

Slovenia Far, Far Away

Bojan BALKOVEC

Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University in Ljubljana
Ljubljana, Slovenia

I got the idea for the title of this contribution from the title of the article by Panta Džambazoski, which was published in *Nova Makedonija* (NMK) at the beginning of November 1991 and is referred to below. The title itself can refer to the geographical distance between Macedonia and Slovenia. This geographical distance naturally somewhat influenced their mutual familiarity and connection. On the other hand, the connection to the phrase “far, far away” alludes to something that is remote and unattainable as in fairy tales.

The dynamics of the events that led to a plural society and independent countries differed in individual republics. In an individual republic the impact of the events from other republics was connected to the situation in the republic itself. If the system of a monolithic party authority had already begun to crumble and the civil society movements had already been developed, the effect was positive in the case of similar events in another republic, otherwise the situation was entirely the opposite. Thus, in the other republics the attitude towards the events in Slovenia was shaped by their own stage of the development of democratisation and the vision of Yugoslavia's future development.

The impression a reader gets when picking up *Nova Makedonija* is that this newspaper, similarly to the majority of the Yugoslav daily political press of the time, was primarily a reporter. The newspaper mostly sums up the reports by the Yugoslav press agency *Tanjug*. In *Nova Makedonija* reporting on the events from the other republics is limited to individual reports. The latter are mostly limited to reporting on interrepublican co-operation. Other occurrences include reporting on the events on a federal level and how the individual republics sided. Occasionally, a text appears that belongs in the

section of curiosities from here and there (on tourist sights, accidents, weather misfortunes). A common practice in Yugoslav newspapers was also the publication, or in fact the reprinting of individual contributions published in the newspapers of another republic. Interestingly, these reprints were in fact often commentaries published in the newspapers of other republics. It can be determined that these commentaries were often the only form of journalistic texts. Let me also mention the common notes of a reporter covering the events in Slovenia which the current state of mind in Macedonia, and chiefly in the other republics as well, saw as unacceptable and non-socialistic. In the continuation I will point out the reports by *NMK* on the events in Slovenia. This contribution is merely a partial insight into and emphasis on individual contributions in the years 1989, 1990, and 1991. Slovenian and Macedonian historiographies have met less often on a bilateral level than e.g. the Slovenian and Croatian or Serbian ones. Contemporary Macedonian historiography was presented in Slovenia at the international symposium *Zgodovinpisje v državah naslednicah SFRJ 1991 – 2003*. Macedonian historiography was presented by Violeta Ačkoska.¹ Of the joint projects, the journal *Slovinci in Makedonci v Jugoslaviji* deserves mention.²

The economic co-operation between Slovenia and Macedonia was placed within the context of a self-governing concerted economy and, of course, of the orientation of Slovenian and Macedonian economy. In the eighties, Slovenian economy shared the fate of the all-Yugoslav economic collapse. With regard to the presentation of the Slovenian economic position, I will mention only the contribution that somehow links us to Macedonia. Namely, the article by Jože Prinčič *Slovensko gospodarstvo v drugi Jugoslaviji (1945-1991)*³, published in a Slovenian-Macedonian journal in 1999. In March 2009, I tried to find material by Slovenian economic organisations in the Archives of Macedonia. I must sadly point out that searching in the

¹ Contributions from the symposium were published in the magazine *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*. See Violeta Ačkoska, *Makedonskata historiografija pomeđu demokratizacijata i partizacijata 1993–2003*. *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, XLIV, 2/2004, pp. 67 - 83.

² *Slovinci in Makedonci v Jugoslaviji*, Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za zgodovino, Institut za nacionalna istorija, Ljubljana/Skopje 1999

³ Jože Prinčič, *Slovensko gospodarstvo v drugi Jugoslaviji (1945-1991)*; In: *Slovinci in Makedonci v Jugoslaviji*, Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za zgodovino, Institut za nacionalna istorija, Ljubljana/Skopje 1999, pp. 105-119.

fund register was rendered difficult, since no up-to-date guide was available. I failed to find a fund of Slovenian economic organisations whose subsidiaries would have headquarters in Macedonia. One exception was fragmented material connected with the old *Ljubljanska banka* bank. It can be concluded that some archival material could be found both on the Slovenian side as well as the Macedonian one within the material by the chambers of commerce or line ministries. The wealth of this material can only be guessed.

The deepening of the economic crisis in Yugoslavia in the eighties in a certain way began to loosen the rigid views on ownership, income, profit, and other things, which for politicians and many economists presented a severe deviation from the socialist concerted economy. The first harbingers of the strengthening of the private sector were covered by *NMK* e.g. on 23rd January 1989, when reporting on the line of thought in Koper's Istrabenz. The latter was evaluating the work results of individual petrol stations and pondered renting some of the less profitable petrol stations to private citizens, primarily to the workers employed at these stations.⁴ Macedonian-Slovenian economic contacts were evaluated by the delegations of the chambers of commerce of both republics in January 1989. The leadership of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce visited Skopje in the second half of January 1989. The three-day visit was dedicated to determining the achievements of the joint economic investments or the future possibilities. As examples of joint investments, *NMK* mostly lists investments in the textile industry and irrigation in agriculture. According to the writing by *NMK*, 119 projects were set up after 1981. The share of connections with the textile industry is also testified to by the mention of the companies visited by the Slovenian delegation. Of the four companies, three were textile factories. We cannot overlook the political rhetoric on agreements on future co-operation that should be strengthened e.g. in construction, and on the joint staff education, which would enable a joint appearance on third markets.⁵

The prices of consumer goods differed across Yugoslavia. In the beginning of February 1989, *NMK* presented the results of the prices at marketplaces, published by the Federal Statistical Office. The article merely forwarded the data mentioning Ljubljana as the city with the most expensive basket. The cheapest basket was the one in Priština, which was worth

⁴ *NMK*, Приватни бензиски пумпи, 23rd January 1989, p. 3.

⁵ *NMK*, Проширување на заедничките вложувања, 25th January 1989, p. 4.

merely 2/3 of the Ljubljana basket. The data was forwarded without any comment.⁶

The winter of 1988/1989 was very dry. *NMK* writes of a four-month dry period that could end in serious water use restrictions. In addition to the coastal region and the Karst, Ljubljana could also be affected due to the drop in the groundwater level.⁷ In the first months of 1989, the Ljubljana newspaper *Delo* also wrote on the hardships caused by the drought in Macedonia. The local farmers no longer wish to hear a weather forecast predicting nice and sunny weather.

Macedonian public was also constantly informed of the international activities of Slovenian economy. At the end of the eighties, TAM from Maribor became associated with the Italian manufacturer IVECO. At the beginning of May 1989, they signed a contract on the transfer of technologies, long-term co-operation and mutual investments.⁸

May 1989 presented a turning point for the Slovenian air carrier Adria Airways. The company included the first Airbus aeroplane in its fleet. *NMK* presented the aeroplane as the most modern one, using the technology of the 21st century.⁹ In the Ljubljana newspaper *Delo*, this acquisition was covered by Mitja Dermastja.¹⁰ A few days later, Adria also presented its novelty in *NMK* in a big advertisement, which also included a call for participating in a contest for the journalistic contribution *Connection*.¹¹ A similar full-page advertisement was published in *Delo* on the same day as the presentation by Dermastja.¹²

AERO from Celje searched for customers all over the former homeland. It offered potential customers in Macedonia its graphical services or pointed out labels as a means of greater recognisability.¹³ A similar adverti-

⁶ *NMK*, Najskap pazарот во Љубљана, 7th February 1989, p. 3.

⁷ *NMK*, Сто илјади луѓе пијат вода од цистерни, 13th February 1989, p. 3.

⁸ *NMK*, Нови договори меѓу ТАМ и Ивеко, 5th May 1989, p. 5, *Delo*, 5th May 1989, p. 3.

⁹ *NMK*, Ербас во флотата на “Адриа” 19th May 1989, p. 8.

¹⁰ *Delo*, 18th May 1989, p. 3.

¹¹ *NMK*, Денес добивме нов авион, 21st May 1989, p. 15.

¹² *Delo*, 18th May 1989, p. 17.

¹³ *NMK*, Aero advertisement, 26th May 1989, p. 15.

sement was seen less than two weeks later.¹⁴ The ABC Pomurka meat industry from Murska Sobota also advertised its products, more precisely the *Kekec* pâté. The advertisement was connected with the casual notice of the possibility of viewing its offer at the exhibition area in Hall 5, during the 39th International Fair in Skopje. The fair was open until 9th June.¹⁵ The now already bankrupt LTH refrigerator factory from Škofja Loka also drew the attention of *NMK* readers to its freezers. In the eighties, it was very modern to buy freezers for storing groceries in households. By buying larger quantities of groceries, particularly meat, the citizens were not only supplied with food, but could in a way also buy the food slightly cheaper. Buying half a pig for the price per kg of meat was less expensive than buying smaller quantities or for everyday use. Such purchases were also a sort of defence against inflation and price increases of all kinds. The advertisements by Slovenian companies or their subsidiaries in Macedonia were also published during holidays. Thus, for example, Ljubljanska banka congratulated on the holiday of the uprising of the Macedonian nation on 11th October.¹⁶

After the creation of the first political alliances in Slovenia in the beginning of 1989, *NMK* describes the direction of these organisations.¹⁷ The contributions on Slovenia are a part of a series of contributions on Yugoslav pluralism. The Slovenian political scene is presented correctly; however, scepticism whether this is a good thing can still be detected.

On 27th September 1989, the Slovenian Assembly adopted constitutional amendments that enabled the transition from a single-party system to a multi-party system and to market economy. The most important one was the 9th amendment which stipulated that Slovenia is free to ally or to not ally with other countries. This amendment strengthened the right to self-determination, for which Serbian lawyers claimed had already been taken advantage of.¹⁸ *NMK* mostly reports on Slovenian constitutional amendments without comment. We can read contributions on the events in Ljubljana, where

¹⁴ *NMK*, Aero advertisement, 7th June 1989, p. 13. Similar advertisements were published by *Delo* on 16th, 17th and 18th May 1989.

¹⁵ *NMK*, ABC Pomurka advertisement, 7th June 1989, p. 13.

¹⁶ *NMK*, 11th October 1989, p. 16.

¹⁷ *NMK*, 7th and 8th June 1989.

¹⁸ For further detail on adopting the amendments, see Božo Repe, *Jutri je nov dan, Slovenci in razpad Jugoslavije* (dalje Repe, Jutri), Modrijan, Ljubljana 2002, pp. 177 to 183.

a session of the Assembly was under preparation, and on the reactions at the federal level, which tried to prevent the adoption of the amendments in different ways. The last attempt was the meeting of the federal Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia on 26th September, only one day before the session of the Assembly in Ljubljana. Slovenian amendments were said to threaten the integrity of the SFRY. The readers were also presented with the texts of the amendments.

On 7th April 1990, *NMK* published an article on the upcoming elections in Slovenia. These were the first multi-party elections.¹⁹ At the same time were held the elections for the president of the presidency, the members of the presidency, and the delegates of the Republican Assembly. In the case of the elections to the Republican Assembly, the most attention was focused on the sociopolitical chamber. In the following days, *NMK* presented the candidates for the president of the presidency. On the day of the elections, *NMK* readers read that three strongly political blocks were present in the elections to the sociopolitical chamber. The strongest one was said to be DEMOS, followed by the renewed Communists, while the third group consisted of Liberals or the former youth organisation.²⁰ After the elections, it reported on the results, stating that none of the presidential candidates received a sufficient number of votes and that another round of elections is required.²¹ *NMK* also covered the presidential candidates in the article *The Discreet Charm of Democracy*²², which includes their biographies. It also points out certain peculiarities of individual candidates. Among other things, it writes that Pučnik's wife is a German who does not speak Slovene and that his children also struggle with the language. Furthermore, the article also describes the pre-election contest that took place just as those in the West. A few words are devoted to the low blows in the election campaign. The results of the election of delegates to the sociopolitical chamber were presented on 14th and 17th April. It informed the readers of the victory by DEMOS, but

¹⁹ The attitude of individual parties towards Yugoslavia is presented in a collection of sources published by Božo Repe, *Viri o demokratizaciji in osamosvojitvi Slovenije* (II. del: Slovenci in federacija); Viri št. 18. Arhivsko društvo Slovenije, Ljubljana 2003, pp. 131 – 210.

²⁰ *NMK*, Кучан со најголеми шанси, 7th April 1990, p. 5; Четворица кандидати за претседател, 8th April, p. 3.

²¹ *NMK*, Никој не доби апсолутно мнозинство, 10th April, pp. 1 and 4.

²² *NMK*, Дискретниот шарм на демократијата, 11th April, p. 2.

did not fail to mention that when reviewing the results, the highest number of mandates per party was given to the renewed Communists, followed by the Liberals, the Christian Democrats, and the Peasant Union.²³

The first session of the new Assembly was called for 7th May 1990. *NMK* reports on the preparations for this meeting. It informs the readers of the candidates for the leading positions and on the debates surrounding them, which is accompanied by the title of the article *Cenkanje okolu rakovodnite mesta*. As one of the candidates for the President of the Assembly it mentions France Bučar, a DEMOS candidate. What is unusual is that the reports on the session of the Slovenian Assembly are stretched out to almost an entire week (5th, 8th, 9th, and 12th May). On 12th May, *NMK* published a record of the protest of journalists due to the initiative for removing the editors of the national media. The call was said to be connected to the inappropriate reporting on the awkward presiding of the session, when the latter was presided over by the oldest Member of Parliament, Karel Franko, even before the elections to the leadership of the Assembly. *NMK* also published a statement by *NMK* journalists supporting *Delo* journalists, condemning the pressure exerted on journalists.²⁴

In the spring of 1991, *NMK* included a great deal of articles connected with the political talks on reforming the SFRY. Leaders of the republics met in a different republic each time and discussed the solution to the crisis. The first two meetings in Split and Belgrade were followed by a meeting in Brdo near Kranj on 11th April. *NMK* already drew the attention of its readers to this meeting on 9th April in a short notice, which also stated that the meeting will last from 11th to 18th April, followed by a press conference.²⁵ Prior to the reports on the meeting in Brdo, an interesting report was published on the tender for a new Slovenian coat-of-arms and the applications of the coat-of-arms for various needs. Among other things, it mentioned that the new coat-of-arms would be used on military uniforms as well; however, the report does not include any comments.²⁶ Slovenian political leadership also used the meeting of the leaders of the republics to inform of the various

²³ *NMK*, За ДЕМОС 36 делегатски места, 14th April 1990, p. 1; Триумф на обединетата опозиција, 17th April 1990, p. 1.

²⁴ *NMK*, 12th May 1990, p. 3.

²⁵ *NMK*, Самитот – на Брдо крај Крањ, 9th March 1991, p. 1.

²⁶ *NMK*, Конкурс за грбот на Република Словенија, 9th March 1991, p. 7.

issues. Thus, *NMK* reports that two press conferences will be held during the meeting of the presidents. At the first one, the President of the Assembly France Bučar and the Republican Secretary for Legislation Lojze Janko presented the preparations for a new constitution and legal changes in Slovenia. The President of the Government Lojze Peterle and the Vice-President Jože Mencinger were said to discuss the sociopolitical events and economic issues.²⁷ In addition to the report on the meeting at which two theses were debated, on a community of sovereign states or a modernised federation, *NMK* offered its readers two interesting observations. It emphasised in a special frame that in contrast to the meetings in Split and Belgrade, in Brdo no Yugoslav flag fluttered. Not even a Slovenian flag was hung; the sentence, stating that a flag of the former Austro-Hungarian counts who owned the mansion was hung was concluded with an exclamation mark.²⁸ The writer also mentions that the host Milan Kučan received the guests and escorted them to the mansion. The only exception was the Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov, whom Kučan first invited to the balcony and whispered something in his ear, which was rendered somewhat difficult due to their difference in heights.²⁹ The same frame also described the menu of the presidential lunch. The following day, *NMK* published a statement by Kiro Gligorov on the meeting in Brdo. The title of the report summed up the Macedonian standpoint: *Union of States or an Independent Macedonia*. The readers were informed that the next meeting will take place on 18th April in Ohrid.³⁰ A commentary on the meetings of the presidents and on the last one in Brdo was published on 13th April. Allow me to merely emphasise that the commentary pointed out the inadequate informing of journalists of the meeting. The records stating that the Slovenian side made good use of

²⁷ *NMK*, Трета рунда разговори на иднината на земјата, 11th April 1991, p. 1.

²⁸ *Се виореше само знамето на бившите австроунгарски зрфови, на кои некогаш им припаѓала оваа вила! NMK*, 12th April 1991, p. 2. Brdo mansion was built in the beginning of the 16th century. It was owned by the Zois family after the 18th century. It was owned by Prince Pavle Karađorđević after 1935. After World War II, it was the Slovenian residence of Josip Broz. It has functioned as a protocol building of the Republic of Slovenia since Slovenia's gaining of independence. In 2001 it hosted the meeting of the American President G. Bush and the Russian President V. Putin.

²⁹ Gligorov does not write about this whispering in his memoirs. Киро Глигоров, *Македонија е се што имаме*, Култура Скопје 2002.

³⁰ *NMK*, Сојуз на држави или самостојна Македонија, 13th April 1991, p. 1.

the presence of journalists and presented the processes of gaining independence can be understood as a reproach. As regards the press conference, we can read about its inappropriate execution, since the Secretary of Information Stane Stanič did not make sure more journalists got their turn. Only 25 of the 47 questions were answered. Of these, all the questions were said to be by Albanian media. Columns began circulating the response that this occurred because Stanič's wife is Albanian.³¹ After the first two meetings in Split and Belgrade, it was in Brdo that they first discussed the two thematic proposals: on the union of independent states (the proposal by Slovenia and Croatia) or Yugoslavia as a unified democratic state (by Serbia and Montenegro). In principle, Macedonia strove for a union of independent states; we will discuss the details of the federal jurisdiction later on.³²

Before the next meeting of the presidents in Ohrid, *NMK* wrote that this will most likely be the decisive meeting. At the same time it was hoped that this meeting will lead to a breakthrough in the search for a solution and end the indecisive stalling.³³ The same page also presented the leaders of the republics. Just as *NMK* had noticed the lack of flags at the meeting in Brdo, its report on the pulse of Ohrid upon the meeting of the leaders of the republics drew attention to the decoration of the city, since the Boulevard of Revolution and other streets were decorated with a great number of Yugoslav and Macedonian flags. Whether the sequence of the record of flags was deliberately in the form of SFRY, followed by Macedonia, or whether it was merely a coincidence, I cannot tell, but perhaps such a sequence was connected to the atmosphere in Macedonia. In a way, this is also demonstrated by the opinions of the inhabitants published in the same article. They are mostly united in the desire to find a solution. Testifying to the dilemmas of the complex legal formulations, the attitudes and the fear of an uncertain future is a statement by one of the interviewees, who did not care whether the future Yugoslavia were a federation or a confederation, as long as it continued to exist.³⁴

On 19th April, *NMK* reported on the Ohrid summit, at which it was agreed that a referendum would be called in all the republics by the end of

³¹ *NMK*, Од Брдо до Охрид и помеѓу, 13th April 1991, p. 2.

³² Repe, Jutri, p. 75.

³³ *NMK*, Охрид - клучна точка на договарањето, 18th April 1991, p. 1.

³⁴ *NMK*, Надежи за разврска на кризата, 18th April 1991, p. 3.

May 1991.³⁵ Similarly to Slovenia using the meeting in Brdo for a press conference on the events in the republic, the mayor of Ohrid presented Ohrid's plans for the coming tourist season to the journalists at the reception.³⁶

Reports on the economy were rarer at the beginning of 1991, despite the fact that within the issue of solving the Yugoslav crisis the economic segment was, naturally, very important. At the beginning of March 1991, *NMK* published a report on the employment situation in Slovenia. Data from the Institute for Social Planning indicated that in the next few years between 150,000 and 200,000 new posts will have to be created in Slovenia. On the other hand, some 100,000 workers were said to be surplus. The new posts were to be created as a result of foreign investments. At that time around 50,000 were unemployed, which was the most so far. Due to the poor economic position and the incapability of the economy to transform itself, many companies faced bankruptcy.³⁷ By the middle of the nineties, when unemployment was the highest, almost 120,000 people were out of a job.³⁸ The meetings of the leaders of the republics were pushed into the background by the economic news from Slovenia until the end of April. The government in Ljubljana was at that time shaken by the resignation of the Vice-President of the Government Dr. Jože Mencinger. *NMK* writes that Mencinger's resignation was to be expected due to his disagreements with the economic policy. The divergence regarding the privatisation of social capital must be mentioned above all.³⁹ In addition to Mencinger, the Minister of Finance Marko Kranjec also resigned.

Upon the announcement of independence, *NMK* published articles reporting on the adoption of regulations in the Slovenian Assembly, followed by reports on the war. On 25th June, when the Slovenian Assembly was adopting the independence acts, *NMK* published a record of the planned decisions of the Slovenian Assembly on the title page and in the continuation on page 4.⁴⁰ The article emphasises that Slovenia and Croatia see their actions as dissolution, while others saw them as secession. Page 4 includes a

³⁵ *NMK*, 19th April 1991, pp. 1 and 3.

³⁶ *NMK*, Презентација на охридскиот туризам, 19th April 1991, p. 3.

³⁷ *NMK*, Околу 100 илјади вработени вишок, 6th March 1991, p. 5.

³⁸ Repe, Jutri, p. 146.

³⁹ *NMK*, Незадоволство од политиката на владата, 27th April 1991, p. 5.

⁴⁰ *NMK*, Зад демократијата се крие отцепување?!, 25th June 1991, pp. 1 and 4.

number of texts on the disagreement with or condemnation of the Slovenian and Croatian decisions. These disagreements were adopted on various levels, including the lowest ones. Thus, e.g., we can read about the protest of the town organisation of the League of Combatants from Skopje. Regarding the events after the secession, let me also mention the commentary signed by Aleksander Šoljakovski on 26th June. The title of the commentary was *Secession and Responsibility*. Šoljakovski writes that Yugoslavia should have changed for a fact, but that the question remains whether it was to take place the way Slovenia and Croatia did it. He pointed out that the roots of Slovenia's dissatisfaction lay in the loss of economic monopoly, which had been generated or enabled by the underdeveloped ones. Now Slovenia says that it wishes to/will preserve the economic bonds. In his opinion this will not be possible.⁴¹

In the autumn of 1991, the Slovenian government decided to freeze the wages wherever the payments in September exceeded the average in the economy by 45%. With this freezing, which was to last until March 1992, they were to also limit the wage ratio to a maximum of 1:11 and set the highest wage in the amount of 106,500 toalars. Unions opposed this act.⁴² After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, economic co-operation between the former republics of Yugoslavia was rendered difficult or discontinued. Communications were also rendered very difficult. Due to the skirmishes in Croatia, land transport was hindered, while telephone traffic was also affected. After 17th September 1991, telephone traffic with Macedonia was completely cut off for several weeks. It was only restored in the beginning of November 1991, but with lesser capacities than before the start of the skirmishes or the gaining of independence.⁴³ Problems also occurred in the economic co-operation of Slovenia and Macedonia. At the meeting of the Vice-President of the Slovenian Government Dr Andrej Ocvirk with economists from the Gorenjska region, the obstacles and problems occurring in the flow of goods and services were discussed. Ocvirk warned of the closing off of the Serbian and Croatian markets, on which additional taxation was introduced e.g. for livestock traffic from Slovenia. According to Ocvirk, Mace-

⁴¹ NMK, Отцепување и одговорност, 6th June 1991.

⁴² NMK, Zamrzнати платите на вработените, 22nd November 1991, p. 7.

⁴³ NMK, Воспоставен автоматски телефонски сообраќај со Словенија, 5th November 1991, p. 6.

donia is interested in continuing the economic co-operation, but is greatly hindered by its traffic separation from Slovenia. Macedonia was even said to contemplate using sea routes to Slovenia. Economic co-operation with Croatia was already very limited, and virtually discontinued with Serbia. It was stated as an example that since 8th October Slovenia has not bought tobacco products from the former republics. The director of Tobačna tovarna from Ljubljana, Ivan Cimerman stated that the mentioned factory could cover the needs of the Slovenian market for tobacco products on its own. However, in so doing, export would cease. The complexity of the problem was also connected with the legal restrictions from the time of Yugoslavia, when the import of raw tobacco was highly restricted, since the SFRY itself was a tobacco manufacturer. On the black market, cigarettes were sold for three and a half German marks.⁴⁴ Reporting on the economic situation in Slovenia continued. At the end of November, *NMK* wrote on the findings of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on the decline of production, which was said to be the strongest in the case of products for mass consumption. Only three industrial branches e.g. noted an increased production in the ten months of 1991 in comparison with the same period in 1990. These were the production of petroleum products, rubber processing, and the graphical industry.⁴⁵

The problem with foreign currency deposits appeared immediately after the gaining of independence. *NMK* writes that in Slovenia savers were preparing to start a party. Its goal would be to settle this problem. *NMK* writes that there are some 800,000 swindled savers in Slovenia. These were said to have deposited around two million German marks in different banks. The savers were said to oppose the motion for a public debt act which foresaw the division of bonds that could be converted into money after 2002.⁴⁶

In the first days of November 1991, Panta Džambazoski⁴⁷ (mentioned as a special correspondent) wrote of his impressions in the independent Slovenia. He began a series of contributions on 2nd November with the article

⁴⁴ *NMK*, Директорите против политичките блокади, 24th November 1991, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *NMK*, Најбрзо опаѓа производството са широка потрошувачка, 28th November 1991, p. 6.

⁴⁶ *NMK*, Со партија до сопствените пари?, 1st December 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁷ The spellings Džambazoski and Džambazovski appear.

Slovenia Far, Far Away.⁴⁸ The first contribution discusses the journey from Skopje to Ljubljana, which is also pointed out by the sentence in bold face *Бележките на еден патник на линијата Скопје – Љубљана*. In a lively description, the writer states the facts that were the result of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. His editor assigned him the task of exploring how one can reach Slovenia and that he should go there and, of course, write a report on the topic. Air transport was not possible. Adria Airways was not allowed to fly, but he could reach Vienna or Trieste by JAT. The option of a train was also limited, since he would first have to take a Greek train to Budapest, then head to Vienna and afterwards manage it from there. The remaining option was travelling by bus, but he was sceptical whether it even existed. On the contrary, Niš-Express connected Skopje to Ljubljana twice a day, naturally via Hungary. As the driver stated, the line had been operational for twenty-five years. Until August it crossed Croatia, but since this is no longer possible due to the skirmishes, it now crosses Hungary. The driver warned him that he should buy a return ticket, since there (in Slovenia, n. B.B.) he will have to pay with those – tolar (»Купи си повратен билет, зашто таму ќе го платиш со оние – толари«). The way the new Slovenian currency was mentioned can be understood as non-acceptance of the mere fact that there is a new currency or as a wish to warn the passenger of the new fact that dinars are no longer accepted. In addition to him, a journalist, the passengers included an opera singer of the Macedonian National Theatre, a Roma, whom he labelled as a smuggler, and the wife of an YPA officer, of Croatian nationality, travelling to her ill mother. The opera singer is travelling to Zagreb. He will arrive there by train from Ljubljana. The lady is also travelling to Croatia, to Samobor near Zagreb. The lady explains in tears that her husband (a Serb) is now regarded there as an occupier. By mentioning the possibility of travelling from Ljubljana to Croatia, the journalist indirectly informed the readers that traffic between these two countries is undisturbed. The Roma swears that Slovenia is merely a stop, since no money can be made there by smuggling cigarettes. He will travel onwards to Italy. During the ride, the journalist reflects on the questions that pose themselves to the passengers: What will the money situation be like in Slovenia? Do Slovenians exchange dinars for tolar? He discovers with resignation that this is the first time that he has to travel to Slovenia with a passport and across other

⁴⁸ *НМК*, Политичко-сообраќаен хаос, Словенија зад седум брегови, 2nd November 1991, p. 16.

countries. He admits to not liking this. His difficult understanding of the new borders was not merely his own. It was only the crossing of the border between the former fraternal republics, where one now had to show a passport and clear a customs check that for many represented a true contact with the situation and pointed out the real dimension of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. In Belgrade new passengers came aboard, Croats, Slovenes, whom the disintegration of the state or the war in Croatia kept far away from home. During the ride across Vojvodina, the passengers could listen to radio reports discussing the skirmishes in Croatia. The passengers listened quietly and without comment, since, according to the correspondent, they did not wish to hurt each other's feelings. During the route across Hungary, the following questions hung in the air: We are travelling across a foreign country, but we do not know where we will end up. Is the place at which we will arrive, our country or not? "I am convinced that none knew the answer."

The following contributions describe the situation in Slovenia. Džambazoski noticed how active the foreign currency black market was and noted down that the marketplace in Ljubljana was the largest smuggling centre in the world. He noticed a great number of smugglers on the market who spoke various languages of the former common state. The foreign currency black market was namely more adaptable than the official market, which the legislation allowed.⁴⁹ Let us remind ourselves that there was no official foreign currency market for citizens during the SFRY. He described the economic situation, mentioning the prices of staple food, unemployment, and a few economic facts connected to the decline in production and the increase in unemployment. The economic and traffic ties to the former Yugoslavia are severed. He concluded the article with the finding that Slovenes have always been aware that they differ from the rest of Yugoslavia. Whether Slovenia will lose or benefit from leaving Yugoslavia, time will tell.⁵⁰ A few days later an interview between Džambazovski and Aleksander Bajt was published, in which they also touched upon the economic aspects of Slovenia's independence.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *NMK*, Југословенизација на Словенија, 4th November 1990, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *NMK*, Држава ни на небо - ни на земја, 5th November 1991, p. 2.

⁵¹ *NMK*, Лошо им се пишува на Словенците, 16th November 1991, p. 15.

The contributions mentioned in this presentation are only a segment of those with reference to Slovenia. Most often, Slovenia is mentioned in reports on various meetings at the Yugoslav level, in which Slovenian representatives were pointed out due to their demands for change. Until the appearance of parties in Macedonia, *Nova Makedonija* mostly wrote on Slovenian and Croatian demands for the reorganisation of Yugoslavia in the form of reports, which summed up the standpoints of federal bodies in a noncritical way. It can be noticed that the reports began changing in the spring of 1991 at the meetings of the presidents of the republics, when Macedonian policy also decisively emphasised that an agreement was needed and that Macedonia will regulate its status appropriately.

