



## JOURNAL À PLUSIEURS VOIX

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# The *Yugoslavist* idea

François Fejtö

**T**he violent political crisis which, after smouldering for several years, erupted in 1987 between the Serbian government and the population of Albanian stock that forms the majority of the autonomous Kosovo region, has brought to light the contradictions which, since its creation, have rendered multinational Yugoslavia a not very sound political construction. The conflict which presently opposes Belgrade to Pristina (the capital of the autonomous region) appears more serious, more tragic than the one that engaged Belgrade and Zagreb in the early 1970s, and which Tito resolved brutally, though without too much damage, by throwing in the balance his prestige and the threat of armed intervention.

At present, however, Yugoslavia's charismatic leader, whom even his adversaries accepted as an arbitrator, is no more. And in spite of the peripheral role of the Albanian community in the Confederation, the Albanian movement, of which it is not clear whether the goal is autonomy or separation, has shaken the entire structure of the State which was created in the name of *Yugoslavism* in 1918.

### The two *Yugoslavisms*

Around the beginning of the nineteenth century, and as an extension towards the Balkans of the Russian originated pan-Slavist movement, *Yugoslavism* spread in an extremely heterogeneous region amongst the Southern Slavs, who were dispersed throughout the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires, and whose differences were greater than their affinities. Among the latter, two nations with a history - or at least a potential - for statehood, the Serbs and the Croats, could claim an outstanding position. On that account, in so far as myth or

tendency to unity within diversity, *Yugoslavism* bore a profound ambivalence from the beginning, for in reality not one, but two *Yugoslavisms* existed.

The first, which was born among the Serbs living outside of the borders of Serbia proper (the so-called *Prečanis*), was a political movement associated with the ambition of the Serbs, which historically had been the first among the Slavs of the South to form an independent state; in the construction of the great Slavic State upon the ruins of decomposed Empires, they performed a role similar to the one that Piedmont had played in the unification of Italy. The other *Yugoslavism*, if analysed in its actual contents, appeared as an attempt to legitimate the ruling position Croatia believed to be entitled to. This second *Yugoslavism* was, moreover, difficult to distinguish from the dream of Grand-Croatia – except when it is considered how the latter looked north, towards Austria, and west, towards Italy, rather than south and east, towards Serbia and the Balkans.

The first of the two *Yugoslavisms*, in whose development an important role was played by the Serbian minorities of Hungary, and by the Serbs of Banat and of Voivodina, economically and culturally more advanced than the Serbs of Serbia, took its inspiration from the popular themes of romantic culture, and cultivated the great dream of reconstructing the medieval realm of Tsar Dusan. The Grand-Serbian or pan-Serbian characteristic of Serbian nationalism ensued almost inevitably from the geographical dispersion of the Serbs throughout all the nebulae of the Slavs of the South. There was indeed no coincidence between the borders of the Serbian State, which had conquered its sovereignty and independence in stages between 1804 and 1878, and the areas inhabited by people of Serbian nationality, which were scattered from Macedonia to Montenegro, from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Kosovo and Croatia, and from Voivodina to Dalmatia. This state of dispersion resulted in Serbian nationalism becoming in a certain sense an international problem from its very beginning, since the union of all the Serbs could not be realized except to the detriment of two Empires and at the price of encompassing the other Southern Slavs as well into the same political unit.

Moreover, this state of affairs included the seeds of conflict with the Croats, and to a lesser extent, with the Bulgarians, the Albanians and the Italians. The fact that the sanctuaries of Serbian nationalism, located in Voivodina, in Albania and in Dalmatia, were geographically marginal in relation to Serbia proper, inevitably drew Serbian nationalism towards an irredentist attitude, i.e.

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towards Grand-Serbism, painted in all its romantic and universalistic rhetoric by the cultural *Yugoslavism* of the historians and the poets. Between 1860 and 1870, the Serbian nationalist-*Yugoslavist* militants were thus quite active in



Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Macedonia. They established contacts with the Serbs of Dalmatia, and mobilized Montenegrin nationalism. It is necessary to note that before the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867, the principal leader of the Serbs of Voivodina, Miletić, was an autonomist within the limits of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which he hoped would become a federation; after the compromise, which confirmed Vienna's and Budapest's condominium of the monarchy, Miletić opted for the destruction of the monarchy and for union with Serbia. At the same time the Serbian youth movement of Voivodina proclaimed itself Yugoslavist in the direction of uniting the Serbs, the Dalmatians, the Croats and the Slavs of Bosnia-Herzegovina in one State under Serbian protection.

The *Yugoslavism* of the Croats was born of a disappointment, similar to that which Miletić experienced, when Zagreb understood that neither Hungary nor Austria could be brought to transform the limited autonomy that Croatia did have within the frame of the monarchy, into a statute of independence comparable to that which Hungary enjoyed. The roots of Croatian *Yugoslavism* go back, however, to the romantic *Illyrist* movement, encouraged by the ephemeral Napoleonic domination in Dalmatia.<sup>1</sup> As Strossmayer, bishop of Zagreb, saw it later, *Yugoslavism* was simply one amongst the many tendencies of Croatian nationalism which, to the very end, did not easily break away from Austro-Hungarian attraction. Inspired by the Italian *Risorgimento* and by German philosophy, Strossmayer advocated the union of the Serbs, the Croats, and the Slovenians in a State which would also have included Dalmatia and Bosnia. To his mind, the centre of these united Slavic States was to be Croatia, but he was impressed by the political successes of Serbian nationalism. His *Yugoslavism* was intended to be the bridge between Catholic Croatia and Orthodox Serbia, speaking - since the Croats had adopted the Stokadian dialect - nearly the same language.

There was, nevertheless, a certain idea of Croatian supremacy underlying in Strossmayer. The Croats maintained the fiction that their State had actually never ceased to exist; that in the eleventh century it had been united with, and not annexed by, Hungary. Croatian nationalism was more frankly expressed by the writer Ante Starević, apostle of Grand Croatia, as including not only Slavonia and Dalmatia but also some of the regions of Voivodina and of Bosnia which have a Serbian majority, and Serbia itself. In reality, Starević's views, which would later be taken up again by the Ustashas of World War II, appeared megalomaniac even to the greater part of his fellow citizens.

World War I, in the beginning, divided the Slavs of the South: the Serbs were part of the Alliance between Russia, France and England, whilst the Croats and the Slovenians, considering the Italians their principal enemies due to their Adriatic ambitions, fought in the Austro-German camp. Nevertheless, in rather confused circumstances, in exile and led by external pressure, the war of 1914-1918 resulted in the co-ordination - perhaps even fusion - of the two Yugoslav myths.

Serbia entered into this fusion in a very strong position, having first the advantage of almost unconditional Russian support, and then the support of the Entente. Serbia's great man, Pašić, took as his models Cavour and Bismarck; in compensation for the sacrifices of his country, which in fact had been occupied during almost the entire war, he claimed Bosnia-Herzegovina and, disregarding an eventual union with Croatia and Slovenia, in which he seemed less interested, the Banat, Voivodina and the Dalmatian coast up to south of Dubrovnik.

Parallel to the diplomatic activities of Pašić, which could not avoid causing some friction between the Italians and the Allies, a group of nationalist *émigrés* from Croatia, Istria and Slovenia, headed by Supilo, Trumbić, Stojanović and the Dalmatian sculptor Meštrović, formed a Yugoslav Committee on April 30, 1915, in Paris. This Committee addressed a manifesto to the French and English governments in favour of the union of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenians into a common national State. Trumbić and his friends depended on the support of the French freemasons and on a certain number of Austrophobic English, French and Italian intellectuals, journalists and historians (Seton-Watson, Wickham Steed, *et al.*), and also received rather important financial aid from their compatriots who had emigrated to the United States.

More "Yugoslav" than the Serbian government which had taken refuge on Corfu, the Committee of Paris, which later settled in London, also claimed for the future Yugoslavia, to be constituted by the fusion of the Serbs, the Croats, the Slovenians and the Montenegrans, the Backa region (with a Hungarian majority), the Banat region, all of Dalmatia, Istria, the cities of Fiume, Pula, Trieste and Gorizia, part of Carinthia and of Styria. This was a diplomatic error, because their excessive demands set against them the Italians, to whom a good part of what they claimed had been promised in the Secret Treaty of 1915. If it had been as the London Committee wanted, the Italians would have

received less from the allies on whose side they had fought, than Vienna had offered in exchange for Italy's neutrality. In the end it was the more realistic Serbians who were able to profit from the Yugoslav Committee's extremism.

However Pašić had never been enthusiastic about transforming the kingdom of Serbia, of which he was a faithful servant, into a Yugoslav State. But his democratic political adversaries forced him to compromise with the leaders of the Committee of London.

After painstaking negotiations, an agreement was reached and made public in the Declaration of Corfu. This agreement was closer to Pašić's objectives than to those of the men of the Committee. The leader of the latter, Trumbić, accepted that the Constituent Assembly, which was to convene after the end of the war, would decide by absolute majority the structures of the new State, even though he required a vote by a majority of two thirds. The Croats of the United States immediately understood the meaning of this decision and they protested: in fact this agreement offered no guarantee against centralizing Serbian hegemony in the new State. But what was important to the Croats at the moment of the signing of the Declaration, was the commitment of the Serbs to fight not only for their own national demands, but also for those of all the Slavs of the South, i.e. for Croat national demands as well.

### **Two dreams, one country**

However, from the moment that the Committee irrevocably committed itself to fight for the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, it was no longer able, in dealing with the Serbs, to play its alternative card for democratic federalism (that the Committee would have probably been able to obtain from Charles, the successor of Francis Joseph). It is necessary to note, in fact, that at the *Reichstag* of Vienna, the Croatian and Slovenian delegates defended to the very end the cause of a Yugoslav Croatian-Slovenian federation, united with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia, under Hapsburg protection. Finally, knowing that the Allies had already decided on the dissolution of the monarchy, even the delegates of the *Reichstag* rallied to the idea of union with Serbia and accepted the principles of the Declaration of Corfu. Anticipating these decisions, on October 29, 1918, the Sabor Croatian Diet voted unanimously on a Self-Determination Act, according to which Croatia severed its ties with Austria-Hungary to unite with Serbia and Montenegro in view of the formation of a common State.

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Hence the two Yugoslav dreams united could be realized under the name of the Kingdom of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenians. But the balance of the forces was such that the new State could not help being dominated by the Serbs. This was made evident by the elections of the Constituent Assembly. To the eyes of the greater part of the Serbian political parties, the unitarian and centralist form of the State appeared natural and inevitable. Serbia presented itself as a politically and nationally homogenous community, to whom central power seemed an urgent necessity. Furthermore, no example of a federal State existed in the Balkans. Consequently, the unitarian conception of the State was inevitably carried into the Yugoslav monarchy between the two World Wars, and a feeling of frustration rapidly prevailed among the Croats. This frustration was expressed by the fuss and fury which characterized the sessions of the Belgrade Parliament where the leader of the Croatian peasant party, Stephen Radić, idol of his nation, was assassinated by one of his infuriated Serbian colleagues.

If the Croatian grievances of this period against Serbian hegemony are closely examined, it may be seen that they reflect an incompatibility of mentality and of aspirations that made true co-operation on equal terms practically impossible. A primary incompatibility existed between the monarchic form of the State, to which even the democratic Serbs, with the exception of the Socialists and the Communists, were sentimentally attached, and Croatian *Yugoslavism*, which was founded on the idea of the independence of the member States and necessitated a frankly federal constitution. A second negative point from the Croatian point of view, was that the choice of the capital of Serbia as capital of Yugoslavia assured a central position to the

Serbs, while Zagreb and, to a lesser degree, Ljubljana and Dubrovnik likewise aspired to the rank of capital. Furthermore, the Croats reproached the Serbs for being over-represented in the diplomatic service, in the administration and in the armed forces, especially in the officers corps. This was true, but this over-representation normally ensued from the fact that Serbia and Montenegro were integrated into the Yugoslav State with previously formed administrative, diplomatic and military cadres which the northern States did not have at their disposal; they only had those which had been formed within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

The Serbian army was a homogeneous and hardened army, in which the integration of former officers and soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army, who had been subject to quite different training and discipline, was not easy. The Serbian over-representation, about which, it may incidentally be noted, the Croats also complained after the Second World War, is partially explainable by the fact that the few Croats and the Slovenians that would undertake a career in the administration were not very willing to move to Belgrade, the latter's Balkan character contrasting with their native Westernized environment. Another grievance of the Croats concerned the preference given to the Serbs of Croatia in filling administrative and police positions in the part of the country where the Croats formed the majority of the population. This grievance was also based on a hardly disputable fact; it is explained, if not justified, by the deep-rooted Serbian mistrust of the Croats, whose *Yugoslavism* still appeared torn by ambiguity. At the same time the Croats and the Slovenians were shocked by the Serbian "hard bureaucratism", inherited from the administrative tradition of the ancient kingdom, of which the Serbian Socialist Markovic had said that the bureaucracy acted "as a domineering, colonizing class with regard to its own fellow citizens."

Yet the incompatibility which weighed most upon the coexistence of the Slavonic brothers of the South, came from the differences of historical traditions, of mentality, of ways of life, which prevented the ethnic groups, related almost solely by language, from merging into one nation, from making of the Yugoslav State the melting-pot of the Yugoslav nation. The differences were fundamentally greater than the affinities. In each ethnic group, it was the religion - Orthodox here, Catholic or Moslem there - more than their common Slavism, which determined the conscience of the people. Whereas the Serbs had been influenced more by Turkish domination, the Croats and the Slovenians - in spite of their permanent or intermittent hostility - were



profoundly marked by their long coexistence with the Magyars and the Austrians.

The Serbs, insofar as they were the most numerous nation in the State, (whose name was changed to "Yugoslavia" in 1929), considered the State theirs, and felt a stronger affection and loyalty than the Croats and the Slovenians, for whom opposing those in power - previously the Austro-Hungarians, now the Serbs - had become a habit. It should also be added that each people felt superior to the other. The Serbs were proud of the hard battles which they had borne throughout the centuries for their survival and for their independence; the Croats, and even more so the Slovenians, were proud of their incontestably superior cultural and technical level.

To the above must also be added the class conflicts, worsened by the tardiness of economic recovery, and the unrest stirred up by the Communists: the latter, obeying the instructions of the Komintern, had done everything to destabilize the Yugoslav State, which was denounced as an instrument of anti-soviet imperialism and land of exile for thousands of white Russian refugees. It is then easily understandable why this was normal democratic political life in post World War I Yugoslavia and why it became inevitable for King Alexander, after the dismissal of the Parliament, to create a personal and authoritarian regime. But such a regime could not but reinforce the Grand-Serbian nature of the country and stand in the way of a foreign and defence policy based on the consensus of all the peoples and nationalities of Yugoslavia, in an international situation which was becoming more and more dangerous. The Belgrade authorities lost confidence in Western protection, but the policy of rapprochement with the Axis powers, outlined by Prince Paul, collided with traditional Serbian pro-Western sentiment. The agreement between the Prince and the relatively moderate Croatian leader, Maček, an odd and hesitant character, came too late. The low morale that reigned in the country on the eve of the German invasion was just as responsible for the rapid defeat of the Yugoslav army as was the army's weakness and lack of preparation.

### **War and civil war**

Yugoslavia fell to pieces. The Germans compensated the Hungarians for their assistance, agreed on without enthusiasm, with a part of Northern Serbia; Serbia, having lost Macedonia, was declared a German protectorate; Croatia,

theoretically independent under the direction of the ultra-nationalist Ustashas, reached its old aspirations in the most disastrous conditions. The leader of the Ustashas, Pavelić, quickly conquered a place of honor among the criminals of war. His greatest exploit was, in fact, the extermination of tens of thousands of Serbs of Croatia and Bosnia and the humiliation of tens of thousands of others, forced to convert to Roman Catholicism. In the course of the four years of the Ustasha regime, 500,000 Serbs, out of whom three bishops and 330 priests, 46 thousand Jews and 25 thousand Tsiganes, were massacred, and 279 Orthodox monasteries and churches were destroyed.

From the above, it can easily be understood how resistance against the Nazis originated amongst the main victims of aggression - the Serbs. Neither was it surprising that resistance took on different aspects among the two components of the Serbian ethnic group: the Serbs of Serbia itself, where resistance was organized around a high-ranking officer of the defeated army, Draža Mihailovic, who had the confidence of the Yugoslav government in exile in London, and who, undoubtedly influenced by the Croats' attitude, became more Serbian than Yugoslav. In Montenegro, the goal of the partisans was, above all, to protect the Serbian population and they did not treat the Croats and the Croatophile Moslems of Bosnia any more humanely than the Ustashas treated the Serbs. Little by little, the war between the Yugoslav peoples was superimposed on the war fought against the invaders.

It was at this very moment that the Yugoslav Communist Party appeared on the scene. The Komintern had given its leader Tito the responsibility of reorganizing the Party since 1934, and of transmitting the line of the international Communist movement to both the Western powers and their European protégés. After the German onslaught on the Soviet Union in 1941, the Communist Party, which had refrained from helping Yugoslav resistance to the German invasion as long as the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939 had survived, no longer denigrated Belgrade's *Yugoslavism* as a cover for pan-Serbism allied with imperialism. Henceforth, not destabilization but national defence became the priority for the Communist Party; anti-fascist and pro-soviet patriotism replaced the class struggle.<sup>2</sup> After the collapse of the German-Russian Entente, which had temporarily threatened Communist credibility, the Party thus resumed its anti-fascist strategy; it formed an insurrectional army which simultaneously waged war against the Ustachas, the Italians and the Nazis, and appealed to all the nationalities, in the name of Yugoslav brotherhood, rekindled by internationalism, to unite against their common enemies.

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It was this energetic condemnation of all fratricidal struggles, in a country profoundly traumatized by the atrocities committed by both sides, that gave the Yugoslav Communist Party superiority over Mihailović's purely nationalistic, Serbian, resistance. Tito, of Croato-Slovenian origin himself, defended the Serbs of Srem and of Bosnia more vigorously than Mihailović's Chetniks did, and he also called the anti-fascist Croats and Slovenians into the battle. Tito and his companions also had the advantage of having acquired in years of



clandestine political activity, and at the school of Moscow, an experience of organization and propaganda which the Serbian officers lacked. Whereas Mihailovic avoided confronting the Germans to spare his forces for the last battle, Tito waged war against the Nazis and the Italians with less regard for the human lives which were sacrificed. After a few vain attempts to unite their action, the Chetniks and Tito's partisans started fighting one another with nearly more ferocity than they had demonstrated against their common enemy. Churchill without a doubt did not err when in spite of his intransigent anti-communism and without being asked to do so by Stalin, he opted to aid Tito in preference to the anti-communist Mihailović.

### The anti-Serbian coalition

Postwar Yugoslavia was to be the result of the power struggles which emerged during the war, together with Tito's out-dated Communist ideas aimed at transforming the national war into a revolutionary war. It is important to realise that in the first partisan formations of 1941-1942, the Serbian elements of Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia dominated. The leadership of Tito's army was Communist and internationalist but its troops were nationalist. It was not until 1943, when the prospects of victory became clear, that more and more Croats, and even entire units of Ustasas, began to pass over to the Communist camp. In this way, with the simultaneous participation of the Slovenian anti-fascists of the Christian-Socialist Party, the Yugoslav character of the Communist Party was more able to assert itself and by November 1943 Tito was still in time to propose the reorganization of Yugoslavia as a federation to the meeting of the Anti-fascist Council of National Liberation.

Tito was without a doubt sincere and believed to be in perfect accordance with the Leninist model, when he rather clearly favoured the other nationalities at the expense of the Serbians. Had not also Lenin himself considered the grand Russians the most dangerous adversaries to Communism? Tito thus dispersed the Serbian population in five Republics and two autonomous regions. In fact, he granted the statute of Republic to Macedonia, which, after the treaty of Bucharest in 1913, had been an integral part of Serbia; the same for Montenegro, which had been united with Serbia in 1918. Bosnia-Herzegovina, with a Serbian majority, was also proclaimed an entirely separate Republic, as well as Croatia, to which the new constitution allocated Slavonia and Dalmatia, and which was therefore able to unite the entire Croatian population, plus 700 thousand Serbs, who were refused the statute of autonomous region inside Croatia.

This statute was, in return, granted to Voivodina, due to the strong Hungarian minority, and to Kosovo which, for historical reasons - in so far as birthplace of Serbian nationalism - could not aspire to a republican statute. The Republic of Slovenia, isolated in a certain sense by its language and culture, believed its adhesion to federally reorganized Yugoslavia would afford protection for its identity and its national interest. In fact the new Yugoslav arrangement could not dissatisfy anyone except the partisans of Grand-Serbia. In theory, the reorganization of the country into a federation better corresponded to the heterogeneity of the peoples of Yugoslavia than monarchic centralization had.

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The reorganization, however, had disappointed more than one citizen, particularly due to Tito's adoption of the Soviet model of federation associated with democratic centralism, viz. With the imposition of the one-party system, the suppression of private economy (with the exception of agriculture), the establishment of a police regime, and hence the creation of the totalitarian system. But here lies the irony of history: this system which wanted to be anti-Grand Serbian, but which was more centralized, more authoritarian, more highly militant and policed than the royal system was, rapidly took on Grand-Serbian characteristics, and this in spite of the fact that among the principal leaders there were at least as many Croats and Slovenians (Bakarić, Kardelj, Hebrang) as Serbs and Montenegrans (Ranković, Djilas). But once again, the capital being, after all, Belgrade, it was naturally the Serbs who proliferated in the federal organs, dominated in the diplomatic services, in the police and in the Party leadership. In Croatia, in Voivodina, in Kosovo, in Macedonia, the local Serbs proved to be the most trustworthy to fill leadership positions. At the moment of the break with Moscow - a lasting factor of consensus - it was among the Serbs that Tito found his most reliable supporters.

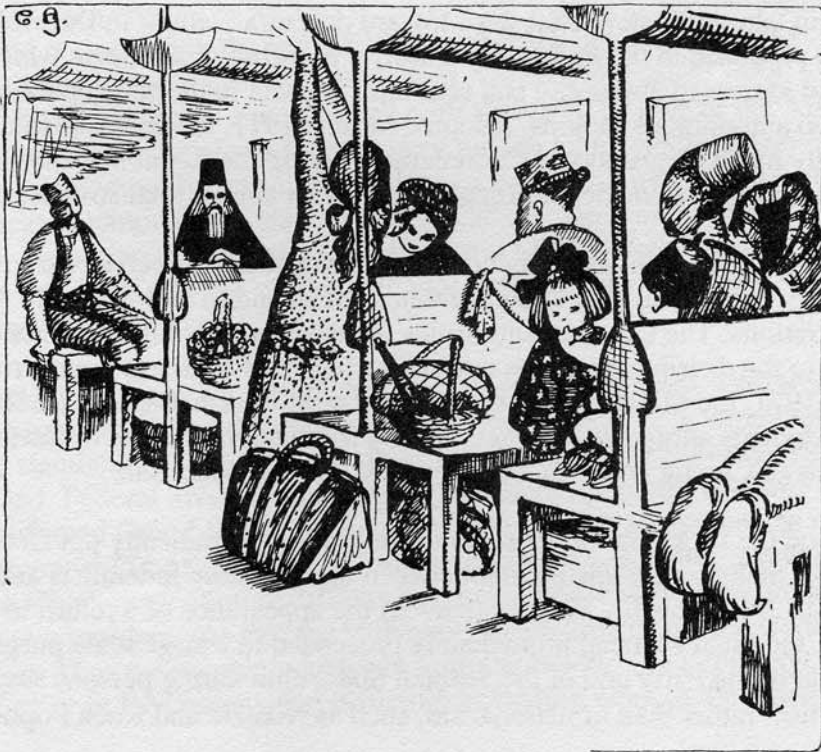
Yet the Communists had to pay a high price for this consensus which they had created in the mind of the population. The leaders of the regime interpreted the reason of their break with the USSR as a result of the centralizing, dictatorial tendency of Stalinist Communism.

To differentiate themselves from the Stalinist system, they thus tried to create a "true socialism", decentralized if not democratic, but in any case more receptive to individual and national traditions and aspirations.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore significant that when the battle of the anti-centralists within the Party, led by the Croatian Bakarić and the Slovenian Kardelj, against the conservative centralists, led by the Serbian Ranković, ended in the defeat of the latter, many of the Serbs of Serbia, of Bosnia, of Voivodina, of Kosovo and of Croatia, and even the anti-Communists, saw in it a defeat of the Serbian nation, forgetting that a few years before they had still considered Ranković, who was the head of the political police, as the very symbol of totalitarianism. It suddenly appeared that centralism, under whatever form, was part of the Serbian - viz. Grand-Serbian - tradition. And from then on the struggle for the decentralizing reform of the federation took on an anti-Belgrade, anti-Serbian colouring in Croatia, Slovenia and Dalmatia, in spite of the fact that in Serbia there was perhaps an even greater number of liberal reformist elements than in the other Republics.

Croatian grievances

The period between 1967 and 1971 was therefore marked by a rebirth of Croatian nationalism, directed against the Serbs, particularly in the cultural field: the greater part of the Croatian writers, including the famous Krleža, who was himself not even a nationalist, signed a declaration which emphasized the differences between the Croatian and the Serbian languages; the Matica Hrvatska became the mouthpiece of anti-Serbian grievances; Belgrade became the scapegoat of all the evils of the regime, whereas Croatia was identified with progress, liberalism and anti-Stalinism. The Croatian Communist leaders, such as Tripalo, who in the beginning limited themselves to demanding more autonomy for their Republic, were overwhelmed by the extremist elements that demagogical agitation had led towards separatism.

Indeed, the unrest in Croatia also had economic reasons. These ensued mainly from the extremely rapid pace of Yugoslavia's transformation from a rural



society into an urbanized and industrialized one. (The rural population diminished from 75% in 1945 to 37% in 1970). On the other hand, the economic reform of 1965, insufficiently prepared psychologically and politically, and entrusted for implementation to people without any experience in market economy, had destabilizing effects which worsened further after corrective measures were taken. Towards the end of the '60s economic growth thus stopped, the deficit of the balance of payments grew to dangerous proportions, and the only way to curb the increase in unemployment was to allow more than half a million workers to look for work in the capitalist countries. In the eyes of Croatian public opinion, all of this was Belgrade's fault. The press discovered that Croatia, which represents 23% of the population of Yugoslavia, contributed to 27% of its GNP, to 30% of its industrial production and thanks to tourism, to 35% of its foreign currency revenue, while only 17% of these assets remained in the hands of the Croats. These revelations led to a campaign unleashed against the banks and the great enterprises of Serbia.

Impressed by the strength and dynamism of Croatian nationalism, Tito then decided to take some new bold steps toward decentralization: in December 1970, he proposed to the Federal Assembly a constitutional reform which stipulated increased autonomy and economic powers in the six Republics and in the two autonomous regions. Adopted in June 1971, the new Constitution practically made Yugoslavia a Confederacy, giving the Republics and the autonomous regions inside the Republic of Serbia almost total sovereignty.<sup>4</sup>

The anti-Belgrade feelings were, however, exasperated to such an extent that Tito's truly substantial concessions did not put an end to anti-Serbian demonstrations. The Croatian authorities themselves called for an immediate solution to the distribution of the currency which had been left in uncertainty; in April 1971, the Matica Hrvatska elected a new, ultra-nationalist leadership and the students announced a strike, calling for the Croatization of the army. The Serbs of Croatia and of Bosnia began to feel no longer safe.

Relying on the backbone of the regime, the army, Tito radically put an end to the unrest, making little distinction between the moderate federalists and the separatists. But, probably in order to avoid the appearance of a return to pan-Serbism, the Field Marshal immediately proceeded to a large scale purge in the leadership of the Party and of the Serbian State, eliminating persons suspected of liberalism rather than of nationalism, such as Nikéžic and Koča Popović,

replacing them with new leaders who were frequently very mediocre, but unconditionally devoted to him. During the end of his reign, this did not contribute to increasing his popularity, at least not in Serbia.

Progress towards federalization was thus accompanied by a step backwards in the political field, and in January 1972, the Confederacy adopted a programme of action which stressed democratic centralism. This contradictory move explains in part why the new Constitution, theoretically impartial, instead of reinforcing the unity of the Republic, added fuel to the fire of the centrifugal forces. Croatia, having won their case in almost all of the claims, could have been expected to calm down. But the severe sanctions taken against some quite popular Croatian leaders, the wave of arrests, and the re-establishment of political control over the press and the university left deep wounds.

At the same time, in reaction to Croatian nationalism, prudently approved by the Slovenians, a growing unrest was noted among the Serbs and a first explosion was produced in Kosovo, which had economic, but especially national motivations. The new *intelligentsia*, graduated from the university which had been created in Pristina as part of the federal action in favour of less developed regions, took the lead of a movement which, without being separatist, cast longing eyes at independent Albania, and called for a Republican statute on an equal footing with Serbia.<sup>5</sup> The idea of the Albanian nationalists was to transform their country into an ethnically homogenous country, persuading, by means often close to terrorism, the Serbian and Montenegrin minorities to leave Kosovo. Their action was not without success: beginning in 1971 nearly 70 thousand Serbian and Montenegrin families left. Thus 650 out of 1450 villages have become ethnically "pure", that is, purely Albanian.

Irrational nationalism: on the one hand the Federal authorities were reproached for not having remedied the underdevelopment of Kosovo, in which the average standard of living was ten times inferior to that of Slovenia, and on the other hand, Federal investments in the region were opposed, believing that they only reinforced Grand-Serbian hegemony. The result was an increase in unemployment (54,4% of the working-age population in 1986). Another problem which made it more difficult to reach a negotiated fair settlement of the Kosovo problem was that the University of Pristina neglected technical education. Thus the many graduates in Political Science, in Economy, in Sociology or in Psychology had difficulty in finding work in the other





Republics of which, in any case, they did not even know the language. And another phenomenon still disturbed the Serbs: the ultra-rapid population growth of the Albanians of Kosovo, owing to their refusal of family planning, (they have the highest rate in Europe - 27 per 1000). If this rate is maintained, the population of Kosovo will reach 2,600,000 in the year 2000, even though it was at 900,000 in 1945 and 1,600,000 in 1981. Under these circumstances, the possibilities of maintaining Kosovo within the frame of the Yugoslav Federation has become more and more problematical. In fact, the Albanians already control the administration and the press and they no longer want to hear mention of returning to the statute that they had before 1971.

The first effect of the Kosovo affair was a serious shift inside the Serbian leadership along two lines of action. The first faction, the most powerful, is led by the president of the Central Committee, Slobodan Milošević, a believer in strong measures, whom political adversaries accuse of wanting to profit from the brutal way in which order has been restored in Kosovo to re-establish the

authoritarian, centralist characteristic of the system in Serbia and in all of Yugoslavia. The second group is lead by Ivan Stambolic, nephew of the late Pitar Stambolic (who in Tito's era was one of the most orthodox Stalinist leaders), but who is a liberal Communist; and indeed his adversaries reproach him for a certain laxity because he prefers to settle the Kosovo crisis through persuasion rather than authoritarian methods. Milošević has the majority of the Serbian Party machinery, the powerful organization of the veterans of the civil war, the Serbian nationalist opinion, and also numerous nostalgics of centralism. Stambolic is supported by almost all the press (particularly the newspapers of the *Politika* group, amongst which the very popular weekly *Nin*) and by the intellectual circles of Belgrade, who are more and more energetically calling for the revision of the Marxist-Leninist ideas from which, according to them, Tito was not able to extricate himself. The liberal intellectuals, however, carry less political weight in Serbian affair than Milosevic's national-centralist group, further strengthened during the summer of 1988, by the demonstration of Serbian refugees from Kosovo, demanding a re-introduction of the two autonomous regions (de facto totally self-governing in any case) into the Serbian Republic, and by discussion of the Central Authorities over the granting of special powers to the police in Kosovo.

In the summer of 1988, Milošević, immensely popular with the Serbs, seems to be in a stronger position than his adversaries. But it is unlikely that, after more than twenty years of liberalization, during which the peoples of Yugoslavia have forgotten fear and have grown accustomed to frankness, a return to the policies of before 1965 is possible. The liberals of Belgrade are this time also supported by those of Zagreb, where the widely distributed weekly, *Danas*, in an important leading published in November 1987, called for the re-orientation of all the foreign policy of Yugoslavia in the direction of association with democratic Europe. They are also supported by the Slovenian members of the teaching profession who almost unanimously reject Marxism, not being afraid to ridicule the myth of self-management and going so far as to condemn openly the cult of Tito which Milošević instead tries to maintain and exploit.

It is unlikely that an attempt at a "unitarist" restauration - i.e. a comeback to Grand-Serbian centralism - could succeed. But it is not clear how the peoples of Yugoslavia will come out of the most serious crisis that they have experienced since 1941: economic crisis, crisis of trust in the authorities and ideological crisis. It is significant that the most popular of the Serbian writers, Dobrica Ćosić, a former Communist partisan, in a speech given on November

18, blamed the Communist Party for the identity crisis which his country is undergoing. Recalling the decisive role that the Serbian people played in the creation of the Yugoslav State, as protector of all the Slavs of the South against foreign influence, Čosić did recognize that "the Serbs in general do not respect differences; they have acted with arrogance and without constraint, with a feeling of superiority in regard to all that is not Serbian." But at the same time, Čosić expressed his disappointment for the "lack of warmth and solidarity which the other nations of Yugoslavia show in regards to the trials and suffering which presently afflict the Serbs in Kosovo and elsewhere." "I have the impression," he said on occasion of a discussion with Slovenian writers, "that you Slovenians look more and more towards the Italians and the Austrians and you move away from your Slavonic roots."

It seems that the great loss of *Yugoslavism* - first in its royal version, then in its Communist version - is Grand-Serbism, a role into which the Serbs were pushed, so to speak, against their original intentions. The actual conditions were not favourable for either Pašić or Tito to become a Cavour or a Bismarck of the Slavs of the South; at the most they could be a caricature of Francis Joseph. *Yugoslavism*, insofar as it might be pan-Serbism, is dead. It has proved to be impossible to make a Yugoslav nation. Will *Yugoslavism* be able to renew itself thanks to the coalition of modern, tolerant, democratic forces which exist within each of Yugoslavia's national components? Is a Yugoslav democratic Confederation possible? One cannot but hope so, for the benefit of Europe.

### References

<sup>1</sup> - See David A. Dyker, "Yugoslavia: Unity of Diversity", in *Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States*, A. Brown and J. Gray (Eds.), Macmillan Press, London, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> - See Branko Lazitch, *Tito et la Révolution Yougoslave, 1937-1956*, Fasquelle, Paris, 1957.

<sup>3</sup> - See "Programme de la Ligue des Communistes de Yougoslavie", *Temps Modernes*, Julliard, 1958, as well as the articles published from 1952 to 1958 of the revue *Questions actuelles du socialisme*, Belgrade, and V. Dedijer, *Le défi de Tito, Staline et la Yougoslavie*, Gallimard, Paris, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> - See *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, P.F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer (Eds.), University of Washington Press, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> - B. Lavergne and H. Laurieux, "La réalité yougoslave", in *L'année politique et économique*, Paris, July 1972, and "Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia", in *Medjunarodna Politika*, Belgrade, 1974.