

looking "for nothing more exalted than a justification for their vices"? Is that what it's all been about, all these years, O generation of vipers? •

Yugoslavian Breakup

by M.N.R.

Yugoslavia is at the point of civil war, but before anyone starts blubbering about what in the world can have gotten into this "proud nation," be assured that there ain't no such animal. There is no such nation nor is there such a thing as a "Yugoslav people." Yugoslavia is not a nation but a geographical abortion, a monstrosity that ensued from the chaos, the vengeance, and the cabals of World War I and its sorry aftermath. The victorious allies split apart and fractured the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire. This sundering was performed not in the name of "national self-determination," but in the equality of this process some nations were destined to be far more equal than others. Particularly privileged was Serbia, a nation on Austria-Hungary's southern border, which had set off World War I by contriving to assassinate Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. Out of the tragedy and ferment of that war, Serbia managed to carve a new Greater Serbia out of parts of the defeated Empire, particularly by suckering the intellectual leaders of the Croats and the Slovenes into adopting a phony and artificial "South Slav" (Yugoslav) ideology and then forming a new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. When the Croats found that this

kingdom, instead of a fraternity of "south Slavs," was merely a mechanism for Serb hegemony, they grew restless and began to move for greater Croat freedom. When the Serbs assassinated the great Croat Peasant leader Stefan Radic in 1928, the Croats moved to form a separate Croatia, whereupon the Serb King Alexander established a unitary royal dictatorship and called it "Yugoslavia."

Another hapless people forcibly incorporated into Yugoslavia were the Macedonians, on the southern border of Serbia, another people seeking restoration of their ancient independence. The results of the crumbling of the Ottoman Empire and of World War I, however, were the carving up of Macedonia among the Greeks and the Serbs. Bulgaria, arrogantly claiming that the Macedonians are only "western Bulgars," was aced out by unfortunately picking the losing side of the last Balkan War and of World War I.

Macedonians forced into Yugoslavia formed the militant revolutionary organization, IMRO (International Macedonian Revolutionary Organization), which assassinated the tyrant King Alexander in 1934. After that the Yugoslav Regent Prince Paul, particularly after 1939, moved toward devolution of power toward the nationalities, actually bringing Croat ministers into the Cabinet. Paul also followed a neutral policy in World War II. British intelligence therefore engineered a military

coupon March 27, 1941, installing a hard-line Serb military dictatorship in Yugoslavia. This pro-British government quickly moved to sign a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union on April 5.

Mussolini, boobishly trying to revive and expand the Italian Empire, had invaded Greece at the end of October, 1940, but his war of conquest was going badly, and the Greeks were counter-attacking successfully. Hitler was preparing to mobilize the countries of Eastern Europe for his mighty assault against the U.S.S.R., but he was obliged to delay this strike to bail out his Axis partner in Greece. Hitler's offer to mediate the Italy-Greece dispute was rebuffed by a Greece prodded by Great Britain, and so Hitler determined to launch his conquest of Greece before mounting an invasion of Russia. The sudden British coup in Yugoslavia in March 1941 induced Hitler to include that country in his Greek campaign ("Operation Maritsa"), which he began on April 6. The Yugoslav campaign was successfully concluded in eleven days, and Greece was mopped up two weeks later.

Ever indulgent to his unreliable Axis partner, Hitler allowed Italian troops to help invade Croatia, while German forces invaded Serbia. Serbia was, understandably enough, treated as hostile, and subjected to permanent German military occupation, whereas the Germans and Italians treated the Croats as fellow enemies

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of the Serbian Yugoslav regime. Croatia was allowed to form a separate national state, naming the Italian Duke of Spoleto as its king.

The new Croat kingdom was run by Ante Pavelic and his Ustasha movement. Every time any newspaper account speaks of Croat nationalism or Croat-Serb rivalry nowadays, the writer invariably raises the spectre of Croatia's "pro-Nazi" regime. But it should be clear that the Croats were not pro-Nazi; they were, simply, anti-Serb, while neutral in more remote European affairs, and the genesis of this attitude should now be clear. It is true that during the war, the Croat Ustasha killed a lot of Serbs, but so too did Serb forces kill a great many Croats. The feelings were all too mutual.

Because the Croats had their own state during World War II, there was no need for them to engage in partisan activities. The Serbs, on the other hand, were impelled to resist the direct military rule of the Germans. A Serb guerrilla force, the Chetniks, arose under Draza Mihailovic, paying more attention to the killing of Croats than of Germans. A communist partisan force also arose, under Josip Tito. Although a Communist, Tito was able to win out over Mihailovic because Tito, being a Croat, was able to appeal far more strongly to all the non-Serb groups in Yugoslavia. None of them would any longer trust a Serb.

Tito's remarkable shift away from Stalinism and central planning, beginning about 1950, took a decisive turn in the mid-1960s, with the institution of market reforms, and the ousting from office

of the Serb Alexander Rankovic, Vice-President and head of the secret police. It became clear that, even among Communist intellectuals and economists, the major drive for freedom and market economy was among the Croats and Slovenes, whereas the Serbs were the most devoted to Communism and central planning. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1966, the distinguished Croat economist Rudolf Bicanic noted, too, that the Serbs were dominant in central institutions—the army, the secret police, central administration—even during Tito's Yugoslavia, and he postulated that perhaps the Serbs had learned the ways of statism during generations of independent statehood, whereas the Croats and Slovenes, under Austro-Hungarian rule, had never learned bad statist habits. Perhaps. But perhaps, too, one answer lies in the Croat and Slovene devotion to western institutions, including a transnational Catholic Church. In contrast, the Serbs are Eastern Orthodox, and hence are used to a tradition of a State-ruled Church.

Ethnic devolution proceeded side by side with market reform until the early 1970s, when an evident desire for Croat independence drove Marshal Tito into a counter-revolutionary crackdown and a blockage of further ethnic and economic reform.

Tito's death in 1980 led to the current Yugoslavian polity: headed by a rotating collective presidency, consisting of one representative from each of six republics, and of two "autonomous" provinces, of Serbia.

In the current situation, it is, again, no accident that the in-

creasingly independent Croat, Slovene, and Macedonian republics have elected non-Communist regimes, and that Croatia and Slovenia have been pushing for independence, whereas the Serbs, headed by their Communist leader, Slobodan Milosevic, have been strong for both unitary centralism and a communist command economy. At a recent climactic vote, Milosevic tried to stampede the eight-man presidency into a central troop crack-down on breakaway Croatia. He was voted down by 5 to 3, and the regional votes are instructive. Voting for the crack-down was Serbia, Montenegro, and Serbia's autonomous province of Voivodina. Voivodina, a northern Serb province acquired from Hungary, has only about 10 percent Hungarians; the rest are Serbs.

That leaves Montenegro, like the Serbs ruled by a one-party Communist regime. Does the stand of Montenegro vitiate our analysis of Serb hegemony? No, because there are no such people as "Montenegrins." Montenegro ("Black Mountain") is simply Western Serbia, and is the mountainous area where Serbs were able to hole up indefinitely and maintain their independence from the Ottoman Empire. Because of this history, Montenegro was also an independent kingdom outside Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans, but it is ethnically simply Serb.

On the other hand, the five presidents voting against the Serb-Milosevic grab for power hailed from Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the southern Serbian auto-

mous province of Kosovo. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a mixed region, consisting of Serbs, Croats, and a plurality of Bosnian Muslims, who became Muslims under the Ottoman Empire. Kosovo, which has been much in the news lately, is 90 percent ethnic Albanian, and is trying to get out from under Serb rule and achieve republic status. The stubborn Serb attempt to keep an iron grip on Kosovo is grounded in history: in the fact that centuries ago, Kosovo was the very heartland of the Serbs.

Why not allow each of these nationalities to go free, to recognize each others' independence, and then hope for peaceful relations and a free-trade zone among the nationalities of what used to be called Yugoslavia? That would surely be the libertarian aspiration. The major stumbling block is Serb imperialism and statism, although in all fairness a welcome sign was the recent mass demonstrations in Belgrade (capital of Serbia) against Milosevic/Communist rule. But, in addition, those of us who consider ourselves Croats-in-spirit have to acknowledge the beam in our own eye. For just as Serbs call Croats "traitors to Yugoslavia" and threaten to send in the national army (the officer corps are two-thirds Serb), so does the new, national anti-Communist Croat republic consider the Serbs living in Serb areas in southern Croatia "traitors" to Croatia. If each nationality is to be independent, these Serbs, rather than live under Croat rule, have proclaimed themselves citizens of the new republic of Krajina, in the southern border regions of Croatia. Well, why not? And if they wish, why shouldn't the Krajinans be

able to merge with their brethren in Serbia proper?

Even if there is peace and a free trade zone, it is important to ground them upon firm recognition of independence for each of these nationalities. And if this should mean, after the anti-Communist revolution in Albania proceeds further, that the Kosovo Albanians wish to merge with their brethren in Albania proper, why shouldn't they? And perhaps even the Macedonians will be able to find their place in the sun once more. Watch out, Greece! Border rectification is the need of the hour, and all we need ask is that the United States no longer stand in the way, prating about a New World Order grounded on a so-called "territorial integrity" that exists only in the minds of fantasists like Woodrow Wilson and his plague of successors.

As we went to press, the dire predictions of the article seemed about to come true: Yugoslavia stood on the brink of civil war. Every May 15 since Tito's death in 1980, the chief president of the collective presidency has rotated automatically in order. In 1990, the hardline Serb Communist and centralizer, Borisav Jovic, ally of Milosevic, came to power. This May 15, the rotation was supposed to fall to the Croat Stipe Mesic. But instead, in an unprecedented power play, Jovic mobilized the Serbs on the eight-man presidency to block Mesic's accession to the office. Any move by the presidency requires five votes, and the rotation to Mesic could only gain four. The Serbs had been able to gain the vote of its Kosovo province by unilaterally abrogating autono-

mous status for Kosovo and Voivodina, and bringing them both to heel as mere internal sections of Serbia. In that way, the Serbs (including Montenegro), can now command four out of the eight-republic votes on the ruling body. As of this writing, no one is president, and no one commands the "Yugoslav" army.

Is "Yugoslavia," at long last, going to be tossed onto the ashheap of history? Will the Croats and Slovenes finally achieve their independence? Is yet another Balkan bloodbath about to begin?

LP Convention Follies

by Joe Melton

It is typical of the pack of losers who constitute the Libertarian Party that the theme they selected for their 20th Anniversary Convention at Chicago this summer—which may well be their last—is "Liberty Triumphant." To call Liberty triumphant is—at the very least—premature; to say that *those* jokers are triumphant is a species of megalomania that could well fit them for the loony bin. According to an elaborate formula of allotting delegates, the Party has decreed 537 total delegate slots; for observers of social pathology, it will be interesting to see how many of these guys actually show up.

Dave Nolan, Keynoter

It is all too fitting that the keynoter selected for this anniversary convention is none other than the LP's Beloved Founder, David Nolan. Not exactly an "out-reach" speaker, Dave is unknown to the world at large; and that is as