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RUMANIA INSISTING ON ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE,
YUGOSLAV PAPER SAYS

The following is a translation of an article published in the October 26 issue of the Belgrade daily Politika under the title "Rumania and Comecon." The author of the article is the Tanjug correspondent in Bucharest Stjepan Vukusic. [vu-ku-shich].

It is today no longer any secret that within Comecon there exist two basic concepts concerning the ways and means of cooperation within this inter-governmental economic organization. The first concept is old and recognizes a center and peripheries, while the new one insists on qualitative changes of the current relationship.

Following the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the first concept has been propagated with new vigor by the five [Warsaw Pact] countries in the name of "the sovereignty of the whole socialist system." The second concept insists on "the community of sovereign states." The advocates of the "strong hand" policy in the five countries demand the management of individual national economies from a bloc center, the bureaucratic hierarchy of the management, and subordination to "the higher interests of socialism," i.e., the interests decided upon by the center of this bloc. The demands by the "five" [i.e. the five Warsaw Pact states which have occupied Czechoslovakia] are, in practice, aimed at transferring all vital economic functions now under the jurisdiction of individual member states to the jurisdiction of the center, to supra-national agencies controlled by the center of the bloc [i.e., by Moscow], which actually means the renunciation of all vital characteristics of national sovereignty

and the transformation of individual national economies into an appendix of the center [in Moscow]. The real meaning of all these demands and concrete actions of the "five" can best be observed only within the scope of similar attempts being made within the military-political organization of the Warsaw Pact, and within the scope of the preparations of an international conference of Communist and workers' parties. In fact by using these three vital channels [i.e., economic centralization, political-military centralization, and an international Communist conference] the center of the bloc and its leading country [the Soviet Union] should assume all essential functions now in the hands of individual national states: military-political, economic and Party. In return for this transformation of "national souls" into one "international soul" and in return for all earthly misfortunes and crises, the bloc's heaven offers everlasting bliss within these "higher interests of socialism." In the case of non-acceptance [of this "bliss"] a quite concrete punishment would be carried out, as the case of Czechoslovakia shows.

Essential differences have appeared in the ways and means of cooperation, rather than in the claim that such cooperation has been necessary. It is namely clear that such cooperation is objectively necessitated by current technical development and by the international division of labor. However, concerning the question of the conclusion which should be drawn from this objective process and the basis upon which the cooperation should be constructed, the Rumanian answer essentially differs from the views of the "five." Certain points indicate how Rumania has decided to follow such a line.

About eight years ago the need for industrialization was the decisive reason for the inevitability of the country's economic and political emancipation. In view of the relative underdevelopment of the economy and the stagnation of the economic structure and even of the standards at that time (because Rumania was allotted the role by Comecon of remaining the agrarian suppliers of other countries), the industrialization of Rumania was then approximately the same thing as today the democratization of Czechoslovakia and other industrially more developed socialist countries. The emancipation of Rumania has brought about a brisk economic growth in the country, accompanied by quite justified expectations and hopes.

Even though another two years are needed for the completion of the more extensive phase of industrialization, which requires a centralistic accumulation,

the present quick growth of industry has placed on the agenda even today the necessity of the adaptation of the political system, more precisely its democratization and humanization, as is now being emphasized here in Bucharest. The struggle for national independence is, in other words, no political caprice but rather the vital precondition for the development of all economic and human potentialities and the construction of a specific political structure and economic policy paving the road [to independence].

[Gheorghe] Radulescu [Rumania's Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economy and the country's permanent representative to Comecon] has quite clearly formulated the Rumanian views and reasons on which these views are based. He does not agree with the forms of cooperation within Comecon as proposed "in various articles and works" in the countries of the "five," such as "the creation of supra-national economic organisms within the framework of Comecon, the renunciation of the national planning of the economic development and a change to international planning, the transferral of important economic levers from the hands of one's own state to the hands of some supra-national agencies and the like." His reasons are quite clear. Said Radulescu: "Such forms of cooperation, as has been demonstrated, would create relationships of subordination and inequality among states and would lead to tension and intolerance; in this way some new difficulties in the process of the growth of material production, in the realization of socialist reproduction and in the increase of the living standards would appear." (1)

This is, we should recall, the reason why such Rumanian motives are labelled as "nationalism." This is also why the author [Radulescu] has devoted most of the space [in his analysis] to the explanation that a real internationalism could be created only if one starts from vital national interests and independence by means of talks and agreements. In this sense the national and international [interests] are only two parts of the same dialectical whole mutually supplementing and complementing each other. Such an internationalism presupposes cooperation and the relationships of equal partners and a "community of sovereign states," a community which Comecon should be.

The "internationalism" proposed by the five [Warsaw Pact countries] is practically restricted to the nationalism of the bloc's center [the Soviet Union]

(1) Even though Vukusic quotes from an article written by Radulescu, he does not say where and when such an article was published.

which does not tolerate the nationalism of subordinated partners; moreover, it excludes them. Radulescu has explained yet another aspect which confirms this claim. He is against the creation and forming of enterprises under the joint ownership of the member countries which would share the profit. He poses the question to "certain economists" whether the member-countries, by creating such joint enterprises, would like to increase their income by exploiting the work of other nations or if they would like to be supplied with industrial products? Radulescu categorically advocates the second alternative, quoting as evidence the joint Yugoslav-Rumanian project at the Iron Gates. "The Rumanian state considers that enterprises constructed with the cooperation of other socialist countries," Radulescu says, "can only really belong to the state in which they were constructed."

This well-known economist has in this way revealed the essence of the demands and plans of the "five," their quite concrete topicality, and the practical and theoretical reasons why such demands and plans cannot be accepted.

Translated by Slobodan Stankovic