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Changes in the Attitudes of Slovenian Communist Leaders toward Yugoslav Statehood in the Late 1980s

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Abstract

This study examines how Slovenian communist leadership's views on the Yugoslav state framework evolved in the late 1980s. To this end, the actions of Slovenian leaders during the procedure of amending the Yugoslav constitution and the discussions in the Slovenian party headquarters on the subject of relations in the federation are analyzed in detail. On the background of growing nationalism in public opinion in Slovenia, the communist leaders of the republic put themselves in an increasingly antagonistic position vis-à-vis the federal center. During 1987, they rejected several proposals for changes to the Yugoslav constitution, which they had initially agreed to based on an incorrect assessment of Slovenian public opinion. Then, in the summer of 1988, in the atmosphere of the Slovenian Spring, local leaders began to favor the weakening of the ties between the Yugoslav republics and redefinition of Yugoslavia as a confederation. Simultaneously, Slovenian politicians were also increasingly questioning some primary assumptions about the existence of the common state and radicalized their political methods in terms of promoting Slovenian interests at the federal level.

Keywords: Slovenia; Yugoslavia; communists; statehood; nationalism

Introduction

The last period of existence of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) after the death of long-time President Tito in 1980 was characterized by a deepening economic and political crisis. The ruling communists unsuccessfully struggled with serious economic problems while disagreements between the political leaderships of the republics and autonomous provinces in the highly decentralized federation were progressively growing, with the authority of Tito as the chief arbiter no longer present. The political elites, particularly in Serbia and Slovenia, also had to respond to the growing activity of nonconformist activists, a large number of whom were nationalistically oriented. Against this backdrop, the nationalist accent in the actions of the political elites was growing. As a result, the relations of politicians within the nominally united League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) in the second half of the 1980s were very nervous and gradually becoming openly confrontational.

This study focuses on the changes in the attitudes of the Slovenian communist elite toward the issues of organization of the Yugoslav federation. The objective of the study is to complement the existing literature on the processes of democratization and Slovenian independence in the late 1980s (e.g., Repe 2001, 2015; Pesek 2007; Lusa 2012) by providing a detailed insight into the

changing considerations of Slovenian political leaders on how firm the Yugoslav state framework should be. The study can also contribute to an assessment of the factors leading to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Scholars who are addressing this complex question have emphasized various aspects, such as the effects of internal economic disparities (Lampe 2002), external pressures exerted by Western creditors during the Yugoslav economic crisis in the 1980s (Woodward 1995), or the lack of democratic legitimacy of the communist regime (Ramet 2002). When it comes to the role played by political elites, they have at times been portrayed as deliberate inciters of ethnonational passions to maintain their hold on power during the transitional period (Goati 1997; Gagnon 2006). Conversely, Dejan Jović (2009) constructed an original story of the unintentional undermining of Yugoslav unity by the communists due to their radical ideology of state withering away in favor of self-management. However, these accounts often lack a detailed analysis of the activities of Yugoslav communist elites in the 1980s, primarily because relevant archival sources from that period have been only gradually becoming accessible. Furthermore, the literature on Yugoslavia's breakup has predominantly focused on the role of Slobodan Milošević and Serbian nationalism, often viewing other nationalisms (Croatian, Slovenian, Albanian) as defensive responses to the former (e.g., Ramet 2002). It is worthy to examine this kind of interpretation in light of the day-to-day actions of local politicians during the critical period.

The years 1986–1988 are examined here as the period preceding the unilateral interventions of Serbia and Slovenia in the existing constitutional arrangements.¹ In doing so, the study seeks to elaborate on the role of the Slovenian political leadership in the breakup of the SFRY. At the same time, it traces the process of identity transformation of Slovenian leaders, at the beginning of which they were unequivocal advocates of Slovenia's continued involvement in Yugoslavia as a socialist federation and at the end of which they were already advocating a weakening of their republic's ties to the common state. This change was epitomized above all by Milan Kučan, who during 1986–1989 was chairman of the League of Communists of Slovenia (LCS, part of the LCY). Immediately afterwards, he was democratically elected to the highest state office in Slovenia (chairman of the Presidency, later president), a position he held up until 2002.

The topic will be discussed in two parts. The first part deals with the 1986–1988 procedure of amendments to the Yugoslav constitution, more specifically the activities of the Slovenian leading communists in this procedure. The focus will be on the organization of relations in the federation, especially in the crucial year 1987, whereas the changes in the economic system, which were also the subject of the same package of constitutional amendments, will be left out here. The second part of the study examines broader views of Slovenian leaders on the overall nature of the Yugoslav state framework. Transcripts of meetings and accompanying materials from the highest party and state bodies of Slovenia (including informal meetings) and the federation and from the sessions of the constitutional commission of the SFRY Federal Assembly and its coordination group for the preparation of constitutional amendments are used. These materials are held at the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana (Arhiv Republike Slovenije [ARS]) and at the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade (Arhiv Jugoslavije [AJ]).

Slovenian Turnabout in the Federal Constitutional Debate

After the death of President Tito, the 1974 federal constitution remained in force, leaving only a limited range of competences in the federal center. Moreover, nominations to federal bodies were in the hands of the individual republics (and the two autonomous provinces within Serbia: Kosovo and Vojvodina) and critical decisions in Belgrade were usually made by consensus of the republics' representatives, represented in parity. Since the early 1980s, there have been debates in Yugoslav political circles about whether changes in the political and economic system were needed and, if so, how deep they should be. The 1985 *Critical analysis of the political system*, a result of broad discussions in Yugoslav institutions, was very conservative, mainly due to the fears of a large part of politicians about a possible centralization of the SFRY constitutional setup. Nevertheless, this

material and especially the subsequent public debate on it implied limited systemic changes; therefore, in early 1986 work on constitutional amendments began to take shape.²

In the atmosphere of a generally bleak economic and political situation, even Slovenian politicians began to realize that their conservative position, which concerned both the setup of the federation and of the economic system, was becoming difficult to sustain. Ciril Ribičič, a constitutional expert in the LCS leadership, thus suggested to his Slovenian colleagues not to limit themselves to “the defensive strategy that we have.”³ The leadership of the Slovenian communists expressed a willingness to accept such systemic changes that would lead to greater efficiency in the functioning of the federation.⁴ At the same time, the Slovenian leaders had defined themselves in advance against some of the proposals for deeper changes in the relations within the federation that could be heard from other republics. They were particularly concerned about the possible establishment of a third chamber of the Federal Assembly in which, unlike the current two chambers, parity of republican delegations would not apply but the number of elected delegates would be based on population. The LCS leadership also opposed efforts to significantly intervene into the electoral and economic system.⁵ Nevertheless, despite their fears of change, the Slovenian leaders admitted that many of the suggestions made in the public debate on the *Critical Analysis*, which were three times more numerous than in the *Critical Analysis* itself, made sense.⁶

The Presidency of the SFRY (the collective head of state) circulated the first version of the draft constitutional amendments to the republics and provinces in November 1986.⁷ The proposed changes were mainly directed at rationalizing the economic system, democratizing political life, and making the functioning of the federation more efficient by centralizing certain powers. In none of these three areas did they interfere with the core of the existing setup—that is, socialist self-government with social ownership, the leading role of the League of Communists, and the federal structure in which the republics, as states within the common state, effectively decided the composition of the central organs. There was satisfaction with this material in the Slovenian leadership. Ciril Ribičič, at a closed meeting of the Presidency of Slovenia (the equivalent of the Presidency of the SFRY at the level of the republic), was pleased to note that the feared Federal Assembly’s third chamber did not appear in the draft, nor was there a change in the election of members of the SFRY Presidency, which was then the exclusive competence of the republics. Ribičič identified the proposal to introduce a direct source of funding for the Yugoslav People’s Army, over which the republics would have no influence, as the only truly fundamental problem for Slovenia.⁸ Otherwise, on more substantive points, the Slovenian Presidency objected only to the temporary supremacy of the federal law over the republic law in the event of their conflict, pending a decision by the federal constitutional court on who had jurisdiction over the area in question.⁹ However, the proposal of the SFRY Presidency also contained other changes in favor of a central level of decision making in Yugoslavia. Transfers of powers from the republics to the federation were envisaged in the following areas:

- extension of the possibilities of the federal bodies to inspect compliance with federal laws in the republics and the possibility to establish new federal inspectorates¹⁰
- uniform principles of organization of large infrastructure enterprises across Yugoslavia (railways, post office, energy)¹¹
- uniform principles of the tax system
- elimination of the right of veto of the republics against executive measures of the federal government and against the initiation of the legislative procedure in the Chamber of Republics and Autonomous Provinces¹²
- extension of the powers of the federal prosecutor, the federal court, and the constitutional court of the SFRY
- several other regulatory powers, such as the basic principles of the system of state administration, mass media, associations of citizens, material reserves, or surveying activities¹³

At the turn of 1986/87, the SFRY Presidency modified the framework of constitutional changes based on comments that were collected from the republics and provinces.¹⁴ The passage regarding the army was somewhat softened. No longer was a specific source of funding directly mentioned but only that the federation provides funds for the army.¹⁵ On the other hand, the intention was added that the federation should establish common principles for the education system while keeping the organization of education within the competence of the republics.¹⁶ Despite the relatively large number of new powers envisaged for the federation, the vast majority of them consisted only in the unification of systemic regulation through federal legislation while organizational functions were to remain within the republics. The overall slight strengthening of the federation's powers was understood and accepted by the Slovenian political representation. In March 1987, Ciril Ribičič recalled that consensus had been reached in the SFRY on consolidating the "self-governing character and efficiency of the federation" and rejected demands to weaken the federation and to move toward "classical confederation."¹⁷

Already in the initial phase, however, the constitutional changes attracted the attention of nationalist activists in Slovenia. In mid-March 1987, the Slovenian Writers' Union strongly condemned the forthcoming changes at a public tribune in Ljubljana, arguing that they might threaten "some essential rights [of Slovenians as] a free nation" (Jež 1987). The writers and the Slovenian Sociological Association subsequently set up their own constitutional commissions and thus ensured that their opposition to the transfer of powers to the federation was continuously present in the public sphere (Repe 2001, 47). Slovenian leaders were aware that nationalist sentiment was on the rise and that it was manifesting itself not only at places that had been for long seen as antagonistic toward the regime, such as the writers' platform or in fresh "contributions to the Slovenian national programme" in the magazine *Nova revija*.¹⁸ Radical proposals in the opposite direction of the SFRY Presidency's initiative proliferated at regional meetings of official bodies, various round tables, and in letters from readers. Ciril Ribičič pointed out that such a situation was unprecedented in other parts of the federation, even in Serbia.¹⁹ At this stage, however, the communist leadership in Slovenia did not expect the manifestations of awakening nationalism to gain majority support in the Slovenian society and therefore were making efforts to get the constitutional changes approved in the republic's institutions.

Namely, further work on the amendments could only proceed if the initial framework of constitutional changes had already been approved by the legislatures of all republics and provinces. Knowing that the political leaders of Slovenia had a positive opinion of the initiative of the SFRY Presidency, the republic's assembly discussed the matter in March 1987. The initiative was explained to the delegates by the Slovenian member of the SFRY Presidency Stane Dolanc. He stressed the agreement of all the republics and provinces with the content of the initiative and cited the goal of overcoming economic stagnation as the main motivation for the constitutional changes. He also devoted himself to defending some passages that were known to raise fears regarding centralization in Slovenia. He justified the harmonization of infrastructural systems or the proposal to reduce the republican veto in procedural matters primarily on the need to ensure the functioning of the single Yugoslav market and to streamline decision making in the federation, and he also mentioned the need to strengthen the cohesion and integrity of the SFRY. He stressed that the intended constitutional amendment on education did not concern the *content* of education but only the systemic setting to facilitate transitions between levels of education across Yugoslavia.²⁰

Miran Potrč, the chairman of the assembly, then informed the delegates that the initiative of the federal presidency was supported by the leadership of the Slovenian Socialist Alliance of Working People²¹ and all district councils. He also objected to the negative opinion of the writers, especially that the proposed constitutional changes were unitaristic or centralistic, and stressed the perspective of the Slovenian nation in self-government socialism and in a federal Yugoslavia.²² After a short debate, all but one delegate to the Slovenian assembly voted in favor of referring the proposed framework for constitutional change to the next stage of the procedure.²³ Some reservations were expressed in the accompanying opinions adopted in parallel, mainly formulated as an appeal to

elaborate the initiative into a form that would not bring about a substantial weakening of the competences of the republics. This applied, among other topics, to education, wherein there had been no federal regulation, even with respect to the levels of education and the length of attendance in schools, since the early 1970s (Plut-Pregelj 2000). Following the fact that in the first half of the 1980s, Slovenia, despite its initial approval, eventually rejected partial unification of the curriculum with the other republics (the so-called educational cores; Wachtel and Marković 2008), the Slovenian assembly now demanded that the planned unification of the “basic principles of the system” should not interfere with the content of the curriculum. An explicitly negative attitude was expressed only toward the temporary primacy of the federal law over the republic law and toward any (i.e., even the proposed procedural) reduction of the veto power in the Chamber of Republics and Autonomous Provinces (Delo 1987f).

After the assemblies of the republics and autonomous provinces had approved the framework initiative of the SFRY Presidency, its concretization passed to the Federal Assembly. The procedure was organized by the Federal Assembly’s standing commission on constitutional issues, where Slovenia was represented by Ciril Ribičič and Miran Potrč. Furthermore, an ad hoc coordination group was set up for the preparation of amendments to the SFRY constitution, where Slovenia was also represented by Ribičič and Potrč, as well as Milan Kučan. The latter was the only chairman of the League of Communists of any republic in the group. His presence signaled that Slovenian politicians feared a possible hardening of the constitutional changes in the direction of greater centralization and wanted to shield their positions with an official of the heaviest political weight. Among similarly prominent politicians, only Vidoje Žarković and Hamdija Pozderac were members of the coordination group. However, they *did not* represent their respective republics (Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina): the former was a delegate of the LCY leadership and the latter a member of the SFRY Presidency, who chaired the group.²⁴ Pozderac had to leave political life at the end of the summer of 1987 because of the Agrokomerc affair.²⁵ He was then replaced at the head of the group by Marjan Rožič, who had also been chairing the constitutional commission since May 1987. Although Rožič was from Slovenia, the leaders of his republic did not trust him, as we shall see further on.

At the beginning of the work of these bodies, the preparation of the amendments did not seem to pose major political problems, at least not because of Slovenia. In the constitutional commission at the end of March 1987, Miran Potrč drew attention to Slovenian concerns about a possible overly expansive interpretation of the proposed transfers of competences to the federation but mainly conveyed the positive attitude of the Slovenian institutions toward the initiative of the SFRY Presidency. He also indicated his conviction that public opinion in Slovenia was similarly disposed, whereas the protests of the writers did not, in his opinion, have wider support.²⁶ However, within the inner circle of Slovenian leaders, concerns about reputation in the Slovenian public were already being expressed. Kučan noted the accusations from the writers’ platform that the Slovenian leadership was betraying national interests and announced that potential escalation of the local situation would affect how Slovenian representatives would proceed with the constitutional changes.²⁷

In the spring and summer months of 1987, the federal coordination group worked to concretize the SFRY Presidency’s initiative into constitutional amendments. The first form of the text (“predraft”) was completed at the end of May. At a subsequent meeting of the coordination group in mid-June, Ribičič called for a restrictive interpretation of the new powers of the federation, arguing that, even so, Slovenian leaders would have difficulty in getting them through their republic’s assembly. Ribičič also noted, with a three-month delay, that at the writers’ public gathering in Ljubljana in March, he and Potrč found themselves in the vast minority in their advocacy of the constitutional changes.²⁸ Although in March, immediately after the gathering, Slovenian politicians judged that Slovenian public opinion as a whole would have no problem with a slight strengthening of the powers of the federation; in the meantime, they had apparently started to receive different signals. For the time being, they were mainly warning their colleagues from other

republics to be content with a minimalist interpretation of the agreed transfers of powers. An exception was the opinion of Potrč that unification of the education system is not necessary at all because better permeability between schools across republics can also be ensured by voluntary agreements between the republics.²⁹ However, in addition, at this meeting Slovenian representatives started to question the overall volume of competence changes. Kučan called for a reassessment of whether they were all necessary.³⁰ The LCS leadership was also ambivalent about the emerging amendments in the press the same week (*Delo* 1987g).

In the first days of July 1987, the federal coordination group sent out a working draft of the amendments to the republics. Immediately thereafter, Slovenian officials, including those who served in the federal coordination group, began to publicly question the whole concept of constitutional changes in the area of relations within the federation. Ribičič declared at a plenary session of the central committee of the LCS on July 6 that Slovenian politicians were fighting “against strong pressures for a complete change of the constitutional concept of federalism in the direction of centralisation” (*Delo* 1987c). A few days later in the press, Potrč spoke against the extension of the powers of the federal judiciary and federal administrative bodies in supervising the observance of the law and, indirectly, against the common foundations of the education system. Potrč further demanded the elimination of all the transfers of competences for which it could not be specified in advance what exactly they would mean. He stressed the need to consider the “objective differences” between the republics, thus questioning the logic that most new powers of the federation would consist only in the uniform regulation of systemic conditions in certain areas (*Delo* 1987h). In the wake of these public statements by Slovenian leaders, the draft amendments were criticized by the constitutional commission of the Slovenian assembly. On one hand, the Slovenian commission demanded that the amendments should not go beyond the original framework of the SFRY Presidency, but on the other hand it opposed a number of the originally agreed transfers of powers, especially in the education, judicial, and tax fields (Leskovic 1987a).

The strongest factor of the change of how the Slovenian leaders looked at the proposed constitutional changes was the fast dynamics in the local public opinion. As already demonstrated above, Kučan in those months stressed many times that the leadership needs to be in line with public opinion on national issues to avoid the stigma of national traitors (for more examples see Janičko 2022). It was in 1987 that the national feelings among the Slovenian population became significantly stronger, as shown by a questionnaire survey held then as well as every year (Janičko 2023). Data collection for this survey took place in June. Then, in mid-July, in an interview for the daily *Delo*, the authors of the survey, headed by Niko Toš and Zdenko Roter, stated with satisfaction that the Slovenian public had “matured in national self-awareness” and that public opinion was demanding not more powers for the federation but rather more autonomy for Slovenia (*Delo* 1987b). The expansion of the space for national topics in the questionnaire just in 1987 and the sympathy with which the sociologists presented the results of the survey is in line with Roter’s claim in his memoirs that this group of sociologists, through coordinated media activities, deliberately pressured to strengthen Slovenia’s autonomy (Roter 2013, 76). The republic leaders took a keen interest in the results of this periodic survey³¹ and were in personal contact with its authors at least on the Kučan–Roter line.³² In the summer of 1987, therefore, they could have had the first news of the survey results even before the sociologists presented them to the press. However, they certainly had signals of the changing public mood from their activities outside their cabinets. At the same time, they themselves were part of the Slovenian society and were undergoing a similar opinion evolution as the public at large. This was usually with a certain delay because of their position of safeguards of the socialist doctrine, to which the Yugoslav orientation was closely linked. However, in the summer of 1987 Slovenia’s leading communist officials began to take some of the initiative in mobilizing the public for the national cause in the context of the constitutional debate. This shift was caused by the leaders’ realization that this was necessary to secure their power position against the opposition groups that were increasingly challenging them.

In the second half of July, Ribičič announced in the federal coordination group that the Slovenian assembly opposed the unification of the basics of the education system. Although Ribičič advocated the need to improve the permeability of the education system across the federation and to jointly define at least the levels of education, he conveyed the fear, widespread in Slovenia (“which has not merely an irrational basis”) that the envisaged federal law on education could be passed in an overly expansive wording and interfere with the content of teaching. As an alternative, Ribičič suggested that the SFRY constitution should directly establish the levels of education and oblige the republics to conclude agreements on the education system.³³ At the same meeting, Kučan objected to another principle, which was also included in the original framework of constitutional amendments—namely, that the federal authorities could intervene if a republic did not implement a federal law. Although Kučan (like other Slovenian politicians) agreed that the nonimplementation of federal laws was a real problem, he suggested that the federal authorities could only issue warnings to a republic in such a case. He saw the possible extension of the powers of the federal apparatus in this area as a distortion of the then “political philosophy” of relations in the federation.³⁴ This was a nucleus of Kučan’s later application of this far-reaching argument to the whole draft of the amendments.

The constitutional commission of the Federal Assembly met on August 18 to discuss the completed draft amendments before referring it to the public debate. A day earlier, the Slovenian counterpart of this commission had been very critical of the draft and concluded that the amendments would have to be substantially amended for Slovenia to approve them at the end. The most significant comment was that the amendments undermined the existing principles of relations in the federation. The criticism from Slovenian legislators was voiced by Potrč at the very beginning of the federal commission meeting.³⁵ Kučan took up the topic of relations in the federation shortly afterwards. He first “informed” the members of the commission about the existence of three different levels of development in Yugoslavia: preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial. These, according to Kučan, implied different consciousness and different interests. Although Kučan added that these stages could be found in all the republics and provinces, he was in this way only hedging against possible counterattacks.³⁶ By lecturing on the different stages of development, he flatly defined himself against the logic of the vast majority of transfers of competences to the federation, which consisted of the uniform setting of systemic conditions. The argument about the abysmal differences in the interests and consciousness of different parts of Yugoslavia marked a noticeable shift in the rhetoric of Slovenian leaders. Although it was presented at the time as a defense of the status quo, it had the potential to call into question even such unity of the political, legal, and economic system in Yugoslavia that was envisaged in the then-current constitution. Kučan otherwise counted more than 30 jurisdictional changes in favor of the center in the amendments. In his view, it was precisely the quantity that introduced the constitution into a “danger zone” in which the basic principles of relations in the federation could be undermined.³⁷ Potrč subsequently demanded that the commission should not declare itself about the draft amendments at this meeting.³⁸

Many participants in the federal commission meeting were taken aback by the harsh criticism of the Slovenian representatives of the draft amendments. Hamdija Pozderac, who led the development of the amendments as chairman of the coordination group, expressed disappointment that after five months of preparation some of its coauthors were not willing to stand up for the proposal in the upcoming public debate.³⁹ Vidoje Žarković objected to Kučan’s argumentation about the quantity of competence transfers, saying that all of them were to help fulfil one of the basic provisions of the valid constitution, according to which the SFRY has a unified socioeconomic system.⁴⁰ Vojo Srzentić of Montenegro also wondered how the Slovenian representatives had reached dramatic conclusions about changing the nature of the federation.⁴¹ Advocates of a greater strengthening of the federation than that resulting from the amendments also spoke up. Referring to the Slovenian objections, Miodrag Bogdanović, chairman of the Serbian constitutional commission, threatened that the possibility of a (not only procedural) reduction of the veto power of the republic

delegations in the Federal Assembly, which was in the original initiative of the SFRY Presidency but did not make it into the draft amendments, might be reopened.⁴² The existence of considerably more radical demands for the consolidation or centralization of Yugoslavia than those held by functionaries such as Pozderac and Žarković was also reflected in the address by one of the Montenegrin representatives in the coordination group, Mijat Šuković. The latter, because of his hyperactivity in producing and explaining distinctly centralizing proposals, was in frequent disputes with both Pozderac and Žarković.⁴³ Of course, Slovenian politicians could not seek support from the radical centralists (mostly from Serbia and individuals from some other republics). But neither did they get it from the advocates of the “mainstream” approach to the constitutional settlement of relations in the federation, which, together with Pozderac and Žarković, included the vast majority of the other members of the constitutional commission. Therefore, the proposal was at the end of a nervous two-day meeting referred to the next procedure.⁴⁴ Slovenia’s change of position signaled major problems for the coming months regarding the final approval of constitutional amendments, where each republic and autonomous province had a veto right. Moreover, this change contributed to a further deterioration of the anyway tense relations between Slovenian leaders and the representatives of the federal authorities and the other republics.

The question arises as to whether the draft amendments⁴⁵ in the section on relations within the federation departed substantially from the original initiative of the SFRY Presidency, thus prompting opposition from Slovenian politicians. A comparison of the two documents shows that this is not the case. The list of newly intended powers of the federation has not been significantly expanded or deepened in the elaborated draft. The exceptions were the newly added federal regulation of the banking and monetary system and the possibility for the federation to regulate *tax policy*—that is, specific tax rates—in addition to the basics of the *tax system*.⁴⁶ The unification of the educational system was concretized as the adoption of a federal law on educational degrees and on the basic conditions for their completion.⁴⁷ Also, the enforcement of the federal laws and the expanded powers of the federation judiciary were concretized in accordance with the original concept in the initiative of the SFRY Presidency.⁴⁸ Moreover, some of the newly envisaged powers of the federation (the basics of the educational and tax system and the principles of the organization of large technological systems) were to be entrusted not to the Federal Chamber, where decisions were made by majority vote, but to the Chamber of Republics and Autonomous Provinces, where each republic’s delegation had the right of veto.⁴⁹ Furthermore, two points remained in the draft that Slovenia had identified as a problem from the outset—namely, the temporary primacy of the federal law over the republic law and the possibility of introducing a direct source of funding for the army outside the contributions of the republics.⁵⁰ Thus, the criticism of the draft amendments by Slovenian politicians was not triggered by the extension of the scope of the constitutional changes compared with the original plan. Kučan acknowledged Slovenia’s change of mind when speaking in the LCY leadership in late September, justifying it by public opinion. At the same time, however, he quickly took the new stance as his own, attacking the draft amendments as changing the nature of the federation and turning the republics into mere administrative units (Janičko 2021, 157). The change of stance due to a wrong initial assessment of the mood in the general public is also evident in a September statement by Potrč toward his Slovenian colleagues: “The agreement [with the initiative of the SFRY Presidency in March was] our common political position.... In all the subsequent debates in Slovenia, the reluctance towards the constitutional changes has become apparent.... I am not referring to *Nova revija*, I am talking about ‘our’ part of the public.... I know that we will have to take this into account.”⁵¹ Ciril Ribičič also warned his colleagues in the Slovenian leadership in November that Slovenia is now rejecting “some” of the originally agreed upon proposals.⁵²

In the first days of September 1987 the proposal was officially published. A few days later, it was strongly criticized in public by Chairman of the Presidency of Slovenia France Popit, and a wave of condemnations of the amendments followed from meetings of the regional and republican bodies of the Socialist Alliance of Slovenia (Janičko 2021, 157). Some Slovenian politicians tried to mitigate

the negative emotions in the public debate. However, they were not successful. For example, at a meeting with representatives of scientific and cultural associations, the chairman of the Socialist Alliance, Jože Smole, persuaded the introductory speaker to focus on the positive aspects of the proposal, but the discussion went in the opposite direction anyway.⁵³ Potrč complained that it was not even possible to divide the amendments into good and bad ones on the floor of the assembly of the republic but rather that rejection of the proposal as a whole prevailed. After all, Potrč had been observing for some time the decreasing willingness of Slovenian legislators to deal with any federal initiatives at all.⁵⁴

Slovenian leaders were caught off guard by the atmosphere despite that they had themselves contributed to its creation in July and August with their public statements against the emerging amendments. Kučan might have been aware of this to some extent. According to him, the mood in the public at the beginning of October “was not so much created by the writers as by ourselves.”⁵⁵ Kučan made a similar statement two weeks later. Without making it entirely clear whether he included himself among the culprits, he warned that Slovenian leaders would have to “look each other in the eye to see how such a situation came about.” He paraphrased the views of a meeting of the ideological commission of the LCS, according to which “all that is needed for the party [in Slovenia] to be recognised as a leading force again is to put itself at the head of a euphoric nationalist bloc.”⁵⁶ A few months later, Smole also recalled that “we ourselves had created a certain climate when we had started the debate on unacceptable amendments.”⁵⁷

Nevertheless, on the background of a fear of a stigma of national traitors, the Slovenian leaders in the following months sought to have all the significant transfers of powers to the federation removed from the draft amendments. Slovenia was completely alone in this activity, as the other republics and provinces had only minor comments, which they, moreover, did not insist on.⁵⁸ In contrast, the Slovenian legislators were the only ones to demand substantial changes in the draft, such as the removal of the amendment on education, of the extension of the powers of the federation court and the prosecutor, or the reduction of the amendment on the enforcement of federal laws. Nor did any other republics join in Slovenia’s long-standing rejection of a separate source of funding for the military and the temporary primacy of the federal law over the republic law.⁵⁹ Since the amendments could ultimately be approved only with the consent of all republics and provinces, the SFRY Presidency in November called on the federal constitutional commission to try to reach agreement on the Slovenian objections.⁶⁰

Whereas politicians from the other republics were trying to meet Slovenian demands, on the Slovenian side, on the contrary, cooperativeness continued to decrease. Regarding the education system, the Slovenian members of the coordination group first proposed the above-mentioned solution, which would have consisted in setting the levels of education directly in the constitution. During the autumn, they reduced this proposal to a general provision of the right to transfer between schools across the SFRY as well as a general, and therefore unenforceable, obligation for the republics to conclude agreements on school systems. The text was prepared by Slovenian representatives, but shortly afterwards Potrč announced that Slovenia withdrew even this solution and demanded the complete absence of education from the constitutional amendments.⁶¹ The attempt to set at least a framework unity of the education system was mainly symbolic as a sign of identification with the Yugoslav whole. Unlike many other areas that were to become the subject of federal regulation (e.g., the basics of the system of material reserves or surveying activities), every citizen had personal experience of education. Easier passage between schools could, in theory, increase mobility across republics, thus strengthening the common identity without raising fears of assimilation of smaller nations—thus, the regret of Vidoje Žarković over the failure to find a compromise with Slovenia and the last-minute effort of the Croatian representative, Emma Derossi-Bjelajac, to suggest yet another option that might satisfy Slovenia.⁶² Even the Slovenian politicians themselves did not in Belgrade comment triumphantly on their retreat from the education proposal and did not claim that they were defending themselves against unitarist intentions. Ribičič agreed that more unity was needed in education in Yugoslavia (“we do not

differ in goals”) but that this should be achieved through agreements between the republics.⁶³ The Slovenian leadership at the time took a similar stance toward constitutional change as a whole. In the autumn of 1987, Kučan still accepted the need for greater unity in Yugoslavia, including with the help of constitutional changes. However, in his view this was to be achieved “not merely by redistributing powers in favor of the federation, but by demanding greater accountability from the republics and provinces.”⁶⁴ In this logic, the republic was to be accountable to itself for its contribution to Yugoslav unity, not to the federal bodies.

After the Slovenian leadership changed its position during the discussion of the constitutional amendments, its members tried to influence the procedure through Marjan Rožič. This Slovenian politician was then chairman of the Federal Assembly, based on which he also chaired its constitutional commission, and after the resignation of Hamdija Pozderac, he also found himself at the head of the coordination group. For example, Slovenian politicians wanted him to split the package into individual items. This would allow Slovenia to reject only part of the amendments without blocking the constitutional changes as a whole. However, Rožič apparently did not carry out the instructions from Slovenia sufficiently, and Kučan declared in a small circle of Slovenian leaders in late September 1987 that he found Rožič essentially unreliable.⁶⁵ In January 1988, Kučan again pointed to Rožič as one of the few Slovenians in high federal positions with whom, among the republic’s officials, “no one is working.”⁶⁶ Finally, in March, Slovenian representatives in the federal coordination group proposed Rožič’s removal from its leadership on the pretext of criticism of his concurrence with the post of chairman of the constitutional commission. However, Rožič withstood this attempt with the support of the representatives of all the other republics.⁶⁷ This was a completely isolated case of a direct attack by Slovenian leaders on one of the nominees of their own republic in the federal bodies in the late 1980s.

During 1988, the Slovenian public debate got further radicalized. There were increasingly loud demands reaching a borderline between confederation and full Slovenian independence—for example, that the republic should first adopt its own new constitution and only on that basis discuss how certain issues could be regulated jointly in Yugoslavia.⁶⁸ Slovenian leaders also found it difficult to resist pressure to call a referendum within the republic on federal constitutional changes.⁶⁹ On the floor of the Slovenian assembly, the willingness to accept even minor transfers of powers to the federal level was rapidly declining. By May 1988, Slovenian legislators were already demanding the removal of passages on the uniform basics of the tax system (i.e., not only tax policy) on the uniform principles of organizing citizens, or even, for example, the reduction of the amendment on the uniform regulation of the principles of surveying.⁷⁰ The hardening of their own stances was at times disconcerting the Slovenian leaders. In June, Bogo Gorjan, chairman of the veterans’ union, first boasted that his organization had also contributed to broadening the scope of Slovenian rejections of individual amendments, only to raise the question of how a complete blockade of the package could be avoided in such a situation.⁷¹

In the summer of 1988, Slovenian politicians calculated that their own republic had 30 objections to the current version of the draft amendments to the SFRY constitution, whereas all the other republics and provinces had only six in total and those were, moreover, only minor ones.⁷² In view of this, the rapidly deteriorating overall political situation in Yugoslavia, and the concomitant national euphoria in Slovenia in connection with the Janša case, or the so-called Slovenian Spring,⁷³ it seems surprising in retrospect that in the autumn of 1988 the legislatures of all the republics and provinces nevertheless approved the constitutional amendments. In their final version,⁷⁴ the necessity to meet all the essential Slovenian demands regarding the relations within the federation was reflected. The federation did not gain any new powers in the regulation of education, and federal laws did not gain temporary primacy over republic laws. Most of the changes in favor of the federation’s judiciary were eliminated, the federation’s new powers in the regulation of the tax system were enumerated restrictively (sources, types, bases of taxes, and taxpayers), and in the area of citizens’ associations, only organizations that would operate throughout Yugoslavia were to be covered by a federal law. The amendment on large technological systems was greatly reduced and

basically just stated the status quo—that is, the mutual coordination of the enterprises of the republics in the sectors of railways, post, and energy and the preservation of their technological unity. Also, on the question of the army, which was ultimately the longest battle fought, Slovenia got its way by eliminating a special source of funding that would be outside the control of the republics. On the other hand, Slovenia accepted compromises on some minor issues. Even in the final version of the constitutional amendments, this left several transfers of regulatory powers to the federation such as the regulation of the basics of the system of material reserves, surveying activities of countrywide importance and mass media, and monetary policy and the banking system. The amendments also retained the right of the federation to ensure the enforcement of federal laws in certain circumstances.

The approval of the constitutional amendments shows that the elites of the republics, including the Slovenian one, were to certain extent still willing to compromise in the second half of 1988. Yet the amendments did not become the basis for a positive turn in relations within the Yugoslav political elite or in the general atmosphere in the society. Indeed, the rapidly growing nationalism did not take any notice of the constitutional amendments, and their adoption was completely drowned out by increasingly dramatic conflicts in the meeting rooms and in the streets.

Views on the State Framework of Yugoslavia and Slovenia

In the 1980s, Slovenian communist leaders acted mainly as advocates of the existing model of organization of the Yugoslav federation under the 1974 constitution. They were rejecting ideas to make substantial changes in the distribution of powers in favor of the federal center but at the same time did not demand a significant extension of their republic's autonomy. Within this overall attitude, however, there were different approaches within the Slovenian political elite to subissues and to the overall perspective of relations within the federation, which, moreover, evolved quite dynamically during the period 1986–1988. The second part of the study will first focus on some specifics in the Slovenian conception of relations in the federation and then present the reflections of Slovenian communist officials on the future perspectives of Yugoslav and Slovenian statehood.

The Slovenian communist leadership at the federal level in the second half of the 1980s acted as a very compact team. At the same time, the leadership demanded loyalty from Slovenian politicians at the federal level, both in the top bodies and in broader forums such as the congress and central committee of the LCY and the Yugoslav Federal Assembly. This approach had had an escalating tendency for some time already. In March 1986, Slovenian officials were praising the fact that the ties of Slovenian delegates in the Federal Chamber of the Federal Assembly to the republic were becoming stronger, thanks to the recent appointment of a coordinator in the Slovenian Socialist Alliance for this purpose and the involvement of delegates directly in the work of the Socialist Alliance. As a result, the highest officials of the republic's Socialist Alliance (and therefore, in existing conditions, very probably also of the League of Communists) could access the draft federal laws in advance. In the future, contact between the delegates and their republic was to be “further strengthened.”⁷⁵ Meanwhile, according to the constitution, the delegates in the Federal Chamber (in contrast to the Chamber of Republics and Provinces) were formally responsible not to the republics but to the districts (Burg 1983, 255–259). Notwithstanding, the Slovenian institutions and the leaders themselves instructed the delegates in the Federal Chamber in an increasingly directive and disingenuous manner, which was evident, for example, in the disputes over federal anti-inflationary measures in late 1987 and in the final phase of the discussion of amendments to the federal constitution in the summer of 1988.⁷⁶ The Federal Chamber had in fact been *de facto* divided into “delegations” of the republics since a number of years before. Almost immediately after the formation of the chamber in 1974, the “delegations” elected their coordinators who negotiated with each other. Moreover, from the beginning, the delegates asked for instructions from officials in their respective republics (Burg 1983, 255–259). On the other hand, the delegates themselves were apparently not always happy about the unintended fragmentation of the chamber, even the

Slovenian ones. Their coordinator, Jože Šušmelj, complained in the press in the summer of 1987 that the result was poor quality compromises in the form of “average” positions of the republics. He suggested that progressive solutions should be sought within the Socialist Alliance at the Yugoslav level on an economic and professional basis regardless of borders between the republics (*Delo* 1987a). However, the practice at that time was developing in exactly the opposite direction.

The Slovenian communists also displayed unity on party soil. Already before the congress of the LCY in June 1986, its Slovenian delegates were called to Ljubljana to hear which positions from the proposed congress documents “needed to be promoted” and which ones needed to be changed. Moreover, the leadership of the LCS was interested in advance in what the Slovenian delegates were going to talk about at the congress plenary session and intended “to ensure that the discussion contributions, notwithstanding their different shades, would be of a uniform tone.”⁷⁷ Two years later, before an extraordinary LCY conference, Jože Smole urged in the same vein that the LCS leadership should direct the Slovenian delegates regarding “who was going to say what.” This proposal was, of course, smoothly accepted.⁷⁸ After all, Milan Kučan had been personally involved in ensuring the unity of the Slovenian representation at the federal level from the beginning of his tenure as head of the LCS in 1986.⁷⁹ The initial initiative may have come from Ivan Dolničar, a general and long-time high official of the federal ministry of defense, a member of the LCS Presidency since 1986. One day before the meeting, at which Kučan announced a major strengthening of contacts with Slovenian politicians in Belgrade, Dolničar suggested just this in an internal conversation in Ljubljana because Slovenians in the federal bodies “are left to themselves” and “then nod to what they hear in Belgrade.”⁸⁰ Kučan took up this idea very vigorously, and by the end of 1987 he was no longer concerned about the legal conformity of the directives to the Slovenian delegates in the Federal Assembly.⁸¹

In front of his colleagues in Ljubljana, Kučan also criticized representations of the other republics for not being as uniform as Slovenia. At the end of 1987, he ironized the disunity of Montenegrin delegates in the Federal Assembly,⁸² and then in June 1988 he marveled that at the LCY conference “it was impossible to tell who was a Croat.... We [the Slovenians] had the most affirmative organized approach.”⁸³ Although republican fragmentation in Yugoslav organs was a general and growing phenomenon, in the second half of the 1980s the “delegations” of Slovenia and Serbia were by far the most uniform ones. In contrast, within the representations of the other republics, divergent views on substantive issues and sometimes even open disputes could be heard. It is therefore very likely that politicians in Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro had less intensive coordination within their republics than did their Slovenian and Serbian counterparts.⁸⁴

The strong pressure of Slovenian politicians and authorities on the unity of the republican representatives in the federation reduced the chances of forming other than territorially or nationally based opinion currents or alliances in Yugoslav politics. Slovenian communists sought potential allies almost exclusively as a republican collective. The logical result was that they judged the situation in Yugoslavia and other actors in the federation according to the extent to which Slovenia succeeded in promoting its views and priorities, thus who was on their side and who was against them. Marko Bulc, for example, judged in June 1988 that the LCY at its conference had finally adopted the Slovenian course in the economic realm;⁸⁵ Boris Mužević, in assessing his colleagues in the LCY leadership, wondered whether they held “the Slovenian stances” (Mužević 2021, 273); and France Popit, in March 1988, during one of his many angry litanies against the federal authorities, uttered, “let what the LCS congress proposed apply to the whole of Yugoslavia.”⁸⁶ However much more cooperative Kučan had previously been in relation to the other republics and the federation compared with Popit, by early 1988 he was already speaking in the same uncompromising terms regarding the *Slovenian stances*: “Any other way [than the Slovenian one] ... threatens socialism and self-government, threatens the AVNOJ foundations of Yugoslavia” (*Delo* 1988a). The Slovenian approach to Yugoslav politics throughout the second half of the 1980s was thus based on a one-sided conception of Yugoslavia as an aggregate of national

collectives. In doing so, it went beyond the formal rules in force at the state and party level while at the same time severely limiting the space for the emergence of common, Yugoslav political initiatives.

The departure of the Slovenian communists from the underlying ideas of Yugoslav statehood, shared until then among the communist politicians throughout the country, was clear in their approach to the question of whether there was a Yugoslav working class or (only) national working classes. The 1974 constitution of the SFRY spoke of uniform or common interests of the working class, which were fulfilled by a single socioeconomic system and a single basis for the political system throughout the country.⁸⁷ In contrast to the nations/peoples appearing in the plural, the working class appeared in the constitution exclusively in the singular. Class interest was thus to counterbalance national interests and in this way act as a cohesive factor across the republics. At the beginning of the second half of the 1980s, leading Slovene politicians (with the exception of France Popit)⁸⁸ did not yet question the existence of the Yugoslav working class, although they sometimes simultaneously stressed its “composite” character. For example, in 1986, the outgoing president of the LCS, Andrej Marinc drew attention to the different interests “within the Yugoslav working class” (*Delo* 1986b); Franc Šetinc, for his part, did not doubt the existence of both Yugoslav and national working classes, of which the Yugoslav working class is composed (*Delo* 1986a). Kučan even omitted the “national component” of the class principle altogether at the LCY congress in the summer of 1986, describing the LCY as “the vanguard of the united working class of Yugoslavia” (*Delo* 1986c). In April 1987, although Kučan warned against the abuse of the class principle at the expense of the national principle in the interests of the centralization of Yugoslavia, he nevertheless subscribed to the historic decision of the Slovenian communists for “the revolutionary brotherhood and unity of the Yugoslav nations and the working class of Yugoslavia” (Šlamberger 1987). Indeed, the unity of the working class in Yugoslavia was sometimes used in the late 1980s to embellish efforts to radically limit the role of the republics or even to impose Serbian hegemony. In the spring of 1987, however, Kučan had not yet found it necessary to respond directly by *negating* the Yugoslav working class.

In the following months, Kučan began to convert the working class into the plural. In January 1988, he spoke publicly of “nations and nationalities, their working classes,” though still also of “the working class of Yugoslavia” (*Delo* 1988a). In February 1988, during the Slovenian media campaign against the army, he told the LCY leadership that the communist leaders in Yugoslavia could not “separate themselves from their republics and provinces, from their nations and their working classes.” The working class of Yugoslavia was already absent.⁸⁹ When he spoke again in public at the end of May about the “national working classes,” he linked them to the national parties (the Leagues of Communists). Although these were, as Kučan added, part of the united LCY, he did not mention the Yugoslav working class as the basis of the unity of the LCY (*Delo* 1988b). In this conception, the LCY, unlike its republican components, was reduced to a (bureaucratic or ideological) forum without a basis in the working class. In late June 1988 at the plenary session of the central committee of the LCS, Kučan further explained that “class” and “national” principles were fused together and therefore there could be no talk of an “abstract, transnational and non-conflicting unity of the Yugoslav working class.” What united Yugoslavia, in Kučan’s view at the time, was only the revolutionary project in the form of a “socialist self-management vision,”⁹⁰ not, therefore, the unity of the working class. However difficult it was to reconcile the plural national “working classes” with the Marxist theory, the Slovenian leaders nevertheless felt the need to introduce them into their vocabulary. This shift signaled a (utilitarian) abandonment of the concept of working-class unity as one of the pillars of cohesion of the Yugoslav federation while remaining committed to communist ideology.

In the vacant space left by the disappearing strongholds of Yugoslav unity, Kučan placed demands for increasing his republic’s influence in the federation. To what level? Quite high, judging from the fact that, according to Kučan, Slovenia’s influence was to be measured by its “economic strength.” In the same speech, in which Kučan operated countless times on the class and socialist

nature of society, he thus offered a not-quite-communist vision of Yugoslavia as essentially a joint-stock company of its republics, among which Slovenia was economically the strongest. At the same time, he made it clear that Slovenia would not be satisfied even with a shareholding, as the second criterion for its influence was to be the “level of development and civilisation.”⁹¹ Kučan did not say what idea he had about quantifying Slovenia’s civilizational superiority over others, but the very use of this claim raised the (unreflected) question of whether nations at different civilization levels belonged in one state. In this respect, too, Kučan caught up with the rhetorical lead of France Popit. The latter had already spoken publicly a year earlier about the civilizational differences between the Yugoslav nations⁹² and nonpublicly even about two different civilizations in Slovenia and Serbia.⁹³

Among Slovenian politicians in the second half of the 1980s, there was a strong tendency to take an *a priori* position in defense of the Slovenian nation in direct and indirect communication with the Yugoslav authorities and other republics. This development was reflected, among other things, in a change in the treatment of the topic of nationalism in the annual reports on the security situation in Slovenia. The 1985 report by the republic’s ministry of the interior and the Council for the Defence of Constitutional Order in April 1986 noted an escalation of hostile behavior against members of other Yugoslav nationalities in schools, workplaces, and sporting events. In contrast to the earlier isolated excesses, according to the interior ministry, there were now broader disturbances of public order of a nationalist and chauvinist nature and there were also calls to fight for an independent and ethnically pure Slovenia. Although it was also mentioned that the Yugoslav press exaggerated these incidents, the growth of nationalism was *not* attributed to events in other Yugoslav republics.⁹⁴ Some Slovenian politicians who discussed the report felt that its tone was too harsh against Slovenian nationalism. Šetinc, for example, advocated “recommending” to the republic’s prosecutor that he withdraw the demand for tougher penalties for the Slovenian perpetrators of an interethnic incident in the town of Idrija. The chairman of the republic’s government, Dusan Šinigoj, directly asked that nationalism in Slovenia not be highlighted so much. The assessment of the rise in nationalism was essentially dismissed by France Popit, who instead wondered “what is happening in Yugoslavia that everyone is attacking Slovenia in chorus.” However, some other participants in the meeting (e.g., Janez Stanovnik, Stane Markič, and Vinko Hafner) agreed with the assessment of the rise of nationalism in Slovenia.⁹⁵

Two years later, in February 1988, the Slovenian state Presidency, together with the Council for the Defence of Constitutional Order, took a completely different approach to the issue of Slovenian nationalism in the “political-security assessment.”⁹⁶ This time, nationalism in Slovenia was attributed primarily to the situation in Yugoslavia and only secondarily to the activity of domestic intellectuals around *Nova revija*. In contrast to the earlier focus on chauvinistic incidents provoked by the local population, the Slovenian Presidency now pointed the finger at workers from other republics as a source of tension: “It is appropriate to draw attention to workers from other republics who are increasingly closing themselves off from their environment out of a sense of threat and because of the clear influence of the Yugoslav press in reporting on events in our republic. The trade unions should, by more subtle political action, extricate these workers from such influences and thus prevent the possible conflicts that are brewing.” In explaining the reasons for the increase in “national sensitivity,” not only internal Slovenian factors but also at times elementary logic have been overlooked. The Presidency justified the propagation of the thesis of Slovenian exploitation by arguing that the republic was “really lagging behind its neighbours”—that is, not behind the other Yugoslav republics (accused of exploitation) but behind Austria and Italy. When the Presidency went on to note the general deterioration of the situation in the republic in the past year, it found the reasons *exclusively* at the Yugoslav level—namely, in the Agrokomerc affair, in the Federal Assembly, and in the measures taken by the federal government. Milan Kučan was also present at the discussion of these evaluations, but he did not repeat his criticism, expressed a year earlier, of the “nationalist mentality” that “everything that is wrong in Slovenia is the fault of the federal state.”⁹⁷

The changes in the attitudes and activities of the Slovenian communists discussed above thus include an attack on the previously agreed draft constitutional changes, an increasingly assertive collective performance at the federal level, the abandonment of some of the assumptions of the cohesion of the federation, and an increasing acquiescence to Slovenian nationalism, including the adoption of its claims. All these processes indirectly point to a departure of the Slovenian establishment from a Yugoslav orientation.

Slovenian politicians have also occasionally commented directly on the prospects of the Yugoslav state. As we will show below, in 1987 and 1988, the initial understanding of Slovenian participation in Yugoslavia as an unquestionable prospect first changed into conditional consent and, by the end of this period, into the preference for weakening Slovenia's ties to Yugoslavia. It must be acknowledged that statehood issues are a sensitive subject. Therefore, during the negotiations recorded on the transcripts, Slovenian politicians could have been more cautious, especially if they favored more radical stances up to secession. Nevertheless, in closed informal talks and in official meetings of the party and state leadership in Ljubljana, Slovenian politicians generally expressed themselves very freely, including invectives to absent (especially non-Slovenian) officials, and in combination with their public appearances, the records of meetings of the Slovenian top forums are therefore of high value.

During 1986, the question of the overall future of the Yugoslav federation rarely came up in the discussions of Slovenian leaders, as there were no sufficiently strong impulses to question it. Ivan Dolničar, for example, wondered in the autumn why a draft LCS document stated that "we are for Yugoslavia" when Slovenians, along with others, had created the country. According to Dolničar, Slovenia should not have allowed itself to be pushed into a defensive position: "We must not allow anyone to like Yugoslavia more than we do."⁹⁸ By this time, Slovenian politicians were already sensing tensions in relations within the federation, and so some of them predicted an escalation of the crisis over the constitution, economic development, and "anti-Slovenism," as Andrej Marinc put it in January 1987.⁹⁹ However, this has not yet led to any consideration of changes in the status of the republic. When the Slovenian leadership accepted the transfer of some powers to the federation in early 1987 and also secured the consent of the republic's assembly, it gave a clear signal that it did not foresee a change in the state framework in the foreseeable future. Responding to the protests of intellectuals, Ciril Ribičič denounced "separatist efforts as utopian constructs for Slovenia's withdrawal from Yugoslavia, the realisation of which is impossible without a civil and wider war, and whose most likely outcome would be the dismemberment of the present Socialist Republic of Slovenia."¹⁰⁰ The LCS leadership made its Yugoslav orientation publicly clear in June 1987 in a form that did not yet require the fulfilment of any conditions: "While resolutely opposing all etatist and unitarist efforts and creatively taking part in discussions [at the federal level], we [Slovenian] communists will be able to contribute most to that the younger generations ... acquire the consciousness that a socialist, self-governing, federal Yugoslavia is not some temporary, transitory, defensive association of small nations against the large ones, but a revolutionary programme which is necessary and worth fighting for in the interests of the workers, of their own nation and of the coming generations" (*Delo* 1987e).

The wave of protests in Slovenia against the proposed constitutional changes and against the economic policy of the federal government in the autumn of 1987 brought with it radical demands by various activists and groups for increased autonomy or even secession of Slovenia as well as doubts in the federal organs and in the army as to whether these demands had support in the Slovenian leadership. The republic's politicians began to discuss their views on the prospects of the federal state with Slovenian participation somewhat more frequently at this time. The topic of a meeting of Slovenian officials in September was the electrified atmosphere in the republic, but the discussion often veered toward criticism of the federation. Dolničar described suspicions from the federation that Slovenia wanted its own army as "fabrications" because, in his view, even nationalist intellectuals did not want such a thing: "I say that in Slovenia even the *Novorevijans* are not even thinking about a republic army because they are not so stupid not to know that it is impossible. It's

not only a historically settled matter, but also ... it's impossible to think like that because you don't see any way out and it makes no sense."¹⁰¹ Dolničar thus inferred from his own current belief in the "historically settled" nature of Slovenia's participation in Yugoslavia and the unrealistic nature of the alternatives that separatist demands could not come from his republic, a logic common among Slovenian politicians then and later. However, when Kučan criticized the activities of the federal institutions in the same debate, he already added a condition to his Yugoslav orientation: "We are for Yugoslavia, but not for any Yugoslavia, to put it perhaps ugly."¹⁰² A week later, Kučan stressed the absence of an alternative option to the Yugoslav one, at least at that moment: "We have no other state and we do care ... what that common state will be and what life will be like in it."¹⁰³

During the Slovenian media campaign against the army and the subsequent harsh reactions of the army, Kučan began to make it clear in the first months of 1988 that the choice between loyalty to Yugoslavia and loyalty to the Slovenian nation would result in the latter. In some Slovenian meetings, such as after the army's statement in March that the situation in Slovenia had the hallmarks of a counterrevolution, there was a very combative atmosphere toward the federation. At the time, Stane Dolanc warned his colleagues not to go into "total conflict" because "Slovenia alone will never be socialist, let alone self-governing."¹⁰⁴ A few months later, Dolanc again expressed concern that Slovenian politicians should not contribute to the possible break-up of Yugoslavia: "If Yugoslavia did not exist, what would happen to each of our republics and each of our nations? ... We have to do everything we can to resolve the situation."¹⁰⁵ Later in the spring of 1989, Dolanc appealed on the floor of the Slovenian legislature, which was already pretty hot for him at that time, for Slovenian politicians to think about the future fate of the joint state: "We must find common ground with everyone else in our homeland, for which we will fight by all means to make it a self-governing socialist equal community of all nations and nationalities in Yugoslavia."¹⁰⁶

In this type of thinking, Dolanc was almost alone in Slovenian forums at the end of the 1980s. His colleagues continued with a mere declarative identification with Yugoslavia, without deriving from it how Slovenia should contribute to its preservation in crisis conditions. In March 1988, for example, Janez Stanovnik stated that the Slovenians had historically "sovereignly opted for Yugoslavia and there is no retreat from that."¹⁰⁷ According to Kučan's June public statement, again, there was no need "to prove what has been proved so many times already, that we are for Yugoslavia, and for what kind of Yugoslavia—a socialist federal one, for its unity and again for what kind of unity, for the defence of its independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty ..., because all this and much more is also our interest."¹⁰⁸ Even on the declarative level, however, things were no longer entirely clear. A month earlier, the leadership of the LCS, in one of its documents, had indeed described Yugoslavia "as our state and our perspective" but, in the same sentence, somewhat ambiguously, referred only to "the possibilities of living together in the SFRY."¹⁰⁹

A significant change, at least on Milan Kučan's side, came in the late summer of 1988. At the end of August, Kučan conditioned the preservation of the federation on the fulfilment of Slovenian ideas about further development: "Are we for Yugoslavia? I am aware of all the delicacy ... of such a publicly posed question, because practically it is a question of which Yugoslavia? Not for any Yugoslavia, but for a socialist and AVNOJ Yugoslavia, which will ensure the free and voluntary decision of each nation, on the basis of its interests, to live together with others in such a socialist and democratic entity.... The debate on the character of Yugoslavia is open." Kučan also raised the question of whether "such a Yugoslavia, which is now being revealed through all these confrontations, can be attractive to Slovenians." Not entirely in line with these doubts, he added that "our firm decision is ... for life in Yugoslavia, ... for us, at least for me, there is no other option."¹¹⁰ Although the complete demise of Yugoslavia was not yet preferred by Kučan, he already imagined the possibility of a change in relations in the country in the direction of confederation: "[To determine] whether there will be a discussion about federation or confederation, I would now refuse to do so.... We have to evaluate whether the definition that has been there so far [i.e., federation] fits or not.... I suggest that as a starting point [of an internal Slovenian debate] we just say that there is an open discussion in Yugoslavia about—what kind of Yugoslavia [there should be]."¹¹¹ This was a major shift in Kučan's

statehood positions, as only two months before he had publicly rejected the idea of confederation (Šlamberger 1988). Kučan's move away from a federal arrangement of Yugoslavia toward confederation or even Slovenian independence is also mentioned by Boris Mužević and Franc Šetinc in their recollections of the late summer of 1988.¹¹² This change followed the escalation of the "nationalist fever" in Slovenia in the second phase of the Janša case in July, when the trial itself began, and was related to Kučan's ascension to the leadership of the national movement. At that time, Kučan publicly came out with the thesis that the trial in Ljubljana, conducted in the Serbo-Croatian language, was a threat to Slovenian sovereignty and language, although he knew that this was a common practice at the time (Janičko 2021, 152–153).¹¹³ In contrast, the antibureaucratic revolution (a rally movement of ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins with the support of the Serbian leadership headed by Slobodan Milošević, under whose pressure the leaderships of Vojvodina and Montenegro later resigned), as a potential threat from Serbia that could also have played a role in Slovenian considerations of changing the status of the republic, was only in its very beginnings in the summer of 1988 and remained within the borders of Serbia for the time being.

Not all Slovenian officials were ready for such a change at that moment. For example, Ciril Ribičič opposed the understanding of Yugoslavia as a "multinational contractual association," because it was also about "common social goals, a common perspective, ... a specific Yugoslav path to socialism."¹¹⁴ Two months later, Ribičič reiterated in the press his opposition to the transition to a "classical confederal union" based on "a day-to-day negotiations of republics and provinces" (Delo 1988c). Miran Potrč also opposed the "contractual association" as late as December.¹¹⁵ Even Kučan (as well as other Slovenian politicians) was still talking about the need for a new Yugoslav constitution in the autumn of 1988 (Janičko 2022, 255–256). He was thus making it clear that, despite his shift in opinion toward confederation, he still did not envision Yugoslavia as a mere international treaty. On the other hand, politicians, who at that moment had more at heart the existing federal arrangement than did Kučan and his Slovenian colleagues, did not share the enthusiasm for the immediate creation of a new constitution. For example, the Croatian member of the SFRY Presidency, Josip Vrhovec, wished to "wait for elementary socio-economic stabilisation" before such an undertaking, so as not to aggravate the already confrontational political atmosphere in the country.¹¹⁶

Yugoslavia, however, never more saw its calmer times, and Slovenian politicians played a significant role in that. Their views continued to evolve along the path pointed out by Kučan, with no predetermined end station. This dynamic was accelerated by the ongoing antibureaucratic revolution, and especially its culmination in the resignation of the Montenegrin leadership under the pressure of demonstrations in early January 1989. Andrej Marinc made it clear to his colleagues at the time that he saw the breakup of the whole of Yugoslavia as an alternative because "I do not believe in alternative dictatorships." Moreover, Slovenia cannot be the only one to secede, given that Yugoslavia is "a common boat from which it is impossible to leave without severe consequences."¹¹⁷ Vlado Klemenčič judged that "we are thinking about differences, about regulating only those things in Yugoslavia in which we have an interest ..., we are talking about building an asymmetric federation."¹¹⁸ Dusan Šinigoj had already called for further decentralization of Yugoslavia a few days before the events in Montenegro, as the current extent of centralization was "too large."¹¹⁹ After the "success" of the demonstrations in Montenegro, Šinigoj rhetorically asked "whether we will go to ... Milošević's Yugoslavia" and advocated the formulation of a Slovenian (statehood) strategy.¹²⁰ Janez Stanovnik proposed a more Yugoslav form of further actions and, as usual, made his identification with the common state clear. However, he also predicted its weakening as a result of developments in Slovenia: "Yugoslavia can only stand if the reality in its parts is recognised.... I think that simply because of the belief in Yugoslavia, the belief in self-government socialism, which is supposed to be the basis of Yugoslavia, its independence and its overall role in the progress of civilization, we have to come up with our alternative. That means we're going to get our heads bashed in, but I still think we have to say it."¹²¹ Even more clearly, Sonja Lokar, a younger member of the Slovenian party presidium, linked Yugoslavia to the perspective of socialism. She argued directly for the preservation of Yugoslavia, while otherwise, she said, there was a risk of dependence

on more powerful neighbors: “People need to be told ... what are the other possibilities to find some form of resistance to the Milošević’s position inside Yugoslavia, or what the possibility of leaving Yugoslavia means. I firmly believe that if we opt for going out of Yugoslavia, that would mean—Slovenians without socialism. It would not be as easy as in the imaginations of those who would like to expensively sell us for only to rule not in Carantania ... but in the *Mark Krain*.”¹²²

Nevertheless, considerations in the direction of independence began to gain ground in the Slovenian leadership from the beginning of 1989, not least because the remaining hopes of (some) communists for the continuation of self-management socialism as the main *raison d’être* of Yugoslavia faded rapidly in the following months, along with the dismantling of socialist “production relations” from the economic system. Namely, the prolonged economic crisis in Yugoslavia throughout the entire 1980s and the unsuccessful attempts to resolve it with the tools of the existing system led to a breakthrough in economic thinking among the political elites in the entire federation. In the spring of 1988, an extraordinary conference of the LCY proposed the introduction of both capital and labor markets, as well as the development of private ownership (Janičko 2022, 252). Systemic changes in this direction were quickly implemented in the federal constitutional amendments,¹²³ effectively intervening in the core principles of self-management socialism. Communist leaders across the federation viewed this move as a promising way to solve the country’s economic troubles, opening a new perspective for the entire country.¹²⁴ However, the official doctrine of the LCY had stressed the path of self-management socialism as the main *raison d’être* of Yugoslavia. Could, then, the joint state survive in case of a complete transformation of the political and economic system? This question also appeared among Slovenian leaders, albeit in a hypothetical manner, around the turn of 1988–1989.¹²⁵ By that time, however, they had already been distancing themselves from federal Yugoslavia under the influence of growing nationalist sentiment within their republic.

Conclusion

In the increasingly neurotic political atmosphere in Yugoslavia in the second half of the 1980s, the actions of key actors evolved dynamically and were becoming more radical, thus gradually increasing the likelihood of an explosive outcome to the societal crisis. At the same time, Yugoslav politicians from various parts of the country, including those from Slovenia, defended themselves against accusations that they were the ones threatening Yugoslavia’s cohesion, pointing the finger at their colleagues from other republics in the common state. In the rhetorical noise that Slovenian communist politicians created by declaratively wedging themselves behind the *status quo* on issues of relations between the Yugoslav nations and accusing the federal center of threatening Slovenian autonomy, fundamental changes in their own preferences regarding the organization of the Yugoslav state framework were easily drowned out. Elaborating on the events surrounding the procedure of changes to the Yugoslav constitution and the so-called Slovenian Spring, this study has attempted to present the process by which Slovenian communist leaders, perceptive to the growing national feelings among the population of their own republic, were abandoning the assumptions of existence of the Yugoslav state that had been shared within the Yugoslav communist elite up to that point and, during the national euphoria in Slovenia in the summer of 1988, started to move away also from the very idea of Yugoslavia as a federal state.

Disclosure. None.

Notes

- 1 During 1989, Serbia significantly reduced Kosovo’s autonomy through amendments to its own constitution, notwithstanding the broad scope guaranteed by the federal constitution, and Slovenia unilaterally limited some of the powers of federal authorities on its territory. For the Slovenian case cf. Hayden (1999, 27–52).

- 2 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 849, Zapis pogovora z delegati iz SR Slovenije v Zveznem zboru Skupščine SFRJ, March 10, 1986.
- 3 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 118, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, March 31, 1986, 3/2.
- 4 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Zapisnik 118, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, March 31, 1986, 3–4.
- 5 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Zapisnik 118, 4; ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 851, Kratka informacija o poteku javne razprave o Kritični analizi delovanja političnega sistema socialističnega samupravljanja, May 21, 1986.
- 6 AJ Belgrade 507, Neautorizovane magnetofonske beleške sa 4, sednice Predsedništva CK SK Jugoslavije, July 25, 1986, 7/5 (Milan Kučan); ARS Ljubljana 1944, Magnetogramski zapis 9, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, December 10, 1986, 2 (Ciril Ribičič).
- 7 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Šk. 852, Predsedništvo SFRJ, Nacrt predloga da se pristupi promenama Ustava SFRJ, Beograd, November 12, 1986 (further on cited as Predsedništvo SFRJ, Nacrt, November 12, 1986).
- 8 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Magnetogramski zapis 9, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, December 10, 1986, 2–4. The proposed amendment read, “Amendments to the constitution of the SFRY should ensure the stability and reliability of the financing of the Yugoslav People’s Army on a long-term basis and provide for special direct revenues of the federation for this purpose.” Predsedništvo SFRJ, Nacrt, November 12, 1986, 13.
- 9 ARS Ljubljana 1944, 9, seja Predsedstva SR Slovenije December 10, 1986; Mnenje Predsedstva SR Slovenije k osnutku Predloga Predsedstva SFRJ, da se začne postopek za spremembo Ustave SFRJ, December 16, 1986.
- 10 “To enable the federal bodies to directly monitor the work of the administrative bodies in the republics and autonomous provinces in implementing the federal laws.... To establish the obligation of the Federal Executive Council [the government] to inform the Federal Assembly of the SFRY and to propose appropriate measures in the event that, even after notifying the executive council of a republic or autonomous province, a federal law ... is not being implemented.... To extend the possibilities of establishing federal inspectorates in certain areas and to specify the right of supervision and other powers, which would be established by a federal law.” Predsedništvo SFRJ, Nacrt, November 12, 1986, 13.
- 11 “The federation ... provides for a uniform basis of organisation, functioning and self-governing socio-economic relations in areas where there is unity of technical-technological systems and which are important for the whole country (such as post, telephone and telegraph, railways and energy).” Predsedništvo SFRJ, Nacrt, November 12, 1986, 15.
- 12 Predsedništvo SFRJ, Nacrt, November 12, 1986, 15–16.
- 13 Predsedništvo SFRJ, Nacrt, November 12, 1986, 18–19.
- 14 Predsedništvo SFRJ, “Predlog, da se začne postopek za spremembo ustave SFRJ,” in *Poročevalec Skupščine SR Slovenije in Skupščine SFR Jugoslavije za delegacije in delegate*. February 12, 1987, Letnik XIII, štev. 4 (further on cited as Predsedništvo SFRJ, Predlog, February 12, 1987).
- 15 “Within the framework of a unified budget of the Federation, it is necessary to ensure the stability and reliability of the financing of the Yugoslav People’s Army on a long-term basis.... In addition to regulating, the Federation ... shall also ensure the management and disposition of the social resources that are spent in the Yugoslav People’s Army for its needs.” Predsedništvo SFRJ, Predlog, February 12, 1987, 5.
- 16 “The federation ... shall regulate the common foundations of the educational system in accordance with Article 165 of the constitution of the SFRY.” Predsedništvo SFRJ, Predlog, February 12, 1987, 5.
- 17 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 25, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije. March 9, 1987, 2/1.
- 18 The opposition-oriented Slovenian magazine *Nova revija* published a special issue on the Slovenian national question in early 1987. In it, the authors of the articles argued extensively for a substantial extension of Slovenian autonomy and for a redefinition of the relations between the Yugoslav republics (Repe 2001, 35–36).

- 19 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 25, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, March 9, 1987, 2/1.
- 20 Sejni zapiski Skupščine SR Slovenije, 10, sklic 1986–1990, Skupno zasedanje, March 18, 1987, 1–14, Portal Zgodovina Slovenija—SIStory. Online: <https://www.sistory.si/11686/menu410>
- 21 An institution with a role, enshrined in the constitution, intended to involve the general public, including noncommunists, in political decision making. In reality, however, the top ranks of the Socialist Alliance were almost exclusively communists, and they proceeded in coordination with the leadership of the Party.
- 22 Sejni zapiski Skupščine SR Slovenije, Skupno zasedanje, March 18, 1987, 14–18.
- 23 Sejni zapiski Skupščine SR Slovenije, Skupno zasedanje, March 18, 1987, 41.
- 24 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Skupština SFRJ—Komisija za ustavna pitanja, Sastavi komisije i njenih radnih tela, Beograd, mart 1987.
- 25 Agrokomerc was a large food processing company in northwestern Bosnia. During 1987, it was revealed that it had raised hundreds of millions of dollars in funds based on uncovered promissory notes. Pozderac was one of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian politicians with ties to the company.
- 26 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 3, sednice Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, March 26, 1987, 3/1–5/1.
- 27 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Sestanek političnega aktiva, March 27–30, 1987, nadaljevanje, March 30, magnetogram, 1/2.
- 28 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2699/58, Stenografske beleške sa 3, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, June 15–18, 1987, June 16, 13/2.
- 29 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Stenografske beleške sa 3, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ, 34/2.
- 30 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Stenografske beleške sa 3, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ, June 15, 31/2.
- 31 For example, the LCS leadership discussed the results of the previous wave of the 1986 survey. ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 5, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, May 26, 1986.
- 32 Roter (2013, 227 and 350) writes that he was meeting with Kučan regularly since 1986. He later became Kučan's advisor for the 1990 election of the head of state.
- 33 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2699/58, Stenografske beleške sa 5, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, July 14–20, 1987, July 20, 1987, 4/2–6/2, 38/1–2.
- 34 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2699/58, Stenografske beleške sa 5, 16/1–2.
- 35 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, sednice Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, August 18–19, 1987, August 18, 10/1–12/1.
- 36 The Slovenian constitutional lawyer Janez Šinkovec used the same division of development stages in those days in the press and applied it bluntly to the republics and autonomous provinces: "In Yugoslavia there are at least three stages of development of the productive forces: elements of pre-industrial society, industrial and post-industrial. Seeking a uniform model and preventing federal units from adjusting their situation according to the degree of development of the productive forces they have reached will obviously have the opposite effect" (Leskovic 1987b).
- 37 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, sednice Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, August 18–19, 1987, August 18, 18/1–20/3.
- 38 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, 28/3–30/1.
- 39 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, 30/1–31/1.
- 40 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, 22/1–22/3.
- 41 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, August 19, 8/1.
- 42 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, August 18, 13/1–14/2.
- 43 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2699/58, Stenografske beleške sa 5, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, July 14–20, 1987, July 20, 1987, 27/1–30/1; Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, sednice Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, August

- 18–19, 1987, August 18, 21/2–3; Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 7, sednice Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, December 10, 1987, 20/2–3.
- 44 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 4, August 19, 1987, 14/3.
- 45 Komisija Skupščine SFRJ za ustavna vprašanja, Osnutek amandmajev k Ustavi SFRJ, in *Poročevalec Skupščine SR Slovenije in Skupščine SFR Jugoslavije za delegacije in delegate*. September 2, 1987, Letnik XIII, šte. 22 (hereafter cited as Komisija Skupščine SFRJ, Osnutek amandmajev, September 2, 1987).
- 46 Komisija Skupščine SFRJ, Osnutek amandmajev, September 2, 1987, Amandma XXXII.
- 47 “A federal law determines the levels of education and the basic conditions for the acquisition of knowledge and training at all levels of education, in all types of schools and in other educational institutions.” Komisija Skupščine SFRJ, Osnutek amandmajev, September 2, 1987, Amandma XXIII.
- 48 Komisija Skupščine SFRJ, Osnutek amandmajev, September 2, 1987, Amandma XXX, XXXVI, XXXVII.
- 49 Komisija Skupščine SFRJ, Osnutek amandmajev, September 2, 1987, Amandma XXXIII.
- 50 Komisija Skupščine SFRJ, Osnutek amandmajev, September 2, 1987, Amandma XXIII, XXXI.
- 51 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 24, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, September 10, 1987, 23.
- 52 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 27, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, November 4, 1987, 9.
- 53 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram razgovora članov predsedstva in izvršnih sekretarjev P CK ZKS dne, September 7, 1987, 5/2–6/1.
- 54 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Sestanek političnega aktiva September 28, 1987, magnetogram, 11/1, Nadaljevanje, October 5, 1987, 2/1.
- 55 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Sestanek političnega aktiva, September 28, 1987, 14/1–2.
- 56 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Sestanek (nadaljevanje) političnega aktiva, October 16, 1987. Magnetogram, 6/1.
- 57 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 33, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, February 16, 1988, 16.
- 58 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2699/58, Stenografske beleške sa 7, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, October 12–13, 1987, October 13, 7/1–2 (Vidoje Žarković).
- 59 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/62, 5, sednica Komisije za ustavna pitanja Skupštine SFRJ, Pregled primedaba na utvrđeni tekst nacrtu amandmana o kojima se predlaže otvaranje rasprave, October 18, 1987.
- 60 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2699/58, Stenografske beleške sa 9, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, November 23, 1987, 1/1 (Marjan Rožič).
- 61 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 7, sednice Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, December 10, 1987, 13/1–16/2 (Vidoje Žarković a Miran Potrč).
- 62 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 7, 14/2–3.
- 63 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 7, 21/1.
- 64 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Sestanek (nadaljevanje) političnega aktiva, October 16, 1987, Magnetogram, 9/2.
- 65 “Now that Hamdija Pozderac is excluded from the job [of chairman of the coordination group], Žarković suggested that Rožič should be the one. This is an unpleasant thing for us. Marjan doesn’t control the job, he doesn’t know what’s going on, the question is who will have influence on him—among us I am saying this openly.” ARS Ljubljana 1589, Sestanek političnega aktiva, September 28, 1987, magnetogram, 2/2.
- 66 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram zaprtega dela razgovora po končani 47, seji Predsedstva CK ZKS, January 25, 1988, 49/2.

- 67 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2701/60, Stenografske beleške sa 10, sednice koordinacione grupe Komisije Skupštine SFRJ za ustavna pitanja, March 10, 1988, 4/4–6/1.
- 68 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Magnetogramski zapis 35, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, March 2, 1988, 5 (Miran Potrč).
- 69 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 2702/61, Stenografske beleške sa 7, 1–2.
- 70 Mnenje k osnutku sprememb Ustave SFRJ (osnutek mnenja), in *Poročevalec Skupščine SR Slovenije in Skupščine SFR Jugoslavije za delegacije in delegate*, May 30, 1988, Letnik XIV, številka 15, 1–17.
- 71 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 60, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, June 20, 1988, 13/2.
- 72 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Magnetogramski zapis 42, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, July 25, 1988, 2–3 a 15 (Miran Potrč and Jože Smole).
- 73 Mass demonstrations in Slovenia since June 1988 in response to the arrest of four people for disclosing state secrets. The demonstrations had a strong charge oriented against the Yugoslav Federal Centre and the Yugoslav People's Army. Slovenia's political leadership was increasingly in solidarity with the demands of opposition activists. On the case itself, see Žerdin (1997); on the actions of Slovenian politicians in federal institutions, see Janičko (2021).
- 74 Amandmaji k Ustavi SFRJ, Beograd, October 22, 1988, in *Poročevalec Skupščine SR Slovenije in Skupščine SFR Jugoslavije za delegacije in delegate*, October 28, 1988, Letnik XIV, številka 32, 3–13.
- 75 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 849, Zapis pogovora z delegati iz SR Slovenije v Zveznem zboru Skupščine SFR Jugoslavije, March 10, 1986.
- 76 Poročevalec Skupščine SR Slovenije in Skupščine SFR Jugoslavije za delegacije in delegate, November 10, 1987, Letnik XIII, številka 32, 4; ARS Ljubljana 1944, Zapisnik 42, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, July 25, 1988, 5.
- 77 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Šk. 847, Zapis delovnega pogovora, June 2, 1986.
- 78 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 56, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, May 5, 1988, 11/2; Zapisnik iz 56, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, May 5, 1988.
- 79 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 16, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, November 14, 1986, 6/1 a 77/2–3.
- 80 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Razgovor članov in izvršnih sekretarjev Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, November 13, 1986, 12/1–2.
- 81 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 27, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, November 4, 1987, 5.
- 82 In the Federal Chamber, “there are indeed delegates from the self-governing community, as it is written [in the law], but from the socio-economic community which is called the republic.... [The directives] are not binding on them, but they cannot vote at their own discretion, as is constantly the case with Montenegrins, who are not united among themselves I don't know if this is a special quality.” ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 27, 5.
- 83 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Razgovor članov Predsedstva in izvršnih sekretarjev CK ZKS, June 3, 1988, Magnetogram, 7/3.
- 84 Štefan Korošec gave his Slovenian colleagues the example of coordination among the Serbian members of the LCY Bureau in the autumn of 1986 (Janičko 2021, 140).
- 85 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram razgovora v Predsedstvu CK ZKS, June 20, 1988, 8/1.
- 86 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 35, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, March 2, 1988, II/1.
- 87 Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije, 1974, Beograd: Savremena administracija, Beograd: Savremena administracija, basic principles (part I).
- 88 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 25, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije March 9, 1987, 5/3–6/1.
- 89 AJ Belgrade 507, Neautorizovane manetofonske beleške 66, sednice Predsedništva CK SK Jugoslavije, February 9, 1988, 34/2–3.
- 90 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 20, seje Centralnega komiteja ZKS, June 27, 1988, 8/2.

- 91 "Slovenia must not be a reservation inside Yugoslavia, it must have the initiative. Its influence must be realistically great, to match its economic strength and its level of development and civilisation." ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 20, 11/2.
- 92 "The Yugoslav People's Army, as the armed force of all our nations and nationalities, must be interwoven with the civilizing elements of each of our nations and nationalities, because only then will it be as attractive to Slovenes, Croats, Albanians, Hungarians and others as it was at the time of the national liberation struggle—a truly popular partisan army" (*Delo* 1987d).
- 93 "It's two civilisations. It's not that one is worse than the other, but that's the way it is. People who have been formed in different conditions, in different civilisations, cannot be happy. Because our lads are not opposed to military service, they just don't want to be officers. We ask why they don't want to.... 61% of the officer cadre are Serbs. The mentality that the army has adopted is really the mentality of the old Serbian army." ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 24, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, September 10, 1987. 18.
- 94 ARS Ljubljana 1944, 64, seja Predsedstva SR Slovenije, April 23, 1986, Poročilo o varnostnih razmerah in drugih notranjih zadevah ter delu organov za notranje zadeve v letu 1985. Stališča Sveta SR Slovenije za varstvo ustavne ureditve ob poročilu varnostnih razmerah in drugih notranjih zadevah ter delu organov za notranje zadeve v letu 1985, April 10, 1986.
- 95 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 64, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, April 23, 1986.
- 96 ARS Ljubljana 1944, 33, seja Predsedstva SR Slovenije, February 16, 1988, Politično-varnostna ocena.
- 97 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 27, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, March 23, 1987, 29/2.
- 98 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Razgovor članov in izvršnih sekretarjev Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, November 13, 1986, 12/1.
- 99 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 21, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, January 19–22, January 22, 49/1.
- 100 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 25, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, March 9, 1987, 2/1.
- 101 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Razgovor članov in izvršnih sekretarjev Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, September 7–21, 1987, September 21, 32/1.
- 102 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Razgovor članov in izvršnih sekretarjev Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, September 21, 41/2.
- 103 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Sestanek političnega aktiva September 28–October 5, 1987, magnetogram, October 5, 14/2.
- 104 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Razgovor v Predsedstvu CK ZKS, March 28, 1988, magnetogram, 17/1.
- 105 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram sestanka političnega aktiva v razširjenem sestavu, August 28, 1988, na Brdu, 13/3.
- 106 ARS Ljubljana 1519/490, Govor Staneta Dolanca na zasedanju vseh zborov Skupščine SR Slovenije March 30, 1989, 19/1–2.
- 107 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 53, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije March 14, 1988, 23/2.
- 108 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 20, 19/1.
- 109 ARS Ljubljana 1589, 57, seja Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, May 13, 1988, Program za izvajanje stališč Konference ZK Slovenije (predlog), May 11, 1988, 1.
- 110 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram sestanka političnega aktiva v razširjenem sestavu, August 28, 1988, na Brdu, 7/2–8/1.
- 111 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 43, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, August 25, 1988, 2/3–4.
- 112 Mužević (2021, 245) writes that Kučan mentioned a confederation in early September 1988, when they were driving together from Belgrade to Ljubljana. Šetinc told historian Bož Repe in 2011 that Kučan, also in September 1988, even spoke of the incipient breakup of Yugoslavia (Repe 2015, 127).

- 113 Cf. also AJ Belgrade 803, 210, sednica Predsedništva SFRJ, August 12, 1988, Translation of Milan Kučan's address at the 89th session of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the LCY, July 26–27, 1988, 2–3.
- 114 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram sestanka političnega aktiva v razširjenem sestavu, August 28, 1988, na Brdu, 44/2.
- 115 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 75, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, December 26, 1988, 14/2.
- 116 AJ Belgrade 803, Stenografske beleške sa 210, sednice Predsedništva SFRJ August 12, 1988, 130.
- 117 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 76, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, January 10, 1989, 28/2, 12.
- 118 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 77, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije January 1989, 25/1.
- 119 ARS Ljubljana 1944, Stenografski zapisnik 55, seje Predsedstva SR Slovenije, January 5, 1989, 3–4.
- 120 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 77, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, January 12, 1989, 17/1.
- 121 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 77, 14/2.
- 122 ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 77, 29/1.
- 123 Amandmaji k Ustavi SFRJ, Beograd, October 22, 1988, in *Poročevalec Skupščine SR Slovenije in Skupščine SFR Jugoslavije za delegacije in delegate*, October 28, 1988, Letnik XIV, šte. 32, 3–13. Amendments X and XI.
- 124 In January 1989 at an internal meeting of Slovenian leadership, Kučan stressed the need for creating a new vision of socialism as a necessary integrative “filling” of Yugoslavia. Without it, the future of Yugoslavia was, in his opinion, questionable. ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 75, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, December 26, 1988, and January 5, 1989, January 5, 37/1.
- 125 In January 1989 at an internal meeting of Slovenian leadership, Kučan stressed the need for creating a new vision of socialism as a necessary integrative “filling” of Yugoslavia. Without it, the future of Yugoslavia was, in his opinion, questionable. ARS Ljubljana 1589, Magnetogram 75, seje Predsedstva CK ZK Slovenije, December 26, 1988, and January 5, 1989, 37/1.

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