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VIEWS OF VOJVODINIAN LEADERSHIP ON RE-OPENING THE ISSUE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SR SERBIA AND SAP VOJVODINA IN 1981

Abstract: In the early 1980s, after the death of the long-time President Josip Broz Tito, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia slowly began to fall into a deep political and economic crisis. One of the most important aspects of this crisis was the crisis between the republic and the province, whose relationship was based on the 1974 Constitution. In terms of relations of the Socialist Republic of Serbia and the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina the degradation started 1981, when in the wake of the Albanian demonstrations (i.e. the counterrevolution in Kosovo), the republic leadership demanded a redefinition of the relations within Serbia, i.e. the change of the Constitution. Responding to the specific criticism from Belgrade, Vojvodinian leaders formed a working group which, in eight comprehensive studies, gave their view of the normative and economic problems of Serbia and Vojvodina.

Keywords: autonomy, Vojvodina, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Serbia.

In 1981, when Vojvodina lost both protagonists of the great dispute over the autonomy from the 1960s – Jovan Veselinov and Stevan Doronjski, a major political crisis started and it did not end until the final disintegration of the country. The crisis began in March with massive Albanian demonstrations in Kosovo under the slogan ‘Kosovo – Republic’, so in April after the riots and casualties the Yugoslav leadership was forced to introduce a state of emergency. This was followed by discussions in party forums at the federal and republic levels, which opened not only the issue of Kosovo’s position in Serbia but also the issue of Serbia’s relations with both of its provinces initiated by the Serbian leadership.¹ These questions were first raised at a joint session of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communist of Serbia (CC of the LCS) and the Presidency of Serbia held at the end of April 1981.

¹ Saying that Serbia used Albanian demonstrations in 1981 to re-initiate the constitutional issue Dejan Jović assessed that, since the Kosovo leaders were discredited, the main opponents to the intentions of Belgrade were Vojvodinian communist (who he saw as one of the most conservative and the least nationalistic parts of the LSY). Jović 2003: 293-296.

What followed was a session of the CC of the LCS on 6 May dedicated to the “causes and consequences of the counter-revolutionary action in Kosovo” which was broadcast live on television. Republic leaders, primarily Špiro Galović, Dragoslav Marković and Ivan Stambolić, connected the Kosovo riots with the status that the provinces got in the 1974 Constitution. Speaking about the situation in Kosovo, Galović argued that the previous years were marked by “the tendencies towards a complete separation of the provinces from the Republic. What was retained as a link is reflected more in the presence of the provinces in the Republic and their participation in solving the issues of interest to the narrower part of the Republic. None of what should be shared according to the Constitution was not fully or formally defined so in practice there was no working together. With respect to many important aspects of the government organization and everyday political work there was almost no real contact. The same can be said of relations in the League of Communists. The new constitutional solutions require much more joint work and cooperation – and this has so far been lacking – instead of a confrontation we need a working analysis so that we can reach a solution in the public interest, which will mean a real, not a formal unity of the Republic.” Marković noticed the escalation of the “requests for the transfer of jurisdiction to the socialist autonomous provinces in the area of citizenship, security, statistics, the Law on planning” and on the party level “to call provincial committees central committees, provincial congresses to be referred to as the congresses of the League of Communists, etc.”

Ivan Stambolić wondered if the “causes and roots of the slogan ‘we want a Republic’ were the roots of statist autonomism” and reminded the audience of “the discussions that we had in 1977,” which, according to him, were intended to “strengthen the self-governing independence of the provinces and the self-governing unity of the Republic as well as Yugoslavia.” He warned that the “gap between the normative and the real” was uneven, that the gap was small “when it comes to creating the elements of federalism of the provinces in the Federation,” and that it was big “when it comes to the realization of the province as part of the Republic.” He noted that in the area of economic life from 1977 onwards “we had more pronounced episodes of disintegration, while in terms of the self-managing joint labor and resources we did not take any major steps. At the same time, many solutions in the field of legislative regulation and development of the political system and relations, which we have adopted since 1977, as well as the proposals for normative regulation of new common areas and functions of cooperation, seem to have led to something that might be called the federalization of the Republic.”

In that sense he referred to the laws on citizenship, on planning, the Executive Council, republic administration, national defense, the financing of joint function, and he particularly emphasized the problem of the Social Plan and the self-management planning, which could not be established “due to differences in the interpretation of the Constitution. And it is known that without economic union there is no other union.” The current dispute between the Republic and the provinces over the Social Plan, according to Stambolić, “only apparently takes the form of a dispute in the interpretation of the legal basis for the adoption of the plan. It in fact shows our differences in the perception of the republic as a state and socio-political community.” He strongly opposed the use of the terms ‘Serbia proper’ and ‘Serbia without the provinces’ and once again returned to the debates from 1977 and “the illusion that we agreed on the big issues that were initiated and that we believed this illusion”

that was created then.² On the following day, May 7, the events in Kosovo were discussed by the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.³

After the speeches of republican leaders followed a Belgrade media campaign regarding the so-called agreement law in which the provinces were blamed for insisting to govern issues in their own territory by their own laws and not by the agreement laws (which were brought in the republican parliamentary assemblies), which in reality led to the ‘federalization’ of Serbia and its transformation into the socio-political community in which a “tripartite partnership” ruled. Vojvodinian leaders denied the claims that the Republic was unequal in comparison with its provinces because, supposedly, the republic laws were also decided on by the provinces but not vice versa by presenting the fact that the delegates from provinces neither voted nor discussed the republic laws, but only attended the sessions, which were organized by the republic assembly itself. Vojvodinian leadership, already worried that the unrest in Kosovo was used to again raise the issue of autonomy, proposed to the national assembly to change the procedure for the adoption of the republic laws, i.e. to exclude provincial delegates from the work of the parliament. However, the response from Belgrade stipulated that it was unnecessary and that the whole problem was blown out of proportion. As a sign of goodwill of Novi Sad, the percentage of assets collected via the party membership fees in Vojvodina and sent to the republic treasury was increased.⁴ However, the Belgrade media continued with the campaign and Vojvodina offered an answer based on statistical data.

Starting from the conclusions of the 20th meeting of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia from 7 May 1981 (“that it is necessary to consider the experiences and problems in achieving unity on the basis of the construction of socialist self-management relations as well as from the viewpoint of the constitutional functions of the Federation, the Socialist Republic of Serbia as a republic and socialist autonomous provinces which are an integral part of SR Serbia and constituent elements of the Federation”), as well as the basic attitudes and evaluation of the joint session of the Presidency of SAP and the Presidency of PC LCV held on 8 May 1981, the provincial work group compiled eight studies during the summer which were addressed to the members of the CC LCS and the CC LCV in September 1981 in order to prepare for the announced assembly of the CC of the LCS dedicated to the republic-provincial relations.

Analyzing the relationships between the organizations of joint work in the field of SAP Vojvodina and SR Serbia without provinces, the members of the work group noted that these relations in general “bear the features of overall relations of the organization of associated labor from the Province with the organizations of associated labor from any other socialist republics and SAP Kosovo,” but that there are certain specific characteristics which were particularly noticeable in the field of foreign trade, domestic trade, banking, tourism and so on. In the first of these materials of the work group all these segments were elaborated in detail.⁵

² Petranović i Zečević 1987: 591-612.

³ Dimić 2001: 447.

⁴ Popović 2006: 718-721.

⁵ Legacy of Đorđe Radosavljević Grne, *Aktivnosti organizacija udruženog rada iz SR Srbije van SAP i SAP Vojvodine (ekonomski odnosi sa inostranstvom, unutrašnja trgovina, bankarstvo, osiguranje, turizam)*, Novi

In terms of trade of Vojvodina with foreign countries, it was stated that it comprised about a third of the foreign trade via the organization of SAP Vojvodina and half of the trade was performed by a foreign trade network of organizations from the territory of Serbia proper, while the rest was mediated by the organizations from Croatia and Slovenia. From this it can be concluded that there was “a high degree of dependence when it comes to foreign trade in organizations outside of Vojvodina, especially large transport organization based in Belgrade.” It was noticed that there were no income bonds between Vojvodinian manufacturers and foreign trade organizations, but instead they had credit relations “or relations which, although formulated in the form of self-government were essentially credit in nature” (as examples of cooperation “Invest – IMPORT” and LŽT Kikinda from Kikinda, “Genex” and “Matroz” from Mitrovica and “Invest-Import” and HIP from Pančevo, “Tehnoservis” and GIK from Kanjiža and “Hempro” and “Hempro Šid” were cited). In order to overcome such a situation and in order to develop “income relations,” the conclusion of self-governing agreements began based on “the elements of lasting cooperation, joint planning and joint risk bearing in the placement of products in the international market.”

It was noted that the network of Vojvodinian foreign trade organizations abroad was undeveloped and that “in the total number of registered forms of activities abroad SAP Vojvodina accounts for about 2%,” while the participation of Serbia proper, depending on the type of the industry, ranged between 22% and 46.5%. This clearly indicated that Vojvodinian economy was directed at Belgrade foreign trade organizations (the examples of cooperation listed are the ones between “Genex” and “Koprodukt,” LŽT Kikinda and “Invest-Import,” “Utva” and “Radnop,” “Naftagas” and “Genex”). Still, it was concluded that this cooperation took place “on a case-by-case basis,” i.e. in individual business deals without any permanent connections “which were not even offered.” Therefore, the creation of Vojvodinian foreign trade network was announced, i.e. the establishment of economic units in twenty countries “through which the interests of the whole Vojvodinian economy in a particular market would be accomplished.” In other markets they would benefit from the existing network of foreign trade organizations from the rest of the country (primarily from Belgrade), which, in the opinion of the compilers of the study, was not sufficiently used by Vojvodinian economy.

Inseparable from foreign trade was the payment-balance position of Serbia proper and Vojvodina. The fact that organizations from Vojvodina were in previous years directed at the self-governing connection with organizations from Serbia outside the province (for the purpose of the procurement of raw materials, joint realization of production, etc.) was at the time of compiling the report “made more difficult due to considerable demands for foreign currency participation in order to realize the plans in the payment-balance positions of republics and provinces.” The examples were listed that confirmed this theory – the cooperation of the Novi Sad “Novkabel” and RTB Bor (“Novkabel” was required to import raw copper according to a self-government agreement, which was increased every year, while at the same time the export of goods from Serbia was increasing); the agreement of several companies from Vojvodina with the Hungarian Foreign Trade Organization

Sad, 22 June 1981. All previous quotations are from the source cited in this footnote.

MOGURT from Budapest concerning the cooperation in the cooperative production of RABA vehicles (the participation of Vojvodinian companies in the export amounted to about 45% and the overall foreign exchange inflow was directed towards the payment-balance position of Serbia outside of the provinces); during 1980 the stock of federal stockpiles exported 200,000 tons of sugar and all the profit was recorded in the payment-balance position of Serbia proper, “although it is known that only Vojvodina has a market surplus of sugar, which is simultaneously prohibited from being exported.”

In terms of international payment transactions it was noted that it “almost completely (about 90%)” took place in the system of banking and foreign trade organizations from Serbia proper and that there was a gap “between the directions of export and import as well as the inflow and outflow of foreign currency.” Particularly harmful to the development of “income-based relations” were the following phenomena: the retention of foreign exchange inflow in the accounts of foreign trade organizations, “usually in a Belgrade bank,” for as long as a month until it was forwarded to the end user in Vojvodina; buying off of agricultural and other products by large foreign trade organization for dinars which would then “with some processing or without any processing at all be sent abroad in favor of the payment-balance position of SR Serbia outside the SAP Vojvodina” etc. As an illustration, they cited two concrete examples – the Belgrade company “Jugodrho” obstructed the formation of the company “Jugodrho Novi Sad,” which was planned “as part of organizing the foreign trade system of consumer goods,” while the multi-year procurement of oil for the needs of central Serbia caused “a high cost of foreign borrowing (interest) that in the current relationship is borne by the refinery and organizations of the joint work of SAP Vojvodina.”

In terms of internal trade it was noted that the share of Vojvodina in the total wholesale turnover was about 10% at the level of Yugoslavia but that of the total number of organizations engaged in the wholesale distribution 11.7% were located in Vojvodina. The situation was similar in retail. As for the trade between the republics and provinces, it was observed that it was decreasing from year to year, so that about 2/3 of the procurement and delivery of goods were performed within the boundaries of SAP Vojvodina (the so-called “rounding up of the production cycle” was a tendency in other federal units as well). In the direction of Serbia proper, which was the most important trade partner of Vojvodina, delivery and supplies of goods slightly exceeded a tenth of the total trade and the largest part of the exchange was performed between the producers in Vojvodina and Belgrade export companies and between Vojvodinian consumers and the coal mine “Kolubara” Vreoci.

As for the inter-bank cooperation, a more detailed analysis of the business of Belgrade “Jugobanka” in Vojvodina has been done since the rest of Belgrade banking institutions (“Beobanka,” “Investbanka”) had a modest share of banking transactions in the province. “Jugobanka – osnovna banka” with the headquarters in Novi Sad accounted for 9% of the total banking potential in the territory of SAP Vojvodina. Since this bank, whose clients were large Vojvodinian exporters (LŽTK Kikinda, “Sever” Subotica and others) was joined into “Jugobanka – udružena banka” and through it performed almost all business and “with the lack of foreign currency assets increasingly felt appropriate consequences for business and liquidity of the banking system in SAP Vojvodina.” On the other hand, due to the lack

of foreign currency, “Jugobanka” believed that it should finance oil import for consumption only in Serbia without the provinces “and not in other areas where there is a significant number of members and clients of the bank” (in particular in Vojvodina, as was previously the case). Although “Jugobanka – osnovna banka” Novi Sad was associated simultaneously with “Vojvođanska banka – udružena banka” it had much closer ties with “Jugobanka – udružena banka” from Belgrade, with the data for 1980 from this main bank itself indicating that there was “more circulation of funds from SAP Vojvodina than towards it.” Using its elaborate network, “Jugobanka” collected more than a third of total savings in Vojvodina, while avoiding the legal obligation “to channel the savings in accordance with the social arrangements and development plans of the area where it was collected.”

The outflow of funds from Vojvodinian branches was also observed in the case of an insurance company “ZOIL Dunav” Belgrade. In addition, Vojvodinian companies which associated their funds through associations of insured parties from Pančevo and Novi Sad were excluded from managing this institution, with different tariffs and conditions having been applied in the area north of the Sava and the Danube in comparison to Serbia proper. A similar situation also existed in the field of tourism services. Thus, in Vojvodina tourism services were offered by eight Belgrade agencies with 22 offices (“Putnik,” “Centroturist,” “Inex,” “Balkanijaturist,” “Beograd-tours,” JAT, KSR and “Lasta”), while of all Vojvodinian agencies only “Sever-turist” from Sombor had a branch office in Belgrade. Vojvodinian agencies cooperated in the sale of package arrangements of operators from Belgrade, while “such cooperation in the opposite direction is almost non-existent.” Although Belgrade tourist agencies made profit on the territory of Vojvodina, they invested funds in the construction of hotels exclusively on the territory of Serbia outside the province. Furthermore, Vojvodinian companies built eight hotels in Vrnjačka Banja, Zlatibor and other tourist places in Serbia proper, while there were no examples of the opposite tendency. In addition, although a number of Vojvodinian companies were members of the Association for recreation of Serbia proper and invested substantial funds in it, the programs of the construction of tourist facilities of the Association were not oriented towards Vojvodina “despite good natural conditions (Fruška Gora, Deliblatska Desert, etc.)” It was similar with the Association for the development of tourism on the Danube, which avoided the construction of “the material basis of tourism in the Vojvodinian area of the Danube.” All in all, the balance of tourist traffic (nights spent in a hotel) between Serbia and the province of Vojvodina had a ratio of 5 to 1.

In order to review and resolve the current issues concerning the implementation of the constitution and laws on the joint work of organizations of associated labor and their association in SR Serbia without the provinces and SAP Vojvodina, the task group produced additional material which covered issues in the fields of oil and gas, chemical industry, metal processing, transport, the chamber and the cooperative associations. As the beginning of the study noted, these issues were “launched and treated in the bodies of CC LCS and PC LCV in the talks on the development of socio-economic relations” in 1977.⁶

⁶ Legacy of Đorđe Radosavljević Grne, *Neka aktuelna pitanja ostvarivanja ustava i zakona o udruženom radu organizacija udruženog rada i njihovih asocijacija SR Srbije bez pokrajina i SAP Vojvodine*, Novi Sad, 24 June 1981 – top secret. All previous quotations are from the source cited in this footnote.

In terms of oil and gas, it was concluded that SOUR “Naftagas” associated nine organizations from Vojvodina and four from the territory of Serbia proper, which together accounted for 85% of the needs of petroleum products and petrochemical raw materials, or more than 50% of total energy needs in SR Serbia. However, it was noted that “satisfactory results have not yet been achieved and the opportunities provided by the association SOUR Naftagas are not sufficiently used.” It primarily referred to the “slowness and often unwillingness” of individual organizations to communicate with each other. It also referred to them closing up towards the outside and remaining within “the narrower or wider socio-political communities,” lack of coordination in the domestic and foreign markets, the absence of the “division of labor,” “the territorial principle (Novi Sad, Belgrade) in organization” and so on.

The following problems were listed as specific objections: the imbalance of the associated investment funds for development programs (Vojvodinian organizations invested over a hundred million dinars in work organizations in the territory of Serbia proper, while less than ten million dinars went in the opposite direction); the beginning of the “regionalization of Naftagas” which happened when “Jugopetrol” Belgrade, “Butangas” Belgrade and Belgrade Refinery along with some other labor organizations formed SOUR “Jugopetrol” Belgrade that had “the same goals of association and matters of common interest, which were already accomplished within SOUR Naftagas”; not establishing a unique Business association of oil and chemical industries in SR Serbia, but instead establishing the Business association “Naftahem,” which included organizations from the territory of Vojvodina “and the only reason for this was the headquarters of the business association” etc.

An example of the “regionalization of Naftagas” was the establishment of the Business association for the exploration of oil, gas and geothermal energy in SR Serbia outside of socialist autonomous provinces by the Belgrade organizations “Jugopetrol,” “Oil Refinery Beograd,” “ButanGas” and “Geosonda,” three of which were members of “Naftagas” and, according to the division of labor from the Self-governing agreement about the association, did not have the right to explore oil and gas. Previously “Naftagas” invested over \$1.2 billion in the study of these energy sources in the territory of central Serbia with particularly negative results and the conclusion that the exploitation of oil and gas in this region was economically unjustified. The newly created business association did not recognize the results of the research done by “Naftagas” and the Executive Council of SR Serbia gave it “exploration rights” which had previously belonged to “Naftagas.” Still, “Naftagas” proposed cooperation to the new association concerning investigation activities in the upcoming five-year period.

Another example of injustice to “Naftagas” was the gasification process, which began in mid 1970s. Already in the first stage of gasification, which included industrial plants in central Serbia and Vojvodina, Belgrade partners did not put at the disposal of the investors the provided funds in dinars, “so the financial structure of the First phase was in fact never finished, which opened a series of major problems not only in part of the project in SR Serbia outside SAP but also in the program as a whole.” Having in mind that and other problems, the Vojvodinian Executive Council proposed in 1977 that the domestic production of gas be directed only at customers in Vojvodina instead of all consumers in

Serbia, while the imported amount should be divided according to consumption, etc. Since it was not possible to reach an agreement regarding problematic issues, the realization of the gasification program was suspended after the construction of gas pipelines in Vojvodina. In the following year, i.e. in 1978, with the support of the Executive Council and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, for the purposes of gasification of Serbia proper an organization "Butangas" was founded after all OOUR's from Serbia excluding provinces (except "Petrolgas" from Čačak) separated from "Naftagas." However, after lengthy negotiations "Naftagas" made an agreement with "ButanGas" to continue the gasification process and they announced some joint activities of the two companies in terms of procurement, transportation and storage of gas.

A misunderstanding between Belgrade and Novi Sad oil traders also occurred on the occasion of the development of the oil refining capacity, so a social contract of SR Serbia for this activity could not be concluded nor could the medium-term plan for "Naftagas" be coordinated. Another problem was the announcement regarding the construction of the new primary facility and the facility for the production of paraffin-based base oils on the territory of Serbia proper, which would significantly reduce the use of facilities in Vojvodina. Furthermore, there was a dispute over the division of labor in the final production of lubricants between the Belgrade Refinery and FAM in Kruševac. These misunderstandings caused heavy dependence on imported products. The problem of the use of reserved facilities of the "Yugoslav Pipeline" was "very severe" because of the attitude of "Naftagas" that it was damaged by partners from other republics, while the Novi Sad company was also troubled by the chronic lack of foreign currency funds necessary for conducting business.

In the chemical sector there were "many various forms of socio-economic and self-managing connections and relationships" of the companies from Vojvodina and Serbia and they were of "different quality ranging from integration ties and income relations to "classic sales relations." The integration processes also included "Zorka" and "Borski basen" from Subotica by investing in the development of facilities for the production of pyrite, phosphoric acid, etc. A factory of mineral fertilizers from Novi Sad was built as an OOUR and part of the "Chemical Industry Prahovo" while the OOUR "Tehnoguma" from Zrenjanin was part of the Rakovica "Rekord." Chemical plants from Vršac ("Hemofarm," "Briksol" and "Hemplast") were joined into the "Inex" system from Belgrade "with a relatively low degree of joint work" while the factory of paint and varnish "Hempro" from Šid was an OOUR which was part of "Hempro" from Belgrade. "Chemical Industry Pančevo" comprised several OOUR's from the territory of Serbia proper and they joined "Naftahem," a business association of oil and chemical industries. A number of organizations from the territory of Serbia outside the provinces ("Zorka," "Viskoza," "Prva iskra," "Kablovi," "Tipoplastika") joined funds on a credit basis in order to develop the facilities for petrochemical industry "with the aim to ensure a long-term delivery of raw materials from these facilities," but the scope of association was "significantly below the volume of assets (cash) that had to be invested for a proportionate share of facilities which will provide long-term raw materials."

In terms of the metal industry complex, which accounted for significant 27.4% in the industry of SAP Vojvodina (and therefore was considered a priority direction of development), nine Vojvodinian organizations with a total of 3200 employees (excluding

the entire river shipbuilding sector within the business association “Dunav-brod”) were part of the OUR from the territory of Serbia without the provinces. On the other hand, two organizations of associated labor from the territory of Serbia with only 250 employees were part of the working organization from the territory of SAP Vojvodina. In addition, the production of automobile parts for the Kragujevac “Crvena zastava” included about 2500 workers of the metal processing industry of SAP Vojvodina. The writers of the study believed that cooperation between the two metal sectors was characterized primarily by short-term commercial relations and that it was therefore necessary to connect them more firmly in accordance with the Law on joint work in order to create a basis “for economic and technical-technological development of production and specialization and more significant investments in the modernization of production capacities and attaining the level of mass production.”

It was estimated that there were more possibilities for cooperation in the programs of processing equipment, electronics, control and automation, wagon construction, road vehicles, agricultural machinery, machine building, shipbuilding and production of parts, assemblies and elements, especially in the car industry. The fields “of particular importance to SAP Vojvodina” were said to be the automobile industry and the production of agricultural machinery and tractors because of the “commitment of SAP Vojvodina to a dynamic development and modernization of production in the agro-industrial complex and means of transportation, especially commercial vehicles.” In this respect it was noted that the problems of supply of raw materials and intermediate goods were “a limiting factor” and questioned the further development of Vojvodinian metal industry. In particular the report noted that the manufacturers of raw materials in Serbia proper (MK Smederevo, RTB Bor, “Valjaonica Sevojno,” “Zorka” Šabac), but in whole Yugoslavia as well, conditioned their supplies “by joining local currency and foreign currency funds for the total deliveries,” with these requirements exceeding “accumulative and reproductive capabilities of the metal processing industry in SAP Vojvodina.”

In the sphere of transport it was stated that there were no “specific joint actions” nor disputes between Vojvodina and central Serbia, like in the case of postal traffic (in which case the territory of the province coincided with the area of transit traffic across the Novi Sad office – with the exception of South Banat, which was tied to the transit exchange Belgrade). It was stated that the only problematic issue between the postal organizations of Vojvodina and Serbia was related to the construction of a new coaxial cable system due to the construction of the Belgrade – Zagreb road through Srem. The postal unit “Srem” demanded to be an investor in the construction of a new coaxial transmission system, which was also a reason for a court trial. Fairly good relations existed in terms of the cooperation of the Associated alliances of Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo. Provincial associated unions delegated their representatives in the Assembly and other bodies of the Associated alliance of Serbia and in mid 1980s the assemblies of three associated alliances adopted the Self-management agreement on joint activities which were, however, lagging behind due to the fault of the Vojvodinian Association.

Quite a different situation in terms of mutual relations existed in the chamber system. The basis of the dispute was a different normative regulation of this matter at the republic and provincial levels, which was repeatedly a topic of talks between the Vojvodinian,

Kosovo and Serbian chambers of commerce. Namely, the organizations of associated labor from the territory of autonomous provinces were members of the Serbian chamber of commerce as proscribed by the republic but not provincial laws. The inter-chamber cooperation was further regulated by the Agreement on mutual cooperation between the three chambers in April 1980, but the Serbian chamber of commerce was criticized for ignoring the agreed obligation that one delegate from each province be a member of the Presidency of the republic chamber. It was noticed that at lower levels the intensity of inter-chamber cooperation decreased and appeared “on a case-by-case basis.” The fact was also emphasized that the representatives of Chamber of Commerce of Vojvodina regularly attended the sessions of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, while, on the other hand, the representatives of the republic chamber failed to respond to calls from their colleagues in Novi Sad. In order to overcome these problems, the two chambers took the initiative for the formation of a mixed committee for mutual cooperation “as a permanent organizational form of cooperation between the two chambers,” so in time it would also include the representatives of Kosovo.

The situation in achieving unity in the field of socio-economic relations was seen in yet another report of the provincial working group from June 1981.⁷ Considerable attention was paid to the field of social planning, around which there was a dispute between the republic government and provincial authorities. Namely, the draft of the republic Law on social planning and on the Social plan of SR Serbia predicted a unified application of a number of provisions in the whole territory of the Republic. The Assembly of SAP Vojvodina contested the possibility of making laws with such provisions referring to the fact that Article 300 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia stipulates there are “no bases for a unique regulation of relations in the field of the social planning system.” In order to harmonize the positions regarding the issue of social planning, the republic and provincial assemblies formed a working group which concluded that “there is no constitutional basis for a unique organization of the system of social planning for the entire territory of the Republic, while the question of the character and content of the social plan of the Republic is coordinated by one provision with three paragraphs, which would be determined in the Law on social planning of the Republic.” After that, the Serbian Assembly adopted the Law on social planning, while the issue of the Social Plan of the Republic still remained open.

The fact that the adoption of the republic Social Plan was not regulated by law led to complications in making the Social Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 1981-1985. The essence of the dispute was the fact that before the adoption of the republic Social Plan an agreement between the republic and provincial authorities was not achieved. The Assembly of SAP Vojvodina brought a Decision on the basic guidelines and the framework of economic policy of the socio-economic development of SAP Vojvodina for the period 1981-1985 in order to identify the possible areas of agreement on the economic policy of common interest (in the fields of energy, production and processing of raw materials, agro-industrial complex, water management, mechanical engineering and transport), while the

⁷ Legacy of Đorđe Radosavljević Grne, *Iskustva i problemi u ostvarivanju zajedništva na osnovama izgradnje socijalističkih samoupravnih društveno-ekonomskih odnosa SR Srbije i SAP Vojvodine*, Novi Sad, 25 June 1981 – top secret. All previous quotations are from the source cited in this footnote.

other side failed to do that. The possible areas of agreement were established only in March 1981 in a meeting of the representatives of the Executive Council of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, the Executive Council of the Assembly of SAP Vojvodina and the Executive Council of the Assembly of SAP Kosovo. These areas were identical to the areas referred to in the Decision on the basic guidelines and the framework of economic policy of the socio-economic development of SAP Vojvodina for the period 1981-1985.

The proposal for a social plan of SR Serbia for the period 1981-1985 made by the Executive Council of the Republic was not only delayed in comparison with the adopted provincial and even federal plans, but was also not made in accordance with the agreement and was submitted despite the negative opinion of the bodies of the Vojvodinian Assembly and Executive Council. The said proposal stipulated that the conclusion of an agreement on the economic policy of common interest be postponed until the end of 1981 and predicted for a unified implementation throughout the Republic. The Province insisted that the draft of the plan be added a provision that would apply to the whole territory of the Republic and that would stipulate that the arrangements concluded between the Assemblies of SR Serbia, SAP Vojvodina and SAP Kosovo would establish the “economic policy of common interest and the guidelines and frameworks for the implementation of the established economic policy in the field of energy, production and processing of raw materials, agro-industrial complex, water management, mechanical engineering and traffic.” In accordance with the agreement reached at the meeting of the representatives of Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo in December 1979 a draft of the law on social planning was prepared and submitted to the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Serbia. This law was applied on the territory of SR Serbia outside the autonomous provinces and a question remained open regarding the constitutional basis for the adoption of the provision related to the Social plan of SR Serbia, whose contents was agreed upon.

In relation to the very important sector of electric power, the Presidency of the CC of the LCS established positions on the issues of the further development of socio-economic relations in the field of electric power and “determining the rights of consumers of SAP Vojvodina to the electricity from plants that are the result of joint construction on the territory of SR Serbia outside SAP.” On the occasion of the implementation of this agreement during 1980 there were several meetings of a joint workgroup of Serbia and Vojvodina. Vojvodinian experts contested the allegation from the summary of the Presidency of the Republic Central Committee that “on the basis of previous investments, consumer rights to a proportionate share of electricity from the respective facilities last as long as the amortization age of the power plant whose construction was invested in.” According to them, the term ‘amortization age’ could be interpreted in different ways while the ‘bookkeeping age’ did not even exist – but establishing it in advance could put the consumers from SAP Vojvodina in such a position so they do not “have the right to use electricity from the plants which are still capable of producing electricity.” As implied, the terminological confusion was only used as a cover to hide the essence which lay in the publicly pronounced decision of the Executive Council of Serbia that “they do not want to burn coal as its non-renewable resource for other areas. On the other hand, the workgroup of the SOUR “Elektrovojvodina” suggested a possible compromise solution by specifying the temporal obligation to deliver electricity to consumers in Vojvodina (HE without Đerdap

1 – 40 years, HE Đerdap 1 – 50 years, thermal power plants – 20 years with 6,000 hours per year).

It was also debatable whether Vojvodinian consumers had the right to electricity from jointly constructed power plants by the end of 1975 (on the territory of Serbia proper). While in 1975 consumers in Vojvodina were delivered 29.6% of electricity produced, before that only 26.7% of the electricity generated belonged to them after the Belgrade authorities decided that the difference between production and consumption belonged entirely to Serbia proper after the expiry of the commitments to Romania, Bulgaria and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Novi Sad suggested that the consumers in Vojvodina had the right to 27% of total produced by electricity ending in 1987, i.e. with the settlement of obligations towards Macedonia, and since 1988 Vojvodinian consumers had the right to 28% of the electricity produced.

For its part, Vojvodina agreed to additionally fund electric power plants which were under construction (mines for the needs of thermal power plants “Morava” and “Obrenovac” and pumped-storage hydro power plant “Bajina bašta”). However, it was noted that the funds for co-financing the plants were not paid at a steady pace by Vojvodina and Serbia proper, so it was necessary to make the re-calculation of the indexation of payments. The proposal of the re-calculation that was made by the representatives of the Republic significantly increased provincial responsibilities, which, according to the authors of the study, was unjust and Vojvodina had to be compensated in some other way in the power sector. In addition, it was stated that Vojvodinian consumers were also damaged by the cost of electric power on the doorstep of the transfer, which did not have the consent of SAP Vojvodina and it had to change. The cost of electricity by final consumers in Vojvodina could reflect the increased electricity transmission losses incurred due to the reorganization of the Electric Power Industry of Serbia and its division into three SOUR’s (for Serbia proper and for both provinces). As the drafters of the proposed studies suggested, electrical power industry of Vojvodina would have to be given the discount of “at least 5% of the applicable tariff rate on electricity taken” because of transmission losses, which was reportedly agreed upon in the Electric Power Industry of Serbia.

The joint workgroup agreed on some more questions (joint investment in the construction of the transmission network in the region of Kosovo), but the agreement was not upheld in the case of the adoption of the Law on electric power industry, which was adopted without the consent of Vojvodina. The question of the hydro power plant “Đerdap,” i.e. the problem of the height of 69.5 meters was singled out. According to the experts from “Elektrovojvodina” the functioning of “Đerdap” at that point was possible “if this hydro power plant was funded and if a protective system was fully constructed because it was required at this height. All this is to be done under the condition that the additional electricity generation between 68 and 69.5 m is shared according to an agreed proportion based on the realized consumption of electricity in 1975.”

The hydropower and navigation system “Đerdap,” constructed on the basis of the Agreement between the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Romania from 1963, is also mentioned in the section of the study dedicated to water management. The new intergovernmental agreement, which proscribed the said elevation angle backflow by 1.5 meters (at the mouth of the Nera river), was made without the consent of SAP Vojvodina

although the impact of this backwater led to elevated levels of the Danube, Sava and Tisa rivers that threatened around 100,000 hectares of the “coastal areas of SAP Vojvodina” and, as stated, “the destruction or permanent degradation of agricultural and forest lands in the coastal area is not acceptable for SAP Vojvodina.” There was a warning that the hydro power plant “Đerdap” did not take any measures to protect vulnerable areas, while the damage done was compensated very slowly and selectively (a fee by the Romanian side delivered in damages to “our part of the hydro power plan” was used to the greatest extent for the needs of Elektroprivreda). The extent of the importance of the issue of electric power is seen in the fact that it was given the greatest attention in yet another study entitled *The activity of organizations of associated labor of SR Serbia out of SAP and SAP Vojvodina in the areas of mergers, commodity trade and foreign economic relations*.⁸

Elektroprivreda Srbija delivered 5.600 million kilowatts of electricity annually to Vojvodinian consumers on the basis of a common investment in electricity generation. (Specifically – 3465 million kilowatts for the invested assets by the end of 1975 on the basis of an agreement law at the level of Yugoslavia regarding the financing of the sources of electricity and 2.145 million kilowatts for the invested assets in the period 1975-1980 on the basis of the Law on financing the sources of electricity in SR Serbia without SAP and SAP Vojvodina). The funds that Vojvodina invested in the construction of the electric energy in SR Serbia in the period 1976-1980 were less than half of the funds provided by Serbia proper in addition to funds received from loans and from its own funds of Elektroprivreda. Because Vojvodinian economy required coal the plan was to continue the pooling of funds in the coal mines in Serbia proper to procure the necessary amounts of coal for OUR's from SAP Vojvodina with joined assets with the producers of SAP Kosovo. In the construction and reconstruction of the road section Pančevo – Belgrade which was 14.5 km long Vojvodina did its part of the job and built a section 5 km long, while SR Serbia without SAP failed to meet this obligation.

One study concerned the abolition of the Law on Electricity of 1975.⁹ This law was passed as an agreement law on the basis of Article 301 of the Constitution of SR Serbia and was applied uniformly on the territory of the Republic beyond provinces and on territory of SAP Vojvodina. It governed electric power activities on the territory of Serbia proper and Vojvodina as well as the “self-governing organization in the field of electric power and providing funds for the construction of power plants for the generation and transmission of electricity.” The law established a Self-governing Community of Interest for electric power in the territory of the Republic without provinces and for the territory of SAP Vojvodina.

However, at the very beginning of its implementation difficulties emerged regarding the election of delegates for the Assembly of the self-governing community of interest and its constitution, so it “practically did not exist throughout the period of validity of the law.” As a result, “the manner of exercising those functions that should be performed by the Assembly of that community was called into question.” Later there was a problem

⁸ Legacy of Đorđe Radosavljević Grne, *Aktivnost organizacija udruženog rada iz SR Srbije van SAP i SAP Vojvodine na području udruživanja, robnoj razmeri i ekonomskim odnosima sa inostranstvom*. All previous quotations are from the source cited in this footnote.

⁹ Legacy of Đorđe Radosavljević Grne, *Informacija o vremenu i načinu ukidanja Zakona o elektroprivredi iz 1975. godine*, top secret.

concerning the implementation of such provisions of the joint law pertaining to the provision of funds for the construction of power plants for electricity production. In 1978 the Serbian Assembly adopted the Law on self-management communities of interest in the field of electric power, which regulated the issue of self-management interest organization in the field of electric power in the territory of the Republic of Serbia outside the territory of the autonomous provinces, which meant that “those provisions of the joint law that referred to the self-governing organization of interest lost any practical meaning because the said laws resolved this issue in another way and only for the territory of Serbia outside the territory of the autonomous provinces.” In addition, the Law on obligatory joint funds for the construction of power plants on the territory of Serbia proper was adopted and it differed “from the concept of the joint law on electric power industry in the part related to the provision of funds for the construction of electric power plants.”

As stated, the application of the Law on electric power industry was discussed “several times at different levels.” Thus, the Presidency of the CC of the LCS at the meeting on 29 October 1979 considered the “problem of the development of socio-economic relations in the field of electric power industry” and “indicated the directions of further action in the field of electric power industry and activities that should be undertaken in further work,” adding that “changes were necessary in legislation in the field of electric power industry and they should be realized by adopting special laws on the energy industry on the basis of the Law on joint work for all three areas of SR Serbia.” Various practical problems between Serbia and Vojvodina had to be solved that were related to previous investments in the production and consumption of electricity, especially when it comes to the relations in this respect between RS Serbia without the provinces and SAP Vojvodina bearing in mind “all their aspects – from the political to the material ones.” In order to solve the problems that occurred during the validity of the agreement law, an agreement was reached “to establish the rights, obligations and other relations in the field of electric power in a law or an agreement.” For this purpose a draft of the Law on termination of the Law on energy and on determining the rights, obligations and other relations in the field of electric power industry was prepared in Novi Sad in early 1980 as a basis for negotiation. However, “independently of the agreed resolution of these issues,” in December 1980 the Serbian Assembly passed the Law on energy industry, whose Article 58 stipulated that the former agreement law of 1975 ceased to be valid on the territory of the Republic outside the provinces. After that the Assembly of Vojvodina passed the provincial Law on energy industry in February 1981 so the previous agreement law ceased to be valid on the territory of SAP Vojvodina.

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СЛОБОДАН БЈЕЛИЦА

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ПОГЛЕДИ ВОЈВОЂАНСКОГ РУКОВОДСТВА НА НОВО ОТВАРАЊЕ ПИТАЊА ОДНОСА СРБИЈЕ И ВОЈВОДИНЕ 1981. ГОДИНЕ

Резиме

Почетком осамдесетих година двадесетог века Југославија је полако почела да запада у дубоку политичку и економску кризу. Један од најзначајнијих аспеката те кризе били су војвођанско-србијански односи, засновани на уставним решењима из 1974. године. Година 1981. била је година отварања велике политичке кризе, која је у марту отпочела масовним албанским демонстрацијама на Косову, да би у априлу, након нереда и жртава, југословенски врх био приморан да уведе ванредно стање. Уследиле су расправе у партијским форумима у којима је отворено не само питање положаја Косова у Србији негои проблем односа Србије са обе своје покрајине. То је покренуто на седници ЦК СК Србије 6. маја, на којој су републички руководиоци косовске немире повезивали су са статусом који је покрајинама дао Устав из 1974. године. На трагу излагања републичких руководиоца, уследила је кампања београдских средстава информисања у погледу тзв. договорних закона, у којој су покрајине оптуживане да инсистирањем да односе на својој територији уређују сопственим, а не договорним законима, заправо теже својеврсној „федерализацији“ Србије. Војвођанско руководство, већ забринуто што се косовски немири користе за поновно покретање питања аутономије, у сврху оповргавања оваквих теза понудило одговор заснован на статистичким подацима. Полазећи од закључака 20. седнице ЦК СКЈ од 7. маја 1981. године, као и од основних ставова и оцена са заједничке седнице Председништва САП Војводине и Председништва ПК СКВ, одржане 8. маја 1981. године, покрајинска радна група је, у току лета, сачинила осам елабората, који су

септембра 1981. године упућени члановима ЦК СКС и ЦК СКЈ из Војводине, ради припреме за најављену седницу ЦК СКС посвећену републичко-покрајинским односима. То су следећи материјали: *Активности организација удруженог рада из СР Србије ван САП и САП Војводине (економски односи са иностранством, унутрашња трговина, банкарство, осигурање, туризам); Нека актуелна питања остваривања устава и закона о удруженом раду организација удруженог рада и њихових асоцијација СР Србије без покрајина и САП Војводине; Искуства и проблеми у остваривању заједништва на основама изградње социјалистичких самоуправних друштвено-економских односа СР Србије и САП Војводине; Активност организација удруженог рада из СР Србије ван САП и САП Војводине на подручју удруживања, робној размени и економским односима са иностранством; Информација о времену и начину укидања Закона о електропривреди из 1975. године; Неке тенденције у тумачењу Устава СР Србије у области законодавства; Информација о току и начину усаглашавања код појединих закона из члана 300. Устава СР Србије; Искуства и проблеми у остваривању Устава СФРЈ, Устава СР Србије и Устава САП Војводине у области законодавства.*

Кључне речи: аутономија, Војводина, Југославија, Косово, Србија.

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ISTRAŽIVANJA – JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCHES 27, 258-273