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## **THE LEFT IN THE POST-YUGOSLAV AREA**

There is probably no other region in Europe where the past and present of the left are so severely out of sync with one another as they are in former Yugoslavia. A look at the history of the area reveals a strong presence of the socialist and communist movement. Prior to the First World War, such socialists as Svetozar Marković were able to lay the foundations of a revolutionary movement. At the beginning of the 1920s, the newly founded Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) was able to achieve the breakthrough of becoming a mass party. After the German invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, the anti-fascist partisans were able not only to mobilize hundreds of thousands of fighters, but also, then, to overthrow the monarchy and establish a new socialist state. The break with Moscow in 1948 initiated the experiment of «workers' self-management» and «the non-aligned movement», which attracted worldwide attention. State and party leader Josip Broz Tito and the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia (SKJ) enjoyed enormous worldwide prestige during the 1960s and '70s. Moreover, such left oriented opposition tendencies critical of Tito such as the Praxis Group, which called for a «humanistic Marxism», were noted worldwide.

This rich history contrasts sharply with the situation of the left at present. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the left in former Yugoslavia underwent an existential crisis. The point of departure for the decline was the severe structural, social and political crisis of the late phase of socialism in the 1980s. The erosion of the base of legitimacy of the SKJ was the precondition for the successful mobilisation of nationalist movements which led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the wars of the 1990s. The rise of nationalism was connected with the strengthening of right-wing, often right-wing extremist, ideologies as hegemonic identification patterns in the post-Yugoslav societies.

The wars of the 1990s not only cost over 100,000 deaths and created 1 million refugees, but also destroyed large parts of the industry and infrastructure of the coun-

try. Rigid neo-liberal economic policies led not only to the privatisation of large parts of industry, but also to the dismantling of the support structures of the welfare state. The long-term results of the disintegration of the state, war and neo-liberal structural reform are apparent in the areas of the political power structure such as; widespread corruption and populist authoritarian models of politics. Even ten years after the end of the armed conflicts, the countries of former Yugoslavia must in many respects be considered «post-war societies», in which many of the structures which developed during the war, such as the close connection between organised crime and the state apparatus, continue to be strongly in evidence. On the social level, a small elite of privatisation profiteers is juxtaposed to large parts of the population who live in marginalised communities without any future or opportunities. If, during the 1970s, the standard of living in Yugoslavia was comparable to that of Italy, today, broad segments of the population live in extreme poverty that is in many cases reminiscent of countries of the Third World. The left has to this day hardly addressed its historical defeat at all. The new formulation of a left oriented perspective is the task of the future.

Our purpose here is to analyze the existing left in light of the socio-political constellation in the post-Yugoslav area, as roughly outlined above. For this purpose, we will examine the left oriented parties, organisations and social movements that exist, and in addition identify the major tendencies and the political location of these forces. In so doing, we will examine all relevant forces defining themselves as «left», and describe, first, the disintegration of the SKJ into its social democratic successor parties, and second, the initiatives of the anti-nationalist, civil society-oriented left. Third and finally, we will examine the trade union and student movements.

In structuring this examination, we have decided in favour of a presentation based on political criteria, rather than on countries. The reason for this decision is that, in spite of the national differences, a certain symmetry can often be ascertained in the development of the left in the various post-Yugoslav countries, which could better be presented in the structure we have selected. In view of the complexity of the topic however, it is clear that the following overview can only briefly touch on a number of aspects which deserve a more detailed analysis.

### **The disintegration of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia into social democratic successor parties**

The causes of the destruction of Yugoslavia are the subject of controversy.<sup>457</sup> It is however a hardly disputable fact that one of the major domestic political causes for the disintegration of Yugoslavia was the existential crisis of the League of Communists

<sup>457</sup> In academic research, institutional, foreign-policy, economic and political-cultural factors are discussed as the cause of the disintegration and destruction of Yugoslavia. This paper cannot examine in detail this, in some cases highly, controversial debate. One examination which provides insight is – Ramet, Sabrina P: Thinking about Yugoslavia. Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, Cambridge 2005.

of Yugoslavia (SKJ). During the second half of the 1980s, the party leaderships in the six republics – Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia – and in the two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo on the territory of Serbia, developed completely contrary political strategies to address the severe social crises of that time.

The leadership of the Serbian republic under Slobodan Milošević had since 1987 demanded a stronger centralisation of the competences of the Federation, and the strengthening of the Serbian republic. This amounted to a reversal of the (con)-federalisation of Yugoslavia, which had been implemented under the Constitution of 1974. By contrast, especially the leadership of the Slovenian Republic demanded even greater decentralisation, and found allies especially among the Kosovo-Albanian communists, and in the party organisations of Vojvodina, Croatia and Macedonia. The SKJ became increasingly incapacitated. At its 14<sup>th</sup> Congress in January 1990 in Belgrade, the conflict escalated to a final break. The party disintegrated at the federal level, leaving behind its component parts in the republics; this was at the same time the beginning of the process of the disintegration of the state, which occurred a year later with the declarations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia, followed by the war.<sup>458</sup>

The anatomy of the disintegration of the SKJ is of great importance for an understanding of the current party system in the region. For most of the «post-communist» socialist or social democratic parties in the countries of former Yugoslavia emerged from the products of disintegration of the former state party; in most of the successor republics, they hold important, and to some extent dominant influence on political life.<sup>459</sup>

This is mostly obvious in the tendencies in Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. In Serbia, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), founded in 1990 as the successor party of the League of Communists, ruled without interruption until the fall of Slobodan Milošević in October 2000.<sup>460</sup> The support for the SPS has melted away during the ensuing years; in the parliamentary elections of May 2008, the electoral alliance led by the SPS obtained only 7.8% of the vote. Nonetheless, the SPS remains an impor-

458 Any analysis of the disintegration of the SKJ must stress that the party had been federalised since the Second World War. It consisted of eight party organisations, having its own leadership and Central Committee. As Othmar Nikola Haberl has shown, the Republic party organisations had far-reaching competences by the mid-'60s. After the 9th Congress of the SKJ in 1969, the congresses of the Republic parties were held first, and that of the SKJ at the federal level only afterwards. Cf. Haberl, Othmar Nikola: *Parteiorganisation und nationale Frage in Jugoslawien* (Party organisation of the national question Yugoslavia), Berlin 1976.

459 At the same time, it should be noted that immediately after the «transformation», some non-left parties emerged from the political structures of the SKJ or its youth organisations in the respective areas, or at least their material resources were used for founding these parties. For example, the stronger Slovenian parliamentary party, the Liberal Democrats of Slovenia (LDS), emerged from the Socialist Youth League. Cf. Lukšič, Igor: *Das politische System Sloweniens*, in: Ismayr, Wolfgang (ed.): *Die politischen Systeme Osteuropas* (The political systems of Eastern Europe), Wiesbaden 2006, p. 660.

460 The SPS was formally founded on July 17, 1990 in Belgrade, as a merger of the Serbian League of Communists and the Socialist League of the Working People of Serbia (SSRNS), a «mass organisation» of the SFRJ. Cf. Milošević, Milan: *Die Parteienlandschaft Serbiens* (The Serbian party landscape), Berlin 2000, p. 45.

tant political factor in Serbia. In the summer of 2008, the former Milošević-Socialists became the junior partners in a coalition with the Democratic Party (DS), their main rivals during the '90s.<sup>461</sup>

The post-communist Union of Social Democrats of Macedonia (SPSM) held the reins of government for long periods during the 1990s, and is an important political force in the southernmost former Yugoslav Republic. In the parliamentary elections on June 1, 2008, the alliance under the leadership of the SPSM achieved 22.5%. The current government is headed by the conservative VRMO-DPMNE of Premier Nikola Grujevski.<sup>462</sup>

The clearest example of continuity of power from the post-communists to the present is provided in little Montenegro, with only 600,000 inhabitants. There, the Montenegro Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), which emerged from the SKJ, has been able to stay in power without interruption for over 20 years now. The dominant figure there is Milo Đukanović, who has determined the country's fate in various functions during this time. Once the youngest member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists, he demonstrated remarkable transformation capabilities; at the beginning of his period in power, he was closely aligned to Milošević. Starting in 1997, he began to make arrangements with the «West», and steered a course toward independence. Đukanović's tenure in office has been accompanied by numerous charges of corruption.<sup>463</sup>

It is not only in Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro that the post-communist social democrats wield important influence, they do so too in the other successor states of Yugoslavia as well. In Slovenia, Milan Kučan, a former party functionary, won the first free election in April 1990. Kučan's newly founded Slovenian Social Democrats became the strongest single party in the elections held at the same time, but had to yield governing power to a coalition of the opposition national liberals of the DEMOS Alliance. Thereafter however, the social democrats governed Slovenia in shifting coalitions between 1992 and 1996, and from 2000 to 2004; they have also been in power since 2008. In the presidential election of October 2008, Social Democrat Danilo Türk won the runoff elections with a convincing 68% of the vote, after winning only 24.4% in the first round.<sup>464</sup> (see below for recent developments).

461 On this development, which surprised many observers, cf. Kanzleiter, Boris: *Politischer Umbruch in Serbien* (Standpunkte, 25), Berlin 2008.

462 In the 1990–1994, 1994–1998 and 2002–2006 legislative terms, the SDSM led the Macedonian government, so that it can certainly be said to have been the dominant party in the political system. Cf. Siljanovska Davkova, Gordana: *Makedonske političke partije kroz prizmu ideologije* (Macedonian political parties through the prism of ideology). In: Lutovac, Zoran (ed.): *Političke stranke i birači u državama bivše Jugoslavije*. (Political parties and voters in the states of former Yugoslavia), Belgrade 2006, p. 209.

463 For the emergence of the Montenegrin political system and Đukanović's role in it, cf. Kovačević, Filip: *Montenegro and the Politics of Postcommunist Transition: 1990 to 2006*. In: *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 2007, 18/3, pp. 72–93.

464 The social democrats in Slovenia changed their party name several times. The Party of Democratic Renewal (SDP) became first the Social Democratic Renewal (SP) and later the Social Democrats (SD). Cf. Lukšič 2006: 660.

In Croatia, the post-communist Social Democratic Party (SDP)<sup>465</sup> lost the first free presidential and parliamentary elections in 1990, and had to yield power to the extremist nationalists of the Croatian Democratic Community (HDC) under Franjo Tuđman. In the immediate post-Tuđman era, from 2000 to 2003, the STP was able to temporarily regain government power, only to lose it again to the HDZ, which had by now mellowed into a more moderate nationalist conservative party. In January 2009, Social Democrat Ivo Josipović was however able to win the presidency<sup>466</sup> and the SDP returned to power in 2011 (see below).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the situation is complicated. Here, the three nationalist parties, the Serbian SDS, the Croatian HDZ and the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) initially gained the upper hand in the spring of 1992 prior to the outbreak of the war, by claiming to represent the interests of the three ethnic groups of the country, Serbs, Croats and Muslims, respectively. The war-making forces grouped around these three parties, while the post-communist social democrats<sup>467</sup> splintered into a number of parties with only local influence.<sup>468</sup> However, in the Serbian part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Serbian Republic (Republika Srpska), Premier Milorad Dodik's Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) dominated the government from 1998 and 2001, and have done so again since 2006; this party could be considered a successor party of the SKJ. By contrast, the STP was only the third strongest force after the general elections of 2006 in the Bosnian Federation. The Social Democrats are nonetheless still present as a small group in the common Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>469</sup>

465 The Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP), as the reformed successor party of the league of Communists of Croatia, in April 1994 united with the small Social Democratic Party founded in 1989. Cf. Zakošek, Nenad: *Das politische System Kroatiens* (The political system of Croatia). In: Ismayr, Wolfgang op cit., 2006, p. 707.

466 The election of Josipović can be seen as a positive sign for the domestic political development of Croatia. Unlike his predecessor Stipe Mesić, Josipović has sent clear signals of the conciliation to Serbia, and has also distance himself from the national conservative Catholic Church.

467 In the first parliamentary election in 1990, the successor to the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the SK BiH-SDP won only 8.32%. Cf. Anđelić, Neven: *SDP – prvih 100 godina. Kratki pogled na socijal-demokratiju u BiH* (SDP: The first 100 years. A brief overview of social democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina). Sarajevo 2009, p. 37.

468 During the war, the (Serbian) League of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) was formed in Banja Luka, while the old «reformists» in Tuzla formed the Union Bosnian-Herzegovinian Social Democrats, which then merged with the old/new SDP under Zlatko Lagumdžija. This party won the election in 2000, as part of the coalition «Alliance for Change». Two years later, due to an intensive reform policy and several scandals, it lost power again, and the old ethnic structures reestablished themselves in the new political system. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 39.

469 Theoretically, the «Serbian» and the «other» Social Democrats would, under the current relations of power, hold twelve of the 42 seats in the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Cf. 2006 election results under: Central Electoral Commission of Bosnia-Herzegovina, [http://www.izbori.ba/rezultati/konacni/parlament\\_bih/index.htm#](http://www.izbori.ba/rezultati/konacni/parlament_bih/index.htm#), accessed on January 14 2010.

## **The programmatic reorientation of the post-communist social democrats: The national turn, the market economy and «Europe»**

Power struggles and programmatic differences between the republics' parties already marked the development of the SKJ during the socialist-federative period.<sup>470</sup> Nonetheless, it was possible, due to a number of internal and external factors, to maintain the cohesion of the party through to the end of the 1980s. At the beginning of the '90s however, dramatic events began to occur, which brought the crisis of the left in Yugoslavia as a whole to the fore. For in the wars of the '90s, the «post-communist» social democrats were on various sides of the fronts, and were among the most important war-making forces. At the same time, a paradox emerged in terms of the long-term perspective: for the parties at the same time saw a clear symmetry of programmatic development, which can be described by the key terms «national turn», «market economy» and «Europe».

The nationalistic discourse in the various former Yugoslav republics initially emerged at the end of the 1980s within the various republics, amongst intellectuals outside of the SKJ party structure. Some of them, such as Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegović or the founder of the Serbian radical party Vojislav Šešelj, were openly anti-Communist. A number of other leading nationalist intellectuals, such as Dobrica Ćosić in Serbia and Franjo Tuđman in Croatia, were former members of the SKJ who had been expelled from the party in the late '60s or early '70s because of their nationalistic positions.<sup>471</sup>

In the context of the economic crisis and the crisis of legitimacy and existence of the SKJ, similar developments occurred in most of the republics at the end of the 1980s. The party organisations increasingly adopted the discourse of the nationalistic intellectuals outside the party. This was especially notable in Serbia, where Slobodan Milošević had since 1987 entered into a close alliance with the nationalistic intelligentsia. But in Slovenia too, the party at a very early stage moved closer to those intellectuals who were using nationalistic arguments to call for an independent course for Slovenia. In Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the post-communist social democrats were during the '90s not war-making governing parties, but that did not prevent them from adopting the core position of the discourse of the nationalistic right-wing

<sup>470</sup> Within the SKJ, there were numerous sharp confrontations between various republic parties. In the mid-'60s, there was a major struggle between the conservative centralists around the Serbian Interior Minister and Secret Police Chief Aleksandar Ranković, and economic liberal federalists around Slovenian leader Edvard Kardelj, in which the Ranković faction lost out in 1966. In 1970–71, the Communist leadership in Croatia under Savka Dabčević-Kučar launched a nationalistic movement for greater independence for Croatia; this «Croatian Spring» was suppressed at Tito's behest at the end of 1971. In 1968 and 1981, functionaries of the Albanian Communists in Kosovo supported rebellions aimed at establishing a separate Republic of Kosovo. For a good insight into the conflicts within the SKJ, see Haberl's study.

<sup>471</sup> For this development, see: Dragović-Soso, Jasna: «Saviours of the Nation». Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism. London 2002.

in their particular countries on the «national question».<sup>472</sup> For example, SDP functionaries in Croatia use the term *branitelj* («defender») for war veterans, with no hint of distance, suggesting that Croatian troops had a generally defensive role, and also participate in the annual commemorations on August 4, marking the offensive of 1995, which drove more than 150,000 Serbs out of Croatia. Although this rhetoric has softened somewhat since the end of the war, national narratives remain the determining factor for the identity of most parties.

The post-communist social democrats not only abandoned the slogan of «fraternity and unity», which had described the SKJ's nationalities policy, they also renounced «workers' self-management», the second basic principle of Yugoslav socialism. At various times and in various forms, all significant successor parties of the SKJ adopted the neo-liberal guiding concept of privatisation and market reform. Moreover, the parties to some extent function as true «privatisation agencies»; with their positions of power in the economic and state apparatus, significant segments of the leading cadre were able to transfer the factories from «social ownership» to their own private ownership.<sup>473</sup>

Like the other parties which took over functions of power in the post-Yugoslav multiparty systems, the post-communist social democratic parties are to a large degree clientelistic supply organisations for their own functionaries. Even after the privatisation process had been largely concluded, the state positions provide access to considerable resources and are filled in accordance with party membership. Corruption and malfeasance in office are an integral, possibly even a constituent, factor of the post-Yugoslav power systems.<sup>474</sup>

This clinging to power also explains the sometimes breathtaking programmatic transformation that certain social democratic parties have undergone in recent years. The above described switch by Montenegrin leader Đukanović in 1997 from an alliance with Milošević to a pro-Western position, enabled him to ride out the war and secure his own position of power. The SPS likewise had no problem abandoning the heritage of the Milošević era in 2008, in order to enter an alliance with its former arch-enemy, the «pro-Western» DP. These rapid transformation processes are moreo-

472 One example is the Croatian SDP. Most SDP functionaries in Croatia use a common term *branitelj* («defender») for war veterans, with no hint of distance or criticism, which attributes to the Croatian troops in the war of the '90s a generally defensive position, rather than criticizing their behaviour in the escalation of the conflict. Functionaries also participated in the annual commemorations on August 4, marking the major offensive launched by the Croatian army in 1995, as a result of which more than 150,000 Serbs were driven out of Croatia.

473 No precise analysis of this process has yet been made, though it is an important area of research. Insight is provided by: Obradović, Marija: Privatisation and the break-up of Yugoslavia, in: South-East Europe Review, 2007, 2, pp. 33–55.

474 As Michael Ehrke of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation said with regard to the development: «It is possible to hide the morality of the Mafia behind a social democratic programme.» Ehrke, Michael : Sozialdemokratische Parteien in Zentral- und Südosteuropa. Politische Gesinnungsvereinigungen oder Managementagenturen für die Regierung (Social democratic parties in Central and South Eastern Europe: Political associations of the like-minded, or management agencies for the government). Bonn 2009, p. 7.

ver the characteristics of all major political parties in the post-Yugoslav area. They mark the functions of the parties as a form of «post-modern» enterprise beyond the scope of the Western European left-right model. Holding onto power is the imperative of their politics. Labels such as «social democratic», «conservative» or «liberal» are not particularly useful in describing the identity of such organisations. None of the post-communist social democratic parties in former Yugoslavia is the locus of any comprehensive programmatic debate.

At least at the level of declarations, the successor parties of the SKJ have today arrived in the mainstream of European social democracy. They call for rapid acceptance of their countries into the European Union and NATO, a status which both Slovenia and Croatia have already joined. Most successor parties of the SKJ have since the mid-1990s also joined the Socialist International (SI); none on the other hand, is a member of the European Left Party.

The key exception, is that of the SPS in Serbia, although here too, the social democratic mainstream tendency largely won out at the time of the party's re-entry into government in the summer of 2008. The SPS too now wants Serbia's rapid accession to the EU and has applied for SI membership, although it still rejects joining NATO, a position it shares with the other major political parties in Serbia, at least officially. That is hardly surprising, in view of the NATO bombing of 1999. In 2012, after softening its position on Kosovo, Serbia achieved candidate status.

In view of the stated developments of post-communist social democracy in former Yugoslavia, the question emerges as to whether these parties can be considered «left». In spite of many caveats, the question must be answered in the affirmative. For in spite of all ideological and programmatic transformation processes, there are some areas of policy in which the post-communist social democrats clearly distinguish themselves from their competitive neo-liberal, conservative and right-wing populist competitors. Let us examine two of them here.

First, unlike the religious/nationalistic right wing, the post-communist social democrats generally keep their distance from the once again powerful churches, and thus to some extent provide a counter-pole to their goal of the re-traditionalisation of society. Second: although they too often reinterpret the anti-fascist partisan struggle in a nationalistic manner, they nonetheless proclaim their adherence to its tradition, while the conservative and right-wing populist parties popularize the heritage of the anti-communist nationalists, particularly the Croatian Ustasha and the Serbian Chetniks, who, during the Second World War collaborated with the Germans in various ways.

Research into the parties in former Yugoslavia is only just beginning. Only in a few cases are there reliable differentiated quantitative and qualitative data on the development of the membership and supporters of post-communist social democracy. The few available studies show that the parties to the left of the centre are largely supported by farmers, workers, pensioners, students and the unemployed. At the same time, the results of recent studies reveal that within these social groups, left parties

enjoy approx. the same level of support as do the parties of the right.<sup>475</sup> Most of those surveyed, asked to characterize their own political positions, categorize themselves as neither left nor right, or supported parties which they considered to be parties of the centre.<sup>476</sup> In a study carried out in Serbian 2005, 50 % of all those surveyed stated that they did not see themselves as close to any party. The only group emerging from the survey that was larger than this group of non-party respondents was that which saw itself as members of a «lower class»; this amounted to 54 % of the total.<sup>477</sup>

### **The left oriented resistance against nationalism and neo-liberalism**

The transformation outlined above was the main trend involved in the disintegration of the SKJ. However, at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the '90s explicitly anti-nationalist initiatives emerged from the SKJ. The most important force was the League of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia (SRSJ), founded at the end of 1990s by the last Yugoslav premier, Ante Marković. His popularity had increased greatly over the course of that year, since he had succeeded in slowing down the rampant inflation. With his all-Yugoslav perspective, he was a counterforce to the nationalists; however, his political and economic transformation ideas were clearly marked by neo-liberal tendencies.<sup>478</sup>

But, left oriented pro-Yugoslav forces also spoke out. In the spring of 1989, the Association for a Yugoslav Democratic initiative (Udruženje za jugoslovensku demokratsku inicijativu – UJDI) was founded, in which politicians and intellectuals of high moral integrity and repute came together.<sup>479</sup> They included, as a member of the Council of the Association, the surrealist novelist, Spanish Civil War veteran, former Yugoslav People's Army commander and Foreign Minister Koča Popović, and such respected members as the economist and theoretician of worker self-management Branko Horvat, and former members of the magazine Praxis, such as Predrag Vranicki (Zagreb), Nebojša Popov (Belgrade) and Božidar Gajo Sekulić (Sarajevo). Other members included former protagonists of the 1968 student protests and of the feminist movement of the 1970s.<sup>480</sup>

475 Šiber, Ivan : Političko ponašanje hrvatskih birača u izborima 1990 – 2003 (Political behaviour of Croatian voters in elections. In: Lutovac, Zoran, Belgrade, op cit., pp. 323–362; Stojiljković, Zoran (2006): Socijalni rascepi i linije političkih podela u Srbiji (Social fissures and lines of political divisions in Serbia. In: *ibid*, 2006, pp. 9–39.

476 Šiber, p. 329.

477 Stojiljković, p. 25.

478 As the Yugoslav federal prime minister, Marković pushed through the first laws which permitted the privatisation of state enterprises. Cf. Gagnon, Valère Philip Jr. : The myth of ethnic war. Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s. Ithaca 2004, p. 91. In October 1989, Marković developed a neo-liberal economic reform program under the aegis of the IMF. Cf. Boughton, James M.: Silent Revolution: The International Monetary Fund, 1979–89. Washington 2001, p. 578.

479 Cf. Stojaković, Krunoslav: Prešućena povijest. UJDI i antiratna opozicija u Jugoslaviji (The untold story. UJDI and anti-war opposition in Yugoslavia). In: Tomić, Đorđe; Atanacković, Petar (eds.): Društvo u pokretu. Novi društveni pokreti u Jugoslaviji od 1968 do danas. (Society on the move. New social movements in Yugoslavia, 1968 to date) Cenzura 2009, pp. 169–182.

480 For a list of all members, see: Horvat, Branko: The association for Yugoslav democratic initiative. In: Đokić, Dejan (ed.): Yugoslavism. Histories of a Failed Idea 1918–1992. London 2003, pp. 302–03.

The primary political approach of the UJDI was the demand for «radical democratisation» as the only possibility for the continued existence of Yugoslavia. However, the UJDI did not see itself as a political party, but rather wanted to create a «movement for the democratic transformation of Yugoslavia», which, in view of the deep crisis, it saw as the only way that a «return of the construction of authentic socialism» might succeed.<sup>481</sup> The need for the foundation of the UJDI was stated as being the fact that there was at present no political force in Yugoslavia that was «both Yugoslavian and Democratic»<sup>482</sup> (emphasis in the original).

However, neither Marković nor the UJDI were able to establish themselves as permanent political organisations with a mass base. Nonetheless, the UJDI especially had long-term political significance. For out of its environment there emerged a large number of groups, networks and initiatives which from the beginning of the '90s represented points of departure for a political alternative tendency. A part of this trend has formed small parties;<sup>483</sup> another part has continued its activities in the form of campaigns, or has founded NGOs.

Central for these alternative tendencies is a commitment to the struggle against war, nationalism and the re-traditionalisation of society. During the '90s, the anti-war movement succeeded at least to a certain extent in maintaining a pan-Yugoslav network,<sup>484</sup> with feminist women's organisations playing a key role. One good example was the organisation Women in Black (Žene u crnom), founded in Belgrade in 1991 as an anti-military and feminist peace organisation. It has now for 20 years been involved in the struggle against war, nationalism, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression.<sup>485</sup>

In recent years, organisations fighting for equal rights for sexual minorities are also increasingly playing an important role within the spectrum of anti-nationalistic alter-

481 *ibid.*, pp. 298ff.

482 *ibid.*, pp. 300–01.

483 In Serbia, the Citizens' Alliance (Gradjanski savez) emerged in this context during the early '90s. Also, the Social Democratic Union (SDU) and a regional party, the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV), should be mentioned. Cf. Milošević, *op. cit.*, pp. 70ff. In Croatia, there was a similar development. In addition to the Socialist Workers' Party of Croatia, founded in 1997, the generally leftist parties included the Action of Social Democrats of Croatia (ASH) and the Croatian Left (Ljevica Hrvatske), founded in 2007 by the unification of a number of left parties. However, none of these parties were able to establish themselves as electoral alternatives.

484 Particularly deserving of mention are the Centre for Anti-War Action (CAA) in Serbia, the Anti-War Campaign (ARK) in Croatia, the International Centre For Peace in Sarajevo, and the Titograd Citizens' Peace Council in Montenegro, which have since 1993 been working together within the framework of the ZaMir (For-Peace) Network, and have launched a number of projects, publications and Initiatives, such as Arkzin, ZaMir Women, ZaMirZine, etc. Cf. Unija 47/Croatian Anti-War Campaign: History. [http://www.zamirnet.hr/unija47/ark\\_unija47.html](http://www.zamirnet.hr/unija47/ark_unija47.html), accessed on January 12 2010.

For a comprehensive documentation of antiwar actions throughout former Yugoslavia, see: Rosandić, Ružica et al.: *Teži put. Mirovne akcije na tlu bivše Jugoslavije* (Hard times. Peacekeeping operations in former Yugoslavia). Belgrade 2005.

485 *Žene u crnom*, Belgrade (Feminist antimilitarist women's peace group): O nama (about us), [http://www.zeneucrn.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=2&Itemid=4](http://www.zeneucrn.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=2&Itemid=4), accessed on January 12 2010.

native tendencies.<sup>486</sup> Various Gay Pride marches held in Ljubljana and Zagreb have shown the power of these initiatives to mobilize. All over ex-Yugoslavia however, these initiatives run up against bitter hostility from nationalistic, clerical and right-wing forces. In Sarajevo, a Gay Pride march had to be broken off in September 2008 after fundamentalist Islamists attacked it. In Belgrade in 2002, a Gay Pride march was attacked by hundreds of clerical fascist hooligans. In the summer of 2009, a second attempt to hold a Gay Pride march in the Serbian capital was again stymied by the threats of violence by the hooligans, clerical and right-wing populist politicians.<sup>487</sup>

Any current political evaluation of the spectrum of anti-nationalistic forces should make a clear differentiation between two tendencies: one of these identifies itself with a left-oriented perspective. It includes the generation of elderly intellectuals in the major cities which grew out of either the left oriented oppositional forces within old Yugoslavia which were pushing for the democratisation of socialism, or from the party structures of the SKJ itself. They include a number of UJDI founders who are continuing to take part in left oriented alternative discussion. Examples include the Serbian Journal *Republika*, or the Mirovni (Peace) Institute in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana.<sup>488</sup> This segment also includes a new generation of young leftists whose political socialisation only began at the end of the socialist era. The main issues for these young leftists include anti-fascism, feminism and social protest.<sup>489</sup>

The second major anti-nationalistic tendency can today no longer be considered left oriented. Here, since the beginning of the '90s, the increasingly dominant discourse centres around a rapid and unconditional integration of the post-Yugoslav states into the «Euro-Atlantic structures», and the implementation of «Western values». These structures combine demands for political democratisation and respect for human rights with those for the establishment of a liberal capitalist market economy and world market integration. This (neo)-liberal segment of the anti-nationalist spectrum is represented by such organisations as the Serbian and Croatian Helsinki Committees, and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Serbia.

The left and (neo)-liberal segments of the anti-nationalist opposition tendency are connected through their social base; what all segments of «civil society» have failed to accomplish to date is the construction of any mass base in the population. The

486 Ever since the early '90s, organisations for equal rights for gays and lesbians have emerged. Cf. Živković, Ljiljana (eds.): *First there was a letter. Fifteen Years of Lesbian and Gay Activism in Serbia and Montenegro. 1990–2005*. Belgrade 2005; Sagasta, Sanja: *Lesbians in Croatia*, in: *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 2001, 8/3, pp. 357–372.

487 Here, it should be noted that especially some of the leading figures most widely touted in the West as «the democratic opposition», have exhibited a particularly aggressive brand of homophobia.

488 *Republika* was founded as the Journal of the UJDI, and is headed by the sociologist and former Praxis staff member Nebojša Popov.

489 Some examples include the alternative youth centre CK13 in Novi Sad (Serbia), which carries out various artistic and also critical theoretical projects, the group *Pokret za slobodu* (Belgrade), which participates in mobilizing workers protests, the youth group *Lenka* (Skopje), and the group around the left-wing critical Journal *Novi Plamen* (Zagreb).

protagonists of these tendencies are for the most part members of the educated elite. Critics describe this «civil society» as the «NGO industry». Professionalisation and institutionalisation of the employees of the NGOs often replace the direct participation of «target groups». «Lobbying» by NGOs at national and multinational government organisations often replaces the mobilisation of political opinion of the people affected.<sup>490</sup>

### **Trade Unions and social protest**

An almost ignored but nonetheless important aspect of the social crisis in Yugoslavia of the 1980s was the growth of a social protest movement of workers. Strikes and workers' demonstrations became increasingly common, especially during the latter half of the 1980s. The demands were oriented largely toward maintaining social standards and jobs, and for payment of wages. The mobilisation of workers was not directed openly against the political system, but rather demanded that the SKJ be kept its promises. Initially, this protest had no nationalistic accents. Only after the leading functionaries of the SKJ turned toward nationalism were workers' protests channelled into the stream of nationalist demands, so that no pan-Yugoslav independent workers' movement was able to emerge at the end of the '80s.<sup>491</sup> In hindsight, the workers in former Yugoslavia must be considered the big losers of the destruction of the federal Yugoslav state. Several waves of inflation have meant enormous losses in purchasing power. At the same time, the economic crisis, wartime destruction and neo-liberal restructuring have caused the collapse of the industrial base, and indeed, a process of de-industrialisation. The long-term effects have been the erosion of social standards, high unemployment and the expansion of the informal sector. Today, secure employment conditions are the privilege of a minority in former Yugoslavia.<sup>492</sup>

490 Based on a study conducted in 2004, Belgrade sociologist Mladen Lazić ascertained that a major share of the NGO activists in Serbia are women (60%) between the ages of 30 and 50 (45.6%), with a high level of education (university or technical college) (63.7%). More than half of the NGO members surveyed are employed as members of academic staffs (53.2%), and many are still students (21.4%); 47% come from homes with college-educated parents. Notable is the fact that the class self-identification of those surveyed is predominantly (52.8%) middle class. Politically, the majority of those surveyed identified as (45.6%) in the middle of the political spectrum, 26% see themselves as centre-left, and only 10.5% self-identify as leftists or «extreme» leftists. Cf. Lazić, Mladen: *Promene i otpori. Srbija u transformacijskim procesima* (Change and resistance. Serbia in the transformation process), Belgrade 2005, pp. 83ff.

491 This development is described very well in: Vladislavjević, Nebojša: *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution. Milošević, the Fall of Communism and Nationalist Mobilisation*, New York 2008.

492 Throughout the 1990s, there was a dramatic rise in the unemployment rate in all post-Yugoslav countries: in former Yugoslavia in 1989, that rate was still 14.9%; today, it is not below that mark in any of the successor states. Unemployment is especially serious in Kosovo, where the official rate in 2007 was 46.3%. Cf. International Labour Organisation Geneva: LABORSTA Labour Statistics Database, (Data bases: Labour Force Survey and Employment Office Records), <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>, accessed on January 25 2010; Republic of Serbia, State Statistical Office: *Anketa o radnoj snazi. Stopa nezaposlenosti* (Labour Force Survey. The unemployment rate), <http://webzsz.stat.gov.rs/axd/drugastrana.php?Sifra=0018&izbor=odel&tab=152>, accessed on January 25 2010; Republic of Croatia, State Statistical Office: *Stopa registrirane nezaposlenosti* (Registered unemployment rate) <http://www.dzs.hr/>, accessed on January 25 2010.

Pushing through the interests of workers is extremely difficult, given this situation. Threatened unemployment and insecure jobs hamper the ability of workers to mobilize. At the same time, the trade union movement is also weak for reasons of organisational politics. On the one hand, various trade union federations compete with one another, and thus often stand in each other's way. Second, the union organisations often are dominated by the interests of particular plants. In contrast, industry-wide unions and union federations are weak.<sup>493</sup>

Nonetheless, trade union protest is sometimes mobilised. Even during the '90s, there were often protests against the social impact of the economic transformation; however, due to the war, their effects were minimal. In recent years, there has been a new wave of workers' protest, especially involving three conflict situations. First, employees have demanded the payment of their wages, which are often held back for months or even years. Second, there have been protests against layoffs. And third, employees have protested against the manner in which plants have been privatised. Most of these three forms of protest are defensive reactions to attacks on employees' interests. By contrast, virtually no offensive representation of trade union interests has been in evidence. Only in exceptional situations do worker protests display a political orientation which might provide a point of connection for left oriented alternative discussion. One example is that of the Jugoremedija pharmaceuticals plant in Zrenjanin, where staff resisted a takeover by a corrupt investor, and successfully developed an employees' shareholder model.<sup>494</sup>

In addition to the workers, students have in recent years increasingly been engaged in social protest. In this area, clearly positive developments can be seen. For the first time since the end of the war, there have been signs of the emergence of a new socially critical student movement which places social issues front and centre. While a student and youth protest of the '90s often displayed an expressly anti-communist character, there has since 2007 once again been an articulate left-oriented student movement. The issues of these protests are tuition fees, studying conditions and the neo-liberal reform of the universities. In their protests at the universities, young people in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are once again connecting positively to one another across these new boundaries.<sup>495</sup>

493 In the post-Yugoslav states, as in most Eastern European countries, the successor organisations of the old «state trade unions» continue to exist, and there are also newly founded organisations, often patterned after the model of *Solidarność* in Poland. However, ideological differences are today no longer of major importance. Cf. Grdešić, Marko: *Tranzicija, sindikati i političke elite u Sloveniji i Hrvatskoj* (The transition, unions and political elites in Slovenia and Croatia), in: *Politička misao*, 2006, 43/4, pp. 121–141.

494 Cf. *Koordinacioni odbor radničkih protesta u Srbiji* (2009): *Novi radnički pokret u Srbiji* (Coordinating Board for Workers' Protests in Serbia (2009): A new labour movement in Serbia), in: *Pokret*, No. 3, pp. 2ff. On the Serbian workers' movement, see: Zlatić, Ivan (2009): *Novi radnički pokreti u Srbiji – ciljevi i prepreke* (The new labour movement in Serbia: Goals and obstacles). In: *Republika*, No. 468–469, Jan. 1–31, 2010.

495 Cf. Tomić, Đorđe: *Chancen für eine neue kritische Jugendbewegung. Studentische Proteste in Serbien und Kroatien* (Opportunities for a new critical youth movement: Student protests in Serbia and Croatia). (Standpunkte International, 21). Berlin 2009.

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## Links

Social democratic parties

### Bosnia-Herzegovina

Socijaldemokratska partija Bosne i Hercegovine (SDP) [Social Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina] <http://www.sdp.ba/>

Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata (SNSD) [League of Independent Social Democrats] <http://www.snsd.org/>

### Croatia

Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske (SDP) [Social Democratic Party of Croatia] <http://www.sdp.hr/>

### Macedonia

Socijaldemokratski savez na Makedonija (SDSM) [Sozialdemokratischer Bund Mazadoniens] <http://www.sdsm.org.mk/>

### Montenegro

Demokratska partija socijalista (DPS) [Democratic Party of Socialists] <http://www.dpscg.org/> (Link inaktiv)

Socijaldemokratska partija Crne Gore (SDP) [Social Democratic Party of Montenegro] <http://www.sdp.co.me/>

### Serbia

Demokratska stranka (DS) [Democratic Party] <http://www.ds.org.rs/>

Socijaldemokratska partija (SDP) [Social Democratic Party] <http://www.sdp.org.rs/>

Socijaldemokratska partija Srbije (SDP)<sup>496</sup> [Social Democratic Party of Serbia] <http://www.sdpsrbije.org.rs/>

Socijalistička partija Srbije (SPS) [Socialist Party Serbia] <http://www.sps.org.rs/>

Socijaldemokratska Unija (SDU) [Social Democratic Union] <http://www.sdu.org.rs/>

### Slovenia

Socialni demokrati (SD) [Social Democrats] <http://www.socialnidemokrati.si/>

<sup>496</sup> The party was founded in 2009. The abbreviation is the same as that of the Social Democratic Party of Nebojša Čović which is a member of the Socialist International; however this is a different party.

## Other left parties

### Croatia

Socijalistička radnička partija Hrvatske (SRP) [Socialist Workers' Party of Croatia] <http://www.srp.hr/>

### Serbia

Socijaldemokratska unija (SDU) [Social Democratic Union] <http://www.sdu.org.rs/>

Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine (LSV) [League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina] <http://www.lsv.org.rs/>

Leftist Parties of the World, Eastern Europe and the Former USSR (Extensive list of left parties in Eastern Europe) <http://www.broadleft.org/easteuro.htm>

### Peace initiatives

Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju [Center for cultural decontamination, Belgrade] <http://www.czkd.org/>

Centar za mir i razvoj demokratije/(ex) Centar za antiratnu akciju [Centre for peace and democracy development, (formerly Center for antiwar action), Belgrad] <http://www.caa.org.yu/>

Centar za mirovne studije [Centre for Peace Studies, Zagreb] <http://www.cms.hr/>

Unija 47/Antiratna kampanja Hrvatske [Union 47/Croatian Anti-War Campaign, Zagreb] <http://www.zamirnet.hr/unija47/unija47.html/>

Mirovni inštitut – inštitut za sodobne družbene in politične študije [Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies, Ljubljana] <http://www.mirovni-institut.si/>

### Feminist initiatives

Autonomni ženski centar [Autonomous Women's Centre, Belgrade] <http://www.womenngo.org.rs/>

Žene u crnom [Women in Black, Belgrade] <http://www.zeneucrnom.org/>

Žene ženama [Women to/with Women, Sarajevo] <http://www.zenezenama.org/>

Ženska mreža Hrvatske [Croatian Women's Network] <http://www.zenska-mreza.hr/>

Ženske grupe BiH [list of women's groups in Bosnien-Herzegowina]

<http://zenskegrupebih.fondacijacure.org/>

Ženski informaciono-dokumentacioni centar [Women's Information and Documentation Centre, Belgrade] <http://www.zindokcentar.org/>

Centar za ženske studije Beograd [Centre for Women's Studies, Belgrade] <http://www.zenskestudie.edu.rs/>

Centar za ženske studije Zagreb [Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb] <http://www.zenstud.hr/>

Ženske studije i istraživanja [Women's Studies and Research] Novi Sad

<http://www.zenskestudije.org.rs/>

### LGBT groups

Labris Beograd <http://www.labris.org.rs/>

Queer Beograd <http://www.queerbeograd.org/>

SiQRD – Slovenian Queer Recourse Directory <http://www.ljudmila.org/siqrd/>

Udruženje Q [Q Confederation, Sarajevo] <http://www.queer.ba/>

Ženska alijansa [Women's Alliance, Skopje] <http://www.womensalliance.mk/>

Belgrade Pride <http://belgradepride.rs/>

Zagreb Pride <http://www.zagreb-pride.net/>

### Left youth groups

Alternativna kulturna organizacija (AKO) [Alternative Culture Organisation] Novi Sad <http://www.ako.rs/>

Crna kuća 13 [Black House 13] Novi Sad <http://www.ck13.org/>;

Delavsko-punkerska univerza [Worker-Punker University of Ljubljana]

<http://dpu.mirovni-institut.si/>

KSSD «Diskrepancija» [«Discrepancy Club» of sociology students, Zagreb]

<http://www.diskrepancija.org/>;

Lenka – dvizenje za socijalna pravda [Lenka – Movement for Social Justice, Skopje] <http://lenka.blog.com.mk/>

## **Student protests**

### **Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Student Plenum of the University of Tuzla: <http://studentskiplenum.blogger.ba/>

### **Croatia**

Slobodni filozofski (Philosophy Department), Student plenum of the philosophy department at the University of Zagreb: <http://www.slobodnifilozofski.com/>

<http://slobodnifilozofski.org/> (English-language site)

Autonomni studenti (Autonomous Students), Department of Philosophy in Rijeka:

<http://blog.autonomnistudenti.com/>

Nezavisna studentska inicijativa Split, University of in Split: <http://nsist.blog.hr/>

Inicijativa za besplatno visoko obrazovanje – OS. i dalje smo tu :) i borimo se! (Initiative for free higher education – Osijek. We are still here :) and we are fighting!), University of Osijek: <http://www.osjecki.studenti.blogger.hr/>

### **Macedonia**

Sloboden indeks <http://slobodenindeks.blog.com.mk/>

### **Serbia**

Borba za znanje (Struggle for knowledge), site of the 2005 – 2008 student protests: <http://protest.zbrka.net/>

Studenti za studente (Students for Students), University of Belgrade:

<http://studentskiprotest08.blogspot.com/> (2008 site)

<http://www.studentizastudente.net/> (current site)

### **Left and critical media**

Arkzin (Zagreb) <http://arkzin.net>

Belgrade Circle Journal (Belgrade) <http://www.usm.maine.edu/bcj/>

Diskrepancija (Zagreb) <http://diskrepancija.org/casopis/>

Nova Iskra (Skopje) <http://www.novaiskra.mk/>

Novi Plamen (Zagreb) <http://www.noviplamen.org/>

Peščanik <http://www.pescanik.net/>

Prelom (Belgrade) <http://www.prelomkolektiv.org/srp/casopis.htm>

Republika (Belgrade) <http://www.republika.co.rs/>

ZaMirZine (Zagreb) <http://www.zamirzine.net/>

Zarez (Zagreb) <http://www.zarez.hr/>