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**Violations by Party
Members in the City
Committee Files of the
Communist Party of Croatia
in Karlovac, 1946–1953**

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Violations by Party Members in the City Committee Files of the Communist Party of Croatia in Karlovac, 1946–1953

This paper deals with violations by members of Communist Party of Croatia in Karlovac from 1946 to 1953. Several topics will be presented, which include mischievous behavior and issues connected to alcoholism; religion; misappropriation, theft, and embezzlement; and work in coal mines. First goal of this paper is to identify what the violations members were sanctioned for. The second goal is to showcase personal stories of people who were sanctioned to see what in fact happened and what kinds of behavior were sanctioned. The archival material used consists of records of the city committee, basic party organizations, and the Register of Sanctioned Party Members.

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KEYWORDS:

Communist Party of Croatia, party penalties, violations, Karlovac

After the end of the Second World War and the elections held in November 1945, the Communist Party officially came to power in Yugoslavia. The new Yugoslav leadership faced major challenges that needed to be addressed. It came to power in a country ravaged by war, with an almost non-existent economy, nations whose interethnic relations were poisoned by the recent war, and social problems such as poverty, unemployment and unresolved agrarian land reform that had been inherited from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The party had to act quickly and efficiently if it wanted to establish order in the country and society. Returning Yugoslavia to a prewar state was out of the question. The new ruling socialist ideology was utopian at its core, and its main goal was the construction of a future socialist society in which the injustices and problems of the pre-existing capitalist and autocratic system would be overcome. The task of building a new society was placed on the shoulders of the working class and the “working people of the city and the countryside.”¹ In order for revolutionary changes to be put into practice, it was necessary not only to educate the working class, but also to create a new type of socialist man who would strive to build a new society.² However, there was a problem in the ideological interpretation of society’s transformation. The working class could not create a new society on its own. According to the Marxist-Leninist conception, the first step was for the (working) class to become aware of its position in society and the role it could play in changing socio-political relations. In the 1902 work, *What Is to Be Done?*, Lenin took from Kautsky the thesis that the working class will gain greater self-awareness from outside.³ It is worth pointing out that Lenin mentions the possibility that workers can gain self-awareness, but only if they constantly learn and strive to improve their knowledge.⁴ However, it can be concluded that the revolutionary party is the main element that still plays a decisive role in leading revolutionary change.

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The Bolshevik Party set the concept of the avant-garde revolutionary party, and that concept was taken on by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY). This idea that CPY was supposed to lead revolutionary changes in society, politics, and the economy was highlighted at the 5th Congress of the CPY in Belgrade in 1948. In the introduction to his paper on the construction of the socialist economy, Boris Kidrič emphasized these postulates. The CPY Statute of 1948 confirmed the decisions made at the 5th Congress that the party is the “avant-garde” of the working class.⁵ If one agrees with the thesis that the party is the vanguard of the working class, then it follows that its members are the ones who should lead the struggle to build a new society.⁶ But what happened

¹ *Program Komunističke partije Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Borba, 1948), 21.

² Igor Stanić, “Aktivan i odgovoran proizvođač i upravljač. Izgradnja socijalističkog radnika-samoupravljača na primjeru brodogradilišta Uljanik 1960-ih godina,” in *Stvaranje socijalističkog čovjeka. Hrvatsko društvo i ideologija jugoslavenskog socijalizma*, ed. Igor Duda, (Zagreb: Srednja Europa; Pula: Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, 2017), 101.

³ Vladimir Iljič Uljanov Lenjin, “Što da se radi?,” in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Iljič Uljanov Lenjin, *Izabrana djela u deset knjiga* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1963): 6:151–52.

⁴ Lenjin, “Što da se radi?,” 6:152–53.

⁵ Boris Kidrič, “O izgradnji socijalističke ekonomike Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije,” in *V. Kongres Komunističke partije Jugoslavije-Izveštaji i referati* (Zagreb: Kultura, 1948), 417.

⁶ *Statut Komunističke partije Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Borba, 1948), 53.

if the members were not following the party line, and what sorts of behaviors were considered problematic? What were the measures used to combat such individuals? This paper will focus on answering these questions.

The first goal is to identify which violations by party members were sanctioned. The second goal is to showcase personal stories of people who were sanctioned to see what actually happened and what kind of behavior was sanctioned. This paper will deal with party members in the party branch in city of Karlovac between 1946 and 1953. I have chosen this period because of its significant political turmoil, the end of war, the establishment of new authorities, and the 1948 Cominform crisis that left the CPY isolated from its former political allies in central and eastern Europe. The Karlovac party branch was chosen because its enormous increase in membership in postwar period. At the end of the war in 1945, there were only 320 party members in Karlovac County, and by 1952 the number had increased to 2,368.⁷ In only seven years, the number had increased roughly sevenfold.

Party Members and Sanctions in the Postwar Period

In just a few years the Communist Party of Yugoslavia/Croatia (CPY/C) had a large jump in its party membership. At the start of the war, CPY had 12,800 members of which 4,500 were members of the CPC. In 1948, CPC membership jumped to 85,748 members, of whom 32.22 percent were workers, 45.53 percent peasants, 13.62 percent bureaucrats and 2.83 percent intellectuals. In August 1948 of all CPC members, 61,220 had only completed elementary school, 9,692 the first four grades of elementary school, 3,978 had no education, and the rest of the members had completed high school or some higher education. In total 74,892 party members had either only completed elementary school or had no form of education at all. This raises the question of how educate to educate a population about Marxism or any other political, philosophical, or economic theory if it largely consists of people who barely have an elementary school education? From that point of view, it is easy to understand why the party sometimes acted as a tutoring institution for its members, because the uneducated members needed guidance to understand what party wanted, what its core ideals were, and how it wanted to create new socialist society.⁸

With members that were uneducated and could possibly be persuaded to follow someone else (bourgeoisie politicians, Stalinist-Cominform sympathizers, church institutions etc.) party officials had to ensure that party members were in line with the party politically by using certain measures. An example of this was "critique and self-critique" within basic party organizations, which was the first step in showcasing deviations from the party line by certain members.⁹ It was discovered at a party organization meeting that a member had committed a violation (for example a violation of the CPY statute or program, non-compliance with party discipline, immorality, etc.), a warning was issued and sanctions were handed out. Penalties that could be imposed on party members included

⁷ Petar Fleković, "Prilog proučavanju razvoja i djelovanja organizacije KPH i SKH na općini Karlovac od 1945. do 1975. godine," in *Karlovac 1579-1979.*, eds. Tomislav Majetić, Katica Miholović, and Đuro Zatezalo (Karlovac: Historijski arhiv u Karlovcu, 1979), 619.

⁸ Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945-1991* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2006), 229-30.

⁹ Berislav Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2005), 88-89.

reprimands, strict reprimands, strict reprimands with a final warning, removal from party functions, and expulsion (for candidates wishing to join the party, the most severe sanction was to strip them of their candidacy status).¹⁰

When taking a closer look at the literature dealing with postwar Croatia and Yugoslavia that focused on the Communist Party, the crucial point was the Cominform resolution of 1948, which resulted in Yugoslavia breaking with the Soviet Union and its allies. Briefly, it is assumed there were three main reasons that led to the Yugoslav–Soviet split, and all three were of an external political nature: Yugoslav involvement in the Greek Civil War (1946–1949), cooperation with Bulgaria and the issue of federation, and Yugoslav influence in Albania.¹¹

In literature the focus is usually on how the CPY sanctioned suspicious party members for being Cominform sympathizers with exclusion from the party or even sending them to the prison complex Goli otok.¹² Book from historian Martin Previšić *Povijest Golog otoka* is all about how the party members were excluded from membership and how they were serving their prison sentences for disobeying the party regarding the Cominform resolution and Yugoslav–Soviet split.¹³

Other literature is also mostly focused on party sanctions for people who were judged to be Cominform sympathizers, but it is focused on specific social groups. Ivo Banac focused on the student body at the party organization at the University of Zagreb and stated that from 1948 to 1950, about a fifth of party members were expelled, and of those who were expelled, a quarter agreed with all points of the Cominform Resolution.¹⁴ Unfortunately, Banac did not record how many members the party had at the University of Zagreb at the time. Tatjana Šarić also focuses on students at the University of Zagreb and party sanctions mostly related to Cominform. She specifies certain centers for Cominform at the Technical and Economic Faculties in Zagreb. The group at the Technical Faculty expressed that the CPY lacked criticism and self-criticism, democracy, and electability; that it should have gone to the Cominform meeting that the was only partially legal. They also criticized the wastefulness of the Central Committee and Tito, and that the country's leadership was not leading the country into socialism. For these reasons, student party members were sanctioned.¹⁵

A book that goes beyond the Cominform party sactions and expands on the topic of party violations is *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom – Komunistička partija Hrvatske 1945. – 1952.* (Croatia under the Red Star: the Communist Part of Croatia, 1945–1952) by Berislav Jandrić.¹⁶ When discussing party sactions and violations, Jandrić provided a list of things and types of behavior for which the party members were sanctioned. Some of these included losing one's party membership card, running away from work duty at the Raša mines, physical

¹⁰ *Statut Komunističke partije Jugoslavije*, 76.

¹¹ Martin Previšić, *Povijest Golog otoka* (Zagreb: Fraktura, 2019), 48.

¹² Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918–2008*. (Zagreb: Europapress holding, Novi Liber, 2008), 452–55.

¹³ Previšić, *Povijest Golog otoka*.

¹⁴ Ivo Banac, *Sa Staljinom protiv Tita* (Zagreb: Globus, 1990), 153.

¹⁵ Tatjana Šarić, *U vrtlogu komunizma: mladi Hrvatske 1945.–1954.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2017), 386.

¹⁶ Berislav Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2005). See also Berislav Jandrić, "Pojave i oblici kažnjavanja članstva Komunističke partije Hrvatske (1945.–1952.)," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 24, no.1(1992): 135–74.

assault, theft, not paying party dues, baptizing a child, having an affair with a convict, immorality, giving false information, etc.¹⁷ Jandrić did not really provide examples of personal stories from which it is possible to clearly see what transpired and what kind of behavior was sanctioned. Jandrić does give a more thorough view of religion, how it was considered to be incompatible with being a member of the Communist Party,¹⁸ the party's issues with religious members because religious views had become a part of tradition that was hard to change in short period of time.¹⁹ But alas, the people's personal experiences of are missing. I believe the topic of party violations can be expanded upon by bringing personal stories to the center of research, and by trying to showcase why were they sanctioned and what exactly they did to deserve such punishment from the party.

Types of Violations

Jandrić used tables of statistics and information from the archive of the Croatian Institute for History to determine the number of party members who were sanctioned. He focused on determining what kind of penalty the party members received and what social group they belonged to (he used only three social groups: peasants, workers, and others).²⁰ He looked at statistical data that dealt with the counties, and inside the counties, he provided data for city committees. Data for the County of Karlovac show that between 1949 and 1952, there were 717 party members sanctioned by party bodies: 237 in 1949, 211 in 1950, 77 in 1951, and 192 in 1952.²¹

An examination of this table will show the results acquired from city committee files in State Archive of Karlovac dating from 1946 to 1953 with the types of violations the party members committed. Data in following table was obtained through an examination of extant material from the city committee of the CPC Karlovac dated between 1946 and 1953. The information used in the table came from party sanctions,²² lists of party sanctions,²³ and the *Register of Sanctioned Members of the CPC CC Karlovac, 1949–1952*.²⁴

There is a slight difference between Jandrić's findings and this table regarding the total number of sanctions. Some of the reasons for this may be that some documents from the state archive in Karlovac are missing, or the local party branches in Karlovac were not agile enough to take precise statistical records.

¹⁷ Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom*, 103–04.

¹⁸ Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom*, 92–97.

¹⁹ Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom*, 93.

²⁰ Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom*, 109–40.

²¹ Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom*, 119–22.

²² HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Kutija 10.

²³ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Lista kažnjenih članova od 1946–1948; Lista kažnjenih članova za 1949.; Lista kažnjenih članova za 1950, 1951 i 1953. godinu, Kutija 10.

²⁴ HR-DAKA-317-1 Registar kažnjenih članova KP GK Karlovac 1949–1952.

Type of violation	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	%	Total
Violation of Party Statute	1	8	1	66	138	120	98	16	65,97%	448
Alcoholism	1	1	1	11	9	3	18	5	7,22%	49
Religion	0	0	2	5	6	5	17	4	5,75%	39
Malversation	0	0	0	3	1	8	9	12	4,86%	33
Theft	0	1	0	2	5	7	14	2	4,56%	31
Immorality	0	0	0	4	0	4	9	5	3,24%	22
Embezzlement	0	0	1	0	1	2	3	2	1,33%	9
Collaboration	0	2	0	2	1	1	2	0	1,18%	8
Cominform	0	0	0	2	1	2	2	0	1,03%	7
Marriage issues	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	0,88%	6
Violence	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0,74%	5
Falsification	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0,74%	5
Raša Mines	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0,74%	5
Housing issue	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0,44%	3
Speculation	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0,44%	3
Smuggling	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0,44%	3
Improper ransom	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0,29%	2
Nationalism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,15%	1
Total	2	12	5	101	175	154	181	49	100%	679

Table 1. Types of party members violations from 1946 to 1953

From the data is clear that 3/4 of offenses in Karlovac were related to violations of the party statute. Most of the offenses in that category were related to not paying party dues, not attending meetings, not carrying out party tasks, not establishing connections with the party organization, and withdrawing from the process to become an official party member. Other violations included being Cominform sympathizers, improper withholding of agricultural products from organized purchasing (specifically livestock), collaboration, marital problems, and immorality. Immorality was a category related to cohabitation outside of marriage, frequently changing partners, or cheating on a partner. Marriage as a category refers to cases where partners have been arguing, one partner has cheated on the other, or they got married for profit. Collaboration refers to those party members who were in Quisling units (Ustaše, Četnici, Domobrani) during the Second World War, or people who deserted the partisan movement. Cases of speculation and falsification have been recorded only on the census lists and in the *Register of Sanctioned Party Members*, yet there are no preserved examples in

the records from which one can reconstruct what actually happened. According to the *Party Register of Convicts*, falsification refers to falsifying vouchers for clothing or food.²⁵ The same problem exists for the category of violence. Only a few examples were recorded, and some of them were related to alcoholism. Nationalism was recorded only once in the *Register of Sanctioned Party Members*.

Unfortunately, as was previously mentioned, it is not possible to present some of these issues through adequate examples because they have not been found in the archive materials. Therefore, in the second part of the paper, the following violations related to alcoholism; religion; misappropriation, theft, and embezzlement; and refusing to work in the Raša mines will be presented.

Alcoholism and Public Intoxication

After violating the party statute, alcoholism was by far the most common behavior that was sanctioned. In what is now Croatia, alcoholism began to be treated as a social and health problem at the beginning of the 20th century. The first book on alcoholism (*Alcoholism and the Question of the Working Class*) was published in 1913 by a society based in Karlovac.²⁶ The pioneer of public healthcare in Croatia, Andrija Štampar, participated in a campaign to combat excessive alcohol consumption. In 1931, the School of Public Health and the Yugoslav Alliance of Sobriety published a second and expanded edition of Štampar's *Narodna čitanka o alkoholu* (A People's Reader on Alcohol). The first edition was published in 1919. This book is important because it treats alcoholism as a broader social issue that affects different social groups, but mostly the lower classes.²⁷

In her study *The Yugoslav Family in Transformation*, Vera St. Erlich looks at the situation of rural families in the countryside in interwar Yugoslavia. One of the chapters is also devoted to alcoholism, and there Erlich put forward some interesting hypotheses as to why alcoholism was so prevalent in the countryside. One of the main reasons why excessive alcohol consumption occurs is a poor, monotonous, and insufficient diet, and even lack of drinking water was given as a reason why alcohol consumption increases.²⁸

During the first postwar years the philosophy of medical healthcare in Yugoslavia was to emphasize the importance of social medicine as the basis of good health for the citizens of Yugoslavia.²⁹ One of the social and medical problems was alcoholism. In March of 1950, Dr. Ivan Hercog at Rebro Hospital in Zagreb gave a lecture about how the capitalist mode of production was preventing successful struggles with alcoholism because the system and the state protected large alcohol factories and innkeepers. Under socialism, these

²⁵ HR-DAKA-317-1 Registar kažnjenih članova KP GK Karlovac 1949-1952.

²⁶ Ivan Kiseljak, *Alkoholizam i radničko pitanje* (Karlovac: Društvo apstinenata u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji, 1913).

²⁷ Željko Dugac, *Kako biti čist i zdrav - Zdravstveno prosvjeđivanje u međuratnoj Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2010), 75.

²⁸ Vera St. Erlich, *Jugoslavenska porodica u transformaciji* (Zagreb: Liber, 1971), 321.

²⁹ Mat Savelli, "Diseased, Depraved or just Drunk? The Psychiatric Panic over Alcoholism in Communist Yugoslavia," *Social History of Medicine* 25, no. 2 (May 2012), 465.

obstacles would be overcome, and alcoholism would be kept under control because it destroys not just the individual but also the community.³⁰

This line of reasoning was similar to the explanation for alcoholism in the Soviet Union. In Soviet magazines a work by Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England, 1844* was used because in it, Engels explains that poor living conditions, low levels of education, the impossibility of providing a better life for their children, etc. were the reasons that pushed workers to alcoholism.³¹ So to overcome the burden of alcoholism, the abolition of capitalism was a requirement. But in reality, even people in the Soviet Union mostly continued to consume alcohol, as was demonstrated in the 1950s when a study showed that the reasons for alcohol consumption were both social and cultural, because in some social circles, drinking was considered to be a sign of masculinity and acceptance in a group.³² Nevertheless, alcoholism in the Soviet Union was seen as a sign of weakness. Alcoholics were described as freeloaders because they: "took more than they gave and refused to join proletarian labor. They stood as remnants of capitalist decadence."³³ We will see if these official explanations of alcoholism were applicable in Yugoslav cases.

Alcoholism was also linked to other offenses such as insults, violent behavior, and other incidents. The first example is from July 1949 when a party member from the Karlovac Iron and Steel Products Factory, identified only as I.B., was fined for drunkenness, breaking glasses, and fighting. The incident occurred when the factory's Basic Party Organization (BPO) organized a celebration in Ozalj to celebrate the execution of the factory's semester plan. I.B. got drunk at the celebration and started smashing glasses, which elicited strong reactions from his comrades. I.B. responded to their criticism by physically attacking them. When he returned to Karlovac, he claimed that he would surely be expelled from the party after this incident.³⁴ I.B. stated at the hearing that he knew drunkenness was bad, and that he had tarnished the party's reputation. He tried to justify the incident by claiming that he was around other people, and that when he gets drunk, it is best to leave him alone.³⁵

It is worth noting that at the hearing I.B. was questioned not only about his alcoholism, but also about not obeying party discipline, refusing to attend party meetings, and leaving the logging work in the forest earlier than expected. This logging incident happened when the BPO at the factory was deciding who would go into the forest to help gather wood, I.B. was voted on and he agreed. When he was asked why he had left, he responded that it was said the voluntary brigade would stay in the forest for twenty days, after they arrived it had been extended to two months. Of the thirty party members that came to help, nine of

³⁰ Hercog I., "Borba protiv alkoholizma u socijalističkoj državi," *Liječnički vjesnik* 72, no. 6-7 (June-July 1950), 261.

³¹ Vera Efron, "The Soviet Approach to Alcoholism," *Social Problems* 7, no. 4 (Spring 1960), 309.

³² Mark G. Field, "Alcoholism, Crime, and Delinquency in Soviet Society," *Social Problems* 3, no. 2 (Oct. 1955): 104.

³³ Timothy P. Rouse and N. Prabha Unnithan, "Comparative Ideologies and Alcoholism: The Protestant and Proletarian Ethics," *Social Problems* 40, no. 2 (May 1993), 220.

³⁴ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni za I.B., Karlovac, July 28, 1949.

³⁵ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Izjava I.B. Karlovac, August 19, 1949.

them were party secretaries, which he thought was wrong.³⁶ He did not explain why he thought party secretaries being in attendance was wrong, but maybe the secretaries were only overseeing the forest work while others were working.

There is no explanation of what was happening during forest work either, but newspaper articles from that era indicate there were certain issues that could have been the reasons why people rejected joining the forest working brigades. The forestry industry lacked workers, so people were called, mainly by the *Narodna fronta* (People's Front)³⁷ and CPY/CPC to join and help with the logging. Some wood companies did not pay working brigades for this, and some were late with payments by several months.³⁸ There were also instances of working brigades having inadequate accommodation. For example, a brigade from Perušić was stationed at a barracks that did not have any straw mattress for beds. One brigade from Donji Lapac stayed in the forest without food for three to four days, even though an article claimed there were enough food supplies in the company's warehouses. Sanitary conditions at some working sites were poor, some did not even have first aid supplies, and there were even instances of workers intentionally destroying their tools, which happened in brigades in Ogulin and Ličko Petrovo Selo. The explanation for this was that the destruction was a result of poor ideological and political training for the workers.³⁹ So it is possible that when I.B. came to the work site in the forest, that there were some problems that caused him to leave earlier than planned. Nevertheless, he was punished with expulsion from the party for breaking discipline and getting drunk.⁴⁰

The following case shows that criteria for some offenses were different. Level of punishment depended mostly on the BPO in which the offense was discussed. Party member J.P. from the State Security Service (*Uprava državne bezbjednosti, UDB*) was sanctioned several times for alcoholism and causing incidents. The first time he was given a warning was on December 15, 1949 for getting drunk at an unnamed restaurant, pulling out a gun and threatening those running out of the building in fear. In January 1950, J.P. got drunk again, and the comrades he was drinking with took his gun and started firing it. When J.P. saw this he began to argue with them in a drunken state, but then withdrew when he saw that was outnumbered.⁴¹ After that incident, he was given a severe reprimand. J.P. was sanctioned for the third time, again for being intoxicated, in January 1951, this time with a severe party reprimand with a final warning. The reasons for his intoxication were recorded in the party minutes. According to the minutes, J.P. had become agitated after the death of his four children. Nevertheless, he

³⁶ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Izjava I.B. Karlovac, August 19, 1949.

³⁷ On People's Front see Branko Petranović, "Osnivački kongres Narodnog fronta Jugoslavije," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 12. no. 1(1980): 5-15.

³⁸ "Neki nedostaci u šumsko-industrijskim poduzećima koče aktivizaciju radne snage," *Novi život*, February 11, 1950, 2.

³⁹ "Za ostvarenje plana aktivizacije radne snage za drvenu industriju od velike važnosti je pravilan prihvat sa radištima," *Novi život*, May 12, 1950, 2.

⁴⁰ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni za I.B., Karlovac, July 28, 1949.

⁴¹ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni "strogi ukor" za J.P., Karlovac, January 28, 1950.

was sanctioned with a severe party reprimand with a final warning.⁴² There is no record of what happened to him afterward.

Work pressure was also a reason why people were deciding to self-medicate with alcohol. F. K., an officer in the Yugoslav Army who had been assigned to work for a military construction company called Tempo, got drunk with several of his comrades after their shift at the company storage facility. Around midnight he went to his office and demanded to be brought several workers who were imprisoned there. Whether these workers were prisoners of war or just some convicts serving out their sentence was not clarified, but we do know that he was beating these workers and forcing them to admit they were "Ustaše." He broke one worker's tooth and forced another one to lie down on the floor so he could stomp on him. Workers reported this officer, and soon enough BPO conducted an investigation and found F.K. guilty. Officer F.K. had already been sanctioned twice with a reprimand and a strict reprimand (for which violations was not recorded), and this time he received a reprimand with a final warning. The accused officer admitted he had been drunk and had beaten the workers. In his defense, he claimed that he had gotten drunk because of too much pressure from work and because he did not feel qualified to be an officer in command of the work unit he had been assigned. He also apologized for damaging the party's status in society. Despite the penalty, BPO gave the officer one more chance, saying they believed F.K. would behave better in the future and would thus prove he was worthy of being a member of the Communist Party.⁴³

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All of these cases had a connection between alcohol consumption and some type of violent behavior. For the UDB officer, it was claimed that his mental health had deteriorated because of the death of his four children, and the military officer felt inadequate for the job had been assigned. In both cases, the sanctions were not so severe, considering the violent behavior that followed their intoxication. The question is why? Why was the worker in the first example expelled, while the other two remained in the party? Jandrić claimed in his book that most of the time it the type of sanction given depended on the BPO, and that sanctions were inconsistent, and in some instances resulted from people's voluntary actions.⁴⁴ One could thus say that people in the BPOs were closer to these two individuals in the UDB and the Tempo company than the one in the Iron and Steel Products Factory, so they didnot want to punish their comrades so harshly. It is a possibility, but it cannot be proven based on archival sources.

Is the explanation alcoholism having capitalist roots suitable for these examples? In these three cases, it does not seem to be, but some parts can be used with certain adjustments. First, no connection was found in archive sources that these individuals were punished because alcoholism was seen as being reminiscent of capitalism. Their sanctions were a combination of several other violations, and in all three cases there was a connection between intoxication and violence. It is only possible to say that the behavior combined with intoxication was

⁴² HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Zapisnik izvanredne sjednice UDB-e za grad Karlovac o slučaju druga J.P., March 5, 1951.

⁴³ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Komitet II. dionice V.G.P Tempo, Strogi partijski ukor sa posljednjom opomenom za oficira F.K., Karlovac, November 7, 1950.

⁴⁴ Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom*, 89, 99.

characterized as being disgraceful and damaging to the party status in society, but there is no clear connection with capitalism. Second, traditionalism/cultural values are not directly mentioned in regard to intoxication, but from context it is clear that traditional values and cultural customs did provide an opportunity for intoxication (as in the example of the celebration in Ozalj). The custom that alcohol is consumed at celebrations is probably connected with cultural values and customs inherited from the past. As for the other two examples, alcohol was used as a way to “calm the nerves,” and this way of treating alcohol as a kind of cure is surely something that these men learned at some point in their lives. The connection between alcoholism and violent behavior was noticed in all three cases, which is interesting how these two types of behavior are intertwined.

Religion

Religion appears as the second most common violation in party records. The term religion here does not refer to a specific religion or religious institution, but to the intimacy of the party members toward religion, which includes celebrating religious holidays, going to church for Mass, baptizing children, and getting married in religious institutions. Religion was characterized as something that was not compatible with being a member of the Communist Party. From the party ideological perspective religion was seen as an ideological apparatus for the ruling classes against the oppressed masses. Furthermore, religious institutions were part of the ruling classes and regimes, and religion in a multinational state can potentially be used as a tool for hatred between nationalities.⁴⁵

Therefore, party members who continued to practice and show religious inclinations were labeled as deviants and outsiders and were sanctioned for their behavior. But the religious issue proved to be much more difficult to resolve, mostly because it has become a traditional value that has been passed on from generation to generation, and party members were still following the steps of their ancestors. It went so far that party members who showed religious sentiments were categorized in three groups: a) Those who believed in God and the priests and went to church because they believed they had to go; b) Members who hated the clergy and Church, but still believed in God, read religious literature, but do not go to church because of party discipline; c) Party members who believed they had cut their ties with God and the Church, but for opportunistic reasons went to church, got married in the church, baptized their children, etc.⁴⁶

On December 18, 1948, the Karlovac city committee organized a session with the main topic being “The Issue of the 25th Day.” Anton Krčevski, the organizational secretary opened the session by stating that December 25th would be a big test for the party. This day would not be celebrated as a holiday and would still be a work day. Therefore, each party organization had to ensure that as many party members and workers as possible come to work. All party members were expected to be present at work, and it was expected that somewhere between 25 and 50 percent of non-party members would show up at work on Christmas Day. The predictions were that if the number of people who came to work on Christmas Day kept increasing, that holiday would eventually become

⁴⁵ Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji*, 98–99.

⁴⁶ Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom*, 93.

a relic of the past. A party secretary named Granapa stressed that the same measures would be in place for both Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christmas.⁴⁷

The list of those sanctioned in 1949 shows there were two party members who had decided to stay at home the previous year to celebrate Christmas rather than coming to work. Both were sanctioned with a severe reprimand.⁴⁸ Party organizations did not punish their members equally for their religious practices. For example, the BPO in Velika Jelsa (part of Karlovac County) sought the expulsion of D. B. in 1952 because she had baptized her child in church. The city committee reduced it to a severe reprimand because it considered it to be too severe for such an offense.⁴⁹ On the other hand, in the same year, there was the case of D.P., a worker at the Ivo Marinković Leather Industry Factory, who was expelled from the party because he openly stated at a party meeting that he intended to get married in church and no longer wished to be a party member.⁵⁰ At a session in July 1953, the BPO of the railway station in Karlovac discussed railway workers attitudes toward religion. One member had been expelled because he got married in church, and now another party member, M. Đ., wanted to do the same. Such individuals were called "hesitants" because they were influenced by the environment. It was also noted that M.Đ. was doing this for financial reasons because his future wife had a few of acres of land as part of her dowry.⁵¹

There was a tendency for BPOs to sanction their members more severely, and when the problem was escalated to the party level at the city committee, the sanctions were reduced. This was the case for another example from the BPO of the railway station in Karlovac, who found out that P.B. had secretly married on Christmas Eve December 24, 1951. P.B. said that he knew this was not in accordance with the party line, but that his wife's parents had pressured him into it, and he had gone along with it out of love for his wife. The local railway committee found him guilty and proposed a severe reprimand before expulsion.⁵² The city committee disagreed with such a harsh sanction because they thought that it was too much for this offense, and they lowered it to a strict reprimand.⁵³

It is interesting to see how higher party bodies reduced the sanctions while the BPOs were sometimes stricter in their judgments of their comrades. One of the reasons why higher party institutions lowered the sentences could have been for tactical reasons. From 1945 to 1953, the Communist Party managed to push the Church away from being the central institution and into the social

⁴⁷ HR-DAKA-317-1-3 Zapisnici sastanaka biroa, plenuma i izvanrednih sastanaka 1948-1951. Kutija 2, Zapisnik sjednice GK KPH Karlovac, December 18, 1948.

⁴⁸ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Lista kažnjenih članova K.P. 1949. godine, 7.

⁴⁹ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Slučaj D.B., Karlovac, April 4, 1952.

⁵⁰ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Isključenje D.P-a, Karlovac, August 21, 1952.

⁵¹ HR-DAKA-317-1-5 Kontrolna komisija - Osnovne partijske organizacije T-Ž, Kutija 9, Zapisnik OPO Željezničke stanice Karlovac, July 25, 1953, 1.

⁵² HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Kazna P.B., Karlovac, February 29, 1952.

⁵³ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Kazna P.B., Karlovac, March 22, 1952.

margins, and religious customs were left to the private sphere.⁵⁴ This meant that religious institutions could not pose a threat to the socialist regime, which had then been consolidated. Thus, the explanation for reducing some of the party's sanctions might have been that the Church had been pushed out of its the position of power in society, so then why should the party push the party members into the arms of the Church, which was already at the margins of society? It would be better to give warning or reduce the severity of the sanctions for party members then to expel them from the party and isolate them. This way, the party could be somewhat certain that members would remain loyal to the regime rather than the Church, and also keep an eye on their behavior and keep track of what they were doing. In 1953, the situation between church and state normalized with a new law about the legal position of religious communities, and the struggle continued over ideological and political ideas rather than administrative measures.⁵⁵

Malversation, Embezzlement, and Theft

The three types of offenses referred to malversation, embezzlement and theft were very similar but differed according to some details. Malversation and embezzlement were criminal offenses related to the workplace, while theft did not have to be connected performing one's job. In contemporary terminology, malversation and embezzlement (or theft if it happened at the workplace) could be described as "worker deviance," which meant that these types of behavior violated "organizational norms, and in so doing, threatened the well-being of an organization, its members, or both."⁵⁶ As previous examples demonstrated, two people who committed the same offense did not necessarily receive the same sanction from party, depending on whether they were part of the BPO. However, it should be noted that the extant documents contain no explanations for why these party members had engaged in acts of malversation, embezzlement, or theft. Even the accused members themselves did not provide any explanations. So, unfortunately, this article will only describe what members did without providing any reasons or explanations for their behavior.

Although theft was not necessarily related to any particular occupation, it typically occurred in the workplace. For example, in May 1951, a worker named S.B. stole a blanket (cloak) and a pallet from the Tempo military construction company. He also helped other workers steal items, but before that he had received a 1,500-dinar bribe from them. The defendant was expelled.⁵⁷ I.K., a factory worker at the Edvard Kardelj Factory in Karlovac was expelled in 1950 for stealing a bicycle and because he had failed to inform the party organization of criminal proceedings being conducted against him.⁵⁸ S.V. was expelled as a party candidate because he had stolen money from the people he lived with, and

⁵⁴ Dejan Segić, "Komunisti na periferiji: između socijalističke ideologije i tradicionalizma," *Kontinuiteti i inovacije*, eds. Anita Buhin and Tina Filipović (Zagreb: Srednja Europa; Pula: Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, 2021), 82.

⁵⁵ Segić, "Komunisti na periferiji," 82.

⁵⁶ Sandra L. Robinson and Rebecca J. Bennett, "A typology of deviant workplace behaviours: A multidimensional scaling study," *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (1995): 556.

⁵⁷ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Zapisnik sjednice VGP Tempo, Karlovac, May 10, 1951.

⁵⁸ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni I.K. OPO Edvard Kardelj, Karlovac, June 5, 1950.

had come to work several time while he was intoxicated (he worked at the Wood Industry Karlovac).⁵⁹

Punishments for embezzlement were very strict usually resulted in expulsion, or the cases were given to local militia or judicial bodies. A case of embezzlement was recorded in the People's Militia. S. Č., a policeman, was accused of abusing his official position during a seizure. During a search of an area, he had seized rifles, pistols, and some other items, and instead of leaving them at the police station had hidden them for himself. For this he was removed as a party candidate.⁶⁰ Another recorded case of embezzlement dealt with the intendant at the Edvard Kardelj School in Karlovac. The defendant, Lj. T., was expelled in 1950 for embezzlement. He had worked at the school as a quartermaster and received invoices for meat from the Grenap store, but the store also sold other commodities. He also received invoices for individual items from the store that were higher than their actual prices and kept the difference for himself. Lj. T. was already in prison for embezzlement at the time he was sanctioned and expelled from the party.⁶¹ D.S., who worked at Pokupje Enterprise's warehouse, was also sanctioned for embezzlement because he had misappropriated sixteen tons of animal forage. He had also stolen food from workers' rations and given it to private owners who lived near the warehouse. For these violations he was expelled from the party.⁶²

The local party committees also interfered if they discovered that their members had been engaging in illegal activity while not at work. This was the case for I. Ž., who was found guilty of the malversation of property when he sold land for a lower price than its estimated value. The case was first introduced at the Elektra company's local party organization⁶³ and was then sent to the city committee, who called the accused in for questioning. According to the records, I. Ž. said he had been planning to buy a new house. He found a house and made an agreement with the Bednar family that was selling the property to buy their house for 220,000 dinars. When they were signing the purchase contract at the lawyer's office, they agreed to reduce the price to 195,000 dinars to avoid paying a higher tax. He claimed he did this at the property owners' insistence, and his friend M.M. had allegedly done the same thing when he was buying a house for himself. Fifteen days later he realized he had engaged in tax evasion and contacted the Bednars to change the contract to the real price of 220,000 dinars, but they refused to do so. He also explained that he had gotten the money

⁵⁹ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o isključenju S.V. Pogon Galanterija Drvnog industrijskog poduzeća Karlovac, Karlovac, October 12, 1951.

⁶⁰ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni S. Č.-a. Kotarski komitet Novska, Karlovac, November 17, 1950.

⁶¹ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni Lj. T. OPO Edvard Kardelj, Karlovac, February 27, 1952.

⁶² HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni S.D.-a. Gradski komitet KPH Karlovac, September 21, 1951.

⁶³ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni I. Ž. Partijska ćelija Elektra, Karlovac, June 27, 1949.

for the new house by selling land in Žugčeva Gorica for 200,000 dinars, and he had borrowed the remaining 20,000 from a friend.⁶⁴ He was found guilty and expelled as a party candidate.⁶⁵

The Raša Mines

Refusals by party members to work at the Raša mines was interpreted as a violation of party discipline. The Raša mines were located on the Istrian peninsula and anthracite (black coal) was exploited there. A mining colony was built under Italian governance in 1936–1937 and was used during the Yugoslav period.⁶⁶ The Raša mines were an economic issue that Yugoslav industry depended on, especially after the Yugoslav–Soviet Split in 1948 that had left Yugoslavia economic isolated. The split had an impact on Yugoslavia's ability to obtain the resources it needed for its industry. In order to overcome this, emphasis was placed on exploiting Yugoslav mines. At a session of the city committee for CPC Karlovac held the beginning of December 1948, Dušan Dragosavac, a member of the CPC central committee, read out a letter from Aleksandar Ranković and the CPY central committee warning about the dire situation in the mines and the lack of workers, which could eventually lead to coal shortages that would bring traffic and industry to a halt. Dragosavac pointed out that the labor shortages were due to the release of German prisoners of war who had returned to their homeland. Another issue was that non-party members at the mines were executing work plans at only 50 percent success rates, and party members were achieving only 10 percent, which he considered unacceptable. The plan was to send about 2,500 Communists to the mines to fill the labor shortage.⁶⁷ These shortages at the Raša mines had also been discussed earlier at the Communist Party of Croatia's Politburo meeting in July 1948. The problems listed then were inadequate workforce allocation and the Swabians' upcoming departure.⁶⁸ In order to fill the gap in the workforce and to keep industry and transportation running (and probably also to boost public morale by showcasing how the Communists were making sacrificing and doing everything in their power to keep the country's industry and transport running, despite economic and political isolation) the party decided to appeal to its members to work in Yugoslav mines.

There was also a campaign in Karlovac for volunteers to work in the mines. In late autumn 1949, the local newspaper *Novi život* (New life) published articles about volunteer work brigades being assembling to work in Yugoslav mines. Sometimes these articles even appeared on the front page. There is an example of this from October 22, 1949, in which *Novi život* ran an article titled "At the Invitation of the Party, Throughout our Area, Laborers are Enthusiastically Joining Brigades to Work in the Mines." This article reported that Karlovac County had been obligated to send 357 volunteers to volunteer work brigades being sent

⁶⁴ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Zapisnik sa ispitivanja I.Ž. Gradski komitet KPH Karlovac, May 14, 1949.

⁶⁵ HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni I.Ž. Partijska ćelija Elektra, Karlovac, June 27, 1949.

⁶⁶ Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918–2008*, 437.

⁶⁷ HR-DAKA-317-1-3 Kutija 2, Zapisnici sastanaka biroa, plenuma i izvanrednih sastanaka 1948–1951. Zapisnik sjednice GK KPH Karlovac, December 10, 1948, 1.

⁶⁸ *Zapisnici Politbira Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske 1945 – 1952*. ed. Branislava Vojnović (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2005), 1: 494–95.

to the mines. Volunteers were divided into three brigades and were supposed to remain at the mines for three months (from November 1949 until January of 1950) to help miners to fulfill their plans. The first brigade consisting of 107 men was to be sent to the Raša mines, a second brigade of 65 brigadiers went to Konjščina, and a third with 185 volunteers went to the Ivanić mines. The article stated that workers, peasants, and intellectuals from the Communist Party and the People's Front were responding to the party's appeal and joining the work brigades. They gave an example of the Karlovac Leather Factory from which sixteen Communists applied to work in the mines when only ten were needed. Some of them were current university students, but according to the article, they would not go to because they had a duty to complete their education. Yet three of them insisted they be allowed to go.⁶⁹ This article was clearly meant to showcase party members responding to the party's call, and they were prepared to overcome any obstacle standing in the way of building the socialism, even if it meant working in the mines.

When the first volunteer work brigade left Karlovac for the Raša mines, *Novi život* published a telegram about which brigade send to Josip Broz Tito. This telegram perfectly summarized the economic and political goals for these volunteer work brigades. As stated in the telegram, they would fulfill their duty for economic reasons, and they would extract enough coal for the first five-year plan to be completed. The political reasons given were that Cominform and Soviet slanders against building socialism in Yugoslavia would not stop them to from working and would only give them extra incentive to work in the mines.⁷⁰ Thus, as previously stated, economic burdens and political isolation caused by Cominform forced Yugoslavia to seek resources in its own country. Since there was a shortage in the workforce, they turned to the party members and the People's Front to fill the gap.

Information from party documents indicates that some party members refused to go, and a table indicates that a total of five members were fined because of the Raša mine. Of these, three escaped from the mine after they arrive, and two simply refused to go.⁷¹ No reasons are given in the party documents as to why the party members refused to work. There are just some short notes stating they were sanctioned for disobeying party instructions to work in the Raša mines. Only exception was a case involving the worker E.K. from the Wood Industry Company who, apart from being careless about other party duties, refused to go to Raša, claiming that his poor financial state would not allow him to go. Even though he was told that he would get larger paycheck if he went to work in Raša, he still refused. He was sanctioned by being stripped of his candidacy status and expelled from the party.⁷² Nevertheless, refusal to work was sanctioned as a sign of disobedience and unwillingness to put forth enough effort to help the

⁶⁹ "Na poziv Partije širom naše oblasti trudenici s oduševljenjem stupaju u brigade za rad u rudnicima," *Novi život*, October 22, 1949, 1.

⁷⁰ "Iz Karlovca je otišla na rad u rudnike prva brigada od 107 dobrovoljaca," *Novi život*, October 29, 1949, 4.

⁷¹ HR-DAKA-317-1 Registar kažnjenih članova KP GK Karlovac 1949-1952. HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Lista kažnjenih članova za 1950. godinu.

⁷² HR-DAKA-317-1-6 Kontrolna komisija, Kutija 10, Partijske kazne B-Ž, Odluka o partijskoj kazni za E.K. OPPO pri Drvno industrijskom poduzeću Karlovac, October 10, 1951.

country when it was lacking coal for industry and simultaneously under attack by Cominform and USSR.

Conclusion

The aims of this article were to identify which violations party members were sanctioned for, to showcase the personal stories of people who were sanctioned, and to see what actually happened and what behavior they were sanctioned for. The goal was also to expand the topic of party violations by bringing personal stories into a focus for research.

There were in total 679 violations that were sanctioned by the party between from 1946 and 1953. Jandrić, whose statistics on party sanctions were cited early, stated there were 717 party members sanctioned between 1949 and 1952. There is a possibility that documents from the state archive in Karlovac are missing, or the local party branches in Karlovac did not keep precise records. Incidents, issues, and behavior that were sanctioned as violations of the party statute included alcoholism and public intoxication, religion, malversation, theft, immorality, embezzlement, collaboration, Cominform, marriage issues, violence, falsification, issues involving the Raša mines, housing issues, speculation, smuggling, improper withholding, and nationalism. For some violations there were no examples mentioned in the original documents. Thus, the second part of the article presented violations related to alcoholism and public intoxication; religion, malversation, theft, and embezzlement; and refusing to work in the Raša mine.

Communist Party sanctions for certain behaviors seemed more like instructional measures based on the assumption that these sanctions would send a message to other party members. It was as if party officials were trying to say, "If you behave like this, here's what you'll get!" It is important to note that sanctions were doled out inconsistently and their severity varied from one BPO to the next. These inconsistencies in party sanctions give an impression that perhaps party discipline in certain BPOs was not so strict to begin with. Sure, when the issue involved Cominform, the party reacted strongly, but this has already been demonstrated in the literature, there is no need to deny that. The party line was not always on point, and it varied. Perhaps personal relationships played a certain role, but there is no indication of this in party documents, this cannot be relied on. The section on religion demonstrated how sanctions of party members were sometimes reduced. If the party really wanted these members expelled, then the city committee would simply agree with the BPOs' decision and could have easily kicked them out. But this did not happen, which means someone in the party hierarchy within the city committee understood that creating enemies and pushing people away from the Communist Party would do more bad than good in the long run. These sanctions also served as instructional measures and a tool for thinning out party membership while retaining those considered to be the best would do the most work to benefit the party.

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