



## The army, mirror of society

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**S**everal times, in the past few months, the Yugoslav armed forces have got themselves mentioned in the country's political news. Early in September 1987, a deadly incident took place among soldiers of different national origin: a soldier of the Albanian minority opened fire on a group of Serbian comrades, killing five of them before committing suicide. This tragic episode has shown that the armed forces, who in the not-too-distant past had been obliged to intervene to quell ethnic confrontation and restore order in Kosovo, are not themselves immune from the tension amongst Albanians and Serbians; and the episode has appeared all the more worrisome since, during the last violent crisis that shook this autonomous region, the military authorities of Belgrade have had to transfer about one fourth of the entire available forces to Kosovo in order to guarantee public order.

Since Kosovo is only a small part of Yugoslavia, this has left observers unsure about the ability of the armed forces to control the situation in case of a broader and more generalized crisis.

At this point it was the turn of the then highest-ranking military officer, General Branko Mamula, to admonish publicly the political authorities, leading many to think that the armed forces might soon come to play a major role in Yugoslavia's rapidly worsening economic and political crisis. And this hypothesis appeared all the more credible not only because the example of Poland had already shown that a communist-military regime could be the outcome of a similar social and economic deadlock, but also because, in the Yugoslav case where severe nationality problems make the situation much more complicated than in Poland, the military could present itself as the last resort to preserve national unity.

Finally, in the spring and summer of 1988 there were recurrent and widespread rumours, difficult to verify, but relating to undisputable factual evidence of plans for a military intervention to quell intellectual unrest in Slovenia, the politically most sophisticated Republic in the Yugoslav confederation, but also the most restless, and the one (along with Kosovo) where separatist aspirations are most visible and widespread.

And on this occasion of the public attack by the highest-ranking officer of the Yugoslav military against the anti-conformist journal of the Slovenian students, in a row that brought a number of student leaders under trial, it became clear that if the Army were eventually called to perform the task of preserving national unity, it could do so only at the expense of all hope of pluralism and liberalization.

This does not mean that the Yugoslav military is not affected, as all the other components of society, by the political, economic and, to a large extent, institutional crisis that present-day Yugoslavia is experiencing. On the contrary, the army is feeling the impact in full, and particularly so since the Yugoslav crisis seems to be affected by Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy more than all the other communist countries. Yugoslavia - which has managed to live for forty years in a delicate and somewhat equivocal equilibrium between the two military blocs as well as between two economic systems - is obviously affected in a way not yet completely understood, but which is bound to bring about a re-thinking of its defence model and the role of its military forces.

This involvement of the armed forces in political developments is, of course, a two-way phenomenon. On the one hand, one could wonder about the potential

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for “Bonapartism” and for an outright militarization of society as a way out of the present Yugoslav quagmire. On the other hand, the fact that the army itself is not immune from the tensions that might tear apart Yugoslav society compels one to wonder not only about the feasibility of a major political role for the armed forces, but even about the operational credibility of Yugoslavia’s complex and original defence system, which is largely founded on the division of labour between the regular army and the civil society mobilized in territorial defence units, and presents analogies with the Swiss and Swedish systems. Indeed, the disintegration of social cohesion seriously threatens this system, officially denominated “generalized people’s defence” (GPD).

### **An offspring of the “rape” of Czechoslovakia**

The GPD, which was organized in its present form soon after the events of Prague in 1968, wanted to be the actual heir to the “war of national liberation” and the expression of a political system which is internally self-managing and externally non-aligned. Instead, in the presence not of “discord within the enemy”, as de Gaulle would have said, but of “discord within the country”, such systems can quickly grow fragile and become a factor of additional instability. Indeed, the GPD encounters problems of consistency, both internally (organization), and externally (in its relations with the Government, as well as with the Yugoslav and international society).

The “law of national defence” which instituted the GPD was promulgated on February 19, 1969. It is clear that the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Warsaw Pact on August 21, 1968, had shown the Yugoslav leaders the weakness of their preceding defence system based on the “people’s army” (i.e. a regular army), such as resulted from the defence laws of 1955 and 1965. The Yugoslav communists were not fooling themselves with the rhetoric of “internationalist solidarity against the forces of counter-revolution”; they understood that the invasion was a full-fledged aggression, and that Czechoslovakia had been “raped”.

They therefore deduced that this invasion was a threat to their independence to which they had to respond. “We must tell them that if they think they can come here one day, without being invited, they will meet their match”.<sup>1</sup> However, the mobilization of the regular army in September 1968, showed that the “steel wall” of true defence was of questionable efficiency, and that the Yugoslavs were largely reduced to verbal deterrence of a possible attacker. As early as

September 24, 1968, the Minister of Defence, General Nicolas Ljubičić, announced the future adoption of a new defence law to the federal assembly. He did not hide the reason for such precipitation: "Military intervention in Czechoslovakia has created new concerns, increased insecurity and caused an even more strained military-political situation in the world, particularly in this part of Europe."<sup>2</sup>

It would, nevertheless, be excessive to consider that the only immediate origin of the GPD was the Prague crisis. Other major events that took place in the same period, such as the Israeli-Arab Six Day War and the Greek Colonels' *coup d'état* of April 1967, brought some idea of imminent danger to the Yugoslav leadership, particularly under Tito. "Yugoslavia felt threatened",<sup>3</sup> and additional credit to this psychosis was also being provided by Anglo-Saxon war fiction, which placed the beginning of a general East-West war in Yugoslavia at the time of the death of Tito. Geo-politically Yugoslavia, which represents a territorial discontinuity of NATO between Italy and Greece, and prevents the Warsaw Pact from having permanent Mediterranean naval bases, and is also a crucial air passage for access to the Middle East, is a tempting prey in the case of a general crisis, and a factor of disturbance on the chessboard of the blocs. During the Six-Day War, for example, Yugoslavia played a crucial role in authorizing the Soviets to use their air corridors to provision the Arab armies.<sup>4</sup>

There are various and multiple threats weighing on Yugoslavia. To the West, the NATO countries theoretically represent a threat which - in spite of the fact that it was Truman who saved Tito from Stalin - was taken very seriously up to 1968 by official defence doctrine. But after the signing of the treaty which finally settled border controversy with Italy, this threat lost whatever credibility, real or feigned, it might ever have had, and all the more so because the balance of forces at world level evolved in favour of the Warsaw Pact towards 1975.

On the contrary, the threat that the Soviet Alliance exercises upon Yugoslavia has been real and uninterrupted since 1948 (except, perhaps, in 1955-56). Today we know that very precise invasion plans had been prepared in the 1949-52 period, and that after 1958 Yugoslavia, which Krushchev officially defined "revisionist", was again excluded from the "socialist camp", a measure that could at any moment (for instance, following an irredentist crisis in Macedonia or in Kosovo, etc.) justify an invasion in the name of "socialist

internationalism". And this was even more possible because the growing power of soviet policy in the Middle East risked drawing Yugoslavia into a general conflict in this area. The events of October 1973, when the USSR threatened to send three parachute divisions into the Suez Canal area, and the United States launched an atomic alert, represent a clear example in this respect. Thus, the perception of constant threats to a fragile state, a situation which recalls the 1936-41 period, requires, in official Yugoslav doctrine, genuinely comprehensive defence. But the Yugoslav ruling party is also trying to historically legitimize its GPD through the history of the Second World War.

### **The mythology of the "partisan war".**

One cannot but be struck by the structural correspondence between the present GPD and what is known about the strategic doctrine of the Yugoslav partisans. Tito emphasized that "the present conception of our GPD uses the great experiences of the war of liberation, in our present-day situation."<sup>5</sup> Thus, in case of an attack of the Yugoslav forces by a superior power, the GPD provides for war in three phases.<sup>6</sup> First of all, a conventional battle "on the front", called "frontal battle"; second, a "combined war", waged by the territorial defence units which would combine uniformity of strategic intentions and decentralization of military initiatives; third and last, in case of extreme necessity, "guerrilla warfare" waged at local level by an almost pulverized armed force. The authors themselves explain that this plan revives what was actually done from 1941 to 1945, but in the opposite order: "guerrilla warfare" was first waged by local partisan units from July to December 1941; then, from December 1941 to May 1944, a "combined war" associating a central group of mobile "proletarian brigades" around the headquarters and a myriad of local guerrilla units; then, after June 1944, in order to liberate the territory, the war became "frontal", with the aim of liberating the entire country. The official strategic doctrine therefore established a conceptual continuity in Yugoslav defence between the 1940s and the period subsequent to 1968.

This *post facto* rationalization conceals the fact that the actual strategic teaching of the partisan war was forgotten between 1945 and 1968. Even though both the Yugoslav Communist League programme of 1958 and the constitution of 1963 appealed to a "defence of the entire people", it was never implemented. The imitation of the Soviet model of the 1945-1948 period, at least in military affairs, survived the break with the *kominform*. In fact, the regular army remained the only depository of Yugoslav defence until 1968. In

spite of the defence plans that foresaw the possibility of an attack coming from either East or West, Titoism would have been another of Stalin's many communist victims without posterity, had it not been for the USA's global nuclear superiority up to 1956. Not only was the conventional army the only defence force, but the Yugoslav defence plans reflected (unknowingly?) the ideological umbilical cord between Tito and Moscow, in so far as they foresaw resisting only an aggression which came from the West. The Prague crisis was, in this regard, a Copernican revolution for the Yugoslav leaders. Striking evidence can be found in comparing Tito's speech at Pula (November 11, 1956)<sup>7</sup> on Soviet intervention in Budapest with the declaration made on the invasion of Prague in 1968. In the latter he affirms that even if the socialist camp had lost Czechoslovakia, it would have been better than invasion, while in the former he had stated exactly the opposite, judging Soviet intervention preferable to a return of the "reactionaries". This sharp difference in political evaluation shows a shift of the ideological centre of gravity of Titoism, and is coherent with the subsequent establishment of the GPD.

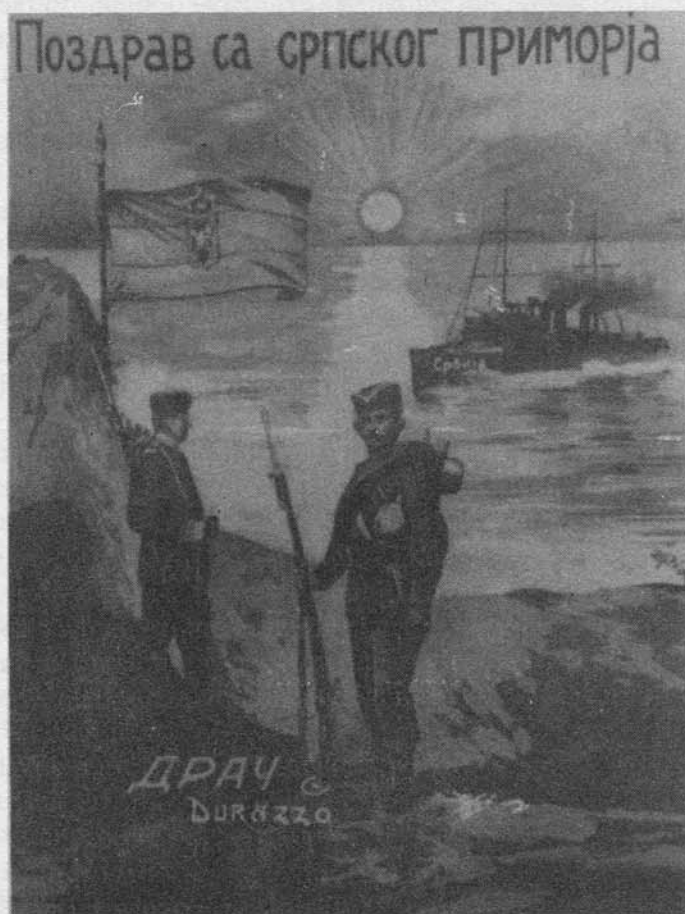
The law of February 19, 1969 and article 237 of the 1974 Constitution, which affirm the unity of purpose of the defence forces (the regular army and the GPD) stem from the irrationality of Yugoslavia's military doctrine, (evident after 1968). Indeed, the conventional characteristics of defence and its positioning (in 1955-68) against NATO were contradictory to the pretendedly self-governing characteristics of Yugoslav society and its principle of non-alignment, in spite of the fact that the latter has maintained anti-Western phraseology.<sup>8</sup> This contradiction in principles did not arouse particular interest abroad, but it is in a way subsequently confirmed by the affirmation, which has been continually renewed by the Yugoslav authorities after 1969, of the correspondence between Yugoslavia's political objectives (non-alignment and self-management) and what the GPD represents.

### **Socializing the military**

The Yugoslavs present the creation of a two-tier defence system (army, plus GPD) as an extension to the military field of the principle of self-government. Since the 1966 removal of Ranković, a Serbian and a convinced centralist, from the position of Minister of the Interior, the GPD has been officially supposed to mean the self-organization of defence by society, i.e. the opposite of the militarization of society. This interpretation was, at least in the beginning, guaranteed by Tito himself: "It is impossible to conceive of the

worker exercising his rights of self-government in the economic, political and cultural sectors, in social life in general, without exercising those same rights in the defence sector.”<sup>9</sup> This is what the Yugoslavs call the “socialization” (*podruslja vanje*) of defence.

The occasion is naturally too good not to invoke the founding fathers, Marx and Engels, who had deemed that the Paris Commune, in the French civil war of 1870-71, had finally found in the “people in arms” the way of ending the



alienation of defence, the bourgeois army being considered the military form of alienation, globally represented by the bourgeois State. As General Ljubičić said in 1981: “The social dimension of defence appears for the first time in the

Paris Commune...It is not by chance that the first decree of the Paris Commune was the abolition of the regular army, pillar of the bourgeois state, and its replacement by the people in arms."

In Yugoslavia, this "people in arms composed by producer-soldiers" would be the military facet of the self-government project itself, whose aim is a real weakening of the State, perceived as an autonomous sphere which decides in the name of the people,<sup>10</sup> the end result being that defence, the paramount function of the State, would not remain its exclusive domain. In fact, the organization of the GPD becomes deeply rooted in the complex structures of self-managing society. Each shop, each enterprise or municipality has its war plans and corresponding general staff. As French sociologist Alain Joxe writes: "This socialization takes the form of a decentralization of powers which makes the State role in defence appear obsolete."<sup>11</sup> In spite of this intense theorization, the question however remains unanswered whether decentralization really favours the diffusion in the society at large of the effort and the spirit of defence. It is indeed obvious that the federal, decentralized structure of countries such as Switzerland or Yugoslavia, is not without consequences in the organization of defence, especially if one combines this federal characteristic with a situation of "neutrality" with regard to the political-military blocs.

Yugoslavia presents the GPD as the expression, in terms of defence policy, of its non-alignment; however if the latter is not neutrality but a particularly active neutralism, it is riskier than neutrality recognized *de jure* by a treaty, as is the case of Austria after 1955<sup>12</sup> or of Switzerland after 1815. In reality, Yugoslavia is part of the "grey zone" in Europe, viz. part of the countries in Central Europe which do not belong to any military alliance. But Yugoslavia's non-alignment is not internationally recognized by any treaty, and only the declaration of Helsinki, which has hardly any juridical value in international law, guarantees its "territorial integrity." The Yugoslavs affirm, nevertheless, that they want to defend "the social system of Yugoslavia, as defined by the Constitution of the Yugoslav Federal Socialist Republic," (article 238). This means, more precisely, a quite peculiar type of socialism, and not socialism in general. This qualification - strengthened by an interdiction of military surrender that is part of the Constitution itself - is aimed at discouraging "all fraternal aid", such as in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. It may be seen, then, that Yugoslav non-alignment presupposes a particularly active defence policy, which is what the GPD is intended to be.



This active defence policy is also coherent with non-alignment, in so far as it is essentially defensive by nature. It is easily understood that the GPD is not applicable except in the hypothesis of an attack on Yugoslavia by an external adversary. To accept the GPD as the official military doctrine is, then, to put oneself in a purely defensive position, which allows Yugoslavia to affirm that it does not threaten the existence of any nation. In this respect Yugoslavia's behavior is consistent with the principles of all declarations of the movement of non-aligned countries, which are themselves consistent with article 51 of the UN Charter. Yugoslavia thus strengthens its moral position in the international arena. But on the top of these political advantages, the GPD theorists are untiringly praising the actual strategic advantages of the defensive attitude. Without going as far as theorizing, like Clausewitz, that defence is by nature superior to attack, they describe with delectation the traps that an aggressor finds himself in, facing the "spines.... of the hedgehog of the GPD that close in on him."<sup>13</sup> An offspring of the 1968 Prague crisis, the GPD has thus been easily grafted on to the roots of strategic thought descending from the partisan war and from the non-alignment and self-management of Titoist policy. And the practical organization of the GPD is based on these theoretical and empirical premises.

### **The GPD and the political system**

The "socialization" of defence takes shape through a diffusion of defence planning throughout the enterprises and the social-political communities. This results in problems of division of labour within the regular army. Four types of participants in the defence process are defined by the law of 1969: the regular army, the social-political communities (Republics, autonomous provinces, municipalities), the collective work organizations (CWO), and the socio-political organizations (the LCY, the Socialist Alliance, the Veterans Union, the Socialist Youth).

The Republics and the provinces organize with the municipalities numerous drills for civil and territorial units. The municipality (502 municipalities for 23 million inhabitants) is the crucial element of the system of the GPD. Through its chief of staff the municipality co-ordinates the defence plans of the local communities (11,640) and of the CWOs. It forms the territorial units, equips them with arms and trains them; it collaborates closely with the organs of the regular army and carries out for the regular army tasks of outfitting the reserves

and recruiting. In the case of war in its territory, the municipality leads the resistance.

The CWOs or enterprises have various defence plans according to their size. Some large enterprises have at their disposal a very sophisticated armament, including anti-aircraft weapons. They have three tasks: to guarantee production under war conditions, to defend the enterprise alone or with other territorial defence units; to organize civil defence, or, if necessary, to evacuate the enterprise and to combine it with others. For this purpose, the defence plan is elaborated by a specialized committee and approved by the workers' council. The plan describes the organization, the surveillance system and the activities involved in a state of war. The enterprise has the obligation to equip, arm and train the workers.

The LCY does not have a role of its own, except to animate the whole network of the GPD, since its control over society and the State comes from the conventional form of the Party-State: 95% of the officers and non-commissioned officers are members of the League. As far as the reverse interferences are concerned, the interferences of the armed forces in political, i.e. party, life have always been discreet, with only two major exceptions: in September 1987, the Minister of Defence, Branko Mamula, condemned the economical and political disorders of the Federation; and Tito himself had recalled, on the occasion of the Croatian crisis of 1972, that the regular army constituted the supreme guarantor of unity.

Indeed, the political significance of the GPD is ambiguous; one could interpret it as leading to a form of "anarcho-liberalism",<sup>14</sup> where each community of Yugoslavia would tend to recover control over its own military contingents. For example, in 1971 the Croatian authorities wanted to Croatianize the whole of defence including the total strength of the regular army in Croatia, to submit them to the authority of the Republic and take them away from the federal government. But this tendency was condemned at the time. The other possible tendency is "police bureaucratism", which is supposed to have disappeared since Ranković's dismissal, but is still a reality in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Yet one can not but note that during the 1971 and 1981 Kosovo crises, the regular army quite conventionally played the usual role of an army and repressed those who threatened the equilibrium enshrined in the existing federal system.

While the law of 1969 states that: "The armed forces form a whole and consist

of the regular army and the GPD", we must note the existence of dualism between the regular army and the GPD. This dualism can prove to be cumbersome if one considers the financing, the logistics and the self-sufficiency of the basic communities which are necessary to the functioning of the GPD.

### **The GPD and the economic system**

The problem is first and foremost macro-economic. From 1976 to 1980, the regular army received a yearly average of 5.39% of the Yugoslav GNP instead of the 6.17% foreseen in its plan.<sup>15</sup> For the first two years of the defence plan for the 1980-1984 period, the regular army received 4.79% of the GNP instead of the 5.8% provided for. In the period of 1976-1982, Yugoslavia therefore allocated, in relative terms, as many resources to its conventional defence as did the United States, which encountered many difficulties in this effort (in France, 3.9% of the GNP on a yearly average for the period 1976-1986 went to defence). Yugoslavia made a bigger defence effort than each of the European countries or neutral members of NATO, and perceivably bigger than that of Hungary, the neighbouring state with whom Yugoslavia has the longest borders. To that, it is necessary to add 0.4% of the GNP dedicated specifically to the GPD.

One then sees that this country dedicates a minimum total of between 5.2 and 5.7% of its GNP to defence, when it is experiencing an economic crisis which has been growing ever more serious since 1979. It may be wondered if Yugoslavia, in following with exemplary zeal the Roman proverb *si vis pacem, para bellum*, is not risking its peace for economic reasons.

If the capacity of the Yugoslav economy to sustain the weight of defence in peacetime leaves one sceptical, its possibilities of sustaining the logistics of war are even more uncertain. Already in peacetime, Yugoslavia has shown a deficit in energy and equipment, which is expressed by a constant deficit in the balance of trade. The Yugoslavs claim to be able to get foreign aid, but if the enemy controls the sky and the sea passages, as would be the case in the hypothesis accepted as most likely by Yugoslav military thinkers, they could do very little. Indeed, it could be noted that Yugoslav authors, very much to the contrary of American strategists are as silent about logistics as they are verbose about the social-political aspects of the GPD (logistics, both the word and the subject, were created by the "arsenal of democracies" after 1941). In order to



make use of all of the advantages of the GPD system at the beginning of the war, for a brief period the regular army will be obliged to respect the logic of armed confrontation (conventional warfare), imposed by the aggressor, who will have at his disposal more sophisticated arms and well-trained top-grade forces. Relatively self-sufficient Yugoslavia therefore collaborates with the USSR, France, Great Britain, Sweden and Rumania for its conventional arms.

Moreover, more than half of the population and resources are concentrated in the Ljubljana-Zagreb-Belgrade area, which corresponds to the Sava-Danube

fluvial plain. If the aggressor were strong, as assumed in the most likely hypothesis, these regions could not avoid military occupation after the "frontal battle" stage, so that both "combined war" and "guerilla warfare" should then take place in regions where the logistic capability of the local communities is very small. In peacetime the problem of the insufficient support capacity of local communities to the decentralized structures of the GPD is solved by subsidies given to institutions in difficulty. However, if this reality should last, if the number of businesses in deficit increases, it is difficult to understand how what since 1965 is supposed to be "market" socialism could match the maximization of economic performance and the financing of defence for each unit, when this financing is an additional burden which handicaps businesses, especially those where the scale economies are small and productivity is too feebly increasing. In this context, "self-sufficiency", uncertain on the Yugoslav level, is even more uncertain for each of the sub-assemblies responsible for the GPD.

### **Connections with the regular army**

The relationship between the GPD and the regular army is largely a problem of sharing money, human resources, and power. Officially this problem does not exist, since the law of 1969 and the Constitution of 1974 are explicit: the two components form a single army with complementary defence doctrines, military obligations, distribution of reserves, etc.

Each Yugoslav citizen between 16 and 55 years of age is subject to four different types of "military obligation".<sup>16</sup> That is to say, first of all, he (or she) can be called to participate in the armed battle; women are exempt from military service in the regular army, but not from training in territorial defence. The second obligation is that of "civil defence" which falls on each citizen from 15 to 65 years of age. The third obligation is to work in wartime, and the fourth is the so-called "material obligation", that is to say, the provisioning of the soldiers in wartime. In this respect, the law of June 1980 defines as the criterion for mobilization "a general capacity to work" and not an excellent state of health, in the assumption that general defence does not necessitate only soldiers. However, military assignment "should not cause any damage to one's health".

After having ended their military service, 20% of the draftees are assigned to the reserves of the regular army, which include 500,000 soldiers. The rest of

the conscripts (80%, i.e. 3 to 4 million people) is affected to territorial defence. The grand manoeuvres like "Liberty 71" and "Unity 83" include units of both the regular army and the GPD.

The organization of the regular army and the GPD calls for precise parallelism of powers: the command of an army or of an army corps pertains to a Republic, a brigade pertains to a municipality. They are reunited at the level of the Presidency of the Federal Republic (collegial organ). It can then be seen that territorial defence, which has its own chain of command and its own material endowment, was created as a strategic component of the Yugoslav defence forces, on an equal level with the army. The territorial defence finds itself given non-negligible quantities of materials. Thus, the "manoeuvre forces" (equivalent to a brigade) located near the airports, have at their disposal 25% of the Yugoslav anti-aircraft weapons (in 1983). However, the aforementioned figures of the allocation of resources (about 5% and 0.4% of the GNP respectively for the regular army and the GPD) show the relatively smaller amount of resources affected to the GPD. The economic crisis and its impact on the GPD, contemporary of the Vietnam and Afghanistan wars, valorize, nevertheless, the role of the soldier in relation to material supplies and logistics, at the same time pushing Yugoslavia to modernize its weaponry to sustain the first shock of a powerful enemy. As Admiral Branko Mamula said in a conference of December 30, 1982, entitled "*Iz manje sredstva brze na modernizaciju*",<sup>17</sup> modernization will continue to be focused on 'preparation of the officers', while the regular army must continue technological development of armaments, within the limits of the available economic resources. The complementarity between the GPD and the regular army is therefore reaffirmed, but the future efficiency of the system will depend on the actual implementation of their co-operation, which has encountered growing limitations during the 1980s.

### **Real or "verbal" dissuasion?**

It is often affirmed that the efficacy of the Yugoslav defence system is based on dissuasion. The discussion on the efficacy of this system is somewhat academic, since several quite competent authors are indeed convinced of the deterrent capacity of this system, and dissuasion is first of all persuasion. Among the persuaded experts is General Beaufre, who first described the GPD in an article in *Figaro* of April 1969. Moreover, John Hartung, a specialist of SIPRI of Stockholm, classified Yugoslavia among the best defended countries

in Europe. This judgement is based on such criteria as the defensive nature of its strategy, the aforementioned Clausewitzian concept, the autonomy of the country, its internal cohesion (quite a weak point in Yugoslavia's case) and the usefulness of the country to the superpowers. Hartung's classification is quite debatable for its neutralist bias (which makes, in his view, Austria four times better defended than France, and Switzerland seven times better), but this reflects an opinion which is widely held in Yugoslavia. To convince of one's dissuasiveness incontestably depends on one's dissuasiveness itself. In this field, appearance is more important than substance.

The effort at verbal dissuasion has been particularly visible during the great manoeuvres of 1971 and 1983. These manoeuvres were located in the crucial regions: the "Liberty 71" manoeuvre took place north of Zagreb, midway between the Hungarian border (Warsaw Pact) and the Italian border (NATO), on semi-level land (40% accessible to armoured tanks), which left them some possibility of defence, but not much.

The "Unity 83" manoeuvre took place in Macedonia, at equal distance from Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, with the participation of 22,000 soldiers of the regular army and 15,000 of the GPD. Two years after the Kosovo crisis, the message is multiple. According to the terms of the Helsinki agreements, international notification was not necessary (the threshold allowed for 25,000 soldiers of the regular army), but just the same the CSCE was notified of this manoeuvre and 200 journalists were ostentatiously invited to make Yugoslav determination known everywhere.

After the death of Tito, whose very existence itself assured a decisional dissuasion, as he was the acting charismatic decision-maker, the preparation level of the GPD must guarantee "structural" dissuasion.

The question can obviously be posed whether the system is technically adapted. Indeed, it includes little civil defence, possibly due to lack of resources: on the contrary of the Swedish and especially the Swiss situations, the Yugoslav population has no underground shelters, nor, in case of default, can it protect itself against an attack which includes even selective usage of massive destructive weapons (like tactical atomic weapons). Decontamination courses are provided for in primary school manuals, but it is still necessary that the decontaminators survive. The system rests on a bet: the adversary will want to politically seize onto the Yugoslav population, but will avoid eliminating a

huge part of them, (in any case, no more than in the 1941-1945 period, when 11% of the population died in four years). But this bet could be lost.

Generally speaking, protection against ABC and tactical nuclear weapons is lacking. Now, a truly determined adversary has no reason to renounce his means, especially if the phase of "frontal warfare" continues too long for his liking. Certain events of the war in Afghanistan or of the Iraq-Iran war cruelly show the weakness of the GPD.

In the same line of thinking, one finds a very weak point in the GPD doctrine, if one thinks of the "occupied territories" which the initial advance of the adversary would obviously create. These territories are called, in official Yugoslav language, "temporarily occupied". But this is only a symbolic characterization which makes no difference in terms of international legal status, since article 41 of the Hague Convention of 1967 devoted to this question, defines military occupation by its actuality. A territory is occupied or it is not occupied, it is not "temporarily occupied". Moreover, the question has to be posed of what the attitude of the population might be, who might be the Quisling, the Husaks, the Pétains, the Neditchs of these occupied territories?

Certainly article 238 of the 1974 Constitution interdicts all surrender, total or partial, and was intended to save Yugoslavia from future disputes, similar to French debates on the June 1940 ceasefire. But in a Marxist country where the Constitution is considered pure superstructure (four Constitutions since 1945), where will right and legitimacy, if not legality, be? Can the present regime, which was itself born of a revolution, warn off in advance the tragedies of history?

### **Is cohesion sufficient?**

A system like the GPD evidently depends on the condition of internal cohesion. The 1941 precedent haunts the Yugoslav memory, like the disaster of 1940 haunts the French memory. On April 10, 1941, four days after the beginning of the war, the German troupes entered into Zagreb, and on April 12 into Belgrade. The Croatian troupes had not ever fought a war, as the setback of the August 1939 compromise showed. The present economic crisis, doubled by the Kosovo crisis, cause fear of a renewing of such scenarios, whose very credibility already indicates, in a way, a failure of the GPD.



An improvement of this analysis is, of course, necessary. In itself, the impact of crises between nationalities on morale and on the future combativeness of the GPD is not only negative. During the war of 1941-45, one could affirm that, on the contrary, the dynamics of the civil war nourished the resistance, because it hardened the acting minorities (active Communists, the threatened Serbs of Croatia, etc...). As Montesquieu remarked in his *Considerations*, a people in civil war is especially dangerous for its neighbours..., because everyone is armed. So, for example, in the case of widespread co-operation with the enemy among the Albanians of Kosovo, the invader would only render their nationalism more inexpiable and, consequently, also the combativeness of the Serbs. One could indeed find many similar analogies. The effects of the economic crisis are, instead, more dangerous because they affect, although not in the same measure, all the peoples of Yugoslavia. Their psychological impact adds to their macro-economic effects on defence. If the spirit of defence were hit as hard as the physical means of defence, one could fear the worst.

The GPD, born of the post-Prague shock (1968-69), which revived the national military-political culture born of the events of the 1941-45 period, has, up to present, largely fulfilled its role: it has been dissuasive and has, then, dissuaded. But it has been less effective, concerning internal crises of Yugoslavia, when these crises have gone beyond a certain limit of seriousness. The significance of the whole system therefore remains ambiguous: this militarization of society would rather be a "civilization" of the army, even though the recent positions of the military high-ranking officials tend to identify a political role for the armed forces, along a line that has become traditional in countries undergoing a serious crisis. In this respect the Minister of Defence, Admiral Mamula's speech on September 23, 1987, before the Central Committee will probably mark an epoch. This speech is a true doctrine account of the political role of the army.

The Secretary-Admiral first of all publicly acknowledged the severity of the crisis: "The crisis threatens the integrity of the country itself and its social system." According to him, the political and economical situation raises some very serious questions concerning the security of the country that the political system reveals itself impotent to face. "The LCY is far from being capable of fulfilling its role...on the contrary, it is ousted from the scene and is more and more ignored... If the League had been united, the Kosovo question would have been settled..." The Minister-Admiral also violently criticized the Slovenian review *Nova Revija*, a student journal which has gradually become openly

anti-communist, accusing it of wanting to tarnish the image of the army. In face of this general decay, the army finds itself on the front line, said Mamula. As far as the army itself is concerned, "order and responsibility should reign... That which was not allowed yesterday must not be allowed today." In addition, the army should have an educative role in general, particularly against "nationalism, for unity and fraternity". At any rate, the Admiral affirmed that the army remains the guardian of Yugoslav stability, of "the federal and self-management system". In this, he said, the army only applies the resolutions of the 13th Congress of the LCY (June 1986) which provides for the reinforcement of defence as a unified structure based on the complementarity of its components. However, Mamula acknowledges that it is difficult for the army to play an educative role against nationalism, for the soldiers "have learned it at school, in football games, at the café".

This speech, which outlines the possibility of a "socialist Bonapartism" in Yugoslavia and recognizes the resistance capacity of the civil society, demonstrates that the civil legitimacy of the regime, and then in a certain sense, of the GPD, is threatened.<sup>18</sup> But on previous occasions, Branko Mamula had openly spoken of this possibility, only to rule it out. "According to some viewpoints, the Yugoslav People's Army is to be considered a federal military organization, and even as a force potentially superseding society. This view explains the worried undertones that can be detected in recent times in our public opinion with reference to the army, to the draft, and in general to the military obligations of the citizens. On the other side, the GPD is considered as a democratic, socialized model of military organization, the only one suitable to the socialist self managing society. Our choices in this field are instead very clear: each of the two components has its place and its role in our doctrine of armed struggle. Ours is a unitary conception".<sup>19</sup>

The decline of socio-political cohesion in Yugoslavia, however, would not be very dangerous if it was limited to the two very peculiar social realities that are the regions of Slovenia and Kosovo. But during the preparations of the Party Conference, and all the more so during its sessions (May 29-31, 1988) a global collapse of its credibility has become evident. Moreover, before that (April 14-17, 1988), the Mikoulic Government has been obliged to withstand, as any "bourgeois" government in Western Europe, a debate in the Belgrade Assemblies that has eventually led to a confidence vote. And if 125 Deputies to the Federal Chamber and 64 Members of the Chamber of the Republics and Autonomous Regions did in the end vote in favour of the Government, the

opposition has succeeded in gathering about a third of the Members of each House, practically the entire Slovenian and Croatian delegations, that have deemed the results of the Government's action to be "unacceptable".

At the Party Conference, on the other side, many speakers have confirmed that workers and young people are abandoning in droves the LCY. Several delegates have also denounced the corruption and the waste of the ruling *élite*; the cost of official cars has been said to be so large that the elimination of such a privilege would enable the country to repay a substantial share of its international debt. And this criticism was not limited to the northern Republics only. Indeed, it has been a group of Serbian delegates that has requested to convene a new Party Congress in September 1988, in order to elect a new Party Leadership.

The country, which has undergone a new massive devaluation, a new inflationary record, and a new agreement with the IMF (as it has regularly happened every year since 1982) seems to be losing all confidence in the system. And this cannot but push the Army to play a larger and more important role.

At the present stage (July 1988) one might then legitimately wonder about the new role the defence forces can really play in the Yugoslav quagmire. As it often happens in Yugoslavia, the innovation is more in the rhetoric of a new speech than in the creation of a truly new sociological substratum. Above all, the lacerating economic crisis (since 1980) presents the defence problem to its full extent. What exactly are the armed forces supposed to defend? Is that which one pretends to defend worth it? Yugoslavia, whose workers are abroad, whose inflation is at 130%, who suffers from financial scandals, is certainly not Switzerland, where inflation is non-existent, unemployment just frictional and capitalism is based on a relatively respected ethic. In order to be general, the GPD must be "of the people", but what do the people want?



## References

- 1 - See *Politika*, October 21, 1968.
- 2 - Declaration of General Ljubičić, Minister of Defence, to the Federal Assembly.
- 3 - See Léo Mates, *International Relations of Socialist Yugoslavia (Medunarodni odnosi socialisticke Jugoslavije)*, Nolit, Belgrade p. 248.
- 4 - On this subject see, for example, F. Fejtő, "Yougoslavie 1976" in *Etudes*, May 1976, and the special issue of *Relations internationales* on the Near East, 1980 (this review is published quarterly in Geneva and Paris).
- 5 - Tito's speech at the University of Ljubljana in 1969, cited in the *Revue de politique internationale*, Belgrade, May 20, 1972.
- 6 - See Pantelic Milojica "La conception d'une guerre défensive populaire générale" in *Questions actuelles du socialisme*, Belgrade, 1969, and *Revue de politique internationale*, Belgrade, May 20, 1972.
- 7 - The original version of the Pula speech can be found in *Dokumenti*, T.3, ed. Rad Belgrade edited by Vladimir Dédijer.
- 8 - On the multiple ambiguities of Yugoslav non-alignment, see Z. Alberstein, *The non-aligned Yugoslavia*, Princeton University Press; Duncan Wilson, *Tito's Yugoslavia*, Cambridge University Press, 1979; and Eugen Berg, *Non-alignment et nouvel ordre international*, PUF, Paris, 1980.
- 9 - Tito's speech at the University of Ljubljana, aforementioned.
- 10 - In Yugoslav self-managing jargon, that the Americans call "Yugoslav parlance", BOAW is the normalized translation of "base organization of associated work", which corresponds to a shop or an industrial establishment. CWO or "collective work organizations" corresponds to the legal notion of enterprise.
- 11 - See Alain Joxe, *Acentrage stratégique et dissuasion* (IRPES, EHESS) and the papers on Yugoslavia in the collective work, *La dissuasion populaire yougoslave*, by Reneo Lukic, editor of the same. His studies were used for all the doctrinal aspects of the GPD and the statistics up until 1983.
- 12 - Yugoslavia is a party to the 1955 Treaty of the Austrian State. The ethnic-boundary line quarrel on the Slovenians of Carinthia can not, then, turn into a conflict. In the same fashion, the 1975 Treaty with Italy regulates the Trieste question. Only the Macedonian border with Bulgaria is not covered by any treaty.
- 13 - V. Bubany, *La doctrine militaire de la DPG. Revue de politique internationale*, November 5, 1971, Belgrade.
- 14 - Anarcho-liberalism is the official nickname of Djilas's theories and of all that abandons pluralism advantageous to the West.
- 15 - For information concerning the average statistics, confirm the data of *Military Balance*, ISIS, London, the *SIPRI Yearbook*, Stockholm, and, after 1986, *L'année stratégique* (in French) available in the 1986 and 1987 editions.
- 16 - See the February 19, 1969 and the June 1980 laws and the 1974 Constitution (articles 237 and thereafter).
- 17 - "Fewer means for greater modernization" conference held at the War School of Belgrade.
- 18 - See *Politika*, September 24, 1987, p. 5 and *Le Monde*, September 25, 1987.
- 19 - Branko Mamula, *Insostituibile corso di Jugoslavia*, in "Questioni attuali del socialismo", Belgrade, n. 1-2, January-February 1987.