DRAGOMIR JANKOV

VOJVODINA
The Ruination of a Region
Data and Facts

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The Ruination of a Region

DATA AND FACTS
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO:

my friends, relatives and people with whom I have not agreed about the matter of Vojvodina, and to those I have agreed with,

to all those, who desire or need to know more about what Vojvodina is, what Vojvodina was yesterday, to better understand what Vojvodina is supposed to be tomorrow.

The Author
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VOJVODINA was created three centuries ago on the outskirts of the Habsburg Monarchy bordering with another empire – the Ottoman Empire (which comprised Serbia as well).

By disintegration of Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 and by the will of great powers of that time, Vojvodina became a part of newly created country – Yugoslavia.

This book explains how Vojvodina, once a model Central European region, became a Balkan province deprived of its rights.

The complete, systematized truths and facts about Vojvodina were never sufficiently researched or published. Even some known facts have been purposely obscured and kept undisclosed. But why is that? It is because some people have a special interest in concealing the truth. It would be naive to expect such facts publicized, at least, not from the people who are taking advantage of Vojvodina.

Moreover, the truth about Vojvodina remains obscure due to lack of initiative of the very people of Vojvodina. The famous tolerance and patience of people of Vojvodina often turns into personal irresponsibility, to themselves and to the future generations as well.

Only small parts of those specifics are shown in this study. However, the approach to the subject is somewhat deficient, because it deals with topics that have to be explored and researched by scientific institutions; by specialists and professionals such as historians, economists, etc, otherwise the study will remain only as an individual effort.

Aware of that fact, the pieces for this mosaic are carefully chosen. I was trying to find such elements, factual and straight, but also to be receptive to their inherent deficiency. I am aware that any discussion or text about Vojvodina is written from the Serbian point of view, which often follows any text about Vojvodina. Nonetheless, if we for a moment dismiss all inevitable deficiencies, this text remains as an immense and irrevocable WARNING.

The word of WARNING goes to everyone outside Vojvodina, primarily to Serbia and the International Community.

Above all, a word of WARNING to people of Vojvodina, whether born here or naturalized, as it is their decision whether they will continue to exist under present conditions of subordination misuse and incapacitation to develop their potentials, or they will resolve to insist on environment of equal opportunity and prosperity.

While researching and collecting data and facts about Vojvodina, I was also learning about exceptional appeal and magnitude of this region. Vojvodina cannot be considered as an irrelevant place, especially because of its size, which is as large as Macedonia and Slovenia, or half the size of Netherlands, Switzerland, and Denmark…
The truth of exceptionality of Vojvodina comes out form the circumstances of two important facts: Vojvodina is the most fertile plain and it contains one of the largest hydrological junctions in Europe. Additionally, as a former part of Central Europe (although on its very perimeter), Vojvodina was the home of many peak events. I will list some examples: Canal from Backi Monostor to Backo Gradiste, linking rivers Danube and Tisza, 110 kilometers long and 25 meters wide, was constructed in only 9 years, from 1793 to 1802. This project represents one of the most important technological and economic projects in the world of that time. The project was directed and completed by “Privileged Royal Shipping Company”, the first private stock companies in Habsburg Monarchy. The water gate built later on that canal, was the first concrete water gate ever built in Europe. Furthermore, one of the first machines ever used in agriculture in the world, and the first one in Hungary, was the steam-powered thresh machine in Novi Becej (Vojvodina), purchased and delivered from England in 1852.

One of the largest and oldest cement factories in Europe, was the factory in Beocin, founded in 1839. The largest grain mill in the Habsburg Monarchy, along with the one in Budapest, was in Kikinda… For over 200 years, one of the major ethnic groups of Vojvodina, the Serbs, possessed some type of their own legislative bodies: the People’s Assembly and the Church Assembly. They also had a mid-level territorial independence within the region of Kikinda with 10 communities and the region of Becej with 14 rural communities. From 1849 until 1860, they possessed a territorial autonomy at provincial level. (Crownland, Serbian Vojvodina and Banat on the Tamis). At the end of 1918, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire fell apart, Vojvodina found itself with a well-organized hydro-system, the most developed rail system in Europe and with a strong local community management. Many municipalities in Vojvodina of that time owned several thousands of acres of cultivable land.

Some of the events from that period are presented in this book. Recent and massive deterioration of Vojvodina, compared with Slovenia and Croatia, with which Vojvodina shared the political and economic destiny from 1918 to 1991, in former Yugoslavia prompted me to add the personal and emotional title “The Ruination of a Region”, to the previous neutral one “Vojvodina, Data and Facts”. It seems that this much I owe to Vojvodina, my homeland. But, this is also a part of the truth about Vojvodina.

The Author
Chapter I
The map of Europe showing Serbia (gray shadowing) and Vojvodina (black shadowing)
VOJVODINA is located in the southern part of the Pannonian Plain, in the northern part of the Republic of Serbia. It borders with Rumania (275 km), Hungary (164 km), Croatia (308 km) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (38 km).

By its position and geographical structure, Vojvodina is part of the Natural Bridge between Central Europe, Balkan Peninsula and Middle East.

There are three regions within Vojvodina: Srem, Banat and Backa.
The area of Vojvodina is 21,506 km², which is more than the area of Montenegro (13,812 km²), roughly the area of Republic of Slovenia (20,251 km²) or Republic of Macedonia (25,713 km²). The size of Vojvodina is just about half of a Netherlands (40,844 km²), Switzerland (41,288 km²) and Denmark (43,069 km²).

**Natural resources - land, water, oil**

Considering the quality of the land used for agriculture and large quantities of natural reserves of water, Vojvodina represent an exceptional agricultural and economic potential in Europe.

The area of cultivable land in Vojvodina is 1,628,000 hectares which is comparable to total cultivable land in Austria (1,618,000 hectares) or almost like cultivable lands of Nederland, Belgium and Luxembourg combined (1,743,000 hectares).

From the total area of Vojvodina (21,506 km²), 75% of it is cultivable! The other countries with similar concentration of cultivable land are Denmark (63%) and Hungary (59%). Vojvodina has the most fertile land in Europe (along with Ukrainian Dark Soil).

**WATER**

Vojvodina contains one of the largest hydrographical junctions in Europe, with three large rivers flowing through this region: the rivers Danube, Tisza and Sava.

Three quarters of all navigable waterways in Republic of Serbia is located in Vojvodina.

*Vojvodina contains one of the largest hydrographical junctions in Europe*
Vojvodina contains about 1400km navigable waterways of rivers and canals: Danube 358km, Tisza 164km, Sava 159km, Tamis 53km, and the network of Danube-Tisza-Danube canals - 664km.

Two things are important: First, a relatively dense network of navigable waterways - about 90% of Vojvodina’s territory and the same number of the population gravitates toward those waterways, connecting 41 out of 45 municipalities. Second, the local waterways connect with the international waters of river Danube. Since 1993, the river Danube connects with canal Rein-Mein-Danube, creating one of the most important river traffic corridors in Europe. This corridor connects to Northern sea, Black Sea and represents the unique benefit for this region.

**OIL**

A natural deposit of oil and natural gas in Vojvodina is the basis of the Oil Industry. In 55 years of its existence, up until 2004, the leading company “Naftagas” from Novi Sad, produced about 43 millions tons of oil, 30 billions cubic meters of natural gas, 270 million of cubic meters of carbon dioxide and 18 million of cubic meters of thermal waters, worth over 15 billion dollars. In 2000, the industry produced about 800,000 tons of oil and 680,000 tons in 2003. *(Information source: Bulletin “Naftagas” August 15, 2001, February 13, 2004).*

**Vojvodina - the granary**

In the former Yugoslavia (SFRY), Vojvodina produced 64% of the market surplus of wheat, 73% of corn, 72% of sugar beets, 84% of sunflower and soybean and 47% of farm hogs, portraying a foundation of the food industry. In Republic of Serbia, without Kosovo and Metohija, Vojvodina produced 58% of wheat in 2001. In 1999, it produced 57% of corn, 95% of sugar beet, 91% of sunflower, 94% of soybean, and 67% of pork meat.. *(Source: Official statistical record)*

**Note: In further presentation, the Republic of Serbia is regarded as Central Serbia and Vojvodina, while Kosovo and Metohija are not included.**

**Population**

In Vojvodina reside 2,031,992 people (census from 2002.). As naturally open and fertile plain, Vojvodina has always attracted immigrants. By its national structure, Vojvodina represents a special ethnic phenomenon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number in thousands</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>1,321,807</td>
<td>65.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>290,207</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatians</td>
<td>56,546</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunjevci</td>
<td>19,766</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovaks</td>
<td>56,637</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegrins</td>
<td>35,513</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumanians</td>
<td>30,419</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruthenians</td>
<td>15,629</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>4,635</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavs</td>
<td>49,881</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>150,952</td>
<td>7.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,031,992</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Increase in Serbian national – Decrease in Yugoslav national (in Vojvodina)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>1,107,375</td>
<td>54.50</td>
<td>1,143,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavs</td>
<td>167,215</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>174,292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fast disappearance of ethnic minorities in Vojvodina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>423,866</td>
<td>21.70</td>
<td>385,356</td>
<td>18.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatians, Bunjevci &amp; Sokci</td>
<td>157,819</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>119,157</td>
<td>5.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovaks</td>
<td>72,795</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>69,3549</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruthenians &amp; Ukrainian</td>
<td>25,115</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>34,306</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumanians</td>
<td>52,987</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>47,289</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** While taking into consideration the rights of individuality and freedom of choice, Croatians Bunjevci and Sokci, Ruthenians and Ukrainians are represented as a single group, only for the purpose of uniformity.

Autonomy of Vojvodina and the ethnic minorities

In 2002, The Hungarians, Croatians, Bunjevci and Sokci, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Ukrainians and Rumanians counted to 473,839 residents of Vojvodina, or 23.3%. Concerning the Republic of Serbia, that is only 8.6%.

With 23.3% of representation in Vojvodina, the ethnic minorities could mean a significant political force, but in Republic of Serbia, with insignificant 8.6%, this is not the case. The stipulation is that Vojvodina must have an actual political autonomy. In that case, the ethnic minorities in Vojvodina could not only participate in decision-making process regarding their own cultural rights and issues, but they could also participate in overall managing of Vojvodina. They could be a part of organization of all other aspects of their existence, such as economy, healthcare, transportation, education, but primarily in domain of economics, space planning and management, health and educational issues, etc…

Autonomy of Vojvodina (political, economical and cultural), could represent a significant instrument to prevent rapid disappearance of ethnic minorities. The numbers and structure of the population of Vojvodina, based on the census data from 1991 to 2002, shows the following:

In Serbia and Montenegro, just like before in former Yugoslavia, the number of ethnically mixed marriages were the highest in Vojvodina. In the photo: a wedding party in Vojvodina. (Photo: Petar Katanic)
- The number of inhabitants of Vojvodina increased by 180,000
- The number of Serbs increased by 178,000, or from 56% to 65%
- Number of the ethnic minorities is reduced by 87,000

The greatest deficit happened among the Yugoslav national whose number decreased by about 124,000, from 1991 to 2002, with participation in Vojvodina declining from 8.65% to 2.45%

The next minority with an absolute deficit in participation are the Hungarians whose number, from 1991 to 2002, decreased by 50,000, having a total of 95,000 from the period 1981 - 2002.

Vojvodina has a negative birthrate; the number of deceased is greater than that of newborns, almost having a small town of about 10,000 to disappear every year. The growth in population in Vojvodina was caused only by influx of the refugees.

The fact that between 1991 and 2002 the number of residents of Vojvodina remained the same, or it has slightly increased, could be appreciated more if we take into consideration an alarming fact that in the same time, the number of inhabitants of Central Serbia decreased from 5,808,906 to 5,466,009, or by 342,897 (5.9%)!

The census, conducted by UNHCR and the Government of Republic of Serbia, in 1996, shows that the number of residents in Central Serbia increased by 566,000, mainly from Serbian population from Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina. About half of them settled in Vojvodina.

In taking care of refugees, Vojvodina sacrificed far more than Central Serbia, because it received roughly the same number of refugees as the Central Serbia.

The vitality of Vojvodina lies in its opennes, too.

### Vojvodina - Serbia

In 2002, the value of domestic product per capita in Central Serbia was 88,600.00 dinars, while in Vojvodina was 106,800.00 dinars, meaning that Vojvodina’s domestic product per capita was by 20.53% greater than in Central Serbia. *Source: Statistical Bureau, notification No 268, Belgrade, Dec. 10. 2003.*

#### Participation of Vojvodina within Republic of Serbia in 2002. (Kosovo and Metohija not included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Territory in km²</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Domestic production</th>
<th>% from the total</th>
<th>% average per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,497,000</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>77,474</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>701,473,000</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Serbia</td>
<td>5,466,000</td>
<td>73,0</td>
<td>55,968</td>
<td>72,0</td>
<td>484,486,000</td>
<td>69,0</td>
<td>94,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodina</td>
<td>2,031,000</td>
<td>27,0</td>
<td>21,506</td>
<td>28,0</td>
<td>216,986,000</td>
<td>31,0</td>
<td>114,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2003, the budget of Republic of Serbia was 271,790,000,000 dinars (The Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia No. 86, April 2, 2003) but the budget of Vojvodina was only 14,197,000,000 dinars, or 5.2% of the total budget of Republic of Serbia (The Official Gazette of AP of Vojvodina No. 15, October 24, 2003).

The participation of funds from Vojvodina in the budget of Republic of Serbia in 2003, although never mentioned in any statistical records, was 54%, as announced by Miodrag Vukotic, the Secretary of Economy of AP Vojvodina.

The figures show participation of 146 billion dinars per 2 million inhabitants of Vojvodina, versus 125 billion of dinars per 5.4 million of inhabitants of Central Serbia which represents an astonishing 315% greater contribution of people of Vojvodina per capita!
Religious organizations

There are about 30 religious organizations in Vojvodina. The largest organizations are Serbian Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Slovak-Evangelist Church, Romanian Orthodox Church and Reformation Church.

In many other religious organizations such as Adventists, Pentecostals, Jehovah Witnesses, etc, we can find members from different ethnic groups such as Serbs, Hungarians, etc…
Chapter II
The Great Migration of Serbs of 1690 - from Ottoman Empire to Habsburg Empire, from the Balkans to Europa, from the mountains to the plain, from Serbia to Vojvodina. (Painted by Paja Jovanovic)
IN the 6th century, Slavic tribes migrated into the Pannonian Plain, today’s territory of Vojvodina. The Hungarians migrated in the 9th century. After subduing the Slavic tribes and other natives, the feudal system was founded and the Hungarian state was established.

Vojvodina remained within Hungarian Kingdom until the invasion of Turks, in the 16th century.

Migration into the Pannonian Plain

IN the 6th century, Slavic tribes migrated into the Pannonian Plain, today’s territory of Vojvodina. The Hungarians migrated in the 9th century. After subduing the Slavic tribes and other natives, the feudal system was founded and the Hungarian state was established.

Vojvodina remained within Hungarian Kingdom until the invasion of Turks, in the 16th century.
By fall of Banat, in 1522, the entire region of today’s Vojvodina became a part of the Ottoman Empire. The liberation from the Turks has been accomplished with help from Austria, but only after extensive battles. Backa and northwestern part of Srem liberated in 1690 and Banat and Southeastern part of Srem in 1718, falling under the Austrian protectorate.

At the end of the eighth Austro-Turkish war, and after one of unsuccessful penetrations of Austrian armies toward Balkans, Serbs mainly from the Kosovo region were forced to flee the Turkish retaliation by moving north across the rivers Sava and Danube. It was the Great Migration of Serbs of the 1690 when the part of population, whose exact number was never established and it could have been between thirty and several hundreds of thousands of souls, left the Balkans and moved into the territory of today’s Vojvodina governed by Austria.

The Vienna’s Crown guaranteed the existence to Serbs outside the limits of the feudal system, the liberty of worship and the autonomy related to church and everyday affairs. (Privileges granted by Tsar Leopold First). In return, the majorities of Serbs received cultivable land and became a part of the military-border system of defense against Turks. They became a guard wall against the Ottoman Empire. As professional soldiers, they fought across Europe for the benefit of the Austrian Crown (on the river Rhine, for the Spanish heritage, in Holland, for the Polish heritage, in the Seven-year war in Bavaria, Prusia, Silesia, Czechia, in war against France, in Italy ...).

It is important to mention that in 1690, Serbs moved into Pannonian Plain by Tsar’s invitation, legally, organized and under the leadership of patriarch Arsenie Carnojevic, who was of Montenegrin descent.
The privileges of Serbs,
to the famous “Nationi Illyrico - Rascianae”

Privileges granted by Leopold 1st, then by Carlo the 6th and Maria Theresa, are important because they show that the Serbs did not migrate to Austria illegally resembling semi-wild hordes, but legally by permission and invitation their status legally regulated for more than two centuries.

Copper Engraved Plates of the books that write on Serb privileges by Kristofer Zefarovic, Vienna, 1746
The peace agreement in Karlovci in 1699

The Great Vienna War, led by Austria against Turkey from 1683 over 16 years, was ended by peace agreement in Karlovci in 1699. Participants in the Peace Agreement were members of the Holy League: Austria, Poland, Venice and Russia on one side, and Turkey on the other. These negotiations lasted for seventy two days and were led in a log house on the hill, above a settlement called Sremski Karlovci (14 km from Novi Sad, currently capital of Vojvodina). In order none of the delegation was privileged, several doors were cut out on the building, in order to enable the negotiators to enter at the same time. From that reason, it was here where a ROUND TABLE was used for negotiations for the first time in the history of international diplomacy.

By the peace agreement in Karlovci, Austria, among other things, got the majority of territories of the today Vojvodina. Turks kept only a smaller part of Srem and Banat, between the Tisa and the Moris rivers, but these territories also came into possession of Austria later in 1718, by Pozarevac peace agreement.

"By its consequences, the peace agreement in Karlovci was one of the most decisive events in the history of Serbs. The Serb nation that had been in
the same country up until then, (in Turkey), was divided in two parts by the newly created border: One part of it remained under the Turks, whereas a great part of the nation fell under Austrian rule. From that time on, Serbs have been developing in a different way in a cultural sense over more then two hundred years - until the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918”. (Suzana Milovanovic, The great Vienna War and Peace in Karlovci 1683-1799, pg.16)

By peace agreement in 1699, Turks withdrew from the major part of the today Voivodina, which part fell under Austria and remained as such up until the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918.

This is where a round table was used for the first time in the history of diplomacy.

**Austria established urban and civilizational foundations**

At about 1700, the creation of Vojvodina had begun. After expulsion of Turks, south of the Danube, the territory of Vojvodina was devastated, sparsely populated, swampy and unhealthy. Austrian authorities undertook a large organizational projects and investments to develop a modern agricultural province, or a base of progress for the entire Monarchy.

The creation of Vojvodina was taking place in two parallel processes: colonization, and land reclamation in order to drain the swamps and to create the new waterways.

The colonization of large proportions was taking place. Except Serbs, other nations had settled in, such as Germans, Hungarians, Croatians, Ruthenians, Romanians, Jews and others...

**The arrival of German Colonists**

The Germans typically came from the Southern Germany, from the city of Ulm, where the river Danube is navigable, over the Regensburg, Vienna, Bratislava (Pressburg), Budapest, to Apatin and to Novi Sad (Neusatz).

In the History of world colonization, it is considered that Germans are the most productive in compact settlements, but the English are considered most suitable to survive in isolated and remote settlements, holding the world primate in colonization efforts. In Vojvodina, Germans proved their quality as colonists.

Since the Austrian authorities have undertaken the planned development and reconstruction of several hundreds of settlements, Vojvodina, not simply an ethnic phenomenon, now becomes an urban phenomenon. From 1750, Vojvodina was considered as one of the largest organized building sites in the World, which can only be compared to colonization and building of American Continent.

Today’s character of Vojvodina’s villages and towns, with wide and straight streets, resulted from the planned and firm development guided by military engineers. The plans based on the geometrical scheme of street networks and uniform concept of ideal city, originated in Baroque style of that time.
This small ship, called “the box from Ulm” would have been taken apart upon arrival with German colonists, and the material was used to build a house (history of Germans from the Danube Basin, Jozef Folkman Senz, Munich 1990)
The organizing of Vojvodina was widespread. It started by designing a functional colonial house to conform to the size and shape of the property and the geometrical division of land and systematic planning of groups of settlements and their arrangement… All of this was considered the first regional planning in the world.

The organizing was professional, efficient and consequent, completed in a short period. It left an everlasting mark on this region. It was an absolute success of European Cultured Absolutism. Ten years following the liberation of Banat from Turks, which became part of Austria, the Canal of River Begej was constructed (Waterway from Titel to Temisoara), which was appreciably reconstructed in the middle of the century). In Backa, between 1793 and 1802, The Franz Joseph Canal, or Big Canal was constructed. The canal was over 100 km long and 25 m wide. The “Privileged Royal Shipping Company”, the first stock company of private capital in Habsburg Monarchy, was commissioned to build and exploit the canal.
Parliament Assembly in Sremski Karlovc, in May 13th 1848, where patriarch Joseph Rajacic announces “Declaration of Serbian Vojvodina” In the middle, dressed in Turkish clothes is leader of volunteers, from Serbia, which was in the Ottoman Empire in that time. (painted by Sava Stojkov)
May assembly of 1848 and proclamation of Serbian Vojvodina

The Assembly of Serbs consisted of deputies and a revolutionary from some communities (convened by the Serbian patriarch Joseph Rajacic, under the pressure of citizens) was held on May 13-15, 1848. The following decisions have been brought: (1) to proclaim a Serbian Dukedom in the territory of Vojvodina with Serbian majority; (2) a permanent committee to be elected with a task to organize governing and resistance (military) in Vojvodina; (3) Stevan Supljikac, the king’s officer who was on the battleground in Italy, but later came to the battleground of Vojvodina, was elected Duke of Vojvodina; (4) Metropolitan Bishop Josip Rajacic was proclaimed as Patriarch.

The Hungarian government considered this act of Serbian legislative body as illegitimate and its members declared traitors and rebels. In June of 1848, the civil war broke out between Hungarians...
and Serbs, which lasted all through the 1849. The Serbs had about 24,000 soldiers, while the Hungarians about 40,000 soldiers.

The Volunteers from Serbia, a “crew”, under the leadership of Stevan Knicanin, significantly helped the Austrian Serbs in defending the proclaimed Vojvodina.

After a brutal battle, as the one presented in the picture throughout the Hungarian Civil War (1948-1949), there were no more such conflicts between Hungarians and Serbs from Vojvodina.

**An anecdote – Vojvodina or sheepskin coat**

This anecdote illustrates how much the ordinary people were enthusiastic about Vojvodina.

After the lost battle in a Serbian small town Sentomas (Srbobran), which was destroyed in 1849, an official from Backa region, Isidor Nikolic, met with Visa Bacin, once smartly dressed peasant, who wore a ragged sheepskin coat and asked him; “Where is your good-looking sheepskin coat?” He replied, “Well, sir, I can’t have both, Vojvodina and the coat.” (Emphasized by author, with a comment that from this reply even today we can learn a lesson).

*(D. Popovic, Serbs in Vojvodina, Matica Srpska 1990, page 305).*

**The Serbian Vojvodina and the Banat on Tamis, 1849-1860**

The Hungarian insurrection was subdued by an armed intervention of the Rusian Tzar (The battle of Vilagos). On November 18th 1849, In Vienna, Tsar Franz Josif proclaimed a territorial and political unit called the Crownland (Kronland). This unit was excluded from the feudal system under the direct administration of the Crown named the Duchedom (Vojvodina) of Serbia and Banat on Tamis.

Instead of Vojvodina with Serbian majority, the Vienna’s Court established a multinational area with about 400,000 Romanians, 220,000 Hungarians, 350,000 Germans and 320,000 Serbs. Tsar declared himself “The Serbian Duke”. As archduke of Vojvodina Baron Meierhoffer was chosen, and later Count Koronini. The chosen capital of Vojvodina was city of Temisoara. The official language was the German language, but the citizens could use their mother tongue (Serbian, Rumanian, etc…) in everyday administrative business and even receive the documents in their own language. By the decision of December 27, 1860, Tsar suspended Vojvodina and merged it to the Hungary. *(D. Popovic, Serbs in Vojvodina, Matica Srpska 1990, pages. 208, 243, 253, 306, 308; D. Boarov, Political history of Vojvodina, N.Sad, 2001, page 61).*

In 1866, Serbs on the Blagovestanski Assembly in Sremski Karlovci, completed a project for the New Vojvodina, taking place of the territories mostly populated by Serbs, with a Duke legislation and finance. The idea remained discontented.
The main characteristics of Vojvodina of that period were:

- The economic prosperity was unilaterally oriented to agriculture and supplying of raw materials. The wheat was one of the most exported products.
- Austrian administration, one of the best of that time, guaranteed the personal freedoms and property protection. The corruption was rare and almost unheard of. This country had a government of law and order, what is now called – The Legal State
- At the beginning of 1800, Vojvodina consolidated ethnically in a specific multiethnic society with three largest ethnic groups. Nevertheless, neither group had the majority over fifty percent, Serbs, Hungarians and Germans.

Two Vojvodinas can be seen in this photo: “Serbian” Vojvodina from 1848 and “Cesarean” Vojvodina from 1849-1860.
Besides civil and religious freedoms granted by the Court, the Germans were slightly preferred by government (colonization, work promotion, etc…). Serbs had certain cultural and religious rights and the benefit of personal autonomy. Serbs kept asking for political and territorial autonomy, (their own territory with their own government) However, the Serbs, named “Natio fidelissima” - the most loyal people, were loyal to the Crown, fighting for its interests.

At the May Assembly of 1848, Serbs solicited for Vojvodina in the areas where they were ethnic majority. By decree of 1849, the “Crownland of Serbian Vojvodina and Banat on Tamis” were created, although without traditionally Serb territories such as Sremski Karlovci, but with addition of Romanian part of Banat. Instead of Vojvodina with Serb majority, was shaped the multiethnic autonomous region (with 400,000 Rumanians, 350,000 Germans, 320,000 Serbs, and 220,000 Hungarians).

The Importance of creation of “Crownland Vojvodina”

“As a separated administrative area, Vojvodina existed only for a short period of time under the Austrian protectorate. But it was considered a 100 year program and a dream for many generations.” (A. Ivic, Vojvodina, N. Sad. 1924, page29.)

“For the first time in history the political identification of Vojvodina was fulfilled. The borders were set and the regulations were put in place.” (Dr Ranko Koncar)

Franz Joseph: The first great Duke of Serbian Vojvodina

The Austrian Tsar, Franz Joseph, was “THE FIRST GREAT DUKE OF THE SERBIAN VOJvodina”, and it can be seen from this title, which, partially translated, means:

“We, Franz Joseph the 1st, by God’s grace, the Tsar of Austria, the King of Hungary and Czechia, the King of Lombardy and Venice, Dalmatia, Slavonia and Croatia… the Duke of Stajerska, Koruska, Kranjaska and Bukovina, the Great Duke of Erdelj, Mark Count from Moravska, Duke of an Upper and Lower Schlesien, Modena… Furlanija, Dubrovnik, The Great Duke of Serbian Vojvodina…” (Grosswojvod der Wojwodschaft Serbien…) etc…

The Austrian Tsar Ferdinand, Franz Joseph’s uncle, when approached by delegation of Serbs in Innsbruck, in 1848, refused to accept the resolutions of the May Assembly as unlawful because he expected the treaty with the Hungarians. The young Tsar Franz Joseph (1830-1916) who ascended the throne on December 2, 1848, confirmed the decisions of the May Assembly, by resolution of December 13, 1848.
The long governing of Franz Joseph, from the revolution of 1848, until the First World War, was remembered as a period of peace, stability and prosperity. Serbs from Vojvodina remembered it by an institution of order, hard currency and moderate taxes.

**Districts of Kikinda and Becej - the forms of a regional self-management**

The Districts of Becej and Kikinda had a very special form of territorial autonomy. When Turks were pushed out south, across the Sava and Danube rivers, the border was demilitarized at the rivers Tisa and Moris. Serbian border-patrol soldiers did not want to become Hungarian peasants; some of them demonstratively populated the Banat, some started to migrate to Russia (1751-1753) in order to continue in a military service (described in the famous novel by Milos Crnjanski – “Seobe” - “Migrations”).

Maria-Theresa, the Empress of Austria, fulfilled Serb’s demands and formed two Serbian districts: Becej and Potisje Crown District (1751-1848) with 14 townships - and Greater Kikinda Crown District (1774-1867) with ten townships.

*City Administration Building, Great Kikinda District, known as “Kurija” (Curia – lat. Courtroom), as it appears.*
Two self-managed districts with their own administration and courts, remained outside the feudal surroundings and populated by liberated farmers and citizens, were formed on the ethnical (Serbian) principle.

*Note:* we should bear in mind this, when Hungarians from Vojvodina are demanding territorial self-management, based on the majority principle, in eight of their townships in the northern part of Vojvodina.

District meant the following: instead of dividing the land and people to feudal landowners, the land was distributed to the Serbian people from the district while receiving the status of free citizens and were freed from the forced labor and constant military obligation. The taxes paid were in fiscal form. They were permitted to brew alcohol, beer and brandy, to set up meet shops, to sell wine, to participate at the fairs and unrestricted trade. Some forms of religious freedoms also followed.

City Administration consisted of the judge elected by all of townships for a period of three years; ten senators for life, one senator for each township, and a notary public. King’s commissioner supervised the work of City Administration.
Vojvodina within the limits of Austro-Hungarian Empire, from 1867 to 1918

Pursuant to agreement between Vienna and Budapest from 1867, the Hapsburg Monarchy became a feudal state, a special union named Austro-Hungary. Vojvodina was part of Austria, but from 1867 it belongs to Hungary.

- Within the Hungarian state, Vojvodina did not have a special status, but it felt as a separate territorial entity, (Délvidék, southern land or region) and it was regarded one of the most developed parts of Hungary.
- In 1868, the Hungarian Assembly introduced legislation regarding church and school autonomy confirming recent Serbian privileges.
- Cultivation of land continues by drying out the swamps and regulating rivers.
- With the constant struggle against the waters, regulation of river Tisa was considered as a major success. This large river was shortened by 60km.
- Administration retains high professional level.
- The intensive railway construction begins. Development of food industry at sub processing level (grain mills, etc…). Vojvodina becomes a granary of the state, sometimes on the European level. The development of Vojvodina continues mostly as a raw material industry, to satisfy other industrial branches and regions. This also meant an outflow of resources form this region.
- In Hungary, there were less than 50% of Hungarians. The rest of population consisted of ethnic minorities: Slovaks, Rumanians, Croats, Germans and Serbs. Magyarization becomes more noticeable, carried out by peaceful means, with use of government, schools, military, credit politics and election geometry. From the end of the nineteenth century, Magyarization was carried out by force, the minorities were deprived of their rights; their names were purposely changed to reflect the Hungarian style. There were some successes by doing this. Backa, for example, as the largest area in Vojvodina, has received the Hungarian character. It contained 45% Hungarians but 60% of the population spoke Hungarian language. In spite of all that, the overall ethnic picture of Vojvodina did not change much. It still contained three principal ethnic groups, Serbs, Germans and Hungarians and neither of them had an absolute majority.
This political caricature is from the Serbian satirical magazine “Komarac” (Mosquito), published in Novi Sad on 10 February 1862. The daily-politics meaning of this caricature, based upon historians and their opinions, is the following: The gentlemen in tail coats represent the official Vienna, personified through the titles from the newspapers of that time: Algemeine Zeitung, Der Donau Vanderer and Donau Centum (a smaller, regional newspaper). They are urging the autonomy of Vojvodina by talking to the snail on which shell is inscribed: VOJVODOVINA (The name used for Vojvodina, at that time, but without pejorative meaning). Loosely translated the cartoon says: “Let the tentacles out, we’ll give you the livestock”. By doing this, Vienna encourages the autonomy of Vojvodina to be at odds with Pest, Hungary, as it done before in the past decades. The paper, on which the snail
222 Years of Privileges of Serbs in Vojvodina

The privileges of Serbs were introduced in 1690, and revoked in 1912 by decision of Tsar Franja Joseph. The privileges lasted exactly 222 years. Those privileges gave the Serbs the following autonomies:

- political: right for church gathering and people gathering,
- religious: religious freedom, use of Orthodox religion, right for church organizations
- educational: right for schools and cultural organizations

At the end of the 19th century, the material base for this autonomy became substantial. Diocese in Sremski Karlovci owned 100,000,000 crowns and 130,000 hectares of land. There were 800 Serbian churches, 28 monasteries, 720 priests, 660 church communions, 350 basic religious schools, one formal theological faculty, all with its own curriculum on Serbian language. These accomplishments were the result of the national solidarity and sacrifice (a spirit of contributions was highly developed among Serbs from Vojvodina) But it is often forgotten that such success was furthermore made possible by participation in Central European cultural, economic and political surroundings.
Chapter III
The organizing of Vojvodina by Austria was widespread. It started by designing a functional colonial house, villages and towns with wide and straight street, geometrical division of land and systematic planning of groups of settlements which was one of the first regional planning in the world.
This section deals with creation of modern Vojvodina for the period when it was affiliated with Central Europe by political, economic and cultural ties. However, we are not talking about Vojvodina’s chronological political history. In this section, the main subject is the zeal of people of Vojvodina, about their accomplishments, education, shaping itself into a self-sufficient form. In this chapter, we do not express the whole review, economical social and cultural events, just some pieces of the mosaic that tell us about many interesting events, including the following:
- About the settlements and houses in Vojvodina.
- About the Nonius, the horse of Vojvodina and its creation.
- About one of the first steam powered thresh machine in Vojvodina in 1852
- About the grain mill in Kikinda from 1869, as one of the largest in Austro-Hungarian Empire
- About regulation of rivers and water ways and restriction of river Tisza
- About the “cutting edge” ship locks in Becej, from 1900
- About the daily laborers, diggers “kubikasi”
- About the people and church gathering, as well as about of Assembly of Serbs
- About the official gazette of Crownland Vojvodina from 1851
- About Joszef Kis and Nikola Mirkov, creators of the hydro system
- About the founders of the Serbian farmers’ and landowners’ library in Kikinda in 1914

Settlements and houses in Vojvodina

In his book / manual, titled “Rural architecture, theory and elements”, (Belgrade University, Gradjevinska knjiga, Beograd, 1973), professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, Dr Branislav Kojic says:
“Settlements in Vojvodina contain some characteristics which set them aside from the rest of the rural settlements, not only from those in Yugoslavia, but also from those in Europe... The basic characteristic is the planned composition with a geometric character, originated by the external intervention of technical nature. These characteristics are in opposition with other rural settlements outside of Vojvodina, built spontaneously with their composition more or less arbitrary, irregular, sometimes even impersonal, detached, average, and ordinary.
The characteristics of the planned composition were reflected not only in STRUCTURE OF THE SETTLEMENTS, but also in the HOUSE itself, in the FIELDS, and sometimes in the GROUPS OF SETTLEMENTS (villages), as well as the region in whole."

“All of today’s settlements in Vojvodina, with a few exceptions, show the above mentioned characteristic. It means that ONE SIGNIFICANT TERRITORY, WITH ABOUT 450 POPULATED SETTLEMENTS of about 21,500 square kilometers and with roughly 1,800,000 inhabitants, IS ORGANIZED AND PLANNED IN ADVANCE”.

“The foreign population was recently settled in different areas in Vojvodina, but not in the ways and fashion of the previous attempts with expressive characteristics of planned action otherwise completed in exceptionally short period”.

“Reorganization of existing settlements and creating the new ones was conducted by the Austrian authorities between 17th and 19th century, but the largest portion of this work was completed between 1750 and 1780... Thus, if we look at the entire situation, it is quite obvious that the second half of the 18th century represents a turning point

“Compositional characteristics of symmetrical settlements, strives to simplified geometrical forms in perpendicular scheme, with symmetrical division”. The picture shows the plan of the settlement Novi Slankamen, with seven parcels for special purposes: the church; township center; school; officer’s dormitory; guards; restaurant.
in history of the rural settlements in Vojvodina …During the times when the existing settlements were reconstructed and the new ones established, there were no similar construction attempts in Europe”. (Underlined by the Author).

“The previous snapshots of the terrain, and borders marking of the new districts, were completed by the expert geometers and engineering officers… The structures of these districts are quite different from those established spontaneously …”

“The planned districts were further divided into parts that are more primary … The main parts were: (1) the village with the houses including gardens and vineyards, (2) cultivable land (plowed field), (3) meadows, (4) pastures. Plowed fields

The diagram of the new border village Crepaja from 1775, with dispersed radial street structure in the center. This pattern exists even today.

Baroque gable, the vertical triangular wall between the sloping ends of gable roof
were “equally divided into parcels about 380 meters long”. Although some changes were later implemented in which way the land was divided, but the length of 380 meters remained until today.”

It is important to mention that in The War Archives in Vienna, professor Kojic found the names of the group of 13 designers responsible for designs of districts and settlements. “According to 13 different design works, it could be concluded that six of them were Germans, four Serbian, a French and an Italian, showing considerable involvement of local designers in large project, as well as in founding new and reconstructing old settlements in Vojvodina. Out of four officers of domestic descent, two were in the leading positions in the technical sector”.

“The basic characteristics, common for all new or reconstructed settlements, with aspiration towards rectilinear street form with uniform placement of the lot and a house.

According to “Main Instruction for Settlements” from 1772… paragraph 14… the width of the main street is set at 34 to 38 meters, width of the side streets is set at 11 to 16 meters. In paragraph 15, the size of the lot was determined at 143 to 190 meter deep, and 23 to 29 meters wide. Many cities and villages in Vojvodina follow the same pattern because of the similar urban inception, only later development brought in some differentiation”.

Typical Village Street in Vojvodina, houses with baroque gables
The Rural House of Vojvodina

Organization and plan of a typical house from Vojvodina with the following rooms and objects:
1. Bedroom;
2. Hallway or Anteroom;
3. Bedroom;
4. Kitchen;
5. Pantry;
6. Stable;
7. Shed;
8. Porch;
9. Front yard;
10. Garden;
11. Summer kitchen;
12. Well and sweep;
13. Barn with a pigsty.
At the time of founding today’s settlements in Vojvodina, the rural house usually consisted from two parts: a kitchen and a room. Compared to German “colonial” house, Serbian house had a long porch, similar to those found in old single story houses in Kosovo from where many immigrants came to Vojvodina. Professor Kojic suggests that around 1800 the merged development of Serbian and German rural house begins, the new house having a porch or a “gang”. In return, the new development enriches Vojvodina’s house with number of functions and a rational space organization, as shown in the picture. This is a good example of how different cultures complement each other.

The summer kitchen; The Water well; The Watchtower; The Barn with pigsty

The orderly fashion characterizes the house below, which represents a home, and a place of work for many generations raised in that fashion.

Typical or traditional house of Vojvodina, bordering with neighboring lot, was not the only type of house found in this region. Modern houses, built in Vojvodina are often represented by the house built on street line, so-called “transversal” house. On the picture above, we can see a newer, similar house, but in angular fashion, so-called “angled house”.

Every traditional house in Vojvodina was always built as a single story (ground floor) house.

Angled house. Serbian peasant’s and landowner’s house in the village of Mokrin, Saint Sava Street, (previously Marshal Tito Street) built in 1930, emulates the type of house build in nearby German villages. (photo D. Jankov)
Nonius – The horse of Vojvodina

In the Pannonian Plain, which can turn into stone during the summer draught, or into a sea of mud in autumn, it is necessary to have an exceptional strength and continuous hard labor all-year-round to obtain large quantity of products. During the last three centuries, the horse was the most basic agricultural force in this region. Austro-Hungarian Empire was able to produce a special breed of horse for the needs of this region. It was Nonius, bred and improved for the period of 100 years, as a creation of scientific selection, but also a creation of enthusiasm and devotion of the many anonymous individuals including stall workers and veterinarians.

It all began when the Austrian cavalrymen captured a French horse after the defeat of French
army led by Napoleon at the battleground of Waterloo in 1815. The horse was used to haul large artillery pieces. The horse was taken to the largest state-owned horse farm Mezőhegyes in Hungary near Szeged. The horse was thought of as Napoleon’s “secret weapon” because it was able to go through the deepest mud, effortlessly pulling out the large artillery pieces.

The French “prisoner of war” was a mixture of an English thoroughbred horse (founded on a temperamental and persistent Arabian horse) and a French working horse from the Normandy region. Further selections created the durable Pannonian horse.

The Nonius, described as a horse with proportionally large head, strong and long neck, deep and wide chest, proper posture and graceful walk. It has very strong skeleton with reinforced shinbone, later systematically bred all over the country.

Further selection, raising and maintaining the constant level of quality, continued in Grabovo, in Srem, at the horse-farm of the Austrian count Eltz from Vukovar, and particularly at the horse-farm ‘Zobnatica’, close to Backa Topola.

In his book, “Horse Raising”, (Naklada skolskih knjiga i tiskanica savske banovine, Zagreb, 1939. page 43.) Miroslav Steinhaus says:

“Usability and value of Nonius is enormous. Because of our special circumstances in our agriculture, it is suitable for most landowners. In the areas where agriculture was more developed, like Backa, Banat, Baranja and Srem (regions of which Vojvodina consisted of), Nonius has a particular importance. Many years of experience had shown that there was no other breed of horse which would be better suited to the demands of agriculture. The strength and the durability, good nature, obedience, persistence and tirelessness, determines Nonius as a workhorse in agriculture. Anyone who ever had a chance to observe Nonius at work, particularly under the adverse conditions, could realize that this horse is the best choice for all kinds of difficult tasks in agriculture”.

This few words should always remind us about Nonius, the horse and the people who created it. In addition, to remember people who built Vojvodina while working with Nonius.
The world’s first steam-powered thresh machine - in Vojvodina

The first steam-powered thresh machine ever produced in the world, was used in Vojvodina, in Novi Becej, in 1852.

How did that happen?

An intermediary from Novi Becej, Feher Jozsef was in Paris in 1851, with his sons Sandor and Miklos, where he became familiar with products of Clayton-Shutterwoth Company from Lincoln, England. He was interested in purchasing one of their products: a thresh machine set consisting of moving steam engine and the thresh unit.

He returned to Novi Becej to obtain the money. Some of the money came from his own sources, some through the loans form baron Karolj Bilot. He returned to England and purchased the machine at the price of 295 pounds, an enormous amount of money for that time. The transportation and custom costs amounted to 51.5% of the value of the machine.

Many were suspicious and afraid of the new machine. It required 19 maintenance workers. It burned about 600kg of coal and spent about 1700 liters of
water, for 10 hours of work, but it did 500 bundles of wheat. The whole thing was so profitable that the next year Feher Jozsef purchased another machine.

“The steam loco mobile represents the revolution in the Hungarian agriculture and we are pleased to see that this first example turned into historical relic of Hungarian technology. The engine served for 48 years and outlived many other machines imported in the region. The steam machine was sent to the Museum of Agriculture in Budapest and remained there until today”. (Rez Gyula), The Hungarian Museum of Agriculture, article: “Thresh machines in Hungary and Vojvodina until the First World War”, published in the book Zito KID PCESA, Novi Sad 1988, pages 34-37.

It appears that this is the only machine sample left and saved. The English newspaper Linkolnshire Life reports: “Today, with certainty, we can say that the oldest machine from Linkolshire is located in The Hungarian Museum of Agriculture. It is the oldest moving steam machine built for exclusively use in agriculture”. A quotation from Zito, KID PCESA, Novi Sad, 1988, page 36.

![Threshing of wheat in Backi Petrovac, 1929. The threshing set consists of steam engine, threshing unit and the elevator. The owners: VlajkoZaric, Serb and Franc Sublic, German. The “band”, or group of workers are Germans](image-url)
The steam grain mill in Kikinda

The steam grain mill in Kikinda was built in 1869 by initiative and merits of Fedor Nikolic from Rudno, a Serbian aristocrat from Austro-Hungary. Although he owned large pieces of land in Banat, this investment was going to exceed his financial capacity. To obtain money for the mill, he established a stockholder company.

Around 1900, the mill employed about 300 workers. By 1910, it was producing 70,000 tons of flour annually. This mill, along with the one in Budapest, was the largest mill in the Austro-Hungary. The flour was exported to Germany, England, Switzerland, Belgium and France. The flour appeared to be of a good quality, reflected through international recognition. The mill “Damfil” (the word combined from German: dampf – steam, and mil – mill) invigorated development of the Kikinda region.

If we are sometimes regretfully saying that Vojvodina was the source of raw materials used in other parts of the state, at least we can say that Vojvodina at that time was the best within that structure.
“Kuluk” – A forced labor while organizing the water works

In the 18th and 19th century, the people of Vojvodina were required, by government decree, to participate in canal constructions, to build protective embankments, to do repairs and maintenance, all at their own time and expense. That was forced labor – work without any financial compensation. This kind of work was required to reclaim more new areas of cultivable land from the swamp lands called “overland” (überland) for peasants. Participants in this hard work considered they had the right to claim that land, often unsatisfied how that land was distributed.

In the book written by Milivoj Rajkov, “The Overland territories in Greater Kikinda Region” (Issued by the Historical Archive of Kikinda, 1967, pages 41-43), citing an unsigned leaflet that circled in Banat in the revolutionary year 1848:

“In Kikinda, our brothers are subjected to a great evil, and it is because they are asking for fairness for their own work and land organized dishonestly by and in the favor of landlords. Just like us in the Kikinda region, you are subjected to a great injustice. You are required to work, and while working, many of you lost your health, while destroying your equipment, horses and carts... Often working in deep mud, with no shelter in bad weather. This is a call, a call for you, to join the people’s army, to liberate our lands and yourselves...”
“Kubikasi” - Diggers whose work is measured by a cubic meter of dirt

The great and constant need for land work created a special workforce called “kubikasi”, the name derived from the type of work, digging the dirt by “cubic meter”.

The group, considered as a special social-professional group, consisted mainly of Hungarian landless peasants. The work was performed in groups, in so-called “bands” under the leadership of someone from their rank, “bandigazda”, meaning leader of the band.

The leader of the group was negotiating the deals, measuring and supervising the workers and the work done. Their menu was quite simple, consisting mostly of bread, bacon and onions.

There were many hard labor jobs in Vojvodina. However, the most of them were seasonal, for instance, to mow fields in the hot summers, soaking of hemp in the rivers or swamps … Very few jobs could measure up to the “kubikasi” not only because of the work nature, but because of

Group of “kubikasi” with their leader Janos Csorba from Temerin at the worksite in Apatin, 1938. The over-the-shoulder belts tied to the cart were used to ease the transport of heavy materials (e.g. damp dirt. It was a semi-good solution, because if the cart slipped and fell, caused by weakness or tiredness, it would pull the laborer down, often into water during the barge loading process).
the rhythm the work demanded. The tempo was destructive. The amount of excavated soil per worker was often nine or ten cubic meters per day, sometimes even more. Whoever could not stand up to the tempo, was often replaced with a new worker. Their hard-earned money was often irresponsibly spent on liquor and drinks offered by local merchants.

“Kubikasi” were the sort of people of incomparable work abilities and resilience. Thanks to them, the large hydrological plans and works were completed in shortest possible time. It wouldn’t serve the justice if we did not mention them as an integral part of creating of Vojvodina.

In 1830 river Tisza penetrated an embankment near Novi Knezevac, and devastated the region of Torontal (Torontal was a parish in the area of today’s Banat, the region of Vojvodina west from Tisza): Over 260,000 of hectares of fertile land was flooded, the water reached the city of Vrsac. This disaster influenced to speed up the works on Tisza. By 1838 the river Tisza was surrounded by mighty embankments.

After the failure of the Hungarian revolution (1848-1849), the official Vienna suspended the works on the river Tisza. But, after the devastating floods of 1855, it decided to resume the project. The centralized organization was established to carry on with the project. The next year the regulation work on the Tisza had begun. During the next 10 years, the embankments of over 3500km long were built, and the river 1419 km long, now was shorter by 443km”.

“The New river Tisza was created

Two participants in our regions were Antal Katona (1816 – 1881) in charge of Segedin - Novi Becej sector, with a headquarters in Novi Knezevac, and Kepessy József (1818-1876) who was in charge of Novi Becej – Titel section”.
Hydrographical map of the river Tisza before the regulation with permanently and occasionally flooded regions. The land subjected to floods in Banat, was about 140,000 hectares.

The Tisza, after the regulation in 19th century, shortened by 60km by cutting 10 meanders – the new riverbed enforced by strong dams.
“Jozsef Kepessy, and his friend and colleague Antal Katona, shortened the flow of River Tisza, from Novi Knezevac to Titel, by 60 kilometers or 40%, by cutting 10 meanders. It can be said that they created a completely new river”. Cited from: “The gallery of old engineer which changed the face of the nature in 18th and 19th century” – an article by Kalapis Zoltan, from the book Quiet Waters, KID PCESA, Novi Sad, 1988, pages 135-137.

**Sluice on the river Tisza – the modern lock on the river**

In 1898, the mouth of the Big Canal of Backa, which connects the Danube from Bezdan to Tisza at the point of Backo Gradiste, was moved by enlarging the canal up to Becej.

In order to connect the Tisza, the new lock was built and opened in 1900. It was a modern object, and a marvel of that time. The lock had two cells, and its enormous door opened by electricity from its own power plant. The electricity was also used to set in motion a neighboring sawmill. Many engineers from Europe and even Japan, participated at the opening.
The Temisoara Assembly in 1790 – The most important Serbian ecclesiastical assembly asking for autonomous Serbian territory. The Assembly was attended by 100 deputies, from the clerical ranks (left), ranking officiers (right) and the nobility and citizens. The title page of Serbian People’s Newspaper from 1837, published in Habsburg Monarchy.


**Serbian People’s and Church Assembly – The “Parliament” of Serbs from Vojvodina, 1694 to 1914.**

“The People’s and Church Assemblies, or general Assemblies, were the highest levels of Serb jurisdiction in the Habsburg Monarchy where debates were held about political, cultural and religious issues and needs. By its character, those assemblies were of electoral, (election of head of church, archbishop, or patriarch) or discussion type, but often those two features were combined”.

Demands for assembly meetings were submitted in a written form. The request was submitted to the general in Varadin, or by deputized citizens (a citizen, a bishop and an officer) who would submit the request directly to the Crown in Vienna. By Tsar’s decree the permission would be granted. Only once the assembly was held without Tsar’s permission, in Baja in 1694, which caused a great disapproval in Vienna but it did not happen again in the next 200 years. Tsar’s decree or rescript (lat. Rescriptum - A reply by a Monarch to an inquiry concerning a point of law or morality), contained a sphere of activities, sometimes the place of meeting and the appointed commissioner who represents the Crown. By the initiative of the Crown, the assembly received a status of Class Assembly, consisting of 75 representatives from which 25% represented the church, 25% represented the army and 25% represented the citizens.

The military personnel attended the meetings per order of superior officer. Only those with highest rank were sent, but sometimes of a lower rank, such as flag bearers, guard commanders and others. Church deputies were chosen by a bishop by explicit order to come in person or to choose a suitable person for the task. The city authorities would choose the most prominent individuals. Only those with proper authorization and seal would be considered as representatives.

From 1732, the place of assembly meetings was established in Sremski Karlovci. Tsar’s commissioner would come to the Assembly several days or even weeks before an official start for the purpose of preparations. The commissioner would be received with cavalry, celebration, and gun salutes. He would pass through the ranks. At the end of the rank, he would meet the church superiors. On the eve of the Assembly, the vigil would be held. The Assembly would start with participants taking their seats; the commissioner was sitting under the canopy.

The director of protocol would call representatives by their names and then they would take their seats. The church officials would always sit on the right side.

Everybody would sing: “You are Blessed” and “Lord’s Prayer” and other songs. Next to the commissioner, the government clerk was seated as a notary. The People’s Secretary mediated between the commissioner and the Assembly, sometimes acting as a translator who could speak German, and some of them could speak Latin, too. After the verifications of representative’s term, the commissioner would read Tsar’s prescript determining a sphere of activity.

After the bell rings, the discussion would begin. Metropolitan directed the discussions, sometimes a little bit heated. For certain issues, committees
were formed, as required, with one representa-
ve from each class. The voting order was as foll-
ows: The church representatives, the military re-
presentatives and the civil representatives, every
class in separate chamber. Then the Assembly wo-
uld deliver a memorandum to the commissioner
with resolutions and demands. If the commissi-
oneer would not accept the resolutions, then the
depuies were chosen to deliver the memorandum
directly to the ruler.

The Assemblies would last several days, some-
times several weeks. (In 1769 the Assembly lasted
from January 13th until October. 7th, with 53 ses-
sions) The representatives were compensated per
diem. The total cost of the Assembly meetings
would be covered by certain eparchies, in agree-
ment with Metropolitan and people’s leaders. The
Serbian money covered the cost of the Serbian
Assembly. There were many problems regarding
lodging of the representatives. The prominent de-
puties often came with large escorts, and they were
accommodated in the houses of the respectable
citizens, while others were accommodated into
modest private houses.

The historian Foriskovic says that Serbian church
and people’s assembly was a sort of parliaments on
the territory of today’s Vojvodina, from 1694, cover-
ing the next two centuries with only few such institu-
tions that could have been found in feudal Europe…

This Assembly, with all of its limitations, of-
fered a democratic procedure through the decades
and generations, which culturally inspired the part
of the Serbian population regarding order, respect
and a reciprocal respect of government and people,
shaping the collective awareness and mentality of
the citizens. We have to be proud about such facts,
but we also have to consider those principles in to-
day’s Assembly of Vojvodina. Serbs from Serbia,
who did not have such historical event, because
they lived in the empire of the eastern dictator-
ship, should appreciate and respect this and con-
sider it as a personal well-being.

Considering the fact that the budget for 2003,
decided by Assembly of Serbia, is 270 bilions di-
nars, with Vojvodina’s contribution of over 50%,
while the budget where the Assembly of Vojvodina
decides is only 5% of the budget of Serbia, shows
that corresponding consideration does not exist.

**Official Gazette of Crownland of Vojvodina**

In the following picture is an Official Gazette
(a publication with printed legislative regulations)
titled: Landes Gesetz und Regierungs Blatt für die
serbische Wojwodshaft und das temeser Banat, or
Territorial Legislative and Administration Gazette
for Serbian Vojvodina and Banat on Tamis.

Even though the Gazette was printed in Ger-
man using a gothic alphabet, citizens of Vojvodina
of that time had a right to appeal to the Territo-
rial Authority in their native language, Serbian, Ru-
manian, etc, and to receive the response in the same
language.

It is important to illustrate that Vojvodina had
its own Official Gazette when others did not, more
than 150 years ago. Some important decisions for
the people of Vojvodina were made on Vojvodina’s
An example of the Official Gazette of Vojvodina, number 42, from December 24, 1851. Paragraph 240 establishes salt price for the following towns in Vojvodina: Bela Crkva, Pancevo, Zemun, Mitrovia...
They drew a map of Vojvodina

Jozsef Kis and Nikola Mirkov – inspirators and creators of hydro systems of Vojvodina

Jozsef Kis was born in Budim, in an officer’s family. When he was 18, he entered a military engineering academy in Vienna. After graduating, he and his three years younger brother Gabor, went to a long study trip throughout Western Europe.

He stopped in England where he visited many construction sites acquiring knowledge of hydro-mechanics. Upon return, he worked as a military engineer, but soon entered the civil service. From 1780 until 1789, he was the main engineer in Backa, Vojvodina region. He worked with his brother, also an engineer. By his own initiative and at his own expense, he was inspecting and measuring the area of the future Grand Canal of Backa. As it always happen to people with great ideas, some laughed at him calling him “crazy Lutheran” (He was a Protestant – remarked by the author).

Jozsef Kiss and his brother Gabor, submitted to Tsar Leopold 2nd, on December 12th 1791, a plan to connect Danube and Tisza by a canal 100km long which would shorten the water way between the Tisza (Transportation of salt from Carpathians, etc…) and the Danube for 260 kilometers. In addition, it would drain the fertile land of Backa. In only ten days, on December 22nd, his proposal was taken under advisement and taken into consideration! The construction of the canal started in June of 1793, and was completed in June of 1801. The canal opened in 1802 with presence of Tsar, but without Jozef Kis who fell into disfavor. That was the biggest hydro project in Danube Basin and Southeastern Europe. Jozef Kis died in Sombor and was buried in Vrbas, at the hill, which looked over the canal. The epitaph on his tombstone said: “Here lays Jozef Kis, a Hungarian nobleman. That he is immortal is proven by this canal, but that he is mortal is proven by this cold stone”.

Nikola Mirkov was born in Novi Sad, in the family of a poor and ailing shoemaker. He desired to become a scientist. He supported himself by guarding cattle, even by digging as a daily laborer, or teaching math to rich students. After finishing gymnasium in Novi Sad, he studied technical science in Vienna, later in Budapest, graduating in 1913. He decided to engage into hydro-system problems, thus becoming one of the most famous experts in that field.

Nikola Mirkov did not become an ideological creator of the hydro system Danube-Tisza-Danube accidentally. He was an open-minded person; he was fond of theatre, music, painting, and of foreign literature. He spoke German, Hungarian, French and English languages. He was an expert in Carpathian - Pannonian hydro flows. Thanks to
him, in 1921, the Central Committee of hydro organization members was founded in Novi Sad. He was against “decentralization and fragmentation of finances and labor”... “under the pretenses of hardship” ...” now about draining the land, then again about irrigation”. The man of such profile, holding onto the deeds of Jozsef Kiss, he does not suggest building of a new canal, but a network of canals. A comprehensive hydro system Danube-Tisza-Danube, whose goal was not only for the purpose of “drying of Vojvodina”, but also the prosperity on the water, next to the water, all in the interest of the state in whole.

Engineer Mirkov was very modest, had no family, he lived in a hotel. He had no salary, and AP Vojvodina authorities took care of him. He died in 1957 in sanatorium in Zurich. He was burried in Novi Sad. At that time, plow trucks and bulldozers were already digging his canal in Banat and Backa.

Jozsef Kis and Nikola Markov were the right people at the right time and in the right place.
The first one was supported by an enlightened and powerful Empire, interlaced with ideas of physiocrats, who believed that national wealth is created not by a speculative capital, but only through production of material goods, the Empire was ready to follow and utilize the contemporary achievements and determined to create the “New Lombardy”.

The new Communist authority, with centralized funds and ready for gigantic activities, supported Nikola Mirkov, emulating thus the “Big Brother”, the Soviet Union. In any case, that was a happy union, which changed the face of Vojvodina. Nevertheless, not all of that could have happened if there had not been a certain connection between those two individuals.

What was the common ground of nobleman Joszef Kiss and Nikola Mirkov, son of a shoemaker from Novi Sad. It was the vision of a great work, the skill and ability to accomplish it. History books do not mention those people and their work, neither the giant endeavour of creating the hydro system of Vojvodina. Hopefully, in some future history book on Vojvodina, these people and facts won’t be omitted.

The Founders of the Serbian farmers’ and landowners’ library in Velika Kikinda, 1914

“Vojvodina brought up gentlefolks with ideals. It had village masters, quiet and noble, it had merchants and artisans protecting the science and the culture, it had respectable and diligent clergy, it had confession schools almost like barricades, it had women who knew the Holy Scripture, directing the family and the household. Vojvodina had a reputation and it was reputable. Diligent people, farmers, artisans and clerks, always clean and righteous like a piece of bread, a people well off, not always modest but always generous... In Vojvodina, there were no personal or family happiness without some general and public pride. Desire for deserving could always be felt. There were no private or public gatherings without taking care about culture, schools, education, etc...” (Isidora Sekulic, one of the greatest Serb writers, from Voivodina, “Vojvodinians about Vojvodina”, Beograd, 1928. page 40)

Since the 19th century, farmers’ and landowners’ libraries were common in Vojvodina, contributing to the enlightenment of farmers and agricultural youth, and agriculture in general.

The people in the photograph, owned from 50 acres to up to a few hundred acres of land, sometimes over one thousand and five hundred, especially some of the members of the rich Budisin family. The library was a club and a place of business meetings. Although it was a Serbian library, it was not nationally exclusive. Most of them, besides the Serbian language, also spoke German and Hungarian, which was considered as normal appearance and the need in such nationally mixed environment of the time.

Those in the photograph, members of a national minority, in a big state, seemed so calm and self-confident. Supported by their land, their national institutions like this library, established and
maintained by themselves at their own expense. In a legislative country like Austro-Hungary, property right was guaranteed and the conscience about its sacredness was deeply rooted in those people. Writer from Vojvodina, Milos Crnjanski, wrote just about one of them, in his book “About Banat And People From Banat” (Novi Sad, 1989. page 79.)

“Look, there goes Milos Budisin, slender and swarthy who can play Obilic (Serbian hiroe against the Turks - D.J.) at amateur performances. His movements are calm, every word pure and clear, that of a gentleman. When he hitches six horses to a plow, no one would say he is plowing or digging. Everyone knows him. People from the Hungarian village Kisorosz, where Hussars were moving out, took his livestock. With three servants and four rifles, he came into the village and claimed back his livestock. Not a single gun was fired although there were plenty of them.
They say that he awfully beats with the whip in the middle of the village.”

Those people did not realize that they belonged to a generation that was going to endure the greatest social breakdowns and the largest burden of the 20th century. The war, disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, expulsion from a civilized district where they had developed for centuries. Then, there came the integration into Yugoslavia, which sole intention was carrying out the agrarian reform affecting the agriculture of the region. After that, the Second World War started. After the War, the creation of the Socialist Yugoslavia in 1945, the years of land misappropriation along with forced collectivization. Vojvodina and its agriculture carried the heaviest burden of this socialist experiment, reconstruction and industrialization as well as support of the newly created “workers’ state”.
Chapter IV
VOJVODINA IN 20TH CENTURY WITHIN SERBIA AND YUGOSLAVIA 1918- 2003
A GENERAL VIEW

The lost place in the sequence of progress

WHEN joined Yugoslavia, in 1918, Vojvodina was almost at the same level of economic development as Slovenia, completing the most developed areas of the country. It was far ahead of Croatia and other parts of the country.

Dr Bogumil Hrabak, a historian writes: “At the time of the attachment, Vojvodina was the richest area of South Slavs. Under the Hungarian rule, the tribal states of Southern Hungary were developed as much as Budapest and the western areas, for instance, the less developed Srem was the most profitable area within Croatia and Slavonija…”, source: Yearbok of the Historians Society of Vojvodina, “Autonomy in Vojvodina“, Novi Sad, 1982, page 73

Seven decades later, on the eve of the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, Vojvodina was falling behind, compared to Slovenia (domestic production per capita was 40% lower, compared to Slovenia), also considerably falling behind Croatia.

Many Yugoslav regions were complaining about exploitation, but Vojvodina was the only part of the former Yugoslavia losing its previous position in economic development.

The economic theory states that a particular region does not easily lose its relative economic position, and if that happens, it is very often caused by external factors. Everything what happened to Vojvodina in the 20th century can be contributed to external factors influenced by political, economic and cultural measures of the state, destroying the whole developed region. Underlining those external measures directed to the outflow of funds created in Vojvodina to other regions, the following could be emphasized:

- Excessive taxation
- Disadvantageous price policies, harming agriculture
- Deprivation of investments and credits
- Dismantling and hauling away of industrial objects
- Forcible change of the ethnic structure, expelling of Germans as well as disappearance of Jews
- Special governmental interventions affecting Vojvodina (agrarian reform and colonization in Yugoslav Kingdom and in the socialist Yugoslavia, communist collectivization of agriculture, etc…)

During the last decade of the 20th century, (1990-2000) a SHARP DECLINE of Vojvodina began caused by war, isolation and sanctions, a decline caused by lack of autonomy preventing Vojvodina to at least partially protect itself and diminish the effects of economic downfall.
A scene from Vojvodina. Typical contrasts in Vojvodina today, frequent sights of neglect and destruction on the most fertile lands in Europa. How is it possible? (Photo: Stevan Lazukic)
Dramatic fall of Vojvodina

Domestic production per capita in 1986, marked as “100” in Yugoslavia, in Vojvodina was 114.6, in Slovenia 199.5, that is, it was 42.5% greater than in Vojvodina. (Statistical Yearbook SFR Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 1988)

Based on the data from the World Bank’s report from 2001, gross domestic product of the Republic of Slovenia was $12,000 per capita, and in SR Yugoslavia just $1,100 per capita. (Source: “Danas”, Oct. 24th, 2001).

If we consider that, the total domestic output in Vojvodina was 50% more from the above and with real participation of gray economy at about 40% - we can say that the gross domestic output in Vojvodina was about $2000 per capita in 2000.

Based on previous figures, a general but indicative overview of developmental relationship between AP Vojvodina and Republic of Slovenia, the following can be presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vojvodina - Slovenia</th>
<th>1918</th>
<th>1:1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Vojvodina – Slovenia</td>
<td>1:1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Vojvodina – Slovenia</td>
<td>1:6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the same start position, after 70 years, Slovenia surpassed Vojvodina by 40% in gross domestic product. From 1990 until 2000, after the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, Slovenia became independent and followed the way of independent governmental and economic development. Meanwhile, Vojvodina deprived of its autonomy and tied with Serbia, followed the ways of wars and isolation, so the gap between Slovenia and Vojvodina increased 6 times.

Taking Slovenia as an example allows us to better perceive the collapse of Vojvodina, (1918-2000), to let us see what we were, what we are now, and what we could have been. To perceive the enormous differences between the possibilities and unfulfilled development, to understand what a loss Vojvodina suffered because it was incapacitated to develop normally. All of this is needed to understand how deep Vojvodina had fallen in the last decade of the 20th century.

This cannot be forgotten.

The further text gives some facts and information perceiving the destiny of Vojvodina within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1918 until the Second World War; In the Socialistic Yugoslavia, then in the “third” Yugoslavia, during the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.
The following countries were comprised by the newly founded Yugoslavia 1918: The Kingdom of Serbia with Macdonia and Kosovo and Metohia, liberated from Turks in 1912, the Kingdom of Montenegro, and following parts (gray shadowing) from Austro-Hungary: Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina and Bosnia and Hercegovina, annexed from Austro-Hungary in 1908.
After the First World War, on Nov. 25th 1918, an Assembly took place in Novi Sad, the so-called Big People’s Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slavs in Backa, Banat and Baranja, with the following declaration: “We attach to the Kingdom of Serbia which guarantees freedom, progress, equality in every way, not only for us, but to all Slavs and non-Slav people living with us”.

This Assembly was not treated as an Assembly of Vojvodina; instead, it was named after its regions: Banat, Backa and Baranja of that time, while region Srem was exempt. The name of the Assembly shows its national structure. From 757 representatives (deputies), there were 578 Serbs (76%), for 29.1% of population, Croats 86 (8.16%), Slovaks 62 (3.32%), Ruthenianas 21 (0.8%), that means that just 41% of the population was represented.
The Big People’s Assembly was elected by “the electoral agenda”, established by The Serbian People’s Committee in Novi Sad, with the exception of Hungarians, Germans and Romanians. Only 41% of the population of Vojvodina took part in the Assembly at which the decision to unify Vojvodina to Serbia was brought. Only those with Slavic origins were given the opportunity to vote. Others, such as Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, almost 59% of the population of Vojvodina, were excluded (except six Germans and one Hungarian presented at the Assembly). (D. Barov, The political history of Vojvodina, Novi Sad, 2001, pages. 110-111).

By this act, a decision of a historical importance did not satisfy the basic norms of legitimacy and democracy.

Unfulfilled expectation – tax robbery; the plunder of Vojvodina

Vojvodina had the largest tax burden in so-called “Old Yugoslavia” dominated by Serbia (1918-1941). From 1920 until 1928, with only 11.5% of inhabitants of the total population, Vojvodina paid more than 25% of taxes in Yugoslavia. During the 1930’s, even with some correction taking a place, Vojvodina paid more taxes than others did. (Dr. Ranko Koncar, The Opposition Parties and Autonomy of Vojvodina 1929- 1941, Novi Sad 1995, pg. 212-213).

The data above are about the first five months in 1925. The situation became even worse. Collection of these severe excises, sometimes paid even in sums greater than approved was allowed because the clerks from Serbia occupied the administration positions in Vojvodina. (Dr. Bogumil Hrabak: “The Autonomy in Vojvodina, 1919 - 1928, as a reaction to financial exhaustion and a political

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Predicted by budget</th>
<th>Collected (in dinars)</th>
<th>Collected (%)</th>
<th>Inhabitants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia and Slavonia</td>
<td>54,000,000</td>
<td>66,000,000</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>23,000,000</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>29,000,000</td>
<td>56,000,000</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalmatia</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia with Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro</td>
<td>71,000,000</td>
<td>60,000,000</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodina</td>
<td>70,000,000</td>
<td>131,000,000</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the numbers are rounded, and the percentage of inhabitants represents the census data from 1921.
Proportionally, Vojvodina was burdened with taxes much more than other developed regions, such as Slovenia and Croatia. The discriminatory system was particularly aimed at Vojvodina. In the newly formed Yugoslavia, the unique tax system did not exist. While in other regions people paid five to six different taxes, in Vojvodina, in 1925, people paid 22 different taxes including the degrading war tax - paid only in Vojvodina. (D. Boarov, *Political history of Vojvodina, Novi Sad 2001, page130*).
One of the first and largest measures undertaken by Yugoslavia, immediately from its foundation in 1918, was the agrarian reform and colonization that lasted through 1941. The heaviest burden was on Vojvodina, because amid 800 largest properties in Yugoslavia, 400 were in Vojvodina. The land was taken away from the private hands, creating the setback for the economically powerful and respectable families. In addition, the land was taken away from the political communities, destroying their economic base, even from the churches and memorials. To better appreciate the level and the scope of deprivation, and to better comprehend what kind of attack was implied on social and economic base of Vojvodina, here are some examples, from Backa, the biggest region of Vojvodina.
THE PROPERTY TAKEN AWAY FROM THE PRIVATE HANDS
In Backa, 84 properties were taken away
[1 acre = 4.046 m²]

- *Kotek Rudolf* - out of 29.711 acres, deprived 19.758 (66%) remained 9.953
- *Lelbach Petar* - out of 14.780 acres, deprived 13.751 (93%) remained 1.029 (deprived by a “facultative purchases”)
- *Dundjerski Gedeon* - out of 9.969 acres, deprived 4.036 (40%) remained 5.933
- *Vojnic Stevan* - out of 3.239 acres, deprived 3.032 (93%) remained 207
- *Polak Izrael* - out of 2.804 acres, deprived 1.467 (52%) remained 1.337
- *Baic Lazar* - out of 1.400 acres, deprived 625 (44%) remained 775
- *Safer Mor* - out of 5.02 acres, deprived 452 (90%) remained 50
- *Gombosi Andrijana* - out of 371 acres, deprived 226 (61%) remained 145

TOWNS (MUNICIPALITIES)
The land was deprived from 76 communities in Backa

- *Ada* - out of 3.319 acres, deprived 2.159 (65%) remained 1.160
- *Mol* - out of 6.843 acres, deprived 3.897 (57%) remained 2.946
- *Backo Gradiste* - out of 3.315 acres, deprived 1.984 (60%) remained 1.331
- *Titel* - out of 5.425 acres, deprived 3.218 (60%) remained 2.207
- *Sentia* - out of 17.067 acres, deprived 11.120 (65%) remained 5.947

- *Stara Kanjiza* - out of 19.784 acres, deprived 8.163 (41%) remained 11.621
- *Subotica* - out of 46.990 acres, deprived 21.848 (46%) remained 25.142
- *Novi Sad* - out of 7.385 acres, deprived 1.623 (22%) remained 5.762
- *Gospodjinci* - out of 6.221 acres, deprived 4.191 (67%) remained 2.030
- *Curug* - out of 11.685 acres, deprived 9.147 (78%) remained 2.538

The base and the legacy of Vojvodina was undermined - the traditional self-management of its townships and communities, economic foundation created through the centuries was at stake.

Wondering if Vojvodina would ever be “rebuilt”, writer Isidora Sekulic wrote: “If Vojvodina could ever again, among the old and pleasant cities, have the EMPIRE CITIES, some Yugoslavian Nuremberg, Munich, Düsseldorf…” (Vojvodinci-ans about Vojvodina, Beograd, 1928, page 40).

THE CHURCH PROPERTIES
The land taken away from 14 church properties in Backa:

- *Catholic Bishopric of Kaloc.* - out of 21.753 acres, deprived 20.462 (94%) remained 1.291
- *Orthodox Patriarchate Property* (Vajska, Kovilj)
  - out of 15.691 acres, deprived 9.019 (57%) remained 6.672
- *People’s Orthodox Church Property*, Sirig - out of 6.661 acres, deprived 4.789 (72%) remained 1.872
- *Serbian Orthodox Church Community*, Stara Palanka. - out of 554 acres, deprived 186 (33%) remained 368
PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

Out of five Serbian foundations in Backa: Eufemija Jovic (Stari Becej), Julijana Konjovic (Sombor), Julijana Kostic (Sombor), Teodor and Persida Mandic (Novi Sad) and Marija Trandafil (Novi Sad), the most of the land was taken away from the foundation of Marija Trandafil, out of 1.031 acres, deprived 861 (83%) remained 17o. (source, Dr Nikola Gacesa, Agrarian reform and colonization in Backa, 1918-1941, Matica Srpska 1968, age. 242-248).

The official aim of the agrarian reform and colonization was quite nationalistic or of “national importance”: “...destruction of somebody else’s land and property” (German, Hungarian and Jewish) to make stronger Slavic, that is, the Serbian population in Vojvodina, to give the land to poor participants of the wars, volunteers and to others from the passive mountain regions. The economic damages were expected and considerable resulting from division of the large properties often commendable managed, and with the destruction of the contemporary means of cultivation and destruction of the livestock reserve. From 1921 until 1929, the number of cattle decreased from 47.000 to 27.000, swine from 1.000.000 to 600.000.

In the middle of the planned national individuality, (the Hungarians, Germans and Romanians could not get the land, but only Serbs, Croatians, Slovaks and Ruthenians), discriminating, unjust, and unfair, a large number of Vojvodina’s peasants left without land. Mainly poor Hungarians, who cultivated that land for many centuries under miserable working conditions. (Source: Nikola Gacesa, “The economy of Vojvodina between two wars”, Collection for history of Matica Srpska, Landless peasants and laborers; the harvest in the surroundings of Novi Sad (Photo: Museum of Vojvodina)
Historian Dusan J. Popovic (originated from Vojvodina) writes about colonization and the decision to exclude the Hungarians from the land ownership: “Some land could have been given even to the poor Hungarian peasants who cultivated that land as daily laborers”. In his opinion, this would be “not only righteous, but also very effective because those people are loyal by the habit, they obey the authority as no one else would”. (Vojvodinians about Vojvodina, Beograd, 1928, page 43).

However, in the colonization efforts dictated from Belgrade and having no prior knowledge of the customs and mentality of Vojvodina, even if there was a good intention, there was no knowledge for the subtle and long-term conception of government interests.

By the statistical data collected in 1919 (only those for Backa region were saved), there were only 22% of landless Serb peasants per 32% of total population, Germans 18% landless per 23% of total population, Hungarians 41% landless per 33% of total population. (Dr Lazar Vrkatic, A Lesson Never Learned, Beograd 2001, pg.135).

In spite of proclaimed national goals, neither Serbian farmers, nor Serbian political communities were spared. The properties of Serbian Orthodox Church, Serbian foundations and institutions founded and successfully guarded in “somebody else’s state”, were treated in the same way. Basically, it was a collision between two worlds – an urban and civil world, with its sophisticated families, properties and institutions (churches, townships, and self-managed communities), and a rural and mountainous, recently self liberated world, with great individual and economical sacrifices, seized the control of the country.

The historian Vladimir Dedijer wrote about “the old tradition from the mountain Dinara, that in peace, the warrior (i.e. Serbs) should enjoy the fruits of his own war accomplishments”. That is why it was said that Vojvodina was “liberated” in 1918 and 1945, so it could be charged for.
Neglect of the hydro system - the floods of 1920, 1924, 1926...

A complex hydro-system in Vojvodina, created during the past 280 years requires a permanent maintenance. A newly created Yugoslavia “found a large hydro system managed by 65 different hydro cooperatives who tamed the biggest shrew of the Pannonian plain – the water. No further measurements were assumed to improve the system…it was even neglected, causing the big floods in 1920, 1924 and 1926.” (Dr. Teodor Avramovic, The economy of Vojvodina... Matica Srpska, 1965, page 350).

Indifference and neglect of the hydro system turns back Vojvodina into the natural state. In the photo: destroyed farm in the water.
“Cry, Vojvodina!”, -The disappointment in Serbia

A year after attachment of Vojvodina to Serbia, in the newspaper of the Radical Party of Novi Sad which contributed to this attachment, “Zastava“ from 18, November 1919. the following article was found:

“…We, the people of Vojvodina, were the first to decide to cut down the ties with Hungary and join Serbia as one soul and body. We even abolished our temporary government just to prove our loyalty to the new common homeland. We went even further; we gave all we could give, were generous to everyone… But, what happened? Our cultivated land was swamped by hordes of thieves, criminals and loan sharks sucking the essence of astonished people still drowsy and confused by recent developments…"

At the beginning of 20th century, there were mass lay-offs of Hungarian and German clerks, but also of unreliable Serbs from Vojvodina, and replaced with people from Serbia as a trustworthy “governmental” element.

“…They came with no regard or love for Vojvodina, angry about ethnic variety, stealing degrading and destroying our peace, while thinking they are making a patriotic act”. (Vasa Stajic, 1922)

The shift from the central European way of governing to a Balkan model of governing was also a cultural shock for many in Vojvodina because Vojvodina was the subject of special exploitation.

In his book, (About Banat and People from Banat, Novi Sad, 1989 page117) author Milos Crnjanski from Vojvodina, one of the most outstanding writers on Serbian language, writes the following:

“These people have an old fashioned kind outlook about Serbia… What is going to change the picture of Banat and make it a little bit colder toward Serbia are taxes. The taxes, the enormous taxes. Nobody knows who pays and how much was paid. There is no record of it. They are asking for taxes, suddenly and approximately. A horseman would ride into town demanding taxes. There are no notes, no precise booklets, and no recorded names, everyone in order, e.g. Laza Gagic paid thirty-four forints and five fillers, then stamp and a signature, and then all is quiet until the next harvest. Now Laza P. Gagic goes more often into the City Hall, one day they are asking for two-thousand dinars, the next day three-thousand dinars, and the day after that four-thousand dinars… And the taxes had to be paid at once, no room for arguments… and all that without a stamp or signature. After two weeks they call again, they forgot to record the taxes for the Begej river. After three weeks they call again, they forgot the taxes for the hospital. Another week passes by and they call again, the taxes were not two-hundred dinars, but two-hundred and thirty dinars, and they need a proof that he paid the taxes for the Begej… Yes, he has to prove it, because they cannot find any records of it … And all that until the next harvest…”

Note: The tax paid for the Begej, was the contributing water tax for the river Begej.
On the eve of creation of Yugoslavia, there were different opinions on how the new state should be organized. In Serbia, almost unanimously, the support was in favor of Unitarian Monarchy. Jovan Cvijic, with several of his colleagues, was an important exception. Jovan Cvijic was one of the greatest scientists in Serbia, the pioneer and the greatest name in the science of geography and anthropogeography at Serbs. He was the president of the Serbian Academy of Science with considerable international reputation. Through the years he traveled through the Balkans, on foot or by horse, becoming an authority on the Balkan nations, notably their mentality and culture. Adding up his moral integrity, then one can say that his opinion about how the state should be organized is more important than any other.

A scientist and a politician, Ljubomir Stojanovic, in his letter from September 11, 1918. to Jovan Cvijic, elaborates his concept about federal organization of the new state. His proposal consists of the following federal units: Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Croatia with Slavonia and Srem, Backa with Banat.
This kind of organization would prevent dominance of any nation. Any “competition” could then be directed to development of education, agriculture and political freedoms. Jovan Cvijic supported this idea and in his letter, from Grenoble, emphasized that “NEW YUGOSLAV STATE .... MUST BE ORGANIZED ON FEDERAL PRINCIPLES WITH COMPLETE EQUALITY OF ALL REGIONS - A UNITED STATES OF YUGOSLAVIA”. (from the book: Ljubinka Trgovcevic, The scientists of Serbia and creation of Yugoslavia 1914 – 1920, Srpska Knjizevna Zadruga, Belgrade, 1986, pages 262-263).

In spite of his beliefs, King Alexander offered a position of Prime Minister of Yugoslavia to Jovan Cvijic, but he refused. The new state, unitarian and centralized, did not reflect his attitude and beliefs. Just how farsighted Jovan Cvijic was, in contrast to Nikola Pasic (a legendary politician from Serbia), is confirmed by the fact that the new state collapsed after two decades and in only six days. Yugoslavia of the 1990’s could have been saved only with federalism much more flexible than the previous one.

In the speech held in Vojvodina at Matica Srpska in 1922, Jovan Cvijic was in favor of decentralized educational system. Quote: “We should strive to relocate, from Belgrade to Novi Sad, and to Sremski Karlovci, Agricultural Faculty, or at least Theological Faculty and High Pedagogical Academy. That would contribute to enlightenment of spiritual centers. Although we missed so much, it is not too late to do this. This is the direction that should reflect the work of politicians from Vojvodina as well as finding the material support”.

The continuance of the speech was followed by the famous and farsighted sentence:

“Because IN SERBIA WAS ALWAYS LIKE IT IS NOW, AND THAT’S HOW IT IS IN OUR NEW STATE, EVERY REGION SHOULD FIGHT FOR ITSELF FOR EVERYTHING THEY NEED”. (Underlined by Author)

That means we should “fight”.

Remark: Cvijic was advocating the establishment of Technical Faculty in Sarajevo, most likely based on the following observation: “I know the kids from Herzegovina and Bosnia in Belgrade schools whose devotion, passion and enthusiasm about science is exceptional. They have a blessed glow…”

This statement shows how Jovan Cvijic did not possess that metropolitan tastelessness and arrogance. (Cvijic: Autobiography and other documents, Srpska Knjizevna Zadruga, Belgrade, 1965, pages 319-335)
Domination of Serbia in Yugoslavia

Some facts in favor of this claim:
- The new state was a monarchy headed by Serbian King from the dynasty of Karadjordjevic, while Montenegrin dynasty of Petrovic left the country. The King was not only a figure, he also had considerable authorizations in legislative and governing system.

The commanding garniture consisted mostly of Serbs
- In the April war of 1941, all army commanding officers were Serbs (B. Petranovic, Serbia in Second World War 1939 – 1945, Belgrade, 1992, page 166)

Disproportionate numbers of ministers:
In the period from 1918 until 1937, there were 656 ministers, from that number disproportionately more from Serbia:
- Serbs from Serbia – number of ministers 393 or 61% per 23% of population
- Serbs from Vojvodina and Croatia (across the Danube and Sava rivers) – number of ministers 63 or 8% per 19% of population
- Croats – number of ministers 137 or 17% per 23% of population
- Slovenians – number of ministers 49 or 8% per 9% of population

Autonomists in Vojvodina - from national to civil autonomy

Due to economical exhaustion, political neglect and cultural deterioration, different political parties emerged and gathered, after the 1930, around the idea to protect Vojvodina’s interests and rights through independent political status. They grouped in so-called “Vojvodina’s Front”.

The Serbs from across the rivers Danube and Sava and Serbs from Vojvodina scored the worst; they did not get even half the ministers based on their participation in the number of inhabitants.

The similar situation was in the Assembly of representatives. In the elections of 1927, out of 44 Vojvodinian representatives, only 27 were born in Vojvodina. The newspaper “Nova Zora”, from July 10, 1927 writes that candidacies were traded “among friends” in Belgrade cafes. If some candidates did not have any other perspectives, they could count on “friendly help” to become representative of Vojvodina. (Dr Bogumil Hrabak, “Autonomy in Vojvodina”, 1919-1928, as a reaction to financial exhaustion and political disregard of the region”. Yearbook of the Historians Society of Vojvodina, Novi Sad, 1982, page 111)

Historian Dragoljub Petrovic states that all government representatives and ministers of foreign affairs were Serbs. In 1946, the great Serbian political theorist Dragoljub Jovanovic had warned: “The first Yugoslavia disintegrated because it had many nations, but only one in power, and that the second one will disintegrate if only one party is in power.” (Helsinki Charter No. 59, Historical, ethnical and ethical rights, Belgrade, 2002)
interests of all citizens of Vojvodina. The idea and political program about Vojvodina as a national autonomy in 19th century, now was changed to reflect demands for civil autonomy in the 20th century.

The promoters and supporters of the idea of autonomy, in national sense, were mostly Serbs. But in political sense, the support was established in local political parties with centers outside of Vojvodina. Democratic Party, Independent Democratic Party and the Radical Party whose headquarter was in opposition of any kind of autonomy, were all in favor of creating a single party of Vojvodina, but they did not succeed. The political identity of each party was preserved, but their work regarding Autonomy of Vojvodina was performed under the unified idea and movement.
On December 28th 1932, the political parties of Vojvodina prepared and presented an important document named Novi Sad Resolution bearing the popular title: VOJVODINA TO PEOPLE OF VOJVODINA and demanded that in the new, decentralized state, Vojvodina receives the same historical recognition as other regions. The opinions were divided and there was no precise assertion in what form that recognition would take place – either through federalization, or autonomy.

The resolution condemned the centralism, which to Vojvodina “…introduced one impossible administration, unbearable tax system creating a universal discontent, a centralism which, with its tyranny and corruption destroyed all the national ideals for which the Serbs from Vojvodina, through the centuries, had an exceptional enthusiasm…”

The resolution had an immediate impact. “It caused a panic within the leadership of the Radical Party in Belgrade, which accused Vojvodina for splitting the Serbian National”, etc... (Dr R. Koncar, Opposition Parties and Autonomy of Vojvodina, 1929 – 1941, Novi Sad 1995, pages 104 - 105)

Reports by the government agency Central Press bureau, about the propaganda of autonomy, were regarded as a launch “of loud slogans with content of separatism”. (The report of Central Press Bureau, July 8. 1935, Ranko Koncar, quoted work) We could only imagine what could have been reported in so-called “patriotic” newspapers in Belgrade…

From the socio-psychological position, it is very interesting to mention reaction of prominent group of Vojvodians living in Belgrade. Eighty-one of them, mostly university professors, engineers, doctors and others, passed a memorandum condemning the movement in Vojvodina, qualifying it as a “separatist movement and if implemented, it would mean a certain death for Vojvodina”. With such an implementation, “Vojvodina would deny its past and compromise its future”. (Politika, October 12, 1936.) Vojvodians established in Belgrade not only condemned any idea about the autonomy, but they also seemed to be the most active adversaries of such movement.

The Novi Sad Resolution in 1932 and some reactions

After some time, in 1932, the leader of the Radical Party of Vojvodina, Joca Lalosevic, made a statement regarding the current situation: “We are very well aware of the complications, problems and issues about Vojvodina… and we would like to solve it in liberal and righteous way, in form of regional autonomy…” (Dr. Ranko Koncar, Opposition Parties and Autonomy of Vojvodina, 1929 – 1941, Novi Sad 1995, page 106)
Vojvodina and the Communist Party

The idea about Vojvodina, political program and movement, were established and led by the political parties of bourgeois orientation. However, the autonomy was achieved, during and after the Second World War, with the party of just the opposite orientation – the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. In the beginning, the communists were skeptical about the movement in Vojvodina. Later, they accepted the idea of autonomy, and worked together with the Front of Vojvodina.

The secretary of the regional committee of the Communist Party of Serbia, Trajko Stamenkovic, in his report to the Central committee of KP of Yugoslavia, from 1935, he writes the following: “Vojvodina needs to be returned to Vojvodinians. The excessive taxation must stop... Vojvodina is an oppressed province, it needs autonomy and the end of pillage”. (Archive of CKKPJ 1935/480). No one before in Serbia spoke so openly and honestly about Vojvodina. 

A scene from Vojvodina. Barefoot workers, the agrarian proletariat on the eve of the Second World War. A new political force steps onto the historical scene, a representative of the agrarian proletariat it was Communist parti of Yugoslavia which will bring about autonomy to Vojvodina.
Chapter VI
Jovan Veselinov, the Secretary of the Communist party of Yugoslavia for Vojvodina speaks at the assembly in Novi Sad in 1945
(Photo: The Museum of Vojvodina) “...Serbia is not what it used to be. In Serbia, the politics are not the same like before the war. The people from Vojvodina were rightfully complaining about abuse from Belgrade who considered Vojvodina to be a “milk cow”. Now, the things are different. There is no hegemonism in charge in Serbia” (December 1944)
**The Socialist Yugoslavia 1945 - 1988**

**Tito’s Yugoslavia**

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The creation of Yugoslavia and Attachment of Vojvodina to Serbia 1945

The new Yugoslavia was founded at AVNOJ Second session (Anti-Fascist Council of People’s Liberation of Yugoslavia), November 29th, 1943 under the leadership of Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ). The session was held on the liberated territory in Bosnia. One of the most important resolutions was to build new Yugoslavia on federal principles, as a federal state.

(The resolution excerpt quotes :) “Pursuant to rights of each nation for self-determination... so that Yugoslavia represents a true homeland for every nation, never again to become a domain of hegemony. Yugoslavia has to be built on federal principle, which will provide full autonomy, equality of people of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

The communist Party of Yugoslavia, which stated an armed rebellion against the fascist occupying forces, struggled to attract as many people as possible. The practical side of the federalism and equality of all people was the only way to motivate the people, otherwise heavily disappointed with unitary and hegemony of the previous Yugoslavia.

Therefore, the forming of federal structure started even before the official announcement of federal intentions at the 2nd session of AVNOJ. In some parts of the country, various forms of military and civil institutions were already talking place. Those institutions were independent and they only had to report to the top communist officials.

**But, what about Vojvodina?**

Vojvodina wasn’t mentioned as a federal entity in resolution of 2nd AVNOJ. Just like in the other parts of the country, various forms of military and civil institutions were formed, so the Autonomy of Vojvodina was practically formed during the war. The decision whether Vojvodina is going to become a federal entity of Yugoslavia, or an autonomous province within one of the republics, was going to be decided after cessation of military operations.

So the decision was made.
At the end of WW2, in 1945 Vojvodina emerged with its own military and civil institutions which were not subdued to Serbia, but to Yugoslavia, and with the territory that historically did not belong to Serbia. By its size, Vojvodina was equal to three out of six Federal republics of Yugoslavia.

This is one of the most important facts from the history of Vojvodina, a fulcrum, which confirms an independently obtained political subjectivism, an inner foundation and outer recognition of inseparable political right of citizens of Vojvodina to make their own decisions, confirmed by the following documents:

**Acts of attachment of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina to Serbia:**

1. Conclusions from the plenum of the People’s Liberation Committee of Vojvodina, held on April 5th 1945, affirms the following: “Vojvodina, within the federal entity of Serbia, should have an unconditional autonomy as an autonomous province”.

2. Assembly of Vojvodina, under the name Assembly of Representatives of People of Vojvodina, dated July 31st 1945, decided about “Attachment of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina to Serbia.” This resolution was sent to the Third AVNOJ session for final ratification.
3. The decision was confirmed and accepted at the 3rd session of AVNOJ, held on August 10th 1945, followed by the words of Dr. Ivan Ribar: “I proclaim that AVNOJ ratifies the decision of the First Assembly of Representatives of Vojvodina regarding attachment of AP Vojvodina to the federal entity of Serbia”. (B. Petranic, C. Strbac, The History of Socialist Yugoslavia 2, Belgrade 1977, pages 78, 79, 80)

4. Following the resolutions, the executive committee of the People’s Assembly of Serbia, introduced the legislation regarding establishment of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

   It is important to summarize the order in which those formal resolutions were introduced:
   - Vojvodina declared its determination to unite with Serbia
   - The declaration was accepted at the highest level, in Yugoslavia the AVNOJ
   - Federal entity of Serbia approves the attachment.
THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF YUGOSLAVIA
(1946)

Article 52

The People’s Assembly consists of two houses – The Federal Council and the People’s Council

Article 54

Republics and autonomous provinces elect the People’s Council. Citizens of each republic elect 30, and from autonomous provinces 20 representatives respectively.

CHAPTER XIII

PEOPLE’S COURTS

Article 115

Courts in the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia are: The Supreme Court of FNRY, the supreme courts of republics and autonomous provinces, district and municipal courts.

Article 121

Judges of the Supreme Court of republics and autonomous provinces are elected and released by People’s Assembly of republic and assembly of autonomous province.

These regulatives of the FNR Yugoslavia Constitution from 1946, approve that Vojvodina was directly represented in the legislation on Yugoslav level (in Parliament) and was defined as a constitutive part of the Yugoslav Federation, and that it had a Supreme Court and judicial autonomy. These rights were taken away from Vojvodina. Vojvodina has no longer these rights.
Status of Vojvodina as an autonomous province within the People’s Republic of Serbia and within the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, was confirmed and guaranteed by constitutional and legislative regulations of the FNRY Constitution from 1946, the Serbian Constitution of 1947, and the Statute of AP Vojvodina from 1946. This historical agreement was abolished by Serbia in 1988.

The frameworks of the autonomy of the new federal, but highly centralized state were tight, but according to the Constitution from 1946, Vojvodina was guaranteed participation at the highest government levels, because as an autonomous province it had 20 representatives in Yugoslav Parliament, while individual republics had 30. Moreover, Vojvodina had its own Supreme Court and judicial autonomy, which is today challenged.

Those inherited rights were later taken away.

A Lesson Never Learnt

During the first attachment in 1918, Vojvodina entered the new state without explicit guarantees, but with a faith in (quote) “Freedom, equality and progress”.

By Stojan Protic, a leader of Radical Party from Belgrade, Vojvodina relinquished its self-management, with theatrical, but not so practical move and surrendered unconditionally to the central government. In 1945, Vojvodina joined Serbia with guaranteed autonomy, but the relationship between two entities was not distinguished clearly.

The first attachment was accomplished by one nation – the Serbs, guided by a national idea expecting equality based on national solidarity.

Followers of certain political idea, the communists, expecting equality based on communist solidarity, accomplished the second attachment. In 1944, Jovan Veselinov, the leader of the Communist Party of Vojvodina said the following: “…Serbia is not what it used to be. In Serbia, the politics are not the same like before the war. The people from Vojvodina were rightfully complaining about abuse from Belgrade which considered Vojvodina to be a “milk cow”. Now, the things are different. There is no hegemonism in charge in Serbia…”

However, the events showed completely different reality. Inequality and exploiting repeated and continued again. The actors of this attachment were either naive, insufficiently courageous or immature to the historical event. Because of that the people of Vojvodina immensely suffered and even today they are paying an enormous price.
The colonists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, arriving in Vojvodina in September of 1944. They were often coming from ruined homes and destroyed villages. For many of them, wheat bread in Vojvodina seemed like a holiday cake.

(Photograph: Museum of Vojvodina)

The agrarian reforms and colonization 1945-1948

Based on Resolutions of the Executive Committee of AVNOJ dated Nov. 21st 1944, and that of its legislation of Agrarian Reforms and colonization, the agricultural landscape in Vojvodina dramatically changed.

In May of 1946, the land reserve of Agrarian Reform was established comprising of 668,000 hectares of agricultural land. For the purpose of the agrarian reforms, the following amount of land has been taken away:

- from Germans 389,000 hectares
- from landowners 84,000 hectares
- from landowners above the prescribed limit 74,000 hectares
- from landowners who didn’t cultivate the land 42,000 hectares
- from the churches and monasteries 34,000 hectares
- etc.

Until 1948, 225,000 colonists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Kosovo – mostly Serbs (72%) and Montenegrins (18%), settled in Vojvodina. They received 235,000 hectares of land. Migration to Vojvodina, mostly from Bosnia, was continued in later decades, but it did not have an organized character. (Group of authors: Social and Economic Development of Vojvodina in New Yugoslavia, pages 27, 35, 53, 54, 56 – Institute for International Economic Relationships, Novi Sad 1986)
Colonists from Drvar (Bosnia) arriving at the railway station in Palanka (Photo: Museum of Vojvodina)

Distribution of documents of allotment of land to colonists in Pasicevo, November 3rd, 1946 (Photo: Museum of Vojvodina)
Military Administration in Vojvodina in 1944

By the order of the Supreme Commander Josip Broz Tito, at Nov. 17th 1944, Vojvodina was subjected to Military Administration. General Ivan Rukavina explained: “…military control of this region is very important in solving very tense inter-ethnic relations and to engage all economic and so-called enemy property, for the purpose of final liberation…”

In reality, retaliation was being prepared against Germans, Hungarians and others. On the October 18th 1944, an order was issued to impel all Germans into camps. Use of their property and all resources from Vojvodina were unlimited. The military administration ended in January of 1945.

Military administration, beside Vojvodina, was only established in Kosovo, in June of 1945 to crush an uprising of Ballista’s - Albanians who were against Kosovo joining Yugoslavia.

Germans are leaving Vojvodina... Autumn 1944, “Europe is leaving”. This is how Dr Zoran Ziletic, university professor from Belgrade, at the German Department, comments this photograph.
**Germans – exodus and retaliation**

By the decision of AVNOJ (Government of Yugoslavia) from Nov. 21st 1944, the Germans who lived in Yugoslavia - 500,000 (1931.) were declared, the complete nation, as an enemy. Germans in Vojvodina - 350,000 (1931.) lost their property by misappropriation.

The majority of Germans, about 200,000, retreated with the departing German army. The ones who remained, mostly those who did not feel guilty or did not collaborate with occupying administration, were subjected to collective responsibility, repression, and annihilation.

We are putting down the following data on the number of Germans from Yugoslavia and Vojvodina, who lost their lives, according to the book "Data about atrocities on the Germans in Yugoslavia – exodus and retaliation.

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"Germans are leaving. “We borrowed the horse and cart. Father was a taylor but he played an instrument to supplement the income. We buried the instrument and notes. We though we would come back.” Franz Keller from Filipovo, Vojvodina (Publication of Danube Basin Germans Rajnland Pfalca in Germany 1991. page 95)

Out of the total number of civilians who lost their lives in camps in Vojvodina, 65% were women and children. 23,968 women and 5,057 children died due to illness and exhaustion.

Later, some of the surviving Germans left for Austria and Germany, but some of them remained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Soldiers</th>
<th>Civilians</th>
<th>Civilians in camps 1944 - 1948</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Yugoslavia</td>
<td>85,399</td>
<td>26,064</td>
<td>59,335</td>
<td>48,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Vojvodina</td>
<td>73,794</td>
<td>19,814</td>
<td>53,980</td>
<td>44,432</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jews

The Jews, proportionally to their number, gave the greatest contribution to the development of economy and culture of Vojvodina. Prior to WW2 in Vojvodina lived about 19,000 Jews, after the war 3,670 and after the exodus about 1100.

Here are some of objects and factories owned by Jews in Vojvodina. In Novi Sad: “Albus” – soap factory (Sege brothers), “Alba” – glass factory (Lampel), “Metal Works od Vojvodina”, today’s “Pobeda” (Weisskopf), in Subotica, “Hartman and Konen” – meat industry, now “29 Novembar”, Ruf (Ruf Brothers) chocolate factory, now “Pionir”, “Sever” d.d. motor factory (Erne Irge), “Ferum” d.d. wagon factory and repair. “Zefir” – “The queen of furnaces” (Rosenfeld Brothers), cooking oil factory in Veliki Beckerek (Zrenjenin), 1856 oil factory of Jovan Lichental, the sugar factory in Zrenjanin was founded by Jewish capital, rug factory, today’s “Proleter”, Paper Factory in Sremksa Mitrovica (Spicer and Sabo), today’s “Matroz”, and the Jews were majority owners of sugar facory stocks from Vrbas,… cement factory and others. Orenstein Brothers have founded a “Union” cement factory in Beocin (Pavle Schosberger: Jews in Vojvodina, “Prometef” Novi Sad, 1998).

Even nowadays, most of the here mentioned companies are among the largest and most important ones in the whole economy of Vojvodina.
Synagogue, the pride of the Jews from Novi Sad.
Building foundation: 52.11m x 25.72m built in 1909. Architect: Lipot Baumhorn
Hungarians

Significant retaliation was carried out against Hungarian population in Vojvodina. The frequently mentioned number was about 20,000 of executed Hungarians, some war criminals, some innocent civilians.

A change in ethnic structure

German exodus and destruction, colonization and migration in Vojvodina have changed the ethnic structure of Vojvodina. The ethnic picture was stable for over 150 years, with no ethnic entity as a majority, changed in favor of Serbs. However, Vojvodina remained, to some degree, a specific multiethnic community.

Furthermore, in Vojvodina a mentality of tolerance and appreciated difference existed, achieved by many years of cohabitation. The ultimate animosity was brought from outside.

The obligatory buy-out of wheat in Backa Topola on August 10th 1946. (Photo: Museum of Vojvodina)
Compulsory purchase of agriculture products, 1941 - 1952

In the summer of 1945, an infamous decree announced a government purchase of wheat and other food surplus for 1945/46. By the decree, every household received a certain number of “responsibilities”, to give the food surplus in grain or livestock to government. This decree served the purpose to feed the rest of the war-ravaged country, but later as a class struggle against rich peasants – the “kulaks”. For this purpose, the decree was extended. Since the planned quantities, could not have been obtained by political agitation, the government resorted to repression with a “punishment” – a confiscation in part or of entire property.

„The seasons of 1945 through 1952, the most horrible years of theft, lawlessness and terror carried out by the police forces recruited outside Vojvodina.“ (D.Boarov, Political History of Vojvodina, Novi Sad 2001, pages 186,187)

From the beginning of the obligatory buy-off in 1945 and until the end in 1949, 1517 properties were confiscated in Republic of Serbia, of which 1,039 or two-thirds in Vojvodina. (Jelena Popov, Drama in the villages of Vojvodina 1945-1952. Novi Sad, 2002)

Ilustrations of oppression

In a four-episode documentary TV series from 1990, directed by Prvoslav Maric the following was cited: In Decani, Kosovo, there was a prison for political prisoners, but also contained some 4,500-5000 so called “zitars” (zito = wheat) (people imprisoned because they could not supply the wheat demanded by a government). Almost all of them were peasants from Vojvodina. They worked as lumberjacks and construction workers, building the road towards Albania, often starved without appropriate winter clothing. Visits from the relatives were not permitted neither the food shipments.

The people were dying, so the cemetery, called the “Wheat growers Cemetery”, was formed near Decani. Visits to the cemetery were forbidden and the families could not claim the bodies of deceased, until the end of prison term. One of the peasants who came back with frostbites said not to touch him because “everything is so decayed”. He died the next day. They took everything they could: machines, bicycles, stoves…but also the food, potatoes, beans…even the pictures from the walls. “While taking the pictures down, they even pulled the nails out…” To some warm clothing was taken away even though it was a month of October.

One peasant was intimidated by death threats, repeatedly taken in the front of death squad. He was forced to dig his own grave… One was beaten, so severely, he oozed blood. But, when he died, his family was told to declare his death as an accident, to say that he was stabbed by an ox.
Compulsory Collectivization

Legislative act of 1945 lowered the maximum ownership of permissible amount of cultivable land to 25-30 hectares. However, very soon the collectivization took place which further assaults on private property creating collective agricultural farms like “kolhoz” (co-operative) units in USSR.

Just like compulsory purchase, forcible collectivization was achieved by political propaganda and by physical and mental torture, where peasants from Vojvodina were often disproportionately subjected to it.

Collonists from Bosnia, co-operative members, on their way to harvest barley. The work enthusiasm existed, but the economic reasons were slight. That’s why these co-operatives did not last very long (Photo: Museum of Vojvodina)
From this chart, it can be seen that Vojvodina was subjected to maximum oppression during the collectivization. On consolidated land areas the production output decreased. Legislative act of 1953 allowed the peasants to opt out from the cooperative with a maximum of 10 to 15 hectares per household.

### Taxation of farm workers in People’s Republic of Serbia (without Kosovo) and participation of Vojvodina

*The tax example from 1946*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income tax</th>
<th>Central Serbia</th>
<th>Vojvodina</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of tax liabilities</td>
<td>623,208 (70%)</td>
<td>246,111 (30%)</td>
<td>869,329 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Income (in thousands)</td>
<td>5,663,000 (49%)</td>
<td>5,936,702 (51%)</td>
<td>11,599,702 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes Paid</td>
<td>474,788 (38%)</td>
<td>779,324 (62%)</td>
<td>1,254,112 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 30% of peasants and income of 51% of the total, the tax Vojvodina paid was 62%, while 70% of peasants and income of 49% of the total, the tax paid in Serbia was 38%. A peasant from Vojvodina had an income 2.5 times greater than the peasants in Serbia, but he paid 3.9 times more taxes.

(***Group of authors: Socio-economic development of Vojvodina in New Yugoslavia, pages. 142, 151, 159, The Institute for International Economic Relations, Novi Sad, 1986***)

In the short period, since 1945 and on and based on the new laws and legislations, Vojvodina suffered the most extensive shock, with immeasurable cultural, social and economic consequences:

- the largest change in land ownership
- the widest oppression during property buy-off and forcible collectivization in agriculture
- the largest economic exploitation and decline

- the largest change in ethnic and cultural population composition
Continued struggle with waters – Hydrosystem DTD

The Socialist gigantism, while taking its aim at Vojvodina, gave its positive contribution in struggle with waters. Construction of the largest hydro system in Vojvodina, the canal Danube-Tisza-Danube, started in 1955, lasting for two decades. The network of main canals is 930km long (664km navigable) connects 80 communities and flows through all large industrial centers.

Hydro system allows irrigation of 500,000 hectares and draining of about 1,000,000 hectares. System of open meliorating canals is 13,870 km long.
Economic setback of Vojvodina

The basic characteristic of economic development of Vojvodina and Yugoslavia, in the period from 1945 to 1990, is absolute setback realized by taking away the accumulations from Vojvodina. This was made possible by resolutions of federal institutions of Yugoslavia and Republic of Serbia as well as by consensus of other Yugoslav republics. Serbia did not resist this misuse of Vojvodina.

Because of its restricted political power Vojvodina itself could not resist nor protect itself.

In the first decade, after 1945, the duty of Vojvodina was to provide food for the population, to finance the reconstruction and industrialization. To what extent Vojvodina was subjected to drastic measures is well shown by the economic decline of -5.7% annually.

Mass collection of wheat in villages Dolovo and Gaj was also a political manifestation in accordance with socialistic spirit.

(Photo: Museum of Vojvodina)
The level of economic decline, 1948-1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall economy</td>
<td>-5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>-2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>-9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>-11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>-13.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the industrialization was the obsession of the communist regime, Vojvodina, despite the fact of its participation, was left out. It seemed logical to build agricultural machine factories in Vojvodina, as it was the main agricultural region with developed metal industry. Instead, the factories were built in Belgrade. (The Combine Factory “Zmaj” in Zemun and the Tractor Factory in Rakovica). With the expansion of “modern industry”, also called a “screwdriver industry”, Vojvodina was once again left out. The TV factories were built in Nis (Serbia) Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina); the refrigerator factories in Skopje (Macedonia), Cetinje (Montenegro), besides the factories in developed parts of the country such as Croatia (“RIZ”) and Slovenia (“Gorenje”).

The centers of political power in Serbia and Yugoslavia continued to marginalize Vojvodina forcing it to remain a low-production agricultural region. Even such low production was channeled into other branches of economy by means of crude administrative measures such as excessive taxation, confiscation, etc… Eventually, THE METODS CHANGED, BUT THE OUTFLOW OF CAPITAL CONTINUED.

Removal of the industrial capacities from Vojvodina

Existing factories were dismantled and removed. Tens of those objects and factories moved to Serbia, and some other parts even in “brotherly” Albania, after the Second World War. The reason behind such move was the precaution in case of eventual attack by USSR. However, the taken property was never returned, nor paid for. There is a belief that some of the dismantled factories have been sent to rich Slovenia as well. But, there is a solid evidence that most of the equipment went to Serbia.

AN EXAMPLE OF CITY OF SUBOTICA

Factories and associated machinery that have been removed: The foundry “Partizan”, the soap factory was moved to “Merima” in Krusevac, Serbia; the very important factory of Vitriol “Zorka” was moved to “Zorka” in Sabac, Serbia, two large industrial mills, hat factory “Roth” was moved to Jagodina, Serbia; factory of ice chests “Goldner” was moved to Rakovica, Serbia, where the new factory was formed called “Jugostroj”, the factory of metal furnaces “Zefir”, clothing factory “Merkur”, factory of artificial marble was moved to Batajnica, Serbia, Railroad Telegraph-Telephone Workshop was moved to Batajnica, Serbia, disbanded were the factories of railroad engines and wagons, several factories of starch which supplied 80% of total production in Yugoslavia, etc…

(Reported at the Economic Consultations of Vojvodina in 1969, Novi Sad – Socio-Political development of Vojvodina in the New Yugoslavia, page 62.)
Between 1945 and 1951, without any reimbursement, from Vojvodina were taken 59 industrial companies and distributed to other parts of the country: one foundry, two power plants, four chemical factories, seven timber factories, five print-works, two automated brick factories, ten hemp factories, one sugar and one oil factory and 24 mills.

Out of 66 factories received from Germans, as reparations for war damages, Vojvodina did not receive anything. (D. Boarov, Political History of Vojvodina, Novi Sad, 2001, page 198.)

Rise and fall of railroads in Vojvodina

By 1918, Hungary established a network of railroads in Vojvodina. In 1857, the railroad line Szeged - Kikinda - Temisoara was completed, connecting Banat with Budapest and further to Europe. After the Second World War the part of this line, from Banatski Arandjelovac to Valkanj, was dismantled and given to Albania, severing the connection with Segedin. That was the end of the former first railroad line in former Yugoslavia.

Characteristics of railroad network in Vojvodina:
- The best in the country and in the most of developed in Europe.
- In 1970, the total length of the railroad network was 1,854km.

Length of railroad lines per 10,000 inhabitants:
Yugoslavia 5.1km
Rumania 5.7km
Serbia 4.9km
Western Germany 5.2km
Vojvodina 9.5km
Switzerland 4.8km
Austria 8.1km
Belgium 4.5km
France 7.5km
Great Britain 3.8km

(Concept of long-term development of SAP Vojvodina, Belgrade Institute of Economics 1971, page 291)

Due to development of automobile traffic, but mostly due to neglect and lack of investments, the railroad network in Vojvodina has almost been ruined. On some main routes, the railroads were modernized, but the rest of routes continue to deteriorate. Ten lines 257km long were dismantled and decommissioned; four lines 75,9km long are no longer used for transport of people or goods; one line, 32.8km long, is no longer used for freight transport. 368, 5 km of railroad lines is out of commission.
In the study “Concept of long-term development of Vojvodina” from the Belgrade Institute of Economics 1971, in foreword – “General overview of the economic development of Vojvodina”, member of Serbian Academy of Sciences, Dr. Kosta Mihailovic reports, “The Belgrade Institute of Economics returns to problems regarding development of Vojvodina for the third time …

The first study uncovered the DRAMA in this region from 1945 to 1952. (Underlined by author)

Here is what academician Dr Mihailovic says about the following period:

“The calculations concerning agriculture production, based on price index from 1966, for the period 1952-1969, showed that the accumulations from agriculture were used for other eco-

Permanent outflow of accumulations

A drama of this region - Vojvodina in a colonial status!

Loading of wheat into the warehouses. This photo represents the symbol of Vojvodina: peasants, like ants, loading enormous government warehouse with their own wheat, their own sweat and labor – all free. First for the reconstruction, then for industrialization, and finally, for social peace of the privileged working class, but also for many re-exporters, such as “Progress” led by Milosevic’s Prime Minister Marjanovic, to sell it at triple prices. (Photo: Museum of Vojvodina)
nomic purposes. The amount is over 6000 billion of (old) dinars from 1966, or 5 billion dollars! Of that amount, the agriculture of Serbia participated with 48%! This number is shocking and one may ask how this is possible?"

“The main question arises: How all this affected Vojvodina and at what cost and consequences? There are no precise calculations, but considering the structure of agricultural production and large market surplus in Vojvodina, one could think that the entire amount of money came from Vojvodina!”

“Of course, the loss of capital was even greater, if we take into consideration the period between 1945 and 1952, where the outflow was comparably higher. It was the period with abnormal economic relations, where outflow of capital and goods was carried out by very direct and drastic measures.”

“The conclusion is that Vojvodina contributed enormously to creation and accumulation of wealth in Yugoslavia while loosing foundation for its own development.”

“Other regions, either developed or not, got used to low prices of agricultural goods and that was the way to solve own capital problems and the living standard of their citizens. Because of such actions, one could seriously ask if the Vojvodina was the victim of DOMESTIC COLONIALISM. This thesis could be very well documented and successfully argued”. (Underlined by author)

The long term of exploitation left not only the economic consequences, but also psychological consequences. Dr Mihailovic states “the lack of desire for progress” in Vojvodina “which is manifested through state of depression”.

The Bible says: “... because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop.” (Holman Christian Standard Bible, New Testament, 1 Co 9:10)

The absence of such a hope during a long period, as in Vojvodina, results in depression and lack of desire for progress.

**Divestment**

The investments in Vojvodina were largely insufficient. In the period of 1947/74, domestic gross investments were lower in Vojvodina compared to the rest of the country, 28.8% in Yugoslavia, 23.6% in Vojvodina. In the normal economy, the investments are usually higher in more developed regions. This was not the case in Vojvodina. Economic analyst, D. Boarov called this period “a theft of Vojvodina’s accumulations, lasting as long as 27 years”.

The rate of growth from 1947 to 1975 was below the average of that in Yugoslavia, which was against the economic logic given the fact that

“A theft of Vojvodina’s accumulations”. The rate of gross investments from 1947/74.
Vojvodina was a region above the average. The gross domestic product was, in 1947/64, 7.1 index points in Yugoslavia, 6.1; in 1960/64, 8.6 in Yugoslavia, 6.3 in Vojvodina, and finally in 1966/75, 5.6 in Yugoslavia, 5.0 in Vojvodina. (Dr T. Bandin, Social-economic development of Vojvodina, Novi Sad, 1978, pages 94, 95).

In the effort to get out of this “iron grip”, to get out of bad relationship, to stop further degradation, Vojvodina demanded changes in the political system. This was rather received with disagreement, especially from the leadership of the Republic of Serbia.

The rate of growth below the average in Yugoslavia

The Constitution
of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1974

The constitutional amendments from 1967, 1968 and 1970, started the changes in political system, preparing the grounds for the new Constitution. The Assembly of Yugoslavia introduced the new Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia with consent of republic assemblies and assemblies of autonomous provinces. The new Constitution gave more rights to the republics, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, but also to the autonomous provinces.

The rights of the two autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija, were on the level of Yugoslavia almost identical as to those of republics, but at the same time those two provinces were parts within Republic of Serbia.

The Constitution affirmed the principle of the checks and balances between the republics, as well as their independence and responsibilities for their own development and for the development of the common state of Yugoslavia. This was a turning point for Vojvodina in a sense of politics, economy and culture. A thirty-year stagnation was about to stop.
Autonomy and economic takeoff of Vojvodina

By acquiring the autonomy, Vojvodina now has the chance to stop the stagnation and, to some extent, compensate the losses. In that period, like never before, so many different structures were built in Vojvodina.

The figures from the Chamber of Commerce of Vojvodina, given in a publication by Dimitrije Boarov, “The autonomy pays off”, Novi Sad, 2002. Here are some of the accomplishments from that period:


in Backa Topola ("Topiko"), "Juko" in Zitiste and "Klanica" in Plandiste.

Capacities for pork meat processing increased from 1,800,000 to over 3,500,000 domestic swine. In beef industry capacities were enlarged from 180,000 to 400,000 cattle.

During its true autonomy, Vojvodina with 2,000,000 inhabitants, in only one decade, from 1971 to 1981, bypassed the river Danube with six new bridges. (Bezdan, Beska, Backa Palanka, Kovan - Smederevo, Novi Sad, Bogojevo).

Also new hospitals were built and existing ones refurbished in Sremska Kamenica, Novi Sad, Sombor, Subotica, Zrenjanin, Sremska Mitrovica, Vrsac, Senta, Ruma and other cities… including construction of over one hundred schools and pre-school facilities.

All this was accomplished by enormous investments and sacrifice of people of Vojvodina. From 1974, the investments in Vojvodina increased from 22.6% to 31.1%. About 23% of revenue was used for accumulation and future investments, while in Yugoslavia that amount was only 17-19%. Vojvodina saved much more money than other parts of the country, sometimes at the expense of people’s wages. For example, only 25% of income was paid towards salaries, while in other parts of the country that amount was about 32%.

The data reflects the building activity in Vojvodina and denounces the claims that “everything was invested in Novi Sad”, claiming that “Belgrade Centralism was substituted with “Novi Sad Centralism” implying that people of Vojvodina basically are not getting anything by gaining autonomy. The facts imply just the opposite, confirming that the Government of Vojvodina, led by agile president Nikola Kmezic, from 1974 to 1982 (descendant of colonists from Bosnia after 1919), paid special attention even to the distribution of funds, ensuring equal and proportional development of the Province.

From the above mentioned data we can draw a most important conclusion, namely that:

during the highest level of autonomy, Vojvodina accomplished the highest economic development.

This is one of the most significant historical experiences for Vojvodina.

The above mentioned statements are illustrated by the following data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td></td>
<td>00,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia Herzegovina</td>
<td>67,3</td>
<td>65,5</td>
<td>69,8</td>
<td>+2,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>77,1</td>
<td>79,3</td>
<td>79,5</td>
<td>+2,4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>124,7</td>
<td>126,0</td>
<td>122,0</td>
<td>-2,7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>69,7</td>
<td>66,0</td>
<td>67,8</td>
<td>-1,9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>194,0</td>
<td>200,8</td>
<td>199,5</td>
<td>+5,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Serbia</td>
<td>96,6</td>
<td>98,9</td>
<td>97,8</td>
<td>+1,2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>33,6</td>
<td>28,2</td>
<td>30,8</td>
<td>-2,8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodina</td>
<td>107,8</td>
<td>113,9</td>
<td>114,6</td>
<td>+6,8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The largest relative growth was achieved by Vojvodina with 6.8 index points, followed by Slovenia with 5.5 index points.

The following table shows the difference in index points between Vojvodina, Croatia, Slovenia and Central Serbia, for given period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia more than Vojvodina</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia more than Vojvodina</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodina more than Central Serbia</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern of difference in domestic product per capita for the given period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia more than Vojvodina</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia more than Vojvodina</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodina more than Central Serbia</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Political and economic independence of Vojvodina, market relations and system of checks and balances between the republics, facilitated faster development. The ever-present stagnation that lasted over decades, was about to stop. Vojvodina started to gain on Croatia, reducing the negative difference with Slovenia, but also getting further away from Serbia. In Serbia, this was perceived as an unwelcome development.

Note: In the upper chart, production per capita in 1986 was greater in Croatia than in Vojvodina by 6.1%, in 2001 the difference increased nine times or 55%. On April 17th, the Radio Free Europe reported that gross production per capita in Vojvodina was $2000 while in Croatia $4400. It appears that Croatia, emerged from the war, with loss of 30% of its capacities, was developing faster than Vojvodina in times of peace, under the iron grip of Milosevic’s regime.
The bridge at Backa Palanka, 728 meters, built in 1971. Contractor: “Mostogradnja” Belgarde

The bridge at Bezdan, 651 meters, built in 1974. Contractor: “Mostogradnja” Belgarde
The bridge at Beska, 2, 212 meters, built in 1975. Contractor: “Mostogradnja” Belgrade

The “Liberty Bridge” in Novi Sad, 1,311 meters, built in 1981. Contractor: “Mostogradnja” Belgarde

The bridge at Bogojevo, 670 meters, built in 1980. Contractor: “Mostogradnja” Belgarde
The signatures on the new Constitution just barely dried out, when the political leadership of Republic of Serbia in 1977, started to challenge the legitimacy of the autonomous provinces. (Blue Book, 1977)

The main complaint was that the provinces underestimated and made decisions for Central Serbia, but not vice versa. This claim was wrong.

Firstly, the number of representatives from Central Serbia outnumbered the delegates from both provinces due to higher population in Serbia. The combined numbers of representatives, from both provinces with 4 million inhabitants, could not outvote the representatives from Central Serbia with 5.8 million inhabitants.

Secondly, by the decree of Article 343 of the Constitution of Republic of Serbia, from 1974 the following was set: “In the relations and matters regarding territory of Republic without provinces...the decision is considered valid if it was achieved by majority vote...by representatives elected in the territory where the decision shall be enforced”. Therefore, in the Assembly of Republic of Serbia without provinces, or Central Serbia, and regarding laws and other matters, only representatives from Central Serbia can vote.

Thirdly, a complaint that Serbia could not establish its own Constitution without an agreement with provinces is correct, but also, it is correct that the Constitutions from the provinces have to be in accordance with the Serbian Constitution, but not vice versa. The same principle is applied at the federal level: The Constitution of Yugoslavia required an agreement form all federal units, but the Constitutions of the republics could have been established without an agreement from the Federal Assembly. This principle was not questioned by Serbia.

The Constitutional position of the provinces was not completely comprehensible. By the Constitution of 1974, the provinces were treated as federal units, like republics, but in the Republic of Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija were autonomous provinces without sufficient distinction of legal authority between Serbia and provinces. This problem could have been resolved in two ways: In non-democratic way, by abolition of all acquired rights, or in democratic way, by federalization of Republic of Serbia, which would mean a solution. In desire to “equalize” itself with other republics without provinces, Serbia chose the first way, undemocratic; seeking an abolition of autonomous provinces. But Serbia conveniently forgot that this “inequality” was chosen by the decision of the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, accepting attachment of Vojvodina as an autonomous province back in 1945.
Autonomy pays off - confirmed by historical experience. Panorama of Vojvodina
Chapter VII
The mass meeting in Vojvodina in 1988, having for its goal the abolition of autonomy, which ended successfully for the opponents of autonomy. This was the beginning of disintegration of Yugoslavia.
Based upon previous matters and similar arguments and with help of strong and advanced propaganda organized by the Serbian Government, numbers of “spontaneous” demonstrations were organized across Vojvodina in summer of 1988. Particular help was provided from participants from outside of Vojvodina. On October 6th 1988, the legitimate government of Vojvodina, was overturned under pressure, with goal to completely abolish the autonomy which ultimately happened. Because of yogurt, given to the demonstrators which they threw on political figures from the government of Vojvodina, the name “Yogurt Revolution” remained.

The Constitution of Republic of Serbia from 1990 – the beginning of disintegration of Yugoslavia

The attempt to centralize Yugoslavia, once again, under the leadership of Serbia, collapsed at the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. In September 28th of 1990, Republic of Serbia affirmed a new Constitution. This was the first secessionist constitution in SFR Yugoslavia. The Republic of Serbia placed itself above Yugoslavia and destroyed the federal structure of the country, even though Serbia accused other republics for secession.

It is confirmed by the following:

Decree of the Article 135, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of Republic of Serbia worded like this:

“When the actions of Federal organs, or organs of any other republics, and against the regulations prescribed by the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia, violate the rights and interests of Republic of Serbia without due compensation, the republic organs (of Serbia) will act accordingly to protect its interests”.

Republic of Serbia arbitrarily reserved the right not to recognize the acts of Federation, breaching the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia.

Moreover, the Constitution of Republic of Serbia of 1990, by partial and unlawful decision, abolished the rights guaranteed to Autonomous Provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija by Federal Constitution from 1974. Once again, Serbia placed itself above the Federation.

The political rights from Autonomous Vojvodina, guaranteed by the Constitution of SFR Yu-
goslavia from 1974 were simply abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia in 1990. 

1. DISTINCTIVENESS OF SOVEREIGNTY – By the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia, sovereignty was divided and it was split up on three levels: federation, republics, provinces.

2. STATUS OF FEDERAL UNIT – the federal structure of Yugoslavia consists of six republics and two provinces established in the Constitution, founded on “equal participation of all republics and provinces at the federal level”, while by the Constitution of Serbia, Vojvodina belongs to the “territorial organization”, along with municipalities and “Town of Belgrade” (The basic principles I, article 4 and other...)

3. TERRITORY OF THE AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE - guaranteed by the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia which cannot be changed without the consent of the province (article 5/1) while by the Constitution of Serbia, the Assembly of Serbia determines the territory of province by simple majority disregarding the will of the province.

4. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE – although guaranteed by the
Abolition of autonomy; meeting in Vojvodina, 1988. The big poster says: “Brothers. Kolasin is with you in your struggle against counterrevolution…” (Kolasin, a town in Montenegro) In the background, a typical settlement in Vojvodina: Two churches, an Orthodox and a Catholic, both built in Baroque style. (Photo: Jaroslav Pap)

Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia (article 206/1, 378, 389/1 and other...), was abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia. Instead, the highest act is a Statute (article 206/1) on the community level.

5. THE LAWS OF AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE – the right of the provinces to introduce own laws, guaranteed by the SFR Yugoslavia Constitution, (article 207/I, II, 268/II, III, 384/I, II, III, 387/I act 9, 389/I and others...) but abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia allowing only lower acts and decisions (paragraph 109) (auto-nomous; greek – own laws)

6. PRESIDENCY OF AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE - guaranteed by the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia; abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE - guaranteed by the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia (article 375 acts 6, 378/
II act 4 and other...), abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia.

8. SUPREME COURT OF AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE - guaranteed by the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia (article 371) abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia

9. PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE OF AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE - guaranteed by the Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia (article 373/III) abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia


12 REVENUE, TAXES AND FUNDS OF AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE – financial independence, health care and pension funds and other... the right to participate in the establishment of tax code of Yugoslavia, all guaranteed by Constitution of SFR Yugoslavia (article 265/II, amendment XXX, act 2), was abolished by the Constitution of Republic of Serbia.

13 STATISTICS OFFICE OF VOJVODINA was one of the first institutions abolished by Serbia after the “Yogurt Revolution”, for one obvious reason, to make Vojvodina blind.

In fact, Republic of Serbia legalized the abolition of autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo. The populist parole of UNIFIED SERBIA was the political promise used by Slobodan Milosevic to get in power. For Kosovo and Metohija that meant - the apartheid, for Vojvodina - the exploitation like never before. Authorities tried to convince Vojvodina that “the income remains where it’s created”, but it was nothing more than deception.

The proof about this is in the picture showing the Clinical Center.

An unfinished Clinical Center in Novi Sad – This building is a symbol and a warning. The building of this pretentious project of 32,500 square meters, started in 1975 with Vojvodina’s resources from the period of real autonomy. It was going to be a top-class health care center for all citizens of Vojvodina. The construction stopped when the infamous Constitution of Republic of Serbia was announced in 1990. Naive skeptics often ask how much the autonomy costs, thinking about the expenditure of the provincial administration.

The answer is that it costs far less than lack of autonomy. This picture is a living proof. (Photo D. Jankov)

The all-inclusive Serbian centralism, imposed by the Constitution of 1990, ensured an absolute superiority of Serbia over Vojvodina, exploitation and unlimited possession of Vojvodina’s resources, unimaginable since 1918 and only comparable to occupation during the Second World War and military administration of 1944.

Forum V-21 – The data

Based on official statistical data, The Forum V-21 NGO from Novi Sad, compiled the publication Documents about Vojvodina from 1989 to 2002 (Novi Sad 2002). The following excerpt is presented by I - V:

I. THE LOSS OF DOMESTIC PRODUCTION, SERBIA – VOJVODINA

Vojvodina lost 8.4 billion dollars more than Central Serbia.

In 1989, Vojvodina’s domestic production was valued at 6.095 billions of dollars, or 3,010 dollars per capita, while in Central Serbia it was 12.169 billion of dollars, or 2,096 dollars per capita. “In the year preceding the loss of autonomy, production output of Vojvodina was per capita 50% greater than of Central Serbia”. In 1999, the domestic production in Vojvodina was 2.534 billion of dollars or 1,169 per capita, while at the same time, in Serbia, production output was 5,089 billion of dollars or 880 dollars per capita. The difference in income remained, but Vojvodina paid much higher price of stagnation caused by wars and sanctions.

From 1989 until 1999, Vojvodina lost 27.6 billion of dollars (calculated by the base index of 1989) while in Serbia the loss was at 54.5 billion of dollars. Per capita, Vojvodina lost $13,578 and Serbia $ 9,432. In other terms, the loss in Vojvodina was 44% higher than that of Serbia for the same period, so Vojvodina lost 8.4 billion dollars more than Central Serbia.

If we consider the fact that between 1952 and 1969, Vojvodina’s agriculture lost 2.5 billions of dollars and if “one could seriously ask if the Vojvodina was the victim of domestic colonialism, with documented and successfully argued thesis” as stated by Dr Mihailovic, then, what one could possibly say about the loss of 8.4 billions of dollars in only 11 years?

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, no one could blame Croatia nor Slovenia for this, because now, Vojvodina has become the “inner colony” only under the dominance of Serbia.
"The debt of Vojvodina was low, measured against the participation in domestic production, and illustrates Vojvodina’s sober politics regarding debt. The attempt to burden Vojvodina with somebody else’s debt, was just one of the measures to harm people of Vojvodina” (Documents about Vojvodina, page 8)

Concerning own domestic production, the debt of Vojvodina was at 16%, in Serbia twice as much, or 33%, the debt per capita in Serbia was 30% higher than in Vojvodina.

One of the leaders for autonomous Vojvodina, Nenad Canak is well remembered by his famous question: “Whose money is ours”? To paraphrase Mr. Canak with similar question: “Whose debt is yours”? The answer to these two questions is: OUR MONEY IS YOURS, YOUR DEBT IS OURS.

In five years, from 1991 to 1996, the average investment per capita was: In Vojvodina $170; In Serbia $230, or 35% more than in Vojvodina.

IV. TAXATION IN SERBIA AND VOJVODINA

The taxes (extra profit, individual businesses, agriculture and property), the situation as of October 27. 2001:

“Taking into account the inflation, reprogram of taxes and write-offs, one could not talk about people’s equality...While talking about taxes, the most important source of income for survival of the government, one could ask who is really in favor of the benefit for our fatherlands” (Documents about Vojvodina, page 30)
The unfinished Clinical Center in Novi Sad – detail. If the autonomy of Vojvodina had not been forcibly abolished, this would not have been a deserted concrete skeleton, overgrown by the trees. But, the autonomy was abolished for the purpose of taking away money from the citizens of Vojvodina. (photo: D. Jankov)

V. NUMBER OF CITIZENS OF LEGAL AGE CHARGED FOR FELONIES AND CRIMES IN 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Out of 1000 inhabitatnts</th>
<th>Bodily harm/ Homicide Law suits</th>
<th>Out of 1000 inhabitatnts</th>
<th>Libel Law suits</th>
<th>Out of 1000 inhabitatnts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>8.108</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.643</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.462</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodina</td>
<td>1.442</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facts about indictments and taxation, compared to Vojvodina, people in Serbia have greater tendencies for lawsuits, but less obligatory habits such as to pay taxes. It also shows that there are specific differences between people in Vojvodina and Serbia in culture and mentality.
Vojvodina was founded and owes its existence to a complex system of rivers and canals, which must be constantly maintained. The absurd of “united Serbia” is perhaps best represented by this example:

Due to floods, in 1999 and 2000, some 3000 objects and houses were damaged or destroyed. Thousands of acres were under the water. Damages estimated at 500,000,000 Euros, which is far more than what would cost to maintain the hydro-system. The main cause for this is that greater part of the funds otherwise collected for flood defenses overflow into Belgrade and only a fraction was used to maintain the infrastructure of the hydro-system. Otherwise, the damage could have been avoided or at least – minimized.

The example of community of Zabalj: In 1999 the total amount collected for maintenance of hydro-system was 2,300,000 dinars. Only 17% or 400,000 dinars was used for protection against the
floods. *(Statement made by the president of Zabalj community, Djordje Djukic)*


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Necessary work range %</th>
<th>Planned work range %</th>
<th>Work range done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27,5</td>
<td>24,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>31,8</td>
<td>36,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44,8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39,4</td>
<td>28,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>36,3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44,8</td>
<td>30,23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, from 1991 to 2000, less than one half of the work was planned in advance and less than one third of the necessary work was done. Bearing in mind that 46% of the territory in Vojvodina is below the level of the great rivers Danube, Tisza and Sava, it is clear that this literally means destruction of Vojvodina in its foundations.

So to speak, it was a war decade for Serbia. In that decade, however, the new business building “Srbija Vode” (Serbia Waters Company) costing several million dollars was erected in Belgrade.

I have no data about how much money was collected in Vojvodina between 1991 - 2000 for drainage purposes, what is the case for Zabalj municipality, but it is well known that up until the abolition of autonomy in Vojvodina, 95% - 98% of the money had been collected and every penny was spent as earmarked.

*Data taken from “Vode Vojvodine” 2004.*

**The example of extreme centralization – Kikinda 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The tax base</th>
<th>Paid in dinars</th>
<th>Refunded in Kikinda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales tax</td>
<td>156,223,504</td>
<td>10,767,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service tax</td>
<td>190,196,927</td>
<td>13,042,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excise</td>
<td>1,565,117</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra profit tax</td>
<td>3,735,547</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income tax</td>
<td>142,206,478</td>
<td>10,054,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property tax</td>
<td>14,546,617</td>
<td>3,868,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>508,474,235</td>
<td>37,733,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refunded %</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kikinda was “refunded” more than 7.42% of money through financing of health care and education, etc. but this is an example of enormous concentration of money and political clout from Belgrade. *(Data: Township of Kikinda)*
The theft though taxation continues after October 5th 2000

After the fall of Slobodan Milosevic regime, the new authorities kept the main levers of highly centralized governmental apparatus of Republic of Serbia. It is shown through the example of theft through taxation in four largest cities (Belgrade excluded) in Republic of Serbia, with the indication number of inhabitants from the 2002 census report. Novi Sad 300,000 inhabitants, Nis 250,000 inhabitants, Kragujevac 175,000 inhabitants and Subotica 150,000 inhabitants. The Legislative act determines yearly amount of taxes to be paid into the central treasury of the Republic of Serbia and the amount that will be returned from the government. The tax law about tax obligations of cities and townships throughout the Republic of Serbia was published in “Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia” No. 15 dated March 29th 2002, with the aim to (quotation) “equalize” tax obligation for 2002.
As one can see, the percentage refunded to city of Nis is twice as much than to city of Novi Sad. (12.5: 6.2). The percentage refunded to city of Kragujevac is even 7.5 times larger compared to the refund to the city of Subotica (31.9 : 4.2).

From Novi Sad, the amount taken is 2.2 times higher than the amount taken from Nis., (6,979,000,000 : 3,124,000,000). Novi Sad receives back only 9.7% more than city of Nis (390,000,000 : 432,000,000)

The same legislative act was passed for the year 2003 and published in “Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia” No. 88 dated December 23, 2003. The following tax obligations were established for 2003:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>To be taken from the city (dinars)</th>
<th>From the amount taken to be returned (dinars)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novi Sad (Vojvodina)</td>
<td>6,979,000,000</td>
<td>432,000,000</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subotica (Vojvodina)</td>
<td>2,365,000,000</td>
<td>99,000,000</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nis (Serbia)</td>
<td>3,124,000,000</td>
<td>390,000,000</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kragujevac (Serbia)</td>
<td>1,107,000,000</td>
<td>353,000,000</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of money returned to city of Nis is 2.2 times larger than refunds to Novi Sad (10.6: 4.9), and the percentage of money returned to Kragujevac is 6.48 times higher than the amount of money returned to Subotica (26.0 : 3.8).

Novi Sad contributes 2.3 times more than Nis (14,332,000,000 : 6,032,000,000) but it receives back only 9.0% more than Nis (639,000,000 : 702,000,000).

In 2002 and 2003, Subotica was taxed twice as much as Kragujevac, but refund in Kragujevac was 72% higher than in Subotica (in 2003, 555,000,000 : 153,000,000).

The joint contribution of Novi Sad and Subotica, containing 22% of the population of Vojvodina and joint contribution of Nis and Kragujevac from Serbia, from the total amounts given and returned, equally in 2002 and 2003, the following calculation emerges:

NOVI SAD and SUBOTICA, contribute with 70% of the total amount of tax, but it receives back only 40%

NIS and KRAGUJEVAC, contribute with 30% of the total amount of tax, but it receives back 60%.

This drastic re-distribution of money, which is beyond the normal relations of solidarity between Vojvodina and Serbia, is forced upon Vojvodina because of inappropriate representation in Assembly of Serbia. This re-distribution of funds is not founded on any objective criteria or laws.
Law does not contain any criteria and distribution of funds is completely arbitrary and only illusory legal, considering the fact that this self-will is formally “dressed” into law.

Three things are important regarding the numbers mentioned:

First, the claim that in democratic Serbia, with market economy where everyone is equal, Vojvodina does not need autonomy because there will not be any exploitation. Obviously, those claims are not true because the government can easily find a way for exploitation.

Second, townships and cities from Vojvodina cannot protect themselves from this kind of exploitation, but only under the umbrella of political subjectivisms of Vojvodina.

Third, this autonomous political rights on the regional level, cannot protect Vojvodina. Vojvodina has to have a particular political subjectivism and political rights, on the level of Republic of Serbia in the Assembly, otherwise Vojvodina will be outvoted.

As it was said before, after the fall of Milosevic on October 5th 2000, the new authorities kept the main forms of highly centralized governmental apparatus, including legislation about tax refund to cities and townships. To show this continuation the following overview of the last three years of Milosevic’ regime is presented (1998, 1999, 2000) and first three years of new regime (2001, 2002, 2003):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Average 3 years</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Average 3 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1998/00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average 3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novi Sad</td>
<td>6,5</td>
<td>11,8</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>(7,7)</td>
<td>12,1</td>
<td>6,2</td>
<td>4,9</td>
<td>(7,7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subotica</td>
<td>10,4</td>
<td>9,8</td>
<td>9,4</td>
<td>(9,8)</td>
<td>10,3</td>
<td>4,2</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>(6,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nis</td>
<td>18,0</td>
<td>17,8</td>
<td>15,1</td>
<td>(16,9)</td>
<td>18,4</td>
<td>12,5</td>
<td>10,6</td>
<td>(13,8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kragujevac</td>
<td>44,0</td>
<td>41,4</td>
<td>39,9</td>
<td>(41,7)</td>
<td>48,0</td>
<td>31,4</td>
<td>26,0</td>
<td>(35,4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39,9</td>
<td>(41,7)</td>
<td>48,0</td>
<td>31,4</td>
<td>26,0</td>
<td>(35,4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The collected data based on the sample of the four largest cities, except Belgrade, show that for the last three years of Milosevic regime those cities received more money than from the new democratic government in the first three years of their governing. These are important and surprising indicators that the new government did not start to dismantle the old centralized system. Instead, the new authorities even increased the centralization in this domain, for as much as 17.3 % (76.1 : 63.0).

The state of Serbia concentrates large sums of money becoming a distributor, instead of allowing the market to do its job.
Cement factory in Beocin – a pearl of Vojvodina’s economy, founded in 1839. Budapest and Vienna were built with cement from Beocin. Suez and Panama canal were built with cement from this factory as well, skyscrapers in New York, London, and the canals Danube-Tisza-Danube, power plant Djerdap, Sava Centre in Belgrade and other.

Privatization – a new attack on Vojvodina – selling of Beocin’s cement factory

The Beocin’s cement factory (BFC) was founded in 1839. It was the largest in Austro-Hungarian empire and Balkans. Pesta and Vienna were built with cement from Beocin. Suez and Panama canal were also built with cement from this factory, skyscrapers in New York, London, but also hydro system Danube-Tisza – Danube, power plant Djerdap, Sava Centre in Belgrade and other. It is the oldest cement factory in Europe and one of the rare factories located on the large waterway on the banks of the Danube. The factory provided the housing for its employees, medical center, daycare center, volunteer firefighters... If anything else could be considered as a pearl of Vojvodina’s industry, then the Beocin factory is certainly the one.

After 163 years of existence, the factory was sold in 2002 to a French company “La Farge” which became owner of 70% of the shares. The basic right and crucial experience of the Eastern European countries in transition, is not to sell “family jewels” to foreigners.

President of the Ljubljana University in Slovenia, Dr Joze Mencinger (the newspaper “Dansas” Jan. 18, 19, 2003, taken from the newspaper Mladina), expressed very convincing substantia-
tion about this occurrence: “The simple logic of an owner is that a peasant who sells his property can only become a servant, or a daily laborer on his former property. He could even live better than before, but this does not change the fact that by selling his property he did not become a strategic partner to a new owner. He actually lost a PROFIT and the RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS. That is why I am perplexed why our government constantly asserts that ownership is not important and that employment is only what matters the most... When I talk about the property that should not have been sold, I believe that property or factories do become more productive, but only to the new (foreign) owners, far less to the domestic economy... THE SALES BENEFIT WILL BE LOWER THAN THE LOST PROFITS”. (Underlined by author)

On the public tribune organized by NGO “Vojvodina Club” on May 23rd 2001, in Novi Sad, director of Beocin Cement Factory (BFC) Zeljko Copkov said that initially the government of Serbia refused the sale of 60% of BFC to the workers of BFC which they could rightfully purchase, according to the law. The government of Slobodan Milosevic took over the sales proceedings, but the new government, established after the October 5th 2000, concluded the sale, with big affair and impression that BFC MUST BE SOLD to the French. On the same tribune, Dimitrije Boarov, an economic analyst said, “by selling the cement factory we are paying the benevolence of the French”. (Herald of Vojvodina Club, Novi Sad, Jun. 2001).

There are reasons for gratitude. When asked by the press, while visiting Yugoslavia, whether he really saved the bridges of Belgrade during the NATO bombings 1999, the French president Chirac answered: “France had considerable air forces employed during the NATO campaign, and in accordance with that, France had a right of veto. I used that right... I thought that destruction of the bridges is unnecessary and even insulting... and people of Belgrade would be punished by such act”. (Danas, Dec. 10. 2001). The NATO bombs went around Belgrade, but they hit bridges in Vojvodina at Beska and all three bridges in Novi Sad. The question if the destruction of bridges in Vojvodina was not “necessary” or “insulting” was not asked, not by the Belgrade press, nor the French president.

What a big irony and humiliation for Vojvodina! To save Belgrade’s bridges, Vojvodina’s bridges were destroyed. Belgrade’s “gratitude” towards France was expressed by forced sale of one of the best factories of Vojvodina.

This also shows that the colonial status of Vojvodina is not only economically, but morally, too, wrong and unacceptable.

Centralism, Unitarism, and conflict of interests of Vojvodina and Serbia

Centralism and unitarism are the forms and manners of organization of Republic of Serbia, which allows political dominance, with objective of extracting money and accumulations from Vojvodina. All this is shown by the tax politics from 2002 and 2003 confirming something already lasted for some time. Of course, no one in Serbia promotes centralism, which is in opposition with democra-
tic principles. The centralism is only disguised through the promotion of UNITY.

Accordingly, any opposition to centralism and exploitation from Vojvodina is perceived as “violation of unity”, “separatism”, even “destruction of the state”. Although the fact is that decentralized and federalized states are consistent, but also very successful (USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Belgium...) That fact is known in Belgrade’s political and scientific circles. The struggle of Belgrade for the “unity” while accusing Vojvodina for “separatism”, is a continuation of unchanged political vocabulary which lasts since 1918.

Enormous concentration of money and political power in Belgrade is bad for entire Republic of Serbia because it creates corruption (affair after affair) and economic apathy. But, in spite of that, there is no resistance within Central Serbia towards Belgrade’s centralism, because the side effects of centralism for them are compensated by exploitation of Vojvodina. Vojvodina suffers double harm from the centralism because of its inherent inadequacy and because of the outflow of the money.

Different political positions between Vojvodina and Serbia are based on different interests. In order to preserve their privileges, centralism is an option chosen by many in Serbia. Vojvodina’s autonomist, are in favor of autonomous Vojvodina in accordance with morals and ethics and contemporary processes of democratic developments in the world. The political position of Serbia is politically obsolete and ethically unacceptable.

**Vojvodina and the “Big Bang” of decentralization**

After the disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia during the past decade, five different states emerged from its territory: Republic of Slovenia, Republic of Croatia, Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which is federalized consisting from Bosnian-Croatian Federation and Republika Srpska), and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Kosovo is under international protectorate, developing its own institutions, and the question remains whether Kosovo is going to become independent, or it will obtain a high degree of autonomy without formal independence.

In 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ceased to exist. Instead, Serbia and Monte Negro emerged as a union with expanded rights. In a few years the decision will be made whether this union is going to continue to exist or not.

The “Big Bang” of decentralization happened, which is not over yet, affecting all former Yugoslav Republics and province of Kosovo. Only Vojvodina was left out because Vojvodina lost its rights by the Constitution of 1974.

While the rights of all others augmented, the rights of Vojvodina diminished. This is a fact!
Vojvodina and International Community

Vojvodina and the West are natural allies. The values of western democracies are very important and in Vojvodina are successfully defended and implemented. Those values are represented through multiethnic tolerance and cohabitation. Vojvodina still represents an exceptional example. Unfortunately, the western countries did not take a notice of it and did not help Vojvodina to endure in its efforts. At the same time, the West is spending an enormous amount of energy and money to establish multiethnic communities in Bosnia and Kosovo, all that with uncertain results.

If true autonomy establishes once again, it could renew the remaining values of Central European in Vojvodina. This is not an egoistical interest of Vojvodina, but it is a long-term interest of Serbia and of International Community too. The International community did not recognize that, and did not help Vojvodina to get out of Serbia’s centralized “grip”.

Vojvodina and the Peace Conference in London 1992
– unfulfilled obligations

The International Conference regarding former Yugoslavia was held in London from August 26-28, 1992. Participated: The Secretary General of the UN, five representatives of Security Council, twelve European Union Members, SR Yugoslavia, four former Yugoslav republics, Canada, Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, OEBS, The Conference of Islamic Countries, The International Red Cross and many others. Following resolution was adopted, with special section “Serbia and Montenegro”, quote:

“All participans must fulfill their obligations. Serbia and Montenegro are presented with a clear choice. Serbia and Montenegro are obligated to immediately cease any military interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina… To reinstate all civil and CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS to CITIZENS of Kosovo and VOJVODINA and to ensure all civil rights to people of Sandzak…” (Underlined by author).

“If Serbia and Montenegro really intend to fulfill those obligations, they will once again take the respectable position in the International Community. They will be allowed to trade, to receive help and donations, otherwise the Security Council will be required to enforce general sanctions which will lead to complete isolation”.

The sanctions came and went. The citizens of Vojvodina did not get their constitutional rights back taken away by the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. The obligation was not fulfilled.

***

BIG INJUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE TO VOJVODINA.
THE TRAGEDY OF THE REGION CONTINUES…
In 1999, NATO forces destroyed all the three bridges in Novi Sad. It is still unacceptable to people of Vojvodina and Novi Sad, who were setting an example in opposition to regime of Slobodan Milosevic, that such sacrifice was necessary in order to stop Serbian forces from displacing some 750,000 Albanians from Kosovo.

This is only one more example of how Vojvodina pays the price of someone else’s terrible politics.
Final Word and Pictures
TAKING into an account the historical circumstances and efforts of all participants, in 1918 Serbia and Vojvodina became one. It was an encounter of two different worlds with differences in “civilization” and the differences that, according to Jovan Cvijic, “never before found in Europe”. During 85 years of coexistence in the same state, the differences are considerably reduced, but did not completely disappear. Vojvodina did not become Serbia. Some very important differences still remain and exist based on the law of the land and tradition.

This must be taken into consideration. For the past eight and half decades, Vojvodina and Serbia did not find the best way to coexist, illustrated in the previous passages of this text.

I. Republic of Serbia is actually divided

A SIGHTSEEING OF A TRAVELER

“VOJVODINA is a rich country. The weather was exceptionally nice when we came and it seemed very special. But, THE BIG SOUTH is also beautiful, perhaps a bit chaotic, but it possess a deeper soul. Up north, it resembles a valley of Padana in Italy. The people are calm, quiet and shy. It was very exiting in Vojvodina, you could feel the East, but you were still at home…”

Paolo Rumiz, an Italian journalist and publicist, the author of the travel book From Trieste to Istanbul. Danas, Sept. 1, 2001

Even a traveler can see that Republic of Serbia is made from two parts; quiet and tranquil north and a little bit chaotic south, to say, it consists of Vojvodina and Serbia.

This is a PRIMARY DIVISION of Republic of Serbia. This division is based on some important factors:

Geographically: Vojvodina is a distinctive plain, while Serbia is hilly and mountainous region. There is a natural border between Serbia and Vojvodina shaped by two rivers: the Danube and the Sava, considered as the “greatest cultural border in Europe”.

Economically: Vojvodina developed as a distinctive agricultural region with food and process manufacturing, oil and chemical industry. The economy of Vojvodina is mostly partial compared to the diverse economic structure of Serbia. To enhance cooperation with other countries, Vojvodina needs to be more open towards the world. Vojvodina represents a specific geo-economical unit with specific interest, different from those of Serbia.
Historically: Vojvodina was part of Habsburg Empire holding an inheritance of Central and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, after loosing its independence, Serbia was a part of a different empire – an Ottoman Empire, holding very different inheritance, an inheritance of Byzantine, Ottoman and Balkan culture. That is why the Serbs in Serbia and Serbs in Vojvodina developed under very different historical and cultural circumstances, with so-called “Plain and Mountainous types of people” – by Jovan Cvijic (a scientist, founder of antropo-geography in Serbia).

Nationally: Nationally, Vojvodina is a homogenous region while Serbia is expressively hegemonic region with one dominant nation. Through the centuries, the practice of tolerance was cultivated in Vojvodina, with multiethnic communities and peaceful cohabitation, while Serbia does not possess such experience. Typically, in Vojvodina one could find two different churches in one town – a Catholic and an Orthodox, while in Serbia that is not the case.

There are three traditional regions within Vojvodina: Srem, Banat and Backa, clearly divided by the rivers Danube and Tisa with no significant differences between those regions. Serbia can be divided into following regions: Sumadija, Eastern Serbia, and Western Serbia, Southeastern Serbia plus the Belgrade region. The division is not as clear, but there are significant differences between those regions.

This is a SECONDARY DIVISION of Republic of Serbia.

II. The issue of Vojvodina

“As soon as a small agricultural region connects with a large and undeveloped region, the majority with a power of its legislation begins suckling the economic blood of the small region”.

Dr Dragan Veselinov 1996

Vojvodina, as a geographically, culturally and economically specific region, does not possess POLITICAL SUBJECTIVIZM, in accordance with its need and interests, measured by standards of modern democratic communities.

Moreover, the Republic of Serbia, as a highly centralized state, does not recognize the secondary division by regions, and as a unitarian state it does not recognize primary division to Vojvodina and Serbia. This discord, between the objective division and formal political unity, creates the following consequences:

- the legislations and decisions, coming from one center and uniform for entire Republic of Serbia primarily correspond to specific needs, but also to interests of the greater part of the Republic-the Serbia.

- the governmental apparatus of Republic of Serbia works directly at disadvantage of Vojvodina for the benefit of Serbia, confirmed by constant outflow of funds from Vojvodina to Serbia.

Therefore, there are two reasons for an autonomous status of Vojvodina:

- firstly, it is necessary to consent to Vojvodina’s democratic rights to self-governing and responsibility for its own development, based on similar experiences of specific regions in other democratic countries.

- secondly, Vojvodina should be protected as well as its population from impudent exploitation.
no matter where it is coming from, even it may come from Serbia, because it is natural right for everyone. Each of these two reasons by itself is enough to justify demands for particular political status. However, since there are more reasons, this demand is even more justifiable.

III. Identity of Vojvodina

The question, which remains, is whether the previously cited differences made some impact to people of this region regarding their awareness of belonging to one very different region. Do the different people of this region possess a feeling of an identity based on belonging to Vojvodina? Does Identity of Vojvodina exist? Moreover, if it exists, then is there knowledge about the issue of Vojvodina, or is it nothing more but a political and intellectual fabrication?

To answer this question, an opinion poll was conducted by an agency called “Scan” from Novi Sad, owned and operated by Milka Puzigaca.

The field poll sample, completed in July of 2003, included 1500 people from 48 settlements in 28 townships of Vojvodina. From the sampled population, half were women, 23% with no formal education, 60% with trade or middle school and 15% with higher education. From the total number of pollsters 68% were Serbs and the rest of other nationalities, 57% were people who moved to Vojvodina from other parts of country. Overall, a representative sample.

In the research study: “The most acceptable status of Vojvodina” the poll question was: “If you were asked, what would you think what category of status is most acceptable for Vojvodina”? The results, very similar from the previous polls, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Autonomy form 1974</td>
<td>34.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Same as now</td>
<td>21.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. More autonomy within Serbia but less than in 1974</td>
<td>20.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vojvodina as Republic in Yugoslavia</td>
<td>6.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Abolish any kind of autonomy</td>
<td>5.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Independent state of Vojvodina</td>
<td>5.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Something else</td>
<td>1.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I do not know</td>
<td>5.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. The solution for the problem of Vojvodina

Until now, the focus has been on the differences between Vojvodina and Serbia, what really separates those two entities. There is, however, one important thing that connects Vojvodina and Serbia. With 65% of the population, the Serbs represent a majority in Vojvodina. Twice so far, in 1918 and in 1945, Serbs from Vojvodina expressed desire to join Serbia.

After the disintegration of former Yugoslavia, when the former republics gained their independence, it became obvious that Vojvodina is not “small”, as perceived before, and based on its economic, cultural resources and infrastructure, Vojvodina could successfully exist as an independent state. Perhaps not as successful as Republic of Slovenia, but no less than, let us say, Republic of Macedonia.
However, even continuous disappointment in Serbia, after all those years of hardship and destruction of Vojvodina, especially under Milosevic’s regime, no major secessionist collective mood is felt in Vojvodina. It is true that in recent years a new category of people has emerged on the scene – people who are patronizing an idea about Vojvodina as an independent state, in a small percentage, though (5 % in 2003). Even though political parties preferring autonomy are often accused by Belgrade of secessionism, there is no political party, or program, which supports and promotes secessionism.

But the fact remains that in the last eight decades, Vojvodina has kept losing many of its characteristics such as expressive multiethnic structure, draining of its cultural and moral reserves such as being attached to a legal system, respecting the law and the government, orderly fulfillment of the duties such as paying taxes, respond to recruitments and similar. But the identity of belonging to a region did not disappear, in fact it became more pronounced. However, the collective mood about autonomy reaches the political demand for autonomous status of Vojvodina within the Republic of Serbia, and that is where the answers about matters Vojvodina could be found.

There are three possibilities:
1. TO KEEP THE STATUS QUO
2. VOJVODINA AS AN AUTONOMOUS REGION OR PROVINCE
3. FEDERALIZATION OF REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, VOJVODINA AS REPUBLIC

To keep the status quo means to keep the state of illusory or inadequate autonomy, illustrated by the amount of the Vojvodina budget given by Republic of Serbia, which is about 5% of the budget of Republic of Serbia. On the other hand, further denial of political subjectivism may have a positive side from the standpoint of autonomous aspirations, it could lead to strengthening of the identity of Vojvodina’s citizens.

The negative side of Vojvodina becoming a province or a region is:

Regionalization of Republic of Serbia with regions, such as: Vojvodina, Belgrade, Sumadija, South Eastern Serbia, South Western Serbia, or similar, with equal rights is not acceptable.

Vojvodina is a traditional and historical region with rights and successful experience as a federal unit in the former Yugoslavia. Regions South East Serbia, South Western Serbia, etc. have never before existed as regions within Serbia and today they have no aspirations for autonomy. They can be only administrative regions. Vojvodina as a HISTORICAL region can not be equal to ADMINISTRATIVE regions in Central Serbia.

Creating an assimetrical system, in which Vojvodina would be granted more rights than other regions, would mean a complicated system as a cause for everlasting clashes. Instead, Serbia should admit that Republic of Serbia is primarily constituted from two parts: Central Serbia and Vojvodina. The issue of regionalization of Vojvodina follows (Banat, Backa, Srem) and that of Central Serbia (Sumadija, South Western Serbia, South Eastern Serbia...) are internal matters of Vojvodina and Serbia.

Acquiring the status of autonomous province, with its own legislation and an executive government, for Vojvodina it would mean fulfillments of demands of many political parties, but it would not resolve the main problem of Vojvodina, which must be solved by enabling self-governing and
protection from exploitation. Outside the circles of autonomous rights, there is a considerable corpus of legislations and jurisdiction used to make decisions on the level of Republic of Serbia, affecting the interests of Vojvodina as an integral part of Republic of Serbia. According to the system of democratic majority within the one-chamber Assembly of Serbia, where Serbia has more representatives than Vojvodina, the superiority of Serbia over Vojvodina is not only possible but also attainable.

Federalization of Republic of Serbia, with Serbia and Vojvodina as equal federal units represents a solution according to the primary division of Republic of Serbia on Vojvodina and Serbia. It also means replacement of democracy based on majority principle of the 19th century with a modern, contemporary form of democracy based on the principle of concensus and the concrete need that Serbia and Vojvodina find fair and maintainable “modus vivendi” By this, Vojvodina is recognized as a particular political subject at the Republic level, which would mean two-chamber assembly.

In one of the chambers, the decisions would be made by majority principle, which means effective problem solving, in the other chamber, the decisions would be made by consensus between Vojvodina and Serbia.

The question asked (with a note of accusation) if this means “Vojvodina state”, the answer is YES. A State no less than any other federal unit in federation, like Bavaria and Saxony in Germany, states of two million people such as Utah and Iowa in the USA, etc… The advantage of such a solution is that it is not founded on some abstract concept, but on the system, which successfully functions for many centuries and often found in rich and democratic countries. Consequently, a fair relationship would establish between Serbia and Vojvodina, a self-sustainable, longer-lasting and a tranquil society. Moreover, the Serbia’s image as the traditional, paternal “provider” state, which pulls all the strings, could change towards more liberal and democratic state. The “unclear” concept of autonomy, where the one who gives, thinks it gives too much, whereas the one who receives, thinks it receives too little, would have changed with federalism containing clear rules, also very important for Balkans.

Does the mood of the inhabitants of Vojvodina have the support for this kind of solution? The “Scan” Agency’s results direct in that way. If the percentage (34%) of those who favour the autonomy constituted back in 1974, is added up to the percentage of those who are for a republic in Yugoslavia (6.5%) plus those who prefer Vojvodina as an independent state (5%), we get a group of 45.5% strong, which could prefer a federation.

Are there any guarantees that this federation would not fall apart like the others? There is none. However, the guarantees for survival of the state are even smaller where all regions are not politically recognized, especially with imposed exploiting. Deprivation of all rights promotes separatism. Kosovo is the most drastic example. The disintegration of Yugoslavia, USSR, or two-member unions such as Czechoslovakia, Norway and Sweden, is disintegration of multinational federations. The federal Serbia would not have such character, because the majority in Vojvodina, with tendency to grow, is the Serb majority.
SUMMARY
or a possible preamble for the Constitution of Vojvodina

Summarizing the historical experience longer than eight decades and evaluating the fact that Vojvodina is paying a steep price for its union with Serbia mainly reflected through obstruction of development, economic exploitation, erosion of inherited cultural values and regression,
- considering that the price is unacceptable not only from the standpoint of interest but also of that of dignity,
- in regard that regimes have changed but the exploitation remained, even after the fall of all the three Yugoslavias,
- the experience shows that falling behind was at its lowest level with the highest level of autonomy,
- that it is natural and inalienable right of citizens and nations of Vojvodina not only to protect their interests and dignity, but also to reserve the right for self-determination,
- that the desires are in full accord with modern democracies and enlightenment,
- certain of mutual consideration of Vojvodina and Serbia, but also
- that forced association, the relation of the superior and the subordinate, represents the source of unstable situations hampering development and leading into discord and that’s why those relations must be changed.
Therefore, we pledge for a collective future on the new foundation, based on equality of Serbia and Vojvodina as political subjects.

Two massages for the end:

Primarily to the citizens of Serbia: a recognized and rich Vojvodina could give to Serbia far more than what Serbia can take from poor Vojvodina.

To the citizens of Vojvodina: the one who does not want to be in control of his own destiny, does not deserve that someone else do it better instead of him.
For Vojvodina to ask

Describing the events on the eve of the May Assembly of the Serbs in Sremski Karlovci back in 1848, a novelist from Sentandreja in Hungary, Jakov Ignjatovic, also a participating representative, wrote in his memoirs:

“I joyfully started my journey on the steamship to Karlovci, to attend the Assembly. A beautiful spring day, plenty of Serbs on the steamship, with Teodor Pavlovic, but not as a representative, but as an observer on behalf of the future theater which was going to be built in Karlovci. Belgradi, Stojackovic, Kojic, as representatives, then Golub, the duke from Pomaz as a representative, Mijalcic was possibly from Kalaz…

On their faces some serious lines can be seen, especially in Pavlovic’s face. He is a pessimist, a prophet of doom, he is concerned that Serbs will make a mistake… Belgradi, a moderate man, shakes his head: says he does not expect anything good to happen, that Serbs, at the Assembly, may ASK FOR VOJVODINA, that we, the Serbs, have no rights in Hungary, that it is impossible…”

(Underlined by autor D.J.)

Serbs did make the “mistake”, they asked for – and WON A RIGHT for Vojvodina as a political entity.

The word VOJVODINA AUTHENTICALLY REPRESENTS A POLITICAL CONCEPT, not a GEOGRAPHICAL one, as many would like to settle it.

Even today, after a hundred and fifty years, we are asking questions, basically aiming at these three words: ASKING FOR VOJVODINA.
The similarity between those

Austrian tsar Joseph 2nd (1741-1790) an excellence of enlightened absolutism, somewhere in newly liberated parts of southern Hungary, today’s Vojvodina, propagates the modern methods of agriculture.

The new region was supposed to become a “new Lombard”, an agrarian base of the whole Monarchy’s development, which has to be the West’s defense from the eastern barbarians.
two pictures is not coincidental

Vojvodina had the task to be one of the main sources of accumulation for bringing about the big project - socialism in new Yugoslavia.

These two pictures, with Joseph 2nd in Vojvodina and Josip Broz Tito in Vojvodina, within the range of two centuries, show striking similarities, but the similarity is not a coincidence.

It shows the destiny of Vojvodina, which has always been submitted to others, primarily serving someone else’s interests, serving some Great Idea.

Today, Vojvodina is in Serbia, under its domination. There is no such thing as a Great Idea in Serbia. Only exploitation has remained.
For how long?
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