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1945 IN CROATIA

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The author presents the basic contours of 1945, which was marked by the end of the war, the collapse of the Independent State of Croatia, the establishment of Federal State of Croatia as a component of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia and the seizure of authority by the Communist Party of Yugoslav (KPJ). After the end of a liberation and civil war, the KPJ took power into its hands and created the essential prerequisites for the federal reorganization of the Yugoslav state and the revolutionary change of society in compliance with its revolutionary and federalist ideas and through the application of experiences from the USSR. The emphasis is on the most important moves by the KPJ in the first year of its rule and the fate of the main anti-communist forces in Croatia.

Key words: Croatia, 1945, The Communist Party of Yugoslavia

Introduction¹

The year 1945 as mostly characterized by the end of the war, the collapse of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), the establishment of the Federal State of Croatia (FDH) as part of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFJ). The

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¹ Most of the data and interpretations, and the references from this article can be found in my books: *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1945.-1950.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1996); *Božidar Magovac: S Radićem između Mačeka i Hebranga* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest - Dom i svijet, 1999); *Križari – gerila u Hrvatskoj : 1945.-1950.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest - Dom i svijet, 2002 (*Križari – gerila u Hrvatskoj: 1945.-1950.*, drugo izmijenjeno i dopunjeno izdanje, Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest – Alfa, 2011)); *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945.-1991. : Od zajedništva do razlaza* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga – Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2006) and *Sindikati i radništvo u Hrvatskoj (1945.-1950.)* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2012), on which this work is based.

Communist Party of Yugoslavia/Communist Party of Croatia (KPJ/KPH) took power into his hands after the liberation and civil war and created all essential prerequisites for the federal reorganization of the Yugoslav state and for the revolutionary change of society in compliance with Marxist doctrine and on the basis of the experiences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the leading world state under communist rule.

At the beginning of 1945, the NDH permanently or intermittently controlled a part of its territory, except Dalmatia, with the help of German troops, but many areas and smaller towns were either under the temporary control of or under siege by Partisan units which operated under the name People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (NOVJ), and as of March under the name Yugoslav Army (JA). Actually, the NDH generally only fully controlled cities, but not even the links between them. All of Dalmatia was under Partisan control, and JA units broke through the Srijem Front in eastern Croatia on 12 April 1945. By 25 April, they entered Vukovar, Vinkovci, Osijek, Virovitica, Slavon-ski Brod, Slavonska Požega and Nova Gradiška, and also Čakovec, while at the beginning of May they similarly entered Bjelovar and Koprivnica, Križevci and Ludbreg. In March, the JA took Udbina and Korenica, and then Gospić, Otočac, Slunj and Ogulin in early April. In the first days of May, they also took Rijeka, Petrinja and Sisak. As the last remaining larger cities in Croatia, Karlovac and Varaždin were taken by the JA on 7 May, Zagreb was taken on 8 May and then Krapina on 9 May 1945.² However, even after the end of the war, many links between individual parts of the country were uncertain due to the activities of the Crusaders (*križari*), adherents of the NDH, about whom more shall be stated below.

The leadership of the NDH did not want to surrender to JA forces, and instead, compelled by the military losses of the German Third Reich, decided to seek support from the victorious Western powers, foreseeing their imminent conflict with the joint communist enemy under the leadership of the USSR. Just before the end of the war they abolished the racial laws which were a barrier to cooperation with the Allies, and which made the NDH a component of the failed Nazi/Fascist system in Europe. They sent the request for collaboration and recognition to the Allies on 6 May, when a massive retreat of the state, political and military apparatus from Croatia also commenced, with the objective of surrendering to Anglo-American units in Austrian territory.

The creation of new state authority did not explicitly abolish the monarchy, nor were republics proclaimed, but the decisions of the Anti-fascist Council for the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) and the establishment of so-called territorial councils, such as the Territorial Anti-fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Croatia (ZAVNOH), formed the state leadership of the

² *Hronologija oslobodilačke borbe naroda Jugoslavije 1941-1945* (Belgrade: Vojnoistorijski institut, 1964).

future federal units. In contrast to the revolutionary conclusions of AVNOJ, the new authorities soon established cooperation with the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. King Petar II Karađorđević was forced to form the Royal Regency on 29 January 1945, and on 2 March he appointed three regents, a Croat, a Slovene and a Serb. The establishment of a joint government on 7 March 1945 created a transitional monarchical-republican government.³

Ustasha, Chetniks, Communists

One of the essential features of the war in the territory of Yugoslavia was the confrontation between domestic political and military movements that perceived the other movements which emerged within the framework of specific nations and states as their greatest threats. The occupying powers and their military units were actually a secondary concern. Croatia entered 1945 deeply divided. There were four major military and political groups: the KPJ at the head of the Partisan movement, the NDH under the leadership of the Ustasha movement, the remnants of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) with a largely passive membership divided between adherents of the former and new authorities, and the Chetnik movement, which advocated the restoration of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The organization of the Ustasha-Croatian Liberation Movement consisted of militant and radical nationalists with a traditionalist bent. The most notable features of the Ustasha organization were the cult of the Croatian state, anti-Yugoslavism, anti-Serbianism and anti-communism. The Ustasha managed to form the NDH on the ruins of Yugoslavia with the assistance of the Axis powers. They exploited German and Italian imperialist aspirations, as well as the aspiration of a large part of the Croatian people for state independence, to proclaim a Croatian state after the collapse of Yugoslavia. The crucial role of the German and Italian allies largely dictated the internal organization and international status of the NDH. Italy, with the assent of the NDH leadership, seized a large portion of Croatian territory, even though the Ustasha movement considered it an inseparable part of the Croatian state. The primary expression of the alliance between the NDH and the Third Reich, besides the establishment of the NDH and warfare against all enemies of the Tripartite Pact, was ideological alignment with the National Socialists, particularly the racist persecution of the Roma and Jewish minorities. The Ustasha also enforced severe measures against the Serbs, who they deemed the primary enemies of the Croatian state, and of whom a vast majority desired the renewal of Yugoslavia.

³ Ferdo Čulinović, *Stvaranje nove jugoslavenske države* (Zagreb, 1959), pp. 58, 208, 221, 229, 232, 244; *Zasjedanje Privremene narodne skupštine. Belgrade 7. VIII-27. VIII 1945.* (Split: Biblioteka Slobodna Dalmacija, 1945), p. 41.

Through the discrimination and persecution against the Serbs, the Ustasha sought to bring long-term stability to the Croatian state. It would become apparent over time that such policies were in fact one of the primary elements that caused the instability of the NDH.

Besides the communists, the other guerrilla formations that opposed the NDH and the occupying powers were adherents of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Called the Chetniks, i.e., members of the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland (JvuO), they were mostly advocates of centralism and Greater Serbian nationalism who wanted to restore the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia embraced them as its own army in the homeland, and they were also recognized by the Allies. The Chetniks drew their support almost exclusively from among the Serbs. Counting on the victory of the Western Allies, they adopted tactics of waiting and loyal relations with the occupying powers, like many other governments in occupied Europe. The passivity of Chetnik units gradually transformed into cooperation with the occupying forces or the Ustasha regime. They presented themselves as the defenders of Yugoslavia and the Serbian nation, and accused the Croats of betraying the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. They formed ties with the Italians on the basis of a common interest: animosity against the Partisans, but also the Ustasha, although they were not in an open military conflict with the latter.

The Partisan movement not only served the communists as a necessary means for the liberation struggle, but also to seize power and to initiate far-reaching social change. This is why they systematically, albeit often secretly, suppressed any form of pluralism. The national question was one of the essential levers for launching a revolution, but its solution only consisted of a federalist form of state community, while relations between nations remained under the strict control of the KPJ without any possibility for the full advocacy of individuals or parties for narrower national interests vis-à-vis state institutions. During the war and immediately thereafter, the communists claimed that they were not fighting for their dictatorship and radical change, and that they would guarantee political pluralism and private property, calling for national liberation and people's democracy. They invited the members of other parties to join their common struggle, but they retained a monopoly on leadership of the Partisan movement, accusing the leadership of civic parties of national betrayal. In this process, they also exploited lower-ranking officials of such parties, according to them the new status of high party representatives. In Croatia they helped establish a new leadership of the supposed Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), renamed the Croatian Republican Peasant Party (HRSS) as of June of that year, consisting of the party's lower-ranking officials. The communists used this new leadership, which separated from the party and its president Vladko Maček, as a means to create the mass character of the Partisan movement and the People's Front (NF), to eject the previous party leadership

and, ultimately, to build a communist dictatorship.⁴ This will be elaborated in greater detail in the following section.

Although there are no entirely reliable data, according to estimates there were approximately 170,000 members of the armed forces of the NDH in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. About 15,000 Croats who were serving in the legionary units of the German army and gendarmerie, about whom there are no dependable data, should be added to this number. At the end of the war, many members of the NDH armed forces emigrated, w others were executed, while the survivors were entirely socially marginalized. In contrast to them, the 203,834 Partisans in Croatia experienced a considerably enhanced social status.⁵ According to the data released by the UDBa (Yugoslav security service) in 1952, there were 94,000 political emigrants who left had Yugoslavia, of whom 30,000 or 32% were Croats.⁶ To be sure, most had emigrated in 1945. As to the number of Chetniks in Croatia, there are no certain data on them, either. In the relevant sources, it was mentioned there were approximately 3,000 of them in 1945. However, given that they often intermingled with Chetniks from Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as those who came from the territory of Montenegro and Serbia, their number in the territory of Croatia was considerably higher. Research for the entire territory of the NDH is somewhat more reliable, and according to it there were approximately 35,000 Chetniks originally from the territory of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁷

In summary, the outbreak of war and the mass recruitment into one of these movements in Croatia's territory was mostly influenced by the Ustasha

⁴ Zdenko Radelić, *Božidar Magovac, S Radićem između Mačeka i Hebranga*.

⁵ *Vojna enciklopedija, Drugo izdanje, 2, Brdo-Foa, "Domobranstvo"* (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1971), pp. 517-520, 518; *Vojna enciklopedija, Drugo izdanje, 6., Nauloh-Podvodni, "Okupacija Jugoslavije 1941-1945"*; (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1973), pp. 361-375, 373; Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1999), pp. 129, 130, 141, 171; Velimir Ivetić, "Srbi u antifašističkoj borbi na područjima Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1941-1945. godine", *Vojnoistorijski glasnik*, (1995), no. 1: 149-175, 152-167. Z. Dizdar claimed that there were 200,000 members in 1945. See: Zdravko Dizdar, "Brojtnbeni pokazatelji vojničkih postrojbi na teritoriju Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1941. - 1945. godine", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, (1996), no. 1-2: 161-197, 197. Davor Marijan asserted that at the end of the NDH, all of its armed forces combined had roughly 110,000 members. See: Davor Marijan, *Ustaške vojne postrojbe 1941. - 1945.*, Magistarski rad, (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet, pp. 73-76).

⁶ Katarina Spehnyak, "Većeslav Holjevac u političkim događajima u Hrvatskoj 1967. godine", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, (2000), no. 3: 567-594, 568; *Položaj i delatnost jugoslovenske političke emigracije u 1952 godini* (Belgrade, 1953), p. 5.

⁷ Bogdan Krizman, ed., *Jugoslovenske vlade u izbeglištvu 1941-1943, Dokumenti* (Zagreb: Arhiv Jugoslavije - Globus, 1981), p. 36; Mladen Colić, "Kolaboracionističke oružane formacije u Jugoslaviji 1941-1945. godine" u: *Oslobodilačka borba naroda Jugoslavije*, knjiga 2. (Belgrade, 1977), pp. 75-76; Ivetić, "Srbi u antifašističkoj borbi na područjima Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1941-1945.godine", pp. 162, 165; Dizdar, "Brojtnbeni pokazatelji vojničkih postrojbi na teritoriju Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1941. - 1945. godine", pp. 187, 192.

terror against Serbs, the Serbian rejection of the Croatian state and the desire for Yugoslavia's restoration, anti-Italian sentiment in the regions occupied by the Kingdom of Italy or under its control and the revolutionary intent of the KPJ.

Croatian Peasant Party

The leadership of the HSS rejected cooperation with the Ustasha authorities. They were counting on an Allied victory, after which the party could continue its work in a possibly expanded and reinforced Banovina of Croatia in a restored Kingdom of Yugoslavia.⁸ The party maintained an equal distance from the Partisan movement, assessing that the KPJ would exploit the liberation struggle for a communist revolution. However, in a manner similar to the Ustasha movement, the KPJ attracted a high number of HSS members to its side, i.e., to the Partisans, by underscoring the similarities in the platform of the HSS and the proclaimed program of the Unified People's Liberation Front (JNOF). With the help of lower-level party functionaries, they accused Maček of treason, and they attempted to gradually impose a new leadership on the party, with whose help the KPJ could use the HSS to waylay criticism that the Partisans wanted to implement a communist revolution. Those members of the party who wanted to join the Partisans and thereby renounce the leadership of the HSS, and thus the party itself, formed the Executive Committee (IO) of the HSS, which was renamed the IO HRSS (Croatian Republican Peasant Party) in June 1945, presenting themselves as the genuine leadership of the HSS.

Throughout the war, and even in 1945, HSS leader Vladko Maček had been under the strict supervision of the Ustasha. In order to avoid the fate of Augustin Košutić, the party's deputy chairman, who had been detained by the Partisans, and also due to articles printed in *Vjesnik*, the bulletin of the Unified People's Front of Croatia, which accused him of betraying the people, Maček emigrated. He sent secret messages from abroad to members of the HSS leadership who had remained in Croatia, telling them not to participate in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly in November 1945. He warned that this would signify recognition of the legitimacy of the communist authorities. In an interview for *The New York Times* published on 23 July 1945, he stressed that a communist dictatorship was ruling Yugoslavia. He thereby rejected the policies of Šubašić and Šutej, members of the communist-royal Yugoslav coalition government headed by Josip Broz Tito.⁹

⁸ Ljubo Boban, *Kontroverze iz povijesti Jugoslavije*, 1. i 2. (Zagreb: Stvarnost - Školska knjiga, 1989); Fikreta Jelić Butić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka* (Zagreb: Globus, 1983); Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950*.

⁹ "Put Mačeka – put izdaje", *Vjesnik*, 26. 2. 1944; "Svim pristašama Hrvatske Seljačke stranke", *Slobodni dom*, 8. 3. 1944; "Maček prorokuje diktaturu Tita. Izjavljuje da je u Jugoslaviji komunistički režim siguran, ali Hrvati će se tome oduprijeti", *New York Times*, 23. 7. 1945.,

After the unsuccessful Vokić-Lorković putsch, August Košutić wanted to negotiate with the communists. However, the Partisan leadership put him in confinement at the end of 1944, after he arrived among the Partisans. Even after the war, Košutić was kept in detention. However, through his wife Mira Košutić, the daughter of HSS founder Stjepan Radić, who had been visiting him in prison, and through the HSS party bulletin *Narodni glas*, he still guided the party's policies. Like Maček, he opposed the legalization of the party and participation in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly of Yugoslavia.¹⁰

Earlier in 1944, the communists had also interned Božidar Magovac, a respected member of the HSS, a Partisan and the deputy chairman of the People's Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ), for reasons similar to those that led to Košutić's detainment. Namely, Magovac had attempted to impose the HSS Executive Committee on the communists as an equal partner.

As opposed to Magovac and Košutić, Ivan Šubašić, the former *ban* (royal governor) of the Banovina of Croatia, and the prime minister of the Yugoslav royal government, became the foreign minister in the communist-royal coalition government on 7 March 1945. He intended to continue his collaboration with the communists within the People's Front of Yugoslavia (NFJ), which was then supposed to be joined by the unified HSS and HRSS. In contrast to Šubašić, Juraj Šutej, also a notable HSS party activist and a member of the interim government, insisted on resignations and an independent campaign by the HSS outside of the NFJ.¹¹

Human casualties and loss of property in Croatia

The year 1945 and the ensuing period were notoriously marked by human casualties and physical destruction. According to some research, a total of 295,000 persons were killed in Croatia, of whom 137,000 were Serbs, 118,000 Croats, 15,000 Roma and 16,000 Jews. In the case of the latter, 6,000 were killed or died abroad. This is a total of 7% of Croatia's population, and 3.6% of the Croats and as many as 17.3% of the Croatian Serbs.¹²

Casualties among the population continued to mount even after the war. Mass executions of Ustasha and Home Guardsmen (*domobranci*) were performed pursuant to commands issued by the communist and Partisan leadership. The chief of the security service (People's Protection Department –

prema: Dinko Šuljak, *Tražio sam Radićevu Hrvatsku* (Barcelona – München: Knjižnica Hrvatske revije, 1988), p. 409.

¹⁰ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, p. 28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Vladimir Žerjavić, *Opsesije i megalomanije oko Jasenovca i Bleiburga: Gubici stanovništva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu* (Zagreb: Globus, 1992), pp. 159-170.

OZNa), Aleksandar Ranković, doubtlessly in agreement with Josip Broz Tito, the chairman of the NKOJ, the KPJ general secretary and supreme commander of the Yugoslav Army, implemented a radical policy of retaliation against all enemies when, on 17 May 1945, he demanded a greater resoluteness from the Croatian branch of the OZNa which had, obviously, been agreed to earlier.

“Over 10 days, only 200 bandits have been shot in liberated Zagreb. We are surprised by this indecisiveness for cleaning Zgb. of villains. You are defying our orders, for we told you to act rapidly and energetically and to get everything done in the first few days.”¹³

Thus, the instruction from the Yugoslav Army’s third OZNa section issued on 6 May 1945 to subordinate OZNa functionaries in military divisions stipulates that prisoners held by the brigades were to be “liquidated on the spot”, and that if they did not have time due to military operations, the prisoners could be sent to the divisions where they would be “purged”. The instruction is clear:

“The stance on captured officers and prisoners complies with earlier instructions. Officers are to be purged without exception, unless you receive notification from the OZNa or Party that an individual is not to be liquidated. In general, no mercy is to be shown in purges and liquidation.”¹⁴

Some lists of persons executed summarily or based on court rulings after the Partisans occupied a given area are available. They were compiled by the OZNa district authorities in April and May of 1948. These are lists from the districts and cities of Benkovac, Brač, Dubrovnik, Imotski, Makarska, Sinj, Šibenik and Zadar. It is entirely certain that such lists also had to have been compiled by the OZNa authorities in other Dalmatian districts and cities, but these have not been preserved, at least not in Croatian archives. It is quite likely that similar lists were compiled by the local OZNa officials in other parts of Croatia, and in the rest of Yugoslavia as well.¹⁵

According to all previous assessments, the Yugoslav communist authorities organized mass executions of approximately 50,000 captured members of the NDH armed forces.¹⁶ Besides executions, the new authorities also organized trials. Based on preserved rulings, mainly from the period running from June

¹³ Mate Rupiċ, ed., *Partizanska i komunistiċka represija i zloċini u Hrvatskoj 1944.-1946. Dokumenti* (Slavonski Brod: Hrvatski institut za povijest-Podruċnica za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje, 2005), p. 263.

¹⁴ Mitja Ferenc, “(Zle) Huda jama: Zloċin u radarskom oknu Barbara rov u Hudoj jami kod Laškog”, *Hereticus*, (2011), no. 1-2: 37-53, 49.

¹⁵ *Partizanska i komunistiċka represija i zloċini u Hrvatskoj 1944.-1946. : Dokumenti : Dalmacija*, pp. 802-928.

¹⁶ Źerjaviċ, *Opsesije i megalomanije oko Jasenovca i Bleiburga*, p. 77; Dragutin Pelikan, “Masovna grobišta na podruċju Hrvatske”, *Politiċki zatvorenik*, (2004), no. 143: 23-24; *Ibid.*, no. 144: 8-10; *Ibid.*, no. 145: 30-32; *Ibid.*, no. 146: 20-22; Mirko Valentiċ, ed., *Spomenica povodom 50-te obljetnice Bleiburga i KriŹnog puta: 1945-1995* (Zagreb: Quo vadis, 1995).

to August 1945, it may be concluded that in Croatia courts martial convicted nearly 5,200 individuals, and of them over 1,500 were sentenced to death.¹⁷ Sentencing was based on the personal accountability of individuals, but also due to membership in an enemy military or movement. Besides retribution, the high number of those killed was also influenced by the planned confrontation with potential military and political adversaries of the KPJ, Yugoslavia and the revolution. Thus, the mass execution of captives was the result of several essential causes: retaliation against military opponents who had caused casualties among the Partisans and their sympathizers; the decision to entirely block the restoration of hostile armies which could have threatened the reconstruction of the Yugoslav state and the KPJ's revolutionary objectives. Besides drastically reducing the number of potential military adversaries, this method also reduced the number of political opponents of the communist dictatorship, especially with regard to the upcoming parliamentary elections in the autumn of 1945. Retaliation, a customary feature of many wars, was transformed into state terror in Yugoslavia and Croatia. It did not only encompass members of the NDH state apparatus, Ustasha, Chetniks, Nazis and Fascists and the wealthy, but also, in Slavonia and Istria for example, Germans and Italians in general. Retaliations based on national intolerance between the Croats and Serbs was difficult to oversee, so at places the identification of Croats as Ustasha across the board moved beyond the state's control and the declared policy of fraternity and equality. There were many examples of abuses to further personal aims, such as the seizure of property and the eviction of entire families from houses and apartments. Briefly, retaliations were driven by wartime, revolutionary, ethnic and personal motives.

Major demographic changes in Croatia were also caused by the emigration or expulsion of members of the German and Italian minorities, mostly from Slavonia and Istria. The Germans were proclaimed guilty on a collective basis. Their property was confiscated and their other ethnic and civil rights were deprived. The basis for such actions was the "Decision on the Transfer of Enemy Assets to State Ownership, State Management of Assets of Absent Individuals and the Sequester of Assets Forcefully Expropriated by the Occupying Authorities" made by the AVNOJ Presidium on 21 November 1944. The decision encompassed Germans, the so-called Volksdeutscher, with the exception of participants in the Partisan movement. Yugoslavia expelled the Volksdeutsche, and simultaneously prohibited the return of those who had fled or had been expelled previously.¹⁸

¹⁷ Kaja Pereković, "Pogled unatrag: Pismo Andriji Hebrangu", *Politički zatvorenik*, 2000, 102, pp. 21-23; Nada Kisić Kolanović, *Hebrang. Iluzije i otrežnjenja* (Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest, 1996), pp. 146-148; Josip Jurčević, *Represivnost jugoslavenskog sustava u Hrvatskoj 1945. godine*, Disertacija, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet (Zagreb: 2000), p. 407.

¹⁸ *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije*, Belgrade, 6. veljače 1945., 2., 13-14; Vladimir Geiger, *Josip Broz Tito i ratni zločini: Bleiburg – Folksdojčeri* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2013), pp. 31-50.

These expulsions were aligned with the practices introduced by the victorious powers. At the Potsdam Conference held from 17 July to 2 August 1945, it was concluded that the remaining German populations in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland were to be relocated into Germany. Yugoslavia was not mentioned, but its authorities followed the example of their allies. A step farther was the Citizenship Act adopted on 23 August 1945, which stipulated that citizenship could be stripped from any member of those peoples whose states were at war with Yugoslavia, if their citizen demonstrated disloyalty to Yugoslavia. These sanctions also extended to spouses and children, if they could not prove that they had no ties to the culpable individual or if they were members of one of the peoples of Yugoslavia. However, the Allies had already closed their borders in the summer of 1945 and ceased admitting transports carrying Yugoslav Germans. So Yugoslavia then interned the Germans in camps. There are no precise data for Croatia, but according to the Internal Affairs Ministry of the People's Government of Croatia, approximately 11,000 Germans had been accommodated in camps in Slavonia at the end of October 1945, of whom many later died. Approximately 90,000 Germans in all were deported from Croatia.¹⁹

The Italian minority endured less severe treatment than the Germans, even though they were also subjected to mass deportations. Besides the unresolved state/legal status of Istria and its unification with Croatia and Yugoslavia and changes in the socio-political order, it is important to also note the impact of retaliations by the authorities against Fascists, the wealthy, intellectuals and Italians in general. Thus, retaliations against the Italians were also motivated by wartime, revolutionary and ethnic reasons.²⁰

Besides wartime casualties, demographic losses and mass deportations, the total population of Croatia immediately after the war was also influenced by colonization, which was launched as a part of the agrarian reforms of 1945.²¹

Croatia also sustained immense physical damage. About 400,000 people were left without their homes; 2.5 million head of livestock had been killed. Approximately 1,787 industrial and mining facilities had been destroyed or damaged. Only 16% of all railroads were suitable for traffic. Over 90% of riverine or maritime vessels had been sunken or taken away.²²

¹⁹ Geiger, *Josip Broz Tito i ratni zločini : Bleiburg – Folksdojčeri*, pp. 31-50.

²⁰ Berto Črnja, *Zbogom drugovi* (Rijeka: Matica hrvatska, 1992), p. 65.

²¹ Stanko Žuljić, *Narodnosna struktura Jugoslavije i tokovi promjena* (Zagreb: Ekonomski institut u Zagrebu, 1989), pp. 110, 118.

²² *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, 5, *Hrv-Janj*, "Hrvatska", 1988., 153-435, p. 373; *Drugi kongres Komunističke partije Hrvatske* (Zagreb: 1949.) p. 79; *Yugoslavia, East-Central Europe Under the Communists*, ur. Robert F. Byrnes (New York - London, Mid-European Studies Center of the Free Europe Committee, Inc., Atlantis Books, bez g. izd.), pp. 405, 408.

Complete domination by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia

From the very beginning of the war, the KPJ took steps which revealed its revolutionary intentions, such as adopting symbols like the red star and hammer and sickle, establishing proletarian brigades and introducing communist commissars to Partisan units, and also establishing people's liberation committees (known as NOOs) as bodies of the new governing authorities. The KPJ did not literally implement the Leninist precept on the two stages of taking power, whereby the liberation stage of the struggle should have been followed by the revolutionary stage, rather these two ran parallel to each other.²³

Later developments showed that all of the opponents of the communists, both real and potential, were tried for treason, and not as class enemies. Under extrajudiciary decisions and court rulings, they were deprived of not only their lives and freedom, but also their property. The communist leadership persistently concealed its revolutionary activity with public declarations advocating democratic principles. Such were the "Declaration of the Supreme Command of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia (VŠ NOV and POJ) and the Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia" of 8 February 1943, and the "Declaration on the Objectives and Principles of the People's Liberation Struggle of the Steering Committee of the Territorial Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Croatia, the High Command of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia (GŠ NOV and POH)" of 26 June 1943, as well as the "Declaration of the Chairman of the NKOJ Josip Broz Tito" of 17 August 1944.²⁴ The victors not only classified "openly Quisling groups" among the vanquished, but also "other reactionary groups". Edvard Kardelj wrote about this in October 1944.²⁵

Given the influence of the Western powers, especially Great Britain, but also the unease among the population over revolutionary undertakings, even after its military victory, the KPJ operated within the NFJ and did not publicly function under its own name. Additionally, the communists, cognizant of their shortcomings caused by their unqualified personnel, wanted to take over all essential posts in the state apparatus and economy before openly operating without the cover of democratic rhetoric. This is why they insisted on maintaining the pretence of parliamentary democracy in 1945. In the meantime, besides their open adversaries, their potential enemies had also become

²³ Ferdo Čulinović, *Stvaranje nove jugoslavenske države*, pp. 78, 80, 81, 94; Rasim Hurem, *Kriza Narodnooslobodilačkog pokreta u Bosni i Hercegovini krajem 1941. i početkom 1942. godine* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1972), pp. 90, 99, 101; Aleksander Bajt, *Bermanov dosje* (Ljubljana: Založba Mladinska knjiga, 1999), pp. 883, 895.

²⁴ *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske, Zbornik dokumenata 1943.* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta, 1964), p. 132; Branko Petranović, Momčilo Zečević, *Jugoslavenski federalizam. Ideje i stvarnost, 1943 - 1986, 2* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1987), p. 72.

²⁵ Edvard Kardelj, *Put nove Jugoslavije* (Belgrade - Zagreb: Kultura, 1946), pp. 398-402.

weaker, and the KPJ's position was further enhanced by the earlier elimination of officials of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia who had been persecuted or marginalized in the NDH, as well as the Jews, who generally belonged to the wealthier class of the population. Moreover, the KPJ's position was also strengthened by the deportation of the Germans during and immediately after the war and their confinement to camps, the expropriation of industries, stores and large estates from their owners through a series of court rulings motivated by political reasons due to alleged national treason, but actually based on concealed revolutionary aims, as well as the monetary and agrarian reforms.

Thus, as already emphasized, in 1945 the KPJ implemented a furtive revolution, and this continued until 1947 and 1948, when it was implemented openly. Besides those who would have been convicted by any court due to their crimes, many communist opponents, rivals and wealthier citizens were convicted due to alleged collaboration with the occupying powers and the NDH. The communist authorities organized orchestrated trials with the help of the tribunals for the protection of national honour, courts marital and civilian courts. Virtually every conviction was accompanied by – as noted – the confiscation of assets and the revocation of voting rights.²⁶ Thus, besides military criminals, so-called enemies of the people were also targeted, as they had to be socially marginalized. They thereby created more favourable conditions for victory in local elections and in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly. In summary, besides those who were convicted due to actual culpability for war crimes or collaboration with the enemy, many were punished according to the revolutionary criteria of the KPJ and under the accusation that they had betrayed national or state interests.

The KPJ was a rigidly centralized party. The higher party bodies controlled all essential decision-making levers, including the election of members to lower bodies.²⁷ The conspiratorial work methods were retained even after the war. The public could not know who the members were, and who the leaders. Meetings were secret. For example, Marijan Cvetković, a member of the Local Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia (KPH) in Zagreb, at a meeting of this organization on 11 August 1945, warned that many Party members are “publicly known”, which was deemed “impermissible”.²⁸ Socialism and communism were not mentioned in public party documents. Only terms such as people's government and people's democracy appeared.

At the beginning of 1945, the KPH had approximately 16,000 members, and together with members in military units stationed in Croatia, in January

²⁶ Milko Mikola, *Sodni procesi na Celjskem 1944-1951* (Celje: Zgodovinski arhiv v Celju, 1995), p. 32.

²⁷ *Yugoslavia, East-Central Europe Under the Communists*, 123.

²⁸ Katarina Spehñjak, *Javnost i propaganda. Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945.-1952.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2002), p. 30.

1945 there were 26,000 members. The young communists, members of the Alliance of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ), of whom there were 40,000 at the beginning of 1945, should also be added to this number. Already in December 1945, the KPH had approximately 42,000 members, 11,000 candidates for membership and 60,000 youth activists.²⁹ Even though the KPJ was defined as a workers' party, based on the social composition of the KPH in early 1945, the 16,000 members consisted of 65% peasants, 23% labourers, 5% intellectuals, 4% civil servants and 3% craftsmen.³⁰

After the demobilization in July and August 1945, according to various data, there were 70,000 to 100,000 members of the Communist Party and 100,000 members of the SKOJ in the Yugoslav Army.³¹ Almost all members of the People's Protection Department (OZNa), the Yugoslav intelligence and security service, which was at the forefront of the struggle against political opposition, were members of the Communist Party.

Formal compromises of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia

Josip Broz Tito, contrary to the decisions made by AVNOJ, which toppled the legitimacy of the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, acceded to the establishment of a joint government consisting of members of the Partisan National Committee for Yugoslavia's Liberation (NKOJ) and the royal government led by Ivan Šubašić on 7 March 1945, as well as royal regents, the expansion of the AVNOJ and elections three months after the war. The KPJ agreed to the introduction of democratic rights, but in practice these rights were little more than a formality.

However, King Petar II Karađorđević did not concede. He recalled the regents on 8 August 1945 after Tito's declaration made at the 1st Congress of the People's Front of Yugoslavia that a monarchy was not possible in Democratic Federal Yugoslavia because it was incompatible with a federation, people's government and democracy and that the People's Front would fight for a republic.

²⁹ *Dokumenti Centralnih organa KPJ.NOR i revolucija (1941-1945), knjiga 22, (1. januar-4. mart 1945.)*, prir. Branko Vuković (Belgrade: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1996), pp. 159, 280, 326; *Zapisnici sa sednica Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta KPJ (11. jun 1945-7. jul 1948)*, ed. Branko Petranović (Belgrade: Arhiv Jugoslavije, Službeni list SRJ, 1995), p. 110; Ivan Jelić, *Komunistička partija Hrvatske 1937-1945*, 2 (Zagreb: Globus, 1981), pp. 329-333; Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, pp. 129, 247.

³⁰ Jelić, *Komunistička partija Hrvatske 1937-1945*, p. 332.

³¹ *V. kongres Komunističke partije Jugoslavije. 21. – 28. jula 1948., Stenografske bilješke* (Zagreb: Kultura, 1949), p. 163; Drago Nikolić, *Razvoj oružanih snaga SFRJ 1945. – 1985. Kadrovi i kadrovska politika* (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1989), pp. 19, 23, 40; Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 214; *Yugoslavia, East-Central Europe Under the Communists*, p. 159; *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, 6, *Jap-Kat*, "Jugoslavenska (Jugoslovenska) narodna armija", 1986., 144-156, p. 152.

The interim government proclaimed this act by the king invalid. The Interim National Assembly (PNS), which held session from 7 to 26 August 1945, agreed to this without holding deliberations.³²

The PNS was supposed to be the transitional representative body from the AVNOJ to the Constitutional Assembly. It was created by the expansion of AVNOJ with so-called uncompromised delegates of the pre-war National Assembly of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, the recommendations of the Crimea Conference on the expansion of the AVNOJ with uncompromised delegates from the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was modified. The AVNOJ was expanded with not only a certain number of pre-war delegates but also members of existing political parties and groups and distinguished public and cultural figures. For it was asserted that the National Assembly of 1938 was put into office under undemocratic circumstances and most of its delegates had conducted themselves treasonously during the war. To be sure, the fundamental objective was to elect as many Communist Party sympathisers as possible.³³

On behalf of the HSS, 26 delegates entered the Interim National Assembly, which had 486 delegates; half of the HSS delegates belonged to the group around Šubašić, while the remaining half were nominated by the HRSS. If the prior members of AVNOJ from among the ranks of the HRSS are counted, Peasant Party members accounted for an disunited group of 37 members.³⁴

Given the estimates by Western representatives that the KPJ would win up to 30% of the vote in free elections for the Constitutional Assembly, the KPJ accorded considerable attention to these elections. In the summer of 1945, the PNS enacted the National Delegate Election Act and the Voter Rolls Act. It was specified that members of the military formations “of the occupiers and their domestic collaborators” who had “fought against the People’s Liberation Army, or the Yugoslav Army, or the armies of the allies of Yugoslavia” did not have the right to vote. At the same time, radical changes led an increase in the pre-war electorate on two occasions by incorporating soldiers, women and youths down to the age of 18. Yugoslav Army soldiers could vote regardless of their age, in the area in which they happened to be on election day, regardless of whether or not they were registered in the voter rolls.³⁵ With these electoral laws, the authorities actually created a selection of preferred voters.

³² Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 – 1988. godine* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1988), p. 377; *Zasjedanje Privremene narodne skupštine. Belgrade 7. VIII-27. VIII 1945.*, p. 41.

³³ *Zakonodavni rad Predsedništva Antifašističkog veća narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije i Predsedništva Privremene narodne skupštine DFJ, 19 novembra 1944 godine – 27 oktobra 1945 godine* (Belgrade: Prezidijum Narodne skupštine FNRJ, bez god. Izdanja), p. 555.

³⁴ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, p. 52.

³⁵ Tvrtko Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik: Hrvati, Titova Jugoslavija i Sjedinjene Američke Države 1945. – 1955.* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa - Profil, 2003), pp. 34, 47; Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945. – 1952.*, p. 128; Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 – 1988. godine*, p. 382; Jera Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1992), p. 365.

Based on the aforementioned laws, persons accused of collaborating with the occupying powers were erased from the voter rolls. In Croatia, suffrage could be revoked for anyone who had served in the armed forces of the NDH. According to the first rulings in this vein, 7.38% of the voters were deleted in Croatia: most of them in the territory of Slavonski Brod and Osijek, while in the Bjelovar precinct as many 25% of the voters were deleted. Wary of potential accusations of undemocratic conduct, the authorities gradually reduced the number of persons with revoked suffrage. It was particularly sensitive to comparisons with Serbia, where such persons only accounted for 3%. In the end, 3.82% of the electorate in Croatia was deprived of the right to vote. This meant 69,109 of citizens out of a total of 2,034,628 voters. The Yugoslav average was 2.4%.³⁶

However, considerable pressure from the authorities led opposition parties to boycott the elections, including the HSS. The authorities responded by introducing boxes without slates or so-called black boxes. It was believed that this ensured democratic rules and the possibility of a secret ballot for voters. The elections were held on 11 November 1945. Since the authorities used threats to compel the population to turn out, those who did not turn out expressed their oppositional stance. To be sure, an unambiguous electoral stance was also expressed by those who dropped their balls into the boxes without slates. A low turnout was mostly recorded in northern Croatia. In the Varaždin precinct, 20% of the voters did not participate, while among those who did 15% dropped their balls in the box without a slate; in the Bjelovar precinct 17% of the voters did not turn out, and there 15% also dropped their balls in the box without a slate; in the Daruvar precinct, 13% of the voters did not turn out.³⁷

Table 1. Constitutional Assembly election results for Croatia, 1945³⁸

Voters	Federal assembly		Assembly of peoples	
	Number	%	Number	%
Registered	2,076,091	100	2,076,091	100
Voted	1,905,429	91.77	1,903,033	91.66
Did not vote	170,662	8.22	173,058	8.33
For People's Front	1,743,797	91.52	1,698,417	89.25
For box without slate	161,632	8.48	204,616	10.75

³⁶ Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945.-1952.*, p. 131; Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 220; Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, p. 344; Jože Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992 - Nastanek, razvoj ter raspad Karadjordjevićeve in Titove Jugoslavije* (Koper: Založba Lipa, 1995), p. 158.

³⁷ Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945.-1952.*, p. 132.

³⁸ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. - 1950.*, p. 89.

The People's Front secured an absolute victory of approximately 90% of the votes out of the 90% of voters who turned out, so the National Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia reflected the complete predominance of the communists. Out of the 534 members in the National Assembly in 1945, 404 were members of the KPJ, while 120 were not. This means that 77% were KPJ members. There were a total of 111 Croatian delegates in the Constitutional Assembly, of whom 70 were members of the KPJ, 32 were members of the HRSS, 3 were members of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition and 6 were non-party affiliated delegates.³⁹ Out of the 25 members of the government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ), a large majority were communists. The government was entitled to issue "decrees with the force of law".⁴⁰

However, the official results were dubious given the conditions in which the elections were conducted. The election campaign was entirely in the hands of the KPJ. The KPJ oversaw the trade unions, state-owned companies, the press and radio, and nominations. There were no opposition slates, nor alternative platforms. Additionally, the organization of polling stations, election commissions, the compilation of voter rolls and the counting of the vote were all in its hands. In many areas, people were compelled to vote by force, while the secrecy of the ballot was not guaranteed. The military and other representatives of the authorities threatened those who did not want to vote with the loss of their ration cards, pensions and housing. They were threatened with prosecution, and even death. The boxes without slates were proclaimed "Ustasha boxes" or "black boxes", and rumours circulated that it would be easy to determine how everyone had voted. Many boxes had narrow openings, so the falling of the rubber balls in them could be heard. There were also cases of moving the balls from the boxes without slates into the People's Front boxes. At places where a sufficient number of voters had not turned up by 7 p.m., the legal deadline was extended as needed.⁴¹ Secrecy of the ballot was not respected. Many of those who voted for the black box became victims of state repression; they were, for example, assigned to engage in "various works".⁴²

According to Western diplomats, the elections were not "Western European in the sense of the word". Despite such assessments, it would appear that a step further was even taken after the assessment at the Potsdam Conference in August 1945 that Yugoslavia had violated the Declaration of Liberated Europe,

³⁹ Katarina Spehñjak, "Narodni front Hrvatske 1945. Godine", in: *Oslobođenje Hrvatske 1945, zbornik radova* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1986), 324-337, p. 134.

⁴⁰ *Ustavotvorni sabor Narodne Republike Hrvatske. Stenografski zapisnici* (28. 11. 1946. – 18. 1. 1947.) (Zagreb: Sabor NRH, 1949), p. 279; Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, p. 225; Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 – 1988. godine*, p. 443.

⁴¹ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, p. 90; HDA, CK SKH, Komisija za narodnu vlast CK KPH, Informacije o izborima za Sabor NR Hrvatske na kotaru Kostajnica.

⁴² HDA, CK SKH, Komisija za narodnu vlast CK KPH, Informacije o izborima za Sabor NR Hrvatske na kotaru Kostajnica.

that there were no democratic authorities and agreements were not being honoured, so the United States and Great Britain recognized the election results on 22 December 1945. Their ambassadors even sent formally credentialed representatives of their countries to Yugoslavia.⁴³

Yugoslavia had moved from being a distinctly anti-Soviet country before the war to the trailblazer of communism in south-eastern Europe. However, already during the war the first signs of conflict emerged with the communist centre in Moscow, which had reined in the revolutionary zeal of the Yugoslav communists. The USSR attempt to avoid heightening tensions with the West, which Yugoslavia neglected, attempting by all available means to extend its borders at the expense of Italy and Austria, to obtain Trieste and Carinthia. Conflicts with the West were also provoked by the seizure of foreign assets and interference in the civil war in Greece.⁴⁴

The communists retained all of the formal contours of a parliamentary system. Actually, though, in 1945 the KPJ used formal procedures to preserve its dictatorship, which were only cemented by parliamentary means. The KPJ secured the support of the populace in two ways: voluntarily and coercively, but in any case successfully.

The Croatian Republican Peasant Party and Ivan Šubašić

Near the end of the war, Kardelj said that during the war the KPJ had “frontally” attacked other parties, but that now it was time to change tactics and engage in “differentiation” among their members. However, both during and after the war, various tactics were employed, from calls to cooperation to persecution of the members of other parties, which resulted in fractured parties without unified leadership and the disappearance of a genuine multi-party system. The communists were actually most afraid of uncompromised opposition politicians who could turn from allies into competitors. They constantly warned of the danger of such individuals breaking the unity of the People’s Liberation Struggle, although they were actually concerned about the challenge to the KPJ’s predominance. Such politicians were welcomed during the war when it was necessary to get as much of the population as possible to sup-

⁴³ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, p. 91.

⁴⁴ Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 292; Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik*, p. 111; *Hrvatski leksikon*, 1. svezak, A-K, “Jugoslavija”, 1996., p. 549; Leonid Gibianskii, “Sovjetsko-jugoslavenski sukob 1948: istoriografske verzije i novi arhivski izvori”, in: *Jugoslavija v hladni vojni: Yugoslavia in the Cold War* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino – University of Toronto, 2004), pp. 27-47; Vladimir Đuro Degan, *Hrvatska država u međunarodnoj zajednici: Razvitak njezine međunarodnopravne osobnosti tijekom povijesti* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2002), pp. 185, 186; Olivera Milosavljević, “Slika Zapada iz vizure komunističke i nacionalističke ideologije”, Hans-Georg Fleck, Igor Graovac, ed., *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, 6, Zagreb, 5. – 7. listopada 2001. (Zagreb, 2002), 113-130, p. 123.

port the Partisans and when they had to operate under communist conditions, but as victory became imminent, they were rejected and treated as traitors.

The role allotted for the HRSS was to “pacify adversarial” peasants in Croatia. Stated simply, the remains of the party, if it could even be called that, for it had been relegated to its leadership without legitimacy and without members, were supposed to prevent opposition activity. The executive committee of the HRSS under the leadership of Franjo Gaži, who took the place of Božidar Magovac, participated in the government, but under the supervision of the KPJ and without public support. The KPJ transformed this body into an instrument for breaking apart the HSS and destroying pluralism and the multi-party parliamentary system. At the same time, it served the communists as proof that there was in fact a multi-party scene and democracy. After playing its role in the elections to the Constitutional Assembly of 1945 and after communist authority had been reinforced by the development of a repressive apparatus and full international recognition, the HRSS was gradually dissolved in the following years.

Šubašić wanted to unify the HSS and HRSS, but also for Maček to tender his resignation. The delegates of the HSS and HRSS were supposed to work together in the Interim National Assembly, and then the parties were to unite. Talks continued until September 1945. The HRSS executive committee, under the direct influence of the communists, was dismissive of the HSS leadership. Actually, rather than unification, it proposed that HSS members join the HRSS, and thus also the People’s Front. The KPJ and its people in the HRSS executive committee wanted to abolish the HSS, and put the HRSS in its place to become a mere section of the Communist Party for the Croatian peasantry.

Šubašić naturally thought of the NFJ as an “association of parties”. However, Tito, the general secretary of the KPJ, the president of the NFJ, the prime minister and the commander-in-chief of the Yugoslav Army, explained to him that it would be an “association of individuals”. This meant only one thing: the melding of all parties into the People’s Front with the firmly organized KPJ at its head.⁴⁵ Finally, Tito publicly warned that the old parties would not be renewed, even though he continued to refute accusations on the creation of a one-party system.⁴⁶

Šubašić convened a conference of the top members of the HSS in the Hotel Esplanade in Zagreb on 2 September 1945.⁴⁷ He put three demands before the participants: that the HSS and HRSS unite, that a so-unified HSS join the

⁴⁵ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, p. 51.

⁴⁶ Vojislav Koštunica and Kosta Čavoški, *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam* (Ljubljana: Tribuna, posebna izdaja, 27 November 1987).

⁴⁷ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, pp. 54-60; Zdenko Radelić, “Konferencija prvaka HSS-a u hotelu Esplanade u Zagrebu 1945.”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, (1993), no. 2-3: 25, 149-164.

NFJ and that the party participate in the elections. However, most of them demanded that Šubašić and Šutej tender their resignations in the government and opposed campaigning together with the HRSS, let alone as part of the NFJ. They demanded that HSS proceed as opposition party, particularly because Maček had emigrated and Košutić was being held in custody. Only a minority advocated cooperation with the NFJ. However, Šutej offered a compromise and the conference adopted a conclusion according to which Šubašić was to visit Maček in Paris and to receive instructions from him. The British put an airplane at Šubašić's disposal. However, on the day before his trip, on 10 September 1945, Deputy Prime Minister Kardelj notified Šubašić that the authorities would not permit him to leave the country. Šubašić suffered a stroke on that same evening.

Šubašić thus endured several severe blows in the course of a month or two: King Petar II Karađorđević rescinded the right of the regents to represent him, Deputy Prime Minister Milan Grol tendered his resignation, and the émigré leaders of the Serbian civic parties sent a memorandum to the Conference of Foreign Ministers in London in September 1945 in which they condemned the policies of the Yugoslav government. Additionally, the Episcopal Conference of Yugoslavia released a Pastoral Letter containing grave accusations of persecution of the Catholic Church. Left without anyone's support, at Šutej's prompting both he and Šubašić tendered their resignations on 8 October 1945.

There was no significant response from the US and Great Britain. They feared that any stronger pressure on their part would have resulted in Yugoslavia completely joining the Soviet sphere of influence, even though that had already happened. On 6 November 1945, they sent a note in which they expressed dismay over the violation of the Agreement. After the elections, on 17 November 1945, a response arrived from Tito. He asserted that all points of the Agreement had been fulfilled and that after the resignations and the electoral victory of the People's Front, "the Allied governments had been relieved of their obligations" toward the "Yugoslav people".⁴⁸

The Croatian Peasant Party: Narodni glas, Maček and Košutić

The KPJ did not want to release Košutić from jail, believing that he could revive the activities of the HSS, particularly ahead of the Constitutional Assembly in 1945 and the Constitutional Convention of 1946. Košutić's release was made conditional upon his assent to tie the HSS to the NFJ or to withdraw from politics. Košutić did not concede to this ultimatum, demanding freedom to engage in party activism. He was thus remanded to two-year custody, and a trial had not yet been held. Mira Košutić, his wife and the daughter of Stj-

⁴⁸ Željko Krušelj and Jera Vodušek Starić, eds., "Jugoslavija u britanskim izvještajima 1945-50", *Danas*, May 23, 1989.

epan Radić, carried out the policies of Košutić. She launched the party bulletin *Narodni glas čovječnosti, pravice i slobode* (People's Voice of Humanity, Justice and Freedom). Her mother and Radić's widow, Marija Radić was the publisher, while Ivan Bernardić was the editor in chief. In Croatia it was the only newspaper that was not under the regime's control. The first and sole issue of *Narodni glas* was printed on 20 October 1945.⁴⁹

Narodni glas rejected the claim that Radić's program had been achieved under the KPJ's leadership. It referred to supporters of the HRSS as "heretics" and "truants", alluding to their participation in the Partisan movement against the wishes of the party's leadership. About Franjo Gaži, the chairman of the HRSS executive committee, it asserted he was installed at his post by the party's master, meaning, of course, the KPJ. The HRSS was called the "peasant section of the communist party in Croatia".

Narodni glas warned that the Constitutional Assembly would determine the constitutional status of Croatia, and that there would be no way to express the free will of the people, because the regime asserted that it would fight to protect the achievements of the war by all available means, including arms. However, *Narodni glas* pointed out that the actual act of liberation was the only achievement of the war, and that the Croats had experienced several liberations over the preceding 25 years: by King Petar I Karađorđević, by the Croatian fascists smuggled in from abroad (i.e., the Ustasha headed by Pavelić), then by the Serbian Chetniks under the leadership of Draža Mihailović, until all of them were pushed aside by the "people's liberation movement" headed by the KPJ and Josip Broz Tito. It concluded that in Croatia "these liberations should finally come to an end".

Narodni glas openly stated that the Communist Party had introduced a dictatorship and that it was persecuting its opponents under the pretence that they were fascists. By the same token, it stressed that there were no personal freedoms, no freedom of private ownership, and that the federal units, including Croatia, had no actual authority. Warning that there would be no way to express the free will of the people in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly, it called on electoral abstinence.⁵⁰

Distribution of the first issue was banned under the accusation that it had berated the achievements of the National Liberation Struggle, provoking ethnic hatred and promoting the efforts of the enemy. Since Bernardić continued work on the second issue, the communist authorities pressured the printing press workers in order to prevent its publication. Thus, according to *Vjesnik*, the employees of Narodna tiskara (the national printing press) in Zagreb refused to print *Narodni glas* because it was "reactionary". After communist youth

⁴⁹ Zdenko Radelić, "Narodni glas – glas oporbe 1945.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, (1994), no. 2: 299-315.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 305.

had already previously (on 22 August 1945) broken into Radić's bookstore in Jurišićeva street in Zagreb – the gathering place of an HSS group around Mira Košutić – and shattered paintings of Radić and Maček, and then threw a bomb at the bookstore on 13 November 1945, further publication was halted.

For the HSS, a fundamental question was whether or not to register the party. The Associations, Unions and Other Public Groups Act of 25 August 1945 stipulated that parties which intended to renew their activities had to register. There were two methods for party registration: by issuing a statement on joining the NFJ or by submitting the party application, platform and charter to the internal affairs ministry.⁵¹

Given the conflicts in the party even after the elections on 15 November 1945, a new conference was convened in the Clergy Hall in Palmotićeva street in Zagreb on 15 November 1945. The participants were supposed to decide between whether or not to register the party. The majority supported the registration of the HSS, because legalization would have facilitated public activity. On the other hand, the authorities could equate the HSS with the Ustasha and Chetniks due to illegal activity.⁵² Opponents of legalization stressed that only Košutić and Maček could decide on matters of such import.⁵³ Ultimately it was decided that deputy chairman Košutić should make a final decision on this matter. Košutić soon sent a letter from jail in which he resolutely declared his opposition to registering the HSS.

Maček communicated with the HSS in the homeland by secret channels. The communist authorities oversaw all contacts with the HSS because people in the top rungs of the HSS were collaborating with the OZNa. They were aware of the attempts of Juraj Šutej, Franjo Gaži and Tomo Jančiković to activate the party. They were naturally also aware of Košutić's views on the elections.

During the session of the Interim National Assembly in August 1945, many delegates of Yugoslav opposition parties advocated joint action. There were talks on cooperation between several parties, outside of the NFJ (Democratic Party, HRSS, HSS, People's Peasant Party, Radical Party, Alliance of Farm Labourers, Slovenian People's Party, Socialist Party). Such initiatives continued unsuccessfully in the ensuing years.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Momčilo Pavlović, "Politički programi Demokratske, Narodne radikalne, Jugoslovenske republikanske demokratske, Socijalističke i Socijal-demokratske stranke Jugoslavije iz 1945.godine", *Istorija XX veka*, 1 (1985): 119-155.

⁵² Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, p. 96.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵⁴ Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941. – 1950.*, pp. 178-182; Zdenko Radelić, "Izvršni odbor Hrvatske republikanske seljačke stranke i njegovi otpadnici (1945. – 1948.)", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, (1992), no. 2: 59-81, 64.

The communists and religion

According to the ideological precepts of Marxism, religion was the primary ideological tool of exploiters in the struggle against the oppressed masses. The communist believed that in a multi-ethnic state, churches and religions created fertile ground for hatred among peoples. This is why the KPJ wanted to limit the influence of religious organizations in the public sphere. It attempted to be the sole ideological and political authority, and atheism was, in a manner of speaking, the only religion that could fulfil an integrative function. Since religion could not be subjected to bans, believers and the church were ostracized from public life, and their activity was subject to harsh restrictions.

The regime took into account the mood of the population, but also international circumstances. The Catholic Church exerted considerable influence among the people, not only as a religious institution, but also as a public institution in the fields of education and charity work. This is why the communists applied methods against it that differed from their destruction of political parties. Most often they accused it of collaborating with the enemy authorities and of serving as an instrument of the class enemy which misused religious sentiment. The millennial policy of the Catholic Church under the slogan “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s”, which was also implemented under the NDH, served as an impetus to find reasons for its condemnation in the recently concluded war. The state justified its attack on the Catholic Church based on its anti-communism, lack of autonomy from the Vatican and the Vatican’s support for Italy.⁵⁵

Even though many priests had cooperated with the NDH regime due to the very nature of their work, or they had an ideological affinity for it, often they suffered precisely because they were an obstacle to the revolution’s ultimate aims. Often they were killed in executions, a smaller number were killed in military operations, and quite rarely they were sentenced to death after court trials. According to one analysis of slain priests, from the war to the end of 1945, a total of 330 Catholic priests were killed, and 206 were killed in 1945 alone.⁵⁶

One of the most important events which influenced the relationship between the Catholic Church and the communist authorities was the Conference of Bishops held in Zagreb on 24 March 1945. It defended the right of the Croatian people to their own state and condemned the numerous executions of priests. They released the Epistle which accused the communists of engaging

⁵⁵ Ibid.:478, 479.

⁵⁶ According to research conducted by Ivo Omrčanin. See: Stjepan Kožul, *Martirologij crkve zagrebačke. Spomenica žrtvama ljubavi Zagrebačke nadbiskupije*, Drugo i dopunjeno izdanje (Zagreb, 1998), p. 225.

in terror, and justified the role of the Catholic Church in the preceding period and, scarcely noticeable, distanced itself from the ruling regime in the NDH.⁵⁷

Tito initially believed that he would settle relations with the Catholic Church. He insisted on its greater independence. He declared these thoughts on 2 June 1945 to representatives of the Catholic clergy in Zagreb. Ironically, Tito, an avowed internationalist, was advocating a national church. This absurdity was motivated by ideology and reasons of state and not, to be sure, narrow ethnic considerations.⁵⁸ These talks were held while Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac was imprisoned. After the bishops met with Tito, he was released. Already on 4 June, Stepinac met with Tito, but their conversation did not bear fruit. Soon Stepinac protested the arrest of many priests and he demanded an end to courts martial for civilians.⁵⁹

The Conference of Bishops met in Zagreb from 17 to 22 September 1945. It released the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Yugoslavia. The bishops levelled a series of grave accusations, and the most serious was that the new authorities had killed or imprisoned 501 priests (243 dead, 169 in prisons, 89 missing; and additionally, 19 seminarians, 3 lay clerics and 4 nuns) during the war and immediately afterward. They also called out the authorities for the manner in which trials were held, as the accused had no possibility of defending themselves by calling witnesses or being represented by attorneys. Out of the one hundred periodicals before the war, the letter emphasized, not one was being published any longer. The operation of Catholic printing presses was being prevented. Seminaries were seized by the army or requisitioned. Religious instruction in schools was no longer mandatory. The authorities were also criticized for the failure to respect private property, and because of the organization of entertainment for the youth without parental supervision. The communists accused the bishops of falsely portraying the situation and encouraging the Ustasha, i.e., the Crusaders, to continue engaging in terrorism.⁶⁰

Persecution of the clergy intensified, so that even the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia had to restrain some communists. Nonetheless, on 15 December 1945, Vladimir Bakarić announced a more radical "campaign against the priests". At a consultative meeting of the secretaries of precinct committees of the Communist Party of Croatia in southern Croatia on 20 December, it was reiterated that a campaign had been launched to "expose the clergy as nests of Ustasha". The Catholic Church was also pro-

⁵⁷ Ivan Mužić, *Pavelić i Stepinac* (Split: Logos, 1991), pp. 155-160.

⁵⁸ Miroslav Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966. godine. Primjer zagrebačke nadbiskupije* (Zagreb: Društvo za povjesnicu Zagrebačke nadbiskupije "Tkalčić", 2003), pp. 17, 20; Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 106.

⁵⁹ Miroslav Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966. godine*, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Mužić, *Pavelić i Stepinac*, pp. 161-175.

claimed an “agent of the imperialists”. One of the reasons for the campaign was concealed in the acknowledgement that the communists did not manage to sway the peasants, who lived in fear of communism.⁶¹ Trials against priests on charges of espionage, terrorism and other anti-state activities increased.

In the meantime, on 4 November 1945, Archbishop Stepinac was attacked in Zaprešić. At the same time, the OZNa was carrying out an operation to forge an order of a flag on behalf of an alleged Crusader group. The Crusader flag was intended for the Crusader group of Martin Mesarov at Bilogora, a former HSS delegate from Virovitica, which was under the OZNa’s control. The blessing of the flag in the archdiocesan chapel on 21 October 1945 was the primary evidence of collusion between the Zagreb archbishop and the Crusaders. The entire case was orchestrated by the OZNa, which engaged former Crusaders and its own agents. The operation lasted from mid-1945 until December 1945, when the OZNa had Mesarov killed.⁶² The accusations against Stepinac were tied to his secretary Ivan Šalić, while the communist regime went so far as to promote Stepinac as the leader of the Crusaders. This accusation was so absurd that it was not exploited in subsequent communist propaganda. The accusations pertaining to the Crusaders were based on the reception of the Ustasha Col. Erich Lisak in the Archbishop’s Palace as a guest, the receiving of letters from the Ustasha Col. Ante Moškov, the collection of medicine for the Crusaders and, finally, the blessing of a Crusader flag, in which Stepinac was not involved.

In a letter to Tito dated 24 December 1945, Stepinac clearly stated his view that the causes of the attack rested in the Communist Party’s stance on religion in general and that “therein lies the essence of today’s dispute between the Church and State”⁶³

Communist youth activists and Party members undertook various actions: they knocked down crosses, broke into parish rectories and attacked priests. Some faced criminal sanctions, others misdemeanour charges, and some were sanctioned by the Party; many, however, were not punished at all.⁶⁴ The authorities persistently denied any killings or attacks on priests, and quite significantly they always laid the blame on the priests. One of the rare acknowledge-

⁶¹ HDA, CK SKH, Savjetovanje sa sekretarima O. K. Gornje Hrvatske, 15. 12. 1945; HDA, CK SKH, inv. br. 307, Izvještaj CK KPH, 17. 3. 1946; HDA, CK SKH, Savjetovanje sa sekretarima Banije, Korduna, Like, Gorskog Kotara, Primorja i Dalmacije, 20. 12. 1945.

⁶² Zdenko Radelić, “Komunisti, križari i Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj 1945. – 1946. godine”, in: Hans-Georg Fleck, Igor Graovac, ed. *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara, 2, Pečuh, 19. – 21. studenoga 1999.* (Zagreb, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, 2000), pp. 583-600; Lav Znidarčić, *Alojzije Stepinac, O stotoj godišnjici rođenja, 2. izdanje* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1998), pp. 29, 71.

⁶³ Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945-1970.*, 1 (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2002), p. 268.

⁶⁴ Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945.-1952.*, p. 262.

ments was made by Miko Tripalo, the secretary of the City Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia, but only in 1965, when during a consultative meeting on religious issues, he admitted that priests had been killed and that youth activists had planted explosives in churches.⁶⁵

There was no state church in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but churches retained certain state functions, such as the registration of births, marriages and deaths. Churches also operated certain primary and secondary schools, and religious instruction was mandatory in all schools. It was precisely due to this traditional relationship between the church and state that one of the more serious conflicts that arose between the new authorities and the Catholic Church was tied to the Marriage Act of April 1945. Mandatory civil marriages were introduced. Church marriages were relegated to the private sphere.⁶⁶

Religious instruction was declared non-mandatory, so anyone who wanted such instruction had to apply for it. It was retained only in the lower grades of primary and secondary schools, but it was not graded. Prayer in schools was officially eliminated, crosses were taken down, and joint school masses were also abolished. The state insisted that religious instruction was not to be held in churches, but only in schools, because "it could be controlled there".⁶⁷

The KPJ adopted a hostile stance toward all religious communities. However, there were no major conflicts with the Serbian Orthodox Church in Croatia. The "loyalty" and "patriotism" of the Orthodox clergy, as opposed to the "impropriety" of Catholic dignitaries, was stressed by Tito himself in an interview for the bulletin of the French communist party, *L'Humanite*, published in early November 1945. It may be assumed that there were no greater conflicts with the Serbian Orthodox Church because in its attitude toward the NDH and the restoration of Yugoslavia it supported the new authorities. The reunification of Serbs in a single state, which was the prime motivation of that Church's political activities, took away any further need for its political engagement. Thus, the differing stance of the KPJ on the Catholic Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church was actually a result of the different attitudes of these two churches toward the communist authorities and Yugoslavia. Additionally, the Croatian Serbs had joined the Partisans in mass numbers and joined the KPJ in a much higher percentage than their share in the population. This also weakened the influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966. godine*, p. 73.

⁶⁶ Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945-1970.*, 1., 195; Miroslav Akmadža, *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i komunistički režim 1945. - 1966.* (Rijeka: Otokar Keršovani, 2004), p. 38.

⁶⁷ Marko Jerković, "Školski vjeronauk u Hrvatskoj nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata (1945-1952)", *Diacovensia*, 1993., 1., 92-107., pp. 96, 97, 99; Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945.-1952.*, pp. 189-195.

⁶⁸ Josip Broz Tito, *Izgradnja nove Jugoslavije*, II., knjiga prva (Belgrade: Kultura, 1948), p. 185; HDA, nesređeno, Izvještaji UDB-e i rad neprijatelja, 1945., 1946., 1947. i 1948. (Neprijateljski

The Crusaders – anti-communist guerrillas

Immediately after the war, approximately 120,000 Chetniks, members of the Serbian Volunteer Corps (called *ljotičevci* after their leader Dimitrije Ljotić), loyalists of the Serbian collaborationist Milan Nedić (*nedičevci*) and Ustasha were arrested, interned or executed.⁶⁹ Many surviving members of the defeated armed forces went into hiding, and some continued to engaged in armed operations. A major role here was played by the Crusaders (*križari*), members of the former NDH armed forces. Their primary motivations for continuing the struggle were anti-communism, anti-Yugoslavism and an independent Croatian state, but also belief in a pending war between the Western powers and the USSR. Many Crusaders hoped that Ante Pavelić would return, and not a few of them wanted Vladko Maček to stand at the head of the Croatian people. The émigré leadership of the NDH and many Crusaders were counting on an alliance with the United States and Great Britain, maintaining contacts with their intelligence agencies and stressing that the fundamental objective of their struggle was and remained a Croatian state. They wanted to forget their former wartime hostility toward the Allies as well as their alliance with the Third Reich and Fascist Kingdom of Italy.

The Crusaders operated in a little over 200 unconnected groups, mainly without commanders and without political guidance. Crusader cells most often had up to 10 members. They did not undertake any major military actions, nor did they form zones under their control; their most intense activity was recorded immediately after the military defeat in 1945. From the end of the war until the end of 1945, their numbers continually and rapidly declined, and there were about 2,500 of them. The Crusaders wanted to maintain a state of emergency. They halted traffic, ambushed individuals, usually communist activists, and less often police patrols, and they also attacked collective farms as well as the main supply sources, because these were perceived as symbols of communism. They operated exclusively in rural areas and the villages from which their members came and where they could be obtain provisions and find shelter. There were no armed activities in towns and cities, but illegal organizations of secondary school and university students were active, mainly writing slogans on walls (graffiti) and tearing down posters and other propaganda materials.

As opposed to the Crusaders, who operated in the territory of Croatia (except for Istria), the Chetniks operated in areas in which there was a higher Serbian population, mostly in the hinterland of northern and central Dalmatia and in Lika. They were less present in central and northern Croatia, mainly in

rad popova. Rad vjerskih organizacija u 1947 godini.); Radmila Radić, "Politička ideologija kao sekularna religija i njena integrativna funkcija", in: Hans-Georg Fleck, Igor Graovac, ed., *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, 4, Pečuj, 20. – 22. oktobra 2000., (Zagreb, 2001), pp. 466-483, 475.

⁶⁹ *Yugoslavia, East-Central Europe Under the Communists*, p. 163.

Kordun, Banovina, Posavina (the lower Sava River Valley) and Slavonia. Immediately after the war, there were several hundred Chetniks in Croatia, but already by the autumn of 1945 their numbers declined to less than 70.

The Yugoslav authorities feared the anti-communist mobilization of Croatian émigré communities, but also of other emigrants from the territory of Yugoslavia. After a dramatic showdown with the Crusaders and those who supported them, as well as the amnesty declared on 5 August 1945, guerrilla activity largely dissipated, although it did persist in subsequent years.⁷⁰

Borders of the People's Republic of Croatia

Given the question of internal borders, in comparison to the NDH the new Yugoslavia and Croatia were in a subordinate position in terms of competing propaganda. While questions concerning the belonging of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vojvodina were at the forefront of plans by both the HSS and the Ustaša organization, the KPJ advocated a much narrower Croatia. However, the KPJ could boast of a considerable extension of external borders. The taking of Istria, Rijeka, Zadar, the Croatian Littoral, Gorski Kotar and Dalmatia was crucial.

An arrangement was concluded between the United States, Great Britain and Yugoslavia in Belgrade on 9 June 1945 concerning the temporary division of the border area between Yugoslavia and Italy into two occupation zones. Zone A with the cities of Trieste and Pula was under Allied administration, while zone B was under Yugoslav administration. The demarcation was established along the so-called Morgan Line, named after British General William Morgan.⁷¹ The only Croatian interstate border that remained the same as in the pre-war period was the border with Hungary.⁷²

The borders between the Yugoslav republics were established on the basis of two principles: historical and ethnic. All republics were founded on the basis of ethnicity, except for Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was primarily rooted in the historical principle. The basis for the determination of the borders between the six federal units came from deliberations held by the Presidency of AVNOJ on 24 February 1945. Croatia was defined "within the borders of the former

⁷⁰ O križarima See: Zdenko Radelić, *Križari – gerila u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1950.* (Zdenko Radelić, *Križari – gerila u Hrvatskoj: 1945.-1950.*, drugo izmijenjeno i dopunjeno izdanje).

⁷¹ *Zgodovina Slovencev* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1979), pp. 925-933; Dukovski, *Rat i mir istarski*, p. 171; Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992*, p. 176; *Međunarodni politički leksikon*, "STT", ed. Marijan Hubeny, Branko Kojić i Bogdan Krizman, 1960, p. 489-490.

⁷² Mladen Klemenčić, "Novija historijsko-geografska osnovica jugoslavenskih izvanjskih i unutarnjih granica s posebnim osvrtom na hrvatske granice", in: *Političko-geografska i demografska pitanja Hrvatske* (Zagreb: Savez geografskih društava Hrvatske, Posebna izdanja, 8., 1991), pp. 317-334, 321.

Sava Banovina together with 13 districts of the former Littoral Banovina and the Dubrovnik District from the former Zeta Banovina”⁷³

The Croatian-Slovenian border in Istria was not entirely defined. Problems around the border were made more complex when applying the principles of demarcation according to ethnic, ecclesiastical and cadastral boundaries as well as economic logic. The borders between Croatia and Slovenia were first determined by representatives of the Croatian and Slovenian Partisan movement in February 1944, when they assigned jurisdictions.⁷⁴

The Croatian-Slovenian border in Međimurje largely corresponded to previous boundaries of this Croatian region and Slovenia’s Prlekija, and where individual villages belonged was determined over the course of 1945 and 1946. Not a single solution satisfied all of the local residents whose national consciousness had not been entirely formed. They considered themselves Međimurje people (*Međimurci*) first, and they were more economically inclined toward Slovenia and learned to speak Slovenian in school, but listened to the Croatian language in church.⁷⁵

The most problematic demarcation between Croatia and Serbia was in Srijem, where the border was largely of more recent origin. In the summer of 1945, the AVNOJ Presidium’s commission charged with establishing the demarcation between Croatia and Vojvodina delineated the border based on the ethnic principle, taking into account geographic and economic considerations, while the historical principle was neglected, as the objective was to have as little of the other unit’s population remain on the opposite side of the border.⁷⁶

Demarcation of the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina involved an inconsistent combination of the historical and ethnic principle. The borders of the Banovina of Croatia were not acknowledged, while the former Ottoman access to the sea at Klek and Neum was, although a similar outlet to the sea between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro near Sutorina was not.

⁷³ *Zakonodavni rad Pretsedništva Antifašističkog veća narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije i Pretsedništva Privremene narodne skupštine DFJ, 19 novembra 1944 godine – 27 oktobra 1945 godine*, 58; Stjepan Sršan, *Sjeveroistočne granice Hrvatske*(Osijek, Državni arhiv u Osijeku - Državna geodetska uprava u Zagrebu, 2003), pp. 51, 52.

⁷⁴ Dukovski, *Rat i mir istarski*, p. 153; Zdenko Čepić, “Oris nastajanja slovensko-hrvaške meje po Drugi svetovni vojni”, in: Zdenko Čepić, Dušan Nećak, Miroslav Stiplovšek, ed., *Mikužev zbornik*(Ljubljana, Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, 1999): pp. 201-215, 204.

⁷⁵ Klemenčić, “Novija historijsko-geografska osnovica jugoslavenskih izvanjskih i unutarnjih granica s posebnim osvrtom na hrvatske granice”: 326; Čepić, “Oris nastajanja slovensko-hrvaške meje po Drugi svetovni vojni”, p. 206-209.

⁷⁶ *Zapisnici NKOJ-a i Privremene vlade DFJ 1943-1945.*, prir. Branko Petranović i Ljiljana Marković (Belgrade: Memorijalni centar Josip Broz Tito – Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, 1991), p. 589; Klemenčić, “Novija historijsko-geografska osnovica jugoslavenskih izvanjskih i unutarnjih granica s posebnim osvrtom na hrvatske granice”, 328; Ivo Banac, *Sa Staljinom protiv Tita: Informbirovski rascjepi u jugoslavenskom komunističkom pokretu* (Zagreb: Globus, 1990), p. 111.

Thus, Bosnia-Herzegovina's access to the Adriatic Sea in the east between two republics was not established, while the one that geographically partitioned Croatia was.⁷⁷ In the inland section, an exception to older borders was the demarcation at Plješivica, when certain Croatian settlements were attached to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1945.⁷⁸

If one accepts the stance that those areas which had a Croatian name, a majority Croatian ethnic composition in the local population, a Croatian historical tradition or a seat of administration in its current territory should be considered a part of Croatia, then the borders in 1945, compared to 1918, were generally altered to its detriment. Thus, in comparison to the situation in the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, divided between the two sections of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1918, the Banovina of Croatia in 1939, and the NDH in 1945, Croatia lost Bosnia-Herzegovina and most of Srijem, and the coastal belt from Boka Kotorska through Budva to Spič, while it obtained Baranja, which became a part of Yugoslavia in 1918, Dvor na Uni, and – at Italy's expense – Cres, Lastovo, Lošinj, Rijeka, Zadar and Istria.⁷⁹ Expansion into former Italian territories would also be formally ratified by international treaties in subsequent years.

The courts and repression

On 3 February 1945, the AVNOJ Presidium voided all legal regulations enacted during the occupation, and also all those regulations in effect prior to 6 April 1941, if they contradicted the values of the People's Liberation Struggle, the decisions made by AVNOJ, the NKOJ and the antifascist councils of the federal units and their governments. No indications was given as to what these values were.⁸⁰

Despite the extrajudicial sanctions meted out against enemies, the legal system was gradually developed. Courts martial functioned until 24 August 1945, and the Decree establishing courts martial contained a rather ambiguous definition of who was considered a people's enemy.⁸¹ In the first months follow-

⁷⁷ Franjo Tuđman, *Povijesna sudba naroda* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1996), p. 437.

⁷⁸ Mladen Klemenčić, "Granica između Hrvatske i BiH u području Ličke Plješivice", in: *Spomenica Ljube Bobana* (Zagreb: Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1996), pp. 397–405, 399, 400, 403, 404; Klemenčić, "Novija historijsko-geografska osnovica jugoslavenskih izvanjskih i unutarnjih granica s posebnim osvrtom na hrvatske granice", p. 327; Husnija Kamberović, *Prema modernom društvu: Bosna i Hercegovina od 1945. do 1950.* (Tešanj: Centar za kulturu i obrazovanje, 2000), pp. 26, 28.

⁷⁹ Klemenčić, "Novija historijsko-geografska osnovica jugoslavenskih izvanjskih i unutarnjih granica s posebnim osvrtom na hrvatske granice", p. 330.

⁸⁰ *Službeni list DFJ*, 1945./4; Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, p. 190.

⁸¹ Slobodan Nešović, *Stvaranje nove Jugoslavije 1941-1945* (Belgrade: Partizanska knjiga – Ljubljana, OOUR Izdavačko-publicistička delatnost – Belgrade, Mladost – Belgrade, 1981), p. 415.

ing the war, the Decree was the sole penal law foundation for trials, and courts martial had jurisdiction over all major criminal acts, regardless of whether or not the perpetrator was in the military. It was amended in April 1945 by a decree governing prison sentences and confidential instructions from the defence ministry. The Crimes Against the People and State Act of 25 August 1945 was supposed to supplant the criminal code of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. It instituted the transition from courts martial to civilian courts. Also important was the decision on the transfer of enemy assets to state ownership, released in November 1944, which was amended in 1945 and later by the confiscation law and decrees regulating the protection of public assets and their management, as well as various instructions governing seizures. Procedures were also conducted on the basis of a law regulating the treatment of abandoned assets formerly seized by the occupying powers, a law on the seizure of wartime profits and the law banning the incitement of ethnic, sectarian and religious hatred.⁸²

The manner in which the courts functioned can be illustrated by the situation in Zagreb after 8 May 1945. The Zagreb Court Martial handed out many death sentences without even recording or writing out the verdicts. Since the Confiscation Act specified that confiscations could only be conducted on the basis of a court ruling, and not on the basis of a memorandum from the court that issued the ruling, the People's Circuit Court in Zagreb requested transcripts of rulings from the Court Martial in Zagreb. But such rulings did not exist. This is why the president of the Court Martial, Vlado Ranogajec, asked Justice Minister Dušan Brkić to issue an order to courts to accept a memorandum from the Court Martial while specifying that an actual ruling would not be necessary. Minister Brkić did indeed issue an order to that effect to the People's Circuit Court in Zagreb.⁸³

The tribunals of national honour in Croatia operated from 24 April to 8 September 1945, when their jurisdiction was assumed by the people's circuit courts. Courts martial tried cases involving the grave crimes of "traitors and enemies", such as war crimes and treason, while the tribunals of national honour dealt with cultural, economic, legal or similar cooperation with the "occupiers and domestic traitors". Activities subject to such punishment were very broadly defined. For example, there was mention of friendly relations with the enemy army and "any activity" which "was intended to serve the occupier and

⁸² Konstantin Bastaić, "Razvitak organa pravosuđa u novoj Jugoslaviji", in: Ferdo Čulinović, ed., *Nova Jugoslavija. Pregled državnopravnog razvitka povodom desetgodišnjice Drugog zasjedanja AVNOJ-a* (Zagreb, Institut za historiju države i prava Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu, 1954), pp. 67-116, 109; Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, pp. 229, 262, 279-282; Michael Portmann, "Communist Retaliation and Persecution on Yugoslav Territory During and After WWII (1943-1950)", *Tokovi istorije*, (2004), no. 1-2: 45-74, 54.

⁸³ Frano Glavina, "Tamne strane hrvatskog nogometa: Vlado Ranogajec zaslužan za Dinamo, poguban za pravедno sudstvo", *Hrvatsko slovo*, 7 March 2003.

his collaborators”. Since at the time when such acts were committed there were no laws that sanctioned violations of “national honour”, this entailed a violation of the legal principle that there is no culpability if an act is not specified as punishable by an effective law. The punishments included loss of national honour, compulsory labour, partial or complete confiscation of assets or monetary fines and exile. The tribunals for the protection of national honour were actually revolutionary courts against respected and wealthier citizens and private property, and their aim was to create state-owned assets. Besides losing their property in whole or in part, the convicted were also stripped of their civil rights, including the right to vote. In this fashion, the communists excluded the wealthier and more enterprising class from the economy and politics, as its members were banned from working in the civil service or engaging in public activities.⁸⁴

It has been noted that the criminal code abolished the classical principle whereby culpability does not exist if an act is not specified as punishable by law, because the possibility of pronouncing sentences for any manner of criminal act was foreseen. The public prosecutor of the People’s Republic of Croatia, Jakov Blažević, announced that the courts were fortresses from which the people would settle scores with the enemy, while in 1945 the chief public prosecutor of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, Jože Vilfan, explained this revolutionary principle with the assertion that a criminal act may be less important one day, but then acquire first-class importance at some point in the future. The state became the fundamental object of legal protection, rather than property and the rights of human beings and citizens. The most important laws were the Impermissible Speculation and Economic Sabotage Prevention Act of 23 April 1945, the National, Racial and Religious Hatred Incitement Prohibition Act of 24 May 1945 and the Crimes Against the People and State Act of 25 August 1945.⁸⁵ A civilian judiciary was established on the basis of a decision made by the Interim National Assembly on 26 August 1945 passed the People’s Court Organization Act.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ivo Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor 1848. – 2000. Treći svezak: 1918. – 2000.* (Zagreb, Hrvatski institut za povijest – Dom i svijet, 2000), p. 175; Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, pp. 188, 190, 273, 279; Bogdan Zlatarić, “Razvitak novog jugoslavenskog krivičnog prava”, in: Ferdo Čulinović, ed., *Nova Jugoslavija. Pregled državnopravnog razvitka povodom desetgodišnjice Drugog zasjedanja AVNOJ-a*, (Zagreb: Institut za historiju države i prava Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu, 1954), 306-335, p. 322; *Partizanska i komunistička represija i zločini u Hrvatskoj 1944.-1946.*, p. 263.

⁸⁵ Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 – 1988. godine*, pp. 384, 445; Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992 – Nastanak, razvoj ter raspad Karadjordjevićeve in Titove Jugoslavije*, pp. 165, 209; Marija Obradović, “Partijska država’ kao element političkog sistema ‘narodne demokratije’ u Jugoslaviji (1945-1952)”, in: *Razvoj, dileme i perspektive jugoslavenskog socijalizma*, (Zagreb, 1988), pp. 173-184, 177, 178; Zlatarić, “Razvitak novog jugoslavenskog krivičnog prava”, pp. 306-335, 324.

⁸⁶ Mikola, *Sodni procesi na Celjskem 1944-1951*, p. 100; Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992*, p. 164.

Numerous laws and decrees which encroached upon private ownership and which penalized a neutral stance during the war created an atmosphere of retaliation and expropriation, in which the boundary between punishing actual criminal and the revolutionary seizure of authority and property was blurred.

The Penalty Classification Act of 10 July 1945 ranked punishments from the least severe to the death penalty: compulsory labour without loss of personal liberty, expulsion from one's place of residence, loss of political and individual civil rights, loss of the right to engage in civil service, prohibition from engaging in certain types of work or trades, loss or elimination of rank or profession, loss of personal liberty from 6 months to 20 years, loss of citizenship and the death penalty.⁸⁷

The first Press Act was promulgated on 24 August 1945. Publications which incited national, racial or religious hatred, called for revolt, insulted allied countries, gave succour to external enemies, called for refusal to serve in the military, threatened state interests and contained slander against the state's representative bodies were banned. Printers had to deliver publications to the municipal public prosecutor prior to distribution. The public prosecutor could order a temporary ban.⁸⁸

According to incomplete data, the Partisans shot 38 journalists, while out of the 332 journalists accredited by the NDH government, 129 fled abroad. Roughly one hundred journalists were banned from writing, while twenty-seven were allowed to do so. The reason was not only their stance during the war, but also the aspiration of the KPJ to take all of the press and radio into its hands.⁸⁹ Of the religious bulletins, only those with a local character, such as, for example, *Glasnik biskupije đakovačke i srijemske* (Bulletin of the Đakovo and Srijem Diocese), which was published in a shorter form, and *Gore srca* (Hearts Afire) in Pazin.⁹⁰ The Order on the Prohibition of Ustasha and Fascist Publications was released on 10 August 1945. A special commission was established to inspect such materials.⁹¹ Books were publicly burned, although there are

⁸⁷ Zakon o vrstama kazni, *Službeni list FNRJ*, 48., 10. 7. 1945.

⁸⁸ Ivana Hebrang Grgić, "Zakoni o tisku u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do danas", *Vjesnik bibliotekara Hrvatske*, (2000), no. 3: 117-134, 119, 120.

⁸⁹ Josip Grbelja, *Cenzura u hrvatskom novinstvin: 1945. – 1990.* (Zagreb: Naklada Jurčić, 1998), pp. 64, 71, 81; Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest* (Zagreb: Novi liber, 2003), p. 306.

⁹⁰ Jerković, "Školski vjeronauk u Hrvatskoj nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata (1945-1952)", p. 101; Božo Milanović, *Moje uspomene (1900-1976)* (Pazin: IKD sv. Ćirila i Metoda - Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1976), p. 160.

⁹¹ I. Hebrang Grgić, "Zakoni o tisku u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do danas", p. 119; Čedomir Višnjić, *Partizansko ljetovanje: Hrvatska i Srbi 1945-1950.* (Zagreb: Srpsko kulturno društvo Prosvjeta, 2003), p. 405.

no written sources testifying to this.⁹² In addition to direct bans, the KPJ also made use of bans on private publishing activity and nationalization of private presses, bookstores and reading rooms and deprived publishers of paper.⁹³

The most important role in disseminating communist ideas was played by propaganda, which was put forth by the leadership of the party's agitation and propaganda departments. Over 100 people, generally professionals, worked in the "agitprop system" in Croatia.⁹⁴

A simplistic (black-and-white) reporting style predominated in newspapers. For example, news from Eastern Europe and the "great" USSR exclusively recounted successes and the more pleasant side of life, while news from the West, particularly from the United States and Great Britain, spoke of imperialism, racism, strikes, unemployment, small salaries and high prices.⁹⁵

One of the major tasks was education and raising the population's literacy levels. A vital role – due to widespread illiteracy – was played by film. Soviet films which, like domestic productions, were still in their nascent stages and under strict party control, exerted an immense propagandistic influence.⁹⁶ Out of the total 217 imported feature-length films in 1945, 93 were from the USSR, while 70 came from the US, the country with the world's strongest motion picture industry.⁹⁷

Besides suppressing non-communist influences in the press and literature, in 1945 the authorities, with the help of SKOJ members, organized youth brigades charged with removing signs from squares and tradesmen's shops written in the so-called archaic orthography. In Zagreb, for example, those who ignored or were not aware of the decision had their storefronts wrecked by youth activists led by members of the SKOJ's City Committee. Notable among the initiators of this street violence by young communists was Marko Belinić, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia. At youth gatherings, SKOJ activists beat those who they designated as pro-Ustasha or clericalists. They made use of public denunciation, beatings and expulsion from school, not only against those who had resorted to violence themselves during the time of the NDH, but also against the children of the

⁹² Hebrang Grgić, "Zakoni o tisku u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do danas", p. 130.

⁹³ Grbelja, *Cenzura u hrvatskom novinstvin: 1945. – 1990.*, p. 67; Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda. Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945. – 1952.*, p. 98.

⁹⁴ Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945. – 1952.*, p. 95; Spehnjak, *Vlast i javnost u Hrvatskoj 1945. – 1952.*, pp. 508, 509.

⁹⁵ Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik*, p. 181.

⁹⁶ Zlata Knezović, "Idejnopolitička uloga sovjetskih filmova u filmskom repertoaru u Hrvatskoj 1945-1952.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, (1988), no. 1-2: 137-171.

⁹⁷ Knezović, "Idejnopolitička uloga sovjetskih filmova u filmskom repertoaru u Hrvatskoj 1945-1952.", pp. 141, 144.

wealthy, those who did not like the regime and devotees of Western culture.⁹⁸ The authorities even transferred suspect teachers.⁹⁹

The new authorities stamped out traditions. Initially a new interpretation was given to certain traditions. On 6 December 1945, the newspaper *Vjesnik* mentioned St. Nicholas, but emphasis was placed on the fact children were not given gifts from “some imaginary basket” but rather from the people’s organizations and Tito.

The Ustasha authorities set national criteria as the measure of any public event, which in relation to the Roma, Serbs and Jews went to the point of the complete exclusion and destruction of their communities. At the same time, dedication to the national offered limitless possibilities for expressing Croatian pride, from the names of institutions to the extolling of historical events, except, to be sure, in areas which were under the control of the Kingdom of Italy. With the fall of the NDH, despite the federal structure and the emphasis placed on national equality, the national approach in everyday life was gradually suppressed. For example, in 1945, it is likely that many experienced the change in the name of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Science, restoring its previous name, the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Science, as an anti-Croatian move.

Social revolution

The drastic treatment of occupation collaborators was customary throughout Europe, but in Yugoslavia the accusation that anyone had collaborated with the occupying powers was often simply a pretence for revolutionary measures and seizure of property. Thus, private property, most often in agriculture, industry, finance, commerce and transportation, was expropriated. Actual guilt was unimportant; all that mattered was the political and economic aims of the KPJ. This is supported by the fact that in the later period many had groundless court rulings against them rescinded or their prison sentences commuted, but their property was almost never returned to them. Many convictions for treason actually concealed revolutionary procedures which the KPJ initially, due to international considerations and the need to reinforce its authority, avoided openly implementing.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Jure Bilić, *71' koja je to godina* (Zagreb: CIP, 1990), p. 102; Radovan Stipetić, “Kako sam spasio Pavletića od skojevskih batina”, *Jutarnji list. Magazin*, 30. 10. 2004., p. 33; Stanko Lasić, *Autobiografski zapisi* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2000), p. 503.

⁹⁹ Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor 1848. – 2000. Treći svezak: 1918. – 2000.*, p. 176; Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945. – 1952.*, p. 198.

¹⁰⁰ Marijan Matićka, “Zakonski propisi o vlasničkim odnosima u Jugoslaviji (1944-1948)”, *Radovi*, (1992): 123-148, 129; Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, p. 415; Nebojša Popov, “Traumatologija partijske države”, Nebojša Popov, ed., *Srpska strana rata: Trauma i katarza u*

Property was seized pursuant to law, but many laws were not aligned with international legal principles, particularly those which specified what constituted collaboration with the occupying powers. Later the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Josip Hrnčević, spoke about the confiscation of assets as outcomes "generated by our revolution".¹⁰¹ According to a statement by Boris Kidrič made in October 1946, seizure of property based on convictions for alleged treason was "a specific form of expropriation of the expropriators", actually "expropriation on the broadest patriotic foundation" because "the former expropriators had collaborated with the occupiers due to class reasons".

In Yugoslavia, foreign capital had a 49.5% share in industry, for example. Given this fact, nationalization would have exacerbated relations with allies, particularly since the Declaration of the Interim Government of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia of 7 March 1945 stressed no encroachments would be made on private property. However, confiscations of assets were quite frequent. The authorities did not pay any compensation for what was taken, as was the case in later nationalization procedures, while at the same time owners were discredited and prevented from engaging in political activity.¹⁰²

In the series of legislative solutions which encroached upon ownership issues, the most important were these decrees and laws: the Decree on Courts Martial of 24 May 1944, the Decision on the Transfer of Enemy Assets to State Ownership, State Management of Assets of Absent Individuals and the Sequester of Assets Forcefully Expropriated by the Occupying Authorities of 21 November 1944, the Impermissible Speculation and Economic Sabotage Prevention Act of 23 April 1945, the Decision on the Protection of the National Honour of the Croats and Serbs in Croatia of 24 April 1945, the National, Racial and Religious Hatred Incitement Prohibition Act of 24 May 1945, the Wartime Occupation Profit Seizure Act of 24 May 1945, the Asset Confiscation and Execution of Confiscation Act of 9 June 1945, the Occupation Currency Withdrawal Exchange Rate and Liability in Croatia Act of 21 June 1945, the Crimes Against the People and State Act of 25 August 1945, the Act Depriving Citizenship to Former Officers and Non-commissioned Officers of the Former Yugoslav Army who Refuse to Return to Their Homeland, Members of Collaborationist Military Formations who Fled Abroad and Persons who Fled Abroad After Liberation of 23 August 1945 (entered into force upon

istorijskom pamćenju (Belgrade: 2001), pp. 117-148, 92; Milko Mikola, *Zaplembe premoženja v Sloveniji 1943 - 1952* (Celje: Zgodovinski arhiv Celje, 1999), p. 154, 186; Momčilo Mitrović, "Narodni i državni neprijatelji u Srbiji posle Drugoga svetskog rata", Hans-Georg Fleck, Igor Graovac, ed., *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, 6, Zagreb, 5. - 7. listopada 2001. (Zagreb, 2002): 249-265, 251.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰² Mikola, *Zaplembe premoženja v Sloveniji 1943 - 1952*, p. 293; Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 - 1988.godine*, p. 381.

its publication on 28 August 1945), the Agrarian Reform and Colonization Act of 23 August and the Federal Croatia Agrarian Reform and Colonization Implementation Act of 24 November 1945.¹⁰³

The Decision on the Transfer of Enemy Assets to State Ownership, State Management of Assets of Absent Individuals and the Sequester of Assets Forcefully Expropriated by the Occupying Authorities of 21 November 1944 was further interpreted in Croatia by the Instructions for work pertaining to implementation of the proposal for the temporary transfer of enemy assets to the management and supervision of the State People's Goods Administration of the Territorial Commission that was charged with investigating the crimes of the occupiers and their domestic collaborators. According to the instructions issued by the Internal Affairs Commission of ZAVNOH on 19 March 1945, a written decision from the administrative section of a municipal People's Liberation Committee was sufficient to consider certain property state-owned, without the need for a court ruling.¹⁰⁴

Pursuant to judgements issued by the courts for the protection of national honour, 117 industrial enterprises and 189 landed estates and other real estate were confiscated.¹⁰⁵

Pursuant to the Asset Confiscation and Execution of Confiscation Act of 9 June 1945, the assets of persons that the People's Liberation Movement had sentenced to death either by court decision or in extrajudiciary proceedings or had fled abroad at the end of the war were appropriated. By 31 December 1945, according to data from the State People's Goods Administration (DUND) and the territorial people's goods administrations (ZUND), in Croatia 8,025 applications for appropriation were filed.¹⁰⁶

The Impermissible Speculation and Economic Sabotage Prevention Act was adopted on 23 April 1945. Sabotage was, among other things, defined as the irrational stockpiling of raw materials.

Under the Wartime Occupation Profit Seizure Act of 24 May 1945, profit was ascertained as any surplus value in comparison to the balance as at 6 April 1941 resulting from economic activities related to exploitation of wartime circumstances. Estimates were made of what would have been earned under normal conditions, so all profits over 250,000 dinars were seized. Cases of persons

¹⁰³ Mikola, *Zaplembe premoženja v Sloveniji 1943 – 1952*, pp. 17, 185; Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966. godine*, p. 127; Michael Portmann, "Nasilje tijekom izgradnje države i društva komunističke Jugoslavije (1944-1946)", in: Zorislav Lukić, ed., *Represija i zločini komunističkog režima u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2012): 149-158, 152.

¹⁰⁴ Maticka, *Zakonski propisi o vlasničkim odnosima u Jugoslaviji (1944-1948)*, p. 135.

¹⁰⁵ Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor 1848. – 2000. Treći svezak: 1918. – 2000.*, p. 175; *Partizanska i komunistička represija i zločini u Hrvatskoj 1944.-1946.*, p. 263.

¹⁰⁶ Mikola, *Zaplembe premoženja v Sloveniji 1943 – 1952*, p. 178.

being tried for wartime profits of 4,500 dinars have been recorded. For the sake of comparison, in July 1945 salaries ranged from 1,500 dinars to the highest pay grade with salaries over 6,000 dinars.¹⁰⁷

The Act on Treatment of Assets which Owners had to Abandon during the Occupation and Assets Seized from Them by the Occupiers and Their Collaborators of 24 May 1945 did not stipulate the restitution of all property, such as mines for example. In “the interests of the people’s economy”, the authorities opposed the accumulation of wealth “in the hands of individuals”.¹⁰⁸

In the restriction of private property, an important role was played by the Occupation Currency Withdrawal Exchange Rate and Liability in Bosnia-Herzegovina Act of 7 June 1945 and the Occupation Currency Withdrawal Exchange Rate and Liability in Croatia Act of 21 June 1945, creating a consolidated financial territory. From 30 June to 9 July 1945, three currency territories in Croatia were abolished: the Croatian kuna, the Italian lire and the Hungarian pengo. Besides determining the exchange rate, also important was the provision whereby cash up to a value of 5,000 dinars of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia could be exchanged. For sums above this value, certificates were issued that were payable within a period of three months. However, they were not disbursed in their full value, rather a progressive percentage was exempted for the Fund for the Renewal of the Country and Aid to Stricken Areas. The upper limit for the expropriation of savings was 70% of its value.¹⁰⁹ However, Reichmarks could not be exchanged for dinars, rather their possession was deemed evidence of collaboration with the occupier.¹¹⁰

State-owned assets were managed by the State People’s Goods Administration (DUND), and by the territorial people’s goods administrations (ZUND) in the federal units, with branch sections in districts, municipalities and towns. Factories were generally managed by an expert director, but the deputy director, with virtually the same authority, was usually a member of the Communist Party.

Social revolutionary measures achieved several aims: strengthening the state, weakening the private sector, eliminating dependence on foreign capital, partially collecting reparations for wartime destruction and gradually centralizing the economy.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Maticka, Zakonski propisi o vlasničkim odnosima u Jugoslaviji (1944-1948), p. 131; HDA, CK SKH, i. b. 307, Izvještaj CK KPH, 17. 3. 1946; HDA, SSJ-ZSD, 22. 7. 1945.

¹⁰⁸ Maticka, Zakonski propisi o vlasničkim odnosima u Jugoslaviji (1944-1948), p. 132; Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966. godine*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁹ Maticka, Zakonski propisi o vlasničkim odnosima u Jugoslaviji (1944-1948), p. 129.

¹¹⁰ *Yugoslavia, East-Central Europe Under the Communists*, p. 333.

¹¹¹ Branko Horvat, *ABC jugoslavenskog socijalizma* (Zagreb: Globus, 1984), p. 32.

Agrarian policy

Already in the first year, the authorities implemented agrarian reform, and privately-owned land was allocated to peasants. This did not comply with Marxist doctrine on the abolishment of individual peasant farms. The reforms were based on the principle that the land belonged to the one cultivating it, for initially the KPJ needed the support of the peasants. The laws that facilitated the implementation of agrarian reform were the Agrarian Reform and Colonization Act of 23 August and the Federal Croatia Agrarian Reform and Colonization Implementation Act of 24 November 1945.¹¹²

The permitted maximum for privately-owned land was set according to the following categories: 45 ha, or 25 ha of cultivable surfaces for large estates, 3 ha for non-peasant holdings, 20 to 25 ha for peasant holdings, and 30 ha in mountain regions. The maximum depended on the size of a family, the quality of the land and the types of agricultural surfaces. The church could have a maximum of 10 ha of cultivable land, and 30 ha of cultivable land and 30 ha of forests surrounding religious structures of particular historical value. Forest holdings were limited from 8 to a maximum of 15 ha, and in mountain areas they could be up to 15 ha.¹¹³

The Farm Labourer Debt Final Liquidation Act of 26 August 1945 wrote off peasant debts up to 5,000 dinars, while regardless of the amount debts were abolished for all deceased, Partisan fighters and their family members and all members of the Yugoslav royal army who were slain in 1941, and for all victims of terror and prisoners of war. A part of the debts of those who suffered in the war and who aided the Partisans was also written off.¹¹⁴

Pursuant to the decisions of the AVNOJ Presidium of 21 November 1944, the internal affairs departments of the people's committees issued decisions on the nationalization of the assets of the Volksdeutsche and the expulsion of the latter to Germany or their assignment to forced labour in camps. The mass expulsion of Germans created the conditions for colonization, i.e., the movement of impoverished peasants into areas with more abundant farmland.¹¹⁵ However, prior to this, another problem that need to be solved involved the peasants in Dalmatia, Hrvatsko Zagorje, Lika and Bosnia-Herzegovina, who during the NDH had been moved to eastern Slavonia, whence the Serbian "Salonika" veterans had been expelled. In Slavonia there were 7,000 such colonists from Hrvatsko Zagorje. After the war, the organized return of many to

¹¹² Maticka, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1948.*, p. 47, 53.

¹¹³ Maticka, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1948.*, p. 47, 53; Akmadža, *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i komunistički režim 1945. – 1966.*, p. 33.

¹¹⁴ Maticka, *Zakonski propisi o vlasničkim odnosima u Jugoslaviji (1944-1948)*, p. 141.

¹¹⁵ Vladimir Geiger, *Folksdojčeri pod teretom kolektivne krivnje* (Osijek: Njemačka narodnosna zajednica, 2002), p. 33.

the districts from which they had come was carried out. About 1,000 colonists from Hrvatsko Zagorje from the time of the NDH remained, because their expulsion had been halted and they were accommodated on formerly German farms. Those who had cooperated with the “enemy” had to leave their farms and take care of themselves.¹¹⁶

Most land was taken from Germans, corporations, large estates, churches, owners of confiscated estates, those who backed down from colonization and, ultimately, the owners of non-peasant holdings over 3 ha.¹¹⁷ Among the larger expropriated landowners were the churches, most notably the Catholic Church.¹¹⁸

The criteria for including persons in colonization were: participation in the Partisans, residence in overpopulated areas and poverty. Families from Croatia were resettled outside Croatia mostly in Bačka, in Vojvodina, and inside Croatia in Baranja, Slavonia and Srijem. Most of the colonists were from the districts of Donji Lapac, Gospić, Gračac, Korenica, Otočac and Udbina in Lika, from the districts of Benkovac, Knin, Sinj, Split, Šibenik and Zadar in Dalmatia and from the districts of Dvor na Uni, Glina, Ogulin, Plaški, Slunj, Vojnić and Vrginmost in Banovina, Gorskom kotar and Kordun.¹¹⁹ In 1945 alone, 3,898 families consisting of 19,364 persons were resettled from their original homes.¹²⁰ Colonization continued with greater intensity in the later period. Many more of the colonists were so-called local agrarian beneficiaries. As opposed to colonists, agrarian beneficiaries received land in their home area, so they did not participate in a move to another part of Croatia. The number of local agrarian beneficiaries for 1945 specifically is not known.

Land was also allocated to peasant labour collectives, federal republic agricultural farms, district and municipal and local people’s goods reserves.¹²¹ The first four peasant labour collectives in Croatia were formed in 1945, encompassing 72 households.¹²²

The primary objective of communist agrarian measures, besides redistribution of land and colonization, was the system of mandatory purchase prices. It was based on coercion, and peasants could not influence either the price or the quantity of products which they had to sell. At the same time, peas-

¹¹⁶ Maticka, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1948.*, pp. 36, 37; Ivan Balta, “Kolonizacija istočne Hrvatske u Drugom svjetskom ratu”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* (2001), no. 2: 387-408, 399.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*:93-97.

¹¹⁸ Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966. godine*, pp. 100, 110, 119.

¹¹⁹ Maticka, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1948.*, pp. 61, 83.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹²² Maticka, “Hrvatsko seljaštvo i politika kolektivizacije (1945. – 1953.)”: 367, 370.

ants were often recruited for temporary or even permanent job assignments in heavy industry or mining.¹²³

Provisioning of the population and social circumstances

According to an estimate made by the Federal Croatian Government, in August 1945 approximately 90% of the population in the Croatian Littoral, Lika and Dalmatia was non-provisioned and starvation had set in. However, according to statements made by Vladimir Bakarić at the fourth session of the People's Diet of Federal Croatia at the end of July 1945, nobody in Croatia had died of starvation.¹²⁴

Great assistance in food was provided by wartime allies. Based on the American military's AML Agreement with the People's Liberation Army Supreme Command of 19 January 1945, 120,000 tons of goods were donated which were then distributed along the coastal belt.¹²⁵ However, systematic aid was rendered as of March by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Despite considerable problems pertaining to transportation, Yugoslavia received more aid than any other European country. This aid benefitted 3 to 5 million people. Among other things, Yugoslavia received 30,000 head of livestock, 3,500 tractors, 12,585 freight vehicles, 221 ships and 7 tugboats, 264 locomotives and 864 rail-cars, one field hospital with over 1,000 beds, 31 field hospitals with 200 beds and 129 field hospitals with 40 beds.¹²⁶

As of the autumn of 1945, the authorities directly organized the provisioning of the population, which had already become accustomed to food rationing during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the NDH. These measures included mandatory purchase quotas for agricultural produce and the system of planned limited distribution of agricultural and industrial products. A system of remittances, vouchers, ration cards and tokens was introduced. The necessary quantities for personal needs were precisely determined for peasants, and everything else had to be turned over to the state.¹²⁷

¹²³ Maticka, "Opskrba stanovništva u Hrvatskoj od 1945.do 1953. godine", *Zbornik Mirjane Gross u povodu 75 rođendana* (Zagreb: Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu): 387-401, 388.

¹²⁴ *Dokumenti Centralnih organa KPJ. NOR i revolucija (1941-1945), knjiga 22, (1. januar-4. mart 1945.)*, p. 193; Maticka, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1948.*, p. 65; Višnjić, *Partizansko ljetovanje*, p. 50.

¹²⁵ Kardelj, *Sećanja*, p. 179.

¹²⁶ Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 237; John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There was a Country*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2000), p. 239; Degan, *Hrvatska država u međunarodnoj zajednici*, pp. 185, 186; Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992*, p. 169; Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 - 1988. godine*, p. 461; Kardelj, *Sećanja*, p. 179.

¹²⁷ Maticka, "Opskrba stanovništva u Hrvatskoj od 1945.do 1953. godine", p. 388, 389; Tomislav Jonjić, "Komunisti iz Hrvatske i hrvatska država", *Politički zatvorenik* (2000): 99.

The regime of planned distribution and consumption encompassed all items for nutritional needs, except for poultry, fruits and vegetables, textile goods and footwear, as well as all types of household needs. Such goods could not be purchased in legal commerce, i.e., outside of distribution channels. In July 1945, two types of citizen consumer booklets were introduced: general and supplemental, which were sub-divided into several categories based on the nature of the work an individual performed.¹²⁸ In order for something to be purchased, three conditions had to be met: having the proper vouchers in the booklet/card, having money and the store actually having a supply of the desired items.¹²⁹

Illegal resale, i.e., the black market and smuggling, was quite well developed. The government introduced draconian sanctions.¹³⁰ However, shortages resulted in privileges for state and political leaders. Under conditions of general penury and shortages, in November 1945 state supply stores were introduced for the diplomatic corps and state representative bodies.¹³¹ In the summer of 1945, the 1941 Partisan Memorial Medals were conferred, which brought with them privileges such as free medical care, the possibility of a one-month stay at thermal spas and transportation fare discounts.¹³²

In Croatia until the winter of 1945/1946, 30,000 houses and 10,000 work facilities were rendered usable, and 1,310 schools were renovated or constructed. Even so, the situation was exacerbated by the need to care for 32,263 war orphans registered in Croatia in 1946. There was additionally a high number of wartime disabled.¹³³

The cities were crowded with refugees and officials of the new authorities. Refugees had to return to their previous domiciles in which they had lived until 10 April 1941. In the first months after the entry of the Partisans in Zagreb, 80,000 persons sought residence permits and assignment of housing.¹³⁴ Besides the seizure of housing units, the system of co-tenancy was also applied, whereby several families shared a single housing unit.¹³⁵ Housing issues had already been regulated in 1945, when the right to allocate housing, i.e., the

¹²⁸ Maticka, *Opskrba stanovništva u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1953. godine*, p. 392.

¹²⁹ Kamberović, *Prema modernom društvu*, p. 123; Kardelj, *Sećanja*, pp. 128, 182; Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu*, p. 128; Maticka, "Opskrba stanovništva u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1953. godine", p. 394.

¹³⁰ R. J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century – and After* (London and New York: Routledge, second edition, 1997), p. 252.

¹³¹ Maticka, "Opskrba stanovništva u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1953. godine", p. 392.

¹³² Nikolić, *Razvoj oružanih snaga SFRJ 1945. – 1985. Kadrovi i kadrovska politika*, pp. 62, 172.

¹³³ Statistički godišnjak FNRJ 1954, pp. 355, 358; Spehnik, *Javnost i propaganda. Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945. – 1952.*, pp. 177, 178, 201.

¹³⁴ HDA, CK SKH, Zapisnik CK KPH, 25. 4. 1946; 30 godina. *Unutrašnji poslovi Zagreb*, 18; Šime Đodan, *Aktualni gospodarski položaj Zagreba*, *Kritika* 13 (1970): 485-500, 489.

¹³⁵ Lasić, *Autobiografski zapisi*, p. 374.

assignment of housing units, was transferred to the people's committees. At the time, rent in an amount of 50% of rents from 1939 was specified, as well as social management of buildings with over three housing units. The owners of residential buildings were only entitled to 10% of the rent. Actually, in practice many housing units, buildings and commercial properties were usurped. Private ownership only existed formally.¹³⁶

The average floor space of a housing unit (apartment) in Yugoslavia in 1945 was 41.2 m², and one housing unit was used by 4.6 persons. The situation in Croatia was negligibly higher than the Yugoslav average.¹³⁷

In the payment system of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, clerical salaries were at a ratio of 1:12, and even 1:16, while the new authorities introduced ratios of 1:3.5, and 1:2.1 for labourers, which was a direct reflection of the poor economic situation and shortages, as well as the communist worldview which accorded priority to equality over efficiency and merit-based advancement.¹³⁸ Payment based on function rather than qualifications predominated, which allowed for the appointment of unqualified Party personnel.

Due to wartime destruction, in 1945 Yugoslavia was only working at 30% of capacity, and production did not reach pre-war levels.¹³⁹ In Croatia there were 227,748 unemployed.¹⁴⁰

Fear of intervention by the West due to Istria and Trieste prompted the authorities to adopt a cautious stance, so the military numbered 100,000 men. There were state agencies charged with recruiting the rural labour force for industrialization, and such bodies also functioned in enterprises. As a part of the People's Front, youth organizations also established voluntary labour brigades. The authorities developed rather diverse methods to convince those who did not respond to summons for "voluntary" work: denial of guaranteed rations, increases in mandatory purchase quotas for produce, cutting off electricity and fuel oil and closure of train stations in settlements where the failure to volunteer was high, bans on milling flour and sales to the families of persons who did not volunteer for labour, and recruitment with the help of the police.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966. godine*, pp. 150, 153; Akmadža, *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i komunistički režim 1945. – 1966.*, p. 201; "Zaštićeni najmoprimci tvrde da ih Vlada diskriminira i 'humano' seli", *Jutarnji list*, December 12, 2002.

¹³⁷ Grga Jelinić, *Kako riješiti stambenu krizu* (Zagreb: AGM, 1994), pp. 15, 18.

¹³⁸ Dušan Bilandžić, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije: Glavni procesi 1918-1985*, 3. dopunjeno izdanje (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1985), pp. 115, 123.

¹³⁹ Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992*, p. 156; Hrvoje Matković, *Povijest Jugoslavije: Hrvatski pogled (1918-1991)* (Zagreb: Naklada Pavičić, 1998), p. 293; Kardelj, *Sećanja*, p. 191.

¹⁴⁰ Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945.-1991.: Od zajedništva do razlaza*, p. 216.

¹⁴¹ Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 236; Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945. – 1952.*, pp. 39, 40; Kamberović, *Prema modernom društvu*, p. 151; Carol S. Liliy, *Power and Persuasion. Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), p. 123.

The new role of trade unions

By establishing a unified organization, the communists took the trade union movement into their own hands. The union became a means of transmission for the Party and a para-state organization. General interests, i.e., the interests of the people and state, were placed in the forefront, rather than the special interests of members. The priority was placed on production rather than the protection of workers. For example, the struggle to reduce work hours and the intensity of labour was abandoned. Moreover, the union was obliged to organize labour competitions, propose increased labour quotas and prevent salary hikes. Its leadership most harshly condemned criticisms that the authorities were creating economic growth on the backs of workers. Given the increasing pressure on workers to increase the tempo of their labour, the authorities explained these procedures by citing the great change in comparison to the capitalist Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It was asserted that workers were no longer working for capitalists, but rather for themselves, the working class and the people. This is why workers were encouraged to increase labour productivity by means of high quotas, and why there were campaigns to reduce the costs of production and labour campaigns named after worthy workers, and non-work days, especially holidays, were changed into work days. All state and para-state organizations had to be engaged to achieve this.¹⁴²

The role of the single trade union was clearly defined by Vladimir Bakarić, the political secretary of the Croatian Communist Party's Central Committee, who, in the 14 July 1945 edition of the Party bulletin *Naprijed*, warned of the dangers concealed by continued insistence on its immutable nature. The union had to abandon its old standpoints after the change in government. Many could not, obviously, understand this, and some even deliberately opposed this new role for the union:

The central question is production. Only with production, more production and ever greater production can we beat back our enemies in this major enterprise. The enemy is willing to concede 'successes' to us in all other fields, only to be able to inflict losses upon us in the this most important field. Raising labour discipline, a combative stance in labour, disclosure of slipshod management in this regard – these are the main tasks of our trade union organizations, because the future of the working class in our country depends upon it.¹⁴³

Not even Marko Belinić, the president of the Unified Union of Workers and Civil Servants of Yugoslavia for Croatia, writing for the union bulletin *Glas rada* (Voice of Labour) on 1 January 1946, did not leave any doubt as to the new role of the union. He asserted that in the time of capitalism the strug-

¹⁴² Zdenko Radelić, *Sindikat i radništvo u Hrvatskoj (1945.-1950.)*, pp. 135-160.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

gle to reduce work hours and oppose the rationalization of labour were part of the struggle against exploitation, while “today”, in the time of the “people’s government”, such demands constitute hostile activity.¹⁴⁴

Croatia, the federal system and national relations

In ZAVNOH documents, the name of the Croatian state is not defined. The names Croatia, Federal Croatia and Federal State of Croatia are all used.¹⁴⁵ In his initial speech upon the establishment of the government, Bakarić did not mention the Federal State of Croatia. In the law changing the name of the Territorial Antifascist People’s Council, “Democratic Croatia” is mentioned, and the Diet (*Sabor*) is referred to as the “People’s Diet of Croatia”. Many laws issued by the ZAVNOH Presidium mention Federal Croatia.¹⁴⁶ This situation prevailed until the Diet’s Presidency passed the Peoples Republic of Croatia Act on 26 February 1946, and this name had already been specified in the Constitution of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia ratified on 31 January 1946.¹⁴⁷

The federal system was an essential preference of the Communist Party of Croatia. It was emphasized that Yugoslavia was a federation of equal republics and nations. For the federal system, the existence of territorial political representative bodies and regional military headquarters was crucial.¹⁴⁸ At the third session of the ZAVNOH in Topusko on 9 May 1944, a Declaration was adopted which stressed that the Croatian and Serbian peoples are equal in Croatia with equal rights.¹⁴⁹

The renaming of the People’s Liberation Army (NOV) and the Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia (POJ) into the Yugoslav Army (JA) on 1 March 1945 and the dissolution of the central command staffs of the federal units also ended the federal armies. All units were subordinated to the command of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army without intermediaries at the level of the federal units. The Command Staff of the Yugoslav Army for Croatia was abolished on 18 May 1945. On 10 August 1945, the Central Committee of the

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁴⁵ *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske, Zbornik dokumenata 1944. (Od 1. siječnja do 9. svibnja)* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta, 1970), pp. 591-672.

¹⁴⁶ *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske, Zbornik dokumenata 1945. (Od 1. siječnja do 25. srpnja)* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta, 1985) pp. 630, 631, 650, 719.

¹⁴⁷ Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor 1848. – 2000. Treći svezak: 1918. – 2000.*, pp. 177, 178.

¹⁴⁸ Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁹ *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske, Zbornik dokumenata 1944. (Od 1. siječnja do 9. svibnja)* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta, 1970), p. 666.

Croatian Communist Party (KPH) already assumed leadership of the party organizations in the Yugoslav Army through the Political Section (Administration) of the People's Defence Ministry. The wartime independence of the federal units was thus entirely ended.¹⁵⁰ Actually, there was no federalism, as all essential decisions were made by the Politburo of the Yugoslav Communist Party's Central Committee. Even though the Politburo reflected a virtually ideal ethnic structure, communist leaders did not act on behalf of nations or even republics.

The general regulation on the appointment of governments was prepared in Belgrade, by the AVNOJ Presidium on 31 March 1945. A general formula was adopted for the appointment of all governments, their names, the number of departments and their jurisdiction. The sole concession to federalism was that AVNOJ did not release its recommendations in the form of laws, but rather as just that, recommendations. The prime ministers in each government became secretaries in the Politburo. In Croatia that was Vladimir Bakarić. The federal government could rescind any republic regulation if they did not comply with federal laws.¹⁵¹

Tito, in his speech delivered in Zagreb on 21 May 1945 (the first and last time he declared his Croat ethnicity), said the federation would not be a set of small states, rather it would have more of an "administrative character", but that the republics would have the freedom to administer themselves and that they would be independent in their cultural and economic development.¹⁵²

Besides several articles in the opposition *Narodni glas* in Zagreb and *Demokratija* in Belgrade in 1945, only images of the unity of all republics and nations were presented to the public, and any topic dealing with ethnic disputes was prohibited.¹⁵³

In Croatia, the wartime rifts could not be forgotten. According to approximate calculations, 65,600 NOV soldiers and 52,500 NDH soldiers had been killed. The fact that there were 174,402 soldiers in the NDH armed forces at the end of the war also impeded a normalization of the situation. The structure of arrested members of the Yugoslav Army in 1946 based on the grounds for their arrest is interesting. Out of this total of 1,104 members of the Yugoslav Army, 1,324 were arrested for Ustasha or Home Guard sympathies, 532 for Chetnik

¹⁵⁰ Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 226; Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, p. 200; Matković, *Povijest Jugoslavije*, p. 287.

¹⁵¹ Vodušek Starić, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946*, pp. 213, 214.

¹⁵² Broz Tito, *Izgradnja nove Jugoslavije*, p. 14; Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 117; Aleksa Đilas, *Osporena zemlja. Jugoslavenstvo i revolucija* (Belgrade: Književne novine, 1990), p. 236.

¹⁵³ Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 - 1988. godine*, p. 386; Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992*, p. 143.

sympathies, and 279 for Slovenian Belogardist sympathies. The discrepancy is obvious, particularly when the share of Croats in the structure of population is compared to the respective shares of Serbs and Slovenes.¹⁵⁴

If the situation in Croatia is considered, the share of Croats in the Partisans was a little over 60%, which was almost 15% less than their share in the structure of its population, while the share of Croatian Serbs was 28%, which was almost 70% more than their share in Croatia's population structure.¹⁵⁵ Even the Communist Party of Croatia had an imbalance in its ethnic structure. Areas with ethnically mixed populations had a much higher share of Serbs than in the comparison to the ethnic composition in this regard.

Table 2. Ethnic structure of the Communist Party of Croatia in 1945¹⁵⁶

Ethnicity	Beginning of 1945		June 1945		End of 1945	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Croats	9,135	57.6	13,877	56,0	30,664	64.9
Serbs	6,257	39.5	10,159	41,0	14,509	30.7
Others	460	2.9	744	3.0	2,062	4.4
Total	15,852	100.0	24,780	100.0	47,235	100.0

In Lika, among the local communists, only 14.5% were Croats, even though their share in the local population was almost equal to that of the Serbs, and even higher in certain areas. Croats were a majority of the population in Banovina, but among Party members the Croats only accounted for a 23.4% share. It was similar in Gorski Kotar, Kordun and Slavonia. After the war, the percentage of Croats in the Communist Party of Croatia grew, but in many areas this proceeded rather slowly. This is why the Communist Party of Yugoslavia established special commissions tasked with verifying the reasons for this situ-

¹⁵⁴ Marijan F. Kranjc, *Balkanski vojaški poligon: Kdo so glavni krivci za razbijanje Jugoslavije (varnosno-vojaški spisi)*, e – knjiga (Maribor: Založba Pro-Andy, 2008), p. 36; Žerjavić, *Opsesije i megalomanije oko Jasenovca i Bleiburga*, p. 198; Josip Potočnjak, “Bleiburg”, *Hrvatska ljevica*, 30. 6. 2001., 5-6, 34-35.

¹⁵⁵ Igor Graovac, “O proučavanju struktura sudionika NOB-a i socijalističke revolucije u Hrvatskoj 1941-1945”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1974., 2., 7-64, p. 62; Branko Dubravica, *Vojska antifašističke Hrvatske (1041-1945)* (Zagreb: Narodno sveučilište Velika Gorica, 1996), p. 3; Ivetić, “Srbi u antifašističkoj borbi na područjima Nezavisne Države Hrvatske”, pp. 149-175, 152-167; Ivo i Slavko Goldstein, “Srbi i Hrvati u narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi u Hrvatskoj”, Hans-Georg Fleck, Igor Graovac, ed., *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, 6, Zagreb, 5. – 7. listopada 2001. (Zagreb, 2002): 247-267, 264.

¹⁵⁶ Jelić, *Komunistička partija Hrvatske 1937-1945*, p. 332; Berislav Jandrić, “Organizaciono stanje i struktura KPH od oslobođenja zemlje do kraja 1946. godine”, in: *Oslobođenje Hrvatske 1945. godine. Zbornik radova* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1986): 62-79, 72-77.

ation.¹⁵⁷ One of the reasons included a negative attitude toward Croats, about which there was discussion at sessions of the Central Committees of both the overall Yugoslav and Croatian Communist Parties, mostly in the summer of 1945. The treatment of prisoners of war, discrimination in food rationing and many cases of reprisals testify to this.¹⁵⁸

Data for the Yugoslav Army after a wave of decommissioning in the summer of 1945 show that its ethnic composition did not entirely comply with proclaimed policies.¹⁵⁹

Table 3. Ethnic composition of officers at the end of 1945¹⁶⁰

Ethnicity	Percentage in JA	% in pop. structure (1948 census)	Compared to pop. structure
Montenegrins	9.20	2.70	+6,5
Croats	22.72	23.99	-1.72
Macedonians	3.58	5.14	-1.56
Muslims	1.88	5.13	-3.25
Slovenes	9.71	8.97	+0.74
Serbs	50.97	41.51	+9.46

The ethnic structure of the victorious army, like membership in the Croatian Communist Party, was dictated by the attitude toward the state framework: for or against Yugoslavia. Among the Serbs the preference was much more clear: it was positive toward various notions of Yugoslavia, and very negative toward any independent Croatia. It is understandable that the overrepresentation of Serbs at state and political posts, especially in areas with ethnically mixed populations, had a direct influence on widespread convictions of the subordinate nature of the Croats.

¹⁵⁷ *Zapisnici sa sednica Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta KPJ (11. jun 1945-7. jul 1948)*, pp. 610, 611, 612.

¹⁵⁸ HDA, CK SKH, Zapisnik CK KPH, 13. 1. 1946; *Zapisnici sa sednica Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta KPJ (11. jun 1945-7. jul 1948)*, 68, p. 382.

¹⁵⁹ Mirsad D. Abazović, *Kadrovski rat za BiH (1945-1991)* (Sarajevo: Savez logoraša, CID - Centar za istraživanje i dokumentaciju, 1999), p. 9.

¹⁶⁰ I assumed data on the ethnic structure of the Yugoslav Army from D. Nikolić and *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*. It is unclear as to where Nikolić obtained data on the ethnic structure of Yugoslavia, given that they do not correspond to the first official census of 1948. While the difference for other nationalities was minimal, for the Croats the percentage should be 23.99 and not 29.69. The share of Croats in the ethnic structure of military officers in 1945 in comparison to the ethnic structure of population in 1948 is therefore larger than what the author cites. See: D. Nikolić, *Razvoj oružanih snaga SFRJ 1945. - 1985. Kadrovi i kadrovska politika*, p. 37.

Conclusion

The fundamental contours of 1945 which marked the end of the war were the collapse of the NDH, the establishment of Federal Democratic Croatia as a part of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia and the seizure of authority by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ)/Communist Party of Croatia (KPH). After the end of the war, the KPJ took all power into its own hands and created the essential prerequisites for the implementation of a thorough reorganization of the society and the Yugoslav state in line with its revolutionary and federalist ideas and the conveyance of experiences from the USSR. Among the first steps taken by the new authorities were the collective punishment of ethnic Germans, which corresponded to the vengeful mood of populations in those European states which suffered under the occupation of the Germans or their allies. Besides merciless retaliation against adherents of the NDH, opponents of the KPJ, as well as large landowners, skilled tradesmen and factory owners, were also subject to mass persecution under the pretence of the struggle against fascists and collaborators with the occupying powers. The KPJ formed and led a political organization under the name People's Front of Yugoslavia, which included sections of civic parties, including the Croatian Peasant Party, after replacing their old leadership by installing lower pro-communist officials, generally concealed members of the Communist Party. All social organizations, and besides the People's Front the most important role was played by women's, youth and trade union organizations, were tasked with the achievement of the communist program, which was presented to the public in the guise of a general popular program of the struggle for rule by the people, social justice and equality in ethnic relations. Parties that did not join the People's Front or which contested the Communist Party's leading role were annihilated. The very high percentages for the Peoples' Front in the elections to the Constitutional Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in November 1945 were achieved under undemocratic conditions. The KPJ maintained the essential elements of a civil society, such as a constitution, parliamentary institutions and elections, but gradually limited them, later even rejecting the multi-party parliamentary system with the reasoning that parties represent narrow interests of individual classes and that they encourage ethnic strife. By spreading fear through repression, in which a special role was played by the security/political police known as the People's Protection Department (OZNa), intense propaganda in the media and schools, and surveillance of intellectual life, the KPJ ensured support for its electoral slate and, gradually for the cult of personality surrounding KPJ leaders, first and foremost Josip Broz Tito. After quashing the guerrilla resistance by the so-called Crusaders and preventing the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) from becoming active, it was mostly churches, and the Catholic Church in particular, which threatened communist totalitarian rule and its philosophical and ideological monopoly. This is why the authorities excluded religion from public life. Besides impos-

ing its political and ideological monopoly, the reasons for such policies by the KPJ should also be sought in efforts to bolster the stability of Croatia and Yugoslavia by suppressing ethnic and religious convictions, particularly due to the communist commitment to normalize everyday life, renew structures destroyed by the war, and develop industry and cities as rapidly as possible in order to reach and then surpass the level of highly-developed capitalist states.

Das Jahr 1945 in Kroatien

Zusammenfassung

Autor stellt grundlegende Merkmale des Jahres 1945 dar, das durch das Kriegsende, den Untergang des Unabhängigen Staates Kroatien (kroatisch: Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH), die Gründung des Föderativen Staates Kroatien im Rahmen des Demokratischen Föderativen Jugoslawiens und die Machtübernahme seitens der Kommunistischen Partei Jugoslawiens/Kommunistischen Partei Kroatiens (KPJ/KPH – kroatisch: Komunistička partija Jugoslavije/ Hrvatske) gekennzeichnet wird. Die KPJ übernahm die Macht nach dem Ende des Krieges und schuf die notwendigen Voraussetzungen für grundlegende Umwandlung der Gesellschaft und des jugoslawischen Staates im Einklang mit ihren revolutionären und föderalistischen Ideen sowie mit Übernahme der Erfahrungen der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken. Eine der ersten Maßnahmen der neuen Macht war kollektive Bestrafung der Deutschen, was mit der zur Rache neigenden Stimmung der Bevölkerung europäischer Staaten korrespondierte, die unter deutscher Okkupation bzw. Okkupation deutscher Verbündeten gelitten hatte. Einer rücksichtslosen Abrechnung wurden nicht nur Teilnehmer und Kollaborateure des NDH-Regimes unterworfen, sondern auch politische Gegner der KPJ, sowie Großgrundbesitzer, Handwerker und Fabrikanten wurden zu Opfern massenhafter Verfolgungen, was alles unter der Maske des Kampfes gegen Faschisten und Kollaborateure der Besatzungstruppen durchgeführt wurde. Die KPJ organisierte und leitete eine politische Organisation unter dem Namen Volksfront (kroatisch: Narodna fronta, NF), die einige Teile der bürgerlichen Parteien in ihren Rahmen einschloss, darunter auch Teile der Kroatischen Bauernpartei (kroatisch: Hrvatska seljačka stranka, HSS), indem die KPJ vorhergehend statt der alten Führung die neuen früher niedriger rangierten prokommunistisch orientierten Funktionäre installiert hatte, die in der Regel verborgene Mitglieder der KPJ gewesen waren. Alle gesellschaftlichen Organisationen – neben der NF spielten weibliche, jugendliche und gewerkschaftliche Organisationen die Hauptrolle – hatten zur Aufgabe die Verwirklichung des kommunistischen Programms, was in der Öffentlichkeit durch das volksgemeinschaftlichen Programm des

Kampfes um die Volksmacht, die Gesellschaft der sozialen Gerechtigkeit und der gleichberechtigten Nationalverhältnisse verschleiert wurde. Die Parteien, die der NF nicht beigetreten waren oder die führende Rolle der KPJ bestritten hatten, wurden vernichtet. Sehr hohe Prozentsätze bei den Wahlen gewonnener Stimmen der NF wurden in nicht demokratischen Umständen erzielt. Die KPJ behielt allerdings wichtige Bestandteile der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft wie Verfassung, parlamentarische Institutionen und Wahlen, beschränkte aber allmählich das Mehrparteien-Parlamentärsystem und später warf es gänzlich ab, unter dem Vorwand, dass die Parteien enge Interessen der besiegten Klassen vertreten und nationale Auseinandersetzungen aufreizen. Indem sie die Angst durch Repression verbreitete, worin die Hauptrolle die sicherheitspolitische Polizei – die Abteilung für die Schutz des Volkes (kroatisch: Odjeljenje za zaštitu naroda, Ozna) – spielte und durch eine intensive Propaganda mittels staatlicher Medien und Schulen sowie durch Aufsicht des intellektuellen Lebens sicherte sich die KPJ die Unterstützung ihrer Wahlliste und allmählich auch Verehrung der Führer der KPJ, vor allem aber Josip Broz Titos, als Götzen. Nachdem die Guerillaabwehr der sog. Kreuzer (kroatisch: križari) unterdrückt und die Wiederaktivierung der Kroatischen Bauernpartei vereitelt worden war, stellten die Kirchen, und vor allem die Katholische Kirche, eine Drohung gegenüber der kommunistischen totalitären Macht und ihrem Weltanschauungsmonopol dar. Deswegen versuchten die Behörden, die Religion aus dem öffentlichen Leben zurückzudrängen. Gründe für solche Politik der KPJ sind nicht nur im Auferlegen des eigenen politischen und ideologischen Monopols zu suchen, sondern auch in Versuchen der KPJ, durch Unterdrückung von nationalen und religiösen Überzeugungen der Bevölkerung die Stabilität Kroatiens und Jugoslawiens zu befestigen, und zwar vor allem wegen fester Entschlossenheit der Kommunisten, den Alltag so schnell als möglich zu normalisieren, im Krieg vernichtete Gebäuden zu renovieren, Industrie und Städte auszubauen, und auf diese Weise die stark entwickelten kapitalistischen Länder einzuholen und zu übertreffen.

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