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## 5. The Disintegration of the Yugoslav Intellectual Community

### Introduction

Secession in Yugoslavia is an expression of deep-rooted nationalism. In his *Vie et mort de la Yougoslavie*, published in 1992, the French Slavist Paul Garde was one of the first to describe the life cycle and tragic end of Yugoslavia. Books and articles followed, but relatively few concentrated on the specific role of scientific institutions and Yugoslav intellectuals.<sup>1</sup> The first aim of the following contribution is to depict the institutional framework of the social sciences in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav, Croatian and Serbian Academies are important in this respect. These Academies were intended to support the national culture of Yugoslavia as a whole and that of the individual federated republics. Particularly important disciplines were linguistics and history. The evolution of the Academies reflected changes in scientific politics, as the authorities attempted to control and to influence research at these institutions. Immediately after taking power, Yugoslav communists were eager to silence nationalist forces. Both nationalists and scientists, however, fought for their freedom, and gradually, with the erosion of the centralist system, nationalism was to find a home in the official scientific institutions.

Second, we also subject to scrutiny a major dissenting philosophical current, which was long regarded as a counterweight to rising nationalism: the Praxis group. Most of its members were partisans during the second world war and became members of the Communist League of Yugoslavia. In that respect, these left-wing critics of Tito's regime were very different from most of the other opposition groups and the émigré intelligentsia who fought the socialist revolution and the communist regime. The break-up of the Praxis group and the subsequent – strongly nationalist – stand taken by some of its leading members exemplifies the disintegration of the Yugoslav intellectual community.

Third, the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy will be analysed in some detail. This Memorandum, which was publicized in the Serbian press in the

autumn of 1986, started the definitive transition of the country's leading ideology from communism to nationalism. The Memorandum was not immediately applauded in Serbian political circles. Only later did it become useful to Milošević in his rise to power, when he adopted the national programme included in the Memorandum as his own. But the use made of this scientific document by the new authorities has to be seen in a complex relationship between scientific and political practices. Refuting the thesis of pure instrumentality in Serbian social science – which holds that scientists and academicians merely serve and justify the interests of the politicians – in the case of the Memorandum, as with the Praxis group or the activities of the academies and other scientific institutions, we observe a looser interconnection (and at times even an opposition) between scholars and the political establishment.

## The Academies of Science and Arts

A Yugoslavian Academy (*Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti*, JAZU) was established in the nineteenth century, before the foundation of Yugoslavia itself. It appeared in the wake of the so-called Illyrian Movement, an expression of Slavic feeling under the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg monarchy. The Illyrian Movement defended the idea that Croats, Serbs and Slovenes were members of a common Slav stock. This idea of a community of all Southern Slav peoples was conceived by intellectuals in the nineteenth century who lived mainly in the Croatian part of the peninsula. The name 'Illyrians' referred to the population groups who had lived on the borders of the Adriatic Sea before the sixth and seventh centuries. The main inspirer of the idea of a Yugoslav Academy was the 'Croatian' Catholic Bishop, Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815-1903).<sup>2</sup> The Austrian authorities approved its creation only in 1867. The Academy was set up in Zagreb as a Yugoslav, or a Southern Slav, Academy which intended also to direct its work towards Bulgaria as a so-called Southern Slav people (Yugo meaning 'south' in the Serbo-Croat language). Strossmayer was considered to be both 'a truly nationalist Croat' and 'a genuine Yugoslav'. He favoured the romantic idea of conciliating Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs in a common Slav cultural nation. In practice, however, Croat members of the Academy tried to use it to spread Croat nationalism. In 1868, the Academy started publishing a series on Croatian historical sources, called *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium*.

In the first Yugoslavia, which was founded after the first world war as a kingdom and was dissolved with the country's occupation during the second world war,<sup>3</sup> the Yugoslav Academy had to repel centralist attacks from the Royal Academy of Belgrade. The president of the Yugoslav Academy, Gavro Manojlović,

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managed to retain the seat of the Academy in Zagreb. But at the end of the 1930s, under the influence of nationalist and authoritarian pressure, the Yugoslav Academy transformed its programmatic orientation and changed its name to Croatian Academy. This was confirmed by the new Ustaša regime during the second world war. A new management board of five Academicians was then installed, better suited to the fascist brand of nationalism propagated by the regime.<sup>4</sup>

After the second world war, the communists came to power and reorganized the Academies in line with their Marxist views. Besides the Croatian Academy, there also existed the Serbian Academy (*Srpska Akademija Nauka*, SANU), the immediate heir of the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences and Arts founded in Belgrade in 1886,<sup>5</sup> and the Slovenian Academy (*Slovenska Akademija Znanosti i Umetnosti*, SAZU), which had started its activities in 1938.<sup>6</sup> New social science institutes were being founded. General guidelines were being provided for interpreting history in accordance with the Marxist point of view.<sup>7</sup> Prominent leaders of the socialist revolution, such as Milovan Djilas and Edvard Kardelj, were eager to participate in the activities of these academies. In the late 1940s, Tito lectured on historiographical subjects – with great success, according to official reports – before the Slovene and Serbian Academies.<sup>8</sup>

Croatian historiography reconstructed the existence of a separate Croatian people and an independent Croatian state in various periods of history. At the end of the 1960s there were serious debates among Yugoslav historians on Croatia's national history. In 1968, four Croatian historians – Šidak, Gross, Karaman and Sčepić – published their interpretation of the history of the Croatian people during the period 1860-1940.<sup>9</sup> Official Yugoslav historians criticized it for neglecting the Yugoslav component. In turn, when Božić, Dedijer and Ekmević produced their History of Yugoslavia (*Istorija Jugoslavije*, 1974), the Croats Gross and Šidak condemned the unbalanced treatment of Croatian and Serbian history. Croatian historians not belonging to the academic establishment and working in the Institutes for the Study of the Partisan War or Labour Movement,<sup>10</sup> such as Vlado Gotovac and Franjo Tuđman, expressed even more nationalistic views. In the beginning of the 1970s, such problems were initially dealt with by repression.<sup>11</sup> Criticism of the unitarist line was labelled Croatian extremism, and banned. One of the Croatian historical journals, Trpimir Macan's *Povijest hrvatskog naroda* (History of the Croatian People), was taken out of circulation in 1972.

At the same time as this repression was taking place, the view prevailed at the top of the communist leadership that the unity of Yugoslavia could be preserved only by transforming its institutions and giving more autonomy to its constituent parts.<sup>12</sup> This was achieved by the new Constitution of 1974. All republican institutions, including the scientific ones, took full advantage of these

decentralizing initiatives which were taking place at various levels of the Yugoslav federal structure. The Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo and the Academy of Vojvodina (both Kosovo and Vojvodina had been granted the status of provinces of Serbia) went through a period in which they expanded their range of activities to an unforeseen scale. Thanks to these reforms, official academies and historical and social science institutes could publish and organize their research along nationalist lines without interference from the centre. Highly sensitive themes, previously labelled as nationalistic, became topics of research. At the same time, federal scientific institutions such as the Institute of Economic Sciences – earlier a scientific organ supporting the Federal Planning Institute – withered away.

At the beginning of the 1980s, with the death of Tito in 1980 and the downturn in the economy, the communist party experienced a serious legitimacy crisis. Previously taboo themes were aired in the press and in scientific publications. The dark sides of the communist regime, such as the existence of internment camps or abuse of power, were openly discussed. Publications rehabilitated nationalistic forces that had been fighting against the communist regime. Nationalism pervaded politics and historiography.

When Milošević took control of power in Serbia at the end of the 1980s, he closed down the Provincial Academies of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Their activities were absorbed by the Serbian Academy in Belgrade. It was argued that the functioning of the Provincial Academies involved a risk of secession and constituted a danger for Serbian culture. The Serb authorities pointed out that by accepting the Tosk language variant – spoken in central and southern Albania – the Gheg-speaking Kosovars left the door wide open to cultural and political penetration from Albania, since handbooks in the Tosk language variant were effectively brought into Kosovo.

Nationalistic revisionism also took a firm lead in Croatian historiography. National figures and movements and the role of religion and the church in Croatian history<sup>13</sup> became favourite topics of research. A revised history of the Independent State of Croatia just before and during the second world war was presented to the public. Criticism of the history of the partisan movement during the second world war, which had previously been voiced exclusively in dissident circles, was now officially sanctioned.

The Sabor (House of Parliament) passed a new law on the Academy on 26 June 1991, providing the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (CANU) with a more nationalist profile. The catholic Cardinal Franjo Kuharić became one of its honorary members. The old and respected scientist Ivan Supek, president of the Academy and a liberal opponent of Tudjman, tried to protect the autonomy of the Academy against major intrusions by party politics, in particular by the dominant nationalist party *Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica* (HDZ). But he

could not prevent President Tudjman from becoming a member of the Academy, however dubious his scientific achievements. Tudjman tried to replace Supek as head of the Academy with one of his own supporters, but Supek managed to retain the presidency for a further term. There were also other signs of resistance against the dominant nationalist ideology. Some historians in autonomous research institutes, grouped around an historical journal, refused to be instrumentalized by the new regime.

### The Critical Intelligentsia of the Praxis group

Praxis was founded in September 1964. The group created a special bond between the main scientific centres of Yugoslavia (Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade), reinforced by the organization of a summer school in Korčula. Its review *Praxis* was originally published in Serbo-Croatian, and from 1965 on also in three Western languages. The journal developed a left-wing critique of the regime and its scientific policies. The chief editors of *Praxis* were Danilo Pejović and Gajo Petrović. Despite the fact that the authors defended individual positions, it was possible to discern a theoretical hard core, which was based on a few common theses.<sup>14</sup> The philosophical concept of 'praxis' was central to this theory. This concept, which had been defined and discussed in the first issue of the journal,<sup>15</sup> was strongly influenced by the philosophical writings of Karl Marx.<sup>16</sup> The members of the Praxis group defended a normative, universalist conception of human emancipation.

According to their vision, humankind is continuously transforming itself and its social environment through the creative transformation of outward reality – a process that will finally lead to the achievement of its essential nature. This view of humanity and society justified the implementation of the Yugoslav institutions of self-management as a step towards true democratic socialism. The Yugoslav self-management institutions were based on an attempt to bring key decisions concerning the organization of human work and politics within the reach of the working people and the citizen. This ideal was to a degree put into practice in industry by the so-called 'work councils', which had a range of areas of competence in the management of their enterprises. The idea of self-management was not shared by communist ideology in the Soviet Union. From that perspective, the theses put forward in Praxis reflected the Yugoslav regime's break with the Soviet political system at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. At the same time, of course, given the orthodox communist inheritance in their own country, it was not to be expected that the Praxis group's theory on self-management could be implemented in Yugoslav society, dominated by the monopoly of one party, without causing major problems.

The precise content that individual Praxis members gave to the philosophical conceptualization depended on their discipline and methodology. Even the level of abstraction depended on the chosen discipline. The sociologist Rudi Supek, for instance, was relatively concrete in his criticism of Yugoslav society, unlike many philosophers. The latter embedded their views in different traditions. The Zagreb-based Milan Kangrga, for example, influenced by German phenomenology, and especially Heidegger, differed in approach and style from the Belgrade-based Mihailo Marković, who had been schooled in Anglo-Saxon neopositivism.

Another basic tenet of the group, also derived from the early theoretical writings of Marx,<sup>17</sup> was the thesis that 'praxis' (practice) implied 'a relentless criticism of all existing reality'.<sup>18</sup> This statement implied continuous criticism of Yugoslav society and in particular of the Communist League of Yugoslavia. Praxis members criticized widespread unemployment and growing social inequality in 'socialist' Yugoslavia. They complained about the lack of democracy and true self-management, and defended the right to freedom of opinion. The communist establishment was invariably labelled as 'bureaucrats'. They were seen as constituting a particular social stratum, or even a special class.<sup>19</sup> The League of Communists was divided on the issue of how to deal with this kind of dissident opinion. On the one hand, members of Praxis were at times heavily criticized, yet on the other, the journal was officially subsidized.

The communists seemed to need a universalist theory of humanity and a progressive justification of self-management as a theoretical counterweight to the growing influence of nationalism. The active participation by most Praxis philosophers in the communist revolution, and the fact that official ideological documents mostly incorporated progressive views, which had a certain similarity to the opinions of Praxis members, compounded the ambiguity in relations between Praxis and the party leadership. Little by little, however, the Praxis philosophers overstated their case and went far beyond the practical needs of the official Yugoslav ideologues. The group's scathing criticism of the communist leadership prompted the leading ideologue Edvard Kardelj – seen at the time as the second most powerful figure in the regime after Tito – to write a counter-criticism of the theses of the Praxis group, which was published in 1966.<sup>20</sup> After several unsuccessful attacks, at the beginning of the 1970s the 'bureaucrats' finally managed to silence the Praxis group in Zagreb. This coincided with the repression of nationalist intellectuals in the Croatian capital – confirming the idea that in the eyes of the party leadership Praxis constituted a theoretical counterweight to nationalism. This repression was a fatal blow to the group, which had already been weakened by growing dissension internally.

In 1981, the founding of the journal *Praxis International* – which was presented as the international continuation of *Praxis* – led to controversies. Its main editor was Mihailo Marković, a Belgrade philosopher who had been editor-in-

chief of the old *Praxis*. He worked on the new journal together with Richard J. Bernstein. Only a few other former Praxis members agreed to sit on the editorial board of the new publication.<sup>21</sup> Zagreb-based philosophers were absent.

Disagreements arose within the Belgrade group of former Praxis members. One was between those who had previously been victims of repression. At the end of 1974, eight professors and assistants of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade had been removed by the authorities. The professors dismissed were Mihailo Marković, Ljubomir Tadić, Miladin Životić, Zagorka Pesić-Golubović, Svetozar Stojanović, Draguljub Mičunović, Triva Indjić and Nebojsa Popov.<sup>22</sup> They had been accused of 'spoiling the youth' and 'undermining the Yugoslav system of self-management'. In particular, their alleged role in the 1968 student revolt and their participation in Praxis group activities had made them a prime target for the Yugoslav authorities. For several years thereafter, their common fate had been unemployment or a closely watched scientific career. The strong solidarity initially felt within this 'Group of Eight' was broken in 1988 by the reintegration into the establishment of Miladin Životić, who accepted a chair in the philosophy faculty.<sup>23</sup> In addition, ideological divergences arose between members. Ljubomir Tadić highlighted the qualities of the nineteenth-century bourgeois Serbian order. Mihailo Marković, on the other hand, continued to praise the value of social property and to reject privatization strategies. He became for a time the theoretician of the Milošević regime. In the early 1990s a Serbian nationalist viewpoint, completely opposed to the universalist conception of humanity favoured by the Praxis group, was common to all three former members of the group – Mihailo Marković, Ljubomir Tadić (who became members of the Serbian Academy) and even Miladin Životić.<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to explain this fundamental turnaround,<sup>25</sup> except in very general terms by the fundamental regression of economic and political life and climate in Yugoslav society.

## The Debate on the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy

In the 1980s, intellectual and academic circles in Yugoslavia debated on the future of the state, and deployed arguments that would later be used in the debate for and against the right to secession. A major turning-point in this debate came with the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy. At a meeting on 23 May 1985, the Academy accepted a proposal by the economist Ivan Maksimović that it should write a memorandum to address the 'most acute social, political, economic, welfare and scientific and cultural problems' of Serbia and Yugoslavia.<sup>26</sup> First drafts were discussed at various meetings in 1986. On 24 September 1986, the Belgrade evening paper *Vječernje Novosti* launched an overt attack on the Memorandum, publishing selected excerpts from the text.<sup>27</sup> The

Academy reacted by stating that this publication was totally unauthorized and was in fact a theft of an uncompleted version of part of a larger scientific document.<sup>28</sup> Only half of the text could be regarded as final. On 5 October 1986, the Committee decided to stop its work on the document and to assign responsibility for its fate to the Presidency of the Academy. The turmoil caused by the newspaper article alarmed the political authorities and particularly the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, which asked for a report. The Executive Board of the Academy denied that the intention of the Memorandum was 'fratricidal' and 'warmongering'. It also repeated that the publication of the excerpts had been unauthorized.<sup>29</sup> In a letter sent on 3 October to Dušan Kanazir, the President of the Academy, Serbian Vice-President Bulatović asked to be sent the version of the Memorandum that had become public. The Executive Board replied that no one in the Academy had the right to release material that had not been approved by the competent bodies.<sup>30</sup>

This history of the origins of the Memorandum demonstrates that the relationship between scholars and politicians was not free from tension. The text itself was a radical reassessment of the programme of the Serbian political leadership. The first part dealt with the crisis in the economy, the defects in the confederal organization of Yugoslavia, the privileged position of Slovenia and Croatia, the dominant position of the party in the state and the moral crisis in society. It defined some principles for redressing the economic, political and moral situation: the introduction of a more efficient economic system, the implementation of the principle of self-determination for the peoples of Yugoslavia and a guarantee of human rights. The Memorandum proposed centralization as a response to the so-called confederal tendencies of the 1974 Constitution. It was claimed that these confederal tendencies had destroyed the unity of the economic system and had led to the downfall of the republics' national economies.

In the second part of the Memorandum, the position of the Serbian people and state was further analysed and a new Serbian programme presented. A recurring theme was the disadvantaged legal position of Serbia as a consequence of the Constitutional reform of 1974. The establishment of the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina within the Republic of Serbia was said to have led to a loss of sovereignty for the Serbian republic itself. In the view of the authors, Serbia could not take autonomous decisions, unlike the two autonomous regions, Kosovo and Vojvodina, whose assemblies had autonomous rights and could at the same time make decisions on their own affairs and also contribute to decision-making at the Serbian and Yugoslav federative levels. According to the authors of the Memorandum, the national integrity of the Serbian people had to be restored, regardless of where they lived, whether within or outside the present Republic of Serbia. This could be interpreted as a threatening appeal for secession<sup>31</sup> and the construction of a Greater Serbian State.

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The most comprehensive criticism of the Memorandum came in 1987 from émigré intellectual circles of the Croatian diaspora, articulated by the members of the Croatian National Congress (*Hrvatsko Narodno Vijeće*). The Croatian academic émigré milieu had a long tradition of producing critical accounts of the communist Yugoslav regime.<sup>32</sup> Mate Mestrović and Radovan Latković of the *Hrvatsko Narodno Vijeće* acknowledged the accuracy of the Memorandum's general description of the Yugoslav economy as being in crisis. But they disagreed with its authors on the causes of the economic débâcle and on the proposed solutions. From the point of view of the Croat émigré writers, the command economy (increasingly under the authority of the republics), state control of society, the non-existence of private ownership and, especially, the destruction of private forms of agriculture, had to be seen as the main causes of the present crisis. They reproached the Memorandum writers for ignoring the need for economic liberalism and decentralization. Nor did the Croats agree with the Memorandum's description of confederal tendencies as going against historical progress. In their view, the constitutional reform of 1974 had led not to a 'real' confederation, but to eight state bureaucracies.

At this point, the Croats were pleading for a rational coordination policy within the framework of a non-bureaucratic confederation. They pleaded for a real confederation, adding that it was following the natural course of history for peoples or nations to acquire their own statehood. Usually, Croat émigré intellectuals at the time defended the right of the Croats to an independent state, but here the more moderate option of a confederation was clearly chosen for tactical reasons. In order to be included in the debate, it was better to plead for a confederation and thereby achieve a gradual loosening of the bonds of the Yugoslav state. Among the human rights they championed, the Croat critics included the right to self-determination and the right to secession – rights that were formally provided for in the Constitution. They agreed with the Memorandum's assertion that sovereignty 'comes forth from the free will of the peoples', but disagreed with the proposal from the Serbian Academy to implement an integral, democratic federalism. Such a policy was perceived by the Croat critics as a return to unitarism and the hegemony of the Serbian people over the other Yugoslav nations. The Croat scholars rejected the central thesis of the Memorandum, which stated that the Yugoslav authorities had followed discriminatory policies in relation to the Serbian economy. They defended the contrary thesis of malicious treatment of the Croatian economy by the Yugoslav regimes, both in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in the second Yugoslavia under Tito's communist regime.

The situation in the first Yugoslavia was a highly contentious issue in the polemics between Croat and Serb scholars. The Croats rejected the Memorandum's thesis that the Serbs had not had a privileged position under this regime. The Croatian counter-arguments were based on a pre-war study by Rudolf

Bičanić, who had studied the economic performance and political representation of Croatia in the first Yugoslavia. In this study, which was first published in 1938, Bičanić had highlighted the monopoly position of the Crown and the Belgrade political élite, which was reflected in the under-representation of the Croats in the higher ranks of the military. This political domination had led to economic exploitation. Economic policy measures, such as an undervaluation of the dinar and an unjust tax policy, had favoured the Serbian economy. The taxes on agricultural estates and on houses, for instance, were twice as high in Croatia as in Serbia. All this was true at least up to 1928, when a more centralizing policy was introduced. The Croat critics of the Memorandum pointed to more recent indices to show the constant decline of the Croatian economy and the concomitant rise of the Serbian economy between 1925 and 1971: in industry, Croatia's 33% share fell to 18% while Serbia's rose from 20% to 35%. A similar trend could be perceived in banking and commerce.

In a new publication, published in 1995, the Serbian Academy answered the Croatian criticisms. It first condemned the separatist aspirations of the Croatian 'Anti-Memorandum'. Then it rejected the allegations in the 'Anti-Memorandum' concerning the subjugated and dependent status of Croatia in the economic and political fields. From the perspective of the Serbian Academy, a confederation would inevitably lead to a separation of the various republics; moreover, the efficiency of the economy required a unified policy. The offer by Slovenia and Croatia on 4 October 1990 to form a loose confederation was described by the Serbian Academy as a transitional strategy towards independence. The Serbian Academy reaffirmed its view that only an integral, democratic federalism could overcome nationalism and separatism, and rejected the depiction of Serb positions as Greater-Serbian nationalism. The Serbs pleaded for a more centralist and unitary system.

The Academy dealt in detail with the Croatian allegations concerning the so-called privileged position of Serbia. Yugoslav leaders such as Tito, Kardelj or Bakarić, it claimed, had been at least as anti-Serbian as they had been anti-Croatian. The policy of these leaders had to be seen as a legacy of the inter-war Comintern policy which, in order to destroy the social order had stigmatized the Serbian bourgeoisie as hegemonistic. Federalism had been used by the communists to keep Serbia powerless. The constitution of Kosovo and Vojvodina as two independent provinces within the Republic of Serbia, in 1974, had turned these provinces into states within a state. The federalization of Yugoslavia had led to the formation of an anti-Serbian coalition, in which Croatia – itself a victim of the communist policy during the Croatian spring – was an active member.

The Serb Academy characterized the data used by the Croatian side to prove economic exploitation by the Serbs as outdated. These data were indeed based largely on the book by Rudolf Bičanić, which had been published in 1938. In

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the view of his Serbian critics, the author of this book had used the wrong indicators and base years. This had already been demonstrated at the time by Serbian economists, but their writings had been largely ignored by the economic profession in Yugoslavia, and especially in Croatia. Moreover, Bičanić himself had not used his earlier findings in a book published after the war, which seemed to prove that he had understood his errors. According to the Serbian Academy, the only reliable disaggregated statistics were those adjusted for industry in 1938 by the Economic Institute of Serbia. Bičanić had ignored these data in his first book, as by then it had already gone to press. Taking the reliable data into account, the growth of industry in Croatia was 1.9 times faster than in Serbia proper. Moreover, whereas in Croatia 481,000 dinars had been invested per 1,000 inhabitants, the figure was only 281,000 for Serbia.<sup>33</sup> The per capita GNP of Croatia had quadrupled between 1947 and 1971, which contradicted the Croatian claim that the position of Croatia had declined. From the Serbian perspective, Croatia had shown a higher growth rate than Serbia.

The Serbian Academy further criticized the analysis made by the former president of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Croatian Jakov Sirotković.<sup>34</sup> He had depicted the 1938 statistical analysis of industry by the Economic Institute of Serbia as 'statistics-juggling', and had fallen back on Bičanić's figures. Sirotković had argued that Croatia had been discriminated against, citing GNP indices for a 35-year period, from 1952 to 1987.<sup>35</sup> These figures allegedly proved that Serbia had higher and Croatia lower indices than the Yugoslav average. The Academy criticized these projections on two key points: if per capita data were given, the situation was reversed. Moreover, the selection of the base year was critical. The selection of 1952 was unjustified, as the GNP in that year had been exceptionally low owing to bad weather conditions in agriculture and a total transformation of industry because of the conflict with the Soviet Union (industries had had to be dismantled and relocated in other parts of Yugoslavia in order to protect them from possible Soviet aggression). According to the first column of figures in Table 1, which were used by Sirotković, Croatia had been a victim of economic discrimination, with a growth index of only 640 as against 701 for Serbia. This would not be the case, however, if per capita data were used for the same period, as the figures in the second column demonstrate (536 for Croatia as against 498 for Serbia). The use of 1947 as a base year would also prove that Croatia was relatively privileged in comparison with Serbia.<sup>36</sup>

Table 1 – GNP indices of Yugoslavia, Croatia and Serbia (in dinars, 1972 prices)

	1987/52		1988/47	
	Total	Per capita	Total	Per capita
SFRY	675	484	730	486
Croatia	640	536	745	598
Serbia	701	498	702	464

Source: Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krestić, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Presidency. *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Answers to Criticisms*, Belgrade, SANU, 1995, p. 62. Period 1987/52 – column 1 – based on Sirotković, other columns are based on Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, Federal Statistics Office, various years.

Sirotković argued in relative terms, while it seemed more logical to the Academy to compare absolute levels. It could then be shown that Croatia, already starting from a slightly higher level, had considerably increased its advantage in the period 1947-1988, and the per capita income span widened considerably (See Table 2).

Table 2 – Per capita GNP, absolute levels in dinars, 1972 prices

	Per capita GNP		Increment
	1947	1988	1988/1947
SFRY	3,460	16,814	13,354
Croatia	3,610	21,587	17,977
Serbia	3,274	15,183	11,909

Source: Mihailović and Krestić, p. 64. Based on Federal Statistics Office, 1986 and Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia, 1990.

The Academy further observed that a comparison for 1988 of the levels of development in both current prices and constant prices clearly showed the underprivileged position of Serbia compared with that of Croatia (see Table 3).

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Table 3 – Per capita GNP in 1988

	Prices in dinars		Indices	
	Constant	Current	Constant	Current
SFRY	16,814	62,939	100.0	100.0
Croatia	21,587	82,063	128.4	130.4
Serbia	15,183	54,201	90.3	86.1

Source: Mihailović and Krestić, p. 67. Based on Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia, 1990, Belgrade, Federal Statistics Office.

A quarter of Serbs were at that time living outside Serbia. The Memorandum had argued that Serbs in Croatia lived in the least developed parts. Sirotković contradicted this statement by arguing that 80% of them lived and worked in urban areas. The Serbian Academy replied to this criticism using statistics prepared by Kosta Mihailović (1990) for 1981. According to these figures, the per capita income of the Serbs in Croatia was significantly lower than that of the Croatians of Croatia (see Table 4).

Table 4 – Per capita national income by republic and by ethnic group.  
(in dinars, 1981 prices)

	National	Croats	Serbs
SFRY	89,466	105,16	85,051
Croatia	114,660	114,461	98,906
Serbia	82,660	108,997	88,672

Source: Mihailović and Krestić, p. 69. Based on Kosta Mihailović, *Regionalna stvarnost Jugoslavija*, Belgrade, Ekonomika, 1990, p. 153.

The Academy concluded this debate by observing that in 1947 Slovenia and Croatia accounted for 34.7% of the population of Yugoslavia and 39.9% of its GNP, whereas in 1988 they had 28.1% of its population and 44.8% of its GNP. With a constant proportion of 41.5% of the population, Serbia's share in GNP had declined from 39% in 1947 to 35.5% in 1988.

From this discussion between Croatian and Serbian economists one may conclude that both parties select data and methodology on the basis of political objectives. They are clever in pointing out that their adversaries have used the wrong methodology. It is difficult for an outsider to make a final judgment on this debate, partly thanks to the lack of reliable data. In strictly economic terms, however, the Serbian side seems to put forward more plausible arguments. But

both parties neglect the fact that the growth of one Yugoslav republic produces a number of spin-offs for the others. In this respect, the Yugoslav economy should be seen instead as a co-operative system. The Croatian and Serbian economists ignore this point, preferring to use a simplified model of the economy as a zero-sum game in which all one player's gains are made at the expense of the others.

The explanation of economic discrimination against the Serbs as a result of the evil intentions of a communist leadership is a product of the imagination, and lacks any foundation. In this respect, there seems to be a remarkable dissonance between a certain rationality in discussing methodological issues, for instance, and the ease with which prejudices are underwritten. The Serbian Memorandum defends a programme of Serbian renaissance but refuses to be regarded as being inspired by nationalism. The Memorandum stresses that the Serbs in Croatia are discriminated against economically and that the secession of Croatia would leave them unprotected. In this way the Serbian Academy has actively contributed to the growing nationalist climate in the country and has provided an intellectual and academic rationale for the programme for a Greater Serbia.

In its critique of the causes of Yugoslavia's economic decline, the Serbian Academy misses the main point. It concentrates on regional economics and the relations between the republics, but does not take into account the general nature of the Yugoslav economic crisis. This is partly because the Memorandum was largely inspired by Kosta Mihailović, an economist specializing in regional development economics. The exclusive focus on the thesis that Yugoslav economic policies had disadvantaged Serbia has drawn attention away from the general structural causes of the crisis in the Yugoslav economy, such as low productivity, inefficient organization and the serious debt problem. These structural weaknesses in the self-managed economic system were aggravated by the competitive investment policy of republican bureaucracies, which pointlessly duplicated industrial capacity in each republic. Moreover, the lack of restraint and self-discipline in the self-managed enterprises – for example the diversion of resources from investment to wages and collective consumption – common to all Yugoslav enterprises, were certainly even more serious in the underdeveloped regions. It handicapped the developed republics by the useless transfer of resources to the funds of less developed regions.

Much of Yugoslav expansion was financed by foreign debt and, with high interest and increased energy costs to be paid at the beginning of the 1980s, the economic system collapsed. An effective diagnosis of this situation should have taken all arguments into account without prejudice, but in the early 1980s the ideological conditions for such fruitful debate on the causes of the economic crisis were not present. Yet it is also true that the highly critical evaluations of the economic performance of the self-management system made by Western observers was not free from ideological prejudice either. It is our personal opinion that a

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gradual reform of the system of self-management would have been workable. But such a reform would only have been possible if based on a correct diagnosis.

### In Place of a Conclusion

Yugoslav authors like to use this formula in drawing conclusions, and we would like to honour this tradition. In this contribution, we have explored the basic attitude of the Yugoslav intelligentsia towards the main political problems of state organization. In the first part, we described the roles and functions of their Academies and the development of historiography. We find here a high degree of autonomy and dissidence.

Apart from the brief period immediately after the communist take-over, which has generally been characterized as the Stalinist period, scientists had a certain amount of freedom to express their views. Dissident thought could flourish in the discussion forums of the Praxis group. Originally constituted as a reformist socialist current, its radical positions came to be rejected by the regime as oppositional. It is striking, however, how the positions of some of the leading members of the group later evolved towards nationalism. In the second half of the 1980s, nationalism found academic expression in Serbia and Croatia in the discussion on the so-called Memorandum. In this debate, an analysis of the general structural deficiencies of the Yugoslav economy was neglected. The exclusive focus on the relatively disadvantaged position of the republican economies and particular national interests made an objective analysis of the economic crisis impossible.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Paul Garde, *Vie et mort de la Yougoslavie*, Paris, Fayard, 1992. A recent overview of intellectual debates in Serbia is given in Aleksandar Pavković 'From Yugoslavism to Serbism: the Serb National Idea 1986-1996', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1998, pp. 511-528.
- <sup>2</sup> Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Yugoslavia*, New York, Praeger, 1971, p. 43; Robert Stallaerts & Jeannine Laurens, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Croatia*, Lanham, Md, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1995, p. 205.
- <sup>3</sup> The second Yugoslavia was built up by the communists after their victory in the second world war. At the beginning of the 1980s, after the death of Tito, there was much talk about a third Yugoslavia in a non-communist era. This never actually had a chance to emerge because the country disintegrated.
- <sup>4</sup> Ivan Božić, Vladimir Dedijer, Sima Cirković and Milorad Ekmević, *History of Yugoslavia*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1974.
- <sup>5</sup> Werner Markert, *Jugoslawien. Osteuropa-Handbuch*, Köln/Graz, Böhlau-Verlag, 1954, p. 195.
- <sup>6</sup> In fact, it was the heir of the venerable 'Društvo za Humanističke Vede' (Society of the Humanities). Its oldest roots can even be traced back to the Jesuit and theology schools of the sixteenth century and the *Academia Operosorum*, founded in Ljubljana in 1693.

- <sup>7</sup> Of course, because the theory – still less the practice – were not set in stone, there was always a wide margin of interpretation. There was a continuous discussion on the limits of the paradigm. Classical historians who graduated before the war continued their work more or less on their old premises. Moreover, the diaspora disputed the communist theses as often as possible.
- <sup>8</sup> For the further ‘history of Yugoslav historiography’, see Ivo Banac, ‘Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Yugoslavia’, *American Historical Review*, Vol. 97, 1992, pp. 1084-1104.
- <sup>9</sup> Šidak, Gross, Karaman and Sčepić published their interpretation in Jaroslav Šidak, Mirjana Gross, Igor Karaman and Dragovan Sčepić, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda, 1860-1940* (History of the Croatian People, 1860-1940), Zagreb, Školska knjiga, 1968.
- <sup>10</sup> The same pattern could later be seen in Belgrade. Although scientists were removed from teaching positions at the university in the early 1980s, they were allowed to continue their work in research institutes – such as the Belgrade Institute of Social Sciences – and there produce fundamental criticism of Yugoslav society. The case of Miladin Životić was an indication to some observers that a transformation to a more democratic society was still possible at the end of the 1980s, just before Milošević came to power.
- <sup>11</sup> It is more than symbolic that immediately after the take-over of the new regime by Tudjman, a second edition of this national history was published (Tipimir Macan, *Povijest Hrvatskoga Naroda*. Zagreb, Školska Knjiga, II. izdanje, 1992). In fact, it was one more expression of the emergence of a new ideological mainstream.
- <sup>12</sup> Here, the opinion of ‘first thinker and ideologue’ Edvard Kardelj was decisive. He also prepared the draft of the new constitution of 1974, which institutionalized the (con)federation.
- <sup>13</sup> For example, Jure Krišto, *Prešušena povijest – Katolička crkva u hrvatskoj politici. 1850-1918* (The Suppressed History – The Catholic Church in Croatian Politics, 1850-1918), Zagreb, Hrvatska sveč ilišna naklada, 1994.
- <sup>14</sup> The editorial committee of the international edition of *Praxis* consisted of Branko Bošnjak, Danko Grlić, Milan Kangrga, Danilo Pejović, Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek and Predrag Vranički (*Praxis*, 1965, 1). The local Serbo-Croat edition was launched in 1963.
- <sup>15</sup> Pedrag Vranički, Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek, Danko Grlić and Branko Bošnjak, *Praxis, International edition*, No. 1, 1965.
- <sup>16</sup> For a short, systematic description of the basic philosophical views of the Praxis Group, see Mihailo Marković and Robert S. Cohen, *Yugoslavia: The Rise and Fall of Socialist Humanism. A History of the Praxis Group*, Nottingham, Spokesman Books, 1975, pp. 30-40.
- <sup>17</sup> In his theses on Feuerbach.
- <sup>18</sup> Marković and Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- <sup>19</sup> The labels were of course reminiscent of the theses of Yugoslavia’s greatest dissident, Milovan Djilas, who had earlier clashed with the bureaucracy and had been removed from power. This is also the reason why some critics of the regime called the Praxis philosophers ‘Djilasists’.
- <sup>20</sup> One of the main reproaches levelled at the Praxis group was its supposed anarcho-liberal character. Moreover, its intellectualism and supposed élitism were not in line with the concrete phase of development of Yugoslav self-management. This all meant that Praxis members were accused of alienating power for themselves from the Yugoslav masses and labourers and from its avant-garde, the League of Communist of Yugoslavia. (See Edvard Kardelj, *Beleške o našoj društvenoj kritici*, Beograd, Kultura, 1966).
- <sup>21</sup> Rudi Supek and Veljko Rus from Ljubljana, and Svetozar Stojanović, Ljubomir Tadić and Zagorka Pesić-Golubović, from Belgrade (*Praxis International*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1981).
- <sup>22</sup> Marković and Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

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- <sup>23</sup> Životić himself played down the disagreement. But it is typical of the change in the press that the once high-quality magazine *NTN* should report the news under a sensational headline: 'My Conflict with the Group of Eight' (Moj spor sa 'grupom 8'). The 'Group of Eight' refers to the eight professors who were dismissed from Belgrade university.
- <sup>24</sup> The Zagreb professor of economics, Branko Horvat, also a collaborator of the Praxis group, remained closer to an universalist position. He became president of the Croatian Social Democrats. He defended both a certain form of social property and at the same time a strict guarantee of civil and human rights.
- <sup>25</sup> The 'relentless criticism of all existing reality' implied an eventual revision of one's own conceptions. This, however, is but a poor motivation for what seems to be a conforming attitude to power-politics designed to secure one's own position. Such a change of attitude was a general trend among intellectuals. Among my personal acquaintances, scholars (and assistants of Branko Horvat) at the *Institut Ekonomskih Nauka* (Institute of Economic Studies in Belgrade) changed over to Serbian nationalist positions.
- <sup>26</sup> *Memorandum*, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1995, pp. 95-140 (p. 13).
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>28</sup> The original text contained 73 typewritten pages, of which 30 can be considered to have been approved by the Committee (*Ibid.*, p. 15).
- <sup>29</sup> However, alternative visions were never formulated, and later most academicians referred to the Memorandum as an authoritative document. Incidentally, one member of the Academy distanced himself from the content and main theses of the document. On this, see further the detailed analysis by the Belgrade philosopher Oliveira Milosavljević, 'Populistička upotreba autoriteta nauke. Javna politička delatnost srpske Akademije Nauka i Umetnosti (1986-1992)' (Populist Use of the Authority of Science. Public political activities of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (1986-1992)), *Republika*, 1-31 July, Nos 119-120, 1998. Partially translated into French as 'Du mauvais usage de l'autorité scientifique', in Nebojsa Popov (ed.), *Radiographie d'un nationalisme. Les racines serbes du conflit yougoslave*, Paris, Editions de l'Atelier, 1998, pp. 205-238.
- <sup>30</sup> Cfr. Pavković, *op. cit.*, p. 513.
- <sup>31</sup> This is observed also in a short remark on Serbian secession in the Memorandum by Oliviera Milosavljević, in Popov, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
- <sup>32</sup> For a short overview of the intellectual production of Croatian nationalist émigré groups in the United States, ending finally with massive support for Tadjman, see Jure Prpić, 'Američki Hrvati i oslobodjenje Hrvatske', in Jure Prpić, *Hrvati u Americi* (The Croatian Immigrants in America), Zagreb, Hrvatska matica Iseljenika, 1977, pp. 357-399, especially pp. 357-399.
- <sup>33</sup> In these figures, Croatia includes Slavonia and Dalmatia and Serbia Vojvodina (but not Srem) (Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krestić, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Presidency. *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Answers to Criticisms*, Belgrade, SANU, 1995, p. 35).
- <sup>34</sup> Mihailović and Krestić, pp. 60-76.
- <sup>35</sup> The indices were constructed by converting current prices for each year into prices for the base year 1972.
- <sup>36</sup> According to statistics from the Federal Statistics Office, GNP in Croatia had increased by 17.5% (the per capita increase being 12.8%) over the period 1947-1952, while the increase in Serbia's GNP amounted to only 1.3% (and per capita GNP decreased by 5.1%). The Serbian Academy also argued that in 1947 Croatia's GNP was 10.3% higher than the Serbian GNP, and that this difference had increased to 31.2% by 1952.

