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# The assembly system of Yugoslavia : Delegations instead of members of parliament

In accordance with the new Constitution of Yugoslavia, which was promulgated in February 1974, some substantive changes have been made in the Yugoslav political system, though in essence, they constitute further elaboration and improvements upon the basic political and social achievements gained in the struggle for national liberation and in the Revolution during the Second world war. For one thing, changes have also been made in the assembly system of Yugoslavia. They legalize new relations in the Federation, which assure the peoples and nationalities full equality upon the principles of free negotiation, association and socialist internationalism.

For the multinational community such as Yugoslavia is this organization of relationships in the Federation is of exceptional importance. Along with the further development of self-management in every sphere of life, the regulating of relationships among the nations and nationalities is the other equally important component in the overall development of Yugoslavia over the past few years. The Marxist method of solving class and national relationships, which has been consistently carried out in the new Constitution makes for organization of the Yugoslav Federation in a unique manner, unparalleled in the history of federated communities.

chambers deliberate on an equal footing. The Federal Chamber numbers 220 members, thirty from each of the republics and twenty from each of the two provinces; the Chamber of the Republics and Provinces numbers eighty-eight, twelve from each of the republics and eight from each of the two provinces.

The jurisdiction of the Federal Chamber comprises business which is in the jurisdiction of the Federation: national defence, foreign affairs, the foundations of internal policy, the fixing or changing of the state frontiers, ratification of international agreements on political and military cooperation, organization of the federal authorities, and the like.

The Chamber of the Republics and Provinces passes the Social Plan of Yugoslavia and legislation pertaining to the economy, the monetary and foreign-exchange system, foreign trade, economic relations with other countries, and the like. The jurisdiction of deliberations and decision-making has been precisely determined by the Constitution.

The two chambers have a greater number of committees and commissions for various business. Their work goes on almost permanently, for it is in the committees and commissions that the basic business of adjusting positions and preparing joint motions.

## THE ASSEMBLY OF YUGOSLAVIA

Yugoslavia is a community of six socialist Republics and two autonomous Provinces. Relationships among them are based on complete equality, irrespective of size or number of population. They enjoy equal rights and have equal responsibilities for the functioning of the Federation. This principle has found fullest expression in the new assembly system. What is especially important is that the republican assemblies assume jurisdiction from the Federation in every important matter of economic policy.

The new Assembly of Yugoslavia (formerly the Federal Assembly) is made up of two chambers: the Federal Chamber, and the Chamber of the Republics and Provinces. The chambers are autonomous and independently deliberate on matters in their jurisdiction. There are only a few matters in which the two

## NEW METHOD OF DECISION MAKING

Before any legislation is passed by the Chamber of the Republics and Provinces, written sanction must be given by the assemblies of the republics and provinces. This is a significant novelty in the assembly system. If in the course of enactment of some regulation a single republic or province dissents against the motion, the entire procedure must be repeated. If the objections are of such a nature as call for amendment and adjustment without renewed procedure, the assemblies of the republics and provinces may authorize their delegations to the Assembly of Yugoslavia to continue action in that direction.

Voting in the chamber is according to the principle of delegations: the head of each delegation announces whether his delegation votes for or dissents. Only



when business is being voted upon about which the Federal Chamber also deliberates delegates declare singly. After positions have been cleared and adjusted during preliminary procedure, the entire process of enacting a bill proceeds apace in the chamber. For instance, the last meeting of the chamber on 31 October lasted only thirty-five minutes, although there were nine points on the agenda. But just this may be taken as a model of good and successful work in the chamber.

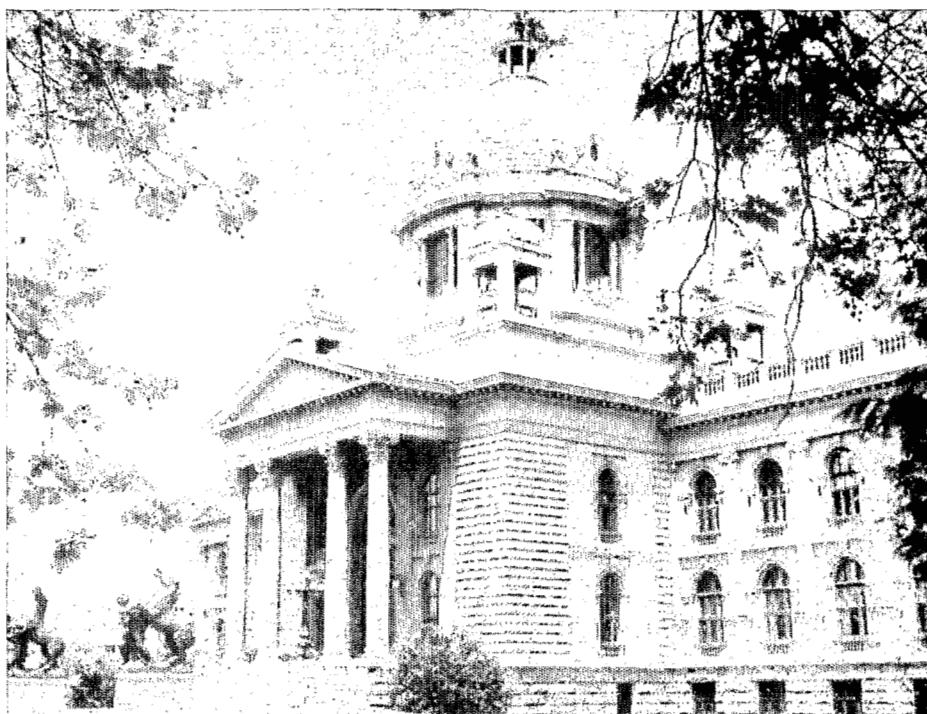
The Federal Chamber deliberates about all matters by a majority of the single votes cast by the delegates. In the assembly's work so far there have been no major problems or differences in deciding about business in the jurisdiction of this chamber. Difficulties as a rule occurred in economic business.

### THE DELEGATE SYSTEM

The delegations to the Chamber of the Republics and Provinces are elected by the assemblies of the republics and provinces by secret ballot at a joint meeting of all their chambers. The assemblies are identical in organization and method of business. They have each three chambers: the Chamber of Associated Labour, the Chamber of the Communes and the Socio-Political Chamber. They are also organized according to the system of delegations chosen by organizations of associated labour in industry, by the communes and by the socio-political organizations.

The delegates to the Federal Chamber are chosen by the communal assemblies, of which there are five hundred in Yugoslavia, also by secret ballot at joint meetings of all their chambers. The preliminary procedure of nominating delegates is carried out in the republics and provinces by the Socialist Alliance of the Working People, the nationwide political organization in Yugoslavia. All these assemblies are established just as the republican assemblies are. Instead of the Chamber of the Communes, the communal assemblies have chambers of neighbourhood communities, which are made up of delegates from the basic housing and communal units on their territories.

It will be seen, therefore, that conventional general elections are not held in



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Yugoslavia. The traditional electoral and representational system has been replaced entirely by a delegate system. The delegations are formed in the basic social cells—the organizations of associated labour and in the neighbourhood communities, and onwards pyramidwise up to the Federation, where they take part in forming all the bodies of government. In essence, the delegate system rounds off the system of self-management. By deliberating about all business in their most immediate environments (industrial enterprises, institutions, schools, neighbourhood communities), the working people directly become part of every body of management and government at every level—in the commune, town and city, province, republic and Federation.

### FAVOURABLE INITIAL EXPERIENCES

Delegations are elected in the basic organizations of associated labour. In accordance with the Constitution they are rounded-off technological, organizational and economic cells in industry. They may constitute whole enterprises; but in practice there are many more enterprises which comprise several basic organizations. There are enterprises in Yugoslavia which are made up of more than forty basic organizations. Delegations are also elected in the neighbourhood communities and in the socio-political organizations at every level. In the whole of Yugoslavia, over 90 000 delegations have been elected numbering over a million members. The delegates are elected for a term of four years.

The delegations of the basic social cells elect delegates to the communal assemblies. But the most important part of

their business is to participate permanently in decision-making on every business that is deliberated upon by the assemblies. Moreover, the delegations of the basic organizations are empowered and entitled to deliberate not only about business in the jurisdiction of their communal assemblies, but also in the jurisdiction of the assemblies of the provinces and republics and of the Assembly of Yugoslavia. It is the duty of the assemblies to provide the delegations all materials about which they have to deliberate. The delegations and delegates consult their basic organizations and transmit their positions. Opinions, observations and suggestions relating to the acts of the assemblies of the republics and Assembly of Yugoslavia may be forwarded either through delegates in the communal assemblies or directly.

The delegate system really went into operation only a few months ago. Indeed, some time is required before it can fully go into operation in accordance with the constitutional provisions. Nevertheless, initial experiences are extremely favourable, especially in the major and powerful industrial centres, and indicate that the working people of Yugoslavia are profoundly interested in this system and wholeheartedly espouse it as their participation in deliberations on all business of "State". Last year's keen political autumn in Yugoslavia, indeed, passed in this token.