

## CROATIA 1945-1991

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Three factors were crucial in the creation of Yugoslavia. First, unification of most of the small South Slavic peoples into a single state for the purpose of defending themselves against their larger neighbours' imperialist aspirations. After 1918, for Croats the only serious threat came from Italy. Second, the Serbian state sought to expand its territory and influence through unification with other South Slavic peoples. Third, the similarity of language and culture had often caused conflicts among South Slavs, especially in areas with populations which were ethnically and religiously mixed, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and the parts of Croatia bordering Bosnia and Herzegovina, which the creation of a single state was to end. Therefore, the idea of a “Yugoslav” state stemmed from the desire for national security, economic progress, and stronger and less contentious cultural links among the nations united in a multi-national state. However, from the beginning differences in the understanding of the political concept of Yugoslavianism were apparent. Like most Serbs, Serbian leaders were in favour of a politically unified state with a strong central government, where all Serbs would be gathered and dominate, as both the most numerous and the most influential nation. But most Slovenians and Croatians imagined Yugoslavia as an area where their hard-won national freedoms and identities would be preserved. The general rule that larger nations satisfy their expansionist aspirations at the expense of smaller ones, while smaller nations incline toward isolationism repeated itself.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the fact that the founders of Yugoslavia were convinced that it was the best solution to the Croatian, Slovenian, and Serbian issues, the new state was also meant to serve the strategic needs of the great powers. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Ljubo Antić, “Hrvatska politika u 20. stoljeću”, *Hrvatska revija*, Zagreb, 2001, no. 1., pp. 20-36; Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1999); Srećko M. Džaja, *Politička realnost jugoslavenstva (1918-1991). S posebnim osvrtom na Bosnu i Hercegovinu* (Sarajevo-Zagreb: Svjetlo riječi, 2004); Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest* (Zagreb: Novi liber, 2003); Hrvoje Matković, *Povijest Jugoslavije (1918-1991) : Hrvatski pogled* (Zagreb: Naklada Pavičić, 1998); Dragutin Pavličević, *Povijest Hrvatske* (Zagreb: Naklada Pavičić, 1994); Ivo Perić, *Povijest Hrvata* (Zagreb: CTT, 1997); Jože Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992 – Nastanak, razvoj ter raspad Karadjordjevićeve in Titove Jugoslavije* (Koper: Založba Lipa, 1995); *Slovenska novejša zgodovina : Od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848 - 1992*, 1-2, ed. Jasna Fischer (Ljubljana: Mladinska založba – Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2005); Nikša Stančić, *Hrvatska nacija i nacionalizam u 19. i 20. stoljeću*, (Zagreb: Barbat, 2002).

its founders lacked an original Yugoslav nation, so in order to realize their goals, the Yugoslav political elite needed to overcome the deep religious, national, cultural, and economic differences among the peoples who made up their state. Unlike the West European model of the nation-state, where the nation was created after the state, Yugoslavia is a characteristic example of East Europe developments, where nations created states, and this difference would have decisive effect on later developments.<sup>2</sup>

The leading idea among Serbs was to create Yugoslavia to be as centralized as possible, with Serbs playing the dominant role in the government and the military. The alternative would have been an independent Serbian state that would encompass all those areas where the Serb population represented a majority of the local population, as well as those areas, for which they claimed a historical right. Two ideas also dominated Croatian thinking—the idea of an independent Croatian state, which would be based on a combination of national and historical rights, or a sovereign Croatian state with a federal or confederal Yugoslavia. Slovenians wished to defend themselves from Germanic and Italian pretensions. But because of their linguistic distinctiveness and their national homogeneity, they did not share the intense cautiousness of most Croats toward Serbian imperialism, nor did they share the Croatian fear of an “amputation” of their territory, because Slovenian territory had no areas with a significant Serbian majority, as did Croatia.

Communists believed that they had the idea of absolute good, of a just and a sensible social, political, and economic order. They inherited the never-ending attempts of idealists throughout history to build a society on their particularly ideal principles. They believed that the material prosperity of the mankind and the unavoidable clash of classes would lead to the logical victory of the working class, either peacefully or more likely by force, which would then, led by the Communist Party (Komunistička partija - KP), build a just and classless society of equal individuals, free of poverty, exploitation, and irrational behavior. Communism uses deeply rooted idea that individuals should be equal. The idea of equality, especially in poor societies, represented a just distribution of production, and an end to unfair competition and social stratification. The fundamental subject was the people, not the individual; and the goal of avoiding social stratification was widely accepted by Communists and their supporters. A patriarchal mentality made state socialism possible, and state socialism in turn institutionalized the fundamental values of a patriarchal society—collectivism, egalitarianism, isolation from one's surroundings, and the cult of the leader.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Olivera Milosavljević, “Jugoslavija kao zabluda (Yugoslavia as a Misconception)”, *Srpska strana rata. Trauma i katarza u istorijskom pamćenju*, 1., ed. Nebojša Popov, (Beograd, 2001), pp. 87-116, p. 61; Nikša Stančić, *Hrvatska nacija i nacionalizam u 19. i 20. stoljeću*.

<sup>3</sup> Latinka Perović, “Raspad i pad”, *Reč*, Beograd, 8 (2001), no. 62: 84-90., 90; Latinka Perović, “Dnevnici Latinke Perović”, *Vreme*, Beograd, 27 may 1991.

As in other communist countries, in Yugoslavia, Communists criticized capitalism practice and promoted the advantages of socialism through interpretation of communist ideology and doctrine. They dismissed the darker aspects of their rule as deviations from the proper, communist course. By avoiding any comparisons of communist ideology with capitalist ideology, i.e., the system of liberal-democratic values, or of capitalist with communist social realities, they were able to use a democratic phraseology to offer a better future.<sup>4</sup>

During 1930s and 1940s many believed that a Soviet type of socialism would be the world's future. Capitalism's image suffered because Communists blamed for the economic disaster of 1930s and argued that it had led to the rise of militant Nazism and Fascism, and to World War II as well. However, Communists did not explain how the Soviet Union had avoided the global economic depression, and they were silent regarding Soviet state terror and the atrocities and suffering of the population, including massive famines, which accompanied collectivization. Apart from the tendency to view the USSR as a successful model and capitalism as a failed ideology, in the late 1940s, many people were convinced that the consequences of World War II could be repaired only through a harmonized action of all segments of society, under the leadership of a strong state. In their first public appearances, Communists did not mention class struggle or the dictatorship of the proletariat, but only the fight against fascism, the struggle for peace, and the need for a thorough regeneration of society through an application of the principles of fairness. They had no problems in finding widespread support for those ideas.<sup>5</sup>

When the Communists assumed power, they immediately began to eliminate the market as an intermediary between the producer and the consumer. The state took the economy into its hands, and the fast-growing bureaucracy took over the steering wheel. The aim of the Communist economic concept was to reconstruct the country, create an economic base for its rule, establish the working class as the foundation of socialism, and give priority to heavy industry, which would ultimately result in a high employment rate, create the basis for development of other industries, and reduce Yugoslavia's economic dependence on other countries, especially capitalist ones. But during the post-war period, the new regime developed the country to the detriment of the living standard through the forced accumulation of surplus of labour, a policy of low wages and the intensive use of the labour force, which as the only employer, the state was able to control closely. The consumer's wishes became largely irrelevant; the state decided where to invest. As a result, investments were often made in violation of the rules of economic logic. The nationalized economy was totally subordinated to the state. But while the ruthless exploitation of workers, raw materials, and sources of energy produced quick results, the

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<sup>4</sup> Jerzy Holzer, *Komunizam u Evropi. Povijest pokreta i sustava vlasti* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2002), p. 62; *Guide to Eastern Europe. The Changing Face of the Warsaw Pact*, ed. Keith Sword (London: Times Book, 1990), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Richard J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century – and After*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 213.

country's economy became inert. In the end, central planning did not stimulate the economy; it simply fostered a lack of initiative and innovation.<sup>6</sup>

Communists made use of the occupation and partition of Yugoslavia in 1941 to promote the revolutionary overthrow of both the old regime and the capitalist system. Like in many East European states, they followed several "rules" after assuming power. One of their first actions was the collective punishment of ethnic Germans, who were evicted to Germany, a mass expulsion that corresponded to a widespread desire for revenge in Europe as a whole. In addition to being the victims of a merciless settling of score with those who had collaborated with the defeated forces, under the pretence of a fight against fascists and collaborators, the targets of these mass persecutions were also the Communists' political opponents and owners and entrepreneurs, who ranged from smallholders and large landowners to artisans and industrialists. The Communists organized a People's Front that encompassed women's, youth, and trade union organizations, all led by communists, and some elements of "bourgeois" parties, by replacing the old leadership with lower ranking pro-communists officials who were as a rule new and covert members of the Communist Party. All social organizations were entrusted with so-called "transmission tasks" intended to realize the communist programme, with the ostensible aim of achieving the "all-people's" programme of the National Front. Those parties that refused to join the People's Front or challenged the Communist Party's leading role were destroyed. The People's Front always won the elections, and high election percentages were the result of completely undemocratic conditions.<sup>7</sup>

The Communist Party did not act openly against democracy; it retained many significant elements of a civil society, including such institutions and forms as a constitution, a parliament, and regular elections. But it abandoned the multi-party parliamentary system with the excuse that parties represented the interests of defeated classes. Through the use of the political police and intensive propaganda by the state-controlled media and school system, the party established its control over intellectual life and ensured popular support for its one and only electoral list.<sup>8</sup>

The dictatorial ruling style of the new regime encouraged idolatry for the leader of "the people and the Party", at the same time it forced religion out of public life. In Croatia, especially after the defeat of the "Crusader's" guerilla resistance in the immediate postwar period and the failure to reestablish the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS - *Hrvatska seljačka stranka*) as a political force, the presence of the Catholic Church posed the greatest threat to the communist monopoly on the popular world view, which was an important

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<sup>6</sup> *Guide to Eastern Europe*, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> J. Holzer, *Komunizam u Europi*, pp. 63-69.

<sup>8</sup> Andrzej Paczkowski, *Pola stoljeće povijesti Poljske: 1939. – 1989. godine* (Zagreb: Profil – Srednja Europa, 2001), p. 8; Katarina Spehnjak, "Vlast i javnost u Hrvatskoj 1945.–1952.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Zagreb, 32 (2000), no. 3, 507-514., 507.

basis for totalitarian rule. Communists opposed religion and its bond with the people. By a systematic suppression of both religion and national traditions, by neglecting their role in creating a strong national sociability, and through its ideological monopoly and the suppression of national and religious differences in the name of the state's stability, Communists constantly increased the frustration of those citizens who wished to express their sense of traditional values.

In the beginning, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ - *Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*) acted covertly; Communists did not declare themselves publicly as Communists. Instead, they acted on behalf of the People's Front and other "transmission organizations." The KPJ became more open in 1947, and it was fully open after 1948, when it explicitly emphasized its leading role in the society.

The communist authorities pursued a rapid modernization and quickly caught up with and overtook the more developed Western capitalist countries, as they exploited the country's natural resources and labor force to build factories and cities. But despite the positive image the regime enjoyed as a result of those successes both in the country and in international circles, over the course of decades, the country's population increasingly realized that socialism was a less productive system than those in both Western European countries and in neighbouring capitalist states, and that the comparison of political rights was not advantageous for socialism. The regime sought to show that more political rights had been achieved in comparison with the country's past. But it avoided any comparison between Croatia and Yugoslavia with other countries, although they had achieved a similar economic development and this proved that Yugoslav system of socialist self-management was no more successful than either Western or Eastern block countries. The regime also suffered from a lack of criticism about "today's reality", which was typical in all communist systems, at the same time that they mocked the previous systems of governing and the achievements before the Communists assumed power. Constant presentations of the past in the worst possible light created a beautified but distorted picture of the Yugoslav state and the communist system, which fostered such an approach.

Despite their shining promises, Yugoslavia's Communists did not create a society of social justice and equality. Nor did they erase class differences, which simply took different forms, and they failed to solve the national issues which had troubled the country since its creation. They also failed to sustain a level of economic development superior to those achieved by "bourgeois" governments in neighboring states.

Nonetheless, if we ignore the period immediately after the war and the activities of Crusaders and remains of other defeated forces, unlike some countries in the socialist bloc, in Croatia and elsewhere in Yugoslavia, there was no significant turmoil or unrest, including strikes, which might jeopardize the regime. The only exceptions were in 1971 in Croatia and later events in Kosovo. Why this should have been so is not clear. Among the possible

explanations were the muted, but fierce repression by the regime in the years immediately following the war; Yugoslavia's distancing from the Soviet-led bloc of the East European communist countries after 1948; the introduction of workers' self-management; considerable freedom of movement and of artistic expression; an increase in self-confidence and the feeling of uniqueness which was based on a specific place in the world due to self-management and the country's role as a leader of the non-aligned movement. There is no simple answer to this question, but it seems that a combination of these various factors contributed to the appearance of a stable and popular regime.

However, if we compare the programmatic aims of KPJ and the manner of their realization, we can see that, between 1945 and 1990, despite their rhetoric, Yugoslav Communists were, abandoning their own initial ideas and the goals of their struggle in every aspect. One indication that this was the case is the collapse of communism in Yugoslavia, even though it also collapsed in other European socialist countries. There are sufficient indicators to conclude that communism would have collapsed on its own, and that was not a single group would fight to preserve it. Nonetheless, the war for the reorganization of the Yugoslav state, starting with efforts to realize the Greater Serbian programme and continuing through the successful struggle for independence by individual republics, was a very bloody one, which demonstrates that substantially different opinions on the issue of Yugoslavia existed among groups within the Communist party.

The Partisan movement's victory in 1945 was achieved primarily owing to the compromise solution to the national issue and the prevalence of the federalist ideas over the unitary and separatist options. Federalism, at least at the beginning, was able to satisfy the minimum aspirations of Yugoslavia's diverse peoples, despite their strong national consciousness. During the first years, it served as a lightning-rod for national feelings, but it did not seriously limit the powers and jurisdiction of the central administration. However, in the new Yugoslavia also, a Yugoslav affiliation - which was then in harmony not only with general international ideas, but also with the ideology of the class solidarity of workers, peasants and the "decent" intelligentsia - was a more acceptable orientation than national exclusivity. The suppression of expressions of national identity was also more efficient than in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>9</sup>

The authorities tried to keep manifestations of national feelings to a bare minimum, except for those associated with the official ideology, in order to prevent possible national divisions and conflicts. By preventing any substantial legitimation of national particularities, the regime sought to build the strongest possible common state. Thus, especially at the beginning, the basic issue was the state; the nation was much less important. But in reality, Yugoslavia was torn between attempts to respect national differences and a federal orga-

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<sup>9</sup> Aleksa, Đilas, *Osporena zemlja. Jugoslavenstvo i revolucija*, (Beograd: Književne novine, 1990), pp. 230-236; Franjo Tuđman, *Usudbene povjestice* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1995), p. 204.

nization on one side and efforts to prevent an emphasis on national differences from jeopardizing the state on the other. For that reason, for most of Yugoslavia's existence those individuals and groups acting to minimize national differences were looked upon in a better light, often to the detriment of national identity, than to those who appealed to and preserved tradition. The authorities struck compromises between their desire to eliminate national differences for the sake of the long-term stability of the country and their need to respect the federal organization of the state in order to satisfy national needs and their persecution of those who insisted on expressing their national identity beyond the specified limits, especially expressions of a traditional or religious character. In fact, Yugoslavia saw the continuation of collision between unitary and national-federalist forces, which became two radically opposed poles. Although their representatives spoke openly on rare occasions, except in critical situations their struggles were hidden, internecine collisions within the League of Communists of Yugoslavija (SKJ – *Savez komunista Jugoslavije*). Generally, they hid behind an arcane and barely understandable political vocabulary full of social- and self-management-jargon. However, they controlled the state, and national state-building forces which had programmes to turn Yugoslavia's republics into independent states, primarily among Croats, were able to act only in emigration.

Yugoslavia was a heterogeneous territory, different from other countries in the area owing to its different nations, religions, state-related traditions and economic differences. The Communist regime managed in part to suppress and alleviate these differences after 1945, but Yugoslavia was still brought into question during any serious crisis, just as it was before 1941. In the final analysis, the lack of a common identity was one of most important reasons for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Those who insisted that the choice was simple, "either Yugoslavia or chaos," tacitly acknowledged a basic reality - that Yugoslavia could have been kept whole only through the use of force, regardless of the form the state took. The creation and disappearance of two Yugoslavias were sufficient proof of that. I believe that this would be confirmed by both those who supported the Kingdom of Yugoslavia or the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, regardless of the means used in their defence, and those who wished for their disappearance.<sup>10</sup>

Since its creation in 1919, the Yugoslav Communist Party embraced almost all the opposing positions take with regard to the national issue. They were centralists, unitarists, separatists, federalists and confederalists. The supranational and integralist orientation among Communists was inherited from the "Yugoslav Nationalist Youth", the tradition of Austro-Marxism in the workers' movement; and the conviction that a genuine communist had to aspire to the creation of a classless society, which is only possible under the presumption of surmounting national differences in big socialist communities and in a unified

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<sup>10</sup> Katarina, Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda. Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945.-1952.*, (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2002), p. 9.

communist humanity, which was not to have national limitations. The KPJ understood its Yugoslavianism in different ways—as opposition to nationalisms of all nations in Yugoslavia, as Yugoslavianism, as patriotism in the struggle against “foreigners” and occupiers, and as Yugoslavianism working toward an international order in which “working people” abandoned their national affiliation and a common origin was welcome. The fundamental idea was to diminish national differences and to bring peoples closer. The Yugoslavianism of the dictatorship of King Aleksandar I Karađorđević of 6 January 1929 aimed at creating a single Yugoslav nation by eliminating all other national awareness, but the KPJ wanted to create a single Yugoslav national awareness, both in the sense of political and ideological loyalty, and in the sense of the mixing and merging of cultures, without eliminating the awareness of individual peoples.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the KPJ with its programme was trying to be a Yugoslav cohesive force. The federalist stream prevailed in the 1930's. In the initial phase, that was just a tactical subordination of the national issue to long-term revolutionary goals. However, the transformation of the KPJ from a revolutionary movement into a bearer of the state order forced it to give more consideration to reality. The opposition tactics gradually turned into a state strategy. Those Communists who once had denied or dismissed the national issue, became representatives of the interests of their republics and their nations. As the only ones who had power, they assumed obligations which often resembled those of their bourgeois enemies with regard to the republic and national quotas. This was particularly obvious after 1974.

Those favouring the whole (Yugoslavia) over the constituent parts (the republics and nations) sought to convince the public that the elements linking Yugoslavia's nations (e.g., supranational elements) made Yugoslav, progressive and good, while the national elements forced Yugoslavs apart and thus were reactionary and bad. They invoked the humanist principles which valued each individual regardless of race, religion and nation, but they defined them within the political limitations of the Communist system, all with the aim of achieving harmonious relations within the state. However, they never spoke openly or questioned the SKJ's national and federalist policy. Starting in the mid 1960s, an emphasis on the importance of the country's nations and republics was promoted at the same time that with the importance of Yugoslavia as a whole was stressed, but the former gradually took precedence over the latter. Indeed, defending national identities and republican interests assumed institutional forms. With the 1974 Constitution, Yugoslavia effectively became a confederation, and the sovereignty of the republics became stronger than that of the federal government. That is why the Constitution met resistance, which became stronger after the death of Josip Broz Tito, particularly in Serbia, where the constitutional changes were seen as primary causes of the weakening and disintegration of Yugoslavia. But in the northwestern part of the coun-

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<sup>11</sup> F. Tuđman, *Usudbene povjestice*, p. 255; A. Đilas, *Osporena zemlja. Jugoslavenstvo i revolucija*, pp. 230, 235, 246.



try, most Croats and Slovenes saw the Constitution as an attempt to solve the profound political and economic crisis in which Yugoslavia found itself during the 1960s. The position of Yugoslav centralists and Serbian nationalists on that Constitution was perhaps best summarized by the General of the Yugoslav Army (JNA), Veljko Kadijević.

Firstly, obstructing an efficient functioning of the federal state; and secondly, enabling the disintegration of the federal state supported by the federal constitution, at the same time making impossible for the federal state to prevent that in a constitutional manner.<sup>12</sup>

The main problem of the Yugoslav state lay in the fact that the very limitations and achievements of the central government, from the point of view of the defence of their long-term national and republic interests were primarily defended by Croats and Slovenes. The republics were given the right of veto and parity, and they had their own foreign policy portfolios. They even had their own armies, the Territorial Defence forces. The Federal Assembly, the Government, and the Presidency were the sites where international and inter-governmental negotiations were held, but the only centralized institutions left were the JNA and Josip Broz Tito. In the period of the inflation of conclusions at the federal level, for instance at the SFRJ Presidency, during the late 1980s, according to the memoirs of its President Raif Dizdarević, most of decision were not implemented or respected, except for those related to the JNA. In effect, only those decisions related to an institution which was beyond the control of the republics were implemented. Consensus and parity were expressions of high democratic principles, and they satisfied the needs of nations and republics. But at the same time, they enabled the minority to hamstring the majority and thus jeopardize the system itself. The longer the deadlock, the more the divisions among the republican communist organizations started to resemble the divisions among the pre-war "bourgeois" parties.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, throughout the period between 1945 and 1991, when Croatia's status was determined by a single-party system and the fact that Croatia was a part of Yugoslavia, there was a struggle going on between the extreme poles of several opposing tendencies: Stalinism – liberalism, unitarianism – federalism, and state administrative economy – partial market economy. Obviously liberalism in communist society must be understood within the boundary of the system itself, because Communist liberals never rejected, especially not publicly, the leading role of the League of communist.<sup>14</sup>

After they had restored Yugoslavia, communists measured their own ideas by their influence and impact on national relations. The primary idea was to

<sup>12</sup> Veljko, Kadijević, *Moje viđenje raspada. Vojska bez države* (Beograd: Politika - izdavačka delatnost, 1993), p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 692; Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel. The Desintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bloomington Westview Press, Boulder-Oxford: 1996), p. XVI; Raif Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita do smrti Jugoslavije*. Svjedočenje, (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2000), p. 188.

<sup>14</sup> Savka Dabčević Kučar, *'71 hrvatski snovi i stvarnost*, 1-2, (Zagreb: Interpublic, 1997), p. 13.

preserve the state and avoid national tensions. The fierce criticism of inequitable interethnic relations in the period before they assumed power was not just a mere phrase nor just the most efficient instrument of the revolution; it also bound the Communists to resolve the “national question.” The Communists trod two paths to resolve the national question, but both led to the same goal—to assure national equality and by doing so to present themselves as the genuine representatives of all Yugoslav nations while at the same time they suppressed those national characteristics which tended to divide, rather than connect, nations in a Yugoslav synthesis. Therefore, Slovenes, as one of the original pillars of Yugoslavia, like Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Muslims, each in their own unique way were allowed their national markers, from language and traditions to customs and emblems, but Croats and Serbs could not do so freely because as the decisive weights on the scales of interethnic harmony they became prisoners of that life-saving formula of “bratstvo i jedinstvo”. Hence the reaction of the authorities to anything demonstrating Croatian differences from Serbs, whether the display of Croatian flags; the singing of patriotic songs and the Croatian anthem, unless as part of official state ceremonies; the use of the name of the “Croatian language” and the following the Catholic tradition. But these prohibitions pained Croats, as they did Serbs, who suffered similar proscriptions. But the pressure was by far the greatest on Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Although all of Yugoslavia’s nations were represented in apex of the Party and the State in the numbers corresponding to the national structure, Serbs were over represented in the executive branch and in the most sensitive services, such as the secret service, the police, the army and the diplomatic corps. As in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Serbs were viewed as “the state-building” nation. Due to the federalist organization of the state and the consideration of the national issue, as one researcher wittily said, the character of Tito’s regime was Croatian, but the state apparatus belonged to Serbs.<sup>15</sup>

Although Communist leaders feared not only nationalism and separatism, but also dominance by Serb, owing to their numbers, Serbs, especially those from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, were over represented in the state structures at all levels, from the local to the federal. Still, one needs to emphasize that the national structure was almost fully balanced in the most influential state and party bodies. The cause of the prevalence of Serbs in Yugoslavia did not lie only in their participation in the Partisan movement and their traditional orientation towards public service, but also in a more positive attitude towards Yugoslavia than other nationalities, particularly Croats. Indeed, one cannot speak of a special Croatian anti-communist attitude, but rather of an anti-Yugoslav one, which was stronger among Croats than among Slovenes or Muslims. One should also bear in mind that Croatian nationalism had always sought to weaken the centralized system, with the more radical exponents favoring the disappearance of Yugoslavia, while Serbian nationalism often hid

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<sup>15</sup> Marko Attila Hoare, “The Croatian and Serbian elites in the post-war period”, in: *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, 4, Pečuj, 20. – 22. oktobra 2000., ed. Hans-Georg Fleck, Igor Graovac, Zagreb, 2001, 378-391, 380.

behind Yugoslav phraseology and rhetoric. Ironically and somewhat paradoxically, the Serbian anti-Yugoslav attitude opposed the Yugoslav idea, but not the Yugoslav state, which Serbs viewed as an enlarged Serbia.

The idea that the SKJ and the state would disappear with the self-management system proved to be utopian, and when in late 1960s the federalist principle started to be applied more broadly and more consistently, both in the state and the SKJ, a phase of rapid disintegration commenced. No other national, political or economic forces, apart from the Communists, were there to keep Yugoslavia together. Traditional national ideologies took on a new life, sometimes teaming up with the Communist leadership of the republics, and sometimes with the anti-communist intelligentsia.<sup>16</sup>

Yugoslavia's nations, led by Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia, looked to themselves, their identities, and the creation of their own states as the best and final way to realize the national goals. The main cause of the fall of Yugoslavia did not lie in economic exploitation or cultural subordination, although many statistical indicators served as powerful arguments of one or another side, but rather in the simple fact that each of the nations aspired to be sovereign within a fully independent state. Yugoslavia had been a compromise of various international and national interests, melded with idealism.

The history of the communist Yugoslavianism, conceived in a Marxist way, is a combination of principled recognition of differences and suppression of those differences in political practice, which eventually led to the fall of Marxist dialectics in the Yugoslav way and to an unprecedented explosion of the old and new nationalisms.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to emphasize that suppression of differences was to someone's detriment and so caused resistance. Consequently, every effort taken to create a common culture and a single language in order to assure the Yugoslav state's survival had the opposite effect because they gave rise to resistance to such a state, which sought to assure its own existence at the expense of its constituent parts. Thus, a cybernetic loop was created, in which every effort to make the state stronger, simultaneously furthered its disintegration. Yugoslav communists did not find a much better solution than those of the regimes before them. They used the war and national conflicts to manipulate the national issue as the most powerful instrument of the revolution, but by doing so they pushed the social issue, the original communist issue, out of the limelight. At the same time, they could not resolve the contradiction between the need to use the national issue to achieve success for their revolution and make the new Yugoslavia stronger on the one side, and on the other, their constant fear that stronger nations would contribute to anti-Yugoslav and communist revolution, whose basis was almost exclusively national throughout the fifty years of the regime.

<sup>16</sup> A. Đilas, *Osporena zemlja. Jugoslavenstvo i revolucija*, pp. 230, 261.

<sup>17</sup> Srećko M. Džaja, "Bosanska povijesna stvarnost i njezini mitološki odrazi", in: *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu, Zbornik radova*, (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju u Sarajevu, 2003), pp. 39-66, p. 60.

Many communists claimed that the problems were in the differences rather than in the nations themselves, and that the differences were distinct only because they existed through nations.<sup>18</sup> However, the fact remains that the solutions to all problems in East Europe in recent history have been sought in those states that have given priority to the national issue. Thus, those who preferred Croatia to Yugoslavia were at least a bit more convincing than those who argued that Yugoslavia was preferable to Austro-Hungary, and the former were even more convincing if the measure of success was the minimization of national, religious, and cultural differences within a state.

Any analysis of economic relations within Yugoslavia must examine two aspects: the issue of development and the issue of equality. Inefficiency led to stagnation. Therefore the underdeveloped were frustrated because they continued to lag behind the developed republics, and the developed republics were frustrated because they continued to lag behind their more developed neighbours.<sup>19</sup>

It seems that the question of economic stagnation and the exploitation of Croatia, and other republics, will never be answered in a satisfactory manner. In light of that, the words spoken by V. Bakarić on 17 September 1964 at the meeting of the Zagreb Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia (SKH - Savez komunista Hrvatske) are very indicative.

We have all started knocking on the Federation's door with the calculations of how much damage we suffered in the last period, and the question is: who has even been given anything in Yugoslavia if we were all 'robbed'?<sup>20</sup>

Frequently opposing arguments coming from many sides on how one republic was exploiting another or even several of them could be, however absurd that may seem, one of the proofs that the question of exploiting and inequality among federal units was an important, but not a crucial issue. Although there may be discussions about the application of different methodologies or even the deliberate misuse of data, the fact is that a great many researchers, who were often divided by their national or republic affiliation, were trying to prove that one republic or nation was stunted in Yugoslavia. Arguments that economic relations among republics were inequitable, in turn, threw Yugoslavia into doubt and led to calls for its reorganization that resulted in completely opposed proposals, which generally could be reduced to a question of centralization versus decentralization. In radical versions, that meant boiling the federal principle down to a formality, or, in another case, separation and the independence of Yugoslavia's republics. Of course, the prevalence

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<sup>18</sup> Ivan Perić, *Suvremeni hrvatski nacionalizam*, 2nd ed. (Zagreb: August Cesarec, 1984), p. 110.

<sup>19</sup> Dejan Jović, "Razlozi za raspad Socijalističke Jugoslavije: kritička analiza postojećih interpretacija", *Reč, časopis za književnost, kulturu i društvena pitanja*, 8 (2001) no. 62, p. 93; Neven Borak, "Slovenija kot najbolj razviti del Jugoslavije", *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, Ljubljana, 2002, no. 2., 97-108, 108.

<sup>20</sup> Vladimir Bakarić, *Socijalistički samoupravni sistem i društvena reprodukcija*, 2 (Zagreb: Forum - Informator - Komunist - Mladost - Prosveta - Svjetlost, 1983), p. 2.

of the radical approach depended on many factors, which became stronger in the early 1990s when various arguments and proposals called into question the survival of the state itself. That is why one should incline to the assertion that the cause of the constant crisis in Yugoslavia and of its eventual disintegration lay in the wish for national emancipation and recognition, and that the economic reason was a less important element.<sup>21</sup>

Yugoslavia was created, disappeared, and was recreated as a result of two world wars, when regional problems were being solved together with the global ones. But clearly, Yugoslavia was of marginal importance and always followed behind them. Although the cultural and linguistic similarities among the South Slavic peoples played a very important role, the defence against imperialism of the larger neighbouring countries and nations, as well as the strategic need of the world's imperialist and ideological systems, were the prevailing factors of unifying and maintaining a common state. Recently, neighbouring countries and great powers have refrained from using threats and begun to satisfy their needs without the use of force, but rather through the manipulation of capital, by promoting democracy, and by promoting respect for human rights and the rights of nations. These approaches were quick, convincing, and acceptable for many people. It seems that there is a political will of the majority in all parts of the former Yugoslavia, including Croatia, that strategic issues should now be solved exclusively through democratic consultation. One should bear in mind that Yugoslavia had been created out of the conviction of a small group who believed that it would be a solution to a Serb, Croat, and Slovene national questions. After seventy years later of largely non-democratic regimes, Yugoslavia disintegrated for good because the majority of its citizens wanted it to do so and because the "national question," which had troubled Yugoslavia from its birth, could not be resolved in any other manner, not just the Croatian, Slovene, and Serbian, but also the Montenegrin, Macedonian, and Muslim (Bosniak).<sup>22</sup>

Although many see of the present solution as final, the fact that Slovenia, the most western and the most developed successor state to the former Yugoslavia, is already a member of the European Union, and that the EU will probably encompass all the other former Yugoslav republics, indicates that the history of the states and nations in these areas is not yet finished. In the history of Croatia's integration into a supranational community, joining the EU will be a completely new experience based on the freely expressed will of its citizens who can finally express their opinion through a multi-party parliamentary system.

*Translated by Ida Jurković*

## **Kroatien 1945-1991**

### Zusammenfassung

Der Artikel fasst beinahe ein halbes Jahrhundert der kroatischen Geschichte zusammen. Der Schwerpunkt liegt sowohl auf der kroatischen politischen Geschichte und den kroatisch-serbischen Beziehungen, als auch auf den Beziehungen zwischen der Teilrepublik und dem föderativen Staat, d.h. zwischen Kroatien und Jugoslawien. Dieser Text basiert sich auf Archivuntersuchungen des Autors, meistens für die Periode der vierziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts, dann auf publizierte Untersuchungen und auf eine große Anzahl historiographischer Werke. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wurde den Volkszählungen gewidmet, die als ein Indikator für die nationale Struktur der staatlichen Behörden und politischer Organisationen galten, in erster Linie von CK (das Zentralkomitee des Bundes der Kommunisten Jugoslawiens) und JNA (Jugoslawische Volksarmee). Der Autor hebt auch manche Indikatoren der wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Entwicklung von Kroatien und Jugoslawien hervor und stellt einen Vergleich zwischen Kroatien, Jugoslawien und Nachbarländern an.