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✦ BRANISLAVA VIČAR



**Yugoslavia between
May '68 and November '89:
Introduction¹**

Jugoslavija između
maja '68 i novembra '89: uvod

Looking back at the recent fiftieth anniversary of *mai 68* and the even more recent thirtieth anniversary of *die Wende*, 'Yugoslavia between May '68 and November '89' traces the impact of these global events on Yugoslavia, a country where the surprising non-violence of student protests was matched only by the shocking violence of capitalist transition. During the last half-century, May '68 has been portrayed mostly as a revolt led by students and workers around the world against state-led industrial society typical both for the US-American hegemony and for the Soviet alternative. As such, the revolution tends to be associated, on the one hand, with NATO member states such as France or the US and, on the other, with members of the Warsaw Pact such as Czechoslovakia or Poland. However, May '68 resonated also in Yugoslavia, a country which not only was aligned neither to NATO nor to the Soviet bloc, but was even the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, a worldwide attempt to oppose both geopolitical blocs. Yugoslavia is thus a rare case of May '68 going beyond the critique of the Cold-War stalemate; a case where this critique of both the US and the USSR was always already the official position of the regime itself; a case where Fordist industrial society common both to the capitalist West and the real-socialist East was challenged by the experiment of workers' self-management, which Yugoslavia introduced two decades before 1968 and abolished two decades after it. What was, then, the object of critique in and following 1968 in a country like Yugoslavia?

But first we should take a step back and ask ourselves if we really need to formulate any of this in terms of anniversaries—not one, but two anniversaries. After all, an anniversary is a bizarre and certainly pre-theoretical mix of the evental and the conjunctural; it is what Fernand Braudel, a key figure in the second generation of the Annales school of history, would call an event, but an event

1
The editorial work on this cluster of articles and the writing of the introduction took place at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in the framework of the research project 'May '68 in Literature and Theory: The Last Season of Modernism in France, Slovenia, and the World' (J6-9384) and the research programme 'Studies in Literary History, Literary Theory and Methodology' (P6-0024), both of which were funded by the Slovenian Research Agency.

removed from us by what he might call a conjuncture. In this respect, May '68 at fifty is neither an event nor a conjuncture; it is an event that happened a whole conjuncture ago. And November '89 at thirty is of course no better.

However, adding November '89 at thirty to May '68 at fifty does not necessarily make things twice as bad. If we look back at what proverbially started in Paris in 1968 from the perspective of what supposedly began in East Berlin in 1989, this at least gives us a chance to move from both the eventual and the conjunctural and grasp the structural, the real interest of Fernand Braudel.

Indeed, according to world-systems theory, the main contemporary successor of Braudelian history, 1989 was a continuation of 1968: a continuation of its liberalism, according to Giovanni Arrighi's assessment at the time (see Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1992), or a continuation of its neo-liberalism, according to Arrighi's revision from a decade later (see Arrighi). Moreover, 1968 itself was a repetition of 1848, according to Arrighi and his colleagues, who saw the bourgeois revolution of 1848 and May '68 as the only world revolutions: just as 1848 was a failed but world-scale return to 1789, so too May '68 was a failed but world-scale return to 1917; and just as the 1848 revolution formed the original Left as a rehearsal for 1917, so too May '68 spawned the New Left as a rehearsal for 1989. In turn, 1848 was, 'in a Hegelian sense, the sublation (*Aufhebung*) of 1789' (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989: 98). Which is a peculiar reference by Arrighi and his colleagues, given that Karl Marx refers to G. W. F. Hegel to portray 1848 as a farcical repetition not of 1789, but of 1799, when Napoleon had his *coup d'état*, itself a tragic repetition of the Roman republic.

Hence, the first reason to think about the dates of revolutions is that revolutionaries themselves do it. The Yellow vests movement

started in French social media in May 2018, exactly fifty years after May '68. By November, the movement spread onto the streets of France and beyond: wearing the high-visibility vests that French law had required of them as a safety measure, motorists demanded real safety measures, including the reintroduction of the solidarity tax. In the process, protesters also produced a *tricolore* with three dates on it, one for each colour: 1789, 1968 and 2018 (with the red third of the flag going to 2018). The year 1989 was missing from the flag, of course, no doubt because the revolutionaries of 1989 had approached their revolution as the exact opposite of May '68: a pro-capitalist upheaval, not an anti-capitalist one. But this is just a further example of revolutionaries conjuring up past revolutions, an example that becomes even more telling if we agree with Arrighi and others who, as we just saw, claim that 1989 was a continuation of 1968.

So, dates of revolutions are important to revolutionaries themselves. But they are important in periods without revolutions as well. In those periods, past revolutions are domesticated like family members who are thrown a party for their birthday, especially for their fiftieth, sixtieth... hundredth birthday. Finally, 1968, 1989 and Yugoslavia meet even at the level where 'Yugoslavia between May '68 and November '89' tries to place itself, namely the level of theory: as Hrvoje Klasić writes (9), the changes brought about by the fall of the Berlin Wall included also a new scholarly interest in the Yugoslav May '68, a topic that remained conspicuously marginal in Yugoslav humanities and social sciences until the country's breakup. In this sense, 1989 marks the birthdate of the Yugoslav 1968 as an object of knowledge.

Indeed, a look at sixties Paris from eighties East Berlin poses questions about the legacy of Yugoslavia that ultimately are structural, insofar as their ultimate horizon is the *longue durée* that goes all the

way back to the early modern origins of capitalism, the object of Braudel's first book, his 1949 masterpiece on the Mediterranean. Outside theory, Yugoslav socialist experiment and its defence during the Yugoslav chapter of May '68 belie the commonplace that May '68 fought for socialism in the West and against socialism in the East. And within theory, Yugoslav non-alignment and workers' self-management pose a problem even for the popular Braudelian account (see Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989: 103–104) according to which May '68 was mostly a revolt against both the US and the USSR. Both these commonplaces about May '68 are complicated by May in Yugoslavia, where the regime was criticised in the name of its own ideals of self-management and non-alignment (which is also why the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was probably the only ruling party worldwide to assess May '68 as a confirmation of its own politics [see Kanzleiter: 85]). *Contra* pre-theoretical opinion-makers, Yugoslav protesters did not protest against socialism as such, despite protesting in the so-called East; *pace* Braudelian theorists, they protested against more than just the forced choice between the US and the USSR (and they were able to do that also because they did not protest against socialism).

Beyond these commonplaces, 'Yugoslavia between May '68 and November '89' aims to rethink our assumptions about May '68 across such divides as the West and the rest, politics and culture, culture and counterculture, and art and critique. As such, it offers us an opportunity to ask ourselves why May '68 was necessary at all in the country that led the Non-Aligned Movement and experimented with self-management as an alternative to both capitalism and state socialism. Estranged in this way, the fact that May '68 did take place even in Yugoslavia can begin to have consequences for our notion of the global May '68, as well as for our understanding of November '89, an event whose

global impact few societies felt as strongly and as painfully as that of Yugoslavia.

In its attempt to sophisticate the state of the art and its focus on the geopolitics of the metropolises in the core of the world-system (Paris, New York, Berlin) and in the Soviet-influenced periphery (Prague, Warsaw), 'Yugoslavia between May '68 and November '89' adds not only the dimension of the semi-peripheral, but the dimension where the semi-peripheral meant the non-aligned and the self-managed, among other things, and was also reflected as such in cultural production. This is way the articles that follow focus on culture and the arts rather than geopolitics, the usual object of study in relation to 1968 and 1989.

Some of the most world-renowned oeuvres produced by the people of Yugoslavia—including Marina Abramović's performance art, the OHO group's conceptual art, the Black Wave film, the Ljubljana Lacanian school, the Praxis school of Marxism, the prose of Danilo Kiš, Milorad Pavić and Dubravka Ugrešič and the poetry of Tomaž Šalamun—began to take shape in the late 1960s and received worldwide recognition by the late 1980s. Together with aesthetic currents from other locales of the semi-periphery of the world-system (notably the Latin American Boom), these and similar phenomena arguably gave a second life to hitherto Europe-based modernism, which by the 1960s was limited to such forms as *nouveau roman* (see Anderson). This final season of European modernism was followed in the core of the system by post-modernism in aesthetics and neo-conservatism in politics, with many protagonists of May '68 becoming so-called New Philosophers, TV intellectuals critical of socialist totalitarianism and revolution in the name of liberalism and human rights. As for Yugoslavia, the final season of European modernism was followed by a party-led suspense of liberal reforms, a crisis of the economic, political and cultural experiment

that was self-management, a dissolution of the state more violent than in any other socialist society, and the emergence of independent successor states. By now, all these states are either in or on their path to the European Union, the institution whose Parliament chose to commemorate the recent thirtieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall by, among other things, equalising the atrocities of fascism with those of communism, the main twentieth-century source of anti-fascism. This indistinction between fascism and its historical alternative seems to be the only non-alignment that awaits ex-Yugoslav societies after the breakup of their common non-aligned country. ♡

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Contributions



Aesthetic ‘Traditions and Perspectives’ and the Politics of the Yugoslav 1968

Estetske »tradicije i perspektive«
i politika '68. u Jugoslaviji

The article inspects the political character of the 1968 events in Yugoslavia against the background of culturalised interpretations of this watershed year in post-foundational theory and aesthetics. The article presupposes that to interpret the global 1968 in terms of an emergence of the political as an aesthetic, cultural subversion of outdated politics would result in a myopic conclusion that 1968 did not happen at all in Yugoslavia. Why is this so? In order to pursue this rather banal but pertinent question, the opposition between politics and the political will be extended along the lines of the dialectics of evolution and revolution. It is precisely the continuity of politics that can help us explain why the Yugoslav 1968 did not usher in formations that in the West were subsequently theorised as pertaining to the notion of the political.

MAY '68, YUGOSLAVIA, THE POLITICAL,
OTO BIHALJI-MERIN, MIROSLAV
KRLEŽA, THE ETHICAL REGIME OF ART

U radu se kontrastira politički smisao događaja iz 1968. godine u Jugoslaviji s etabliranim kulturološkim tumačenjima kakva možemo naći u postfundacionalističkoj teoriji i estetici. Osnovna pretpostavka teksta je da bi nas interpretacija 1968. kao globalnog fenomena, u smislu nastupanja političkog kao estetske i kulturne subverzije prevaziđenih politika, dovela do kratkovidnog zaključka da u Jugoslaviji 1968. uopšte nije ni bilo. Zašto je to tako? U svrhu pronalaženja odgovora na ovo jednostavno, ali relevantno pitanje, predlažem prošireno razmatranje dihotomije politika/političko na tragu dijalektike evolucije i revolucije. Upravo činjenica kontinuiteta politike u posleratnoj Jugoslaviji može da posluži kao polazište za odgovor na pitanje zašto 1968. u Jugoslaviji nije dovela do kulturnih i političkih rešenja koja su se na Zapadu, u retrospektivi, teorijski etablirala kao političko.

MAJ '68, JUGOSLAVIJA, POLITIČKO,
OTO BIHALJI-MERIN, MIROSLAV
KRLEŽA, ETIČKI REŽIM UMETNOSTI

1

Instead of referring to Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari or Michel Foucault to inevitably blame them for their undialectical development of these concepts, I prefer to refer to Sven Lütticken's framing of their political and aesthetic theory in a broader context of commodification processes that overtook the revolutionary ideas of the 1960s (see Lütticken). For a de-politicisation of anarchism, see Taylor.

INTRODUCTION

In the memory of the long 1960s, one particular idea is dominant, namely the belief that 'changes in the cultural sphere must precede social and political transformation' (Gilcher-Holtey 2008: 203). This understanding of revolution as a cultural rather than political turn-about flouts those outspoken and historically verifiable ambitions of the movement that cannot be short-circuited with anti-institutional, anti-statist, contra-cultural and subversive politics, or with libidinal economies, micropolitics¹ and the politics of aesthetics. In terms of politics, this is accompanied by a 'repudiation of old-fashioned class and party politics of a "totalizing" kind' (Jameson 1984: 192; see also Guattari 1995: 121, 123, Gilcher-Holtey 2013: 11–12). And in aesthetic terms, the culturalised memory of the 1960s renders invisible the fact that at least one part of aesthetic practices supported the 'idea of the Party as revolutionary vanguard' (Lütticken: 119). This has a series of implications.

First, the culturalisation or aestheticisation of the political 1960s ties in with a disregard for the historical revolutionary aesthetics that were aligned with organised politics and large-scale political movements. This primarily refers to the leftist interwar aesthetics that committed themselves to political purposes and sometimes deliberately renounced their modern right to autonomy. The normative definition of 'proletarian-revolutionary literature', delivered in 1931 by Oto Bihalji-Merin, is a case in point: 'By proletarian-revolutionary literature we mean literature that realises the world from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat and that educates the masses according to the tasks of their class and the struggle against capitalism.' (Bihalji-Merin 1978: 370)

Second, simultaneous with the (post-)1960s repudiation of or inconclusiveness about the ideological rationale of organised political aesthetics of the interwar era is an invisibility of those aesthetic phenomena that emerged around the global 1968 but did not follow the turn from politics to the political.

Similarly, the events in Yugoslavia never came to the forefront of post-1968 political and aesthetic theory for the very reason that the Yugoslav June 1968 resembled neither Third-World post-colonial liberations nor First-World cultural revolutions. Being evolutionary in a way that I will explicate below, and by simultaneously supporting the presumably outdated idea of organised politics, the Yugoslav protests, which emerged simultaneously in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and other larger cities, simply failed to become 1968.

I

Nowadays, the theoretical omnipresence of the political as the antipode and successor of traditional politics is enabled by the fact that the political is a 'purposively blurry notion' (Hebekus et al.: 13). In contemporary political theory, with post-foundational theory as a kind of ringleader, politics implies a rather conventional understanding of the business of politicians and political parties, movements, states or legislative frameworks. The political, on the other hand, presents a challenge to the established order, an interruption and perhaps even a break (see Bedorf and Röttgers, Esch-van Kan et al., Marchart: 35-60). Anarchic by itself, it suspends the symbolic economy of institutionalised, archaic, authoritarian, prescriptive, paternalist or pedagogic politics (which refers both to the politics of state and to the politics of revolution). Concomitantly, the political is semantically closely

related to the buzzword *revolution*, the perceived meaning of which is, paradoxically, synonymous with politics. The origins of this quid pro quo can be traced back to the 1960s: whereas politics was repressed in favour of the political, the term *revolution* itself did not disappear from the political and aesthetic vocabulary insofar as it was preserved in the guise of cultural revolution. Here, the unveiling of cultural revolution as a mere 'Scheinrevolution' (Habermas: 327) was referenced not only by the critics of the student movement but also by the movement's ideological tutors. In 'Cultural Revolution', a text that remained unpublished during his lifetime, Herbert Marcuse (123) noted that cultural revolution was a rebellion rather than a revolution and that it even '*absorbed*' the political revolution.

For the purposes of this article, it is of utmost importance to recognise that the political, besides presenting a revision of inherited political thought, draws its ground-breaking potential from art and literature (see Mouffe). However, this switch from politics to aesthetics is complicated by the consensus in art theory that, in capitalism, 'the redistribution of the sensible is overwhelmingly constrained by capital' and hence 'critique in and through art (the "empty space") cannot but be immanent and local' (Roberts: 224). Here, post-1968 thought (post-Marxism included) meets the solid ground of liberal aesthetics and its notion that art is an insufficient placeholder for absent politics. 'The result is'—if one is permitted to adopt here Blair Taylor's claim (737) about the political failure of anarchism—'an aestheticization of politics wherein taste and cultural preference become a cipher and shorthand for politics'.

Due to this theoretical focus on the shift away from outdated politics and towards aesthetic revolts (that is, towards the political), the Yugoslav 1968 falls out of frame of what nowadays counts as post-1968

thought. For reasons which will become clear below, the assessment of the Yugoslav 1968 (and of many related phenomena from the Second and Third Worlds) demands other analytical tools than those of contemporary post-foundational theory; in the Yugoslav case, what is needed the most is an analytical move away from the contemporary hegemony of the political towards the dialectics of evolution and revolution.

II

‘We don’t have any special programme. Our programme is the programme of the most progressive forces of our society—the League of Communists and the Constitution. We demand its full realisation,’ proclaimed Belgrade students and professors in June 1968 (quoted in Pavlović: 69). Even a brief look at the slogans and programmes that emerged in June 1968 (see Pavlović: 40–50, Popov: 39, 96–97) reveals that the protesters adhered to the official belief that state-based politics was an ‘ontological prerequisite of freedom’, to use a formulation by Oskar Davičo (quoted in Popov: 151).² In contrast to the theorisations of art under capitalism as the bearer of a ‘promise of *total revolutionary praxis*’ which art cannot uphold (Roberts: 61), the Yugoslav 1968 did not promote aesthetics as a medium of melancholic self-reflection on its own catachrestic status of ‘art being in the world and not of the world’ (Roberts: 36). The political and economic foundations of socialism, in fact, remained determinants of aesthetic endeavours up until the beginning of the 1970s and the influx of post-structuralist tendencies.³

A tentative answer to the central question of this article—how is it that the specific post-1968 exchange of politics for the political arguably did not happen in Yugoslavia?—may rest in the character of Yugoslav aesthetics in relation to revolutionary politics, as these

2 Davičo voiced this in his 1951 text *Poezija i otpori* (Poetry and Resistances), in the immediate post-Stalinist era. I quote it to suggest a continuity rather than a break between 1951 and the slogans of 1968.

3 For the significance of the journal *Ideje*, post-structuralism’s gateway to the Yugoslav intellectual scene, see Jakovljević: 146.

evolved in the decades preceding the 1968 events. When pursuing this assumption, I follow Philipp Gassert's suggestion (124) that the perspective on 1968 be extended; however, instead of looking at later decades, I take into account the *longue durée* of the socialist emancipatory trajectory throughout the post-revolutionary 1920s and 1930s, the Second World War and the post-war systemic shifts. I contend that this reversal of perspectives helps us grasp the specific role of Yugoslav art and aesthetics and the fact that it did not usher in a rebuttal of foundational politics.

In the interwar period, attempts to develop organised politics and an accompanying (counter-)culture, supported by large-scale institutions (such as revolutionary parties and city or state policies), were a matter of course in the wide range of leftist positions. In this context, both literary production and criticism were confronted with the question of the priority in the relation between evolution and revolution: specifically, the dilemma was whether the liberation of humankind could be precipitated gradually, by cultural and educational means, or whether it demanded a political revolution. Whereas the first solution preferred gradual cultivation through arts and literature, those who argued for the second option claimed that the liberation of humankind could only be completed by political means—which could and should be supplemented by a cultural evolution, yet not replaced by it. This controversy was incited by Rosa Luxemburg's 1899 pamphlet 'Social Reform or Revolution?' ('Sozialreform oder Revolution?'), a far-reaching critique of Eduard Bernstein's study from the same year, *Evolutionary Socialism (Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie)*. Thereafter, their debate marked the insurmountable ideological, political and social schism between interwar social democratic advocates of gradual reforms and communist fighters for a global revolution (see Jameson 1981: 73).

In post-war Yugoslavia, whose navigation in the Manichaean Cold-War world was characterised by a unique third way, the revolution/evolution controversy had a different trajectory than in other socialist countries, where the evolutionary (social democratic, anarchist and similar) positions were erased, but this trajectory was also different than the one in capitalist countries, where leftist traditions became substantially desolated throughout the Second World War. Thanks to Yugoslavia's exemplary position between the globally confronted political blocks, the Communist Party (called the League of Communists of Yugoslavia after 1952) was able to tolerate the challenges and even tacitly appropriate the legacy of social democracy. Although critical of reformist initiatives of non-party groups, and openly hostile towards those who defended social democratic positions, the Yugoslavia of the 1950s and 1960s brought forth the dormant potential of socialist ideas according to which social reproduction should be governed directly by producers and state property transformed into social property (see Vujić: 125). Encouraged by these developments, many prominent intellectuals committed themselves to the 'demolition of the dogma' (first and foremost, of Stalinism) and advocated for the 'freedom of creation and research' in place of the rebutted ideological 'nihilism and liquidationism' (Mikecin: 150). Consequently, the conditions became ripe for evolutionary developments also in the realm of art and through art (see Kolečnik: 69).

There is an overarching consensus among historians that during the rocking 1960s Yugoslav students had more things in common with students from Western, non-socialist countries than with those from the Eastern Block; indeed, 'the essential "east-west divide" described by some historians of 1968 existed more in the wishful thinking of socialist authorities than in the actual practices of student activists, who

ignored this boundary with great abandon' (Fichter: 101). Yet when it comes to the political and theoretical reappraisal of the June 1968 events in Yugoslavia, the simple opposition between politics and the political would force us to make the myopic conclusion that a Yugoslav 1968 never happened. Yugoslav students and workers (who partly acted in their support) differed from this pattern insofar as they did not contest the legitimacy of power relations as they had been constituted by politics.

If the cultural revolution in the capitalist West was critically recognised as a reformist development and therefore as mere evolution, this was merely an attempt to rectify its proclaimed revolutionary promises; the concomitant protests ensued under a socialist regime, which by the same token made them both reformist and evolutionary, yet in a diametrically opposite setting. Although Yugoslav counterculture was 'strongly reflective of the anti-authoritarian and participatory values that student activism sought to enact' (Fichter: 106), the authority of the Revolution and of organised (state, party, institutional, cultural) politics, which on its part drew much of its legitimacy from the liberation from fascism, was not put into question. In contrast to their Western comrades, Yugoslav protesters called not for an overthrow of the regime but for a more inclusive, more just and more socialist socialism. Accordingly, renowned artists and intellectuals who took part in the political assemblies in June 1968 did not retract from or reach out for art as a kind of other scene that would act in place of politics. For example, Stevo Žigon's famous Belgrade staging of Robespierre's speech from Georg Büchner's play *Danton's Death* (*Dantons Tod*) and Fabijan Šovagović's Zagreb recital of Miroslav Krleža's poem 'Plameni vjetar' (Wind of Flames) were performances delivered not by actors for their publics but by politically concerned citizens in front of other fellow citizens.

III

The political engagement of artists not as artists but as public intellectuals is couched in the idea of socialist totality as it was established after the Revolution. According to Vlado Mađarević (49), 'Revolution can be accomplished only with a total purpose, that is, with the humanist aim of annulling every kind of totalitarianism and making impossible once and for all any kind of social coercion'. In this setting, it was primarily systemic matters (located on the economic and governmental plane), and not individual issues (considered as markers of 'private individualism and a lack of sense for cohesion' [Lukić 1968: 86]), that could account for the 'society in its totality' (Buden 2018: 138). Simultaneously, freedom for everybody was expected to come not from art or prominent artists but from the revolutionary organisation and, subsequently, the state. Therefore, in the Yugoslav 1968 the superiority of politics over aesthetics still proved to be a determinant. However, in the two post-war decades, intermittent developments and breaks occurred that need to be detailed.

After the Second World War, once the socialist state was established while the ideal communist society still had to be achieved, many insisted that the fault for the initial failures of socialism was, in Davičo's words, 'not with the system, the state apparatuses, but with us, as we are incapable of making use of the full capacity of freedom'. This meant that the state was more advanced than its citizens and that these should draw level with the former.⁴ The task was to 'master the technique of freedom' (quoted in Popov: 151). In aesthetic discussions and literary criticism, this mastering of the technique of socialist freedom took place over a series of breaks, primarily those of 1948 and 1968. However, the breaks did not culminate in an 'abysmal'⁵ stalemate

4

Recall that 'in the Marxian system, only a collective unity—whether that of a particular class, the proletariat, or of its "organ of consciousness", the revolutionary party—can achieve this transparency; the individual subject is always positioned within the social totality' (Jameson 1981: 283).

5

For the 'abysmal' state of communist and anarchist groups in post-war Germany, see Koennen: 260.

ignorant and unaware of its own antecedents; instead, they were performed as acts of self-reflection, self-criticism and synthesis.

For example, Petar Šegedin discussed the incongruence of theory (exegetically explained by the Party) and praxis (actual living worlds of socialist citizens) with regard to literary criticism. In 'O našoj kritici' (On Our Criticism), a speech he gave in 1949 at the Second Congress of Yugoslav Writers, Šegedin exercised a kind of collective self-criticism, speaking virtually on behalf of Yugoslav literary criticism as such. Here, the fault of 'our' theoretical attitude consisted in a reductionist orientation towards immediate political goals. Having debased itself to a pragmatic, limited practice, our criticism resembled the work of a merchant who, trading minerals, judged his stones according to their value as commodities and was unable to see their beauty. Against this background, Šegedin (116) posed the following rhetorical question: 'How can a critic behave when he excludes the criterion of "human sense, of what corresponds with the whole fortune of human and natural being", if all he has at his command are intellectualised notions of decadence, formalism, chauvinism, bourgeois objectivism, anti-humanism, etc.?' In Šegedin's view, the Party was still in command of the proper comprehension of this Marxian 'human sense, of what corresponds with the whole fortune of human and natural being'. This was a gesture of loyalty and an unmistakable sign of adherence to top-down politics, and yet it functioned also as a marker of an evolutionary extension of the otherwise steadfast revolutionary framework.

Miroslav Krleža's subsequent 'Govor na Kongresu književnika u Ljubljani' (Speech at the Third Congress of Yugoslav Writers in Ljubljana) served as another milestone in these evolutionary developments. His lecture, delivered in 1952, is remembered as a watershed moment,

an exemplary break and inaugural moment of free artistic expression (see Šicel) and of an 'aesthetics of the fundamental ego' (Lasić: 161)—contemporary reactionary academics see it even as an onset of 'various cultures of dissent' (Bing et al.: 100). An upgraded reading of Krleža's lecture, however, may arouse a suspicion that this cultural bard still basically adhered to what Jacques Rancière (135) critically denominates as the ethical regime of art: 'In the ethical regime, works of art have no autonomy. They are viewed as images to be questioned for their truth and for their effect on the ethos of individuals and the community. Plato's Republic offers a perfect model of this regime.'

Undoubtedly, Krleža's idea of commissioned literature had a straightforward social, ethical duty: 'Our socialist literature has to defend the South-Slavic socialist status quo because, in this way, it defends our socialist and therefore, logically, also our popular and cultural survival.' (Krleža 1952: 238) However, his defence of an ethical regime—specifically, 'our' ethical regime—was also accomplished through a normative discharge of the hard-boiled doctrine of socialist realism—which is a point Rancière himself does not cease to reiterate in relation to the ethical regime of art. Yet in contrast to Rancière's poetics of hybridity (for which see Perica), Krleža's 'middle position' (Pantić: 193) was still placed within the narrative of socialist telos. Against Todor Pavlov and Andrei Zhdanov's 'programmatic iconography', Krleža (1952: 226) pleaded for socialist art that would be able to provide 'the objective motives of our leftist reality with subjective reflection' (Krleža 1952: 243). In contrast to his interwar refusal to provide a simplified appeasement of art and revolution, or aesthetics and politics, in 1952 Krleža (193) opted neither for aestheticism nor for directly political art but for a surpassing of these two positions by way of what he called 'authentic aesthetic socialist commitment—political

commitment through an autonomous sphere of art'. Now, although Rancière and many other theorists working today defend a similarly mediating idea of aesthetic commitment via aesthetic autonomy, the decisive difference between contemporary positions and Krleža lies in the aporetic and hence apolitical character of the former (see Sonderegger, Roberts: 258).

Moreover, Krleža's idea of committed autonomy astonishingly resonates with Georg Lukács's late work on an aesthetics that bears the principle of *tertium datur* as its core element. Not unlike Lukács, who insisted on the specificity of the aesthetic and appreciated art's social commission, which in Lukács is only intelligible under conditions of socialism, Krleža discussed art's duty towards a collective horizon that presupposed a dialectic integration or synthesis of distant and even fallacious components into a new socialist totality. This 'synthesis' should not be a 'cult of romantic phrases but a true poetic representation of facts'; hence, '[t]he tremendous amount of impressive creative matter should be given a programmatic framework, and the tragedy of our own divisions and mutual negations should be explained and construed—therein should our primary mission lie' (Krleža 1952: 242).

Against ingrained interpretations of this speech as a sign of the freedom and historical victory of Art, I contend that Krleža's *tertium datur* was enabled due to a change in political conditions—the establishment of a socialist state that provided institutional support for organised culture, which on its part acted on behalf of the official ethical regime of art. In other words, Krleža's political commitment via aesthetic autonomy became possible only after he acknowledged, in contrast to the interwar years, the primacy of politics over the political. His change of course—from aporetic and therefore counterrevolutionary 'solipsistic mystifications', to use a characterisation

by Bogomir Hermann (A.B.C: 307), towards a recognition of the state as the guarantor of 'our' freedom—illuminates the fact that the evolutionary perspectives in post-war Yugoslav acknowledged the necessity of rule and power.

IV

These landmarks show that Yugoslav aesthetics in the decades prior to the events of 1968 were marked by an overall agreement with the primacy of politics. Similarly, and in contrast to a far-reaching renouncement of institution, ideology and authority by a significant faction of the First-World 1968, the Yugoslav 1968 did not harbour any ambition to put forth the political in order to replace a compromised politics. In this section I shall outline pertinent early developments that gesture towards a possible explanation for this state of things. To this end, I shall delve into the ideological trajectory of Oto Bihalji-Merin, one of the most renowned Yugoslav editors, art historians and writers. By taking into account the interwar developments and by contouring the political, economic and aesthetic trends throughout two and a half post-war decades, I read Bihalji-Merin's career in terms of the development from revolution to evolution. Here, I propose the thesis that there is a continuity here that leads almost seamlessly from the former to the latter—a thesis that interprets Bihalji-Merin's and similar careers as being exemplary of a Rancièrian ethical regime of Yugoslav art and politics. Over the decades, this regime—and Krleža and Bihalji-Merin were only its most prominent representatives—relied on similar material and structural foundations of the socialist state (see Kirn: 252), in return effecting proxy impacts on the relationship between politics and aesthetics in the Yugoslav 1968.

Much like Miroslav Krleža, Bihalji-Merin belonged to those authors and critics who in the 1920s committed themselves to communist cultural activism; however, due to either their bourgeois origin or their proclivity for nineteenth-century high culture and liberal (that is, bourgeois) aesthetics, they were occasionally regarded as being estranged from revolutionary Marxism and hence counter-revolutionary. Yet in contrast to Krleža, Bihalji-Merin submitted himself early on to the goals of an organised communist counterculture and even played an important role in the establishment of a transient episode of Yugoslav socialist realism. In order to outline his ideological pathway from revolution to evolution, I first quote from his 1929 text 'Povodom jedne umjetničke izložbe u Beogradu' (Considering a Recent Art Exhibition in Belgrade), in which he criticised, writing under the pseudonym Otto Biha, the 'muse of the bourgeois art which inspires only pointless aestheticisation or graceful virtuosity' (Biha 1929: 56):

Art stands in the service of progress. In the dialectic process of economic and spiritual mutual powers, art is one of the factors of either progress or reaction. That is why we are uncompromising in our criticism. We cannot bow in front of beauty. We ask: whom does beauty serve? Someone who after successful stock exchange transactions takes 'his soul' for a walk through the gardens of beauty? Or those who in their miserable life walk the path of misery? (Biha: 1929: 57)

Similar statements can be found also in the texts he published in *Die Linkskurve*, the leading German communist literary journal between 1929 and 1932. Bihalji-Merin was an editorial-board member and for some time even the chief editor of *Die Linkskurve*. After an intervention of a left opposition inspired by the Russian Association of Proletarian

Writers (RAPP), and after the onset of the 'Wendung' (for which see Becher), Bihalji-Merin was briefly dismissed from the editorial board. Unlike Krleža, he then started to promote the proletarian mass novel (*Massenroman*), which was conceptualised as a conscious and progressive appropriation of nineteenth-century bourgeois literary forms with the aim of encouraging broad layers of society to join the communist movement (see Gallas: 66).

In the early post-war years, Bihalji-Merin even acted as an important promoter of socialist realism in Yugoslavia. Forty-four issues of *Jugoslavija-SSSR—Časopis društva za kulturnu saradnju Jugoslavije sa SSSR*, a monthly journal which he edited from 1945 to 1949, serve as outstanding study material of the Rancièrian ethical regime in Yugoslavia. S. P. Lebedjanski's 1947 report (9) on 'Izložba dela sovjetskih slikara u Beogradu' (Belgrade Exhibition of Works by Soviet Painters) illustrates the ethical foundations of socialist realism at its best: 'Soviet art is unfamiliar with unimaginative formalistic buffoonery. In his works, the Soviet painter endeavours to express thoughts, feelings and efforts of the people, of its leaders, its heroes and its famous men.' Evidently, Lebedjanski erects socialist realism by detaching it from the class enemy of formalism. Furthermore, the painter is not only 'a' painter or perhaps a socialist realist painter, but a Soviet painter. He does not announce possible worlds to come but pedagogically depicts what already is: 'thoughts, feelings and efforts of the people'. The 'people' are on their part associated with heroic, outstanding and exemplary figures: 'leaders', 'heroes', 'famous men'. Reading these kinds of contributions to *Jugoslavija-SSSR*, one is reminded of the quality that Ljiljana Kolečnik (32) ascribed to socialist realism as a whole, namely that these contributions testify to the infamous ideological 'monosemy' and that 'it is hard to resist the impression that all the time we have only one and the same text in front of us'.

6
Socialist modernism would be an alternative term. As the present discussion draws on continuities between post-war socialism and the interwar era, when it was aestheticism and not modernism that was repudiated, here I prefer to invoke socialist aestheticism because it implicitly refers to the once controversial status of selected movements in modern art.

It would, however, be false to assume that the successor journal, *Jugoslavija: ilustrovani časopis*, which was launched in 1949 after the proverbial break with Stalin and discontinued ten years later, introduced any 'freedom of creation and research'. With the new monthly, Bihalji-Merin made a sharp turn towards art movements he had already discarded, including impressionism and expressionism. The journal's evolutionary extension of revolutionary aesthetics revalued the modern aestheticism that had already been rejected for being decadent, formalist or even morbid (see Šegedin: 116, Lukić 1968: 25). In the late 1940s, this promoted the journal's editor to the role of a 'backer' (Jakovljević: 17) of so-called 'socialist aestheticism' (Lukić 1968: 85, Jakovljević: 10, 17, 83–98).⁶ However, *Jugoslavija* was still financially fostered and ideologically empowered by the state, which the monthly supplied with new, hitherto liberated aesthetics in return.

Maintaining 'many traits of the previous phase' (Lukić 1975: 241), socialist aestheticism reflected the new political and social constellation that came into life after the Resolution of the Informbureau and especially with the implementation of the foreign policy of non-alignment and the domestic policy of self-management (introduced in 1951). It supported the new ethos of non-authoritarian socialism and was thus still in tune with the collective, representative aesthetic ethos. Here, instead of hastily proclaiming the end of the ethical regime in art for the sake of challenging the otherwise fitting claim that in the new journal 'a detachment from the former "ethical" mission of art proves to be conspicuous' (Jakovljević: 51), one should be aware of the continuities as well as the breaks within the socialist ethical regime. Bihalji-Merin's invention of socialist aestheticism, with its new appreciation for those formalist practices that the accelerated historical pace had dismissed for being irrational and politically misleading,

was not an automatic appropriation of the counterpart (the liberal aesthetics of the capitalist era), but an affirmation of a conspicuously socialist *tertium datur*, which, moreover, was 'the third and real solution' (Lukács: 521) to the dilemmas between free and committed art, the high and the low, and capitalism and communism.

In his 1957 text 'Tradicije i perspektive' (Traditions and Perspectives), Bihalji-Merin spoke from the point of view of post-war Yugoslav art and stressed the specific historical conjuncture 'in which all that was once needed to be fought for has a natural, self-evident right of existence'. The 'young generation of Yugoslav artists' was born into a world that now—thanks to its systemic coordinates, one may add—allowed for those artistic articulations that in times of strong political struggles were considered as misleading. This generation demanded 'recognition and acceptance even for its most fantastic experimental modes of expression' (Bihalji-Merin 1957: 12). Bihalji-Merin's acceptance of the manifold forms of expression of this new generation is, however, not to be understood as an invocation of irrational forces (the 'corporeal wants, dark passions and egotistically impure drives', as they were vaunted in Krleža's 1933 introduction to Krsto Hegedušić's book of drawings [Krleža 1933: 11]), but as an extension and merger of formerly acuminated ideological fronts. Implicitly, Bihalji-Merin here worked in line with Krleža's post-war demand that '[a]ll things be discussed with regard to their particular space and time' (Krleža 1952: 319). Much like the state as a whole, socialist aesthetic theory was now able to acclaim those evolutionary artistic expressions that turned towards the inner anthropological, emotional and ontological problems of the human being, as well as to his or her individual poetic being (see Mađarević: 19). In this context, although he repeatedly stressed art's own autonomous means of expression, Bihalji-Merin promoted

neither a notion of a self-contained, transhistorical artwork nor the idea of a fundamental artistic ego:

The style of a particular time is a distinctive handwriting of the collective in question. The individual artist may believe that he draws his creation from his most hidden 'I'. The presence of a commonality that surpasses the individuality nonetheless shapes the style of his time. Surely, for the contemporaries the general traits are often overshadowed by the personal ones, yet the time distance makes the big, consistent traits of the epoch come to the fore. (Bihalji-Merin 1955: 3)

In Bihalji-Merin's synthetic vision, one particular art form accomplished the desired conceptual integration of interwar revolutionary efforts with post-war evolutionary concessions. This was naive art in its modern inception (Henri Rousseau), interwar variants (including the Zemlja group in Yugoslavia) and post-war climaxes from Africa and Haiti (see Bihalji-Merin 1971). In the Yugoslav context, it was naive art in particular that signalled the break with socialist realism without abandoning figuration. Simultaneously, it functioned as a counterpart to the rise of non-figurative and abstract tendencies (see Zimmermann: 196). Here, we can take a look at yet another ideological dimension of Bihalji-Merin's aesthetic preference for naive art and its *tertium datur*: the possibility of appreciating this art appears as an emblematic proof of the historical resolution of the controversy over evolution and revolution. If, in the 1920s and 1930s, evolutionary and revolutionary positions debated over what comes first—political revolution or aesthetic evolution—the formation of the socialist state rendered this quandary invalid. Similarly, Yugoslav naive art (and Zemlja in particular) was promoted from an example of “left” formalism’ (as Grgo Gamulin

dismissed it in 1946 [quoted in Kolečnik: 44–45]) to an authentic mode of Yugoslav aesthetic expression. In a nutshell, it was only after the victory of the revolution that evolution could become acceptable.

V

So went the official story. Notwithstanding the compelling power of this interpretative framework or 'jargon' (Močnik: 30–31), a series of protests and demonstrations from the 1950s and 1960s (see Fichter: 104, Vučetić) testified to the fact that the resolution of the revolution/evolution controversy, however sophisticated in a theoretical sense, displayed flaws in everyday praxis. A mere glance at the sociological data relating to the first two post-war decades (see Popov: 126–27, 184–85) speaks volumes about the insufficiency of the redistribution of the sensible in terms of an authentic socialist becoming of individual political subjects. There is, thus, a flip side to the Yugoslav ideal-typical development towards a historical and ideological synthesis, namely the gap between the lived experience of the people and the theoretical formulas offered by the political and aesthetic establishment. On the other hand, slogans from June 1968 demonstrate that there still existed a clearly identifiable homology between these two levels; thus, we indeed can assume that on the plane of ideology and art production a 'divide between "official" and "unofficial" culture' was inexistent (Bago: 27).

In his recent book on performance art in Yugoslavia, Branislav Jakovljević demonstrates that Yugoslav socialist aestheticism functioned as a revamped version of socialist realism, whereby the realist component was abandoned but the socialist horizon was preserved. Therefore, especially when it comes to its ethical dimension—ethics standing here

for the centrality of socialist totality in the sense explicated above (that is, totality in the Marxian 'human sense, of what corresponds with the whole fortune of human and natural being')—instead of looking at the breaks it is more advisable to search for the continuities of the socialist ethics, continuities that became evident after the supposed end of socialist realism. The continuity thesis advanced above suggests that a certain socialist rationale was sustained throughout the 1950s and 1960s which was still able to prove its political viability in June 1968. Accordingly, even those who acted as advocates of freedom of speech and unbounded creativity were in consensus with the overall political and aesthetic setting.

CONCLUSION

Let me summarise my argument and bring the continuity thesis to a close. With the turn towards socialist aestheticism, Bihalji-Merin neither simply exchanged content-oriented aesthetics for its formalist counterpart nor did he abandon the ethical regime for the sake of some historically and artistically superior aesthetic regime (for this superiority, see Rancière: 135). Expressed in terms of Kolečnik's (34) systematisation of three elementary traits of socialist realism—socialist idea, partiality and the popular spirit—socialist aestheticism came into being following the rejection of militant partiality. At the same time, socialist aestheticism upheld the unmistakable allegiance to the idea of socialist totality, the teleological notion of universal human progress included. In a similar vein, the Yugoslav 1968 did not signal a break with the Party, but instead exercised a comradely critique of its leadership for not fulfilling the duties and promises of the Revolution. As partiality—in the meaning of loyalty to the League of Communists

of Yugoslavia—ceased to be unquestionable, socialism—in the meaning of both humanist striving for freedom and adherence to the established socialist polity—was reinforced.

In 1968, this ultimate horizon of socialist totality still proved its validity for those who exerted social and political criticism. Although the presumed historical resolution of the revolution/evolution controversy was ‘part of the strategy of domination in the conditions of socialism’ (Močnik: 30), and although Krleža and Bihalji-Merin, as respectable citizens, were, in fact, ‘hovering above socialist reality’ (Pantić: 197) and were thus part of the problem rather than part of the solution of the relations of hegemony in Yugoslav society, it is pivotal that they acted in support of the idea of a hierarchical relation of politics and the political and that in 1968 this idea was still upheld by the coming generation. If the *longue durée* of Yugoslav political aesthetics was related to the 1968 protests at all, it was through this assumption of a secondary, even subservient position of art in relation to politics. Famed film director Želimir Žilnik’s claim that ‘the emancipatory promise of culture is a bluff’ (Buden 2010: 47) could be used here to encapsulate the entire thesis of my article: the Yugoslav 1968 did not propel any countercultural aesthetics, subversion or micro-politics precisely for the reason that, against the socialist horizon, the political could never have recuperated from the failings of politics. This then explains why Yugoslav protests, rather than ushering in the political, demanded reforms on the plane of politics. ♡

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Povzetek

Članek raziskuje politični značaj leta 1968 v Jugoslaviji, pri čemer se v prvi vrsti ograjuje od kulturoloških razlag tega prelomnega leta, kakršne pogosto srečamo v post-fundacionalni politični in estetski teoriji. Članek oriše zgodovinski razvoj razmerja med politiko in estetikom, kakršen se z gledno kaže v ideoloških premenah dvojice ključnih jugoslovanskih intelektualcev: Miroslava Krleže in Ota Bihalji-Merina.

Temeljna predpostavka je, da bi nas opazovanje globalnih razsežnosti leta 1968 zgolj z gledišča političnega (kot estetske ali kulturne subverzije, ki spodkopava tradicionalno politiko) zavedlo v prehitel sklep, da se leto 1968 v Jugoslaviji sploh ni zgodilo. K temu preprostemu, a daljnosežnemu dejstvu lahko pristopimo tako, da dihotomiji politika/politično dodamo dialektiko evolucije in revolucije. Pri tem je ključen pojem (r)evolucionarnega spora, ki je zgodovinsko utemeljen v medvojni ideološki polemiki med revolucionarnimi komunisti in evolucionarnimi socialdemokrati. Ta spor se je zaostрил ob vprašanju, ali je v emancipacijskem boju bistven revolucionarni političen obrat (rušenje kapitalističnega sistema kot takega) ali postopna priprava na oblikovanje nove družbe (kjer obstoječega stanja ne razstavimo, ampak ga popravljamo s pomočjo kultiviranja v sferi umetnosti, izobraževanja in športa). Po drugi svetovni vojni se je ta spor v kapitalističnem svetu rešil drugače kakor v socialističnem. V Jugoslaviji je izgradnja socialistične države zagotovila sistemske pogoje za legitimnost tistih kulturnih prizadevanj, ki so jih komunisti v medvojni fazi razrednega boja zavračali kot zgolj evolucionarna; v nasprotju z uradno in v določeni meri nesporno tezo o tem, da je nova socialistična družba kraj sinteze (r)evolucionarnega spora, je jugoslovanska povojna družba doživela svojo antitezo v politični artikulaciji novih socialnih razlik, ta kritika pa je dosegla vrhunec junija 1968.

Pri tem je pomenljivo dvojje: prvič, junijska gibanja niso bila anti-sistemska, temveč nedvomno evolucionarna; drugič, kljub določenim podobnostim s socialdemokratskimi prizadevanji v kapitalističnih državah socialistični evolucionarni poskus ni zvedljiv na paradigmo, ki jo sodobna post-fundacionalna teorija obravnava s pomočjo pojma političnega. Jugoslovansko leto 1968 namreč ni poskušalo uradnega prizorišča (državne) politike, ki je operirala v horizontu ekonomskih, sistemskih in splošnih interesov, zamenjati z novim prizoriščem. To pa velja tudi za specifično umetniške artikulacije političnega nerazumevanja.

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Not even a Desperate Attempt to Defend Socialism: Two Theoretical and Ideological Currents in Contemporary Slovenian History¹

Ni očajanički pokušaj obrane
socijalizma: dva teorijska
i ideološka toka u savremenoj
slovenačkoj istoriografiji

The 1930s and the 1980s were both marked by major and significant social crises that would eventually usher in two different kinds of society. The crisis of the 1930s resulted in the Second World War. Its particular outcome in Slovenia and Yugoslavia was the development of a multinational federal state and socialism. The crisis of the 1980s eventually led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Slovenian secession and the transition to capitalism. The aim of this article is to compare these two periods. The national programme is seen as the key here. For, unlike in the 1940s, a significant portion of the social movements of the 1980s simply lacked one.

YUGOSLAVIA, THE NATIONAL
QUESTION, SOCIALISM,
SELF-MANAGEMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY

Tridesete i osamdesete godine 20. века obeležene su velikim i značajnim društvenim krizama koje su na kraju dovele do razvoja dva različita društvena poretka. Kriza tridesetih godina rezultirala je Drugim svetskim ratom, a razvoj multinacionalne savezne države i socijalizma javlja se kao njena direktna posledica za Sloveniju i Jugoslaviju. Kriza osamdesetih godina dovodi do raspada Jugoslavije, otplenja Slovenije i prelaska na kapitalizam. Ideja rada je da se uporede pomenuta dva perioda. Ono što se pokazuje kao ključna razlika su nacionalni programi. Znatan deo društvenih pokreta u osamdesetim godinama, za razliku od četrdesetih, jednostavno nije imao nacionalni program.

JUGOSLAVIJA, NACIONALNO PITANJE,
SOCIJALIZAM, SAMOUPRAVLJANJE,
CIVILNO DRUŠTVO

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The following article will discuss two different historical periods: the 1930s and the 1980s. The 1930s and the 1980s were both marked by major and significant social crises that would eventually usher in two different societies. The crisis of the 1930s resulted in the Second World War. Its particular outcome in Slovenia and Yugoslavia was the development of a multinational federal state and socialism. The crisis of the 1980s eventually led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Slovenian secession and the transition to capitalism.

Any comparative assessment of these crises is not an easy task. Initially they appear to be very different: in the 1930s the whole world was on fire, while in the early 1990s wars only broke out in the peripheries. Furthermore, whereas the 1930s led to an armed confrontation between two polarised movements in Slovenia, the 1980s are held in high regard as a period of national unity, with the military conflict of 1991 seen as a limited confrontation with an external armed force.

CONTESTING NARRATIVES ON THE SLOVENIAN PAST

The nationalist ideology of the Slovenian state has to date had the most success integrating the crises of the 1930s and 1980s into a single narrative. For example, by making the day of Resistance to Foreign Invaders a national holiday (it is celebrated on and generally referred to as 27 April, the date when, in 1941, different progressive groups founded the Anti-imperialist Front of the Slovenian Nation), the Slovenian nationalist narrative integrates communist-led resistance against Nazi and fascist invaders during the Second World War with the history of Slovenian state-building. Nationalist ideology plays up the patriotic side of the resistance movement while explicitly resenting its traumatic side, that is, its revolutionary side.

Multiple political factors shaped the ideology in question. It all started in the 1980s, when the fate of Slovenian anti-partisan fighters immediately after the Second World War became public knowledge. The newly established political parties in many ways shaped their public image around responses to the fact that in the early summer of 1945, around 12.000 anti-partisan fighters and some civilians were killed by the Yugoslav (ex-partisan) army (see Čepič et al.: 436). Liberal political parties condemned post-war atrocities in general terms and criticised the communist usurpation of the resistance movement and the authoritarian or totalitarian regime that eventually followed, but continued to defend the resistance and most of its institutions (such as the Assembly of the Representatives of the Slovenian Nation, convened in Kočevje in 1943). After all, the victory of the partisan movement brought substantial territorial gains for the Slovenian nation. The right-wing parties denounced the partisan movement altogether and strived to improve the public image of the anti-partisan fighters who, up to the late 1980s, had been officially treated simply as national traitors or, at best, as a tragically misguided formation.

The celebration rituals of 27 April revealed that a compromise between these contested narratives was possible, but at a price—the rehabilitation of the image of the anti-partisan fighters. It was a price that liberal politicians were unable or reluctant to pay. In 2005, while serving as Prime Minister, Janez Janša, the undisputed leader of the Slovenian political right, praised the partisans and even the partisan movement itself—but only in its pure form, as resistance against foreign invaders (see Janša). Then in 2006, France Cukjati, President of the National Assembly and a member of Janša's Slovenian Democratic Party, went even further and spoke of the disappointment supposedly felt by both sides—the partisans and their domestic adversaries, it was said,

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It is not a coincidence that Tine Velikonja, a notable biographer and collector of the testimonies of the anti-partisan fighters, explicitly compared Janez Marn alias Črtomir Mrak, a disputed figure in the Slovenian anti-communist movement of 1941–1945, with Sholokhov's fictional character Grigori. According to Velikonja, Janez Marn as a pre-war Christian Socialist who joined the partisans, deserted with the Chetnik movement and eventually became chieftain of a gang of deserters who also cooperated with the Germans. Velikonja credits him with fine virtues, especially his endeavour to survive, his passion and even his bitter end, which somehow mirrors that of Sholokhov's Grigori, except for his selfishness, as he fought only for his gang members. Janez Stanovnik, a Christian Socialist and a partisan who knew Mrak well, testified that Mrak was the founder of the Black Hand, an organised group of notorious murderers whose victims were the relatives of the partisans and activists of the National Liberation Movement (see Velikonja and Trampuš).

both got a raw deal in 1945 (see Anonymous). In other words, it was once possible to praise the partisans within the right-wing historical narrative, if only for their (ultimately individual) valour as resistance fighters. The partisan and even anti-partisan fighters of the 1940s could thus be compared to the Slovenian Police and Territorial Defence Forces in the war of 1991. In essence, they were all brave and free-spirited and they all loved their motherland. Social revolution, which was an integral part of the Slovenian national liberation struggle from 1941 to 1945, thus became a mere conspiracy, a pretence for violence by a communist clique exploiting otherwise honourable and patriotic individuals.

This narrative, which integrates individual virtue with real history, is not without a certain appeal. As in a good, or even a cheap but effective, work of fiction, it allows for identification with the protagonist virtually regardless of his or her affiliation. Grigori Melekhov, the main character of Mikhail Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don* (*Tikhiy Don*), is a young Cossack, passionate, brave and resourceful. Amid turbulent historical events he tries to be loyal to himself and his passions. An inability to adapt forces him to switch sides repeatedly—he becomes an Imperial army horseman, a White, a Red and ultimately a bandit. His character is positive, regardless of his affiliation. But Sholokhov's epic does not have a happy ending.² Grigori returns home a desperate man, ultimately crushed by the history he so long evaded.

Returning to the nationalist narrative in Slovenia, it is possible to equate partisans and their adversaries only by representing them as uniformly miserable. To reiterate, this portrayal is wholly adequate for a work of fiction, but is clearly lacking with regard to the national narrative of the past. This is particularly true when the narrative is staged in the current memorial landscape of Slovenia, filled as it is even today with countless monuments and street and school

names praising not only partisans but also communist revolutionary heroism, sacrifice and victory. Conversely, the memorial markers of the anti-partisan fighters had for decades been limited to symbols of their inglorious deaths—mostly wooden crosses and other modest religious images and signs merely designating the places of their execution. All this began to change in 2013, with the commemoration of the establishment of the first anti-partisan fighting unit in Šentjošt, a village near Ljubljana (see Košak). The event featured a small parade by men wearing the uniforms of the Slovenian Home Guard, the Quisling anti-partisan unit established by the Germans in 1943.

Open celebration of anti-partisan forces was something new in Slovenia. The economic crisis at the end of the first decade of the new millennium, and then the so-called refugee crisis of 2016, marked a substantial ideological shift in Slovenian right-wing politics. Any concession regarding the positive historical role of partisan resistance now became unacceptable. And it seems that the once seamless national narrative is now starting to show cracks. Empowered by several resolutions of the European Parliament,³ the narrative faces its greatest challenges to date. It is highly likely that the nationalist narrative will be replaced by an alternative narrative, one that underscores the discontinuity of the crises of the 1930s and the 1980s. As this would be utterly devastating for our memory landscape, it is imperative that we take a closer look at the differences between the 1930s and the 1980s.

NOT EVEN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO DEFEND SOCIALISM

Why did Yugoslav socialism—as a social system which, in economic terms, was a system of social ownership of the means of production, and, in political terms, a system of countless committees and assemblies

3 See the European Parliament's recent resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, which equalises the roles of Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union in the Second World War and extends this treatment to their respective symbols. Interestingly but not surprisingly, it is silent on the communist contribution to the victory over fascism. (See European Parliament)

4 Even though the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its activities had been totally banned in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians since 1921, Slovenian communists managed to spread their ideas through legal press. Especially after the economic breakdown of 1929, they made extensive efforts to prove that capitalism does not work for the great majority of the population and is coming to an end. A notable contributor on the topic in Slovenia was economist Stane Krašovec. In essays published in the legal (communist-sponsored) journal *Književnost* in the 1930s, he explained why the middle strata is doomed under capitalism (see Krašovec). *Književnost* also published the authoritative explanations of prominent Soviet economist (of Hungarian descent) Jenő Varga on why capitalism is about to rot (see Varga). It is worth noting that Varga modified his opinion after the Second World War: in post-war nationalisations and other state interventions in the economy he saw a stabilising factor of capitalism in the West and was subjected to fierce criticism in the Soviet Union at the time (see Mommen: 167–91).

for every imaginable social issue—collapse so easily? In the late 1930s and early 1940s, during the Second World War, the opponents of the communist-led national liberation struggle were fully aware that the victory of the communists would put an end to the world they knew and ruled over. They knew that relations of property and political domination would change completely. So, they fought back with everything they had. But in the 1980s and 1990s, not a single bullet was fired in defence of social property or socialism. This detail is widely praised in public debates, and also by historians. In fact, the praise is so overwhelming that it belies a lack of proper explanation.

The consensus view within the discipline of Slovenian history is that socialist economy was generally inefficient (see Lorenčič: 26–27 and Prinčič: 1102) and heavily dependent on foreign credit (see Repe 2001: 10–13 and 2003: 114). That might be true. But the feudal economy became inefficient, too, and during the crisis of the 1930s capitalist economy proved to be untenable for many. The radical left at the time pointed out this inefficiency, and was able to provide ample empirical and theoretical evidence for its claims.⁴ And yet the elites and the ruling classes fought back in defence of this inefficiency. Credit has been an essential feature of capitalist economy since its very beginning (see Arrighi); it even predates capitalism as a mode of production characterised by a free labour-force. The debt crisis, and with it the notion of living beyond one's means, is an essential phenomenon of contemporary capitalist societies, and it has had catastrophic consequences for millions, even in the most advanced countries. Yet the ruling classes and their neoliberal ideologues unconditionally defend the rationality of the system, and spare no expense in doing so, even as anti-systemic challengers on the left attack their claims in light of the very evident financial turmoil brought about by the crisis of 2008.

When Socialism and its forms of property relations hit a rough patch in the 1980s, no one stood up for them. Rastko Močnik once asked for whom exactly the socialist economy was untenable.⁵ There were of course conflicting views on models of privatisation in the 1990s (see Lorenčič: 193–212). And of course, the communist elite and the managerial class eventually realised that the system is not working, and that the only way to maintain their privileges was through a shift in economic and political systems (see Močnik 2006: 167, 205–206). But one also has to take into account that as late as 1988, The League of Communists of Slovenia had around 110.000 members (see Repe 2001: 5). In a country with a population of roughly two million that is an enormous figure. The Party had so-called cells (officially called Primary Organisations) in virtually every enterprise. And it all begs the question: Why was there not a single naive and hopeless attempt to organise working people and citizens to defend their rights under the system of self-management as the latter slowly withered away over the course of the 1980s?

As far as I know, nothing of the sort occurred. There are anecdotes about how, back in the early 1960s, critical intellectual and publicist Jože Pučnik tried to recruit complete strangers on the bus for anti-communist rebellion (see Kermauner: 80–81). But one would be hard pressed to find so much as a hypothetical mention of defending the ailing system in the late 1980s, even in fiction. Even rare cases of suicide among old Communist revolutionaries—suicide being the most primitive and desperate form of rebellion—have yet to find any place in the (popular) culture. A political comic by Zoran Smiljanič entitled 1991 could perhaps be conditionally considered an exception. It tells the story of an anonymous Yugoslav People's Army conscript, self-described only as a Yugoslav, who dozed off and missed the retreat

5 Rastko Močnik posed this question in 2014 in the framework of discussions following the foundation of a new radical political party in Slovenia—the Initiative for Democratic Socialism.

of the Yugoslav army from Slovenia. Thinking the retreat was a drill, he initially remains in the barracks by himself and reads the Yugoslav constitution. When eventually faced with the Slovenian army, he refuses to accept the new reality, and everyone takes it as a joke. He is the embodiment of every stereotype of the latter-day Yugoslav federation and society. In the end he freezes to death, air rifle in hand, while on guard on a deserted hill, waiting for the Yugoslav People's Army to return.

Again, the exception (if it is that) proves the rule. A general overview of (real life) popular sentiment and its concrete forms at the time reveals no such longing for political or social utopia. The 1990s were actually ushered in by a flood of conspiracy theories about the so-called Udbomafia (a sort of deep state allegedly centred around the old Yugoslav intelligence service) and Milan Kučan (see Repe 2015: 455–96). In 1987, there was a major strike at the Litostroj factory in Ljubljana. This was an important event in the crisis period, but it did not spark mass popular mobilisation. The arrest of four individuals the following year did.

This brings us to the question of progressive social forces in the 1980s, namely intellectuals and activists—the so-called left—who are the usual suspects whose historical task (in the Marxist tradition) is to organise the masses. What was their role in these processes?

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The national question seems key to this argument. It is the political issue par excellence in modern Slovenian history, and it can be used to connect the crises of the 1930s and the 1980s in a sensible way. It also helps us understand how the two epochs differ.

In the 1930s and 1940s, all major Slovenian political groups and forces proposed some kind of national programme or plan of action, or at the very least they had a more or less refined idea of the future prospects of the Slovenian nation. The leading Slovenian Catholic party (the Slovenian People's Party) proposed many programmes and plans. It tried hard to secure autonomy for Slovenians within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia before proposing, in the initial stages of the Second World War, setting up a Slovenian puppet state for German and then later Italian invaders (see Perovšek: 339–42, Čepič et al.: 81–114). These proposals turned the party towards collaboration. And they all failed. As the war dragged on, hard-line Catholic right-wingers gave up on the restoration of Yugoslavia, while others secretly proposed some kind of federation. It was in this situation that the National Liberation Movement took the initiative. The movement was led by the communists, but it successfully made alliances with splinter groups from the Catholic camp and other patriotic groups and workers in the field of arts and culture.

One could say that the communists in Slovenia reinvented themselves in the mid-1930s by working on the national question. Their idea was very simple. Theoretically, it rested on the most basic Marxist conceptualisations of history and class struggle: the nation as a historically produced community which is open to further transformations, the working class as a principal agent in the contemporary national community, and so on (see Sperans). It was very easy to translate these concepts into patriotic slogans. In propaganda and declarations, they boiled down to a mixture of an easy-to-understand patriotism plus a leading role for the working people and their rightful claims.

This narrative was acceptable to many groups and individuals who had strongly disagreed with the communists at first. For example, it is still not entirely clear why, once they had left the Slovenian

People's Party by the mid-1930s, Christian Socialists did not take the initiative. Their theories and concepts were much more sophisticated. If we compare the assessments of fascism offered by Edvard Kardelj, a communist, and Bogo Grafenauer, an intellectual close to the Christian Socialists who would go on to become a prominent historian, we can see that the two differed in a number of ways. While Kardelj wrote extensively about fascist manipulation, he treated it in a matter-of-fact way and failed to explain properly how such manipulation really works (see Kardelj). Bogo Grafenauer, on the other hand, got to the heart of the matter by proposing a critique of liberal democracy and parliamentarism and their relativism regarding the truth. In order to explain why fascist propaganda is so successful, he proposed a hypothesis about the existence of a 'fascist condition' ('fašistično dejstvo') as a condition in modern bourgeois society that predated fascism itself: 'The fascist condition without the fascist doctrine came into being due to the liberal attitude regarding the truth and above all the equivalence of different truths. These truths might contradict one another, yet according to the liberal view they deserve the same respect and recognition as equals. Not the idea, fascism put the method first.' (Grafenauer: 116–17)

Both Kardelj and Grafenauer did, however, agree on the importance of the social question in their historical moment, and both found liberal democracy, with its formality, to be very problematic.

Let us now turn to the 1980s and early 1990s. Some time ago, historian Božo Repe (2001: 28–29) claimed that the League of Communists of Slovenia lost the initiative in the 1980s when it refused to propose its own (national) programme. The opposition did propose a programme. But the issue here is not some loosely defined general opposition. A national programme was introduced in 1987 by the group around *Nova*

revija, a journal which consisted of various anti-communist, predominately nationalist intellectuals. The thesis proposed by Repe makes sense. However, I would argue that the ruling political party—The League of Communists of Slovenia—was not the only group to lose the initiative. I would also bring into the picture the intellectual groups and social movements that emerged in the early 1980s. Unlike the intellectuals at *Nova revija*, these groups did not focus on the problems of the Slovenian nation and its prospects for total sovereignty.

Nova revija challenged the political monopoly of the League of Communists of Slovenia in 1987. In the now famous issue 57 of the journal, Tine Hribar argued, in a manner rather typical of the outlet, that the power of the existing Slovenian state derives not from the sovereignty of the Slovenian nation but rather from ‘the *power and self-management* of the working class and the working people’. The total political monopoly of the Party is granted, since the Party is considered the ‘inner force of self-management’ and ‘the leading ideopolitical integrating force in the political system’ (Hribar: 23). The main idea behind issue 57 was to break the monopoly of the League of Communists of Slovenia and open the debate on the sovereignty of the Slovenian nation and its place in Yugoslav federation.

The leftist groups and movements mentioned above were already critical of the Party in the early 1980s, albeit in a less explicit manner. Admittedly, at that time the economic crisis in Yugoslavia had yet to evolve into a political crisis. That happened in the second half of the decade. These oppositional groups were comprised of Marxist intellectuals writing for various publications in the early 1980s, including the magazine *Mladina*, the journals *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* and *Tribuna*, and the Krt book series. They criticised the regime by focusing on its crisis management and the dysfunctionality of the economic system

of self-management, and would later turn to criticism of education reforms, freedom of speech, and so on. These groups and intellectuals were working under the cover of the Alliance of the Socialist Youth of Slovenia, an organisation which became increasingly independent from the early 1980s on (see Vurnik). Several movements proliferated under the protection and sponsorship of the so-called youth alliance; these included the ecologists, an early gay and lesbian movement, a peace movement, and a few non-political clubs in the Slovenian countryside (see Muršič). Even the punk counterculture benefited from the youth alliance.

The point I would like to make here is that these groups and individuals did not think at all about national issues. Problems of Slovenian sovereignty were not pertinent to their immediate goals. Gregor Tomc, punk activist and hardly a leftist, got the chance to contribute to issue 57, and he was a bit confused when he received instructions from the editorial staff to write a piece on civil society in the Slovenian framework:

First and foremost, being Slovenian was never a strong feeling for me. I feel connected to Ljubljana. I am a guy from Kodeljevo and that represents me best. In a similar way, I feel connected to other places outside Slovenia where I spent some time. Contrary to abstract national affiliation, particular persons, adventures and memories bond me with these places. My affiliation with Slovenia is superficial and loose. My authentic feelings are much more bound up with other places. For that reason, I found it hard to start writing on the topic. (Tomc 1987: 144)

The real problem for Gregor Tomc was socialism itself, the repressive nature of the state, and so on. What the movements and individuals wanted, at least initially, was a level playing field in social and public

life, free from administrative and other interference from the ruling political party, the League of Communists. What they wanted most was their own autonomy and freedom. And looking at their production in the fields of social theory, culture and the arts, one could argue that they were able to achieve most of their goals within a so-called socialist civil society.

My hypothesis is that the socialist system was able to absorb and balance out significantly higher levels of dissent and conflict than is generally believed.⁶ But what these groups and individuals did not do was engage in broader social activism outside the narrow limits of (their own) artistic and intellectual autonomy. Their critiques and claims were of course universal, but their concrete social action was very limited, at least initially; they were 'single issue movements', as Rastko Močnik put it (2014). But this changed in the late 1980s, at a critical moment of social crisis.

The same could actually be said of the group around *Nova revija*. Initially, in 1987, their proposal for a national programme amounted to little more than the musings of a group of intellectuals. This changed in 1988, when the state security agency and the police arrested three individuals for leaking a military document. The Committee for the Defence of Human Rights was established soon thereafter. This association's membership consisted of around 100.000 individuals and 1.000 legal entities and included representatives from basic communist party organisations, workers' collectives and even the emerging lesbian movement, but also from the Catholic church and *Nova revija* (see Žerdin: 405). So, the left-wing intellectuals from the socialist civil society were eventually capable of coming together for a common cause, and that did mean taking a further step out of the comfort zone of their particular autonomies. It was a risk.

⁶ Already in the early 1970s, such distinguished Slovenian sociologists as Vladimir Arzenšek claimed that Yugoslav society lacks institutional outlets for conflict resolution (see Tomc 1985: 9–10).

The main question here is why that kind of risk was not taken a year earlier, during the Litostroj strike? A clear answer is hard to come by, but the consequences of a lack of broader social mobilisation around this event are easy enough to identify. The strike happened because the workers' salaries were not adjusted to inflation. The workers at Litostroj established a strike committee under the leadership of France Tomšič (an institution with no legal grounds in the then-valid constitution) and supported the idea of founding the Social Democratic League of Slovenia. It is clear that the workers' industrial action followed patterns with which some of them were familiar—France Tomšič, for example, was an engineer with experience in the West. Their ideal was an independent trade-union organisation and a two- or multi-party political system. The reinvention of socialist self-management on the basis of the critique developed by left-leaning intellectuals from the beginning of the decade was out of the question (see Centrih: 155). It is worth noting that France Tomšič, an active member of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, proposed a call for a general strike in June 1988, but other influential members of the Committee favoured mass rallies and dismissed his idea (see Centrih: 155 and Žerdin: 124–29).

CONCLUSION

To be clear, as doctrine, the national programme proposed by *Nova revija* was by no means imposed on or accepted by other movements, individuals or groups. For one thing, it was a critical public intervention rather than a clear, elaborate programme. What *Nova revija* achieved in 1987 was more of a political scandal and a broader polemic. Unlike the 1930s and 1940s, no single clearly delineated group or party was dominant. Groups and individuals maintained their autonomy, and

this eventually led to the formation of political parties. Those who did not aspire to formally enter the political sphere maintained their autonomy as intellectuals or activists.

But then something happened. As the political crisis matured in the late 1980s, debates about the Yugoslav constitution and the sovereignty of republics and regions took centre stage. Separatism was on its way. Social issues came second. The Marxist critique from the early 1980s simply evaporated. Marxists did not even have ambitions of winning hegemony in the civil society of the late 1980s. One might say that when it appeared in 1989, UJDI, The Association for the Yugoslav Democratic Initiative, which was made up of left-wing intellectuals in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, was a kind of attempt to reverse these processes. But it lacked social impact and was short-lived. In this context, it seems that the initiative of *Nova revija* is best characterised as a sign of a shift in public polemics, and not as a socially impactful event establishing the domination of a new group. ♡

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Povzetek

Članek primerja dve teoretski in ideološki konjunkturi na Slovenskem v dveh zgodovinskih obdobjih. Obe konjunkturi sta pripeljali do družbenih prelomov, vendar z različnimi učinki, neenakimi posledicami za družbene skupine in razrede. Prva konjunktura zajema trideseta leta 20. stoletja, ko je komunističnemu gibanju kljub pretežno skromnim in močno poenostavljenim teoretskim in ideološkimi konceptom nazadnje uspelo povezati napredne levičarske skupine v narodno-osvobodilni in revolucionaren projekt. V nasprotju s to konjunkturo pa je druga, tj. konjunktura iz osemdesetih let, kljub neprimerno razvitejšim in bolj sofisticiranim družbenim teorijam ter barvitejšo polemiko pripeljala zgolj do vzpona civilne družbe. Kljub velikemu začetnemu optimizmu je ta civilna družba nazadnje zagotovila samo avtonomijo kritičnih levičarskih intelektualcev, ne pa tudi emancipacije delovnih ljudi in marginaliziranih družbenih skupin. Prva konjunktura si je za cilj ambiciozno zastavila odpravo kapitalizma, druga pa se je na koncu zadovoljila s t. i. normalizacijo slovenske družbe v skladu z ideali zahodnega sveta.

Druga pomembna razlika, ki loči ti konjunkturi, pa zadeva nacionalno vprašanje oziroma nacionalni program. Medtem ko so v štiridesetih letih 20. stoletja tako rekoč vsa pomembnejša gibanja (ne glede na ideološki predznak) predstavila določen nacionalni program ali vsaj postavila nacionalno idejo v središče svojih razmišljanj, tega pri naprednih gibanjih iz osemdesetih let pravzaprav ne najdemo. Kljub temu nacionalistična ideologija današnjega dne ob najrazličnejših priložnostih obe obdobji oziroma konjunkturi povezuje v enotno nacionalno pripoved.

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From the Marginal to the Exemplary

Od marginalnog
do egzemplarnog

One way to connect the events of 1968 to those of 1989 is by rereading those who have theorised the artistic significance of the events in their immediate present: Aleksandar Flaker around 1968, and Aleš Erjavec and Marina Gržinić around 1989. These thinkers created models which, used together, can help us grasp the causality that connects 1968 to 1989. Three hypotheses will be proposed: first, there is a development leading directly from the anti-protestant ethics of pleasure of the 1960s to the commodified desire of the 1980s to migrate from socialism to the shopping mall; second, there is a link between the upcoming literary generation's struggle against canonical national literature in the 1960s and the nationalist programme championed by the same writers in the 1980s; third, whereas Slovenian literature produced only marginal cases of the 1968 model, its so-called alternative culture of the 1980s was an exemplary case of the European East as such.

JEANS PROSE, SLOVENIAN
ALTERNATIVE CULTURE, 1989, ETHICS
OF PLEASURE, COMMODIFIED DESIRE

Uspostavljanje veze između 1968. godine i 1989. godine može započeti novim čitanjem autora koji su svojevremeno teorijski artikulirali umetnički značaj ovih prelomnih godina: Aleksandar Flaker za 1968. i Aleš Erjavec s Marinom Gržinić za 1989. godinu. Ovi teoretičari su stvorili interpretativne modele koji se mogu upotrebiti za istraživanje uzročno-posledičnih veza koje se uspostavljaju između 1968. i 1989. godine. Istražićemo tri hipoteze: 1) postoji neposredna veza između etike užitka, koja se tokom šezdesetih godina suprotstavlja protestantskoj etici, i komodifikacije želje iz osamdesetih godina, koja je omogućila prelazak iz socijalizma u tržišni centar; 2) postoji veza između borbe mlade književne generacije protiv kanona nacionalne književnosti u šezdesetim godinama i njihovog javljanja u ulozu protagonista nacionalnog programa dvadeset godina kasnije; 3) premda je slovenačka književnost stvorila marginalne slučajeve koji se mogu podvesti pod model 1968, takozvana alternativna kultura u Sloveniji osamdesetih godina bila je, zapravo, egzemplarni slučaj za ceo region.

PROZA U TRAPERICAMA, SLOVENAČKA
ALTERNATIVNA KULTURA, 1989, ETIKA
UŽIVANJA, KOMODIFIKACIJA ŽELJE

One way to discover what connects 1968 and 1989—the year of the student revolt and the year of the fall of the Berlin wall from its Eastern side—is by revisiting the work of those who analysed these events as they were unfolding. Traditional humanities and social sciences prohibited this kind of approach with the caveat that rigorous research can consider only that which lies at least fifty years in the past. This used to be one of the tenets of pure objectivity, and objectivity is still held as a crucial characteristic of science, in opposition to social critique and journalism. But that caveat and the accompanying tenet were exactly what was attacked by the student revolt of 1968, during which the academia was accused of impotence and ideological capitulation to the existing regimes of power. From the 1980s on, this scholarly revolt gradually occupied the academia and installed itself as the victorious approach to the humanities and social sciences. It has a name as well, namely the postmodern. Historical victories are always somewhat ironical, as are those comparisons of 1968 and 1989 which attempt to produce so-called objective reports on events from fifty and thirty years ago respectively without taking into account the historicity of their own time. The following report will take the form of a rereading or *rileggendo*, as Benedetto Croce called it in the context of aesthetics (see Croce), a return to a pair of immediate responses to 1968 and 1989 respectively which, read sinoptically, can tell us much of what we need to know about the connection between the two dates; rereading Aleksandar Flaker's response to 1968 and Aleš Erjavec and Marina Gržinić's response to 1989, this attempt to compare 1968 and 1989 will try to avoid the act of forgetting its own time, as it will connect 1968 and 1989 with the aim of contributing to a reflection on the potential of contemporary revolts and on the destructiveness of contemporary walls. And if it is not very objective to approach research with such affective interest, then we are perhaps better off without research.

1. 1968

In 1968, Eastern Europe had a different agenda than the West, which enjoyed its student revolt and its beginnings in the movement against the Vietnam War. In Eastern Europe, the agenda was that of the Prague Spring and its violent end in the August 1968 occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact under the leadership of Soviet Union. In Yugoslavia, which was free of Soviet patronage, these events were interpreted as a confirmation of Yugoslav independent self-management orientation, and as an actualisation of Soviet military threat. This threat was used to legitimise a turn away from a liberal party management of Yugoslavia, a turn that would include interventions against the 1968 student movement in Belgrade, the subsequent student movement in Ljubljana and the student and nationalist movement in Croatia. That Eastern Europe belonged to the same formation as Yugoslavia, and that the countries shared a cultural attitude to the West that was different from that of the Soviet Union, was expressed in a particular kind of literature that peaked around 1968 and was analysed at the time by Croatian scholar Aleksandar Flaker under the telling name of jeans prose (see Flaker).

This unstable literary formation narrates young protagonists troubled by their uncertain identities who struggle against the world of adults, admiring pleasures which are slowly becoming culturally acceptable. As a kind of unsatisfactory *Bildungsroman*, jeans prose builds on J. W. Goethe's *Young Werther* (*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*) as well as J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. An American orientation defines here something more than just the generational split of the 1960s and its demand to distrust anybody over thirty. Its components are jeans promoted into an Eastern fetish with a political and social meaning.

Social because jeans were an expression of democracy and equality much like Warhol's Coca-Cola, and politically subversive because they represented the American way of life together with the American myth as the youth's alternative to socialist mythology. The struggle between the young and the old steps in to replace the opposition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This negation of the world of elders is felt as a subversion in the world of socialism as well, but not an oppositional or dissident subversion. What is under attack is the establishment with its rules and demands, which are put in place before the new generation can even express its own will. The hero of jeans prose does not know his or her will and is in search of authenticity, but insofar as this aim is not met jeans prose is an incomplete *Bildungsroman*: the search of authenticity ends neither in a stable adult existence nor in disaster and suicide, thus deconstructing the typical narrative structure of the novel. Where does it stop then? In a typical Eastern European manner, Flaker summarises as follows:

The character whose function in contemporary prose was to destroy forms and to question, with his or her approach to narration, the traditions of European prose and of social, ethical, moral and psychological structures of the world of adults becomes in Šoljan's novels one of the characters, placed at the margin of the social structure and yet complementary to it and therefore unavoidable within the novel produced by Šoljan. From the subject of narration this character evolved into the object of the author's narration and was thus questioned—and not only for his or her betrayal—together with the civilisation that has shaped him or her. We should not forget that the group with which the girl in jeans heads for Dubrovnik in 1974 drives a 'fičo' and that the members speak not only about discos and cafés but even about Harley-Davidsons

and Yamas—all machines of contemporary civilisation which characterise them as so many representatives of new, consumerist social tendencies in socialist society, a society which neither they nor the other boys and girls in jeans question, even if they abstain from verbally or schematically expressing its ideals. (Flaker: 248)

A youth revolt in search of new authenticity arrives at consumerist escapism: that is the revolt's contradictory character, or perhaps the consequence of its failure to find authenticity. And if there is no authenticity to embrace, ordinary everyday pleasure can well replace socialist slogans. Immanuel Kant's dilemma of having to choose between happiness and culture becomes impossible once post-Fordist consumerism elevates happiness, this elusive and vague idea, into the culture of pleasure which stands in place of true or authentic happiness. In 1968, it was of utmost importance to be rather than have. But to have is the most pleasurable way of being, is it not? At least the only way available—as long as one is not under socialism where there is no way at all. This is what 1968 has in common with 1989. At first, it was all about human rights and free public space, but then it quickly went on to pave the way to another place, the shopping mall with its freedom for commodities rather than persons—at least until persons became commodities as well, as they were placed on the market as freely as this is possible in the realm of commodities and their free exchange with other commodities.

The only Slovenian representative of jeans prose is Rudi Šeligo, according to Flaker's book, where Šeligo's prose is read as a marginal example of jeans prose (see Flaker: 128). Šeligo's 1971 short story 'Šarada' (Charade) introduces a girl who, according to the language she uses, comes from the same source as jeans prose, but the formation

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Perspektive (Perspectives) was a journal launched in 1960 by young critical artists, social scientists and other intellectuals, and banned in 1964 by political authorities. Reism and ludism, two artistic attitudes resulting from it, either insist on the total reification of the world which the artwork is concerned with (reism) or take the world and its matters as a reason for playfulness without reason, on the other side of Schiller's project (ludism). The notion of a world without an exit belongs to both artistic attitudes.

itself as the expression of youth revolt is treated in a radically empiricist way and with an anxiety which proves that the world of youth evasion from the uncanny world of adults necessarily falls apart (see Šeligo 1995: 137–57). As it is, the struggle against the old has no perspective.¹ Returning to Šeligo to comment on his 'Okus po jodu' (The Taste of Iodide), another short story from 1971 (see Šeligo 1995: 159–76), Flaker detects complete reification represented by a group of young characters who visit the Slovenian coast to display their shallow fascination with boats, motorcycles and radio transistors (see Flaker: 161). It seems that here Šeligo is already dismissive of the consumerist pleasure principle which is to come out as a result of the logic of jeans prose.

But this is not how Slovenian literary criticism and literary history understood Šeligo's emergence and later work. Aleksander Zorn (268, 270) finds Šeligo's insistence on the absence of the author from the story revealing and draws on a conclusion reached by Taras Kermauner in his commentary of Šeligo's 1968 novel *Kamen* (Stone), namely that Šeligo did not participate in his generation's involvement with the end of humanism and the dissatisfaction with the world. Šeligo's reism is seen as a decision not to include the empirical author's feelings and beliefs in literature, on the one hand, and, on the other, as a mode of writing which insists on depicting things as they are, without any plea for transcendence or utopia. From this point of view, Šeligo's prose is not a marginal Slovenian example of jeans prose. It is a conscious negation of jeans prose's narrator and optimal projection, if one may use Flaker's own concept to describe that which amounts to the absence of a final perspective in Šeligo's writing—the absence due to which Šeligo's narratives simply end at some point without conveying and message, following the literary structures of *nouveau roman* rather than *The Catcher in the Rye*.

At another point, Flaker reads Šeligo's major work *Triptih Agate Schwarzkobler* (The Triptych of Agata Schwarzkobler) as a kind of detached partner of jeans prose (see Flaker: 176). This short novel enters in a mysterious intertextual relation with *Visoška kronika* (The Chronicle of Visoko), a canonical Slovenian novel written by Ivan Tavčar in 1919; according to Flaker, the basis of this relation is the criticism of social value systems shared by the two novels. In Tavčar's case, this takes the form of a confrontation between liberalism and clericalism; in Šeligo's case, the confrontation is between the youth and the establishment—but the encounter fails to bring expected results. In conclusion, Flaker (238) looks at yet another example of what he sees as Šeligo's marginal position within jeans prose, namely 'Odgovori in baterije' (Answers and Batteries), a short story consisting of thirteen questions addressed to the character of Milena, who answers only by moving her body parts while the first-person narrator disappears into the questionnaire. The final question, however, remains unanswered, namely: 'For which of the things I am about to name would you be willing to die the most?' (Šeligo 1973: 191)

Flaker's unusual focus on Šeligo's prose can be explained in terms of both literary theory and literary history, that is, by looking at the model's instability in space as well as in time. In spatial terms, this Eastern European model includes Slovenia as the most Western part of the East, the part which despite its Western perspectives, even despite using the techniques of *nouveau roman*, cannot escape its Eastern socialist destiny. In temporal terms, the Slovenian marginal example of Flaker's model exemplifies the ultimate consequences of the possibilities of jeans prose, namely the reified pleasure of commodities and/or the anxiety of an establishment without an exit.

In Eastern European jeans prose, as well as in a few other genres from around 1968, we find more than just criticism articulated from the positions of traditional literary humanism and nationalism, where socialism is denounced together with the socialist states' subaltern position in relation to the Soviet Union. Quite the contrary, in jeans prose, the criticism is articulated in the name of the young generation and its struggle against the ideologies of traditional humanism, nationalism and socialism; the criticism is voiced from the positions of a generation which demanded authentic revolution rather than its bureaucratized caricature, expecting authenticity to mean joy, pleasure and happiness rather than ascetic sacrifice in the name of a brighter future for the nation and for socialism. Real socialism emerged as an answer to the 1968 illusion and utopia, declaring that it is not possible to live in socialism and have fun at the same time. The 1980s, with their culmination in the fall of the Berlin Wall, brought about a novelty: a grip of art over an ideologically presented reality, revealing that the system is unable to deliver what it promises. However, the art revealed what the system truly wanted—and the system did not want to hear about it, as if it were afraid of its own desire.

2. 1989

Let us now try to compare jeans prose to subversive literature from the socialist countries written in the 1980s. In Yugoslav literature, the first writer to touch the nerve of the dominant ideology was most likely Dobrica Ćosić with his 1972–1976 tetralogy *Vreme smrti* (translated as *A Time of Death*). A saga of a Serbian family and its social and political environment in the course of the twentieth century expressed strong nationalist emotions and ideas which just a few years later turned into

a militant political programme. Moreover, during the post-Yugoslav wars, Dobrica Ćosić would himself become a political representative of this programme as the President of the Republic of Serbia under the President of the Serbian government and the leader of the Communist Party, Slobodan Milošević. Another literary work of a nationalist kind, more scandalous even than Ćosić's, was Jovan Radulović's *Golubnjača* (The Pigeon Cave), a depiction of the genocide against the Serbs perpetrated by the Quisling authorities of the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War. *Golubnjača* appeared in 1980 as a short story, and when Radulović adapted it for theatre it was banned by the authorities, a decision which only helped boost the popularity of its literary source. Around the same time, writings about Goli otok were developed into a genre called the Barren Island literature. Goli otok (literally The Barren Island) is an island in the Adriatic which was used as a concentration camp for alleged supporters of Stalin after the Yugoslav break with the Soviet Union in 1948; on Goli otok, the so-called re-education of misled members of the Communist Party was characterised precisely by the kind of atrocities that were typical for Stalinist regimes. This category of prose includes such popular novels as Branko Hofman's *Noć do jutra* (Night Until Morning) from 1981, Antonije Isaković's *Tren 2: Kazivanja Čeperku* (Moment 2: Telling It to Čeperku) from 1982 and Igor Torkar's *Umiranje na obroke* (Dying by Installments) from 1984.

These are just two kinds of subversive literature which openly addressed something that had been only whispered about. During the same period and especially in Slovenia, another kind of culture developed from the youth subculture as punk became the predecessor of the so-called alternative culture. Instead of following dissident tactics, this new culture refrained from criticising the system directly and instead

chose to affirm its weakest points in embarrassingly exaggerated ways which succeeded in denouncing the system without exposing themselves to criticism. And although critical literature which revealed past crimes of the socialist regime was criticised, it was allowed to appear, which may have been a sign of the regime's crisis as well as a signature of the new generation of Party leadership. But how can the affirmation of nationalism in traditional high culture, on the one hand, and the critique of the dominant ideology in styles characteristic of popular culture, on the other, be contextualised within the relationship between 1968 and 1989?

In 1991, two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and amidst the efforts of Slovenia to gain independence from Yugoslavia, a time when the 1980s enjoyed an afterlife in the living forms of art and politics, Aleš Erjavec and Marina Gržinić published *Ljubljana, Ljubljana: 1980s in Art and Culture*, a book about Slovenian radical and avant-garde art of the 1980s or, as this art was called at the time, alternative culture. According to Erjavec and Gržinić, the alternative presented around 1968 fought either with or against the state, whereas the alternative culture from around 1989 was a fight for the state; this alternative culture was, however, itself split between the Slovenian punk of the early 1980s and a certain band from the late 80s, namely *Agropop*, a popular turbo-folk group whose branding drew on exaggerated Slovenian folk simplicity (see Erjavec and Gržinić: 60). Towards the end of the book, Erjavec and Gržinić add another comparison between the beginning and the end of the 80s: in 1983, Matjaž Vipotnik's poster with Karl Marx sporting an 80s racing bicycle and a red scarf asks, in French, if the future has already come (*Est ce que l'Avenir est déjà venu?*). The answer came in 1988: it was offered by the campaign entitled *Slovenija — moja dežela* (Slovenia — My Country), which seemingly targeted potential

foreign tourists but in effect addressed Slovenians as proud members of a newly independent nation from the 'sunny side of the Alps' (see Erjavec and Gržinić: 156).

The conjunctures of 1968 and 1989 faced the same problem: they both needed to solve problem of exercising opposition and critique under totalitarian or at least authoritarian conditions. For our purposes, the tactics that come to mind can be simplified with the help of Hans Christian Andersen's tale about the emperor's new clothes. The main characters of the tale are: two weavers who promise to produce a perfect ideological effect and tell the clever from the stupid by dressing the emperor in clothes that only the clever can see; the king himself who cares more about the ideological effect on his people than about the material reality of his clothes; people turned into a general public for the emperor's ideological performance; and a kid who has to tell the truth because he happens to escape the allure of the ideological effect.

Putting aside a somewhat less belligerent critical manner of the Aesopian hidden truth, the conjuncture of 1968 was characterised by two approaches, one traditional and one new. The traditional approach functioned like the one in Andersen: the kid of literature keeps repeating that the king is naked and is unable to understand that the others fail to see the naked truth. The new approach was offered by jeans prose: there, the kid does not care much whether the king is naked or properly clothed, but instead insists that the king is just a product of the people's belief in his kingship. The problem of this second approach is that the kid, unable to overthrow the ideological illusion, eventually concludes that nothing can be done because people are the source rather than the solution of the problem. Therefore, the kid enjoys his own privilege of seeing through appearances while the people are left to enjoy their society of the spectacle.

In 1989, another approach developed. The old king, the founding hero of nakedness, has died, and ideology had to be restructured *ad usum delphini*. The new king has gone mad believing that he is destined by nature to be a king and at the same time feeling unable to step into his father's shoes. As a result, he uses ideological clothes together with threats and applied violence to make people accept that which he himself is unsure of. The weavers suspect that this can go terribly wrong, but they keep on making illusory fabric because this is all they know. People start to think that something is wrong, but demand that illusory clothes reinstall themselves and start functioning properly; they want the spectacular cult to be continued. In his imaginary narrative, the kid makes signs of king's grandeur bigger and stronger, contrary to the king's appearance in reality. At first glance, this should allow all the partners in the story to enjoy in that which reality does not provide any more: the weavers should be able to see that their work still has its effect; the king should be able to recollect himself and start functioning properly; and the people should be able to calm down and enjoy once more the spectacle of power. Due to the kid's exaggerated use of images and symbols, an exaggeration of the weavers' conventional ideological product, all the partners in this ideological production become engulfed with a somewhat uncanny, unreal and threatening feeling; an estrangement effect of sorts.

As a result, art became an efficient weapon only when communism's executors themselves lost their ideological faith in the legitimacy of their mission and vision. Their activities proved that their ideological belief was false: instead of following a utopian mission, they started to worship that which really existed: this socialism is not what we dreamed of, they argued, but it is at least what we really have. Two allegories of post-socialist postmodernism illustrate this perfectly.

The first one is the iconography of hammer and sickle as it functions in post-socialist cultures; the second one is the Day of Youth, an annual celebration of Yugoslav youth designed to show how politically effective and powerful art can be.

As mentioned above, jeans prose built on Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Post-socialist postmodern art, on the other hand, drew its inspiration from Andy Warhol's merger of pop-art and soc-art for his *Hammer and Sickle* series. Putting this communist sign in continuum with the Campbell soup and Marilyn Monroe, Warhol identified ideological signs and symbols with commodities while also, on the other hand, identifying commodity fetishism with ideological signs and symbols. Post-socialist postmodern art intensified this kind of identification so as to be able to produce what was expected from art in the name of socialist realism at a moment when faith in socialism was already faltering and disappearing. In this context, it was up to the audiences to decide whether this kind of artistic effect is to be perceived as an act ironic exaggeration of a faltering and disappearing socialist enthusiasm or as an expression of an unlikely late surge of socialist belief. This was a time when Eastern Europe experienced its visual turn. This had two consequences: the national culture as the main ideological field of nation-building turned away from its literary canon and embraced visual means of expression, initiating a methodological turn in political and social criticism as well. The main reference point of this new artistic treatment was the Leninist doctrine of revolution in non-modernised countries like Russia, where only a coalition between the peasant majority and the minority class of industrial workers under the leadership of the latter could initiate both modernisation and a communist revolution. The hammer and the sickle are the symbols of this union; but in Eastern Europe, they are also symbols of a lost national

independence. As such, the hammer and the sickle appear in Eastern European (but also Cuban) art of the 1970s and 80s as symbols of a power which is losing its hegemony over people and nations (see Erjavec). Hence, comparing 1968 to 1989, one should begin by noting that, by 1989, the central place occupied by literature until 1968 was taken over by the visual arts.

The Day of Youth was a celebration held each year on 25 May, Tito's supposed birthday, at the Yugoslav People's Army Stadium in Belgrade. This ideological ritual represented the rejuvenation of the leader with young blood as well as the initiation of youth into a life of following in Tito's footsteps on the path to eternity. After Tito's death in 1980, the ritual was expected to stop. However, the necrophiliac slogan *I posljiže Tita—Tito!* (After Tito—Tito!) allowed the spectacle to survive and become a topic of conflict between the leadership and the representatives of alternative politics and culture. When it was the Slovenians' turn to provide the poster for the Day of Youth, the call was won by *Novi konstruktivizem* (New Constructivism), the design section of *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (which is German for New Slovenian Art). The proposal was accepted by a Slovenian jury according to which it represented the best visualisation of the alternative and independent politics of the Socialist Youth League. The poster was then accepted also by the organising committee in Belgrade, in this case because it supposedly offered a powerful image of the youth following the ideological hegemony of Titoism. Soon, however, it was discovered that the poster was a re- and post-production of a Nazi poster, with socialist symbols replacing those of Nazism. The authors were accused of Nazism and unauthorised copying, to which they replied that they did only what Tito himself represented: the work of denazification and of the construction of socialism. In this case, the visualisation of the

hegemonic ideology was such that it could be enjoyed both by the young representatives of political opposition and the old bearers of authoritarianism. Producing no strict ideological meaning, the visualisation was able to meet the ideological desires of both sides of the conflict. As such, this artwork exposed the fact that, from the perspective of art, the choice between conflicting ideological camps is no choice at all: they both want their desire to be satisfied by the artwork. In the end, while the image was not used as a poster, its distribution became even more successful due to the scandal it had caused. In this way, it satisfied the desire of *Neue Slowenische Kunst* as well.

3. CONCLUSION

There seem to be three possible historical narratives which can trace the events from 1989 back to those from 1968.

The first one is a narrative about the ethics of pleasure and its development from the 1960s, when it stood up against the protestant ethics, to the 80s, when it was transformed into a commodified desire to leave socialism for the shopping mall. This narrative seems hardly convincing if we are aware of the extent to which May '68 was characterised by anti-consumerism and an obsession with authenticity. But one ought to be aware of the weaknesses of the idea of personal authenticity, including such naive positions as the one presented by Erich Fromm in his most popular book: in his 1956 bestseller *The Art of Loving*, Fromm argued that those who, unlike both proletarians and capitalists, have independent positions—so, lawyers, artists, professors, etc.—can exercise real authentic love even under capitalist conditions of marriage. Authenticity means here that people can be free from consumerist alienation because they can freely choose between

2

A humorous attack on the canonical status of literature combined with a portrait of the new avant-garde of the 1960s is provided in the 1972 novel by Dimitrij Rupel and Mate Dolenc entitled *Peto nadstropje trinadstropne hiše* (The Fifth Floor of a Three-Floor House). The most important moment for anti-nationalism was offered by the polemics between Dušan Pirjevec—Ahač and Dobrica Ćosić. When Ćosić proposed his notion of a unitarist Yugoslav nation, Pirjevec replied, somewhat unexpectedly given the norms of the public space at the time, by arguing that Yugoslavia already solved the national question when it acknowledged its constituent national cultures and its federal constitution. Pirjevec defended this solution with the argument that it allowed the new generation to devote its cultural and political engagement to the more important problems of humanity as such. Pirjevec's approach was to negate aesthetic and any other kind of humanism by following Heidegger and declaring the end of humanism.

3

During the Second World War, Edvard Kocbek was a Christian socialist leader of the Liberation Front. After the break-up with the Soviet Union in 1948, →

commodities without becoming victims of consumerism. Under socialist conditions, this goes further. Even in Yugoslavia, an open country with a half-developed market economy, socialist conditions meant that one could not choose freely because the choice was made by the state or Party. This deprivation of the pleasures of the capitalist paradise is taken as alienation, and the metamorphosis of the socialist market into the capitalist shopping mall is accepted as a source of authentic joy and existential freedom to choose one's way of life.

The second possible narrative revolves around the national ideology of literature. In the 60s, the struggle of the young literary generation against the traditional canon of national literature included the negation of literary nationalism and even of any need to follow the nationalist programme.² In the 80s, this same group first adopted the Heideggerianism of Dušan Pirjevec and then embraced a postmodernist ideology; one of the results was a new journal entitled *Nova revija* (New Journal). Soon, however, their search for tradition led them to the legacy of Edvard Kocbek.³ To broaden the horizons of this new direction and to share their incompatible political programmes, a meeting between Serbian nationalists of Dobrica Ćosić's kind and a Slovenian literary delegation was organised in Ljubljana in the second half of the 80s. Even before that, both old and young Slovenian nationalist writers as well as many other intellectuals were engaged in the fight against the so-called common nuclei proposed by Yugoslav centralists as obligatory contents of all elementary and secondary schools with the aim of promoting a kind of common Yugoslav ideology. The nationalists won this battle against Yugoslav unity. Later on, in 1987, issue 57 of *Nova revija* started a discussion about the historical possibilities of the Slovenian nation in a time when it was obvious that the national programmes of the Communist parties of the individual Yugoslav

republics contained vastly different futures. Finally, in 1988, the Slovenian Writers' Association produced the first draft of the Constitution of a future Republic of Slovenia. After the first elections of the newly implemented multi-party system took place in 1990, many writers and intellectuals became Members of Parliament or took other important functions in politics. Most of these intellectuals entered public life around 1968, including Rudi Šeligo and Dimitrij Rupel, but also such legendary leaders of the 1970–1971 student movement as Jaša Zlobec as well as representatives of an older generation who had entered the national literary canon before the 60s, such as Tone Pavček and Ciril Zlobec. In the 80s, the '60 generation produced a nationalist programme by amalgamating a postmodernist literary ideology with a modernist final historical end. It was a move of great importance but short career: by the end of the 90s, both traditional national culture and the postmodernist national culture from the 80s lost their political and cultural weight. Symbolically, the most important reason for the existence of the Ministry of Culture was not its role in the cultural fields of literature, theatre or the visual arts, but its involvement in media legislation and regulation. The victory of the visual over the literary and of the popular over the elitist was complete, which also realised the intention of May '68 to promote popular culture into a kind of high culture. In order to be marginal in art and culture after 1989 it was not enough to belong to the artistic avant-garde. The real scandal was to be anti-nationalist or at least too cosmopolitan, like, for instance, Neue Slowenische Kunst or Dragan Živadinov, the artist who introduced a state in time and a cosmist project of the artistic cultivation of outer space.

The third possible link between 1968 and 1989 presents itself in the form of the opposition between the status of Slovenian art and culture

→ he opted for a radical liberalisation of the Yugoslav political system, which cost him all his political functions. At the same time, his ethical criticism of post-war mass shootings of the defeated opponents resulted in the ban of his major prose work, the 1951 book *Strah in pogum* (Fear and Courage). He was isolated from the public space, put under permanent surveillance and sporadically persecuted. As his intellectual and artistic position was Christian, liberal democratic and socialist, he was embraced by the Catholic Church as a victim of communism but never as a source of intellectual grandeur or political wisdom.

in 1968 and 1989. In 1968, Slovenian literature was a case of a nation-building literature of a nation without state, to use Montserrat Guibernau's concept, and new generations of writers fitted the model of late modernism or pre-postmodernism with their hermetic and ludist poetics practiced in opposition to the popular. In the context of Eastern European literature, the Slovenian case was a marginal moment of this '68 model; in the international context, the Slovenian case was fairly responsive to Western European high and late modernism due to Yugoslavia's openness towards Western art and philosophy, and this latecomer's receptiveness resulted in a new chapter of the belatedness of Slovenian culture. In the 80s, Slovenia alternative culture took part in a greater stream of alternative social movements which prepared and conditioned the transition from post-socialism to capitalism and democracy, the transition which included a break from the (con)federal Yugoslavia and an establishment of an independent and sovereign nation-state. Slovenian alternative culture is an exemplary case of this new model of post-socialist postmodern alternative and is as such irreducible to a belated reception of Western postmodernism. But at the same time, 1989 represents the return of the Easterners of Europe to the position of latecomers. ♡

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Povzetek

Če hočemo vzpostaviti zvezo med pomenljivima letnicama 1968 in 1989, lahko to opravimo na različne raziskovalne načine. Ker pa so se že sodobniki zavedali pomena obeh dogodkov, namreč študentskega revolta in padca berlinskega zidu, z njima pa tudi vloge literature posebej in umetnosti nasploh, se lahko problema lotimo tudi tako, da vzamemo v roke sočasne analize. Ker govorimo o Vzhodni Evropi, geopolitičnem pojmu, ki je do leta 1989 trdno označeval drugi, socialistični blok bipolarnega sveta, je za leto 1968 pri roki študija Aleksandra Flakerja o prozi v kavbojkah, za leto 1989 pa knjiga Aleša Erjavca in Marine Gržinič o osemdesetih letih v slovenski umetnosti in kulturi. Obe knjigi sta usmerjeni k izdelavi modela literature oziroma umetnosti svojega obdobja, pri čemer Flakerjev pristop povezuje literature celotne Vzhodne Evrope, slovensko literaturo pa predstavi kot robni pojav svojega modela, medtem ko je druga knjiga namenjena zgolj slovenski alternativni kulturi osemdesetih let. Erjavec je kasneje spodbujal raziskovanje modela osemdesetih let tudi v drugih socialističnih deželah.

S primerjavo teh modelov je mogoče raziskati možne povezave med letoma 1968 in 1989. Ob tem se ponujajo tri hipoteze. Prvič, obstaja neposredni razvoj od etike ugodja, ki se je leta 1968 postavila po robu protestantski etiki, in oblagovljenim poželenjem po selitvi iz socializma v nakupovalno središče v osemdesetih letih; drugič, obstaja podobna povezava med spopadom mlade književne generacije s kanonom nacionalne književnosti in nastopom te generacije dvajset let kasneje v vlogi zastopnika programa narodogradnje, vključno z izdelavo prvega predloga ustave republike Slovenije; in tretjič, medtem ko je slovenska književnost, kot trdi Flaker, za model 1968 izdelala zgolj robne primere, je v osemdesetih letih t. i. slovenska alternativna kultura, ki je že pretežno vizualna, zgleden primer za celotno vzhodnoevropsko regijo.

Lev Kreft

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**Protests of 1968:
The Politics of Memory
or the Memory of Politics?**
Protesti 1968: politika sećanja
ili sećanje na politiku?

There are many accounts of student protests from 1968 that have been written by the witnesses of events, and there are also many studies conducted by experts in various fields, but the event itself is difficult to place in wider political narratives. However, the event still seems important for several reasons: it was neither expected nor foreseeable; the mobilisation of the protesters was spontaneous and sudden; key issues included anti-imperialism and corruption; meetings, demonstrations, tracts became everyday life of the protesters; and there was a mix of anarchistic liberalism and practical organisation. Hence, the challenge of re-politisation seems to be the main heritage of May '68 as a type of contradictory ferment. Focusing on student protests in Belgrade and their subsequent echoes, this article attempts to shed light on the structural reasons for the discrepancy between the complexity of events and the poverty of experience, or between the politics of memory and the remembrance of politics.

MAY '68, YUGOSLAVIA, THE STUDENT MOVEMENT, THE EVENT, POLITICS

Postoji mnoštvo izvora o studentskim protestima 1968. čiji su autori neposredni svedoci, postoje i mnogobrojni stručni radovi o ovom događaju, ali čini se da se on još uvek teško smešta u širi politički narativ. Međutim, postoji nekoliko aspekata koji ovaj događaj čini i dalje bitnim: kretanja 1968. nisu bila ni očekivana ni predvidljiva; mobilizacija protestanata je bila spontana i trenutna; antiimperijalizam i korupcija su bile važne teme; sastanci, demonstracije, proglašeni i leci bili su deo svakodnevice protestanata; protest je bio obeležen mešavinom anarhističkog liberalizma i praktične organizacije. Stoga se čini da je repolitizacija glavni legat koji zbivanja iz 1968. kao protivrečni ferment ostavljaju za sobom. Ovaj članak je pokušaj da se, kroz analizu studentskog protesta u Beogradu i njegovih naknadnih odjeka, pokažu strukturalni razlozi za nesklad između složenosti događaja i siromaštva iskustva, odnosno između politike sećanja i sećanja na politiku.

MAJ '68, JUGOSLAVIJA, STUDENTSKI POKRET, DOGAĐAJ, POLITIKA

There is no lack of information about *May 1968* (to use a seemingly innocent name to designate a long political process), but it seems that stereotypes, silence and uncritical nostalgia prevail in discussions about it. There are many accounts of student protests in 1968 that have been written by witnesses of events, and there are also many studies written by experts in various disciplines, but the events themselves are difficult to move into official historiography and even more difficult to place in wider political narratives. Do we know more about these events today, more than fifty years later, and do we know it better? Or is there always something new when we are faced with the events of 1968? The first question to be posed hence concerns the very status of writing the event. As Julian Bourg notes (27), May 1968 ‘can amount to a historical Rorschach test, upon which one projects a range of perspectives, emotions, and judgments’. A certain relativisation is always involved when we think about 1968. This follows also from the fact that there are no real terms to describe the events of 1968, only ideologically and intellectually simple labels such as *crisis*, *strike*, *rebellion*, *revolution*, *conflict* or *conspiracy*. On the other hand, terms that may be more useful are almost out of use: for example, today nobody would describe the events as a boom of utopian dreams.

However, several aspects seem to make the events relevant even in our time: the movement was neither expected nor foreseeable; mobilisation of the protesters was spontaneous and sudden; anti-imperialism was a major topic; meetings, demonstrations, leaflets entered the everyday life of the protesters, characterising it with a mix of anarchistic liberalism and practical organisation. In the second part of my article, I will focus on student protests in Belgrade and their subsequent echoes in order to show the structural reasons for this discrepancy between the complexity of events and the poverty

of experience, or between the politics of memory and the remembrance of politics.

At the core of the 1968 events is a curious paradox: in January 1968, the United Nations General Assembly designated 1968 as the International Year of Human Rights to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; today, however, 1968 is remembered as the year of protests against the political class all around the world. According to Mark Kurlansky, 1968 is the year that rocked the world, but there are others who would say that nothing really happened. As Hrvoje Klasić points out (49), for most of the population, 1968 was a year like any other, and only intellectuals granted it such enormous importance. The events of 1968 demonstrate a certain resistance to explanation which needs to be explained itself. The nature of the event itself is antinomian, and contradiction is written even into the graffiti that cropped up all over Paris during May '68: graffiti like *Il est interdit d'interdire* (It Is Forbidden to Forbid) and *Soyez réalistes, demandez l'impossible* (Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible) reveal the 'antinomian revolt against norms' (Bourg: 6). Did 1968 change our understanding of the revolution itself? After 1968, did excess and heterogeneity, anti-authoritarian sensibility, certain forms of insolence, moral liberation actually cease to be excessive? There are many views that see May '68, especially its French chapter, more as a cultural than a political phenomenon (see Reader with Wadia: 87). But the question is whether this is only the effect of the kind of culturalised politics that dominates today.

Alain Badiou begins his text on the four dimensions of May 1968 with a clear statement in favour of discontinuity: nothing that was there before has 'any active significance for us' today, he writes; it remains only as '[n]ostalgia and folklore' (Badiou: 43). This is one possible

point of view, and it is not maintained only by Badiou, of course. But he goes on to offer an even more pessimistic assessment: ‘the real hero of ’68 is unfettered neo-liberal capitalism’ (Badiou: 44). This primarily refers to the well-known argument regarding the transformation of lifestyles, the enthronement of individualism, the commodification of pleasure, the triumph of the colourful universe of commodities and consumption. But then there is also something which Badiou calls ‘the libertarian May’ (Badiou: 49). This May is about a transformation of habits, a new understanding of love relationships and individual personal freedom, the May of women’s movement and the emancipation of homosexuals, the May of new theatre and new forms of public expression, and so on. To this Badiou adds one final May 1968: this May ‘was crucial, and it still prescribes what the future will bring’ (Badiou: 51). It is connected to the decade 1968–1978 and then absorbed by the years of François Mitterrand. The first aspect of this period is the rise of the conviction that we are ‘witnessing the end of an old conception of politics’ and seeking a different political conception, somewhat blindly, during the 1970s. This is when the belief there is an agent that carries the potential of emancipation (such as the working class, the proletariat, the people or the students) is shattered and replaced by an obsession with the question: ‘What is politics?’ (Badiou: 52)

But Badiou also proposes a number of optimistic hypotheses. Writing during the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, he claims that May 1968 is of interest to a significant portion of the youth, and that we can turn to 1968 as ‘a potential source of inspiration’ in our efforts to truly act (Badiou: 44). And there is, moreover, ‘another, and even more optimistic, hypothesis’ that a different world is possible, that the idea of revolution may be revived. Here, Badiou joins those who argue that May 1968 is an extremely complex event that precludes any uniform

description; hence, his emphasis is on 'heterogeneous multiplicity' (Badiou: 45). On the other hand, the failure of protest opens up the myriad of questions about the technology of power, the working of the police, the role of the media, and so on.

In his article on the Prague Spring, Karel Kosík asks the following question: 'What do Czechs know today about an event like the 1968 Prague Spring?'. (Incidentally, this might be easily translated also as: 'What do we [Serbs, Slovenians, Germans, Italians...] know today about an event like the 1968 student protest?') In Kosík's reading, it seems that, fifty years later, 1968 appears as the symbol of our irresponsibility not only to the past but even more to the present: 'In reality, the Prague Spring is a permanent event. To look at this event means to see the misery of our present.' (Kosík: 141) Thus, it seems to me that our question is really not what 1968 was, but what it is. Bourg even wrote recently that 'much of what matters today still relates to forces unleashed in the 1960s and 1970s, from human rights to terrorism to religious politics to economic disorder to the infinite variations on life and lifestyle around the world' (Bourg: xi). In brief, the idea that 1968 is a kind of event that reveals a 'fundamental sense of possibility' (Bourg: xii) still seems relevant.

In what follows I will address these questions by looking at the student protests that erupted in Belgrade in early June 1968. Of the numerous accounts of these protests I will mainly focus on the following books and articles: Živojin Pavlović's diary *Ispljučak pun krvi* (Spit Full of Blood), which was forbidden in 1984 but published in 1990; Nebojša Popov's seminal book *Društveni sukobi—izazov sociologiji: 'Beogradski jun' 1968* (Social Conflicts—A Challenge to Sociology: The 'Belgrade June' 1968), which was forbidden in 1983 but published in 1990; László Végel's memoir *Szellemi krónika (Hatvannyolc)* (Intellectual Memoir

[Sixty Eight]), which appeared in 1998 and was republished in his book *Hontalan esszék* (Homeless Essays) in 2003, a year after it was translated into Serbian; and Milisav Savić's book *Šezdesetosmaš: priče, reportaže i intervjuji iz Studenta '68* (Sixty-Eighter: Stories, Reports and Interviews from the '68 volume of *Student*), which was published in 2016.

In the post-Yugoslav context, stereotypes, omissions and uncritical nostalgia about the protests of 1968 were influentially challenged by proper discussion only some ten years ago, especially after the fortieth anniversary of the events. For example, in 2008, the Institute for Recent History of Serbia published a valuable edited collection of twenty-four research articles entitled *1968—četrdeset godina kasnije* (1968—Forty Years Later), from which I also take my above diagnosis (see Radić). One of the contributions to this collection shows that the student unrest of June 1968 'was for many years known as a true historiographic taboo in former Yugoslavia' (Zubak: 449); another one argues, that, given the significance of the June 1968 movement, 'it is surprising that the student protests in Yugoslavia are yet to be adequately addressed by (post-)Yugoslav or international scholars' (Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 455). Ten years later, Croatian historian Hrvoje Klasić published a book on Yugoslavia and the world in 1968 that has the potential to change the perception of the events of 1968 in the discipline of history as well as to contribute to public debate. In addition to the texts given above, these two publications have largely shaped our most recent thinking about the relation between the politics of memory and the memory of politics.

The Belgrade events certainly have a methodological character, as Nebojša Popov demonstrates in his book. But again, is there something more than sheer methodological interest or historiographic curiosity? If we try to treat the Belgrade events of June 1968 as just

an example of student protests around the globe, we are surprised to learn that the first impression of the witnesses is that it was spontaneous. Pavlović begins his diary with typical images of everyday life of a peaceful socialist middle class in Belgrade in the long enumeration of small meaningful quasi-events: ‘sparks of programmed freedom, weddings, public holidays, dancing, alcohol, a trip in the “nature”, lamb on the spit, fascistoid brainwashing at the stadium, triumphant seduction of a waitress’ (Pavlović: 19). Pavlović also writes that ‘the majority of young people fit in with the dominant mechanism of life, dreaming of the paradise of the western hemisphere’ (Pavlović: 24). And then, suddenly, chaos: on 3 June 1968, the headline of *Politika*, a major daily newspaper, reported on student riots in New Belgrade. The first impressions of the witnesses are that they do not understand what is going on: ‘We still do not quite understand what happened’, wrote Pavlović in his diary (25). Only a day later, he changed his mind: ‘Something really is happening. Routine habits and established patterns of life are breaking into pieces.’ (Pavlović: 39)

But what actually happened? If we follow the account offered by Popov (36–42) we see that, at the beginning, what happened was banal and unpromising, but not without consequences for a rising prevalence of mass media. The initial conflict arose at a social gathering entitled, as if ironically, *Karavan prijateljstva* (Friendship Caravan). Bad weather conditions forced the organisers to hold the event indoors, in a hall nearby student dormitories in New Belgrade that could accommodate only 400 visitors. Students and other guests were not informed that only brigadiers could enter the hall. When, at about 10 PM, a number of students tried to enter the hall, a fight broke out between students and brigadiers. Police arrived shortly thereafter and engaged in a fight with students and other guests. The mass in front

of the student campus was growing and news came, later unconfirmed, that one student had been killed. Students attacked police officers and plundered a fire truck. Around midnight, about 3000 students gathered. The confiscated fire truck became the platform from which students asked the crowd to gather at the Federal Assembly in Belgrade and submit their requests to the deputies. On their way to the city centre the students were brutally confronted by the police and numerous participants were injured or arrested. Adding insult to injury, media reports immediately blamed the students for the 'incidents' (Popov: 38) while portraying the brigadiers as victims of violence and hooliganism (see Pavlović: 25). The next day, the student insurgence became a strike and events escalated until the famous speech given by Tito on 9 June.

The students soon issued a proclamation compiled by the University Board of the Union of Students of the Belgrade University, the Action Board of Demonstrations and the editorial board of the journal *Student*. Despite subsequent malicious and superficial interpretations, student demands seem well informed from today's perspective. They primarily sought to reduce social inequalities, including the rate of unemployment that forced many workers to emigrate (see Pavlović: 29). In addition, they requested that the arrested students be released from prison and their police files destroyed, and culprits for the brutal behaviour of the police charged. They also requested a meeting with the Presidency of the Federal Assembly to discuss student matters with students and university representatives. Finally, they demanded resignations of the managers and editors-in-chief of Belgrade daily newspapers, Radio Belgrade and the Tanjug news agency.

None of the demands were met. Ironically, though, they marked the beginning of an end of a system of power that failed to break free

from Stalinist methods. To quote the Tito speech that marked the end of demonstrations: ‘And finally, I once again turn to the students: I wish for you to take to learning, for it is exam time, and I wish you a lot of success, because it would be really harmful to lose more time.’ (Quoted in Pavlović: 110) But time for what? And for whom? Who actually lost time here? Today it is clear that ‘the June crisis was a clear sign of the irreparable loss of legitimacy of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. In the long-term perspective, student demonstrations dismantled the myth of a non-confrontational society and eroded the Party’s pretensions to absolute power’ (Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 455).

A paradox traverses the event. Let us say that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was perhaps the only ruling party in the world that, ‘despite some reserve, viewed the global student movement as a fundamental confirmation of its own ideological and political foundations’ (Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 456). This holds true especially for the demands for self-government (*autogestion*) as they were expressed at demonstrations in France. As a result, media reports on demonstrations were rather abundant (undoubtedly a mistake in the technology of power). For example, on 25 May, the *Borba* newspaper published the famous interview Jean-Paul Sartre had conducted with Daniel Cohn-Bendit five days before. The Yugoslav leadership also supported the reforms of Alexander Dubček—whom Tito visited on 9 August, just ten days before the intervention of the Warsaw Pact (see Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 456).

Such political support for global student protests explains the specificity of student press in Yugoslavia. In 1968, Yugoslav student press was transformed from a means of communist propaganda to a separate media sphere that refused to follow the official party line (see Zubak: 420). With a newly independent editorial policy, student press showed

a strong interest in international student turmoil and the related protests against the Vietnam War (see Zubak: 420–21). Critical periodicals included *Pogledi*, which was published by a group of young intellectuals in Zagreb in 1952 and 1953 and was followed by such outlets as *Naše teme* in Zagreb, *Perspektive* in Ljubljana, *Polet* and *Omladinski tjednik* in Zagreb, *Student* and *Susret* in Belgrade, and *Tribuna* and *Mladina* in Ljubljana.

Very little was to be read in Yugoslav student press about the situation at French universities before May 1968. But after the outbreak of the revolt in Paris, numerous reports were published. The most interesting ones came from the scene of action. This is how a correspondent of *Tribuna* got involved in a fight with the police, a journalist of *Mladina* talked directly with student demonstrators, and philosopher Mihailo Marković, a member of the editorial board of *Praxis*, found himself in Paris during May as a participant in a scholarly conference on Karl Marx. *Student* immediately published Marković's impressions, which were full of enthusiasm for the bravery of the students (see Zubak: 427). There, Marković did not believe that the students were capable of creating a new society, but he did see them as 'a catalyst that can ignite unpredictable revolutionary movements in the world' (Marković: 8). *Student* published the programme of the Comité d'action étudiants-écrivains (Students-Writers Action Committee), which *Tribuna* praised as a model for a future programme of the Ljubljana students (see Zubak: 429). From today's perspective it could be said that student press created intellectual conditions for the articulation of a specific type of political rebellion within socialist Yugoslavia. As noted by Marko Zubak, writing about student rebellion in the world can also be seen as a channel through which the 'desire for change in Yugoslavia itself' was reflected (Zubak: 450).

To understand the specificity of the student protest of June 1968, we must look at a specific socio-political figure—the intellectual, especially the philosopher. As shown by Christoph Charle, in the late nineteenth century the notion of the intellectual began to refer to the ambitious elite of well-educated people who sought to use the possibility of publishing in print and in other media to exercise symbolic power and thus compete with other kinds of elite in their effort to control the social and political imaginary (see Charle). One could make the argument that socialism enabled this figure of the intellectual to persist longer in Eastern Europe than in the West. The public sphere in socialist Yugoslavia paradoxically seems more transparent than in successor states because in Yugoslavia access to the public sphere was limited to individual journals and newspapers which, despite their specificities, shared a common, if fragile, hermeneutic horizon. The philosophical journal *Praxis*, published by the Croatian Society for Philosophy from 1964 to 1974, was an important instrument in creating the spirit of rebellion. The journal brought together critical philosophers and sociologists from across Yugoslavia who paid equal attention to the systems of government in both capitalist and socialist societies. These included Gajo Petrović, Milan Kangrga, Danko Grlić, Predrag Vranicki, Svetozar Stojanović, Mihailo Marković, Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, Veljko Korać, Ivan Focht, Vojin Milić and Milan Životić. In addition, through its summer school on the island Korčula, the *Praxis* group maintained contacts with some of the most world-renowned philosophers and Marxists, including Herbert Marcuse, Ágnes Heller, Jürgen Habermas, Erich Fromm, Henri Lefebvre, Zygmunt Baumann, Lucien Goldmann, Leszek Kołakowski, Ernest Mendel and Karel Kosík. Philosophy thus became the so-called liberation science of the 1960s, aimed at humanising social relations and the place of the individual

in production and in daily life (see Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 461). This did not go without tensions between the government and intelligentsia, however, tensions which became increasingly pronounced in late 1967 and early 1968 (see Klasić: 40).

But if the spirit of rebellion was tolerated in student journals and among critical intellectuals, why was the establishment so scared of the students? This may be the question of all questions, yet it seems easy enough to answer. The reach of student journals and the *Praxis* group was rather small, and their political influence limited to a small number of curious intellectuals who could be easily controlled. With thousands of students on the streets, however, it became clear that everything was possible and that the regime could not control the population. The official disappointment in the power technologies was obvious and had serious consequences. The leadership was shocked as the protest 'was the first open rebellion against the consolidation of power in the years after the Second World War' (Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 454). And this shock was backed by the fear of re-politicisation of the youth and the fear of the loss of monopoly on political activism (see Klasić: 71). Duško Radović, famous author of children's books, gave an interview for *Student* in October 1968 in which he spoke about the consequences of the June events in terms of a utopia that found its topos, its place: 'Heroism is the courage to believe in your thoughts. And the revolutionary is anyone for whom nothing is so sacred that it could not be replaced by something better.' (Savić: 75) These words explain the fear of the ruling elite rather well.

On the other side, there are also explanations that take into account the fear of the students themselves. Philippe Bénéton and Jean Touchard (27) ask an interesting question about the students' politics of fear: 'Can the university crisis be explained by the fear of failure and

the risks of public competition?' The rebellion was a conflicted mixture of revolt and revolution, a protest against the flows of civilisation and against a specific regime.

Žarko Puhovski, who was 'certainly the most accomplished theorist within the student press of Zagreb and of entire Yugoslavia' (Zubak: 438), saw three basic elements of the rebellion: disappointment with the old left; aversion to formal politics; and a search for solutions outside the existing system (see Zubak: 438). Film director Dušan Makavejev and sociologist Trivo Inđić supported not only the protest as such but also the students' decision to invent unconventional approaches (see Zubak: 439). Inđić traced the rebellion back to the disappointment of the youth with the political systems of Western welfare societies as well as socialist bureaucratic regimes. László Végel, too, thought that the protests 'declared both capitalism and socialism uncomfortable' (Végel: 253). According to Végel, the student rebellion had a crucial anti-authoritarian legacy which nationalist ideology tried to deny everywhere (Végel: 254). In this sense, the 1968 legacy could be used in the struggle to resist nationalism and populism. According to Pavlović (140), the Yugoslav student movement 'suffered a complete defeat as a revolutionary act, but managed to preserve some validity as a reformist force'.

On the other hand, the events of 1968 can be seen as the root of a new kind of post-conflict society. After 1968, media, soft power, video surveillance, politics of fear and hard-line liberal moralism all contributed to the rise of a new kind of normativity that was a far cry from the famous Parisian graffiti. History may have undone the students' aspirations, but it did not resolve the social tensions to which they reacted. On the contrary, it seems that these tensions are stronger today than they were fifty years ago, as they help deepen social inequalities,

unemployment, media control, the politicisation of fear and the crisis of democracy.

Was the crisis in Belgrade specific to Yugoslavia or was it a part of a wider issue? Was its target a specific government or corruption as such? Given their tendency to correct the system from within, one could argue that the Belgrade protests were an involution, not a revolution. Compared with protests in other countries, the Yugoslav movement owes its specificity to ‘the unique fact that, because of the Yugoslav peculiarity, the students were able to articulate their demands within the framework of official ideology’ (Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 459). Hence, for example, the announcement of students and professors at the Faculty of Philosophy on 4 June, the second day of the protests: ‘We don’t have any special programme. Our programme is the programme of the most progressive forces of our society—the League of Communists and the Constitution. We demand its full realisation.’ (Quoted in Pavlović: 69).

Let us briefly summarise the so-called lessons of the protests in the hope that this will lead us to an intelligible politics of memory: a minor conflict lead to a serious political event; the role of state violence manifested in undue action of the police helped determine the trajectory of the conflict; the dynamic of the protests surprised the protagonists themselves (see Kanzleiter and Stojaković: 453); there was unprecedented solidarity among students, and between students and professors; the politicisation of 1968 featured ‘increasingly strong expressions of solidarity among Yugoslav students with students elsewhere, but also with endangered third-world liberation forces’ (Zubak: 446); in search of concrete policies, the students opposed abstract discussions (see Pavlović: 62); the capture of speech (*prise de parole*) was a notable project, pursued especially at the events held at the Faculty

of Philosophy in Belgrade. Finally, 'overcoming the gap between the theory and the practice of communism was one of the most prominent aspirations of student protesters in Belgrade and Zagreb' (Zubak: 428).

Despite the universality of student demands it remains unclear whether the protests were a rebellion against a particular government or its segments, and whether the target were capitalist elements in socialist economy or the state of corruption. Developing his thesis about the aestheticisation of the protests, Pavlović saw a dilution of the protests in the way in which they were often approached by artists. Indeed, revolution as festival and carnival showed all of its ambivalence during 1968. In the end, it seems that Badiou is right when he argues that the importance of 1968 lies in the feeling that the old political conception came to an end, and it also seems that there has been a blind and cursory search for a new political conception that has yielded deceptive results. Therefore, neither the politics of memory nor the memory of politics, but the challenge of re-politicisation seems to be the main heritage that the events of May and June 1968 leave behind as a kind of antinomian, contradictory ferment. ♡

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Povzetek

O *maju 1968* (če naj uporabimo nedolžno ime daljšega političnega procesa) ne manjka informacij, a razprave v veliki meri obvladujejo stereotipi, molk in nekritična nostalgija. Ne manjka niti poročil prič študentskih protestov iz leta 1968 niti razprav iz najrazličnejših strok, pa vendar dogodke same le težka okvirimo v uradno zgodovinopisje in še težje umestimo v širši politični okvir. Od tod tudi pomanjkanje izrazov za opis dogodkov iz leta 1968, tako da nam preostanejo le ideološko in intelektualno omejeni klišeji, kot so *kriza*, *stavka*, *upor*, *revolucija*, *konflikt* ali *zarota*. Na drugi strani so izrazi, ki utegnejo biti koristnejši, skoraj popolnoma pozabljeni: nihče na primer danes ne bi teh dogodkov obravnaval kot eksplozije utopičnih sanj.

Pa vendar te dogodke marsikaj približuje našemu času: bili niso niti pričakovani niti predvidljivi; mobilizacija protestnic in protestnikov je bila spontana in nenadna; anti-imperializem je bila ena glavnih tem; maj je bil apoteoza mimeografa, kot pravi Keith Reader; sestanki, demonstracije, letaki so postali del protestniškega vsakdana, ki je s tem postal zmes anarhističnega liberalizma in praktičnega organiziranja. Pomen maja je v intuiciji, da je, kot pravi Alain Badiou, čas starih političnih koncepcij minil, pa tudi v tem, da je slepo iskanje nove politične koncepcije obrodilo varljive sadove. Izziv repolitizacije se torej kaže kot osrednja dediščina protislovnega vrenja iz maja 1968. Ob obravnavi študentskih protestov v Jugoslaviji in njihovih odmevov članek osvetljuje strukturne razloge za neujemanje med kompleksnostjo dogodkov in bedo izkustva oziroma med politiko spomina in spominom na politiko.

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Slovenian Intellectuals of the 1960s from the Political Point of View¹

Slovenački intelektualci
u šezdesetim godinama
s političke tačke gledišta

This article focuses on the question of how the activities of the intellectuals in the 1960s were observed and evaluated by the leading politicians of the Communist Party of Slovenia. The negative reputation that the Slovenian political leadership acquired with its rough intervention in the cultural scene in 1964 was the foundation for the consideration of how to avoid such scandals in the future. In the second half of the 1960s, the League of Communists of Slovenia commissions for ideological questions were led by people who defined the role of intellectuals in society in an entirely different manner than the older generation of communists. Hence, as long as this group of politicians prevailed in the Slovenian political leadership, the door was open for diversity in the sphere of culture.

SLOVENIA, MAY '68, INTELLECTUALS,
COMMUNISTS PARTY OF SLOVENIA,
CULTURAL POLICY

U radu se analizira način na koji su vodeći političari Saveza komunista Slovenije videli i valorizovali aktivnost intelektualaca tokom šezdesetih godina prošlog veka. Negativna reputacija koju je slovenačko političko rukovodstvo steklo 1964. godine grubom intervencijom u sferu kulture poslužila je kao polazište za razmatranje strategije kako da se izbegnu slični skandali u budućnosti. U drugoj polovini šezdesetih godina komisijom za ideološka pitanja Saveza komunista Slovenije upravljali su ljudi koji su definisali ulogu inteligencije u društvu polazeći od potpuno drugačijih pretpostavki nego starije generacije komunista. Sve dok je grupa mlađih političara preovladavala u slovenačkom političkom rukovodstvu, vrata za različitost u sferi kulture su bila otvorena.

SLOVENIJA, MAJ '68, INTELEKTUALCI,
KOMUNISTIČKA PARTIJA SLOVENIJE,
KULTURNA POLITIKA

1
This article was written at the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana in the framework of the research project 'May '68 in Literature and Theory: The Last Season of Modernism in France, Slovenia, and the World' (J6-9384), which was funded by the Slovenian Research Agency.

This article takes a look at how the activities of cultural workers towards the end of the 1960s were observed and evaluated by those who made the decisions regarding the public image of the Slovenian cultural scene. Predictably, in a one-party authoritarian system, this power was assumed by the politicians and ideologues of the League of Communists of Slovenia (LCS). However, the Party's politics was not in the least straightforward or unchangeable. Through the decades, it instead went through several periods in terms of its attitude towards producers of literature and other art forms (see Gabrič 1998, Ramšak). In the 1960s, several Yugoslav republics saw a strengthening of the role of the upcoming generation of communists who were not limited by dogmatic Marxist models and were therefore more favourably inclined towards different artistic and scholarly activities. The negative reputation that the Slovenian political leadership acquired with its rough intervention in the cultural scene in 1964 (see Inkret) was also behind the leadership's new resolve to avoid such scandals in the future without losing the influence on the cultural sphere.

In 1964, Stane Kavčič, president of the ideological commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia (CC LCS), was at the helm of the cancellation of the journal *Perspektive* (see Repe 1990). Kavčič belonged to those leading communists who supported a calmer attitude towards intellectuals, and as a reformist in economy he knew that the participation of experts was crucial for a successful functioning of society as a whole. The cancellation of the third journal of upcoming intellectuals in a row caused a strong public reaction—and not only in Ljubljana or Slovenia. Politicians criticised the contributors to *Perspektive* for defending standpoints that at times seemed unacceptable. Criticism focused on Jože Pučnik, who was imprisoned once again, and on Veljko Rus, who called for the organisation of those

with fewer rights while allegedly also demanding 'that trade unions be shaped as a political opposition to the leading cadres in labour organisations'.² Measures taken by the authorities resulted in a scandal which made the authorities realise that the affair had significantly more negative consequences than positive ones, as even those cultural workers who otherwise supported them would publicly express their disagreement. As it often happens with strict censorship, what the authorities triggered with their measures against *Perspektive* was precisely the opposite of what they wanted: 'The interest in *Perspektive*, which had been largely unknown and certainly not read by many people, has increased, and now people are looking for it in libraries and elsewhere in order to learn about its contents.' Those who agreed with the cancellation of the journal wondered why the measures had not been implemented earlier, and at the same time cautioned that the censorship should not be 'restricted only to Ljubljana', as 'similar things are happening elsewhere as well, which indicates that *Perspektive* has a certain influence in the field'.³

Negative responses to the cancellation of *Perspektive* also came from the rest of Yugoslavia. During their visit to Zagreb, members of a delegation of the LCS leadership also discussed the issue with the philosopher Gajo Petrović, a co-founder of the Korčula summer school and the journal *Praxis* (for which see Sher), where he was also editor-in-chief. Petrović did not support the repressive measures, even though he disagreed with many positions expressed in *Perspektive*. As the Slovenian politicians hinted that *Praxis* should not advertise *Perspektive*, they learned that this was not the intention and that the two publications had not been, and did not intend to become, connected in any way. Petrović only spoke highly of Rus, who became a member of the *Praxis* editorial board.⁴

2
SI (Arhiv Republike Slovenije) AS 1589 (Centralni komite Zveze komunistov Slovenije), III, t.e. 149, Informacija o simpoziju 'Alienacija in reintegracija človeka naše družbe', 15 January 1964. (Here and elsewhere, archival sources are given in footnotes.)

3
SI AS 1589, III, t.e. 149, Informacija o nekaterih pojavih in komentarjih na terenu ob ukinitvi *Perspektiv*, 29 June 1964.

4
SI AS 1589, IK, t.e. 42, Lojze Skok: Zapisek razgovorov na Gradskem komitetu ZK Zagreb, februar 1965.

5
SI AS 1589, IV, t.e. 144,
a.e. 353, Položaj sloven-
ske politične emigraci-
je—njena nacionalna
in moralno politična
zavest (po 'Svobodni
Sloveniji'); *ibid.*, Tabor.

Criticism of the measures taken by the Slovenian authorities was also expressed beyond the Yugoslav borders. Slovenian (as well as Yugoslav) authorities were constantly worried that domestic opponents of the regime would establish political connections with anti-communist émigrés. They monitored the negative responses to the events surrounding *Perspektive* and its contributors in the press of the Slovenian diaspora.⁵ They could not know, however, what political analysts thought about the issue—or perhaps it never crossed their minds that foreign intelligence services such as the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could possibly be interested in such minor details. But in June 1965, a CIA analysis of the Yugoslav intellectuals who opposed the regime mentioned Milovan Djilas and 'Djilasism' in the introduction (CIA: 1) before focusing on the events in Slovenia:

The Slovenian literary magazine, Perspektive, became the first publication to criticize the regime openly on such sensitive issues as agricultural policy, the one-party system, the effectiveness of self-management of enterprises, the conformity of the press, the affluence of the party hierarchy, and other 'failures' of the Yugoslav system. (CIA: 2)

The affair was obviously quite prominent, since CIA agents were familiar with the facts. Their analysis also included the emergence of a new journal, thus spelling more trouble for Yugoslav authorities; this journal was none other than *Praxis*, an outlet 'which appeared soon after *Perspektive's* demise' (CIA: 4).

It is therefore not surprising that *Perspektive* remained in the focus of the leading politicians for quite a long time. For several years, they would see descendants or at least conceptual successors of *Perspektive* in publications by Slovenian intellectuals that they assessed

as unacceptable. In the political terminology of the 1960s, the terms *perspektivovec* or *perspektivaš* (supporter of *Perspektive*) were used to refer to those intellectuals who formally declared themselves as Marxists but whose positions often opposed the ideology and politics of leading communists. The authorities evaluated the activities of other journals with equal scepticism, and they realised that the cancellation of *Perspektive* had by no means benefitted them in the long term.

In the mid-1960s, most of the criticism of Party ideologues was aimed against *Tribuna*, a journal run by students at the University of Ljubljana in which a new generation of writers and theorists, approximately a decade younger than the generation of *Perspektive*, had already started to assert itself. As they listed the mistakes of this journal's editorial board, the conclusion of LCS leaders was simple: “*Tribuna*” published a few articles recently which can be deemed as clear attempts to revive the ideological and political concepts of “*Perspektive*”. The dissatisfaction of leading Slovenian communists was strengthened by their realisation that the student organisation of the Communist Party insisted on the position which it had already expressed during the initial scandal, namely: ‘We do not agree with the “*Perspektive*” group or its writings, but its cancellation was nonetheless unnecessary. It is better to write about, discuss and criticise the issues, in any manner and from any position, than disregard them completely.’ The editorial board of *Tribuna* was replaced by new cadres,⁶ but the journal remained the target of repeated critiques. Yet it persisted and preserved its critical outlook on the society. In January 1967, the leadership of the LCS warned the leadership of the Party organisation at the University that it should ‘take a stand regarding *Tribuna*, as it continues to provide fertile ground for reactionary ideas’. Instead of focusing on student matters, the editorial board of *Tribuna* continued to address new issues,

6
SIAS 1589, III, t.e. 149,
Informacija v zvezi
s ‘Tribuno’, glasilom
slovenskih študentov,
25 February 1965.

7

SI AS 1589, IK, t.e. 34, Zapisnik 15. seje Izvršnega komiteja CK ZK Slovenije, 30. January 1967, p. 5.

8

SI AS 1589, III, t.e. 181, Zapisnik razgovora pri sekretarju CK ZKS Albertu Jakopiču glede objave v Biltenu CK ZKS o razmerah v Idriji v zvezi z ustanovitvijo revije 'Kaplja', 2 February 1966, p. 6.

including 'a debate or dialogue with clericalists regarding the basic questions of the Party and its role'.⁷

The next periodical which the authorities suspected of reviving the ideas of the supporters of *Perspektive* was founded not in Ljubljana but in the small mining town of Idrija. In early 1966, the first issue of *Kaplje* circulated among the readers. Initially, the leadership of the League of Communists in Idrija was not concerned with this journal (see Gabrič 2017: 22–26). However, the Party central in Ljubljana wondered whether it was appropriate that a journal which they did not control had started to spread its influence. Unlike other local publications, *Kaplje* received no financial subsidies, and so these others outlets were expected to 'improve and rejuvenate their editorial boards' to 'ensure that "*Kaplje*" fails on its own, without garnering much attention'.⁸ However, contrary to these aspirations, *Kaplje* was frequently discussed in political circles in the following years. Local forums indeed followed the activities of this journal, but they did not implement any political measures against it. Cooperation of the *Kaplje* team with the editorial boards of other Slovenian journals, contributions by individual writers who were politically questionable in the eyes of the authorities, and particularly cross-border cooperation with the Slovenian minority living in Italy enabled *Kaplje* to make an impression not only on the Slovenian cultural public but also on the politicians (see Gabrič 2017: 26–30).

Many other journals targeted by the internal criticism of the Party ideologues were published as well. On the cultural scene, public debate strengthened and some positions went far beyond the lines of those that had been persecuted and penalised only a few years earlier. Nonetheless, Slovenian political leadership no longer wished to take similar actions. Attempts were made, though, to restrict the influence of critical

intellectuals and their publications by supporting those journals which rejected their positions on a supposedly expert level.

In 1961, the Higher School of Political Science was established as a Marxist research institution dedicated to educating political and social-science cadres as well as journalists. Highly influenced by leading Party ideologues, the school was eventually nicknamed *the red seminary*. In 1964, the school launched the journal *Teorija in praksa*. A number of leading Slovenian politicians were appointed to the editorial board, expecting that the journal would establish a dialogue on a highly professional level with the other journals and contribute to the assertion of the Marxist worldview with convincing arguments. However, for some of the politicians the manner in which the new school and journal approached the task was unsatisfactory. The school leadership wanted to fulfil the academic criteria needed for the school to become a member of the University as soon as possible. The more narrowly-envisioned ideological goals championed by the politicians were therefore neglected. In January 1967, Albert Jakopič, a disgruntled member of the CC LCS, assessed that *Teorija in praksa* failed to oppose *Tribuna*, adding that he did not understand 'how our own publications could contribute to disintegration'.⁹ France Popit also underlined unacceptable theses from selected *Tribuna* articles, which he would have expected *Teorija in praksa* to criticise. The explanation of the journal's managing editor, Stane Kranjc, who stated that *Teorija in praksa* 'addresses certain issues on a level of serious publications and without any pretensions of acting as an arbiter',¹⁰ was not able to satisfy the politicians from the older generation.

The nascent politics of more 'liberal' part of the Slovenian leadership, which strived to establish a constructive dialogue with the intellectuals, can be followed as of the second half of the 1950s. At that

9
SI AS 1589, IK, t.e.
32, Zapisnik 13. seje
Izvršnega komiteja
CK ZK Slovenije,
9 January 1967, p. 8.

10
Ibid., p. 21.

11
SI AS 1589, IK, t.e. 15,
Zapisnik razširjene
seje Izvršnega komi-
teja CK ZK Slovenije,
29–30 March 1962,
pp. 151–52.

12
SI AS 1589, IK, t.e. 32,
Zapisnik XII. seje
Izvršnega komiteja
CK ZK Slovenije,
8 March 1966,
p. 15 (France Popit), pp.
28–29 (Vlado Krivic).

13
See SI AS 1589, IK, t.e.
33, Zapisnik XIV seje
Izvršnega komiteja
CK ZK Slovenije,
4. 4. 1966, and Zapisnik
XV. seje Izvršnega ko-
miteja CK ZK Slovenije,
19. 4. 1966.

time, the Slovenian government was headed by Boris Kraigher, who was deemed the political enabler of *Perspektive*. He believed that the contributors of *Perspektive* ‘do not enjoy any political support or represent any significant political force; and, secondly, most of them defend—with conviction rather than only tactically—the socialist positions and the workers’ self-management in all of their statements’.¹¹

Changes in the attitude of the authorities towards culture and cultural workers were also influenced by the political developments in Yugoslavia. Slovenian politicians focused their attention on the economic reform under the leadership of Boris Kraigher, which was welcomed in the developed parts of Yugoslavia and therefore also in Slovenia. On the other hand, this affected the revival of national tensions in Yugoslavia, in respect to which Slovenian politicians were relatively united—much like in the case of the economic reform. Slovenian politicians also began to underline the specificities of the Slovenian language and culture, suggesting that, due to the small size of the market in Slovenia, Slovenian culture should receive more subsidies than cultural activities in other Yugoslav republics.¹² Only a decade earlier, such demands could still be rejected by the Slovenian leadership (see Gabrič 2015: 225–234). The unity of the Slovenian politics was also strengthened by the political conflict in the leadership of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in 1966, which was followed by the removal of Aleksandar Ranković from his prominent political function. Tumultuous political developments also resulted in the rejuvenation of the leading political structures and in a different understanding of the social role of intellectuals. With these issues, however, the unity of Slovenian politics ended. The older members, led by Edvard Kardelj, perceived the rejuvenation of the Party leadership as an attack on their leading political positions.¹³

The assessment of the role of intellectuals in socialist society was also among the causes for the divisions between old and young communists. Boris Zihlerl, who had been the leading cultural ideologue only a decade and a half earlier, said that he was not keen on the changes. He was surprised to encounter a lack of understanding even at the Higher School of Political Science. The discussion about democratic centralism gave him the impression that 'the opinion prevails that this is something completely obsolete, that it is only here to embellish our programmes and statutes while being completely unbinding'. Suspecting that he has become too 'old-fashioned' to 'understand things', Zihlerl struggled in vain to conceive of a way of uniting the positions of the communists 'without returning to a kind of leadership we know from the past'.¹⁴

Former head of the Agitprop, the censorship apparatus of the Communist Party in the first post-war years, Zihlerl was not the only one to assert that types of leadership known from the past had already been surpassed. In the mid-1960s, during the disputes with the cultural workers, other advocates of harsh methods from the Slovenian political leadership also remembered the times when the retaliation against those with different opinions had been much swifter and more brutal. For example, in May 1966, during yet another discussion about the journals which published contributions that were not to the liking of the authorities, Edvard Kardelj mentioned that the law on press should be amended because it was 'bad and obsolete', as it had been written for completely different times, times that had already passed. 'When the Agitprop actively intervened and summoned those who introduced hostile ideas, this law was appropriate, which is not the case anymore',¹⁵ assessed Kardelj. At a session at the beginning of 1967 (yet again while listing the offences of the journal *Tribuna*), Slovenian

14
SIAS 1589, IK, t.e. 32, Zapisnik XI. seje Izvršnega komiteja CK ZK Slovenije, 8 February 1966, p. 29.

15
SIAS 1589, IK, t.e. 33, Zapisnik XVIII. seje Izvršnega komiteja CK ZK Slovenije, 23 May 1966, p. 32.

16

SI AS 1589, IK, t.e. 34, Zapisnik 15. seje Izvršnega komiteja CK ZK Slovenije, 30 January 1967, p. 5.

17

SI AS 1589, III, t.e. 193, Zapisnik seje komisije za družbeno-politične odnose in idejno-politične probleme, 6 December 1966, pp. 8–9.

top leadership wondered how it could ‘compensate for the deficit’ after something like the Agitprop was no longer possible.¹⁶

In the second half of the 1960s, however, the LCS commissions for ideological relations, culture, education and research were led by people who defined the social role of intellectuals on entirely different foundations than the older generation of Communists, which had still dictated cultural politics in the 1950s. In December 1966, while preparing materials for a comprehensive Party consultation, France Hočevar—a lawyer and, at the time, vice-president of the Slovenian government—emphasised two fundamental shifts in the assessment of the role of intellectuals in society. The first shift entailed ‘the aspirations to provide the intelligentsia with a position in the society and define it, in its relation to the League of Communists, as a creative part of the society. The aim of these positions is to break away from the current attitudes towards the intelligentsia and reveal the causes of the unsatisfactory state of these relationships’. The second fundamental shift entailed the distancing from the previous politics of favouring the technical intelligentsia, which was supposedly closer to the working class due to its more production-oriented work than the intelligentsia in the social sciences and humanities, which supposedly was removed from the working class and the Communist Party as its vanguard. Defending this second shift, Hočevar claimed that ‘our position is that the intelligentsia should be included in its totality, without favouring the technical section’. It was also deemed necessary to surpass the mentality of certain communists who believed that ‘the development of our society depends on the productive force of the working class, thus underestimating the connection between the working class and the intelligentsia, which causes conflicts that are also underestimated by the communists’.¹⁷

Following such principles, the consultations about the educational, cultural and academic matters, organised in the context of the LCS commissions in the following years, represented an open confrontation of different positions, aimed at solving pressing issues. During these consultations, the disagreements between the older and the younger generation of cultural workers were more frequent than between the politicians and the cultural workers. Rather than the Party ideologues, it was Josip Vidmar—the patriarch of Slovenian cultural workers who believed that the new policies were undermining his own cultural authority—who would most frequently express his disapproval of the younger intellectuals' ideas. When, in 1965, Vidmar was among the people asked by the editorial board of *Teorija in praksa* to express their position on current issues in cultural politics, the very manner in which the question about the role of cultural workers in the society was asked bothered him (see Vidmar: 77). When Catholic intellectuals were given more opportunities to present their views publicly, Vidmar mentioned to Kardelj that the influence of the clericalists was strengthening at the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, a key Slovenian institution which Vidmar happened to be the president of at the time. In 1968, Vidmar was the first to sign the statement *Demokracija da—razkroj ne!* (Democracy Yes—Disintegration No!). During the discussions about how to solve the crisis in the Slovenian National Theatre in November 1969, he disagreed with the proposal that 'all movements should be equal in the theatre, especially if [...] they exist only under the influence of the current fashion in Europe'. He believed that such matters belonged to somewhat more experimental theatres.¹⁸

Vidmar's traditionalist positions provoked resistance not only among the younger generation on cultural workers but also high up in the Party. At the session of the Central Committee of the LCS

18
SIAS 1589, IV, t.e. 144, a.e. 354, Zapisnik 1. seje začasne delovne skupine, ki je bila ustanovljena v skladu z zaključki razgovora o problematiki Drame SNG, ki je bil dne 21. novembra 1969, pp. 14–15.

19
SI AS 1589, IV, t.e. 6,
Dokumenti Komunist,
20 March 1970, p. 14.

20
Ibid., pp. 22–23.

in March 1970, he argued that the Party should make better use of the opportunities to disseminate the tremendous emotive power of communist thought among the youth, where various Western philosophic orientations were spreading.¹⁹ Yet again, a younger communist from the so-called liberal section of the Party disagreed with him—in this case Janez Kocijančič. His reaction to Vidmar’s words was published in the documents of the LCS leadership under a meaningful title: ‘Young people are experimenting in the field of culture—yet this is not anti-communism.’²⁰

In comparison with the preceding two decades, characterised by swift changes in the field of cultural politics, the intellectuals now experienced a minimal and almost imperceptible pressure from the political authorities. The introduction of various aesthetic and theoretical movements in the Slovenian cultural sphere of the late 1960s was also a consequence of this (relative) openness. For as long as the so-called liberal part of the Party prevailed in the Slovenian political leadership, the door was open for cultural diversity. When this political leadership was replaced at the beginning of the 1970s (see Repe 1992: 204–34, Ramšak: 46–53), its cultural orientation declined as well, followed by renewed repression on the cultural scene. ♡

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Povzetek

Članek se osredotoča na vprašanje, kako so vodilni v Zvezi komunistov Slovenije ocenjevali delovanje intelektualcev v šestdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja. Tedaj se je v vodstvu okrepila vloga mlajše generacije komunistov, ki ni bila opredeljena z dogmatičnimi marksističnimi obrazci in je bila bolj naklonjena raznolikosti umetniškega in znanstvenega delovanja. Negativni sloves, ki ga je leta 1964 pridobilo slovensko politično vodstvo zaradi grobega posega na kulturno prizorišče, je bilo izhodišče za premislek, kako bi se tovrstnim aferam v prihodnje izognili, ne da bi ob tem izgubili vpliv v kulturni sferi. V drugi polovici šestdesetih let so komisije Zveze komunistov Slovenije za idejna vprašanja vodili ljudje, ki so vlogo intelektualcev v družbi opredeljevali drugače kakor starejša generacija komunistov, ki je nadzorovala kulturno dogajanje v petdesetih letih. Zaradi tolerantnejšega odnosa so bila posvetovanja o šolskih, kulturnih in znanstvenih vprašanjih vse bolj odprto soočanje različnih stališč. Bolj kakor razhajanja med politiki in kulturniki so postala izrazita razhajanja med kulturniki starejše in mlajše generacije ustvarjalcev. V primerjavi s hitro spreminjajočimi se kulturnopolitičnimi obdobji prejšnjih dveh desetletij so bili izobraženci pod manjšim pritiskom oblasti. Vstopanje različnih umetniških in znanstvenih usmeritev v slovenski kulturni prostor v šestdesetih letih je bilo tudi posledica te kulturnopolitične odprtosti. Dokler je v slovenskem političnem vodstvu prevladovala skupina mlajše generacije komunističnih politikov, so bila vrata raznolikosti v kulturni sferi širše odprta. Zamenjavi tega političnega vodstva na začetku sedemdesetih let pa je sledil tudi zaton te kulturnopolitične usmeritve in nov pogrom na kulturnem prizorišču.

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**May '68 and the Emergence
of *écriture féminine*:**

**The French Centre and
the Slovenian Periphery**

Maj '68 i nastanak

écriture féminine: Francuska
i Slovenija - centar i periferija

This article discusses the relation between second-wave feminism and Slovenian literature, focusing on the poetics of female authors. It begins by addressing the relations between the 1968 student movement and the struggle for women's emancipation, particularly the literary and theoretical innovations of women in France with an emphasis on the symbolic position claimed by the authors around the *écriture féminine* circle. After presenting the second wave of the women's movement in Slovenia, the article sketches out the Slovenian reception of *écriture féminine* and sets up the framework for a further exploration of the emergence of *écriture féminine* among poets in the period 1964–1980. During that period, there was no Slovenian equivalent of *écriture féminine*. However, as *écriture féminine* was emerging in France, some emancipatory stirrings in Slovenian poetry were felt, particularly in the work of two female poets of an earlier generation and one author who had participated in the student movement.

MAY '68, WOMEN'S LIBERATION
MOVEMENT, *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE*,
SLOVENIAN FEMALE POETS,
SPEAKING OUT

Članak proučava odnos drugog talasa feminizma i književnog sistema s fokusom na pesničke prakse autorki. U prvom delu analizira se relacija koja se uspostavlja između studentskog pokreta '68, borbe za emancipaciju žena i književnih i teorijskih inovacija u Francuskoj s naglaskom na simboličku poziciju za koju su se izborile autorke kruga *écriture féminine*. Nakon predstavljanja drugog talasa ženskog pokreta u Sloveniji, daje se skica recepcije francuskih teoretičarki, kao i okvir za buduće proučavanje ženskog pisma u slovenačkoj poeziji u periodu 1964–1980. Tokom analize dolazi se do zaključka da u slovenačkom književnom sistemu nije moguće govoriti o *écriture féminine* kao o posebnom pokretu ili književnom toku, ni kada je reč o književnom stvaralaštvu ovog perioda uopšte, ni unutar podsistema poezije, što ne znači da nije bilo pojedinačnih slučajeva, odnosno, glasova snažnog emancipatornog potencijala i nesumnjive umetničke vrednosti koji su se javili istovremeno s francuskim pokretom.

STUDENTSKI POKRET '68,
POKRET ZA OSLOBOĐENJE ŽENA,
ÉCRITURE FÉMININE, SLOVENAČKE
PESNIKINJE, SPEAKING OUT

**THE STUDENT REVOLUTION, WOMEN'S LIBERATION
MOVEMENT AND *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE***

The question of women's participation and the division of gender roles in the 1968 student uprisings received increased media attention in May 2008 and May 2018, the fortieth and the fiftieth anniversaries of the revolt. In terms of leadership, May '68 was an overwhelmingly male affair: women rarely had access to public forums or important leadership positions. A series of personal testimonies reveal a sharp polarisation in so-called practical activities: while men were discussing, women were making coffee; while men were standing at podiums making speeches, women were distributing leaflets. The subject of May '68 was, as Florence Prudhomme argues, the male subject, the subject of male sexuality, the subject of the phallic libido that has never been threatened by the danger of an unwanted pregnancy or a potentially fatal backstreet abortion. At the same time, by shifting to the personal, the spirit of the revolution produced a new conceptualisation of politics and this in turn caused the woman's question to be asked again, this time in a new and more subversive manner. To a large extent, the new wave of western feminism—as an autonomous movement a landmark of which remains the birth of the *Mouvement de libération des femmes* (Women's Liberation Movement) in France—was the result of the diversification of the student movement. As historian Bibia Pavard put it: 'Everybody, the historians and the protagonists, agree that the history of the MLF begins in 1968. The MLF was born in the wake of May '68 even if it rose in opposition to it.' (Pavard: 36)

The Neuwirth Law, which partly lifted the ban on birth control methods in 1967, was among the first steps towards women's emancipation in France. The law, replacing a law that had been passed in 1920

under the Vichy Government, did not lift the prohibition of abortion and in any case was never fully implemented. MLF's slogan *Mon corps est à moi* (My Body Is Mine) and the 1971 *Manifeste des 343* (Manifesto of the 343), in which 343 women admitted to having had abortions, paved the way to the passage of the Veil Law in 1975, finally lifting the ban on artificially terminated pregnancies. This was the most concrete accomplishment of the second wave of the women's movement in France.

In May 1970, the journal *Partisans* announced the birth of the MLF by dedicating a special issue to it. The movement was the result of a rethinking of May '68 carried out by female participants of the uprising on the basis of their own experience. In this process, female participants of May '68 sought to understand the social, political and psychological reasons for the silence of women during political assemblies, and for the overt arrogance of their male comrades. More generally, they wanted to confront the oppression of women in society, to build an effective (and also theoretical) platform for fighting it. In the words of Françoise Picq, one of the movement's main protagonists, the movement fought for the 'abolition of patriarchy and capitalism, of relations of oppression, exploitation, alienation and the bipolarisation of genders' (Picq: 220).

Views on the exact date of the emergence of the MLF differ. Some of the key protagonists of the MLF attest that the movement began during the events of May '68, while their testimonies do not always name the same starting point. According to Antoinette Fouque, one of the leading figures of the MLF, the movement was born at the Sorbonne where she met with several female members of the *Comité révolutionnaire d'action culturelle* (Revolutionary Committee for Cultural Action), the central student committee of the May '68 movement. Others name the assembly of the group *Les femmes et la révolution*

(Women and Revolution) organised by Anne Zelensky and Jacqueline Feldman as the MLF's beginning. According to a third account, the MLF emerged in October 1968 when Antoinette Fouque, Josiane Chanel and Monique Wittig had their first meeting.

Disagreements about the date actually reveal profound differences in visions about the women's movement. The MLF, far from being homogeneous at its start, soon split into several factions around differences on political, gender and social questions. During extended debates about whether feminism would ever become revolutionary rather than remain reformist and collaborationist, three main positions were established regarding the questions of how the oppression of women should be understood and how to engage in the political sphere. The first camp advocated an essentialist theory, insisting on the notion of difference with a focus on the woman defined by her sexuality. It advocated for complete political separatism, a position that led to the formation of *Psychanalyse et politique* (Psychoanalysis and Politics), a revolutionary faction which rejected the very notion of feminism. The second camp sought to make the whole left rethink its foundations and include feminism in its analysis and practices. This faction developed the analysis of difference as a social construction and accepted alliances with other political formations. Today, researchers of this period distinguish between revolutionary (differentialist) and egalitarian feminism, to which they add the trade-unionist variant. All three currents would continue to develop in subsequent decades.

AVANTGARDES AND *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE*

The role of the French neo-avant-garde literary movement in May '68 was extremely significant. Nonetheless, there is a significant lack of research

on the relationship between writers and revolutionaries during May '68, a lack that we can only begin to make up for with the help of recent studies by Patrick Combes and Boris Gobille. The space that the emerging neo-avant-garde movements began to open in the late 1960s enabled the transmission of the fight for women's rights to the field of literature and opened a new area in the literary field where a younger generation of female authors could gain recognition.

As Boris Gobille puts it, the Tel Quel group, one of the leading neo-avant-garde movements that fought for leadership in the ideological framing of May '68, extended the field of class struggle to language, arguing that it is in the sphere of language that bourgeois domination generates and reproduces itself. For this reason, members of Tel Quel understood writing as action and production rather than mere expression. Textual action was believed to have its own efficiency due to its relation to social struggle. Its primacy, however, is not assured as it destroys the code of the bourgeoisie (Gobille: 116). Thus, language, *le langage*, and writing, *l'écriture*, are both key elements in the revolutionary imagination of May '68; hence, for example, one of the most famous slogans of May '68, *Écriture, subversion, sexualité* (Writing, Subversion, Sexuality). Under the name *écriture féminine*, the emerging women's writing defined the happening of the female body through language and the happening of (female) language through the body as the main domain of its investigation. In her manifesto entitled 'The Laugh of the Medusa' ('Le Ride de la Méduse'), Hélène Cixous (876) exhorts women: 'And why don't you write? Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it.'

In the 1960s and 1970s, many female authors began to criticise the literary canon for being formed according to a patriarchal and patrilinear reasoning that was perceived as being universal. Methods of fighting male domination in the literary system were various and included the absence

of struggle in literary practice itself. So-called women's literature was seen as being the other, which meant different, second-class and minor in relation to universal literature. For this reason, many female authors did not want to be classified in the category of women's literature at all, a frequent situation which continues to characterise many national literary systems. As Simone de Beauvoir put it: 'We rejected women's literature because we wanted to speak on an equal footing with all the men in the world.' (Quoted in Naudier: 61)

In the period when the concept of *écriture féminine* emerged in France, a polarisation emerged between older female authors and a new generation in search of an entry into the literary field. Female authors who already belonged to the literary establishment, such as Beauvoir, Marguerite Yourcenar and Nathalie Sarraute, rejected the notion of gender difference in literature, while those who were not published until the second half of 1960s embraced gender difference, with its proximity to linguistic difference, as their core principle.

In the decade from 1975 to 1985, there was widespread belief in the idea of literature written by women based on the premises of gender difference and the specificity of female writing. In the 1974 best-selling book *Parole de femme* (A Woman's Word), Annie Leclerc wrote:

They said that the Truth did not have a sex. They said that art, science, philosophy were truths for all... No, no, I do not ask for access to the Truth, knowing all too well what a powerful lie men possess. I only ask for the word. You give it to me, very well, but I do not want it. I want my own... Because it is not sufficient to speak about me in order for me to find my own word. Women's literature: feminine literature, very feminine, of a delightful feminine sensibility... A man speaks in the name of a man, a woman in the name of a woman. (Leclerc: 11-12)

In France, this new phenomenon was addressed also by Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Wittig, Xavière Gauthier, Chantal Chawaf, Jeanne Hyvrard and Michèle Montrelay. Several of these writers proposed a new conceptualisation of *écriture féminine*. An argument could be made, though, that the term had different meanings. In a narrow sense, *écriture féminine* depicts a literary current and a literary movement traversing the subfield of the neo-avant-garde, which in many aspects ideologically defined May '68. In a broader sense, *écriture féminine* is a transhistorical phenomenon theorised by these authors as a way of writing related to the feminine.

In the narrow sense, *écriture féminine* developed its own style in producing typical post-structuralist texts—blurring fiction and essay, mixing poetry with theory, and investigating specific topics to reject presupposed characteristics of women's literature, including fragility, tenderness, submissiveness, sensitivity and sentimentality. These new strategies share a common goal: they are all dedicated to challenging the oppression of women by the dominant ideology using language and writing that by necessity deals with the body. Literary tradition, cultural practices and dominant ideological forms are challenged in the attempt to put forward a linguistic difference produced by gender difference, which would in turn lead to the deconstruction of the symbolic order of the patriarchal discourse. The female body in all its aspects, and with a specifically strong emphasis on sexuality and its connection to language, becomes the main thematic paradigm. Issues to be explored include sexual pleasure, pregnancy, labour, menstruation, lactation and masturbation.

In *Parole de femme*, Leclerc writes:

Too bad for him, I will have to speak about it, about the pleasures of my sex, no, no, not about the pleasures of my soul, my virtue,

or my feminine sensibility, but about the pleasures of my woman's womb, of my woman's vagina, of my woman's breasts, about the sumptuous pleasures of which you have no idea. I will have to speak about it because only in this way will a new word be born, a woman's word. (Leclerc: 15)

The reinvention of women's writing is based on the capture of speech (*prise de parole*) as a form of occupying public space. To begin to speak as a woman, to utter the feminine, is the main goal of the works of *écriture féminine*, be they theoretical treatises, literary texts or hybrid forms. When women capture speech in their own way and present their dark continent, which, according to Cixous, is unexplored by men, they are not babblers (*bavardes*), but speakers (*parleuses*). This is the idea that provided the title of the famous book of conversations between Gauthier and Marguerite Duras, *Les Parleuses*. Certain authors, particularly Hyvrard, preferred to categorise their works as words (*paroles*) rather than poems or stories, while Cixous coined the term *sext* to combine *sex* and *text*. *Parole* and *sext* thus became specific genres created by *écriture féminine*.

Écriture féminine developed with the symbolic support of the neo-avant-garde. In 1974, issue 58 of *Tel Quel* was dedicated to women's writing and one of the special issues of *La Quinzaine littéraire* was entitled *L'écriture a-t-elle un sexe ?* (Does Writing Have a Sex?). As a part of the neo-avant-garde, the feminine became one of the emblems of literary subversion and a key practice of the aesthetic innovation by which emerging younger female authors began to achieve greater symbolic power in the literary system. In this respect, *écriture féminine* participated in the symbolic occupation of the literary field. The production of texts was accompanied by the establishment of a publishing infrastructure, a network of journals, and so on. Antoinette Fouque created

the Des femmes publishing house, Gauthier founded the journal *Sorcières*, Cixous co-founded the Centre for Women's Studies (Centre d'études féminines) at the experimental University of Vincennes, the first of its kind in Europe.

Regarding the connection between the neo-avant-garde and *écriture féminine*, I would like to briefly mention an important difference that emerged from different responses to the question of who writes literature. Those parts of the neo-avant-garde that were associated with Union des écrivains, a writers' union which played a crucial role in May '68, put forward the necessity of anonymity. In contrast, *écriture féminine*, whose advocates were closer to the Tel Quel group, which was in overt conflict with a part of Union des écrivains, rested on the principle of identity. In their view, there is no possibility of dethroning when enthroning has never occurred. The deconstruction of the *Auteur*, theorised at the time by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, specifically meant the death of the male author at a time women were 'coming to writing', to use the title of a Cixous essay. If the speaking subject of May '68 was still male, that is, the phallic subject, it was subsequently subverted by the feminine in the field of literary discourse. This went beyond the dichotomy of biologism, because here the feminine was established as a marginal discursive position aimed at subverting the dominant logo- and phallogocentric discourses. For this reason, Kristeva, in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* (*La révolution du langage poétique*), assigned a profoundly revolutionary nature to the feminine principle at the core of what she called *the semiotic*.

Écriture féminine is a literary movement whose production reached its peak between 1974 to 1985, yet its most important theoretical contributions allow us to define it also as a transhistorical concept that can be useful as a critical tool in studying literature written by women.

Probably the most important difference between the various conceptualisations of *écriture féminine* derives from the question of whether *écriture féminine* can occur in the literary practice of male authors. It should be noted that such conceptualisations already mark a shift from the biological difference between the sexes towards the notion of the social construction of genders. The most complex and widely disseminated discussions were put forward by authors with post-structuralist and psychoanalytic backgrounds, notably Cixous in 'The Laugh of the Medusa', Irigaray in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (*Speculum : de l'autre femme*) and Kristeva in *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

Feminist critics of a later generation reproached the concept of *écriture féminine* for reproducing a biologism based on a Eurocentric and essentialist universalisation of the experience of a white western woman (see Moi, Jones). They claimed that *écriture féminine* insisted too much on difference understood in an essentialist manner, whereby the values assigned to each side of the male/female polarity are reversed but the polarity itself remains, as does the male as the determining referent. Critics also reproached *écriture féminine* for its lack of practical activism. Nonetheless, some critics, particularly Toril Moi, acknowledged the theoretical depth that was missing in American feminism (see Moi). Later critics, notably Judith Butler, argued that *écriture féminine* restricted the meaning of gender to received notions of masculinity and femininity, and that it idealised a particular expression of gender, namely the feminine, thus producing new forms of hierarchy and exclusion (see Butler: viii).

Écriture féminine, new literature written by women which began to emerge in France in the late 1960s, was the first literary movement to establish itself on the basis of gender difference. Its founders and advocates took a differentialist stance and were subsequently criticised

by egalitarian feminists for renouncing the practical struggle against discrimination and the oppression of women. It is true that *écriture féminine* as a movement distanced itself from activism, but this does not mean that it gave up the fight. Instead, it relocated the fight in one of humanity's primary discursive and symbolic practices: the art of literature. It introduced the principle of gender difference into literature, re-evaluated, and made it an emblem of artistic creativity. By exploring the female body with a special emphasis on its sexuality, *écriture féminine* did not bracket out the issue of the social and political position of women, but rather relocated the problem of the political within the literary discourse; hence one of the key insights of second-wave feminism, condensed in the famous slogan *The Personal Is Political*. In so doing, it followed the main principle of one of the wings of the neo-avant-garde literary movements that participated in May '68, namely the idea of subverting the social order not through direct political action, but through writing as a practice with transformative social effects (see Naudier: 59). *Écriture féminine* opposed logo- and phallogentrism, emphasising the feminine in all of its aspects, and thus contributed importantly to the symbolic and aesthetic revolution that put into question language itself.

THE NEW FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN SLOVENIA

New feminism, which began to criticise the dominant state feminism, had been present in Yugoslavia since at least the mid-1970s, when a number of emerging groups began to address issues such as domestic violence against women and children, enforced gender roles, gender pay gap and gender-based political marginalisation. These Yugoslav developments were felt also in Slovenia, its northernmost republic. As a united movement acting under the influence

1 Here I would like to refer to a statement made by Monika Žagar during a recent discussion about her own experience of participating in neo-avant-garde groups connected to the student movement. To paraphrase her description: the eccentric behaviour of men was viewed as luddite, while women behaving in a similar manner were criticised for being hysterical.

of western feminism and the slogan *The Personal Is Political*, Yugoslav feminism aimed at securing sexual and reproductive rights, and acted on two primary fronts of resistance: against the socialist treatment of women's issues and the single-party system, and against the rising ethno-socialist thematisation of birth rates (inextricably connected to reproductive freedom) in the construction of the national agenda. According to Vlasta Jalušič (17), new feminism in Slovenia belonged to a group of civil-society movements that emerged during the 1980s by following the post-1968 models of peace, environmental and other alternative Western movements as well as Eastern European ideas of civil society and anti-politics.

As a platform, new feminism in Slovenia was also inspired by local student movements of the 1970s. After Tito's death in 1980, a period of liberalisation in politics and culture ensued, stimulating the formation of alternative groups in which a young generation of intellectuals joined forces with those from the student movement. However, not unlike the MLF in France, female protestors did not begin to push for the creation of women's groups until the end of the 1970s, as they were deeply disappointed with their male comrades from the 1968 sequence.¹ Sociologist Tanja Renner states that women understood their initiative as a counter-front to the liberal movement of the New Left and as a response to the unresolved personal conflicts in the relations between the sexes (see Jalušič: 105). In an article published in the mid-1980s in the left-wing magazine *Mladina*, Jaša Zlobec, one of the most vocal male participants in the student movement in Ljubljana, described the student movement as a failure; specifically, he regretted the fact that post-1968 generations retreated into privacy, which resulted in the loss of not only human solidarity but also the solidarity between men and women (see Jalušič: 32n49).

ÉCRITURE FÉMININE IN SLOVENIA

In Slovenia, the student movement established a space of reflection that became an important source for the emergence of civil society and democratisation in the 1980s. This was also the space from which new feminism would later arise, established on the foundation of post-Marxist, post-structuralist and psychoanalytical paradigms. For French feminist theorists, the theorisation of women's writing emerged above all from post-structuralism and psychoanalysis. Despite the early and exceptionally fruitful reception of French structuralism and post-structuralism, which, among other things, resulted in the establishment of what is now known globally as the Ljubljana Lacanian school, writers associated with *écriture féminine* were not widely read in Ljubljana until the early 1990s, and writers and poets such as Leclerc, Hyvrard and Gauthier remain largely unknown today. The sole exception was Kristeva, whose research reached beyond feminist theory. In the 1970s, *Problemi*, *Časopis za kritiko znanosti*, *Tribuna* and other journals published translations of a number of her texts on themes that were also studied by Slovenian Lacanians at the time.

But these were topics that had no specific connection to women's writing, a theme that Kristeva, however, introduced in her key work, *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Kristeva's feminist theory began to penetrate the Slovenian intellectual space during the mid-1990s, especially through *Delta*, the first Slovenian journal of women's studies and feminist theory, founded by Eva Bahovec and Milica Gaber Antić in 1995. In *Delta*'s first editorial, significantly entitled 'A Journal of Their Own?', the editorial staff established a critical distance towards essentialism (Uredništvo: 6)—for which, as mentioned above, American feminists had already reproached the French post-structuralist

2

In 1986, Maca Jogan, Mirjana Ule and Tanja Renner established a seminar on women's studies at the University of Ljubljana (see Jalušič: 111 and Verginella and Selišnik).

3

The scholars mentioned here belong to the generation of the student movement. I do not include the feminist literary-pedagogical approaches of later generations of female scholars, such as Silvija Borovnik, Katja Mihurko Poniž and Lilijana Burcar.

theorists—while also indicating their inclination towards psychoanalytically-based feminism (for which see Jalušič: 55–56n94). The first issue of *Delta* opened with a translation of Kristeva's essay 'Stabat mater'. In the third and fourth issues, an overview of the work of Luce Irigaray written by Paula Zupanc Ečimović appeared. Two years later, Mateja Gajgar also wrote about Irigaray. Cixous, in contrast, received much less attention. 'The Laugh of the Medusa' came out in Slovenian translation as late as 2005, published in *Apokalipsa*. On the initiative of the journal's editor, Stanislava Chrobáková Repar, *Apokolipsa* began to put out regular issues on gender issues in 2003 as part of the project of a journal within a journal.

In the mid-1980s, the women's movement in Slovenia began to receive institutional support and its main advocates started to introduce women's themes into university programmes.² In the mid-1990s, several Slovenian female scholars who belonged to the generation of the student movement started to lecture about women's writing and literature from the perspective of feminist theory in literature university departments both in Slovenia and internationally. Specifically, Metka Zupančič lectured on French writers and Monika Žagar on Scandinavian writers at American universities, Nadežda Čačinović in Croatia, and Neva Šlibar and Irena Novak Popov in Slovenia.³ Metka Zupančič remained focused on French post-structuralist feminism and particularly on Cixous.

FEMINIST TONES AND *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE* IN SLOVENIAN WOMEN'S POETRY 1964–1980: EARLY OBSERVATIONS

In 1977, Elaine Showalter, the first practitioner of gynocriticism, defined three historical phases of women's writing in English literature. First, there was the long phase of imitating methods from the dominant

patriarchal tradition. This was followed by a second, intermediate phase, a period of radical resistance and demands for autonomous minority status. The third and final phase was that of self-discovery and self-liberation accompanied by the effort to create a positive construct on the basis of traditional asymmetrical relations. In Slovenian poetry, the second phase (see Novak-Popov 2014: 72) only began in the second half of the 1960s, and was soon followed by the third phase.

The most important shifts in tone can be observed in the poetic practices of two central representatives of the so-called critical generation, which is also referred to as alienated lyricism, namely Saša Vegri and Svetlana Makarovič. Unlike most of the French authors associated with *écriture féminine*, neither Makarovič nor Vegri belonged to the generation of the student protest movement.⁴ The time frame chosen here, 1964–1980, corresponds less to the *longue durée* of May 1968 and more to the publication of two important collections, namely *Somrak* (Dusk) by Makarovič in 1964 and *Konstelacije* (Constellations) by Vegri in 1980. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that either of these older-generation female poets consciously made the choice to systematically transform gender into an aesthetic value as was the case with *écriture féminine*. Like Beauvoir, Makarovič rejected the categorisation of her creativity into women's writing, which she mockingly defined as the work of gentle poetesses writing erotic lyrical poetry. Makarovič decisively broke with this tradition in her debut, and even more radically in subsequent poetry collections, especially from her 1972 book *Volčje jagode* (Mock Strawberries) onwards. Both authors, but especially Makarovič, had a visible place in the established literary system, and yet they were not freed from stigmatisation based on their gender, which continued to be understood within a patriarchal system based on the fundamental asymmetry between men (the universal standard)

4 The situation of Makarovič and Vegri could best be compared, in terms of the poetic creativity of French female authors, to that of Thérèse Plantière, one of the most unique poets who became increasingly radical in her aesthetic feminism.

5 This is clear from mainstream book reviews of Vegri's work, starting with her 1958 debut *Mesečni korj* (see Hofman, Konjar, Grafenauer 1959, Grafenauer 1961–1962, Zlobec, Rupel 1962 and Rupel 1967). Any mention of sexual difference is categorised by male critics as feminine and therefore less valuable. Even positive book reviews characterised those elements of her work which did not seem to be in agreement with patriarchal models of femininity as either masculine or unusual (unusual for a woman, that is).

and women, where the latter would always remain other, secondary and second-class.⁵

Makarovič and Vegri, each in their own way, challenged discrimination against women and the enforced image of female identity, in particular by deconstructing the myth of the wife and mother. Makarovič searched for women's genealogies in archaic traditions and used them to construct a unique symbolic language and identity for her female protagonists, including those of the moth, the miller girl, the *žalik žena* (a willy-like fairy in Slavic traditions), the tenth daughter and the Fates, all defined within the criminal/victim opposition. Chrobáková Repar, who wrote one of the most valuable studies on Makarovič's poetry on the basis of gender characterisation (see Chrobáková Repar: 94–103), argues that women's resistance in Makarovič's poetry is tragic because her protagonists ultimately are not liberated from the (self-)destruction that patriarchal society projects onto them.

Vegri puts the position of women, female roles and femininity in contemporary society, and the search for female identity outside of enforced patriarchal patterns and into the context of the everyday life of the middle class and the fragmentation of identity that is the postmodern condition. Her third poetry collection, *Zajtrkujem v urejenem naročju* (Breakfast in a Settled Lap), published in 1967, puts into poetry the consequences of the systematic asymmetrical functioning of gender norms in society, transcends the idealised love relationship, and deconstructs the maternal myth from within in such a way that she also openly poeticises the negative aspects of the parental relationship (for example, the loss of identity that is not part of the maternal role). The last poem of this poetry collection confronts the emptiness that a jump out of this paradigm promises, an emptiness

that includes freedom of choice together with the beginning of a more equal gender relationship:

*Od kod si namenjena tja, kjer je
prepovedano biti?*

[...]

Moj dragi ostaja brez verig.

[...]

On nima verige v ustih.

Prosta si.

Tu pred teboj je brezno.

[...]

Lahko bi ostala nema.

Nema žena.

Vogali te zazidujejo in ne moreš pasti.

[...]

Razmisli o možnosti, ki zija iz prepada.

(Vegri 1967: 76-77)

Or, in English translation:

*From where are you going there,
where it is forbidden to be?*

[...]

My beloved has no chains.

[...]

He has no chains on his mouth.

You are free.

The abyss is in front of you.

6 An early discovery of the spaces of her own femininity through erotic pleasure, pregnancy and giving birth is accomplished in *Naplavljeni plen* (Stranded Prey), a 1961 book that offers an in-depth exploration of the female body as well as a demythologisation of the maternal role and the roles of the spouse, projects integral to *Zajtrkujem v urejenem naročju*.⁷

[...]

You could remain mute.

A mute woman.

Walled into corners you cannot fall.

[...]

Think about the possibilities gaping from the abyss.

The subject in this poem is not entirely certain that she will jump into the abyss. She is still anchored in the apparent order of false relationships, thus leaving the reader in suspense. The title of Vegri's next book of poetry, *Ofelija in trojni aksel* (Ophelia and the Triple Axel), makes it clear that the subject will not only jump but jump with the skill of a figure skater. In the poetry collections that follow, the deconstruction of the patriarchal ideology and the search for the discursiveness that Vegri's previous poetry performed mainly on the thematic level⁶ begin to take place also on the signifying level of the poetic discourse.

Scholars have described *Ofelija in trojni aksel* as a remarkable example of double-voiced women's writing (see, e.g., Novak-Popov 2014: 264). The sixteen poems are written in two typographies (small and capital printed letters) which break the verses into two parts. Each poem is made of two linked columns without spaces. On the discursive level of the recitative (for which see Balžalorsky Antić), this typographical duality is a rhythmic and semantic reflection of the division that occurs in the subject's configuration on another level, in the relation between the subject of enunciation and the lyrical persona. The poems are mostly written in the second person, addressing a person of the female gender. The use of the second-person pronoun can be interpreted in two ways: as an address to the

self where Ophelia, as the recipient, is the objectified version of the speaking subject, or where Ophelia is actually another person who is not the alter-ego of the speaker. This second interpretation invites the hypothesis that the collection actually continues the inquiry into the maternal role. This is very obvious, for example, in the poems 'Kadar te gledam' (When I Look at You) and 'Ravno je zrasla detelja na zelenici' (The Clover Just Grew on the Meadow), which address the relationship between the mother and her young daughter (see Vegri 1977: 7, 8). The figure of Ophelia thus represents a transgenerational intersection, fusing both identities. The older I/you displays the admiring awe of the younger figure in the pairing, a relationship established on the tolerance of otherness and the encouragement of a feeling of freedom, both of which should inform the behaviour of an emancipated young woman: 'TU PUŠČAŠ s podplat / DRUGJE in drugačne sledi / KAR puščaj / ZNAMENJA / SMERI' (Vegri 1977: 12; in English: 'YOU LEAVE footprints/ ELSEWHERE and other traces/ JUST leave/ SIGNS/ PATHS').

In *Konstelacije*, a book of poetry from almost a decade later, Vegri actualises the (late) peak of the poetic neo-avant-garde to which she had belonged neither poetically nor generationally. In this book, she summons several principles of *écriture féminine*, though less in theme than in structure. With its multiperspectivity and fluidity paradoxically constructed on the most detailed and deliberate architectonics that flirt with the possibility of multidimensionality inherited from Srečko Kosovel's constructivism, *Konstelacije* represents one of the most daunting interpretative challenges in Slovenian poetry, which alone calls for an analysis of the book in the context of *écriture féminine*.

Here I will only note that Vegri, with her feminist tones convincing integrated into her poetry, is even more radical than her younger colleagues who began publishing during the *longue durée* of May 1968, including Ifigenija Zagoričnik Simonović, Bogdana Herman, Majda Kne, Maruša Krese and Berta Bojetu. In the work of most of these female authors, we see neither a liberation from the patriarchally dictated patterns of social and intimate relations nor a reformulation of symbolic language. Even overt signs of resistance against domination and discrimination are difficult to find. However, this generation of poets ushered in a significant and hitherto invisible theme that would be revealed in radicalised representations of the anomalies and pathologies that are the consequence of the most negative elements of patriarchal relations, namely the psychological and physical violence culminating in sexual abuse of women and children. Thus, they established a new poetic space to openly and inexorably confront these traumas. The lyric speaker in Zagoričnik Simonović's poem 'Misterij žene' (The Mystery of a Woman), whose title alludes to the eponymous collection of short stories by Zofka Kveder, asks:

*Od kje ta bledost
 Od kje ta mir
 Od kje ta ponižnost
 Bojim se zgubiti nenadoma
 Bojim se zapraviti si nenadoma
 Bojim se biti nezadostna nenadoma
 Komu glede na kaj*

*Ljubica sem vdana
 Križem kražem razorana.*

In English:

*From where this pallor
 From where this calm
 From where this humility
 I fear losing myself suddenly
 I fear wasting myself suddenly
 I fear being insufficient suddenly
 To whom according to what*

*I am a devout lover
 Criss crossed furrowed.
 (Quoted in Novak-Popov 2005: 240)*

The poem, written in 1973 by the main female representative of neo- and post-avant-garde poetry and published in the student journal *Tribuna*, asks about the reasons for the submissive position of women in intimate relations, the consequence of which is internal destruction. In 1977, in her autobiographical prose poem 'Voda mi je vzela moža in otroka' (The Water Took my Husband and Child), in which we detect both thematic and structural characteristics of *écriture féminine*, the poet openly addresses her experience of sexual abuse as a child (see Zagoričnik 1977: 46–63). With a few exceptions (for which see Novak-Popov 2014: 66), Slovenian literary history remained silent about this—perhaps out of consideration and discretion, or perhaps because of the complicity of other writers in the Slovenian literary field. The silence of the literary community is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the poet herself decided that she would put the traumatic experience into her poems and publicly speak about the abuse on several occasions

7 Speaking out was one of the key elements of second-wave feminism, inspired by the slogan *The Personal Is Political*. Zagoričnik Simonovič's poem was published at a time when the Western public sphere slowly began to acknowledge sexual abuse of children as a social problem (see Wright). New feminists accomplished a great deal by encouraging the gesture of speaking out, and sexual abuse of children became a central theme of feminist texts in the 1970s and 1980s. In Slovenia, new feminists established an SOS hotline for women and children who were victims of violence (see Jalušič).

in subsequent decades. By writing and publishing this poem—the title of which probably alludes to the consequences of the trauma: the impossibility of a healthy love relationship and the decision not to become a mother—Zagoričnik Simonovič performed an aesthetic, political and therapeutic act. The text appeared at a time when the emerging women's movements in the West placed the notion of speaking out on their agenda.⁷ The wider testimony of survivors of abuse in the discursive field of literature, above all in memoirs, would have to wait until the 1990s.

CONCLUSION

Écriture féminine, the new literature written by women which began to emerge in France in the late 1960s, was established on the basis of gender difference unlike any other strand of literature known at the time. The challenges it assigned itself can be summarised as follows: to raise the question of women's emancipation in the arts and introduce the issue of women's rights to the literary scene; to rehabilitate the centuries-long discredited position of female writers in the literary canon; to symbolise in the literary discourse what had been hitherto forbidden because of a general value system based on the male point of view: to transform gender as a mark of stigmatisation into a positive value; to build a theoretical basis for overcoming the oppressive patriarchal framework, challenging the phallogocentric system of literature and developing a theory of women's writing.

In the Slovenian literary system, it is not possible to speak of *écriture féminine* as a specific movement or literary current during the era under discussion (certainly not in comparison with the so-called French cradle). Although during the same period that *écriture féminine* emerged in France, a number of emancipatory stirrings in the poetic

production appeared in Slovenia, in particular by two female poets of the generation that preceded the student movement and by one female poet who participated in the student movement. These small shifts in the poetic discourse did not change the metapoetic production, nor did they offer anything like the theoretic elaboration developed by their French colleagues. Moreover, new poetic practices were not complemented by any extraliterary network (of journals, publishing houses or discussion groups) that might have facilitated their dissemination on the level that, for example, had characterised the first wave of feminism in Slovenia. In contrast to the French case, where *écriture féminine* emerged at the same time as the MLF, the emancipatory shifts that were started by a few female authors in Slovenia between 1964 and 1980 were the precursor to a new wave of feminism that—in opposition to so-called state feminism—would only become organised in the 1980s. Although its production was sporadic and eclectic, poetic practice, therefore, preceded and indeed paved the way for new feminism's activist initiatives and theoretical reflection. ♡

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Povzetek

Članek ponuja uvod v proučevanje razmerja med drugim valom feminizma in slovenskim literarnim sistemom, pri čemer se osredotoča na pesniške prakse avtoric. V prvem delu se posveti relaciji med študentskim gibanjem ter bojem za žensko emancipacijo in s tem povezano literarno in teoretsko inovacijo žensk v Franciji s poudarkom na simbolnem pozicioniranju, ki so si ga izborile avtorice iz kroga t. i. *écriture féminine*. Po predstavitvi drugega vala ženskega gibanja v Sloveniji članek skicira recepcijo *écriture féminine* in poda okvir za nadaljnje proučevanje vznikanja *écriture féminine* v slovenski poeziji v obdobju 1964–1980. V primerjavi s Francijo slovenski literarni sistem ni razvil *écriture féminine* kot posebnega gibanja ali celo literarnega toka, in sicer ne v literarnem ustvarjanju tega obdobja nasploh ne v podsistemu poezije. Pa vendar se v obdobju, ko v Franciji vznikne *écriture féminine*, tudi v Sloveniji pojavi nekaj pomembnih emancipatornih zastavkov z umetniškim presežkom, in sicer predvsem pri starejših avtoricah Svetlani Makarovič in Saši Vegri ter mlajši avtorici Ifigeniji Zagoričnik Simonovič. Toda teh premikov v pesemskem diskurzu ni spremljala ne metapoetska produkcija ne teoretska razdelava, ki jo prispevajo Francozinje. Poleg tega pesniška praksa ni bila podkrepjena z vzpostavitvijo obliterarne mreže, ki bi olajšala njeno širjenje (revije, založbe, krožki itn.), kot se je to zgodilo v prvem valu feminizma na Slovenskem. V nasprotju s francoskim primerom, kjer *écriture féminine* vznikne sočasno z gibanjem *Mouvement de libération des femmes*, pa so emancipatorni premiki, do katerih pride v delu nekaterih pesnic v obdobju 1964–1980, starejši kakor novi val feminizma v Sloveniji, ki se dokončno vzpostavi šele v osemdesetih letih. Pesniška praksa, četudi zgolj občasna in neenotna, torej prehiti novofeministične aktivistične iniciative

in teoretsko refleksijo, in sicer med drugim z dejanjem odkritega govora o izkušnji spolne zlorabe.

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In the Name of Freedom: The Poetic Ludism of Milan Jesih

U ime slobode: pesnički
ludizam Milana Jesiha

This paper examines how the demand for freedom was fulfilled in Milan Jesih's poetry from different periods, paying particular attention to the origin of the label *ludism*. In the broader perception, language play was central to Slovenian ludism, but it flourished without a clear link to Derrida's concept of the play of signification or Heidegger's idea of being as play. A comparison of Jesih's poetry collections *Uran v urinu, gospodar!* (Uranus in the Urin, Master!), *Soneti* (Sonnets) and *Maršal* (Marshal) shows that all three books open up space for carnivalisation, as they connect the high with the low, and the comical with the serious. This happens against the background of belief in the autonomy of art. Freedom remained an imperative in Jesih's poetic oeuvre, which made his poetry comparable to play. The notion of ludism thus seems appropriate both in conceptual and stylistic terms.

SLOVENIAN POETRY, MILAN JESIH,
LUDISM, NEO-AVANT-GARDE,
PLAY, AESTHETIC AUTONOMY

U radu se analizira pitanje kako je ostvaren imperativ za slobodom u različitim periodima pesničkog stvaralaštva Milana Jesiha, s posebnim naglaskom na genezu termina *ludizam*. U širem smislu reči, jezička igra je ključna za slovenački ludizam, međutim, takvo polazište se razvilo bez jasnog oslanjanja na Deridin pojam igre označavanja ili Hajdegerovu ideju o biću kao igri. U poređivanjem Jesihovih zbirki *Uran v urinu, gospodar!* (Uran u urinu, gospodare!), *Soneti* i *Maršal*, postaje evidentno da sve tri knjige otvaraju prostor za karnevalizaciju, s obzirom na to da povezuju visoko s niskim, smešno s ozbiljnim, na temelju pretpostavke o autonomiji umetnosti. Sloboda je ostala imperativ u Jesihovom pesničkom opusu, što čini mogućim poređenje njegove poezije s igrom. Stoga je termin *ludizam* primeren kako u pojmovnom tako i u stilskom pogledu.

SLOVENAČKA POEZIJA, MILAN
JESIH, LUDIZAM, NEOAVANGARDA,
IGRA, ESTETSKA AUTONOMIJA

MILAN JESIH AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

The first public appearance of Group 442, which evolved from Group 441 (Ivo Svetina, Denis Poniž and Ferdinand Miklavec) when it was joined by new members, including Milan Jesih, came in the form of a special issue of the journal *Problemi*. Published in December 1968, it featured six poems by Jesih. According to Svetina, *Problemi 442* (Problems 442) became the manifesto of the group, and they published Poniž's 'Esej o golem človeku' (Essay on the Naked Man) as its programme. However, as Poniž later pointed out in his role as a literary historian, the members of the group developed their own poetics, 'which were loosely associated with only a few characteristics' (Poniž: 116). Jesih's memory also testifies to the fact that the group's appearance was anything but a sign of a literary movement with clearly defined goals:

[W]e found it inappropriate to talk about each other's poetry. Only occasionally I exchanged a few words with Ivo Svetina about possible differences and common points, but more in the manner of amateur cooks [...]. But to sit together over the verses—never. Never. [...] It may be that others did, but we didn't; Matjaž Kocbek was even dismayed that it would seem as if we were showing our penises to each other. We didn't identify with the manifestos, which Ivo Svetina especially liked to write, as well as Denis Poniž, even though they were signed 442 or 443. (Jesih 2011)

In addition to the desire for public recognition, the members of Group 442 appear to have been primarily associated with youthful resistance to restrictions, be they social, ideological or aesthetic. Thus, one can understand the fact that the group took its new name from Jesih's poem

‘Obljuba’ (Promise), in which one’s complete freedom is not a utopia but an attainable goal, a promise that will come true: ‘lahko si boš nadel ime Ferkeverk ali Pupilo ali Stemson / lahko boš Jaka ali Judež / lahko se boš rimal ali pa se opajal s čim drugim / lahko boš počel prav vse (‘you can get the name Ferkeverk or Pupilo or Stemson/ you can be a Jake or a Jew/ you can rhyme or indulge yourself in something else/ you can do just about anything’ [quoted in Svetina 2009: 28]). The political message is hidden in the verses because they can be read as criticism of collectivism and totalitarianism, but one would seek in vain the call for a change in society. Jesih’s poetry was implicitly engaged in the context of social happenings, but the author was not a revolutionary. Although he was, by his own assurance, restrained from programmatic writings by the members of the group, his political activities can be explained in these words from one of them: ‘The poet is not a revolutionary at all! Only a provocateur provoking the public from behind (safe enough) ramparts.’ (Svetina 2009: 37)

Artistic provocation, the inheritance of the avant-garde and Baudelaire’s maxim that the bourgeois should be shocked, were perceived as insufficient by some Group 442 contemporaries, as can be seen from the student journal *Tribuna*. In May 1969, Group 442 staged an evening of poetry at the Drama theatre in Ljubljana, entitled *Žlahтна plesen Pupilije Ferkeverk* (Pupilija Ferkeverk’s Precious Mould). The review in *Tribuna* stated that the group was primarily about a new way of presenting one’s poetry, ‘breaking the conventional image of a literary poetry evening’ (Šrot: 7). The authors took equal account of three levels: poetry, the acoustic image of the word and the visual dimension; however, according to the reviewer, they got stuck halfway, remaining within the frame of the formal and the usual. He was critical of the selection of poems (Andrej Brvar’s poems did not seem to be in tune

with other texts, and some poems were extremely bad), and he praised the directing by Dušan Jovanović. He compared the performance to ‘the playful and unprompted happenings of the groups OHO and Katalog’, emphasising that, in such a constellation, ‘every provocation loses its focus and transforms into a sufficient purpose and goal only in itself’ (Šrot: 7).

Jesih co-authored the play *Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* (Pupilija, Pappa Pupilo and Little Pupillos) in October of the same year, at that time as part of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre, which was active from 1969 to 1972. In a memorial to Pupilija Ferkeverk, Svetina pointed to its political role, which did not require a clear ideological definition. According to him, it was mainly a

controlled opposition to socio-political currents, party resolutions, and so on. The Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre was ideologically unburdened, but also undefined, because we did not follow the ideas of extreme leftists, young Marxists who (also) gathered around the student periodical Tribuna, or in the neighbouring premises in the Casino Building, where the University Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia was based [...]. The members of Pupilija did not identify with the ideas of Perspektive, or, to be more precise, with the most radical views of former members of Perspektive, which were then assembled in the editorial board of Problemi. (Svetina 2008: 90)

Jesih’s engagement in the student movement, too, can be understood against the background of the exercise of individual freedom, ideological relaxation and indeterminacy. In April 1971, Jesih participated in demonstrations that took place in front of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. The students first protested with the permission of the

authorities against the noise caused by traffic, demanding the construction of a bypass. A few days later, protests followed a visit by French Prime Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas. An indictment was filed against Jesih for allegedly calling for physical confrontation with the police, and a student, Frane Adam, was in criminal proceedings for a different offense. Darko Štrajn, a student official who was also interrogated at the time, remembers how they tried to explain Jesih's call for the policemen to be shot between the eyes as a metaphor. Police investigation at the Faculty of Arts was the reason for the student occupation of the faculty, which took place under the motto *Our Movement is a Struggle for Socialism* from 26 May to 2 June 1971, when it ended due to university holidays. In addition to reports of a boom in creativity at the time of the occupation, *Tribuna* published an article in which a supporter of a political programme written by Jaša Zlobec incidentally described the role of Jesih and other poets during the occupation of faculty: 'Jesih is a bluffer, a false martyr. In the faculty occupation, he and Cizelj, with their poetry, only muddied the water and confused people. Other "revolutionary" poetry also caused more bad than good.' (Gruden: 6) In the interview mentioned above, Jesih said the following:

A young man shouted, 'I'm here!', he wanted to be seen and heard, I would write anything to be noticed. We provoked, used nasty words, wrote something politically questionable, albeit always with a healthy sense of keeping our asses safe... One time, the editor of Radio Student replaced some of my silly verses with music, something like 'Tito washed his bloody hands in the wide waterfall...' — Something like this, purely silly. As far as I was concerned, the student movement was also like this, nothing particularly heroic. (Jesih 2011)

In 1972, Jesih's first poetry book, *Uran v urinu, gospodar!* (Uranus in Urine, Master!), was published in an elite book series. It was regarded as a representative example of Slovenian ludism, neo-avant-garde and modernism. An external feature of Jesih's poems is the consistent abandonment of capital letters; about halfway through the collection, stanzas with four rhyming lines begin to appear, with the number of stanzas in a poem varying in number; the rhythmic order and sequences of rhyme known from traditional Slovenian poetry are typical. The basic creative principle is the logic of associations; phrases and sentences are logically linked in terms of meaning, and word games, quotes, allusions and stylisations abound.

THE CONCEPT OF LUDISM IN SLOVENIAN LITERARY STUDIES

The term *ludism*, derived from *ludus*, which is Latin for play, was introduced into discussions of Slovenian literature by Taras Kermauner. As noted by Marko Juvan (272), the term emerged 'around 1970, first in the comments on Jovanovič's satirical and parodical grotesque *Znamke, nakar še Emilija* (Stamps, and Then Emilija)'. Kermauner wrote about the play earlier, in the context of the poetry of Tomaž Šalamun. In 1967, he published a study on Šalamun's *Poker* in *Problemi*, announcing the beginning of a new era: 'The human kingdom, the era of human-ism is over. The Age of the Thing (res-ism) has begun.' (Kermauner 1968: 64) In this essay, Kermauner (1968: 66) equates play with human labour because 'the many years of dealing with nature and objects that we ourselves proclaim as Work [...] are just a kid tossing colourful pebbles, a monkey stacking dice, blindly trying, gambling, in which victory is completely random and has no meaning outside the game itself'. In these words, Heraclitus's famous words about time

as a pebble-playing child echo as well as Nietzsche's doctrine of nihilism. Kermauner's equation of work with play has no positive connotation; it is obvious that his set of metaphors points to the randomness and meaninglessness of human action. The title of Šalamun's collection is interpreted in the spirit of existentialism, as a version of the metaphor according to which human existence is a childish, meaningless game: 'Man's yearning for Meaning is hopeless in advance. And this blind hopeless manoeuvre, this game of human existence, is called Poker by Šalamun.' (Kermauner 1968: 66) Not only human existence in its thousands of years of history, but also the loss of values in modernity was equated with senseless play by Kermauner. For the onset of the new era was sociologically interpreted as the introduction of banal middle classes and mass consumer society, in which no elite view is valid anymore: 'Everything has become a game... And that is why the lucid man today has nothing left to do but play poker.' (Kermauner 1968: 66)

Kermauner was born in 1930 and his generational peers include the literary critic and historian Janko Kos. Kos's contribution to the reception of Slovenian avant-garde literature is invaluable as well. In 1970 and 1971, he published a series of articles entitled 'Med tradicijo in avantgardo' (Between Tradition and the Avant-Garde) in the journal *Sodobnost*. There, he argued that ludism 'can be used to designate the spiritual core of the literary avant-garde, which is essentially directed at "play" as the only possible form of human existence' (Kos 1971: 148). Much like Kermauner, Kos was not impressed with play as such, much less with turning poetry into play. Commenting on the belief that poetry should become a type of play, he noted that freedom, spontaneity, adventure, immediacy and other values which give meaning to play belong to the Romantic metaphysics of the absolute and autonomous subject—a metaphysics which 'has fallen apart and can no longer

be taken with complete seriousness as something which is real in our time' (Kos 1971: 144). Kos recognised the common origin of both the literary avant-garde and the European left, especially the New Left, in Romantic metaphysics; this is how he chose to explain their apparent affinities, occasional cooperation and interlacing. For him, their most notable common feature was 'the need for the destruction of the structures, forms and institutions of European civilisation, in which they see something which is "bourgeois" and therefore destructive' (Kos 1971: 144). He declared that the poetry of Tomaž Šalamun was the only 'authentic and internally valid achievement' of the Slovenian poetic avant-garde because, in Šalamun, 'poetry is still a higher structure of experience and creation, not "play" in the true sense of the word' (Kos 1971: 149–150).

In the first years after its release, neither Kermauner nor Kos called *Poker* a ludist collection. They regarded it highly because of its message and commitment to the values of traditional poetry. Kermauner focused his interpretation of *Poker* on its link to current social conditions in Slovenia. He explained Šalamun's poetry as a critique of the new middle class and at the same time as a mockery of the values of the former bourgeois elite. He placed *Poker* in the realm of mimetic poetry, recognising in it a meaningless play which mimics how meaningless the world itself has become. He also wrote about the world as play in connection with Jesih's early poetry, which he proclaimed to be ludist, because it 'gives what is possible and not what is banal in reality'. The world is 'a play of emotions, opinions, descriptions, facts, events, thoughts, values, things', but in Jesih's poetry relationships between them are multiplied as 'poetic language creates variations that have hitherto been unimaginable. Thus, poetry is the creation of the world'. Whereas Šalamun's poetry was meaningless play by which the poet

revealed the nihilistic essence of the world, Jesih's poetry was completely free, non-mimetic and purely aesthetic. Kermauner did not explicitly equate Jesih's poetry with play, but he wrote that Jesih was one of the poets who 'chase the word in crazy dialectical paradoxical games' (Kermauner 1975: 81). The method of Jesih's poetry is absurd, but it does not herald death or nothingness; on the contrary, its 'absurdity is joyful, bouncy, full of fervent pleasure with existence'. Kermauner recognised a completely new type of poet in Jesih, a poet related to Šalamun in the strongest way, but only partially. He declared Jesih a rhetor who 'enjoys words, while enjoying their meaning much less or not at all' (Kermauner 1975: 80).

In that essay, Kermauner did not explicitly address the quality of Jesih's ludic poetry, though he wrote favourably about it. He claimed that the poet's goal was not to expose the meaninglessness of the world (which was the role of Šalamun's poetry), but to enjoy the words. In doing so, Kermauner did not deviate significantly from his original understanding of play as an activity that has no meaning beyond itself. He described Jesih's poetry as ludist because of its ability to create a world which exists solely at the word level. Absurd, meaningless combinations of words in Jesih's poetry 'embody freedom', which Kermauner (1975: 80) interpreted as 'the destruction of familiar banal forms and contents'. The traits that link Jesih's poetry to play are (besides the silent assumption of the absence of meaning in both) freedom and independence from ordinary reality.

Freedom and separation from real life were highlighted by Johan Huizinga as a key feature of play in his classic 1938 study *Homo ludens*. In the 1960s, his thesis on the play was 'in vogue across Europe, including in Ljubljana and Belgrade'. Dušan Jovanović played an important role in the reception of his ideas in Slovenia. In 1963, writing the drama

Norci (The Fools), he ‘read the book *Homo ludens* with great interest’ (Kralj: 400). Norci was published in the magazine *Problemi* in 1968, and staged three years later in Celje. In that period, Jesih also collaborated with Jovanović within the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre.

Huizinga explained the freedom of play as a consequence of the fact that games were never imposed by physical need or moral duty, and he considered poetry to be the most noble type of play. For him, the creation of poetry is anchored in the area of play from which it originates: ‘Poiesis, in fact, is a play-function. It proceeds within the play-ground of the mind, in a world of its own which the mind creates for it. There things have a very different physiognomy from the ones they wear in “ordinary life,” and are bound by ties other than those of logic and causality.’ (Huizinga 119) Whereas young Slovenian creators from the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre valued play much like Huizinga, it would be hard to argue the same for Taras Kermauner and Janko Kos. It may be inferred from Kermauner’s essay about Jesih’s poetry that, at least for a short time, he favourably accepted the idea of poetry as free play, but very soon disappointment ensued. In a 1978 essay, he described the unfulfilled prospects of ludism as follows:

One should no longer be committed to demagogic ideas, false ideologies, cherished visions which have been exposed as so many masks with which authoritarianism cheated people. Play is supposed to eliminate these masks and develop spontaneous creative powers of the man. But what happened was that only letters, phonemes, graphemes, reflections and materials were at play. (Kermauner 1978: 37)

Kermauner’s words display the humanist’s frustration over the inability of ludic poetry to expose a free man hiding under the guise of false

ideologies. The finding that only letters, phonemes, and so on are played out could be linked to Derrida's category of language play. It should be noted that art, which creates a 'para-world within language', was given its own name by Kermauner—*linguism*. Kermauner justified his disappointment with a reference to emerging theories which, as he thought, deny the existence of a world outside of language: 'Language analysis has finally found that there is nothing but Language; language is a conventional system, it is a computer and we are all its food.' (Kermauner 1978: 37) He reinforced the existing critique of modernism by arguing that an ideology of opposition to all ideologies was played out. Just six years after the publication of Jesih's first book of poetry, he wrote about it in a completely new way: 'Poems from the poetry collection *Uran v urinu, gospodar*, incredibly humorous, innovative, fun, mocking, popping, fresh, not seen in Slovenia before, are fading; their god, Milan Jesih, remains on the chamber pot.' (Kermauner 1978: 38) In other words, Jesih's poetry is childish.

In the late 1960s, Andrej Medved, himself a poet, began to study the philosophical aspects of play. In 1970, he published the essay 'Bit in/kot igra' (Being and/as Play) in *Tribuna*, in which, by relying on late Heidegger, he argued for the identity of being and playing. For Medved, 'being has no foundation because it is "in" play', and the play is therefore 'not a "centre"/foundation, but rather an indication of the absence of the foundation, of transcendence, of the absence of the transcendental signified'. In brief, '[t]he notion of being-as-a-game belongs to a "decentred" mind' (Medved: 1393). These are categories that point to Derrida. In 1970, Medved's essay 'Poezija kot igra: razmišljanje o sodobni slovenski poeziji' (Poetry as Play: A Meditation On Contemporary Slovenian Poetry) was published in the journal *Naši razgledi*. In it, Medved (1978) rejected the claim that modern poetry was a 'useless toy without

meaning'. He showed that although poetry as play is aimless and pointless, because it is not determined from the outside by a higher principle, this does not mean that it is completely meaningless. Play, and with it contemporary poetry, 'represents and embodies our situation in the world', he wrote. 'Everything in the world is in the spontaneous process of creation and change of all things, everything (the world) is played in play.' (Medved: 1618) Contemporary poetry as play returns to its origin, that is, to the thinking characterised by a 'relaxed imagination, unsystematic and unsystematised mythicality, childlike unconscious animality, spontaneous savagery placed between consciousness and unconsciousness, original disorder as a source play, unlawful in its change' (Medved: 1620). In this way, contemporary poetry as play 'utters the world in its presence' (Medved: 1624). In connection to this statement, Medved referred to the concluding thoughts of 'Vprašanje o poeziji' (The Question of Poetry), a 1969 essay by Dušan Pirjevec where contemporary poetry is defended as a type of play designed to show the primacy of the existence of all that is.

In the discussion on the meaning of poetry that took place in Slovenia in the 1960s and 1970s, Medved's position is that a contemporary poem should be 'theoretically justified through literary theory' (Medved: 1628). His essays can be read as an attempt to conceptually justify the poetry of the time, although they are not programmatic writings around which a literary group could form. In the discussion on the development of the concept of ludism in Slovenian literary studies, it is interesting that Medved did not evoke the notion of ludism in his essay on poetry as play. But as he referred to reism, on the other hand, it is not likely that he knew the concept of ludism at the time, otherwise he probably would have expressed his opinion about it. Thus, while pointing out the inappropriateness of the label 'reist poetry'

insofar as 'it points to something objective, substantial', he added only this: 'The constitution of modern poetry is at play.' (Medved: 1624) In 2001, Medved published an extremely comprehensive anthology of theoretical and poetic works titled *Fantasma epoché: poezija in/kot igra* (*Fantasma epoché: Poetry and/as Play*). In the titles of the chapters in which Slovenian poetry is compiled, Kermauner's terms are used for different directions of Slovenian modernist literature, whereby ludism and reism appear as two names for the same phenomenon, that is, for play as a thing. Linguism is referred to as the play of language; carnism is a game of the body or play as a body; and the shortest section is called 'Igra smrti in usode' (The Game of Death and Fate).

In a study on ludism in Šalamun's *Poker*, Marko Juvan notes that only in Slovenian criticism and literary history did ludism 'solidify itself as a label for *an ism*, that is, for a modernist or neo-avant-garde current or even movement', whereby one should not neglect the fact that it is 'a retroactive label for artistic happenings and phenomena given from the outside by criticism' (Juvan: 274). In my opinion, in addition to writings by Kermauner and Kos, the theories of Huizinga were particularly important for the original use of this designation, and less so Heidegger's idea of being as play or Derrida's category of the play of signification. Although, in a broad perception, the central feature of Slovenian ludism was play with language, it flourished without a clear reference to Derrida. A Slovenian encyclopaedia of literature describes ludism as the name for those 'aspirations in contemporary avant-garde literature to which artistic creation is a particular example of "play"; poetry is based on free, spontaneous, creative "play" with language'; in ludism, playfulness 'is a socio-moral ideal or model of true life and spiritual freedom' (Kos et al 2009: 219). According to this interpretation, ludism is a view that emphasises freedom as the

main value; in literature, this turns out to be play with language, but the encyclopaedia does not explain what kind of procedures this game includes. In fact, Juvan was the first to attempt to justify ludism as a literary movement or current by presenting its structural features. At the conceptual level, he proceeded from Derrida and Huizinga, and, before defining ludism's stylistic procedures, he expanded the field of play to include 'play with language, characters, textual patterns, conventions, possible worlds, roles, ideologies, etc.' (Juvan: 274). Juvan is careful to note that the ludists have taken procedures from tradition, accumulating and developing them, including word-play anagrams, palindromes, magic squares, paronyms, calembours, etc.), games of rules, restrictions and conventions (radicalised by the French group OULIPO), play with fictional worlds (characteristic of the literature of nonsense), play with the text's reception (non-linear reading), parodies of genre, style and text templates, the carnivalisation and transgression of moral codes, and metafiction procedures and romantic irony (see Juvan: 282). Juvan also shows that many of these processes are present in Šalamun's *Poker*; Šalamun, Juvan notes (291), even thematised the ontological meaning of the 'game of the world', most obviously in the poem 'Mrk V' (Eclipse 5).

URAN V URINU, GOSPODAR!, SONETI, MARŠAL

Jesih's first book of poetry, *Uran v urinu, gospodar!*, is the most consistent of all his collections in terms of violating the communicative role of poetry. The verses formally follow the established rhythms and patterns of the rhyme, but they cannot easily be compiled into a narrative with one narrator. Because of the familiar rhythmic and sound image of the poem, the implicit reader expects either a traditional

confession or a narrative, but, searching for a meaning, has to resort to individual phrases or verses which only lead at a dead end. In the circumstances in which the book was published, verses with no apparent meaning could be a caricature and critique of the idle talk of politicians. In addition, even today, readers can devote themselves to unravelling ambiguous places and hidden messages and be rewarded with their subversiveness. Thus, for example, the verse 'kdo bo mačka zaklal' ('who will slaughter the cat' [Jesih 1972: 18]) can be read as an allusion to the prominent politician Ivan Maček (*maček* literally means 'cat'), and the verse 'nihče neba naj ne zaklepa' ('no one should lock the sky' [Jesih 1972: 42]) can be understood as a metaphorical demand for freedom. Considering the political situation in socialist Slovenia and Yugoslavia, the reader easily forms the image of a lyrical speaker who is a skilful, witty and sufficiently careful critic of the ruling ideology, which matches the role played by the author during the student movement. Kermauner's interpretation, with its emphasis on the non-mimetic nature of *Uran v urinu, gospodar!*, seemingly shed light on something else, namely the autonomy of poetry. However, insisting on the autonomy of the arts had (and always has) a political connotation. In his study of Dušan Jovanović's plays, Lado Kralj (401) emphasises this aspect: 'In a socialist country, the artist seeks creative autonomy of even more than in a capitalist one, resisting not only petty-bourgeois habits and morbid deformities but also the forced optimism of Marxist ideology, an optimism which conceals dogmatism and violence.'

Of the poetry collections published by Jesih after *Uran v urinu, gospodar!*, none experienced such a reception as his 1989 book *Soneti* (Sonnets). Reprinted twice, this book of poetry had a significant influence on discussions on Slovenian poetic postmodernism. Postmodernism was widely discussed in Slovenia from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s

when the belief that it was over prevailed. In 1990, the literary historian Boris Paternu published a study in which he focused on Jesih's 'non-diversionary relation to the poetic tradition' (Paternu: 204). Due to the many intertextual figures—the most important Slovenian references are the poets France Prešeren and Simon Jenko, and other writers include Joseph Brodsky, Guido Cavalcanti and William Shakespeare, who are referenced in Jesih's notes, as well as A. P. Chekhov and Patrick Süskind, who are mentioned in the poems themselves—one classifies Jesih as a postmodern poet 'if one wanted to', Paternu thought (205), but he found it more important to note that Jesih maintains his autonomy in relation to tradition. According to Kos (1995: 141), *Soneti* 'should be considered a real example of Slovenian poetic postmodernism' if they were to be read in a way that would convince us that we 'can no longer determine whether any reality is even true or what should be real in this ambivalent, indeed already polyvalent composition of the world'. This type of reading is quite widespread, as is the argument that the lyric speaker plays different roles and is hence always more than one.

Soneti was perceived as a postmodern collection because it included features that were not difficult to relate to Jesih's ludic beginnings. At the ideological level, the freedom of the lyric speaker, with its different roles, still stands out: the lyric speaker can be a poet, a thinker, a lover, an observer, and so on. When it presents itself as a poet, it often points to the potential of its imagination as a power to create fictional worlds. Unlike *Uran v urinu, gospodar!*, *Soneti* does not abolish the mimetic function, as it is characterised by leaps between ordinary and fictional reality. Like *Uran v urinu, gospodar!*, *Soneti* is a conceptual book of poetry, and the stylisation of the traditional poetic form of the sonnet is much more recognisable in it because there is no Slovenian reader who would not notice the allusion to Prešeren's sonnets. In addition

to the poetic procedures mentioned above, both books are characterised by word games. The main difference between them, however, is that the book of sonnet is more accessible to narrative attempts because of its narration of small, everyday experiences. The sonnets were published at a turning point, and—although they do not contain direct allusions to political developments—they corresponded with the general desire to assert the individual's needs and desires. Perhaps, along with their relaxed communication, this was the main reason for their popularity.

Jesih's poetic imagination grew most widely in his most recent book of poems, *Maršal* (Marshal). Its conceptual framework is not formal but substantive in nature as individual poems make up a story set in a time when the lyric speaker was still a child. It is through this speaker's eyes that we get to know an unnamed marshal who resembles Marshal Tito in many ways, even though his qualities are so intensified that he grows into a caricature. The marshal is a genius, he knows everything, and (almost) everyone loves him (almost all of the time). In Jesih's burlesque, one of the main roles is played by the child's mother, a fat ballerina whom the marshal loves, even though sometimes he treats her 'kakor z živaljo ne ravna žival' ('worse than an animal treats an animal' [Jesih 2017: 70]). There are scenes in the field of fiction in which the ballerina starts to fly while dancing—the only thing the marshal cannot do. The mother's concern for the marshal, her unfailing admiration and forgiveness (she is aware that the marshal's regime is defective), and especially the mourning of the marshal's death, these are all characteristics which help Jesih reveal the long-repressed attitude of the people of ex-Yugoslavia towards Tito. Different-minded people are represented by the boy's father's character, but after a period of political re-education, even he 'kot dež na pogrebu joka' ('cries like a baby at the funeral' [Jesih 2017: 34]).

In addition to thematic and formal differences, the comparison of *Maršal* with *Soneti* and *Uran v urinu, gospodar!* shows a trait shared by all three books: they all open a space for carnivalisation, for the connection of the high and the low, the funny and the serious. This happens against the background of the belief in the autonomy of art. Freedom remained an imperative in Jesih's poetic oeuvre, which made his poetry comparable to play. Ludism is therefore an appropriate term both conceptually and stylistically. If absolute freedom turned out to be a utopia in everyday life, it is still true that one can do everything in its name at least in poetry. ♡

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Povzetek

Prispevek se ukvarja z vprašanjem, kako je v poeziji Milana Jesiha iz različnih obdobj uresničena zahteva po svobodi, pri čemer se posebej posveča genezi oznake *ludizem*. Jesih je bil v študentskih letih član skupine pesnikov 442, kasneje Gledališke skupine Pupilije Ferkeverk, aktivno je sodeloval tudi v študentskem gibanju. Člani skupine 442 so se izogibali ideološkim opredelitvam, bili pa so politično angažirani. Poleg želje po javni uveljavitvi jih je povezoval predvsem mladostni odpor do kakršnih koli omejitev. Leta 1972 je v elitni knjižni zbirki izšla Jesihova prva pesniška knjiga *Uran v urinu, gospodar!*. Obveljala je za reprezentativen primer slovenskega ludizma, neoavantgardizma in modernizma. Pojem ludizma (iz lat. *ludus*, igra) je v razpravi o slovenski književnosti uvedel Taras Kermauner okoli leta 1970, o igri pa je pisal že v eseju o Šalamunovi zbirki *Poker*, kjer je igro izenačil s človekovim nesmiselnim delom. Medtem ko *Pokra* še ni označil za ludistično zbirko, je ta pojem uporabil za Jesihovo zgodnjo poezijo. Njegovo razumevanje igre se je za kratek čas približalo idejam iz vplivne knjige *Homo ludens*, v kateri je Johan Huizinga poudaril, da je poezija kot vrsta igre neodvisna od vsakdanjega življenja. Kermauner je svoje mnenje o ludizmu kmalu spremenil, saj mu ni uspelo razkriti svobodnega človeka, ki naj bi tičal pod krinkami lažnih ideologij.

V širši percepciji je za osrednjo lastnost slovenskega ludizma obveljala igra z jezikom, vendar se je to zgodilo brez razvidne navezave na Derridajev koncept igre označevanja ali Heideggerjevo idejo o biti kot igri, o katerih je okoli leta 1970 pisal Andrej Medved. Ludizem je kot literarno smer ali tok znotraj modernizma prvi poskusil utemeljiti Marko Juvan. Na idejni ravni je izhajal iz Derridaja in Huizinge ter naštel značilne postopke, ki so jih ludisti prevzemali iz tradicije.

Primerjava Jesihovih zbirk *Uran v urinu*, *gospodar!*, *Soneti* in *Maršal* pokaže na njihovo skupno lastnost: vse tri knjige razpirajo prostor za karnevalizacijo, za spajanje visokega in nizkega, smešnega in resnega. To se dogaja na ozadju prepričanja o avtonomiji umetnosti. Svoboda je v Jesihovem pesniškem opusu ostala imperativ, zaradi katerega je njegova poezija primerljiva z igro, oznaka *ludizem* pa je zanjo primerna tako z idejnega kakor s stilnega vidika.

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**Crisis of the Journal
Problemi in 1968**

Kriza časopisa *Problemi*
1968. godine

This article addresses the formal resolution of the crisis which emerged in early 1968 within the editorial board of the Slovenian scholarly and literary journal *Problemi*. It attempts to follow and analyse the new mechanism of censorship which followed the abolishment of a number of literary journals in the past by the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia. The formal fragmentation of the idea of a general cultural journal into separate divisions (philosophy, literature, sociology, literary criticism) introduces an innovative scheme of atomisation of responsibility—and with it the journal's major influence on the political processes in Slovenia.

1968, SLOVENIAN LITERATURE,
LITERARY JOURNALS,
CENSORSHIP, POST-WAR HISTORY,
CULTURAL POLITICS

U radu nas interesuje formalni aspekt razrešenja krize nastale početkom 1968. u redakciji naučnog i književnog časopisa *Problemi*. Istražuje se i analizira nov mehanizam cenzure nastao nakon što je Centralni komitet Saveza komunista Slovenije ukinuo nemali broj časopisa za književnost i kulturu. S formalnom razdeobom opšteg časopisa za kulturu, kakva je bila prvobitna zamisao, na odvojene edicije (filosofija, književnost, sociologija, književna kritika) dolazi do inovativne sheme atomizacije odgovornosti – a time i uticaja časopisa *Problemi* na političke procese u Sloveniji.

1968, SLOVENAČKA KNJIŽEVNOST,
KNJIŽEVNI ČASOPISI, CENZURA,
POSLERATNA ISTORIJA,
KULTURNA POLITIKA

POST-WAR JOURNAL PRODUCTION

In her research on the French literary field, Anna Boschetti (51–65) came to the conclusion that the most important development in twentieth-century literature was probably the rising importance of journals as a means of intervention in the literary field and its balance of power, most often with the aim of establishing more progressive positions. Moreover, according to Taja Kramberger (2011: 105), cultural and literary journals represent a ‘privileged subject in the study of the dialectic in the literary field and the habitus of the agents that work within it’. In Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptualisation (1991: 4–5), the literary field is a space of ‘competitive struggles that show tendencies to preserve or transform the field of forces’ according to the internal logic of the cultural field, which is lodged between new structural places and the lines of forces external to the field (including political, ideological and economic forces). Historically established in the late nineteenth century, the literary field was organised around two poles: the subfield of the production mentioned above, whose purpose was to accumulate symbolic capital, and the subfield of mass production (see Koffeman: 11). Individual fields are further divided into more or less autonomous subfields where ‘the weakness of a field or its autonomy means that social relations that are supposedly external to a field play a decisive role in determining the relations within the field as well; a weak field is deeply submerged into the existing social relations and has neither the strength nor the capital to separate itself from them’ (Kramberger 2011: 107). According to Bourdieu, the division of the literary field was parallel to its empowerment in relation to the field of power and its economic development. As the literary market grew, giving rise to the function of the professional writer, critical counter-currents emerged

as well, although, as Bourdieu shows, this kind of literary doxa has a logic of its own:

There are economic conditions for the economic challenge which leads to its being oriented towards the most risky positions of the intellectual and artistic avant-garde, and for the aptitude to maintain oneself there in a lasting way in the absence of any financial counterpart; and there are also economic conditions of access to symbolic profits—which are themselves capable of being converted, in the more or less long term, into economic profits. (Bourdieu 1996: 216)

As the central event of the Slovenian twentieth-century journal publishing and the cultural and literary fields created by it during the Second World War, the establishment of 'cultural silence'—declared in 1942 when periodicals were no longer published due to the Italian occupation, with *Ljubljanski zvon*, *Sodobnost*, *Dejanja* and *Modra ptica* being discontinued by their respective editors-in-chief, Juš Kozak, Fredo Kozak, Edvard Kocbek and Janez Žagar (see Gabrič 1989: 388)—along with the altered political situation after the war meant that *Novi svet*, the ideological successor to *Sodobnost*, was given centre stage: acting precisely in the sense of Bourdieu's above argumentation, *Novi svet* was able to 'quickly capitalise on and operationalise the capital that it had before and during the war' (Kramberger 2011: 146). Further evidence that the decision to establish only one general cultural journal was closely tied to the continuity of political and social activity by individual journals before the war can be found in the writings by Dušan Pirjevec, according to whom, 'in 1945 and 1946, Boris Kidrič warmed up to the idea of two journals, but Juš Kozak opposed it so decidedly that it was not realised' (Pirjevec: 1270).¹ It was Juš Kozak, in fact, who in 1946, when the agitprop

1 In the post-war period, the pre-war role of the project of *Sodobnosti* coincided mostly with the activity of *Novi svet* (later on *Naša sodobnost* and *Sodobnost*), in which it stood in opposition to the heterogeneous critical social habitus which in the post-war period included the journals *Beseda*, *Revija* 57, partially *Problemi* and later on the student journal *Tribuna*.

movement began, became the first editor-in-chief of *Novi svet*, which was first published at a time when the early political pressures to cooperate with the Soviet Union (see Štuhec: 486) were already noticeable and were even reflected in the title *Novi svet*, which was clearly reminiscent of the Soviet journal *Noviy mir*.

Until the early 1950s, communist authorities shaped the post-war cultural policy through hierarchically run commissions for agitation and propaganda called agitprops (see Dovič: 206–210, Gabrič 1991: 60); Boris Zihlerl's responses to the journal *Beseda* in 1952 are symptomatic in this sense (see Gabrič 1995: 50). The authorities found a cause for administrative censorship, which meant the termination of subsidies, five years later, in 1957, in Lojze Kovačič's *Zlati poročnik* (Golden Lieutenant) (see Štuhec: 493). The youth journal *Mlada pota* was also established in the early 1950s by the authorities, and 'political leaders allocated substantial subsidies to their own journals and provided the means for high circulation, adopting soft methods in their attempt to diminish the public influence of controversial ideological currents' (Dovič: 209). In the mid-1950s, Stane Kavčič, Boris Kraigher and some of the other leading members of the Communist Party of Slovenia changed their opinion, which now differed substantially from Zihlerl's own (see Gabrič 1995: 123). In contrast to 'Zihlerl, Kraigher stressed the autonomy of the collective'; however, as was evident from the subsequent discontinuation of *Beseda*, *Revija 57* and *Perspektive*, the supervision of the Communist Party 'remained strict and unusually meticulous practically up to the mid-1980s' (Dovič: 209).

Revija 57 was discontinued after six issues and its editorial board was relieved of its duties in late 1958 (see Štuhec: 494). Later on, many contributors to *Beseda* (1951–1957) and *Revija 57* (1957–1958) became affiliated with *Perspektive* (1960–1964), which was hence immediately placed under

the watchful eye of the ideological committee of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia (CC LCS) (see Lukšič: 70, Repe: 17–18). The increasingly critical contributions and, in particular, the establishment of direct criticism of the agricultural policy were labelled as *djilasovstvo* (Djilasism), a highly negative designation referring to the dissident Milovan Djilas. Consequently, in the spring of 1964 the new issue of the journal was denied printing and Jože Pučnik was imprisoned for writing the article 'O dilemah našega kmetijstva' (On the Dilemmas of Our Agriculture), published in issue 33–34, as was the journal's editor-in-chief, Tomaž Šalamun, officially for authoring the poem *Duma 64*.² At that time, the staff of *Perspektive* published a public letter, expressing their own cultural silence as a repetition of the one from 1942. Peter Božič, Lojze Kovačič, Marjan Rožanc, Veljko Rus, Dominik Smole, Rudi Šeligo, Dane Zajc, Vital Klabus and Taras Kermauner wrote:

Because we have no other means to express our deep disagreement with the procedures we have been witness to, and because the publication of our literary works and essays has become nothing more than an illusory activity and a silent approval of this state of affairs [...], we shall relinquish our cooperation until we reach the conclusion that the situation has changed. (Kermauner: 104)

However, the idea of a second cultural silence in the name of social change fell apart: the socio-economic situation did not change in the same way as it did during the Second World War, and the Bourdieusian tactic of changing symbolic capital into economic capital came to nothing. It was only after the changes in the social order in the late 1980s and early 1990s that some of those who took part in the cultural silence were able to turn symbolic capital into economic capital.

2 The journal's publisher demanded that the editorial board, headed by Kermauner and Zajc, be replaced, which happened in April 1964, but issue 38–39 was not published nonetheless because the publisher gave a statement, published on page 6 in *Naši razgledi* on 9 May 1964, that there was an attempt by a narrow group within the journal to exploit young co-workers in the editorial board for politically reactionary purposes.

3 This brought about the first cracks in the understanding of the generality of journals. However, as groups gathered around individual journals could not be classified according to formal logic, it was impossible to avoid mandatory changes in the editorial boards of journals.

The abolishment of *Perspektive* elicited a direct response from *Sodobnost*, which resulted in Dušan Pirjevec being relieved of his duties as the editor-in-chief. Between 1960 and 1964, significant changes occurred at *Sodobnost*, a direct descendant of *Novi svet*. According to Pirjevec (1271), at the time *Perspektive* became a model for ‘a different model of journal publishing’ and ‘the idea of a different method of editorial work began to mature’. As a result, in the late 1960 the contributors’ assembly as the deciding body was established, and even editorial boards were elected and assessed by such assemblies. The main accusation of the editorial board of *Sodobnost* was that the journal had ‘increasingly closed in on itself’ and had thereby ‘changed into the voice of a narrow group that is nothing more than a clique’ (Pirjevec: 1273). Pirjevec replied that the logic of the Socialist Alliance of Working People, which divided people into two camps, would lead to

a formalised internal schism that in its most grotesque extremes would look somewhat as follows: on the one hand, prominent cultural workers with no stain to their name, on the other, ad hoc workers burdened by the dark stamp of a doubtful past. In the concrete situation and in relation to the future of the journal, such a schism would greatly endanger the very existence of the journal and was therefore to be avoided, which was only possible through a unique differentiation that caused the process of devaluation to move in a new direction. The first demand of this new direction was that the structure and physiognomy of the journal were no longer to be considered as the result of a collective endeavour of the whole, that is, a relatively broad circle of contributors, but had to be replaced by an uncomfortably narrow group, if not even just a small number of individuals, which meant that responsibility needed to be narrowed down. (Pirjevec: 1276)³

In 1962, when *Sodobnost* was going through these changes and *Perspektive* was still a relatively new journal, the journal *Problemi* was established under the auspices of the Central Committee of the People's Youth of Slovenia (CC PYS) to replace *Mlada pota*, which was discontinued. This move was severely criticised by the CC LCS because, according to Zihel's words at the committee's meeting of 16 October 1962, 'the youngsters did it quietly' (see Repe: 20). At this same meeting, Vida Tomšič defended *Problemi*, claiming that this was 'a group of people that even at the last CC PYS congress saw themselves as the main polemicists against *Perspektive*, as the only ones whose position was rooted in Marxism'. The group included Božidar Debenjak, Janez Dokler and Vladimir Kavčič, who, as Božo Repe writes (20), were still 'young people, though they no longer belonged to the kind of youth that had believed that Marxism should be openly defended against *Perspektive*'.

In the two years following the discontinuation of *Perspektive* in 1964, in particular after the rise of a more liberal branch of the Communist Party of Slovenia under the leadership of Stane Kavčič—who was in fact directly involved in the discontinuation of *Perspektive*—the majority of the contributors to *Perspektive* joined *Problemi*. This migration also helped the younger generation (whose central figures—Franci Zagoričnik, Tomaž Šalamun and others—had already contributed to *Perspektive*) introduce elements of concrete poetry, neo-avant-garde tendencies, elements of structuralism, post-Marxism and the French *nouveau roman* into the Slovenian public sphere. In 1965, Dušan Pirjevec, former editor-in-chief of *Sodobnost*, joined *Problemi*, as did many former contributors to *Perspektive* (or *perspektivovci*, as they were called), including Peter Božič, Rudi Šeligo, Irena Pučnik, Jože Snoj and Janez Jerovšek, who were joined in 1966 by Dušan Jovanović, Veno Taufer, Braco Rotar, Aleš Kermavner, Saša Vegri, Spomenka Hribar, Taras

4 The three main figures of *Problemi* between 1962 and 1968 later found their place at *Prostor in čas*, a journal established in 1969 with the intention 'to offer a podium to a quite large group of writers and theorists, especially from the middle and older generations, who were left without a central journal after *Problemi*'s editorial board was taken over by the younger, more avant-garde generation' (Ramšak: 135).

Kermauner, Veljko Rus and Ivo Urbančič. In the short period from 1965 to 1968, the changes in the pool of contributors directly undermined the power of Kavčič, Debenjak and Dokler as the founding fathers of *Problemi*.⁴

PROBLEMI IN EARLY 1968

In early 1968, the editorial board of *Problemi* was beset by an internal rift which, according to Ivo Urbančič, a member of the editorial board at the time who wrote on the matter in a March 1968 issue of *Tribuna*, was the reason why, 'for many authors who have or have not contributed to *Problemi* [...] the very positive initial direction of *Problemi* began to turn negative'. These authors 'realised that *Problemi*, with its across-the-board openness, obscured the differentiation in our culture and thereby enlarged its already substantial amorphousness' (Urbančič: 2). In Urbančič's words, the basic programme of the journal was

non-exclusivity, openness for the different conceptual, aesthetic and critical blueprints in our cultural milieu, with the aim to make possible, maintain and expand the narrow communication channel in culture. [...] Every living conceptual, aesthetic and critical direction wishes to express itself clearly according to its immanent logic, to differentiate itself from others and thereby realise itself—'to live itself out'. However, in our situation, in the objective situation of our culture as a whole, this is for various reasons most often impossible. (Urbančič: 2)

At the time, there was another cause for conflict in the editorial board of *Problemi*, namely the actions of both the editor-in-chief and the secretary of the journal's editorial board, who insisted on excluding

Braco Rotar from the editorial board due to the text he had published in the Trieste journal *Most*. Kavčič, editor-in-chief, provided additional evidence for his decision, 'claiming that *Most* is a politically suspicious journal funded by the CIA' (Urbančič: 2). In early 1968, Urbančič's idea of the journal's openness was tied to keeping Rotar, but also Franci Zagoričnik, who also published a text in *Most* soon after, in the editorial board, which preserved the journal's initial openness, yet crushed a different kind of openness, for it gave the opportunity to 'the informal permanent group in the editorial board [...] to preserve itself as the sole legitimate pillar of the concept of the general openness of the journal' (Urbančič: 3). Dokler, a founding member of *Problemi*, took a stand in defence of the journal and wrote in a March 1968 issue of *Tribuna* that the journal's concept 'did not include choosing contributors on the basis of aesthetic or social affiliations, and should that principle establish itself in the future, the journal will no longer be what it was initially meant to be'. The demand to depoliticise culture 'was at the very core of the concept', Dokler added (2). These words were directly addressed at *Perspektive* and the well-known narrow-mindedness and exclusivity that had resulted in the journal's discontinuation four years earlier.

Another concrete cause for the divide within the editorial board of *Problemi* in early 1968 was the proposal that Dušan Pirjevec and Taras Kermauner become members of the editorial board. Vladimir Kavčič, editor-in-chief, rejected the proposal in advance and, with the help of the journal's secretary, disclosed the information to the Central Committee of the Youth League of Slovenia (CC YLS) without the board's knowledge (see Urbančič: 2). According to the *Zabeleške o sestanku uredništva 'Problemov'* (Notes on the Meeting of the Editorial Board of 'Problemi'), the addition of Pirjevec to the editorial board of *Problemi* was opposed by 'Kavčič, Dokler, Kerševan, Debenjak'.⁵ At the

5 SI (Arhiv Republike Slovenije) AR 538 (Republiška konferenca Zveze socialistične mladine Slovenije, 1941-1990), AŠ 150, AE 20. (Here and elsewhere, archival sources are given in footnotes.)

meeting, the representatives of the CC YLS opposed these newcomers as authoritative personalities who could jeopardise the general openness of the journal. In the April 1968 issue of *Tribuna*, this was further corroborated by Milan Kučan, the member of the CC YLS who signed the notes of the meeting; Kučan wrote that, at the meeting, the position of the president of the CC YLS, Janez Kocijančič, regarding Pirjevec was that, ‘through the principle of openness, the journal *Problemi* makes it possible to publish literary and sociological contributions by individuals from different currents of thought and aesthetics’; hence, ‘[t]he addition of strong, authoritative personalities to the editorial board would mean that one group would prevail over everyone else, and the journal would thereby become exclusivist’ (Kučan: 2). At the time, candidacies of both Kermauner and Pirjevec were not only politically unfeasible but also represented a formal opposition to the concept of the openness guaranteed by the internal unity of the journal. The contradiction surrounding the question of openness and prevalence of one group within the editorial board was undoubtedly a response to the past events in *Perspektive* and *Sodobnost*, where the main protagonists were none other than Kermauner and Pirjevec.

The growing discontent with the internal contradiction at *Problemi* brought about a formal division of the journal on 26 March 1968, when the new editorial board held its first meeting and confirmed the division established by the editorial board one or two weeks before. According to the document *Informacija o aktivnosti centralnega komiteja Zveze mladine Slovenije med 17. in 18. plenarno sejo CK ZMS (od 29.1.1968–29.3.1968)* (Information on the Activity of the CC YLS Between the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Plenary Meeting of the CC YLS [from 29 January 1968—29 March 1968]), ‘the contradiction over the concept of the journal *Problemi* [...] introduced a clear

polarisation of forces within the editorial board'. This polarisation then escalated into 'bitter personal conflicts',⁶ which was also corroborated by Kučan in *Zabeleške o sestanku uredništva 'Problemov'*, where he wrote that, at the meeting, 'the atmosphere was quite undemocratic and intolerant', because Ivo Urbančič and Milan Pintar, both members of the editorial board, claimed that, 'with its bureaucratic interference in the cultural sphere, the CC YLS is to blame for all of this, and people such as themselves are only useful for maintaining the façade of democracy', while 'Urbančič and Pintar refused to discuss the physiognomy of the editorial board and the number of members', and Kavčič suggested 'that the editorial board be appointed by the journal's two publishers'.⁷ The leadership of the CC YLS then authorised two of its members, Kučan and Mitja Rotovnik, to draft a proposition for a new editorial board of *Problemi* in cooperation with the representatives of the journal's other publisher, the Executive Committee of the Association of Slovenian Students (EC ASS), and the members of the previous editorial board. What is more,

⁶ SIAR 538, AŠ 150, AE 20.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ SIAR 538, AŠ 153.

*the group that was responsible for drafting the proposition for a new editorial board [...] had quite a difficult task at hand, as the spirits were so restless that it was necessary to exclude some of the former editors from the proposition. The group analysed the level of democracy in the functioning of the editorial board of the journal and further refined some of the fundamental elements of the journal's concept, then used these results to draw up a proposition that was subject to two amendments before it was passed by the contributors' assembly. The contributors' assembly of Problemi confirmed the political views of the CC YLS and the EC ASS regarding the editorial board and the concept of Problemi.*⁸

The newly elected editorial board wrote in an April 1968 issue of *Tribuna* that,

content-wise, Problemi remains a general journal that covers all fields, although it should do so in a more meaningful, thematically adapted, stylistic and content-oriented manner. To give the editorial board the means to pursue this general direction, the decision has been made to divide the board into four field-specific groups. The members of the group for literature and art are: Iztok Geister, Niko Grafenauer, Dušan Jovanović, Saša Vegri and Franci Zagoričnik; the members of the group for literary and art theory and criticism are: Taras Kermauner, Lado Kralj, Andrej Medved and Rastko Močnik. Sociology and political science is edited by: Ivan Hvala, Marko Kerševan, Rudi Rizman and Marjan Tavčar; and the members of the group for philosophy are: Spomenka Hribar, Milan Pintar, Ivo Urbančič and Mitja Rotovnik. (Uredniški: 1)

Vladimir Kavčič, a founding member and the editor-in-chief of *Problemi* until 1968, claimed in his article 'Slovenski revialni tisk 1952–1974' (Slovenian Journals 1952–1974) that the usurpation of *Problemi* was brought about by the new president of the commission for ideological and political work, Mitja Rotovnik, who

organised and carried out the change, [...] a crowd gathered at the contributors' assembly, for the first time the hall was quite full of young people, potential future contributors to the journal, but with the exception of the editors there were none of the contributors who had filled the pages of the journal and designed it all these years, [...] the majority of the members of the editorial board were not present at the elections, they probably agreed to participate beforehand. (Kavčič 2000: 136–38)

It seems that the disintegration of groups depicted by Kavčič was not as important as the formal solution regarding the journal's openness. Kavčič (2000: 142) noticed that the journal gave up on 'general social subjects' and promised 'that work, thought and poetry would no longer be instruments for battles between groups or even against the group in power'. He also wrote that there were in *Problemi* 'some attempts to thematise the problematic and divide it by branches'; however, 'in our situation these attempts could not replace a general journal' (Kavčič 2000: 142) Less than two years after the events, in January 1970, Dušan Jovanović wrote that 'the division into four basic fields, that is, sociology, philosophy, literature and journalism, [...] in our opinion turned out rather favourably, because the journal as a whole lost its traditionalist meaning and began to function more coherently' (Grafenauer et al.: 23).

In the editorial board's meeting in March, internal disagreements were resolved with a generally neutral formal division into four sub-groups (literature and art; literary and art theory and criticism; sociology and political science; philosophy). This solved the problem of 'strong, authoritative personalities' by fragmenting those sections of the journal that were edited by such persons—Kermauner was a member of the editorial board from the very beginning, and Pirjevec joined later on as well.

Within a journal which became 'purer, style- and content-wise' (see Urbančič: 2), each and every individual subject by its very nature prevented a more direct cooperation. With the journal's fragmentation, which in a few years manifested through different names for individual expert fields (*Problemi-Literatura*, *Problemi-Eseji*, *Problemi-Razprave* and *Problemi-Aktualnosti*), the concept of 'non-exclusivity, openness for the different conceptual, aesthetic and critical

blueprints in our cultural milieu' (Urbančič: 2), which was also the journalistic concept of the CC YLS, was preserved. Fragmentation also confirmed that, in both *Sodobnost* and *Problemi*, the 'the structure and physiognomy of the journal were no longer to be considered as the result of a collective endeavour of the whole, that is, a relatively broad circle of contributors, but had to be replaced by an uncomfortably narrow group, if not even just a small number of individuals, which meant that responsibility needed to be narrowed down' (Pirjevec: 1276).

The autonomy of literature within *Problemi*, discussed by Andraž Jež in his article on the globalisation and Americanisation of Slovenian literature, therefore has its own history: the exclusion of autonomy in the mid-1970s and the later desire for it found a path precisely through the division into different fields of expertise in the late 1960s. Jež writes that this

did not arise merely from the increased distance from the traditional Slovenian literary engagement that Dušan Pirjevec brought under the general term 'the Prešeren structure', but was most likely to a great extent linked to the situation in the journal. Problemi-Literatura was in fact the literary branch of the journal with a marked focus on structuralism and psychoanalytical theory and, for more than fifteen years, philosophers of the Lacanian school were in a very ambivalent relation with literary authors and editors. Throughout the 1970s, literary editions in many ways represented a shift away from the theoretical foundation of the journal, to which the tense relationship between the philosophical conception of Problemi and the literary autonomy, which writers for the literary editions of the journal sought and were increasingly outspoken about, contributed substantially. (Jež: 329)

However, the above division into specialised fields took place as early as the late 1960s: the November–December 1969 issue included a list that suggest the following thematic division of the journal's 1969 volume: issue 73–74, January–February: sociology; issue 75, March: literature; issue 76, April: philosophy; issue 77, May: literary theory; issue 78–79, June–July: literary theory; issue 80, August: literature; issue 81–82, September–October: philosophy; issue 83–84, November–December: literature. Accordingly, the journal's subtitle was also changed from *Revija za kulturo in družbena vprašanja* (Journal for Culture and Social Issues) to *Časopis za mišljenje in pesništvo* (Journal for Thought and Poetry). Gradually, every field became increasingly independent and achieved greater autonomy. The section *Problemi–Razprave* was established with issue 98–99 issue of *Problemi* in 1971 and was edited by Braco Rotar. *Problemi–Literatura* broke away with issue 109. The gap widened in the 1980s, when at the end of the decade the journal *Problemi–Literatura* became completely autonomous under the aegis of the LUD Literatura association and its title was changed to *Literatura*.

The forecast made by Pirjevec four years earlier in *Sodobnost* came true at a very important time that already provided a glimpse into the student protests in Yugoslavia and, more importantly, into the end of the liberal thaw from the early 1970s. This was the time when it was finally possible to bring into life an idea from 1957, when the CC LCS, reacting to the discontinuation of *Besede*, decided that the successor of *Besede*, *Revija 57*, 'need not be met with administrative measures: what is needed is more cooperation with the communists that manage or contribute to the journal in order to resolve the individual issues in the political struggle among the journal's contributors' (Gabrič 1994: 1077). Such approaches of internal solutions to particular problems were not successful until 1968, because up to then external

9 Right up to the end of the 1980s, in fact, as literary and cultural journals were censored in the 1908s as well. *Tribuna*, which played an important role in establishing the public discourse on the division within the editorial board of *Problemi* in 1968, was censored at least five times throughout the 1980s (see Sela: 34–41).

administrative measures as methods of censorship were used to abolish both *Revija 57* and *Perspektive*, even though it is clear that in the case of *Problemi*'s internal disagreements we are also dealing with a struggle between two different kinds of intellectuals.

**SELF-CENSORSHIP OF THE CULTURAL FIELD
AS THE SUBORDINATION TO THE FIELD OF POWER
AND THE SPECIFIC GENEALOGY OF THE INTELLECTUAL
IN THE SLOVENIAN CULTURAL FIELD**

In the post-war period, general cultural journals in Slovenia were published from the end of the Second World War onwards, representing a continuity with the cultural journals of the 1930s, which at that time were explicitly political and increasingly involved in public debates (hence the crisis of *Dom in svet*, the question of Marxism in *Sodobnost*, and so on). The formal transformation of these so-called general journals was not gradual; it occurred with the crisis of the editorial board of *Problemi*, a crisis which was resolved with the help of the founder of the CC YLS. The thematic division of the social and aesthetic groups into different branches most definitely is a reflection of two things: on the one hand, the weak autonomy of the literary field in relation to the fields of power and economy, in this case the Party and the institutionalised management of cultural policy; and, on the other hand, the development of the figure of the intellectual in Slovenia. If we agree with Dovič that the Party's control up to the 1980s was minutely thorough (see Dovič: 208–210),⁹ and that the method of authoritative censorship changed in concert with the substitutions in political leadership (see Gabrič 1995), then it becomes clear that, despite the liberalisation of the Party in the 1960, which in the imagery of the time is most

distinctly expressed in the persona of Stane Kavčič,¹⁰ the need to censor certain social groups and the dynamics they had set off was still present. After *Perspektive* was abolished in 1964, *Problemi* became a safe haven for many writers and theorists who were left without a publishing platform,¹¹ thereby providing space for a diverse range of literary, philosophical and theoretical approaches. There is no doubt that the CC YLS preserved the concept of openness in the desire to limit narrow groupings in the new editorial board as well; however, the manuscript draft of the statement from 1968 also states that the CC YLS (or at least one of the branches in the organisation) supports 'the openness of the concept of the editorial board of *Problemi* in the conviction that their editorial policy guarantees the general possibility of publishing; the editorial board's sovereignty is conditioned by its full responsibility'. Hence the following conclusion: 'The demagogical demand for an administrative block by withdrawing funds repeatedly appears in the renouncement of individual literary phenomena. We are convinced that such things cannot be solved by withdrawing funds: it is impossible to eliminate the problem of disparate ideas, if it indeed exists, by removing it from the pages of journals and newspapers.'¹²

The contradiction in the activity of the CC YLS, which condemned administrative censorship while clearly trying to control the activity of the groups centred around *Problemi*, indicates that the literary field itself can, in the words of Taja Kramberger, "spontaneously" practice censorship of the "deviant discourse" that the supervising bodies in the field wish to eliminate, thereby forcing the field to only speak that which is acceptable, decent and appropriate' (Kramberger 2011: 143). In the case of *Problemi*, it seems that in the fragmentation into specialised subfields, by which the unity of the group was somewhat

10

It was Stane Kavčič, for example, who, as the president of the ideological committee of the CC LCS between 1963 and 1966, was responsible for the abolishment of *Perspektive* (see Repe).

11

The political leadership attempted to replace *Perspektive* and other abolished general journals with *Teorija in praksa*, a journal with a more limited scope that was more directly managed by the CC LCS and was established 'in the context of troubles that the leadership of the LC encountered in the discussion about *Perspektive's* change of direction'. In brief, '[t]he leading fraction of the LC realised that, by abolishing journals, that is, by using raw force, it was no longer possible to secure legitimate power' (Lukšič: 70).

12

SI AR 538, AŠ 153.

13

In the changed historical circumstances, the establishment of a new journal also brought about the consolidation of its power and the possibility to influence social and political activity.

lost, a form of censorship coincided both in the contributors' assembly as autonomous labour and in the journal's publishers (the CC YLS in particular) as the acting bodies that exercised power, that is, the representatives of the field of power and authority, and that so-called spontaneous censorship had far-reaching consequences in the fields of culture and literature. In their later historical development, the groups within *Problemi* increasingly distanced themselves from one another, which led to the establishment of *Nova revija*¹³ in 1982 and of *Literatura* in the years directly preceding the destruction of Yugoslavia. And if it was easier to establish the figure of the autonomous intellectual in that period than in the 1960s or 1970s (see Rupel), there is no doubt that the formal resolution of the crisis in *Problemi* was in many ways possible due to the increasing specificity of individual intellectuals, in particular Kermauner and Pirjevec, and their decision to abandon the generality of their calling. In the first months of 1968, the broader contradiction, which in the case of *Problemi* was clearly observable from the late 1960s onwards as the consequence of both the socio-political situation and the specific genealogy of the figure of the intellectual, could only be resolved in the way in which it was resolved: by formally resolving the tensions caused by the facts mentioned above. ♡

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Povzetek

Kulturniške revije splošnega tipa v povojnem obdobju so na Slovenskem izhajale vse od konca druge svetovne vojne naprej in predstavljajo kontinuiteto s slovenskimi kulturniški revijami iz tridesetih let 20. stoletja, ko so te postajale eksplicitno politične in so se močneje vpenjale v javni diskurz in javne polemike (od tod kriza revije *Dom in svet*, vprašanje marksizma v *Sodobnosti* itn.) Formalna preobrazba tovrstne revije splošnega tipa se ni zgodila postopoma, temveč je do njene kulminacije prišlo v trenutku krize uredništva revije *Problemi* v letu 1968, ki je bila rešena s pomočjo CK ZMS kot ustanovitelja. Tematska razdelitev t. i. socialnih in estetskih grupacij, dejavnih v slovenskem kulturniškem polju, na različne stroke je na eni strani zagotovo znak šibke avtonomije literarnega polja, ki je podrejeno polju moči in ekonomije, v tem primeru partiji in institucionaliziranemu upravljanju kulturne politike, na drugi strani pa je znak razvoja figure intelektualca na Slovenskem.

Revija *Problemi* je po ukinitvi *Perspektiv* leta 1964 postala pribežališče mnogih piscev in pisk, ki so ostali brez platforme za javno objavlanje, s čimer je odprla prostor za najrazličnejše literarne, filozofske in teoretske pristope. Nedvomno je CK ZMS v želji po zamejitvi ozkega grupiranja tudi v novem uredništvu ohranjal koncept odprtosti, ki zagotavlja načelno možnost objavljanja. Oblika cenzure v fragmentaciji revije na strokovna področja, s čimer se je delno izgubila enotnost grupacije, zbrane okrog revije, je sovpadala tako pri zboru sodelavcev kot avtonomnem delu kakor pri izdajateljih (predvsem pri CK ZMS) kot vršilcu izvajanja moči, tj. predstavniku polja moči in oblasti, posledice t. i. spontane cenzure znotraj kulturnega in literarnega polja pa so bile daljnosežne. V kasnejšem zgodovinskem

razvoju so se grupacije v okviru revije *Problemi* vse bolj odmikale druga od druge, kar je vodilo k ustanovitvi *Nove revije* leta 1982, malo pred razpadom Jugoslavije pa se je literarni del, *Problemi-Literatura*, povsem osamosvojil v revijo *Literatura*. Širše protislovje, ki se v reviji *Problemi* jasno izkazuje od konca šestdesetih let naprej in je posledica tako družbeno-politične situacije kakor specifične genealogije figure intelektualca, se je v prvih mesecih leta 1968 razrešilo s formalno razrešitvijo napetosti, ki so nastajale tako zaradi notranjih nesoglasij kakor zaradi zunanjih vplivov.

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**From Theatre Experiments
to National Institutions:
Lado Kralj and Dušan
Jovanović between
1968 and the 1980s¹**

Od pozorišnog eksperimenta
do nacionalne institucije:

Lado Kralj i Dušan
Jovanović između 1968.
i osamdesetih godina

The article analyses the developments in Slovenian theatre between 1968 and 1985. It follows the careers of Dušan Jovanović, playwright and director, and Lado Kralj, director and professor of comparative literature, as members of the generation that entered the public sphere around 1968 and went on to radically change the Slovenian theatre of the 1970s and 1980s. The analysis shows that the main goals of the student movement—freedom of speech and of artistic expression as well as social change—were also at the heart of the artistic revolution that started in 1969 before it was developed by experimental theatre groups (Glej and Pekarna) and finally adopted by theatre institutions (the Mladinsko Theatre and the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana).

DUŠAN JOVANOVIĆ, LADO KRALJ,
SLOVENIAN THEATRE,
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE,
THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

U radu se bavim historijom slovenačkog pozorišta od 1968. do 1985. godine skicirajući razvojne puteve Dušana Jovanovića, pisca i režisera, i Lada Kralja, režisera i profesora istorije književnosti i pozorišnih studija. Obojica su predstavnici generacije koja stupa na scenu 1968. i unosi radikalnu promenu u slovenačko pozorište sedamdesetih i osamdesetih godina 20. veka. Kroz analizu će se pokazati da su osnovni ciljevi studentskih demonstracija – sloboda govora i umetničkog izraza, kao i društvene promene – i ciljevi umetničke revolucije koja je počela s *Pupilijom* 1969. godine i razvila se u eksperimentalni teatar (Glej i Pekarna), kako bi osamdesetih godina ušla u nacionalne institucije (Mladinsko pozorište i Slovenačko nacionalno pozorište Drama Ljubljana).

DUŠAN JOVANOVIĆ, LADO KRALJ,
SLOVENAČKO POZORIŠTE,
EKSPERIMENTALNO POZORIŠTE,
STUDENTSKE DEMONSTRACIJE

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INTRODUCTION

Dušan Jovanović and Lado Kralj were probably the most important figures in the Slovenian theatre experiment of the late 1960s. Jovanović directed the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre throughout 1969 and Kralj co-founded the Pekarna Theatre in 1971; together, they founded the Glej Experimental Theatre in 1970. In 1978, they both entered prestigious national institutions as artistic directors: Kralj joined the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, where he stayed until 1982; Jovanović joined the Mladinsko Theatre, where he worked until 1985.

They both took theatre experiments to their limits and then turned away from them: Jovanović showed his vision of experimentation in *Igrajte tumor v glavi in onesnaženje zraka* (Play a Tumour in the Head and Air Pollution); Kralj practiced experimentation in Pekarna, which he closed in 1978 after he realised that it had turned into a therapeutic group obsessed with the psychological frustrations of its members. At that point, they both changed the institutions they had entered: Kralj, working at Drama, 'tried to carry out an authentic aesthetic revolution and met quite a resistance from the authorities' (Toporišič and Troha: 2); Dušan Jovanović turned the Mladinsko Theatre into the most interesting Yugoslavia theatre of the 1980s.

What was the view of theatre practice held by Kralj and Jovanović, judging by their work from the 1960s to the 1980s? How did it change over time, as the decade of the student revolt gradually transformed into a time of the downturn of socialism?

The answers to these questions can help us understand how the student generation of 1968 carried out its revolutionary ideas by taking on key positions in the Slovenian theatre system. However, before

we look into the specific features of the theatre scene, we should revisit the historic moment of 1968.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

The student movement was a series of protests around the world through which young people demanded social change. It took place both in the Western and the Eastern bloc. While students in Paris protested under slogans such as *Soyez réalistes, demandez l'impossible* (Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible), students in Belgrade demanded social equality. The movement also resonated among young artists. In Yugoslavia, their fight against social realism, which was supported by the leading ideology, was also a fight for modernism and new artistic genres from the West.

Ivo Svetina, who was twenty years old at the time, published his literary programme *Ročni praznik* (Celebration of Hands) in the journal *Tribuna* on 23 October 1968:

I do not write in the name of provocation. My writing itself is a provocation. [...] History and tradition are mother and daughter. The mother seduces politicians, the daughter, poets. The mother has lost her charm long ago and the daughter is an innocent prostitute. I provoke national heritage, national treasures, I do not like museums. These old faces from the seventeenth century who tremble at the sound of a typewriter are pathetic. [...] Provocation is action. The provocateur is an activist; a rebel against peace is a general. The poet is an agent of war.
(Quoted in Dolgan: 165)

Later on, he demands complete freedom of artistic expression: 'I am against all literature that stands for any one social class, formation

or group. Literature is a reflection of the nation's freedom and self-reflection only through the individual who deeply feels and lives this freedom and self-reflection.' (Quoted in Dolgan: 166–67)

The method of young artists was not based on a clear social programme, but rather on a modernist approach of disillusionment and absurd. During the May 1971 occupation of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, Milan Jesih, too, wrote a manifesto:

The house of being is SILENCE, VACUUM is her shepherd. In the valley of Doom lives the shepherd and in this valley there is a house. And we are all on a pilgrimage to the valley of Doom. This is what we live for. In accordance with the logic of this valley, which can also be dubbed Death, is the teleology of our existence and the existence of everything there is. (Quoted in Dolgan: 200)

Such demands provoked a response of mainstream writers and cultural ideologists that was published in *Delo*, the most widely read Slovenian daily at the time, under the title *Demokracija da—razkroj ne!* (Democracy Yes—Disintegration No!). This was a protest against the fact that such literature was financed by public money (see Dolgan: 171–72). Let us now focus on the developments in the theatre.

PUPILIJA, PAPA PUPILO PA PUPILČKI

Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki (Pupilija, Pappa Pupilo and Little Pupillos) was the first and only theatre production of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre. Premiered on 29 October 1969 in Ljubljana, it was a collective production directed by Dušan Jovanović that turned out to be a complete shock for the audience, as it understood theatre as an event that

is co-created by the performers and the audience, offering what Kralj later on discussed in terms of a different life experience.

The most controversial scene was the slaughter of a white hen at the end of the performance. A series of reviews and articles appeared in the press and a heated debate arose around the question of freedom of artistic expression. Jože Snoj, for example, wrote the following:

To hell with you, members of the ad hoc theatre group Pupilija Ferkeverk. I wish I had never met you. [...] I protest in the name of the white hen that you slaughtered on Wednesday night in front of a full auditorium. Moreover, you did it consciously and without a utilitarian purpose, which is a symptom of a criminal deviation. [...] At the same time I fear that, for similar reasons and in front of a live audience, you might someday murder an innocent child. (Snoj: 5)

Despite his rage, however, Snoj admitted that, in a way, the production managed to highlight the lack of moral values in a modern world.

The management of the Križanke theatre reacted immediately and was no longer prepared to host the performance. The attacks from the cultural establishment had a double effect: it was more difficult for the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre to find a venue and workspace, while the reaction made their production into a Yugoslav and international hit. They performed on the Ljubljana student campus, joined by an audience of 1200 people who attended even though there was no real promotion. The same holds for the reprise in Maribor that was also recorded by the Croatian national television station. Later, they performed in Zagreb (24 and 25 March 1970), in Rijeka and again in Zagreb at the Festival of student theatres. They also appeared in Belgrade at the review of amateur stage companies, where *Pupilija* won the prize for the most

experimental production. A television station from Western Germany recorded parts of the show, and the Slovenian national television station recorded the whole performance. The Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre fell apart soon after, but some of the members continued to work under the leadership of Matjaž Kralj. The last performance, presented at the Edinburgh Arts 75 in May 1975, was Matjaž Kralj's *You Must Be Quicker Than Your Mind, Love*.

Ivo Svetina, a member of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre who took part in the *Pupilija* performance, found a connection between the production and May 1968 in Paris: 'Seeds that were planted in May 1968 in Paris, when civil society was born, have also ripened in Slovenia.' One of the results was Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre, which 'was a search for the human need to create a different, parallel reality, the reality of art.' (Svetina: 77)

DUŠAN JOVANOVIĆ

The leader of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre was Dušan Jovanović. Jovanović was a bit older than the others and his drama *Norci* (The Madmen) was in the repertoire of the Stage 57 theatre, the most renowned experimental theatre in the 1960s, just before it was silenced by the authorities. Nonetheless, Jovanović developed his theatrical credo precisely through *Pupilija*. Forty years later, he remembered the play as follows: 'With *Pupilija I*, at first unknowingly, drank the sweet potion of brotherhood. I became an adherent of a tribe. [...] I tried to implement this Pupilija syndrome later on in new theatre environments and on different levels.' (Jovanović 2009: 92)

And what was this Pupilija syndrome? *Pupilija* was an artistic reaction to the false harmonious image of society and its mainstream art.

It was not Art with a capital A. According to professional standards it was simply amateur theatre, but it brought about the liberating power of parody and of ritual, and the desire of unlimited freedom.' (Jovanović 2009: 91) Jovanović thus came up with a form of theatre that builds on parody and moves the boundaries of what is acceptable in making theatre, in writing, as well as in political provocation.

Jovanović also always tried to establish a tribal atmosphere, although he was rarely successful in that regard. 'An actor is a member of a trade union which defines him and his social role, the role of an employee... I came to this conclusion after I tried to change a professional ensemble into a social group, to introduce a participative process into theatre.' (Jovanović 2009: 93) Here, Jovanović talks about his artistic leadership of the Mladinsko Theatre in the 1970s and 1980s, but let us examine his professional career a little bit more closely.

Jovanović directed his first performances in professional theatre in 1968 (the Slovenian National Theatre Maribor) and 1969 (the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana). On 1 March 1969, he staged *The Memorandum* (*Vyrozumění*), a play by Václav Havel. Just a few months later, on 7 October 1969, his own play, *Znamke, nakar še Emilija* (Stamps, and then Emilija), was staged at Drama, directed by Žarko Petan. This example of the theatre of the absurd features a fight between two secret service groups that are chasing a stamp collection that is supposed to feature a code. The action is constantly relativised, as Philatelist could be either a super-agent or just a man who wants to get a woman (Emilija). Similarly, Emilija and her husband could be either a married couple or just a couple of agents. At the end, Emilija kills everybody, lies down and calls the headquarters for someone to come and get her. Instead of agents, though, only three hens arrive, which is a radical satirical comment on Yugoslav secret service agencies. As a case of social

parody, the play was very successful. It ran for ninety nights over two seasons and won a prize at the 1970 MESS festival in Sarajevo (see Kranjc: 384).

THE GLEJ EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE

On 25 June 1970, the premiere of *Kaspar* by Peter Handke marks the beginning of the Glej Experimental Theatre, a theatre company which was formally established a week later, using as its name the word *glej*, ‘to watch’, to stress its commitment to a different artistic approach. The members of the executive board were Dušan Jovanović, Lado Kralj, Samo Simčič, Lučka Simonič, Zvone Šedlbauer, Iztok Tory and Matjaž Vipotnik. Kralj remembers these beginnings as follows: ‘The idea of putting together a new alternative theatre group formed at the end of 1969, when I was approached by Dušan Jovanović and Zvone Šedlbauer. Soon after that, Igor Lampret, Marko Slodnjak and Iztok Tory joined the group. The ensemble was recruited quickly and spontaneously from the students at the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television.’ (EG Glej) Dušan Jovanović worked at Glej predominantly as a director. He directed some of its key performances there, including *Victor, or Power to the Children* (*Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir*) by Roger Vitrac (22 January 1971), *Spomenik G* (*Monument G*) by Jovanović and Bojan Štih (28 January 1972), *Kdor skak, tisti hlap* (*He Who Jump a Serf*) by Rudi Šeligo (26 January 1973), *Živelo življenje Luke D.* (*Long Life the Life of Luka D.*) by Pavle Lužan (23 January 1974) and *Pogovor v maternici koroške Slovenke* (*A Discussion in the Womb of a Carinthian Slovenian Woman*) by Janko Messner, Tomaž Šalamun and Jovanović (5 October 1974).

Let us focus in more detail on *Monument G*, the play which, together with *Pupilija*, marks the end of traditional theatre in Slovenia. With

Monument G, Jovanović staged a play by Bojan Štih. He wanted to implement Jerzy Grotowski's poor theatre and repeat the experience of the Pupilija Ferkeverk group. He started with twelve actors who were asked to confront the text and act in reaction to it. In the end, only Jožica Avbelj stayed and was joined by the musician Matjaž Jarc. She was the only one who, as Jovanović recalls (2009: 95), 'reacted to my stammering instructions autonomously: she confronted the characters and expressed herself in relation to them'.

Glej produced a new form of theatre that was based on the theatrical event. This was a Yugoslav phenomenon. 'At approximately the same time Atelier 212 was formed in Belgrade, Theatre ITD in Zagreb, and we all displayed tendencies that were completely different from those in theatre institutions. We realised that compromises were no longer possible, as this would have led to an aesthetic and ideological defeat.' (EG Glej) There was a clear connection between these views and the student revolt that demanded social revolution and the transformation of all traditions.

The next milestone in Jovanović's career was the production *Žrtve mode bum-bum* (Victims of the Bang-Bang Fashion), premiered on 16 October 1975 at the Mladinsko Theatre. Jovanović himself wrote the text and directed the play. Together with his play *Igrajte tumor v glavi in onesnaženje zraka*, which Ljubiša Ristić staged in Celje on 9 January 1976, this was a turning point in Jovanović's career. In 1978, he took over the Mladinsko Theatre, which he quickly turned into the most innovative theatre in Yugoslavia.

An official notice was sent to all the Slovenian theatres that the anniversary of something needed to be commemorated, probably that of the liberation or the victory over fascism. Smole called me and gave

me a completely free hand. I was to write a text and stage it. In his conspiring and sly way, however, he let me know that he expected nothing conventional from me. (SMG: 121)

The result was a text for a glamorous hostess, a female and a male choir that was based on an overview of military fashion from the Middle Ages to the present day. This was complemented by chanted ‘entries from the Dictionary of Standard Slovenian, pertaining to thematically related concepts (fighting, socage, the Scourge of God, fear, man, suffering, work, home, birth, death, love)’. In between, there were ‘generic scenes: military scenes, name calling, reports, processions of the wounded and the maimed’. The process of making the play was also innovative:

We started studying towards the end of the season and sat at the table for over a month. At reading rehearsals, we painstakingly sought for the right sound image for each chorus. [...] After the holidays we continued with improvisation and set production. The premiere was triumphant and the ideological grudges were extreme. Most often, we were reproached for the fact that all the uniforms (even those of the partisans) were made equal in the neutral discourse of fashion jargon. (SMG: 121)

Andrej Inkret wrote a review of the play in which he summarised his impressions as follows: ‘This is a thoroughly vivid innovative production with great artistic zeal, sharp and without prejudice, colourful and brilliant, game-changing and ruthless. And above all, it is a production that is refined in the use of modern theatrical speech, a production where the poetry exceeds the narrow boundaries of “light” cabaret or satire.’ (SMG: 133) The production was a hit, with seventy-three nights in the repertoire.

A year later, Ristić staged *Tumor* in Celje. The text is an ironic take on theatre experimentation. Director Dular, dramaturge Palčič and their actors occupy the Slavija Theatre and throw out all the traditionalists. The image of theatrical laboratory is self-referential and fruitless. Jovanović explained his disillusionment with theatre experimentation in an interview from 1990: 'All these experiments are fruitless, they are marginalised and usually carried out by young people. One cannot exist in such a situation for long, so it is imperative to leave it and set off on a march through the institutions, in an attempt to change their bureaucratic nature and the people who work in them.' (EG Glej) The cooperation with Ristić marked the next period, when Jovanović became the artistic director of the Mladinsko Theatre.

THE MLADINSKO THEATRE

When Dušan Jovanović became the artistic director of Mladinsko Theatre, his most famous play, *Osvoboditev Skopja* (The Liberation of Skopje), was staged as well. Written in 1976 and 1977, the play opens up taboo themes of socialism and gives a boost to the dynamic political theatre of the 1980s. Engaged in a struggle for social as well as aesthetic change, it fulfils one of the main goals of the 1968 generation.

The play is constructed out of the protagonist's fragmented memories of the final months of the Second World War in Skopje, when he, Zoran, was six years old. It is an autobiographical play that goes beyond the author's memories in order to explore the theme of the impact of historical events on the individual. The audience is shown a complex family life with the partisan Dušan, Zoran's father, who is absent and only arrives at the end as a liberator, and members of the resistance in Skopje. In contrast, there are a number of female protagonists

who try to survive in difficult circumstances. Lica, Zoran's mother, thus prostitutes herself with a German officer in order to get food for her family, while his aunt, Lenče, gives piano lessons to a Jewish girl who is deported in the middle of the play. Life is shown as being far more complex than it was presented by the official ideology after the war. One of the most illustrative scenes is Act 3, Scene 5, entitled 'Orgy': in the apartment of Zoran's family, the mother is dancing half-naked for the German officer, the Doctor is dictating Lenče a list of provisions sent to the Partisan army in the basement, Grandma Ana is chain-smoking, while, next to her, her drunk son Georgij, completely ruined by torture, is singing a traditional Macedonian song; Zoran is observing all this, unable to grasp the meaning of the antagonisms at work.

At the end, the play explains the trauma of Jovanović's generation in a dialogue between Zoran and his father:

Zoran: One night I woke up at three o'clock from a peaceful sleep, without the shadow of a dream. I was woken by some unexpected realisation: I felt I had suddenly discovered the meaning of my life. At first, it was like the soft, gentle transformation of blood into clotting mud. Starting in the tiniest blood vessels at the extremities of my body; under my nails, in my toes, my lips, at the base of my nose. Then the coagulation spread through all my veins.

At that very moment, I had a peculiar feeling that I could destroy this experience, annul it, and wipe it out. By disappearing. By flying away. By coming unstuck and leaving behind the trammels of my body. The capillary vessels in my brain became filled with this clotted blood and the neurons began to die one after the other. Then the arteries hardened,

the heart stopped, died and burst in a great milky jet, which spurted out and filled all of space.

Dušan: *My son, I don't understand you.* (Jovanović 1985: 76)

Directed by Ljubiša Georgijevski, the play was premiered in Drama on 7 November 1978. It was invited to the Sterijino pozorje festival in 1979, where Jovanović won the prize for the best contemporary drama. It is interesting that three productions of *Osvoboditev Skopja* were shown at the same festival—in addition to the one in Ljubljana also one in KPGT from Zagreb and one in Skopje.

There are two other productions that are even more important for the development of Slovenian theatre, both directed by Ristić; these are *The Persians (Persai)* by Aeschylus, premiered on 9 December 1980, and *Missa in A Minor* by Ristić, premiered on 21 December 1980. According to Tomaž Toporišič, these are the most important performances of the 1980s because they put the Mladinsko Theatre on the European map. 'In the breakthrough production of the *Missa in A Minor*, Ristić placed a completely individualistic montage of fragments of *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich (Grobница za Borisa Davidoviča)* by Danilo Kiš along with pieces by Lenin, Trotsky, Proudhon.' (SMG: 90) In terms of approach, Ristić's play is reminiscent of Jovanović's *Žrtve mode bum-bum*. As he himself said in an interview for the magazine *Teleks*: 'There is no individual interest of the writer, director or actor. We all invest into the production everything we are, know and have.' (Quoted in SMG: 90) It was a very popular play, but also a very controversial one. As Marko Juvan points out, its main feature was a mixture of political issues and an avant-garde approach: 'The political theatre of the 1980s attempted to turn away from the theatre conventions of the "socialist bourgeoisie" and to surpass the

aesthetic formalism of “socialist modernism” by using an open drama form, collective acting, montage of documentary material and fiction, and an avant-garde notion of Gesamtkunstwerk.’ (Juvan: 549) *Missa in A Minor* won international acclaim: ‘the *grand prix* of the BITEF festival in 1981, awarded for the first time in its history to a “domestic” performance’, as well as ‘an exhaustive review by Heinz Kluncker in *Theater heute*, a leading European theatre magazine, which proclaimed *Missa* to be the biggest event of BITEF, a leading European festival of new theatre at the time, ultimately placing Ristić, *Missa* and the Mladinsko Theatre on the map of European theatre’ (SMG: 94).

LADO KRALJ

Kralj was not an active member of the Pupilija Ferkewerk Theatre, but the group was closely connected to Pekarna, the experimental theatre which he established together with Ivo Svetina in 1971. As he explains in an interview with Primož Jesenko: ‘*Pupilija* influenced Pekarna already with several people whom Bara Levstik gathered for the new theatre. [...] Its power was that it showed the life situation, the experience of a generation. The innovation that was partly adopted by Pekarna was to show the special features of a specific generation.’ (Kralj and Jesenko: 27) It is precisely this longing for a different life experience that is the legacy of the student movement.

PEKARNA

Glej and Pekarna co-existed, but Pekarna tried to be more radical in its following of ritual theatre. As Kralj puts it: ‘When a piece was selected it was presented to the whole group and everybody debated about

how it could be constructed and who was going to take which part.' (Kralj and Jesenko: 14) Moreover, the work was based on the engagement of the actor. 'If an actor does not want to perform a certain part of the text, you make a revision together and leave him or her the parts which he or she will confront productively. The actor was definitely more important than the author or its rights. We did not care about those.' (Kralj and Jesenko: 16)

The turning point for Pekarna was again a production directed by Ristić. Premiered on 1 October 1974, *Tako, tako* (So-So) consisted of a number of fragments about marginalised people written by the Serbian author Mirko Kovač. Those miserable lives were understood as a social critique and a criticism of the Communist Party. Ristić also experimented with casting, as he 'put three older men on stage: one was almost homeless and the other two were pensioners'. They were 'positioned in one of the four cubes on stage, discussing their daily routines, drinking wine, basically playing themselves' (Kralj and Jesenko: 19). A similar approach was used almost a decade later by Romeo Castellucci in the productions of *Societas Raffaello Sanzio*. No wonder that Pekarna attracted a lot of attention at the international theatre festival in Nancy.

After *Tako, tako*, the productions of Pekarna lost some of the initial strength of the group, and in 1978 Kralj and Svetina decided to close the theatre. There were also other reasons for this decision, from the fact that actors demanded pay to the fact that the collective organisation of work was no longer a priority for everyone.

THE SLOVENIAN NATIONAL THEATRE DRAMA LJUBLJANA

The 1970s were a decade of increased ideological repression in Slovenian culture, which resulted in a crisis of the Slovenian National Theatre

Drama Ljubljana, the most important institutional theatre in Slovenia. Between 1971 and 1977, Drama was directed by Janez Šenk, who tried to negotiate new work conditions with the three directors, Mile Korun, Žarko Petan and France Jamnik, who in the end left Drama. Other Slovenian directors boycotted the theatre and Šenk had to hire directors abroad, which proved to be more difficult than he had thought. As a result, Drama ‘was not selected for the competition programme at Sterijino pozorje for almost a decade’ (Kranjc: 387). The other Ljubljana theatres, the Ljubljana City Theatre and the Mladinsko Theatre, became more innovative and interesting.

The manager who was appointed to overcome this crisis was the famous actor Polde Bibič. At his inauguration, he stressed that he needed an artistic director who would bring a new aesthetic as well as a new repertoire (see Kranjc: 428). This artistic director was Lado Kralj, appointed on 22 May 1978. As he remembers: ‘Concerning Drama as an institution, I was merely interested in how it worked. Polde Bibič, whom I did not know personally, invited me. We had to go to the Central Committee of the Communist Party and to Josip Vidmar to be approved. After that, I was in a way let into Drama.’ (Kralj et al.: 208–209)

Kralj began to implement his ideas immediately and results followed quickly. As early as the season 1978/1979, a production of *Tango* by Sławomir Mrożek had quite an impact, although it was a student production directed a very young Janez Pipan. *Tango* was invited to the Borštnikovo srečanje festival. *Osvoboditev Skopja* marked the season and was invited to Sterijino pozorje. Kralj introduced new authors to the Drama repertoire. The most controversial ones were those who had already been introduced by Glej or Pekarna, such as Peter Handke, Edward Bond, Harold Pinter, Václav Havel, Dario Fo, Jovanović, Peter Božič, Dimitrij Rupel, Dane Zajc and Drago Jančar. Kralj invited Korun, Petan

and Jamnik to return to the theatre and added some of the directors from his experimental phase, namely Georgij Paro, Zvone Šedlbauer, and Božo Šprajc. Productions were invited to Sterijino pozorje more than once; they won prizes in Novi Sad, at MESS, in Dubrovnik and elsewhere.

Kralj's last season was marked by the staging of the first play by Jančar, *Dissident Arnož in njegovi* (Dissident Arnož and His Band). Premiered on 22 January 1982 and directed by Šedlbauer, the production tackled the conflict between the intellectual and society. The production was very successful: Jančar won the Grum Award for the best play of the year and one of the awards at Sterijino pozorje.

Kralj's decisions were controversial, leading to a number of conflicts. The transcripts of the programme board meetings that could show us how his decisions were contested have been lost, but we have his own recollections. 'The whole mandate they were carefully checking my work. There was the programme board, with people from different political organisations. These members even cried at meetings to secure their agendas,' he says in an interview. Kralj also explains why he left Drama and became a freelancer: 'I had had enough of fighting with the authorities. I even had to defend myself, together with Boris A. Novak, the dramaturge at the time, in front of a judge when one of the actors accused us of working against the brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav nations.' (Kralj et al.: 209)

CONCLUSION

So, has the student movement of the long 1960s had an impact on the development of Slovenian theatre? It seems that it has, as a generation of authors and directors was formed around it that introduced a new kind of creative process and a different understanding of theatre.

The focus on the final product was replaced by a focus on the process, on theatre as an event that happens between the actors and the spectators. A group of young people that gathered in the Glej Experimental Theatre and the Pekarna Theatre was marginalised for almost a decade, but entered the institutions in 1978, first the rather small Mladinsko Theatre, which was originally established to serve young audiences, and then the most important theatre in Slovenia. It is not surprising that Kralj and Bibič had to defend themselves before the highest political body, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and the most influential theatre ideologue, Josip Vidmar. In their work, both Jovanović and Kralj followed their social and aesthetic aspirations, advocating for freedom of speech and criticising the regime. ‘The theatre was very important in a political sense back then. And that was what interested me most at the time,’ Kralj explains (Kralj et al.: 209)

The revolutionary spirit of 1968 is present in the work of both Jovanović and Kralj, as well as in the work of their generation. As Kralj puts it: ‘To know the power, to test it... In a way we were encouraged to do that by professor Pirjevec, who urged us to enter the institutions and subvert them from the inside.’ (Kralj et al.: 210)

Nonetheless, the views defended by Jovanović and Kralj did have support in the historical moment. With the death of Josip Broz—Tito in 1980, a significant process of social change began which eventually led to the end of socialism and Yugoslavia. The belief held by Jovanović and Kralj that the theatre should be a social forum where alternative social ideas can and should be discussed corresponded to the need of the audience for social and political change. Thus their long march through the institutions was a successful one. It presented a turning point in the development of Slovenian theatre and the legacy of those changes is palpable even today. ♡

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Povzetek

Članek se osredotoča na vprašanje, kako je generacija ustvarjalcev, ki je dejavno sodelovala v študentskih nemirih med letoma 1968 in 1971, kasneje delovala v slovenskih gledališčih. So bili njeni pogledi na gledališko umetnost, ki so pomenili radikalni prelom z literarnim gledališčem in pripeljali slovensko gledališče prek gledališkega eksperimenta v sedemdesetih letih 20. stoletja do političnega gledališča osemdesetih let, podobni osnovnim ciljem študentskega gibanja? Analiza se osredotoča na poklicni poti dramatika in režiserja Dušana Jovanovića ter režiserja in pozneje teatrologa Lada Kralja, ki sta bila bržkone najvidnejša predstavnika generacije 1968 v slovenskem gledališču.

Njuna gledališka pot je bila povezana s skupino umetnikov in umetnic, ki je v gledališču poskušala uveljaviti glavne cilje študentskih nemirov, zlasti radikalni prelom z obstoječim redom in z življenjsko izkušnjo prejšnje generacije. V gledališču se to kaže kot uveljavljanje ritualnega gledališča, kolektivnega načina dela in premikanja mej svobode. Vse to nakaže že prelomna predstava *Pupilija papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* (1969), ki jo je skupaj z drugimi zakrivil Dušan Jovanović. T. i. pupilski sindrom kasneje razvijata Jovanović in Kralj s sopotniki v Eksperimentalnem gledališču Glej in v Gledališču Pekarna, ob koncu sedemdesetih let pa skoraj istočasno vstopita v institucionalna gledališča. Jovanović tedaj postane umetniški vodja Slovenskega mladinskega gledališča, kjer vpeljuje kolektivni način dela s profesionalno ekipo, obenem pa z Ljubišo Ristićem, Janezom Pipanom in ostalimi osrednjimi režiserji tega obdobja vzpostavi gledališče kot družbeni forum, kot izrazito politično gledališče, ki je prevladovalo v osemdesetih letih. Enako stori Lado Kralj, ko leta 1978 prevzame umetniško vodenje ljubljanske Drame. Na repertoar postavi sodobne in v političnem smislu

kontroverzne avtorje (med katerimi so Peter Handke, Edward Bond, Sławomir Mrożek, Václav Havel, Dario Fo, Dušan Jovanović, Peter Božič, Dimitrij Rupel, Dane Zajc in Drago Jančar). Poleg tega pripelje nazaj v Dramo najbolj inovativne slovenske režiserje (med katerimi so Mile Korun, Žarko Petan, Franci Križaj in Janez Pipan), s čimer Dramo ponovno uveljavi kot eno od inovativnih jugoslovanskih gledališč. Študentsko gibanje je tako pustilo globoke sledi v razvoju slovenskega gledališča vse do danes.

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**Czechoslovak
'Normalisation' in
the Fiction of Vilenica
Prize Laureates**

Čehoslovačka »normalizacija«
u prozi laureata Vilenice

Milan Kundera's success in the 1980s was partly due to his essays, which critiqued Cold War-era Europe from both east and west and helped revive the concept of Central Europe. He was one of three Czech writers to win Slovenia's Vilenica Prize in the first eight years of its existence, along with Jan Skácel and the Czech-German Libuše Moníková. Following the award granted to Pavel Vilikovský (the only Slovak laureate to date) in 1997, Czech and Slovak writers did not win the Vilenica for nearly twenty years until Jáchym Topol's prize in 2015. This article examines these Czech and Slovak writers as both novelists and critics of the late socialist period, reflecting the historical experience of a region of small nations surrounded by global powers.

MILAN KUNDERA, CZECH LITERATURE,
SLOVAK LITERATURE, VILENICA
PRIZE, CENTRAL EUROPE

Uspehu Milana Kundere osamdesetih godina 20. veka jednim delom doprineli su eseji u kojima je autor, kako s tačke gledišta Istoka tako i Zapada, izložio kritiku Evrope iz vremena Hladnog rata, čime je podstakao oživljavanje pojma Centralne Evrope. U prvih osam godina otkako je ustanovljena slovenačka nagrada Vilenica, Kundera je bio jedan od troje čeških laureata, uz Jana Skacela i češko-nemačku autorku Libušu Monikovu. Nakon 1997. godine, kada je nagrada dodeljena Pavlu Vilikovskom (jedinom slovačkom laureatu do danas), gotovo dvadeset godina nije dan češki ili slovački autor nije osvojio Vilenicu, sve do 2015. godine kada je Jáchym Topol proglašen za dobitnika. U ovom radu analiziraju se pomenuti češki i slovački pisci kao romanopisci i kritičari kasnog socijalističkog perioda čije delo odražava istorijsko iskustvo regije malih naroda okruženih velikim svetskim silama.

MILAN KUNDERA, ČEŠKA KNJIŽEVNOST,
SLOVAČKA KNJIŽEVNOST, NAGRADA
VILENICA, CENTRALNA EVROPA

1
Ukraine and Bulgaria
were given their first
awards in 2017 (Yuri
Andrukhovych) and
2018 (Ilija Trojanow).

The Vilenica International Literary Prize, bestowed in the context of Slovenia's literary festival of the same name, is the most significant award specifically for Central European literature. Its laureates from sixteen countries include some of the most noted figures of the region: two former winners, Peter Handke and Olga Tokarczuk, simultaneously won the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2018 and 2019.¹ The Vilenica Prize emerged from the Cold War-era political debate over the concept of Central Europe that was most vividly expressed by the Czech novelist Milan Kundera in his 1984 essay 'A Kidnapped West' (originally published the previous year in French as 'Un occident kidnappé', and also known as 'The Tragedy of Central Europe'), with his claim that the so-called small nations under Soviet domination had been 'kidnapped' from their historical place in Western culture (Sabatos 2008: 1835). In Czechoslovakia, the repressive period between the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion and the 1989 Velvet Revolution was known euphemistically as *normalisation*. According to Jiří Holý:

Normalization was jokingly called 'Stalinism with a human face'. [...] The regime, whose hallmark was careful conservatism, strove to retain the status quo. [...] From the ordinary citizen the state demanded only passive loyalty; in return he or she was guaranteed peace and a relatively decent standard of living. [...] The attempt not to lose one's 'bread and butter' led to people playing two roles, publicly pretending to be acquiescent [...] and privately conducting their lives according to their own moral code. Private life was of course tainted by this perversion. [...] It seems that the evil threatening man comes not only from outside. It penetrates as far as we ourselves allow it to through our apprehension about being victimized, and our fear for our place in society. (Holý: 133–35)

While Kundera's writings were banned in Czechoslovakia as well as in most of the Eastern Bloc, they were published in the relatively liberal conditions of the former Yugoslavia. They had particular resonance in Slovenia, which welcomed the revival of Central European identity as a counterbalance to Serbian political dominance. In the 1990s, the newly independent Slovenia continued to serve as a bridge between east and west, with the former Eastern bloc liberated from Communism while Yugoslavia descended into civil war.

The first two years of the Vilenica Prize were given to so-called Western writers with roots in what was then Yugoslavia: the Italian Fulvio Tomizza (1986), born in Istria, and the Austrian Handke (1987), who is partly Slovenian. Kundera, honoured in 1992, was by far the most famous of the Vilenica laureates, and was one of three Czech writers to win the Vilenica Prize in the first eight years of its existence, along with the poet Jan Skácel (1989) and the Czech-German Libuše Moníková (1993).² Following the award granted to Pavel Vilikovský (the only Slovak laureate to date) in 1997, Czech and Slovak writers did not win the Vilenica for nearly twenty years until Jáchym Topol's prize in 2015.³ Two other Vilenica laureates, Péter Esterházy (1988) and Claudio Magris (2009), used the 'normalisation' of Czechoslovak society after 1968 as an example of the entire Central European experience under Communism.

Although the Hungarian Esterházy was the first laureate from behind what was then still the so-called Iron Curtain, his aristocratic origins alluded to the Habsburg past. In his 1990 text *The Book of Hrabal* (*Hrabal könyve*) the author/protagonist is writing an essay in honour of the Czech novelist Bohumil Hrabal. Part Two is narrated by the author's wife Anna to Hrabal himself, explaining the petty absurdities of life under late Communism:

2 Moníková's award was the only time the Vilenica Prize was given two years in a row to laureates of the same country, although in the intervening year Czechoslovakia had separated into the Czech and Slovak Republics (and neither Kundera nor Moníková had lived there for decades).

3 This is not counting two Swiss laureates born in Czechoslovakia, Erica Pedretti (1999) and Ilma Rakusa (2005).

The road a mittel-europeer must traverse when negotiating with builders—for this clearly applies from Prague to Belgrade [...] runs parallel, if you'll excuse me, Bohumil, with Wittgenstein's; the elegant and rigorous geometric viewpoint is superseded by an approach more suited to the occasion, a more responsive, warmer, more personal touch. For instance, my husband thought at first that when he was quoted a price, it was what it was [...] he had no idea that the price first quoted means nothing, at most it is a friendly sign that there will eventually be something, some work done, and some payment too, but let's not worry about it right now. (Esterházy: 96)

Anna later tells Hrabal: 'Prague is a real city, I can see that. For me, Budapest is not.' (Esterházy: 101) By inserting Czech words into a Hungarian novel, Esterházy creates a Foucauldian heterotopia in which the Danube becomes an imaginary ocean, reuniting Central European cultures that have been separated by politics and language (see Sabatos 2013b: 69).

Kundera's 'A Kidnapped West' challenged Western readers' assumptions about the division of Europe. By promoting Central Europe as a traditionally Western region, Kundera liberated his work from the national context of Czech fiction and the label of East European writing (Sabatos 2013a: 34). Although its boundaries are roughly those of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, he insists that 'it's a culture or a fate', as its borders are 'imaginary and must be drawn and redrawn with each new historical situation'. He describes this fate as that of 'great *common situations* that reassemble peoples, regroup them in ever new ways along the imaginary and ever-changing boundaries that mark a realm inhabited by the same memories, the same problems and conflicts, the same common tradition' (Kundera 1984: 106–107). However, these

'imaginary and ever-changing boundaries' are left somewhat vague, and even change between the French and English versions of the essay (see Sabatos 2011: 24–26). When Kundera published his collection *The Art of the Novel* (*L'art du roman*) in 1986, he selected seven of his essays as approved texts, but excluded others, including 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', omitting it from his official bibliography despite it being one of his most influential works.

The essay 'Sixty-Three Words' is a 'personal dictionary' in which his entry for 'Central Europe' refers to the 'pleiad of great Central European novelists: Kafka, Hasek, Musil, Broch, Gombrowicz', and cites 'their mistrust of History and of the glorification of the future; their modernism, which has nothing to do with the avant-garde's illusions'. The end of this section evokes 'The Tragedy of Central Europe': 'The destruction of the Hapsburg empire, and then, after 1945, Austria's cultural marginality and the political nonexistence of the other countries, make Central Europe a premonitory mirror showing the possible fate of all of Europe.' (Kundera 1988: 124) Some traces of this Central European tragedy can be seen in this essay, but these references have been removed from their political context, much as the so-called kidnapped nations were cut off from the natural development of European culture. Nonetheless, the concept was intensely debated by writers in the former Yugoslavia, as the Slovenian novelist Drago Jančar (202) reflected two decades later: 'How long has it been since we read Kundera's essay on the tragedy of Central Europe [...] and had the feeling that something was said which had been on the tip of our tongue for a long time?' Jančar is sceptical of the idealisation of European integration that replaced the previous socialist utopia, but insists that 'the idea of Central Europe was not an ideology' and 'can therefore not experience a decline or even the collapse to which all ideologies promising the best of all possible

worlds are doomed' (Jančar: 207). The Vilenica Prize was part of this effort to redraw the boundaries of Cold War Europe and to regroup its peoples along the common tradition of Austro-Hungarian culture rather than the post-war order of capitalism versus socialist ideology.

Christopher Merrill, writer, translator and director of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, visited Vilenica in 1992 together with the poet Aleš Debeljak:

Vilenica had played a role in the breakup of the Communist order, and of Yugoslavia, by bringing together dissident poets and writers from the former Habsburg lands to explore the ways in which 'the rigid structures are dissolving,' as one writer put it. Accordingly, the theme of this year's discussions was the disintegration of universalism. Milan Kundera was to receive the Vilenica Prize, not so much for his writings [...] as for his support of Slovenia during the Ten-Day War. (Merrill: 95)

Arriving at the site of the festival, the famed Lipica stud farm in Sežana, Merrill discusses the Central European identity with the poet Venó Taufer, the founding president of the festival: "Yugoslavia meant Serbia," said Venó. "When I was abroad it was frustrating to have to explain who I was. [...] Czechs, Slovaks, Austrians, Hungarians, Croats, all Central Europeans share this frustration [...]. And we all have our so-called minorities [...]. And nothing is self-sufficient. Those who think otherwise are the aggressors in this world.'" (Merrill: 96)

Merrill's discussion about Peter Handke with the poet Tomaž Šalamun as well as an unnamed Slovenian novelist reveals how political conflict had penetrated the cultural sphere. Merrill's suggestion (attributed to Šalamun) that Handke's support of Serbian nationalism derived from his artistic rivalry with Kundera offers a surprising explanation

for a controversy that re-emerged almost thirty years later with Handke's Nobel Prize:

'Will Handke show up?' I asked.

The novelist muttered a curse.

'Handke's the number one pen in Europe,' said Tomaž. 'Kundera's his only competition; when he came to Slovenia's defense, Handke had to do the opposite.' (Merrill: 97)

Ultimately both the reclusive Kundera and Handke skipped the 1992 festival, but the following year the prize was given to a far less well-known Czech émigré: Libuše Moníková.

Moníková published her works in Germany and was largely unknown in her native Prague until after 1989, but her descriptions of life under normalisation force the reader to negotiate an unfamiliar cultural context. In Moníková's 1987 novel *The Façade M.N.O.P.Q.* (*Die Fassade: M.N.O.P.Q.*), the story of five characters travelling from Czechoslovakia to Siberia is a reflection of her nation's fate after the Soviet occupation in 1968. Katie Trumpener (153) has referred to it as an example of 'postcolonial writing' that shows how 'Czech writing and culture have been marked by a succession of empires'. The first chapters of *The Façade* portray four artists, all loosely based on real-life opponents of the normalisation regime, who are restoring the façade of a castle. The detailed descriptions of the *sgraffiti* (decorations) on the façade are balanced with scenes from the living conditions, conversations and pastimes of the artists. While these descriptions might be incomprehensible to Western readers (as well as banal to Czech readers) they show

Moníková's purposeful use of German, pushing it to describe a reality that is intimately tied to the Czech language and the cultural context of the normalisation period. The artists are later joined by a young archivist named Nordanc from Luxembourg, who had moved to Prague with a Czech lover in 1968, but decided to stay after the invasion, even after his lover went into exile. Doubly marginalised as the only non-Czech and only gay man in the group, Nordanc identifies closely with the student martyr Jan Palach, and like Moníková in real life, he was in a cinema on Wenceslas Square when Palach set himself on fire just metres away in protest of the Soviet occupation.

In Part Two of the novel, Nordanc joins the four Czechs on a picturesque journey across Siberia which brings them into contact with other oppressed groups, including a possibly imaginary group of magical women. On board the Trans-Siberian Railway, Nordanc chats with four Russian sailors from Vladivostok about the miniscule Czech navy, and one of them tells him: 'It doesn't matter [...]. We'll defend you.' The Luxembourger's 'attention is diverted from those narrow hips' and he replies: 'That's what I'm afraid of.' (Moníková: 351–52) While Moníková uses Nordanc to satirise West European idealisation of Eastern Bloc suffering, she also demonstrates Palach's function as an icon of resistance throughout the normalisation period (see Sabatos 2009: 204–205). In January 1989, authorities prevented representatives of the dissident movement Charter 77 (including future president Václav Havel) from delivering a speech on Wenceslas Square to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Palach's death. This event prefigured the peaceful Velvet Revolution the following November, the event which provided a victorious conclusion to the moral complexities of the normalisation period and reopened the Czech literary scene to writers, such as Kundera and Moníková, who for decades had only been able to publish in exile.

Most of the Czech literary works translated into English in the 1970s and 1980s came from independent exile or dissident writers, while very little Slovak literature appeared in translation, partly because the underground literary movement in Slovakia was smaller and more isolated. Yet during the years of normalisation, the limited distribution of Slovak literature worked to its advantage, since Slovak writers were allowed a certain degree of creative freedom denied to their Czech counterparts, at least in the late 1980s. Pavel Vilikovský's 1989 novel *Ever Green Is...* (*Večne je zelený*) treats Slovak nationalism with the same irony that is present in Moníková's portrayal of Czech identity. The novel, written in the early 1970s but published only months before the fall of the Communist regime, does not directly refer to the political atmosphere of the normalisation period, but parodies the Slovak obsession with identity through its narrator, an aging spy, who recounts his adventures to an unknown listener but leaves each story unfinished before moving on to the next. Vilikovský's postmodern approach is thus characterised by both intertextuality and incompleteness. The title of the novel, a parody of Goethe's *Faust*, appears at the very end: 'it still applies [...] that gray is theory, and ever green is [...] the horse of life!' (Vilikovsky: 111)⁴

Vilikovský draws on the uniqueness of the Slovak experience, as a minority within a small nation, to find the possibility of resistance to linguistic and ideological conformity. In the final chapters of *Ever Green Is...*, he satirises the misunderstandings between Czechs and Slovaks after the establishment of a common state (see Sabatos 2003: 184–88). His concern with language and his use of intertextuality, as well as his awareness of the close connection between politics and sexuality, are recognisably postmodern elements. Timothy Beasley-Murray suggests that Vilikovský's work marks the beginning

⁴ The original line from *Faust*, Part 1, is: 'All theory, my dear boy, is gray, / And green the golden tree of life.' (Goethe: 70)

of a new theoretical orientation in Slovak fiction, an orientation which has dominated the generation of fiction writers since 1989 and in which the use of 'literary heteroglossia through intertextual play with other languages is the embracing of a notion of Slovakia, tinged with Czechoslovak-nostalgia, tolerant toward its Hungarians and other minorities' (Beasley-Murray: 51). This concept of Slovak identity reflects a Central European orientation rather than a narrowly-focused national one; it is a direct reaction to the narrowly nationalistic rhetoric used by Vladimír Mečiar's regime in the first years of Slovak independence. It is not surprising that the inspiration for this playful conception of the nation came from a work first conceived in the most repressive years of Communist normalisation.

Although Vilikovský emerged in 1989 as the leading voice in contemporary Slovak prose, he did not publish another first full-length novel until over a decade later; this was the 2001 book *The Last Horse of Pompeii* (*Posledný kôň Pompejí*). In some ways this is one of his most autobiographical works: it concerns a Slovak student's visit to London on a research fellowship in the early 1970s. His British academic advisor (whom he nicknames 'Professor Okey-Dokey') asks him to write on the so-called Slavic sensitivity in the work of Joseph Conrad. The narrator's scepticism towards this concept is reminiscent of Kundera's essay 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', in which the Czech novelist points out that Conrad (born of Polish origin under Russian rule in today's Ukraine) hated the term *Slavic soul*. Early in the novel, the narrator meets the Englishman Mac, who asks him about the solitude of his existence in London. Indeed, other than Mac and Professor Okey-Dokey, the narrator's solitude is broken largely by letters from home and the newspapers he reads: each chapter begins with excerpts from the letters and accounts of various events from the newspapers.

At the end of the novel, the narrator returns home, having rejected the possibility of a life in exile, yet this does not indicate an acceptance of political normalisation. As Peter Darovec has stated, 'Pavel Vilikovský remained one of the few Slovak prose writers' of the Communist era 'in whom we do not find, in any work from any period, any expression of conformity toward totalitarian ideology' (Darovec: 32).

Vilikovský's satirical perspective on Central Europe has been shaped by the unique geographic and cultural situation of Bratislava, at the so-called border between the East and the West. In his 1986 book *Danube (Danubio)*, which lies between literary criticism, cultural history and travelogue, Magris has described the Slovak capital as 'one of the "hearts" of Mitteleuropa, with layer upon layer of centuries forever present, unresolved conflicts and lacerations, unhealed wounds and unreconciled contradictions' (Magris: 220). Visiting in the mid-1980s, he observes that since 1968 'the splendid city of Prague has given an impression of being under the spell of neglect and death, while Bratislava, in spite of everything, is sanguine and cheerful, a vital world in an expansive phase, looking not to the melancholy of the past, but to growth and the future' (Magris: 226). Magris notes that the changes made by the normalisation regime 'have given the Slovaks some measure of satisfaction and compensation, in comparison with the desert created among the Czechs and in Czech literature', concluding: 'If Czech literature has been thrown out of office, and now survives only amongst exiles, [...] Slovak literature today has its own effective organic unity, even when it clamours for a new "epic" and a new positivity, a political and social function of collaboration rather than of opposition.' (Magris: 232) Vilikovský's *Ever Green Is...* was still unpublished at that time, but it epitomises this liveliness in Slovak literature under late normalisation.

In 2013, the Vilenica Prize was given to Topol, whose 1994 novel *City Sister Silver* (*Sestra*) was widely considered the first major work of Czech prose after the Velvet Revolution. While mostly depicting the first years of the post-Communist transition, the novel begins with the events of 1989, particularly the flow of East Germans seeking asylum in Prague's West German Embassy. More importantly, like Vilikovský, Topol's inventive use of language is a reactive against the stifling conformity of normalisation-era Czech society. As Rajendra Chitnis has suggested,

Topol attempts in effect to re-create Czech, mixing registers, dialects and languages, suggesting, however, that the process will never be completed, that language, like life, can never be mastered, but will always surprise and undermine those who possess it. Through this activity, the writer in fact serves his tribe, those who speak his language, by preventing them from becoming too embedded in their present existence and preparing them for the 'snares and traps' ahead. (Chitnis: 113)

In his later novels, Topol examines earlier periods, including 1968, with the same sensitivity towards the manipulation of language. *Gargling with Tar* (*Kloktat dehet* [2005]) portrays the period of the Soviet occupation from the perspective of a young boy named Ilya living in an orphanage: 'It was a Czech home for foreign kids, neglected kids, bad kids [...]. Some boys spoke their own unintelligible language, though the nuns didn't allow it. You had to gargle tar for that. Any foreign words were washed away from their throats with bubbles of pain, then the boys were topped up with Czech.' (Topol: 5) Like Mircea Cărtărescu, the 2011 Vilenica laureate with whom he might be productively compared, Topol's prose is intensely poetic, perhaps reflecting his artistic coming

of age in the 1980s, when poetry still had a relatively wide readership for its ability to convey hidden meanings despite censorship.

Although Kundera repudiated his youthful poetry—and young poets in general—in his 1969 novel *Life is Elsewhere* (*Život je jinde*), and nearly all of his essays focus on fiction, he begins his well-known essay on Kafka, ‘*Quelque part la-derrriere*’ (‘Somewhere Behind’), which appears in *The Art of the Novel*, by quoting a poem from his fellow Moravian Jan Skácel, the 1989 Vilenica laureate: ‘Poets don’t invent poems/ The poem is somewhere behind/ It’s been there for a long time/ The poet merely discovers it.’ (Kundera 1988: 99) In this piece, Kundera rejects the simplistic Western interpretation of Franz Kafka’s novels as a critique of either totalitarian or capitalist societies, reflecting the Cold War division of Europe:

How is it possible that in Prague Kafka’s novels merge with real life while in Paris the same novels are read as the hermetic expression of an author’s entirely subjective world? [...] Totalitarian states [...] have brought out the close relationship between Kafka’s novels and real life. But if in the West people are unable to see this relationship, it is not only because the society we call democratic is less Kafkan than that of today’s Prague. It is also, it seems to me, because over here, the sense of the real is inexorably being lost. (Kundera 1988: 107)

Returning to Skácel, Kundera concludes: ‘If “the poem” is already there, then it would be illogical to impute to the poet the gift of *foresight*; no, he “only discovers” a human possibility [...] that History will in its turn discover one day.’ (Kundera 1988: 116) Thirty years after the revolutions which ended the normalisation period in Czechoslovakia along with the other Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the region displayed

genuine progress towards democratic freedoms and individual rights, as uneven and incomplete as this development may have been. Yet only a few months after the anniversaries of 1989, History seems to be in the process of discovering a new 'human possibility' whose long-term results will profoundly change 'the sense of the real' as we have known it since the beginning of the modern age, and in which the hard-won unity of European society has once again been overshadowed by national interests. ♡

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Povzetek

Obdobje med praško pomladjo in zasedbo Češkoslovaške iz leta 1968 ter žametno revolucijo iz leta 1989 je na Češkoslovaškem (kjer je bilo znano pod evfemizmom *normalizacija*) sicer zaznamovala represija, a je med drugim prineslo večje zanimanje za češko literaturo kakor katero koli prejšnje ali poznejše obdobje. Čeprav gre mednarodni preboj češke književnosti pripisati eni sami knjigi, namreč v eksilu objavljenemu romanu Milana Kundera *Neznosna lahkost bivanja* (1984), je »normalizacija« povzročila vzpon disidentskega gibanja, ki je sodelovalo pri odpravi hladnovojne delitve Evrope. Kunderi so slavo v osemdesetih letih zagotovili ne le romani, pač pa tudi eseji, v katerih je pisec kritiziral hladnovojno Evropo tako z Vzhoda kakor z Zahoda in oživiljal pojem Srednje Evrope. Kundera je bil eden od treh čeških dobitnikov slovenske literarne nagrade vilenica v prvih osmih letih njenega obstoja; ostala lavreata sta bila pesnik Jan Skácel in češko-nemška avtorica Libuše Moníková. Leta 1997 je vilenico prejel Pavel Vilikovský, edini slovaški lavreat doslej, odtlej pa češki in slovaški pisci niso prejeli te nagrade vse do leta 2015, ko jo je prejel Jáchym Topol. V tej razpravi so omenjeni češki in slovaški pisci in piska (Milan Kundera, Libuše Moníková, Pavel Vilikovský in Jáchym Topol) obravnavani kot romanopisci in kritiki zadnjega obdobja socializma, ki so reflektirali zgodovinsko izkustvo neke regije majhnih narodov, obdane s svetovnimi velesilami.

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**‘In thousands of poems
you seek a worldwide
retrospective of crime
and death’: Ethical,
Activist and Intellectual
Rigour in Jure Detela**

»U hiljadu pesama tražiš
svetsku retrospektivu zločina
i smrti«: etička, aktivistička
i misaona oštrina Jureta Detele

The article presents the transformative potentials of Jure Detela's political thought on the basis of the texts that emerged from his social activism.

In the period of the student movement, Detela established himself on the political left; his initial works are marked by a socialist political perspective, and later he became receptive to the political ideas of anarchism. In the 1980s, Detela was the first in the Slovenian public sphere to criticise imprisonment as the predominant mode of punishment and to demand the abolition of the death penalty. He developed arguments against the death penalty on the basis of an understanding of the interrelatedness of personal and structural violence. In the complex context of the disintegration of the Yugoslav socialist system and the accompanying socio-political changes, Detela began to conceive the Pacifist Alliance social movement. His concept of pacifism is very close to A. J. Muste's concept of revolutionary pacifism; in both cases, pacifism is intertwined with justice—Detela disdained the search for peace without it.

JURE DETELA, ACTIVISM, SOCIALISM,
ANARCHISM, PACIFISM

U radu su, na osnovi Detelinih tekstova baziranih na društvenom aktivizmu, prikazani transformativni potencijali njegove političke misli. U periodu studentskog pokreta Jure Detela profilisao se u političkoj levici; početke njegovog delovanja karakteriše socijalistička politička perspektiva, dok je kasnije postao odan političkoj ideji anarhizma. Osamdesetih godina 20. veka je na prostoru Slovenije plasirao kritiku zatvorskog sistema kao prevladavajućeg načina kažnjavanja i povezoao je s ciljevima za ukidanje smrtne kazne. Argumente protiv smrtne kazne predstavlja bazirajući se na razumevanju međusobne povezanosti ličnog i strukturnog nasilja i njihovog zajedničkog uticaja. U kompleksnom kontekstu raslojavanja jugoslovenskog socijalističkog sistema počeo je s osnivanjem pokreta Pacifistički savez. Detelin koncept pacifizma je vrlo blizak Mustijevom konceptu revolucionarnog pacifizma: i kod Detele je koncept pacifizma prepleten s pravdom – težnja ka odsustvu nasilja bez ultimativnog zahtevanja za pravdom za njega nije bila prihvatljiva.

JURE DETELA, AKTIVIZAM,
SOCIJALIZAM, ANARHIZAM, PACIFIZAM

1

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1

In this paper,¹ I will try to present the transformative potentials of Jure Detela's political thought on the basis of the texts that emerged from his social activism. 'In the context of events in Slovenian art in Detela's time,' Miklavž Komelj writes, 'his position was consistently singular, prominent, solitary—yet the spiritual shifts of the time were inscribed in it with seismographic precision' (Komelj 2011: 455). The complexity and differentiation of the levels of meaning of Detela's thought are established in such a way throughout his poems, essays, theoretical texts and fragmentary writings that all of these texts somehow correspond to each other. For Detela, poetry was not a 'manifestation of the external signs of poetry' embedded in a mystical, transcendental sphere, but a practice that abolishes 'segregation between the language of poets and other incoding practices' and enables the 'evocation of a consciousness of presence' (Detela 2011: 193). With ethical, activist and intellectual rigour, Detela continually critically reflected on his own poetic practices and evaluated the transformative potential of his poems, guided by a critical understanding of language and its representational powers. He understood 'the necessity of poetry as a critique of an existing language' as well as 'the necessity of criticism of existing poetry' (Komelj 2010: 6). Detela's commitment to nonviolence is associated with the recognition of a radically non-violent position where one does not defy violence but instead allows it to be confronted (see Komelj 2018b: 1710–11). It was only through the endurance of a consciousness of violence that, 'in thousands of poems [...] a worldly retrospective of crime and death' was revealed to him, as he wrote in *Pesem za Jureta Detelo* (A Poem for Jure Detela [Detela 2018: 177]).

Detela's social activism did not occur in isolation from his poetry; he expressed this deep connection when he described his poems as 'the clearest lines' of his life (Komelj 2005: 121). The point of connection is what he termed 'total confrontation' in his essay 'Kulturniški fevdalizem' (Cultural Feudalism [Detela 2005b: 10]). This initial inseparability, of course, does not imply that 'his poetic position could a priori serve him as an alibi for masking weak intellectual moves or vice versa' (Komelj 2005: 121). Detela rejected the illusion that social issues could be solved at the literary level; but because he understood literature as an integral part of the structure of society, a part which is directly linked to and intertwined with the real world, he dismissed as an illusion the idea that real social change is possible without a change in the symbolic system.²

2

Detela's activism spans the period of the student movement through to the dismantling of Yugoslavia, 'when it seemed that all the ideals of nonviolence that he dedicated his life to have collapsed' (Komelj 2011: 487). In order to trace Detela's social activism, I have examined his essays, letters, leaflets, programme guidelines and unpublished notes.³ I have also included the autobiographical text *Pod strašnimi očmi pontonskih mostov* (Under the Terrible Eyes of the Pontoon Bridges), which Detela wrote in 1984 and 1985.

Detela's entry into activism is thus marked by the period of the student movement, a time when he politically established himself on the left. At the time, he collaborated with the Trotskyist group of the New Left which was also associated with Jaša Zlobec, Mladen Dolar, Branko Gradišnik, Marko Uršič and others. In Detela's legacy, a number

2

In a theoretical reflection on his own poetry Detela even made a demand to deal with 'the violence inherent to the marking process as such' (Komelj 2018b: 1692).

3

Detela's legacy is archived in the manuscript department of the National and University Library (NUK) in Ljubljana under inventory number 14/2009. Comprising twenty-two folders, this legacy was edited by Miklavž Komelj, according to whom it shows Detela's 'way of creating as a wild eruption in which writing to him was following the most elementary inner desire' (Komelj 2018a: 10).

4 Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica Ljubljana, Zbirka rokopisov, redkih in starih tiskov. Zapuščina Jureta Detele 14/2009. Folder 11.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

of manuscripts from the early 1970s refer to this period,⁴ including a draft of the call to socialist-oriented student organisations and to the youth in capitalist countries. In these texts, which have a Marxist theoretical basis, Detela expresses an understanding of the importance and necessity of the student movement in Slovenia (and more broadly in Yugoslavia) on two axes.

On the first axis, he describes the student movement as a critique of the liberalisation of the economic system through the market reform of 1965, which, after the most stable and successful period of Yugoslav economic history, marked by self-managed socialism, saw the beginning of a structural turn in economic and social development. Detela points out, in particular, the rise in social inequality that originated from liberal market tendencies, and mentions the following anti-socialist effects of the reform: the lack of scholarships; material hardship of students resulting from higher costs of rent, transportation and food (Detela also notes that food in faculty restaurants was becoming both scarce and falling in quality); more difficult conditions for enrolment into university and consequently a decline in students of working class and rural background; high levels of graduate unemployment and economic emigration. 'In the name of adapting economic reforms,' he writes, 'many of the social benefits we have once enjoyed are at stake.'⁵

On the second axis, Detela shows an understanding of the need for a global anti-capitalist movement. In several manuscripts, he expresses his commitment to building a Revolutionary Youth International, a collective guided by solidarity between the socialist-oriented youth of both capitalist and socialist countries on the basis of an anti-imperialist internationalism devoted to the struggle 'for the united socialist states of Europe'.⁶ These ideas were based on the Marxist assumption

of the necessity of organising the political power of the working class. Detela metaphorically calls the youth 'the flame of revolution'; however, 'youth is not the star guide of the revolution', as he writes, and needs to connect with the working class. Individual pages bear the following slogans: '*Down with imperialism, down with bureaucracy!*'; '*Viva the world socialist revolution!*'; '*Viva the world unity of the proletariat and the youth!*'⁷

7
Ibid.

8
Ibid.

9
Zakaj ne bom
sodeloval pri zasedbi
Aškerčeve. Narodna
in univerzitetna
knjižnica Ljubljana,
Zbirka rokopisov,
redkih in starih tiskov.
Zapuščina Jureta De-
tele 14/2009. Folder 11.

In the context of the student movement, it is also interesting to note that Detela did not participate in the occupation of Aškerčeva Street in 1971, which demanded an end to the problem of traffic noise on the street, particularly the section by the building of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana. He did, however, produce the leaflet entitled *Zakaj ne bom sodeloval pri zasedbi Aškerčeve* (Why I Will Not Participate in the Occupation of Aškerčeva),⁸ in which he conveyed the message that he did not support student initiatives with partial, apolitical goals. He did not regard the occupation of Aškerčeva as an integral part of the student movement, as he argued that the nature of student campaigns should be confined to issues that directly affect students, that is, study conditions and the possibility of meeting student needs within the existing social framework. His assessment of the action was that, 'despite the protests, the students essentially agreed to the status quo'.⁹

The 1970s and 1980s brought changes in the socio-economic situation in Yugoslavia triggered by the geo-strategic and neo-imperialist interests of the Western powers in the Balkans. Due to the economic reforms sponsored by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, accompanied by debt restructuring agreements with the United States and other international creditors, Yugoslavia descended into an economic crisis that threatened its political stability. So-called structural reforms were accompanied by the piecemeal dismantling of the

Yugoslav welfare state with all the predictable social consequences (see Chossudovsky: 257–77) At that time, Detela no longer recognised the concept of socialism as an emancipatory force, as he had in the early 1970s, and in his post-student movement texts, there are very few mentions of socialism. However, it should also be noted that he never renounced his early period. In 1982, for example, he published an open letter in the journal *Nova revija* in which he wrote the following about the New Left: ‘Assuming that the term denotes, inter alia, the texts published in *Tribuna* from 1970 to 1972, and those protests in Paris and Belgrade that reached a peak in spring 1968, I must say that I still fully agree with 95 percent of these texts and the vast majority of demands made by the protesters.’ (Detela 1982: 467)

3

In the eyes of the authorities, Detela was perceived as a far-left sympathiser with terrorism who attacks the foundations of socialist society. As he notes in his autobiography, in which he describes his confrontations with the police between 1974 and 1982, this was partly due to his fondness for anarchism and individual actions such as his commemoration of the killed members of the Red Army Faction, which he organised in 1977 at the Zvezda park in Ljubljana. In the same year, Detela (2018: 683) referred to their killing, which took place in the German prison of Stannheim, in following lines: ‘Tragika ni več izum. / Svet je definiran / s simboli smrti.’ (‘The tragic is no longer an invention. / The world is defined / by the symbols of death.’) It was the very political nature of Detela’s demand for non-violence that allowed him to recognise the actions of the Red Army Faction as a direct product of West German violence, leaving no room for moralising about

individual acts of violence without reflecting on the violence of state structures. In the closing pages of his autobiography, he commented on his actions as follows:

Even when I held the commemoration, it was quite clear to me that I would never use the terrorist methods used by certain German anarchist factions; needless to say, the accusations with which the authorities, judges and numerous journalists reject terrorist anarchists are completely wrong because they despise anarchist social criticism and ignore the violence of the authorities against anarchists; they ignore the social situation in which urban guerrillas are produced.
(Detela 1988: 47)

In the title of this autobiography, *Pod strašnimi očmi pontonskih mostov*, Detela makes an intertextual link to Rimbaud's poem *The Drunken Boat* (*Le Bateau Ivre*) and its final verse: 'Nor swim past prison hulks' hateful eyes' ('Ni nager sous les yeux horribles des pontons' [Rimbaud: 102, 103]). This, as Miklavž Komelj points out (2011: 476), is extremely important as it protects Detela's text from possible ideological manipulations that would render it a banal accusation of the so-called totalitarianism of Yugoslav socialism. Although the work presents a critique of institutionalised coercive systems, this is not a critique that would stem from an anti-socialist position. When Detela writes that it is 'pointless to fight against people as individuals; it only makes sense to combat the evil we recognise in global dimensions' (Detela 1988: 3), he removes the critique of violence from a localised context. At the same time, he introduces a distinction between two levels of violence, the personal and the structural (for which see Galtung), in order to confront the reader with the conditions in which violence functions as a norm. A quote from

10

Among other things, Detela participated in the short-term occupation of a house on Erjavčeva Street in Ljubljana, which can be considered as the first squat in Ljubljana (see Komelj 2005: 125). Detela also participated in a literary evening in the squat.

11

The opening of the cages at the zoo was interpreted by Detela in the text *Sporočilo* (Message), published in the journal *Tribuna* in 1975, as a 'complete metaphor': 'This act made the text written on the day I decided to act meaningful. In this text, I consider the opening of animal cages as a complete metaphor, a complete symbol that applies to the here and to those outside, which we usually attribute to animals and which I consider unjust. If the complete metaphor is seen from both sides, even from the side of the animals, then the position outside for the animals is deleted.' (Detela 1975a: 8) With this act, Detela realised a metaphor used by Kazimir Malevich in 1915 (see Komelj 2018b: 1684).

The Drunken Boat indicates that Detela in part intentionally incited confrontation with the police in order to provoke mechanisms of violence.

In *Pod strašnimi očmi pontonskih mostov*, anarchist ideas related to the practices of revolutionary daily life, such as squatting,¹⁰ activist interventions, passive resistance and civil disobedience, are also expressed. This is how Detela describes part of a conversation with a police officer: 'The policeman also asked me if I would be willing to break the law if I thought that the law was cruel and unjust. I replied that ultimately I would be prepared to do that and that I once broke into the Ljubljana Zoo and opened a few cages to allow captured animals to escape.' (Detela 1988: 20)¹¹

4

Detela was the first in the Slovenian public sphere to criticise imprisonment as the predominant mode of punishment and to demand the abolition of the death penalty.¹² He regarded prison as a measure which, by perpetuating the idea of punishment, merely maintains the cycle of violence. For example, he publicly opposed the imprisonment of Yugoslav writers for their nationalism; he rejected the assumption that prison could solve social problems, such as the problem of nationalism, and considered prison as a form of punishment that violated the fundamental principles of human rights. In the autumn of 1983, he even resigned from the Slovenian Writers' Association because its representatives refused to express solidarity with incarcerated writers. In a letter to the board of directors of the Slovene Writers' Association, which he also published in the journal *Nova revija*, he stated that it is 'anachronistic if a writer denies solidarity with anyone incarcerated; prisons should be abolished, the same as the death penalty'; moreover, '[t]hose who deny solidarity

with those incarcerated for nationalism because they are afraid of being considered a nationalist are cowards' (Detela 1983: 2204). In the same year, he was the first signatory of the initiative to the delegates of the Federal Assembly to abolish the death penalty (other initial signatories included Alenka Puhar, Božidar Slapšak, Marko Uršič and Jaša Zlobec).¹³

This marked the beginning of an all-Yugoslav movement against the death penalty, in which Detela was extremely active over the next few years. He published the first text against the death penalty in 1975 in *Tribuna*, entitled 'Teze o temeljih preventivne učinkovitosti smrtno kazni' (Theses on the Foundations of the Preventive Effectiveness of the Death Penalty), where he critically reflected on two of its social functions: deterrent and retribution. He articulated seven theses, of which the thesis that '[t]he assertion about the necessity of the death penalty [...] is an assertion of the need for the fear of death' should be singled out (Detela 1975b: 2). He regarded the movement for the abolition of the death penalty as 'an inevitable contribution to a more responsible logic that must undo the logic of fear' (Detela 1984a: 61). He published several essays on the death penalty between 1984 and 1985 in *Problemi* (see Detela 1984a, 1984b, 1984c, 1985) and *Nova revija* (see Detela 1984d).

It is in these texts that Detela's concept of violence is perhaps most clearly articulated.¹⁴ He developed arguments against the death penalty¹⁵ on the basis

12 This link has recently been recognised as still relevant, especially in the American abolitionist movement; the discourse on the death penalty in the American context is necessarily linked with confronting the realities of the prison system and (racial) oppression. More recently, many researchers in various scientific disciplines have examined the interconnected relationship between the prison-industrial complex and the practice of the death penalty (see, e.g., Adelsberg et al. and Davis).

13 Peticija proti smrtni kazni. Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica Ljubljana, Zbirka rokopisov, redkih in starih tiskov. Zapuščina Jureta Detele 14/2009. Folder 11.

14 In this article, I do not address Detela's reflection of symbolic violence, which, at the level of poetry, is reflected in his critique of metaphor and has already been examined by several commentators (see, e.g., Jovanovski, Komelj 2005, Komelj 2011, Komelj 2018b, Komelj 2020 and Vičar).

15 Fifteen years after Detela presented his arguments against the death penalty in the then-Yugoslav space, Jacques Derrida began to conduct a two-year seminar on the death penalty (1999–2001) in Paris as part of the Questions de responsabilité (Questions of Responsibility) research programme. Derrida's discourse on the death penalty is abolitionist like Detela's, but Derrida's starting point was the critique of sovereign state power. By deconstructing the theologico-political logic of sovereignty, Derrida interrogated the authority that the state holds over life and death (see Derrida). In a dialogue with Elisabeth Roudinesco, Derrida critically reflected on the philosophical discourse on the death penalty and claimed that in the Western philosophical tradition no one has elaborated a consistent discourse against the death penalty (see Derrida and Roudinesco: 146).

16
 Peticija proti smrtni
 kazni. Narodna in uni-
 verzitetna knjižnica
 Ljubljana, Zbirka
 rokopisov, redkih
 in starih tiskov. Za-
 puščina Jureta Detele
 14/2009. Folder 11.

of an understanding of the interrelatedness between personal and structural violence. He not only associated violent acts on the part of the individual with their deliberation, but also argued that the responsibility for violence is shared. '[I]f a person stabs another person with a knife,' he writes in an essay entitled 'O smrtni kazni' (On the Death Penalty), 'we are inclined to mistakenly believe that the only cause of this act is concentrated solely in the killer, whom death penalty advocates naturally see as being completely separated from the world' (Detela 1984a: 60). Detela was convinced that directing attention at the individual perpetrator of violence, which he viewed as one of the social functions of the death penalty, allows structural violence to remain unnoticed; it remains unrecognisable as violence and consequently escapes condemnation. Detela expressed the recognition of the two levels of violence not on the terminological level but rather on the conceptual level, in terms of understanding the continuity between them. He clearly defined structural violence when he stated that it is 'ingrained into many social and productive structures' (Detela 2005a: 19), and he recognised the mechanisms of structural violence in the death penalty itself. The convict, according to Detela, did not harm any of the people involved in his execution, from the prosecutor to the executor—the basis of their actions are the structural expectations that they fulfil according to their social roles (Detela 1984a: 60).

In his activist efforts to abolish the death penalty in Yugoslavia, Detela shared the conviction that 'the death penalty is in complete contradiction with the humanistic vision of a socialist society',¹⁶ but the abolition of the death penalty in Yugoslavia was for him just a springboard to the understanding that the global abolition of the death penalty cannot be considered without simultaneously

addressing the dynamics of the capitalist world-economy. He regarded the global abolition of the death penalty as an integral part of the abolition of 'reciprocal execution and oppression on a global scale' (Detela 1984a: 62); within this context, he also considered the consequences of capitalist exploitation in countries that the West transforms into so many members of the third world. In terms of understanding 'structural violence as *social injustice*' (Galtung: 171), Detela argues that 'virtually every European is [...] entangled in a wide variety of oppressive mechanisms' (Detela 1984a: 61). Detela's understanding of the link between personal and structural violence is based on the identification of the structural elements within personal violence and the personal elements within structural violence, and his belief that 'the death penalty prevents us from finding our share of causes of world violence within ourselves' (Detela 1984a: 61) also derives from this understanding. Detela radically confronted the violence within himself when, in the poem *Pesem za Jureta Detelo*, he called himself a murderer: 'Morilec!' (Detela 2018: 176). According to Detela, the dividing line between 'the awareness of the sanctity of life and the murderous nature' does not occur between the perpetrators of the crime and the innocent, but within every individual (Detela 1984a: 61).

Therefore, for Detela there was no a priori non-violent position; such a position is only possible through enduring the awareness of violence within oneself. This is why Detela saw the possibility of addressing levels of violence in society in a 'total confrontation' (Detela 2005b: 10). When he announced that he would give birth to a 'new, terrible beauty', this beauty is not only '[w]ithout aggression' and '[w]ithout murders', but also '[w]ithout illusions of innocence' (Detela 2018: 749).

17

Detela's co-signatories of the proposition were Franjo Francič, Ignac Kalin, Jani Osojnik and Janez Tomaž Marolt.

5

In the complex context of the disintegration of the Yugoslav socialist system and the accompanying socio-political changes, Detela began to conceive the Pacifist Alliance. This was the period when the programme of economic collapse, which began in 1989, put the final nail in the coffin of the federal financial system and federal political institutions; policies of the International Monetary Fund had paralysed the ability of the government to finance its own economic and social programmes. The so-called structural adjustment programmes, which were part of the Western financial community's policies, had a significant political motivation: the purpose of these adjustment reforms was to dismantle the socialist system and move the national economic system in a neoliberal direction (see Chossudovsky: 259–61 and Gibbs: 16–60). However, the establishment of the Pacifist Alliance was not a direct response to the neoliberal order that was being put forward; nor do we have any data that would imply that Detela knew the broader international context of economic policy and the collective strategic interests of the US and other Western powers in the Balkans. In the programme guidelines of the Pacifist Alliance, published in *Nova revija* in 1990 under the title 'Predlog za delovno usmeritev pacifističnih zaveznikov' (The Proposal for the Working Orientation of the Pacifist Alliance),¹⁷ Detela (1990a) did not produce any new political guidelines, but connected a number of political starting points that he had already articulated several times. The programme consists of thirty-four points; as an overview, the Pacifist Alliance was conceived as an anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-nationalist, anti-speciesist, anti-militaristic, pacifist movement. It should be emphasised that Detela's concept of pacifism is not apolitical—it does not detract from thinking the

modern world-system—but is very close to what the pacifist thinker and social activist A. J. Muste discussed as revolutionary pacifism (see Muste). For Detela, too, pacifism and justice were intertwined concepts; he disdained the search for peace without justice. '[T]he field for my revolution' (Detela 2011: 113) was the field from which his pacifism grew. He was aware that, because of their radical nature, the guidelines of the Pacific Alliance could not become ethically or politically binding for the majority of the Slovenian population, so he initially foresaw connections at the international level, specifically with 'other political and ecological groups' (Detela 1990b: 1371) organised around egalitarian principles.¹⁸ Along with the programme guidelines, Detela published the text 'Nekaj misli ob predlogu za delovno usmeritev pacifističnih zaveznikov' (A Few Thoughts on the Proposal for the Working Orientation of the Pacific Alliance), in which he justified the need for a 'radical minority' for structuring the political and ecological consciousness of the majority (Detela 1990b). If I try to think of both texts and draw out the starting points that underpin this new emancipatory orientation, which is still highly relevant today, three elements stand out.

First, Detela spoke of a need to create a new ecological consciousness that marks a shift from the conception of the so-called balance of nature to the rights of every living being to life and freedom of movement, based on the connection between a critique of colonialism, imperialism and anthropocentrism. As Komelj states (2011: 465), in a 1981 notebook, Detela drew a dividing line between the left and the right in ecology: '[T]he right presupposes the a priori harmony of nature. The left sets out the harmony between living beings as a goal that all beings aspire to but has never been realised.' For Detela, the critique of the a priori natural balance was the basis for a harmonious relationship between beings, as he was convinced that this notion 'does not allow for a turn

18

He specifically referred to the animal liberation movements such as the Lega per i diritti degli animali and the anarchist Animal Liberation Front, which was known primarily for its methods of direct action (see Detela 1990a: 1367).

19
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica Ljubljana, Zbirka rokopisov, redkih in starih tiskov. Zapuščina Jureta Detela 14/2009. Folder 11.

20
Ibid.

21
In 1989, Detela sent a letter to the Green League of Italy, expressing solidarity with their demands for a ban on hunting, the abolition of zoos and a ban on animal testing, and called for a more complex commitment to ending animal oppression, the criticism of the animal-industrial complex, in particular. In the same letter, he called Yugoslav animal farms and animal transport a 'cosmic shame'. (Pismo Zeleni ligi Italije. Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica Ljubljana, Zbirka rokopisov, redkih in starih tiskov. Zapuščina Jureta Detela 14/2009. Folder 11.)

in the cultural and production relations that would be able to solve what ecologists refer to with the problematic word “nature”.¹⁹ Commitment to values proclaimed by dominant ecological movements—that is, concern for the quality of human life and health, reduction of air pollution, protection of natural resources, and so on—was for Detela insufficient, as these are the values that are at least seemingly recognised by the governing establishment.²⁰ Detela (1990b: 1369–70) called on ecologists to establish a new value system in which the rights of the individual beings that constitute nature would find their place.

Second, Detela fought for the extension of the concept of non-violence to all conscious beings, as resistance to violence against humans and resistance to violence against animals belong to the same endeavour. Even before he wrote the programme guidelines for the Pacifist Alliance, Detela had attempted to destabilise the speciesist basis of the moral distinction between violence against humans and violence against animals several times, for example in the following statement: ‘I do not understand why we cannot look at violence against humans and violence against animals from the same perspective.’ (Detela 2011: 203) Detela advocated for a radical transformation of the human relationship towards animals and was the first in the Slovenian and wider Yugoslav public space to introduce an awareness of violence against animals as a political problem. In one of his essays on poetry, he wrote: ‘[T]hose who do not see the problem of deer as a political problem have no idea what ecological movements are all about—are they about an environment conceived as possession, or are they about the welfare of every animal?’ (Detela 2005a: 19–20) In ‘Predlog za delovno usmeritev pacifističnih zaveznikov’ several points relate to examples of structural violence against animals (eating meat, wearing fur, hunting, zoos, circuses, animal experiments),²¹ while

point eighteen contains the explicit requirement for a legal animal right to life, freedom of movement and unspoiled habitat (see Detela 1990a: 1366–67).

Finally, Detela wanted to spread awareness of the necessity of the existence of a radical minority committed to the ethics of non-violence. Detela was convinced that only a radical minority engaging in positions of nonviolence in the general public can form an awareness of the values which enable the formation of truly consistent and ethically responsible pacifist and ecological programmes. According to Detela, a radical minority also enables a sharpening of the ethical and ecological awareness of individuals and encourages them to challenge existing social and ecological policies, as well as structuring the 'broad and complex awareness' of the ways of addressing structural violence. The existence of a radical minority is also necessary if one wishes to distinguish between political and apolitical ecological movements; and it also provides a critique of the biodiversity programmes that grant genetic capital priority over the protection of individual beings. (See Detela 1990b: 1369–71) Detela also vociferously rejected compromises; he was convinced that the radical minority must remain a minority in order not to compromise its own work and values. Detela (2018: 146) expressed the uncompromising nature of his anti-speciesist position, for example, in the poem *Nekemu hermetistu, za eksperiment z zajci* (To a Hermetist, for the Experiment with Rabbits): 'Nobenih pogodb za zajce' ('No contracts for rabbits').

6

In conclusion I want to stress the difficulty of positioning Detela politically. At the beginning of his activism, he established himself on the

political left; this initial period was marked by a socialist political perspective, although he later became receptive to the political ideas of anarchism. But despite his notebook entry from 1990 according to which ‘the sense of the universality of rights is fundamentally anarchist’ (quoted in Komelj 2011: 487) it seems that the notion of anarchism is both too narrow and too loose to grasp the whole expanse of Detela’s thought. Detela himself, too, constantly avoided labelling. He expressed his non-acceptance of signifiers in a somewhat humorous way when he wrote the following in his notebook from 1982 to describe himself: ‘psycholamarkist-orphic internationalist-anarcho-communist nirvanist’ (Detela 2018: 948). The signifier that best captures his position is most likely—*singular*. ♡

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Povzetek

Članek skuša na osnovi tekstov Jureta Detele, ki izhajajo iz polja družbenega aktivizma, prikazati transformativne potenciale njegove politične misli. Detelov vstop v aktivizem označuje obdobje študentskega gibanja, ko se je povezal s trockistično skupino nove levice. V besedilih iz zupuščine, ki se nanašajo na to obdobje, Detela izraža razumevanje pomena in nujnosti študentskega gibanja v Sloveniji (in tudi širše v Jugoslaviji) na dveh oseh: na prvi osi študentsko gibanje pojmuje kot kritiko liberalizacije ekonomskega sistema z vpeljavo tržne reforme v letu 1965; na drugi osi kaže razumevanje potrebe po globalnem protikapitalističnem gibanju.

V sedemdesetih letih 20. stoletja je postal Detela dovzeten za politične ideje anarhizma. V tekstu *Pod strašnimi očmi pontonskih mostov* (1988), v katerem opisuje svoja soočanja s policijo, je izpričal tudi pojavnosti anarhističnih idej, vezanih na prakse revolucionarnega vsakdanjega življenja, kot so skvotanje, aktivistične intervencije, pasivni odpor in civilna nepokorščina. V tem avtobiografskem tekstu lahko prepoznavamo kritiko institucionaliziranih sistemov prisile, a velja poudariti, da to ni kritika, ki bi bila izrečena s protisocialistične pozicije, saj jo Detela izvzema iz lokaliziranega konteksta.

Detela je v slovenski prostor vpeljal kritiko obstoja zaporskega sistema kot prevladujočega načina kaznovanja in jo povezal s cilji za odpravo smrtnih kazni. Argumente proti smrtni kazni je razvijal na podlagi razumevanja medsebojne povezanosti med osebnim in strukturnim nasiljem ter njenega součinkovanja. Detela je bil prepričan, da usmerjanje pozornosti na posameznega izvajalca, izvajalko nasilja dopušča, da strukturno nasilje ostaja neopaženo ali komaj zaznavno: neprepoznano kot nasilje in kot takšno brez obsodbe. Mehanizme strukturnega nasilja pa je prepoznal prav v smrtni kazni.

V kompleksnem kontekstu razgradnje jugoslovanskega socialističnega sistema in spremljajočih družbeno-političnih sprememb je Detela začel snovati družbeno gibanje Pacifistična zaveza. Njegov koncept pacifizma je zelo blizu Mustejevemu konceptu revolucionarnega pacifizma: tudi pri Deteli je pacifizem prepleten s pravičnostjo – prizadevanje za nenasilje brez ultimativne pravičnostne zahteve zanj ni bilo sprejemljivo. Če skušamo izpostaviti izhodišča programskih smernic, ki kažejo novo emancipatorno usmeritev, ki bi lahko bila relevantna tudi danes, velja izpostaviti troje: 1) vzpostavitev nove ekološke zavesti, ki doseže premik od pojmovanja t. i. naravnega ravnovesja k pravicam vsakega živega bitja do življenja ter je utemeljena na povezavi kritike kolonializma, imperializma in antropocentrizma; 2) razširitev koncepta nenasilja na vsa zavedajoča se bitja; 3) vzpostavitev zavesti o nujnosti obstoja radikalne manjšine, ki je zavezana etiki nenasilja.

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