Slovene Studies 11/1-2 (1989) 231-243

SLOVENIA BETWEEN LIBERALIZATION AND — DEMOCRATIZATION?

Cyril A. Žebot

I. The Concepts of Liberalization and Democratization*

During the visit to Yugoslavia, March 14-19, 1988, by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, *The Washington Post* of March 15, wrote: "[Gorbachev] is also to visit the [northwestern] Yugoslav republic of Slovenia, where a liberal local regime has developed a radical model of political pluralism under communism." A follow-up report in the same newspaper of March 17, the day Gorbachev was in Slovenia, said that "the Soviet leader asked to visit Slovenia because of its status as a Communist-ruled region that is most advanced in economic development and political liberalization." On the same day *The New York Times* correspodent wrote from Ljubljana: "Hard-working Slovenia . . . has often marched to a different drumbeat than most of Yugoslavia, wielding the tools of economic restructuring to pursue its own development and interests . . . its Communist leaders have opened up the intellectual debate to a wider degree than is evident elsewhere in the country." Such reports naturally provoke the question: What kind of "political pluralism" did Gorbachev find in Slovenia?

There is a broad consensus among foreign observers that since the death in 1980 of Yugoslavia's President-for-life Josip Broz-Tito, developments in Slovenia have indeed evolved more and further than in other republics of multinational Yugoslavia. Sometimes one even gets the impression that Slovenia is on the verge of independence and ready for transition to democratic rule. Calling in its title Slovene dissidents "The Champions of Glasnost", an editorial in *The Economist* of March 19, 1988 asked: "Are there any taboos left in Slovenia?"

There is no doubt that, at its roots, the difference between Slovenia and the rest of Yugoslavia has to do with Slovenia's ethnic homogeneity as well as its cultural and economic affinity and proximity to the West as a sort of mini-Europe in the geographic center of the old continent on "the sunny side of the Alps". However, even in Slovenia political and economic evolution has not reached as far as readers of the above and similar reports may have inferred. Misunderstandings stem from the failure to distinguish between two related but quite different evolutionary concepts: liberalization vs. democratization.

Liberalization, in reference to today's Communist régimes, means different things in different countries, but these differences are all to be found in the following categories: greater assertion of policy differences within the ruling Communist Party, limited recognition of human and civil rights to the citizens and, at its most liberal, toleration of various dissident phenomena. Within these categories liberalization is expansible or reversible by decisions of the Communist Party leadership. The Slovene Communist Party (League of Communists) has permitted liberalization in Slovenia to expand farther than it has in other republics of Yugoslavia. *Glasnost* (with *perestroika*) is Gorbachev's (not yet fully clarified) version and extent of "liberalization" for the Soviet Union. In no case has liberalization affected the political monopoly of the ruling Communist party.

The concept of democratization, on the other hand, extends, as the etymological meaning of the word suggests, essentially beyond liberalization. It involves legalization of organized political opposition with a view to making possible equal participation of all the people in the electoral processes of periodically selecting a country's government and

checking on its performance in between. In other words, democratization means an end to the political monopoly of the ruling Communist party. Once achieved, democratization can be reversed only by successful internal or external military suppression.

To clarify these differences, historical examination as well as contemporary analysis are needed. This is a *sketch* for such a study of multinational Yugoslavia with special regard to the Republic of Slovenia, among the republics of Yugoslavia the "most advanced in economic development and political liberalization".[1]

II. Slovene Territory and the Period Between the Wars

After the horrors visited upon Slovenia in World War II by virtue of its triple occupation in April 1941 (by the Germans in the North, the Italians in the South and the Hungarians in the East)[2] and the concomitant Communist terrorism against their helpless non-Communist compatriots, the Slovenes, at war's end in May 1945, found themselves again, as after World War I, a part of Yugoslavia with Belgrade as the domineering center of a multinational state. There was an important difference, however: while after WW I the incipient Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had been a constitutional monarchy, after World War II the Belgrade domination was a Stalinist-type dictatorship.

As all of Europe, prewar Slovenia also had its share of economic and social problems. But those problems were amenable to progressive solutions in the framework of the Slovene democratic tradition. A Bolshevik-type revolution—such as the Communists started during the enemy occupation under the disguise of the "war of national liberation"—certainly was not the remedy for them. Slovene social and economic problems were not even primarily of a "class" nature: they stemmed from the fact that between the two world wars Slovenia lacked a government of its own. That was the key factor which, after World War I, slowed down the exceptionally promising economic and social development experienced in the central Slovene province of Carniola since the democratic reform of Habsburg Austria in 1908.[3]

For that promising development to continue after World War I, it was necessary that all the Slovene lands of the defunct Habsburg Empire be united under a sovereign and democratic Slovene government. Unfortunately, these two prerequisites were not fulfilled. As much as one third of the Slovene territory, including the entire Slovene part of the Adriatic coast, was seized by Italy, the new German Austria and Hungary. Even the bulk of Slovenia that became part of the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS)—later renamed "Yugoslavia"—had less autonomy in its "own" new state than the above mentioned Slovene province of Carniola had possessed in the Habsburg Empire. The first SHS constitution of June 1921 established pluralistic and secret elections but did not recognize the right of self-government of the constituent nations. The Kingdom of SHS was democratic as far as relations between individual citizens and the government were concerned (a constitutional monarchy) but autocratically repressive in relations between its nations and the government.

The failure of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to provide its member-nations with the needed political autonomy for their own national development became the cause of increasing tensions and frictions. Instead of resolving them by a change of the Serbian-imposed constitution of the original Kingdom of SHS in a (con)federal direction, King Alexander in January 1929 disbanded the parliament, abolished the constitution, and instituted his own dictatorship. Later he also did away with the multinational name (SHS) of the country and renamed it "Yugoslavia" as if it had been the country of a (nonexistent) nation of the "South Slavs". This unnatural attempt came to an end when the King was

assassinated during a visit to France in October 1934.

A Regency Council was established with Prince Paul, a British-educated cousin of the late King, as one of its three members. Under his leadership a process of gradual re-democratization was begun which also aimed at a (con)federal reorganization of the multinational country. The political leader of the Croats, Dr. Vladimir Maček, became the head of the so-called "United Opposition" in which Serbian opposition groups were also represented. However, Dr. Macek's Serbian opposition partners were not willing to agree with him on the Croatian demand for a (con)federal reorganization of the multinational country. The Serbo-Croatian stalemate was broken by Prince Paul when he directed the Prime Minister, Dr. Dragiša Cvetković, to reach an agreement on (con)federal reorganization of Yugoslavia with Dr. Maček on behalf of the Crown. In August 1939 an autonomous state (Banovina) of Croatia was established as the cornerstone of a projected new (con)federal union whose composition was to be determined through further negotiations among the political representatives of Yugoslavia's national components. Before this laborious process could yield the final agreement, a group of Serbian officers, taking advantage of Yugoslavia's diplomatic difficulties in a Europe dominated by Hitler, staged a palace coup in Belgrade, on March 27, 1941, toppling the Prince-Regent and his government. At that point Hitler decided to complete his domination of southeastern Europe by annihilating a dubious Yugoslavia which he did with a Blitz air attack on Belgrade on April 6, 1941. A multiple Axis occupation followed.

III. Post-War Yugoslavia and The Sovereignty of Equal Nations

The only good consequence of World War II for Slovenia was the return to Slovenia of the bulk of rural areas of the Slovene-populated maritime provinces which, after WW I, had been taken by Italy. Yet, at the end of the War, Slovenia was again left without the port-city of Trst/Trieste (together with its Slovene coastline north of the City), without the city of Gorica/Gorizia (together with the Slovene populated region along the river Sŏca/Isonzo south of the city), without so-called Venetian Slovenia, northwest of Gorizia, and without Kanalska dolina/Kanaltal/Val Canale in the Julian Alps. All these Slovene lands were again annexed to Italy, while the Slovene-populated southern Carinthia was left to the restored German Austria. Thus in spite of all the Slovene suffering in the War the age-old objective of a United Slovenia was again denied to the Slovene people, all for the benefit of Italy and Austria, both of which not only had been de-Slovenizing by force sizeable Slovene minorities after WW I, but during the war had actively participated in the destructive Axis occupation of all of Slovenia. This was truly one of the great injustices as well as political mistakes of WW II.[4]

Moreover, territorially mutilated Slovenia within postwar Yugoslavia remained without national self-government. It is true that already the first constitution of postwar Yugoslavia (1946)—based on the wartime agreement that postwar "Yugoslavia should be built on a democratic and federal principle as a community of nations of equal rights"[5]—talked about the country's federal structure. However, the postwar Stalinist régime paid little attention to its own constitutional and legal provisions or promises; self-government of constituent nations, viz., republics for a long time remained blocked. It was more than twenty years later that, with a sequence of constitutional amendments between 1967 and 1971, the principle of the original sovereignty of Yugoslavia's constituent republics finally asserted itself.

The long-delayed implementation of the wartime commitment to institute a new Yugoslavia as a union of equal nations coincided with the accession to power of younger

political cadres in the republics who were less burdened with the past Stalinistic excesses.[6] Some of these younger leaders took constitutional changes very seriously. This scared the leaders of the old guard in the Communist party. Only six months after the decentralizing constitutional amendments had been adopted, the top party leadership decided that the daring younger leaders in the republics had to go. The untoward consequences of this decision have been far-reaching and still dominate the country.

After the purges, top governmental functions in the republics again passed into the hands of more subservient but also less capable political opportunists who, in connivance with lesser autocrats in municipalities and with the political and bureaucratic center in Belgrade, have managed to ruin Yugoslavia's economy. The root cause was the stubborn hold by the Old-Guard Communist leadership on to its monopolistic political power in the pursuit of two objectives: first, not to permit real enterprise autonomy and open markets lest they erode Party control over the economy and citizens; and second, to continue administrative redistribution of income and capital in favor of the perennially "less developed" regions that have been the political mainstay of Belgrade centralism. This double-duty Belgrade centralism has continued at the expense of the self-reliant "developed" areas; in Slovenia, especially, antiquated plant and equipment could no longer be properly replaced and modernized to keep pace with the technological development in the neighboring Central-Western Europe, of which not so long before Slovenia had been a part.

It was thus that after the decentralizing constitutional changes in 1967-1971, marred by the sweeping political purges of 1972, Yugoslavia, instead of having a self-managed market economy with mutually complementary economic development of autonomous republics, saw its economy degenerate into autarchic neofeudalism of Communist potentates at all levels and points of the government structure.[7] When, at that juncture, within a year from each other, the two remaining top leaders of the Yugo-Communist regime both died (Edvard Kardelj in 1979, followed by Josip B. Tito in 1980), the accumulated economic difficulties had blended into a general political and social crisis which today still plagues the country. This malaise has been aggravated by some twenty billion dollars of foreign debts in hard currencies, most of which "Yugoslavia"[8] had incurred in the late seventies but has since had difficulties in servicing because they had been poorly invested while the confiscatory political administration of the incoming foreign exchange has caused quality exports to keep falling short.

IV. The Accumulating Economic Crisis: Problems and Solutions

It is not possible in this essay to deal with all the various consequences of the accumulated crisis. Let us just mention that at the end of 1987 the rate of inflation reached about 170 percent[8] which, by European standards, was unique. When inflation is this high, most legal personal incomes necessarily trail it. This is why "illicit" strikes have multiplied as have "concealed" economic activities of all kinds (a widespread underground or "gray" economy) by means of which politically well-connected and/or more inventive people try to secure productive employment or just try to protect their previous standard of living. The original responsibility for these and other economic and social woes resides in the wrong economic and political system which suppresses personal initiative and responsibility across the board.

The only way out is to free economic enterprises of administrative shackles, legalize the non-fraudulent parts of the underground economy with the freeing of all domestic prices, including wages and interest rates, while progressively abolishing subsidies to losing enterprises and imposing strict financial discipline from the National Bank down to the

least participant in the economy. In a market economy the participants must live up to their contractual commitments freely entered into between financially independent economic subjects—buyers and sellers of scarce goods and services for consumption as well as production—according to their market-determined and market-oriented economic incentives.

Such an economy is efficient, because in it competition minimizes prices and costs while maximizing participants' economic gains or, in some cases, at least minimizing their losses. Institutional and operational details of the overdue reform to this effect must be left to the republics so that they could adapt the pace of the transition to their greatly diverse conditions. If Slovenia feels that it is ready for such an economic reform, why should it wait until Kosovo feels the same way?

The opposite view—that for a multinational economy to be efficient even more centralization is necessary than Belgrade already possesses—is without foundation in logic or fact. Indeed the federal government already controls 64% of all the tax revenues of the country while all the republics and autonomous provinces together receive only 17.6% (with the remainder going to local governments).[10] By any definition this is a telling indicator of an excessive degree of centralization in a multinational (con)federation.[11] For an efficient economy, open markets are necessary with the concomitant legal safeguards. The most effective multinational common market exists in the European Economic Community whose members are twelve sovereign states, every one of which has a national economy of its own; yet they freely exchange goods and services on their agreed-upon market.

For Yugoslavia, after its long chain of centralistic and administrative failures, it should by now be clear that its economic enterprises must be endowed with a self-responsible, market-oriented entrepreneurship of their own empowered and competent to engage in competition in free market—local, republican, interrepublican, and foreign. It should also be obvious that for competition to be as effective as possible ideological limitations imposed on the amount of land a family farm can own as well as similar limitations on personal, viz., private enterprises in other fields must be eliminated.

V. The Yugoslav Political System: Slovene Historical Antecedents

Yugoslavia's political system is also in need of substantial reform. The seventy years since the inception of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 have abundantly confirmed that the multinational character of the country is irreversible.[12] Yugoslavia consists of several nations in the full European sense. These societies are defined by their own ethnic characteristics, culture and even civilization and live on their own inherited territory. Yugoslavia's "multinational reality" is made up primarily of the three nations that were listed in the name of the original Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS) between 1918 and 1929. Three other nations (the Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Bosnia's Moslems) achieved recognition after World War II. As other nations of the world, these nations also naturally tend to self-government for the obvious reason that in modern conditions no nation can preserve its continuing existence and progress without a government of its own to complement the cultural and economic activities of its members with the necessary national services.

Let us now take a closer look at the historical emergence of Slovenia. As other nations in central, eastern and southeastern Europe that were forced to live under the domination of the respective master-nations (races) in the German, Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman Empires, the Slovenes, too, toward the middle of 19th century began consciously to assert

their need and will for a national state of their own. Until World War I many Slovenes kept hoping that their nation would achieve this essential political goal by the unification of all Slovene lands into a United Slovenia as one of the national states of a (con)federally reorganized Habsburg Empire, whose multinational diversity would be bound into a successful union by almost ideal economic complementarities of member-nations as well as similarities in culture and way of life.

It was because of the outrageous oppression in Slovenia by the German military rule in Austria during the first three years of World War I that the Slovenes finally became convinced that there was no future for them as a nation in the Habsburg Empire. They realized that Habsburg Austria had irretrievably fallen prey to its own German nationalists who did not want the multinational Empire to become a union of equal nations but instead wanted a closer union, if not an outright merger, with the neighboring German Empire. It was thus that they viewed Slovene provinces in Austria—extending between the south-eastern Alps and the northern Adriatic coast around Trieste—as a natural obstacle to their objective of turning Trieste into a directly-controlled maritime outlet for a united Austria and Germany. For the ruling Pan-Germans the only "solution" was to use their political and economic hegemony as a means to Germanize this Slovene "obstacle" which ethnically separated the German north from the "warm waters" of the Adriatic.

In summary, despite the economic and other benefits from many centuries of common life in Central Europe, the Slovenes decided to leave Habsburg Austria in order to preserve the national existence. It is quite obvious therefore that they did not enter Yugoslavia (i.e. the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) in 1918 with the intention of becoming Serbs or being otherwise culturally crippled and economically impoverished. In seventy years of experience with Belgrade centralism their view of the future of Yugoslavia has crystallized into the following simple proposition: Because of its multinational character, Yugoslavia can only be a union of sovereign nations for unquestionably common matters, which each member-state, in its own recognized national interest, has voluntarily accepted as such—or there will be no Yugoslavia. Essentially this includes coordination (not unification) of national defenses of member-states to enhance their common outward security, a common legal framework to establish and to maintain a freely functioning common market—and whatever else all of them may want to undertake in common.[13]

VI. Yugoslav Political Reform: Pressures for Centralization

In 1987-1988 a controversial process was under way in Yugoslavia to prepare certain constitutional changes in the guise of helping to solve the ongoing economic crisis. A succession of proposals from Belgrade revealed a clear intention to augment the powers of the central government.[14] Communist leaders in Slovenia have spoken openly against such reactionary changes. In defending the achieved constitutional autonomy of the republics, Slovene party leaders have responded to the virtually unanimous demands of Slovene public opinion.[15] But—as it was stated in a dispatch to *The New York Times* by its correspondent from Ljubljana on the day of Gorbachev's visit to Slovenia—the Slovene Communist leadership is "under pressure from the national Government to close ideological ranks in order to better confront the nation's economic woes."[16] The irony was that Slovenia resisted this pressure not only from political recognition of an already excessive government centralization in Belgrade, but also because it knew too well that further centralization could only worsen the economic crisis since Belgrade had been using its powers for counter-productive administrative measures instead of permitting free markets to function.[17] At this writing it was not yet clear whether the Communist leadership in

Slovenia would persist in opposing these centralistic practices and ultimately deny the consent of the Republic of Slovenia without which the existing federal constitution cannot be changed.

Repeated pressures for centralization bring to mind the original sin of both Yugoslavias after each of the two World Wars. When on December 1, 1918, the victorious Serbs imposed their own terms for the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, not only did the Serbian royal house become the arbiter of "last resort", but the Serbian capital of Belgrade became the seat of the government of the new multinational state. The dominating Serbs made good use of both these original advantages. A similar development was repeated after WW II. After the central government had been established in Belgrade in October 1944, the seat of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was also transferred from Zagreb to Belgrade in 1945.

One may therefore conclude that in Yugoslavia, together with a consistently confederal reorganization of the multinational country, an additional constitutional change is needed: To transfer the capital of the confederal union from Belgrade to another city that will be geographically more central and will not be at the same time the capital of one of the constituent republics.

VII. The Western Powers Views on Yugo-Unitarianism

It can frequently be heard that the great Western democracies (USA, Great Britain, France etc.) view Yugoslavia as if it were a one-nation (unitarian) state. This probably was true concerning prewar Yugoslavia until the agreement between the Crown and the Croatian political leader Vladimir Maček in August 1939 with which the multinational reality of Yugoslavia was for the first time substantively confirmed. Concerning postwar Yugoslavia, the attitudes of Western Powers have been more complex. Already the first constitution of postwar Yugoslavia in January 1946 proclaimed the country to be a federal state of several nations. But until the mid-sixties the Communist regime of postwar Yugoslavia was not only dictatorial (essentially Stalinist) but also centralistic (essentially Leninist). And even after the adoption of decentralizing constitutional changes in 1967-1974 the ruling Communist party (the renamed League of Communists) has stayed committed to the Leninist principle of "democratic centralism" anchored in Belgrade.

It is not so strange, therefore, that the foreign policy of Western powers toward postwar Yugoslavia has again been leaning toward Yugo-unitarism. Even when, after the death of Josip B. Tito in 1980, Yugoslavia's slide toward a general social crisis was accelerated, one could increasingly hear voices in the West saying that the federal government in Belgrade needed more powers if it was to succeed in controlling the accumulated economic difficulties amidst the country's high foreign indebtedness in convertible hard currencies.[18]

In the ensuing years of the eighties it became clear, however, that the *Belgrade* government has had enough power to cope with the accumulated difficulties, but *has not been willing to adopt market-oriented remedies*.[19] It has preferred to continue its administratively redistributive policies in favor of the chronically subsidized regions and enterprises at the expense of the self-sustaining ones and to the detriment of the country as a whole. When, at the same time, dissident movements began to expand by leaps and bounds, particularly in Slovenia,[20] the centralistic bias of Western policies toward Yugoslavia became less noticeable. This subtle change was probably helped by the fact that the Belgrade government kept evading the advice of the International Monetary Fund urging freer market relations and less subsidization of chronically losing enterprises, a policy orientation that consecutive Yugoslav governments had themselves been repeatedly

proclaiming but never following.

The official policy of the United States toward Yugoslavia was concisely restated by Michael M. Armacost, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, in June 1986 when he described the American policy as "the support of independence, unity and integrity of Yugoslavia".[21] Two years earlier A. Ross Johnson, a noted American authority on Yugoslavia, had expressed the American policy as "the support of independence, territorial integrity and well-being". Since the subject is *foreign* policy, the word "unity" sounds like another word for the expression "territorial integrity" without any other substantive significance of its own. Yet, official formulation of foreign policy should be simple and clear. Because of this redundancy one could suspect that the Armacost version must have been welcome by the crypto-unitarist political circles in Yugoslavia that continue to press for greater centralization in Belgrade. Because of its deceptive redundancy and potentially damaging ambiguity, the word "unity" should quietly disappear from future formulations of the policy of the United States and other Western powers toward Yugoslavia.

The West should encourage developments in Yugoslavia which encourage democratic institutions based on full human and national rights. The history of both Yugoslavia has shown convincingly that the realization of potential benefits from a union of its nations depends on their mutual confidence, not on force. To the extent that the nations of Yugoslavia have recognized common concerns and interests, mutual confidence will bind them together in a viable union.

VIII. Suggested Policies for Political Democratization

In conclusion, Yugoslavia needs constitutional reform that respects the sovereignty of each of its member-states (republics) and provides for joint direction of freely agreed upon common concerns. For free selection of political programs and their administrators as well as for the protection of human rights, it is essential that the citizens of each member-state be allowed to choose at least between two mutually independent political parties. This requires that the existing Leagues of Communists in the constitutent republics (as well as their parent-League of Communists of Yugoslavia) give up their political monopoly which is incompatible with a free society. The constitution must affirm the right of citizens to establish and to join non-Communist political parties as they do other voluntary associations.

This still leaves unresolved the most important problem: *How to implement* the union of sovereign member-states and a more-than-one-party prerequisite for democracy? How fast or gradually should the necessary changes be carried out? These "hows" constitute the dynamics of the twin transition of Yugoslavia about which a distant observer is not in a position to say much more than what I have already said. I do have, however, an idea as to how to introduce a more-than-one-party political system in Slovenia. I said something about it twenty years ago when, for the first time, similar changes had been talked about:

> "Tito has only one outcome that would secure continuity: To accept the necessity to reorganize the Communist party so that it would leave its hitherto hiding ground in the Socialist Alliance of the Working People. That would make it possible for the latter to live a political life of its own independently from, and in full equality with, the Communist party. This would be the road by which they could reach the condition of two mutually independent political organizations as the minimal requisite for a working democracy that (in Yugoslavia) has repeatedly been promised but never attained."[23]

Tito, of course, did not opt for such a reform. The political structure he left behind consists of eight Communist parties, one each in the six republics and two autonomous provinces, to correspond to the (con)federal reorganization of the government of multinational Yugoslavia in 1971. But this decentralized political structure continues to operate in the framework of the parent Communist party of Yugoslavia to satisfy the Leninist principle of "democratic centralism" which is to guarantee overall conformity with the overriding Communist nature of the régime.

Yet an important aspect of liberalization in Slovenia is precisely in the area of intra-(or inter-) party relationships where the Slovene party leadership has recently been asserting significant policy differences with the leadership of the Yugoslav party, particularly in connection with the proposed constitutional changes in 1987-1988.[24]

The Titoist political structure was once half-facetiously described as a "one-and-a-half-party system." The additional "one half" was in reference, not to the existence of the subordinate Communist party pluralism, but to the so-called Socialist Alliance of the Working People which operates like a transmission belt of the ruling Communist party (of "workers") in each republic to facilitate its reaching non-Communist citizens ("working people"). This is the principal area where developments in Slovenia went farther than in other republics, a fact that may justify the above appellation ("1.5") as a symbolic indicator of a potential further change. There are quite a few organizations, institutions and even officially subsidized media in Slovenia that may be said to be persistently or growingly "dissident" but operate within or in the close periphery of the loose structure of the Socialist Alliance.[25]

However, even in the Republic of Slovenia liberalization has stopped far short of democratization as a process that aims at bringing about the possibility of equal political participation for all the citizens, communist as well as noncommunist. Even in "liberal" Slovenia the opponents of the one-party regime cannot constitute themselves into independent political parties as the Communists are organized in their own. Unfortunately for the theory of social evolution in its application to Communist systems stemming from the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, no Leninist party in power anywhere in the world has as yet crossed the political Rubicon that separates liberalization from democratization.

In spite of this universal record to the contrary, one can still ask whether, for some so-far-unexplained reason, the League of Communists of Slovenia may be on the verge of a pioneering crossover from liberalization to democratization. Only time will provide the answer. But when?

If and when further developments will push the Communist party leadership toward political democratization, it may perhaps become, at least in Slovenia, easier to make the necessary transition by, say, tacitly permitting the existing Socialist Alliance to become free of the ideological tutelage and organizational control of the Communist party. Such a development would yield an additional benefit. Starting with only two independent political parties—a newly independent Slovene Socialist Alliance in electoral competition with the old League of Communists—the fledgling process of democratization would avoid the danger of a counterproductive splintering of the politically less experienced and younger opponents of the one-party monopoly. For one has to keep in mind the difference between the essentially spontaneous phenomenon of "dissidence" (a category of "liberalization") on the one hand, and organized political "opposition" (a category of "democratization") on the other. To be a dissident is essentially an individualized intellectual phenomenon, a "voice crying in the wilderness" that only remotely helps to prepare the way for structured political opposition as an essential ingredient of a working democ-

racy. A Socialist Alliance capable of becoming independent could become a convenient transition from the intellectual position of dissidence to a new situation of effective political opposition which can be effective only if it can find active support beyond the intellectual community in the broad strata of the population.

In Slovenia, democratization has an added meaning, for it will also solve the need for "national reconciliation" as a legacy of the fratricidal violence during and after WW II. Scattered all over Slovenia are mass graves not only of those Slovene Communists "liquidated" during the enemy occupation of Slovenia and of fallen partisans but also of thousands of former Slovene *domobranci*, whom—against all the pertinent international rules—the British occupation forces in Austria had forcibly repatriated across the Austrian-Yugoslav border several weeks after the end of the war in May 1945. These unfortunate repatriates were virtually all brutally massacred by the newly implanted Communist regime. The leadership of the Communist party has yet publicly to admit and apologize for these mass murders. The massacres entered the domain of public knowledge only with the publication in 1975 in nearby Trieste (the originally Austrian and then Italian port city with a sizeable Slovene minority) of an interview with Edvard Kocbek, the wartime top non-Communist ally of the Communists in the wartime Slovene "Liberation Front" (OF).

Kocbek's revelation caused a barrage of Communist attacks against him and the authors of the book in which his interview was published. Then something entirely unexpected happened: Amidst these hostile attacks *Naši Razgledi*, a Communist-controlled Slovene biweekly review for intellectuals, reprinted the text of the Kocbek interview.[26] This made it official, as it were, just short of the regime's own admission of the massacre.

When asked in the interview the follow-up question: "What do you think it would be necessary to do concerning the horrible fate of the Slovene Homeguards?", Kocbek gave the following far-reaching answer:

> "Above all we have to lift it from the negation to public admission . . . Responsible people must explain how was it possible for the victorious Liberation to conceive within itself such a shameful fear of the opponent . . . There is no valid theory that would generically select victims of a world-historical mission and abstractly decide the death of a fellow human being. Public admission of a guilt that concerns us all is at stake . . . Until we publicly admit our guilt, our great guilt . . . we Slovenes will never enter a pure and clear atmosphere of the future."[27]

When Kocbek's injunction is met, democratization will complete national reconciliation. When democratization will allow all the people of Slovenia to participate on equal terms in the self-government of their own country in common recognition and actual exercise of the basic principle of the democratic rule, they will thereby all be reconciled into a bond of people with equal human and civil rights freely taking part in deciding political questions of Slovenia in accordance with the pluralistically determined majority rule.

But democracy does not mean only equal human and civil rights for all the Slovenes and national reconciliation among them. Seventy years of experience in two Yugoslavias have taught the Slovenes that in a world of sovereign nations and international agreements they will not be able to assert their own national interests and to develop on equal terms with other nations if they remain deprived of their own sovereign statehood. Only unquestionable sovereignty of its republic will be the guarantee of the future of Slovenia.

Georgetown University

NOTES

* Editors' note: It is with deep regret that we report that Professor Žebot passed away on January 9, 1989, at the age of 74. He submitted these remarks—some of which have been since overtaken by events—in the summer of 1988. For more details of his views on the historical and political developments in Slovenia in the twentieth century readers are directed to his book *Neminljiva Slovenija* (Celovec/Klagenfurt: Mohorjeva, 1988).

1. David Remnick and Jackson Diehl, a dispatch from Yugoslavia to *The Washington Post*, March 18, 1988.
2. John LaFarge, S.J., *The Martyrdom of Slovenia* (New York, 1942) (first published as a series of three articles in the weekly magazine *America* (1941-1942); H.M. Foreign Office, *Yugoslavia: Basic Facts* (London, 1943-1944), Pt. II, 5 and 30; Robert Langer, *The Austro-Yugoslav Problem* (New York, 1951) 47.
3. Josip Mal, *Zgodovina slovenskega naroda, najnovejša doba* (Celje: Družba sv. Mohorja, 1928) 1095-1126; Fran Erjavec, *Zgodovina katoliškega gibanja na Slovenskem* (Ljubljana: Prosvetna zveza, 1928) 159-238.—John LaFarge, the Editor-in-Chief of *America*, prefaced the collection *Martyrdom of Slovenia* with the following characterization of prewar Slovenia: " . . . this is a little known story of the tragic and epic atrocities that have decimated the people of *Slovenia*—a peaceful and Catholic people who *had achieved a near-Utopia of co-operative social and economic life, before the Nazi terror struck* . . . " (My emphasis, CAŽ).
4. Even today Austria continues heavyhandedly to discriminate against the Slovene national minority in Carinthia. After the departure of the liberating Allied Forces and contrary to the spirit of Article 7 (for protection of national minorities) of the 1955 State Treaty for Austria, the succeeding all-German provincial government of Carinthia eliminated the bilingual school system for ethnically mixed parts of Southern Carinthia that had been instituted in 1945 under the auspices of the Allied Administration in Austria. Since the abolition of that just and practical solution a succession of further discriminatory measures against the Slovene minority has followed, the latest one being an attempt to take Slovene children out of the already very reduced number of bilingual classes into apartheid-type segregated ones thus virtually forcing their parents to opt for an exclusively German education for their children for the sake of mere economic survival.
5. Dusan Bilandžić, *Istorija socialističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* (Zagreb, 1978) 62-63.
6. Foremost among them were Stane Kavčič in Slovenia, Savka Dabčević-Kučar in Croatia, Marko Nikežić in Serbia and Krste Cervenkovski in Macedonia.
7. "Because of the relapse into Leninism [after Karadjordjevo and Tito's public broadcast of 1-2 December 1971], Yugoslavia's newly confederated republics . . . purged of their popular and respected younger leaders, have yet to agree on a joint, mutually beneficial program of development, based on economic complementarity, an unrestricted common Yugoslav market, and international trade at a realistic rate of exchange. Instead, with renewed political distrust (among the handpicked protegees who replaced the purged leaders in the republics), the republics embarked on largely autarchic courses of economic development. In the process, their complementarity has been administratively restricted . . ." (Cyril A. Zebot, "Yugoslavia's selfmanagement on trial", *Problems of Communism* (Washington, D.C.) March-April 1982, 48).
8. "Yugoslavia" is here in quotation marks because the name of the country has been used to cover up the facts as to who in what republic had contracted these loans, for how much, for what specific purpose, and under what repayment conditions. In other words, these loans were nationalized.
9. *Ekonomska politika* (Belgrade) 1867 (January 11, 1988) 11. Other preliminary findings on the deteriorating state of the country's economy in 1987, expressed as percentages of the attainments in 1986—the first-listed figures—and of the planned percentages for 1987 (in parentheses) are bad also: Social product -0.5 (3.0), industrial production 0.7 (3.5), agricultural production -7.5 (2.5), productivity in industry -2.2 (1), employment in the social sector 2.0 (2.0), personal consumption -1.0 (-), investment in plants & equipment -4.0 (4.5), exports 3.7 (4.5), imports 1.9 (3.5), real personal incomes -7.1 (1.5). (*Ekonomska politika* 1867: 111).—For an updated analysis of the inflationary impact of Yugoslavia's tax system see T. Dumežić, "Porezi i kriza", *Ekonomska politika* (February 1988).
10. Tomislav Dumežić, "Poreski sistem: finansiranje federacije", *Ekonomska politika*, Beograd, March 14, 1988, p. 20.

11. The apparent budget of the federal government in Belgrade amounts to "only" 6.5 percent of the social product. However, the federal government also controls a long list of expenditures by the governments of the republics, autonomous provinces and municipalities. "Thus the (apparent) 6.5 percent increases and exceeds one quarter of the country's social product. There are not many governments in the world that have so great a fiscal authority . . . The federal government also directly controls money and credit flows, economic relations with foreign countries, prices, and can also, if it deems necessary, regulate personal incomes . . ." ("Budžet i inflacija", *Ekonomska politika* (October 12, 1987) 5.)
12. In an interview on the meaning of the fall of Alexandar Ranković (in 1966) Josip B. Tito agreed that in Yugoslavia "it is not possible to create one (single) nation." (*The Sunday Times*, London, July 6, 1966). It was this realization that gave the impetus to the sustained process of major constitutional changes during the years 1967-1971, changes that introduced into Yugoslavia's political system several confederal elements.
13. The fullest discussion and expression of this Slovene national consensus is contained in the monthly review *Nova revija* (Ljubljana) 57 (February 1987) where on 246 pages sixteen articles constitute comprehensive "contributions toward a Slovene national program".
14. Dimitrij Rupel, "Imperij zla vrača udarec" and Franc Bučar, "Kaj prinaša predlog ustavnih sprememb", *Nova revija* 58-60 (1987).
15. As mentioned in note 13, the entire No. 57 of *Nova revija*, a leading Slovene journal for critical examination of pressing political as well as other delicate problems in Yugoslavia, was dedicated to scholarly "contributions for a Slovene national program." No other major publication in Yugoslavia before that had a similarly profound impact on the intellectual community and young people. Then the Association of Slovene writers organized a public symposium on "Constitutional Changes" on March 16, 1987, which in its entirety was published as a book. In following-up the same writers association issued a series of statements rejecting the consecutive Belgrade proposals for re-centralizing constitutional amendments. Even the reserved and restrained leadership of the Catholic church in Slovenia issued a statement saying that constitutional changes "should be enacted to advance the process of democratization and decentralization as well as to strengthen the autonomy of every nation in Yugoslavia . . .," *Družina* (Ljubljana) July 12, 1987. The clearest public statement came from The Sociological Association of Slovenia: "The majority of the Slovene public opinion wants constitutional changes in diametrically opposite direction from that which is reflected in the official proposal . . .," *Delo* (Ljubljana) November 21, 1987.
16. John Taggliabue, "Tepid Times for Gorbachev In a Thriving Yugoslav City", *The New York Times*, March 18, 1988.
17. Three high-level testimonies to this effect—an article by Dr. Dragomir Vojnić ("Zarobljenici Staljinove dogme") and interviews by Štefan Korošec, a member of the Presidency of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia ("Izlazak iz blokade") and by Čivko Pregl, Executive Secretary of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia ("Što opet hoče Slovenci")—were published in the magazine *Danas*, Zagreb, January 12, 1988.
18. I distinctly remember the loneliness of my early review article of 1982—Zebot, "Yugoslavia's self-management"—which argued that there was no economic need for increased centralization in Belgrade.
19. See note 17.
20. The principle meeting ground of Slovene dissidents is the already mentioned *Nova revija*. On a different level, the official youth organization (Federation of Socialist Youth of Slovenia) with its weekly magazine *Mladina* has been a vocal proponent and defender of dissident causes and of a variety of "alternative movements" (environmental, antinuclear, etc.). On still another plane, the Association of Slovene Writers and many other organizations of citizens in Slovenia, including leading members and organs of the League of Communists and of the Socialist Alliance in Slovenia, as well as virtually all the newspapers and magazines in Slovenia, have increasingly become dissident if not outright oppositionist in relation to the Yugoslav Communist leadership in Belgrade and its centralistic inclinations and policies. For a recent survey of this growing type of Slovene dissidents see *FBIS Trends: Yugoslavia* (January 21, 1988): "Slovenes display increasing opposition to federal policies", FBIS 091 (WA123456789 FBIS Media Analysis), Washington, D.C.
21. Michael M. Armacost, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, "U.S. - Yugoslav Relations" in *Current Policy* (U.S. Department of State) 848 (June 2, 1986).
22. A. Ross Johnson, *Yugoslavia's Significance for the West*, Rand Corporation Paper P-6980, 1984.

23. C. Žebot, *Slovenija včeraj, danes in jutri*, (Celovec/Klagenfurt, 1967) 90.
24. See Section VI and notes 17 and 20 above.
25. See note 20.
26. Boris Pahor and Alojz Rebula, *Edvard Kocbek - pričevalec našega časa* (Trst/Trieste, 1976) 128-153; reprinted in *Naši razgledi*, Ljubljana, May 9, 1975.—An account of the fate of the Slovene repatriates is in Nikolay Tolstoy's book *The Minister and the Massacres* (London: Hutchinson, 1986); see also Dimitrij Rupel, "The heresy of Edvard Kocbek," *Slovene Studies* 10 (1988) 51-60.
27. Pahor and Rebula 150.

POVZETEK

SLOVENIJA MED LIBERALIZACIJO IN - DEMOKRATIZACIJO?

Avtor govori o političnih dogodkih v Sloveniji do pomladi 1988 in vidi v njih prej razvoj v smeri liberalizacije kot v smeri demokratizacije. O razliki med tema dvema konceptoma, v kolikor se nanašata na Slovenijo, avtor razpravlja v zvezi z zgodovinskom razvojem Slovenije po letu 1918 in še zlasti po letu 1946, to je zlasti z razvojem, ki je dosegel svoj višek v ekonomski krizi osemdesetih let. Dalje je v članku podan pregled razvoja in izmenjavanja političnih sistemov v Jugoslaviji po letu 1918, s posebnim ozirom na njihov odnos do raznih vidikov politične centralizacije (eden avtorjevih zaključkov: glavno mesto Jugoslavije bi moralo biti neko centralno središče federacije, ki bi ne bilo hkrati glavno mesto ene republik). V nadaljnjem je govor o uradni zunanji politiki Združenih držav do Jugoslavije. Potem avtor razpravlja o političnih linijah, ki bi utegnile pripraviti Jugoslavijo na pot politične demokratizacije, še posebno o odpravi političnega in elektoralnega monopola, ki ga sedaj uživa Komunistična partija v državi. Če bi, na primer, prišlo do ustanovitve neodvisne Socialistične zveze v Sloveniji, bi volitve zares nudile izbiro in bi bila možna demokratska opozicija. Drug tak predpogoj je sprejeti zahtevo Edvarda Kocbeka in javno priznati krivdo v domobranski aferi. In končno in vendar je najmanj važno - brez republiške suverenosti Slovenije ne gre.