

The Phenomenon of Yugo-nostalgia in post-Yugoslav countries

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The phenomenon of Yugo-nostalgia began to arise at the turn of 1980s and 1990s and took various forms, appearing in the background of both culture and politics. It was expressed most explicitly in the mass demonstrations organised in Yugoslav society in early 1991, and expressed the desire to keep the country whole. Yugo-nostalgia, as described below, takes into consideration a nostalgia and longing for the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

Definition of nostalgia

The fall of the state and national community has not gone without echoes in this later period and is expressed in longing for times lost. The term “nostalgia” originates from the Greek words *nostos* – return, and *algos* – suffering, and in the case of the political community, means a sorrow and longing for the previous social, political and cultural order. Svetlana Boym in her book *The Future of Nostalgia* writes that, nostalgia depends on unpredictability, it is a longing for place, but also for the old times and childhood. It is a taboo issue and: “concerns the relations between the individual and group as well as national biographies, between personal/private and collective memories.”¹ The author distinguishes two types of nostalgia - restorative and reflective. The first, “emphasises *nostos* and tries to carry out a historically unprecedented reconstruction of lost home.” It defines itself as truth and tradition. It is the root of a recent national and religious revival where two plot lines are employed - a return to roots and conspiracy. Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in an absolute reconstruction of a memorialised past. It gravitates towards collective pictorial symbols and verbal culture. The second type is focused on *algia as*, “a longing that itself delays homecoming.” Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalence of human longing and

¹ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York 2001, p. XIV–XVI.

affiliation. It does not relate to one plot only but investigates the ways of inhabiting many places at once, while in different time zones, “it loves details not symbols.” Reflective nostalgia pauses over ruins, it asks about the time and history which occur in dreams of places and times past.²

Mitija Velikonja, in turn, defines nostalgia as: “[...] comprehensively diversifying and variable, emotionally charged, individual or collective, a (non)instrumentalised narration, which in a binary way ennobles romantic old times, people, things, feelings, scents, events, spaces, relations, values or political systems. At the same time it presents the past in stark contrast to the less valuable contemporary, and pours out its soul for old times lost.”

M. Velikonja has distinguished four types of nostalgia: 1. Personal and collective; 2. “Material” (old and new items/things) nostalgia as a feeling or idea; 3. Instrumental and non-instrumental (commercial, cultural, political); 4. Mimetic (related to authenticity, decorated with the aura of “genuine experience”) and satiric (ironic, ignoring the old canons). What is most critical, as the Slovenian author writes: “[...] nostalgia is not the story of who we used to be but of who we *never were* [...] a *Homo nostalgicus* does not describe the the old history in a neutral and committed way, but is an interpreter of manners.” In his view, nostalgia is a reaction and action.³ Nostalgia may be understood as either an opium for the disoriented masses or as the neutral, aesthetic irony of pro-western youth.⁴ Two different phenomena appeared in the 1990s - the culture of nostalgia and nostalgic culture. The first signifies part of a common phenomenon, i.e. materialized group discourse, institutions or units. The second is the social, cultural and mental state of popular convictions and relationships to the old times, being the subject of nostalgia.⁵

After the collapse of the multinational countries of the Eastern Block, a nostalgia directed towards political formations emerged. It brought about a longing for the ease, simplicity and meaning of the life within the imposed predictability of the socialist system. These included memories of social, political and economic security (all of which collapsed with the onset of crises related to the transformation of systems), the security of a closed

2 Ibidem, pp. XVIII, 41–45, 49–50. Por. S. Boym, *Nostalgia i postkomunistyczna pamięć*, in: F. Modrzejewski, M. Sznajderman (ed.), *Nostalgia. Eseje o tęsknocie za komunizmem*, Wołowiec 2002, pp 277.

3 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija*, Beograd 2010, pp. 31, 34–37, 165.

4 S. Jansen, *Antinacionalizam. Etnografija otpora u Beogradu i Zagrabu*, Beograd 2005, p. 221.

5 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, p. 44–45.

world as well as for childhood, music and underground intellectual life. Alongside the nostalgia for Yugoslavia (described further), one can also mention a longing for The Soviet Union (USSR), The German Democratic Republic (GDR)⁶, the People's Republic of Poland (PRP) or Czechoslovakia.⁷

In Russia this nostalgia is noticeable, inter alia, in the demonstration of national feelings during ceremonies, e.g. the 50th anniversary of Stalin's death.⁸ Moreover, nostalgia occurs as a longing for the times of Leonid Brezhnev, for great power and for heroes such as: Peter the Great, the generals Alexander Suvorov and Mikhail Kutuzov, Marshal Georgy Zhukov, the writer Alexander Pushkin, the chemist Dmitri Mendeleev and the cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.⁹ They are people who, as symbols of the worlds of science, culture and politics, were recognisable the world over. They are those who contributed to creating the greatness of Czarist and Soviet Russia in the international arena. Nostalgia for USSR seems to be a longing for a vast soviet empire, for geopolitical space. The fact is that, after Perestroika and the collapse of USSR, at the beginning of 1990s, the soviet system was forgotten. As witnessed when the statues of those such as Felix Dzerzhinsky, Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin were removed from Gorky Park in Moscow. However, no sooner than in 1997, they were raised again. Alongside them statues of Adam and Eve, Mahatma Ghandi and Don Quixote were included, as well as of the great Russian writers Sergei Yesenin, Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov. The statues do not appear to inspire many emotions, since they are, "only statues - they can't hurt anybody." In a new Art Park, everyone can coexist and, as S. Boym remarks: "Soviet history has been altered into an idyllic one."¹⁰ The images of Stalin and Lenin are used without limitations in comedies. "Glokal nostalgia" can be noticed in the film *Burnt by the Sun* by Nikita Mikhalkov, where a nostalgic and idyllic vision of 1930s Soviet life is presented. In 2000, when the *Kursk* submarine sank, one could hear

6 D. Berdahl, *Where the world ended: re-unification and identity in the German Borderland*, Berkley California UP 1999.

7 A. Roberts, The politics and anti-politics of nostalgia, in: *East European politics and Societies*, 2002, 16: 3, pp. 764-809.

8 T. Kuzio, Analysis: Attitudes to Soviet past reflect nostalgia, pragmatism, *Ukrainian Weekly* LXXI (August 2003) (34), p. 2.

9 B. Dubin, The West, the Border, and the Unique Path – Symbolism of the „other” i the Political Mythology of Contemporary Russia. Russian Politics and Law, *Armonk*, NY 2002, 40/2, s. 20-21, in: M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, p. 114.

10 S. Boym, *The Future...*, pp. 83-91.

comment in Russia as follows: “We all live in the soviet submarine.”¹¹ Later, when Sociologists would ask, “Are you a Soviet person?”, 15% of Russians and 12% of Ukrainians answered positively. In the West of Ukraine, only two percent of those polled longed for the times of communism. Those Russians who spent part of their life in the previous system claim that USSR has not collapsed, and that they don’t perceive Georgia or Ukraine, for example, as foreign countries. Furthermore, they long for the ideology, the youth and the soviet myths of that time, as well as social equality and access to health care. In short, they emphasise that, “it was much better those times.”¹²

So too, in East Germany (former GDR) in 1989, began the process of deleting memory of shame about the past. Legends began developing about how everybody used to resist the old regime.¹³ Before then there had been two countries, and one nation, with one cultural tradition. Currently, there is one country with two identities: *Ossis* and *Wessis* – with their own cultural memory and frames of collective memory.¹⁴ However, the unification process, along with escalating unemployment, caused East Germany to return to memories. What is more, the concept of *osstalgia* developed, meaning a nostalgia for the GDR, which is perceived as an attempt to find your own identity as well as a reckoning with the past, a new assessment and a farewell to the GDR.¹⁵ The film *Goodbye Lenin* became a symbol of this longing for old times in the GDR, with the German RTL TV later basing a TV series on it.¹⁶ We are also reminded of the old GDR in a Berlin bookshop called Karl-Marx-Buchhandlung, where, among other things, one can buy the game *Aleja Stalina* (Stalin Avenue), while a shop called *Ostprodukte* supplies goods produced in the former GDR, e.g. *Metal Shine* car polish to maintain the plastic bodies of Trabant cars,¹⁷ which themselves are currently popular with collectors. Identity is still a problem for the people of Eastern Germany who, in 1999, felt their citizenship of a united Germany in only 20% of responses, while the slogan “not

11 Ibidem, pp. 57–67, 70.

12 P. Kościński, J. Prus, *Narodowość: ludzie sowieccy*, 17.11.2010 <http://www.rp.pl/artykul/564952.html?p=1> (accessed: 12.01.2012)

13 T. Brussig, *Odczuwamy nostalgię, bo jesteśmy ludźmi*, in: F. Modrzejewski, M. Sznajderman (ed.), *Nostalgia. Eseje o tęsknocie za komunizmem*, Wołowiec 2002, pp. 16–17.

14 S. Boym, *The Future...*, pp. 177–178.

15 J. Trenkner, *Był kiedyś taki kraj...*, in: F. Modrzejewski, M. Sznajderman (ed.), *Nostalgia. Eseje o tęsknocie za komunizmem*, Wołowiec 2002, pp. 18–19.

16 J. Vukotić, *Mače, ideš u Kluz?*, <http://www.nin.co.rs/2003-08/01/30122.html> (accessed: 27.04.2010).

17 J. Trenkner, op. cit., pp. 16–17.

everything was so bad for us” became popular.¹⁸ Similarly, in Poland, the expressions “it was better during communism”¹⁹ or “those were the days,” are a return to a more certain identity. Here, only 50% recognise the present system as being good. This phenomenon is also characteristic of areas in Eastern Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Russia, Croatia or Serbia.

It is necessary to emphasise that the phenomena described above are not a nostalgia for the political system itself, as that system had a negative approach towards human beings and individualistic behaviours. Simona Popescu, a Romanian writer and essayist claims: “[...] nostalgia means an ability to recall things, nostalgia for communism relates to forgetting. The greater the amnesia, the greater the nostalgia.”²⁰

Yugo-nostalgia as an example of collective memory

The concept of Yugo-nostalgia was popularised by Dubravka Ugrešić at the beginning of the 1990s, and at that time the phenomenon was perceived as negative. The writer, who called herself “a Yugoslav” in Croatia, was denounced as a traitor and a witch.²¹ Bojan Baskar and Emilio Cocco have defined Yugo-nostalgia as, Austro-nostalgia. The first author emphasised the similarities between the Hapsburg empire and Yugoslavian socialist state, the second paid attention to the expressions, “it was better before” as describing a longing for Austria-Hungary.²² D. Novačić illustrates three definitions of Yugo-nostalgia. Firstly, it is: “[...] an elegiac remembrance of life in the former Yugoslavia [...]”. Secondly: “[...] unpleasant recollections of the life which had been led earlier, which was later renounced, and which we still feel ashamed.” Thirdly: “[...] it is a collection of manifestations of one culture, which has

18 Ibidem, pp. 21–23, 32.

19 P. Smoleński, *Za komuny było lepiej, czyli o kłopotach wspólnej podróży nad morze*, in: F. Modrzejewski, M. Sznajderman (ed.), *Nostalgia. Eseje o tęsknocie za komunizmem*, Wołowiec 2002, pp 114–129.

20 S. Popescu, *All that Nostalgia*, in: F. Modrzejewski, M. Sznajderman (ed.), *Nostalgia. Eseje o tęsknocie za komunizmem*, Wołowiec 2002, p 104.

21 W Chorwacji pięć pisarek sprzeciwiających się nacjonalizmowi okrzyknięto czarownicami (vještice), były to: Dubravka Ugrešić, Slavenka Drakulić, Rada Iveković, Jelena Lovrić i Vesna Kesić.

22 E. Cocco, *Borderland Mimicry: Imperial Legacies, National Stands and regional identity in Croatian Istria after the nineties*, *Nar. umjet.* 2010, 47/1, p 20; T. Petrović, *The Territory of the Former Yugoslavia In the „Mental Maps” of Former Yugoslavs: Nostalgia for Space*, w: J. Sujecka (ed.), *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, Poznań – Warszawa 2007, p 31, p 264. Zob. B. Baskar, *Austronostalgia, Yugonostalgia and Memories of Empires*, *Balkanis*, 2004, 5/12–16, pp 48–52.

outlived the society where it was created [...] “Yugo-nostalgia” is a word formed from the connection of two neologisms, i.e. *Yugoslavia* and *nostalgia*.²³

Yugonostalgia takes different forms. Firstly, it erases memories about Yugoslavia in the context of contradicting the nationalism and Yugo-nostalgia itself. It is also used as a reaction to the growing power of nationalism, and due to this, became anti-nationalistic. Secondly, it exists in the meaning of cultural and social aspects, historic memory and a certain geopolitical space, e.g. Yugo-nostalgia in politics. Thirdly, it is a commercial (pop-cultural) Yugo-nostalgia in which one may identify several types, such as Tito-nostalgia, Yugo-nostalgia for music or Yugo-nostalgia in the Internet.

In its first form, the phenomenon of Yugo-nostalgia is determined by many factors including political, economic and social crises, being emphasised even more since the death of J.B.Tito in 1980. An event that led to increased ethno-nationalism, and consequently, the breakup of the Yugoslav state, which started with the secession of Slovenia and Croatia. These events resulted in the perceiving of the Yugoslav state as prison form which one was eager to escape. Also, in that period, we may not speak about Yugo-nostalgia in a positive connotation, since it was ignored and its existence as a mass phenomenon was denied. Despite ongoing support for the maintaining of Yugoslavia following previous reforms, the proponents of a such a strategy were usually the former leaders of three communities: Serbian – S. Milošević, Muslim – A. Izetbegović and Croatian – F. Tuđman.²⁴

In Croatia, the word Yugoslavia was prohibited, while Yugo-nostalgic or Yugo-zombi became synonyms of betrayal; more painful than *Chetnik* or *commie*. This entailed the removing of old names from streets and schools. The Cyrillic alphabet became undesirable (particularly in Croatia), while the entire system of values was turned upside down, seemingly within a few moments. Definitions which had been desirable up to then, such as anti-fascist, former partisan, communist, left winger or anti-nationalist - obtained a negative meaning. Therefore, being Yugo-nostalgic indicated opposition to democracy and disqualification in political life. The change of values which occurred in culture, politics and ideology (from

23 D. Novačić, *Jugonostalgija – istorija bolesti*, <http://www.bastabalkana.com/2009/10/jugonostalgija-istorija-bolesti/> (accessed:27.04.2011).

24 M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii w pierwszej dekadzie XXI wieku*, in: A. Gil, T. Kapuśniak (red.), *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Region bałkański*, Lublin 2009, cz. 2, rok 7, p. 12.

communism to nationalism) introduced effacement of identity and confusion within society. Nostalgia turned out to be the most pernicious of these, as it implied the presence of memory.²⁵ Yet, on the other hand, “homogenizing anti-nationalism” was one of the beliefs of Yugoslavianism (as termed by Stefen Jansen) and was: “[...] anti-nationalist owing to which one was able to preserve a national belongingness, with the past and present as problem-free elements of ones everyday life.”²⁶

Aleš Debeljak remarked that nostalgia is an intelligible feeling joining the former Yugoslavs: “However these feelings *have their roots in the past*. Currently there is a wide gap between the past and the present. It is *packed solid with butchered bodies...*”²⁷ Nationalists, nationalism and ethnic cleansing may be recognised as the symbol of these bodies. The permeation of ethno-nationalism, along with a longing for Yugoslavia and anti-nationalist attitudes in general, were a characteristic feature. As Tanja Petrović remarked: “a mental map” of the past started to be reorganised from a dwindling post-Yugoslavian space. This process occurred at the same time in both the power elite and among ordinary people, yet towards two separate directions: the power elite were trying to extinguish the common memory and values of Yugoslavia from their minds, while ordinary people were not ready to throw away their Yugoslav experiences, and it was they who began a nostalgic discourse about the past.²⁸ According to S. Jansen, Yugo-nostalgia appeared as an escapist strategy, which helped people to forget about the customs of their reality and to construct an idyllic past.²⁹ This “collective memory loss, a terror of oblivion” (S. Jensen) or “memory forfeiture” (D. Ugrešić) forced one to forget that which was remembered. Ugrešić also emphasised the term “memory terror” – being forced to recall that which you do not remember.³⁰ As an example one may give the international railway connection from Zagreb to Belgrade: on the information board, the termination point for the railway route Tovarnik – Šid (currently Belgrade), was given as the new Croatia- Serbia border, although the train went on to Serbia.

25 D. Ugrešić, *Kultura kłamstwa*, Wołowiec 2006, p. 143.

26 S. Jansen, op. cit., p. 217.

27 A. Debeljak, *Zmierzch idoli*, w: F. Modrzejewski, M. Sznajderman (red.), *Nostalgia. Eseje o tęsknocie za komunizmem*, Wołowiec 2002, p. 214.

28 T. Petrović, op. cit., pp. 263–264.

29 S. Jansen, op. cit., pp. 220–221.

30 D. Ugrešić, op. cit., pp. 127, 337–365 and in: F. Modrzejewski, M. Sznajderman (red.), *Nostalgia. Eseje o tęsknocie za komunizmem*, Wołowiec 2002, pp. 242–267.

Furthermore, in Serbia and Croatia the word Yugo-nostalgia became, as Stefen Jansen writes, “a vivid code” where the nationalists tarnished all the ideas and deeds.³¹ It implied the existence of only Croatia, without any relation to Serbia, let alone Yugoslavia.

Employing the word Yugo-nostalgia implied imposing the etiquette of negative and contemptuous connotations.³² This sort of politics was led by nationalists who derided and criticised Yogo-nostalgists (and their longing for 1st May trips and the thirteenth salary) as being the ones who lost out during the transformation.³³ Likewise, people who emigrated during the war were considered Yogonostalgists. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1990s, Yugo-nostalgia functioned as a strategy and the basis of an anti-capitalist resistance, it was an answer to nationalist discourse.³⁴ As S. Jansen perceives: “Yugo-nostalgia was increasing in proportion with the occurrence of nationalism, while nationalist wars divided the Yugoslav 'home' into two parts.”

The term Yugo-nostalgia was more frequently used in Croatia than in Serbia. The regime magazine *Vjesnik* in Croatia, and the electronic network *Zamir* (za - mir - to peace; trans. A.J.S), which was an essential anti-nacionalist initiative between the republics during the war, were labelled Yugo-nostalgic (negative connotation) in their attempts to create a common state. Likewise, president F. Tudman used the word Yugo-nostalgia in a collective manner to label such people as: those of mixed marriages, left wing politics, officers' children or the red bourgeoisie.³⁵ Moreover, he emphasised that Yugo-nostalgia either has nothing in common with the renewed creation of a mutual state, or does not show loyalty towards Yugoslovianism. S. Jansen, who investigated the problem under discussion, remarked that people who still considered themselves Yugoslavs, did not support the reviving of Yugoslavia again. By and large, in the rhetoric of the nationalists only, Yugo-nostalgia was expressed as loyalty towards Yugoslavia and as a desire to create a common country again. In Belgrade, at the beginning of the 1990s, Yugonostalgia appeared to be a complicated problem. It was a specifically Serbian desire to retrieve territories lost, which was used to give grounds for a

31 S. Jansen, op. cit., p 221.

32 Ibidem, p 222.

33 *Zemlja cija je zastava dvaput bila na mesecu* op. cit., www.srpskadijaspora.info/vesti.asp?id=11935; M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii...*, p. 14; T. Petrović, op. cit., p 263–264.

34 T. Petrović, op. cit., p. 264. Zob. *Feral Tribune* 05.10.98, pp. 48–49.

35 F. Tuđman joined the Communists Partisans of J.B. Tity.

greater Serbian nationalism of Yugoslavia, included in the Croatian term *Srboslavija*.³⁶ In the case of Yugoslavia, it was not a longing for the centralised arbitrariness of Belgrade.³⁷

In 1997, the Croatian magazine “Globus” published the article: *Are you Yugo-nostalgic? (Da li ste jugonostalgicar?)*. It referred to many various phenomena from the times of Yugoslavia such as: pop songs, films, TV series, comics, magazines, food products, football, cars and even brands of refrigerators.³⁸ From that moment on, one may speak about a transition from an anti-nationalist and political Yugo-nostalgia, to a social and cultural one.

In spite of the existence of nationalist rhetoric, the creating of new countries and the strengthening of national identity, the next impulse for a discourse about Yugo-nostalgia was the elaboration, *Leksikon YU – mitologije*, issued in Serbia in 2004. Earlier in 1989, on the initiative of Dubravka Ugrešić, Dejan Kršić and Ivan Molek, work on the lexicon project was started. An internet forum was conducted, which consisted of a peculiar invitation to post memories on the website related to the everyday life of the former Yugoslavia. The aim was to create a lexicon - a dictionary/encyclopedia of popular culture, which might be helpful to define the identity of the former Yugoslavs.³⁹ It was formed by the ordinary citizens of the now non-existent state, specifically those who were born in the 1960s. It is a lexicon of popular culture written in the Serbian and Croatian languages, while the factors mentioned above “make it a collective piece of work” as the authors write in the introduction. It illustrates 50 years of past for the inhabitants of Yugoslavia,⁴⁰ it elaborates their memory of Yugoslavia as well as the phenomenon of Yugo-nostalgia, and the elements of culture which have been remembered by society. It includes information about people and events related to worldwide culture and politics. The lexicon has been called a “Holy Bible of Yugo-nostalgia.”⁴¹ It sets the stage of Yugo-nostalgia described as the expression of certain cultural and political alterations, mainly in a positive connotation. Characteristics of the cultural-social aspects included therein have been divided (M. Velikonja and S. Jensen) into three categories:

36 S. Jansen, op. cit., pp. 221–224, 231–232; zob.: I. Spasić, *Sećanje na nedavnu propost*, in: Z. Golubović, I. Spasić, Đ. Pavićević (ed.), *Politika i svakodnevni život*, Srbija 1999–2002, Beograd: Disput.

37 A. Debeljak, op. cit., p. 224.

38 “Globus”, 22.08.1997, pp. 81–90, S. Jansen, op. cit., p. 246.

39 M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii...*, p. 15; I. Adrić, V. Arsenijević, Đ. Matić, *Leksikon Yu-mitologije*, Beograd, p. 4.

40 I. Adrić, V. Arsenijević, Đ. Matić, op. cit., p. 5.

41 M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii...*, p. 16.

1. Recollection – memories of a mutual home. 2. Memories of better times in Yugoslav everyday life. 3. A desire for better life - sorrow and longing for a better life. In addition, T. Petrović perceives these memories as shrunken territorial, geographical and cultural space - as a private and virtual space.⁴²

Reminiscence about Yugoslavia, as a “home” was related to relocation. Examples included employment for workers throughout the different regions of Yugoslavia or the treating of Dalmatia as a leisure destination, where people of the entire Yugoslavia used to possess their dachas. The geographic space (within one country) of the people inhabiting Yugoslavia had shrunk.⁴³ After the breakdown, the dwellers of Yugoslavia had suddenly lost one citizenship and were given another one - some of them became immigrants, internally displaced people possessing the passports of new countries. Free movement was prevented due to legal and security obstacles, which resulted in dissatisfaction and nostalgia for the freedom to travel. There was a longing for the red Yugoslav passports, which in the times of Marshal Tito, were of a great value - inhabitants when travelling abroad, were not required to have visas. The most significant problems occurred to those from mixed marriages as well as national minorities. What is more, the opportunity to travel within the area between Belgrade and Zagreb, used to give the possibility of connecting “two centres.” Here, Yugo-nostalgia is considered as personal-political, not geopolitical. S. Jensen adds that it is not a reminiscence of the state or etiquette of citizenship, but a remembrance of home within the mutual cultural space. Nostalgia for the Yugoslav home was also reflected in the singing of songs from the various former republics of Yugoslavia.⁴⁴ Taking into consideration a sociolinguistic context, the interlocutors of Jansen from Belgrade and Zagreb, would speak about both their new countries (Serbia and Croatia) and the space of Yugoslavia: *mi i ovde* (we and here). Jansen remarked that those who showed kindness (or did not) towards Yugoslavia, took advantage of the concentric model: my country or nation in the centre, later, the remaining former republics of Yugoslavia or nations (now “foreign countries”⁴⁵) witnessed a certain domination of identity and Yugoslav identification. While, the Serbo-Croatian language underwent erosion,

42 T. Petrović, op. cit., p. 263–264.

43 Ibidem, p. 265.

44 S. Jansen, op. cit., pp. 224, 258; zob.: I. Spasić, op. cit.

45 S. Jansen, op. cit., p. 225.

and also became the subject of nostalgia, as the creation of new borders hindered communication.

The image of Yugoslavia in the memory of home was manifested, inter alia, in the creation of a new virtual Yugoslavia (more below) as well as “the fourth Yugoslavia”, i.e. a Yugo-land in the south of Serbia. In the city of Subotica, Blaško Gabrić constructed a 1.6-hectare theme park with a swimming pool symbolizing the Adriatic Sea, a replica of Triglav Mountain (once the highest summit of Yugoslavia, nowadays Slovenia).⁴⁶ The song *Od Wardaru do Triglava* (from Vardar to Triglav) became the anthem of the new land. In 2003, thousands of people came to celebrate the birthday of a new “fourth Yugoslavia”, while the new streets were opened by Josip Broz Tito’s grandson.⁴⁷

Memories of better times (i.e. memories of the normality of everyday life) were associated with popular culture and a dissatisfaction with the nature of the current situation (i.e. the conflicts of the 1990s). This kind of recollection was expressed in the symbolic statement: *life was better during Tito’s times*, with that period in Yugoslavia perceived as modern, pro-west, open and individualistic.⁴⁸ An example may be in the memories of the sporting achievements of mixed national Yugoslav teams, or the opportunity to purchase a car, the Zastawa 750 - colloquially referred to as *ficia* or *buba* – produced in Kragujevac (Serbia). Distinctive is the fact that the car enjoyed its popularity for many years, and the brand name was changed in 1980 from Zastawa to Yugo (a model, the Yugo Koral, was produced at that time). That name was associated with Yugoslavia in an unambiguous manner. In 2001, the Zastawa brand returned. Mitja Velikonja writes about Yugo-nostalgia as a nostalgia for a deceased country, for pleasant “macro-Yogoslav” memories, for pop-culture (e.g. rock and roll, punk), films, TV series, stage and informal relationships (friends) as well as formal relations (military service, competition, inter-school exchanges).⁴⁹ Nostalgia often works as opium for the masses, yet in the lands of the former Yugoslavia, it is described as the sorrow of hope lost.⁵⁰

46 In *ex-Yugoslavia, Tito – era nostalgia*, “International Herald Tribune”, www.ihf.com, 27.01.2008 i 10.05.2008 and <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/world/europe/27iht-nostalgia.4.9533599.html> (23.04.2011).

47 T. Petrović, op. cit., p. 269.

48 S. Jansen, op. cit., pp. 227, 233.

49 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, pp. 13–14.

50 S. Jansen, op. cit., p. 259.

Aleš Debeljak, a Slovenian essayist, describes a nostalgia for a diverse country: multi-national, multi-cultural and religious. He wrote: “[...] the diversity of Yugoslav reality was a *natural fact* to me.” Slovenian cultural identity was based upon three factors; local Slovenian tradition, the tradition of worldwide mass culture and experience related to the area of Yugoslavia.⁵¹ All these created the picture of a lost, once better life, which seemed to be simpler than the new ethno-nationalist reality. The third type was connected with the commercialization of Yugo-nostalgia, and constitutes its most contemporary form. As has been mentioned, one may emphasise Tito-nostalgia and Yugo-nostalgia in music, the internet and politics.

Tito-stalgia

Druže Tito, vrati nam Se! Ni mrtav...
(*Comandre Tito, come back! But not dead ...*)

Dejan Novačić⁵²

Comandre Tito loved hunting, women and travelling,
and we loved Commander Tito.

Ninus Nestorović⁵³

Mitja Velikonja defines “titostalgia” as: “[...] a nostalgic discourse on the deceased Yugoslav president in the former space of a collapsed country.” This bias towards the socialist period, and its leader, appears to be a paradox which differs from the once compulsory and prescriptive Titoism. Nowadays, Titostalgia is not compulsory, but self-imposed, selected individually, and involves all aspects linked to the life of the former leader.

In her book, dedicated to the topic of Titostalgia, Velikonja explains why the image of Tito is perceived in such a positive manner in the former republics of Yugoslavia, why he is so present across such wide range of popular culture and how it is manifested. This nostalgia, according to a play on words is - a longing for the South, a longing for the Comrade (*tuga za Jugom, tuga za Drugom*). Moreover, Yugoslavia was often ironically called Tito-landia and Tito-slavia (*Titolandija, Titoslavija*) or the country of brotherly

⁵¹ A. Debeljak, op. cit., pp 218–219, 221–222.

⁵² Dejan Novačić – Serbian writer.

⁵³ Ninus Nestorović– Serbian aphorist.

nations and nationalities, a free Yugoslavia, socialism with a human face. Conversely, there were no lack of expressions of a negative nature, e.g. a dictatorial regime, a creature of Versailles/Yalta or the prison of nations (*tamnica naroda*). Tito was called the victorious partisan commander, world citizen, cosmopolitan, the only true Yugoslav, but also a war criminal, tyrant, anti-democrat, heathen and the Balkan Pol Pot. After World War II, he was described as a communist Martin Luther King, Henry VIII, and even the Balkan Caesar.⁵⁴

Images of Josip Tito currently appear in all the former republics of Yugoslavia, e.g. on key rings, portraits, postcards, lighters, magnets and pens. Numerous books are devoted to him, i.e. *Titov prevodilac* (Tito's Guide) by Ivan Ivanji, *Titova poslednja ispovjest* (Tito's last confession) by Vjenceslav Cenčicia, *Kako smo zabavljali Tita* (How we entertained Tito) by Minja Subota, *Tito bez maske* (Tito unmasked) by Miro Simičicia, *Titov kuvar* (Tito's cookbook) by Anja Drulović and *Jelovnici poznatih ličnosti: Kako se hranio Josip Broz Tito* (Menus of famous people: What Josip Broz Tito used to eat) by Branko Trbovic. Streets and squares named after Tito have remained in many cities throughout the former Yugoslavia, e.g. *Titov Trg* (Tito Square), *Maršala Tita* (Marshal Tito) in cities such as Podgorica, Bar and Ulcinj (Montenegro), Tuzla, Sarajevo and Mostar (B&H), Bečej, Kanjiža, Subotica, Bačka Topola and Vrbas (Serbia), Skopje, Tetovo, Veles and Strumica (Macedonia), Zaprešić, Zagreb and Varaždinske Toplice (Chorwacja), with the largest number of them being in Istria – Rapac, Labin, Pula, Umag, Opatija and Fažani, where in 2007, the name *Riva Tito* (Tito Promenade) was restored.⁵⁵

Especially noteworthy is the posthumous (even religious) cult worship of Josip Broz Tito, as manifested through ceremonies in which people go to his statues, greet him and even kiss his feet and coat⁵⁶ or dress up as him on May, 25. An increased yearning for the times of Tito may be witnessed in the growing number of people celebrating the birthday of the former head of Yugoslavia in his home village of Kumrovac. The most vociferous of these celebrations, in which roughly seven thousand people took part, were held in 2003. Statues of Tito can be found in Skopje, Sarajevo, Kumrovec and in Belgrade on Dedinje. The Marshal seems to remain a symbol of strong leadership, security, solidarity and those things that

54 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, p. 14–15.

55 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, pp. 57, 91–92.

56 Ibidem, p. 105.

people are longing for. His glorification is not related to political aspects, but to sentiment, commerce, and even provocation and entertainment. A *Tito party* in Doboj in 2007, was organised for purposes of tourism and commerce. In turn, companies manufacturing a brand of water *Titov izvor* are guided exclusively by marketing motives.⁵⁷ Although on buildings in Belgrade you may read such inscriptions as “Tito, come back, we forgive you everything”, the Marshal is not loved as much in Serbia, as he is in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁸ Between 2009 to 2010, thousands of people came to Tito’s grave, among whom, some were dressed as partisans. They wore white uniforms and carried flags and other symbols of Yugoslavia. In 2010, ceremonies of the Josip Broz Assotiation and the Communist Party were recently organised, with their chairman being Josip Joška Broz, a grandson of the deceased dictator.⁵⁹ As a consequence of the *Titostalgia* phenomenon, May has become the month of Yugo-nostalgia.⁶⁰

Yuog-nostalgia in post-Yugoslav countries

After 2000, Yugo-nostalgia exploded with force anew in all the former republics of Yugoslavia. In Croatia, wine is produced with such names as *Titovo* and *Brozovo*, *Titova medevina*, *Titov liker* and *Titova rakija*, as well as the *Titov izvor* mineral water. In Istria, *Titov kej* (Tito’s Boulevard) can be found. The Eurokaz International Festival of Theatre in Zagreb, changed its name to *Titikaz* in 2007, and was held under the slogan *Tito – četvrti put* (Tito – a fourth time). In Kumrovec, in turn, during the anniversaries of Josip B. Tito’s birthday or death, massive ceremonies are organised. One example may be the year 2004, when, during the 112th anniversary of the Marshal’s birthday, about five thousand participants gathered. In 2005, on the 25th anniversary of his death, there were between eight and ten thousand people gathered in the same city. With Slovenians constituting the largest

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 21–22, 92.

⁵⁸ D. Čosić, *Modna Jugonostalgia*, 22.10.2009, <http://www.presseurop.eu/pl/content/article/122591-modna-jugonostalgia> (accessed: 22.04.2011) and D. Čosić, *Jugonostalgia*, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/14162/Jugonostalgia/> (accessed: 22.04.2011).

⁵⁹ M. Milenkowska, *Jugonostalgia pełną parą Tłumy na grobie Tity*, http://fakty.interia.pl/fakty_dnia/news/jugonostalgia-pelna-para-tlumy-na-grobie-tity,1483685 (accessed: 23.04.2011)

⁶⁰ M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii...*, p. 31.

group.⁶¹ As Mirella Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska remarks, there were the trips to Belgrade which became popular in Slovenia, while in Croatia, the island of Brioni is of particular interest as well as the restored palace in Tikveš, which used to be a favourite hunting place for the Marshall.⁶²

Yugo-nostalgia in Slovenia is manifested in such ways as the creation of a website in honour of the long-serving leader (www.titoville.com) where parodies and humorous anecdotes from the Yugoslav past are placed.⁶³ In Slovenia, the image of Tito has become a trademark, used in the advertising of alcohol (Jagermeister), a Mercedes sedan and a Canon photocopier. There was also a punk band in the 1990s.⁶⁴ In 1998, 47.8% of Slovenians had mixed memories (positive and negative) towards the former Yugoslavia; 36.9% mostly positive and barely 5.4% negative.⁶⁵ In the same year, 63.9% of Slovenians expressed their positive opinion regarding Tito, six years later the percentage increased to 79.5%. In 2005, during a TV public opinion poll, 77% of Slovenians considered Tito as a positive historic figure.⁶⁶ As Velikonja writes: “the majority of Slovenians treat Yugoslavia as a closed chapter in their history, yet Yugo-nostalgia is widespread, in particular in the field of culture.”⁶⁷ Local left-wing movements in both Slovenia and neighbouring countries, organise marches in memory of Tito on May 25. Youth Day (*Dan mladosti*) in Ljubljana and a Republic Day (*Dan republike*) are held as well.⁶⁸

Why are we facing such a vivid nostalgia in Slovenia? One reason was their escape from the fate of a terrible civil war. Nostalgia is seen among the elderly (as memories of previous good times) as well as among the young. Young people do not remember the Marshal, but they perceive Yugoslavia as a symbol of union and security. Apart from that, this nostalgia has a commercial character, since Tito sells well (*Tito se dobro prodaje*). Why are ceremonies related to the former country, as well as the Commandant's birthday, being celebrated in Slovenia, alongside Statehood Day (*Dan državnosti*) or Europe Day (*Dan*

61 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija*..., pp. 70, 96.

62 M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii*..., p. 17.

63 S. Jansen, op. cit., p. 247.

64 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija*..., pp. 54, 74.

65 M. Velikonja, *Slovenia's Yugoslav*..., p. 99.

66 T. Petrović, op. cit., p. 264.

67 M. Velikonja, *Slovenia's Yugoslav* ..., p. 99.

68 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija*..., p. 90, 95.

Europe)?⁶⁹ The answer may be in the words of Drago Jančar, a Slovenian essayist, who at the beginning of 1990s wrote: “Probably I’m not speaking on behalf of myself alone when I say I love Yugoslavia, that is the geography, the culture and the people, but that I hate *Yugoslovakism* with my whole heart – by that I mean the Yugoslav idea.”⁷⁰ Moreover, as S. Boym remarks, on the example of the Nostalgija Snack Bar in Ljubljana, one may assume that in the area of the former Yugoslavia, there is a cultural taboo related to a common memory.⁷¹

In Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, the grave of Tito is called *Kuća cveća* (House of Flowers) and has been opened since 1982. It is a part of the Museum of Yugoslavian History (Muzej istorije Jugoslavije), formerly called The May 25 Memorial Museum (*Muzej - Memorijalni muzej 25. Maja*). Memorabilia related to the Marshal can be found here. In 2004, The museum was visited by about 20,000 people. In 2008, as during every anniversary of his death in Belgrade, at Dedinj (where he was buried), there were over a thousand people.⁷² In the centre of Belgrade one could find a shop with memorabilia related to him. Yugo-nostalgia is also celebrated during the feast of trumpeters in Guča. Every year the citizens of former republics gather together, while some of them demonstrate their nostalgia for Yugoslavia by singing the hymn *Hej Slaveni*.⁷³ Two other events linked to Tito and worth mentioning take place in Montenegro. In 2004 Filip Vujanović, the president of Serbia and Montenegro at that time, gave one of the Marshal’s uniforms as a gift to Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi.⁷⁴ Between 1946 and 1992, the capital of Montenegro was called Titograd, changed in 1992 to Podgorica. The international code of the airport in Podgorica is still TGD, from the old Titograd.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina at Baszczarsziji (in the centre of Sarajevo) portraits of Josip B. Tito are sold. The nearby Caffe Tito, has become a cult location for young people to meet.⁷⁵ The AVNOJA Museum in Jajce has been restored.⁷⁶ Monika Palmberger, a social anthropologist, thinks that Bosnian Muslims from Mostar are more Yugo-nostalgic than

⁶⁹ Ibidem, pp. 118–127, 144.

⁷⁰ D. Jančar, op. cit., p. 14.

⁷¹ S. Boym, *The Future...*, pp. 51–52.

⁷² M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, p. 97.

⁷³ *Trubači, pivo i jugonostalgija*, Tanjug, 7.08.2009, http://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/drustvo/trubaci-pivo-i-jugonostalgija_141407.html (accessed:27.04.2011).

⁷⁴ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, s. 65.

⁷⁶ M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii...*, p. 17.

Croats, as an example she gives the names of the streets commemorating the events and times of Yugoslavia, which were changed on the Croat side, while on the Muslim side they were unchanged⁷⁷.

Both *Broz voda* (Broz Water) and *Broz kafe* (Broz Coffee) are produced in Macedonia. A calendar with the image of Tito was spotted in 2008 as well. It is published by the Tito Communists League of Macedonia (*Savez Titovih levih snaga*). Similarly, the Youth Mini-Relay (*Mini štafeta mladosti*) is organised in Skopje, Slovenia.⁷⁸ In 2004, in the capital of Macedonia, a Balkan Reality Show called *Me myself - It's me* was broadcast. Twelve contestants of the former Yugoslavia were to live in one villa, two from each country: Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Kosovo (?) (question mark –A. Novaković). If proving the idea of brotherhood and unity was to be the assumption of the programme, so the concept did failed,⁷⁹ as the contestants constantly rowed with one another. Furthermore, the lyrics to a Macedonian song, performed by Tijana Depčević, *Everything is the same, only he is not here* (*Sve je isto, samo Njega nema*)⁸⁰ again indicate the existence of nostalgia for Yugoslavia, and Tito, in the form of pop-culture.

Yugo-nostalgia on the Internet

Mass culture and the computerization of society moved Yugo-nostalgia into the cyber-world. The oldest website (launched in 1997) concerning Yugoslavia is Titoville (www.titoville.com), launched in Slovenia. One can find films, books and songs about Yugoslavia in the English language. Cyber Jugoslawia (Cyber Yugoslavia, CY – (www.juga.com)) is another Internet initiative focusing the Yugo-nostalgia, that was established in 1999. In 2010, it had 16,000 members, with 88% of its users supporting the joining of Cyber-Yugoslavia to the United Nations (sic!). “[...] It is our home. We do not have our own country physically, yet we have a nationality, we give our citizenship and passports to CY. Since this is Atlantis, we allow ourselves double or tripe citizenship.” Those who are

77 M. Palmberger, *Nostalgia Matters: Nostalgia for Yugoslavia as Potential Vision for a better Future*, *Sociologija*, vol. L(2008), no. 4, p. 361, <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0038-0318/2008/0038-03180804355P.pdf> (accessed:23.04.2011).

78 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, p. 51, 96.

79A. Novaković, *Golotinja i Jugonostalgia*, 01.12.2004 http://www.blic.rs/stara_arhiva/zabava/73853/Golotinja-i-jugonostalgija (accessed:27.04.2011).

80 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, p. 26.

eager to be given citizenship are welcome and need only look up the constitution, while the remaining interested parties are invited by the authors to visit the virtual country.⁸¹ Another Internet site is Titoslavlja (www.titislavlja.com), launched on May 25 2005, by the Sarajevo non-political non-governmental citizens' association - Humanists Peace Action (*Mirovna akcija humanista*). A recording found on the website states that: "[...] a completely new country has entered the world stage along with announcing the republic of Titislavlja and its constitution, which maintains the ideas and visions, which Tito advocated for his entire life." Instead of a parliament and president, the country has its own flag, a hymn entitled *Commander Tito we swear* (*Druže Tito mi ti se kunemo*), a constitution and a passport, with the capital remaining in its citizen's hearts. In 2004, the website Brotherhood (*Bratstvo*) was launched and devoted to Republic Day on May 29. Other sites, where similar issues are raised, include the following: www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net, <http://yu-centar-tito.50webs.com/>, marsal.blog.hr, www.slobodnajugoslavija.com⁸² and www.konzulatsfrj.com. In 2010, a Slovenian Internet website for "all Yugo-nostalgics" www.jugonostalgija.org appeared as well as a blog on Yugoslavia – A Virtual Museum <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/>, edited by an author impersonating a Yugoslav.

Yugo-nostalgia in music

Music played an enormous role, as a cultural component, in creating the social awareness of the Yugoslavs. After the country's collapse music from the new post-Yugoslav countries was considered as native to Serbia and Croatia, except the fact that in Croatia, one was not able to purchase records with Serbian music. In Slovenia, as S. Jansen writes, one could purchase the records of Slovenian music labelled as "native." In the 1990s, musicians from the 1970s or 1980s started enjoying fame again, such as Haris Džinović from Bosnia or Darko Rundek, an icon of Yugoslav rock music, who was popular in all the republics. Another singer, a symbol of 1990s, was Đorđe Balašević, who declared himself a Yugoslav. The artist expressed Yugo-nostalgia through his songs and interviews, in which a longing for youth, love and everyday issues were a dominant theme, and were based upon his own experience. His work was

81 M. Antić, *Nova Jugoslavija - Cyber Jugoslavija*, <http://www.mail-rhivce.com/sim@antic.org/msg10104.html> (accessed: 14.04.2011).

82 Ibidem.

universal, in particular devoted to young people and a memorial to the times of Yugoslavia.⁸³ Yugo-nostalgia⁸⁴ was manifested in listening to groups such as *Bijelo dugme* as well as creating new bands under the banner of Yugoslav or Titoist. The first of these bands led by Goran Bregovic (born in Sarajevo from Serb-Croatian parents) became the most popular, although the group broke up with the dismemberment of Yugoslavia. Another Yugoslav artist, Bruno Langer, Croatian in origin, openly considered himself to be Yugo-nostalgic. He stated: "I really miss those times, both in terms of music as well as everything else. There are people who, as I say, close themselves in their chicken coops (new countries) and don't see anything beyond their own doorway. This is a tragedy. [...] Some say, spitefully, that all this Yugo-nostalgia is just a show, yet I think that it is the most positive thing that has happened within the last 18 years." He added: "[...] when I arrive in Belgrade, I don't come to a foreign country, but home, to my people."⁸⁵

Yugo-nostalgia in politics

The Phenomenon of Yugo-nostalgia in the domestic politics of the individual countries, that have risen from the debris of Yugoslavia, is not welcomed. Yet, some parties and organisations, do attempt to reference it. There are associations in every former republic – in Croatia there are about twenty (e.g. the Tito - Marshal of Peace Society of Love for the Motherland, (*Domoljubno društvo maršal miru Tito*). In B&H the Society – *Savez društva*, is chaired by Raif Dizdarević, the former chief of the SFRY Praesidium. In Macedonia, the Association of Citizens Looking after the Image of Josip Broz Tito, numbers 11,000. The Titoist Left-Wing Communist League was established there, as mentioned above, which since 2006 has been participating in parliamentary and local elections, and has 3,500 registered members. It is headed by Slobodan Ugrinovski. In its first election in 2006, the party received three thousand votes, two years later six thousand. Its members are diversified in terms of ethnicity and age.⁸⁶

83 S. Jansen, op. cit., pp. 226, 248, 251–253.

84 *In ex-Yugoslavia, Tito-era nostalgia*, op. cit.

85 M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Zjawisko Jugonostalgii...*, p. 19. Zob. M. Radojković, Jugoslavija mi nedostaje, „Blic”, 26.10. 2008, www.blic.rs/zabava.php?id=62491.

86 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, pp. 100–101.

Josip B. Tito has sometimes become a topic of political rivalry among both left and right-wing parties in Croatia and Slovenia. In Croatia, conflicts between the strongest parties (e.g. the Social Democratic Party of Croatia *SDP* and the right-wing HDZ) often take place around the subject of the Marshall. Campaign topics include, evaluating the acts of Tito and advocating *Tito* or *Tuđmanem* (as emphasised by M. Velikonja). One example may be a statement issued by the leader of the SDP, Zoran Milanovic, in spring 2007 that, “Tito is greater than Tuđman.” This brought on a wave of accusations from opposing parties, that the SDP was eager to renew Yugoslavia by creating relations between the two countries again. Milanovic was attacked as a “great Titoist” who allegedly advocated Yugoslavia and communism, his friendly relationship with Borys Tadic, the Serbian President, was assaulted. As was his support for Željko Komšić, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Titoist. He was accused of idealising Titoism, and instead of participating in Statehood Day celebrations, he took part in ceremonies for the Day of Anti-Fascist Battle (*Dana antifastičke borbe*). Even earlier, in 2003, there was a division in the party between “Titoists and revisionists” which resulted from a public discussion which broke out after the release of the photographs of Ivica Račan, then party leader and Croatian Prime Minister, who had posed next to a photo of J.B. Tito during celebrations of the sixtieth anniversary of the partisan uprising in Istria.⁸⁷

In her book entitled *Titostalgija*, M. Velikonja cites survey results to the question of who was the greatest Yugoslav politician of the twentieth century: 32.4% of Serbs claimed that it was Tito, another was Nikola Pašić gaining 21.1% of votes and Slobodan Milošević with a result of 9.2%. In Serbia and Montenegro in 2004, to the question of who had been of the greatest importance for Serbia in the last two hundred years, 18% of respondents answered Tito, 14.2% Nikola Tesla and 8.4% Zoran Đinđić. In Croatia, in a 1998 survey *Jutarnjeg listu* Tito, Tuđman and Tesla were considered the “most eminent Croats of the millennium, whilst in 2000, it was Tito, Radic and Tuđman. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 59% of respondents considered Tito a positive figure. In Slovenia, in 1995, he placed sixth, while in 1998 and 2003, he was fourth among the most significant figures in Slovenian history.⁸⁸

The Yugo-nostalgics and theYugoslavs

⁸⁷ Ibidem, p. 139–140.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 110–112.

Dejan Novačić, author of a book entitled *SFRJ za ponavljače* (SFRJ redux[sic]), draws attention to the significant differences between Yugo-nostalgic people and Yugoslavs. A Yugo-nostalgic person may be every inhabitant of the former Yugoslav territory, as well as anyone willing to determine themselves that way. Yugoslavs, however, were once the residents of Yugoslavia, who with its collapse, became stateless. Furthermore, Yugo-nostalgism has an emotional attitude towards the past with no connection to the former country, while Yugoslavism has a political foundation. Yugo-nostalgics are interested in common scientific and cultural areas. They also have a distinct edge over Yugoslavs, as they actually exist.⁸⁹ This project views such an assertion to be incomplete. The truth is that, while Yugoslavs became stateless, they have not disappeared. It is enough to take a look at censuses, where a portion of the population openly declare themselves as a social group – Yugoslavs. Being Yugoslav, apart from the aspect of political affiliation to the former country, includes social and cultural aspects, as well as a strong emotional charge. It is after all, emotions and belonging that strongly determine one identity over another. Thereby, a Yugoslav *can* be a Yugo-nostalgic person, but is not forced to be. Be that as it may, the latter is not often a Yugoslav. D. Ugrešić, in her preface to Novačić's book, described it as a “self-proclaimed museum” whose curator is its author.⁹⁰ He presents Yugoslavia, its society, culture, politics, geographical location, army, sport and cuisine in a humorous (though not always factual) manner with a substantial dose of irony and cynicism. He also lists Yugoslav scientific achievements and inventions. This, while also proposing a five second Yugoslav language lesson.

Yugo-nostalgia has become a commercialised part of pop-culture. It is puzzling to think that products with the image of Tito are sold in the former republics of Yugoslavia instead of contemporary national heroes.

Yugo-nostalgia - criticism

Yugo-nostalgia is also the subject of criticism which emphasises its: ideological colouration, excessive commercialisation, scattered memories, glorification and embroidering of memories

89 D. Novacić, *Jugonostalgija – istorija bolesti – Basta balkana*. Serbian lifestyle Blog, <http://www.bastabalkana.com/2009/10/jugonostalgija-istorija-bolesti/> (accessed:27.04.2011).

90 D. Novačić, *SFRJ za ponavljače*, Novi Sad 2008, p. 11.

of Yugoslav Times and their leader, Josip B. Tito. This poem, by an unknown author, posted on the Internet in 2009, may be an example of opposition to mass Yugo-nostalgia.

Rođen u Jugi, bio pionir, silom me vodili na sletove...
I tad sam znao da je sve to sranje, a tek sada nemam neku nostalgiju.
Da živim "srećno" sa maskom preko očiju?
Plata zagarantovana 40 godina do penzije?
Da se zadovoljim Stojadinom ili Fićom?

Ne hvala.
Radije živim u kapitalizmu.
Imam svoju firmu, radim puno, ali hvala bogu i imam.
Ne polemišem, ne političim, ne gledam velikog brata, ne gledam ni [...] TV, koristim Internet, pratim moderne
IT tehnologije i u njima pravim i svoje IT produkte od kojih dobro živim.

Radnici kukaju jer nema posla?
Svetska ekonomska kriza?
Kuknjava na sve strane?

E pa od kuknjave nema ništa dobro, nego da se zavrnju rukavi, angažuje glava na čitanju i učenju novih stvari pa
će biti i napretka⁹¹.

.....
Born in Yugoslavia I was a pioneer, forced to participate in parades...
I knew then that it was all foolishness, now I do not feel any nostalgia.
Do I live "happily" with a mask over my eyes?
A guaranteed salary, forty years until retirement?
Am I satisfied with **Stojadin** or **Fika**?⁹²

No, thank you.
I am happy with Capitalism, I have my own firm, the work is hard but thank God I have it.
I am not idealogical, not political, I don't look to Big Brother, don't watch [...] television, use the Internet
I follow IT, make IT products, from which I earn a good living.

The Workers complain they don't have work?
World economic crisis?
Lament on all sides?

Nothing good comes from lament, we roll up our sleeves, put our heads into reading and learning what's new,
then there will be progress.

This criticism stems from an inability and unwillingness of society to change. Many, after the break-up of Yugoslavia, did not want to return to the past. Those born after the

91 *Kakvo bre ime?*, <http://www.bastabalkana.com/2009/10/jugonostalgija-istorija-bolesti/> 2.10.2009, –
użytkownik; Translated by: Anna Jagiełło-Szostak.

92 Yugoslav production cars: *Stojadin* to Zastava 101; *Ficia* to Zastava 750.

disintegration of the SFRY, have grown up and started their lives in independent countries with new national identities.

Yugo-nostalgia appears in every former republic with various intensity. It refers to emotions, culture, politics and economy. It is also a question of existence and the collapse of a certain community, which as a nation, has not been fully developed but which has gained a specific and divided identity. As Benedict Anderson writes: "Nations [...] do not have an identifiable date of birth, while their death, as much as it ever occurs, is never natural. As a nation does not have a founder, its biography can not be written evangelically, *from the beginning* through a long chain of procreation. The only alternative way of shaping this is to write it in the reverse direction, backwards [...] to a point which is vaguely illuminated by archaeology. Yet, its formation, as such, is marked by death, which as a result of a strange reversal of conventional genealogy, begins in the present."⁹³ The Phenomenon described has not yet been sufficiently defined and requires further political sociological research as well as that of the other humanities.

"Our Yugoslavia"

Despite the processes of disintegration, an initiative was undertaken aimed at focusing on the new nations of the former Yugoslavia in terms of a common identity and nation. The association "Our Yugoslavia" (Naša Jugoslavija) was founded in Pula (Croatia) in 2009, and its mission was to stabilize relations between the people from the area of the former state, as well as to maintain the memory of the SFRY. The organisation was established by Zlatko Stojković and Matija Rojnić from Pula, and Krešo Seba from Zagreb. It has two hundred members and subsidiaries in Serbia (Smederevo) and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Stojković encourages membership⁹⁴ and believes that Istria, as a tolerant region, is a good place for the existence of such an organisation. The members of the association presented an initiative to the Parliament (Sabor) of the republic of Croatia and the National Institute of Statistics in Croatia, to recognise the Yugoslav nation since, as the authors state, there were 1,200,000 mixed marriages. Moreover, the organisation calls for the abolition of borders between the countries arising after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, and the creation of a monetary

⁹³ B. Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–199.

⁹⁴ *Naša Jugoslavija*, www.nasa-jugoslavija.org (accessed: 15.07.2011).

and tariff union based upon the constitution of 1974, without which they believe joining the EU will not be possible.⁹⁵

Within the framework of “Our Yugoslavia”, the League of Yugoslavia (Savez Jugoslovena) was established on March 21, 2010 as a coordinating body. The main task of the league is to conduct activity enabling the introduction of the Yugoslav nationality into the adopted nationalities of all the countries arising after the breakup of Yugoslavia. They believe that as in other nations, they have the right to gather in social organisations, submit their identity in censuses as well as to maintain their cultural, historical, artistic identity and national literary heritage. In addition, the League of Yugoslavs is eager to begin a public discussion concerning Yugoslav rights and their active role in building a democratic society. By establishing this league, those declaring themselves as Yugoslavs unambiguously confirmed the necessity and feasibility of establishing one main organisation, wherein those who feel Yugoslav may find a place to define themselves. Therefore, the goal of the league is: to unite Yugoslavs, regardless of political, religious or sexual affiliation; the protection of the Yugoslav culture, language, traditions and customs; to develop friendly relations between the nations; to strengthen ties with Yugoslavs living around the world and to overcome divisions by bringing closer the nations in conflict after the breakup of Yugoslavia.⁹⁶

The members of the League of Yugoslavs emphasise that they have their own emotional space. Stating that: “Yugoslavism represents a type of common life in our area and has a great potential for forming integration throughout a common living space within the former SFRY.”⁹⁷ As they believe, the fundamental characteristics of Yugoslavism are its heterogeneity and openness towards others, unity regardless of colour of skin, gender or religion. Yugoslavism means speaking explicitly about equality, pride of common language and ancestry, history, a common struggle for liberation as well as the reconstruction of a destroyed homeland. In conclusion they add: “[...] the Yugoslav idea dates back to the 19th century, it is deeply rooted in the nature of the nations of Yugoslavia, and has left an indelible

95 *U Puli osnovana Naša Jugoslavija*, 30.09.2009, www.naslovi.net/2009-07-30/e-novine/u-puli-osnovana-nasa-jugoslavija/1260009#komentar (accessed:15.07.2011).

96 *Naša Jugoslavija*, www.nasa-jugoslavija.org/Savez_Jugoslavena.htm (accessed:15.07.2011).

97 Ibidem.

footprint among us all.”⁹⁸ Additionally, the organisation publishes an Internet magazine where articles concerning the problems of Yugoslav identity are published.

Summary

The processes of Balkanization and de-Balkanization are still occurring in the areas of the former Yugoslavia. Despite the initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Democratic Alternative, a concept of Boris Vukobrat, and even the formation of Slobodan Miloszevic's “fourth Yugoslavia” in 1992, the idea of Yugoslavism was impossible to maintain or revive. The concept of an economic Yugosphere, as well as integration with the EU and NATO, are the only forms of renewed cooperation. For such a multi-ethnic area, it is the creation of Euro-regions which may become useful, and which are both a field of cross-border cooperation as well as traditional rivalry⁹⁹ in divided areas. An example of this within the areas of the former Yugoslavia may be the Euroregion Dunaj-Kris-Marusza-Cisa between Serbia (Wojwodina), Romania and Hungary. Established in 1997, it consists of nine parts, and includes regions among the countries formed from the ruins of Yugoslavia. It has undoubtedly contributed to an intensified cooperation. Presumably, it will take many more years for the people of these regions to forget about the war and strained ethnic relations.

The dominant phenomenon, however, is the existence of historical, geopolitical, ethnic and cultural divisions. Although a return to the idea of Yugoslavia as a unitary nation is not possible, after the collapse of Yugoslavia several forms of national-state development were undertaken by Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Montenegro and Macedonia. Accession to European Union structures, for the Western Balkans, opens an opportunity to integrate new political, economic and cultural forms. The re-opening of borders, language similarities, the inflow of EU funds and common economic initiatives can contribute to the development and integration of this region. Yet, this requires time and strength of purpose. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and even Serbia are still struggling with complicated ethnic politics, which constitute challenges to their leaders, with the solving of these issues a key for the stabilization of the Western Balkans. In this author's opinion, the

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁹⁹ See. Z. Kurcz, *Pogranicza: Modelowe Euroregiony i tereny tradycyjnej rywalizacji*, in: Z. Kurcz (ed.), *Wybrane problemy życia społecznego na pograniczach*, Wrocław 2002, p. 11–24.

most critical tasks to solve are the issues of the ethno-political divisions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Albanian problem in Macedonia (“the second Kosovo”), the Kosovo and Serbian dispute as well as ethnic problems in Serbia, in particular the Sanjak and Vojvodina regions. An alternative for these multinational countries may be to attempt the course of a Swiss consensual Democracy.

The last aspect taken into consideration in Yugo-nostalgia is largely a reaction to the socialist country falling apart and the complicated and difficult reality related to it. An opposition to new policies and nationalism has also occurred. During the war, and immediately after it, those who were involved in Yugo-nostalgia were not be able to come to terms with the division of one geographical and political space into several countries. It also applies to those who emigrated, refugees and Yugoslavs who came from mixed marriages and irrevocably lost their citizenship and nation. Does Yugo-nostalgia include the intention to restore the Yugoslav nation? Does it correspond to the idea of Yugoslavism and long for it? It rather seems to be a reflection on the past, on an “invented or imagined” Yugoslavia, while initiatives such as “Our Yugoslavia” reinforce the memory of the Yugoslav nation, which has never been recognised officially. An important role is played by the consumerist Yugo-nostalgia, which directly contributes to maintaining the memory of a by-gone unity.¹⁰⁰

100 M. Velikonja, *Titostalgija...*, pp. 76–78.