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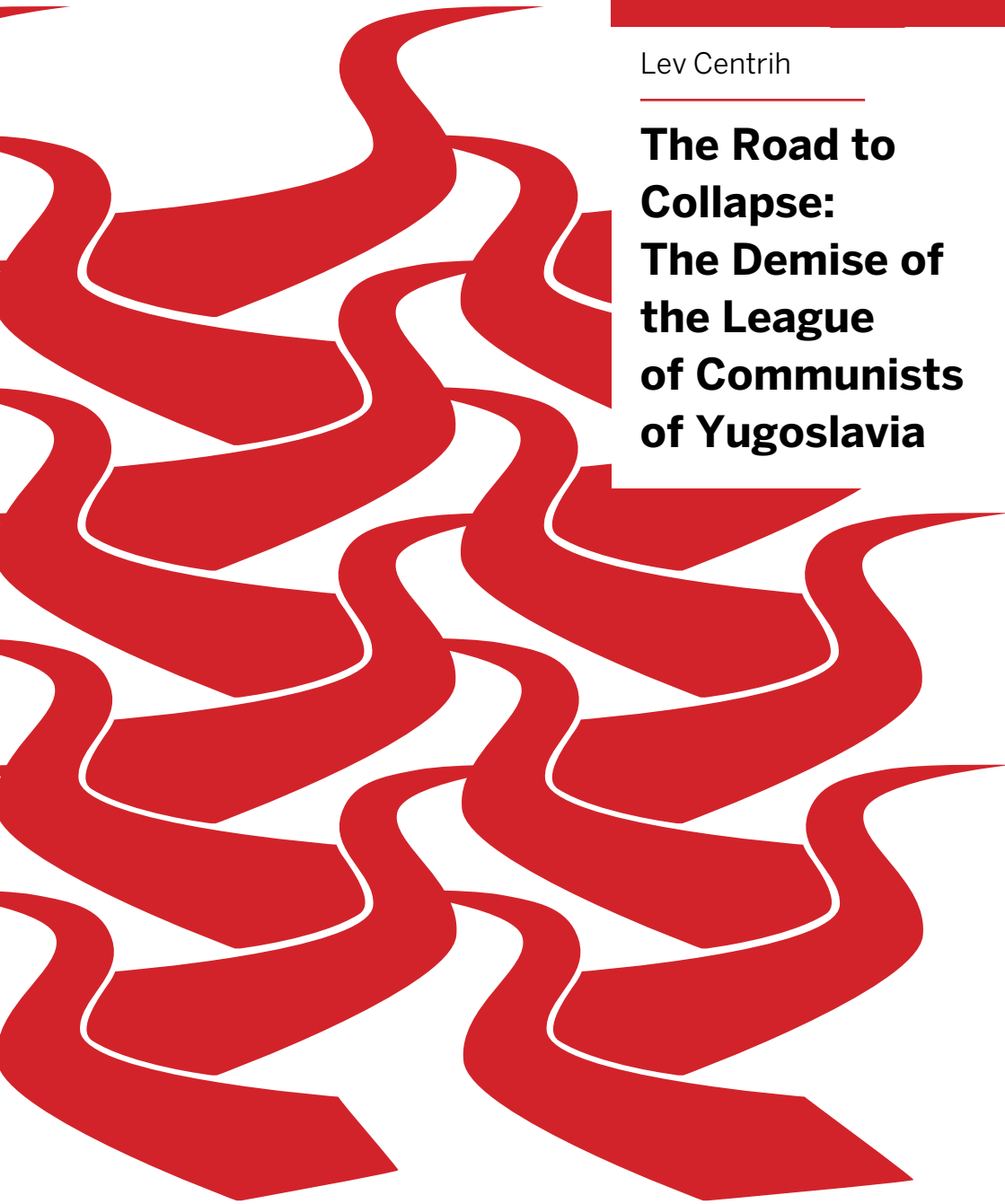

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INTRODUCTION

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) was the dominant political force in socialist Yugoslavia. It collapsed after its 14th extraordinary congress, which took place in Belgrade from 20 to 22 January 1990. Its local branches, organized on the level of the federal republics, were soon renamed into social democratic, socialist or refoundation parties and adopted new programs. Yet, despite its relevance as the moment of formal dissolution of the LCY, the 14th Extraordinary Congress of the LCY was in fact only a spectacle in which earlier developments were merely confirmed and brought to conclusion. The Slovenian delegation called for democratic reforms in Yugoslavia, including multi-party elections, appealed for the peaceful resolution of the unrest in Kosovo and proposed the reform of the LCY as an association of fully autonomous political parties.

1 I would like to thank the comrades Stipe Ćurković and Krunoslav Stojaković for their valuable and critical comments and suggestions on the earlier versions of this paper.

When the propositions were rejected, the Slovenian and Croatian delegations left the congress.[2] All initiatives following the 14th Congress aimed at creating a new, Yugoslavia-wide political organizations failed, most notably Pokret za Jugoslaviju [The Movement for Yugoslavia], an organization set up by the communist organization of the Yugoslav People's Army which eventually merged with the party of the Jugoslovanska ljevica [The Yugoslav Left] and was active only in Serbia.[3]

It was at this time that the disintegration process in Yugoslavia matured. Over the next 18 months the state would cease to exist. In the territory of Yugoslavia, several new independent states emerged: some of them (Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia) called for international recognition, while others claimed land and protection for ethnic minorities who had suddenly become citizens of other countries (Serbia and Croatia). Serbia and Montenegro, on the other hand, "defended" the continuity of the former Yugoslav federation, while Muslims in Bosnia and Albanians in Kosovo literally lost all sovereign rights – the former were slated for ethnic cleansing while the latter were subjected to an apartheid regime.[4] This story is all too familiar. It is a history of bloody civil wars and genocide. Compared to the almost unthinkable atrocities experienced by millions in the former Yugoslavia, the collapse of the socialist economy seems secondary or, to go by mainstream accounts, even natural and rational. It is not my intention to provide a simple alternative explanation of the Yugoslav wars as a mere reflection or logical consequence of the collapse of the socialist economy. To be sure, alternative scenarios not involving civil war were possible. It

2 Repe, Božo: Slovenci v osemdesetih letih. Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, Ljubljana 2001, p. 67.

3 Repe, Božo: Jutri je nov dan. Slovenci in razpad Jugoslavije, Modrijan, Ljubljana 2002, p. 235.

4 Pirjevec, Jože: Jugoslovanske vojne 1991-2001, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 2003, pp. 461-467.

is however worth noting that in the 1990s, not a single bullet was fired in defence of Yugoslav socialism. In the 1940s, when Yugoslav socialism emerged, the old exploitative classes responded with fierce and armed resistance in defence of their property, status, political power and privileges. Working people in the 1980s on the other hand, responded to hardships and the gradual disintegration of socialism with waves of strikes which took place in all republics and provinces and were the most intensive in 1987 – 1988.[5] Workers eventually failed to defend social property and the powers and rights formally granted to them by the Yugoslav constitution. It is, however, important to note that throughout the 1980s workers' actions were in most cases limited to classical forms of industrial conflict: struggles for higher wages or better working conditions and actions against corrupted or abusive management. To be sure, workers – especially in the second half of the 1980s – protested in front of Party and government buildings, organised protest tours to Belgrade and sometimes even managed to win transnational solidarity for their actions (Croat workers from the Borovo and Vartileks factories went to Belgrade in the summer of 1988, for example), which were sometimes articulated politically against austerity measures dictated by the IMF and supported by the Federal Government.[6] Yet in none of these cases did the workers go further and create an alternative to the LCY.

Nevertheless, alternative trade unions were being created. In Slovenia the first independent trade union was established as early

5 "The number of strikes went from 247 instances, with 13 507 workers involved, in 1980 to 1 851 strikes, involving 386 123 workers, in 1988. These statistics place Yugoslavia among the countries with the highest strike activity in Europe at this time." Musić, Goran: Serbia's Working Class in Transition 1988 – 2013, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe, Belgrade 2013, p. 13.

6 Lowinger, Jake: Economic Reform and the "Double Movement" in Yugoslavia. An Analaysis of Labor Unrest and Ethno-Nationalism in the 1980s, A Dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore 2009.

as December 15 1987, while in Serbia the first independent trade union Ujedinjeni granski sindikati - Nezavisnost was established as late as November 23 1991, when the pro-regime workers' organisations crumbled.[7] Yet, contrary to what one may expect, by the late 1980s/early 1990s these trade unions were in no way locuses of defence of socialism; at best they functioned as suitable partners in "social dialogue" or mere pressure groups during the transition to capitalism. This phenomenon was common to virtually all socialist countries, with the partial but important exception of Poland in the early 1980s. In the late 1980s the emerging new workers' movement in Yugoslavia was defeated by nationalists. Many new workers' leaders, including a substantial number of rank and file members, were co-opted in Serbia by Milošević and later very much the same happened in Croatia under Tuđman.[8] Similar tendencies asserted themselves among important parts of Slovenia's working class. The founder of the first independent trade union France Tomšič did not hesitate to publicly state the following at a major opposition rally in Ljubljana in May 1989, organized in support of the idea of a Yugoslav confederation (meaning – more independence for Slovenia): "[…] each nation should be able to use, whenever it finds this necessary, the rifle, the stick and the cash box."[9] By that time, the new workers' movement in Yugoslavia and its potential for transnational mobilisation along class lines were effectively already dead. By

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7 The first independent trade union in Slovenia was organised in the heat of the strike in Litostroj – a major water turbine factory in Ljubljana in December 1987. Workers established a strike committee – an institution unknown until then in the legislature and dissolved the official trade union organisation in the factory. In 1988-1990 new independent trade union associations in Slovenia started to emerge as part of the fragmentation process of the official trade union organisation. Tomšič, France (Marta Lavrič Tomšič and Rosvita Pesek eds.): Od stavke do stranke, Nova obzorja, Ljubljana 2010, pp. 177-197; Repe 2002, p. 112; Musić 2013, p. 10.

8 Lowinger 2009, pp. 141-142.

9 Tomšič 2010, p. 321.

the early 1990s, workers were thus already pacified as a distinct and independent political force. Mass desertions from the Yugoslav People's Army in 1991, by the time of first military clashes in Slovenia and especially later in Croatia, perhaps meant the strongest (passive) resistance against nationalism.[10]

To sum up, in the 1980s the working people of Yugoslavia found that they could not use the institutions of socialist-self management in their favour while the LCY was experienced by them not only as alien but also as hostile to their interests. While these facts alone do not explain why the workers failed to organize, they do reveal the reasons for their weakness, reasons which would become ever more apparent during the transition and especially today. They also provide an explanation for why the ideological transition of the national constituents of the LCY went – due to the defeat and substantial ebbing of working class mobilizations as both a challenge and potential corrective to party structures – relatively smoothly and why, as "reformed" or normal bourgeois political parties, they accepted capitalism in the guise of market and democratic reforms and eventually embraced neoliberalism.

The first part of the paper will look at relations within the LCY, i.e. among its national branches. In the second part, I will elaborate on an empirical study of the reality of self-management on the shop floor. The study uses the case of Avtomontaža, a bus factory in Ljubljana. Lastly, a conclusion will be presented.

10 Cf. Lowinger 2009, pp.16-17. However, not all desertions in the summer and autumn of 1991can be interpreted as manifestations of anti-nationalism: in some instances they have to be understood as manifestations of loyalty to new independent states and national armies (or paramilitary forces) emerging at that time.

1.
THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE PARTY

The economic crisis in Yugoslavia during the early 1980s was an important factor in the development of the political crisis which eventually led to the disintegration of the state. In order to avoid simplified conclusions, a realistic account of the impact of the crisis on the political system is necessary. The economic crisis experienced by Yugoslavia in the 1980s was essentially a debt crisis: Yugoslav foreign debt was about 2. 3 billion dollars in 1970; it grew to 12 billion dollars by 1978, and reached 20 billion dollars by 1981. In 1985, Yugoslav foreign debt stood at 48.2 percent of the national GDP.[11] Labour productivity remained low despite sizeable investments in technology; by 1981, Yugoslavia was unable to service its debt obligations and buy industrial materials and petrol. The immediate results were inflation and a shortage of certain consumer goods, such as petrol and washing powder. The living standard fell to 1960s levels. From 1981 to 1983, Yugoslavia adopted – with the "assistance" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – a series of painful austerity measures known as the Long-Term Plan for Economic Stabilization. These measures kept wages down, cut public spending and boosted exports. Economic historiography is of the general opinion that the Yugoslav stabilization measures were unsuccessful.[12] However, the rate of foreign debt as a share of GDP did fall considerably in the second half of the 1980s – it was at 20. 4 % in 1990 – as foreign exchange reserves increased. It therefore seems

11 Borak, Neven: Ekonomski vidiki delovanja in razpada Jugoslavije, Znanstveno in publicistično središče, Ljubljana 2002, pp. 264-265.

12 See two leading Slovene economic historians on the issue: Borak 2002; Prinčič, Jože: Pot do slovenske narodnogospodarske suverenosti 1945-1991, Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, Ljubljana 2013, pp. 285-296.

that the political crisis worsened just as the economic (debt) crisis somehow began to subside in the second half of 1980s. The price of this relative "economic recovery" in the second half of the 1980s was of course paid for by the working people in the form of a substantially declining standard of living. According to Jake Lowinger, who draws on Karl Polanyi's theoretical framework, workers throughout Yugoslavia responded with strikes, which thus became a form of the "self-protection of the society" against austerity measures.[13] The republican governments – sometimes in open opposition to the federal government – invested substantial efforts to keep the situation under control in order not to undermine the basics of the welfare state. It appears that Milošević's regime in early 1990s Serbia relied on the same tactics in order to control the latent unrest in society. What Goran Musić accurately observes for Serbia in the 1990s at least in part makes sense also for Yugoslav society throughout the 1980s:

"The quality of state services was decreasing drastically. The cues were piling up, nepotism became the norm and supermarket shelves remained empty for most of the time. Nevertheless, the bare minimum of something resembling a functioning welfare state was maintained even under warlike conditions. Basic foodstuffs were heavily subsided and rationed to the workforce through state enterprises and trade unions. Medicine, electricity and heating were all scarce, but their prices remained low and state intervention made sure that those in need got access to them. The infrastructure inherited from socialist times enabled the maintenance of a minimal civilized standard of living for many members of the working class even in these hard times."[14]

In short: the economic situation in Yugoslavia was not good – one could even call it severe – but it was far from catastrophic. To

13 Lowinger 2009, p. 44.

14 Musić 2013, p. 21.

be sure, unemployment was on the rise, and people used to smuggle in jeans and coffee from Trieste; however, they did not experience mass impoverishment and the collapse of welfare system.

Curiously, the political events of the 1980s and the growing conflicts, tensions and unrest in Yugoslavia resembled the political crisis of the early 1970s. To be sure, the events in the early 1970s also had an economic context, but unlike the early 1980s, the economic crisis that began in the 1960s was a typical recession. It was the by-product of imbalances in the plannned economy that led to market reforms which began in 1965 and were halted in 1968, and which generated growing inequalities between working collectives and between the federal republics and provinces.[15] The term "economic stabilization" was actually coined in the 1960s; it's been about "stabilization" ever since, and in Yugoslavia, the use of the term was not as manipulative as it may seem.

Every economic crisis reveals the (in)stability of the political system, that is, the system's capacity to propose a political and economic project in response to social dislocations[16] brought about by the crisis. This response in turn is a test of the strength and legitimacy of political elites. In both the early 1970s and 1980s, there were quarrels about the sovereignty of the federal republics and provinces (the national question). And in both cases (in 1968 and again in 1981), the crisis started in the province of Kosovo; students, as the main protagonists of the protests on both occasions, called for

15 Bilandžić, Dušan: Historija Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije. Glavni procesi 1918-1985, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 1985, pp. 305-319.

16 Social dislocation is a concept developed by anthropologist and historian Eric R. Wolf; it describes situations where a crisis causes rapid changes by shaking the key agents in a given society; the outcome is not yet certain, but it reveals the strength of the dominant social groups: "Traditional groups have been weakened, but not yet defeated, and new groups are not yet strong enough to wield decisive power." Wolf, Eric R.: Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman 1999, p. 283.

greater sovereignty for Kosovo – the right to evolve the province of Kosovo to the status of a republic with the right of secession – but also for improved living conditions. The students' discourse can therefore be described as a strange mix of irredentist and orthodox "Marxist-Leninist" slogans.[17] And in both cases the Kosovo crisis was a secondary development, even if it did brutally reveal the problem of unequal development in Yugoslavia by sparking off events which could not be managed by means other than the use of force. But the main political conflict in Yugoslavia lay elsewhere: it was not the conflict between the republics, and especially not the conflict between the Yugoslav nationalities. It was the conflict within the LCY.[18] The strength of Tito's political line was to handle conflicts inside the LCY quite successfully.

The LCY was a mighty organization with an epic history. Numerically, the LCY reached its peak in 1982, with more than 2.1 million members, or 9.6 % of the entire population and 28.6% of the employed population.[19] The LCY was established in 1919 as the Socialist Worker's Party of Yugoslavia (Communists). In 1920, at its second congress in Vukovar, it was renamed into the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY). With members numbering into the tens of thousands, it came in third in the Yugoslav elections for the constituent assembly in 1920 and organized large-scale strikes. But the party was soon banned. Party membership dropped from 65,000 in 1920 to 1,000 in 1924.[20] In 1929, under the dictatorship of King

17 Horvat, Branko: Kosovsko pitanje, Globus, Zagreb 1989, pp. 134-143.

18 "The main political conflicts in Yugoslavia were intra-Party conflicts. Finally, the disintegration of the Party led directly to the disintegration of the state." Jović, Dejan: Yugoslavia. A State that Withered Away, Purdue University Press, West Lafayette 2009, pp. 11 and 101-102.

19 Abdulij, Tahir (eds. et al), Zgodovina Zveze komunistov Jugoslavije, ČZDO Komunist and Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana 1986, p. 397.

20 Lešnik, Avgust: The Development of the Communist Movement in Yugoslavia during the Comintern Period, in: "International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online", 2005, no. 18, pp. 38-46. Available at: http://newsletter.icsap.de/home/data/pdf/INCS_18_ONLINE.pdf (Access on November 3, 2014).

Alexander, the Party's call for a people's uprising was a tremendous failure. Its leadership, preoccupied with faction struggles, fled the country, leaving behind only a few hundred active members, most of whom were in prison. On the eve of World War II, despite significant losses in the Spanish Civil War, Soviet purges and repression from the Yugoslav regime, the Party, under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, somewhat managed to rebuild its ranks, particularly those of its youth organization. In 1941 it succeeded in organising resistance against the Fascist invaders. After the war the CPY came to power. National party organizations for Croats and Slovenes had been established before the war (1937), while the other republics saw national branches forming soon after. The CPY was like the Soviet communist party: a "federation" of national communist parties, unified by Marxist-Leninist doctrine and a democratic centralist organizational principle. Formally, this organizational structure remained more or less intact until its demise in 1990. In reality, of course, significant changes occurred in the 1960s and would make themselves felt during the political crises of the early 1970s and 1980s. In 1948, the CPY split with the Cominform, but it wasn't until the 1950s that the split evolved into a doctrinal dispute. It was at this time that the CPY introduced two agendas: A. the idea of socialist self-management, which stood for worker control over companies and local communities; B. the great return of the Party as an "authentic" communist organization with roots going back to the middle of the 19th century and to the League of Communists that Karl Marx himself had organized. The CPY changed its name on the VI congress in Zagreb in 1952 and declared that its mission was by no means to run the socialist state, but to merely guide the country indirectly through the education of the working class while at the same time programmatically rejecting the party's monopoly on Marxism-Leninism.[21]

21 Program Zveze komunistov Jugoslavije. Sprejet na sedmem kongresu Zveze komunistov Jugoslavije, ČZDO Komunist, Ljubljana 1984, pp. 201-202.

In reality, socialist self-management in the 1950s and 1960s meant (more or less) extensive autonomy for individual companies, which by the 1960s had evolved from production capacities of the Soviet type to those of typical modern companies, and which also had to sell their products on the market and be accountable for workers' wages. In other words, companies in Yugoslavia had to become profitable.[22] This development did not bring about true management of companies by workers, but rather strengthened management. With the relaxation and eventual abolition of the central ministerial management of the national economy, these developments made the federal republics and even the municipalities stronger, as these smaller territorial units were now responsible for regulating the newly established socialist markets. The political crisis of the early 1970s revealed this very clearly for the first time.

In the 1950s and as late as the 1960s, the Party's faction struggles played out in the old-fashioned Stalinist way. The protagonists of these struggles would go on to become relevant players, in line with their power within the apparatus of the Party and federal state ministries or agencies. Such was the case of Milovan Đilas in 1954. Đilas was a Politburo (Executive Committee of the Central Committee of LCY) member, a leading propagandist and, for a brief period of time, President of the Federal Assembly. While the latter political function was meaningless, his membership in the Politburo made him a relevant player in power conflicts, while his post in the party's propaganda arm made him a rather weak figure. His criticism of the Party never had a real chance of being accepted, and he eventually became a typical dissident, that is, an isolated individual without a movement or institutional backing. He was completely harmless. Yet the fight with his ideas (Đilas promoted a two-party system) unfolded in the Central Committee and Politburo, and was

22 Cf. Županov, Josip: Samoupravljanje i društvena moć, Globus, Zagreb 1985, p. 7.

not drawn along republic or national lines. The case of Aleksandar Ranković in 1966 was similar, but it was the last of its kind. Ranković was also a holder of multiple state functions, among them vice president of the state, but his relevant power rested on simultaneous control of both the Party's apparatus and the federal secret police. In the 1960s he advocated centralist principles at the expense of the development of the socialist self-management model strongly supported by Edvard Kardelj. This faction struggle is sometimes interpreted as a conflict between autonomist and centralist aspirations. Such conflicts were a traditional fixture of modern Yugoslav political history and date back to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the 1920s. Even though both Kardelj and Ranković could count on supporters in their respective republics, these cliques were irrelevant to the outcome of this faction struggle in which Kardelj, with ambiguous support from Tito, eventually emerged victorious.

In the early 1970s the game suddenly changed. The reforms of the 1960s had forced a number of old party cadres into early retirement, and the younger generation got its chance. These young Party leaders owed their power and prestige mostly to the environment in which they originated, that is, to their republics of origin. Unlike their seniors, they built their careers primarily at the republic level and created their power networks accordingly. Last but not least, the decentralization of the 1960s had progressed to such an extent that a growing number of important decisions were now being made at lower levels of administration. The motor for this development was not, however, the ideal of a people's democracy, but rather the emergence of a market economy with its regulations, which demanded such a transfer of power. In times of economic crisis, this new elite of party leaders naturally understood the hardships from the vantage point of their respective republics and provinces. Their power – maintaining local elites (historic blocs), privileges and prestige – rested, after all, on the performance of their republics, just like

the power of future directors would rest on the performance of their respective companies. To be sure, in the 1970s democratic centralism still mattered for the careers of these new, young party leaders. It was, however, experienced as the limit of their power and not as the glue holding together the Party, as had been the case with the older generation. In the 1980s, democratic centralism could no longer be anything but nostalgia for the heroic days of the Party. A *de facto* multi-party system had emerged in Yugoslavia by the early 1970s.[23] The LCY had in fact become a veritable federation of seven separate Leagues of Communists (the republican branches plus the communist organization in the army), each with its own establishment, leaders and particular interests. The economic crisis of the 1960s introduced a new situation in the country – one of growing inequalities, but the responses to the crisis varied as each republic and province increasingly became an economic and political world unto itself. In 1968 Belgrade saw protests from radical leftist students; in Zagreb in 1971, on the other hand, the student organization was for a time controlled by a nationalist group closely connected to the so-called Maspokret (Maspok), or Mass Movement. Maspok originated at Matica Hrvatska, a major cultural society in Croatia; it was initially an oppositionist cultural association calling for greater independence for the Croatian republic (one of their concrete demands was that foreign currency obtained from tourism be deposited with Croatian banks). A considerable portion of high-ranking Croatian communists, even leaders such as Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Miko Tripalo, openly sympathized with or were directly involved in

23 Dejan Jović characterized the Yugoslav political system as de facto pluralist in the middle of 1980s; according to him, the agents of this pluralism were not classical political parties or interest groups, but the political elites of the republics and provinces. It is possible, however, to detect the emergence of "pluralism" of this kind a decade earlier. Cf. Jović, Dejan: Osma sjednica. Uzroci, značaj, interpretacije, in: Pavlović, Momčilo (ed. et al.): Slobodan Milošević: Put ka vlasti, Institut za savremenu istoriju Beograd and University of Stirling, Belgrade and Stirling 2008, p. 39.

Maspok. In Slovenia, on the other hand, the "liberal" leadership of Stane Kavčič was proposing more radical market reforms, including an optional shareholder system. Kavčič was offered the post of federal prime minister, but turned it down. The student movement in Slovenia in 1970-72 was, like its somewhat earlier Serbian counterpart, radically leftist, but had less social impact. In Serbia, the Party leadership of Marko Nikezić and Latinka Perović proposed economic programs similar to those of Kavčič. A commonality of all three cases was that the leaders strived to win local public support for their policies. This was particularly the case in Croatia, where a nationalist movement with ties to high-ranking party officials had emerged. Nationalism was in the air; murmurings of certain republics having an unfavourable constitutional status or being exploited by other republics were commonplace. A conflict between the "old" line and the younger "liberal" generation was inevitable.

All of the above-mentioned leaders were eventually forced to resign. Meetings of republican leaders with Tito were a prelude. At the time, Tito himself was the institution which mobilized the repressive (including the Army) and Party apparatus to defeat local leaders. Tito and his loyal cadres in the republics called for differentiation within party ranks: 375,854 people were expelled from the LCY (or voluntarily left the organization) from 1973 to 1982. the growing tensions and unrest in the republics within the Party. One consequence was that the conflicts of the early 1970s did not evolve into conflicts between the republics, as would happen in the second half of the 1980s. The victory speech of the Party went something like this: there is no conflict of interests between the Serbian and Croatian nations, but there is a conflict with nationalism pouring into the Party's ranks from marginal opposition groups. The confrontation with republic leaderships in 1972 and 1973 activated elements of the Party's past, and yet it was something new: it was a conflict with those whose power and prestige increasingly relied on

the republics, and not on the LCY. And importantly, it was handled on a case-by-case basis. In the late 1980s the Yugoslav People's Army desperately tried to take Tito's place as the institution charged with settling conflicts among republic leaders. Its efforts were a tragic failure, as it found support only in certain republican oligarchies (Serbia), and not in the LCY.

Tito's victory – if it can be called that – had not been complete. To be sure, the repressive apparatus of the state and the Party became stronger for a time. However, the new Constitution of 1974 granted a vast degree of independence to the Yugoslav republics, and the LCY continued to be a federation of national parties; its executive committees were made up of delegations from the republics and regions and representatives of the Army. Since the federal Party leadership, including the Congress, was built along national party lines, the faction struggles of old were now effectively possible only on the level of national Parties. To be sure, in the second half of the 1980s open conflict between the republics did break out. Yet the agents of these conflicts were not factions in the LCY or in the federal government/assembly, but *ad hoc* alliances of political elites of different republics (between those of Serbia and Montenegro, and, for a short time, of Slovenia and Croatia, for example) sharing similar interests *vis-à-vis* elites from other republics.

In the first half of the 1980s there were initiatives inside the Central Committee of the LCY to limit the autonomy of the republican Parties, but these remained unsuccessful. The debt and the Kosovo crisis sparked off a new wave of polemics. In the realm of the economy, self-management was considered an appropriate tool for crisis management by the LCY, at least initially, while the unrest in Kosovo in 1981 raised questions about the federal constitution. All local branches of the LCY initially bought into the idea of a counter-revolution in Kosovo, as the student demonstrations there were labelled, while in Serbia resentment against the constitution

grew strong in opposition circles, but also inside the Party. Serbia could not change its republican constitution without the consent of its two provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina). Already in 1979 Ivan Stambolić, the President of the Presidency of Serbia, had noted that Serbia is economically lagging behind the Yugoslav average with potentially dangerous consequences, and highlighted low figures for per capita investment. Stambolić further outlined Serbia's inability to contribute the required resources to the Fund of the federation for less developed republics and provinces (further: Fund of the federation)[24]. The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts of 1986, now infamous for its thesis that the events in Kosovo were not a counter-revolution, but an act of genocide against the Serbs, was even more radical; it underlined non-equal trade between the republics at the expense of Serbia as a cause of the low output of electric power. In their opinion, Serbia was becoming economically subordinate as the share of capital from other republics in the Serbian national economy increased.[25] This development paved the way for Slobodan Milošević to emerge in Serbia. He called for social and political reforms, but also declared a grand return to early Titoism. His success lay in his ability to mobilize informal and sometimes even opposition groups and movements, which suddenly provided leverage against the Party apparatus and republic-level institutions.[26] In other words: despite his Bolshevik rhetoric, the early period of Milošević's rule in Serbia resembled the early days of Maspok in Croatia in the 1970s. Milošević's Yugoslavia-wide initiatives for greater unity had no real effects in the LYC or in the federal bodies of the state; they were understood as a call for centralism. "Anti-bu-

24 Official title of the fund: The Fund of the federation for crediting faster development of the economy of less developed republics and Kosovo (established in 1965).

25 Borak 2002, pp. 127-128.

26 Cf. Jović 2008, pp. 44-50; Jović 2009, pp. 253-285.

reaucratic" revolutions[27] sponsored by Milošević's movement met with success in Vojvodina and Montenegro; in Kosovo, autonomy was eventually taken off the table. Milošević also won support in the establishment of the Yugoslav People's Army. In all these events, the LCY was paralyzed, while in its federal bodies, consensus was next to impossible. As Milošević's project or Yugoslavia-wide initiative for a new political unity (constitutional reform of the federation) failed, the Bolshevik discourse faded. Ultra-nationalist discourse easily took its place. In Slovenia, these events forged an informal alliance between the opposition and the local Party. The opposition in Slovenia was very heterogeneous, and its composition had changed little since the early 1970s. Its members ranged from groups within the conservative (nationalist) cultural establishment and dissidents to the ultra-leftists in the Alliance of the Socialist Youth and several groups of intellectuals. This alliance materialized in the form of joint roundtable discussions and increasing tolerance for opposition activities in Slovenia. In summary, for the Slovenian Party leadership from the middle 1980s onwards, unity, or at least consensus among local informal groups on certain issues, movements and political organizations, mattered more than unity within the LCY, which by this time had become unattainable.

27 The "Anti-bureaucratic" revolution was a political invention of Slobodan Milošević and his supporters in the second half of the 1980s in Serbia. This "revolution" manifested itself in mass rallies organised by the regime against its opponents – both local and from other republics and provinces – who were targeted for public condemnation. Lowinger argues that the grassroots labor movement was hijacked by the regime and mobilized against supposedly corrupted and "evil" bureaucrats, while Jović suggests that the cells of the anti-bureaucratic revolutions were pro-regime pressure groups, which became active in all vital institutions in Serbia, from public media to Party organisations. See: Jović 2008; Lowinger 2009, pp. 141-142.

2.
SELF-MANAGEMENT – BETWEEN UTOPIA AND REALITY

The main Party ideologist Edvard Kardelj was very much aware that the Party, despite its vast powers, was actually a weak link in Yugoslav society. Yet, he also considered the Party necessary in order to defend the fundamentals of the socialist revolution (social ownership of the means of production; the dominance of the working class) in Yugoslavia.[28] In the crisis of the early 1970s the Party had to intervene by mobilizing its repressive and ideological apparatuses and by purging its ranks. Of these measures, it was the repressive ones that prevailed. According to Kardelj's political theory, this repression by the Party was actually a remnant of the one-party system; as it develops, socialism will invent a new way of managing crises. The answer was therefore the continued development of the socialist economic and political system of self-management. After the political crisis, Yugoslavia in the 1970s was inundated with new legislation – a new constitution (1974), a new Law on Associated Labour (1976) and new institutions. The political system was being rebuilt around the centrality of the new powers of the working people.

In the realm of economy, this new legislation meant a new orientation and the consolidation of the independent working organizations known as Basic Organizations of Associated Labour (BOAL) into Composite Organizations of Associated Labour (COAL). BOALs were independent in that they had the right to have their own bookkeeping, planning, leadership and working councils, as well as the free right to associate with other working organizations. In the realm of politics, BOALs were defined as the basis of a political system where delegations were not only elected to

28 Kardelj, Edvard: Democracy and Socialism, Yugoslav Review, Belgrade 1978, pp.78-79.

municipal assemblies, but also to branches of organizations such as the League of Communists, trade unions and sometimes even youth organizations. In other words: the responsibilities of self-managed working organizations were not limited to economic problems, but spilled over into politics. The conference of delegates elected on the level of the working organizations had to form political positions, and the same was true for the basic organization of the Leagues of Communists. BOALs and COALs were directly accountable to their local communities. BOAL and COAL budgets reveal exact figures for local roads, housing, research projects, fellowships, etc. This was the heart of Kardelj's idea of total worker control over not only income, but also total social reproduction. The basic bond between the BOALs in a given working association was in the realm of income. This meant that in the event of insufficient realization (misfortune) in the market, a BOAL, as a member of a working association, could count on collective solidarity. In other words, the workers would receive their wages no matter what. The Yugoslav economic system was defined as a hybrid planned/market economy; in practice, this meant that the workers in a given BOAL could operate at a loss, with the risk borne by the working association, and in the last instance by the municipality, or even beyond: by the republic and then by the federation.

The association principle of the working organizations was grounded in concrete proposals for overcoming the hardships of the economic and political crisis of the 1980s. At the time, the system of socialist self-management was, at least officially, considered superior to the western market economy model and/or to the eastern planned economy. The formation of associations of BOALs located in different republics and provinces was even proposed.[29] This is how Franc Popit, president of the Central Committee of the League of Com-

29 Polazne osnove dugoročnog programa ekonomske stabilizacije, in: Andrić, Milan and Jovanović, Tomislav: Interventni zakoni, društveni dogovori, rezolucije i mere za sprovođenje ekonomske stabilizacije, Svetozar Marković, Belgrade 1983, p. 28.

munists of Slovenia, proposed to end the Kosovo crisis. He proposed that up to 50% of the Fund of the federation be made available as capital for new trans-republic associations of BOALs.[30] In other words, central funding for industries in Kosovo was to be replaced by funding for "joint ventures", which would lead to new companies based on equal partnership and made up of several collectives located in different republics. Bargaining between collectives and solidarity would bridge the considerable differences between the incomes of BOALs in, say, Kosovo and Slovenia, and the isolation of Kosovo and its working class from the other parts and working people of Yugoslavia would be broken. This move would have also meant the transformation of the Fund of the federation. This was important because of harsh criticism which claimed that these financial resources actually sustained underdevelopment, since they were used to fund energy facilities and thus reproduce the income gap between republics caused by the scissor price effect.[31] Popit's proposal was in line with Kardelj. According to the latter, associated labour was far more advanced than institutions like the republics, provinces, federation and even the Party itself.[32]

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30 Iz razprave Franceta Popita. Z združevanjem dela in sredstev do napredka, in: "Komunist", May 8 1981, Ljubljana, p. 9.

31 "It is clear now that the control over the prices for raw materials and energy – which kept the growth of the latter 30% lower as compared to the prices of other commodities since 1954, went hand in hand with the activities of the fund for the faster development of the underdeveloped. The fund favoured the investments in the raw material and energetic facilities in Kosovo. What initially appeared as the cure for underdevelopment was in fact a driving force of the development of underdevelopment." – Kirn, Srečo: Razvoj nerazvoja: primer Kosova, in: "Časopis za kritiko znanosti", no. 51-52, year 10, 1982, p. 79.

32 "Today, the social superstructure as a whole, and the political system in particular, are becoming the crucial issue on which our further successful development on the principles of self-management will hinge. This question is all the more pressing as the evolution of our political system might even be said to be lagging behind; some of its institutions have already outlived their usefulness, given the present level of development of the relations and practices fostered in associated labour organized on the principle of self-management. If this incongruity were to persist, it could become a serious stumbling block to the further successful consolidation and stability of the system of socialist self-management in general." Kardelj 1978, p. 18.

National identities were closely guarded in Yugoslavia. "Brotherhood and unity" was a slogan that captured the highest and most praised value in the country. It stood for the mutual respect and assistance between nations and nationalities (nations without their own republic) as well as the cooperation between their highly developed national cultures. "Unity" meant the common interest to stay together in the socialist federation. Still, all aspirations for a Yugoslavia-wide culture, even in modest forms, such as school curricula on contemporary literature in the 1980s, were strongly resented by local cultural establishments. Yugoslav national identity was recognized, but was not defined as a supranational entity like the Soviet nation in the same period. Kardelj knew that national particularities in the realms of culture, mythology and history were basically unbridgeable. They were all reproduced by a bourgeois type of cultural ideological apparatuses; this is why there was ever-present potential for national conflicts. According to Kardelj, only associated labour had the ability to connect people in the realm of their real interests: in the economy, where basic social contradictions emerge. The principle of solidarity was considered the highest value in the self-managed economy; it was considered absolutely necessary since socialist society, by retaining the market, still suffered from its capitalist past.

The introduction of the BOALs and new legislation and institutions were the answer to the political crisis of 1970s. The Yugoslav constitution of 1974 meant the absolute limit of emancipation of the Yugoslav nationalities. The republics (but not the provinces) were essentially independent states. The federation was little more than a weak mechanism for negotiations between the antagonistic interests of these states; continued development was to be borne by the BOALs, which were expected to bridge differences between republics. In the crisis of the 1980s, this new project simply did not work. A mere 1.5% of working organizations had their centres in

other republics.[33] Furthermore, tendencies of economic de-integration in relation to the West became visible in the Yugoslav economy in the 1970s and the same can be said for the economic relations between Yugoslav republics and provinces.[34] The proposal Popit had made in 1981 was eventually realized in reforms of the Fund of the federation, but with little or no positive outcomes for the Kosovo crisis or any serious progress in the trans-republican associations of the BOALs. By 1983, critical (leftist) intellectuals and Party functionaries agreed that socialist self-management in Yugoslavia was merely an institutional foreshadowing of the social relations of the future, and not a representation of those of the present.[35]

The tendencies of economic de-integration were not only visible on the level of republics and municipalities, but also on the level of working associations. I have closely studied this phenomenon using the case of Avtomontaža, an important bus and truck factory in Ljubljana in the early 1980s. In 1985 the company

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33 Bilandžić 1985, p. 516.

34 Yugoslav export declined through the 1970s. In 1970 the share of foreign trade (West, COMECON and the rest) was 12,7 % compared to 9,2 % in 1980. In that period Yugoslavia took on a considerable amount of credit in order to boost economic and social development; very often, however, the licences for technology were sold to Yugoslav companies under the condition to be applied in manufacturing for the domestic market only. The relative de-integration of the Yugoslav economy from the West was thus partly imposed, partly supported by fixed prices, a non-convertible currency, import customs and so on. However, incentives for foreign trade varied throughout Yugoslavia. Commodity exchange between the Yugoslav republics and provinces declined considerably as well. In 1970 the exchange between republics and provinces accounted for 27,4% of economic activity, compared to only 22,2% in 1980. Only Macedonia maintained relatively stable levels of inter-republican commodity exchange during the 1970s, at around 66-68 %. For Serbia, on the other hand, the inter-republican commodity exchange share rose from 60% in 1970 to 69,7% in 1980. See: Polazne osnove dugoročnog programa ekonomske stabilizacije 1983, p. 6; Zarić, Siniša: Jugoslovenstvo i zajednički ekonomski prostor, in: "Časopis za kritiko znanosti", no. 91-92, year 1986, pp. 101-102.

35 Cf. Pašić, Najdan: Temeljni družbeni konflikt, in: "Komunist", January 7, 1983, Ljubljana, p. 5; Županov, Josip: Marginalije o društvenoj krizi, Globus, Zagreb 1983.

encompassed eight BOALs. Its market share for bus production in Yugoslavia was 31% in 1984; for other vehicles it was 23%, and exports made up 17% of all production.[36] A study of documentation produced in the company's self-management bodies reveals that in the early 1980s, the association of BOALs was a very serious problem. The documentation suggests that the vast majority of decisions were automatically made in the self-management bodies of the company, and that the consent of the workers was merely a formality. However, when the question of association with other working organizations came up, the workers clearly expressed their particular interest, which differed from that of the management (directors, engineers, experts) or functionaries in the trade union and Party organization. In at least two cases (in 1982 and 1983), the workers' stance prevailed over the leading groups in the company. In a referendum, the workers rejected a merger with a working organization called Avtotehna; in another case, a referendum was not even held since the local Party organization felt that the workers' opinion was extremely hostile towards a merger.[37] The documentation does not clearly reveal the motives for the workers' resistance. Party and trade union reports on the issue give some of the workers' arguments against the merger: worsening of working conditions after the merger and Avtotehna's alleged lack of appropriate facilities.[38] Other documents about the political and security situation from Avtomontaža (1983) and the Šiška–Ljubljana municipality (1984), where most of Avtomontaža's BOALs were located, reveal both solidarity among the BOALs and separatist tendencies. The reports outlined poor communication between BOALs, and this was interpreted

36 Enciklopedija Slovenije, vol. 1, Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana 1986, p. 155.

37 Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana (ZAL), LJU 635, t.e. 14, a.e. 94, Zapisnik 15. Redne seje Skupnega delavskega sveta DO Avtomontaža, September 9 1983, p. 4.

38 ZAL, LJU 635, t.e. 14, a.e. 93, Zapisnik Skupnega delavskega sveta DO Avtomontaža, November 22 1982.

simply as poor organization; however, cases of "wage mentality" were also reported.[39] "Wage mentality", in the jargon of the time, meant workers' indifference to their social environment and role in advancing the social standard; in other words, there was a lack of interest in real wages. This "wage mentality" was rooted in the austerity measures of the time, which meant a reduction in consumption and an orientation toward trade with the countries of the West. Laws were introduced that permitted pay raises only in cases where a company had a positive trade balance in convertible currency. And pay raises were badly needed since the prices of basic goods skyrocketed due to inflation and could no longer be regulated by "social agreements". At this time, commercial rents were also introduced in public housing in Slovenia. Investments in public goods declined, which automatically meant the decline of the role of self-management in the realm of social reproduction. The authority of the administration on the republican level became relatively strong, since the austerity measures could only be introduced administratively. It should however be pointed out that the working people in Slovenia exhibited an extremely high level of tolerance for these measures. There were few strikes in Slovenia at the time; in fact, there were fewer strikes than in the 1970s.[40] Likewise, managerial authority in the factories also grew stronger. The following passage from an annex to the minutes of a Party organization meeting at the Utesnila BOAL (a part of Avtomontaža), which gives an assessment of the performance of the director from 1979 – when the crisis started – to 1982, is typical in this regard:

"It is possible to say that decisions were made in those days [1979-1982] which were not really in the spirit of self-management.

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39 ZAL, LJU 635, t. e. 48, a. e. 345, Ocena varnostno-političnih razmer za DO Avtomontaža za leto 1983, Politično varnostna ocena razmer v občini Ljubljana-Šiška za leto 1984 in tekoče obdobje.

40 Repe 2002, pp. 138-139.

Yet the difficult circumstances, when quick responses were necessary and when we strived really hard to get out of the mess we were in, allowed the director to act on his own by applying the most rational measures. We, the workers in professional services, are fully aware that an iron fist was at the time perhaps the only possible solution to save the factory. For the most part, we did not even have enough time to democratically search for consensus. The fruits of these methods are, however, visible today."[41]

Austerity measures – reduced consumption, anti-inflation programmes, and the inclusion of the Yugoslav economy in the global division of labour – were the terms on which the IMF agreed to reprogram Yugoslavia's old debts and provide new lines of credit. I already assessed the role of the debt crisis in Yugoslav society and concluded that it was highly negative, but not catastrophic. Here I would like to propose the hypothesis that the synthesis of self-management proposed by the state leadership, which involved the association of BOALs with the aim of distributing the burden of the crisis more equally and increasing exports to convertible markets, thus tying incentives to realizations in these markets, was impossible. There is no question that companies with strong ties to the West benefited from these arrangements and had little reason to merge with less fortunate BOALs that lacked foreign business connections. In Slovenia, exports to the West were highly praised as early as the 1960s, in the period of so-called liberalism. "Party liberalism" was eventually defeated, but the companies kept their business ties with the West. The great "export turn" in the long run meant the deepening liberalization of the economy by the 1980s; private entrepreneurship eventually became legitimate – no longer considered merely an unwanted but necessary transitional anomaly on the path to more developed

41 ZAL, LJU 635, t.e. 47, a.e. 344, Ocena o delovni primernosti in sposobnosti za tov. P. J. [abbrevation is mine] – direktorja TOZD Utesnila, s strani strokovnih služb in družbeno-političnih organizacij, February 17, 1982.

forms of socialism, but a legitimate end in itself. The development of socialist self-management thus ground to a halt. But unlike in the early 1970s, the emancipatory project would not be reinvented. The handful of people still advocating self-management in the late 1980s accepted private property and the market economy as the natural environment for workers' ownership of or participation in successful enterprises.[42] Privatization, which began with the fragmentation of working organizations, was the real outcome of the process. Avtomontaža no longer exists; its vehicle factory – once its largest BOAL – went into bankruptcy in 2000. In its place, a gigantic residential complex called Celovški dvori was built.

42 See for example: Županov, Josip: Samoupravni socializem – konec neke utopije, in: "Teorija in praksa", year 26, no. 11-12, Ljubljana 1989, p. 1399.

CONCLUSION

During the last period of its existence, in the context of stubborn economic stagnation, the economic and political system of socialist self-management was increasingly considered utopian, a normative system unable to regulate real, existing social relations. The companies did not in fact operate in accordance with the concept of associated labour, but in line with the logic of entrepreneurship, that is, by taking account of available assets, profit motives and hierarchies. In the political system, the central place was still occupied by the bureaucracy.[43] By the early 1980s these critical observations about Yugoslav society were hardly secrets, and were openly discussed even in the central Party press. The Party called for the realization of the Kardelian project of self-management. This, however, would have entailed that the workers themselves be truly in charge of and have control over the whole of social reproduction. Yet at least according to the documentation at Avtomontaža[44], the workers showed little interest in decision-making, except in the case of mergers. It appears, however, that self-management was perceived as very real by the management. Workers could hold fast to the "wage mentality" and sleep at meetings, but for directors and their staff, self-management must have been a nightmare. We must keep in mind that in most cases directors were Party members – 26,9 % of the members of the working collective of BOAL Zunanja trgovina [Foreign Trade] at Avtomontaža, for example, were Party members, which suggests that the majority of workers were not directly under the Party's discipline. Whether directors personally believed in the ideology of self-management is irrelevant; in order to cover their backs, they had to honour the self-management rituals. Their careers

43 Županov 1983, pp. 33-39.

44 It is indicative that Lowinger's study on strikes in Yugoslavia in the 1980s provides hardly any cases of explicit workers' demands for control over the factories.

did not depend solely on their companies' performance, but also on their position in the Party's hierarchy; in official jargon, this was described as loyalty to the tradition of the revolution.[45] Last but not least, Kardelj's ideas had the force of a law, and the directors had to at least pretend to honour them. Directors were responsible for running companies for profit, which increasingly meant doing business with western companies, but were burdened with "pointless" meetings with workers where they had to explain and defend business and technical decisions.[46] Vast amounts of paper were used to print the documentation for workers council meetings. Kardelian self-management resulted not in new social relations, but in new institutions which, in reality, meant lots of time-consuming activities and armed the workers with many opportunities for (passive) resistance. On the other hand, it also gave the management control over their workers, while the meetings provided a channel where management could win workers' support for unpopular decisions. This would be important during the transition in the 1990s. Managers were often able to persuade workers to work for lower wages, thereby shifting the burden onto the workers' households and their

45 The Statute of Avtomontaža in its article 81 regarding the criteria required for the post of the director general reads the following: "[...] his socio-political manners include the appropriate orientation regarding the socialist revolution, brotherhood and unity between Yugoslav nations and nationalities and include commitment for developing self-managing social relations and division of income according to the performed labour." ZAL, LJU 635, t.e. 2, a. e. 16, Statut delovne organizacije Avtomontaža, tovarna gospodarskih vozil, trgovina in servis motornih vozil, Ljubljana, December 1975.

46 Anton Stipanič, a former general director of Iskra, a major high tech company producing electronic devices and equipment in Ljubljana, remembers: »Self-management degenerated into the waste of human efforts and fruitless discussions on how to reconcile the economic ignorance of politics with the necessity to do business most effectively and be competitive in the market. «, Pogovor z radioamaterjem, obveščevalcem in nekdanjim direktorjem Iskre Antonom Stipaničem, in: »Delo. Sobotna priloga«, September 9, 2012, Acess: http://www.delo.si/zgodbe/sobotnapriloga/najprej-smo-se-zravsali-z-americani-in-italijani-okoli-trsta-potem-pa-z-rusi.html. (Visited: November 22, 2014).

networks in order to save the companies.[47] Even if the workers did not take their great historical mission to control the whole of social reproduction too seriously, they at least strongly identified with their companies. Thus it is not too risky to say that the self-management machinery, with its referendums, assemblies and discussions, became entangled in a never-ending decision-and position-making process which ultimately created strong affiliations to companies rather than class consciousness. Jože Mencinger, a leading Slovene economist and minister for the economy in the first post-socialist government, recently described the matter in the following terms:

"Slovenia was in a special situation because in the 1970s there was a decision that industry should go to where people were rather than people going to where industry was. This meant that there was a dispersion of industry throughout the country. Most workers were part-time farmers because of the landholding limit of 10 hectares. This created small farmers who could not survive on farming alone. So, they got jobs in these companies. They had a feeling of ownership over these companies. When I went to the countryside and talked about privatization, the answer of people was: 'Why are you talking about such nonsense. This is nationalization not privatization. These companies belong to us!' Before that, I thought self-management was just the invention of Kardelj. But it was very much alive in Slovenia because of these specific circum-

47 Marko Jaklič and Andraž Hribernik described the case of Kolektor, a commutator factory located in the small Slovenian town Idria. In the late 1990s, the company faced competition with Chinese producers. Researchers outlined the management's capability – the director kept his position since early 1980s, to persuade the workers to become more productive. In other words, the workers agreed on lowering their wages. The company received the support from the community as well; in the 1990s it was not unusual that Idrian firms transferred some manual labour tasks to the workers' families and thus benefited from cheap labour. Jaklič, Marko and Hribernik, Andraž: Slovenski tradicionalni preživetveni model kot dejavnik razvojne blokade slovenske družbe, in: Neosocialna Slovenija, Univerzitetna založba Annales, Koper 2010, pp. 28-29.

stances, namely the dispersion of industry and part-time farmers." [48]

As far as the Party was concerned, even though the central Party press attacked the "techno-(anarcho)liberal tendencies" – a notion that meant the supremacy of management and profits over the workers – on a regular basis, Party organizations on the shop floor nevertheless often sided with management and not with the workers, as the merger plans at Avtomontaža suggest.[49] It is not hard to imagine that the official communist ideology of the LYC had little potential for mobilization. In their weekly paper Mladina and in the theoretical journal *Časopis za kritiko znanosti,* the oppositionist leaders of the Alliance of the Socialist Youth of Slovenia characterized the Party bureaucracy as a ruling class. In the early 1980s, Mladina ran lots of articles about the real life of the working people, including migrants from other Yugoslav republics, and about the authoritarian nature of schools and other institutions; despite its radical leftist agenda, the Alliance did not attempt to mobilize the workers against the Party, even though it was the only Slovene organization potentially capable of starting such a project. Instead, it played the role of a constructive opposition. In the early 1990s, the former Youth organization, now stripped of its radical leftist past, became the political and ideological core of the dominant Slovene political party, Liberalna demokracija Slovenije [Liberal Democracy of Slovenia], which would go on to lead efforts for the integration of Slovenia into Euro-Atlantic organizations. Like the economic transition to

48 Slovenia's Gradualist Transition. Interview with dr. Jože Mencinger, August 6, 2013. Available at: http://www.johnfeffer.com/slovenias-gradualist-transition/ (Access November 2, 2014).

49 Cf. Footnote 38. Lowinger outlines the fact that in most of the cases of strikes in Yugoslavia throughout the 1980s the relations between the workers and local party organisations were antagonistic. The antagonism in question was especially severe in Kosovo, where the local Party organisation invested serious efforts during the unrests of 1987 to separate workers on a national basis in order to control the situation. See: Lowinger 2009, p. 102.

capitalism, the political transition to a classical multi-party system in Slovenia was peaceful. Institutions like the roundtable discussions organized by the Socialist Alliance of the Working People or the Marxist Centre at the Central Committee of the LCS facilitated dialogue between the opposition and the Party. Events in Kosovo in the second half of the 1980s and growing resentment against the constitution, which became official policy among the Serbian political leadership and the Army, were the crucial points where the Slovenian Party and the opposition initially found the same language, resulting initially in defending the federal constitution, then democracy and human rights.

The LCY *de facto* ceased to exist in the second half of the 1980s. Joint action was virtually impossible at this time. It was completely pointless for the Party's base to appeal to the LCY directly, since the LCY was nothing more than an association of national branches. The LCY Party centre could no longer initiate differentiation (i.e. impose splits or internal divisions based on different accounts of the political situation or dominant party line) within local party branches; its aspirations for such powers, however, had a cohesive effect on Party members in the republics and (semi-)opposition groups. Even though the Leagues of Communists in the republics at least formally defended socialism and Marxist-Leninist doctrine almost until the bitter end, they quickly figured out that communist ideology could not serve as the bond for these newly established alliances (historical blocs). Nationalist ideologies – which in Slovenia were dressed up in an often very shallow and tacky jargon of human rights and civil society – on the other hand *could*. In their campaigns, the LCs thus no longer addressed the working class, but the nations, thereby contributing to and legitimizing the rise of nationalism.[50]

50 Neven Borak, relying on Ciril Ribičič (a top-ranking LCS political functionary and a professor of law), outlined that it was easier in the late 1980s to reach consensus about changing the socio-economic framework in the federal constitution than changing the relations between republics: "In other words, the main ideological force easily abandoned its class orientation and traded it for the national orientation." Borak 2002, p. 173.

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Note on the archive material

All archive material was obtained at Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana [Historical Archive of Ljubljana]. The serial number for documentation on Avtomontaža bus factory is LJU 635.

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