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# **Kosovo, 1944 - 1981: The Rise and the Fall of a Communist 'Nested Homeland'**

Aleksandar Petrović and Đorđe Stefanović <sup>1</sup>

## *Abstract*

Based on established explanations of unintended effects of Communist ethno-federalism, the nested homeland thesis seeks to explain the failure of Kosovo autonomy to satisfy either Albanian or Serbian aspirations. Previously unstudied Yugoslav Communist archives indicate that the nested homeland model enabled Communist oligarchies to use the language of national equality to justify the pursuit of ethnic domination. While promising equality among ethnic groups, this institutional design failed to provide equal treatment and safety for all inhabitants of Kosovo, *regardless* of ethnicity. Lack of electoral accountability and suppression of freedom of speech prevented public negotiations and a lasting settlement of the status issue.

## **Introduction**

In the aftermath of the demise of the three Communist federations, Western scholars have engaged in a debate on the role of ethno-federal arrangements in the process of disintegration. Some argue (Snyder 2000; Bunce 1999) that the Communist rulers 'created their own grave diggers,' to paraphrase Marx, by introducing ethno-federalism. Brubaker (1996) argues that an unintended consequence of the Soviet ethno-federalism was reinforcement and politisation of ethno-national identities. Others claim that the Communist ethnic 'federalism' was a facade for the unitary organization ('democratic centralism') of party-states and that suppressed national identities returned with a vengeance in the 1980s. According to this latter view, the end of Communist federalism was not a failure of genuine federations, but of authoritarian, unitary, and excessively centralized states.<sup>2</sup>

A study of the development of Kosovo autonomy from 1944 to 1981 offers an opportunity to assess these competing explanations. The widespread disillusionment with the autonomy that satisfied neither Albanian nor Serbian national aspirations led to the mobilization of Albanian nationalism in the early 1980s, massive Yugoslav state repression, and the creation of the political opportunity for the rise of Slobodan Milosevic and the surge of Serbian nationalism in the mid 1980s. In effect, the failure to design a mutually acceptable status for Kosovo started a chain reaction that led to the unravelling of Yugoslavia.

Previously unused archival evidence<sup>3</sup> indicates that a crucial and largely neglected cause of the failure of the Yugoslav ethno-federalism in Kosovo was the Leninist 'nested'

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<sup>1</sup> The authors contributed equally to the research and writing of the paper.

<sup>2</sup> For a systematic critique of this argument, see Brubaker (1998).

<sup>3</sup> We analyzed several thousand pages of previously unresearched internal Party materials (primarily transcriptions of meetings and final reports) produced by the Commission for Socio-Political System and Multi-National Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, from 1958 to 1977. The sources were accessed in The State Archives of Serbia and Montenegro (previously Yugoslav Archives) in Belgrade, from August 2008 to February 2009.

ethno-territorial autonomy.<sup>4</sup> While the Yugoslav Communists began to emulate the Soviet model after the war, the model reached its full institutional level in the late 1960s. By simultaneously legitimating both the Serbian claim (Kosovo as a part of the Serbian ethno-territorial homeland) and the Albanian claim (Kosovo as an Albanian ethno-territorial homeland) the nested autonomy model created a remarkably conflict-prone ethnic federation. Both ethnic groups could see themselves as ‘legitimate owners’ of Kosovo and demanded that the other accept minority status. Furthermore, the anomalous position of the Kosovo autonomy in the ideological and institutional structure of the Yugoslav federation enabled both Albanian and Serbian national activists to frame their demand for preferential treatment and ethnic domination in terms of ‘equal treatment’ for their ethnic group.

Our paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge on Communist federalism by introducing a new analytical concept (‘nested autonomy’) potentially relevant for a set of cases in Communist Yugoslavia and the USSR and by using new archival evidence to describe the causal mechanisms by which the Kosovo nested homeland exacerbated the ethnic conflicts it was supposed to heal. The paper reviews the main findings of the existing analyses of Communist ethno-federalism before going on to develop the nested homeland thesis. The historical part of the paper analyzes the archival sources to assess the validity of the nested homeland thesis. Finally, the conclusion notes the use of the language of national equality to justify the drive by Communist ethnic entrepreneurs to achieve ethnic domination.

### **The Fragmentation Effects of Ethno-Federalism Thesis**

Ethno-federalism is a form of political power sharing within a single country between the central government and the government of one or more ethno-territorial autonomous regions. Each such region is explicitly designed as an ethnic homeland for an ethnic group, with special responsibilities for that group’s cultural survival and advancement. Following the Soviet terminology, we refer to the ethnic group ‘for whom’ the ethno-territorial autonomy was established as ‘titulars’ in that territory.

While all Communist regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the only countries to completely disappear were those that had implemented ethno-federalism: Czechoslovakia, the USSR, and Yugoslavia. Multi-ethnic Communist countries that did not introduce ethno-federalism – such as Romania and Bulgaria – experienced regime change, but managed to stay in one piece. Some social scientists claim that ethno-federalism unintentionally facilitates nationalist mobilization and state disintegration (Beissinger 1998, p. 182; Gorenburg 2003, p. 25; Bunce 1999, p. 49; Vujačić and Zaslavsky 1991, p. 137; Connor 1984). Some build on social movement theory and draw attention to resources and opportunities, as opposed to grievances in the formation of nationalist movements. By noting the importance of state-recognized identities and existing organizations to the emergence of social movements, they link political process models with historical institutionalism (Gorenburg 2003, p. 9; Bunce 1999; Brubaker 1996).<sup>5</sup> These scholars argue that ethno-federalism fragments common

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Nested autonomies’ is our term to describe this specific ethno-federal form.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in the Soviet case, once Gorbachev’s reforms reduced the threat of direct repression of protest activity, the deep institutionalization of ethnicity determined the form and expression of nationalist demands (Gorenburg 2003, pp. 9, 24; Zaslavsky 1997, p. 89).

national identity, freezes more exclusive ethnic identities, and legitimizes titular nationalism and chauvinism.<sup>6</sup> Ethno-territorial autonomy encourages titulars to perceive ethno-territorial autonomy as creating their ethnic ‘homeland’ or their collective ethnic property (Connor 1984, p. 501), where they can ‘naturally’ expect – and demand – preferential treatment *vis-à-vis* non-titulars in terms of job distribution, access to cultural resources, and so on (Zaslavsky and Brym 1983, p. 98). As Khrushchev explained in 1956, ‘Should the Jews want to occupy the foremost positions in our republics now, it would *naturally* be taken amiss by the indigenous inhabitants’ (Zaslavsky and Brym 1983, p. 105; emphasis ours). Titulars typically see a strong presence of non-titulars in good jobs as inherently unfair. Yet the demand to exclude minorities from good jobs, usually called racism in North American discourse, appears blatantly unfair to non-titulars who frame their opposition as a demand for equal (‘meritocratic’) treatment, regardless of ethnic background.

When the distribution of jobs clearly happens along ethnic lines, even those who previously did not care about ethnicity are more likely to think frequently about it (Gorenburg 2003, p. 12). With the specification of geographic borders and official political symbols (flag, coat of arms, capital city), it becomes easier for titulars to perceive ‘their’ autonomy as a state-in-waiting (Connor 1984, pp. 300-301, 497; Bunce 1999, p. 49). Ethnicity-based sub-national governments can thus fail to either integrate or tolerate ethnic ‘Others’ (Kalin 2004, p. 306) and degenerate into a ‘government of ethnic majority, by ethnic majority, for ethnic majority’ (Hayden 1999, p. 15).

In addition to disintegrative ideological effects, ethno-federalism may provide institutional resources for secessionists. Ethno-territorial autonomy has its own bureaucracy, and this bureaucratic apparatus will have a vested interest in the maintenance and strengthening of titular ethnic identities, as the weakening or disappearance of such identities might threaten their reason to exist. Thus, if secessionist politicians manage to capture a provincial government, they have at their disposal a number of institutional resources to further their own cause: tax revenue, patronage positions in the provincial officialdom, and even coercive apparatuses.<sup>7</sup>

Studies of post-Communist Europe have produced a growing body of evidence on the institutionally disintegrative effects of ethno-federalism. In the USSR, the ethnic groups with the highest level of autonomy (union republics), most wealth, highest average level of education, and the least linguistically assimilated population were the first to secede (Hale 2000). As these union republics used their well-developed ethnic institutions to cultivate ethnic identities and facilitate nationalist mobilization, Hale concludes that ‘appeasing restive regions by decentralization is unlikely to succeed’ (Hale 2000, pp. 32, 49). Similarly, Beissinger (2002) finds that Soviet ethnic groups with union republics, the lowest level of linguistic assimilation, and highest level of urbanization were ‘early risers’ on the path to secession. He concludes that the Soviet federal system, instead of preventing secessionism, actually promoted it by creating a

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<sup>6</sup> In North American terminology, ‘racism’ is normally preferred to ‘chauvinism.’ However, in this case the group difference was generally not perceived as ‘racial’ but ‘cultural.’ Hence, to call this form of ideology and policy of discrimination ‘racism’ would be misleading.

<sup>7</sup> In addition, as Donald Horowitz (1998) explains, in the post-Communist period, international law has evolved in the direction of the recognition of the right of secession of territorial autonomies from multi-national federal states.

sense of territoriality (even for groups that previously lacked a bounded territory), providing ethnic cultural and educational institutions, and creating national middle-class party cadres and intellectuals (Beissinger 2002, p. 119).<sup>8</sup>

### **The Nested Homeland Thesis and Kosovo Case**

Our study builds upon the insights of Beissinger, Brubaker, and Bunce. However, we go beyond them by drawing attention to the *nested homeland* – a Leninist ethno-federal institution with an especially strong disintegrative potential, but largely unstudied. By nested homeland, we are referring to one ethnic group’s ethno-territorial autonomy embedded within another ethnic group’s ethno-territorial autonomy.<sup>9</sup> The introduction of a nested homeland appears to be at least partially motivated by the desire to craft a compromise between competing nationalist aspirations over a disputed territory.

We argue, however, that a nested homeland has an even worse disintegrative potential than do the ‘normal’ ethno-territorial autonomies analyzed by Brubaker, Bunce and others. In ‘normal’ ethno-territorial autonomy, ethnic tension tends to develop between the titulars who demand a preferential treatment in ‘their own land,’ and non-titulars who demand equal treatment. In the case of nested homelands, we may see a clash of two ‘titular nationalisms,’ as both groups see themselves as the titular ‘majority’ and demand to be in the dominant position in the territory in question. Thus, instead of reducing existing ethnic grievances, this institutional settlement can create new ones.

On the basis of previously unused archival sources, we develop a new explanation for the failure of the Communist ethno-federalism<sup>10</sup> and test its validity on Kosovo, an Albanian ethno-territorial autonomy embedded within Serbia, Serbian ethno-territorial autonomy within Yugoslavia. We take a close look at the failure of the Kosovo autonomy between 1969 and 1981 to satisfy either Albanian or Serbian national aspirations.<sup>11</sup> In this

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<sup>8</sup> While the overall Communist experience with ethno-federalism can hardly be seen as positive (Emizet and Hesli 1995, p. 504; Gorenburg 2003, p. 25, Vujačić and Zaslavsky 1991, p. 137), it cannot be argued that ethno-federalism has always produced state fragmentation and disintegration. A number of democratic ethnic federations – such as Switzerland, Canada, and India – have relatively successfully weathered secessionist challenges over long periods. Even so, over-generalizing from the dramatically negative experience of Communist federations might make us downplay the more successful records of their democratic counterparts. Two leading scholars and advocates of ethno-federalism (or ‘multi-national democracy’) persuasively argue that studies of federalism should focus on specific conditions that make success of ethno-federal institution more or less likely (O’ Leary and McGarry 2009). This is our goal in this paper.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Nagorno-Karabakh was an Armenian ethno territorial autonomy embedded in Azerbaijan, Azeri ethno-territorial autonomy within the USSR. Unlike Communist Yugoslavia, which had only one ‘nested homeland,’ the USSR operated a complex hierarchy of nested autonomies. In 1939, it had 21 autonomous republics, 9 autonomous oblasts, and 10 national okrugs (Suny and Martin 2001, p. 2).

<sup>10</sup> A nested homeland was neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the rise of ethnic tensions and conflicts in the late communist period. As Brubaker’s (1996) analysis of triadic relationship shows, Communist ethno-federal institutions and policies led to ethnic conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia, and Moldova, although no nested homeland institutions were implemented in these cases. Moreover, in several cases, such as North Ossetia, the nested homeland institution was implemented but did not seem to have a negative effect on ethnic relations. There were several causal paths towards ethno-national conflict at the end of the Communist period, and the nested homelands effect was just one of them.

<sup>11</sup> The nested homeland model cannot be seen as the ‘root cause’ of this conflict. The clash between Albanian and Serbian nationalist projects over Kosovo territory, dating at least to 1878 (Stefanović 2005), precedes Communist attempts to ‘solve the national question’ in the Balkans. Yugoslav Communists

period, Kosovo Albanians experienced a considerable improvement in their standard of living, educational achievement, and overall economic development (Cohen 2001; Hoxha 1984). Further, Kosovo remained a province within Serbia, thus quieting a major concern of Serbs. Even so, large numbers of both Albanians and Serbs were dissatisfied, voicing their grievances in mass public demonstrations, despite the risk of repression by Communist security forces (Mertus 1999). In fact, ethnic Albanian demonstrations in the early 1980s met with massive Yugoslav state repression, and Serbian protests of the mid-1980s initially faced repression before being politically instrumentalized by Slobodan Milošević (Dragović-Soso 2002; Vladislavjević 2004). By championing the cause of Kosovo Serbs, Milošević began a wider Serbian ethnic mobilization that helped justify the unilateral abolition of Kosovo autonomy in 1989, undermine federal Yugoslavia, and trigger the horrific violence that accompanied its disintegration. The failure of Kosovo autonomy had tragic consequences for all Yugoslavia. In Yugoslav and Soviet federations, the earliest ethnic conflicts to escalate to mass inter-ethnic violence in the 1980s were related to nested homelands: Kosovo and Karabakh.

Why did Kosovo autonomy within Serbia fail to satisfy either Albanian or Serbian national aspirations? In response to this question, and building on the historical institutionalist perspective, we argue that the Communist authorities' decision to recognize a territory as one group's ethnic homeland while simultaneously placing that territory inside a larger region recognized as another group's ethnic homeland created fundamental institutional and ideological contradictions. That is, by recognizing Kosovo as the ethnic homeland of Yugoslav Albanians and embedding it within Serbia, which they designated the ethnic homeland for Yugoslav Serbs, they placed these two ethnic groups on a collision course. On the one hand, because Kosovo was still part of Serbia, Albanian nationalists argued that they were not equal to other Yugoslav nations as they lacked their own ethno-national republic. On the other hand, because other Yugoslav republics did not contain autonomous provinces and Kosovo Albanians were *de facto* titulars in Kosovo, Serb nationalists argued that Serbia and the Serbian nation were not equal to other Yugoslav republics and nations. As Jović (2003, pp. 30, 263) notes, while Albanians wanted a republic so that they would be equal to others (i.e. other Yugoslav nations), Serbs wanted to achieve equality by abolishing Serbia's provinces.

While existing theories and studies make the nested homelands thesis seem plausible, its credibility can only be established by careful empirical research. To this end, we draw upon records of Yugoslav debates, policy documents, and legislation on Kosovo status. If the nested homelands thesis is correct, discourse and framing analysis should indicate that both Serbian and Albanian activists frequently justified their demands for the dominant position in Kosovo by claiming that the province was already designed as their ethnic homeland. In effect, the anomalous position of the Kosovo autonomy in the ideological and institutional structure of the Yugoslav federation enabled both Albanian and Serbian national activists to frame their demands for preferential treatment and ethnic domination in terms of 'equal treatment' for their ethnic group. However, junior Party members did not necessarily know the details of the secret internal CPY debates, and the general public knew even less. The participants in the debates – the politically important sections of population (Gagnon 2004) – had no electoral

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cannot be blamed for the existence of this ethnic conflict, but they do have major responsibility for the failure to channel the conflict in less destructive directions.

accountability to the ‘nations’ they claimed to ‘represent’ or ‘defend.’ Thus, it is implausible to generalize from the content of these debates to the popular opinions of Yugoslav citizens who might not have felt any significant allegiances to ‘their’ respective nations.

### ***Soviet Roots of the Yugoslav Communist Approach to the National Question***

Yugoslav national policy developed within the context of Austro-Marxist ideas formulated by Renner (1902) and Bauer (1907) and the reaction to those ideas by Lenin and Stalin. Renner argued that the nation is a spiritual and cultural community, and he emphasized the central role of language in the formation of a group’s collective consciousness and sense of belonging. Bauer looked upon national character as a social bond and considered the nation a collective with a shared destiny and common culture. He defined nation as ‘an aggregate of people bound into a community of character by a common destiny,’ thereby minimizing the importance of compact national territory. Similarly, Renner argued that ‘[n]ationality is not essentially connected with territory; [rather, nations] are autonomous unions of persons.’ For the Austro-Marxists, nationality was essentially a matter of folk culture and language; as such, the state only had to offer reassurances of cultural autonomy, while withholding administrative and territorial autonomy as concessions that could potentially disintegrate the country.

In 1913, at Lenin’s request, Stalin produced an analysis of nationality as a political factor in which he rejected the ‘abstractions’ of the Austro-Marxist approach and emphasized the material basis of nationalism. He argued that nationality represents a complex phenomenon emerging not only on the basis of a shared language and culture, but within a context of a common economic life in a compact territory. Rejecting the notion of cultural autonomy as ‘intrinsically reactionary,’ but unable to advocate the centralism and assimilation practised by Tsarist Russia, he proposed a system of regional (i.e. territorial) autonomies as the ideal form of self-determination and the solution to the national question (Stalin 1913).

Believing that a nationalist demand for independence arises from a minority’s bitter experience with discrimination and oppression by the majority (Connor 1984, p. 201), Lenin developed a deprivation-based explanation of minority nationalism. In his view, by creating ethno-national autonomies, the Soviet government could protect minorities from Greater Russian chauvinism and allow them to experience full cultural development. Over time, minorities would overcome their distrust of the central government (Lenin 1922). Similar levels of socio-economic development and economic growth would bring various ethnic groups closer until they ‘merged’ into a new national collectivity – a ‘Soviet people’ (Connor 1984, pp. 50, 201, 245, 277).

A Leninist vision heavily influenced Yugoslav communists and their ‘solution’ to the national question (Guzina 2000, p.22). As Tito observed in 1935, ‘The Soviet Union became the model for the multinational state, the model for what Yugoslavia with its varied races must become’ (cited in Connor 1984, p. 146). In 1935, Yugoslav communists decided that the post-revolutionary Yugoslav state should be a multi-national federation. The pre-war Kingdom of Yugoslavia had been dominated by the Serbian monarchy and political elite, and the communists promised that a new Yugoslavia would replace ‘Greater Serbian hegemony’ and the oppression of non-Serbs with the national equality of all Yugoslav peoples. This promise was a crucial element of their mobilizing

appeal to non-Serbs in World War II (Connor 1984, p. 147, 158).

The first step in Yugoslav post-war decentralization was the replacement of pre-war unitary Royal Yugoslavia (1918-1941) with a Communist federation composed of ethnic republics. To this end, Yugoslav communists implemented a system that closely emulated Soviet federalism (Crawford 1998, p. 254). Following the Soviet model, each republic had a legislative assembly, government, judiciary, anthem, coat of arms, and flag (Stanovčić 1988, p. 33). Each titular nation was granted its 'own' federal unit as a form of ethno-territorial autonomy. This arrangement was intended to satisfy all claims of self-determination without breaking up the Yugoslav state. Despite its formal federal character, the centralized organization of the Communist Party, which wielded political and economic power, insured that in this period Yugoslavia was a unitary state with some cultural autonomy for recognized ethnic groups (Shoup 1968, pp. 119,122; Vucinich 1969, p. 253).

This model, however, provided no clues on how to deal with territories whose 'national ownership' could be disputed. The formula could be easily applied to areas where national groups lived in compact settlement zones and where administrative borders could coincide with ethnic borders, such as the border between Czech and Slovak republics in Czechoslovakia, or borders of ethnically homogenous Slovenia in Yugoslavia. But many areas of Yugoslavia were nationally mixed and/or had a high concentration of national minorities. Without a clear set of theoretical guidelines from the Soviets, Yugoslav communists dealt with this issue on a case-by-case basis. In the case of Kosovo, they selected a nested autonomy formula: Kosovo (as an autonomous region) would become a form of ethno-territorial autonomy for Yugoslav Albanians 'nested' within Serbia – a form of ethno-territorial autonomy for Yugoslav Serbs.

From a normative point of view, the nested autonomy model seemed a superb solution – the circle was squared by proclaiming both Yugoslav Serbs (Kosovo as part of Serbia) and Yugoslav Albanians (Kosovo as a form of Yugoslav Albanian ethno-territorial autonomy) equal 'national owners' or titulars of the territory in question. Thus, nested autonomy was envisioned as a compromise. But instead of being a compromise, this 'double promise' of Kosovo proved unsustainable, creating competition between the two groups as to who was the rightful (and ultimately, sole) 'owner' of the region. The fact that Kosovo as a form of nested autonomy for Yugoslav Albanians was positioned on the periphery of the country (bordering Albania) also contributed to rising tensions because breaking away from Yugoslavia (and uniting with Albania) was now a feasible scenario.

### ***Kosovo in Communist Yugoslavia: From Facade Autonomy to Nested Homeland***

In regards to Kosovo's history in socialist Yugoslavia from 1944 to 1981, four distinct phases can be delimited: the post-war formative period (1944-1948), the period of Serbian domination (1949-1965), the post-Ranković formative period (1966-1968), and the period of Albanian domination (1969-1981). While formative periods of ethnic relations were characterized by fluidity, unpredictability, and rapid change in the relations of power and legitimating ideologies, periods of domination were characterized by stability and incremental change.

The period of Serbian domination was characterized by the region's nominal-only autonomy and an overrepresentation of Serbs in the administrative apparatus when

compared to their overall percentage in the region's (and later, province's) population. Throughout this period, Kosovo was run as little more than a district of Serbia, although its constitutional autonomy continued to expand from 1946 onwards. Serbian was the principal language of the administration, and the University of Pristina was only a branch of the University of Belgrade. Serbs staffed the majority of senior positions in the provincial administration, local state security forces, and police, and the local branch of the Communist party was a subsidiary of the League of Communists of Serbia.<sup>12</sup> Kosovo state authorities focussed on repressing ethnic Albanian separatism ('irredentism'), especially after the 1948 Tito-Stalin split and Albania's continued allegiance to the Soviet Union. This period also witnessed significant ethnic Albanian emigration to Turkey.

A complete reversal of previous trends characterized the period of Albanian domination. After 1966, it was Serbs who began to leave, moving to Central Serbia and Vojvodina. The new focus of state authorities was combating Serbian nationalism ('Great-Serbian chauvinism') following improvement of Yugoslav-Albanian relations when Albania left the Soviet camp in 1960. Ethnic Albanian participation in provincial administration, local state security forces, and police was adjusted to reflect the population composition, before turning into Albanian overrepresentation by the late 1970s. The local Communist party organisation in Kosovo became independent, separating from Serbia's Communist party. The University of Pristina separated from the University of Belgrade, and Albanian became the language of administration and the local media. The province dropped 'Metohija,' which was associated with Serbs, from its name and became simply Kosovo.<sup>13</sup> By 1974, Kosovo had gained almost-republican status in Yugoslavia's state hierarchy. Importantly, neither period solved the basic conflict over Kosovo: the roles of the oppressor and the oppressed were merely reversed.

Surviving records of debates between Albanian and Serbian Communists from 1966 onwards shed light on the continuing Serbian-Albanian conflict, especially their divergent understandings of 'national equality' in socialist Yugoslavia and the 'titular' ('majority') national group in Kosovo. From an Albanian nationalist standpoint, equality meant recognition of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians as a Yugoslav nation – not just another minority or 'nationality.' Within the context of socialist Yugoslav postwar constitutional theory, to be a 'fully equal' Yugoslav nation, an ethnic group had to have titular status in 'its own' ethnic republic. Serbian nationalist understanding of equality also had a constitutional and a territorial component. From 1966, Serb activists sought to prevent the evolution of Kosovo province into a republic. Serbian Communists argued that the growing autonomy of Kosovo prevented Serbia from exercising effective control over its own territory; this threw into question the equality of Serbia as a republic in the Yugoslav federation and, indirectly, of Serbs as a Yugoslav nation.<sup>14</sup> Serbian Communists

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed example of the numerical overrepresentation of Serbs in Kosovo's administrative, state, and party apparatus from this period, see *National composition of institutions*, a report produced in 1956 (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K11/21). Serbs and Montenegrins represented a quarter of the local population but filled almost half of the most important administrative and executive positions.

<sup>13</sup> The word *Metohija* (from Greek *metoh*, meaning Church land or possession) has negative connotations for Kosovo Albanian ultra-nationalists because of its association with the Serbian Orthodox Church (Ramet 1992, p. 191).

<sup>14</sup> As Serbian Communists repeatedly argued, while other Yugoslav republics contained regions with non-titular concentrations (such as Krajina in Croatia or Western Macedonia), no other Yugoslav 'national' republic had to cope with autonomous provinces in its territory.

continued to claim titular status in Kosovo – despite their dwindling numbers – by emphasizing that the province was part of Serbia (the ethno-territorial autonomy for the Yugoslav Serbs), and ethnic Albanians were a minority in the republic as a whole.

***From Fascist Greater Albania to Communist Serbia: Kosovo's Journey, 1944-1948***

While the Yugoslav Communists had to overcome strong popular resistance to their regime in several regions,<sup>15</sup> Kosovo was one of the most difficult nuts to crack. Following the German invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, most of Kosovo became part of the Italian protectorate of Greater Albania. From April to July 1941, Albanian paramilitaries burned all but two Serbian settler villages, and about 30,000 settlers fled the province (Horvat 1987, p. 48).<sup>16</sup> Nor was there significant local resistance to the Italian occupation force. Then, after the capitulation of Italy, the Germans formed an SS Division out of Albanian troops, and the Kosovo Albanian SS division took part in the Holocaust.<sup>17</sup>

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) failed to gain any significant support among Kosovo Albanians during most of the war. In April 1941, the CPY had 279 members in Kosovo, but 240 were Serbs or Montenegrins.<sup>18</sup> In the first three Communist guerrilla units formed in 1941, there was not a single Albanian (Horvat 1987, p. 53). The Communist leadership repeatedly called on Albanians to rise up, hinting that if they proved themselves in the 'anti-imperialist movement' they would be granted self-determination.<sup>19</sup> However, the promise of self-determination could not have been all that attractive, since Kosovo Albanians were already part of Greater Albania. Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, in charge of organizing Communist activities in Kosovo during the war, later recalled: 'The Albanian population remained suspicious towards all those who fought for the resurrection of Yugoslavia, whether it was a question of old or new Yugoslavia. In their eyes, that was less than what they [had] received from the [fascist] invaders' (quoted in Banac 1988, p. 207).<sup>20</sup> Finally, in 1944, after Communist units from

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<sup>15</sup> Victorious Yugoslav Communists ethnically cleansed Italian and German minorities and settled Slavic settlers in their place in Istria and Vojvodina. The low-scale Chetnik (Serb pro-Western nationalists) guerrilla activity continued in parts of Serbia and Bosnia for several years after the war.

<sup>16</sup> On the inter-war colonization policy of Serbian authorities, see Stefanović (2005).

<sup>17</sup> For more information on the 21<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Mountain SS Division 'Skenderbeg' (comprised of Kosovo ethnic Albanians) and their activities, see Tomasevich (2001, pp. 154, 499).

<sup>18</sup> In 1931, 33 per cent of inhabitants of Kosovo reported a Slavonic mother tongue and about 60 per cent reported Albanian mother tongue (SZS 1998). The 1931 census reported mother tongue and religion, not self-declared ethnic identity. It lumped together various Slavonic languages, and it makes no sense to assume that all Slavonic language speakers thought of themselves as 'Serbs.'

<sup>19</sup> For example, on December 2, 1943, the Central Committee of the CPY wrote to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania that 'every nation has the right of self-determination, including secession,' quickly adding that 'we do not support all national movements but only those that prove themselves in the struggle against imperialism' (Cited in Horvat 1987, p. 56). Similarly, in the winter of 1944, the Regional Secretary of the CPY for Kosovo promised that 'the Albanians are guaranteed the right to self-determination, and they need to earn that right in the struggle against the [German] invaders' (cited in Horvat 1987, p. 58).

<sup>20</sup> The Kosovo Albanian lack of resistance, collaboration, or even active support for the fascist regime needs to be interpreted in the context of the highly discriminatory and repressive policies that Royal Yugoslavia applied against this minority (see Stefanović 2005). Italian and German occupiers allowed schools in the Albanian language and unification with Albania proper. Thus, for many Kosovo Albanians, the fascist occupation was a significant improvement over their position in the Yugoslav Kingdom.

Albania, Serbia, and Bulgaria took over the province from German forces, an Albanian anti-Communist organization started a major uprising with up to 30,000 militants. It took Yugoslav Communist forces about six months to crush the uprising (Cohen 2001, p. 16; Horvat 1987, p. 50). According to an internal Party report, approximately 3,000 Albanian fighters were killed.<sup>21</sup>

In July 1945, the (Communist) Regional Assembly of Kosovo and Metohija issued a resolution asking to join Serbia. According to the resolution, ‘the people of this region [Kosovo] is confident that the People’s government of Serbia will give it full protection’ (cited in Pavlovic, 2001, p. 142). The Regional Assembly did not specify which ‘people’ they meant, but in light of the persecution Kosovo Serbs experienced in Greater Albania from 1941 to 1944 and Tempo’s previously cited statement on Kosovo, we can assume that Albanians were not seeking protection in Serbia.

Interestingly, while the local (Serb-dominated)<sup>22</sup> Kosovo Communist Party was working for Kosovo’s incorporation into Serbia, senior Yugoslav Communists were preparing to incorporate Kosovo into Albania. For several years, Yugoslavia’s Communist leaders seriously considered handing over Kosovo to Albania, if Albania joined the Yugoslav Communist federation. The idea of Greater Albania within Greater Yugoslavia was, for some time, popular with the leadership of Albania and the Soviet Union. The union of Kosovo and Albania was promised during the 1943-1944 conference of Yugoslav and Albanian Communists in Bujan, Albania<sup>23</sup> and received approval from Stalin during his meeting with Yugoslav Communists in Moscow in April 1944.<sup>24</sup>

The relationship between Belgrade and Tirana soured after Yugoslavia’s 1948 break-up with the USSR and CP Albania’s decision to side with the Soviets. As Albania was now a hostile neighbour, handing over territory was out of the question, and Kosovo remained in Serbia. Despite previous proclamations about the ‘commitment to the right of self-determination,’ neither Kosovo Serbian Communists nor Yugoslav Communist leaders showed any interest in consulting the population of Kosovo (or the rest of Serbia) on the status question.

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<sup>21</sup> AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K4/1 (4-7).

<sup>22</sup> In 1945, there were about 1,000 Party members in Kosovo, and only about 300 were Albanian. In December 1946, there were 5,505 Party members in Kosovo; 2,490 Serbs, 1,069 Montenegrins, and 1,771 Albanians (Pavlović 2001, p. 146).

<sup>23</sup> The ‘Bujan Conference’ was held between December 31, 1943, and January 2, 1944, in the village of Bunjaj (Bujan) in northern Albania. The conference elected 42 delegates: 36 ethnic Albanians (of whom 15 were from Albania and 21 from the Yugoslav territory), 5 Serbs and Montenegrins, and 1 Slavic Muslim. The collective presidency consisted of 7 Albanians, 1 Serb, and 1 Montenegrin. The controversy comes from the last paragraph of the first point of the adopted resolution which states that Kosovo and Dukagjin [Dukadin] were regions populated predominantly by Albanians whose clear wish was to unite with Albania. The resolution goes on to state that the only way for the Kosovo (and Dukagjin) Albanians to unite with Albania was by engaging in a common struggle with the other nations of Yugoslavia against the Axis powers and their domestic collaborators. Once freedom had been won, all nations in the region (including Albanians) would have a chance to decide their own destinies by invoking the right of self-determination and seceding from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav and Albanian Communist parties are named as the guarantors of this promise. For detailed information, see *Narodni odbor Autonomne Kosovsko-metohijske oblasti (AKMO) 1943-1953, Osnovni materijali sa zasedanja* (Priština 1955).

<sup>24</sup> During the meeting, Edvard Kardelj, Slovenian-Yugoslav Communist leader, informed Stalin: ‘On the territory of Kosovo and Metohija we now have more Albanians than Serbs. We are planning to hand over these territories to the Albanians, once we establish better relations with them.’ Stalin replied: ‘Very good. That is a correct approach’ (‘A Report on Kardelj-Stalin meeting in Moscow,’ in Popović 2001, p. 264).

***Facade Autonomy and Serbian Domination, 1949-1965***

We know that you joined the German Army, that you fought against us, but we will not hold you responsible for that. We know that you were manipulated. We don't want Kosovo Šiptars<sup>25</sup> to be second or third class citizens. We want you to have your rights, equality, your language, your teachers, to feel *as if* you were in your own country. (Tito's speech to Kosovo delegates, May 1945, emphasis ours; cited in Mišović 1987, p. 416)

Following the Leninist principle that minority secessionism stems from experiences of oppression and economic inequality (Lenin 1922), the CPY set out to improve the cultural life and economic conditions of Kosovo Albanians, allowing Albanian language schools<sup>26</sup> and opening a teacher's college (1958) and a Faculty for Philosophy (1960) in Kosovo's capital, Pristina (Pavlović 2001, p. 152). These efforts improved educational levels: from 1953 to 1982, the number of illiterate in Kosovo dropped from 54.8 per cent to 23.5 per cent (SSRNJ 1985, p. 181). Systematic efforts to make the ethnic composition of the Party more representative of the Kosovo population – that is, to recruit more Albanian Communists – also produced results: the number of Albanians jumped from less than 14 per cent in 1941, to about 30 per cent in 1944, and to 50 per cent by the mid-1960s (Pavlović 2001, p. 146; Cohen 2001, p. 20).

While this was an indisputable improvement at a collective level, Albanians were neither perceived nor treated as a Yugoslav nation. If the equal treatment of an ethnic group required that it be recognized as one of the Yugoslav nations, with its own ethnic republic and titular status, then it was first necessary to decide which ethnic groups 'deserved' to be recognized as 'Yugoslav nations.'<sup>27</sup> Yugoslav Communists, following the Soviet model (Martin 2001), distinguished between the ethnic groups who already had ethnic homelands outside Yugoslavia (Albanians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Slovaks, etc.) and those who needed a territorial homeland within Yugoslavia. As Albanians already 'had' an ethnic homeland in Albania, they were not entitled to a republic in Yugoslavia.

Moreover, wartime developments had major consequences on CPY's perception of the Albanian minority. The CPY line on the national question during the war and Revolution was that each of the Yugoslav peoples should gain an equal place in the future federal Yugoslavia through participation in the struggle against Fascists and collaborators.<sup>28</sup> While members of all Yugoslav ethnic groups participated in all kinds of

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<sup>25</sup> In this period, *Šiptar* was a standard Yugoslav term for Kosovo Albanians. After the 1960s, the term acquired negative connotations, and the officially accepted term became 'Albanian' [*Albanac*].

<sup>26</sup> Austro-Hungarian occupational authorities (1916-1918) and Italian/German occupational authorities (1941-1944) set up Albanian-language schools during the period of their control. There were no Albanian-language schools in royal Yugoslavia (Đekić 1990, p. 178).

<sup>27</sup> Schafer (2001, p. 166) shows that the Bolsheviks faced the same problem of 'selective recognition' during their Revolution. Like their Yugoslav students, the Bolsheviks were guided not only by overarching ideological principles, but also by tactical calculations, especially the need to recruit ethnic minorities for the Revolution by promising them recognition and improved collective status.

<sup>28</sup> The understanding of the war as an opportunity for the ethnic groups to prove their worth in the eyes of the Party is well expressed in this proclamation of the CPY Serbian HQ to Kosovo Albanians in August 1944: 'Together with the fascist aggressors you fought against the neighbouring peoples and thus dishonoured yourselves. Because of such actions you still have not gained the right to live together with other peoples of Yugoslavia in brotherhood and unity. Now is your chance to rectify your mistakes and

military activities during the war, by late 1944 the vast majority supported the victorious Communists. The Kosovo Albanians consistently and *en masse* supported anti-Communist forces, leading to a deep suspicion that they – as a people – were not loyal to the revolutionary regime and thus did not deserve equal status in the new country.<sup>29</sup>

In light of the minimal ethnic Albanian participation in Tito's Communist wartime movement in Kosovo, the insurgence against Yugoslav authorities in the immediate post-war period, and Albania's support for ethnic Albanian separatism, it is not surprising that Yugoslav State Security in Kosovo allocated the majority of positions to Serbs and Montenegrins as the 'more reliable element' from 1945 to the mid-1960s.<sup>30</sup> More ominously, with the possibility of Soviet invasion after 1948 and constant anti-Yugoslav propaganda from Albania, Kosovo Albanians – already an 'unreliable element' during the Revolution – were easily seen as a potential 'enemy within,' likely to support invaders. 'Reliable' Serbs and Montenegrins, meanwhile, were heavily overrepresented within the Party, and even more so in the police and state security.<sup>31</sup>

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erase your shame' (cited in Marković 1991, p. 216). Not surprisingly, this rhetoric did not prove terribly effective, as the Kosovo Albanian anti-Communist uprising started a few months later.

<sup>29</sup> While inter-war and war-time Party proclamations promised the end of the Greater Serbian oppression and 'a brotherly, free, equal community of all nations of Yugoslavia' (cited in Connor 1984, p. 158), ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins were heavily over-represented in the Party, especially in the early post-war period. As late as 1971, Serbs were over-represented in Croatia, Bosnia, Vojvodina, and Kosovo. This over-representation was clear for the war-time (Partisan guerrilla) generation but less clear for younger Party members (Cohen 1989, pp. 302, 420). In the early 1970s, Serbs and Montenegrins represented 43 per cent of the Yugoslav population and 85 per cent of all army officers (Cohen 1989, p. 298). Researchers generally explain the enduring Serbian over-representation in the Party and the Army as a consequence of 'militaristic meritocracy.' During WW II, ethnic Serbs (especially in Bosnia and Croatia) joined Communist resistance forces early and in considerable numbers. Other ethnic groups joined later, and some – such as Kosovo Albanians – had no significant participation. In the post-war distribution of commanding social positions, being 'red' was usually more important than being an expert. Thus, whether and how early one joined the Communist resistance was frequently the most important criterion (Denich 1973, p. 102). Understandably, those who joined early, when the outcome of the war was far from certain, were seen as more genuinely committed to the cause than those who joined later, when victory was no longer in question and when, presumably, many simply wanted to be on the winning side. Since Serbs generally joined earlier, they were over-represented in the Party after the war, especially in Croatia and Kosovo (Horvat 1987, pp. 288-9). While Serbs and Montenegrins were over-represented, non-Slavic groups (such as Albanians and Hungarians) were underrepresented. Furthermore, villages and regions known for their support of the Communists during the war were rewarded with new roads, factories, etc., after the war (Lampe 2000, pp. 282, 294). This kind of ethnic distribution pattern was hardly the initial intention of the revolutionary leadership (which was genuinely multi-ethnic); indeed, it became a source of major ideological embarrassment for the CPY, one that they attempted to 'rectify' by affirmative action hiring and promotion of non-Serbs and non-Montenegrins, especially in the Party and the Army.

<sup>30</sup> Between 1945 and 1947, 420 ethnic Albanians who held various positions in Kosovo but allegedly secretly worked for Albanian Sigurimi (state security) were arrested; a few supposedly managed to infiltrate high positions in the local branch of Yugoslav state security. For more detailed discussion of these issues see: AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K4/1 (4-7).

<sup>31</sup> In 1948, Serbs and Montenegrins were about two thirds of the active white collar workforce in Kosovo (Cohen 2001, p. 18). In 1956, Serbs were only 27.4 per cent of the population of the province but comprised 86.6 per cent of the state security personnel (Horvat 1987, p. 62). For a detailed example of numerical overrepresentation of Serbs in Kosovo's administrative, state, and party apparatus from this period, see *National composition of institutions* produced in 1956 (AJ, XVIII-K11/21). Before 1966, Serbs and Montenegrins were 15 times more likely than Albanians to work in the Yugoslav State Security Kosovo branch (Popović et al 1990, p. 19)

The siege mentality that grew out of the fear of invasion by the Soviet bloc led to repressive state policies. The constitutional changes of 1953, adopted after the 1948 Tito-Stalin split, strengthened the ‘federal’ state and turned Kosovo and Vojvodina into *de facto* districts of Serbia. Kosovo was seen as a political battlefield for Tito and the Soviet bloc, to which Albania belonged. Thus, Kosovo Albanian ethnic separatism was actively encouraged by the Soviet-affiliated Albania.<sup>32</sup> Kosovo’s territory was now considered too vulnerable to be given major industrial projects (Poulton 2003, p. 129), and Yugoslav Communist leaders decided that Kosovo could provide raw materials for other, more industrialized, parts of Yugoslavia. These economic decisions were politically motivated, and in the long term, they contributed to the Kosovo’s status as the most undeveloped region of socialist Yugoslavia. While Kosovo’s social product per capita was 49 per cent of the Yugoslav average in 1947, by 1962 it had fallen to 33 per cent (Bogetić 2001, p. 183).

A major grievance voiced by Kosovo’s ethnic Albanians after the fall of Yugoslav Secret Police Chief Aleksandar Ranković (in 1966) concerned the collection of firearms by State Security forces from late 1955 to 1965<sup>33</sup> in all municipalities in the province, as well as all neighbouring municipalities with significant Albanian populations in Central Serbia. There were a number of arrests, beatings, and two fatalities. The main goal was to remove firearms from the hands of the local population in what was seen as the most sensitive region in Yugoslavia in terms of security. Firearms were collected from ethnic Albanians, Serbs, and Montenegrins. But as the majority of senior police and security officers were Serb or Montenegrin, and as the collection of firearms was only in regions with a large Albanian presence, this action could easily be seen as ethnic profiling, ethnic harassment, and an expression of fundamental suspicion towards Albanians.

The ethnic harassment of Albanians went further. Teachers of Albanian language and history were called to special meetings with the State Security and were instructed on the ‘proper’ ways to do their work (Sekulić 1989, p. 154). Only Albanians were systematically targeted, and Yugoslav State Security, led by Aleksandar Ranković, the highest-ranking Serbian Communist, played a particularly active role.<sup>34</sup> In the early

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<sup>32</sup>A report titled ‘Campaign of Eastern European countries and reaction of ethnic minorities’ (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K3/25), produced in 1958, elaborated on the propaganda activities originating from Albania and directed at Yugoslav Albanians. With regards to Enver Hoxha’s Albania, the report notes that the neighbouring country publicly stated its territorial aspirations on Yugoslav territory (speech by Enver Hoxha, Second Congress of the Communist Party of Albania, April 1952; see AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K3/25 (2)). Albania openly proclaimed its territorial aspirations towards Kosovo-Metohija and western Macedonia, spreading anti-Yugoslav propaganda and calling on ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia to fight the Yugoslav regime (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K3/25: 5). The document also stated that Albania was the only member of the Eastern Bloc that continued to act against Yugoslavia after the period of normalization (after 1955; AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K3/25: 8-9). The author(s) note that the nature of Albanian campaign changed after 1955: after initially laying claim to Yugoslav territory, Tirana argued that the status of Kosovo was ‘unresolved.’

<sup>33</sup> During this period, 12,000 rifles, 1,000 machine guns, 100 heavy machine guns, 100 mortars, a few thousands handguns, a large amount of ammunition, and even 1 buried artillery piece were taken from local villagers in Kosovo. For the record of the September 22, 1966, discussion and its analysis see Sekulić, (1989, pp. 340-341).

<sup>34</sup> A textbook used in the Yugoslav State Security training schools specified that national minorities (such as Yugoslav Albanians) ‘have strong national feelings and thus are often ready to work for intelligence agency of their home country. As they are our [Yugoslav] citizens and so have all rights of our citizens –

1960s, State Security in Serbia had no Albanians or Hungarians in its senior ranks (Sekulić 1989, pp. 272-3). Moreover, the fact that in 1947 Yugoslav authorities allowed Serbian and Montenegrin inter-war settlers to reclaim the land in Kosovo (Petrovic and Blagojevic 1989, pp. 71, 153) may have convinced Kosovo Albanians that the ‘new Yugoslavia’ was not all that different from the old one. And the decision to add overwhelmingly Serbian parts of Central Serbia to Kosovo in 1959 left the impression that authorities were trying to increase the Serbian presence in Kosovo province.<sup>35</sup>

During this time, the official term for a Yugoslav Albanian was *Šiptar*, in contrast to an Albanian from Albania (simply known as ‘Albanian’). Yugoslav Albanians also used a different dialect from that of neighbouring Albania, and Gheg-speaking Kosovo Albanians adopted Tosk literary Albanian only in 1968.<sup>36</sup> The fact that during Ranković’s era different national terminology was used (‘Šiptar’ for Yugoslav Albanians, ‘Albanian’ for Albanians from Albania) and the fact that adaptation of the dialect used in Albania occurred only after the fall of Ranković raises the possibility that Yugoslav Communists toyed with the idea of proclaiming Yugoslav Albanians in Kosovo a separate national group. This would represent a ‘Macedonian’ solution, by which the proclamation of a separate national group for Macedonian Slavs in Macedonia – with its own socialist republic – would solve the problem of pro-Bulgarian irredentism there.<sup>37</sup>

In any event, despite some improvements in educational policy, language rights, and middle-class representation, Kosovo Albanians faced a bleak future in Yugoslavia, with slow economic development, limited opportunities for advancement in the senior party-state levels, and ethnic harassment by Serb-dominated police and State Security. Under such conditions, many Kosovo Albanians emigrated to Turkey.<sup>38</sup>

The process of Yugoslav Albanian (and other Yugoslav Muslim) immigration to Turkey during the 1950s is not well researched. What seems clear from the sources is that Communist Yugoslavia and Turkey signed an agreement on Turkish property in Yugoslavia in January 1950. However, the document remains secret and is not available in Yugoslav state archives.<sup>39</sup> Apparently Yugoslav citizens who self-declared as ‘Turk’

to serve in the Army, to be state officials and people’s deputies, they can use these positions to collect information [i.e. spy for neighbouring countries]’ (cited in Sekulić 1989, p. 154).

<sup>35</sup> In 1959, Kosovo’s borders were expanded in the north to include Serb-populated regions. According to Krstić, parts of central Serbia, Ibarski Kolašin, Zvečan, and Leposavić, were included in the Kosovo region to increase the number of municipalities with a Serbian population (Krstić 2004, p. 39, 50).

<sup>36</sup> In 1958 at the meeting of CPY’s Committee for Interethnic Relations, it was pointed out that ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia spoke a different dialect from Albanians in neighbouring Albania, and that the existence of two different dialects was a problem in terms of local education and overall cost of obtaining proper print-related material (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K1/16 (37)).

<sup>37</sup> We uncovered no further evidence of such an (aborted) plan by Yugoslav Communists; if it existed, the plan would have raised many additional issues, including the status of Yugoslav Albanians outside Kosovo, most importantly in western Macedonia, and questioned whether the new nation should be an equal Yugoslav one. In the latter case, Kosovo would need to become a socialist republic, and Yugoslavism would have to move away from the concept of South Slavic unity.

<sup>38</sup> Some Albanians were allowed to move from Albania proper into Kosovo in the after-war period, but their numbers were small. According to Serbian demographer Ruža Petrović, in 1981 there were about 4,800 inhabitants of Kosovo who were born in Albania (Petrović 1991, p. 175).

<sup>39</sup> Albanian politician Adem Demaçi has argued that the 1950 Yugoslav-Turkish agreement activated the notorious plan of Serb ultra-nationalist Čubrilović for expulsion of Albanians, first formulated in the 1930s (Radonić 1990, p. 10). Demaçi does not provide any specific evidence to back up this claim. On the Čubrilović plan, see Stefanović (2005, pp. 481-482).

were allowed to leave for Turkey. There are conflicting estimates on the total number of Yugoslav citizens who immigrated to Turkey in this period. One might be tempted to assume that ethnic group boundaries and identities in Kosovo were unusually strong and ‘bright’ as a result of a series of severe ethnic discrimination, wars, and mutual ethnic expulsions (Stefanović 2005). However, the dynamics of the Albanian migration process indicates that some of the ethnic boundaries, including the one between Muslim Albanians and ‘ethnic’ Turks were blurred.<sup>40</sup>

***Changing of the Tide: The Fall of Ranković and Albanian Resurgence, 1966-1968***

One cannot talk about equal rights when Serbs are given preference in the factories even when they are under-qualified, and Albanians are rejected although they have the same or better qualifications. (Tito’s speech in Pristina, March 1967; cited in Cohen 2001, p. 22)

1966 was a pivotal year, for Yugoslavia as a whole, but especially for Kosovo. During the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at Brioni on July 1, 1966, Aleksandar Ranković (Head of State Security) was sacked, along with a number of associates.<sup>41</sup> The Brioni Plenum signalled CPY’s abandonment of Soviet-style

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<sup>40</sup> A Macedonian Communist delegate at the meeting of CPY’s Committee for Interethnic Relations (held on October 13, 1958) mentions that his Republic received 18,000 individuals (no ethnicity is specified) from Kosovo who expressed a desire to immigrate to Turkey (selling all their property in Kosovo in preparation), but they later changed their minds and decided to stay in Macedonia (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII K1/16: 37-38). He also says that 130,000 Turks immigrated to Turkey from Macedonia, but 9,000 were ethnic Albanians claiming to be Turks (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII K1/16: 38). According to another document analyzed by the Committee, by the end of 1956, 86,380 individuals (both ethnic Turks and Albanians) had left Macedonia for Turkey; with regards to Kosovo, the figure is not given, but it is noted that the number is ‘much less’ due to prohibition (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K4/13: 20). Stenographic notes from CPY’s Central Committee for Interethnic and Inter-republican meeting (held on September 21, 1967) give a better idea of the number who immigrated from Kosovo to Turkey during this period (1951-1967). Prominent ethnic Albanian party member Fadilj Hodza states that 14,000 individuals moved from Kosovo to Turkey (AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII-K3/1: 93). There is no indication how many were ethnic Turks and how many were ethnic Albanians. According to Yugoslav census data, the number of self-declared Turks inexplicably jumped from 97,954 in 1953 to 259,536 in 1961 (Hoxha 1984, p. 68; Petrović 1987, p. 23). Kosovo Albanian politician Hajredin Hoxha estimates that from 1953 to 1966, 230,716 Yugoslav citizens moved to Turkey and that ‘at least’ 80,000 of them were ethnic Albanians (Hoxha 1984, p. 70), but fails to explain how he arrived at this number. Reconstructing timeline and statistical information about the migration of Kosovo Albanians to Turkey from 1953 to 1966 is challenging. First, a number of Slavic Muslims and ‘real’ Turks were also migrating from Yugoslavia to Turkey, and the official figures do not appear to make a clear distinction between these three groups. Second, migration was going on not only from Kosovo, but from neighbouring Macedonia, which too had a large Muslim population. Third, several reports indicate that the policy on migration was more ‘liberal’ in Macedonia than in Kosovo, which reportedly led significant numbers of Kosovo Albanians to move to Macedonia so that they could migrate from there (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII K1/16: 37-38; AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII-K4/13: 20). Finally, it seems plausible (and several Party documents make this point) that the ethnic boundary between Muslim ‘Albanians’ and ‘real Turks’ was blurred in this period (AJ, A CK SKJ, XVIII K1/16: 38), largely due to the lasting identification of many Balkanian Muslims – including Muslim Albanians – with the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, ethnic boundaries between ‘Serbs’ and ‘Montenegrins’ are frequently blurred today, with one sister or brother self-declaring as ‘Serb’ and another as ‘Montenegrin.’

<sup>41</sup> The 4th Plenum (the ‘Brioni Plenum’) was not about Kosovo *per se*; rather, it was a Communist-style purge through which the Party adopted a major global policy shift, distancing itself from its previous policies (calling former policies ‘deviations’), blaming them on certain individuals, and sacking those

centralism as a model (favoured by the Ranković group) and marked the beginning of Yugoslavia's transformation into confederation (favoured by the Kardelj group), a process completed by the adoption of the 1974 Constitution.<sup>42</sup>

While the downfall of Ranković and other opponents of decentralization led to the shifting of power to the republics, the issue of Kosovo was not mentioned during the Brioni Plenum. However, a major transformation began in September 1966, during the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia. During this meeting, Ranković was, for the first time, accused of Serbian nationalism and the suppression of Albanians in Kosovo. Albanian party delegates (Veli Deva, Kolj Siroka, Ali Sukrija, and others) openly expressed the sense of Albanian victimisation in Kosovo. A leading Serbian Communist, Mihajlo Švabić, responded that he felt 'ashamed as a Communist and as a Serb and as a human being' of the treatment of Kosovo Albanians (Sekulić 1989, p. 186). At the end of the Plenum, policies of State Security in Kosovo from 1945-1966 were proclaimed 'unlawful actions' and 'deviations.' Ranković was purged from the Party and withdrew from public life.

By condemning previous policy and sacking those behind it, the Plenum prepared the terrain for ethnic Albanian supremacy in the province. Individuals associated with Ranković's 'bureaucratic-statist' (mostly Serb) regime were purged, replaced in most cases by ethnic Albanians. Ranković and his group were not only condemned as 'centralists,' but as Serbian nationalists and chauvinists. In sum, 1966 marked the end of the period of Serb domination and the beginning of ethnic Albanian domination in the province (Sekulić 1989, pp. 12, 75-123).<sup>43</sup>

The political offensive of the Albanian cadres within the Party soon split into two streams. The first group, the hardliners, mostly associated with the University of Pristina, pushed for an immediate elevation of Albanians to a Yugoslav nation and Kosovo to a fully-fledged Albanian national republic. During the summer 1968 debates on constitutional reforms, the Communist organization in Đakovica/ Gjakovë (Western Kosovo) demanded that the right of self-determination be equally applied to nationalities and nations (Mišović 1987, p. 135). On September 3, 1968, during a discussion on constitutional reform at the University of Pristina, Professor Hajredin Hoxha suggested that the use of the term 'nationality' be discontinued and that Yugoslav Albanians be recognized as a 'nation' (Mišović 1987, p. 141). Other participants agreed that Yugoslav Albanians should be recognized as a 'nation' (Mišović 1987, pp. 146, 155). The demand for transformation of the province into a republic was openly articulated, and there were semi-official statements that certain provincial institutions (such as the local University) should be tailored for the ethnic Albanian population, given that Serbs already had all

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individuals. This ritual allowed the Party to claim to be perpetually ideologically 'correct and consistent,' regardless of dramatic policy changes.

<sup>42</sup> Ranković was a ruthless police chief, loyal to the regime, and personally devoted to Tito. Ranković was sacked as a potent symbol of the centralist model which was now abandoned by the Party (Sekulić 1989, pp. 17-18).

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed reproduction of stenographic records of discussions and conclusions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia please see the Section *Šesta Sednica CK SK Srbije (14-15. septembra 1966)* in Popović (1999 pp. 791-840).

such institutions in (central) Serbia (Mišović 1987, pp. 319-327). Similar demands were voiced during the 1968 Albanian student demonstrations throughout the Province.<sup>44</sup>

The other group, the gradualists, such as Asllan Fazlija, senior Kosovo Albanian Communist and a member of the Commission for Socio-Political System and Multi-National Relations of the Central Committee of the CPY, developed a more sophisticated approach. Fazlija suggested that the Party-State keep Kosovo as part of Serbia, while transforming its status into a republic and Albanians into titulars.<sup>45</sup> In a nutshell, his idea was to fully realize the existing potential of a nested autonomy by making Kosovo a Serbian province in form, but an Albanian ethnic republic in content.

Fazlija's 1967 report outlined a new understanding of equality. His main concern was eliminating existing status differences between the Yugoslav nations (Serbs, Croats, etc.) and the Yugoslav nationalities (Albanians, Hungarians, etc.).<sup>46</sup> To achieve this goal, he proposed direct representation of Yugoslav nationalities at the federal level. Equating the Yugoslav Chamber of Nations with Yugoslav republics, he proposed a name change to 'Chamber of Nations and Nationalities' and subsequent direct representation of nationalities in it.<sup>47</sup> He also suggested adoption of this system by the republics and provinces, allowing nationalities to be represented at all three state levels in a similar fashion.

Continuing with the federal theme, Fazlija argued that autonomous provinces should be directly tied to, and represented at, a federal level, as a natural next step in the process of Yugoslav decentralisation, in line with the conclusions of CPY's 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the previous year.<sup>48</sup> In this way, equality of ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia would have not only a theoretical component (the equality of nations and nationalities), but a territorial one, given that ethnic Albanians represented a majority of the population in one autonomous province.

According to Fazlija, autonomy and self-management of autonomous provinces should be taken a step farther, noting that the factors leading to the creation of Yugoslav republics also led to the creation of autonomous provinces, and it was not logical for autonomous provinces to have a lower status than the republics.<sup>49</sup> He never proposed the abolishment of the term 'nationalities' (i.e. proclaiming ethnic Albanians a Yugoslav

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<sup>44</sup> Slogans during the Albanian demonstrations in 1968 included: 'We want a republic;' 'We want a constitution;' 'We are Albanians, not Yugoslavs;' 'We want a national flag;' 'We want Preševo in the province;' 'Long live Albania;' 'One people, one state, one party' (cited in Horvat 1987, pp. 100-101). Preševo Valley is a small Albanian majority region immediately east of Kosovo. According to a letter of CPY's Serbian provincial committee addressed to CPY's Kosovo regional committee dated November 6, 1944, Preševo Valley was temporarily included in the Vranje district until it could be handed over to the Kosovo regional committee. This territorial transfer never happened, and the valley remained part of central Serbia; see Petrović (1988 p. 138)

<sup>45</sup> In an 1967 Internal Party Report, Asllan Fazlija notes 'Some ideological-political problems with regards to position and exercise of equality of nationalities in the SFRY' ('Materials for debate,' AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII A-K3/1).

<sup>46</sup> See AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII A-K3/1:16. In socialist Yugoslav state theory, nations and nationalities were fully equal, but separate legal categories continued to exist. Discussions about this issue inevitably led to questions regarding the nature of Yugoslavia itself – is the country essentially a South Slavic union, or is it purely a socialist entity regardless of the ethnic affiliation of its citizens?

<sup>47</sup> AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII A-K3/1: 16

<sup>48</sup> AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII A-K3/1: 17

<sup>49</sup> AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII A-K3/1: 17.

nation) or elevating Kosovo to the status of Yugoslav republic, but his vision entailed putting nations and nationalities – along with republics and provinces – on an equal footing in Yugoslavia.<sup>50</sup> This method of achieving equality would bypass the thorny issue of partitioning Serbia by elevating its two autonomous provinces to the level of Yugoslav republics. Nevertheless, autonomous provinces with rights equal to the republics would make their inclusion in Serbia meaningless in all aspects except strictly *de jure*.

Fazlija described Ranković and his associates as a clique of Serb nationalists and chauvinists who directed activities of Yugoslav State Security in Kosovo against ethnic Albanians, calling them ‘unreliable elements.’<sup>51</sup> His analysis, combined with the discourse earlier adopted by the Central Committee of the CP of Serbia, was so potent that presenting Ranković’s centralist police regime in national terms (i.e., as Serb nationalist/chauvinist abuse of State Security and police positions in Kosovo to suppress local ethnic Albanians) became a constant feature in following reports and debates by ethnic Albanian party members. Fazlija’s approach was eventually accepted by the Commission for Socio-Political System and Multi-National Relations of the Central Committee. By March 1967, Tito and the central Party leadership had accepted the argument that Ranković’s policy amounted to Serb chauvinism.

As previously mentioned, the Brioni Plenum made no mention of Kosovo, and the process of Yugoslavia’s decentralization (as prescribed by Kardelj) was to happen at the level of the six federal republics. Decentralization of Serbia itself as one of the federal republics was neither discussed nor contemplated. Nevertheless, within a short period, in follow-up meetings on a republic and provincial level,<sup>52</sup> Yugoslav Albanian Communists managed to push through Kardelj’s decentralization model for Yugoslavia on Serbia. Ranković’s centralism was presented as ‘Great Serb chauvinism’ and suppression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.<sup>53</sup>

While this push of Kosovo Albanian communists can be interpreted as a form of ethnic politics, it is at least as plausible that they correctly calculated that elevation of ‘their’ entity would lead to greater autonomy and more resources for the local Communist oligarchy. Actually, several leading Serbian Communists from Vojvodina and Kosovo supported elevation of status of their respective provinces into republic-like status.<sup>54</sup> It appears that the collective interests of local oligarchies to gain prestige and

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<sup>50</sup> AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII-A-K3/1: 18.

<sup>51</sup> AJ, A CK SKJ, XXIII-A-K3/1: 36.

<sup>52</sup> These meetings included the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Plenums of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Kosovo.

<sup>53</sup> For example, see the speech by Veli Deva (Kosovo Albanian delegate) at the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, in which he argued that Ranković-led State Security employed ‘special measures’ against the members of Kosovo Albanian intelligence – especially teachers of Albanian language, literature and history (Popović 1999, pp. 802-3); Veli Deva used the term ‘bureaucratic-chauvinistic dreg’ (Ibid, pp. 803-804) to describe Ranković faction operations in Kosovo, implying that they were pursuing Soviet-style centralism *and* Serb nationalism at the same time. Deva’s views found their way into the official conclusions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum: Point II of the final resolution accused Ranković’s faction of both ‘unitarism and nationalism,’ binding – and consequently equating – the two. Transgressions of the State Security in Kosovo against ethnic Albanians were labelled as ‘the most drastic (although not the only) form of anti-constitutional and chauvinistic practice’ (Ibid, p. 840).

<sup>54</sup> Draža Marković quoted in Đekić (1990, pp. 190-193). Marković lists a number of Kosovo Serb Communists who supported republican status for the Province, and claims that most of Vojvodina’s oligarchy did so to create a precedent for the creation of the ‘republic of Vojvodina.’

resources were more important than their commitment to, or defense of ‘ethnic interests.’ Thus, Kosovo’s status was not only a struggle between two titular nationalisms, but a power struggle between provincial and republican communist oligarchies.

In 1968, a series of constitutional amendments<sup>55</sup> put Fazlija’s vision in place and changed the position of Serbia’s autonomous provinces. Amendment 7, adopted in December 1968, listed the two Socialist Autonomous Provinces as elements of the federal state. Amendment 18 provided a description of the provinces’ origins<sup>56</sup> as a reflection of their changed status. The new language suggested that the two autonomous provinces were to be seen as territorial vessels of national self-determination, the same as republics. This meant that Serbia (a vessel of Serbian self-determination) contained Kosovo, whose Albanian majority saw the province, but not the republic of Serbia, as the vessel of its own Albanian national self-determination.

Amendment 19 reinforced the position of Kosovo’s ethnic Albanians by asserting that the Constitution’s basic provisions for the rights of Yugoslav nations applied to them as a Yugoslav ‘nationality’ – a label reserved for citizens of Yugoslavia who were ethnically affiliated with a neighbouring state. (Distinctive labels for Yugoslav nations and Yugoslav nationalities nevertheless remained, perhaps as an unspoken way of distinguishing ethnic groups who created Yugoslavia from those who ended up in it.) Amendment 16 guaranteed that the boundaries of the provinces could not be changed without the consent of their provincial assemblies (Ramet 1992, p. 76). Amendment 18 increased the provinces’ independence from Serbia, emphasizing their direct relation with the federation. Finally, LCY’s organizational structure was changed to parallel that of the Yugoslav state. In November 1968, sections of the League of Communists of Serbia for Vojvodina and for Kosovo became the separate Leagues of Communists of Vojvodina and of Kosovo.

The reaction of the Serbian national Communists was swift, but ineffective. On May 29, 1968, at the Fourteenth Session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, Dobrica Ćosić and Jovan Marjanović made formal speeches (Petranović 2002, p. 111). Ćosić noted that in Kosovo one could observe radical Serbian nationalism and Albanian irredentist and separatist tendencies at the same time. While condemning paternalism and tutorship as the negation of democracy (referring to Ranković’s period), Ćosić also condemned anti-Serbian feelings and the ‘Albanocentrism’ which had emerged in the aftermath of Ranković’s fall. Ćosić predicted that the new approach in Kosovo would create a permanent and open conflict: ‘A bureaucratic and statist understanding of the equality of Albanians in Serbia and Yugoslavia, and the development of their sovereignty will inevitably end in irredentism, the deepening of political differences among the peoples in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as in Albania and Yugoslavia, in a permanent and open conflict’ (Petranović 2002, p. 111-2). Even more ominously – and correctly – Ćosić predicted that anger over Albanian domination in Kosovo might trigger a large-scale Serbian nationalist mobilization and a revival of ‘the old historical goal and national ideal – unity of Serbian people in one state’

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<sup>55</sup> The Official Gazette of SFRY, No. 55/68.

<sup>56</sup> The Amendment reads: ‘Through the common struggle of the peoples and nationalities of Yugoslavia during the National Liberation War and Socialist Revolution [the provinces had joined Serbia] on the basis of the freely expressed will of the population – the peoples and national minorities of the Provinces and of Federal Serbia’ (The Official Gazette of SFRY, No. 55/68).

(Dragović-Soso 2002, p. 40).<sup>57</sup> However, the majority of members of the Central Committee of Serbia rejected Čosić and Marjanović's analyses, and they were removed from public positions.

In the critical years after the fall of Ranković's centralist Serb-Montenegrin group, Albanian national Communists achieved a series of key ideological victories. First, their representation of Ranković as a Serb chauvinist persecuting Albanians became accepted within the Party. Second, the decentralization drive promoted by the victorious Kardelj group extended from the Yugoslav republics to include the two provinces. The idea that Yugoslav nations should be equal at the collective level to Yugoslav nationalities was now constitutionally enshrined. Finally, Albanians became the *de facto* titulars in Kosovo. The era of Albanian domination in Kosovo was dawning.

### ***Albanian Domination and Serbian Flight, 1969-1981***

Albanian nationalism aspires to ethnic exclusiveness, ethnic cleanness. That is indisputable. For that is the aim of every nationalism, especially those who cannot hope to assimilate the other (Fehmi Agani, Pristina university sociology professor and a senior Kosovo Albanian politician, speech in Ljubljana, 1989; cited in Gaber and Kuzmanič 1989, p. 117).

In line with the Leninist theory of minority nationalism, CPY's response to Albanian experiences of persecution by the Ranković regime and the 1968 demonstrations was to promote the Albanian cadres within the local party-state, dramatically increase the autonomy of the local Communist party, and try to jump-start Kosovo's economic development by major transfer payments. The first to change after the fall of Ranković was the composition of the State Security in Kosovo, followed more gradually by that of the Communist Party. The purge of the Ranković's associates, combined with preferential hiring of ethnic Albanians, led to a rapid change in the State Security: the number of Albanians jumped from 13 per cent in July 1966 to 46 per cent in November of the same year (Lukić 1990, p. 228).

According to the Leninist explanation of minority nationalism, the most effective way to overcome the nationalism of smaller nations is to create economic equity.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, an economic equalisation policy aimed at allowing Kosovo to catch up with other parts of the country was instituted. A fundamental problem for the development policy was the phenomenal growth of the ethnic Albanian population. In 1953, among Kosovo women, the completed fertility rate (for age 45-49) was 6.32 for Albanian women and 5.92 for Serbian women. In 1991, it was 6.16 for Albanian women and 2.78 for Serbian women (Blagojević 2000, p. 215). From 1971 to 1980, the natural increment rates per 1,000 were 29.0 for Albanians, and 6.6 for Serbs; the Yugoslav average for the period was 8.9 (Petrović 1992, p. 25). The combination of very high fertility with very low spatial mobility of the Albanian population in Yugoslavia led to Kosovo's transformation from one of the least populated regions of Yugoslavia in 1921 (on average, 40.3 inhabitants per square kilometre) to the most densely populated region in 1991 (179.7 inhabitants per square kilometre) (Blagojević 2000, p. 215). Despite major

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<sup>57</sup> Another Serbian Communist (Đuro Trbović) argued that 'the thesis [according to which] nationality has a right to self-determination is unsustainable. Nationalities do not have that right and CPY's position on that is clear.' Quoted in Mišović, (1987, pp. 63-65).

<sup>58</sup> 'Ostvarivanje Politike Ravnopravnosti' (1976, pp. 5, 16, 85).

equalization transfers from other parts of Yugoslavia, the population growth, as well as poor investment decisions by the local Communist party, resulted in Kosovo falling farther behind.<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, it does not appear that Kosovo Albanian politicians saw the exploding population as problematic.<sup>60</sup> Quite the contrary: on the basis of their demographic rise, Albanian ethnic activists began to argue that they should be recognized as a fully-fledged Yugoslav nation with their own republic and titular status. A leading Kosovo Albanian Communist asked in 1968, ‘Why do 370,000 Montenegrins have their own republic, while 1.2 million Albanians don’t even have total autonomy?’ (cited in Cohen 2001, p. 22)

In the cultural sphere, an independent University of Pristina (hitherto a branch of the University of Belgrade) was created in 1969, followed by a rapid increase in the Albanian share of both faculty and student body (Ramet 1992, p. 191). A senior Kosovo Albanian Communist observed that in Kosovo a national minority ‘has’ a University and Academy of Arts and Sciences, a ‘unique case in the world’ (Hoxha 1984, p. 89). Ethnic Albanians were also granted the right to fly the national Albanian flag, identical to the flag of the neighbouring Albania. Kosovo Albanians were becoming *de facto* titulars of the province.

In the economic sphere, massive transfer payments from the wealthier part of Yugoslavia began to show some effect. The percent of agricultural workers was reduced from 83.3 per cent in 1948 to 23.5 per cent in 1981; and the number of illiterates dropped from 54.8 per cent in 1953 to 23.5 per cent in 1982 (SSRNJ 1985, p. 181). A large share of the equalization payments went into the creation of the university system; much less effort was made to develop local industrial capacities or Yugoslav-level mobility that would provide employment opportunities to the booming (overwhelmingly Albanian) student population.<sup>61</sup> In 1981, 52 per cent of inhabitants of Kosovo were under 20 years of age, and the ratio of students to 1,000 inhabitants was 274.6 in Kosovo and 194.9 in Yugoslavia as a whole (Pavlović et al 2004, pp. 13, 23). A combination of low geographic mobility of Albanian graduates (due to linguistic differences and Slavic

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<sup>59</sup> Albanian demographer Islami notes that the completed fertility of Kosovo Albanian women who lived in urban areas and were active in the labour force was only 2.74 (Islami 1989, p. 45). Serbian demographer Petrović agrees with Islami that the increased participation of Albanian women in education and employment lowered overall fertility rates, and points to the high level of patriarchal traditionalism in many Albanian families. Islami, however, blames the position of Albanian women on Kosovo’s lack of economic development (Islami 1989, p. 45; Petrović 1991, p. 189). Kosovo Albanian women were 5 times less likely to have paid employment than Kosovo Serbian women (Popović et al 1990, p. 13). Thus, it appears that the affirmative action hiring policy in Kosovo only promoted on the basis of ethnicity, ignoring gender, thereby channelling policy benefits to Albanian men and failing to contribute to gender equality within the Albanian community. Lack of employment opportunities for Albanian women, in turn, made very high fertility levels more likely and delayed the demographic transition of the Albanian population. Only 9.55 per cent of working age women in Kosovo had paid employment, while in Yugoslavia as a whole the number was 32.71 per cent (Popović et al 1990, p. 43).

<sup>60</sup> In the late 1980s, Albanian nationalist Adem Demaçi proudly stated that ‘the [Yugoslav] Albanians succeed in doubling their numbers’ in 25 years (Radončić 1990, p. 66).

<sup>61</sup> In June 1977, leading Yugoslav-Slovenian Communist Kardelj noted in his address to the Kosovo Albanian Communist in Pristina that they must modify their education policy, ‘because if you keep going without a sense of limit or focus on the expansion of the highly educated cadre, you will not be able to employ them and they will not be able to find job anywhere in Yugoslavia, so in the end you have to expect that these people will react by nationalism’ (Hasani 1986, p. 320). The 1981 Albanian demonstrations proved Kardelj right.

discrimination against Albanians in other parts of Yugoslavia), a sense of relative deprivation (due to the inability to obtain suitable employment), and rapidly expanding student population proved an explosive mix during the 1981 demonstrations.<sup>62</sup>

What started as a movement for equal treatment of Kosovo Albanians slowly but surely became a push for Albanian domination and marginalization of Kosovo Serbs. In urban areas, a major controversy developed over the strict use of affirmative action quotas to promote the hiring of Albanians to correspond to their quickly growing population proportion. The desire to make the composition of public institutions better reflect the composition of the population is understandable, particularly in light of anti-Albanian policies of the Ranković years. However, the policy was pursued to such an extent that many Serbs were left with the impression that ethnic background was more important than qualifications or merit in hiring and promotion decisions (Petrović and Blagojević 1989, pp. 160, 164).

While Serbs continued to dominate the economic elite, Albanians were quickly filling the ranks of teachers and humanistic intellectuals. By 1971, Serbs constituted approximately 21 per cent of the population, but still represented about 52 per cent of factory management (Cohen 2001, p. 24). In a 1985 survey of 500 Serb and Montenegrin households who left Kosovo,<sup>63</sup> 76 per cent of respondents stated that (after 1966) Albanians had preferential treatment in terms of access to jobs in Kosovo (Petrović and Blagojević 1989, p. 157). Official statistics imply that this impression was correct.<sup>64</sup> By 1980, the ethnic Albanians were 92 per cent of those employed in the state sector, while Serbs were only 5 per cent (Ramet 1992, p. 193). As Serbs were about 13 per cent of the population in 1981 (SZD 1998), they were now heavily underrepresented in the state sector.

While the initial promotion of the Albanian language in public institutions made perfect sense as a means to achieve equal treatment, it gradually reached a point where services in Serbian were simply not provided. After a speech by a Communist Albanian Party leader in a Kosovo Serbian village, Serbian farmers asked if the speech could be translated, but the Albanian Communist replied that ‘there is no need for translation – those who do not know it [Albanian] must learn it’ (Petrović and Blagojević 1989, p.

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<sup>62</sup> Lazar Koliševski, a leading Yugoslav Macedonian Communist, observed in April 1981 that the ‘tremendously large University in Pristina keeps producing the profile of graduates who cannot find jobs and thus, can become the nationalist activists’ (Popović 2001, pp. 269-70).

<sup>63</sup> While the 1986 survey of Serbs and Montenegrin families who left Kosovo contains a number of important findings regarding these people’s experiences, it has several limitations. As the authors acknowledge, they did not collect data on the opinions and experiences of Kosovo Albanians or remaining Kosovo Serbs (Petrović and Blagojević 1989, pp. 5, 23). The sample of 500 families was not random, which leads to problems of representativeness (Ibid, p. 5). The authors did not analyze some of the reasons that might have prevented significant Kosovo Albanian outmigration, such as Slavic discrimination (Popović et al 1990:, pp. 5, 14). Serbian migrations from Kosovo were not systematically compared with Serbian migrations from less developed parts of central Serbia (Agani 1989, p. 119) that had no presence of ethnic others. Finally, the study occasionally uses alarmist language and tends to systematically downplay the economic factors when explaining the migratory decisions.

<sup>64</sup> Quotas were based on the percent of Albanians in the total population, not their share of the working age population. For example, in 1971, in response to the complaints of Serbian Communists that Albanians were monopolizing job opportunities, a senior Albanian Communist said that the percent of Albanians in the whole population was still higher than the percent of Albanians in the employed population (Mišović 1987, p. 274). This argument ignored the fact that, because of the much larger proportion of young Albanians, many were not old enough to be employed.

171). A Kosovo Serb who left the province later complained that during official court proceedings in Kosovo ‘everyone spoke only Albanian, so I, my brother, and my sister in law did not understand what was going on at all’ (Ibid, p. 184). Serbs reportedly started leaving the local Communist Party as discussions were frequently held exclusively in Albanian, without translation (Ibid, p. 179). They were replaced by the Albanian cadres. In 1946, ethnic Albanians represented 32 per cent of the Communist Party members in Kosovo and Serbs 42 per cent. By 1974, Albanians were 63 per cent and Serbs only 26 per cent.<sup>65</sup>

In rural areas, Kosovo Serb peasants bitterly complained that after 1966, they were subjected to myriad acts of ethnic harassment from younger members of the Albanian majority, hungry for land as a result of the dramatic increase in the rural population density.<sup>66</sup> In the 1985 survey of Serbian migrations from Kosovo cited above, about 46.4 per cent of rural households reported instances of verbal ethnic threats in their settlements, and 24.6 per cent reported various forms of physical assaults, mostly bullying of children on an ethnic basis (Petrović and Blagojević 1989, pp. 123, 135). However, the (Albanian-dominated) police and courts generally failed to stop the harassment; 53.6 per cent reported that the local Communist party did nothing (Ibid, p. 172). Similarly, with respect to the Kosovo police, 30.2 per cent said they did nothing, 14.4 per cent said they pretended to intervene, and 15 per cent said they protected the Albanian harassers (Ibid, p. 187). As one respondent explained, ‘The police was all theirs, so you can either shut up and suffer or get up and leave’ (Ibid, p. 166). When asked to compare their lives in Kosovo and central Serbia, respondents frequently commented on a new sense of safety – they could freely speak in Serbian, freely walk the streets even at night, and were not afraid that their children would be harassed (Ibid, pp. 60-69). The majority (57.8 per cent) stated that the greatest improvement associated with migration was freedom from harassment and assault (Ibid, pp. 223, 306-309).

Kosovo Serb Communists who wanted to discuss the systematic experience of ethnic harassment within the Kosovo Communist Party were labelled ‘nationalists’ and disciplined by Albanian-dominated Communist institutions (Ibid, p. 178),<sup>67</sup> thus preventing meaningful articulation of bitter feelings. A tendency to assume that Serb nationalism was the ‘greatest danger’ was the accepted wisdom in the Serbian Communist Party, whose 1976 report states: ‘In Serbia, of course, the most dangerous is Greater Serbian nationalism, and for this reason the Communists of Serbia fought especially hard against that form of nationalism.’<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See National Composition (1956) and *Ostvarivanje Politike Ravnopravnosti* (1976) . While this was a rather drastic change in the Party composition, Albanians were still underrepresented compared to their share in total population of province, which was about 74 per cent in 1971.

<sup>66</sup> As a 1976 Internal Party report explains, Kosovo ‘is the only region of the country in which there is an absolute growth of rural population, which causes rural over-population [prenaseljenost] with all of its negative implications’ (*Ostvarivanje Politike Ravnopravnosti* 1976, p. 18).

<sup>67</sup> For example, in the early 1970s, two Kosovo Serbian Communists complained about the ethnic harassment of Serb peasants, and a Kosovo Turkish Communist complained about Albanian assimilationist pressure on ethnic Turks. All three were purged by the Albanian-dominated Provincial Communist Committee (Pavlović et al 2004, p. 26).

<sup>68</sup> *Ostvarivanje Politike Ravnopravnosti* (1976, p. 5).

A rapid Albanian population growth<sup>69</sup> was not met with increased economic opportunities in Kosovo; with greater competition for scarce resources (especially jobs and land), the local Albanian Communists instituted rigid hiring quotas, to the great detriment of young Serbian urban job seekers. They also turned a blind eye to the ethnic harassment of Serbian villagers. Faced with such protracted discrimination, large numbers of Kosovo Serbs voted with their feet by moving into central Serbia. The scale of this population movement was significant, with about 85,000 or one third of all Kosovo Serbs moving out of Kosovo from 1961 to 1981 (Pavlović et al 2004, p. 26).<sup>70</sup>

By the early 1970s, Kosovo was a province of Serbia in form, but an Albanian ethnic republic in content. As noted, the process of Serbia's transformation, along the lines envisioned by Fazlija in 1967, was completed by the time of the 1974 Constitution.<sup>71</sup> But in Serbia, there was a constitutional duality in place. The Constitution stated that the republic was a state (Article 3) with a territory (Article 5), and autonomous provinces were 'socio-political communities' (Article 4) and constituent parts of the republic (Article 2). Granted, citizens of Serbia could realize their 'sovereign rights' in the republic, but the citizens of the two provinces had 'sovereign rights' as well. In other words, the citizens of Serbia living in the provinces could exercise their rights in the republic, but the realization of those rights depended on the consent of the provinces. This situation, known as 'conflicting norms,' was embedded in Article 300 of the Constitution. Article 245 provided that 'the nations and nationalities shall have equal rights,' although the distinction between nations and nationalities remained.

By 1981, changes to the constitutions of the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo were made completely autonomously, with no provisions for either review or recommendations by any organ of the Socialist Republic of Serbia. However, Article 301 of the Serbian Constitution stated that enacting legislation for the entire territory of the Socialist Republic of Serbia (including the autonomous provinces) required mutual agreement of all three assemblies (the assembly of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, as well as two provincial assemblies). It also said that if only one assembly rejected the

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<sup>69</sup> From 1953 to 1981, the rural population in Kosovo increased by 55 per cent (Popović et al 1990, p. 7).

<sup>70</sup> The migration of Serbs from Kosovo provoked a heated discussion in the 1980s, with Yugoslav Albanian scholars and politicians explaining the movement as a result of economic causes (lack of jobs in Kosovo, lower price of land in central Serbia) or Serbian unwillingness to live in equality with Albanians (Dragović-Soso 2002, p. 118; Islami 1989, p. 53). Serbian scholars stressed ethnic harassment and discrimination (Dragović-Soso 2002, p. 119; Blagojević 2006, pp. 151, 155). The findings of the 1986 survey indicate a combination of economic and non-economic motivations. For example, while a significant percent (15.6 per cent) of Kosovo Serbs who moved out indicated that they would have stayed in Kosovo if they could obtain employment, the vast majority (76.6 per cent) indicated that they never wanted to return. The majority (57.8 per cent) stated that the greatest improvement associated with migration was freedom from harassment and assault (Petrović and Blagojević 1989, pp. 223, 306-9). Subsequent claims by Serbian ultra-nationalists that Kosovo Serbs were victims of a 'genocide' committed by Albanians in the 1970s (Dragović-Soso 2002, pp. 126-7; Bracewell 2000) were meaningless, inflammatory exaggerations. Instead, the flight of Kosovo Serbs should be seen in the context of the overall trends of Yugoslav migration in the post-1966 period, characterized by movement from a minority situation to a majority situation. Due to unintended effects of Yugoslav ethno-federalism, many Yugoslavs had the following dilemma: 'Why should I be a vulnerable minority in someone else's republic, when I can be a titular in my own republic?' Many resolved this dilemma by moving to the safety of their home republics. While it could be argued that the migration from Kosovo was more intensive, similar processes were happening in other parts of the country with other ethnic groups.

<sup>71</sup> The Official Gazette of the SFRY, No. 9/74.

proposed legislation, the bill would become law only in Central Serbia and the province that accepted it. This peculiar setup was at the core of Serbian national activists' argument that the Socialist Republic of Serbia was not equal to other Yugoslav republics, because Serbia could not effectively legislate on its entire territory. Constitutional contradictions were inevitably bound to turn into conflict over the exercise of power in Serbia once the Communists started to take the Constitution more seriously in the 1980s.

Within the Yugoslav ethno-federal structure, the position of Kosovo and Kosovo Albanians was an anomaly. In the Communist Party, there were two major projects for resolving this anomaly. The solution of the (mostly) Albanian Communist activists was to complete the transformation that started in 1968, formally recognizing Albanians as an equal Yugoslav nation with titular status within the republic of Kosovo. The counter-project of Serbian activists was to reclaim the equality of Serbia with respect to other Yugoslav republics (and thereby of Serbs to other Yugoslav nations) by re-integrating Kosovo within Serbia and recognizing ethnic Serb titular status in the province.

Serbian resistance was growing, first within non-Party institutions, then within the Party itself. With respect to the former, during discussions of the 1974 Constitution, held at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade, several university professors pointed out that creation of autonomies with jurisdiction only in Serbia clearly placed Serbia in an unequal position *vis-à-vis* other Yugoslav republics (Pavlović 2001, pp. 164-5). In January 1975, the Presidency of Serbia demanded constitutional revisions, arguing that Serbia alone had not obtained 'its historical right to the national state within the Yugoslav federation' (Pavlović et al 2004, p. 22).

In March 1977, a working group of the Central Committee of the CP of Serbia prepared the 'Blue Book' internal report to facilitate discussion about the Serbian republic-provinces relationship.<sup>72</sup> The Blue Book's core argument was that Yugoslav republics (like Yugoslavia itself) were states, with full right to self-determination, including the right to secede. While the Socialist Republic of Serbia was a state, Serbia's provinces were autonomies derived from its statehood (i.e. not states in their own right). The authors then explained the disjointed nature of the relationship between the Socialist Republic of Serbia and its provinces. They pointed to a lack of coordination – or even meaningful connection – in a number of legislative, judicial and executive branches between the republic and its provinces, including the way in which the republic and provinces were represented in the federation.

The authors concluded that in the present state of affairs, representatives of the Socialist Republic of Serbia had legislative, judicial and executive powers in Central Serbia only (i.e. not in the two provinces) and represented only Central Serbia at the federal level. As a consequence, the Socialist Republic of Serbia was not equal to the other Yugoslav republics. Moreover, given a Yugoslav republic's dual status, the inequality of Serbia as republic translated into the inequality of Serbs as a Yugoslav nation within Yugoslavia. Their final point was a synopsis of mainstream Serb understanding of equality in socialist Yugoslavia:

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<sup>72</sup> The Blue Book is reproduced in its entirety in the document section of Đekić (1990, pp. 123-174).

In our [Yugoslav] socialist system the Socialist Republic of Serbia – same as any other republic in relation to its corresponding nation – has, together with its other characteristics, important attributes and functions of a national state of the Serb people. Taking into account the expressed tendencies towards weakening the unity of the republic as a whole and ever-more increasing differentiation into three separate regions, weakly or only formally tied together, the question whether or not the Serb nation is exercising its historical right to national state within Yugoslav federation based on its self-determination on an equal footing to other Yugoslav nations is now being posed.

Thus, the Blue Book explicitly argued that due to the increased autonomy of the provinces, the republic of Serbia – as a ‘national state of the Serb people’ – was not equal to other Yugoslav national republics. This, in turn, implied that Serbs were not equal to other Yugoslav nations.

Unlike Fazlija’s 1967 report on the position of minorities, the Blue Book had few immediate effects, as the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Serbia prudently decided not to endorse this document prepared by its own expert group. This cautious position earned them praise from Tito (Bogetić 2001, p. 193).

However, Albanian activists aspired to the status of Albanians as a fully-fledged Yugoslav nation, titular in its home republic of Kosovo. Such a move implied not only that Kosovo should secede from Serbia, but that Kosovo Albanians – a non-Slavic people with an ethnic homeland outside Yugoslavia – should be recognized as equal to (Slavic) Yugoslav nations. ‘Yugoslavia’ was often understood by Yugoslav citizens as a ‘union of South Slavs,’ a self-understanding which threw into question the position of a rapidly growing non-Slavic Albanian ethnic group in the Slavic state. In the words of Albanian intellectual Shkëlzen Maliqi, ‘How can Albanians feel at home in a country defined as the state of South Slavs?’ (Maliqi 1989, p. 70).

There is no reason to assume that a gradual change in ethnic composition of a country must have a negative impact on inter-ethnic relations.<sup>73</sup> However, the Yugoslav ideological and institutional framework prevented the creation of an amalgamated national identity and linked ethnic equality with titular status and an ethnic republic. Thus, the gradual demographic change in Albanian groups and their demand for titular status slowly eroded the stability of the existing political order.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Particularly instructive here is the American racial and national formation experience, the gradual development of more inclusive boundaries of the majority ethnic/racial group: from a more exclusionary WASP identity of ‘The People’ in the era of the American Revolution, to less exclusionary ‘white’ majority identities in the twentieth century. While this process often involved protracted ‘racial’ discrimination and bitter social conflicts, new waves of immigrants from Europe gradually ‘became White’ and were accepted as members of the dominant ethno-racial group (Roediger 2005). The descendants of the Aboriginal populations and African slaves were, of course, not so fortunate (Omi and Winant 1994).

<sup>74</sup> Similar dynamics developed in Lebanon before the inter-ethnic war, as the deep institutionalization of ethnicity combined with entrenched ethnic power sharing arrangements and quotas increasingly clashed with a new ethno-demographic reality produced largely by inter-ethnic fertility differentials (Bieber 2000).

### ***The 1981 Demonstrations and the Coming Clash of Two Mass Nationalisms***

The position of the Communist Party is clear: the cadre are not a-national and they have the right to protect the interests of their own nation. Nobody can take away my right to care, as a member of the Serbian nation, about my people. (Jovan Pelenović, Member of Kosovo Central Committee, June 1982 session; cited in Mišović 1998, p. 382).

In 1981, several months after Tito's death, Kosovo Albanian students engaged in large demonstrations, demanding that Kosovo be granted the status of a Yugoslav republic. The Yugoslav Communist elite, still reeling from the loss of its charismatic leader, responded, first with shock and then fury. After the expensive and federally financed program of economic development in Kosovo, after Kosovo had become a *de facto* Albanian republic, the Albanian demonstrators still demanded more.<sup>75</sup>

The 1968 Albanian demonstrations were treated relatively leniently, and organizers were not severely persecuted. This time, however, the Communist party-state unleashed full scale repression, arresting the student organizers and purging the Kosovo Communist party of 'Albanian nationalists.' Serbian Communist nationalists seized this opportunity to define Albanian nationalism as the new 'greatest danger' to Yugoslav unity and framed demands for the status of republic as anti-Yugoslav. Again, the tide was turning, this time in favour of Serbian nationalists. Yet neither the Albanian demand for republican status nor the Serbian demand that the province be re-integrated into Serbia was inherently 'anti-Yugoslav.' Both represented rational attempts to pursue collective ethnic interests within the logic of the Yugoslav ethno-federal system, which heavily privileged titulars, failed to protect minorities, and neglected the basic rights of individual Yugoslav citizens to equal treatment regardless of ethnicity.

### **Conclusion**

Our analysis of the development of Kosovo autonomy from 1945 to 1981 indicates fundamental contradictions in Yugoslav Communist attempts to resolve competing nationalist claims. Communist leaders discussed annexation of Kosovo into Albania, combined with Albania joining Federal Yugoslavia, but were stymied by the negative Serbian reaction. Then the 1948 break between Tito and Stalin ended negotiations. The incorporation of Kosovo into Serbia, with only a semblance of autonomy, combined with the siege mentality of the 1950s and the anti-Albanian prejudice of senior Serbian Communists, placed Kosovo Albanians in an inferior position. Consequently, many migrated to Turkey. The fall of Ranković and his group created opportunities for Albanian upward social mobility and for the economic development of Kosovo within Serbia and Yugoslavia. However, instead of arriving at genuine ethnic equality in Kosovo, the ethnic groups simply exchanged places.<sup>76</sup> This time, Kosovo Serbs had to leave to escape discrimination. By the early 1980s, the sense that Kosovo autonomy was detrimental to their ethnic group was widespread among both Albanian and Serbs.

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<sup>75</sup> The 1981 demonstrations, which involved widespread street violence and massive use of the security forces, marked a qualitatively new period of Yugoslav communist history. A detailed analysis is well beyond the scope of this paper. Nor for the time being, can such analysis be conducted from the primary sources in the State Archives of Serbia and Montenegro, as these will only become accessible to researchers after 2011.

<sup>76</sup> Our findings support existing analyzes of the reversal of ethnic domination in Kosovo in the Communist period (Blagojević 2001, pp. 222-3; Popović et al 1990, pp. 15-18; Pavlović et al 2004, pp. 5-6).

**Table 1: Two Periods of Ethnic Domination in Kosovo<sup>77</sup>**

	<b>Serb Domination (1949-1965)</b>	<b>Albanian Domination (1969-1981)</b>
Institutional Domination <sup>1</sup>	Serbian over-representation in: State Security; Communist Party; State Sector.	Overwhelming Albanian majority in State Security, Communist Party; Albanian over-representation in State Sector.
Symbolic Domination <sup>2</sup>	Albanians defined as ‘minority’; Serbian <i>de facto</i> official language.	Cultural Institutions (University, Academy of Sciences) as ‘Albanian’; Albanian as <i>de facto</i> official language; Flag of Albania as official symbol.
Ideological Justification for Ethnic Preferential Treatment	Kosovo Serb war-time over- representation in the Yugoslav Partisan forces.	Kosovo Albanian share in the overall population of the Province.
Selective De-Criminalization / Criminalisation of Nationalism <sup>78</sup>	Albanian irredentism defined as the ‘Greatest Danger.’	Greater Serbian nationalism defined as the ‘Greatest Danger.’
Outmigration of the dominated	Albanians to Turkey.	Serbs to ‘safe’ parts of Serbia.

*Notes:* 1. *Institutional Domination* is indicated via over-representation in key provincial institutions (security apparatus, party, state). It usually also indicates employment discrimination via the exclusion (or token representation) of the dominated from the most desirable jobs.

2. *Symbolic domination* is reflected in the use of language and ethnic group symbols as state symbols.

This paper traces the origin of the failure of the Kosovo autonomy to the Leninist model of nested homelands.<sup>79</sup> Still, the emergence of Kosovo autonomy was not simply the product of a dogmatic application of the Leninist model but the result of a complex interplay among the Communists’ overall ideological commitment and understanding of

<sup>77</sup> The table contrasts long-lasting domination periods and leaves out shorter and more fluid formative periods.

<sup>78</sup> While the Leninist ethnic relations doctrine prescribed healthy ‘flourishing’ of ethnic cultures and national ‘affirmation,’ nationalist ‘excess’ was prohibited and was to be prosecuted. The problem was that the line between ‘nationalist flourishing’ and ‘nationalist excesses’ was, at best, blurred (Mišović 1987, p. 420). In practice, the lack of precision in the doctrine created opportunity for self-interested application of the principle by power holders, so that their own nationalism was ‘flourishing’ and nationalism of the ‘Other’ was ‘excess.’ The term ‘greatest danger’ comes from Martin’s (2001) study of Soviet ethnic policies before WWII. In the early Soviet period, Russian chauvinism was decried and vigorously persecuted as ‘the greatest danger,’ but after the late 1920s, the nationalism of smaller nations became the ‘greatest danger’ (Martin 2001, pp. 7, 23, 258, 267). As the shift occurred, policies previously seen as ‘healthy’ national ‘affirmation’ were now retroactively labeled ‘nationalism’ and their promoters persecuted (2001, p. 363). As Suny (1993, p.117) notes, ‘The regime retained full power to decide what was permissible “patriotic” expression and what was pernicious nationalism, and the boundary between the two shifted constantly.’

<sup>79</sup> Clearly, supportive evidence from a single case study can, at most, raise the nested homelands thesis to the level of plausibility. To refine the description of the causal mechanisms, determine the explanatory power, and outline the scope of the thesis, it is necessary to systematically compare the Kosovo case with nested homelands in the USSR, both those that might have had disintegrative effects (such as Karabakh or Abkhazia) and those with little or no evidence of such effects (such as North Ossetia). While the full development of our theoretical argument demands such comparative historical analysis, such a project goes beyond the scope of this paper.

the Soviet ‘model,’ competition for scarce resources among different groups within the Communist Party, and various improvisations that aimed to address issues on the ground in the most opportune manner. The nested homeland institutional framework that emerged enabled two credible but mutually exclusive understandings of national equality while failing to protect individual and minority rights from the chauvinism of the titulars. Once Kosovo was designed as Albanian ethno-territorial autonomy and embedded into Serbia, which was designed as Serbian ethno-territorial autonomy, nationalists on both sides felt empowered to demand supremacy (titular status) for their own ethnic group. Kosovo was still part of Serbia; therefore, Albanian nationalists argued they were not equal to other Yugoslav nations as they lacked their own ethno-national republic. Other Yugoslav republics lacked autonomous provinces and Kosovo Albanians were *de facto* titulars in Kosovo; hence, Serb nationalists argued that Serbia and the Serbian nation were not equal to other Yugoslav republics and nations.

A language of ‘affirmation’ and ‘national equality’ was used by both Albanian and Serbian nationalists to pursue titular positions and gain privileges for their respective ethnic groups.<sup>80</sup> The Leninist doctrine, combined with Albanian and Serbian nationalist projects, was the source of this contradiction. Postulating that ‘full national equality’ meant possession of a titular status in ‘one’s own’ national republic created an incentive for ethnic groups to struggle for titular status so that they could dominate others instead of being dominated. Instead of promoting gradual ‘de-titularization’ in Kosovo – de-linking individual and group opportunities from issues of titular status – the Communists replaced one group of titulars with another without modifying the fundamental structure of the system. While promising equality at the ethnic group level, the Communist institutional design simply exchanged the roles of the dominant and the dominated, failing to provide basic equal treatment and physical safety for all inhabitants of Kosovo, *regardless* of ethnic background.

However, even if the Communist nested homeland model was an unworkable compromise, this does not mean that compromise was impossible. The most bitter grievances on both sides concerned the systemic police and court discrimination reflected in the lack of protection from ethnic harassment, as well as job market discrimination *via* preferential hiring. Prevention of these forms of ethnic discrimination – ‘de-titularisation’ – would have decoupled the status issue from issues of individual equal treatment and freedom from fear. In this way, the whole question of who was a titular and who was not would have declined in significance for the vast majority of people. Contrary to Stalin’s reasoning, the Austro-Marxist concerns for non-territorial minority rights were not ‘reactionary’ ‘abstractions’ but vital for the freedom and prosperity of people living in disputed territories.

While ‘de-titularisation’ would have reduced the most immediate grievances, however, it would have failed to address the overall status issue. Even if there was no

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<sup>80</sup> Still, as we have shown, senior Albanian and Serbian Communists never acted as competing ‘monolithic blocks.’ Ethnic ‘interests,’ however defined, were often less important motivators than other group and individual identities and interests. Even when they wanted to pursue ethnic interests, there were often wide differences in preferred strategies within the same ethnic Communist elite. As previously discussed, several senior Serbian communists (from Kosovo and Vojvodina) supported the transformation of Kosovo from a province into a republic, presumably because that would lead to elevation of their own status and resources. Similarly, while some Albanian Communists insisted in the late 1960s on the immediate creation of Kosovo as an Albanian republic in Yugoslavia, others preferred a more gradual approach.

blatant discrimination against non-titulars, the question of whether Kosovo should be a province of Serbia or a different Yugoslav republic – or something else – would remain unresolved. Even if the nested homeland model was an unworkable institutional compromise, the long history of multinational democracies offered a variety of power-sharing options that could have been adjusted to local needs and conditions by negotiation among the authorities in Belgrade, Pristina, and Tirana.

Yet the authoritarian nature of Communist politics heavily constrained the opportunities for the free articulation of competing interests and open negotiation of a compromise agreement.<sup>81</sup> Despite Leninist rhetoric about the ‘right of self-determination,’ Albanian and Serbian political and intellectual elites – never mind the majority of the citizens – were never allowed to openly formulate their positions on the status question. Gradual and public status negotiations by democratically elected politicians – the bread and butter of the multi-national democracies – were unimaginable within the confines of authoritarian Communist politics. For this reason, the criticism of the Communist ‘pseudo-federalism’ rings true (McGarry and O’Leary 2009, p. 9): without the democratic accountability of political elites and without freedom of speech, we are left with secretive bargaining between self-proclaimed Communist ‘defenders’ of competing ethnic interests. While an imposed settlement might appear fair and reasonable to elites who are not accountable to those who must live under such a settlement, the outcome of such bargaining processes can hardly be seen as binding by the interested parties. It is difficult to see how an illegitimate process can produce a legitimate and binding outcome. A legitimate and hence durable settlement of the protracted ethnic conflict seems impossible without a gradual process of bargaining and compromises made by democratically elected representatives of the citizens.

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<sup>81</sup> Fear of the State Security prevented ethnic Albanian intellectuals and politicians from articulating their grievances before the fall of Ranković. Similarly, in 1971 a group of Belgrade University professors who tried to articulate Serbian national opposition to the Communist Party designs on Kosovo were promptly purged.

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