

# Towards Croatian Integration into Europe

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The late Croatian President, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, has left a variegated legacy in European and international affairs in the wake of his departure from the historical scene. The paper published in this issue of the journal was delivered in January of 1990, on the cusp of democratic changes in Croatia and the rest of the former Yugoslavia. During this uncertain period, Tuđman was the president of a broad movement and emerging political party in Croatia, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) (independent political parties were only just beginning to be legalized in Croatia).

The paper, *On Historical Necessity and Contradictions between Sovereignty and Integration of European Nations*, was delivered at the "Round Table of Europe" forum, organized by a foreign policy 'think tank' in Austria. The forum was co-hosted by the *Eine Veranstaltung der Politischen Akademie der OVP* and the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Alois Mock, Austria's foreign minister at the time, hosting a reception for participants. In addition to outlining his historical view of European integration, Tuđman used this opportunity to advance the democratic process in former Yugoslavia. Along with the Slovenian participants, Tuđman initiated a resolution calling for democracy in former Yugoslavia, and the application of the right of nations to self-determination. In addition, Tuđman used the forum to inform the broader European public of the remaining political prisoners in Stara Gradiska, and address the issue of democratic changes in Croatia.

The themes that Tuđman addressed are issues which have consistently followed his political, military and scholastic endeav-

ors, and which fall under the general heading of national identity and self-determination. Tudjman's focus on these issues stems from a diverse historical legacy of the unresolved national question in the former Yugoslavia, and the latent national issues that confronted the major European nations after the Second World War. For Tudjman, Yugoslavia had twice been a failure, precisely because it could not resolve the fundamental differences and interests of the disparate nations. Although he did not believe in historical determinism, the national question was one of the paramount issues of modernity, and the emergence of the nation-state a universal form of political organization. The paper he delivered was less a policy statement—although there are also elements of this—but much more a historical elaboration of the crux of the problem facing the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

Tudjman believed that Croatia was part of Europe. Indeed, not even its membership in two Yugoslavias had severed the deep and binding ties that Croatia had with Central Europe. However, he was aware that there was no simple, one-dimensional solution to any complex international or national problem. National self-determination was an imperative in Europe as much as it was in the former Yugoslavia, but there were solutions short of independence and sovereignty. The gradations shifted according to circumstances. In the case of former Yugoslavia, the federation could only survive if it were transformed into an alliance of sovereign states. Otherwise, the nations would disassociate and form independent, sovereign states. These two options were not mutually exclusive, and the political and diplomatic efforts that followed were designed to avoid an escalation of tensions. However, war did ensue, and we were left with the legacy of Slobodan Milosevic's attempt to transform former Yugoslavia into a greater Serbia.

The underlying theme addressed by Tudjman in his paper relates to the contemporary problem confronting Europe: the countervailing process of integration and disintegration. Tudjman's understanding of these processes is reflected in his views that the world is becoming more diverse because there is more pressure to recognize human diversity, despite the ever-increasing integration of the globe at the functional and technological level. Unfortunately, Tudjman stopped with the principle of the nation-state, not because he lacked an understanding of the broader issues relating to identity in late modernity or of the liberal principles of social democracy, but because he believed that it was precisely the question of national identity and self-determination that was antecedent to broader issues of identity, political representations, and ultimately democracy. In addressing the notion of an integrated Europe of nations, Tudjman looked

beyond the state, and saw new forms of political organization on the horizon. These institutions could only be viable if they guaranteed nations and other forms of political community, such as ethnic minorities, sufficient freedom for their development and security. The Europe of the future will necessarily confront these issues. To date, Europe has successfully broached the complex issues relating to identity and integration, a process that is never fully complete, and always in abeyance.

