

**POLITICAL TRANSITION IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA**

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**Abstract:** The history of European political transition includes the countries of the Western Balkans, in particular Yugoslavia which during 1989 and the events that occurred, was strongly influenced by politics and opened the journey of creating the multi-party system as in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. Different from other republics Macedonia passed the political transition with no internal conflicts. Most of the people who lived in this region had not ever been able to participate in democratic elections to express their opinions freely. About developments in the former Yugoslavia in 1990, could be written everything because the events will simply warn that this year would be a risk for its future. Political pluralism will be the first step that the constituent republics of the Yugoslav federation will attend. This journey will be full of contradictions and will be accompanied by internal conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia. In this paper special emphasis will be Macedonia from the beginning of independence and contribution of political factor in Macedonia. The Referendum for independence and developments of the Albanian political factor also will be important for the future of this country.

**Keywords:** conflict, transition, pluralism, elections, democracy, independence.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 opened a new chapter or the origin of the creation of the multiparty system, as well as in Yugoslavia there were created many political parties that aimed at the independence of the republics from the former Federation. This process was not easy, it was articulated with internal clashes of different ethnicities that lived in the former republics. In this paper I will try to establish this political transition process with many key points that I will elaborate on in continuity. Today, even though these countries are faced with internal difficulties and divergences have not been overcome, economic development and internal reciprocity between communities living in these republics are targeted.

### 2. HISTORICAL VIEW OF YUGOSLAVIA'S CREATION

To create former Yugoslavia took decades or nearly a century since the idea of joining southern Slavs from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end of the First World War. However, to break up the same Yugoslavia, it took only few years. Communist leader Tito will be in charge of the Yugoslav Federation for almost 35 years. He, along with his associates, will be able to keep the Yugoslav Federation united, and also to strengthen it by taking loans from many countries in order to promote and advance economic capacities.

The Western world also became Tito's great supporter for the sole reason that he had expressed his geopolitical independence from the Soviets, so it often became dull and blind to its policy. Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchev will make many attempts to restore confidence to Tito by offering Yugoslav readmission in the Warsaw Treaty.<sup>465</sup> Tito will cunningly escape this co-operation. As a factor that caused dissatisfaction would be inappropriate constitutional changes. As a result of the power that Serbs had accumulated in the 1930s, Yugoslavia in 1945 was formed with six republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro, as well as two autonomous provinces within Serbia for to preserve the rights of "minorities" as Kosovo for Albanians and Vojvodina for the Hungarians.

### 3. THE START OF CRISIS IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The post-1966 period will be characterized by the revival and Croatian nationalism movement that will begin among students. From 1971, members of the Communist Party will start to circulate proposals for Croatia's secession. Tito here will act with the imprisonment of the people who took part among them also Franjo Tudjman. The northern countries of Yugoslavia also had social dissatisfaction and economic difficulties, so Slovenes and Croats opposed centralized economic planning. They preferred to invest in their own country because they had healthy industries

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<sup>465</sup> Buja, R. *Kosovo issue and Yugoslavia dissolution*. Pristina: AAB University, (2007).

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and also a developed tourism from the Adriatic Sea. After Tito's death in the 1980s, each of the republics and autonomous provinces were states within the state and differences between the nations became deeper. After Croatian separatism, Serbian nationalism will emerge, although other ethnicities believed that Serbs had greater influence on the federation, Serbs insisted that the Yugoslav system puts them in an unfavorable position.<sup>466</sup> On the other hand situation in the Kosovo region because of the mythical importance for Serbs was very serious. Student protests because of bad conditions would suffice for the situation to go out of control and intervene Serbian police against Albanians. From 1985 the Serbian Academy of Sciences will draw up a memorandum to criticize Tito and his anti-politics policies. According to them, for the 30 years of communism Serbia has remained poorer than the north of Yugoslavia. There will also be criticism of the "genocidal" policies against Serbs saying that the majority of Albanians are "suppressing" the Serb minority in Kosovo. The academy will support the idea of a Serbian state and this idea will be strongly supported by Slobodan Milosevic, a product of the Yugoslav communist system.

Milosevic will become chairman of the Communist League of Serbia and in 1987 will give the "patriotic" pro-Serb speech in Fushë Kosovë / Kosovo Polje with which he will gain popular support and will begin to purge the party from rivals as well as "Cares" also for the means of public information. In January 1990 the Communist League was separated from nationalist circles. At that time Serbian police increased the anger of Albanians in Kosovo. The Yugoslav Army intervened to restore military power. These violent episodes by the Yugoslav police sparked nationalist feelings of separation. In the spring of 1990, Slovenia and Croatia undertook concrete steps towards separation. In April, the Slovenian center-right coalition won the elections and began building a constitution that gave the right to partition from Yugoslavia. In Croatia Tudjman founded the Croatian Democratic Union (BDK), a nationalist party that won the elections in April. In Serbia, the referendum held on 1-st of June 1990, gave Serbia the right to lift the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo. The referendum in Serbia prompted Slovenia and Croatia to decide to leave the Federation. In this way the gap between the nationalist blocs was growing. At this point Milosevic, the Serbian leader stated that if Yugoslavia will be divided then all Serbs wherever they live would join in one political entity. Milosevic also pressed Albanian revolts.<sup>467</sup> When the first outbreaks outside Kosovo started there were some dead people. In May 1991, a Croat had to become Yugoslav president in line with the rotating Yugoslav presidency system, but Serbs refused to admit a Croatian president.

The constitutional path to find a choice within the Federation failed. So in June, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence.

In March 1992, war slipped from Croatia to Bosnia. This former Yugoslav Republic was divided during the war between ethnicities. In March 1992, a Bosnian majority voted for the country's independence with the plebiscite, but other ethnic groups opposed it. In Geneva, Switzerland, the process of talks took place with Anglo-American mediators Vance and Owen. Their plan divided Bosnia into different ethnicities and will end the war, but this plan was sharply criticized by US President Clinton who was distanced from this plan. In these 40% of Serbs controlled more than 70% of Bosnia. Under international pressure, Serb leader Karadzic accepted a 52% cut-off plan. Being under international pressure and in a difficult economic situation, Milosevic wanted the end of the conflict in Bosnia. Meanwhile, Muslim Bosnians began to gain Western public opinion, gradually managed to receive aid from the United Nations and arms trafficking because of economic sanctions.<sup>468</sup> While conflict with Bosnia will be very tough, with Macedonia the process will be very quiet. Macedonia was one of the states of the former Yugoslavia that gained autonomy peacefully. The Yugoslav Army based on the peaceful retreat was implemented without incident. It is worth pointing out that even the first pluralistic elections, the declaration of independence and the state constitution passed peacefully. The first parliamentary elections of 1990 were the first multiparty elections in the Republic of Macedonia. The composition of parliament emerging from these elections approved the basic acts and key laws for the functioning of the state as the declaration of Macedonia's sovereignty (1991), the decision to hold a referendum on the Sovereign and Independent States, the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, declaration of international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia. With the constitution of 1991, the Republic of Macedonia is defined as a state with a parliamentary system of governance based on the principle of the separation of jurisdiction. Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia claims that the country has no territorial claims against any neighboring country and as far as this issue is concerned, it has no conflict with neighboring states around the borders. However,

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<sup>466</sup> Tafili, E. *Political transition in Central and East Europe*. Tirana: Pegi, (2008).

<sup>467</sup> Bernard, L. *Balkan Europe from 1945 to the present*. Tirana: Dituria, (2007).

<sup>468</sup> Misha, G. *History of the Balkans 1804-1999*. London: Granada books, (2000).

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its southern neighbor- Greece will become a continuing obstacle to its admission to the UN, although the Badinter commission of the EU calls for international recognition.

From 1997 to 1999 in this period the conflict was concentrated in Kosovo. After more than six years of peace politics pursued by the alienated leader of Albanians Ibrahim Rugova, the process began to deteriorate. The repressive measures taken by Belgrade after the failure in Bosnia were severe. All constitutional and civil rights of the Albanians were suppressed. There were many killings and mass rape. Rugova's diplomatic action failed along with Milosevic's educational actions. This was the signal that Milosevic did not intend to further tolerate the Albanians. Milosevic mobilized the Serb minority by arming and the Yugoslav army began operations against Albanians. After sanctions and recommendations to withdraw, the UN Security Council decided to mobilize NATO for air strikes against Belgrade and the Serbian bases in Kosovo in the spring of 1999. This action led to the end of the conflict. United Nations troops were deployed there and the civilian mission of this organization started. Year 2003 marks the disappearance of the Yugoslav Federation from the Balkan political map after 83 years of its existence. The Federation of Yugoslavia was replaced by a lost union, commonly referred to as Serbia-Montenegro. This unspecified regulation was clearly and conclusively reached mainly under the political-diplomatic pressure of the European Union.

#### **4. POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE TRANSITION PERIOD**

The collapse of the monist system and the establishment of political pluralism in former Yugoslavia will be welcomed from all nations with hope and confidence in the positive change of their future, from repression, persecution, imprisonment that they had been through for decades. In Croatia, the nationalist movement was led by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), under the leadership of former political dissident Franjo Tudjman. The HDZ gained power in 1990 for its anti-communist expression and Croatian identity. It was seen as the most serious alternative to the atheist socialism of former communists, or the Democratic Party for Change (later called the Social Democratic Party of the Social Democratic Party (SDP)). From the Macedonian Bloc the most important parties were: MAAK (the Movement for Immediate Action), former LCM will be reformed with the new Democratic Transformation Party, and then the same party will change its name to the Social Democratic League SDSM. VMRO-DPMNE will be the party that aimed at uniting all Macedonians in one state. The first Albanian party that was founded in the former Yugoslavia (Kosovo) was the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) on December 23, 1989. The first political party that gathered the Albanians of the Presevo Valley was the Party of Democratic Action (PVA), which was established on 19 August 1990. Albanians in Macedonia formed two political parties within a short time: the Party of Democratic Prosperity, 16 April 1990, and the Democratic People's Party (DPP) on June 23, 1990.<sup>469</sup> The Albanians in Montenegro will follow the example of their compatriots and on September 9, 1990, founded their first national party, named Democratic League of Montenegro (LD in MZ). All these parties will influence the affirmation of democratic values even though this political transition as described above has been very dynamic. All these countries emerged from bloody conflicts with the exception of Macedonia, which will later be implicated in an Albanian-Macedonian internal conflict that will be mediated by the Albanian political factor and the international community, resulting in international agreement, the Ohrid Agreement, which provides and guarantees that political parties will fully implement and accelerate the process of Macedonia's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The destruction of the Federal Yugoslavia caused the opening of a lot of old problems in the Balkans. The conflicts that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia were also difficult for the international community. Also, with the emergence of new independent states, the problem of transition or passing from socialism to capitalism was also manifested. All the states that came out of this transition felt and hoped they would have a strong economic and political development. But except Slovenia, which easily passed this time and had a rapid economic development, other republics faced numerous difficulties. More pronounced were the economic problems then leading to various political problems, these difficulties also came from many years of conflicts in this region, and as a result of politics there is no mutual regional co-operation for exit from outdated nationalism but the Euro-Atlantic route must be followed because all states of the region have the priority for inclusion in NATO and the EU.

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