true insofar as they are consistent with a sour and sweet constitution of atoms configured according to the tendency of perceivers to selectively take them in. We are in error if we expect our impression of 'sweet wine' to be accompanied by the same perceptual judgment. What we fail to recognize is, to quote James Warren again, "[...] how the state of the perceiver in part determines which aspects of the perceptible object are registered" (Warren 2019: 22). According to this reading, sensory reports are fully consistent with the underlying atomic structures of perceived objects, while our mistaken belief that they are in contradiction is the result of our inability to grasp that, as Fabio Tutrone succinctly explains, "[...] different perceptive possibilities are inherent in the material constituents of things, but the task of actualizing them is entrusted to sentient atomic beings" (Tutrone 2020: 88).

So far, so good. But before we conclude that the Epicurean program is plausible enough to overcome the problem of conflicting appearances, we must examine whether the other examples of the variability of sensations can fit into the contextual reading. Perhaps just as in the case of wine, it may be necessary to consider how the atomic dispositions in the perceiver's body affect the perception of the wine, so in the case of the tower, it may be necessary to understand how the environmental conditions (i.e., different kinds of atomic configurations of different media) affect the way the perceivable object is registered. From this point of view, the conflict between the perceptions 'round tower' and 'square tower' could be explained as an apparent one, since the former is an accurate representation of a 'round' formation of atoms of a distant tower, while the same is true for the latter since it conveys information about a 'square' formation of a tower from a moderate distance. However, much it may appear that the explanation given below does indeed apply to the problem of the opposite appearances of the tower, it should be noted that it differs in some important respects from the explanation proposed for dealing with the variety of appearances of wine. In the case of wine, the mistaken belief that sensory impressions contradict each other is based on the false assumption that wine is generally sweet (or sour), whereas in the case of the tower, as Gisela Striker vividly emphasizes, "error arises only from the mistaken assumption that the same object has been perceived in different cases" (Striker 1996: 90). This idea is neatly elucidated by Long and Sedley, who point out the following:

> So too, since the vision's province is to report not actual bodily shape, but "shape at a distance", we feel no conflict between the far-off and close-up views of the same square tower: naturally we expect a far-off tower to look different from a near-by tower since they constitute different objects of sensation. (Long, Sedley 1987: 85)

Once we realize this, we can see how both the impression of a 'square-tower' and the impression of a 'round-tower' can be correct. And in order to provide a proper basis for an indexical reading of the tower case (i.e., to reconcile it with a notion of the rightness of sensation), numerous commentators (including Sextus Empiricus) have suggested that the Epicurean point of view may have been that the proper objects of sensation – which they must correspond to in order to be true – are not external, solid things, but rather the atomic images or *eidola* (cf. Sext. Emp. *Math*. VII 206–210; Everson, 1990: 177). In other words, according to this line of thought, the proper objects of our perception are not the objects themselves and their actual forms, but their configurations of forms from a particular perspective or distance. Indeed, to uphold the notion that the contents of sensory impressions of the tower are distinct yet non-contradictory in the sense of Warren's argument (§II), we must assert that the objects of perception consist of atomic images or *eidola*. As a result, this approach appears to elucidate the persuasive power of the mistaken conviction that the sensory impressions of the tower are contradictory.

Acceptable as it may seem at first glance, this interpretation is not without considerable difficulties. Whether one regards the proper objects of sensation as *eidola* or as external entities, it is expected that any proposed explanation acknowledges the notion that sense perceptions serve as a reliable way of knowing the world. However, given that we have the impression of a 'round tower' when in fact the tower is rectangular and that Lucretius tells his readers that atomic images do not look like the objects in question, "but vaguely resemble them in a shadowy fashion" (DRN 4.363) there seems to be a good reason to agree with Scott Aikin that the information about the external object in the Epicurean theory is only selectively captured by sense impressions (cf. Aikin 2020: 195). Given that the *eidola* did not retain the contours of the object, many scholars agree that the Epicurean theory falls far short of supporting the claim that sense impressions provide us with information that is true and reliable (cf. Irwin 1989: 151; Striker 1989: 85). Call this the 'reduced content of sensations' objection.

Several philosophers challenge the notion that *eidola* selectively capture external objects. They argue that *eidola* serve a greater purpose than merely presenting external objects by providing a richer and more nuanced depiction of the state of affairs (on this point, see Gavran Miloš 2015: §2). According to this view, *eidola* are reliable indicators of objective reality because they accurately portray the entirety of a perceived situation resulting from the physical rearrangement of atoms. Let us call this view 'enriched content of sensation'. However, the problem with this line of thought is that it only accounts for a portion of what we have been promised. As we learn from various sources, the senses are supposed to provide us with something more concrete – that is, information about the shapes and colors of things – as every atomic image 'bears the appearance and form of the object from whose body it falls and wanders away' (DRN 4.54) (cf. Ep. Hdt. 49–50). Yet, as Lucretius also informed us, "the image loses its sharpness before it can deliver a blow to our eyes because the images during

their long journey through the air are constantly buffeted and so become blunted" (DRN 4. 353-359). Considering this, the textual evidence favors Aikin's view of the 'reduced content of sensations' rather than that of the 'enriched content of sensations', and the former poses considerable difficulties for the Epicurean account, as noted above. But even if the 'reduced content of the sensations' interpretation is ignored and we hold to the notion of the complexity and richness of perceptual content we are confronted with the following question: What is the role of the senses in the process of knowledge acquisition? If we acknowledge the contextual nature of perceptual content and link its truth to the conditions under which it occurs, can we truly determine the true nature of things or only how they appear to us? (cf. Palmer 2020: 365–366) This reflection should make us wonder whether our perception corresponds reliably to external objects in our surroundings. Indeed, we can say that sense-impressions can serve in most cases – causally – as signposts to our environment and provide a solid basis for further inferences in the acquisition of knowledge about the objects in an external world. However, stating that they are relevant to justifying our claim to knowledge is not equivalent to asserting that they have the capacity to satisfy that claim. To obtain truth-promoting evidence and avoid skepticism, as Irwin argues, we must show that our inferences are warranted (Irwin 1989: 151).

In addition to these considerations, (for those who do not harbor doubts about the feasibility of illuminating ancient theories of knowledge by aligning them with modern debates), a comparative analysis between ancient theories and modern epistemology may give rise to new challenges for Epicurus's theory. For instance, we can see that Epicurean accounts of perceptual illusions are not available if we treat Pyrrhonean seemings and appearances in a pseudo-phenomenalistic way, like the contemporary conceptions of sense-data or sensa. In a similar manner, appearances are private, subjective, transparent, and incorrigible. Of course, Pyrrhonists did not employ any phenomenalistic descriptions of appearances involving "round red patches" or anything alike, and physical objects were nevertheless featured in the Pyrrhonean language concerning seemings or appearances. However, the idea of treating them in any protophenomenalistic way is supposed to render all the distinctions akin to the modern distinction between primary and secondary qualities unavailable. In a Berkeleyan move, all the qualities would in fact be subjective or secondary. Our accounts concerning physical objects and extramental reality become parasitic on what we say about *phantasia* (φαντασία). One might add that this suits the Pyrrhonean, because in Sextan times the term *phantasia* became synonymous with *phainomenon* (φαινόμενον) and the whole idea of making all qualities secondary would make Aenesidemus' tropes better arguments. The protophenomenalistic rendering of the skeptic's view on what appears to him to be the case makes Epicurean explanations of perceptual illusions impossible for the skeptic because there are no intrinsic properties of the objects an Epicurean might utilize in his account.

Apart from that, there are cases of perceptual illusions that are not to be found even in an exhaustive compendium like Aenesidemus' tropes and for

which Epicurean theory is not capable of accounting for how they come about. The best example is, perhaps, the infamous Müller-Lyer illusion. There has to be something at the side of the subject that explains why two lines seem to be of different lengths when the fins of their arrows point in opposite directions. Epicurean theory of perception lacks any means to describe the connection between some visual cues and what we perceive. In this case, it is the way that the perceived depth of the shafts depends on the direction of the arrows. However, there were no theoretical obstacles for Epicurus to hypothesize, in a Fodor-like manner (Fodor 1984), about some perceptual modules that process certain visual information in a peculiar way. But he did not do it. This kind of perceptual illusion did not come even to Sextus' mind. And it is a pity because a Pyrrhonist might hypothesize that people in cultures that do not entertain box-like objects do not suffer from this illusion. That would create a novel and a very interesting trope.[9]

So, the Epicurean theory, as presented, does not fully explain how certain visual cues lead to specific perceptions. We suggest that Epicurus could have, but did not, hypothesize about specialized perceptual modules that process visual information in specific ways, as later philosophers like Jerry Fodor have done. However, the deficiency in theoretical elaboration within Epicurean thought renders it less capable of elucidating certain intricate perceptual phenomena.

V

In this paper, we explore the applicability of a contextualist interpretation to the Epicurean explanation of sensation variability in response to Pyrrhonist objections challenging Epicurus' theory. The approach we consider emphasizes the role of context and contextual factors in influencing perception, suggesting that apparent conflicts in sense impressions can be reconciled by examining the conditions under which they occur. Specifically, we delve into the Epicurean explanation of knowledge creation, involving atomic films (eidōla/simulacra), external alterations, and subject-dependent selections. This exploration into the Epicurean perspective on sensation variability and its interaction with skepticism underscores the necessity for a more refined understanding of context's influence on perceptual content. In addition to addressing the complexities inherent in the contextual reading of the content of perception, the paper illuminates further challenges in explaining certain later examples within the history of the philosophy of perception debate. Our proposal asserts that Epicurus' epistemological theory remains problematic, particularly when one takes into account the role of context in shaping sensory experiences (through a comparison with ancient Pyrrhonist objections) and possible explanations of some more intricate perceptual phenomena (in light of modern phenomenological arguments).

9 We thank Mašan Bogdanovski for his assistance in shaping these final points and for providing insightful comments on the preliminary draft.

Abbreviations

Diogenes Laertius
DL = Lives of the Philosophers
Laertius, Diogenes. 1925. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, (transl. R. D. Hicks, M.A.) [= DL]

Lucretius
DRN = On the Nature of Things (De rerum natura)

Epicurus
Ep. Hdt. = Letter to Herodotus
Ep. Men. = Letter to Menoeceus
Ep. Pyth. = Letter to Pythocles
KD = Principal Doctrines

Sextus Empiricus (Sext. Emp.)
Math. = Against the Professors
Pyr. = Outlines of Pyrrhonism

Plutarch (Plut.)
Adv. Col. = Against Colotes

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Jelena Pavličić i Ivan Nišavić

Epikurovo stanovište o verodostojnosti opažanja: o kontekstualističkoj interpretaciji sadržaja perceptivnog iskustva

Apstrakt

Pojedini teoretičari su tvrdili da postoje ubedljivi razlozi na osnovu kojih se može braniti epikurejsko stanovište o pouzdanosti čulnog svedočanstva na osnovu kontekstualističkog tumačenja sadržaja percepcije. Konkretnije, sugerisano je da možemo odgovoriti na skeptičke izazove ukazivanjem na kontekstualno osetljivu prirodu perceptivnog sadržaja i povezujući njegovu istinitost sa uslovima pod kojima se on pojavljuje. Ispitujući ove predloge, identifikovali smo neke izvore zabrinutosti i istakli izvesna ograničenja u pružanju adekvatnog okvira za epikurejsku ideju da čulno svedočanstvo može poslužiti kao kriterijum istinisti saznajnih tvrdnji. Posebno smo tvrdili da treba biti oprezan prema kontekstualističkom čitanju perceptivnog sadržaja, ne samo zato što ne predstavlja održiv model za pouzdano razlikovanje istine od neistine, već i zato što nije adekvatno podržano dostupnom tekstualnom evidencijom koja leži u osnovi epikurejske empirijske epistemologije. Konačno, ukazali smo na dalje probleme za epikurejsko stanovište koristeći se nekim kasnijim razmatranjima u istoriji filozofije percepcije.

Ključne reči: *eidola*, percepcija, empiristička epistemologija, kontekst, suprotstavljena tvrđenja

III

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Up to two double sheets (60.000 characters including spaces), abstracts, key words, without comments.

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Between 100 and 250 words.

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In the text: (Onofrio 2015: 139).

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U tekstu: (Hartman 1980: 108).

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