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BOOK REVIEW

Lilijana Burcar, *Restavracija kapitalizma: repatriarhalizacija družbe* [Restauration of Capitalism: Re-patriarchization of society], Sophia, Ljubljana 2015

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In her book *Restavracija kapitalizma: repatriarhalizacija družbe* (Restauration of capitalism: Re-patriarchization of society), Lilijana Burcar compares the systemic and structural conditions of women's position in socialism and capitalism. The basic difference between socialist and capitalist policies, argues Burcar, is that capitalism defines reproductive labor as an individual and private matter, while state socialism in Eastern Europe regarded it as a collective responsibility. State socialism(s) thus set up public services to perform the labor traditionally assigned to women, which allowed women full entrance into the workforce and the public sphere and also provided them with economic independence that finally changed their position in the family and the wider social community. Burcar presents the ideas of socialist feminists, which are here defined as Eastern European and Yugoslav "political workers," and then provides different examples of state policies in different Eastern European countries, most comprehensively represented by Yugoslavia. She also explores policies in Western capitalist democracies, discussing the time period from the end of the Second World War to the present moment, and uses different data (e.g. women's employment rates, availability of child care) to point out the connection between state policies and women's position in society.

Drawing on these examples, she demonstrates that only socialist systems provided all the necessary conditions for socio-economic emancipation and hence for the abolition of institutional patriarchy.

The book consists of five chapters, starting with an outline of the evolution of institutional patriarchy as a system of gender relations that are structurally and historically conditioned and reproduced by capitalist economic systems. The second chapter compares the positions of women in socialism and capitalism, with respect to four fundamental conditions of socio-economic emancipation: (i) full-time permanent employment; (ii) individually based social rights, benefits and transfers that are not dependent on the employment status of the husband; (iii) the socialization of educational labor and childcare; and (iv) a fully compensated maternal and parental leave with a right to return to the previous work position. Chapter three examines the tendency towards historical oblivion and devaluation of the Yugoslav socialist legacy by new "Antifa" and neo-Marxist groups in the space of former Yugoslavia. The debate on historical amnesia is followed by chapter four, which offers an analysis of actual policies that were implemented by post-socialist states in order to dismantle the emancipatory achievements of state socialism. The final, fifth, chapter examines new capitalist policies aimed at childcare and women's employment, which are re-institutionalizing patriarchal relations and removing women from the public sphere.

With her work, Burcar seeks to challenge the social amnesia over the contributions of the socialist state to the feminist cause. She states that contemporary activists in post-Yugoslav states, influenced by the liberal feminism imported from the West, are focusing on "independent" feminist activities, while discarding state policies as influenced by politics and, hence, flawed. However, as she reminds us, those same policies and activities, which can be

only realized by the state, were the exact point of socialist feminism. In the post-Yugoslav case, this historical amnesia appears as an appreciation of the iconic Woman's Antifascist Front (AFŽ), which is perceived as an autonomous organization, while not recognizing that it was working under the auspices of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The abolition of AFŽ at its fourth congress in 1953 is often interpreted by contemporary activists as the rejection of the feminist cause, while not understanding that socialist feminism did not treat the "woman question" as a separate matter, but sought to implement equality in all social spheres. Analogously, Burcar rejects the thesis of the "double burden" of socialist women, meaning that their inclusion in the labor market added another responsibility on top of the reproductive labor they had to perform at home. She argues that reproductive labor was to a significant extent socialized and did not remain the sole responsibility of women. However, Burcar here neglects to tackle two issues. First, when focusing on Yugoslav socialist policies, she fails to discuss the differences among different social strata, as well as among the Yugoslav regions, which experienced an uneven implementation of those policies so that not all women were relieved of their "double burden." Additionally, as recognized by some recent studies on socialist female workers, such as Bonfiglioli's *Women and Industry in the Balkans,* the remaining housework continued to be women's duty, and was also celebrated as such by the official socialist rhetoric promoting the ideal of a "working mother." Recognizing these nuances would add to understanding the complexity of the Yugoslav system that retained certain patriarchal patterns and views despite the above-mentioned emancipatory policies.

One of the main aims of Burcar's book is to systematically reintroduce the idea of the structural interdependency between patriarchy and capitalism as two intertwined and mutually dependent systems. Burcar persistently demonstrates that all historical forms of

capitalism benefit from confining reproductive labor to the private sphere, where women perform it. In other words: it is cheaper to have women at home, taking care of children and the elderly, than to build public childcare facilities, maintain them, educate professional caretakers, provide support staff, and pay them. By underlining this idea, she also draws a strong distinction between "socialist feminists," meaning political workers in socialist Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe, and Western feminists. She criticizes the Western European Marxist feminism, including the Wages for Housework movement, for understanding patriarchy as an independent system that precedes capitalism, and for treating gender relations as only exploited by capitalism, but not caused or conditioned by it. Although we might agree with Burcar on the interdependency between patriarchy and capitalism, this strict distinction between Western and Eastern feminisms is somewhat simplified, as it reduces the complexity of both strains of feminist thought. In the end, Burcar strengthens her main argument with an examination of new capitalist policies in the post-socialist states and the subsequent decline in the employment of women and their removal from the public sphere, calling for socio-economic emancipation as the condition for all other emancipatory social relations.