

# TRAGEDY IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

**Nationalism Berserk**

**B**y spring of 1991 Yugoslavia was nearing terminal illness. The federal League of Communists had ceased to exist since the withdrawal of the Slovenian and Croatian branches. Although the federal premier Ante Markovic's economic program managed to maintain relatively high wages and a stable currency, the political crisis was visible to all. The presidents of the six republics were holding endless sterile meetings trying to work out an impossible compromise between the Slovenians and Croats willing to accept at most a loose confederation and the Serbs pushing for a more centralized federation. There was an apocalyptic atmosphere in the circles of intellectuals among which I moved that spring in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. A worn-out regime was on its last legs, but there was little joy and much fear about the prospects for the future. We did not expect any velvet revolution or magical fixes from the new mantra, "market and privatization." Yet none could even imagine just how terrible the next two years would be. Only in Sarajevo, of all places, were dissident activists still relatively optimistic in early 1991.

I was involved in the debates in the media throughout the country that year after having joined with some democratic socialists in organizing the first open noncommunist political group in Yugoslavia. The Association for Democratic Alternatives in Yugoslavia (UJDI) was organized in all the major cities including Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Skopje, Rijeka, and Split. Most of us had known each other through decades of meetings and activities. UJDI included many of the student generation of 1968, some feminists, and peace

activists. We had also gathered most former members of the *Praxis* circle, with the notable exception of Mihailo Markovic, a major academic figure from Belgrade. His absence signaled how many friends with whom we had collaborated for years would soon be lost to Serbian or Croatian nationalism. Markovic was a well-known democratic socialist dissident, a leader of the Belgrade Eight; he shocked us by becoming vice president and spokesman of Milosevic's ruling authoritarian Serbian Socialist party, which was essentially the old Serbian League of Communists with ever-more aggressive nationalist politics.

My own situation was complicated. As a dual U.S.-Yugoslav citizen I would now have to opt for citizenship in one of the new states. When not in New York I have lived in Croatia on the Dalmatian coast since 1967; most of my political and academic ties were also there, and so I chose Croat citizenship. But by national origin I am a Serb, with many ties in Belgrade. Increasing national polarization put me in a difficult position as a known public opponent of the Milosevic regime and Serbian nationalists. This made me a target for both Serbian and Croatian nationalists, the first because of my politics and the second because of my ethnicity. My position became even more uncomfortable after the right-wing nationalists won the first pluralist election in Croatia. I was a Serb and, to make things worse, an active participant in left-wing Croatian politics. Armed paramilitary groups of urban lumpen types were now increasingly visible on the streets of Zagreb and Belgrade. And it soon became a genuine issue whether or not to carry licensed arms. My friends recommended it

while traveling or speaking in small industrial towns and rougher neighborhoods, something unimaginable during the long Titoist twilight.

I remember my initial shock when I first saw Chetnik insignia on bearded young thugs in the center of Belgrade peddling chauvinist tape cassettes and blood-curdling pamphlets. They looked like caricatures of the Chetniks from the Second World War. The only models the young had were from the war movies that glorified the Communist Partisans and treated the Chetniks as collaborators, rapists, looters, and killers. That was precisely what had made them attractive to the new converts! It was a Serbian folk version of the skinheads and neonazis in the West. Similar cultural blends in the Croatian paramilitaries mixed Ustasha symbols with heavy-metal music and skinhead and Rambo images, sometimes topped off with Catholic prayer beads and a cross. These were the groups that would do some of the fighting and commit most of atrocities in the wars that summer.

The Swedish Institute of the Workers' Movement\* had given me a modest grant to try to help democrats and social democrats in Yugoslavia though a project optimistically called "Transitions to Democracy in a World Perspective."<sup>1</sup> The grant made possible minimal material aid to the democratic left, such as fax machines and a newsletter (in English) to maintain a network of individuals and institutions. We also organized meetings with new unionists in the media, and shipyards, and among teachers in Croatia and Serbia.

As the war spread in 1991, UJDI became an anachronism. Most of our members turned to organizing social democratic parties in their respective republics. If Yugoslavia were to come apart we wanted to make sure that our new states were, at least, democratic, had reasonable social programs, and were open to cooperation across the new frontiers. Most of us believed that this could only be done by organizing social democratic parties and unions, because that would be the only way to compete against populism and nationalism. Some of my friends in Macedonia and Slovenia stayed in the reformed former Communist

parties, which in those two states had evolved into genuine social democratic organizations.<sup>2</sup> Many younger intellectuals preferred to work with social movements, which in practice meant ecological, women's, and peace groups. An important group in Belgrade around Vesna Pesic of the Democratic Reformist party argued that it was premature to raise leftist political issues in Serbia, since the most urgent goal was to establish peace, minimal democratic norms, a law-abiding state, and human rights.<sup>3</sup> The advocates of these various views cooperated with remarkable nonsectarian amity and continue to do so to this day. I joined the Croatian social democratic organization led by Professor Branko Horvat, arguably *the* leading democratic socialist economist in Eastern Europe.

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### Horror Shows

By mid-summer 1991 an ever-more brutal armed conflict in Croatia evolved from a local revolt by the Serbian minority into a war of aggression by the Yugoslav Army and the Serbian government. By the fall all communications between Croatia and Serbia had been cut, and travel and phone messages between eastern and western parts of former Yugoslavia now had to go through Hungary or Bosnia. Throughout that summer and fall, as the war in Croatia accelerated, the democratic opposition from the various republics still managed to organize round-table meetings of the federal government and opposition, mostly in Sarajevo, where we had mass and institutional support.

My own project was to pull together a fall conference near the Hungarian border with participants from the democratic opposition and some independent intellectuals, as well as democratic socialists from Western Europe, Russia, and Eastern Europe. International participants and solidarity helped the morale a little. We tried to make sense of what was happening and to work out some joint proposals. These were modest efforts to keep some kind of nonnationalist and democratic leftist community together.

Old personal ties and friendships crumbled as many of the intellectuals I knew rallied to the defense of their own nations. The pressure

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\* Now the Olof Palme International Center

to do so was immense. Revived images in the media of the near-genocidal massacres of the Serbs in Croatia during the Second World War traumatized people who had seemed immune to nationalism. My Croatian friends were bombarded with current pictures of Serbs burning cities, including Dubrovnik, which is a cultural icon, and the massive destruction of churches and monuments. Television on both sides repeatedly showed horrendous pictures of mutilated bodies in vivid color. This reached a point where child psychologists in Belgrade and Ljubljana protested that children were displaying massive war neuroses. By spring 1992 television in Belgrade and Zagreb had become unbearable and the relatively objective station run by the federal government from Sarajevo an early casualty of the war in Bosnia.

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### War in Bosnia, Politics in Croatia

The second Croatian pluralist elections took place in August 1992, when the new war in Bosnia had been raging for months. Although Tudjman's ruling Croatian nationalists imposed an electoral law grossly tilted in their favor, we decided to participate anyway, as did all opposition parties. We failed to negotiate a general coalition with other democratic leftists and the regional parties from Istia and Dalmatia in time for the election. The best that we could do was to have a joint democratic socialist candidate for president, who got a respectable 4.5 percent of the vote in a field of sixteen. We also helped elect five members from the regional parties in a parliament of 137.

What we did manage was to campaign in the teeth of wartime nationalist hysteria and get a respectable hearing and high visibility. Horvat, Viskovic (a popular gadfly member of the outgoing parliament), and I campaigned in the media, temporarily accessible during the elections, and before grim audiences of unemployed workers and veterans from the Slavonian front, where we received a surprisingly respectful hearing. I remember massive applause when attacking President Tudjman as a puffed-up provincial authoritarian, a former communist general who has all of Tito's vices and not a single one of his virtues. There were innumerable threatening phone calls and much

hate mail. But there were also letters from pensioners, school teachers, and ordinary workers and members of the traumatized Serbian minority who were grateful for the campaign. Desperate union activists asked for specific advice about how to handle the layoffs and massive takeovers of the worker-managed enterprises by the nationalist government. In semiclandestine late-night meetings in the shipyards we urged them to stick to absolutely rigid seniority, with no management prerogatives whatsoever, lest solidarity be destroyed by nationalist demagogery and management favoritism. Although we had a major impact, in the end we lost that battle too, and a purge of Serbs and Croat unionists followed.

A larger unified party of the democratic left should emerge this year since much of what we predicted about the economy and politics of Croatia unfortunately did happen. The economy continues in a tailspin, there are endless financial scandals as the streets fill with the young, the unemployed, miserable pensioners, and abandoned veterans. During the campaign the government emphasized its support of an independent Bosnia against Serbian aggression. By now the scandalous complicity of the Croat authorities is clear in the partition of Bosnia through setting up a separate Croat state in Bosnia much as the Serbs did. While the major aggressors are the Serb nationalists and the army, Croat troops have also occupied large parts of Bosnia and are in combat with the mostly Moslem troops of the Bosnian government.

Both Serbian and Croatian national myths emphasize the centuries of wars against the Ottoman Turks. Moslem Slavs, though ethnically and linguistically identical to the Croats and Serbs, are somehow transformed into the legendary Turkish enemy and made to pay for the years of Turkish dominance. Given that most urban "Moslems" are secular and culturally indistinguishable from their Serbian and Croatian neighbors I find this hard to understand. Most Europeans, especially East Europeans, do not accept a multicultural and multi-ethnic environment as normal; most American intellectuals do. Only consciously internationalist and cosmopolitan Europeans do. Internationalism was always very fragile in

the communist movement, where it was turned into a caricature of Soviet "patriotism." E.P. Thompson and others have always stressed the intimate link between communitarian localism and class consciousness. And yet during the years I lived and worked in Yugoslavia it had seemed that a new heterogeneous popular culture was emerging among the young and among the urban workers. Multi-ethnic Sarajevo was the major source of popular music and culture. The current wave of nationalism strikes me as the revenge of provincial language and history teachers and all who insist that they must preserve that which is specific to their nation. The war in Bosnia is obviously also an uricide; cities I have known and loved have been relentlessly bombed into shambles. This is the revenge of the local villagers who have always hated the cities. The cities where massive intermarriage and denationalization take place, where various national groups mix and make friends, where women enter professions, where the young reject tradition—these cities are the source of modernity. The villagers have always hated and envied the cities, and this war permits the destruction of these "dangerous" places.

Being a citizen of Yugoslavia had meant to me being a member of a very heterogeneous community. The new identities we are now forced to assume are so much narrower, more parochial, and less flexible. A bridge between the old and new civic identities is only partially created by the community of the democratic socialist movements. I now feel personally poorer, as I believe will many citizens of former Yugoslavia. However, that Yugoslavia which I mourn is now clearly dead. The aggressive nationalism of my own people is mainly responsible for this unnecessary death.

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### Can We Make Sense of This?

The political elites of the states of former Yugoslavia have wrought a massive disaster on their peoples. They have also reduced their actual independence. The shell of former Yugoslavia, now reduced to Serbia with its two restive formerly autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina and an ever more reluctant Montenegro, having waged two wars

of aggression in two short years, is now an international pariah subject to an ever-tightening blockade. Open clashes between the relatively moderate federal president, Cosic, and Prime Minister Panic with the hard-fisted Serbian nationalist regime of Milosevic threaten an intra-Serbian civil war. Large parts of Croatia are now protectorates of the United Nations, while the country tries to cope with almost a million refugees. Bosnia's government is reduced to a few enclaves and is now forced to fight a two-front war against Serbian and Croatian nationalist armies. Macedonia hovers on the edge of economic and political disaster because the Greeks vetoed its recognition by the European Community and the United States. Slovenia's living standards have been pushed back two decades to those of 1972, but it is still the least unfortunate of the new states. Before breaking up in 1990–91 Yugoslavia had a better case for European Economic Community (EEC) membership than Hungary, Poland, or Czecho-Slovakia; by now that is obviously an unattainable goal.

The elites of former Yugoslavia are not alone. Throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union destructive over-ambitious bunglers, often uncritically supported by a West relieved to see the last of the communists in power, were able to get more or less popular mandates. The self-indulgent electorates as well as a large part of the intelligentsia wanted to release their repressed nationalist urges. They engaged in a politics of theater, indulging in a little "harmless" assertiveness against their minorities and neighbors. "Just a little harmless funky national self-assertiveness," after decades of prim preachy insistence by the old communist rulers that chauvinism was forbidden and nationalism suspect. As the simultaneously playful and thuggish soccer riots and recent skinhead riots against immigrants in Western Europe have already demonstrated, that theater can also be deadly. In fact, many soccer fan clubs became the core of the nationalist paramilitary bands in Serbia and Croatia.

Democracy in most postcommunist states is a form of expressive politics bred by the weakness of the dissidents and communist repression. There was no chance to learn a

responsible politics, to learn that what they decide can sometimes matter a great deal: that it can well be a matter of life and death, war and peace. For almost half a century, politics had been a sham and had bred a bone-deep cynicism.

**T**itoism was a history of repeated attempts, all ultimately unsuccessful, at internal reform of a communist regime. They were defeated by the contradiction between an increasingly attenuated authoritarian Leninism and a democratic empowerment through self-management. The Yugoslav party theorists had experimented with various mixes of decentralization and party (League of Communist) control for almost four decades. They introduced semisyn-dicalist models of workers' councils, decentral-ization down to the level of county govern-ment and ever-greater autonomy for the republics and provinces. The League of Communists also tried introducing market criteria in the economy. They even withdrew from direct control of culture and the arts. The decades-long experiment in workers' self-management was not merely a sham. It did substantially limit the powers of managers and it did involve large numbers of workers, over prolonged periods of time, in managing their own enterprises. The basic weakness was that all these experiments, good and bad, were brought in from the top down by the party. They thus provided no genuine sense of empowerment and responsibility that victories gained in prolonged political and economic struggles bring to the mass of the people.

The League's systematic repression of a normal development of responsible opposition groups, journals, and parties created an intel-lectual and moral desert. That human-made desert became a happy hunting ground for charlatans, adventurers, and demagogues who came to prominence overnight as the system collapsed. There had been no time to develop alternate views and politics to be tested in debate and mutual criticism. Instead the "new" non- and anticommunist politicians had to develop immediately. Quite naturally, the new politicians did not build their programs out of whole cloth. A substantial part was played by

right-wing emigrés, especially in Croatia, who had preserved a nasty kind of traditional xenophobic nationalism during the long years in diaspora. Centrists and liberals did not arouse passionate commitment; the democratic left was weak, fragmented, and compromised by the similarity of its language to that of the communist reformers. Organic right-wing nationalism was at least "authentic." It fit nicely with a crude and selfish Social Darwinism associated with fashionable new economic dogmas of privatization and an uncontrolled market—the devil take the hindmost, especially if he is nationally different.

Much of the hostility to communism in Yugoslavia in the late eighties,<sup>4</sup> even among the beneficiaries of their rule, was based on an "echo effect" of the general collapse of communism throughout the bloc. It did not matter that the performance of Yugoslav communism was substantially different from that of the communism of Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. It was tarred with the same brush. Countries one admired for being order-ly, progressive, and with a high living standard, that is, Western Europe and a United States mostly known through movies and consumer products, were not communist. Communism had to be gotten rid of for many reasons, and for most people love of democ-racy was one of the least important. Alas, it never held a candle to the love for consumer goods.

Nationalist politics in Serbia and Croatia include a mish-mash of clericalism, romantic historiography, pseudoscientific nationalist eth-nography, and arcane plot theories involving the freemasons, Jesuits, and espionage agen-cies. All that was now made available to the new anticommunist, nationalist politicians. Plot theories and political paranoia had long been widespread in former Yugoslavia and throughout Eastern Europe. This was encour-aged by the ceaseless efforts of the political police and their favorite journalists to develop a "security consciousness"—a general paranoia about all foreigners, potential spies, and all who were different and might threaten the political order. There was ample room for an alliance of the right-wing emigrés and the communist police-inspired journalists. Both

loved dark plots with undefined alien forces of great malignity. Protofascist and communist-inspired paranoias fit together neatly and helped corrupt and infect an already insecure public opinion faced with the collapse of known comfortable beliefs and social and political systems.

These are politics for intellectually and morally lazy people; almost everything is explained by conspiracies against our very own poor victimized nation. For the Serbian nationalists it is self-evident that the Albanians and Bosnian Moslems are in cahoots with the world conspiracy of Islamic fundamentalism and eternally lust after pure Serbian womanhood. The Croats are obviously an extension of the permanent plot of the Vatican against Orthodox Christianity or, alternately, the German march to dominate Eastern Europe. For the Croat nationalists the Serbs represent the barbarian non-European hordes of treacherous "byzantines" out to destroy Western civilization and Christian (that is, Catholic) culture; they are also "natural Bolsheviks" and even biologically inferior. This helps to increase the circulation of a mass yellow press and corrupts television and radio. It is a politics of identity reduced to its crudest form, "we" versus "they."

**A** democratic solution to the Yugoslav crisis is now almost unimaginable. And yet it is all the more urgent. Bosnia has been destroyed as a viable multi-ethnic polity through the brutal war and massive ethnic "cleansing" by the Serbian nationalists aided by the army and with Croat nationalist complicity in partitioning that state. Democracy is endangered in both Serbia and Croatia as well, because two bitter dirty wars have been waged for maximalist national aims with horrendous losses of lives and property. No one has won. Those responsible for the policies that led to the wars and who proved so incompetent in waging them are desperately struggling to stay in power. The price for the Milosevic regime's staying in power could well be an extension of military aggression to Kosovo, the Moslem areas of Serbia, and even Macedonia.

On the other hand, the Croats have hardly

won a victory. The 1991 war fought entirely on Croat soil was massively destructive, destroying whole cities and creating some 600,000 refugees; in 1992 another 400,000 refugees from the Bosnian war poured in. Croatia also lost effective control of the one-quarter of its territory where large concentrations of the Serbian minority live. The war has encouraged the already strong existing tendencies toward authoritarian presidential rule by decree and censorship. By 1992 the last of the independent press had been taken over.

When the war moved from Croatia to Bosnia in spring 1992, intercommunal violence and open warfare reached near-genocidal proportions. By far the largest number of the victims were Moslem civilians, but all sides murdered civilians and ran concentration camps mainly to create ethnically "pure" cantons in what had been an exemplary multi-ethnic society. A state based on all the citizens as distinct from ethnic or national groups is rejected by the Serb and Croat nationalist leaders in Bosnia. Both now war against the Bosnian government. Partition is the only answer that the Croat and Serb nationalists will tolerate. However, it is impossible to have an ethnically based partition without massive transfers of population. These transfers will not be voluntary. Small townspeople and peasants do not readily leave their ancestral homes; they have to be terrified out of their minds. Cantonization of Bosnia and the creation of nationally "pure" states thus leads in a straight line to massacres, atrocities, looting, rape, and concentration camps as instruments of the new demographic policy. The Serbian nationalists have done by far the most of this, but there have also been massive transfers of Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia.

One-quarter of Croatia is under indefinite UN control, and an ever-more suspicious German sponsor supervises its human and minority rights performance. International aid cannot begin to make up for the destruction by the Yugoslav army and the loss of the Yugoslav-wide markets. The Croatian authorities are at best inefficient, when not complicit, when faced with massive dismissals, denials of citizenship papers, and destruction of the homes of an isolated and frightened Serbian minority. This is despite the fact that the

Croatian constitution and legal systems have incorporated enlightened provisions for the protection of minorities. But these guarantees remain a dead letter. Just as no real democracy is possible in Belgrade so long as the Serbian government represses Albanians in Kosovo, no real democracy is possible in Croatia so long as its Serbian minority is treated as second-class citizens.

**C**onversations with top officials of the last legal federal government<sup>5</sup> make clear that the Yugoslav National Army (YNA) had become an independent force at least a year before the breakup of Yugoslavia in June 1991. That was when military intervention against the unilateral Slovenian declaration of independence passed the point of no return. The army's military and political failure encouraged the Croat separatists to follow. However, the secession of Croatia, with a large Serbian minority both manipulated by Belgrade and thoroughly frightened by the maximalist oratory of the Croatian nationalists, guaranteed a war in Croatia. The army lost this war as well. The Serbs remaining in Croatia, both innocent and guilty, now suffer from an assumption of their collective guilt by the majority Croat population.

Why did the Yugoslav army push ever further into this doomed adventure? The answer is both nasty and simple. Although committed to preserving Yugoslavia, the Army leadership was even more concerned with preserving communist political power. Therefore, it opposed the only kind of Yugoslavia that could have been preserved: a decentralized, economically reformed, and pluralistic Yugoslavia—in other words, a noncommunist Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavia that the army sought to preserve could only be preserved by naked force. In that aim it wrongly believed that it had a reliable ally in Milosevic's Serbian regime. It was wrong because Milosevic banked on an alliance with Serbian nationalists, who were anti-Titoist, and whose aims required the destruction of any kind of Yugoslavia that could have been acceptable to the other national groups.

At least twice before June 1991 the army

was on the verge of a coup to upset the reformist Markovic federal government. It believed that the Soviet Army, which faced similar foes in its own country, would be a firm ally. That last chance vanished with the failed coup against Gorbachev in the summer of 1991. Had that coup succeeded, the army would have struck, assuming the backing of what would still have been a Soviet Union, with a ruling Communist party. The Yugoslav Army leadership had tied its fate to antireformist military and political conservatives in the Soviet Union. The defeat of the coup in Moscow left the Yugoslav army faced with total international isolation and also made it more desperate and adventurist. Within months the old Titoist generals were pensioned off and replaced by a younger and more nationalist lot.

This means that it was essential from the very beginning to unmistakably demonstrate to both the army leadership and the Milosevic government that their murderous goals were not achievable except at unacceptable cost. That is why a real blockade was a necessary step, but only a step, to changing Serbian policies. Complete and enforced air interdiction of Bosnia, permitting the Bosnian government to arm itself and taking out most of the Serbian artillery that freely bombed civilian targets in Sarajevo and other major cities in Bosnia for six months, could have been effective much earlier. Now it is too late to prevent hundreds of thousands from dying in the bitter mountain winter. These deaths could have been prevented or at least much reduced. Half of the Bosnian population will now be turned into refugees, while Europe is ever more unwilling, and Croatia ever less able, to accept more refugees. Most of this was avoidable, the result of human activities, not of fate.

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### A Free Association of Yugoslav States?

What might be imagined as a decent, if not optimal, outcome emerging from the wreckage? What is essential is for the new frontiers between the new national states to be (1) *absolutely* inviolable and (2) not too terribly relevant to the lives of most people and for the functioning of most economic institutions and

transportation networks. The first step is peace and mutual recognition, within their present borders, of all states emerging from Yugoslavia. Any attempt to redraw these frontiers would lead to military conflict. Attempts to redraw the frontiers along "ethnic" lines reinforce two deadly myths. First, that it is possible to draw frontiers in such a way as to create ethnically "pure" national entities and second, that this is desirable. Both myths are born of a desire to create ethnically homogeneous national states. This is inimical to democracy in a real world where states are increasingly multi-ethnic. Instead, there should be a systematic de-linking of exclusive ethnic and national symbols from those of the state, which should be a state of all of its subjects, who should all be equal citizens.

The populations of whatever national identity who fled the war zones must be permitted to return with guarantees of safety. Therefore, all "patriotic" paramilitaries must be disarmed, and for some time both the police and courts must be under international supervision. An international court to try war criminals is essential. An international court might also be a

way to deal with long overdue human rights in Kosovo and with rights of minorities.

A second step should be to create a free-trade zone, if at all possible with a customs union. This is necessary for many obvious reasons, including the interdependence of much of the industry and services in former Yugoslavia. It would be a good idea to revive the old proposal that the whole area become a military free zone. This would make both civil society and democracy considerably safer than they are in the presence of national armies.

What forces might fight for such a program? Is it any more than wishful thinking? I believe that the ethnic mobilization has very shallow roots. There were seventy years of Yugoslavia, forty-five after the Second World War. A great deal of cultural and economic integration took place. This is why I believe that once all states that have emerged from Yugoslavia recognize each other's independence and borders, the tendency will be toward increasing cooperation. There are more than two-and-a-half-million people in mixed marriages.

The present widespread popular anticommunism and antileftism is also only skin deep.

## **Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition"** **An Essay by Charles Taylor**

*With commentary by Amy Gutmann, Editor,  
Steven C. Rockefeller, Michael Walzer, and Susan Wolf*

Can a democratic society treat all its members as equals and also recognize their specific cultural identities? Should it try to ensure the survival of specific cultural groups? Is political recognition of ethnicity or gender essential to a person's dignity? These are some of the questions at the heart of the political controversy over "multiculturalism."

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There is a discreet but widespread nostalgia for the “good old Titoist days,” days of job security, rising incomes, and law and order in what was the most open communist-ruled country in Europe. Real incomes in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia have dropped from an average of 600 to 800 German marks a month in 1990 to well under 100! Massive dismissals purely at the discretion of management face huge numbers of workers. All vestiges of workers’ control and self-management have been abolished. Pensions have been cut in half. Inadequate social services are sharply reduced. Women’s social gains—the rights to abortion and a place in the work force—are all under harsh attack by the nationalist and clerical right. Every fourth person in Croatia, fifth person in Serbia, and third person in Bosnia is now a refugee. More ethnic warfare looms in Kosovo and the Moslem areas of Serbia. More refugees will result from the fall of Sarajevo.

My best hope rests on the notion that the broad, class-based left has more resonance in the memories and politics of Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia than does the nationalist right. There are social democratic and leftist parties in all of the former Yugoslav states that maintain loose networks and share a common democratic politics. They are in the governments of Macedonia and Slovenia and the opposition in Croatia, Bosnia, and new “Yugoslavia.” They have broad support from dissident intellectuals and from former communist democratic reformers. They draw support from

the antiwar young and from increasingly militant unionized workers.

It is not at all certain that these forces can win. Much will depend on the support they get from the social democratic left in Europe, even more from their courage in the face of repression in some of the new states. However, they do represent a hope, a possibility worth fighting for.

Modern nationalism, not only in Eastern Europe, moves by rules of strange and convoluted logic, sometimes explicitly antirational and antimodern. The hard-line nationalists in the 1920s in Europe, in France, Spain, Italy, and Germany were quite aware of this dimension of nationalism. They gloried in it and produced authoritarian nationalist movements, some immersed in Jungian symbols. Nationalism is a thing of passion and emotion, nonrational and postuniversalist; it is meant to be felt and believed and not coldly analyzed. It is also utterly nondemocratic although populist, and it is not open to the compromises and negotiations that are the heart of modern democratic politics. Nationalism awakened is inconsistent with building “cool and rational” complex federal or confederal states that are essential if any kind of democratic arrangements are to work in multi-ethnic states. This is not merely a problem for the states of former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union. In an era of awakened nationalisms in multi-ethnic states democracy is often the first casualty. □

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The “world perspective” was initially provided by the Mexican and Egyptian institutes, which wanted to see what they could learn from the problems of the transition to democracy in Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. This formula also enabled West European social democrats to participate in some of our activities.

<sup>2</sup> In both Slovenia and Macedonia these social democratic former reform Communist parties are now in coalition governments.

<sup>3</sup> Pesic is now a major leader of the Citizen’s Group, which unites the leading opposition to Milosevic’s regime and provides backing for the more moderate federal prime minister Panic and federal president Cosic. The situation in Serbia is close to an internal civil war. Things may still end with an army coup.

<sup>4</sup> That hostility was quite real in many social circles, but it

nevertheless must not be forgotten that the Yugoslav Communists did respectably well in the first free elections in 1990 in *all* the republics, winning in three (Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia), and being the largest opposition parties in two. Thus, they did better than East European Communist parties on the whole. To be sure, continued evolution of the Serbian party turned it into a party that rejected the positive heritage of Yugoslav communism, keeping only the link with the political police and repressiveness.

<sup>5</sup> This information is based on my own lengthy interviews and conversations with former cabinet ministers and ambassadors of the federal government of Ante Markovic. Through cross checking I am convinced that it is true. Both the prime minister and the secretary for international affairs were among the first targets of the military “hards” during the first half of 1991.