

On the Eve of the 1978 Party  
Congress

Two generalizations about postwar Yugoslavia, and perhaps only two, have proved to have consistent predictive as well as descriptive validity. The first concerns the regime's and the Yugoslavs' apparently inexhaustible willingness to experiment, their impatient readiness to discard and devise replacements for organizational forms, procedures, epithets, priorities, and even some conceptual frameworks at the first signs of defective parts or poor performance on the road. The second is that every Yugoslav specialist whose analysis has led to the conclusion that this or that policy or trend is irreversible, a "moment of truth," or commits the future of the society or the system has invariably been proved wrong. Those who wrote about Yugoslavia ca. 1947 in terms of irrevocable and particularly zealous loyalty to the Soviet Union and the Soviet model of socialism may presumably be excused by the state of our factual knowledge and of social science theory at that time. In the later 1960s, many twists and turns and falsified predictions later, this was a less valid excuse for those of us, this time including myself, who saw the then existing level and quality of institutionalized, legally recognized, and assertive interest group pluralism and popular participation as an effective barrier to any reversal of the trend away from Communist Party autocracy and centralized authority—except perhaps through outside intervention or a coup that would do too much damage to the social and political fabric to be contemplated by those in a position to carry it out. Wrong again. And now, what of those who since 1972 have with equal confidence composed obituaries for confederation, pluralism, or social self-management with a meaningful face, and

who have proclaimed the re-enthronement of a recentralized and re-Leninized Party as the Autocrat of all the Self-Managers? On the evidence of the subjects being discussed in the context of preparations for the June 1978 Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), and the way they are being discussed, this, too, seems to have been at best an oversimplification.

Particular attention is now focused on the latest pronouncements of Edvard Kardelj, the regime's perennial chief official ideologist. Kardelj himself is often called the regime's number two man and is usually considered to be Tito's most likely first successor as President of the Party, unless he loses his battle with cancer before that time comes. His views, officially proclaimed "the basis for the

---

*This Report is a revised version of a Paper presented at a conference on "Yugoslavia: Accomplishments and Problems," held at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., on October 17, 1977. The conference was organized by Professor George W. Hoffman of the University of Texas with assistance from the External Research Office of the U.S. Department of State and the publishing house of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. It was attended by about 90 scholars, journalists, and government officials. Other papers presented were by Professor Paul S. Shoup of the University of Virginia (on the Party), Professor Laura D'Andrea Tyson of the University of California at Berkeley (on the economy), and Professor Fred Warner Neal of the Claremont Graduate School, formerly an AUFS Associate stationed in Yugoslavia (on foreign policy). Professor Neal's paper is also being published as an AUFS Report.*

activity of the League of Communists in preparations for the Eleventh Congress," are set forth in a speech made at a meeting of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LCY on June 13, 1977, and in a book from which the speech was excerpted, published in October and entitled *Developmental Trends in the Political System of Socialist Self-Management*.

Kardelj spoke at length about a "pluralism of self-management interests" that must be enabled "to find expression within the framework of democratic self-management decision-making as directly and freely as possible." The 1974 Constitution and the almost equally long Associated Labor Act passed by the Federal Assembly in November 1976 provide improved mechanisms for such expression and participation, he said, but there is still "a certain discrepancy between proclaimed and constitutionally established democratic principles and our social and political practice." This discrepancy has its "objective causes," including "the level of development of the revolution and society, the level of economic development and equality, the power ratio of social forces, the sharpness of social conflicts, the impact of world contradictions on our internal social life, and the like." It is also the result of "subjective factors," among which he lists "bureaucratic centralism, technocratism, the scramble for political control of man and similar phenomena in the sphere of social relations, or sectarianism, opportunism, too much reliance on administrative means [Marxist jargon for coercion], individualistic ambitions and similar phenomena in ideology and politics." While "the system itself cannot eliminate all such phenomena," Kardelj said, improvements in the system can help, and to this end "the changes which have necessarily to be introduced in our political system largely concern the position, role, and manner of operation of the League of Communists itself."<sup>1</sup>

The Party, it seems, has still not found the magic formula of organization, membership, attitude, and "manner of operation" that will enable it to perform its "leading role" properly, as that role has been defined in principle since the early 1950s: on the one hand effective as a uniquely influential interpreter of socialist values, proponent of "socialist solutions," mediator, and

antidote to "spontaneity" and to the reduction of the political process to simple bargaining among socialism's "pluralism of interests" without regard for the general interest; on the other hand, not a monopolizer of power and an "external factor" dictating decisions only formally taken by "self-managers." Failing to find this formula, Kardelj wrote in 1965<sup>2</sup> and again in 1977, the Party will be doomed to founder between "its Scylla and Charybdis," either maintaining its political monopoly as "a classical political party in a one-party system," which inevitably leads to diverse "deformations" and eventually to Stalinism, or finding itself "on the periphery of social developments," reduced to a seldom-listened-to "ideological-propagandistic force." For Kardelj both of these dangers are still real and are described in much detail, but in the portions of his treatise that constituted his June speech the Party's prevalent failing is again an excessive dependence on "administrative means" and misuse of power. "It often happens," he said, "that social-political organizations [an umbrella term for the Party and its subsidiary organizations like the Socialist Alliance] illegitimately intervene in decision-making by responsible, self-managing, state, and social organs and organizations." The consequences, in his view, are harmful for both democracy and responsibility, since "real" and formal responsibility are no longer one and the same thing." The Party is condemned to the status of a dictatorial minority dangerously isolated from the influence of the masses and their variegated interests, and the regime takes on the appearance if not the reality of basic instability.

Kardelj's answer is not new and still lacks specificity, as he seems at one point to acknowledge,<sup>3</sup> but it has not been heard at this level and in these phrases in recent years:

*Our point of departure here must be that every organ and every institution should autonomously take decisions in its jurisdiction and be fully made responsible both politically and materially for these decisions, which, before they are taken, must be subject to consultations of and influence by all creative socialist forces, and especially social-political and other social organizations, as well as scientific and professional institutions.*



*The practitioner and the theoretician: Stane Dolanc, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the LCY since 1971, and Edvard Kardelj—both Slovenes—are the most talked about and generally considered the most influential of Tito's lieutenants today...and tomorrow?*

To achieve such influence, he writes elsewhere in the treatise, the Party must fully “integrate itself” in today’s complex system of workers’ and social self-management. By itself and through other “social-political organizations” it should begin by “ensuring that key positions in the assemblies, state organs, and other institutions of self-management are firmly in the hands of socialist forces.” These social-political organizations should also more regularly and consistently exploit their right, which has been expanded and made explicit in the new Constitution, to have their own direct representatives present and heard at various kinds of meetings of these institutions and at basic as well as higher levels. Failure to do these things or doing them ineffectively is the major reason why the Party has too often been forced back into reliance on “administrative means” and the position of “a monopolistic ad-

ministrator of society,” acting outside and above the self-management system. On the other hand, he warns, doing these things properly means learning to play by a new and more difficult set of rules, one in which the Party “has to be prepared to retreat and make compromises when a conflict of interests in the sphere of self-management democracy or a lagging behind of the social consciousness of the working masses is involved.”<sup>4</sup>

Kardelj’s often obscure, always verbose, and frequently pedantic utterances have traditionally given rise to two contradictory reactions. The first has been to invest them with more impact and more positive consequences than subsequent developments have usually justified, and to credit their author with more “liberalism” (in the Western sense) and antidogmatism (in a generic sense) than careful analysis warrants. The second

has been privately expressed even by some middle-ranking members of the Yugoslav establishment who share his general outlook and who fear the consequences if his illness removes him from the scene before the transition to a post-Tito era. It considers much of his philosophizing boring, irrelevant, a distraction from real issues and "real life," and sometimes pernicious when it has led to institutional experiments that did not work, creating the impression that "self-management" is cumbersome, inefficient, and a source of instability.

Whichever of these reactions is usually justified—in this writer's opinion each contains some truth—Kardelj's 1977 speech and book deserve the attention they are receiving, both on their own merits and as an indication of a general change in political atmosphere and potential. Kardelj is careful to point out that his "pluralism of self-management interests" is not the same thing as "the political pluralism of the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary system," which Yugoslavia will continue to "reject in advance" as inappropriate in a multinational and socialist state and a step backward from self-management socialist democracy. Party Executive Committee Secretary Stane Dolanc has subsequently made the same distinction in his own way, during a meeting with foreign journalists on February 21, 1978, by pointedly using the native Serbo-Croatian word *mnoštvo* (meaning "a great number" or "lots of") where Kardelj had used the loan-word *pluralizam* (originally borrowed by Yugoslav social scientists from their Western counterparts but in general political and journalistic usage for more than a decade) to designate the Yugoslav and legitimately socialist form of multiplicity of interests. It is more significant, however, that a positive evaluation of any kind of "pluralism," and by any name, was explicitly condemned by Tito and others during the retreat to firmer Party control after 1971. The treatise as a whole echoes criticisms, ideas, and values that dominated official Party thinking around 1967, and that were both cause and effect of the political atmosphere and the decentralizing and pluralizing economic and political reforms of that period. Finally, Kardelj's return to such a line does not appear to be an isolated phenomenon. Other authoritative spokesmen—early examples include Dolanc

(addressing a Zagreb Party meeting in January 1977) and Federal Assembly President Kiro Gligorov (in a press conference for foreign journalists in June 1977)<sup>5</sup>—have anticipated or echoed his views.

Meanwhile, ordinary and non-Party Yugoslavs are reporting renewed insistence, in their own factories or offices, that non-Communists must again be as eligible for promotion or election to decision-making positions as Communists, and that elected "self-management" bodies (usually with non-Party majorities) rather than local Party organizations must "really" make policy decisions. By last summer one such Yugoslav, only recently concerned because decision-making in his enterprise seemed to have returned to the hands of a politically influential Party clique that he considered incompetent, was instead complaining about "too much so-called self-management, meaning too many meetings and compromises or nondecisions, so that no one can be held responsible when things go wrong. They call it democracy, but democracy should mean freely electing someone to take charge, then letting him do it and insisting that he be accountable for what he does." All this suggests that significant changes are taking place in atmosphere, political style, and expectations at the bottom of the social and political pyramid as well as in the rhetoric heard from the top.

On the other hand, the existence of effective resistance to these purported and still tentative changes is confirmed by other evidence, also usually indirect and hard to substantiate. One frequently cited example is the delay in proclaiming the amnesty for political prisoners that finally took place on Yugoslav National Day, November 29, 1977—it had been talked about at the beginning of the year, at least one senior official confirmed in April that it was "under consideration."<sup>6</sup> and informed sources had said that it would be proclaimed on the occasion of Tito's 85th birthday in May. Some officials hinted that the postponement was to avoid giving the impression of submission to foreign pressures on behalf of "human rights" in "socialist" countries (in his June speech Kardelj argued that the question is legitimate although the motives and intentions of those who raise it are suspect), but less official

sources claimed that resistance within the leadership was also playing a role. There is also the curious delay in publishing Kardelj's book. The manuscript was circulated to members of the Party Presidency at the time of his June speech. Immediate publication was assumed, but it did not appear until October. In Belgrade in July it was being said the delay was because the author was being urged to revise and "toughen" some allegedly controversial sections. The always active Belgrade rumor mill is inevitably ready to name names in such cases, including Bosnian Party leaders whose influence derives from Bosnia's ethnic neutrality as an officially non-national state common to Serbs, Croats, and Muslim South Slavs. However unverifiable such labeling may be, almost everyone agrees that those who would like to see more emphasis on the role of socialism's "pluralism of interests" and less on "the leading role of the Party" are keeping a low profile for the time being.

Meanwhile, a selective reading of Kardelj's book can offer almost as much aid and comfort to those who fear renewed liberalization as to those who pray for it. As outside observers who consider it on balance a "hard line" book point out, the kinds of passages cited above are balanced by others that repeatedly condemn "the illusion of spontaneous democracy," that extol even more ubiquitous if more subtle Party control until "the balance of social forces" tips far more in the direction of "conscious socialist subjective forces," and that justify the exclusion from participation and limitations on other rights and liberties for "enemies of socialism and self-management."

At the least it seems clear from this mixed evidence that one important feature of Tito's response to the political crises of 1971-72 no longer obtains. This is the freeze imposed on critical thinking about the Party's residual and then reasserted supremacy over other "sub-systems" in an increasingly pluralistic "global system," in practical terms meaning its right to intervene openly, as an organization with constitutionally sanctioned final authority, and ultimately to dictate decision-making by other bodies. That authority, as defined by the Tenth Party Congress and a new Constitution in 1974, is formally unchal-

lenged, and the thaw on this and related issues that were so hotly debated in the later 1960s may or may not have serious and tangible as well as largely atmospheric consequences. It does, however, reflect a renewed self-confidence and sense of at least domestic security by the leadership (Kardelj and others have mentioned success in restoring political stability as the reason why further "democratizing" reforms can now be contemplated). That in turn is shaking loose other social forces, generating new expectations and doubts, and generally reopening questions and options that were suppressed but not foreclosed since 1971. To examine why and how this seems to have happened and what "ratio of social forces" it represents or releases may provide clues to the kind of Yugoslavia that will come when (if!) Tito finally departs.

For two decades, from the early 1950s until 1972, Yugoslavia was with reason—if also with occasional exaggeration or unrealistic expectations—the focus of favorable comment and high hopes emanating from "bourgeois-democratic" and "neo-Marxist" circles in the Western world. Here at last it seemed that an old dream, common to liberal and Marxist political thought, was in the process of being realized. A modernizing dictatorship, created by a revolutionary minority whose ideology included democracy as well as development, was in significant measure fulfilling both pledges and adapting to the change without institutional breakdown or serious conflict. If Yugoslavia at the end of the 1960s was not yet a "democracy," by either classic liberal or its own "social self-management" socialist definitions, it had certainly evolved from quasi-totalitarianism through a looser Party autocracy into an ill-defined polyarchy of plural and increasingly autonomous corporate participants in public decision-making. It was a system in which divergent interests and values, most if not all social strata, and most politicized Yugoslavs who had not opted out because of basic ideological dissent were finding forms of representation that were real, responsive, and increasingly responsible.

Then, beginning in December 1971, Tito himself initiated a series of coups that seemed to be directed against the liberalizing and democratizing essence of the system that the outside world

calls "Titoism." "Anarcho-liberalism" replaced "Stalinist conservatism" and "bureaucratic centralism" at the top of the list of official threats to the Yugoslav road to socialist democracy. Communist "liberals" and "nationalists" were purged from Party and government offices and the mass media, and Tito threatened to use the Army if they did not go peacefully. Some dissident Communists were suspended from university teaching (but only after a long and difficult political struggle and even then retaining academic rank and full pay), and some dissident and activist non-Communists went to jail. A new immediate goal was proclaimed: a cleansed, redisciplined, and recentralized League of Communists would reassert its authority—its monopoly of ultimate power—over the plural institutions and conflicting interests of social self-management and a socialist market economy. Most of Yugoslavia's friends in the West turned away their faces, often with a bitterness that exuded an odor of burnt illusions.

Did all these developments, as many of these new critics contend, flow merely from an arbitrary change of mind and direction by an old man, supported in his reversion to the Bolshevism of his youth by individuals and interests that had never liked the pluralizing fallout of "Titoism"? Or had the Yugoslav experiment gone wrong in whole or in part and by some standards that non-Marxists might also accept? What was, in fact, the price of the particular pluralism that had developed in Yugoslavia and that Tito and others had found to be unacceptably high? And should one lightly and totally dismiss the argument of the regime's official spokesmen and apologists (including numerous former "liberals" who remained in high positions) that reasserting the authority of a recentralized Party at this time is really a *reculer pour mieux sauter* to a genuine "self-management democracy," capable of repulsing every "counter-class" of apparatchiks or entrepreneurs that seeks to usurp the power of the people?

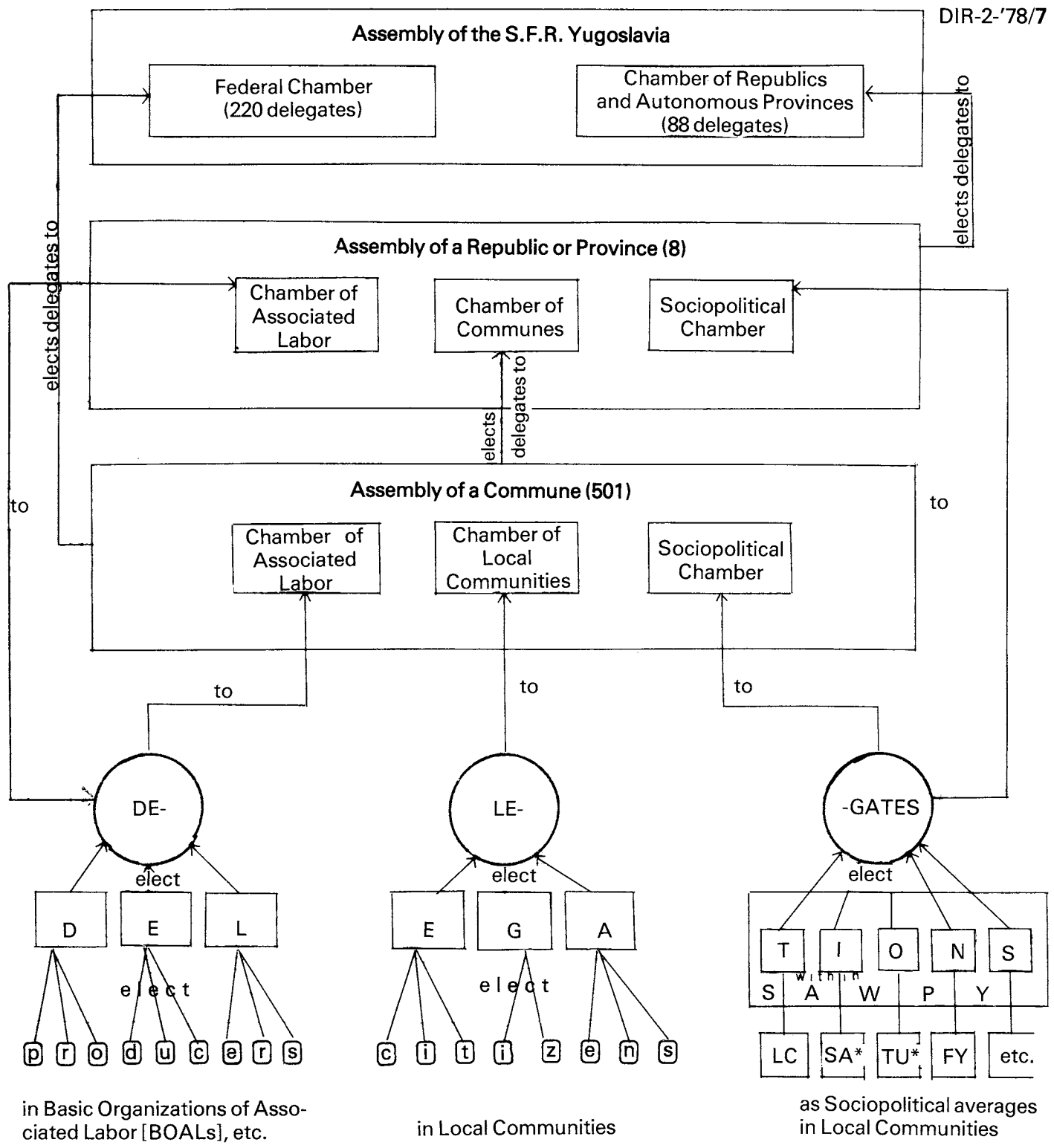
It was clear, at least to this observer, that the crisis which provoked Tito's "counter-Titoist" interventions (and which gave them wider popular support than is generally recognized) was real enough and did involve the price of particular forms of pluralism. Although the parts, quality,

and significance of this crisis were not always those that the people who executed his coups have listed and what they did was probably an inappropriate response, the labels of anathema they used—"nationalist," "anarcho-liberal," and "the technocratic-managerial counter-class"—are clues worth following.

The key question is a classic one: who rules Yugoslavia, for whom do they do it, and to what ends? Once upon a time, in the infancy of the regime, it was a Politburo of a dozen men, ruling through a disciplined, centralized, hierarchically organized Party whose bureaucracy—Djilas's "new class," still sometimes officially called a "bureaucratic caste"—combined traditional Balkan inefficiency and corruption with Leninist ubiquity and omnipotence, a fateful amalgam. The Politburo ruled for themselves, dictators of both the economy and the polity and beholden to nobody and to nothing except the limits of the possible, which included the limits imposed by the founding myths of their regime and by their ideology.

Later, as a result of deliberate but cautious decentralization, Yugoslavia was ruled by a wider Party elite, dispersed in ways that permitted regional and sectoral interests to surface, be represented, and conflict. Still, adequate discipline was imposed by Tito's authority, by the glue of genuine wartime and postwar comradeship among key people, and by the device of placing one well-chosen man—Aleksandar Ranković, an astute political manipulator with unswerving loyalty to Tito—in charge of both Party organization and the political police. The economy, spun off from the monolith in the name of "workers' self-management" and "market socialism," was kept in thrall by continuing state regulation and control of investments and by insuring that members of the elite also held key economics posts (which some found more engaging than their Party roles, with interesting political consequences).

Toward the end of the 1960s, with Ranković gone, political decentralization carried further and become self-sustaining, and a policy of "détatization" of the economy carried to extremes that began to resemble nineteenth century *laissez-*



in Basic Organizations of Associated Labor [BOALs], etc.

in Local Communities

as Sociopolitical averages in Local Communities

\*SA and TU "propose and determine" candidates for *all* types of Delegations/Delegates in addition to electing their own

[Simplified by omitting the Municipal Assembly level for larger cities comprised of more than one Commune]

- LC - League of Communists
- SA/SAWPY - Socialist Alliance of the Working Peoples of Yugoslavia
- TU - Trade Union
- FY - Federation of Yugoslav Youth
- etc. - Federation of Associated Veterans Organizations, Women's organizations, et al.

faire, the answer became more complex and eventually nonexistent: by 1970 Yugoslavia was in effect not being governed at all.

In this process the national question, Yugoslavia's eternally central question, played an essential but potentially two-edged role. Each of the South Slav nations that give Yugoslavia its name—Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and now Muslim Slavs of Bosnia as a newly recognized “nation”—has a Republic of its own as an ostensible nation-state (or in Bosnia-Herzegovina a tri-nation-state for Muslim Slavs, Serbs, and Croats) within the Federation. Each of the two largest non-Slav minorities—Albanians and Magyars—shares with Serbs and others an Autonomous Province that has enjoyed most of the attributes of a Republic since 1968. (That none of the Republics, except Slovenia, comes even close to the “ethnic purity” implicit in their definition, but mirrors the ethnic complexity of Yugoslavia as a whole, is a complicating factor of increasing but often unrecognized importance.) Gradual decentralization of political and economic power after 1950, whether it favored the Republics or smaller units within them, enjoyed a mutually reinforcing relationship with the national sentiments and suspicions of regional leaders. Each decentralizing step and consequent acquisition of local decision-making power and locally controlled wealth gave them—except for the Serbs, historically devoted to a unitary state which they would dominate from Belgrade, their own and the Federal capital—something more to defend and something more to defend it with. This new battery included separate power bases founded on their autonomous control of more power and instruments of patronage and on their increasingly visible and self-advertised defense of local (perceived as ethnic) interests. At the same time, competition for remaining centralized (Federal) funds and favors reinforced resentment of other regions that seemed to be doing better, again meaning other ethnic groups, and of the Federal administration in Belgrade that non-Serbs considered Serb-dominated and ethnically prejudiced. All this still further increased “national consciousness” and the motivation and credibility of regional leaders as national leaders. Thus regional leaderships *qua* national leaderships became the principal instruments *and* principal

beneficiaries of the process of political pluralization on which other forms of “democratization” and “self-management” were based.

The power of central state and Party authorities to make and implement decisions evaporated, at first gradually and almost unnoticed and then, after 1966, dramatically and rapidly. Enough of this power came to lodge in republican and provincial state and Party apparatuses so that it became necessary to secure their agreement before measures affecting general interests could be adopted or enforced. The situation was astonishingly legitimized by Constitutional amendments adopted in 1971 (and more astonishingly confirmed by the new Constitution of 1974, after Tito's coup), which in effect converted Yugoslavia into a confederation with few central powers. But the regional authorities, with all their new political weight, lacked commensurate economic power. Monetary and fiscal instruments and important tax powers remained in the hands of the paralyzed Federal government of 1968-1971, while an important fraction of total investment funds remained at the disposal of three former Federal banks, located in the Federal capital. Thus the power of the regional authorities was almost entirely negative. They could and did veto—since their respective interests demanded contradictory solutions to most major problems—but they could not implement policies of their own.

Effective power ca. 1970 was therefore nowhere and everywhere, a quasi-anarchy of diffused decision-making with reduced responsibility (for anonymous power is irresponsible power), together with a free-for-all scramble to pick up the pieces. The country prospered, after a fashion, and both economic and political life were unprecedentedly free and exciting; but macroproblems accumulated unanswered.

This, then, was one dimension of the crisis that Tito sought to resolve with his *coup de main*. But it had two others, in the shape of the two principal contenders (or were they really two faces of one contender, as Tito's ideologues now maintain?) for the mantle of power, the role of primary decisionmaker, that had been stripped from central Party-state apparatuses. These were the “nationalism” and the “managerial-technocratic elitism”



of subsequent official anathemas; by any name they existed and were a blemish on either Western-liberal or Yugoslav-socialist definitions of democracy.

The conviction that national freedom, as expressed in "national sovereignty" and a nation-state of one's own, must precede and is a precondition for individual freedom is certainly not new in Eastern Europe; nor is the tendency to slide from that conviction into an absolute identification of national with individual freedom or into an identification of the nation with the personae of its leaders, whether elected or self-proclaimed. This is also a region with particularly intense experience of the nation elevated to a superordinate and even exclusive value and point of reference, so that every issue is interpreted in national terms.

These attitudes and attendant emotions did not disappear "under socialism" in postwar Yugoslavia. The tendency of regional Communist leaders to present themselves and to be accepted as national leaders has been noted. In some cases their claim to speak for their nation came close to sounding like a claim that they incorporated the will of the nation. In the public discussion of constitutional amendments of 1971 great attention was paid to the concepts of national and republican "sovereignty" and the Republic as the "national state of the Croatian (or Slovene or Macedonian or Montenegrin) nation."

Except for constant lip service to the principle that each Republic was to be a "self-managing socialist community" in which the "class content" is equal to or takes precedence over the "national content" of citizenship, this was highly reminiscent of debates in the similarly multinational Hapsburg Empire in this same region before 1918. Now as then, a man's national particularity was taking precedence over his universality. His relationship to society is seen in organic terms: if his identity can be fully realized and his interests protected only as a member of a nation, then the nation takes precedence over the individual and the "general will," as articulated by national leaders, has greater value than an individual will or a collectivity of wills. Such a concept of man in society does not belong to the mainstream of either Western liberal or Marxian

socialist views of the nature of human freedom and the kind of social order needed to guarantee its existence and growth. It belongs instead to a vision of the world in which society is hierarchical, roles and status are prescriptive, and individual salvation is to be sought through identification with the community and submission to its precepts, known to and enforced by an enlightened or chosen few.

What had in effect taken place was an inversion, at most partly conscious and willful, of the rank-order of self-management and national emancipation as the cardinal political values of official Yugoslav Communism, at least momentarily giving precedence to the latter. A series of constitutional amendments adopted between 1967 and 1971 symbolized and institutionalized this inversion by gradually if never completely shifting from one principle of decentralization and aggregation to another, which is fundamentally different. The first, evolving in theory and institutional forms since the 1950s, aspires to pluralistic decision-making through essentially syndicalist or corporatist mechanisms, by delegates of "working people" grouped according to economic and social function. The second aspires to pluralistic decision-making on the basis of territorially focused ethnic groups. The first is consonant with the regime's declarative dedication to "direct social self-management without intermediaries" through progressive "de-étatisation" and an eventual "withering away of the Party," and is at least indirectly consonant with its search for a form of "consociational democracy" based on consensus decision-making as the most appropriate form for a multinational state.<sup>7</sup> The second, by itself, implies the continued existence of forms explicitly rejected by official Yugoslav Marxism: of a state or confederation of states with the usual mix of traditional and modern functions, in the end perhaps autocratic, perhaps "bourgeois-democratic," perhaps "social-democratic," but not "socialist-democratic" as this term is defined in Yugoslav theory. In this evolution the quest for an answer to the national question was at odds with the quest for viable macropolitical forms of self-management, even as the two had been mutually supportive in the preceding phase.

The central message of the Party line since 1972, although it does not make this point in quite this way,<sup>8</sup> is clear about a related one. The Party, it is now said, had virtually abdicated its "leading role" because it became disoriented by "incorrect views" originally promulgated at its 1952 Congress (the first attempt to codify an emerging "Titoism") and revived in modified form after 1966. Those who held these views, now scathingly described as "anarcho-liberals" or simply "liberals," had erred grievously in holding that at present levels of socioeconomic modernization the further promotion of social-self-management should be characterized by more "spontaneity" and "pluralism" and thus a decreasing political or "interventionist" role for the Party. Instead, according to the indictment presented at the Tenth Party Congress in May 1974, the relaxation of firm Party control and of centralized Party authority had led to power being grabbed by local politicians who were often more nationalist than communist and by "technocrats" in industry, commerce, and banking whose admiration for Western managerial techniques led them to behave like capitalist managers. Those who had countenanced these developments were therefore either wittingly or unwittingly promoting the restoration of a bourgeois-type economy and multiparty democracy, undermining both socialism and the unity of a state in which multiple parties had always meant ethnic parties. The reassertion of Party authority and of intra-Party, pan-Yugoslav "democratic centralism" was thus necessary to protect both unity and socialism. In doing so it would also make possible the further development of self-management, at last freed from the distraction of nationalism and the dominance of its own "technocratic bureaucracies."<sup>9</sup>

With this criticism and consequent action, the Party in its traditional function as ultimate and ultimately centralized arbiter of the system and "with Tito at its head" returned to downstage position in the drama. But the institutions and associated interests that were now clustered around the confederal structure of the state (the national question), "market socialism" and its autonomous enterprises (the developmental question), and the institutions of self-management (the question of socialist-democratic forms and "consciousness") were not thereby elimi-

nated, nor did they lose more than one dimension of their previous quasi-autonomy within the system as a whole.

Those who viewed the system developed under "liberal" ascendancy after 1965-66 as more stable and resistant than it turned out to be made the mistake of underestimating the explosive potential of the nationalist sentiments released by that system and the reaction of politically important persons and groups to the national, economic, and social problems the reforms seemed to have generated or aggravated. But they also underestimated the extent to which the Party's partial abdication of centralized and even decentralized control, essential to the amount and kind of pluralization of decision-making centers and expansion of participation which was taking place, continued to be reversible, i.e., dependent on perceptions, personnel, and balances of political forces and calculations that could change over time rather than a reflection of irreversible social, value, and generational changes. In the same fashion, after 1971-72, those (including many of the same observers) who predicted a return at least to the centralized if loose-reined Party oligarchy and token self-management of the 1950s have been guilty of miscalculating the extent to which social and value changes since the 1950s and their institutionalization *are* irreversible and a formidable barrier to political rollback, to a new form of monolith, or to a really effective neocentralism. Many other options are open and offer varying degrees of desirability from various ideological points of view (Western-liberal-democratic, social-democratic, national, or "socialist self-management"), but not those.<sup>10</sup> This is a bold assertion, which needs further argument and more precision.

\* \* \* \* \*

A charter for the new chapter in contemporary Yugoslav history which opened after the political crises and Tito's coups of 1971-72 can be found in a combination of three sources: in the new Constitution that was promulgated in February 1974, in the proceedings and conclusions of the Tenth Congress of the LCY three months later, and in the no less than 671 articles of the Associated Labor Act passed by the Assembly of the Socialist



*Stane Dolanc, in a characteristic pose, during a February 1978 conversation with foreign and domestic journalists about the forthcoming XIth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the state of Yugoslavia and the world.*

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on November 25, 1976. The new Constitution reflected both planks of the post-1972 Party platform. On the one hand it provided in impressive and apparently realistic detail for the further development of plural institutions and loci of decision-making and of checks and balances among them. On the other hand it legalized the restored role of the Party as the final authority over and above all other systems. The Tenth Congress further endorsed this restored role, amid some hints of continuing top-level disagreement about the quantity and quality of optimal Party intervention, and confirmed the purges, the new, surviving, and resuscitated "leading cadres," and the organizational devices and rules that were to facilitate the "ideological and political offensive of the League of Communists" ordered by Tito, Dolanc, and others in 1972. The 1976 Associated Labor Act in turn elaborated the Constitution's provisions in the area of "socioeconomic relations" and the economic system in enormous detail—so enormous that it is difficult to regard it as a normal legislative act, capable of point-for-point implementation and enforcement; or if it is so regarded, the results of such a courageous attempt to anticipate every contingency and legislate for every aspect of "socioeconomic relations" seem likely to immobilize the system and make the legal profession the country's major growth industry.

In two areas the 1974 Constitution breaks all precedents by providing for the Party's direct representation in government organs. First, it specifies that the Party President (Tito, since 1974 "without limitation of mandate," and someday his successor) should be an ex officio member of the collective State Presidency of Yugoslavia, which now consists of eight other members, one from each Republic and Province, and which is formally the ultimate constitutional arbiter in disputes among the regions and nations.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the Party and the other "sociopolitical organizations" that are its principal levers of mass political and social control—the Socialist Alliance with its 8.5 million (formal) members and subsidiary youth, women's, veterans', and other organizations, the Trade Union Federation, etc.—elect their own "delegations and delegates" to special "sociopolitical chambers" in the new parliamentary system. This is in addition to influencing

the election of other "delegations and delegates," both informally and through the Socialist Alliance, which nominates all candidates.

It is revealing that Kardelj himself, in his June 1977 speech and book, has referred to "hesitations and debates" within the Party concerning the necessity or appropriateness of both these innovations. "Because of this," he adds, "the sort of sociopolitical chamber which we should have elected was not chosen at the first elections." Kardelj blames such doubts on the survival, apparently also at high levels, of the erroneous "liberal" idea that "spontaneous," unguided democracy is possible, which it never is in any system, and will produce properly socialist decisions. As for the Party, returning to his principal theme he argues that

*there is only one alternative to this kind of democratically responsible social position of the League of Communists. This is for it to become a social organization that would operate outside the system, controlling the operation of self-management and state organs by means of internal directives and resolutions without assuming formal social responsibility and without democratic cooperation with the working masses, self-managers, sociopolitical organizations, and socialist forces in general. The League of Communists rightly renounced such a role long ago.<sup>12</sup>*

"The system of delegations and delegates," one of Kardelj's pet concepts since the 1960s, is itself the most discussed, theoretically significant, and cynically greeted innovation in the formal political system. Officially it is a unique form of "direct democracy" that has at least two formidable advantages over the traditional "bourgeois-democratic representative system." First, it permits issues and plural interests to appear on the political stage individually and in relevant ad hoc combinations (and therefore with specific, issue-focused majorities and minorities) rather than lumping them together in large and often inconsistent packages for mediation through class-based or other kinds of political parties. Second, it permits every individual citizen to participate in politics and to represent his interests directly and in a variety of ways rather than treating him as "an abstract political citizen" and making politics "the monopoly of a thin stratum of professional

politicians, the techno-bureaucracy, the politicized intellectual elite, and the true power-holders of class rule."<sup>13</sup> Its more mundane reality begins with the direct election of two kinds of "delegations," one for citizens as "producers" in more than 65,000 "organizations of associated labor" and analogous bodies (i.e., those employed in the socialist sector in industry, commerce, agriculture, and social services) and the other for citizens as citizens in 12,000 "local communities" (*mesne zajednice*), Yugoslavia's smallest territorial units. About one million Yugoslavs, or one of every 14 of voting age, are members of a delegation of one of these two types. Beyond that all elections are indirect: the two types of delegations elect delegates to corresponding chambers of communal assemblies and the latter elect delegates to similar chambers in municipal, Republican, and Provincial assemblies (all tricameral) and to the Federal Chamber of the bicameral Assembly of Yugoslavia at the top of the pyramid (where the second chamber consists of delegates from the eight republican and provincial assemblies). The third or "sociopolitical" chambers of lower-level assemblies are comprised of delegates from the Party and other "sociopolitical organizations," as described above. Only these last may include professional politicians; all the rest are required by statute to be filled with part-time amateurs, who continue to do their ordinary jobs and are supposed to consult their delegations on all issues.

Popular cynicism about the new system derives from the indirectness of all elections above the delegation level, control of all nominations by the Party-controlled Socialist Alliance, the comparative advantages that full-time professional politicians in the sociopolitical chambers can be presumed to enjoy, and a singular paucity of contested elections, even with all these precautions. This last is as true in the elections in spring 1978 as it was the first time under the new system in 1974. In a random election-day check of lists of candidates for all three types of delegations in Croatia and Belgrade in March 1978, I found that two-thirds contained precisely as many names as there were places to be filled. The rest, usually in the local community category, offered some choice, for example 28 names for 25 places. All this is in marked contrast to the last two general

elections held under the old system, in 1967 and 1969, when many and then a majority of seats were contested, some of them hotly,<sup>14</sup> and when the resulting assemblies were effective, vociferous, and frequently disputatious actors in the decision-making process. The official reply is that a hankering after such contested elections is another relic of fixation with "bourgeois parliamentary democracy" as the only form of democracy and a misunderstanding of the delegate system.

With these exceptions—for many, contradictions which undo the ostensible intent of all the rest, but in official eyes its ultimate guarantors—other changes introduced by the 1974 Constitution and Congress and the 1976 Law on Associated Labor have a different theme. This is the elaboration of more devices designed to prevent accumulation of power, in effect a far more complex elaboration of the American Constitution's system of "checks and balances," here involving the economic as well as the political system.

In the economy and in relations between the economic and political systems the focus is on what Professor Najdan Pašić of Belgrade University, commenting on the 1974 Constitution at a seminar for American law students organized by the AUFS Center for Mediterranean Studies, called "the basic dilemma of public ownership, which is therefore the basic dilemma of socialism: who controls the great economic power materialized in public property and social capital?" In Yugoslavia this dilemma has been posed in the form of two subsidiary questions: how to avoid the state's doing it, to which the answer in principle had long been workers' self-management; and then, how to prevent self-management from perverting "social property" into "group property" through appropriation of effective ownership rights by the professional cadres or even the workers who manage specific lumps of it.

In attempting to answer these questions, the new Constitution defines "social property" and its abuses more precisely and makes rules to prevent intra-enterprise and inter-enterprise credits or those made by banks and insurance companies from becoming a source of control over income earned by the present or "past" labor of others. It extends "de-étatization" by expanding the area in

which "self-management agreements," and "social compacts" among economic units, "self-managing communities of interest," and "socio-political communities" should legislate and collect and dispense revenues in place of the state at any level.<sup>15</sup> Potentially of particular importance, the new statute in effect destroyed the enterprise as it had existed since 1950, completing the gradual evolution of "work units" within enterprises, created in the late 1950s and since 1971 called Basic Organizations of Associated Labor (BOALS), into the central legal entity of the economic system. The enterprise remains as the form in which a contractually integrated cluster of BOALs would normally appear on the market or be represented in other external relations, but only on the basis of powers delegated by the otherwise independent BOALs; all net income from economic activities is now BOAL income, its use and distribution with few restrictions under each BOAL's control.

Within BOALs and enterprises the new Constitution also forbids the election of managerial and technical staff to workers' councils, an attempt to reduce their power and separate policy-making from technical administration. Enterprise directors are again elected, for a renewable four-year term, from a list of one to three candidates proposed to the workers' council by a commission comprised of an equal number of enterprise representatives and of communal Assembly appointees—a return to the system before 1964, when communal participation in the nominating commission was eliminated after it was criticized as unjustifiable political interference in workers' rights. A further reform of the banking system, also required by the new Constitution, is designed to make the banks at last really responsible to the BOALs and enterprises which subscribe to their capital and thus in theory to the workers who produce values rather than those who administer them, an ideological distinction on which all such new controls are based. Similar controls are to be imposed on insurance companies and commercial enterprises.

Judgment concerning the extent to which these and other provisions have been implemented or had an impact on "socioeconomic relations" ultimately depends on whether one is inclined to view a pint glass that contains a half-pint as half full or

half empty. Reports of BOALs successfully negotiating "self-management agreements" for integrated production or sales that are as or more efficient than those of formerly centralized enterprises are balanced by reports of nothing yet undertaken or of unended conflicts that are seriously impairing often already inefficient operations. Elsewhere, and particularly in social services like health and education, one hears of conscientious formal implementation of the new rules leading to even more meetings of more people than before, producing more nondecisions or too many decisions that are unimplemented or unwise because lines of responsibility are blurred and sanctions for mistakes or inaction cannot be or are wrongly imposed.

Some complain instead that decision-making in their "organization of associated labor" has been reassumed by a Party *aktiv* or an informal group of politically influential Party members whom they consider less intelligent than their local "techno-managerial elite" and at least as arbitrary. This, too, can up to a point be considered implementation of the constitutionally sanctioned post-1972 right and duty of the Party to interfere directly in all matters; it is significant that the press, which from 1967 to 1971 tended to use disapproving language in reporting instances of Party organs intervening to secure the dismissal of a director or a change in enterprise policy, was in 1974-1976 usually reporting them as examples of what ought to be happening. The same qualification applies to other complaints that promotions and appointments to managerial positions again depend more on Party membership or Party connections than on ability or educational and job qualifications. This practice, too, is at least arguably consonant with post-1972 official insistence that an applicant's ideological qualifications should be considered his most important ones if the "distortions" and "deviations" from self-management of former years are to be avoided. It also, however, creates a problem in terms of efficiency, morale, and the principles of self-management acknowledged in recently renewed attacks on it by senior officials.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, still others (including a once again more candid press) report a sense and some evidence that "grassroots" participation in BOAL

and communal decision-making is in many instances more widespread, effective, and productive of economically efficient or socially desirable results than on any previous mile of the Yugoslav road to socialism. It is less clear, however, that this is true of the "system of delegates and delegations" in the hierarchy of assemblies. Soon after the 1974 elections, and as most people must have anticipated, the press was recording the failure and practical difficulties of delegates' regularly consulting their delegations as required by the Constitution. There is also little evidence that the Federal or republican assemblies with their statutorily-guaranteed nonprofessional and working class majorities may reassume the aggressively critical and active role that was frequently played by some of their chambers between 1963 and 1969 and that made Yugoslav parliamentary life in that period exciting and worth following.

Meanwhile, these same sources reveal tensions and conflicts among "self-managed" institutions and "interest communities" that are also familiar to observers of the Yugoslav scene before 1971. Banks and large commercial enterprises and conglomerates—a major target of the Croatian leadership before 1971 and subsequently under equally intense fire from Tito and the postpurge Party, now as infringers of "self-management rights" rather than "national" ones—continued to resist the dilution and sharing of their economic power ordered by the new Constitution. Negotiations of "self-management agreements" and "social compacts" aiming at vertical or horizontal integration of production or marketing activities (often in effect the establishment of a cartel, with predictable impact on the functioning of a market supposedly based on free competition—but that is another problem and story<sup>17</sup>) have dragged on. Wealthier partners resist integration with poorer ones while all warily guard their autonomy and, where they exist, the economic rents that such agreements would often eliminate. And local political life, as far as one can tell when press reporting has become more circumspect, still seems to involve disputes and shifting coalitions among groups and organizations representing diverse interests and kinds of interests, each containing some Party members and with the local Party organization only a particularly powerful one

among them rather than a superordinate mediator or arbiter speaking for socialism and the general interest.

\* \* \* \* \*

All these impressions are no more than that, based on the Yugoslav press and random observations and conversations with official and unofficial Yugoslavs in recent months—a sample too small for accurate analysis and with the omens too mixed for confident prognosis; therefore an agenda for systematic research rather than the product of same. Some conclusions can nevertheless be drawn. The most obvious and important are that political life in Yugoslavia has become neither dull nor actually subordinated to a single center since the reassertion of the Party's power and the rule of "democratic centralism" after 1972, and that plural and at least partly autonomous loci of political and economic decision-making with broad if still very finite participation continue to be its hallmark. These loci in turn generally correspond to the aggregations of sometimes conflicting but "legitimately socialist" functional, national, and personal interests that were in principle postulated, accepted, and accommodated by Yugoslav Communist theory at least as early as 1962.<sup>18</sup> They are also presumably what Kardelj has in mind when he speaks of a pluralism of self-management interests," which he and (some?) other members of the current leadership purport to favor despite only recently being burned by what they then described as the consequences of a more vaguely defined "pluralism" run wild.

There are undoubtedly many reasons why the Party's apparently genuine determination to regain control over this complex political and economic power structure seems to have resulted only in some shifting about of relative strengths within it, on balance away from managerial personnel and toward Party ones. In the first place, it is reasonable to assume, and there is some evidence, that a number of senior officials who participated in or applauded Tito's coups of 1971-72 and the reimposition of a measure of Party centralism and dictatorship were sincere in their insistence that this was a self-limiting retrenchment and the only way to clear and smooth a badly distorted and

rockstrewn Yugoslav road to self-management socialism, therefore really a *reculer pour mieux sauter*.<sup>19</sup> This is surely the meaning of recent invocations of restored political stability as the reason why it is now safe to reopen certain questions concerning the Party's use of power and the suitability of its social composition and the attitudes of many of its members (its "personality") for an age of self-management. It is equally reasonable to assume these people have persuaded some of their more doubtful colleagues that they are right that the post-1972 level and quality of Party intervention has done more harm than good, that reopening these questions now will not pose a threat to the power or policies that these others value most, and that it may indeed enable all of them to ride herd with less effort and better effect.

But these are also once again personal and therefore removable factors, like the balance of Party power and of Party minds that facilitated the reforms of the 1960s and were changed by the events of 1970-1972. (Tito's repeated assertion, in the context of those events, that the "rot" had begun with the Sixth Party Congress in 1952 and that he "had never liked that Congress"—which first proclaimed the principle of an "influential" rather than a powerful, ruling, and universally "interventionist" Party—is worth recalling. It is a reminder that anticipating when minds may change under changed circumstances, or when long-suppressed doubts may seem to be proved right by changed circumstances, may be more useful than a calculus of power relations based on assumptions of consistency on the part of the protagonists.) Nor is it clear that these views have prevailed. It is therefore surely more important, and the point of the line of argument offered here, to know something about the relative strength, relative autonomy, and durability of that Yugoslav version of "countervailing powers," the institutionalization of "a pluralism of self-management interests."

Over time these have come to mean three *kinds* of interests that are analytically and now institutionally distinguishable, but that are often indistinguishable in perceptions and in their dynamics because they overlay one another in the same individuals and in some of the groups to which they belong. These are interests based on socio-

economic functions (that is, as "producers" in a broad sense), on nationality, and on one's other identity as a consumer of values (again broadly defined to include goods, services, and intangibles like culture, leisure, or security). In the present Yugoslav system each of these is endowed with a corresponding set of institutions, already described above but meriting repetition at this point in the argument. Organs of workers self-management, economic chambers and associations, trade unions, and Chambers of Associated Labor in the assemblies aggregate "producer" interests of various, often conflicting, and sometimes overlapping types, and "self-management agreements" and other devices provide modalities for negotiation and agreement among them. Republics and Autonomous Provinces aggregate national interests, in a theory that is in reality marred by the fact that all of these except Slovenia are in varying degrees actually multinational units;<sup>20</sup> here the organs and elaborate procedural rules of the Federation serve as the mechanisms for negotiating conflicts and for agreement by consensus on matters of common concern that require common policies. Third, "self-managing communities of interest" provide consumers generally and "users and renderers" of "services" like education, science, culture, and health and welfare in particular, with analogous forums for intragroup negotiations and external relations. Finally, there are additional institutions and procedures for negotiation and agreement among these kinds of "subsystems" of interests. These include the tri- and bi-cameral assemblies of the parliamentary pyramid and other organs of what Yugoslav parlance calls "sociopolitical communities." They also include the device of "social compacts" and the auxiliary services of the Socialist Alliance as a roof organization, with and under the League of Communists, for special interest and other mass "sociopolitical organizations."<sup>21</sup>

It is my contention that three factors have endowed several of these institutions with a strength, an impact on the present functioning and future shape of the system, and on balance a consenting and supporting role in terms of the survival of the regime (meaning an independent, one-party, federal, and socialist Yugoslavia) that have often been underestimated—and by members of the leadership as well as other Yugoslav and outside observers.



The first, already mentioned, is spasmodic permissiveness or encouragement on the part of one organization in a good position to frustrate such an evolution, which is, of course, the Party, or more accurately the Party-state apparatuses. This has happened in part because some leading officials believed it should happen, as argued above, and in part because internal dissension has periodically paralyzed these apparatuses sufficiently, at either the Federal or a regional level, to provide a functional equivalent of permission.

The second is quite simply that these institutional arrangements are there and available. This is not merely the statement of the obvious that it appears to be. Only partly as a result of deliberate planning, these arrangements provide places and mechanisms for the mobilization and expression of group interests that by their nature, because they represent particular but collective demands on the system, will seek to mobilize in any society, but that do not often find such conveniently ready-made, legal, clearly defined, and functionally differentiated devices to this end. Furthermore, there is a place in these arrangements for almost all economically or socially important collective interests and social strata. (The most conspicuous and significant exception is the private peasantry, which still tills 85 percent of the country's cultivable land and with dependents accounted for about 38 percent of the population in the last census. One *political* reason for continuing resistance to proposals that would give them their own channels for participation<sup>22</sup> seems to be a lingering fear of a mobilized and politicized private peasantry, kept alive by regime memories of the strength and anticommunism of prewar peasant parties and at least instinctive awareness that this is the numerically largest social stratum that has been excluded from the benefits of the system and that is therefore most likely to be nonsupportive if politicized. To the peasants should be added the less important exception of ca. 90,000 people working in the nonagricultural private sector, and the presumably temporary exception of Yugoslavs working abroad, still numbering an estimated 600,000 after a decline in the total that began in 1974.) The institutions and procedures that embody and express the interests of such a relatively inclusive and clearly differentiated cross-section of economically or socially important functional groupings will tend to

acquire a strength and durability that is less likely to be found in the more amorphous and informal or extralegal forms of interest group participation and pressure found in most societies.

Finally, there are the dynamics of three decades of a particular quality and style of rapid if uneven economic and social modernization. These have created or greatly enlarged the social strata and occupational categories that have these otherwise abstract "interests" and that man these otherwise meaningless institutions. One such stratum is comprised of what Yugoslav terminology means by "the working class," in effect limited to workers in the socialist sector, i.e., in "organizations of associated labor." Then there are the people that I call "socialist entrepreneurs" and engineers, often called "the technical intelligentsia." Another intelligentsia, sometimes (and usually with malicious purpose) called "the humanist intelligentsia," is found in education, science, culture, the health service, the law, . . . and in the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed, since additions to the supply of this category have lately outstripped the growth rate of demand in many branches. One should also probably include the disputably separate category that is often (and again disparagingly) known as "functionaries," numerically significant in local "social-political organizations" and the organs of "social-political communities." Taken together, these are also the society's most dynamic social strata, whose functions are essential to further economic development and general welfare, and whose support or at least compliance is essential to the survival of the regime and system. Each of them has its complaints. However, many observers are convinced that even if they were free to express their intimate and ultimate political desires (which, it is worth remembering, they are not free to do), none of these strata as such, and only a minority within each of them, would be found to be in general opposition to the regime whose policies have created or enlarged them or to the system that nourishes them and that includes legal, routinized, and (what is unique and in my view particularly important) particularized and clearly identifiable channels for expressing their interests and visibly influencing policy.<sup>23</sup>

The very existence and importance of these people and strata and the importance to them of

these channels, combined with the regime's inevitable awareness that their basic loyalty, motivation, and efficiency matter and can be undermined by attempts to deprive them of such channels, must also strengthen and tend to preserve an effective "pluralism of self-management interests." At the same time, this approach to understanding its strengths provides a clue useful in understanding or anticipating *which* of the institutions of "self-management pluralism" are likely to have a relatively larger or more powerful role in the making of effective public choices. This *should* reflect the relative importance of specific strata or functions in the global socioeconomic system and in the regime's estimations of its need for support and compliance. Thus, for example, the "technical intelligentsia" and the instruments through which it expresses its demands (despite being more limited in number or accessibility under the 1974 Constitution) can usually be expected to carry more weight than the "humanist intelligentsia" and the channels—in any case more diffuse—provided by "self-managing communities of interest." In the same way Chambers of Economy, which represent "socialist entrepreneurs" more than workers, tended to be distinctly *primus inter pares* among the functional or corporate chambers in the five-chamber assemblies of 1963-1974 and regional Party chieftains speaking for "national interests" were more important than Trade Union Federation leaders in bringing about the liberalizing economic Reform of 1965.

If the thesis presented in these last paragraphs is valid and as significant a part of Yugoslav social and political equations as I suspect it is, two further conclusions of broader and predictive importance follow. The first is that the "system" as a whole is thereby more stable and on balance acceptable to most Yugoslavs who matter, or who are likely to matter, than many outside observers (and many Yugoslavs!) think it is. It is therefore likely to prove more resistant to institutional breakdown or basic (revolutionary or "counter-revolutionary") change than these others either fear or hope when they focus instead on counterpressures and tensions arising from national rivalries and fears and from the jolts that must come with the passing of "charismatic" Tito and the founding generation. The second, which has been the principal argument of these pages, is that

these resistant qualities will include formidable barriers to attempts to reimpose a fully effective personal or Party dictatorship. Moreover, these barriers will tend to constitute points of departure for counterattacks by individuals and groups with an economic, social, or ideological stake in recapturing and expanding recently existing levels of participation in making public choices through plural and autonomous channels. Such a counterattack, characterized by ambivalence, extreme caution, and in general a "low profile" that seems likely to last as long as Tito is there and his reaction is uncertain, appears to be taking place at the present time.

These are modest conclusions, as cautious and circumscribed as the apparent revival of liberalizing currents that they purport to explain. They omit, for example, the potential impact of "the external factor," which is worrying many Yugoslavs of almost all political complexions, and which usually means the Soviet Union but can also mean currently gloomy European and world economic prospects. They largely omit the personal factor (i.e., the potential importance of who will be sitting where in the political game of musical chairs when the band stops playing for that someday inevitable state funeral). More generally, they also say nothing about the economic and ecological efficiency or inefficiency of the system,<sup>24</sup> or whether it is realizing other important socialist and democratic values, including equality, freedom from all forms of exploitation and injustice, and relief from alienation in all its manifold dimensions. These, too, are important—for many people more important than the question of how, by whom, and for whom we are governed in politics and economics—but are separable if ultimately never separate subjects.

\* \* \* \* \*

The speaker quoted below is a former and apparently popular and effective director of an "organization of associated labor" in one of the more developed parts of Yugoslavia. He happens to have been a prewar Communist (one of about 12,000 who joined an illegal, hunted, revolutionary organization before 1941 and one of 3,000 such people who survived the war) and is still a believer in the high ideals that led him to become one, despite latterday, sad, and debilitating reflections

about the ability of human nature plus power to pervert the most noble ideals and ideologies. He is talking about the circumstances surrounding his decision to leave his directorship and take early retirement:

*“There was some perplexity about my decision, and I was asked to withdraw it and was summoned before various committees to explain. In fact, it was a matter of choice between fighting for the dismissal of some colleagues who were not working, which is virtually impossible in our system, or having a heart attack, which I didn’t particularly want. I was finally called before the city committee of the Party, where I told them what I really thought. Our system of self-management, instead of meaning self-management of and for the enterprise and society as a whole, means to most people self-management of one’s self—working only when and as hard as one wants, but with assurance that one’s job will go on and one’s pay will continue to increase. I needed help when there was something that had to be done, but no one was there, and then I met them taking the promenade on main street, and they said: ‘Why were you in the office, and not here with us?’ This kind of work ethic and other things, including stealing in the usual sense, of which there is also a lot, are forms of stealing under socialism, which is worse than stealing under capitalism, because under socialism it is stealing from society as a whole, from one another, from the commonweal. Without a sense of rectitude and human solidarity there can be no socialism, no self-management. So I wanted out.... Our system is infinitely better than that of the East; it is probably better than that of our Western neighbors, for example Italy; but it is not good because we do not work and are not just to one another and society.”*

This, too, is Yugoslavia, as much a part of its accomplishments and problems as are a “pluralism of self-management interests,” tremendously impressive (if often costly and inefficient) economic and social modernization, an excluded and neglected peasantry, a model solution to the problems of multinationalism through a unique form of confederation (marred in implementation and by an ethnic map that reproduces the problem on a smaller scale in each federal unit), and many contradictions. The ex-director’s lament is also in many ways more real and more revealing

than any theoretical or social scientific “model” or analysis of the workings and potential of self-management and its plural interests, including the discussion in the preceding pages.

In addition, it suggests a final set of unanswered questions: who in Yugoslavia really believes the concept of ubiquitous social self-management as a supremely democratic and supremely socialist form of socialist democracy can be implemented in the real world of what Milovan Djilas calls “unperfect society”? If it cannot be, what are the nature and limits of its real potential? If no one who matters believes that it can be, what do such people really think and expect of the present system? How far will they go to protect it?<sup>25</sup>

The answer may begin with the ex-director’s perception that the Yugoslav system “is infinitely better than that of the East” and “probably better than that of our Western neighbors.” The first of these comparatives must mean better above all because it is conducive to more liberty, less coercion, and more participation through routinized, public channels representative of more legitimate individual and collective interests. All of these are absolute and not culturally relative values. The second comparative can be translated to mean better adapted to Yugoslav conditions and Yugoslav “political culture.” As the ex-director’s specific reference to Italy reminds us, it is also a reasonable and certainly common Yugoslav response to the nature and consequences of political instability in a number of traditional-democratic states in the West and their apparent inability to cope with contemporary terrorism and their own increasingly critical problems. Both of these modest “betters” can also give the Yugoslav system, with all its inefficiency, corruption, limited freedom, and other imperfections, a legitimacy that equals durability but not rigidity and immunity to further, repeated, and even major evolutionary change.

(April 1978)

[Photographs by Fototanjug, Belgrade]

## NOTES

1. Except where otherwise noted, citations in this Report are from the June 13 speech, which consisted of the Introduction and pages 134-40, 175-79, and 56-62 of the subsequently published book (Serbo-Croatian title *Pravci razvoja političkog sistema socijalističkog samoupravljanja*). I am here assuming that Kardelj excerpted what he considered his most important points. As noted below, these extracts do not include the "tougher" passages in the book, particularly those concerning the role of the Party and justifying the exclusion of "enemies of self-management socialist democracy," that have led other observers to interpret the latter as on balance a "hard line" rather than a "liberal" statement.
2. On this and other points the 1977 book echoes ideas found in Kardelj's 1965 treatise, "Notes on Social Criticism in Yugoslavia" (trans. in *Socialist Thought and Practice* [Belgrade], October-December 1965 and January-March 1966), which uses the "Scylla and Charybdis" image for the Party's eternal dilemma.
3. Cf. *Pravci razvoja* . . . , pp. 182ff.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 141ff, 149, 151, 179-87, when not in the June 1977 speech.
5. *Politika* (Belgrade), January 7, 1977 (for Dolanc), and "Magnetofonski snimak konferencije za štampu Predsednika Škupštine SFRJ Kire Gligorova . . ." (Belgrade, June 27, 1977, mimeo.).
6. Vladimir Bakarić (who also said there were 502 such prisoners), in a press conference with foreign journalists in Zagreb, April 16, 1977 (as reported in *Politika*, April 18, 1977).
7. For this point, see in particular Susan Bridge McCarthy, "Yugoslavia Moves toward Consociational Democracy" (unpublished ms., Yale University 1969), and Bogdan Denitch, *The Legitimation of a Revolution* (New Haven and London, 1976), pp. 22 ff.
8. Kardelj comes close to it in his criticism of "the political system of the bourgeois state, whether in its multiparty or one-party form" (*Pravci razvoja* . . . , ch. 2).
9. Cf. my account and interpretation of the Tenth Congress, "Yugoslavia's Return to Leninism" [DIR-1-'74], *AUFS Reports*, Southeast Europe Series, Vol. XXI, No. 1, 1974.
10. Or at least not as long as the regime is successful in pursuing its principal foreign policy goal, which is independence and nonalignment.
11. From 1953 to 1971 Yugoslavia had a single President, Tito. A collective State Presidency was created by constitutional amendment in 1971, at Tito's suggestion, to prepare for his departure. Officially a further acknowledgment of the federal and multinational character of Yugoslavia, the collective presidency also recognizes the political fact that no leader except Tito is universally regarded as a "Yugoslav" rather than a Serb, a Croat, etc., and thus acceptable to all nationalities. Until 1974 it consisted of 23 persons—3 from each Province, and Tito—which predictably proved unwieldy and optically absurd.
12. In the June speech and *Pravci razvoja* . . . , p. 139. The same arguments are repeated *ibid.*, pp. 148 and 157.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 155.
14. See "Yugoslav Elections, 1969, Parts I, II, and III" [DIR-4, 5, 6-'69], *AUFS Reports*, Southeast Europe Series, Vol. XVI, Nos. 4, 5, 6, 1969.
15. See the glossaries in *Yugoslav Survey*, Vol. XV, No. 3, pp. 121-32, and in the English translation of the Associated Labor Act (edition of the Secretariat of Information of the SFR of Yugoslavia Assembly, 1977). A more detailed description of these aspects of the new Constitution can be found in my *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (London and Berkeley, 1977), pp. 326-332.
16. Including Kardelj and Dolanc in recent days (see notes 1 and 5).
17. A point discussed in detail in another paper presented to the Washington meeting, Laura D'Andrea Tyson, "The Yugoslav Economy in the 1970s."
18. When it was articulated in terms of the "functional" interest dimension during the discussions that accompanied the drafting of the 1963 Constitution, which expressed it in the form of five-chamber "corporatist" parliaments. Its origins, however, go back much further (see A. Ross Johnson, *The Transformation of Communist Ideology* [Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972], pp. 150-53, 168, George Hoffman and Fred Warner Neal, *Yugoslavia and the New Communism* [New York, 1962], pp. 214-218, and Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment*, pp. 67-71).
19. This does *not* mean an assumption that all such people were ideologically or only ideologically motivated or "true believers" in self-management. Other considerations could lead to the same conclusion, for example, awareness that the system has become too differentiated and complex for efficient or even effective monocentric control, or that the motivation, efficiency, and compliance or support of key social and economic sectors was being undermined (see below). The "evidence" can in any case be easily dismissed, since it consists of little more than the observer's ultimately subjective judgment that the terms used, the context in which they are used, and the speaker's previous record indicate that he probably means it.
20. Slovenia's Italian and Magyar minorities are too small and in general too favored and therefore quiescent to preclude listing that Republic as an exception. In the rest, according to 1971 official census figures, national minori-

ties (in Yugoslav parlance "nationalities") and members of nations whose focus of national loyalty is in another region constituted between 10.5 percent ("narrower" Serbia, without Kosovo and the Vojvodina) and 32.8 percent (Montenegro) of total population, not counting officially trinational Bosnia-Herzegovina (39.6% Muslim, 37.2% Serb, 20.6% Croat) or the Vojvodina with its ethnic patchwork.

21. Kardelj similarly but more elaborately distinguishes six "areas of social life" in which "the fundamental characteristics of a democratic pluralism of self-managing interests in our society appear in various ways" (*Pravci razvoja*...., pp. 89ff):

*The first such area is associated labor in all its aspects... expressed in workers' self-management.*

*The second is the interests of working people and citizens in fields of social activity such as health, education, science, culture, and other areas of similar, broad common interests...organized in self-managing communities of interest.*

*The third area is the interests of citizens related to their condition of life and that of their families in the place where they live...organized in local communities and self-managing communes.*

*The fourth area is the specific interests of the nations and nationalities, protected by the self-managing independence of the Republics and Autonomous Provinces and democratic relations in the system of the Federation.*

*The fifth area is the creative activity of socialist social forces in the domain of ideology and politics in general... expressed in the specific role of social-political and other social organizations [i.e., the Party, etc.].*

*The sixth area is the most varied aspects of joint social interests, on which the decisions are taken in the democratic organs of the delegate system...*

22. Some recent proposals, for example, by permitting new forms of voluntary, peasant-initiated cooperative organization outside the socialist sector, are described by Ivan Lončarević, *Die Kooperation zwischen den privaten Landwirtschaftsbetrieben und den gesellschaftlichen Wirtschaftsorganisationen in der Landwirtschaft Jugoslawiens* (Berlin, 1974), ch. V.

23. The argument in these paragraphs is similar to Bogdan Denitch's principal thesis in *The Legitimation of a Revolution* (pp. 2, 4, 12 and passim). On the other hand, one can equally validly argue that the Yugoslav political and police systems make it impossible to know (and that there is in fact reason to doubt) that most members of even these strata would not prefer a different system. In the discussion of these points at the Washington meeting at which this paper was presented, Richard V. Burks explicitly took issue with Prof. Denitch's "legitimation" thesis. Prof. Burks contended that

*"the Yugoslav regime still has not reached the harbor of legitimacy, although I would agree that it is appreciably closer to that blessed port than any of its fellows. Despite the fact that Yugoslav society has undergone the most far-reaching pluralization that any Socialist regime has yet experienced, the LCY could probably not put together a majority in a free election.... What could be a more effective step toward the illusive state of legitimacy than elections in which the voter had a real choice, not between parties to be sure (since that might involve unacceptable risk) but between candidates? As long as there was such choice Yugoslav parliamentary life, as Professor Rusinov says, was worth following. But the incipient political landslide in Croatia, and its impact in places like Slovenia and Kosovo, led the Yugoslav leadership to the distasteful conclusion that even semifree elections were out of the question."*

24. Laura D'Andrea Tyson's conclusions on this subject in her very able paper, referred to in Note 17 above, are as mixed but on balance as cautiously positive as the political conclusions in this paper.

25. I am personally doubtful whether public opinion surveys in Yugoslavia can give us the answer, but they do provide some clues. These tend to suggest a more widespread and higher level of belief in the potential workability and present beneficial effects of "self-management" than my own more limited and unsystematic probings have usually uncovered. Cf., for example, Sharon Zukin, *Beyond Marx and Tito* (Cambridge, 1975), ch. 3, with the Yugoslav survey data reported in detail in Allen H. Barton, Bogdan Denitch, and Charles Kadushin (eds.), *Opinion-Making Elites in Yugoslavia* (New York, 1973), and more briefly as an appendix to Denitch, *op. cit.*