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Original scientific article

DELEGATE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

CASE STUDY: MONTENEGRO 1974-1990

Jelisaveta BLAGOJEVIC MILJANIC¹

Parliament of Montenegro, Bulevar Svetog Petra Cetinjskog 10, Podgorica,

e-mail: elizabethab@t-com.me**ABSTRACT:**

The aim of this paper is to present and describe the principles and values upon which the establishment and functioning of a specific form of parliamentary self-management system, known as the delegate system, were based. This objective will be achieved through the application of the historiographical method, content analysis, and a case study of the parliamentary delegate system of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, as defined by the Constitution of SR Montenegro adopted in 1974. The electoral principles and methods for electing delegates to the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro were defined by electoral legislation, specifically two laws on the election of delegates adopted in 1974 and 1989, as well as the Law on the Election of MPs adopted in 1990. This allows for a comparison between different electoral principles, such as the parliamentary system of a tricameral assembly with a unicameral parliament, the position of delegates versus MPs, and a one-party versus a multi-party system. Furthermore, the paper provides an overview of the basic constitutional principles governing the delegate system of the Assembly of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It also presents the reasons for its introduction through a historical review of the development and changes in self-management since its inception in 1948."

KEY WORDS:

Yugoslavia; Montenegro; Delegate system; Self-management; Constitution 1974;

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SAŽETAK:

Cilj ovog rada je prezentacija stručnoj i široj zainteresovanoj javnosti načela, principa i vrijednosti na kojima se zasnivalo ustanovljenje i funkcionisanje posebnog oblika skupštinskog sistema samoupravljanja – delegatskog sistema. Navedeni cilj smo nastojali da ostvarimo primjenom historiografskog metoda, metoda analiza sadržaja i studije slučaja za koju je odabran skupštinski delegatski sistem Socijalističke Republike Crne Gore definisan Ustavom SR Crne Gore iz 1974. godine. Izborni principi, načela i način izbora delegata u Skupštinu SR Crne Gore definisani su izbornim zakonodavstvom, pri čemu su predstavljene odredbe dva zakona o izboru delegata 1974. i 1989, kao i Zakona o izboru poslanika iz 1990. godine. Na ovaj način, omogućena je komparacija različitih izbornih načela, odnosno skupštinskih sistema sa trodomnom, odnosno jednodomnom skupštinom, sa delegatima, odnosno poslanicima, sa jednom, odnosno više partija. Pored toga, dat je osvrt na osnovna ustavna načela uređenja delegatskog sistema Skupštine Savezne Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, te je ukazano na razloge njegovog uvođenja kroz istorijski prikaz razvoja i promjena u sistemu i koncepciji samoupravljanja od njegovog uvođenja 1948. godine.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

Jugoslavija; Crna Gora; Delegatski sistem; Samoupravljanje; Ustav 1974;

Introductory remarks

The main purpose of this paper is to present the functioning of the parliamentary system of self-management, specifically its mode of operation and structure established by the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro (SRCG) from 1974. This system is known as the delegate system, distinct from the multi-party system defined and introduced in the late 1980s by amendments to the constitution. These amendments altered the structure of the Assembly, making it unicameral, abolishing councils and the delegate system. On October 12, 1992, a new Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro was adopted, following the enactment of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on April 27, 1992.

Several authors in the 1970s and 1980s explored the theoretical and practical aspects of the delegate system and its implementation (Kardelj, 1973, 1977; Marjanović, 1976, 1978; Popović, 1974, 1976; Kulić, 1976; Zečević, 1978; Bilandžić et al., 1979; Lovrić, 1979, 1980; Petranović, 2019; Višnjić, 1981; Šuković, 1982; Grdešić, 1986; Jovanović, 1986). However, there is a lack of recent analyses of the functioning of this system, even on its mere existence. This issue is only partially covered by monographs and articles of serial publications, mostly by Western authors analyzing the socialist self-management system during the rule of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the League of Communists of Montenegro, as well as the reasons for its decline.

In contrast to the delegate system and its functioning in Montenegro, multipartyism with the operation of a unicameral parliament has been the subject of analysis from various perspectives, considering its advantages and disadvantages. Thus, the aim of this paper is to present to both experts and the wider public the parliamentary system that operated for more than a decade and significantly differs from the current system due to different state, social, and overall arrangements. It has been recognized that the description and expansion of data collected on this topic would be valuable for researchers in the fields of history, political science, sociology, and related areas studying the political history of Montenegro in the second half of the 20th century, as well as elements of the political system in a general sense.

The paper is divided into four segments, covering the conceptual clarification of the delegate system, pointing out the reasons for its introduction, the description of the structure of the delegate system at the federal level, including a diagrammatic representation of the election of delegates to the Federal Assembly. The third chapter presents the constitutional solutions for organizing the delegate system in the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro. Finally, there is provided an overview of the basic electoral principles for the election of delegates/members of the Assembly of the SR Montenegro defined by laws from 1974 to 1990.

Nationalism and Technocracy as Causes of Introducing the Delegate System

Self-management implies a distinct economic and social system characterized by active management and decision-making by citizens and workers. This system operated legally, institutionally, and economically in Yugoslavia in various forms for nearly 40 years, from its introduction in 1950 until its abolition in 1989. The reason for introducing socialist self-management in Yugoslavia was the split with the Soviet Union, leading to the search for a new ideological and political basis for legitimacy (Calic, 2019, 179). The goal was to reject Stalinist totalitarianism while still adhering to the socialist revolution. The struggle for socialist democracy began in extremely challenging conditions, amidst the pressure from the Informbiro, Cold War conflicts, underdeveloped economy, low production levels, cultural backwardness, and a lack of democratic tradition (Petranović, 1980, 513).

The People's Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ) legalized workers' self-management at a session held on June 27, 1950, by adopting the Basic Law on the Management of Economic Enterprises and Higher Economic Associations by Workers' Collectives.² Within three months, 7,136 workers' councils were established, with 15 to 120 members, and in enterprises with fewer than 30 employees,

² In his article "On People's Democracy" from 1949, the main ideologist Edvard Kardelj criticized Soviet statism, pointing out the threat of merging the party and the state into one. Alongside Milovan Đilas, Boris Kidrič, Moša Pijade, and Vladimir Bakarić, he prepared in 1950 the "Basic Law on the Management of State Economic Enterprises" with the following key elements: de-bureaucratization through workers' councils; decentralization of management, politics, and culture; and democratization of all aspects of life (Calic, 2019, 179).

the entire collective formed a council making decisions on profit distribution, company acts, etc. The legal basis for the development of self-management outside the economy was the Law on People's Committees in March 1952 and the Constitutional Law, recognizing the commune as the basic cell of society and the foundation of self-management. This led to administrative-territorial changes, with 351 districts reorganized into 107 districts, and 4,052 municipalities reorganized into 1,479 (Petranović, 1980, 536-537).

The communal system began operating in September 1955, giving local authorities more influence on their territory's economy by appointing company leaders and participating in profits (Petranović, 1980, 537). The economy flourished due to loans from Western countries, intense foreign trade, and the placement of goods in the markets of socialist countries.³ Calic (2019, 183) refers to this period of Yugoslavia's economic development as an "economic miracle," where industrial production increased by 13.83% annually (ahead of Japan), and personal income by 5.9%.

However, in the period 1961-62, economic momentum declined due to expensive investments and consumption beyond actual capabilities. Industrial growth fell from 15% to 4% in the first half of 1963 (Ibid, 213). This was accompanied by a confrontation within the leadership structures between those advocating for the development of self-management and those pushing for its limitation to save society from anarchy.⁴ This led to the adoption of the 1963 Constitution, separating the functions of the President of the Republic from the President of the Federal Executive Council, and the Federal People's Assembly became a five-cameral "law factory" based on self-management principles (Ibid, 544-545).

In July 1965, an economic reform was launched to increase labor productivity, connect the economy with the world market, limit the state's role in investment, and direct accumulation (Ibid, 570). However, the working class did not become the master of

³ The expansion of the economy was accompanied by an expansion in employment, with 3,400,000 employed individuals in 1963. Around one million of them were employed in the industry alone. The land area increased to over a million hectares, and agricultural production rose by over 40% (Petranović, 1980, 542).

⁴ Given the fear of the law of the free market, accumulations beyond state control, and the direct producers as decision-makers in investments (Ibid, 543). In addition, self-management was undermined by bureaucratic forces, socio-political organizations provided weak support for the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, they acted independently, self-management organizations at higher levels were built slowly, and instances of depersonalization of responsibility were not eliminated (Ibid, 542-543).

reproduction, unemployment increased, and economic conditions were uneven, leading to protests and revolts, especially in the form of work stoppages and student demonstrations in 1968 in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana (Ibid, 574, Cavic, 220). Additionally, conflicts within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia arose with forces opposing self-management led by Aleksandar Ranković and Svetislav Stefanović, leading to their resignations or exclusion from the Central Committee (Ibid, 572). It was noted that the State Security Service excessively controlled all aspects of social life, interfered in company operations, and tended to "stand above society" (Ibid, 571).

Furthermore, nationalist tendencies and demands emerged. The Autonomous Province of Kosovo faced significant socio-economic problems as the least developed region in Yugoslavia. Demands for republic status resulted in violent student uprisings in Kosovo and western Macedonia in November 1968 (Cavic, 232), which were suppressed by Yugoslav security forces.

In the spring of 1971, part of the Croatian party leadership accused unitarist-centralist forces of conspiring against the Socialist Republic of Croatia and its leaders. *Matica hrvatska* fueled nationalism, and in late November, nationalists organized a student strike in Zagreb to provoke a general workers' strike (Ibid, 581). The League of Communists of Yugoslavia condemned nationalism as anti-communist, and at a December meeting of the Presidency, it called on the League of Communists of Croatia to deal with nationalists, considering their actions as counter-revolutionary and unconstitutional. This led to the resignation of the President of the League of Communists of Croatia, Savka Dabčević-Kučar, and the secretary of the Executive Committee, Pero Piker. By April 1972, 741 members were excluded, 131 were removed from office, and 280 resignations were submitted (Ibid, 582).

In addition, in the League of Communists of Serbia, the president, Marko Nikezić, advocated for the creation of large economic-financial systems, with the tendency to build a modern Serbia, which was perceived as anti-self-management based on liberalism and technocracy, leading to Nikezić's resignation.

At the second Conference of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1972, an action plan was adopted to fight against nationalism in the form of separatism and hegemonism, against technocratic tendencies, and against the formation of certain centers of economic and financial power outside the sphere of production and beyond

production control (Balandžić, 1979, 16). The Conference advocated for replacing representative with a delegate system (Petranović, 1980, 582-584). All forces were preparing for the next stage of self-management development based on collective work. One of the most significant architects of this system was Edvard Kardelj, emphasizing the need to protect the working class from anti-self-management forces. This resulted in the adoption of a new Constitution for the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1974, where the social structure was based on the "power of the working class and all working people and on relations among people as free and equal producers and creators, whose labor serves exclusively for satisfying their personal and common needs."

The construction of new relationships in production was accompanied by changes in the political system, culminating in the introduction of a delegate system where "the interests of the working people are primarily expressed and represented in the assemblies by their delegates who continue to remain in their workplaces, and the assemblies do not turn into some kind of professional political representatives" (Kardelj, 1973, 93). In contrast to the parliament as the "expression of the monopoly of political power embodied in the ruling party," where delegates are tied to a political party and political monopoly, the delegate assembly is based on delegations of self-management communities of interest (Kardelj, 1977, 172). The assembly should be the working body of the entire social community, where the entire self-management and social structure interested in those decisions can directly participate in the preparation and adoption of decisions (Ibid, 173). Delegate assemblies must be the "concentration of the creative power of our socialist society and a factor in connecting and coordinating all social influences on politics" (Ibid, 174). This social experiment involved the election of delegates, the constitution of delegations, the adoption of work regulations, the preparation of work programs, adequate information, the training of delegates, providing working conditions, and similar activities, where, in this process, organizations of associated labor were more or less successful (Vujević, 1979, 73).

The delegate system was intended to ensure the adequate representation of workers and citizens in the decision-making process. However, despite changes through amendments to the Constitution adopted in 1974, it did not survive, as there was a schism in the overall social, political, economic, and state organization.

In Montenegro, it functioned until 1990 when it was replaced by a new system with a unicameral parliament and members of parliament instead of "delegates." The following chapters present the constitutional principles of the functioning of the delegate system in the SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), i.e. the SR Montenegro (Socialist Republic of Montenegro), as well as the electoral principles defined by the legislation on the election of delegates in Montenegro.

Constitutional Solutions: Parliamentary System "From Below"

In accordance with the assemblies of the republics and the assemblies of autonomous provinces, the Federal Assembly, in 1974, enacted the Constitution of the SFRY, which defined the principles, foundations, and structure of the delegate system of the working class. This system originated and operated from the grassroots level, i.e., from the basic organizations of associated labor and self-management organizations and communities, through municipalities and provinces, up to the Republic and the Federation (Kulić, 1976).

The foundations of the new assembly system were outlined in 20 articles of the Constitution (132-152). The constitutional provisions stipulated that, in order to directly exercise their rights, duties, and responsibilities and to participate in the functions of the assemblies of socio-political communities, the working people in basic self-management organizations and communities, as well as socio-political organizations, form delegations. These delegations appoint delegates in the Assembly whose term lasts four years and cannot be elected more than two consecutive times. The function of a delegate is incompatible with other legally determined functions in the bodies of the same socio-political community.

In taking positions on issues decided in the assembly, delegates act in accordance with the guidelines of their self-management organizations and communities, as well as the basic positions of the delegations or socio-political organizations that delegated them. They also act in line with common and general social interests and needs, while being independent in determining their decisions and voting. Delegates are obliged to inform delegations and basic self-management organizations and communities, or socio-political organizations that delegated them, about the work of the assembly and their

own work. They are responsible to them for their work. Delegations and each of their members, as well as delegates in the assembly, can be recalled, with the recall generally conducted in the manner and procedure for the election of delegations and delegates. Delegations and each of their members, as well as delegates in the assembly, have the right to resign.

The position and powers of the Assembly of the SFRY, councils and their scope, composition and method of council elections, the manner of operation and decision-making in the councils, the adoption of acts in the Council of Republics and Provinces based on the consensus of the assemblies of republics and autonomous provinces, the rights and duties of delegates and delegations, and the election and powers of officials in the Assembly of the SFRY are determined by particular articles of the Constitution 282-308.

According to the Constitution, the Assembly of the SFRY had the following powers: 1) Deciding on changes to the Constitution of the SFRY; 2) Examining and determining the foundations of domestic and foreign policy of the SFRY, enacting federal laws and other regulations and general acts; 3) Adopting the social plan of Yugoslavia, the budget of the federation, and the final account of the federation; 4) Deciding on changes to the borders of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; 5) Deciding on war and peace, ratifying international treaties on political and military cooperation, as well as those requiring the enactment of new or the amendment of existing laws; 6) Determining the policy for the implementation of federal laws, other regulations, and general acts, and the obligations of federal organs regarding the implementation of these regulations and acts; 7) Electing the President of the Republic and proclaiming the election of the Presidency of the SFRY; 8) Electing and dismissing the president and members of the Federal Executive Council; 9) Electing and dismissing the president and judges of the Constitutional Court of Yugoslavia and the Federal Court, appointing and dismissing the federal social pleader of self-management, federal secretaries, the federal public prosecutor, and other officials determined by this constitution and federal law in federal organs and members of collegial bodies; 10) Exercising political control over the work of the Federal Executive Council and federal administrative organs, exercising social supervision; 11) Performing other tasks determined by this constitution (Article 283).

The rights and duties of the Assembly of the SFRY were exercised by the Federal Council and the Council of Republics and Provinces according to the provisions of this constitution. The Federal Council was composed of delegates from self-management organizations and communities, as well as socio-political organizations in the republics and autonomous provinces. The Council of Republics and Provinces consisted of delegations from the assemblies of republics and assemblies of autonomous provinces. The Federal Council and the Council of Republics and Provinces, on an equal basis: 1) Elected and dismissed the President and Vice President or Vice Presidents of the Assembly of the SFRY; 2) Elected and dismissed the President and members of the Federal Executive Council, appointed and dismissed federal secretaries and other officials determined by this constitution and federal law, and members of collegial bodies in federal organs; 3) Elected and dismissed the President and judges of the Constitutional Court of Yugoslavia and the Federal Court, appointed and dismissed the federal social ombudsman of self-management, as well as the federal public prosecutor; 4) Elected and dismissed members of the Council of the Federation; 5) Ratified international treaties requiring the enactment of new or amendment of existing republican and provincial laws; 6) Made decisions on the extension of the mandates of delegates in the Assembly of the SFRY; 7) Adopted the rules of procedure for the joint work of the councils of the Assembly of the SFRY and their joint working bodies, and the decision on the organization and functioning of the services of the Assembly of the SFRY.

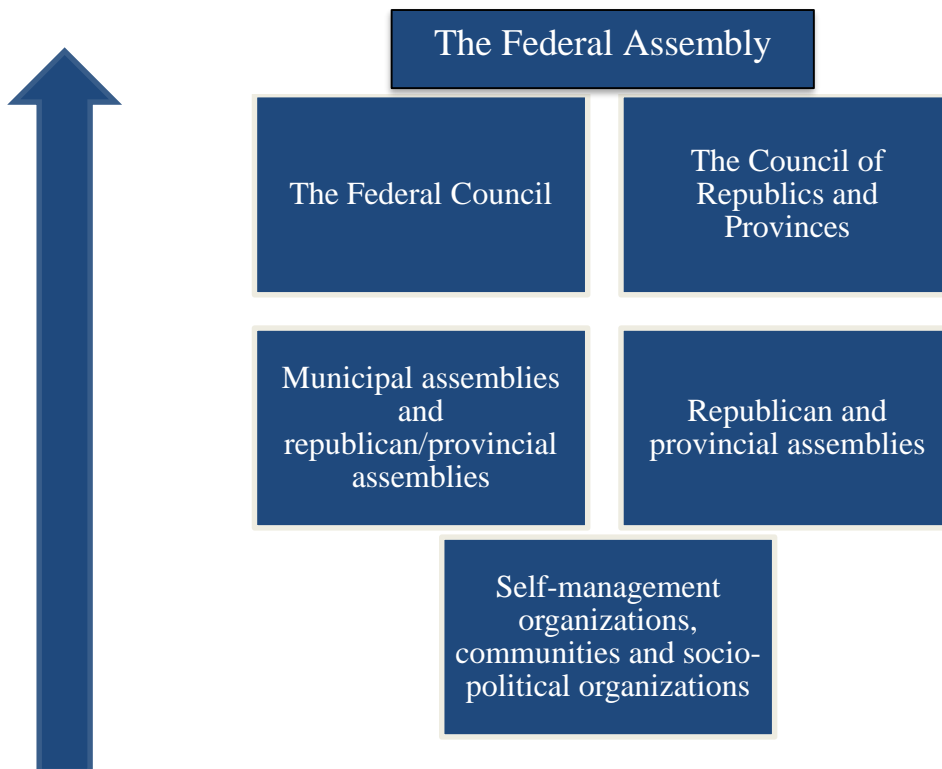
The Federal Council consisted of thirty delegates from self-management organizations and communities and socio-political organizations from each republic, and twenty delegates from each autonomous province. The candidacy process was conducted by the Socialist Alliance of Working People (SSRN), where candidates for delegates were proposed by the delegations of basic self-management organizations and communities from the ranks of members of the delegations of these organizations and communities. Socio-political organizations within the SSRN also proposed candidates from their delegations. The list of candidates for delegates was determined by the candidacy conference of the SSRN, and they were elected by the municipal assemblies within the territory of the republic or autonomous province by secret voting.

The Council of Republics and Provinces consisted of twelve delegates from the assembly of each republic and eight delegates from the assembly of each autonomous province. The delegation to the Council of Republics and Provinces was elected and revoked by all councils of the assembly of the republic or the assembly of the autonomous province during a joint session by secret voting. The elected delegates retained their mandates in the assemblies in which they were elected.

The right to propose federal laws and other general acts within the jurisdiction of the Council of Republics and Provinces, based on the consensus of the assemblies of republics and assemblies of autonomous provinces, had each delegation and working body of the Council, assembly of the republic, or assembly of the autonomous province, and the Federal Executive Council (Article 298).

Each council of the Assembly of the SFRY had a president and vice president. The president represented the council, convened council sessions, presided over council sessions, and signed decisions and other general acts adopted by the council. The President of the Assembly of the SFRY and the president of the council convened sessions of the Assembly of the SFRY or council sessions at their initiative or upon the request of the President of the Republic, the Presidency of the SFRY, or the Federal Executive Council. The President of the Council of Republics and Provinces convened council sessions and, upon the request of a delegation in the council, and the President of the Federal Council did so at the request of a certain number of delegates as determined by the rules of procedure of the Federal Council.

In order to clarify the construction and functioning of the decision-making system "from below" - from self-management organizations, communities and socio-political organizations, followed by municipal assemblies and republican/provincial assemblies to the Federal Assembly, there is presented a diagrammatic representation of the delegate system of the SFRY Assembly.

Diagram 1: Delegate System – SFRY Assembly⁵

Based on the presentation of basic constitutional solutions at the federal level regarding the structure and role of the assembly system, the following section provides a description of the assembly system at the republic level by the example of Montenegro. The basic principles of the Constitution of the SR Montenegro regarding the structure, powers, and role of the Assembly are outlined, followed by an introduction to the legal provisions related to electoral principles and the manner of electing delegates to the Montenegrin Assembly.

⁵ Source: Kulic, 1976.

The Delegation System of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro

On the thirteenth joint sitting of all councils held on February 25, 1974, the Assembly adopted and proclaimed the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro.⁶ The sitting was chaired by the President of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, Vidoje Žarković, and was attended by 210 out of 248 deputies, representing the majority of deputies from each council.⁷

On the agenda of this sitting, in addition to the Draft Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro prepared by the Republic Council, was the Draft Constitutional Law for the Implementation of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, prepared by the Executive Council. The Executive Council submitted amendments to the Draft Constitution, which the Republic Council accepted, and the Legislative-Legal Committee provided reports on the consideration of these acts. In that regard, the deputies unanimously adopted the Draft Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro and, in accordance with Article 173, paragraph 8 of the Constitution, made a decision to proclaim the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro.⁸

Furthermore, at the 13th session of all councils, based on Article 344, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, the Assembly also adopted a decision to proclaim the Constitutional Law for the Implementation of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro.⁹

⁶ During the mandate period of 1969-1974, the Assembly consisted of five councils: the Republic Council, the Council of Municipalities, the Economic Council, the Educational and Cultural Council, and the Social and Health Council.

⁷ The attendees at the sitting were: members of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from Montenegro, members of the Federation Council from Montenegro, members of the Federal Executive Council from Montenegro, deputies of the Federal Assembly from Montenegro, representatives of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Montenegro, the Republic Conference of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People, the Republic Conference of the Alliance of Trade Unions, the Republic Committee of the Veterans' Association, the Republic Conference of the Youth Alliance, the Republic Conference for Social Activities of Women of the Republic Committee of the Reserve Military Officers' Association, representatives of the command of the Military District of Titograd of the General Staff of the People's Defense of Montenegro, the President of the Constitutional Court of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, members of the Coordination Commission for Constitutional Issues of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, republic secretaries, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, and presidents of all municipal assemblies in the Socialist Republic of Montenegro.

⁸ Verbatim records of the proceedings from the thirteenth joint session of all councils of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro on February 25, 1974, Montenegro Assembly, Podgorica, 116-118.

⁹ Ibid, 122.

Regarding the adoption of the new Constitution, President of the Assembly Mr Žarković emphasized in his address to the deputies that the process of preparing the Constitution had lasted for three years, including a months-long public discussion involving hundreds of thousands of "our working people and citizens." He characterized the Constitution as the result of a "free democratic agreement on the organization of our community." According to Žarković, the Constitution aimed to reform the entire system of socio-economic and political relations, strengthening the position of the working class and its ability to become the "leading social force and to resist decisively against anti-self-management and other reactionary forces." The delegation system in the Assembly was seen as a "logical continuation of self-management in collective work and a form of eliminating intermediaries between the interests of the working class and political power."

Additionally, Žarković pointed out that the Constitution increased the autonomy of republics and provinces, along with their responsibility for their own material and cultural development. He concluded that the Constitution represented a "charter of self-management" and provided the working people with a powerful tool in order to achieve their interests and aspirations. The Constitution "enriched and deepened the fundamental values of the revolution, its democratic and humane character, the brotherhood and unity of the people".¹⁰

The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro (*Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro No. 5, dated February 26, 1974*) established that all power in the Socialist Republic of Montenegro belongs to the working class in alliance with the working people of towns and villages. The League of Communists of Montenegro, as part of the unified League of Communists of Yugoslavia, was recognized as the initiator and organizer of the people's liberation struggle.. "and became the organized leading ideological political force of the working class of all working people in Montenegro in building socialism and realizing the solidarity of working people...". The foundations of the establishment of the parliamentary system in the Socialist Republic of Montenegro were defined by Articles 146-170 of the newly adopted

¹⁰ Verbatim records of the proceedings from the thirteenth joint session of all councils of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro on February 25, 1974, Montenegro Assembly, Podgorica 119-121.

Constitution. Similar to the Constitution of the SFRY, the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro defined the Assembly as the organ of social self-management and the highest authority within the rights and duties of the socio-political community (Article 146, paragraph 1). Workers formed delegations in basic self-management organizations and communities and socio-political organizations for the direct realization of their rights, duties, responsibilities, and organized participation in the functions of the assemblies of socio-political communities. In basic self-management organizations and communities, delegations were formed by: 1) workers in basic organizations of associated labor and work communities; 2) workers engaged in agricultural, artisanal, and similar activities that involve property rights; 3) workers in work communities of state organs, socio-political organizations, and associations, as well as active military and civilian personnel in the service of the armed forces of the SFRY; 4) workers and citizens in local communities. In socio-political organizations,¹¹ the function of delegations was carried out by their elected bodies determined by their statutes or other decisions (Article 147, paragraphs 2, 6).

Delegation members were elected by workers in basic self-management organizations and communities, from among their composition, through direct secret ballot. The number of members, composition of the delegation, the method of election and recall were determined by the statutes of basic self-management organizations and communities. The composition of the delegation had to correspond to the social composition of the basic self-management organization or community (Article 148, paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 6). Candidates for delegation members of basic self-management organizations and communities were proposed and determined by the workers of those organizations and communities in the organizations of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People, or in the organizations of the Trade Union.

As specified in Article 141 of the Constitution of the SFRY, similarly, Article 157 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro prescribed that in taking positions on issues decided in the assembly, delegates acted in accordance with the guidelines of their self-management organizations and communities and the basic positions of the delegations, or socio-political organizations that delegated them. They also acted in line

¹¹ League of Communists, Socialist Alliance of Working People, Trade Union Alliance, Socialist Youth Alliance, Alliance of Associations of People's Liberation War Veterans

with common and general social interests and needs, while being independent in determining and voting. Delegates were required to inform the delegations and basic self-management organizations and communities, or socio-political organizations that delegated them, about the work of the assembly and their own work. Additionally, according to Article 155, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, delegates delegated to the Assembly were obliged to inform the municipal assembly that delegated them about their work and were responsible to it for their work. Delegations and each of their members, as well as delegates in the assembly, could be revoked following the procedure for their election. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, the mandate of delegates and delegation members could be extended by the Assembly (Articles 148, 149, 154-156).

Special constitutional provisions (Articles 308-355) defined the powers, position of the Assembly, councils, and their scope of work, composition and method of council elections, the way they function and decide in councils, commissions, and committees, the rights and duties of delegates, the calling of delegate elections, the president, vice president of the Assembly, and the presidents of the councils, and the election of a member of the Presidency of the SFRY.

Until the constitutional changes in 1990, the Assembly of the Republic of Montenegro was tricameral, consisting of three councils: the Council of Associated Labor, the Council of Municipalities, and the Socio-Political Council. At the meetings of the councils, independently in the jurisdiction of each council, or jointly in the equal jurisdiction of two or all three councils, the Assembly decided on matters within its competence. As equal assembly councils, they also included the assemblies of the republic's self-management interest communities in the fields of education, science, culture, health, and social protection (Dragović, 2007, 126). Regarding the leadership structure, the Assembly had a president and one or more vice presidents and a secretary, and each council had a president and a secretary. The Assembly's presidency consisted of the Assembly President, the Vice Presidents of the Assembly, and the Presidents of the councils.

Each council had the right to consider issues within the jurisdiction of another council, take positions on those issues, and submit its opinions and proposals to the relevant councils. The competent council was obliged to discuss and take a position on these

matters. The competent council also had the right to request the opinions of other councils on draft laws, other regulations, or acts (Article 317).

At a joint session of all councils, the Assembly decided on changes to the constitution of the Republic of Montenegro, gave consent to changes in the constitution of the SFRY, decided on changes related to the borders of the SR Montenegro, enacted laws and other regulations in the field of planning systems, encouraged the faster development of less developed municipalities and determined which municipalities were entitled to additional funds, adopted the social plan of Montenegro, the republic's budget, the final account, gave consent to the social plan of Yugoslavia, decided on the extension of the mandates of members of delegations and delegates delegated to the assemblies of socio-political communities, determined the anthem of the SR Montenegro, carried out certain elections and dismissals, adopted rules of procedure for its work, and more (Article 318).

Each council decided by a majority vote at a sitting attended by a majority of delegates, except when a special majority is provided for by this constitution. The Assembly decided at a joint sitting of all councils by a majority vote of the attending delegates, except when a special majority is provided for by the constitution. To make a decision at a joint sitting, it was necessary for a majority of delegates to be present in each council (Article 339). Voting was public, except when the constitution, law, or rules of procedure prescribed secret ballot (Article 341).

Regarding the election of delegates to councils, the president of the Assembly had to announce them no later than 15 days before the expiration of the delegate's term. From the day of announcement to the day of the election, no less than a month and no more than two months could pass. The mandate of delegates whose term had expired ceased on the day of the verification of the mandates of the newly elected delegates (Ar. 348). During the period of the validity of the 1974 constitution until the adoption of the 1992 constitution, there were five elections for the tricameral Assembly: in 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, and 1989, and one election for the unicameral Assembly in 1990. In the first term of the delegate tricameral Assembly, there were 135 delegates, and in the next four, there were 165 delegates each. In the sixth term, there were 125 members of the unicameral Assembly elected in accordance with the amendments to the Constitution of July 31, 1990, introducing political pluralism.

Table 1: The Structure of the Assembly, the number of delegates/MPs, the number of sittings for each convocation, 1974-1992¹²

Convocation	1974-1978	1978-1982	1982-1986	1986-1989	1989-1990	1990-1992
Structure of Assembly	Tricameral	Tricameral	Tricameral	Tricameral	Tricameral	Unicameral
Election Date	25 Aprile 1974	13 Aprile 1978	13 Aprile 1982	21 Aprile 1986	12-13. June 1989 (CAL) 18 June 1989 (CM, SPC)	9 December 1990
Number of delegates/MPs						125
Council of Associated Labour (CAL)	65	75	75	75	75	
Concil of Municipalities (CM)	35	55	55	55	55	
Socio-Political Council (SPC)	35	35	35	35	35	
President of Assembly	Budislav Šoškić	Budislav Šoškić	Milutin Tanjević, Omer Kurpejović, Čedomir Đuranović, Marko Matković	Veselin Vuksanović	Dragan Radonjić	Risto Vukčević
Number of sittings						29 sittings, 21 ordinary and eight extraordinary
Council of Associated Labour	56	54	51	42	19	
Concil of Municipalities	52	50	51	39	19	
Socio-Political Council	54	49	53	42	20	
Joint sittings of all councils	15	18	25	23	16	
Joint sittings of all three councils	38	27	21	21	×	

¹² Source: DRagovic, 2007, 138-177.

Electoral Principles for the Election of Delegates in the Assembly of the SR Montenegro

As indicated in the tabular overview, during the period from 1974 to 1992, there were six convocations of the Assembly of the SR Montenegro, consisting of five convocations of the tricameral Assembly and one convocation of the unicameral parliament. Concerning the elections for the tricameral delegate composition of the Assembly, there were no significant differences in the electoral principles and the method of electing delegates until the amendments to the Constitution in 1989 and the adoption of the new Law on the Election of Delegates. Until then, the manner and procedure for proposing, determining, electing, and recalling delegates to the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro were regulated by the Law on the Election of Delegates to the Assembly of the SR Montenegro (Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 5/74, 2/78, 10/78, 1/82).

The Council of Associated Labor consisted of delegates representing the working people in organizations of associated labor and other self-management organizations and communities. The Council of Municipalities comprised delegates representing the working people and citizens in municipalities, while the Socio-Political Council included delegates representing the working people and citizens organized in socio-political organizations. Candidates for delegates were proposed by delegations of working people in basic organizations of associated labor and other self-management organizations and communities from their own composition.

Delegates to the Council of Associated Labor were elected by delegates in the councils of associated labor of municipal assemblies. Candidates for delegates to the Council of Municipalities were proposed by delegations in basic self-management organizations and communities, as well as socio-political organizations from their own composition. Delegates to the Council of Municipalities were elected by delegates in the municipal assembly at a joint session of all councils through secret voting with ballots. Candidates for delegates to the Socio-Political Council were proposed by delegations from these organizations united in the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Montenegro (SSRN), from their own composition. The Candidacy Conference of the SSRN Montenegro determined the candidates as prescribed by the rules of the Republican Conference of the SSRN Montenegro. The selection of delegates was based on the list of candidates from the socio-political councils of municipal assemblies.

Elected candidates were those who had a majority of votes in most councils. If there were more candidates than the number of delegates to be elected, candidates with the highest number of votes in most socio-political councils of municipal assemblies were chosen.

Delegates were elected for four years, could not be elected more than two consecutive times, and could not simultaneously be candidates for delegates in two or more councils of the Assembly. All delegates had to be at least 18 years old (Article 3-10 of the Law).

Candidates for delegates to the Council of Associated Labor were determined by a candidacy commission composed of delegates from the councils of associated labor of municipal assemblies and representatives of the SSRN. Two-thirds of the members of the candidacy commission were elected by the council of associated labor of the municipal assembly, and one-third was delegated by the municipal commission of the SSRN conference. Delegates to the Council of Associated Labor were elected in proportion to the number of workers, taking into account the appropriate representation of various work areas. Approximately one delegate was chosen for every 2,700 people. Each municipality had to elect at least one delegate, representing the work area with the highest number of workers. Elections were conducted through secret voting with ballots. Candidates with a majority of votes were selected, and in the case of more candidates than the number of delegates to be elected, those with the highest number of votes were chosen.

Candidates for delegates to the Council of Municipalities were determined by a candidacy commission chosen by the municipal assembly at a joint session of all councils, from among the delegates of all councils of the municipal assembly. Approximately one delegate was elected for every 15,000 inhabitants, and each municipality had to elect at least one candidate.

The electoral principles for the election of delegates to the councils of the Assembly in 1978 were the same as in the previous term, with the exception that, according to Amendment IV to the 1978 Constitution and changes and amendments to the Law, more delegates were elected from certain municipalities to the Council of Associated Labor and the Council of Municipalities. During the 1982 elections, the electoral principles remained the same, but in accordance with the Law on Amendments to the

Law on the Election of Delegates to the Assembly of the SR Montenegro (1/82), the number of delegates elected to these two councils was changed. The mandate period that began in 1986 was shortened due to protests and demands for the removal current government, lasting until July 6, 1989, instead of until 1990 (Dragović, 2007, 156).

Elections for a new convocation were conducted in accordance with the new Law on the Election of Delegates to the Assembly of the SR Montenegro (9/89), which was adopted and proclaimed on March 29, 1989, through Constitutional Amendment XLIV in 1989, defining partially different electoral principles.

Delegates to the Council of Associated Labor were elected by workers in organizations of associated labor and other self-management organizations and communities primarily connected by work and relationships in social reproduction, directly through secret voting. Delegates to the Council of Municipalities were elected by workers and citizens who had reached the age of 18, directly through general and secret voting. Workers and citizens expressed their choice for the election of delegates to the Socio-Political Council based on the list of candidates through general and secret voting.

Any person from these organizations and communities could be elected as a delegate to the Council of Associated Labor, while in the Council of Municipalities and the Socio-Political Council that could be any working person and citizen who had a residence in the municipality from which they were elected or was a member of the given organization. Candidates for delegates had to be at least 18 years old.

Delegates to the Council of Associated Labor were elected proportionally to the number of workers, considering the appropriate representation of different work areas and their connection in social reproduction. Approximately one delegate was chosen for every 3,000 people. The election was based on two criteria: (1) one delegate was chosen from each municipality in the work area with the highest number of workers, and (2) from a specific work area in the Republic (Dragović, 2007, 165). According to the criteria of work-relatedness and relationships in social reproduction and the number of employed individuals, the following number of delegates were elected from various work areas: metallurgy 5, machinery industry 2, agriculture 3, forestry 5, construction 4, industry sector of electrical engineering 2, transportation and communications 4, production of electrical machinery 2, textile industry 5, trade 5, hospitality and tourism 4, crafts and personal services 2, education, science, culture, and information 4, health and social

protection 4, finance and other services 2, and DPZ (social-political community) and DPO (social-political organization) 3 delegates.

Candidates for delegates were proposed by workers and their delegations at candidacy assemblies (comprising all workers) in basic self-management organizations and communities. The criteria for proposing candidates for delegates were determined by the Socialist Alliance of the Working People. The list of proposed candidates was established through public voting. The Candidacy Conference determined the candidates for delegates from the list of proposed candidates through secret voting. The election of delegates took place at polling stations in the basic self-management organization and community of the relevant work area, through secret voting with ballots. The candidate who received the highest number of votes was considered as the elected delegate (Dragović, 2007, 165).¹³

For the Council of Municipalities, approximately one delegate was elected for every 16,000 inhabitants, with each municipality electing at least two delegates. According to this criterion, certain municipalities elected the following number of delegates: Bar 2, Bijelo Polje 4, Budva 2, Danilovgrad 2, Žabljak 2, Ivangrad 4, Kolašin 2, Kotor 2, Mojkovac 2, Nikšić 5, Plav 2, Plužine 2, Pljevlja 3, Rožaje 2, Tivat 2, Titograd 9, Ulcinj 2, Herceg Novi 2, Cetinje 2, and Šavnik 2 (Article 61).¹⁴

At candidacy assemblies in local communities and basic forms of activity of socio-political organizations, workers and citizens proposed delegates, and the candidacy conference determined the candidates. The municipal election commission determined the polling stations so that approximately 2,000 workers and citizens could vote at one polling station. Voting was done through ballots, and candidates who received the highest number of votes were elected as delegates. The list of candidates for delegates to the Socio-Political Council was determined by socio-political organizations within the social alliance of the working people from among their members. The Election Commission established the candidate lists and provided them to the municipal election commission, which determined the voting results in its municipality.¹⁵

¹³ For more information on the election of delegates to the Associated Labor Council, see Article 26-59 of the Law on the Election of Delegates to the Assembly of SRCG (9/89).

¹⁴ For more information on the election of delegates to the Council of Municipalities, refer to articles 60-82 of the Law on the Election of Delegates to the Assembly of SR Montenegro (9/89).

¹⁵ For more information on the election of delegates to the Socio-Political Council, refer to articles 83-87 of the Law on the Election of Delegates to the Assembly of SR Montenegro (9/89).

With amendments to the Constitution (Amendments LXIV-LXXXII) on July 31, 1990, political pluralism was introduced, i.e. a multi-party system where citizens, through their representatives in the assemblies of socio-political communities, participated in referendums, assemblies, and similar events (Dragović, 2007, 172). In connection with this, a new Law on the Election and Recall of Council Members and Deputies was adopted, defining new electoral principles for the unicameral Assembly of 125 deputies elected through a proportional electoral system where voters cast their votes for a list, and the electoral units are municipalities (20). Citizens elect deputies based on free, general, equal, and direct suffrage through secret voting. Every citizen who has reached the age of 18 and has been a resident in the territory of the Republic for at least three months before the elections has the right to vote and be elected as a deputy. Candidates are proposed and determined by citizens, political organizations, and other associations, with a minimum of 50 citizens having residency in the given electoral unit. An equal number of deputies are elected in each electoral unit, proportionate to the number of voters.¹⁶

In accordance with this law, elections were held on December 9, 1990, marking the beginning of a new term of the Parliament. Instead of the usual four years, this term lasted only two years, until the end of 1992. In October 1992, a new constitution was adopted, and through a constitutional law for its implementation, it was stipulated that elections for deputies should be held by the end of 1992. In the new elections, 10 political parties participated individually or in coalitions, along with independent candidates. The distribution of seats was as follows: League of Communists of Montenegro (SKCG) 83, Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia for Montenegro 17, Democratic Coalition 13, and People's Party of Montenegro 12 (Dragović, 2007, 173-4).

¹⁶ For more information, please refer to the Law on the Election and Recall of Councilors and Members of Parliament (36/90).

Concluding Remarks

The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, adopted in 1974, underwent six amendments in 1978, 1981, 1985, 1989, 1990, and 1991. The amendments from 1978, 1981, and 1985 provided more detailed specifications regarding the position, composition, and powers of various organs, while later amendments introduced changes to the socio-economic and political system. Around 110 out of the 436 articles of the Constitution, remained unchanged, primarily concerning human and civil rights (Dragović, 2007, 119). Some key changes in the political system included the renaming of the SR Montenegro to the Republic of Montenegro, the shift from delegates to directly elected MPs and councilors through secret voting, with candidates proposed by citizens, political organizations, and associations. The amendments also guaranteed freedom of political action and association, introduced the division of state power into legislative (Parliament), executive (Government), and judicial (courts) branches. The Presidency of the Republic consisted of four members elected directly by citizens through secret voting, self-managed interest communities were replaced by social funds etc (Dragović, 120-121).

These changes were primarily driven by an economic crisis caused by inflation, unemployment, economic losses, and high indebtedness, leading to a decline in the standard of living and crises in other spheres of life. From 1974 to 1985, federal indebtedness tripled due to misguided investments, economic illiquidity, a costly and cumbersome administration, global market non-competitiveness, irrational spending by republican elites, and a global energy crisis. The poor economic situation at the federal level implied a similarly challenging situation in Montenegro, one of the less developed members of the Federation. This triggered public dissatisfaction with the management of societal affairs by the ruling elites and a loss of trust in their capabilities. In addition to socio-economic demands for improved living conditions, there were also nationalist slogans and attacks on the political elite (Šćekić, 2022). Golubović (1991, 32) argued that self-management had to fail because workers and companies did not have a real influence on decision-making despite declarative claims, statements, and regulations by the ruling elites. Additionally, Lydall (1989, 109) recognized that Yugoslav self-management did not enable workers' democracy, and workers in private enterprises had more freedom and rights if they belonged to a particular union.

Widespread discontent expressed through a series of rallies, culminating on January 11, 1989, resulting in the replacement of the ruling administration at both the republic and local levels within the existing framework of the League of Communists of Montenegro. In other words, these rallies did not bring about a change in the socialist regime itself; instead, the League of Communists of Montenegro, under internal and external pressure, was preparing the ground for the introduction of multiparty politics.

As mentioned, the first multi-party elections in Montenegro took place on December 9, 1990. These elections were held for the President of the Presidency of the SR Montenegro, members of the Presidency of Montenegro, members of the Parliament, and councillors of municipal assemblies. Momir Bulatović (League of Communists) was elected as the President of the Presidency of the SR Montenegro, while the "reformed" League of Communists secured an absolute victory with 83 out of 125 parliamentary seats (Šćekić, 2022). These elections marked a break with the one-party system, following a similar move by other republics of the former SFRY.

The presented electoral principles and constitutional principles clearly demonstrate the differences in parliamentary systems, specifically in the structure of the assembly and the method of its election, during the period of self-management and its transition. This offers a comparative perspective on the functioning of assemblies "from below" through self-management principles and processes, emphasizing the role of the working class and citizens in decision-making. It also explores the transformation process and elections based on a completely different model of operation. This work serves not only as a reminder of the historical development of Montenegrin parliamentarism but also sheds light on the workings of a unique form of self-management in the political domain, focusing on its tricameral assembly structure based on a delegate system. Understanding the operation of the delegate system is essential for a clearer understanding of the functioning of the entire one-party self-management system, especially with a thirty-year temporal distance of the operation of multi-party systems with a unicameral parliament.

This paper provides a foundation for further in-depth studies of this system, its specific components, and implications for the current system. As one of the first works in recent years on this topic, it is necessary to consolidate the basics of the delegate system by

presenting the fundamental constitutional principles and principles defined by laws on the election of delegates/MPs. Understanding its base is the first step towards a more detailed and profound examination and comprehension of its individual elements.

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