

THE YUGOSLAV EXPERIMENT, 1948–1974. By *Dennison Rusinow*. Published for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977. xxii, 410 pp. \$16.50.

Professor Rusinow has written a political history of the Yugoslav regime after its expulsion from the Soviet bloc. His history is based in part on the study of a wide selection of the literature, but it rests primarily on the reports he wrote and the interviews he undertook while serving as the American University Field Service representative in Yugoslavia from 1963 to 1973.

The principal contribution of *The Yugoslav Experiment* is the new insight it gives us into the process by which ethnic conflict returned to the Yugoslav state and again came to dominate its political life. The removal of Ranković in 1966 was crucial, Rusinow argues, because it was followed by the de facto dismantling of the (Serbian dominated) central party apparatus and, consequently, by the partial pluralization of the party itself, and even of society as a whole. One aspect of the process of pluralization was the return to an effective parliamentary life and concomitant experimentation with semifree elections in 1967 and 1969. But whether within the party or outside of it, decision making came to be based on territorially focused ethnic groups.

Partial pluralization was soon followed by a series of nationalist outbreaks. These included, in Serbia, the election to the federal parliament of opposition nationalists in 1967 and 1969; the Kosovo (Albania) riots of 1968; the Slovene highway crisis of 1968; and, most threatening of all, the conversion of that hoary cultural institution, the *Matica Hrvatska*, into an opposition, Croatian nationalist, political party during 1970 and 1971.

With deadlock at the center, liberal Croatian leaders decided to “build” democratic socialism in one republic only. But their leadership was challenged immediately by the conservative *Matica*, which promoted an essentially separatist program. To prevent destabilization of the entire postwar political system, Tito intervened in a *coup de main* and thereafter undertook the task of putting Humpty Dumpty back together again by reconstructing the central party apparatus.

Rusinow’s presentation is flawed by his failure to place the development he traces in its international context. Thus Ranković was removed because he and his subordinates were blocking the implementation of reform legislation providing for a Socialist market. But such experimentation was made possible, as Rusinow fails to say, by Western subsidies to the regime. The United States, for example, regularly covered Yugoslavia’s hard-currency deficit, although in an ingenious variety of ways. Without outside help, the adventure with the Socialist market would probably not have been possible.

The decision to rely to some significant degree on market forces was based on many considerations, such as the increasing reluctance of the northern republics to continue investing huge sums in their southern counterparts. But surely one of the most important factors in this crucial decision was concern for Yugoslav independence. Western subsidies might not continue indefinitely. Unless Yugoslavia could sell her goods and services in the capitalist market place at a profit, periodic hard-currency deficits might ultimately force her to return to primary reliance on the non-competitive bilateral barter trade of the Socialist world. The Socialist market was to serve as a pillar of Yugoslav sovereignty by improving the efficiency of the Yugoslav economy. Most economists would not agree with Professor Rusinow that the Socialist market, as such, is inherently unstable and promises only short-term gains.

Nonetheless, for what it does accomplish, *The Yugoslav Experiment* is a very useful book. A more penetrating analysis of the domestic factors in the return of ethnic conflict is not likely to be available for some years.

R. V. BURKS
Wayne State University