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Like in the subchapters on Kosovo, the author outlines the political activity of the Turkish parties in Macedonia, as well as the Turkish community's activities through numerous cultural and civic organisations. As already mentioned, the dispersion of the Turkish population is a limiting factor as regards their representation in the parliament and local councils, and impedes more ambitious political engagement. Moreover, as is often the case, political, ideological and personal divisions within the Turkish political class further complicate political life. The main division is into adherents of a moderate liberal political stand and nationalists who accept the Turkish-Islamic synthesis.

The political situation in the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo and in Macedonia remains problematic and volatile. Albanian-Serbian and Albanian-Macedonian relations are always first to come to mind when trying to explain the complexities of the region's recent history, and they certainly are key to understanding its past and future. But Çelik offers the readers of his book a new perspective, that of the region's Turkish minority. Although the numerical strength and political and cultural influence of the Turkish population is relatively weak, they form an integral part of these societies and are active participants in political events and developments in the central Balkans, especially given the support they enjoy from the Republic of Turkey.

KOSTA NIKOLIĆ, *MIT O PARTIZANSKOM JUGOSLOVENSTVU* [THE MYTH OF PARTISAN YUGOSLAVISM]. BELGRADE: ZAVOD ZA UDŽBENIKE, 2015, xvii+502 p.

*Reviewed by* Dragan Bakić\*

Many generations of Yugoslavs born after 1945 thought that their socialist homeland had been forged in the Second World War in the heroic armed struggle fought by Tito's communist partisans against the occupiers and their collaborators (*narodnooslobodilačka borba*). It was then, as the communist origin myth expounded, that the nations and national minorities of Yugoslavia forged their brotherhood and unity (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*) which laid ground for the post-war socialist federation. That new country replaced the "rotten monarchist dictatorship" that was the Kingdom of Yugoslavia destroyed in the Axis invasion of 1941 and put an end to national discrimination of non-Serb peoples that was synonymous with the rule of a "Greater-Serbian hegemonic clique". The legacy of communist Yugoslavism, however, seems to have survived the break-up of the country nearly twenty-five years ago. In

Serbia, in particular, a section of population, not limited to youth-nostalgic older generation, still maintains a strange affection for dead and buried Yugoslavia. All this makes the necessity of scholarly examination of the phenomenon more pronounced. That is exactly what Kosta Nikolić, one of the most gifted Serbian historians, embarks on in his most recent monograph. His analysis is a continuation of what he had already discussed in his excellent *Srbija u Titovoj Jugoslaviji (1941–1980)* [Serbia in Tito's Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2011). Nikolić has presented a thorough deconstruction of what he terms "the myth of partisan Yugoslavism". It should be noted that his study is not that of the history of the Yugoslav idea or the Yugoslav state from

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1918 onwards. It focuses on the official discourse of Yugoslav communists and draws largely on the impressive range of sources of their own provenance and not that of their opponents.

Nikolić analyses the communist view of Yugoslavism from the inception of the bolshevised Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) at the Vukovar congress in 1920. This included the struggle for proletarian dictatorship and terror as means of achieving it and ensured that the CPY became but a mere section of the Comintern whose policy it would blindly follow. It also meant that Lenin's view of Yugoslavia as an artificial Versailles creation that needed to be broken became the guiding principle of CPY; the exploitation of the national question in this country became "the most efficient method" to accomplish its dismemberment and seize the power (p. 26). Rather than adhering to their international doctrine, the communists thus opted for "national communism" as the author aptly puts it. Based on Lenin's interpretation that communists should support revolutionary national liberation movements in "backward" countries, the "left faction" of CPY insisted on encouraging national differences with the view to bringing down the Kingdom. Those Serbian communist such as Sima Marković and Filip Filipović who believed that the national question was democratic and constitutional had to renounce their views and accept those of their Croat and Slovene party colleagues. The latter proclaimed Yugoslavia to be a "dungeon of nations": the "ruling" Serbian nation – and not just a "Greater-Serbian bourgeois clique" – suppressed the other nations, Muslims, Croats, Slovenes and Macedonians, and the struggle for their national liberation was instrumental in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. Such attitude led to the CPY's cooperation with nationalist and even terrorist organisations of all anti-Yugoslav shades, the Croatian Peasant Party, Ante Pavelić's

Ustasas, Montenegrin separatists, pro-Bulgarian IMRO, the Albanian Kosovo Committee. Complying with Stalin's turn "to the left" into world revolution to topple European fascist regimes which were about to start a military crusade against the Soviet Union, the CPY codified its anti-Yugoslav orientation in the decisions of the 1928 Dresden congress.

As a corollary of this emphasis on a national-revolutionary agenda came the transformation of the CPY from a single working class party organisation into several national parties. Serbian communists were completely marginalised in this ideological shift and their role was reduced to extending help to the struggle of communists from the "oppressed" nations for their national liberation. This process was rounded off with the elimination of the most prominent Serbian communist, at least partly independent-minded Marković; after that, the next generation of Serbian communists trained their revolutionary consciousness "with no regard for national interests of their own people" which was "a unique phenomenon in the political history of the European twentieth century" (pp. 144–145). The founding of the Communist Party of Croatia and the Communist Party of Slovenia in 1937 was a concession to separatist tendencies of Croat and Slovene communists and prepared the ground for (con)federalisation of the Yugoslav party and later the communist Yugoslav state. This was the organisational structure of CPY that Tito sanctioned when he became its leader in 1940 emerging from Stalinist purges.

The true role of Tito's partisans during the Second World War in establishing their own brand of Yugoslavism is perhaps the most revealing part of the book. Far from the official narrative about the joint struggle of all Yugoslav nations and national minorities against the Axis invaders forging *brotherhood and unity*, the partisans were participants in, and

one of the initiators of, the horrible civil war fought along ethnic and ideological divides which claimed the lives of the majority of war casualties. Nikolić convincingly argues his case in an analysis of partisan war effort in each of Yugoslavia's regions with their different national structures. After having abstained from fighting the occupiers as long as the 1939 German-Soviet pact of non-aggression was in force, communists rose to arms at the Comintern's order following Hitler's attack on the USSR in June 1941. The insurrection was quickly quelled by German troops but not before the partisans initiated a civil war in Serbia against another resistance movement, Draža Mihailović's royalists. In doing so, Tito discarded the Comintern's instruction that "class struggle" was a second phase of revolution that should follow, and not precede, national-liberation struggle in which communists needed to join forces with all anti-fascists. Tito and his Serbian partisans found refuge in Montenegro and spread a civil war there, even crueller than that in Serbia. Their main enemies became not German and Italian occupiers, but rather Mihailović's chetniks labelled "Greater Serb nationalists" who acted as military forces of the Yugoslav government-in-exile in London. Nikolić demonstrates how the civil war in Montenegro was in fact "a war for identity because communists fought for Montenegrin and royalists for Serbian statehood" (p. 303). The rhetoric about fighting "the traitors" and "the fifth column" was conveniently employed to justify a ruthless struggle for power.

In June 1942, Tito's partisans were expelled from Montenegro and they arrived in western Bosnia, the heart of the Nazi-puppet Independent State of Croatia. Their ranks and files were recruited from the Krajina Serbs subjected to genocide by the Ustashas whereas the Croat masses – and Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina – supported an independent Croatia,

if not the Ustaha regime. In order to gain support of Croats and Muslims, Tito and the CPY revived the bogey of "Greater Serb chauvinism" and went as far as to intimidate them with the prospect of being slaughtered by Mihailović's chetniks unless they joined the partisans. Even such tactics did not yield much result until the capitulation of Italy in September 1943. Party headquarters in Croatia as well as in Slovenia had an absolute autonomy in the conduct of military operations and acted without coordination with each other or Tito's Supreme Command. In January 1943 when the survival of the main partisan forces in Bosnia was at stake, the commander of Croatian partisans, Ivan Rukavina, refused direct requests for assistance; Tito himself never set foot in Croatia during the war (p. 459). He had no less trouble with the disobedient and particularistic Communist Party of Croatia led by Andrija Hebrang which, in Tito's words, leant towards Greater Croat nationalism and separatism. Thus, there was no overall Yugoslav strategy and it was not before mid-1943 that the CPY started to insist on Yugoslavism and Yugoslavia for the sole purpose of acquiring legitimacy among the Allied Powers.

Elsewhere was the same. In Slovenia, communists were practically independent of the CPY and promoted Slovenian national interests alone, including irredentist claims at the expense of Italy – Yugoslavia was not even mentioned. The fact that Slovenian partisans did not carry out a single military action outside their province throughout the war speaks for itself. In Macedonia, Metodije Šatorov went as far as to attach Macedonian party committee to the Bulgarian communist party and he was expelled from the CPY in July 1941 because of his hostile attitude towards Serbs (pp. 367–368). A rift between pro-Yugoslav and pro-Bulgarian Macedonians remained the main fea-

ture of the partisan movement in that province.

It was in Bosnia that the partisan movement managed to take root and prepare the ground for taking power in the entire country. *Brotherhood and unity* policy was most successful in this ethnically-mixed area as a strategy of defending those who struggled for their life and offering Yugoslav solidarity and common army as a solution – Muslims were allowed to preserve their special identity among partisans and given the opportunity to escape their share of responsibility for Ustasha atrocities. It was in Bosnia that the national policy of CPY was finally shaped and formulated. This was a balancing act: Tito embraced the restoration of Yugoslavia unpopular with non-Serbs, but inevitable in order to maintain his movement which mostly consisted of Serbs; on the other hand, he underscored the full national self-determination that non-Serbs would have in a new Yugoslavia and passed over in silence the genocide committed against Serbs. Finally, the foundations of communist Yugoslavia were laid at the second meeting of the partisan supreme governing body, AVNOJ. It was then envisaged that federal Yugoslavia would consist of six units (republics): Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia – BiH was the only one that was not based on national principle as it had no absolute ethnic majority among local Serbs, Croats and Muslims.

Serbia was a clear loser in the new communist re-composition of Yugoslavia although Serbian communists alone called their compatriots for the restoration of that country. Nevertheless, Tito and his Supreme Command maintained firm control over Serbian communists, the treatment of whom was sometimes humiliating. The formation of Serbia as a future federal unit bore witness to the utter inability and unwillingness of Ser-

bian communists to protect Serbian national interests. The Sandžak area nearly became a separate entity outside Serbia; it was because of the unwillingness of local Muslims to join partisans and the formation of two other autonomous regions within Serbia that such designs were dropped. Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija were these autonomous regions – the latter despite the fact that the local Albanians supported the Axis occupation and offered armed resistance to partisans as late as December 1944 (the Serbs in Croatia did not receive autonomous status although they were the backbone of partisan forces). This was effectively a concession to Albanian nationalism and an attempt to placate it, a policy that would carry on in post-war Yugoslavia. In fact, during the war Tito even considered ceding Kosovo to communist Albania. It was a measure of Serbian communists' impotence that their party was not formed until May 1945, at the end of the war and eight years after the formation of the parties of Slovene and Croat communists. In addition, repression against all anti-communists was by far most ruthless in Serbia – this was a continuation of the struggle against "Greater Serbianism", the most dangerous enemy of CPY since its inception.

In conclusion, Nikolić has produced an excellent book which presents a well-documented account of the evolution and nature of partisan Yugoslavism. His findings will be quite surprising to many a reader but lucid and convincing nevertheless. Contrary to partisan mythology, Nikolić has proved, partisan Yugoslavism was a thin veil designed to cover rampant nationalism of Yugoslav communists, with the noted exception of those of Serb origin, and to provide a framework for dictatorial rule of Tito and CPY. As such, it planted the seeds of destruction of Yugoslavia in a civil war just a decade after Tito's death.