

Nationalistic tendency in communist camp: The cases of Yugoslavia and Romania

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Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to examine the nationalistic characters of socialist regimes after the Second World War until the 1990s in the cases of Romania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Therefore, I will attempt to examine whether the communist leaders in Romania and Yugoslavia appealed to nationalistic communism or communism with national distinction in order to demonstrate that they were not directly controlled or directed by The Soviet Union. They enjoyed sovereignty greater than other communist countries in Eastern Europe. Both Romania and Yugoslavia could receive maximum of aid and attention from Western countries, which led to maneuvering strategies between the Western countries and the socialist camp.

These supposedly distinctive characteristics of the development and historical situation may explain how the communist leaders or parties tended to appeal to nationalism, why they inclined to nationalism, what the main factors were. Analyzing this tendency in those countries could be helpful to better understand the movement for change and its unique features in the area.

At this point, even though Yugoslavia and Romania are different, they both had similar ways in the development of former communist regimes and similarity in their nationalistic character. This tendency of nationalism had begun earlier in Yugoslavia because its communists were largely independent compared to those of Romania. However, nationalistic tendency was initiated in certain situations. Some attempt to illuminate these certain situation will be made in the paper. Periodically criticizing the leading communist country in international affairs, Romania cancelled its membership in the Warsaw treaty organization. Yugoslavia was in the front line of the Non-Alignment Movement with Indonesia and India. Both countries' leaders strongly attempted to retain communism.

On the other hand, these characteristics can be observed in other countries as well. For example, in Poland, Jaruzelski could be considered a strong leader who concentrated power, and Janos Kadar in Hungary opposed repression and implemented several economic reforms that resembled to the basic elements of market economy. Yet they did not devise communism with nationalistic plea.

In the Yugoslav context, the term nationalism is understood as devising and designing distinctive modes from the Soviet style communist model, whose justification is usually found in the explanation of the distinct situation and the advantage of their

citizens, the people. Therefore, the term nationalism does not necessarily mean the same thing as it is discussed in the academic literature.

The analysis of the nationalistic inclination of former communist countries such as Yugoslavia and Romania, could be interesting in the sense of understanding their distinct transitions from communism to democracy - and the current development in still communist countries like China, Cuba, Vietnam or North Korea, also characterized by a certain degree of nationalistic tendency. China refused pure Marxism Leninism in the early years of the Second World War and began to develop its distinctive communism, which is sometimes considered authoritarianism. The Cuban revolution was not a communist revolution in the beginning, but, in order to survive and ensure continuing Soviet support and defense in face of the US, Castro had to accept the contract condition - communism. In the case of North Korea, it made efforts to develop a self-sufficient economy and to integrate nationalism into communism. However, it is important to consider when analyzing these communist countries, the world's contemporary development and globalization.

Analysis of the nationalist tendency in the communist “world”: Yugoslavia and Romania

Yugoslavia

The nationalistic tendency is not only the case of a few communist countries like China, North-Korea or Yugoslavia. Especially after the Sino-Soviet tensions, socialist countries made nationalist-independent attempts in their policy towards The Soviet Union. Mosely (1965) mentions that “... nationalism, which Marx denounced as a tool of the bourgeoisie in its exploitation of the workers, remains a powerful emotion within Communist countries and quarrels among Communist states”⁷. The powerful emotion of nationalism more or less influenced the development of most socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Brzezinski (1967) argues that the conflicts and contradictions between particular interests of individual socialist countries and the universal interest of the so called socialist camp find their origin in the initial imposition of universal values by one major power, the Soviet Union, on other satellite socialist countries. But this was not the case in Yugoslavia and Albania because the communists came to rule by themselves without the Soviet intervention. The Yugoslavian communists were powerful enough to win the elections and control the country without Soviet military or other assistance.

In the first run, there were no essential conflicts between the Soviet Union and other newly established communist countries which were assisted or established by

⁷ P.E. Mosely. (1965). Introduction in *The Communist States at the Crossroads* ed. by A.Bromke, New York, p. 5.

Soviet intervention. Soon, the new socialist states began to claim lost lands and national problems.

Thus Polish and East German communists were making discrepant statements about the permanence of the Oder-Neisse frontier, the Polish and Czechoslovak ones about their states' respective border claims in the Teschen and Glatz districts, the Czechoslovak and Hungarian ones about the treatment of the Magyar ethnic minority in Slovakia, the Hungarian and Romanian ones about the rectification of the frontier in Transylvania, and the Yugoslav and Bulgarian (as well as Greek) ones about the just disposition of Macedonia.⁸

Among them, the Yugoslav leader Tito was the most pressing in the claims of the territory for the Trieste, which was claimed by Italy (backed by the United States and Britain). His understanding and uncontrollable character was not favorable to Stalin. For example, “following the 1947 Paris Treaty, Yugoslavia was the first to conclude formal treaties with them, thereby beating the USSR to the punch”⁹. It was usually expected that socialist countries had to request for the sanction on their decision in establishing diplomatic relations or other bonds with other countries, or the Soviet Union would make a precedent first for other satellites. This was not welcomed by Stalin. Through Cominform, the Eastern European countries began to criticize Tito for being revisionist although economically he had been implementing many soviet type reforms such as collectivization of the peasants and lands, nationalization of industries. Even though he was building the Stalin type system, “... Stalin was less impressed by the scenario of close and voluntary imitation than he was concerned with the autonomy of the imitator ... Tito - while treating Stalin respectfully - would convey that he had come to negotiate, not to receive orders, and that he was a partner, not an instrument”¹⁰. This personal treat of Tito and his autonomy in decision making, from Soviet advisers especially concerning Stalin, had caused the rift between the two leaders. The conflict between Tito and Stalin was the first major conflict within the Communist camp, which reached extreme forms such as terrorist actions and espionage. In the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party, Tito criticized the Eastern European countries that for becoming Soviet colonies. Malenkov made a similar declaration about Yugoslavia being an American colony in his speech from the Communist party congress of the Soviet Union. As a result of this conflict with Stalin, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform in 1948¹¹.

After Stalin's death, the relationship between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia tended to normalize; that same year, the two countries established diplomatic relations followed by the resumption of other diplomatic relations with communist countries. The

⁸ J.Rothschild and N.M.Wingfield. (2000). *Return to Diversity: A political history of East Central Europe Since World War II*. 3d edition, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 125

⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 109.

¹⁰ J.Rothschild and N.M.Wingfield. (2000). *Return to Diversity: A political history of East Central Europe Since World War II*. 3d edition, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 128.

¹¹ Encyclopedia “Yugoslavia: History”, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/14128History.html>, accessed November 14, 2001.

leaders of the two countries exchanged visits and the Soviet Union recognized Yugoslavia's unique way of socialism. But this normalization was short-lived. It ended by the Soviet military intervention into Hungary in 1956. Tito was not satisfied with the event, and, indirectly, he was criticizing that some "Stalinist" mistakes in Communist countries existed. The Chinese leaders were also supportive of the Soviet Union in condemning Tito for his critique of other communist parties. Tito's dissatisfaction about Soviet hegemony would be expressed on the occasion of the 1968 military intervention in Czechoslovakia, described as violating the sovereignty of an individual country.

Economically, Yugoslavia wanted to pursue its independent policy even though the soviet type economic system was adopted, with the communist leaders of Yugoslavia desiring to go for a policy of intensive industrialization, contrary to the Soviet recommendation for an agricultural economy in Yugoslavia. Even Yugoslavia halted the establishment of joint companies between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which was one of the main types of economic cooperation in Eastern Europe. The main value of Tito's Yugoslavia was to be sovereign, independent, not controlled by the Communist Party of The Soviet Union. As Rothschild argues, Tito was concerned with " ... Soviet apathy toward Yugoslavia's industrialization plan and apparent intent to reduce its economy to extractive dependence"¹².

Therefore, autonomy was the main principle for Tito not only in the country's foreign policy but also in its domestic policy. Compared to other Eastern European countries, Yugoslavia had become more similar with the Soviet model and Stalinist regime. As an advanced communist country, similar to the Soviet Union at least in the opinion of Yugoslavian communists, Yugoslavia began to criticize the Soviet model and to initiate reform in its economy. According to Brzezinski (1967), Yugoslavians saw the state ownership of the property, especially the means of production, tended to be state capitalism, negative features included.

After 1950, a number of Yugoslav leaders, particularly Kardelj, Djilas, and Dedijer, developed these notions into a vigorous and extensive condemnation of almost every aspect of Soviet domestic policy, ranging from Great Russian chauvinism and the introduction of large-scale social inequality and stratification, to a destruction of the solidarity of the international labor movement and a betrayal of Marxism-Leninism¹³.

In fact, this was not only a criticism of the Soviet system, it was rather a criticism of the previous Yugoslavian experiment with the Soviet model which was most similar compared to other Eastern European communist countries. Industrialization policy and centralization of the administrative system in Yugoslavia, along with Soviet boycott

¹² J.Rothschild and N.M.Wingfield. (2000). *Return to Diversity: A political history of East Central Europe Since World War II*. 3d edition, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 130

¹³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 190.

because of the Stalin-Tito dispute, caused an economic downturn for Yugoslavia and it was compelled to carry out some reforms. The main reform was the establishment of the Workers' Councils, which were supposed to have the ultimate power in running the enterprises. According to Brzezinski, although the Workers' Councils were supervised by the director of an enterprise, by the norms of the national economic plan and communist party cells, these Councils were important in "internally improving workers' moral and externally in emphasizing the Yugoslav claim to having established the true Marxist-Leninist method of constructing socialism"¹⁴. Other than the Workers' Councils, some other reforms were implemented.

The economic and administrative decentralization had been undertaken especially in the new constitution of 1953, where Yugoslavia refused previous commitments to the Stalinist Soviet type regime. The Communist Party name changed into the League of the Communists of Yugoslavia expressing its new image of a democratic character. As Brzezinski states, this change of the party name "symbolized its alleged voluntary and democratic character"¹⁵.

Yugoslavia's willingness to recognize the right of voluntary membership, which conflicted with the whole idea of collectivization led to another reform measure. In other words, collectivization was abolished from economic programs. In March 1953, "Decree on Property Relationship and Reorganization of Peasant Working Cooperatives" allowed the peasants to withdraw, and, in fact, ended the collectivization policy.

All these changes in the domestic economic area were explained in terms of a unique and alternative path toward socialism. According to the official policy of the Yugoslavia even sometimes by this difference, the Yugoslavian communists often claimed that their model was an authentic reflection of the real Marxism and Leninism. Nevertheless, Yugoslavs were accused of cheating Marxism-Leninism, and serving imperialist countries like USA although even Khrushchev evaluated the economic achievement, especially the workers' council, as innovative in socialism.

The new constitution of Yugoslavia, promulgated on February 21, 1974 as the reaction to different economic and ethnic issues related to budget appropriations, to regions and other social problems. As a result, the country was decentralized to a high degree; it increased the autonomy of local regions, as well as, the one of Vojvodina and Kosovo; the power of federal government was significantly softened.

In addition, the independent and autonomous policy of Tito also influenced the foreign policy to a large extent. Rothschild shows that Yugoslavs treated "the Soviet Union as but one of several pillars of their foreign policy, along with Europe, the Third World, the United States, and China."¹⁶ In 1961, along with India and Indonesia,

¹⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 191.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Rothschild, Joseph. and Wingfield, Nancy. M. *Return to Diversity: A political history of East Central Europe Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3d edition, , p. 182

Yugoslavia was one of the founding states of the Non-Alignment Movement whose intention was to "...form a third world force through a policy of nonalignment with the United States and The Soviet Union..."¹⁷, which actually included many aligned third world countries. Rothschild continues to assert, "While Tito's leadership of the nonaligned camp continued to have an anti-American edge, he never again embraced the Soviet Union as a comrade."¹⁸

This movement gave communist Yugoslavia an opportunity to cooperate and a possibility to receive Western aids, although this was problematic. The main problem was the contradiction between the official ideological doctrine and regime and their economic needs to receive foreign, especially Western aid, during the lonely existence among "cold" communist countries. Therefore, US administrations tended to give various economic aids to the Yugoslavian government assuming that Yugoslavia had within a different economic system, a moderate communist ideology, independent in its policy. However,

*the United States congress has persistently shown, and will certainly maintain, a high degree of reluctance to extend economic benefits to a country that favors the basic tenets of Soviet foreign policy and actively supports anti-Western movements throughout the world*¹⁹.

As for the Western Europe, Drachkovitch described, the relationship was not favorable although the one with Italy was in good shape compared to other Western European countries. Economically, the Common market increase of introducing common standards such as price and trade barriers, hindered the Yugoslavian exports. In 1954, Yugoslavia concluded a military defense pact (independent of NATO) with Greece and Turkey²⁰. According to Drachkovitch, Yugoslavia was popular in the Third World until the Moscow-Peking conflicts influenced the Chinese negative attitude so that its propaganda among the member states of the third world countries led to criticism against Yugoslavia. The conflict between China and the Soviet Union was caused by many different factors including the historical development of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the middle of a civil war with the Kuomintang - the nationalist right wing party. The Kuomintang officially ruled China from 1912 to 1949 until Mao Zedong's victory (with Soviet support) and his effective propaganda. During this earlier period of CCP, Mao Zedong had become a nationalistic communist by combining communist ideology with peasant reality and national culture. Therefore, Mao tried to receive assistance not only from the Soviet Union but also intensively from the United States. The Soviet Union had not been supportive towards the CCP assuming the low probability of success. Mao eventually, became powerful by using effective propaganda in rural areas and betraying

¹⁷ Encyclopedia "Non-Aligned Movement" <http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/09317.html> accessed November 14, 2001.

¹⁸ Rothschild, Joseph. and Wingfield, Nancy. M. *Return to Diversity: A political history of East Central Europe Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3d edition, , p. 182

¹⁹ Drachkovitch, Milorad. M. "Yugoslavia", in Adam Bromke, editor, *The Communist States at the Crossroads*(New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1965), p.196.

²⁰ Encyclopedia "Yugoslavia: History", <http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/14128History.html>>, accessed November 14, 2001

Chan Kaishek. He did not comply with the agreement with Chan Kaishek to fight against Japanese militarists together after the formal cease-fire of civil war. Besides previous territorial claims in Outer Mongolia, China attacked India in the early 1960s, whereas the latter was an ideological ally for the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union did not publicly support this event and was condemned by the Chinese for its passiveness and neutrality. Mosely^[21] sees the main reason for this as a sign of the Chinese ambition to become a nuclear power, but Khrushchev refused in 1959 to implement the program he had promised in 1957. In its attacks on Khrushchev, the CCP identified the bias of the Soviet Union as similar to the revisionist tendency in Yugoslavia. Thus, the emphasis of the Moscow-Belgrade conflict shifted to the Moscow-Peking conflict, leaving The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia more reconciliatory.

Yugoslavian socialism was significantly different compared to other Eastern European countries: it can be said that Yugoslavia tried to build socialism like the Soviet Union but with their own will, as they wanted to be independent and friendly partners with the Soviet Union, thus contradicting the Soviet great-power-ambition to influence the domestic and foreign policies of other communist countries. One could make an analogy of Yugoslavia as playing China's role in Eastern Europe, in terms of its position in the Socialist camp: it was relatively powerful, independent, nationalistic, it was maneuvering between the Soviet Union and Western countries to receive aids regardless of their ideologies and regime. Some ambition of becoming a regional power could be observed from the idea of a Balkan Union of Communist countries which would have included Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania, and from its territorial claim for Trieste against Wester-backed-Italy, assuming that the Soviet Union would have supported it. Yugoslavia had also a different economic system where the market elements of its economic system were introduced in a socialist context. As Rothschild concludes, along with the negative consequences, this model had some positive outcomes as well: "wider range of civil freedom and more supply of consumer products, and favorable approach towards cultural and educational values of its component ethnic people"^[22]. This tendency of pluralism was the result of Yugoslav nationalism. Farkas states that domestically, "Pluralism based primarily on nationalism, had consistently pressured for policy which would functionally decentralize the system"^[23]. The new constitutional amendments were the sober examples of this policy towards decentralization.

Romania

²¹ Mosely, Philip. E. "Introduction: Power and Ideology in the Communist States" in Adam Bromke, editor, *The Communist States at the Crossroads* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1965), pp. 12-13.

²² Rothschild, Joseph. and Wingfield, Nancy. M. *Return to Diversity: A political history of East Central Europe Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3d edition, , p. 190.

²³ Farkas, Richard. P., *Yugoslav Economic Development and Political Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc. 1975), p.21.

Romania, one of the few non Slavic nations (East Germany, Hungary and Albania are also non-Slavic), allied with the Axis powers during the Second World War which contributed to nationalist and anti-Russian feelings in Romania. As Brzezinski stated that the Romanian Communist Party was initially nationalistic because one of their main goals was the “identification of Communism with nationalism through emphasis on popular national issues, typically territorial ones.”²⁴ Assumingly, the Soviet might have played on the Romanian claim to Transylvania in convincing Romanians that the Romanian Communists would be more able to find a common language with the Soviet Union on this issue. However, this tendency was common in other Eastern European countries, most of which had some kind of territorial claims, such as the ones mentioned before in the case of Yugoslavia. After the Second World War, the communists came to power supported by the Soviet military intervention. Romania had to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina according to the Paris treaty as war reparations; meanwhile, economic exploitation started through the joint companies called Sovroms.

In the beginning of Romanian socialism, the communist leaders Ana Pauker and Gheorgiu-Dej strictly followed the Soviet model, gradually adding some nationalistic or independent tendency. Gilbert states that “the Pauker leadership openly acknowledged the leadership of the CPSU in relations among communist parties, and the Romanians also readily accepted the notion that the USSR must be the leader of the socialist states”²⁵. The constitution was similar to the constitution of the Soviet Union, the nationalization policy of industry and agricultural collectivization was implemented. During the short period after Stalin’s death, when some uprisings occurred, Romania was loyal to the Soviet Union. The Romanian support for the Soviet military repression in Hungary 1956, could be explained in two ways, on the one hand, as the Romanian loyalty to the leading communist country and on the other hand, as its own national interest to stop Hungarian revolution which could destabilize the Romanian society and spread over to the large Magyar minority in Romania. The Stalinist repressions were repeated in Romania and thereby Gheorgiu-Dej managed to get rid of his main opponent-Pauker.

However, Brown²⁶ argues that Romania was the first to de-stalinize. According to Gilberg in later years of his rule, Gheorgiu-Dej made “... even open statements about the importance of national sovereignty and rather strong hints that certain historical events pertaining to boundaries had represented a questionable precedence in decades past (a clear reference to the Soviet incorporation of Bessarabia in the summer of 1940)”²⁷. In the 1960s, when the Moscow-Peking conflict began, Romania was neutral whereas most Eastern European communist countries supported the Soviet Union. Rothschild wrote that Romania “reduced its participation in joint WTO military maneuvers and declined to

²⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 18.

²⁵ Gilberg, Trond. *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceausescu's Personal Dictatorship* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1990), p. 47.

²⁶ Brown, J.F., “Romania and Bulgaria”, in Adam Bromke, editor, *The Communist States at the Crossroads* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1965), p. 108.

²⁷ Gilberg, Trond. *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceausescu's Personal Dictatorship* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1990), p. 49.

let any be held on its own soil. In November 1963, Gheorgiu-Dej paid a state visit to Belgrade, where Tito—who had recently again been at odds with Moscow—gave him the special honor of inviting him to address the Yugoslav National Assembly²⁸. These measures were the beginning of the autonomy in foreign policy, which continued during Ceausescu's era. This tendency was also reflected by the wish to pursue independent economic policy. Based on the idea of labor division in communist camp, Romania was to specialize in agricultural products and consumer industry, which was contradictory to its priority in industrialization. In April 1964, the Communist party announced its refusal to subordinate, “... national needs to a supranational planning body in which others would dictate the form of the country's economy”²⁹ and demanded respect for the sovereignty of Romania as independent country. Thus, in the later years of Gheorgiu-Dej's rule, the tendency of autonomy in choosing their path of development was increased - the reflection of the people's overall attitude towards USSR. Brown states that “the worse his relations with Russia became, the stronger would become his popular support.”³⁰

The succession of Ceausescu after the death of Gheorgiu-Dej in 1965 symbolized increased nationalism in Romania. According to Verdery, Ceausescu supported not only national values but more than that, also the “idea of progress, the importance of science, an ethic of work and productivity and so forth”³¹. This diversity of Ceausescu's ideology was explained by Gilberg³², emphasizing on all its other aspects: populism - the idea to valorize the people, emphasize the preferences of the masses; personal cult that is to show an image of a powerful sober leader, self-sufficiency in culture and economy.

Ceausescu implemented some reforms that improved the degree of administrative decentralization and managerial autonomy, diminished the party's direct oversight of intellectual production like magazines and books and increased the financial freedom of cultural industries. The name of the party and state changed into the similar version of The Soviet Union, which meant that Romania had made significant achievement towards communism.

In foreign policy, he continued and even reinforced the tendency of autonomy of Romania. Verdery³³ mentions that Romania's trade with the communist bloc decreased from 2/3 of its total foreign trade to less than half by 1970, and the relatively active foreign policy towards the Western countries resulted in membership in the General

²⁸ Rothschild, Joseph. and Wingfield, Nancy. M. *Return to Diversity: A political history of East Central Europe Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3d edition, , p. 163.

²⁹ Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology Under Socialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), p. 105.

³⁰ Brown, J.F., “Romania and Bulgaria”, in Adam Bromke, editor, *The Communist States at the Crossroads* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1965), p. 117.

³¹ Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology Under Socialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), p. 101.

³² Gilberg, Trond. *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceausescu's Personal Dictatorship* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1990), pp. 49-57.

³³ Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology Under Socialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), p. 105.

Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1971, in the World Bank and in the International Monetary Fund in 1972. Also, it received trade preference from the European Community in 1973, and The Status of US Most Favored Nation in 1975, and the trade with the West even exceeded that with the communist countries. As in the case of Yugoslavia, besides the tendency toward independence in Romania's foreign policy and its domestic reform, it also benefited and tried to benefit from Western aids. This trend sounded like the "neutral coexistence principle" of different socio-economic systems. Moreover, Romania established diplomatic relations with West Germany in 1967, maintained friendly relations with Israel after the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, while the other East European communist regimes opposed the war. Also, Romania did not participate in the military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. These actions and traits of the foreign policy showed some positive signals for Western countries and made it easier to receive Western aids also encouraged by the national anti-Russian sentiments domestically.

According to Brzezinski, this autonomy could be linked to the feature of Romanian nationalism as the only Latin country among Slavic countries. "The Romanian Communists even unearthed the writings of Professor Nicolae Iorga, an eminent prewar Romanian nationalist ideologue, who could not have won Romanian Communist endorsement by his opposition to industrialization, but who clearly made a niche for himself by his stress on the special mission of Romania, an isolated outpost of Latin civilization in a sea of Slavic barbarity, as a link between the Byzantine east and the Latin west"³⁴. This kind of feeling encouraged the independent stance in foreign and domestic policy among the people. Therefore, being autonomous meant being nationalistic, which was a reflection of the intensive restoration of nationalism in Romania.

Verdery noted that Ceausescu's speeches, newspaper headlines, and slogans had started intensive appeal to national values; for example,

*We must have a unitary history ... in (which) the history of the Romanian people will also encompass the history of the revolutionary workers' movement, of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party, as well as of the Romanian Communist Party. There cannot be two histories, a history of the people and a history of the Party. Our people has a single history, and the activity of the Romanian Communist Party, along with other parties in different periods, constitutes an inseparable part of the history of the homeland (Ceausescu 1983b[1982]: 67)*³⁵.

This nationalist appeal became the official ideological doctrine of Romanian communism "with the establishment of a Commission on Ideology within the Central Committee"³⁶ and with his two speeches on July 1971 called the "July Theses". Many scholars usually saw this tendency in Romania as the regime's need for mass support.

³⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 439.

³⁵ Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology Under Socialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 118-119.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 101.

However, Verdery gives a different explanation. She contends that the Communist “party was forced to use national values (not unwillingly) under pressure from others, especially intellectuals”³⁷. As Verdery argues, there were contradictory intellectual stances on different problems and values but the Nation was the main universal value so that each of them could find a common language. This “catch-all” value was important in legitimizing the regime especially among the intellectuals but on the other hand, this nationalistic appeal was also to some extent shared by the rulers themselves. Brzezinski argues “The Soviet Romanian divergence in turn brought to the surface the long-suppressed Romanian national resentment of Soviet (Russian) exploitation and territorial expansion at Romania’s expense. The Romanian leadership found it convenient to identify with this resentment and it, no doubt, also at least in part shared it”³⁸.

On the other hand, Verdery concludes that these national values served as a source for the “quiet revolt” of party leaders from Soviet supervision simultaneously trying to make Marxism and Leninism closer to the Romanian soil, which was alien by itself in Romania. She goes on mentioning that Communism was least favored in Romania compared to Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Bulgaria.

Even in some respect, one could note some chauvinistic aspects of Romanian nationalistic tendency. “Under Ceausescu, Romanian nationalism has turned to chauvinism”³⁹, Gilberg writes and goes on that they were highly praising the virtues of Romania’s history in many cases at the expense of others. The speech of Ceausescu in 1986 reads,”

The migration of foreign tribes and populations ... checked for hundreds of years the development of the Romanian people. ...Another well-known truth is that first the more advanced Daco-Roman civilization, then that of the Romanian people, left their imprint on the existence of the migratory populations which settled in this land (1988:2).

In other words, Romanians were superior to the contaminating nomadic tribes (Hungarians and Slavs) that surrounded and debased them”⁴⁰. This was reflected in the Romanian policy toward its Magyar and German minorities designed to decrease their ethnic homogeneity by mass immigration of Romanians into the areas where these minorities had settled.

In general, there are many similarities between Former Yugoslavia and Romania in their socialism. Traditionally, Romania was not favorable toward the Soviet Union (Russia) due to many conflicts and threats from the great powers in history. Even after the Second World War, the Soviet Union annexed a part of Romania - Bessarabia - into

³⁷ Ibid. p. 122.

³⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 444.

³⁹ Gilberg, Trond. *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceausescu’s Personal Dictatorship* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1990), p. 51.

⁴⁰ Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology Under Socialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), p. 129.

its territory. This anti-Russian or anti-Soviet attitude in Romania made socialism difficult to implement without using strong force, which was the case in Romania in the early years of the Gheorghiu-Dej rule and in the late years of the Ceausescu rule. Their policies reflected the public desire of resistance to the Soviet domination in both foreign and domestic aspects. This nationalistic autonomous stance in politics gave both Romania and Yugoslavia credibility from Western countries and other dissident socialist countries like China, North Korea, and also from each other. Although Ceausescu was not a charismatic leader (according to T. Carabas⁴¹) as Tito was in Yugoslavia, both leaders consolidated power for themselves. However, under the pressure of the composing republics of Yugoslavia, Tito admitted significant decentralization in the 1974 Constitution. In Ceausescu's case, he provided his relatives, families with important government offices.

Conclusion

There are some similar and different features of the nationalistic tendencies in Yugoslavia and Romania, which are determined to a large extent by their historical development, by features of the people, of the economy and of international relations.

Both Romania and Yugoslavia had adopted Stalinist policy in the early years of socialism and pursued strict policy of industrialization and collectivization, the latter of which was rejected later. The industrialization policy was their major priority even though the The Soviet Union proposed the internal labor division of socialist camp. This relative freedom to pursue their own economic policy was a major step towards autonomy. Also, both countries inclined to pursue the cult of a leader although Ceausescu was not as charismatic as Tito was.

As a result, both countries were boycotted by many Socialist countries and had to find other ways to improve their economic situation. Then, they shifted toward Western countries for economic aids and improved their autonomy in foreign and domestic policy, although they still adhered to the communist ideology. From this strategy of maneuvering between two camps, these countries benefited but also lost. Both countries could receive more aids from Western countries compared to other socialist countries in Eastern Europe, but also more negative policy fruits from Socialist camp. It was difficult for Yugoslavia and Romania to become active trade partners with Western countries since the communism was still the major ideology.

As far as economy is concerned, both countries implemented some reforms of decentralization. However, Yugoslavia advanced in this direction more than Romania. Yugoslavia tried to build market socialism by introducing some elements of market economy into its socialist planned economy, which ultimately failed. Nevertheless, Romania pursued a stronger ideological policy compared to Yugoslavia, by which Romanians indoctrinated the national values along with Marxism-Leninism.

⁴¹ Teodora Carabas, (private conversation) November, 2001.

Another difference was the policy toward their ethnonational components. In this direction, Yugoslavia was more advanced in tolerating and recognizing the diversity of ethnations and conceded significant power to regional and local governments. One of the main features of the communist ideology is to declare the equality of different nations, which was compatible or not negative for those ethnic republics. It could be argued that communism and leader's charisma were important to keep the ethnic problems from collision even though they existed. On the contrary, Romania strongly asserted national values and it reached to chauvinism, which led to suppression and the assimilation of ethnic minorities.

One could therefore conclude that, after all, the events of Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland in 1979 and 1981 might not have been only against the communist regime but also against the Soviet domination. It would be interesting to look at other nationalistic communist countries like China, as another Yugoslavia on the the Soviet Union's South eastern direction, but also like North Korea, Cuba, Albania and Vietnam. The interesting notion is that these nationalistic socialist countries often "made friends" with each other in face of greater Soviet threat or domination.

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