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BANOVINAS – ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF KING ALEXANDER I KARADORĐEVIĆ AND HIS PERSONAL REGIME

Abstract: One of the main consequences of the King Alexander I Karadorđević’s personal regime was an administrative rearrangement of the state that formed new administrative units called banovinas. Historiography to date has not shed much light on the circumstances under which the banovinas were formed. Studies show that this issue occupied much of the attention of the king and his court, and that the best experts were engaged. At the beginning of the dictatorship, banovinas and their bans were used as a means through which the proclaimed ideology of Yugoslavism would come into being in the form of a single Yugoslav nation. The starting point was to remove national and historical borders between Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which were regarded as the culprits behind divisions within the population. Presenting federalization as derived through banovinas as administrative units served to conceal their true function in the process of building a unified state. Following the death of King Alexander I Karadorđević, there was an abundance of support for the idea of banovinas as administrative units and as part of the foundation of the Yugoslav state. After only ten years, the borders of the banovinas, as defined by the September constitution, were changed due to the creation of the Banovina of Croatia. This act annulled all the principles of the 1929 administrative rearrangement. The further fate of the banovinas was determined by the Second World War, in which the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as a state disappeared. Based on an analysis of available archival material, periodicals, memoirs of contemporaries and historiographical publications, the intention of this study is to show how the banovinas, as new administrative units, were used to serve the king’s personal dictatorship. Opinions of the Banovinas as parts of the administrative system are mostly negative. However, in a broader context, they brought progress and prosperity to certain areas of the state.

Keywords: personal regime, Yugoslav ideology, banovinas, ban, Ban’s Council.

The parliamentary crisis that continued after the adoption of the Vidovdan Constitution on 28 June 1921 culminated in the assassination of members of the Croatian Peasant Party in the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on 20 June 1928. From 28 November 1920, when elections for the Constitutional Assembly were held, until 6 January 1929, when the king’s personal regime was established, none of the National Assemblies managed to last four years. Elections were held in 1923, 1925, and 1927. During the same period, eighteen governments were formed, the longest-running being the third government under Nikola Pašić (357 days), and the

shortest being the government under Nikola Uzunović (9 days).¹ According to the provisions of the Vidovdan Constitution, the king held administrative, legislative, and judicial authority. Administrative authority was vested in the king through the government, which was made up of ministers; legislative authority was vested in the king and the National Assembly, with the king having the right to dissolve the National Assembly; and judicial authority was vested in the courts, but under the king's control.² Starting from the beginning of parliamentarism in the new state, the court gradually emerged from the constitutional framework, and starting from the first government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (SCS), the king demonstrated that his word would be crucial. During the period of parliamentarism (1919–1929), the court sought to impose its will in ruling the country by regrouping political forces and creating coalitions and concentrations that collapsed quickly and easily in order to create new ones.³ One of the consequences of this was an unsuccessful attempt to adopt the Law on the Division of the Country, which was planned within six months after the constitution was adopted. Since this law was unable to achieve the necessary parliamentary majority, in April 1922, Nikola Pašić's second government issued the Decree on the Division of the Country into Thirty-three Districts and the City of Belgrade Administrative District.⁴

The adoption of this decree started the process of unitarianism, which was meant to establish a centralist system. The ruling circles believed that state unity was the foundation on which a united Yugoslav state should be built, and that its internal stability depended on the relationship between the central and district administrations. With this in mind, thirty-three districts were established in order to prevent further strengthening of "the idea of a province" and the process of "tribal grouping". Even before 1914, Serbia had been divided into fifteen parts, with historical regions that became parts of the Kingdom of SCS. Parts of Vojvodina were merged with parts of pre-war Serbia for national reasons so that these parts were integrated into a whole. These principles were also used in the new 1929 administrative division of the country. The Decree on the Division of the Country into Regions violated a poorly developed parliamentary system and made the king even stronger.⁵

Criticism directed against the administrative division into districts stated that they were too small to be able to perform large tasks, yet too large to resolve small tasks. Furthermore, the regions could not fulfill the population's economic, social, and transportation needs, mostly because they were unable to establish relationships with the administrative centers of the areas from the territories that belonged to them. On the other hand, there was a disproportionately large bureaucracy, which became a financial burden for a relatively small number of taxpayers. In most areas there was an insufficient number of professionals, and it was complicated, legislatively and constitutionally, for them to function.⁶ Under the district administration, decentralization did not exist, even though a certain portion of state affairs were expected to be transferred to the districts. Until period

¹ See *Vlade Srbije: 1805–2005*.

² Gligorijević 1973: 373.

³ Stojkov 1969: 15.

⁴ *Službene novine kraljevine SHS*, Beograd, 28 april 1922, 1–2.

⁵ Stanković 1981: 36–43, 46.

⁶ Grgić 2014: 134.

of the districts ended, their self-governing authorities remained limited, and there was pressure from political interests when making important decisions for certain districts.⁷

At the beginning of November 1928, King Alexander I Karađorđević traveled in secrecy to France. His visit was private, and he went for a medical examination. However, while he was in Paris the king met with the French president Gaston Doumergue.⁸ One of the topics King Alexander discussed with the French officials during this visit was concerned with resolving the internal crisis in the Kingdom of SCS. The relationship between France and the Kingdom of SCS fell within the general policy that France took the lead as a “great force” with the new states that emerged after the First World War. In order to ensure its safety from a potential future threat from Germany, France relied on these states, which had been created under its auspices. The Kingdom of SCS was among these states that were regarded in Paris as a “poor and weak relative.” Moreover, French politics had two conflicting imperatives: preserve an alliance with Italy within an anti-German perspective, and protect the Kingdom of SCS from Italy’s territorial aspirations. For this reason, France desperately needed internal political stability in the Kingdom of SCS that could preserve the unity of the state and of the military organization.⁹

French diplomacy envisioned four cultural areas in the Kingdom of SCS, each with a majority Serb, Croatian, Slovenian, or (in the case of Macedonia) Slavic population. Based on the situation in Paris at the end of the 1930s, many people began to think about an internal reorganization of the Kingdom of SCS with preserving the integrity of its foreign policy as a priority.¹⁰ France replaced the idea of federalism with the vision King Alexander had at the time of his arrival in France of a single centralized state.¹¹ The French foreign minister, Aristide Briand, suggested that the king could solve the Croat problem with a personal union. The king rejected his suggestion of reordering the state on a federal basis that would give Croatia autonomy.¹²

Some of the French officials believed it was impossible to find a solution within the existing political relationships in the Kingdom of SCS, which would involve an agreement among the parliamentary parties, but on the other hand, there was confidence in the king and his authority. It was also clear how far away the Kingdom of SCS was from the model of a strong and democratic state that France had in mind for it, and for this reason the idea of the king’s personal regime was accepted with some resentment.¹³ In such a situation it was not difficult for King Alexander to convince the French ruling circles that there was no reason to fear more serious political protests, and that he would solve the crisis with no harm done to “state and national unity.” The king expressed willingness to introduce a degree of administrative decentralization under the control of the authorities in Belgrade, with the condition that the boundaries did not follow certain historic lines.¹⁴ Certain that he had a

⁷ Jovanović 1938: 3.

⁸ Avramovski 1986: 522, 538.

⁹ Sretenović 2008: 471–472.

¹⁰ Sretenović 2009: 548.

¹¹ Sretenović 2008: 480.

¹² Vinaver 1985: 148.

¹³ Sretenović 2008: 480–481.

¹⁴ Krizman 1962: 189–191; Stojkov 1969: 79.

support from his most important ally, France, for his decision to introduce an authoritarian regime, King Alexander instructed the ambassadors Miroslav Spalajković and to Milan Srškić to write a proclamation entitled, *To My Dear People*.¹⁵ The text of the proclamation would be modified several times before it was published.¹⁶

British diplomats reported that those in Belgrade who were well-informed believed the plan for a coup d'état had been approved in Paris before the king implemented it.¹⁷ The British also thought that it was necessary to revise the Vidovdan Constitution in order to replace the administrative division with larger districts that had a considerably larger degree of autonomy. The king had the highest authority in the state, but the problem was there were politicians around him who were incompetent and prone to corruption. Thus, a British representative in Belgrade asked whether the Kingdom of SCS needed “a Piłsudski” who could deal efficiently with all of the forces that had paralyzed the country.¹⁸

Finally, under the pretense that “parliamentarian life threatened to destroy the very existence of the state,” on Christmas Day, 6 January 1929, King Alexander I abolished the Vidovdan Constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, and banned political parties, thereby imposing his personal dictatorship. This put an end to the decade-long parliamentary crisis that had been the main reason for stalled progress and the development of the state. With the proclamation, *To my Dear People: To All Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes*, the king emphasized his goal of preserving state and national unity. In his opening statement addressing the government ministers led by General Petar Živković, the king underscored his intention to change the system in order to remove the issues impeding the state from functioning. He had the highest expectations for the ministers concerning “the recovery of the state administration,” since it was the only way to create “complete trust among the people of government authorities”.¹⁹

Work on the new administrative system began immediately after the assassination in the National Assembly in June 1928 at the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the Law on Royal and Supreme State Administration. Among other things, the jurisdictions of this administration were: to study government, both in the country and abroad; make suggestions to improve how the administration operated; draft bills, acts, and regulations concerning the organization of the government and formal administrative rights; participate in drafting the bills for other ministries; give opinions on laws and acts with a special view toward codification and the unity of the principles and organization of governing authorities.²⁰ The administration began in August 1928, and its members were appointed at the recommendation of Anton Korošec, who was the prime minister and the minister of internal affairs. Otman Pirkmajer and Kosta Janković from the Ministry of Internal Affairs had important roles in administration. This administration created all laws, regulations, rules, and important instructions related to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including The Law on the State System on 19 June 1929 with amendments on 9 October, 1929; The Law on the State's

¹⁵ Jukić 1965: 104–105; Bajin 2016: 460.

¹⁶ Gligorijević 2010: 356.

¹⁷ Avramovski 1986: 610.

¹⁸ Avramovski 1986: 499–500.

¹⁹ *Službene novine Kraljevine SHS*, Beograd, 6 januar 1929, 1–2.

²⁰ *Uredba o ustanovljenju i ustrojstvu Komisije za uređenje uprave*: 1–8.

Name and the Kingdom's Division into Administrative Districts on 3 October, 1929; The Law on the Ban's Councils on 7 November 1929; Decrees on Determining Property, Administration, and Budgeting for the Banovinas; Decrees on the Liquidation of Property Relations of Former Regions on 23 October 1929; and Decrees on the Organization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 25 July 1929.²¹ Anton Korošec was the head of this administration, and after the dictatorship was introduced it was led by Dr. Mihajlo Jovanović, former president of the Court of Cassation and a member of the International Court in The Hague. This administration was regarded by the prime minister, General Petar Živković, as the most deserving for equalizing legislation and passing laws, including the most important ones: The Law on Ban's Administration and The Law on Bans' Councils.²² Based on testimonials of contemporaries and reports addressed to the prefects in February 1929 by the prime minister, General Petar Živković, it may be concluded that the administration was behind numerous laws and decrees made during the first year of the dictatorship.²³

In addition to the State System Administration, the Supreme Legislative Council had an important role in legislation that was legally based on the king's regime. This council managed to harmonize substantive and procedural law and civil procedural law, which had not been adopted before the dictatorship was introduced. There is information about the Supreme Legislative Council in the memoirs of one of its members, Daka Popović, a former minister for agricultural reform in Anton Korošec's government. According to his memoirs, the council was composed of former politicians who were mostly ministers and professors from the Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana universities. The Slovenes were the most active and valuable for the council, were always well-prepared for meetings, and held unified views. The Croats were less well-prepared, and the majority of the Serbs improvised their views on legal solutions. The Slovenes and most of the Croats did not come out of the Austrian rights framework and repeatedly insisted that rights should be transferred into the new legislation. The council drafted a multitude of laws from different fields, most of which were completed by the beginning of 1930. Daka Popović was not satisfied with the council's final results, since he had conceived of new legislation that was more original and closer to the newly created opportunities. His objections related to the fact that the laws were adopted by compromise, and the only ones who would be satisfied with this were the Slovene representatives.²⁴ The draft laws were forwarded to the Ministry of Justice, and after they received its consent, they came before the government and the king for approval. The final result of the council's work was seen in 132 laws and regulations that were adopted during the first six months of the dictatorship, so that by the end of 1929 there were around 200 laws.²⁵

The development of the country's new administrative division was kept secret during 1929, and the public could only guess about the big changes ahead. The press recognized the Minister of Justice, Milan Srškić, as a key figure in this. Thus, the Zagreb daily *Obzor*, immediately after the introduction of the dictatorship, announced in an article called "The New Division of the State into Provinces" that the Minister Srškić would soon submit a new

²¹ Alimpić 1929: 1072–1074.

²² Živković 2016: 115.

²³ Grgić 2014: 136–137.

²⁴ Popović 2019: 62–63.

²⁵ Dimić, Žutić i Isailović 2002: 353–359; Dobrivojević 2006: 96.

law to the king on the country's division into areas. Cited as one of the main reasons for the new division of the state, was the need to reduce the number of districts to reduce the strain on public finances. In the same newspaper, the article "Versions of the New Administrative Division of the State" considered the possibility of a division into fourteen new districts that would be larger than the existing ones, and whose borders would overlap with financial directorates. After the dictatorship was introduced, the financial directorates were in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Skoplje, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Zagreb, Split, and Ljubljana.²⁶ Similar theories were also printed in the press in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and changes in the administrative order were announced by Sarajevo's *Jugoslovenski list* in the article "New Division of the Country into Provinces" and *Glas slobode* in "New Division of the State into Regions", as well as in Mostar's *Narodna sloboda* in "The Division of the State into Regions". All of these articles included speculation regarding the number of the future administrative units, and they predicted the existence of four, six, twelve, or fifteen regions.²⁷

On the front page of Belgrade's *Politika* on 17 January 1929, there was an interview with King Alexander by Soervene, a journalist from the French newspaper *Le Matin*, entitled "To Preserve the Unity and Future of the Kingdom". In it, the king said that two goals, among others, of his personal regime were to decentralize the state and reorganize the administration.²⁸ Soervene reported his conclusions from the interview with the king to the Romanian newspaper *Kuventul*, which were then quoted by *Politika* on 19 January 1929 in the article "G. Soervene on a New State in Yugoslavia". His view of the situation was the following:

The King believes that this provisional regime will not last long, and that afterward he will be able to convene a constitutional convention. It will divide the kingdom into more provinces. The local sentiments of people who have been oppressed for so long and cannot be avoided will be able to be heard in the local assemblies. Moreover, a general parliament will be elected with all necessary guarantees. Only serious and truly representative members will enter the parliament.²⁹

According to witnesses of the events in the first months of the dictatorship, Srškić created legislation that suited the needs of the dictatorship and was based on the principles of unitarianism and Yugoslav ideology.³⁰ Among other things, he demanded that large administrative units should be formed that would be capable and strong enough to satisfy their own needs, but their borders would not jeopardize the state's unity. He also saw an opportunity in the new administrative system to achieve his idea of removing the border between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina created by the Drina River.³¹ Srškić continued to deal with the kingdom's issues concerning the administrative systems during his mandate as prime minister (November 1932 – January 1934). He wished to create something similar to bureaucratic autonomy, so during this time he sought a solution that would fall

²⁶ *Obzor*, Zagreb, 10th January 1929, 1; *Obzor*, Zagreb, 12th January 1929, 1; Grgić 2014: 135–136.

²⁷ *Jugoslovenski list*, Sarajevo, 12 January 1929, 1; *Glas slobode*, Sarajevo, 18 January 1929, 1; *Narodna sloboda*, Mostar, 24th January 1929, 1; Šarac 1975: 276.

²⁸ *Politika*, Belgrade, 17th January 1929, 1.

²⁹ *Politika*, Belgrade, 19th January 1929, 3.

³⁰ Nikić 1938: 155.

³¹ Uzunović 1938: 141–142.

somewhere between centralism and federalism.³²

One draft of the state's administrative rearrangement by an unknown author created during the second half of 1929 has been preserved in the archives. According to this draft entitled "The Division of the State into Regions," eight new larger areas would be formed that would be named according to their administrative centers: Novi Sad, Ljubljana (Slovenia), Zagreb (Croatia), Dubrovnik (South region), Sarajevo (Bosnia), Belgrade, Niš, and Skoplje. This draft formed areas based on geographical and economic principles and rejected historical borders. The Novi Sad region included Bačka, Srem, Podrinje, and the cantons of Brčko, Bijeljina, and Gradačac, which used to belong to the Tuzla district. The Bosnian region included the entire region of Bosnia and Užice, but without Herzegovina and the three Tuzla cantons mentioned above. The Zagreb region would be the largest and have the biggest population. It would include Zagreb, Osijek, Split, and the Coastal–Krajina region, as well as Međumurje, Baranja, and the Makarska canton from Dubrovnik region. The Dubrovnik region, or South region, included Herzegovina, Zeta, and the Dubrovnik region. This draft had many elements that were applied during the division of the state into banovinas.³³

There were conflicts among the leading people in the dictatorship regarding the administrative centers of the new areas. The prime minister, General Petar Živković, insisted that Dubrovnik should be one of the centers, while the minister of foreign affairs, Vojislav Marinković, opposed this idea and demanded that Cetinje should be the administrative center. He insisted on this because he considered it important to satisfy the interests of both the Montenegrins and the Slovenes.³⁴ According to the testimonies of contemporaries, newspaper articles, and scarce archive material, it may be concluded that the new administrative arrangement for the state was planned and was not rushed, as many in some diplomatic circles believed.³⁵

Finally, speculation regarding the new administrative system ended when the government had an afternoon session on 2 October, 1929 with the prime minister, General Petar Živković, who acquainted the government with the Law on the Name and the Division of the Kingdom into Administrative Regions.³⁶ Although most of the ministers were familiar with the process of drafting a new administrative system, the way the law was adopted reflected how decisions in the government were made. After introducing the law to the members who were present, the prime minister decided that the ministers had accepted this "historic decision" with the "greatest pleasure" without anyone saying a word.³⁷ The law was signed the next day by the king and published in *Službene novine*, and in the first article, the name of the state the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was changed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.³⁸ By adopting the name of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Nikola Pašić's concept of preserving Serbian and other tribal names in the name of the state was rejected, and this basically marked a transition from unitarian compromise to Yugoslav

³² Jovanović 1938: 291.

³³ AJ, F335, 17/1.

³⁴ Pavlović 1955: 51.

³⁵ Dobrivojević 2006: 106.

³⁶ *Politika*, Beograd, 4th October 1929, 1.

³⁷ Grgić 2014: 137–138.

³⁸ *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, Belgrade, 4th October 1929, 1–2.

integralism.³⁹ In his report, Živković presented the proclaimed Yugoslavism as a “synthesis” of the Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian peoples, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as a “complete and synthetic solution to our national and state problem”.⁴⁰ The proclaimed Yugoslav ruler was given what he lacked—an ideology based on the fiction of the nation’s ethnic unity.

What makes the ideology of Yugoslavism different from ideologies in the dictatorial regimes in Europe during the interwar period is that it was not totalitarian.⁴¹ Supporters of integral Yugoslavism thought the unity of the state and society could be achieved by imposing “discretized” Yugoslavism from above. It was believed that this was a way to quickly create the “Yugoslav man”.⁴² The identity of the new Yugoslav nation was created within the context of experience in creating modern European nations and under the impression that a seemingly random unification of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes would be given a “halo of an inevitable and finally completed process of a one-way path in the course of history.” The road that public would have to travel to transform the existing tribal identities into a general Yugoslavism was marked by many implied but “insufficiently and inarticulately expressed assumptions”.⁴³

With the new administrative regulation, the state was divided into nine regions called banovinas. The prime minister said that the economic criterion was one of the primary criteria in determining their borders. In accordance with the French solution for internal administration, the French *département*, they were also named after the rivers. The goal of this division was to unburden the central government and to reduce and simplify administration.⁴⁴ The kingdom was divided into the Drava Banovina with its seat in Ljubljana; the Sava Banovina its seat in Zagreb; the Vrbas Banovina with its seat in Banja Luka; the Littoral Banovina with its seat in Split; the Drina Banovina with its seat in Sarajevo; the Zeta Banovina with its seat in Cetinje; the Danube Banovina with its seat in Novi Sad; the Morava Banovina with its seat in Niš; the Vardar Banovina with its seat in Skoplje; while Belgrade, Zemun, and Pančevo remained within the City of Belgrade Administrative District.

The public was told that the new administrative system consisting of banovinas was created due to the need to “develop” national and historical units. Its purpose was explained by economic reasons such as a cheaper bureaucracy, i.e. better transportation connections and economic consolidation.⁴⁵ There were cases where these justifications did not make much sense, such as the example of Baranja, which became a part of the Danube Banovina from which it was separated by the Danube River and where there were no transportation connections. The explanation was that it could not become a part of the Sava Banovina, which already had a large population.⁴⁶ The borders between banovinas were drawn in order

³⁹ Dimić 2001: 140.

⁴⁰ Manakin 1932: 162.

⁴¹ Čalić 2013: 145.

⁴² Petranović, Zečević 1991: 224.

⁴³ Petrović 2007: 38.

⁴⁴ Živković 2016: 115.

⁴⁵ Jovanović 2011: 137.

⁴⁶ Politika, Belgrade 4th October 1929, 1.

to implement the proclaimed Yugoslav unification. As territorial and administrative units, banovinas represented the highest form of centralism and were directly subordinate to the apparatus of the ruling dictatorship. Thus, the centralism manifested in an omnipresent king's power prevented the banovinas, the largest administrative areas in the state, from achieving a higher degree of autonomy.⁴⁷ Their real purpose was to implement state and national unitarianism into everyday life while preserving national unity and defending the state.⁴⁸

Banovinas were the highest territorial and administrative areas in the state and were also self-governing units. This had also been true for the previous districts, with the only difference being that they were simultaneously state administrations and self-governing. In the banovina system there was a union of state and self-governing authorities connected and grouped into one overarching Royal Banovina Administration under the control of the ban (governor).⁴⁹ A day after the proclamation of the banovinas, *Politika* published an front page article called "The Name and the Significance of the Ban in our History". The article said that the ban had always been part of "our" history as the name for a high-level state administrator. It emphasized that the title of ban was first used by the Croats in the twelfth century in Lika and Krbava. The article further explained that there had been special areas in medieval Croatia that had been under the administration of the Croatian King-Regent. Later on, among the Croats, the position of ban developed from the administrators of certain areas as the state position right below the king.⁵⁰

The function of the ban was placed in the service of dictatorship, and it was conceived of as something that would lead the public to break away from the previous condition. The ban was conceived of as a person who would be the leader of the largest administrative area in the state and who represented royal authority in the banovina. On 10 October 1929, newspapers published King Alexander's decree appointing nine bans on their front pages. The bans were Dušan Srnc in the Drava Banovina, who was an engineer and professor at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Ljubljana, a former minister of construction, and a previous member of the Slovenian People's Party; Dr. Josip Šilović in the Sava Banovina, who was a professor at the Faculty of Law in Zagreb; General Svetislav Milosavljević in the Vrbas Banovina, who was a former minister of transport; Dr. Ivo Tartalja in the Littoral Banovina, who was a lawyer and a former mayor of Split; General Kosta Smiljanić in the Zeta Banovina, who had been well-regarded commander of the Drina Division; Đaka Popović in the Danube Banovina, who was an engineer, a former minister of agrarian reform, and a former member of the People's Radical Party; Đorđe Nestorović in the Morava Banovina, who was a former judge and a member of the Supreme Legislative Council; Živojin Lazić in the Vardar Banovina, who was the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Velimir Popović in the Drina Banovina, who was a former secretary for prime ministers Stojan Protić and Nikola Pašić, a minister without portfolio, and a former member of the People's Radical Party; and finally, Manojlo Lazarević, who retained his position as the Belgrade City Administrator.⁵¹ In the Drava Banovina, whose boundaries matched the

⁴⁷ Dimić 2001: 140.

⁴⁸ Petranović 1988: 190–191.

⁴⁹ Krbeč 1932: 352; Kostić 1933: 224.

⁵⁰ *Politika*, Belgrade, 5th October 1929, 1.

⁵¹ *Politika*, Belgrade, 10th October 1929, 1–3; *Vreme*, Belgrade, 10th October 1929, 1,7; *Obzor*, Zagreb, 10th

borders of Slovenia, the ban was someone from the closest circle around Anton Korošec, the political leader of the Slovenian People's Party. Neutral figures who were not politically engaged after 1918 were placed as bans in the part of Croatia that was divided between the Sava Banovina and the Littoral Banovina. A retired professor, Dr. Josip Šilović was seventy-one years old at the time of his appointment. He was known to be a political opportunist who repeatedly changed his political commitments during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and there were reasons for why he supported the dictatorship.⁵² Ban Ivo Tartalja had a reputation in Split as a former mayor and lawyer, and during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy he had been Yugoslav-oriented, for which he had been tried as a traitor and spent the war years in an internment camp.

The people appointed bans can be described as experts in the circumstances in the Danube, Morava, and Vardar Banovinas. Ban Daka Popović, born in Novi Sad, was known for writing numerous works focused on improving living conditions, and he was also an expert in the political and economic situation in Vojvodina, located within the Danube Banovina. Ban Đorđe Nestorović was also born in the area that became a part of the Morava Banovina. Before the First World War, he was a member of the Independent Radicals and had served as its representative in the National Assembly on the island of Corfu. After the war he served as a judge in the Trade, Appellate, and Cassation Court, and as a member of the Supreme Legislative Council had contributed to the codification of the legislation on which the king's personal authority was based. Živojin Lazić was familiar with the situation in South Serbia, which had been included in the Vardar Banovina. As the head of public security and later a deputy minister of internal affairs, he organized a security service in South Serbia that faced the challenges of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO or *Вътрешна македонска револуциона организација*). As part of this, he organized the Association against Bulgarian Bandits in 1921, which focused on dissuading people from supporting the VMRO. Generals Krsta Smiljanić and Svetislav Milosavljević were two men who had the ruler's confidence: the first one as a celebrated military commander sent to Cetinje, and the other had been sent to Banja Luka to initiate the modernization of the Vrbas Banovina, which lagged behind all the other banovinas in every respect. The appointment of Velimir Popović, a close associate of Nikola Pašić, was a similar case. Manojlo Lazarević also enjoyed king's complete trust. He was appointed as administrator for the City of Belgrade in 1912, and he occupied this leading position until the king's death.

However, unlike the preparation of the new administrative system, which lasted for some time, it appeared that the appointments of the first bans were not accompanied by adequate plans to give them guidance for action. In his memoirs, the first ban of the Vrbas Banovina, Svetislav Tisa Milosavljević, records being invited by Prime Minister Petar Živković on 5 October 1929 and was offered a position as a ban. During the audience, the king told him the following:

First of all, remember, Tisa, that you are my personal choice for the position of ban for the Vrbas Banovina, where you will have a great deal of work ahead of you. Serbs are the majority there and those are the best Serbs in terms of love for homeland and patriotism in general. However, there are

October 1929, page 1.

⁵² Grgić 2014: 186.

still individuals and smaller groups among Muslims and Croats who cannot reconcile themselves with the existence of the new state. And that is why you will have a lot to do in this area. Try also to maintain good relations with these dissatisfied elements, and try to bring them around to the idea of state and national unity. And where you need to prevent harmful action, be decisive; do not indulge and do not fight a frontal battle.⁵³

Following the oath, the instructions given to the Prime Minister, Ban Milosavljević were put into one sentence: “All for the king and the homeland!”⁵⁴

Daka Popović had similar recollections about his appointment as ban, and recorded the following sentences:

I could not control my destiny. With the new administrative division of the country I was set to be the ban of the Danube Banovina. Then I felt how hard it was to escape from politics. I had nowhere to go except to accept a new political role without my consent. I soon realized that I was not a candidate of Prime Minister Živković, whose candidate was another Popović from Vojvodina.⁵⁵

The new administrative system that divided the kingdom into banovinas marked the beginning of an extensive action that the regime established by dictatorship in order to erase tribal divisions. To create Yugoslavia, it was necessary to create a unique nation embodied in the name of the Yugoslavs. Aware that this process was very complex and would take time, the creators of integral Yugoslavism decided to impose it by force through simple administrative decisions. One of the means of imposing integral Yugoslavism was the establishment of banovinas as new administrative units.⁵⁶ Newspapers were used as propaganda to present the banovinas to the public as a solution to the issues surrounding how the state functioned. In his first statements following the decree on the appointment, the bans emphasized what their priorities would be. So, Ban Ivo Tartalja pointed out that the biggest problems in the Littoral Banovina were how to finance and construct railroads that would connect Split with its hinterland and to develop certain industries such as viticulture, fishing, tourism, and mining. The ban of the Vrbas Banovina, Svetislav Milosavljević, said that his priority would be economy, culture, and transportation. The ban of the Danube Banovina was the most specific in his plans and announced a unification of economic organizations through a single organization. He also prioritized the reorganization of municipal administrations and expressed the belief that banovinas would have the possibility to organize municipalities on-the-spot.⁵⁷ The ban of the Sava Banovina, Dr. Josip Šilović, reported that the Croats were allegedly delighted with the name Yugoslavia, as the ruler called the state, saying the precursors of the Yugoslav idea were the Croats Ljudevit Gaj, Bishop Josip Juraj Štrosmajer, and Dr. Franja Rački. He also claimed that the banovina as an idea was as old as Croatia. He emphasized that his main task as ban would be to support improvements in peasant production.⁵⁸

⁵³ Milosavljević 2005: 18–23.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ The candidate of the Prime Minister for the first ban of the Danube Banovina was Kosta Popović, a lawyer from Sombor. Popović 2019: 64.

⁵⁶ Dobrivojević 2006: 106.

⁵⁷ Šimunović-Bešlin 2007: 92–39; *Politika*, Belgrade, 11th October 1929, 1, 3; *Vreme*, Belgrade, 11th October 1929, 1.

⁵⁸ *Vreme*, Belgrade, 20th October 1929, 1.

Large demonstrations were organized throughout the kingdom so that those who gathered could send messages of support for the ruler's decisions express their satisfaction with some cities becoming administrative centers for the newly formed banovinas. Thus, there was a large rally on 5 October 1929 in Novi Sad to support the king's decision to divide the state into banovinas. The procession, which was made up not just of ordinary people, but also of soldiers, *Sokoli*, and members of the National Defense, paraded through the streets of the city, and the crowd cheered King Alexander, the Royal Home, and Yugoslavia. Speakers expressed their satisfaction with Novi Sad being chosen as the seat of the banovina, and that its citizens had a high awareness of the state and national unity achieved by the creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.⁵⁹ Due to the decision to make Novi Sad the administrative seat for the Danube Banovina, the city received more political and administrative importance than it ever had in the past. This was all for the sake of the "nationalization" that was derived from it, but at that point in a Yugoslav rather than a Serbian form. Novi Sad began to be referred to as the "Yugoslav Athens" in the spirit of the new ideology of integral Yugoslavism.⁶⁰ There was a demonstration held on the same day in Sarajevo, and a message was sent that was that dismantling the "political border on the Drina" had fulfilled Bosnia's centuries-old dream, and the creation of the Drina Banovina was "a sign of liberation and unification." The mayor told the people that the ruler made them happy with his decision to make Sarajevo the center of a large banovina, thus securing its prosperity in the future.⁶¹

The bans officially began their duties on 11 November 1929. They were all responsible for providing a workplace for the ban's administration and for organizing duties for the staff they had been assigned. The main priorities were to form a financial department and to establish a journal of protocols, a registry, and secondary books.⁶² The bans made their first official public appearances during what was referred to as inspection trips, which were organized in the first months of their service. The ban's formal inspections were supposed to serve as a means of supervision over certain administrative and other state authorities, but they were mostly political and representative and meant for the title of ban to leave an impression among the general public. The inspections required the bans to tour certain cantons according to a predetermined schedule. The canton commissioners would organize a festive welcome accompanied by an appropriate program of events.

During the first years of dictatorship, these events emphasized loyalty to the ruler, the regime, and the direction of state politics. Bans used the visits to different places to talk to prominent representatives of the people, the leading figures in the regime's parties and associations, and other important individuals. Bans visited local sights, oversaw the works financed by the banovina, and conducted public hearings on the needs of the locals. These inspection trips served primarily political purposes and to boost the state and new administrative units' reputations. This was the best way to create a sense for the people that the government was taking care of them. These inspection trips also enabled the bans to

⁵⁹ Vajagić 2009: 132–133; *Politika*, Belgrade, 6th October 1929, 1–2.

⁶⁰ Bjelica 2007: 107–116.

⁶¹ *Politika*, Belgrade, 6th October 1929, 1–2.

⁶² AV, F126, II 15771/1930.

familiarize themselves with their subordinate administrators and to obtain information firsthand. The central administration required the bans to attend ceremonial openings of fairs, hospitals, schools, and other festivals, as well as liturgical rites, society meetings, and other similar events that promoted Yugoslavian ideology. Their presence at such events was used for propaganda purposes.⁶³

The first months under the new organization of the state administration were relatively peaceful. This can be seen in the monthly reports sent to the bans by the canton administrators regarding public safety and important events. The reports from the Danube Banovina were written to emphasize that the new administrative system had managed to resolve many issues almost immediately. During October and November 1929, it was reported that the people were calm and satisfied with the new situation, and that there were no political events. All political newspapers were shut down, political parties' activities ceased, and the police closely watched all social movement. Special attention was dedicated to former politicians who did not take part in the dictatorship regime. Canton commissioners insisted that the mood and agreement of the entire population with current conditions was completely satisfactory. It was especially important to create an image of the people being convinced the new age would bring prosperity, which had to be proved by the people's willingness to help reach it as soon as possible.⁶⁴ Newspaper propaganda dominated articles praising the new banovina system as something based on the decentralization of the administration and which would lead to progress and improvements in the state. Such newspaper articles were predominant during the first half of 1930.⁶⁵ Reports by the canton commissioners from the areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina that had joined the Drina and Zeta Banovinas were similar, in which the general political mood of the people was described as favorable.

However, it was stated that this mood was being spoiled by "reservations from one segment of the population." There were some among the Serbs who could not be reconciled with national elements being removed from the name of the state or with the prohibition of the public use of the Serbian flag and emblem. Furthermore, Muslims saw they had lost their unity in the new administrative order because they were a minority in all of the banovinas.⁶⁶ The largest number of canton commissioners stated in their reports that the citizens from their areas accepted changes "with pleasure," and that opponents of the regime had responded with silence. It is interesting to note, however, that there were areas that accepted the new administrative system with sincere approval. The people of Međumurje were delighted that this area now belonged to the Sava Banovina after being a part of the Maribor region for many years. Therefore, in October 1929 many telegrams from Međumurje expressing gratitude were sent to the king and the government.⁶⁷ Yet, the greatest approval was in Slovenia, which was within the Drava Banovina. The Catholic Church saw the creation of the Drava Banovina as erasing the borders that brought Slovenians economic and cultural alliance within the Yugoslav community. The leading Slovenian newspapers, *Slovenec* and *Jutro*, greeted the new administrative system on their

⁶³ Grgić 2014: 185; Milosavljević 2005: 123; Vajagić 2016: 72–77.

⁶⁴ AV, F126, II 1709/1929, 20652/1930; Šimunović-Bešlin 2007: 93–97.

⁶⁵ AJ, F 38, 7–438, 439, 1536, 5337.

⁶⁶ Šarac 1975: 279.

⁶⁷ Grgić 2014: 143–144.

front pages.⁶⁸ The Drava Banovina could thank Anton Korošec for such boundaries; he was the only leader of a political party who had entered into General Petar Živković's government.⁶⁹ Moreover, at that time Montenegrins and Macedonians, who were not recognized as nations, also found themselves within the borders of the Zeta and Vardar Banovinas, which were wider than their ethnic borders.⁷⁰

The selection of some cities such as Novi Sad and Banja Luka as administrative centers led to economic, demographic, and urban progress.⁷¹ The aspirations of the newly established banovinas to become administrative centers would reflect their economic power, strength, and prosperity led to the idea of building palaces for the bans. In addition to prestige, there were also some justifiable and practical reasons for constructing these palaces. The idea of building the ban's palace in Novi Sad came shortly after the formation of the Danube Banovina.⁷² Soon, the bans in Split, Banja Luka, Cetinje, and Skoplje started preparing preliminary designs for palaces that would be built in the following years.⁷³

The real state of the country could not be hidden for long, and by the mid-1930s the first signs of the people's dissatisfaction with the state in the kingdom began to emerge. The political position of the dictatorship was weakened by the consequences of the Great Depression, which had hit small and medium size peasants who made up the majority of the kingdom's population. The people's negative mood was exacerbated by the new tax system; the masses blamed the dictatorship for these conditions and viewed the existing political order "with skepticism".⁷⁴ Along with the king's personal authority, there was also the Law on Direct Taxes, which eliminated the five different tax systems. The main characteristic of the old tax system was a huge inequality in taxation between different parts of the state. This was particularly evident in Vojvodina, where there were over fifteen different types of taxes, and which was why the population was constantly dissatisfied.⁷⁵

Since agriculture was the most important industry, the rural population was the largest group of taxpayers. The land income tax (*zemljarina*) was paid for any land used for agricultural purposes. The basis for paying the land tax was cadastral income, which represented the monetary value of the average land income. The problem in applying this new law was the lack of a land cadaster in many parts of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In such situations, taxation was based on a comparison with revenues where there was one, and this created the possibility for numerous illegal actions among tax officials. The land income tax was expressed in two forms: basic and supplementary. For the basic tax, the population paid different fees, state monopolies, taxes on trade, and similar financial provisions. With the formation of banovinas, they were given the right to introduce banovina taxes and independent banovina fees. When they were added to the fees and taxes used to finance local authorities like municipal administrations, it was clear that it was an increased

⁶⁸ Šmid 2018: 103–105.

⁶⁹ Stiplošek 2006: 15.

⁷⁰ Dubravica 2011: 160.

⁷¹ Vajagić 2015: 172.

⁷² Vajagić 2019: 115–116.

⁷³ Mladinić 1996: 283–293; Stošić, Radmanović 2019: 16–17; Marković 2004: 115–116.

⁷⁴ AV, F126, II 86317/1930.

⁷⁵ Popović 2019: 200.

burden on the population.⁷⁶

The decline in the price of agricultural products led to a decline in exports, and the farmers could not fulfill their payment obligations to the banks and the state. This then led to a decline in tax revenue, putting the state's finances in crisis. The state tried to find a way out of this situation by refinancing and delaying the return of debts, but it also introduced new taxes. The taxpayers were also put under pressure, which resulted in tax authorities managing to collect even more taxes from the population than planned. Thus, in the Danube Banovina in the first quarter of the 1931 fiscal year, 23% more taxes were charged than planned.⁷⁷ Although the authorities did not cause the economic crisis, they did not demonstrate an ability to mitigate its consequences, which was why complete discontent was directed toward them. Foreign diplomats observed in their reports that more than 90% of the population in Serbia and Croatia were opposed to the dictatorship's regime.⁷⁸

Finding itself in this situation, the regime employed successful propaganda combined with police pressure on those who resisted the regime. A government declaration issued on 4 July 1929 confirmed the concept of "one nation and one national sentiment." As a reflection of the public manifestation of enthusiasm for the kingdom's new administrative system, the prime minister, General Petar Živković, signed the Rules on the Organization and Work of the Banovina's Councils. With these rules, the banovina's councils were defined as advisory bodies for the ban, and the ban's councilors had a duty to follow economic, social, and cultural developments in the cantons and towns they were appointed to.⁷⁹ An act appointing ban's councilors for all nine banovinas was signed the same day, and their names were published in *Politika*.⁸⁰ As a part of promoting the newly-appointed councilors, the prime minister, General Petar Živković, organized a reception for the councilors from all banovinas at the Guard House in Belgrade. The protocol stipulated that one of the councilors should address the prime minister. The speeches were full of gratitude for the appointments and assurances that they would diligently execute the tasks entrusted to them. After their speeches, the prime minister spent time in individual conversations with the councilors, and expressed his interest in the parts of the country they came from. He organized a dinner in the evening for the councilors from all nine banovinas and for his ministers. During dinner, the prime minister gave a speech in which he expressed his expectations for the councilors to be the true interpreters of and believers in the Yugoslav idea for the places they came from.⁸¹

These deputations were, according to one of the leading figures of the dictatorship, Vojislav Marinković, the prime minister's idea. The "spontaneous" thrill of the masses that were happy to come to Belgrade, to "take a stroll" down the streets at the government's expense, reminded Marinković of the book *Stradije* by Radoje Domanović, in which there is a constitutional provision that every citizen of the country must be pleased to salute any

⁷⁶ Vajagić 2016: 39.

⁷⁷ AV, F126, II 18552/1931.

⁷⁸ Stojkov 1969: 82.

⁷⁹ *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, Belgrade, 4th July 1930, 14–15.

⁸⁰ *Politika*, Belgrade, 4th July 1930, 1–3.

⁸¹ *Politika*, Belgrade, 6th September, 1930, 3–4.

government proceeding.⁸² Very soon after the Banovina's councils began operating, the public became aware that their purpose was absolutely pointless. As long as they were in existence, they served as bodies that simply rubber-stamped decisions that had already been made, as was the banovina's previously prepared budget.⁸³

The implementation of Yugoslav unification was in the hands of individuals appointed by the king. They were supposed to use their time in office to implement the political program defined by the government in the declaration of 4 July. The whole process of achieving state and national unity happened through the actions of the state authorities whose representatives gave a practical contribution to achieving the main tasks through their efforts. The ban oversaw the implementation of this policy, and it also included the canton's official and the president of the municipality. The ban was also required to supervise all other officials outside the general administration and to make sure they acted in the interests of achieving Yugoslav ideology. The administrative authorities had to make sure that what other officials did was in the spirit of the declaration, and they had the right to take legal measures in cases of deviations. One of the obligations of the administrative authorities was also to determine what exactly officials had to do and to record their actions. They also had to assist organizations with Yugoslav ideology. The authorities were also required to register "the best citizens" in any area who would be engaged in determining the government's course. However, although the authorities had almost all the resources available to the state, there were many "fences" that Yugoslav ideology could not cross over.⁸⁴

Growing discontent in the country caused by a difficult economic situation and the pressures on King Alexander to end the dictatorship resulted in the adoption of the 1931 Yugoslav Constitution. Banovinas were given a constitutional basis as administrative units in Section VIII. Articles 82–87 defined their administrative authority, and Article 83 outlined their borders. The constitution also laid out that the Banovina's Council should be chosen in general and direct elections with a four-year mandate. The council elected the Banovina's Board from its members, and it was conceived of as a self-administered executive body within the banovina. The adjustment of constitutional provisions with legislation was resolved by adopting the Law on the Banovina's Self-Governments. The draft of this law was written by Milan Srškić at the beginning of 1933, and its creation coincided with increasing opposition to the dictatorship. The basic draft of the law was intended to make the banovinas administrative units with broad authority, secure them financially, and enable them to fulfill the people's needs. However, this law was not submitted for approval because it was not accepted by the king.⁸⁵ Thus, banovinas remained within a framework of poorly developed self-governments and without the authority to conduct state administration. Therefore, one of the objectives was not achieved, which was to make them administrative and self-governing units at the same time.⁸⁶

The banovinas as an administrative system would lose its importance by establishing an illusion of parliamentarism within the constitution through which King Alexander tried

⁸² Pavlović 1955: 51.

⁸³ Vajagić 2017: 115.

⁸⁴ Babović-Raspopović 2002: 35, 39.

⁸⁵ Jovanović 1938: 289–291; Nikić 1938: 157–164.

⁸⁶ Tomić 2016: 108.

to gather and organize all the available forces in the state for his Yugoslav program. The elections for National Assembly in November 1931 and the creation of the regime's political party led to politicians from the parties that had been banned becoming active again. The bans were soon at the service of the political parties that governed the state. Thus, what little autonomy the bans had was now lost. The leading roles would be taken over by different individuals and politicians who had joined the regime, and this slowly established a system of government that was much like the one before the dictatorship. The assassination of King Alexander in October 1934 in Marseille marked the end of his personal regime. Authority would be exercised by the Regency Council, led by Prince Paul Karađorđević, on behalf of the underage King Peter II Karađorđević. This period would often be referred to as "a dictatorship without dictators".⁸⁷ Up until the Kingdom of Yugoslavia entered the Second World War, the banovinas put their functions into the service of achieving the program of the government of Bogoljub Jeftić, Milan Stojadinović and Dragiša Cvetković.

One of the first decisions of the Regency Council was to postpone changing the current state of the administrative and constitutional order until the king's maturity. However, this decision was violated in August 1939 when the Banovina of Croatia was created through a regulation, merging the Sava and Littoral Banovinas, and adding territories from some cantons in the Danube, Drina, Zeta, and Vrbas Banovinas. The creation of the Banovina of Croatia changed Article 83 of the 1931 constitution, which had determined certain borders between banovinas. This constitutional change was implemented without the consent of the National Assembly and the Senate. The legal basis for the Regulation on the Banovina of Croatia was found in Article 116 of the 1931 constitution. According to this article, if public interests were jeopardized, the king could, by decree, undertake all necessary measures in the entire kingdom or in one part of it apart from the constitutional and legal regulations. The unitarianism of the state order was replaced by the proclaimed Yugoslav unitarianism brought by the king's personal authority to eventually shift to the federalization of the state with the declaration of the Banovina of Croatia. The acceptance of federalism was driven by external factors, changes that arose in international relations, and strong internal pressure from the Croats.

The Banovina of Croatia should have served as a model according to which the country could have been federalized in the near future. However, there was no single position on the number of federal units among Serbian politicians in power or in the opposition. A special federal unit that would include Slovenia was not in dispute, but the issue of a Serbian federal unit was yet to be resolved. The majority of the disputes were connected to statuses of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojvodina, and Macedonia. Proposed solutions included the status of a federal unit and even self-governing units within Serbian federal unit. Resolving this issue was further complicated by the Croatian position that the political agreement between Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković and the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Vlatko Maček, had been temporary. The Croatian side immediately sought a territorial correction of the borders of the Banovina of Croatia. It also left open the issues concerning areas inhabited by Croats but which had not been included in the

⁸⁷ Petranović 1992: 26.

Banovina of Croatia.⁸⁸

The establishment of banovinas was meant to give a governing and administrative form to the dictatorship. Banovinas were of great significance because they were the expressions of the Yugoslav unitarianism proclaimed by the king's manifesto of 6 January 1929. Banovinas were supposed to give the public the impression that the state had been federalized and to win over a part of the Croatian public by using the title of ban, where it had a long historical tradition. The beginning of the banovina's administration was jubilant and accompanied by organized events that expressed the people's spontaneous enthusiasm. Behind all of this was the apparatus that carried out the ruler's personal regime, and all of the press that had been permitted to publish were used for propaganda. The personal regime reached its culmination early on when the state was divided into banovinas, because the end of 1929 had brought a reckoning concerning the state's true condition. This condition was further hampered by the Great Depression, which was a severe worldwide economic crisis. The apparatus of the king's personal regime made up of the army, the police, and influential financial circles could not adequately respond to these challenges.

The Royal Banovina Administrations should have existed as strong political and economic units capable of operating independently within the common state of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, the reality was quite different because the centralized state prevented the banovinas from achieving the autonomy for which they had been formed. The results the Royal Banovina Administrations directly depended on the desire and willingness of state officials to comply with the ideology of Yugoslavism, which served as the foundation of the state's new administrative system. Within these circumstances was also the administrative and political power carried out by the bans. Throughout the period of the banovinas, there was a policy of "easily replaceable bans," and, as a result, seventy-two different people served as bans, acting bans, and the Belgrade city administrators. The large number of bans indicates their position was quite unstable, and that the position depended exclusively on the ruler or the prime minister. During 1929–1941, the largest amount of turnover occurred in the Vardar Banovina (twelve) and in the Danube Banovina (eleven). The smallest turnover occurred in the Banovina of Croatia, where only one man served as ban, and in the Littoral Banovina, where there were only three. Most bans and administrators for the City of Belgrade were Serbs (58). Only eight were Croats, five were Slovene, and one was Muslim.⁸⁹

Finally, the decade-old dilemma of whether the king really wanted to strengthen the "Serbian factor" or if he instead wanted to "tear up Serbianism" arose from the fact that Serbs were present in several banovinas. The king sacrificed the territorial entity of Serbia in 1922 for the sake of centralization and unitarianism. On the other hand, in what were considered more important areas, he strived to form administrative areas in which Serbs would be the majority. He also applied these principles when determining the borders of the banovinas. Croatia was divided between two banovinas, thus weakening the Croatian base for creating a unified nation. Of the total number of bans, Serbs accounted for more than 80% of the appointments. In giving up national sovereignty for the sake of creating a common state of

⁸⁸ Radojević 1994, 192–196; Dimić 2001, 192–196.

⁸⁹ Banovi Kraljevine Jugoslavije (The Bans of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) 2019: 180–219.

Yugoslav nations, Serbs also had to give up the possibility of having an administrative area in which they were the majority. These sacrifices were the conditions for the existence of the Yugoslav state, which King Alexander saw as the greatest legacy of his reign. The project to achieve national unity by ignoring all other nations' right to exist by only permitting the existence of a Yugoslav nation was unsuccessful. As administrative units in almost all areas of the country, the banovinas managed to achieve some progress that was in the spirit of the time as well as more general progress that had an effect on society during the interwar period. The idea that banovinas should replace and suppress tribal names and historical provinces eventually made the banovinas a scope for the national integration of the Slovenes into the Drava Banovina and the Croats into the Banovina of Croatia.

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ПРЕДРАГ М. ВАЈАГИЋ

Друштво наставника историје Бачке Паланке

**БАНОВИНЕ - АДМИНИСТРАТИВНЕ ЈЕДИНИЦЕ
У СЛУЖБИ ШЕСТОЈАНАУАРСКЕ ДИКТАТУРЕ 1929–1934.**

Резиме

Један од проблема у функционисању Краљевине Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца између осталих било је унутрашње административно уређење које није одговарало потребама државе. Завођењем Шестојануарске диктатуре апарату који је био задужен за њено спровођење указала се прилика да државу организује на новим основама. Тако је дошло до успостављања бановинског уређења које је имало за циљ да управно и административно уобличи заведену диктатуру. На почетку диктатуре бановине као нове административне јединице имале су велики значај. Оне су у пракси биле оживотворење идеје југословенског унитаризма прокламоване владаревим манифестом који је пратио завођење диктатуре. У јавности су бановине требале да оставе утисак федерализације државе, а на њиховом челу се налазио бан, титула која је у Хрватској имала дугу историјску традицију. Како би се шире народне масе придобиле за ново стање у држави почетак рада бановина је протекао у знаку манифестација подршке краљевој политици које су организовали носиоци диктатуре. Приказане као као политички, економски и саобраћајно јаке целине, способне за самосталан живот у оквиру заједничке државе Краљевине Југославије бановине то у стварности нису биле. Свуда присутан државни централизам спречавао је бановине да остваре аутономију због које су биле створене, а њихови резултати директно су зависили од спремности и воље државних чиновника да се повинују идеологији југословенства, која је представљала темељ новог административног уређења државе. Честе смене банава спречавале су континуитет у њиховом вођењу, а позиција бана је искључиво зависила од воље владара или председника владе. Новим административним уређењем режим Шестојануарске диктатуре је врло брзо достигао свој врхунац. Већ почетком 1930. године уследиће почетак лаганог пада који је дошао као последица Велике економске кризе. Лични режим краља Александра I Карађорђевића је успео да преко бановина успостави пуну контролу и доминацију државног врха над целокупним унутрашњим односима у држави, али не и главни циљ постизање националног јединства брисањем историјских граница између народа Југославије. Од унитаристичког уређења државе владајући кругови ће одустати августа 1939. када је створена Бановина Хрватска. Њеним стварањем започет је процес федерализације Краљевине Југославије који није окончан због избијања Другог светског рата.

Кључне речи: Шестојануарска диктатура, југословска идеологија, бановине, бан, банско веће.

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