

## **THE POSITION OF BELIEVERS AS SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF YUGOSLAVIA**

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There are two reasons why I am using the case of Yugoslavia in order to deal with the theme of believers as second-class citizens. The first one is simply that I am living and working as a scholar in that country. It is my ethical and scholarly responsibility not to restrict the results of my many years of scholarly investigation only within the borders of my country, regardless whether the results of that scientific investigation are "favorable" or "unfavorable" for my country. I consider sociology to be a critical social science, which must be emancipated from ideological and politocratic structures regardless of possible personal consequences. For that reason I do not accept the ideological classification into Marxist and bourgeois sociology, according to which the former ought to be an apologist for the socialist (Marxist) social system, because the latter, according to this classification, defends, by definition the capitalist system.

The second reason is in my conviction that there are some key characteristics valid for all socialist countries. Concisely these characteristics could be expressed by the term "real socialism," which was accepted in Yugoslav sociology more or less as a key analytical concept for the entire social reality of these countries. The analysis of the social position of believers as second-class citizens in Yugoslavia could turn out to be instructive also for others and permits a certain generalization of the results of such an investigation.

### I

For our analysis it is of crucial importance first to identify these key characteristics which are in the closest correspondence with the predominant doctrinal ideology, namely that it is possible to change the global system as a natural system by "revolutionary" means into a socialist society. Such changes are decided upon and implemented by the Communist Party, which alone knows the goals of social construction.

The first characteristic is, accordingly, a one party system, which alone permits the efficacious realization of the elaborated social construction. A multi-party system in

principle is not possible. The Communist Party becomes normatively assigned (by means of constitutional or other legal texts) as an avant garde social elite, which has the right to determine the direction of social development in all social spheres in accordance with the values and criteria of their own aims regardless of the will and attitude of the citizens. The radical conclusion is that political democracy, as an universal achievement of human civilization, is viewed as an anti-systemic structure.

The second characteristic is reflected in a completely closed systemic social model. Effective directing of social development is possible only by denial of freedom of all individual behavior which does not coincide with the specified conception of the social project. In the contrary case, the permission of innovative attempts of individuals or social groups would permanently threaten the Party's social project and therefore their realization is thwarted or even completely prevented. Therefore civil and human rights in these countries are in principle unacceptable because they are against the system.

The third characteristic deals with the logic of the structure of the project and the model of leadership of social development. The model of leadership is strictly hierarchical. That means, firstly, that the general principles of the project without exception determine the positions and solutions on the lower levels. The individual and particular must function strictly as part of the general; that is axiomatic and without discussion. Out of it follows that centralization is the essential part of the social construct. All the initiatives, ideas, and general solutions always stem from the "center" and are transmitted by middle, lower, and lowest levels of hierarchic structures, namely, from top to bottom. Every other way, primarily from the bottom to the top, is regarded as explicitly anti-systemic and is therefore consistently repressed.

The fourth determinant relates to the character and meaning of the state and the government. The state, as a means by which the Communist Party uses for the realization of its project, in principle cannot be the so called state of laws, in the classic meaning of that term. The socialist state is perceived as the "absolute" rule which is not bound by any norms of laws which would precede public laws, e.g. natural human rights or private, special rights as the source of legal norms and human rights. The only original source of legal norms is public law. Practically this means that all social structures and activities are clearly legally regulated with the application of the principle that everything is forbidden unless explicitly allowed. That also means that there is a need for an enormous administrative apparatus not only for the carrying out of that which is legally stipulated, but also for the control and repression of everything that appears outside the legally regulated and not only for the repression of everything which is against the norms. The state takes on the function of defending the Party's project but not the function of defending civil and human rights.

The fifth characteristic is that in these societies the natural activity of the market system is replaced by measures of the Communist Party and the state. That means the absolute predominance of the administrative regulation and activity even in the economy. Planned economy is the slogan of that model. According to the above mentioned principle, even the economy functions according to the hierarchical form of administration. An

independent, autonomous economic enterprise is impossible in principle because it is an anti-systemic entity. Also impossible is private ownership, or so called pluralism in the form of ownership. Likewise impossible is the actual functioning of social ownership or self-management regardless of its basic socially progressive significance. Basically only state ownership with all its consequences is acceptable. This means that ownership is in the hands of political rulers. Since the administering of this state ownership cannot be done directly and absolutely, the political rulers (depending explicitly or implicitly from the conditions in different socialist countries) distribute ownership rights to individual producers and thereby create not only the appearance but also the real relationships characteristic for feudal forms of property ownership. Looking at it radically that means that ownership in these countries is privately owned by the state, but that all rights which are derived from it are in the hands of the political power-holders, who distribute these powers arbitrarily. And since the holder of the power is the Communist Party that means that the party controls absolutely all processes and channels of use of these distributed rights. At least for now one cannot deny that in various socialist societies there are other characteristics or parallel sub-systems of private and cooperative ownership, but only as minor phenomena.

The sixth characteristic is the (im)possibility of articulating various individual and group interests or even showing initiative in all spheres of societal life, from culture to politics and economics. Such natural articulation is in principle anti-systemic at least in so far as the interests and initiatives collide with the vision and articulation of the projected development by the leading Communist political elite. Due to this it is impossible to have autonomous associations and organizations even in the economy, and even less in politics or elsewhere. Every form of associations of interests is prescribed "from above" or allowed only on the basis of prior permission of the hierarchically determined political (party) governing organ.

Consequently self-management, in the sense of activity independent of the center of the system, is, as stated previously, not acceptable in principle for the said system. Since in all those countries (especially in Yugoslavia) there are forms of associating and acting which are called self-management, one should state that these are limited forms of self-management, forms which we might call para-self-management. They should not be underestimated but it is important to see their limits. These limits are determined by the normative system of government which in principle allow the center of political power to intervene arbitrarily and freely either into the functioning of individual politico-territorial units (republic, commune, county, autonomous region, or similar), individual economic enterprises, or normatively determined "self-managed" associations. More specifically: it is not only a case of para-self-managing but of pseudo-self-managing. The form of arbitration from the center varies from country to country. In those cases where there is a full identity between the government and the party leadership the arbitrating of the party is exploitative. If there is a declared separation of the government and party organization, the party arbitration is implicit, but no less effective. Hence, all attempts by political-territorial units (communities) to function autonomously are regarded anti-systemic. A radical conflict-situation therefore emerges especially in the case of republics and

(formally) autonomous regions in which there is a close identity between the political and ethnic (national) community.

The seventh characteristic deals with the axiomatic claim that the project of the Communist Party is scientific with an a priori assertion that Marxism is a science. The result is a slogan about scientific socialism, a scientific worldview (Weltanschauung), a scientific school, etc. The Communist Party is represented not merely as avant garde, a leading social subject, but also as the carrier, "owner" of an avant gardist scientific ideology, which provides, without exception, scientific solutions for all spheres of social life. The existence of other ideologies (and religions) may, at best, be tolerated. Competitive, alternative functioning of other ideologies is regarded as anti-systemic. Every form of competitiveness disturbs the system thus conceived. Therefore special defense mechanisms are created under the guidance of the political center. The final radical consequence of the defense mechanism is that it develops into a mechanism of repression (Party and state) whose goal is to destroy or at least marginalize the alternative ideologies. Historical evidence points to the conclusion that the final variant is when Marxism becomes an explicitly fundamentalist para-religion, which shows signs of aggression and destruction of other patterns of thought and behavior of people, both individuals and groups.

Based on the above listed characteristics of real socialist societies (formulated as ideal types in Weber's meaning of the term) we can determine the essential characteristics of the social position of (religious) believers within these societies. Not taking into account, for the time being, the rich and manifold historical and sociological evidence which testifies to the events in the field of religion of Eastern European socialist countries (including Yugoslavia), but paying attention exclusively to the character of these societies, we can list the some of the essential characteristics of this process.

1. At best, the system tolerates the existence of various religious groups, religious organizations and communities. For a variety of reasons the decision is not to prohibit completely their formal existence and activity (except in Albania). However, a whole series of legal mechanisms for the limitation of their activities with the goal of social marginalization of religious organizations was established. The ideologically primary concept of the freedom of religious activity actually limits that freedom to liturgical activity within church buildings. The single party system, which was established after the revolution, cannot accept any organization, especially political, which is not under its direct control or is explicitly permitted by it. Large churches especially (i.e. Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant) are not only institutions outside the system, but represent a great challenge to the system due to their very existence. Such churches are, namely, not some small, insignificant oases outside the system, but represent a significant and influential segment of society, which the system is unable to control directly and cannot exert an influence upon its internal structure, and even less so upon the church's teaching. For the system the Catholic Church is a special challenge due to worldwide (international) character with a hierarchical center outside the country, which they cannot influence. The existence of such large churches within socialist countries, according to the fundamentalist interpretation of Marxism, corresponds to an unfinished revolution.

Therefore there are numerous actions (reactions) of the system with the goal of carrying out the revolution as originally conceived. Sociological and historical evidence about various persecutions and even massacres (pogroms) testifies about these attempts to finish the revolution.

2. The avant garde political party, which insists on the absolute monopoly of social decision-making, starting with the assumption of power, and even more so later, needs the justification of its own failures. Therefore churches can serve as a welcome scapegoat who is blamed for failures in the "building of socialism." Failures might threaten the monopoly of the avant garde in the eyes of the population. Therefore the system must construe a subject of responsibility outside itself. Such a function is taken over by "the class enemy." Although it is desirable that such an enemy, in principle, be basically imaginary and undetermined (therefore slogans such as nationalism, technocracy, bureaucracy, liberalism, etatism, dogmatism, anarchism, anticommunism, antisocialism, contrarevolution--all functioning as the "class enemy") yet, in various phases of the so called struggle against the "class enemy" the system ascribes responsibility for its own failures also to the churches. That leads to new repressions and new limitations for religious organizations and institutions.

3. Slogans produced by the system, as well as ideological fantasies about the "danger of clericalism or clerical nationalism," especially in the case of Yugoslavia, play a special role. Looking at it objectively, one detects the most sensitive spot of the system about the competitiveness in the political sphere of society. Simple monopoly does not only include the monopoly of a political ideology which creates and achieves things "from top to bottom," from the political center downward, but excludes generally every political initiative "from bottom up" and within the system, if this initiative is against the ruling political values and solutions. Even more so it excludes every political initiative of political subjects outside the system. Every political initiative, even in the form of moral attitudes expressed toward specific social and political events, which might come from religious groups or organizations, especially from churches, are in principle anti-systemic. Therefore they are repressed. Exceptions are possible due to tactical political reasons only when religious groups or individuals give supportive statement about the existing political and social system. In its function of legitimizing the existing system such exceptions may even be accorded the status of the permitted. The charge of clericalism (or the abuse of belief and the church for political purposes) is applied to every instance of articulating a critical moral-political reflection upon social reality by the believers and especially by church leaders. The charge of clerical nationalism as a stigma is applied in principle to every attempt of public pronouncement by the church about the relationship between religion and the nation.

4. Citizens-believers, members of religious communities, may, according to the announcement of the system, if they have political aspirations, involve themselves only in existing socio-political organizations which have been recognized by the system. This is true both for organizations in the narrower sense of the word, as well as for other nonpolitical or prepolitical associations and societies. The network of socio-political

organizations, associations and societies is prescribed from the center and allows no exceptions, spontaneities or initiatives from "bottom up."

Even in this respect there are two limitations for citizens-believers. The first is in regard to the possible ways of their participation in political and social life. The system does not tolerate, much less permit, any explicit appeal to religious values for such participation. The believer can function only as an abstract citizen and must, in accord with the system's principle that belief is only a separate personal concern, leave her or his religious convictions "at home." The second, even more essential limitation, has to do with the absolute party monopoly. Accordingly, the entire network of socio-political organizations, associations, and societies functions exclusively as a transmission mechanism of the Communist Party. The programs of these organizations sometimes even explicitly state that they are identical with the Party program. Since the Party program normally values religion negatively, aiming at its "dying out," believers find themselves in a situation of acting against their own convictions, aspirations, and interests.

5. The status of believers as second-class citizens is the direct result of the avant garde societal role of the Communist Party. Explicitly or implicitly all Communist Parties of Eastern Europe accept the Bolshevik concept about religion as an obstacle for the full participation of believers in activities aiming at changing social relations. Therefore believers are not allowed to join the Communist Party, which is a privileged political institution. This is reflected not only in the fact that there are few believers who are party members, but also that, practically speaking, they are absent from the organs of government, centers and places where the greatest amount of political and social power is concentrated. The system gives preference in such roles and places to members of the Communist Party. Therefore, as a norm, believers are excluded from governing institutions. There is a negligible chance that they may succeed to be involved in leadership positions of any social sphere (from economic and political to cultural and educational). Some analysts even regard believers as third-class citizens, because second-class citizenship is accorded to all nonmembers of the Communist Party, among whom are also nonbelievers. From the perspective of the system public expression of religious convictions are a sufficient reason for sharper attacks upon religious than irreligious non-Party members. Social, professional, and political promotion of citizens-believers is therefore not only systematically made impossible or obstructed by the system but is declared as anti-systemic because it would cause problems with the political monopoly of Communist Party members.

6. The ideological slogan of the scientific worldview, which seeks the systematic acceptance of this view, namely the homogenization of the worldview conception, specially harms the believers. The religious worldview is regarded by the system as a specially dangerous obstacle in the elimination of nonscientific worldviews. The concept of scientific worldview is claimed to be identical with Marxism, which in principle included atheism, formulated as militant atheism. The religious worldview is seen as being theistic, hence in complete contradiction with the Marxist. On that basis in all socialist countries, a more or less strictly institutionalized system reeducates citizens in

the aim of homogenizing their worldview. This was especially manifested in the school system either in the form of explicit or implicit obligatory study of so called scientific atheism. One must not underestimate the importance of the separate system of atheist propaganda from atheist museums and exhibits to publishing activities. All of that had many psychological effects upon the spiritual world of the believing population. They were constantly exposed to pressure, which caused mass traumatization of believers as they were convinced, with good reason, that even in contemporary socialism, and more so in the future, their convictions are undesirable.

From all the above on the basis of the analysis of the system, we can conclude that the interpretative hypothesis of the second-class position of believers under conditions of real socialist societies is warranted. Second-class citizenship is a sociological metaphor for the social position of all those citizens, individuals and groups, whose models of thought and behavior do not fit into the system of prescribed and by the political and ideological monolith desired forms of thinking and behaving. Conflict between required behavior and the natural behavior of citizens as human beings as a rule ends with negative consequences for the social position of all who are "disobedient" and "insubordinate". Historical and sociological evidence testifies about various forms of such consequences in those countries ranging from the complete marginalization in society to the revocation of citizenship and exile. Believers experience this in a special manner also, because, as a rule, when compared with others, they are also members of religious organizations and churches. Second-class citizenship does not manifest itself merely in the form of personal experience, repression, and unpleasanties, but also in collection problems and the factual exclusion from the system. The forms of repression and exclusion from the system differ from country to country. Each one them, from the U.S.S.R. to Yugoslavia, have their peculiarities. But none of the specificities of Eastern European countries leads to the loss of the common characteristics which we described.

Already at this point in our analysis we must assert that the model of real socialism never functioned perfectly nor optimally in any of these countries in the course of various time periods. What is obvious is that in this moment the social reality of real socialist countries is experiencing a serious, all-encompassing structural and comprehensive social crisis of the "second wave." Out of that crisis came many initiatives of new (and old) political elites in order to reform the system. Glasnost, perestroika, "new thinking," rights of people, new socialism, socialism with a human face are only some of the slogans which connote change, new possibilities, and even new horizons not only for socialist countries but for all of humanity. It is clear that the single party system of rule is not an exemplary form of governing highly developed societies. The single party system, as we already noticed, presupposes undeveloped human structures, hierarchical and bureaucratic rule and thereby establishes only a single center of organization which has all the "truth." Feedback of information, which is needed by every system, has the sole function in real socialism to exert control about how exactly and faithfully lower levels execute directives and decrees sent from above. Looking at this system sociologically this model contains the largest number of instances of the enlightenment absolutist state with pronounced feudal components. The crisis had to take place also because the system is totally unable to adapt itself and respond to the demands of the contemporary age which were raised by

the structures of the post-industrial information society. All socialist societies are latently or even manifestly facing a crystal clear alternative: remain within the framework of the prevalent real socialist conception or look for solutions, reforms, and corrections within the system or even reject that concept and construct a model of a natural system, which would in essence mean to construct a social-democratic model, as it functions in some European countries. According to the first alternative the reforms would in the final instance mean still greater centralization, administrative arbitrariness in all social relations, an even greater degree of economic, political, cultural, and spiritual homogenization and more efficient control from top to bottom. In the latter case a social-democratization of the entire system would occur with positive consequences in economics, politics, and culture as well as in the field of human rights. The fate of the so called religious question depends on whether the first or the second option will be implemented. At the present there are still open possibilities for the implementation of either option. Therefore it is still useful to reflect about the second-class status of religious believers as citizens in these countries.

## II

At the time of this writing [April 1989] Yugoslavia is facing a deep, all-encompassing social crisis, the likes of which was not seen since 1945. Today it is clear, that despite attempts in the past to distance the country from the model of real socialism, this has not occurred. Several very opportune occasions to achieve this goal were missed.

The first opportunity was immediately in 1945, after the War and after the completely autochthonous movement for national liberation, which already during World War II came into conflict with Stalinist Bolshevism. Despite efforts for other alternatives, the victorious Communist elite accepted the Stalinist Bolshevik model of social organization in its entirety.

The second opportunity came in 1948 after the brutal conflict between Stalin and Tito, when society had to find a new identity in order to be distinguishable from the Stalinist model. The massive support which the population gave to Tito opened incredible opportunities for a change. However, the case of Milovan Djilas in 1953 testifies that the political elite did not wish to abandon the concept of political, cultural, and economic monolithism. Renewed serious attempts were related to the program of economic and social reform in 1956 which did not succeed for the same reasons and terminated in the "icy" 1970s (as sociologists called it) which led to the new homogenization of all social sectors supported by significant repressions. The second half of 1980s (after Tito's death in 1980) show signs of even deeper social crises which may resolve themselves in either of the two directions described earlier.

The first real efforts to transcend the real socialist model in Yugoslavia can be undoubtedly identified in the second half of the 1960s in the form of the fairly important movement toward dialogue between Marxists and Christians. The significance of that movement, whose protagonists are intellectuals from both sides, especially in parts of Yugoslavia in which the Catholic Church is predominant (Slovenia and Croatia), is that

the concept in itself presupposes equality of all who participate in the dialogue, including the equality of Christians. The public manifestations of this movement brought a lot of fresh ideas in the cultural and spiritual sphere although politicians were at best tolerant but simultaneously kept "closing" the intellectual space. However, one should not underestimate the impact of this movement for the softening of political attitudes toward religious organizations and a certain liberalization in regard to the exercise of all human rights by believers. "The ice years" essentially suspended the dialogue or at least completely marginalized it. The political center was skillfully able to manipulate the religious pluralism of Yugoslavia with which there are permanently connected latent or manifest tensions and opposition between the three great religions of Yugoslavia, namely Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Islam.

The second, more serious attempt of public reflection of religious freedoms and related social position of believers was the publication of the results of empirical research of sociologists of religion about religious phenomena in various parts of the country, and especially in Slovenia, Croatia (Zagreb, Split) and Serbia (Belgrade, Nis, Novi Sad). The empirically oriented sociology of religion definitely destroyed the monopoly of ideology and politics in this field. By means of its activity it "legalized" religious views, convictions, and practice. The publication of the results of the empirical research greatly demystified ideological positions about the marginalization of religious convictions and the influence of religious communities. Though it may sound anachronistic, by means of this research religious phenomena received the dignity of an object of scientific research and lost to a large degree the status of an object of obligatory ideological manipulation.

Nevertheless the publishing of the results of empirical research, which deal directly with the question of the political and social equality of believers as citizens, during their publication in 1986 encountered a severe political and ideological reaction even in Slovenia, the westernmost part of the country which has the reputation of having a liberal political elite. This was less in regard to the reliability of the data (numbers) but more in regard to our efforts to interpret the empirical data, although the interpretation was in the form of interpretative hypotheses in so far as we attempted to relate the existing situation to the system, either by defining the system's defects or by pointing to the logic of the system's production.

During the annual polling of public opinion in the republic of Slovenia--an independent federal unit of Yugoslavia--in the 1980s we have already thrice polled a representative sample of the population and among the others also asked the following question:

Do you think that the believing (religious) citizens are in any manner neglected (abused), are in an unequal position or not?

In the annual poll we received the following distribution of replies to this question:

1983 1984 1986 -----

-no,they are not being neglected

in any respect 65.7% 61.6% 61.7%

-in principle and by the

constitution they are not, but

in practice it does occur 20.3% 25.4% 22.9%

-yes, in principle they are being

neglected 3.0% 2.7% 4.1%

-I do not know, undecided 11.0% 10.3% 11.3%

Parallel with these data we had the use of research data regarding views and values of high school youth in Slovenia (1980, 1981, and 1986) in which the diversity of positions was even more accentuated. As much as 45% (1980), 44% (1981) and 48.8% (1986) opined that in practice believers are being neglected.

The interpretation of the cited empirical data started with the presupposition that the declared statements about human and citizens liberties in the Constitution of Yugoslavia are not problematic, because these definitions were taken over from the generally accepted international conventions and declarations. Further they started with the presupposition that perceptions of the restrictions of these liberties (in our case the political and other freedoms of believing citizens) depend upon many socio-demographic, statutory, and other factors. Also taken into account was that less than the entire population is religious. Namely the sociological evidence in these years when research was done, was that 50-53% of the entire grownup (over 18 years of age) population is religious. That means that we had to take into consideration that the sensibility of believers in that respect is probably different from the sensibility of nonbelievers. Additional material for our interpretation was also the written replies of the high school students (1980, 1981) who could (and mostly did) document their answers with examples from life, which led to the conclusion that citizens who are believers are in practice neglected. That led us to look for an answer why the high school students (14-18 years old) perceived a greater neglect of believers than did adults. From the above as well as the broader referential framework resulting from the real socialist reality, we believe that the fact that every fourth respondent points to the violation of civil rights of believers cannot be interpreted as accidental or as a "natural phenomenon" which appears only in the model but not in real life. The density of "cases" is so great that at least it points to defects in the system. This system includes social, legal, or psychological mechanisms which block or at least limit the opportunities for believers in their attempts to exercise the declared human and civil rights.

A paradigmatic example of these mechanisms is the operation of so called moral-political fitness. Until recently all public job opening announcements, especially for leadership positions, included also the request that the candidate demonstrate moral and political

fitness for the job. In practice it is clear that this always indicates the selection of a member of the Communist Party. Factually believers were obstructed in their "regular" professional promotion. This was even more accentuated in political promotion. How else to explain the fact that there are no believers in the highest levels of federal, republican, and even local governments? While in the lowest institutions of self-management (local communities) one can still find here and there a believer as a president or secretary, this does not happen at the level of the county, region, republic, or federation.

The system of real socialism produces suspicion of nonparty members, especially believers. The system of so called "cadre coordination" (formally within the framework of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People) places control mechanisms at all levels of the system, which, without exception, gives preference in political elections to members of the Communist Party and others who are "morally and politically fit." A special system of selecting "cadres" function also for professional service in the army and police. Empirical investigations of (non)religiosity in the republic of Croatia, for instance, show that people in those services are mostly members of the Communist Party. A similar system of selection, though not so rigid and explicit can be found in the field of education, especially in middle and higher schools and in the state administration of the republican or federal levels. Moral-political fitness was practically until yesterday the criterium for selecting and retaining university professors. A special impact in that respect was the decree in the statute and program of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia that nonreligiosity is a condition of membership. This is then connected to the constitutional provision about the leading role of the Communist Party in society. This means that the party is legally privileged and so are its members when compared to other citizens and especially believers.

Church hierarchies of both the Catholic and the Orthodox churches frequently pointed out these facts both as the base and the cause of the second-class citizenship of believers. The importance of these empirical data consists also in pointing out that the perception of the "inequality of believers in practice" is present not only among believers but also among nonbelievers or undecided. The distribution of this perception among believers is above the Slovene average (1983: 26.7%, 1984: 33.2%, 1986: 33.9%). That is understandable on account of their greater sensibilities. The distribution of this perception among nonbelievers, as one may expect, is under the Slovene average (1983: 17.8%, 1984: 20.3%, 1986: 17.8%). However, nearly every fifth citizen nonbeliever confirms the discrimination of believers. The same trend one can see in the distribution among (non)religious high school students in Slovenia. Among high school students who attend catechism classes (research of 1986) the view that believers are discriminated against is as high as 71%.

How to interpret the greater degree of criticism among the youth? Why is the sensibility of high school believers greater than among adult believers? The social structure of adult believers certainly affects the distribution of their views. In 1986 the believing population was made of 71.8% of qualified laborers, farmers, retirees, and homemakers, 19.8% were white collar workers, and the rest made up 8.3%. This social composition of believers

determines the lower level of perception about their social position as citizens-believers as does the larger distance between them and those social segments which due to discrimination on account of religious conviction they are practically absent (politics, education, army, police, public administration, and organs of government). High school students, on the other hand, experience discrimination more directly on account of their experience of the promotion of the scientific (Marxist) worldview. The young are less conformists by definition and their experience tends to be more emotional than that of adults.

These hypotheses are supported by the documentation of the statements by the youth as to where and how discrimination against believers is taking place, which they made during the polling. The majority of statements point to discrimination in:

schools (singling out believers, discrimination against teachers who are believers, preferential treatment of atheism),

professional promotion (preferential treatment of Communists in job applications when compared to believers, stipends and financial assistance for education, discrimination against believers for the teaching positions),

political advancement (there are no believers in any significant political institutions, the exclusion of believers from politics due to moral-political fitness criteria),

suspicion by the general public toward religion and believers (here they mention critical and derisive articles about religion in the press, ridicule by political leaders, identification of religion with superstition, trickery, and fallacy, and the general negative atmosphere in regard to religion in all of society),

privileged social position of Communists (Communists have a priori greater rights in their jobs, politics and elsewhere; in all leading positions one finds only Communists),

believers cannot be members of the Communist Party (that means they cannot be in certain professions such as police, customs, army, and this also means the prohibition for Communists to belong to the church which directly intervenes into human and familial relations),

the abuse of clergy (the position of clergy is discriminated against, the press and other media attack clergy, students of theology are not treated equally with other students by government organs),

radio and television (inability of clergy to appear on their programs, religious events are not considered newsworthy, no worship services are broadcast),

army (religion and believers are treated differently, i.e. negatively in the spirit of scientific and militant atheism).

These are the main social sectors and manners which high school students identify as areas in which there is abuse of religion and believers. They form the basis of the perception of the inequality of believers.

The ideological and political reaction was sharp and negative in respect to our interpretation that all empirical evidence points to the conclusion that a large number of believers as well as other citizens experience the socialist system as discriminatory mechanisms against believers and who experience their social position as being second-class citizens. Using the old neo-stalinist approach they stressed that this was a misuse of scholarly and professional research for "antagonistic purposes," which supposedly happens whenever the socialist system is in difficulty and crisis. The Constitutional provisions about the equality all citizens before the law regardless of worldview and religion are supposedly the best proof about the untruthfulness and unacceptability of the thesis of second-class citizenship of believers. Since the authors of these ideological and political writings were unable to completely negate some of the well-known negative instances, they explained the abuse of believers with the well-known Bolshevik slogan about "sectarianism." Some Communists, supposedly, do not understand correctly the social approach to believers and make mistakes in their actions. They are usually provoked by clerical activities, especially by clergy, who tend to abuse belief and church for political purposes. Any other interpretation, therefore, means a reactionary, even contra-revolutionary attack upon all the foundations of the socialist system. And so forth.

Despite all of this sociological science, based on empirical data and analysis of the whole system remains firm in its interpretational hypothesis about the second-class citizenship of believers. We were also convinced by data obtained from the research of public opinion in Slovenia in 1987, when we tested again the question of the social inequality of believers. The percentage of those who believe that there is no inequality in the constitution and the laws but that in practice there is such inequality increased from 22.9% in 1986 to 33.00% with an additional 3.8% who believe there is general inequality. The percentage of those who state that there is no inequality in theory or practice fell from 61.7% in 1986 to 52.9%. Knowing the situation in our country we cannot interpret this as meaning there is an increase of believers. More plausible is the interpretative hypothesis that especially since 1986 there is increased awareness by citizens, including believers, about their human and civil rights.

In the recent years (especially since 1987) there came a change in Yugoslavia, along with the escalation of the social crisis. These changes are symbolized by three slogans by which the political elite announces its willingness to change: economic reform, the reform of the political system, and the reform of the Communist Party. In the field of politics a reaffirmation of political pluralism occurred. In regard to the reform of the Communist Party there is not only a greater demand of separating the Communist Party from the government but also for the elimination of the constitutional provision of its privileged and leading role. The essential qualitative novelty is that there is also a strongly articulated pressure for change from the bottom, and at least in certain parts of the country (this is especially true for Slovenia) there are also at the top political elites which are very liberally oriented and to whom change does not mean only a political

tactic out of necessity but also a new political strategy under the slogan "new socialism." In that context there emerged a more relaxed climate also in regard to the religious question.

The social and political scene is still completely open; all options and attempts to deal with the crisis are possible. The fate of the question of the second-class citizenship of believers will depend upon the option taken.

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