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OVERVIEW

1. Old Solutions to New Problems in Yugoslavia?

Summary: As Yugoslavia's internal situation grows increasingly worse, some people are calling for a return to solutions from earlier times.

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Some strange signals have been coming out of Yugoslavia in recent days about how to deal with the multitude of problems confronting the leadership. For the last eight years, if not longer, the country has been plagued by what is often termed "the crisis." Among its components is the political paralysis arising from the 1974 constitution, which underscored the predominance of the party while reinforcing the rights of the six republics and two autonomous regions, thereby effectively establishing rule by eight separate parties pursuing their own respective concerns. High on the list of national political difficulties are the seemingly insoluble Kosovo imbroglio, in which Serbian and Albanian interests appear irreconcilable, and the basic question of the most effective balance between central and republican powers and interests, which has bedeviled the country since the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was established in 1918. Added to this are a national debt and triple-digit inflation, both of Latin American proportions, and an ever-declining standard of living.

By the beginning of the decade it had become obvious to most observers of Yugoslav affairs at home and abroad that matters could not continue as they had. Tito died in 1980; and the riots in Kosovo the following year proved that he, whom the British historian A. J. P. Taylor once dubbed "the last of the Hapsburgs," had been little more successful than any of his predecessors among the rulers of southeastern Europe in decisively "solving the national question," if such a solution exists at all. The slogan put forward by the LCY, "After Tito--Tito!" sounded hollow, if not absurd. Meanwhile, the economic situation seemed regularly to go from bad to worse, the remedies offered proved ineffective, the promise of a decent standard of living that had underlain the Titoist claim to legitimacy was eroded, and there were impatient calls throughout society for something to be done.

To date, however, the leadership has been able to offer little more than words. This state of affairs reflects the divisions in the LCY; but more fundamentally it reveals the system's inability to reform itself radically by introducing not only a market economy but also a political structure truly responsive and accountable to public opinion. The old leaders continue to dominate political life; and special meetings, be it last year's plenum on Kosovo or last month's special party
conference on "the crisis," produce little but long-winded documents bristling with meaningless expressions such as "we must" and "it must be that."

Old Ghosts? In short, the authorities seemed to recognize that something was wrong and needed to be corrected; but they were unwilling or unable to tamper with the fundamentals of the system and hence could offer only lip-service to reform. Amid this setting, however, some voices have been raised that seem to offer solutions from the past to the problems of the present. At the party conference, for example, the Serbian party leader Slobodan Milosevic referred to the "Yugoslav people" (instead of using the usual formulation "peoples and nationalities of Yugoslavia") and otherwise, too, seemed to argue for the "unitary" approach of treating the country as one and indivisible, which the non-Serbs generally regard as a veiled form of Serbian domination of the other nationalities. In effect, Milosevic was distancing himself from the federal approach so successfully promoted by Tito in his rise to power and substituting the "unitary" philosophy of the royal dictatorship proclaimed by King Alexander on 6 January 1929.

Another, and at least as bizarre, throwback to the past emerged in May with rumors that some elements in the military leadership had sought to stage some sort of "coup" to "restore order" in Slovenia. This republic is the most Westernized of the six, having been linked for roughly 900 years with what is now Austria and being closely tied culturally, socially, and economically to Western Europe—and to Austria, West Germany, and Italy in particular. Its press, especially the publications aimed at young people, reflects this influence; and the youth periodical Mladina has been particularly iconoclastic, most nobly toward the military, which is accustomed to being considered above criticism.

The authorities issued unconvincing denials that there had been any plans for a coup. Then, in late May and early June, two journalists connected with Mladina and a sergeant major were arrested for allegedly having divulged military secrets. As Tanjug's report of June 3 put it: "On 31 May, the agencies of the Ljubljana city secretariat of internal affairs detained [the journalist] Janez Jansa and, after informative talks, filed a criminal charge against him . . . ."

It is not clear where all this will lead, but the use of police or even military measures to crush the spirit of dissent in Yugoslavia's most progressive republic with the most reformist party leadership of any of the eight does not bode well. "Unitary" formulas and Stalinist methods seem ill-suited for solving what is a fundamental structural problem of a system that has long reached the limits of its possibilities.

Patrick Moore
THE PARTY CONFERENCE

2. A Preview of the First Conference of the LCY*

Summary: From May 29 through 31 the League of Communists of Yugoslavia will hold its first conference in an effort to regain its diminishing influence and find solutions to the country's pressing problems.

* * *

The First Conference of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia will take place from May 29 through 31 at the Sava Convention Center in Belgrade. The 786 delegates will discuss 3 specific issues: economic, political, and party reform. The conference comes at a time when the Yugoslav public is making it increasingly clear that it regards the country's leadership as inept. The leadership, for its part, hopes that the conference will help restore public confidence in it and provide the impulse for the sweeping reforms needed to pull Yugoslavia out of its worst economic and political crisis in 40 years.

Background. The idea for the conference originated with local and republican party organizations, which considered that the decisions reached at numerous party plenums and at the last party congress in June 1986 had not been properly implemented. Proposals for an extraordinary congress of the LCY were repeatedly rejected, however, by leading party officials as being too expensive and difficult to organize. It was also claimed that it would come too soon after the last, 13th LCY congress in June 1986 and provide an implicit challenge to the party program laid down then, when solemn pledges had been made that the political and economic crisis would be resolved and that the working class would be given more political power and a better standard of living.

What changed the economic and political scene was the uncovering in mid-August of the $1 billion financial scandal involving the Bosnian agroindustrial conglomerate Agrokomerc. It then became apparent to most party officials that, if not an extraordinary congress, then at least some sort of a conference was in order. The Agrokomerc scandal shook Yugoslavia's financial and political systems; it led to the resignation of the Yugoslav State Vice President, Hamdija Pozderac, in early September; and by the end of the year it had prompted the resignation of hundreds of party, government, banking, and industrial officials.

At the 10th plenum of the LCY CC on 25 September 1987 the party decided to convene a conference to take place in January. Some party leaders, for example, Radovan Radonjic, a Montenegrin member of the LCY CC who is president of the party's Commission on Ideological and Theoretical Work, wanted the conference to

* This paper was written on 27 May 1988.
take place earlier, in mid-December 1987. The conference was finally agreed upon at the 11th plenary session of the LCY CC on December 7 and 8. Although a definite date was not fixed, it was tentatively scheduled for late March 1988.

After the 13th CC plenum on February 28, however, it was announced that the conference would be postponed until early May, because the party needed more time to coordinate an agenda and the republics and autonomous provinces needed to convene regional party conferences to elect delegates to the national conference. The plenum also adopted a discussion document for the conference, which was published in most major Yugoslav dailies on March 11. The document is divided into three parts and twenty-one points. It says that

The LCY Conference is aimed at helping to clarify ideological dilemmas and to remove the causes of vacillation and resistance to the implementation of the resolutions of the 13th LCY Congress and Long-Term Economic Program of Economic Stabilization [adopted in July 1983]. It is expected to provide the main direction for bringing about changes within the LCY and society as a whole . . . and to strengthen the party's ideological and political unity.1

Among the topics on the agenda are party unity in overcoming the present crisis (whatever that may prove to mean in actual practice, given the deep national and other divisions within the LCY); the possible revision of the party's program, which was published in 1958; and the endorsement of an unhampered market economy, together with attendant changes in the constitution. Party leaders have recently been concerned at the slow and inconsistent progress that has been made in introducing economic reforms and have called for the speedy end to the politicization of the economy and for the separation of the party from the state. Speaking to students, intellectuals, and local party officials at the Split Marxist Center, Stipe Suvar (a Croatian member of the LCY CC Presidium and a candidate for the post of party president, which is to be decided in late June) said that the party had to change, abandon its political monopoly, and stop "interfering in the day-to-day running of the government." Suvar made a similar statement last January that was roundly applauded by regional party officials.2

The Party's "Last Chance." The Yugoslav press appears to be counting on the conference to bring about radical changes in the country's economic and political system. Some editorials have warned, however, that the party must now assert itself if it really wishes to remain in control of the reforms that are being openly advocated by both the public and party and state leaders.

The Belgrade weekly Novosti 8 commented in early March that the party conference would be "the last chance for the party to restore its prestige" and for the party leadership to "secure
its legitimacy." The weekly predicted that the conference would either "mark a definitive split between the leadership and the base or restore confidence in the LCY and its leaders." Referring to the growing swell of demands for radical changes to the system, the commentary said that "the genie has been let out of the bottle and cannot be returned to it until it has completed its job." If the conference were held in the same spirit, it said, it would "certainly have the significance and impact of a special party congress."³

On May 5 the LCY CC Presidium announced the official dates of the conference. The Belgrade daily Politika headlined the story on the front page of its May 6 edition and said that the conference would "not have to plan ahead for the 21st century but deal . . . [rather] with the current crisis." The agenda for the conference says that all the sessions will be "conducted in an open and democratic manner," which prompted Politika to predict that "the demands of [delegates to the] conference will be more radical than any of the proposals put up for discussion."

The Delegates. In communist countries party conferences take place between party congresses. Unlike congresses, which discuss a large number of issues, have broad powers to make personnel and party rule changes, and are attended by at least 1,500 delegates, conferences focus on only 2 or 3 issues and are attended by fewer delegates. Conferences are also largely advisory in nature and are intended to help the LCY CC deal with problems that arise during the congresses, which are held every four years. According to party figures published in December 1987, the forthcoming conference will be attended by 784 delegates. Bosnia-Herzegovina will send 125 delegates; Croatia, 111; Macedonia, 78; Montenegro, 61; Serbia, 161; Slovenia, 69; Kosovo, 54; Vojvodina, 76; the Yugoslav Peoples' Army, 46; and party cells within federal agencies, 3.⁴ It has now been announced that there will be 785 delegates, however, although it is not clear whom the additional delegate will represent. Some 420 of the delegates were elected by local party cells; 165 were from the republican, provincial, and army CCs; and 200 were members of the LCY. Yugoslavia's population is more than 23,000,000, and as of mid-1987 there were 2,099,613 party members.⁶

In terms of nationality, among 585 elected delegates there will be 210 Serbs, 82 Croats, 60 "Yugoslavs," 50 Macedonians, 49 Slovenes, 47 Montenegrins, 40 Moslems, 29 Albanians, 9 Hungarians, 3 Turks, 2 Romanians, 2 Slovaks, 1 Russian, and 1 Vlach. Among the delegates are 134 workers, 60 engineers and technicians, 84 enterprise directors, and 22 people from the agrarian sector. The delegates include 134 women and 56 people under the age of 27.⁶
Press coverage will be extensive; 387 reporters and photographers representing 83 domestic and foreign newspapers and wire services have been accredited. A spokesman for the Yugoslav Ministry of Information said on May 20 that the conference would be closed to foreign reporters and that only photographers would be allowed in the Sava Convention Center; but a Tanjug release four days later made no mention of the ministry's announcement and said that the "the work of the conference will be covered by 387 domestic and foreign correspondents."

Conclusion. The fact that the LCY is holding the conference shows that it is trying hard to unite itself, institute reforms, and then set about remedying the country's situation. On numerous occasions the party has admitted that it is disunited on all fronts and that it is highly bureaucratized and divided according to regional interests. With each gathering of the party, the cracks in the Yugoslav economic and political system widen.

For several years the party has spoken of the sacrifices that must be endured by all Yugoslavs. At the last major gathering of the LCY, the 13th party congress in June 1986, it was agreed that the party would continue to act in "Tito's revolutionary spirit and defend his achievements." The situation has only grown worse, however; and it has become increasingly apparent that many Yugoslavs have lost their patience with the country's leadership. If the forthcoming party conference fails to agree on a practical program of reform, the situation will only worsen and discontent will become more widespread. If the conference endorses the economic, political, party, and constitutional reforms that have been proposed, however, it will certainly be seen as a watershed in the history of post-Tito Yugoslavia.

Milan Andrejevich

1 Komunist (Belgrade), 11 March 1988.
2 Politika (Belgrade), 21 May 1988; Vecernje Novosti (Belgrade), 26 January 1988.
3 Novosti B (Belgrade), 10 March 1988.
4 Vjesnik (Zagreb), 4 December 1987.
3. An Assessment of the Party Conference

Summary: The League of Communists' three-day conference was an attempt to reunite the party and lend support for economic and political reform. It seems that despite the party's show of unity, there are deep divisions within it. This suggests that the country's political paralysis is likely to continue.

* * *

The First Conference of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was held from May 29 through 31. A 38-page report issued for the conference stated that "the party is capable of seeking and finding a way out of the economic and political crisis" and that economic reform measures would be in place by the end of the year; the final report is expected to be released at the next CC plenum in June. In closing the conference, Bosko Krunić, the President of the Central Committee Presidium, urged the party to implement the "necessary changes without delay"; he added that the discussion at the conference had shown that the party was prepared to make those changes and that it had completed its work in accordance with the guidelines drawn up beforehand. What all this will mean in practice, however, is another matter.

The conference produced a stream of accusations and complaints, and numerous remedies for the country's current problems were proposed. Party leaders and many of the delegates spoke frankly about the party's shortcomings and of corruption in the party, the possibility of leadership changes and the party's relinquishment of the monopoly on power, and the need for different opinions to be recognized and for minority as well as majority views to be respected. In practice this means respecting the progressive minority, concentrated mainly in Slovenia and Croatia, as well as the old-line, dogmatic majority of officials and party organizations from the south of the country.

In fact, however, the conference could do no more than resort to self-criticism and finger-pointing, since it had neither the power to enact measures nor to change top party leaders. Conferences are only empowered to make recommendations that ensure the better coordination of party policies between congresses, which are held every four years.

The conference had 809 participants (785 delegates and 24 guests of officials from the party, state and federal government). The delegates were divided into three working groups on the themes set forth at the party's 13th plenum on February 28; these were led by members of the party's Presidium. Five regional party conferences—in the republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and
Slovenia—were held in preparation for the LCY gathering. In the autonomous provinces, conferences are planned for late June in Kosovo and for November in Vojvodina; and the republic of Serbia has not set a date.

Some 400 Yugoslav reporters and 150 foreign journalists were accredited to cover the event. The foreign press corps was not allowed into the conference center, however, but had access to closed-circuit television coverage of some of the sessions and to the state-run wire service Tanjug.

A Divided Party. From what was said by the participants in the conference, in the party report, and by Krunić in his closing speech, it seems that the party remains deeply divided over the pressing issue of what practical measures are needed to pull the country out of its worst economic, political, and ideological crisis in the postwar era. Moreover, many of the issues raised by some of the party's leaders and many of the delegates had already been discussed at numerous central committee plenums, both at the national and regional levels. This raises doubts as to whether the conference will have achieved more than simply repeating what has been said many times before.

Paradox and confusion proved to be the order of the day. Recognizing their lack of any real power, delegates repeatedly recommended the convening of an extraordinary party congress in order to institute a reform package and make changes in the party's leadership. This recommendation was made despite the fact that it ran counter to the party's view that an extraordinary congress would only divide the party further. It was eventually announced at the conference that there would, indeed, be no extraordinary congress because, it was claimed by Ivan Brigić—a Bosnian representative in the CC Presidium—the convening of a congress now would cast doubt on the achievements of the current conference. Krunić said that the conference had been a success and, rather than calling for an extraordinary congress, urged "extraordinary efforts to ensure that the program of the 13th party congress and the work of the first party conference" be successfully completed.²

Assailing Party Leaders. The most striking feature of the conference is that for the first time in communist Yugoslavia several party and government officials were criticized by name for leading the country into its present crisis. The party leadership in general was criticized for its ineptitude, toleration of corruption, and abuse of privileges; these are accusations that have frequently been made in recent years and printed in the state-run media. The senior officials named were Krunić; Milanko Renovica, who was President of the party in 1986–87; and Federal Secretary for Internal Affairs Dobroslav Culafić.
Krunić suggested that there should be a radical purge of party members; he added that "indifference to thievery, immorality, and dishonesty is not permissible" in the LCY. Many delegates, however, called for a complete overhaul of the party, beginning with the party's Presidium.⁴

Zvonimir Hrabar, then President of the Confederation of Trade Unions, demanded that an official investigation be conducted to determine whether Renovica had indeed misappropriated funds by ordering the construction of seaside villas for himself and other party officials at the resort of Neum on the Bosnian-Herzegovinian coast. Recent press reports have linked Renovica, the wife of Prime Minister Branko Mikulić, and several other leading Bosnian party and state leaders with similar shady dealings.⁵

Slobodan Milosevic, the President of the Presidium of the Serbian CC, suggested that if the party had not implemented a complete social reform program by the autumn of this year, "then an extraordinary congress of the party should be called." He went on to say that "either the leadership will fulfill the will of the people or the people will replace it."⁶

Assessment. It seems that the old differences within the party continue and that the LCY cannot produce anything more than vague formulations and empty phrases to deal with a situation that daily goes from bad to worse, despite the leadership's attempts to give the impression that they support reform and their expressed recognition that things cannot go on as they have until now.

The real problem is that economic reforms cannot be implemented without political reforms and the LCY's support for ideologically unpalatable measures, such as the development of a real market economy. In the words of the Slovenian party President Milan Kucan, "economic measures are not enough without political reform." In turn, one of the major obstacles to all reform is the strange combination of the dominant role of the party combined with extreme regional autonomy that has existed in Yugoslavia since the constitution of 1974, which attempted to strengthen both centripetal and centrifugal forces at the same time. This has led to political paralysis and to the de facto existence of eight parties, one for each of the six republics and two autonomous provinces.

Given this lack of unity at the top, it is futile to expect the party to set down a coherent policy, purge its ranks, and provide the firm leadership that was Tito's hallmark. The document produced by the conference is long-winded, vague, and full of jargon and tired expressions such as "we must" and "it must be that." Once again, as at the earlier CC plenum on Kosovo, important and even vital issues were discussed at length; because of the political paralysis, however, hopes that the gathering would produce anything more than phrase-mongering
were disappointed. Moreover, the situation is unlikely to change so long as the system as a whole remains in its present state and popular opinion, although it can be expressed in print and in official bodies, cannot exercise control over the centers of power.

Milan Andrejevich

1 Radio Zagreb, 31 May 1988; Tanjug, 1 June 1988.
2 Ibid.
3 Renovica denied the reported allegations, saying that "They were obviously trying to discredit me politically." Borba (Belgrade), 2 June 1988.
4 Vjesnik (Zagreb), 30 May 1988.
5 Borba, 1 June 1988. Hrabar's term as President of the Confederation of Trade Unions has expired; and Marjan Grozen, a Slovene, was elected his successor on June 2.
6 Vecernje Novosti (Belgrade), 31 May 1988.
4. Milovan Djilas in the Limelight Again

Summary: Milovan Djilas has given his first public lecture in Yugoslavia for nearly 35 years. Before a gathering of students at the University of Maribor, in the republic of Slovenia, Djilas spoke of Tito and the disintegration of the LCY.

* * *

Milovan Djilas, Yugoslavia's most prominent dissident, recently gave his first public lecture in Yugoslavia since he was purged from the party nearly 35 years ago. Djilas spoke before 300 students in a crowded student dormitory at the University of Maribor, the second largest city in the republic of Slovenia. He had been invited by the students to speak on the history of Yugoslav communism since World War II and on pluralism and one-party rule."1

The lecture contained nothing that Djilas had not already said in the Western press on various occasions. What made it noteworthy was that he gave it in public in Yugoslavia, which is also an indication of the politically liberal climate in Slovenia. In March 1987 the student periodical Katedra, which is published in Maribor, carried the first interview with Djilas in a Yugoslav periodical for more than 30 years. The editorial board justified its appearance by stating that, after so many years of being ignored, Djilas should be allowed some say, given his international standing and the role he had played in the establishment of communist Yugoslavia. In the interview Djilas repeated certain facts about his life and praised young Slovenes as "currently the most radical" and the Slovenian press as "more probing than in Belgrade"2 --observations with which most Western observers of Yugoslav affairs would readily agree.

In contrast, the Belgrade authorities had temporarily banned the biweekly Intervju for having placed a photograph of Djilas holding his newly acquired passport on the cover of its 22 May 1987 issue. In February 1987 Djilas was granted a passport for the first time in 17 years and since then has traveled to London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Jerusalem, and Washington, D.C. The Belgrade media has also sharply criticized the Maribor authorities for allowing the lecture to take place and labeled it "orchestrated anticommunism with Djilas in the starring role." A Belgrade daily said Djilas "rudely attacked the party, Tito, and [especially] the army." Belgrade television criticized Ljubljana television for broadcasting excerpts of the lecture.3

In March of this year, however, a Belgrade literary biweekly, Knjizevne Novine, published a short story by Djilas, entitled "War," about the execution of a World War II deserter
in the presence of his parents and of peasants retreating from the fighting. The magazine placed Djilas's name on its cover as a contributor. Djilas's book about his experiences during World War II, which was published in the West in 1977 under the title Wartime, will soon be put out by a Belgrade publisher.

On Tito and the Party. Djilas's audience in Maribor roundly applauded him as he spoke of the need to "find compromises through a democratic coalition." He stressed that "the crisis is not in the economy but in the monopolistic position of the party," a phrase heard frequently throughout most of Yugoslavia but particularly in Slovenia. Djilas began his lecture by declaring that "this is my first public speech [in Yugoslavia] in 34 years . . . , and I feel as though I've come from a deadened world into one that is alive and awakening." The remark implicitly praised Slovenia at the expense of Belgrade, where Djilas lives and which the Slovenes tend to regard as the center of a less than liberal line of thinking.

Djilas was questioned during the meeting about Tito and why he had decided to oppose him. In reply, he reiterated his opposition to the privileges enjoyed by the communist leaders and equated the "new class" they constituted with any other political elite; having assumed power, the Communists, he said, had forgotten their former idealism and concentrated on defending their monopoly on power and privileges. Djilas was one of the rare communist leaders who sharply criticized the system while he was still at the height of his power, not, as in many such cases in Eastern Europe, only after falling from grace.

On 16 January 1954 the Central Committee, under Tito's leadership, removed Djilas as the state Vice President, branding him a traitor; his offense had been to point out the contradictions between theory and practice in the country's communist system. Djilas handed in his party membership card of his own accord in the spring of 1954; and his subsequent book, The New Class, has become an internationally recognized classic of communist studies.

Djilas also made clear during his lecture that he still views Tito as an important historical figure whose break with Stalin was a great achievement. He said that Tito "was an authoritarian figure and cannot be erased from history. The revolution and the break with Moscow [June 1948] cannot be erased."

When interviewed by Reuter in May on the eve of the First LCY Conference, Djilas pointed out that the party was living in a "world of illusions"; and he predicted that despite radical demands for reform, the conference would produce "a very long document nobody ever reads." In pessimistic terms, characteristic of Djilas, he stated that "there is no way out
under this system. . . . We will go deeper into the crisis, and the party will continue to disintegrate." Western observers have generally taken the view that the conference did, indeed, produce much phrase-mongering but no clear commitment to long overdue action.

The Party Proposes a Market Economy. Several key points have emerged from the conference that relate to Djilas's assessment of the country's predicament and his calls for an end to the party's monopoly on power. It emerged during the conference that a vast section of the party's ranks and files believe that the party's control over economic affairs should be brought to an end and that party interference was largely to blame for the economic crisis.

In calling for the speedy end to the "politicization of the economy," the conference adopted a 38-page report that included a pledge of support for the recommendations made by the federal government's 33-member Economic Reform Commission, which is headed by Prime Minister Branko Mikulic. On June 1 the proposals were submitted by the government's commission to the Federal Assembly, where a debate will take place sometime in mid-June. The reform package is aimed at shifting the economy toward a more market-oriented system by the end of this year. It calls for the economy to be greatly deregulated, the profit motive to be encouraged, bonds and shares to be introduced, loss-producing state enterprises to be sold off or leased, and private and cooperative forms of ownership to be expanded. Spearheaded by Mikulic's commission, the proposals are the work of 10 working committees involving some 140 experts.

The introduction of a more market-oriented economic system has long been discussed in official circles. Moreover, since the beginning of the year official support for certain radical changes has been steadily gaining momentum; indeed, it seems that opposition to radical economic changes by party, state, or government leaders will increasingly go against the grain of public opinion. The nine-member State Presidency has already given its support to the Economic Reform Commission's work.

Conclusion. The implementation of official proposals for economic and political reforms will remain stalled, however, so long as the party's bureaucracy for exercising control remains intact. Instead of taking any significant action to remedy this problem, the party as a whole reaffirmed during its conference a commitment to the Yugoslav concept of democratic centralism, which is a mixture of adopting policies issued by the LCY CC and of tolerating extreme regional autonomy. Thus, the party remains ambivalent and divided about whether to diminish its role in the affairs of the country.

Nevertheless, the party's leadership now seems to have implicitly acknowledged the validity of much of Djilas's assessment of the negative effects of the party's monopoly on
power. His prediction long ago that the only solution to the country's deep-rooted problems would be a complete democratization of its politics and society, beginning with the establishment of an alternative socialist party to challenge to the LCY, may also prove correct. Meanwhile, opposition to the party's monopoly has gained momentum, and the open expression of diverse and dissenting views has become an increasingly common feature of Yugoslav society. At the same time, however, Yugoslavia is very far indeed from establishing political pluralism or what Djilas calls a "democratic confederation"; the possibility of such a development, however, should not be ruled out altogether.

Milan Andrejevich

1 Reuter, 2 June 1988.

2 Katedra (Maribor), March 1987, no. 9.

3 Politika (Belgrade), 5 June 1988; Radio Belgrade, 4 June 1988, 10:00 P.M.

4 Knjizevne Novine (Belgrade), 1 March 1988, 40th anniversary edition of the official publication of the Serbian Writers' Association.


6 Vecernje Novosti (Belgrade), 2 June 1988.
5. Was the Yugoslav Army Prepared To Quell Dissent in Slovenia?

Summary: Mladina, the controversial weekly of the Slovenian Socialist Youth organization, has reported that there was a plan allowing for the Yugoslav Peoples' Army to take action against reformist elements in Slovenia. The Slovenian government has denied this.

* * *

In the latest edition of the Slovenian Socialist Youth weekly Mladina it was alleged that there were plans for the mass arrest of Slovenian journalists, intellectuals, and officials by the police and for the intervention of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army in the event of public demonstrations protesting those arrests. It was reported that military officials had demanded that the Slovene Minister of Internal Affairs do something to reverse the trend toward "counterrevolution" in Slovenia. The magazine also published a statement from students demanding that Slovenia's top leaders announce whether there were any such plans for mass arrests.1

On May 20 the Ministry of Information issued a statement denying the existence of such plans. It admitted, however, that the security forces in Slovenia had been in touch with some of the republic's leaders about the current situation, which was regarded by some party, government, and military officials in Belgrade and Ljubljana as having gotten out of control.2

According to Mladina, the contingency plan for intervention in Yugoslavia's most developed and Westernized republic was thwarted by Stane Dolanc, the Slovene representative in the nine-member State Presidency and a member of Tito's old guard, who on May 15 became Yugoslavia's State Vice President, and Milan Kucan, President of the Slovenian Central Committee Presidium and an ex officio member of the LCY CC Presidium. Mladina claimed that both men had been notified about the plan by Slovenian security agencies. The magazine also published an open letter from the youth organizations of the Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor. Both organizations demanded "a clear and detailed answer" about the rumors from Kucan and from Slovenia's Minister of Internal Affairs, Tomaz Eržl. Most Yugoslav dailies carried excerpts of the open letter on May 20.3

Mladina's claims will undoubtedly rekindle the controversy it stirred up in February and March of this year when it denounced the army as "an undemocratic institution always ready to stage a military coup" and described Admiral Branko Mamula,
who was Yugoslavia's Minister of Defense from May 1982 through May 1988, as "a merchant of death." Articles criticizing the army have been frequent in recent months and have also appeared in several other youth publications (Katedra and Tribuna) and the Ljubljana weekly Teleks.

Whether or not the rumors are true, the latest accusations against the military authorities are a further indication of just how volatile the political situation is in multinational Yugoslavia. Moreover, it seems that there are those in the military who think that they can successfully apply strong-arm or even Stalinist methods in dealing with the complex problems of the republic. Who are these men, whom do they represent, and how typical of professional military leaders is their thinking? This latest controversy involving an alleged "military takeover" came shortly before the Conference of the League of Communists (May 29-31), which was to discuss party, political, and economic reforms.

Mladina's Claims. The weekly claimed that the plan for military intervention had been devised by Yugoslavia's Military Council, which described it as "a defense against a special war" of subversive action against the government. The Military Council operates within the Federal Secretariat for Defense and is responsible for state security; it also advises and makes proposals to the Secretariat. The magazine said that the district military commander of Ljubljana, Lieutenant General Svetozar Visnjic, a Serb, had been designated by the Military Council to coordinate an investigation by leading officials of the Slovenian Ministry of Internal Affairs to determine whether the Slovenian party and government were capable of handling the republic's affairs.

According to Mladina, the Military Council also recommended that the Ljubljana District Military Command be on the alert for any public demonstrations, strikes, or boycotts in the wake of the mass arrest of dissident Slovenian journalists, intellectuals, and some government officials, which was to be carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. According to the open letter from the student organizations, the plan also provided, "according to some versions," for "the liquidation" of some people. Both the letter and the magazine claimed that the Military Council had been prevented from putting the plan to the republic's party leadership by the "energetic intervention of Kucan and Dolanc." It also said that there was sufficient evidence to prove that such a plan had been discussed and that at the last moment "Slovenia escaped a military coup by a whisker."

In a previous issue of Mladina, which was temporarily banned by the Ljubljana public prosecutor, it was claimed that at a secret session of the LCY CC Presidium on March 29 Kucan had informed his colleagues of the Military Council's plan without properly notifying civilian leaders. The article was
banned, because it had revealed "state secrets jeopardizing national security." According to Mladina, Kucan had received his information from an earlier meeting of high-ranking military leaders who had discussed plans for the military's intervention in Slovenia without notifying Yugoslavia's federal leaders.4

The Official Denial. In response to Mladina's allegations, the Slovenian government and CC and General Visnjic issued statements denying the existence of such plans. The Slovenian Ministry of Information admitted, however, that the Military Council had met on March 25 to discuss "very sensitive issues related to the concept of territorial security and the army," which had been criticized in several Slovenian periodicals. Throughout March, numerous party, government, and veteran organizations condemned the media attacks and accused Slovenian publications and Slovenian dissidents in general of having been backed by a foreign conspiracy to overthrow the country's government.

The Slovenian government's statement went on to say that "there was no discussion at the meeting about some plan of action for defense against a special war in Slovenia." It said that the meeting had simply discussed recent press attacks on the army and that the proceedings "had been reported by the press through Tanjug."6 The statement did not, however, deny outright that military intervention had been discussed. It even said that the question raised by the Military Council in early March of the possible existence of "a special war" in Slovenia had been discussed on March 25 and the Ministry of Internal Affairs had concluded that they did not "have at their disposal data that would justify these assessments or that subversive forces" were supporting the editorial boards of several Slovenian periodicals. According to the statement, the Ljubljana District Military Command and the Ministry of Internal Affairs "considered that such assessments [of military intervention] would have a detrimental effect on the political situation in Slovenia."

According to the statement, the Slovenian CC and State Presidency had explicitly disagreed with some of the Military Council's assessments. After a plenary session of the Slovenian CC on May 20, Kucan repeated much of what had been said in the statement of March 18; he said in the context of Mladina's claims that it was "in someone's interest to stir up everything once again." He said that at a time when "everyone expected the thing to be over" and every "effort is being made toward economic and political reform, it is in someone's interest to turn things around."6

According to the Belgrade daily Politika Ekspres,7 the government statement only fueled speculation that the army had, indeed, been planning to intervene in Slovenian affairs. The paper said that the statement was "highly unconvincing" and that it did "not even begin to answer a provocation as gross as that
of the Slovenian youth magazine"; moreover, it had failed to quell the rumors by not having "clearly stated that absolutely no scenario for military intervention was drawn up in March." The Slovenian government and party leadership, it said, had failed to answer Mladina's charges; and this lack of action "was not accidental." General Visnjic, however, has dismissed the rumors as "nonsense and a fabrication."  

Can the Army Rule? In Tito's lifetime, the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (YPA) had an important role in maintaining political stability. Tito threatened to use the army against Croatia's "nationalistic and chauvinistic" party and state leaders in 1971, and as a result the army enjoyed political prestige as the party's main instrument in preserving its power. Some people assumed that the army would replace Tito as a symbol of the country's unity. By and large, since Tito's death the army has remained the only centralized organization in the country; it is no longer considered a political arbiter, however. Although the army's assistance in the handling of the Kosovo crisis was generally well received in the spring of 1981, the army has never regained the political stature it enjoyed in Tito's lifetime.

In recent years the army has, in fact, become a frequent target of criticism, particularly among young Yugoslavs; Slovenian youth organizations have accused the army of becoming the "policemen and occupiers" of the republic. Young Yugoslavs are showing increasingly less interest in the military as a profession. The strained relations between young people and the army are becoming increasingly apparent; for example, the army weekly Narodna Armija announced that, for the first time since the introduction some 40 years ago of Youth Day, the army would not be taking part in this year's festivities.  

In any event, Mladina's allegations are likely to prove unsettling for some time to come, in that they suggest that some professional soldiers still believe a Stalinist approach can be used to deal with the increasingly complex political, economic, and social situation in the country's most developed and Westernized republic. This constitutes yet another variable in the already hopelessly intricate Yugoslav political equation.

Milan Andrejevich

1 Mladina (Ljubljana), 20 May 1988, no. 20.
2 Vjesnik (Zagreb), 21 May 1988.
4 Mladina, 6 May 1988, no. 19.
7  Politika Ekspres (Belgrade), 23 May 1988.
6. **Yugoslavia Builds Up Air Force with MIG-29 Fighter-bombers**

**Summary:** Yugoslavia has publicly revealed the latest addition to its weapons arsenal: one of supposedly sixteen Soviet-built MIG-29 supersonic fighter-bombers. The introduction of the MIG-29s is part of the modernization of the country's air defense system.

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The Yugoslav Air Force recently put on display the latest addition to its arsenal, one of supposedly sixteen Soviet-built MIG-29 supersonic fighter-bombers, which are the most advanced Soviet warplanes in production. The MIG-29s will fill some gaps between the retirement of many of Yugoslavia's older planes and the introduction of domestically built supersonic aircraft. Yugoslavia joins Syria and India as the only known foreign countries operating MIG-29s. Some 300 MIG-29s are used by the Soviet Air Force.

The MIG-29 was displayed on May 15 at an air show at the Batajnica military air base, some 10 kilometers northwest of Belgrade. The air show was part of the celebrations to commemorate Yugoslav Air Force Day on May 21. According to the Socialist Alliance daily Borba, about 70,000 people attended the show (the Belgrade tabloid Vecernje Novosti put the figure at 100,000). Vecernje Novosti noted that this was the first public acknowledgment that the Yugoslav military had bought the planes from the Soviet Union. The MIG-29 was also displayed at the 12th International Air Show in Zagreb on May 21 and 22.

On the eve of CPSU's General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's five-day state visit to Yugoslavia from March 14 through 18, it was disclosed that Yugoslavia had purchased 16 MIG-29s from the Soviets. Rumor had it that the Soviets had given the Yugoslavs some of the planes in partial payment of $1.5 billion owed to Yugoslavia because of the imbalance of trade between the two countries. Yugoslav officials denied that the government wanted Soviet military imports to pay off the deficit, however; and it was specifically stated on another occasion that two MIG-29s had been bought in 1987, both of which had been converted into two-seater training aircraft.

The MIG-29 is capable of reaching a top speed of 2,400 kilometers an hour and an altitude of 18,000 meters. It is 17.32 meters long and has a wingspan of 11.36 meters. It is capable of carrying 6 assorted bombs and missiles weighing 3,000 kilograms and is mounted with a 30-millimeter cannon. It has a combat radius of 1,150 kilometers.

**Upgrading the Country's Air Defense.** Within the next decade Yugoslavia plans to retire some 140 MIG-21s and Soviet helicopters as well as locally manufactured aircraft, such as
the Galeb-2. At the moment the MIG-21s are the backbone of the Yugoslav air-defense system. However, in view of the successful integration of domestically produced ground-support planes, such as the subsonic Super-Galeb G4 and the Orao series fighters, and plans for the domestic production of a supersonic fighter-bomber by the mid-1990s, the MIG-21s are becoming outdated for Yugoslavia's strategic and defense purposes.

In a recent interview with the army weekly Narodna Armija, the Commander of the Air Force, Colonel General Anton Tus, spoke of the importance of integrating the MIG-29s into the current air-defense system and said that pilots and technicians had recently completed maintenance and tactical training with the jet at the air academy outside the Adriatic port of Zadar. Tus also said that the introduction of the MIG-29 was of "great operational and technical importance for Yugoslavia and its defense." The pilot of the plane at the Belgrade and Zagreb air shows, Major Hajrudin Hodzic, confirmed what Tus had said. At present some 12 Yugoslav pilots have been trained to fly the plane.³

Since Yugoslavia is a nonaligned country, it has largely had to rely for its defense on domestically produced weapons. Although Yugoslavia has received arms and technology from the West and the Soviet Union, it is a major producer of weapons and exports arms and military supplies worth about $2 billion—about a third of its production—to 67 countries, most of which are nonaligned. About 240 Yugoslav enterprises are engaged in arms production.⁴

Two years ago the Belgrade weekly NIN reported that Yugoslavia would be producing its own supersonic fighter, the Novi Avion Orao. NIN said that the new aircraft would be "technically the most modern and would incorporate the latest world achievements" in the aerospace industry.⁵ No further details were given until December 1987, when Tus confirmed that Yugoslavia was planning to build a new jet that would "raise the scientific and technological level of the entire country." The supersonic fighter is expected to be put into service by 1995 and the prototype to be ready by 1993.⁶

Yugoslavia's lack of technical expertise and hard currency will, however, force it to look abroad for technical and financial assistance with this project. Several American, French, and British firms have shown interest in manufacturing parts of the plane; and it is possible that the production of the jet may be paid for through joint-venture agreements and the subsequent export of the finished product. It would not be the first time that the Yugoslavs had looked abroad for assistance in developing military aircraft: in the mid-1970s Yugoslavia and Romania collaborated on the production of the Orao supersonic fighter; the project never got off the ground, however, because of the inadequacies of Romanian industry and because it was too expensive.
It is likely that Third World countries would be interested in buying a Yugoslav-manufactured supersonic fighter for the same reasons that they have bought other Yugoslav weaponry (for example, Gazela SA-342 combat helicopters, M-84 tanks, Jastreb fighters, minisubmarines, hand-held antiarmor missiles, and various types of rescue and combat patrol boats): because Yugoslavia's nonaligned status means that there are no political strings attached to buying weapons from it and because Yugoslav weaponry is relatively cheap.

Plans have also been announced for the joint production of multipurpose turbojet helicopters by civilian and military manufacturers for both civilian and military use. The 1,700-horse power helicopter will be manufactured in Belgrade, largely by the Ivo Lola Ribar enterprise, which specializes in the development and production of robots, lasers, and sophisticated helicopter technology. Altogether 43 Yugoslav enterprises as well as a West German aeronautical firm and Rolls Royce of Great Britain will participate in the project. The first prototype will cost about $1,000,000 and is expected to be finished by the end of 1989. The USA, Brazil, and some Middle Eastern countries have already expressed interest in buying the helicopter.7

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1 Politika (Belgrade), 16 May 1988; Borba (Belgrade), 16 May 1988.
4 Danas (Zagreb), 29 March 1988.
5 NIN (Belgrade), 19 May 1985.

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