Integration concepts and praxis in Slovenia

Žarko LAZAREVIĆ

ABSTRACT

The chapter deals with the political, economic, and social integration strategies and practices of the modern period that were developed to integrate the Slovene ethnic territory. The concepts discussed represent the different political realities in the periods of the Habsburg monarchy, Yugoslavia, and the independent state. The concept of 'United Slovenia' formed the basis of national ideology in the first period. Toward the end of the 19th century, the idea of 'United Slovenia' was combined with the idea of Yugoslavism. The goal was to increase the relative importance of Slovenes and improve the chances of realizing the maximalist goal of the national ideology. The 20th century was marked by the idea of Yugoslavism as a space for preserving and strengthening Slovenian identity. Later, in the period of the communist authorities during the second part of the 20th century, a new concept of integration was developed, that of the 'Unified Slovenian cultural space.' The aim of this concept was to unite the ethnic area on a cultural level, regardless of state borders. In the late 1980s, during a profound political, economic, and social crisis, a new integration concept emerged that aimed at full statehood for Slovenia and integration of the ethnic territory through incorporation into the European Union.

KEYWORDS

Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Habsburg monarchy, national ideology, national movement, integration concepts

Introduction

Like other peoples, the Slovenes became a nation in the sense of a modern political community in the 19th century. The formation of the Slovenes as a distinct ethno-cultural entity took place in an environment and territory where the aspirations of different communities were intertwined.[1] In this process, the Slovenes faced a disadvantage as a numerically small community that was also administratively divided into different historical provinces. The relative weight of the Slovene national movement was already modest, and the fact that the Slovenes were divided into multiple

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1 Zajc, 2008, pp. 103–114.

provinces in which they were a minority became even more apparent. Moreover, there were no strong centers in the Slovene territory. Ljubljana became a real Slovene center only toward the end of the 19th century. While it played this role in the political and cultural sense, only in the 20th century did it become a real Slovene center. The centers on the verge (Trieste, Graz, Zagreb) extended their spheres of influence deep into the Slovene area. They became places that directed economic and cultural flows and encouraged mass emigration from the central Slovene territory to the periphery. All three major cities were home to large Slovene minority communities.[2]

All this made integrating the territory extraordinarily difficult, as it was hard to formulate a unified strategy of national assertion in such diverse social and political contexts. Therefore, efforts to assert the Slovene language represented the cornerstone of a strategy that could be shared by Slovenes in different provincial contexts. The concept of the Slovene national question appeared in the political vocabulary and persisted well into the 20th century. It included the struggle for equal development of language and culture. Early on, the national movement also experienced disappointments that made it necessary to reconsider the maximalist goal of national ideology. Further disillusionment followed in the 20th century when the Slovene national space was divided among four countries.

This chapter is divided into several thematic sections that consider the historical context and present the different stages of integrating the population and the space. First, the focus is on the issue of defining Slovene identity—that is, on the period of Slovene national awakening. The second part deals with the concept of the United Slovenia program and the integration of this territory in the 19th century. The presentation is supplemented by an outline of the idea of Yugoslavism among the Slovenes. This is followed by an analysis of the Yugoslav period and finally, the departure from the Yugoslav idea toward an independent Slovenian state.

1. The national awakening

Consciousness of the kinship of the people was present even before the national movement arose. An important period in this respect was certainly the Reformation. At that time, Primož Trubar codified the Slovene language and writing by publishing religious literature. He was aware of the linguistic unity of the entire territory, regardless of administrative boundaries. Therefore, he decided to take the dialects of the central Slovene area as the linguistic standard, which also facilitated communication in the remote regions. Trubar's decision was the starting point for forming a cultural pattern that became the basis for defining the Slovene nation. Even after the Counter-Reformation and re-Catholization, the Slovene language continued as a linguistic practice. It was used mainly in the religious press, but the partial public use of Slovene and printing of the few books in Slovene still strengthened the consciousness of the

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2 Lazarević, 2014, pp. 339–356.

area's unity, even if only in a small circle of educated people. However, these later became the nucleus of the awareness of the linguistic and thus ethnic homogeneity of the population.

The situation began to change more rapidly during the Enlightenment. The reforms during the reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II were crucial. Introducing compulsory education and the part of the Slovene-speaking administration at the lowest levels raised important questions. As Vasilij Melik wrote, 'it was necessary to decide which language the compulsory schools, the new offices and the courts should use.'[3] This proved crucial for establishing the Slovene nation, as the national movement could not be stimulated by relying on long-standing state tradition, which did not exist. Until then, Slovenes had not been given a unified name; regional names and identities prevailed, and the geographical term Slovenia did not yet exist.[4] Thus, the Habsburg Monarchy played an important role in affirming the Slovene language and identity by fully unifying linguistic practice for the purposes of education, promulgating laws, and implementing administrative practices: it unified the Slovene ethnic space culturally, through linguistic regulation.[5]

The publication of the Slovene grammar, *Marko Pohlin*, in 1768 is considered the beginning of the national movement. In addition to regulating the language, the author clearly held that using Slovene was crucial for the cultural education of broader segments of the population and that it was suitable for every situation.[6] A similar assertion was made by Ožbalt Gutsman, who, in addition to a grammar, also wrote a German-Slovene (1789) dictionary,[7] thus further qualitatively consolidating Slovene for everyday use. In the first half of the 19th century, France Prešeren, who later attained the status of a cultural saint, raised the Slovene language to the highest artistic level with his poetic work.[8] The common consciousness of ethnic space was also consolidated by Anton Tomaž Linhart, who emphasized the unity of territory and population in his book *Poskus zgodovine Kranjske* in *ostalih dežel južnih Slovanov Avstrije* (*Attempt at a History of Carniola and Other South Slavic Lands in Austria*, 1791). Between the river Drava and the Adriatic Sea, he saw a single people, whom he did not yet call Slovenes. The concept of the book is based on 'the history of a people whose language, culture and history unite it into a distinct whole, different from other peoples, independent of administrative and political divisions.'[9]

From the beginning of the 19th century, the terms Slovene language and Slovenia were increasingly used in public. Thus, the term 'Slovene language' gradually replaced the earlier regional terms, such as the Carniolan language. The fact that others began to adopt the name, thus acknowledging Slovene identity, did much to confirm the term.

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3 Melik, 2002, pp. 26–28.
4 Kosi and Stergar, 2016, pp. 458–488.
5 Almasy, 2016, pp. 490–508.
6 Melik, 2002, pp. 26–28; Prunk, 1992, p. 22.
7 Prunk, 1992, p. 23.
8 Paternu, 2000, pp. 152–159.
9 Vodopivec, 2010, p. 19.

The term 'Slowenische Sprache' gradually gained acceptance in German, which was challenged by the use of the Slovene language.[10] Gradually, language also became a marker of ethnicity, which was a significant change from the earlier conditions where it had been perceived merely as a means of communication.[11] In the next phase, this also raised the question of naming the territory where the Slovene-speaking population lived. Notwithstanding the ethnic territory's administrative fragmentation, the name Slovenia became more and more accepted in, of course, an informal way. When it was finally published in a newspaper in 1844,[12] it was effectively formalized. The use of the term Slovenia then slowly spread among the population. It emerged as an intellectual and cultural concept, an imaginary country and was widely used in political rhetoric but did not exist in everyday administrative and political life. It took a whole century for it to briefly become an official political-geographical concept after 1918, permanently becoming official after the establishment of the Socialist People's Republic of Slovenia in 1945.

The process of defining Slovene identity as a nation and Slovenia as an imaginary country was thus completed in the first half of the 19th century. The development did not proceed in a straight line, nor was it a broad movement. The definition of the identity was relevant only in intellectual circles, which, however, were distributed throughout the entire ethnic area. For no part of the relevant area can it be said that the idea of Slovene identity penetrated the broad masses of the people.[13] Crucially, however, the foundations were laid for the population's comprehensive nationalization in the second half of the 19th century.[14]

2. United Slovenia

The year 1848 was important in the process of the national movement, as it was a time when hopes for great changes were widespread. It seemed that the Habsburg Monarchy could be reorganized by taking greater account of the interests of the various ethnic communities, which by this time had already become clearly defined nations. The year 1848 obviously heralded an era of nationalisms that would in many ways be irreconcilably opposed. In this revolutionary year, the Slovenes were not on the sidelines; they clearly emerged as a political entity. Based on the national consciousness movement of the last decades, which had been progressing steadily since the publication of the first grammar book in 1768, awareness spread of the Slovenes as a distinct cultural and political entity. This provided the conditions for a clear definition of the goals of the national ideology, the creation of a platform for political action, and mobilization of the masses.

10 Melik, 2002, pp. 26–28.
11 Vodopivec, 2010, p. 14.
12 Melik, 2002, p. 28.
13 Kosi and Stergar, 2016, pp. 458–488.
14 Kosi, 2008, pp. 93–101.

Like other nations, the Slovenes published their national program in the year that dreams were allowed. The program emphasized the need to overcome the reality that Slovenes were divided among the various Austrian provinces of Carniola, Gorizia, Trieste, Istria, Carinthia, Styria and Prekmurje in the Hungarian state. Matija Majar drew up the program United Slovenia. With it, he clearly laid down the basic demands of the national movement: the entire ethnic territory was to be united into a single autonomous entity, Slovenia, with Slovene as the official language in administration and education. Language as the basis for national identification was evident in Majar's writing. He states the following, 'Slovene nationality is synonymous with the Slovene language. For us this is a condition sine qua non!' The autonomous entity should align with the Kingdom of Croatia within the Habsburg Monarchy. Majar's words were unequivocal: 'Each nation should live in its own homeland as it pleases: the Germans as Germans, the Italians as Italians, the Hungarians as Hungarians,' and the Slovenes as Slovenes.[15] The petition was sent to the Viennese Royal Court and presented at various political events, rallies, and forums. It was accompanied by a map of the ethnic territory, drawn by Peter Kozler.[16]

The concept of a United Slovenia was important for three reasons. First, it became a platform for political mobilization. The signing of the United Slovenia petition was launched and found popular support in both rural and urban areas. At this point, it became clear that the cultural work of the Vormaerz had been successful after all. Judging by the many petition signatures, the efforts to assert the Slovene language and identity as cultural and ethnic categories were well received.[17] This fact gave the political representatives the necessary confidence and encouraged the national movement. The second important aspect was the decision for the Habsburg framework, but with a firm rejection of the Habsburg Monarchy's integration into the German state, which was one of the options in the political discussions at that time. Majar was also clear on this issue:

> Under no circumstances do we want to be a part of the German Union (Deutschen Bund). We are and will remain loyal to our illustrious Emperor and our constitutional government; we want to be and will be in a friendly alliance with all the nations of our Empire, including the Germans; but we have nothing to do with the rest of Germany and the German rulers. Any alliance with these Germans would obviously be to our disadvantage.[18]

The third point involved the connections with the South Slavic area within the Habsburg Monarchy. Connections with Croatia were a constant feature of the 19th

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15 Pančur, 2005, pp. 24–25.
16 Kozler and Knorr, 1853.
17 Granda, 2000, p. 136.
18 Prunk, 1992, p. 56.

century. In a sense, 1848 anticipated the Yugoslav idea, which gained political momentum toward the end of the 19th century.

The United Slovenia program contained a maximalist idea that had little chance of realization in the Habsburg context. The Habsburg Monarchy's organization was based on historical provinces; from the central government's point of view, any change in territorial organization represented a risk to the established balance of power and stability. Not to mention the problems of the Slovenes in the Prekmurje region, which was an integral part of the Hungarian kingdom. Any change toward a United Slovenia would be impossible without the Hungarian government's agreement. The Slovene national movement representatives were aware of this fact and therefore generally spoke of Slovene ethnic territory, but not specific regions. From that point of view, the idea of a United Slovenia was revolutionary in that it called for reorganizing the Habsburg Monarchy on a national basis, making it unworkable in such a context. In the Habsburg dimensions, the Slovenes' relative political weight as a community was modest. At that time, even the greatest optimists with an undisguised desire for higher numbers could not count more than 1.5 million inhabitants[19]—and not even all of them accepted the Slovene identity.

3. Political and economic integration

The unification of the ethnic area took place in the second half of the 19th century, based on two forms of nationalism: ethnic and economic. First, the populations was nationalized. In the 1860s and 1870s, the efforts for a national awakening turned into a mass movement. By organizing political manifestations, called Tabor in the Czech model, the population was encouraged to define themselves as Slovenes. These manifestations were usually large-scale events, in some cases involving as many as tens of thousands of people. Politically, they were based on the idea of a United Slovenia. The gatherings demanded that the Slovene language be equal with German and that Slovene be introduced in schools, churches, and administration. The language and its public use became an important element of national identity until the end of the Habsburg Monarchy. The struggle for equal rights for the Slovene language was accompanied by efforts to raise the level of science and art and bring it closer to the current trends of cultural creation in Western European countries.[20] The process of nationalizing the population did not take place in a vacuum, but also collided with competing nationalist aspirations due to the population's ethnically mixed structure. Studies show[21] that it took place in an atmosphere of conflict. Political antagonisms based on ethnicity then continued to paralyze Slovenian

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19 Melik, 2002, pp. 36–49.
20 Dolenc, 2010, p. 78.
21 Cvirn, 1997.

territory until the First World War, with national differentiation even reaching the family level.[22]

During this period, the Slovene national movement remained united based on the goal of nationalizing the population as quickly as possible and organized into a single national party. The national idea and network of cultural associations integrated the ethnic space based on the idea of Slovene as an ethnic denomination, putting aside ideological differences. The national movement began to compete in elections and quickly reaped the fruits of its labor. The National Party and its candidates won elections at various political levels. The movement soon had representatives in the provinces and National Assemblies in Vienna, and it took power at the local level, especially in the countryside. Later, the ideological-political differentiation between the Catholic and Liberal orientations took place within the national movement, which also acquired a clearly recognizable political party structure in the 1880s and 1890s. Toward the end of the century, the ideological-political split continued as the Social Democratic Party also became organized. This resulted in a triad of political interests. Schematically, the Catholic side represented the countryside, the liberal pole the urban environment, and the social democratic pole the workers. Although they differed in the ideological-political sense, these three camps did not deviate from the United Slovenia principles in their concept of national ideology. However, in the last decades of the 19th century, they increasingly approached the Yugoslav idea.[23]

With a slight delay, the process of nationalizing the population was complemented by economic nationalism. The leaders of the national movement were convinced that political and cultural emancipation alone was not enough. Any fully developed nation urgently needed economic emancipation as well; otherwise, emancipation was incomplete. It soon became clear that the economic elements could also provide important leverage in the political struggle. In the name of the generally beneficial goals concerning political strengthening, arguments and appeals soon appeared to secure national differentiation in the economic sphere as well. To strengthen its own economic base, the national movement began to also implement the slogan 'To each his own' in the field of economics. Economic life was to take place entirely within one's own national community. The boycott of nationally maladjusted merchants, craftsmen, enterprises, banks, and others was a fundamental instrument in this process. This was a political arbitrage aimed at diverting economic flows to those proponents of the economic initiative who defined themselves as Slovenes. At the same time, a system of economic institutions was built, owned, or controlled by members and supporters of the national movement.

Cooperatives were the most typical example, as they combined elements of national and social solidarity on the one hand and economically responsible action on the other. They seemed to be the appropriate means of creating a parallel economic system with an ethnic connotation. Moreover, cooperatives were relatively

22 Aplinc, 2005, pp. 44–111.
23 Zajc, 2008, pp. 103–114.

independent of the authorities and required few resources other than political will. Under the conditions of developing capitalism and advancing individualization, they created a sense of security while propagating reciprocity within the ethnic community. Uncertainty, both political and economic, could be avoided by relying on compatriots with similar, if not identical, interests. Thus, cooperatives functioned like a social safety net. Moreover, they gave the impression of belonging to the people, treating everyone equally, and being democratic. They were extremely widespread, and their network was very dense. In this way, the cooperatives contributed to the further integration of the Slovenian territory. Their initiators did not adhere to provincial borders but covered the entire ethnic space. Within politically (party) differentiated cooperative networks, they enabled circulation of services, goods, knowledge, and capital according to uniform standards and ensured a unified appearance in the market.[24] Integration was accelerated by the advent of the mass press (various magazines, newspapers, and books) and the railway network, which overcame barriers to communication.[25]

4. The Yugoslav idea

In the early days of the national movement, the question was raised of relations with the South Slavic territory within the Habsburg Monarchy. The initiators of the national movement were aware that quantity was an important criterion in political relations at the international and national levels. They were also aware of the limited relative political and economic importance of their own nation and territory. Therefore, in 1848, they firmly rejected closer ties between the Habsburg Monarchy and the potential German unified state. The fear of assimilation remained actual throughout the 19th century. Moreover, the territory settled by the Slovenes was administratively divided into individual provinces. Consequently, the Slovene communities found themselves in different political positions and different sociopolitical contexts. For this reason, the national movement was politically organized at the regional level. At the beginning of the 20th century, only the Catholic-oriented Slovenian People's party, which organizationally covered the entire national territory, surpassed this. Regional party organizations made it difficult to build a common platform, as political strategies were tailored to diverse regional circumstances. Efforts to improve the Slovene ethnic group's situation had to be made at the local level, where the principles of equality of nations and languages were implemented. Practices in the various parts of the ethnic area were very different. The fragmentation further weakened the actual political power of the national movement and political representation.[26]

24 Lazarević, 2001, pp. 351–364.
25 Cvirn and Studen, 2001, pp. 57–62.
26 Melik, 2002, pp. 78–85, 670–686.

Because of the kinship of the Slovenes with the Slavic peoples and especially the South Slavic peoples, the idea gradually emerged that the Slovenes were part of a larger community, and that by establishing links with the South Slavic peoples, they could increase the relative importance of their national movement while contributing to an acceptable long-term solution within the Habsburg framework. Traditionally, the idea of integration with the South Slavic area was prevalent in liberal political circles. Later, however, the Catholic Party took the initiative when, toward the end of the 19th century, it became clear to its leaders that it would be impossible to reach an agreement with the German parties regarding Slovene demands at the regional or national level. At this point, the idea of closer ties with Croatia came to the fore. At the beginning of the 20th century, the three dominant political options (Catholic, Liberal, and Social Democratic) shared the opinion that a rapprochement with Croatia was necessary. The ideas of such cooperation were not very clear, nor was the knowledge of the geographical area and its political, social, and economic situation the best. The liberal side confined itself to expressing sympathy for the South Slavic nations, while the social democrats included the Yugoslav dimension in the name of their party (Yugoslav Social Democratic Party). Somewhat clearer were the ideas of the Catholic political camp, which placed much of its hopes on Croatia's specific constitutional position in the Hungarian half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[27] By relying on Croatia and its state-legal position, Slovene demands would hopefully gain political weight.

Before World War I, the Yugoslav idea of trialism became much stronger, calling for reorganizing the Habsburg Monarchy into three entities; the South Slavic nations (Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs) were to become the third constituent unit of the Habsburg Monarchy. For the political elites, this seemed to be a perfectly acceptable solution to the Slovene national question. Later, in May 1917, when they were already thinking about the situation after the end of the war, the Slovene, Croat, and Serb deputies read the so-called May Declaration in the Vienna Parliament. They addressed it to the highest authorities—the royal court and the government—and demanded solving the South Slavic question by creating a Yugoslav unit within the monarchy. Numerous rallies followed, where the demand for a Yugoslav unit was supported by the people who signed the text of the May Declaration. The mass support was to ensure greater relevance of the demands for reorganizing the monarchy. The May Declaration addressed the fundamental issues of the Habsburg Monarchy and the place of Slovenes within it, but potentially also outside of it, which, if demands were not heeded, was advocated by some of the political elites as a last resort. Most of the elites accepted the May Declaration as a minimum political condition for staying within the Habsburg Monarchy.[28]

27 Prunk, 1992, pp. 140–150.
28 Perovšek, 2018, pp. 16–20.

5. The Yugoslav experience

The experience in the Yugoslav state must be divided into two periods: the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the period after World War II, when Yugoslavia was transformed into a communist country. Although the socio-political contexts were different, the dilemmas in both periods remained the same and concerned the relationship between regional autonomy and centralism. Schematically speaking, the dominant part of the Serbian political elite held the view that the country could not be successfully run without centralizing decision-making processes in the central government. In contrast, the dominant part of the Slovene (and Croatian) elites saw the country's stability in regional political and cultural autonomy. Proponents of centralism also advocated cultural (national) unification of the country, while proponents of autonomy insisted on existing identities being allowed to develop freely. The second option was fully implemented in the 1970s.

The dilemma became relevant in the first years of the new state. The establishment of the Yugoslav state in 1918 was an important turning point. It marked the end of the search for an adequate solution to the Slovene national question at the end of the First World War, including advocacy of the right to self-determination under the impact of the famous Wilsonian points. When it became absolutely clear that no solution could be reached within the existing framework, the representatives of the Yugoslav nations in the former Habsburg Monarchy (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina) proclaimed a short-lived state of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs in November 1918. The attempt was unsuccessful, as the new state was unable to gain international support or recognition. In the tense international situation and threatened by the Italian occupation of the territories promised to it in the Treaty of London (1915), the representatives of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs agreed to a rapid unification with the Kingdom of Serbia on December 1, 1918. This led to the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (SHS), later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.[29]

On the one hand, the Kingdom of SHS was a new state; on the other hand, there was legal and political continuity with the Kingdom of Serbia.[30] The core of the political and economic system of the Kingdom of SHS was represented by the legislation and state institutions of the Kingdom of Serbia.[31] The new state was organized and administered as an enlarged Serbia—that is, in the manner to which Serbian administrative and political elites were accustomed. In its heterogeneity and political divisions along ethnic lines, the Kingdom of SHS resembled the former Habsburg Monarchy in many ways. The diverse past—in other words, belonging to different state communities, traditions, and cultural circles—had already sown the seeds of

29 Perovšek, 2018, pp. 103–117.
30 Kršev, 2012, pp. 115.
31 Gnjatović, 2007, p. 92.

constant political tensions, if not discord, at the very beginning of coexistence in the new Yugoslav state. Due to differing perceptions,[32] the new state was constituted in an atmosphere of conflict, characterized by an obvious discontent among the majority of Slovene (and Croatian) elites. Disillusionment and a sense of inferiority in Slovenia and Croatia set in and persisted for decades afterward.[33]

In political rhetoric, Yugoslavia was a nation-state, as the state ideology propagated the tripartite Yugoslav political nation consisting of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. The concept represented the lowest common denominator for unifying three distinct historical and cultural traditions. In the Slovenian public, resistance to such attempts was evident very early on, when the first attempts at cultural unification were made in the state, based (and would always be based) on Serbian and Croatian traditions. As early as 1921, most of the Slovene public supported the so-called Autonomist Declaration, in which intellectuals firmly rejected any idea of merging Slovene culture or national identification into a Yugoslav identity. They pledged to preserve all regional identities and cultures, not just the Slovene one, and defined Yugoslavism only in terms of state affiliation, not national affiliation. They also laid down the basic principle that was then applied until the end of the Yugoslav state: Yugoslavia made sense to Slovenes only if it allowed for free and unhindered national, political, cultural, and economic development. This position was reaffirmed in the 1930s when Josip Vidmar, a well-educated young liberal, reiterated his insistence on an independent Slovene identity and culture. During the period of the dictatorship, he enjoyed the broad support of the general and most of the political public because of his unwavering positions.[34]

Just as great as the hopes were the disappointments when the Yugoslav state was founded—and not only because of the internal organization of the new state. Yugoslavia brought the final realization that the concept United Slovenia was over. The geopolitical processes, over which the Slovenes had no influence, cut sharply into Slovenian reality. What they feared most actually came to pass: after 1918, Slovenian territory was divided among four countries—Austria, Italy, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. The pain was all the greater because most of the Slovene population in Carinthia had voted for annexation to Austria in the referendum of 1920. One-third of what was considered the motherland remained outside the Yugoslav framework. With the annexation of four countries, four customs policies, four financial systems, and four economic and social policies, the processes of alienation between the different parts of the Slovene national territory began. The importance of Yugoslavia became even more emphasized. In it, the Slovenes, with their status as a constituent nation and their active participation in the country's government, had the opportunity to develop identity, culture, and an economy. The political elites appreciated this, despite further

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32 We are referring to the state's system (centralism vs. autonomy,) the adoption of a constitution, monetary reform, administrative practices, and division.
33 Vodopivec, 2005, pp. 461–484.
34 Dolenc, 2010, pp. 75–115.

disappointments such as the proclamation of the confederal status of Croatia (Banat of Croatia) before World War II.[35]

World War II was a severe test for the Slovene nation. Slovenia was divided into four zones of occupation, with Italy occupying the west, Germany the center, and Hungary the east. In the south, a small area was occupied by the Quislingan Independent State of Croatia. During World War II, the Slovenes were subjected to genocide and cruel violence. From the point of view of the occupiers, it was only a matter of time before the Slovene identity would be extinguished. The German and Hungarian occupiers were ahead of the game, while the Italian occupier planned to eliminate the Slovene identity a little more slowly. The Slovene situation during World War II served as one of the examples of Raphael Lemkin's concept of genocide. Under these circumstances, a successful resistance movement emerged, led by the communists. The communists established the principles of self-determination, the concept of United Slovenia, and the restoration of Yugoslavia as motivating slogans; therefore, the resistance movement was organized throughout the Slovene national territory. After the end of the war, the Yugoslav Army occupied the areas populated by Slovenes in Italy and Austria but had to withdraw under the pressure of the Western Allies. Nevertheless, it was precisely thanks to the resistance movement that Yugoslavia managed to adjust the border with Italy in favor of Slovenia and Croatia. This represented one of the few border changes in Europe after World War II. There was a consensus on the desirability of restoring the Yugoslav state after the war and Slovenia's position as an autonomous entity within it. Of course, ideas about what post-war Yugoslavia should look like varied according to ideological viewpoints.[36]

The establishment of the communist regime after World War II brought many changes to Yugoslavia as a whole. The state was reorganized as a federation along ethnic lines. Thus, for the first time, the (Socialist) Republic of Slovenia was created as an integral part of the Yugoslav state alongside the republics of Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Hercegovina, and Macedonia. At the same time, Yugoslavia initiated a radical transformation of its society and economy, embodied in the concept of a communist revolution. The communists promised to transform the country into a community of equal nations, which included the possibility that each part of the state could develop its own identity. After the controversy between the Serbian writer Dobrica Ćosić and the Slovene professor of literature Dušan Pirjevec, it became completely clear that the individual nations were not ready to give up their national and cultural identities in the name of communism and Yugoslavism.[37] The views that came out of Slovenia were easily identified within Croatia as well as in Montenegro and Macedonia, where people were not given the opportunity to develop independent identities in their own republics until after World War II.[38]

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35 Perovšek, 2005, pp. 447–460.
36 Godeša, 2006.
37 Gabrič, 1995, pp. 345–353; Gabrič, 2004, pp. 425–448.
38 Ivešić, 2021, pp. 142–161.

The view emerged that national equality could only be achieved by strengthening the positions of the individual republics and consolidating the elements of statehood. An essential component of this republican statehood was the ability to decide for themselves the issues that were subject to federal jurisdiction. These principles were gradually institutionalized from the mid-1960s and fully implemented with the 1974 Constitution. This was followed by delegating broad powers to the individual republics, which became autonomous in their decisions but obliged to coordinate their interests at the federal level. Responsibilities for defense, international relations, and to some extent, taxation, customs, and monetary policy, remained at the federal level. Therefore, inter-republic relationships and policies became the key points of the Yugoslav state's functioning.[39] The communist ideology or Communist Party was supposed to be the cohesive force that would bring together the different interests.[40]

The deep economic and political crisis of the 1980s had significant consequences for society. The consensus that had enabled redistribution of power between the republics and the federation dwindled, and new ways were sought to end the crisis. The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts of 1986 played a crucial role in this process. The memorandum authors stated unequivocally that Serbia was politically and economically inferior, even discriminated against, in Yugoslavia after 1945. Decentralizing the economic and political systems was seen as disintegrating the country. According to the memorandum authors, centralization and strengthening the powers of the federal authorities were crucial to overcome the deep crisis.[41] Serbian political elites gradually began to implement these principles in political practice, which led to confrontations with the other republics.

Any attempt at centralization that could endanger the already achieved degree of autonomy or national identity was firmly rejected in Slovenia. In response to the Serbian Memorandum, intellectuals, rallying around the monthly journal *Nova revija*, published a special issue devoted to the 'Slovene national program.' The contributions shared the idea that to overcome the Yugoslav crisis, it was necessary to ensure comprehensive statehood and transform the political, social, and economic systems toward a liberal-democratic system in which there was no place for the Communist party's monopoly. With regard to Yugoslavia, they wrote that the Federation was a compromise. The role of the Federation was to ensure development of the small Yugoslav nations; the Federation was not to appear as a superior and dominant force trying to unify and homogenize.[42] Both the public and official policymakers increasingly accepted these views as a political program.[43]

By the late 1980s, economic and political tensions in Yugoslavia escalated significantly. As a symptom of the profound and socially divisive crisis, monthly

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39 Borak, 2010, p. 36.
40 Mencinger, 1990, pp. 490–495.
41 Mihailovic and Krestic, 1995, pp. 95–118.
42 Vodopivec, 2010, p. 423.
43 Zajc, 2016, pp. 129–144.

inflation reached 58.8% in December 1989, an annual rate of 25,616%.[44] In this situation, Serbian pressure to centralize the country intensified. In the late 1980s, in a series of extremely heated debates, three concepts for transforming Yugoslavia crystallized. The first option was a centralized federation, most strongly advocated in Serbia. In Slovenia, this option was rejected because it was seen as an obstacle to Slovenian development. As experience had shown, a policy of centralizing macro-administration would only create instability due to significant regional disparities in Yugoslavia.[45] The second option, proposed by Slovenia and Croatia, was to transform Yugoslavia into a confederation of states with full political and economic independence, which would precisely define mutual relationships and the content of common policies. However, this was unacceptable to the federalist concept supporters. Both the first and second options presupposed the need to reach a new agreement on the state's institutional structure and the content of common policies. In 1990, after the multiparty elections were held in Slovenia and Croatia, the option of independence for the individual Yugoslav republics appeared to be a very realistic option.[46]

In a situation where no agreement could be reached, a third option began to be put into practice. From the Slovene point of view, the concepts of statehood/independence, conceived as a solution to the 'national question,' and the political and economic transformation of the communist system into a parliamentary political model and market economy merged into two aspects of the same process. In the second half of the 1980s, a consensus was reached on the urgent need to reform or even abandon the communist economic and political order. During this period, numerous movements and opposition groups emerged, demanding the abolition of the one-party communist system and economic transformation into a market economy. In 1989, the ruling Communist Party and opposition groups, which later transformed into political parties, agreed to hold free elections. In the April 8, 1990, elections, the non-communist DEMOS coalition (the Christian Democrats, the Liberals, the Social Democrats, and the Greens) won a majority. The coalition DEMOS formed the first non-communist government, headed by Christian Democrat Lojze Peterle. The goal of the new government was an independent Slovenian state that would join Western European political, economic, and military organizations.

The collapse of the communist bloc and with it the end of the Cold War division of Europe paved the way to realizing these ideas, not only in Slovenia but also in the other Yugoslav republics. Amid general chaos, Yugoslavia collapsed after a decade and a half of deep political and economic crisis. In 1991, after a brief war, Slovenia emerged as an independent country. In 1992, it became a full member of the international community by joining the United Nations.

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44 Žižmond, 1991, p. 7.
45 Mencinger, 1990, p. 492.
46 Žižmond, 1992, p. 111.

6. Independent Slovenia and its integration into the European Union

Slovenian statehood began with a new constitution that completely abolished the socialist legacy. It defined Slovenia as a democratic and social state under the rule of law, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The political transition was followed by an economic and social transition under the government's lead by liberal democrat Janez Drnovšek. The transition from a socialist to a market economy took place gradually, avoiding various shocks to reduce the inevitable social costs of transformation. Political elites opted for a slow and controlled transition to a market economy and for confidence in their own abilities. They focused on long-term stability of the economy as a whole and on keeping social costs as low as possible. Slovenia gradually transformed its economic system. Three processes were extremely important: privatization, denationalization, and economic liberalization. Liberalization allowed free enterprise and integration into the international economic space; privatization was a tool for transforming the socialist sector of the economy, while restitution was a way to return property that had been nationalized after 1945.[47]

The transformation process had several goals. The first and most important was the institutional alignment of the state, society, and economy with the Western European countries. In the second stage, after 'Europeanization' was completed, integration into the European Union was to follow. Integration into Western international structures became a common goal of the political elites, one that also enjoyed broad public support. Joining the European Union would ensure democratic development and promote economic progress in the long term, thanks to stability and a predictable democratic environment. At the same time, joining the NATO pact would provide long-term security. The first cooperation agreement with the European Union was concluded in 1993, followed by the Europe Agreement in 1996; at the same time, negotiations were underway to join the NATO Pact. Both processes were brought to a successful conclusion and confirmed in the referendum on accession to the EU and NATO. On March 23, 2003, the population voted overwhelmingly in favor of accession to both organizations. Slovenia joined NATO on March 29, 2004, and the European Union on May 1, 2004, along with several other former communist countries. Immediately after joining the European Union, preparations began to meet the conditions for adopting the euro as a national currency. The prevailing opinion among the political elite was that only the introduction of the euro would fully complete the process of Europeanization—that is, Slovenia's integration into the European area. At the same time, accession to the European Union also reaffirmed the concept of United Slovenia. The entire ethnic territory was given the opportunity to develop cooperation in the political and economic spheres and to integrate the cultural sphere without obstacles,

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47 Lorenčič, 2016, pp. 51–65.

regardless of state affiliation, in the same regulatory environment, and with open borders.[48]

Accession to the European Union was made with the expectation that the European framework could protect and promote each member's national development. This is a long-term prism through which Slovenes have judged their position in the past. Tine Hribar, a philosopher and important thinker on Slovenian statehood, expressed this very clearly when he wrote the following:

> Just as there are no open borders without borders, there are no open cultures without cultures themselves—cultures with their own centers... These cultures—of diverse and varied origins, present today as the cultures of European nations—constitute the foundations of a cultured Europe. This does not mean, however, that they constitute what is usually called European culture. European culture—that is, what is called culture—does not exist. There is no single European culture, just as there is no single European culture as a particular way of understanding the world. There is, however, Europe as a meeting place of different cultures—that is, a plural space of diversity... In short, European cultures, including Slovenian culture, are not branches on a tree whose boot is European Culture. Instead, they are self-sustaining, self-contained, and independent trees.[49]

7. Conclusion

In 1896, Ludwik Gumplowicz, a professor at the University of Graz, published an article on the Slovene nation in the Parisian journal *Revue internationale de sociologie.* The article was merely informative, but it was important for another reason: it was precisely the Slovene case that convinced Gumplowicz to change his doctrine on nations. In the spirit of the times, Gumplowicz had long insisted on a distinction between historical and non-historical nations. Only historical nations that possessed a state were nations in the proper sense of the word, while he called others undefined ethnic communities or tribes. The Slovene case, however, convinced him to change his views. He redefined a nation as a community that expresses itself in a common language and has a common cultural essence, not just a common origin.[50] Statehood as such did not matter much, at least not in Central Europe. The process of a national constitution proceeded differently, either starting from the state framework or from the cultural and historical heritage. The Slovenes were an example of a coherent national community formed on a common linguistic-cultural basis, despite territorial division.

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48 Vodopivec, 2010, pp. 456–457.
49 Hribar, 2004, p. 426.
50 Cvirn, 1993, pp. 356–357.

They were a part of the broader process of forming modern nations as cultural, political, and economic entities in the 19th century. In a broader sense, the formation of the Slovene nation can be described using Hroch's stages of nation-building. Miroslav Hroch distinguishes three hierarchical stages in the development of national movements. He defines the first phase—phase A—as the period of romantic interest in a nation. The next stage, Phase B, is dominated by 'patriotic or national agitation.' This, then, is the period of national revival. The last phase, phase C, involves a strong national mass movement.[51] The first phase lasted until the Vormaerz, when the concepts of Slovenia and Slovenes were defined, named, and specified in terms of territory. The second phase followed after 1848, when the population's strong nationalization began. The third phase took place in the last decades of the 19th century, when the nationalization process was more or less completed. At this point, one can speak of the Slovenes as a modern cultural (cultural institutions, mass press), political (ideological partisanship, distribution of interests), and economic community (faster economic development).

The concept of United Slovenia formed the basis of national ideology throughout the 19th century. It included the demand for constituting a separate political-administrative entity that would encompass the entire territory inhabited by Slovenes. The concept was more of a propaganda and motivational slogan than a realistic platform for political action. Because of its ethnically mixed structure, Slovene emancipation was framed as a response to the political and economic aspirations of other nations—mostly pitting Slovenes against the Germans and, on the fringes of Slovene territory, against the Italians and Hungarians. The low relative importance of the Slovenes as a community posed a challenge to the leaders of the national movement. Therefore, toward the end of the century, the idea of United Slovenia was combined with the idea of Yugoslavism, due to the Slovenian kinship with the Croatian and Serbian nations. The association's aim was to increase the relative importance of Slovenes and improve the chances of realizing the maximalist goal of a national ideology. The 20th century was marked by the idea of Yugoslavism as a space for preserving and strengthening the Slovene identity. At the same time, it also meant turning away from the idea of a United Slovenia in the political sense and strengthening the policy of a 'unified cultural space.' The aim of this concept was to unite the ethnic territory on a cultural level, regardless of national borders. In the late 1980s, when a profound political, economic, and social crisis completely destroyed social and political cohesion in the Yugoslav state, a new national concept emerged. It aimed at Slovenia's full statehood and integrating the ethnic territory through its incorporation into the European Union. The state borders were no longer an obstacle to integrating the Slovene territory.

51 Hroch, 1985, pp. 22–23.

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