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**The Use of History: The
Construction and Role of
Monuments in the Building
of a Socialist Society – The
Case of Petrova Gora**

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The Use of History: The Construction and Role of Monuments in the Building of a Socialist Society – The Case of Petrova Gora¹

This paper examines the policy of monument construction in socialist Yugoslavia, focusing on their function as sites of collective memory of the People's Liberation Struggle, as well as their broader, multifaceted role, exemplified by the monument at Petrova Gora. Special attention is given to the ways in which the state regime's use of history contributed to the construction and reinforcement of the ruling ideology. The legacy of the People's Liberation Struggle, understood also as a socialist revolution, played a crucial role in legitimizing communist authority and shaping socialist ideology. Within this context, monuments functioned not only as commemorative spaces but also as instruments of cultural, educational, and touristic development. Petrova Gora, as a site of historical significance and a symbol of Yugoslav brotherhood and unity, serves as a paradigmatic example of the entanglement of memory politics, regional development, and ideological formation aimed at creating the new socialist man.

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KEYWORDS:

socialism, cultural memory, monuments, socialist man, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Petrova gora, People's Liberation Struggle

¹ This article is based on: Tin Celner, "Petrova gora i Narodnooslobodilačka borba: od povijesti do upotrebe povijesti," MA thesis (Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, 2024), <https://repozitorij.unipu.hr/islandora/object/unipu:9833>.

“It was in the land of peasants, in the rolling Balkans: in the forests and the mountains of Yugoslavia, that monuments to the most significant events of the People’s Liberation Struggle were sprouting, hypertrophied and as pagan as Stonehenge, whose proportions they often surpassed.”² Although this description of monuments to the People’s Liberation Struggle (NOB) built during the socialist Yugoslavia era, taken from the *Lexicon of YU Mythology*, is not scientifically founded, it is perhaps the best and most vivid description of how monuments were built across Yugoslavia.

Monuments of this type were created in postwar Yugoslavia as places of remembrance and the commemoration of individual events, locations, individuals, and organizations from the time of the NOB, and in a broader sense they served the new communist government as a constant reminder of its necessity, thereby legitimizing the regime.³ Brotherhood and unity, born from the shared struggle of different nations during the NOB, along with the NOB itself, which was also considered a socialist revolution, now become the ideological foundations of the new socialist state and society, a collective integrative element of the nationally diverse Yugoslavia. It is not surprising then that the slogan became the official narrative and the foundation for building a collective memory of the war, in the shadow of which lay the suppressed civil war taking place parallel to the NOB and the socialist revolution.⁴

Monuments were initially built haphazardly and on a local level, spurred by individuals or the Partisan veterans organized in the Union of Veterans of the People’s Liberation War (SUBNOR), which was responsible for creating the official narrative related to war history. It is not surprising that by the early 1960s, there were about 14,000 monuments and memorial objects spread throughout Yugoslavia.⁵ Later, especially during the 1970s, monuments were built that surpassed Stonehenge in proportions, and with their futuristic forms projected an image of a society leaping toward modernization. In addition to using the history of the NOB for ideological purposes, there was an attempt to integrate this history into local tourist offers, thereby contributing to the economic development of the region.⁶ The perfect example of the construction of a monument, a memorial park that would serve as a place of the commemoration of the partisan struggle and the legitimation of the political system in which it was created, but also as a force of development in the region, is Petrova Gora. During World War II, on the territory of Croatia, the Petrova Gora mountain in the Kordun region was the important hub of an uprising and an area of the constant activity of multiethnic partisan units, and their organizations and institutions.

² Vladimir Arsenijević and Iris Andrić, eds., *Leksikon YU mitologije* (Zagreb and Beograd: Postscriptum and Rende, 2012), 367.

³ Milan Rakita, *Prostorno-političke i memorijalne infrastrukture SFRJ* (Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe, 2022), 76-77.

⁴ Heike Karge, “Local Practices and Memory from Above: On the Building of War Monument sin Yugoslavia,” in *Shaping Revolutionary Memory the Production of Monuments in Socialist Yugoslavia*, eds. Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc (Ljubljana: Igor Zabel Association for Culture and Theory, 2023), 93-94.

⁵ Heike Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu – okamenjeno sećanje?* (Beograd: XX vek, 2014), 69.

⁶ Rakita, *Prostorno-političke*, 101.

For almost the entirety of the war, the Central Partisan Hospital operated there, which, although less than 100 kilometers from Zagreb, continuously withstood enemy offensives. The closest the enemy units came to destroying the partisan hospital was during offensives in April and May of 1942 when a siege was set around the mountain, from which partisans, civilians, and the wounded managed to escape by breaking through enemy lines.⁷

It is precisely through the example of the memorialization of Petrova Gora that one can address the question of how the experience of NOB was used in the construction of a collective culture of memory. More specifically, this case allows for an examination of the broader context and purpose of such a culture of memory and memorialization in socialist Yugoslavia, as well as the ways in which it contributed to the formation of Yugoslav socialist ideology. To address these questions, this study draws on newspapers and periodicals such as the daily *Večernji list*, the local weekly *Karlovački tjednik*, the biweekly architectural journal *Čovjek i prostor*, the leisure magazine *Vikend*, the daily political newspaper *Vjesnik*, and the professional and scholarly monthly journal *Arhitektura*. In addition, valuable insights were provided by members of the local population living in the vicinity of Petrova Gora, who willingly shared their experiences related to this site during the socialist period.

Memorialization

The process of memorializing Petrova Gora began shortly after the end of the war, in 1946, when the President of the Presidency of the National Assembly of Yugoslavia, Ivan Ribar, laid the cornerstone for the future monument at the top of Petrovac, the site of the first failed partisan charge on April 1, 1942.⁸ Due to the economic situation post-war Yugoslavia found itself in, as the country with the lowest standard of living in Europe, the monument was built and opened 35 years later. However, the process of memorializing Petrova Gora did not stagnate. In the late 1950s, after Yugoslavia distanced itself from the cultural and economic practices of the USSR, supported by financial aid from the West, the country went through a boom known as the economic miracle, which in Yugoslav society led to a prevailing belief in a better tomorrow.⁹

In such a context and atmosphere, at the end of the 1950s, the Department for the Documentation and Registration of Monuments of the People's Revolution was established at the Conservation Institute in Zagreb. The conservator in charge of the heritage of the People's Liberation War (NOR) was Rastko Schwalba, and among his first tasks was recording and documenting the partisan hospitals in Croatia, including that of Petrova Gora. As the barracks and the buildings were dismantled and transferred to the surrounding villages after the war, it was necessary to document where they

⁷ For more about Petrova Gora in World War II, see: Celner, "Petrova gora i Narodnooslobodilačka borba," 14-44.

⁸ Dragan Pajić, "Pogled na poslijeratni razvoj kotara Vojnić," in *Kotar Vojnić u NOR i socijalističkoj revoluciji*, ed. Đuro Zatezalo (Karlovac: Historijski arhiv u Karlovcu, 1989), 1380.

⁹ Igor Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem. O povijesti dokolice i potrošačkog društva u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2005), 45-50.

were located and organize their return to their original positions. In order to restore the original appearance of the hospital, an extensive reconstruction of the buildings and the surrounding area was undertaken, adhering to the most modern conservation practices of the time.¹⁰ In anticipation of the 20th anniversary of the uprising in 1961, during a ceremonial session of the people's committees of the municipalities of Topusko, Vrginmost, and Vojnić, it was decided that the buildings, dugouts, and the cemetery of the Central Partisan Hospital would become Memorial Sites of the Central Partisan Hospital Petrova Gora, and the surrounding forest area would become the Memorial Park of the Central Partisan Hospital.¹¹ As preparations for the celebration were nearing completion, the construction work on the road from Vojnić to the top of Petrova Gora (Petrovac) was completed, and at the same time a road was built to the original location of the hospital, enabling its future reconstruction. The road was opened on the day of the celebration, a memorial plaque was unveiled at Petrovac for those who died during the charge on April 1, 1942.¹² The historical reconstruction of the Petrova Gora area and the mapping of objects from the time of the NOB were carried out, alongside Rastko Schwalba, by his colleague Rade Vulkov, as well as the secretary of the History Commission of the Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia (SKH) in Karlovac, Đuro Zatezalo.¹³ Their work resulted in the final documentation and mapping of seventy significant historical sites on Petrova Gora, which were ultimately protected, and together formed a collective whole of the monument park. That same year, a smaller, low monument was placed in front of the partisan cemetery, which was the only intervention in the original space, the conceptual design for which was created by sculptor Stevan Luketić and poet Jure Kaštelan.¹⁴ On this occasion, a Tourist Society was founded in Vojnić, and it published the first tourist guide to Petrova Gora and its surroundings. And finally, that same year, the area received administration for the memorial sites of Petrova Gora.

In 1963, the Petrova Gora Memorial Area was granted the status of a cultural monument, and its boundaries were defined by a resolution from the Conservation Institute in Zagreb, within which there were hospitals, pharmacies, workshops, printing presses, monuments, church ruins, dugouts, and many other structures that formed the entirety of the Memorial Area.¹⁵ The complete reconstruction of the Central Partisan Hospital buildings was completed in 1964, and the young historian from Karlovac, Mile Dakić, was appointed to head the Memorial Area. The following year,

¹⁰ Sanja Horvatinčić and Nataša Matušić, "Put građanske hrabrosti: Centralna partizanska bolnica na Petrovoj gori," Savez antifašističkih boraca i antifašista Republike Hrvatske, accessed July 18, 2024, [https://sabh.hr/europsko-antifasisticko-nasljeđe/put-gradanske-hrabrosti/put-gradanske-hrabrosti-hrvatska/](https://sabh.hr/europsko-antifasisticko-nasljeđe/put-gradanske-hrabrosti/put-gradanske-hrabrosti-put-gradanske-hrabrosti-hrvatska/).

¹¹ "Veliki narodni zbor u Vojniću," *Karlovački tjednik*, July 27, 1961, 1.

¹² "Veliki narodni zbor u Vojniću," 4.

¹³ Pajić, "Pogled na poslijeratni razvoj," 1401.

¹⁴ Sanja Horvatinčić, "From Storytelling to Re-enactment: Strategies of Monument-Making in Socialist Yugoslavia," in *Shaping Revolutionary Memory the Production of Monuments in Socialist Yugoslavia*, eds. Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc (Ljubljana: Igor Zabel Association for Culture and Theory, 2023), 121.

¹⁵ Horvatinčić and Matušić, "Put građanske hrabrosti."

he organized a symposium on the partisan sanitary service at this location. Among the speakers at the symposium were key figures in the development of the uprising and sanitary service in Kordun, including Bonka Oreščanin, Jakov Kranjčević Brada, Rade Bulat, Franz Kleinhappel, and Savo Zlatić.¹⁶ A similar symposium was held in 1967 and 1969 in Topusko to mark the 25th anniversary of the third session of ZAVNOH. The main theme of the symposium was Petrova Gora, but not only in the context of World War II; it also explored Petrova Gora in historical continuity, touching on topics from other scientific fields.

As research had shown that there was a large number of objects of great historical and cultural value on Petrova Gora, the need for the protection of this area became apparent. Therefore, in 1965, Ante Marinović Uzelac from the Institute for Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture, together with his team of collaborators, created the term *spomen-područja* (memorial areas), as a new category for protected areas, using the example of Petrova Gora.¹⁷ The design and content planning of the monument-area was entrusted to the Committee for the Conceptual and Programmatic Design of the Petrova Gora Memorial Area, which was led by president Vladimir Bakarić and secretary Rade Bulat.¹⁸ While the spatial plan for development was begun, the Committee organized public consultations with artists, cultural workers, and entrepreneurs to further consider the future content of the monument-area.¹⁹ Additionally, the Committee was involved in collecting voluntary donations from citizens and organizations, and at the time of creating the spatial plan had a fund of 240,000 dinars.²⁰

In 1969, the general layout was created at the Institute for Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb, in collaboration with the architects Ante Marinović Uzelac and Bruno Milić, along with the economist and tourism expert Dragutin Alfier.²¹ The layout envisioned the development and protection of the Memorial Area, the conservation and marking of historical sites, which would then form a broader historical-cultural picture of the area. The area would therefore serve as a place for ideological-political, educational, and touristic development and exploitation, and in doing so initiate the development of the region. Thus, the centre of the monument-area, the colossal monument, would not only function as a commemorative object but also serve a broader purpose with spaces for a museum, cultural activities, and even a lookout attraction. Hospitality facilities would be arranged beside it, which, along with the surrounding nature (also preserved and protected), were intended to offer a comforting and complete vision for visits, stays, and recreation. The entire study, in addition to being a spatial layout, was also an economic plan, investing

¹⁶ Mile Dakić, *Petrova mi gora mati informativno-historijski vodič* (Zagreb: Prosvjeta, 1973), 125.

¹⁷ Boro Pavlović, "Memorijalni park narodnooslobodilačke borbe Petrova gora," *Arhitektura* 29, no. 155 (1975): 24.

¹⁸ "Petrova gora još privlačnija," *Večernji list*, March 14, 1967, 4.

¹⁹ "Razgovor o Petrovoj gori," *Večernji list*, March 15, 1969, 14.

²⁰ "Petrova gora za rekreaciju," *Večernji list*, March 18, 1969, 10.

²¹ Zana Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori – prilog istraživanju i revalorizaciji," in *Simpozij Problem spomenika: spomenik danas*, ed. Božidar Pejković (Klanjec: Anali galerije Antuna Augustinčića, 2015), 387.

heavily in the potential for development of this part of Kordun. And thus discussions arose for the possibility of developing various forms of tourism, industry, trade, transportation, culture, and education in the area.²² Such potential for Kordun was not in vain, as the region had maintained the status of the most economically underdeveloped area since the time of the Military Frontier, and this situation persisted in post-war Yugoslavia. In 1965 this status was officially recognized, and Kordun began to be treated as a peripheral, economically underdeveloped area.²³

In 1970, the Administration for the Monumental Objects of Petrova Gora changed its name to the Memorial Park Petrova Gora, and that same year, a nationwide Yugoslav tender was announced for the construction of the monument. The tender was announced through the Association of Fine Artists of Croatia, the Association of Architects of Croatia, and the Association of Urban Planning Societies of Croatia, and it outlined various requirements that the project was required to fulfil. In addition to the monument, which was to be illuminated, there a museum of the revolution was intended, as well as exhibition spaces, a tourist centre, a restaurant, and a lookout. The tender also included an overview of the historical events at Petrova Gora, from the legend of the death of Petar Svačić, the last medieval Croatian king, to events from the NOB.²⁴ This allowed interested sculptors and architects to gain better insight and inspiration for the work they were to create, which was not only to act as a monumental structure, but have a broader multifunctional purpose and synthesize the memory of past events, primarily the NOB and the socialist revolution.

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The panel of judges, consisting of members from the architectural professions, artists, cultural workers, and partisan veterans from Petrova Gora, led by Rade Bulat, made a decision regarding the results of the tender in 1971. Out of the 17 submitted works, the first three received prizes of 40,000, 20,000, and 10,000 dinars, while the works numbered 19, 18, and 23 were purchased for 7,000 dinars each.²⁵ For a better understanding of how large this amount of money was, it is important to note that in 1971 the average monthly salary in Croatia amounted to 1,563 dinars.²⁶

The first prize was awarded to the young and unknown architect Igor Toš for his project combining architecture and monumental sculpture in the form of spiral cloaks wrinkled and intertwined, symbolizing brotherhood and unity rising upwards, as well as the eternal struggle for freedom.²⁷ This solution resembled the "Kordun watchtowers, which in the consciousness of the people symbolize the eternal guard."²⁸ The second prize was awarded to Vojin Bakić for his sculpture on six concrete pillars, representing the

²² Pavlović, "Memorijalni park," 25-29.

²³ Ibid, 26.

²⁴ Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 388.

²⁵ "Natječaj za izgradnju idejnog rješenja spomenika na Petrovcu u Petrovoj gori," *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 222 (1971), 16.

²⁶ Igor Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje. Svakodnevni život i potrošačka kultura u Hrvatskoj 1970-ih i 1980-ih* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2009), 33.

²⁷ Silvia Kalčić, *Svijet prema labirintu - Eseji o visokoj modernosti i postmodernizmu 1970-ih i 1980-ih* (Zagreb: Ulupuh, 2017), 405-406.

²⁸ "Natječaj za izgradnju idejnog rješenja spomenika na Petrovcu u Petrovoj gori."

Yugoslav republics, with a museum placed inside a metal sphere at the top of the pillars. The third prize was awarded to Stevan Luketić, a former collaborator of Vojin Bakić, and architect Ivan Vitić. Their solution was a monument made of concrete elements that symbolize the forest of Petrova Gora, with a lookout at the top, while in front of the monument, they imagined a plaza with an underground museum representing a dugout.²⁹

The preparations for the construction of the monument progressed slowly, and only in 1973 was the Committee for the Construction of the Monument established, with Vladimir Bakarić as its president. The committee consisted of several commissions, and its work was supervised by the Executive Board, with Rade Bulat elected as its president.³⁰ The entire project was supported by various republican organizations, from the Parliament to individual municipalities, the SUBNOR organization, the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Croatia (SSRNH), artists, and others. A date was set for the unveiling of the monument, which was to take place on the Day of the Uprising of the People of Croatia, 27 July 1976, and efforts to raise funds "on the principle of voluntarism and solidarity" were launched, both from citizens and from various socio-political organizations.³¹ At that time, the estimated final cost of the project was around 60 million dinars, and even gold and silver coins were issued, their sales raising funds for the project.³² Artists organized colonies at Petrova Gora and then sold their works at auctions, with the collected funds being donated to the monument construction fund.³³ Screenings were also organized to familiarize all interested parties with the plan and program for the construction of the monument.³⁴ Rade Bulat, as president of the Executive Committee for the construction of the monument, announced the beginning of construction for May 1975.³⁵

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Construction did not begin that year, and the cooperation between the Committee and Igor Toš abruptly ended. In the first half of 1975, a debate arose between Toš and the Executive Committee in *Vjesnik*, after Toš sent an open letter criticizing the work of the Executive Committee and the decision to announce an additional limited tender for the conceptual design, which the Committee had announced as early as November 1974.³⁶ The Executive Committee quickly responded, accusing Toš of "pushing his private interests," inflating the project's costs and personal fees, and making the committee's work more difficult. Additionally, the Committee added that they had supported Toš the entire time, which is why they issued a badge with the symbol of his project, as well as a Bulletin of the Committee in 10,000 copies, which they sent to all socio-political organizations and forums in Yugoslavia.³⁷ Toš responded once again, asserting that the Executive Committee was trying to shift responsibility and thereby cover up the real

²⁹ "Natječaj za izgradnju idejnog rješenja spomenika na Petrovcu u Petrovoj gori."

³⁰ "Spomenik revolucije na Petrovoj gori," *Večernji list*, March 19, 1973, 3.

³¹ "Petrova gora - spomen područje," *Večernji list*, November 16, 1973, 3.

³² "Zlatnici za Petrovu goru," *Večernji list*, March 5, 1974, 3.

³³ "S blokom po Petrovoj gori," *Večernji list*, May 6, 1974, 18.

³⁴ "Projekcija o Petrovoj gori," *Večernji list*, June 25, 1974, 6.

³⁵ "Gradnja na godinu," *Večernji list*, July 1, 1974, 20.

³⁶ "Natječaj - samovolja ili društveni dogovor?," *Vjesnik*, March 16-17, 1975, 8.

³⁷ "Tko gura privatni interes," *Vjesnik*, March 23-24, 1975, 8.

reasons for the breakdown of cooperation and the announcement of a new tender.³⁸ A new competition was announced in November 1974, and the authors who had won the first three places in the 1970/1971 competition were invited to participate. Toš did not participate in the second competition, so the proposal by Vojin Bakić won.³⁹

The real reasons for the breakdown of cooperation with Toš and the announcement of a new competition remain unclear to this day, but it can be assumed that there were broader issues at play – a complex mix of various reasons linked to the political events surrounding the Croatian Spring, artistic and ideological preferences, as well as the personal interests of the individuals involved in the story of the construction of the monument at Petrova Gora.⁴⁰

Whatever the reasons for the disagreements and the need for a second competition, the second competition was concluded on March 4, 1975, and the construction of the monument was entrusted to Vojin Bakić and his associate, architect Berislav Šerbetić.⁴¹ Although the solution offered by Bakić and Šerbetić in terms of form irresistibly resembles Toš's original solution and differs significantly from Bakić's solution in the first tender, Bakić, according to his own words, worked on the form for a long time and discovered the idea in the exploration of "leafed" forms. With this form, he symbolized flags that flutter and move freely in space, and he found inspiration in his earlier work: "I wanted it to follow the same principle as the monument in Kamensko, that it develops upward from the base and unfolds like a crown."⁴² The monument was initially conceived in concrete, but in the end, when it became clear that the cost of the required work would be as high as a metal cladding on a steel frame, the decision was to use metal instead. This decision was closer to Bakić and his cycle of Light Forms. Such a monument made of stainless steel acted as a mirror of the surrounding space and the sun, and its reflection was visible for kilometers around it. Due to its shape, it remained a monument on the inside as well, and it was then necessary to find solutions for all the other required functions. The upper part was to house the Museum of Revolution with a library and reading room, which would be distributed along the perimeters across six floors connected by stairways and two elevators, while all the social spaces, such as a hall for meetings and performances, were placed in the underground part of the monument, accessible via a service passage from the western side.⁴³

Although by the end of 1975, 10 million dinars had been collected for the construction, the Construction Committee faced problems, which was reflected in the need for reorganization. The "too large and insufficiently effective" Committee reduced its membership from 350 to 119, and the Executive Committee was reorganized as well.⁴⁴ The reorganized Committee

³⁸ "Pokušaj prebacivanja odgovornosti," *Vjesnik*, April 13-14, 1975, 8.

³⁹ Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 395-6.

⁴⁰ Darko Bekić, *Vojin Bakić ili kratka povijest kiposlavije* (Zagreb: Profil, 2007), 166-70.

⁴¹ Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 395.

⁴² "Spomenik Revoluciji na Petrovoj gori," *Arhitektura*, 176/177, 1981, 4.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 4-6.

⁴⁴ "10 miliona za spomenik," *Večernji list*, December 30, 1975, 5.

continued securing funds for the construction through the issuance of gold and silver coins, as well as collecting donations, with particular emphasis on the Vukovar municipality, its socio-political organizations, local communities, and citizens.⁴⁵ The contribution to the work and alleviation of financial expenses was provided by girls and boys who, as part of the Petrova Gora '77 work action, together with members of the JNA, began the initial work.⁴⁶

However, despite all the donations and voluntary work, the situation in the global markets disrupted the plans for construction. Delays, irregular tenders, and the inefficiency of the Construction Committee which persisted throughout the 1970s, led to an awkward situation and the postponement of the start of the monument's construction. The end of the decade marked the beginning of the economic crisis.⁴⁷

The construction of the monument finally began on September 15, 1980, with the contractor being the construction company Tempo from Zagreb. Since political organizations viewed the entire project as a political issue, and all deadlines had long passed, an average of 300 workers participated in the work, a night shift was introduced, and a youth work action was organized. All resources were mobilized to build the monumental structure in the shortest possible time, consuming 7,700 m³ of concrete, 1,000 tons of iron, and 4,300 m³ of stainless steel. In the end, it cost around 215 million dinars, or 11 million West German marks at the time.⁴⁸ The monument was officially opened in front of 30,000 visitors on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the first partisan hospital on October 4, 1981.⁴⁹

Although great hopes were placed in the development of this area from the outset of spatial planning, the ambitious and somewhat megalomaniacal plans were not in line with the actual economic situation that followed the monument's opening. As a result, the monument was never fully completed, and the initial idea for the development of the area around Petrova Gora never fully came to life.

Visitors arrived at the reception square, next to which was a bus parking lot. In the square, there were partially underground reception buildings with a bar, restrooms, an information centre, and a shop, all framed by glass. From the square to the monument, a 150-meter long staircase ascended, and halfway up, at the spot where a grave had previously been, there sat a memorial ossuary containing the remains of partisans who died during the charge on Petrovac.⁵⁰ Inside the monument, the realization of the museum display was achieved by the Memorial Park Petrova Gora, which included Đuro Zatezalo and Gojko Vezmar. However, since the Museum of the Revolution never fully came to life, visitors were greeted at the opening by the Tito in the Karlovac-Kordun Area exhibition.⁵¹ After some time, a temporary

⁴⁵ "Devet utemeljitelja," *Večernji list*, April 15, 1976, 6.

⁴⁶ "Grade mladi i vojnici," *Večernji list*, August 3, 1977, 8.

⁴⁷ Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 27-30.

⁴⁸ Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 399.

⁴⁹ "Spomenik bratstva i jedinstva," *Karlovački tjednik*, October 8, 1981, 1.

⁵⁰ "Spomenik Revoluciji na Petrovoj gori," *Arhitektura*, 176/177, 1981, 6.

⁵¹ Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 399-400.

museum space was arranged on the ground floor of the monument, with a film projector that played an informative reel for visitors. Similarly, in the Partisan Hospital, visitors were shown audio recordings and songs about the history of Petrova Gora.⁵²

Visitors at the reception square of the monument were greeted by a sign authored by the director of the Memorial Park, Mile Dakić. The sign was intended to highlight the importance of Petrova Gora as a place of remembrance for the NOB, the socialist revolution, and the development of brotherhood and unity.

Petrova Gora, with its symbolism, dignity, and the scars of war, stands as a reminder of the price of freedom, brotherhood, and unity—of the arduous and victorious path of Tito's revolutionary generation, who selflessly gave themselves for freedom and socialism.⁵³

The Role of Monuments in the Socialist Ideology

Alongside brotherhood and unity, constant reminders of the NOB through anniversaries in the socialist calendar, the educational system, art, culture, film, and many other aspects of daily life, created a sense of a revolution in progress, aligning with the Marxist idea of the process of the state's eventual withering away.⁵⁴ Through these reminders, the communists, as creators of the state myth by mythologizing the NOB, created the aforementioned legitimization of their own position and the ideological model of social organization. With this system, combined with ideas of Tito's personality, non-alignment and self-management, they established the ideological foundations of the Yugoslav socialist society. Therefore, a plausible interpretation is that monuments to the revolution, and the places and objects directly connected to the ideological roots of socialist society were as important to them as temples are to the religious. The historian Vjekoslav Perica goes a step further in his work, *Contributions to the Genealogy of Yugoslav Partisan Mythology*, calling such a system the political religion of the time, or sacralised politics.⁵⁵

There is no doubt that among the more important places in Croatia was the Petrova Gora Memorial Park with its monolithic monument, "an ode to brotherhood and unity, to our collective."⁵⁶ The symbolism of Petrova Gora served in shaping part of the narrative of the ongoing revolution and directly indicated the fundamental values of socialist society.

⁵² Interview with Mihajlo Novaković, a technician at Radio Petrova gora until 1982. Later he was in charge of maintenance of the equipment and elevators in the Memorial Park.

⁵³ Đuro Zatezalo, *Petrova gora uloga i značaj u NOR-u Hrvatske* (Zagreb: SNV, 2010), 93.

⁵⁴ On the process of the withering away of the state, see: Veljko Cvjetičanin, *Marksistička teorija društva* (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1979), 101.

⁵⁵ For a more detailed explanation of the interpretation of political religion, sacred politics and civil religion, see: Vjekoslav Perica and Mitja Velikonja, *Nebeska Jugoslavija: Interakcije političkih mitologija i pop-kulture* (Beograd: XX vek, 2012), 16.

⁵⁶ From the speech of the President of the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, Jure Bilić, at the opening of the monument, see: Irena Škorić, *Neželjena baština* (Zagreb: Artizana film, 2016).

Its external form strongly symbolizes the development of our NOB. In it, some see a great torch of the revolution, others see the fluttering flags of fraternity of the nations in a desperate struggle for their freedom and for socialism. Everyone will be able to find themselves in it as part of the continuity of the revolution.⁵⁷

It was precisely through the continuity of the revolution, influenced by the Yugoslav socialist ideology through a broad network of socio-political organizations and institutions of socialist Yugoslavia, that the process of transformation, or re-education of citizens into new socialist people, was supposed to take place.⁵⁸ Such a process, in a simultaneous relationship with the process of the state's theoretical withering away, was considered a transition toward a classless communist society in which a new socialist man was expected to be ready to take on the responsibility of social management and, once the transition was complete, participate in the new communist society. The implementation of socialist values began precisely with the group that formed the foundation of society and the future bearers of socialist ideas, namely children, who from an early age "absorb everything they see or hear like sponges."⁵⁹ The process of implementing these ideas began in school, and was further deepened in the Pioneer organization and later in the Youth organization. Ultimately, the acquired values that benefitted social interaction led to joining the Party or partaking in the efforts of other socio-political or social organizations, thus providing a solid foundation for the further construction of socialist man.⁶⁰

Children passing through the educational system became familiar with socialist values, particularly through history lessons, and thus the narrative of brotherhood and unity extended through and applied to all historical periods.⁶¹ The central event undoubtedly became the socialist revolution and the NOB, so in the 1970s history textbooks for eighth-grade students described Petrova Gora as the focal point of the uprising in Croatia.⁶² More detailed information about the NOB in Kordun and Petrova Gora, such as the story of the siege of Vojnić, could be found by students in historical readers.⁶³ More than a decade later, in the latter half of the 1980s, Petrova Gora was described in textbooks as the permanent centre of free territory, and the institutions located there were mentioned, along with a brief reference

⁵⁷ From the speech of the Federal Secretary for Energy, Rade Pavlović, at the opening of the monument, see: Saša Ban, *Betonski spavači*, episode *Treći put: Smrt fašizmu, sloboda ostalima* (Zagreb: Hulahop, 2023).

⁵⁸ Igor Duda, "Uvod: od nazadnosti do svemira, od projekta do zbornika," in *Stvaranje socijalističkoga čovjeka. Hrvatsko društvo i ideologija jugoslavenskoga socijalizma*, ed. Igor Duda, (Zagreb and Pula: Srednja Europa and Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, 2017), 5-14.

⁵⁹ Igor Duda, "Kameni temeljci. Stupovi jugoslavenskoga društva i pioniri kao mali socijalistički ljudi," in *Stvaranje socijalističkoga čovjeka. Hrvatsko društvo i ideologija jugoslavenskoga socijalizma*, ed. Igor Duda, (Zagreb and Pula: Srednja Europa and Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, 2017), 23.

⁶⁰ Duda, "Uvod: od nazadnosti do svemira," 10-11.

⁶¹ Dubravka Stojanović, *Prošlost dolazi* (Beograd: XX vek, 2024), 287.

⁶² Šarlota Đuranović and Mirko Žeželj, *Prošlost i sadašnjost 3. Udžbenik povijesti za VIII razred osnovne škole* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1971), 110.

⁶³ Mirko Žeželj, *Prošlost i sadašnjost 3. Povijesna čitanka za VIII razred osnovne škole* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1969), 99.

to the Ustaša offensive and the breakthrough of the encirclement.⁶⁴ From 1969 to 1989, textbooks contained various details and information about the NOB in Kordun, mostly concerning the first two years of the war with an emphasis on the unity of Serbs and Croats, while the Kordun Partisans were mentioned as one of the builders of brotherhood and unity. Students would get a closer look at Petrova Gora during school visits to the Memorial Park, and if they didn't go there on family trips, they could visit Petrova Gora as pioneers during anniversary celebrations or pioneer gatherings, or as scouts on camping trips and meetings.⁶⁵

However, even outside the classroom, the reminder of the socialist revolution continued, and so children could learn about Petrova Gora by collecting stickers for the album *Monuments of the Revolution*, such as finding sticker number 97, which depicted Petrova Gora, the first partisan hospital in Croatia.⁶⁶ The insight that could be gained by filling out and reading the album is outlined by the editor on the very first pages:

[...] what an event from our national liberation struggle and revolution it was, what a struggle, what suffering, what a sacrifice, and what a victory, won right here at the place where the monument now stands. When you fill the album with stickers and read all the texts, you will learn that the fight for freedom and a better life, led by the Communist Party and comrade Tito, was fought in every corner of our country. You will notice that among the monuments there are many memorial cemeteries and ossuaries, and it will become clear to you that we won freedom and the creation of our socialist Yugoslavia – a brotherly community of our peoples and nationalities – with many sacrifices. Among those who bravely died in the fight against the fascist occupiers and domestic traitors were also pioneers and youth, your peers. Thus, our sacrifices are heavier, and our freedom more precious.⁶⁷

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Children were also provided insight into the past through numerous educational content and films and also television programs, some of which touched on Petrova Gora and its role in the NOB.⁶⁸ One of the more interesting examples is the episode *Following the Partisan Hospital* from the popular children's show *Kocka, Kocka, Kockica*, in which the host Branko Kockica, together with children from the Pedagogical Centre Karlovac, visits the "famous" Petrova Gora and the Central Partisan Hospital to "feel that distant wartime period."⁶⁹

There were also children who wanted to learn more about the NOB, and so Snježana Kolšek, a fifth-grade student from the *Bratstvo i Jedinstvo* (Brotherhood and Unity) Elementary School in Križevci, turned to the *Večernji list* publication for help in collecting pins. After collecting, among other things, a pin with a memorial of Petrova Gora, she came up with the idea of creating an album with information about the NOB, which she would

⁶⁴ Blagota Drašković, *Čovjek u svom vremenu 4* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1987), 114.

⁶⁵ "9. susret najmlađih," *Večernji list*, May 29, 1975, 5.

⁶⁶ Ljubiša Petković, *Spomenici revolucije* (Bela Crkva: Grafičko-izdavačka radna organizacija Sava Munčan, 1978), 21.

⁶⁷ Petković, *Spomenici revolucije*, 3.

⁶⁸ "Legendarna Petrova gora – herojski narod," *Večernji list*, July 19, 1974, 7.

⁶⁹ *Kocka, kocka, kockica*, episode *Tragom partizanske bolnice* (Belgrade: Radio Television Belgrade, 1979).

use to organize an exhibition that would be “useful and educational, so the young would learn something and the older generations would renew their memories.”⁷⁰ However, the older generations had already renewed their memories of the NOB, and this often, as Petrova Gora held an important place in the socialist calendar. Every year celebrations were organized to mark various anniversaries and holidays, such as the Day of Uprising (July 27) and Fighter’s Day (July 4), and the main event of the year was the people’s gathering for the anniversary of the breakthrough of the encirclement. Such events were organized as intergenerational, allowing young people to learn about the NOB firsthand, but also to experience it. For example, the Scout Association organized a reconstruction of the breakthrough of the encirclement on several occasions, and thus truly bring the wartime experience to life. Around 4,500 scouts participated in the reenactment of that event on the anniversary in 1969, who were housed like the partisans, in homes in the surrounding villages.⁷¹

During the celebrations of important anniversaries, along with the official commemoration protocols, cultural and entertainment activities were also organized. For example, during the celebration of 30 years of liberation and 33 years since the breakthrough of the encirclement, the Croatian Automobile Association organized a concentrated car drive, an additional session, as well as a readiness for an action review as part of the established system of the Total People’s Defense of the country.⁷²

During speeches at anniversaries and gatherings at Petrova Gora, as well as in the public space, the role and symbolism of Petrova Gora in the building of brotherhood and unity was constantly referenced and emphasized:

The people of this region remained faithful to the fundamental achievement of our revolution— brotherhood and unity of our peoples—throughout the entire war. Petrova Gora has given and continues to give an example of unity and equality of Croats, Serbs, and Muslims. This example should be taught to young generations, and above all, they should protect and develop the brotherhood and unity of our people.⁷³

Petrova Gora became one of the stops on the caravan of brotherhood and unity, which every year connected Kragujevac and Karlovac.⁷⁴ It was during these caravans, visits that individuals and groups revived the memory of the NOB, from which they drew and adopted the values that emerged within it, particularly the narrative of brotherhood and unity.⁷⁵ Youth work actions (ORA) also played a significant role in the development and implementation of socialist ideas, and these actions took place at sites connected to events from the NOB, such as Petrova Gora. They represented a symbolic bridge between the wartime generation of youth and the epic partisan past, and

⁷⁰ “Proljeće u Lukovdolu,” *Večernji list*, March 22, 1976, 5.

⁷¹ “Petrova gora 1960,” *Večernji list*, April 16, 1969, 3.

⁷² “Automobilisti na Petrovoj gori i...,” *Večernji list*, April 11, 1975, 18.

⁷³ “Monolitan narod i SK,” *Večernji list*, May 20, 1980, 2.

⁷⁴ “Susreti bratstva,” *Večernji list*, May 8, 1981, 6.

⁷⁵ Nikola Baković, *Brotherhood on the Move. Ritual Mobilities in the Second Yugoslavia* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2023), 27–29.

the new generations of youth who were to continue and carry the revolution forward. These ORA became a perfect “incubator” for the development of socialist ideas.⁷⁶ The ORA at Petrova Gora began with preparations for the construction of the monument, and after its completion, they continued. The workers’ barracks of the Tempo company were converted into a youth settlement opposite the monument for this purpose. The brigadiers worked on reforesting Petrova Gora, cleaning and maintaining roads and drainage channels, and after the construction of the monument, the youth labour brigade received the status of a federal labour action. This status was the subject of discussions at federal youth forums during the “Action Summer” of 1985.⁷⁷

After the first and second shifts of the labour brigade achieved good, even record-breaking results to “justify their existence,” the third shift was met with a decision from the Presidency of the Federation of Socialist Youth Conferences (SSOJ) at the beginning of August to revoke the status of a federal labour action (SORA).⁷⁸ The federal status was removed from two other labour actions without consulting republican youth leadership. As a result, the brigadiers of the third shift at Petrova Gora took matters into their own hands, launching a petition against the decision, and a week later, the decision was reversed.⁷⁹

As *Večernji list* hinted with the headline “Twilight of Work Actions?,” during the 1980s with the economic crisis, Yugoslav society began to slide into a social crisis. This period marked the peak of saturation with the mythologization of the NOB, and new narratives of the past as well as alternative views of socialism began to penetrate public space.⁸⁰ Unlike the post-war period when young people went to the ORA driven by political and ideological ideas about the reconstruction and building of the country, in the summer of 1985, young people primarily found motivation in the fun that awaited them by going to ORA.⁸¹ And although this fun, travel, and socializing with brigadiers from different parts of the country contributed to an unconscious development of brotherhood and unity, it was a far cry from the post-war ideals and the number of young people present at the ORA in those lost days. The memory of the NOB had been reduced to irony, best exemplified by the phrase “we’re off to the partisans,” which became a sort of code for young men and women sneaking out of the youth settlement barracks at Petrova Gora to spend the night together in the forest.⁸² Although it is unlikely that they were reconstructing events from the NOB in the

⁷⁶ Dragan Popović, “Omladinske radne akcije kao ideološki (udarnički) turizam,” in *Sunčana strana Jugoslavije. Povijest turizma u socijalizmu*, eds. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2013), 289-291.

⁷⁷ “Sumrak radnih akcija?,” *Večernji list*, August 13, 1985, 4.

⁷⁸ “Opravdali postojanje,” *Karlovački tjednik*, August 8, 1985, 2.

⁷⁹ “Sumrak radnih akcija?,” *Večernji list*, August 13, 1985, 4.

⁸⁰ Jelena Đureinović, “Nasleđa antikomunizma: kontinuiteti i transformacije politike sećanja od kasnog jugoslovenskog do postjugoslovenskog perioda,” in *Kontinuiteti i inovacije*, eds. Anita Buhin and Tina Filipović (Pula and Zagreb: Srednja Europa and Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, 2021), 207.

⁸¹ Popović, “Omladinske radne akcije,” 300.

⁸² Interview with Čedomir Studen, brigadier of several SORA Petrova gora.

forest, or at least not the moments of epic battle, they could still hear the music of one of the new wave bands performing on the plateau in front of the monument or in the youth settlement amphitheatre. Some of these bands touched on revolution and socialism in their songs, albeit in an ironic way.⁸³ As the social crisis grew, the motivation for working for labour actions dwindled, so an "experiment" was carried out at the Petrova Gora SORA in 1988. For the first time, 250 brigadiers from Yugoslavia and the diaspora received monetary compensation for their work.⁸⁴

However, despite the saturation with the NOB, during the 1980s the experience of Petrova Gora as a partisan medical centre served medical students from the University of Zagreb to better understand medical treatment in wartime conditions. In the autumn of 1978, the barracks of the Central Partisan Hospital became classrooms for learning the history of medicine and the concept of the healthcare service in the Total People's Defense system.⁸⁵ Students and healthcare workers exchanged their experiences with medical professionals from Petrova Gora during the war, and from this grew the annual meetings of medical students and healthcare workers that were held at Petrova Gora on the occasion of SKOJ Day.⁸⁶ Guided by Dr. Slobodan Lang, students at Petrova Gora learned medical ethics, and commemorated those who demonstrated the highest levels of humanity and ethics during the war. Undoubtedly the most significant figure was Marija Schlesinger,⁸⁷ in whose honour the Dr. Marija Schlesinger Award was established in 1982, on the occasion of World Health Day. It was awarded to healthcare workers for their personal contribution and lifelong achievements in the protection of health and humanitarian relations.⁸⁸ Due to its humanitarian tradition, Petrova Gora was also the site of Red Cross team exhibitions, where they demonstrated their readiness in the event of imminent danger.⁸⁹

The experience of the partisan hospital, along with the extensive history of Petrova Gora and the NOB carried out there, combined with its natural beauty, was seen as a potential for the development of tourism. In addition to the socioeconomic benefits for the local community, tourism would lead to the popularization of the achievements of the socialist ideology and help in its implementation.⁹⁰ As early as the 1960s, when plans

⁸³ Perica and Velikonja, *Nebeska Jugoslavija*, 55-62.

⁸⁴ "Eksperiment SORA," *Večernji list*, August 2, 1998, 12.

⁸⁵ "Zemunice uče liječnike," *Večernji list*, June 17, 1978, 6.

⁸⁶ "Susreti na Petrovoj gori," *Večernji list*, September 30, 1983, 3.

⁸⁷ Marija Schlesinger, a physician serving at the partisan hospital on Petrova Gora, died during military operations in early 1943 and was buried, in accordance with her expressed wishes, at the entrance to the dugout, so that her grave might serve as a protective measure for the wounded in the event of its discovery. Savo Zlatić, "Zdravstvena djelatnost na području kotara Vojnić tokom NOB-e," in *Kotar Vojnić u NOR i socijalističkoj revoluciji*, ed. Đuro Zatezalo (Karlovac: Historijski arhiv u Karlovcu, 1989), 744.

⁸⁸ Sonja Kolar, *Republičke nagrade i društvena priznanja u SRH* (Zagreb: Muzej revolucije naroda Hrvatske, 1988), 9.

⁸⁹ "Smotra prve pomoći," *Večernji list*, June 21, 1974, 9.

⁹⁰ Rory Yeromans, "Od drugova do potrošača. Odmor, slobodno vrijeme i ideologija u komunističkoj Jugoslaviji," in *Sunčana strana Jugoslavije. Povijest turizma u socijalizmu*, eds. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2013), 94-95.

were being made for the complete memorialization and organization of Petrova Gora, this potential was emphasized. However, although it was never fully utilized and not all plans were realized, tourists still came. The need for accommodation facilities had arisen as early as 1962, and a motel was built at Muljava on Petrova Gora at the location where partisans set out on May 14, 1942, for the breakthrough of the encirclement, and was thus named "14. maj" (May 14). Sometime after, a youth mountain lodge of the 8th Kordun Assault Division was also built near the partisan hospital.⁹¹ Visitors came, as mentioned earlier, during numerous anniversaries related to the NOB, but also to cultural events that were organized at Petrova Gora, such as part of the program of the Goranovo Proljeće (Goran Spring) festival.⁹² Hunting tourism also developed on the mountain, and the entire Memorial Park complex was part of a broader tourist offer, along with the spas in Topusko.⁹³ The complete offer and all necessary information for visitors were found in tourist guides published by the Memorial Park in several editions, and such information was particularly useful for excursionists.⁹⁴ Excursion tourism was often promoted, and in 1979, the magazine *Vikend* recommended its readers take an excursion to Petrova Gora on the Fighter's Day public holiday:

If you are looking for a rich treasury of natural beauty, intertwined with historical events and adorned with monuments, you will find it on the border of Banija and Kordun. For here, with its network of wooded mountain slopes, stretches Petrova Gora, about which songs have been written and an immortal legend created. Accessible from all sides, it's a favoured excursion site which warmly welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors, and therefore, we now recommend it as the destination for yet another weekend excursion, just before the Fighter's Day.⁹⁵

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Arrangements by various travel agencies that included Petrova Gora as a destination were a common feature in newspapers and other advertisers. There were also those who, for International Women's Day in 1973, offered a one-day trip to Petrova Gora and Ozalj, organized by Croatiaturist.⁹⁶ However, less relaxed and more official visits were also frequent, and Petrova Gora was an important stop for various political delegations, among which the visit of Josip Broz Tito to the Central Hospital in 1967 stands out. Besides domestic visitors, foreign guests and foreign socio-political delegations also came.⁹⁷ Foreign citizens came in an organized manner during various events held at Petrova Gora, such as the Sixth Scout Review of Yugoslavia in 1975, when scouts from Italy and the USSR visited.⁹⁸ Although there were also unorganized individual visits, both foreign and domestic guests, Croatian SUBNOR expressed concern in 1985 that 70-80% of the visitors to the Memorial Park consisted of organized school visits or visits from other

⁹¹ Pajić, "Pogled na poslijeratni," 1402, 1415.

⁹² "Počinje Goranovo proljeće," *Večernji list*, March 16, 1976, 10.

⁹³ "Mjesto zdravlja i uspomena," *Večernji list*, May 19, 1988, 14.

⁹⁴ Mile Dakić, *Memorijalni park Petrova gora* (Vojnić: Memorijalni park Petrova gora, 1984).

⁹⁵ "Petrova gora – simbol, spomenik i legenda," *Vikend*, June 29, 1979, 8.

⁹⁶ "Pokloni za 8. mart," *Večernji list*, January 26, 1973, 16.

⁹⁷ "Listajući knjigu uoči Dana ustanka – Velika poruka Petrove gore," *Karlovački tjednik*, July 23, 1964, 7.

⁹⁸ Baković, *Brotherhood on the Move*, 164.

organizations.⁹⁹ The local community benefited from such visits, especially after the construction of the multifunctional monument on Petrovac, making the area “a real factory, a nucleus around which a rich offer for visitors grew, a motivation for the arrival of many people, and turning the entire area into an attractive excursion and even residential point.”¹⁰⁰ In practical terms, this benefit is best described by Mirko Jeremić, who worked as a waiter from 1986 to 1991 in the café at the base of the monument. He says that about 50 buses arrived daily, and during school excursions even a truckload of Coca-Cola would be sold.¹⁰¹ Visitors could also buy souvenirs at one of the Memorial Park’s souvenir shops, most of which were produced in the villages around Petrova Gora. Among these were books, brochures, badges, gold and silver coins, models of the monument, and even vinyl records with folk songs and speeches about the history of Petrova Gora, produced by Radio Petrova Gora and Jugoton, the leading record company based in Zagreb. The benefits of the Memorial Park for the local community were not only financial but also cultural and recreational. In the 1970s, the Memorial Park launched its own radio station, which, along with its entertainment and music programs, promoted the history of Petrova Gora and nurtured the traditions of local folklore. The radio also broadcast live celebrations of various anniversaries, such as the commemoration of the breakthrough of the encirclement, recorded interviews with surviving fighters, and various lectures about Petrova Gora, which were specifically aired in the Memorial Park’s facilities.¹⁰² Similarly, young people from surrounding areas benefited as they had the chance to meet other youths from across the country during visits or labour actions, and also enjoy concerts by popular bands. Along with socializing and playing, local children could also earn some pocket money by guiding smaller groups through Petrova Gora and the Central Partisan Hospital.¹⁰³

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The Memorial Park Petrova Gora had its problems during the 1980s, and after two years of warnings, at the end of September 1985, the sanitary and labour inspection decided to close the hospital.¹⁰⁴ The hospital was reopened only two months later, after all the operational irregularities had been corrected.¹⁰⁵ Three years later, the professional scientific journal *Muzeologija* assessed the Memorial Park Petrova Gora as being poor in both its programming and staffing, while the exhibition at the Central Partisan Hospital, in their opinion, needed to be reinstalled, refurbished, and supplemented. A critique was also made of the monument, which they considered to be “a failure in architectural and urban planning terms because the designer did not valorise the surroundings at all.”¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Baković, *Brotherhood on the Move*, 75.

¹⁰⁰ “Spomenik s dohotkom,” *Večernji list*, September 19, 1981, 2.

¹⁰¹ Škorić, *Neželjena baština*.

¹⁰² Interview with Mihajlo Novaković.

¹⁰³ Interview with Marinka Nestorović, a resident of Vojnić.

¹⁰⁴ “Nemar zatvorio partizansku bolnicu,” *Večernji list*, September 21, 1985, 4.

¹⁰⁵ “Telex-Petrova gora,” *Večernji list*, November 25, 1985, 3.

¹⁰⁶ “Katalog muzejskih zbirki, muzejskih izložbi i stalnih izložbi sadržajno vezanih uz radnički pokret, NOB i poslijeratnu socijalističku izgradnju na teritoriju SR Hrvatske”, *Muzeologija*, no. 26 (1988): 71.

In the second half of the 1980s, alongside rising inflation, the social crisis reached its peak. Although almost unnoticed and invisible, it began to surface in various ways. Almost prophetically, at the Youth Day event at the JNA stadium in Belgrade in 1987, the commentators, while warning about the situation and the future, noted that the choreography, which had started with a unified circle, continued with each republic and province breaking off into small, disconnected circles.¹⁰⁷ The ideas and traditions built on the socialist revolution led during World War II began to be replaced by new traditions, which the communists, in their own view, had dealt with during the revolution.¹⁰⁸ The old-new traditions, such as nationalism, religion, and capitalist relations, were merely part of the bubble in which Yugoslav society was located. And this bubble would eventually burst, resulting in war and the disintegration of Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

The experience of Petrova Gora during the Second World War was employed under socialism in the construction of a collective culture of memory focused on the NOB and the socialist revolution, thereby conferring legitimacy to the contemporary socio-political system. The formation of this culture of memory was accompanied by the memorialization of places, events, and individuals associated with Petrova Gora. The process of memorialization began immediately after the end of the war, continued with the establishment of the Memorial Park and the original monument to the Central Partisan Hospital, and reached its culmination with the construction of the monument by Vojin Bakić in the early 1980s. As the process of memorialization was accompanied from the outset by a range of challenges, including the economic conditions of the immediate postwar years, the inefficiency of certain actors involved in the process, irregularities in the competition for the construction of the monument, and ultimately the economic and social crisis of the 1980s, the process of memorialization was never fully completed. Despite this, Petrova Gora attracted large numbers of visitors each year. These included day-trips, school excursions, socio-political delegations, as well as organized scout camps, gatherings, commemorations, and voluntary labour actions, all aimed at fostering the core principles of Yugoslav socialist society rooted in the experience of the NOB. Such ideas, most notably brotherhood and unity, and the interpretation of the NOB as a socialist revolution, were intended to contribute to the formation of a new socialist man who, once the process of the withering away of the state was complete, was expected to enter a utopian communist society. The local community also benefited from the process of memorialization, although not to the extent initially envisioned. Nevertheless, the contribution to the community was tangible and remains evident today in conversations with local residents. With the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic

¹⁰⁷ Youtube, "Dan mladosti 1987," accessed August 19, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xfWUsUjVyl&t=1525s>.

¹⁰⁸ Dušan Bilandžić, *Jugoslavija poslije Tita 1980-1985* (Zagreb: Globus, 1986), 225.

¹⁰⁹ For more on the reasons for the breakup of Yugoslavia, see: Dejan Jović, *Uvod u Jugoslaviju* (Zaprešić: Fraktura, 2023), 325-436.

of Yugoslavia, the established interpretations and modes of inheriting and transmitting history likewise came to an end, while new narratives became central to the construction of a new culture of memory.

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