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In the course of gathering material for the accompanying letter on "Yugoslav Communist Theory," Fred Warner Neal interviewed both the deposed Yugoslav political leader Milovan Djilas and the chief theoretician of the Yugoslav Party Edvard Kardelj. Mr. Neal is believed to be the only American to have talked at length with Djilas since he was forced out of power.

Phillips Talbot



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YUGOSLAV COMMUNIST THEORY

Titoism and the Problem of the Vanishing Dialectic

A Letter from Fred Warner Neal

Belgrade
November 15, 1954

Right after the Soviet Union tossed Yugoslavia out of the Cominform in 1948, Tito and his aides continued to insist they were good Marxists-Leninists-Stalinists. By 1950 they declared they were not Stalinists but were good Marxists-Leninists. Today they admit, at least privately, that they are no longer Leninists but insist that they are good Marxists. How long the third part of this rapidly-diminishing hyphenated attribution will stand up only the future will tell.

Officially, Marxism-Leninism is still the ideology of the Yugoslav Communist Party and State. The State owns all industry. The first and perhaps most basic economic reform--the establishment of workers' councils to manage factories--was defended (and logically so) as Leninism, and as a hark back to the early Soviets; and it was contended that there was nothing un-Leninist in further giving these workers' councils representation in legislative bodies. The abandonment of the agricultural collectives in 1952-53 was announced as a temporary measure only, which had much in common with Lenin's NEP. Tito at that time was in full accord with Lenin's maxim that socialism is impossible without socialization of the villages. The sweeping decentralization of industry and state economic authority certainly would have astounded Vladimir Illich--but even that did not necessarily run counter to his basic principles, since the party was in control and socialism and communism were still the goals. Indeed, in the name of Lenin the Yugoslavs claimed that they were rescuing Marxist-Leninist doctrine from Stalinism and thus were proceeding meaningfully with the "withering away of the State."

However, basic principles of Leninism--perhaps the most basic--concern the role of the Communist Party: first, as the discoverer of truth, expressed in a precise political line leading to specific (however unrealistic in fact) tactical and strategic goals; and second, as the exclusive instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat for enforcing the carrying out of the line.

By the time the Sixth Party Congress rolled around in

November 1952, it was no longer clear that the Yugoslav political line was precise or that the goals, either strategic or tactical, were specific. As Milovan Djilas declared to the Congress, no specific party program was presented because the Yugoslav Politburo felt "our own socialist development was not yet sufficiently clear in outline."

Since there was admittedly no clear line, what then became of the second part of Lenin's concept of the Party's function as the instrument of enforcement? If there is no line, then why have a Party, or at least why have one as the exclusive political instrumentality?

It was precisely this question which produced the Djilas crisis a year ago and which still constitutes perhaps the most significant ideological question in Yugoslavia.

Actually, the party leaders did move slightly in the direction of easing the party's domination--but only in the direction, and only slightly. At the Congress, the name of the party was changed to the League of Communists. The Yugoslav party had always operated in a sense behind the People's Front, which grew out of the wartime partisan organization. This was one of the points made in criticism by the USSR. Now the People's Front, renamed the Socialist Alliance, was to have an even more important function as a vehicle for the expression of public opinion. The top leadership of the Socialist Alliance and the League of Communists was nearly identical, but the party apparatus was to be drastically reduced and many of its functions turned over to the Socialist Alliance. The League of Communists was to become primarily an organization for discussion, education, and leadership through personal example.

All this was still Marx. The Manifesto, in fact, speaks of "the communists" much in this vein, rather than as a formal political party. But it wasn't Lenin. Yet, as events showed, if Marxism without Leninism is the dictatorship of the proletariat without the dictatorship of the Party, it wasn't quite Marx either. For despite what might have been said, the Djilas case seemed to prove that the Yugoslav Communist leaders had no intention of presiding over the dissolution of their own dictatorship.

The decentralization of the economy that was taking place about the time of the Sixth Congress bore out Djilas' remarks' about the vagueness of Yugoslav socialist development. Although the new program of decentralization is not of itself entirely counter to Leninist principles, nevertheless, according to the strict Marxist-Leninist dialectic, the policy should have an ideological basis. The idea for workers' councils was clearly based on socialist, and even Leninist, ideas. But the theoretical base for the sweeping decentralization was not clear. True, the Yugoslavs rationalized--correctly, as it turned out--that decentralization would mean more production. But this is a mere practical point of view. Merely practical points of view, according to Leninism, are admissible only as temporary, tactical approaches.

-3-

When the NEP was decided on in 1921, it was made clear to all that it had this temporary character. The new economic policy of Yugoslavia is different. It was, and still is, explained as a strategic, rather than a tactical, program. But the theoretical justification of it was vague: since socialism was in the interest of workers and since the workers were now running their enterprises, more decentralization meant more freedom for workers. Socialism, however, is built on cooperation, not competition. Competition can be justified for the socialist only as a tactic for increasing output, and only as a temporary measure. If by some abstruse rationalization it can be justified strategically within the Leninist dialectic, the Yugoslavs have not done so. At the same time, even the new forms are not regarded as necessarily lasting. "We are searching for our way," the Yugoslavs say repeatedly.

The abandonment of the policy of collectivization in agriculture, on the other hand, was announced as a temporary, tactical measure, designed to increase production. "Bread, not forms, is what counts," said Tito, adding, "at the same time, complete socialization of the villages remains our inexorable goal, for, as Lenin said, only in that way can socialism be achieved."

In the Soviet Union, the Communist Party kept its ideological powder dry, so to speak. Neither confusing its tactical with its strategic goals nor relinquishing any of its exclusive political control, it was able, when it chose, to end its temporary NEP. Today, in Yugoslavia, the tide away from collectivization is strong. One hears not a word about the temporary nature of the abandonment of collectivization. The peasantry in general is probably the weakest sector of support for the regime. Any new measures toward collectivization would be certain to meet strong peasant resistance, and the economic plight of the country is such that new peasant resistance might be catastrophic. Strong-arm methods that surely would be necessary even to begin such a policy have been renounced in such a manner that it would be extremely difficult to reintroduce them. And the leadership of the Communist Party in the villages is weaker than ever. Party officials in Croatia, for example, have admitted that the morale of many of its members in rural areas is at its nadir, because they feel they lost face when the collectivization policy was abandoned. The chairman of a district committee near Kumrovec, Tito's birthplace, while appearing enthusiastic over the new policy, declared: "It is sometimes difficult for our peasants to realize that it was we Communists who saw the need for a new policy. Some of them saw Communism only as collectivization. Now that we have a new policy toward collectivization, they think we have a new policy toward Communism. In a sense, of course, this is so, but these theoretical positions are difficult to explain."

The party attitude not only toward agriculture but also toward the industrial economy is summed up by a sentence heard on the lips of high and low alike: "We are searching for our way." This sounds more like western political pragmatism than eastern

dialecticism. Such pragmatism is compatible with a dialectical approach only for the short-run. In Yugoslavia, however, it has taken on the appearance of a long-run policy. The dialectical justification for a permanent policy of experimentation has yet to be put forth.

These ideological problems have been in the minds of many Yugoslav Communists for a long time, probably ever since the Cominform Resolution in 1948. At that time, as the late Boris Kidrič phrased it, "we Yugoslav Communists had our eyes opened." And, as is well known, a communist with his "eyes opened" is capable of many strange thoughts.

The strange thoughts in Yugoslavia first received formal expression in 1952, when the Sixth Party Congress addressed itself to the problem of a Communist dictatorship in a state with a decentralized economy moving ostensibly in the direction of more political democracy. The Party leadership--Tito, Djilas, Kardelj, Pijade, et al.--proposed a changed role for the Yugoslav Communists. They were to withdraw from the role of active directors of state affairs and to assume the classic role which Marx had ascribed for such as they--as the most forward and active members of the proletariat they would lead by virtue of their ability as teachers and good citizens.

The official viewpoint, expressed by Aleksandar Ranković, head of the UDBA (the secret police), was that no longer was there a danger from reactionary antisocialist elements in the country. The first phase of the revolution had eliminated them. The danger now lay in the type of socialist development to come. To avoid the Soviet pitfall of bureaucratic dictatorship, less formal party domination and more popular participation was necessary. The vehicle for popular participation was already present--the Socialist Alliance. The Party could now retire farther behind the scenes and turn over to its instrument, the Socialist Alliance, more active political direction.

This did not, however, mean a two-party system. Tito explicitly pointed out--with reason perhaps based more in Marxist logic than in Yugoslav reality--that since political parties were but the reflection of economic interests and that since in Yugoslavia there was only one economic interest (that of the workers), there was no need for other parties.

The clearest and perhaps the most contradictory statement about the meaning of the new policy came from Milovan Djilas. Djilas has increasingly been regarded as the party's chief theoretician. As a member of the Politburo and as a close personal friend of Tito, he was generally regarded as the "Number 2" or "Number 3" man in the Party--"the Yugoslav Rudolph Hess," some unsympathetic observer dubbed him.

Djilas told the Party Congress that "if we really wish to develop democracy.....we must face the fact that this cannot

happen without the danger of revival of not only bureaucratic but bourgeois elements as well..... Let me take two simple examples. Today we cannot arrest a priest because he plays ball with childrenout of reactionary political motives against our system..... Today we cannot prevent people with various kinds of ideas, often reactionary and antimaterialist, from publishing their works because we would in this way make it impossible for ourselves (the Communists, workers, and progressive professionals) to put forward various opinions. We would also be making it impossible for talented young people to come to the fore, and we must let them do so even if they are ideologically confused, which they cannot help being if for no other reason than that they are young."

To cope with these dangers, Djilas said, the activities of Communists "and others" must become "livelier, more interesting and fuller of content than those of, let us say, the priests..... The process of the class struggle in our country is far from finished; it is simply taking on new forms."

But then Djilas went on to echo Tito's warning that this did not imply a two-party system like those in the West, nor did it mean that reactionary elements had carte blanche to undertake "antistate activity." Any trend toward bourgeois democracy, Djilas warned, would be "but a mask for turning back to semifeudal conditions" that existed before World War II.

The Party Congress occurred in November 1952. Scarcely more than a year later, the "Djilas affair" occurred. In the interim, there had been other ideological developments. At the Congress, Ranković discussed the problem of intraparty democracy and reaffirmed that it was based on democratic centralism--that is, on the idea of the party hierarchial setup, each body bound by the decisions of bodies superior to it.

It was Trotsky who, in complaining about democratic centralism under Stalin, once said that it meant the dictatorship of the country by the party, dictatorship of the party by the central committee, dictatorship of the central committee by the politburo, and dictatorship of the politburo by the dictator. In Yugoslavia, the new party statutes abolished the politburo and permitted a breach in democratic centralism to the extent that any primary organization theoretically had the right to expel its members, regardless of their membership in higher organizations.

Then, some time after the Party Congress, there was published Tito's answer to some young communists' questions about the future role of the party. In this "Brioni letter," Tito spoke about the "eventual withering away of the Party." This was an entirely new concept in Marxist ideology. In some distant millennium the state was supposed to "wither away," but what would happen to the party in that period was simply never discussed. The letter was immediately the subject of wide and varying interpretations in the Party press and elsewhere. An official Party statement had to explain that the Marshal was only looking to the distant future when communism would have been achieved and the problem of

ideological leadership would no longer be present. But for the foreseeable future, it was explained, leadership by the Communist Party--modified as it might be--was an indispensable factor in the development of socialism and communism in Yugoslavia.

During this contretemps, Djilas, as the chief ideologist, had been doing a lot of thinking. His position--as he explains it now to the rare visitor who finds him--was something like this:

When the Yugoslav Communist Party was marching forward firmly along the lines of the Leninist dialectic, then it was necessary to have the principle of democratic centralism firmly observed; it was necessary to have, in fact, the dictatorship of the party leadership, because that leadership was responsible for the carrying out of the line that had been agreed upon. Now, however, the Yugoslav party had in fact abandoned both Leninist forms and Leninist theory. It had no definite line. It was "searching for its way." There was no longer any real danger from reactionary forces because they didn't exist. The danger was now from party bureaucracy. The only way the Party could insure the kind of political leadership necessary and at the same time avoid the dangers of Stalinist bureaucracy was to permit more freedom within the Party. This meant the abandonment of strict democratic centralism, to permit the formulation of "ad hoc blocs" of Party members who would differ among themselves on various questions. Since the Party had abandoned the idea of arriving at the single truth through the application of dialectical methods, truth had to be arrived at by free discussion. That it was to be a "socialist truth" would be insured by the fact that the discussion would be only among Communists in a society already Socialist.

Djilas then had no idea, he says, of allowing competing political organizations to be formed outside the Party. But he was convinced that there had to be more freedom for political discussion inside the Party.

With these ideas in mind, Djilas went to see Tito. He proposed to write a series of articles outlining his view. Tito agreed. Djilas says he discussed his view with Tito in detail. Tito says he spoke of the articles only in the vaguest of terms. However that may be, after an hour's private discussion Tito gave Djilas the go-ahead signal.

Certainly the articles themselves were vague. Djilas' style at best is involved. But there was no question that the idea for more free discussion inside the Party caught on. The responses generally were enthusiastic. The enthusiasm, however, was far from unanimous. The stronger the tone of the articles became, the more some party leader drew back, horrified. Finally, in an effort to make his point dramatically that the Yugoslav

Party dictatorship could not continue to hold a monopoly on formulation of ideas, Djilas became very personal. His last article ridiculed the belief that only the old Party people were good communists. He declared that many new able Yugoslavs, who were never Partizans, were excluded from the communist society just because they were not members of the old Communist group. He cited the case of a young actress, a child at the time of the war, who had recently married a leading party official. She was, he said, ostracized by the party hierarchy, and especially by their wives, because "she was never one of us." This attitude, Djilas said, was the attitude of bureaucracy trying to maintain its hold long after the raison d'être for that hold had passed. It was the desperate attempt of owners of villas and big cars to hold on to their privileges by trying to maintain a closed society.

Djilas didn't name any names. But all Yugoslavia knew he was referring to the pretty young actress wife of Peko Dopević, chief of staff of the Yugoslav army, who had been having social difficulties among her peers.

If Djilas' desire in writing this last article--in December 1953--was to focus attention on his position, he succeeded--all too well as it turned out. Unfortunately for him, however, Djilas himself was vulnerable on a number of counts. First, it had been widely rumored for some time that Djilas was enamored of the lovely Mrs. Dopević. Second, Djilas himself, for no other reason than his leading position in the Party, was a willing possessor of villas and a fine automobile. Third, it was Djilas, as much if not more than anybody else, who had warned the Sixth Party Congress against going in the direction of "bourgeois democracy."

During the last weeks of 1953, Djilas' articles hit the presses regularly. While they excited much general discussion, it wasn't until publication of the last one--about the pretty young actress--that the alarms began to sound. The word was passed around that "Djido," as Djilas was called by Party intimates, had gone too far. Then it was suddenly announced that a plenum of the Central Committee would be held to consider the Djilas case--a plenum called by Marshal Tito himself.

On the day of the plenum the Party bigwigs and their staffs arrived in their shiny American cars at the Communist headquarters on Boulevard Revolution in downtown Belgrade. After most of them had assembled, Djilas, who lives just around the corner, arrived on foot. He was accompanied only by Vladimir Dedijer, Tito's official biographer and the leading party journalist.

In the proceedings that followed--wide open to the public--Dedijer alone defended Djilas, although Dmitra Dmitrević, Djilas' former wife and once a leading figure in the party in her own right, gave lukewarm testimony in his behalf. All the rest--including Tito, Kardelj, Ranković, Pijade, and several Popovići--arose one by one to denounce their friend and colleague for deviationism. Tito seemed to do it more in sorrow than in anger. Old Pijade,

ailing still from long years in royalist prisons, was bitter and used personal invective. The smaller witnesses jumped on the band wagon with varying degrees of opposition.

The tenor of their remarks was clear: what Djilas was advocating amounted to ending the Communist Party's position as the sole political party in Yugoslavia. It was advocacy of factionalism. It resulted from a selfish, isolated, ivory-tower approach. It smacked of personal political ambitions. It was tantamount to risking all that the comrades had fought for. It opened the door to reactionary forces. Worst of all, it was going against the whole party--leadership and rank-and-file--in a manner that was uncommunistic, individualistic, and bourgeois. It showed that "Djido" had separated himself from the Party.

Djilas' defense was perhaps less than resolute. He said he was misunderstood. He said he had no intention of going against the Party and had thought the leadership was back of him. He said he was merely offering ideas for discussion. He said he realized now that he was in error. And yet, with rare courage, he added: "It would not be honest if I said that now, suddenly, all the ideas I have held were wrong. This I cannot do."

The Central Committee voted censure with no opposition--both Djilas and Dediđer abstaining. Djilas was expelled from the Central Committee and, although not then expelled from the Party, he was put on probation. (He has since resigned). He was then summarily removed from the post of president of the new parliament--a post he had not in fact yet officially assumed. But he was allowed to go free, and remains so to this day. He is completely ostracized. At a basketball game in Belgrade recently, when Djilas, using a pass, sat down in a section reserved for officials, there was actually a scramble of those near him to change their places. He still retains comparatively comfortable pensions as a former Party member, Partizan general, and president of parliament. His wife works as a stenographer.

Djilas himself has declared that he survives as a "monument to the Cominform resolution." There is little doubt that in the days of Soviet methods in Yugoslavia, he would have been summarily dispatched by a firing squad. Still, for a Party professing political democracy, the action was drastic. Exactly why it was taken in that manner is far from clear. Kardelj says he pleaded with Djilas during the period of publication of his articles to discontinue them. Djilas denies this. Djilas says that if Tito had asked him or sent him word to stop, he would have done so; it is indeed difficult to doubt that this is so. Why Tito didn't step in remains a mystery, unless he feared Djilas as a political opponent and wanted to give him rope to hang himself. This is an unlikely possibility, however, Tito's position being what it is.

Djilas' own explanation is that Tito and his colleagues were frightened at the response the articles received from the rank and file of party members and from the mass of the population, and were frightened also at opposition from certain party

functionaries who feared for their jobs. He says he believes Tito was sincere in agreeing to the articles in the beginning, but "maybe he didn't understand what I was saying." He says the other Politburo members persuaded Tito that an example should be made of him. He says he does not exclude personal motives.

"Tito says I am politically dead," Djilas declared with a shrug of his shoulders. "Probably that is true. It is true also that there are no Djilasites, in any formal active sense. But there is lots of Djilasism."

Djilas is of the opinion that Tito performed a magnificent job of leadership during the war and in the first five years thereafter. He paid him tribute for holding the party together during the difficult days following the Cominform Resolution. "Nobody else could have done it," he said.

"But now," Djilas added, "Tito has outlived his time. This is sad, but it happens to most political leaders. He is not at home in ideological matters. He is not personally an opportunist but he is playing the role of opportunism, and the party leadership is opportunistic. Once the main ways of Marxism-Leninism were abandoned, there was no longer any justification for the party dictatorship. One cannot stand still on the road toward democracy. You go either forward or backward. We have gone backward. This is a victory for the very bureaucracy we fought against in our struggle with the USSR."

Djilas cites as an example that the lack of free discussion in the party is, in his opinion, responsible for excessive decentralization in the economy. The policy of decentralization, he says, was not thought out carefully. Because it has been excessive and is resulting in economic difficulties, there will soon have to be a resort to direct, administrative controls again. He sees this as a step backward, and he is afraid that once it is taken the Party bureaucracy will not soon again lightly loosen central authority.

Djilas is of the opinion that the Soviet Union may go ahead toward political democracy more rapidly than Yugoslavia, now that Stalin is dead. He sees the USSR beginning to take that direction, and believes that once such a movement starts--"in an upsurge of anti-Stalinism"--the USSR may go faster and farther than Yugoslavia.

Since he resigned from the Party, Djilas' ideas have continued to develop. He now believes definitely that two or more formal political parties are essential to political democracy. And he believes that economic democracy is essentially meaningless without political democracy. Worker-management of industry and direct worker-representation in parliament are great steps forward, he says, but they are not enough. Djilas says he has faith that political democracy will come to Yugoslavia eventually, but in the inevitable struggle there is danger that harm will be done to socialist development.

"It is here that the party leaders have damaged the cause of socialism in order to maintain their positions," he declared.

Meanwhile, Djilas relaxes in his apartment, writes philosophical tracts for his own amusement, and helps take care of his two-year-old son. He is a somewhat pathetic figure. "I would like to start a philosophical magazine," he said, "but of course they will not let me. I would like to make a trip abroad, but probably I could not get a passport. Maybe if I were invited to write for a scholarly magazine abroad, they would permit it.

"I am a Yugoslav patriot, and I have no desire to do anything against my country. They know that. I suppose my apartment is watched, but it doesn't concern me."

Djilas was correct in the last assumption. It was difficult to find out where Djilas lived. No official sources would even give his telephone number. But the day after I left his apartment, a foreign-office official asked a Yugoslav friend:

"I understand Gospodin Neal saw Djilas yesterday. Do you know what they talked about?"

It was only after I had talked with Djilas that my countless efforts to see Edvard Kardelj, his successor as chief party ideologist, were rewarded. Although Mr. Kardelj had in the summer personally invited me to see him, letters, telephone calls, and visits to his office brought no appointment. The day before I saw Djilas, one of Kardelj's assistants said over the telephone that no interview could be arranged. Mr. Kardelj was too busy. The next evening, at--of all places--the Soviet Embassy reception on the anniversary of the October Revolution, I met Kardelj.

"And why haven't you come to see me, Gospodin Neal?" he asked, bowing over a glass of vodka. I told him I had done everything except break into his private apartment in an effort to do so.

"Incredible," murmured Kardelj. "I have not been informed at all about this. Can you come to my office at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning?"

The talk with Kardelj lasted three hours and covered the whole range of Yugoslav ideological development, plus a lot of personal remarks about Djilas.

Djilas was described as confused in mind, corrupted in soul, opportunistic in practice, a Cominformist in democrat's clothing. Djilas' proposals did not rise to the dignity of serious discussion.

Then why were they discussed so vigorously at the plenum? Because, said Kardelj:

-11-

Djilas' ideas would have produced anarchy in the party and in the land. It was necessary to point this out. It may be that Djilas himself did not understand the import of his own ideas. Yugoslavia is moving steadily toward political democracy, and the Communist Party has been the vanguard of this movement. To have clipped the Party's wings, so to speak, at this moment, would have been to retard our political development. The basis of political democracy is economic democracy. This has been achieved through the workers' councils. The first step toward political democracy has been achieved in local, autonomous self-government, with the workers' representatives--the producers' councils--playing a leading role.

As far as free political discussion is concerned, this takes place in workers' councils and generally in the Socialist Alliance. The Communist Party has divested itself of most of its functions of formal administrative leadership. Political parties are either a reflection of clashing economic interests or they are meaningless as far as real issues are concerned. In Yugoslavia, there is no clash of economic interests, in the Marxist sense, and to have meaningless parties in a country with our level of cultural and ideological development would only mean confusion.

As more and more of our political and economic activities are decentralized to the local level, there is bound to be more and more free political discussion. People will have to discuss problems in order to solve them. That is our way toward socialism. When communes are established throughout the country, merging local government with industry and agriculture, the state--in the formal sense of a national state apparatus--will have withered away. When that occurs, the Party will have withered away also, because there will no longer be any need for a Party in the same sense as we have it now. But that is a long time ahead. In the meantime, by giving increasing authority to people at local levels, we are guarding against bureaucratic tendencies in either the state or the party. It is true that we do not see all the directions we shall have to take clearly at this time. We are searching for our way. But we are sure about the direction of decentralization and development of the Commune. The Commune means political democracy and economic democracy because it is political democracy and economic democracy.

Mr. Kardelj was then asked: Is Yugoslavia still operating according to the Leninist dialectic? Is the Yugoslav party still a Marxist-Leninist party? He thought for a full minute before he answered:

No, to be frank it is not. We have repudiated Stalinism, which is a type of bureaucratic dictatorship developed by Stalin in the Soviet Union. This was a perversion of Leninism. But Leninism itself is simply a series of ideas and methods that grew specifically out of the Russian experience. Our experience is different. I will not say that Lenin's way of operating was not useful at one time. We are still Marxists. In deciding questions in our minds, we follow the approach of dialectical materialism, perhaps not as Lenin would have seen it but as we see it here. In practice, we simply keep to broad, general Marxist goals, but we are searching for our own way to get there. We feel that there are many forms and types of socialism, and that one is not necessarily more correct than another.

Then what of the point that the Party is no longer needed as the exclusive instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Kardelj replied:

The Party in Yugoslavia has never been altogether that exclusive instrument. We had our People's Front, and now the even broader Socialist Alliance. The Party itself now has undergone changes which make it more democratic. Its position is now chiefly one of discussion and educational leadership. Communists themselves must lead as individuals only because they personally are able, competent individuals meriting the confidence of their fellow citizens, or not at all.

Mr. Kardelj said that in fact it was the Communist Party that furnished the leadership. Then he was asked:

Is not this fact, coupled with the absence of a dialectical line, responsible for some of the confusion in Yugoslavia today? For example, the Communists, having in mind a proletariat-dominated state, have rather bungled the agricultural situation, which is the key to Yugoslav well-being. Despite decentralization of authority to local governments and communes, these bodies are heavily dominated by workers. This means they tend to ignore, or at best are unable to treat properly, agricultural problems. Do you still believe--as Tito stated in 1952, quoting Lenin--that socialization of the villages is necessary for socialization of the country? The present anticollectivization policy, once called only temporary, seems to have become an increasingly normal pattern. If the economic well-being of the country depends on giving the peasants "a break" in the political as well as the economic sense, does this not mean that worker-domination of parliamentary bodies will have to be decreased? And if so, since the peasants are admittedly the most backward element of the population (as far as socialist ideas are concerned), would not this mean that socialism in the whole country would be endangered? Does all this mean that, in effect, you have to choose between developing socialism and the economic well-being of the country?

-13-

Mr. Kardelj admitted the logic of these questions. Then he undertook to discuss them like this:

It is true that our abandonment of the former, Soviet-type policy toward collectivization is permanent. We realize that collectivization cannot be forced. It may be that we will never develop the Kolkhoz-type agricultural collective in Yugoslavia. I don't know.

However, we still believe that socialism in the villages is necessary for socialism in the country. This is obvious because, even after our industrialization is completed, the villages will remain a very large and important sector. Also, it is true that socialism in the villages means some form of cooperation. It does not necessarily mean Kolkhozes.

We do have faith that cooperatives of some sort will develop in agriculture. There is a firm base for this in our past. We hold that any type of cooperative is good, even a simple cooperative for buying seed and so forth, and that it is in the direction of socialism. We feel that the more industrialization we have, the greater will be the impetus toward cooperatives, and thus toward socialism.

As socialism in the country develops generally, this will have an effect on peasants. Peasants are a part of their society, inescapably, like everyone else. In America, farmers have a capitalist orientation because America is capitalistic. In Yugoslavia, as socialism develops, our peasants will come to have a socialistic outlook. And when this happens, the cooperative movement will be victorious. What kind of cooperatives will develop we don't know. We are searching for our way. All this will take a long time, maybe 25 or 50 years, before socialism in the villages wins out.

During this period, the peasants will gradually play a larger role in our socialist life. And as the cultural and ideological level of our workers grows, they will come more and more to appreciate the socialist problems involved in agriculture and to have a less narrow approach to these problems. The same is true of the peasants.

These are not easy problems. We have made mistakes, and we may be making some now. But one thing our experience with the Soviet Union taught us is to beware of being dogmatic. We are searching for our way. We are trying to do so by dialectical reasoning. We are keeping our eyes always on socialist goals, and we think we have the basic organization to achieve socialism. To us, this means political democracy as well as economic democracy. We feel we are advancing in our own way toward both.

Mr. Kardelj spoke earnestly and, it seemed, with complete frankness. When he said that the political reality of the Yugoslav Party's course was borne out by the successes it has had, there was much evidence to support him. The Party successfully organized the Yugoslav state after the war. It successfully weathered the great ordeal of excommunication by the Soviet Union. It has succeeded in making the heterogeneous Yugoslav people more of a united nation than has ever been the case before. It quickly and without apparent difficulty squashed the schismatic tendencies it felt Djilas encouraged. It has gone a long way toward winning popular support for much of its program.

And yet there remain the twin contradictions of a planned cooperative economy and decentralized competition, and of a one-party state with political freedom. The latter anomaly was never demonstrated more clearly than when the Yugoslav National Theatre in Belgrade this fall gave Menotti's opera, The Consul. The theme in The Consul--the secret police in pursuit of the family of a political opponent trying to flee an iron-curtain country--has been enacted countless times in Yugoslavia in real life, and to some extent it still is. To the Yugoslavs, the opera must have seemed reality incarnate. Still it was performed, received with enormous enthusiasm, and will be given again during the current season.

Shortly after The Consul was presented, my wife and I went dancing with two Yugoslav friends. One was a young woman about 25 years of age, whose brother had just been released from prison and who, prior to 1949, had had some serious difficulties with police. The other, a man, was a Party member but about as unpolitical and as unideological as it is possible to be--a type one meets frequently in Yugoslavia.

During the evening, while I was dancing with the young Serb, she was seized with a fit of trembling and she declared that she was sure that our other friend was an agent of the UDBA. Her fear, so great that she insisted on being taken home at once, was genuine. At the same moment, the man was confiding to my wife that he thought the young woman was an UDBA agent and that we all should be very careful.

This state of affairs, where everybody suspects everybody else--so typical of the iron-curtain countries--is distasteful to all Yugoslavs except the most hardened party militantes. The Yugoslavs (and their children) are being told of the evils of such a situation not only through media such as The Consul but also directly by Tito and the Party leadership. Maybe the leaders don't mean it. But the latitude of political and economic freedom in Yugoslavia today is such that it is difficult to see how a coming generation, in any event, can help but be convinced. The clash between the absence of an ideological line and the maintenance of the party dictatorship is felt not only by Djilas but by thousands of others--especially those who, growing up in the new atmosphere, do not have the psychological restraint developed during the Soviet

-15-

era or the reverence for Party discipline so characteristic of many pre-1948 Communists. Members of the new generation are inevitably going to have more and more power in Yugoslavia as time goes on. They may prove to be opportunists and use their power to continue the present limitations on political freedom, or they may use it to cross the boundaries that still separate their country from genuine political democracy. It is hard to imagine that they will use their power to support a dialectic that isn't there.

Regardless of this, a very interesting question is posed here--namely, the question of whether one can have a socialist (communist-type) system and still have real political democracy. The Yugoslavs are trying to prove they can.

The Soviet Union, in pronouncing an anathema on the Yugoslav Party, took the position, in effect, that any deviation from what Moscow regarded as the right way would mean the failure of the effort to achieve a Marxist society. The Yugoslavs, setting off on their own course, have denied this. Developments in Yugoslavia during the coming interesting years are likely to show who is correct.

Fred Warner Neal