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COMMUNIST POWER IN YUGOSLAVIA
IN THE YEARS 1945–1991

RISE, TRANSFORMATIONS, DECAY

Yugoslavia governed by the Communist Party was a specific country. This came to light already at the time when the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) was coming to power, and later in the formative period of its political system and the adoption of concrete systemic solutions, especially after the conflict with Stalin in 1948. The specificity of Yugoslavia was also marked in the period of the decay of its system of power and finally the disintegration of the state itself, towards the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s.

In the inter-war period the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was of no major political significance. Its influence grew in the period of World War II, mostly due to the assistance from beyond Yugoslavia's borders. What I have in mind is British and American supplies of military equipment. Apart from Albania, Yugoslavia was the only country in Central-Eastern Europe where Communist armed forces received so much material help from the Western powers. The Communists of Yugoslavia also received support from the Soviet Union, initially in the form of supplies of military equipment, and later — the military operations of the Red Army after it entered the area of Yugoslavia. Ultimately, it was the external assistance to the Communists that determined the course of events in Yugoslavia. This assistance was used by Tito not only in his fight against the forces of the Third Reich and its satellites, but also in fighting against his internal opponents, mainly Ante Pavelić's Ustashi, and Draza Mihailović's Chetniks.

Considering the military support given by the Great Powers, one can say that the current opinion that the Yugoslav Commun-

ists came to power unaided, frequently encountered in historiography, does not quite tally with the truth. We should rather say that external aid helped to organize the armed forces in Yugoslavia and that only due to this aid the Communists could develop military and political operations on a scale which was not observed in other countries of Central-Eastern Europe, with the only exception of Albania. It was precisely this assistance that contributed to the final victory of the Communists and their take-over in Yugoslavia in 1945. This victory was to a much smaller extent due to the direct operations of the Red Army and the penetration of Yugoslavia by Soviet security forces. Nevertheless, it is hard to say whether the CPY would be able to take up military operations on such a scale and to seize the power on their own without the foreign — Soviet, British and American support. One should also remember that the CPY found diplomatic support in the Kremlin, and furthermore, favourable conditions resulting from the general, dominant strategic-military position of the Red Army in Central-Eastern Europe in the final period of the war and directly afterwards. Quite naturally, this was an additional factor that augmented the Communists' chances in their fight for power in Yugoslavia.

In the first post-war years the specificity of Yugoslavia was above all reflected in the speed with which the CPY consolidated its power. By means of an extremely developed apparatus of terror, that is military detachments, militia, security forces, the CPY eliminated its opponents more promptly than the Communist Parties in other Central-European states. It was also exceptionally eager in copying Stalinist systemic patterns. As a result, Yugoslavia became a "miniature" copy of the Soviet Union. This was determined by its system of power, systemic solutions, the form of national relations, and the principles that connected the individual republics to the central authorities in Belgrade. The latter similarities were of special significance, considering the national differentiation in both countries.

This situation in Yugoslavia developed to a large extent regardless of the restrained attitude of Stalin himself, who thought that the process of coming to power by Communists should go on more slowly, in accordance with his wishes, demands, tactics and policy in the face of the United States and Great Britain. The dictator in the Kremlin did not so much wish at that time that

Yugoslavia should uncritically and directly copy the Soviet systemic patterns, but rather that the internal and international activity of the authorities in Belgrade would be adapted to the aims and needs of the current policy of the Soviet Union.

However, in this field Tito and his associates showed some independence, seldom encountered among other Communist leaders, also in Western Europe; this irritated Stalin already during the war. Nevertheless, he had agreed, although reluctantly, to the attitude of the Yugoslav leadership, until the international situation became dominated by the "Cold War". Stalin's policy during this conflict started to change: both on the global and Central-European scale, but also in relation to Yugoslavia. The new situation made the Soviet dictator introduce new elements to his policy in each of those areas. This resulted from his assessment that the Western world was consolidating under the sponsorship of the United States and consequently the Central-European countries should be bound even more strongly to Moscow.

Within the framework of the projected, and later arising, strong and centralized Soviet bloc, there would certainly be no room for an independent or autonomous policy of the Yugoslav party leadership. Therefore, Stalin aimed at its liquidation. However, an attempt to remove Tito failed. "The healthy forces" in the CPY, which in 1948 and 1949 were called upon to abolish the Yugoslav leader, were too weak and soon landed up in concentration camps on the Adriatic islands — Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur. In fact, Tito intensified his terror, this time against some of his recent party comrades. He also developed a violent anti-Soviet propaganda in his country, which naturally did not take place in other Central-European states subjected to the process of Sovietization. As "the defender" of his country, he met with support from a considerable part of Yugoslav society, and as a desirable ally, after a period of distrust and expectancy, also from Western leaders. Under the influence of his closest associates, that is Djilas and Kardelj, he also decided to modify the previous, Soviet systemic model. The result was a paradoxical and specific situation. Up till then, the process of ruthless Sovietization of Yugoslavia went hand in hand with a slower Sovietizing action in other Central-European countries, conducted, with Stalin's blessing, by their party leaderships. At the moment when Stalin called upon the party leaders in those

countries to speed up the pace of this process and accomplish Sovietization (at the conference in Szklarska Poręba, as well as during the formation of Cominform and right after that) in Yugoslavia conditions arose for the reverse process: a gradual, though not immediate departure from the strict, dogmatic Stalinism in the direction of some liberalization of its system, synonymous with the "construction" of its own "genuine socialism". Thus, in the case of Yugoslavia Stalin's policy had led to results contrary to what he expected.

Finally, the systemic modification in Yugoslavia took place after the outbreak and in the course of its conflict with Stalin, in isolation from the international Communist movement, and in the course of time — also under the influence of, as it turned out, unsolved national problems, tensions and conflicts. This modification was tantamount to a search for a new legitimization of Communist power. Previously this legitimization was perceived in Stalinism, however, after the conflict with the Soviet leader, it became not only an insufficient, but outright undesirable political, ideological and propaganda instrument. So a theory was spread that Stalinism was not a realization but a deviation from the principles of Marxism–Leninism, and a clear sign of "revisionism"; that state ownership of the means of production does not signify social ownership; and that the source of all evil, also in Yugoslavia, is the omnipotence of state–party bureaucracy. Therefore the latter should be abolished, or at least — considerably limited.

The latter assertions concerning the criticism and condemnation of bureaucracy, resembled the theses of Leon Trotsky. They were later developed by Milovan Djilas, among other works in his articles in "Borba" at the end of 1953 and the beginning of 1954. They led to the downfall of this politician. Tito and Kardelj propounded a view that the condemnation of bureaucracy cannot lead to the reconstruction of political pluralism, suggested by Djilas. The leaders of the CPY declared that only the introduction of the so-called self-management system can help to reduce the influence of bureaucracy. Finally, as a result of an appropriate act of the Skupština of 1950, workers' councils and managing committees started to be created in factories; their competences were very limited, in fact they were only a façade covering the previous, unimpaired power of state–party bureaucracy. In such conditions the above-mentioned liberalization was

very slow, limited to the gradual softening of terror and introducing some elements of the market economy. This did not stop Tito from delivering a violent, anti-Soviet speech, never repeated in the same form, at the Sixth Congress of his party — whose name was changed into a League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) — in November 1952. Tito condemned in it not only Stalin's crimes and politics, but also generally the Stalinist system, and the Soviet system altogether. He suggested that the main cause of crime and genocide in the USSR was not so much the person of the dictator in the Kremlin, but precisely the system that he created. Thus Tito's speech preceded the famous report delivered by Khrushchev at the closed session of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in February 1956. Tito's speech was earlier, and deeper in its attack than the report of the leader of the Soviet party who confined himself to the condemnation of the "cult of the personality", errors and deviations of Stalin himself.

The Yugoslav leaders and party ideologists declared that the "self-management" system would be connected with "the development in the direction of communism", that is — with a rise of "an association of free producers", and the process of the "disappearance" of the state. Actually, their views were a conglomerate of the conceptions of "Utopian" socialists, the creators of Marxism as well as the theory of Leon Trotsky. While speaking of the "disappearance" of the state they thought, of course, not of its liquidation, but limitation of its functions, especially regarding the economy, of the transference of these functions to workers' collectives, or more broadly — employees' collectives. They maintained that this would lead to doing away with "the alienation of the working class and working people", i.e. the phenomenon that according to Marx was characteristic of the capitalist system, and according to Tito and his followers — also of Stalinism, because of the rise of the stratum or class of bureaucrats and a contradiction of interests between this group and the "working people". The thesis dominating in the Yugoslav party was that the above-mentioned contradictions result from the class structure of relations in society and the appropriation of the means of production and income (according to Marxian terminology, the so-called surplus value) — by the state-party bureaucracy. Only by doing away with such a structure of relations and the unjustifiably privileged position of bureaucracy (which in the Stalinist system

performed the same role as “the bourgeoisie” in capitalism, and exploited the “working classes”), could the complete eradication of Stalinism be achieved in “socialism”, also in Yugoslavia.

In such conditions the “construction” of a “self-management” system was to be a long-lasting process which required an overcoming of the resistance of bureaucracy. Regardless of the question whether the creation of “self-managements” was possible at all, not only in Yugoslavia, but in any other country, one might ascertain that the Yugoslav conception of “self-management” was proposed by the representatives of the top party and state authorities, that is — the condemned bureaucrats. As a result this concept mainly served political manipulation and became an argument justifying the thesis that the Yugoslav system was one of, or tended to realize “genuine socialism”, which had been betrayed and undermined by Soviet “revisionists”. It was certainly a convenient political instrument, mainly because the fight against “bureaucracy” could be treated so as to suit current needs. It could be cited as the justification of reforms, e.g. those that were begun in the middle 1960s, or used instrumentally, as Milošević did at the end of the 1980s. While striving for power, the Serbian leader fought against his then opponents within the party, and within the framework of “the anti-bureaucratic revolution”, mobilized against them the population at large — a policy which, *toutes proportions gardées*, resembled that of Mao Zedong during the “cultural revolution” in China.

Ultimately, the actual implementation of the “self-management” system made no progress. This was probably because the Yugoslav authorities had no idea at all what concrete shape this system was to take. Considering that the critique of Stalinism had led one of the party leaders, Djilas, to denying the foundations of the mono-party and the uncontrolled power of Communists, any attempts at actual search for the “correct” form of “self-management” could become dangerous. So it was much better to remain in the sphere of ideas, slogans and generalizations that had no connection with the actual practice of government. The more so, because in the 1950s the softening of terror connected with urbanization, industrialization, a high rate of growth of national income and of the living standard of the population might seem an adequate method of the country’s stabilization and the legitimization of power. In such conditions

the party leaders with Tito at the head proposed a vision of Yugoslavism, identified then with efforts to create a uniform Yugoslav nation. The previous differences between nations and nationalities in this state were supposed to gradually disappear. In the international arena, on the other hand, Yugoslavia took advantage of the situation that emerged after Stalin's death, and achieved some improvement in its relations with Moscow, now ruled by Khrushchev. It also took advantage of the process of decolonization and the emergence of the so-called Third World. Yugoslavia gradually became one of the most important states in the movement of "nonaligned" countries, that is those that did not accede to the blocs dominated by the USA and the USSR. Such a situation ensured Yugoslavia a strong international position, disproportional to its actual, limited economic, military and demographic potentialities. Tito became the only Communist leader in Central-Eastern Europe who could play an independent role in the international arena, and influence the course of events on a global scale. Without the support from and co-operation with the leaders of other "nonaligned" countries, this would not be possible.

However, at the turn of the 1950s the authorities of the CPY conceived some doubts as to their previous methods and manners of exercising power and their effectiveness in securing stabilization and creating suitable conditions of progress. Some developments emerged that made Yugoslav leaders introduce essential changes in their system of power and, more broadly — of the state. It was becoming ever more obvious that the policy of *bratstvo i jedinstvo* (brotherhood and unity), which secured, formally, equal rights for all the nations of Yugoslavia, but also created a perspective of transforming that country into one nation, was a failure. It was not an effective method of liquidating national tensions and feuds, which started to gather strength. At the same time the situation at the top of power changed, since the previous, relatively homogeneous party leadership, started to split. In the first place, there arose two groups, two party factions. One was headed by Aleksandar Ranković, who controlled the security forces and the personnel policy of the party. He was for sustaining the previous methods of government, and against reforms — both political, economic and in the field of national relations. On the other hand, the group whose main repre-

sentative was Edvard Kardelj, called for reforms and changes. The situation was becoming dangerous, the more so, because the clashes and tensions within the party were not only confined to the struggle for power, but were also of a national character. In fact, Ranković was a Serb, a politician seen as a defender of Serbian national interests, and even — an adherent and guarantor of the Serbian domination in the country. In contrast, Kardelj, who was of Slovene descent, was a politician whose ideas and strivings were close not only to the personages inclining to reforms, but also those who were afraid of the domination of Serbs in Yugoslavia. They were mainly Slovenes, Croats, Macedonians, Albanians as well as Muslims, who as a result of the policy of Tito, (aiming to counterbalance the influence of Serbs and Croats, both in Bosnia, Herzegovina and the whole of Yugoslavia), gained the status of separate nations. At the beginning of that decade the Yugoslav leader took a middle course between the two main, above-mentioned party groups, so as to finally support Kardelj, that is — the reform wing of the LCY. This was accompanied by a collapse of the high growth of national income, and growing economic difficulties; many representatives of the Yugoslav establishment became convinced that the previous system of government, and even more broadly — the previous system of centralized statism described as state socialism, had exhausted its potentialities. It was a system of centralized state power, where, without speaking out loud, people perceived at least some relics of Stalinism. If it should continue, it might lead, such was the opinion, only to a catastrophe — both political, economic and in the field of national relations. One can suppose with much probability that Tito's decision was also, or even in the first place, caused by more practical considerations, connected with the great concentration of power in the hands of Ranković. If Tito was to retain his dominant position in the party and state, it seemed to him imperative to weaken the position of this politician, or outright remove him from power. This was necessary regardless of whether this supervisor of Yugoslav security forces had or had not installed hidden microphones in the office of the leader of the LCY.

In the second half of the 1960s Yugoslavia was not the only country in Central-Eastern Europe ruled by the Communist Party and taking up reforms. However, in Czechoslovakia reformatory ideas were mainly connected with the short period of the

“Prague Spring”¹, while in Hungary — they were limited to economic matters, that is the introduction of the so-called New Economic Mechanism, from January 1968 onwards, which contained some elements of the market economy. In contrast, it was the specificity of Yugoslav reforms that they were carried out over a long period of time and concerned the whole system of relations in the state — its political system, economy and national matters. To justify them, the ineffectiveness of the previous system of “state socialism” was cited, and a necessity to reduce, or even liquidate the influence of bureaucracy. These reforms were associated with the “self-management” ideology, since it was maintained that the domination of bureaucracy must be replaced by the actual rule of “the working class”, or more broadly — the totality of employees. Nobody knew what it would look like in practice and whether it was possible at all. Nevertheless, this was the specific Yugoslav approach, especially the criticism and condemnation of bureaucracy. This criticism never appeared with such intensity in other Central-European countries governed by Communists, to say nothing of the Soviet Union.

It was also declared in Yugoslavia that the economy must develop in accordance with market mechanisms, that it should be connected with the world economy, hence it was necessary to break with autarky. In the field of national relations, on the other hand, the conception of creating a homogeneous Yugoslav nation was renounced as a result of a view, mainly promoted by Kardelj, that the nations of Yugoslavia had reached their full shape, and they defied the domination of supra-national organs of power.

Such a view led to a thesis that Yugoslavia should be decentralized “along national seams”, in practice — those of republics and regions. Eventually, the whole system of Yugoslavia should be, in accordance with these assumptions, deprived of state control and bureaucracy, democratized and decentralized. The main obstacle to the introduction of such a policy, that is Ranković — was removed in July 1966. This event entailed similar consequences as the report of Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in the Soviet Union. The condemnation of repressions

¹ With the exception of introducing a “double-unit federation”, that is the transformation of Czechoslovakia into a federal state of the Czechs and Slovaks in 1969, see E. Mizerski, *Geneza i rozpad ustroju federalnego byłych socjalistycznych państw europejskich (The Origin and Breakup of the Federal System of the Former Socialist European States)*, Toruń 1996, pp. 37–38.

and the suggestion to apply milder methods of government resulted in the USSR in the “thaw”, while in Yugoslavia it gave rise to the phenomenon known as liberalization.

However, the Yugoslav liberalization produced more profound transformations than the “thaw” in the Soviet Union. In various republics and regions, mainly in Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and Kosovo various groups and organizations started to emerge and became active mainly under the direction of intellectuals, students, and representatives of the broadly-conceived intelligentsia. They voiced various views and represented multifarious political trends: liberal, democratic, nationalist, sometimes extremely chauvinist, showing sympathies with the former Ustashi and their headman Ante Pavelić, as well as, though to a smaller extent — with the Serbian Chetniks and Draza Mihailović. There were also some groupings showing sympathies with socialism and communism, in the latter case — also siding with the former Cominform, now condemned in Yugoslavia. Moreover, liberalization had led to ever stronger divisions within the LCY, mainly of a national character. Some influential persons, party groups and even local apparatuses of power, such as the leadership of the LC of Croatia with Savka Dabčević-Kucar, started to support contradictory national causes, strivings and aspirations of particular republics and autonomous regions.

This situation started to irritate, displease and even alarm the central authorities with Tito at the head. It was a symptom, as it is frequently termed, mainly in English language literature, of the so-called crisis of modernization, that is an exacerbation of contradictions and the general indolence of this system during its transformations and reforms which were assumed to favour its effectiveness and modernization. It turned out that also the Yugoslav variety of communism, differentiated ever more distinctly, could be only a “blind alley of modernization”². Of course, Tito and his associates did not pronounce such an assessment, but they, too, could not but perceive that the reforms, contrary to expectations, did not lead to the stabilization and strengthen-

²The term used by K. Minogue and B. Williams in their work *Ethnic Conflict and the Soviet Union: The Revenge of Particularism*, in: A. J. Motyl (ed.), *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities, History in the Study of the USSR*, New York 1992, p. 241, cited from R. Szporluk, *Imperium, komunizm i narody. Wybór esejów (Empire, Communism and Nations. Selected Essays)*, introduction and ed. A. Nowak, Kraków 2003, p. 239.

ing of Yugoslavia. On the contrary, during their implementation the tendencies to disintegration became stronger, and there was a danger of a weakening, or may be even liquidation of the power of the LCY. From the authorities' viewpoint, the latter threat was especially important. Indeed, the results of the Yugoslav liberalization were evidently a model illustration of Alexis de Toqueville's thesis that repressive and despotic systems decay precisely when attempts are made at their reform and liberalization. As a result Tito, making use of his authority and the unimpaired control of instruments of exercising power "by force", that is the army, the militia and security forces, at the turn of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s carried out "purges" in various republics and regions, mainly Kosovo, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, and stifled local national movements. For this purpose he also made use of the support from many representatives of the older generation of party leaders, who previously, in the process of an exchange of generations, had to give way to younger party activists. The latter were initially supported by Tito, but he gradually lost confidence in them, since they supported, as the central authorities maintained — various "nationalists", "liberals", "anarcho-liberals", "technocrats", "petty-bourgeois elements", "crooks", and "after-comers" of Djilas, Ranković and Cominform.

Ultimately, at the beginning of the 1970s, Tito stopped being the main promoter of reform and changed into a politician most committed to its checking. For this purpose he also reached for the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, which, if not completely dropped, had certainly not been overused since the party congress in 1952. Now, in contrast, the party propaganda was again dominated by such terms as "revolution", "class struggle", dictatorship of the proletariat", "class enemy", "democratic centralism", and "revolutionary and Marxist roots". Just as all the solutions "by force", they were to serve the checking of the process of the decay of the "single-party" system of government. In this respect the Yugoslav regime resembled other Eastern- and Central-European systems, with the Soviet system at the head. The same might be said of keeping up the deprivatization of the means of production³, despite the thesis, maintained formally, though not put into

³ With the exception of those owned by farmers. As we remember, in 1953 in Yugoslavia collectivization of farming was stopped. In this respect Poland was also an exception, for three years later it followed in Yugoslavia's footsteps.

practice, about the need to respect the principles of the market economy. I say “deprivatization”, since in the European countries of “real socialism” it signified “nationalization”, while in Yugoslavia — nationalization with the ambition to transform it into a “genuine socialization”. This was connected with creating the above-mentioned “associations of free producers” who would own the means of production, would regulate the processes of production, and would decide the division of income, investments and accumulation. This was never put into practice, and yet, the specific Yugoslav understanding of the so-called social property was sustained. The same relates to the thesis that party and state bureaucracy were the main obstacles, apart from the “technocrats”, to the introduction of “genuine” social property. The only result of these conceptions was that the state enterprises gained the status of independence. This favoured the aggravation of the economic chaos, since the situation of enterprises was not clear. Officially, they ceased to belong to the state, but did not become private property. This was atypical, both in comparison to other countries of “real socialism” and the Western, capitalist ones. The “self-management” organizations were only supposed to manage these enterprises. In practice, paradoxically, these enterprises became the objects of fight between the condemned bureaucracy and the condemned “technocrats”, or objects managed by the representatives of both these groups. However, most frequently these managers had their common, state-party roots, and were derived from the same milieu.

The specificity of the Yugoslav “socialism” inclines researchers to a discussion of its special traits. One can frequently encounter the view that in Yugoslavia, in contrast to many countries of “real socialism”, we were dealing with a local, national road to “the construction of socialism”. A “road”, which in some essential points was said to depart from the Soviet model.

In my opinion this thesis does not quite agree with the actual reality. Among other things because the independence from the Kremlin, or efforts made in this direction, accompanied by placing emphasis on separate, national aims and aspirations, need not have always determined the character of concrete systemic solutions. The classical example of this may be the posture of the Rumanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, who tried to combine Stalinist systemic orthodoxy with a relative independence from

the Kremlin in his current political activity. Until the outbreak of a conflict with the Kremlin, the posture of Tito had been essentially the same. In this case, it would even be difficult to speak of some “specificity” of Yugoslav systemic solutions, of some attempts to oppose Moscow in this field. Later some elements of such a policy appeared indeed, but mainly on a verbal plane, because in the 1950s the systemic transformations in Yugoslavia were very superficial. In contrast, in the next decade, when they gained significance, this was a result not so much of a wish to oppose the Soviet model, as of the structure of internal relations in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the anti-Soviet systemic rhetoric was mainly a political manipulation that was to prove, as before, that is after the resolutions of Cominform in 1948 and 1949, that Yugoslavia was constructing “genuine socialism”, and to legitimize the power of the Communist Party in that country. Moreover, in the case of Yugoslavia the very notion of a “national” road to “socialism” must have been ambiguous, considering that no Yugoslav nation actually existed, and it would make no sense relating this designation to the Serbian, Croatian or Macedonian nations.

One could hardly speak, either, of the market economy as the distinctive feature of Yugoslav “socialism”. It developed, indeed, in the period of reforms, but after the “purges” of the early 1970s it was kept up only formally, officially, in vestigial form, giving way to the contract economy, based on the so-called social contracts and “self-management” agreements. These were certainly some distinctive, although not the most important marks of the Yugoslav system in comparison to those of Eastern and Central Europe. Some “specificity” could be attributed to the insignificant role of economic planning, as well as to the independence of enterprises and “self-management” organizations. However, they were only formally independent, and subject to state-party supervision. The separate character of Yugoslavia could also be seen in the work of crowds of Yugoslav *gastarbeiters* in the West, who enjoyed a relatively high living standard, in comparison to other countries of “real socialism”. This high standard, paradoxically, was accompanied by the unemployment of hundreds of thousand people at home, a phenomenon unknown in “fraternal countries”⁴.

⁴ Not to mention, of course, the phenomenon of the so-called “hidden unemployment”, that is one economically unjustified.

Neither would the “nonalignment” policy be a convincing testimony to the specificity of Yugoslav “socialism”. Nor did the relations of Yugoslavia with Moscow, its co-operation with Third World countries, connected with the condemnation of the political “blocs”, determine the matter of essential systemic solutions. Indeed, some “nonaligned” countries, like e.g. Fidel Castro’s Cuba, took over the Soviet systemic model. If Yugoslavia departed from it to a certain extent, it was not because of its relations with the “nonaligned countries”, or their policy towards the Kremlin.

In sum, while analysing the matter of Yugoslav “specificity”, one should rather take into consideration a different set of issues. These were mainly connected with a different understanding of society. For Yugoslav ideologists, “theorists” and propagandists with Kardelj at the head, society was not a homogeneous collectivity with identical purposes, interests and aspirations. Yugoslav theorists did not share the view of the Party leadership in Poland, which in the 1970s found its expression in the propaganda thesis of the “moral-political unity of the nation”. Yugoslav ideologists spoke openly of the differentiation of society, of the contradictory interests of particular social groups and even — of diverse class interests in Yugoslav society. In this connection they put forward a thesis of a need to define the plane of emergence, clashes and expression of these interests. It was assumed to be a “self-management” and national plane, or more strictly speaking — a republican and regional plane. With the reservation, however, that the former, as a result of the subordination of “self-management” institutions to the state-party apparatus, existed only in theory, while the latter — national-republican — in practice. This plane favoured the emergence of a specific socio-political system which, as it turned out, made possible a chaotic interplay between various institutions, and mainly — a rivalry between the state, republican and regional authorities. Bureaucracy was no obstacle to the emergence and functioning of such a system. Indeed, this system was under its control, which would not be the case if self-managements were “genuine”, that is the enterprises were actually managed by the “working people”, “the working class”, or the totality of employees. Eventually, as a result of the acceptance of the above-mentioned special pluralism in relations between the federation and particular republics, as well as inter-republican and inter-regional relations, the system of govern-

ment in Yugoslavia and more broadly speaking — its political, social and economic system as well as the structure of national relations were decentralized. This decentralization also concerned the party itself, whose republican and regional cells became autonomous, and gained authentic rights. Just as the authorities and institutions subject to them in particular republics and regions, they changed into organs which expressed local aims, interests and aspirations. In fact, and mainly, these organs tried to broaden as much as possible the extent of their own influence. In such conditions, the basically totalitarian system of government, in which the authorities controlled society and blocked the emergence of alternative, competitive, non-communist political forces, changed into one which allowed an official, though limited struggle and rivalry of various centres within the party oligarchy. At the same time the monopoly of power remained in the hands of the Communist Party, or more strictly speaking — the Communist Parties of various republics and regions. It was precisely because of this situation that Yugoslavia became a peculiar systemic phenomenon: in comparison to the countries of Western Europe, as well as the USSR and its satellites in Central-Eastern part of the Continent. For this reason, too, Yugoslavia ceased to be a "miniature" Soviet Union, that is a state where national relations were similar to those in the USSR. This change occurred as a result of the decentralization of the party and subsequently — of the state. In fact nations, republics and regions controlled by the local cells of the LCY, gained authentic rights in the political, economic, national and constitutional sphere. This was visible especially after the death of Tito and the introduction of rotation in the posts of the president of the state and the leader of the party. These were headed each year in turn by the representatives of another republic and region. This was an essential change, a breach with the traditional methods of government by the Communist Party in various countries, with the Soviet Union at the head. A breach tantamount to a departure from the Bolshevik principle of leading the party and the state by the general (first) secretary, whose power was not limited by any term of office. In the Soviet Union this power depended each time on the current correlation of inter-party forces. The same could be said of other countries of the Eastern bloc, with due regard to the special, generally decisive role of the external factor, that is the posture of Moscow.

Decentralization was assumed to be the most important condition of the stabilization and survival of the state. This would be mainly due to the respect for the interests of all the republics as well as the expectation that the element of rivalry of particular nationalities would be counterbalanced by agreements they would conclude with one another. In effect, this kind of pluralism, together with the above-mentioned decentralization, differed from the traditional "bourgeois" kind, mainly by its special understanding of subjectivity. The citizens as individuals, and consequently political parties, were thus deprived of subjectivity, and the argument was put forward that a free interplay between various political forces only generates social inequality and class differences, and — inevitably leads to the disintegration of the state, precipitating its downfall.

However, the relative balance between the republics and regions, ensuring the state a minimum of integration and stabilization, was possible only under the rule of Tito and his closest associates, derived mainly from the old, prewar communist staff. The president was supposed to realize his policy with their help. In fact, he had a special dictatorial kind of power, which certainly was not of the Stalinist type. His subordinates and collaborators could show some initiative and activeness, as well as define, as Kardelj did, the party ideology and the concrete systemic solutions. Their freedom went so far that some party activists, e.g. Bakarić, put forward a thesis that the main characteristics and principles of the "socialist" system in Yugoslavia were established and introduced precisely by Kardelj, and not the LCY leader. This was true, to a certain extent, since in contrast to Stalin and many other communist leaders, Tito did not aspire to the role of the main party "theorist" and ideologist in his country. In this respect he was rather the highest authority who approved or not of the assumptions worked out by his closest collaborators. His historic and political role was reduced to the fact that by his activity in the international arena and in Yugoslavia itself he created the conditions and possibilities of implementing the ideas or concrete systemic solutions of which he was neither always, nor the main, author. In current politics he was sometimes a brutal, relentless and determined actor, but this was mainly when he reached the conclusion that the moves of such or other party activists, as well as personages from outside the LCY, threatened his personal

position, the power of his party, the interests of the state, “socialism”, or “the correct” political line. Thus his person was the basic guarantee of the functioning of “controlled” decentralization, that is a system worked out mainly by Kardelj.

The president’s name also brings to mind the notion of the so-called Titoism. It has many interpretations; in my opinion, however, it is synonymous with a certain conception, according to which only the rule of the Communist Party could guarantee to Yugoslavia its survival, a survival which would ensure to Tito an exceptional political position that would suit his ambitions. These objectives could be reached due to an extremely flexible, pragmatic policy, largely departing from the “dogmatic” activity of the majority of Central-European Communist, let alone Soviet, *aparatchiks*. Within the framework of this policy the leader of the LCY reached for various, contradictory solutions, depending on time, situation and needs, once posing as an ally and “votary” of Stalin, then as his enemy and critic, an adherent of centralization or decentralization, the market economy or social contracts and self-management agreements, now brutal, now “liberal” methods of government.

It should be emphasized that after Tito’s death all the defects of the decentralized system of Yugoslavia came to light. In the first place — the lack of a forum where contradictory aims, strivings and aspirations could be voiced but also co-ordinated. There was no forum where an understanding could be reached between the representatives of various republics and regions. As a result the scene was dominated by the factors of the disintegration of the state. These were mainly the centrifugal actions of the younger, post-war generation of Yugoslav Communists. They associated their personal, individual interests not so much with Yugoslavia as with various republics and regions. The spectacular case of Milošević was symbolic, but not isolated. A similar posture was taken by many other, republican and regional politicians, of whom it is worth mentioning the Slovenian leader, Milan Kucan. They found a convenient tool in the above-mentioned, defective political pluralism. Deprived of a normal, democratic mechanism that would allow a free interaction of ideologically differentiated forces, the Yugoslav pluralism, however, in contrast to the Soviet system, could not suppress all the tensions and conflicts. While recognizing the differences and contradic-

tions and permitting national rivalry and combat, the Yugoslav system allowed them to become a convenient, disguised method of expressing and realizing strictly political goals and interests. Due to the clearly visible “loop-holes” and “crevices” in this system, political actions could be “smuggled” under the pretext of the defence of national interests, arousing tensions and conflicts in this sphere. As a result the special characteristic of the Yugoslav system, utilized by the LCY activists mainly in the period of the liberalization of the 1960s and 1970s and also by non-party members after Tito’s death, was to present the rivalry and combat in the political, social and economic area as a method of defence and realization of the interests of particular nationalities.

The acceptance and utilization of nationalisms by the Communist Parties was nothing new, also after the Second World War and in Central-European countries. Suffice it to mention the activity of Mieczysław Moczar and the so-called partisans in Poland, or the policy of the long-standing leader of Rumania, Nicolae Ceausescu. The only specificity of Yugoslavia was that the political mechanism introduced in the period of reforms helped to arouse nationalisms. It turned out that not only a multi-party system, as Tito declared, but also the decentralized variety of the mono-party system created conditions favourable to the development of nationalisms in particular republics and autonomous regions. It is hard to say whether such tendencies could be checked under a centralized mono-party system. At any rate, such a view was put forward by the adversaries of decentralization, mainly derived from the ranks of party “conservatives”.

It should be emphasized that the practical utilization of nationalisms in Yugoslavia went hand in hand with an official condemnation of those tendencies by the party, especially when they appeared among the Serbs or Croats. These tendencies were associated with the Chetniks, Ustashi, the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*), and even the state tradition of those nations, in apprehension of the revival of hegemonic strivings among the Serbs, and separatist tendencies among the Croats. This aroused a sense of harm and oppression and paradoxically strengthened the position of those personages who despite the official condemnation employed nationalist rhetoric and ideology in their policies.

Ultimately, the basic defect of the Yugoslav decentralized system of government was that it sharpened the lack of balance between particular republics and that almost all, or at least the main members of the federation felt they were wronged by the resolutions of the 1974 Constitution. The adversaries of the previous centralization, mainly Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Albanians, thought these resolutions gave them too little, while the adherents, mainly Serbs — that they deprived them of too much. Thus the constitutional resolutions could not solve the basic Yugoslav national dilemma, that is the problem how to reconcile the aspirations for an independent statehood of these nationalities with the strivings of the Serbs for living in one, common state. The Yugoslav nations realized that the solution of this dilemma would require a separation of their nations, connected with a correction of the boundaries of particular republics and regions, which would only be to the benefit of the Serbs, and to the detriment mainly of Croats, Albanians, Macedonians and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This specific “stalemate” situation became even more difficult, especially in the 1980s, because of the general ineffectiveness of the Yugoslav system, the prolonged and insoluble economic crisis and the erosion of communist ideology. The factors with the help of which the communist leaders tried to legitimize their power so far, that is the “achievements” of the revolution and the fight for national independence, the attempts at modernization in the form of urbanization and industrialization, the ideology of *bratstvo i jedinstvo*, or Brotherhood and Unity, as well as “self-managements” had not produced the expected results, and lost the power of social persuasion. In such conditions the crisis of “socialism” in the local “self-management” form was sharpened; this form, as its adversaries declared, was only a political manipulation, consisting of the “reformation” of the previous “denomination”, that is Stalinism. The power of the LCY — at various levels — also weakened, especially after the death of Tito and his closest associates, that is Kardelj and Bakarić. This was certainly a symptom, and to a certain extent a result of the situation that emerged then in the whole of Central-Eastern Europe, and in the first place — in the Soviet Union — as a result of Gorbachev’s reforms. The only difference was that in Yugoslavia the power and attractiveness of nationalist ideologies and movements was much

greater. They enjoyed the sympathies of the population in various republics and autonomous regions, mainly among students, the intelligentsia, intellectuals as well as the representatives of various cells of the state-party apparatus. It was precisely in these circles that national strivings and programmes appeared most often. In Serbia and Croatia they found the support of the Orthodox and Catholic clergy. Earlier, that is under the rule of Tito, this support was insignificant, mainly because the policy of the Yugoslav government hampered or even barred the activity of the clergy in the social, political and national fields. This policy was dogmatic, relentless and not flexible enough, truly "Marxist", even in the time of liberalization which began in the middle 1960s. The situation of both these denominations was then more difficult than for example, that of the Catholic Church in Poland. The only exception was the policy towards the believers in Islam, because Tito tried to win the support of the Muslims who were gaining the status of a nation. The situation of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches improved only in the 1980s. This was due both to the general political relaxation, and to the endeavours of nationalists in various republics to gain the support of the Orthodox and Catholic clergy.

As early as the 1960s, the representatives of different national movements that were at variance with one another posed a question why Yugoslavia, which recognized the aspirations of "non-aligned" nations and states for independence, and moreover stood side by side with India and Egypt at the head of the "nonaligned" movement, refused to acknowledge the right of its own nations and citizens to sovereignty and independence. "If Togo can be an independent country, why could not we possess our own state?" — was the question asked in Zagreb, Ljubljana, and finally even in Belgrade, that stronghold of Yugoslavism.

Ultimately, the specific characteristics of decentralized Yugoslavia were strong internal quarrels within society and within the apparatus of power. The situation in Yugoslavia was quite different from that prevailing in Poland. Here we also had some divisions, contradictory interests, but the main division line was between the authorities and society, especially at the times of numerous crises. Due to this opposition the structure of relations between those governing and those governed resembled a bipolar system dominated by a fundamental contradiction between the

aims and interests of both these groups. This manifested itself in the period of the consolidation of "people's rule" in the years 1944-1948, in October 1956, and above all — at the time of the rise of "Solidarity" and its activity in the years 1980-1981. Some elements of this situation also appeared at the time of martial law. A similar situation also emerged at various moments of the post-war history of other Central-European countries governed by Communist Parties. However, in Yugoslavia, its complex national structure and decentralized system of government, and the decentralized system of the state did not allow such a situation to arise. They did not lead to polarization, or a distinct, basic opposition between the government and society, but to a dispersal and fragmentation of contradictory interests, a differentiation of the postures of various social groups. This was true not only in the area of their mutual relations but also within these groups — the workers, "self-managements", intellectuals, representatives of the intelligentsia, dissidents and the opposition as a whole. Their aspirations and interests, especially in national respects, differed, and did not allow the formation among them of a common consciousness, a sense of unity or the common, superior objectives of the Yugoslav state. They also did not allow them to unite in their fight against the apparatus of power, which was also divided by its contradictory aims and national interests. In fact the main goals of the representatives of this apparatus, resulting from the wish to retain complete, uncontrolled power, were connected with the aspirations and strivings of particular nations. In principle, the defence of the interests of those nations was meant to be the main instrument of the legitimization of the Communists' rule. It was to favour the maintenance of the power and survival of the party. Nevertheless, the play with nationalisms, the support given by various, quarrelling sections of the Yugoslav apparatus of power to the contradictory national aspirations, its acting according to the principle *divide et impera* — all this did not allow the conducting of any effective reforms, or contribute to stopping the economic, political and social crisis in the field of national relations. On the other hand, it helped to generate further, even greater divisions, also within the party ranks, as well as the rise of differences which could not be overcome. It favoured the domination of a way of thinking which inclined various party politicians to make declarations, and

others, like Milošević to act, according to the principle that now "my own nationalist is closer to me than a Communist from another republic, with which my own republic is in conflict".

This situation was bound to lead both to the decay and disintegration of the LCY and to create conditions for the rise of various, non-communist political forces. In keeping with the specificity of Yugoslavia, they emerged on the basis of national divisions. Generally, they renounced the communist system while employing democratic slogans, but associated their basic political activity not so much with the attempts to democratize their own republics or Yugoslavia as a whole, as with the realization of contradictory, different national interests. Slovenia, where sympathies with and support for the democratic system were the strongest — both on the part of the authorities and society — was no exception. This situation differed from that which arose in such countries of "real socialism" as the German Democratic Republic or Poland, which were nationally more homogeneous.

Towards the end of the 1980s the decay of the previous system of power and the Yugoslav state itself was also favoured by the international situation, that is the course of events in other Central-European countries and the Soviet Union, and mainly the gradual extinction of the "Cold War". As a result Yugoslavia was losing its previous significance in the politics of both the Great Powers and military-political blocs. For the Soviet Union it ceased to be important also because the USSR itself was sinking into a crisis leading to disintegration. Therefore the external pressure, especially Soviet, conspicuous in the period of the "Cold War", a pressure which favoured the maintenance of the Yugoslav system of government and state, in the course of time grew weaker and finally disappeared. Ultimately, both its disappearance and the changes in Central-European countries became additional, significant factors that favoured the revival, emergence and activity of various groupings which later changed into political parties, or became political parties with definite national programmes at the very outset. They dominated the political scene, pushing into the background various sections of the disintegrating League of Communists of Yugoslavia. In the final stage of the SFRY we come across both nationalist groups and parties which developed from the former local communist groupings, and such whose origin had nothing to do with the organs

of the former, communist apparatus of power. Their actions, clashes and conflicts, and on the other hand — also informal alliances between these groups — would influence most powerfully the fortunes of the previous system of government in Yugoslavia. They arose mainly on the national ground.

As a result, the main reasons for the decay and disintegration of this system would be national conflicts, and not — like in other Central-European states — the phenomena derived from the relations between the ruling power and society. These relations were dominated either by conflicts, or the attempts to overcome them by the agreements and negotiations at the “Round” or “Triangle Table”, as it was in Poland or Hungary. In the case of Yugoslavia, the renouncement of the local, “self-management” version of “real socialism” was an important, but secondary reason for the abolition of the power of the LCY and its republican and regional centres of leadership. The international situation was also of secondary importance. This was because it only favoured, but did not engender the national tensions in that country.

The more so because this situation determined in the first place the disintegration of the state. The latter phenomenon ensued after the disappearance of the previous system of government, which was the main factor that cemented the state, just as it was in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. The influence of the external factor was mainly connected with the fact that in the period of the decline of the “Cold War”, the gradual disintegration of the Soviet Union, the general lack of interest in the Balkan countries, and the engagement of the USA in Iraq, the Great Powers took a passive stand with regard to Yugoslavia. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the governments of the United States, France, Great Britain and the Soviet Union expressed the opinion that the survival of Yugoslavia was necessary. However, they did nothing that would favour this survival and, more importantly, that would prevent the later disintegration of Yugoslavia by way of war, bloody settlement of accounts and national conflicts. This was also due to a certain ambivalence, at least as far as the United States, France and Great Britain were concerned. This ambivalence took the form of the opinion that the survival of Yugoslavia was as important as the right of nations to self-determination. In the USA the latter

opinion was emphasized mainly by the adversaries of president G. Bush's policy towards Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the representatives of the West-German government did not encounter such a dilemma, while supporting the national and state aspirations of Slovenes and Croats. As a result the policy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the matter of Yugoslavia differed from that of the above-mentioned Western states and the Soviet Union. Regardless of its ambiguous motivations, which have not been fully clarified, the policy of the FRG favoured even more the disintegration and the outbreak of a bloody war in Yugoslavia. Some elements of this kind of policy could also be detected in the postures of Austria, Italy and Vatican. Nevertheless, one could not detect any essential contradiction of interests in the postures of the USA, the USSR and European countries towards Yugoslavia. As a result, the international situation that emerged in connection with that country also had its good sides. In fact, it did not kindle in the Balkan countries a great international armed conflict, such as took place in 1914. Nor did the European processes of integration and the inter-connections between the strongest Western states within the framework of NATO favour such a war. Eventually, regardless of understandable though secondary differences, these processes and inter-connections ruled out the possibility of an armed confrontation between those states, or an outbreak of a conflict comparable to both World Wars.

It should be emphasized that the factors which were the main cause of the decay of the system of power, and later of the whole SFRY, also accompanied the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1941. However, there were some differences. It must be admitted that inter-war Yugoslavia was convulsed by many national conflicts, but towards the end of the 1930s and at the beginning of the 1940s they definitely tended to subside. This process may be exemplified by the signing of the *sporazum* on 26 August 1939. In contrast to the various levels of the authorities of the SFRY, the Yugoslav government was then interested not in clashes and confrontation, but in the liquidation or at least significant curtailment of national feuds. There were no symptoms then, either, of the spontaneous growth of conflicts between the nations of the then Yugoslavia, regardless of the fact that the reasons which might lead to them in the future, had not been then liquidated.

One could hardly observe at that time such phenomena as clashes, divergencies and even armed incidents, which fifty years later arose in various parts of the state between Serbs on the one hand, and Slovenes, Albanians, and finally Croats and Muslims on the other. Nor did any member of the state authorities in Belgrade think seriously of introducing a state of emergency or martial law. On the other hand, in the late 1980s and early 1990s all these events and plans were the order of the day. They were accompanied by strong separatist tendencies of Slovenes, Croats and Albanians. As a result, in 1941 the direct causes of the breakup of the state were completely different than 50 years later. In the first case, of decisive importance was the aggression of Germany, Italy and their satellites, that is an external factor, while in the second — the internal conditions, that is growing national clashes and conflicts. One might say that in 1941 they were primarily the consequence, while half a century later — the main cause of the disintegration. In 1941 the external aggression brought about a breakup of the state and created favourable conditions for the development of earlier stifled national tensions and conflicts, while in 1991 the situation was different. It was these tensions and conflicts, that is internal factors, that had led to the secession of Slovenia and Croatia, which commenced the disintegration of the Yugoslav state. The only similarity may be detected in the fact that in both cases national clashes, conflicts and tensions led to bloody slaughter and settling of accounts, in 1941 — after the breakup and dismembering of the inter-war Yugoslavia, 50 years later — after the events that commenced the disintegration of the SFRY. It was also characteristic that those who took part in the settling of accounts were, apart from various nationalist groupings, also the Communists. During World War II they fought against their internal and external enemies, in the name of the construction of a new, federal system, on the Soviet model. They argued that this would ensure respect for the rights of all the nations and national minorities. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s this situation changed diametrically. Many communist leaders, with Milošević at the head, as well as many, though not all the cells at various levels of the LCY took over the goals and ideology of the nationalists and together with them participated in breaking up the previous system of power and the state itself. After all, during World War II, while making

use of external support, Communists were the main force of Yugoslav statehood, and resisted in this field various nationalist groupings, and above all — Ante Pavelić's Ustashi. However, half a century later, various personages and cells of the disintegrated and collapsing LCY, together with nationalists in various republics of Yugoslavia, brought about the disintegration of that state.

It is impossible to define to what extent the evolution of the Communists' attitude resulted from their actual convictions, and to what degree — from calculation, the estimation that nationalist aims and ideologies would be the best method of sustaining their previous power and political status, if not in the whole of Yugoslavia, then at least in its particular parts. It would also be hard to ascertain now why the disintegration of Yugoslavia, in contrast to that of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, was accompanied by the above-mentioned armed conflicts and bloody national clashes. Most frequently they are associated with the great differentiation of nations, civilization, culture, religion, language and economy in the area of the whole state, and the fact is forgotten that in the Soviet Union this differentiation was even greater. The war in Yugoslavia is also associated with the conviction that such a complicated political structure could survive only in the conditions of a strong power like that of Tito and his collaborators. It is also associated with the controversial opinion that in the Balkan countries the conflicting nationalisms explode most strongly at the moment of a collapse of the previous power, as was indicated by the events of the First and Second World Wars. The destructive role of the aggressiveness of the Serbian authorities with Milošević at the head is also emphasized. And finally, historians cite the unquestionable significance of the ineffective policy of the Western world, which did not want to, or was not able to, connect its diplomatic recognition of the states emerging from the ruins of Yugoslavia with obliging them to attend to its peaceful disintegration.

Without denying the weight of these arguments one must say that of essential significance could also, or even in the first place be the practice of the political life after Yugoslavia's decentralization. By recognizing the different national aims and interests and legalizing the fight for their defence, the central authorities with Tito at the head, unawares, created a situation conducive not so much to the stabilization as to the gradual disintegration

of the state. In such a situation various sections of the decentralized state-party apparatus could for years take advantage of the national aspirations and strivings in their current political strife, and their struggle for power. This could only favour the simultaneous activation and augmentation of the force of nationalist movements, as well as ever greater conflicts between the authorities of various levels, on the ground of nationalisms incited by the political activity of the party itself. These processes acquired the dimensions that were not encountered in Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union, that is other multinational federal states under communist control. In this perspective the national tensions, clashes and conflicts which had led to a war in Yugoslavia made it look like a logical consequence of a dramatic, sinister course of events. The atmosphere of hostility was also incited by the local republican media, controlled by the party authorities of various levels and dominated by various local nationalisms. This mainly concerned television, which played such a role for the first and only time in the history of Europe. Eventually, the play with nationalisms, conducted mainly though not only by the Communist Party, and in fact — by the conflicting local sections of the LCY, was not only one of the causes of the disintegration of Yugoslavia but might also be one of the main reasons for the bloody armed fights in the area of that country. Whether and to what extent this hypothesis is right, will be shown by future research.

However, the phenomenon of the breakup of the system of power and Yugoslavia itself, as well as the later armed fighting cannot be reduced to internal tensions and conflicts and the influence of international conditions. The processes of the disintegration of this state should be also perceived in a wider historical context, bound up with the emergence of modern national states in Europe. This took place mainly in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. The situation prevailing at that time enabled the completion of the process of the rise of national states in Western Europe and preconditioned their rise also in the Central-Eastern part of the Continent. These conditions arose regardless of the fact that the age-long domination of Turkey and the Habsburg monarchy was a great obstacle to the realization of the state ambitions of many Central-European nations, including the Balkan ones. This domination finished after the First

World War, but its collapse did not bring a solution that would satisfy all the Southern Slavic nations. The creation of Yugoslavia, initially with the Karadjordjevićs, and then with Communists headed by Tito, was not such a solution. In various periods of the history of that state, dissatisfaction because of the lack of their own state was shown not only by the Croats, but also Slovenes, Macedonians and finally the Serbs. Also Albanians, that is representatives of the most numerous non-Slavic nation in Yugoslavia, rose in rebellion. In such conditions only the breakdown of the system of power in Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, coinciding with the end of the "Cold War" and transformations in the Soviet Union and the countries of Central-Eastern Europe, could create an opportune situation that would allow a slow, though in comparison with other European countries, belated realization of the state aspirations of the nations inhabiting Yugoslavia. It seems that this delay, due to the age-long stifling of the natural and justified strivings of those nations, became another cause of the outbreak of the acts of aggression that led to bloody fighting on national ground. The obstacle to the materialization of those ambitions, that is the state of Yugoslavia, soon disappeared, which led to the immediate outbreak of armed fighting resulting also from the enormous intermingling of nationalities. It became impossible to introduce any boundaries between nations. Ultimately, both the breakup of Yugoslavia and the bloody fighting that ensued soon after, were the most conspicuous symptoms of that stage in the rise of national states in the Balkan region, which started together with the secession of Slovenia and Croatia. It might only be added that similar processes, accomplished in other parts of Europe⁵, were frequently as bloody and cruel as those in the area of the disintegrating Yugoslavia. It is also significant that the events that commenced its breakup have not yet led to the completion of the process of the rise of national states in the Balkan region. This is shown, for example, by the tense relations between the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo and the currently unsettled status of this area. Generally, the processes of the breakup of the system of power in Yugoslavia and of Yugoslavia itself, coincided with

⁵ Of course, not in all. I do not mention the special case of the USSR. The European republics of this state certainly did not fulfil the dreams of the local nations about their own states.

diametrically opposite tendencies in Western Europe; following the end of the "Cold War" and the collapse of "real socialism", these tendencies spread all over Europe, embracing also its Central-Eastern part. As a result, the absolute value attached to a national state in the area of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia collided with the restriction and reduction of the role and sovereignty of such states in other parts of Europe, where supra-national and supra-state institutions and organizations were rising in significance.

Nevertheless, regardless of the conspicuous processes and tendencies to the integration of Europe, the breakup of the system of power and the state in Yugoslavia was not an isolated phenomenon. Similar developments could be observed in other multinational countries controlled by the Communist Parties, that is in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. These events had a structural basis and resulted from the structure of relations between the federation and local authorities. In Yugoslavia this structure was different from those in the USSR and Czechoslovakia, as well as in other European countries of "real socialism" which were not built on the principle of federation. In fact, decentralization had led to the weakening of Yugoslav federal authorities in comparison to republican and regional ones. As a result, the decision-making process in the SFRY was of a different character than in the Soviet Union and other states of the Eastern bloc. Agreements, haggling and "pushing" between the republics and regions, especially in economic, financial and national matters, frequently undermined the decisions of federal authorities, were often at variance with their aims, designs, and conceptions, especially after Tito's death. From the point of view of decision-making, these agreements, and on the other hand — inter-republican clashes in Yugoslavia — were of much greater significance than the resolutions made "from above", dominating in the politics of Moscow, Prague and generally — the authorities of the European countries of "real socialism".

It should be emphasized that apart from the differences in the manner of decision-making, there were also some similarities, such as conflicts between the centre and peripheries. As far as the Yugoslav and Soviet federations are concerned — these conflicts took place between the central and republican authorities. They took various forms, gathered strength or weakened

in various periods, and appeared in different political contexts. In Yugoslavia — they emerged mainly in the period of reforms which commenced in the middle 1960s and were crowned with the voting of the Constitution of 1974. On the other hand, in the USSR — they took place mainly under Gorbachev's rule, in its final stage. Nevertheless, in both countries, they were of secondary importance. In the case of Yugoslavia of decisive significance were the national and inter-republican relations, full of feuds, clashes and conflicts. In the Soviet Union after World War II, and also in the final stage of this state, national conflicts were not so strong. As a result, the fate of the Soviet Union was determined mainly by the conflict between the interests of the Soviet centre of power and the excited ambitions and aspirations of the main, dominant nation of this empire, that is the Russians themselves. Beginning with Stalin, the leaders in the Kremlin tried, in various periods, to Russify their empire to a smaller or greater extent, but in such a way as was bound to affect also the Russian sense of national pride. To use Roman Szporluk's term, one might say that in practice "the Russian nation was immersed in Stalin's state"⁶, that is — its interests, culture, history and tradition became the object of manipulation by the rulers in the Kremlin.

The above situation must have been favourable to those politicians who like Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin perceived some chance for themselves in the "defence" of the Russian qualities against Sovietism. As a result the president of Russia became the main grave-digger of the Soviet Union. In contrast, such a role was not played by Milošević and his followers with regard to Yugoslavia. At least in the sense that the Serbian president did not decide to make the move characteristic of Yeltsin and most important for his whole political career. At the turn of the 1980s Milošević clearly gave his compatriots to understand that he was thinking mainly of the interests of Serbia, and that he did not care about Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, he did not sign an agreement resembling that which was signed in Białowieża Forest in December 1991. This was probably because the conflicts between the Yugoslav nations and republics made it impossible for him to find partners with whom he could define a suitable formula for reconciling contradictory interests, and to establish the terms of

⁶R. Szporluk, *Imperium, komunizm, narody*, p. 181.

Yugoslavia's "dissolution". The fact that Yeltsin was able to find such partners in various Soviet republics may serve as a proof that inter-republican animosities were of secondary importance to the process of the breakup of the USSR. The intermingling of nations in particular republics, that barred reaching any understanding between the national leaders in Yugoslavia, in the USSR was even greater, but was no obstacle to the agreement of the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus in December 1991. Was it because in the Soviet Union there was no official approval of the defence — and in fact — the combat of national interests, and as a result — the play of the representatives of the state-party apparatus with nationalisms was not so free there as in Yugoslavia? It seems that this hypothesis deserves serious consideration.

One cannot rule out that Milošević's posture, different from Yeltsin's, was due to the fact that the position of Serbia in Yugoslavia, although it resembled that of Russia in the Soviet Union, was not the same. After World War II Serbia was the most important republic in Yugoslavia, but it did not achieve a dominant position in this state for long. It did not acquire such a status regardless of being suspected of such wishes and designs, and of the fact that various Serbian politicians and personages, not only in the Communist Party, but also among its enemies, indeed thought of introducing the domination of their republic in Yugoslavia. At the same time, Serbia was not "immersed" in Yugoslavism to the extent that Russia was in Sovietism. Moreover, Serbian politicians and wide sections of public opinion in Serbia did not consider Yugoslavism to be an actual threat. On the contrary, they were convinced that it might serve the introduction of Serbian domination in Yugoslavia. In such circumstances, Milošević and other Serbian nationalists did not perceive in Yugoslavism any threat to Serbia or personally, to themselves. So they did not have to attack the Yugoslav state. On the contrary, they openly suggested that if Yugoslavia were centralized again, they would reconcile themselves to the fact of its existence. This suggestion was in keeping with their expectations that such a systemic form would ensure Serbia either complete domination, or a very strong position in this state, and to them personally — a political position reflecting their aspirations and ambitions. As a result Milošević and Serbian nationalists were not, in principle,

enemies of Yugoslavia, in contrast to Yeltsin and Russian nationalists and democrats, who saw the Soviet authorities in the Kremlin, that is the persons of Gorbachev and his followers, as their main adversaries in their personal and national ambitions. After all, the exponents of Serbian strivings did not have to reckon with the federal authorities in Belgrade, who were weak and deprived of actual influence on the course of events in their country. They could criticize them, oppose them in their policy, but they were aware that these authorities were not able to threaten the nationalist aims and strivings in Serbia. While Yeltsin had his opponents in the central authorities in Moscow, Milošević had them in the personages who ruled in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Priština. Thus these two situations were not the same. They were the reason for the different reactions of both these politicians, as well as personages and milieux which supported them and saw them as exponents of their own aims, strivings, interests, and national values. Wishing to satisfy the personal and wider national aspirations of these milieux Yeltsin decided on a confrontation with central Soviet authorities, while Milošević and his followers — with republican and regional centres of political power. As a result the Russian president sought allies on the periphery, while the leader of Serbia declared his readiness to co-operate with the representatives of the central state-party apparatus, on condition that they would act in keeping with the aims and principles of the policy he would recognize as the most suitable. He wanted to mobilize them to fight with the decisive dispersal of forces in various parts of the SFRY. This was certainly what Yeltsin did not want to do in the USSR. Ultimately, the breakup of the Soviet Union progressed in conditions of the confrontation between the aspirations of Yeltsin and Russian nationalism on the one hand and the Soviet "internationalism" headed by the Kremlin on the other. In Yugoslavia — in contrast — this breakup was due to fierce, chaotic conflicts between various centres which also had military power at their disposal. In the middle of 1991 these conflicts also took the form of armed fighting.

It would be difficult to assess who appeared in the role of the main personage that put the mechanism of those confrontations into motion. Milošević and Serbian nationalists certainly strove for power and domination, if not in Yugoslavia, then in inde-

pendent Serbia which also absorbed those Yugoslav areas which were inhabited by the representatives of their nation and were connected with Serbian history, culture and traditions. These strivings collided with the aspirations for independence of the authorities, political and intellectual élites and wide sections of public opinion in other republics, mainly Slovenia and Croatia. They showed no actual tendency to a compromise, and in this respect they resembled Milošević and Serbian nationalists. They also incited the strivings which to a smaller or larger extent appeared in the earlier periods of Yugoslav history. In these conditions Milošević could not become a Serbian Yeltsin. He would have to enjoy support from the other republican élites and obtain their consent to the realization of his own political programme, as well as — to take a definite stand against the federal centre of power in Belgrade. Both these elements were lacking. Finally, the breakup of Yugoslavia was determined by the various roused nationalisms. Their representatives did not want to, were not able to and could not reconcile the contradictory national interests. This was mainly due to basic divergencies between the Serbs on the one hand and Slovenes and Croats on the other.

I think that one more problem deserves to be mentioned. This is a view that the breakup of Yugoslavia might not have occurred if the Yugoslav federation, as well as the Soviet or Czechoslovak ones, had not been created on an ethnic, national basis. To support this view, reference is made to the examples of Switzerland and the United States. It is maintained that the latter are stable and multinational federations at the same time. Nevertheless such an approach seems to be erroneous, and ahistorical. It does not take into account the fact that the American political system arose in conditions of an influx of population from various continents. This population did not settle in separate, delimited territories, but in the areas which from the very beginning had been nationally mixed. This intermingling must have precisely been the reason that prevented the creation of a federation based on national units. Regardless of such or other intentions it would be impossible for purely technical reasons.

We should also remember that the masses of people coming to the New World had no roots in the local history, tradition or culture that would be their own. While arriving there for many ages, they adjusted themselves to new conditions. They created

new forms of life and activity, frequently in opposition to the country from which they had come. This opposition arose from their earlier poverty, religious persecution and a lack of political rights. It may be added that the most numerous group that came, that is the English, or more generally — persons coming from the British Isles, broke all their political ties with the United Kingdom at the time of the American Revolution at the end of the 18th century.

All these factors must have favoured the development of a common American national consciousness. This has nothing to do with the fact that large groups of population in the USA still preserve their Italian, Polish, German, Jewish or Irish national identity. So there were conditions in America for creating a federation which might ignore ethnic divisions corresponding with a definite territory, without the threat of a breakup of the state. This situation resembled that of Switzerland, inhabited by a multilingual but not multinational population. At any rate, for many ages in Europe national divisions were not co-extensive with languages. In the case of Switzerland, its specific geographical situation and the sense of a community of aims and interests have for ages promoted and shaped the common, Swiss national consciousness, regardless of the different languages spoken in its area.

Such a community has never arisen in Yugoslavia. This was regardless of the efforts of various intellectual élites in the 19th and 20th centuries as well as the policy of the Karadjordjevićs, mainly in the 1930s. There was no natural, nation-generating process springing "from below" that would embrace all the peoples of Yugoslavia. Its area saw the rise of nations that were aware of their separate, specific aims, different cultures, traditions, history, and different political and economic interests. These nations were connected with the areas that were only parts of the Yugoslav state. They had lived there for ages, and were not composed, as in America, of the masses of uprooted refugees who sought better conditions of life. As a result there were no conditions in Yugoslavia for a rise, on the American model, of a double national consciousness on a mass scale — Yugoslav, and at the same time Serbian, Croatian, Slovene, or Albanian. Hence, in practice, there was no possibility of ignoring national divisions in the process of the creation of the Yugoslav system, regardless of

whether it would be a monarchy or a Communist state. This would require acting by force, and the latter proved ineffective in the long run. This was shown, for example, by the attempts made by King Alexander and his successors. The creation of Croatian Banovina in 1939 was in fact a symptom of a breakdown of the Karadjordjevićs' policy of Yugoslavism. Ultimately, Communists "inherited" a definite national situation and had to reckon with it. This was regardless of the fact that Tito's federal conceptions resembled, mainly until the conflict of 1948, and even later, until the decentralization, the policy conducted with regard to nationalities by Lenin or Stalin. It would be hard to define precisely to what extent the division of the country into republics and autonomous regions, which took into account national factors, resulted from the historical inheritance, and to what — from adopting the national policy of the Soviet leaders. One can only say that in the Soviet model any divisions were of secondary significance, since centralization was treated as a general systemic principle. As a result the federal model of the state and the policy of Tito and his successors after decentralization were not so much a continuation as an essential modification of the Soviet model. This was also one of the main reasons why events took a course heading towards the breakup of Yugoslavia.

A question arises, however, whether a withdrawal from decentralization, as well as generally from the systemic solutions enabling the creation of a federation out of national parts, with due regard for national differentiation, could have ensured the survival of the state. Would such a withdrawal have prevented the rise and accumulation of national contradictions, dissatisfaction and frustration? Would it have prevented the crises, the collapse of the internal stabilization, and finally the bloody armed conflicts in the period of the change of the balance of forces in the international arena? And primarily, would it have been effective at the final stage of the "Cold War", which favoured essential transformations in Central-Eastern Europe, that is also in Yugoslavia?

One might also reasonably ask a question whether Yugoslavia would have been able to survive if Tito had actually introduced authentic democratic solutions and procedures in his system of power and — more generally — in the system of the state. These were the suggestions of various party and non-party activists,

put forward mainly in the period of reforms commenced in the middle 1960s. In this connection one might wonder whether democratization might have counterbalanced various nationalisms and checked the tendencies to disintegration. Indeed, the communist authorities of various levels did not so much create these tendencies, as intensify them and they utilized them in their policy. However, we are not in possession of instruments that would make possible an analysis of the facts, phenomena and events that did not actually take place. As a result it would be difficult to give precise answers to the above questions. Such questions and answers can only be regarded as loose speculations, deprived of any scholarly value.

(Translated by Agnieszka Kreczmar)