"For A New Social Order": A Genealogy of Self-Management in SFRY

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ETYMOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five years ago the self-management system (slo. samoupravljanje) was abolished in Slovenia. Yet Slovenians have not forgotten the term. On the contrary, the economic and financial crisis has revived its memory via certain alternative political and for now extra-parliamentary movements and initiatives (Rižnar 2013). For established political parties the term self-management has turned into a taboo (Dragoš 2013) or almost a curse. To conservatives it represents one of the symbols of the Socialist regime that they brought down in order to take the part in transition; to the established "Left" self-management is an unwelcome historical-political memory it has tried to suppress in order to lose the label "continuity" with the Socialist regime. The current public debate on self-management has revolved around the non-essential issue of who had

been the original author of the concept (Švajncer 2013; Dragoš 2013) rather than focusing on an objective assessment and the potential of re-actualization of self-management. This may be typical of Slovenian political culture, yet it is also regrettable considering the efforts in other (academic) communities to rethink progressive political concepts in order to find solutions for the current politico-economic crisis of the West.[1]

The Dictionary of Slovenian Language defines self-management as "independent, direct or indirect decision-making by members of a workers' or other community to manage communal matters". This definition is also valid for democracy in the broadest sense of its meaning. The definition of democracy by the same source is interestingly consistent with the definition of self-management: "1. Political system of rule of majority that protects individual and political rights of all citizens; 2. The principle of equality in decision-making in the life of a collective". The Dictionary defines Socialist democracy in particular as a system "based on public ownership of production means and self-management of citizens" (DSL 2008).

Self-management and democracy are therefore tightly knit, yet they are often identified as antipodes in Slovenian political discourse. This is quite telling of the neo-conservative dimension of such discourse and the mentality of its mediators in a yet unconsolidated democracy. It echoes the early interpretation of the representative democracy as an opposition to direct democracy that was typical of political elites of the first bourgeois revolutions (Toplak 2012: 734-735). On the other hand, this conceptual "misunderstanding" contributes to the contours of a Pearsonian (2000: 251-253) path dependence of the Slovenian political community the discursive anomalies of which were identified as a form of exclusivisms and anachronisms by Rotar (2007: 246). It also contributes to the understanding of the corporate and illiberal fundaments of the Slovenian political culture (Lukšič 2006: 57).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE GENEALOGY OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management as "a project of organization of production and society" had first been invented by utopian Socialists. However, in the

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1 In 2014 Council of European Studies at the Columbia University organized the annual congress of Europeanists entitled The Resurrections and included a panel on Yugoslav self-management into the official program.

political and academic discourse the concept soon became inseparable from the evolution of the workers' movement, which conceived of self-management as "an expression of the efforts of the proletariat to free itself of the wage condition and take over power over production and social relations" (Nikolić, 1989, 5). According to Miloš Nikolić, the leading Yugoslav Marxist theoretician in the 1970s, the evolution of the concept and the implementation of self-management as a catalyst pointed at a gradual evolution of the workers' movement and therefore, the research on self-management should necessarily be part of interpretations of the development of the workers' movement (Nikolić 1989: 5).

At present such a framework for interpretation of self-management has become too narrow. In the contemporary post-industrial society the workers' movement has found itself in serious trouble: the traditional blue-collar working class has significantly diminished in recent decades, while the workers' representatives such as trade unions and "labor parties" have lost credibility in processes of adaptation to and collaboration with the employers and the governments – in particular in a peripheral European state such as Slovenia – which at present represent the interests of capital rather than public interests. Although collaboration between state unions and governments has become less intensive since the collapse of the European Socialist regimes and some forms of direct conflict between the proletariat and capital have been revived, in particular since the start of the current economic crisis, the workers' representatives are a much less important interlocutor for the opposite side and not just for the smaller numbers of the proletariat they represent. The post-War Socialist regimes in Europe functioned as a permanent pressure on the capitalists so that they were forced to give ground in negotiations on workers' rights in exchange for guarantees that trade unions would not promote the ascent to power of radical leftist or Communist parties in Western Europe that could seriously threaten the private ownership of production means. This is how the post-war welfare state was possible (Wahl 2011: 31-33), while the one-party regimes behind the Iron Curtain ensured their political legitimacy by even greater social concessions and state services. When the collapse of the Socialist regimes annihilated this threat to liberal capitalism, the capitalists were no longer interested in negotiations. On the contrary, with Thatcherism, Reaganomics and globalization an immediate and intensive deconstruction of the welfare state has begun; on the ruins of which at present live or vegetate the majority of Europeans. Such destructive processes could neither be avoided by the post-Socialist state despite initially high standards

of social protection; moreover, the welfare state has been subjected to additional criticisms here as a relic of the former regime. It should also be taken into consideration that the post-Communist states have uncritically adopted parliamentary democracy and market economy at the precise moment of the victorious ascent of neoliberalism and the subsequent pressure for a "lean" state that was to become the descendant of or, more precisely, the sorry remains of the welfare state (Toplak 2009: 609). An additional argument for the obsoleteness of Nikolić's thesis on inseparability of self-management from the workers' movement has to do with current attempts at reviving self-management that no longer take place in the context of the workers' movement and which will be discussed later on.

More convincing and ideologically open is the connection between conceptual evolution and practice of self-management and the evolution of political systems in the industrializing modern Europe as detected by Karl Korsch, beside György Lukács the most prominent theoretician of Western Marxism. Korsch divided the "organization of labor", as the fundamental historical issue of the proletariat, into three historical stages: in the first stage the organization of labor was feudal-patriarchal and workers were neither owners of the labor force nor had they personal freedom; in the second stage the workers became owners of the workforce yet only under absolute despotism of the company/factory that employed them; and in the third stage the "right of the participation of citizens workers in the community of work" started to emerge with the political emancipation of the proletariat (Korsch 1978: 50). With the dissolution of the post-war welfare state we therefore regressed to an earlier stage in history since the third stage of participation of workers in the community of work had already been reached. At present, we are back again to the second stage that Korsch also identifies as "the industrial constitutionalism", by analogy with political constitutionalism identified as a transitory stage between absolute monarchy and participatory democracy. According to Korsch, the final "industrial revolution" would only be developed under the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, the developments in the 20th century, and in particular the scope of the proletariat and the discreditation of the idea of its dictatorship in Communist Europe, have made the latter a highly improbable vision for the 21st century, unless neoliberal policies would cause such a "proletarization" or even disappearance of the conservative middle class that circumstances would become ripe for the "dictatorship of the precariat". For these reasons in the history of self-management to follow, I focused on the pre-workers' movement era and the Yugoslav period. I left out the

evolution of Soviets and later on, the national liberation committees during the Second World War in Yugoslavia as well as the post-war rehabilitation of self-management in the Western European workers' movement. In short, I discuss the history of self-management here independently from the history of the workers' movement.

Beside Miloš Nikolić, historicization and analysis of self-management in the context of the workers' movement was of scientific interest to many Yugoslav analysts, such as Branko Pribičević (1979) and Rudi Supek (1974), and most recently in Slovenia to the economists Aleš Vahčič and Tea Petrin (1986) and Janez Prašnikar (1989) as well as to sociologists such as Veljko Rus and Frane Adam (1986). Towards the end of the Yugoslav self-management era, Yugoslav theoreticians were mainly occupied with the transfer of democracy as a form of the participation and decision-making process from the political to the economic sphere and by the "export" of the concept and practice of self-management to the developing countries. With the dissolution of Yugoslavia and abolition of self-management these reflections were interrupted, just when they tackled the essence of the problem of implementation of self-management and pointed at key reasons for failure of this project in the SFRY. At present, the topic of self-management is making a comeback with the youngest generation of Slovenian leftist theoreticians and politicians.[2]

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

The concept of self-management first appeared in the early 19th century in works of utopian Socialists such as Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen, and later on in texts produced by early workers' rights activists such as Louis Blanc and Louis-Auguste Blanqui as well as several other French authors, which was unsurprising considering the French political progressivism at the time. Utopian Socialists conceived of self-management in a period when the working class had not yet been a consolidated political force and at present, with the working class no longer being a considerable political force, their reflections remain quite relevant. The utopian concept of self-management was not "contaminated" by the obligatory connection

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2 See Kirn (2014) or texts accessible on the website of the Institute for Workers Studies at www.delavske-studije.si (in Slovenian) or the program of the Slovenian parliamentary party United Left.

with the workers' movement and the proletarian revolution. Such connections have later been again rendered rather obsolete by the position of the working class in the post-industrial society.

Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) based the relations between the state and the economy on the preposition that the only sensible aim of the industry was production of things useful to man; that the government needed to intervene, when the industry crossed certain lines; that only producers who were taxpayers could also be voters; and that human society was in fact a workers' society defined more broadly than the proletariat as the whole of the active population. Since he was the first to argue abolition of private property as well as planned economic policy, Friedrich Engels proclaimed Saint-Simon the first anarchist (Nikolić 1989: 12).

Charles Fourier (1772-1837) imagined extensive self-managed cooperatives or phalansteries where up to 1620 people would cohabit – the number calculated by Fourrier included all combinations i.e. types of personality. As political subjects, phalansteries were to unite into a global federal government. Work, adapted to individual's capabilities and interests, should have become pleasure and unpleasant works would therefore be better paid. Fourrier's concept of self-management deviated from the revolutionary principle of equality and focused instead on a harmonious symbiosis of differences (including gender; Fourrier invented the word feminism). Phalanstery was also far from proletarization of society since its welfare and social contacts (basic human needs according to Fourrier) were enjoyed by producers as well as consumers (Dilas-Rocherieux 2004: 114-123).

In the US state of Ohio alone, Fourrier inspired the foundation of four phalansteries in the districts of Ohio, Trumbull, Columbian and Clermont, including the most famous Communist settlement Utopia. In 1844 Utopia was settled by Fourrier's followers who in exchange for $25 acquired a wooden cabin with some land. Yet the commune subsisted under Fourrier's rules for just three years - in 1847 Utopia was taken over by spiritualists who reoriented local economy to the market and private property. They moved their townhouse to the Ohio riverbank only days prior to catastrophic floods in which most of the settlers who found shelter there died (Bailie 2014).

Robert Owen (1771-1858) turned Fourrier's experimental logic upside down and first went through the empirical stage of a concrete social experiment before identifying theoretical prepositions of his communitarian utopia. He reorganized, optimized and humanized his father-in-law's company in the Scottish village of Lanarck and soon managed the village as a commune in which the wellbeing

of the worker was of direct benefit to the company, which spent the profit to further enhance the wellbeing of the community. Yet when Owen attempted to repeat the experiment on a larger scale, despite public recognition and popularity he failed to win the 1819 parliamentary elections. Owen's attempt to create a thus designed commune from scratch in the United States – the New Harmony colony in Indiana between 1824 and 1828 – also failed economically since the community could not survive amidst the market-oriented American environment because of insufficient self-subsistence. Due to the constant inflow of new inhabitants, the colony also lacked cohesion; newcomers had a negative impact on infrastructure and subsequently on communal relations. When Owen tried to improve the situation by personal intervention, it was already too late: the community went bankrupt for absence of competent craftsmen and poor management (Dilas-Rocherieux 2004: 100-102).

Whereas there was no room for the state in Owen's visions of future society, his French contemporary Louis Blanc still allowed it; his concept of self-management was mainly focused on companies, which thus organized would compete and in time replace conventional capitalist ventures. Blanc's society was also to be distinctly meritocratic. Blanc did not linger in fantasies, but implementations of his ideas were all very short-lived. In March 1848 he designed the first workers' factories (*ateliers nationaux*) in France in which 100.000 workers were employed but they were closed down by July 1848 (Nikolić 1989: 15).

Louis-Auguste Blanqui also favoured collective property. He was the most proto-Marxian of all utopians in that he called for a vanguard group of revolutionaries to first take over power and then introduce self-management. At the final stage of societal transformation self-management was to enter all power spheres (Nikolić 1989: 13).

The most famous self-management thinker in France in the 19th century was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), the author of the groundbreaking anarchist study What Is Property (1840) and a political radical who first argued for total abolition of the state and political system. From the present perspective, Proudhon's arguments unfortunately sound even less realistic than they must have appeared in his own time. In particular he was unconvincing in how to overcome obstacles to achieve an ideal society according to his prescriptions, since he emphasized solidarity, mutuality and ethics as solutions to all problems. In Proudhon's demands that all economic activities needed to be surrendered to the free effect of economic laws on the one hand and on the other hand that all economic decisions needed be left to workers' unions/economic subjects that were to function ac-

cording to the principle of mutual fair exchange of goods, there was a considerable contradiction, especially since he also supposed a total sovereignty of the individual and he imagined society as a harmony of individualities. Later on Proudhon realized he was mistaken and agreed to further existence of the state in which he hoped to balance the authority by federalism. He transferred self-management to the level of a workers' company whose collective owners were workers who worked in a publicly transparent way yet within the framework of the market economy. In the second half of the 19th century, such companies were actually founded in France. However, Proudhon criticized them for their isolation and the gentrification of worker owners. Based on this experience, Proudhon concluded that two preconditions were necessary for the successful implementation of self-management: a certain level of education of the stakeholders needed to be ensured and the property needed to be collective and only used by particular collectives without being owned by any of them (Proudhon 1967: 129-131).

Karl Marx considered workers' cooperative "the first important victory of political economy of labor over political economy of capital" (Marx et al, 1974, 387), the "workers association [being] their own capitalists" (Marx et al. 1974: 373), while in order for the "social production to transform into a unified, extensive, harmonious system of free and cooperative labor, general social changes are needed, such changes in fundamental social conditions that may be achieved only by a transition of the organized social forces i.e. state power from the hands of capitalists and land owners to the hands of producers themselves" (Marx et al. 1974: 158). Marx found the thesis that in order to introduce self-management the working class had to first take over political power and transform political structures, confirmed by the 1871 Paris Commune. (Marx et al.1974: 301).

In the Slovenian speaking part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1945) we find the earliest references to self-management in the texts by the Christian Socialist Andrej Gosar (1887-1970), more precisely in his book entitled For A New Social Order, published in 1933. Gosar based his societal vision on a common sense that "a universally valid ideal of self-management system cannot exist and each state therefore must be organized according to its specific conditions for the best state system is the one enabling for as much of individual and public prosperity as possible" (Gosar 1994: 220). Gosar also considered democracy and self-management as antipodes and argued for self-management since "local authority is original as the state authority is original" (Gosar 1994: 213) and the supremacy of the state authority over other levels of power and administration was therefore

not legitimate. He nailed one of the key elements of the Slovenian politico-historical path dependence by the conclusion that "the state administration [...] is something alien to the people, hostile even, while self-management is humane and familiar" (Gosar 1994: 214).[3] In accordance with Christian Socialist convictions Gosar would introduce self-management in all key areas of human activity – in economy, politics, culture and in the social strata – yet self-management in these spheres would only be efficient, if they were self-managed into a coordinated system. Gosar still opted for hierarchy at this point i.e. the supreme authority of political power arguing that it would be more difficult to delineate the right power relations between particular self-managed domains in a totally egalitarian system than to assign supremacy of political self-management to economic, cultural and class self-management (Gosar 1994: 216). Considering self-management in economy Gosar's concept was much more conservative than the later Yugoslav self-management. According to Gosar, self-management in companies meant merely organizing planned production by economic areas via representation of companies managed by self-managed committees in a dialogue with the capital owners, labor leaders, trade unions and professional chambers.

Despite some still unfulfilled and progressive ideas that would at present contribute to a greater quality of democracy such as consistent consideration of the administrative principle of subsidiarity, safety valves for the tyranny of the majority and interesting initiatives for active citizenship (Gosar 1994: 215-6 and 219), Gosar insisted not only on the authority of state power, but also on private property (except for compensation for the owners of certain key resources), and in order to assess Gosar's concept of self-management historical contextualization is therefore crucial. In other words, comparing Gosar's and the later Yugoslav concepts of self-management it becomes obvious that self-management is a word of multiple complex meanings that cannot be synonymized at will. Ironically, we may agree with the conservative analysts of the Slovenian political reality: Slovenia indeed is at present founded on self-management principles in many respects yet not still but rather again as these are more conform to the adoption of Gosar's conservative idea of self-management rather than the sediments of the much more radical Yugoslav self-management system.

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3 Alienated state is a phenomenon clearly detected in Slovenian democratic transition by political scientists (Toplak et al, 2012) as well as political anthropologists (Vuk Godina, 2011).

SELF-MANAGEMENT IN SFRY – THE BEGINNING AND THE END

Reflections on Yugoslav self-management also need to be consistently contextualized since the political and academic discourse in Slovenia and abroad includes the entire spectre – from odes to harsh judgments. The Yugoslav concept of self-management was supposed to solve one of the key issues of the Marxist proletarian revolution – how to pass from the Communist vanguard ruling in the name of the proletariat to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat. In this respect the self-management period was intended to be a transition. Albeit achieved by very different means than the current transition, the declarative aims were the same – freedom, prosperity, security. Foundation of the Yugoslav self-management was the complete (and not Gosar's merely partial and strategic) socialization of private property, while the workers would dispose of the means of production and incomes in the individual as well public interest (Šetinc 1979: 146). From 1950 on self-management spread to "all areas of work and life in [Yugoslav] society and became an increasingly integral system enabling workers to manage the newly created value in the TOZD (Slovenian abbreviation for Basic Organization of United Labor) as in the socio-political self-managed interest community and all other forms of pooling of labor and production means". Beside workers thus becoming shareholders, Edvard Kardelj, the most eminent theorist of Yugoslav self-management radicalized self-managed political pluralism into "a system where each citizen is a party." (Sruk 1994: 290).

Reasons for the introduction of self-management in Yugoslavia are numerous, depending on the source and the time distance. According to Nikolić, the Yugoslav self-management marked the beginning of the destalinization process and represented the most concrete, continuous and radical criticism of Stalinism (Nikolić 1989: 45). Dragoš (2013) is at present much more critical of self-management: the latter was the result of the decline of Yugoslav Stalinism and an attempt to reinforce the power of the Communist elite, which contradicts President Josip Broz Tito's announcement at the introduction of self-management that self-management would eventually result in the disappearance of the state which was to be the final aim of this social experiment (Nikolić 1989: 45). Šetinc adds to these reasons that "self-management was a necessity in Yugoslav circumstances as Yugoslavia was a multi-national community of diverse and traumatic histories. Respect for national idiosyncrasies and struggle for a true, also economic equality of nations could only be brought about fully in the

self-management system" (Šetinc 1979: 145-146). The Yugoslav self-management system was therefore founded on complex arguments, reaching from the Cold War foreign policy to at least declarative anarchist imperatives and from a cohesion agenda to the balance between nationalist tendencies of the federal republics and the federal authority that was crucial to the survival of the SFRY. The reasons for the "export" of the self-management system to the developing countries that we find in later self-management theories indirectly serve to interpret the experience of self-management in SFRY: in the late 1980s self-management was still identified as the path to the individual's political and economic freedom, while workers' participation was "the reflection of contemporary production mode and reflection of converging socio-economic systems in a contemporary world" (Prašnikar 1989: 156). Introduction of self-management in the post-colonialist Third World made sense since Yugoslav self-management was introduced very early following the Second World War into which the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was pushed as a distinctly traditional, non-cohesive society with great economic imbalances. Moreover, the federalized parts of Yugoslavia had endured centuries of colonial rule.

We may apologetically agree with Rižnar (2013) that "self-management historically failed or did not achieve its aim" or go along with critical Sruk (1994: 290) that self-management was a farce in which the "party structures", the "new class"[4] affirmed itself as the new owner of means of production while the masses in the stagnating system "actually decided on nothing" – in the late 1980s it became clear that self-management contributed to a fatal weakening of the Communist party while it did not come close to the abolition of the state. On the contrary, weakening of the federal authorities by consecutive constitutional amendments and the cohesion agenda failure led to increasing idiosyncrasies of the republics and finally, in the early 1990s, the emergence of anachronistic nation-state projects based on separatist nationalisms. By its very failure, self-management increased hopes of individual's political and economic freedom in a radically different, democratic-market paradigm in these new state entities. Stalinism and the Cold War meanwhile became historically irrelevant. Nikolić on the other hand, emphasizes the transitional nature of self-management which in its integrity is almost impossible to implement and represents therefore a very remote objective. It may be reachable in its first phase only and that is

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4 New Class was the book title of the famous criticism of Yugoslav Socialism by Montenegrin dissident writer Milovan Đilas (1911-1995).

> ... the duality of self-management and the state [in which the latter] manages foreign policy, economic development and general reproduction, while self-management is closed behind the walls of companies and other institutions. Self-management developing in the social base remains embedded in the state organization of a Socialist society (Nikolić 1989: 118).

This first phase (until 1974) alone fulfilled in SFRY the expectations related to political and economic liberalization. In the first decade of the self-management era, albeit uneven, the SFRY's growth was one of the highest in the world and SFRY became an example of one of the fastest transformations from an agrarian to a modern industrial society in history (Toplak et al. 2012: 57).

However, economically and politically this was not yet self-management in the full sense of the word as the political regime which would implement self-management from above was supposed to "renounce the power to the direct representation of workers" (Gurwitch 1973, 35). Despite public promises, this never came true. From the remaining possibilities of implementation of self-management according to Gurwitch the spontaneous self-organization of workers during a social revolution also failed (in the Soviet Union), while the third possibility – a gradual and slow transformation of autocratic and bureaucratic economic structures in a conflict with the political regime (Gurwitch 1973: 35) remains untested and may be a future aspiration.

The second important factor of failure of self-management implementation that is detectable in theory from utopian Socialists on is the insufficient education and awareness of stakeholders in the process. As mentioned earlier, Proudhon was the first to acknowledge this obstacle. In the second half of the 20th century numerous authors addressed this issue. According to Lucien Goldmann and Serge Mallet self-management was attractive only to "a segment of the working class ... related to most advanced technological development" (Goldmann et al. 1968: 67). John Galbright presents a similar argument in his book The New Industrial State (Galbright 1970: 69-80). These assessments coming from abroad were confirmed by Ljubo Sirc after the abolition of self-management: "Workers are for the most unable to take decisions requiring knowledge, experience and updated information. In the best of cases they can elect managers and insist that these consider their partial interests i.e. pay them more than the minimum wage and keep jobs at any price" (Sirc 1994: 62). Among disadvantages of the structure of the self-management system Sirc also mentioned the absence of economic initiative and sense of responsibility as

well as creation of companies based on political decisions rather than economic necessities (Sirc 1994: 117-118). I would argue that these reasons for the failure of self-management may only partially be attributed to the concept itself, while path dependence and political culture based on traditional egalitarianism, class determinism, centuries of collective subordination to the Others, nepotistic tendencies of closed communities and a specific collective development horizon, mostly limited to survival, were also at work here. This conclusion is based on observations that these factors also hindered transition processes in the post-Yugoslav time and space (Toplak et al. 2012: 183-213). Historian Janko Prunk (2002) attributed failure of the Yugoslav self-management to the "human factor" as well, i.e. to the disappearance of the key designers of the concept, Edvard Kardelj in 1979, Josip Broz Tito in 1980 and Vladimir Bakarić in 1983 (Prunk 2002: 178). According to Phillips and Ferfila Yugoslav self-management may also have been a collateral damage of the general collapse of the Socialist regimes and the debt crisis caused by policies of international monetary institutions. At the same time, there were internal systemic contradictions, dysfunctional institutions and ideological rigidity and utopianism of the whole experiment that brought it to a halt (Phillips et al. 1992: 111). Sirc partially opposed this argument when he pointed out that Kardelj brought down to earth many initial utopian elements of the self-management project and limited at first total socialization of work and income by later introduced economic planning. At last Kardelj was willing to admit that there was no system in which inequalities could be totally abolished (Sirc 1994: 26). The circle of theory and practice of self-management was thereby somewhat closed as this was the very starting point of utopian Socialists.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to find answers to the questions as follows: Why workers' self-management in Socialist Slovenia and Yugoslavia did not work? How can the concept of self-management be conceived and made relevant in the present Slovenian political and economic context? Can autonomism, which is one of the theoretical foundations of self-management, constitute an efficient alternative or threat to the neoliberal capitalism? One may answer the first question with many more or less convincing explanations on reasons for the historical failure of self-management in the Yugoslav case. Some rea-

sons have meanwhile become irrelevant to the reflection on potential revival of the system. As Sirc warned, it is hardly motivating for such reflections that one of the reasons for failure of the Yugoslav self-management was the incapacity of the political elites to learn from past mistakes or consider analytical insights (Sirc, 1994, 125). However, if I bring this intellectual challenge to the end, I argue that at present two of these reasons may contain a lesson for the future. The first considers the implementation of self-management that ran in two wrong directions and should not have been imposed either from above or from politics to economy. What remains to be tested then is the introduction of self-management from the bottom up and in the economy first. The second lesson concerns the importance of education of stakeholders in self-management processes. The results of the Bologna study reform in Europe may be closer to the idea of a technocratic anthill than the desired knowledge society, yet without a doubt the average citizen is more educated than s/he has ever been and most have at their disposal sophisticated technologies for efficient mass communication. A new factor to the benefit of some form of re-implementation of self-management is the realization that a combination of representative democracy and market economy in the imported form is an unsuitable development paradigm for Slovenia. Following Gosar's vision, we should include the specifics of Slovenian political culture and past experience in the creation of an undoubtedly needed vision of the political and economic future, which, again according to Gosar, should aim at individual's and public prosperity. In a contemporary world such a vision cannot be entirely autarkic. Such a vision should be as autonomous as possible yet connected into a collation of similarly autonomous entities, such as utopian Socialist communes.

Independence of an individual entity from the psychopathology of the "markets" would thus be achieved simultaneously to the creation of a unified front in the struggle against the global rule of the capital. Autonomism is by no means an obstacle to a federation, on the contrary. The small size of a community can be an advantage or a disadvantage and it depends entirely on itself as to whether it will show some initiative in the flexible introduction of novelties or it will merely suffocate in the tight net of inbred status quo.

Slovenia needs not to become a utopian experiment (again). There is reason for optimism when one considers that self-management as a political and economic phenomenon is coming back at the infrapolitical and microeconomic level simply because other forms of production and action have proven less efficient. Worldwide and in Slovenia, top IT companies have realized that the sooner the participa-

tion of the employees in the decision-making process the more successful the implementation of the decisions taken as the stakeholders in the implementation process have come to own these decisions, and the higher subsequently the profit (Toplak et al, 2002, 11-12). The neoliberal dogma of savings in labor costs and subsequent increase of precariat has also come to be doubted as on the one side, the differences in competitiveness of the labor force diminish and on the other side, the employers have realized that delocalization and use of the contractual precarious labor force results in lesser loyalty to the company, lesser motivation for work, lesser quality of work and inevitably, lesser profit.

When the economic system eventually ends up reorganized according to the principles of self-management as dreamed of by the utopian Socialists and the 20th century Communists, regardless of the ethics of its motives, the political sphere will also need to be reorganized since the political representation in the form of partitocracy has proven harmful and dangerous not only to prosperity, but to peace as well. The debate on the relevance of the representative democratic political system with regard to the size of the society remains relevant, while at the infrapolitical level in Slovenia, too, we have detected the interesting phenomena of spontaneous public organization of citizens according to the principles of self-management, co-management, and cooperatives. In certain cases these forms of self-organization have emerged from the "revolutionary" energy of the recent anti-government protests but have to face hard work in order to reach long-term affirmation and implementation of changes from bottom up - not a "long march through the institutions", but a long march through public opinion.

As such it will be of primary importance to consider that political language creates political reality. In this text alone it has become evident that self-management has more than one meaning and that it is necessary to contextualize it in order to avoid it becoming the victim of daily ideological disputes. Some eminent social theorists have lately attempted the rehabilitation of historically compromised and hollowed concepts such as Communism (Žižek 2012: 473-475; Badiou 2013). Such concepts are also being refreshed and revived as green capitalism, post democracy, and social economy. Yet in order to convince public opinion, so tired of everything and so eager for anything new, that is not enough. It would be better to refresh the theoretically undying, yet practically unviable concepts with really new, unburdened terms that will renew some faith in the future. Even prior to that, we should come up with convincing explanations for past mistakes and realistic plans for future prospects.

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