

# FINAL REPORT

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Visegrad Scholarship at the OSA - Vera and Donald Blinken Archives

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Research Project:

## **The other 1989. The third-way political vision of Ante Marković and its representation through the media in Yugoslavia**

The fellowship at the OSA has been conducted in the frame of my current post-doctoral project, which examines a topic related to the late and post-socialist transformation in Yugoslavia (“The other 1989”, or “The year that did not happen to us”, following the Dejan Jović’s appropriate definition)<sup>1</sup> and to the so-called “political alternatives” to authoritarian drifts and violent dissolution on ethnic grounds. Within the massive literature on the dissolution of Yugoslavia, this field has been generally overlooked so far. The project analyses the political vision and legacy of Ante Marković, Prime Minister of the Yugoslav Federal Government from March 1989 to December 1991, and founder of a political party, the Alliance of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia (hereafter SRSJ). His platform grounded on social-democracy and on a decentralised federalism which would reject both secessionism and centralism. The broader research goal is to inquire whether and how Ante Marković, the government and the movement he led, envisaged a fully-fledged transformation of Yugoslavia, following the scheme of “triple transformation” conceptualized by Claus Offe (meaning a transformation at the three levels of citizenship/(supra-)nationhood; constitutional/institutional framework; and allocation, economic policy).<sup>2</sup> More specifically, the project aims to explore how this supra-national and democratically reformed concept of a “Third Yugoslavia” was narrated and presented in the public sphere, following the premise that a supra-national notion, as an imagined community and a mental construct, is conveyed in discourse.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dejan Jović, “1989: godina koja nam se nije dogodila”, *Politička misao*, December 2014. URL: <http://politickamisao.com/1989-godina-koja-nam-se-nije-dogodila/>

<sup>2</sup> Claus Offe, “Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East Central Europe”, *Social Research*, 58, 4, pp. 865-892.

<sup>3</sup> Wodak, De Cilia, Reisigl, Liebhart, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, 2006.

## Research at the OSA Archives

The material available at the OSA holdings is extremely relevant to any researcher working on late-socialist Yugoslavia and its dissolution. Official documents from that period are usually still, and likely will remain, unavailable in Former Yugoslav countries for various reasons (time rules; state security necessities; destruction or concealment following war events). In these circumstances, printed and media collections are an obliged and valuable source.

My research at the OSA has included both printed sources and video sources. The former came from the Yugoslav Subject Files Series (300-10-2; 205-4-80), as well as from the Series of the single ex-Yugoslav Republic (205-4- 90, 100, 120, 130 corresponding to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia), which includes press clippings from Yugoslav press (mainly the agency *TANJUG* and outlets *Borba*, *Politika*, *Vjesnik*, *Oslobodjenje*, *Delo*, *Večernje Novosti*, and occasionally from others), from Western press (mostly from *AP*, *Reuters*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Guardian*; occasionally from outlets of European Community's countries and Soviet Union), as well as RFE/RL Reports from the timeframe 1989-91.

My primary interest was to collect the speech transcripts, interviews, news reports, texts of laws, amendments, analyses etc. which directly involved the Prime Minister Ante Marković, other members of the Federal Government and of the Alliance of Reformist Forces. This material was crucial in order to examine the narratives, strategies and interactions of these actors. In particular, it allowed me to grasp several examples of discursive constructions of Yugoslav identity, such as the *topoi* of re-authentication of anti-fascism and anti-stalinism as myths of origins, and the exceptionalism (i.e. the reaffirmation of the idea that "Yugoslavia is different" from Central Eastern European countries as a tool of self-claimed pride and of seeking preferential treatment from the European Community and Western actors).

The collected material from the Yugoslav-based press also allowed me to have a broader picture on certain social issues from a bottom-up - not just elite-centred - perspective, such as labour mobilisations, strikes, social unrests, results of public opinion polls etc., in order to grasp how could they possibly affect the action and public narrative of the Federal Government. All these thematic categories were well monitored by the RFE/RL services particularly in the course of 1989. The analysis of international press coverage was important as well, helping me to observe how these media framed and categorized the Marković's programme, and how this reception could affect the quest for legitimacy of the

reformist project in the international setting, in view of the Yugoslavia's repositioning - especially its long-term strategy for integration into the European Community -.

As for the video sources, I examined the material in the collection of the Balkan Archive (HU OSA 350-1-1) containing footage from Yutel. Founded in October 1990, Yutel was meant to become the first state-wide TV station, since the broadcasting system was completely decentralised, as each of the eight republics and autonomous regions had their own channels. This had substantially contributed to the formation of separate public spheres and imageries on cultural identity, historical repertoire, perception of events etc. One must recall that Yutel was created and produced under direct initiative of Ante Marković and his Federal government, with the twofold intention offering an example of high professional standard and restoring an all-Yugoslav conscience. In this view, Yutel would have been both a tool and a display of the Reformists' modernization project which would overcome the dogmatic deviations of socialist self-management while challenging ethnic-centric particularisms.

Examining the Yutel footage available at the OSA, I have been able to grasp some techniques that the TV staff adopted in order to reanimate an all-Yugoslav public sphere, such as the use of some specific linguistic markers, a given selection and sequencing of news, and a construction of a state-wide frame of reference - recognizable to the overall public in terms both of language and content. It must be recalled that, following the war events, Yutel – whose headquarters were in Sarajevo - ceased to exist in May 1992 and no official or public collection of its video material has been kept anywhere. Such uniqueness brings further relevance to the Yutel footage located in the 350-1-1 Fund.

I would like to take the chance to express my deepest gratitude to the OSA Staff involved in my sources' requests. They made available the videos despite they were undergoing a massive relocation and digitalisation process which, for technical reasons and given my fellowship duration restraints, could have affected my search in serious terms. The ongoing digitalisation will firmly improve the accessibility of this invaluable video material, from which the community of scholars dealing with Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav affairs can considerably benefit. I am also grateful to the OSA Research Staff and fellows for the helpful feedback and suggestions which I received following my research presentation. These comments, and the inspiring research environment in which I conducted research at the OSA, cement the results I obtained from my Visegrad Fellowship, which will be included in an article to be submitted soon to an international peer-reviewed journal.

## Detailed list of OSA Holdings consulted

### *A. Written Sources*

HU – OSA 205-4-80 Yugoslav Subject Files from the RFE/RL Research Institute

- # 3 – Culture, Mass Media 1988-90
- # 4 – Economic policy 1988-91
- # 5 – Economics, Foreign Trade 1988-91
- # 6 – Economics, Labour 1988-91
- # 11 – Political Citizenship, Constitution, Crisis 1990-91
- #12 – Crisis, Dissolution 1991
- #17 – Foreign Relations EC, General 1980-90
- #18 – Foreign Relations 1989-91
- #23 – Government 1988-91
- #25 – Nationalism, Local Government, Parliament 1988-91
- #30 – Politics 1988-91
- #31 – Politics, Opposition 1988-91
- #43 – Social Issues, Living Standards 1988-91
- #48 – Social structure 1988-91

### HU OSA 300-10-2 Yugoslav Subject Files I

- #67 – Central Committee 1989
- #188 – Government 1989
- #316-317 Party SKJ 1989
- #353 - Protests 1988-89
- #354 - Public Opinion Polls 1988-89
- #423 - Strikes 1989
- #445 - Trade Unions 1988-89
- #489 - Western Press 1989-90

### HU OSA 205-4-90 Bosnia Herzegovina Subject Files

- #19-20 - Politics; Political Parties; Biographies 1991-1996

### HU OSA 205-4-100 Croatian Subject Files

- #17-18 - Politics; Political Parties; Biographies 1991-1996

HU OSA 205-4-120 Serbian Subject Files

#12-13 -Politics; Political Parties; Biographies 1990-1996

#14 -Politics: Republic of Serbia 1990-92

HU OSA 205-4-130 Slovenian Subject Files

#1 - Politics 1989-95

***B. Video Sources***

HU OSA 350-1-1 Balkan Archive

Tapes (digitalized)

#479 (various news reports – YUTEL)

#695 ..

#949 ..

#965 ..

#971 ..

#978 ..

#987 ..

#989 ..

#995 ..