

Regionalisation, Regionalism and the National Question in Tito's Yugoslavia (1945–1980)

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PRECEDING EVENTS (1941–1945): THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND TITO'S PARTISAN MOVEMENT

In April 1941, due to military attacks by the German army, the first Yugoslav state fell apart.¹ Disintegration was immediately followed by an armed resistance, in order to stand up against the conquering German, Italian and Hungarian troops. This resistance had two focal points: the so-called chetnik movement led by Draža Mihailović and the other, the communist partisan movement, which was headed by Tito.² From the fights with the conquerors (Germans, Italians and Hungarians), with the troops of the ustasha movement (Croatian freedom fighters) and with each other, by 1945 Tito's partisans came out as winners.

It was quite early in the fighting phase that Tito recognized the importance of the national question and deliberately strived to maintain the multiethnic features of the Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY), and his partisan movement (AVNOJ: The Anti-Fascist Council for the Liberation of Yugoslavia). This effort becomes apparent when surveying the list of the leaders of these organizations: Tito himself was Croatian, Ranković Serbian, Gilas represented Montenegro and Kardelj Slovenia. In Tito's opinion it was only the survival of a multiethnic state that could grant CPY, and AVNOJ their central political roles in the re-emerging Yugoslav state. The resolutions of the 'foundation document' of the new state, signed on the occasion of the AVNOJ meeting of November 29–30, 1943 in Jajce, reflect the spirit of this policy. "On the basis of general sovereignty rights, including the right to separation and unification with other nations [...] AVNOJ has made the following resolutions. 1. The peoples of Yugoslavia have never recognised and will never recognise the partitioning of Yugoslavia by the Fascist powers. 2. [...] Yugoslavia is to be founded on the principle of Federalism which is to grant equal rights to all Serbians, Croats, Slovenians, Macedonians and the inhabitants of Crna Gora, that is to the peoples of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Crna Gora and Bosnia-Herzegovina. 4. Ethnic minorities in Yugoslavia are to be granted all ethnic rights."³

1 D. SOKCSEVITS, *Horvátország a 7. századtól napjainkig*, Budapest 2011, pp. 515–516.

2 M. MATTEC, *The Chetniks Movement of the Yugoslav Resistance*, Baltimore 1975, pp. 8–15.

3 *Az AVNOJ határozatainak dokumentumai*, Újvidék 1974, p. 5.

It is evident from the Jajce document that AVNOJ committed itself to the cause of the Federation of five nations (Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian and Montenegrin), forming a country of six member-republics. As the war was progressing, an increasing number of non-Serbs turned toward the Communist partisan movement, although it had originally been founded by Serbs, with the peasants of the mountainous regions being the first “partisans”. This situation can be explained by the fact that Tito’s federalist ideas offered a solution for the problems of non-Serbian nations as well; they were now able to establish their own member-republics and function as a nation within the Yugoslav state.

By May 1945 the conquering foreign troops had been forced out of Yugoslavia by partisans, but the military events of that time were also used to defeat those inner forces (ustashas, chetniks etc.) which were supposed to threaten the emergence and the long-term existence of the federal state, having been outlined in Jajce.⁴ Practically the military events were carried out so as to take revenge and annihilate — or significantly weaken — collaborators and potential adversaries. The events of this revengeful campaign were often ethnically coded, and, in our opinion, apart from the chetniks, who were Serbs, the campaign actually was ethnic cleansing. When describing the events of this time the following facts of ultimate significance need to be considered:⁵

- In the vicinity of Kočevski Rog tens of thousands of Slovenian soldiers and civilians were shot with machine guns.
- The majority of the captured Croatian ustashas — an estimated 20,000 people — was killed.
- 40,000 out of the half million ethnic Germans were killed.
- The majority of the Ballists — Albanian rebels fighting for Greater Albania — were eliminated.
- At the turn of the years 1944 and 1945 about 40,000 Hungarians were killed in Voivodina.

As it is attested by academic research into this period the number of victims can be estimated as 200,000.⁶ Although it needs to be added that, this number is only the number of those who had been “executed”. The scale of ethnic cleansing of the period can best be illustrated by the lot that fell to the ethnic Germans.

In 1941 the number of ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia was 525,000, out of which 330,000 lived in Voivodina. This group of about 500,000 Germans was literally eliminated. First the Germans of Croatia got evacuated as part of Hitler’s plans. 200,000 Germans from Voivodina left in the fall of 1944 with the withdrawing German army. At the turn of 1944 and 1945 about 40,000 ethnic Germans from the group that stayed was deported to the Soviet Union and about 15–20,000 fell victims to the revenging

4 J. JUHÁSZ, *Volt egyszer egy Jugoszlávia*, Budapest 1999, pp. 113–115.

5 L. GULYÁS, *Két régió — Felvidék és Vajdaság — sorsa az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchiától napjainkig*, Budapest 2005, pp. 128–129.

6 A. BEBLER, *A föderalista kommunizmus jugoszláv modellje*, in: *Európai Szemle*, No. 2, 1992, pp. 112–128.

partisan troops. The remaining 70,000 — 80,000 people were relocated in the Federal Republic of Germany in the late 1940s.⁷

In addition, if we consider the fact that Tito relocated about 140,000 Italians from the formerly Italian-inhabited seaside areas, such as the Istria peninsula, Fiume and Zadar, it can be stated that in 1944–45 Tito and his comrades took a gigantic step towards the strengthening of the south Slavic features of the Yugoslav state.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR FEDERATIVE YUGOSLAVISM: THE CONSTITUTION OF 1946

From the previously described resistance movement a direct path lead for Tito to obtaining power for the communists of Yugoslavia and, consequently, his successful anti-German partisan movement could develop into a monolithic communist system. On November 29, 1945 the constituent National Assembly convened and declared the cessation of the monarchy and proclaimed the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. On January 31st, 1946, by officially announcing the launch of constitution, the federal Yugoslav state (JNF) was founded.

The Constitution considered federacy as a basis for the country's new political system and it divided the country into six member-republics including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Crna-Gora, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. In addition, two autonomous regions were established within Serbia; one of these was the so-called Kosovo-Metochia, an autonomous region and the other, Voivodina, an autonomous province.

The constitution laid down the basic rights and duties of the federal state and it also determined the rights and duties of the six federal member-republics, including the relationship between them. The equality of rights of Yugoslavia's peoples and member-republics was granted by the two chambers of the federal Skupština — a kind of federal parliament. In the National Council all the six member-republics were represented by an equal number of representatives, while in the Federal Council the inhabitants of each area were proportionally represented.⁸

The constitution had two very important features. One was that the communist party (CPY), the only and unquestionable bearer of political power, occupied the central position in the country's political system. In other words it meant that, Yugoslavia was a single-party dictatorship. The communist party represented both the legislative and the executive power. Government, legislation, courts, all central or local organizations were only responsible for implementing CPY decisions and orders. Since in practice CPY dominated the entire political scene, this kind of centralization questioned the ability of the federal system to function properly.

The other significant feature of the constitution was that it was mostly a translation of the Soviet constitution of 1936. Thus the Yugoslav federal system was actually based on the Soviet model. Bebler pointed out the most significant consequence of this characteristic feature. In his opinion both the Soviet and the Yugoslav communists thought

7 K. KOCSIS, *Egy felrobbant etnikai mozaik esete*, Budapest 1993, p. 19.

8 J. R. LAMPE, *Yugoslavia As a History: Twice There Was a Country*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 230–232.

that the communist revolution would irrevocably solve the national and ethnic problems in their respective countries. This is why the country's leaders did not implement any useful tool in the system in order to manage and solve their ethnic problems.⁹

When implementing the new system, Tito taught the new member-republics "obedience" by granting them certain advantages, including authority, area or both. These advantages included areas as follows: For the Macedonians Tito made it possible to establish the Republic of Macedonia in the area, which had been returned to Yugoslavia from Bulgaria. It means that Macedonians for the first time in modern history were acknowledged as a nationality and it was within the new Yugoslavia that their first national state could come into being. Tito did everything he could in order to help the strengthening of the regional identity of local inhabitants and to have the national identity of the Macedonian Slavs take root independently of the Serbs, and, most importantly, of the Bulgarians. In order to achieve this aim as early as 1945 a new alphabet and special spelling rules were created and the vocabulary of the Macedonian literary language was also distinguished from that of the Bulgarians. In addition, a new church was founded, too, and in 1958 the archbishopric of Ochrid was established, which in 1967 was officially made into the centre of the national church of Macedonia.¹⁰

The Slovenians were also able to accomplish some of their national objectives. They expanded their territory: those areas, which had belonged to Italy in the period between the two world wars were now annexed to Slovenia. In addition, they obtained the title of a member-republic, which meant a higher status for them. Consequently, Slovenians could now live within the area of an undivided member-republic, called Slovenia. The Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences was also founded.

The small republic of Crna-Gora obtained all those rights which had been given to the "larger" member-republics. In addition, it was allocated significant resources for development by the central government.

Bosnia-Herzegovina was restored as an independent unit within its historical borders of 1878. It also received the status of a member-republic, and, in addition, it could obtain a gateway of its own to the Adriatic Sea. A later development was, that the Bosnian Muslims were raised to the rank of a "nation"; they were given the same rights as the country's five other Slavic nations.

Seemingly Croatia was on the losing side in 1945, because it had lost its sovereignty and both in the east and in the west it had had to give up territories on behalf of Serbia, Crna-Gora and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Actually Croatia was also in the winning team. On the one hand Croatia, despite its former "sins", was now able to obtain the status of a member-republic, and, on the other hand, it was granted some territorial compensation, too: in the west Croatia was able to acquire part of the Istrian peninsula and those areas of Dalmatia, which used to belong to Italy.¹¹

Serbia has been excluded from our list of winners on purpose. It does not mean that Serbia and the Serbians were among the losers of the Constitution of 1946. The Serbs- similar to their status in the period of the monarchy — have always been con-

9 BEBLER, p. 124.

10 L. ARDAY, *A makedón kérdés*, in: L. ARDAY (Ed.), *Reformok és kudarcok: Jugoszlávia utolsó évtizedei és ami utána következik*, Budapest 2002, pp. 184–209.

11 SOKCSEVITS, pp. 614–619.

sidered as a nation practicing political hegemony. Concerning the top political positions — except for the highest ones, in which the right ethnic proportions were carefully taken into account — in the apparatus of the party and the federal state, as well as in the army, the Serbians were overrepresented. In addition, the Serbian inhabitants of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina — the so-called Dinaric Serbs — were also to take up key posts in their respective member-republics.¹²

1950S AND 1960S: THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

It was as early as the events of the Second World War that Tito and the CPY had begun to establish a Soviet-type state socialism in the country. The aims of the communist party included the expulsion of the German invaders, the establishment of the federal Yugoslav state, but the implementation of the new social and economic order of communism was also of great significance. This issue can very well be illustrated by the fact that Tito and his comrades started to change the conditions of ownership as early as the period of the war. 80% of all industrial plants and banks underwent a de facto nationalization as early as 1945, partly through confiscation (in case of “collaborators”), and partly through sequestration (in case of foreign owners). The Nationalization Act of December 5, 1946 only codified the process that had already run its course. In the country’s economy — except for agriculture and small-scale industry and trade — private property ceased to exist.¹³

On August 23, 1945 the Land Reform Act was ratified and, it created the basis for the expropriation of land property of 45 hectares or larger, owned by private persons or the church. When executing the provisions of the law, a total of 1.57 million hectares of land was expropriated, from which 800,000 hectares were re-allotted. The maximum size of the new land properties was 25–30 hectares. The remaining land properties formed the basis for the establishment of state-run farms.

In April 1947 the parliament adopted the first 5-year plan for the period 1947–1951 and it marked the beginning of the introduction of centralized planned economy in the country.

On the basis of the above steps it can be stated that during the period in question Yugoslavia started to march rapidly on the road to a Soviet-type state socialism. But, in 1948–1949 Tito and his comrades opposed Stalin in several questions, among which the issue of the Balkan Confederacy was the most important. Belgrade was not willing to act as it was required from Moscow. As a result of these conflicts by the fall of 1949 Yugoslavia and the Soviet bloc countries terminated all their relationships meaning, that the Soviet Union and its allies formally cancelled their agreements with Yugoslavia and, they even introduced an economic embargo. In addition, the military incidents that took place on the country’s borders meant possible threats, signaling, that a serious armed conflict could break out any time.¹⁴

12 JUHÁSZ, pp. 110–111.

13 LAMPE, pp. 234–235.

14 F. FEJTŐ, *A népi demokráciák története*, Budapest 1991, pp. 163–180; LAMPE, pp. 241–250.

In our opinion the Soviet bloc-Yugoslav conflict and the attempt to isolate the Yugoslav state had very significant consequences concerning the further political and economic situation in the region. Most importantly, as a result of this serious conflict the Soviet Union ceased to exist for Yugoslavia as the communist model country. Tito and his staff could not do both ideologically oppose the Soviet Union and, at the same time, copy the Soviet system. This is why Tito and his comrades broke away from Stalin's bureaucratic-ethic model of state socialism. Consequently, Tito re-interpreted socialism (communism) in order to introduce a new ideology and system of self-management.¹⁵

According to the theory of self-management the state — except for its military functions — is to wither in communist societies and it is first to take place in the economy. This is why functions related to the joint ownership of property have to be practiced by the workers of the given company through their elected workers' councils. The members of these councils would make decisions concerning company-related economic issues within the national legal framework. According to this ideology, the workers' councils actually are self-managing organs, which would gradually be given full rights.

This theory led to the re-interpretation of the "leading role" of the communist party as well. This issue was raised on the CPY's Zagreb Congress of November 2-7, 1952. It was at this event that the new role of the party was formulated; it was stated that the party was to concentrate on ideological and political issues and it was not supposed to take the lead in administrative operations. In practice this model of self-management was decentralization, a process, compatible with the special features of Yugoslav society. In Yugoslavia there was no majority nation, administratively it was made up of the self governments of medieval Dalmatian towns and rural communities. This is why this new ideology was generally well-received in Yugoslav society.

In the 1950s and 1960s both Yugoslavia's economy and administration were characterized by the sharp duality of the struggle between centralization and decentralization.¹⁶ On June 26, 1950 the Basic Law was passed by the Parliament, including the Act on the Administration of State Companies and Higher-Level Cooperatives by the Workers. This regulation marked the beginning of decentralization in the Yugoslav economy, a process, during which the overwhelming majority of industrial and trading companies got to be run at republic-level instead of the federal-level.

In 1953 agrarian policy also took a new direction and the agricultural cooperatives were transferred into independent organizations meaning that former cooperative members were allowed to quit and work independently. The so-called second constitution of 1963 defined Yugoslavia as a state, characterized by a regulated market economy, which was based on social ownership (not to be confused with state ownership). With the reform package of 1965, economy was to a large extent liberalized; the role of the federal centre as the leader of the economy became minimal and state control over investments was brought to an end. The new aim was to give companies the right to dispose of 70% of their income, thus the role of the federal government as the re-allocator of the incomes was minimized. The decentralization of government administration gained momentum in the 1950s, too. From 1952-1955 the formerly district-controlled 15 thousand settlements were united into 1,500 communi-

15 E. KARDELJ, *A Jugoszláv Kommunista Szövetség*, Újvidék 1980, pp. 131-135.

16 GULYÁS, p. 133.

ties (called *općina* in Serbian), then their number got reduced to 530. Finally, in 1967 the original districts ceased to exist. In this system of decentralized administration the settlements (communities) played a significant role in organizing local economy, especially in the areas of the reproduction and allocation of incomes.

It is evident that both in economic life as well as in administration an increasing number of legal rights and possibilities for decision was transferred from federal level to republican, provincial or communal level. In the opinion of party leadership by reducing the role of state in the management of economy, the independent self-managing companies would bring about a “socialist” market economy, in which they would be able to regulate the market through their own spontaneous and democratic cooperation.

Parallely with the above described decentralization processes — or rather, opposing them — centralization was also present in the system. Leadership in the social and economic processes was in the hands of the top officials of the single-party state and the CPY was a centralized organ, too. Although, party officials spread liberal views, but actually they were only allowed to exist and operate within the framework of the single-party system. The complicated situation of those times can very well be illustrated by the following example. When a director was to be elected at a self-managing company, the likely scenario was that a politically well-connected person would become the head instead of other candidates with excellent managerial skills, even if the former one was less talented and less suitable for the job. The reason behind this choice was that it was through him that the company was more likely to gain the support of the highest officials. In addition, while in the 1950s reforms and decentralization were undoubtedly at the centre of the political thought in Yugoslavia, in the 1960s the supporters of centralization (the “traditionalists”) were trying to oppose decentralization.¹⁷

On the political scene these conflicting ideas manifested themselves in the fierce battle between the Slovenian Kardelj (leader of the Reformers) and the Serbian Ranković (leader of the conservatives). In this conflict Tito stood by the Reformers. In 1966 Ranković was removed from power, although it did not mean the implementation of all reformist endeavors.¹⁸ It was researcher Dénes Sokcsevits who pointed out that if all the reforms had been consistently introduced, the rationalization of the economy would have led to the closing down of unprofitable businesses and an enormously high unemployment rate, creating social tensions of high intensity; these were steps the party leaders were afraid to take.¹⁹ It is also to be noted here that in spite of this feature unemployment was still very high in Yugoslavia: on the longer run the West-German economic boom absorbed the majority of the unemployed, a feature, which led to the birth of the category of 1.5 million guest workers.

Instead of consistently carrying out the reforms at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s, the previously described system of self-management was reorganized on several occasions. By introducing a variety of economic tools, including the freezing of prices and salaries, the introduction of restrictions on imports, the devaluation of the national currency, the introduction of cheap loans and the elaboration of a 13-year plan for economic development, Tito attempted to make his system more competitive.

¹⁷ JUHÁSZ, p. 143.

¹⁸ LAMPE, pp. 284–286.

¹⁹ D. SOKCSEVITS, *Déli szomszádaink története*, Budapest 1994, pp. 286–287.

In summary, the period from the late 1950s to the end of the 1980s can be characterized as a time of fluctuation from one extreme to the other. On the one hand there was the practice of centralization and exaggerated government intervention, on the other, economic chaos and anarchy. The attempts to reorganize the self-managing economic system served as a framework to all these conflicts. In our opinion the socialist self-managing system today can only be seen as an ill-fated experiment. Its founding fathers arbitrarily changed several economic rules, for example the regulatory role of the market — thus they opened the way for voluntarism. Due to decentralization investment, production, and market broke up first, then they sank onto the level of republics, then onto the level of the individual communities. Parallely with the above, the federal-, republican-, provincial- and community-level administrative systems grew enormously because a very chaotic system had to be operated. In our opinion the self-governing system was not a viable system and it was possible to maintain it only temporarily and by using foreign loans.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT

As it could be seen in the previous chapter in Tito's Yugoslavia economy and politics were extremely closely interrelated. There was a third motif related to the above two features, too, and it was the national question. In practice it meant that a factory in Yugoslavia was not simply a Yugoslav factory, but it was either a Serbian, or a Croatian factory. It also meant that economy was related to ethnic issues. In addition, the leaders of the individual republics, who also represented one or another ethnicity, very often turned to the tool of national rhetoric's in case of economic conflicts, for example, when the question was raised which unprofitable factory — the Serbian or the Croatian one — was to be closed down.

| Member states | The contributions of member states for GDP (1974) | Proportion of GDP per capita (1976) | Investment per capita |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| "Smaller" Serbia | 24.11% | 97 | 11,000 dinar |
| Slovenia | 16.02% | 206 | 23,000 dinar |
| Croatia | 26.74% | 125 | 16,500 dinar |
| Voivodina | 11.17% | 119 | 16,000 dinar |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | 12.50% | 66 | 8,500 dinar |
| Macedonia | 5.45% | 66 | 8,500 dinar |
| Kosovo | 2.07% | 29 | 6,000 dinar |
| Crna-Gora | 1.95% | 65 | 14,000 dinar |
| Yugoslavia | 100.00% | 100 | |

Table 1: Regional disparities in Yugoslavia 1974–1976

Source: Gulyás, p. 134.

| Year | Bosnia-H. | Crna-Gora | Croatia | Macedonia | Slovenia | Serbia | Voivodina | Kosovo |
|------|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| 1953 | 44.0% | 26.0% | 15.6% | 40.3% | 2.4% | 27.4% | 11.8% | 62.2% |
| 1988 | 14.5% | 9.4% | 5.6% | 10.9% | 0.8% | 11.1% | 5.8% | 17.6% |

Table 2: Proportion of illiterates in Yugoslavia 1953, and 1988

Source: D. PLESTINA, *Regional development in Communist Yugoslavia: Success, Failure and Consequences*, Boulder 1992, pp. 180–181.

This situation was even further complicated by the fact that the communist Yugoslavia inherited from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia very significant differences concerning the level of development of its individual republics.²⁰

On the basis of Tables 1 and Tables 2 the regional differences in Tito's Yugoslavia can clearly be drawn..From the given data (see Table 1) it can be seen that four areas — Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo and Crna-Gora — were underdeveloped. On the other hand four other areas — “Smaller Serbia” (i.e. Serbia excluding Voivodina and Kosovo), Voivodina, Croatia and Slovenia — can be considered as developed areas. This statement is proven by Table 2. On the basis of the above it can be stated that within Tito's Yugoslavia there was a North-South divide concerning the level of development in the individual member republics (More developed North, less developed South).

When comparing columns 2 and 4 in Table 2, it becomes clear that regional differences were related to political questions. It is evident that at regional level investments were not aligned with the GDP produced by the more developed republics or Voivodina.²¹ Part of the national GDP was spent by the less developed republics. The difference was especially remarkable in Crna-Gora. This fact can be supported by other data as well.

In 1971 it was Croatia, where 21.6% of Yugoslavia's total population lived, that produced 51% of Yugoslavia's foreign currency income. It came from two resources. On the one hand 80% of Yugoslavia's total income from tourism was produced by Croatia. On the other hand the Croatian guest workers transferred much money from abroad. From the 1.2 million Yugoslav guest workers 51% was from Croatia, while only 21.6% of Yugoslavia's total population was Croatian. The Member-Republic of Croatia was allowed to keep 2/3 of its foreign currency income, and 1/3 of it was spent by Belgrade on the “federal costs” of supporting the bureaucratic apparatus and the army, as well as other underdeveloped regions.²²

In 1971 Slovenia, where 8.4% of Yugoslavia's total population lived, exported 18.4% of all Yugoslav goods and produced 20% of the GDP. In 1953 Voivodina, which represents 8.4% of the country's area and 9–10% of its population, received a meager 3.6% of the country's total investment funds. In the 1960s Voivodina got 8.7% and in 1978 10.9% of the country's investment funds.²³ Tito's system used the policy

²⁰ L. BÍRÓ, *A jugoszláv állam*, Budapest 2010, pp. 141–200.

²¹ L. GULYÁS, *A Vajdaság helyzetének hosszú távú változásai a jugoszláv államosodási folyamatokban 1918-tól napjainkig*, Pécs 2003, pp. 82–93.

²² SOKCSEVITS, *Horvátország*, pp. 638–647.

²³ L. GULYÁS, *A Délvidék fejlődésének főbb csomópontjai és tendenciái*, Nyíregyháza 2006, pp. 55–68.

of redistribution to level out regional developmental differences. From 1945–1965 a significant part of the central budget was spent on financing the country’s underdeveloped regions.

| Area | 1966–1970 | 1971–1975 | 1976–1980 | 1981–1985 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | 30.7% | 32.4% | 30.75% | 27.9% |
| Crna-Gora | 13.1% | 11.4% | 10.85% | 9.9% |
| Macedonia | 26.2% | 22.9% | 21.6% | 19% |
| Kosovo | 30.0% | 33.3% | 37.0% | 42.6% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 3: Proportion of federal fund for the development of underdeveloped regions 1966–1985
Source: P. RAMET, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia*, Bloomington 1985, pp. 194, 199.

Then, in 1965 the so-called “federal fund for the development of underdeveloped regions” was founded and the developed regions were required to pay 2% of their annual national income into it. This money was then distributed among the underdeveloped regions. It is evident from Table 3 to what extent the country’s four underdeveloped regions got support from the developmental fund.

When comparing data from Table 3 with the figures taken from the third column of Table 1, it can be concluded that despite the governmental support the underdeveloped areas were not able to catch up with the other regions of the country. This fact can be illustrated with the case of Kosovo.²⁴ The area of Kosovo had received the largest share from the federal developmental funds, still, its backwardness became more significant when comparing it with the province of Voivodina or the other republics of Yugoslavia. Kosovo’s increasing backwardness triggered unrest among its Albanian population; they felt they were being exploited, thus their loyalties toward the Yugoslav state were shaken. The question rightfully arises what the reason was behind Kosovo’s backwardness when it had received considerable sums of support. There are two answers to this question. One is the significantly high birthrate of the Albanian population, the other, as it has been pointed out by experts, the larger part of the developmental support was used irrationally.

The other side of the coin is — and this fact has been frequently emphasized by the Kosovo Albanians — that they felt they had paid back the governmental support with Kosovo’s minerals and cheap labour.²⁵

It can be stated that the developed non-Serbian areas, including Slovenia, Croatia and Voivodina were the sufferers of the reallocation of central budget items. Consequently, it is fully understandable, that the developed areas fought for greater economic independence and a proportionate budget allocation within the federal state. When investigating the events of the 1971 Croatian Spring it can be seen that, the chain of events started with a demand that came from reality: Croatia had not received its share of foreign currency from the federal income it was entitled to on the basis of its contribution. It was only later that other demands — in the areas of

²⁴ N. MALCOLM, *Kosovo: A Short History*, New York 1999, pp. 314–333.

²⁵ Gy. RÉTI, *Albánia sorsfordulói*, Budapest 2000, p. 327.

language use and culture, i.e. the demands of *Matica Hrvatska* — were added to the original one, then a rather openly eclectic proposition was born, i.e. the conversion of Yugoslavia into a confederation.

The questioning of the form of the Yugoslav state was too much for Tito, so he had the Croatian reform communists dismissed and had several hundreds imprisoned on charges of nationalism. After these events from 1972–1989 Croatia was quiet. The new, ultra conservative leaders of the League of Communists of Croatia were careful not to let Croatian nationalism come to the surface again. The scenario was very similar in Slovenia that is the national communist leaders were replaced by new ones. The Slovenian national claims were also dealt away with by Tito.

TITO'S ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE FEDERAL SYSTEM: THE CONSTITUTION OF 1974 AND ITS FAILURE

The “Croatian Spring” and the events that had taken place in Slovenia were not without any success. In accordance with Tito’s politics of equilibrium the head of state had attempted to remove not only “Croatian nationalists” and the “Slovenian liberals” from power, but he also tried to weaken the Serbian Centrists in Belgrade as well. It is Tito’s Constitution of 1974 that reflects these tendencies and in connection with it the following points need to be emphasized:

1. The principle of collective leadership was introduced and a 9-member state presidium was set up. Eight federal units (six member-republics and two autonomous provinces could delegate one member; each of them had the right to vote. The 9th member of the presidium was Tito himself.
2. In order to increase democracy, the principle of rotation was introduced in several leading positions.
3. The sphere of authority and the independence of the individual republics got widened: they could have their own constitutions, they were administered by independent governmental bodies and they could establish their own national banks as opposed to the Federal National Bank.
4. The two provinces within Serbia — Kosovo and Voivodina — also got significant — almost republican — rights.

This constitution, which was written with the aim of strengthening the federation, had several confederative elements, including the principle of “one federal unit, one vote” rule, and the procedure that the constitutional amendments were to be based on consensus.²⁶

The question rises why Tito, a head of state with full powers, had a new constitution introduced in 1974. In the opinion of Anton Bebler, the aim of the 1974 constitution was to put a stop to centralizing intentions.²⁷ Tito aimed to achieve this aim in two ways. On the one hand he made concessions and gave more rights to the member-

²⁶ JUHÁSZ, pp. 159–161.

²⁷ BEBLER, p. 128.

-republics and to Yugoslavia's other nations. The extension of the rights of the Albanians in Kosovo and the acknowledgment of the national sovereignty of Bosnian Muslims can be quoted as examples of the above. On the other hand he tried to curtail Serbian dominance. The extension of the rights of the Kosovo Albanians was a hard-won victory; Tito had had to face the opposition and the hostility of the conservative Serbian leaders of Belgrade. Due to the regulations of the Constitution of 1974 the structure of the administration of the state was almost fully elaborated, the province was given a direct representation in federal party- and governmental bodies, while its own affairs were managed independently of the federal state. Thus Kosovo became a de-facto member-republic; its situation was different from that of a de jure member republic in one — albeit very significant — aspect. Kosovo as a province, unlike the member-republics, did not have the right to secede.

It is important to call the attention to the controversial situation of the Serbian nation within the second Yugoslav state. On the one hand Tito tried to stop the re-birth of pre-1939 greater Serbian nationalism by opposing it; on the other hand the Serbians played the most dominant roles in party- and state leadership. Two figures can illustrate the above. In 1974 out of the 205 top party positions 60 were filled by Serbians, 27 by Crna Gorans, 29 Croats, 27 Slovenians, 15 Muslims and 5 Hungarians. Back in 1971, 70% of the top army positions were occupied by Serbians and Crna Gorans.

Tito's forced constitution of 1974 failed to achieve its aims. This fact can be explained by the following two examples. On the one hand the concessions did not meet the expectations of the Slovenian and Croatian nations, and it did not solve the long-term Albanian problems either. On the other hand the Serbians had the feeling that the Yugoslav government used the constitution to negatively discriminate against them. This Serbian feeling got crystallized in the so-called Academic Memorandum of 1986. The second half of the 1980s can best be characterized by Giles's following sentence: "*Tito was the only working institution of Yugoslavia*", since the post-1974 impasse situation and national conflicts could only be solved by his strict decisions and authority.

After his death on May 4th, 1980 the events of the 10-year period that followed could best be summarized as follows: the new Serbian leaders — Milošević's emergence in 1986 is significant in this respect — favoured the program of a greater Serbian nationalism and they also tried to restrict the rights of the constitution of 1974.²⁸ On the other hand the non-Serbians continued to fight for a further extension of their rights, the confederacy and on the long run for the independence of their own nations. As a result of these two controversial forces it was in 1991 that the irreversible process of the disintegration of the Yugoslav state began to take momentum.²⁹

28 P. RAMET, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, Boulder 2002, pp. 3-26.

29 V. MEIER, *History of Its Demise*, London, New York 1999, pp. 60-100.

CONCLUSIONS

In 1945 Tito reorganized the Yugoslav state. During this process he created a new model, the model of the federal communist state. After breaking up with the Soviet Union in 1948–1949, he added the theory and practice of self-administration, which, in his view was capable of re-shaping the idea of socialism. From the 1950s onwards both in economic life and administration (the elaboration of the system of self-management and the introduction of the commune system) decentralizing processes were present. In addition, centralizing features were detectable, too. From the early 1950s to the early 1980s the country's economic life was characterized by teetering between the two extremes of decentralization and centralization. The constant attempts for reorganizing the country culminated in the Constitution of 1974 which, in fact, proved to be a failure. The federative model was not viable on the long run.

Tito's Yugoslavia inherited very significant differences from the Yugoslav kingdom concerning the level of development of its individual regions. Tito's system tried to level out these differences by adopting the policy of redistribution. From 1945 onward they spent a considerably large sum from the central budget to finance the country's underdeveloped regions. Despite this federal support, the underdeveloped areas were not able to catch up. Within socialist Yugoslavia, too, there was a North-South divide (developed North, underdeveloped South). In addition, the more developed member — republics (Slovenia, Croatia), which had to pay for all this, questioned the right of this system to exist. The unresolved problems and the intertwining nature of politics, economy and the national question eventually resulted in the disintegration of the Yugoslav state.

ABSTRACT

During its brief history of 91 years it was on two occasions that the Yugoslav State came into being (1918 and 1945), after which it got disintegrated (1941 and from 1991 until today). This is why it is worth investigating the characteristic features of both stages of its disintegration. In our opinion the so-called North-South divide, which had always existed in the country's economy, played a fundamental role in both periods of disintegration. This divide led to significant differences between the regions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–1941), as well as the regions of the socialist Yugoslav state (1945–1991). Our paper aims to investigate how Tito's Yugoslavia tried to deal with the problems of regional differences and it will also look at the outcomes of these attempts.

KEYWORDS

Yugoslav State; History of Second Yugoslav State; Political Thought of Tito

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