Post-war Yugoslavia existed within a framework which taught the necessity of the obedience of people to history – that is, to history as a process of social and economic development. Yugoslavia in its second incarnation was created ostensibly to serve such ends. However, it was created by and organised around, a small group of personalities, of which Tito was supreme. A statesman by temperament and outlook, he required a state over which to govern. Yugoslavia, reincarnated, provided just such an entity, and the people, willingly or otherwise, were obliged to follow.

If the Second World War provided the opportunity for the KPJ to achieve the Leninist ‘revolution from below’, then the period immediately following was when the revolutionary party completed its work by bringing about the ‘revolution from above’ to transform the state’s economic and social base. Initially, the Yugoslav communists, like those elsewhere in eastern Europe, were permitted a certain latitude in how they carried this process out. This was to be a short-lived interval, however, and by the summer of 1947, the Yugoslav leadership found itself pressured from the Soviet Union to adopt greater conformity with Soviet dictates as Stalin responded to Cold War insecurities by imposing greater uniformity among his most immediate allies. The conflict which arose out of Tito’s pursuit of Yugoslav ‘national’ interests and the communist internationalist agenda directed from Moscow, not only drove Yugoslavia from the Soviet bloc, but forced its leadership to redefine communist doctrine in line with the requirements of ‘Yugoslavism’. The second Yugoslavia was both Tito’s creation, and also a consequence of the Cold War and the clash of ideologies which defined international politics in Europe for over forty years.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE PEOPLE’S FRONT

During the summer and autumn of 1945, the Partisan leadership consolidated its grip on power. The tactics they adopted were those of
the Popular Front, expressed in creation of a coalition of left and centre left parties, but one in which the communists were dominant over all others. The background of the war and the need to address the question of collaboration provided the perfect justification for maintaining a high degree of centralisation and security in its aftermath. The AVNOJ held its third and final meeting, when it was expanded to include sixty-eight members of the last pre-war parliament who were not ‘compromised by collaboration with the enemy’. Activists for the right and centre politicians were harassed and their publications suppressed. Within the government, the three Cabinet members drawn from the London Government found their freedom to function progressively circumscribed. Grol resigned in August, in protest at the conditions; Šutej and Šubašić followed in late September. The latter still commanded sufficient popular respect to merit house arrest.

Elections were held on 11 November 1945 and there was never any doubt about the result. All the pre-war parties not included in the People’s Front were excluded, while intimidation by the secret police ensured that only the very brave or very foolish availed themselves of their right to register a dissenting vote on the ballot paper. In the event, eighty-eight per cent of the eligible electorate of 7.4 million voted; of these, ninety per cent supported the government. The first act of the Constitutional Assembly when it convened on 29 November 1945, was to abolish the monarchy and proclaim Yugoslavia a Federal People’s Republic.¹

**Sovietisation**

The process of ‘Sovietisation’, of transformation of the state from a coalition of left and left centre parties into a one party state, which took place throughout eastern Europe in the period 1945–48, was accomplished more swiftly in Yugoslavia than in most of the others. If examined within Hugh Seton-Watson’s three-stage model of communist takeover in the region, it can be seen that the first stage, the ‘genuine coalition’ never pertained, while the second, the ‘bogus coalition’ existed only briefly and then only to achieve international recognition and legitimacy.² By the adoption of the new constitution on 31 January 1946, the KPJ had achieved the complete monopoly over the institutions of the state and could turn to the task of building socialism. Henceforth the socialist parties were forced to ‘fuse’ with communist parties.