

BOOK REVIEWS

Silvo Devetak, *The Equality of Nations and Nationalities in Yugoslavia—Successes and Dilemmas*. Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1988 [= Ethnos, Band 32]. xi + 136 pp., maps.

The issue, the author, the content of the study: three relevant components to be considered.

The issue: the 1974 Yugoslav constitution rigidly defines the nations and nationalities in the country. It recognizes six nations: Croat, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Moslem, Slovene and Serbian; and ten nationalities: Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech, Italian, Hungarian, Rumanian, Rusin, Slovak, Turkish and Ukrainian. These national groups hold constitutional and ethnic rights that are not extended to other ethnic groups such as German, Gypsy, Vlach, Greek, Austrian, Russian, who are nevertheless present in the country in noticeable numbers. The fundamental distinction appears to be determined by territorial concentration and correspondingly territorially-confined legal rights. It should be noted that the principle ongoing demand of the Albanian *nationality* to be recognized as a *nation* emphasizes the significance of these definitions.

The issue of the constitutionally-determined rights of the federation, the republics, the autonomous regions and local constituencies, and the problems of implementing those rights in various governing bodies and socio-political organizations, forms the core of this study. The discussion stresses what the law says and what normative principles are to be considered, and gives less emphasis to the actual implementation of the laws in contemporary Yugoslavia; for an assessment of this aspect of legal rights, we have to look elsewhere.

The author: Devetak is the director of the Slovene government's Inštitut za raziskovanje narodnostnega vprašanja (the singular is translated as a plural in English: Institute for the Study of Ethnic Problems). In this capacity he serves as government advisor and often as spokesman for official policies at national meetings, and international conferences and symposia, where he has been an active and welcome contributor. Presentations at these occasions constitute the bulk of this monograph.

The content: in thirteen chapters Devetak treats ethnic relationships, local autonomies, the role of self-management, the position of languages in federal agencies and especially in Slovenia, the significance of the Alpe-Adria framework and of transboundary cooperation, and concludes with a prognosis of the future ideological and political development of nationalism and ethnicity. The (incomplete) bibliography of the author's studies for the decade 1979-88 is a welcome addition to the study.

It is not surprising that the assessment is less critical than one would like to see, and is more concerned with anticipated successes than with failures of governmental policies; on the other hand the study is more critical than is usual from a government-sponsored research institution. The failures, where recognized, are ascribed to implementational deficiencies. The policies themselves are presented as inviolable.

The book portrays the Yugoslav scene from the Slovene observation point. Only two chapters (F: "Aspects of linguistic equality in Slovenia," and I: "The Alpe Adria as a multinational region") deal with issues within Slovenia. The rest of the monograph assumes the Yugoslav reality, of which Slovenia is an important though not dominant part. The presentation therefore portrays the larger Yugoslav frame and Slovenia within this frame, acknowledging that what appear to be insurmountable problems of language

recognition pale in the face of the much deeper issues of Albanian *nationality* and Macedonian *nation*.

We are confronted with "BOALS" (Basic Organizations of Associated Labor) and "SIZ" (Self-managing Communities of Interest)—differing numbers of these units are given in different parts of the study—and of course with the Socialist Alliance of Working People, the cadres, and the self-management entities. For an uninitiated reader the specific terminology does more to obscure than to reveal, though it is part of contemporary Yugoslav jargon; however clear and consistent internally, it is difficult to grasp for external observers.

The self-management system and the implementation of laws made in local jurisdictions is presented as the "Yugoslav solution of ethnic problems," all within the framework of the socialist-communist ideology which governs the rights of individuals and of communities. These bases include "the social ownership of means of production, decision making on the part of the working people and all citizens on the use and distribution of the results of their labor" (p. 1); other factors considered in the study exist and are operational also in other ideological and political systems: development planning, self-management, federalism, equality of nations and of nationalities.

It is the author's assertion that the rights of nations and nationalities are an application of the socio-economic system and not a separate structural system based on ethnicity. The federated system of government retains very limited decision-making authority at the national level. The implementation decisions are relegated to the "field," where the regional and local executive agencies carry them out. The decentralization is more evident in the execution of centrally-adopted policies than in the dispersal of policy-making authority. The recognition of nations and nationalities is not left to the members of those nations and nationalities. What they retain is the method by which they may internally execute these rights and privileges. The "pluralism" of interests (p. 19) is not necessarily matched by the pluralism of diverse methods of implementation.

As in other multicultural and multilingual countries and regions, cultural identity leans heavily on language and language recognition: language both as a communicative device and as an icon or symbol. In Yugoslavia—and this is well portrayed by the author—the two functions are merged and are often in conflict: it might, from the standpoint of communicative efficiency, have been functionally more appropriate to adopt a single dominant language. But a decision of this nature would have run counter to ethnic recognition; efficiency suffers at the cost of ethnic individuality.

For Slovenia, the contradiction between the "state" as the organization of power and the concept of "national consciousness" (p. 73 in G, "Contacts with the 'Mother Nation'—Rights or concession?") is viewed differently in Ljubljana than from Belgrade. In Ljubljana the Slovenes in Austria, in Italy and in Hungary are viewed as an integral part of the "national consciousness unit," while the Slovenes within Yugoslavia are a recognized nation in the federation. Viewed from Belgrade, Slovenia is only an administrative unit of Yugoslavia. The activities of Slovenes in Trst/Trieste are thus internal for "national consciousness" and yet external for the "state." The issues of internal tension are contrasted with the friction produced by international boundaries. The solutions require different approaches and engage decision-makers at different levels: the regional level for internal issues, the international level for trans-boundary issues. The author explores these ramifications. In the judgement of this reviewer, this presentation is the most valid and innovative contribution of the book; it is expanded to consider contacts with the "mother nation," cultural and educational cooperation between neighboring nations, and support for the

multinational region of Alpe-Adria; and it reviews the ideological and political aspects of the future development of the *Yugoslav Community of Nations and Nationalities* (notice the terminological formality!), including the consequences of ethnic diversity for the economic integration of a “unified Yugoslav market.”

Because various portions of this monographic publication appeared previously in less accessible outlets, Devetak's theses are less surprising to a connoisseur than to a casual observer. Although normative principles—what is supposed to be—still dominate his presentation, his assessment of an incomplete implementation is fair, refreshing and innovative. The various chapters, each written for a different audience, cannot avoid occasional duplication and even contradictions; and more thorough editing would have also standardized the system of bibliographical references—not even the author's own works are consistently listed in footnotes and bibliography. These are however minor pécadilloes and do not detract from the overall value of the work.

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Ivo Banac. *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*. Ithaca NY / London: Cornell University Press, 1988. 294 pp., maps, photographs, tables. \$32.50.

This book has an intriguing thesis: that Titoism is Stalinism, Yugoslavia's version of “Socialism in One Country.” The point is one which many Western scholars and statesmen miss, writes Banac. Because their focus has been so riveted on East-West tensions, they have mistakenly portrayed Yugoslav socialism as it developed after the 1948 rift with Moscow in simplistic terms. Here, with Yugoslavia, they believed, was a socialism that was genuinely building democracy and a pluralistic society, while coincidentally also challenging Stalin's hegemony in the Communist world. This was, of course, music to the ears of the ideological West, living in the crusading era of the Cold War. The West wanted to view Yugoslavia as united, standing behind Tito in opposition to Moscow. It bestowed its approval with financial aid already in the early fifties.

But life and politics are not simple, and especially not in Yugoslavia. Social and political alliances can be strangely illogical and unpredictable in this Southeast European state. The shifting alignments can be confusing, as Banac illustrates in charts which plot political regroupings within the party beginning in the early twenties. One thing, however, is certain: that Communists in Yugoslavia were not wholly united behind Tito against Stalin in 1948; in fact, Banac demonstrates that opposition to Tito was substantial. Yet, pro-Cominformist (i.e., pro-Moscow) support in Yugoslavia was diverse, scattered, unorganized. Supporters' motives varied: from the ideological, to the tribal, to the nationalist. Moreover, alliances continued to shift, which enabled Tito's “Stalinism” to prevail. In the years of the Cominform crisis, Tito and his aides, many of whom had been trained in Moscow in the thirties—according to Banac it took someone who studied under Stalin to be a Stalinist—were able to whip Socialist Yugoslavia into shape. Some of the pro-Moscow opposition went into exile, others were rounded up, prosecuted, and sent to Goli otok (Yugoslavia's *gulag*). Statistical tables document the surprisingly large numbers. In the end Tito's anti-Communist fight achieved what neither inter-war party confrontations or the wartime struggle could, and what Stalinist purges of the thirties did achieve for Stalin: