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THE SEGMENTATION OF THE YUGOSLAV COMMUNIST ELITE, 1943–1972

ABSTRACT

The communist elite of Yugoslavia established Yugoslavia anew during World War II. A federal communist arrangement was put in place, with the period shifting from an almost totalitarian regime towards an operationally consociational one. In this paper, we question the issue of the homogeneity and very existence of the Yugoslav ruling communist elite in the period 1943–1991. We focus on decision-making, discussions and purges by considering newly available archival sources. The article finds that while the elite was successful in taking power it was not long before the elite started to be ethnically segmented. The origins of this segmentation related to how resolution of the national question of the nations at issue was understood, in turn further driving the segmentation process. Overall, we argue that individual national elites were already established by 1972.

KEY WORDS: Yugoslav elite, communism; purges, Politburo, elite segmentation

Segmentacija jugoslovanske komunistične elite, 1943–1972

IZVLEČEK

Komunistična elita Jugoslavije je v času druge svetovne vojne znova ustanovila Jugoslavijo. Oblikovana je bila federativna komunistična ureditev, ki se je gibala od skoraj totalitarnega režima do skoraj operativne konsociacije. V tem članku analiziramo homogenost in sam obstoj jugoslovanske vladajoče komunistične elite v obdobju 1943–1991 na podlagi virov, ki so zdaj na voljo. Zlasti analiziramo odločanje, razprave in čistke. Čeprav je elita uspešno prevzela oblast, se je segmentacija elitne skupine pričela brez odlašanja. Viri segmentacije so se nanašali na nacionalno dojemanje vprašanja zadevnih nacij, kar je vse bolj gnalo proces

segmentacije. Sklepamo, da so bile nacionalne elite oblikovane že leta 1972, ko je jugoslovanske elita prenehala obstajati kot enovita skupina.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: jugoslovanska elita, komunizem, čistke, politbiro, segmentacija elite

1 Introduction

One is on slippery grounds attempting the study of societal elites in a manner coinciding with the elementary meaning of the term. Classical thinkers, Pareto and Mosca, with daring analyses, remain cited today (see, for example, Dogan 2003; Burton and Higley 2001; Best 2012), although the formers' constructs were hardly based on empirical findings, but were primarily the product of their "sociological imagination". Hence, the troubles confronted at analysing the elite are illustrated by Giddens: "there can exist a 'governing class' without necessarily being a 'ruling class'; there can exist a 'power elite' without necessarily being either a 'ruling' or a 'governing class'" and he continues to list terms which do not coincide in depiction of power elites (1972: 348).

On the other hand, there was great consent on the nature of political elites in communist countries, particularly the former European ones. For example, Djilas (1957), Aron (1968), and Burton and Higley (2001), held very similar views and contended the structure is simple, imposed by political violence, closed, ruling in the name of an ideology, the ideology being disconnected with social reality. For example, Djilas held simply that the "new class" [elite] operated via decision making and appropriation on the basis of state ownership. "The owner-ship privilege of the new class manifests itself as an exclusive right, as – party monopoly, for the political bureaucracy to distribute the national income, to set wages, direct economic development, and dispose of nationalized and other property" (Djilas 1957: 44–45). Hence, the party elite would "own" the state.

Burton and Higley develop the idea of Djilas's "new class" [elite] speaking of ideocracy: "An ideocratic elite is a stable unrepresentative regime in which power is monopolised by a single party or movement, so that power exercises and transfers jockeying for position within the uppermost body rather than domi-nating some representative body" (2001: 188). Thus, Burton and Higley grant somewhat more elasticity in their comprehension of the ruling group than was put forward by Friedrich and Brzezinski (1956) in their famous piece at designating the "communist" and "totalitarian" dictatorship. The latter held it was a strictly hierarchical structure with a charismatic leader at the apex. With Burton and Higley, there is also no contention that the ideocratic elite would act in a perfect totalitarian rationality, making the state ever more totalitarian, but its operations

are about "jockeying", i.e. manoeuvring and manipulating. As to the "doctrine" elites invoke, not only for the "ideocratic ones", but in general, Burton and Higley hold a Paretian view: "Doctrinal unanimity is always more apparent than real" (2001: 186). They also do not propose an operative definition of a political elite's structure: "Political elites are somewhat elastic formations with unclear boundaries" (2001: 182). This complements the words of Mattei Dogan, another authoritative source on elites, who wrote: "Elite studies seem to be shut to a conceptual Tower of Babel, where scholars gamble with non-specified words" (Dogan 2003: 6).

When the stratification of (socialist) communist countries became the subject of detailed sociological investigation, it produced various patternings, all of which underscored the relevance of education as dimension of stratification and, to a lesser extent, the relevance of membership in the ruling party: for examples, Best (2012) does demonstrate the relevance of Party membership in the case of the German Democratic Republic in the 1980s, whereas Mitja Hafner-Fink studying Yugoslav social structure does not (1989), following Popović (Popović et al. 1977; see also Eyal and Townsley, 1995). The dimension of stratification studied by Yugoslav scholars at the time would not allow for the notion of an elite, a stratum far apart from the others, with power concentration. Relating to the Yugoslav communist elite, Higley and Pakulski held, furthermore, that it "took power in 1945" and belonged to the "strong unity" type of "ideological elites" (Higley and Pakulski 1995: 416). They also considered it a "national" elite, but in the article devoted to post-socialist transformations, they omit to analyze this transformation.

Other significant assertions on the existence of a Yugoslav communist elite are to be found with Higley and Pakulski, (1995: 416), Burton and Higley (2001: 185), Cotta (2018: 321) and others. For example, Higley, Hoffman-Lange, Moore and Kadushin wrote explicitly in 1991 of a "Yugoslav national elite" (1991: 43). Rusinow, in a well-known monograph on Yugoslavia, published in 1978, also wrote of the Yugoslav political "elite" in the singular no less than 58 times (Rusinow 1978). Denitch (1990) wrote of a "Yugoslav political elite" as late as in 1990, although he also had in mind elites in various other segments of social life and he would allow for republican variation of the political elite. In a study on Yugoslavia from 1972, the CIA also wrote of a "Yugoslav political elite" as hierarchically organised, without hesitation (Director of National Intelligence 1972: 5). Hence, there is an opulence of assertions on the existence of a single Yugoslav communist elite.

These assertions were not without any foundation. Loosely, one can say that in the period of 1945–1991 in Yugoslavia initially there was a single elite, which did not encompass everyone who lived off of politics, but mainly the top com-

munist party and government republic and federal functionaries. The elite was comprised of the ones who concentrated political power, although we would not limit it to the "apex" (possibly coinciding with the federal Party politburo) when describing it. In this paper we will be speaking of the political elite, knowing that other terms and concepts are also used, particularly nomenklatura, bureaucracy, estate, and upper class being the main ones. These terms involve differences in theoretical approaches, but mainly focus on the same or similar aggregates (see Eyal and Townsley 1995). It needs to be mentioned that no nomenklatura existed in Yugoslavia in the technical meaning of a list within which all key appointments were made. There were initiatives in this direction, particularly by Ranković in 1949, but such a single binding list was never established. There were lists both of key leaders in republics and provinces (for grandees to "rotate" among posts), particularly as of the 1970s, and there were partly successful attempts to draw lists of federal professionals from the republics and provinces to enforce republican-provincial control upon them (Burg 1983: 212–213; Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 264).

Although this is not decisive for our argument, we may hypothesize the political elite was, around 1962, a relatively small one, numbering between one and two thousand people, containing federal party grandees (members of executive bodies), federal and republic government members, major deputy federal ministers, some generals, a few top security officials. At the time the economic and cultural elite did not form part of the political one. This is much less than the 9.000 Ranković, Tito's deputy proposed to be entered on a nomenklatura list in 1949 (January 1949 Central Committee CPY Third Session, Petranović, Končar and Radović 1985: 214–219), which, however was never adopted. By way of description, we may note there were always women represented in the elite, but male domination was heavy during the entire period. Most elite members were socialized within the CPY and although they were becoming more educated with time, the Yugoslav political elite was never truly intellectualized, although there was an attempt in the late 1960s.[1] The Yugoslav political elite was never easy to study sociologically. We note that Denitch, Barton and Kadushin, studying the entire spectrum of "opinion making" elites in Yugoslavia, were not able to reach the very highest political leaders and that social change makes it "difficult" to designate the elite (1973: 6).

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1. The attempt was launched by Tito himself (probably in the hope that more educated leaders would be less nationalistic), bringing to the political scene social scientists like Miroslav Pečujlić, Slavko Miloslavleski and Stipe Šuvar. Stane Dolanc was also launched at the time as "from the University of Ljubljana scholars". Tito would retract this attempt at intellectualization, with dire consequences for some.

In this paper the focus will be on the composition of the Yugoslav power elite, restricting ourselves to one important aspect which is frequently overlooked by quantitative studies: did Tito's Yugoslavia comprise a single political elite or *whether the elite broke down according to nationhoods and republics (provinces), and if so, when did the segmentation occur.* Hence, we will observe some important actions on the part of this group(s) and touch on the issue with which other elite group(s) the political elite(s) corresponded. More specifically, we shall be recounting and narrating two important historical processes which were involved in the making or breaking of the singular elite: (1) purges and oustings, and (2) the 1962 politburo session. Our narrative is based on newly available archival evidence.

Our point of departure will be the contention on the existence of a single Yugoslav political elite, which was found among the authors quoted above, to which others could be added. Some critical points in time indicating the elite's homogeneity or its absence will be presented. The conceptual issues of elites, political elites, power elites, elite segments will remain outside the focus of this article and we will focus solely on the process of Yugoslav communist political elite. The study of the Yugoslav elite(s) from communist times presents a particularly interesting case, albeit unclarified, as it was considered to have been a strong, solid one in the post-World War II period, as acknowledged for example by Higley and Pakulski (1995), while later studies of post-socialist (elite) transition either skip the case (Higley and Pakulski 1995; Linz and Stepan 1996), or speak of one republic transition as if it had been an exclusively internal transformation (Iglič and Rus 2000; Sekulić and Šporer 2000; Lazić 2000; Adam and Tomšič 2002). They do not address the issue of how many elites managed to evolve out of a single supposed entity. Did the segmentation come about as a collateral consequence of the state's dissolution or was it vice versa? The paper addresses this gap in the literature as well.

2 Elite dynamics in communist ethno-federation

This was a case of communist revolution, with a small group of enthused revolutionaries, with a totalitarian state in mind by the rulers (Djilas 1948) who took power by way of the Partisan movement spanning more or less throughout Yugoslavia. However, from the beginning it was also an ethnofederal arrange-ment with 6 territorial entities at par, later to be supplemented by 2 more in an attempt to find a balance. The elite was plurinational and »ideologically unified«, according to the term of Higley and Burton (2012: 247). The substance of the ideology can be defined as (1) achieving a communist order and (2) solving the national question of each nationhood within Yugoslavia, thus radically do-

ing away with previous "greater Serbian hegemony". Possibly the first issue the revolutionaries needed to solve was the number of ethnofederal units, an issue put to the populace ro decide would not be contained even if communists had arranged. They took the decisions in private. We will not deal with the issue at length (see Haug 2012: 87–113). It will suffice to note: On borders, within Yugoslavia agreement was achieved with "facilely", as Djilas recollected (Djilas 1992), but the entire situation was not free of encumberments and tensions. Between Partisan leaderships as nuclei of future governments, territorial disputes existed (Haug 2012: 110–113).

We will focus on two relevant aspects in the operations of the elite: purges and discussions.

2.1 Purges, oustings and national parity

The first major disputes within the communist elite came soon after the War, concerning food, particularly grain deficit. The unrealistic policy of "compulsory delivery", with delivery quotas imposed upon peasants, at unrealistic law prices and its imminent failure was reflected in inter-ethnic relations among top communists, who began to point fingers at each other. Blagoje Nešković, head of the Party in Serbia, was, with respect to compulsory delivery of agricultural foodstuffs, in 1947, unjustly pressed to suck out by force more than was produced in 1947 by the Vojvodinian peasants (this was recorded at the Politburo session on March 4, 1947). Nešković opposed delivery quotas. Kidrič, Kardelj, Tito and others criticized him strongly for not accepting the quota plan, for distancing himself from the 5 economic year plan in general. He was labelled an "opportunist", "practicist" and "un-self-critical", criticised for being "disrespectful to such an experienced and long-standing communist as Kidrič" (Petranović and Zečević 1988: 313–318). Same criticisms and clashes also came about at the Federal Economic Council in 1947–1949, among the same participants and along the same lines (Zečević and Lekić 1995).

However, the most important issues in Nešković's deviation from the CPY line were his opposition to the formation of Sandžak as a federal unit in 1945, at which he was successful in 1945 (Zakonodavni rad 1951, 56–58), and opposition to Macedonian leadership on Serbo-Macedonian borders, (at which he was also partly successful (Glišić 2011: 42; Petrović 2012: 143). No less important, he opposed autonomy for Kosovo Albanians, supporting the downgrading of the status to an administrative district within Serbia. He was also among those Serb leaders who insisted Vojvodina not be granted status of federal unit. He successfully opposed autonomy for Wallachs in Eastern Serbia (Glišić 2011: 94). Meanwhile, he insisted on the application of the Cyrillic alphabet. To complete

his portrait, it should be noted he forbade the idiom "Greater Serb nationalism" and "hegemony" to be mentioned in school text books while he was in power, as noted by Mitra Mitrović, at his dismissal (Glišić 2011: 114). He later testified to having promoted the idea that Montenegro and Macedonia be part of the Serbian Republic (CIA Reading Room 2015).

In 1950, Ćanica Opačić, Rade Žigić and Dušan Brkić were the first among Serb leaders to be ousted. All three were republican ministers in Croatia, the second largest of the Yugoslav republics, with a Serb population at the time of 14.3 % (Miljković 1989: 46). The three were Serbs, representing Serbs in the republic's government. They were the most prominent Serb leaders in Croatia. The three were primarily accused of siding with the Soviets and Cominform, but Serbian chauvinism was also prominent among the accusations. They were said to have been "pan-Slavist" and Eastern Orthodox oriented, demanding Serbian epic poetry be studied in schools and the Cyrillic alphabet be used in Croatia, (Bilandžić 2006: 260). Hence, the Croat Communist Party [CP] Central Committee in its "Resolution" passed on 12 September 1950, established that Brkić clung "to a mystical (pan)Slavism", but they all, by "their chauvisnist actions, attempted to disturb fraternal relations between Serbs and Croats" (Borba, 1950). At that time, interethnic relations were officially taken to be harmonious, since the national aspect of the Yugoslavia question was thought to have been definitely solved by the six republic arrangement and by socialist relations, where exploitation was ruled out by just distribution solutions. Hence, the wording without reference to any phenomenon with social dimensions.

One of the main events during the entire political history of Tito's Yugoslavia was the ousting of Tito's second man, Aleksandar Ranković, in 1966. He was chief of security during the entire period 1945–1966 until his removal. Ranković, a Serb, was accused of sundry abuses of secret services, particularly of intercepting conversations between the highest leaders and bodies and using this information to his advantage. He was ousted with collaborators, also Serbs. His downfall indicated a watershed, after which Yugoslav unity was no longer an achievable aim, and all subsequent reforms focused on empowering the republics (and provinces), which would prove to be cradles for future states (Haug 2012: 189–192). At the ousting, care was taken not to give it an anti-Serb tone and all replacements of the Ranković group were by Serbs. However, at the very session where the purge was carried out in July 1966, Tito stated, "It seems we targeted well in nationalist trends being at the core" (Četvrti plenum Centralnog komiteta SKJ 1966: 94). This opened the way for harsher ideological labels.

Later, the ousting gained an ideological aura, and it was claimed that "greater Serbian hegemony" was the essence of Ranković's abuse of power. For example,

Kardelj, the chief ideologist during the entire period (died in 1979) at the session of Executive Bureau (Politburo) of LCY in March 1970, praised the post-Ranković leadership of Serbia of "suppressing directly the pressures of 'greater Serbian hegemony'", alluding to Ranković's influence. He admitted this [post-Ranković Serbian] leadership was supported by the other republican and the federal leadership, but it was the Serbian leadership who mastered the situation in this "most difficult battle" (Petranović and Zečević 1988: 481). Approximately at the same time, Savka Dabčević Kučar, then chair of Croat LC, went further and at a session which gained much public attention, she claimed any effort to strengthen federal jurisdiction - code word "unitarianism" - was nothing else than "[Serbian] hegemonism", only to repeat it a few sentences later (Petranović and Zečević 1988: 467). This manner of thinking was not restricted to Kardelj.

Ranković's ousting gave great impetus to Kosovo Albanian claims be expressed. In 1967, a year of many changes and seeming amicability within the Yugoslav communist elite, Kosovo leaders, headed by Fadil Hoxha and Veli Deva, visited Tito on 23 February. In the air of enjoyment of the air of ease, upon Ranković's fall, Hoxha advanced the counterfactual statement that "it was Albanians who beat the Balist forces [Albanian insurrection]" in the immediate post-War period. Albanians should hence "feel at home in Yugoslavia", whereas Deva more explicitly stated "Albanians should be equal to other peoples" of Yugoslavia in entirety and "not only in part" (this was a request Albanians not be treated as nationality minority but at par with Serbs, Croats etc.) This narrative would evolve in the following years into an assertion of Albanians having remained in Yugoslavia by self-determination and hence being entitled to own republic (all these disputes were within the political elite). This was the basis for claims of republic status to be granted to Kosovo, which was not accepted by Serb leaders and could not evolve into reality (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 121, 134). However, this very claim gave Kosovo Albanians a narrative around which to "build nationhood", along with national institutions like university in Alabnian, academy of sciences, institutes etc.

In 1971, the main event was the "purge" of the Croat political leadership. At issue were Savka Dabčević Kučar and Miko Tripalo, heading a more extensive group. The purge was imposed by Tito himself, after some hesitation over the "Croat Spring", an effervescence in Croatia, containing a mixture of liberal ideas and even stronger ethno-nationalism, including calls for independence and threats to Serbs (living in Croatia) (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 119–120). The purge itself may have seemed to Tito's associates as fully justified, since the Croat movement caused much ethnic unrest and polarization in entire Yugoslavia. The then Croat leaders Miko Tripalo an Savka-Dabčević Kučar toyed with nationalism, until it

got out of hand. The purge created an impression, though, that it was unbalanced, as Croats only were affected, it seemed like a "Serb victory", which did not make Tito happy and did not give him peace.

The so called "highway affair" (1969) also resonated in the Yugoslav public. It came about due to the Slovene leaders' endeavours to draw a disproportional part of funds from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development loan for construction of highways, although the loan was intended express development of underdeveloped regions. In particular, Slovenia was already granted a loan for highways in Upper Carniola (in the previous round). The federal government, headed by Slovene Mitja Ribičič, denied processing Slovene request. This decision on 31 July, 1969 was resisted by the Slovene government, led by Stane Kavčič. It was strongly supported by the Slovene public, which was informed of the issue. However, entity parity was the mode of operation. Throughout Yugoslavia there was dissatisfaction with Slovene claims. As a consequence, dissatisfaction with Yugoslavia was demonstrated in Slovenia – the head the Party Committee of Celje, reported on "requests for independent Slovenia" (Repe 1992: 784). Not entering into details, we will note only that the removal of Kavčič was an internal Slovene affair (Marinc 2018), not directly requested at the federal level, but needed to present Slovenes communists as not tolerating nationalism.

In the same period (1972), Krste Crvenkovski and Slavko Miloslavleski were removed from power in Macedonia, whereas retirees Avdo Humo and Osman Karabegović were castigated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A purge was conducted also in the province of Vojvodina, whereas the relatively weak leaderships in Montenegro and Kosovo were spared.

These purges left hurtful impressions within the elites and more widely within the masses, they were understood as particular attacks upon respective nationhoods. Hence, Miroslav Pečujlić, in 1969 member of the highest Party body from Serbia, would comment negatively on the number of Serbs purged, relating the number of purges among Serbs with an alleged Tito's "psychological complex of greater Serbian hegemony" (Bilandžić 2006: 78).[2] More generally, all those purged would attain a certain charisma within their nationhoods. More than 100.000 people were present at Ranković's funeral in 1983. This charisma would not bring them back to power,[3] but would contribute to nation-building, by feeding a feeling of martyrdom and injustice on all sides involved. (With the

2. Exceptions to the rule of purges being about nationalism and were interpreted as such were only Djilas in 1954 and the purge in Vojvodina 1972 (Vojvodina was a province).
3. Franjo Tuđman, Croatian president (1990–1999), although holding rank of general, was not truly a member of the Yugoslav communist political elite.

exception of Albanians, where there were no such losses, as the Party organization was weak there). On the other hand, all these purges need to be understood as attempts to homogenize the Yugoslav political elite, by elimination of what was considered within the elite as destructive nationalism, not only by Tito. Perović recollects that before her and Nikezić's ousting, Kardelj suggested to them to oust nationalists (Perović 2018: 406).

2.2 The 1962 Politburo session

The in-fighting within the elite was continuous, although not visible. One gets a glimpse of early acute interethnic tension from an event in 1949, when the CPY Central Committee considered the initiative by Aleksandar Ranković and its Organisational secretariat to introduce a new level of government (*oblasti*). This was expressly an attempt to diminish republic authority and possibly to grant a homeland to Serbs in Croatia (the Karlovac region). The proposal was not accepted and in fact the magnetic tape noting the speeches was »severed«, after Slovene communist leader Miha Marinko frontally dismissed the proposal as reintroducing medieval divisions in Slovenia (Maribor, Ljubljana and the Littoral). (Petranović, Končar in Radonjić 1985: 214–219; Petranović 1988: 308). The issue was never mentioned again.

Special attention in the operation of the Yugoslav communist elite should be afforded to the 1962 March extended Politburo session (60 persons taking part). The Politburo is indicative, as it is considered to have been the apex of communist power, hence unity should have been most expressed there (Higley and Pakulski 1995: 418; Lowenhardt, van Ree, and Ozinga 1992). Particularly, as we are dealing with an ideological elite and the Politburo was its apex.

The session was convoked in a sensitive situation when Yugoslavia was externally insolvent. The stage was also enriched by Slovene opposition and obstruction of the adoption of a federal five year plan, as Slovene leaders considered there should be less stress on investments and more on personal consumption. Tito opened the meeting commenting on discourse at sessions of the federal government (promoting the interests of individual republics), where economic measures were adopted and of a federal parliament session which boycotted by representatives of one republic (Slovenia). Very worried, Tito said: "What kind of discussions are these! One can ask whether this state is able to survive, without dissolving?" (Zečević 1998: 32).

Most discussants were evasive in expressing what they thought, as it could prove dangerous to their positions. They mostly did not address what Tito wanted to hear from them: how to change the political system and the role of the CPY, particularly the republic-federal level of government relationship, in order for the

system to be operational. On the other hand, Mijalko Todorović and Svetozar Vukmaković quarrelled on the Marxist understanding of economic notions, which was an interesting sideline of the grave situation. This also derailed the narrative from the major issue.

The basic problem were differences over what kind of state Yugoslavia should be – only a "casual" union of nations at par, with a more advanced market organization, export geared economy (as advanced by Boris Kraigher and Miha Marinko of Slovenia), or a state with a firm centralist, administrative organization (in all areas of life, as advanced by Ranković, Gošnjak, Veselinov, Minić [among which only Gošnjak was not a Serb, he was a Croat and minister of defence]). Serb and Bosnian Serb leaders seemed to be in favour of this, but they were reluctant to express it openly.

Some participants wrongly considered that they could beg economic assistance for their republics. This was done by the *Montenegrins* (Blažo Jovanović, Filip Bajković), who infuriated Tito by entering into the issue how the course of certain rivers should be changed within electric power plant construction. Tito commented: "I did not convoke this meeting because of changes in the course of waters, but to organize ourselves [the LCY], because we [the LCY] are in crisis … I see no one who comprehends the entire issue [from a pan-Yugoslav point of view]" (Zečević 1998: 224).

Bosnia and Herzegovina leader Osman Karabegović discussed the unfavourable position of wood processing and mining, also noting the need for assistance to underdeveloped areas. He referred to Kardelj as authority (Zečević 1998: 83–88). Đuro Pucar (Zečević 1998: 159–162) and Rato Dugonjić, Serbian grandees from Bosnia and Herzegovina spoke mostly of generalities, but referred to Ranković as authority. Their tone was different than Karabegović's, like they were almost begging for a purge, or at least repression (Zečević 1998: 161).

Macedonian leaders were more articulately national. They also begged for financial assistance at investments, speaking of "the mighty ones" opposing them, which could be addressed either to Serbian or Slovene leaders. The then rising Macedonian leader Aleksandar Grličkov complained of lack of funds for subtitling foreign films in the Macedonian language, on the general poor treatment of the Macedonian language (144). This also had nothing to do with the session subject, but is indictive of Macedonian gaining self-consciousness.

These three nationhoods presented themselves in their identity and claims, but the major opposing actors, although guarded, were Slovenes and Serbs from Serbia.

Already in the introductory speech, which was presented in a raised tone, due to the economic and financiral crisis, Mijalko Todorović, federal vice premier,

a Serb, underscored a bank from the Slovene capital, Ljubljana, for "printing money" without backing, but with the blessing of local politicians. Possibly the most expressed in the first round of Serbian speeches was Jovan Veselinov, head of the Serbian Party. Veselinov spoke "of a new nationalism" present, not the bourgeois one, but one with new "theories" (Zečević 1998: 124) targeting Edvard Kardelj. As if denoting what would be legitimate, he conceded in Serbia they support economic policies in favour of their own republic, but they do not make a general theory out of it (Zečević 1998: 125). The Serb participant Dragi Stamenković also attempted to unmask Slovene demands for greater standard of living rises and less investment by claiming Slovenia was already developed and hence it now proposes the no-return General Investment Fund be closed down (Zečević 1998: 172). Hence, Stamenković pleaded for a further high investment rate which would produce a yield in the future.

In contrast, Slovene leaders Boris Kraigher and Miha Marinko underscored the need for stimulation of productivity, exports and the standard of living. Particularly Marinko expressed disagreement with a federal "extra-profit tax", which was to have affected adversely and unjustly the Slovene economy. This may have been addressed to Mijalko Todorović, the federal vice-premier. Marinko also criticised the entire yet inarticulate economic order; attempt at market institutionalisation (Zečević 1998: 92–93). Boris Kraigher expanded along the same line: the unjust "extra-profit" tax, in fact directed against productivity, the foreign currency regime was inappropriate, he underscored the closed nature of the Yugoslav economy, its not being geared towards export. Marinko's speech was directly and critically attacked by Stamenković, who said Marinko was in fact attempting to derail the discussion from political issues to less important issues of productivity (Zečević 1998: 170). Marinko immediately protested. Serb Miloš Minić also polemicized with Kardelj and came close to calling for centralism as solution (Zečević 1998: 209, 213).

Then, there were participants who seemed to be shocked by the situation and attempted to diagnose it. Ivan Gošnjak, Minister of defense and Svetislav Stefanović, Minister of the interior, Mijalko Todorović complained that the federal government was no longer a united body, having evolved into an arena for the promotion of republican interests solely (Zečević 1998: 181, 228). Stefanović also stated that persons he knew from the pre-War period "have changed beyond recognition. Some devil has got his grip upon us" (Zečević 1998: 181).

Petar Stambolić, one of top Serbian communists, stated "enemies" [anti-communist adversaries] were speaking in similar terms as republican Party functionaries, because Party functionaries were to have been referring to republic interests in the manner as Croat and Serb intellectuals between two World Wars (Zečević

1998: 100), i.e. bitterly and over same issues. By implication, this was a concession to the effect nothing had changed along the major Yugoslav axis (although some of the main Serbian-Croat cultural disputes had not yet eventuated at the time, but Stambolić may well have anticipated them (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 111)).

Lazar Koliševski, head of Macedonian communists, noted that in Macedonia central committee members in that republic were taking sides on the Dušan Pirjevec – Dobrica Ćosić debate on whether nationhoods should effloresce or whether Yugoslav cultural unitywas to be pursued (226), indicating cultural nationalist conflicts had a strong echo in the political elite. The debate had just preceded this meeting (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 78–79). Rato Dugonjić spoke of another change. During the War he felt free (as communist leader) to travel throughout Yugoslavia (and inspect the situation among Partisans), whereas such an act "would now seem unnatutural", as he felt restricted to his republic. He diagnosed the situation as "sliding into a confederation" (Zečević 1998: 81). Although not directly, he was supporting the Serb view of a more centralized government. Another important diagnosis was by Marinko: he simply conceded "trust has been lost" (Zečević 1998: 95).

The discussion that counted the most were those of the two Tito's lieutenants: Aleksandar Ranković and Edvard Kardelj, the top most Serb and Slovene. Ranković was straightforward in his requests for republics to implement central decisions (by way of implication, not to be partners in decision making). He pointed to the deviations of disunity in the Montenegrin leadership and failure to observe the Serbian leadership by the Vojvodina committee. He would not point the finger to Slovenia directly, but he did call for accountability of the Slovene representative Viktor Avbelj, who opposed the adoption of the federal five-year plan (Zečević 1998: 107–108). In the then parlance, he clearly called for centralism: "Many of our comrades do not feel sufficiently being members of the LCY Central Committee" (Zečević 1998: 104), calling for subjugation to the federal leadership.

Kardelj, who was in a sensitive position, as he could have been toppled for having "new theories" and advancing "states' rights", to use the American term, took a guarded position, speaking towards the end. For example, he conceded "republicanism" (pursuing republic interests) existed, but called for not doing with republics away (Zečević 1998: 195). He also shared the wisdom that – the much sought for - unity "could not be declared", (Zečević 1998: 191), would not come about by words only. He also conceded the crisis would adversely affect Yugoslav prestige, something dear to Tito, but he did not back Slovene leaders directly.

The "devil" Stefanović noted and the "trust" lost among one time communist underground fighters, who spent time together incarcerated prior to World War II - amounted to Ernest Gellner's and Anthony D. Smith's devil: nationalism. Communist leaders were in the process of being transformed into national leaders, catering for their republics. Nationalism would not be invoked by the participants expressly, except by Stamenković, who was a junior functionary at the time. He characterized Slovene requests to diminish federal investments causing reactive "chauvinism" among Serbs (Zečević 1998: 168).

No one would dare call the other a nationalist, but nationalism is what was behind the differences among the leaders. Hence, along with Tito's classical communist position on unity needed, on democratic centralism being the organisational principle, his emotional position on Yugoslavia, one could expect the Slovenes would get at least a scolding, if not a series of removals. Nevertheless, the session ended in a stalemate. Conclusions of empty verbiage were adopted but not even disseminated to the membership. Tito expressed "disappointment" and in fact felt worse than that. Allegedly, he considered resigning "twice" during the session but concluded the meeting by stating "he would fight on" (Zečević 1998: 255). To mitigate the situation he conceded "particularist" deviations "were not so important and they can be corrected" (Zečević 1998: 254), the tape recording has some omissions on that spot). Upon the meeting, Tito would resolve the immediate issues by private talks to the republic leaders and by taking a loan from French banks (testimony of Petar Vasiljević). Another effect would be a reshuffle of the top grandees one year later (1963). But there were no "casualties".

This does not mean national elites were fully constituted in 1962. In fact, the differences may have seemed only political in nature, but their positioning in the various national leaderships was typical and would remain typical. Croatian relative tacitness was also typical of the personality of Vladimir Bakarić, but the road of no return was taken and visible in 1962. Upon this Politburo session, at the Eighth Party Congress, in 1964, Tito conceded Yugoslavia was a complex entity with republic autonomy and ethnic complexity that were to be respected. This was in contrast to the previous position on the national question having been fully solved, for example in 1948 at the session of the Slovene Academy of Sciences in November, 1948. Tito continued this way of adjusting to ethnic plurality even more by ousting Aleksandar Ranković, the main promoter of centralist trends. At that moment Tito was not yet aware of the long term consequences, which were initiated.

Although participants found they no longer formed a single tightly knit group, the institutions continued to operate. The 1962 session and its contents, for ex-

ample, remained a secret to the CIA. The National Intelligence Estimate from 1967 considered it "a communist state in name and theory" where it also stated that "the Yugoslav experiment seem[ed] to be progressing satisfactorily." The only troubles it foresaw were related to "orderly succession". "We believe the principal accomplishments of the Yugoslav system are fairly secure" (National Intelligence Estimate 1967: 15–67).

However, the process of constitution of nationhoods continued. On September 18, 1970, Mirko Tepavac, the Yugoslav foreign minister at the time, at meeting with Tito (explaining difficulties at work) told him: "I must say that every loyalty [on the part of diplomats] to federal bodies has been extinguished. It has been replaced by loyalty to republican centers, often bringing about incompetence to the detriment of Yugoslavia ..." (Đukić 2009: 144). In 1971–72, republics took control of "their" professionals in the federal bodies (Vasiljević 2016; Burg 1983: 212, 213). This control was in the form of republican lists of personnel, of planning their careers, holding meetings of federal personnel from the republic with republican grandees, financial assistance to personnel from respective republic (certainly by Slovenia to stimulate professionals going to Belgrade to serve at federal posts). Of course, it was also expected these professionals in the federal administration advance only the interests of their respective republic. In principle, every professional was affiliated to his republic, although this regime was never perfected, as some remained from the previous regime, where professionals were more "civil service minded", in any case independent of republics.

3 Denouement

Hence, approximately by 1971–2, political elites will have been constituted as separate republic and province ones. There was no longer a federal political elite as a distinct social group. One can hold that this disunion was, by the operation of system mechanisms, attempted to be hidden, by promoting Tito's charisma, which now stood alone (Jović 2009: 92). This coincided with the 1971 federal constitutional amendments making the federal government fully dependent on republican-provincial consents on all pertinent issues.

Tito was also aware that in 1971 the purge of Croatian nationalist leaders did not eradicate nationalism and told Nikezić and Tepavac in October 1971: "You [Tepavac in Nikezić] would be dreaded if you knew what I think of the future [of Yugoslavia], upon my departure" (Tepavac 2012: 73). At a session with the Croat leadership in November 1971, Tito exited from the hall where the meeting on the situation in Croatia was held and walking towards his wife

stated: "Yugoslavia is of the past", using a curse along.[4] Tito confided later to his associate Blažo Mandić of having "deceived" himself regarding inter-ethnic relations (Mandić 2012: 46). In 1979, a year prior to his death, he confided to a foreigner "chaos" will ensue upon his passing away (Woodward 1995: 345); very unusual in comparison to previous Tito's masterfully guarded statements to foreigners.

Although the communist national elites never undertook explicit moves to dissolve Yugoslavia, and hesitated to instigate popular nationalism, other nationalism in the sense of nation building, constructing reified nationhoods, including "autarkic economies" after 1971, was considered legitimate and practiced widely on their part, including "national academies of sciences", ministries of foreign affairs, etc. On the other hand, too much "softness" towards other nationhoods by elite members would be penalized (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 95).

Contemporaneously with segmentation, communist leaders were losing power over social processes (see Haug 2012: 355–374; Čolak 2017). In fact, from the point of view of the 1991 state dissolution the events evolved logically. Particularly upon Tito's death when nationalism exploded in all parts, particularly by the action of ethnic entrepreneurs (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 160–166). The communist grandees were still organisationally linked into a "communist confederation" and would not undertake any action towards state dissolution. But nor were they able to undertake action toward reforms needed. Only the next generation of communist leaders in Slovenia and Serbia approximately in 1986 grasped they would not be able to govern without anti-communist support. These played the nationalist card. But at the time, the stage was much more picturesque in nationalism appearing in most undexpected areas: like public health in Kosovo, where both Serbs and Albanians would consequently fear medical practitioners of the other nation (Rich 1993; Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 137–183).

4 Discussion and conclusion

The paper was focused on the transformation of a single Yugoslav communist political elite into a plural of national elites, in fact seven ones. The Vojvodina elite, which disposed with a province, an "entity discharging sovereign rights", as it was worded in the constitutional text, in the period 1971–1988, did not pass the test of attaining independence as the others did, nor of being able to maintain itself as a political elite. The elite and the autonomous entity were abolished in 1988 and Vojvodina was politically integrated into Serbia (Flere and Klanjšek

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4. This is based on the testimony to the first author by the residence manager who was present at the time, August, 2016.

2019: 247–249). We did not follow the process of elite segmentation in detail, nor were we able to delineate the formation of all seven elites. But we pointed to certain major watersheds.

Strong indications of the Yugoslav political elite segmentation were present three decades prior to the break-up of Yugoslavia itself. In the meantime, it can now be clearly seen, steps in the direction of the elite's fragmentation only paved the way for final state dissolution.

One important lacking element in the of the formational on national elites picture was the role of cultural elites. They were national ones from the beginning. They were in an interaction with the political elite. Mostly, cultural elites were more directly and openly nationalistic and not instrumentalitically so. We only mentioned what Koliševski said, illustrating that there was interaction (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 58, 77–82, 155–158).

The political elites in the period of 1962–1991 may not have been aware of where they were heading, as Jović (2009: 9) claims and as Andrej Marinc testified to the first author (2018). They may have well believed they were acting not only in the direction of solving the national question, but also of finding proper solutions for entire Yugoslavia. Whether this was self-deception or they were unable to comprehend, by their immersion into every day affairs, to see clearly, remains to be studied. In the *Trattat*o, Pareto writes that elite members "are carried along by the sheer force of the system to which they belong, involuntarily, and indeed against their will, following the course that is required by the system" (Pakulski 2018: 23). Already in 1962, nationalism got hold of the political elite. Slovene and Serb leaders were not ordinary political factions, but they expressed perceived national interests. Macedonians at the time were also clearly articulate. Croats were neutral and one could discern their siding with either faction, but that is how Vladimir Bakarić perceived Croat interest. Montenegrins and Muslims (Bosniaks) were not yet articulate. Tito could only declare his "disappointment" because "no one would grasp the [supranational] entirety", (Zečević 1998: 224) and finally "despair" and "indisposition" (Zečević 1998: 252). But the system worked on, although the elite was ever more segmented. How long? The adoption of the 1974 constitution was a major point in strengthening republics, although the 1971 constitutional amendments basically empowered republics and provinces, i.e. their "consociating" elites.

In the final denouement, Andrija Šolak, an insider in the very final period of Yugoslavia's existence, wrote in 2017 that until 1988 there were earnest attempts to find a modus vivendi for Yugoslavia on the part of the communist elite (members of the Politburo ["Presidency"]). The end came 6 February, 1989 with an unannounced proposal by Milošević friend Bogdan Trifunović and its adoption

at Central Committee of LCY ession, to recall the Albanian Central Committee member from Kosovo Azem Vllasi, paving the way to the latter's incarceration (Čolak 2018: 28). From then on, most communist inner elite members were preparing for an exit strategy and for mutual blaming only.

The early segmentation of the Yugoslav communist elite is an unusual phenomenon. It would be wrong to comprehend it as elite corruption or and replacement by a counterelite. Further research may prove it was indicative of the exceptional and extraordinary nature of its very establishment, according to our guess, the work of a number of persons which could be counted on the fingers of one hand (Flere and Klanjšek 2019: 16). Upon reaching power, not being able to achieve Yugoslav, particularly cultural integration (which they opposed ideologically nor did conditions exist for its implementation), the elite itself was doomed for failure. Foreign scholars often err in this respect. For example, Cotta wrote of »regional elites having disempowered the Yugoslav national elite« implying this happened in the late 1980s (2018: 569). However, elite theory almost exclusively considers elites at the national level, i.e. nation state level, as Pakulski pointed out: "Political elite members are today typically conceived at the national level" (2018: 12). In the Yugoslav case, a circumvential path was taken towards confirming the determinism of political elites being constituted at the national level. Those authors noted speaking of a Yugoslav national political elite did so out of inadvertent mistakes, lack of knowledge or simply *lapsus calami*.

Although the change in the nature of the communist elite came in 1962 as an unpleasant surprise to most of its members, one should comprehend it as logical. Solving the national question was always in the forefront of CPY's objectives. Dissolving of Yugoslavia had been occasionally taken as a goal by the CPY also in the inter-War period (Gligorijević 1992). The failures in the achievement of other goals, particularly the development goal (achieving the level of development of Western developed countries, as heralded by Djilas in 1946, Djilas 1948: 268) necessarily made national emancipation a more attractive goal, although in 1962 no one was taking dissolution as a goal yet. But the elite was very dissatisfied with its failure to achieve the developmentalist goal, even more so with the immediate economic situation. They were yet to open the topic of "clean accounts" between republics, which they will solve by progressive diminution of federal competences.

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