

CRISIS IN CROATIA
Part III: The Road to Karadjordjevo

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In November 1971, only a few weeks before the fateful meeting at Karadjordjevo, an old friend from Zagreb accosted me in a Belgrade hotel.

“You live here,” he said, “so tell me: What in God’s name do these stupid Serbs really think is going on in Croatia?”

I replied with cautious understatement that there was a widespread feeling that the Croatian Party, in its pursuit of democracy and mass support on a national platform, had encouraged a national euphoria and tolerated nationalist activities and “excesses” that many non-Croats, conscious of recent history and the hypersensitivity of the national question in Yugoslavia, found alarming.

“Are they really so badly informed?” my friend asked desperately. “Don’t they realize that Croatia is still ruled by our Croatian unitarists, not even by nationally conscious much less nationalist Croats?”

Did he mean, I asked, to call Miko Tripalo a “unitarist”? No, not Tripalo. *Kraljica* Savka, then? (Mme Dabčević-Kučar had come to be known popularly as “Queen Savka”—for the Croats an affectionate and for the Serbs a sarcastic nickname.) No, not really, although one could not quite be sure. Vladimir Bakarić? Yes, certainly, and most of the rest, and they—not Tripalo and Savka—were still the principal holders of power in the Party. Not understanding this and its implications was one source of Belgrade’s complete misinterpretation of events in Croatia.

This, I knew, was the view of *Hrvatski Tjednik*, the new “cultural” weekly of the aggressively nationalist Matica Hrvatska that now claimed a

circulation of over 100,000 only six months after starting publication, but my friend was not (to my knowledge) a Matica man. He was always, however, well informed. Divisions within the Croatian leadership were apparently reaching a point of climax at which someone, sooner or later, would have to go. On all the evidence then available, it seemed certain that this would mean those to whom the damning label “unitarist” could be made to stick.

Hrvatski Tjednik and the Zagreb student press had in recent months begun naming names, including some members of the Croatian Party’s Executive Committee, the President of the Croatian Parliament (Jakov Blažević), and—some-what more cautiously—Bakarić himself. The definition of a “unitarist” had also undergone some refinement: it connoted even more clearly a traitor to the Croatian national cause and denoted, inter alia, anyone identified by the Tripalo-Savka-Pirker triumvirate or the Matica as deviating from “the line of the League of Communists of Croatia as defined by the Tenth Session.”

The split in the Croatian leadership and its exploitation by political forces outside the League of Communists had, we learned later, played a crucial role in the evolution of the Croatian crisis since the spring of 1971. So, too, had the consequences of a stubborn determination on the part of both factions to hide their differences—the basic reason why even normally well-informed observers were only vaguely aware until late in the game that they existed—and the ambivalent public attitude of the ultimate arbiter, President Tito. The Croatian drama was being played out, with increasing complexity, at three closely interrelated political levels: within the Croatian Party leadership, between the

parts of that leadership and other political forces (both Party and non-Party) in Croatia as a whole, and at the all-Yugoslav level as a dialogue between Croatian spokesmen and Tito.

Action at the first and last levels took place largely behind closed doors, and it is only since Karadjordjevo that the general public and even Party leaders and members not privy to such councils have been given selected but extensive information about what was really going on. However incomplete and one-sided, the volume and quality of what has been released is in itself also highly significant. Seldom if ever in the annals of Communist movements has there been such an instant replay of intimate details of a decisive moment in Party life or one in which the losing faction has been treated with such relative fair play that the retention of some traditional epithets of Marxist-Leninist abuse seems oddly out of place and demands for criminal prosecution of the losers appear singularly ill-founded.

It is on this kind of information that the following tentative and partial political chronology of Croatia in 1971 is based. Such a chronology is one essential prerequisite for passing judgment on the judgments passed at Karadjordjevo and after.¹

Doubts in the Spring: Are They Ours?

Seriously contrasting evaluations of Croatian nationalism and its implications for Party strategy apparently first became evident in closed meetings of the Republican leadership in February 1971. One group, headed by the Party President (Savka Dabčević-Kučar), the Secretary of the Executive Committee (Pero Pirker), and the Party's most active and visible politician (Miko Tripalo), continued to maintain that nationalist "excesses" were marginal phenomena of little significance and that the "national euphoria" was socialist and therefore positive in essence and direction and supportive of the Party's program and goals. The strategy set at the Tenth Session a year earlier and as interpreted by them should be continued, including a cautious alliance with "moderate" nationalists that simultaneously strengthened the Croatian bargaining position, facilitated the Party's opening to the masses, contributed to "democratization" by permitting more non-Communist but essentially prosocialist elements to participate in the political

process, and isolated "extreme" nationalists and separatists, rendering them harmless.²

Another group in the leadership, including as time went on seven of the nine members of the Executive Committee, argued that the "escalation" of nationalism which had taken place since the Tenth Session (and which, ironically, had been foreseen at the Tenth Session) indicated the urgent advisability of a thorough review of the Party's tactics in this field. If statements made by members of this group since Karadjordjevo are complete and accurate, their initial dissent was based on two observations. The first was that the Croatian Party's toleration of nationalist "excesses," whether or not these were really marginal phenomena, was causing alarm in the rest of the country and among non-Croats (especially Serbs) in Croatia. It was thus tending to isolate the Croatian leadership, thereby weakening their bargaining position, and to provoke the "greater danger" of Serbian nationalism. The second touched the basic but rarely articulated principle on which the League of Communists' continuing monopoly of ultimate political power in an increasingly pluralistic Yugoslav polity is founded: that dissent and even opposition can be tolerated and can even make a positive contribution as long as they are not organized. It was an infringement of this principle that these members of the Croatian Party leadership were sensing when they noted that in some recent incidents connected with the "national euphoria" individuals who were "not ours" were presenting themselves and being accepted by Party as well as populace as legitimate spokesmen and intermediaries. If they were "not ours," whose were they?³ The suspicion that they represented organized political forces outside the control of and in competition with the League of Communists and its network of "pre-emptive" subsidiary institutions was to grow with the months and an accumulation of evidence that it might be so. For the Communist mind, even in its open and protestant Yugoslav variant, the mere existence of such forces raises *a priori* suspicions of antisocialism and images of conspiracy and counterrevolution. Empathy with such predispositions is essential if the nature and seriousness of the accusations made at Karadjordjevo and after are to be understood.

The story of the coming months was to be further complicated by the fact that the two-faction

division suggested in these pages is a misleading simplification. The Savka-Tripalo-Pirker group, for convenience referred to in this Report as the "triumvirate" and their followers, was by no means as monolithic as the label implies. For example, mutual personal jealousy and sometimes important differences of opinion always divided Savka and Tripalo, who had partly distinct followings. On the other side there was an even broader spectrum of political judgment and philosophy, ranging from mild dissent on an occasional question of tactics to disagreement on fundamental ideological premises. The clearer bipolarization that existed by November was the product of a year of slowly evolving political struggle and was never quite complete.

Events at Zagreb University and the activities of the Matica Hrvatska before and immediately after the debate on the Party's attitude toward Croatian nationalism began again in February 1971 and provided the primary focus of initial disagreements within the leadership. At its annual assembly in November 1970 the Matica Hrvatska had launched a membership drive and a new program, in which it was declared to be the right and duty of the Matica to interest itself in economic and political questions. Publishing activities were also expanded, and in March 1971 the Matica launched a new weekly, *Hrvatski Tjednik*, subtitled "a newspaper for cultural and social questions;" from the first issue it was clearly a primarily political journal expressing opinions that in a multiparty society would unambiguously label it as the organ of a National-Liberal party.⁴ It was joined a few weeks later by the *Hrvatski Gospodarski Glasnik* (Croatian Economic Tribune), which articulated the Matica's views on economic problems and theory. In subsequent months the *Hrvatski Tjednik's* circulation climbed dramatically to over 100,000 while the membership drive raised the Matica's enrollment from 2,323 members in 30 branches in November 1970 to 41,000 in 55 branches. The expanding organization was provided with its vertical hierarchy by 16 "commissions" (*povjereništva*), 33 "initiating committees" (*Inicijativni odbori*), and Zagreb headquarters (*sjedišništvo*).

The first shock at the University had come on December 21, 1970, when elections were held for Zagreb's first student pro-Rector, a post created as

part of an otherwise largely abortive effort to reform higher education after the Yugoslav-wide "student revolt" of June 1968. The "official" candidate of the Party-sponsored student organization was unexpectedly defeated by a "spontaneous" candidate, Ivan Zvonimir Čičak, a non-Communist and sometime seminarian who told the assembled students in a speech accepting the nomination that they probably should not vote for him because he was non-Party, a Croatian patriot, and a practicing Catholic.⁵

It could be argued and was that Čičak's candidacy and election had been genuinely spontaneous, a protest by students against the "irrelevance" of Party-dominated student organizations whose leaders, because they were not genuinely responsible to their ostensible electors, moved in an unreal world of political theory and practice divorced from the realities of student life and problems. The then leaders of the Student Federation later candidly admitted in conversations with friends that such criticism was justified, that they had indeed lived and operated in a "dream world" of systems analysis and other exciting intellectual and political games, dedicated with youthful enthusiasm to schemes for making democratic Yugoslav socialism a progressive reality, ignoring more mundane tasks and their constituency or practicing juvenile versions of the "modern" Yugoslav Communist strategy of political manipulation to maintain Party control of a heterogeneous polity. "We deserved to be overthrown," they said ruefully.

And they were, at the end of a complex three-month political struggle and in circumstances that deserved more attention than they received at the time.

April Coup at the University

In retrospect it seems clear that the most important factor in determining the outcome of the political in-fighting at Zagreb University during the first months of 1971 was the confusion, uncertainty, disunity, and in many individual cases the growing self-doubt of Party organs and their faculty and student instruments. A revealing irony is involved. The history of university student movements, in prerevolutionary Yugoslavia and elsewhere, offers numerous examples of a small Communist minority dominating student politics

because only the Communists were armed with clearcut goals and strategies backed by faith, discipline, and hierarchy. In Zagreb these qualities were now the monopoly of another group, and it was the Party that was in disarray, divided into numerous currents: traditional (in the Yugoslav sense), "new-leftist," nationalist, social-democratic, and a vacillating and eclectic mixture of all of these.

Communists at the University were also receiving contradictory instructions and no clear ideological guidance from different members of the equally divided municipal and Republican Party leaderships. In January one member of the normally authoritative Croatian Executive Committee, Ema Derossi-Bjelajac, had stated categorically to a student meeting that "the League of Communists of Croatia stands behind the programmatic and political orientation of the student leadership in Zagreb and Croatia, and that leadership cannot be put under some question mark." In March, however, the head of the Party organization at the University warned that "heretofore it has been insufficiently clearly said that the League of Communists does not stand and cannot stand behind any politically unconsidered and politically harmful conduct of the leadership of the Student Federation."⁶ Did this represent a change in strategy by higher Party organs and an official abandonment of the existing leaders, or merely disunity? With both decision-making and disunity hidden behind closed doors, no one could be sure.

Meanwhile, the regular annual assembly of the Zagreb University Student Federation, which should have taken place in January 1971, was repeatedly postponed by a nervous official leadership whose president, Slobodan Lang (a medical student and son of one of Yugoslavia's best-known economists), had resigned in February in protest against such postponement. A campaign of vilification was under way in which the official leadership was accused not only of "unitarism," philosophical "new-leftism," and political "neo-Stalinism," but also of being run by a "Jewish troika"—this last a surprising as well as particularly ominous accusation, since even extremist South Slav nationalisms have rarely included serious anti-Semitic currents. In such an atmosphere and with the official leadership discredited

and ineffective, the repeatedly postponed assembly was finally convened for April 4 and events moved rapidly to a climax.

On March 27, in anticipation of the annual assembly, a mass meeting was convoked by an ad hoc group of students from several faculties (law, philosophy, economics, civil engineering, and medicine), some student dormitories, and the "hometown clubs" of students from Kosovo, Djakovo, Herzegovina, and Imotski. The geographical grouping—the first and third are not in Croatia—is particularly noteworthy. Zagreb University students from Kosovo, an Autonomous Province within the Republic of Serbia with a non-Slavic Albanian majority, are all Albanians, lately being wooed as allies by the Croatian leadership and with even better historic reasons for disliking Serbian hegemony than the Croats. The Croatian minority in Herzegovina, part of the ethnically mixed Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Muslim Yugoslavs, Serbs, Croats), has always been a traditional recruiting ground for Croatian nationalist parties and was a Ustasa stronghold. Djakovo (in Slavonia) and Imotski (in the Dalmatian hinterland) are also regions of mixed Croatian and Serbian population and were to become outstanding centers of the "national movement" as the year progressed. Čičak himself is from Herzegovina, and most of the new Student Federation leadership after the April coup were to be Herzegovinians or from the Dalmatian hinterland.

About 1,000 students attended the March 27 rally. The principal speaker was Dr. Marko Veselica, a member of the Federal Parliament and many other important official bodies, a Party member and professor of economics, and generally considered the outstanding intellect and ideologist of the "national movement." He was already a *bête noire* for the non-Croatian press (and Tito personally) and was to be ousted from the Party in July and arrested in January 1972.

"Since 1965," Veselica told the gathering, "a process of devaluating self-management has set in, and this has happened because unitaristic forces have had predominant power in the Federal Parliament and federal administration and because they have had enough cunning and money to buy a part of the Croatian bureaucracy. . . . In analyzing

In following the story the reader may find helpful a partial list of the personae dramatis, and their places in a condensed diagram of appropriate Yugoslav and Croatian Party institutions, with their normal abbreviations:*

League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY)

(1)	by statute responsible to	(2)
Executive Bureau		Presidium
15 members, of whom		52 members, of whom
2 Croatian members:		7 Croatian members:
Vladimir Bakarić Miko Tripalo		Vladimir Bakarić Srećko Bijelic (President of Zagreb City LC) Jakov Blazević (President of Croatian Parliament) Pavle Gazi Zvonko Liker Miko Tripalo Savka Dabčević-Kučar (ex-officio as President of the LCC)

League of Communists of Croatia (LCC)

(1)	by statute responsible to	(2)
Executive Committee (EC-CC-LCC) 9 members (elected from and by the CC):		Central Committee (CC LCC) President, Savka Dabčević-Kučar
Pero Pirker, Secretary Ema Derossi-Bjelajac Jure Bilić Dusan Dragosavac Ante Josipović Marko Koprtla Milka Planinc Jelica Radojčević Josip Vrhovec		

*Status as of November 1971. For the election and statutory responsibility of the LCY Executive Bureau and Presidium, see footnote 1 to Part I of this series of Reports. The Croatian Executive Committee is responsible to the Central Committee, which is elected by the quinquennial Congress of the LCC.

our past we do not have to blame other nationalities for our fate. We must above all accuse our own politicians, a part of our political representatives, who betrayed the interests of the Croatian nation and the nationalities who live in Croatia and were not their true representatives."

The meeting elected a "working presidency" to carry its views before Party forums and the forthcoming assembly and adopted a series of resolutions and statements of principle. Typical of these was one which noted: "Despite massive acceptance of the Tenth Session of the CC LCC, there are still those who do not accept its decisions, who even openly oppose [them] from Stalinistic and unitaristic positions, abundantly exploiting earlier achieved bureaucratic positions in the framework of the University. . . . Students of Zagreb University are not a little astonished at their betrayal by their highest leadership, that is by the Presidency of the Student Federation." They therefore demand, inter alia, the dismissal of these leaders, the exclusion from University faculties of those "compromised in past events," the admission to the Party of new members on a mass basis, and the dismissal of the editors of the student newspaper.

On April 3, the day before the assembly was to convene, the University Conference of the League of Communists met and heard a report by its President, Dr. Milan Androić. "Feeling themselves to be heirs of all positive national traditions," Androić told the gathering, "youth has found it hard to take the suppression of national feeling [that occurred] in the era of powerful unitaristic tendencies. They could not agree with the view of individuals who saw only the working class and its social problems and did not simultaneously see as a class the hegemony of one concrete nation. . . . We as Communists fight for the interests of the Croatian nation, for the equality of Serbs and all nationalities in Croatia. We cannot permit anyone to deny the historic existence of our or any other nation in the name of some abstract class interest. Equally we cannot accept a distinction between national and class interests."

He was followed on the platform by Veselica, who said that "the meeting of March 27 was the most important political gathering I have attended since the war." The University, he continued, had become the nucleus of "those forces who will bring

unitarist forces to a reckoning on the ideological-political plane, and let no one be deluded, they [unitarist forces] are not few and what is worse, they are hard to uncover." One must reconsider the concept of Croatian chauvinism, Veselica said, and what is in the minds of those people who have built careers on throwing that label around; such people must be punished, whether they act consciously or unconsciously. He noted as a "shame which must be ended" the fact that only 48 per cent of Party members at the University were Croats and that 50 per cent of such Communists declare themselves to be "Yugoslavs." (Quoting this statement, a Belgrade weekly added that the official statistics in fact show that 20 per cent of Zagreb University Communists are registered as "Yugoslavs" by nationality, not 50 per cent.)

The Party conference continued the following day and listened to the secretary of the Croatian Executive Committee, Pero Pirker. According to the Belgrade press, Pirker was particularly applauded for his positive evaluation of "the politicization of students" and when, noting widespread support for the Tenth Session, he called for an opening of Party doors to all those who "accept the course of the Tenth Session." The fall of the official leadership of the Student Federation, news of which had just reached the meeting, he considered "a major turning point in Croatian politics; no compromise is possible, some people must go."

"There is no division into left and right. There is only a division into those who are for the Tenth Session and the League of Communists—and others," he concluded.

The 25th Annual Assembly of the Student Federation of Zagreb University had meanwhile begun, that Sunday morning, attended by about 1,000 of the University's 30,000 students. Damjan Lapaine, acting president since Lang's resignation, opened the meeting by introducing distinguished guests. The list is again retrospectively significant: Drago Bozić, president of the Croatian Socialist Alliance; Ivan Šibl, president of the Croatian Veterans' Association; Šime Djodan, secretary of the Matica Hrvatska; Djuro Despot, member of the presidency of the Zagreb Party organization; and Ante Josipović, member of the Croatian Party Executive Committee. Except for Josipović, who did not speak and who ten months later, ironically,

was to chair the Party Commission that investigated the alleged "counterrevolution," all were or would emerge as principal protagonists of the "national movement" condemned at Karadjordjevo. Djodan, with Veselica, was to be expelled from the Party in July 1971, would continue to play a major role thereafter, and was arrested in January 1972; the rest lost their jobs and later their Party memberships after Karadjordjevo.

The next item on the agenda was the election of a "working presidency" to preside over the assembly, normally in Yugoslav congresses a ritualistic approval of an officially proposed list. This time, however, two students came from the floor, took the podium, and demanded that the committee appointed at the mass meeting of March 27 and not Lapaine's list should form the "working presidency" because any list proposed by a discredited leadership was unacceptable. Lapaine attempted to rule them out of order and when they refused to leave the platform he summoned the student marshals of the meeting to remove them. The marshals instead removed Lapaine and escorted him out of the room by force. The rest of the old leadership and their supporters—54 persons according to Zagreb newspaper reports—followed as a token of protest, while the March 27 committee took the platform. Their first act was to point out that in decorating the hall the late leadership had failed to put the flag of the League of Communists alongside state and university flags on the platform; this was hastily done, symbolically claiming the seal of Party legitimacy for the coup.

Before approving the program of the March 27 meeting and electing a new leadership, the assembly—now minus the old executive committee and its remaining followers, who met in another room, protested the illegality of their removal by force, and declared their rump meeting to be the legitimate assembly—listened to a series of speakers from among the distinguished guests, each of whom in one way or another declared that *this* was the legitimate meeting. The most important legitimization came from University Rector Ivan Supek, hastily summoned by Student Pro-Rector Čičak. Ivan Šibl, noting that he could not speak "officially" for his Veterans' Association, said that personally he was delighted to find himself "among likeminded people" whose pro-

gressive idealism and enthusiasm reminded him of wartime comradeship and the struggle for socialism they had waged at that time.

Veselica also spoke, repeating what he had said at the two previous meetings with some additions. According to the Belgrade but not the Zagreb press, he asked the students to accept his view that university professors who "waver in the new political atmosphere cannot be professors in a Croatian university, and certainly not in the social sciences. He said specifically that such professors, no matter how good they are in their specialties, must be removed from the University." He also discussed the "so-called 'authentic left,'" the label applied to the old student leadership and its followers in recent months. According to the Belgrade daily *Politika*: "He said that these leftists never stood up against deformations in society, for example those pointed out at the Fourth Brioni plenum [the fall of Ranković], and that this same left never even protested against Genex and Inex [the wealthy Belgrade-based export-import firms that had become a particular target of Croatian criticism, as noted in Part II of this Report.] In his opinion such organizations are bunkers of class and national discrimination, bastions of demonstrations against a self-managing community. He also accused those 'leftists' of selling the Croatian coast over the past several years, considering it ideal for the creation of Yugo-combinations [sic]."

The one discordant note was sounded, oddly enough, by Čičak. The Student Pro-Rector seems to have taken the platform twice, once to protest that the March 27 committee was behaving even more "dictatorially" than the old leadership and that the eviction of Lapaine and company was improper and the second time, at the end of the meeting, to protest that he had been seeking the floor for some time and was ignored until the hall was half empty. This was a hint, for observers who were prepared to notice it, that Čičak was not really the man of the new movement that he was thought to be, that the new leaders now coming forward were prepared to use him but also found his independence of them and his avowed theism an occasional embarrassment. The political composition of the Zagreb student movement continued to be more complex than most descriptions have suggested.

The new president of the Zagreb Student Federation was Dražen Budiša, a handsome and articulate philosophy student from Drnis, a Croatian town in an ethnically mixed and most barren part of the Dalmatian hinterland that was to appear in the developing crisis as often as Budiša himself. Conspicuous at his side was Ante Paradžik, like Čičak a Herzegovinian and soon to become president of the Croatian Student Federation as the Zagreb coup was consolidated at the Republican level. These two were to be the leaders of the student strike of November 1971 that was the immediate occasion for Karadjordjevo and were to be arrested on the day that the Croatian Central Committee met to accept the resignations of the Tripalo-Savka-Pirker triumvirate as the post-Karadjordjevo purge begun.

The April coup at the University is important to the story of the Croatian crisis in two respects. The Zagreb student organization was the first citadel of the Yugoslav Communist establishment in Croatia to be taken over by an organized political movement whose primary focus of loyalty lay outside the framework of that establishment, in competition with it ideologically and for political domination. The takeover was accepted and ultimately if at first cautiously approved by the most authoritative spokesman of the Party, who argued (in closed Party meetings) that comrades on the Party Executive Committee and elsewhere who worried about the new student leaders because "someone else has put them forward, not we," were reflecting outdated concepts of authoritarian Party control and conservative, antidemocratic fears of mass participation. Such fears, it was further argued, were unjustified because the new student leadership and the politicized students and Croatian nation behind them were fundamentally "socialist" in orientation and therefore really "ours" in a modern, progressive sense of that possessive noun.⁷

The argument was essentially between those who were confident that under their leadership socialism could harness nationalism—to the greater glory of both socialism and themselves—and those who feared that it would prove to be the other way around. The differences between them on this issue, increasingly a question of strategy and principle, rather than mere tactics, ironically contributed to transforming the fears expressed by the latter group into accurate prophecy. Embattled on

a new front, within their own ranks, the Croatian triumvirate would in coming months be forced into ever closer embrace with and dependence on their "moderate" nationalist allies and on the "national euphoria" that was becoming ever more extreme in expression.

Friends in Zagreb who are by no means without Croatian national if not nationalist sentiments, who were enthusiastic about the triumvirate and their policies until late in 1971, but who had become alienated and alarmed some weeks or months before the end came in December, now retrospectively see the Party leadership's reaction to the April coup as their first serious miscalculation and fatal mistake, after which it was downhill all the way to Karadjordjevo. Such a judgment is or can be made normatively neutral in terms of the motivations, intentions, and political goals of the various protagonists, both in the Party leadership and among its competitors. It merely registers the empirically verifiable hypothesis that after April 1971 the triumvirate and their friends, having accepted the conquest of one of the Party's key pre-emptive institutions by an autonomous political organization that was not subject to Party discipline, were no longer in full control of the situation, that such a state of affairs is *per se* incompatible with the Yugoslav Communist system, and that its consequences would sooner or later become intolerable to the guardians of that system, especially President Tito. When it came to that point, the Croatian leadership would have no choice except unconditional surrender, either to the guardians of the system or to their own erstwhile (nationalist) allies. To choose the latter would be to raise the specter of civil war.

To Brioni: Tito's First Warning

One reason why the events at Zagreb University in March and April 1971 received relatively modest attention at the time was the competition provided by other dramas on other stages, all on the same basic theme. On April 7 two young Croatian emigrant workers walked into the Yugoslav Embassy in Stockholm and shot down the Ambassador, a Montenegrin Communist Party member since 1936, Partisan political commissar and former Deputy Minister of Interior. The assassins were led away singing Croatian nationalist songs. Three days later, as the Ambassador lay dying, the



A CROATIAN COMMENTARY: Oto Reisinger, Yugoslavia's best caricaturist, drew this montage of cartoons, entitled "Springtime Chores," for Croatia's leading daily newspaper, *Vjesnik* (April 18, 1971). The grim figures sowing seed from a bag labeled "Defamations and Attacks on the Political Leadership of S.R. Croatia" (upper right) are an Ustaša, a Cominformist, a Serbian nationalist Chetnik, and "unitarism" dressed like a petty bureaucrat. While a barefooted peasant woman labeled "the economy" laboriously cultivates young crops (left center), a fat character named "Re-export" (a reference to the Belgrade-based foreign trade conglomerates Genex and Inex) excuses his relaxed posture by saying, "I am a specialist only for harvesting." The blackbirds (associated with the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 and thus possibly here a symbol for Serbs) at lower left are devouring seedgrain in a field "sown with seed for the new foreign currency and foreign trade system." The woodsmen at lower right, cutting down the dead tree of "unitarism," complain: "Whatever way we saw, it goes on sprouting new shoots."

leading Croatian Ustaše émigré organization in Western Europe, headed by that Branko Jelić of West Berlin who had recently claimed to have the backing of the Soviet Union, held a provocative meeting in Munich to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the creation under German sponsorship in 1941 of the fascist "Independent State of Croatia." The same week, in Zagreb, the Croatian Party's Central Committee issued an unprecedented statement accusing "certain Federal agencies" (by clear implication UDBa, the Serb-dominated security police) of a "conspiracy" to discredit the Croatian Party leadership by concocting evidence of links between them and the Ustaše émigrés.

The "conspiracy" against the Croatian leadership remains to date the most mysterious chapter of the 1971 drama. We know now, from post-Karadjordjevo revelations, that the Croats' allegations had been discussed at the Federal Party level in February or March and that it was agreed then that no public announcement should be made until a special Party commission had investigated and reported. It is also known that the Croatian Central Committee decided after an unusual closed-door meeting (its Nineteenth Session) and for still obscure reasons to violate this agreement and make the accusation public.⁸ Once that had happened, the nature of the charge—involving government agencies—made it necessary to appoint a commission of the Federal government to conduct its own investigation, parallel to that already undertaken by the Party.

The results of the government commission's report were also released under unusual circumstances: not from Belgrade, but from Tito's private retreat on the Brioni islands, and during a tense meeting there of the full Presidium of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the end of April. The report itself only deepened the mystery. It firmly absolved the accused Federal agency (still only implicitly UDBa) of any improper behavior, either collective or individual. But it also agreed and deplored that there had been a conspiratorial effort abroad—source and agents unspecified—to discredit the Croatian leadership by alleging links with the Ustaše that did not exist. Ignoring the slap in the face they had been given by the first part of the communiqué, Croatian leaders claimed a victory in the second part.

The rest is speculation. One story circulating after the event, with an obvious appeal to readers of spy thrillers, held that the military intelligence organization attached to the Yugoslav military mission in West Berlin (itself an often-forgotten relic of the Allied occupation regime after 1945) had infiltrated an agent into Jelić's organization there. What the Yugoslavs did not know was that Jelić knew and had skillfully planted faked information on the agent suggesting the links that understandably angered the Zagreb leaders. The unsuspecting military mission dutifully reported to Belgrade. Thus, according to this version, a federal agency was in fact involved, but was not UDBa, and its crime was not an anti-Croatian conspiracy but an embarrassing failure to know that its agent's cover had been blown and that he was being used by the enemy.⁹ *Se non e vero, e ben trovato.*

These specific events took place in an atmosphere already charged with a generalized nervous tension in which ethnic nationalisms of all kinds were playing a primary role as cause, indicator, and effect. The Federal government under a Slovene Prime Minister, Mitja Ribičič, had all but ceased to function, the result of an already long-standing inter-Republican stalemate on key issues, aggravated now by an extended debate on the package of constitutional amendments, described above, which was to strip the Federal center of much of its remaining power. The unprecedentedly genuine and open public discussion of the draft amendments itself added to tensions by providing a forum for free expression of ever more extreme national sentiments and mutual recriminations.

These country-wide developments, the related atmosphere, and Tito's angry reaction to them in April and May 1971 have been described in an earlier Fieldstaff Report.¹⁰ The President's reactions included the first of a series of threats to invoke "administrative measures" (a Marxist euphemism for arbitrary dismissal, purge, or arrest) if more "democratic procedures" did not "produce order in the League of Communists" and an end to alarming expressions of nationalist sentiments. Although Tito thundered against an unspecified "Western journalist" who wrote that such threats had been heard before and had always proved to be an "empty gun"—"but now," he told a congress of managers and workers on May 8, "this will not be an empty gun—we have plenty of

ammunition"—neither friends nor foes took him as seriously as later events suggested they should have.

More specifically, Tito also summoned the Yugoslav Party Presidium and other leaders to a meeting of which he said in advance: "We will not go our ways until we come to an agreement." Even now, however, little is known about what went on at that gathering, officially the Seventeenth Session of the Presidium, beyond what I reported at the time:

At the end of April the threatened meeting was duly convened. It met at Tito's Adriatic retreat on the Brioni islands, lasted three days, and issued a communiqué of startling blandness. Speeches made at the meeting were not published. This is unusual in recent Yugoslav Party practice, but was afterwards justified by Tito on the ground that there had been sharp disagreements at the beginning of the session and that publishing what was said would only aggravate tensions. What was important, he said in a May Day speech, was that complete agreement had been reached before they adjourned. . . . The communiqué . . . included an announcement that the constitutional amendments should be adopted and implemented quickly, that nationalism and divided leaderships are bad things, and that the participants had agreed that all matters of disagreement were negotiable.¹¹

Since Karadjordjevo we have been told what one guessed at the time, that the Croatian leadership was specifically on the carpet at Brioni. Several participants have now said that Tito's remarks then included everything that he was to say again at Karadjordjevo. One Croatian member of the Yugoslav Presidium, Pavle Gaži (perhaps significantly not a professional top Party leader but an enterprise director brought into the leadership as part of its "de-professionalization" in 1969), has put it this way: Brioni was "much tougher" than Karadjordjevo because by Karadjordjevo "we knew who stood where. But at Brioni we did know that most of his [Tito's] very sharp criticism of blindness to nationalism was directed toward us Croats." Gaži also sensed, allegedly for the first time, that his colleagues in the Croatian leadership were not as

united as he had thought. "Some members talked differently," for example in defending the new Zagreb student leadership as "positive, revolutionary, saying that we must have full confidence in them."¹²

Also of significance have been the protests of many Croatian Party leaders, including members of the Executive Committee, that even they never knew who had said what at Brioni.¹³ Similar complaints were made about other important meetings in subsequent months, including the Villa Vajs discussions in June and Tito's Zagreb visit on July 4 (see below), about which Gaži and Zvonko Liker, the other "non-professional" Croat on the Yugoslav Presidium, claim they were uninformed.

While many such complaints can probably be discounted as a convenient excuse, after December, for earlier passivity or continued support of the Croatian triumvirate, the general picture that emerges of the nature of communications (and non-communication) within the wider Party elite has a considerable credibility and helps to explain some otherwise puzzling aspects of the crisis, including the speed and ease with which the "movement" collapsed when the triumvirate were removed. The accusation, made since Karadjordjevo, that one secret of their power was their "monopoly" control of intra-Party communications (in the hands of Savka, Pirker, and Koprtla, by virtue of their Party functions) and of the principal mass media (*Vjesnik*, *VUS*, and Zagreb radio-television) seems largely fair.

A monopoly or quasi-monopoly of communications was important, moreover, in both directions within the Party hierarchy. It has been consistently argued in official documents and statements since Karadjordjevo that Tito's failure to act on any of his repeated threats between April and December—a key factor inhibiting the worried antitriumvirate majority on the Croatian Executive Committee from acting on their own initiative—was that the Croatian leadership on each occasion convincingly assured him that they had learned their lesson, would repair the damage themselves, and had achieved or shortly would achieve internal unanimity to this end. Those who told him this were the triumvirate and their friends. If others in Croatia, like Gaži and the majority of the Executive Committee, were really shocked and

worried by the way these spokesmen "talked differently" in meetings with Tito, as they later claimed, they consistently kept silent. As their own positions within the Croatian apparatus became increasingly precarious they had, with one outstanding exception, good reasons for such caution.

The exception was Vladimir Bakarić, unassailable until near the end and with privileged access to the throne. Although one of the accusations leveled at Bakarić as early as July by Croatian nationalists and their allies in the Party was that he was poisoning Tito's mind with false reports about the situation in Croatia, there is so far no independent evidence that he had moved before late November and he himself has said, in self-criticism, that he had not. His own explanation is that he had withdrawn from active participation in Croatian politics until concerned comrades on the Executive Committee brought him back late in the year. Only in November, during preparations for the 22nd Session of the Croatian Central Committee, did he discover what was really going on and decide to go to Tito as soon as the latter returned from his state visit to the United States and Canada.¹⁴

The Phony Peace

The Croatian leadership chose to interpret their return from Brioni publicly unscathed and the decision to proceed with constitutional amendments that would dramatically strengthen the powers of the Republics as personal victories and an endorsement of their basic strategy. In return they knew that they were expected to contribute to a calmer atmosphere and to rendering the central government again capable of action in its residual spheres of competence, and that these obligations would require them to show a willingness to compromise on some disputed issues and to take a stronger stand against Croatian nationalism.

For a time, therefore, the atmosphere did improve, and for some weeks optimists were able to conclude that the worst of the crisis was over. Agreement was reached on several, sometimes minor, federal issues that had long been blocked by inter-Republican disagreements. Croatian leaders spoke of the necessity, now that they had won the system and Republican "sovereignty" they had demanded, to prove that it would work. "S.R. Croatia

is [now] a state," Tripalo told the Central Committee on May 14, "so it is necessary to behave like statesmen."

At the same time, however, the triumvirate quickly demonstrated that it was not retreating on any fundamental principles. Within a fortnight of Brioni Miko Tripalo had again raised, unblemished, the flag of the Croatian demand for a radical revision of the Yugoslav foreign currency system. That this now became the cardinal Croat demand, from which the leadership would not budge and on which their alliance with the Matica and other elements of the "national mass movement" was most firmly founded, was in some ways curious and was certainly—for legitimate Croatian interests—unfortunate. If their grievance was real, the solution they proposed was singularly unrealistic.

As noted before, Croatian tourism, emigrant remittances, and exports account for nearly 40 per cent of all Yugoslav hard currency earnings. Under existing regulations most of these earnings (minus a variable "retention quota," averaging about 7 per cent, which the exporter or tourist enterprise kept in foreign currency) had to be sold to the National Bank in Belgrade for dinars. Since these foreign currencies were then resold by the National Bank to importers and other claimants all over Yugoslavia, with the demand always exceeding the supply, the Croats could argue that "their" foreign currency earnings were being "expropriated" by others, in violation of the principles of self-management, which hold that the workers in each enterprise (and thus in each Republic) should freely dispose of the "value" created by their labor.

It was an old argument. At one time the Zagreb Chamber of Commerce had joined those of other major exporting centers, including Ljubljana, Belgrade, and Sarajevo, in a joint *démarche* to the Federal government, demanding an upward revision of retention quotas. Now, however, the Croatian leadership was seeking, in effect, separate Republican foreign currency regimes: each should keep what was earned or remitted on its territory, buying and selling as needed on a free all-Yugoslav (in fact inter-Republican) currency market. The principal objection to this proposal was that it made nonsense of a unified Yugoslav market in goods and services and could not be implemented

without giving rise to equally reasonable supplementary demands that would create a dual-currency system, impossibly cumbersome and more inequitable than the present one. If it were accepted, what, for example, would stop a Bosnian or Serbian firm that sold meat or vegetables to a Dalmatian hotel from demanding payment in the foreign currency the hotel was "earning" by serving food to foreign tourists? Or a steel mill in another Republic from demanding payment in foreign currency for steel delivered to a Croatian shipyard for a tanker sold to the Japanese? Where would such a process stop? Was it not better to make minor adjustments in the existing system to meet in some degree the legitimate grievances of principal exporting regions, freely admitting that the system would remain imperfect and iniquitous and concentrating on financial and developmental policies that would make the dinar fully convertible as quickly as possible, thus eliminating the whole problem.¹⁵

The Croatian leadership never found a reply, and the argument soon became symbolic and emotional rather than practical.¹⁶

The Twentieth Session

On May 13 and 14 the Croatian Central Committee met, its Twentieth Session, to discuss implementation of the conclusions of the Brioni meeting. One after another the members rose to condemn Croatian nationalism as well as Serbian nationalism, unitarism, étatism in any size or package, and other official vices. The tenor was such that the session was soon thereafter condemned by *Hrvatski Tjednik* and others, including Party leaders in some districts, as a victory for "conservative forces" in the Central Committee. Spokesmen and publications of the Matica Hrvatska began, in this context, to suggest that it would prove necessary to convene an Extraordinary Congress of the Croatian League of Communists to purge these conservatives and fill the Central Committee with "true representatives" of Croatian sentiment—a threat that was later to be taken up by some Party leaders.

There were, indeed, significant differences of emphasis among speakers at the Twentieth Session (and—as usual—in the reporting of them in the Zagreb and Belgrade press), differences that would

in coming weeks be used to distinguish "good" Croatian patriots from "bad" Croatian unitarists on the Central Committee. Some demanded an all-out political offensive against "nationalist elements" of all kinds. Others wished to make careful distinctions between "separatists" and "chauvinists" on the one hand and those whose "national euphoria" was being or could be channeled into mass support for "self-management socialism" and "the line of the League of Communists." Several discussed the mass enrollment of new members in the Party that many were urging as a natural corollary of what was now being called "the national mass movement." For some this was dangerous without careful "ideological-political preparation" and screening of candidates; for others such caution was itself a sign of old-fashioned, conservative thinking appropriate to an earlier revolutionary period but not to the present. Some accused Croatian nationalists of not seeing how much the Party was doing for Croatian interests; others were worried that the Party, in taking this line, was emphasizing national over class interests to a dangerous degree. Tripalo replied with what became the basic thesis of the "mass movement": national and class interests are the same because nation and class have become identical.¹⁷

Quoted in the Belgrade press but not in Zagreb's *Vjesnik* were interestingly strong statements by two men who were to emerge in December as the most important of the new, post-Karadjordjevo Croatian leaders, Jure Bilić and Josip Vrhovec, both members of the Executive Committee majority that had found itself in growing disagreement with Tripalo, Savka, and Pirker since February 1971. According to the Belgrade weekly *NIN*, (May 16):

On the behavior of Croatian nationalists toward the LCC leadership, Josip Vrhovec said: "They 'call the role' of us on many issues, saying: now what will you do? And if we simply will not work to their instructions then they put us under a question mark. They are a petit-bourgeois, nationalistic and chauvinistic current whose final goal, concretely here in Croatia, is the separation of Croatia from Yugoslavia." Vrhovec added that it was precisely this group that was demanding that the LC should permit the coexistence

of various ideologies, including those that are unacceptable to Communists, in the name of an alleged necessity for the League of Communists to show that it is a national party. Every compromise in this sense is very dangerous and unacceptable for the League of Communists, Vrhovec said.

Even more detailed was the analysis offered by Jure Bilić. . . Speaking of Croatian chauvinism, Bilić noted that they had their periodicals, new or old with new editorial boards, but that some individuals were very noisy also in verbal interventions contrary to the policy of the League of Communists. It is a question of chauvinistic interventions which encourage the creation of dislike, even hatred, of other nationalities. Croatian Communists, Bilić emphasized, must draw a firm line between themselves and these people, since otherwise they may create the impression that they are moving toward a kind of "national communism."

"I do not accept such a line, and the whole League of Communists of Croatia does not accept it, because that would be national anticommunism. . . . The point is that with their line individuals and certain forces are drawing the past into our present relations, drawing in separatism. These 'guardians of conscience' talk of the LCC and S.R. Croatia as 'the most progressive nucleus in the country.' They even name individual names, and of the rest they say that UDBa put them in their jobs and functions. . . . One current among these forces preaches the thesis of a type of clerical socialism, a kind of co-existence of socialism and clericalism directed especially toward youth. In essence this is an effort to create an antithesis of the League of Communists, and the League of Communists and our society must not and will not permit this. . . ."

It is instructive to compare the *Vjesnik* report of these same speeches, which contain none of the sentences quoted here. The most significant statement attributed to Bilić by *Vjesnik* (not mentioned in *NIN*):

"I think we do not need to be alarmed by this undoubted national euphoria. There were some comrades yesterday and today who were against the national euphoria. As far as I am concerned, I am in fact in favor of the national euphoria, if the League of Communists is in charge of it."

With rare exceptions—*Vjesnik* did print the outspokenly critical remarks of one Croatian Serb member of the Central Committee, Rade Bulat, and the attacks on him that they invoked, including one by a fellow Serb on the Executive Committee, Dušan Dragosavac—the Croatian press was still careful to portray the entire leadership as united behind the triumvirate. If the Belgrade press attempted to paint a rather different picture, most Croats knew what to think of that.

The Villa Vajs Discussions

The battle lines within the Croatian Party had now been drawn, although few outside the inner circle and a consistently well-informed Matica Hrvatska executive yet knew it and there was still time and room for change. The political struggle in Croatia during the next months was focused on three interrelated fronts:

(1) The struggle of the triumvirate and their friends, in competition with the Matica and its network, to maintain Party control of the "national mass movement," preventing "excesses" wherever possible.

(2) Efforts by all members of the Party leadership to find a definition and interpretation of the "mass movement" and a corresponding program of action on which they could all agree and operate, thus avoiding a definitive split in their ranks and a struggle for power at the Party summit.

(3) The struggle by all concerned to resolve all issues within the boundaries of Croatia, without influence or intervention from outside that might compromise their newly won "sovereignty" and the principles of confederation—i.e., a struggle to avoid a "Yugoslavization" of the Croatian crisis.

By November, developments on all three fronts had entered a new phase:



The Twentieth Session, May 1971. In the front row, from left to right, Ema Derossi-Bjelajac, Miko Tripalo, Milka Planinc, and Josip Vrhovec: the triumvir sits among his principal opponents on the Executive Committee, now submissive but within seven months to be his judges.

(1) The leadership of the "mass movement" was in effect a triumvirate-Matica condominium in which the triumvirate were struggling to preserve their autonomy but were increasingly cast in the role of junior partners.

(2) The search for unity within the Party leadership had been abandoned and some or all of the triumvirate's group were prepared for open conflict and a decisive, once-and-for-all, political battle to remove the "factionalist" majority on the Executive Committee and their friends.

(3) Knowing this and aware of their weakness, the antitriumvirate faction was now prepared to invoke outside help by appealing to Tito.

The appropriateness of the word "struggle" is of central importance. The bare fact that an inability to resolve an initially minor disagreement about political tactics in one vitally important sector had

evolved into a struggle for enough power to impose one tactical orientation or the other, and that such a political struggle necessarily involves polarization, was introducing a new, dynamic factor into an unstable equation. Within the leadership, the group around the triumvirate became increasingly deaf to warnings they might otherwise have listened to because they were really hearing things they themselves had also said and felt. Their opponents, attention focused on one subject and the political battle associated with it, increasingly saw only what was (from their point of view) negative and dangerous in the "mass movement" and failed to give serious thought to the implications of the fact that nationalism was a more powerful mobilizing force than the official ideology and practice of "self-management socialism."

On the second and third fronts, the story is one of an unending series of indecisive meetings and of declarations and "action programs" that were,

with one important exception, too vague and general to commit anyone to specific action. The battle on the first front (and during the second phase on the second front as well) was fought throughout the Republic, but most intensively in Dalmatia and Slavonia and in Zagreb itself. It involved the founding of new Matica branches with pomp and processions, demonstrative celebrations of anniversaries of events in Croatian history or the birth or death of historic heroes, struggles for control of individual Party organizations and town halls, and "incidents" concerning employment in or control of individual economic enterprises. It was also characterized by an ever increasing tension between Croats and Serbs in ethnically mixed districts, where both communities were known to be arming themselves in anticipation of a physical show-down.¹⁸

Now that the debate on the draft amendments to the Federal Constitution had been ended, the drafting of corresponding amendments to the Croatian Constitution provided a platform on which the Matica press and spokesmen could build further demands and a program representing an increasingly coherent ideological position, simultaneously national and socialist. Endless articles on the definition of the "state sovereignty" of Croatia appeared in *Vjesnik* and *VUS* as well as in the Matica's periodicals. Almost all—with Bakarić as the outstanding dissenter—took as a self-evident premise the basic ideological position of nineteenth century national liberalism: that man is naturally divided into nations, that the nation is the only legitimate basis of a state, and that each nation consequently has an inalienable right to a nation-state of its own. In this context the Socialist Republic of Croatia must be considered as the nation-state of the Croatian nation, the state that the Croats had sought for a thousand years in vain, that had been promised them by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia during the Second World War, and that only now was becoming a reality under the inspired national leadership of Tripalo and Savka.

Corollaries included a discussion of the status of non-Croats in the Croatian state, especially Serbs, and of their languages. By the autumn additional corollaries were being considered by the Zagreb student leaders and the Matica press: a nation-state must also have an army of its own, membership in the United Nations, and its own

foreign policy. In vain, by then, the official Party leadership and its press warned that such "radicalism" was performing a poor service because it only alarmed the rest of the country and strengthened the "unitarists" by appearing to substantiate their arguments that the Croatian movement was edging toward separatism. In vain, dissenters like Bakarić asked what had happened to Marxist concepts of the class basis of the state. The audience had heard too much of that kind of Communist ideological sloganeering in the past 30 years to respond, while the analogous slogans of nationalism had been censored so long that they seemed excitingly new, with the added spice of forbidden fruit.

Articles analyzing the ethnic composition of employment in the police, in government bureaus, in the Party, in enterprise managements, and eventually among workers in certain enterprises became numerous, and always the Croats were found to be inadequately represented in their own country. The criterion of the "ethnic key," accepted in principle for political leaderships and government employment, was applied everywhere, leading to nervousness and "crises" in economic sectors and enterprises in which, usually for historic or demographic reasons, Serbs were more numerous than their 15 per cent participation in the total population warranted. Examples of such sectors, equivalent to a catalogue of many notorious "*slučajevi*" ("incidents") of the long, hot summer of 1971, include the Zagreb Railway enterprise (Serbs of some Lika and Dalmatian hinterland villages had had their first chance of employment outside agriculture when the Zagreb-Split line was built through their region under the Serb-dominated Royal Yugoslav government, establishing a tradition of Serbs from these districts working on the railroad), the oil refinery and steelworks in Sisak (the latter resisted), several companies in the Zadar area (where nearly everybody, Serb or Croat, is a newcomer, the original Italian population having disappeared after 1945), and many more. In the Baranja district a genuine economic and jurisdictional conflict between the Belje agricultural-industrial combine and the Jelen forestry and hunting enterprise, which between them totally dominate the economy of that district, and between Belje and local government officials characteristically became a primarily ethnic conflict because Belje is managed largely by Croats, Jelen is Serb

and Belgrade-based, and the old guard of local politicians were predominantly Serb former Partisans.

To such documented realities must be added what is often technically hearsay but as important to the total atmosphere when untrue as when true: undoubtedly exaggerated tales of vandalism meted out to Serbian property in Croatia (including cars with Serbian license plates circulating there) and stories that are difficult to verify but often seem to have been true of individual Serbs and Serbian villages physically threatened by Croat neighbors. As a result, relations between the ethnic communities in many districts reached a level that my own older Croatian friends, both Croats and Serbs, have told me was "worse than before or even during the war." (Many of these friends, it is worth noting, are basically apolitical intellectuals or "ordinary folk," the kind of people who had supposedly been "politicized" by the "national euphoria" to form the "mass movement" backing the triumvirate. Their own political evolution in the course of 1971, as I saw them from time to time, is therefore possibly significant. With few exceptions, they were indeed caught up in the "national euphoria" and had been enthusiastic supporters of the triumvirate. With equally few exceptions, they had become alienated and worried by the autumn of 1971, and the first reason they usually offered was the escalation of interethnic hatred and the terrifying memories this aroused in people over the age of 35.) The "reign of intellectual and emotional terror" in which Croatian Serbs and "unitarists" found themselves by late 1971 is not the invention of those who invented the phrase after the event.

In such an atmosphere the Party leadership met, debated, and continued to disagree. The most important such gathering began on June 22, 1971 at the Villa Vajs, a Party retreat in Zagreb used for top-level conferences. It was attended by the Executive Committee, the Croatian representatives on the all-Yugoslav Executive Bureau (Bakarić and Tripalo), and leading personalities from the Croatian Parliament, government, and other "socio-political organizations." The Villa Vajs meeting was apparently the first full and frank discussion of differences among the top leadership to take place before a somewhat wider audience. According to the Report of the Josipović Commission, presented

to the Croatian Central Committee in May 1972, the participants talked:

- about the dangerousness of the infiltration of nationalist points of view into the League of Communists of Croatia, which could obscure the clarity of [the Party's] orientation on the basic direction of the struggle for the further development of socialism and self-management;
- about the danger of a one-sided orientation of the Croatian LC against unitarism, leading to a neglecting of action against nationalism and chauvinism;
- about the appearance of two lines and two directives in LC organizations in the country;
- about a confusion of ideas in the League of Communists, especially in some LC leaderships, and about tendencies to seek alliances with the carriers of nationalist ideas in the struggle against unitarism;
- about the dangerousness of designating as a unitarist anyone who points out instances of Croatian nationalism and about the use of this criterion to label and exert pressure even on members of the Executive and Central committees, with the intention of discrediting and immobilizing them and thus destroying the unity of the LCC leadership;
- about the consequences of contrasting evaluations of events in the Student Federation;
- about the fact that the most outstanding protagonists of nationalism were expanding their activity, while in the inner leadership of the CC LCC and in some Party leaderships in the country there existed diametrically opposed evaluations of the activity of these people, along with a tendency in many environments to accept and present individuals of nationalistic orientation as the most consistent fighters for the policy of the CC LCC and especially for the principles of the Tenth Session;
- about the tendency to de-emphasize the risk from the unfriendly activities of nationalist forces in comparison with [the risk from] the activities of unitaristic, neo-Cominformist, and other bureaucratic forces, although the activity of nationalists was assuming at that time an ever more organized and aggressive form;

- about the danger that a policy isolating Croatia within Yugoslavia would make more difficult the solving of vital Croatian and Yugoslav questions, which could be solved on the basis of now accepted constitutional amendments only through a process of agreement and mutual compromise;

- about the insufficiency of organized and systematic ideo-political action in the face of these occurrences, the lack of a clear and firm party line in the mass media, and especially about the widespread and ever stronger influence on the masses of those periodicals which took an oppositional, nationalistic line toward the policy of the Croatian LC, etc.¹⁹

The minutes of the meeting were classified and have never been released, but the argument was reportedly a bitter one and so inconclusive that a second session was held on June 26, after which the series was suspended in anticipation of a visit by Tito to Zagreb at the beginning of July. The report of the Josipović Commission adds only that,

... the discussion was carried on in a tense atmosphere in which there emerged a confrontation between two contradictory lines and interpretations of the policy of the LCC on vital questions and on the role of the Socialist Republic of Croatia in S.F.R. Yugoslavia. Those comrades who showed themselves to be critical of the aforementioned occurrences and who saw them as part of an organized system of enemy activity were pointed out, especially by the most responsible functionaries of the LC [i.e., Tripalo, Pirker, Dabčević-Kučar], and suffered as protagonists of ideas and a line contrary to the Tenth Session and the policy of the CC LCC.²⁰

Tito's July Visit: The Second Warning

A week later an unusually angry Tito descended on the Croatian capital and summoned the Executive Committee and some other Party leaders to a meeting. Typical of the style of the Croatian crisis, there was at the time no mention in the press of this meeting or what transpired there, so that the general public depended on rumors while Croatian Party organizations learned only what individual

emissaries from Party headquarters chose to tell them. Since these presented sharply contrasting versions, they only added to the disorientation and confusion that characterized the Party in the countryside in the months to come.

Finally, in May 1972, a text of Tito's remarks at the meeting of July 4, 1971, was published. It appeared to be a transcript but is in fact a reconstruction from memory and notes by some who were present—members, needless to say, of the antitriumvirate group—since it seems that no verbatim record was kept. If the published version is nevertheless assumed to be a reasonable approximation of the words actually spoken, it is a remarkable document.²¹

"This time," Tito allegedly began, "I am going to speak first. You see that I am very angry. That is why I have summoned you and the meeting won't last long."

The situation in Croatia, he said, was not good. Nationalism had run wild. The only countermeasures taken were useless verbal condemnations, while "under the cover of 'national interest' all hell collects, . . . even to counterrevolution." Relations between Serbs and Croats were bad, and "in some villages because of nervousness the Serbs are drilling and arming themselves. . . Do we want to have 1941 again? That would be a catastrophe."

Three times in his remarks Tito referred to the international context: "Others are watching. Are you aware that others would immediately be present if there were disorder? But I'll sooner make order with our Army than allow others to do it."

And later: "With all this we've tarnished ourselves enough abroad. We've lost prestige and it will be hard to get it back. They are speculating that 'when Tito goes, the whole thing will collapse,' and some are seriously waiting for that. . . The internal enemy has plenty of support from outside. The great powers will use any devil who'll work for them, whether he's a Communist or not."

Still later, warning that he was considering an appeal to the country ("and I know I'll have the workers on my side"), he abruptly reverted to the theme of rumors that were circulating: "All kinds of things are being said. Now, among you, it is

being said that I invented my conversation with Brezhnev in order to frighten you and force you into unity.”

(This highly interesting remark would appear to *confirm* earlier and otherwise scarcely credible rumors that Tito had told the Croats at the Brioni meeting at the end of April that Brezhnev had phoned to offer Soviet “fraternal assistance” if he should need it in dealing with the situation.)

Tito specifically criticized, *inter alia*, ethnic head-counting of Serbs and Croats in factories (“we will not allow that, and I shall say so publicly.”) He noted that “you have allowed the Matica to transform itself into a political organization, to such a degree that now you’ll have difficulty in controlling that [situation]. It has become stronger than you, you’re in no condition to curb it.” He found curious and ominous the new fashion of glorifying as “revolutionaries” historical figures like Ban Jelačić, who in 1848-49 “extinguished the Hungarian revolt, which was progressive, . . . [and] the Viennese students and workers.”

“I am for prohibiting the political activity of the Matica and the ‘Prosvjeta’ [a corresponding “cultural organization” of the Croatian Serbs]. In a socialist society socialist organizations must develop culture and not those who are against socialism. Have we forgotten what it means to be Communists and what the struggle for socialism means?”

“. . . Now I seek firm action. . . . What have you done against those of whom the sparrows on the roof are already singing and who preach and say all kinds of things [Veselica and Djodan, but not only them, there are lots more], against those who are already singing a song: ‘Comrade Tito, I kiss your forehead, now come put on the Ustaše uniform.’ Those aren’t only drunkards. It worries me that you don’t see this.”

Of the political situation at the University, he said: “I would dissolve the [Party] organization at the philosophy faculty. The majority of the students is good, but some individual enemies are very active there and can draw the students into dangerous things. You made a mistake when you supported these students. Not all students are dishonest, but those who lead them do not have honest intentions.”

The basic problem, Tito said, was that “the League of Communists is not ideologically united. It must be cleansed of all that is not on this ideological line. The Socialist Alliance is there as a mass organization and let these various [people?] conduct their struggle of ideas and discussions there. Democratic centralism doesn’t have to be the rule there, but Communists in that organization must act unitedly and act politically. . . . In the League of Communists democratic centralism must be firmly respected. We have the strength and must use it in the struggle against the class enemy.”

“So I want to hear what you think of doing,” Tito concluded. “It would be blindness and poor politics to think that it will be easy and that you can solve it all by some conversations with them. A surgeon’s scalpel will be necessary, and I won’t hesitate to use it, believe me I won’t.”

At the end of the meeting, Tito spoke again. He apologized for being so sharp in his criticism and said he was pleased to hear that they accepted it and would undertake unified action along the lines he demanded. “The main thing now is for you to be united, and that also in practice. You’ll very quickly be able to show the class enemy that this is no joking matter. This will be a great help to me as well, so that I can deal more sharply in the all-Yugoslav framework and in other Republics, and with the outside world as well, for I view these matters in terms of the international situation.”

Faced with “these deep contradictions among us” he had thought to make a public and open statement of his views. Now, however, he would not do that. The outside world expected after Brioni that “the process of the disintegration of Yugoslavia” would be brought to a halt, and if he were able to speak now it would be said that Yugoslavia had become nonviable.

“Two Lines and Two Directives”

Once again, it seems, the rest of the Croatian Party leadership had let the triumvirate speak for them in a meeting with Tito, who may or may not have been informed of the substance of the Villa Vajs conversations and the sharp disagreements that had surfaced there. The struggle to maintain the unity of the leadership continued, and those who were later openly to oppose the triumvirate

claim that they kept silent on July 4 because they could still convince themselves that this unity would now be achieved, on their terms, with the help of Tito's sharp words. "We really believed then—apparently we were too naïve—that this was possible," Ema Derossi-Bjelajac was to say later.²²

The first omens were mixed. On July 12, a week after Tito's visit, the Fourth Conference of the League of Communists of Croatia (the annual "mini-congress" introduced into Yugoslav Party organization in 1969) met in Zagreb. It was agreed by the leadership that the delegates should be informed, in a closed session at the end of the Conference, of Tito's criticism. Instead, however, the Secretary of the Executive Committee, Pero Pirker, confined himself to a brief summary described by the Josipović Commission as "so general, superficial, and inadequate that others who were there reacted publicly."

The Conference also heard some speeches and interventions the "nationalist content" of which provoked Bakarić to insist during a coffee break that Savka, as President of the Conference, must publicly censure such views. This Savka refused to do, arguing that it was inopportune to embark on an open confrontation at such a level and on such issues.

Other speakers reflected the acceptance by some senior Party spokesmen of constitutional principles and formulations originating in Matica publications. Djuro Despot, a senior figure in the Zagreb Party organization, noted, for example, that,

when the Croatian state is expressed in terms of sovereignty, then what is under discussion is the national state of the Croatian nation. The basis of this lies in the unambiguous political and constitutional-legal fact, which is universally accepted, that sovereignty is one, unified, and indivisible, and in this sense Croatian sovereignty cannot be divided. Divided sovereignty is in content the same as limited sovereignty.

Another speaker, the then President of the Socialist Alliance in Croatia Ivica Vrkić, agreed:

So, let everyone know that we are fighting for and will direct our political

organization toward the realization of Croatian statehood as a union in equality of Croats, because here is a unique chance for Croatia, for the Croatian people to create their state which they have sought throughout history, and if they do not get it now it seems to me that the Croatian people will never again even be for a Communist movement.²³

On the other hand, the Zagreb Party Presidium, under pressure from the Executive Committee, met on July 23 and voted to deprive the two Matica leaders specifically named by Tito on July 4, Sime Djodan and Marko Veselica, of Party membership. It was done more in sorrow than in anger and not without resistance. Zagreb Party boss Srećko Bijelić and Djuro Despot, both among the triumvirate's most loyal lieutenants, attempted in their speeches at the Presidium meeting to minimize the "errors" of Djodan and Veselica and to suggest that erring comrades could always hope to regain Party membership if they mended their ways. From the Zagreb University student leadership came angry threats of a student strike in support of the ousted men when the fall semester began in October.

Both Veselica and Djodan continued after losing their Party memberships to hold all their other, non-Party offices (Veselica, for example, was still a Croatian deputy to the Federal Parliament's Socio-Political Chamber in December) and to be active politically, curiously even attending and speaking at Party meetings. And, as the Belgrade press never failed to note, official leaders like Tripalo condemned them formally but never objected to sharing the platform with them at public meetings in various parts of Croatia.

Meanwhile, according to the Josipović Commission, developments were taking place in regional and local Party organizations, especially in Dalmatia, that the Executive Committee did not know about until the Commission began its investigation after Karadjordjevo:

Thus, for example, on July 20, 1971, the Presidium of the Inter-Communal Conference for Dalmatia met in a secret session during which Dragović [the President] in his introductory remarks

and Kriste [the Vice-President] in his intervention suggested that some members of the Executive Committee of the CC LCC at the Fourth Conference of the LCC had given a false evaluation of the situation in Dalmatia, that in the field they are incorrectly interpreting and distorting some closed meetings of the Republican political leadership, for example the conversation of President Tito with the Executive Committee and political functionaries of Croatia, that there are in the leadership of the LCC some individuals who do not agree with "our political course and its principal protagonists". . . There are those who even talk "about some centers of counterrevolution." In this connection it was proposed at this meeting that it would be necessary "quietly to prepare an open confrontation within the LC as well, because the forces of counterrevolution which are found in the League of Communists are more dangerous than nationalists," that it was necessary to hasten the process of differentiation within the CC LCC, and further: "that we in Croatia will fail to exploit the chance to constitute ourselves either as a state or as a self-managing unity if we do not clean out of the leadership in Croatia individuals who adopt positions contrary to our course"; that it would be necessary "to choose true representatives of the Croatian nation who will speak with Comrade Tito because he is misinformed" about the situation in Croatia, etc., and that to this end "it will be necessary to move toward holding an extraordinary congress of the LCC" or "immediately to convene the Conference of the LCC."

Mentioned in the context of this discussion as persons working against the policy of the LCC were Dragosavac, Bilić, Radojčević, [all members of the Executive Committee], Baltić, and especially Vladimir Bakarić, who, according to statements at this meeting, is Comrade Tito's most important informant in the sense of opposing the policy of the Croatian leadership. . . .

At "about this same time," the Report continues, the Party committee in Zadar wrote to Savka and to other Party organizations in Dalmatia—but not to the Republican Executive Committee—demanding that the Croatian trade union chief (Milutin Baltić) and four members of the Party Executive Committee (Bilić, Dragosavac, Derossi-Bjelajac, and Radojčević) be disciplined or removed from office for "destructive interventions" in Dalmatian politics.²⁴

The "Action Program" of August 2

These developments in Dalmatia and elsewhere in fact represented the reactions of the then Party leaders and their allies to the activities of the Executive Committee majority after Tito's visit. Whether or not the majority "naïvely" thought that a chastened triumvirate were now ready to work with them, as they claim, they themselves were acting on the basis of Tito's criticism, issuing instructions and visiting local Party organizations to demand discipline and an offensive against "nationalist forces"—the burst of activity that the pro-Matica Party organization in Zadar had called "destructive interventions."

The majority group in the Executive Committee also drafted a 30-point "Action Program" which was presented to and formally approved by a meeting of the Croatian "Aktiv" (The Executive Committee plus presidents of regional and communal Party organizations and other selected leaders) on August 2. Designed to implement what Tito had demanded, this document was to have a curious history.

The August Action Program was the strongest attack on Croatian nationalism in general and the Matica Hrvatska in particular by a leading body of the Croatian Party since the Tenth Session. Although other "antisocialist" forces and groupings—Serb nationalism, unitarism, neo-Cominformism, and the rest—are also discussed, it is clearly stated that Croatian nationalism is enemy number one "at the present moment" and ten of the Program's 30 points are dedicated to this subject. This line is portrayed as consistent with and not a revision of the Tenth Session: ". . . along with its condemnation of and reckoning with unitarism, the Central Committee of the LCC at its Tenth Session and on numerous occasions thereafter also

clearly defined the protagonists of nationalist tendencies and condemned nationalist forces—Croatian and Serb—as equally antisocialist, antiself-management, and antinational.”

The Action Program accepts Tito’s thesis that nationalism is a disguise for the “class enemy.” Alleging that the present economic, political and cultural position of the Croatian nation in Yugoslavia is untenable, nationalists

seek political solutions which, referring formally to the Croatian nation, would bring onto the stage class interests which are neither the interests of the working class nor of the Croatian nation. . . . Not believing in the working class and undervaluing the class element in the constitution of the Croatian state, these forces insist on a ‘unified national movement’ and a ‘general reconciliation of Croats,’ which means reconciliation with Ustaše émigrés, extremist nationalist and chauvinist forces which have been defeated in the course of and after the revolution.

These forces “advocate and organize their political centers and attempt to create strongpoints in the countryside—outside and against the policy of the League of Communists.” Their ultimate goal is said to be “the seizure of power and of dominant positions in the LCC, in order to force on it [the League of Communists of Croatia] a program which is contrary to the Tenth Session and to the interests of S.R. Croatia as a self-managing, sovereign, and equal Republic in the framework of S.F.R. Yugoslavia.”

The principal vehicle of such forces is identified as the Matica Hrvatska:

In the Matica Hrvatska a small number of people act as a nucleus whose conceptions and goals are contrary to our socialist development and to the purposes of the Matica itself. They pull the strings and seek to transform the Matica Hrvatska into a stronghold for the activity of the opposition, into a second political party, and objectively they constitute a conspiratorial group against the LCC and LCY, [against] the socialist development of Croatia and Yugoslavia. The

League of Communists must resolutely resist, preventing the extension of branches [of the Matica] in factories. The founding of branches of the Matica, whose purpose is not cultural and educational activities, like the campaign to expand the Matica as a kind of pan-political and total national movement cannot be supported, it must adhere to the principles set forth in [its] statute.²⁵

At the meeting at which the Action Program was adopted, Savka Dabčević-Kučar again defined, as she had done before, the fundamental difference between nationally-conscious Croatian Communists and nationalists: “The difference,” she said, “is that we see full national affirmation and strengthening of equality only on a platform of self-management socialism and in the context of the development of national equality, now of Republican and national statehood, in the context of socialist Yugoslavia. They are outside of that. That is the line of demarcation.”²⁶

Once again she was ignoring the vital point that the first part of this “line of demarcation”—for or against “self-management socialism” might have one meaning and relevance for a minority of Party true-believers and another meaning, or no relevance, for the soldiers of the “mass movement.” She ignored or feigned to ignore that the latter might be cynical about socialist slogans they had heard for years but excited by nationalist slogans that seemed fresh because long forbidden and whose promises paradoxically seemed more tangible because they were vague, founded on emotion, and rooted in Croatian political history and traditional aspirations.

Those who drafted the Action Program apparently supposed that, after acceptance by the “Aktiv,” it would be circulated to all Party basic organizations as a binding instruction with implementation enforceable under the rules of “democratic centralism.” That this did not occur was because such communications are the responsibility of the Secretary of the Executive Committee, the triumvir Pero Pirker, who invoked the technical argument that the Program must first be approved by a plenary session of the Central Committee, which did not meet again until November. Until

then the Action Program could only be treated as an advisory document and a semiconfidential one at that. In this guise it circulated among Party members in some districts but was allegedly suppressed in others, like Dalmatia, where the regional Party organization was in the hands of those loyal to the triumvirate.

Such procedures were later cited, after Karadjordjevo, as evidence for the thesis about "two lines and two directives" in the Croatian Party, with many key functionaries considering themselves answerable only to Pirker and Koprta and not to other members or to the Executive Committee as a whole. For local Party chieftains whose primary concern was political self-protection, such a state of affairs was not only unusual

but grounds for extreme nervousness. If they chose the wrong side in the struggle that seemed imminent at the center, they were undone. To most it must have looked as though the position of the triumvirate, backed by the "mass movement," Koprta's control of Party appointments, and the growing organizational strength of the "second party" based on the Matica, was unassailable.

They chose accordingly, reinforcing the impression that the triumvirate commanded the loyalty of almost the whole of the Croatian Party except for "conservative" die-hards like Bakarić and the majority of the Executive Committee. That loyalty on such a basis is a fragile thing was to be proved in the ten days after Karadjordjevo.



NOTES

1. Speeches and articles since Karadjordjevo, supplemented by a review of an extensive file accumulated during 1971 (primarily from *Vjesnik* and *Politika* among the dailies, *VUS*, *NIN*, and *Hrvatski Tjednik* among the weeklies), provide the principal sources. As this Fieldstaff Report was being completed, the 400-page report of a Croatian Party investigating commission headed by Ante Josipović was presented to the Croatian Central Committee (at its 28th Session on May 8, 1972). Extensive extracts are being published in the press and have been utilized as they appear, but no date has been set for the release of the entire Commission report. A most valuable additional source would be the stenographic records of the Karadjordjevo meetings, especially the 20 hours of confrontation between Tito and the Croat leadership during the night of November 30-December 1. This material was circulated to all Party organizations a few days after the Presidium meeting, but not to the non-Party public. Unfortunately, the Yugoslav press has not yet produced a Jack Anderson. (References to *Vjesnik* in later footnotes are usually but not always to the early edition available in Belgrade, which carries many articles that first appeared in later editions of the preceding day.)

2. See Part II to this series of Reports (DIR-5 '72), p. 14 and excerpts from the Report of the Josipović Commission published in *Vjesnik*, May 9, 1972, and elsewhere.

3. See footnote 7 below.

4. That party label is mine, not theirs or anybody else's in Yugoslavia, and is deliberately chosen to invoke the memory of parties and movements of that name in nineteenth century Central Europe. I find the program and aims of the Matica group much closer to those of this traditional National-Liberalism (which everywhere became more national than liberal) than to the other historic political currents with which the Yugoslav Communist establishment has attempted to associate them: clericalism, peasant populism (as represented by the interwar Croat Peasant Party), or the Ustaše. These elements also came to be present, as the Matica became an assembly point for all non-Communist "opposition" elements in Croatian society, but the national-liberal current, so defined, continued in my opinion to be clearly dominant.

5. This detail is from Zagreb students present at the election assembly.

6. This and other quotations in this section are from contemporary and often contradictory reports of the events in the Yugoslav press, especially *NIN* (Belgrade), April 11; *VUS* (Zagreb), April 14, and the dailies *Vjesnik* (Zagreb) and *Politika* (Belgrade) during the week of the coup.

7. Representative of the attitudes of those whom the triumvirate considered "conservative" if not "unitarist" are the interpretations of Bakarić and Ema Derossi-Bjelajac. Bakarić thought that the existence of an *organized* opposition to the LC was first "proved when in the student leadership there appeared people created not by the League of Communists but by someone else" (speech at Virovitica, in *Vjesnik*, Dec. 9, 1971). Cf. Derossi-Bjelajac's opinion that

what had happened at the University was that "there were two centers: one ours, Communist, which had one plan of action, and on the other side a nationalist center which had another plan, which had in its plan simply seizing the student organization and later infiltrating the Party at the University." The Executive Committee, she added, knew this and had "police material on it," but were unsuccessful in preventing the coup in part because the nationalists were "very often assisted by the action of members of the Party," among whom Djodan and Veselica were the most conspicuous (speech at Rijeka on December 10, in *Vjesnik*, December 12, 1971).

8. The 19th Session also remains a mystery, our interest in it stimulated by occasional references like that of Rade Pavlović at the post-Karadjordjevo 23rd Session, discussing the "collective guilt" of the whole Central Committee for the crisis: "But we must also, comrades, remember the 19th Session, about which no one speaks."

9. The most one can say about this fascinating version is that foreign correspondents who attempted to check it out could not get the Yugoslav officials they spoke to to deny it. Readers interested in concocting even better spy thrillers should see and speculate on Tito's alleged July reference to a "conversation with Brezhnev" at this time (see p.19 below).

10. Dennison I. Rusinow, *The Price of Pluralism* [DIR-1-'71], Fieldstaff Reports, Southeast Europe Series, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, 1971.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

12. Gaži's remarks at the 23rd Session of the CC LCC, December 12, 1971 (as reported in *Vjesnik*, December 14).

13. For example, Ema Derossi-Bjelajac, a member of the EC, in a speech at Rijeka on December 10, 1971 (*Vjesnik*, December 12).

14. See Part IV of this series, final portion of the section headed, "The Stakes Are Raised and Tito Calls."

15. This solution has in fact now been adopted—precisely 15 days after the resignations of the Croatian leadership suspended the Croatian veto. "Retention quotas" have been raised from ± 7 per cent to 20 per cent in the economy generally and to 40-50 per cent in tourism. The latter, ironically, is probably better than the pre-Karadjordjevo Croatian leaders could ever have wrung from their partners in the Federation and presumably represents a sop desperately thrown to wounded and resentful Croatian public opinion.

16. For a perceptive description of how the foreign currency problem was "transformed" from the economic to the national plane, see "Kontrarevolucija bez krinke," in *VUS* (Zagreb), February 2, 1972.

17. Long excerpts from all speeches, sometimes significantly cut or paraphrased (as noted below), can be found in *Vjesnik*, May 14-16, 1971.

18. Tito himself, a reasonably reliable source, has confirmed reports to this effect (in his July 4, 1971 talk with the Croatian leaders, as carried in all Yugoslav newspapers, May 9, 1972).

19. From the condensed version published in *Vjesnik*, May 9, 1972.

20. *Ibid.* Interestingly, almost the same words had already appeared in a long and useful recapitulation of the Croatian crisis in *NIN*, December 12, 1971. Cf. also the comments on the Villa Vajs meetings of Milka Planinć and Ema Derossi-Bjelajac in their December speeches to the Croatian Reserve Officers Association and at Rijeka (*Vjesnik*, December 12, 1971), and the speeches of Antun Biber and others at the 23rd Session of the CC LCC (*Vjesnik*, December 14).

21. The text was printed in most Yugoslav newspapers on May 9, 1972, ironically the 27th anniversary of the liberation of Zagreb from German occupation and the first anniversary of Savka's speech at the mass meeting in Zagreb which many consider the birth of the triumvirate-sponsored "national mass movement."

22. In the Rijeka speech of December 10, *loc. cit.*

23. Both as quoted in the Josipović Commission's Report, *loc. cit.*

24. *Ibid.* "Discoveries" of this sort during the Commission's investigation probably explain the hardening in the attitude of men like Bilić and Vrhovec toward the triumvirate that took place about a month after Karadjordjevo. Bilić told this writer in January 1972 that such a hardening was not a "tactical political move" on their part but reflected "new knowledge that we did not have then about the activities of the former leadership." Since Bilić was and still remains adamantly opposed to political trials for the triumvirate's group, this explanation of his January bitterness toward the comrades from whom he had parted company more in sorrow than in anger a month before seems to me convincing.

25. From the extracts published in *Politika* (Belgrade), October 2, 1971.

26. As quoted in *NIN* (Belgrade), October 17, 1971. Cf. Tripalo's similar definition of "our conception of statehood" below, see Part IV of this series, final portion of the section headed "The Triumvirate's Position."

