

Serbian/Yugoslav-Romanian Relations and Interactions in the 20th Century

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The League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist Party from the mid-1980s to the fall of Ceaușescu

Abstract: The article deals with the relations between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român) from the mid-1980s until the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime in 1989. The paper focuses on the contacts between the leading representatives of the two communist parties and the views of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist Party on the global processes in the late 1980s.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Romania, the 1980s, Ceaușescu, communism

The normalization of Yugoslavia's relations with the Eastern Bloc in the mid-1950s facilitated the rapprochement between the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Romania, which was confirmed by frequent political contacts between the leaders of the two states as well as by concrete undertakings. The supreme symbols of Yugoslav-Romanian cooperation after the Second World War were the hydroelectric power plants on the Danube, Đerdap 1 and Đerdap 2. Additionally, Belgrade and Bucharest shared similar views on many international issues and the situation within the international communist movement. Both states aimed for a certain degree of independence from the two Cold War blocs, even though Romania, as a member of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON, was closer to Moscow compared to Yugoslavia. The similarity in the foreign policy strategies of the two states was evident in 1968 when both Romania and Yugoslavia took a critical stance on the Warsaw Pact's intervention in Czechoslovakia. An important segment of the good relations between Yugoslavia and Romania was the close relationship between the two state and party leaders, Josip Broz Tito and Nicolae Ceaușescu.¹

¹ On the relations between Yugoslavia and Romania during the Cold War, see: Vladimir Cvetković, *Pogled iza gvozdene zavese: jugoslovenska politika prema zemljama narodne demo-*

This trend continued after Tito's death in May 1980. In the 1980s, there were no major problems in the relations between Yugoslavia and Romania, nor in the relations between the communist parties of Yugoslavia and Romania. When, in late 1985, the Romanian party and state leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, visited Yugoslavia, he met, among others, with Vidoje Žarković, the President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. In the conversation with the Romanian leader, Žarković stressed that the cooperation between the two communist parties was good and developing successfully. He emphasized the Yugoslav desire to further enhance this cooperation. Žarković also proposed the continuation of bilateral contacts at the highest level. The Yugoslav party leader added that the two-year program of party cooperation had been successfully implemented, encompassing the exchange of expert delegations, lecturer exchanges, as well as collaboration between party schools and party media. In addition, Žarković highlighted the need for further improving the economic relations between the two states. The Romanian leader agreed with Žarković's assessment of the bilateral relations but criticized Yugoslav interest in the status of Yugoslav minorities (Serbs and Croats) in Romania. He also pointed out the need for contacts between the highest representatives of Romania and Yugoslavia.²

Similarly, the relations between Yugoslav and Romanian communists were described in a document from the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia dated December 1985. It was noted that the relations between Yugoslav communists and the Romanian Communist Party were based on the principles of „independence, autonomy, equality, and non-interference.” It was underlined that the planned two-year cooperation between the two parties had been successfully carried out.³

According to Yugoslav sources from that period, the Romanian international position was precarious, with its regime being criticized both in the West and the East. Criticisms from the East were internal, while the West openly disapproved of the Romanian government, with a focus on the issue of human rights in Romania. According to a document from the Central Com-

kratije u susedstvu: 1953–1958, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2013); Владимир Цветковић, „Југословенско-румунски односи у данима совјетске интервенције у Чехословачкој 1968. године”, *1968–чејргесей јодина йосле*, ур. Радмила Радић, (Београд : Институт за новију историју Србије, 2008), 163–179; Немања Митровић, *Тишо - Чаушеску : јодине зближавања. Јујословенско-румунски односи : 1968–1970*, (Београд : Институт за савремену историју, 2020).

² Arhiv Jugoslavije [Archives of Yugoslavia] (AJ), Fond 507, Savez komunista Jugoslavije (SKJ), Komisija za međunarodne odnose i veze (IX), 107/I-428, Minutes of the conversation between President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Vidoje Žarković, and Nicolae Ceaușescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and President of Romania, December 13, 1985.

³ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-428, CK SKJ, Information about the upcoming visit of Nicolae Ceaușescu on December 12 and 13, 1985.

mittee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, dated December 4, 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev's refusal to meet with the Romanian leader after Ceaușescu's visit to North Korea and China indicated Soviet reservations about the regime in Bucharest. Yugoslav analysts, however, noted that Romania was attempting to improve relations with Eastern European countries. Nevertheless, despite this partial isolation Romania was experiencing at that time, Yugoslavia was interested in strengthening cooperation with Bucharest. In a Yugoslav analysis of relations between Yugoslavia and Romania from 1985, it was noted that the relations with Romania played a significant role in Yugoslav foreign policy.⁴

In a Yugoslav report on the relations between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) and the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) from June 1987, it was stated that the cooperation between the two parties was based on a two-year agreement, similar to agreements Yugoslav communists concluded with other communist parties. The authors of the document listed several examples of cooperation between the two parties. In April 1987, a member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina delivered a lecture in Romania, and a few months later, as part of the cooperation between the two parties, a delegation from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia visited Romania to study the Romanian political system. In the same year (1987), a delegation from the Romanian Communist Party visited Yugoslavia, to analyse the Yugoslav energy system.⁵

In the same document, however, it was stressed that the Romanian side had not done enough to improve cooperation between the two communist parties. It was stated that the Romanian Communist Party was insufficiently active in improving bilateral cooperation, as it did not demonstrate its readiness to hold roundtable discussions between representatives of the two parties. Additionally, the planned exchange of delegations often did not take place.⁶

According to the assessments of Yugoslav communists in the second half of the 1980s, the decline in the international reputation of the regime in Bucharest continued. It was emphasized that Ceaușescu's regime faced criticism both in the West and the East. In one document from the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), it was mentioned that Western media almost daily reported critically on the situation in Romania. Particularly negative coverage focused on the low living standards of Romanian citizens, the Ceaușescu family, the status of ethnic minorities, and the state of human rights in Romania. In the same document, the Central Committee of the LCY underlined that Romania refused to follow the Soviet

⁴ *Ibid*; AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-428, CK SKJ, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Preparations for the official visit of Nicolae Ceaușescu to Yugoslavia on December 12 and 13, 1985.

⁵ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-437, CK SKJ, Information on the cooperation between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist Party, June 18, 1987.

⁶ *Ibid*.

model (Perestroika), which Ceaușescu explicitly confirmed after the plenum of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) in January 1987. Ceaușescu opposed attempts to improve socialism by adopting certain capitalist elements such as private ownership.⁷ It was emphasized that during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Romania in May 1987, Romanian reservations towards the reforms in the Soviet Union became apparent. The analysts of the LCY noticed that Ceaușescu viewed Gorbachev's reforms as internal matters of the Soviet Union and that he consequently had no intention of copying the Soviet model in his own country. According to the assessment of the LCY, the Romanian communists adhered to a dogmatic variant of socialism.⁸

These Yugoslav assessments of the situation in Romania did not differ from Western perceptions of Romanian politics. During Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Romania in May 1987, the *Washington Post* wrote about delicate relations between Moscow and „its most conservative East Bloc ally.” The commentator of the American daily noted that during the dinner with Gorbachev, Ceaușescu expressed reservations towards Perestroika, stating only that Bucharest was following the Soviet Union's course „with interest.”⁹ In a conversation with a high-level delegation from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), which visited Romania in July 1987, Ion Stoian emphasized that Perestroika was an internal matter of the Soviet Union. This signaled that the Romanian leadership would not follow the Soviet model of modernizing socialism.¹⁰

Even though Yugoslav perceptions of the Soviet Perestroika were considerably more positive, Yugoslavs did not sever ties with the Romanian Communist Party. Just a month after Gorbachev visited Romania, President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), Bosko Krunić, visited Romania. During the meeting with Ceaușescu, both sides positively assessed the relations between the two communist parties as well as the economic cooperation between Romania and Yugoslavia.¹¹

However, Krunić's visit to Romania revealed disagreements between the two parties. Ceaușescu emphasized that the relations between the two parties were closer in Tito's era. On the other hand, Yugoslavia was not satisfied with the status of Yugoslav ethnic minorities (Serbs and Croats) in Romania. Ceaușescu emphasized that the ethnic minority policy was an internal matter for Romania, that all Romanian citizens had equal rights as

⁷ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-437, CK SKJ, Information on the position of the Romanian Communist Party on the current processes in the socialist countries.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ „Gorbachev Begins Talks in Romania”, *Washington Post*, May 25, 1987.

¹⁰ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-439, Report on the official visit of the LCY delegation led by President of the Central Committee of the LCY, Boško Krunić, to Romania on July 22–24, 1987.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

well as that ethnic minorities had schools and cultural institutions in their languages. Additionally, the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party was particularly dissatisfied with the Yugoslav press coverage of Romania.¹²

The conversation between Nicolae Ceaușescu and the Yugoslav delegation led by Boško Krunić, President of the LCY Presidency, also indicated significant differences in views on the problem of external debt. While Romania opted for a radical reduction of external debt, Yugoslavia chose a more conservative approach. Ceaușescu advised Yugoslav communists to preserve Yugoslavia's independence by immediately repaying external debt. In addition, he recommended a radical reduction in consumption and imports. In response, Boško Krunić emphasized Yugoslavia's unwillingness to follow Romania's path in eliminating external debt: „(...) All analyses indicated that it would be better to reach an agreement with the IMF. The Yugoslav economy is largely dependent on the import of raw materials, and such a decision would create enormous problems for us.”¹³

Despite these disagreements, Yugoslav communists were not dissatisfied with the results of President Krunić's visit to Romania. It was assessed as successful, with both sides showing interest in continuing their cooperation.¹⁴

According to the report of the LCY Central Committee on the visit of the LCY delegation to Romania, Ceaușescu positively assessed the relations between the two parties and states, but also highlighted the possibilities for further improvement of bilateral relations. The then leader of the Yugoslav communists, Boško Krunić, expressed a similar assessment of bilateral relations at both the party and state levels. He also made specific proposals: strengthening the cooperation of party institutions and party media, intensifying the exchange of delegations, and organizing roundtable discussions on current issues. Krunić emphasized the possibility of further improvement of economic cooperation between the two countries, considering the compatibility of the economies of Yugoslavia and Romania.¹⁵

In a document from July 1987, the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) criticized the previous cooperation between Romanian and Yugoslav communists, with responsibility being shifted to the Romanian side. It was claimed, among other things, that visiting lecturers from the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) in Yugoslavia chose topics that could not stimulate dialogue. The collaboration between the

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-439, Minutes of the conversation between President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LCY Boško Krunić, member of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LCY Marko Orlandić and the General Secretary of the RCP Nicolae Ceaușescu on June 22, 1987.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-439, Minutes of the conversation between President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LCY, Boško Krunić, and General Secretary of the RCP, Nicolae Ceaușescu, on July 23 and 24, 1987.

local (regional) party institutions of the LCY and the RCP, as well as the communication between the media of the two communist parties, was assessed as underdeveloped. Nevertheless, the Central Committee emphasized the interest of Yugoslav communists in developing cooperation with Romanians.¹⁶

The reporting of the Yugoslav press on Romania represented a permanent source of discord between Bucharest and Belgrade. According to the Central Committee of the LCY, some comments in the Yugoslav press about Romania were malicious since they were „grossly insulting Nicolae Ceaușescu.” Consequently, the Romanian side often protested against such comments, and even the Yugoslav leadership criticized anti-Romanian comments in the Yugoslav press.¹⁷

Like many other Yugoslav documents, the above-mentioned analysis of the LCY Central Committee disapproved of the policy of the Romanian regime towards Yugoslav minorities in Romania, underlining the assimilation of around 50,000 Serbs and 10–12,000 Croats living in Romania. According to the author of the report, such a policy was aimed at creating a „unified Romanian socialist nation.” The document reiterated that Bucharest considered the ethnic minority issues an internal matter for Romania and stressed substantial differences in Romanian and Yugoslav views on Bucharest's policy toward Yugoslav minorities during Yugoslav-Romanian talks.¹⁸ In a meeting with Boško Krunić, Ceaușescu emphasized that the assimilation of ethnic minorities was a normal consequence of modern life and spoke against linking the status of minorities with human rights issues.¹⁹

In 1987, Yugoslav communists viewed Romania's international position as extremely complicated, given that despite the membership in the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, Romania sought to preserve its independence. The analysts of the LCY noticed the increasing American pressure on Romania regarding human rights which culminated in the decision of Regan's administration to revoke the most favored nation status for Romania.²⁰

A new meeting between the high representatives of the two communist parties occurred in September 1988 during the visit of Ilie Ceaușescu, a member of the RCP Central Committee and Deputy Defense Minister of Romania, to Yugoslavia. The conversation with Stefan Korošec, Secretary of the Presidency of the LCY Central Committee, among other things focused on

¹⁶ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-439, Preparations for the visit of the LCY delegation, led by Boško Krunić, to Romania, July 22–24, 1987.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-440, Minutes of the conversation between President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LCY, Boško Krunić, and Nicolae Ceaușescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and the President of Romania, on November 13, 1987.

²⁰ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-439, Preparations for the visit of the LCY delegation, led by Boško Krunić, to Romania, July 22–24, 1987.

Romania's delicate foreign policy in the late 1980s. Ceaușescu complained about Romania being subjected to a propaganda campaign, in which Hungary played a significant role. He accused Budapest of waging a propaganda war against Romania, with the ultimate goal of annexing Transylvania to Hungary. In this regard, Ceaușescu emphasized that Hungary had used the slogans of American propaganda in this campaign.²¹

The following year, in July 1989, Ion Stoian, Secretary of the RCP Central Committee, visited Yugoslavia and met with Stanislav Stojanović, Executive Secretary of the Presidency of the LCY Central Committee. Stoian positively assessed the cooperation between the two parties but suggested more frequent meetings between the leaders of the LCY and the RCP. In this regard, he proposed that Milan Pančevski, President of the LCY Presidency, visit Romania. However, Stoian reiterated Romanian dissatisfaction with the reporting of the Yugoslav press on Romania, which already evolved into a chronic problem in Romanian-Yugoslav relations.²²

During discussions with the leaders of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), Stoian paid special attention to the dramatic events in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. He expressed particular concern about the developments in Hungary and Poland, noting that „reactionary forces” in these two countries were supported by the United States. Stoian also criticized the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, emphasizing that it strengthened the U.S. position in the region. He underscored that insistence on human rights represented imperialist pressure and interference in the internal affairs of socialist states.²³

Two months later, in Belgrade, the President of the Presidency of the LCY, Dušan Čkrebić, met with Ioan Totu, a member of the Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania. Totu led the Romanian delegation at the Ninth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in 1989 in Belgrade. Čkrebić positively assessed the Yugoslav-Romanian relations, while Totu criticized several facets of Yugoslav policy towards Romania. He emphasized that Bucharest was not satisfied with Yugoslav criticism of the policy of the Romanian regime towards Yugoslav minorities in Romania. Totu argued that all citizens of Romania were equal before the law and stressed that Romania would not raise the issue of the rights of the Romanian minority in Yugoslavia.²⁴

²¹ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-448, Minutes of the conversation of Secretary of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LCY, Štefan Korošec, with Colonel-General Ilie Ceaușescu, member of the Central Committee of the RCP and Deputy Minister of Defense, on September 21, 1988.

²² AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-450a, Report on the visit of candidate member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Ion Stoian, July 16–19, 1989.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-450c, Minutes of the conversation between Dušan Čkrebić, member of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and candidate member of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Ioan Totu, on September 6, 1989.

As in previous meetings with high officials of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), the Yugoslav press was again on the agenda. Totu reiterated Romanian dissatisfaction with the reporting of Yugoslav media on Romania while noting that the Yugoslav party press did not cover Romania in the same way. Čkrebić responded that Yugoslav authorities had suggested to Yugoslav media to avoid publishing half-truths about Romania.²⁵

In November 1989, the delegation of the LCY, led by Marko Lolić, a member of the LCY Central Committee, attended the 14th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party. The delegation stayed in Romania until the end of the congress (November 25), but Lolić returned to Belgrade a few days earlier, on November 22. Apparently, with this move, the LCY wanted to publicly signal its rapid distancing from Ceausescu's regime.²⁶

In the conversation with Lolić, the leaders of the RCP criticized the overthrow of Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria and expressed the belief that this change was directed from Moscow. As to Yugoslav-Romanian relations, the leaders of the RCP criticized the reporting of the Yugoslav press on Romania, which eventually prompted the regime in Bucharest to impose a ban on entry to the Tanjug's (Yugoslav news agency) correspondent.²⁷

In the report from the 14th Congress, the members of the Yugoslav delegation emphasized that the situation in Romania was „catastrophic” as well as that the relations between Romania and the states of the Warsaw Pact were dramatically deteriorating. The delegation gained the impression that Romanian foreign policy did not adapt to the processes and trends in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s.²⁸

A reliable indicator of the growing differences in the views of Yugoslav and Romanian communists on the processes in the socialist bloc (the end of the total dominance of communists and political pluralism) was the official message from the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia to the participants of the 14th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party. The message highlighted the need for reforms in the socialist system: „This inevitable process of building a new world view (...) requires that contemporary socialism undergo deep and essential changes (...). In our view, the current reform processes in some socialist countries are pursuing this goal. (...) The League of Communists of Yugoslavia has fully committed itself to implementing profound economic and political reforms in our country and building a more economically efficient and politically effective socialist society.”²⁹

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/1-450e, Report of the delegation of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia on the 14th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, November 20–25, 1989.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/1-450e, Message from the Presidency of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia to the participants in the 14th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, November 20, 1989.

This message from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia to the Romanian Communist Party fundamentally differed from the stance of the RCP, which resisted implementing the reforms taking place throughout Eastern Europe. For this reason, Romanian media published a shortened version of this message, omitting controversial parts.³⁰

The head of the LCY delegation at the 14th Congress of the RCP, Marko Lolić, met with Nicolae Ceaușescu on November 21. The minutes of this meeting indicate that the Romanian leader was aware of the danger he was facing, i.e., the coup that was being prepared. Ceaușescu proposed that Belgrade and Bucharest should organize a meeting between the state and party leadership of Yugoslavia and Romania „anytime and anywhere”, but before the 14th extraordinary congress of the LCY in January 1990. Lolić expressed reservations about this proposal, stressing that Yugoslav communists were too busy preparing for the congress.³¹

The profound differences between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) and the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) were disclosed immediately after the conclusion of the 14th Congress of the RCP. On November 27, 1987, the Presidency of the LCY Central Committee issued a statement stressing the fundamental differences between the two parties on the processes in Eastern Europe, i.e. the reforms, democratization, and human rights issues. Nevertheless, despite these bitter disagreements the Presidency of the LCY invited the delegation of the Romanian Communist Party to the 14th Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.³²

The formal rupture between the LCY and Ceaușescu's party occurred at the end of 1989 during the so-called „Romanian Revolution.” In the dramatic events that shook Romania, Yugoslavia and its party publicly sided with the opposition forces. The Yugoslav press actively supported the anti-regime protests from the very beginning of the uprising in Romania.³³ On December 20, 1989, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia publicly severed ties with the Romanian Communist Party. The Presidency of the LCY clarified this decision in a statement condemning the use of violence in Romania:

„Regarding the tragic events in Romania, the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia expresses its deep concern and strongly condemns the brutal repression against the people

³⁰ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-450e, Report of the delegation of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia on the 14th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, November 20–25, 1989.

³¹ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-450e, Minutes of the conversation between Marko Lolić, member of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, with Nicolae Ceaușescu, November 21, 1989.

³² AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-450e, Announcement of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, November 27, 1987; „Između SKJ i rumunske KP postoje suštinske razlike”, *Politika*, November 28, 1989.

³³ Petar Dragišić, „Serbian Press and Romanian Revolution in 1989”, *Analele Științifice ale Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași. Istorie*, 68/2022, 89–99.

and the reprisals that have led to human casualties. The current changes and reforms in Eastern European countries are historical processes and cannot be stopped by closing borders, especially not by violence, threatening and attempting to keep the Romanian people (...) living in this country subdued and isolated, which is contrary to the aspirations of the modern world for democratization and respect for human rights and freedoms. The Presidency of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia considers it necessary that physical violence and all other undemocratic actions stop, advocating for dialogue and the active role of all progressive and democratic forces in the country in paving the way to democratic processes in line with the aspirations of the people. Due to the responsibility of the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party for these tragic events and all their consequences, the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, taking the sentiments of LCY members and the general public in our country into consideration, decided to suspend the cooperation with the Romanian Communist Party, including withdrawing the invitation for the Romanian Communist Party delegation to attend the 14th Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.”³⁴

This statement marked the complete break in relations between Yugoslav communists and collapsing Ceaușescu's regime. Unlike the RCP, Yugoslav communists viewed Perestroika and the processes in Eastern Europe in 1989 with much more enthusiasm.³⁵ Ceaușescu's Romania did not follow this trend, which led to dramatic events in Romania in December 1989. Although the Yugoslav Party was significantly more open to reforms in Eastern Europe, it suffered the same fate as the Romanian Communist Party. Just a few weeks after the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime, the Yugoslav Communist Party ceased to exist. The 14th extraordinary congress of the LCY, held in late January 1990 in Belgrade was the swansong of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The delegations from Slovenia and Croatia left the Congress, which led to the dissolution of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

The downfalls of the Communist Party of Romania and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia coincided but did not have the same root cause. Ceaușescu's party collapsed due to incompatibility with the new ideological and geopolitical trends in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the Yugoslav party and state were destroyed by the escalation of ethnic tensions in the

³⁴ AJ, SKJ, IX, 107/I-450e, CC LCY, Official statement, December 20, 1989.

³⁵ On the Perestroika and the European history in the late 1980s, see: Vladislav M. Zubok, *Collapse: The Fall of the Soviet Union*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021); Mihail Gorbačov, *Sam sa sobom*, (Beograd: Laguna, 2014); Roj Medvedev, *Boris Jeljcin, Rusija na kraju XX veka*, (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2009); Ivan T. Berend, *Evropa posle 1980.*, (Beograd: Arhipelag/Službeni glasnik, 2012); Tony Judt, *Geschichte Europas von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, (München/Wien: Carl Hansen Verlag, 2006); Volter Laker, *Istorija Evrope 1945–1992*, (Beograd: Clio, 1999); Ričard Dž. Krempton, *Balkan posle Drugog svetskog rata*, (Beograd: Klio, 2003).

late 1980s and early 1990s. The fate of these two parties confirms the accuracy of Tolstoy's well-known quote: „All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”

Summary

In the second half of the 1980s, the relations between Romanian and Yugoslav communists were very close. However, despite the multifaceted cooperation, there were several controversial issues between the two parties. Yugoslavs were not entirely satisfied with the policy of the Romanian regime towards Yugoslav minorities in Romania (Serbs and Croats), while the Romanian side criticized the Yugoslav media for their reporting on Romania. In the late 1980s, the two parties did not view the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe in the same way. Unlike the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the Romanian Communist Party did not welcome the new political and social trends in the countries east of the Iron Curtain. Therefore, in late December 1989, when violence escalated in Romania, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia severed all ties with the RCP, sharply condemning Ceaușescu's regime.

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