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Yugoslavia

Cultural Opposition and Dissent in Yugoslavia: Different Shades of Red

“A human without alternatives is not a human,” said sociologist Nebojša Popov.¹ Investigating the possibilities for alternatives in authoritarian systems beyond the political sphere can be a way to approach the topic of cultural opposition. To what extent was the regime able to infiltrate and control society, and how were “spaces (or niches) of freedom” possible in socialist Yugoslavia? These are questions which cannot easily be answered. For many, Yugoslavia was a strange entity, somewhat like a “platypus”: a conglomerate of people and a unique geopolitical synthesis emerged on the ruins of two multicultural polities, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. Josip Broz Tito’s Yugoslavia was described as a country with “six republics, five peoples, four languages, three religions, two scripts and one Tito.”² Tito, the most prominent figure of Yugoslav communism, the guerrilla leader who gained the respect even of his ideological opponents during the Second World War, ruled the country with a “steel hand in velvet gloves.” Tito’s Yugoslavia had many features of totalitarianism: an all-powerful one-party apparatus with a charismatic party leader who was also the (lifetime) president of the state, a cult of personality, a capillary system of social oversight based on censorship and ideological commissions, and a privileged elite of “sociopolitical” workers. However, under Tito’s “sceptre,” some forms of liberties emerged in Yugoslavia which were inconceivable in other communist countries.

Titoism as a distinct Yugoslav version of the communist system had developmental phases. The most important was Tito’s break with Stalin in 1948. According to Ivan Supek, “at first, schools, arts, and science were subordinated to strong ideology. The majority of social scientists, about 90 percent, were members of the Party (...) The Communist Party established its Marxist cadets in the faculty departments or institutes of importance as guardians of its order, (...) the interpretation of history and society could not be avoided by ideological mystification.” However, “the very fact that [the Yugoslav com-

1 Kanzleiter and Stojaković, 1968 in *Jugoslawien*, 185–200.

2 Ahtisaari, *Beogradska zadaća*, 23. Although this quote refers to the diverse and complex ethnic and religious setup of Yugoslavia, the country’s cultural diversity was far more complex than suggested by the author.

munists] were endangered by Stalin was pushing them to the West and loosening the original hard Bolshevism.”³

One of the important consequences of the rift between Yugoslavia and the USSR was the opening of the country to the West and its influences. Although it was a complex political and social process that had its victims (Tito’s methods of dealing with political opponents in the period did not differ significantly from Stalin’s), this process was new and unique at the time in the history of communism, and culture played a significant role in it. This rift explains many of the ambivalences of Yugoslav culture. The compelling repertoire of Communist reveille and the cult of Tito was pervaded with jazz and rock ‘n’ roll and admiration for American film actors.

Given these ambivalences, German historian Wolfgang Höpken warns against assessing Tito’s Yugoslavia as authoritarian, though he stresses that its repressive character has been underemphasized in recent research. Höpken calls for a differentiation of ruling periods and for acknowledgment of the specificities of the Yugoslav system. He proposes the formula “controlled freedom” [*durchherrschte Freiheit*].⁴ As observed by Czech director Jiří Menzel, socialist Yugoslavia, as a country open to Western influences, was perceived in the communist bloc as an “America of the East.”⁵ In a similar vein, the Belgrade historian Radina Vučetić coined the term “Coca-Cola Socialism” to describe the Yugoslav popular culture of the 1960s.⁶ President Tito was the symbol of Yugoslav (socialist) patriotism, unifying (mostly) South Slavic people (Albanians and Hungarians forming rather big minorities) under the formula of “brotherhood and unity.”

A vital lever used by the government was the cultural policy in which Tito played the crucial role as supreme arbitrator. When promoting self-management of the working people in the 1950s at the National Assembly, Tito “predicted that its success ‘would depend on the intensity of cultural development.’”⁷ Never before had the state invested as much in public education as it did after 1945, undertaking significant efforts to eliminate illiteracy, promote health education, introduce and enforce compulsory schooling, and provide financing for libraries and cultural centers.⁸

Parallel to the party propaganda apparatus, many distinct “spaces of freedom” emerged. Culture experienced the same turbulent and non-linear metamorphosis as Yugoslav socialist society as a whole; from the Stalinist phase of fighting against the “national enemies” until the early 1950s, which was a period of strict censorship and rigid party control over all aspects of life (including culture); through a phase of liberalization, particularly from the

3 Supek, “Refleksije na prekretnici milenija,” 810.

4 Höpken, “Durchherrschte Freiheit,” 64.

5 Menzel, *Moja Hrvatska*.

6 Vučetić, *Koka-kola socijalizam*.

7 Matvejević, *Jugoslavenstvo danas*, 128.

8 Calic, *Geschichte Jugoslawiens*, 186–87.

mid-1960s until 1971/72, to the end of the 1980s when communist officials publicly stated that they were no longer able to control the social processes that ultimately led to the emergence of political pluralism. One of the film directors of the critically oriented "Black Wave" in Yugoslav cinematography, Đorđe Kadijević, whose films came under censorship (*Praznik, Pohod*), described the paradox of Tito's "soft Stalinism." He said: "My films, although forbidden, were taken to world festivals and met with great success. Although an adversary of modern art, Tito's 'soft Stalinism' enabled him to speak in 1962 explicitly against abstract art and at the same time let him build the Museum of Contemporary Art, quite unhindered. A similar paradox is the fact that the writer Borislav Pekić was imprisoned [...], but afterward received prestigious awards."⁹ Tito hence applied a broad range of strategies to cope with critical minds: parallel to repression or intimidation, he also successfully teased and won over adversaries by allowing them some degree of (controlled) freedom.¹⁰

The final rejection of the Stalinist matrix comes in 1952, when the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia criticized state centralism and Stalinism, and proclaimed self-management as the Yugoslav path to socialism.¹¹ The historian Marie-Janine Calic argues that Yugoslav self-management meant a "quasi real existing denial of state socialism."¹² Historian Predrag Marković stresses that the Yugoslav system was proclaimed not only in contrast to the East, but particularly as superior to the parliamentary democracy of the West.¹³ In that period, the conditions for the gradual opening-up of Yugoslavia were created. This opening-up found manifestation in ever-increasing trade and cultural cooperation with the West. Tito skillfully maneuvered between the two blocs, promoting an "alternative path to communist internationalism." Tito's "third way" and "peaceful coexistence" crystallized in the Non-Aligned Movement at the beginning of the 1960s.¹⁴

The Copernican inversion in Yugoslav art at the beginning of the 1950s—related to the rejection of the Zhdanov Doctrine and Stakhanovism in USSR—led to the affirmation of abstract art tendencies, which had produced remarkable artistic achievements, recognized even abroad. With the performance of the group EXAT 51 (Experimental Atelier in 1951) in Zagreb, "the thesis on the equality of abstract painting with other contemporary tendencies was proclaimed, and at the same time, the freedom of artistic expression was chosen for the first time not only in socialist Yugoslavia but also in the entire socialist bloc."¹⁵ The break with the dogma of social-realism through the affirmation of

9 Cukić, "Đorđe Kadijević o Titu." About Pekić, see also Cvetković, *Portreti disidenata*, 139–74.

10 Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu*, 49.

11 Supek, "Refleksije na prekretnici milenija," 811.

12 Calic, *Geschichte Jugoslawiens*, 194.

13 Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 515.

14 Jakovina, "Jugoslavija na međunarodnoj pozornici," 434–84.

15 Župan, *Pragmatičari, dogmati, sanjari*, 13.

abstract art represented an “expression of creative freedom unprecedented for the Eastern Bloc.”¹⁶ In 1952, at the Third Congress of the Yugoslav Writers’ Union in Ljubljana, the leading Croatian writer and one of the most prominent Yugoslav intellectuals, Miroslav Krleža, opposed socialist realism and announced the liberation of literature from ideological bonds. Broad cultural activity developed and, within it, various cultures of dissent.

Similar phenomena can be observed in all areas of creative expression. In 1964, for instance, a group of Zagreb Marxist philosophers and sociologists began publishing the *Praxis* journal, and they opened a summer school in Korčula, in which Yugoslav intellectuals and some of the most prominent philosophers from all over the world participated. In their work, philosophers and sociologists of praxis orientation discussed the issues of the time, including critical attitudes towards the policy of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY). The culmination of *Praxis*’ work was related to the student protests of 1968 against communist bureaucracy and social injustice which were held in many cities in Yugoslavia, with the most important events taking place in Belgrade.¹⁷ The Praxis philosophers were labelled “anarcho-leftists” and condemned by the party; finally, in 1974 they were forced to cease their activity. Some intellectuals were publicly excluded from the party and even dismissed from their places of employment. Some of the protests in 1968 were nationally motivated, such as the demands of Albanians in Kosovo for self-determination.¹⁸

A complementary theme of the culture of dissent in Yugoslavia is the emergence of a parallel “space of freedom,” in emigration in which many dissidents and oppositionists ended up. Mihajlo Mihajlov, one of the most famous Yugoslav dissident writers, who lived in the USA and left his personal papers at the Hoover Institution (HI), was one such dissident. HI also holds the personal papers of Milovan Đilas, the most famous Yugoslav political dissident, who until the early 1950s was one of Tito’s closest associates. For his criticism and his advocacy of greater democratic input into decision-making, Đilas was dismissed from all political functions and sentenced to prison. While he was in jail, he managed to get his books published abroad.

Most dissidents and oppositionists in emigration were, however, anti-communist and anti-Yugoslav. One of the most prominent Croatian pro-democratic intellectuals in emigration, Bogdan Radica, stated that “the legitimacy of the Croat people and their destiny must be taken over by free Croats” because “only they have the right to speak in the name of the captured Croat people.”¹⁹ After the victory of Yugoslav communism, two fundamental paradigms relevant to the culture of dissent appeared: the one that

¹⁶ Ibid., 14.

¹⁷ Fichter, “Yugoslav Protest,” 99–121.

¹⁸ Limani, “Kosovo u Jugoslaviji,” 251–78.

¹⁹ Radica, “Titov smrtni skok.”

emerged within Yugoslav society and the one linked to political émigrés in the democratic states of the West. Both developed critical reflections relevant for understanding the complex Yugoslav political and cultural heritage. Whereas Croatian and Serbian emigrants took particularly fierce anti-Yugoslav stances, the situation for emigré Bosnian Muslims was different. They were more loyal to the Yugoslav project, because Bosnian Muslims were acknowledged as a nationality in the 1960s only as a consequence of the socialist experiment of Tito's Yugoslavia.²⁰

The impact of literature, film, and music, ranging from pop culture to avantgarde trends, found manifestation in actions that had political implications. In an interview with COURAGE, the conceptual artist Vladimir Dodig Trokut states that members of the 68-generation were considered "a group of humanists, nihilists, anarchists, anarcho-liberals, anarcho-humanists, dialectics, disbelievers, rivals, and party renegades." As Trokut states, everything was happening under the watchful eye of the authorities, who made sure that the behavior of the "rebels" did not escape control; there were even occasional sanctions. On the other hand, some Communist leaders and intellectuals, such as Vicko Krstulović, Koča Popović, and Jure Kaštelan, guarded and supported the alternative path of the younger generation.²¹ This personal patronage was an important reason behind the circulation of certain liberal cultural expressions, while others (those without patrons) were inhibited. Marković holds that many exemptions from state repression can be explained by "camaraderie" (a form of old boys' club formed in the trenches of the war, the members of which shared a loyalty which transcended the socialist ideology).²² If someone belonged to the group of "comrades," he would be treated in a different manner than others (like the writers Branko Ćopić in the 1950s and Dobrica Ćosić in the 1960s and 1970s).

In the period, immediately after the break with Stalin, Yugoslav cinematography opened to Western film, and Soviet films were censored until Stalin's death. Film director Želimir Žilnik (1942–) states that in his youth he watched "the complete French new wave, American underground movies, the young Buñuel, the complete Italian neo-realism," while the films of prominent Russian authors could only be seen after 1965.²³ Žilnik belonged to the "Black Wave" Yugoslav film movement. In the 1960s and 1970s, the member of this movement portrayed Yugoslav reality from a critical perspective. Žilnik's films and the films of many other Yugoslav filmmakers won prestigious awards at festivals abroad but were also subjected to criticism by the authori-

20 In the 1971 Yugoslav census, the category "Muslim" was included as a national category, rather than a confessional ascription. The category applied to Slavic speaking Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Southern Serbia (Sandžak), but not Muslim Albanians. Lučić, *Im Namen der Nation*.

21 Dodig Trokut, Vladimir, interview by Albert Bing for COURAGE-project, December 22, 2016.

22 Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 517.

23 Žilnik, "Praxis i 'crni talas' u filmu."

ties, and some were even banned (*Rani Radovi* [Early Works] in 1969). Despite the “hot-cold” relationship between the Communist state and the intelligentsia and the occasional persecution of political dissidents, Yugoslavia became an increasingly open country.

After the fall of the powerful minister of interior and chief of the State Security Service (UDBA) Aleksandar Ranković in 1966, further liberalization occurred even in the party circles themselves. The rector of the Zagreb University Ivan Supek witnessed these events: “Censorship and many controls were falling, people wrote more freely in the newspapers and spoke more freely at meetings ... society was acquiring a more and more pluralistic composition.”²⁴ The Croatian cultural revival started, so the Croatian reform movement (“Croatian Spring” or “Maspok”),²⁵ which was led by Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Miko Tripalo, culminated in the national demands for decentralization and economic reforms. However, in late 1971 “Tito and the senior leadership condemned the events in Croatia, undermined the ‘deceived’ Croat Communist leaders, and urged a return to Leninist Bolshevism.”²⁶ The results of the defeat of the Croatian Spring were mass arrests, a ban on public appearances or role for many intellectuals, and a new wave of political emigration.²⁷ Repressive measures were taken in other republics too. In the first six months of 1972, 3,606 people were imprisoned as “political criminals” (60 percent of them were from Croatia), compared to 1,449 in the three years of 1969–1971.²⁸ The legitimacy of the LCY was seriously threatened. The liberally oriented Serbian party leadership, including figures like Marko Nikezić and Latinka Perović, were dismissed for their “anti-Soviet” and “anti-Titoist” positions; the leaders of Slovenia and Macedonia also lost their positions. Political cleansing at the beginning of the 1970s clearly showed the boundaries of Titoism regarding tolerance for opposition to the Yugoslav state. Immediately after the cleansing, the centralizing-etatist ambitions of the Communist authorities were enforced in all spheres of life, although this was “in fundamental contradiction with the proclaimed principles of full equality

24 Supek, “Refleksije na prekretnici milenija,” 812.

25 The term *Maspok*, actually an acronym for “mass movement,” was derogatory in LCY parlance in 1971 and therefore it was not used by the Croat reformers, but rather by their critics. The massiveness of the movement is often held as an argument against it. The term “Croatian Spring” has now become the standard term used in Croatian historiography.

26 Supek, “Refleksije na prekretnici milenija,” 812.

27 The aspirations of Yugoslav dissidents who initiated the national question at the beginning of the 1970s did not meet with sympathy in the West, in contrast with the aspirations of dissidents from the Eastern Bloc who had raised the national question in the 1960s. Spehnjak holds that the West’s support for initiators of national questions in the Eastern Bloc rested on a political strategy that strived to weaken the Soviet sphere. Since Yugoslavia, since 1948, did not belong to the Soviet political block, the events in Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1970s were considered dangerous to the integrity of Yugoslavia and therefore were not supported. Spehnjak, “Disidentstvo kao istraživačka tema,” 13.

28 Marković, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?,” 119.

of the Yugoslav peoples."²⁹ Nevertheless, by the 1974 Constitution, the republics were defined almost as states, thus creating the preconditions for a more pronounced decentralization of the federal state. Tito, as the primary integrative factor of Yugoslavia, was once again proclaimed lifelong president and Supreme Commander. This reverberated in the reinforcement of Tito's personality cult, which "had never been as exaggerated and omnipresent as now [in the 1970s]."³⁰

Tito's strike against liberal cultural expression at the beginning of the 1970s must be read against the backdrop of economic growth based on foreign credit, massive imports, imported energy, and migrant workers, each of which furthered the opening-up of Yugoslavia towards the world. The spread of Western influence could not be stopped anymore. Free travel to Western countries also had an impact on ideas about lifestyle, and it offered first-hand familiarity with Western living standards.³¹ After Tito's death in 1980, various forms of informal pluralistic relations, relative freedom of the press, and social criticism took place outside the party and state forums. Changes were possible within and despite the system. For example, the youth magazines *Polet*, *Studentski list*, *Mladina*, *Student*, and others, which initially had had an official communist ideological basis, became significant representatives of alternative civic culture and cultural opposition to a bureaucratized communist ideology.³²

Rock music in Yugoslavia had a somewhat specific status compared to the rest of the communist countries. Initially, Yugoslav rock music was not necessarily oppositional, or it was less oppositional than in other (more rigid) communist cultures.³³ In late socialism however, and especially in the 1980s, some "music movements" (New Wave, New Primitivism, and New Partisans) used rock to criticize the country's cultural and political developments.³⁴ At socialist Yugoslavia's end, rock artists were channelling rebellious voices against the system, while at the same time its "majority stood against the violent dissolution of the state, which was both a pragmatic and an emotional attitude in that a stable Yugoslav polity represented first and foremost a large and established market and an audience which numbered in the millions."³⁵ As Catherine Baker suggests, "Yugoslavia's rock music movements outlasted their country," and this music "continues to provide old and new fans with a consciousness of belonging to a cultural community larger than the confines of their own successor state."³⁶

29 Macan, *Susret s hrvatskim Kliom*, 61.

30 Marković, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," 119–20.

31 Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien und seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943–2011*, 148.

32 Zubak, *The Yugoslav Youth Press 1968–1980*.

33 Zubak, "Pop-Express (1969–1970.)," 25–26.

34 Mišina, *Shake, Rattle and Roll*.

35 Spaskovska, "Stairway to Hell," 3.

36 Baker, "Dalibor Mišina," 308.

In the second half of the 1980s, the Slovenian cultural and media scene, on which the controversial political-artistic group *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (New Slovene Art) left a significant mark, became a hotbed of demands for radical social changes (democratization and the construction of civil society). Many intellectuals, especially from Croatia, joined the Slovenian movements. The popular columnist for Zagreb's weekly newspaper *Danas*, Tanja Torbarina, although Croat, in 1987 declared her political orientation as "Slovenian" saying: "I am a Slovenian by political conviction."³⁷

With the intensification of interethnic conflicts, the focus of cultural dissent shifted increasingly from the demand for democratic reforms to national confrontations, which ultimately led to the collapse and decomposition of the Yugoslav state. The rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia can be explained as a consequence of the inconsistencies and failures of Tito's "Sonderweg" experiment.³⁸ The socialist translation of a multi-cultural reality which embraced ambivalences and syncretism to a state-policy based on ethno-national categories eventually resulted in a radical invalidation of diversity, particularly after the political and economic instability aggravated in the 1980s.³⁹ The multiplicity of national, supra-national, and other loyalties could no longer be kept as a particularity of the socialist Yugoslav project. Rather, one had to choose one side. Many Serbian dissidents, such as Dobrica Ćosić in the 1980s and 1990s, embarked on nationalistic politics, and their engagement prompted or met with nationalistic responses in other republics.

After nationalism had become the mainstream system of meaning, cultural resistance found manifestation in anti-nationalist and anti-war activism, but with no significant impact on further developments, which soon led to bloodshed.⁴⁰ From the perspective of the culture of dissent, the case of the magazine *Danas* is also interesting. This high-circulation weekly magazine, sold all over Yugoslavia, was an indicator of social change; ranging from the affirmation of the freedom of the press to a chronicle of social interactions announcing the emergence of political pluralism, as well as the profound chronicle of the dissolution of the Yugoslav state. Abroad, *Danas* was perceived as "the media and pluralistic intellectual paradigm in the state on the edge of the 'civil war'."⁴¹

Yugoslavia had "despite its 'Western' trappings and greater tolerance of dissent [...] an essentially illiberal regime, in which breaches of human and civil rights were endemic."⁴² The almighty party personnel, also exposed to constant review of their social role, continued to control the army (to a certain extent), the police, much of the media, and the most important government

37 Bing, "Tjednik *Danas* i percepcija razvoja političkog pluralizma," 204

38 Miller, *The nonconformists*.

39 Miller, "Faith and Nation," 144.

40 Spaskovska, "Landscapes of Resistance, Hope and Loss," 37–61.

41 "Svijet o *Danasu*."

42 Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the nation*, 256.

institutions. Nevertheless, in the cultural sphere, Yugoslavia was a more liberal communist fellow. By maneuvering between the two blocs, Yugoslav culture and everyday life became largely westernized, whereas political life and the economy remained basically "Eastern."⁴³ This constellation caused tensions in the social fabric, the "cracks, ... dysfunctionalities, and dangers" of which were mirrored in counter-culture.⁴⁴ A peculiar culture of dissent emerged through informal social networks ("camaraderie"), diplomatic calculi (liberal image making towards the West, claims of socialist particularity towards the East) and a radical federalization of the state and the party. Last but not least, a significant change of living standards (brought about by industrialization, education, consumerism, and free travel) marked the period of Yugoslav socialism and facilitated cultural alternatives.

Collections

After the collapse of communism, all of Yugoslavia's former republics became independent states (some sooner, some later), with the former Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo concluding the process after separating from the Republic of Serbia in 2008.⁴⁵ The COURAGE Registry therefore contains collections from seven states: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo.

Most of the collections described in the Registry are located in Croatia and Serbia. In the COURAGE Registry, there are over fifty collections in Croatia, more than twenty in Serbia, and around ten in Slovenia. In the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Montenegro, the numbers are much smaller. Most of the collections are held in public institutions in the capital cities of the post-Yugoslav countries.

In the case of collections in Croatia, the topics related to diaspora, national movements (the Croatian national movement), and state and party control are found. Furthermore, the topic of Croatian national movement is represented in most of the emigrant collections and in the vast majority of collections on state and party control and censorship. The most representative collections of Croatian emigrants are the Vinko Nikolić Collection at the National and University Library in Zagreb and the Bogdan Radica Collection in the Croatian State Archives (HDA). The national question preoccupied Croatian intellectuals in Croatia who were also the key figures behind the national reform movement (the so-called Croatian Spring). In this movement, the most influential organization was the *Matica hrvatska*, the Croatian cultural institu-

43 Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 524.

44 Voncu, "Alternative Culture and Political Opposition," 289.

45 The Republic of Serbia does not recognize Kosovo's declaration of independence. More than half of the UN member states have recognized Kosovo.

tion which was founded in the first half of the nineteenth century and the archives of which are located in the HDA. In addition to institutions, political dissidents also left a significant mark on the Croatian Spring. That was the case of Miko Tripalo, whose collection is held in the Center for Democracy, which was named after him. The national movement in Kosovo is covered through *ad-hoc* collections at the Archives of Kosovo, beginning with the demonstrations of 1968 and lasting through the 1981 demonstrations. There is also a collection on the underground groups "Illegalia." Cultural societies that cultivated national culture have also been suspended, as evidenced by the case of the Serbian Cultural Association Prosvjeta and its collection, which is found in the HDA.

The topic of state and party control is covered well in the Registry. Such collections are mostly found in state archives, such as the HDA in Zagreb (e.g., the Collection of the Commission for Ideological and Political Work of the People's Youth of Croatia) and the Archive of the Republic of Slovenia (the Collection of the Slovenian State Security Service on monitoring Slovenian scientists in the period from 1945 to 1962). Collections of a similar type are in state archives in other cities (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Vinkovci, Sisak, Pula). Two collections on the notorious labour camp for political prisoners on "Bare Island" (Goli Otok) in the Adriatic document the repressive character of the system (one collection is held at the Croatian History Museum, and the other at the Serbian Academy of Sciences, or SANU). Tackling "Goli Otok" in the arts and in literature in particular was "one of the biggest taboos of the Yugoslav public sphere" during Tito's reign, as exemplified by the 1969 ban on the play "When the pumpkins blossomed," based on the novel by Dragoslav Mihajlović.⁴⁶

One topic related to state control is censorship. Censorship in film is documented by the holdings in the collection of forbidden films of Nikša Fulgosi, which is kept in the archives of the Croatian Cinematheque. The HDA contains the Iljko Karaman Collection of Court Records on Censorship and the Aleksandar Stipčević Personal Papers. Informal and self-censorship also merit mention, albeit it is more difficult to track historically. Such forms of limiting free expression occurred through telephone calls, informal talks, professional "advice" by theatre and film committees and editorial boards, and media campaigns.⁴⁷ In the Registry, incidents of informal and self-censorship are told in the Oral History interviews and in debates in the literary and cultural journals, like *Književne novine* and *Polja*.

Several collections concerning the art scene are also described in the Registry. In Croatia, the neo-avantgarde visual and conceptual arts had many essential representatives. Works by these artists are found in several collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, in the EXAT 51 and New

46 Münnich, "Jugoslawische, literarische Geschichtskonzeption," 207.

47 Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu*, 48–49.

Tendencies Collection at the Tošo Dabac Archive, and in the No Art Collection of Vladimir Dodig Trout Anti-Museum. In Serbia, there are several collections at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, and at the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina in Novi Sad. The Collection of Gordana Vnuk (EUROKAZ) bears witness to neo-avantgarde art in the performing arts. A commune in the countryside of Vojvodina is described as a niche of freedom in the collection of the "Family of the Clear Streams" collection of Božidar Mandić. Cultural opposition in film is represented mostly by the so-called "Black Wave" movies. Among many important filmmakers, Lazar Stojanović stands out as the most prominent representative of the second generation, primary due to his film "Plastic Jesus" (1971), which was declared anti-communist propaganda and led to Stojanović's imprisonment for three years. His collection contains his personal compilation, which was assembled over the course of the previous decades and consists of books, newspapers, posters, catalogues and video materials/films, including "Plastic Jesus," one of the most famous and striking acts of dissidence in socialist Yugoslavia.

(Neo)avantgarde in theatre is relevant, as this part of Yugoslav culture seemed particularly free, with Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" being staged in Yugoslavia as early as 1956, for instance. As the collection of the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) clearly shows, however, culture served to maintain a certain liberal image relevant for Yugoslavia's position as a non-aligned country. Research on avantgarde culture in Yugoslavia helps decipher what Vučetić refers to as the "deep schizophrenia of Yugoslav society."⁴⁸

Intellectual dissent in Yugoslavia is palpable in the phenomenon of the neo-Marxist philosophy and sociology, which left a significant heritage in Yugoslavia. The relevant material for this phenomenon in Croatia is found in the Rudi Supek Personal Papers, and the Praxis and Korčula Summer School Collection. In Serbia, the Ljubomir Tadić Collection and the Nebojša Popov Collection represent the Belgrade circle of the Praxis orientation.

Of the works which were censored in Yugoslavia, most were books.⁴⁹ However, as mentioned above, censorship rarely occurred in a direct way, as the Danilo Kiš Collection at the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) exemplifies. This collection on one of the most important non-conformist writers of Yugoslavia illustrates the ambivalences of Yugoslav cultural policy, as Kiš won the prestigious NIN award (for Yugoslav literature) in 1972, but was accused of defamation in 1978. Kiš was acquitted by the court, but left Yugoslavia after the devastating media campaign launched against him during the proceedings. Nevertheless, his ex-wife Mirjana Miočinović stressed in the interview with COURAGE that Kiš never per-

⁴⁸ Vučetić, "Između avangarde i cenzure," 705.

⁴⁹ Nikolić, Cvetković and Tripković, *Bela knjiga-1984*, 20.

ceived himself as a dissident, but rather as a non-conformist writer.⁵⁰ The press clipping collection of writer Ivan Aralica offers insights into the situation in Croatia, and the Collection of Edward Kocbek shows the case of the author who wrote a volume of short stories entitled “Fear and Courage”⁵¹ in 1951, which made him a *persona non grata* in Slovenia. The example of Dobrica Ćosić, the most famous Serbian novelist and the “father of Serbian nationalism,” stresses the importance of a cultural perspective on the developments in Yugoslavia. Ćosić’s intellectual and political career illustrates “that nationalism was more than a tool for cynical and needy politicians and less an ancient bequest than an unsurprising response to real conditions in Tito’s Yugoslavia. [...] In their very humanism the seeds of failure sprouted, since the Tito regime was unwilling or unable to satisfy this one’s desire to develop a new universalist culture, that one’s faith in the regime’s commitment to social justice.”⁵²

The theme of opposition to the regime by religious institutions in the COURAGE Registry is primarily related to the Catholic Church in Croatia and Slovenia. In Slovenia, the most important collections are the Antun Vovk Collection and the Alojzije Šustar Collection. In Croatia, there is a rich collection of Catholic priest and journalist don Živko Kustić and a collection of Smiljana Rendić, a columnist of the *Glas koncila* (Voice of the Council) - the first journal in Croatia published without the influence of the communist authorities, who was sentenced to one year in prison for her writing. The Bek-tashi Mysticism in Macedonia is described in one collection as an alternative spiritual space.

Youth sub-culture and music are represented in the FV 112/15 Group Collection, which offers testimony to the Slovenian alternative music scene, which was the strongest in Yugoslavia.⁵³ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Zenit Đozić Collection on New Primitivism (*Novi primitivizam*) contains materials on a subcultural movement established in Sarajevo which found expression in music and comedy on radio and television in the 1980s. In Croatia, there is a significant collection of rock and disco culture in Rijeka (Velid Đekić Collection), and the photo archive of Goran Pavelić Pipo offers exciting insights into youth sub-culture and the new wave music scene of Zagreb. The theme of the student movement is covered in the Operation Tuškanac Collection in State Security Service files of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (at HDA). The “Last Youth of Yugoslavia” *ad-hoc* collection based on an exhibition at the

50 Miočinović Mirjana, interview by Sanja Radović for COURAGE-project, January 14, 2017 and December 26, 2016.

51 Kocbek, *Strah in pogum*.

52 Miller, *The nonconformists*, xi.

53 It should be emphasized that through the research, we also discovered some other important collections containing materials relevant to the counterculture and artistic scene in Slovenia, especially about the creative group *Neue Slowenische Kunst*, but the owners of the collections did not want to cooperate with the COURAGE project.

Museum of Yugoslavia provides insights into the alternative and pop culture of Belgrade's youth circles between 1977 and 1984.

The theme of counter-cultural activities of sexual minorities is covered in the Lesbian Library and Archive ŠKUC-LL in Ljubljana and the History of Homosexuality in Croatia Collection at the Domino Association (Queer) in Zagreb. The Feminist Movement is represented in the collection of the Women's Studies Center in Zagreb, the Žarana Papić Collection at the Center for Woman Studies in Belgrade, and the Women's Activism Collection of the Kosovo Oral History Initiative. There is also the Lydia Sklevicky Collection at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, which contains the personal papers of one of the pioneers of the feminist movement in Yugoslavia.

Human rights movements were strongest in Slovenia, as is reflected in the collections. The topic can be explored on the basis of the Alenka Puhar Collection, the Collection of Testimonies at the Study Centre for National Reconciliation and the Archives of the Peace Movement in Ljubljana. The Alenka Bizjak Collection testifies to the existence of the ecological movement in Yugoslavia, and the Pugwash Movement Collection shows the development of the antinuclear movement and the influence that Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs had in Yugoslavia.

Most of the collections are kept in public institutions, and the state is usually their owner. Most are found in public archives. These collections are usually archival funds of the state institutions and associations and personal funds of individuals whose heirs donated their collections to the archives. In addition to archives, libraries and museums also hold most of the collections in the Yugoslav successor states.

In collections that were created through the work of institutions and organizations, the history of collecting and preserving generally does not involve significant cultural-opposition stories. In most of the cases, the law mandated the acquisition of these collections by the state archives. Regarding the personal funds, the situation is different and usually far more interesting. Perhaps one of the best examples is the story of the Lazar Stojanović Collection. Some parts of his collection, especially the most politically sensitive items, were confiscated during several police investigations against Stojanović in the 1970s and 1980s, and they have not been recovered. Other parts are lost due to his changing places of residence. The story of Stojanović also illustrates how cultural opposition can become a lifetime activity despite changing political systems. After Yugoslavia, the author and film director returned to Serbia from abroad to engage in the anti-war movement and participate in the activities of human rights circles. The COURAGE Registry also contains stories about the efforts of Radica's daughter Bosiljka and Ivo Banac, who on three occasions (in 1996, 2001, and 2006) organized the transfer of the Bogdan Radica Collection from the United States to Zagreb.

The size of the collections varies from tiny collections, such as the No Art Collection, which numbers only ten items, to collections of more than 100 ar-

chival boxes of documents, such as the Rudi Supek Personal Papers. The COURAGE Registry also contains more than a dozen *ad-hoc* collections. These collections do not exist as independent units but as part of more extensive collections which contain various materials. This is the case with the sizeable archival fund of the State Security Service of the Socialist Republic of Croatia at the HDA, which contain four *ad-hoc* collections that are in fact the subdivisions of a single archival fund. The situation is similar in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb and Belgrade. Also, the collections of the magazine *Vidici*, *Student*, and *Književne novine* do not represent a separate library unit, but are kept as part of the “Periodicals” collection in two institutions, the National Library of Serbia and the University Library of Belgrade. Literary and cultural journals are relatively well represented in the Registry, not only because they are well preserved (except the forbidden, still unavailable issues), but also because they illustrate the wealth of intellectual activities unfolding within and despite a restrictive system. The former editor of *Polja*, Jovan Zivlak, maintained that since political opposition was impossible, cultural opposition should be understood as “mastering and learning freedom.” He emphasized the “belief in culture” and offered the following explanation: “There was a kind of deep consent among intellectuals, among the largest number of intellectuals in this former country. It was a consent that culture, literature, and philosophy are the foundation of our freedom. It was as if you were sharing something, some kind of secret. That was this cultural revolution or cultural resistance.”⁵⁴

Some of the essential collections are in private hands and are now unavailable to the public. Suzana Jovanović, the widow of Lazar Stojanović, is the owner of his collection, with no financial support from any additional source. Zenit Đozić has plans to establish a cultural centre to commemorate the phenomenon of New Primitivism, but the financing is still uncertain. Anti-authoritarian activists, like Borka Pavićević and Dragomir Olujić (Open University Collection), have valuable material but no institutional capacity to archive and store this material, which is held in their private flats or houses. Other collections are in the private hands of researchers (CADDY Bulletin Collection, Mysticism in Macedonia, Srđan Hofman Electronic music Collection). These collections are significant to the history of the cultural opposition, but their fate is uncertain because they are funded mostly by the owners themselves, who may have limited means.

Most public collections are rarely funded with direct or special funding. In this sense, the Zoran Đinđić Library, which was financed by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Belgrade, is more the exception than the rule. Collections that are held in public institutions (archives, museums, libraries) are normally financed through the financing of the institutions by the state (Ministry of Culture). Direct funding occurs through special events,

54 Zivlak Jovan, interview by Željka Oparnica for COURAGE-project, September 25, 2017.

such as publications or exhibitions on anniversaries of historical events, as happened for the 40th anniversary of the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF collection) at the Historical Archives of Belgrade.

The fall of Communism is the most important event in the history of most of the collections in the post-Yugoslav countries. It meant the end of an era after which people were able to begin gathering testimonies about cultural opposition and dissent. Institutions opened their doors to the public, and many individuals handed over various materials and collections to archives, museums, and scientific institutions. Sometimes, this happened through a personal initiative: when Branka Prpa was the director of the Historical Archives of Belgrade (2002-2010), she directly asked important non-conformist intellectuals like Nebojša Popov to bequeath their personal collection and library to the archives.⁵⁵ The collapse of Communism was a call for those people who had amassed collections in secret, far from the prying eyes of the communist authorities, to open their collections to the public or donate them to institutions that would make them more accessible. Most of the collections described in the Registry, however, are rarely used. For instance, COURAGE researcher Sanja Radović was the first person to access the Zoran Đinđić collection at the Archives of Serbia.⁵⁶

The potential of these collections is not sufficiently exploited academically, and even less so socially. Most of the people who have used the collections are researchers, primarily historians. Although most collections are fully or partially available for research, only a few are available online. A good example is the Praxis and Korčula Summer School Collection, which is entirely digitized and available to the public, or the Zoran Đinđić Virtual Museum, which is partially digitized, and the entire *Polja* – Magazine for Culture and Art collection. In a social sense, only a few collections have attracted substantial media coverage. In Croatia, remarkable public interest was triggered by the exhibition “A Century of Croatian Periodicals from the Croatian Diaspora from 1900 to 2000” in 2002. In Slovenia, the exhibition “FV: Alternative Scene of the 1980s,” which was held in 2008, reached out to the public, as did the 70th anniversary exhibition of *Student* magazine in Serbia. Sometimes, the COURAGE project itself has kindled public interest in the collections, as in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s “History Fest.” In general, outreach events, such as exhibitions, publications, and film screenings, give the collections public relevance.

The most original elements of the COURAGE research project are found in the Oral History Interviews. The heritage of cultural opposition is ambivalent, multifaceted, and even dissonant; it could be perceived not only as a history of triumph, but also as a history of trauma.⁵⁷ Eye-witness accounts

55 Prpa Branka, interview by Jacqueline Nießer for COURAGE-project, June 24, 2017.

56 Kostić and Mihajlović, “Đinđićeva zaostavština.”

57 Dragičević Šešić and Stefanović, “How Theaters Remember,” 13.

help us forge a path towards a nuanced understanding of how “niches of freedom” were created in unfree systems.

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