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THE SILENT REPUBLIC: POPULAR MUSIC AND NATIONALISM
IN SOCIALIST CROATIA

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Abstract

This paper explores the development of popular music and its relationship to the political situation in Croatia and Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991, and how global musical trends were used to construct and reinvent Croatian and Yugoslav cultural and political identities. It begins with a discussion of the suppression of patriotic music in the early decades of socialist Yugoslavia, when the regime attempted to create a supranational culture that would unify Yugoslavia's constituent nations. It then analyses the national cultural revival in Croatia in the late 1960s that prompted a political movement known as the Croatian Spring, when the pop singer Vice Vukov incorporated Croatian patriotic themes into his songs. In the years following the crushing of the Croatian Spring in 1971, Croatian nationalism was again suppressed in politics and music, and because of this stifling of political opposition Croatia was dubbed "the silent republic." For the rest of the 1970s the political function of pop and rock music was reflected in its glorification of Yugoslavia and its leader, Josip Broz Tito. However, after the death of Tito in 1980, New Wave rock bands such as Prljavo kazalište began to criticise aspects of the Yugoslav system and indicated a new turn towards nationalist politics in Croatia. This study concludes with a discussion of popular music and nationalism in Croatia from 1990 to 1991, and it highlights the dilemma that Croatia's liberal democracy has since faced in dealing with the phenomenon of extreme nationalist music, especially that performed by the singer Thompson.

Keywords

Croatia, Yugoslavia, popular music, nationalism, socialism

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Since the time of Christ
New faces, the same scene
Satanic forces are trying
To make us non-existent
Antichrists and masons
These communists and those ones
Spread satanic phrases
In order to defeat us
Oh, my people
Oh, my people¹

This song “E, moj narode” (“Oh, My People”), composed and performed by the Croatian rock singer Marko Perković – commonly known by his stage name “Thompson” – is a unique example of extreme nationalist protest music in contemporary Europe. Thompson has been divisively controversial but also widely popular in Croatia, and he has even been dubbed “the first right wing protest pop star in Europe.”² His penultimate album, also titled *E, moj narode*, was the bestseller in Croatia in 2002, and Thompson’s sell out concerts in the cities of Zagreb and Split have attracted tens of thousands of people.³ On *E, moj narode*, Thompson articulated the grievances of Croatian extreme nationalists against Croatia’s centre left coalition government – “these communists,” as he calls them – led by the Socijaldemokratska partija (SDP, Social Democratic Party) and its leader, prime minister Ivica Račan.⁴ The Račan government was in power from January 2000 to December 2003; it succeeded the government of the nationalist, right wing Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (HDZ, Croatian Democratic Union) that ruled from 1990 to 2000, and whose leader, Franjo Tuđman, served as Croatian president from 1990 until his death in 1999.

Thompson considered the SDP “communist” because it is the reformed successor of the Savez komunista Hrvatske (SKH, League of Communists of Croatia), the republican wing of the Savez komunista Jugoslavije (SKJ, League of Communists of Yugoslavia) that ruled Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1990.⁵ The Račan government was defeated by the HDZ in the elections of 23 November 2003, and before these elections Thompson called on his fans to remove the “communist” government “from the political scene once and for all.” The rock star accused the Račan government of failing to defend Croatian “national interests” and “traditional values” as fervently as the HDZ had, and of “doing everything to destroy the Croatian state, to sell it off, make it deep in debt, and to belittle and shame the Croatian soldiers and renowned individuals who created it.”⁶ This last gripe was a reference to the HDZ leaders, especially Tuđman, under the leadership of whom Croatia achieved independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, as well as to the Croatian military officials who led the Croatian Army during the Homeland War⁷ from 1991 to 1995. Thompson has been especially supportive of the Croatian

¹ *Od vremena još od Krista/ Nova lica, scena ista/ Vražije sile se trude/ Da nas ne bude/ Antikristi i masoni/ Komunisti ovi, oni/ Šire sotonske fraze/ Da nas poraze/ E, moj narode/ E, moj narode.* Marko Perković-Thompson, *E, moj narode* (Zagreb: Croatia Records, 2002).

² Miljenko Jergović, “Lake note crne legije,” *Globus* (20 September 2002).

³ D. Miljuš, “Thompson zapjevao pred 40.000 ljudi,” *Večernji list* (16 September 2002).

⁴ The Račan government initially included six political parties: the SDP, Hrvatska socialno-liberalna stranka (HSLŠ, Croatian Social Liberal Party), Hrvatska seljačka stranka (HSS, Croatian Peasants’ Party), Hrvatska narodna stranka (HNS, Croatian People’s Party), Liberalna stranka (LS, Liberal Party) and the Istarski demokratski sabor (IDS, Istrian Democratic Assembly). The IDS left the coalition in June 2001, as did the HSLŠ in July 2002.

⁵ The SKJ had until 1952 been called the Komunistička Partija Jugoslavije (Communist Party of Yugoslavia).

⁶ Marko Perković-Thompson, “Izbori,” *Službene stranice M.P. Thompsona* [<http://www.thompson.hr>] (accessed 21 November 2003).

⁷ The “Homeland War” is how the war is commonly referred to in Croatia, with the Croatian term being “Domovinski rat.” The war was fought between Croatia and the forces of its insurrectionist Serb minority, which were initially supported by

generals who have been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague or tried by Croatian courts for war crimes, and he attacked the Račan government for cooperating with the ICTY and treating these generals as “criminals.”⁸

As articulated in Thompson’s songs, the grievances of the extreme nationalists against the Račan government hinged upon their interpretations of key periods in Croatian history, particularly the Second World War and postwar socialist Yugoslavia,⁹ as well as Croatia’s secession from Yugoslavia in 1991 and the Homeland War. For example, Thompson has glorified the extreme nationalist Ustasha¹⁰ movement that ruled the Nezavisna država Hrvatska (NDH, Independent State of Croatia),¹¹ a Nazi puppet state, during the Second World War. At his concerts, he has sung Ustasha songs and shouted the Ustasha slogan “Za dom spremni!” (“Ready for the homeland!”), and some audience members have openly displayed Ustasha iconography and raised their right arm in the fascist salute.¹² In November 2003 the Dutch authorities cancelled two concerts that Thompson was scheduled to perform for the Croatian diasporic communities in Amsterdam and Rotterdam after Jewish, antifascist and antidiscrimination groups reported that Thompson uses Nazi salutes and that Nazi iconography is displayed at his performances.¹³ Thompson blamed Jews for the cancellation of the concerts, saying that he had done nothing wrong to them, “but neither did Jesus, and they crucified him anyway.”¹⁴ And in December 2003, Croatian journalists discovered an internet recording of Thompson singing the song “Jasenovac i Gradiška Stara” (“Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška”). Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška were two concentration camps in the NDH in which tens of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Roma and antifascist Croats were killed, and in the song Thompson glorified the murder of the Serbs.¹⁵

Unlike the Dutch authorities, the Račan government failed to censor Thompson while it was in power because of his huge popularity and the memory of the repression of Croatian nationalism in Yugoslavia. As the postcommunist successor of the SKH, the SDP would have been open to accusations that it was behaving like its predecessor if it had suppressed such nationalist expressions, and the party feared the political backlash that such a move could incite.¹⁶ The SKJ had often treated

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the Jugoslovenska narodna armija (JNA, Yugoslav People’s Army) and the regime of Serbian president Slobodan Milošević.

⁸ Perković-Thompson, “Izbori,” *op. cit.*

⁹ There were, of course, three Yugoslavias: interwar Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941, communist Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991, and a rump Yugoslavia comprising Serbia and Montenegro from 1992 to 2003. For the purposes of this essay, my use of the term “Yugoslavia” refers to communist Yugoslavia, unless it is modified by another adjective.

¹⁰ In this study, the Croatian words “Ustaša” and its plural “Ustaše” are used in their transliterated English forms “Ustasha” and “Ustashe.”

¹¹ The NDH comprised most of the territory of today’s Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

¹² Jergović, *op. cit.* Furthermore, in his song “Geni kameni” (“Genes of Stone”), from the album *E, moj narode*, Thompson calls 1945 - the year that the Ustashe were defeated by the antifascist, communist Partisans - a “bad” year.

¹³ Zvonimir Mamić, “Thompson krivi Židove,” *Novi list* (29 November 2003).

¹⁴ Cited in *ibid.*

¹⁵ *Jasenovac i Gradiška Stara/ Jasenovac i Gradiška Stara/ To je kuća Maksovih mesara/ To je kuća Maksovih mesara/ U Čapljini, klaonica bila/ U Čapljini, klaonica bila/ Puno Srba Neretva nosila/ Puno Srba Neretva nosila* (Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska/ Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska/ That’s the house of Maks’ butchers/ That’s the house of Maks’ butchers/ There was a slaughterhouse in Čapljina/ There was a slaughterhouse in Čapljina/ The Neretva took many Serbs away/ The Neretva took many Serbs away). Cited in V. Strukar, “Thompson veličao ustaške zločine u Jasenovcu,” *Novi list* (30 December 2003). “Thompson na razgovoru u policiji,” *Novi list* (27 April 2004). “Maks” is Vjekoslav Maks Luburić, the Ustasha commander of the Jasenovac concentration camp. Čapljina is a town in Herzegovina, and the Neretva is a river that flows from the Adriatic Sea through Herzegovina and Dalmatia. For a detailed study of the Thompson phenomenon, as well as other connections between popular music and politics in Croatia since 1991, see Catherine Baker, *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

¹⁶ The Račan government came under intense pressure from right wing political parties and war veterans’ organisations for its cooperation with the ICTY, and from 2001 demonstrations were held in Croatian cities that attracted hundreds of thousands of supporters who protested against the extradition of Croatian military officials to The Hague. In this political

Croatian nationalism as a threat to Yugoslavia's cultural and political unity, and it labelled expressions of Croatian national sentiment as "chauvinist" or "Ustasha," even when they were liberal or not as extreme as those of Thompson.¹⁷ Its suppression of Croatian nationalism particularly affected musical production: Croatian popular music artists who dared to articulate patriotism in their music were censored, and citizens who sang patriotic songs faced police beatings and imprisonment. This experience of repression partly explains the revival of patriotic music in Croatia since the late 1980s, within which Thompson's songs are an extreme case.

To understand why Thompson attacks "communists" as being hostile towards Croatian national interests, and why the SDP was wary of censoring Thompson's music, it is imperative to examine the repression of Croatian popular music and nationalism under socialism. This study explores the political uses of popular music in Croatia in the postwar period until the establishment of the independent Republic of Croatia in 1991,¹⁸ and it shows how popular music was instrumentalised to articulate Croatian nationalism, forge a Yugoslav identity, criticise the Yugoslav system or support the regimes of the SKJ and the HDZ. Yugoslav communists and Croatian nationalists both used popular music styles that had reached Croatia from the West – especially America – for political purposes, and this study shows how the global musical trends of jazz, pop and rock were used to construct and reinvent Yugoslav and Croatian cultural and political identities.

This history of popular music and nationalism in Croatia explores the development of popular music and its relationship to the political situation in Yugoslavia and Croatia from 1945 to 1991. It begins with a discussion of the suppression of patriotic music in the early decades of socialist Yugoslavia, when the regime attempted to create a supranational culture that would unify Yugoslavia's constituent nations. Initially hostile towards popular music trends from America as well, the SKJ became more tolerant of Western popular music from the 1950s after Yugoslavia improved its relations with the West. From then on, popular music developed relatively freely in Yugoslavia and was used by the regime to construct a pan-Yugoslav popular culture. This study then continues by examining a new phase in the history of popular music and nationalism in Croatia that began in the early 1960s, as the Yugoslav federal leadership placed less priority on the project of forging an integrative Yugoslav culture and gave the republics more freedom to develop their national cultures. This led to a national cultural revival in Croatia that prompted a political movement known as the Croatian Spring, when the pop singer Vice Vukov incorporated Croatian patriotic themes into his music. Next examined here are the years following the crushing of the Croatian Spring in 1971, when Croatian nationalism was again suppressed in politics and music, and because of this stifling of political opposition Croatia was dubbed "the silent republic." For the rest of the 1970s the political function of pop and rock music was reflected in its glorification of Yugoslavia and its leader, Josip

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context Thompson became the poster boy of the extreme nationalist cause: his concerts became major political and social events for the who's who of the Croatian right, including officials from the HDZ and the extreme right wing party Hrvatska stranka prava (HSP, Croatian Party of Rights), as well as the leaders of war veterans' organisations. In addition, seats at his concert in Split in 2002 were symbolically reserved for Croatian military officials who had been indicted for war crimes, such as Mirko Norac and Ante Gotovina. Miljuš, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ In this study the adjectives "extreme nationalist" and "patriotic" are used to distinguish between patriotic music that subscribes to a romantic and liberal nationalism, as now embraced by Croatian political parties around the centre of the political spectrum, while "extreme nationalist" music is associated with the extreme nationalism of the political right. However, "nationalism" and "nationalist" are used for the sake of explanatory ease to refer to artists and songs that profess some degree of Croatian nationalism, be it extreme nationalist, patriotic or somewhere in between.

¹⁸ This study focuses on Croatia and does not present a complete treatment of the relationship between politics and popular music in Yugoslavia, which would require an examination of the situation in Yugoslavia's other constituent republics and provinces. Herein, however, cases from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Slovenia are referred to, to the extent that they inform developments in Croatia. For a broader discussion of the rock scene in Yugoslavia, see Sabrina P. Ramet's studies in *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, 4th edn. (Westview Press: Boulder, 2002): 127-50; "Shake, Rattle and Self-Management: Making the Scene in Yugoslavia," in *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994): 103-39; and "Shake, Rattle and Self-Management: Rock Music and Politics in Socialist Yugoslavia, and After," in *Kazaam! Splat! Poof!: The American Impact on European Popular Culture since 1945*, eds. Sabrina P. Ramet and Gordana P. Crnković (Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003): 173-97.

Broz Tito, but after the death of Tito in 1980 New Wave rock bands in Yugoslavia began to criticise aspects of the Yugoslav system. In 1988 the Croatian New Wave band Prljavo kazalište (Dirty Theatre) reintroduced Croatian patriotic themes into popular music, and the huge popularity of Prljavo kazalište in the late 1980s indicated a turn towards nationalist politics in Croatia. This study concludes with a discussion of popular music and nationalism in Croatia from 1990 to 1991, after the victory of the HDZ in Croatia's first postwar multiparty elections. From hereon nationalism was no longer silenced in Croatian musical production, and as Croatia moved towards independence from Yugoslavia and faced the Homeland War, nationalist themes became more frequent in popular music.

Popular Music and Nationalism

Approaching popular music in Croatia from a historical and political perspective is not only important for understanding contemporary phenomena such as the case of Thompson or how popular culture has been used in Croatia to forge cultural and political identities, but also how nationalisms and national identities are constructed through popular culture. As Yugoslavia modernised in the postwar period and became increasingly industrialised and urbanised, national and supranational identities were reinvented through mass media, the marketplace and global cultural trends. While the SKJ used these to forge a supranational Yugoslav identity that was based on the various cultural, economic, political and social aspects of socialist development, Croatian national identity was also reshaped in the postwar period through new forms of cultural expression and technology. Thus, whereas in the earlier half of the twentieth century Croatian artists and composers nationalised their musical production and performance by basing it on folk elements, popular music artists in the postwar period instrumentalised global musical trends to express Croatian nationalism. Such songs were extremely popular among the Croatian public, which suggests that the composer, performer and audience of these songs perceived no apparent contradiction in utilising global musical styles to articulate the national. Indeed, Vukov even asserted during the Croatian Spring that “some sort of “global” pop music does not exist at all, but just national music asserted in global frames.”¹⁹

Vukov's statement may ring true for small nations and linguistic communities such as the Croatian one, but it is seemingly harder to justify when one considers the global reach of American popular music, which has also been a major influence on Croatian popular music since the interwar period. A study on the relationship between popular music and nationalism in Croatia offers useful insights into the functions and limits of America's cultural influence on postwar Europe, for it shows how American popular culture has been used in Europe to shape national identities. Scholars have tended to approach the Americanisation of postwar Europe from the positive perspective of “economic modernisation and political and cultural democratisation,”²⁰ or from the negative one of American imperialism and – especially in the case of communist Eastern Europe – cultural infiltration and propaganda.²¹ But the impact of American popular music on Yugoslavia went beyond these as Yugoslav communists and Croatian nationalists used popular music trends from the West to forge local cultural and political identities. Considering this, it is useful to approach the relationship between popular music and nationalism in Croatia from the following perspective offered by Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger:

American culture – and by that we mean images and products ranging from American movies and music to fashion and architecture, made by industries based in the United States – has, by offering alternative modes of identification, been crucial in the shaping of new identities.²²

¹⁹ Cited in Srećko Lipovčan, “Vice Vukov: Ako je netko uvrijedjen kad pjevam hrvatske pjesme, onda je greška u njemu...” *Hrvatski vjesnik* (17 September 1971).

²⁰ Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger, “Introduction: Americanization Reconsidered,” in *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan*, eds. Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000): xiii-xiv.

²¹ Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997) ix.

²² Fehrenbach and Poiger, *op. cit.*, xv. In her book *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*, Poiger uses this idea to explain how American popular music was used in East and West Germany in the 1950s to reconstruct German identity. Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz*,

That American popular music could be used to shape identities in Yugoslavia and Croatia is, then, not a unique example of how American culture has been appropriated in postwar Europe. But the Yugoslav case presents us with different insights because of Yugoslavia's unique position during the Cold War: although socialist, it remained outside of the Eastern and Western camps from 1948, and this made it more open to cultural influences from the West than other parts of Eastern Europe. Furthermore, whereas the impact of Americanisation has been a matter of great debate in postwar Western Europe – particularly in France²³ – an examination of the development of popular music in Yugoslavia shows that the Yugoslav regime was, from the 1950s, more preoccupied with the threat posed by internal cultural nationalisms rather than that of American culture.

In the postwar period Yugoslavs, like other Europeans, “appropriated American mass culture and made it their own,” as the historian Richard F. Kuisel puts it.²⁴ The ethnomusicologist Edward Larkey explains just how Europeans have appropriated American popular music and “made it their own” in his study on popular music and national identity in Austria. According to Larkey, genres of popular music go through a series of phases before they develop from a cultural import into a stable domestic tradition: these begin with the consumption of the music and the imitation of it by local artists, with the final phases being the nativisation of the music through de-Anglicisation followed by re-ethnicisation.²⁵ In the Croatian case, it is after the stage of re-ethnicisation that Croatian nationalists instrumentalised popular music styles, with different genres fulfilling this function depending on whether they had reached the stage of re-ethnicisation at a time when the political context was tolerant of nationalism. Larkey’s model is thus useful for explaining not only how popular music develops from the consumption of a global cultural phenomenon into a constructor of national identity, but also why various genres are utilised at different times for the purposes of political protest. For example, it explains why *schlager* (sentimental pop songs that had been introduced into Croatia via Austria and Germany in the interwar period) was the genre that was used to articulate Croatian patriotism during the Croatian Spring, even though rock music was at the same time the genre of political protest in the West. It was not until the 1980s that rock music would assume this function in Yugoslavia after going through the stages of consumption, imitation and de-Anglicisation from the late 1950s to the 1970s. Indeed, in showing how governments, political and social movements and dissidents all instrumentalised popular music to articulate their aims and ideologies, an examination of the relationship between popular music and Croatian nationalism counters the view advanced by scholars who have promoted rock as the music of resistance, and derided pop as genre devoid of political character.²⁶ The Croatian case shows that both genres are validated as realms of political manipulation by multiple forces that have different – and often contesting – political motivations, be it differing conceptions of Croatian nationalism and/or a commitment to various political ideologies.

The relationship between popular music and nationalism in Croatia also offers insights into the extent of cultural and political freedom in Yugoslavia. Although Yugoslavia’s openness towards cultural influences from the West from the 1950s onwards gave it the semblance of being the most liberal country in communist Eastern Europe, the censorship and repression of Croatian popular musicians who incorporated patriotic themes into their music exposed the limits of the Yugoslav regime’s tolerance. To be sure, rock music developed in Yugoslavia more freely and rapidly than in other countries in Eastern Europe, which also differed among themselves in their official attitudes

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Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000): 30, 205.

²³ For a study on the impact of and reaction to Americanisation in postwar France, see Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

²⁴ Richard F. Kuisel, “The French Cinema and Hollywood: A Case Study of Americanization,” in *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan*, eds. Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000): 208.

²⁵ Edward Larkey, *Pungent Sounds: Constructing Identity with Popular Music in Austria* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993): 9.

²⁶ For studies on the artistic, political and sociological value of popular music, see Simon Firth, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), and Ray Pratt, *Rhythm and Resistance: Explorations in the Political Uses of Popular Music* (New York: Praeger, 1990).

towards rock music (in Hungary and Poland, for example, rock music was more tolerated than in Bulgaria and Romania).²⁷ But as in other parts of Eastern Europe, popular music in Yugoslavia was subject to censorship when it challenged the ideology and politics of the regime. In his study of censorship in Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991, the journalist Marko Lopušina maintains that the authorities never compiled lists of songs that could not be broadcast or performed, and that it was instead the editors of radio and television stations and press publications, organisers of concerts and record company officials who imposed political censorship on artists and songs that were deemed ideologically or politically inappropriate.²⁸ In addition to this, composers, songwriters and singers engaged in self-censorship, be it for genuine ideological or political convictions or because they wanted to maintain job security. As the journalist Mark Thompson points out, this self-censorship was influenced by the “national mythology” of the SKJ, one component of which was “the claim that the country’s achievements, and even its existence, rested upon constant vigilance against an array of powerful international enemies”²⁹ to which one could also add domestic nationalist ones. Another element of this mythology was the claim that the Titoist system of self-management – according to which workers or employees managed farms, factories and businesses – had made Yugoslavia “the first and only democratic socialist system.”³⁰ As the Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulić writes, in the 1980s

[I]t had become obvious that the system of ‘self-management’ Yugoslavia was so proud of was a ruse, invented to make you believe that you – not the government or the party – are to blame. It was the most perfect system among the one-party states, set up to internalise guilt, blame, failure or fear, to teach you how you yourself should censor your thoughts and deeds and, at the same time, to make you feel that you had more freedom than anyone in Eastern Europe.³¹

Brotherhood and Unity

After the Second World War the SKJ endeavoured to create a supranational Yugoslav identity that would unify the constituent nations but also acknowledge their diversity. This Yugoslavist cultural policy was based on the ideas of “brotherhood and unity” among the nations and Yugoslav socialism,³² and in the musical sphere it determined what could be performed and produced. In Croatia musical production between the two world wars had been dominated by a national orientation that drew inspiration from folk music³³ and, in accordance with the extreme nationalist ideology of the Ustashe, the music composed in the NDH was also nationally imbued.³⁴ But after the Second World

²⁷ For a collection of studies on rock music in Eastern Europe, see Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), and the volume *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, ed. Sabrina Ramet (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994).

²⁸ Marko Lopušina, *Crna knjiga: cenzura u Jugoslaviji 1945-91* (Belgrade: Fokus, 1991): 243-4.

²⁹ Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Luton, UK: University of Luton Press, 1999): 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (London: Hutchinson, 1987): 6.

³² Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998): 9.

³³ Josip Andreis, *Music in Croatia*, 2nd edn., trans. from the Croatian by Vladimir Ivir (Zagreb: Institute of Musicology, Academy of Music, 1982): 196; Antun Dobronić, “A Study of Yugoslav Music,” *The Musical Quarterly* vol. 12, no. 1 (January 1926): 66-8; Krešimir Kovačević, *Muzičko stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj 1945-1965* (Zagreb: Udruženje kompozitora Hrvatske, 1966): 11, 33; Zija Kučukalić, “Contemporary Trends in Yugoslav Music,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* vol. 2, no. 2 (December 1971): 272; Stanislav Tuksar, *Kratka povijest hrvatske glazbe* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska: 2000): 115.

³⁴ Naila Ceribašić, “Heritage of the Second World War in Croatia: Identity Imposed upon and by Music,” in *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, ed. Svanibor Pettan (Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1998): 113. For a discussion of the musical history of Croatia from the perspective of a musicologist writing in the NDH, see Božidar Širola, *Hrvatska umjetnička glazba: odabrana poglavlja iz povijesti hrvatske glazbe* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1942).

War national themes in music were ignored in all of Yugoslavia's constituent republics and superseded by a focus on the wartime struggle of the antifascist Partisan movement, socialist development and Yugoslavism.³⁵ Instead of songs that imitated Western styles or were nationalist in content, revolutionary songs, Partisan marching songs, traditional folk songs and Russian songs were privileged in the years immediately after the Second World War.³⁶ In its promotion of "brotherhood and unity," the Yugoslav government directed ensembles, radio stations and schools to incorporate folk music from all of the Yugoslav nations into their programmes.³⁷ Agitprop commissions also urged composers and songwriters to produce melodies that incorporated socialist realist symbols and themes, such as the hammer and sickle, tractors, ploughs, heavy industry, labour and happiness.³⁸ Darko Kraljić, a well-known composer of the time, recalled how he had "once received lyrics about a tractor that happily ploughs away, while the sun is even more happily shining, and another time about happy people digging a field – and delighting in it!"³⁹

According to the musicologist Svanibor Pettan, musical performance and production in Yugoslavia excluded "songs that did not match the proclaimed interpretation of history or emphasised the past of a constituent ethnic group outside the Yugoslav framework."⁴⁰ The performance of songs that were considered ideologically or politically inappropriate by the authorities was punished by loss of job, imprisonment or penal labour.⁴¹ The songs that were the most politically dangerous were those of the defeated wartime forces, such as the Nazis, Ustashe and the Serbian Chetniks.⁴² However, patriotic and traditional songs that were perceived as being too nationalist were also banned from the radio and public performance.⁴³ Although this was effected all over Yugoslavia, the nationalisms of the two largest nations, the Croats and Serbs, were considered more of a threat to Yugoslavism than those of the smaller nations, and Croatian and Serbian patriotic songs were consequently censored on the radio more than Macedonian, Montenegrin and Slovenian ones.⁴⁴ The government's restrictions on religious life also limited the public performance of patriotic music:⁴⁵ considering the close relationship between religion and national identity in the Yugoslav nations – and particularly in predominantly Roman Catholic Croatia – religious songs often had a national component, and just after the Second World War they were doubly attacked for their religious and national themes.

Together with patriotic and religious music, in the late 1940s Yugoslavia's political leaders also attacked Western popular music – especially that originating from America – as culturally degrading, ideologically inappropriate and politically threatening. American popular music had already entered Yugoslavia in the interwar period, and in the 1930s bands such as Zagreb's Trio Jurković were imitating American jazz.⁴⁶ It is in this period that the origins of popular music – or *zabavna glazba* (literally "entertainment," or pop, music), as it is called in Croatian – lie, in the dance orchestras, *schlager* and jazz that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s largely as a result of American and

³⁵ Wachtel, *op. cit.*, 146.

³⁶ Petar Luković, *Bolja prošlost: prizori iz muzičkog života Jugoslavije 1940-1989* (Belgrade: Mladost, 1989): 9; Ljerka. V. Rasmussen, *Newly Composed Folk Music of Yugoslavia* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 40.

³⁷ Svanibor Pettan, "Music, Politics, and War in Croatia in the 1990s: An Introduction," in *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, ed. Svanibor Pettan (Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1998): 11.

³⁸ Luković, *op. cit.*, 12.

³⁹ Cited in *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Pettan, *op. cit.*, 11.

⁴¹ Ramet, *Balkan Babel, op. cit.*, 127.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 23-4, 26-7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁴⁵ Jerko Bezić, "Croatian Traditional Ecclesiastical and Non-Ecclesiastical Religious Songs during Onerous Times," in *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, ed. Svanibor Pettan (Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1998): 95-6.

⁴⁶ Cited in Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, 39.

German musical influences.⁴⁷ However, from 1945 to 1948 cultural and political relations between Yugoslavia and the United States were strained, not only because they found themselves in opposing ideological camps but also due to issues such as the Greek Civil War and Yugoslav claims on Trieste.⁴⁸ Popular music from America was now perceived by the Yugoslav government as a weapon in the battle between capitalists and communists in the Cold War, and the commitment to communism of anyone who performed or listened to such music was rendered questionable.

The top officials of the Yugoslav regime led the charge against American popular music and publicly condemned jazz as a “Western conspiracy” that corrupted youth and swindled people of their money.⁴⁹ In 1947 Milovan Djilas, a leading party ideologue and vice premier in the Yugoslav government, published an article in which he declared that “America is our sworn enemy, and jazz, likewise, as its product.”⁵⁰ Tito opposed modern jazz for aesthetic reasons as well, and in the late 1940s he told his biographer Vladimir Dedijer that he liked Yugoslav folk music, “but not stylised, as people like to do nowadays... Jazz, in my opinion, is not music. It is racket!”⁵¹ Tito expressed similar sentiments to the jazz musician Bojan Adamič in the late 1940s, when Adamič tried to convince the Yugoslav leader that jazz was not the political threat that it had been made out to be:

“Comrade Marshal, all of us who play jazz in Yugoslavia like you very much, so in their name and mine I would like to wish you a happy New Year.”

“I like jazz, too, but not the uncivilised sort,” replied Tito.

“Comrade President, excuse me, but I don’t think I understood you well. You don’t like revolutionary, modern jazz, but the old-fashioned, peaceful sort?”

[no reply from Tito, op.a.]⁵²

Taking their cue from the statements made by the state leadership, cultural, political and social organisations in Yugoslavia in the late 1940s waged a battle against Western popular music. Party committees banned concerts and plays that had “decadent Western music,”⁵³ and radio stations censored it from their programmes - often even more thoroughly than Djilas or Tito had suggested, in order to prove their loyalty to the regime and to secure their employment. Musical sections were formed on all radio stations with the job of censoring music that used the English language or was considered “capitalist,” “decadent” or “kitsch;” all tones above “C” were labelled “reactionary” and “unfit for the domestic public.”⁵⁴ Yugoslav artists who were affected by such censorship included the Croatian singer Ivo Robić, whose pop melody “Jesenska ruža” (“Autumn Rose”) was removed from the programme of Radio Zagreb in 1947 because it was considered too “decadent.” Likewise, in the same year the pop song “Snježi” (“It’s Snowing”), composed by Mario Kinel, was also not broadcast on Radio Zagreb because it was considered “dangerous for the consciousness of communist forces.”⁵⁵ With the censorship of Western popular music on Yugoslav radio, people instead tuned in to the Voice of America (VOA) and other international broadcasts to hear the latest American popular music, or they accessed it at American cultural and diplomatic missions.⁵⁶ Such actions did not go unpunished,

⁴⁷ Kovačević, *op. cit.*, 88-9.

⁴⁸ David L. Larson, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Yugoslavia, 1943-1963* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979): 82-179; Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997): 1-41.

⁴⁹ Luković, *op. cit.*, 40, 46.

⁵⁰ Cited in *ibid.*, 11.

⁵¹ Cited in Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, *op. cit.*, 127.

⁵² Cited in Luković, *op. cit.*, 46.

⁵³ Cited in Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 23.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-4, 26-7, 32, 246; Luković, *op. cit.*, 12.

⁵⁵ Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 27.

⁵⁶ Cited in Luković, *op. cit.*, 10, 29. In the late 1940s and 1950s, American officials realised the potential that American popular music had as a tool of cultural infiltration and propaganda, and they placed more emphasis on music in their

however, and Kraljić was even arrested and imprisoned for several hours after he listened to American records with a group of friends in the American Reading Room in Belgrade.⁵⁷

However, from 1948 the Yugoslav Communists' hostile attitude towards Western popular music began to soften after Yugoslavia severed its alliance with the Soviet Union. On 28 June 1948 the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia from its ranks and withdrew all of its economic and technical aid after Tito refused to submit to Soviet political domination.⁵⁸ For the next four decades of its existence, Yugoslavia pursued an independent line of socialism dubbed "Titoism," and it remained outside of the Eastern and Western camps in the Cold War and instead led the movement of non-aligned states. Following the split with the Soviet Union, Russian songs became subject to political censorship on Yugoslav radio and, as Yugoslavia turned to the West for economic and political support, Western popular music began to receive more airplay.⁵⁹ A consequence of the rapprochement with the West was that Yugoslavia opened itself up to Western cultural influences more than any other country in Eastern Europe, and from the early 1950s Western popular music developed in Yugoslavia with the official support of the regime. Jazz concerts were now organised with the support of state cultural institutions, Yugoslav jazz bands were given permission to perform in the West, the Soviet Union and other parts of the East Bloc, and American jazz stars were invited to perform in Yugoslavia.⁶⁰ In the 1950s, then, jazz, pop and rock music became increasingly apolitical in Yugoslavia in the sense that it was no longer considered a cultural and political threat from the West, and in 1964 Tito would tell a delegation of the Muzička omladina Jugoslavije (Musical Youth of Yugoslavia) that "I have nothing against modern plays and jazz. They, too, are necessary. Young people should have fun."⁶¹

With the expansion of mass media (television services began in Yugoslavia in 1961) and the increasing domestic production of the local recording industry in the 1950s and 1960s, popular music developed into a central part of Yugoslav popular culture.⁶² In these decades a division in musical production was established among the Yugoslav republics that would continue into the 1980s, with Croatia dominating in pop music, and Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in folk.⁶³ This was not only demonstrated by the fact that the Jugoton record company, the leading producer of pop music in Yugoslavia, was based in Zagreb, but also by the number of popular music festivals that were established in Croatia from the 1950s. For example, in 1953 Radio Zagreb organised the first Tjedan lake muzike (Week of Light Music), and Horizont (Horizon) – the musical section of the leading youth organisation in Croatia, the Narodna omladina Hrvatske (National Youth of Croatia) – organised the first dance melody competition in 1954, which later developed into the Zagreb Festival.⁶⁴ In 1958 the Opatija Festival, which developed into the most important pop music festival in Yugoslavia, was established in the Croatian town of the same name, and in 1960 the Melodies of the Adriatic festival started in Split.⁶⁵ As the ethnomusicologist Ljerka V. Rasmussen observes, these festivals were "the single most powerful public forum for the presentation, production and definition of Yugoslav popular music," and "Croatia was the major contributor in shaping *zabavna* music on the festival front."⁶⁶ In

(Contd.)

international radio services in order to attract more listeners in Eastern Europe. A survey conducted by the United States Information Agency (USIA) in the 1950s found that VOA's "Music USA" programme, which was launched in 1955, was the station's most popular programme. Hixson, *op. cit.*, 115, 117.

⁵⁷ Cited in Luković, *op. cit.*, 12.

⁵⁸ Larson, *op. cit.*, 180-200.

⁵⁹ Lopušina, *op. cit.*, 243; Luković, *op. cit.*, 33; Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, *op. cit.*, 127. From 1949 the United States provided economic aid to Yugoslavia and, from 1951, military assistance as well. Larson, *op. cit.*, 200-49; Lees, *op. cit.*, 43-119.

⁶⁰ Luković, *op. cit.*, 17, 29, 34-5. Among the American jazz stars who performed in Yugoslavia at the time were Louis Armstrong, who performed in Belgrade in April 1959, and Ella Fitzgerald, who did so in February 1961. *Ibid.*, 41.

⁶¹ Cited in Zvonko Štaubringer and Milenko Popović, *Tito u anegdota* (Belgrade: Mladost, 1972): 177.

⁶² Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, 42-3.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶⁴ Kovačević, *op. cit.*, 89.

⁶⁵ Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, 41.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 41-2.

the late 1960s Croatian pop singers would capitalise on the popularity of these festivals and the media attention that they received in order to promote the nationalist causes of the Croatian Spring.

The Croatian Spring

By the mid 1960s the SKJ had changed its policy not only towards Western popular music but also towards national cultures: the forging of a supranational Yugoslav identity was no longer the sole focus of cultural policy and, in accordance with increasing economic and political decentralisation, the republics were given greater reign to develop national cultures.⁶⁷ As a consequence of this decentralisation, a cultural revival emerged in Croatia from 1966 that motivated a national political movement known as the *maspok* (an acronym for “masovni pokret,” or mass movement), and this period became known as the Croatian Spring. The *maspok* articulated the cultural, economic and political grievances that Croatia had regarding its position in Yugoslavia, and it sought increased autonomy for Croatia within the Yugoslav federation. Intellectuals, students and workers supported the movement, as did the liberal faction of the SKH, led by the secretary of the SKH Savka Dabčević-Kučar and the Croatian representative on the SKJ presidency, Miko Tripalo.⁶⁸

As part of the national revival, old national emblems re-emerged in popularity among Croats and patriotic songs that had been suppressed by the authorities were openly sung again.⁶⁹ The national revival was also expressed in popular music, but unlike in the West, where rock was defining itself in the 1960s as the music of political protest and social movements, Croatian rock artists did not articulate the themes of the *maspok*. Rock music had entered Yugoslavia in the late 1950s and Yugoslav rock artists were still occupied with imitating the styles and themes of the American and British rock scenes. Instead, it was old patriotic songs and newly composed *schlager* that became the most politicised musical genres during the Croatian Spring.

In the realm of popular music, the figure who personified the Croatian Spring was the Croatian pop singer Vice Vukov, who in the mid 1960s was one of Yugoslavia’s most popular stars. From 1967 Vukov began to use his public performances at concerts and festivals to make patriotic statements that reflected the sentiments and themes of the Croatian Spring, and he would do so through his songs, costumes and by directly addressing the audience with patriotic remarks. Vukov’s repertoire during the Croatian Spring comprised two groups of songs: the first were folk songs from the different regions of Croatia, and the second were songs that articulated the cultural, political and social issues of the *maspok*.⁷⁰ Together with his music, Vukov also played a prominent role in the Croatian Spring as a member of the editorial board of the newspaper *Hrvatski tjednik* (*Croatian Weekly*). First released in April 1971, *Hrvatski tjednik* was a mouthpiece of the *maspok* and focussed on Croatian national issues, and it developed an enormous readership in Croatia.⁷¹ Among its contributors were some of Croatia’s most prominent intellectuals, including the writer Vlado Gotovac, who was the newspaper’s editor, and Tudjman, who was then a historian.⁷²

Vukov’s involvement in the Croatian Spring started in 1967 when he took part in the Melodije Jadrana festival in Split wearing a traditional costume from the Zagorje region of northern Croatia. Upon finishing his song, he told the audience (which included viewers from all over Yugoslavia, as the festival was televised) “you know that for me, as a good Dalmatian, it was unusually nice to wear

⁶⁷ Pedro Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984): 51; Wachtel, *op. cit.*, 173-5.

⁶⁸ Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia*, *op. cit.*, 104-43; Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997): 190-202.

⁶⁹ Ante Čuvalo, *The Croatian National Movement: 1966-1972* (New York: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1990): 161.

⁷⁰ Vice Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja: sjećanja na 1971* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 2003): 89-100.

⁷¹ Jill A. Irvine, *The Croat Question: Partisan Politics in the Formation of the Yugoslav State* (Boulder: Westview 1993): 262; Tanner, *op. cit.*, 196-7.

⁷² Cited in Vice Vukov, *Pogled iza ogledala* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1999): 7.

this beautiful Croatian national costume of ours.”⁷³ The festival’s audience responded to Vukov’s remark with applause that continued for several minutes, and Vukov later received letters of congratulations for his performance, including one from Tripalo.⁷⁴ Vukov’s costume and remarks were interpreted as an expression of Croatian nationalism because Vukov himself is from Dalmatia: by wearing the costume from another region, he asserted a Croatian national identity rather than just a regional one. Vukov further emphasised this by performing a song typical of the Zagorje region at a festival dominated by Dalmatian musical styles and themes, and during the Croatian Spring he had a propensity for singing Croatian folk songs outside of their region of origin.⁷⁵ By portraying the various regional identities as components of a Croatian national one, Vukov was expressing a criticism made by *maspok* intellectuals that Yugoslav cultural policy had privileged regional identities in order to subvert Croatian nationalism. They argued that the words “Croatia” or “Croatian” had been stigmatised as “nationalist and chauvinist,” and that Croatian national culture was being fragmented into regional ones.⁷⁶ Vukov saw this as a

nationally, culturologically and politically disintegrative phenomenon. Namely, at that time you were allowed to be a Dalmatian or Zagorac [from the northern Croatian region of Zagorje, op. a.] as much as you wanted, but not a Croat. Kajkavian songs and Dalmatian songs were welcome, but not Croatian songs. I therefore accept the value of regional folklore not as a value that is to be “defended” from others, but that is given to all thanks to the *political idea* of national integrity.⁷⁷

Together with these folk songs, Vukov also performed newly composed *schlager* that articulated the political issues of the Croatian Spring. A major grievance of the *maspok* intellectuals concerned the high rate of emigration from Croatia to the West: they argued that, due to poor economic and political conditions, Croatia had one of the highest rates of emigration in the world.⁷⁸ Vukov concurred that emigration was “the biggest Croatian problem,”⁷⁹ and he addressed the issue in two of his most popular *schlager* from the early 1970s. In them, he called on Croatian emigrants to return to their country, which he believed was “the most a person could do in the search for their own identity and their own happiness.”⁸⁰ The first of these songs was “Svijet je velik” (“The World is Big”), which won first prize in the song festival in Zagreb in 1970:

The world is big if you know where home is
You collect the sun to give it to someone of your own
Everything that you take on your travels is like a dream
It will be more beautiful once you return here⁸¹

The other song in which Vukov treated the issue of emigration was “Tvoja zemlja” (Your Country), which was released in 1971 and became the most popular patriotic song produced during the Croatian Spring:

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja*, op. cit., 67-9.

⁷⁶ Čuvalo, op. cit., 105-7.

⁷⁷ Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja*, op. cit., 70.

⁷⁸ Čuvalo, op. cit., 97-103.

⁷⁹ Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja*, op. cit., 69.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁸¹ *Svijet je velik ako znaš gdje je dom/ Sunca skupljaš da ih daš nekom svom/ Sve što nosiš kao san na svoj put/ Bit će ljepše kad se jednom vratiš tu.* Vice Vukov, “Svijet je velik,” *Tvoja zemlja* (Zagreb: Croatia Records, 1995).

That's your country, build your home there
The old foundation is there, there on your soil
Foreigners and storms tore her apart
But she is still there as long as we are
You'll be rich like us
A king who doesn't know what a crown is
But on your land, like these people
You'll be great like us⁸²

Although Vukov continued to perform throughout the Croatian Spring, his songs were banned on radio and television stations after the public prosecutor in Croatia initiated criminal proceedings against him for “insulting citizens and inciting national intolerance.”⁸³ The action was prompted by an article in the Serbian magazine *NIN* in October 1968, which listed a series of anti-Serbian comments that Vukov was alleged to have made at concerts. For example, it was alleged that he had told a Serbian audience member who hissed at him at the Melodies of the Adriatic festival in 1968 to “go there, to your own country, and hiss,” and that after he failed to win first prize in the “Pjesme ljeta” (“Songs of Summer”) festival held in the Dalmatian town of Baško polje in 1968, he had accused the organisers of selling tickets only to Serbs.⁸⁴ Vukov responded to the allegations by saying that “I consider chauvinism to be a degradation of true patriotism and, moreover, its opposite. Chauvinist feelings are a form of hate, and hate is foreign to me as a human being.”⁸⁵

The charges against Vukov were dropped in July 1969 for lack of evidence, after several of Vukov's colleagues stated that they had not witnessed Vukov make the anti-Serbian remarks at the festivals.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, the state media continued to attack Vukov as a “chauvinist” and highly ranking “nationalist and enemy of the people,” and at the end of 1968 he was removed from all of the pop music charts in Yugoslavia.⁸⁷ Intellectuals, the organisations of Partisan veterans from the Second World War and other social and political groups called for him to be banned from performing in public.⁸⁸ However, when Vukov was declared *persona non grata* by the authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1971 and his songs were removed from the republic's radio and television programmes,⁸⁹ a group of young writers came to his defence and published a letter in *Hrvatski vjesnik* in which they wrote that

if Vice Vukov was a writer, his books would likely be removed from bookshops and libraries and perhaps, according to the same methods, even burned... We protest against such “reckonings” with public figures, against these inquisitorial methods that are incompatible with the society in which we live and work.⁹⁰

The Silent Republic

Although he was prevented from performing in other parts of Yugoslavia, Vukov remained popular in Croatia and continued to have concerts there, and he also performed abroad for the Croatian diaspora

⁸² *To je tvoja zemlja, tu sagradi dom/ Tu je stari temelj, tu na kršu tvom/ Tujin i oluje kidali su nju/ Al' još uvijek tu je sve dok mi smo tu/ Bit ćeš bogat ko i mi/ Kralj što ne zna što je kruna/ Al' na svojoj grudi 'ko i ovi ljudi/ Bit ćeš velik ko i mi.* Vice Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja* (Zagreb: Jugoton, 1971).

⁸³ Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 52, 57, 60, 249-50.

⁸⁴ Cited in Luković, *op. cit.*, 95.

⁸⁵ Cited in *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁸⁷ Cited in *ibid.*, 95.

⁸⁸ Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja*, *op. cit.*, 62-3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹⁰ Cited in Lipovčan, *op. cit.*

in Australia, Canada, the United States and Western Europe.⁹¹ However, Vukov's career came to an end in late 1971 when Tito quashed the Croatian Spring: the Yugoslav leader believed that the demands of the *maspok* had gone too far and were threatening the unity of Yugoslavia, and in December the leadership of the SKH was forced to resign. In the following months the SKH was purged of its liberal nationalists, while intellectuals such as Gotovac and Tujman were imprisoned and *Hrvatski tjednik* was shut down.⁹² Vukov's name appeared on a list of the chief offenders of the Croatian Spring: dubbed the "Kontrarevolucionarni komitet pedesetorice" ("Contrarevolutionary Committee of the Fifty"), the list began with Dabčević-Kučar and Tripalo, and Vukov was the thirty-seventh person on it, appearing under the category of "pop singer."⁹³ However, unlike his colleagues from *Hrvatski tjednik*, Vukov managed to avoid arrest because he was on a concert tour in Australia in December 1971, and after his Australian tour he flew to Paris instead of Zagreb, where he remained in exile for five years.⁹⁴ When he returned to Croatia in 1976 he was still considered a "nationalist" and "politically inappropriate," and he was forbidden by the authorities from performing concerts and recording music.⁹⁵ For the next thirteen years the man who was once one of Yugoslavia's most popular singers worked in Zagreb as a corrector and editor in the publishing house of Croatia's leading cultural organisation, Matica hrvatska (The Croatian Matrix).⁹⁶

After the Croatian Spring the authorities again applied repressive measures against any citizen who performed a song that was considered to be nationalistic. To be sure, it was not only Croatians who were punished for singing patriotic songs, as such repression also occurred in the other republics and autonomous provinces of Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹⁷ However, because Croatia was, before the 1980s, the only republic that experienced a national movement as intense as that of the Croatian Spring, the suppression of nationalism was harsher there than elsewhere. Indeed, the conservative communist faction led by Stipe Šušar that replaced the liberal SKH leadership of the Croatian Spring was so effective in its repression that the Yugoslav media dubbed Croatia "the silent republic" in the early 1980s.⁹⁸ In 1978 Šušar still believed that the regime needed to remain vigilant because

it is a fact that, after the decisive reckoning with the nationalist movements, we have believed for too long that their so-called political defeat was adequate. Today it is not sufficient to say that nationalism has been removed from the political scene...⁹⁹

The "reckoning" with nationalism was evident in the measures taken against citizens who were caught singing patriotic songs. Such citizens were punished according to the "Zakon o prekršajima protiv javnog reda i mira" ("Law Against Violations of Public Order and Peace") of the Croatian criminal code, which prescribed imprisonment of up to sixty days for "belittling the socialist, patriotic and national feelings of citizens."¹⁰⁰ A common issue cited by Croatian dissidents of the 1970s and 1980s in their charges against the authorities was the mistreatment of people who were accused of breaking this law by singing patriotic songs. As the dissident Ivan Zvonimir Čičak, a student leader from the Croatian Spring, wrote in the German magazine *Der Spiegel* in October 1977:

⁹¹ Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja*, *op. cit.*, 72-4.

⁹² Tanner, *op. cit.*, 200.

⁹³ Vukov, *Pogled iza ogledala*, *op. cit.*, 7.

⁹⁴ Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja*, *op. cit.*, 79-80.

⁹⁵ Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 57, 79.

⁹⁶ Vukov, *Tvoja zemlja*, *op. cit.*, 102.

⁹⁷ Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 65, 246.

⁹⁸ Čuvalo, *op. cit.*, 206-7; Tanner, *op. cit.*, 204.

⁹⁹ Stipe Šušar, *Politika i kultura* (Zagreb: Globus, 1980): 245.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 244.

We must speak of those people who sing Croatian songs and are automatically imprisoned for two months, if not more. They imprison people for this. They imprison people for wearing the Croatian coat-of-arms on their watch. These are absurdities.¹⁰¹

In 1980 the Croatian dissident Marko Veselica, who was expelled from the SKH in July 1971 because of his nationalism, told the West German journalist Hans J. Bornemann of an incident in the Dalmatian town of Karin. As Veselica put it, policemen beat up “a group of young Croats attending a religious celebration only because they were singing Croatian national songs in their own country.” Several of the youths were accused of being “chauvinists” and were imprisoned; one of them, a university student named Branko Perica, died from the beatings and mistreatment that he had suffered in prison.¹⁰²

The silencing of Croatian nationalism was also evident in popular music, and Croatian artists avoided incorporating patriotic themes into their musical production because of the repressive measures that they could be subjected to. While citizens continued to face imprisonment for singing Croatian patriotic songs, after the Vukov case there were no censorship measures taken against Croatian artists because they did not attempt to articulate nationalism in their music. Considering state control of mass media and the recording industry, any performer who fell foul of the authorities faced the possibility of having their career destroyed, as the example of Vukov demonstrated. However, there still were pop and rock artists in Yugoslavia who were considered provocative and were censored, but in the 1970s this happened more for the promotion of drug use or pornographic imagery rather than nationalism or political protest.¹⁰³

Rock music in Croatia in the 1970s avoided political protest not only because of the measures that could be taken against artists but also because rock music still had not undergone the phase of re-ethnicisation. In the 1960s and early 1970s the Yugoslav rock scene was still largely imitative of the styles and themes of Western rock, but this changed from the mid 1970s when it experienced the golden age of its development.¹⁰⁴ As the 1970s progressed, Yugoslav rock became increasingly nativised linguistically (by being sung in the Yugoslav languages), stylistically (in its incorporation of traditional instruments and folk influences), and thematically (in treating cultural, political and social issues specific to Yugoslavs). Rock scenes developed in all of Yugoslavia’s major cities, with the main centres being Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Zagreb.¹⁰⁵

Although rock music in Yugoslavia did not yet function as the musical genre of political protest, rebellion and resistance as it did in the West, Yugoslav rock was politicised in the 1970s to the extent that it was coopted by the regime to promote its ideology and politics. According to Ramet, Tito is said to have personally favoured a tolerant approach to rock music, which meant that rock music was not suppressed in Yugoslavia as it was in other parts of Eastern Europe.¹⁰⁶ In exchange for this official support, Yugoslav rock musicians were expected to avoid criticising the government and were urged to include in their repertoires songs that glorified Yugoslavism and Tito.¹⁰⁷ Such songs were produced by the most popular groups and singers in Yugoslavia across all genres, ranging from the

¹⁰¹ Ivan Zvonimir Čičak, “Kot mir der Eßschüssel schaufeln,” *Der Spiegel* (31 October 1977).

¹⁰² Cited in Boris Katich, *So Speak Croatian Dissidents* (Toronto: Ziral, 1983): 77. In another example, a group of workers in Split were imprisoned for fifteen days for singing Croatian patriotic songs in 1986. Lopušina, *op. cit.*, 93.

¹⁰³ Lopušina, *op. cit.*, 76-7.

¹⁰⁴ Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, *op. cit.*, 131.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 129-30.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 129-31; Ramet, “Shake, Rattle and Self-Management: Making the Scene in Yugoslavia,” *op. cit.*, 111. For examples of how regimes in other parts of Eastern Europe coopted pop and rock artists, see László Kürti, “How Can I Be a Human Being?” Culture, Youth, and Musical Opposition in Hungary,” in *Rocking the State*, *op. cit.*, 74; Olaf Leitner, “Rock Music in the GDR: An Epitaph,” in *idem.*, 23-6; Sabrina P. Ramet, “Rock: The Music of Revolution (and Political Conformity),” in *idem.*, 8-9; and Ryback, *op. cit.*, 106, 150-2.

punk rock of the Sarajevo-based band Teška industrija (Heavy Industry) to the pop rock of the Belgrade-based Generacija 5 (Generation 5) and Suncokret (Sunflower).¹⁰⁸ Although not all Yugoslav rock musicians played unabashedly to the regime's tune, the fact that many of the most popular singers and groups did prompted the journalist Dušan Vesić to write in 1990 that "from the middle of the 1960s until only a few years ago, [Yugoslav] rockers were the greatest servants of the Tito regime!"¹⁰⁹

This politicisation of rock music was beneficial for the Tito regime because it allowed its ideology to penetrate youth culture and promote a Yugoslav identity among young people. Rock songs were used to modernise a Yugoslav identity that had heretofore been based on the Partisan struggle in the Second World War, "brotherhood and unity," socialist development and the cult of Tito. Examples of how the historical themes of Yugoslav national mythology were incorporated into popular music include the songs "Tito i prva proleterska" ("Tito and the First Proletarian Brigade"),¹¹⁰ sung by the Croatian pop singer Oliver Dragojević, and Meri Cetinić's "Poziv na borbu" ("A Call to Battle"):

The Germans flee and the Ustashe flee, too
The black hordes all fear Tito
He is a hero to whom there is no equal
He creates an army from small groups¹¹¹

In incorporating these historical themes into their songs, rock artists portrayed the historical foundations of socialist Yugoslavia as relevant to young people, and they presented Yugoslav youth as the vanguard of Yugoslav socialism, conscious of Yugoslavia's history and the role young people would play in its future. The Serbian rock band Rani mraz (Early Frost) captured these themes well in its song "Računajte na nas" ("Count on Us"); released in 1978, it was – as the historian of Yugoslav rock Petar Janjatović describes it – "quickly promoted as a generational hymn that could be used at every appropriate occasion."¹¹² The song insisted that the penchant for rock among Yugoslav youth did not mean that their commitment to Yugoslavism was any less sturdy:

In the name of all of us from fifty-something
I composed a verse as an oath to Tito
I don't mention history and far away wars
Because I was born after them
The fate of future days lies in us
And many perhaps fear for it
The blood of the Partisans flows through our veins
And we know why we are here
Count on us
Some suspect that we are being led by a bad trend
Because we listen to records and play rock
But somewhere in us is the flame of battles
And I'm telling you what I know well
Count on us¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Generacija 5, "Po Titu se vek poznaje," *To majka više ne radja: pesme o Titu* (Belgrade: Komuna, 1999); Suncokret, "Reč Titova," *idem.*; Teška industrija "Pesma o Titu," *idem.*

¹⁰⁹ Cited in Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, *op. cit.*, 130.

¹¹⁰ Oliver Dragojević, "Tito i prva proleterska," *To majka više ne radja: pesme o Titu* (Belgrade: Komuna, 1999).

¹¹¹ *Biježe Nijemci, biježe i ustaše/ Crne horde sve se Tita plaše/ On je heroj kome nema para/ Iz grupica on armiju stvara.* Meri Cetinić, "Poziv na borbu," *To majka više ne radja: pesme o Titu* (Belgrade: Komuna, 1999).

¹¹² Petar Janjatović, *Ilustrovana YU rock enciklopedija 1960-1997* (Belgrade: Geopoetika, 1998): 23.

¹¹³ *U ime svih nas iz pedeset i neke/ Za zakletvu Titu ja spevao sam stih/ Ne spominjem prošlost i bitke daleke/ Jer rođena sam poslije njih/ U nama je sudbina budućih dana/ I neki se možda plaše za nju/ Kroz vene nam protiče krv partizana/ I mi znamo zašto smo tu/ Računajte na nas/ Sumnjaju neki da nosi nas pogrešan tok/ Jer slušame ploče i sviramo rok/ Al'*

The New Wave

After the death of Tito in May 1980, however, Yugoslav rockers could not be counted on to toe the party line for much longer. In the 1980s Yugoslav politics, culture and society became increasingly liberalised and public criticism of the Yugoslav system became more open. On the rock scene, some Yugoslav singers continued to promote the official line that Yugoslavia would function as it had while the Yugoslav leader was still alive; Davorin Popović, for example, expressed this in his song “Tito posle Tita” (“Tito after Tito”).¹¹⁴ But all over Yugoslavia a new generation of rock bands was emerging that followed the New Wave of punk rock that had emerged in the West in the mid 1970s, and it was more willing to openly criticise the Yugoslav system. The Croatian filmmaker Igor Mirković recalls in his book *Sretno dijete (Happy Child)* – which explores the development of the New Wave scene in Zagreb in the late 1970s and early 1980s – that the New Wave was becoming more political just before 1980:

1980 was nearing and somehow it felt that politics would soon enter into our lives. It even happened to us – those of us who dedicated their lives to our new rock’n’roll religion and only thought and spoke about it like missionaries – even among us conversations were happening that would have until recently been unthinkable.¹¹⁵

In the early 1980s Yugoslav rock music was thus more critical of the Yugoslav regime than it had been in the 1970s, and it articulated popular dissatisfaction with economic and political conditions. In the 1970s Yugoslavia had experienced an economic boom that had brought a higher standard of living and an increase in the consumption of consumer goods. But the boom had been financed largely through foreign loans, and from 1975 to 1980 the Yugoslav national debt increased from US\$5 billion to US\$20 billion.¹¹⁶ This resulted in an economic crisis in the 1980s that led to a decline in the standard of living, with high inflation and shortages in consumer goods.¹¹⁷ In addition to these economic problems, Yugoslavia also faced a challenge to its political stability in Kosovo, where tensions between the Albanian and Serb communities erupted into riots in the early 1980s.¹¹⁸

In the early 1980s the New Wave bands did not yet couch their political grievances in nationalist terms, and instead expressed gripes against corrupt party functionaries, the army, the secret police and Tito.¹¹⁹ The Zagreb-based rock band Azra, for example, released the album “Filigranski pločnici” (“Delicate Footpaths”) in 1982, which contained songs that criticised Tito and the Yugoslav authorities’ censorship of music.¹²⁰ The most controversial New Wave band was the Sarajevo-based *Zabranjeno pušenje* (Smoking Forbidden), which produced songs that were critical of the economic and political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia and mocked the cult of Tito.¹²¹ *Zabranjeno pušenje*’s attitude towards Tito caused it problems when the band’s lead singer Nele Karajlić exclaimed at a concert in the Croatian port city of Rijeka in November 1984 that “the Marshal has broken down,” after a Marshal-brand loudspeaker stopped working (which it had). The Yugoslav media suggested that Karajlić had in fact intended to ridicule Tito (the Yugoslav leader was commonly

(Contd.) _____

negde u nama je bitaka plam/ I kažem vam što dobro znam/ Računajte na nas. Rani mraz, “Računajte na nas,” To majka više ne radja: pesme o Titu (Belgrade: Komuna, 1999).

¹¹⁴ Davorin Popović, “Tito posle Tita,” *To majka više ne radja: pesme o Titu* (Belgrade: Komuna, 1999).

¹¹⁵ Igor Mirković, *Sretno dijete* (Zaprešić, Croatia: Fraktura, 2004): 101. *Sretno dijete* is based on the film of the same name that was produced by Mirković in 2004.

¹¹⁶ Tanner, *op. cit.*, 207.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 207-8.

¹¹⁸ Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997): 149-53, 156-7.

¹¹⁹ Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, *op. cit.*, 134, 138-41; Tanner, *op. cit.*, 89, 91.

¹²⁰ Janjatović, *op. cit.*, 18.

¹²¹ Pedro Ramet, “Apocalypse Culture and Social Change in Yugoslavia,” in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Boulder: Westview, 1985): 14.

referred to as “Marshal Tito”, according to his military ranking), and the police in Rijeka questioned the band. Zabranjeno pušenje’s concerts were then cancelled all over Yugoslavia, including in Split in 1985, where the concert’s organisers feared that the band might “offend the reputation of Josip Broz Tito” during its performance.¹²²

The extent to which the New Wave bands infused their music with political criticisms differed according to the level of political liberalisation in the various republics. The political and social atmosphere in “the silent republic,” for example, was still repressive when compared to Slovenia, where the republican leadership initiated a period of liberalism in the early 1980s that was unmatched anywhere else in communist Eastern Europe.¹²³ Ljubljana became the centre for new cultural and social movements in Yugoslavia, and feminist, gay, ecological, peace and punk movements were formed there in the early 1980s.¹²⁴ They injected pluralism into the Slovenian public sphere, challenged the dominance of the SKJ and contributed to calls for systemic reform, all of which ultimately led to the first multiparty elections in postwar Slovenia in April 1990, and the republic’s secession from Yugoslavia in June 1991.¹²⁵ Many of Slovenia’s leading pop and rock groups at the time were affiliated with the new social movements: for example, the rock band Borghesia (Bourgeois), famous for its songs that mocked the cult of Tito and attacked police repression, was associated with gay and pacifist groups.¹²⁶ Another Slovenian rock band, Laibach (the German name for Ljubljana), even achieved international acclaim in the 1980s, and it cultivated an ironic Nazi-style image that was conceived to highlight the totalitarian similarities between communism and fascism.¹²⁷

While New Wave rock developed into the musical genre of political protest in 1980s Yugoslavia, the pop music that had been censored for its “decadence” and “kitsch” immediately after the Second World War and had incorporated patriotic themes during the Croatian Spring was now the least politically provocative genre. In the 1980s Croatia maintained its position as the major centre for pop music production in Yugoslavia, and the East-West dichotomy in Yugoslav musical production continued, with Slovenian record companies focussing on pop music, and Bosnian and Serbian ones on folk.¹²⁸ Croatian pop groups such as Magazin (Department Store) and Novi fosili (New Fossils) were among the most popular groups in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, and they serenaded the public with

¹²² Lopošina, *op. cit.*, 92, 253-4; Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, *op. cit.*, 136.

¹²³ Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, 3rd edn. (New York: Penguin, 1997): 48.

¹²⁴ Jozef Figa, “Socializing the State: Civil Society and Democratization from Below in Slovenia,” in *State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia, 1945-1992*, eds. Melissa K. Bokovoy, Jill A. Irvine and Carol S. Lilly (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997): 163-82.

¹²⁵ Tomaž Mastnak, “From Social Movements to National Sovereignty,” in *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements, Prospects*, eds. Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994): 94-5.

¹²⁶ Ramet, “Shake, Rattle and Self-Management,” *op. cit.*, 121-3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 118-20.

¹²⁸ In her study on the content of musical programming on Radio Sarajevo in 1989, Rasmussen discovered that Croatian composers had produced 41.8 per cent of the Yugoslav pop music that was broadcast, well ahead of Bosnian composers (25.9 per cent) and Serbian composers (23.8 per cent). In the folk music category, Serbian composers dominated with 46.9 per cent, their Bosnian colleagues produced 34.6 per cent, while Croatian composers contributed only 4.6 per cent. Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, 152.

A study on Yugoslav popular music by the Croatian journalist Darko Hudelist in 1984 also showed a similar division among the republics according to the musical production of their record companies. Of the leading record companies in Croatia, Jugoton and Suzy, 65.6 per cent of Jugoton’s musical production was pop music, 18.9 per cent was folk and 15.5 per cent was rock, while for Suzy the figures were 78.2 per cent for rock and 21.8 per cent for folk. In Serbia’s biggest record company PGP RTB, 82.7 per cent of its production was folk music, 10.8 per cent was rock and 6.5 per cent pop, while two other Serbian companies, Diskos and Jugodisk, produced only folk. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the musical production of the record company Diskoton was 67.8 per cent folk, 18.1 per cent rock and 14.1 per cent pop, while the figures for Slovenia’s ZKP RTV Ljubljana were 42.0 per cent pop, 33.4 per cent rock and 24.6 per cent folk. Cited in Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, 170.

songs that focussed on the ubiquitous pop themes of fun and love.¹²⁹ The popularity of Croatian pop groups all over Yugoslavia was also demonstrated when the Croatian group Riva (Boardwalk) represented Yugoslavia at the 1989 Eurovision Song Contest in Lausanne in 1989. Riva won the competition, and its victory gave Yugoslavia the right to host the contest the year after; when Zagreb staged it in May 1990, a Croatian pop singer, Tajči, again represented Yugoslavia. The participation of Yugoslavia in the Eurovision Song Contest reflected the country's non-aligned position during the Cold War and its cultural openness towards the West: the contest was established in 1956 in order to promote cultural cooperation among Western European states, as a complement to the economic cooperation that they were already pursuing under the European Coal and Steel Community and through plans for the European Economic Community. Yugoslavia first entered the contest in 1961 and, until the 1990s, it remained the only Eastern European country to participate.

However, 1990 was the last year that Yugoslavia appeared in the Eurovision Song Contest as a united country, as political developments in Yugoslavia in the late 1980s led to the disintegration of the federation in 1991. The reforms in Slovenia in the 1980s were important in influencing liberalisation in Croatia, and by the late 1980s a more liberal Croatian republican leadership led by Račan loosened the regime's control over culture, politics and society. In this new political atmosphere the rock group Prljavo kazalište dared to break the patriotic silence that had prevailed on the Croatian popular music scene since 1971. The band was formed in 1977 as part of the New Wave, and it comprised six young men from the working class neighbourhood of Dubrava in Zagreb.¹³⁰ In 1988 Prljavo kazalište released a song titled "Mojoj majci" ("To My Mother"), which was dedicated to the recently deceased mother of the band's guitarist, Jasenko Houra. The song referred to Houra's mother Ruža as "ruža hrvatska" ("the Croatian rose"), and it caused a stir in Croatia because it was the first time since the Croatian Spring that a hit song had explicitly mentioned the word "Croatian":

And now when she is not here
Who will wake me in the morning?
And now when you are not here, I know well
That you were the last Croatian rose
Rose, my little Rose
I cried out all my tears because of you
Rose, my little Rose
I cried out all my tears¹³¹

Because it used the word "Croatian," "Mojoj majci" was interpreted as a patriotic song and it became enormously popular in Croatia because of this. However, for the same reason the band was criticised in other parts of the Yugoslavia for propagating Croatian nationalism, and it lost its popularity in Serbia, where the nationalist politics of the Milošević regime were now in force.¹³²

Reflecting the changing political climate in Croatia, Prljavo kazalište played a concert on Zagreb's central square on 17 October 1989 that was attended by hundreds of thousands of people, with estimates ranging from 200,000 to 300,000.¹³³ The city authorities had decided to cancel the concert before it was about to start, and Houra was meant to tell the public that it would not go ahead. However, Houra refused to inform the audience of the cancellation and instead began singing and,

¹²⁹ Magazin, *Svi najveći hitovi 1983.-1990.* (Zagreb: Croatia Records, 1993); Novi fosili, *Najbolje godine* (Zagreb: Croatia Records, 1993).

¹³⁰ Janjatović, *op. cit.*, 142; Mirković, *op. cit.*, 24-5.

¹³¹ *I tek sad kad je nema/ 'Ko će jutrom da me budi/ I tek sad kad te nema dobro znam/ Ti si bila zadnja ruža hrvatska/ Ružo, moja Ružice/ Sve sam suze isplak'o nocu zbog tebe/ Ružo, moja Ružice/ Sve sam suze izplak'o.* Prljavo kazalište, "Mojoj majci," *Zaustavite zemlju* (Zagreb: Suzy, 1988).

¹³² Janjatović, *op. cit.*, 143; "Biografija," *Prljavo kazalište* [<http://prljavokazaliste1977.netfirms.com/Bend/bend.htm>] (accessed 23 November 2003).

¹³³ Hrvoje Horvat, "Za noge hladno, oko srca toplo," *Prljavo kazalište na trgu* (Zagreb: Dallas Records, 2003).

despite the presence of hundreds of policemen, the authorities did not attempt to stop the concert.¹³⁴ The significance of the concert in Croatian history is underlined by the fact that it attracted so many people, who cheered and sang most loudly when the group performed the song “Mojoj majci.” Footage of the concert shows a crowd filling Zagreb’s central square, Trg Republike (the Square of the Republic, which was renamed in 1990 after the nineteenth century Croatian duke Josip Jelačić), and the audience is mostly composed of young people, many of whom are waving Croatian flags (then still the flag of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, which consisted of the Croatian tricolour with the Yugoslav golden-edged red star in the centre, rather than the traditional Croatian flag with the chequerboard shield).¹³⁵ This was the first time that Croatian nationalism had been publicly asserted in postwar Croatia in such numbers: it signified the beginning of a new period in Croatia’s musical and political history, and it heralded the end of the “Croatian silence.”¹³⁶

Independence and War

On 14 May 1990, nine days after the Eurovision Song Contest was held in Zagreb, the first multiparty elections of the postwar period were held in Croatia. Tudjman’s HDZ was victorious, and just as it was to define Croatian politics for the next decade, so too would its political victory determine changes in Croatian musical production. After the HDZ came to power, patriotic and religious songs were distributed by record companies and openly sung again without fear of repression,¹³⁷ and artists who were silenced after 1971 were rehabilitated. Vukov was permitted to perform his first concert since the Croatian Spring in 1989, and in 1990 he released his first album since *Tvoja zemlja*, a collection of Italian songs titled *Bella Italia (Beautiful Italy)*.¹³⁸ However, in a historical irony, Vukov later became critical of the HDZ’s nationalist policies, and in the 1990s he published newspaper columns that attacked the politics of the Tudjman regime.¹³⁹ He instead affiliated himself politically with the SDP, and he won a seat in the Croatian parliament on the SDP’s electoral list in November 2003.¹⁴⁰

With nationalist forces in power in both Croatia and Serbia, the Yugoslav popular culture that had developed in the postwar period came to an end, and the new regimes began to use popular culture to reinvent national identities. From 1990 radio and television stations in Croatia stopped playing Serbian music because of increasing political tensions, and this was the first step in a quiet boycott that the Croatian media followed vis-à-vis Serbian music throughout the 1990s (and it is still tangible today, albeit to a lesser extent).¹⁴¹ The Yugoslav popular music scene divided along national lines, and some groups even split among themselves due to the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, at the start of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992, the original Zabranjeno pušenje folded: Karajlić moved to Belgrade and established another band there under the same name, while two other members, Sejo Sexon and Elvis Kurtovich, went to Zagreb where they, too, formed a group called Zabranjeno pušenje.¹⁴²

After the HDZ assumed power, the censorship of popular music in Croatia was targeted not only at Serbian musical production, but also at songs that glorified the Partisans, communism and Yugoslavia, and at Croatian artists who were not supportive of the regime or were based in Belgrade.

¹³⁴ “Biografija,” *op. cit.*

¹³⁵ *Prljavo kazalište na trgu* (Zagreb: Dallas Records, 2003).

¹³⁶ Horvat, *op. cit.*

¹³⁷ Bezić, *op. cit.*, 98.

¹³⁸ Cited in Vice Vukov, “Mojih posljednjih osamnaest godina,” in *Ljudi iz 1971.: prekinuta šutnja*, ed. Milovan Baletić (Zagreb: Dopunski izdavački program Vjesnik, 1990): 118-9.

¹³⁹ For Vukov’s criticisms of the HDZ and Tudjman, see Vukov, *Pogled iza ogledala, op. cit.*

¹⁴⁰ Jasmin Klarić, “SDP izabrao zbog Račana,” *Novi list* (15 November 2003).

¹⁴¹ Lopusina, *op. cit.*, 106, 108; Mirković, *op. cit.*, 142; Ramet, *Balkan Babel, op. cit.*, 266; Dubravka Ugrešić, *Kultura laži: antipolitički eseji* (Zagreb: Arkzin, 1996): 152.

¹⁴² Janjatović, *op. cit.*, 194.

As was the case in Yugoslavia, Croatian artists who supported the HDZ's politics also fared better in the production and distribution of their music and the coverage that they received on radio and television.¹⁴³ Tudjman's hostility towards Croatian artists who remained in Belgrade during the Homeland War was related to criticisms he had published back in 1972, when he wrote that "under the excuse of building a Yugoslav socialist culture, a whole generation of the most prominent Croatian" dramatic artists, historians, musicians, directors, writers and sportsmen "was taken to Belgrade," which led "to the loss of a national backbone for the sake of Yugoslav socialist integration along the Soviet model."¹⁴⁴

Reflecting the division in musical production that had been established in Yugoslavia, pop music in Croatia in the early 1990s was instrumentalised for nationalist politics, while in Serbia it was folk music – and especially its turbofolk variant – that became the Serbian nationalist genre *par excellence*.¹⁴⁵ During the Homeland War patriotic themes became the norm in Croatian popular music rather than the exception. Initiatives such as Hrvatski Band Aid (Croatian Band Aid), in which a group of Croatia's leading artists produced the song "Moja domovina" (My Homeland), were intended to mobilise Croatians behind the war effort and promote the Croatian cause abroad (with many of the new songs also being sung in English).¹⁴⁶ The pop singer Tomislav Ivčić achieved the most international success with his song "Stop the War in Croatia," which called on Europe to recognise Croatian independence and bring an end to the war:

Stop the war in the name of love
Stop the war in the name of God
Stop the war in the name of children
Stop the war in Croatia
We want to share the European dream
We want democracy and peace
Let Croatia be one of Europe's stars
Europe, you can stop the war¹⁴⁷

It was also at this time that Thompson made his debut on the Croatian music scene: in the autumn of 1991, at the height of the Homeland War, he recorded the war song "Bojna Čavoglave" ("Čavoglave Battalion"), named after the Dalmatian village he comes from.¹⁴⁸ However, unlike "Stop the War in Croatia," "Bojna Čavoglave" was not used by the Croatian government to promote the Croatian cause abroad due to its extreme nationalist and anti-Serbian lyrics, and also because it did not subscribe to a

¹⁴³ Pettan, *op. cit.*, 15.

¹⁴⁴ Franjo Tudjman, *Misao hrvatske slobode: od nacionalne ugroženosti do državne samostalnosti (fragmenti: misli i pogleda)* (Zagreb: Narodne novine, 1997): 300-1.

¹⁴⁵ Turbofolk had its origins in the newly-composed folk music (NCFM) that developed in Yugoslavia from the early 1960s. As the sociologist Eric Gordy defines it, NCFM is "defined by the use of styles and structures borrowed from various folk forms combined with pop instrumentation and arrangements," while in turbofolk "instrumentation and arrangements borrowed from commercial dance and disco elements dominate while a few folk elements remain." Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999): 104-5. In the nationalist mobilisation that occurred in Serbia from the late 1980s, the Milošević regime used culture to promote Serbian nationalism and extend its control over public and private life. During the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the Serbian state-controlled media privileged turbofolk in its programmes, and the cultural space for rock music and new musical trends from the West was diminished. The most famous turbofolk star in Serbia in the 1990s was Svetlana Veličević, known by her stage name Ceca. In 1995 she married the notorious Serbian warlord Željko Ražnatović-Arkan, who led Serb paramilitary forces in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

¹⁴⁶ Hrvatski Band Aid, "Moja domovina," *Moja domovina* (Zagreb: Croatia Records, 1991). A collection of pop and rock songs produced by Croatian artists during the Homeland War can also be found on *The Best of Rock za Hrvatsku* (Zagreb: Croatia Records, 1992).

¹⁴⁷ Tomislav Ivčić, *Stop the War in Croatia* (Zagreb: Zlatna palma, 1991).

¹⁴⁸ Jergović, *op. cit.*

global pop music style (because it incorporated folk elements and its video clip had a “visual image lacking “Western” refinement”):¹⁴⁹

Ready for the homeland!
In Zagora at the spring of the Čikola river
The brothers are standing to defend their homes
A Croat stands beside a Croat, we are all brothers
As long as we are alive you won't enter Čavoglave
Thompson, Kalashnikov and Zbrojovka are shelling
Throw a bomb, chase the gang across the spring
Step forward, guns ready and let's sing together
We, brothers, are fighting for our freedom and homeland
Listen, Serbian volunteers, gang of Chetniks
Our hand will reach you even in Serbia
God's justice will reach you, everyone knows that
The fighters from Čavoglave will judge you
Listen to the message from Saint Elijah
You won't enter Čavoglave, you never have
Oh Croats, dear brothers from Čavoglave
Croatia will never forget you¹⁵⁰

Like many other songs from the Homeland War, “Bojna Čavoglave” was composed by Thompson on the front line,¹⁵¹ and the video clip of the song shows Thompson and his fellow soldiers on the battlefield, armed and wearing military fatigues. The song was used by Croatian radio and television stations to rally citizens behind the war effort: as Miro Vidović, the producer of TV Opuzen, a local television station in southern Dalmatia, explains, “[w]e would play “Čavoglave” sometimes fifty to sixty times a night just to keep up morale.”¹⁵² However, in an example of how the censorship of nationalist music continued in Croatia even after the end of communist rule, the Croatian state broadcaster Hrvatska televizija (HTV, Croatian Television) initially refused to broadcast the video clip because it was too violent and contained an Ustasha salute. However, the song became a hit among the public and Croatian soldiers at the battlefield, and in response to requests from the latter, HTV submitted and began to broadcast “Bojna Čavoglave.”¹⁵³

As Thompson's most recent album demonstrates, one of the most controversial aspects of Croatian musical production from the late 1980s has been a revival of songs associated with the Ustasha. As the commentator Ruth Ellen Gruber explains, the re-emergence of pro-Ustasha feeling in postcommunist Croatia was a reaction to the “regime-dictated historical interpretation” of the socialist era – which forbade “any positive or even objective mention of non-communist movements or

¹⁴⁹ Cited in Pettan, *op. cit.*, 22.

¹⁵⁰ *Za dom spremni! / U Zagori na izvoru rijeke Čikole / Stala braća da obrane naše domove / Stoji Hrvat do Hrvata, mi smo braća svi / Nećete u Čavoglave dok smo živi mi / Tuče Thompson, kalašnjikov, a i zbrojovka / Baci bombu, goni bandu preko izvora / Korak naprijed, puška gotovs i uz pjesmu svi / Za dom, braćo, za slobodu, borimo se mi / Čujte srpski dobrovoljci, bando četnici / Stići će vas naša ruka i u Srbiji / Stići će vas božja pravda, to već svatko zna / Sudit će vam bojovnici iz Čavoglava / Slušajte sad poruku od Svete Ilike / Nećete u Čavoglave, niste ni prije / Oj, Hrvati, braćo mila iz Čavoglava / Hrvatska vam zaboravit neće nikada.* Marko Perković-Thompson, *Bojna Čavoglave* (Zagreb: Croatia Records, 1992).

¹⁵¹ Miroslava Hadžihusejnović-Valašek, “The Osijek War-Time Music Scene 1991-1992,” in *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, ed. Svanibor Pettan (Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1998): 166.

¹⁵² Cited in Dona Kolar-Panov, “Ethnic Cleansing, Plastic Bags and Throw-Away People,” *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture* vol. 8, no. 2 (1994) [<http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/8.2/Kolar.html>]. Up until the end of the Homeland War in 1995, “Bojna Čavoglave” was played on radio and television more frequently around the times that the Croatian Army would begin a major military offensive against Serb forces. Although the government obviously kept its military plans secret, the frequency with which songs such as “Bojna Čavoglave” were broadcast would give the viewers the feeling that an offensive was about to be unleashed.

¹⁵³ Pettan, *op. cit.*, 24.

leaders” – and the suppression of nationalist movements by the Yugoslav authorities.¹⁵⁴ Although pro-Ustasha expressions were sometimes censored under the HDZ – as in the case of HTV and “Bojna Čavoglave” – Tujman and his government failed to forestall a revival in pro-Ustasha sentiment, and were even complicit in reintroducing symbols associated with the NDH.¹⁵⁵ For Tujman, the appeasement of pro-Ustasha sentiment was a political tactic, for he wanted to appeal to various elements in his party, Croatian society and the diaspora. Tujman had himself been a Partisan fighter, and he was committed to the idea of reconciling the opposing historical traditions of the war in order to unite Croats behind the cause of an independent Croatian state. Tujman’s attitude towards Croatia’s history during the Second World War was controversially epitomised in a statement he made in 1990, in which he declared that

the NDH was not only a quisling and fascist creation, but also an expression of the Croatian nation’s historical desire for an independent homeland.¹⁵⁶

The re-emergence of songs and symbols associated with the Ustasha were widely criticised by antifascist associations, human rights organisations, the independent media, Jewish groups and left wing politicians in Croatia. In addition, Serbian wartime propaganda referred to expressions of pro-Ustasha sentiment in order to characterise the Republic of Croatia as an “Ustasha” state (just as Croatian propaganda labelled the Serbs as “Chetniks”). This was demonstrated in 1991 after Croatian television broadcast the pop song “Danke Deutschland” (“Thankyou, Germany”), performed by Sanja Trumbić, which thanked Germany for recognising Croatian independence on 23 December 1991:

Thank you, Germany, my soul is glowing
Thank you, Germany, for the kind gift
Thank you Germany, many thanks
Now we are not alone
And hope is coming into the destroyed home¹⁵⁷

Serbian state television depicted Bonn’s decision as a rehabilitation of the Nazi-Ustasha alliance, and TV Belgrade played the clip for “Danke Deutschland” over “filmed scenes of crowds greeting Germans in the middle of Zagreb at the beginning of World War II.”¹⁵⁸ As Tanner observes, the song appeared only briefly in the Croatian media, and “was played rather more often on Serbian radio and television as proof of the Croats’ filial attitude to Germany.”¹⁵⁹

Conclusion

In order to explain the revival of nationalism in Croatian popular musical production from 1989 to the present, it is necessary to understand the relationship between popular music, nationalism and politics in Croatia during the socialist period, for continuities exist across the periods in the instrumentalisation of popular music for the construction of cultural and political identities. After the Second World War the Yugoslav government attempted to build a new socialist culture that would integrate Yugoslavia’s constituent nations; Croatian patriotic music was suppressed, and musical production instead

¹⁵⁴ Ruth Ellen Gruber, *The Struggle of Memory: The Rehabilitation and Reevaluation of Fascist Heroes in Europe* (New York: American Jewish Community, 1995): 1.

¹⁵⁵ Tanner, *op.cit.*, 291.

¹⁵⁶ Cited in *ibid.*, 223.

¹⁵⁷ *Danke Deutschland, meine Seele brennt/ Danke Deutschland, für das liebe Geschenk/ Danke Deutschland, vielen Dank/ Wir sind jetzt nicht allein/ Und die Hoffnung kommt in das zerstörte Heim.* Cited in Ceribašić, *op. cit.*, 109-10.

¹⁵⁸ Ceribašić, *op. cit.*, 109-10. Germany was criticised by fellow members of the European Community (EC) for recognising Croatian independence before the other EC members had agreed to it, but the allegation that Bonn’s support for Croatia rested on the historical experience of the Nazi-Ustasha alliance is of course absurd, as Daniele Conversi demonstrates in *German-bashing: The Break-up of Yugoslavia* (Seattle: Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, 1998).

¹⁵⁹ Tanner, *op. cit.*, 318.

incorporated the themes of the Partisan movement, socialist development and Yugoslavism. Although the authorities were hostile towards Western popular music trends in the late 1940s and early 1950s, they began to tolerate them after Yugoslavia's split with the Soviet Union in 1948 and its increasing openness to the West. However, while the SKJ no longer perceived Western popular music to be a threat and even began to use it to forge a Yugoslav culture, it remained vigilant of internal cultural nationalisms, and Croatian nationalism was suppressed in popular music until the late 1960s.

From the early 1960s the SKJ no longer placed as much emphasis on an integrative Yugoslav socialist culture and, in accordance with political reforms that decentralised the federation, the republics were given greater reign to develop their national cultures. Such reforms led to a revival of Croatian patriotic music during the Croatian Spring, and Croatia's most popular singer of the time, Vico Vukov, epitomised this by incorporating patriotic themes into his *schlager*. However, after the Croatian Spring was quashed in 1971, Vukov suffered the fate of other prominent figures of the *maspok* and was banned from performing in Yugoslavia. The measures taken against Vukov reflected the general suppression of Croatian nationalism in culture, politics and society in the 1970s and much of the 1980s. Some Croatian citizens who were caught singing patriotic songs faced mistreatment by the police and imprisonment, and pop and rock artists conformed to the regime's politics by avoiding patriotic themes in popular music.

Until the late 1980s the articulation of nationalism remained taboo in Croatian popular music, but popular music was still politicised as artists produced songs that glorified Yugoslavia and Tito. However, in the early 1980s New Wave bands emerged all over Yugoslavia that ventured to criticise the Yugoslav system, and they were especially vocal in Slovenia, which was the most liberal Yugoslav republic in the 1980s. The liberalisation enacted in Slovenia from the early 1980s eventually influenced similar reforms in Croatian society, and by the late 1980s the SKH loosened its control over Croatian culture, politics and society. This prompted Croatian pop and rock artists to reintroduce nationalism into their music, and in 1989 the band Prljavo kazalište was the first to release a song with a patriotic theme. The song was enormously popular among the Croatian public, and the band's concert in the centre of Zagreb in October 1989 attracted hundreds of thousands of people. Prljavo kazalište mobilised a national sentiment in Croatia that was politically expressed when the nationalist HDZ won the first postwar multiparty elections of May 1990, after which popular music was instrumentalised by the HDZ regime to promote the causes of Croatian independence and the Homeland War. However, following the HDZ's assumption of power the censorship of music remained a political phenomenon in Croatia in the early 1990s, but was now largely directed against Serbian musical production.

Since the victory of the HDZ in 1990, a disturbing trend in Croatian music has been a revival in songs that glorify the Ustaša movement, which has also been manifested in the success of the rock star Thompson. This paper has explored the suppression of Croatian patriotic music in the socialist period, and Thompson has instrumentalised the memory of this to legitimise his extreme nationalism. But his propagation of an image of "communists" as the repressors of Croatian national sentiment also made the Račan government wary of censoring Thompson because of associations that could be made with the suppression of Croatian patriotic music under socialism. Thus, now that the liberal nationalism that was espoused by Croatian pop and rock musicians during the socialist period is legitimised on the Croatian political scene, it is extreme nationalist music that has emerged as the new music of political protest. This has produced a dilemma for Croatia's young liberal democracy as it endeavours to consolidate the freedom of expression that was suppressed under socialism and restricted during the Tadjman era, with opposing actors in Croatian politics and society debating whether this freedom of expression legitimates the glorification of fascism. The case of Thompson shows that the once silent republic is now grappling with how to silence the singer, as it sees its liberal democratic identity threatened by expressions of extreme nationalism.

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