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ИНСТИТУТ ЗА СРПСКУ КУЛТУРУ ПРИШТИНА – ЛЕПОСАВИЋ
INSTITUTE FOR SERBIAN CULTURE PRISHTINA – LEPOSAVIĆ



The Institute for Serbian Culture, Priština – Leposavić

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KOSOVO AND METOHIA IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE PRIME MINISTER BLAGOJE NEŠKOVIĆ (1945–1952) AS AN EXAMPLE OF METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL SOURCES**

Abstract: There are relatively few documents in historiography that speak directly about the attitude of Blagoje Nešković, Prime Minister of the NR of Serbia, towards the issue of Kosovo and Metohija. For now, we have at our disposal four important documents that show his attitude towards the situation in this Serbian province. The first document is Blagoje Nešković's Report on the political situation in Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija written in 1945, the second is an analysis of the elections held in 1945, the third is a dispatch from 1946 on the payment of emergency economic aid for colonists from Kosovo and Metohija, and the fourth is the statement of Đorđije Đoka Pajković which he gave regarding the case of Blagoje Nešković in 1952. With methodological analysis of these documents as important historical sources for the issue of Kosovo and Metohija during the government of Blagoje Nešković (1945–1952), it is possible to make a mutual comparison between them and to follow how the attitudes of the president of the Serbian government towards this territory changed. In this way, it is indirectly possible to analyze the importance of his views in relation to the later development of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija.

Key words: Kosovo and Metohija, Blagoje Nešković, documents, historical sources, comparative analysis, methodology.

1 INTRODUCTION

The beginning of Blagoje Nešković's¹ government in the People's Republic of Serbia (PRS) was marked by close relations between Yugoslavia and Albania. Yugoslavia recognized the Albanian government of Enver Hoxha,

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1 Dr. Blagoje Nešković (1907–1984) was born in Kragujevac in 1907. He graduated from high school in 1926 in Belgrade, and then from the Faculty of Medicine in Belgrade in 1933.

provided economic and military aid to the PR of Albania as well as diplomatic support. Yugoslavia was a natural ally against Italian encroachment into the Balkans, and was also an ally of Albania against Greece, which sought a revision of its northern border (Petranović 1991: 143). An important step in the Yugoslav-Albanian rapprochement was the signing of the agreement between the Provisional Government of Albania and the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia on February 20, 1945 in Belgrade (Životić 2011: 119). On that occasion, two interstate agreements were signed. The first agreement was related to military cooperation in the fight against Germany, and the second was an agreement on the exchange of economic goods, which provided that Albania would make available to Yugoslavia all surplus oil, gasoline, petroleum and other oil derivatives, as well as wool and olive oil, while Yugoslavia took the obligation to deliver corn, wheat and sugar to Albania (Životić 2011: 120).

As a student, he joined the Association of Marxist Students. He became a member of the Local Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia for Belgrade in 1935. He volunteered in the Spanish Civil War. He participated as a fighter and doctor in the Đura Đaković Battalion, 129th International Brigade. He was appointed as the president of the Central Medical Commission of International Brigades, which gave an expert assessment of the capabilities of individual fighters for the efforts that await them on the battlefield. After returning from Spain, he spent two years in the camps in France working as a doctor. After the camp was dismantled, he returned to Yugoslavia, stayed in the camp in Bileća for a short time, and was then exiled to his hometown.

At the end of January 1941, he came to Belgrade and went underground. He was soon elected to the position of secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia for Serbia. He spent most of the war illegally in Belgrade (until he went to free territory in 1943) where he organized resistance against the occupiers in Serbia. He was a member of the Main People's Liberation Committee, a member of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia and the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Serbia. At the founding congress of the Communist Party of Serbia in May 1945, he was elected secretary of the Central Committee and held that position until 1948. In the period from 1945 to 1948, he held the position of Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Serbia. The conflict with Josip Broz began in 1947, when he was criticized at a meeting of the highest state leadership for implementing a too lenient policy when determining purchase quotas in Vojvodina. On that occasion, Blagoje Nešković did not accept the criticism of the top party leadership. In 1948, he was appointed as the president of the commission, which also included Ivan Gošnjaki and Vida Tomšić, which was supposed to investigate the "case" of Andrija Hebrang and Sreten Žujović. In 1952, he became the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.

In October 1952, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party appointed a commission (composed of: Milovan Đilas, Aleksandar Ranković, Spasenija Cana Babović and Dušan Petrović Šane) to investigate the case of Dr. Blagoj Nešković, because he was accused of supporting the Informburo Resolution. The commission came to the conclusion that the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the SKJ communicated to the organizations of the Communist League on November 27, 1952, that allegedly Dr. Nešković had a wavering attitude towards the USSR at the time of the conflict with the Information Bureau. As one of the many reasons for his removal from office, he was also attributed to a wrong assessment of the political situation in Kosovo and Metohija. We were particularly interested in how his attitude towards Kosovo differed from the official party line. After being expelled from the party, he completely withdrew from political life and devoted himself to a scientific career. The Union of Communists of Yugoslavia rejected his request for rehabilitation in 1983. Blagoje Nešković died on November 11, 1984 (Mirković 2018).

Yugoslavia helped Albania and the Albanian communists, but Enver Hodža perceived Yugoslav help as pressure and tried to resist the pro-Yugoslav group led by Koči Džodže. The pressure and desire to annex Kosovo and Metohija to Albania continued to exist regardless of the apparently good relations between the two countries (Petranović 1991: 153).

Although the decision on the annexation of Kosovo and Metohija to Serbia was most likely made at an impromptu and informal meeting of the party leadership with representatives of the CPY Regional Committee for Kosovo and Metohija, Miladin Popović and Fadil Hodža, it did not succeed in stifling Albania's aspirations towards this territory, which it claimed from the point of view of the people's right to self-determination (Životić 2011: 130). A big problem was also the issue of colonists in KiM. Yugoslavia tacitly agreed to the stay of Albanian families who had settled on the estates of expelled Serbian colonists during the war, but it remained unresolved what to do with those families who did not manage to obtain land. Yugoslavia tried to discreetly return them to Albania, but the Albanian side had a greater interest in them staying in Kosovo and proposed to grant them land and thus resolve their status. Furthermore, it helped the illegal migration of Albanian families from poor areas to Kosovo (Životić 2011: 245). In the end, a part of the landless families returned to Albania, which only partially started to solve this issue.

The request for Kosovo was supported by all layers of Albanian society, and mostly by the intelligentsia, mainly of merchant-beg origin, educated in the West, who had a great influence in the state apparatus and public life in Albania (Životić 2011: 245). Also, Western countries, especially the representatives of Great Britain and the USA, supported the idea of Greater Albania and in that way influenced the disruption of the good relations between the two countries.

When the Informburo Resolution was published, the CP of Albania was among the first to support it. This can be explained by the fact that Enver Hoxha wanted the Soviet side to emerge victorious so that he could get rid of the pro-Yugoslav pressure in his party on the one hand and realize the idea of Greater Albania under the patronage of the USSR and with Kosovo as part of it on the other (Petranović 1991: 173). At the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania held in February-March 1948, an attempt was made to improve Yugoslav-Albanian relations, but it was only a temporary retreat for Enver Hoxha (Petranović 1991: 167). From the correspondence of J. Broza and Enver Hoxha conducted during April 1948, it is evident that the crisis in relations continued to deepen. J. Broz also ordered the withdrawal of Yugoslav instructors and military delegates to the Albanian army (Petranović 1995: 363). The Central Committee of the CPY pointed out that there was an obvious deterioration in relations because the Albanian side did not show enough trust in Yugoslav intentions and did not sufficiently appreciate the help that Yugoslavia provides to it (Petranović 1995: 368). Still, J. Broz softened that attitude a little with a letter sent to E. Hodža on April 22, 1948, underlining that Yugoslavia still wants to help the construction of Albania (Petranović 1995: 371). However, the Politburo

of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania rejected the accusations that Albania was to blame for the deterioration of relations and shifted the entire responsibility for the crisis to Yugoslavia. Shortly after, in July 1948, Albania handed over two notes to the Yugoslav representative in Tirana. In the first note it demanded the immediate withdrawal of all Yugoslav experts of any kind from Albania, and in the second it unilaterally canceled all economic agreements and contracts with Yugoslavia signed since 1945. Yugoslavia responded by demanding the return of all material resources previously given on the basis of those agreements, as well as the repatriation of all Yugoslav citizens from Albania. Relations continued to deteriorate. Yugoslavia stopped supporting Albanian interests in foreign countries in which it had done so until then, and Enver Hodža began to speak openly against Yugoslavia in his speeches, accusing it of trying to subjugate Albania. Albania was obviously getting closer and closer to the USSR (Životić 2011: 322). The conflict led to the severing of political, economic, military and educational-cultural ties, and there was a serious threat of turning into an armed conflict. From the middle of 1948 until the end of 1953, when the conflict began to subside, there were frequent incidents between the border troops, and the culmination was in 1951, when the news of a possible Soviet attack on Yugoslavia via Albania was transmitted, which soon proved to be disinformation (Životić 2011: 322). Problems at the borders began to be solved in 1953, when work began on agreements to overcome this problem.

2 BLAGOJE NEŠKOVIĆ AND THE KOSOVO ISSUE

We do not have many sources about Blagoje Nešković's views on Kosovo. For now, we have at our disposal four documents that directly show what the attitude was towards the situation in Kosovo and Metohija. The first document is Blagoje Nešković's Report on the political situation in Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija written in 1945, the second is an analysis of the elections held in 1945, the third is a dispatch from 1946 on the payment of economic aid for colonists from Kosovo and Metohija, and the fourth is a statement by Đordije Đoka Pajković which he gave in connection with the case of Blagoje Nešković in 1952.

The report can be found within the fund of Blagoje Nešković and Branislava Brana Perović in the Historical Archive of Belgrade in box number 10². It was written in 1945, when Blagoje Nešković was the secretary of the Central Committee and the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Serbia. At the time of the creation of this document, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia relied entirely on the Soviet Union in its foreign policy, which can be concluded based on the analysis of the content of the document. The Report is significant, because

2 Historical Archive of Belgrade, fund 2157, Bequest of Blagoje Nešković and Branislava Brana Perović, box 10 (unordered fund), Report of Blagoje Nešković on the political situation in Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija.

it is based on Blagoje Nešković's views on the then most important current internal political issues in Serbia - the redemption issue, the national issue, the country's post-war recovery. It is particularly important because it is one of the few documents on the basis of which Blagoje Nešković's position on the Kosovo issue can be seen. From the content analysis, we learn that the attitude of Blagoje Nešković towards the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija in 1945 did not differ from the attitude of the top of the Communist Party, i.e. that he fully followed the party's course on this matter. Regarding the attitude towards national minorities, the pre-war policy of the communists was continued, according to which the Serbian communists were especially expected to take the lead in condemning the Great Serbian reaction. This idea is also observed in B. Nešković, who says: "The Šiptar reaction cannot promise anything new to the people of Šiptar that it has not already promised them until now and during the occupation, and which, of course, it has not fulfilled. As for the Great Serbian reaction, the people of Kosovo and Metohija know it very well. Now it's up to us that the Šiptar masses not only get to know better the liberation movement, but to feel all the benefits it brings to all the people of our country."³ He advocated reducing the dissatisfaction of the Albanian national minority by educating Albanians and involving the Albanian masses in people's committees, respecting the rights of national minorities and investing more in regions inhabited predominantly by Albanians. We note that these views coincided with the official policy of the Yugoslav government of that period. In the report, he makes very specific proposals for the territory of Kosovo and Metohija:

- „a) solve the agrarian issue with the participation of the rural poor to the general satisfaction of the Šiptar and other masses of Kosovo and Metohija;
- b) resolve the distribution of the land, involve the widest Šiptar masses, and then Serbian and Montenegrin ones through the slum committees;
- c) lead the fiercest fight against chauvinism, religious intolerance, insulting traditions and curtailing the national rights of any national group;
- g) expand and strengthen the „Committee of Shippers of Kosovo and Metohija” as part of JNOF;
- d) rely on slum committees and Šiptar committees in setting up and consolidating people's committees;
- đ) drag the Šiptar masses themselves into the militia, as well as the entire state apparatus;
- e) work tirelessly against illiteracy, especially of the Šiptar masses;
- h) to draw into JNOF broadly and tolerantly those respectable Šiptars who want to work in the spirit of politics of the liberation movement.”⁴

It can be seen from the above-mentioned tasks that efforts were made to win over Albanians as sympathizers of the national liberation movement and that this was one of the basic ideas after the war in solving the Kosovo issue. The inclusion

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

of Albanians in the ranks of sympathizers and members of the CPY went together with the resolution of the land issue. The report unequivocally testifies that Blagoje Nešković was aware of the importance of solving the agrarian issue for winning over the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija. „There is no doubt that the issue of religious tolerance, language, schools, participation in government and administration and other national rights is important and that all of this will affect the attitude of the Šiptar masses towards the liberation movement, but the essence is the issue of land. When the Albanian people began to convince and personally assure the Šiptar peasant that the land he cultivates will not be taken away from him, when the rural poor were allowed to participate in the distribution of the land, when the settlement of the settlers in Kosovo and Metohija was approached fairly, it was immediately felt that the Šiptar the masses stopped joining armed gangs, even those who had broken away began to return to their homes.”⁵ The analysis of this text clearly shows that Blagoje Nešković supported the policy of the state leadership in Kosovo and Metohija, which allowed the Albanians to keep the land they had acquired during the war, and that he thought that such a policy had a positive effect on the acceptance of the communist movement among Albanians. It is the same with the issue of settlers. Although he does not speak in detail about the problem of Albanian families who moved to Kosovo and Metohija, he clearly says “when the settlement of the settlers in Kosovo and Metohija was fairly approached”, from which we can conclude that he considered that the state resolved this issue in the right way.

For PR of Serbia, the problem with the colonists in Kosovo and Metohija was not only with the Albanian population, but also with the returnees from Serbia, who turned out to no longer have their homes. This can also be seen on the basis of the dispatch that the Prime Minister of Serbia, Blagoje Nešković, sent on April 11, 1946, to the Presidency of the Government of the FNRJ, in which he demanded that an additional 70 million dinars be sent as a matter of urgency to about 8,000 families, i.e. 35,000 people who were refugee colonists from Kosovo and Metohija, who returned there after the war, and still had no roof over their heads. Nešković stated that the houses of some of them were destroyed and nothing had been done to rebuild them, while the houses and properties of others were usurped by Albanians who refused to return that property⁶. He requested that the aid in food, clothes and shoes sent by UNRRA be delivered to these people. This appeal from the Government of Serbia was sent after the report of the Audit Commission for Kosovo and Metohija, which stated that the families of the colonists were forced to sleep in baskets and barns for a year and a half in extremely difficult hygienic and material conditions because they were not allowed to get back their property (Vukadinović 2019:238). Funds were requested from the Government to provide materials for the construction and renovation of houses, but also for help with clothes, shoes and food that were missing.

5 Ibid.

6 Archive of Yugoslavia, fund 50, f. 89, 720.

That Blagoje Nešković believed that Kosovo and Metohija were indisputably Serbian territories is confirmed by the analysis of the elections held in 1945. The analysis is a very concise document that refers to the election results in the entire territory of Yugoslavia. Among other parts of the country, KiM is also mentioned. Blagoje Nešković emphasizes that the rights of national minorities will be respected in that area, but that he will not allow the history of Albania to be taught in the schools of Kosovo and Metohija.⁷ This statement indicates that he did not agree with the Albanian pretensions to Kosovo and Metohija. For him, Kosovo and Metohija are a part of the Yugoslav state, where multi-ethnicity must be respected, but on the other hand, state integrity must not be threatened.

Analyzing both of these sources, as well as based on knowledge of the CP's relationship with Kosovo and Metohija, we can say that Blagoje Nešković followed the party's political line in 1945-1946 and that his views were the result of current party policy.

The fourth source is the statement given by Đoko Pajković regarding the case of Blagoje Nešković in 1952, which is included in the Secret File of Blagoje Nešković.⁸ On September 9, 1952, Đoko Pajković, who was at the head of the Regional Committee of Kosovo and Metohija, submitted a statement in which he attacked Blagoje Nešković for his lack of understanding of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija. In that statement, he accused him of not knowing the situation in Kosovo and Metohija and of poorly conducted politics. The statement was written in a very personal tone and was used as one of the pieces of evidence for B. Nešković's from power and expulsion from the party. Đ. Pajković accuses him of a chauvinistic attitude towards the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija, incorrect behavior towards him as a member of the Regional Committee for Kosovo and Metohija, and for an inadequately conducted policy of redemption in the area of Kosovo and Metohija.

"In his presentation, Blagoje Nešković stated that the basic task of the party organization was to allocate the undistributed land to the poor, and to create "poor committees". It was shown that this directive was the result of ignorance of the conditions in Kosovo and Metohija, that no undivided free country existed, that the „poor committees" had no reason to exist and that to determine all of this - with such a meager staff and weak committees, a lot of precious time was spent, until the Regional Committee saw that the main problem was actually on the other side i.e. they should have returned to the Shiptars the unjustly taken land, which was assigned to the settlers.

I pointed this out to Blagoje Nešković several times on behalf of the Regional Committee, which he did not attach any importance to. Finally, we decided to prepare a proposal for a decision to solve this issue, and we did so. However, he turned a deaf ear to it and constantly postponed the solution of this issue,

7 Historical Archive of Belgrade, fund 2157, Legacy of Blagoje Nešković and Branislava Brana Perović, box 10 (unordered fund), Analysis of the elections held in 1945.

8 Private archive of the Nešković family, Secret file of Blagoje Nešković, Statement of Đordija Đoka Pajković about Blagoje Nešković from 1952.

which, as practice has already shown, was a real serious measure of connecting our Party with the wider masses of Šiptars in Kosovo.

As a result of weak mutual relations between nationalities in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as the criminal policies of the occupiers, after the war we had about 25,000 property disputes in the area and about 10,000 disputes about burned and destroyed houses, between Šiptar and others. The position of the Regional Committee on this issue was that disputes should be resolved by agreement, settlement, etc. That is why joint commissions (Šiptari and others) were created in each municipality with the task of solving these matters. This was all at a time when there were party organizations on most of the territory of the area, so it took more time to resolve this issue. Blagoje Nešković was dissatisfied with this kind of work, accusing us in the Regional Committee of not working, of being afraid of the Šiptars, emphasizing that we should have a tougher course towards the Šiptars, and if they react against it, then we should tell them that we will evict them." (*Statement*, 1). Blagoje Nešković's attitudes towards Albanians differed significantly in his public speeches in relation to his statements to his colleagues. While in public appearances, as expected from a communist, he stuck to the Party's line, in private conversations his views were in line with his national feelings, which Đoko Pajković also points out:

„Immediately before the elections in 1945, when the Regional Committee, based on the interest that existed in the masses, asked Blagoje Nešković how the issues of Kosovo and Metohija would be resolved in the new state, he probably said because of his attitude towards Šiptar that it would be a „district within the Republic“, ignoring our opinion about the need for autonomy, calling it nationalist, ignorant, etc. Repeating this time also the position that the Šiptars are grave sinners from the war, that what they were given was a lot, as well as that any expressed dissatisfaction can lead to their eviction. I don't think I need to emphasize how much we were surprised and amazed by this attitude of the party leadership" (*Statement*, 2).

However, although he may have used a harsh tone, Blagoje Nešković's attitude at that moment fully corresponded to the policy of the top of the Communist Party. Namely, as we have already seen before, after the war it was left unresolved what to do with those Albanian families who did not manage to obtain land, but still moved to Kosovo and Metohija. On the Yugoslav side, there was an intention to return them to Albania, which was achieved in the end for a part of them. With this in mind, we can understand why B. Nešković mentions the possibility of emigration. Comparing this document with the *Report on the political situation in Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija*, which was created at that time, it is clearly concluded that it agreed with the official state policy in that period. It is obvious that such statements were only later misused against him for the purpose of political discredit.

In the following text, Đ. Pajković points out the alleged chauvinistic attitude of B. Nešković towards the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. He especially repeats the accusation when he talks about the situation in 1945-1946.

„I had a particularly difficult and sharp conflict with him at the consultation held immediately after the 1945 elections in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Serbia. Blagoje Nešković evaluated the exceptionally good results in these elections in Kosovo as the result of the opportunistic policy of the Regional Council of the Committee because, in his words, we „were trying to appease the Šiptars”. When I opposed this very nervously (because he denied any positive work and influence of the party organization on the situation and elections), he rudely and insultingly attacked me, saying that I and the other comrades from RC did not understand the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, although he had no basis for such a claim.

After this, our conflicts became more frequent. At the next consultation in the Central Committee of the CPS, I pointed out in my report that the Šiptar masses had begun to join the NF and that we made a final decision to organize them. He very harshly condemned my position, claiming that such an understanding of the situation and realization of unity is an expression of political blindness, ignorance and lack of class consciousness. My efforts to explain the issue, to emphasize the specifics of the political development in the area, the need for such a resolution of the issue, were thwarted by frequent interruptions on his part in a way that I never considered friendly” (*Statement*, 2).

CPY was looking for a way to win over as many Albanians as possible to its policy. In 1945, there were about a thousand members of the Party in Kosmet, of which about 300 were Albanians. The following year, this number increased five times compared to the Serbian and Albanian population (Nikolić 2011: 269). CPY especially tried to win over Albanians to join the Party since their number was almost four times smaller than the number of Serbs who joined the Party. In the field, the Party tried to return the less compromised outlaws to a normal life and to incorporate them into local government bodies (Petranović 1991: 103). However, this kind of policy did not give favorable results in the long run; it did not suppress nationalism or the aspiration of Albania to annex this area to its state. Albania was very keenly interested in the issue of Kosovo, regardless of the fact that the two countries improved relations in the post-war period (Petranović 1993: 93).

„At the end of 1946 or the beginning of 1947, the Regional Committee assessed the political situation in the region due to the complaint of the then head of the UDB, Spasoje Đaković. Blagoje Nešković invited the entire Regional Committee to a meeting in the Central Committee. At that meeting, he accused us of misjudging the political situation in Kosovo and Metohija, of beautifying it, of portraying it in a rosy light. And we did not, of course, accept that, which I openly told him. However, right after that he asked us to send him an annual report on the work of the party organizations and condition in the Region. When we sent him the report with the grades he gave, he immediately invited me to a meeting, which was also attended by the then secretary of the PC of Vojvodina Vidić, where he criticized my report as weak because it „shows the situation in a black light”. When I told him that it was not the grade of the Regional

committee but his grade and the grade of the UDB head, he was very angry and behaved very unfriendly towards me.

Regarding mistrust towards Šiptars and the Regional Committee, he overestimated various phenomena in our area and on that basis took a position towards the Regional Committee. In 1947 after the obligatory purchase of grain, a group of 20-30 peasants came to Prizren and Uroševac to SNO to complain about the collection. He was informed about it through UDB. That was enough for him to ask me questions about the demonstrations in Kosovo. When I told him that it was too harsh and exaggerated an assessment and that we would suppress it, he called me derogatory and insulting terms in the presence of some comrades, adding that I don't know anything" (*Statement*, 2).

Blagoje Nešković did support the government's official position towards Kosovo and Metohija and was against Kosovo joining Albania, which Albania was undoubtedly striving for throughout this period. „After the war, a federation between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania was planned in our party leadership. Then Đilas asked me on behalf of Broz if I would agree to Metohija joining Albania and Montenegro joining Serbia. I refused" (Glišić 2011: 177). When he was supposed to be expelled from the Party, he was also labeled as being intolerant towards Slovenes and Montenegrins and that he suspected that B. Kidrič and F. Leskošek work to the detriment of the PR of Serbia, and in favor of the People's Republic of Slovenia. This was taken as a grave sin against him in relation to the policy of brotherhood and unity in which it was expected that Serbia should voluntarily make the most efforts for its preservation (Glišić 2011: 177).

Đoko Pajković further criticizes Nešković's behavior regarding the obligatory purchase policy on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija in 1947. Namely, the lack of cadastral data on the exact area of the land held by the peasants was a problem when determining the purchase quotas. Due to doubts about the correctness of the farmers' applications, the Ministry of Trade made a decision to increase the areas by 20% and take the purchase based on that calculation. Đ. Pajković states that he immediately pointed out to B. Nešković the incorrectness of such a decision, but he ignored that suggestion. Later, the Ministry withdrew this decision and reduced the debts by the amount of the increased land area because it turned out that the population was too burdened. According to him, B. Nešković allegedly also then insisted on keeping the 20% increase according to which the purchase quotas were calculated and thus burdened the peasants too much.

„It is well known that we approached the obligatory purchase in 1947 unprepared. In our case, the absence of cadastral data on the land was a particular difficulty. In the Ministry of Trade at the time, a decision was made that where there are no cadastral studies, due to doubts about the correctness of the farmers' applications, the superficial lands should be increased by 20%. I pointed out to Blagoje Nešković that such an increase in land means an unfair and dangerous burden on the peasants. He reacted to it very harshly and not

in a friendly manner. However, this had an impact, both then and later, on the burden by the purchase, taking into account the structure of households and the fertility of the land, as well as a larger share than in other regions, which can be verified even now.

Recognizing the justification of our requests, the Ministry of Trade notified the Regional Committee about reduced debt for the amounts by which the land surface had been increased. On that basis, RC monitored the execution of the purchase. When he found out about it, he characterized the whole Regional Committee and first of all me as an opportunist. He brought back the 20% increase as obligatory. He considered our resistance to this incomprehensible policy an expression of fear. On several occasions after that, in an insulting and mocking form, he told me „not to be afraid”, „that I have become braver” etc. It is a special question just how much stupidity and damage within the masses we had from that” (*Statement*, 3).

As for the buyout policy, we know from historical sources that Blagoje Nešković was criticized for the buyout policy in Vojvodina exactly because, according to the party's standards, he was too lenient in determining the buyout quotas. For the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, we have no data that the party was dissatisfied with his work, and it was certainly in the state's favor that the purchase quotas were as high as possible. It is very likely that after suffering criticism due to the results of the purchase in Vojvodina B. Nešković tightened his attitude towards the purchase in the whole country, hence his persistent insistence to maintain the increased calculation by 20% of the area. We think that by looking through that prism, his attitude towards the buyout policy in Kosovo and Metohija could not be seen as contrary to state interests.

We can see that throughout the document Đoko Pajković is very personal and that he often points out how B. Nešković had an unfriendly attitude towards him.

„I think these few examples that I presented here show that Blagoje Nešković, not wanting to know the conditions in Kosovo and Metohija, on which I tried to provide him with as much material as possible, took such positions that made our work difficult and we lost precious time. My pointing out the unsustainability of some of his positions and conclusions were the reason for his rude, dictatorial and insulting attitude towards me the Regional Committee. He demanded the acceptance of his views without question, underestimated and insulted the Regional Committee as a whole as incapable of helping him, by providing the necessary notifications, etc. It is also interesting to point out: that he criticized me and the entire committee for insufficient acceptance of Šiptars into the Party (that was correct); but in some of his political standpoints we felt chauvinism, which could not be without consequences for the organizational development of the Party among the Šiptars.

I suffered a lot because of his attitude towards me. I often rummaged through my head whether he was right. I constantly came to the conclusion that the reason why he accuses me is the following: that I am an opportunist

and a coward. This does not stand, because I worked in such conditions, so I am not evaluated that way. In two or three of the aforementioned conflicts, I stuck to my views very firmly, which I told him openly. But despite that, I came to the decision several times to write to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Serbia, to thank the Party for its trust and to ask to leave the Communist Party of Serbia. But, bearing in mind all the difficulties in our area, I decided not to do so, considering that I must not allow it to be a special and more of a problem for the Party" (*Statement*, 4).

Analyzing the content of the statement, one gets the impression that Blagoje Nešković and Đorđije Đoko Pajković were never on good terms, and that the statement was an opportunity for Pajković to deal with an old political dissenter. An important fact is that the statement was written subsequently only in 1952, when Blagoje Nešković was supposed to be replaced. Obviously, it was necessary to find as much evidence as possible and turn it against Blagoje Nešković, in order to justify the decision to expel him from the party. For these reasons, we think that Đoka Pajković's statement should be taken with a grain of salt. Based on the knowledge of the CPY's relationship on this issue, we can say that Nešković followed the political line of the party, that his attitude was the result of the current party policy. What we can also assume from Nešković's position is that he did not know about such an agreement with J. Broz and J. Stalin, which would have meant the surrender of Kosovo and Metohija to Albania if such an agreement had really existed. Blagoje Nešković had remained on the same line that the party had before the war.

3 CONCLUSION

By analyzing the contents of the Prime Minister Blagoje Nešković's documents related to the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, we came to the conclusion that Blagoje Nešković did support the government's official position towards Kosovo and Metohija and was against the annexation of Kosovo to Albania, which Albania was undoubtedly striving for throughout this period. Using the method of mutual comparison of these four documents, we determined that they complement each other and are correlated with the foreign policy that FPRY conducted towards Albania. The exception is partly the statement of Đorđija Đoka Pajković from 1952, since it was given in specific circumstances and with the clear aim of discrediting the political work of Blagoje Nešković. That is why we took this document with a dose of critical reserve. Blagoje Nešković had an ambivalent attitude towards the national issues, on the one hand he tried to prove himself as a good communist, so he often emphasized „Yugoslavism" and the „thesis of brotherhood and unity" which was an integral part of political rhetoric. On the other hand, he was a native of Šumadija, a Serb, who never forgot his nationality nor the role that Serbia played during the Second World War. At a time when communists, and especially Serbian communists, were not

forgiven for their national weakness, we can say that Blagoje Nešković had, in a way, revolutionary attitudes in relation to other communists and to the role he had in the CPY. Those attitudes were noticeable sometimes more sometimes less in accordance with how much such a thing was possible in CPY.

It has been shown that when it comes to the policy towards Kosovo and Metohija Blagoje Nešković had more far-sighted assessments than his fellow party members. He predicted that giving too much freedom to the Albanian population would have negative consequences for the unity of the country and that the role played by that population during the Second World War should not be forgotten. Regardless of the fact that he supported the policy of massification of the CPY by including as many Albanians as possible, he was determined that „he will not allow Albanian history and language to be taught in Serbian schools in Kosovo#. It turned out that his fear of giving too much autonomy to the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija was well-founded, as will be shown in the coming decades.

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КОСОВО И МЕТОХИЈА У ДОКУМЕНТИМА ПРЕМИЈЕРА
БЛАГОЈА НЕШКОВИЋА (1945–1952)

– Фундаментално истраживање историјских извора –

Резиме

У првим годинама после Другог светског рата односи између Југославије и Албаније деловали су веома срдечно. Међутим, Албанија никада није одустала од својих претензија на територију Косова и Метохије коју је покушала да припоји својој држави. Југославија је то на разне начине покушавала да спречи. Пре свега су нас занимали ставови Благоја Нешковића, значајне личности комунистичког покрета, у вези са косовским питањем. Обављао је значајне политичке функције у послератним годинама (секретар ЦК, председник Владе Србије, потпредседник Владе ФНРЈ). 1952. године, када је био приморан да поднесе оставку на све партијске функције и искључен из ЦК Југославије, један од многих разлога за то била је његова погрешна процена политичке ситуације на Косову и Метохији. Посебно нас је занимало да ли се и на који начин његов однос према Косову и Метохији разликује од званичне партијске линије. Анализом доступних извора из тог периода, дошли смо до закључка да је Благоје Нешковић следио званичну линију Комунистичке партије и да се не може говорити о неким ставовима који су били супротни званичној државној политици. Показало се да је Благоје Нешковић, када је реч о политици према територији Косова и Метохије, имао далековидије оцене од својих партијских другова. Испоставило се да је његов страх од давања превелике аутономије Албанцима на Косову и Метохији био основан, што ће се показати у наредним деценијама.

Кључне речи: Косово и Метохија, Благоје Нешковић, документи, историјски извори, упоредна анализа, методологија.