INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR THE
NEW BELGRADE URBAN STRUCTURE
IMPROVEMENT

Equipe N°51103

SERGE RENAUDIE  PIERRE GUILBAUD  HENRI LÉFÈBVRE
INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a world-wide phenomenon, in this the second half of the twentieth century, which Yugoslavia has not escaped.

The extension of cities has provoked upheaval in civilizations, the importance of which we have yet to measure.

Socialist countries, even with all their differences, have not been capable of avoiding this situation, nor of creating "The Socialist City".

In the capitalist world, the development of cities is unrestrained, poorly or not at all mastered, devastating and irreversible.

If it is true that the city has been a place of civilization, its rupture may annihilate this role. Or the urban may well be a space of dissociation of the society and the social (in a chaos, in a mass agitated by diverse movements). Or it will be a space of reappropriation (of daily life, of the social). If there is no absolute determinism but always (in biological life and in human time) possibilities, which are often opposed, a "choice" more or less conscious is made. The urban today and tomorrow? A sheaf of possibilities, the best and the worst. Perhaps the best here and the worst someplace else!

The "right to the city"? (droit à la ville?) This means and again, would say: not to allow the loss of the historic
heritage, not to allow the space to crumble, to restore the "center" as a place of creation, civilization.

The right to the city comes as a complement, not so much to the rights of man (like the right to education, to health, security, etc.), but to the rights of the citizen: who is not only a member of a "political community" whose conception remains indecisive and conflictual, but of a more precise grouping which poses multiple questions: the modern city, the urban. This right leads to active participation of the citizen-citadin in the control of the territory, and in its management, whose modalities remain to be specified. It leads also to the participation of the citizen-citadin in the social life linked to the urban; it proposes to forbid the dislocation of that urban culture, to prohibit the dispersion, not by piling the "inhabitants" and "users" one on top of another, but by inventing, in the domains and levels of the architectural, urbanistic, and territorial.

This right presupposes a transformation of society, according to a coherent project, responding to interrogations and theoretically (in the sense that it implies the practical moment) responding to the problems, and to the creations in the domains where art, knowledge (le connaitre), the daily and the global, interfere: architecture, for example, but on a larger scale: time and space.

In our researches, travels, and studies, we have obtained a critical knowledge (connaissance) of the cities in capitalist and socialist countries. We have seen everywhere, crazy cities (villes folles).

Our distended cities, our megalopolis - the modern urban - are to be deconstructed and reconstructed. An entire "historie" period would be necessary to undo and redo them.

Because of self-management, a place is sketched between the citizen and the citadin, and Yugoslavia is today perhaps one of the rare countries to be able to concretely pose the problematic of a New Urban.

This competition for the restructuration of Novi Beograd could take a part in the premises of this renaissance of the city.
The plannification of Novi Beograd has failed, both in its attempt at global coherence and in the political will to create a city.

The conceptual and morphological schematicism of the zoning and grid could lead only to failure, both social and urban.

What remains of the desire for ordered functionalism and summary purism...towers and bars of ominous dimension, lost in a deserted space where neither the public nor the intimate find their place.

Beyond this distressing scene, which is infinitely repeated in the suburbs and new-towns the world over, it must be said that such urban catastrophes originate, not in a diversion, deviation or bad interpretation of the theorems set out in Le Corbusier's Athen's Charter but, in the theorems themselves.

To authoritatively separate, disjoint and disarticulate its parts kills the city, as it would any other complex living organism.

In administrating a reglementation of mechanical functionalism, zoning has done nothing more than to prepare the death of the city.

The separation and isolation of normally linked activities engenders a sclerosis of each element, and the functionalism of the whole.

Little by little solitudes settle, like grains of sand in the urban tissue and restrict its flexibility.

Solitude of individuals, solitude of families, within the family, the group, the neighborhood, the apartment building, the office...solitude engenders inertia and when collective, weighs on the social life and movement of the community: it prevents solidarity and sociability and compromises the development of the individual and the collectivity.

The uprooting of populations since the 1950's and for certain countries well before, represents in Europe, whatever the economic and political system, an irreversible situation which no culture has been able to resolve or integrate.

The populations immigrated to the cities, having lost their village culture, have not succeeded in establishing another and thus find themselves in a position of rupture and loss of references to a time-space which eludes them; a time-space which in recent years has undergone, and will undergo, upheavals.

The survival of solidarities and communities in the immigration towards urban centers is progressively destroyed by the fragmentary life style engendered by the zoning of housing projects and undermined by solitude.

Old cities themselves, faced with this influx of conflicts, have lost their potentialities and assume nothing more than a role of nostalgia; they most often become historic centers, museums: zones of past and lost references.

Belgrad does not escape this evolution.

Productivism, standardisation, rationalism and zoning, searching order and profit-earning capacity, do not take into account the social cost of what they have produced.

It is impossible to content ourselves with a criticism of
the poverty of housing projects (grands ensembles). We must divulge and combat the functioning.

On the cold stage set of air currents, empty spaces and boxes, we must refill, recapture weight and place, anchor and reinvest this territory delivered to the winds and occupy the territory for the city.

The urban design of Novi Beograd does not succeed in edifying a city.

It is certain that the unfinished state of the urban tissue does not favorise this constitution but more profoundly, it is the type of layout itself which guarantees never to make a city of Novi Beograd.

Thus we can only rejoice that Novi Beograd is unfinished.

If utopia were allowed us, we would build on the flanks of the plateau and research a development of Novi Beograd towards the hills, hanging onto the slopes as the ancients knew how to do.

The bars and towers, progressively abandoned, would become the ruins of another time, a museum in memory of a former era where individuals were not entitled to be citizens in full measure.

But unfortunately we must be very realistic and consider the enlargement of Novi Beograd irreversible.

Before exposing our proposition for the development of Novi Beograd we will refute the two principle tendencies which animate city planners and architects: "Neo-Rationalism" and "Post-Modern Historicism".

1-Certain people maintain that the CIAM theory of zoning has been denatured and propose to reinforce it. We have shown above that the ill-fated aspect of zoning resides in the hypotheses of this very theory.

To continue this type of organization would be to reinforce each zone with facilities and to otherwise continue the road network and its hierarchies; in other words, to attempt to rationalize that which has "overflowed" in recent years to escape the effects of rationalism.

Order and order again in the hope of being able to predict and control everything.

Implant a few parks, a few playgrounds, augment the committees and commissions of control and verification...and little by little surrender to financial, political and historic imperatives...all those goods reasons which come from no one knows where but before which each must bow in the name of the Reason of the State.

And inevitably, the stacking and sectionning mechanism will begin working again.

Because zoning is not innocent; its method, its efficiency is the 'putting in order', an ordering which denies the importance of the aleatory and possibilities.

Zoning dreams of being able to stamp and shelve the world of movement and chance; city planning then sets down its regulations, laws and statistics.

Zoning proceeds, by the repetition of identical functions, from one level to another, from the macroscopic to the microscopic.
The rigid and redundant organization (of the forms and more importantly the systems) of the bars, towers, blocks, road systems...which constitute Novi Beograd assume that an "organizational message" be transmitted without deterioration of the parts in relation to the whole and vice versa.

The resistance of the population (inhabitants as well as visitors) to this redundant regrouping expresses an important loss of the "organizational message" and brings into question its efficiency. In addition, this resistance shows us that "active forces" other than those foreseen by the zoning, exist and organize themselves, sometimes even producing their own order which, becoming more and more active as opposed to the weight of the surroundings, enters into direct conflict with the zoning and its rigid order. This is then a crisis.

The conflictual situation in which all of the suburbs and town extensions, conceived on the basis of zoning, find themselves today is proof of the incapacity of such a system to evolve and integrate, in its evolution, modifications imposed by time.

The rigidity and organizational logic of zoning does not allow for the possibility of reaction or transformation; it is this rigidity which renders it so fragile.

The danger is that such a situation, if no analysis is made and more importantly, if no radical decision is taken, can evolve towards the abandon of these territories or a certain form of social entropy.

It is impossible to string together an urbanism whose ideology is fundamentally opposed to the self-management of the City, Space and Time.

2-The second tendency preaches the use of city plans which have already withstood the test of time.

This would bring us to reinstall plans inspired or copied from other cities or older districts, to make a collage or patchwork out of pieces of Beograd.

Existing urban forms are considered a guarantee for the formation of a city simply because they are issued from history.

All that remains is the choice of the most pertinent typology to transcribe.

In turn, each group militates for the urban form or architecture from the period they prefer.

Unfortunately, the complex conditions which created these urban forms are unreachable; this accounts for the endless disagreement on the form and period best adaptable to contemporary situations.

The tendency towards recuperation is very dubious; it can only function by readjusting a chosen image to a situation which necessarily eludes it and thus renders the utilization illegitimate.

The typologies of old urban centers, villages, ruins... so many possibilities may appear reassuring but they are nonetheless inadapted.

If the persistence of certain forms may be noted in the historical analysis of the city, it does nothing to eliminate the majority of different elements from one city to another and cannot legitimize a particular form as trans-historic.

On the other hand, there is no reason, at the moment of projection, not to take measure of existing cities and organizations.

We may note, for example, that the Federal Palace is the same distance from the train station in Novi Beograd as the Louvre is from the Arc de Triomphe or from one end to
another on Boulevard Saint Michel in Paris. But the parcels, edifices and surrounding streets are as different as the activities and rhythms which develop there.

Through comparative analysis we can become conscious of the diversity of reasons which constitute a particular urban form and of their total irrecoverability.

A monument does not exist by itself but in a combination (ensemble) which goes beyond even the city and which transforms itself in time.

Repetition is in no sense a guarantee in the edification of a city; repetition is at most an eventuality among millions of other possibilities, themselves retrieved or new.

**URBAN COMPLEXITY**

Our proposition is based on a primary statement: "The city is complex".

As with every dynamic organization, cities are fluid and mobile and any attempt to stop them in order to analyse and represent them risks killing them.

Also, as in every dynamic organization, repetition, regularity and redundancies on the one hand, and variety, improbability and complexity on the other do so exist; even in the most simple urban settlement.

Even as rationalities combine, one has to locate the role of the aleatory and of the noise that perturbs institutional discourses and the institutions themselves; and often their establishment may be the guarantee of survival when sclerosis seizes hold of order.

Indeed, cities sometimes seem to be artificial systems in as much as laws have fashioned them, regulating shapes and locations, and this, from the very beginning. Examples of strict urban organizations responding to systematic and inflexible repetitiveness are numerous; equally numerous are urban landscapes that seem to have been moulded without default....And yet a transgression has always taken place, an overflowing of established frames, proving that everywhere there is an "undefined" that refuses to give itself to instituted paths. The most rigid planning authorities are daily confronted by resistances and detours, produced as much by individuals as by groups.
But if it is obvious that the city is not a crystal, it is equally obvious that it is not evanescent smoke; cities also know resistance to total disorder, and new regulations always come to replace those which have just fallen.

In the analysis of the city, it from this coexistence of order and diversity that we must learn.

The study of the city should take the ethical turn of a quest for knowledge, choosing from projected trajectories the ones offering more diversity and richness, even as it obligates itself not to kill the object of its analysis.

Research on the city then becomes as dynamic as its object and without end. Its practical interest will no longer be to procure a justificatory and legislating knowledge, but rather, will allow for the discovery, in the course of analysis, of new possibilities for the development of the city, of the "vivre-ensemble".

Thus, to recognize that "the city is complex" implies the abandon of all hope of totalizing knowledge of the city and all possession of it.

Today, architects and urbanists find themselves inevitably confronted with the question of citizenship and its problematic, and no longer with an individual statistically described by dubious sociologies and psychologies.

In the face of galloping urbanization, the last forty years have only succeeded in constituting a culture of air currents for the vast majority of inhabitants.

There has, however, been no lack of assertions that only four functions are enough to synthesize the City: to inhabit, to work, to circulate, and to cultivate body and mind.

This theory, issued from the CIAM, may seem very attractive, because of its great simplicity and its ability to disarticulate a complex organization into a few categories functioning for themselves, but it can in no way generate those complex organisms which are cities.

To mitigate the glaring insufficiencies of such a schematism (which one has to acknowledge as financial speculation whatever the economic or political system) some tentative to mix these four functions, and even sometimes to add a few, have appeared during the last twenty years.

But the integration of elements of categories into a complex structure cannot in itself suffice by means either of juxtaposition or even in a mixture or superposition.

As in a biological organism, the city is composed of a number of elements which, once combined, create a complex ensemble that becomes the bearer of a greater significance than the sum of these elements. The city is a combinatoire in which, at all levels of organization, phenomena of communication, going in all directions, establish themselves in a complex structure. If the city is a complex organism, it is also a living organism, evolving with time. When we say that it is indispensable to determine the functions (which must organize themselves in complex structures permitting, by means of their communications systems, a "combinatoire", based on convergence, and not on juxtaposition) we should not forget indeterminate functions. This means that the study of structures should take into account the disappearance and the birth of new functions, and rely not only on human diversity, but also on its essential characteristic evolution. It seems clear that a complex structure in comparison with a simplified structure of zoning allows for a greater number of combinations than one can foresee in the solutions of architecture.

It is possible to imagine collective life as a never ending passage on an abstract axis going from "more private" to the "more public". The first would be intimate space within the dwelling, the office, etc...and the second, the central square, for example. Between these two extremes we could locate the landing, stair cases, interior courts, common gardens, arcades, back alleys, streets, avenues, and so forth....
But to imagine city life on a single abstract axis is not enough. We must also incorporate the geographical relations to the site, the relations of facades with the exteriors, the relationships that interpersonal networks draw between private spaces and also privatisations, the "intimisations" of the collective space.

We would then have to imagine that at each point of this sliding on the abstract axis from "more private" to "more public" elaborates itself in other axes, going in all directions, themselves inscribed in other connections, in a complex "combinatoire".

Relational richness would establish itself inside the diversity of space sharing this private and public, i.e. within organizations diversifying the relations between individuality and community, private and public. This would establish itself as much in terms of relations as in terms of law.

But to establish that there is an urban complexity will not transcend humanitarian insight if we do not have the will to pursue this research and, when building a city or within a city, to take into consideration that one has to intervene with more complexity in an already located complexity, toward an enrichment of its diversities.

It is then in the always greater multiplication of possibilities that a new citizenship can rise up, linked to a dynamic self-organization.

We can consider, with the biologist Henri Atlan, that in self-organising systems, that serves as program is continuously modified in a non-pre-established fashion by aleatory factors coming from environment, and errors in the system. Chance is then conceived as the intersection of many independent chains of causality.

Their cause has nothing to do with the flow of phenomena which constituted the anterior history of the system.

It is in this respect that the outbreak of environmental factors and their encounter with this environment constitutes noise, from the standpoint of exchanges of information in the system, and produces only errors within it. But when the system is able to react to these mistakes in a manner that not only prevents its disparition but, further, promotes its modification in a beneficial way, or at least, in a way that preserves its future survival (in other words, when a system is able to integrate these mistakes to its own organization...) then they lose a posteriori their characteristic of errors. They only retain this characteristic from a perspective exterior to the system, because they do not relate to any pre-established program contained in the environment and destined to organize or disorganize the system. On the contrary, from an internal standpoint, in as much as the organization consists of a kind of captured disorganization, they only appear as errors at the precise moment of their occurrence and in relation to the maintenance (which would be as inauspicious as it is imaginary) of a status quo of an organized system, which is represented as soon as a static description may be given. Otherwise, after this moment, they are integrated, recuperated as organizing factors. The effects of the noise then become events in the history of the system and it organizing process. They remain, however, the effects of noise insofar as their outcome was unpredictable.

It would suffice to consider the organization as an uninterrupted process of disorganization-organization, and not as a state of affairs, so that order and disorder, organization and contingency, construction and destruction, life and death would no longer be especially distinct. But this is false; there is no unity of contrary: order must really be perturbed by disorder and destruction, although not total must be real, the irruption of the event must be a real irruption.

It is at this point that architects and urbanists weigh their responsibilities. It has always been necessary for an authority to explain to what was self-organized in the
city that an order was indispensable, an external order, finding its justification in science and technology, if not in God.

The architect is not an educator of the people.

The new urban architecture poses the question of the ethic of architecture, asserting that it belongs on the side of knowledge (connaissance) and no longer to a Knowledge (savoir) which has promoted entropy and emptiness in cities, as is demonstrated by suburbs the world over, even the least disagreeable.

The question of the place of the architect in his observation of the city is perpetually posed by the very process of knowledge (connaissance) which implies the consideration of cities as complex.

The city cannot live an imposed stability, even if the urban elements persist. It is order, whether totalitarian or subtle, which paralizes urban life, and the "vivre-ensemble", when it is imposed artificially from the exterior and makes cities into artificial organisms.

The objective is not to realize urban structurations to be skirted or diverted by city-dwellers, but it is rather the realization in which relations, communication networks inevitably meet other unpredicted networks, and in such a way that a new and undefined space of communication is constructed through the action of the inhabitants alone.

Citizenship occurs not from the granting of rights by the authority, but in a dynamic possibility offered to individuals of inscribe themselves into the movement of collectivity, of a "vivre-ensemble" : the City.

Citizenship is then understood as a new urban culture, granting recognition to the individual at every stage of community, in which he himself defines the multiplicity of his relations to time and space.
We are obviously in disagreement with such misleading and dishonest elaborations.

It is a crucial point that the buildings represented on the plan at 2 cm for 100 m are the same as those which really exist.

This type of urban planning and architecture, by ignoring the scales and skipping steps, produces agglomerations out of scale.

Figuration is a dangerous trap.

Our designs, while "abstract" are more concrete than any figurative representation; they convey more information by organizing condensations, encounters, strong points superpositions of graphic logics, different densities... a world which clings to the land, the water of the rivers, roads and existing buildings, to everything which we may know of Novi Beograd today.

In adhering to the site and to the existant, our designs attempt to provoke ideas of multiple combinations between the different activities and functions of a city and of diverse forms which are progressively elaborated by changing scales and by introducing new and more precise elements and new and more numerous interventions.

OUR PROPOSITION

A-To join

1-To pass over the river, to multiply the bridges and thus diversity the traffic, the manners and the reasons to cross the river.

2-To join the districts of Novi Beograd with one another, particularly those which are the most peripheral and distant (blocks 45, 61, 62).

B-To regroup, to reassemble

1-To create "quartiers" with their own centralities and not only one city-center for all Novi Beograd.

2-To give each "quartier" a particular characteristic.

C-Crossroads

To create crossroads using the constructions, streets, squares, "rotation points" over large streets, orienting traffic and directions towards the "quartiers".

D-To use the Sava

To articulate the passage over the Sava.
To model the site and the city in one single ensemble.
To organically adhere to the river and its banks.
1-Left Bank
To create, at the junction of Beograd and Novi Beograd, a new district with a residential "quartier" organized around small concentric canals and a small port for small boats.

2-Right bank
To create, opposite the district describe above, a new "quartier" encircled by a canal with one port in continuity with the Beograd Fair Complex, with a commercial port easily accessible to barges, and to the north, a second area with offices and dwellings, joined with the "Sava Centar" by a direct bridge.

3-To create "quartiers" or extensions of existing districts along the banks of the Sava (for example, next to the Museum of Modern Art or extensions of blocks 44, 45, 70).

4-To create public transportation networks on the rivers.

5-To create ports for small boats.

E-Existing buildings
To invest the space between and against existing buildings in combination or even in contradiction with them.

To envisage the destruction of some of them.

F-Highway
To pass over the highway with a bridge, as large as a district, which would reunite the two districts separated by the highway.

Thus to create "hills" to cross, to jump this river of automobiles.

These "hills" could be filled with parking and storage spaces and covered with buildings, streets, parks, squares, plateaus, terraces, etc....a real neighborhood in a real city.

G-Train station
The train station is a characteristic activity around which the district can be organized.

A "hill" ten floors high, composed of offices and housing, streets and squares around the station, which descends in the center of the "hill" over the tracks.

The streets pass under and through this "hill" and serve the station and the parking lots; other streets climb the "hill" and are organized around the central crater.

H-Train tracks
The tracks are lined with high earth fill, planted with trees and vegetation.

I-Vegetation

1-Parks
Parks are essential to the creation of the City and must participate intimately in its organisation.

Large parks can be implanted around the Federal Palace and the Museum of Modern Art, including a stadium and other sport facilities.

Another park can be foreseen along the highway south-east of the Sava Centar.

Block 79 can be extended towards the Sava in combination with a pleasure port.

2-Terraces
The buildings can be conceived with terraces like "hanging gardens" with vegetation, trees,...
3-Public Graden
They must be incorporated into the buildings as courtyards, playgrounds,....

With the terraces they will constitute an urban unity.

3-Circulations

Our drawings demonstrate an intertwining of different kinds of circulations using different levels.

These circulations must be very diverse, composed with public and private spaces, with automobiles or pedestrians.

Streets, footpaths, avenues, lanes, boulevards, alleys, arcades,....

PRINCIPLES

The city is complex.

The construction of the city should respond to principles of evolution which structurally guarantee its complexity.

It is necessary to eliminate the schematic and discriminatory urban regulations which rigidify the development and weaken the potentiality for change and new possibilities of the "vivre-ensemble". The city should respond to principles of evolution which guarantee the development of its complexity through time.

The city is dynamic.

These principles, by preserving the complex development of the city, assure its capacity to respond to aleatory and perturbing factors in the urban system, by an augmentation and renewal of its complexity and not by a foreclosure or immobilization of the system.

A- First general principal: "diversity"

This first principle defines at once the problematic of structures, of organisations, dimensions, strengths, ... toward a multiplication of possibilities.

It is opposed to tendencies that would wish the economy and urban life to be managed by artificial norms and programs, postulating the reproduction of the identical as
an insurance of the harmonious development of the city.

It is opposed to systematization, to homogenization, and to uniformity.

It assures an approach to urban reality level by level without imposing, from the macroscopic to the microscopic, a single organization and conformation. It is opposed to the approach which flattens and equalizes in order to impose an artificial and oppressive order on the city.

Diversification implies that no law of composition can become by essence dominant and legislatizing, and thus that no law be claimed as determining a production of different as a guarantee of diversity, since it would itself become a new repetitive system.

This principle grants to diverse dimensions the right to exist and to function.

Diverse dimensions of units of production, but also diversity of products.

Diversity of management rules and practices, diverse methods of regroupment and individualization.

Diversity of circulations, of communication networks, of their management, production, realization and of their use.

Accounting for the importance of the diversity of activities which cannot be reduced to the restrictive and superficial synthesis of the Athens Charter: "to inhabit, to work, to recreate, to circulate".

Diversity of time in the city with respect to the multiplicities of rhythm; the integration of natural rhythm and urban rhythm.

Diversity of modes of interactions and connection of elements, activities, functions, jurisdictions, managements, acting on, in and by the city.

Diversities of dimension and structures of buildings and architectures.

Diversities of land use, occupation and management.

Diversities of spaces in their appropriation by the "private" and the "public".

It is through diversity that the citizen's right may be taken into account in a space where he can recognize himself in many successive relations between individual and community, because he himself create and realizes this urban space at multiple levels.

Ⅷ. Second general principle: "imbrication"

It defines the combinatory mode, the situational placement of different elements called to constitute, over a period of time, the city, as much on the static as the dynamic level.

This principle defines a situation of active relation (mise en presence active), in which interactions, interconnections, interferences and interpenetrations of events may be considered as new components of the City.

Unexpected encounters, coincidences and conjunctions, unusual, unhabitual and accidental contacts, abnormal junctions suddenly occur and develop as new potential to organize the city.

These two general principles proceed from the same dynamic: complexity, and reciprocally reinforce each other.
Imbrication of activities and functions, respecting the specificity of each against the parcellation of zoning which reduces cities to dormitory-cities, office-cities, commercial-cities, recreation-cities..., to the impoverishment of those activities.

Imbrication of flux and networks.

Imbrication of circulations, because if it is desirable to separate the child from automobiles and to offer him specific circulations, one must not confuse protection and segregative differentiation that leaves the child in ignorance and isolation.

But equally because the multiplicity of connections between different types and rapidity is the sole guarantee of a good flow of the ensemble and each of its parts, even the smallest.

Imbrication of different dimensions and different forces.

Imbrication of ages.

Imbrication of qualifications and of social and cultural strata.

Imbrication of appropriations.
- public/private
- collectivity/individuality
- community/intimacy

Relational richness establishes itself in the diversity and the imbrication of spaces sharing public and private within organizations diversifying the relations between individual and collectivity by mixing intimacy and community.

Imbrication of territories:
- in terms of law: differentiation and imbrication of types of property and rights of utilizations of space-time.
- in terms of size: diversity and imbrication of the different dimensions and surfaces of lots.
- in terms of time: diversity and imbrication of more or less long utilizations of spaces and territories.

Imbrication of rhymes: recognition of different times and rhymes (in activities, circulations, between nature and city,...) in no way implies their separation in different spaces nor their obligatory fusion in an average or conflictual ensemble. It is in the multitude of different rhymes and in their combination that the city palpitates, vibrates, ... lives.

Imbrication of different managements.

Imbrication of built and unbuilt spaces, of built and green spaces of different sizes, uses and properties.

We wish to restore the potentialities of the city. We wish to elaborate cities in which diverse activities such as education, sport, health...workshops, offices, housing, commerce can be concentrated and intermingled.

A city in which the complex combination of activities will imply a diversity of circulation open to various utilizations.

A city where parks and free spaces will not be confined to ground level but will invest constructions and circulations with terraces, gardens and rooftops.

C- Third general principal: respect of specificities

Each activity, function group or unit (for example,
the individual in relation to the collectivity) must be able to preserve its personal identity; notably in its connection with other activities, otherwise the simple act of connection would prevail and dominate.

It is now the orchestrated evolution, by what can be called the "informational" which replaces communication by information and privileges connection over encounter.

In this new type of zoning each activity is reduced to its minimum and witnesses its diffusion and encounters channelled, "cabled".

The activity is then brought to a state of isolation, which is translated for individuals into a graver state of solitude.

These principles could progressively be elaborated into a "Charter of Cities".

It will have no rules, laws, or regulations to promote or enforce.

It will assure diversity and research, assuring that the City will never again know those simplifying, reductive, limiting and authoritative linear developments.

**IMPLICATIONS**

This project will have implications in very diverse domains.

In effect, it will be indispensable to elaborate a new organization of the distribution of landed property and of construction permits.

The construction should be controlled very severely while at the same time, permitting free implantations, in order to allow individual initiative the liberty to participate in the elaboration of the city.

This would imply that new types of building promotion be practised: by diversifying densifications, types of buildings, the combinations of programs and different activities. Thus it is necessary to imagine methods of mixed financing but also, new forms of public services which could insert themselves in this process.

The imbrication of the activities and the functions of a city implies a strict collaboration of their financing.

The building industry should diversify its interventions and vary the dimensions of the construction companies.

The solution of assisted self-construction (construction of the infrastructure by a company and the completion of the rest by individual, or groups of inhabitants) should be elaborated for new constructions as well as existing buildings.
The indispensable multiplication of common transport (tramway, bus, taxi, boat on the Sava) would imply that the statutes of those services as well as their profit-earning capacity be redefined.

The objective is not to create a city center in Novi Beograd but to reinforce its districts with their own centralities, each differently specified.

These centralities cannot and should not be considered as a simplistic concentration of commerce and services. They should derive their specificities from the multiple relations of activities which structure the ensemble of the district.

Work in all its forms (offices, workshops, non-polluting industries, services...) should reinstall itself in the lodging and discover in that liaison, new dynamisms and organisations in the relations of production.

For this, the diversity of types of work but also of the size of companies is fundamental.

In this domain, many things are to be invented, as for example, small self-managed companies constructing their own work space but also the housing of its workers with financial and technical aid from the community; as for example, large companies "bursting" and dispersing their facilities and their interventions, in order not to create zoning and to profit from the local forces and dynamisms which could develop in the "quartiers".

These diversified forms of autogestion and production, allied with those more specific of construction and land development, by diversifying even the principle of self-management, can enrich it with new social and political structures.

The increase of the population in cities troubles and disables even the most perspicacious; it is most often considered a catastrophe demanding expeditious and rapid responses which quickly prove themselves superficial and cumbersome.

By augmenting, the population also enlarges its own potentialities to organize.

Nothing implies that a large quantity be treated as a unity comporting no internal differentiation.

Nothing implies that a city be treated with general and schematic laws such as those of blocks, zoning, large companies....

A population, made of different cultures and horizons, reinforces, though the shaving of multiple experiences, its capacities of organization and self-management.

But in order that these populations, often uprooted, can use their force it is necessary that they are able to take possession of their spaces, of the city.

Our project proposes an urban organization of Novi Beograd which would make possible the real intervention of the population in the successive levels of the elaboration of the programs and their planning.

For this reason, our project does not present fixed urban forms but modes of organization.

The restructuration of Novi Beograd will require a lot of time and it will be necessary to evaluate the urgencies.

The limited knowledge that we now have of the national and regional economic programs and urban plan, does not permit us to establish a schedule of interventions.

On the other hand, our project permits a simultaneous deve-
Development of different sections of Novi Beograd.

Our project is made in the dimension of a Capital: the Capital of a Federal Republic where all the nations which compose it may find, through new modes of appropriation of the space of the city, their own character.
INTRODUCTION

L'urbanisation est un phénomène mondial dans cette seconde moitié du XXème siècle auquel la Yougoslavie n'a pas échappé.

Cette extension des villes a provoqué des bouleversements dans les civilisations dont nous mesurons encore mal toute l'importance.

Les pays socialistes, même avec toutes leurs différences, n'ont pas su éviter cette situation ni créer "la Ville Socialiste".

Dans le monde capitaliste, le développement des villes est effréné, mal ou pas maîtrisé, dévastateur et irréversible.

S'il est exact que la ville ait été un lieu de civilisation, son éclatement peut anéantir ce rôle. Ou bien l'urbain sera un espace de dissociation de la société et du social (en un chaos, en une masse agitée de mouvements divers), ou bien il sera un lieu de réappropriation (de la vie quotidienne, du social). S'il n'y a pas de déterminisme absolu, mais toujours (dans la vie biologique et les temps humains), des possibilités souvent opposées, un "choix" plus ou moins conscient s'accomplice. L'urbain, aujourd'hui et demain ? Une mer de possibilités, le meilleur ou le pire.

Peut-être le meilleur ici et le pire ailleurs !

Le "droit à la Ville" ? Cela voudrait dire et veut encore dire : ne pas laisser perdre l'héritage historique, ne pas laisser l'espace s'éviter, retrouver le "centre" comme lieu de création, de civilisation.

Le droit à la ville vient en complément non tant des droits de l'homme (comme le droit à l'éducation, à la santé, et à la sé-curité, etc...) que de ceux du citoyen : celui-ci n'est pas seulement membre d'une "communauté politique", dont la conception reste indécise et conflictuelle, mais d'un groupement plus précis posant de multiples interrogations : la ville moderne - l'urbain. Ce droit conduit à la participation active du citoyen-citadin au contrôle du territoire, à sa gestion, dont les modalités restent à préciser. Il conduit aussi à la participation du citoyen-citadin à la vie sociale liée à l'urbain; il propose d'interdire la dislocation de cette culture urbaine, d'empêcher la dispersion non pas en entassant les "habitants" et "usagers" les uns sur les autres, mais en inventant dans les domaines et aux niveaux de l'architecture, de l'urbanistique, du territorial.

Ce droit suppose une transformation de la société, selon un projet cohérent, répondant aux interrogations et résolvant théoriquement (au sens fort, impliquant le moment de la pratique) les problèmes et, d'autre part, des créations dans les domaines où l'art et le connaître, le quotidien et le global, interfèrent : l'architecture par exemple. Mais plus largement, le temps et l'espace.

Dans nos recherches, nos voyages et nos études, nous avons acquis une connaissance critique des villes des pays capitalistes et socialisés. Nous avons vu partout des villes folles.

Nos villes éclatées, nos mégapoles - l'urbain moderne -, sont à déconstruire et à reconstruire. Il faudra toute une période "historique" pour défaire et refaire.

Grâce à l'autogestion, un lieu s'enquiquine entre le citoyen et le citadin, et la Yougoslavie est peut-être aujourd'hui un des rares pays à pouvoir poser concrètement la problématique d'un Nouvel Urbain.

Ce concours pour la restructuration de Novi Beograd pourrait faire partie des prémisses de cette renaissance de la Cité.
Le plan urbain de Novi Beograd a autant échoué dans sa volonté de cohérence globale que la volonté politique de faire une ville.

Le zoning et le quadrillage n'ont abouti, par leur schénatisation conceptuelle et morphologique, qu'à la saillie sociale et urbaine.

Que reste-t-il de ces désirs de fonctionnement ordonné et de ce purisme sommaire... des barres et des tours, perdus dans l'espace désertique, des dimensions minstres, des espaces de frontaliés où ni le public, ni l'intimité ne trouve leur compte,... des paysages lugubres.

Dépassons le spectacle lassant et affligeant que ces tableaux indéfiniment répétés des banlieues ou des villes-nouvelles du monde entier pour remarquer que ces catastrophes urbaines trouvent leur origine non dans un détournement, une déviation ou une mauvaise interprétation des théorèmes de la Chartre d'Athènes de Le Corbusier, mais dans ces théorèmes-mêmes.

Comme cela arrive pour tout orgaînme vivant et complexe, séparer, disjoindre, désarticuler autoritairement des parties n'aboutit qu'à tuer la ville.

En lui administrant des règles de fonctionnement mécaniques, le zoning n'a rien opéré d'autre que le meurtre de la ville.

La séparation d'activités normalement liées et leur isolement n'a permis que la sclérose de chacune d'elle et du fonctionnement de l'ensemble.

Le fonctionnalisme est irraisonnable.

L'habitat s'ennuie à seulement habiter comme le travail à seulement travailler.

Peu à peu, des solitudes se déposent, comme des grains de sable, dans le tissu urbain et en durcissent la flexibilité.

Solitude des individus, solitude des familles ou à l'intérieur de la famille, du groupe, du quartier, de l'immuable, du bureau, ... la solitude devient une inertie très lourde et devenant collective, elle pèse sur la vie sociale et le mouvement de la communauté; elle freine la solidarité et la sociabilité, et elle compromet le développement de l'individu et de la collectivité.

Le déracinement des populations, dès les années 50, et pour certains pays, bien avant encore, a représenté en Europe, quel que soient les systèmes économiques et politiques, une situation irréversible qu'aucune culture n'a pu résoudre ni intégrer.

Les populations immigrées vers les villes, ayant perdu leur culture villageoise n'ont pas réussi à en établir une nouvelle et se trouvent ainsi en position de rupture et de perte de référents à un espace-temps qui leur échappe; espace-temps qui, dans les dernières années, et dans les toutes prochaines, a subi et subira encore des bouleversements.

La survie des solidarités et des communautés dans l'immigration vers les centres urbains est progressivement détruite par le mode de vie fragmentaire du zoning des grands ensembles et minée par la solitude.

Les villes anciennes, elles-mêmes, ont, devant cet afflux de conflits, perdu leurs potentialités et n'assument plus qu'un rôle de nostalgie; elles deviennent le plus souvent des centres historiques, musées, zonings des références passées et perdues.
Belgrad n'échappe pas à cette évolution.

Le productivisme et la standardisation, le rationalisme et le zoning, en cherchant l'ordre et la rentabilité, n'ont pas évalué le coût social de ce qu'ils ont produit.

Il est impossible de se contenter de critiquer la pauvreté des grands ensembles, il faut en déceler et en combattre le fonctionnement.

Dans la froide mise en scène des courants d'air, des vides et des boîtes, il nous faut rééprouver, reprendre poids et place, s'ancrer et réinvestir ce territoire livré aux vents, occuper le terrain de la ville.

Le tracé urbanistique de Novi Beograd n'arrive pas à édifier une Ville.

Il est certain que l'inachèvement du tissu urbain ne favorise pas cette constitution mais plus fondamentalement, c'est le type-même du tracé qui est une garantie de ne jamais arriver à faire de Novi Beograd une Ville.

Aussi ne pouvons-nous que nous réjouir que Novi Beograd soit "inachevé" !

Si l'utopie nous était permise, il faudrait alors construire sur les flancs du plateau et étudier un développement de Beograd vers les collines, en s'accrochant aux pentes comme les anciens firent le faire.

Les barres et les tours progressivement abandonnées, deviendraient alors les ruines d'un temps passé, un musée en souvenir d'une époque révolue où on entassait les individus qui n'avaient pas encore le droit d'être citoyens à part entière.

Mais malheureusement, il nous faut être très realistes et considérer l'agrandissement de Novi Beograd comme irréversible.

Avant d'exposer notre proposition pour le développement de Novi Beograd, nous réfuterons les deux tendances principales qui animent les urbanistes et les architectes : le "néorationalisme" et le "post-modernisme historiciste".

1- Certains soutiennent que la théorie des CIAM, le zoning, a été dénaturée et proposent un renforcement de ces théories. Nous avons montré précédemment que l'aspect négatif du zoning réside dans les hypothèses de cette théorie.

Continuer ce type d'organisation reviendrait à renforcer chaque zone par des équipements et continuer par ailleurs le quadrillage des voies de circulation et leurs hiérarchies ; c'est-à-dire tenter de rationaliser ce qui a "débordé" ces dernières années pour échapper aux effets du rationalisme.

Ordonner, ordonner encore et toujours, en espérant pouvoir tout tenir et prévoir.

Implanter quelques parcs et quelques jeux d'enfants, ... augmenter les comités et les commissions, de contrôle et de vérification... et peu à peu céder à nouveau devant les impératifs financiers, politiques, historiques,... toutes ces bonnes raisons qui arrivent d'on ne sait où mais auxquelles chacun doit se plier au nom de la Raison d'État.
Et inévitablement la machine à empiler et à sectionner se remettra en route.

Parce que le zoning n'est pas innocent; son efficacité, il la place dans la mise en ordre qui nie l'importance de l'aléatoire et des possibles.

Le zoning rêve de pouvoir ranger et étiqueter le monde mouvant et hasardeux; l'urbanisme se fait alors règlements, lois, statistiques...

Le zoning procède par répétition de fonctionnements identiques d'un niveau à un autre, du macroscopique au microscopique.

L'organisation rigide et redondante (des formes et surtout des symboles) des barres, tours, blocs, voitures... qui constitue Novi Beograd suppose qu'un "message organisationnel" soit transmis sans détérioration des parties au tout et inversement.

La résistance de la population (tant habitante que visiteuse) à cet ensemble redondant exprime une perte importante de ce "message organisationnel" et la remise en cause de son efficacité. Par ailleurs ces résistances nous permettent de repérer que d'autres "forces vives", que celles prévues par le zoning, existent et s'auto-organisent, produisant même parfois leur propre ordre qui, devenant de plus en plus performant devant la fourche environnante, rentre alors en conflit direct avec le zoning et son ordre que la rigidité a sclérosé. C'est alors la crise.

La situation conflictuelle actuelle dans laquelle se trouvent toutes les banlieues conçues sur les bases du zoning, à travers le monde, est la preuve de l'incapacité de ce système à évoluer et à intégrer dans son évolution des modifications imposées par le temps.

La rigidité de la logique organisationnelle du zoning ne lui permet aucune possibilité de réagir ni de se transformer. C'est cette raideur qui le rend si fragile.

Le danger est que de telles situations, si aucune analyse sérieuse n'est menée et surtout si aucune décision radicale n'est prise, peuvent évoluer vers un abandon de ces territoires, ou à une certaine forme d'entropie sociale.

Il est impossible de rafistoler un urbanisme dont l'idéologie est fondamentalement contraire à l'autogestion de la Ville, de l'Espace et du Temps.

2- La seconde tendance prône l'utilisation des plans urbains ayant déjà fait leurs preuves dans l'histoire.

Cela revient à ré-installer des plans inspirés ou copiés de villes ou de quartiers anciens, de faire des collages ou des patchworks de morceaux de Beograd.

Les formes urbaines existantes sont alors considérées comme des garanties à la formation de la ville puisqu'elles sont issues de l'histoire.

Reste alors la question de la typologie à choisir et à retranscrire... laquelle est la plus pertinente ?

Dans cette attitude, chacun milite pour la forme urbaine ou architecturale de l'époque qu'il préfère.
Malheureusement les conditions complexes qui ont créé ces formes urbaines restent insaisissables et c'est ce qui apporte des désaccords sans fin sur la forme et l'époque la mieux adaptable aux situations contemporaines.

Cette tendance à la récupération est très douteuse et ne peut opérer que par réajustement de l'image choisie à une situation qui y échappe obligatoirement et qui en rend ainsi illégitime l'utilisation.

Typologies de centres urbains anciens, de villages, de ruines, ...autant de possibilités qui bien que pouvant apparaître comme rassurantes, n'en sont pas moins inadaptées.

Si la persistance de certaines formes peut apparaître dans l'analyse historique des villes, cela n'efface en rien la majorité des éléments différents d'une ville à l'autre, ni n'investit telle ou telle forme de légitimité transhistorique.

Par contre, rien n'empêche au moment de la projection de prendre la mesure des villes et des organisations existantes.

Nous pouvons remarquer par exemple que le Palais fédéral est éloigné de la gare de Novi Beograd d'une distance identique à celle qui va à Paris, du Louvre à l'Arc de Triomphe ou encore à la longueur du Boulevard Saint Michel; mais les terrains, les édifices, les rues environnantes sont différents tout comme les activités et les rythmes qui s'y développent.

Par des analyses comparatives nous pouvons prendre conscience de la diversité des raisons qui constituent une forme urbaine et de leur irrécupération totale et complète.

Un monument n'existe pas seulement par lui-même mais dans un ensemble qui dépasse même la ville et qui se transforme dans le temps.

Le répéter n'est en rien une garantie à l'édification de la Ville; c'est tout au plus une éventualité parmi des milliards d'autres possibilités, elles-mêmes rapportées au nouvelles.
COMPLEXITE URBANEC

Notre proposition prend appui sur un premier énoncé :
"La ville est complexe".

Comme toutes organisations dynamiques, les villes sont fluides
et mouvantes et toute tentative de les figer pour l'analyse ou
la représentation risque de les tuer.

Comme dans toutes organisations dynamiques également, la répé-
tition, la régularité, la redondance d'un côté, la variété, l'im-
probabilité, la complexité de l'autre, coexistent même dans les
regroupements urbains les plus simples.

En même temps que se tramant des rationalités, force est de ré-
cupérer le rôle de l'aléatoire et du bruit qui perturbent les
discours institutionnels et les institutions mêmes, s'instituant
parfois comme la garantie d'une survie quand la sclérose gagne
l'ordre.

Il est vrai que les villes apparaissent parfois comme des systèmes
artificiels tant les lois les ont façonnées dans leurs formes et
leurs impositions, et ce, depuis toujours. Les exemples ne
manquent pas d'organisations urbaines strictes et répondant à des
répétitivités systématiques et inflexibles. Nombreux sont les
paysages urbains que des lois semblent avoir forgés dans des moules
sans défaut... et pourtant toujours un dépassement à lieu, un dé-
bordement des cadres établis, prouvant que partout un "indéfini"
se refuse aux chemins institués. Les autorités planificatrices
les plus rigides sont quotidiennement mises à l'épreuve des
résistances et des détournements tant par les individus que par
les groupes.

Mais s'il est certain que la ville n'est pas un cristal, elle n'est
pas non plus une flaque évanescente; elle connait également des
résistances au désordre total, et des règlements viennent toujours
remplacer ceux qui viennent de tomber.

Dans l'analyse de cette ville, c'est de cette coexistence entre ordre
et diversité qu'il faudra tirer un enseignement.

La recherche sur la ville devra prendre la tournure éthique d'une
quête de connaissance, choisissant dans les trajets projetés ceux
qui offriront le plus de richesse et de diversité tout en s'o-
bligeant à ne pas tuer l'objet de cette analyse.

La recherche sur la ville devient dès lors aussi dynamique que
son objet et sans conclusion. Son intérêt pratique ne sera plus
d'apporter un savoir justificateur aux législateurs mais de
permettre de découvrir dans le parcours de l'analyse toujours
de nouvelles possibilités au développement de la ville, du "vivre-
ensemble".

Ainsi donc, reconnaître que"la ville est complexe"implique l'abandon
de tout espoir d'un savoir total sur elle et de toute possession
à son égard.

L'architecte et l'urbaniste, ou l'architecte-urbaniste se trouvent
confrontés aujourd'hui inévitablement à la question, non plus
d'un individu statistiquement répertorié par des sociologies ou
des psychologies douteuses mais à la problématique de la citoyénité.

Les quarante dernières années n'ont réussi face à une urbanisation
galopante qu'à constituer pour la majorité des habitants qu'une
culture des courants d'air.
Pourtant les assurances n'ont pas manqué qui ont affirmé que quatre fonctions suffisaient à synthétiser la ville : habiter, travailler, circuler, cultiver le corps et l'esprit.

Aussi attirante que puisse paraître cette théorie, issue des CIAM, par sa grande simplicité et sa facilité à désarticuler un organisme complexe en quelques catégories fonctionnant sur elles-mêmes, elle ne peut engendrer aucun de ces organismes complexes que sont les villes.

Pour pallier aux insuffisances criantes d'un tel schématisme (dont il faut bien reconnaître qu'il relève de la spéculation financière quel que soit le système économique ou politique), des tentatives de mélanger ces quatre fonctions, et parfois même en en augmentant le nombre, ont vu le jour depuis une vingtaine d'années.

Mais l'intégration d'éléments ou de catégories à une structure complexe ne peut se suffire de juxtapositions, même dans un mélange ou une superposition.

Comme dans un organisme biologique, la ville se compose d'un certain nombre d'éléments qui, une fois combinés, donnent un ensemble complexe qui devient porteur d'une signification plus grande que celle de la somme de ses éléments. La ville est un organisme vivant qui évolue dans le temps. Quand nous disons qu'il est indispensable de déterminer les fonctions (qui doivent s'organiser dans des structures complexes permettant grâce à des systèmes de "communications" une "combinatoire" basée sur la convergence et non la juxtaposition), nous ne devons pas oublier les fonctions indéterminées. Ce qui signifie que la recherche de structure doit tenir compte de la disparition, de la naissance de nouvelles fonctions, et s'appuyer non seulement sur la diversité humaine, mais aussi sur son caractère essentiel d'évolution. Il apparaît comme évident qu'une structure complexe par comparaison à la structure simplificatrice de la méthode de zoning est porteuse d'un nombre beaucoup plus grand de combinaisons que l'on peut entrevoir comme illimitées dans les solutions de l'architecture.

Il est possible d'imager la vie collective comme un passage incessant sur un axe abstrait allant d'un "plus de privé" à un "plus de public". Le premier serait l'espace intime dans le logement, le bureau, etc... et le second, la grande place centrale par exemple.

Entre ces deux extrêmes, nous pourrions repérer les paliers, les escaliers, les cours intérieures et jardins communs, les porches, les arcades, les ruelles, les rues, les avenues, etc.

Mais imaginer ainsi la vie urbaine sur un seul axe abstrait n'est guère suffisant. Il faudrait aussi y incorporer les rapports au terrain, au site, les rapports des façades avec l'extérieur, et les rapports que les réseaux relationnels publics tissent autour des espaces privés, et également les privatisations, les "intimisations" d'espaces collectifs.

Il faudrait alors imaginer qu'en chaque point de ce glissement sur l'axe abstrait d'un "plus de privé" à un "plus de public" s'élaborent d'autres axes en tous sens, eux-mêmes inscrits en d'autres connexions, en une combinatoire complexe.

La richesse relationnelle s'établirait dans la diversité des espaces partageant ce privé et ce public, c'est-à-dire dans des organisations diversifiant les rapports entre individualité et collectivité par des "panachages" d'intimité et de communauté, de privé et de public. Ceci s'établirait autant en terme de relations qu'en terme de droit.

Mais le constat d'une complexité urbaine ne dépassera pas la
perspicacité humanitaire s'il n'est pas question d'attacher à ces recherches la volonté, quand il est question de construire une ville ou dans une ville, d'intervenir dans le sens d'un plus de complexité dans la complexité perdue, dans le sens d'un enrichissement de ses diversités.

C'est alors dans le toujours plus de multiplication des possibilités que peut surgir une nouvelle citoyenneté liée à une auto-organisation dynamique.

Avec le biologiste Henri Atlan, nous pouvons considérer que dans les systèmes auto-organisateurs, ce qui fait office de programme ne modifie sans cesse, de façon non prévisible, sous l'effet de facteurs aléatoires de l'environnement, productions d'erreurs dans le système. Le hasard est alors conçu comme intersection de plusieurs chaînes de causalités indépendantes.

Les causes de leur survenue n'ont rier à voir avec l'enchaînement des phénomènes qui a constitué l'histoire antérieure du système jusque-là.

C'est en cela que la survenue des facteurs d'environnement et leur rencontre avec celui-ci constituent du bruit, au point de vue des échanges d'information dans le système et ne sont susceptibles d'y produire que des erreurs. Mais à partir du moment où le système est capable de réagir à celles-ci, de telle sorte non seulement de ne pas disparaître mais encore de se modifier lui-même dans un sens qui lui est bénéfique, ou qui, au minimum, préserve sa survie ultérieure, autrement dit à partir du moment où le système est capable d'intégrer ces erreurs à sa propre organisation, alors celles-ci perdent à posteriori un peu de leur caractère d'erreurs. Elles ne gardent ce caractère d'erreur que d'un point de vue externe au système parce qu'elles ne correspondent à aucun programme pré-établi contenu dans l'environnement et destiné à organiser ou désorganiser le système.

Au contraire, d'un point de vue intérieur, dans la mesure où l'organisation consiste en une sorte de désorganisations rattrapées, elles n'apparaissent comme des erreurs qu'à l'instant précis de leur survenue et par rapport à un maintien qui serait aussi néaste qu'imaginaire d'un statu quo d'un système organisé, et que l'on ne représente dès qu'une description statique peut être donnée. Autrement, après cet instant, elles sont intégrées, récupérées comme des facteurs d'organisation. Les effets du bruit deviennent alors devenus de l'histoire du système et de son processus d'organisation. Ils demeurent pourtant les effets d'un bruit en ce que leur survenue était imprévisible.

Il suffirait de considérer l'organisation comme un processus ininterrompu de désorganisation-organisation, et non pas comme un état, pour que l'ordre et le désordre, l'organisation et le contingent, la construction et la destruction, la vie et la mort, ne soient plus tellement distincts. Mais, c'est faux, il n'y a pas d'unité des contraires; l'ordre doit vraiment être perturbé par le désordre, la destruction, bien que non totale, doit être réelle, l'irruption de l'événement doit être une véritable irruption.

C'est alors que l'architecte et l'urbaniste plètent leur responsabilité. Il a toujours fallu qu'une autorité viennent expliquer à ce qui s'était auto-organisé dans la ville qu'un ordre leur était indispensable, un ordre extérieur, trouvant sa justification dans la science et la technique, quand ce n'était pas d'un dieu.

L'architecte n'est pas un éducateur du peuple.
La nouvelle architecture urbaine aborde la question de l'éthique de l'Architecture, affirmant qu'elle se situe du côté de la connaissance et non plus d'un savoir qui a poussé les villes à l'entropie et au vide comme l'illustrent les banlieues du monde entier.
mêmes les moins désagréables.

La question de la place de l'architecte dans son observation de la ville est perpétuellement posée par le processus même de connaissance qu'il implique le fait de considérer les villes comme complexes.

La ville ne peut vivre d'une stabilité imposée même si des éléments urbains perdurent. C'est l'ordre, totalitaire ou subtil, qui paralyse la vie urbaine et le vivre-ensemble quand il est imposé de l'extérieur, artificiellement, et qui fait des villes, des organismes artificiels.

L'objectif n'est pas de réaliser des structurations urbaines que les habitants pourraient contourner ou détourner mais des réalisations dans lesquelles les relations, les réseaux de communication rencontrent inévitablement d'autres réseaux impérs qu'un espace de communication, nouveau et indéfini, s'édifie alors par le fait des seuls habitants.

La citoyenneté survient non de la reconnaissance de droits par autorité mais dans la possibilité dynamique offerte aux individus de s'inscrire dans le mouvement d'une collectivité, d'un "vivre-ensemble" de la ville.

La citoyenneté conçue alors comme une nouvelle culture des villes est la reconnaissance de l'individu à chaque étape de la communauté, en ce qu'il définit lui-même la multitude de ses rapports avec l'espace-temps. L'architecture prend toute sa place dans ce processus.

Mais plus encore que dans l'analyse des villes, nous devons nous méfier de la précipitation quand il s'agit d'en bâtir une.

C'est progressivement, par paliers, qu'il est possible d'élaborer la complexité d'une ville, de laisser la complexité urbaine se mettre en place.

À chaque niveau, successif, interviennent de nouvelles données, de nouveaux paramètres qui à un autre niveau, auraient été déplacés, lourds, inadaptés, inefficaces.

C'est ainsi que graduellement, et dans le temps, une complexité peut s'élever de nombreuses possibilités.

Dans la phase proposée dans ce concours, il s'agit de présenter une "idée", de "donner une idée" de ce que pourrait être l'élaboration de Novi Beograd dans le temps.

Il s'agit donc de présenter une image qui ait le pouvoir de faire entrevoir par son mode de composition graphique des modes de combinaisons urbaines possibles.

Ces plans doivent susciter des réflexions sur la multitude des richesses des combinaisons qu'une ville peut comporter.

Ainsi, ne peut-on, si on veut demeurer sérieux, faire de la figure avec des bâtiments, des toitures, des arbres..., avec des ombres et des axes.

Comment dessiner des bâtiments, des quartiers entiers quand aucun programme n'est encore élaboré, quand personne ne sait encore par quoi ils seront occupés; ou alors c'est considérer que les activités et les relations qu'elles entretiennent entre elles, n'ont pas à intervenir dans la forme de la ville.

Nous ne sommes évidemment pas d'accord avec ces élaborations trompeuses et malheureuses.
C'est bien le drame de Novi Beograd que des bâtiments soient sur le plan à 2 cm pour 100 m, les mêmes que dans la réalité.

Ce type d'urbanisme et d'architecture, en brûlant les échelles, produit des agglomérations sans échelle.

La figuration est un piège dangereux.

Nos dessins, tout en étant "abstraits", sont plus concrets que toute représentation figurative; ils apportent plus de renseignements en organisant des condensations, des étalements, des rencontres, des points forts, des glissements, des superpositions de logiques graphiques, des densités différentes, ... tout un monde qui s'accroche au terrain, à l'eau des fleuves, aux routes et aux bâtiments existants, à tout ce qu'il est permis de connaître actuellement de Novi Beograd.

En adhérant au site et à l'existent, nos dessins cherchent à susciter des idées de multiples combinaisons entre les différentes activités et fonctions d'une ville, et des formes diverses qui s'élaboreront progressivement en changeant d'échelles et en faisant intervenir de nouveaux éléments toujours plus précis et de nouveaux intervenants toujours plus nombreux.

**Notre Proposition**

**A - Relier**

1. Relier au-démeus du fleuve, multiplier les ponts et donc diversifier les trafics, les manières et les raisons de passer le fleuve.

2. Relier les quartiers de Novi Beograd entre eux, aller rechercher les quartiers les plus périphériques et les plus éloignés (blocs de 45, 61, 62).

**B - Regrouper, rassembler**

Créer des quartiers avec leurs propres centralités et non un seul centre ville pour tout Novi Beograd.

Donner à chaque quartier une caractéristique.

**C - Carrefours**

Créer avec les constructions, les rues, les places, des "points de rotation" sur les grandes voies, des carrefours orientant les directions vers les quartiers.

**D - Utiliser la Sava**

Articuler le franchissement de la Sava.

Modeler le site et la ville en un seul ensemble.

Adhérer organiquement au fleuve et aux rives.

1. rive gauche

A la jonction entre Belgrad et Novi Beograd, créer un quartier nouveau avec une partie plus spécialement résidentielle organisée autour de petits canaux concentriques, et un petit port pour petits bateaux.

2. rive droite

En face du quartier précédemment décrit, créer un nouveau quartier entouré d'un canal avec une partie en continuité avec le Parc des
Expositions internationales, et comportant un port de marchandises pouvant aisément recevoir les péniches.
Plus au Nord, une seconde partie avec bureaux et habitations.
3. Créer des quartiers ou des extensions de quartiers existants sur les bords de la Sava (à côté du Musée d'Art Moderne, extensions des blocs 45, 44, 70).
4. Créer des réseaux de transports en commun sur l'eau.

E - Bâtiments existants
Investir l'espace entre et contre les bâtiments existants en se combinant à eux ou même en contradiction.

Envisager la destruction de certains.

F - Autoroute
Passer au-dessous de l'autoroute avec un franchissement important comme un quartier pour réunir les deux parties qu'elle coupe.

Créer ainsi des "collines" pour pouvoir passer, "sauter" ce fleuve de voitures.

Ces "collines" peuvent être constituées de parkings et d'aires de stockages sur lesquelles sont installés des bâtiments, des rues, des parcs, des places hautes, etc... tout un vrai quartier de ville.

G - La gare
La gare de Novi Beograd est un centre important qui peut être traité comme un quartier très spécifique s'organisant autour d'elle.

Une "colline" haute de 10 étages, composée de parkings et d'aires de stockage, combine des bâtiments de bureaux et d'habitat, des rues et des places autour de la Gare qui, au centre, redescend dans un creux au-dessus des voies de chemin de fer.

Des rues passent sous cette "colline" et la traversent, desservant ainsi la gare et les parkings; d'autres y montent et s'organisent autour du vide central.

H - Les Voies ferrées
Elles sont entourées de hauts terre-pleins d'arbres et de végétations.

I - Espaces verts
1. Parcs
Les parcs sont essentiels à la création de la ville et doivent participer intimement à son organisation.
De grands parcs peuvent être implantés autour du Palais fédéral et du Musée d'Art Moderne, avec un stade et les installations sportives.

Un autre parc peut être prévu en bordure de l'autoroute, au sud-est du Sava Center.

Le bloc 79 peut s'étendre en Parc vers la Sava, en combinaison avec un port de plaisance.

2. Terrasses
Les constructions peuvent être conçues avec des terrasses comme des jardins suspendus avec de la végétation et des arbres,...

3. Jardins Publics
Ils doivent être incorporé aux bâtiments comme des cours intérieures, des espaces pour les enfants,...
Ils constituent avec les terrasses une unité urbaine.
J - Circulations

Les dessins montrent un entrelacement de différents types de circulations, utilisant des niveaux différents.

Les circulations doivent être très diverses, composant avec les espaces publics et le privé, avec les voitures et les piétons.

Rues, sentiers, avenues, ruelles, boulevards, allées, arcades,...

LES PRINCIPES

La ville est complexe.

La construction de la ville doit répondre à des principes d'évolution qui garantissent structurellement sa complexité.

Il faut écarter les règlements d'urbanisme schématiques et discriminatoires et les lois rigides et sélectives qui solérosent son développement et son changement, et affaiblissent ses potentialités à réaliser de toujours nouveaux modes du "vivre-ensemble".

La ville doit répondre à des principes d'évolution qui garantissent sa complexité dans son développement dans le temps.

La ville est dynamique.

Ces principes, en préservant le développement complexe de la ville, lui assurer une capacité à répondre aux facteurs aléatoires et perturbateurs survenant dans le système urbain, par une augmentation et un renouvellement de sa complexité et non par une fermeture ou une immobilisation du système.

1er principe général : diversité

Ce premier principe définit à la fois la problématique des structures, des organisations, des dimensions, des puissances, ... dans le sens d'une multiplication des possibilités.

Il s'oppose aux tendances qui voudraient que l'économie et la vie urbaine soient gérées par des programmes artificiels postulant la reproduction de l'identique comme assurance d'un développement harmonieux de la ville.

Il s'oppose à la systématisation, à l'homogénéisation, à l'uniformité.

Il assure une approche du fait urbain par niveau, sans imposer, du macroscopique au microscopique, une même organisation et conformation.
Il s'oppose à la démarche qui aplani et égalise pour instaurer un ordre artificiel et oppressif à la ville.

La diversification implique qu'aucune loi de composition ne puisse devenir par essence dominante et légitime et donc ne revendique en rien, comme déterminant, une production du différent comme garantie à la diversité parce qu'elle deviendrait alors une nouvelle systématisation répétitive.

Ce principe assure à diverses dimensions le droit d'exister et de fonctionner.

Dimensions diverses des unités de production, mais également diversité des produits;

Diversité des modes de gestion;

Diversité des modes de regroupement, et d'"individualisation";

Diversité de circulations, des réseaux de communication, de leur gestion, de leur production, de leur réalisation et de leur utilisation;

Prise en compte de l'importance de la diversité des activités qui ne peuvent être réduites à la synthèse restrictive et superficielle de la Charte d'Athènes; "habiter, travailler, se reposer, circuler";

Diversité du temps dans la Ville par le respect de la multiplicité des rythmes; intégration des rythmes naturels et des rythmes urbains;

Diversité des modes de rencontre et de connexion des éléments, activités, fonctions, juridictions, gestions,... agissant sur, dans, par la ville;

Diversités des dimensions et des structures, des constructions et des architectures;

Diversité des techniques;

Diversité d'utilisation, d'occupation, de gestion du territoire;

Diversité des espaces dans leur appropriation par le "privé" et le "public";

C'est par la diversité que peuvent être pris en compte les droits du citoyen dans un espace où il peut se reconnaître dans de nombreux rapports successifs entre individu et communauté, parce qu'il crée et réalise lui-même cet espace urbain à de multiples niveaux.

2ème principe général : imbrication

Il définit le mode combinatoire, la mise en situation des différents éléments appelés à constituer dans le temps la ville tant sur le plan statique que dynamique.

Ce principe définit une situation de "mise en présence" active où les interactions, les interconnexions, les interférences, les inter-pénétrations des événements peuvent être considérés comme de nouveaux composants de la ville.

Des rencontres inopinées, des coïncidences, des conjonctions, des contacts insolites, inhabituels, accidentels, des jonctions anormales, surgissent autant de nouvelles potentialités organisationnelles de la ville.
Ces deux principes généraux procèdent d'une même dynamique, la complexité, et se renforcent réciproquement.

Imbrication des activités et des fonctions; dans le respect de la spécificité de chacune; contre le cloisonnement du zoning qui réduit les villes à des villes-dortoirs, des villes-bureaux, des villes-commerces, des villes-loisirs... dans l'appauvrissement de ces activités.

Imbrication des flux et des réseaux;

Imbrication des circulations parce que s'il est souhaitable d'éloigner l'enfant des voitures et lui offrir des circulations particulières, il ne faut pas confondre protection et différenciation ségrégative qui laisse l'enfant dans l'ignorance et le retrait.

Mais parce qu'égalemnt la multiplicité des connexions entre les différents types de circulation et de rapidité est la seule garantie à une bonne irrigation de l'ensemble et de chacune des parties, même les plus petites.

Imbrication des différentes dimensions et des différentes puissances;

Imbrication des âges;

Imbrication des qualifications et couches sociales et culturelles;

Imbrication des appropriations;

- public/prisé
- collectivité/individualité
- communauté/intimité

La richesse relationnelle s'étend dans la diversité et l'imbrication des espaces partageant le privé et le public dans des organisations diversifiant les rapports entre individu et collectivité par des panachages d'intimité et de communauté.

Imbrication des territoires:
- en termes de droit;
  différenciation et imbrication des types de propriétés et des droits d'utilisation des espaces-temps;
- en dimension:
  diversité et imbrication des différentes dimensions et surfaces des parcelles;
- en terme de temps:
  diversité et imbrication des utilisations plus ou moins longues des espaces et du territoire.

Imbrication des rythmes:
La reconnaissance des différents temps ou rythmes (dans les activités, les circulations entre nature et ville,...) n'implique en rien leur séparation en espaces différenciés ni leur obligatoire fusion en un ensemble moyen ou conflictuel. C'est dans la multitude de différents rythmes et dans leur combinaison que la ville palpite, vibre,... vit.

Imbrication des différentes gestions;

Imbrication des espaces construits et des espaces libres, des espaces construits et des espaces verts...
Il s'agit de restituer à la ville ses potentialités.
Il s'agit d'élaborer des villes où la santé, l'éducation, les sports,...
par exemple, puissent être concentrés et diffusés dans et avec les
autres activités comme par exemple, le travail en atelier ou en bureau,
l'habitat et le commerce, les salles de réunion, de cinéma, etc.
Des villes où puissent exister des petits comme des grands ateliers,
de petits comme de grands bureaux, les logements regroupés en im-
meubles, en petits bâtiments, en maisons groupées ou individuelles,...
Une ville où les combinaisons complexes des activités impliqueront
des diversités dans les circulations qui irrigueront les différentes
activités en les décloisonnant. Une ville où les espaces verts,
les espaces libres ne seront pas cantonnés au sol, mais investiront
les constructions comme les circulations, en terrasses, jardins
suspendus, toitures,...

2ème principe général : respect des spécificités
Chaque activité, fonction, groupe ou unité (par exemple, individu/
collectivité) doit pouvoir préserver son entité notamment dans toute
connexion, sinon ce serait le seul fait de connecter qui prévaloirait
et dominerait.
C'est l'évolution orchestrée actuellement par ce qu'on peut appeler
"l'informationnel" qui remplace la communication par l'information
et privilégie la connexion à la rencontre.
Dans ce nouveau type de zoning, chaque activité est réduite au
minimum et voit sa diffusion et ses rencontres canalisées "cablées".
Elle se trouve alors ramenée à un état d'isolement, ce qui se tra-
duit pour les individus par un état de solitude encore agravi.
Ces principes pourraient progressivement s'élaborer en une "Charte
des Villes".

Elle n'aura aucune loi, ni règlement à promulguer, à appliquer.
Elle assurera la diversité et la recherche, assurant que la ville
ne connaîtra plus ces développements linéaires, simplificateurs,
réducteurs, limitatifs et autoritaires.
IMPLICATIONS

Ce projet aura des implications dans des domaines très divers.

En effet, il sera indispensable d'établir une nouvelle organisation de la distribution de la propriété des maisons et des permis de construire.

La construction devra être à la fois sévèrement contrôlée et devra permettre des implantations libres afin de laisser aussi à l'initiative individuelle la liberté de participer à l'élaboration de la ville.

Cela impliquera que de nouveaux types de promotion immobilière soient pratiquées en diversifiant les densifications, les types de bâti- ments, les combinaisons de programmes et d'activités différentes. Il faudra alors imaginer des modes de financements combinés mais également de nouvelles formes de services publics qui puissent s'y insérer.

L'imbrication des activités et des fonctions d'une ville suppose une collaboration étroite de leur mode de financement.

L'industrie du bâtiment devra diversifier ses interventions et il faudra varier les dimensions des entreprises de construction.

Des solutions d'auto-construction assistée (construction de l'infrastructure par une entreprise et réalisation du reste par les habitants individuellement ou en groupe) devront être élaborées tant pour les réalisations nouvelles que pour les bâtiments anciens.

L'indispensable multiplication des transports en commun (tramway, bus, taxis, bateau sur la Sava) impliquera que soient rédifiés les statuts de ces services ainsi que leur principe de rentabilité.

Le planning urbain devra être restructuré ; ses objectifs et ses modes d'intervention devront être redéfinis.

L'objectif n'est pas de créer un centre ville à Novi Beograd mais de renforcer les quartiers avec leurs propres centralités, chacune différemment spécifiée.

Ces centralités ne peuvent et ne doivent pas être considérées comme une concentration simpliste de commerces et de services. Elles doivent priser leurs spécificités dans les rapports multiples des activités qui structurent l'ensemble du quartier.

Le travail dans toutes ses formes (bureaux, ateliers, industries non polluantes, services ...) doit se réinsérer dans l'habitat et découvrir dans cette liaison de nouveaux dynamismes et de nouvelles organisations dans les rapports de production.

Pour cela, la diversité des types de travaux mais aussi de grandeurs des entreprises est fondamentale.

Dans ce domaine, beaucoup de choses sont à inventer, comme par exemple des petites entreprises autogérées construisant leur propre espace de travail mais aussi l'habitat des travailleurs de l'entreprise avec des aides financières et techniques de la communauté ; comme par exemple, de grandes entreprises "établissant" et répartissant leurs locaux et leurs interventions pour ne pas créer de zoning et pour profiter des dynamismes et des forces locales qui peuvent se développer dans les quartiers.

Ces formes diversifiées de l'autogestion et de la production, liées à celles plus particulièrement de la construction et de l'aménagement du sol, peuvent en diversifiant le principe même de l'autogestion, l'enrichir.
de structures sociales et politiques nouvelles.

L'accroissement de la population des villes inquiète et désespère même les personnes les plus perspicaces; il est considéré le plus souvent comme une catastrophe nécessitant des réponses rapides et expéditives qui s'avèrent rapidement superficielles et lourdes.

En augmentant la population élargie aussi ses propres potentialités à l'organisation.

Rien n'implique qu'une grande quantité soit traitée comme une unité ne comportant aucune différence interne.
Rien n'implique qu'une ville soit traitée par des lois générales et schématiques tels que les blocs, le zoning, les grandes entreprises, ...

Une population, faite de cultures et d'horizons différents, renforce, par la mise en commun des expériences multiples, ses capacités à l'organisation, à l'auto-organisation.

Mais pour que ces populations, souvent déracinées, puissent utiliser leurs forces, il faut qu'elles puissent prendre possession de leur espace, de la ville.

Notre projet propose une organisation urbaine de Novi Beograd qui rendra possible l'intervention réelle de la population aux niveaux successifs de l'élaboration des programmes et de leur planning.

Pour cela, notre projet ne présente pas des formes urbaines figées mais des modes d'organisation.

La restructuration de Novi Beograd demandera beaucoup de temps et il faudra évaluer les urgences.

Actuellement, les connaissances limitées que nous avons des pro-
Our exploded cities must be deconstructed and reconstructed.

The city is a "combinatoire" open to time in which, at all levels of organisation, phenomena of communication, going in all directions, establish themselves in a complex structure.

Always more numerous possibilities of urban combinations permit unlimited architectural solutions.
Diversities and imbrications
Coherence of interlacings
Urban turbulence

to articulate the passage over the flood
to model the site and the city in one simple ensemble
so organically adhere to the river and its banks
Alliance of the old and the new in the肖像 of the Future
AUTOGESTIÓN
or HENRI LEFEBVRE
IN NEW BELGRADE
CONTENTS

p. 1 Pierre Guilbaud, Henri Lefebvre, and Serge Renaudie
   International Competition for the
   New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement

p. 81 Neil Smith
   Preface

p. 89 Klaus Ronneberger
   Henri Lefebvre and the Question of Autogestion

p. 119 Ljiljana Blagojević
   The Problematic of a “New Urban”:
   The Right to New Belgrade

p. 135 Zoran Erić
   The Third Way: The Experiment of Workers’
   Self-Management in Socialist Yugoslavia

p. 151 Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber
   Afterword

p. 155 Poster Series

p. 158 Contributors

p. 158 Acknowledgements
Preface

Neil Smith

Henri Lefebvre, whose life spanned all of the decades of the twentieth century, was arguably that century’s most influential urban theorist. The publication of this previously unpublished and unearthed text is therefore a highly significant event. I say “event” deliberately given Lefebvre’s simultaneous contribution and debt to the Paris Situationists in the 1950s and 1960s. It is significant not just because Lefebvre’s name is on it, along with co-authors Serge Renaudie and Pierre Guilbaud, but for at least three other reasons (there are surely more). Written in 1986, this text constitutes an urban planning proposal for an international competition to remake New Belgrade at a crucial moment in the history both of the city and, as would later become apparent, of the Yugoslav state. This might seem an odd project for Lefebvre to those of us mostly familiar with his more theoretical writings, and the text bears the clear influence of his French architectural co-authors, but it also represents a fascinating continuity with Lefebvre’s own earlier work. Together, through their proposal, they sought to make New Belgrade into an event.

The first reason for this text’s significance—its empirical specificity—may be the most mundane. Although Lefebvre’s theoretical sensibility pervades the text, what is striking here is the engagement with the details of urban design—the critique of Corbusier blocks, where to put parks, the interstices between buildings, the function of bridges, how to mix offices and bars, and so forth. Here, it would be easy to imagine a division of labour between the older theoretician and the younger architects and to attribute this part of the project largely to the architects, but I suspect that would be erroneous. If his earlier work did not generally deal in the detail of such architectural or urban design, there are places especially in The Production of Space (1974) where it did. Hence there is a sense of continuity with Lefebvre’s work here.
which any discussion of the urban was a similarly bourgeois dalliance that distracted attention from class. Unlike Foucault on the one side and Althusser on the other (however much they shared, in many ways, an intellectual structuralism), Lefebvre retained a vibrant, dynamic, original, inventive Marxism that would never be pinned down, whether by a party line or by reaction to it. He chose a far more difficult route. In retrospect, it is difficult in looking back at the details of his own life not to recognize an extraordinary intellectual and political courage.

In a sense, Lefebvre was the perfect comrade therefore for the New Belgrade project, based in a state that had broken with Stalinism nearly four decades earlier, and this is the third reason for this text’s significance. Much of his work since the late 1960s had been about the city, the urban and the production of space in relation to capitalism, but it always held the ambition and intent of a post-capitalist world. In Belgrade, which bore all the scars of an instrumentalist “socialist” urbanism that Lefebvre rejected with the same vehemence he denounced capitalist suburbia, he also found an exciting opening insofar as Yugoslavia had in place at least the rudiments of workers’ self-management (*autogestion*). Unlike France or East Germany, for example, it fit between the worst of Stalinist planning and the worst of the capitalist market, and in the context of the 1980s this really was an important opening. Here at least, there was a glimmer of possibility for a “New Urban.” In a more seamless way than in almost any other of his texts, the New Belgrade project combined Lefebvre’s penchant for theory with a sometimes awkward hankering for the empirical. To what extent this is due to the collaboration with his co-authors is not immediately clear. This said, one has to cast a critical eye on some of the formulations here, and it is important to register these moments of critique. The authors emphasize the spontaneous creativity of diversity and insist on the complexity of the city, which “implies the abandonment of all hope of a totalizing knowledge of the city.” And yet a certain evolutionary biological framework organizes some of the thinking about cities—cities as organisms—and this not only straightjackets the insistence on diversity, but it seems much too easy and outdated a metaphor today.
Putting Lefebvre in a contemporary context has its own revelations. In his 1970 book *The Urban Revolution*, he argued that we were on the threshold of a new historical epoch, the “urban problematic.” Urbanization increasingly supersedes industrialization as the world historical and geographical reality. This seems, at first glance, like a mix of epochal apples and oranges, but if we consider the global economic and (Lefebvre would insist) social crash since 2007, it is difficult to disagree. An unprecedented amount of global finance capital was invested in property, again globally, but Lefebvre would have winced at the irony that indeed it was the US housing market that triggered this depression. He understood then, however vaguely and elliptically, that the making of the built environment was an increasingly central part of both the leading edge and the reproduction of capitalism; most of us are catching up with this insight only now. In 1970 he anticipated “world cities” (a concept, incidentally, that he attributed to Mao Zedong) long before “global cities” became fashionable, and in the present text there is a reference to “Megapolis,” which surely owes something to Jean Gottman’s monumental study *Megalopolis* of 1961. Lefebvre’s innovation was to see the generality of these ideas and to suggest that what might be called “city building” (he never quite puts it this way) had become a central driver of capital accumulation. Further, as this New Belgrade project only hints at, cities today are less tied to a subsidiary role within national spheres than to a more constitutive role with respect to global political and cultural economies.

This sets up an interesting tension that becomes apparent in this text. Drawing very much from Marx, Lefebvre always insisted on the importance of “production,” always in material and conceptual, social and spatial terms, all imbricated in daily life. All of these elements come together in the New Belgrade proposal, which explicitly advances the notion of imbrication. At the same time Lefebvre rejects productivism as a malady, in the sense that production cannot be reduced to a narrowly material concern.

It goes without saying that that he indeed was a fierce critic of the kind of “constructionism” that has developed into the present era’s “condition of truth” under the aegis of a post-structuralist sensibility. This was precisely the point of his earlier critique of “mental space,” which was aimed squarely at emerging Parisian social theory in the 1970s. By the same token, he is clear that (social) economic analysis is indispensable but that economism is barren.

“It is impossible to string together an urbanism whose ideology is fundamentally opposed to the self-management of the City, Space, and Time,” reads the New Belgrade proposal. This is classic Lefebvre. It works as a critique of previously existing urbanism in capitalist societies, but it also works as an aspiration for a “New Urban” to be built out of the ashes of capitalism. If the ambition of self-management (autogestion) largely came to grief at the hands of a post-1970s neoliberalism, this is beginning to look like a temporary defeat. Confronting the global economic meltdown after 2007, desperate Wall Street capitalists simply could not comprehend their new world: “This is not how capitalism is supposed to work!” they gasped. Had they read Lefebvre, or Marx, or even Schumpeter, they would have understood only too well that the kind of global economic and social crisis currently unfolding is endemic to the capitalist mode of production. For Wall Streeters, that which once seemed impossible, literally inconceivable, is now fact. The socialist left needs to feel this same lesson with the same profundity: what seemed impossible a decade or two ago in the darkest days of neoliberalism can, with political work, be made to become social fact.

The global economic depression did not immediately lead to widespread coordinated revolt and uprising, but it did lead to sporadic political anger in cities around the world. As the crisis gathered, the immigrant banlieue of Paris erupted as immigrant workers and youth protested racism and police violence. The same year, 2005, even according to official Chinese government statistics, there were 74,000 violent uprisings, riots, or revolts in that country, making China the global capital of class struggle. (Enamoured as he was with Mao in the late 1960s, Lefebvre today would surely appreciate the ironic truth that it is only a matter of time before

the Chinese Communist Party officially rewrites Lenin: capitalism is actually the highest stage of communism.) Three years after these events, in Athens and in other cities, another political explosion rocked the Greek state to its roots. In Riga, Latvia, and Reykjavík, Iceland, in early 2009, violent demonstrations led to the fall of elected governments. More importantly, self-management has had its recrudescence. Most prominently, following the bankruptcy of the Argentinian state in 2001–02, workers’ cooperatives sprang up all over Buenos Aires and in other cities. By 2007 an estimated 50,000 people were involved in self-managed factory and housing cooperatives in Buenos Aires alone. The fallout from the global crisis after 2007 threatens far more widespread autogestion. Even in the United States, where the 2009 nationalization of banks and car companies—some the largest in the world—would have been inconceivable even months earlier, a Detroit-based General Motors finds itself only 10% privately owned in 2009 while the union (United Auto Workers) owns, for the moment, a greater share of the post-bankruptcy company. By no stretch of the imagination does this amount to workers’ self-management, but it does suggest that even in the belly of the capitalist beast, a dramatic shift is underway concerning what is and is not possible. Lefebvre would have appreciated that.

Lefebvre understood that there was no automatic correlation between economic crisis and workers’ revolt. Far from it. And yet he would also have appreciated that amidst a crisis such as the one engulfing the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the political future becomes radically open. He lived his life in search of that radical openness of possibility, often deliberately undefined in the face of both capitalist and Stalinist certainty—undefined too in the faith that political practice made its own possibilities. Situationist-inspired, philosophically bent, politically unstinting, and urban plan-inclined, Lefebvre would have relished the possibilities of autogestion in the present moment as the beginning of a much larger event.
Currently Henri Lefebvre’s works on space are singled out from his extensive oeuvre as the focus for critical reception. In contrast, little attention is paid to his vehement criticism of all forms of power, an issue that reappears as a leitmotif in all his texts. This state of affairs is certainly partly a consequence of the utterly different political constellations that pertain nowadays. The French philosopher (1901–91) grew up in an era when communism still confronted capitalism as a genuine alternative. Throughout most of his political life this independent thinker always found himself fighting on two fronts: critiquing both the capitalist system and dogmatic orthodox Marxism. In his reflections he frequently addressed the problem of bureaucratic state socialism.

On a large number of points Lefebvre moved beyond the program prescribed by “official” Marxism, which concentrated its efforts on gaining control of the state apparatus and on centralized planning of production by the politically active proletariat. In contrast, he declared everyday life to be the decisive category for the connection between economics and the practices of individuals in their lives. Changing everyday life would have to occur through the intervention of all players and not according to the norms of representative democracy. “On this level the association of interests and interested individuals has a name. It is called autogestion.”

1. Henri Lefebvre turned towards Marxism in the late 1920s and was for many years a member of the Parti Communiste Français. In 1958, he was excluded from the Party for “revisionism.”

2. Henri Lefebvre, Position: contre les technocrates (Paris: Gonthier, 1967), 48, quoted in Predag Vranicki, Geschichte des Marxismus, vols. I, II (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974 [originally published in 1961 and 1971, respectively]), 902. (Translator’s note: Unless an English text is noted in the citation, all quotations are translated by Helen Ferguson.)
He views the idea of autogestion as a means to an end and an end in itself, which makes it possible to drive forward the “withering away of the state” (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels) and fosters a comprehensive democratization of society.

However, as militant movements critical of the system have ebbed away, Lefebvre’s penetrating thought has lost much of its previous intensity. The “volcanoes of Marxism” are viewed as extinct now and since the collapse of the “Socialist camp”—if not before—capitalism has become victorious worldwide—apparently with no possible alternative. A contemporary reading of Lefebvre’s work must bear in mind the historical specificity of many of his texts and consider to what extent the French philosopher’s reflections might still offer points of reference for contemporary social critiques.

**Alienation and appropriation**

Marx’s early works, in particular Theses on Feuerbach (1845) and Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844), are crucial lodes for Lefebvre’s thinking. He views them as a call to take practical life processes of the general public as a subject for research.

That is the reason why Lefebvre selects as his point of departure a category he sees as the fundamental level of social reality: production. What does this term signify? Traditional “critiques of political economy” located production in factories; Lefebvre, however, sees this as an inappropriately reductionist approach to reality:

> “Marxist dogmatism defined it [mankind] by labour and for labour, as a producer. But active man creates the human world and, through the act of production, produces himself. He does not simply produce things, implements, or goods; he also produces history and situations.”

He considers the term production to encompass production of societal-social relations and “in the fullest sense of the term, reproduction.”

In adopting a broader definition of production, Lefebvre intends to focus attention on human practice, with a view to rehabilitating the productive character of all human activities. In this context, he reproaches orthodox Marxism not just for limiting social reality to a consideration of the economy but also because, through this primacy of the economy, it brings about—on the theoretical plane—the very reduction of human activities that the capitalist mode of production practices in reality. As a consequence of these kinds of economic ideologies, the “notion of appropriation has literally vanished from Marxist thought.”

As a logical consequence of this, Lefebvre thus makes human realization the focus of his social analysis: humans engage in such realization when they actively appropriate “their world.” He sets the term appropriation in opposition to the notion of alienation: Lefebvre uses this term in a much broader sense than Marx, who believed it had a tendency to “overlook the diverse range of forms in order to define alienation in a uniform manner by its borderline case: as the reification of human activities and relations, brought about by the economic fetish, money, commodities, capital.”

Lefebvre identifies alienation not only in capitalist production and labour relations, but also in the multifarious constraints that play a part in structuring all aspects of everyday life.

Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life* (1974) is not limited to the sphere of reproduction but turns its gaze instead on the entire

---

3. The French term autogestion is difficult to express in German, as its meaning cannot be fully conveyed by the German terms “Selbstverwaltung” (self-administration) or by “Partizipation” (participation). (Translator’s note: The term is equally difficult to translate into English. I have opted to use the French term autogestion, with occasional references to worker’s self-management to link in with quotations and refer readers to the discussion on translating the term in Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, eds., *State, Space, World: Selected Essays by Henri Lefebvre*, trans. Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009].)

4. The model of autogestion can be traced back to the early nineteenth century in Europe. The idea resonates, in particular, with theoreticians involved in anarchist, anarcho-syndicalist, and syndicalist circles (Mikhail Bakunin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Peter Kropotkin, Georges Sorel, etc.). Proudhon (1809-65), in particular, who had a pronounced ideological influence on the French trade union movement, is seen as a pioneering thinker on autogestion.

5. Henri Lefebvre, *Der dialektische Materialismus* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966] (originally published in 1939). Lefebvre played a decisive role in the 1930s in the publication of Marx’s early works in France.


7. Ibid., 265.

8. Ibid., 48ff.

process of socialization. It, thus, also encompasses a critique of political economy and at the same time moves beyond this. His interest in acquiring more knowledge about a critique of political economy that is orientated to the entire process of socialization aims, in particular, to attain his declared goal, namely to “give subjectivity renewed value”\(^\text{10}\) and to seek a place for autonomy and creativity. Here the notion of “creation” plays a key role and is intended to replace Marx’s much more narrowly defined notion of work. This term cannot be equated with artistic activities, but instead on the social level stands for “the activity of a collectivity assuming the responsibility of its own social function and destiny—in other words for self-administration.”\(^\text{11}\)

**Yugoslavian autogestion socialism**

Although the ideological roots of the *autogestion* model are to be found in the 19th century, the term *autogestion* only began to be used in France in the 1950s.\(^\text{12}\) This was due above all to the existence of the Yugoslav model of *autogestion*, or workers’ self-management, which, in those days, was viewed as an “independent route to Socialism.”\(^\text{13}\)

Initially *autogestion* was not part of the political program of the Yugoslav Communists; instead, it was much more the case that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) under the leadership of Marshall Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980) took a Stalinist approach and was controlled by the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau), with Moscow holding the reins.\(^\text{14}\) The new regime in Belgrade rapidly adopted many significant features of the Soviet system. For example, the new 1946 constitution was broadly similar to the 1936 USSR constitution, and the federation model adopted by the state also echoed the Soviet model in many respects.\(^\text{15}\) There were, however, also historical grounds for adopting this paradigm. Whereas the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in the inter-war period was centralized and Serb-dominated, Tito opted for a federal structure in order to contribute to overcoming nationalist antagonisms. The model of an ethnic nation with three “tribes” was replaced by a nation-state model, which, at the same time, also comprised recognition and equal rights for the nations living in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav federal state, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was made up of the constituent republics—Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro—as well as the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, which, although part of the constituent Republic of Serbia, had their own rights and competences. In the interest of the balance of powers, the architecture of the new federal order was devised to weaken the formerly hegemonic Serb position. As a result, “Southern Serbia” was transformed into the constituent Republic of Macedonia, and Kosovo and Vojvodina were accorded territorial autonomy within the Republic of Serbia. The Krajsina region, populated mainly by Serbs, was, however, not granted such rights out of consideration for Croatian sensitivities. By way of compensation for this reduction in the size of their territory, the Serbs were given over-proportional influence in state institutions.\(^\text{16}\)

---

13. French social scientist Frank Georgi points out that the term *autogestion* is a literal translation of the Serbo-Croat term samoupravljanje (“self administration”). Georgi identifies the first uses of the term in French translations of Yugoslavian texts. In the early 1960s, the term acquired a new use: *autogestion* was now also used to refer to the administration of agricultural land lying fallow in post-independence Algeria. Georgi argues that the importance of the Algerian example for the spread of the term *autogestion* should not be underestimated.
14. Cominform, which was responsible for the international Communist movement between 1947 and 1956, was the successor organization to the Comintern (Communist International). The latter was dissolved in 1943, as the Soviet leadership did not wish to provoke its Western allies politically during the struggle against German aggression.
The partisan army’s victory in the war of liberation against the German, Italian, and Hungarian occupation, a struggle accompanied by a vicious civil war, provided the foundations of legitimacy for the new state. The Yugoslav Communists, who had acquired an absolute monopoly on power as early as 1945, were proud of what they had accomplished independently in military terms. In most other “People’s Democracies” in Eastern Europe, the Communists could only seize power with the protection of the Soviet army and with a certain time-lag. The CPY adopted a correspondingly assertive attitude towards the Soviet leadership and their allies. This autonomy was the main cause of the growing misunderstandings and tensions in relations with Moscow, which ultimately led to the definitive rupture between Josef Stalin and Tito. Yugoslavia was formally excluded from the Cominform at the Bucharest conference on 28 June 1948.

In light of pressure in the foreign policy domain, as well as in domestic policy, the Yugoslav leadership felt obliged to set new ideological and organizational priorities. Tito now began to preach an independent route to Socialism, involving turning away from the “bureaucratic and repressive Stalinist state.” Two pillars underpinned his alternative project, one of which was decentralization. In 1949, a new bill guaranteed the governments of the republics greater influence. The second pillar was the establishment, in the same year, of workers’ councils in state companies as “organs of socialized labour.” With a view to emphasizing this new direction, the CPY changed its name in 1952 to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY).

17. Yugoslavia is among the countries that suffered the most in the Second World War. Approximately 10 per cent of the population died during the occupation.

18. After the attack on Yugoslavia by Germany’s Wehrmacht in April 1941, the Independent State of Croatia was declared; its territory encompassed Croatia (without the areas occupied by Italy and Hungary) and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Largely as a consequence of the dearth of other collaborators, the German Reich government tapped into the fascist Ustaše movement in this endeavour. The puppet regime was responsible for the genocide of the Serbs, Jews, Sinti, and Roma. In Slovenia, too, it was primarily the Catholic clergy who collaborated with the occupiers—as was also the case in Croatia. Finally, the Domobranci (Home Guard loyal to the Church) fought against Tito’s partisans. The partisans’ retaliation at the end of the war was exceedingly bloody. The massacre of the “White Guard,” in which thousands were killed, remained a taboo topic in Slovenia for a long time even after the collapse of Yugoslavia.


In foreign policy, Tito secured the “Yugoslavian route to Socialism” through a policy of “non-alignment,” which was very positively received in particular amongst “Third World countries.” The regime actually did succeed in overcoming the country’s isolation. In the Cold War era, the “Yugoslavian experiment” enjoyed a great deal of sympathy in Western public opinion—particularly amongst the non-orthodox Left.

Lefebvre also observed the project attentively. In Problèmes actuels du marxisme (1958), he presented the following appraisal: “In 1950 these Marxists have now set up what is referred to in classical terminology as the socio-economic basis for the withering away of the state. It comprises a complex structure of local, decentralised and democratically elected organs: worker administration councils in factories, producer councils at various levels (municipalities, districts, federated republics, federation). . . . Several central organs and ministries, including those for planning, agriculture and public education, have vanished; their powers have been transferred to decentralised organs. In theoretical terms the state of public officials, the administrative state, no longer exists in Yugoslavia.” Lefebvre identified two different models of Socialism: “One, administrative or state socialism, has—sometimes in a dreadful fashion—demonstrated its effectiveness. The other, Socialism without a state, is still in search of its path and its formulation: it has not yet proved its worth.” He added a further caveat to this cautious appraisal, indicating that the Yugoslavian model is not suited to highly developed industrialized states.

In practice, it transpired in Yugoslavia’s everyday reality that the break with Stalinism postulated by Tito was often merely a formal severing of ties. As the centralist Party concept was not really called into question, the principle of workers’ self-management was
in structural conflict with the LCY’s assertion of a claim to a monopoly position as the guarantor of workers’ rights. State companies were not administered democratically by “direct producers” but were de facto subject to the control of local party functionaries and directors. In addition, a complicated set-up, which was virtually impossible to grasp and which delegated powers to various tiers of the system, made the autogestion model increasingly cumbersome and bureaucratic. However, one must concede that Yugoslav autogestion Socialism did at least grant workers certain co-decision rights.

In the early 1960s, Yugoslavian intellectuals—parallel to the New Left in the West—engaged in the critical reception of Marx’s early writings and declared these to be the most important part of his oeuvre. In contrast, the LCY drew primarily on Capital (1867). Advocates of this nondogmatic school of thought were grouped around the journal Praxis. They discovered Marx’s notions of alienation and practice and gave them a “cultural revolution” interpretation. Entirely in keeping with Lefebvre’s thinking, these key terms served as a theoretical reference in calling for permanent changes in the world of everyday life. “Human life,” to cite philosopher Branko Bošnjak (co-founder of the journal Praxis), “must be oriented constantly to practice. . . . It is not words that are important but action; not empty words but genuine action. The human being is what he does and what he accomplishes. . . . Struggling for humanity must constitute the primary content of political practice.”

This, of course, also meant Titoist state ideology and the bureaucratic “degeneration” of the workers’ self-management model.

The system-critical thinking of the Praxis group fell (partly) on fertile ground. In 1968, a student movement developed in Yugoslavia too. Boris Kanzleiter and Krunoslav Stojaković point out in their 2008 study that—in contrast to the protests in other countries—the students involved in revolts in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Novi Sad, and Sarajevo were able to articulate their demands within the framework of the dominant state doctrine: “Our program,” as one declaration by striking students and professors pronounced, “is the program of the most progressive forces in our society—the program of the LCY and our constitution.” One sentence later came the real punch-line: “We want to see this implemented directly in practice.”

Demonstrating students also yelled out slogans condemning the “red bourgeoisie” and demanded that all social differences be overcome, and that the elements of a market economy introduced in 1965 be withdrawn.

The regime saw advocates of the Praxis philosophy as promoting the student movement on the ideological front. After a broad protest movement with marked nationalist undertones emerged once again in Croatia in 1970–71, the Party leadership prepared to strike back; in 1975, Praxis was definitively banned and a series of professors who had worked for the journal were dismissed from their posts.

The myth of socialism based on autogestion, or workers’ self-management, faded in the course of the 1970s. The central
federation grew stronger, but there was no democratization of Yugoslavian society. The individual republics increasingly acquired greater powers and decentralization proved to be a driving force in “nationalization.” In place of the old, “centralizing socialist” Party officials, who had endeavoured to uphold the myth of the partisans and the war of liberation as an ideology of integration, “regional-nationalist” elites now took centre-stage and attempted to consolidate their political legitimacy through nationalism and ethnocentricity. In the light of this development, Lefebvre also took a more sober approach. In the pamphlet La révolution n’est plus ce qu’elle était, the French philosopher summarizes the Yugoslavian experiment in an interview with Communist activist Catherine Régulier:

I am talking about the failure of centralised planning in the Soviet Union as well as the failures of autogestion in Yugoslavia. . . . this failure [Khrushchev’s] demonstrates how difficult it is to provide an impetus to democratising from above. The movement comes from below or it does not come at all. The example of Yugoslavia leads us to the same conclusion. A state that proclaims autogestion from above paralyses it by this mere fact and converts it into its opposite.

**Autogestion in France**

The idea of autogestion was not found only in socialist Yugoslavia or post-independence Algeria. There was public debate on this model, particularly among the French Left, and some of the French Left also advocated for the idea. In this context, the shape of the autogestion debates always reflected the political trends of the moment.

Initially, the situation in post-war France was coloured by a specific constellation of political forces. As early as autumn 1944, the Allies accepted General Charles de Gaulle, who had led the struggle against the German occupation from England, as the head of the French provisional government, which brought together all the political forces in the Resistance, including the Communists. However, just a few years later, there was a shift in the complicated equilibrium of the domestic political balancing act. As political blocs began to take shape around the two superpowers, the US and the USSR, the national consensus between the parties crumbled in France too. A huge wave of protest and strikes in reaction to deteriorating living conditions served as a pretext for “bourgeois” forces to remove the Communist ministers from government. The outbreak of the Cold War, which France was also involved in militarily in its capacity as a former colonial power, raised the stakes and strained the political climate within the country; even minor ideological deviations from the official line of either of the camps could potentially be seen as going over to the enemy.

The Parti Communiste Français, which was loyal to Moscow, together with the General Confederation of Labour, Confédération générale du travail, the trade union affiliated to the Party, dominated the proletarian milieu. Although the Communists were utterly isolated in the Party-political landscape, they enjoyed networked structures with far-reaching links. Communist control of the largest French trade union confederation, the development of a Party press with print runs in the millions, and the panoply of mass organizations that developed (women, young people, former

---

30. Veljak, “Selbstverwaltung war—bestenfalls—Mitbestimmung.” In this respect, it is also interesting to look at how the Praxis school of thought evolved. Even in the early 1970s, some intellectuals not only turned towards concrete political and economic questions, but also turned toward ethnic and nationalist positions. A strange amalgam of political dissidence and nationalism emerged. In a certain sense, there was a “negative dialectic” here of alienation philosophy and re-ethnification.
31. Henri Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier, Die Revolution ist auch nicht mehr was sie mal war [Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979 [originally published in 1978]].
32. Ibid., 133.
33. The eight-year-long Indochina War (1947–54), which ended with the complete victory of the Communist Viet Minh over French colonial power, should be mentioned in particular here. There were also bloody insurgencies in other French colonial areas too; in 1947 in Madagascar, for example, where 80,000 people lost their lives when the insurgency was suppressed, or in Tunisia, where partisans fought successfully (1951–1956) to gain independence. Last in the series came the Algerian War (1954–1962), where it is assumed that one million Algerians were killed, out of a pre-war Muslim population of 8.5 million.
combatants, tenants, etc.) gave rise to a kind of closed counter-society. The Communists also acted as a magnet for student and intellectual circles. The Parti Communiste Français was partly so attractive due to memories of the Front Populaire from the period between the wars, whilst, on the other hand, it was also partly the fruit of the still vital legacy of the Résistance. Alongside the Stalinist bloc, there were only small, radical left wing groupings, which were either close to Trotskyism or focused on council communism and other dissenting ideas with a Marxist provenance.

However, the first cracks in the hegemony the Parti Communiste Français enjoyed among the Left appeared in the 1950s with the insurgencies in Czechoslovakia and East Germany (1953), in Poland and Hungary (1956) coupled with Nikita Khrushchev’s revelations about Stalin’s crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1956). In particular, the justifications given for Soviet military intervention in Budapest and the French government’s colonial policy in Algeria damaged the Parti Communiste Français’s reputation. It was during this period that Lefebvre turned his back on the Party once and for all. Whereas previously he considered bourgeois ideology to have been vanquished by Marxist philosophy, he now took the view that Marxism’s theoretical foundations had been shattered; orthodox “dialectic and historical materialism” had morphed into a rigid doctrine underpinning and sustaining the state. In the light of the changed situation, the libertarian Left, around journals such as Socialisme ou Barberie (1949–69) or Internationale Situationniste (1957–72), regrouped and gained greater influence. In particular, the group Socialisme ou Barberie proved to be a driving force for de-Stalinization in the leftist intellectual milieu. In the wake of events in Hungary, Socialisme ou Barberie lambasted the Parti Communiste Français and emphasized the revolutionary role of the Hungarian proletariat, which had practiced “direct democracy” for a short time. One overarching development was the assumption among representatives of this way of thinking that bureaucratic capitalism existed and was manifested in the East in a “centralized” fashion and in the West in a “fragmented” form. In their view, Titoist Yugoslavia, too, with its autogestion model, was also only a variant of bureaucratic rule. In particular, Cornelius Castoriadis (1922–97), the intellectual leader of the group, expanded on the bureaucratization thesis. He noted a growing tendency for the economy and the state to merge, the replacement of the bourgeoisie by a bureaucratic class and increasing state presence in all areas of life. Castoriadis contrasted this tendency with autonomy. By this he meant primarily workers’ self-management, and the notion of the proletariat being independent from parties and trade unions. Later he also used the term in a more general way. Socialisme ou Barberie had a pronounced


36. In the 1930s, after the German Communist Party was banned by the Nazis, the Parti Communiste Français was the strongest Communist force in Western Europe. As a reaction to attempted fascist putsches, in 1936, a Popular Front emerged in France, comprising political forces ranging from the radical left to the bourgeois centre.

37. After the defeat in 1940, a dividing line ran through French society. The major- ity supported the clerical, conservative, and prosperous circles of the collaborat- ing Vichy government, whilst General de Gaulle’s resistance, conservative though the movement and many of its leading supporters were, was backed, above all, by “progressive” forces. The Communists—banned since 1939—initially categorized the war with Nazi Germany as an “imperialist war,” in which the proletariat should not partici- pate. The Parti Communiste Français’s attitude did not change until summer 1941 when Germany’s Wehrmacht attacked the Soviet Union. From then on, the Parti Communiste Français became the most important bastion of resistance against the German occupa- tion. Henri Lefebvre was actively involved in the Résistance.

38. In early 1956, a left-wing alliance headed by the Socialists had won the elec- tions. The Communists, at the time the strongest left-wing party with 30 per cent support, tolerated the new government. In light of realpolitik considerations, the Parti Communiste Français voted in parliament to support special powers, which made the state of emergency imposed in Algeria considerably more severe.


41. Cornelius Castoriadis grew up in Greece and in 1937—under the dictatorial Metaxa regime—joined the illegal Communist youth organization. After the German occupation of the country (1941), he tried in vain to reform the CP and joined the Greek section of the IV International. In 1945, he felt he had no option but to emigrate to France, where he initially joined the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI), the French section of the IV International. However, he left the organization as early as 1948, in no small part due to the establishment of amicable relations between the PCI and the Tito re- gime. After Socialisme ou Barberie was dissolved, he limited his involvement—except for a brief intermezzo in 1968—to critical commentaries. He enjoyed great academic recognition above all for his publication L’institution imaginaire de la societé (1957–72), regrouped and gained greater influence. In particular, the group Socialisme ou Barberie proved to be a driving force for de-Stalinization in the leftist intellectual milieu. In the wake of events in Hungary, Socialisme ou Barberie lambasted the Parti Communiste Français and emphasized the revolutionary role of the Hungarian proletariat, which had practiced “direct democracy” for a short time. One overarching development was the assumption among representatives of this way of thinking that bureaucratic capitalism existed and was manifested in the East in a “centralized” fashion and in the West in a “fragmented” form. In their view, Titoist Yugoslavia, too, with its autogestion model, was also only a variant of bureaucratic rule. In particular, Cornelius Castoriadis (1922–97), the intellectual leader of the group, expanded on the bureaucratization thesis. He noted a growing tendency for the economy and the state to merge, the replacement of the bourgeoisie by a bureaucratic class and increasing state presence in all areas of life. Castoriadis contrasted this tendency with autonomy. By this he meant primarily workers’ self-management, and the notion of the proletariat being independent from parties and trade unions. Later he also used the term in a more general way. Socialisme ou Barberie had a pronounced
influence—particularly in respect to autogestion—on the May 1968 movement and on the New Left.42

The Situationist International (SI),43 which Lefebvre also had closer contacts to at times, also picked up on the notion of autogestion.44 This avant-garde group of artists and intellectuals ties into Dadaist and Surrealist traditions. Initially, the SI appeared with the aim of overcoming the divisions between art and politics. Their experimental techniques comprised subverting and diverting existing forms of capitalist culture. In 1960, Guy Debord (1931–94), the Situationists’s intellectual leader, briefly became a member of Socialisme ou Barberie, which provided him with important theoretical input, particularly concerning the idea of council communism. Debord, for his part, encouraged Socialisme ou Barberie to move beyond the limited perspective of factory agitation and to attack the capitalist order in its entirety. In The Society of the Spectacle (1967),45 he criticized not only the divisions separating labour from leisure, but also the all-encompassing technocratic administration of human conditions of existence; alienation, in his view, is not produced in the sphere of production, but instead characterizes all spheres of life. The quotidian, as Debord explained in another passage, has become a colonized sector of modern bureaucratic capitalism. Established modes of perception and action could, in the SI’s view, be disrupted through the “construction of situations” in which the individual could define themselves playfully. The theory of construction as a cultural form of revolutionary practice would find resonance in the New Left’s anti-authoritarian forms of action.

However, in the Situationist vision, deconstruction of everyday life is only the first step. The second step was advocated by Mustapha Khayati, a member of the SI, in the pamphlet On the Poverty of Student Life (1966),46 proposing autogestion généralisée (“generalized workers’ control”) as a revolutionary cultural project to subvert the power and social norms of capitalist society. “Workers’ control must be the means and the end of the struggle: it is at once the goal of that struggle and its adequate form.”47

Left-wing Christians in search of “humane Socialism” also played a role in France as another group advocating the idea of autogestion. Workers’ self-management seemed to them to be a viable model to save industrialized states in the East and West from a soulless world populated by robots, a society where the labour force has no influence on a company’s working methods and decisions, which allows people to fade away as passive consumers of a materialist social order and to be administered by an impersonal, bureaucratic state.48

The term alienation is, thus, the overarching category that unites various groups in their critique of capitalism. During this period the theory of alienation provided the basis for many intellectuals in Western metropolises to develop critiques of society and culture. In this respect, neo-Marxist and conservative trends overlapped or, indeed, complemented each other.

From the mid-1960s, the idea of autogestion meant much more in France than simply a reference to experiences in Yugoslavia or Algeria. This was also manifested in the founding of the journal Autogestion (1966), which for two decades was the most important platform for discussions on the topic. Former Socialisme ou Barberie members, such as Yvon Bourdet (editor of the journal), and critical Marxists like Lefebvre helped to clarify the contours of the autogestion concept. In the first edition, Lefebvre began by exploring the work of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, one of the intellectual

---

42. Socialisme ou Barberie's ideas also inspired Italian left-wing radical politics, especially 1960s and 1970s Operaismo, or Workerism (Sergio Bologna, Antonio Negri, Mario Tronti, etc.).
43. In choosing this designation, the group was also referring, inter alia, to a quotation in Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, trans. D.D.L. (New York: Mondial, 2005), in which he described the proletarian revolution as the "situation" that "renders all retreat impossible."
44. The contact broke down when the Situationists claimed that Lefebvre had plagiarized one of their texts on the Paris Commune. He, in turn, accused the Situationists of "revolutionary Romanticism": he claimed that they were unilaterally dissolving the dialectic between subjectivization and objectivization, replacing these with the notion of individual self-realization.
47. Ibid.
fathers of autogestion: he explained how Proudhon had endeavoured to roll back the state, starting from points of “strength,” for example, by reorganizing the banking sector. Efforts to this end have, however, either failed economically or been swallowed up by capitalism. Lefebvre argues that autogestion should instead begin in the economy’s zones of “weakness.” As he explains, this offers the possibility for new social forces, which could undermine the solid props of capitalism. That, however, will only be possible once the system has already begun to crumble. Autogestion, as Lefebvre puts it, means “opening toward the possible.” It shows a practical way to “change life, which remains the watchword, the goal and the meaning of a revolution.”

Like the Situationists, Lefebvre broadened the notion of autogestion, which was originally much narrower. It now also entailed a viable utopia that appeared to bridge the gap between reform and revolution.

Just a little later, one of the central demands in the slogans of the French May ’68 movement was a call for autogestion. In the process, the debate on autogestion moved beyond the constrained sphere of radical left-wing circles and attracted interest from a wider audience. The student revolts began in the underprivileged outskirts of Paris, the banlieue, at Nanterre University, and then the spark leapt to the capital and, ultimately, set the entire country alight. Whilst the “insurgency in France” did happen later than in other countries, it also proved to be much more of a hot issue for French society. The fact that the French revolts did not flare up at the same time as those elsewhere is in no small part due to the existence of the Parti Communiste Français, which still assumed a significant role on the Left and served as a disciplining factor maintaining order among the forces in opposition within society.

A technocratic urbanization program also contributed to the outbreak of the student revolts in France. In the course of the industrialization of the university and with a view to relieving big cities of the burden of over-subscribed faculties, a series of university centres and student villages were created from scratch outside French cities. The new university campus in Nanterre, for example, is situated in “no man’s land.” The modern cité universitaire is made up of functional buildings that offer the space for only a minimum degree of social life. The students were, thus, forced to live in overcrowded accommodations and subjected to repressive house rules, which included a ban on political activities and on men and women meeting freely in each other’s rooms. Yet, this twofold shearing-off, both functionally and socially, produced unwanted effects. “The university campus,” to cite Lefebvre when he was on the faculty of Nanterre University, “where the function of housing is reduced to the absolutely necessary minimum and specialised—whilst maintaining the traditional divisions between male and female, between work, leisure and private life—becomes a locus of sexual hopes and rebellions. The slightest ban, the slightest control becomes intolerable. Not so much because of their—mostly ridiculous—effects but because they symbolize repression.”

The French student union had already criticized the structural weaknesses of the university, although without managing to drum up much active support among those affected. A broader movement only began to emerge when various steps were taken by small student groups in the spring of 1968, significantly disrupting the functioning of the university through limited breaches of the rules, being provocative, and violating taboos. The main initiators were the group of Enragés (literally, “The Enraged Ones”), with the
thrust of their approach modelled on the ideas of the SI, together with the 22nd March Movement, which, for its part, was strongly influenced by former Socialisme ou Barberie members. The leftist radical students viewed the university solely as a forum for action and as the point of departure for a comprehensive revolution encompassing all of society.

What began as the revolt of a small student minority on the outskirts of Paris ultimately gave rise to a political crisis in the ruling system. The revolutionary spark ignited the workers, too. Although no calls to protest came from the trade union headquarters, within just a few days almost ten million people were on strike. It was the largest general strike ever experienced in France. The reasons for this lie not only in economic causes but also in structures of authority within companies. The success of the students in asserting their demands vis-à-vis the government served as a model here. The trade union Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT), with a program close to that of the New Left, gave the spontaneous strikes a new dimension by using the term autogestion in a public declaration for the first time. The anti-hierarchical thrust of the concept sufficed to unite the demands of students and workers. Democratization of universities was to be followed by democratization in firms: “À la monarchie industrielle et administrative, il faut substituer des structures démocratiques à base d’autogestion.” The slogan of autogestion did succeed in bringing together the various protest movements for a short time, yet—despite numerous attempts in the occupied firms—did not become institutionalized in the longer term. In the first instance, the term was not added to any party manifesto. The Communist-oriented Confédération Générale du Travail also rejected the concept as a formule creuse (“empty form of words”), as it was aimed primarily at changing decision-making structures and not at altering ownership structures.

Whilst Lefebvre primarily derived his notions of autogestion from his critical reading of Marx and the experiences of the 1871 Paris Commune, the experiences of the May ’68 movement now became an important source of inspiration. In The Explosion: Marxism and the French Upheaval (1969) he portrayed autogestion as a conflictual practice, that blows a “breach in the existing system of decision-making centres.” It is erroneous “to limit this process to the administration of economic matters (companies, industrial sectors, etc.). Autogestion implies educating society. It presumes a new social practice at all levels.” He asserted that this process might well bring about the collapse of bureaucracy and centralized state administration, but could also be reversed. Retreating to corporatist interests, thus, posed a threat to the process of autogestion. As an antidote, he recommends “constant self-criticism.” It is impossible to miss the echo of Maoist Cultural Revolution here. For Lefebvre autogestion also signified living-out criticism of representative democracy. The varying interests of society at the grassroots level must be present and not “represented,” i.e., delegated, to those holding office. Seen in technical terms, the organization of autogestion could take the newest productive forces as its basis. In another context, Lefebvre paraphrased Lenin’s slogan “Socialism is electrification plus Soviet power” in the formula “Socialism is autogestion plus a modern information system.”

In the 1970s, the model of autogestion became the “core of the identification of the increasingly radical CFDT.”

56. Ibid.
57. After the collapse of Napoleon III’s dictatorial regime—as a consequence of defeat in the war against Germany—an uprising broke out in Paris on 18th March 1871, with support from bourgeois and proletarian leftists, anarcho-syndicalists, and anarchists. This insurgency picked up on the revolutionary tradition of 1789 and was also accompanied by countless social experiments. After two months, the Commune was suppressed by the “counter-revolution” in bloody street battles. For Marx, and later for Lenin, the Paris Commune was a role model for the proletariat seizing power. The Situationists, for their part, celebrated it as “the only realization of revolution—ary urbanism.”
59. Ibid., 78.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 80.
62. Quoted in Vranicki, Geschichte des Marxismus, 902.
evolved in this direction *inter alia* due to the persistent work of political persuasion carried out by former Socialisme ou Bariberie member Daniel Mothé, who triggered a far-reaching discussion on *autogestion* in the trade union.\(^6^4\) The idea of *autogestion* increasingly gained ground among the Trotskyist, or anarchist Left, and amongst proponents of council communism. Even the Parti Socialiste began to advocate *autogestion*-style Socialism. In adopting this approach, they drew conceptually on the work of theoretician Pierre Rosanvallon,\(^6^5\) who had close links to both the CFDT and leftwing strands of the Parti Socialiste. Above all, Rosanvallon emphasized the experimental character of *autogestion* and linked it to values such as creativity, spontaneity, and freedom from domination. The notion of *autogestion* seemed to him to be predestined to assume the function previously fulfilled by democracy or socialism.\(^6^6\) For the Parti Socialiste, still simply a traditional electoral association, the advantage of the model was that it made it possible to carve out a clear profile vis-à-vis the Communists through the notion of *autogestion*, whilst, at the same time, involving social movements, which were very much attracted by the idea of *autogestion*. In 1979, the Parti Communiste Français adopted the term, without, however, altering the actual content of their political program as a consequence.\(^6^7\)

This political constellation led Lefebvre to reflect anew on *autogestion* and the role of the state. Whilst he had repeatedly analyzed the relationship between state power and society, it was only in the course of the 1970s that he drew up a systematic approach to his reflections on the issue. In his four volumes on the state,\(^6^8\) Lefebvre criticized political theory, which he felt showed deplorable disregard for the notion of space. In contrast, he called for a comprehensive spatialization of all political and economic concepts: space constitutes a decisive instrument for the state in controlling social relations between individuals and social groups.

Lefebvre works on the assumption of mondialisation (a virtually untranslatable term, roughly equivalent to “generalization”) of the state, which gives rise to a new social development: the *mode de production étatique*, or state production mode. Already present in the politics of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal in the 1930s, which presaged Fascism and Stalinism, state production mode was now put into practice in all developed industrial societies. In Lefebvre’s view, state socialism in the East and state capitalism in the West are only particular manifestations of analogous social developments. Hallmarks of the state production mode are the reinforcement and extension of state bureaucratic control of social spaces within a strategy of production and consumption. In his view, this process must not necessarily signify direct nationalization of the production sphere, but can assume different forms: he sees coordination, concentration, regulation, and planning as “soft” forms of state rule, which may, should the situation arise, also tip over into violent, repressive interventions in crisis scenarios.\(^7^0\)

The societal project embodied in state production mode sets its sights on homogenizing and rationalizing all spheres of the social realm. It is not merely limited to the economy, but also encroaches upon all facets of everyday life. However, implementing state production mode ensures at the same time that resistance to state “rationality” takes shape on all spatial levels. For, in Lefebvre’s view, the state is confronted with an ineluctable dilemma: on the one hand, it must keep space open for the requirements of capitalist or socialist production and circulation. At the same time, it is confronted with the movements of those using space, who do not

---

\(^{6^4}\) Gabler, *Antiziperte Autonomi.*


\(^{6^7}\) Georgi, “Selbstverwaltung.”


\(^{6^9}\) Translator’s note: see the introduction to Brenner and Stuart Elden, eds., *State, Space, World,* for comments on use of this term.

wish to accept space being completely subjugated to the directives of the state mode of production—for, after all, it is space that makes up their life, their everyday experience. This revolt forces the state to disclose the truth, namely that state rationality and the police go hand-in-hand, as do urban planning and violence. When thinking of resistant users of space, Lefebvre’s gaze encompasses the entire “grassroots movement”; neighbourhood committees, citizens’ initiatives, squatters occupying houses or factories, consumer organizations, non-collaborating trade unions, activities conducted by the women’s movement and by alternative and peace movements. For Lefebvre, decentralized control through grassroots democracy provides the surest guarantee that social demands are related to a specific space in order to ensure that these demands are not rendered intangible and void of meaning. In his view, almost all of the living conditions people experience are linked to particular spaces or are expressed though these spaces. For that reason, Lefebvre had to introduce the idea of “autogestion territoriale” with a spatial reference as a counterweight to state administrative rationality. He believes that the prospects of success for social movements increase if the state feels that it is overburdened in light of global economic pressure and, therefore, must necessarily delegate power and functions “downwards.” In discussion with Catherine Régulier, Lefebvre sets adoption of the notion of autogestion by the two major French parties on the left within this context:

Entire countries are at risk of becoming sub-divisions of these companies. The only way to avert this danger is with complete support from the masses, in other words, in a direct democracy and through the invention of a new type of social production, in other words first and foremost with new circumstances in production at a grassroots level. If one proceeds in this manner, then one can even avoid state production. . . . It is clear that changes within the state, necessary though these may be, are not sufficient and may move in very different directions. I hope that in France and in the other Latin European countries—in other words, in the countries of Eurocommunism—we will be spared a still more perfect version of the state mode of production, which we would then no longer be able to escape even with the best will in the world. 71

Departing from the idea of autogestion
Confounding Lefebvre’s hopes, the notion of autogestion began to lose its mobilizing force in the 1980s. The CFDT stated openly that it was giving up its demand for workers’ self-management in firms and autogestion had vanished from the Parti Socialiste manifesto even prior to the 1986 electoral defeat. 72

A whole host of reasons can be cited for this development; in the course of the 1970s the Fordist growth model found itself in a two-fold crisis—on the one hand, the productivity reserves of the Taylorist organization of labour were exhausted, whilst, on the other hand, the instruments of the Keynesian welfare state failed with growing internationalization of the economy. Yet, it was not only the economic crisis, but also the altered everyday practices of the collective that made a decisive contribution to disrupting this model of socialization. A variety of social movements emerged, attacking authoritarian and hierarchical structures and demanding “autonomy” and “self-realization” in their lives. The intensity of the struggles and the release of “autonomous subjectivity” did not, however, bring about a complete change in the system; instead capitalism succeeded by offering something new in terms of identity and consumer culture to respond to the wishes and demands of social movements. The neoliberal project, thus, picked up on criticism of the authoritarian welfare state and at the same time turned it against its subjects. In this relationship, a convergence can be detected between alternative leftist and conservative groupings, for critique of the state and of bureaucracy was one of the decisive ideological discourses that paved the way for capitalist restructuring. 73

71. Lefebvre and Régulier, Die Revolution, 133.
72. Georgi, “Selbstverwaltung.” After twenty years, the last edition of the journal Autogestion was also published in 1986.
Neoliberal power technologies aimed to individualize social risks, to reduce existing protective rights, and to abandon people to self-regulation. Neoliberalism responded to intensified calls for more individual room for manoeuvre by “making an ‘offer’ to individuals to participate actively in solving certain issues and problems that previously had fallen within the responsibility of specialised and authorised elements in the state apparatus.”

After forms of an “objective rule” took the place of the authoritarian patriarchal regime at the start of the last century, a new social regulatory mechanism currently seems to be gaining the upper hand with the call for “controlled autonomy.”

If one goes along with the arguments put forward by French sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, the various capitalist regimes are also decisively shaped by the kind of criticism directed in each case at the predominant ruling model. Since the middle of the twentieth century, two strands of critique can be detected: one is directed against exploitation and inequality (critique sociale), the other addresses aspects of autonomy and self-realization (critique artiste). “Artistic criticism,” which developed first of all in small intellectual circles, criticized disciplinary regimes in factories and uniformization in a mass society. In contrast, this critique advocated the ideal of individual autonomy and freedom.

Boltanski and Chiapello’s thesis is that capitalism managed to regenerate itself in the 1980s, because it had learned from the radical stance adopted by “artistic criticism,” the profound rejection of any kind of institution, duration, and commitment. If, for example, the passive labourer entirely subjected to a minutely planned work process was considered to be the ideal type in the Fordist factory, in the post-Fordist world, virtues such as independence or showing initiative are required. Whilst Fordist entrepreneurial culture emphasized the functional division between membership of an organization and the life-world, post-Fordist concepts propagate the vision of an exclusive corporatist life-world and the construction of “total communities.” At least in terms of the stated goals of this program, the division between work and everyday life is to be overcome. However, this concept has little to do with Marx’s critique of alienation. Mobilizing subjectivity is aimed much more at the individual’s capacity to absorb and make use of cooperation and communication. As Italian theorist Maurizio Lazzarato emphasizes, what we are dealing with here is a new technique of power.

In his view, the call for subjectivity and creativity constitutes an authoritarian discourse, which does not obliterate the antagonism between autonomy and command. Capital aims to use the subjectivity and personality of the producer in generating value. Command is to be anchored in the subject and in communication. To put this polemically, whilst the slogan used to be “if you work, you produce,” the formula today is “if you work, you communicate.” And the answer to the question “What does autonomy have to do with work?” is “More and more all the time!”

Flexible capitalism was in a position to absorb the libertarian potential of “artistic criticism,” of bureaucratic incrustation, uniformity, and heteronomy. As a result of this appropriation, traditional “social criticism” became increasingly “uprooted.” Over the last few decades, industrialized society’s resources of collective solidarity, which developed out of the shared experience of labour in alienated conditions, have become eroded, and the social pillars of the old class compromise are also dissolving. At the same time, given the current pressure for flexibilization and deregulation, many critics of the neoliberal project succumb to the temptation of nostalgia for the “golden age” of Fordism. Yet, there are, of course, no longer any social and economic foundations for this kind of projection. Naturally this does not imply abandoning the struggle for social standards and leaving the neoliberals to clear away the rubble of the welfare state.

---


In a certain sense, flexible capitalism managed to take the sting out of both forms of criticism at the same time; on the one hand, by integrating and co-opting it, on the other hand, by transforming capitalist everyday life into a world that apparently can no longer be interpreted with the traditional means of social criticism.

This also reveals the limitations of Lefebvre’s critique of everyday life. The impact of his oeuvre derived from a constellation that currently no longer exists—on a combination of critical theory with social movements that aimed to bring about fundamental changes in everyday life. In contrast to his ideas, namely that moving towards autogestion was virtually inevitable, capitalism emerged strengthened from the crisis of Fordist socialization. It has proved to be capable of absorption, picking up on demands for “autonomy” and instrumentalizing these for its own purposes. Qualities once directed against capitalism, such as “subjectivity” and creativity have become an important raw material for economic valorization processes.  

77 What is to be done?  
Yes—Henri Lefebvre was integrated into the structure of “Fordist Marxism” and could no longer sufficiently grasp the dialectic of neoliberal restructuring. Yet, irrespective of this kind of ideological limitation, his reflections on the relationship between the state and everyday life continue to be fruitful.

In public opinion, the process of globalization is, therefore, often viewed as a historical tendency, which apparently leads to the complete disappearance of state competences and regulatory powers. In contrast, Lefebvre’s central thesis is that the role of the state concerning the structuring of the spatial dimensions does not become any less important in the context of capitalist globalization. Instead, the state should be seen more as a process spanning the globe, which even produces globalization, the world market as one of its dimensions, and cannot fundamentally be negated by this. Lefebvre avoids ascribing causal primacy to a particular spatial dimension. In any event, the “local” will, in his view, not be swallowed up by the “global.”

Similarly, the thesis of the “lean state,” which purportedly withdraws more and more from the regulation of the social sphere, proves to be misleading. Assuming that the “state” and the “market” are at opposite poles does not take account of the fact that market processes are always rooted in and guided by political considerations. A crucial argument for Lefebvre is that political and state power do not merely intervene in the economy, but are already comprised in it. The space of the economy should always be seen as a politically structured space. Every time that a player enters into a social relationship with another player, the state is present as an “included third party,” and guarantees that contracts will be respected thanks to the state’s powers to sanction breach of contract.

It is not a question of abandoning practices of state intervention. It is instead much more the case that (for Germany) the contours of a “guarantee state” emerge, which engages in a shift towards private individual provision (for ill-health and old age), but does not fundamentally call into question the idea of intervening in social issues. The “return of the strong state” in light of the global financial and economic crisis provides definitive proof of this. It is not only the financial industry and businesses that are pressing for more state involvement now; people threatened by unemployment and social degradation also long for the strong state. Understandable though this may appear in the light of the crisis, it is important to recall one of Lefebvre’s basic insights: the state tends and has the power to engage in authoritarian control, and to produce catastrophes and wars.

The “democratic question” and problems relating to human rights have lost none of their importance either. The return of the punitive state and the erosion of the welfare state function according to the principle of communicating vessels. Ruling by law and order would thus be the quintessence of neoliberal society. At the
same time, privatization processes increase the influence of play-
ers that are not democratically legitimized. Frequently, state and
private negotiation systems, which are, to a large extent, beyond
the reach of public control, take the place of public legislative and
decision-making procedures. In addition, in the case of the Europe-
an “social city,” it is possible to identify a return to a “city of prop-
erty owners,” of the type we have long been familiar with from US
urban planning. (Here, I refer to concepts such as public-private
partnerships or business improvement districts.)

Property is an authoritarian system established by the system of
political rule. However, the predominant liberal democratic mode
of thought concentrates almost exclusively on problems of authority
in the system of government and shows little awareness of questions
that arise out of the authority contained in property law. For ex-
ample, in the “property city,” a variety of legal and subject positions
hold sway, for example, in terms of access to particular spaces and
places for the subaltern classes. That means two of Henri Lefebvre’s
demands are still topical: the right to the city and the right to devi-
ate. The right not to be excluded from the centre of urban life and
marginalized in disadvantaged peripheral areas and the right not to
wish to subjugate oneself to the stipulations of homogenizing forces.

Translated by Helen Ferguson
The Problematic of a “New Urban”:
The Right to New Belgrade

Ljiljana Blagojević

In 1986, Henri Lefebvre and architects Serge Renaudie and Pierre Guilbaud participated in the International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement, organized by the City of Belgrade under the auspices of the International Union of Architects. In the opening lines of their competition report, they stated that in the process of worldwide urbanization during the second half of the twentieth century, the socialist countries had not been capable of avoiding the overwhelming growth of cities, nor of creating “The Socialist City.” This statement alone raises issues that are central to my explorations of New Belgrade as a modern socialist city, but also for rethinking Lefebvre’s work today in this concrete case. More to the point, Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud continue their opening argument by contrasting the predicament of the “devastating and irreversible” development of cities in the capitalist world with their findings about the specific case of Yugoslav socialism. As they claim in the concluding lines of the same introduction: “Because of self-management, a place is sketched between the citizen [citoyen] and the citadin, and Yugoslavia is today perhaps one of the rare countries to be able

2. Booklet submitted to the International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement, by Equipe No. 51103 (Serge Renaudie, Pierre Guilbaud, and Henri Lefebvre), July 1986, n.p. Where not otherwise noted, all quotations are from this source.

to concretely pose the problematic of a New Urban.” Between the two statements, emblematically inserted, is a concept of the “right to the city” (droit à la ville), which motivates the whole project:

The right to the city comes as a complement, not so much to the rights of man (like the right to education, to health, security, etc.), but to the rights of the citizen [and this is a crucial distinction]; who is not only a member of a “political community” whose conception remains indecisive and conflictual, but of a more precise grouping which poses multiple questions: the modern city, the urban... 

This right presupposes a transformation of society, according to a coherent project responding to interrogations and theoretically (in the sense that it implies the practical moment) to the problems, and to creations in the domains where art, knowledge (le connaitre), the daily and the global, interfere: architecture, for example, but on a larger scale: time and space.

The last line of the above quotation initiates an argument with the basis of the competition as it was organized on the premise that only the modern urban structure of New Belgrade needed transformation, and not the society.

The program specifically asked for proposals improving the unfinished plan of the central zone and the enlargement of the modern city, and not projects for social and political transformation. The theoretical basis of the competition rationale was provided by the Research into Alternative Urban Models and the Study for the Reconstruction of the Central Part of New Belgrade and the Sava Amphitheatre, which were carried out by the Institute for Development Planning of the City of Belgrade in the period from 1979 to 1984, the results of which were published in 1985, in the book titled Lessons of the Past. 4

In sum, Lessons of the Past offers the most extreme criticism of the functional city (or, as its author calls it, “functionalistic town”) and, by extension, of the modern socialist city of New Belgrade, regarding its unfinished open plan as an economic, social, and physical void and an empty field of disjunction. Denouncing the modern city, the book is built upon the lessons of the past and lavishly illustrated with historical images such as engravings of sites and urban scenes by Giambattista Piranesi, Sebastiano Serlio, Andrea Palladio, Canaletto, and plans of successful cities like Turgot’s Plan of Paris (1739) and Nolli’s New Plan of Rome (1748), to name but a few most outstanding ones. The lateral references to contemporary “scientific theories of urban growth” give due credit to Konstantinos Apostolos Doxiadis’s concept of ekistics (1942), Charles Whebell’s corridor theory (1969), and R. R. Boyce’s wave theory (1966), but they remain unexplored in the concrete sense. 5 The ensuing alternative urban models and studies of reconstruction of New Belgrade are represented by beautifully crafted models and plans, in which an aestheticized tabula rasa exemplifies the modern city in urgent need of massive physical intervention following the urbanistic model of historical cities. The proposed theoretical models of modern city re-urbanization were subsequently exhibited at the RIBA in London and published in the bilingual (Serbo-Croat and English) exhibition catalogue titled With Man in Mind. 6 The text and plans blatantly disregard the actual sociopolitical context and the specificity of a planning model based on the premise of the socialist city. More to the point, the political and the social are substituted by the aesthetic, or as the author claims, the poetic. 7 The ensuing competition program and its outcomes reproduced much of the same ethos.

The international jury awarded two ex-aequo first prizes, one to a plan which, according to the jury report, provided “a vision of a humanized city” while totally ignoring the existing modern urban structure (by Polish architects Krzysztof Domaradzki, Roman Dziekonski,


5. Ibid., 127-34.

6. With Man in Mind, An Exhibition of Two Projects from the City Planning Institute/ Belgrade, Yugoslavia (Belgrade: Kulturni centar, 1986); this publication was prepared specially to accompany the exhibition held at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London.

7. Ibid., 56.
and Zbigniew Garbowski) and the other to a rather formal and dense re-urbanization scheme (by the architect Jaroslav Kachlik, from Bratislava). The proposal by Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud was eliminated in the first stage of the jury procedure (acquiring only three votes by jury members). I would argue that it was removed from further consideration despite, or rather for the very reason of, the relevant critique of the socialist city and the reality of the sociopolitical construct of self-management, which was presented in their written report. In disagreement with the competition requirement to propose a definitive design, and dismissing such a figuration as “a dangerous trap,” Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud argued for an idea, or, rather, a concept of complexity that would be elaborated over time. Their designs were, accordingly, not concrete proposals, but served as a correlative to the central proposition of the right to the city. Questions such as, “Has state socialism produced a space of its own?” “[H]ow is the total space of a ‘socialist society’ to be conceived of?” and “How is it [space] appropriated?” posed earlier by Lefebvre in his Production of Space (1974) underlined the argument of Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud, yet seemed redundant or even disturbing to the competition judges.

I would propose that precisely this argument is central to New Belgrade, even more so in its current transformation under the conditions of post socialist sociopolitical and economic transition. The seemingly apolitical planning stance of the 1980s, as presented in Lessons of the Past and With Man in Mind and reflected by the competition program, may have served as a latent internal critique of the sclerotic system of socialist planning, but it produced


a non-critical projective impulse that is only now fully visible in the contemporary spatial transformations of New Belgrade. In the current process of re-urbanization this projective impulse serves the model of depoliticization as put into practice in the process of the all-encompassing commodification of urban space. The method employed by Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud, even if somewhat outdated in content, provides a critical tool for discarding projective planning paradigms and shifts the exploration towards what they call urban complexity and the issue of citizenship, or the duality citoyen-citadin. Their critique of the time, however, focused only on the two dominant paradigms, namely “neo-rationalism” and “post-modern historicism.”

Yet if the planning of New Belgrade is examined more closely, it becomes clear that it cannot be easily narrowed down to only these two paradigms, and that its outcome resulted from a long and complex process of historical and sociopolitical change and consequent transformations of planning strategies. The construction of New Belgrade commenced in 1948, on the empty terrain between the historical cities of Belgrade and Zemun, which served for centuries solely as a military territory, or rather, a no-one’s-land between the shifting borders of divided and conflicting empires. The river Sava, between Belgrade and Zemun, marked a geographical and political border line from the fourth-century division of the Roman Empire to the Eastern and Western Empires, until the fifteenth century, when the whole territory became part of the Ottoman Empire. It became a border again between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires in the eighteenth century, and thereafter between Serbia and Austro-Hungary until 1918, when this territory became part of the unified Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, or Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In 1941, after the capitulation of Yugoslavia, the river Sava was reinstated as a state border again, between the two asymmetrically and violently created nation states, German-occupied Serbia and the puppet Independent State of Croatia, and remained so until the end of World War II.

Thus, in the period Eric Hobsbawm refers to as the “Thirty-one Years’ World War” (1914–45), this terrain had gone through a substantial change from a no-one’s-land between borders to being a territory of conflict (war between Austro-Hungary and Serbia), specifically, contention over sovereignty (Serbia vs. Yugoslavia; monarchy vs. republic), and, finally, to the central political space of a new, ambitious, and modern socialist state. Its urban potential was, paradoxically, first seen by the side that had lost this territory in World War I, when the Viennese architects Erwin Ilz, Rudolf Perco, and Erwin Böck included it in their proposal submitted to the International Competition for the Belgrade Master Plan in 1922. The ensuing Master Plan of Belgrade (1923) fully acknowledged this potential in the Illustrative Plan of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the River Sava, which showed the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes’s ambitions and desire for a capital fitting its sovereign monarch. The actual planning, however, remained at a standstill given the conditions of constant contention over sovereignty between the monarch and opposing forces within the multinational state. It was only as a city of the Republic that New Belgrade had entered into the post–World War II world. When the planning of New Belgrade was resumed in 1946, the new city was conceived of as the administrative capital of the new Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. In that, it strongly reflected an ideological and political construct of a new beginning, that is, of building socialism on a clean slate in a supra-historical time constellation. Forces engendering this transformation and setting the course for the initial planning concepts of New Belgrade proceeded from the premise that the empty site represents, as Lefebvre defined it, a homogeneous abstract space, a tabula rasa, its use value being predominantly political. And, as Lefebvre put it, “we already know several things about abstract space. As a product of violence and war, it is
political; instituted by a state it is institutional.”

The founding of the new city as the administrative capital of the Federation demonstrated the ambition of the new Republic for New Belgrade to take precedence over the pre-socialist constellation of cities and to become the site of a supranational political community of Yugoslav nations that did not belong to any existing city centre.

The first post-war plan of New Belgrade, titled Sketch for the regularization of Belgrade on the left bank of the river Sava (1946), by Nikola Dobrović, showed only the state and Party buildings set in an open block structure along the avenues radiating out towards the rivers Sava and Danube. Marked on the plan are the two most prominent buildings, namely the Presidency of the Federal Government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Housing was, strangely enough, totally omitted from the scheme, and, paradoxically, in the new socialist city the working population, the common city dwellers, were left, as Lefebvre would put it, in the urbanist’s blind-spot. The initial plan was soon radically challenged by other prominent Yugoslav architects who proposed alternative visions of the future city development.

With the breakup of political relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc in 1948, and the following course towards decentralization of the multinational state and self-government, the initial ideological notions were substituted by the political construct of self-management socialism. Following the change in political paradigm, the new outline plan from 1948, again by Nikola Dobrović, proposed the introduction of mass housing in an urban landscape concept, clearly demonstrating the differentiation of a modern socialist city from the previously conceived capital city.

Its capital status was lost, even if it was only a brief episode of a symbolic character, New Belgrade was designated anew as a territory integrated into Greater Belgrade, as shown in the Master Plan of 1950. The ensuing proposals for the layout of the modern urban structure reflected the shifting planning paradigms of the period.

13. Tehnika (Belgrade), br. 11-12 (1946), 353.
Finally, in 1962, the definitive Regularization plan was adopted, and it remained in force until the beginning of the 1980s. When New Belgrade was eventually, largely realized, in the 1960s and 1970s, it was as a city of housing, its disjointed structure bearing traces of all previous planning strategies, including the finalized buildings of the Federal Executive Council (formerly the Presidency of the Federal Government), and the Sociopolitical Organizations (formerly the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia), both renamed to mirror the concomitant institutional rearrangements of Yugoslav federative socialism.

Being situated between two historic cities, New Belgrade acted as an integrative urban structure for the Greater Belgrade, and, thus, fully reflected the notion of a socialist city as Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co put it, by succeeding in "inverting the logical manner in which a bourgeois city expands by introducing into the heart of the metropolis the residence as a decisive factor." The specificity of the housing function followed the ideological premise that a place of residence/apartment in socialism is not a commodity in the first place, but that it is its use value that defines it. It reflected another sociopolitical construct of the right to a residence as a universal right to the common public good and related to the ideal of just distribution—the ideal of a free apartment and free social services for all. As a consequence, New Belgrade was realized as a city in the societal realm, i.e., through public/common property.

The appropriation of modernism in this period of fervent construction largely followed the Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne’s (CIAM) concept of the functional city, with the underlying narrative that this model could be fully concretized only under the conditions of socialism. The housing blocks of 6,000 to 10,000 inhabitants each, complemented by schools and basic services, formed the urban structure of the central part of the new city. Although the concurrent crisis of CIAM and its dissolution initiated a thorough re-examination of the concept of the functional city, strict zoning continued in New Belgrade, separating housing blocks from

the central city functions, which were ambitiously planned but never realized in the central zone. The dogmatic rigour of CIAM’s concept, be it as it may, on the level of the housing blocks themselves, the high standards of urban and architectural design, as well as social services provisions have hardly been reached since, and from the mid 1980s to today, not at all.

Yet, to paraphrase Lefebvre, the first contradiction that can be recognized here is that between quantity and quality: while providing societally owned flats for tens of thousands of inhabitants, and, thus, satisfying a primary need, New Belgrade failed at simultaneously satisfying the desire for appropriate spaces of commercial leisure. As a city depending entirely on state (administrative) intervention, it was over a long period that the city had no internal economic dynamics. The end of the 1960s also brought a breakthrough in social life, bringing rebellion against the forces that homogenize and hegemonize and demanding a space of differences. As Lefebvre noted, “[W]hat is different is, to begin with, what is excluded: the edges of the city, shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games, of guerrilla war, of war.”15 The transgression manifested itself in the rising shanty town at the edges of the modern city. It can also be seen in what Lefebvre calls the representational space of art, e.g., films (by directors such as Želimir Žilnik, Živojin Pavlović, Dušan Makavejev, and others), radical art (by artists such as Marina Abramović, Raša Todosijević, and others), as well as in the movement towards critique of Stalinist ideology (represented by the journal Praxis) and subsequent calls for socialist democracy and more social justice and equity, and in student left movements, which actually sparked off the demonstrations of 1968 in New Belgrade.

As for spatial practice in New Belgrade, it bore a contradictory duality—of the state-imposed normality of new housing blocks, in themselves heterogeneous enough, and the non-regularized, spontaneously growing edge city. The planning abstracted the contradictions of this social reality, rendering it temporary and a matter of technical solution. In Lefebvre’s words, representations of space flattened all the creases, while the contradictions remained intact.

Lefebvre insisted that “[s]pace considered in isolation is an empty abstraction,”16 and, to paraphrase him further, good will, purity of a righteous ideological position, clear conscience and a beautiful soul only make the situation more difficult.17 If the modernism of New Belgrade can be defined as “use value modernism,” and, by extension, its functionalism as a “functionalism of free residence,” this reduction of the concept of the functional city becomes an internal limitation of New Belgrade as a modern city and its paradox. Despite the lived space of a fairly well rounded and integrated urban structure of the housing blocks, New Belgrade lacked urban complexity and centrality.

It is this lack that Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud put at the centre of their argument when they say that “the planification of New Belgrade failed, both in its attempt at global coherence and in the political will to create a city” and that the type of planning layout (modern urban structure of the functional city) itself guarantees never to make a city of New Belgrade. Rejoicing that the city is unfinished, they suggest, “If utopia were allowed us . . . the bars and towers, progressively abandoned, would become the ruins of another time, a museum in memory of a former era where individuals were not entitled to be citizens in full measure.”

Addressing reality, however, Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud propose a set of related general principles. The first principle is “diversity” (as opposed to systematization, homogenization, and uniformity), which would operate by diversifying units of production, products, management rules and practices, communication networks, activities, time in the city with respect to multiplicities of rhythm, modes of interaction, dimensions, land use, occupation, appropriation of “private/public,” and, most importantly, diversifying the principle of self-management. It is through this total diversity that the citizen’s right to the city is spatially accounted for. The second principle is “imbrication” (overlapping), defining the situation of active relation, i.e., “the combinatory mode, the situational

15. Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 373.
16. Ibid., 12.
placement of different elements called to constitute, over a period of time, the city. These two general principles proceed from the same dynamic: complexity, and they reciprocally reinforce one another.” Here, I would stress that imbrication of appropriation is particularly indicative in the context of the socialist city, as it assumes a relational richness of diversity and imbrication of public/private, collectivity/individuality, and community/intimacy. The third principle of “respect of specificities” relates individual (identity) to the collectivity.

Related to the main issue of the actual competition programme, of how to create the centre of New Belgrade, these principles provide for an alternative concept of centrality, not considered a simplistic concentration of commerce and services, but the possibility of a New Urban. In regard to New Belgrade and its future development, Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud envisaged these diversified forms of social and political structures enriching the principle of self-management, such as diversified forms of types of work and habitation, as well as new dynamisms and organizations in the relations of production. In addition, the proposition that the right to the city “presupposes a transformation of society, according to a coherent project” connects also to what Lefebvre wrote in 1974:

To phrase the question even more precisely, what is the relationship between, on the one hand, the entirety of that space which falls under the sway of “socialist” relations of production and, on the other hand, the world market, generated by the capitalist mode of production, which weighs down so heavily upon the whole planet, imposing its division of labour on a worldwide scale and so governing the specific configuration of space, of the forces of production within that space, of sources of wealth and of economic fluctuations?18

In the conditions of contemporary change in the sociopolitical paradigms of post-socialist transition in Serbia, this relationship poses multiple questions. The modern city realized under the conditions of socialism is often reductively seen as the physical residue of a deposed socioeconomic and political system, or as its ideological monument. Its unfinished open plan is being rapidly filled by what is simplistically understood to have been lacking in the socialist epoch, namely, commercial and business development on the one side and orthodox churches on the other. Perceived again as a terrain that needs to be conquered, with demarcation lines now set by multinational capital, new borders are put in place, e.g., glitzy development vs. dilapidation, gentrification vs. depravation, depoliticization vs. peripheralization, and desecularization vs. public space (consumption).

Between the past marked by universality and the hegemony of two dominant dogmas, that of Marxism and of CIAM’s functional city, and the current processes of globalization, the structure of the modern socialist city yields to the present transnational processes with dramatic spatial and social consequences. Finally, in the context of European integrations and its limitations, Lefebvre’s distinction citoyen/citadin (citizenship/city-dwelling-ship) is particularly illuminating. With the breakup of the former federation of the multinational state, New Belgrade lost its dimension as the city where, as Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud concluded in their competition report, “all nations which compose [Yugoslavia] may find through new modes of appropriation of the space of the city, their own character.” Could it be argued that, thus, a priority for New Belgrade today is the recovery of citizenship, as well as the city-dwelling-ship, in recovery of its almost-lost comparative advantages, primarily in the reinterpretation of its centrality in the regional, as well as in the European context?

18. Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 54.
Post–World War II Yugoslavia
The year 1948 was in many ways decisive for the future social sys-
tem of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia,¹ which had just arisen out of World War II. In that year, a decisive dispute between Tito and Stalin resulted in a break with all ties to the USSR and its dictate as proclaimed in the Cominform Resolution.² Following Stalin’s accusations that Yugoslavia was “too similar to the old regime,” the entire Yugoslav political structure was set up to prove Stalin wrong and to assert this fact to the Soviets. The Yugoslav social system, therefore, had to be different from Soviet state socialism, which led to an ideological experiment with a non-state type of socialism. It was simultaneously both anti-Soviet and Soviet-centric because it was created as a “mirror image” to the USSR model. It couldn’t exist without the USSR as the necessary Other in relation to whom the new Yugoslav identity was built. The development of such a system after the historical break had support in the authentic anti-fascist liberation movement, which provided the concept for the strongest cohesive force within the multiethnic country, namely fraternity and unity among all nations in the fight against German occupation.

The reforms of the Yugoslav socialist country, which began right after the end of World War II, took another course as a result of the split with Stalin and were aimed at establishing a third

---

¹. The anti-fascist movement of partisans proclaimed in 1943 the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, and the country was renamed the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia after World War II, in 1946, by the newly established communist government. The country was renamed again in 1963 to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
². Due to accusations in the Resolution, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was expelled from Cominform (Communist Information Bureau), a Soviet-dominated organization of communist parties formed in 1947, which was the successor to the Comintern (Communist International).
possible solution, a third way in between the Eastern and Western blocs. One of the crucial projects of the new country was to build its administrative centre, and the choice was a marshland across the river Sava and the old city of Belgrade, where New Belgrade, as the capital of socialist Yugoslavia, was about to be built—a process that started exactly in 1948. The concept of the capital was elaborated in urban planning, with a dominant administrative axis in which the buildings for the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Presidency of Government of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia were first marked. Even though architectural competitions for these two buildings were opened as early as 1946 and the building process of the latter began in 1948, the immediate crisis—the clash with the USSR and the isolation imposed by the Eastern bloc, as well as the West’s passive and cautious approach in anticipation of a resolution to the conflict—prolonged the realization of all major architectural and urban projects. The situation slowly started to change after Stalin’s death in 1953, and there was a loosening of pressure on Yugoslavia, which enabled Western countries to send military and economic support. In the years of crisis, and torn between two power blocs during the Cold War period, Tito, together with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, managed to establish an enlightened foreign policy through the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955. The movement was an attempt to avoid participation in the Cold War and consisted of countries that didn’t want to conform to the rule of two major political blocs by trying to find a third possible platform on which to cooperate and act globally. After the Belgrade Declaration of reconciliation with the USSR in 1955, and after loans started to flow from the International Monetary Fund, Yugoslavia was able to further develop its chosen “third way,” both in the urban planning of New Belgrade and in the Non-Aligned Movement: these two developments coincided in 1961 when the first summit of the movement was held in the newly opened (specifically for this occasion) building of the Presidency of the Government (renamed the Federal Executive Council and commonly called Palace of Federation).

The building itself, which had final modifications before the opening, showed the potential of architecture to reflect its socio-political context and the need to “visualize” the idea of the “third way,” which opposed both the paradigm of Western modernism, seen in the International Style, and Eastern Socialist Realism. The cultural sphere had also played a vital role in the construction of visual representations, illustrating the sociopolitical orientation of socialist Yugoslavia. The “doctrinal” period of Socialist Realism, which lasted several years, erased all links with former “bourgeois aesthetics.” Paradoxically, it was “canonized” on the V Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1948, just after the split with Stalin, but already from the beginning of the 1950s its normative role in the production of socialist imagery in service to its proclaimed principles of liberty, equality, brotherhood, and unity, etc. were questioned by the artists themselves. Theoretical support came later from the group of Praxis philosophers who offered an answer to the question how to produce within a theoretical and practical paradigm that would remain Marxist but that would be critical of the “vulgar materialism” of “reflection theory,” which advocated for Socialist Realism in art practice. The outcome was the possibility for a new paradigm of “socialist aestheticism” (i.e., non-representational art), as elaborated by the Serbian writer Sveta Lukić.

The Yugoslav version of socialism

Yugoslavia developed a socialist regime that could be seen as an eclectic model that united a theoretical background in some aspects of Marxism but that also “borrowed” some of the socioeconomic premises of capitalism. First formed with the concept of a “fraternity and unity” among South Slavic nations, Yugoslavia was not, however, conceived of as a national state, nor was there any specific goal of forming a new nation that could be seen as a revival of the old regime. The new concept was for a society that was national in appearances, but socialist in essence. Unlike a liberal-democratic understanding of the state as the central institution of democracy,
the socialist regime insisted on the Marxist idea of a dying out of the state. The idea of socialism was to turn the state into society, to weaken its power to the level where state functions are taken over by associations of free producers. From the point of view of socialist ideologists, true democracy was not political, as liberalism would like to claim, but economic. Liberal democracy was, therefore, seen as inferior to socialist, economic democracy.

For Yugoslav communists, the concept of self-management, as promoted already in 1950, meant the same as the concept of democracy for Western European liberal countries. True democracy could be seen only in the concept that human beings themselves control the products and conditions of their work. For a society where workers are the most important subjects, true democracy could be, thus, reached only when the workers decided on the products of their labour through self-management. Successful reforms and economic prosperity led Edvard Kardelj, the mastermind of the reforms, to claim, “self-management had not only demonstrated the economic effectiveness” but also allowed Yugoslavia to “solve democratically most of the contradictions and conflicts that cropped up in society.” Kardelj, as the main ideologist of the concept, conceived of an ideocratic society and tried to push “social reality” towards an ideological concept. He thus followed Marx’s recommendation that it is not enough to interpret the world in a new way, but to make possible world changes in a way in which reality will come closer to your interpretation.

4. The phases of the development of self-management in Yugoslavia were the following: 1945-52, the period of a centrally planned economy, similar to the Soviet model of state socialism; 1952-65, the introduction of self-management, where the process of decision-making was gradually decentralized; 1965-74, the period of self-managed market socialism, when market mechanisms were utilized in as many areas as possible, focusing on the activities of socially owned enterprises operating in the market; 1974-88, the system of “free associated labour” or “contractual socialism.” See Saul Estrin and Tea Petrin (1991), “Patterns of Entry, Exit and Merger in Yugoslavia”, in P.A. Geroski and J. Schwalbach, eds., Entry and Market Contestability: An International Comparison (Oxford, U.K. and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell), 204-20.

5. Dejan Jović, Jugoslavija—država koja je odumrla: Uspon, kriza i pad Cetvrte Jugoslovije (Belgrade: Samizdat B92, 2003), 146.

6. Ibid., 121.

7. See Marx’s analysis in the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” See http://www.marxists.org for the full text of the theses.

For workers’ self-management socialism, society had much greater importance than the state, which was supposed to die. However, this “death” had to be a very long process, and in the first years of workers’ self-management the role of the state and the Communist Party was of the utmost importance. The network of basic pillars that led the social development of self-management socialism was very complex and, therefore, the political system had to regulate the relations between these pillars in order to foster their synchronous actions and prevent any one from becoming monopolistic. These social pillars were seen in the sociopolitical interest of the producers, in working collectives as carriers of production, in communes, in socialist associations, and in the state. The state, therefore, had the task of creating a path between the broad initiatives of immediate producers and the working people, thus transforming itself from an instrument of rule over the people to an organizational instrument of self-managed workers with the aim of governing their affairs. Likewise, the Communist Party, whose avant-garde role was crucial at the first phase of socialist development, had to lose its ruling position and hand it over to the free producers and their associations. All kinds of social associations such as working councils, civil society unions, etc. flourished in the new society and created a broad network in the self-management system of Yugoslavia.

The ideological basis for a society of workers’ self-management was soon translated into all spheres of social life. The property regime was a good example, namely, after the nationalization of all big private companies and industry in the post-war period, with the introduction of self-management, state property was declared “social property” belonging to the society as a whole. The shift in social practice was reflected as well in the change in name of the Communist Party to the League of Communists at the VI Congress in 1952. Consequently, the building designed for the Central Committee of the Communist Party, yet to be opened in 1965, was renamed


9. Ibid.
The Building of Social Political Organizations, following the new tendency in social development.

**Self-management in social practice**
The main nucleus of this new society of workers’ self-management was seen in the creation of basic units in factories and industry—e.g., the “basic organization of associated labour” (BOAL)—that provided workers with the prerogative to decide for themselves on the production process. The lower levels of society provided the place where real, direct democracy took place, where all workers participated in the decision-making process. While the working councils were independent in decisions on production and other social issues such as the distribution of income, vacations, rights to state-owned apartments for workers in need, etc., on other issues they depended, on one side, on experts regarding scientific issues, and, on the other, they operated under the auspices of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia regarding all cadre questions. The Communist elites had exclusive prerogative in cadre administration, and, therefore, while the real self-management of workers occurred on the lower level, on the upper level, among elites in the League of Communists, there was not much democracy.

The Constitution of 1974 introduced the concept of self-management in all spheres of society. The population was divided into the “working class,” “working people,” and “citizens.” In accordance with Marxist theory, “working class” was the term used to mark the locus of power in a socialist regime. Working people were all employees in state-owned companies and institutions. All other members of society were seen just as citizens. To be able to actively take part in the self-management system, the “citizens” had to join sociopolitical associations that functioned at different levels—from the county to the city to the federation—but citizens actually could act only on the level of their local territorial units, while the other “sociopolitical” organizations were reserved for working people only. State laws and regulations controlled all of these associations and organizations, and their activities were monitored and approved by the Socialist Union of Working People (SUWP), the biggest one of them all.  

In the political system, self-management functioned in the following way. The new concept was based on the principle of “delegates” and “delegations.” The system began at the lowest level in factories and all associations and social groups on local levels, like BOAL, where the delegates were selected to form delegations. This principle continued up to the Parliament, but the delegates there were responsible to the delegations that selected them and had to strictly follow their instructions. The population had the possibility to choose delegates only at the lowest level, still having just one mostly unknown candidate. The whole system of delegates and delegations was regarded as the major shift from a bourgeois parliamentary democracy to a more immediate workers’ democracy.

The system of self-management became universal in society and covered all areas in the public sector and all professions that used public (state) property for its activities. It was implemented in such spheres of society as state administration, schools, and cultural institutions such as museums and theatres, where all institutions were governed by workers’ councils in which all employees had a vote.

Problems in the implementation of self-management
In ideocratic societies, such as the Yugoslav socialist society was, we have to analyze the level of discrepancy between the conceptual ideological premises of how the society was intended to function and the actual modus operandi that occurred in social reality. The implementation of the workers’ self-management system had many obstacles and problems, but also inherent antagonisms. The problem in a system of delegates was that it was still a representational model of self-management, and the desired immediate and direct self-management by an association of free producers (as it was elaborated by Kardelj) was underdeveloped and never to be achieved.

---

12. Ibid., 14.
The conceptualization of a model of workers’ self-management reached four different sets of problems in its social implementation: the bureaucratization of self-management practice; the position of workers’ organization and broader social associations; internal distribution, or the process of formation of workers’ individual income and its repercussions on social relations; and deviation from principles on the leading role of the League of Communists.\(^\text{13}\)

Instead of the de-bureaucratization of society, the numerous working councils, associations, and other social units produced even bigger and more complex administration and bureaucratic apparatuses. The major criticism of Marxism towards liberal democracy, that it represents abstract citizens when levelling society to a political democracy, now came back to the Yugoslav Communists; their system eliminated the idea of the abstract citizen and expected the workers to represent the interests of abstract “working people.”

The first critical voices that attacked the bureaucratization of the self-management system came already in the 1960s from a group of leftist, Hegelian-Marxist philosophers whose platform was the magazine *Praxis,*\(^\text{14}\) published from 1964 to 1974. They found the main problem and cause of the unsuccessful development of a proper self-management socialist system to be the prevalence of “statist bureaucratic” groups in Yugoslav society. They advocated for a more effective and less bureaucratized system of self-management.

Other problems in the implementation of such an elaborate and complex political and social system could be seen in the relatively undeveloped country in which it was conceived, where the working class was, historically, underdeveloped and the population was mainly rural. It was difficult to create a modern, ideologically conscious working class in such a society, where most of the workers were still strongly tied to the village and land.

On the federal level, a structural problem existed in the strong contrast between the richer and the poorer republics. There was always a big discrepancy in the pace of development and economic standard between the northwestern part of the country (Slovenia and Croatia being the most developed republics) and the southeastern parts (Macedonia and Kosovo suffering from very slow development and economic growth, partly due to overpopulation). Distributive justice among the republics was always a major issue for Tito and the Communist elite, and the federal budget had a complex strategy built within it for overcoming such problems. The fair redistribution of the federal budget and the percent that the developed republics had to contribute to the underdeveloped ones never ultimately succeeded in fostering an adequate pace of economic growth among all republics.

In the thesis of Kardelj from 1970 that identified the necessity of the “plurality of self-management interests” as crucial for a society of self-managed workers, Renata Salecl found the key ideological problem that provided the groundwork for the eventual disintegration of the self-management system. For Salecl, this phrase, among many others in the vocabulary of self-management, actually had greater relevance than just an empty formulation and could have been used to undermine the unbreakable monolith of the League of Yugoslav Communists. The League had to be united, and there were no possible dissonant voices from within its elite that would speak publicly. If they did, the method of discreditation used against “astray thinkers” was all too familiar to all socialist regimes. Therefore, a plurality of opinions, ideas, and interests was never welcome in the public sphere. With the introduction of this concept from the very ideologist of the society (Kardelj), the unity of the League of Yugoslav Communists was challenged in the public sphere. Salecl analyzes further that this, as she calls it, surplus syntagm “became the point at which the system began to fracture, that is to say, the point where elements, which had until then formed an ideological structure, now achieved independence and began to function as ‘floating signifiers’ awaiting new articulation.”\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{13}\) Popov, *Partija (SKJ),* 63.

\(^{14}\) Its international editorial board included Alfred J. Ayer, Erich Fromm, Lucien Goldmann, György Lukács, Zygmunt Baumann, Ernst Bloch, Agnes Heller, Jürgen Habermas, Henri Lefebvre, Herbert Marcuse, etc.


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 208.
This tendency opened up the public sphere for hegemonic struggles and the rise of ethno-nationalism that would soon end up in a series of ethnic clashes and the dissolution of the country of Yugoslavia.

The decline of self-management
After the death of Tito in 1980, there were many symptoms that suggested the collapse of the social system of workers’ self-management in Yugoslavia was inevitable. In the following period of the 1980s, the Yugoslav economy was facing a serious crisis manifested by hyperinflation, foreign debts, trade deficits, unemployment, etc. For this reason the Yugoslav government adopted a policy of building the private sector and fostering the inflow of foreign capital, thus, openly introducing a new model of the free market economy into the existing system. The full demise of workers’ self-management could be seen in 1988, as the social model changed and the mixed market economy (based on diversified property forms) replaced “social property” and self-management.

The economic reforms of Prime Minister Ante Marković were, at that time, the ultimate efforts at preserving a Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by founding it on new ground with the creation of a civil society, which focused on four fundamental principles: a free market economy; the opening up of the country to the world; an establishment of a legal state and the development of civil rights; and the democratization of political life with introduction of a pluralistic, parliamentary democracy. This program faced big resistance by the Communist oligarchy in the republics because it compromised all previous pillars of the socialist system. On the other hand, this last chance for choosing a civil instead of a purely political environment, hyperinflation started to grow rapidly, and in January 1994 it reached its peak with a daily rise in prices on the level of 62% or 2% per hour! The most severe economic crisis came after the UN Security Council’s resolution 757, which declared economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on May 30, 1992. The formal reason for this measure by the UN was the engagement of Serbian military and paramilitary forces in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as cases of ethnic cleansing. In April 1993, the complete blockade of all financial transactions with the FRY was established by UN declaration 820. In this sociopolitical environment, hyperinflation started to grow rapidly, and in January 1994 it reached its peak with a daily rise in prices on the level of 62% or 2% per hour!

Social transformations after the demise of self-management
Privatization in Serbia had begun with Ante Marković’s Law on Enterprises in 1988 and proceeded with the Serbian Law of 1991 and was mostly completed by 1994. It happened that this year was a turning point in the retreat and abolishment of privatization, which had to be reevaluated because of hyperinflation, this then led to direct state control of enterprises by Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević and his oligarchy. This was no surprise, bearing in mind the mechanisms behind hyperinflation, and the motives of Milošević and the political elite who actually induced it and abused monetary and political power for their personal economic gain and control over the means of production and key enterprises.

18. The very slow progress in privatization in Serbia and Montenegro during the 1990s was caused by the United Nations’ sanctions, the lack of foreign capital, the sharp decline in economic activity, poor experience and constraints to implement and control privatization, and the low level of information and nontransparent procedures. See Veselin Vukotić, Privatization in Montenegro: Global Development Network for Southeast Europe (Vienna: The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, 2001).

19. The most severe economic crisis came after the UN Security Council’s resolution 757, which declared economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on May 30, 1992. The formal reason for this measure by the UN was the engagement of Serbian military and paramilitary forces in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as cases of ethnic cleansing. In April 1993, the complete blockade of all financial transactions with the FRY was established by UN declaration 820. In this sociopolitical environment, hyperinflation started to grow rapidly, and in January 1994 it reached its peak with a daily rise in prices on the level of 62% or 2% per hour!

20. When he assumed the leading position in the Communist Party in Serbia in the mid 1980s, Slobodan Milošević came to the idea of economic mobilization to help the development of the Republic. The major project in this respect was the Loan for the Serbian Industrial Renaissance, which was announced in June 1989. The loan was supposed to show the cohesive strength of all Serbs throughout the world, and all state-run institutions and media had the task of supporting this project. This step was just one in a row of the “robbery of people,” as Milan Dinkić described it. See M. Dinkić, Ekonomija destrukcije (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1996).

Hyperinflation and the economy of destruction induced social stratification in an extreme manner. It meant the impoverishment of the majority of the population on the one side and the creation of a political-financial elite on the other. The new elite consisted of the highest political leaders, a small number of directors of state-run companies and banks, as well as the owners of certain “private” but essentially “para-state” companies. They all based their material and formal status on different kinds of monopolies: a monopoly over the release and distribution of money; a monopoly on the importation and trade of certain merchandise; the media monopoly; and a preference in financial transactions with the state, etc. Their interest was, therefore, never oriented to the overall development of the state economy, but the maintenance of their personal monopoly and wealth. One of the aspects that made possible such a concentration of power and wealth within this limited group of people is the fact that Serbia was, and still remains, the only post-socialist country where a denationalization law was never adopted.

After the collapse of Milošević’s regime in 2000, the new government took a more direct course towards neoliberal capitalism and more “transparent” auction or tender sales of previously socially owned enterprises, all supported by a new law on privatization from 2001. However, it happened that a large number of enterprises ended up in the hands of individuals/companies that had accumulated capital during the 1990s and were highly implicated in many cases of corruption and fraud in alliance with Milošević and his regime. On the other hand, all major industrial facilities that were not destroyed in the NATO bombing of 1999 were sold within a few years to big international companies and the process was followed by economic mediation of the so-called transitional banks, mostly from the South East Europe (SEE) region, which are now flourishing in Serbia and buying financially exhausted local banks.

The social transformation had the strongest effect on the former pillar of socialist society—the workers. Labour conditions in the devastated factories and industries were at the lowest possible level; i.e., the workers were not getting any salaries for years, and the new proprietors mostly took the approach of cruel capitalist exploitation, which resulted in a series of strikes at different factories and enterprises, as well as public protests by unions. If we just have a look at the statistics in the period from 2001 to 2004, we see that the number of workers in the public sector decreased by 200,000, yet the increase in the private sector was only 100,000, meaning that 100,000 workers lost their jobs.

The new social shift towards neoliberal or predatory capitalism is best exemplified spatially in the urban realm. In Serbia, this is manifested most clearly in New Belgrade, which was figured to be both the administrative and cultural capital of socialist Yugoslavia, and which is now the site of the most rapid urban transformation. The social change is exemplified symbolically with the privatization of the building of the former Central Committee of the Communist Party, which was once the locus of power for the driving force in socialist society. The building was bombed by NATO in 1999, sold in 2002, and transformed into a business centre and symbol for the rapidly spreading new ideology in New Belgrade. With the recent development of the Ušće shopping mall which, at 130,000 square meters, is the biggest in the Balkans, and the future twin tower of the business centre (the tallest in the Balkans), this site is becoming a new “city” or centre of financial power. If Yugoslavia was, unlike other socialist countries, developing a specific model of socialism after its collapse, the invasion of neoliberal capitalism is just too similar to all post-socialist countries and it affects it in the same way it affects the urban realm of all the major capital cities. The spatial effect of this rapid social transformation can be seen in new types of segregations taking shape both through “self-isolation” of the financial elite in New Belgrade’s recently formed housing blocks, which resemble gated communities, and also the marginalization of different social, ethnic, and racial groups in certain blocks, such as the Chinese community or shanty towns in the case of the Roma

21. Ibid., 234–35.
22. For example, British American Tobacco and Philip Morris bought the tobacco industry, US Steel bought the steel industry, and finally the Russian companies Lukoil and Gasprom bought the oil and gas industries.
population. The sharp socio-spatial stratification is creating new
types of social relations and re-creating the class antagonisms of
capitalism, as well as the conditions for struggle and conflict.

The legacy of self-management: New perspectives?
In a recent theoretical analysis of the possible alternative social
and economic systems to the actually existing phase of capitalism,
the model of workers’ self-management in socialist Yugoslavia is
worth revisiting. Other important models for analysis are the cases
of self-management in Latin American countries such as Chile,
Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina, where, in different contexts, workers
have shown the potential for self-organization and the capacity to
reclaim and repair factories and enterprises. The case of Yugoslav
workers’ self-management was the longest and, in its early stage,
the most successful due to the strong, homogenizing forces of anti-
fascist and then anti-Stalinist movements, but also because it
was implemented through a top-down method by the ruling com-
munist party in order to encompass all spheres of society. Such a
social model could be, therefore, analyzed at the limits of its his-
torical context with all the valuable lessons one could learn from
it, both in its successful phase and its demise. However, this model
difficult to “translate” into an understanding of the bottom-up
and grassroots processes of self-management and self-organization
emerging in different social systems in capitalism today. For in-
stance, the actual debates of the workers’ self-management move-
ment in Argentina focused on several key issues, including whether
the enterprise should be run by an occupying cooperative or self-
managed by workers; whether alliances should be made with politi-
cal parties and their leaders; and whether the perspective of self-
management in enterprises should be local, regional, sectoral, or
national in scope.24

In this respect, it is useful to turn to the ideas of French soci-
ologist and urbanist Henri Lefebvre25 and the questions he posed
when he reflected on the idea of “new citizenship.”26 Lefebvre’s
thinking regarding new citizenship relied on three propositions: the
right to difference, a redefinition of citizenship, and self-manage-
ment. Essentially, he was asking for new rights of the citizen. This
included the right to information, free expression, culture, identity
within difference (equality), self-management, the city, and ser-
vices, among others yet to be defined. The right to self-management
Lefebvre proclaimed among other new rights for the citizen would
involve rights to the democratic control of the economy, and, there-
fore, of companies, including national or nationalized ones, i.e.,
those which up to now had been under some degree of state con-
tral. Lefebvre defined self-management (autogestion) as: knowledge
of and control (at the limit) by a group—a company, a locality, an
area or a region—over the conditions governing its existence and its
survival through change, through self-management.27

It is exactly in the intertwined circuits between social relations
and their spatial embeddedness that we can see the potential for
new types of self-organization taking shape. Likewise, the possibility
for different social groups that arose in new social systems in Serbia
and in other former Yugoslav republics to influence their own real-
ity and fight for both social and spatial justice exists in these inter-
twined circuits.

24. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, “Worker self-management in historical perspec-
perspective.

25. Henri Lefebvre was arguing that exactly because of self-management Yugoslavia
was one of the rare countries to be able to concretely deal with the problem of the
“New Urban.”

26. Lefebvre was working on the new relations among the individual, society, and the
state and thinking about how to redefine citizenship under “mondialization,” the im-
migration and migration patterns that are shaping urban and social landscapes and new
forms of belonging.

27. Stuart Elden, Elizabeth Lebas, and Eleonore Kofman, eds., Henri Lefebvre: Key
Writings (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 218-19.
Afterword

Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber

French philosopher and urbanist Henri Levebvre’s highly influential thought circulates around the search for the possible, ranging from the right to the city, the critique and poetry of everyday life, and the production of space through spatial practices, to autogestion (workers’ self-management), which is the focus of his 1986 text that is reproduced here for the first time.

This philosophical examination of autogestion, submitted by Lefebvre with French architects Serge Renaudie and Pierre Guilbaud as part of a proposal for the International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement, which the state of Yugoslavia sponsored for its capital, is at the core of this publication, which we have conceived as an artists’ book. This proposal has only come to light through the exemplary research of architectural historian Ljiljana Blagojević, who initially discovered the unpublished proposal in the civic archives of Belgrade. The document is printed here as a facsimile to represent its historical materiality.

Lefebvre viewed New Belgrade and Yugoslavia as having a particular position in what he called “the urban revolution.” The particularity that Lefebvre saw in Yugoslavia and in New Belgrade in 1986 is evident in the proposal: “Because of self-management, a place is sketched between the citizen and the citadin, and Yugoslavia is today perhaps one of the rare countries to be able to pose the problem of a New Urban.” For Lefebvre, the promises of capitalist modernism planning, as well as state socialist architecture and city planning, had failed, and in this late text he turned back to collective everyday practices as an antidote to these failures. Through their urban vision for New Belgrade, Lefebvre, Renaudie, and Guilbaud emphasize the potential that autogestion holds for the people of any urban territory to counter the flawed and often-failed concepts of urban planning from above.
We have built this artists’ book around possibilities that emerge from Lefebvre’s thought with respect to agency, citizenship, and urban texture. We asked experts in urbanism, architecture, art, and Lefebvre’s work to put the process of autogestion into context as it was historically proposed and enacted in New Belgrade and the Yugoslavian state, and as its remnants or traces are still to be found in New Belgrade in the era of neoliberalism. Essays by Ljiljana Blagojević, Klaus Ronneberger, and Zoran Erić, as well as a preface by Neil Smith, comment on both the historical situation of New Belgrade, Yugoslavia, and Lefebvre and the present potential of autogestion. Together these texts locate the notion of autogestion in the current discourse of critical urban and architectural studies as well as the political moment.

A second impetus for this book is the continued interest in and use of Lefebvre’s ideas by artists. But why has Lefebvre also been so productive for the work of artists? In his foreword to Lefebvre’s The Urban Revolution, Neil Smith proposes, “He [Lefebvre] always embraces a tension between rigor and fantasy, hard-nosed critique and political desire, which is why he is so exciting to read.” We see exactly this tension and Lefebvre’s typical push towards the energy of the everyday in the following quotation from The Production of Space: “Lastly, [the production of space] rejoins the freest creative process there is—the signifying process, which contains within itself the seed of the ‘reign of freedom,’ and which is destined in principle to deploy its possibilities under that reign as soon as labour dictated by blind and immediate necessity comes to an end—as soon, in other words, as the process creating true works, meaning and pleasure begins.”

Christian Schmid likewise has identified a compelling aspect of Lefebvre’s “fundamental triadic unity of the space-time conception: space-time-energy.” It is this tension and energy within Lefebvre’s work that makes his openness productive for artists and offers a compelling background for contemporary aesthetic practices.

Yet, from an artist’s perspective, and from the perspective of a politics of representation that is central to Lefebvre’s thought, the question of how to represent autogestion’s past and present remains crucial. Sergio Bologna framed this question, although in a different context, in an interview with Klaus Ronneberger and Georg Schöllhammer:

And how can one give an account of something today that cannot be represented in visual form? When storytelling fails, historiography is difficult. There is thus a twofold danger: on the one hand the “no-past” ideology, on the other, the undepictable nature of the new. . . . We should rather be worried about our inability to depict the present. That is the real disintegration, the disintegration of a culture that is no longer in a position to illustrate present-day labor or to give an account of it.

The dual question of representation—of the representation of an idea like autogestion and of the representation of the often-invisible economic and social processes that shape cities and their urban texture—have informed the visual concept of this book. Based on Lefebvre’s differentiation of “spaces of representation” and “presentation of spaces” and taking the difficulties of representing the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism into account, we developed a series of five posters. In so doing, we try to answer this dual question by representing autogestion through another area that Lefebvre also turned his attention to: the contested relations between citizens and the state, particularly the negotiated relationship between community self-organized spaces and projects and the state and governmental apparatuses. The posters span the scales of the concept and actual organizing of autogestion: from the state buildings in New Belgrade that it was historically formulated and launched from to sites that new forms of autogestion could take shape in. Therefore the posters

depict the Palace of Federation and Sava Center, apartment blocks that were societally owned, the Roma settlement Gazela, and Peti Park. Ultimately, our photographs of architecture and urban sites in Belgrade address the postulations of Lefebvre’s autogestion and the right to the city. Aesthetically we have tried to reflect this through a link to the street posters of Paris 1968 (which we researched in the Special Collections and Rare Books division of Simon Fraser University), and we have tried to set the aesthetics of that moment of “radical openness” alongside our present time. We would like to see a similar potential and possibility in these sites that Lefebvre himself earlier described in the proposal for New Belgrade: “It is then in the always greater multiplication of possibilities that a new citizenship can rise up, linked to a dynamic self-organization.”

This book first evolved from our participation in the project Differ-entiated Neighborhoods of New Belgrade, initiated by Zoran Erić of the Museum of Modern Art in New Belgrade, which focused on the context of transition and neoliberal restructuring in Serbia and in the city. Along with the immensely valuable experiences and friendships that have grown throughout the course the project, we would not have been able to develop this book project without the continuous and generous engagement of Ljiljana Blagojević and Zoran Erić. Had they not shared their research and knowledge with us through their contributions, the endeavour of this artists’ book would simply never have materialized. We are extremely grateful as well to Klaus Ronneberger for his major and captivating essay, which opens our understanding of Lefebvre’s thought to new avenues and histories, and to Neil Smith, who has contextualized this project with his extensive knowledge of Lefebvre and his keen eye on the future of social change. Our special thanks goes to Jeff Derksen, our co-editor, who has been engaged with the project in a very helpful and enriching way. Finally, we are very grateful to Fillip for working with us in their initial book-publishing project, in partnership with Sternberg Press, and the great labours and design and editing acumen of Jeff Khonsary, Kate Steinmann, Kristina Lee Podesva, and Amy Zion.
CONTRIBUTORS

Neil Smith, an urban geographer who has been central to the critique of gentrification, is a distinguished professor and former Director of the Center for Place, Culture and Politics at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. His books include The Endgame of Globalization (2005), American Empire: Roosevelt’s Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization (2003), The New Urban Frontier (1996), and Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space (1984).

Klaus Ronneberger is an independent urban researcher in Frankfurt, Germany. Informed by decades of experience in urban social movements, he has edited and authored numerous articles and books on urban theory, regional restructuring, local politics, and law and order, including Die Stadt als Beute (1999).

Ljiljana Blagojević is an architect, historian, and theorist at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Her research focuses on relations among space, politics, and ideology in the architecture and urbanism of the twentieth century. She lectures, teaches, and publishes widely in Serbia as well as internationally.

Zoran Erić is an art historian, curator, and lecturer. He holds a Ph.D. from the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. Currently he is working as Curator of the Centre for Visual Culture at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade. His research fields include the meeting points of urban geography, spatio-cultural discourse, and theory of radical democracy.

EDITORS

Urban Subjects (Sabine Bitter, Jeff Derksen, and Helmut Weber) is a cultural collective formed in 2004. Urban Subjects focuses on research and developing artistic projects on urban issues. Urban Subjects curated NOT SHEEP: New Urban Enclosures and Commons, Artspeak Gallery, Vancouver, in 2006, and organizes discursive programs with the Vancouver Flying University.

Jeff Derksen lives in Vancouver, Canada, and works in the English Department at Simon Fraser University. His books include After Euphoria: art/space/neoliberalism (2009), Annihilated Time: Poetry and Other Politics (2009), Transnational Muscle Cars (2003), Dwell (1993), and Down Time (1980). He has published widely on poetics, art, urbanism, and cultural politics.

Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber have worked since 1993 on projects addressing cities, architecture, and the politics of representation and of space. Sabine Bitter is based in Vancouver and works at Simon Fraser University. Helmut Weber is based in Vienna. Their exhibitions include Right to the City, Upper State Gallery, Linz; We Declare: Spaces of Housing, Gallery Gachet, Vancouver; Live Like This!, Camera Austria, Graz; Corocos, Hecho en Venezuela; Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver. http://lot.at

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Autogestion, or Henri Lefebvre in New Belgrade is realized on the occasion of the exhibition Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber: RIGHT, TO THE CITY, with a comment by Jochen Becker, at the Landesgalerie Linz am Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseum, Linz, Austria, 9 July to 13 September 2009; Martin Hochleitner, Artistic Director, and Stefanie Hoch, Curator.

The book is made possible through the generous financial support of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK), Austria and Landesgalerie Linz am Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseum, Linz, Austria.

Für die Linzer Museumsausgabe gilt:
Kataloge der Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseum N.S. 90
ISBN 978-3-85474-211-1
Land Oberösterreich / Oberösterreichische Landesmuseum
Museumstraße 14, A-4010 Linz
Director: Peter Asmann

The artists would like to thank Jochen Becker, Bik Van der Pol, Reinhard Braun, Aleksandar Dimitrijević, Helen Ferguson, Dušan Grlja, Stefanie Hoch, Martin Hochleitner, Vladan Jeremić, Slobodan Karamanić, Markus Miessen, Roxanne Panchasi, Stefan Römer, Dubravka Sekulić, Tanja Vasić and Jordan Vasić (Democratic Roma Association), and Jelena Vesić.