

THE DEMAND «KOSOVA-REPUBLIC» CANNOT BE STIFLED EITHER WITH VIOLENCE OR WITH

by **ARBËR KORABI**

Rather than an aspiration, «Kosova-Republic» is an expression of protest of a population two million-strong, which is now conscious not only of its numbers, but also of the justice of its cause. It is the voice of a population which has long experience of persecution and mistreatment, together with a brilliant tradition of proud and indomitable resistance.

THE EVENTS OF MARCH-APRIL THIS YEAR RAISED IN AN ESPECIALLY ACUTE MANNER A MAJOR QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE — THAT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF KOSOVA AND THE ALBANIAN POPULATION IN GENERAL IN YUGOSLAVIA IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FEDERATION. THE SLOGAN «KOSOVA — REPUBLIC», RAISED IN VARIOUS WAYS PREVIOUSLY, HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN UP BY THE BROAD MASSES. NOW IT HAS EMERGED OPENLY, IS NO LONGER MENTIONED IN WHISPERS, IS ENCOUNTERED IN THE LEAFLETS AND APPEALS, IN THE SQUARES AND STREETS OF THE TOWNS, IN THE LANES OF THE VILLAGES, ON THE WALLS OF SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS, THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE REGION. IT IS IN VAIN FOR THE MOBILE SQUADS OF «TERRITORIAL DEFENSE» TO RUSH TO ERASE AND PAINT OVER THIS SLOGAN BECAUSE, DESPITE THE MOUNTING TERROR, IT REAPPEARS. THE MAIN THING IS THAT IT IS NOW DEEPLY IMPLANTED IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE PEOPLE WHO COMPRISE THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION.

In the months which have passed since the spring, it has become clear that the slogan «Kosova — Republic» is a real demand of the time, a demand which cannot be dodged. Whether or not the Great-Serbs want to accept this, it is becoming one of the most burning problems in the internal life of Yugoslavia. It has won acceptance as a problem for discussion. It is no longer a taboo theme. And bearing in mind the breadth and strength of the movement, we can say with full conviction that it will not be removed from the agenda until it is given a correct solution.

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pulation two million-strong, which is now conscious not only of its numbers, of its size, but also of the justice of its cause. It is the voice of a population which has long experience of persecution and mistreatment, together with a brilliant tradition of proud and indomitable resistance. Its message, which is now spread throughout the whole world, is simple and clear: it refuses to be trampled down, to be treated as a race inferior to the other nations and nationalities in the Federation. An indispensable step towards winning equality is the realization of the demand «Kosova — Republic».

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The Yugoslav press, whether of a republic or Federation level, has tried

for a long time to minimize or ignore this slogan. Everyone remembers how it was disdained and underrated at first in Belgrade and everywhere. The Kosova events were described virtually as an act of simple rebellion, as a brutal outburst of street violence by an unconscious mob without any clear cause or aim. The fable about the «destructive retrogressive» spirit of the Albanians was spread widely in an attempt to excuse the blood-thirsty counter-action by the police.

If the staff directing the anti-Albanian propaganda has now been obliged to change its tactic, this is further proof of the strength and maturity of the movement and of the vitality of the demand. Besides the grave reprisals against demonstrators in Kosova, in the framework of the whole propaganda campaign which accompanies the punitive actions in Kosova, efforts are being made to support the thesis of «ideo-political differentiation» by explaining «why Kosova cannot become a republic».

Under this general title «Borba», the central organ of the Socialist League of Workers of Yugoslavia, has recently carried a series of articles in which, we can say, it puts an end to a «remote», «superior» and «far-removed» stand towards the events in Kosova, trying to present an analysis and a synthesis at the same time. The articles have been entrusted to the pen of the

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publicist Jovan Raičević who toils through pages of print to answer the question which has been raised not only in Kosova but also world-wide: why should Kosova not be a republic, what are the reasons which impel the Yugoslav leadership to insist so rigidly in rejecting a demand which, if not according to the letter, is undoubtedly in the spirit of the Constitution of Yugoslavia (of course, if they take this Constitution seriously).

The first observation which comes to mind from reading such material is that, whereas earlier they did not deign even to mention this question, now, however, they are obliged to discuss it and argue about it. The central organ of the Socialist League of Workers of Yugoslavia itself has taken it up.

Second, it strikes the eye that the articles have pretensions to be rather more than simple publicity materials; they are presented as a kind of pseudo-scientific study with a theoretical-dogmatic form in which the political, economic, juridical, ethical and psychological factors are put together to knock down «Kosova – Republic».

What particularly characterizes the «Borba» articles, the main idea that runs through them, is the thesis that in post-war Yugoslavia the national question has found the most just and complete solution, that moreover the Yugoslav Federation constitutes an unrivalled example from this aspect, a

model unattained till now in the world. Somewhere Raičević issues the challenge: «In the whole world today, either in the East or the West, or in the so-called developing countries», is there another instance which can approach Yugoslavia from the viewpoint of its handling of the national question?

Thus, the first and most general explanation provided as to «why Kosova cannot be a republic» is that the national question is not raised in Yugoslavia today, because it has long been settled, and that the events in Kosova are nothing but an «accidental occurrence» which must not spoil the harmony of the «community», the atmosphere of «unity and fraternity» which prevails in the relations between peoples and nations in Yugoslavia. This implies that the action of the Albanians of Kosova is a completely isolated phenomenon, which is out of tune, which is simply «nonsense» compared with the whole picture of national peace achieved in the Federation. The foreign press reports that a psychosis of blaming the Albanians has been created and cultivated among the Yugoslav public, the finger is being pointed at the Albanians as the main, if not the only, source of all the misfortunes which Yugoslavia is experiencing in this phase.

This over-all assessment is presented to us as a postulate, as an abso-

lute truth. On the basis of formal logic this must exclude any discussion in connection with the national question in Kosova. It is not our purpose to dwell at length here on a problem which concerns the whole of Yugoslavia as a federation. We have had and have our own opinion and position, have said and say that Yugoslav revisionism does not provide a basis for a sound treatment of the national question either in theory or in practice. Beginning and becoming crystallized as a complete distortion of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the broadest plane, it could not but end up with failure in this field, too. In fact, the national policy in Titoite Yugoslavia has never been established on stable foundations, on solid principles pervaded by socialist ideals. It has been a policy inspired by pragmatism, a policy of adaptation to circumstances, trying to balance the contradictions and squabbles among the nations. This is why the rivalries between different nations and Slav and non-Slav ethnic groups constitute one of the most characteristic features of the internal life of the Yugoslav Federation. This has frequently led to clamorous developments, such as the fall of Ranković in 1966 and the purges in the 70's in the two most important republics – Serbia and Croatia. All these outbursts that have shaken Yugoslavia have had their basis in the national question.

«Borba's» boasts that «the development of Yugoslavia has proceeded normally and without upheavals» in this field convince no one.

The most important thing — and this is where we must concentrate our main attention, is that the main operations for «the settlement of the national question» in post-war Yugoslavia, the various deals and concessions were carried out at the expense of the Albanian nationality. Its fundamental rights were sacrificed on «the altar of national peace» in the Yugoslav Federation. Nothing else brings out better the true nature of the national policy in Titoite Yugoslavia. The Albanians and the territories inhabited by them have been used as pawns in the unprincipled game to placate the squabbles between the Slav republics. The later developments are well known but repetition is the best cure for short and weak memories. The greater part, the trunk — Kosova, was left under the wing of Serbia, while the rest — the branches, were divided between Macedonia and Montenegro. The opinion and desire of the Albanians was never consulted.

The Albanians on both sides of the border have always adhered to a consistent line. They did not fall into the trap of «Greater Albania» of the fascist brand, they believed in the ideals of the National Liberation War, in the principle of self-determination of nations and, on this basis, at Bujan in December 1943-January 1944, the Albanians on that side of the border, in the proper form and through the proper channels, sought unification with Albania as a right won through their struggle. Tito himself, in his meeting with Comrade Enver Hoxha in 1946, declared that Kosova was Albanian. However, it soon turned out that for the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia their recognition, during the National Liberation War, of the principle of self-determination up to secession for the people of Kosova was, in fact, simply a matter of tactics, and the course of events showed this. The variant of the «workers and pea-

sants'» republic of Kosova, put forward in 1940 by such a figure of the CPY as Moša Pijade, was not accepted, either. Solemn declarations and promises were cast into oblivion, and after being cut off from the Albanian trunk, Kosova was again partitioned within the Yugoslav Federation.

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During all these months we have heard it said that according the status of a republic to Kosova would undermine the foundations of the Yugoslav Federation and that such a thing would jeopardize the federative structures themselves. In this instance the argument has been developed along juridical-constitutional lines, and on this basis the demand «Kosova — Republic» has been described as illegal and unconstitutional.

«Borba» more or less repeats these apocalyptical forecasts. Raičević, too, talks about a great «confusion» which would allegedly be created in the Yugoslav federative system if the demand of the Albanian population were accepted. But how can one seriously reject a just demand with formal, juridical argument? The Yugoslav Federation with its internal divisions and subdivisions was set up without the participation of the Albanian population. The Yugoslav leaders and their propaganda cannot produce even one document which implies the authentic expression of the will of the Albanians in the various stages of the creation of Federative Yugoslavia, either during the National Liberation War (in the meeting of AVNOJ at the end of 1943 the Albanians not only were excluded from participation, but were not even mentioned), or after the war, when the federative structure was completed. The only act by the Albanians is the decision of Bujan, regardless of the fact that the Great-Serbs today may call it an unfortunate episode and even a black stain on the history of the National Liberation War. Consequently, even if the problem is ap-

proached from rigorously formal positions, we have to do with a «juridical flaw» in the process of the creation of the Federation in connection with the rights of the Albanian population, a «flaw» which excludes this population from responsibility for everything decided **in connection with it** at the various stages and instances. Can «Borba» be basing itself on the «law» of the Yugoslavia of the Krals to invalidate the demand for changing the position of the Albanians in present-day Yugoslavia?!

A general tendency has been clearly observed in the Yugoslav propaganda to counter the demand «Kosova — Republic» with a number of difficulties of a constitutional nature which are deliberately exaggerated beyond all reason. This may appear a convenient shelter, but is is completely insecure. Here the problem is turned upside down; to common sense the basis for reasoning in this case should be: whether the demand is just, and not whether eventual obstacles might emerge in the process of its practical realization. If there is good will, the obstacles are surmountable. After all, what is the sense of this fetishism of the juridical forms of constitutional acts?

Although they are fundamental acts, constitutions are not unchangeable or everlasting. There is no constitution in the world which, along with its main provisions, does not also envisage the respective procedures for necessary amendments or additions. The Constitution of the Yugoslav Federation makes no exception. In the foundation of the Yugoslav Federation there is an injustice which has been done to the Albanian population. Therefore, the essence of the question must be considered, and procedural considerations must not weigh unduly. The Albanians cannot be expected to carry the burden of combinations worked out in the past to their detriment. In their demand, the Albanians are not proceeding simply from a desire to disrupt the Yugoslav constitutional framework, but their aim is to have their rights recognized. The

conclusion emerges automatically: the authors of these combinations must untangle the knot on the basis of the just settlement of the national question in Kosova by recognizing its right to the status of a republic and to an equal membership in the Yugoslav Federation.

One excuse which is frequently mentioned to oppose the demand «Kosova – Republic» is that of the «specific autonomy» which is described as a unique phenomenon, «unknown up till now in political-legal theory and practice». In order to add conviction to the phrase there is the ready sequel that «true, the Region of Kosova is part of the Serbian Republic», but at the same time it is also a «constitutional element of the Federation» with certain rights «which are comparable with those of republics». In this case a long list is made of the positions and the responsibilities which members of the Albanian nationality (naturally, selected) can take in all the state structures at the republic or Federation levels. Naturally, all this is calculated to deceive the innocent in the hope that public opinion might be fooled with such transparent tricks.

Here they are speculating on the so-called «federative constitutional element» which has a declarative and formal character, which does not alter the essence, that is, leaves unchanged the position of Kosova, the content of which is not state political autonomy, but administrative autonomy. In the system of the Federation the Region of Kosova today is juridically a subordinate component of the Serbian Republic. Undoubtedly, the administrative autonomy which Kosova has today is an achievement, fruit of the efforts and struggle of the people of Kosova themselves against centralizing tendencies which have always aimed to reduce it to a simple unit of the internal territorial division. However, it always remains an administrative autonomy the limits of which are not only conditioned by the main prerogatives, which belong to the republic and Federation (never to the auto-

nomous region), but also can be altered according to circumstances or the pressures of this or that current which assumes superiority in political life.

It is not surprising that in the countless meetings in the forums of the state and the party at all levels, in the chorus of the recriminations over the «concessions» which have allegedly been made to the Kosova people, different participants in the discussion, spokesmen for the Great-Serb chauvinist clan, have called loudly for the revision and restriction of this autonomy. Now they are passing from words to deeds. Great-Serb chauvinism is using the big stick. One aspect to the repressive policy imposed on the Albanian population is the police terror, the court sentences and the administrative punishment, the mass expulsion and dismissal. Another no less important aspects is the frontal assault on the achievements made in the Region of Kosova in the fields of education, culture and science, especially during the last ten years. «Borba» does not hesitate to mention these achievements as evidence of the importance of this autonomy and a proof for its value for the affirmation of the Albanian population. However, «Borba's» words sound like a cynical mockery today when the University of Prishtina, the schools and scientific and cultural institutions are under attack, when a general offensive is being mounted against the values of Albanian national history and culture. Masked as a struggle against «myths of the past» and «national romanticism», a wide-scale action is being developed the final aim of which is to deprive the people of Kosova of their history, to deny the national identity of the Albanians and to bring about their merger with the Slav mass. A strong tendency for a return to the policy of assimilation, although it has brought nothing but defeats, and even upheavals, is emerging.

The attempt of «Borba» to present the events in Kosova as the result of a deviation from the official policy, a deviation which is attributed to the so-called «national bureaucracy» of the

Region, is ridiculous. With the term «national bureaucracy» the stratum of Albanian officials of the local state and non-state structures is implied, who, always according to «Borba», assisted by «an intelligentsia with marked nationalist tendencies», has allegedly permitted, and indeed incited, a process of withdrawal from the «socialist community» which has resulted in a narrow national self-isolation. No, gentlemen of «Borba», such mystifications don't hold water! The course which has been pursued towards the Albanian population has been well studied, has been determined long ago and with full consciousness in the highest instances of the Yugoslav state. A number of «short-term and long-term» aims, both against the Albanian population in Yugoslavia (as an element of political calculations in its internal life) and in relation to the independent Albanian state in the hope that it will eventually fall like a ripe apple into the Yugoslav «basket», are linked with this course. The top Yugoslav leadership may have been taken by surprise by the concrete results of this policy, but not by the fact of the application of this policy, which it had formulated in every possible detail. Nothing has been done in the Region of Kosova without the full knowledge of the central state organs in Belgrade. For example: the conference held on the occasion of the centenary of the League of Prizren, to which the Yugoslav press is now returning to paint it in somewhat scandalous colours, had the green light from the top federative organs. «Borba» is silent on this account and lays the blame on a certain «national bureaucracy» which had allegedly misused the «specific autonomy»! Today the truth is: this policy has been subjected to a radical revision which has two main characteristics: on the one hand, the attack on the achievements of the Albanians, and on the other hand, a free field for the Great-Serb chauvinist trend to seek revenge.

Searching for arguments to reject the demand «Kosova – Republic» as theoretically baseless and practically unrea-

lizable, «Borba», attacks it by claiming that this implies what it calls «the vertical linking of all the members of the Albanian nationality» in Yugoslavia, regardless of where they live. The reference is to a state «linking» which would include not only the population of Kosova within the existing boundaries of the Autonomous Region, but all the Albanians wherever they are, including those who live dispersed in the other republics of the Yugoslav Federation. This adds «Borba», would be a political organization on the principle of nationality, and not on the territorial principle, which is the foundation of any proper organization of state life. Here the Belgrade newspaper thinks that it has washed its hands by alluding to the struggle which Lenin waged in his time against the attempts of the Bund to emerge as a centre representing all the Jewish workers of Russia, by basing itself precisely on the principle of a «vertical national linking». First of all, one must observe: since the demand «Kosova — Republic» is totally rejected, why bother to discuss certain supplementary aspects of it, certain further implications of it? When the head is removed what importance have the limbs? Second, although the Leninist heritage has suffered the most unbelievable distortions at the hands of the Yugoslav revisionists, one is still astonished at their boldness in wanting to use Lenin as a witness to justify an act of national oppression! Just imagine — they try to use Lenin who was the passionate defender of the small peoples, who mercilessly pilloried «his own» Great-Russian bourgeoisie, first of all!

As for the essence of the matter it is a clumsy falsification, an outright attempt at a sleight-of-hand. The problem of the Albanians in Yugoslavia cannot be compared with that of the Jews in the time of the Czarist Russia, and neither does the demand «Kosova — Republic» have the remotest resemblance to the pretensions of the Bund about the unification of all Jews under a «vertical national linking». The

Jewish workers at that time were dispersed in various regions of the Russian Empire, while the Albanian population in Yugoslavia is compact not only from the ethnic viewpoint but also from the territorial viewpoint. The territories inhabited by the Albanians in Yugoslavia constitute, in the main, a natural territorial entity. Geography speaks in favour of the Albanians' demand. It is precisely here that «Borba» sees the greatest «danger»: that the «Republic of Kosova» would lead to the «territorial concentration of the Albanian nationality» in Yugoslavia under «a single umbrella», and this would bring about that some regions (inhabited by the Albanian population) would break away from Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia in order to unite into «a compact Albanian region». But is there any more just and reasonable demand? Why must the Albanians of Yugoslavia be dispersed under three different «umbrellas» and not be united under one «umbrella», that of their own republic, always within the Yugoslav Federation? But see, here they raise the existing territorial divisions within this Federation as another unsurmountable obstacle. The observation which was made above in connection with the status of this Region is equally valid for the territorial division: this division was made without taking into account the Albanian population. After the war it was proclaimed that a new administrative division of liberated Yugoslavia would be made on the basis of the national criterion. However, in regard to the Albanian population, this criterion was trampled on with both feet. The territory inhabited by the Albanians was broken up within three republics and one autonomous region. This was done for two main reasons: first, it was a concession made to the concept of «Great Serbia» and conditions were created for a policy of oppression and assimilation of the Albanians; second, the territories inhabited by the Albanian population were used to give demographic and territorial consistency to the two smallest republics: Montenegro and Macedonia. Hen-

ce, this operation with the scissors, too, comes within the framework of the pragmatic policy which was adopted to overcome the contradictions which emerged in the field of the national problem. Here, too, the Albanian population was condemned to pay the bill for these combinations. However, these things are not decreed once and for all, are not unalterable. This is a matter of political will, and not difficulties of a constitutional nature.

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On more than one occasion since the events in Kosova, some circles in Yugoslavia have selected organs of the Western press to express «in confidence» certain of their most «intimate» feelings and thoughts connected with these problems. The French newspaper «Le Monde», which has now become a regular spokesman for the Yugoslav chauvinist viewpoints, especially attracts attention. Recently, it published an article by its correspondent in Belgrade, P. Janković, who is of Serbian nationality. As a good Serb, this journalist has lined up completely with the most extreme views of the Great-Serb clan. And the French newspaper gives him unreserved use of its tribune, while abandoning its boasted «vocation» of defending human rights on a world scale. Right from the start, Janković touched on the question of the status of Kosova and makes known the «clear-cut and definite» reply which has been given to this question in Belgrade. Kosova, he adds, «will never win» the position of a republic within the Yugoslav Federation.

Apart from the fact that the explanation given for this categorical refusal has never been heard before, it also has the merit of being quite explicit. So: Kosova cannot become a republic, because «Yugoslavia is the motherland of its Slav peoples and not of the Albanians of Kosova who have their motherland across the border, in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania.» Could it be stated more bluntly? Could

the inequality of the Albanians within the Yugoslav Federation be proclaimed more clearly? Up till now it has never been stated that Yugoslavia is a federation of Slav republics. We do not find this in its Constitution, either. Apparently, certain influential circles at republic or Federation level, confronted with pressures from all sides and in an excess of a euphoria of repression, have lost their heads and are opening and laying on the table many letters which they kept profoundly secret. Of course, when it is said that the homeland of the Albanians of Kosova (and we add the whole of Yugoslavia) is the PSR of Albania, this is true. And this is not denied in the least. But it stands to reason that this is not mentioned in order to condemn the division of the Albanian nation in two as a great historical injustice. Today even what a Serbian internationalist social-democrat like D. Tucović said about this at the time of First World War, is considered heresy. Here the aim is neither more nor less than to use the ethnic links of the Albanian people of Kosova with the Albanian people in Albania as an argument to deny the former the right to be equal with the other peoples within the Yugoslav Federation. This assumes the colour of racism. Here we have to do with an effort to justify a kind of «apartheid» against the Albanian population precisely because of the ethnic nationality they belong to. Hence, it emerges from this that the present-day Region of Kosova is not at all a form of state organization which opens fields to the affirmation of its population, but a means of discrimination, of elimination, which must keep it firmly in their present inferior position. This is the meaning of «specific autonomy»!

In its series of articles «Borba» guards against directly mentioning this kind of reasoning. However, it unmistakably echoes it by manoeuvring with certain considerations which we shall call of a juridical-international nature. The thesis that «a nation cannot have two national states», that since a separate state of the Albanian nation exists, a second Albanian state cannot

be created, and there is no room for two parallel states of the same nation, is intended to express these shades of meaning. In this connection, it must be made clear that in the present case there is no talk at all about the creation of two Albanian national states. Here, too, the propagandists of Belgrade are up to some trick. They pretend that they do not understand that the demand for the republic of Kosova does in no way raise the issue of the creation of a second Albanian state with the attributes of a separate participant in international relations. The aim of this demand is simply the alteration of the status of Kosova, raising it from the rank of the autonomous region to the rank of the republic, but always within the frame of the Yugoslav Federation. «Borba» refers to cases of the creation of «dual» national states after the Second World War (two Germanies, two Koreas), which it describes as the result of wars with «grave consequences in international relations» and as «the frontline of conflicts between blocs». Disregarding the fact that the situation is not comparable, because the republic of Kosova would not be a separate state, like two Germanies and two Koreas at the present time, still it is in order to ask: was the division of the Albanian people in two a result of peaceful processes? The separation of Kosova from the Albanian trunk was likewise a consequence of wars, concretely, of the Balkan Wars and the First World War.

The propaganda from Belgrade, and on this point «Borba» dwells especially, is ringing the alarm bells over the events in Kosova, describing not only the internal dangers for the Yugoslav Federation, but also the threatening developments in the plane of the international policy on the scale of the Balkans and indeed the whole of Europe. The matter is presented as though not only the stability of «non-aligned» Yugoslavia «outside blocs», but also the peace in this zone are connected by a very fine thread with the internal structure of the Yugoslav Federation. This is followed by a hail of «terrible» ac-

cusations against the PSR of Albania which, by coming out in defence of its compatriots, is not only «interfering in the internal affairs of a foreign state» and «undermining its internal order», but also is endangering peace, disturbing the equilibrium in the Balkans and Europe and opening the way to international complications and superpower intervention! The foreign policy of our country is declared «adventurous» and «expansionist».

Bluffing is a well-known method in the Yugoslav foreign policy, but we still have not seen it reach such culmination. The PSR of Albania has declared more than once through its top representatives that it is not in the least interested in weakening or destabilizing Yugoslavia, but on the contrary, that the Albanian people will fight beside the peoples of Yugoslavia in case of aggression, whoever it might come from. But does the stability of Yugoslavia rest on its internal juridical status quo? No sound reasoning can accept that the foundations of the Yugoslav Federation could be undermined by the simple alteration of the position of one region which wants to be raised to the rank of the republic within the Federation. In supporting the demand of our brothers in Yugoslavia we are acting within the bounds of international norms which recognize the right of «the mother state» to care for its compatriots outside its borders. Apart from this, we are convinced that the fulfilment of the demand of the Albanian population would eliminate a source of discontent and disturbances and, in the end, would lead not to the weakening, but to the strengthening of the internal situation in Yugoslavia. The interest of the peoples of Yugoslavia and the whole of the Balkan zone, if it is properly understood, requires that the problem of the Albanians of Yugoslavia should not be allowed to become a gangrene. The way to achieve this is not through savage police reprisals, or through campaigns of denigrating propaganda, but by allowing the Albanian population a position of dignity in the system of the Yugoslav Federation.

«Borba» follows up all this lengthy and highflown harangue about the internal and external complications, which allegedly will be the inevitable accompaniment of fulfilling the demand of the Albanians, with the thesis which identifies them (the Albanians of Yugoslavia), with a «national minority». It endeavours to analyse the concept of the «national minority» by giving us the content of the regime for this minority.

«The fundamental and vital question for a national minority in the framework of another state,» says the Belgrade newspaper, is that it must have «full national rights», for example, the «use of its mother tongue and schools in its mother tongue», and these must be «guaranteed by law». A national minority, it adds, cannot pretend to have its own state in the framework of another state. «Borba» goes on to display a liking for advice and moralization when it says that «national minorities are an inevitable aspect of the process of the creation of states», that «it is not possible to define the borders of states in such a way as to ensure that they are made up of a completely 'pure' and 'homogenous' national population»; therefore,... «the national minorities must not be sources of discord, but bridges for bringing peoples together».

To our way of thinking this reasoning is built on rotten foundations and is lame from the outset. The Albanian population of Yugoslavia is not a national minority. Up till now the Yugoslav propaganda itself has boasted that the term «national minority» has been eliminated from the official terminology, because, it claimed, it expresses a certain deprecation towards some ethnic groups, a certain inferiority of them in comparison with the other parts of the «community». We do not find this term in the Yugoslav Constitution, either. Now perhaps they have repented, and that is why they are talking about «national minorities» again. Many people might conform to the concept of a national minority, and naturally the question is not raised that it should be

eliminated from the internal state practice or international practice. However, for the Albanian population in Yugoslavia this is a very narrow concept. Here we are referring to almost half the Albanian people, who are situated within the Yugoslav Federation. «Borba» likes to refer to figures to prove its thesis and calculates that the Albanian population in Yugoslavia constitutes 7 to 8 percent of the total population, while it reaches 14 to 15 percent in the Republic of Serbia. Although the percentages have been «retouched» to some degree, we have the right to ask: why are such calculations not carried right through to the end? What position does the population of Montenegro and that of Macedonia occupy in the total population of Yugoslavia? From the viewpoint of numbers, the population of Montenegro and Macedonia come right at the bottom of the classification table but, nevertheless, they are not national minorities and have their own republics. «Borba» is silent about the fact that the Albanian population in Yugoslavia today amounts to about two million people, and hence is third in size in the whole Yugoslav Federation. Now we know that there is another «argument»: it is not a Slav population. Then it becomes clear once again that the obstacle is not their numbers but discrimination on a national basis.

The spokesmen for Great-Serb chauvinism also see other «dangers» in the eventuality that the right of the Albanian population to organize itself in a separate republic is recognized. Thus «Borba» says that, if the Republic of Kosova were recognized, it would be a state form of shutting the Albanian nationality within the narrow framework of its own «ethnos», and this would lead to «a separation and isolation from life and communication with the other parts of the Federation». In this case, as «Borba» forecasts, the members of the Albanian nationality «would exploit the newly-created national state» «to liberate themselves from the complex of the minority», to establish their own hegemony, and «to absolutize the interests of

the Albanian nationality». This would mean that the members of other nations and nationalities in this newly-created state would find themselves in a position of national minorities in relation to the Albanian nationality. This would result in efforts to displace these minorities and in mutual quarrels and clashes in general. All this would come about simply if the Albanians were given the right to have their own republic.

In other words, if Kosova became a republic, the Serbian minority which lives there would be oppressed and would not have any rights. In his judgement, the gentleman of «Borba» proceeds from a concrete fact, namely, that at present, since the Albanians are a minority in the Republic of Serbia, they are denied all rights. He thinks that the present position of the Albanians in Kosova will be that of the Serbs tomorrow. Therefore, for him the only alternative is the continuation of the oppression of the Albanians and the denial of their rights.

The claim about the so-called «xenophobia» of the Albanians, about their «incapacity» to lead a civilized coexistence with the other ethnic groups is more than just a slander. It takes not only a disdain for the truth but also no small dose of evil aim to make such insinuations about a population which has always been the victim of persecution, which has suffered every kind of outburst of the Great-Serb idea on its own back. No, gentlemen of «Borba», you are unable to slight the honour and the good name of the Albanians in their conduct towards the other ethnic groups. We need only recall the time of the National Liberation War: we can mention hundreds of cases of massacres committed by the Ustaše and četnici in various parts of Yugoslavia against the Slav population, but not in Kosova or in the territories inhabited by the Albanians in general. It was not rare for the Kosovaman to turn his back to the bitter past and take his Slav neighbour under protection to save his life and his property from the occupiers.

Finally, the Great-Serb chauvinist spokesmen never cease to astonish us with their logic. The Albanians can be a minority in relation to others (this is virtually their fate), while the others cannot be a minority in relation to the Albanians! Here again racist tones can be distinguished. We have always understood clearly that the Great-Serb chauvinist ideology has as its intrinsic element anti-Albanian prejudices which border on absurdity.

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The whole Yugoslav propaganda machinery has been set in motion in connection with the events in Kosova. The main means of public communication: the press, radio and television are being exploited to the maximum. Countless speeches, articles, talks and broadcasts have been made in order to distort the true meaning of events, to disparage the Albanians' demands, to throw mud at

the PSR of Albania over its stand in defence of these demands. Now «Borba» is making its contribution in this field by putting forward a whole «platform» which could be called «against the Republic». The whole thing is a pitiful reasoning devoid of any power to convince, without any foundation at all, which adds nothing to the stale phrases said long ago and which simply goes to prove once again how legitimate is the demand of the Albanians of Yugoslavia and how pointless, weak and even ridiculous are the «arguments» presented to obscure and liquidate this slogan. In fact, as has been observed by many, it must be admitted that the Yugoslav revisionists have rarely found themselves in such a tight spot as that which has been created following the events in Kosova: it is difficult to find a case as flagrant as this which has so clearly revealed the great gap which divides the words, learned theorizing and the democratic and socialist phraseology from their deeds and the living reality. It is an

undeniable fact that in the light of the events in Kosova and the stands which the leaders of Belgrade are maintaining, present-day Yugoslavia is becoming more widely known to progressive opinion as it really is, an unstable anti-democratic state which oppresses and kills its own citizens.

The propaganda from Belgrade can release any number of smokescreens to preserve what it can of the «prestige» of «non-aligned» «self-administrative» Yugoslavia in the outside world. However, it cannot cover up the fact that in Kosova and the other parts inhabited by Albanians today, it is carrying out an anti-democratic and inhuman act of repression and denationalization against a compact population. The demand «Kosova — Republic» will have greater repercussions yet. Just as it cannot get rid of a population of two million through so-called «drastic» measures, neither can it stifle a just demand with false reasoning and empty theorizing.