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Brothers Re-United! Federal Citizenship in Socialist Yugoslavia

Centralist federalism, 1945–1967

The first phase of federalism in post-war Yugoslavia can be named 'administrative federalism' by borrowing Tito's own definition of the federal units as having only an 'administrative character'. However, the matter was not at all purely administrative. It involved the re-creation of the Yugoslav polity and at the same time a laborious construction of sub-state entities and their own political communities. The creation of separate republican citizenship was part and parcel of this intensive construction of modern states within a larger federation. New Yugoslavia was established as a federation of six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia), one autonomous province (Vojvodina) and one autonomous region (Kosovo), both within Serbia. The republics were established according to ethnic but also historic criteria that resulted in one major exception (Bosnia-Herzegovina) to the general rule that units should be ethnocratic homes for their titular nationalities. Another exception was autonomous Vojvodina within Serbia, established because of its separate history from Serbia proper and its multiethnic composition that would, however, soon be dominated by a Serb majority. Due to its large ethnic Albanian population, Kosovo was formed as an autonomous region (*oblast*) – a lower status than that of a province (*pokrajina*) – and was immediately under martial law after the war. Montenegro might be seen as a cross between a historic state and an ethnically based republic. The debate on whether Montenegrins are a separate nation (they were recognized in socialist Yugoslavia as titular group in their own republic) or a regionally defined part of the larger Serbian nation (the belief still held by one third of contemporary Montenegrins who identify themselves as Serb) is still ongoing.

In this context, it is important to mention the political destiny of the Muslim-populated Sandžak region divided between Serbia and Montenegro. During the

war Sandžak had its own land assembly that was on an equal footing with other land assemblies. A separate Sandžak land assembly was a political concession to the region's Muslim population that was not significantly present among the Partisans. After the war the region faced several possible scenarios: unification with Bosnia-Herzegovina and autonomy (the solution favoured by the Muslims of Sandžak), unification with either Serbia or Montenegro or division between Serbia and Montenegro. The last option eventually prevailed in the spring of 1945 as Sandžak was judged by the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) to have no 'national basis' for autonomy. As for the 'borders that unite', disputes and conflicts erupted immediately after the war between Croatia and Serbia over the Srem/Srijem region that had been put under Croatian command during the war but was mostly Serb-populated, between Croatia and Montenegro over Boka Kotorska (historically part of Habsburg Dalmatia but mostly ethnically Montenegrin) and over Sandžak (see Banac 1988: 100–108).

In early 1946, the first post-war Constitution was adopted and the country established itself as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ). Its first article reads as follows:

The Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia is a federal people's state republican in form, a community of peoples equal in rights who, on the basis of the right of self-determination, including the right of separation, have expressed their will to live together in a federative state. (*Constitution of FPRY 1947*)

Its article 9 proclaims that 'the sovereignty of people's republics (...) is limited only by the rights which by this Constitution are conferred on the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia'. The following article (10) deemed *unconstitutional* 'any act directed against the sovereignty, equality and national freedom of the peoples of FPRY and their people's republic'. As explained in article 1, each republic had the right of self-determination 'including the right of separation'.

This point caused confusion over whether this right had been already used or whether it remained there for eventual future use. The leading Yugoslav Marxist Moša Pijade explained in a letter to Colonel Vlado Strugar that the republics had already exercised their right to unite and not to secede (see Hondius 1968: 141–143). Therefore, the right of secession 'is only in connection with the origin of the FNRJ and not in order to ensure that our republics still have today the right of separation'. Pijade insists that it was an irreversible act of unification (Djilas 1991: 167), the act brought into being during the common resistance struggle. Pijade obviously considered the recent armed struggle politically more significant than a referendum: spilled blood in the place of a cast ballot!

Although the republics were nominally sovereign, their power was curtailed by the Constitution itself that clearly underlined the prevalence of the centre. Article 9 provided that certain rights belonged exclusively to the Federation, whereas article 11 stated that the republican constitutions were to conform to the federal constitution (see Djilas 1991: 161; Shoup 1968: 114). In the case of a discrepancy, the federal laws were supposed to supersede those of the republics. The Constitution also established a bicameral federal Parliament that consisted of the Federal council representing the population (50,000 inhabitants for one deputy) and the Council of Nationalities to which every republic sent 30 delegates, whereas Vojvodina had 20 and Kosovo 15 seats.

In light of the future constitutional and political development of Yugoslav federalism, it is interesting to note that the 1946 Constitution established separate republican ministries of education without a similar federal body. This immediately created a problem over the school textbooks in the sensitive areas of history and literature, the pillars of any Eastern European nation-building: Montenegro, Bosnia and Macedonia required the common approach, whereas Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia opposed it (Lampe 2000: 237). The educational



Figure 3.1 Yugoslavia 1945–1991 (Source: The Cartographic Section of the United Nations).

curricula were never unified and the differences in content and interpretations of events or literary works only grew in the following years (see Wachtel 1998).

The 1946 Constitution is largely seen as a copy of the Soviet 1936 Constitution. Edvard Kardelj himself admitted that this was the inspiration. 'For us the model was the Soviet Constitution, since the Soviet federation is the most positive example of the solution of relations between peoples in the history of Mankind' (in Hondius 1968: 137). Nevertheless, in spite of Kardelj's enthusiastic praise for the Soviet model and the widespread opinion that the 1946 Constitution was a clear case of plagiarism – an opinion that was more often than not automatically repeated by many scholars of Yugoslavia – there are some significant differences.

One can agree with Hondius that '[t]he Yugoslav Constitution was partly an original product, partly a copy of the Stalin Constitution' (1968: 150). The origins of Soviet and Yugoslav federalism were quite different. The long-existing tradition of federalist Yugoslavism eventually matched the Soviet model of a multinational federation, but the USSR was an ideological union of different nationalities – thus its non-national and non-geographic name – whereas Yugoslavia was established as a South-Slavic (supra)national state. One of the most conspicuous differences between the two is evident in the guiding principle according to which the subunits were formed: Yugoslavs did not follow the Soviets by applying exclusively ethnonational standards, but created historic (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vojvodina and to a large extent Montenegro) as well as ethnonational subunits and paid more attention to history, though not always, than their Soviet role models in determining their borders. Among the more specific departures from the Soviet model was the granting of larger fiscal powers to the republics (Lampe 2000: 234; Rusinow 1977: 17). Also, by 1948 each republic had its own communist party. However, Yugoslavs did not follow the Soviets in granting to some republics the right to have their own foreign ministries and their own armies. Yugoslavs would soon distance themselves even further from their Soviet teachers only two years later when the romance with Moscow came to its abrupt end. This would push them to develop new original formulae for 'really existing socialism' in a multinational federal country.

The ideological brainstorming between 1948 and 1953 resulted in the 1953 Constitutional Law that significantly altered the 1946 Constitution. Article 1 defines the FPR of Yugoslavia as a 'socialist federal state of sovereign and equal nations' (*Ustavni zakon* 1988 [1953]). However, the following article (2) clarifies that 'all power in the FPRY belongs to the working people'. The 'working people' of Yugoslavia, as a newly constructed supreme sovereign body, was obviously supposed to supersede the individual, although still

'sovereign and equal' nations. The confusion over supremacy and sovereignty would mark future constitutional attempts as well. The working class and the working people would be often mentioned as sovereign alongside with Yugoslav nations, the republics and, finally, all citizens. We can see here that four different legitimacy principles were in conflict, which is important to bear in mind for later developments. 'Working people' was supposed to include all working citizens of Yugoslavia, not only the working class as the pillar of a socialist regime. In addition, initially five and later six nations were sovereign as well and had the right of self-determination. Furthermore, six republics including their citizens, regardless of ethnicity, were also sovereign and had the same rights (later the right of secession as well). Finally, the Federation as such represented the totality of all citizens. It was clear from the start that the very constitutional definitions of these overlapping 'sovereign' bodies invited different ways of imagining political community or communities and thus constant and necessarily conflicting re-interpretations.

The 1953 Constitutional Law itself did not include the right of self-determination and secession of the republics. This elision corresponded to Moša Pijade's influential and original interpretation that the single-use right of self-determination had not been exercised as a right to secede but to unite.¹ The right itself thus became obsolete. This significant change was rooted in the widespread belief among the Yugoslav political elite that the national question had been solved once and for all and that the Yugoslav socialist consciousness was about to develop. The Yugoslav constitutional architect Edvard Kardelj explained the constitutional changes by a new development that had brought into being a 'unified Yugoslav community' that would overcome the national consciousness of individual nations but would not become a new nation (in Djilas 1991: 180). Nevertheless, the lawmakers were not unanimous on the question of sovereignty: the centralists wanted the question to be avoided altogether and the true character of the Yugoslav Federation to be finally recognized, whereas those coming from the republics sensitive to federalism (Macedonia, Croatia) defended the constitutional notion of republican sovereignty (Shoup 1968: 191–192).

The establishment of the Council of Producers (*Vijeće proizvođača*) in place of the Council of Nationalities (*Vijeće naroda*) confirmed the new ideological line centred on socialist self-management. Historians of Yugoslavia (Djilas 1991: 179; Lampe 2000: 261) usually interpret this, together with the loss of the right of secession, as a step towards the withering away of the republics. The Constitutional Law also appointed Tito as president of the FNRJ and established

the Federal Executive Council (SIV). The Federal Council (*Savezno vijeće*) itself consisted mostly of the members representing their constituencies (one deputy for 60,000 Yugoslavs), whereas republican or provincial authorities delegated a total of 60 members. The Constitutional Law made possible the direct election of deputies. Nonetheless, the deputies were mostly indirectly elected and delegated to the Parliament, which signalled the Party's orientation – under Kardelj's influence – towards a total rejection of direct political representation judged to be too 'bourgeois' (Rusinow 1977: 77).

These constitutional changes, as noted above, were primarily motivated by the conflict with the USSR and the ideological competition between the two socialist states. Fostering of Yugoslav unity, on one hand, seemed necessary in the face of the Soviet threat, but, on the other, was a product of the sincere belief that once the national question had been solved by the internal federal organization of Yugoslavia, all energy should be invested into the building of a single socialist society. The insistence on an all-Yugoslav unity of the working class echoed the Marxist imperative that, in spite of the administrative and political divisions within the state and the Party, the unity of the working class and the Party itself should not be jeopardized.

Only eight years later preparations for a new constitutional experiment began under the leadership of the unavoidable Kardelj who joined forces with the Croatian leader Vladimir Bakarić and other more liberal politicians (Rusinow 1977: 155). The fruit of this two-year labour was a new, ambitious Constitution that was adopted in April 1963. It sought to codify all Yugoslav political, social and economic experiments with socialism after the official introduction of self-management in 1950 and the 1953 Constitutional Law. The country was significantly renamed the *Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* (SFRJ). The term 'state' was replaced with 'social community' and 'socio-political community'. The text itself consisted of nine principles followed by 259 articles (*Constitution of SFRY* 1963). It is important to note here the first basic principle and its significant wording:

The peoples of Yugoslavia, on the basis of the right of every people to self-determination, including the right to secession, on the basis of their common struggle and their will freely declared in the People's Liberation War and Socialist Revolution, and in accord with their historical aspirations, aware that the further consolidation of their brotherhood and unity is to their common interest, have united in a federal republic of free and equal peoples and nationalities and have founded a socialist federal community of working people, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (...)

Article 1 again redefined Yugoslavia as ‘a federal state of voluntary united and equal peoples and a socialist democratic community based on the powers of the working people and on self-government’ [a more common translation would be ‘self-management’, *Ustav* 1971].

As for the relations between the centre and the republics, one can say that the republics gained some significant concessions. The right to self-determination and secession was mentioned again in the first basic principle and the republics’ legislative powers were broadened. The Constitution mentioned voluntary cooperation among the republics and institutionalized the practice that equal representation should determine the composition of the Federal Executive Council (article 226).

Nonetheless, it could be generally concluded that the power of the centre was confirmed. Rusinow notes that the republics – defined now as ‘state socialist democratic communities’ (art. 108) – had not been reinforced vis-à-vis the centre, but that enterprises, communes and other self-managing associations had been (1977). For Hondius the new Constitution proved the Yugoslav leaders’ intention to start ‘transition from the hierarchical to the organic state community’ (1968: 311). In this sense, enterprises, associations and republics themselves were all seen as communities; the Federation being, in the words of legal scholar Jovan Đorđević, ‘a community of communities’ (in Hondius 1968: 312).

The Federal Assembly was radically reformed and divided into five chambers, four of which represented citizens by their economic or social-political function (economy, education and culture, welfare and health and organizational-political chamber), whereas the fifth was the reformed Council of Nationalities (now consisting of ten members from each republic and five from each autonomous province). To understand citizens’ engagement, delegation and representation as well as political legitimacy, one has to take into account a special Yugoslav political model. Besides self-management at the workplace, direct elections were practised only at the lowest communal level. After that, the communal and republican assemblies delegated members to the Federal Assembly. As mentioned before, for Kardelj this was a radical departure from the bourgeois-democratic concepts of parliament and political representation (Kardelj 1977: 97–102, 119–133; Rusinow 1977: 152). Rusinow explains that the Yugoslav voter enjoyed triple representation: as a citizen-consumer in the political chambers, as a citizen-producer in the corporate chambers (if employed in ‘working communities’) and as a member of an ethnic group represented by a republic or province in the Chamber of

Nationalities (1977: 151). Bosnia-Herzegovina as a non-ethnic republic, but some other republics as well, paid special attention to the equal representation of all major ethnic groups in its bodies.

To sum up, the 1963 Constitution could be seen not as a turning point of Yugoslav federalism, but as a moment of hesitation. Although centralist federalism was underlined as the norm of the constitutional and political organization of Yugoslavia, the 1963 Constitution unleashed a political dynamic that would lead towards more decentralization and would even encourage liberal trends. This became evident after the fall of the leading centralist and chief of the state security apparatus Aleksandar Ranković in 1966 and the adoption of the first amendments to the 1963 Constitution already in 1967.

Bifurcated citizenship

On 28 August 1945, the law on citizenship of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia was enacted. It was slightly modified a year later after the adoption of the 1946 Constitution of the FNRJ.² The law had an important function in establishing the initial body of citizens of the 'new' Yugoslavia. Yugoslav citizenship was primarily based on the principle of origin (*ius sanguinis*; see Jovanović 1977: 22; Medvedović 1998: 27–29; Tepić and Bašić 1969: xxxvi). Its article 35 provided that everyone who had been a Yugoslav citizen on 28 August 1945, under the 1928 citizenship act of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, would become a citizen of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. Some of its provisions revealed an intention to underscore the South-Slavic character of the country and also to revoke citizenship from internal ideological wartime enemies who either collaborated with the occupiers or had emigrated abroad. Since it was often impossible, due to the widespread destruction caused by the war, to prove former Yugoslav citizenship, article 25 proclaimed that anyone belonging to one of the 'peoples' of Yugoslavia (i.e. to one of the South-Slavic ethnic groups), those born and raised on the territory of Yugoslavia and permanent residents of the FPRY would be considered citizens of the FPRY. Article 9 also facilitated acquisition of Yugoslav citizenship for persons belonging to 'any of the peoples of the FNRJ' and coming from regions outside its current borders, i.e. to any of the South-Slavic nations, but not for members of *nationalities* considered to have their national home outside Yugoslavia.

Furthermore, in 1948 the law on citizenship was revised in order to exclude from Yugoslav citizenship all citizens of German ethnicity residing abroad

on the basis of their 'disloyal conduct toward the national and state interests of the peoples of the FPRY'. In the same year, an unusually named law on the deprivation of citizenship was enacted as well.³ By these two legal provisions, an unwanted minority – a vast majority of almost 500,000 Germans living mostly in Slavonia and Vojvodina – together with ideological adversaries were excluded from the initial citizenry of the new Yugoslavia.

The status of another largely unwanted minority – namely, ethnic Italians residing in the coastal parts of Slovenia and Croatia – was regulated by separate acts and treaties between Yugoslavia and Italy. A special act related to Yugoslav citizenship – the law on citizenship of Persons Residing on the Territory Annexed to Yugoslavia according to the Peace Treaty with Italy⁴ – was adopted in 1947 following the Paris Peace Treaty between Yugoslavia and Italy. According to this act, persons who as of 10 June 1940 were residents of the territories annexed by Yugoslavia were to lose their Italian citizenship and acquire Yugoslav citizenship. Ethnic Italians had a one-year period to opt for Italian citizenship – in effect, to opt for whether they wanted to live in Yugoslavia or Italy. In addition, an equivalent offer of Yugoslav citizenship was made to the Slavic population from the contested border region between Yugoslavia and Italy.⁵

The first law on citizenship immediately established a two-tier or bifurcated citizenship in post-war Yugoslavia. Article 1, paragraph 2 of the 1945/46 law on Yugoslav citizenship stated that: 'Every citizen of a people's republic is *simultaneously* a citizen of the FPRY and every citizen of the FPRY is *in principle* a citizen of a people's republic.' Article 48 of the 1946 Constitution of the FPRY established that 'every citizen of a republic enjoys in every republic the same rights as the citizens of that republic'. The 1953 Constitutional Law (article 12) contains the same provision. The 1963 Constitution, however, coupled these rights with duties (article 118), a measure that was also incorporated into the 1974 Constitution of the SFRY (Jovanović 1977: 22).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the republic-level citizenships of the constitutive republics were established on the basis of municipal membership or *zavičajnost* (Jovanović 1977: 14–17, 26) and Yugoslav citizens were allowed to have only one, clearly established republican citizenship. The municipal units of the republican Ministries of the Interior started evidencing republican citizens as of 1947 (1977: 45–46). Although it is a widespread opinion – among those rare scholars who examined this issue – that republican citizenship was an almost irrelevant administrative and legal measure in socialist Yugoslavia, it is clear that from the very beginning it had a political function. According to the Voting Registers Law of 10 August 1945 and of 17 July 1946, only citizens of a particular

republic had the right to vote in that republic and in the voter's registration form their republican citizenship had to be stated (*Zakon o biračkim spiskovima* 1947: 32). Citizens from other Yugoslav republics who happened to *reside* on the territory of that republic were not allowed to vote there. Republican People's Assemblies were supposed to be elected only by citizens of these republics, although some republics, such as Croatia, in the following years allowed both its citizens and its residents to participate in the election of delegates for the Croatian Parliament (Hondius 1968: 184). Yugoslav citizenship and permanent residence in a republic were general conditions for participation and voting at the first democratic elections in 1990 as well.⁶ These electoral rules were fashioned by republican socialist authorities and with respect to valid federal laws that guaranteed all Yugoslav citizens the same rights and duties throughout the still existing Federation. However, one cannot fail to see that Yugoslav citizens entered liberal politics through the republics whose citizenship they possessed (the large majority of voters) or in which they permanently resided, and not as federal voters. This would have serious political consequences during the decisive years of 1990 and 1991 (see Chapters 6 and 7). After the break-up of Yugoslavia, republican-level citizenship became essential in determining the initial citizenry of the new states. In other words, republican citizenships became the only strong criterion for political inclusion or exclusion (see Chapter 9).

Another striking feature of bifurcated citizenship in Yugoslavia – another element that since the beginning had been silently reinforcing the power of the republics vis-à-vis the federation – was that only the republic-level registries of citizens existed in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1991.⁷ Thanks to the republic-level registries, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, all former Yugoslav republics were in a position to adopt the policy of legal continuity between previous republic-level citizenship and citizenship of the new state.

During the era of socialist Yugoslavia, three laws on Yugoslav citizenship were enacted (in 1945/1946, in 1964 and in 1976) following the major constitutional changes in 1945/1946, 1963 and in 1974. They also defined the relationship between federal and the republic-level citizenship. The 1945/1946 changes provided federal citizenship for Yugoslav citizens who were concurrently – 'in principle' – citizens of constituent republics. In turn, all citizens of constituent republics were *simultaneously* citizens of the FNRJ. The 1964 law, however, provided for a *united* Yugoslav citizenship (article 1), made republican citizenship conditional upon federal citizenship and declared that republican citizenship would be lost with the loss of federal citizenship (article 2, paragraph 2).⁸ The 1976 law on Yugoslav citizenship contained

a similar provision and added an article (22) on how to resolve disputes caused by the republics' varying laws on citizenship.⁹ These norms regulated the citizenship status of a newborn child either according to the citizenship laws valid in the republic of which the child's parents were citizens or, if the parents did not have the same citizenship, according to the citizenship laws of the republic where the child was born. The norms also offered an option for parents of different citizenships to agree on the citizenship of their child as well as, if the parents could not agree, a possibility for naturalization of the child in the republic of his or her birth. What was mostly an administrative hurdle for new parents, if they migrated within Yugoslavia or came from different republics, was exactly what would turn to be of outmost importance for their children (often unaware of their republican citizenship) when the country disappeared. Those whose families kept in order their 'archives' managed to navigate more or less successfully the post-Yugoslav administrative labyrinths and traps. Those who were not that lucky had a much more difficult path towards full citizenship status in the new states.

The republic-level laws on citizenship were fashioned in order to be in harmony with the federal law on citizenship. In general, they were similar, but they also varied to a certain extent from one republic to the next. They were adopted in three waves, in 1950, in 1965 and in the period between 1975 and 1979. In order to understand their role and the nature of the changes, I briefly present below the case of Croatian citizenship, a case that fairly represents the citizenship-related legislation of other Yugoslav republics as well.

In 1950, the law on citizenship of the People's Republic of Croatia provided that the basic principle for acquisition of Croatian republican citizenship was *ius sanguinis*.¹⁰ However, and this is where the administrative procedure imagines different scenarios, if parents of a newborn child had different republican citizenships, the child could acquire Croatian citizenship if both parents agreed. If they did not agree and they had residence in Croatia, the child would automatically acquire Croatian citizenship. If the parents did not have residence in Croatia but the father had Croatian citizenship, the child would become a Croatian citizen as well. The 1965 law on citizenship of the Socialist Republic of Croatia brought some changes to the procedure.¹¹ Croatian citizenship was automatically granted if a child was born in Croatia and both parents had Croatian citizenship. In all other cases, parents had to agree on the child's citizenship. In the 1977 law on citizenship of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, we observe some new changes related to the acquisition of citizenship.¹² *Ius sanguinis* remained the automatic criterion for acquiring Croatian citizenship;

if both parents were Croatian citizens, the child would automatically become a Croatian citizen. However, if only one parent were a Croatian citizen, the parents then had to agree. In cases in which the parents did not agree or did not sign a statement during the two months following the birth of their child, Croatian citizenship was automatically accorded to the child if the parents had permanent residence in Croatia. If the parents did not have permanent residence in Croatia, the child would acquire Croatian citizenship if his/her birth was registered in Croatia's registry of births.¹³

Those were the legal attempts at establishing clearly who belonged to what federal entity. The administrators were doing their job, more or less accurately, while the 'ordinary citizens' came across complex citizenship matters only when dealing with the administrative offices and tended generally to forget about them the moment they solved their pressing problems. In their almost complete ignorance of these matters, the nature and functioning of their citizenship regimes, understood here in its legal and political dimensions, was changing not only by laws or administrative measure but also by the political and constant constitutional processes, the dynamic intra-party politics (or the separate republican parties' competition), as well as by wider socio-cultural debates in a rapidly modernizing society such was Yugoslav. Above I explained the importance of the changing nature of Yugoslav federalism for better understanding of what it meant to be a Yugoslav citizen. Equally important for Yugoslav citizenship was the system of self-management and the unrelenting process of decentralization.

Self-management, decentralization and citizenship

The constitutional changes cannot be seen or analysed separately from the general trend of decentralization that modestly began in the early 1950s. The expulsion of Yugoslavia from the communist family by its *pater familias* Stalin forced the Yugoslav leadership to find theoretical justifications for their rebellious position. In this politically precarious situation and in the midst of purges launched within Yugoslavia against *Stalinists*, Milovan Djilas re-read Marx's early writings and found the principle of socialist self-management that implied anti-bureaucratism and anti-*etatism*, both of which were associated with Stalin's USSR. In Djilas' own account of events, he recalls that in the spring of 1950 he suggested that Marx's idea of the free association of producers should be implemented in Yugoslavia. He explained this to Kardelj and to the

leading Yugoslav economist Boris Kidrič (while sitting in a car in front of Djilas' villa). The idea was hotly debated in the Party's inner circles for months and was finally embraced by Tito (Rusinow 1977: 50–51). As early as 26 June 1950, the National Assembly adopted the first laws on self-management that would become the trademark of Yugoslav socialism. In short, they claimed control of the economy for the workers and direct democratic control over political bodies for the citizens, with the ultimate goal of the 'withering away of the state', i.e. the creation of a classless and stateless communist society.

The first decentralization measures were tested in the politically less charged economic field. By April 1951, only railways, the postal service and river and air transport were left to central control (Lampe 2000: 256). Self-management meant social ownership of the means of production by those who actually produce. However, the central state did not give away its leverage. The heavy taxation of profits meant that it kept a grip on self-managing production units. However, the process had started and it required constant changes and reforms that would in the decades to come become increasingly market oriented (Unkovski-Korica 2015). It would also empower local actors, factory managers closely related to the republican elites and the republics themselves. Little wonder that Yugoslavia soon faced an economic competition between republics as well as sharp inequalities in economic performance and standards of living between the more developed republics and provinces such as Slovenia, Croatia and Vojvodina and those less developed such as Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. In spite of solidarity mechanisms such as the funds for the underdeveloped republics, Yugoslavia soon experienced its most complex political conflicts over economic issues. Self-management, in spite of frequent criticism that it actually never empowered workers enough or that managers and party cadres actually ran the workplaces and in spite of all its imperfections in a developing country, remains, however, the biggest experiment in economic democracy ever undertaken. As such it attracted international attention during its existence (e.g. Pateman 1970: 85–102; Zukin 1975) and continues to do so (Lebowitz 2013; Suvin 2014: 219–359; Unkovski-Korica 2015), especially in the context of intensive thinking about economic alternatives to neoliberal capitalism, the growing importance of workers' cooperatives and some concrete steps in introducing self-management in different forms in certain Latin American states. Self-management was based on the idea that people should not only govern political structures and be equal in rights in front of the law but also that equality and democratic control should necessarily, for democracy to flourish, be introduced in the workplace where most of the people spend most of their time. In this respect, we can claim that

self-management was an important part of the Yugoslav socialist citizenship regime in its political empowerment of citizens-workers.

More far-reaching political changes followed the introduction of self-management. In 1952, at the Sixth Congress of the CPY in Zagreb, the Party was renamed the *League of Communists of Yugoslavia*. Djilas claims that this was again his idea; only later did he remember that it was what Marx had called the First International (Rusinow 1977: 75f). The *nomen* was an *omen* of departure from the Leninist style of monolithic party structure and a signal of general democratization that included the delegation of all power to the 'base' (communes and factories). The LCY was supposed to maintain for itself the leading ideological role within the general socialist movement and to remain apart from both the state and the economy. This had far-reaching effects, particularly visible more than a decade later with political decentralization and economic liberalization. Rusinow notes that three new Executive committee members who replaced the Party's politburo were also the heads of republics (Vladimir Bakarić of Croatia, Lazar Koliševski of Macedonia, and Djuro Pucar of Bosnia) and four members neither lived in Belgrade nor executed any federal political functions. 'This, too, was a more important real harbinger of future developments than the formal downgrading of the status of the republics in the Constitutional law' (1977: 76).

Party congresses often announced future constitutional changes. Therefore, at the next Seventh Congress in 1958, the LCY recognized 'individuality, equality, and the right to self-determination of all Yugoslav peoples (...) as well as their unity on the basis of federal state structures.' Although the right of self-determination was mentioned again and was to be re-introduced to the Constitution five years later, the Party was still insisting on 'socialist, Yugoslav consciousness' and its development in a 'socialist community of peoples' (in Shoup 1968: 207).¹⁴

The next Eighth Congress of the LCY in 1964 turned out to be decisive for the decentralization of Yugoslavia that would soon proceed at an ever-growing pace. Only a year after the 1963 Constitution was adopted – the Constitution that displayed strong centralizing elements! – decentralization or, more precisely, federalization of the Party was put in motion, which signalled the move towards what I call 'centrifugal federalism' (see Chapter 4) and the corresponding constitutional changes. The statute adopted at the Eighth Congress emphasized the 'independence' of the republican parties and provided that in the future the republican congresses would assemble *before* the central congress of the LCY. They were supposed to determine 'the policies, positions, and tasks' of the

republican Leagues of Communists that should be 'in harmony' with the policy of the LCY (Lampe 2000: 286; Shoup 1968: 213). It is important to note that the national question was the central topic of the reports delivered by leading political figures, including Tito, Kardelj and Veljko Vlahović (in Kobsa et al. 1978: 354–359), with the exception of Aleksandar Ranković.

At the congress, Kardelj significantly talked about 'national economic independence' as a 'special way of self-management of the working people'. He openly supported decentralization and stated that self-managing peoples should enjoy the fruits of their own labour as individual workers (Budding 2008: 103). Kardelj explicitly equated peoples with republics and, more importantly, with individual workers. Some new elements clearly entered into his theory justifying the national existence of the republics on economic grounds, which was, according to Paul Shoup, a reversal of his original intent. The motives behind both Tito's and Kardelj's abandonment of their earlier insistence on broader Yugoslav consciousness are to be found in the strong resistance that this policy met, the importance of Croatia and Slovenia in fighting the opposition to economic reforms and the fear of Ranković's centralist faction (Shoup 1968: 225).

Simultaneous to these changes within the Party was a renaissance of parliamentary life after the adoption of the 1963 Constitution and the ensuing elections. '[It] became, virtually overnight, more exciting and effective than in any other Communist single-party State' (Rusinow 1977: 152). The movement seemed to be orientated towards real parliamentarism, but as Burg concludes, the actual direction was towards *immobilisme* (Burg 1983: 76). This, however, proves that certain institutional measures dynamized – even beyond expectations of their creators – the political life in Yugoslavia and, to the surprise of many conservative communists such as Ranković, actually pushed liberal decentralizing trends forward. They also empowered local players, a development that would become decisive in the years to come (see Rusinow 1977: 154–156). According to Sabrina Ramet, the reforms that took place between 1963 and 1965 established a balance-of-power system in Yugoslavia. And the fundamental principle of this system was that no single actor (republic) had sufficient power to dictate terms unilaterally to the others (Ramet 1992).

The opposition to progressive decentralization of the Party and the state was finally crushed during the Fourth Party plenum at Brioni in 1966 with the fall of Aleksandar Ranković, the chief of the omnipresent state security for twenty years since the war. The defeat of Ranković and his followers signalled a huge push for liberally oriented anti-centralists. The Party itself was immediately

reformed. Its former power was reduced and its administrative organization cautiously refashioned to prevent the accumulation of power in certain organs or, even worse, in the hands of influential individuals. Tito's leading position was, of course, not questioned and he continued to lead the Party, but this time as president and not as secretary general as before. Dennison Rusinow stresses the significant events taking place at the end of 1966: Ranković and his group were pardoned (although harsh measures were required by some Party organs), Milovan Djilas was released from prison, and the Slovene government resigned after a proposed bill on social insurance taxes was overturned in the Slovene republican assembly. This was, as Rusinow points out, the first time that a Communist government in a one-Party system resigned because of a parliamentary non-confidence vote (see 1977: 197–202).

If, as I noted, the 1963 Constitution was a moment of constitutional hesitation, the ensuing four years could be branded as a period of intensive decision-making intended to provide the country with a political stability that would emanate from its subunits and not from its centre. The events from the Eighth Party congress in 1964 to its Fourth plenum in 1966 and the first constitutional amendments in 1967 generated the centrifugal logic of distribution of political and institutional power. In his study on 'conflict and cohesion' in socialist Yugoslavia, Burg reiterates that the Yugoslav leadership tried to produce a system of conflict regulation in order to prevent inter-republican, i.e. inter-ethnic, conflicts. The strategy of decentralization was actually conceived as a strategy to preserve the integrity of the Yugoslav state, but it eventually produced deeper divisions and created conflicting blocs that were, in turn, more often than not identified with ethnic groups (1983: 3–4, 6). This description reveals clearly the logic of centrifugal federalism to which we turn in the next chapter.