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On Class Relationships in Yugoslavia 1945–1974, with a Hypothesis about the Ruling Class

The essay is divided into an ‘‘*Introduction to the Concept of Class*,’’ then ‘‘*Data and Categorizing Classes in Yugoslavia 1945–75*’’ which treats of the working or lower classes, an approach to the ruling class, the ‘‘middle classes,’’ and women, and ends with ‘‘*A Hypothesis: The Involution of the Ruling Class*.’’ In the wake of Marx it concludes that a ruling class existed but was for ca. 20 years a class *in statu nascendi*. It concludes with ‘‘An Excursus on Classophobia,’’ analyzing writings by Kardelj, and a hypothesis on ‘‘Two Yugoslav Singularities.’’ The first or splendid plebeian singularity was the double liberatory course of the 1941–45 partizan insurrection and of the postwar attempt at a socialist democracy. The second or miserable singularity was the stasis and then the suicide of the ruling partitocracy.

Keywords: Yugoslavia; class analysis; ruling class; singularities

> [T]he function of the historian is not to establish permanent truth (except about what the evidence can establish), but to advance a discussion which must, inevitably, sooner or later, make his or her work obsolete ….
>
> Eric Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour*

Introduction

This essay was written to search for an explanation of the development and eventual collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Its final hypothesis was that a key factor was the rise of a ruling class which eventually fractured, and its decisive parts decided that their interests were better served by fracturing the State too and constituting its fractions into independent neo-comprador classes (in the case of Slovenia and Croatia) or gambling for a Greater Serbia. The hypothesis was by no means certain in my mind, so I tried to have it unfold from an as ‘‘thick’’

as possible analysis about the overall Yugoslav class structure which I was anyway committed to, and passed a judgement only at the end.

At the beginning, I encountered such a cacophony of stances about what class is (if anything) that I had to clear this up for further use, and I hope that of the readers. This next section feeds into my main discussion in many subterranean ways, but I have not tried to construct overt linear connexions between them.

The essay is part 2 of a book on SFRY, part 3 of which deals with the Communist Party and Part 4 with Self-management. Unless essential, I have refrained as much as possible from here using arguments and secondary literature pertaining to those two issues.

Introduction to the Concept of Class

The basic point of why we bother about classes can be supplied by Hegel: ‘‘When we say that man must be a ‘somebody’, we mean that he should belong to some specific social class, since … [a] man with no class is a mere private person and his universality is not actualized’’ (addition to § 207).

A working hypothesis on how to use the concept of societal class today can be derived from the discussion that begins with Marx’s indications. I propose to retain from it the following six points, which seem reasonably certain and indispensable for further work.

1. After the tribal community, human societies have been divided into multifarious antagonistic groups of increasingly differentiated kinds. Some of these groups determine so strongly the position and behaviour of their members that they compete in importance with the overall society, and membership in one excludes membership in other groupings on the same level (Gurvitch 105, 116–20). From an array of terms for such groups, such as caste, stratum or layer, and – before capitalism – estate (*Stand, état*), I shall use only ‘‘*class’’* and ‘‘*class fraction*’’: Poulantzas (see *‘Pouvoir politique’* 77–100, especially 99 – cf. also his ‘*Classes in Contemporary Capitalism’*) acknowledges that only those two constitute a societal force, and Marx could be read that way too (Ollman, ‘‘Marx’s Use’’ 576).

I shall sidestep the problem of whether classes can be said to exist in a rather different form before the rise of capitalism – and a certain bourgeoisie – though I believe that they did. I shall use the Weberian tradition of

approach to societal groups where necessary for the discussion of Yugoslavia, but it will not be prominent. Two major advantages of the Marxian approach seem to be that (a) it relates to the economy as a whole (though his analytical stress was on production) while Weber relates only to distribution, and (b) it can encompass the Weberian ‘‘elite’’ as a class fraction, while the ‘‘elite’’ approach as a rule tends to deal analytically with elites plus bio-sociological ‘‘masses.’’ However, it will be useful where the Marxist tradition has refused to face problems and degenerations after coming to power.

2. Classes are distinguished from other supra-local societal groups not only by their importance, multiple functions and inner articulation. Most important is that classes are legally open to anybody; in reality, they are halfway closed.

3. As with many other groups coterminous with society as a whole, classes do not exist alone but are *relational* animals: there is no bourgeoisie without an aristocracy or proletariat (see Thompson, also Bensa d, Resnick-Wolff, Ritsert, Roemer and Wright). Each class is not only different from other ones but its interests are, especially for the Marxian tradition, often incompatible to those of other classes (Ossowski 120 and passim). Nonetheless, class differences and antagonisms as well as their alliances may vary considerably, and their boundaries are often “[obliterated by m]iddle and intermediate strata’’ (Marx *Capital* 3: 870, at/ch52.htm).

Classes practice simultaneously a certain solidarity, stimulated by common opposition against other classes, and internal competition, with frequent inner and outer conflicts (see MEW 54). Thus, opposition and furthermore *tensions and collisions* are included in the very concept of societal class. Class conflict is a zero-sum game: what is *monopolized* by one dominant class is denied to the dominated classes (Lazić, *Čekajući* 47), though if necessary a fraction of the monopolized power and affluence can be allotted to keep the dominated classes from rebelling.

4. Classes are multi-functional, and consequently compete in importance for their members with the national unit of which they are parts, or with gender. A central factor of class unity is the individuals’ common power- position in the mode of production and financial share of the societal wealth, which can be in capitalism called their economic conditions of existence, ‘‘that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter’’ (Marx, *18th*

Brumaire,/ch07.htm). In the Marxian vision, classes are primarily organized around the axis of ‘‘a relationship of exploitation,’’ that is, ‘‘appropriation of a part of the product of labour of others’’ (Ste. Croix ‘‘Class’’ 99–100 and passim, and see his *The Class Struggle*). A second factor reinforcing class unity is professional condition. Both of these conditions, taken in the largest sense, mean that members of a class belong to the same layer of the societal pyramid. Thus, an individual’s membership in a class is relatively stable, and, except in politically and/or economically revolutionary times, classes themselves are relatively stable.

5. Classes are, unlike most other groups, partially conscious and partially unconscious’’ of some important aspects of themselves (Gurvitch 111). In the Marxist tradition, class in the full sense only comes into existence when classes begin to acquire consciousness of themselves as such (Hobsbawm 16, and see the foundational case-study by Thompson); Gramsci calls it an advance from economic to political consciousness (181). The attribution of such consciousness often led to wishful thinking, based first on revolutionary impatience and later on dogmatism. Marx and Engels’s initial, somewhat monolithic conception of a stable class consciousness, seems to me subject to conjunctures in micro-history, apparent in their own later writing and the tormented theory and practice after them, and brought to the clearest point by Lukács’s ‘‘imputed consciousness’’ (126ff.). A class’s consciousness is a ‘‘potential … rooted in a situation’’ (Ollman, *Dialectical* 157); it is constructed by various existential pressures upon existing presuppositions and inclinations, often alienated, and depends on actions: independent of concrete micro-historical situations, ‘‘it is wrong to suppose that *any* particular class … is subjectively and incorruptibly revolutionary *per se* …’’ (Hobsbawm 222). With the rise of industrial capitalism, the degree of class consciousness clearly rises, and becomes more exclusively economic beginning with 19th Century Western Europe (cf. Hobsbawm 17–18 and Lukács). Finally, the same class’s relation to societal reality, and thus consciousness, often changes drastically, sometimes even in the short term.

In conjunction with point 3 on classes as relational, this means they are (especially before Fascism) organized only partially, in flexible and changing ways. They have many subordinated fractions, overlapping functions and fuzzy fringes. Nonetheless, classes are ‘‘powerful centers of spontaneous collective reactions’’ (Gurvitch 133), articulated in current ideologies and long-duration cultural artefacts. Each class shares an everyday culture, more or less estranged from the culture of other classes –

in some cases, e.g. England, Ceylon or Haiti, speaking different dialects (Ossowski 152).

6. Polanyi supplies some important reminders of matters forgotten in the Marxist vulgate, which often envisaged practically isolated entities. First, ‘‘the relation of a class to society as a whole’’ (163), which defines a class’s role and prospects, includes major *overall* factors – such as a war or climate change – that affect different classes in different ways. Second, alongside deep-seated class enmity in some cases, there exists in other cases an irrefragable need for complementary roles, which was recognized by all theoreticians who were also practical politicians, such as Lenin or Weber; indeed, the success of any major class interest depends on alliances with other classes, and thus on the ability of formulating a common wider interest for society as a whole (159). Third, ‘‘interests’’ should be interpreted not only (though always also) economically but as including significantly factors like comparative status and security (161–62; cf. Hobsbawm 222); Adler defines class by means of ‘‘the vital societal interests (*Lebensinteressen*) of a human economic group’’ (101–2), for which ‘‘economic exploitation is only the initiating or constitutive (*klassenerzeugend*) impulse’’ (104).

I would opt for an operative use of the following elements from Gurvitch’s definition (116): classes are really-existing, large, supra-local societal groups characterized by strong determination of their members’ lives, partial openness towards new members, exclusiveness towards and opposition to other classes in the same space-time, multi-functionality focussed on and by their members’ economic plus professional condition as well as other needs of status and security, whose interests crystallize in a spread of changing class consciousnesses.

However, this needs three crucial additions. The first one, from Lenin, uses the relationship to surplus labour (though with a stress on its political aspect) and also has the pragmatic merit of being applicable to all the connotations of class in Marx and Engels (cf. Ossowski 82). His definition of classes is ‘‘large groups of people differentiated by their position in a given historical system of societal production, by their relations (in most cases fixed and sanctioned by laws) to the means of production, by their function in the societal organization of labour, and consequently, by the way and the measure in which they enjoy the share of riches of which they

dispose. Classes are groups of people of which one can appropriate the labour of the other according to the distinct place occupied in a given system of social economy.'' (Lenin 472).

Secondly, I use elements from Polanyi and Gramsci: as classes are fully relational entities, they are, especially at times of threat and rapid change, organized in hegemonically structured alliances based on the hegemon's ability to interpret society's strategic goals.

A third, crucial addition has to do with an evaluation of class society today, and it is a paraphrase of the constant horizon shared by Marx and all the people and movements that claim this filiation: however, class society, especially after the full development of capitalist industrialization, is an increasingly violent, decisive fetter stymieing not only social justice but threatening the very existence of humanity. True, that type of society embodied in capitalism, eventually attained amid horrendous sufferings, a rise in societal wealth which can finally make exploitation and domination unnecessary for a decent life by one and all; but in the last two or three epochs, say after 1848, class societies have been a root cause of psycho-physical destructions, a hugely growing threat to the existence of society and indeed of the genus Homo.

The resulting overview may be too loose for a definition, but the term ''class'' has probably an inherently polysemic character. At any rate I need a guideline for further work:

- Synchronically, *classes are large, supra-local societal groups differentiated by their positions in a given historical system of societal reproduction; which means their powers and functions in the exploitative organization of labour and their positions within the distribution of the fruits of production, including for the upper and middle classes the appropriation of labour from the lower ones. Classes are characterized by strong determination of their members' lives, partial openness towards new members, exclusiveness towards and opposition to other classes in the same spacetime, multi-functionality focussed on and by the individuals' economic plus professional conditions as well as other needs of status and security, and a spread of changing class consciousnesses*.

- Diachronically, *classes are* as a rule, especially at times of threat and rapid change, *organized in hegemonically structured alliances based on the hegemon's ability to interpret society's strategic goals. However, class society, especially after the full development of capitalist industrialization and wars, is an increasingly destructive fetter stymieing not only social*

justice but threatening the very existence of humanity.

For individuals, the above delimitations mean that class is a grouping to which members neither belong by birth (as in caste) nor by explicit choice (as in voluntary associations) nor by any command of a precise societal power. On the other hand, the members' overriding common interests make for a tendency towards attaining class consciousness, especially in situations that threaten the whole class (as was the case with the bourgeoisie before the French Revolution or the industrial proletariat of 19th Century Europe). Marx's category of *interest,* based on ''need'' (*MEW* 28) but larger, seems to me of strategic importance, for it unites collective and personal levels, while at the same time allowing us to factor in people's material circumstances. It is accompanied by the terms of ''orientation'' and personal ''motivations'' (Ritsert 69–71).

The focus of Marx's opus, however, grew to be the critique of ''economics,'' a branch of sapience or science which arose with capitalism and bourgeois quantification in 17th–18th Century Britain, and in which classes are for the first time established exclusively on the basis of ownership and/or labour, rather than a military or political-cum-religious role as in feudalism or preceding ages. In his tradition, classes are strategic nodes for understanding a society, since they are relations between, on the one hand, the key production, circulation and consumption of goods needed for life, and on the other hand, everything else in the human production of life. These relations arise on the basis of unequal appropriation of surplus labour, thus of ''objective'' (i.e. tendentially dominant) economic and psychological interests of large groups of people whose individual interests are decisively shaped by their class situation within a societal division of labour.

If we want to find some simpler common denominators for classes as forms of interdependence between people, that is, of how some groups of people depend on other groups, the debate after Marx gives us three main criteria: dependence on basis of *power*, of *societal function* and of *economic position*. The best Marxians, such as Gramsci, have also retained Marx's original anthropological bent by stressing *cultural practices*, in the widest sense of the reproduction of societal life. These four criteria are not exclusive but usually combined in various ways. Further, paraphrasing what Lazić points out, the reproduction of classes is not exclusively economic, but tied to human productivity in the domains of material production, of societal control, and of the symbolic imagination, three different forms of praxis themselves differently integrated in different societal formations and

concrete societies (Čekajući 47).

From times immemorial, the dominant metaphor of spatial opposition in politics was based on the heaviness or labour of those below and lightness or privilege of those above, often mediated by metaphors from engineering construction (basis and superstructure) and by geology (strata). This can be used in a binary (digital) or gradual (analogue) way, resulting in the opposition of only two or of more (usually 4–8) classes. The first way is the sturdy plebeian or popular cognition of ''us'' versus ''them'' (oppressed/oppressor, powerless/ powerful, the have-nots/haves); Marx uses it in his didactic overviews such as *The Communist Manifesto,* modifying the last opposition after his work on *Capital* into exploited/exploiters, and adding to this a ''middle'' class oscillating between the upper and lower one. The second approach is the scholar's work on an actual society; Marx uses it in his historical investigations such as *The 18th Brumaire*, and Lenin at various points from *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* to his characterization of early Soviet society. The unresolved question of class (self-)consciousness, which has vexed the Marxian approach from Marx and Engels through Lukács and Gramsci to Lefebvre and the present day, is so difficult to resolve because it is at the crossroads of Marx's revolutionary didactics and scholarly punctiliousness; I shall approach this too in concrete Yugoslav discussions.

It has been pointed out that Marx's work sometimes uses the term 'class' loosely (Ollman ''Marx's Use" 576), and furthermore fuses three approaches to class structuring: a dichotomic one, a gradational one and a functional one, while occasionally introducing a flexible but inductive fourth one, the interaction of two or more dichotomies (Ossowski 93), which became the central Marxist procedure. In sum, class was never explicitly defined by Marx or Engels but used in flexible ways, with various connotations according to the investigation at hand. Nonetheless, the nucleus of the concept of societal class, to which I have pointed above, is – together with the one of surplus labour – a kind of emblem and metonymy of Marx's doctrine and of all Marxist political programmes. Marx's theory of class is foundational: ''simultaneously rich in possibilities, in some ways rather contradictory, and insufficiently worked out …'' (Gurvitch 6). Yet, owing to the reluctance of non-Marxists to found it in exploitation of labour and to various misconceptions among Marxists, it has given rise to multiple and incompatible interpretations.

Problems of Yugoslav Statistics

As anyone knows who has used the official statistics of Yugoslavia, it is extremely difficult to disentangle their rubrics of public versus private ‘‘workers’’ and the myriad sub-divisions, based on an economistic and productivistic modelling, not only to obtain class statistics but even for a full articulation of the population; Bakarić rightly called its categories ‘‘State capitalist ones’’ and complained it lent itself to ignorant misreading (3: 127). Further, research about the intertwined economy and politics of Yugoslavia has provided us with no satisfactory apparatus ‘‘to cope with socialist historical reality’’ (Kovač 446 – the complaint is from 1987, but I think still valid). True, there have been some sterling and very valuable efforts; still, to a large extent all of us have to do it ourselves: any work in this field must at present be considered highly provisional. This holds in spades for my attempt, written outside ex-Yugoslavia with many personal limitations.

Nonetheless, I shall proceed by constructing some estimates of societal classes in Yugoslavia, all rounded off to the nearest 100 or 50. I propose to speak here only about the situation from 1945 to the mid-1970s; we could maybe call this period Yugoslav Socialist Fordism (a very incipient and low-grade Fordism), and its first part ‘‘the 15 glorious years.’’ A first approach to it shows the total population and its most salient divides into: agricultural/urban, female/male, ‘‘active’’/‘‘supported’’ and minors/adults:

A preliminary but central problem visible from Table 1 has to be faced here. It pertains to the ubiquitous chief sub-division in Yugoslav statistics, ‘‘active [population].’’ It is a weird patriarchal or Adam-Smithian-to Stalinist productivist category which counts all those publicly employed outside private ownership plus the male and a part of the female peasants, while a large part of peasant women are lumped with children and oldsters as ‘‘kept’’ or ‘‘dependent’’ (cf. the complaint by Bakarić 2: 195). Most though not all ‘‘active’’ people are between 15 and 65 years, while dependents comprise the young, the old, the invalids and sick, students and all the non-publicly employed women who could be categorized in the rubric ‘‘housewives’’ (that classification, however, does not exist).

I propose rather, first, to constitute a more realistic category of *working people*. This means that, to begin with, we need to add to the ‘‘active,’’ first, all the female peasants and urban not otherwise employed

housewives. This can be calculated keeping in mind, as concerns gender, that the ratio of female to male agriculturists was consistently around 53:47% (while in population as a whole the ratio of females to males was around 51:49%); and second, as concerns age that the total population over 15 years of age was in 1950 equal to 11.2 million, in 1961 equal to 12.9 million and in 1971 equal to 15.05 million. The difference to the so-called active population would be: 3.45 million in 1950, 4.55 million in 1961 and 6.15 million in 1971. From this should then be subtracted the elderly (between 1 million and 1.6 million in those years, of which about one-third was in agriculture counted as ''active'', see SG81 100), and those ''privately employed'' (about 300,000). It then becomes clear that in 1950 roughly 2.5 million, in 1961 about 4 million and in 1971 about 5.5 million working people are not accounted for in these statistics.

Table 1. Population (in thousands) (from SG81: 80, 83 and 99–101, with 1981 from Woodward 192)

Year	Total	Agriculture	Female	Active	>15 years
1950	16,350	10,500	8400	7750	5150 [53]
1961	18,600	9200	9500	8350	5700
1971	20,550	7850	10,450	8900	5500
1981	22,000		11,200+?		

Second, in that number the categories of invalids, students and self-employed artisans grew between 1961 and 1981 from about 0.5 million to above 1 million (see section ''An Approach to the Ruling Class"). I do not see what else could the rest from 2 to above 4 million be except: (a) the working women in village and town officially not counted as ''active'', as defined above, of which, for the not counted adult peasant women, indications from SG81 (101) are that they could be 1 million or somewhat over in number, while the number of urban housewives remains unknown; (b) increasingly, workers not permanently employed, mainly male, including those who failed to register for statistics (say migrant construction workers), those officially unemployed (in 1971 290,000, around 3% of the active population) and (c) some other marginal strata. I shall return to this in the section ''An Approach to Actual Classes: The Working or Lower Classes.''

An Attempt at a Survey and at Class Statistics

In a complex and little theorized society, the problem is to hypothesize which classes and/or class fractions may be said to exist, and what was their dominant relationship. My hypothesis is that (besides the small and vanished, mainly comprador, bourgeoisie of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia), the classes were:

1. *Peasants* (who were, as producers based on private property, in the cities flanked by *urban artisans*, from 1945 to mid-1960s a numerically smaller group oscillating between 0.8 and 0.3 million); in time, the number of peasants would fall significantly, while the numbers of all other classes would rise: peasants would fall heavily, roughly from 50% to 33%, and all other percentages (except possibly that of the statistically non-existent housewives) would rise. All Yugoslav averages would have distinct ‘‘republican’’ deviations.

2. *Fully employed manual workers*, rising between 1945 and 1975 from less than 0.5 to almost 3 million; thus composed largely of migrants from villages plus some who were previously artisans, and sub-divided into class fractions.

3. As of the early 1950s, an ominously swelling group of *partly and precariously employed workers* outside the official system, later to a good part employed in Western Europe or for long stretches unemployed, coming from peasants and manual workers; finally, if women exclusively working as housewives are counted as analogously marginal group, this quasi-class congeries, in the margins of the system but important to it, is numerically comparable to category 2, and lacking a better name I would call it mainly *sub-proletarian* (though some housewives were well-off, and even had domestic help).

4. *The dominant class*, later probably several class fractions, perhaps best named (as in some of Horvat’s work) the *politocracy*, but out of which probably a new *‘‘technocracy’’* arose. Both the division of the ruling class and the role of its subordinate but still privileged employees are matters for further study.

5. *The ‘‘middle’’ classes* of employees and non-manual workers, divided at least into the fractions of *white-collar worker*s, both in industry and outside it, then *engineers and technicians* and *the intelligentsia*, mainly in human sciences. This was initially a mainstay but then an increasingly doubtful ally of the politocracy (I can speak out of personal experience

here).

6. After some point in the 1970s and 1980s, and thus outside my brief here, one could perhaps find a true potential *bourgeoisie* of the comprador variety (representatives of foreign firms, top banking and foreign trade personnel, etc.).

There are not only grey zones between the classes and their fractions but up to around 1960 the classes were unusually fluid and upward mobility frequent. But by the end of the 1960s, Šuvar estimated that 2% of the Yugoslav population had reached the living standard of the capitalist ‘‘middle class’’ and another 10% were close to it, while 20% – that is, around 4 million people! – lived on an ‘‘existential minimum’’ (*Sociološki* 165).

An Approach to Actual Classes: The Working or Lower Classes

What a proletariat is depends on its definition. While it was no doubt useful for Marx to focus primarily on industrial workers, so that in his wake they became practically synonymous with proletarians, Lenin no longer could do that, and today it seems much more useful to use Engels's elastic definition: ‘‘By proletarians we understand the class of modern wage-labourers who have no means of production of their own and therefore depend for livelihood on selling their labour-power’’ (Bensaïd 47, as a condensation of Engels's ‘‘Principles’’; Marx sometimes spoke this way too). If by labour-power we mean – as we should – both manual and intellectual labour-power, I count here as proletarian my hypothetic classes 1–3 and a part of 5 from the above section. The official discourse was of a united ‘‘working people,’’ immediately after World War 2 composed of ‘‘workers, peasants and honest intelligentsia’’ and later of ‘‘working people’’; the workers were, especially after the mid-1960s often, belatedly and inconsequentially, promoted to ‘‘working class.’’ In my own discourse I call working people (or workers) all those who produce or create new values (Suvin, ‘‘Living Labour’’), so that I shall call Marx's proletariat – without any doubt a class – manual non-agricultural workers.

Peasants: In pre-1941 monarchist Yugoslavia the agricultural labour surplus was estimated between 6 and 7 million people out of a population of 15.5 million, it was the central economic issue (Woodward 67); in a background way it remained such in the SFRY too, as it supplied an unending stream of

immigrants to cities. The later trajectory of the peasantry was paradoxical: immediately after the 1941–1945 Liberation War peasants constituted around 70% of the Yugoslav population, around 10 million people (Bilandžić, *Ideje* 156, ELZ5 8). The partisan army had been composed mainly of peasants, largely young ones. The most active and politicized became professional Party workers, civilian or military, and later a part of the dominant class(es); but their small size relative to the total peasantry can be gauged from the 1945 CPY membership of 141,000, the majority of peasant provenance. In 1948, of the 483,000 members, 49% were by provenance peasant, 30% worker and 21% other (mainly intellectuals or employees), while membership of Party committees included 23% of peasant provenance locally and 5% in the federal central committee (Barton, Denitch and Kadushin 47). But around 1949, when the Party organized a huge drive for collectivization of agriculture, the majority of peasants switched to a sharp if mainly passive opposition. After a few years, the collectivization was repealed, the work co-operatives promptly disbanded themselves and the peasantry remained as very small landowners with an average of three people (a nuclear family) working on one holding (SG81 83), and with a smaller number of State farms in the plains (amounting in 1957 to 9% of the arable land).

The peasantry was after the early 1950s politically more or less forgotten and ‘‘left to get modestly along on their smallholdings’’ (Bilandžić, *Ideje* 156), with the assumption that industrialization would thin its ranks (which did happen) and solve all other problems. The government did later provide technical and tax help, for example with fertilizers, high-yield grain seeds, and similar. Yields in agriculture rose considerably around 1960, and villages were well on the way to complete electrification, but since the average family holding was under 4 hectares while 39% of 2.6 million holdings in 1969 were under the market-productive limit of 2 hectares (Kontetzki 423, Fiamengo et al. 63), problems remained. In 1974, according to SG81 (236–37), agriculture supplied the country abundantly in meat, fish, milk and eggs, but by value two- thirds of grain products and over half of fruit and vegetables were imported. Horvat noted that 4 million Yugoslav peasants fed 20 million people, with a productivity of about one-sixth of the US agriculture; the percentage of peasant illiteracy was in 1961 still near 29% (Horvat 181), and even by 1971, one-third of the village population had less than 4 years of elementary schooling (Kontetzki 26), meaning they could sign their name and probably recognize numbers and letters. The

peasantry‘s role as a political subject was unimportant. Nonetheless, it was an epochal change when in 1969 the peasantry, with about 9 million members, fell under one-half of the total population for the first time since the Neolithic Age; in less than a quarter of a century more than 1.5 million peasants had moved to smaller or bigger townships, though not all to full employment. In the mid-1970s the agricultural population was probably around 7.5 million, or around 36% of the total population, with a continuing large flow to the urban, expatriate, as well as ‘‘irregular’’ workers; around 1.5 million part-time workers, so called ‘‘peasant workers,’’ fluctuated conjunctu- rally between industry and agriculture, and grew in number (cf. Denitch 64, Kontetzki 384–85, and Vlado Puljiz and Vladimir Cvjetičanin, both in Žuvela et al. 144–50 and 243–55), and of the *gastarbeiter* workers in West Europe, whose number swelled in the early 1970s from two-thirds of a million to a full million, 45% came from the villages (Kontetzki 395). By 1981 the private peasantry was estimated to be only 20% of the population (Šuvar ‘‘Radnička klasa’’ 34) with less than one-third of the total employed labour (Schrenk et al. 32), and over half of families had at least one member permanently employed outside agriculture.

Manual non-agricultural workers: During the 1941–1945 war and revolution an estimated 90,000 skilled workers were killed (Rusinow 19), out of the pre-war, small and young, working class, estimated at 350 thousands employed plus their families (Lampe 153, 188, and 190). Even if we assume skilled workers were much more frequent in the small pre-war workshops than after the war, in my view the workers’ overall participation in the partisan struggle was proportionately significant (see also Bakarić 426–27, Badovinac 60, and for a contrary opinion Bilandžić, *Ideje* 91). But the workers were numerically swamped by the peasants, also not so well represented in the higher echelons of the Party as the intellectuals, yet still several times higher than the percentage of workers in the population: in 1948, the Party membership was by provenance 30% workers, while among committee members, from local to the topmost ones, people of worker provenance constituted around 40% right up to the federal central committee (Barton, Denitch and Kadushin 47). After the early 1950s, the proportion of the workers stagnated, so that by 1954 it was overtaken by members in administrative jobs (Filipi 755); only highly skilled workers rose from 5% in 1961 to 9% in 1965 (idem 775). Also, a higher than usual proportion of workers were expelled from the Party (Filipi 766, Horvat 231). In

1962, workers and peasants accounted for 20% of the local Party committees and 13% of the district ones (Horvat 202); the numbers decreased in higher committees, and as time went on.

The working class officially did not exist in any statistics or published studies of that period (they were included in ‘‘the working people’’ or ‘‘self-managers’’), therefore everybody must infer how matters stood. In 1945, there were 460,000 wage-earners in Yugoslavia, and the number of such ‘‘self- managers in production’’ leapt in 1955 to 1.5 million, by 1961 to over 2 million and by 1971 to over 3.2 million. The statistics as a rule conflate them with enterprise ‘‘experts’’ (engineers plus other university graduates from ‘‘soft’’ sciences) and managers, and often also with enterprise employees, under the rubric ‘‘active’’ or ‘‘productive’’; that group rose by 1971 to 4.3 and by 1976 to 4.8 millions, of which one-quarter to one-third were women (*Situation* 109, 137, SG81 80), while industrial workers in the grouping are estimated at 60% or in 1971 to 2.6 million. The CPY included by the mid-1960s 346,000 workers or 34%; however, what was a worker often remained fuzzy, since a virtuous working-class ‘‘origin’’ was often substituted for present occupation even for people who advanced from the ranks: ‘‘Those members of the working class who took a place in the hierarchy of societal power … cut off ties with their class as regards their condition, interests, way of life and ideology’’ (Bilandžić, *Ideje* 93). Probably actual manual workers in CPY amounted to less than 30% of those in the active population. From 1963 to 1969, the proportion of workers fell in the Federal Assembly from 5.5% to 0.6% (4 people in all), in the 8 ‘‘republican’’ assemblies from 7.5% to 1.3% and in the communal ruling bodies from 14.6% to 13.1% (Tozi and Petrović 1591). In sum, it remains to be discussed whether the government of Yugoslavia was, to use Lincoln’s language, ‘‘for the workers’’; but it was neither ‘‘of the workers’’ nor ‘‘by the workers’’ outside the domain of actual productive enterprises, where the workers had some real but limited power.

The increase in worker numbers was a result of the very rapid Yugoslav industrialization, which was only possible through strong pressure from above for extensive use of a growing new labour force, with a forcible accumulation of surplus labour from unskilled or semi-skilled labourers (Bilandžić, *Ideje* 91), who had as a rule neither a working-class nor an urban and civic tradition. Thus in 1953 out of 1.6 million manual workers 36% were ‘‘unskilled,’’ that is, mainly fresh from lower schools and/or

villages (ELZ4 601), and the proportion of at least one-quarter of workers with less than 4 years of elementary schooling was unchanged as late as 1971; even illiteracy was by 1961 still over 5% (Horvat 181). On the other hand, highly skilled workers rose from 4.7% in 1961 to 9.7% in 1976, when the ‘‘skilled’’ ones were 29.5% and the rest had low skills or were unskilled (Bilandžić, *Historija* 393, cf. Tonković 439). This made for the emergence of distinct income and ideological strata, which possibly amounted to three distinct class fractions (Bakarić 2: 449) among workers based on qualification and permanence of employment. Probably, as in other countries the highly skilled workers (9.7% in 1970; Tonković 439) had a distinct consciousness, which made them participate more actively in politics and self-management, while on the other end the unskilled ones were more rebellious but ‘‘less politically conscious and far less organizable then the skilled’’ (Hobsbawm 222, see also 215–16, 232). Since the unskilled fraction was in the 1980s still estimated at 40% of all the workers, I shall quote Šuvar (confirmed by all investigations) at more length:

> A significant mass of unskilled or semi-skilled workers, with low or non-existent education, from undeveloped peasant milieus, exposed to heavy and repetitive labour, repressed out of self-management ... still exists on the margins of society, in peculiar ghettoes of seasonal and Gastarbeiter work, captive to boot of a parallel economy on smallholdings, possessing traits not only of peasant … but also of lumpenproletarian consciousness. (Šuvar. ‘‘Radnička’’ 34 and 47, emphasis in original).

If non-permanent workers with one foot in industry and another in village are a class fraction, then there were at least three such strata in the working class (while women workers might have been a fourth one).

When incomes of workers are compared to those of employees at an analogous level of stratification, the official income minima were from the beginning in 1952 at least 10–20% lower for the workers, and the gap kept growing; the relation between the lowest and highest incomes – those of the less skilled and unskilled workers vs. top officials and professionals–, which was in the austere 1950s perhaps as low as 1:3.5, had in 1968 reached 1:10 (Bilandžić, *Ideje* 131, 260). A major difficulty was the lack of proper housing for the rapidly rising number of newcomers to towns, which was supposed to be provided by the enterprises hiring them. On the other hand, besides practically lifelong employment, health insurance, pensions and

many other facilities (cheap and extensive holidays, for ‘‘highly skilled’’ workers cheap housing, etc.), the living standard of the fully employed working class was certainly much superior to the pre-war one and kept modestly rising until 1980 (Tonković 448, 453), so that this ‘‘socialist primitive accumulation’’ was much less cruel than the capitalist one described by Hogarth, Engels and Marx, which meant for the masses in Britain three centuries of utter misery and alienation.

It remains unclear what was the attitude of this class towards the politocracy and the government, though it was in great majority clearly not hostile. Findings are scant and contradictory until the 1980s. An inquiry about its mobility in 1963 found that 80% were satisfied to be workers and 70% believed they were being respected and valued by society, yet 85% wanted their children to be office workers (cited in Horvat 179). Some years later, often the most industrious and skilled workers fuelled the outflow to Western Europe: the *Gastarbeiter* lived in horrendous circumstances there, but their average monthly wage was 750 West German marks (236,000 old dinars), as compared to approximately 210 marks at home. At that time, about 40% of workers had monthly incomes below 60,000 old dinar or 190 marks (Bilandžić, *Ideje* 260); a survey in 1967 found out that the workers would have stayed in Yugoslavia had their income been 350 marks (ibidem 252).

The 1981 census showed that out of 13 million people in Yugoslavia aged 19–60 there were 7 million in employment (‘‘radni odnos’’ – this comprises in industry manual workers, engineers, technicians and employees, and outside of industry the last three professions plus the professionals), 1 million registered in unemployment bureaus, nearly 1 million (that number was reached in 1971) was *de facto* abroad and a remainder of 4 million not fully identified (Woodward 191–92, 199). Who composed this remainder? As suggested in the section ‘‘Problems of Yugoslav Statistics’’, these people fallen between the meshes of statistics were, on the one hand, peasant women, full-time housewives, 200,000 unable to work, over 300,000 students, about 800,000 urban self-employed, mainly artisans; and on the other hand, an unknown number of unregistered, extra-legal workers, a seasonal unskilled workforce shifting from job to job, often in short-term construction, who stemmed mainly from the poorer regions south of the Danube–Sava–Sisak–Senj divide. These final ‘‘precarious’’ workers formed, together with the Yugoslav unemployed and the workers in Western Europe, a heterogeneous sub-proletariat

unrecognized by theory or public opinion, which became a permanent threat both to the fully employed workforce and to democracy or socialism in general. Counting the housewives as ‘‘workers’’ too, we might by then get to over 20% of the ‘‘active’’ labour population living under super-exploited conditions. This tallies with Šuvar’s 20% of population at the existential minimum.

Finally, all independent investigators see the worker-bearers of self-management as an atomized class as a result of its objective economico-psychological position, which because of its inexperience, fragmentation by enterprises, lack of trade-union tradition and other factors did not become ‘‘a class for itself’’ (Marx, MEW 181). Even strikes, which were more and more frequent after the 1960s, were almost always confined to a single enterprise (Jovanov).

An Approach to the Ruling Class (Actual or Potential)

It was genuinely unclear for the first post-war decades whether there was in Yugoslavia a ruling class and, if there was, what its composition and nature might be. Both for this reason and because of self-censorship and political prudence, it remained tricky how to name it. Branko Horvat – who knew it from experience as a top expert, but whose data go from the 1950s to the early 1960s – began by describing it vaguely as on the one hand the ‘‘State apparatus (bureaucracy),’’ defined as those relying on physical power, and comprising ‘‘the government administration, the judiciary, the police, armed forces and professional politicians’’; he calculates them in 1953 at 220,000 and in 1961 at 257,000 people (170–71, 176, 184). On the other hand by way of official statistics, he calls them managerial or leading *(rukovodéci*) cadres, comprising in 1961 around 60,000 people, half of them having a secondary and half a university education (179–80), while around 26,000 more were a kind of middle bureaucracy. A ranking by salary reveals that in 1963 there were 213,000 people receiving over 70,000 dinars salary (which however included also top university teachers and some other professionals). A very rough division into a top and a middle governing group might be effected, which in the early 1960s, following these rather fuzzy statistics, might be guessed to comprise, respectively, 60 and around 70,000 each, though the middle stratum was destined to expand rapidly with the shift of power to the level of federal republics and partly to the local level. There would then remain about half of Horvat’s 257,000 as the lowest central

‘‘bureaucracy’’; the three groups together might be called at least a potential ruling class.

The 1953 revision of Party statistics from counting provenance to counting present profession resulted in 45,000 peasants and 93,000 workers being declassified as such (Filipi 762); it can be inferred that, most probably, a great majority of these 138,000 people comprised a good part of the ruling group. A 1960 statistic on the social origin of full-time government ‘‘employees,’’ presumably comprising everyone on the salary rolls of the central government (it is reproduced by Horvat only as to percentages), can be simplified into three groups, in good part identifiable by means of education: workers, peasants, and ‘‘other’’ (meaning here mainly intellectuals, possibly other petty-bourgeois such as white-collar employees, and indeed clearly, especially in the middle stratum or class fraction which comprised the top co-opted experts, some bourgeois;

Table 2. Social origin of federal government ‘‘employees,’’ 1960

Father’s Occupation	Peasant	Worker	Other
Leading cadres	36.7	24.9	38.4
Middle employees	27.2	21.7	51.1
Lower employees I	31.9	33.0	35.1
Lower employees II	55.1	29.1	15.8

‘‘lower employees I’’ were those with secondary education, II with primary education, Table 2).

Horvat’s overall hypothesis accords well with the later statistics in SG81 (110), which finds in ‘‘Societal activities [meaning the political organizations] and State organs’’ in 1965 183,000 people, the number then falling until 1969 and after that rising to 210,000 for 1974. This number does not comprise the rapidly rising ‘‘technocracy,’’ of which more below.

Theoretically speaking, one key predicate for the ruling groups is their monopoly position in the system of power. The Yugoslav ruling group possessed the official monopoly of power in society, including in the final instance the organizing of commodity production and in general the reproduction of societal life, however this may have relied on balancing between its interests and pressures from the manual workers, and it was later modified into a polyarchy between the federal centre and lower levels. Since

the power of decision reposed on political command not only of the armed forces but also of macro-economic decisions, I would in a first approximation accept Horvat's term of politocracy. This group enjoyed material privileges which were much lower than either Soviet or post-Welfare-State capitalist privileges, but on the other hand, towards the top, probably much larger than the salaries found in public statistics, since they included free and generous transport, apartments, holidays and many other perks. It also had a high, in the first 20 years almost hieratic but from the 1970s on rapidly falling consensual prestige as leaders towards a better future for all. Bilandžić, who was himself a part of it, makes a heartfelt plea for its having in the first post-1945 years sacrificed all of its personal time and energy to collective societal interests (*Ideje* 74), and I can testify that this was to a large degree true up to, say, the early 1950s. Yet it is equally true, as an inside observer noted, that ''officials in the government, as wielders of power and living in strictly hierarchical social structures, are exposed to fearful conservative and anti-socialist pressures'' resulting in ''tendencies to deformations in consciousness [and] behaviour'' as well as to despotism, as shown by the secret police infiltrations denounced in 1966 (Horvat 171).

Thus, today we cannot dodge the question: was this a class – which would have overriding interests of its own not identical with a function necessary for the society as a whole, which it may also possess – or was it, as the official Party *doxa* later had it, a stratum? The criteria for deciding what it was are more than usually vague. However, I shall use three criteria: a theoretical one, a deductive one and an inductive one. The first criterion flows from two observations by Marx: (a) that a class can exist in relation to another class while it still does not exist ''in relation to itself,'' and (b) that the condition for the liberation of the working class is the abolition of all classes (cf. Gurvitch 23, 22) – which was not even beginning to take place in the SFRY. The second follows the Marxian method of explaining the hand of the ape by the hand of man by looking backward or ''regressively'' (term from Lazić *Čekajući* 60; cf. Ollman *Dialectical Investigations* 133–79) from the last two decades of the SFRY, when I believe it was a class – or in fact several classes: for otherwise the break-up of Yugoslavia would be unexplainable.

Table 3. Lazić's quasi-class division, 1984 (in % of belonging, *Sistem* 81)

	highest	higher middle	middle	lower middle	low
Politicians	31	63	6		
Managers	5	79	16		
''Experts'' and lower white-collar workers		2	78	20	
Skilled workers			1	70	29
Unskilled workers				17	83
Peasants				24	76

For the third, I use Lazić's most encompassing retrospect based on data from 1984; he devised an ''Index of Overall Societal Position,'' based on location in the societal pyramid, material status, education, type of job and site of residence, which can for the final phase of the SFRY – serving for a look backward – be summed up in somewhat modified terms and presented as in Table 3 of strata by percentage of belonging.

While one could fault some premises of these findings, conducted within what it was possible to envisage in however tolerant an SFRY, the overall picture is indicative of a class system. Thus the original ruling politocracy – up to, say, the mid-1960s – is best called a class *in statu nascendi* (being born). It corresponded to the Weberian category of an elite through its concentrated control over resources indispensable for, and active participation in, the reproduction of a given societal structure (freely paraphrased from Lazić, *Čekajući* 43) -- though I have indicated above how Occam's razor leads me not to use this terminology. As Hobsbawm notes discussing the USSR, ''a process of this kind was implicit in the 'proletarian revolution', unless systematically counteracted'' (30). It must be said to the great honour of the Yugoslav CP leaders that they tried to counteract it; but they finally failed.

One indirect measure of the closure at the top was upward social mobility in Yugoslavia. In brief, it seems to have been very high in the first decade and considerable in the second one (Horvat 151, 237–38), but falling fast after it. For example, in the 1961/62 school year, secondary schooling (from 15 to 18 years) was undergone by virtually all children of employees, one-third of workers' children, and one-seventh of peasant children. The chance for a worker youngster to enter university was one-eighth of, and of a peasant one one- thirteenth of, the chance of an employee youngster (Horvat 237). Lazić concluded that by the 1970s vertical social mobility was significantly restricted, though sons of peasants and manual workers could still rise into the ''middle'' classes (cf. *U susret* 77–148).

In the 1960s, it was officially admitted that there was sharp friction at the

highest and middle Party and State levels between tendencies which were then termed bureaucratic versus self-management ‘‘forces.’’ The top federal level was eventually reconstituted as a papered-over unity, but just below the top, at the middle and higher middle level of key executives, the hidden conflict remained virulent. At issue was, in Marxist terms, the quite central problem of the division of surplus labour while ensuring a growing income pie to be divided. Without entering here into economic data and its complex ramifications or their historical ups and downs, I suggest that the conflict theoretically or ideologically, at least in good part, hinged upon the attitude towards an optimum balance between planning and commodity production for the market. In brief, enforceable planning, a key plank of the original Kidrič economic system in 1950–1951 (Suvin, ‘‘Ekonomsko-političke’’), was simply dropped. The opposition between planning and market was then side-tracked into interminable debates about centralism versus decentralization; from the mid-1960s this resulted in a disempowerment of the ‘‘investment funds’’ (mainly federal ones) that had until then disposed of three-quarters of all investments. The revulsion of the top leaders and the general populace against centralized ‘‘State socialism’’ was thus mainly channelled into liberal market idolatry.

This was well understood by the IMF, behind the scenes untiringly pushing capitalism in Yugoslavia, whose teams insisted on ever more ‘‘decentralization as a Trojan horse for marketization,’’ so that each IMF loan programme was followed by further decentralization (Woodward 169–70); these political aims successfully culminated in 1989. In the meantime, the self-interested ideological confusion resulted in a kind of confederacy of the six constituent ‘‘republics,’’ allowing their centres – especially in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia – sufficient power to block unwelcome federal initiatives. The class equivalent of these large power shifts was not, as Marxist theory and the original plebeian perspectives demanded, the vertical extension of self-management by the ‘‘working people’’ up to the federal power-level, but the rise of a supposedly ‘‘technocratic’’ class fraction centred in the republics and constituted by the top enterprise and financial managers. Top Party leader and official theoretician Kardelj even estimated in a fit of despondency that the conditions for the rise of capitalism on the one hand or, on the other and more probably, of managerial-technocratic monopoly or a central State bureaucracy were better than for the success of self-management (Bilandžić, *Ideje* 316–17). Since even he could not bring himself to delve into the class interests determining such chances (cf. Suvin ‘‘Diskurs’’ and ‘‘An Excursus on Classophobia’’ below), this became a

self-fulfilling prophecy.

What was the ‘‘technocracy’’? Its rapid rise to a share in power was based on triangular balancing between the working classes, the Party politocracy – on which it leaned while competing with it – and the world market, reproducing what came openly to be called ‘‘the capital relationship’’ or even ‘‘financial capital’’ inside Yugoslavia (see Bilandžić, *Ideje* 295–97, 300, and Bakarić passim). The statistics to be found in Horvat's work (cf. Table 2) show for 1972, among 3.4 million employed in production and commerce, 154,000 with ‘‘high professional education’’ (SG81 114), though many were in somewhat subordinate positions as engineers or accountants. Horvat characterizes the early technocracy through its central figure metonymically as ‘‘managers’’ – that is, directors of economic enterprises – and observes that their function was, among other things, to represent the interests of society, so that they were co-nominated by local governments; within the self-management system theirs was early on a hybrid role, stressing more a political than a professional status (164). The enterprise directors, at least, participated also in a generational shift: in 1966, of a population of 1270, one-fifth were newly elected and among them almost half were 30–39 years of age (Rusinow 144). Bilandžić's later definition of this technocratic fraction (*menedžeri)* is ‘‘business people from the productive economy, banks, insurance societies,’’ as well as from systems combining several enterprises (*Historija* 411), he dates their swift rise to the 1965 reform and believes the politocracy *sensu stricto* began to take second place to them in power and reputation. This meant, I would guess, the transfer of some former ‘‘bureaucrats’’ to this fraction and their confluence with younger and better schooled newcomers (not only engineers). It was thus a complex rearrangement amid a power struggle within the ruling class.

If ‘‘bureaucracy’’ can only be governmental, they might be called technocrats (Bilandžić, *Historija* 184). However, after a lengthy discussion (‘‘Bureaucracy’’ and ‘‘Diskurs’’) I concluded ‘‘bureaucracy’’ was finally a wrong term, and to my mind technocracy too was an unfortunate designation taken from Western discourse, and used by this sub-class as an ‘‘expert’’ alibi.

Others

‘‘Middle classes’’: This only partly meaningful term is here not used, as in

much sociology, as a synonym for the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie, but for groups in an analogous ‘‘middle’’ position between manual workers and the ruling class, for which a better term does not seem available. They could be, in an inevitable simplification, called the professionals, that is to say (in my terminology) non-manual workers who were neither within the politocracy nor directly dependent on it (as the ‘‘technocrats’’ were). They were often metonymically called the intelligentsia in a sense dependent on the French, German or Russian uses of the term, though they were clearly a congeries of various ‘‘professional’’ or ‘‘expert’’ (*stručni*) fractions, an existentially and politically somewhat heterogeneous spread united by university graduation (cf. both articles by the Ehrenreichs). It may be useful to divide the middle classes at least into three wings: first, the classical humanist intelligentsia, social scientists and teachers as well as the rather distinct scientific and medical intelligentsia (more easily bought off); second, engineers in production (officially an ‘‘expert’’ part of workers’ self-management) and third, a large wing of white-collar workers ranging from production enterprises to all other administrative labour (differentiated into upper and lower by the divide of university degree). Numerical data are obtainable mainly for the university graduates, 79,000 in 1948, while 220,000 more graduated between 1945 and 1965 (Horvat 184). Thus the professionals were in Yugoslavia, except for the traditional priests and pen-pushers (lower bureaucrats) a creation of socialism. Much work remains to be done on the sub-division, evolution, and relation to societal power of these ‘‘middle classes’’. Their upper reaches, both in industry and outside it, were often officially suspected to be an embryonic ‘‘new class’’ (i.e. bourgeoisie – see Bakarić 2: 8), but though their consumerism and ostentation tended to reinforce this view, they mostly remained either subordinates or on the outskirts of the truly rising new class within the politocracy. How all these fractions are to be sub-divided is again unclear, though one main indicator would be the level of schooling. Debray proposes for developed capitalist societies a division into a minority of ‘‘organic’’ mercenaries, the reproductive or distributive intellectuals – the admen and ‘‘design’’ professionals, the new media clerisy, most lawyers and engineers – versus a majority of increasingly marginalized humanists and teachers (95 and passim): if we only knew how to quantify this (Suvin ‘‘Where Are We?’’).

The intellectuals were equally prominent in the pre-war Party and in the 1941– 1945 struggle, during which an estimated 40,000 intellectuals, a high percentage of that small class, were killed (Rusinow 19), mainly fighting with the partisans. They remained prominent in the ruling Party after 1945:

as shown above, Party membership in 1948 – the core of the budding politocracy – was by provenance around 20% intellectuals or professionals. Tens of thousands joined the Party in the ‘‘heroic’’ 1945–1952 years, when this did not simply guarantee better career chances but more work and danger. Horvat therefore concluded that the intellectuals were in the first two decades of the SFRY ‘‘one of the mainstays of the system’’ (168); but he also acknowledges that – if we except those who became a part of the politocracy – they were often considered as poor cousins, since Marxist and socialist parties paradoxically had an inbuilt anti-intellectual strain (183). The history of ‘‘the mainstay’s’’ disaffection can be exemplarily and exasperatedly followed in the ‘‘bureaucracy debate’’ which I have analysed in Suvin ‘‘Diskurs’’.

Women: This is an adjunct to class analysis, but to my mind indispensable to and intersecting with it. Before the war, women’s position was, except in a very few major cities, one of patriarchal subordination; women workers were often treated abominably. Jancar-Webster’s indispensable survey, from which I take all data in this paragraph, shows that between the World Wars women’s share of the employed rose from 20% to 28%, with a maximum around 200,000 (19). The most resolute among the exasperated young women from the working and other classes often found their way into the SKOJ, the illegal and at the time direly persecuted youth wing of the Party, of whose 30,000 members in 1941 one-third were women (101). The CPY programme adopted in 1940 was full material protection of maternity and full legal equality for women, including equal pay for equal work; both were decreed during the 1941–1945 war, and a host of associated democratic legal and economic measures followed. However, the material bases for equality, such as kindergartens, came about only in the cities, slowly and partially. ‘‘The official figure for women’s participation in the partisan cause is 2 million,’’ of whom 100,000 were soldiers (25,000 were killed, 40,000 wounded) and 282,000 were killed in the concentration camps of the various Fascist governments (46). This means that, by tradition, choice or accident, most women stayed on the sidelines, but it nonetheless represented a huge breakthrough. Of the women fighters, 70% seem to have been under 20 years of age, and as with the men, they were predominantly young peasants (48). There is a dearth of rich overall statistics, but the ‘‘active participants’’ in the partisan cause from the federal republic of Croatia for whom occupation is known are divided thus: 249,000 peasants, 202,000 students, intelligentsia and ‘‘white collar’’, 86,000

workers, 91,000 ‘‘housewives,’’ plus 217,000 ‘‘unknown’’ (54); I would think most of the last two categories can be allotted to peasants, who would thus account for about half of the women included. A huge number of younger women, whether fighters or supporters, were taught literacy and self-confidence. The Anti-fascist Front of Women (AFŽ), founded during the war, had a key role in this as well as in aiding the fighters, so that women were represented in all the local authorities. The AFŽ committees were given autonomy, but key posts were appointed by the Party as a whole; Jancar-Webster terms it not only ‘‘an original creation’’ but ‘‘a remarkable expression of political acuity on the part of the Party leadership’’, and she is rightly very critical of AFŽ‘s subordination from 1944 on, which culminated in its eventual dissolution in 1953 (122–25).

Parenthetically, a quite parallel judgement should be made relating to the youth – the main demographic force of the partisan victory 1941–1945. But the obverse of that parallel is the remarkable example of political dullness or blindness conveyed by dissolving the highly active Communist Youth in 1949, even before the AFŽ. If there were more data at hand, youth might be an additional ‘‘others’’ category.

After 1945, the percentage of women in the labour force oscillated and eventually settled in the 1970s on a level of around one-third, though most of them were, as before the war, in the lower-skilled occupations (Jancar-Webster 164–65). In 1979 employed women represented around 54% of their age cohort (20– 55 years, the pensionable age), but again almost half of them were unskilled (167). They were employed primarily in manufacturing, especially textile industry, and then in culture and education, in health and social welfare, and in catering and trade. Obversely, in 1979 women were 54% of the official ‘‘job seekers,’’ including 63% of those with secondary or higher education (a clear indication of gender bias). On the positive side, by the end of the 1970s some 40% of the hugely burgeoning university student population was female, disproportionately concentrated in such faculties or schools as Arts, Pharmacology, and Social Work (168–69). In politics, women’s membership in the Party stagnated in 1946–1966 at between 15.5% and 18% though, due to the general massification of the Party, it quadrupled in absolute terms reaching 186,000, of whom 1.5% were peasants, 17% workers, 23% pensioners and housewives, 5% students and about half from the middle and ruling classes (using my terms – data in Filipi 748, 752, 781). In 1970, women comprised 10% of the upper chamber of the Federal Assembly, while in the constituent republics’ chambers they

comprised 3.5–9%, and in the municipality committees 6.7% (Denitch 44–45). At the end of the 1970s, women were around one-third of the delegates in the ‘‘basic organizations of associated labour’’, but only 12% of the workers’ councils and 6% of its managing boards (Jancar-Webster 170).

I have to ruefully concur with Jancar-Webster that all of this amounts to a reassertion of many patriarchal biases after World War 2, though there were also several unretractable gains in legal equality, higher education and employment. The upshot of the actual economic and psychological circumstances was rising political apathy on the part of most Yugoslav women, while a few went their own way into feminism.

A Hypothesis: The Involution of the Ruling Class

Here is a compressed summary of the class data found in the section ‘‘An Attempt at a Survey,’’ adjusted for the 1971 total population of 20.5 million (of which women were 10.5 million and under-fifteens 5.5 million) and adding family members. The average household in 1971 had 3.8 members (SG81 80, 102), so I had to guess how many family members in each class were ‘‘non-active.’’ I am uncomfortably aware that (except for the peasants) in this statistical mess all numerical conclusions are tentative; but they are preferable to nothing, and as proportions to each other defensible. It is a pyramid with broad base and steep slope (Table 4).

My approach is Marx’s anthropological one: emancipation of all persons through emancipation of humanity from classes (cf. Draper 81). This means that each class society (which is what the SFRY remained, though class antagonisms were quite muted for the first two decades) should be judged by the criterion of how much it contributes to this emancipation.

A central presupposition for anything else is society’s self-preservation. This meant for Tito and the CPY, and later for the politocracy (but also for a great majority of the population): independence plus industrial development with rising disposal of material goods. The function of the ruling class *in statu nascendi* was to organize strong and permanent drives towards these two horizons. Both of them met with impressive success; but as of the 1960s, harmonious development of the whole economy needed radical democracy through self-government, which did not happen. When the economy faltered, so did all else. I shall return to the reasons for its faltering,

Table 4. A class pyramid, 1971

-Ruling class/es: 0.5–0.8 million
-Middle classes (including technicians): 4.5–5.5 million
-Peasant smallholders: 7.5 (þ private artisans 0.5) million
-Manual workers (industry, transport, building, services): around 7 million (the 1 million workers abroad were partly from this class and partly from peasantry)
-[Total population: 20.5 million]

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which were in my opinion both exogenous (the world capitalist market and big powers) and endogenous, in the section ‘‘A Summing Up and Hypothesis: Two Yugoslav Singularities – Splendour and Misery’’ and in a later essay.

On what basis should classes be differentiated in historical societies? As discussed in the section ‘‘Introduction to the Concept of Class’’, classes are groups with different positions within the exploitative appropriation of the product of labour on natural resources. Different classes and class fractions had different strategic shares of political power, economic production and cultural hegemony or legitimation (cf. Lazić, *Čekajući* 30) pertaining, I think, mainly to knowledge and prestige. In all class systems, the ruling ideas, norms and horizons for the whole society are those of the ruling class (usually with pockets of deviation, mainly in the proletarian classes and the intelligentsia). In ‘‘socialist’’ societies, as in many pre-capitalist ones, the politocracy had a leading role in all the three domains. Furthermore,

> It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers — a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labour and thereby its social productivity — which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the State (Marx, *Capital* 777, at/ch47.htm, my italics)

Therefore, I shall begin with a closer theorization of this, based on this approach and the data in the section ‘‘An Attempt at a Survey and at Class Statistics.’’

Did a ruling class exist in Yugoslavia? There was a societal group possessing a monopoly of power, control of the conditions of production,

material privileges, and a collective consciousness. Further, there was a class of manual workers: since classes are relational entities, yes, a ruling class existed. (Neither class was officially recognized, though Party ideologists rinsed their mouths with the working class from the 1960s on.)

The denial that there existed a ruling class was, if at all argued, usually argued on the basis it did not own but only administered the ‘‘strategic heights’’ of the economy, as manifested in the fact the members of this ‘‘stratum’’ could not alienate any part of it, for example through personal inheritance (cf. e.g. Pečujlić, in Fiamengo et al. eds. 628–29 and elsewhere); even the less monochromatic Šuvar, who boldly talked about a ‘‘counter-class’’ juxtaposed to the workers, denied there could be an antagonistic opposition because the appropriation of surplus labour was used for ‘‘socially useful work’’ and thus was not exploitation (cited in Kerševan ‘‘K vprašanju’’ 1469–70). As opposed to such prevarications, the ‘‘Marx sequence’’ of concepts for property (Ritsert 33–37) reposes upon appropriation of things, goods, and services (though after the industrial revolutions, cognitive entities also grew in importance) effected by classes in power through violence, which entails the exclusion of other classes and lesions – in the wide sense – of its members. The result of these appropriations is exclusive possession (*Besitz*), that is, ways of ‘‘factual disposition over the means of appropriation, respectively the really appropriated shares of products and services by the excluded others’’ (34; see Hegedüs 94–97). When the appropriation is legally sanctioned, a given form of ‘‘ownership’’ (*Eigentum*) comes about which is ‘‘exclusive possession, justified by cultural contents and norms,’’ in Weber’s term a domination (*Herrschaft*) based on obedience (34). To speak with Hegel, ‘‘possession is the subsumption of a thing under my will’’ (cited in Ritsert 36). Most pertinent here is that in this Marxian optic ‘‘class relationships are relationships of appropriation’’ (37) – that is, simultaneously relationships of production and of possession (65). As Marx put it in the italicized part of the above quote, the crucial point is who decides ‘‘the conditions of production.’’ In Yugoslavia, it was the ruling class, being born or actual.

Thus, while legal justifications and sanctions are no doubt important, they do not determine the central power relationships inherent in all possession, in whichever ways these be justified; in ancient societies often in religious ways, which partly carried over into feudal societies, and – as I have in argued in ‘‘15 Theses about Communism and Yugoslavia’’ – in masked ways also into socialist ones. As Trotsky noted in *The Revolution Betrayed*

about the USSR in the 1930s, ‘‘The means of production belong to the state. But the state, so to speak, ‘belongs’ to the bureaucracy.’’ (ch09.htm) In Ritsert’s terms, the Yugoslav ruling class did not individually own any means of production, but it collectively possessed them all (this is also the thesis of Lazić’s works), and administering the economy implied considerable economic advantage. However, the politocracy ruled (at least up to the divide of the late 60s-early 70s) by making not inconsiderable economic compromises with the middle class and manual workers. And as to socially useful application of the surplus labour, the criterion would be: did the direct producers have a significant say in determining what and how much was useful how (cf. Kerševan, ‘‘K vprašanju’’ 1476, Visković in Žuvela et al. 97–104)? On the whole, they did not.

A key example: it was the federal government, later increasingly in negotiations with the governments of the constituent republics, that decided the division of the surplus value earned in production: how much should go into workers’ incomes plus enterprise investment vs. allocations first taxed away and then distributed by the State. This relationship is a permanent measure of ruling- class seizure of capital (in the 1950s, it measured the balance between statism and self-management, see Brus 72–73). The results of the crucial 1965 reform were ambiguous and finally unsatisfactory: the field of decision-making by enterprises and workers’ councils was somewhat enlarged, but it was not vertically extended to the top of the power chain. The ambitious plan of the reformers to slash the power elite’s disposal of national income from 70% to 30% (Bakarić 473), but without putting the difference under the direct producers’ control, failed dismally. Lacking co-ordinated yet democratically arrived at guidance, the necessity of meso-economic mergers and other vertical cooperation fell under the sway of banks and analogous uncontrolled and alienated centres of financial power. This ‘‘removed the centres of decision further from the workforce and [the] self-management units’’ (cf. Brus 84–85, 191–211), without clear lines of political democracy to determine delegation from below, and without competing programmes within socialist horizons but based on open information flows.

Was there exploitation of the working class (and other working people) in SFR Yugoslavia? In Marx’s terms, which envisage a daily dynamic compulsion (*Zwang*) for the appropriation of labour’s surplus value (MEW 26.2 409), clearly yes, there was. This is temporally and axiologically prior to and underlying all the ideological and territorial quarrels within the by now

polyarchic politocracy about distribution of this surplus. The surplus remained constant at 2:1; that is, about two-thirds of the surplus labour ended up outside the enterprise – a level identical to those of the Maya statelets (as Bakarić noted 2: 7). Here too, Weberian ‘‘domination’’ terminology proves insufficient (cf. generally in Suvin ‘‘Terms of Power, Today’’).

However, did a ruling class spring full-blown from the 1941–1945 revolutionary war? No, it did not. Justice should be done to the complexities of a contradictory revolution, a two-headed Janus bearing simultaneously huge liberations and a threat of counter-revolutionary re-subordination if the revolution did not permanently continue by other means after coming to power (I discuss this at length in ‘‘15 Theses’’). I do not believe even that the early nuclei of this class noted by Djilas in 1954 deserve to be called more than a class *in statu nascendi*. When did a ruling class fully constitute itself, in Marx’s terms as ‘‘a class for itself,’’ that is, with a core of class consciousness arising out of a ‘‘diffuse’’ one (Gurvitch 103)? Some crucial determinations can be found by historical investigation of the declining cognitive solutions and economic success in Yugoslavia. The turning point for these factors, its original sin so to speak, can be found in the mid-1960s as the politocracy’s fierce resistance to further experimentation with direct democracy – which could have sprung from, but surely could not coincide with, the limited self-management in the factories and then other workplaces. This indicates that the ruling class’s aims at that time became ‘‘raised to a political level,’’ which is Polanyi’s definition of class consciousness (183) by way of Marx. The period of about 1965–1974 would then be one of the lost final battle – or two battles – against this involution, waged by an insufficiently decisive minority at the top, supported by but never really allied with the working class and a part of the middle class (the subterranean battle was theorized by the *Praxis* group and up to a point by Horvat and Kardelj).

My historical hypothesis for Yugoslav politics (I hope to factor in economics and surplus labour in another work) is then:

- ca. 1945–1952: postwar reconstruction and consolidation, centralist fusion of Party and State;
- ca. 1952–1961: introduction of limited self-management, monolithic unity of Party and State continues;
- ca. 1961–1965/1966: counter-offensive of the conservative majority of politocracy, by the end of this period a self-conscious ruling class;

- ca. 1966–1974: the battle for direct democracy through vertical extension of self-management to the power top has been lost; the ruling monolith fragments into a polyarchy of ‘‘republican’’ power-centres, which within the turn to a not systematically contained market economy mostly slide into nationalism;
- post-1975: stagnation and ad-hoccery, Yugoslav Brezhnevism. This period could perhaps be 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.

This complex field of forces might be illuminated by discussing the very important ideological conundrum of ‘‘class struggle’’ in the Leninist vulgate.

An Excursus on Classophobia

The Yugoslav politocracy and society lived with three major denials or Freudian repressions: of the peasantry, the women and the not fully employed workers. The most pertinent ones were ‘‘the women question’’ (as suggested earlier) and the denial of class.

How can lifelong Marxists deny the existence of classes in a still fairly backward society? I shall take as my *exemplum* the second-ranking person in the Party and State, and its main theoretician, Edvard Kardelj, who did so. How and why did he get to this classophobia?

Having read most of his voluminous opus, I shall discuss as a sufficient example key passages of his 1967 article, the title of which translates as ‘‘The Working Class, Bureaucratism, and the LCY.’’ It is on the one hand, within its peculiar *langue de bois*, remarkably frank and clear – the bureaucracy is a lawful phenomenon when the revolution has shattered the bourgeoisie but the working class is too weak to enforce self-government: ‘‘Therefore, an independent administrative stratum had to come about, politically very strong, who could have an essential influence on the regulation of societal relationships and contradictions .. .. Because of such political power, this stratum can and does come into collision — sometimes a progressive and sometimes a conservative one — with the central mass of the working class or with some of its parts.’’ On the other hand, he claims this bureaucracy is <u>not</u> a class: ‘‘But because of such a position, the bureaucracy in the professional sense [notice the prevarication, DS] does not become such a new class that would be the main obstacle to the societal

influence of the working class.'' And further''[We are not dealing with a struggle of] class against class, because finally the long-range interests of all these strata are the same. Therefore the class struggle is in such circumstances expressed … primarily as an ideational and political struggle.''[1/] I must sadly say that this mishmash of Weber and Lenin without Marx can only be called a refusal to think the matter to the end.

Two contextual matters are also implied here. First, an argument is made in other places by Kardelj and other supporters of the system, for example Šuvar (*Sociološki*; cf. Kerševan, ''K vprašanju'' 1476), that there are overriding societal needs – such as independence and development of industry – which must be met, and which in situations of dire stress must take precedence. I believe this is a correct argument, but it comes maybe 15 years too late: no socialist society can be developed if a permanent siege mentality is fostered beyond necessity. This was proved to the hilt by the Stalin experience, and Kardelj was – in one of his favourite terms – ''subjectively'' an anti-Stalinist. Second, Kardelj was the highest representative of the pro-workers'-councils wing inside the CPY. But his argument shows, *a fortiori* for most other leaders, that finally the politocracy behaved like all other ruling classes: there can be no fundamentally threatening contradictions in our society. In a banal misreading of Hegel, it believed that the real is also the rational and moreover the only possible state. It would have been a better argument, and a step towards seeing reality, to say (like many bourgeois sociologists in capitalism) that classes exist and they can all be friends together. Why not admit that?

It is because we are here at a theoretical dead-end. To a Leninist, calling a group an opposed class with which the working class is in conflict means that this group has to be dispossessed by all means at hand (I found this expressly confirmed by Bakarić 486). Yet the theorem that if classes exist, there must automatically and unceasingly be an intense overt and strategically purposeful struggle between them, is Stalinist obfuscation: ''Class *conflict* … is essentially the fundamental relationship between classes involving exploitation and resistance to it, but not *necessarily* either class consciousness or collective activity in common .. .'' (Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle* 100; cf. Mills 309–10); that is, in a proper wide sense class conflict is all that a class does or suffers insofar as it affects its power in relation to other classes (see Ollman, *Dialectical Investigations* 164 and passim). In this sense, ''class conflict is the way class relations and classes themselves exist'' (Kerševan, ''Razredni'' 129); but the ambiguous term of

‘‘conflict’’ can be stretched to mean anything between actual insurrectionary fighting and opposition or inherent contradiction. The logical obverse to Stalinism, that if there is no intense overt struggle there are no classes, is liberal and social-democratic obfuscation. Both strongly influenced Kardelj’s waffling between bureaucracy ‘‘in the professional sense’’ and in the Leninist sense.

Finally, who were these politically highly important strata or social groups with economic interests opposed to the producers’ self-management, alluded to oh- so-circumlocutorily by Kardelj, how many people? We have no clear data, but, based on the indirect statistics adduced in the section ‘‘Data and Categorizing Classes in Yugoslavia 1945–1975’’, I would argue this might have comprised maybe one-third of the politocracy, including at least about one-half of the middle and just-below-the-top Party cadre, which means including many, if not most, professional politicians. To call them enemies would mean that they should be removed from positions of power. In difficult economic and international circumstances, and without a democratic socialist civil society, based in the lower and middle classes to be nurtured as an ally, such a radical split in the politocracy was too much to envisage even for its (very moderately) ‘‘left’’ wing, and was therefore transmogrified into ‘‘ideological struggle’’: an avowal of impotence that solved nothing.

A Summing Up and Hypothesis: Two Yugoslav Singularities – Splendour and Misery

Splendour: Creative Plebeian Singularity

How are we to evaluate comparatively the trajectory of Yugoslavia after World War 2? It issued from a Communist Party led popular or plebeian revolution unique in Europe (except for the aberrant case of Albania), and in some ways much more similar to the Chinese and the first Vietnamese revolution (cf. Fejtö 225–28 and passim; Johnson). All of these were revolutions carried out by the peasantry, rooted in Leninist anti-imperialism, and organized by a handful of tightly knit professionals with a considerable input by urban intellectuals. They were outside Stalin’s reach, distrusted and resented by him. The strong partisan tradition of solve-it-yourself-on the-spot (‘‘snađi se druže’’) applied not only in the fighting units but also in the network of territorial power from below and in the political organizations.

Hence, there was in-depth experience of self- determination in the People's Liberation Committees (NOOs) and in supra-territorial organizations such as the Anti-fascist Youth League (USAOJ – with a prestigious nucleus of largely autonomous Young Communists [SKOJ]), the AFŽ and others. They were all initiated and supervised by the Communist Party but allowed large autonomy; in the words of the excellent monograph on women by Jancar-Webster, each was ''an original creation'' and ''a remarkable expression of political acuity on the part of the Party leadership'' (on the AFŽ, 122–5).

Inversely, after 1944 all these autonomies kept shrinking, perhaps because they were too successful: the Women's Front was dissolved in 1953 and the Communist Youth in 1949, as remarkable examples of political blindness. To understand these and later oscillations, we have to postulate a permanent clash between the warm and the cold currents in Yugoslav communism (as in all radical movements): that is, the orientation towards plebeian democratic power from below versus the orientation towards elite or vanguard domination from above.

The new State power embarked after 1945 on a rapid industrialization of the country as the inevitable precondition for is independence, well-being and cultural modernization. The ''capital'' for this had to be found in a new ''primitive accumulation'' – analogous to the one in 16th–17th Century England before it acquired colonies – from the only source available in the absence of a modern working class or of foreign plunder: the peasantry. This process was not singular: all industrially undeveloped countries have striven to do so, whether the ideological justification was, for example, Bismarckian or Leninist. After 1945, Yugoslavia followed the Soviet road in the State organization of economics and power, but fortunately not the worst facets of Stalinist practice. What was singular is, to begin with, that it was in 1945 rooted in popular enthusiasm for reconstruction of a devastated but now liberated country. Singular in Yugoslavia was, further, both the secession from Stalin, and the rediscovery by some top leaders after it of the Paris Commune and of their own partisan roots in Marxian self-government which set the Party out on the road of both strengthening the local centres of power down to the basic territorial units and of slowly introducing self-management in the nationalized enterprises. A second revolution (Fejtö 225ff.) sketched out a zig-zagging road to a real socialist democracy from below. Furthermore, Tito as of 1950 found a second source of financing which permitted him to dispense with forced collectivization of land and

subservience to Moscow: foreign loans. 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 which turned the recipient into a semi-colony. This allowed the Yugoslav societal experiment a quarter century (roughly 1949–1973) of breathing space before the world market and the Western powers began to squeeze the windpipe. It became meaningful on a world scale when that space-time was used for the development of the experiment in self-management, first through workers' councils in industrial enterprises, and then extended to all workplaces including education and culture to health services.

On the international scale, this singularity allowed for that second remarkable experiment of the movement of Non-Aligned Countries, working for peace and independence against both Cold War camps. It resulted in a real independence of Yugoslavia, until the ruling class involution made it economically and politically vulnerable.

To discuss the ups and downs of these experiments requires a separate essay, which I hope to get to. Let me therefore just reduce it to two points. First, though self-management did not lead to workers control of enterprises, it did generate much worker and technician input and

Table 5. Some key data of economic growth (from Bilandži´c *Historija* 386–94)

Rate of growth of industrial production 1969/1953: 10.5% (officially 5th highest in the world)
GNP due to industry vs. agriculture: 1947, 18% vs. 42.6%; 1972, 38.1% vs. 18.8%
Growth of pro capita GNP 1969/1953: 259%; yearly average 6.1%
GNP pro capita: 1953, ca 300 US$; 1971, ca 800 US$

Still, having started as one of the poorest economies of prewar Europe, devastated by war to boot, this meant Yugoslavia was in the 1970s only entering into the ranks of economically middling countries: its pro capita GNP was roughly half of Italy or

Czechoslovakia, though probably more equitably distributed.

enthusiasm, reflected in the remarkable economic success of the SFR Yugoslavia 1950–1960, with a levelling off in the 1960s.

Second, self-management threatened members of the new ruling class who therefore regrouped from the end of the 1960s onwards as partly a financial ‘‘technocracy’’ and partly as three major and three or four minor ruling groups in the constituent republics, introducing a lot of waste and a slide towards nationalism, while blocking a direct democracy from the basis to the top of power (Table 5).

Misery: Suicidal Class Singularity

The involution of the ruling class put a stop to further emancipation of labour and of the public sphere, which had coincided with maintaining an independent and reasonably prosperous federal Yugoslavia (cf. Suvin ‘‘Pogled unazad’’). It allowed a more or less unhindered development of endogenous and exogenous factors militating against such a State. It destroyed all credibility in a vanguard communist leadership. This was a second and suicidal singularity. Halting emancipation, Yugoslavia – very late – joined the other ‘‘socialist’’ countries from Poland to Bulgaria in unresolved stasis.

This endogenous factor can be initially described as a fattening of the arteries in the split and quarrelling ruling class, which turned exclusively towards its class interests. This meant abandoning its victorious historical bloc with the workers, peasants and middle classes. When they forsook this alliance, they lost the working classes’ horizons – which borrow solutions for society’s major problems from the future (Polanyi 162, echoing Marx). A sociopolitical counter-offensive against the forces in favour of self-management by a strong conservative faction of the ruling class began in its opposition to the very interesting *Programme of the League of Communists* passed in 1958. The politocracy’s ideological helplessness and confusion led to a stalemate at the top level of decision-making in the mid-1960s which allowed only piecemeal solutions. Of the other classes, the two large proletarian ones, peasants and manual workers, were politically and economically neutralized and sociologically atomized. So were the majority of the middle classes, mired in consumerism, while a radical wing of the humanist intelligentsia was by itself too powerless to count seriously (cf. Žvan 463–4). This led towards a politico-economic paralysis after the 1965 reform, and more acutely in the less favourable international economic

climate of the 1970s (cf. the titles by Samary).

The economic situation that resulted was well described by Woodward as neither the theoretical ‘‘market socialism’’ à la Lange and Taylor (for ‘‘the market did not apply to factors of production — labor, capital, … raw materials, credit’’) nor a planned economy: after 1952 plans became only a set of policy goals for production and investment, after 1956 goals were set at five-year intervals (with interruptions), attempting to define credit, price and foreign-trade policies and to forecast the growth path based on information from plans of enterprises and localities. While there was substantial price and other regulation, there was no set of legally binding commands, quantity controls or directed allocations, so that the central government resorted to ad hoc quantity controls where immediate results were needed (169–71). This was a confession of failure, but it tided ruling interests over for the next couple of years at a time. This mishmash economic model did not fuse the capitalist ‘‘law of [exchange-]value’’ with communist planned production for use-value, or indeed subordinate the former to the latter, but ensured that neither could fully operate; economic growth, the basis of the LCY’s legitimacy, stalled and eventually reversed. By 1979, Yugoslav foreign debt had in three years levitated from 4–5 to 17–19 billion US$, and the capitalist world politics and market interests became in the 1980s increasingly unfavourable. Politically, the ‘‘capital functions concentrated [in the Party/State apparatus] … could never fully lose their status of ‘worker representatives’’’ (Kerševan, ‘‘K vprašanju’’ 1485), so that they had to enter into some compromises with the workers or producers. But the politocracy shifted the central economic functions to the six federated republics, which meant the rise of six (in fact seven, with Kosovo) local ruling sub-classes. At some point, this doubly hybrid status became increasingly irksome to them and the economic sops to the working classes impossible. Having refused a full economic-political democracy where they would lose some of their central prerogatives, the only course available to dominant class/es was a sharp political change by which their economic class interests might be largely safeguarded (it turned out this belief was mistaken). This safeguard was attainable at the price of supporting nationalism and dismantling the Yugoslav Federation.

To get ahead of my analytical limits here, this means that as of the early 1980s the capitalist powers were in a position to bring Yugoslavia economically crashing down simply by stopping IMF loans. Practically, the SFRY became a peripheral dependency of global capitalism (a position prefigured from the 1960s on, when it had become a supplier of cheap labour

to the West European economies), left for the moment to stew in its own sauce but with a prospect of full integration into capitalism by a fire-sale of its whole economy. This was actualized into overt changes by the withdrawal of the USSR from world politics after the mid-1980s. The USA preferred a united subservient Yugoslavia. The German banks and the Vatican, with longer memories of painful defeat, preferred dismembering it; they won out.

Very few ruling classes in recent history have opted for dismemberment. This was a true negative singularity, as extreme as the first, positive one: the experiment in self-management and peaceful international equality.

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When not actually cited or paraphrased, much stimulating secondary literature is not adduced. I use Party with capital P and CPY for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in all of its guises, or LCY for the later League of Communists. Unacknowledged translations are mine.

Note

1. Here are the passages from Kardelj’s Serbocroatian (though I do not know whether the original was Slovenian and afterwards translated, which

would explain some but not all of its plodding): ‘‘Zbog toga je morao nastati i jedan veoma samostalan upravljački sloj, politički veoma snažan, koji je mogao bitno da utiče na regulisanje unutrašnjih društvenih odnosa i suprotnosti …. [U]sled takve političke mo´ci, taj sloj može do´ci i dolazi — ponekad u progresivnom, ponekad u konzervativnom smislu — u sukob sa osnovnom masom radničke klase ili sa pojedinim njenim delovima.’’

‘‘Ali zbog takvog svog položaja birokratija u profesionalnom smislu ne postaje ona nova klasa koja je glavna prepreka društvenom uticaju radničke klase.’’

‘‘[To nije borba] klase protiv klase jer su u krajnjoj liniji dugoročni interesi svih tih slojeva jedinstveni. Zato se i klasna borba u tim uslovima izražava .. . prvenstveno u idejnoj i političkoj borbi.’’(47–48, 45–46)

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