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Situation Report - Yugoslavia 20 July 1989

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Yugoslavia/9
20 July 1989

SITUATION REPORT

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1. Resurgent Serbian Nationalism: Six Centuries After Kosovo Polje

Summary: *This week's celebrations of a major new cathedral and of the 600th anniversary of the destruction of the medieval Serbian empire embody the positive and negative aspects of Serbian nationalism.*

* * *

Manifestations of Serbian nationalism have been reflected this week in separate but related events. On Sunday, June 25, the world's largest functioning Orthodox cathedral, Saint Sava, was inaugurated in Belgrade. Three days later, Serbs throughout Yugoslavia are celebrating the 600th anniversary of the battle of Kosovo Polje, or the Field of Blackbirds, a Serbian defeat that sealed Ottoman rule over Serbia and much of the rest of the Balkans for the next 500 years. Both these observances, and the circumstances leading up to and surrounding them, exhibit both the positive aspects and the dangers that have accompanied the surge in Serbian nationalism fostered over at least the past year by the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic.

Construction began on the cathedral of Saint Sava in 1935 but was halted by the German invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941. Shortly after the end of the war, the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church began a series of repeated, but fruitless, appeals to the Yugoslav government for permission to resume work on the building. Only with the death of Tito in 1980 and the removal of his firm grip on Yugoslav politics in general and on such potentially contentious issues as religious and national aspirations in particular did there appear any likelihood of gaining official approval for resuming the project. Finally, in 1984, permission was granted and work began again.

Saint Sava's Cathedral has come to represent for Serbs their perception of themselves as triumphant in the face of repression. It was on the site of the new church that the Ottoman Turks burned the remains of Saint Sava, who is regarded as the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church. By this act the Ottoman rulers were symbolically destroying not only Sava's religious influence in Serbia but also preventing the continuation of the Serbian cultural or political tradition. Thus, since its inception, the attempt to build a church on this site has constituted an assertion of Serbian nationalism. In response, Serbs around the world have rallied to support the project. The construction has been financed entirely by voluntary donations, including considerable sums from individuals in the United States and Canada.

Although the cathedral will not be finished until 1992, enough work had been completed to enable the patriarch to hold the first service as scheduled on June 26. Beneath a 4,000-ton

cupola that took 20 days to be raised into place and before about 12,000 people inside the cathedral (including the daughter of the Prince Regent of Yugoslavia at the outbreak of the Second World War) and more than 100,000 outside, Patriarch German, accompanied by all the Serbian Orthodox bishops, conducted a service lasting 3 hours.¹ Almost on the eve, therefore, of a most important anniversary, a monument to the Serbs' sense of pride and renewal was inaugurated in Belgrade.

Three days after the first service in the cathedral, Serbs throughout Yugoslavia and in Kosovo Polje are celebrating the 600th anniversary (June 28) of the Ottomans' defeat of the medieval Serbian state. Those papers that support Milosevic have thoroughly publicized the event in a highly nationalistic spirit. True, various Serbian and Yugoslav officials have attempted over the last year or so to reassure the other Yugoslav nationalities that Kosovo Polje is an anniversary not just for Serbs but one that commemorates a decisive date in the history of the entire Balkans, and even of the West and Christendom as a whole, and that it should thus be celebrated by all Yugoslavs. These attempts appear to have had only limited success, however, although representatives of the Croatian Catholic Church attended the service at Saint Sava's Cathedral and many representatives of the government, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and various Yugoslav organizations have taken part in the festivities.

June 28 is, moreover, the anniversary of two other events in Yugoslav history. In 1948 on this date Stalin cast Yugoslavia out of the Cominform, thereby cutting it off from the bloc and forcing it to develop an alternative model of communism. Perhaps more important, it was on 28 June 1914 that Gavrilo Princip, a nationalist Serbian student, assassinated the Hapsburg Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, triggering off the chain of events that led to the outbreak of World War I. The student radicals wanted the Hapsburgs out of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which the nationalists claimed for Serbia, and were particularly incensed that the archduke had chosen June 28 to visit the town, which they took as a provocation. Against this background it is perhaps not surprising that some other nationalities are a little uneasy about the prospect of massive Serbian demonstrations on this day.

Serbia's State President Slobodan Milosevic has become the focal point for others' fears of Serbian nationalism. He is perceived as having manipulated and directed the recent successful attempts to reassert Serbian control over the predominantly ethnic Albanian province of Kosovo, the population of which is now about 90% Albanian but which is also the traditional heart of medieval Serbia and the location of the battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389. In the process, he has widely been seen at home and abroad as having fanned nationalist sentiments among Serbs in order to increase his own personal clout, as well as to advance the power of Serbia within the

Yugoslav federation. Milosevic's most vehement detractors, especially in Slovenia and Croatia, depict him as a hard-line Stalinist on party matters and a fighter for Serbian domination of the rest of Yugoslavia.

It is true that Milosevic has advocated market-oriented economic reforms; but his overall image remains that of a demagogue, nationalist, and dogmatist. Even within Serbia he has recently come under attack. On June 22 the Committee for the Defense of Freedom of Thought and Expression, a group of nonconformist Serbian intellectuals, condemned the Serbian authorities' treatment of ethnic Albanian prisoners in Kosovo; their censure was aimed implicitly at Milosevic.² Since Milosevic is regarded by many Yugoslavs as the personification of aggressive Serbian nationalism, the speech he is to make today will be studied widely for clues as to his future political course, which is bound to affect not only Serbia but all of Yugoslavia as well.

David Goodlett

1 *Vecernje Novosti* (Belgrade), 26 June 1989.

2 *Borba* (Belgrade), 22 June 1989.

2. Milosevic's Speech at Kosovo Polje

Summary: *Slobodan Milosevic's speech at Kosovo Polje on the 600th anniversary of the defeat of the Serbian Army by the Ottoman Turks seems relatively mild for a man known as an aggressive and uncompromising politician.*

* * *

Serbia's State President Slobodan Milosevic clearly captured the nationalistic mood (which the media, controlled by his supporters, had fostered) at the celebrations on June 28 commemorating the 600th anniversary of the defeat of the Serbian Army by the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Kosovo Polje, also known as the Battle of the Field of the Blackbirds. Although he stressed the Serbs' pride in their history and made some historical and other allusions that could hardly have gone down well with Kosovo's Albanian majority, Milosevic's speech was nonetheless relatively mild compared with past speeches in which he had strongly criticized his political opponents. His intolerant approach in the past had led many people to believe that he would renew or engage in new attacks on political leaders who differed with his views on Serbia's statehood and on political and economic reform; apart from the generally nationalistic vein of his remarks, however, he was not as aggressive as some might have expected.

There were obvious signs, however, that the celebration also served as a kind of political rally. According to Radio Ljubljana, thousands of photographs and posters of Milosevic were displayed, but not one of Tito. The radio commentator also remarked that the celebration indicated "an obvious national rallying of Serbs" and that the Serbs "worship [Milosevic] like the legendary Prince Lazar," who died at the Battle of Kosovo Polje. Milosevic memorabilia were being sold; and several times during his speech the crowds chanted his nickname, "Slobo, Slobo."¹

Many Serbs will undoubtedly long remember the event as a day when Serbs throughout Yugoslavia and from North America and Western Europe assembled to commemorate the most celebrated date in Serbia's history. About 1,000,000 people probably attended the ceremonies, although estimates of the size of the crowd ranged from 600,000 to 1,600,000. About 1,000 reporters (900 domestic and 100 foreign) covered the events. Top political figures from throughout Yugoslavia as well as 50 foreign ambassadors attended the ceremonies. The leaders of the four major religious denominations in Yugoslavia, the Serbian and Macedonian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches and Islam were also present.²

For Yugoslavia's ethnic Albanian minority, however, Milosevic's speech offered no hope of reconciliation with the

Serbs, Yugoslavia's largest ethnic group. Ethnic Albanians make up almost 90% of Kosovo's population. Despite the fact that the Serbian media and the organizing committee for the celebrations went to some lengths to point out that the Battle of Kosovo Polje had involved an alliance of Serbs, Albanians, Bulgarians, Croats, and Hungarians against the Ottoman Turks, the overall tone of the celebrations was more narrowly nationalistic and these groups were virtually excluded from the festivities. Nor did Milosevic explicitly make reference to these ethnic groups, although he did speak of the importance of mutual "accord . . . among all citizens living in Serbia, regardless of their nationality or religion." Most ethnic Albanians would find that hard to believe, given the fact that for decades they have felt like second-class citizens in Yugoslavia. Both Yugoslav and Western press reports indicated that Kosovo's ethnic Albanians had boycotted the ceremonies.³ In short, the entire program, which had been carefully worked out in every detail, including the political overtones, was the greatest celebration of Serbian nationalism in recent memory.

Besides being, in his official capacity, the most important man in Serbia, Milosevic is undoubtedly also both the most prominent political figure in Yugoslavia and the most talked-about leader (in a positive or a negative sense) since Tito, who died in May 1980. He is also considered by many to be the first Serbian leader since the Second World War to have defended Serbia's interests, albeit at the expense of antagonizing some other parts of the loosely-knit federation. Many Yugoslavs outside Serbia accordingly regard Milosevic with apprehension and believe that he has taken advantage of Serbian frustrations by appealing to Serbian national grievances, in particular the position of Serbs in the restive province of Kosovo. Milosevic's speech at Kosovo Polje will undoubtedly reinforce those feelings of both admiration and fear of the 47-year-old lawyer and banker turned politician.

Some aspects of Milosevic's speech are reminiscent of the uncompromising approach he has taken in some previous speeches. He openly assailed past leaders of Serbia, without mentioning names, saying

If we lost the battle, it was not only due to Turkish military supremacy but also to the tragic discord at the top of the Serbian leadership. This discord . . . has followed the Serbian people throughout their history, including both world wars and later in socialist Yugoslavia, when the Serbian leadership remained divided and prone to compromises at the expense of the people.

Although he has spoken in these terms before, the delivery of this message in front of the massive crowd was effective in suggesting that it was Serbia's current leadership, under his direction, that had reunited Serbia.

Supporters will find comfort in his remark that "The moment has come when, standing on the fields of Kosovo, we can say openly and clearly: No longer"; the implication was that the Serbs had won a significant victory in Kosovo today and had made it clear that it would not be the last one. This point was again implied when Milosevic said: "Today, six centuries later, we are again fighting a battle and facing battles. They are not armed battles, although such things cannot yet be excluded."

This is tough talk, and some people fear that Milosevic and his political allies may feel strengthened by the outpouring of popular support in response to his speech and accordingly will be even harder to deal with at the Extraordinary 14th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in December.

Milan Andrejevich

- 1 Radio Ljubljana, 28 June 1989. 5:00 P.M.
- 2 *Politika* (Belgrade), 29 and 30 June 1989; *Jedinstvo* (Pristina), 29 June 1989; *Vjesnik* (Zagreb), 29 June 1989.
- 3 *Borba* (Belgrade), 26 June 1989; AP and Reuter, 28 June 1989. Radio Zagreb on June 30 concluded that the event on June 28 and Milosevic's "insistence on harmony and unity . . . is frightening when it comes from the mouth of the leader of the most numerous nation in a multinational country." The commentary criticized Milosevic for dismissing "the contribution of the Serbian people to the struggle for the national and social liberation of Yugoslavia." Zagreb Television and *Vjesnik* also criticized Milosevic's speech. In response, on July 2 the pro-Milosevic daily *Politika* said that attacks from Croatia amounted to nothing more than "an echo of hatred [and] a condemnation of an entire nation and its history."

3. The New Tough-Sounding Leaders in Kosovo

Summary: Two leading hard-liners in Kosovo--the new provincial party chief Rahman Morina, and Rexhep Hoxha, the new youth leader who has already become a controversial figure in the country--have made some tough-sounding statements about Kosovo's various nationality problems in interviews and speeches. The fate of the former provincial party leader Azem Vllasi was discussed, as well as the controversial issue of "isolation" and the crisis of young people in Kosovo.

* * *

The new leadership in Kosovo, despite being incapacitated by deep purges and lacking grass-roots support, is showing no hesitance in trying to combat the province's almost hopeless political, economic, and social situation. The new leaders obviously have the full trust and backing of the Serbian leadership, which has had the province fully under its control under stipulations in the constitutional amendments passed in April. The current party chief in Kosovo, Rahman Morina, and the new and already controversial chief of the provincial party's youth organization, Rexhep Hoxha, have clearly shown in interviews and meetings that they are the leading hard-liners of the new generation of Kosovar leaders.

During the recent 600th anniversary celebrations of the Battle of Kosovo Polje, Morina was interviewed by a large number of Yugoslav and foreign journalists attending the event.¹ Asked about the fate of Azem Vllasi, his predecessor who is now under arrest and awaiting trial, Morina first replied that "he will get what he deserves" but then hastened to add that everything would depend on the findings of the appropriate legal bodies. Morina was next asked about the policy of "isolation," that is, holding people without charges or trial and subjecting them to tough interrogations and apparently even beatings and torture. He retorted that too much fuss had been made about this and that the measure was constitutional; moreover, had it not been introduced, "much more severe steps would have been necessary today." His elaboration on the subject was probably not very convincing to the reporters:

One cannot isolate clean and guiltless people. As a humane person I am in principle opposed to jails and isolation, especially of young people who are born clean; but someone has ruined them, and this must be explained.

Before assuming the post of president of the provincial League of Communists, Morina was head of the provincial department of internal affairs; and because of this background, Tirana has depicted him as an "obscure police chief."

Morina also replied to reporters' questions about his alleged lack of popularity by saying, "I just don't know who says that I don't enjoy the support of the majority of the Albanians. I think I do have their support." He admitted, however, that both Albanian "nationalists" and other unnamed enemies opposed him.

He also denied that Ibrahim Rugova, the head of the Union of Kosovar Writers, had been jailed but warned that if Rugova "continues in that manner," he would end up before the law, because he "threatens democracy in Yugoslavia." Rugova is the province's most prominent dissident and has made headlines through his interviews to the foreign news media (the latest one appeared in the West German weekly *Der Spiegel*²).

With regard to the anniversary celebrations, Morina said that traditions had to be developed for a better future and for the benefit of everyone. He said that "some small groups" from Ferizaj, Pristina, and Gjakova had attended the event, which seems to confirm the general impression that Kosovo's 90% ethnic Albanian majority ignored the celebrations, which were staged as a festival of Serbian patriotism.

Morina has recently made other statements on Kosovo's many difficult problems. At a meeting of the presidency of the provincial League of Communists over which he presided, for example, Morina discussed the crisis of young people in Kosovo.³ After noting that "a considerable number" of young people in Kosovo had engaged in "hostile nationalist activities" since 1981, the meeting concluded that the problems there could not be solved "through repression alone." It was said that the "resocialization" of young people was very important but that little had been accomplished in this regard, as could be seen from the fact that during the latest hostile demonstrations, "those who participated had been very extremist in their actions, similar to their behavior in the past." The legal authorities were asked to help those young people who recanted by bringing them back into the mainstream of society "through the reduction of jail terms and through amnesties."

Rexhep Hoxha. The Pristina daily *Rilindja* published an interesting interview by another rising Kosovar leader, Rexhep Hoxha, the President of the Kosovo Socialist Youth Alliance.⁴ Hoxha is an ambitious young man who, like his predecessors Mahmut Bakalli and Azem Vllasi before him, is being referred to by the Yugoslav press as the province's rising new politician. He has been in his new post barely a month and has already aroused a controversy. On June 15 the Slovene Branko Greganovic submitted his resignation as President of the Socialist Youth Alliance of Yugoslavia, after the organization's Presidium refused to censure a speech by Rexhep Hoxha, who, in line with Serbian political thinking, accused Slovenian politicians of causing the tense situation in Kosovo by supporting Albanian nationalists and of pursuing a "contemptuous and hazy" anti-Serbian and anti-Yugoslav policy.⁵

From the tone of the interviewer it seems that *Rilindja's* editors themselves were puzzled about Hoxha's background. The article itself prominently displayed the rhetorical question "Who is this man?" The daily answered its own question by saying that Hoxha "has no home, is single, with a Yugoslav orientation." When asked about his nationality, he replied, in order "to clarify some misunderstandings that have cropped up lately," that he was a Moslem. This seems rather strange since his name is Albanian and also because Yugoslavia's Moslem nationals generally live in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Finally, it is unclear how Rexhep Hoxha intends to be a rallying force for the province's Albanian youth by insisting that he is of Moslem nationality.

Rilindja published the interview under the heading "I Did Not Say that Young Slovenes Are Anti-Serb and Anti-Yugoslav" and noted in the introduction that Hoxha continued to claim that *Rilindja* had not reported "objectively" on the meeting of the Yugoslav Youth Socialist Alliance. In the interview Hoxha's criticism of his Slovene counterparts did not abate:

The comrades of the Slovene delegation wanted only to tackle new issues and not to talk about concrete cooperation. They totally rejected the current policy on Kosovo and wanted it invalidated; and [they] demanded the rescinding of the decision to call the 1981 and recent events counterrevolutionary. They wanted to hold the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia responsible for applying the emergency measures; they claimed that in Kosovo the Albanians were being discriminated against in education; [they] talked about the threat to the rights of the Albanians and concluded by comparing Kosovo to Beijing and the events in China.

He continued in the very self-assured manner that has become his trademark by saying that he was "particularly upset" by the claims of the comrades from Slovenia that they were "more competent [than Kosovars] to tell the truth about Kosovo." Asked to speak about the current difficult situation in his capacity as the leader of young Kosovars, Hoxha replied:

The most important thing for me is that the young Kosovars see their future in Tito's Yugoslavia and not, as the troublemakers say, in Albania. Young Kosovars are aware of the poverty in Albania and are therefore ready through greater unity and determination to strive for the development of Kosovo within the Yugoslav framework and not in any other way. We possess a considerable potential to overcome this [present] situation.

The two politicians who were interviewed are important representatives of the present hard-line leadership of Kosovo. It seems quite unlikely that their statements will have a major

impact on the people in Kosovo, especially since one of them has even gone so far as to deny his own national background.

Louis Zanga

1 Rilindja, 29 June 1989.

2 26 June 1989.

3 Rilindja, 2 July 1989.

4 Ibid., 2 July 1989.

5 See Yugoslav Situation report/8, Radio Free Europe Research, 27 June 1989, item 8.

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4. Bosnia and Macedonia Elect Yugoslav State Presidency Members

Summary: Voters in Yugoslavia's traditionally conservative republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia have elected new representatives to the eight-member federal State Presidency. Both of the new members are less than 40 years old.

* * *

On June 25 direct elections were held in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia by secret ballot to choose who would represent the republics in the eight-member federal State Presidency. Vasil Tupurkovski, a 38-year-old professor of law, was elected by a wide margin in Macedonia, while Bogic Bogicevic, a 36-year-old political scientist, was chosen in front of five other candidates in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both men were elected six weeks after the rest of the new State Presidency had been officially sworn in. Macedonia did not elect its representative in early April because the Macedonian National Assembly was split over the choice of a representative, and Bosnia delayed its decision because of a political scandal.

Two other republics held direct elections to choose representatives for the Yugoslav State Presidency. On April 2 Slovenes elected Janez Drnovsek and rejected the officially backed candidate, Marko Bulc. On April 9, in contrast, Montenegrins chose Nenad Bucin, the officially backed candidate. These four elections were the first since the State Presidency was established in 1971 in which representatives were elected by the general public. The representatives from the remaining two republics and two autonomous provinces were elected by secret ballot by the respective national assemblies.

Are Direct Elections Legal? Top officials, such as members of the State Presidency, are normally chosen by indirect election: delegates in the republican national assemblies elect officials for higher office without holding direct elections. There are, however, different interpretations of Yugoslav electoral procedure because of an apparent contradiction in the constitution. The constitution states that public referendums are binding but also suggests that a national assembly can ignore the results of a public referendum.

This apparent contradiction has led members of Yugoslavia's Constitutional Court to question the validity of the direct elections, a step that could have serious political repercussions and indicate a retreat from democratization. On July 5 Yugoslavia's highest court announced that it would examine the legality of public referendums and decide whether the republican national assemblies were obliged to endorse candidates chosen by direct election. The assemblies of Bosnia and Macedonia have recently confirmed the results of the elections that were held on June 25.¹

Tupurkovski's Background. Tupurkovski was born in Skopje in 1951. He obtained a doctorate in law in 1976 from the University of Skopje and is now a Professor of International Law there. He received a Master's degree from the University of Michigan after writing a thesis on violations of human rights in Greece by the military junta from 1967 to 1973. He joined the League of Communists (LCY) in 1972 and served from 1979 to December 1980 as President of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia. He is still considered to have been the organization's most unconventional leader. From May 1982 to May 1986 he was a member of Macedonia's Central Committee (CC) Presidium. At the 13th Congress of the LCY in June 1986, he was elected to the CC Presidium.

Tupurkovski soundly defeated the 57-year-old Dragoljub Stavrev by 720,976 votes (76.5%) to 188,156 (20.1%) (32,694 votes were declared invalid). Of 1,255,925 eligible voters, 942,662 (75.05%) actually voted.² Tupurkovski was expected to beat Stavrev, who has been in politics for 20 years and is currently a member of Macedonia's 9-member State Presidency. On April 14 the Macedonian National Assembly failed to elect a member to the State Presidency because of a stalemate allegedly caused by the media's coverage. The media had criticized the way in which the election was being conducted and the fact that, at one stage, there had been as many as 122 candidates. The Macedonian party Presidium accused the media of "misinformation . . . aimed at discrediting some of the candidates . . . and of providing incomplete information to the public about certain phases of the elections."³ Some Macedonian national assembly delegates accused the party of trying to influence the outcome of the assembly's secret ballot; Jakov Lazarovski, the republic's party President and one of the two official candidates, was expected to win the election.

Tupurkovski, a colorful figure, is known in Yugoslavia for his mustache, casual style, and preference for polo shirts, sweatshirts, and jeans. While serving as President of the Socialist Youth Alliance, the outspoken Tupurkovski had said that the younger members of the LCY were "obsessed with careerism" and that many officials in the youth alliance were lazy. In October 1988 he warned that "the position of the LCY as a leading party in Yugoslavia was one of the sources of Yugoslavia's problems."⁴ He supports "nonparty pluralism" (a political system without any parties) and a market-oriented economy. In a televised debate with Stavrev on the eve of the elections, Tupurkovski stressed that market-oriented reforms depended on the "indispensable reintroduction of self-management."⁵ He also sparked a controversy after he said that a vote of no-confidence in Dusan Ckrebic, one of Serbia's representatives on the CC Presidium, taken at the 17th CC plenum in October 1988, was evidence of an "unprincipled coalition" against one republic (that is, Serbia). His comment provoked not only support from Serbia and the Vojvodina but also considerable criticism from the majority of other party officials.

Bogicevic's Background. Bogicevic was born in the village of Ugljevik, near the Bosnian town of Bijelina. He joined the party in 1971 and began his political career in the Bosnian town of Tuzla. He held numerous top posts in regional youth organizations, served as a member of the Presidium of the Bosnian Socialist Alliance, and was a delegate to the Bosnian National Assembly. In May 1986 he was elected a member of Bosnia's CC and since early 1989 has been a member of its Presidium.

Bogicevic defeated four other candidates. All five candidates were Serbs, because the Bosnian National Assembly realized that Bosnia had not been represented by a Serb on the State Presidency since Cvijetin Mijatovic (1974-1984). The representatives since Mijatovic have been Branko Mikulic, a Croat, and Hamdija Pozderac and Raif Dizdarevic, both Bosnian Moslems. Bogicevic, who was placed third in the pre-election polls, received 609,258 votes (33%); Dragan Kalinic, a Bosnian member of the LCY CC and the party's candidate, received 439,866 votes; Bosnia Prime Minister Marko Ceranic was third with 388,272 votes; Zivko Radisic, a businessman from Banja Luka, received 241,761 votes; and Nedjo Milicevic, a member of the Bosnian government, received 118,722 votes. Votes were cast by 1,906,000 Bosnians--about 70% of the electorate. More than 108,000 ballots were declared invalid.⁶ Of the five candidates, Bogicevic was widely considered by the Bosnian media to be the most experienced politician; yet his election was a surprise because of his age and because he was not backed by the party. Bogicevic described the results of the election as "a victory for the democratization of the electoral system." He also said that he had voted for one of his four opponents.⁷

Bogicevic has a Master's degree in political science and advocates the separation of the party from the state. On several occasions he has demanded that the party and the state stop interfering in economic affairs. He also thinks that a stronger federal State Presidency would help hold Yugoslavia together. He advocates both the development of a modern market-oriented economy and a stronger federation, in other words, a more powerful central government. He also believes that the federation must become "a guarantor of a more technologically oriented system." He interprets political pluralism as the "pluralism of opinion." This would involve an expanded role for the Socialist Alliance, the party's mass front organization, but not a multiparty system. To achieve such goals, Bogicevic had said in pre-election and postelection interviews, his first priority would be to develop "a strong Yugoslavia, a strong [system of] associated labor, an undivided working class, and strong republics and provinces." Bogicevic has also demanded a nationwide environmental protection program and that both regional and federal governments pay more attention to environmental issues.⁸

Bogicevic is also one of the men helping to rescue the Bosnian conglomerate Agrokomerc. In August 1987 the media revealed that the enterprise's management had issued \$1 billion worth of unbacked promissory notes with the support of some of the republic's top party and state leaders. Once considered the best example of Yugoslavia's system of industrial self-management, the company's rapidly dropping sales and shrinking work force forced the Bosnian government to rescue the company. Bogicevic recently claimed that "everything is not as black as it seems There are also good signs that things will start moving" at Agrokomerc.⁹

Bosnian Spy Scandal. Bogicevic's victory was preceded by a political scandal, the third major scandal in Bosnia since August 1987. On April 11 the Bosnian National Assembly failed to select a representative because neither candidate had won a majority. A third candidate--Nenad Kecmanovic, a 41-year-old, liberal-minded professor of sociology and President of Sarajevo University who had led in the pre-election polls and was widely supported by the public--had withdrawn several days before the election after being accused by Bosnia's Ministry of Internal Affairs of "having indiscrete contacts with foreign intelligence agents," Western diplomats, and scholars and of providing "detailed descriptions of events in Yugoslavia."¹⁰ The Bosnian Socialist Alliance issued a statement saying that "Kecmanovic does not fulfill the criteria demanded from candidates for this position."¹¹ Subsequently, Kecmanovic was forbidden to run as a candidate in the elections on June 25. Shortly thereafter, however, the Sarajevo University Conference, which is affiliated to the Bosnian Socialist Youth Alliance, renominated Kecmanovic and repeated the claim of the university's student paper that he had been a victim of "backstage political deals."¹² Bosnia's Socialist Alliance, which is responsible for coordinating election procedure, rejected the students' initiative.

Kecmanovic has repeatedly denied any wrong-doing and has claimed that "as a university professor, I never had access to any state secrets." In an interview in a Belgrade daily, he said that "I have certainly done no damage to my country. I may, in fact, have contributed to its prestige. I was accused only after it became obvious that I was a favorite in the race."¹³ Kecmanovic is an outspoken opponent of the conservative leadership in Bosnia, and his popularity among students probably upset some key officials whom he had previously criticized.¹⁴ It is worth remembering that Kecmanovic and Vojislav Seselj, a well-known Bosnian Serb dissident now living in Zemun, were both members of the Sociology department at Sarajevo University in the early 1980s. Seselj's views have been sharply condemned by both the Bosnian and the federal authorities, and in 1984 he was sent to prison for "hostile propaganda against the state." He was in prison for 22 months.

The State Presidency. The collective State Presidency was designed to prevent a power struggle among the republics after Tito's death. Each of Yugoslavia's six republics and two autonomous provinces has a representative on the State Presidency; they each serve a one-year term as head of state on a rotational basis. The rotating system was introduced during Tito's lifetime under the constitutional amendments of 1971. Members are elected for a term of five years and can be re-elected for an additional five-year term. The current State Presidency members are all eligible to stay on until May 1999. The State Presidency is in charge of the Yugoslavia's armed forces and its foreign policy.

The Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SAWPY), the party's mass front organization, has already decided which members of the State Presidency will be given which jobs and the order in which they will be President. The order is as follows: Borisav Jovic (Serbia), who was President of Serbia's National Assembly and a member of Serbia's party Presidium, takes office in May 1990; Stipe Suvar (Croatia) a former President of the League of Communists CC Presidium follows in May 1991; Bucin (Montenegro), a member of the SAWPY Presidium, takes office in May 1992; Dragutin Zelenovic (Vojvodina), a businessman and President of Novi Sad University, follows in May 1993. If the following are re-elected in 1994, they will also become President: Riza Sapundziju (Kosovo), an economist and one of Yugoslavia's most widely respected bankers, would take office in 1994; Tupurkovski (Macedonia) would follow in 1995; and Bogicevic in 1996.

Of the eight new members of the State Presidency, only Kosovo's representative, Sapundziju, was a member of Tito's partisans during the Second World War. A seat on the State Presidency was traditionally the last major political post prior to retirement; and until now, its members have always been from the ranks of Tito's partisans. The average age of the new State Presidency is 50; the average age of the previous members was 66.

Conclusion. The emergence of a younger generation of politicians will not, however, be enough to solve the multitude of economic, political, and social problems that plagued the previous leadership. In addition, if the Supreme Court decides that the direct election of candidates is invalid, there could be serious political repercussions; and Yugoslavia's Western creditors would probably take a dim view of such a development. Moreover, several of the new members of the State Presidency, such as Jovic, Suvar, and, to a lesser degree, Bucin and Tupurkovski, have been involved in political controversies over the last year. Now that these controversial party members have been appointed to a state body, it is unlikely that much

progress will be made in the short term at separating party from state.

Milan Andrejevich

- 1 *Vecernje Novosti* (Belgrade), 6 July 1989.
- 2 *Borba* (Belgrade), 27 June 1989.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 12 May 1989.
- 4 See Yugoslav Situation Report/10, *Radio Free Europe Research*, 11 November 1988, item 2.
- 5 *Tanjug*, 24 June 1989.
- 6 *Vjesnik* (Zagreb), 28 June 1989; and *Vecernje Novosti* (Belgrade), 28 June 1989.
- 7 *Vecernje Novosti*, 29 June 1989.
- 8 *Borba* (Belgrade), 14, 23, and 28 June 1989.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 28 June 1989.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 19 April 1989; and *Vecernje Novosti*, 13 April 1989.
- 11 *Borba*, 21, 22, and 23 May 1989.
- 12 *Vecernje Novosti*, 30 May 1989.
- 13 *Borba*, 17 April 1989.
- 14 For instance, Branko Mikulic, Milanko Renovica, and the late Hamdija Pozderac and his brother Hakija.

5. Imams Continue To Press for Changes

Summary: For the fourth time since last November, reform-minded imams from Bosnia have demanded the immediate recall of the Supreme Head of the Ruling Council of the Moslem Community in Yugoslavia.

* * *

On July 3 about 70 imams (Moslem prayer leaders and scholars) from the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina demanded the ouster of the supreme head of their religious community.¹ They also criticized the hierarchy for not submitting a draft proposal for a new constitution for Yugoslavia's Islamic community. This was the fourth time since November 1988 that imams had publicly expressed dissatisfaction with the Islamic hierarchy. The previous protest occurred on February 14 and involved some 500 imams. On March 2 a special commission established by the Islamic Supreme Ruling Council adopted proposals for drafting a new constitution; and in April the body announced that the supreme head, Reis-Ul-Ulema Adzi Husein Mujic, would retire in November 1989.²

Yugoslavia has the largest Moslem population of any European country except Turkey. In the 1981 census nearly 2,000,000 people, primarily Serbo-Croatian-speaking Slavs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, officially declared themselves of Moslem nationality; and almost 4,000,000 Yugoslav citizens have an Islamic background, with the vast majority of them being members of the Sunni branch, and are of the above-mentioned Moslem nationality, ethnic Albanians and Turks, or Gypsies. There are almost 3,000 Mosques and 3,000 imams in Yugoslavia. The Islamic communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia are served by 1,200 imams; and there are three other administrative districts: Kosovo (which includes Serbia and the Vojvodina), Macedonia, and Montenegro.

The Controversy. Imams from the Bosnian town of Tuzla called for the latest protest meeting to be held in the republican capital of Sarajevo on July 3. They submitted a petition bearing 40 signatures calling for the "democratization of the Islamic religious community," which apparently means that they are seeking a greater voice in the day-to-day affairs of the religious community and the official organization of Yugoslavia Moslems and in the election of the religious leaders.³

The imams from Tuzla urged all Bosnian imams to attend; but only 70 turned up at the meeting, which was held in the auditorium of the Islamic Religious community's headquarters. The low attendance suggests that the much-talked-about power struggle between the reform-minded imams, who are referred to as "the imam movement," and the conservative hierarchy may have

subsided. In large part, this may be explained by the Supreme Ruling Council's acceptance of most of the demands for changes in the overall make-up of the Islamic community and its hierarchy and that the feeling among the majority of imams that the Church's hierarchy is responding to the need for changes.

The latest protest could, however, be a result of dissatisfaction among a small faction within the reform movement. According to a Tanjug report, demands have also been made for a return to traditional Islamic practices pertaining to the behavior and dress of Moslem women, the role of the wives of imams, and codes governing students and faculty members of Moslem religious schools and other cultural institutions.⁴

When the 11-member Supreme Ruling Council adopted proposals to review the suggested constitutional and administrative changes in March, it was clearly a victory for the reform-minded imams. The reforms, if implemented, will be the most significant changes since the late 1960s. The Council did reject the demand for the recall of Mujic as Supreme Head, although it did support the demand for recalling Ferhat Seta [she-ta], the President of the 13-member Bosnian Islamic Assembly for Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia. According to protesting imams, Seta was given "an attractive position" within the hierarchy; press reports have not indicated what that position was.

The imams from Tuzla did not, however, call for Mujic's removal, although this demand was made at the July 3 protest meeting. Mujic, the former mufti (the chief spiritual leader) of Tuzla, has been head of Yugoslavia's Moslem community since October 1987. A spokesman for the Supreme Ruling Council announced in April that Mujic had decided to step down as Supreme Head in November. The position is normally a life-time appointment.

Milan Andrejevich

1 *Vecernje Novosti* (Belgrade), 4 July 1989.

2 *Politika* (Belgrade), 7 April 1989.

3 *Borba* (Belgrade), 30 June 1989.

4 Tanjug, 3 July 1989.

6. Joint Ventures

Summary: Since the start of 1989 Yugoslavia has been trying to encourage more joint ventures. Despite the country's economic and political problems, new laws appear to be encouraging more foreign investment.

* * *

While observers of Eastern Europe have recently been focusing on political and economic liberalization in Poland and Hungary, Yugoslavia has been intensifying its efforts to reform its economy on market-based principles. At a time of ethnic conflict, personal power struggles, an inflation rate of over 700%, and a high rate of unemployment (it has reached 55% in Kosovo), Yugoslavia has taken steps in the last year to improve the legal rights of foreign investors.

A new law on foreign investment that came into force on 1 January 1989 abolished many restrictions. Firms completely owned by foreign companies could now receive tax breaks or even exemption from taxes in the first years of operation. Export-oriented enterprises could also receive special export incentives. Foreign owned firms must still, however, be based in the various "customs-free zones" long-established throughout the country; and the companies will not allowed to grow very large. In the area of joint ventures, however, the changes were more sweeping.

Since January 1 all enterprises owned jointly by foreign and domestic partners have enjoyed the same legal status as purely domestic enterprises. Apparently as a result, there has been a boom in the activity of joint ventures. Although no recent figures are available for the number of joint ventures in Yugoslavia, anecdotal evidence suggests there has been a sharp increase in their activity. By the middle of January, the Yugoslav authorities claimed that the total value of construction contracts in 1989 performed outside Yugoslavia by joint ventures involving Yugoslav companies would probably exceed \$2 billion. In contrast, in 1988 Yugoslav builders carried out \$1.4 billion worth of construction work outside Yugoslavia.¹

Typical of the major construction projects taking place in Yugoslavia itself was a preliminary agreement signed in April 1989 between Hyatt (the US hotel company), The First National Bank of Chicago, and a consortium of five Yugoslav firms to complete a new luxury hotel, the Hyatt Regency-Belgrade. Work had started on the hotel once before, but the project was abandoned because of a lack of money. The Yugoslavs say that the hotel will open on September 1 even though most of the partners in the project think this is optimistic. This \$50,000,000 hotel has been organized as a joint stock company

with a founding capital of \$20,000,000, 51% of which will be provided by Hyatt, the rest by the Yugoslav partners. The Chicago bank will provide the remaining \$30,000,000. Profits will be split between the partners in proportion to their contribution of investment capital. This is the first time that a communist government in Yugoslavia has allowed a foreign company to be the majority owner of a joint venture. In addition, this is the first joint venture in Yugoslavia that will not be managed by a Yugoslav.²

The construction industry is only one area in which the authorities are trying to encourage joint ventures. Also in April Energoinvest of Sarajevo signed a contract with the American oil company Amoco to look for gas and oil in the mountainous republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Amoco has reserved the right to withdraw from the project if the search is not successful; but if prospects of finding sufficient quantities of oil or gas appear good enough, Amoco and Energoinvest will exploit the reserves jointly.³

In late May a similar agreement was reached between FAC, an American company based in Los Angeles, and Energoinvest--11 Oktomvri (a subsidiary of Energoinvest based in Sarajevo) to produce components for the electrical industry. Energoinvest will provide \$2,500,000 of the \$3,500,000 initial capital investment. FAC will pay the balance and provide the advanced technology required for the enterprise.⁴

On June 2 it was announced that a Chinese-Yugoslav joint venture would soon start making clothing, largely for export to Western Europe, in the Macedonian capital of Skopje. The partners in this venture are the Shanghai Garment Corporation and *Interimpeks-Promet* and *Makedonija Sport* of Skopje.⁵

Building upon these and other such joint ventures, in the first week of June, Belgrade invited almost 200 Yugoslav businessmen working temporarily or permanently abroad to a seminar with the aim of institutionalizing contacts between foreign and domestic companies and of encouraging foreign investment in Yugoslavia. At this seminar, entitled YU-etnobiznis, Yugoslav officials emphasized that Yugoslavia would not reverse its market-oriented reforms. It was agreed at the meeting that similar seminars should be held each year in early June. The participants also decided to set up a Yugoslav International Business Center in Belgrade to help foreign businessmen. The business center is also to be financed as a joint venture.⁶

The efforts to encourage joint ventures reflect the determination of the authorities to introduce market-oriented reforms. The Yugoslav authorities have to work hard to overcome the skepticism and mistrust of foreigners, particularly in light of the increasing ethnic tension in Yugoslavia. So long as the hard-line approach of the authorities to ethnic unrest does not

turn into a reaction against economic liberalization, the number of joint ventures will probably continue to increase.

David Goodlett

1 Tanjug, 25 April 1989.

2 See *Jedinstvo* (Pristina), 17 April 1989; *Politika* (Belgrade), 17 April 1989; and *East European Markets* (London), 5 May 1989.

3 Tanjug, 3 April 1989.

4 *Ibid.*, 25 May 1989.

5 *Ibid.*, 2 June 1989.

6 See *Borba* (Belgrade), 6 June 1989; and *Politika*, 7 and 8 June 1989.

7. Vecernje Novosti Reports on Romanian Refugees

Summary: *A major Yugoslav tabloid has published an 11-part series on the plight of Romanian asylum seekers who use Yugoslavia in transit to the West.*

* * *

The Belgrade tabloid *Vecernje Novosti* recently completed publication of an 11-part series on the plight of Romanian refugees in Yugoslavia.¹ According to the five authors of the articles, there has been a significant increase in the number of Romanians fleeing as the country's economic and social crisis goes from bad to worse. The articles described the great risks involved in crossing the 557-kilometer Romanian-Yugoslav border. Many Romanians enter illegally by swimming across the River Danube or hiding between the trunks and back-seats of automobiles or underneath them. Some have reportedly attempted suicide when caught by Yugoslav customs officials and police.

Background. For the vast majority of refugees, Yugoslavia serves as a way station. In 1988 about 4,300 refugees entered Yugoslavia; more than 4,000 were Romanians seeking asylum. From January through May 1989, some 5,000 refugees entered Yugoslavia; of these almost 4,100 were from Romania. Some unofficial estimates claim that about 20,000 Romanians fled in 1988, with an unspecified number going to Hungary, and that about 2,000 either were killed by border guards or drowned in the Danube. In 1986 around 1,200 refugees passed through Yugoslavia on their way to the West. About 700 were from Romania, 300 from Czechoslovakia, 72 from Poland, 36 from Hungary, 16 from Albania, 16 from the GDR, 15 from Bulgaria, 4 from the Soviet Union, and a total of 41 from the People's Republic of China, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, South Africa, the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Algeria.²

Yugoslavia, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Refugees, is obliged to give aid and protection to those who leave their country for political, religious, national, and racial reasons. Yugoslav officials say that they are unable to accept all the refugees largely because of a shortage of funds, so that some asylum-seeking refugees are sent back to their countries of origin. Although Yugoslav officials admit that they have sent back asylum-seekers, there are no official figures; a Dutch newspaper, however, reported that Yugoslavia returned about 90% of Romanians seeking asylum.³ The federal Ministry for Internal Affairs has the final say on all matters pertaining to the status of refugees.

All foreigners who enter Yugoslavia illegally are given prison sentences of between 10 and 30 days; the average sentence is 15 days, and during that period officials usually determine whether to grant them permanent residency. According to the

Executive Committee for Refugees in Belgrade, refugees are provided with health care, accommodations, and clothing for a maximum of two years. Most refugees are given basic English-language training at refugee shelters, since most of them are eventually received by the United States, Australia, or Canada.

Romanians' Experiences. According to officials of the Executive Committee for Refugees, Romanians constitute the largest number of foreigners seeking asylum; they are also reportedly the least troublesome and "even the most disciplined." The series of articles in *Vecernje Novosti* gave details about several successful and unsuccessful escapes. One Romanian, for example, got away by floating across the Danube holding on to an empty natural gas canister. It is not uncommon for Romanians to flee to Yugoslavia dressed only in swimming trunks and bringing no other possessions with them. Some are hidden in automobiles, usually in the undercarriages. During the weekend of June 23-25, 11 Romanians swam across the Danube in the Kladovo region; they are currently serving 20-day jail sentences in the town of Negotin near the Yugoslav-Romanian-Bulgarian border. Officials say that the 11 will be granted temporary residency on their release.

Some Romanians have attempted suicide when caught by the Yugoslav police. Three young people (two males and a female) from Timisoara, for example, entered the country illegally at Moravita. The two men swallowed poison and the woman was prevented from doing so by the police. After a short convalescence in a hospital in Vrsac, all three were returned to Romania.

One Romanian gave an account of his first unsuccessful attempt to escape. After being sent back to Moldavia by Yugoslav officials, he told *Vecernje Novosti*, he had been fined 1,100 lei; he had earned 2,000 lei a month. He said that some Romanians had been beaten by the authorities after their return and some had been imprisoned; he added, however, that it was "simply not true that Romanians have been executed for attempting to seek asylum."

There are believed to be eight refugee shelters in Yugoslavia, all within twenty kilometers of Belgrade. The articles mentioned three shelters; Camp Kosutnjak, Banja Koviljaca, and the largest refugee shelter known as the "Motel of 1,000 Roses," which is 10 kilometers south of Belgrade, near Mount Avala. According to the motel director, Radosav Samardjic, the average stay for refugees "is about one or two months; a few even stay more than a year; and the longest stay was by a Romanian who waited two years before emigrating to the West." Samardjic said that it was not uncommon for the motel to take in families with two or three children. In the past two months six babies had been born to refugees staying at the motel. The motel has 160 beds and is a B-class establishment.

The typical hotel menu consists of a breakfast with bread, butter, and jam; tea and milk; and occasionally eggs, salami, or meat paste. The lunch menu for June 8 was soup and moussaka (egg plant and ground beef) and on June 9, soup and cabbage with beef; there is sometimes fruit or cake for dessert.

Conclusion. It is interesting that some Yugoslav newspapers are only now writing about the highly sensitive topic of Romanian refugees. Until a few years ago, Yugoslav-Romanian economic and political relations were sound, largely because Josip Broz Tito had built his Balkan policy around his personal relationship with Nicolae Ceausescu. Matters subsequently soured, because the Yugoslavs increasingly disliked Ceausescu's treatment of the Yugoslav minorities and found his style of rule anachronistic; Ceausescu seems to view post-Tito Yugoslavia as an unreliable partner without effective leadership.

Milan Andrejevich

- 1 *Vecernje Novosti* (Belgrade), 26 June to 6 July 1989.
- 2 *Vjesnik* (Zagreb), 25 June 1989; *Tanjug*, 22 August 1987.
- 3 *Het Parool* (Kampen), 10 April 1989.

- end -

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

to Yugoslav SR/8, *RFER*, 27 June 1989,

Item 6, page 26, second full paragraph, line 11 should read as follows:

"Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian" language.

Item 7, page 29, paragraph beginning with Maltreatment of ..., line 1 should read as follows:

Mladina is the first youth publication ...

also add to footnote 1, line 5 after bananas:

The Zagreb weekly *Danas*, no. 380, 30 May 1989, published an interview with Agim Vllasi, a 31-year-old ethnic Albanian driver from Kosovska Kamenica who was released from isolation on May 15 after spending 49 days in detention. The *Mladina* interview is strikingly similar to Vllasi's account. Agim is the nephew of Azem Vllasi, former President of the Kosovo provincial party Presidium, who is currently being held in detention while charges are being drawn up for the crime of "counterrevolutionary activities."