

PLURALISM AND DEMOCRACY IN YUGOSLAVIA:
REFORM OR PARALYSIS

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The present debate in Yugoslavia about "democratization" of the League of Communists is a consequence of the Party's heritage of anti-Stalinism, the constitutional evolution of the country, and the situation after Tito's death. Nearly two decades ago the Praxis group of political philosophers were the first to criticize the absence of intraparty democracy, and while many of these critics were silenced, their ideas have re-emerged in Yugoslavia during the economic crisis of the 1980's. Within the League, the debate has touched on its responsibility for public policy, its organizational principles, and its monopoly of power. Opposition to reform and fear of political change have limited practical effect of the debate, but it continues to raise fundamental questions about the meaning of democracy in a one party system.

Discussion about "democratization" of the Yugoslav League of Communists (LCY) has been a persistent feature of the country's political life since Tito's death in 1980.¹ I wish to examine the arguments advanced by some proponents of "democratization" in Yugoslavia and to address a familiar but important question: Are polemics about the preferred evolution of Yugoslavia's political system a cyclical phenomenon common to other communist party states, or is the Yugoslav situation an unprecedented, if yet unfulfilled, extension of "self-management?" Support for the unique promise of LCY "democratization" may be sought in the radical nature of the arguments advanced, in the passing of a single authoritative source of ideological interpretation, and in Yugoslavia's independence from the Soviet Union. An observation of Adam

Ulam's offers an equally powerful argument for the contrary viewpoint.

The tragedy and paradox of all communist systems in this direction [of democracy and decentralization]... is that in a sense they only make more essential the ubiquitous grip of the party on all spheres of political, economic and social life. The more necessary it will become to assure the unity of political centralization... (1965, pp. 151-152)

A corollary of this position is that if "depoliticization," the "essence" of Titoism in Ulam's judgment, succeeds too well, the regime is threatened by a loss of identity because "it is impossible to run a communist state without a nucleus of devoted and ideologically minded people." Cycles of Yugoslav liberalization and authoritarianism appear to support Ulam's view, but Tito's role in the process is unmistakable and irreplaceable.

Before 1980, ideological change in Yugoslavia was associated with conflict with the Soviet Union (1948, 1958), or with disruptions within the League itself (1954, 1966, 1972). Since Tito's death, dissent about the character of intraparty democracy and mutual relations of LCY and the state has reached unprecedented levels, despite the absence of earlier sources for change. It is not unusual for League spokesmen to speak defensively. Fuad Muhic' of the LCY Bosnia-Hercegovina Central Committee admitted the existence of those who claim "the party possesses legality but that [it] lacks historical legitimacy, because it is losing support of the working class" (*Borba* 1983d). The unsatisfactory situation brought on by the inaccessibility of LCY decisions is in turn associated with the country's economic crisis, the "federalization" of the LCY itself, and a general malaise after the 1982 12th LCY Congress. Within a year of the congress, a member of the Montenegrin Central Committee presidium, Vukola Vasiljovic', spoke of a "climate of insecurity, suspicion, tension, and wavering being created in which pressure [was generated] to change the system or to set actions in motion outside the political system" (*Tanjug*, 1983b). Support to "change the system" has been diffuse and enjoys the support of acquiescence of LCY officials at the highest level.

For the first time Yugoslav theoreticians have acknowledged a source of "antidemocratic" attitudes that cannot be associated with "cominformists" or supporters of the ousted Rankovic. Nadjan Pasic has held that western "neoconservative" trends have created such epigeous offshoots in Yugoslavia as "Balkan authoritarianism" under a veneer of Marxism. In a seminar organized by the Serbian League's Central Committee, Pasic acknowledged that such "neoconservatism" in Yugoslavia had taken the form of "institutional fetishism in defense of the status quo... Of course, those defending the status quo are those who enjoy positions of authority and this means the factions of the professional administrative structure in the economy, and especially in politics" (*Borba*, 1983c). Supposedly such "factions" wanted to turn the LCY into a "party of order" as part of a "strategy for saving socialism." Surely, Pašić was aware that the paradox of "conservative" Yugoslav communists drawing inspiration from bourgeois political trends took away the stigma of any similar influence on communist "liberals" advocating pluralism.

Whatever the accuracy of Pašić's claim about the source of "neoconservatism" in Yugoslavia, evidence for his concern soon emerged. In April 1984, less than four months later, twenty-eight Yugoslavs of various ideological outlooks were arrested for attending a talk given by Milovan Djilas (*New York Times*, 1984). Several were beaten, charged with disseminating "hostile propaganda" and were sentenced. For his efforts on behalf of the accused, the lawyer Srdja Popović was arrested and then interrogated while his apartment was searched and papers seized. The association with Djilas provided the apparent pretext for the arrests, yet the arrested could not be accused of political naivete. Leading members of the LCY Presidium had called for greater tolerance of political viewpoints outside the LCY and accelerated democratization within. According to Presidium member Alexander Gričkov, editor of the theoretical journal *Socijalizam*, democratization required

demonopolizing the LCY from its leadership role as the [exclusive] ideological political force... this means creating a socialist league as a real front for all socialist forces whose boundary markers are the constitutional system, socialist self-

management, equality of nations... and a state of nonalignment (*Borba*, 1983c).

In effect, the notion of "boundary markers" defining the substance of LCY assumptions excluded their procedural counterparts, that is democratic centralism. Implicitly, Grlickov was supporting tolerance of those who sought basic changes in the LCY. The move against Djilas's audience established a de facto "boundary marker" when few apparently existed.

Any impression of novelty in the situation must be tempered by the historical perspective of Yugoslav ideological development. The problem of "democratization" in the LCY originates in the Yugoslav criticism of the Stalinist political system. As early as 1950, Edvard Kardelj attacked the Soviet practice of "making a fetish of the State," and in so doing attributed a negative cast to states that could not be separated from the party itself. He wrote, "It is not the task of the workers' state to 'create' socialism, to conceive and construct it... its task is to clear the way for social and economic forces which by their inner essence are necessarily socialist and therefore develop freely, and must inevitably create socialism" (Johnson, 1972, p. 147). Initially, the state would retain its functions of external defense and repression of class enemies; "democratization" was identified with decentralization, rather than with the transfer of governing responsibility to workers' councils. Nevertheless, as Yugoslavia's ideological profile became sufficiently distinguished from the Soviet Union's, and as the federation was established, the party, soon to be renamed the "League," began to surrender its insistence on specific political outcomes founded on democratic centralism.

At the Sixth Congress in 1952, both Tito and Ranković emphasized the LCY's commitment to democratic centralism and its increased responsibility, but Djilas's call for separation of party and state meant that the League would only prescribe general policy lines and suggestions for their implementation (*Borba Komunistična Jugoslavije*, 1952, pp. 289-302). Lower party organs would enjoy substantial autonomy. How decentralization and democratic centralism could be reconciled was never explained. According to Dennison Rusinow:

Those who had the new definition [of the League's role] did not have an answer. Neither did the perplexed Party members in the field who were now told in one and the same breath that their responsibility for the making and implementation of 'correct' socialist decisions had increased but their power to fulfill that responsibility must diminish (1977, p. 77).

Much of Yugoslavia's postwar political history can be explained in terms of the costs in party morale of such slogans as "decentralization, desatization, democratization, and depolitization" (Bićanić, 1966, p. 643). The defection of Djilas from the League presents in microcosm the dilemma of communist reform. Communist party states may no more "democratically" abolish the heritage of Leninism than liberal democracies may vote to abolish limited government.

Less abstractly, Yugoslav communism has grappled with the dilemma of democratization through constitutional experiment and ideological variation that is both utopian and vaguely repetitive. In 1951, Pašić wrote:

It is not difficult to understand how the socialist state becomes stronger and at the same time withers. The state becomes stronger as the true representative of the interests of the whole society... but this process, this transformation by means of ever broader democratization into the organization of the [workers] themselves simultaneously signifies its withering as a special apparatus of class force separated from society. (Johnson, 1972, p. 152)

The problem was taken up again in the 1958 Program; "The leading political role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia will gradually disappear in the perspective, as the forms of direct Socialist democracy become stronger, develop and expand" (Pribicevich, 1958, p. 253). Thirty years after his 1951 statement, Pašić concluded that the

development of socialist self management democracy and the socialization of politics does not lie in some new redivision of power... [could more be imagined?] but in self management integration which will empower

all functions of executive power and administration of state functions placed directly in the service [of workers] and under their direct democratic control. (*Nase Teme*, 1982, p.2026)

Lacking such integration as the cause and consequence of democratic reform, the LCY has coexisted uneasily with constitutional innovation and critical interpretations of Marxism that promised "democracy."

Of course, the *Praxis* episode of Yugoslav Marxism is the best known example of organized demands for democratization of Yugoslav political life. The *Praxis* philosophers saw the true meaning of socialism in the freedom of creative political activity to overcome individual alienation (Gruenwald, 1981, pp.227-250). Through various colloquia and their own journal, the *Praxis* group sought an independent position from which they could criticize League policy. The timing of the enterprise followed the adoption of the 1963 constitution and preceded the eighth LCY Congress. In retrospect, the harassment and eventual banning of the journal *Praxis* demonstrated the incompatibility of a ruling communist party and potential opposition. In June 1964, Svetozar Stojanović, Mihailo Marković, and Gajo Petrović, among other philosophers, met in Novi Sad with party regulars at a conference sponsored by the Institute for the Study of the Workers Movement. Stojanović put forth his ideas for a democratic reform of the LCY, including the rotation of cadres, open discussion, use of the referendum, respect for minority opinion, democratic nomination, election of party officials, and full accessibility of the work of party organs to public scrutiny (Sher, 1977, p. 41). The veteran League ideologist Veljko Vlahović curtly rejected this barrage because "self-management" within the LCY amounted to a "serious mistake."

The League would find and continues to find much objectionable in "leftwing intellectuals." But it is easy to overlook the support for *Praxis* that was implicit in Yugoslav communism's heritage of anti-Stalinism, its rejection of simple determinism, and in its denial of claims to ideological monopoly. Some five years after the Novi Sad meeting, Latinka Perović, Secretary of the Serbian League's Executive Committee, penned

a plea for open discussion that the *Praxis* group could not have bettered.

The essence of intraparty democracy leads mainly to freedom of thought and the right of criticism. It is a phase through which organizations pass. But this problem is not limited to that of democracy within the League of Communists but [requires] the creative participation of communists in working out the strategy and tactics of the League. The general ideational and political level of the League may make this unrealistic. Yet the League is a revolutionary, not a 'pedagogical' organization. Therefore the constant confrontation of their members with the contradictions created in a Socialist society and the active democratic participation of all in the right of decision making have become the order of the day. (Perović, 1969, pp. 14-15)

If the party was in need of pedagogy, the *Praxis* philosophers were quite ready to assume the task; and, as distrustful or supportive as many officials of the LCY might be, the survival of the journal through 1973 was due in part to the state of the League itself after 1966. Lacking a reliable means to prosecute its editors, communist opponents of *Praxis*, particularly those in the Croatian leadership, were unable to censor the journal, while the Serbian League would not interfere with the *Praxis* bastion at the University of Belgrade.

Critical thought about "democratization" of the League of Communists and the "humanization" of Marxism could not easily be channeled through a decentralized and often incoherent LCY. As long as dissent did not endanger public order, the LCY might afford to loosen its ideological monopoly. But as early as 1968, the disorder of student demonstrations brought down censure. Tito lashed out against "individual professors, semi-philosophers, *Praxsovc*i, and various dogmatists... For them the working class and its role means nothing. For them the League of Communists means nothing Do such people educate our children in schools and universities? There is no place for them there" (Sher, 1977, p. 213). Yet, before expulsion of the "Belgrade Eight," as they were called, from the University's Philosophy Faculty in early 1974, the philosophers had an important place, for as much as Tito might complain, his will

would not be brought to bear without a restructuring of the LCY.

By dramatizing the threat of the Croatian crisis to Yugoslav integrity and by purging local party leadership, Tito laid the basis for a restoration of central authority and inaugurated a new "ideological offensive." Talk about LCY "democracy" would now mean Leninist norms of democratic centralism, or as Kardelj explained, "democracy" would exist "for socialism but not against it." In the spring of 1974, the Tenth LCY "Congress of Unity" convened to proclaim the vigor of the LCY, the relevance of "moral-political criteria" in education and to condemn the "so-called 'left critics'" who had attempted "to replace the avantguard role of the LCY by false liberalism and super-class illusions about freedom and democracy" (*Dokumenti i platforma*, 1973, p. 130). The 1970's produced abundant evidence to support Adam Ulam's comment (above) that the more communist regimes attempted to reform, the more necessary they made "the ubiquitous grip of the party." To the extent that the LCY tolerated a plurality of viewpoints in public life, it confronted intellectuals more concerned with the development of nationalist sovereignty than humanist universals.

Tito's death in 1980 removed the sole obstacle to a renewal of debate. As Pedro Ramet commented, "The chief adjudicator is gone, and there is no one, thus far, able to take his place. Hence the democratization debate is wide open" (1980 p. 45). Comparison with the content of earlier and present ideas about ideological reform and "democratization" are hard to avoid. Part of the process has been a restoration of the Marxist left. In November 1983, the Institute for the International Working Class Movement of Belgrade convened a three day conference in Novi Sad on the topic "Marx and Socialism -Contradictions and Prospects." Fifty intellectuals gathered to disagree about the "crisis of socialism" in a way reminiscent of the Novi Sad meetings in 1964 prior to the foundation of *Praxis*. A *Borba* correspondent noted a "nostalgic recollection of 20 years ago [when] again in Novi Sad, almost the same people discussed the same topic; it is evident how much has changed. Some have altered their views radically, and others have held to the same." Svetozar Stojanović spoke for the reformers in affirming that "self-management cannot be realized without a radical democratization of society," and (more boldly) that Marxism was

vulnerable to "abuse in the ideological sense" and "authoritarian communism." Stojanković, Ljubomir Tadić, and Predrag Vranicki, among others, repeated many of their arguments penned in *Praxis* and in so doing provoked some of the same *ad hominem* criticism from LCY officials. Petar Živadinović compared Stojanović with the anti-Marxist French *nouveaux philosophes* for allegedly deriving Stalinism from Marxism and for showing a "touching predeliction" for "liberal bourgeoisie democracy." Fuad Muhić attacked the idea of "constitutional pluralism" and any "negation" of the LCY (*Borba*, 1983b).

The Conference might have little importance were it not symptomatic of several features that transcend the pattern of "democratic" reformism and "authoritarian centralism." First, renewal of the debate had coincided with a time of economic dislocation and nationalist discord. Thus, just one month before the Kosovo demonstrations in 1981, Aleksandar Grlićkov had called for a "wide-ranging dialogue in the League of Communists" and the "promotion of dialogue between the LCY and other socialist forces in Yugoslavia" (Stanković, 1983b, p. 3). Second, any "ideological offensive" on the part of LCY is unlikely because of its incompatibility with the collective presidencies of the LCY and the Federation.

The Chairman of the LCY Presidium, Mitja Ribičić, ruled out such a development in a lengthy interview given on May Day 1983. Ribičić reaffirmed the 1958 LCY program as a source of "new instruments for debureaucratizing society and the League of Communists." Unacceptable ideologies of "bureaucratic dogmatism" and "anarcho-liberalism" were not associated with any present social groups but with the historical persons of Ranković and Djilas (*Tanjug*, 1983a). As for the question of "what new forms of democracy should emerge from socialist development," Ribičić recalled an old *Praxis* vision as nothing less than "the need to develop self-management in the direction of going beyond the framework of enterprises and extending it to the entire direction of society" (*Tanjug*, 1983a).

Whether the collective presidency is unable to agree on a more precise definition for the LCY or whether Ribičić in fact expects social revitalization from outside the LCY command structure is difficult to assess. The Twelfth League Congress in 1982 suggested the latter possibility. An editorial in *Borba*

(1983a) recalled the Congress' demand: "It's more and more obvious each day that if the League of Communists does not 'divorce' itself from centers of power, it will not be possible [for Yugoslavia] to find a more decisive and quicker way out of the current dangerous situation in self-management.. or [eliminate] the considerable irresponsibility in realization of a stabilization policy."

DEMOCRACY: FROM THE STATE TO THE LEAGUE AND BEYOND

Yugoslavia's present economic situation has created a "crisis" of political innovation in the traditional sense of the word. On the one hand, austerity imposed to cope with economic difficulties threatened to stifle change through greater centralization,² while on the other hand, the staggering dimension of its economic problems created opportunities for political innovation. Decision making remained fragmented in a bewildering array of republican, federal, provincial, and local executives, but the League of Communists retained responsibility for the appointment of personnel and for setting the boundaries of debate. Few League spokesmen suggested a concentration of economic decision making authority in the League and Central Bank, and many found the economic situation a consequence of the League's ideological monopoly.

In a recent interview, Ljubislav Marković of the University of Belgrade claimed that the economic situation had "restricted the relevance of dogmatic concepts of Socialism." The dogmatists had tried "to make people happy by means of various promises propagated by ruling political forces adding to Yugoslavia's foreign debts" (Stanković, 1984). The result of centralized power was a situation in which "people care only for their own and their families' food and clothing, while everything else - from housing to education - is something taken care of by the State." Supposedly, because the "State fills a central area" of working life, work fails to surpass a low level of productivity. Marković argued for greater individual initiative in an economy more sensitive to market forces.

This relatively "neoliberal" viewpoint shares the same logic of mainstream arguments for democratization. As a *Borba*

editorial explained, "One gets the impression that at any moment there are only two actors on the social scene: the LCY on one side and enormous problems facing society on the other" (1983a). The result of this perception develops into an unholy alliance of "bureaucracy and technology" through the "negative teamwork" of LCY leaderships, banks, and political-economic organizations. Meanwhile, self-managing institutions and rank-and-file communists become irrelevant to decision makers who look upon them as "some sort of surplus" grudgingly accepted.

Democratization of relations within the LCY requires a change of attitude needed to engage the support of broad segments of the population on behalf of economic stability. In a sense, the proponents of reform appear to be asking that Yugoslavs accept the burden of imposed austerity caused by errors in the League's judgment but clearly promise more sweeping change. Presidium Chairman Ribičić has put the matter bluntly: "The League of Communists can no longer be engaged in an alliance along two tracks, the statist pragmatic and the socialist self-managing" (*Borba*, 1983c, p. 1). Only "revolutionary pressure" from below on behalf of self-management can insure the economy's recovery. This view differs fundamentally from that advanced by the *Praxis* group; it argues that democracy is not to be pursued for the abstractly humanist goal of overcoming alienation but for protection of socialism itself. The themes of economic stabilization based on self-management and of pernicious evils due to "bureaucracy and technocracy" attempt to legitimize demands for change and mobilize the LCY rank and file.

The upper leadership could not reach a consensus defining "democratization," a condition that allowed political figures of lesser status than Ribičić or Grlićkov to become involved. Indeed, both the institutional details and the theoretical basis of democratic self-management had been debated since the publication of a lead article in *Socijalizam* in July 1980. The timing of the "Plea for a Dialogue about the State in Socialism" (Jovanov, 1980, p. 81) indicates that Tito's death was a signal for debate. Although the extent of Yugoslavia's economic situation had not yet become apparent, the material imperative for democratization formed a central premise of Jovanov's argument. He wrote that "according to all analyses of social accounting, for a relatively long period of time, Yugoslavia has

maintained a surplus of resources in banks and socio-political associations at all levels." The surplus raised a question in itself and generally about "the decisive influence in the distribution of newly created value... [which] effectively prevents the expression of economic power." Loss of working class economic power had occurred under self-management because of the conflict with "bureaucracy" and more exactly by the "hyperproduction" of institutions and by decision making whose "consequences [stood] in direct conflict with the interests of the working class." Excessive institutional norms simply exhausted energy and creativity and "formal" voting served to aggravate the contradiction of the State and self-management.

Jovanov had put forward a variant of the same argument about the LCY that Ribičić would use four years later, namely, the "party's practical political action in oscillation between the State and self-management." Only a "public dialogue" about the LCY and democracy could restore the communists as an "integrative factor of the working class with a historic role." Unlike earlier arguments on behalf of "decentralization," Jovanov's article disavowed a new attempt at "decentralization," since experience had shown that whether power was divided horizontally or vertically, it ended up creating "closed circles" of decision making and ultimately "disintegration" (Jovanov, 1980, p. 95).

This broadside in *Socijalizam* provoked little open opposition, yet one reply is interesting for its paucity of theoretical force. According to Jože Goričar, the "Plea for a Dialogue" had inaccurately described the relation of the State and self-management as "contradictory" rather than "dialectical." It was necessary to "integrate the movement with the regime into a single system of socialist democracy" rather than to set off each antagonistically. An "order" (*poredak*) would be necessary for progressive change, however pure the "movement" (*pokret*) that inspired it. Failures of self-management, according to Goričar, were not due to the absence of democracy but to personal defects and political culture. "A great majority of our citizens are nearer to the mentality and value system of a meddling industrial western country than of a free socialist community of politically and culturally developed people who decide democratically about their life and work" (Goričar, 1980, p. 134). Such a viewpoint might preserve a tutelary role for the

League, but could do little to inspire the energies of ideological fidelity.

Support for Jovanov's "Plea" and democratization became more voluble and radical. Extraordinarily bold assertions seconded the distinction of "order" and "movement." In some of its elements, the socialist State is identical to a greater or lesser degree to the "bourgeois form of the State," because of its potential to become alienated from "the real interests of the working class," and the "polarization of civil and political society" (Blagojević, 1982, pp. 48-49). The "dialectic" of "order" and "movement" now became a "continuous struggle for the division and redivision of social wealth." Implicitly, Yugoslavia had allowed the "order" to dominate the "movements," that is, to make impossible the redivision of wealth or the function of Marxist criticism. In this view, the separation could be overcome by the abolition of a "professional" political class, a development that could be "opened" by democratization of self-managing relations critical of the "State in socialism," rather than an attempt to improve the "socialist State" (Blagojević, 1982, p. 41).

Some writers saw sufficient wealth in the history of Yugoslav practice to seek a relevant reform model (Djordjević, 1980, pp. 78-86), while others, such as Branko Horvat, found occasion to resurrect the distinction of "scientific Marxism," "vulgar Marxism," and "Marxology." Among valid Marxist methodological innovations, Horvat found the organizing slogan of the *Praxis* group: "Criticism of everything that exists - not, of course, in a nihilistic sense, but in the sense of critically examining unrealized possibilities" (Horvat, 1983, p. 1777).

Clearly, the League could not be exempt from criticism. Enver Redžić, a veteran of the organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, presented one of the most damning indictments. Redžić cited the low representation of workers in the party and its leadership organs, and the apparent instability of their membership. The resulting "dominant bureaucratic stratum" survived to engage in an "unprincipled struggle for functions and position," an evil drawn from Tito's *Opus* (Redžić, 1982, p. 399). Redžić saw little "dialectical" in the process; instead, it amounted to a "permanent conflict of bureaucratic tendencies and methods" and "efforts to change and transform them into

democratic relations." The "bureaucratic ruse" consisted of preserving its "methodology and mechanism" of deciding on behalf of "direct producers" through indirect mediation. Placid platitudes of "continuity" embodied in the 1982 Party Congress documents would not meet the urgency of "deprofessionalization" and "democratization."

Redžić's mention of the Party Congress touched a sensitive nerve. The revival of Marxist criticism could be salutary, providing it did not challenge authority itself. The Congress had drawn a careful boundary in affirming the League's "democratic centralism." LCY Presidium member Branko Mikulić held out democratic centralism as "an essential condition for the democratic development of our society as a whole" (1982, pp. 49-50). "Dialectical" now came to include a sense of animation, for at once it implied a "united organization and a uniform ideological orientation" alongside the "equal position, independence, and responsibility" of League members. The reaffirmation of the party statute on democratic centralism was a test case, since it confirmed the power of leading organs to expel members who resisted League policy. However, the momentum generated on behalf of "democratization" was registered clearly at the Congress. First, former Presidium Chairman Dušan Dragosavac repudiated "persistent centralist tendencies" in the LCY; the LCY Central Committee gained a number of powers exercised formally by the Presidium, and only six members of the 23 member Presidium were re-elected (*Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 1982, p. 31672).

More radical steps towards democratization were turned back. Bogdan Crnobrnja had demanded that LCY rank and file be permitted to recall members in executive position; to convene an "extraordinary" Congress within a year, if needed to implement adopted policies; and to use the secret ballot for multi-candidate elections (*Keesing's*, 1982, p. 31674). Although Mikulić reported that the Statuary Commission had not accepted the proposals, he acknowledged the disagreement over "verification" of party positions, and proposed that the LCY Statute be changed further before the Thirteenth Congress in 1986.

The question of League decision making had been intensely debated prior to the Congress, and, in view of its willingness to

consider further changes by 1986, the debate has become more intense. Conservatives have praised existing LCY relations as an embodiment of interparty democracy, while advocates of change have called for a replacement of "democratic centralism" by the more vague "democratic unity." A "moderate" viewpoint in the debate has endorsed democratic centralism, because the League, unlike self-managing organizations, is a "voluntary organization."

Those who form the SK do so voluntarily, that is, one decides consciously to associate his personal will with the general will as a synthesis of individual wills. That association is carried out by the principle of democratic centralism, which means in a certain sense a limitation of democracy and with respect to its voluntary component, is not imposed as someone else's will (Markovic, 1982, p. 574).

Of course, such apologetics may seem fatuous either to outspoken advocates of interparty democracy or to western students of communist politics. However, the argument's conclusion acknowledges the urgency of central questions about democratization in Yugoslavia. First, how can the LCY expect to abolish relations of "hierarchy and subordination" in social relations, if it does not alter its own decision making structure? And, second, how can an organization based on democratic centralism assume a leading role with self-managing and federal institutions? Significantly, few theoreticians have simply invoked the authority of Tito and Kardelj to support their viewpoints.

One possible alternative to democratization within the League is suggested by the transformation of other institutions into effective rivals. For example, one possibility suggested recently has been to revitalize the Socialist Alliance. SAWPY Federal Conference Chairman Marjan Rožic has acknowledged the "cohesive" influence of the League on the Alliance as a "red thread" running through its actions. Yet, he demands a more complementary relation between the two organizations. Specifically, he argues that the Alliance should express the will of "organized socialist forces" which are not subordinate to the personnel of the organization; that it discuss "the most sensitive questions" of art, literature, and culture; and that it exercise "social controls and criticism which contribute significantly to

realizing a cadres policy that is still not sufficiently democratic" (Rožic, 1984, p. 237). In mentioning a "cadres policy," Rožic avowedly seeks to replace various "coordinating bodies" with the Socialist Alliance - a proposal that would attenuate a key principle of political control in all communist party states.

Organizational heresies have inspired theoretical dissonance as great as any propounded during the late 1960's in Yugoslavia. Clearly, certain works demonstrate that the leading figures of the LCY have surrendered a claim to ideological monopoly. Milivoj Oreb, a lesser known Slovenian, has elaborated upon an explanation of why socialist states resort to war which identifies the bellicose propensity of the classic bourgeoisie imperium with the systemic imperatives of "bureaucratic" socialism (Oreb, 1982, pp. 3-17). Ljubomir Tadić, a *Praxis* figure, returned to demonstrate the fundamental idea of "criticism of everything that exists" as basic to all of Marx's writings in his attack on ruling ideologies (Tadić, 1983, pp. 316 - 382). Finally, the most innovative and surprising work has examined the "mythology of the revolution" and the "aphoristic, uncritical and a priori attitudes about socialism - its possibilities and institutions" (Milosavlevski, 1983, p. 11). Examining "myths about consciousness concerning the revolution" promises a means of approaching Tito's role in Yugoslavia and the corollary of the "partisan myth" of the war.

Any criticism of Tito's legacy implies discussion about generational change. Older communists, critical of intraparty debate, have blamed the postwar generation for the dysfunctions of "localism" and the variety of "ideologies" within LCY ranks. Such sentiment is typified in the writing of the Croatian communist Stipe Šušteršič who holds that the League suffers from the passing of its "creative minority" within the wartime generation and the "careerist, mediocre, and parvenu mentality" of its successors (Šušteršič, 1985, pp. 47,53). The malaise of ineffectiveness in the face of economic decline likely sharpens anxiety about the new generation. Between 1980 and 1984, average personal income declined 34%, and inflation approached 100%; some communists consider the 1983 stabilization measures to have failed (Stanković, 1985b). Spokesmen acknowledge the relation between dissent and the economic situation. Introducing the League platform for the thirteenth Congress, LCY President Vidoje Žarković acknowledged that "the

unfavorable economic situation and [the League's] slowness in dealing with accumulated problems... gave heart to all those who act from antisocialist and anti-self-management positions" (Žarković, 1985, p. 16). Challenges to the regime's legitimacy from without are easily identified and condemned, but Žarković was at a loss to explain the "contradictions, problems, and obscurities" arising from within the LCY in its action and discussion.

Surely, a source of ineffectiveness lies in the conflict between the interests of individual republican and provincial leaderships with respect to one another and with respect to the needs of the Federation. The platform for the thirteenth Congress recognized a "basic conflict between the working class and the alienated holders of economic and political power who control surplus value" (*Platform*, 1985, p. 25). League documents have interpreted the relevance of "democratization" to mean greater discussion and mobilization through the Socialist Alliance, improvements in local assemblies, and the federal delegate system, as well as broader involvement in personnel (cadre) appointments (*Borba*, 1985). Democratization does not entail a revision of decision making within the LCY itself. A Central Committee Plenum of July 30, 1985, reaffirmed the League's commitment to democratic centralism, threatening the expulsion for those acting contrary to adopted policy positions (Stanković, 1985a). Thus it is not surprising that any question of the League's central role in political life, as Neca Jovanov suggests in a recent work, has been dismissed as a prescription for "anarchy" (Bošković, 1985, p. 416).

PRAXIS RECIDIVUS?

"Democratization" in Yugoslavia may be approached in various ways. To minimize its distinctiveness, one might find parallels in earlier abortive phases of Yugoslav liberalism. To accentuate its distinctiveness (or disgrace) is to emphasize the institutional possibilities brought on by the death of Yugoslavia's immediate post war leadership. To an extent, both views find comparative reflection in a Yugoslav equivalent of "de-Stalinization" or "de-Maoization," that is, a kind of "de-Titoization" without criticism of Tito. I suspect that the significance of the movement may best be understood by

reconsidering some aspects of the *Praxis* period. Several assumptions of recent ideological change in Yugoslavia originated in the *Praxis* period and contributed an important dimension to the meaning of "democratization" in Yugoslavia today. First, the use of theory as a means of criticizing institutional arrangements is implicit in both periods, although it is also a means of political struggle within the party since 1980. Second is the renunciation of ideological monopoly by leading political figures. The *Praxis* group pretended to instruct the League from the outside, while theories for "democratization" have been put forward by younger or academic League members without major responsibility. Third, the concern over "alienation" bridges the two periods. While discussion about the "young Marx" of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* amounted to a central tenet of *Praxis*, the current theorists favoring democratization assume greater involvement of Yugoslav citizens, representing a necessary step in overcoming the alienation created by the economic crisis. Unlike the *Praxis* philosophers, the current theorists have challenged their opponents in the League. The deeper and disturbing question concerns the ultimate compatibility of democracy in its conventional sense and socialism in any sense. More exactly, as Oskar Gruenwald describes the dilemma, how can Marxist humanism avoid remaining "hostage to anti-humanist, dogmatic, and totalitarian aspects of Marx's *Weltanschauung*" (1983, p. 299).

NOTES

¹The first scholarly attention to the debate may be found in Ramet (1980). Subsequent works from Yugoslavia cited in the body of the paper will demonstrate the continuing nature of the "democratization" theme since 1980.

²For example, a closed session of the Yugoslav assembly of July 2-3, 1984, endorsed the government's central role in all foreign economic transactions. An account of the meeting in Stankovic (1983) suggests some unusual efforts at discipline on the part of the Federal Executive.

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