

HOLIDAYS AND WORK COMPETITION – A STRATEGIC RELATION DURING THE FIRST YEARS OF THE SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA

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Abstract: Perceiving work competition as a strategic practice of a selected social system the author of the article examines the relationship between work competition and (public) holidays in the period of the first five-year economic plan of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1947–1952). This relationship was mutual and similarly as in other socialist countries centrally planned as well as directed: holidays helped spreading the idea of competitive way of working as well as they helped structuring (working) time. On the other hand work competition helped rooting the new system of public holidays as well as it also structured and shaped holidays. Nevertheless, a competition at a work-place, a category of work competition, which is most often mentioned in the literature, was only rarely referred to in people's recollections. Only some forms of work competition, for example post-war voluntary restoration work or youth working actions, were memorised which, as the author suggests, is also influenced by the symbolic acknowledgment of work and workers during socialism and with the fact that cultural politics of the time was not perceived solely as a cynical manipulation of political elites.

Key words: Slovenia, socialism, planned economy, self-management, work competition, holidays.

When the collection of short stories, entitled equally as one of the socialist holidays, *Dan zmage*,¹ was published, the presenter of the Studio City talk-show at the Slovenian national television gave the following comment: “*Victory Day used to be something collective. Today, the collective Victory Day is gone. There are only individual Victory Days left. Everyone wins on one's own. Nowadays, we keep gaining a victory over each other and eventually this has turned against*

¹ Victory Day.

ourselves, so we are left competing with no one but ourselves. Slovenians run marathons, climb mountains and so forth. All in all, they fight with themselves, compete with themselves and gain a victory over themselves. /.../ We have been persuaded by everyone that a common good no longer exists, that /.../ there is no such common thing anymore, worth fighting for – far from dying for.”²

Although his possibly influential view may be just one of the views on the contemporary attitude of Slovenians to competition, it suggests that the present time is radically different from the socialist past when supposedly (mostly) collective competitions and victories were not only taking place but were also individually perceived as the most significant. In the following article I therefore try to examine the relationship between work competition as one of the forms of the recent-past collective competitions (cf. Miklossy – Ilic 2014 and Lampland 1995)³ and (public) holidays of the time considered. I try to analyse the impact this connection had on people’s lives and question the significance of work competition and collective victories. The first few years after the Second World War, the times of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), in which – especially after 1952 – the workers’ self-management system started to replace the centrally-planned social-economic system (Černe 1988: 33), are thus observed. For the years 1947 and 1952, the first and the last year of the first five-year economic plan of Yugoslavia, when work competition was in full swing (Stanič 2000; cf. Kos 1988; Černe 1988; Pšeničny 1993), I mainly analyzed periodicals.⁴ However, the article is also based on archives of the Republic Council of the Trade Union Federation fund and its precursors as well as on (in)formal interviews with the inhabitants of the small, nonindustrial Slovenian town Brežice (cf. Habinc 2006).⁵

² See the interview with the writers Suzana Tratnik and Mojca Kumerdej in the Studio City talk-show, on the 27th February 2012, from 51’53’’ to 52’28’’ and from 53’00’’ to 53’10’’. See: <http://tvslo.si/predvajaj/studio-city/ava2.130068683>. Browsed: 8th March 2012.

³ As it is usually associated with capitalism and individualism competition in socialist societies has only been marginally researched. But already Lenin tied it to work and promoted it as a way of reaching higher standards of communism. According to Miklossy and Ilic not only work competition was known in socialist societies: there existed also a competition between socialist (Soviet Union) and capitalist states (USA), a competition between formal and informal spheres of socialist societies as well as a semi-capitalist competition (Miklossy – Ilic 2014).

⁴ I examined the central communist newspaper of the then Republic of Slovenia – Ljudska pravica (The People’s Right) and some local newspapers.

⁵ The article is based on the research which I conducted as one of the members of the research group, gathered for the project Holidays and constitution of national community in Slovenia, which in the period from the 1st July 2011 to the 30th June 2014 was financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency.

Introduction to work competition in relation to holidays

According to Matošević, the difference between the socialistic and the capitalistic rationalization of work is mainly in their social and individual interpretations (e.g. of an individual's success) (Matošević 2011: 221). This is why I generally understand work competition during socialism as one of the forms of work stimulation and not for example as a crucial and differential characteristic of holidays and festivities in socialist times (see e.g. Roth 2008). In fact, in Slovenia, economic development, encouraged by way of competition and rewarding (also in relation to holidays), had already been introduced at least by Maria Theresa and Joseph II.⁶ I am therefore not interested in the systemic differences between festivities in socialism and capitalism, or in the very research orientalism, as called so by Thelen (2011: 44). For me, a certain form of the relation between work competition and holidays, framed within particular time and space, is mostly a form of (work) competition in relation to holidays in general. Following de Certeau (1984: xix), I additionally understand it as a strategic practice of certain social systems. But since people also perform their own tactics or practices, which are always running in parallel with the systemic strategic practices, and are used precisely to avoid the formal strategies, in the article I try not to show not only a few examples ("genres") of the strategic relationship between work competition and holidays, but also some tactics of avoiding this strategic relationship.

A precondition for this strategic relationship which in my opinion developed after the Second World War was the idea of competition as a way of increasing efficiency which in the mid of the 20th century had spread from the Soviet Union to Yugoslavia as well (cf. Hudales 2013: 92). Already during the Second World War, the communist holidays were considered to be milestones at which mostly the members and the sympathizers of the Communist party practiced various activities or evaluated past work.⁷ In 1946, i.e. the first post-war year, work competition was already considered a general and new way of working in Yugoslavia. Although some Slovenian authors distinguish between post-war voluntary restoration work, work competitions and the youth working actions (Švajncer 1980: 43; cf. Černe 1988; Kos 1988; Pšeničny 1993; Stanič 2000),

⁶ Both monarchs encouraged the development of specific economic/agricultural sectors (for example, horse and cattle breeding as well as fruit and potato growing) by launching competitions, while at holidays they additionally rewarded those farmers who managed to breed the best animal or grow the most qualitative produce (see Smerdel 1988/90, cf. Lampland 1995: 240).

⁷ For example, in 1945, at the 2nd congress of the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia the members of the local Slovenian Youth Organization took part in a competition for the best election performance, the best organization of meetings, couriers' training, designing of flyers, etc. (see Tekmovalni vestnik).

they all agree that the youth were the most frequent initiators in all these forms, who did majority of organization and action work. All the forms were brought in from the Soviet Union, and the conflict between the Communist party of Yugoslavia and the “hegemonic aims of the Soviet state and the party” (Lešnik 1990: 148), which started at the end of 1947, caused them to be practiced even more consistently in Yugoslavia:⁸ “*In 1949 and 1950, the competitions of udarniki*⁹ *were in full swing [...] according to the decree from 1949,*¹⁰ *the largest amount of udarniki was announced exactly in 1950*” (Švajncer 1980: 47). As in other socialist societies, where according to Katherine Verdery ritual language was supposed to transform the social experience, holidays were ideologically a suitable mobilizing tool, which served to spread the idea of competitive way of working (Lampland 1995: 237). Planning was a major ritual of a political life (Lampland 1995: 242) which was exposed in Slovenian media especially at the beginning of the first five-year plan. On the other hand holidays also helped structuring (working) time, since they were one of the milestones or ways of setting the beginning or the end of a competition period. However, this – rather one-dimensional – way of understanding the role of holidays in relation to work competition was established only around 1948. In 1946 work competition, held solely at holidays, was still considered by many to be overly sporadic and inconsistent (Borc 1946; cf. Hudaes 2013: 92). Ideally, every collective should have had its own yearly competition plan, according to which regular competitions should have taken place, whereas for the holidays they would have only involved a few additional or new short-term competitive assignments (Zapisnik). Such attempts to assure consistency prove that, in Yugoslavia as well, work competitions were already being centrally planned and directed since the initial post-war years (cf. Roth 2008). Furthermore, already in 1946, the central Trade Union organization of Yugoslavia also proclaimed Workers’ Day (May 1)¹¹ and The Day of the Republic (November 29) to be the two main occasions on which to show, evaluate and reward work results (Borc 1946). This is how a calendrical year was divided into halves by the two milestones and already in 1946 there was a May competition, which was held from December 1 to May 1, and a November

⁸ The perception of work returned to its Marxist and Leninist origins, while some forms of work competition, supposedly initiated by the people, as for example brigadier work, were conceptualised as Yugoslav peculiarities (Matošević 2013: 105–107; cf. Hudaes 2013: 100).

⁹ Strike or shock workers (cf. Hudaes 2013).

¹⁰ For more on the decree see below.

¹¹ Together with International Women’s Day (March 8), Workers’ Day was the central occasion for evaluating work competitions in Czechoslovakia as well (Müller 2004: 160).

competition which was held from May 1 to November 29.¹² Besides that, work competition in Yugoslavia was also associated with other federal and republic public holidays – in Slovenia for instance with Insurrection Day and Liberation Front Day. Collectives often competed even on other occasions which were neither federal nor republic holidays, yet, they were ideologically suitable: e.g. at the Communist party congresses, the (alleged) birthday of the Yugoslav president Tito, at International Women’s Day; work competition was even presented at the first post-war New Year’s celebrations for children.¹³

Structuring and disciplining as a way of modernization

Although the instructions about work competitions clearly forbid the interference of competition with the quality of work,¹⁴ not only the achievement and/or exceeding of set goals but also the variety, massiveness and speed of production were mostly evaluated in terms of quantity (cf. Lampland 1995: 242). Reporting was centrally directed, standardized, visualised and numerical and it can be seen as the most often genre, meant to impress the public, to show the intertwinement of the measurable with the abstract and to create an impression of the victory of socialist forces. As Golonka-Czajkowska has also emphasized, it was mostly the symbolic meaning of numbers that was exposed (Golonka-Czajkowska 2004: 243; cf. Matošević 2013: 108). Reports and analyses were only partially published by media, whereas they were regularly published within the frame of working organizations by graphs, wall newspapers, by conferring flags¹⁵ and weekly announcements. Media mostly published the standardized calls for new

¹² In practice May or November competitions kept their names but could start and/or end variously: for example, in 1946 the federation of Economic-Administrative and Technical Institutions started their 1st May competition in Ljubljana on March 1, while the textiles and clothing sector of Slovenia had their November competition from March 1 to August 31 (see Poročilo; Okružnica).

¹³ For example: “*Children will be told in a simple way – by Dedek Mraz (Father Frost) who should be a central figure at all celebrations – about the achievements of our workers, innovators and rationalizers*” (An Areal 1948: 2).

¹⁴ The Regulations on the procedure and terms for the announcement of *udarniki* in companies and organizations (from 1946) and the Law of honorary titles for working people (from 1949; for more on both see below) prescribed that the exceedance of quotas should not be gained by way of neglecting the quality of products, ignoring standards or economizing on the quality of production, machines or tools.

¹⁵ Little flags that people passed from one to another and kept them at their work places. By appearance they were similar to the little representative desk-flags which could nowadays still be seen in directors’ or managers’ offices.

competitions and oaths,¹⁶ which were made by the working collectives to the general public as well as to the central Trade Union organizations or to the hierarchically superior institutions. As already indicated, practically all holidays were suitable occasions for evaluating the results of working competition, nevertheless it was the Workers' Day which was publicly most greatly exposed. Following the Soviet example, besides media and reports within the frame of working organizations there were also numerous parades being held on May 1, which did not only visually expose the results of competitions, but were also establishing different kinds of hierarchies: those groups which were recognized as socially the most important ones, for example industrial laborers, were in the forefront together with the winners of work competitions. At the same time, parades also established spatial hierarchies by defining relations between the federal centre, the republics and the local environments as the state's periphery.¹⁷

Work competitions were frequently accompanied also by celebrations, i.e. another standard genre among parades, media publications, etc. Their scenario was far from being coincidental or spontaneous, since the main committee of the United Trade Unions of Yugoslavia had made instructions already in 1947. These instructions contained recommendations about the exact order of events at the celebrations, the invited guests and the preparation of venues: after an opening speech by the president of the general committee of the Trade Union branch, its secretary should present a competition report and the resolutions for the next six-month competition period, and should speak about weaknesses of the past competitions. Then a representative of the Trade Union should start handing out awards, while the main award should be bestowed by the worker who had made the flag with the written name of the working collective. Finally, all other awards may also be handed out, possibly accompanied by a short speech by the best uđarnik of the working collective. Representatives of the republic and local authorities, the responsible Ministry and professions, other officials, media and

¹⁶ For example: "*The working people of the Źelezarna Štore (Štore ironworks factory) gathered at the celebration of November 29, are now celebrating the achievement of the production plan for the year 1947. On this occasion, the working collective of the Źelezarna Štore undertakes to tackle the assignments, coming in the year 1948, with even greater commitment*" (Delovni kolektiv Źelezarne Štore 1947: 3).

¹⁷ The title of the report of the 1st May parade in the Yugoslav capital of Belgrade in 1947, for instance, emphasized that two hundred thousand people participated in the celebration, while the 25-kilometre-long parade was claimed to have lasted for almost six hours (Tanjug 1947a: 1). On the other hand, such crowds have never gathered at republican or local celebrations. In the same year, the comparable 1st May parade in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, only lasted for two hours, while the newspaper report about it did not appear on the front page, but only on the second (An Areal 1947: 2).

film companies should strictly be invited to the celebrations. Special attention was also paid to a celebration venue which was to be decorated with portraits of leaders (e.g. teachers) and winners of a collective, together with flags and parades. The results of competitions were expected to be presented graphically and the awards were to be exhibited in a visible place (Uputstvo).

One part of celebrating work competition therefore was also to announce the best individual competitors, work heroes, *udarniki*, rationalizers and innovators-inventors, which until 1949 were declared and awarded at public holidays solely. Trade Union branches performed such announcements on the basis of Regulation on the procedure and terms for the announcement of *udarniki* in companies and organizations, adopted already in 1946 by Federal plan Committee. After 1950, when the Law of honorary titles for working people had lowered criteria for those titles (see Švajncer 1978; Švajncer 1980), the amount of announcements rapidly rose (cf. Hudales 2013: 97). Moreover, announcements gained higher independence from public holidays, since they could be performed until the tenth of the month, each month. In any case the system of bestowing awards as well as bonuses and rewards for the best work results attempted to discipline individuals also with punishments. According to the regulation from 1946, honorary titles could have been taken away from individuals on the basis of their unsuitable behaviour, or they would not have even been conferred in case of an individual's low work discipline. Such a flagrant violation of rules was for instance one's absence from work on religious holidays or any other working days. The absent ones were punished by getting one day less of their annual leave or by not being given goods, like e.g. clothes and shoes (*Prazniki*). In some companies financial and moral penalties also became a regular practice. Nevertheless, structuring (working) time by means of work competition during socialism is, at least in my opinion, only a part of a wider process of disciplining and civilizing people, seen as preliminary conditions for modernization of community in general (cf. Elias 2000–2001). Namely, rewarding individuals was based on those personal capacities or achievements (diligence, persistence, speed, accuracy, etc.), which were perceived as characteristics that not only contribute to an individual, but also to a collective benefit, progress, growth and development – i.e. to common good. Similarly as individuals, different social groups were also encouraged to massively take part in various activities, which contributed to that same common good. In the context of competitions, this mostly meant achieving and surpassing those specific goals, which were connected to peoples' social roles and assignments, the way these were seen by the socialist social system of the time. Just as

all workers generally competed in achieving higher work efficiency, or in the rationalization of work time, minimization of unjustified absences from work, economization and inventions, miners, for example, also specifically competed in reduction of risk at work, improvement of coal quality, education and trade union activities (Tanjug 1947b: 1). Similarly, all social, political and cultural groups competed in the amount of their members, while cultural groups, for example, additionally competed in variety and the extent of their cultural programme. Women's Antifascist Front competed in the amount and variety of their educational subjects and practical courses, the amount of orders for *Kmečka žena*¹⁸ magazine, or in the amount of members of agricultural and other cooperatives, etc. (An Areal 1949a: 1). Pupils were focused on their learning success as a preparation and qualification for their future role as efficient (non-physical) workers. And since they were pioneers, they also competed in regular school attendance by way of keeping a strict record, in organization of different courses and pioneer festivals and in the amount of different extra-curricular activities (especially natural sciences and mountaineering) they attended. In schools pioneers' organizations also competed in reaching the highest amount of those who had learnt how to play chess and who had received the sports emblem (An Areal 1949b: 2). Youth organizations furthermore competed in the amount of their sections, performances and lectures on war, or in organization of Tito's relays, actions of collecting old material for recycling, participation at economic actions and in making best youth parties (An Areal 1951a: 4). As a part of the pre-military education¹⁹ competing in mastering military skills was also encouraged and since physical fitness or sport, logic, technique and natural science were generally believed to greatly contribute to the aims of a social system, various social groups were also competitively encouraged to practice those skills in schools or in their spare time. Almost any kind of cultural-educational activity was thus considered to have the power of cultivating or "enlightening", whereas the value of relaxing and socialising was systemically only tolerated rather than really acknowledged. As already Golonka-Czajkowska stated, all forms of work, regarded as intentional physical or mental activities, performed for a purpose that is external to the activity (Spittler 2008: 143), were considered to lead towards progress, development and reinforcement of communism (Golonka-Czajkowska 2004: 243).

¹⁸ Peasant woman.

¹⁹ A special education at which school youth learned basic defence methods and military skills was a part of a regular curricula in Yugoslavia between 1948 and 1973. It was supposed to shorten the time of the obligatory military service and thus make young people more available for economic activities (Bajec et al. 1994: 985).

Work as a (strategically ideal) form of celebration

As illustrated by now, in the period concerned (public) holidays served to structure and discipline (working) time and life. But the relation between holidays and work competition seems strongly mutual since the idea of work competition equally helped shaping and rooting the new system of public holidays. Namely, those were the times when new public holidays had just started to replace the old ones and were therefore only gradually getting familiar to people (cf. Habinc 2006). This process was supported by work competition and the pertaining evaluations and the rewarding of work successes. Holidays which were thus imprinted in the collective social consciousness and memory, directed by the state, eventually also became a means of building the (newly defined) homogeneous national identity (cf. Bajt 2009: 86). However, in my opinion, this mutuality had another layer; in the first post-war years work competition was also one of the ways of celebrating and organizing festive scenarios. In other words: it was neither only the holidays which structured working or competition time, nor was it only work competition which helped rooting the system of holidays, in fact, the very holidays were also structured and shaped by work competition. For instance, as a part of festive cultural activities working collectives could compete in the amount of plenary meetings, commemorations, lectures and wall newspapers (see e.g. Prvomajsko).²⁰ Work in general and work competition more distinctly was thus considered as the ideal way of celebrating a holiday, which is still joked upon by a saying “*To celebrate a holiday by working*”.

Nevertheless it was already in 1952 that the then republican weekly newspaper *Ljudska pravica* no longer contained any news on work competition²¹ – due to the new priorities, like self-management – representative and symbolic meanings of work competition in relation to public holidays remained quite strong up until the beginning of fifties and as an echo in a form of youth working actions until the eighties (cf. Bajt 2009: 89; Matošević 2013: 109; Kos 1988; Pšeničny 1993; Stanič 2000; Ninković Slavnić 2010: 68–88; Hudales 2013: 104). But when questioning how work competition in relation to holidays has influenced people’s lives, Müller has noted two contradicting responses: on one hand, workers were checking the limits of their personal and social freedom by bad, laid-back work or by being absent from work. But on the other hand, the system also encouraged

²⁰ Work was for example considered as the best way to congratulate Tito for his birthday: “*A new record in exceeding the quota is the most convenient way for a working collective in the Velenje lignite mine to congratulate Marshal Tito for his birthday*” (medn. 1947: 2).

²¹ However it was mentioned in the local media as well as some archival sources up until the beginning of the sixties.

them to be more self-initiative and creative. Similarly to workers in the capitalist West workers in the socialist East rebelled and adapted work competition as well (Müller 2004: 159–170), which is why work was not considered a value as such. People used it as a tactic (de Certeau 1984: xix) to achieve their specific aims; they were even making distinctions between real (daily) and false work – i.e. the “façades” or the propaganda manifestations, performed for the sake of a show such as were the oaths for higher productivity (cf. Yurchak 2003). Nevertheless false work was far from insignificant, since it enabled people the access to different bonuses (Golonka-Czajkowska 2004: 244). Consequently, work competition caused some differentiation among people, in spite of the fact that it was designed for the purpose of integrating working communities and as a socialist ideal of equality (Golonka-Czajkowska 2004: 243–248). In Slovenia as well, the holders of honorary titles for instance did not only gain symbolic and media attention; according to the regulation from 1946, *udarniki* also received financial rewards and additional help in a form of food, clothes, shoes, fuel and other necessities of life, together with a special ticket which enabled them to avoid long queues in hospitals or on trains (Švajncer 1980: 43–44). On the other hand, my oral sources do not really confirm specific aspirations for titles for the sake of gaining material benefits.²² The emic view – as distant and imbued with contemporary gaze into the past as it is – reveals that in the first post-war years people did not perceive work competition as a competition at all. Instead, they liked to speak about (working) actions and voluntary post-war restoration work (cf. Švajncer 1980: 43), in which they did not so much compete as they did cooperate – like e.g. when they were picking Colorado potato beetles. According to them, competition is (was) a concept, associated with personal profiteering, therefore, they claim they did not use this concept. “*They worked together*”, “*whatever was needed, we did it*” – among other, also the country and homes which were ruined during the war. If I hadn’t reminded them, they would have barely remembered competitions at work or those in schools. Time distance brought a critical gaze and made them see work competition (i.e. unlike working actions) as “*a necessary evil*”, in terms of: “*whatever had to be, we obeyed*” (Transkripts). According to Golonka-Czajkowska, a distance to false work could be noticed on a local level already in those times, as people were not following instructions or writing competition reports as scrupulously as they were supposed to (cf. Zapisnik 3 – An Areal 1951b: 2). According to Yurchak, people knew that formal work inevitably had to be done

²² Matošević similarly observed material rewards were more important in the Soviet Union while in Yugoslavia a symbolic recognition and moral superiority were in the forefront (Matošević 2013: 104).

before it was followed by the “meaningful work” (Yurchak 2003: 498), and this is why they often interpreted the scrupulous instructions in their own way, with a specific criticism of socialist planning and hypocrisy (Lampland 1995: 264): “*As much as it was needed*” (Transkripts). Willingly or not, people did participate in ideological reproduction by practicing the rituals of socialist competition at work (Müller 2004: 160). But public holidays as a practice always included a possibility of avoiding official strategies of power (Luthar – Pušnik 2010: 12). This is why people at least partially adapted the aims of work competitions and pertaining celebrations to local or personal aims – and thus by maintaining inequality domesticated the ideology and preserved the system while at the same time they moved closer to the social pragmatism of capitalism (Lampland 1995: 247–248). Those individuals, who had to organize competitions or announce and report results either due to their official duty or as members of mass institutions, used work competition as a tactic to establish their social status or their career (cf. Yurchak 2003; Kaneff 2004: 7–174). The rest of local community did not mind this, as long as those closer to power-holders remained “loyal” and did not achieve their personal careers “*at the expense*” or to the detriment of others (cf. Habinc 2011).²³ Despite this, the “activists”, as Yurchak named them, were not the only ones who participated in the competition “race” or its preparations (Yurchak 2003; cf. Golonka-Czajkowska 2004: 243). Since (public) holidays were rare social occasions which were not only allowed but also encouraged, many young people fancied coming together also in relation to work competition: “*Of course we were happy to go. We had no radio, nor anything! /.../ For us, everything was an event. As there was hora legalis at eight, we couldn't go anywhere. Zero! /.../ We were making paper paroles and advertising areas where people put some reports on work results*” (Transkripts; cf. Hudaes 2013: 105). And by no means any form of work competition was perceived as a way of controlling every pore of people's lives (cf. Müller 2004; Matošević 2011).

Instead of conclusion: Considering different forms of work competition during different socialisms

In the post Second-World-War Yugoslavia work competition, which was top-down conceptualized, centrally planned and strategically related to holidays,

²³ For example: “*Some of the functionaries of the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia were from our town, so we knew them in person. Those were the inhabitants of Brežice who were also important figures in political arena and had a lot of political power and influence in their hands, but kept their circles of people for themselves. Well, we did not cause troubles to them, neither did they to us.*” (Transkripts)

was to become a new way of work. Every single social group as well as each individual were supposed to contribute their share to a mosaic of modernization, not only by working more, in terms of quantity, but also by rationalizing or innovating a work process, by which local knowledge and experience were not totally expelled from planning (cf. Lampland 1995: 255). Political agenda behind such economical, technological and social progress was “directed at building a concept of shared identity on economic development”, by which and “under ‘the supremacy of the proletariat’” (Hofman 2009: 294) existent differences among people were believed to vanish. But at least according to those interlocutors I spoke to (cf. Erdei 2011: 279) it can hardly be estimated this goal was generally reached. As I tried to illustrate work competition caused some social and spatial hierarchies (cf. Lampland 1995: 335) and often resulted in experiencing work process as “false work” and a façade. On one hand this helped individuals in gaining access to goods and social status and thus lead to constructing new differences between people, rather than surmounting the existent ones. But on the other hand “false work” was commonly perceived as a part of the formal sphere, which in Yugoslavia coexisted alongside the informal one already since its early socialist years (cf. Yurchak 2003). Nowadays informality of life during socialism is mostly remembered in terms of sociability and connectedness when people were “working together” nevertheless if this was at voluntary restoration work, at the workplace or at the youth working actions (cf. Švajncer 1980: 43; Černe 1988; Kos 1988; Pšeničny 1993; Stanič 2000). Moreover the majority of interlocutors I spoke to, mostly referred only to some forms of work competition, while e.g. competition at work-place, a category which is most often mentioned in the literature, was largely excluded from their recollection. In my opinion, it is thus crucial to acknowledge differences among individual forms of work competition within a socio-political economic system in question. Besides that it seems important that the contemporary perception of work competition during socialism is imbued with the then symbolic acknowledgment of work and workers (Krašovec 2010: 199–202). This is why holidays, rituals, monuments and posters or cultural politics during socialism in general were also not perceived solely as a cynical manipulation of political elites (Krašovec 2010: 199–202; cf. Müller 2004: 153). Collective competition and collective victories – to which the aforementioned leader of Studio City talk-show was referring – have remained in the memory of individuals mainly as the kind of victories which were connected to collective (physical) work for the benefit of community. That kind of work was a practice in the first few years after the Second World War or even continued in a form of youth working actions almost until the end of socialism.

The latter therefore seem to be the very context, reduced by memory, with which contemporary (individualized) competition is now compared. It is the context of collective work, which existed, which was collectively and personally encouraged and rewarded as well, the strategically supported idea of collectivity and common good which today seems to be perceived as no-longer known in contemporary Slovenia.

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Svátky a soupeření v práci – strategické spojení během prvních let socialistické Jugoslávie

Resumé: Autorka zkoumá vztah mezi soupeřením v práci a (veřejnými) svátky v době Federativní socialistické republiky Jugoslávie. Soustřeďuje se na první pětiletý hospodářský plán (1947–1952), kdy bylo pracovní soupeření v plném proudu, a chápe jej jako strategickou praktiku v rámci zvoleného sociálního systému. Vztah mezi soupeřením v práci a veřejnými svátky byl, podobně jako v ostatních socialistických zemích, centrálně plánován a určován: na jedné straně byly svátky vhodnými nástroji k mobilitaci a umožňovaly propagovat myšlenku soupeření v práci, na druhé straně se stávaly mezníky určujícími počátek a konec soupeření, a tak napomáhaly strukturovat (pracovní) čas. Již v roce 1946 ústřední odborová organizace Jugoslávie určila svátek práce (1. květen) a den republiky (29. listopad) za dvě hlavní příležitosti, kdy měly být prezentovány, hodnoceny a odměňovány výsledky pracovního úsilí, a až do roku 1949 byli nejlepší individuální pracovníci vyhlašováni a odměňováni právě jen o veřejných svátcích. V článku jsou prezentovány příklady strategického vztahu mezi soupeřením v práci a svátky, a jako ilustrace také několik příkladů vzpomínek pamětníků na ně. Autorka pokládá za důležité, že většina respondentů zmiňovala jen některé, konkrétní formy pracovního soutěžení, například poválečné práce na obnově nebo mládežnické pracovní akce, zatímco soupeření na pracovištích, které je v literatuře zmiňováno nejčastěji, se ve vzpomínkách neobjevuje. Zdá se tedy, že je nutné pochopit rozdíly mezi konkrétními formami soupeření v práci, stejně jako vzít v úvahu skutečnost, že dobové chápání soupeření v práci bylo v době socialismu zásadně ovlivěno symbolickým jak oceňováním práce a pracovníků, tak i skutečností, že kulturní politika v té době nebyla vnímána pouze jako cynická manipulace organizovaná politickými elitami.