

‘Self-managing’ the ‘brotherhood and unity’
Understanding Tito’s approach to nationalism

by

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Submitted to

Central European University

Nationalism Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2021

Abstract

This thesis presents an account of intellectual historian analysis of Josip Broz Tito's stances on the national question. Thesis approaches the theme by putting Tito's stances on the national question into a relation to his stances on the economy. The main thesis' argument is that all the questions relating to his approach, such as the reasons for his failure and the intellectual origins of his approach, cannot be answered without considering his stance on economy. Tito's thought is contextualised in the first part within the linguistic context of other Marxists – Otto Bauer, Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Joseph Stalin, and the Yugoslav Communists from the interwar period. Each of the authors' approach is analysed and put into mutual conversation by relating to their stances on the economy. In the second part, Tito's thought is contextualised within the context of evolving self-management model after the Second World War. Tito's formula of brotherhood and unity is thus evaluated in relation to the role it plays for the development of the self-management model. In approaching the theme in such a way, the thesis finds firstly that Tito's approach was most similar to Stalin's, which is derived from their shared theoretical understanding of how socialism should look like, and secondly, that Tito's approach to the national question played the role of fostering Yugoslav national identity for the purpose of fostering the Yugoslav economy.

key words: Yugoslavia, nationalism, Marxism, Tito, self-management, brotherhood and unity.

Acknowledgments

In my dance with this more than a year-long project, I have realised that conducting a scientific research is by no means easy, and that life in academia is not as shining as they presented it to us in school. However, all of the hurdles are more easily jumped over once one has a strong army backing it up. The pure love and unwavering support that I have received from my parents and brother throughout of my education are something that I am never going to be able to repay. Luckily, they are not in academia and I will not have to compensate in kind. The person who is in academia, and who has been my cornerstone for the entirety of this process is Jelisaveta. She has not only supported me emotionally and intellectually, but has been my strictest and most devoted proof-reader, reviewer, critic and friend. She is making me a better person and a better historian on a daily basis, and I can only hope that she will remain by my side for whatever comes at my path. Many other friends and comrades deserve to be included in this short piece, for their critical stimulation is what allows me to perceive the direct influence my scientific work might have on the real world. However, each of the person in my life is there by my personal choice, and each of them deserves much more than this brief mention written minutes before the deadline.

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1. Introduction

“All forms and products of consciousness
cannot be dissolved by mental criticism [...] but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to this idealistic humbug.”¹

Ever since the Communist regimes lost the totalitarian grapple over their respective societies, liberal commentators of history have made sure to underline and remind everyone of this defeat. Whether the neoliberal ‘end-of-history’ or the more traditional ‘totalitarianism’ type of argument is utilised, liberals have tended to see socialism as inevitably crumbling under its’ own weight.² Whilst they more than often pin-pointed weak points of Communist regimes, liberal historians have always set out on the quest of understanding the roots of communists’ failings with an already cemented answer. In other words, they were merely reading the East European history backwards, skimming for highlights which match their expected results. In turn, all ‘sub-failings’ of communists, such as on the national question, were deemed as equally defective and contributing to the demise of the whole project.³ In spite of that, even there, the interconnection between the failure of the overall project, that is, economic substitution of the capitalist mode of production with the socialist one, and the failure of the particular project, say on nationalism, was rarely considered as a two-directional hierarchical relation. Put

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974): 58-59.

² Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?,” *The National Interest* no. 16 (1989): 3-18. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1979).

³ For an example, many scholars claim that the Soviet ethno-federal model was unsustainable or prone to crisis and thus effectively determined the fate of the Soviet country. See Philip G. Roeder, “Ethnofederalism and the Mismanagement of Conflicting Nationalisms,” *Regional & Federal Studies* 19, no. 2 (2009): 214. For a more elaborate and wider-covering presentation of such view, see Valerie Bunce, *Subversive institutions: The design and the destruction of socialism and the state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

differently, liberals failed to grasp the primarily instrumental role that nationalism played in the Communists' charge on the economy, but instead retrospectively applied today's norms.

Liberalism, however, is not the dominant trend in the studies of Communist failures anymore. In the similar vein as political events of 1989 fostered the supremacy of the liberal historiography, thus events like the 1999 Seattle demonstrations signalled the ascendancy of the post-modernist perspective in social sciences. In-fact, whilst it is often marked down that post-modernism reacted against Marxist class-reductionism and uni-linearity, one could argue that it was precisely the weakness of the liberal counter-argument which equally prompted the rise of post-modernism. Consequentially, any grand narrative, any 'great system of knowledge' or general method was demonised thenceforth as it has "effects and functions of subjection and rule".⁴ The source of such outlook is, in my opinion, the interplay of 'nominalism' and 'biopower'. Namely, on the one side, there is a belief that whole of the human subjectivity is socially constructed, that nothing has meaning until society gives it one and that by bestowing names, new realities are constructed.⁵ On the other side, with his famous notion of 'governmentality', Michel Foucault stressed that power functions through the production of knowledge, that is, by fogging our clarity and modelling our behaviour for a desirable form of social control.⁶ Thus, combining the two, if one identity is constructed by speaking of it and if the same identity is becoming controlled and oppressed when general conclusions are

⁴ Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991) : 165. See also *ibid*, 29.

⁵ See Ian Hacking, "Making up People," in *The Science Studies Reader*, eds. Mario Biagioli, 161-171 (London: Routledge, 1999). There are numerous quotes from the probably most famous post-modernist Michel Foucault, confirming the views that identity is not something metaphysical, but political and socially constructed. Most explicitly stated, for Foucault "the individual is not a pre-given entity ... The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces." See Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* eds. Colin Gordon (New York, 1980): 73-74. For a less explicit example, see Foucault's discussion of origins of perversion and sodomy in *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978): 42-43.

⁶ Following Esposito, for Foucault move from biopolitics to biopower is a process of mutation of sovereignty from the 'power over life' to the 'power over life itself'. Foucault presented this view most famously in his discussion of how modern prison mechanisms are being applied within society more broadly to create what he calls 'docile bodies'. See especially the introduction of his book *Discipline and Punish*.

proclaimed of it, then the role of ‘philosophers’ is to speak as little and as narrowly as possible of that identity, but merely point to the oppressions imposed through discourses of it. Consequentially, the predominance of this post-modernist outlook reflected in history in the shift of research focus towards culture, discourse and linguistics and the narration of numerous separate stories about power-relations, particular rationalities and production of particular interests. Likewise, in the studies of Communists’ failings, the main interest of post-modernist scholars are manifestations and productions of culture and ideological discourses by the Communist regimes, through which they perpetuated their social control. Implicitly, if this control failed it was because of the unsuccessful linguistic construction of categories. For an example, nationalism becomes one of those studied cultural fields where ideological discourses were produced, one which could have contributed to the demise of the entire Communist project but through its’ inconsistencies failed to manipulate people’s obedience.⁷ In other words, all that matters in determining the fate of the Communist project is that which is uttered. However, what is problematic with this approach is that it takes as a starting point the surface manifestations of social processes and works-up from them, instead of primarily considering them as end-points, whose origins ought to be first explained. Put differently, there are no *why* questions – why particular discourses and ideas were chosen, why ideas themselves change; only *how* questions.

In this thesis, I will argue that the time is ripe for another shift of *zeitgeist* in historical science, and that Marxist method offers better tools to penetrate the reasoning behind Communists’ decisions. As stated above, liberalism will always note the choice as between two inevitable evils, whilst post-modernism will not really bother to derive the motivations. Marxism, meanwhile, has the vantage point of placing historical actors within the class-

⁷ See for an example Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Summer, 1994): 414-452. This will be more discussed below.

relations context, through which, as Marx's quote from the epigraph suggests, both the proper material contextualisation of 'undemocratic' ideas and the manifesting of the interconnectedness of several fields becomes feasible. In-turn, Communists can be seen as representing interests of particular social forces when operating with, say, economy and nationalism. Marxism, however, is not the dominant trend in historiography at the moment. Flourishing in the post-war period, as Enzo Traverso noted, "Marxist historiography, which could not declare itself neutral in the same sense as the Weberian social science, necessarily felt the aftershock of 1989."⁸ With firstly the nominally socialist countries failing to overcome alienation, exploitation and misery, and subsequently with the fall of communism, the "class-based memory has been swallowed up",⁹ and the power of the Marxist view as an emancipatory theory was put in question.¹⁰

Nonetheless, the struggle between historiographical schools is not pre-determined. As the dominant trends hitherto alternated, likewise nothing is indicating the eternal supremacy of post-modernism. In fact, one could argue that the very escaping the attempts of grasping the totality of society by post-modernists is a manifestation of method's limitations. Precisely because of the struggle's indeterminacy, I would like to contribute to the Marxist side of this wider debate and [primarily] against the post-modernist side, by examining the reasons behind Yugoslav Marxists' failure to resolve the national question.

To be more precise, I intend to present the framework through which it will become possible to understand the ideas and policies of Josip Broz Tito on nationalism. I will discuss Tito's ideas, however, the majority of the thesis will be the discussion of the context to which he was responding with those ideas. Thus, in one of the innovations that this thesis is bringing,

⁸ Enzo Traverso, "Marx, History, and Historians. a Relationship in Need of Reinvention," *Actuel Marx* vol. 50, no. 2 (2011): 5. What is more, Traverso further notes Thierry Aprile's conclusion that the "death" of Marxist historiography was sealed in 1989. See *ibid*, 1.

⁹ *ibid*, 6.

¹⁰ Chris Harman, *Bureaucracies and Revolution in Eastern Europe* (London: Pluto Press, 1974): 10.

I will set the basis for explaining Tito's failure on the national question by linking his thoughts on nationalism to his thoughts on economy.

Through the discussion in this thesis, I will demonstrate that the Marxist method offers a more potent tool for grasping the Communists' approach to the national question in Yugoslavia. Namely, what Marx's epigraph quote suggests is that national identity cannot be narrowly overcome, regardless of what one says or does concretely about it, but only by the palpable overcoming of "the actual social relations which gave rise" to this identity in the first place. Thus, by considering Tito's views on the national question more broadly, that is, placing those views into a dialectical relationship with his views on the outlook of socialist economy, I will demonstrate that Tito's failure to resolve the question of nationalism is much more due to his ultimately statist and reformist approach to economy, than simply due to his approach to nationalism. In other words, Tito's solutions to the national question is to be evaluated by the extent to which his overall political project envisaged the overcoming of the dominant economic mode of production. Put differently, I will not search for the reasons for the failure to the national question within the approach to the national question itself, but within the much higher-level and wider-reaching 'economy question'. Thus, I will take seriously what Tito said about nationalism, that is, I will trust him to have honestly intended to resolve the national question in a Marxist way by ultimately getting rid of national identities.

With today's hindsight, it is obvious that his attempt failed. However, the reasons for the failure are not so clear-cut. As mentioned above, I will argue that it was Tito's statist approach to the economy which rendered his approach to the national question destined to failure. In short, Tito proclaimed a Marxist-Leninist solution to the national question, which entails that the national question cannot be resolved within capitalism, but solely within socialist mode of production. Meanwhile, Tito's thoughts and policies related to the construction of the socialist economy, despite his probably-honest intentions, were not

directing the Yugoslav society towards socialism. Thus, it is within the disbalance between two policy-spheres that the reason for the failure on the national question should be sought. Put bluntly, one cannot at the same time claim to have resolved the national question from a Marxist standpoint, and not have overcome capitalist mode of production.

Tito's stance on the national question is relatively unproblematic for historians to trace. His famous formula of 'brotherhood and unity' has been extensively analysed, and tracked back to Lenin and Stalin. However, differencing between the latter two, nuancing the relative ideational influence they had on Tito, has not been successfully answered yet. Thus I intend to resolve this issue by noting the differences between Lenin and Stalin on the question of economy, and then counterposing Tito's respective thoughts to denote correspondence. Considering Tito's thoughts on the national question through economic prism opens new insights into his rationale, that is, how Tito understood the role of nationalism in the process of achieving the socialist economy. The insights stem from the challenges he faced along the way and responded to. The main challenge was, generally speaking, the economic backwardness of the post-war Yugoslavia he inherited, which forced him into constant compromises and put him into conflict with, more narrowly speaking, the bureaucratic class. It is this bureaucratic class which represented the carriers of the Yugoslav nation-building project, and observing how Tito balanced their power to the overall path to socialism is the key to understanding why his solution to the national question failed. In my opinion, Tito intended to combat the bureaucrats, however, his understanding of socialism was ultimately much alike to Stalin (state-sponsored gradual construction of socialism through stages) which made his effort of combatting their pressure futile. His counter-effort to bureaucrats is mostly epitomised in the economic model of self-management. On the question of the extent to which self-management really presented a considerate alternative to Stalinism, a palpable road to socialism, and gave a

meaningful political power to the working class, depends the success of Tito's solution to the national question.

The case of Yugoslavia is traditionally interesting for scholars in general and is particularly puzzling for historians of Eastern Europe, perhaps due to the terrible wars that ensued country's dissolution. Depending on the narrative, there were 'several Yugoslavias'. Most commonly, the First denotes the royalist regime of the interwar period, whilst the Second is that of the Yugoslav Communist Party¹¹ post-war regime. Yugoslavia as a country existed from 1918 until 1992, changing its name over time.¹² Under its ultimate Constitution, Yugoslav federation consisted of six republics each with its' titular nations: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, and two autonomous regions, where a substantial non-Slavic ethnic minority resided.¹³ What, however, usually sets Yugoslavia apart from other Communist Party (CP) led countries is its' reformism. At the centre of it is the above-mentioned Yugoslav economic model of workers' self-management, officially introduced in 1950, nominally intended to counter the bureaucratic tendencies. Thus, on the first sight, everything about Yugoslavia seemed different in comparison to other Eastern European (EE) countries – 'socialist' economy was pro-market oriented, Communist leader was an open anti-Stalinist, dissidents nominally had more democratic space and freedom to

¹¹ Party changed its' name on several occasions over time. It was founded in 1919 under the name "Socijalistička radnička partija Jugoslavije (komunisti)" [Socialist Workers Party of Yugoslavia (Communists)] or SRPJ(k). The following year it changed its' name into "Komunistička Partija Jugoslavije" [Communist Party of Yugoslavia] or KPJ and held this name until 1952 when it was substituted with "Savez Komunista Jugoslavije" [League of Communists of Yugoslavia] or SKJ, used until its' demise in 1990. This issue will again be touched upon later on in the thesis. This thesis will use KPJ and SKJ intermittently.

¹² It was founded in 1918 under the name of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSHS). The name was changed into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (KJ) in 1929. With Communists ascendancy to power, the state first took the name of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFJ) in 1943, changing into Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ) in 1945 once Communists got a firm grip over the state-control, and finally the name was changed into Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) in 1963. The union of Serbia and Montenegro continued to bare the name of Yugoslavia from 1992 until 2003, but this state was not a legal successor to the Yugoslavia above.

¹³ The status of recognised nations changed over time. This will be partly discussed in the fourth chapter. Furthermore, there were other recognised nations, although the term nationalities were used for them. Thus, for an example, Albanians were the titular nationality of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo. Analysing the aspect of "non-nations" in Yugoslavia goes beyond this thesis' scope.

express their criticism. In other words, Yugoslavia never seemed to fit into conclusions made about other EE countries. In this context, successfully explaining the reasons behind Tito's failure to resolve the national question would be even more rewarding.

I hope that my answer to the question of the Tito's failure to resolve the national question through Marxist perspective will have at least two contributions. Firstly, as hinted above, I feel that hitherto dominant treatment of the Communists' failures on nationalism has been deficient in offering a way beyond national identities, and consequentially beyond national conflicts. Thus, I hope to contribute to the literature on the theories of nationalism, by making a case for a Marxist strand of modernism against the liberal and particularly constructivist/post-modernist strands, thus further 'strengthening' the whole modernist approach to nationalism. Secondly, I expect this thesis to provide a new insight into the Yugoslav dissolution literature, by negatively arguing against the outright rejection of Tito's approach to the national question. By stressing the causality between economics and national question, I will show that the Yugoslav Marxists' failure in economy does not render as useless their method on nationalism, nor the whole Marxist approach. Put differently, I will show that scholars have too often failed to evaluate attempts of practical Marxists' to resolve nationalism as endeavours to stay true to the Marx's epigraph quote.

The theme is highly relevant not only in the academic sphere, but in the real-life as well. Namely, there is currently no social force in former Yugoslavia which has at one and the same time both an interest in and ability to achieve the overcoming of national identities. On the one side, ever since the terrible and bloody ethnic wars which followed the dissolution, nationalism has dominated the politics and society in general in practically each of the successor states, nurturing inter-ethnic intolerance. Meanwhile, liberal attempts of overcoming differences through neoliberal economic measures and institutions has arguably only further entrenched the antagonisms, as politicians usually have to resort to populist-nationalism in

order to have sufficient political capital to implement austerity measures. Furthermore, in prescribing to the continuing of the current mode of production, they do not foresee abandoning the national-state framework. As Tom Nairn asked, “Why has globalization engendered nationalism, instead of transcending it?”¹⁴ In other words, joint life between nations is practically unimaginable by these forces, and the failed Yugoslav experiment solely confirmed such idea’s irrationality. On the other side of the spectrum, the only intention of overcoming national identities has been closely tied to the Yugoslav project. Remnants of the affinity to such idea are epitomised in a Yugo-nostalgic tendency, which, however, remains sparse over the territories of numerous states and present mostly on the internet, impotent of providing a viable alternative to the present state of affairs.¹⁵ The last relevant attempt of overcoming numerous national identities was carried by the Yugoslav Communists under the banner of Yugoslavism. However, with the Yugoslav Communist Party (KPJ)-led country ultimately failing to overcome alienation, exploitation and misery, the power of the Marxist view was put in question.¹⁶ Whilst all the above-sides offered their critique of the Yugoslav project, because the Marxists are the only ones having an interest of overcoming national identities and thus of joint life, it is more relevant to rethink critically Yugoslavism from the Marxist perspective. Put differently, as many have rejected the Marxist approach in disregarding Yugoslav project, discerning the differences between the two, that is, providing a nuanced view of their relation, can have real-life implications. “Marxism’s survival as a theory capable of giving realistic hope to the oppressed depends upon its coming to terms with the reality of the [post-war] Eastern Europe.”¹⁷ While this thesis cannot save Marxism from the atrocities committed in its’ name, it can at least comb through the various Marxist approaches to the national question whilst

¹⁴ Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997): 63.

¹⁵ For an overview, see Maja Maksimović, “Unattainable Past, Unsatisfying Present. Yugonostalgia: an omen of a better future?,” *Nationalities Papers* vol. 45, no. 6 (2017): 1066-1081.

¹⁶ Chris Harman, *Class and Bureaucracies in Eastern Europe*, 10.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

looking at Yugoslavia, and thus by providing a more nuanced view of the relationship between Marxism and Yugoslavism, give a further life-line to Marxism in this area.

Structure

The main argument of the thesis is that Tito's approach to the national question, and in turn its' failure, can be grasped solely by observing Tito's stances on nationalism as part of his general understanding of how socialism is to be achieved and how will it look like. Thus, the thesis' answer to the concrete question of Tito's failure to offer a working solution to the national question lies in his ultimately reformist and statist approach of countering the bureaucratic tendencies in the building of socialist economy in Yugoslavia. As Marxism views nations as existing solely during capitalism, with Tito failing to put forward the political project for overcoming the capitalist mode of production, he sealed the fate of his approach to nationalism. Furthermore, the 'smaller' argument stemming from the main one is that Tito's view of nationalism can be much more effectively situated within the various strands of the Marxist thought by observing his understanding of the preferred type of revolution and the outlook of the socialist economy. Thus, I will argue, that Tito's approach to the national question can be definitively related to Joseph Stalin's and not Vladimir Lenin's only after noting the the state-capitalist nature of the 'socialist' economy he shared with the former.

The thesis' argument will be constructed through the following structure. The introductory chapter will briefly present what I understand as a nation, and how I perceive that it should be analysed from the Marxist perspective by drawing on the works of Miroslav Hroch and Eric Hobsbawm. This will be followed by the short overview of the relevant attempts to analyse nations in Yugoslavia from such perspective.

The second chapter will provide the linguistic context of Tito's stance on the national question, that is, it will present and analyse the texts in which other Marxists attempted to answer the same question as Tito. The initial sub-chapter will look at 'practical materialists' (as Marx called them), or communists, and their approach to the national question – from Otto Bauer, through Luxemburg and Lenin, up to Stalin, thus providing a wider theoretical/linguistic framework within which Tito operated. A short demonstration of the thesis' method will be observable here, as each of the communists' approach to the national question will be evaluated according to their writings on the economy. Afterwards, I will present the evolution of the KPJ's stance on the national question in the interwar period, focusing on the 1923 debates and the Comintern (KI) influence on the prevalence of one faction's stance. The main argument of the chapter will be that solely by observing their writings on economy, one can note the differences between Lenin and Stalin in approaching the national question.

The last chapter will get to the real innovations of this thesis. Namely, the thesis will first present Tito's writings on the national question before the conquest of power, stressing his theoretical similarity and combability with Stalin at the time. Afterwards, the chapter will discuss the period between the KPJ's rise to power and conflict with Stalin in 1948, analysing the state policies and Tito's thoughts on economy and nationalism in the period and noting how it maintained the similarity with Stalin, despite the conflict. Finally, the chapter will dive into the analysis of Tito's thought after the split, contextualising Tito's formula for the national question in this new context of self-management model. Observing how self-management originated, developed in the 1950s and deteriorated in the 1960s provides crucial insights for the role Tito entailed for his 'brotherhood and unity' slogan. The argument of this chapter will be that the Yugoslav post-1950 economy did not qualitatively change from its pre-1950 form, and thus from the Soviet economy, effectively meaning that, as it was not overcoming the capitalist mode of production, it prevented itself from resolving the national question. This,

way the thesis will conclude that Tito's approach to the national question was most similar to Stalin, and that their conflict was of real-politik nature and a logical conclusion of the contradictory approach to the socialist economy, rather than of ideological nature.

Methodology

The obvious methodological instrument for deriving thinkers' stances is the intellectual history. After all, "whatever one thinks of the forces that underlie the historical process, they are filtered through the human mind and this determines the tempo and the manner in which they work. It is human consciousness which connects the long-range factors and forces and the individual event".¹⁸ However, which particular approach is most suitable is not directly clear. In this thesis, I will use the method of which basis were provided by the Cambridge School, but complement it with a Marxist approach, by giving the meaning to the studied context.

To understand the meaning thinkers gave to their ideas, Cambridge School of history of ideas provides a solid starting ground. In arguing against the conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), R.G. Collingwood stressed that there are no eternal, but various and ever-changing problems, each peculiar in its own nature, to which philosopher answered, and in doing so approached each with particular intention.¹⁹ Quentin Skinner added that philosophers were engaged in political struggles of their times, and understanding their writings requires historicising political questions to which they answered.²⁰ "Texts are the primary object of study and their meaning is elucidated almost exclusively by reading them with relation to other

¹⁸ Felix Gilbert, "Intellectual History: Its Aims and Methods," *Historical Studies Today* vol. 100, no. 1 (Winter 1971): 90.

¹⁹ R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978): 69. Cited from Terence Ball, "History and the Interpretation of Texts", 27. For an overview of *Begriffsgeschichte* method, see Reinhart Koselleck, "Social History and Begriffsgeschichte." In *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans, van Vree. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998): 23-35.

²⁰ See Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* vol. 8 (1969): 37.

texts.”²¹ However, as Joseph Levine has noted, Skinner’s excessive and narrow focus on texts which surrounded the thinker was a step away from Collingwood’s direction. Namely, Levine argued that *prior* to retrieving ‘dominant questions’, it is necessary to ‘fix’ texts in the political situation and actual circumstances.²² In his other words, “to understand [the text], it would seem necessary to put together *both* the previous discourse *and* the real-life situation as they appear to the speaker”, which for Levine means (in following Collingwood) combining the externally observed facts with internally analysed thought “[...] by re-enacting [an event] on the basis of the evidence, and then inferring the [author’s] thought and intentions.”²³ This correction of Skinner’s conceptualisation of intellectual context as going beyond texts is indicative of the French intellectual history school, influenced by social historians of the Annales School. In such approach, classic texts were placed alongside relatively unknown thinkers.²⁴ Indeed, such method furthers historian’s understanding the intention thinker had with a text.²⁵

However, both approaches succumbed to the challenges of the recently-dominant trend of ‘cultural’ or ‘post-modern’ intellectual history. The reasons are two-fold. Firstly, due to the ever-changing nature of the social context, some scholars deemed it more useful to observe how the social context itself was portrayed through culture, rather than to continuously attempt to determine to which social group ideas belonged.²⁶ Secondly and more devastatingly, as noted above, post-modernists effectively argued that “all interpretations of meaning are in the

²¹ Brian Cowan, “Intellectual, Social and Cultural History: Ideas in Context,” in *Palgrave Advances in Intellectual History*. eds. Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 175.

²² Joseph M. Levine, “Intellectual History as History,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 66, no. 2 (2005):189-190.

²³ *ibid*, 191. My emphasis.

²⁴ For an overview of the French Intellectual History School, see Cowan, “Intellectual, Social and Cultural History,” 175-179.

²⁵ A somewhat similar argument is made by Jan-Werner Müller, who suggests that Cambridge School method would benefit from observing how the text, and ideas contained in it, was perceived by the people – see “how did those books answer their problems”, and thus “re-focus on context as lived political experience.” See Jan-Werner Müller, “European Intellectual History as Contemporary History,” *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 46, no. 3 (2011): 582-3, 586.

²⁶ Cowan, “Intellectual, Social and Cultural History”, 180.

final analysis ‘indeterminate’ and ‘undecidable’,”²⁷ a conclusion stemming from the view that *language* prevents the understanding of ‘true’ “expressions of interests, since it is the discursive structure of political language which conceives and defines interest in the first place.”²⁸ Precisely at this point the impotence of Skinner’s Cambridge School method is manifested, as it remains tied to essentially linguistic context, devoid of critically analysing its relations to the material reality – society and politics.²⁹

Meanwhile, Marxists never gave language the autonomy, but subordinated it to the material reality, making it susceptible to culturalists’ challenge. In Marx’s words, “language, like consciousness, only arises from the need,” that is from the present stage of social organisation.³⁰ This, however, does not mean, as post-modernists would criticise Marxists for determinism and reductionism, that language is a mere reflection of thinker’s material interests, but that ideas, translated through language, can indicate the current social position of the idea’s maker – a position which then, considered abstractly, shows material interests. As Paul Blackledge noted, Marxists never thought that language is objective.³¹ Indeed, any utterance is a form of abstraction from the concrete thing and from the experience of that thing, and the idea, put in the social context, becomes an attempt at generalisation of a particular direct experience. What I claim is that, once appreciated the role ideas play, one can identify *of which social force* that generalised experience is. Namely, abstractly speaking, ideas serve to support the superstructure which in-turn supports a definite force of production.³² In other words, once

²⁷ Terence Ball, “History and the Interpretation of Texts,” in *Handbook of Political Theory* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004): 20.

²⁸ Gareth Stedman Jones, “The Determinist Fix: Some Obstacles to the Further Development of the Linguistic Approach to History in the 1990s,” *History Workshop Journal* vol. 42 (Autumn 1996): 20. Cited from Paul Blackledge, *Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006): 7.

²⁹ This point was brilliantly noted by Neal Wood. See *Reflections on Political Theory* (London: Palgrave, 2002): 103, 109.

³⁰ See Marx, *German Ideology*, 51.

³¹ Blackledge, *Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History*, 10.

³² This understanding of the base-superstructure relation, and role of ideas within that relation, is presented by Chris Harman. See his article “Base and Superstructure,” *International Socialism* vol. 2, no. 32 (Summer 1986), accessed 17th April 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/harman/1986/xx/base-super.html>, which also appeared as one of the essays in his book *Marxism and History*.

base and superstructure are considered not as separate sets of institutions determining each other (as is implicit in both structuralist and humanist strand of Marxist thought, each ‘advocating’ the primacy of one institutional set),³³ but as two sides of the same coin, as two complimentary parts of the same project, abstract and subjective nature of ideas becomes linked to the particular social force of production, whose interest is empirically definable. Put more bluntly, “in a class society it is impossible to have a single general view of the world”.³⁴ Consequentially, the two opposing forces will project their ‘superstructural candidate’ with corresponding ideas struggling over the hegemony for the societal dominant view. Those ideas may not explicitly state the material interests of their creators, but will indicate the relative position of their creators within the current social struggle. Essentially, the interest of the two relative forces is either the preservation of the current mode of production (considered broadly) or its’ alteration. In sum, depending on whether ideas challenge or defend the hegemon view, it is possible to discern the interests of ideas’ authors.

³³ Detailed discussion of theoretical positions of both strands goes beyond the time and space of this thesis. Nonetheless, I can indicate sources for getting more familiar with different arguments. Firstly, confusion partly stems from Marx’s unclear or alternating position on the question (the [in]famous distinction between young and old Marx). For the “structuralist Marx”, see especially Karl Marx, “Preface of A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”, accessed 17th April 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface-abs.htm>; certain passages from the *German Ideology*, such as “Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.” in Marx, *German Ideology*, 47, also 50; and, of course, *Das Kapital* and first three chapters of the “First Manuscript” in *1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. For the “humanist Marx” from the *1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* see the last chapter “Estranged Labour (From the First Manuscript)”, accessed 17th April 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>; the famous opening quotes in Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972): 10, but also 33-34. Marx’s collaborator and friend, Frederick Engels is even more often considered as determinist, thus for his ‘humanist side’, see “Letter to J. Bloch in Königsberg,” Accessed 17th April 2021, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90_09_21.htm. Secondly, as for the classic Marx’s interpreters belonging to respective schools, for a structuralist view’s, see Claude Levi-Strauss, “Struktura i oblik,” *Kritika* special edition, no. 4 (1970): 146-166. For structuralists’ extreme version (Orthodox Marxist view), see Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Program)*, (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1910). or Georgi Plekhanov, “On the Role of the Individual in History,” accessed 17th April 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/plekhanov/1898/xx/individual.html>. For a humanist reading of Marx, see Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism. Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution* vol. 1 *The Founders*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978): especially pages 132-161. An ‘extreme’ version of humanism is found with various Maoists, but is more eloquently put by the New Left, see for an example Edward P. Thompson, “Revolution,” *New Left Review* vol. 1, no. 3 (1960), accessed 17th April 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/thompson-ep/1960/revolution.htm>.

³⁴ Harman, “Base and Superstructure”. Similar quote is found in Gilbert – “because society consisted of various groups with different interests the existence of a common dominating idea in each historical period could not be maintained”, see “Intellectual History: Its Aims and Methods,” 87-88.

This struggle of ideas would be, as post-modernists would notice, an endless quest. Indeed, as this thesis' epigraph claims,³⁵ this can only be resolved in practice. Nonetheless, whilst retaining the scholastic context of dealing with this question, theoretical work can contribute to the practical struggle by rendering one side's argument stronger. Namely, as Georg Lukacs' noted (although not in these exact terms), philosophers of the rising/challenging social force – the working class, by taking-up the 'standpoint of the proletariat', they experience both the old and embrace the new order, and in-turn obtain the means of the total critique of the society.³⁶ This renders their view much more potent/'truer' than that of the old-class philosophers. Thus, as Leon Trotsky remarked, the contribution of rising-class philosophers to that class's ideological victory lies in the correct locating of the moment when the continuous quantitative changes have accumulated to form a sufficiently strong challenge to a hegemon view.³⁷ The method for discerning such moment entails exploring how "the superficial social features [...] can be derived from the underlying social processes [...] by providing an understanding of the various ideological currents of that society, showing how they arise out of the real world and express [that world's] certain aspects in a distorted way."³⁸ Before all of that, however, as Marx noted, "the only way in which thought might appropriate

³⁵ And also Marx's second thesis on Feuerbach. "The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth — i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question. [Marx's emphasis]", *Theses on Feuerbach*, accessed 9th of May 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm>.

³⁶ See Georg Lukacs, "Postvarenje i svijest proletarijata," in *Povijest i klasna svijest*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1970). John Rees is also recognising this role that Lukacs may provide, see his book *The Algebra of Revolution. The Dialectic and the Classical Marxist Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998): 197-255. In terms of defining what the 'standpoint of the proletariat' objectively is, Blackledge stresses the role of the working-class party in defining the 'standpoint of the proletariat' as a perspective generalised from the history of working-class struggles against capitalism, which in-turn allows for the question of interests of the working-class not to be a subjectively determined issue. In my words, Party is carrying the generalised experience of the working-class struggle, out of which, once observed abstractly, interest of the working class can be discerned. See Blackledge, *Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History*, 13-14.

³⁷ "But quantitative changes beyond certain limits become converted into qualitative. [...] To determine at the right moment the critical point where quantity changes into quality is one of the most important and difficult tasks in all the spheres of knowledge." See Leon Trotsky, "The ABC of Materialist Dialectics," in *A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party* (December 1939), accessed 7th May 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1939/12/abc.htm>. "

³⁸ Harman, Base and Superstructure.

the concrete in the mind was rising from the abstract to the concrete.”³⁹ What this means, as Blackledge correctly interpreted, is to start from the society as it appears, however chaotic, then deconstruct it into constituent parts to determine its nature, which for Marx is class relations, and then reconstruct it back and observe what do new insights of class relations tell about the societal appearance now.

Thus, in conclusion, by supplementing Levine’s above-mentioned method with Trotsky’s and Harman’s remarks, I will aim to unravel the meaning Tito gave to his ideas on the national question, by placing his writings both within the social and the linguistic context of various attempts at resolving the national question. More concretely, the method contains two aspects. Firstly, by placing Tito’s writings on nationalism in relation to his texts on socialist economy (which is more telling of the mode of production he envisaged to create / is necessary) the extent to which proposed solutions challenge the dominant ‘project’ becomes discernible. Secondly, by stressing the existence of the managerial, bureaucratic class, it becomes possible to abstract away from the concrete situation and deduce the interests of such class. Put differently, the social context is the rise of the bureaucrats to which Tito nominally wrote against. Thus, what I will argue is that Tito ultimately represented and argued for a reformist class consciousness when talking of nationalism, mainly because his standpoint was not that of the working class. In other words, by counter-posing him to other ideational attempts to resolve the national question, I will make possible to evaluate which is closer to the ‘standpoint of the proletariat’.

³⁹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (London, 1973): 101. Cited in Blackledge, *Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History*, 14.

2. Marxism and the Yugoslav nation

As one journalist noted of the October 1988 workers' strike in front of the Federal Parliament in Belgrade, "people arrived as workers, and left as Serbs", once manipulated by the speech of the notorious Slobodan Milošević.⁴⁰ However, as Goran Musić correctly argues, such view implies passivity of the working class, and in-turn presumes the fluidity and manipulateness of national identities.⁴¹ This is a post-modernist view of nation, currently dominant in the field, and despite its good intentions, it fails to go beyond nationalism itself, as in this case it tends to seek the alternative for ethnic nationalisms of former Yugoslav nations within Yugoslavism. In other words, the implicit conclusion of the post-modernist approach to nationalism in Yugoslavia is that construction of a more benign Yugoslav supranational identity would have been more potent strategy of combatting separate nationalisms.

The idea of a Yugoslav nation emerged in various forms already in the 19th century. Serbs and Montenegrins had their own national state since 1878, whilst Croats and Slovenians had national champions struggling for their rights within the Austro-Hungarian empire. Bosniaks and Macedonians were not yet recognised, but were considered as parts of some other Southern Slav nation. Nonetheless, different views were present, stemming from considering them as tribes of the same nation to all being separate nations. The creation of the Yugoslav state for the first time in 1918 saw the unitarist-integrative approach as dominant among several others, where the predominantly Serbian political elite claiming for itself the role of Piedmont in the unification quest and the subsequent creation of the Yugoslavs. Despite several [mostly repressive] attempts, the interwar royal regime failed to construct a Yugoslav nation. How do the Communists, who took power after the Second World War, relate to this?

⁴⁰ Cited from Goran Musić, "'They came as workers and left as Serbs': the role of Rakovica's blue-collar workers in Serbian social mobilisations of the late 1980s," in *Social inequalities and discontent in Yugoslav socialism*, eds. Archer, Duda and Stubbs (London: Routledge, 2016): 133.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

More concretely, how did Tito perceive this task? Were they supposed to continue the process of Yugoslav nation-building or to disregard the aspect of national policies? To be able to discuss how different Marxists (with Tito amongst them) approached the national question, I will present here briefly how I understand nations and nationalism, building on the previous research made by two Marxist academics – Miroslav Hroch and Eric Hobsbawm. In the end, I will briefly touch upon the existing literature which attempted to comprehend the national questions in Yugoslavia from similar angles.

“Of an ancient kindred we are, but Goths we are not
Part of ancient Slavdom are we!”⁴²

Miroslav Hroch is one of the first Marxist academics who explicitly and elaborately demonstrated the unbreakable bond between capitalism and nations.⁴³ However, in his book, through comparing the development of eight ‘less-studied’ European national movements from 19th century, Hroch is going beyond this simple state of fact, and is displaying how the combination of concrete objective material conditions influence the development of the national consciousness. Indeed, “economic development determined the nature of the [national] constituents; its form [however] was determined by the territorial, linguistic and political relations.”⁴⁴

⁴² These are the verses of the famous World War Two Partisan song “Uz maršala Tita” [With Marchal Tito]. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sMD6W0qhYk> . This is my translation. There is the English version, with a more poetic translation. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1Dfp5mnkpw>

⁴³ “It was only capitalist mass production which enforced the full transition from the local market and the expansion of regular exchange over the whole national territory.” Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 6.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

To be able to pin-point those latter concrete conditions, Hroch is famously counter-posing three *phases* within the evolution of the national movements on the one side to two *stages* of the material conditions. Phases A, B and C correspond respectively to periods of ‘scholarly interest’ in the national movement, ‘patriotic agitation’ and finally ‘the rise of a mass national movement’.⁴⁵ Hroch is here especially interested in phase B – the transitional phase, observing the behaviour of ‘patriots’ – who consciously, voluntarily and actively propagate the national movement.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the first stage is that of the rise of capitalism, epitomised in the growth of industrial economy, struggle against absolutism, building of the modern state, etc., whilst the second stage usually commences with the bourgeois revolution, denotes the already enthroned capitalist society, characterised by already established modern states, the rise of the working-class movement, etc.⁴⁷ Connecting the two parts, that is, observing whether one of the phases, occurred prior or after the bourgeois revolution, it becomes feasible for Hroch to denote which conditions gave rise to which form of national consciousness. Especially in relation to the activities of ‘patriots’, Hroch claims that “the individual’s national consciousness is determined by the objective relations and by the conditions of his own existence”, meaning that an intellectual historian can here observe the link between objective interests and nationalist propagation.⁴⁸ In other words, the interests of those who prophesied nationalism indicate the concrete material conditions which give rise to nationalism. Different conditions will reflect in different individual’s interests, which will in-turn determine their form of preferred national consciousness.

Hroch’s methodological point goes beyond Ernest Gellner, one of the fathers of nationalism studies, in denoting the modernist origins of nations. Without going much into Gellner’s theory, it suffices to say here that the ‘relative synchronicity’ of history is presumed

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 21.

⁴⁶ Definition of ‘patriots’ is given on page 14.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 25-26.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, 13.

in his work, that is, that the process of nationalism creating nations occurred everywhere, only a few decades or centuries earlier or later.⁴⁹ Meanwhile Hroch shows that the temporal difference is not a mere historical trivia, but a manifestation of structural distinctness. Indeed, once he establishes the variations in objective conditions between separate cases, it becomes impossible to conclude that the one and same idea, national consciousness operated in both/all. Instead, as Hroch demonstrates, Gellner's 'subjectivist definition of the nation' fits only "large" nations, where the process of "development towards bourgeois society run entirely parallel with the movement towards national existence," and where consequentially "a new class fought the old feudal ruling class and proclaimed itself the representative of the whole nation".⁵⁰ Nationalism was "the organic part of social transformation and bourgeois revolution".⁵¹ Contrarily, in "small" or "oppressed" nations,⁵² national movements occurred after the bourgeois revolution and state-formation. In other words, because the bourgeois revolution was carried by the foreign bourgeoisie, the subsequent emerging national movement was "under the domination of a foreign bourgeoisie".⁵³ Under these conditions, where 'patriots' are not propagating ideas merely against the old feudal class, but against the foreign nationals, the interest of these few propagators is only reformist, that is, patriots only want to substitute the foreign ruling class but are not bent-on the social change. In regards to this thesis' discussion, interests of small-nation 'patriots' are structurally different to those of large-nation 'patriots', and in-turn, their nationalism, which creates nations, is diverse to Gellner's uniformal national consciousness. Precisely at this point Hroch finally manages to respond to Anthony Smith's critique of modernists for not providing space for human agency in their theories of nations.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983).

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 10.

⁵¹ *ibid*, 8.

⁵² Hroch also mentions "transitory" cases, such as Hungary or... which do not fit either. The inclusion of the third category separates Hroch from numerous popular binary understandings of nationalism

⁵³ *ibid*, 8-9.

⁵⁴ Smith's generic criticism of all modernists is that they fail to appreciate pre-existing cultures and in-turn prevent grasping particular nationalism's appeal. See Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999): 9.

Hroch's patriots, their central mediating influence on the process of nation-building in the interplay of objective relations and consciousness, resolve this issue.

This allows researchers to go beyond the post-modernist criticism when discussing how Communists approached the national question. Namely, if national consciousness can be developed only at particular material conditions which are unbreakably tied to capitalism, it becomes unsustainable to claim that 'patriots', whoever they be, prophesied nationalism during the socialist period. As a Marxist who took-up a huge part of the post-modernist perspective when developing his theory of nations, Benedict Anderson did not tie the national consciousness narrowly to capitalism, in-turn leading him to believe the ideological lies of CPs that they have achieved socialism and in-turn did not see the incompatibility with the simultaneous propagation of nationalism and construction of socialism.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, applying Hroch to studies of nationalism in 'socialist' countries entails, not the addition of phase D where the main protagonists of nationalism are Communists,⁵⁶ as this would mean not taking seriously them and their ideas of ultimately getting rid of nationalism. Instead, it would be locating the forces which survived from earlier phases and continued their task under the Communists' patron. In my opinion, it is the bureaucratic class that ought to be studied as Hroch's 'patriots', because they were the main propagators of the state-building process in all of the 'People's Democracies', including Yugoslavia. Thus, following Hroch, if bureaucrats are carriers of the national idea, their interests indicate the concrete conditions which gave rise to such national consciousness. In other words, the context of Yugoslav Communists is to be derived through the focus on the bureaucratic class. As the actual bureaucrats' writings on

⁵⁵ As his opening passages indicate, Anderson intended to contribute to the Marxist understanding of nationalism, whilst, in the book's second edition, Anderson argued that his "book attempted to combine a kind of historical materialism with what later on came to be called discourse analysis; Marxist modernism married to post-modernism *avant la letter*." See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Rise and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006): 1-4, 227.

⁵⁶ See Terry Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2001): 15.

nationalism, study of which would require the Annales-type of intellectual history, is still waiting to be discovered, this thesis will not focus on texts of bureaucrats but rely more on the secondary literature on the bureaucrats in Yugoslavia, in order to derive the sense of their interests, and thus contextualise what Yugoslav Communists struggled against. The gap between the proclaimed ideational Marxist approach to the national question and the actual practical solutions upheld, is to be an indication of the amount of pressures which the bureaucratic class exerted on the Communists, and in-turn, an evaluation criteria for their ideas about economy, that is, the extent to which the totality of their thought managed to provide an alternative to the pressures of the bureaucratic class.

Eric Hobsbawm is another scholar important for the Marxist understanding of nationalism as he tries to understand nations in their totality. In his quartet of books on *Ages*, where Hobsbawm effectively shows the development of capitalism, not from a fragmentary separate angle, but by pointing out the numerous connections of various ‘histories’ of capitalism, Hobsbawm paved the way for a generalized Marxist method against postmodernism.⁵⁷ Analogously, in his book *Nations and Nationalisms*, Hobsbawm does not deal with the micro history of some individual example of a nation or nationalism, but tries to understand, through a macro perspective, the inter-connection between nations and the development of capitalism. Thus, for Hobsbawm, a nation is an explicitly modern construct, constructed from above by nationalism (“an ideology that the political and national units should coincide”), which ought to be studied “from bellow as this is where it takes root and is most powerful and volatile.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ A quartet of Hobsbawm’s books are titled *The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848*, *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875*, *The Age of Empire: 1975-1914* and *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century. 1914-1991*.

⁵⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 9-10.

Whilst he was more of a social historian, in regards to nationalism Hobsbawm drew on Hroch's phases, but focused more on the process of transition from phase B to phase C, that is trying to understand why national ideas have gained mass acceptance.⁵⁹ In this bottom-up approach, that is, "nation as seen not by governments and activists of nationalist movements, but by ordinary persons",⁶⁰ lies his another successful response to the post-modernist argument for the nation. Namely, building on his book of essays *Invention of Tradition* (written in the same year that Anderson and Gellner wrote their respective books on nationalism), Hobsbawm established a constructivist way of understanding the origin of the nation unambiguously based in the material interests of capitalism. In other words, to the question of *why* nations are imagined or invented, Hobsbawm answers that such historical narratives served to either "legitimise institutions and social hierarchies" or create some form of "symbolic social cohesion and collective identities".⁶¹ Combining the insights from Hobsbawm's two books, it becomes clearer what Neil Davidson meant when he noted that "national consciousness is a key element in a reformist class consciousness".⁶² It is not that nationalism merely served the interest of capitalists in the industrial period. Instead, "the capitalist system generates nationalism as a necessary everyday condition of its continued existence", as "nationalism already provides one possible means of meeting the psychic needs created by capitalism". "It is the need for some collective sense of belonging with which to overcome the effects of alienation, the need for psychic compensation for the injuries sustained at the hands of capitalist society, that nationalism provides in the absence of revolutionary class consciousness."⁶³ Thus, it is this kind of materialist analysis of consciousness formation that puts Hobsbawm above

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 12.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 11.

⁶¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 9.

⁶² Neil Davidson, "Reimagined Communities," *International Socialism* vol. 117, no. 2 (2008), accessed 10th May 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/davidson/2008/xx/reimagined.html>.

⁶³ *ibid*.

both Gellner and Anderson, because, unlike the former, it allows for a possibility of national consciousness waning with the alteration of material reality, and unlike the latter, it explicitly points to capitalism as the material reality whose change is bound to ‘reimagine’ the national consciousness.

However, if Hobsbawm’s method is indicative of the proper opposition to the post-modernist understanding of nations, his concrete conclusions are not. Namely, in his famous debate with a post-Marxist Thomas Nairn⁶⁴, in what many commentators have noted as a mechanistic and dogmatic Marxist way, Hobsbawm argued that, in the period of enthroned capitalism, capital can be better opposed by a strong state. As Christian Høgsbjerg noted, Hobsbawm dedicated most of his ‘history from-below’ to labor movements and organizations, but not the working class.⁶⁵ This selective and narrow bottom-up approach limited the role that Hobsbawm attributes to the working class in its struggle against capitalism. Consequently, despite his calls for capitalism to be understood in its totality, Hobsbawm fails to see the instrumental role that the state as an institution plays in the structural maintenance of the capitalist system, and effectively bounds his resistance to nationalism merely to its separatist kind. As will be shown below, the Marxist approach to the national question must be conditional, however not as Hobsbawm’s proclamation of opposing one might against the other, that is, by supporting a stronger ‘anti-capitalist state’. Instead, the approach needs to be set out dialectically to seek the disappearance of the state as a whole, out of which a

⁶⁴ Neil Davidson argues that Nairn was on course of abandoning Marxism already with his book *The Break-up of Britain*, on which Nairn and Hobsbawm debated, but confirmed this with his later book *Faces of nationalism*. “On the evidence of this work [*Faces of nationalism*] he no longer considers himself to be any sort of Marxist. Indeed, it is questionable whether he can in any sense still be described as belonging to the left. Nairn is no longer merely a theorist of nationalism--Marxist or otherwise--but a nationalist theorist, advocating nationalism not only for his own nation, but as a universal political programme for the peoples of any potential nation states, in much the same way as revolutionary socialists argue for working class power. The extent to which Nairn has abandoned not only Marxism, but socialism itself, has been missed by both his critics and his supporters.” See Neil Davidson, “In perspective: Tom Nairn,” *International Socialism* vol. 82, no. 2 (1999), accessed 3rd June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/isj2/1999/isj2-082/davidson.htm>.

⁶⁵ Christian Høgsbjerg, “Eric Hobsbawm’s Histories,” *International Socialism* no. 157 (2018), accessed 10th June 2021. <http://isj.org.uk/eric-hobsbawms-histories/>.

qualitatively new force will arise. In Harman's words, Hobsbawm is right by economic criteria — of course, a small state taken in the abstract cannot oppose capital; but he was wrong by political criteria, because he does not see the possibility of autonomous action of the masses, but only through certain organizations or institutions.⁶⁶ Put differently, Hobsbawm is seeing a strong state as an opposition to capitalism, whose eventual victory, however, would still not resolve any of capitalism's contradictions. In the Marxist understanding, only force capable of resolving contradictions of capitalism and creating a new synthesis is the working class. Thus, it is the greatest limitation of Hobsbawm's conclusion on the national question that he sees nationalism as influencing the economic base merely through its' effect on the state, and not through its potential mobilisation and empowerment of the masses.

The same inconsistency is reflected in Hobsbawm's uncritical approach to the study of nationalism in 'People's Democracies'. Namely, as Harman notes, especially in the parts where he is discussing nationalism in 'socialist' countries, Hobsbawm does not look at things 'from-below', as is commonly his approach, but by referencing the statements of regime officials.⁶⁷ Hobsbawm's loyalty to the CP of Great Britain and its' uncritical stance to Stalinism, has impacted much of his writing. Likewise in discussing nationalism in 'socialist' countries, Hobsbawm does not problematise the state-building itself and the role of bureaucrats in that process because, again, he sees resistance to capital through a strong state. Consequentially, Hobsbawm's inconsistent application of his general method to the study of Communists' constructivist policies towards national identities, retains his conclusion's explanatory power to the same level as those post-modernists who criticised Communists for their insufficient construction of a supranational identity. Equally for Yugoslavia, it would be much more fruitful to save Hobsbawm's method from his words. This would entail analysing why did the national

⁶⁶ Chris Harman, "The return of the national question," *International Socialism* 56, no. 2 (1992) accessed 10th May 2021. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/harman/1992/xx/natquest.htm>.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

consciousness play a key element in a reformist class consciousness of Yugoslavs, that is why was it necessary to provide a sense of collective belonging and overcoming effects of alienation. In other words, Hobsbawm is offering us an angle through which we can understand *why* did KPJ/SKJ find the cultivation of reformist class consciousness compatible with its' ultimate Marxist goal of achieving communism.

Despite the developed general Marxist approach to the national question, there has not been many such applications to the Yugoslav case, especially not of how Communists treated them. There were relatable approaches, such as developmentalist/left-liberal views of Fred Singleton and Susan Woodward.⁶⁸ Namely, they both effectively observed how nationalism arose from capitalist market mechanisms. In other words, they thought of the Yugoslav economy as not so qualitatively different from the capitalist one, and in-turn blamed the market mechanisms for the outbursts of nationalism. However, neither of them gave much agency to the Yugoslav Communists, failing to properly answer why they consciously intertwined the national question with the state-building process.

Thus, for an example, reporting at the nationalists' peak in early 70's, Singleton claimed that the national question in the post-war Yugoslavia took the form, not of cultural or other, but of economic arguments.⁶⁹ Overall, Singleton's books on Yugoslavia represent insightful overview of how the Yugoslav institutional set-up, including those parts related to nations, has reflected the developments in economy, and thus provide useful contextual sources for the development of Yugoslav Communists' policies.⁷⁰ However, there is little treatment of ideas behind policies. When Singleton says that "the real [economic] grievances were magnified by

⁶⁸ One could also include Dennis Rusinow here, and indeed, his book will be used for content especially in the parts on the Constitutional development, however, the economic argument is less explicit in Rusinow than is in the former two. See Dennis Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

⁶⁹ Fred Singleton, "The roots of discord in Yugoslavia," *The World Today* vol. 28, no. 4 (1972): 170-180.

⁷⁰ Fred Singleton, *Twentieth-Century Yugoslavia* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1976), and Fred Singleton, *Twentieth-Century Yugoslavia* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1976).

nationalist extremists”, he is referring to the regional economic differences and the neglect of the south-eastern republics caused and augmented by the market mechanisms upheld by the Yugoslav Communists.⁷¹ Commenting on the turbulent events of 1971, Singleton sees nationalism almost as a rational recourse of respective side in its’ protection of economic interest. Consequentially, Singleton has opened up space for critical remarks. Thus for Singleton “political actions seem to be the unavoidable result of the situation and not led by ideological positions. Neglecting the role of ideology leads Singleton to treat nationalism as logical outcome in a country where regional economic imbalances follow ethnic and religious makeup of Yugoslavia.”⁷²

In Woodward, one finds the similar logic more explicitly put. To start with, Woodward’s most famous piece sets the framework for discussing identities, by tying them to a particular economic setting. Namely, whilst she devotes most of her attention on how the international setting influenced the debates and struggles between liberal and conservative factions within KPJ/SKJ, one of the ‘peripheral’ observations was that all of social life of a Yugoslav citizen depended on state employment. “To be unemployed was to be excluded from full membership in society—a loss of full citizenship rights, a second-class status, a disenfranchisement.”⁷³ Furthermore, on the sides of her tracing how the development policies ‘took the back seat’ to the adjustment to the international market, Woodward answers how the strategy towards labour created, not a solidier, but “a segmented society, with separate universes of decision making”.⁷⁴ The implicit conclusion that nationalism was a response to crisis in late 1980’s when unemployment rose was further developed in Woodward’s subsequent book dealing more exhaustively with national identity in Yugoslavia. Namely, whilst on the one

⁷¹ Singleton, The roots of discord

⁷² Domagoj Mihaljević, *Igniting the Revolutionary Light: State Formation and the Introduction of Workers’ Self—management in Yugoslavia, 1945-1950*, (MA Thesis. CEU, 2020): 10.

⁷³ Susan Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment: The Political Economy of Yugoslavia, 1945-1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995): 4.

⁷⁴ *ibid*, 311-312.

hand “the primary social divisions and inequalities in Yugoslav society were not defined by ethnicity but by job status and growing unemployment,”⁷⁵ on the other it was not the federal government which was supposed to provide, realise and protect individual’s job, but the “local coffers”.⁷⁶ In other words, the decentralising economic reforms “reinforced the localization of economic distribution and the social divisions”, having the effect of increasing “personalistic criteria in access to jobs and goods” in-turn ethnicity becoming crucial basis for employment.⁷⁷ This point was made more eloquently several years later when she claimed that self-management’s market-disciplinary role tied Yugoslavs’ identities to their respective working and residential communities. “Employment status defined the identities, economic interests, social status, and political loyalty of Yugoslav citizens. One’s place of work was the centre of one’s social universe”.⁷⁸ Put differently, “institutionally there was no basis for a society-wide concept of collective interest as a counterweight to the social segmentation created by criteria for employment and income, or to the ongoing demands for greater autonomy over capital.”⁷⁹ In sum, Woodward was claiming that it was the rise of titular-nation-based republics as a meaningful determinant of individual’s economic life which nudged him/her to valorise the national identity, and in-turn set the framework for the recourse to nationalism in late 1980’s.

Woodward’s account is great for contextualising the writings of Yugoslav Marxists, as it highlights some of the economic challenges they had to face. However, as most of her critics have stressed, her overt focus on the international factor causing those challenges is deterministic, and effectively obliterates Yugoslav Marxists of any ‘guilt’ for having found

⁷⁵ Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: chaos and dissolution after the Cold War*, (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995): 44. Woodward made a similar claim in one of her earlier articles: “Political cleavages are defined not by nationality or liberal/conservative party factions, but by the package of policies on credit, domestic and foreign currency, investment, and individual employment that coalesce around territorial defense and commodity trade.” See Woodward, “Reforming a Socialist state,” 304.

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 42.

⁷⁷ *ibid*, 56.

⁷⁸ Susan Woodward, “The Political Economy of Ethno-Nationalism in Yugoslavia,” *Social Register* 39 (2003): 76.

⁷⁹ *ibid*, 78.

themselves in that situation of having to make the 'Faustian bargain'.⁸⁰ Through Woodward's perspective, Yugoslav Marxists' hands seem to have always been pulled, and there is no real sense of the extent to which they themselves contributed to such course of action. Nevertheless, both Singleton and Woodward remain extremely useful for providing content-information and their theoretisation of self-management's contribution to the rise of nationalism makes them a necessary starting point.

A much more successful framework for a Marxist treatment of nationalism in Yugoslavia was provided in my opinion by Vladimir Unkovski-Korica. Namely, Unkovski-Korica looks much closer than Woodward to domestic factors which contributed to the structural shifts towards pro-market orientation, and finds that nationalism gained prominence much earlier. He starts by demonstrating that self-management represented an episode in the immediate post-war process of securing an independent economy, that is state-building, through increased productivity and labour discipline.⁸¹ The claim that the adoption of self-management model was not caused merely by the split with Stalin or some other international factor, but that it followed from Party leadership debates and ideas, allows Unkovski-Korica to treat nationalism as part of the wider arguments about self-management that Party leaders are making in their debates. In other words, Unkovski-Korica notes that already after 1956 nationalism was on the agenda, culminating in February 1958 with the strike in Trbovlje mine, but that the Yugoslav Communists did not approach nationalism as explicitly in either of the cases, instead considering it as part of the struggle for the particular economic path.⁸² Such dialectical understanding gives Unkovski-Korica an edge above former scholars in treating nations in Yugoslavia through a Marxist perspective, as it both ties their emergence more clearly to the capitalist process of state-building, but also provides a mechanism to observe

⁸⁰ See for an example Jovo Bakić, *Jugoslavija. Razaranje i njegovi tumači* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2011).

⁸¹ See Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, *The Economic Struggle for power in Tito's Yugoslavia: From World War II to Non-Alignment* (London: I.B. Tarius, 2016): 86.

⁸² *ibid.*, 142-143, 171-173.

how the utilisation of nationalism was instrumentalised. The latter aspect was, however, not deeply explored by Unkovski-Korica, partly as his methodological approach is much more often based in economic and not intellectual history, and also as the primary focus of his work is not nationalism per se. In other words, Unkovski-Korica's account of treating nationalism as a sub-product of economic policies could be further improved with the explicit focus on the written works of Yugoslav Communists, and not as much on the archival sources. In that way, in addition to a wider time-frame, I intend to complement on Unkovski-Korica's book.

3. Tito's Linguistic Context

This chapter is presenting the linguistic context of Tito's approach to the national question. In other words, a background analysis of attempts to answer similar questions as Tito did is provided. This chapter will thus provide the basis for putting Tito in conversation with other Marxist authors by introducing the ideas of those other authors who preceded him chronologically.

In effect, here are presented the origins of the approach to the national question dominant after the Second World War, when Tito's Communists seized power. Taken more abstractly, this chapter is discussing how the approach which ultimately failed in Yugoslavia in 1990's relates to various Marxist thinkers. Given the fact that Tito is basing himself on them, it is important to trace the origins of his approach to the national question.

Initially, Tito is put within a linguistic context of "great" Marxists – Bauer, Luxemburg, Lenin and especially Stalin. The works of 'great' Marxists on nationalism and economy will be all put into a joint discussion, allowing for a micro-version of the thesis's argument to be demonstrated – namely, that their thoughts on nationalism cannot be considered isolated from their entire thought, especially the economic part. As I will dedicate more space to Stalin, because of his influence on Tito, the argument is important as it allows a more nuanced view of differences between Lenin and Stalin in regards to the national question. The last part of the chapter will be a relatively brief presentation of how these 'great' discussions reflected in the context of KPJ in the interwar period. Tito's later interventions are thus placed within a direct context of two competing Party fractions.

Marxists and the national question

The previous chapter ended by outlining a Marxist understanding of a nation's or nationalism's origin. The discussion of how Marxists ought to approach nations and nationalism is a separate topic as it is not a simple theoretical exercise of academics, not a mere interpretation of the world, but entails a normative claim of how to change it. In other words, it moves from the acknowledgment that nations are products of capitalism to the plan of overcoming both. Thus, this chapter introduces the linguistic context of Tito's approach to nationalism, by outlining how various Marxists attempted to resolve the national question.

As is most often the case, the starting point for Marxist strategy-contemplating is the *Communist Manifesto*, and the famous, apparently-contradictory quote:

“The working men have no country. [... *However,*] since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation, it is so far itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word. National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, [...], to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto. The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster.”⁸³

In other words, the working-class is national and international at the same time, but how do the two ‘identities’ correlate was answered differently depending on the respective interpretation

⁸³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, chapter 2, accessed 1st June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm>. For the treatment of Marx's and Engels's usage of notions of ‘people’ and ‘fatherland’ the Manifest see Aleksandar Matković, “Komunistički manifest i ‘otadžbina,’” accessed 1st June 2021, <https://aleksandarmatkovic.wordpress.com/2020/02/22/komunisticki-manifest-i-otadzina/?fbclid=IwAR3dB6OPBGjrXRPOqL6-B08ULNaUBhGAgIjTnkEnogLEMecObSnttOHcmE>.

of Marx. I hold that those different interpretations did not revolve around the national question taken narrowly, but around the question of changes in the systems of production. Namely, it was clear for almost every Marxist that nationalism will eventually lose its significance once the capitalist phase is overcome. However, Marxists disagreed on how to overcome it, and especially how nationalism fits into that.

Thus, the issue of Marxism offering a coherent guidance to approaching nationalism, in the context of structuralist-humanist debate, revolved around the question of whether Marxists ought to save Marx's and Engels's words or method. For an example, stressing the humanist aspect when discussing Engels's unfortunate use of the terms such as 'non-historic nations'⁸⁴ or 'reactionary peoples'⁸⁵, Roman Rosdolsky, argued that Engels's "revolutionary optimism" caused him to slip into Hegelian idealism, and concluded in-turn that this mistake does not fit into Marx's and Engels's overall approach.⁸⁶ Coherence is in the method not the words. On the other hand, focusing on the changes in the structure, Ephraim Nimni argued that, in the writings of Marx and Engels, a nation-state was placed in a dialectical position towards an international communist society, as a *necessary* mid-step. This coherent overall approach, Nimni continues, is a product of the combination of their evolutionary perspective of society as changes automatically occurring out of the growth of the forces of production and their Eurocentric attitude.⁸⁷ However, as Enzo Traverso and Michael Löwy have successfully argued, Nimni is doing Marx and Engels injustice, as there is indeed an intrinsic humanist part of their writing, which stresses the role of politics, of humans, of superstructure, in determining back the forces of production, the economy, the base.⁸⁸ In the arguments of the both sides, it is

⁸⁴ Frederick Engels, "Democratic Pan-Slavism," accessed on 17th April 2021, <https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/marx/works/1849/02/15.htm>.

⁸⁵ Frederick Engels, "The Magyar Struggle," accessed on 17th April 2021, <https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/marx/works/1849/01/13.htm>.

⁸⁶ Roman Rosdolsky. See John-Paul Himka's summary of Rosdolsky's argument on pages 4-5. The argument is repeated by Michael Löwy, "Marxists and the National Question," *New Left Review* vol. 96, no. 1 (1976): 83-85.

⁸⁷ Ephraim Nimni, "Marx, Engels and the National Question," *Science & Society* vol. 53, no. 3 (1989): 297-326.

⁸⁸ Enzo Traverso and Michael Löwy, "The Marxist Approach to the National Question: A Critique of Nimni's Interpretation," *Science & Society* vol. 54, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 132-146.

clear that Marx and Engels put the resolution to the national question into a dialectical relationship towards the ultimate achievement of communism, with the difference between structuralist and humanist interpretations of the Marxist approach to nationalism being in their respective understandings of how to bring about communism. In other words, understanding any normative claim of how Marxists ought to approach the national question obliges a researcher to take into consideration the claim-maker's stance on the economy. Summarising both sides' arguments in that light, the question of Marxists approaching nationalism depends on whether they see the capitalist stage as *necessary* one and in-turn whether nationalism is *inevitably* leading towards capitalism, or alternatively if there is a *possibility* of capitalist mode of production not creating the national state/identity and in-turn nationalism leading to the potential skipping of capitalist stage straight to socialism.

'Austro-Marxists' were one of the first groups to provide further insights for the Marxist perspective on nationalism by attaining essentially a humanist outlook. In the account sympathetic to the Austro-Marxist line, Ronaldo Munck quoted the famous later Polish Humanist-Marxist Leszek Kolakowski in claiming that Otto Bauer's book *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* was "the best treatise on nationality problems to be found in Marxist literature".⁸⁹ Indeed, when Bauer commented that he developed his approach to nationalism intending to offer "guidelines beyond an abstract profession of internationalism" in the nationalism-torn Austro-Hungarian empire,⁹⁰ it was "a break with reductionism" present in the hitherto Marxist circles.⁹¹ What Bauer was arguing against concretely was the official party Programme upheld in Brno in 1899, which was influenced by German liberals⁹² and Karl

⁸⁹ Ronaldo Munck, "Marxism and nationalism in the era of globalization," 49.

⁹⁰ Ronaldo Munck, "Otto Bauer: towards a Marxist theory of nationalism," *Capital & Class* vol. 9 (1985): 86.

⁹¹ Munck, Marxism and nationalism in the era of globalization, 49-50.

⁹² Robert A Kann, *The Multinational Empire. Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918. Volume I. Empire and Nationalities*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950): 154, 162.

Kautsky⁹³, and was thus paramount of the ‘economistic’ and ‘deterministic’ Second International approach. Kautsky’s influence was sensed in the territorial basis for autonomies given to nations, whilst by thus merely reforming the Empire, Programme ensured the status quo and “introduced and manifested the reconciliation of the workers with the Austrian empire idea”.⁹⁴

Bauer was undoubtedly building on his senior Austro-Marxist, Karl Renner. Namely, Bauer provided Renner’s concern with the psychological aspect of national identity⁹⁵ with a Marxist tone by grounding these common psychological characteristics in the materialistic analysis of conditions that gave rise to the ‘national character’.⁹⁶ However, where Bauer departed from Marxism was in noting how the individual, and not the working-class, upholds the national culture as a filter for interpreting particular experiences.⁹⁷ Furthermore, as Michael Löwy noted, Bauer also took-up Renner’s ‘social-statism’ (in-turn inherited from Ferdinand Lassalle) – the view that the economy serves the capitalists increasingly, whilst the state serves the proletariat increasingly, meaning that the germ of socialism is in the institutions of the capitalist state.⁹⁸ Consequentially, Bauer has an equally reformist approach to the national

⁹³ German Orthodox Marxist. See Munck, Otto Bauer, 86.

⁹⁴ Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 156-157.

⁹⁵ *ibid*, 168. Bauer’s intellectual relationship with Renner was alternating over time, as he stopped agreeing with him after 1917, once Bauer got a higher role in the Party. See *ibid*, 167, 176. Nevertheless, the psychological aspect never left Bauer’s perspective, giving him a clear ‘humanist’ approach.

⁹⁶ Mark Blum and William Smaldone, *Austro-Marxism: The Ideology of Unity*, (London: Brill): 39-42. Munck notes that Bauer was not an idealist, he rejected spiritualism, he just wanted to understand phenomenon of the nation, and its effects on the psychological set up of nationals. In other words, Bauer intended to “discover the social roots of national struggles, showing how the property-owning classes mask their class struggles in the form of national struggles for power”. See Munck, Otto Bauer, 88, 90-91.

⁹⁷ “Thus, the nation does not represent for us a certain number of individuals who are somehow superficially held together. Rather, the nation exists in every individual as an element of his specificity, as his nationality. The national character trait is manifested only as a character trait of individuals, but it is nevertheless produced by the society. [...] The nation is not a sum of individuals; rather, each individual is the product of the nation; the fact that they are all the product of the same society makes them a community. The fact that the characteristics that are manifested only as traits of the individual are a social product and, in the case of all members of the nation, a product of one and the same society, unites the individuals as the nation.” Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 110.

⁹⁸ Michael Löwy, “Marxists and”, 92-94.

question, seeing the national *evolution* through gradual legal improvements,⁹⁹ thus highlighting that his theory of nations has no space for the autonomous action of the working-class.

What is more, Bauer's 'systematic conception' of the nation suffers from the same 'reflection theory' illness as Kautsky. Thus for Bauer, "the development of the nation [is] reflect[ing] the history of the mode of production and property",¹⁰⁰ whilst, in the process, his nation becomes a Hegel-like absolute spirit, not representing current state of affairs, but an abstract notion realising itself regardless of human activity. Munck defends Bauer that he sees state and nation, not as timeless abstractions, but always historically defined,¹⁰¹ however there is equally implicit linearism [in-turn rendering phenomena abstract] in this mirror-image of structuralists that Bauer argued against. Bauer's conclusion is that, as the 'nationality principle' continually corresponds to a phase of ever increasing access of masses to the mental labour, socialist mode of production will bring this process to its' logical conclusion, opening education for all, "integrat[ing] the masses for the first time into the national cultural community"¹⁰² and thus allowing national cultures to fully prosper. In other words and as in a reversed image of Marx, for Bauer, socialism is the instrument whilst the nation is the goal. Bauer does say that "socialism needs nationalism". However, his socialism would need nationalism for increasing productivity of labour, that is, achieving the international division of labour.¹⁰³ Such understanding of socialism, as a matter of simply better distribution of fruits, necessarily bore with it reformist means of achieving it. Thus, it comes as no surprise that Bauer perceived the social change through 'functional democracy'¹⁰⁴, or by achieving the

⁹⁹ "Austria will journey step by step towards national autonomy. The new Constitution will be created by a series of laws." Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 326.

¹⁰⁰ Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 118.

¹⁰¹ Munck, *Marxism and nationalism*, 50.

¹⁰² *ibid*, 407.

¹⁰³ For Bauer, socialism is to bring the whole world together by finishing the work of capitalism, such as making the division of labour truly global. See *ibid*, 409-411.

¹⁰⁴ Essentially a top-down reform introduced workplace democracy. See Blum and Smaldone, *Austro-Marxism*, 48.

‘equilibrium of classes’ mediated by the state.¹⁰⁵ If the main actor is an abstract individual, and not the working-class, indeed there may not be any contradiction of achieving communism and nationalism. The linearity of Bauer’s idealistic historicism renders cultural values neutral and devoid of class content, and in-turn “the complex relationship of the proletariat to the bourgeois cultural heritage was reduced by Bauer to a simple act of appropriation, or rather passive acceptance.”¹⁰⁶

In conclusion, Bauer did not envisage a way for nationalism to lead to socialism, quite the opposite, nationalism was to follow from socialism. Bauer’s thoughts on nationalism were induced thus by his reformist understanding of socialism. Seeing historical change in a strictly linear way is conducive that any political change, even a top-down redistributive law, can bring history closer to socialism. Following from this determinism, Bauer perceived no revolutionary potential for nationalism. The reasons, in my opinion, lie in him noting abstract ‘individuals’ as key actors in the interplay with nationalism, and not the working-class.

If Bauer was on the right-wing of the international labour movement in regards to the national question, Rosa Luxemburg is often taken to be the left-wing, arguing that nationalism is reactionary.¹⁰⁷ The essence of her view on Poland’s independence is that, as “there is no social class in Poland that has at one and the same time both an interest in and ability to achieve the restoration of Poland”,¹⁰⁸ and as national oppression would not exist in socialism, there is no sense in advocating for Polish independence. An over-simplistic view of her as a ‘national nihilist’ does not help in discerning the extent of revolutionary power she contributed to nationalism. Indeed, in order to support her view that small nations have no future, Luxemburg

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, 49-51.

¹⁰⁶ Löwy, *Marxists* 93-94.

¹⁰⁷ See Rosa Luxemburg, *The national question* (New York, 1976), accessed 5th April 2021 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1909/national-question/index.htm> ;

¹⁰⁸ Quoted from Tony Cliff, *Rosa Luxemburg* (London: Socialist Review Publishing, 1969): 57.

referred to Engels' articles on 'non-historic nations', saying that he made a mistake, but had a correct method.¹⁰⁹ However, neither was her stance uniform over time, nor can her approach be grasped without fitting it within the totality of her thought.

In regards to her view's consistency over time, whilst Tony Cliff argues that Luxemburg held a consistent position from its formulation in 1896 till the end,¹¹⁰ Jie-Hyun Lim stresses her "zig-zag path" and episodes in it which contain a more pro-nationalist stance.¹¹¹ Similarly, whilst Peter Hudis notes the similar line in Luxemburg even in 1918,¹¹² Löwy argues that she made a shift in 1914, abandoning economic determinism in understanding nationalism afterwards.¹¹³ Regardless on the fluctuation or consistency, all of the commentators agree that her intra-party struggle against Polish socialist-patriots mostly determined her opposition to utilising nationalism for achieving socialism.¹¹⁴ A similar issue to the afore-mentioned treatment of Engels occurs – method or words? If her views fluctuated over time as depending on terms of direct political struggle, an overarching logic influencing views can then alternatively be discerned by consulting Luxemburg's writings on other themes. Following that method, Lim argues that it was not economism but 'proletarian fundamentalism' which continuously "made her blind to a reality" that "nationalism can survive in proletariat as well, especially in that of oppressed nations",¹¹⁵ which is in my opinion contradictory as precisely 'proletarian fundamentalism' entails economism in its' understanding of a revolution as a 'spontaneous' – as opposed to the conscious and organised event. Differently put but with the same logic, Hudis points to Luxemburg's idealistic advocacy

¹⁰⁹ Löwy, *Marxists*, 87.

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, 53.

¹¹¹ Lim notes that Luxemburg at one point in 1916 briefly even agreed with Lenin on the revolutionary potential that recognising the right of nations to self-determination can have for breaking imperialism. See Jie-Hyun Lim, "Rosa Luxemburg on the Dialectics of Proletarian Internationalism and Social Patriotism," *Science & Society* vol. 59, no. 4 (1995): 508-512, 517, 520-521.

¹¹² Peter Hudis, "Luxemburg and Lenin", 212, 220.

¹¹³ Löwy, *Marxists*, 87-88.

¹¹⁴ Cliff, *Rosa Luxemburg*, 58-59. Lim, *Rosa Luxemburg*, 503-505. Hudis, *Luxemburg and Lenin*, 212-213. Löwy, *Marxists*, 89.

¹¹⁵ Lim, *Rosa Luxemburg*, 526, 524.

of revolutionary democracy leading her to make contradictory conclusions – “how can thoroughgoing democracy be made real while denying masses of people the right to national self-determination?”.¹¹⁶

Instead, I propose that Luxemburg’s writings on economy can be more telling. The entirety of her economic writing has been suggesting revolutionary methods and goals. Her 1906 book on *Mass Strike* (finished whilst on vacation with Lenin)¹¹⁷ quite explicitly states that “the movement does not go only in one direction, from an economic to a political struggle, but also in the opposite direction. [...] The economic struggle is the factor that advances the movement from one political focal point to another. The political struggle periodically fertilises the ground for the economic struggle.”¹¹⁸ Earlier, she directly put revolution in a dialectically superior position over reforms, whilst recognising the benefits of the latter.¹¹⁹ What is more, as Löwy implied, Luxemburg’s 1898 economic dissertation served as the guiding star for her approach to the national question.¹²⁰ From her analysis that the Polish economy is already integrated into Russian, Luxemburg found that only ‘anti-market forces’, such as nobility and peasantry, can have interest in Polish nationalism, and in-turn concluded that nationalism should not be supported. However, Lim notes that “the economic statistics that she used were already of date at the turn of the 20th century”.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Hudis, Luxemburg and Lenin, 220.

¹¹⁷ Hudis, 208.

¹¹⁸ Rosa Luxemburg, *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions* (Online version: Rosa Luxemburg Internet Archive, 1999): 35-36. accessed 14th April 2021. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1906/mass-strike/>.

¹¹⁹ “Legislative reform and revolution are not different methods of historic development that can be picked out at the pleasure from the counter of history, just as one chooses hot or cold sausages. Legislative reform and revolution are different factors in the development of class society. They condition and complement each other, and are at the same time reciprocally exclusive, as are the north and south poles, the bourgeoisie and proletariat.” See Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution* (Online version: Education for Socialists Revolutionary classics): 29, 55-56. accessed 14th April 2021. <https://marxistnkruaistforum.wordpress.com/karl-marx-the-poverty-of-philosophy/reform-or-revolution-by-rosa-luxemburg/>.

¹²⁰ Lowy, 85-86.

¹²¹ See Lim, Rosa Luxemburg, 507.

Thus, if it is evident that Luxemburg had sufficient dialectical perspective to understand the revolutionary potential nationalism can have for promoting socialism, did she make an honest mistake or deliberately chose not to uphold such view due to her political intra-party struggles? Lenin's criticism of Luxemburg mistaking the economic criteria of independence for the politic seems definitive towards the latter answer.¹²² One is thus obliged to side with Cliff and Löwy that the inconsistency is mainly due to the intra-party struggles. Being aware of her position, and how arguing the opposite would contribute to the global class struggles, Luxemburg concluded not to allow nationalism to have a negative impact on the base. Luxemburg's thoughts on nationalism were experiencing shifts over time, which was a symptom of the sense of inadequacy between her profound understanding of dialectics, as seen in her writings on economy, and particular intra-party struggles she was caught in. Consequentially, although not explicitly, nationalism holds a revolutionary potential in her writing.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's views on the national question almost naturally come after the above-two, as he took the central position between them.¹²³ In general, Lenin has been a source of much interest for the Intellectual Historians, partly because of his impressive theoretical opus, and partly because of his decisive role in the Bolsheviks' rise to power. In particular, apart from some contentious attempts to trace intellectual origins of Lenin's stance on the

¹²² Lenin once ridiculed Luxemburg's ultra-leftist rejection of the self-determination: "for the question of the political self-determination of nations and their independence as states in bourgeois society, Rosa Luxemburg has substituted the question of their economic independence. This is just as intelligent as if someone, in discussing the programmatic demand for the supremacy of parliament, i.e., the assembly of people's representatives, in a bourgeois state, were to expound the perfectly correct conviction that big capital dominates in a bourgeois country, whatever the regime in it." Quoted from Tom Lewis "Marxism and Nationalism," *International Socialist Review* no. 14 (2000).

¹²³ For an account that puts Bauer in the centre and Lenin on the right of the trio, see Walter Baier "Lenin, Luxemburg, Bauer. The Left and the National," in *The Radical left in Europe* (London: Merlin press, 2019): 73-84.

national question further back and in unorthodox places,¹²⁴ most historians agree that Lenin increasingly took interest of the national question from 1912 and that he was primarily motivated by the struggles within his own party. At the time, Lenin moved to Austrian Poland, got further insight into the Austro-Marxist policies and the Balkan war, and felt compelled by the Menshevik Vienna conference (where a position on cultural autonomy was adopted)¹²⁵ to polemicise the following two years against Bauer in order to attack the Jewish Bund.¹²⁶ With the break-out of the First World War in 1914, Lenin fully “realised how powerful nationalism is”¹²⁷ and thus spent two subsequent years debating against Luxemburg in order to strike against Nikolai Bukharin and Georgy Piatakov.¹²⁸

Lenin’s stance thus contained ‘a two-sided task’ – on the one side, preserving the unity and fostering the merging of the proletarian struggle, and on the other, fighting any nationalism and recognising equality of nations.¹²⁹ Naturally, depending against who he is arguing, one side is stressed more, but overall, the pair is necessary for Lenin’s attribution of the revolutionary potential to nationalism. Much has been written already of how Lenin foresaw both that the Austro-Marxist approach of fostering cultural autonomy will lead not to the inter-mixing but to the segregating of the working-class’s parts, and that Luxemburg’s neglect of the nationalist oppressions limits her revolutionary aspects.¹³⁰ This dual task was most elaborately presented in his 1914 piece where Lenin nuanced that only nationalism of the

¹²⁴ Isabelle Kreindler traces it to the 19th century Russian Orthodox missionary. See Isabelle Kreindler, “A Neglected Source of Lenin’s Nationality Policy,” *Slavic Review* vol. 36, no. 1 (1977): 86-100. Tamas Krausz traces Lenin’s view on nationalism through the development of his theory of imperialism, pointing not as much back in past to his contemporaries John A. Hobson and Rudolf Hilferding and to 1905 revolution. See Tamas Krausz, “Lenin on Global History and the Global Historiography on Lenin,” *Russian Studies Hu* no. 1 (2020): 21. and Tamas Krausz, *Reconstructing Lenin*, (New York: Monthly Renew Press, 2015): 144-145.

¹²⁵ See Tony Cliff, *Lenin 2: All power to the soviets*, (London: Pluto Press, 1975): chapter 3. Accessed 11th April 2021. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1976/lenin2/index.htm>.

¹²⁶ Jewish group within Russian Social Democrats, advocating for cultural autonomy. Munck, Otto Bauer, 92.

¹²⁷ Conor Walker, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1984): 30-31.

¹²⁸ Members of the Bolshevik party, advocating against the right of nations to self-determination. Cliff, Lenin 2.

¹²⁹ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “O pravu nacija na samoodređenje,” in *V. I. Lenjin Izabrana djela* vol. 1, no. 2. (Belgrade: Kultura, 1949): 283.

¹³⁰ Chris Harman, “The Return of the National Question,”

oppressed nation struggling for the equality has progressive potential. Thus, by recognising the right of that nation to self-determination, according to Lenin, this has a double effect towards internationalism. Firstly, it helps the separation of false consciousness of workers of that nation from their national ruling class,¹³¹ in-turn fostering international solidarity in the long-term.¹³² Secondly, nationalism of the oppressed nations can be destructive for the oppressing nation, and through it, for the imperialist system as a whole.

These prophecies can best be grasped by taking it into consideration with later pieces which have more pronounced economic features. Thus, when Lenin famously stated that Russia represented “the weakest link in the imperialist chain”,¹³³ while he did not imply that the chain would completely and automatically dissolve, he did suggest that by fostering the revolutionary nationalism, a superstructure can directly influence the base, that is, “fertilise the economic struggle”. As Connor Walker eloquently put it, from Lenin’s claim that the national bourgeoisies have blunted the revolutionary consciousness by temporarily exporting exploitation, “it followed that the contradictions among capitalist states and within capitalist states could be exacerbated by the driving of wedges between colonies and the mother countries.”¹³⁴ In other words, Lenin here highlighted the interconnectedness of the small-nationalism’s victory and the global capitalism’s failure through the creation of a revolutionary situation. Finally, this point was banged home later of the same year, when Lenin, whilst not speaking explicitly of nationalism, demonstrated that “every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle”.¹³⁵ By liberating itself from the state-

¹³¹ As Lenin described in his example of Swedes and Norwegians. See *ibid.* 258-263. see also Alex Callinicos, “Marxism and the National Question,” in *Scotland: Class and Nation*. eds. Chris Bambery (London: Bookmarks, 1999). Accessed 30th December 2020. <http://www.marxists.de/theory/callinicos/natquest.htm>.

¹³² Lenin’s leniency to Finnish and Ukrainians is proof that the alternative approach would be creating space for the national bourgeoisie. See Lenin, *O pravu nacija na samoodređenje*, 258, and also Vladimir I. Lenin, “Critical Remarks on national question,” 21, accessed 30th December 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1913/crnq/index.htm>.

¹³³ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers). Accessed 15th April 2021. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/>

¹³⁴ Connor Walker, *The National Question*, 31-32.

¹³⁵ Vladimir I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972): 12.

mechanisms, the working-class becomes free of nationalist influences and can finally realise its full potential.

The above-three angles in-fact represent three levels of the same unified political project. Indeed, as Löwy has rightly noted, it is this Lenin's insistence that nationalism is a political question, that is, that it "belongs wholly and exclusively to the sphere of political democracy",¹³⁶ which puts Lenin's dialectics above Luxemburg, and explains why they can hold the same views on the economy but different on nationalism.¹³⁷ Of course, the economic independence of small nations is unattainable within capitalism, as Luxemburg claimed,¹³⁸ however not seeing the potential in exploiting the political demand for a national independence is a mechanistic misreading of the working-class's consciousness' development. Thus, in conclusion, once noting how Lenin's thoughts on nationalism were mostly influenced by his theory of imperialism and socialist state, which provided the link between nationalism and internationalism by showing that 'non-international' revolutionization of the societal superstructure may alter the relations at the base, the consistency behind Lenin's "inconsistent"¹³⁹ approach to the national question is highlighted. Nationalism as a state of consciousness cannot be overcome without the world-wide defeat of capitalists and nationalism in-turn can serve as the rope to hang them.

¹³⁶ Vladimir I. Lenin, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," accessed 8th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/jan/x01.htm> .

¹³⁷ Löwy, Marxists and nationalism, 96-98.

¹³⁸ Luxemburg, *The National Question*, chapter "The Right of nations to Self-Determination," accessed 8th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1909/national-question/ch01.htm> .

¹³⁹ Walker, 35-37.

A Marvellous Georgian¹⁴⁰

Most ambivalent and controversial Marxist ‘theorist’, and the one obtaining most from each of the above Marxists and further passing on the most to Tito, is Joseph Stalin. Unfortunately, there is a deficiency of properly critical accounts of Stalin, that is, attempts to take Stalin’s words at the same time as genuine attempts at contributing to the Marxist theory and practice and noting why they diverge from Marxism. The adversaries resorted too often to the backward-reading of his life, searching for seeds of his later monstrous acts within his psychological make-up or within Marxist overall theory. Meanwhile, various ‘leftists’ either made apologetics of Stalin by noting counter-examples of Stalin’s heroic acts and characteristics, or attempted to save Marxism by distancing Stalin from it. In other words, the history of Stalin’s political thought remains a battlefield, one where Marxist school has suffered many defeats, but also one where space for its’ breakthrough can perhaps more easily be extricated. I hope to contribute to such cause here by discussing Stalin’s approach to the national question. Such quest entails tracing Stalin’s intellectual origins, and on that issue, intellectual historians are divided along similar lines as they are when discussing Stalin generally, with Marxists of several kinds combatting over the question of Lenin’s and Stalin’s overlap on the issue. I hold, like the critics of Stalin, that they had disparate approaches, but that, unlike most of the critics, this distinction can best be accentuated by counterposing Stalin’s and Lenin’s approaches to socialist economy.

¹⁴⁰ Lenin famously referred to Stalin like this in his letter to Maxim Gorky, convincing the famous writer that the Bolsheviks are taking the national question seriously. “As regards nationalism I am fully in agreement with you that we ought to take this up more seriously. We have a marvellous Georgian who has sat down to write a big article, for which he has collected all the Austrian and other materials. We shall go at this hard.” See Vladimir I. Lenin, “To Maxim Gorky,” accessed 15th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1913/feb/00mg.htm>.

Stalin's March 1913 article *Marxism and the National Question*, "his most significant foray into Marxist theory before the revolution",¹⁴¹ contains a famous definition of nation as a "historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture".¹⁴² Likewise, in citing Marx, Stalin argued that "national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing".¹⁴³ Certainly, there are some weak-points of the article, however, the article is in general considered as a positive contribution to the Marxist theory.

The polemic about the article, instead, revolves around the extent to which this work truly represents young Stalin's ideas vis-à-vis Lenin's direct influence. Following Trotsky's famous remark that Stalin has never written anything good on nationalism before or after 1913,¹⁴⁴ the issue of Stalin's authenticity remained prominent. Indeed, Lenin's influence is undeniable. As mentioned above, with Lenin "infuriated" by the 1912 Vienna Conference, he commenced an intra-party struggle against the Jewish Bund, prompting in-turn Stalin from late 1912 to write against "Liquidators".¹⁴⁵ The issue of Stalin being Lenin's proxy for the intra-party war, however, is often overstated by Stalin's critics, to the extent of practically erasing Stalin's personal fingerprints on the article by stressing Lenin's close editing in February 1913.¹⁴⁶ The dynamic was more aptly captured by Erik Van Ree, Stalin's staunch defender, who argued that Stalin's 1913 article was merely an episode in a series of his writings on the national question in that period.¹⁴⁷ By bringing-forth to the analysis further Stalin's articles

¹⁴¹ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Stalin. Passage to revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020): 525. What is more, Suny notes that Stalin wrote about the national question in 1904, stressing the necessity of the centralised party. See *ibid*, 512.

¹⁴² Joseph Stalin, "Marksizam i nacionalno pitanje," in *Marksizam i nacionalno-kolonijalno pitanje*. (Belgrade: Kultura, 1947): 10.

¹⁴³ *ibid*.

¹⁴⁴ cited from Suny, Stalin. *Passage to Revolution*. 531.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph Stalin, "On the Road to Nationalism (A Letter From the Caucasus)," accessed on 15th April 2021, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/01/12_2.htm.

¹⁴⁶ Suny, Stalin 524, 529.

¹⁴⁷ Van Ree, Stalin and the National Question, 214, 218-222, 224-225.

from 1904, two from late 1912, and his correspondence during the 1913-1917 exile period when Stalin maintained the focus on the national question, Van Ree convincingly shows that he held a consistent interest in the theme, and that 1913 article cannot be so simply put down to Lenin's influence. This allows Van Ree to note that the article's first chapter (unlike chapters 2 to 7) is exclusively Stalin's and going against Lenin's views as it "included a cultural and psychological uniformity as a constitutive element of nationhood".¹⁴⁸ Consequentially, Van Ree's engagement with the 1913 article is much more insightful than that of Stalin's critics. In analysing his definition of nation, Van Ree notes the 'organicist' view of nations, that is, an all-or-nothing definition of 'organic wholeness' where a nation cannot come into being without each of the components being fulfilled.¹⁴⁹ Following from there, Van Ree further comments that Stalin's view of nations is not necessarily modernist, as his listing of joint economic life as a characteristic of a nation *alongside* other characteristics (language, culture, psychology) entails that the latter could have existed before the economic life, that is, before capitalism.¹⁵⁰ Certainly Van Ree goes too far in concluding that Lenin, despite his continuous tactical shrewdness, would support such apparently crucial theoretical disagreements merely for the sake of intra-party struggles, especially since Lenin has devoted much ink and time to combat 'naturalist' views of nations by Stepan Shahumian,¹⁵¹ a Georgian Bolshevik, whom Van Ree singles out as one of the main sources of Stalin's organicism.¹⁵² In other words, Stalin was not a naturalist, and the disagreements between Stalin and Lenin were not as great as Van Ree would have us believe. Nevertheless, Van Ree offers basis for clearer picture of what is uniquely Stalin's view of nationalism, something which critics were less successful in doing.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, 222.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*, 226-229.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*, 226.

¹⁵¹ For a brief overview of the debate between Lenin and Shahumian, see Suny, *Stalin*, 513-514.

¹⁵² Van Ree, 227.

Once the Bolsheviks started applying the national policies into practice, the stakes for those policies' ownership were raised, as the answer would place the blame for the terrible atrocities committed by the Soviet regime either on Lenin or Stalin, or both of them. Again, one finds several strands of answers within historiography. Non-Marxists tend to put Lenin and Stalin together, Stalinists defend policies as proper Marxist, whilst Stalin's critics take all the blame off Lenin. I argue here that there is a crucial difference between Lenin and Stalin in this period as well, that Stalin's approach was not consistent with Marxism, whatever policy he took, but that this can best be highlighted by observing his understanding of socialist economy.

The difference between the two is observable already from the initial post-revolutionary phase (or at least after the biggest battles of the Civil War were won by the Reds), as it is the only period when both Lenin and Stalin were present in policy-making. In-fact, most of the confusion within the non-Marxist camp of historians traces-back to their understanding of Stalin and Lenin being in agreement here. Terry Martin thus claims that "both Lenin and Stalin insisted that nationality would persist for a long time even under socialism" and that Stalin occasionally grudgingly but ultimately loyally supported the 'Greatest Danger' principle, propagated by Lenin, all the way up to 1932.¹⁵³ Similarly, in his evaluation of the Soviet interwar approach to the national question as consistent, Connor Walker adds that both Lenin and Stalin narrowed the meaning of self-determination. Namely, by firstly introducing the provisional clause of the right being granted depending on the class which leads the nationalist movement, and then by keeping for the Party the hegemony on the correct interpretation of [counter-]revolutionary tendencies, Bolsheviks subjugated the right to self-determination to the

¹⁵³ Greatest Danger principle entails the idea that nationalism of great-powers is a greater threat to socialism than that of small-nations' nationalism. This was outlined by Lenin in "The Question of Nationalities or "Autonomisation", accessed 19th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1922/dec/testamnt/autonomy.htm>. The dispute between Lenin and Stalin on this issue is most extensively discussed by Moshe Lewin in his book *Lenin's last struggle* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).
Martin, Affirmative Action Empire, 5, 7-8.

needs of the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁴ Finally, Yuri Slezkine notes that Stalin followed Lenin's logic in arguing for territorial autonomy against cultural and that dealing with nationalism of oppressed nations requires sensitivity.¹⁵⁵

Consequentially, by piling Lenin and Stalin together, the above authors tended to read the weakness of Marxism into the fallacies of Soviet policies on nationalism. Indeed, the 1923 Policy, with its' high-stress on the continuous usage of right of nations to self-determination, may suggest the congruence of Lenin's and Stalin's thoughts, who both stridently defended the right, and Lenin's 1920 *Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions* have by all means served as an inspiration for several Congresses' Resolutions. Other Stalin's works on the national question created after Lenin's death can equally be read as containing essential agreement of the two. Thus, already in his omen to the late Lenin, Stalin has mechanised Lenin's words in arguing that the national question can be solved solely with the proletarian revolution which falsely planted his own narrow definition of self-determination as Lenin's.¹⁵⁶ In 1929 he explicitly said that whilst nations did not exist before capitalism, some of it aspects did.¹⁵⁷ When Stalin talked in 1930 about deviations in the Party in regards to the national question, he defended the 'correct' line of flowering national cultures as Leninist, quoting how "Lenin stood wholly and entirely for the slogan of developing national culture under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat".¹⁵⁸ In the same year, Stalin argued against the Japhetic theory of linguistics, that is, against the view that language families will necessarily merge into one under socialism.¹⁵⁹ Much later, in the 1948 speech Stalin talked of each nation

¹⁵⁴ Connor Walker, National Question, 48-50.

¹⁵⁵ Yuri Slezkine, USSR as a Communal apartment, 416-417, 419-420.

¹⁵⁶ Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, 63-64.

¹⁵⁷ See Joseph Stalin, "Speech given at the dinner in honour of the Finish Government Delegation," Accessed 15th April, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1929/03/18.htm>.

¹⁵⁸ Joseph Stalin, "Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.)," accessed 17th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1930/aug/27.htm>.

¹⁵⁹ Main proponent of this theory in USSR was N. Ia. Marr. For Stalin on linguistics in 1930, see Slezkine, The USSR as a Communal Apartment 437-8.

contributing with its peculiarity to the ‘common treasury of world culture’.¹⁶⁰ Finally, two years later, Stalin reversed one of his earlier stances, and supported the Japhetic theory of languages.¹⁶¹ Deciphering what was behind all of these stances and whether there was coherence behind the shifts has intrigued scholars. For an example, Slezkine argues that despite different phases in Soviet nationality policies changing their form, fostering of national identities was always the order of the day.

Whilst Slezkine’s work is invaluable for comprehending Soviet interwar national policies, he does not really offer explanation for the form of policies changing. In my opinion, this is because he did not consider the relationship between national policies and economy. Explaining all of the shifts in Soviet policies, inspired by Stalin, as manifestations of Marxism’s inevitable defeat to nationalism, is possible only in as much as one neglects Lenin’s writings on economy, and takes Stalin as a sole representative. Put concretely, when Martin is claiming that “the period from 1919 to 1923 was devoted to working out what exactly non-Russian ‘national self-determination’ could mean in the context of a unitary Soviet state”, he is observing the whole problem through Stalin’s eyes. For Lenin, even after the revolution, the principle of right of nations to self-determination continued to hold the same role of fostering revolution. To be sure, as Walker has correctly noted, Stalin agreed that there is an interest in self-determination being used for as propaganda instrument in spreading the power of CPs globally.¹⁶² However, for Stalin the issue of self-determination after the revolution was primarily subjugated to the project of constructing socialism. Thus, in analysing the Soviet national policies, critics have *a priori* believed Stalin that socialism has been achieved after the revolution. Because of that, to highlight the difference between Lenin’s and Stalin’s approach

¹⁶⁰ Joseph Stalin, “Speech given at the dinner in honour of the Finish Government Delegation,” Accessed 15th April, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1948/04/07.htm/>.

¹⁶¹ Joseph Stalin, “Marxism and Problems of Linguistics,” Accessed 15th April 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1950/jun/20.htm> .

¹⁶² Walker, National Question

to the national question in the post-revolutionary period, that is, to discern what is uniquely Stalin's, we must turn to his economic writings.

Stalin's economic thought has to and can be traced back to the pre-revolutionary period, that is, it is not a mere product of coming to power. Unfortunately, there are not many economic writings by Stalin before 1917. He spent much of his time in prison/exile, and in his other works, Stalin mainly focused on the [daily] questions of party-organisation intending to intervene into intra-party struggles. Nevertheless, two essays on the agrarian question, written by Stalin in March 1906 during the "First Russian Revolution" can serve as paradigmatic sources for delving into his early economic thought. In them, Stalin radically argued for the full collectivisation of land, basing his conclusion on the necessity of peasants turning into proletariat at this stage of the process of capitalist free development.¹⁶³ Stalin here defined for the first time how he envisioned socialism in a relatively typical way,¹⁶⁴ however in his perspective of "town being the leader of the village" are present seeds of his later mechanical view of 'stages theory'. In other words, in a dogmatic manner, Stalin saw history moving in a unilinear way, feudalism and peasants necessarily passing through the capitalist phase. Despite this still being the dominant view among Plekhanov-inspired Russian Marxists, the 1905 revolution was proving it erroneous, as Trotsky and Luxemburg demonstrated.¹⁶⁵ Socialism does not have to pass firstly through the capitalist phase, but can arise straight from feudalism. Stalin's longer essay *Anarchism or Socialism* from later same year, however, only reiterated the mechanic understanding, claiming that Marxists ought to favour the preservation of state power after the revolution.¹⁶⁶ In sum, for pre-revolution Stalin, if capitalism is inevitable, then

¹⁶³ Joseph Stalin, "The Agrarian Question," accessed 11th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1906/03/x01.htm>."

¹⁶⁴ "Introducing socialism means abolishing commodity production, abolishing the money system, razing capitalism to its foundations and socialising all the means of production." See Stalin, "The Agrarian Question.

¹⁶⁵ Leon Trotsky *1905*, accessed 20th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1907/1905/>. Hudis, Luxemburg and Lenin, 208.

¹⁶⁶ Joseph Stalin, "Anarchism or Socialism," accessed 11th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1906/12/x01.htm>.

so are nations. Likewise, if nations cannot exist without all of the characteristics (including joint economic life), the tasks for socialists is to foster the development of both, as this is creating the necessary social conditions for the next stage of socialism.

Such idea is further exposed in the post-revolutionary period. Overall, the periodization of Soviet approaches to the national question follows the Stalin-inspired shifts in approaches to the economy. Thus, the 1923-1928 NEP period¹⁶⁷ “witnessed an initial working out of the consequences of the 1923 nationalities policy decrees”.¹⁶⁸ It was in this period, in the linguistic context of two economic-industrialisation debates and the social context of the rising bureaucratic class due to the Soviet economic backwardness,¹⁶⁹ that the Stalin-adopted formula of ‘socialism in one country’ became formulated. Namely, Stalin’s ally Bukharin argued that the Soviet industry can be developed with the demand for industry products generated through the gradual exchange between the state and peasants.¹⁷⁰ In other words, what sufficed was that the relations inside the country were developing along socialist path. Opposingly, Trotsky’s perspective of capitalism as a global economy shows that, regardless of country’s internal property relations, a state remains one huge chunk of private property within the world market.¹⁷¹ This big chunk in-turn becomes dependent on the whole market as it is lacking means to survive on its own, becoming entrenched in world competition and subjugated to economic pressure – necessity of profit accumulation. The rest of the argument follows Marx more clearly. To ensure competitiveness when planning their economy, decision makers of an

¹⁶⁷ New Economic Policy. Officially proclaimed in 1921, however, I take 1923 as the starting year as this is the year of Lenin’s retirement from politics and of Stalin’s initial taking over of the power.

¹⁶⁸ Martin, 25.

¹⁶⁹ Tony Cliff, *State Capitalism in Russia*

¹⁷⁰ See Nikolai Bukharin. For a more detailed discussion of the economic policies and debates at the time, see Edward H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country* vol. 1 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1958).

¹⁷¹ Tony Cliff, “State capitalism,” in *Trotskyism after Trotsky*, accessed January 6th, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1999/trotskyism/ch02.htm>; for more detailed view, see Tony Cliff, *State Capitalism in Russia*, accessed January 6th, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1955/statecap/index.htm>
Leon Trotsky, *The revolution betrayed*, accessed 10th May 2019 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1936/revbet/index.htm>

economically-backward country are obliged to both intensively exploit their domestic working-class and to invest into machinery. In other words, if Marxists decide to construct socialism in one country, they will necessarily turn against their own working-class.

Stalin, as is known to everyone, did not agree with Trotsky. Among his 1924 lectures at Sverdlov University (where he also talked of the national question), Stalin presented his imagining of a socialist economy. Namely, he did recognise that the “final victory of socialism” is impossible without “the victory of the revolution in at least several countries”.¹⁷² However, at the same time, he considered “organising construction ... along the lines of preparing for the abolition of classes” the necessary task of proletariat maintaining power,¹⁷³ and found that this construction entails being lenient towards peasants.¹⁷⁴

The period of “the Socialist Offensive”, of increased industrialisation and collectivisation in the four years following Stalin’s consolidation of power, was accompanied by “The Great Transformation” period of national policies extravagantly celebrating ethnic diversity.¹⁷⁵ In the same 1930 report where he talked of deviations towards the national question, Stalin’s talk of the past economic successes and future tasks captures the same rationale behind economic decision-making, that is, strengthening the domestic socialist construction by increasing productivity and rationalising production, only now applied to the different sectors.¹⁷⁶

The subsequent period of “Great Retreat” in the mid 1930s, marked by the selective but not neglecting suppression of nations,¹⁷⁷ reflected a continuation of statist economic policies.

¹⁷² This is a stance typical of the proponents of the ‘permanent revolution theory’. It was elaborated by Trotsky in his book *1905*, but is also implicit in his “Lessons of October,” For Stalin’s quote, see Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, 34.

¹⁷³ Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, 35-36.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid*, 54.

¹⁷⁵ Slezkine, *USSR as a Communal apartment*

¹⁷⁶ Stalin, *Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress*

¹⁷⁷ It was a trend of reducing the number of the blossoming nations but the continuation cultivating “those that bore fruit”. See Slezkine, maybe others as different classification. Walker says before and after 1930’s, Van Ree also

Stalin thus declared in 1934 that USSR had finally “become an industrialized society based on solid socialist foundation”.¹⁷⁸ Increasingly focusing on his Stakhanovite movement (which is itself telling of the role Stalin held for the working class), in the speech from the following year Stalin presented socialism as a mere extension of the living standard for the masses.¹⁷⁹ It is clear there that the ‘socialist content’, intended to load the ‘national form’, was nothing more than outdoing other capitalist countries within the developmentalist competition. Bauer’s similar notion of socialism merely extending the space for nations comes to mind. Finally, Stalin’s 1938 theoretical essay is paradigmatic of how the ‘reflexivity theory’ ties the national question to the most immediate mode of production, and in-turn prohibits the utilisation of nationalism for the potential rapid skipping of the stages, something Lenin suggested.¹⁸⁰

For Stalin, it is clear – Soviet socialist project needs further modernisation and development of bases for material life, which is best achieved through the state. Consequentially, to conclude, the national question for Stalin is subjugated to the question of building a socialist state. Depending on the requirements of this state-building process within the changing global-market circumstances, the approach to the national question will take different form. Because for Stalin socialism can be achieved in one country, and apparently has been constructed in Soviet Union, the principle of right of nations to self-determination takes precedence in decision-making only when it is not conflicting with the direct needs of the Soviet economy. As Suny put it, “[Stalin’s] innovation in Lenin’s thought marked a profoundly important shift in Soviet domestic and foreign policy – away from the militantly internationalist and revolutionary policy that made Soviet socialism dependent on revolution

¹⁷⁸ Quoted from Slezkine, 442.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph Stalin, Speech at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites.” accessed 15th April, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1935/11/17.htm> .

¹⁸⁰ In considering the superstructure as separate from and occasionally “lagging behind” the base, Stalin suggested that “to be able to influence the conditions of material life of society [...] the party of the proletariat must rely upon such a social idea as correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society.” See Joseph Stalin, “Dialectical and Historical Materialism,” accessed 17th April 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1938/09.htm>

abroad toward a more national commitment to the building of a new socialist society within a single state.”¹⁸¹ Hillel Ticktin similarly commented: “The Soviet Union built up a whole doctrine of the stages of national liberation in order to justify their actions, which were always pragmatic decisions based on their immediate interests”.¹⁸² For Lenin, the self-determination principle was to be propagated independently of the Soviet immediate needs, precisely because the only ultimate solution for the contradictions and backwardness of the Soviet economy is to be found in the *global* socialist revolution.¹⁸³ Thus, the distinction between Lenin and Stalin on the national question cannot be made by simply reading their words on the national question. Instead, it is necessary to look-up also their envisioning of the socialist project, as their words on nationalism obtain meaning solely when fit into this wider puzzle.

KPJ and the national question

Soon after the state creation at the [in]famous Versailles peace congress, Socialist Labour Party of Yugoslavia (communists) (SRPJ(k)) was formed in April 1919, with various national social democratic parties joining in. Vladimir Kobsa, a Yugoslav historian of KPJ’s attitude towards the national question in the interwar period, distinguishes three periods of the attitude’s development.¹⁸⁴ The initial, from 1919 until 1923, marked by the relative neglect of the national question in-turn not challenging the Yugoslav nation-state; the second, from 1923 until 1935, where the relative dominance of the left-wing of the Party pushed for the anti-

¹⁸¹ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment. Russia, the USSR and the Successor States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 69.

¹⁸² Hillel Ticktin, “Marxism, Nationalism and the National Question After Stalinism,” *Critique* vol. 33, no. 1 (2005): 27.

¹⁸³ The global and anti-linear perspective in Lenin’s is most notable in the above-discussed *Imperialism and State and Revolution*, but also in his *April Theses*. See Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution,” accessed 18th June 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/04.htm>.

¹⁸⁴ Leopold Kobsa, “Prilog istraživanju stajališta KPJ o nacionalnom pitanju u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju od kongresa ujedinjenja 1919 do lipanjskog plenuma CK KPJ 1935,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 7, no. 1-2 (1967): 343.

Yugoslav and pro-federalist approach; and the third, post-1935, which is the direct context of Tito, distinct for its' re-adoption of the pro-Yugoslav stance from the first stage, albeit with a federalist perspective. Naturally, the phases are not so easily clear-cut, and it is possible to use alternative criteria for categorisation. By applying this thesis' method-argument, that is, seeing the narrow approach to the national question as part of the total project of altering economic system, a more indicative yardstick becomes the increasing role of the Communist International (KI) and its' hierarchical subordination of the local CPs to the requirements of the 'socialist motherland'. In other words, once Stalin fortified his grapple over KI, the rationale behind economic changes for practically all of CPs, including KPJ, became 'stages theory' and 'socialism in one country' theory, thus profoundly altering their approaches to nationalism. Thus, going against Kobsa, I would suggest that the shift in 1935, when KPJ started seeing the preservation of Yugoslavia compatible with their solution to the national question, was not as radical as the one in 1928, and that only through such periodisation, we can properly grasp the context within which Tito is developing his approach to the national question. The shift in socialist content was more important than the shift in the national form.

Indigenous revolutionary years (1919-1928)

The interwar story of KPJ is that of factionalism, and most of phenomena can be explained by observing which faction was dominant. Thus, the Party's neglecting attitude towards nationalism in its' infancy period is often attributed to the fact of prevailing membership coming from the former Serbian Social-Democratic Party (SSDP) and not parties from former Austro-Hungary (Croatian or Slovenian).¹⁸⁵ In regards to the national question,

¹⁸⁵ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984): 220-221. This Serbian predominance is partly explained by the fact of Croatian and Slovenian SDPs having splits along what might be called Bolshevik/Menshevik line, which led the 'right' to enter into coalitions with

Connor Walker describes SSDs as “the most truly internationalist of all Marxist parties”,¹⁸⁶ and Katrine Hilde Haug notes that they were “closer to the position of Luxemburg than Lenin”,¹⁸⁷ which for SRPJ(k) translated to the vague stressing of the class-struggle importance whilst the national question was of secondary importance – it was a question for the bourgeoisie.¹⁸⁸ As Serbs have already obtained their state prior to 1918, they “did not have the same need for a supranational identity”, but for legal improvements, whilst the national unification is the historical task of the bourgeoisie.¹⁸⁹ The subsequent Congress of 1920, despite moving further to the left by weakening the ‘Serbian wing’ and changing its name to KPJ, merely “endorsed the goal [of national self-determination as prescribed by KI] while ignoring the prescribed means”.¹⁹⁰ The Congress resolution continued with unrealistic calls for creation of a federation of soviet republics, not discussing tactical plans, apart from some hints of *legalistic* approach justified as a response to the strengthening of the regime.¹⁹¹ National tensions were still seen as remnants of old nations’ lives within separate regimes, which will be resolved after a joint life.¹⁹² Prominent KPJ member in the interwar period Moša Pijade remembers: “[I]t was simply thought that national unity and centralism were outside of our discussion.”¹⁹³

other more ‘democratic’ mainstream parties, while the ‘left’ joined the SRPJ(k), thus allowing for a majority of members of SSDP, who did not have such a split [at that time].

¹⁸⁶ Connor Walker, National Question, 130.

¹⁸⁷ Katrine Hilde Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia. Tito, Communist Leadership and the National Question*, (London: IB Tauris, 2015): 22.

¹⁸⁸ Kobsa, Prilog istraživanju stajališta KPJ o nacionalnom pitanju u Jugoslaviji, 344.

¹⁸⁹ Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 22-23.

¹⁹⁰ Walker, National, 133.

¹⁹¹ Kobsa, Prilog istraživanju stajališta KPJ o nacionalnom pitanju u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju od kongresa ujedinjenja 1919 do lipanjskog plenuma CK KPJ 1935, 435.

¹⁹² Banac, *The national Question in Yugoslavia*. For the optimistic account of the process of creation of Yugoslav nation within cultural sphere see Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia*, 67-127.

¹⁹³ Moša Pijade, “Malo partijske istorije nacionalnog pitanja,” in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978): 212.

Following KPJ's electoral and industrial-struggle successes of 1920, the infamous *Obznana* banned the Party,¹⁹⁴ and with the party membership surging from approximately 50 thousands to as low as a thousand, earlier divisions were now exacerbated around explanations for such a defeat. What is more, the numerical differences between factions were irrelevant, and thus, unable to organise Congress in the country, the First Party Conference in Vienna (July 1922) marked the beginning of proper factional struggles among the leadership. Furthermore, KI (which KPJ joined already in 1919) "bombarded [CPs] with reminders" of the obligation to adopt Lenin's approach to the national question.¹⁹⁵ In such context occurred the most elaborate and extensive debate on the national question within KPJ.¹⁹⁶ Whilst hardly any disputant survived the purges of late 1930's, their arguments were continued to be utilised even in the post-war period. Thus, Tito's linguistic contextualisation requires their brief analysis.

The most prominent theorist of the right was Sima Marković.¹⁹⁷ Him being on the right whilst holding views which under Luxemburg were termed as ultra-leftist only goes to demonstrate the relativity of the axis. Marković claimed that the participation of workers in the struggles for achieving national interests would be "a class suicide", it would "dirty" the class struggle, as it would solely represent interest of the ruling class which holds monopoly over the national state.¹⁹⁸ By adding a notion of *social-imperialism*, Marković showed that nationalism is a false shelter for workers which creates improvement of conditions solely for the ruling class.¹⁹⁹ Underpinning his view was the presumption that people cannot achieve their

¹⁹⁴ See Janko Pleterski et al. eds. *Povijest Saveza Komunističke Jugoslavije*, (Belgrade: Izdavački centar Komunist, 1985).

¹⁹⁵ Walker, *National Question*, 56.

¹⁹⁶ Debate was carried through the pages of the Party journal *Borba* in 1923. Latinka Perović's 1975 doctoral dissertation is the most important study of that debate, where she traces back a crucial shift in the attitude of KPJ towards national question from the right's centralist and unitarist arguments to the left's federalism to this debate. See Latinka Perović, *Od centralizma do federalizma, KPJ u nacionalnom pitanju*, (Zagreb: Globus, 1984).

¹⁹⁷ Leader of the right wing, also leader of the Party until 1926.

¹⁹⁸ Sima Marković, *Nacionalno pitanje u svjetlu marksizma*, (Belgrade: Centralni odbor NRPJ, 1923): 29.

¹⁹⁹ Mihael Antonolović, "Nacionalno-internacionana dijalektika Sime Markovića," *Sociološki pregled*, vol. 52, no. 4 (2018): 1369-1388.

national emancipation without denying same emancipation to a certain other nation, and that instead, people could be emancipated solely within international constellations.

The view that national differences cannot be resolved within capitalism was not so different from the Party's left-wing. Instead, what distinguished the two was the form of the future international compounds and the strategy towards achieving it, with 'the right' taking the views much-alike to Kautsky and the Second International. On the latter issue, in the context of low revolutionary tide, Marković argued that the priority should be the democratization of the society, which would in turn improve conditions for the working class thus in turn allowing it to lead the struggle for a revolution and an ultimate solution of national questions.²⁰⁰ In other words, not primarily aiming to resolve national tensions, he wanted to pacify them so that 'a clear class struggle' could commence.²⁰¹ Thus, he focused mostly on the improvements of the Yugoslav Constitution in the direction of guaranteeing equality to nations by providing them with political autonomy.²⁰² "Without most complete democracy, there cannot be a solution to national question."²⁰³ Consequentially, on the former issue of the form future international national constellations will take, Marković's view of the Yugoslavia supranational identity was not entirely negative. Namely, Marković was clear that Yugoslavia was instrumentalised as so to protect Serbian privileges, however, in the orthodox tradition of preferring the big states, he argued that the Yugoslav supranational identity is practically

²⁰⁰ Pleterski, *Povijest Saveza Komunisti Jugoslavije*.

²⁰¹ Kobsa, *Prilog istraživanju stajališta KPJ o nacionalnom pitanju u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju od kongresa ujedinjenja 1919 do lipanjskog plenuma CK KPJ 1935*, 347.

²⁰² In Marković's view, the 1921 Constitution was instrumentalised by the Great Serbian bourgeoisie to further their own imperialist aims. See Sima Marković, *Tragizam malih naroda*, (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 1985). Marković has post-mortem been relativized and hailed as a defender of rights of Serbs, which was based on false equalisation of the 'Great Serbian national' and the communist unitarism. See Aleksandar Kostić (ur.), *Sima Marković: Zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa "Društveno-politička i naučna misao i delatnost Sime Markovića"* (Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 2013). I thank Stefan Gužvica for this insight.

²⁰³ Sima Marković, "Greške druga Cvijića," in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978).

already established and provides Communists with the framework through which they can intensify the class struggle, and in-turn do away with Serbian privileges.²⁰⁴

Meanwhile, ‘leftists’ in 1923 debates, much like Lenin in 1914, noted that not only bourgeoisie, but also workers participated in the dispute over nationalism, and in-turn that has to broaden Party’s platform in order to direct both the proletariat towards the party and other social actors into a joint struggle.²⁰⁵ Consequentially, unlike ‘the right’, in terms of strategy for the national question ‘the left’ proposed alliance with other social actors, such as the peasantry and oppressed national minorities, so that once the Communists got into power, national tensions will be resolved more easily.²⁰⁶

Đuro Cvijić is one of the left-wing Communists whose writings are useful as he more clearly argued against Marković. Instead of relying on the bourgeoisie and democratic process to resolve the national question, Cvijić suggested that a much more effective way of ‘demasking’ the bourgeoisie’s demagogy would be linking the national with the social question, as the language and social issue are more understandable to the masses.²⁰⁷ In other words, instead of resolving the national question from above with the constitution reform, the issue should be resolved from below, with Lenin’s principle of right of nations to self-determination, which is in-fact the most effective way of arriving at the democratic state. In regards to the form the international constellation will take, the former strategic considerations induced a practical conclusion that nations cannot achieve self-determination within capitalist Yugoslavia, but solely within the framework of each nation’s workers- and peasants-led government joining into a [non-necessarily Yugoslav] federation. To round-up, precisely

²⁰⁴ Kobsa, *Komunistički pokret i nacionalno pitanje*, 50.

²⁰⁵ Kobsa, *Prilog istraživanju stajališta KPJ*, 348.

²⁰⁶ *ibid*, 349.

²⁰⁷ Đuro Cvijić, “Predlog rezolucije o nacionalnom pitanju,” in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978): 203. Đuro Cvijić, “O čemu je suština spora?” in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978): 214. Đuro Cvijić, “Dva odgovora” in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978): 213.

because nationalism is a powerful political phenomena which can more successfully bring about socialism, separatist nationalisms of respective Yugoslav nations ought to be instrumentalised, subsequently creating free and voluntary basis for merging of nations, through mid-step of Balkan federation.

If KPJ was divided, it was nevertheless still relatively autonomous. The factional struggles, however, created a fertile ground for the gradual subordination of KPJ to KI.²⁰⁸ Namely, already at the 3rd Party's Land Conference in December 1923 – January 1924, the Resolution opted for the left approach to the national question, linking it with the social question for the first time,²⁰⁹ recognising that the centralistic Yugoslav constitution solely exacerbated national differences and that KPJ needs to stand at the forefront of national movements proletariat aiming to create a Balkan federal republic.²¹⁰ Still, with the Conference Resolution not proposing much detailed plan of achieving set-out goals but remaining within vague calls,²¹¹ as Tito noted, the right-wing was allowed small manoeuvre-space continuing to defy the rules of democratic centralism, refused to recognise the Resolution and initiated a break away from the Party.²¹² Inhibiting the Party potency, KI decided to react against the right already in summer 1924 when Stalin famously criticised Marković for both excluding the right of nations to self-determination and the future federational framework, and for disobeying Party orders.²¹³ Henceforth, there has not been any rethinking or challenging of the basic principles of the Party approach to the national question.

²⁰⁸ Vladan Vukliš claimed that KPJ was mostly on the side-lines of the process during the early years of KI's 'second period' (1921-1928), mostly due to its' decreasing size and influence in the illegal period, but that such relationship changed after outbursts of factional struggles within KPJ. See Vladan Vukliš, "Zaokret Kominterne prema Narodnom Frontu i propaganda KPJ (1934–1939)," *Glasnik Udruženja arhivskih radnika Republike Srpske* vol. 3, no. 3 (2011): 181.

²⁰⁹ "Rezolucija o nacionalnom pitanju (3. Zemaljska Konferencija KPJ)," in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978): 221-225.

²¹⁰ Pleterski, *Povijest SKJ*.

²¹¹ Kobsa, *Prilog istraživanju*, 350.

²¹² Tito, *Borba za pravilan stav o nacionalnom pitanju u KPJ*, 341.

²¹³ Joseph Stalin, "O nacionalnom pitanju u Jugoslaviji," in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978): 228-231. Furthermore, KI confirmed the Third Conference Resolution, and pushed it further to the left, arguing that Croatia, Slovenia

The [Third] Internationale will be the human race

Still, however, despite KPJ adopting a pro-federalist and an anti-Yugoslav stances already in 1924 after KI's suggestion, KPJ has not really actively worked on fulfilling those goals until the IV Party Congress of November 1928. The Resolution of the 1926 Third Party Congress added only a slightly more detailed reiteration of the previous Conference's Resolution with additions of KI's federal suggestions,²¹⁴ but Party overall remained paralysed from the factional struggles. Thus, 1928 represents a crucial shift both on the global level of KI, and correspondingly with the inner functioning of KPJ.

Isaac Deutscher noted the 'reflexivity' of the VKP(Bolsheviks) inside KI, thus Stalin's banning of factions within VKP(b) effectively made all of the CPs subjected to KI.²¹⁵ As the historian Stefan Gužvica put it, instead of unity in action as entailed by the concept of democratic centralism, a nuanced difference here is that decisions from above cannot be questioned.²¹⁶ KI essentially became a foreign-policy instrument of the Soviet Union.²¹⁷ Meanwhile, a hierarchy among CPs appeared – Bulgarians were in charge of the Yugoslavs, who were in-turn patrons of Albanians.²¹⁸

Consequentially, the shift reflected inside KPJ as well. Several months prior to the 1928 KPJ Congress, KI sent "an open letter" demanding from KPJ to abolish factionalism so that it

and Macedonia ought to enter future Soviet federation of Balkan-Danube republics independently and not as part of Yugoslavia. See Kobsa, *Prilog istraživanju*, 351.

²¹⁴ Pleterski, *Povijest SKJ*, 99-102.

²¹⁵ Isaac Deutscher, *Staljin. Politička biografija*, (Zagreb: Globus, 1967): 335-398.

²¹⁶ Stefan Gužvica, Interview by Srećko Pulig, *Novosti*, Ljubljana, December 2019. <https://www.portalnovosti.com/stefan-guzvica-tito-je-na-rat-gledao-levije-od-kominterne>

²¹⁷ Walker, 57. For an account of the "bolshevization" of the Comintern, see Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (London: MacMillan, 1996), 41-80.

²¹⁸ See Stefan Gužvica, *Before Tito: The Communist Party of Yugoslavia during the Great Purge*, (Tallinn: TLU Press, 2020): 97-98.

can execute its' "correct" hitherto decisions.²¹⁹ Indeed, "in terms of documents and decisions made, [1928] IV Congress was, more than any earlier gathering of Yugoslav communists, under control of central international communist movement."²²⁰ The Congress passed the Resolution on the national question which most-explicitly argued for the dissolution of Yugoslavia (then still Kingdom of SHS) and for all Yugoslav nations forming independent states.²²¹ Whilst such stance has already been present in Party documents and resolutions since 1924, for the first time KPJ adopted them, not out of consideration for needs and interests of the Yugoslav workers' movement, but out of needs of KI. The anti-factional Resolution, pushed by KI's representative at the Congress, Stalin's loyal Palmiro Togliatti, ensured the subordination of KPJ to KI.²²² The Resolution "On War Danger and Our Tasks in the Struggle Against the War" is even more indicative of the shift in the rationale behind KPJ's decisions, as in proclaiming Yugoslavia as "one of the most militant countries in the world" and as a likely base for future attacks on USSR,²²³ effectively subjugated the resolution to the national question resolution to the needs of defending the USSR.

Resolutions made without much connection with actual situation on the ground but reflecting KI's third period of "class against class",²²⁴ led to increasingly 'terrorist' activity of KPJ, which failed to motivate the masses. Communists agitated against the Yugoslav regime, but also against bourgeoisies of each nation, failing to recognise the demagogic control they had over masses. Most of the nations had a political party fighting already for 'their' national interests, or in other words, those political parties already had a monopoly over a national question, and communist slandering of them as socio-fascists remained abstract for most of the

²¹⁹ See Ubavka Vujošević, "Četvrti kongres KPJ – obračun sa „levim“ i desnim frakcionaštvom," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, vol. 11, br. 2-3 (1979): 33-34.

²²⁰ *ibid*, 34.

²²¹ *ibid*, 49-50, 60-65.

²²² *ibid*, 50-55.

²²³ *ibid*, 58-61.

²²⁴ On the analysis of KI's Third period, see Gordana Vlajčić, *Kominternu i taktiku borbe 'klase protiv klase'. 1927-1934* (Zagreb: Cekade, 1989).

people.²²⁵ Furthermore, KPJ's illegal 'terrorist' activity ultimately resulted in the stronger repression of the royal regime, with King Aleksandar introducing royal dictatorship in 1929, either forcing most of the KPJ's leadership and members to flee the country or incarcerating them.²²⁶

The subsequent period until 1935 is one of the least active intervals, with Party moving back to the margins.²²⁷ Ultimately, KPJ gradually adopting a pro-Yugoslav stance in 1935 was a response to KI's respective shift towards the 'Popular Front' strategy.²²⁸ Namely, KI informed all CPs in March 1933 not to openly attack social-democrats,²²⁹ and soon, after Georgi Dimitrov's plea, in May 1934 officially announced and formalised the shift towards 'popular-front' tactics at KI's VII Congress in 1935.²³⁰ However, the domestic failure aided the shift. Recognising the difficult situation the party is in, the new Party leader Milan Gorkić entered numerous legal fronts where he did not insist on the leadership of communists, which was eventually to lead to Gorkić's critics accusing him of 'liquidationism'. The logic of Gorkić's approach was Stalin's stages theory subjugated to the idea of socialism in the Soviet country, entailing in the Yugoslav context a 'two-stage' revolution. In relation to the national question, this logic played into the gradual adoption of a pro-Yugoslav stance. Namely, KPJ realised that exploiting the national question for revolutionary purposes could play into the hands of nationalists, and thus they gradually moved towards the Yugoslav framework.²³¹ Thus the 1934 KPJ Land Conference proclaimed a somewhat contradictory resolution, of both stating a clear support for the preservation of the Yugoslav state and creating KPJ-subordinated

²²⁵ Vukliš, *Zaokret Kominterne prema Narodnom Frontu i propaganda KPJ*,

²²⁶ What is more, KPJ General Secretary Đura Đaković was murdered in this period. See Đorđe Piljević, "Sukobi i čistke u KPJ 1929–1933. godine i Kominterna," *Tokovi*, 1–2 (1992): 61–86.

²²⁷ For an overview of the period, see Gužvica, *Before Tito*, 55–93.

²²⁸ Popular Front strategy in the context of Yugoslav Communists entailed seeking co-operation with the leaders of various liberal and national movements opposed to the Yugoslav regime and to fascism, while at the same time infiltrating legal organisations and building a base of support for the future communist cause from within. See Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 38–42.

²²⁹ Vukliš, 185.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 186–188.

²³¹ Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 33–34, 37.

Croatian and Slovenian CPs.²³² At the same time acknowledging that Croatians and Slovenians are under the influence of their respective national parties but offering them a short-term internationalist solution of continuing the Yugoslav framework is a clear departure from Lenin's carrot approach.

²³² Kobsa, Prilog istraživanju, 353. "O stvaranju KP Hrvatske i KP Slovenije," in *Nacionalno pitanje u djelima klasika marksizma i u dokumentima i praksi KPJ/SKJ*. eds. Leopold Kobsa et al. (Zagreb: Naklada CDD, 1978): 254-257.

4. “Protect the brotherhood and unity, like the apple of your eye!”

Tito stuck to his formula on the national question – the famous ‘brotherhood and unity’ throughout of his reign. The issue is, however, whether he attributed the same meaning to it at different periods. Forged already on the eve of the Second World War, the formula was most eloquently exposed by Tito in his 1942 article, tying the solution of the national question to the revolutionary constitution of a new socialist order.²³³ Clear is the influence of Lenin’s dual task of both acknowledging the importance of nationalism and at the same time keeping it dialectically subordinated to the revolution. In his last public appearance, in 1978 at the commemoration of the World War Two (WW2) Sutjeska battle, Tito reiterated his argument that brotherhood and unity needs to be preserved, however, this time it was for the sake of the further development of the socialist Yugoslavia.²³⁴ The unity entailed in the claim that “each of our republics would be meaningless, were we not all together” does not set as an end goal the overcoming of nations, but subordinates the brotherhood to the needs of preserving and advancing Yugoslav socialism.

I argue in this chapter that Tito’s approach to the national question was consistent over time, and that he followed Stalin’s understanding throughout of his life. The shift in the meaning attributed to the slogan of ‘brotherhood and unity’ in my opinion follows the same theoretical rationale, which merely manifested differently in alternative contexts. Thus, I argue here that the change in the context crucial for Tito’s approach to the national question is the conquest of state-power by Tito’s partisans, and not Tito’s split with Stalin in 1948. Once Tito

²³³ Josip Broz Tito, “Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji u svjetlosti narodnooslobodilačke borbe,” in *Sabrana djela* vol. 13 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1982).

²³⁴ Josip Broz Tito, “Josip Broz Tito posljednji govor na Sutjesci 1978. upozorava - ČUVAJTE BRATSTVO I JEDINSTVO!,” Youtube video, 7th February 2008. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_s_B0ms6Z0.

demonstrated that his understanding of socialism is Stalinist in nature, that is, that it can be constructed in one country, and not Leninist, that is, requiring a global systemic change, he stripped nationalism of its' revolutionary potential, and reduced its role to the preservation and advancement of the Yugoslav economy state-power. With the necessity of producing according to the world-market standards (with which socialism in a single country cannot break), a mantra of national unity proved useful for fostering conglomeration of enterprises, required for the successful capitalist competition abroad. In other words, Tito ended up creating a situation for which Marxists often criticise capitalist countries, where an abstract nation is constructed in order to obscure class differences and allow for state-economy development.

That there is a high theoretical similarity between Tito and Stalin is not a controversial statement, however, they need to be more firmly tied together, and this I believe is best achieved by observing their thoughts on economy, and how they related the national question to the project of achieving socialist economy. In short, if one demonstrates that Tito's approach to the construction of socialism has not *essentially* changed after 1948 with the introduction of the self-management model, but remained loyal to the Stalinist theory of 'socialism in one country', then the role attributed to nationalism has equally not been alternated. Thus, building on the previous chapter, I argue here that Tito's approach to the national question can be tied to Stalin and not Lenin only when considering the entirety of his thought, both chronologically and thematically.

This chapter will begin by discussing Tito's stance on the national question prior to the conquest of power (1943/1945). Mainly locating Tito within the linguistic context (relating him to the above-discussed Marxist answers), I will also place his approach to nationalism in relation to his thought on factionalism, and comment on the influence that KI expressed on Tito. Subsequently, the chapter will discuss the period from the state capture until 1948 split, presenting Tito's thoughts [and Yugoslav state policies] on economy and nationalism. Noting

how the former were similar to Stalin's conception of socialism, epitomised in a strong state-developmental attitudes, a shift in Tito's appreciation of 'brotherhood and unity' will be noted. This part of the chapter will conclude with the discussion of the impact such shift had in relation to the project of constructing the Balkan Socialist Federation (BSF), highlighting the similarity of Tito's and Stalin's theoretical approach. The final part of the chapter will be the gist of this thesis' argument. Firstly, it will outline the development of the workers' self-management economic model – what it entailed, how it was ideologically justified by Tito and his comrades and how it performed (especially focusing on the debates around the 1961 and 1965 reforms, and on the workers' strikes and protests in the late 1960's). Ultimately, how different was its' end-goal to the previous Soviet-inspired phase? Secondly, it will present Tito's writing on self-management, its failure and reform, especially in the light of 1968 protests. Thirdly, the chapter will outline how the constitutional rights of nations altered with the changes of self-management model, and accompany this journey with Tito's own thoughts on the matter. From there, in conclusion, a link between Tito's reliance on self-management and his shift to an etatist understanding of 'brotherhood and unity' will be reiterated.

As will be demonstrated, Tito's writings on national question prior to obtaining state-power experienced numerous shifts, and more often than not, its' exact form did not coincide with the Soviet/KI suggestions. By presenting Tito's thought as a totality, I will offer a logic guiding those shifts, making a coherent whole of them. The insufficient material of Tito's economic writings before 1945 require of an intellectual historian to consider the post-1945 period. Observing the two periods together, allows us to comprehend Tito's writings on the national question throughout of his life as subordinated to the project of constructing socialism in one country.

Unarmed Tito?

In relation to Tito's pre-WW2 stance on the national question, historiography has been divided on the question whether Tito loyally merely executed KI's demands²³⁵ or continuously "put Yugoslavia's national interest above the interests of international communism."²³⁶ As is most often the case, neither extreme is fully correct. Certainly, as mentioned above, KI was a centralised organisation leaving local CPs little manoeuvre space, however, such deterministic view allows even less space for denoting the filter role that leaders of local CPs played, if nothing else. Conversely, seeing Tito as a pragmatist and independent politician fails to explain why Tito agreed with Stalin at one point and not at another, despite it never going into his favour. I would argue closer to the former view, claiming that Tito would not have found himself in a position to execute KI's orders had he not approached tasks of communists similarly to Stalin – pragmatically searching for best cunning political tools to achieve the closest subsequent stage.²³⁷ Put differently, precisely because of his ideological similarity to Stalin, he had a manoeuvre space to interpret and adapt KI's orders, but had to do so within the boundaries of Stalin's proclaimed perspective. Geoffrey Swain, despite being aligned to the latter type of argument, offers a great insight in arguing that Tito was a Leninist on domestic, revolutionary issues, and a Stalinist on international, socialism-constructing issues, and that conflict with Stalin arose once those two spheres started overlapping.²³⁸ Such argument, however, falls one step short, as it fails to denote a small nuance that crucially divides Lenin and Stalin. Namely, for Lenin, as argued above, the two spheres are inherently and heavily

²³⁵ See Nora Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy* (London: Routledge, 1985).

²³⁶ Best example is Tito's biographer Vladimir Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito. Prilozi za biografiju* (Belgrade: Kultura, 1953).

²³⁷ Stefan Gužvica makes a similar argument in his book, although Tito is not his direct focus. See Gužvica, *Before Tito*.

²³⁸ Geogfrey Swain, "Tito: The formation of a disloyal Bolshevik," *International Review of Social History* vol. 34, no. 2 (1989).

interlinked, whereas for Stalin, there is a clear separation of the two spheres. Thus, in building on Swain's biographical insights, I will argue here that Tito's linguistic influence lies much closer to Stalin than Lenin, that is, that the 1948 split between Tito and Stalin is not caused by ideological differences, but because of the internal contradictions of the one and same ideological approach to the national question, entailed in the theory of 'socialism in one country'.

Observing such influence, however, is impossible without the appreciation of what Tito considered to be the boundary between the domestic and international. In other words, it is necessary to read Tito's economic works to get a grasp of where socialism begins for him, and consequentially what role nationalism plays in the process. Tito's stance on the national question cannot be deduced prior to 1937 if considered narrowly.²³⁹ If, however, one does what I consider to be a Marxist approach to intellectual history and looks at the totality of author's thought, a story can start already in 1928, when Tito first burst onto the scene at the pinnacle of factional struggles. Namely, as the Organisation secretary of the KPJ's Zagreb branch, Tito presented an anti-factionalist platform, grounding KPJ's activism among the working-class and less among intellectuals.²⁴⁰ What is more, in Zagreb that same year, Tito "organised protests against the murder of Stjepan Radić", a leader of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), largest Croatian party in the parliament.²⁴¹ As was noted above, at the 1928 KPJ Congress, on the basis

²³⁹ Almost none written work remains from Tito prior to 1926, as the edition of Tito's collected works begins with 1926. See Josip Broz Tito, *Sabrana djela* vol.1 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1983). There seem to be no significant writings on the national question prior to 1937, as the volume on the national question and revolution of the edition of Tito's selected works starts with 1937. See Josip Broz Tito, *Izbor iz dela* vol. 3 *Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977). Thus, there is no way of finding his reflections on the contemporary debates on the national question. However, Haug found that whilst setting up a Regional Committee for Slovenia in October 1934, Tito argued that the primary pledge of KPJ must be the liberation of all the peoples of Yugoslavia under Great Serbian hegemony. See Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 33.

²⁴⁰ This was later called "Zagreb line". See Josip Broz Tito, „Predlog Rezolucije za Mjesnu konferenciju KPJ u Zagrebu u februaru 1928.“, *Sabrana djela vol. 1* (Belgrade:Komunist, 1981): 78-80. Edvard Kardelj, Tito's closest associate throughout the post-war period, was one of a few of the young cadre whom Tito brought-up at this period. See his recollection in Edvard Kardelj, "Tito na istorijskim raskršćima," *Izbor iz dela VII.* eds. Bogdan Trifunović (Belgrade: Komunist, 1979): 354-357.

²⁴¹ Geoffrey Swain, *Tito: A Political Biography* (London: IB Tauris, 2011): 12.

of by-then-Stalinised KI's Open Letter, an ultra-leftist approach to the national question was adopted. Drago Roksandić, however, notes that in the same year's obituary to his fallen comrade, Tito clearly entailed a Yugoslav framework for the future "free working class", going against the Congress-adopted direction.²⁴² Tito's anti-factionalism thus did not necessarily conflict with the either anti- or pro-Yugoslav stance, suggesting that the capability of the Party to carry out most immediate demands [flowing downwards from KI's centre] is super-ordinated to the exact form the approach to the national question takes.

Following the four years in prison (1929-1933),²⁴³ Tito's sharp rise to the higher Party echelons coincides with KPJ's KI-induced shift towards a more Yugoslav-friendly attitude. According to Walker, following KI's shift to the popular-front tactics, the self-determination "phrase simply vanished" from January 1937.²⁴⁴ Tito translated this to the Yugoslav context in 1936 by arguing against the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and for the federational Yugoslav framework.²⁴⁵ For Jovo Bakić, this Yugoslavism which Tito propagated was different to the 'integrative' and 'realist' variant of early 1920's. This was a "minimalist Yugoslavism of a Croatian tendency", corresponding much to the KPJ's left-wing stances.²⁴⁶ Similarly, Swain argues that Tito, despite breaking with the "aggressive" leftist stance already in 1932²⁴⁷ and subsequently continued to be "tactically flexible", Tito remained on the Left of the Party, which in the times of the rightward shift after 1935, "from the start of Tito's period as de facto Party leader, he began to explore the nature of his dependency on Moscow".²⁴⁸ In his 1937

²⁴² Drago Roksandić, "Bratstvo i jedinstvo' u političkom govoru jugoslavenskih komunista 1919–1945. godine," in *Tito - viđenja i tumačenja*. eds Manojlović Pintar, Olga et al. (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije : Arhiv Jugoslavije, 2011): 33.

²⁴³ In prison, according to Swain, Tito read with his comrades, among other authors – Kautsky, Plekhanov and Luxemburg. See Swain, Tito, 13.

²⁴⁴ Walker, National Question, 143-144.

²⁴⁵ Josip Broz Tito, "Pismo za Srbiju," in *Sabrana djela* vol. 3 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1983): 32-38.

²⁴⁶ Bakić, Jugoslovenstvo Tita, 46.

²⁴⁷ Roksandić notes that the Party debates on the constitution of Croatian and Slovenian CPs were on going, and that "Josip Broz was obviously not interested in those disputes, and that it is questionable whether he ever even participated in them." see Roksandić, "Tito – vi" footnote 22.

²⁴⁸ Swain, Tito, 14, 20.

article, Tito argued that communists ought to champion the Croatian national struggle against the Belgrade-based Yugoslav government oppression,²⁴⁹ which suggests the retention of the pre-1935 KI & KPJ line – a more leftist perspective. In other words, they say Tito as opposing KI.

Swain, and Bakić to an extent, are overstating Tito's ideological differences with Soviets precisely because they consider Tito's political compass as defined primarily by the national question taken narrowly. As I have argued above, the crucial shift in the rationale regarding KPJ and national question occurred in 1928, not in 1935, meaning that both pro- and anti-Yugoslav stance could be in accordance with Moscow so long as they entailed the satisfaction of most immediate needs of the Soviet motherland. It is not, as Walker has noted, that shifts in the USSR's foreign policy lead automatically to changes within KI's orientation, which in-turn induce alterations in the allegiances to Soviets vis-à-vis home country. Consequentially for Walker, with the move to 'popular front' tactics, it was clear for workers that they ought to shuffle their loyalties from USSR to their own state, with further two 180 degrees shifts occurred in 1939, when Soviets signed the non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany and declared the war as imperialist, and in 1941, when USSR was attacked and the war again became a national liberation struggle.²⁵⁰ However, consciousness never directly reflects neither the material realities nor the demands of the political authority. Likewise, the needs of USSR were not directly translated into exactly prescribed policies, but were subject to interpretations of CP leaders like Tito, allowed as long as the criteria and ultimate goal was the same – the enhancement of the Soviet socialism.

This pattern of KI's and KPJ's both matching and inconcurring lines being unproblematic is further evident in the rapid and radical shifts in the discourse around the

²⁴⁹ Tito is careful to make a distinction between Belgrade-based politicians, and the Serbian people in general, when talking about the oppressors of Croats [and other nations]. See Josip Broz Tito, "Komunisti i hrvatski narod," in *Sabrana djela* vol. 3 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1982); 84-87.

²⁵⁰ See Walker, 57-60.

beginning of WW2. Thus, in the period when he “should” argue for Soviet loyalties, Tito made a first step towards expressing explicitly the notions of brotherhood between Yugoslav nations and the necessity of their unity in 1938.²⁵¹ In the light of Serbo-Croatian agreement the following year, Tito argued for Croat self-determination, as the movement has already achieved a mass support, but reiterated a dual task of also seeking unity of workers with Serbs.²⁵² However, with the disappointment of this Cvetković-Maček agreement and Croatian question gaining more prominence, Tito took a rather nuanced view of neither arguing for secession of Croats as a *carte blanche*, nor did he took a mere pro-Yugoslav stance. Instead, Tito combined the two, and argued for the new revolutionary order within Yugoslav framework – popular front from below.²⁵³ Finally, in the article following the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Tito both implied that Serbs and Croats are nations whilst Yugoslavia was merely a state, thus hinting at Luxemburg’s distinction between political integration and total assimilation, but more importantly, reminded Croatian working class that its’ fate is tied to the working classes of the other Yugoslav nations.²⁵⁴ According to Swain, this article was “uncompromising in its defence of Yugoslav territorial integrity”.²⁵⁵

Was Moscow indeed content with Tito’s overall approach even when his concrete analysis diverged from theirs? They were most certainly aware of his radical stances before mid-1939 when Tito stressed the struggle against fascism much less but made no meaningful action in that regard. What is more, it is precisely in 1939 that Tito was confirmed as the KPJ

²⁵¹ Josip Broz Tito, “Za mir, nezavisnost i slobodu!” in *Sabrana djela* vol. 4, (Belgrade: Komunist, 1983): 30-33.

²⁵² Josip Broz Tito, “Borba Hrvata za samoopredeljenje,” *Sabrana djela* vol. 4 161-163. Tito signed this article as W. Viktorow. From Petar Požar we know that he used the same pseudonym when denouncing Ante Ciliga for Trotskyism in the article for the same Paris journal *Runschau*, and we can thus conclude that he used the pseudonym whenever writing for this journal. See Petar Požar, *Jugosloveni žrtve staljinističke čistke*, (Belgrade: Nova knjiga): 300.

²⁵³ Geoffrey R. Swain, “Tito: The formation of a disloyal Bolshevik,” *International Review of Social History*, vol. 34, no. 2 (1989): 260.

²⁵⁴ Josip Broz Tito, “Narodi Jugoslavije!” *Sabrana djela* vol. 4 164-168. What is interesting to mention is that this was a first article written whilst back in Yugoslavia, and that this re-location apparently did not cause a shift in Tito’s perspective.

²⁵⁵ Swain, 25.

leader, despite his leftism.²⁵⁶ To accentuate Tito's distinction to Stalin, some historians highlighted that Tito was due to face charges of Trotskyism for his article on Czechoslovakia.²⁵⁷ However, it seems contradictory to claim both that Tito was shrewd and knew the functioning of KI, and that he survived merely because of lucky Soviet shift upon the signature of Nazi-Soviet pact. If Tito was indeed so cunning, he would not have intentionally chosen a policy that would get him removed. Instead, it is fair to conclude that even such approach, which in its direct form does not match KI's demands, remains within the ideological margins set out by the leading Stalin's ideology.

Tito's speech at the KPJ's Fifth Conference in 1940 has equally triggered various interpretations from historians. Walker has noted the apparent contradiction in Tito's concurrent criticism of KPJ's right wing and propagation of national autonomy as a solution, something that Marković argued earlier.²⁵⁸ Bakić maintained that this was still a left approach, that flirtation with nationalism was still of tactical, and not strategic considerations.²⁵⁹ "We are not interested in the bourgeois ideal of a Fatherland to be defended, but of a world revolution to be carried through" proclaimed Tito.²⁶⁰ In addition to the issue of Tito here being either on left or right, Swain tells us that precisely before the Conference, KI suggested against the 'people's government' strategy, but that Tito went through with it nonetheless.²⁶¹ That both when Tito's and KI's stances coincided and when they disagreed there was no larger issue at stake, only goes to reinstate the claim that the concrete interpretation of a policy was always allowed to differ to the extent that it did not differ from the dominant general idea. Put

²⁵⁶ Gužvica, *Before Tito*, 152-153, 177.

²⁵⁷ *ibid*, 177. Swain, *Tito* 25.

²⁵⁸ Walker, 145-147.

²⁵⁹ Jovo Bakić, "Jugoslovenstvo Josipa Broza Tita: kontinuitet ili diskontinuitet?," in *Tito - videnja i tumačenja*. eds Manojlović Pintar, Olga et al. (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije : Arhiv Jugoslavije, 2011): 47.

²⁶⁰ Walker, *National*, 146-147.

²⁶¹ Swain, *Tito*, 28.

differently, my argument that Tito and Stalin did not differ theoretically is further supported here.

Further on, just months prior to the commencement of WW2 in Yugoslavia, KPJ made a decision to create a separate Croatian CP in order to appease Croat demands more successfully.²⁶² Still, though, Tito went to lengths to appease centrifugal forces²⁶³ and published a text in which he termed the war as imperialist and called for a socialist revolution, thus a class struggle, as a response to it. “It is impossible for the oppressed people to struggle for their liberation, the endangered nations for their independence, [...] and not to strike at the very foundations of the imperialist system.”²⁶⁴ Furthermore, disregarding Georgi Dimitrov’s advice of reducing the revolutionary rhetoric and putting forward instead a call for national liberation,²⁶⁵ Tito started organising the Party for an insurrection, which culminated in famous May consultations,²⁶⁶ where a line to war more similar to Trotsky’s permanent revolution was adopted instead the one which KI demanded and envisioned a typical ‘stages theory’ approach. For Bakić, putting forward such policies was not contradictory with the continuous support for the Yugoslav framework, as the support was pragmatically justified as more conducive for the carrying-out of the revolution.²⁶⁷ However, with the commencement of the Operation Barbarossa, KPJ’s Central Committee (CK) called upon, not the working class or peasants, but each of the Yugoslav *nations* for what is now a defensive war – “The struggle of the Soviet Union is also your struggle, as it is struggling against your enemy...”²⁶⁸ To apply Walker’s earlier notes, direct allegiance moved from USSR to Yugoslavia because Soviet needs required so. Following Partisan’s temporary defeat by the end of the year, Tito shifted his rhetoric

²⁶² Haug, *Creating Socialist Yugoslavia* 51.

²⁶³ *ibid*, 49-53.

²⁶⁴ Josip Broz Tito, “Rezolucija V Zemaljske Konferencije Komunističke Partije Jugoslavije.” in *Sabrana djela* vol. 6 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1983): 51.

²⁶⁵ Josip Broz Tito, *Sabrana djela*, vol 6. 213, 215.

²⁶⁶ Haug, *Creating Socialist Yugoslavia*, 55-64.

²⁶⁷ Jovo Bakić, *Jugoslovenstvo Josipa Broza Tita*, 48-51.

²⁶⁸ Haug, 46.

slightly and argued that “the current struggle is ‘people’s liberation’ in form, but ‘class’ in essence”.²⁶⁹ As Tito’s Partisans’ successes increased in the following year and territories expanded, Foča regulations of February of 1942, declared, apart from organisation principles, also that “all confiscated property ... is to become social property and to be entered in the People’s Liberation Fund, administered by People’s Committees.”²⁷⁰ By the end of the year, in the article where brotherhood and unity was first explicitly utilised, Tito argued that “the war is not an equivalent to the previous world imperialist war [anymore], but this one is a patriotic, liberating war,”²⁷¹. Consequentially, solving the national questions is the key to winning it. In sum, there were shifts induced by KI, however, they never followed a strict pattern as set out by Walker.

Briefly, this oscillation from one discourse to another is observed in the gradual toning down of the revolutionary rhetoric vis-à-vis ‘national liberation’, as opposed to increasing utilisation of both together. This, shift, however, as Swain noted, is following a consistent logic, as Tito attributed ideas of Stalin to the building of socialism, thus an international sphere for Yugoslavs, and ideas of Lenin to the revolution in a capitalist country, thus a domestic issue for Yugoslavs.²⁷² However, and this is Swain’s limitation, as argued above, for Lenin, there is no clear separation of domestic and international. What I am trying to prove in this thesis is that such nuances can only be grasped by considering the role of nationalism as a part of any Marxist’s general thought. In-turn, remembering the distinction between Lenin and Stalin entails that Tito was Stalinist all along, and that apparent separation of two spheres temporarily hid this connection. In fact, soon there was a blurring of the two – when the political vacuum created by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia’s disintegration and KPJ took power – building

²⁶⁹ Swain, Tito, 43.

²⁷⁰ Fred Singleton, *Twentieth-Century Yugoslavia* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1976): 110.

²⁷¹ Josip Broz Tito, “Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji u svjetlosti narodnooslobodilačke borbe,” in *Sabrana djela* vol. 13 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1982): 96.

²⁷² Swain, Tito: The formation of a disloyal Bolshevik, 262.

socialism from scratch automatically became an international issue. In-turn, Tito's Stalinist approach came forth. To put it differently, 'brotherhood and unity' was a political slogan envisaged as an antithesis to the fascist danger, and indeed it was ultimately successful. However, it never contained an antithesis to the capitalist order once fascist danger was gone. Unfortunately, Tito's writings on economy in this period are scarce, and merely simplistically referred to the Soviets as a model. Thus, to see the limited extent to which it presented an antithesis to capitalism, we must turn to Tito's writings on economy upon the capture of state-power.

Our land's bravest hero[es]

Mainly thanks to the collapse of Mussolini's regime, KPJ's national front rapidly grew in power, and in November 1943, despite Soviet grumbling,²⁷³ declared itself as a new government.²⁷⁴ At the same meeting, AVNOJ²⁷⁵ passed resolutions and regulations which nationalized property, with further property nationalization of all enemies, war profiteers, collaborators, absent people, etc. in the following two years.²⁷⁶ Wrapping it up with the 1946 Constitution, almost 80% of industry, banking and transport were in state hands. "The Party, acting in the name of the proletariat, not only initiated policies, but also directly administered all aspects of execution of those policies from federal to communal and enterprise level," reminiscent of Stalinist form of state capitalism.²⁷⁷ Indeed, economic problems were relatively similar, which induced the similar approach of fostering capital accumulation through the

²⁷³ KI was dissolved in May 1943 due to the Stalin's facilitation of co-operation with Western allies.

²⁷⁴ For a brief and introductory overview of the process of Yugoslav post-war state coming into being, see Ivo Banac, "Yugoslav Communists and the Yugoslav State," in *Cambridge History of Communism vol. 2*, eds. Norman Naimark et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 570-598.

²⁷⁵ AVNOJ – Antifašističko Vijeće Narodnog Oslobođenja Jugoslavije (Antifascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia)

²⁷⁶ Singleton, *Twentieth-Century Yugoslavia*, 110.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 111.

centrally developed economy. The state aimed to increase efficiency in the economy by strengthening vertical organisation, and also to increase productivity by giving more incentives, and thus started controlling access to the nationalized resources.²⁷⁸ New central planning and administrative system created in summer 1946, envisaging more intermediary levels of bureaucracy designed to increase productivity by getting closer to the workers, was part of “the increasing centralisation of government hierarchies, the Party, and the mass organisations, with a concomitant rise in professional administrative staff, [...] with] relatively few roots in industrial workplaces.”²⁷⁹ The main issue in 1947, at the time of introducing the first Five-Year Plan, intended to rapidly industrialise Yugoslav economy, was the bargaining between investing in the industry, thus ensuring competitiveness on the world-market, and in the agriculture, thus securing the social peace of, by that time, largely peasant population.²⁸⁰ In short, in the most-immediate period upon capturing power, KPJ found itself in difficult conditions of economic backwardness, requiring from the preservation of the state for the successful finalisation of economic tasks.

Swain notes that Tito understood the necessity of the state apparatus already in early 1944, instructing Party leaders to “approach all matters from the standpoint of a new, independent, *state formation*.”²⁸¹ In the post-war economic context, with problems which similarly troubled the Soviets in 1920’s, Tito opted for a solution similar to Stalin’s and

²⁷⁸ Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, *The Economic Struggle for power in Tito's Yugoslavia: From World War II to Non-Alignment* (London: Ibitarius, 2016): 50-54.

²⁷⁹ Unkovski-Korica, *Economic Struggles*, 55.

²⁸⁰ For conditions of agriculture in Yugoslavia after the end of WW2, see Singleton, *Twentieth Century Yugoslavia*, 114-117. The contradiction between two options was nicely highlighted by Domagoj Mihaljević: “During 1947 the party leadership wanted to rationalize the costs of the production as much as possible and assert the centralized state system [...] Attempts were made to reduce the amount of wages in cash, decrease distribution costs and save on fuel and stocks. Various systems of rationalizing the food costs were introduced like coupons, and food stores within factories. [...] Efforts were made to centrally regulate the wages at all cost, since this was crucial for the implementation of the plan. Nevertheless, great resistance appeared in carrying out this policy. When workers dissatisfied with low wages threatened to strike, factory managers often had no choice but to engage in collective bargaining and agree to workers' demands, regardless of the state directive not to negotiate with workers”. See Domagoj Mihaljević, *Igniting the Revolutionary Light: State Formation and the Introduction of Workers' Self-management in Yugoslavia, 1945- 1950*, (MA Thesis. CEU, 2020): 55. See also, Unkovski-Korica, *Economic Struggles*, 62-66.

²⁸¹ Swain, *Tito*, 69. My emphasis.

Bukharin's line of 'socialist transformation of peasants'. Namely, Tito concluded that KPJ could not achieve complete collectivisation, because of the potential opposition from peasants, and thus passed the Law on Agrarian Reform and Resettlement in August 1945, which strengthened peasants by giving them land, even though they imposed upper size limits on land.²⁸² In sum, collectivisation was not followed through thoroughly and at the height of collectivisation, in 1949, 78% of Yugoslavia's agricultural area remained in private hands.²⁸³ In other words, for Tito apparently, like with Bukharin, a gradual exchange between the state and peasants was the way of developing the Yugoslav economy. Similar rationale was behind his speeches to the factory workers in 1946. Tito motivated the workers to increase production, "as this is the only way to make our living conditions better".²⁸⁴ Elsewhere, Tito argued that "we must first now create preconditions for a better workers life. [...] The essence is that we produce as cheap as possible as many necessary means of subsistence".²⁸⁵ Finally, in Tito's view, "competition [...] has a huge importance for our speedy development in completion of Five-Year Plan and building of socialism."²⁸⁶ The approach to peasants and workers forms a coherent project – if the threshold of socialism is the mere elimination of material inequalities, then it is not contradictory to utilise the state instrument to foster such *uravnilovka*.²⁸⁷

Tito's stances on the national question mainly followed the processes in the economy. In the new context, however, 'brotherhood and unity' obtained a different role already by the end of WW2. Instead of being utilised to foster conditions for a new revolution, now it was employed to prevent national questions from hindering the construction of socialism in the Yugoslav state. "There are still enemies who are annoyed with our unity and brotherhood, [...]

²⁸² Singleton, 115-118.

²⁸³ Singleton, 119.

²⁸⁴ Josip Broz Tito, "Pozdrav radnicima fabrike "Rade Končar", in *Izbor iz dela vol. 2 Radnička klasa i Savez Komunističke Jugoslavije 1926-1977*, (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 204-205

²⁸⁵ Josip Broz Tito, "Ostvarimo što hitnije preduslove boljeg života," in *Izbor iz dela vol. 2 Radnička klasa i Savez Komunističke Jugoslavije 1926-1977*, (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 202.

²⁸⁶ Quoted in Tomislav Anić, "Socialist Competition from Soviet Union to Yugoslavia," *Review of Croatian history* vol. 13, no. 1 (2017): 191-192.

²⁸⁷ Equalisation of differences/inequalities.

and who want to] introduce the squabbles and fratricidal war back into our country.”²⁸⁸ It is of no surprise that in the same speech immediately after the above warning Tito reminded the youth that the task highly interlinked with the preservation of brotherhood and unity is the “construction of a new, federative Yugoslavia”. Speaking of the intra-republican borders in 1945, Tito famously declared that they should be “white lines on marble pillars”, they should be borders that connect, not separate.²⁸⁹ Federal Yugoslavia is a “joint house” where “brothers, despite being demarcated, are under one roof”. The focal points of his 1946 article were the differences between the inter-war and post-war Yugoslav state, and the transformative nature of NOB (National Liberation Struggle). For Tito, the new Yugoslavia is a much more just state, which has a sufficiently resolved national question, and NOB was appealing to the peoples precisely because of its’ dual aspect – “not merely inviting people to struggle against the occupier” but also offering hope of a radically new and better life.²⁹⁰ Titoists would perhaps say that this was giving a socialist content to a nationalist form. The state nationalities policies followed the same logic. The Articles 9 and 11 of the 1946 Constitution defined republics nominally as sovereign, but their powers were reduced by the centre, with Article 46 further stressing the primacy of the federal centre and its’ obligations. In other words, republics had power only where not explicitly vested in the Federation.²⁹¹ Furthermore, the Council of Nationalities (*Veće naroda*) was instituted as one of the two chambers of the Federal Parliament, and was given a veto power. As often stated in the literature, the Constitution was almost a word-to-word copy of the Soviet 1936 Constitution.

²⁸⁸ Josip Broz Tito, “Govor na Drugom Kongresu Antifašističke Omladine Jugoslavije,” in *Sabrana djela* vol. 20 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1984): 47.

²⁸⁹ Josip Broz Tito, “Govor održan u Zagrebu 21. maja 1945,” *Sabrana djela* vol. 28 (Belgrade: Komunist, 1988): 64-72.

²⁹⁰ Josip Broz Tito, „U čemu je specifičnost oslobodilačke borbe i revolucionarnog preobražaja nove Jugoslavije. in *Izbor iz dela* vol. 3 *Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 87-96.

²⁹¹ Dennis Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978): 71.

In tying, however, the brotherhood and unity slogan to the state, Tito gave it a new meaning. It is not that slogan simply had “Yugoslav patriotism” inherent in it, as Haug argued,²⁹² but that it obtained ‘patriotic’ connotation as soon as it became utilised for preserving the Yugoslav state. To relate this shift to more general Marxist approaches to nationalism, it is the end goal [to which national question is subordinated] which provides the approach to nationalism with meaning. For Tito upon the seizure of power, the end goal became the preservation of state, and ‘brotherhood and unity’ – his solution to the national question, turned into an absolute and abstract idea of a nation. “Brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav peoples is a sacred relic on which no one should dear to sin”!²⁹³ Thus, as Drago Roksandić noted, the principle “with truly emancipatory potential, became an instrument of political repression.”²⁹⁴

Adopting this limited role of nationalism by tying it to merely one state, prevented the conglomeration of CP-led states into joint federations. To remind the reader, practically all of the Marxists agree that contradictions stemming from capitalism cannot be resolved within capitalism but require the socialist mode of production. Where they differ, is on what socialism looks like. Thus, within the program of the 1920’s KPJ’s left-wing, the national question in the Balkans – one of capitalism’s mischiefs, could be resolved solely within the context of the Balkan Socialist Federation.²⁹⁵ Questions of Macedonia and Kosovo, where other South Slav and non-Slav ethnicities lived intermixed, could not be resolved within capitalism precisely because entailed the congruence of nation and the state. With Tito, however, as socialism can

²⁹² Haug, 123.

²⁹³ quoted in Roksandić, *Bratstvo i jedinstvo*, 41.

²⁹⁴ *ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Idea existed since late 19th century. To my knowledge only sources in English are contained in Dragan Plavšić Dragan and Andreja Živović, “The Balkan Socialist Tradition: Balkan Socialism and the Balkan Federation, 1871-1915,” *Revolutionary History*, vol 8, no 3 (2003). At the beginning of the Second World War, British pushed an idea of a Balkan Federation as a mean of future protection of status quo and defence against the Soviets, see Branko Petranović, *Balkanska Federacija 1943-1948*, (Šabac: Zaslona, 1991): 37-38, 45-46.

be achieved within a Yugoslav state, BSF is no longer a *necessary* dialectical step. Naturally, as with all Marxists, ultimate joining of states and nations will be achieved within the communist phase, and thus they will work on that path, but with the proponents of the ‘socialism in one country’ theory, there is no need to rush things up.

Thus, Tito did indeed work on the construction of BSF in the afterwar period. In his Leninist linking of the national question to the revolution, Tito was one of the initiators for the creation of Balkan Headquarters (*Balkanski štab* - BŠ) already in summer 1943, a platform for cooperation of KPJ, Greek CP and Albanian CP.²⁹⁶ Under the Bled Agreement with Bulgaria, Yugoslavia renounced all of the war reparations in the light of comradely internationalism and hopes of forthcoming unification of two states into a joint federation.²⁹⁷ Huge economic investment into Albanian economy after the war was supposed to prepare grounds for the merging of two ‘socialist’ states.²⁹⁸ Tito and other KPJ high-officials were retrospectively keen to remind everyone of their pre-1948 internationalism, embodied in numerous material aid to other ‘people’s democracies’.²⁹⁹ However, from the conflict with Stalin, all of Tito’s plans in that direction seem to have stopped.

What were the reasons behind Tito’s pulling of the break on the BSF project? Certainly, Stalin buried the idea, by subjugating its’ realisation to the direct needs of USSR. Thus, already in late 1943 with the Tehran Conference, Stalin prioritised the appeasement of the UK and USA and dismembered KI, in-turn nudging the dismemberment of the BŠ.³⁰⁰ However, Tito did not simply obey Moscow’s ideas, but had his own considerations which rendered BŠ detrimental both to the Soviet and Yugoslav interests. Indeed, the first one to question BŠ was

²⁹⁶ See Petranović, *Balkanska federacija 1943-1948*, 57-59.

²⁹⁷ See Branko Petranović, *Balkanska Federacija*: 181, 185-186.

²⁹⁸ Most recently stressed by Jeronim Perović, see his article “The Tito–Stalin split: a reassessment in light of new evidence.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* vol. 9, no. 2 (2007).

²⁹⁹ See Milentije Popović, *O ekonomskim odnosima između socijalističkih država* (Belgrade: Kultura, 1949).

³⁰⁰ Petranović, 195.

Tito.³⁰¹ Branko Petranović thus highlights Fitzroy Maclean's visit as a cause for Tito's shift, inducing him to consider international context.³⁰² "We must take great care – considering the international position – about Yugoslavia as a whole, as a state," claimed Tito. Consequentially,

"Any creation of joint headquarters in the current situation would be wrong, and even harmful. [...] We have our Supreme Headquarters for the whole of Yugoslavia, which can provide assistance in all respects to both Bulgarian and Greek partisan detachments. [...] Therefore, there must be leading military centres within their national borders, which can cooperate on an allied basis, in order to coordinate operations and transfer experiences from that struggle. Yugoslavia plays a leading role in the Balkans in every way [...] we should be the centre for the Balkan countries."³⁰³

In this quote it is distinctively visible how the prioritisation of constructing socialism in one country prevents any international solution to the national question. That Tito followed Stalin on this issue does not show some stricter control by the latter, but the increasing overlap in theoretical understanding of interests, induced by the fact of both are finding themselves in the relatively similar context of leading the socialist project.

The story is similar around the actual 1948 conflict. Stalin did effectively end the BSF idea by separating it into two stages – the first of dual federation between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, with Albania potentially joining-in in the second stage.³⁰⁴ Tito's opposition to Stalin on this issue did not result from his realisation that the national question will not be possible to resolve without the BSF – if that was the case, he would have probably continued to work with

³⁰¹ Petranović, 65.

³⁰² Petranović, 66.

³⁰³ Petranović, 66-67.

³⁰⁴ Jeronim Perović, "The Tito–Stalin split: a reassessment in light of new evidence." *Journal of Cold War Studies* vol. 9, no. 2 (2007).

other CPs on that project in some form. Instead, believing that constructing socialism in Yugoslavia is possible, Tito concluded that the national question can be resolved without BSF for the time being. Consequentially, conclusions on the sources of Tito-Stalin split ought not to suggest their ideological divisions, but in the very logic of their shared perspective. Where does BSF lie for Balkan communist like Tito? Is it a domestic or international issue? In-turn, should Lenin's or Stalin's advices be utilised? As I have demonstrated, the two can never be considered separate, and once understood as inter-linked, it becomes clear that holding a view that socialism can be constructed in one country will have direct consequences on the international connections between 'socialist' countries. Put differently, this perspective entailed real-politics consideration, and its' most loyal adherents – Tito and Stalin, had a conflict because the they approached the middle ground with same perspective but from opposing sides. Interests of the countries which they were leading, countries which were essential for the successful construction of socialism in their respective country, collided. If developing socialism in your country is a necessity, that is, seeing socialism in one country as an end-goal, then nationalism results from such view naturally, as a mean of justifying every step on such a path.

Tito's alternative to Stalinism

As mentioned above, much of Tito's and Yugoslav history after 1948 tends to be explained as some form of response to the split. Tito and comrades certainly helped to portray such view. The core of most of such accounts was self-management. Self-management's adoption, however, was not conducted merely or primarily out of ideological reasons, as some would have us believe, but out of pragmatic considerations of economic reforms necessary for the continuous construction of socialism. Namely, with the previous more centrally-planned

system being unable to resolve internal contradictions (quite the opposite, increased some of them), as Vladimir Unkovski-Korica has shown, a search for an alternative model began even prior to the split.³⁰⁵ The logic behind the initial adoption, as well as all of the subsequent reforms and considerations, has been the enhancement of the socialist project within Yugoslavia.

Economy and nations

‘Basic Law on Management of State Economic Enterprises and Higher Economic Associations by the Workers’ Collective’ was introduced in June 1950, after initial 6 months experimental period.³⁰⁶ In his famous speech, Kardelj attempted to present the introduction of the workers’ self-management economic model as a move away from Soviet bureaucratism and towards withering away of the state.³⁰⁷ Likewise for Milovan Đilas, it was supposed to be an anti-bureaucratic and anti-etatist return to Marxist principles of socialization of the previously state-owned property giving thus workers proper control of the process of production.³⁰⁸ Similar sentiment was echoed by most leading economists, who saw workers’ self-managing model as economically more efficient and rational approach than centralism.³⁰⁹ Triple D – debureaucratisation, decentralisation and democratisation, was the order of the day. In other words, general people’s properties (such as factories, transport, trade...) were to be

³⁰⁵ Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, “Workers’ Councils in the Service of the Market: New Archival Evidence on the Origins of Self-Management in Yugoslavia 1948–1950,” *EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES* 66, No. 1 (2014).

³⁰⁶ law - <https://www.marxists.org/subject/yugoslavia/self-management/1950/06/x01.htm>
Singleton, 125-130.
Korica, 86-100.

³⁰⁷ Unkovski-Korica, 82-86.

³⁰⁸ Igor Štiks, Brothers Re-United! Federal Citizenship in Socialist Yugoslavia,” in *Nations and Citizens in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav States: One Hundred Years of Citizenship* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015)

³⁰⁹ Branko Horvat, *Privredni sistem i ekonomska politika Jugoslavije. Problemi, teorije, ostvarenja, propusti* (Belgrade: Institut ekonomskih nauka, 1970): 19. Overview of the debates is available in the same publication, 11-14, 17-20.

managed by working collectives (everyone employed in the enterprise) on behalf of the social community.³¹⁰

Indeed, the working collective seemed to be in control of most decisions, as by April 1951, only a few of transport and communication enterprises were under central state control,³¹¹ while in society's enterprises workers directly elected among themselves 15 to 20 workers to the Workers' Council, which met every month and made decisions about enterprise's business.³¹² The Workers' Council elected among itself 3 to 11 members to a committee of managers, which was the executive branch, making day-to-day decisions. Finally, the Party, through local administrators, suggested a director to the enterprise, who was to have a central role of organising, but on whose appointment Workers' Council had veto-power.³¹³ All of the important decisions were to be made by the whole collective's deliberation.

In truth, societal means of productions were henceforth controlled not centrally but by working collectives (everyone employed in the particular enterprise), which were in-turn run by Workers' Councils to which employed workers were elected.³¹⁴ The move away from state-planned economy is plain when observing the development of the enterprise's increasing competency of wage and investment decision-making, which by 1957 left practically full disclosure with the enterprise.³¹⁵ What is more, the justification of the new model was made easier as it proved successful. Namely, between 1953 and 1960, GDP grew on average annually

³¹⁰ Singleton, *A Short History*, 126.

³¹¹ Štiks, *Brothers Re-United!*

³¹² Michael Lebowitz, "Pouke jugoslovenskog samoupravljanja," accessed 10th May 2019 <http://www.princip.info/2014/05/03/pouke-jugoslovenskog-samoupravljanja/#>

³¹³ Lebowitz, *Pouke jugoslovenskog samoupravljanja*; or Singleton, 127; or see udzbenik

³¹⁴ See Michael Lebowitz, "Pouke jugoslovenskog samoupravljanja," accessed 11th January 2021, <http://www.princip.info/2014/05/03/pouke-jugoslovenskog-samoupravljanja/#>; or Singleton, *Twentieth Century Yugoslavia*, 125-130.

³¹⁵ See Unkovski-Korica, *Economic Struggles*, 107, 125, 138-142.

by 8.9%³¹⁶ while the real wage increased annually on average by 5.4% between 1953 and 1964.³¹⁷ The Second Five Year Plan was achieved ahead of schedule.³¹⁸

All this was achieved, however, with a continuing backing of state in the form of protective barriers, subsidies, price fixing, cheap credits, etc. As argued above, the adoption of a decision to build socialism in one country entailed an active participation in the world-market competition. For the relatively economically-underdeveloped country such as Yugoslavia, being competitive required some accumulation of capital. The Soviet model of heavily-present state in the economy was one of the options of overcoming such issue, but it had a problem for not being the most efficient system. The self-management model, however, whilst resolving the latter issue much better, largely exacerbated the former. Atomising the society and subsequently unleashing the market discipline on it backfired in the 1960's. In-turn, the continuing logic behind all of the economic reforms primarily aimed to resolve the issue of enterprises competitiveness by balancing between the capital accumulation and rational business management.

Thus, at the turn of the decade there were opposing views for the direction of the Third Five Year Plan. As the market forces caused unbalanced economic growth, some economists argued for a planned economy and an even stronger role of the state.³¹⁹ On the other hand, there was an increasingly dominant opinion that market orientation is a solution for developing the economy, as its rational disciplining effect would bring higher efficacy and better product-quality.³²⁰ The latter prevailed and in 1961 three 'limited' economic reforms were implemented which completely abolished income control and liberalised foreign trade. However, these led to "inflationary wage payments" and worsening of the trade balance, whilst industrial

³¹⁶ Dušan Miljković eds. *Jugoslavija 1945-1985. Statistički prikaz* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1986): 66.

³¹⁷ *ibid*, 141.

³¹⁸ Horvat, *Privredni sistem i ekonomska politika Jugoslavije*, 29.

³¹⁹ *ibid*, 22.

³²⁰ *ibid*, 20.

production growth halved.³²¹ Still, leading economist Branko Horvat claimed, rationale of reforms was right, whilst the problem was corruption (bad implementation) and economic backwardness (bad timing).³²² Thus, the course was continued and in July 1965, passing of the new package of over 30 new laws signalled the “birth of market socialism”. Package reformed the banking system, as now local banks (not federal banks) were able to use funds provided by factories, the foreign trade system, with withdrawing export subsidies, reducing import duties and allowing enterprises complete free trade with foreign enterprises, the monetary system, having abolished price controls and devalued the currency, and finally reformed budget system, having reduced budget spending, taxation and put caps on wage rise.³²³

Still, these reforms have again failed – productivity increase-rate and accumulation-rate have decreased, trade-balance has worsened, prices were not stabilised, and in overall Third Five Year Plan was abandoned.³²⁴ This time Horvat acknowledged improvements of the political implementation, but put failures down to bad timing, that is, unprepared and too great exposition to the market effects.³²⁵ To move beyond the economic language, living standard in general deteriorated – prices of food, clothing, rents and fuel were on the rise, while there was an increase in unemployment by 40% between 1964 and 1970.³²⁶ Regional inequality gap widened even further. Stratification of the society heightened, as “salaries of the highly skilled staff, as well as of the officials, grew faster than the salaries of the worker”.³²⁷

³²¹ See *ibid*, 20-21. Also see Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Yugoslavs*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 240.

³²² This is not suggesting that Horvat had a significant say in the policy-making, but mainly to hint at role of professional economists whose advice was increasingly been sought after by SKJ. See Horvat, *Privredni sistem*, 22-23.

³²³ See Singleton, *A Short History of Yugoslavs*, 241-242.

³²⁴ Horvat, *Privredni sistem*, 26.

³²⁵ *Ibid*, 25-26.

³²⁶ Singleton, *A Short History*, 242-244. Furthermore, Singleton notes that “the percentage of the workforce who were unemployed did not grow at the same rate, as there was a steady influx of new recruits from the rural areas. These were mainly people who had previously lived on privately owned farms and who were not counted as insured workers, or they were school leavers from the villages. Many of these filled vacancies in industrial occupations, replacing workers who had gone abroad.”

³²⁷ Namely, already in 1961 “workers in the leather and footwear industry were given 7% increase, whereas the employees in the oil industry were given 41% increase”, see Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić, “Harbringers of Crisis. Labour strikes in Yugoslavia (1958-1974)”, *Istorija 20. veka* vol. 37, no. 1 (2019): 163.

Following the introduction of self-management model, the 1953 Constitutional law readjusted an approach to the national question. Mainly and perhaps paradoxically, it aimed to foster Yugoslav unity, as all powers not vested with the Federation were delegated, not to the republics, but to ‘the working people’.³²⁸ Parliament still being bicameral, *Veće naroda* was now subsumed as one part of the Federal Chamber, whilst Chamber of Producers (*Veće proizvođača*) was added. The 1963 Constitution came after the further influx of profit rationale into the policy-making, with decentralisation being in full power. Thus, the republics gained significant concessions, as right of self-determination has returned, republics’ legislative powers was broadened, there was insistence on voluntary cooperation among the republics and equal national representation within Federal Executive Council. However, it was not republics which were reinforced at the expense of state, but enterprises.³²⁹ Federal Parliament’s composition further complicated as *Veće proizvođača* was now divided into four chambers (each representing one occupational branch),³³⁰ meaning that the Yugoslav voter had triple representation – as a citizen, producer and as a member of ethnic group.³³¹

Amendments to the 1963 Constitution were passed in three waves, all after the full-on embracement of market logic in 1965. Six amendments passed by the Federal parliament in 1967 reflected the changing balance shift, as it constitutionally enhanced republics’ powers vis-à-vis the republic, with the first amendment broadening the ‘list’ of areas on which *Veće naroda* could now meet.³³² The second package of 12 amendments, passed in December of 1968, after a turbulent year, abolished the Federal Chamber with its competencies passing to *Veće naroda*, whilst Autonomous Regions (ARs) effectively reached same level as republics, as their National Assemblies could now introduce their own constitutional laws, have their own

³²⁸ Rusinow, Yugoslav Experiment, 70-72.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ see Singleton, A Short History of Yugoslavs.

³³¹ Rusinow, Yugoslav Experiment, 151.

³³² See Rusinow, Yugoslav Experiment, 225-226.

Supreme Court and veto-power federal decisions concerning them.³³³ Finally, last 21 “workers” amendments were passed in the summer of 1971, which through focusing on the position of workers in self-management, further limited federal functions in areas of investment and law-making. The 20th amendment is paradigmatic, as it “reversed” previous balance of power, with now Federation having power only where not explicitly vested with republics and ARs. Even those powers were further restricted with new introduction of “ethnic keys”, that is, principle of republican and provincial parity, with each institution having such ethnic structure so to impose “harmonization” of views, effectively giving each actor veto power.³³⁴

Challenges

Increasingly crisis-like situation pushed for the solidification of the subjective counter-force – workers’ strikes.³³⁵ In total between 1958 and 1969, there were 1732 registered workers’ strikes,³³⁶ and even though the [in]famous first strike happened already in January 1958 (Trbovlje, Slovenia), a sharp increase occurred in 1962. Neca Jovanov puts that to Tito’s speech in Split that year where he encouraged workers to fight for their rights,³³⁷ while Nebojša Popov puts it precisely as a reaction to the above-mentioned 1961 reform, which caused feelings of insecurity amongst workers.³³⁸ Even though actual numbers of strikes were intentionally hidden by authorities,³³⁹ Popov (and Jovanov a decade later) provides us with the indisputable fact of the increasing number of strikes in the 1960’s, making it finally an official problem for the Party, confirmed by the fact that it has met requests of almost every strike

³³³ Ibid, 228-229.

³³⁴ Ibid, 283-286.

³³⁵ This paragraph partly draws from the paper I produced for the course Twentieth Century Balkan History.

³³⁶ Nebojša Popov “Štrajkovi u savremenom jugoslovenskom društvu,” *Sociologija* vol. 11, no. 4 (1969), accessed on 11th January 2021, <http://www.zsf.rs/analize/strajkovi-u-savremenom-jugoslovenskom-drustvu/> .

³³⁷ Neca Jovanov, *Štrajkovi u SFRJ od 1958. do 1969. godine* (Belgrade: Zapis, 1979): 96.

³³⁸ Popov, *Štrajkovi u savremenom jugoslovenskom društvu*.

³³⁹ Dobrivojević Tomić, *Harbingers of Crisis. Labour strikes in Yugoslavia (1958-1974)*, 169-171.

within the extremely fast period.³⁴⁰ Jovanov put that rise down to the overall democratization of the society whilst at the same time workers were decreasingly represented in all main institutions, including SKJ and trade-unions. Popov meanwhile focused on the deteriorating position of the workers, showing that there were some 90 000 workers having minimum wage in 1968.³⁴¹

The deteriorating economic conditions called for two great challenges and demands for the reform of the self-management model. The first one in the form of student demonstrations in Belgrade in early June 1968. Despite being often overestimated both by contemporaries and by later commentators, radicalism of student demands and their criticism of self-management is, however, questionable, and I would argue, remained at the surface level. In short, student demands, whilst indeed pointing to numerous issues with Yugoslav society, failed to problematise the contributing effect self-management model had in bringing them. Instead, they bought to the official line of idealising self-management as an ideal, and famously stated that they “don’t have any special political program [... but] that [their] program is the program of the most progressive force of the [Yugoslav] society – Programme of SKJ. [They] demand programme’s more consistent implementation.”³⁴² In other words, they failed to prevent an alternative reform discourse. The second challenge took its’ mass-character with the Croatian Spring 1971 protests, but the crux of it was the economic platform put forward by the Croatian League of Communists’ (SKH) leadership a little more than a month after student demonstrations. Their argument followed (and mostly overlapped with) the authors of the so-called *White book*, published in the context of early 1960’s economic debates, which saw the

³⁴⁰ Jovanov shows, however, that SKJ’s attitude towards strikes was critical, that it signified backwardness of the working class’ consciousness as they “undemocratically” went against self-management, and that SKJ focused on punishing initiators. See Jovanov, *Štrajkovi u SFRJ*, 27-32.

³⁴¹ He argued that there were several axis of inequality – regional, intra enterprise, inter sectoral.

³⁴² “Drugovi radnici, građani i omladinci (4. jun 1968)” quoted in Boris Kanzleiter, “1968. u Jugoslaviji. Tema koja čeka istraživanje,” in *Društvo u pokretu. Novi društveni pokreti u jugoslaviji od 1968. do danas*, eds. Đorđe Tomić and Petar Atanacković (Novi Sad: Cenzura, 2009): 36.

roots of economic stagnation in the objective factor of excessive role of the federation.³⁴³ Intervening into debates of the federal budget balance and economic rationalisation, Miko Tripalo and Savka Dabčević Kučar let the tendency of the further decentralisation of Yugoslavia. Both students and SKH leadership presented a challenge to the self-management model, and by ultimately appealing to the masses, created a vacuum space for a more radical rethinking of the economic policy, however, both remained within the dominant rationale. The former saw the Party and its' ideology as the most progressive, whilst the latter presumed the existing Yugoslav framework, merely arguing for a slightly different distribution.

In addition to the Croatian Spring challenge which derived from the above mentioned SKH leadership platform, Yugoslav system experienced another challenge to their approach to the national question. Namely, three-day debates in March 1971 at the Belgrade Law Faculty have spurred many controversies – namely, one of the speakers (Mihajlo Đurić) was afterwards arrested.³⁴⁴ Đurić was most 'principally' critical of constitutional reforms from centralist position. He argued that 1971 amendments "practically cracked" Yugoslavia which is now becoming a mere "geographical term" as under the masks of ethnical parity independent national states are arising within Yugoslavia, and that Serbs have most to lose because of their presence in other republics.³⁴⁵ "Anti-regional autonomy" sentiments are found with Aleksandar Ivić, Budimir Košutić, Vladimir Jovanović, and finally Stefan Vračar, who argued that ambiguity of amendments manipulates and mystifies the problem, and that increase of

³⁴³ Hrvoje Klasić, "Svibanjsko savjetovanje 1968: Ekonomsko-politička platforma Hrvatskog proljeća," in *Hrvatsko proljeće 40 godina poslje*, eds. Jakovina Tvrтко (Zagreb: Centar za demokraciju i pravo Miko Tripalo, 2012): 60.

³⁴⁴ Publishing speeches from the meetings, originally planned for the *Annales of the Belgrade Law Faculty*, was prohibited afterwards, and only saw the light in 1990. Before that, in his 1988 book *Jugoslavija nacija i politika. Prilog raspravama o ustavnim promenama od 1968. do 1988*. Radoslav Stojanović, himself one of the speakers at the 1971 debate drawing from his memory and notes presented main points of each speech on pages 31-50. Furthermore, in the book *Federalizam, nacija, socijalizam. prilog javnoj debate o ustavnim promenama* from the same year as the actual debates, prof. Jovan Đorđević expanded on his views, see pages 11-20, and 83-85.

³⁴⁵ Mihajlo Đurić, "Smišljene smutnje," *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu*, vol. 19, no. 3 (May-June 1971): 230-233.

autonomy for republics vis-a-vis federation prevents the successful development of self-management.³⁴⁶

Tito handling the business

The sharp rise of Tito's reference to 'brotherhood and unity' and nationalism in general in 1960's is the first indicator that Tito's formula obtained a different meaning. In short, with the 1960's signifying an ever-further submerge into market-orientation in grappling with the deteriorating conditions, Tito's approach to the national question had the purpose of creating a sense of false unity, thus inducing economic actors to the merging of their powers, which is necessary for the further development of the Yugoslav road to socialism.

Tito's 1956 article on the meaning of internationalism primarily in regards to the former colonies is the initial hint of his utilisation of national question.³⁴⁷ With the Bandung Conference ongoing at the time and Tito travelling to Egypt and other distant places, such internationalism was to serve the Yugoslav economy exporting its' products to the less-developed countries. The domestic context is even more telling. In 1957, Tito for the first time during the self-management period, suggested clearly the interplay he envisages for nationalism and socialist economy. Namely, with the presumption that chauvinism wears-off when people are intermixing, Tito suggested that workers-producers from different republics should intermingle and join their forces as it is in their best interest.³⁴⁸ The 1962 came after the

³⁴⁶ Stojanović, *Jugoslavija nacija i politika*, 42-44.; Budimir Košutić, "Ustavni amandmani i suverenost naroda," *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu*, vol. 19, no. 3 (May-June 1971): 300-303.; Vladimir Jovanović, "Preduzeće osnovna organizacija udruženog rada i jedinstveno tržište," *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu*, vol. 19, no. 3 (May-June 1971): 328-333; Stevan Vračar, "Tzv. Ustavni amandmani su izraz društvene krize, ali nisu i izlaz iz ove krize," *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu*, vol. 19, no. 3 (May-June 1971): 333-337.

³⁴⁷ Josip Broz Tito, "Narodi se ekonomski, kulturno i politički mogu razvijati samo ako postanu nezavisni," in *Izbor iz dela vol. 3 Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 201-206.

³⁴⁸ Josip Broz Tito, "Nacionalno jedinstvo i idejno jedinstvo su nerazdvojno vezani," in *Izbor iz dela vol. 3 Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 198-200.

unsuccessful 1961 economic reform and the first failures of the self-managing model. Thus, in that year, with increasing strikes and his speech in Split, Tito increased his rhetoric that “each of our republics would be meaningless, were we not all together” and that “we must preserve our greatest legacy – the brotherhood and unity of our peoples, as it allows us to creatively move forward and create a strong socialist community.”³⁴⁹ The message is clear: we must work together for the state and not complain in order to achieve socialism. Later same year, Tito most explicitly outlined the task of workers in relation to nationalism and economy. Namely, as the main obstacle is that “there are many same-branch enterprises which do not have mutually co-ordinated programmes of work, they experience difficulties in producing and selling their products. Thus, they are the burden of a socialist community [sic.]. This is to be corrected with smaller enterprises coordinating with larger factories.”³⁵⁰ It is the “immediate economic interests which require from us to fasten the integration process. Enterprises from all republics ought to cooperate. Fluctuation of capital must not remain within the boundaries of one republic but of our entire country.” In-turn, “precisely on this common interest [of working together] workers should nurture brotherhood and unity”.³⁵¹ A year later, Tito reiterated that *uravnilovka* in various fields is required so as to allow for this economic integration of enterprises from different republics.³⁵²

To briefly summarise hitherto Tito’s new national formula in the self-management context, the issue of unity became subordinated to and determined by the productivity criteria. More concretely, solely with the construction of conglomerate, large enterprises with accumulated capital could the Yugoslavs competitively export their products abroad. Precisely

³⁴⁹ Josip Broz Tito, “Ni jedna naša republika ne bi bila ništa da nismo svi zajedno,” in *Izbor iz dela* vol. 3 *Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 231-233.

³⁵⁰ Josip Broz Tito, “Ekonomija, tržište i kretanje kapitala u jednoj državi mora biti jedinstveno ma koliko u njoj bilo nacionalnosti,” in *Izbor iz dela* vol. 3 *Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 234-238

³⁵¹ *ibid*, 236-237.

³⁵² Josip Broz Tito, “Svako može da bude ono što osjeća da jeste i niko nema prava da mu natura neku nacionalnu pripadnost,” in *Izbor iz dela* vol. 3 *Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 240-241.

here do the contradiction of the ‘socialism in one country’ theory come to the fore as they enmesh policy-makers into the market-defined rationale. In-turn a shift in the meaning attributed to ‘brotherhood and unity’ is most apparent here – it is not utilised anymore for the spread of revolution by capitalising on national differences, but it is the unity of nations as a precondition for their economic development.

Finally, in 1964, Tito clearly identified the bureaucrats as the bearers of the nationalist tendencies. According to Tito, bureaucrats and workers are opposed primarily because workers’ interests go beyond one republic within integration, whereas bureaucrats prevent the further development of self-management and economic integration with their statist tendencies.³⁵³ Tito here clearly identified and attacked the influence of the bureaucratic class. However, what truly matters is how he combatted them in reality. Thus, in the same article, Tito’s solution for the backwardness, and in-turn for the “further development of intra-national relations” is “the most rational utilisation of available means and resources.”³⁵⁴ This is a great example of why it is necessary not to consider any Marxist’s approach to the national question narrowly, but place it within his wider thought on economy.

The extent to which Tito’s economic thought provided a counter-tendency to the bureaucrats is especially noted in times of crises, as those periods posed the question of the future of self-management. Thus, in relation to the students’ challenge, KPJ’s answer is often summarised with Tito’s famous television speech where he, as a “benevolent father”, accepted most of student’s demands (but condemned presence of “reactionary elements”), and promised to work on their implementation.³⁵⁵ In fact, much of the overestimation of students’ radicalism is due to this Tito’s “defeat”. In addition, there has been a ‘stereotype’ that Tito’s regime was

³⁵³ Josip Broz Tito, “Međunacionalni odnosi u našoj federaciji,” in *Izbor iz dela vol. 3 Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija* (Belgrade: Svjetlost, 1977): 249-254.

³⁵⁴ *ibid*, 256.

³⁵⁵ TV Beograd, “Tito govori studentima. Beograd, 9. jun 1968. godine.,” YouTube video, posted by “Muzej Istorije Jugoslavije,” 11th June 2015, accessed 14th January 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nne2feNUEu8>.

“shaken to the ground”, and many subsequent events are explained through these lenses. However, Milivoj Bešlin criticises such retrospective historicization and presents an argument that student demonstrations had almost no effect on Tito’s leadership and subsequent events.³⁵⁶ He makes note of other processes which were already ongoing at the time, and most importantly for this paper’s discussion, claims that *Smernice*, a document of the Presidency of the SKJ’s Central Committee published on 14th of June, was already initiated in late May, that is, before student demonstrations.³⁵⁷ *Smernice* themselves overlapped hugely with student demands, as they were just about “redistribution of priorities and methodology of implementation of already existing SKJ’s program.”³⁵⁸ The extent to which Tito had control over the situation is presented by Hrvoje Klasić, who stresses the calmness of Tito choosing the right moment to make public declaration on student demonstrations, and the difference between what Tito said at the joint sitting of the Presidency and Executive Committee of the SKJ’s Central Committee on 9th of June (where he expressed highly negative opinion of demonstrations) and what Tito said on TV. Namely, according to Klasić, Tito intentionally manipulated his comrades so that he could utilise students’ argument of leaderships’ incapability to increase his own political leverage.³⁵⁹ This indeed suggests that Tito recognised the crisis and in-turn presented yet another discourse of reform, which, however, again did not go in the direction of questioning the self-management model, but yet again aimed at resolving issues with a political means. In sum, Tito never saw an objective problem with self-management, but put all of its’ fallacies down to amendable human factors.

³⁵⁶ Milivoj Bešlin, “Uticaji “juna ‘68.“ na političku situaciju u Jugoslaviji,” in *Društvo u pokretu. Novi društveni pokreti u jugoslaviji od 1968. do danas*, eds. Đorđe Tomić and Petar Atanacković (Novi Sad: Cenzura, 2009).

³⁵⁷ *ibid*, 57-60.

³⁵⁸ *ibid*, 57. For the full text of the document, see “Smernice Predsedništva i Izvršnog Komiteta CK SKJ o najvažnijim zadacima Saveza Komunista u razvijanju sistema društveno-ekonomskih i političkih odnosa,” *Politika* (14th June 1968): 3-26.

³⁵⁹ Hrvoje Klasić, “Tito’s 1968 Reinforcing Position,” In *Revolutionary Totalitarianism, Pragmatic Socialism, Transition*, eds. Ognjenović G. and Jozelić J (Palgrave Macmillan, London. 2016): 174-175.

In regards to the challenge from both Belgrade centralist and Croatian decentralists, Tito mainly responded with the stick rather than with the carrot. In addition to Đurić being arrested, a subsequent purge of liberals saw most of the Serbian Party leadership removed. Similarly, Croatian leadership was forced to resign on their places. The 1974 Constitution, “the most complete constitution in the world”, with its’ complex system of quotas and affirmative measures, in-fact represented the fence outlining the extent to which self-management can go against centralist tendencies without breaking. With the necessity of resorting to repression, it seems fair to conclude that Tito’s ongoing attempt to utilise the concept of ‘brotherhood and unity’ failed to resolve the contradictions inherent in the Yugoslav economic conditions.

Who wants to be a Yugoslav?

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, Tito’s main formula for resolving the national question – the ‘brotherhood and unity’, experienced a substantial shift in the meaning it carried, however, the logic which was behind both/all of the shifts, was unchanging. This becomes obvious solely when taking into consideration also Tito’s approach to the economy, and further more clear once observing what socio-economic issue Tito was attempting to resolve with his formula. Tito’s pre-1945 formula was a revolutionary motto, interpreting the tactical requirements in regards to the national question through the perspective of ‘socialism in one country’, that is, by instrumentalising nationalism to advance the socialist project ongoing in USSR. After 1945, Tito’s immediate context changed as he found himself at the head of a state. His rationale, however, did not change – it was merely applied from a different standpoint. In other words, the criteria for utilising nationalism was the preservation and advancement of the Yugoslav socialism-constructing project. This has led Tito into conflict with Stalin, because the concrete interests of two countries collided. Nonetheless, the logic behind either’s

understanding of the role of the national question was the same – nationalism serves to foster the project of building socialism in the respective country. This did not substantially change with Tito’s Yugoslavs adopting a self-management model. Workers equally remained subordinated to the needs of the socialist project, which was in-turn controlled by the market logic. Tito’s formula of ‘brotherhood and unity’, however, obtained an important supplement after the adoption of self-management. Namely, it served, and ultimately failed, to balance between the two requirements of the Yugoslav socialist project – capital accumulation and efficient resource-utilisation. Observing all of these nuances in Tito’s approach to the national question, and the consequential much tighter connection that can be made between him and Stalin, could not have been possible without this thesis’ method – taking up the economic aspect of thinkers’ opus, and considering the stance on nationalism as part of it.

5. Conclusion

Rarely has there been a story of people like Tito. Moving away from the small village on the at the time non-existent border between Croatia and Slovenia, he became a symbol of resistance to both Hitler and Stalin, a first dissident in the post-war Europe, and a man associated with profane taste for luxury. Tito's influence has been immense. The Fourth Internationale split because of him, whilst most of the Eastern European countries, including the Soviet Union for some brief time, at least considered his revisionism as an alternative path to the creation of socialism. In addition to the numerous anti-nationalists from the former Yugoslav region celebrating him, the self-management model propagated by him has reached factories as distant as Latin America. How he thought and why he thought particular things is such an important research area, which opens up insights for so many disparate themes, that it is surprising that there are not even more attempts of historicising his life.

In this thesis I have attempted to contribute to the advancement of explaining one part of his thought, the one that considers the national question. More precisely, I have set out to contribute to the Marxist approach to the Intellectual History by examining the reasons behind Yugoslav Marxists' failure to resolve the national question. My answer to the question of why did Tito fail to resolve the national question can best be summarised that the failure followed from Tito's incapability to overcome the capitalist mode of production.

In the first part of the thesis, I made sure to highlight the link between economy and nationalism, in order to demonstrate, not merely that one cannot comprehend any Marxist's stance on the national question narrowly, but that a Marxist solution to the national question entails a particular approach to the economy. In that way, I intended to evaluate different Marxists against the Marx's quote from this thesis' epigraph. Thus, when contextualising Tito within the linguistic context of other Marxists attempting to answer the same question, I

evaluated each of their respective approaches to the national question by looking at their writings on the economy. Thus, I succeeded in offering a more nuanced view to the existing literature on the relation between Lenin and Stalin. The approaches of the two towards nationalism are very similar when taken narrowly, however, when taking into consideration their writings on the economy and how they envisaged socialism, a clear difference emerges. In-turn, by noting the etatist influences on Stalin, it became possible to highlight similarities he has with some other authors, like Bauer, whose stances are irreconcilable with Lenin's.

In the second part of the thesis I placed Tito's stances within the socio-economic context of the backward Yugoslavia. There I observed the challenges which stemmed from the economically underdeveloped context and to which Tito tried to react. I have highlighted the role that self-management had in rationalising the Yugoslav economy, and thus making its productivity higher, and have afterwards counter-posed Tito's formula for the national question 'brotherhood and unity' against it. I have argued that the national formula only made sense when analysed as part of the general ideational project to which self-management belonged. Without it, Tito's anti-nationalist but Yugo-patriotic calls obtain merely the abstract and empty shape. Seeing it, instead, as an ideological tool for fostering the Yugoslav unity necessary for the conglomeration of Yugoslav enterprises, required for the sufficient capital accumulation and subsequent meaningful competitiveness on the world market, sheds much stronger light on Tito's approach. In other words, I have demonstrated that Tito's rhetoric of brotherhood and unity, often taken as progressive, were in-fact conservative, serving the perpetuation of one system.

In-turn, these findings allowed for much more nuanced positioning of Tito back into the linguistic context, linking him to Stalin much more tightly than is usually done. In other words, it was precisely this shared conception of socialism, epitomised in the theory of

‘socialism in one country’, which guided all of the ideas and decisions of both Tito and Stalin in regards to both nationalism and economy.

With the method and conclusions presented in this thesis, future researchers can, not only answer why did the Yugoslav socialism fail or what was the purpose of the self-management, but can apply it to the study of any Marxist intellectual’s thought. Stances of Praxists, a vibrant Marxist humanist group of Yugoslav dissidents for an example, on the national question are waiting to be explored. They have written extensively on both themes, criticising the Yugoslav regime, however, no one has as of yet connected these two aspects of their thought. This would provide serious insights for the understanding of Tito’s regime as well, highlighting the ideational opposition he faced. Naturally, the potential for further implications does not end there. Any Marxist ought to agree with Marx’s epigraph. This means that each of their approaches to the national question are yet to be explored. With the potential development of the method, basis for meaningful comparative or global analysis could be made, putting the authors into mutual conversation. Svetozar Vukomanović-Tempo, a prominent KPJ member, much interested in the autonomous trade-unions in Yugoslavia, would be an extremely interesting source. Going even further, perhaps the squeezing of high-party or intellectuals sources would lead future generations into the exploration of the bureaucrats’ stances on nationalism and economy. They seem to be the key in each of the failed socialist project, and the Annales-inspired Intellectual History would thus massively contribute to our overall understandings of the post-war socialism by exploring the thoughts of the bureaucratic class.

The main limitation of this thesis is in my opinion its’ lack of focus. Attempting half-heartedly at the same time both the macro-analysis of grand theories in order to create a total picture, and a micro-focus on one individual, has left me hanging somewhere in the middle. The scope of this thesis was probably never sufficient to incorporate both, and opting for either

would have been more fruitful probably. Nevertheless, this is merely an indication of the space for improvement. Great thinkers can never be completely considered separately from the general themes, as they were influenced by them, and influenced them back. Tito was one of them, and studying his thought necessarily represents such difficulties. Historiography is still waiting on a definitive account of his life and thought. I hope to have contributed to that goal at least by some extent.

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