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Si duo faciunt idem, non est idem: The Fate of the German and Albanian National Minorities in Yugoslavia at the End of the Second World War*

Abstract: The paper examines the behavior of Yugoslavia's two largest national minorities during the Second World War. It investigates reasons why the new communist authorities after the war did not punish the ethnic Germans and ethnic Albanians equally for their similar collaborationist attitudes.

Keywords: ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche), ethnic Albanians, Yugoslavia, communists, Second World War

The newly established Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later renamed Yugoslavia in 1929) inherited diverse minority populations from the former Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, with many of these minorities previously belonging to once privileged groups. The most numerous among them belonged to once privileged peoples. This fact, combined with animosity accumulated during the centuries, nationalism among the elites of the leading South Slav peoples and international situation – especially Yugoslavia's relations with mother-countries of certain minorities – determined each ethnic minority's position under the new circumstances.¹ According to the 1921

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1 For an overview cf. Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva, pastorčad kraljeva. Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918–1941*, (Beograd: INIS, 2005).

census, ethnic Germans and Albanians were the largest and third largest minorities in the country, but by 1931, Albanians had become the largest and Germans the second largest national minority.² Approximately 70% of all minority populations lived in the territory that would become the People's Republic of Serbia after the Second World War, including the majority of Yugoslav Germans and Albanians. In Syrmium, Baranya, the Bačka, and the Banat, Germans coexisted with Hungarians, Serbs, Slovaks, Croats, Romanians, and others, while most Albanians lived in Kosovo, where Serbs were the minority. Other Germans were in Slovenia (Kočevje/Gottschee, towns of Lower Styria) and scattered among Slavic majority in Slavonia, Baranya and Bosnia, whereas a larger number of Albanians lived in North-Western Macedonia and smaller numbers in Southern Serbia and in parts of Montenegro bordering Albania.

The overall position of national minorities in the interwar Yugoslavia was not bright, but on the whole, it was on par with the European average,³ with certain minorities, such as Germans, faring slightly better, and others, such as Albanians, faring substantially worse. All minorities suffered discrimination in terms of political representation, equal participation in the government, land distribution under agrarian reform, and educational opportunities.⁴ Therefore, despite often significant differences among them, nearly all national minorities shared a common dissatisfaction with their status.⁵ As a rule, dissatisfaction among national minorities was often stirred up or exploited by their mother countries, but in the case of Albania, due to the significant disparity in size and military power between Albania and Yugoslavia, support for the Albanian minority after 1924 remained largely verbal.⁶ In case of the

2 There were 505,790 ethnic Germans and 439,657 ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia according to the 1921 census (*Statistički pregled Kraljevine Jugoslavije po banovinama*, (Beograd: Pretsedništvo Ministarskog saveta, 1930), 5). Ten years later, respective numbers were 499,969 and 505,259: *Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, ed. Theodor Schieder, (Augsburg: Weltbild Verlag 1995), 11E.

3 Janjetović, *Deca careva*, 448.

4 *Ibid*, 144–263, 324–345.

5 Zoran Janjetović, “Unbroken Spirit in a Broken Bottle. National Minorities and the Yugoslav State 1918–1941”, *Clio im südesteuropäischen Diskurs. Festschrift für Andrej Mitrović zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Dietmar Dahlmann, Milan Kosanović, Milan Ristović, Ranka Gašić, (Bonn: Zikic Stiftung, 2007), 167–195; Ђорђе Борозан, *Велика Албанија. Поријекло – идеје – пракса*, (Београд: Војноисторијски институт војске Југославије, 1995), 258–260; Velimir Terzić, *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941. Uzroci i posledice poraza*, Vol. I, (Beograd; Ljubljana; Titograd: Narodna knjiga, 1982), 559–563.

6 Following initial Albanian rebel raids and Yugoslav military action, the Yugoslav government concluded the conflict by installing Ahmed Zogu as Albania's president. Zogu swiftly went to Yugoslavia's rival, Italy, which used Albanian nationalism to destabilize the

Volksdeutsche, they remained a means of Germany's pressure on Yugoslavia.⁷ As long as Yugoslavia remained strong and its international position stable, national minorities, despite foreign support, could not threaten its integrity, a situation that continued until April 1941 when the country was attacked by Axis powers and their allies. The article will look at the actions of German and Albanian national minorities under the Second World War foreign occupation and their post-liberation fates, highlighting their differences and investigating the causes for them.

After the short-sighted coup d'état on March 25, 1941 that toppled the government that acceded to the Tripartite Pact, Yugoslavia was attacked by Germany and its allies on April 6, quickly defeated and dismembered.⁸ The majority of almost all national minorities sided with the invaders, not necessarily their co-nationals. Thus, the *Volksdeutsche*, whose Nazi leadership had streamlined them according to German model since 1938/39, formed impromptu armed bands that disarmed Yugoslav soldiers, and took control over villages and strategic objects. The process was not void of victims.⁹ The Albanians showed a unison spontaneity in attacking the Yugoslav army, its depots, but

country. Although Zogu's irredentist propaganda was initially ineffective, it became challenging when Italy invaded Albania in 1939 and seized control of the propaganda. More importantly, the nationalist education gained by ethnic Albanian emigrants in Albanian schools before returning to Kosovo during the Second World War had a huge impact: Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 9–11, 75–139, 187–221, 248–261; Marco Dogo, *Kosovo. Albanesi e serbi: le radici del conflitto*, (Lungro di Coscenza: Marco, 1992), 234–266.

7 Janjetović, *Deca careva*, 382–388; Zoran Janjetović, "The Question of the *Volksdeutsche* in Yugoslav-German Relations Between the World Wars", *East-Central Europe and the Great Power Politics (19th–20th Centuries)*, ed. Veniamin Ciobanu, (Iași: Juminea, 2004), 321–337; Zoran Janjetović, „Vajmarska republika i nemačka manjina u Jugoslaviji”, *Tokovi istorije* 1–4/1998, 140–155. The Nazis were generally willing to accept the *Volksdeutsche*'s less-than-ideal status in order to preserve good relations with Yugoslavia and ensure its economic and political assistance. However, this did not exclude occasional intercessions, and more importantly, it did not prevent various Nazi organizations from adopting their own minority agendas: Cf. Dušan Biber, *Nacizem in Nemci v Jugoslaviji 1933–1941*, (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1966), 59–62, 89–108, 149–154, 158–162.

8 On the attack and on events that preceded it: cf. Terzić, *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, I–II.

9 Tone Ferenc, *Nacistička politika denacionalizacije u Sloveniji u godinama od 1941. do 1945.*, (Beograd; Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga, TOZD založba, 1979), 494–503; Josip Mirnić, *Nemci u Bačkoj u Drugom svetskom ratu*, (Novi Sad: Institut za izučavanje istorije Vojvodine, 1974), 78–79; Zoran Janjetović, *Nemci u Vojvodini*, (Beograd: INIS, 2009), 286–300; Mirna Zakić, *Ethnic-Germans and National Socialism in Yugoslavia in World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 67–73, 138–139; Akiko Shimizu, *Die deutsche Okkupation des serbischen Banats 1941–1944 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschen Volksgruppe in Jugoslawien*, (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003), 96–119; *Das Schicksal*, 45E–59E; Biber, *Nacizem*, 251–267.

also Serbian civilians – especially the interwar colonists who received land as part of the agrarian reform.¹⁰ Thus, both national minorities displayed disloyalty toward the state that had shown little loyalty towards them and greeted the occupiers as liberators.¹¹ However, this was only one of the reasons for their treasonous behavior. Another essential factor was nationalism: both minorities strengthened the feeling of national belonging under government pressure and propaganda by their elites and from their mother countries.¹² Sometimes, the harsh and discriminatory tactics of the Yugoslav authorities intensified the Albanians' long-standing animosity toward the Slavs.¹³ The absence of traditional

10 Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 266–289; Ненад Антонијевић, *Косово и Метохија 1941–1945 – ратни злочини*, (Београд: Музеј жртва геноцида, 2017), 119–124, 132–133; Branišlav Božović, Milorad Vavić, *Surova vremena na Kosovu i Metohiji. Kvislinzi i kolaboracija u Drugom svetskom ratu*, (Beograd: ISI, 1991), 27–33, 204, 446–450; Dogo, *Kosovo*, 322–324; Виолета Ачкоска, *Братството и единството 1944–1974. Помеђу хармонија и дисхармонија*, (Скопје: Институт за национална историја, 2002), 10–12.

11 *Historie d'Albanie des origins à nos jours*, eds. Stefanaq Pollo, Arben Puto, (Roanne: Horwath, 1974), 270; Michel Roux, *Les Albanais en Yougoslavie. Minorité nationale. Territoire et développement*, (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1992), 213; Bernd J. Fischer, *Albania at War 1939–1945*, (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999), 87; Павле Џелетовић Иванов, *Балистички покрет 1939–1952. Масовност, сарадња са италијанским и немачким окупаторима и злочини над Србима*, (Београд: Архив Србије, 2000), 49–50; *Heimatchbuch der Stadt Weißkirchen im Banat*, (Salzburg: Heimatortsgemeinschaft, 1980), 174; Philipp Sandles, *Sekitsch, erlebte Heimat*, (Sensheim: Verein zur Pflege donauschwäbischer Heimatkunde, 1977), 269; *Franztal 1816–1944. Erinnerungen an Franztal–Semlin. Heimat an der Donau. Ansiedlung. Dorfleben. Flucht. Neubegin*, eds. Nikolaus Hefner, Franz Egger, Josef Braschl, (Salzburg: Verein der Franztaler Ortsgemeinschaften, 1984), 124; Hans Volk, *150 Jahre Karlsdorf. Geschichte der Gemeinde Karlsdorf im Banat*, (Freilassing: Pannonia Verlag, 1958), 39; Berta Sohl, *Heideschütz 1809–1945*, (Freilassing: Pannonia Verlag, 1960), 48; Leni Lenz, *Franztal, ich muss dich lassen*, (Freilassing: Pannonia Verlag, 1957), 82; Anton Zollitsch, *Filipowa. Entstehen, Wachsen und Vergehen einer donauschwäbischen Gemeinde in der Batschka*, (Freilassing: Pannonia Verlag, 1957), 175.

12 Nathalie Clayer argues that ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia developed mass nationalism after the Second World War, with the development of Albanian-language schools: Natali Klejer, *O poreklu albanskog nacionalizma. Rađanje većinski muslimanske nacije u Evropi*, (Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2022), 127. This may be true if one considers nationalism in its current form, but it is obvious that resistance to South Slavs and their state, combined with shared Islamic faith, fueled a sense of distinct identity even before 1945.

13 Cf. Sami Bey Frascheri, *Was war Albanien, was ist es, was wird es werden?*, (Wien: Hölder, 1913), 42, 44; Klejer, *O poreklu albanskog nacionalizma*, 189, 193, 204, 205, 220, 222, 225, 234, 236, 245, 270, 307, 393, 396, 417, 418, 471, 476, 509, 512. Albanian nationalist hostility toward Slavic control predated Yugoslavia, rooted in competing territorial claims among Serbs, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, and Albanians, with foreign powers fueling tensions. The ethnic-Albanian actions during Yugoslavia's collapse, turning on their Macedonian neighbors as in the past, reveal that interwar tyranny served more as an excuse

clans, still prevalent in Albania's mountains, aided the process, which was further bolstered by irredentist propaganda, both official and unofficial, especially used by the Italians who occupied Albania in May 1939. The German minority in the new South Slav state consisted of several scattered German groups, with different histories, origins and dialects.¹⁴ Using press, cultural, economic, and political organizations, a small number of national activists began to create a coherent national minority from these groups.¹⁵ The process made significant progress, but was not completed even after the young Nazis took over all ethnic German organizations with the Reich's assistance in 1938/39. Most Yugoslav Germans were proud of Germany's strength and war victories, but they were willing to remain law-abiding as long as Germany maintained good relations with Yugoslavia.¹⁶ National loyalty prevailed with both minorities during the occupation, yet it led to different outcomes.

The territories inhabited by these two national minorities, like the rest of Yugoslavia, were dismembered. Not ethnic criteria, but the interests of the occupying powers, primarily Germany and Italy, were decisive.¹⁷ Nonetheless, nearly every national minority received better treatment than in interwar Yugoslavia, except for smaller groups like the Gottschee-Germans, who were "resettled" outside the zone designated for Italy.¹⁸ The ethnic Germans in Ba-

than the true cause of the violence they unleashed in April 1941 (Ачкоска, *Братството и единството*, 12–14).

14 A brief overview in: Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 3E–27E.

15 Janjetović, *Nemci*, 139–260; Carl Bethke, *Deutsche und ungarische Minderheiten in Kroatien und in der Vojvodina 1918–1941. Identitätsentwürfe und ethnopolitische Mobilisierung*, (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2009), 171–174, 272–307; Biber, *Nacizem*, 11–41; Zakić, *Ethnic Germans*, 36–37; Branko Bešlin, *Vesnik tragedije. Nemačka štampa u Vojvodini (1933–1941)*, (Novi Sad; Sremski Karlovci: Platoneum; Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, 2001); Михаел Антоловић, *Немачка мањина у Војводини (1918–1941). Друштво и политика*, (Сомбор: Педагошки факултет, 2017), 57–93; Hans Rasimus, *Als Fremde im Vaterland. Der Schwäbisch-deutsche Kulturbund und die ehemalige deutsche Volksgruppe im Spiegel der Presse*, (München: Donauschwäbisches Archiv, 1989); Bernd Robionek, *Ethnische Ökonomie im politischen Spannungsfeld. Das deutsche Genossenschaftswesen in der Vojvodina (1922–1941)*, (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2019).

16 Mirnić, *Nemci*, 45–50; Antolović, *Nemačka manjina*, 119–162; Zoran Janjetović, „O nacifikaciji vojvođanskih Švaba“, *Tokovi istorije* 1–4/1999, 240–260; Shimizu, *Die deutsche Okkupation*, 54–79; Zakić, *Ethnic Germans*, 40–55; Bethke, *Deutsche und ungarische Minderheiten*, 558–580.

17 Cf. Ferdo Čulinović, *Okupatorska podela Jugoslavije*, (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1970); Slobodan D. Milošević, *Nemačko-italijanski odnosi na teritoriji okupirane Jugoslavije 1941–1943*, (Beograd: ISI, 1991).

18 Cf. Ferenc, *Nacistička politika*, 503–630; Hans Hermann Frensing, *Die Umsiedlung der Gottscheer Deutschen. Das Ende einer südosteuropäischen Volksgruppe*, (München: Süd-

nat, an autonomous region of occupied Serbia, were given top positions, received more food than other ethnic groups, benefited from confiscated Jewish and Serbian property, expanded their educational system, and were only nominally subordinate to the collaborationist Serbian government.¹⁹ On the other hand, they were required to serve in the police, and since 1942, in the Waffen-SS division “Prince Eugene”.²⁰ They committed war crimes alongside the Germans of the Reich as soldiers, prison and concentration camp guards, policemen, and officials.²¹

In the Bačka region, the Volksdeutsche were subject to Hungarian rule but, similar to other ethnic Germans in Hungary, they retained a measure of organizational and educational autonomy. They became the most radical faction within the Volksbund, the radical ethnic German organization. Their schools and economic cooperatives continued to function independently, and they were permitted to fly the Nazi flag, display Nazi insignia, and advocate for Hitlerian ideology.²² They were, nevertheless, subject to three less than voluntary Waffen-SS recruitments in 1942, 1943, and 1944.²³

ostdeutsche historische Kommission, 1970); Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 82E–83E, 3–63.

- 19 Shimizu, *Die deutsche Okkupation*, 173–218, 245–295, 383–418; Janjetović, *Nemci*, 304–311; Sandor Végh, “Le système du pouvoir d’occupation allemand dans le Banat yougoslave 1941–1944”, *Les systèmes d’occupation en Yougoslavie 1941–1945*, (Belgrade: ISI, 1963), 507–508, 516–518, 532–533; Ekkehard Völkl, *Der Westbanat 1941–1944. Die deutsche, die ungarische und andere Volksgruppen*, (München: R. Trofenik, 1991), 73–78, 84–88, 160–163; Zakić, *Ethnic Germans*, 78–80.
- 20 Thomas Casagrande, *Die volksdeutsche SS-Division „Prinz Eugen“. Die Banater Schwaben und die national-sozialistischen Kriegsverbrechen*, (Frankfurt; New York: Campus Verlag, 2003), 168–169, 189–195, 218; Shimizu, *Die deutsche Okkupation*, 206–211, 230; Végh, *Le système*, 534–535.
- 21 Végh, *Le système*, 541–543; Casagrande, *Die volksdeutsche SS-Division*, 258–259, 282, 320; Shimizu, *Die deutsche Okkupation*, 375–382. More on the massacres committed by the division “Prince Eugene” cf. Srđan Božović, *Divizija „Princ Eugen“*, (Pančevo: Narodni muzej Pančevo, 2011). On crimes against the Jews cf. Božidar Ivković, „Uništenje Jevreja i pljačka njihove imovine u Banatu 1941–1944”, *Tokovi revolucije* 1/1967, 373–403; Teodor Kovač, „Banatski Nemci i Jevreji”, *Zbornik [Jevrejskog istorijskog muzeja]* 9/2003, 23–87; Ratko Mitrović, „Sudbina Jevreja u krajevima gde su folksdojčeri preuzeli vlast aprila 1941”, *Zbornik [Jevrejskog istorijskog muzeja]* 2/1973, 265–271.
- 22 Mirnić, *Nemci*, 103–170; Norbert Spannenberger, *Der Volksbund der Deutschen in Ungarn 1938–1944 unter Horthy und Hitler*, (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003), 262–263, 265–267, 301–302, 333–335.
- 23 Mirnić, *Nemci*, 171–195, 313–323; Josip Mirnić, “The Enlistment of the Volksdeutsche from the Bačka Region in the Waffen-SS”, *The Third Reich and Yugoslavia 1933–1945*, (Belgrade: ISI, 1977), 622–653; Janjetović, *Nemci*, 322–326; Spannenberger, *Der Volksbund*, 282–294; Loránt Tilkovszky, “Die Werbeaktion der Waffen-SS in Ungarn”, *Acta Historica* 20/1974, 141–177.

Germans in Slavonia, Sirmium, and Bosnia, after joining the Independent State of Croatia, received comparable benefits, including substantial representation in local governance and the establishment of a separate military structure.²⁴ Therefore, they frequently clashed with both the Ustasha and their Serbian neighbors and were compelled to confront communist-led rebels (partisans).²⁵ Even though some of them were willing to help the persecuted Serbs, many made themselves culpable of war crimes committed during the conflict. They also participated in robbing Jewish and Serbian property, which was another stain on their wartime record.²⁶

Most members of the Albanian minority had a worse reputation than the Volksdeutsche, as the majority of the crimes were the result of spontaneous actions against Serbian neighbors.²⁷ Albanians were given preferential

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- 24 Zdravko Krnić, „Položaj Njemačke narodne skupine u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj“, *Zbornik Centra za društvena istraživanja Slavonije i Baranje* 1/1984, 26–40; Zdravko Krnić, “The German Volksgruppe in the Independent State of Croatia as an Instrument of German Occupation Policy of Yugoslavia“, *The Third Reich and Yugoslavia 1933–1945*, (Belgrade: ISI, 1977), 654–669; Z. Krnić, S. Ljublanović, C. Tomljanović, „Neki podaci o organizaciji i radu Njemačke narodne skupine u NDH“, *Zbornik* [Historijskog instituta Slavonije] 1/1963, 26–40; Mario Jareb, “The German Ethnic Group in the Independent State of Croatia [Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien] from 1941 to 1945“, *Review of Croatian History* 3/2007, 201–217; Valentin Oberkersch, *Die Deutschen in Syrien, Slawonien, Kroatien und Bosnien. Geschichte einer deutschen Volksgruppe in Südosteuropa*, (Stuttgart: Donauschwäbische Kulturstiftung, 1989), 376–420. A contemporary Nazi study in: Wilhelm Sattler, *Die Deutsche Volksgruppe im Unabhängigen Staat Kroatien*, (Graz: Spair Verlag, 1943).
- 25 Antun Miletić, “The Volksdeutsche of Bosnia, Slavonia and Srem Regions in the Struggle against the People’s Liberation Movement (1941–1944)“, *The Third Reich and Yugoslavia 1933–1945*, (Belgrade: ISI, 1977), 559–603; Holm Sundhaussen, “Zur Geschichte der Waffen-SS in Kroatien 1941–1944“, *Südost-Forschungen* 30/1971, 176–196; Jareb, “The German Ethnic Group”, 210–211; Krnić, *Položaj*, 221–222, 233–234; Krnić, Ljublanović, Tomljanović, „Neki podaci“, 14, 26–27; Жарко Атанацковић, *Срем у Народноослободилачком рату и социјалистичкој револуцији*, (Београд: Месни одбор СУБНОР-а Шимановци, 1969), 109–110, 240.
- 26 Атанацковић, *Срем*, 109–110, 240; Žarko Atanacković, *Zemun i okolina u ratu i revoluciji*, (Beograd: Nolit, 1962), 48–50, 109; Krnić, Ljublanović, Tomljanović, *Neki podaci*, 38–40, 66–67; Miletić, “The Volksdeutsche”, 574; *Saopštenja o zločinima okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini, Srem*, knjiga 2, tom 1, (Novi Sad: Pokrajinska komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača Vojvodine, 1946), 49, 55, 65, 67–68, 132–135, 178; Dušan Vuletić, „Stradanje u Sremu – Drugi svetski rat“, *Na putu ka istini*, ur. Dragoljub Živković, (Novi Sad: Skupština Autonomne pokrajine Vojvodine, 2008), 135, 143, 145, 165.
- 27 According to Yugoslav political police (OZN/UDB) analysis of postwar data, the number of Albanian villages that did not actively collaborate with the occupiers during WWII could be counted on one hand: Cf. Državni arhiv Srbije (DAS), fond BIA, III/140.

treatment in both German and Italian-occupied parts of Kosovo. In the German-occupied zone, ethnic Albanians were given administrative positions, the opportunity to open schools, and other benefits that they did not have during the interwar period. They were also allowed to carry weapons and take all the advantage of their Serbian neighbors.²⁸ They had far more freedom of action in the Italian-controlled part of Kosovo, which was absorbed into the occupied Greater Albania, where Albanians manned the government, police, and organized military and paramilitary formations, including fascist ones.²⁹ Their initial victims in both parts of Kosovo were Serbian colonists, but the violence quickly spread to native Serbs as well, with pillaging and burning of Serbian homes being prevalent. While some of these acts were related to attempts against partisans, the majority were campaigns focused exclusively at plunder, murdering, and expulsion.³⁰ Apart from cupidity, there was a political motivation behind it all: the desire to purge Kosovo of the Serbs, both newcomers and locals. Murders were committed on a large scale, targeting both civilians and not very numerous partisan fighters. The Jews were obligingly rounded up and handed over to the Nazis for extermination.³¹ Indeed, the actions of the Kosovo Albanian collaborationists did not stop at former state boundaries: their leaders actively participated in Albanian politics on the highest levels, and their military units (such as the infamous Regiment Kosova established by Xhafer Deva) left a bloody trail both in Kosovo and in Albania.³²

28 Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 316–333; Ali Hadri, *Narodnooslobodilački pokret na Kosovu 1941–1945*, (Beograd: Zavod za istoriju Kosova, 1973), 95, 111, 116–119, 124–125; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 159–163, 166–167.

29 Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 300–306; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 49–54, 89, 127–130; Hadri, *NOP*, 99–101; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 127, 130, 221; Spasoje Đaković, *Sukobi na Kosovu*, 2. izdanje, (Beograd: Narodna knjiga, 1986), 117–119; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 111.

30 Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 30–33, 380–386, 396–399; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 51–52, 107; Franzisca A. Zaugg, *Albanische Muslime in der Waffen-SS. Von "Großalbanien" zur Division "Skanderbeg"*, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016), 159; Hadri, *NOP*, 303–305; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 253–256, 326–329; Slobodan D. Milošević, *Izbeglice i preseljenici na teritoriji okupirane Jugoslavije 1941–1945*, (Beograd: ISI, 1981), 54–55, 104.

31 Ненад Антонијевић, „Холокауст на Косову и Метохији и његов контекст“, *Израелско-српска научна размена о проучавању холокауста. Зборник радова са научног скупа Јерусалим-Јад Вашем 15–20. јун 2006*, (Београд: Музеј жртава геноцида, 2008), 399–408; Nenad Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 459–465; Ženi Lebl, *Do „konačnog rešenja“: Jevreji u Srbiji*, (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2002), 215, 239, 243; Pavle Dželetović Ivanov, *21. SS-divizija Skenderbeg*, (Beograd: Nova knjiga, 1987), 152–154; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 247–253.

32 Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 306–315; Hadri, *NOP*, 303; Fischer, *Albania*, 184; Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 355; Zaugg, *Albanische Muslime*, 147; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*,

Due to the repressive Bulgarian policies, the small Albanian population within the Bulgarian-occupied zone stood out as an anomaly in their opposition to the occupiers. However, their supreme ambition was to join Greater Albania rather than to fight for Yugoslavia's restoration, especially under communists' auspices. Indeed, some of them were willing to assist the Bulgarians in chasing the partisans,³³ just like their fellow nationals in the Italian and German occupation zones, albeit on a smaller scale.

During the first half of 1944, the Germans established Skanderbey, a special Albanian Waffen-SS division tasked with fighting Communist partisans. However, despite their willingness to kill and plunder, the Albanians proved to be poor soldiers, reluctant to fight far from home, which led to the division's disintegration before the German withdrawal in September 1944.³⁴ Armed by retreating Germans, the Albanians resisted the invading Yugoslav and Albanian partisans led by communists.³⁵

The Yugoslav communists led the only pan-Yugoslav resistance movement, aiming both to liberate the country and seize power to implement Soviet-style revolutionary reforms. To rebuild Yugoslavia, they had to address one of its central issues: the national question. In western Yugoslavia, the national question primarily involved relations among Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, while in the east, it focused on Serbs, Macedonians, and national minorities. The Communist Party, predominantly workers, needed to broaden its appeal in a largely peasant society. Addressing national issues was crucial

330–338.

- 33 Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 81–82; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 212; Vlado Strugar, „Sistem bugarske okupacije u jugoslovenskim oblastima (1941–1944)“, *Jugoslovensko-bugarski odnosi u XX veku. Zbornik radova*, Vol. I, (Beograd: Narodna knjiga, 1980), 281, 284 (251–293); Димитрије Кулић, *Бугарска окупација Србије, 1941–1944*, I, (Београд: Јустисија, 1992), 284.
- 34 Cf. Ivanov, 21. *SS-divizija*, 124–128, 150–186, 193–233, 235–236, 239–241; Zaug, *Albanische Muslime*, 145–205, 250–283; Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 356–357; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 319–333; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 200–201, 357–358, 360; Fischer, *Albania*, 185–186.
- 35 Between 30,000 and 35,000 Albanian collaborationists of various factions gathered to defend Kosovo from the advancing Yugoslav and Albanian partisans, along with Bulgarian troops who had switched sides, with the resistance lasting until November 25, 1944: DAS, BIA, III/121, Uprava Državne bezbednosti AKMO, Izveštaj po pitanju šiptarske nacionalne manjine, Priština, October 10, 1952; Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 444–447; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 248; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 473–491; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 204–205; Hadri, NOP, 309; Душан Бојковић, „Албанско становништво у процесу изградње ‘народне власти’ на Косову и Метохији 1945“, *1945. Крај или нови почетак?*, (Београд: ИНИС, Музеј жртава геноцида, 2016), 107–108.

for gaining support, especially since the Communist Party had very few members from minority ethnic groups and needed to enhance its appeal across diverse populations. Despite efforts to acquire such members by promoting minority rights, very few Germans and Albanians were communists on the eve of WWII.³⁶ However, the Communist Party never had a concrete plan for dealing with national minorities, theoretically supporting self-determination as part of the Comintern's strategy from 1924 to 1935 to break up Yugoslavia, which later shifted to vague notions of federalization during the Popular Front policy.³⁷ In the late 1930s, the ambiguity of the notion was irrelevant: if the Communist Party was weak, its chances of revolutionary transformation of the country were even lower.

There were few members of national minorities in the Party, as almost all politically active Volksdeutsche were already aligned with National-Socialism. On the other hand, the language barrier, Albanians' overall cultural backwardness, and the perception of communism as something Slavic rendered the Communist Party entirely unappealing to members of the Albanian national minority.³⁸ A large number of Kosovo Albanians who became communists fled to Albania, presumably for nationalist motives, and became infected with communist ideas there.³⁹ Many of them returned to Kosovo fol-

36 Until October 1940, there were 239 members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in Kosovo, including 23 Albanians (Hadri, *NOP*, 41). At the same time in Vojvodina, there were around 650 members of the Communist Party, 30% of whom were Hungarians, along with a few members of other nationalities, while the rest were Serbs. Despite Vojvodina being home to a large German minority, only 10 party members were of German origin (Mirnić, *Nemci*, 264; Bethke, *Deutsche und ungarische Minderheiten*, 544).

37 On CPY's meandering in national question cf. Gordana Vlačić, *Revolucija i nacije. Evolucija stavova KPJ i Kominterne 1919–1929. godine*, (Zagreb: Centar za kulturnu djelatnost SKH, 1978); Десанка Пешић, *Југословенски комунисти и национално питање 1919–1935*, (Београд: Рад, 1983); Desanka Pešić, "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the National Question of Albanians between the two World Wars", *Kosovo. Past and Present*, (Belgrade: Review of International Affairs, 1989), 91–99; Dušan Lukač, *Radnički pokret u Jugoslaviji i nacionalno pitanje 1918–1941*, (Beograd: ISI, 1972); Branislav Gligorijević, *Kominternu, jugoslovensko i srpsko pitanje*, (Beograd: ISI, 1992).

38 To make things worse, many ethnic Albanians who sympathized with the Communist Party did so not because it was Marxist, but because they believed it was against Yugoslavia: Milutin Folić, *Komunistička partija Jugoslavije na Kosovu 1919–1941*, (Priština: Jedinstvo, 1987), 318, 321.

39 Folić, *Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*, 363. Many left-wing ethnic Albanians from Đakovica emigrated to Albania between the two world wars, likely driven by nationalist motives. Although Yugoslavia had Social-Democratic and Communist parties, Bernd Fischer suggests that the communism which emerged in Albania during Italian rule was more akin to extreme nationalism, blurring the lines between ideological and nationalist motivations

lowing the Italian occupation, but were unable to persuade their fellow Albanians to join the partisans. The situation of few German communists was the same, if not worse: they fought loyally in communist ranks but they could not win over other Germans.⁴⁰

From the start of the uprising, the Communist Party sought to recruit members of national minorities for the “People’s Liberation Struggle” by issuing proclamations and appeals urging them to join the Yugoslav peoples in fighting the “invaders and collaborationists”.⁴¹ Members of both minorities sided firmly with the occupiers due to the privileges they received, ideological indoctrination, nationalism, and the dynamics of wartime events (including crimes perpetrated by members of national minorities). Members of small Slavic minorities, such as Czechs and Slovaks, were the most inclined to join the partisans. All other minorities, including the Slavic Bulgarians, mostly sided with their invading compatriots, and even the tiny Ruthenian ethnic minority could not be won over in larger numbers.⁴²

However, the CPY leaders did not give up, especially since after Italy’s capitulation in September 1943, when some progress had been achieved in recruiting members of national minorities. The second session of the partisan quasi-parliament, AVNOJ, held on November 29, 1943, decided that Yugoslavia would be reformed as a federation, with all South Slavic peoples as

(Fischer, *Albania*, 121, 151). The ideological development of the Albanian regime after WWII seems to confirm this (Cf. Nathalie Clayer’s opinion on Albanian historiography under Enver Hoxha in: Klejer, *O poreklu*, 17–18).

- 40 According to Slobodan Maričić, around 2,000 ethnic Germans were Communist Party members, partisans, or supporters. To illustrate this, he includes a list he produced, though it appears to contain many individuals who were either Jews, of distant German ancestry (as suggested by their Slavic first names), or who even died before WWII: Cf. Slobodan Maričić, *Susedi, dželatli, žrtve. Folksdojčeri u Jugoslaviji*, (Beograd: Connect and Media Marketing International, 1995), 163–168.
- 41 Branko Petranović, *Srbija u Drugom svetskom ratu 1939–1945*, (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1992), 155, 353; Атанацковић, *Срем*, 190, 197, 258; Atanacković, *Vojvodina*, 26, 77; *Vojvodina u Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu i socijalističkoj revoluciji 1941–1945*, ur. Čedomir Popov, (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, Institut za istoriju Vojvodine, 1984), 78, 82, 99, 100, 108, 110, 125, 223, 259, 262, 293, 329, 330; Nikola Gaćeša, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji 1945–1948*, (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1984), 76; Aleksandar Kasaš, *Mađari u Vojvodini 1941–1946*, (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, 1996), 135. Proclamations rarely addressed Germans, or only “honest Germans” (implying most were not), while in Kosovo, written proclamations played a smaller role due to the extremely high illiteracy rate, especially among Albanians.
- 42 Zoran Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija. Nacionalne manjine u Srbiji 1944–1964*, (Beograd: INIS, 2022), 151, 152, 161, 166, 167, 183, 184. Most Banat Romanians excelled at passivity.

constituent members, while national minorities were promised equality and full exercise of their national rights.⁴³ Albanian communists, limited in number but forceful and well-connected among themselves, went a step further at a conference in Bujan at the turn of 1944: they promised Albanians the right to self-determination if they joined the struggle against the Germans.⁴⁴ This was both the result of their nationalism and their frustration that so few ethnic Albanians wanted to join them. Although the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party rebuked them for discussing state borders at the time,⁴⁵ the Bujan conference is now regarded as the birthplace of modern Albanian nationalism in Yugoslavia.⁴⁶ In practice, a few small Albanian partisan units made little effect on the ground; indeed, the approaching demise of the Reich tied Albanian nationalist leaders and broad masses even closer to the sinking German ship.⁴⁷ Pursuing the pipe-dream of Greater Albania, they continued expelling the Serbs until couple of weeks before liberation of Kosovo⁴⁸ and fought the partisans even after liberation.

The ethnic Germans were even tighter tied to the Reich: at first out of sympathy and engrained discipline, and later on out of necessity or compulsion. Having actively supported the Reich, the Volksdeutsche in Vojvodina felt

43 *Jugoslovenski federalizam. Ideje i stvarnost. Tematska zbirka dokumenata*, Tom I, 1914–1943, ur. Branko Petranović, Momčilo Zečević, (Beograd: Prosveta, 1987), 801.

44 Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 411–414; *Jugoslovenski federalizam*, I, 406–407, 411–414; Petranović, *Srbija*, 558–560; Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 460–477; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 152–153. Although couple of Serbian and Montenegrin communists also took part at the conference, their presence was mostly ceremonial.

45 Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 484, 485; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 154–156; Petranović, *Srbija*, 561–562; *Jugoslovenski federalizam. Ideje i stvarnost. Tematska zbirka dokumenata*, Tom II, 1943–1986, ur. Branko Petranović, Momčilo Zečević, (Beograd: Prosveta, 1987), 98–100; Hadri, *NOP*, 398–405; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 418.

46 Đaković, *Sukobi*, 164–165, 169–171. Ali Hadri, the leading ethnic Albanian historian of the socialist era, writes about the Bujan conference toward the end of his book on the “People’s Liberation Movement” in Kosovo, not in its chronological order. (cf. Hadri, *NOP*, 398–405).

47 Following Italy’s capitulation in September 1943, the Germans were forced to rely solely on the Kosovars, as the local Albanians refused to compromise themselves by helping with the losing nation. On the other side, the Kosovo-Albanians saw the Reich as Greater Albania’s sole guarantor: Перер Баргл, *Албанци од средњег века до данас*, (Београд: Клио, 2001), 223–224.

48 On Albanian partisan units cf. Petranović, *Srbija*, 251; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 180–183, 369–370; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 95; Hadri, *NOP*, 249. On expulsions under German rule cf. Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 70, 72; Milošević, *Izbeglice*, 54–56; Dogo, *Kosovo*, 325; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 380–386, 396–399; Zaugg, *Albanische Muslime*, 159; Hadri, *NOP*, 303–305; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 326–327.

threatened long before the Red Army approached Yugoslavia's eastern frontiers, and some ethnic Germans, such as those from Bosnia or western Slavonia, had to be resettled even before the end of the war was near.⁴⁹ When the front-line came closer to Yugoslavia's eastern borders, it was in order to consider a temporary evacuation (as was thought). For military reasons and to maintain the morale of both ethnic Germans and Germany's allies, the meticulously planned evacuation of the most vulnerable Banat Swabians was delayed by Nazi leaders until it was too late.⁵⁰ The evacuation in Bačka and Baranya was not planned (except for Novi Sad), but local Germans took flight at their own initiative when they saw the Hungarian officials leaving.⁵¹ Only in the westernmost part of present-day Vojvodina, Syrmium, was the evacuation planned and carried out in a systematic manner.⁵² Later, in the early months of 1945, the remaining Germans from Slavonia and Slovenia were also evacuated or fled, leaving some 40% of the previous German population under communist sway.⁵³

After liberating eastern Yugoslavia, the communists quickly realized that their preached theory and propaganda diverged significantly from the reality, particularly in Vojvodina. During the first days of partisan power, German and Hungarian populations were subjected to mass shootings, beatings,

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- 49 An overview of ethnic German migrations to and from Yugoslavia during WWII in: Zoran Janjetović, "The Disappearance of the Germans From Yugoslavia: Expulsion or Emigration," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 1–4/2002, 215–231; Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 75E–84E. For partial resettlements and evacuations of the Yugoslav Volksdeutsche during WWII cf. Frensing, *Die Umsiedlung*; Ferenc, *Nacistička politika*, 478–577; Milošević, *Izbeglice*, 343–347; Marica Karakaš Obradov, „Migracije njemačkog stanovništva na hrvatskom području tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata i poraća“, *Scrinia Slavonica* 12/2012, 271–294; Marica Karakaš Obradov, *Novi mozaici nacija u „Novim poredcima“*, (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2014), 287–314; Antun Miletić, „Preseljenje i evakuacija folksdojčera iz Srema i Slavonije 1942–1944“, *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Slavonije i Baranje* 12/1975, 15–28.
- 50 Zoran Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito. Disappearance of the Vojvodina Germans*, (Belgrade: University of Mary, 2005), 120–135. For a contemporary version of an active eyewitness cf. Josef Beer, "Flucht aus dem serbischen Banat", *Die Donauschwaben 1944–1964. Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte*, ed. Josef Schmidt, (München: Arbeitergemeinschaft donauschwäbischer Lehrer, 1968), 32–53. Only about 10% of the Banat Swabians were evacuated.
- 51 Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 135–146; Mirnić, *Nemci*, 327–332. Approximately 60,000 to 70,000 Bačka Germans were evacuated, while 40,000 men were sent away under arms.
- 52 Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 153–173; Oberkersch, *Die Deutschen*, 432–441. The „official version“ by the chief organizer of the evacuation in: Ferdinand Gasteiger, "Evakuierung der Deutschen aus Kroatien", *Die Donauschwaben 1944–1964. Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte*, ed. Josef Schmidt, (München: Arbeitergemeinschaft donauschwäbischer Lehrer, 1968), 54–63.
- 53 Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 89E.

rape and plunder.⁵⁴ To be sure, other suspect citizens received the same treatment.⁵⁵ Soon after the liberation of Banat and Bačka, Military Administration was imposed on October 17, 1944, to control the minority populations and exploit the province's economic potential for the war effort. People's liberation councils were established in predominantly Slavic areas, while military rule governed Hungarian, German, and Romanian villages.⁵⁶ The incarceration of ethnic Germans and Hungarians during wartime could be rationalized as a temporary measure, but the continued imprisonment of Swabians after the Magyars' release in December 1944, and the subsequent imprisonment of free Germans by mid-1945, contradicted claims of equality.⁵⁷ Another strong evidence that the Volksdeutsche would be treated differently from all other minorities was the decision of the Presidency of the AVNOJ of November 21, 1944 to confiscate all German and ethnic-German property.⁵⁸ Although the decision made no mention of property owners, they were effectively denied

54 Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 191–216; Kasaš, *Mađari*, 160–178; Enikő Sajti, *Hungarians in the Vojvodina 1918–1947*, (Boulder Col., Atlantic Research and Publications Inc., 2003), 413–414; Oberkersch, *Die Deutschen*, 463–464.

55 Thus, 236 Serbs, 196 Germans, 171 Hungarians and 37 persons of other ethnicities were sentenced to death in the Banat (DAS, BIA, II/54, Nemačka obaveštajna služba u Banatu, II deo. Nemačke ustanove policijske i upravne službe i organizacija). This does not imply that there were more undesirable under the Serbs, but rather that real or alleged culprits of other nationalities had fled in greater numbers. According to the statistics, no ethnic group was spared when it came to dealing with the “enemy”. The highest known number of ethnic Germans killed in Vojvodina during the initial weeks of freedom is 7,612 (Srđan Cvetković, „Pregled uhapšenih i streljanih lica od Ozne na teritoriji Vojvodine do 20. juna 1945“, *Istorija 20. veka* 1/2011, 200). This, however, does not indicate that it is final.

56 Michael Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution in der Vojvodina 1944–1952. Politik, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft, Kultur*, (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 149–163; Janjetović, *Konfrontacija*, 215–218; Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 217–219; Gojko Malović, „Vojna uprava u Banatu 1944–1945“, (MA paper, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Arts, History Department, 1979), 33, 66.

57 The process of putting the Ethnic-Germans and Hungarians into concentration camps in order to use the inmates for hard labor started days after introduction of the Military Administration. However, as early as November 20 the order was issued to set Hungarians free. It was implemented since early December, although inhabitants of several villages deemed especially culpable were incarcerated in early 1945 and stayed in camps until middle of that year (Malović, „Vojna uprava“, 82–83; Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 219–220; Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 219–221; Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 239–249, 269; Kasaš, *Mađari*, 178–182).

58 Former partisans, their aides, people with non-German marriages, and the assimilated were all excluded: Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 102E–103E, 180E–184E; Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 230–238; Vladimir Geiger, „Sudbina Folksdojčera u bivšoj Jugoslaviji (s posebnim osvrtom na razdoblje nakon Drugog svjetskog rata)“, Vladimir Geiger, *Nestanak Folksdojčera*, (Zagreb: Nova stvarnost, 1997), 31, 53–56.

any civic and human rights. The Yugoslav government officially agreed to ban the return of Volksdeutsche refugees in May of next year.⁵⁹ Even before that those who tried to return were taken off trains, or turned away from the border. Those who did manage to enter the country were quickly detained in one of the country's roughly 100 concentration camps for ethnic Germans.⁶⁰ Smaller groups were expelled across the border from Slovenia and Slavonia on several occasions.⁶¹

Sometime, probably in summer 1945, before the Potsdam conference, the decision was reached to "resettle" all remaining Volksdeutsche to Germany.⁶² That was a euphemism for expulsion also used by the Allies in the Potsdam Protocol, that however, did not mention Yugoslavia among the countries allowed to "resettle" their ethnic Germans.⁶³

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- 59 Vladimir Geiger, „Heimkehr. Povratak slavonskih Nijemaca nakon Drugog svjetskog rata iz izbjeglištva/prognaništva u zavičaj i njihova sudbina”, *Scrinia Slavonica* 2/2003, 522, 525; Karakaš Obradov, *Novi mozaici*, 295; Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 225.
- 60 Geiger, „Heimkehr”, 522–523, 528–530, 536, 543; Karakaš Obradov, *Novi mozaici*, 297–301; Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 177, 179, 190; Zoran Janjetović, “Die Politik gegenüber der deutschen Minderheit in Jugoslawien nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg”, *Kulturaum Banat. Deutsche Kultur in einer europäischen Vielvölkerregion*, ed. Walter Engel, (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 168–170. On concentration camps cf. Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 249–258; Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 249–286; Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 102E–118E, 345–587; Branislav Danilović, *Gakovo i Kruševlje. Logori za Podunavske Švabe u Bačkoj 1945–1947*, (Sombor: Istorijski arhiv Sombora, 2008); Vladimir Geiger, „Logori za Folksdojčere u Hrvatskoj nakon Drugog svjetskog rata 1945.–1947”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 3/2006, 1081–1100; Milko Mikola, „Konzentracijska taborišča za pripadnike nemške in mađarske narodnosti v Sloveniji leta 1945”, *Dokumenti in pričevanja o povojnih koncentracijskih taboriščih v Sloveniji. Koncentracijska taborišča Strnišče, Hrastovec, Brestrnica in Filovci*, ed. Milko Mikola, (Ljubljana: Ministarstvo za pravosodje Republike Slovenije, 2007), 11–26.
- 61 Schieder, *Das Schicksal*, 112E–114E; Dušan Nečak, „Nemci na Slovenskem 1945–1955 v luči nemških in avstrijskih dokumentov”, *Nemci na Slovenskem 1941–1955*, ed. Dušan Nečak, (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1998), 222–224.
- 62 The decision was in the making ever since late 1943, but it seems it became final only in spring 1945. It came about under the influence of several stockholders (communist top-brass, Slovenian intellectuals, Serbian nationalists), but the details of the decision-making remain unknown: Božo Repe, „Nemci na slovenskem po drugi svetovni vojni”, *Nemci*, 147; Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 261. Milovan Đilas, a prominent Yugoslav communist, said in his memoirs that the decision was unanimous and understandable in light of German crimes. He claims that the Yugoslav leaders could have changed their minds if the Poles, Czechs, and Russians had not previously agreed on expulsion and partially expelled their Volksdeutsche: Milovan Đilas, *Revolucionarni rat*, (Beograd: Književne novine, 1990), 410.
- 63 Cf. Alfred M. de Zayas, *Nemesis and Potsdam. The Anglo-Americans and the Expulsion of the Germans. Background, Execution, Consequences*, (London; Boston: Rutledge and Kegan

Over the next two years, the Yugoslav government repeatedly sought Allied approval to expel Yugoslav Germans, but the request was consistently denied, including by Soviet advisers. The Soviets, already burdened with refugees, were unwilling to accept more. Communist Yugoslavia, a staunch Soviet ally, supported Soviet actions internationally. Furthermore, Yugoslavia's border conflict with Italy and territorial claims in Austrian Carinthia made the Western Allies hesitant to compromise, further straining relations and complicating their acceptance of the proposal.⁶⁴ Thus the Yugoslav Germans had to remain in concentration camps where some 50,000 of them died of starvation, diseases and hard labor.⁶⁵ Since legal "resettlement" was denied, in order to reduce their number, the Yugoslav authorities facilitated and even organized illegal escapes of the incarcerated Volksdeutsche across the border.⁶⁶ This approach changed in the fall of 1947 when able-bodied Germans were recruited for jobs in mining and agriculture, requiring a five-year commitment for those who accepted. They were paid like other workers, and their children could attend school, including German-language institutions. By spring 1948, the camps were dismantled, and all remaining Volksdeutsche were freed, with their civic rights restored after mandatory labor, though their property was not returned.⁶⁷ This, combined with the stigma under which they had to live for decades, spurred most of the surviving ethnic Germans to emigrate to Ger-

Paul, 1979); Geza C. Paikert, *The German Exodus. A Selective Study on the Post-World War II Expulsion of German Populations and its Effects*, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhof, 1962); Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 90–95.

64 Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 288–300; Janjetović, "Die Politik", 169–171; Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 262–265; Arbeitskreis Dokumentation, *Verbrechen an den Deutschen in Jugoslawien 1944–1948. Die Stationen eines Völkermords*, (München: Donauschwäbische Kulturstiftung, 1998), 271–273.

65 Arbeitskreis Dokumentation, *Verbrechen*, 313. The latest and best documented figures are much lower than previous estimates: Cf. Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 328; *Das Schicksal*, 132E. The number is still high, thus many Volksdeutsche authors discuss genocide. This, however, is incorrect because genocide implies a purpose to eliminate an entire ethnic, racial, or religious community. That was not the Yugoslav communists' objective. Their goal was to eliminate ethnic Germans by "resettlement", preventing refugees from returning, and expelling smaller groups. Thus, their actions may be described as *ethnic cleansing*.

66 *Das Schicksal*, 112E–118E; Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 278–280; Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 265–267.

67 Горан Николић, „Живот након скидања са крста“, *Један свет на Дунаву. Разговори и коментари*, ур. Ненад Стефановић, (Београд: Просвета, 1997), 221–226; *Das Schicksal*, 114E–118E, 263E–264E, 589–621; Zoran Janjetović, "Die Deutschen in Jugoslawien 1948–1960", *Integration oder weitere Diskriminierung. Die Lage der Deutschen im Karpatenbecken in den 1950er Jahren*, (Budapest: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2016), 58–62.

many and Austria where most of them already had relatives and friends from their homelands.⁶⁸

The story of ethnic Albanians in the early postwar months and years was quite different, while their collaboration was no less extensive than that of the Volksdeutsche. Already in December 1944, large bands of insurgents attacked several towns in Kosovo. They were repelled, but that did not usher into real peacetime in the province.⁶⁹ Although Albanian mobilization for the partisan army began in early 1945, it faced resistance due to poor political preparation and local unwillingness. Authorities, lacking reliable allies, relied on outlaws and war criminals who eventually rebelled in January. This uprising required 30,000 reinforcement troops, diverting resources from fighting Germans and resulting in the imposition of Military Administration on February 7, 1945.⁷⁰

So why did the communist authorities, cognizant of the Albanian hatred of the regime and indeed, of Yugoslavia, strove to recruit them, against their better judgment? The reason was both military and political. Militarily, the Yugoslav Army (as the partisans were renamed) suffered casualties during the final combats for liberation of the rest of the country, so it needed all soldiers it could get. Furthermore, it was important to remove larger numbers of able-bodied Albanian men from their home-places in order to reduce their capacity for rebellion.⁷¹ Political aspect was even more important: it would be politically unacceptable to recruit only Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians

68 Janjetović, "Die Deutschen in Jugoslawien 1948–1960", 62–65; *Das Schicksal*, 116E–118E; Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 266–267; Oberkersch, *Die Deutschen*, 469–470; Karakaš Obradov, *Novi mozaici*, 301–302.

69 Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 487–490; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 250–251, 258–259, 290; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 205–209, 227; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 492–493; Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 496–497; Димитар Тасић, „Албански оружани отпор успостављању власти нове Југославије 1944–1945“, 1945. *Крај или нови почетак? Тематски зборник радова*, (Београд: ИНИС; Музеј жртава геноцида, 2016), 95; Игор Вукадиновић, *Аутономија Косова и Метохије у Србији (1945–1969)*, (Београд: Балканолошки институт, 2021), 115–126.

70 Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 497–502; Вукадиновић, *Аутономија*, 126–137; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 210–215, 220, 228–229, 235–236; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 499–514; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 502–514; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 264–280, 293; Bojković, „Албанско становништво“, 110–113; Tasić, „Албански оружани отпор“, 96; Hadri, *NOP*, 388–390.

71 Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 528; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 230–231; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 257. Poor leadership and enemy propaganda led to a violent confrontation in Bar and a mutiny and huge defection in Vršac. Apart from that, there were numerous other desertions, both individual and group-based (Đaković, *Sukobi*, 233–236; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 516–518, 522–526; Tasić, *Албански оружани отпор*, 97–98, 102; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 513–524; Божица Славковић, „Дезертирање Албанаца из Југословенске

without inducting members of the minorities as well, especially of the largest minority, the Albanians.⁷² In a way the communist leader Josip Broz Tito said as much to a delegation of Kosovo Albanians in April 1945: he said the Albanians had collaborated with the enemy and dishonored their name. He was willing to let bygones go if they would join the Yugoslav Army and help liberate the rest of the country. He also promised full equality and national rights.⁷³

The latter were already in the making. Having liberated the eastern half of Yugoslavia the leading communists set about organizing the new state. As we have pointed out, it had been foreseen that it would be a federation. However, at the second AVNOJ session, the structure of the future federation had still to be defined, as had the borders between respective federal units. While military operations continued, the government in Belgrade began developing the country's internal structure. In that context, special attention was devoted to the Vojvodina and Kosovo, the two largest minority-inhabited regions. As it were, both were quite important to the Serbs, who made up considerable parts of their populations. Kosovo was the center of the medieval Serbian monarchy, as well as the location of some of Serbia's most magnificent and notable churches, monasteries, and other monuments.⁷⁴ The Vojvodina on the other hand was the cradle of modern Serbian culture.⁷⁵ Thus, both predominantly minority-inhabited provinces had huge importance for Serbian history and national feeling. The partisans found the most massive support among Serbs, but the strongest opposition to communist rule also came from the Serbs due to ingrained monarchist and small-peasant traditions. Thus, the Serbs, as the country's largest ethnic group, served both as fundamental pillars of the new regime and as potential opponents. Consequently, the communist authorities needed to be aware of these dynamics and approach the Serbs discreetly. The Germans, as the largest national minority in Vojvodina, were largely eliminated through evacuation, flight, mass murders, deportation to the Soviet Un-

армије након ослобођења Косова и Метохије (1944. и 1945)“, *Војноисторијски гласник* 1/2010, 94–97.

72 Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 261. The complaint the Yugoslav communist top-brass was sparing the Albanians and sacrificing the Serbs echoes in historiography to this day: Cf. Вукадиновић, *Аутономија*, 127.

73 Миомир Гаталовић, *Косово и Метохија у државној политици Југославије 1958–1965*, (Београд: ИСИ, 2016), 40; Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 522; Radošin Rajović, *Autonomija Kosova. Pravno-istorijska studija*, (Београд: Ekonomika, 1985), 455–457.

74 Among other numerous works cf. *Косово и Метохија у српској историји*, (Београд: СКЗ, 1989).

75 Cf. Душан Ј. Поповић, *Срби у Војводини*, II–III, (Нови Сад: Матица српска, 1990).

ion,⁷⁶ and internment in concentration camps. However, it was crucial to appease other minorities, such as Hungarians and Romanians. As a result, the prospect of Vojvodina as an autonomous entity emerged in November 1944, and by February 1945, it was nearly certain that the province would become an autonomous component of Serbia.⁷⁷

By the time the great Albanian rebellion in Kosovo had been crushed, the status of that province was decided too: for the above-mentioned reasons, it was decided to allot it to the future Serbian federal unit as an autonomous region.⁷⁸ However, the degree of its autonomy would be lower than that of Vojvodina due to several reasons. Firstly, the proportion of the Serbian population in Kosovo, perceived as a guarantor of loyalty to the state and regime, was smaller than in Vojvodina, where Serbs and other Slavs often united against non-Slavs. Secondly, the Albanians were more hostile toward Yugoslavia compared to certain minority populations in Vojvodina.⁷⁹ Thirdly, Kosovo's economic and cultural development was significantly lower than that of Vojvodina. Lastly, Vojvodina had a history of autonomist traditions dating back to the late 18th century, which Kosovo lacked.⁸⁰

Kosovo's status as part of Serbia was eventually validated in July, August, and September 1945 by rubber-stamp parliaments in the province, Ser-

76 Between December 29, 1944 and January 6, 1945, 10,000 to 12,000 Volksdeutsche, mostly women between the ages of 17 and 35, were deported to Ukraine. They stayed there for four years of hard labor before being deported to Germany: Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 230–248; *Das Schicksal*, 93E–97E, 295–344.

77 Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 294–298.

78 Kosovo's status has been discussed since the summer of 1944. The choice was neither "automatic" or unanimous: possibilities such as founding a separate republic, partitioning the territory between Serbia and Montenegro, or even giving it away to Albania were on the table: Rajović, *Autonomija*, 234–237; Gatalović, *Kosovo*, 41; Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 300–302; Вукадиновић, *Аутономија*, 141–142.

79 In 1945, Kosovo had 83.8% peasant population, whereas Vojvodina had 51.6% (Rajović, *Autonomija*, 260). Depending on the author, the percentage of illiterate Kosovo-Albanians at the eve of WWII was estimated between 80 and 97% (Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 562). In the spring of 1945, Vojvodina had 7,216 Communist Party members compared to only 1,238 in Kosovo, despite the populations being relatively similar: Cf. Милан Борковић, „Оснивачки конгрес КП Србије и његов значај“, *Оснивачки конгрес Комунистичке партије Србије*. Зборник радова, (Београд: Институт за историју радничког покрета, 1988), 25. One could go on forever listing differences between the two regions.

80 Cf. Чедомир Попов, Јелена Попов, *Аутономија Војводине – српско питање*, (Сремски Карловци: Крбови, 2000).

bia, and Yugoslavia.⁸¹ By that time almost all ethnic Germans remaining in the country were put into concentration camps. On the other hand, inclusion of members of all other minorities into new representative bodies and the Communist Party was in full swing. The ethnic Albanians were completely involved in that process.⁸² Furthermore, the revision of the agrarian reform, which they perceived as one of the main evils of monarchist Yugoslavia, was initiated. Already in March 1945 the return of the expelled colonists was temporarily suspended. Even if some of them were allowed to return to the province throughout the summer, their reinstatement was extremely slow: local Albanian commissioners challenged their property rights, and local officials in Albanian-majority areas frequently refused to assist them. As late as spring 1946 many of the former expellees were still living in railway carriages, cities, or residences with (typically large) Albanian families because they were unable to return to their plots or had their homes had been burned down. At the same time, the Albanians refused to reveal who had burned houses of Serbian settlers and only half-heartedly helped the colonists rebuild their houses, as ordered by the new powers-that-be in exchange for impunity and as a confidence-building measure. During the revision of the agrarian reform in Kosovo, which lasted until the first half of 1946, Albanians were not only given back land they had lost between the wars (to which they often had only spurious rights), but also given some more.⁸³ All of those measures were designed to appease the Albanians. The number of people with Albanian ancestry who were proclaimed war criminals barely surpassed 300, demonstrating how far the new authorities were ready to go to appease the Albanian national minor-

81 *Jugoslovenski federalizam*, II, 167–172; Rajović, *Autonomija*, 238; Вукадиновић, *Аутономија*, 163.

82 Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 305–350.

83 Milovan Obradović, „Revizija agrarne reforme na Kosovu“, *Kosovo* 3/1974, 367–412; Gaćeša, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji 1945–1948*, 162–175, Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 520–521, 559–563; Момчило Исић, *С народом, за народ, о народу. Сретен Вукосављевић 1881–1960*, (Београд: ИНИС, 2012), 182–194, 208–210; Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 351–356. The local authorities in the Drenica region went so far as to expel the returning colonists (Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 559). Minorities in Vojvodina were granted land, with 87,954 hectares out of a total 197,457 hectares distributed, though not all applicants were successful. Hungarians in Banat were viewed as less culpable for participation than those in Bačka and Baranya (Gaćeša, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji 1945–1948*, 199).

ity.⁸⁴ On the other hand, approximately 1,700⁸⁵ Volksdeutsche were identified as war crime suspects. While some claim up to 47,300 Albanians were killed at the end of the war and during the rebellion,⁸⁶ the number supported by official records is considerably lower.⁸⁷ On the other hand, around 10,000 ethnic Germans were killed in fall 1944 in Vojvodina and until May 1945 in Croatia and Slovenia. Unlike the alleged Albanian victims, these were primarily recorded in the contemporary documents.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the majority of Albanians were killed in action while opposing the Yugoslav Army and the police, whereas almost all Volksdeutsche were killed during the initial wave of summary retribution or when defending their property or family members from pillaging or rape. The fact that police personnel believed that identified war criminals should only be prosecuted if they had slain partisans demonstrates how lenient the new powers-that-be were toward the Albanian populace seven years after the war ended.⁸⁹ Only a small percentage of the outlaws and rebels who took part in the rebellion against the new government or roamed the mountains for months after the conflict ended were imprisoned, and an even smaller proportion were shot.⁹⁰ Many of those who had served the

84 Borožan, *Velika Albanija*, 523; Bojković, *Albansko stanovništvo*, 126. Only 17 people were sentenced to death, according per Srđan Cvetković's findings from contemporary documents: Srđan Cvetković, *Između srpa i čekića. Represija u Srbiji 1944–1953*, (Beograd: ISI, 2006), 258. However, those who were killed without being tried should be also included (DAS, BIA, V/115). During fighting with Albanian rebels near Srbica in late January 1945, 37 people were killed in action, whereas over 200 were captured and sent home (Tasić, „Albanski oružani otpor,” 97).

85 Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 198.

86 Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo. A Short History*, (London: Harper Perennial, 1998), 312; Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 143. Both authors accept uncritically the claim of a contemporary Albanian collaborationist activist.

87 Although the total is unknown, the figures obtained from political police indicate that the number of Albanians killed with or without trial during the first months after WWII was at least ten times lower than Albanian propagandists and their unsuspecting epigones claimed. (Cf. documents in: DAS, BIA, III/140, V/4, V/112, V/117. Cf. also: DAS, BIA, III/121, Ispostava SUP-a Uroševac. Analiza šiptarske nacionalne manjine, Uroševac, March 20, 1956; DAS, BIA, V/100, Predmetni registar. Spiskovi streljanih lica; Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 263–265).

88 They tally with the computations Volksdeutsche authors have made in 1990s (Cf. Arbeitskreis Dokumentation, Verbrechen).

89 DAS, BIA, III/113, Jovo Bajat Odeljenju UDB za Kosmet, July 21, 1952; DAS, BIA, III/113, Vujica Sekulović Odeljenju UDB za Kosmet, October 17, 1952; DAS, BIA, III/113, Živko Mitrović Odeljenju U.D.B. za Kosmet, Lipljan, January 24, 1953; DAS, BIA, III/113, Milorad Lekić Odeljenju Uprave državne bezbednosti za Kosmet, Suva Reka, July 6, 1952.

90 The regional war crimes commission declared on September 29, 1945 103 persons war criminals, most of whom were in hiding or abroad. Military courts sentenced 281 per-

Italians and Germans as armed volunteers fighting the partisans or pillaging Serbian villages, were soon “recycled”, and became members of the Communist Party, communist youth organization (SKOJ), civil servants, teachers or even police or army officers.⁹¹ Some were eventually discovered and removed from their posts, but many continued as part of the new government apparatus. In order to pacify the province, the authorities were more than willing to turn the blind eye on wartime misdeeds and to ascribe it to ignorance, enemy propaganda, legitimate grievances from the pre-war period, etc. Thus, only the Volksdeutsche were collectively punished for siding with the Reich and its allies and participating or conniving at war crimes. The unjust collective punishment became doubly unjust for being applied only on one ethnic group.⁹²

What were the reasons for such differences in treatment of two national minorities, despite their equal disloyalty during enemy occupation? It is difficult to provide an answer with direct confirmation from historical sources, so one must rely on indirect conclusions drawn from both documents and circumstances. One might broadly categorize the grounds for such disparate treatment as those related to foreign and domestic policy. The new government’s inability to control the Albanian minority by force led to their humane treatment in Kosovo, where authority was weak and force was used only when necessary. Attempts to mobilize Albanians and send them to fight elsewhere aimed to reduce their capacity for violent opposition, but this backfired, ig-

sons by that date, 71 out of them to death (Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 523). Despite diverging numbers in documents, it is obvious that punitive policy was quite mild if one has in mind the scale and number of war crimes in Kosovo 1941–1944. This is proven also when “ordinary” collaborationists were in question. According to a political police list containing 373 names of former Albanian gendarmes and policemen, 17 of them were abroad, 236 at their homes, 17 shot, 16 in prison, 4 died and the whereabouts of others was unknown (DAS, BIA, V/115).

- 91 DAS, BIA, III/139, Enver Hodža, Spisak sa podacima SS-ovaca, žandara, albanske fašističke vojske, Vulnetara, Članova Fašističke Partije, Saradnici Ovre, a sada koji su Članovi KPS i Kandidati; DAS, BIA, III/139, Matija Trkulja, spisak lica koja su bila u službi okupatora a sada su kandidati i članovi KP za srez šar-planinski, [1949]; DAS, BIA, III/117, Spisak članova K.P.S. koji se spominju u istrazi [s.a.]; DAS, BIA, III/117, Spisak članova Komunističke partije, kandidata i skojevaca koji su otkriveni kao saradnici okupatora, [s.a.]; DAS, BIA, III/26, Statistički pregled članova KPJ i kandidata sa terena naše oblasti koji su u toku rata bili u raznim okupatorskim ustanovama, organizacijama i oružanim formacijama, February 15, 1950; Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), fond 507, Savez komunista Jugoslavije, XVIII – k. 4/1–22, Referat o šiptarskoj nacionalnoj manjini December, 1952; Božović, Vavić, *Surova vremena*, 532–546; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 293–304, 308–310, 314–316, 333–338, 344–346, 348–349, 351–355, 380; Antonijević, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 364, 527.
- 92 In fact, individuals of all peoples and national minorities in the country could be found on both sides of the wartime divide, albeit in varying proportions. Except for the Jews, no ethnic group can claim that almost all of its members were on the “right side”.

niting a major rebellion that nearly escalated into full-scale insurrection. If force had to be used *faute de mieux*, winning hearts and minds through propaganda was almost a no go at the beginning. The possibilities for this were extremely limited due to a very small number of Albanian communists, lack of language skills with their South Slav comrades, general animosity toward the Slavs, religious and conservative views and isolation of the traditionalist Albanian communities. As a result, other measures that eventually worked had to be implemented: amnesty (overt and tacit) for war criminals and rebels, mild punishment for most prominent offenders, revision of the agrarian reform, removal of part of the Serbian colonists from Kosovo, inclusion of ethnic Albanians in the new administration and the Communist Party on all levels, opening of Albanian-language schools,⁹³ setting up cultural associations⁹⁴ and last but not least, the granting of autonomy to Kosovo, the region where the majority of Yugoslav Albanians resided.⁹⁵ True, some of the measures implemented for ethnic Albanians (political involvement, education, and cultural associations) were also implemented for other minorities, but territorial autonomy was an exception.⁹⁶ The idea of dividing Kosovo between Serbia

93 In 1939, Kosovo had just 297 elementary and secondary schools with 719 courses, 11,886 Albanian and 20,914 Serbian pupils. As of 1945, there were 408 schools with 827 classrooms, with 24,992 Albanian and 30,952 Serbian students enrolled. There were 354 Albanian and 435 Serbian teachers (AJ, 507, XVIII – k. 4/1–22, [No title, January 1960]).

94 By 1949, five Albanian cultural associations were founded (AJ, 507, XVIII – k. 4/1–22, Albanska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji, [1949]). Although it compared unfavorably with the number of cultural associations in the Vojvodina, if generally low level of Albanian culture is considered, the outcome is still respectable.

95 Albanians in Macedonia were denied autonomy due to their smaller population and concerns about emerging Macedonian nationalism. Although Macedonians were South Slavs, they were not recognized as a separate nationality in inter-war Yugoslavia. Consequently, the ruling communists aimed to gain support from both national minorities and Macedonians for the state.

96 Territorial autonomy for Kosovo and the Vojvodina were means of solving national issues, but they favored above all national minorities: in Kosovo, the Albanians, and in the Vojvodina all of them, but especially the largest, the Hungarians (Cf. Rajović, *Autonomija*, 238–239). According to a later statement by Vladimir Bakarić, Kosovo's autonomy was intended to compensate ethnic Albanians for being denied the ability to unite with Albania (Букадиновић, *Аутономија*, 141). However, this viewpoint appears to be oversimplified, as Vojvodina, which is a patchwork of ethnic groups, has been granted more autonomy. Territorial autonomy was a broad kind of minority protection, not a unique concession to ethnic Albanians, as Stanoje Aksić claims: Cf. Stanoje Aksić, *Položaj autonomnih pokrajina u ustavnom sistemu SFRJ*, (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1967), 69–71. Dimitrije Bogdanović's view that territorial autonomies addressed only Serbian concerns rather than minority issues is one-sided: Cf. Димитрије Богдановић, *Књига о Косову*, (Београд: САНУ, 1985), 238.

and Montenegro was opposed by ethnic Albanian communist leaders, while ceding it to Albania was rejected as unfeasible due to Serbian susceptibilities.⁹⁷

This brings us to the international political justification for the Albanian national minority's benign treatment. The Comintern tasked Yugoslav communists with forming the Communist Party of Albania, which Dušan Mugoša and Miladin Popović successfully accomplished in 1941.⁹⁸ During the following years the Yugoslav communists tended to keep their comrades in Albania under tutelage.⁹⁹ As the war progressed increasingly in their favor, military cooperation also became closer. Several partisan divisions from Albania were asked to help liberate Kosovo, hoping their presence would induce local Albanians to give up resistance to the communist rule.¹⁰⁰ Tito began to hatch plans for future Balkan hegemony, and Albania was vaguely perceived as part of some kind of Balkan Federation. Partly for that reason, the possibility of turning Kosovo over to Albania was unofficially dangled before Albanian communist leaders, or so they thought.¹⁰¹ Clearly, with this aim in mind, it would be counter-productive (to say the least) to punish the Albanian offenders severely for war crimes and misdeeds, let alone the minority as a whole. Even if it were not militarily so difficult to expel the compact Albanian population from the province rich in mountains and woods, such policy might damage plans for federation or alliance with Albania. It would also

97 Вукадиновић, *Аутономија*, 147–149; Borozan, *Velika Albanija*, 519; Branko Petranović, *Balkanska federacija 1943–1948*, (Београд: ИКР Заслон, 1991), 104; Božović, Vavić, *Sur-ova vremena*, 583; Rajović, *Autonomija*, 213.

98 Fischer, *Albania*, 121–125; Đaković, *Sukobi*, 76–83; Александар Животић, *Југославија, Албанија и велике силе, (1945–1961)*, (Београд: ИНИС; Архипелаг, 2011), 99–101; Petranović, *Srbija*, 251; Rajović, *Autonomija*, 153. To be sure, the official history of the Albanian Party of Labor never mentioned it (Cf. *Histoire du Parti du travail d'Albanie*, (Tirana: 8. Nëntori 1982), 67–73).

99 Животић, *Југославија*, 102–103, 110–115. The agreement on common struggle the CPA reached in early August 1943 with the nationalist organization Balli Kombëtar was annulled at the Yugoslav communists' demand a month later: Fischer, *Albania*, 149–151; Животић, *Југославија*, 87–90; Gatalović, *Kosovo*, 36.

100 Rajović, *Autonomija*, 176; Petranović, *Srbija*, 644; Petranović, *Balkanska federacija*, 141–142; Ivanov, *Balistički pokret*, 240; Животић, *Југославија*, 116–118.

101 Albanian communist leaders certainly wished to see Kosovo united with Albania, but were not in a position to demand it. Their Yugoslav comrades for their part were more interested in dragging Albania into a federation with Yugoslavia than in starting a domestic problem over Kosovo's cession. Once they realized Kosovo would remain in Yugoslavia, Albanian communists lost interest in the federation with Yugoslavia (Животић, *Југославија*, 118–120, 135–136; Petranović, *Balkanska federacija*, 136–138, 149–152, 155, 157–158, 162; Ethem Çeku, *Kosovo and Diplomacy since World War II. Yugoslavia, Albania and the Path to Kosovan Independence*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 21–23.

undermine credibility of the broader policy of national equality, as no ethnic group could be confident that it would not be punished collectively for opposing the communist regime or for siding with the enemy. After all, the Soviet example proved already before WWII that the communists, for all their talk of humaneness and proletarian internationalism, were not averse to brutal resettlements of whole ethnic groups,¹⁰² much like Nazis.

But how did the Volksdeutsche fit into this pattern? They were promised equality just like all other ethnic groups, only to be collectively punished shortly thereafter. To begin, it is true that Yugoslav communists failed to fulfill many of the promises they made during the war, both to the Yugoslav population and to foreign diplomats.¹⁰³ Also, the Germans have always been unique. They were not only wealthier and more culturally advanced than any other ethnic group in the country, but they were also more organized, and, perhaps most importantly, they had the most powerful mother-country backing them. By the fall of 1944 and spring of 1945, fears of a resurgent Germany using German minorities as tools persisted among Yugoslav communists. This concern was shared by leaders of other Eastern European countries and the Allies, evident in the Potsdam Protocol and the mass expulsion of ethnic Germans from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.¹⁰⁴ Milovan Đilas noted that Yugoslav communists looked to other Eastern European nations when deciding to expel the Volksdeutsche. Unlike ethnic Hungarians, who were spared deportation due to Soviet interests (Hungary had already been earmarked as a future socialist country under Soviet domination),¹⁰⁵ the Volksdeutsche were subject to the communist government's discretion. Although not included in the Potsdam Protocol, the expulsion of ethnic Germans aligned with Stalin's strategy,

102 Pavel Polian, *Against their Will: The History and Geography of forced Migrations in the USSR*, (Budapest; New York: Central European University, 2004), especially 57–157.

103 For example, they would not impose communism and would allow free elections, among other things: Војислав Г. Павловић, *Од монархије до републике. САД и Југославија (1941–1945)*, (Београд; Бањалука: Клио; Глас српски, 1998), passim.

104 In fact, expulsions of Volksdeutsche from East European countries were planned already during the war and started already before the Potsdam conference. The conference protocol simply attempted to regularize and “legalize” existing practices (Cf. Janjetović, *Between Hitler and Tito*, 83–86, 304–315).

105 Mátyás Rákosi, secretary general of the Hungarian Communist Party, pleaded with Tito for assistance in preventing the Magyars from being expelled from Czechoslovakia, and it appears, also from Yugoslavia (Kasaš, *Mađari*, 182; Portmann, *Die kommunistische Revolution*, 276; Sajti, *Hungarians*, 412; Cvetković, *Između srpa i čekića*, 231). It can be presumed that the Soviets were behind this intervention, since they probably did not want to encumber Hungary with too many expellees and to poison the relations between the future socialist countries beyond repair.

as it made countries more dependent on Soviet protection against a potential German resurgence. With 60% of Yugoslav Germans already abroad as soldiers and refugees, and their overall numbers being lower than in Czechoslovakia or Poland, Yugoslavia was excluded from the Protocol. The country's strong loyalty to the USSR and the significant presence of foreign Germans in occupied Germany and Austria reduced the willingness of the Allies to take on the Yugoslav Volksdeutsche too.

Aside from these foreign policy grounds, there were domestic and economic policy reasons for imposing harsh punishment on the German national minority. First and foremost, ethnic Germans were so closely linked with Germans from the Reich that ordinary people frequently struggled to discern between their crimes.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, many other crimes committed by other belligerent parties that became possible only through German invasion, were pinned on “the Germans” – both from Germany and from Yugoslavia – rather than the genuine perpetrators. Subsequent schoolbook historiography and popular culture reinforced this view, causing the Volksdeutsche to remain perceived as “bad guys” in popular memory for decades after WWII.¹⁰⁷ In this way, “the Germans” served nicely to fortify the “partisan myth” which was later transformed into the homogenizing “patriotic myth” of the “good Yugoslavs” having fought the bad “Germans” and a few local traitors.¹⁰⁸ Members of the Albanian national minority, on the other hand, “crossed over” to the right side and joined other ethnic groups in the country who had allegedly opposed fascism and invaders as a whole, through their integration into the socialist system, politicized historiography,¹⁰⁹ and a policy of remembrance. As the ethnic Albanians population and the power and influence of Albanian politicians grew,¹¹⁰ the “partisan myth” included increasingly larger number of ethnic Albanians.

106 Đilas, *Revolucionarni rat*, 410.

107 The first to start depicting the Volksdeutsche in a more nuanced way were Yugoslav writers: Cf. Vladimir Geiger, *Sudbina jugoslavenskih Nijemaca u hrvatskoj i srpskoj književnosti*, (Zagreb: Zajednica Nijemaca u Hrvatskoj, 2009).

108 It took decades to start including the Yugoslav ethnic Germans into the „official“ partisan historiography, but even then, their company was seen as an exception (Cf. Slavica Hrečkovski, „Njemačka četa 'Ernst Thälmann' u jedinicama NOV i POJ u Slavoniji“, *Zbornik Centra za društvena istraživanja Slavonije i Baranje* 1/1984, 331–350; Nail Redžić, *Telmanovci. Zapis o njemačkoj partizanskoj četi „Ernst Telman“*, (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1984).

109 Cf. Hadri, *NOP*.

110 Јан Пеликан, *Новим путевима. Косово 1958–1969*, (Београд: Службени гласник, 2022), 386–492; Isabel Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen der alten erschaffen wir die neue Welt! Herrschaft-*

Apart from the symbolic role, elimination of the Volksdeutsche offered huge economic advantages to the new regime. While ethnic Germans were not as wealthy as widely believed, their accumulated wealth was considerable, with confiscated plots in Vojvodina alone accounting for 39% of the land designated for agrarian reform.¹¹¹ German companies, shops and other establishments, together with those confiscated from other owners, also provided the communists with solid foundations for a socialist economy.¹¹² This, along with their military prowess and ideological radicalism, allowed the Yugoslav communists to transition from capitalism to socialism more quickly than other East European countries. Unlike Vojvodina, Kosovo had fewer large estates, holdings were smaller, and Albanian families often faced a shortage of land.¹¹³ Because of primitive working methods and poor infrastructure, the province rather suffered from agrarian overpopulation which had grave economic, social and political consequences. The post-WWII colonists were directed to the Vojvodina and Slavonia where former Volksdeutsche fields and houses had been and not any more to overpopulated Kosovo.¹¹⁴

Summary

The WWII brought about significant changes to Yugoslavia, most notably the rise of the Yugoslav communists, who entered the conflict aiming for power and societal transformation, solving the national question that had been a major issue during the inter-war period. The communists strove to grant all ethnic groups national rights, so national minorities received every right except for self-determination, that was reserved for the Yugoslav peoples, albeit only in theory. Although the largest national minorities collaborated with the invaders, they were not treated in the same way after the war. The ethnic Germans and ethnic Albanians made up two opposite poles of that policy. Even though their crime was the same, the first received harsh punishment, while everything was forgotten and forgiven to the latter. Individual culpability was

spraxis und Loyalitäten in Kosovo (1944–1974), (München: De Gryter Oldenbourg, 2016), 321–362.

111 Никола Л. Гаћеша, „Аграрна реформа и колонизација у Југославији (1919–1948)“, Никола Л. Гаћеша, *Радови из аграрне историје и демографије*, (Нови Сад: Матица српска, 1995), 190.

112 For a somewhat exaggerated survey of the Volksdeutsche property cf. Leopold Egger, *Das Vermögen und Vermögensverluste der Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, (Sindelfingen: Landsmannschaft der Donauschwaben in Baden-Württemberg, 1983).

113 Gatalović, *Kosovo i Metohija*, 272; Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 358–359

114 Cf. Gaćeša, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji 1945–1948*.

established in the majority of instances, yet punishment was nearly universal for the Volksdeutsche and forgiveness almost universal for ethnic Albanians. The first were practically wiped out as a collective body, whereas the latter became increasingly important regional factor that would achieve influence on federal level in the late 1960s. The reasons for this uneven treatment were to be found partly in foreign policy: Germany was still feared as potentially dangerous in the future, while Albania was wooed as a prospective ally and/or member of a larger federation. Part of the reasons was rooted in domestic policy, and they were determined by sheer numbers, the ability to offer armed resistance, the density of minority populations and their share in the overall population in Vojvodina and Kosovo, respectively, the general wealth of each minority, the need to demonstrate the credibility of the new policy of national equality, etc. Although the Volksdeutsche had been included in the policy of national equality since the early 1950s, the majority of them refused to integrate due to painful memories, the failure to restore their property, the continued suspicion and disdain they faced in everyday life, and the fact that their friends and relatives lived abroad. After early resistance, ethnic Albanians accepted the opportunity of integration: inclusion became infiltration, and eventually subversion.

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Резиме

Зоран Јањетовић

SI DUO FACIUNT IDEM, NON EST IDEM: СУДБИНА НЕМАЧКЕ И
АЛБАНСКЕ НАЦИОНАЛНЕ МАЊИНЕ У ЈУГОСЛАВИЈИ НА КРАЈУ
ДРУГОГ СВЕТСКОГ РАТА

Апстракт: Овај рад анализира понашање две највеће националне мањине у Југославији током Другог светског рата, са фокусом на њихове колаборационистичке тенденције. Такође, он трага за разлозима због којих су послератне комунистичке власти примениле неједнаке казнене мере према етничким Немцима и етничким Албанцима, упркос сличностима у њиховој сарадњи са окупаторским снагама.

Кључне речи: етнички Немци (фолксдојчери), етнички Албанци, Југославија, комунисти, Други светски рат

Други светски рат је донео значајне промене Југославији, а пре свега успон југословенских комуниста који су у сукоб ушли са циљем да дођу на власт и изврше друштвене промене решавајући национално питање, једно од главних спорних питања током међуратног раздобља. Комунисти су намеравали да свим етничким групама обезбеде национална права, при чему су националне мањине добиле сва права изузев права на самоопредељење које је било резервисано за југословенске народе, а и то само у теорији. Без обзира што су највеће националне мањине сарађивале са окупаторима, нове власти после рата нису поступале са њима на исти начин, због чега су се фолксдојчери и Албанци нашли на супротним половима те политике. Иако је њихов грех био исти, први су сурово кажњени док је другима све опроштено и заборављено. У већини случајева утврђена је појединачна кривица, али је за фолксдојчере казна била скоро општа, док је за Албанце опроштај био готово општи. Први су збрисани као заједница, док су други постајали све утицајнији покрајински фактор, који ће чак од краја шездесетих година остварити утицај и на савезном нивоу. Разлоге за ово треба тражити делом у спољној политици: Немачка је и даље виђена као потенцијална опасност у будућности, док је Албанију требало придобити као будућег савезника и/или члана једне шире федерације. Део разлога тицао се унутрашње политике и био је условљен самим бројем, способношћу за оружани отпор, густином насеље-

ности мањинског становништва, уделом у укупном становништву Војводине, односно Косова и Метохије, материјалним положајем сваке од тих мањина, потребом да се докаже веродостојност националне политике и другим факторима. Иако је од почетка педесетих година инклузивна мањинска политика протегнута и на фолксдојчере, већина их је одбила да се интегрише због болних сећања, изостанка реституције одузете имовине, живота под сталном сумњом и презиром у свакодневном животу, као и зато што су њихови рођаци и пријатељи већином били у иностранству. После почетног отпора, припадници албанске националне мањине су прихватили понуђену интеграцију: укључивање се претворило у инфилтрацију, а на крају у подривачку делатност.