

# *Splendours and Miseries of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (1945-74)*<sup>1</sup>

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*post res perditas* (Machiavelli, after the fall of the Republic)  
*felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas* (Virgil on Lucretius)

## **0. Overview**

This essay explores the trajectory of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (under its various names) in the 30 years from coming to power to settling into a sterile crisis. After ca. 1974 no really new factors appear but the old ones get aggravated, and I do not delve into that phase, though no doubt it would be historically instructive, in a depressing way. I shall present here some main theses argued in the essay.

Part 1 attempts to ground what follows in the statistics of Party membership and its evident turning from the initial peasant bulk, led by some radical workers and professionals or intellectuals, to an employee and white-collar bulk, presided over by a politocratic oligarchy. Self-management was slowly introduced between 1950 and 1961, but the politocracy's conservative majority launched a counter-offensive (1966-74) which blocked self-management from being extended to the top. Instead the ruling monolith fragmented into a polyarchy of "republican" power-centers, which mostly slid into nationalism. I call the final period stagnation and ad-hocery, Yugoslav Brezhnevism.

Part 2 discusses main Party problems and achievements, which I group under the concepts of singularities and resistance to them. I note these briefly here and discuss them in greater detail below. The *first* Yugoslav singularity was that the revolution 1941-45 was fought as an anti-imperialist war for national liberation and social justice. While sparked and led by the Party's hierarchic network, the struggle was conducted from below upwards, for freedom and against of the monarchist and fascist systems. A *second* singularity came about in 1948 with the rejection by Tito and the great majority of the Party of Stalin's attempt to dispossess the CPY in favour of Soviet stooges. By 1953, Tito and the CPY could claim a unique double victory: over Hitler and Stalin. A *third* revolutionary singularity sketched out a zigzagging road to a real socialist democracy and self-management from below. It came to a head in the 1960s, when the Party "democrats" reached a compromise with the middle-of-the-road against a return to Stalinism. At the end, however, the Yugoslav economic model mixed reliance on a largely uncontrolled and never examined profit motive and consumer market with a largely piecemeal and inefficiently decentralized "command economy" of the Soviet type, in an ad hoc patchwork which led to political and economic stasis.

A State ruled by a Communist Party of the Leninist type is forced to keep in mind the undying enmity of world capitalists and to keep its ideological and material defences honed. However, I read its principal conflict after the first few years as one between the budding oligarchy, always in favour of dictatorship from above, and the budding self-government of the

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid the cumbersome repetition of CPY [Communist Party of Yugoslavia] and/or LCY [League of Communists of Yugoslavia], I shall use for them, in spite of my reluctance at "god-words," Party with capital P. My thanks go to many people who supplied me with materials and debated with me: Boris Buden, Gal Kirn, and Ozren Pupovac from Berlin, Matko Meštrović and Vjeran Katunarić from Zagreb, Vera Petrović and Todor Kuljić from Belgrade; Ron Davis from San Francisco.

masses. In Yugoslavia, because of its singularities, the Party tried to think about disempowering the oligarchy. But since its Stalinist genotype had an inbuilt distrust of democracy and socialism from below outside of the Party, it could not allow it inside the Party either. An impasse resulted in the form of a veto power by the regional oligarchies and banks. Buoyed by an invasion of both native patriarchal and Western bourgeois mores, they became nationalist and chauvinist as against the power center in Belgrade. In an unfavourable international political and economic climate, the split oligarchic classes became in most cases ready to turn into neo-comprador bourgeoisies at the service of foreign financial capital. The inglorious downfall of its last 15 years and collapse into a congeries of mutually embattled dwarvish classes leading brainwashed mini-nationalisms is the *fourth* and suicidal Yugoslav singularity, which pragmatically erased the first three.

## 1. Some Central Data

First we must get to know who – in the sense of typical or representative groups – we are speaking about.

### 1.1. The Party Top

In the early 1970s a team headed by Barton and Denitch analyzed “Opinion-Making Elites in Yugoslavia.” It tabulated the top 120 people (bar some at the very top who didn’t have time) by prior occupation (45). Their findings may be categorized as follows (adding the corresponding data for 1918-41):

	<b>Post-1945</b>	<b>Old Elite 1918-41</b>
Ruling class (financial, military, State officials, professional politicians)	0	(45)
Professional and white collar	59	(56)
Workers	37	(0)
Peasants	5	(0)

The Barton et al. “communist elite” was roughly, I surmise, the top surviving professional revolutionaries from 1941 plus 10-15 top experts who joined the government administration in 1945 and the years immediately following. (Characteristically, the only comparable proportion among professionals in the “elite” between monarchist and socialist Yugoslavia was of lawyers: 16% after the war and 22% before! In a wider group of over 1,500 top “opinion-makers” in 1969, a huge 29% had completed law studies – and in federal administration every second person had a law degree [137].)

Immediately below this apex of maybe 150 people there was – I argued in “Class,” section 2.23, following Horvat’s necessarily fuzzy statistics (170-71, 176, 184) – a top and a middle governing group which in the early ‘60s might have comprised respectively ca. 60 and 70 thousand each, though the middle stratum was destined to rapidly expand with the shift of power to the federal republics and partly to the local level. One would assume that they were almost all in the Party, and that this “leading cadre” group remained in the 1960s between 150 and 250 thousand; the numbers tally with the Party membership at the end of World War 2 and up to the 1948 expansion (see Table 2 below).<sup>2</sup>

As to the class composition of the Party and its centers of power, Barton et al. cite data which I again summarize (with % of the class in “economically active” population added at end):

<sup>2</sup> Horvat’s hypothesis accords well with the later statistics in SG81: 110, which finds 183,000 people employed in “Societal activities [meaning the political organizations] and State organs” in 1965, the number then falling until 1969 and after that rising to 210,000 for 1974 (this number does not comprise the rapidly rising “technocracy”).

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>WORKERS</b>	<b>PEASANTS</b>	<b>OTHERS<sup>1/</sup></b>
Top leadership <sup>2/</sup>	39	7	54
Local leadership <sup>3/</sup>	40	23	37
Total membership	30	49	21
Share in population	13	73	14
Note 1/ Intellectuals, students, salaried employees, others			
Note 2/ In federal and republican Central Committees			
Note 3/ In district, town, and local Party committees			

The Party Central Committee confirmed at the crucial 1940 5<sup>th</sup> Conference had 14 workers, 12 intellectuals, 2 employees, and 1 peasant (*Pregled* 277). The prewar leadership was thus composed of professionals/intellectuals and workers in equal proportion. From the urban/rural divide of the “elite” (*Pregled* 54, 109), which shows that less than 1/3 came from communities of over 5,000 people, it can be concluded that both these groups were largely first-generation descendants of peasants.

### 1.2. The Party as a Whole

Before the mid-1960s the statistics of Party membership were published on the occasion of party congresses and only rarely and unsystematically in between, so the situation was unknown to everybody except the inner circle of rulers and some top administrators. But it can now be approximately reconstructed (from *Pregled*, Filipi, *Situation*) as follows:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>WOMEN</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
1941 (April)	12	(not available)	Note 1
1945 (end of WW2)	141	–	50 died in war
1946	258	46	
1947	285	47	
1948	483	84	Note 2
1949	531	96	
1950	607	109	
1951	705	123	
1952	773	132	
1953	700	121	
1954	655	113	
1955	625	106	
1956	649	108	
1957	755	124	
1958	830	138	
1959	936	157	
1960	1.006	167	
1961	1.035	171	
1962	1.018	169	
1963	1.019	172	
1964	1.031	178	
1965	1.046	184	
1968	1.146	–	
1972	ca. 1,000	–	
1976	1.400	–	
Note 1/ <i>Pregled</i> , has 8,000, which is probably wrong because 9,000 of the 1941 CPY members died during the war and 3,000 survived. To this should be added the important SKOJ (Communist Youth) with 30,000 members, without whom there would not have been the necessary cadres for the partisan movement in 1941. The population before WW2 was 15.5 million.			
Note 2/ At the end of the year the category of “candidates” (probation members of CPY), then numbering 52,000, was abolished, so the 1949 number includes most of them.			

There were two early crucial moments in this flux. The first was 1948-49, the conflict with the USSR and the Cominform, when 50-60,000 members were expelled (and many arrested) for siding with Stalin; this was statistically swallowed up in the unannounced but ample recruitment drive in the first half of 1948 in view of the conflict with Stalin, which accounts for at least 80,000 of the 1948 members (Bilandžić 158). It can be assumed that in 1949 1/3 of the Party were new members, presumably less prone to the cult of Stalin.

The second is the obvious dip in the years 1953-56 inclusive, with 187,000 members expelled (Filipi 749). There were significant oscillations also in the number of members resigning of their own accord (which must be inferred because it was not systematically published), which reached about 200,000 in 1957-64 (*Izveštaj* 32). This was due first to the debacle of the village collectivization campaign in 1953 (Barton et al. 100) and immediately thereafter to the ouster from power of Milovan Djilas and his sympathizers. The collectivization was a first obvious defeat of the Party (the patchy results of the first Five-Year plan were both hidden and attributed to the USSR/Cominform-imposed blockade); it was mismanaged in a moderately Stalinist fashion both in its course and in the lack of a suitable explanation for backing down. As will be seen in further statistics, this marks the divorce of the politically awake part of peasantry from the active enthusiasm for Party-led politics which had lasted for a decade, from 1942-43 on. But I suspect, though cannot prove, that a final factor for the alienation of roughly one quarter of the 1952 membership was also weariness after a decade of a huge psychological strain, where all the hours and forces of members were caught up in the armed revolution and then in organizing a largely destroyed and hugely threatened country. The climb down from collectivization, and the immediately following, inevitable setting of boundaries, was certainly much less bloody and more dignified than the diametrically opposed course embarked upon by Stalin in 1927-30, but it took its toll.

To the contrary, the rise in members 1957-61 can be attributed first to the threat after the Soviet put-down of the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and more lastingly to years of economic growth, decentralization to the federal republics plus the refurbished communal system, and a cautious expansion of self-management, while the stagnation or drop 1961-65 reflects the economico-ideological difficulties of the time.

Beyond the '60s statistics, Carter points to a large number of people leaving the Party in 1970 amid the apathy after the student demonstrations of 1968. Anyway, the rise of the market economy and technocracy as well as the fixation on education degrees meant that at this time "the membership of the Party was much less important than it had been earlier, or than it was subsequently to become" as a stepping stone to a socially privileged position (30)

The percentage of *women* oscillated 1946-66 between 16 and 18%; it was highest in 1949 (data for 1946-47 are estimates based on the 1/6 of women in the partisan forces during the war). An additional cause for their dip 1953-58 and permanent stagnation thereafter was the productivist dogma that industrialization will solve everything, which also meant the downplaying of particular organizing for women. Both the "double shift" of family mothers and the patriarchal attitudes contributed: the proportion in Slovenia was 32-27% and in Croatia 28.5-21%, while in Macedonia it was 14-11%, in Bosnia, the epicenter of partisan warfare, it fell from an astounding 22% in 1946 to 14-15%, and in the professional armed forces it was 4% (in 1965 perhaps 3,000 out of 76,000). Their social composition for the mid-1960s (see Table 4) shows that the main groups of women members were either in the factories (ca. 32,000, probably ca. 1/10 of the worker membership), or in various offices including those of the ruling class (ca. 104,000), or in "territorial" Party units (41,000 pensioners and housewives); of the scanty handful of peasant members, women were 1/9 (*Izveštaj* 38).

**TABLE 4: Women Party Members in the mid-'60s (in %, adapted from Filipi 781; "others" make up the small gap toward 100%; professional army members not counted)**

CLASS	1964	1965	1966
Workers	18.3	18.0	17.1
Peasants	1.9	1.5	1.4
Professional and White-Collar	52.9	52.9	53.1
Students	3.9	4.4	4.9
Pensioners and housewives	22.7	22.9	23.0

More articulated data about *Party social composition* are available for a few years later, at what was probably the apex of LCY popularity, in Table 5 (adapted from Barton et al. 113). The full number of LCY members was then 1,146,000, and of Yugoslav population 20,154,000, with those over 18 years 13,140,000:

**TABLE 5: Social Groups in Party in 1968 (numbers in thousands)**

SOCIAL GROUP	NO. IN LCY	IN GEN. POPUL.	% OF GROUP IN LCY
Leading cadre or personnel	83	107	77.2
Professional army	not available		
Technical intelligentsia	50	112	44.4
Security personnel	31	84	36.5
Non-technical intelligentsia	129	443	29.1
Students	37	143	25.8
Administration employees	140	900	15.5
Workers	357	2,439	14.6
Pensioners	90	1,256	7.2
Unemployed	16	327	4.9
Private peasants	84	4,420	1.9
Private craftsmen	5	292	1.2
Housewives and "others"	34	2,700	1.2

*Comment:* All data are estimates; the data for the army are unclear and to my mind unreliable, but the % of the professional armed forces in LCY would have been among the first two. "Technical intelligentsia" meant primarily the engineers, while "non-technical" meant the humanist, medical, and similar intelligentsia; their % in the Party is strikingly high, as is the case with students. The pensioners include a great number of former partisans given preferential options for retirement due to war service. The small number of peasants is a striking example of the Leninist bias against and lack of understanding for this class, so recently the bulk and mainstay of Tito's partisans

The best breakdown I found of the "professional and white-collar" group in the Party, officially called Employees, from 1969 (Carter 260) gives a clearer picture:

**TABLE 6: Breakdown of "White-Collar" Membership 1969**

GROUP	NUMBER	% OF PARTY
Managers (leading cadre)	67,250	6.1
Engineers and technicians	54,765	4.9
In education, health, science, and culture	132,853	11.9
Administrative staff	138,217	12.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>393,085</b>	<b>35.3</b>

It ought to be stressed that great, often inordinate attention was paid in the Yugoslav system, and therefore in statistics too, to formal qualifications and degree of schooling. It was the key to economic and ideological division of the working class into 3 or 4 – or with women 5 – fractions

(analyzed in Suvin, “On Class”). Technical and other intellectuals are defined by their university degree, without which one is a simple technician or employee; there are further divides between high-school and elementary school graduates. This was also a way to avoid class analysis, while simultaneously providing a pointer (often the only one extant) to it. An example might be the mid-‘60s statistics about women in the Party (Table 4), where my category of Professional and White-Collar is in the original divided into university, high-school, and elementary school graduates (respectively ca. 9.8, 25.7, and 17.5%, in all 52.9%). After the 1960s practically everybody aspiring to prominence had to obtain a graduate degree; a case in point may be Tadjman, who seems to have politically browbeaten professors into granting him one.

A telling overview of Party membership % 1946-68 (Barton et al. 116 taken from Nikolić ed.; cf. Carter 260), divided into Workers, Peasants, White-Collar, and Others, which I abbreviate even further, may serve as a summary:

**TABLE 7: Trajectory of Party Membership by Class 1946-68 (in %)**

*Workers* rose from the 1946 % of 27.6 to a high of 36.7 in 1962 and then fell to 31.2, and in 1971 to 28.8 (Carter 32); there was a clear shift towards more highly skilled workers. In 1961 workers comprised only 2/3 even in the industrial Party cells (*Izveštaj* 35).

*Peasants* fell precipitously from the 1946 % of 50.4 to 42.8 in 1952, 22.6 in 1954, and 7.4 in 1968.

The misleading category of *Others* includes pensioners, students, housewives, and a few others; it fell from 1946 % of 11.7 to 6.1 in 1962 and then rose to 18.7.

The even more obfuscatory category of “White-Collar Workers” or employees hides, of course, the ruling class, its direct administrators, the technical and humanist intelligentsia, and all other employees. It rose steadily from the 1946 % of 10.3 to the 43.8 of 1968.

The major demographic and social shift in post-World-War-2 Yugoslavia was the movement of more than 1.5 million peasants to the cities. As I noted in “On Class,” it was an epochal change when in 1969 the peasantry, with ca. 9 million members, fell under one half of the total population for the first time, and the flow continued unabated. Barton et al. note that this shift “from peasant to worker or white-collar-cum-administrator, was spearheaded by the Party members, who were also the most mobile. [This meant] that the most active, articulate, and talented activists in the villages left” (117). In 1953 Party statistics were revised from counting provenance to counting present profession, which resulted in 45,000 peasants and 93,000 workers – out of 700,000 members – being declassified as such (Filipi 762); it can be inferred that most class composition statistics 1945-52 should be analogously revised. As of the mid-1950s, “the LCY had ceased to be a predominantly peasant party without becoming a working-class one” (Rusinow 96-98); it had in fact become predominantly a party of employees and office-holders, who by the mid-‘60s even had an absolute majority (Horvat 199-204). By that time there were 77,000 peasants in the million-strong LCY (Filipi 754-55, cf. Rusinow 144-45), mainly functionaries of the trading cooperatives and suchlike institutions in the countryside. The Party aged; in the ‘50s *youngsters* up to age 26 were 40% of the members but in 1966 12%; at that time the 26-40 age cohort comprised 59%, and the over 40 cohort 30% (cf. Rusinow 137, 144-45, *Izveštaj* 37); the SKOJ (Communist Youth League) was abolished in 1949 and the People’s Youth organization grew increasingly bureaucratic and irrelevant (Carter 34). The young came back in great numbers in the 1970s (*Situation* 72), but then for career purposes.

### 1.3. Concluding Pointers

Writing in the mid-60s, the well-informed insider Horvat concluded:

In 1963 workers and peasants made up 20% of communal [party] committees, and 13% of the district committees.... [T]he percentage must be still lower for the higher echelons.... [Thus] employees dominate the organization, and especially its leadership.... If we add that relations in the

Party were ‘hierarchical and semi-military’ (M. Todorović), it becomes clear how dangerous the pressures toward bureaucratization were in the LCY.” (202-03)

After the first post-war decade LCY was predominantly a party of people working (or not) by sitting down, rather than of the manual labourers standing up. At this point, no value judgement is implied, except that official ideology clung to the vehement affirmation it was ruling in the name of the workers.

And a careful foreign observer living in Yugoslavia summed it up for 1965:

Generalisations based on such statistics are hazardous.... [B]y 1965 over 70% of the rank and file and most middle-grade officers had not been adults during the war; 75% of them had not been members... before the break with Stalin; [and] the top leadership by virtue of longevity in power had survived and might be presumed to have learned from a greater variety of revolutionary and post- revolutionary experiences than in any other socialist State except China. (Rusinow 145)

## 2.0. Main Party Problems and Achievements: The Singularities and the Resistances

The main subjective difficulty into which I bumped at every step was that the author—coming himself from that environment, knowing it as one knows his homeland, embroiled in its hopes and disappointments, having taken part in its impetus and its aberrations, truth and error—had to force himself to forget what he believed he knew, to detach himself from what hurt him, to establish between him and the facts the distance indispensable for understanding. The reader should judge whether he has succeeded.

F. Fejtő, 1969 (free translation)

I am not writing a (however potted) history of the CPY/LCY, but an overview of what seem its essential historical features with a view to explaining its great successes, its tergiversations, and later great failures. Nonetheless, a chronological outline by periods, where central problem clusters will emerge, remains indispensable.

### 2.1. Ca. 1934-50: Two Singularities<sup>3</sup>

Prewar Yugoslavia, though very rich in natural wealth, was one of the poorest countries in Europe, a semi-colony economically halfway between the metropolitan countries of Europe and the Asian colonies (it had had a surplus village population amounting to 4 million out of 11.4 million peasants).

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>REVENUE IN \$</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>REVENUE IN \$</b>
USA	554	Czechoslovakia	134
Germany	520	Yugoslavia	96
UK	468	Egypt	85
France	283	India	34
Austria	166	Indonesia	23

When Tito (Josip Broz) in the mid-1930s was appointed by the Comintern first organizational and shortly thereafter general secretary of CPY, he insisted that the leadership must be inside the

<sup>3</sup> I wish to record my indebtedness for the term "singularity" to Ivana Momcilović and Slobodan Karamanić, from our e-mail exchanges in 2011. I was also stimulated by Gal Kirn, who calls this a "politics of rupture": he links self-management with the rupture from Stalin, while introducing as a third leg the non-aligned movement, cf. "From the Primacy."

country. Aided by the world economic depression, the ideological bankruptcy of the monarchist regime and existing political parties, and the new Comintern antifascist policy, he succeeded in forming a tightly disciplined, illegal communist nucleus. As one of his main helpers Edvard Kardelj remembered, in that situation “a serious impact [was only possible] through a well-organized and conceptually monolithic revolutionary organization” (*Tito* 187). Though the communist parties under Stalin had totally lost “the early traditions of dissent and debate,” and their model both for internal and outward use was “a social dictatorship... that was master of all public life” (Ali 149), this did not much matter under illegal and revolutionary conditions. In the 1930s the Party began putting roots (as it had already after World War 1, before being outlawed) into “a mass revolutionary movement, but without depriving its consolidated underground organization of its distinctively cadre features” (188). The uprising and military struggle 1941-45 against the Nazis and their followers added much flexibility in the necessarily autonomous local guerrilla movements – communication was only by courier through multiple enemy lines – that everywhere flanked the Partisan HQ moving between Bosnia, Montenegro, and Serbia, and the monolithic hierarchy served it well.

The Party’s proclaimed aim in the war was National Liberation Struggle (NOB). A People’s Front grouping everybody willing to fight the occupiers was developed, while class struggle was taboo (and where zealots like Djilas proclaimed it, the insurgents split). In each locality, liberated or underground, a People’s Liberation Committee (NOO) was instituted, from which wealthier peasants were not excluded – in some cases they were more militant than the poorer ones – but they were not allowed to govern without the poor: “Many well-to-do peasants and... members of the bourgeoisie joined our struggle and [remained] with us to the very end” (Kardelj, *Tito* 149). In order to draw the population into uprising, the partisans “kept insisting on their vital social and political interests,” while key positions were kept in CPY hands, as the only alternative to failure (149-54). The partisans fought both against fascist occupiers and against the obviously failed old State dictatorship bloodily preserving national and class inequalities (cf. Denitch chap. 3 and 4, and Pupovac). The class conflict was overtly initiated when the monarchist *četniks*, in defence of their power base and privileges and spurred on by the refugee royal government in London, attacked the partisans at end of 1941, “[preferring] a civil war even at the cost of overt collaboration with the [Axis] occupier” (Kardelj, *Tito* 153). The war could thus be conducted as the people vs. the traitors.

Therefore in 1945, as realistic foreign commentators noted, Tito, the partisans, and their whole programme were outright popular in all parts of the country (Auty, cited in Fejtö 1:70), and won the elections hands down. The Party, by now 141,000 members hardened by war, mostly young peasant men and women but with an important leavening of intellectuals and professionals, took over the key positions in the government, as it already had in the army and the developing security apparatus, busy fighting counterrevolutionary guerrillas in the mountains for years to come. Thus began a period of reconstruction, which Fejtö rightly calls also the period of democratic reforms (universal suffrage, agrarian reform, democratization of education, and much more) – in fact the first Enlightenment government in the Balkans. The country was totally devastated: the average age of the 1/9<sup>th</sup> of population who died in the war was 22 years; the Allied Reparations Commission estimated the damage at \$47 billion, 50 times the prewar annual national income; the retreating Germans ploughed up all the rail ties, and the whole country counted 200 trucks (see Hoffman-Neal 138-39). Welcome and important aid came from UNRRA, which supplied up to June 1947 \$415 million worth of goods, including 1.2 million tons of food, 4,000 tractors, etc. (Fejtö 1: 127-29).

The subsequent periods may be roughly divided (see Suvin, “On Class” 3.1), as follows:

- ca. 1945-50: postwar reconstruction and consolidation, centralist fusion of Party and State;
- ca. 1950-61: introduction of limited self-management, monolithic unity of Party and State, high economic growth continues;



- ca. 1961-65/66: counter-offensive of the conservative majority of politocracy, by the end of this period a self-conscious ruling class;
- ca. 1966-74: the ruling monolith fragments into a polyarchy of “republican” power-centers, which, within the turn to a not systematically counteracted market economy, mostly slide into nationalism; significant decline in economic growth;
- post-1974: stagnation and ad-hocery, Yugoslav Brezhnevism. It could be perhaps divided by Tito’s death, i.e.: up to 1980, stronger role of politocracy as a confederal polyarchy; after 1980, crisis and weakening in all respects.

As Lukács rightly remarked about Leninism, in it the Party’s role is even more decisive after the revolution, so that “every turning point in [mass history] is always simultaneously a critical internal Party matter” (*Lenin* 86). It involves articulating economic problems with political decisions. However, the transferral from mass to Party level means that I shall group the problems a bit differently in what follows.

The *first Yugoslav singularity* was then that the revolution was fought by a great majority of the people as a war for national liberation and justice, impossible within the system of subservience to imperialism. While sparked and firmly led by a hierarchic network, the struggle was by both design and chance conducted from below upwards, for freedom and against the totally corrupt and murderous authority of the old class systems – monarchist and fascist. The partisan army, the local Liberation Councils, the youth and women’s organizations, even the rapidly expanding and still largely undercover Communist Party were parts and expressions of that plebeian singularity in occupied Europe: a people (or group of peoples practicing *fraternité*) freeing itself by its own forces, with postwar power not coming in on the muzzle of foreign tanks (British in Greece, Russian in the rest of middle-cum-eastern Europe). After a very successful economic recovery 1945-47 due to the same combination of forces, that is, rooted in popular enthusiasm for reconstruction of a now liberated country, a *second singularity* came about in reaction to Stalin’s plan of taking power away from the CPY in favour of Soviet stooges: the refusal of Tito and the great majority of the Party to buckle down, the break with the USSR in 1948. While up to Stalin’s death it was touch and go whether Russia would not invade, Tito and the CPY could in the event claim their unique double, albeit local, victory over Hitler and Stalin, the two most oppressive and murderous rulers known before the 1990s.

As Kardelj summarized it, the lesson from the “Cominform conflict” was to shun “the deformation of any Communist Party which identified itself with the State and with the police apparatus” so as to avoid its fallout, where “the working masses had been isolated from government and separated from the execution of power.” The only way out was in reviving the people’s power of partisan days – that is, self-management (*Reminiscences* 122-23); the privileges of the “bureaucratic caste” were in good part revoked (cf. Fejtö 1: 305). Between 1950 and end of 1952 professional Party functionaries were reduced from 11,900 to 4,600 (Lilly 23).

## 2.2. 1950-65: Third Singularity, First Blockage

But then, economic needs and problems, always threatening, loomed increasingly large: as in all countries east of Germany, “*industrialization was an imperious necessity*” (Fejtö 1: 299). Whence was to come the absolutely needed “primitive accumulation of capital” for industrialization, urbanization, and economic development in general? My hypothesis (in “On Class”) is that though after 1945 Yugoslavia followed the Soviet road in the State organization of economics and power, this was tempered by plebeian democracy from below. It eventually made impossible a Stalinist dispossession of small private peasants, of dubious immediate help anyway. Further, after the secession from Stalin, some top leaders’ rediscovery of the Paris Commune and of their own partisan roots in Marxian self-government set the Party out on the road of both strengthening the local centers of power down to the basic territorial units and slowly introducing *self-management* in the nationalised enterprises.

As of 1950, Tito found beyond domestic surplus labour a second source of financing which permitted him to dispense with forced collectivization of land and subservience to Moscow: *foreign loans*. US economic aid – without other countries or private banks – amounted in 1950-59 to \$1,158 million (Hoffmann & Neal 348); later data have it amount for the period 1950-55 to \$1.2 billion, half of it military (Rusinow 46), and it seems that in 1955-61 as much more was given (Auty 1965: 170). Because of “Western” interest in the strategic role of the Yugoslav army during the Cold War, these loans were not accompanied with the usual foreign ownership and domination turning the recipient into a semi-colony. This allowed the Yugoslav societal experiment a quarter century (roughly 1949-73) of breathing space before the world market and the Western powers began to squeeze the windpipe. That spacetime became meaningful on a world scale when it was used for developing an experiment in self-management through workers’ councils, and an experiment in global peaceful coexistence through the Non-aligned movement (see Kuljić 132 and *passim*). A “*second revolution*” (Fejtő 2: 225ff.) or *third revolutionary singularity* sketched out a zigzagging road to a real socialist democracy from below (cf. Buden, Denitch, Kardelj “Snaga,” Lilly 3, 250 and *passim*), which I shall follow.

The strength and overriding novelty of a communist social remodelling lay in *centralized economic planning* for wider production and greater productivity – if wisely and democratically managed. Simultaneously, this necessitated a capillary broadening of central power, which had strong tendencies towards oligarchy, hierarchy, ridiculous meddling in details, and allergy to democracy – the bind that has spawned Stalinism and was ceaselessly reproducing it. The way out can retrospectively be seen as, first, the use of best available data and models from both experts and the concerned “working people,” second and concomitantly, an open and level playing field for their competitive confrontation. The Yugoslav Party set up some economic institutes but their work was strongly counteracted (and eventually, certainly by the early ‘70s, nullified) by behind-the-scenes pressures from segments of the oligarchy – local, sectional, finally nationalist – intent on aggrandizing their bailiwicks; already in the mid-‘50s they had demoted Kidrič’s central planning to unenforceable “forecasts” (Waterston 39).

The Party had also inherited from Stalinism and its own illegal past a total aversion to public scrutiny (cf. Carter 89-92), constantly counteracting the “partisan” mass openness. In theory, this led to a political organization in two concentric circles: at the center the Party, in the outer circle the People’s Front, the local authorities from the communes upward, and eventually self-management by workers’ councils. Between them, a constant feedback of stimuli and opinions was supposed to obtain. In practice, a fully hierarchical Party, where all main decisions were arrived at by a couple of dozen people and their intimate collaborators (indeed, in the first 10 years or so by less than a dozen people), meant that the outer circle, while allowing much minor grassroots initiative, was for major decisions a voting machine and propagandist adjunct, a Stalinist “transmission belt” downwards. In short, “the party was not ideologically prepared for all the complexities of peacetime construction from a position of power” (Horvat 195). The stifling Russian apathy was avoided in the experimental climate of the first 10 or even 20 years; thought was free, but propagating it in the press and then in the rising media met not only with some understandable taboos, present in any society (cf. Carter 199), but with a generalized suspicion by Party cadres immediately below the top against rocking the boat and “anarchy.”

Nonetheless, the need for mass support, their own roots in the desire for justice, and economic imperatives combined to push for a more or less democratic reform. Politically speaking, the battle was borne by a good part of the Politbureau, now dubbed Executive Committee, cautiously enlisting support from urban working people against the Party middle cadre in effective executive power:

...the process of decentralising party control from the top but not transferring power to the lowest levels created a middle layer of State and party officials, who were very anxious to preserve their positions and therefore became pillars of dogmatism and the establishment. (Bićanić 69)

But the battle was hidden – shadow armies fighting on a darkling plain beyond the public’s understanding – so that support from the people could only be half-hearted. Thus it see-sawed, based on contingent economic and macro-political pressures (from Soviet stances, the world market, and inner regroupings): in 1950-53 democratization was advancing, culminating in the 1952 6<sup>th</sup> Party Congress with a remarkable attack by Tito on the USSR social system (expunged from his *Works* after the 1955 reconciliation; see Lalović) and in abolishing immediately afterwards the agitation-propaganda and the cultural departments of the Central Committee secretariat, practically the Party watchdogs and norm setters in these fields (Hoffman-Neal 180). The Constitutional Law of January 1953 introduced “social self-management” also outside industry as well as a new Council of Producers in the federal parliament. But the Djilas affair of early 1954 entailed a clampdown of several years, the direct Party control then leading to economic inefficiency.

Then the wind began veering: in 1957 the first Congress of Workers’ Councils was timidly held, against stout opposition of the Party middle level; in January 1958 the first workers’ postwar strike occurred in Slovenia; in February 1958 the Executive Committee issued a sharp and public Circular Letter attacking bureaucracy and dictatorial, corrupt, even chauvinist practices by communists (Hoffman-Neal 201-03). This sequence culminated in the 1958 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress and the remarkable LCY Program adopted at it, which a group headed apparently by Kardelj and Party stalwart Veljko Vlahović was entrusted to write. Though Soviet protests against an early draft resulted in amputation of a theoretical characterization of Stalinism, enough remained to make this supreme articulation of Titoism quite indigestible to Khrushchev, and to Mao (Fejtö 2: 153-54). I cannot discuss here its imposing bulk and in places unmistakably Kardeljian prolix discourse: it had clear strong and weak sides, the latter including too much optimism about world politics and too much scientism.<sup>4</sup> However, I remember well the euphoria caused at the time by the conclusion: “Nothing that has been created must be so sacred for us that it cannot be surpassed and cede its place to what is still more progressive, more free, more human” (*Yugoslavia’s Way* 263). The prospect of such a permanent humanist revolution, alas, never quite materialized.

The properly economic aspect of the postwar development and the battle around self-management cannot be followed here in any detail; I hope to do so in a later essay. Suffice it to say that after the ambiguous half-success of the first Five-Year Plan in 1947-51, the economy boomed from 1953 for most of that decade; indeed the industrial growth of Yugoslavia was among the highest in the world; the next Five-Year Plan was fulfilled in four years, 1957-60. Rusinow (98-100) summed up the result as better supply of raw materials and better infrastructures, but not better allocation of resources or control of prices, nor smaller disparities between the Northwest and the Southeast regions, since the social product gap grew (from 110:71 against the country average of 100 to 116:67). Again, in theory it was decided as early as 1955, at a Brioni meeting of the Executive Council with the experts, to abandon extensive for “accumulative” industrialization, which also meant a higher share of investment for agriculture and consumer goods (Rusinow 101-02), but in practice the extensivity lasted well into the 1960s. There was a recession in 1961-62, “exposing the weaknesses of the compromise economic model of the 1950s” and inaugurating a polarization within the oligarchy (Rusinow 112). Both factions wanted to keep a political monopoly for the Party, but the “conservatives” wanted to keep self-management penned up to manage the 30% of revenue allotted them in industry with the State disposing of the rest, whereas the “democrats” proposed to build up self-management into a complete politico-economic system, up to the federal parliament and possibly government, as Kidrič had originally planned (see Suvin, “Ekonomsko”).

The logical end-horizon of the democrats would have been a return in the economic key to Lenin’s 1917 horizon of “all power to the Soviets,” which had turned practically into “all power to the Party” under the pressure of economic chaos and the civil war. This would have meant not

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<sup>4</sup> On the weak points, see Lalović; on Kardelj generally, see Suvin, “Diskurs”.

primarily less power to the Party, which would still be hegemonic and in control of army and security forces, but less practical privilege – moral and material – to the Party cadres, from lowest to highest. Since Tito did not much like this idea and nobody except some intellectuals dared to propose that it be practically implemented, people like Kardelj and Croatian Party leader and economic theorist Vladimir Bakarić hesitated to propose it even to themselves, never mind publicly. (We still don't know what happened at the famous explosive March 1962 Central Committee meeting, except that Kardelj's position on top was seriously threatened and was saved only by compact Slovene Party support and threat of secession; one can surmise he learned the limits of what could be fought for, and concluded that a slow march through the institutions would have to suffice.)

In this bind, we must assume that the “democrats” reached a de facto compromise with what one could call the middle-of-the-road and became “decentralizers,” since this meant to one group power to the republican and local leaders, and to the other power to the self-managing working people.<sup>5</sup> The unreconciled hard-line conservatives took good care to assure that only the first meaning was ever implemented. With verbal and smaller material sops thrown in for the workers, the façade of unity was kept. The 1960s rise of a “polyarchy” (Rusinow 192ff.) in the ruling class and Party, including the six power centers in the federal republics, reflected mainly pressures from lower echelons of Party and power, but very little directly from the working people. Still, this meant that “[a]n impressive number of autonomously organized and institutionally legitimized forces... [represented] diverging interests and values...”; this was to a sympathetic observer an interesting and suggestive case of political democracy evolving without a multi-party system (Rusinow 347)—for example, the youth press alone was counted as having 68 newspapers in 1969 (Carter 196). But missing was the possibility of open pressures by the still young and inchoate working class, as well as of the intellectuals and youth, the forces which had (together with the long ago backgrounded peasants) carried the partisan spirit. In terms of the Party this meant that it was no longer a cadre party, but it was confused and unable to tap the mass energies from below (cf. Carter 31). The compromise of power to the constituent republics and their territorial oligarchies could finally rely against the power top in Belgrade only on alliance with nationalism, which therefore made a remarkable comeback in the 1960s, buoyed on the wave of consumerism and invasion of both native patriarchal and Western bourgeois mores.

### 2.3. 1965-74: A Half-hearted Battle Lost

The mid-'60s seemed to be a time of changes. In Russia not only the Stalin but the Khrushchev destalinization eras were over; the apparatus settled into stasis. The Vietnam War had largely neutralized the USA as far as intervening elsewhere went. The first generation born in the postwar Welfare State was of student age and eager to flex its wings against the gerontocracy reigning everywhere. The economic development of the “people's democracies” could only go on by means of trade within the world capitalist market, which meant exposing their production to foreign competition. As for Yugoslavia, though its problems were for the moment smaller, its economy was faltering at the beginning of the 1960s, and it too decided to go the path of increased foreign trade, which meant increased foreign aid (around \$350 million in 1961 alone) and either a favourable trade balance or huge problems of indebtedness. At that point the unresolved knot of the police within the LCY exploded.

In Stalin's USSR, the Party had become dominated by the political police, and he exported this model to all the communist parties in the 1930s. In the “people's democracies” of east-central Europe, “[t]he first acquisition of the revolution, its first base, was the police” (Deutscher 534). The

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<sup>5</sup> I differ here from almost all the otherwise useful Western commentators, such as Carter and Lilly, including the most deserving Rusinow, insofar as they were entirely innocent of both Leninist and “new class” psychology and cut everything down to the Procrustean bed of liberals vs. conservatives. A clear differentiation should be drawn between “liberal” in the sense of pro-market and unchecked development of bourgeois mores, and in the sense of pro-self-government and plebeian democracy from below.

exception, however, was Yugoslavia, where the CPY organizational secretary Aleksandar Ranković was deputized by Tito to form an autonomous force (*Uprava državne bezbednosti*, the Administration or Bureau of State Security, popularly called the Udba), yet inevitably on the Russian strong-arm model, however tempered: instead of a whole archipelago of gulags, there were two main ones, and the number of prisoners seems to have been in lower five digits; still, in 1951 Ranković admitted that half of the arrested were finally exonerated (*Sednice* 522). The Udba eventually began capillarizing through the whole society, but it was at this heady time of opening met with such vehement protests in the Party leadership that Tito sacrificed his close collaborator at a public Central Committee session in June 1966, and the incipient police State-within-the State was reduced to something approaching normality. In the meantime inflation and unemployment had worsened and a “great economic reform” was planned (Fejtö 2: 231), eagerly theorized and pushed by Kardelj and Bakarić.

The spirit of partisan democracy prevented descent into a kind of police quasi-Stalinism. Yet the way this was done, by secret backstage manoeuvres using army intelligence against the police, suggests that the problem had itself arisen from lack of a clear alternative – and principally: just what was self-management supposed to mean politically, for society as a whole and for the decisive Party nucleus? The long stalemate at the top meant that even steps in the right direction were taken late and piecemeal, and that the middle generation now arriving to power as well as the Party members (in 1964 71% of them were under 40 years of age! – Rusinow 144-45) did not have a clear horizon. There was little or no real democratic centralism in the Party: even for major decisions, the Central Committee met very rarely, and then only to affirm monolithism. The third Yugoslav singularity was singularly slow to unfold. In fact, the change of atmosphere in the Party itself seems to have been remarkable; a fully embedded intellectual phrased it thus: “The [Party] collectives were transformed into aggregates of private individuals, frankness and openness gave way to reserve and calculation, egoistic opportunism took the place of comradeship, principle was replaced by conformity, courage by careerism” (Horvat 195). Social mobility, as seen for example in the schooling figures by class (Horvat 238), slumped. Ideologically,

Marxism ever more obviously split into dogmatism and pragmatism.... The waning of social mass activity was accompanied by growing institutional activity,... [with] endless reorganizations on all levels....founded on the illusion that through [these] social inertia can be prevented.... Hence a condition ensued which we called “bureaucratic optimism”; our leaders frequently spoke of a reality not experienced by the masses.... (Rus 278-79)

The key plank of the 1965 reform was very promising: to empower production enterprises – the “direct producers” – by raising the disposal share of their produced income from 30 to 70%.<sup>6</sup> This would not only have pleased the workers, the rejuvenated trade unions under the leadership of Vukmanović-Tempo, the critical intellectuals, and the new educated managers (misleadingly called “technocracy” in Yugoslavia), but would also have meant a major boost for financing initiatives from below, both economic and political. But it was impossible to put into effect without a parallel full democratization of the Party as not simply a transmission apparatus from the top down (its ossification was best analyzed by Cvjetičanin). This finally needed an empowerment of sustained loyal minority dissent inside it, cautiously advocated by dignitaries like Miloslavlevski and Crvenkovski (in Nikolić ed. 240-47, cf. Carter 76-79) but shunned like the plague by the top, including Kardelj and Bakarić. Instead, the compromise of allowing a more or less unchecked market economy to co-exist with self-management was reached.

As a result of this knot, the income share of the direct producers leaped in the first two years after 1965 and then slumped back to 30%; the problem began to fester. The etatist monopoly over

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<sup>6</sup> Bakarić cynically remarked that leaving 30% to the direct producers was the level at which already the Maya statelets had operated.

surplus labour was not diminished or disempowered but was decentralised into 7 or 8 semi-State apparati plus a burgeoning financial system based on the local republics (banking, insurance, foreign trade); the latter was rapidly becoming a power on the par with the central State administration, run by a separate fraction of “technocrats” introducing classical capitalist relationships in its key domain:<sup>7</sup> this Topsy grew with much friction and inefficiency. Real income, which had almost doubled between 1952 and 1965 and further advanced to 1970, stalled; worker emigration grew by leaps and bounds and had reached one million by 1973, when a reflux was imposed by West European economy (SG81 18, 83, 95-96; Woodward 191-99 & passim). By 1970 bank funds were 51% of all investments in production and housing, while the share of the “Organizations of Associated Labour” fell to 27% (Rusinow 206).

For a while it had seemed the interests of the direct producers could prevail “by means of a major mobilization of ‘factors of socialist consciousness’, often outside the Party (trade unions, the student union, intellectual groups and institutions)” (Lalović 154). When this hit a dead end, and the politocracy stopped at “half a step in self-management, and, what is worse, without a new concept of societal planning matching the self-management system” (Kardelj, *Subjektivne* 313), the resulting frustration erupted first in the “new left” student demonstrations of Summer 1968 (most sustained in Belgrade), which proved that large potential energies were available from below – and spurned.

The quarrelling Party, by now predominantly a white-collar organization, drew itself together, as it did in face of the immediately following Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which sounded the death-knell of libertarian communism in Europe. But no problems were solved; Kardelj, reputedly the second man of the Party, acknowledged in 1970:

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia has in some essential ideologico-political matters become almost impotent to keep to a common course of action in practice. Within... our economic system and self-management, the pressure of ... various ways of sundering the working people from decisions about the conditions, means, and fruits of their work has effected serious inroads into our system and our revolutionary orientation. There are serious tendencies toward the expropriation of people’s self-management rights..., especially by way of an inadequate integration, the banking system, etc. (*Subjektivne* 205)

Therefore, the problems erupted again in much uglier ways in the nationalist “Croatian Spring” of 1971, and again had to be put down by a show of force and personal demotions at the expense of the middle generation. This was quite unnecessarily repeated in Serbia on the old Stalinist principle to preserve power by striking first at the Right and then at the Left. Thus, as of 1972 and with the cumbersome and unenforceable, thus irrelevant, constitutional amendments two years later, it became clear that “the programmatic perspective of the emancipation of labour was quite given up, that the LCY had ossified into a bureaucratic apparatus falling apart internally, unable to see the real situation...” (Lalović 154). The Party, truly a vanguard from 1941 to the 1960s, became in a more differentiated society the main brake upon further development of both self-governing democracy and economy (cf. Kuljić ch. 6).

The economic mix of a largely uncontrolled profit motive with an inefficiently decentralized “command economy”, along with a more or less free consumer market, is what led to a stall. Within it, “Generational cleavages [we]re reinforced by the unselective, wholesale use of West European societal models of behaviour, pushed by the mass media, particularly the popular journals and television” (Denitch 27). There was no organized public sphere “to put pressure on the outrages of the [unregulated] market and on the arbitrary tendencies of the State institutions” (Rusinow 280). Further, “republicanization [i.e., devolution] of money and finance ensured that the fundamental problems of macro-economic monetary policy would remain unsolved” (Dyker 89). Rusinow’s

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<sup>7</sup> cf. among many such diagnoses Bavčar et al., Divjak, Dyker 64-76, Kardelj *Subjektivne* 313-17 et passim, Rus, and Vidaković.

judgment on it (345-47) seems to me fair: in this economy nobody could come close to rational allocative decisions. The laissez-faire element meant that traditional capitalist economic and political problems recurred, such as monopolies and misdistribution of riches without regard to unequal ability or diligence. As in many Welfare States, the government then intervened to tamper with the economy, which here meant a return to the political “strong hand,” wielded by a fully careerist Party.

### 3.0. Looking Backwards

In the brief but brilliant introduction to his *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky posited a “law of combined development” for the post-revolutionary period in industrially and socioeconomically backward countries. It amounted to the necessity of jumping from precapitalist or indeed archaically patriarchal economic and technological forms to the most advanced socialist forms. This entailed the necessity not only of accelerated development but also of leapfrogging over some historical phases, and it could only be done by constantly using the key State power. It was accompanied by a deluge of collateral effects, and first of all, in Lewin’s words, “the coexistence and reciprocal maiming between the most advanced forms and the huge queue of vastly backward forms” (14-15): the backward patriarchal, petty-capitalist, and autocratic forms were pulled vertiginously forward, but the advanced socialist forms of equality and fraternity--not to mention liberty--in production and distribution were subject to a similar contamination and pull backwards. Specifically in Yugoslavia, as Dedijer remarked, the 90% of Party cadres who in 1945 came from the peasantry “left an imprint on the institutions into which they grew... by manifesting the old tradition that the warrior should enjoy the fruits of his victory, while in such conceptions of rule the personal good was identified with the general...” (565-66). Today we could add not only that it was an open question which pull would be stronger, but also that using the State as a direct administrator of the economy, while necessary at the beginning and thus understandable in the most backward Russian 1920s (cf. Suvin “On the Concept”), would certainly add to the backwards pull by entailing a loss of democratic initiative from below – the only force which could make for the revolution’s success.

This leads to the question of what is *the basic conflict* in a State ruled by a Communist Party of the Leninist type. It is of course forced to keep in mind the undying enmity of the world’s capitalists and their barely restrained eagerness for the rollback of revolution and seizure of its riches, and thus to keep the State’s ideological and material defence facilities honed. However, after the first few years the principal conflict obtains not between internal “capitalist remnants” or émigrés and the revolution but between forces internal to the original revolutionary seizure of power – *the budding oligarchy*, always in favour of dictatorship from above – and *the budding self-government of the masses*, who rightly felt that communism should be a step by step democratic de-alienation in the workplace and in political life. If the Party oligarchy wins, an impasse and stasis results which leads to ideological and economic collapse; this happened in Yugoslavia in the unbelievable form of the veto power exercised by the regional oligarchies, which necessarily became nationalist and chauvinist. As in 1800 Germany, it made for political impotence and intellectual *misère*; as in 1700 Poland, the State was bound to be carved up as soon as its enemies stopped cancelling each other out. Together with the fostering of runaway consumerism as an alternative to plebeian democracy, this resulted in a resurgence of nationalist middle classes in various republics, increased foreign leverage, and finally indeed the victory of capitalism – with the split oligarchic classes mostly ready to turn, as we have seen, into neo-comprador bourgeoisies at the service of foreign financial capital. The revolutionary Party is not necessarily forced to eat its children, but it is forced to defeat its oligarchy and its petty barons, on penalty of perishing as Party and as revolution.

Because of the singularities discussed in Section 2, the Party tried to think about a disempowerment of oligarchy. But it proved unable to resist the hurricanes of history, which smile at trapdoors to

ramshackle shelters. These world-wide hurricanes or shifts of tectonic plates may be summarized as follows:

From 1975 onwards the pace of economic growth in the developed countries... fell by at least half.... In some years there was virtually zero growth.... Unemployment became omnipresent and structural. The growth model... had been based on various factors: very cheap energy supplies; importation of foreign labour; cheap raw materials; virtual full employment; fixed exchange rates between currencies; [etc.]. This growth was underpinned by a very rapid salarization of an originally agricultural population, an abundant supply of family dependents and a demand that was driven first by postwar reconstruction, and then by wars taking place in the Third World.... This model finally ran out of steam more or less abruptly in all countries.... (Moulier Boutang 11; I tried to wrestle with this much less concisely at the end of the 1990s in three essays collected in *Defined*)

The oil crises of 1973 and 1980 were additional catalysts and welcome excuses for not understanding what was an incipient mutation of Fordist industrial capitalism (and socialism) into globalized financial capitalism at its most unrestrained. It entailed the collapse of the USSR and its camp, driven into bankruptcy. When balancing between two camps had ceased by 1989, this cut out the economic prop of relatively easy Western loans as well as its interest in a strong Yugoslav State (that is, army). The final obstacle to a full unleashing of mutually exclusive, and necessarily murderous, nationalisms had vanished. It needed only a push, supplied by the German government and an eager Vatican, for the divided oligarchy to commit suicide as a class, and thereby to unleash the murderous nationalisms and tear apart Yugoslavia.

What then remains of the Federative Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia? Nothing can erase the inglorious and injurious downfall of its last 15 years and its collapse into the worst possible alternative: the mutually embattled dwarvish classes leading brainwashed mini-nationalisms. This is the *fourth Yugoslav singularity* which erased the first three. It endures, with the repressive and unintelligent course of events that led to it, as a lasting blot and regret. But of the original concept and practice, I think a lot remains – despite the *damnatio memoriae* enforced by the hatred, much of it self-hatred, of the “successor” governments and statelets.<sup>8</sup> Not only the various brilliant achievements of culture and cohabitation, and development of the first modern proletariat and intelligentsia in this part of the world, but also a lesson for the future: since the only viable future for the Balkans is some kind of formally instituted peaceful coexistence and economic interchange. This essay is one in approaching such a lesson.

And what remains of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia? Again, not primarily a memory but a historical lesson. It is what I have called the singularities. They should be understood and meditated. The *external or power key* may here be the relationship of the Party to the State: the State’s liberatory role cannot but be ambiguous and precarious, and this is mirrored in the Party’s internal functioning. In the witty inversion by Wang, the Party-State becomes the State-Party (8) – shedding communism as plebeian democracy in the process.<sup>9</sup> The *internal or ideological key* may be the relationship of de-alienation or emancipation to economism or productivism; that does not mean accepting Mao’s “politics first, economy second” idea – unless politics is to be taken as open confrontation of legitimate “socialist” interests, which then crystallizes as criterion for everything else, including the no doubt key economics. In both economics and politics, the key was obviously a development of the self-management system vertically up to the “republican” and federal power levels, replacing parliamentary democracy by delegation. Delegation was then timidly tried in the

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<sup>8</sup> President Tudjman in Croatia, himself a fourth-rate ex-Titoist, had dozens, probably hundreds, of the numerous monuments to the 1941-45 Liberation Struggle and its victims, which included masterpieces of sculptural and architectural art, dynamited in the 1990s. I don’t remember any liberal outrage at this in the world public or political sphere, though it was exactly the same Talibanic rage and theological hatred as in dynamiting the Buddhas of Afghanistan.

<sup>9</sup> There is by now a considerable list of disregarded modern proposals advocating democratic communism, for example by Gorz, Althusser, and Medvedev; I have approached it in a Marxian philosophical key in “15 Theses”.



70s-80s, but without integral self-management, therefore piecemeal and too late. What would have been needed was to change the Party's role from commander to trainer: not necessarily with less power, but with a power that interacts with an encouraged political as well as economic democracy going from the ranks upwards.

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- See also Carter, Nikolić, Rusinow, and *Statistički* in Part 1.
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