

Petar Gošev, 1948

Economist, politician, President of the League of Communists of Macedonia from 1989 till 1991

Object: Marx, Frano Kršinić, 1947 (bronze),
gift from the United Syndicate

Recorded in Skopje, September 30, 2016

Duration: 10' 32"

People of my age had the opportunity to live in two systems: in the previous, so-called socialist system and then in the capitalist system. From this perspective, and having experienced both, I can only express disappointment, which I share with most citizens in my republic. In socialism we lost the race with the modern world, with the developed countries, due to poor productivity of the system. It managed to survive, as we know, for a few decades but then we realized that development juices had dried up and the system simply had to collapse. Sadly, many citizens still don't understand that, including many who belong to the intellectual class. The idea of equality dominated in that system and it was exercised in a well-known way - through small difference in workers' salaries. Precisely that was the reason of unproductivity. As this system everywhere collapsed we had hopes that a change would yield results, hoped to harmonize the organizational forms with the most productive systems in the world.

Though capitalist systems differ around the world, capitalism still is the most dominant system today. However, barely 20% of the world functions successfully. Thus, disappointment in this system is equally strong, and expectations of a vast majority of people have been betrayed. Social certainty i.e. uncertainty has peaked. Inequality has risen to the highest level. Using the example of Macedonia, I can say that inequality in this country, which came out of an egalitarian system, is the highest in Europe. We can talk of inequality similar to that in South American or some African countries. For example, the coefficient of revenue inequality in Macedonia is forty. Even more than forty! That inequality is slightly higher than the one in neo-liberal America. Should such a situation continue, it's likely to bring down this system too. Should it continue in the world, because all around the world inequalities are huge, this model of capitalism, this so-called modern, or "surrogate" capitalism as Stiglitz dubbed it, will be threatened as well. Stiglitz says that market functioning isn't the problem, but according to him the problem lies in the political system that doesn't allow fair market competition. This generates inequality and takes us back to Marx's considerations on capital and wages. According to the standard economic theory capital yield was supposed to decrease. With it the wealth of the owners of capital was supposed to decrease, instead of assuming these cosmic proportions. But, we now have a reverse situation that Piketty described in his book "Capital in the 21st Century" published some two-three years ago. While praising Piketty for approaching Marx's view of capital and wage relation, Stiglitz rightly concludes that the issue is not the capital in the 21st century, but rather democracy in the 21st century, since the economic inequality created in the period after the fall of socialism along with the differences created in neo-liberal countries produced economic inequality that prevents development of democracy in these societies. Rich people and large corporations can exploit anyone as they

Petar Gošev continued

see fit now. Such a society again is perceived like an incorrect, unfair society. That's why there are growing protests in the world, dissatisfaction and conflicts of various forms. And they are shifted to the ground of nation, ethnicity, religion. Modern humanity must find the answer to this question. The name of such a system does not matter. There is no point in pondering whether it's socialism or capitalism. Equality among people is what we should discuss. What a fair and a just society is - that is what we must discuss, and once society reaches a consensus on relations thus defined being fair, the name of the social system will come by itself. This is the key issue: how to ensure democracy in a society, how to ensure justice in a society, how to ensure fair relations in a society.

In ex-Yugoslavia, including Macedonia, we are moving away from this idea. Thus, problems are shifted to the inter-ethnic sphere through stimulation of national-chauvinism. There will always be conflicts if we reduce people's identity to two main elements: ethnicity and religion. The identity of man is a much broader component. In the power struggle those who crave power and authority constantly play with these issues. But they are irrelevant if you think about the overall human identity and integrity. Much needs to be done in that domain. Conflicts in the former Yugoslavia will be extended if no results are reached in this area, and if we keep insisting on reduced identities, on producing inter-religious conflicts, if we keep discussing unresolved territorial issues. All this still exists in the Balkans, including the former Yugoslav republics. These issues draw away attention of the citizens from more important ones like economic prosperity or overall social progress, from the questions what is democracy, what is a fair society.

Jože Menciger, 1941

Economist

Object: Portable TV "Iskra"

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 9' 29"

I deal with the history of socialist economics, including that of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia greatly differs from the other socialist countries. What was deemed dissent elsewhere, was policy in Yugoslavia. If we consider the development, it's obviously linked to what we produced, and periods before and after 1953 should be viewed separately. That year the new constitutional law was passed and with it the decision-making rights were partially transferred to the companies. So, companies decided what to do and how to do it. This is the period in which Yugoslavia began production of consumer goods like TVs, cars etc. There was a ground-breaking shift from one socialist thought to another. It was a relatively successful period - from 1953 to 1965, when a new period started. Yugoslavia then gradually abandoned hard-core socialism for something called Yugoslav market economy. Two things must be noted here. First, unlike other socialist countries, decentralized decision-making was introduced. This led to the production of consumer goods, and weakened the power of politics at the same time. We were free and I can say that Yugoslavia developed in the right direction until 1970. After that a reversal took place, a clash between the bureaucracy and technocracy. This generated an economic system that could not function. Yugoslavia still managed to develop rather successfully, and it was self-management and social ownership, strange as it may seem, that enabled the decentralized management. Thus, transition in Yugoslavia could have been conducted differently than in other former socialist countries.

Within Yugoslavia Slovenia had a big advantage because it has always been "the first farmer in the village" but after reaching Europe we've become "the last townsman". "The first farmer in the village" was, in fact, the one that took most of the decisions about the economic system in Yugoslavia. After all, there was the troika - Kardelj, Kidrič and Krajger - the decision-makers. All in all, I'd say that Yugoslavia had a very specific development path compared to other countries. Unfortunately, we didn't use that in transition. Slovenia has had a special role in it. In the 1970s Slovenia embraced the idea of so-called "dispersion economy". No major cities were built in Slovenia. Ljubljana is still a relatively small town and rural environment was not at all disadvantaged compared to cities. One could even say that the village live better than cities, since it was decided to move the factories where the people are, and not move people to where the factories stand. This enabled highly dispersed development of Slovenia and created a compact society at the same time. Most of the workers were farmers or semi-peasants who owned some arable land. When transition brought on social problems, they were much smaller in Slovenia than elsewhere. Slovenia was also substantially more developed than the Yugoslav average. The gross domestic product was almost always twice that average. Therefore Slovenia had good conditions for transition. I remember that in the 1990s Slovenes claimed to have been exploited in Yugoslavia. Something similar is now happening in the EU. I call it the "Yugoslav syndrome". Everyone

Jože Menciger continued

thought they were exploited, but that is economically meaningless. Since stagnation lasted almost 10 years in Yugoslavia, Slovenia began to seek a way out in the 1990s. After Tito's and Kardelj's death, we lost the men who always knew what to do. A dispersion period started. We got apparatchiks unable to continue running things. In those bad times of stagnation accusations of being exploited began. Nationalism surfaced in individual republics, and some suffered a major setback with their leaders. I must mention Croatia with Tudjman, who was a strong nationalist, and Serbia with Milošević on the other hand. In Slovenia we were lucky to have a normal man as Milan Kučan. I think he contributed the most to our peaceful transition from one social system to another.

Unfortunately, we Slovenes didn't use the advantage accumulated in the long years spent in Yugoslavia with its specific economic system and the major dispersion of industry in Slovenia. All this made privatization relatively simple, and it was clear to me that in this case, employees of the enterprises were the ones that cared the most for them. I have always opposed various funds or bonds distribution, but I think we made a mistake not using it. Our idea of capitalism was always linked to what we have seen over the border, in Austria and northern Italy. But we forgot that there was capitalism in Argentina and in South American countries as well. Sadly, with the idea of the "end of history" in the 1990s the American type of capitalism prevailed. It spread across Europe, including Slovenia. After the independence, development was relatively successful in Slovenia, all up until 2005. Then the "gambling" period began. Everyone began to rely on accumulating so-called financial wealth. People were buying shares at home and abroad. Even the government took part in this. Slovenia, a country with zero external debt, became indebted ten billion euros in three years. Then the crisis started, and the authorities' reaction to it was completely wrong. Damages incurred in Slovenia after the crisis were greater than those made by crisis itself. The politicians' response was utterly wrong, as they largely obeyed directives from the European Commission (EC), which was a fundamental error. A country which, at the time of its formation in the 1990s, ultimately required changes from Belgrade, became a state that obeys the EC, even thinks ahead about what will EC say - will we do things right, i.e. the way they want us to do it. In recent years, great damage was caused several times by the decisions of the European Commission.

Luka Lagator, 1945

Economist and cartoonist

Camping fridge made of plastic, brand "Style"

Recorded in Cetinje, August 11, 2016

Duration: 5' 54"

Ex-Yugoslavia... the middle one, if I can call it that, the one I was born and lived in, offered great opportunities for inventive people, for those who felt capable of creating something, regardless of the designation in terms of education. I might be a typical example of those who "found their way" in that system. Probably drawing on experiences from the past, and from the immediate and broader environment, Yugoslavia made it possible for people to exercise their freedom. I guess that those freedoms suited me perfectly, while at the same time I was a bit of a disappointment in what I was educated for. I didn't make much of an effort in that and chose to become involved in what I thought was challenging for me, in a field that gave me a chance to show my utmost. In spite of a whole range of activities dominated by expectations of economic and social success, to secure a better life and so on, I opted for the artistic one thinking it was dominant in me. And no one stopped me in doing so. There are general qualifications for that period: a time of communist restraints, an era of restricted human freedom. I don't think it was so. Actually, I think it was rather the opposite. Sure, there was some of that too, as it usual is the case when people gain power. If one is keeping power a bit too long, there's a whiplash effect, one becomes possessive in every way, as well as determined to achieve something... Sure, this is what lead to Goli Otok camp and all the conflicts. Thus, from a potential Garden of Eden Yugoslavia practically became a Devil's Yard, finally turning into a garden of ashes. The social consciousness that implies a higher level was not capable of passing such a test provided by the self-governing socialist system that we lived in and enjoyed. Back then we had a middle class and now that class is gone. All this includes a factor that's somewhat limiting, though, depending on the angle one looks at it, it can also be a stimulating factor. For example the consumer society emerged in Yugoslavia lasting from the 1970's up to the break-up in the 1990's. It was modelled on some of the more developed countries, such as the US, neighbouring Italy, or Germany. We all know what we no longer have today. Back then we had textile and footwear industry, home appliances industry, the weapons and tooling industry. We had a complete economy, even though it was a self-management socialist system. Within that economy we had the consumer mentality that might have brought us down, like it's threatening the world that came after. When it became clear that not all could equally possess things, although we strived for a society of equality, it morphed into its opposite. The same is happening globally for nearly two decades now. The worldwide economic crisis is mostly generated by these very same reasons. I'm not being pessimistic, but I believe that the economic and social crisis are normal conditions, while the periods of wellbeing are actually outstanding circumstances that last much shorter. In fact something that usurps, that brings about a crisis is somehow a natural phenomenon. Just look at yourself, from birth to death. States are very similar. In my opinion, and it's an opinion I've accepted at the time I was getting my education, the state is also a living organism that is born, that has its own life and that has to wither away. However, we didn't wait for our country to die, killing off Yugoslavia ahead of time. Perhaps we did that a bit too early and maybe it was struck down in the prime of life.

Besa Shahini, 1982

Sociologist, political analyst

Object: Women's costume, made in 1870, Prizren, gift from the District board of Socialist Alliance of Working People of Prizren, 1955

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 3' 16"

Industrialization of Kosovo as part of Yugoslavia was launched very late, in the 1960's or late 1950's. It lasted briefly, from the 1960s to the 1980s when it was ended. De-industrialization of Kosovo began in the 1990s. Factories or factory branches from other parts of Yugoslavia, previously opened in Kosovo, were gradually closed or the personnel replaced. Instead of Albanians, Serbs and others were employed. Late industrialization, early deindustrialization, and then the policies led by the international community, after it took over the administration of Kosovo, mostly those of privatization of factories and reduction of jobs that these factories provided. Today our economy focuses on services not on production. This hampers the economic growth of Kosovo. I don't know who these workers who sent this gift were. But industrialization and job creation began well after 1955. Later on, this caused the temporary economic development of Kosovo as part of Yugoslavia.

At the time, from the 1970s when Kosovo gained the right to open a university in Albanian, the number of women receiving an education grew. Thus they had the opportunity to be employed. This period of development of Kosovo was very brief. Actually it lasted two decades. The advancement of women ended along with this period. In the 1990s repressive measures by the Republic of Serbia contributed to create a parallel educational system in Kosovo. Albanians went to school in basements, garages and the like. At the time, many girls stopped going to school. One-third of the girls that attended school in the 1990s didn't continue their education. It was a big blow to the progress brought to women by the industrialization and economic growth in the 1970s.

Samir Lemeš, 1968

Professor of engineering, University of Zenica

Object: Tribute, Iron works Powerplant Zenica, September 10, 1979

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 8, 2016

Duration: 3' 29"

The Zenica Steelworks, the center of ferrous metallurgy, was created more than a hundred years ago when Austro-Hungarian industrialists first set up a small steel mill there. After the WWII, the Steelworks became a symbol of the rapid development of the socialist state. Interestingly it was located here for defense reasons as it was situated away from the borders. We somehow expected to be attacked from the outside, but in the end we attacked our country ourselves, destroying Yugoslavia from the inside. The Steelworks powered growth, it fed us all. It was even called "Mother Steelworks". Back then it was understood that anyone born and living in Zenica would eventually find certain employment there. There was a positive labor culture. Working implied a positive ideal of perfection.

After the war, the Steelworks stood useless. Then production was restarted, but just to privatize the plant. Actually it was given away to a foreign investor who treated the plant quite differently than we expected. We expected large investments from the new owner, being a global steel manufacturer we expected world standards. It did not happen. Now we have something completely different: we have huge pollution and no investments. The excuse is that the Steelworks polluted for a century, but you can't compare what existed 30, 40, 50 years ago with the technology we have today. Back then there were some 20,000 employees, and now there are just about 2,000, with a constant tendency to reduce that number as well.

We are now in a position of having to hide our problems. Recently the policy has been completely reversed. We've spent years convincing the government that there's a problem and that we must start solving it. There has been a mild political change, but it focuses on an entirely new philosophy: they tell us not to talk about pollution because that will chase away the investors. Rather than accusing those who pollute, they accuse us who point out the problem and talk about it. I just don't like this. I preferred much more the labor culture that appreciated and praised people who worked, making an icon of a workingman as someone who produces and contributes a lot. It seems that those working the least are turned into icons today. And that's something I just don't like.

Dragan Miljanić, 1951

Former worker and union member of “Arsenal“ company, Tivat

Object: Scale model of the school ship of Yugoslav war fleet “Jadran”

Recorded in Tivat, August 12, 2016

Duration: 5' 13”

I guess every Yugoslav knows about ship “Jadran”. It was the trademark of the Yugoslav People’s Army, the ship Tito used in the socialist era, and that regularly overhauled at the “Sava Kovačević” shipyard in Tivat - the “Arsenal”. The “Sava Kovačević” shipyard in Tivat had some 1.350 workers, plus 800 to 1.000 sub-contractors, it was the lifeblood of the Bay of Kotor. In socialist era Tivat was the second best municipality in terms of gross national income. Just one Slovenian municipality was ahead of it. We repaired ships, submarines, and all kinds of vessels. We also produced anti-hail rockets. Workers were satisfied, unlike today. A worker that wanted to work could earn a lot. Each worker was insured and was provided with housing. The “Arsenal” was a powerful company, as it would be called today. But back then it was the state owned shipyard. The “Sava Kovačević” built all you can see in Tivat today, except for Porto Montenegro, some 80% of everything: buildings, streets, parking lots, all those things needed for a normal life. However, they said that the time had come to get that dirty technology out of the Bay, so at the site of the “Arsenal” now there is the “Porto Montenegro” marina. I must say that the “Porto Montenegro” really is beautiful, the sea is clean, it has beaches, and hotels. But it is too expensive, and out of the 1.300 shipyard workers that used to work there, only some 30 have a job there today. A total of some 50 former workers still have a job in Tivat, and I know nothing of the others.

In the socialist era everyone knew their job and their duties. Working hours were respected, and workers were paid for every hour they spent at the job. They had social security, pension funds and so on, and now private companies and the so-called businessmen exploit them. Now there are no trade unions, workers have no rights, and they have no benefits that I mentioned. The workers are expendable today.

As for democracy, I firmly believe that there was more democracy under Tito, than there is today. Today there’s no trace of democracy here. I could talk and criticize like this with no end, since I surely long for the times I grew up and lived in, and regret that my grandchildren and children were denied all of that. Those were the best times we had. Back then nobody cared if you were Montenegrin, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Albanian, or Hungarian. We were all Yugoslavs. We were all friends, we all went to youth drives together. We all helped each other, while now everything is money based. People who, back at Tito’s times, couldn’t even work as simple couriers hold the highest positions today. Don’t think I’m belittling such a job, but the leaders in this country today lack the essential requirements for living, working, and advancing our society like it was the case when the “Arsenal” produced, manufactured and fed the Bay of Kotor.

Valter Cvijić, 1986
Anthropologist

Object: Selfgovernment (scale model for a monument), Oto Logo, bronze, height 48 cm, gift from the Red Flag Institute, 1980

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 1, 2017
Duration: 2' 56"

In my opinion, the self-management in Yugoslavia primarily was a mechanism of social integration at a time when Yugoslavia had to differentiate itself from the policy of the Soviet Union. I think the Yugoslav authorities introduced self-management as a new consensus mechanism among classes with limited emancipating potential. That doesn't make self-management politically irrelevant today; actually, it is probably more relevant than ever. But a new self-management toolkit must be built in completely different conditions from those at the time of Yugoslavia and industrial modernization. Those circumstances don't exist today, nor can be revived.

Now we are left with some key questions: What would self-management mean today? Where would self-management take place? Within which institutional framework? Within the labor sphere or outside of it? I think our generation must upgrade the self-management concept, expanding and revising it significantly. The very concept of self-management surely holds a huge emancipating potential, especially in a time of disintegrated society when the institutional heirs of self-government are collapsing throughout former Yugoslavia. In Slovenia there is the Socio-Economic Council that continues the tradition of creating consensus of classes, but today when the neo-liberal model is facing a crisis, such bodies are merely a formality, and not something that could really work. Thus, the key question that arises today is what kind of self-management and who are the self-government stakeholders? This must be taken into account because we live in a very different society than the Yugoslav self-management socialism was. Therefore, all this must be reassessed.

Nina Vodopivec, 1974
Anthropologist

Object: Order of the Hero of the Socialist Work, 1950

Recorded in Ljubljana, January 31, 2017
Duration: 5' 39"

The medal of the Order of the Hero of Socialist Labor makes me think about the meaning of work in socialism, and at the time of post-socialist transformation in the last 20 years. I think of specific people. Not just those who have received this award, but of all those that invested their energy, time, skills and knowledge in the development. Meanwhile we've qualified their work as inefficient, as something obsolete. We've cancelled their efforts and abolished various workers' rights. My thoughts are strongly marked by research of the position of workers in the textile industry at the time of socialism in Slovenia, as well as of the transformation of the labor market with the emergence of flexible forms of employment at the time of post-socialism. My interlocutors, textile workers from the socialist era, called the socialist factory "our factory". It wasn't about ownership, but about belonging. Factories deliberately instilled this sense of belonging and built workers' identity. Factories affected a wider circle of people than just the employees and their families. They built housing, medical and dental clinics, organized nutrition, childcare, consumption, cultural, educational and social activities. In many localities they developed infrastructure. By organizing holidays in union owned vacation homes they enabled children to go to the mountains or the seaside. In the socialist modernization scenario development meant more than productivity and capital growth. It was necessary to develop infrastructure that would satisfy workers' wishes and needs. Besides electrification, sewage and road construction, it meant regulating environmental conditions and dealing with the divide between work and home. What was happening outside the workspace was important too.

I must stress that work should be viewed beyond the rational technological operations. With work a man becomes involved in a society. Work unites both formally and informally. A job allows access to other spheres of activity and existence. Work gives person a feeling of being useful, gives him dignity and structures his life. This must be considered when we talk about unemployment and about how work has been transformed. Work was once deemed a right ensured by the state and society. Today it is the individual that has to ensure a job for him or herself. The idea is that individuals create their own jobs. Everyone must realign to the needs of market rationality that demands competitiveness, mobility and flexibility, essentially becoming small entrepreneurs. And when we talk about entrepreneurship, it's not just about the transformation of business models and work organization. It's about everyone functioning as an enterprise. What's being strongly stimulated in Slovenia is the creation of independent entrepreneurs and startups. What are the consequences? Based on this neoliberal paradigm you are responsible for yourself and expected to create your own workplace, to offer skills, knowledge and personal qualities on the market while at the same time adjusting to that market. Risk and responsibility shift from society to the individual. At the same time, there is internalized guilt for one's own situation, thus the perception of social problems has also changed. For example, the perception of

Nina Vodopivec continued

unemployment or poverty - now we blame the individual for it, saying how he or she didn't manage, or lacked motivation. So, there is no more social conditionality. Permanent intensification of labor flexibility led to precarity and to precarious forms of life. There is increasing number of people who live in uncertainty, and at the same time we have increasing number of motivational trainings that should enable us to "successfully" deal with stress and uncertainty. This intensification of labor flexibility has many psychophysical consequences, which we still do not take seriously seeing them as a personal issue. These processes have individualized the very sphere of labor collectivity. In order to achieve political mobilization, create conditions for re-acquiring rights and ensure better working conditions, we must organize and associate.

Tomislav Badovinac, 1934

Economist, member of the Presidency of Central Committee of Communist Party of Croatia, from 1986 till 1989

Object: "Brčko-Banović", Krsto Hegedušić, 1956, oil painting, 146x162 cm, gift from the author, 1962

Recorded in Belgrade, January 26, 2017

Duration: 7' 05"

The Brčko-Banović railroad is synonymous with youth work drives. It's iconic in the sense that the Brčko-Banović railroad introduced the involvement of young people in the reconstruction and development of the country. After the World War II, the horrendous casualties and destruction were unimaginable. Almost nothing could be done with machinery and manual work was the only alternative. Thus Tito invited the young people to replace fighting with rebuilding. Youth organizations took on upon themselves to manage work drives and enthusiastically embraced the call.

The proud spirit embodied by the construction of the railroad generated the slogan "We build the railroad - the railroad builds us". The young later added another slogan: "No resting before reconstruction is finished". After the Brčko-Banović railroad, the Šamac-Sarajevo railroad was built, followed by the first highway from Zagreb to Belgrade. A number of new cities were built by the hard work of the young. These towns were given schools, hospitals, playgrounds, homes, and everything else that a proper city needs. These work drives were a true phenomenon. So much that they drew attention of many countries and a lot of young foreign nationals came to take part in them. They would not have become so popular if the Youth Organization hadn't become the managing and executive force of the youth work brigades with the young people becoming both a stakeholder and the manager of all activities related to such voluntary labor. The youth work drives created the conditions to bring together all profiles of young people - farmers and workers, high school and university students, even foreigners from all continents. The mutual rapprochement and companionship generated a very special spirit. This helped silence all those that were contrary to any closeness among the young, and in turn made brotherhood and unity possible. In fact, they were all in the same position doing the same tasks and work.

Today we live in the so-called transitional social framework. It's dominated by capitalism, with the primary goal of profitable employment. Such circumstances allow no conditions for a work drive, like at the time when socialism was being developed. It would be great if the Ministry of Education were to organize at least two obligatory working weekends for students. Thus university students of all kinds could do some community work to get acquainted with life outside their usual environment. Their professional training should be put to use. For example, medical students might do examinations, checking blood pressure or blood sugar levels. Agronomists might help with farming issues. Mechanical engineers could focus on their field, veterinarians on veterinary problems. This would make a change in young lives that ignore all aspects of social living due to a tendency to just quickly acquire means or capital.

Teodor Celakoski, 1971

Cultural worker and activist

Object: "Builders of the Highway", Nandor Glid,
bronze 60x47.5x30 cm, gift from builders of the highway,
given before 1957

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 5' 03"

A few years ago, the civil society and the unions launched a major campaign in Croatia aimed against privatization and concessions of the highway infrastructure. A huge social reaction surfaced. In just 15 days we managed to collect 500.000 signatures, and to do that in the streets, in direct contact with citizens. Considering that Croatia has about 4 million inhabitants, this means that in very short time we managed to collect the signatures of a large share of the population. One of the key strategies of the government's counter-campaign was the promotion of a public discourse to the effect that Goldman Sachs or some similar corporation should manage the highways since they anyway weren't ours because of the foreign loans used to build them. Interestingly this circumvented the fact that a good percentage of these highways had already been built during the socialist era. Back then highways also played a significant ideological role, generating social cohesion, so to say. Even the new ones built to the South and to the coast had an important role in building social cohesion in Croatia. So, in both of these independent processes of society building there was an attempt to deny the heritage and the fact that the infrastructure was pre-existent. And this was a great injustice. They insisted that the highways were burdened by loans, but not all of them were. A good portion of these highways was built during socialism, especially the tract from Zagreb to Slavonski Brod.

We are faced with a fetishized privatization cycle, escalating into a neoliberal variant. In Croatia, with the drastic rift of the 1990's, it seemed that the obvious facts were to be denied. Like, for example, the state of infrastructure: from the kindergartens in Zagreb to the highways and to the huge housing projects that were inherited, the existence of infrastructure was denied. I believe that such denial of reality and life had stunning consequences. Due to ideological motives and the need for political domination, a certain type of discourse, primarily nationalist, is used, and everything is being done to disallow the past.

It's quite interesting to see how one fundamental factor so closely tied to patriotism and national resources, is given away exactly by the players that thrive on this ideological matrix as they cross over and entrust important state infrastructure to private corporations. They are willing to renounce to essential parts of sovereignty. Since we are like a province, a peripheral, we must find the strength to resist such processes. Otherwise we'll lose any chance of managing our future.

Husnija Kamberović, 1963

Historian

Object: "Duel", Paja Jovanović,
gift from the State Security Service, 1959

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 10, 2016

Duration: 2' 17"

Yugoslavia was a country made up of a lot of contradictions. In a very strange way they enabled this country to function as a coherent whole for quite some time. It was a country where, for example, it was possible for art students to get a scholarship from the major industrial companies, like the Zenica steelworks, and then to come back and get a job in these industrial companies - making photographs, paintings or simply illustrating the life of the working class while promoting the life of the workers and the labor phenomenon as such. This was surely a country of security and stabile prospective. Still, as it was relatively short-lived, life of that same country resembled a life of great poets such as Pushkin and Lermontov - they had a short but honorable life and eventually died in duels. It could be said that the executors of Yugoslavia, whose death was not a dignified one like that of Lermontov, were people who knew Yugoslavia very well and had overnight rejected all the good sides that country had.

Two decades after Yugoslavia was killed many still wonder whether it's really dead. It seems that Yugoslavia as a country is truly history now, but the Yugoslav idea will endure in the future for it has evolved into a myth.

In today's Bosnia and Herzegovina Yugoslavia is mostly viewed from the perspective of its collapse, so all that happened at its end is being extended to its eighty years long history. I think it is a wrong perspective, since Yugoslavia and its life can only be understood within the context of the time when it existed during the twentieth century.

Branko Kostić, 1939

Professor of Economics, acting Chairman of the Presidency of the SFRY from 1991 till 1992

Object: Deer antlers, Karadjordjevo, 1964

Recorded in Podgorica, August 26, 2016

Duration: 3' 30"

Whilst he was alive, many called Yugoslavia "Tito's Yugoslavia", and justly so, I think. In fact, with his successful foreign policy Tito became one of the most outstanding statesmen of the second half of the twentieth century. However, Yugoslavia fell apart, although I insist that it was broken up immediately after Tito's death. I think he bore the greatest responsibility for that as well. He was at the head of the Communist Party, he had enormous popular support, especially in Serbia and Montenegro. Back then he could do whatever he wanted. But instead of rebuilding Yugoslavia according to state principles after the WWII, Tito and the Communist Party turned to ethnic principles, to national principles in building the country. Thus six republics were formed, six small states within Yugoslavia, and after 1974 Kosovo and Vojvodina were added to that list. So the country virtually disappeared along with Tito.

Much before the 1990's war in ex-Yugoslavia I insisted that it would be far more rational for Yugoslavia to be based on the state principle, similar to Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the United States. In the 1990's I visited Canada and the US as the Head of the Presidency of Montenegro. They had fierce ethnic and religious divisions there, even greater than those we had in Yugoslavia at the time. But all those people who were from Montenegro, or whose ancestors moved there from these parts, when asked what they were replied they were Canadians or Americans. Only some would say they were Albanian, or Montenegrin or Serb or Muslim, and so on. From that point of view, I think Tito carries the greatest responsibility for Yugoslavia disappearing along with him. There's a folk saying: If a mason spends 40 years building a house and it crumbles as soon as he leaves the site, then he was not a good mason and he laid poor foundations. But essentially, Yugoslavia was created in 1918 by the major powers and those same powers broke it up in 1991.

Goran Miloradović, 1965

Historian

Object: Ceramic sculpture "Duel" (Battle on the Lake Peipus 1242, between Russians and Teutonic), h:48cm, gift from J. V. Stalin, 1945

Recorded in Belgrade, November 23, 2016

Duration: 8' 15"

There's a sculpture called "The Duel" depicting the medieval battle on Lake Peipus between the Russians and the Germans, which Stalin gifted to Tito in 1945. Its meaning at that moment was quite obvious. Namely, Stalin wanted to make a parallel between the war he had just victoriously finished with those fought in the past.

After the WWII there was still a great Soviet state regarded as a threat to the Western Europe, and Yugoslavia was a special barrier between those two. This political and geo-strategic function of Yugoslavia was in fact what made it fundamentally different from the Soviet Union. Both Yugoslavias, the Kingdom and the socialist one, were obstacles to the Soviet expansion to Europe. That's why Tito and Stalin had to become opponents. This came shortly after the end of the WWII.

What were their similarities? They were similar in their ideology, in their education. I'm primarily referring to the Party education here. The Party shaped its stuff, and they both went through that process. Party and government structures that were built in two countries were copies of each other. The state Tito was building was a copy of the Soviet empire, though in a smaller area. Tito's ambition was to form a Balkan Federation with Yugoslavia as the central state to which other socialist countries would be affixed: Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Greece after the victory of the Communists in the civil war etc. It was a threat of a new hegemony in the Eastern Europe. Stalin was unwilling to be denied his spoils of war and the conflict between the two leaders was inevitable. The means used in this conflict were identical. Emulating Soviet gulags, Yugoslav communists set up their own for political opponents. Both gulags were primarily filled with disobedient communists. The institutions were the same, reliance on the army and police was the same. However, the differences in leaders' characters had important impact on the overall life in these countries. Stalin was introvert and ascetic, unlike Tito, who was extrovert and a hedonist. Their parties mirrored their personal traits. The lifestyle Tito tolerated and expected of his officials was quite different from how the Soviet leaders lived. So we are looking at differences in political everyday culture rather than differences in ideology.

The 1948 conflict was not the ideological one. Rather, it was political conflict that occurred due to geo-strategic causes. But it spilled over into all other spheres of life: into the everyday life, the culture, science and so on. That was the reason why Yugoslav communists insisted they were building something different and better, namely, a more authentic socialism than the one of the Soviets. This was quite fictitious because all these advantages that Yugoslav socialism boasted with sooner or later appeared in other East European countries. Thus, Yugoslavia was not that specific. What was specific, however, was the freedom of movement since Yugoslav citizens could go abroad and come back way before citizens of the East European

Goran Miloradović continued

countries could. This was the main advantage of that country. Everything else was more or less a copy and depended on the financial resources of certain countries. Socialism was not identical in Eastern Europe. It differed in Czechoslovakia, in East Germany, in USSR etc.

The block of countries that existed in Eastern Europe was physically well protected. These countries could not be threatened from outside, if for no other reason than due to the nuclear potential of the USSR. They were only threatened from within by those that represented their elite: the political leadership. Those who established these countries could not rule forever. New generations were coming and they accepted new criteria. These were not people that came out of the war, but those with different experience, ideals and desires. Informal opposition was mostly recruited among comrades managers or their descendants. This was the situation in Yugoslavia, as well as in other socialist countries. Such informal opposition worked through culture or education, through social and sometimes even political circles. If it became openly politically active, then political repression ensued cutting opposition down. Those who opposed the government always came from the leftist circles close to that very government. Thus, they smothered socialism, this great promise that primarily was a moral one: a promise that it is possible to build a just world where the exploited can be given back what they are stripped of. This is what they have betrayed. From private capitalists they made a state capitalist who also exploited the people relentlessly and shamelessly. Over decades, that initial contract or the agreement made during the revolution between the government and the people was depleted. Disappointments surfaced mostly during the sixties. With the 1962 clashes in the Soviet Union between the law enforcement and the dissatisfied people, and in 1968 in Yugoslavia with the conflict between law enforcement and dissatisfied and disappointed students who demanded more of Marxism. Students were not protesting against socialism in Yugoslavia, they were protesting against the lack of socialism, against the betrayal of the ideals, especially in the moral sense. And who could betray those ideals in moral terms other than those who had the power. And these were their parents, hence there the circle closes.

Leftist ideologies are dead because leftists killed them. And they would never return in that form. We might have some other hybrid variants of other ideologies, we might have other grounds on which people will dissent, but we will not see again that what the 20th century had. I think there should be no remorse about it either. This 21st century might not be better, but it will have to be different.

Stjepan Mesić, 1934

Politician, former President of the Republic of Croatia

Object: Model of the Marshal sign, Antun Augustinčić, 1943-1946

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 6' 10"

Tito was the main integrative factor. Along with him there was the League of Communists and the Yugoslav Army. When Tito left this world and the political scene, this main integrating factor disappeared. The Party remained but at the 14th Congress it disintegrated too. The Army was looking for a sponsor. Top Army officials were aware that this costly, inert mechanism could survive only if there was a source of income. So they sought a sponsor, who eventually was found in the guise of Slobodan Milošević who took over the helm of Serbia. However, Milošević didn't want any reshaping of Yugoslavia. He aimed to create greater Serbia, relinquishing the troublesome parts. That's why he opted to use war to attain his political aims. In the end, Franjo Tuđman became head of Croatia. Initially he had agreed to the confederate model I proposed within the Presidency of Yugoslavia. According to that model confederation was to be proclaimed, but first all of the republics were to declare their independence. This confederation agreement was to define the jurisdictions to be transferred to the republics, and what was to be left under the authority of the confederation. Its term would have been 3 to 5 years, to see how things would work out. The confederation could have been extended then. Otherwise we'd all go our separate ways, without war. But the winds of war swept over Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with numerous victims and a sea of blood. In the end everyone felt this war. Even those who were not directly affected, like Serbia, were still deeply involved in the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. So, we did something that was profoundly wrong. Something that led the Yugoslav nations to hatred, although it could have been avoided. It wasn't hatred that led to war. It was war that created a hatred that is still felt today.

So whenever I think about Yugoslavia, about its positive and negative aspects, the positive ones always outweigh the bad ones. Among other things, we had liberated our country ourselves, we were not liberated by the Red Army. When I talked to Chinese President, Hu Jintao, I said how we had a lot in common even though we were different. The similarity lies in the fact that we both got rid of our conquerors on our own. People forget 1945, although they should keep it in mind. The Red Army had reached the borders of Yugoslavia, the Croatian border, rivers Drava and the Danube. Had it not been for the National Liberation struggle, the Red Army would have gone on to Milan. People should remember those times and realize that we had a functioning system. One that was far more liberal than the one in the USSR. And we also had a market economy. In fact, our enterprises operated in market conditions. Sure, at the beginning we had a planned economy, but it was not a purely planned economy for long. The market economy had developed so much that our companies did business all over the world competing with those coming from the developed world. Thus I think all this should be stressed to remind people of how things used to be. Because the young generations know very little about it. They don't know much about what happened and what would have happened if there had not been a National Liberation struggle organized by the Communist party headed by Marshal Tito.

Shkelzen Maliqi, 1947

Philosopher, political analyst

Object: Mini camera “Steku”, Tito’s personal object

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 4’ 40”

I don’t remember ever seeing that camera, not a single photo or a description of this small device. Except for it being an apparatus, I don’t know much about it. But the very word “apparatus” made me associate reminding me of Tito, the chief, the big boss of a huge apparatus that ruled Yugoslavia for nearly 40 years. And ruled in a rather convincing way indeed. It seemed a stable country, but it was still based on an apparatus. Perhaps, from the outside Yugoslavia seemed... Well, what was built under socialism, looked stable and promising in some way. But it lasted only as long as the apparatus.

All those big systemic reforms discussed for so many years... Self-management, brotherhood and unity... All those slogans from the time of socialism proved to be like soap bubbles and suddenly we found ourselves in the crossfire. And this brought on another thought that I had when Communism fell, for example in Romania. I thought about what was happening to their flag. They tore out the five-pointed star and left a hole in its place. I guess that Yugoslav socialism was similarly thorn out all of a sudden and we ended up in a completely different reality. We ended up in a hole filled by savage neoliberal capitalism which is practically merciless. In a way it is destroying what was perhaps the best in Yugoslavia – namely, the welfare state. It wasn’t complete nor perfect, but it was a welfare state. Many of my friends and me personally had some sort of a vision about correcting the negative aspects of communism in social and political terms. Keeping the ideal of a welfare state, with the practice of Scandinavian social democracy, for example, in mind. It was also achieved in other European countries when those countries were prosperous in their development. And now this is somehow rocking. The hole in Eastern Europe, in Romania, in Yugoslavia, in Soviet Union and in Russia now, somehow jeopardize the West as well.

The new apparatus are also dysfunctional because they have produced states which are mafia-like, like some sorts of alliances between political and real mafia.

Hristina Ivanoska, 1974

Artist

Object: "Yield I, Nucleus", Olga Jančić, 1967, gift from the city of Bajina Bašta, September 28, 1979

Recorded in Skopje, September 29, 2016

Duration: 5' 47"

I managed to catch a small part of the socialist period. Well, not exactly small, full sixteen years. I can't say that I got out with traumas, I even have very fond memories of that time. In my family, including my parents, my sister and me, there was a sense of equality, in how we shared responsibilities. I think my mother even had a very dominant role. There was a kind of matriarchy. We had full support from their side in making decisions on our education, on our view of the future although some conservative attitudes, certain expectations still existed. But interestingly never regarding the choice of profession. I wanted to study art, that was my choice ever since the high school, and my parents fully supported me in that. That profession was never called into question, although I know that this wasn't the case in some other families. However, there were some more traditional values in terms of marriage and family.

Later the breakup of Yugoslavia and the secession of Macedonia came. Thinking from a distance, as I was a teenager then, I can't say that I've gone through some traumatic situations. The existing system just collapsed. On the other hand, generation of my parents faced an enormous challenge of how to proceed. Gone were all the values they believed in and all they had built, the security they enjoyed in different segments of the society. Professionally, privately and in the family. They got lost, their life devalued. There were positive aspects though. Macedonia finally became an independent state, seceded from Yugoslavia, even though among Macedonian citizens opinions were somewhat divided in that matter. But, I guess that the politics of what was left from Yugoslavia, along with the war fought in the Balkans somehow determined their decision. Thus, secession was not particularly pronounced and there was no great sense of loss.

My parents worked in a factory, they were engineers, occupying managerial positions. That system had totally collapsed. Regardless of one's position in the factory, people experienced denial of what they were and what they had achieved, lost their standing in labor relations, everything they had created. They were just thrown out. My parents became redundant and ended up protesting in the streets. I think my father was more psychologically hurt. There were moments when he didn't know what to do, how to get out of that situation, out of that crisis. How to secure a living for his family. He would get up early in the morning as he would do each day getting ready for work, put on a suit and tie, and then he would sit at the dining table in front of a fax and telephone without knowing where to begin. My mother began to fear that something will happen to him, because there were people who paid with their lives for they couldn't bear the upheaval that befell us.

Ajla Buljubašić, 1985

Professor of BHS literature

Object: Filigree basket with a message, The Youth of Sarajevo, 1950

Recorded in Zenica, December 8, 2016

Duration: 1'52"

I like to call myself Yugonostalgic, although I did not grow up in that period. Still my parents brought me up in the spirit of communism. To this day I have a picture of Josip Broz Tito on my wall. Based on what I heard from my parents and what I learned in history classes I know that those times were really wonderful because everyone lived in a spirit of brotherhood and unity, which is not the case today. Why? Unfortunately, due to the war and number of other circumstances young people are not rebellious today, or at least not rebellious enough. Many talented young people want to do something but it is difficult for them to survive here, to try to achieve something. So, most of them are just leaving. But as a people we like to boast when someone reaches success. We like to say that he or she is from Bosnia and Herzegovina, from Croatia or Serbia, whatever. For me the Yugoslav period was so much better than what is now. People were really equal, and today they are not. They're poisoned, and so is the society. Poisoned with hatred, with religion. That's disastrous. But this is not evident as it's being swept under the carpet. I believe that Yugoslavia was something that Europe is trying to be today. Only back then one man ruled Yugoslavia and today they are many and somehow they can't agree on things.

Varja Đukić, 1962

Actress

Object: A plaque – sculpture Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik Summer Festival to its Patron on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the patronage and 30 years of the Festival, July 10, 1979

Recorded in Podgorica, August 10, 2016

Duration: 4'44"

In the environment and the family I grew up in, the notion of Yugoslav was something ordinary, something how you would normally declare yourself. I was born in Zagreb and traveling by train to Podgorica I perceived all parts of ex-Yugoslavia as my own. What I heard through the media as a child was very integrative. I had notions of all the cities and regions of the country. I listened to the music I loved, without discriminating among the authors of the music. Within the Yugoslav space, Dubrovnik was indeed special. We knew that in its history it was a model city-state. We knew that in Yugoslavia of that time, as well as in Europe and the world over it was a kind of civilizational capital spanning throughout the centuries all the way to the modern age.

In my youth I thought of the Dubrovnik Summer Festival as a pinnacle of what attracted me. I knew it was a celebration of a time in which artists and spectators who come to Dubrovnik from all over the world merged in the joy of theater. I very much loved a production I enjoyed as a high schooler at the Dubrovnik Summer Festival - Hamlet, directed by Ljubiša Ristić. I even remember the cast. I followed all the events. Later in my professional life in the theater, Dubrovnik remained an unfortunate void. Having no opportunity to work there it remained an untouchable space that still bound me to the values embodied by Yugoslavia. A path to integration and theatrical freedom, the essay production related to the Festival, the contemporary music presented at the Festival by authors and artists. It also preserved the notion that what we share as a linguistic culture has its refuge in this ancient city and in this idea of freedom. Later, when I visited Dubrovnik to see plays always involving world level actors and playwrights I was aware that they are continuing what existed before: the state-enlightenment system cultivated by Yugoslavia under the guidance of Comrade Tito to whom this plaque was dedicated. It all yielded something that I think is an adequate rendition of the future of that country which didn't survive in spite of all those efforts and achievements.

In the times after the break-up war, a period of deep economic crisis followed preventing such cooperation in tune with our needs. Today, regardless of what the public might be aware of, regardless of the existing or lacking media reporting, this community still exists quite intensely. It integrates people involved in artistic creation and it will remain so forever because we have a common language, no matter what you may call it, that connects us all, and which entwines all the artistic works generated before the disintegration of Yugoslavia. There is no other perspective but to continue creating in that language - in those languages. Working individually, in concert, in free collaboration with artists. Especially with those that we understand at any time of day or night. As I read, watch and listen I believe that this community has a great perspective, the only threat perhaps being the occasional restriction in belonging to a richer society.

Nikola Gelevski, 1964

Publicist, publisher

Object: "Comrade Tito's birth house", Stojan Aralica

Recorded in Skopje, September 29, 2016

Duration: 4' 33"

My prompt to reminisce is a painting, actually its title, "View of Tito's birth house". I didn't like Yugoslavia because of this personality cult. Yes, I was young, but when Yugoslavia broke up I was not that young anymore, so I think that my emotions and conclusions were mature. Well, what comes to mind is not so pleasant, because it takes me back to adulation of Tito. And that's what I really didn't like when I was young. I guess it started back in the high school. That component of Yugoslavia, the inviolability of Tito I really did not like. Still, I liked very much most of the other things in that country. Especially compared to the present and in the light of these past twenty years.

It seems that among other things, this adulation led to a major outburst of hatred. It's not only an issue of worshiping Tito. Rather, in a mature concept of civil society worship is not the most acceptable ideology or option. Adulation is a characteristic of nations, and that's why these new states are much, much worse. Back then we worshiped only Tito, but more or less we had the right to criticize everything else, at least in the mature stage of the SFRY. We had the right to criticize the system, the Party, the cultural model, the concept of centralization, decentralization, and such. Now, with this wave of adoration of the nation we are left with limited horizons for criticism, if any, since you can't criticize the nation. If you do, you'd be attacking the entire apparatus in these provincial states because they are based on the idolatry of nation and nationalism. That really reduces the space for any fundamental critique. And even when you articulate and manifest criticism, it is often senseless and sterile. There is no more space in which criticism makes sense. Or any thinking about ideology, about the country etc. I somehow think that these new countries, like Konstantinović said, are nothing but parochial states. Some call that "banana-republics", post-spaces for the imperial expansion of Western capital, where the cheapest possible labor is available. At least Macedonia is like that. Workers are paid here even less than in China or Vietnam. It's simply unbelievable and amazing.

These new parochial states were born of hatred. That's the ideology they grow on and are fed by. This is why I find them disgusting. My own country is disgusting, and I can spot similar trends in former fraternal republics. We've reached a point of being worse off now than back then. Take the economic model for example. Economy, workers, and even this cultural model within that general economic model. Ideology, too. Ideology of cosmopolitanism, brotherhood, solidarity is for me much more attractive and more normal than these narcissistic outbursts of hatred with promotion of selfishness, egoism and very narrow views.

Bogić Bogićević, 1953

Politician, member of the Yugoslav Presidency between 1989 and 1991

Object: Ceramic plate made for the occasion of nomination of Sarajevo for XIV Winter Olympic Games, Muhamed Kadrić Hamo, gift from the author, March 4, 1980; Inscription written on the back of the plate: "To Comrade Tito, the most loving man, the genius of the human kind, father of all Yugoslav nations and nationalities. To the father of the Nonalignment movement, the man who lit a torch of freedom, peace, joy and humanism. Always and forever – to the one who is oldest and forever young! Your deed, dear Comrade Tito, will be guiding me through beautiful fields of art that should serve all men. This is why I am presenting you, with all my heart, the first ceramic souvenir, a plate, dedicated to the future Olympics in Sarajevo. It is my work, and it is your work! You have to get well! Live forever our beloved Tito!"

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 10, 2016

Duration: 5' 29"

The text I'm talking about was written in 1980, and it expresses the sentiments of most of the Yugoslavs. It was written just before the Olympic games in Sarajevo, and the artist listed all the advantages of Yugoslavia as an optimal solution for all its citizens, for all its republics and peoples. Yugoslavia was the first socialist country to host the Winter Olympics without being boycotted by either the East or the West. Yugoslavia, though at the southernmost point of Europe and Sarajevo that had no Olympic and winter sports tradition was chosen for the Winter Olympics. Back then in Sarajevo there was just the Skenderija hall and the Olympic mountain of Jahorina. In spite all of this, these Games were judged to be the best organized ones ever.

So, although we remember that period due to the one-party system, verbal crimes, trials for cursing, though we had queues for gasoline, for detergent, coffee and the like, a lot of things were well managed. We had one of the most valuable passports in the world that allowed visa-free access to countless countries. People traveled, thus it was nothing like the "real socialism" countries. We had an anti-fascist tradition and based all on anti-fascism. We had other advantages too for all of those who wished to embrace the richness of different cultures, of religions, nations and traditions. Unfortunately, all of these advantages are now gone. We embraced and developed things that weren't good. Even then there was corruption and jobs via connections, as well as many other things not in compliance with certain democratic traditions of the welfare states such as Norway, Sweden and Finland to which we aspired. Today we formally have freedom. But, as Dostoevsky said long ago: "The moment people get freedom but no security, they will eagerly hand that freedom over to someone." Today we have no security, we don't have the labor laws that Yugoslav workers enjoyed. They had paid vacation, and were not abused by the tycoons and the nouveau riche. The abuse isn't just domestic, since liberal capitalism is determined to rule the world. All those critical of such globalism, are being called terrorists.

It was the leaders who unleashed nationalist passions, violence, hatred and fear among people, and not those with a different name or of different ethnicity. We paid the bloody price of such manipulation and sick, unfulfilled ambitions and projects for greater states that in this region could not be implemented without borders being changed, and revisions of the borders implied bloody wars.

Ognjislav Slunjski, 1951

Attorney

Object: "Bosnian landscape", Radenko Mišević, gift from Factory "Soda", Lukovac, 1960

Recorded in Banja Luka, December 7, 2016

Duration: 3' 03"

The gifts, once made to Josip Broz, evoke memories of a great man and of good times, experienced at least by my generation of 1951. We recall good times, camaraderie, harmony. It can't even be compared to what we have today. I'm still nostalgic. I don't blame any particular nation. All nations are good, though in every nation there are good and bad people. Our present has been shaped by others. We were one Yugoslavia, one good society. There was welfare, growth, certainty for the youth. Today, we have lost all that. Young people don't know what to do when they graduate. Older people barely survive. We have minimal pensions and merely struggle for existence. We can't help our young, as our parents helped us once. Times were so different.

What happened is horrendous. I can't come to terms with the fact that we are no longer one Yugoslavia. Once we were united from Mt. Triglav to Gevgelija. We could travel, visit, no one bothered us. Our living standard was European, and today we're behind Albania. The plan to turn Bosnia into a small Yugoslavia just won't work. Because we're economically exhausted. If we were economically stronger, that would be easier to achieve. All we see today are clashes among politicians. We see no unification in sports, economics, culture and such. Take the national teams of Bosnia and Herzegovina, rarely will you find a Serb as a team member. They are mostly Muslims and Croats, and that's sad. I think our perspective is very poor unless we strengthen our economy. When we get the economy up to a certain level, the nationalist schemers will lose their power. We have clever young people, smart people, with the intelligence to lead. But this intelligentsia is still asleep. The waters are still murky and the ones that caused this are still afloat. They don't seek unification, but only push for discord. The more hatred, the better off they are. They benefit, and we, the citizens, merely languish.

Miroslav Grčev, 1955

Architect, graphic designer, cartoonist

Object: Order of the Yugoslav Big Star

Recorded in Skopje, September 30, 2016

Duration: 8' 22"

Decorations were appreciated in the former Yugoslav federation. People loved and valued them. Not because of their design, although as a professional I think it was great, but because those medals and symbols also reminded them of historical heroism, of the values of freedom, brotherhood, unity, and of the human qualities like solidarity, mutual support and cultural enrichment. I think that in this post-Yugoslav period, depreciatively called period of post-socialist transition which is a term I'm deeply disgusted by, discontinuity has been imposed in all the countries that emerged from the Yugoslav breakup. An incorrect, culturally very harmful notion that new symbols must establish discontinuity with Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav cultural, artistic and symbolic heritage. To make such discontinuity usable in these present situations, over the past fifteen years the memory of Yugoslavia has somehow been forbidden. Early in the '90s another derogatory term was promoted: any recollection or comparison with our own past within the Yugoslav Federation was branded elderly or sickly Yugonostalgia. In a way, such Yugonostalgia was prohibited. In our country it is still forbidden. It's been paired with an ahistorical, completely reactionary, even stupid and harmful thesis that everything that was happening in Yugoslavia was covered exclusively by the sign of Communism. And in this new global neoliberal paradigm communism is deemed the source of all the evils of the 20th century. So there's an ongoing historical revisionism, which promotes a reality that is not only bad, but is affecting virtually all of us in ex-Yugoslavia. A reality that is not only bad now, but is getting worse from day to day. A regression, a dissolution of values that once were modernist, progressive and strong in every sense. Be it regarding urban planning or architectural development, today we witness decay. What's even worse is that this decay actually means the destruction of any recollection of Yugoslavia, of the time when we had the privilege and pure coincidental historical joy to live in Yugoslavia.

Our memories of things being better then are prohibited because they allow us to compare and simply conclude that any day in the present is worse than our days back then. So symbols, such as the Yugoslav medals or other national insignia, not to mention everything that has been built in Skopje, remind us of that time. It's so painfully obvious or "očebino" as we say here. What's so blatant is the disproportion and the image of reversing historical processes. We're sliding back into the prenatal period of Macedonia. Before the Macedonian state was virtually invented and founded in the context of Yugoslavia at the end of the World War II. In it the Macedonian nation was emancipated for the first time and along with it Macedonian culture, Macedonian language, all the Macedonian symbols, all the artistic achievements. Today it's all forbidden. We are now at the level of a nation which is pursuing a terribly retrograde process of self-cancellation. We're heading for prenatal of Macedonia somewhere around the time of World War I when all kinds of gangs ravaged the land. People who have had their own ideas about who, what and why should live here. At that time no one even dreamed that one day

Miroslav Grčev continued

within the Yugoslav Federation a new culture would be born in the true sense of the word, a new liberated and emancipated nation that in 45 years managed to achieve its complete definition, be it in the fields of art, science or culture, to achieve its graphic, symbolic, artistic, architectural materialization. Today, these artifacts remind us of those times. They are so antipodal, so painfully contrary to all I see in my surroundings and my reality today, especially in the center of the Macedonian capital.

Marko Špadijer, 1938

Publicist and writer, former president of Matica Crnogorska

Object: 100.000 years of history of Montenegro (archeological excavation), gift from the City of Nikšić to Tito

Recorded in Cetinje, August 11 2016

Duration: 7' 31"

We've just celebrated the 1000th anniversary of Jovan Vladimir and Doclea state. Compared to 180-200 thousand years those 1000 years, though they are a long period of time, are just a small segment of existence of life in this region. It's 1000 years of state structures in this territory. And those 1000 years of state continuity represent a millennium-long cultural sequence, implying a dramatic history that affected this area. Various migrations, movements, conflicts, border changes, diverse cultural influences: East, West, Islam, Orthodoxy... It was a mixing of foreign civilizations, cultures, states and empires large and small. And this whole galimatias encompasses tiny Montenegro. Montenegro as a heir of Doclea, Zeta and finally Balšić's Montenegro. This small country was a straw in the whirlwinds, a mere segment that managed to survive in all the historical storms. It has its own history, its culture, its symbioses that stem from the collisions and overlapping of cultures.

Montenegro had this same role in the 20th and 21st century. It entered the 20th century as an independent state. When Yugoslavia was formed it lost its statehood and this is one of the specificities of Montenegro. In return it got a chance to express its historical heritage within the newly formed state. In the first Yugoslavia until '45 it was anonymous and lost, tasked with deleting its historical origins. In the socialist Yugoslavia it regained some statehood and could be identified as a national and cultural entity which was creating a new kind of state within Yugoslavia. This induced Montenegrin gratitude, if I'm allowed to speak on its behalf. Within socialist Yugoslavia Montenegro had a chance to gain institutions, to restore its identity, to gain equality within Yugoslavia and to compare and permeate its cultural and other values with other nations within and beyond Yugoslavia. Thus, Yugoslavia was somehow "inspiring" for Montenegro. It was useful because the aid of Yugoslavia was necessary for Montenegro to survive, advance and become self-aware.

However, in 1990, the set of circumstances related to the break-up of Yugoslavia caught Montenegro off guard. It had no national program of its own, linking its fate to Yugoslavia, and later to Serbia. It was a continuation of the traditional standpoints: "What is good for Serbia is also good for Montenegro". "What is good for Russia is also good for Montenegro". Thus, it had no national program. Therefore, it was a little bit lost when the wars started. It accepted to deny itself and become part of the greater Serbia project as a replacement for Yugoslavia. It was all driven by the choice to save Yugoslavia and its integrity.

Then, the awakening and the rise of national consciousness came. Along with it came the confidence that with the disintegration of Yugoslavia Montenegro could become a sovereign state like the others, to regain its sovereignty at the beginning of 21st century that it had lost in 20th century. Luckily for us, this happened without blood or war. A referendum was the democratic way.

Marko Špadijer continued

There's a tendency to integrate the ex-Yugoslav space, now called Western Balkans, considering the previous experience. Having lived together for over 70 years it could be renewed by reconnecting and intertwining these separate identities. None of these countries is nationally homogenous, having other nations within. If the Yugoslav supranational component isn't stressed enough, there will be a strengthening of nationalism, and we'll all turn into provinces. If we care about ourselves, keep the national pride if you wish, we should reconnect within the Yugoslav space since this is the only chance for this region, for the Balkans and ex-Yugoslavia to gain new cohesion. I am sure that there is no political option for being one state again, except within the EU once we all join as part of that project. So politically, there can be no renewal of Yugoslavia. But culturally there is a chance because, as I've seen, people are willing to connect, to act in a broader framework and link up. This offers a chance for cultural reintegration of the region. It's the only chance, the only noble one, the only one that doesn't create quarrels but good relations.

Ljubomir Frčkoski, 1957

Professor of law, author of the First Macedonian Constitution

Object: "Jajce", Ismet Mujezinović (oil painting, 64x95 cm),
gift from the National Board of the City of Jajce, November 29, 1953

Recorded in Skopje, September 30, 2016

Duration: 4' 55"

The Macedonian view of Yugoslavia is full of anxiety, of wandering confusion and discomfort. On the one hand, from this distance, it's unpopular to talk about and comment its independence, which is the archetype of dignity and a realized nationalist fantasy. It's probably so for all nations. But at the same time, Macedonians have no bad memories of life in Yugoslavia, nor about the concept, the idea, the balance of national myths and politics. To use Lacanian terms, this confusion is the division of the libidinal economy of the Macedonian nation. And it is diversely resolved in the political sphere, especially in the antagonistic sphere of politics. The myth that we live in today is a right-wing utopian myth. There's an obvious hole or bypass in the memory about the idea of Yugoslavia, and the SFRY experience. It's due to the unpleasant fact that unlike other, perhaps larger nations in Yugoslavia the Macedonians went through the key constitutional act of creating their own national state together with the federation. The paradox erodes the purism of nationalist right-wing ideas, at least in that variant. It is impossible to love an independent nation-state that's been made by the communists in '43 or '45 first as the People's Republic and then as the Federative Yugoslavia. That is the hole in the middle, Lacan's "lack" in the middle of subjectivity or discussions about it. This is compensated in a strange way, with the neurotic presence of ex-Yu music and celebrities, from the turbo-folk to pop-music scene in Macedonia. This connection of subculture and culture is compensatory, and we're still waiting for a leftist emancipatory myth to absorb the larger event of Macedonian state creation along with the Yugoslav idea and the Federation experience. This myth is yet to be created, as the Left is always late. Also, its myth is more complex, based on hope, emancipation and critical assessment of its own history. Such reverse review of history lies ahead of them. They pursue a rational discourse in reviewing politics. A mythical narrative must be made for the Macedonian nation, one that would be leftist and emancipatory.

Independent countries that emerged from ex-Yugoslavia will face a traumatic process, a passage through fantasy, to use the Lacanian vocabulary again. The attitude towards this common idea and experience, viewed from today's perspective, seems fascinating especially knowing all our dirty little nationalist secrets. The structure of the nations, and the balancing act between national and political, represents a fascinating project. This implies a rewriting of our joint history, perhaps in a different context with a different balance of the Right and the Left and of their myths and views. It will be an exciting self-analysis situation to incorporate this experience into our national experiences.

Esad Bajtal, 1956

Philosopher, sociologist, psychologist and political analyst

Object: Needlepoints made by Biljana Kecman from Banja Luka, given in 1983

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 9, 2016

Duration: 4' 15"

Twenty odd years since Yugoslavia has disappeared, the only concept of it, translated into a single word, is the human concept. It was a country for the people and it was a service. The state is always a service and it worked for the people. There is no other concept or context to explain what it was and what has disappeared. The post-war experiences increasingly confirm this. We have some Bosnian/Croatian/ Serbian concepts and contexts, we have the collectivist logic, but the people are missing. The citizen has disappeared from the public political scene. He/she has disappeared even from his/her own private life. The citizen ceases to exist when he/she finds no bread in his/her home and has to look for it at the soup kitchen. In the "folk kitchen" as it is referred to here. When a man cannot sustain himself, he no longer exists, he is dead. Living dead roam this country. This was an unknown issue in Yugoslavia. That's why it was a humane concept and Yugoslavia was a humane society and a humane state. So, without sentimentalism or Yugonostalgia, this is a logical story covered by the post-Yugoslav experience.

No artistic ambition is linked to these tapestries. The only ambition was to be a gift from the heart, a person to person gift. One given to a man that people loved. So, tapestries have nothing to do with art, although they might, if they're seen as such. Those that choose this viewpoint are escaping from reality. They discard what they meant, their semantic meaning, their semantic layers and messages. Turning to the aesthetic they want to forget the ethic aspect. Repression of the ethical! We will not discuss justice, life, rights, humanity, dignity. We'll forget all that, because this refers to kitsch. It's not like that. These tapestries were not made as works of art, but as good deeds. To recognize and honor an achievement, a good society where living was humane.

The public opinion, the political and public sphere no longer recognize universal gestures. Now all gestures must fit the B/C/S formula. So it must be either a Bosnian or Serbian or Croatian tapestry. They must include that type of meanings. And not only tapestries! They are just symbols of what we are talking about. Any statement must be ethnically or clerically defined if it is to be presented to the public. In their homes and their own lives, people still dream of what they had as reality, for every normal person wants to live. There's too much politics, especially lousy politics that turned into politicking. Normal men and women would still be making such tapestries! But they can't or just lack the civic courage to risk being labeled enemies of one kind or another for showing such banality, for yearning to express what they deem normal and universal. Nurturing differences and insisting on them, means to repress the humane only to be able to rule the ethno-subjects. Ethno-vassalage is the key value at the moment, with a negative connotation in a rational sense of the word but with a positive one in the wake of their policies, in the wake of their own politicking.

Snježana Kordić, 1964

Linguist

Object: Album no. 1092, gift from the Elementary school
“Brotherhood and Unity” from Rijeka, May 1972

Recorded in Zagreb, January 28, 2017

Duration: 4' 59"

I have several associations related to this object. One regards the personality cult of the leader instilled as early as the elementary school. Children were taught to blindly trust the authority rather than learning to question or think independently. This formed an empty space in their heads for some future leader who knows how to lead the young, and later the adults, without them having any critical attitude towards him. We saw the nasty consequences this had later. When the term “our leader” is used here, there’s this collectivity instilled in elementary school and the same collectivity is still here today. It’s the basis of all our nationalisms.

The second association relates to the language policy. The attitude towards language and the alphabets in Yugoslavia was far more liberal than it is today. Today it’s completely different. Back then foreign independent researchers from the West quoted the Yugoslav language policy as a very democratic one, as a policy that achieved the highest possible level regarding the rights of minorities, the rights of all languages and all the variants. Not only did Western researchers stress this back then, but in recent times they insist that the democratic language policy in Yugoslavia is what most of the countries in Europe are aiming for. For example, 16 languages were used in the Yugoslav media. In schools 14 languages were in use. At the universities 9 languages were used. It was one of the first, if not the first, country which had textbooks in the Roma language. And the biggest language in Yugoslavia was democratically standardized: in each of the republics, where it was in use, norms were adapted to the most widespread usage in practice. Today, these things are not mentioned. A forged image of linguistic history is promoted. Even though there was equality of languages and their variants, and there is proof corroborating it, it’s being ignored. Not a word about it in the media, or in the schools. In fact, there are claims of terrible linguistic inequality, terror and imposition of the language of the other nations! Such forging of linguistic past has various objectives within today’s language policies. One is to show their own people as a victim attributing evil qualities to another people. This obviously feeds hostile feelings towards others. This builds nationalism. It also builds the sense of superiority towards others, which is a characteristic of nationalism. There’s also an implicit justification of negative actions towards other peoples that are committed today. Justifications also apply to linguists’ impositions made at the level of their own nation. For example, when common words are prohibited as nationally improper and people are required to use archaic or freshly created words because they are allegedly ethnically proper words.

Haris Jusufović, 1980

History professor

Object: Doll (black or Indian, made of wool), gift from the nursery "Dr. Mladen Stojanović", Sarajevo, for Tito's birthday 1962

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 10, 2016

Duration: 5' 17"

My name is Haris Jusufović and I was born in 1980. It was back at the time of Tito's Yugoslavia. My earliest memories regard the Sarajevo Olympics in 1984. I am a professor of history. For the past 15 years I've been teaching history and civic education. My exhibit is interesting. It's an Indian or Black doll, a gift for Tito's birthday in 1962 made by Sarajevo kindergarten "Dr Mladen Stojanović". Well, an interesting topic! First of all "Dr Mladen Stojanović" kindergarten no longer exists. Names of major partisan heroes are now almost non-existent in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Kindergartens have changed their names. Why was this gift made in 1962? It was a year after the Non-Aligned Summit in Belgrade, and the Sarajevo kindergarten sends a message about the openness of the Yugoslav society after the famous Non-Aligned Summit. If you were to pick some kids from a kindergarten then their names would be Selma, Mirza, Ana, Tanja, Stefan, Ivan... clearly indicating that they came from different ethnic communities. You won't see that today. Today, when you work in a school and when children in Sarajevo schools and kindergartens hear the name Stefan, Nemanja, Ivan or Ana, they are puzzled as they are unaccustomed to such names. Conversely, just a few kilometers from here in Eastern Sarajevo, when they hear name like Tarik, Bakir or Aida school children are left speechless. Unlike then, children don't know each other. For the past 20 years they live completely separated in pure ethnic, ethno-confessional communities. Coming back to this little doll, one might say that it was a single-minded party state, a country where political opponents were arrested and detained right from the start. Today in 2016, we talk about pluralism, about an open and democratic society, and free voting. But the question is whether this was truly so? Were children more open towards diversity? Were they more free? Did they cross the borders of our present small states and communicate normally with each other? How divided is the society we have today? I always wonder how true are the statements about uniformity of thought, and how much single-mindedness do we face today within a given national, ethnic community. With regards to this doll, it's clear, and it's a female doll! Consider the present. What could come from a kindergarten? If they were to send a gift to our national leaders, it would surely be an ethnic Serb, Bosniak, Croat, Montenegrin. And she would have to be a housewife. Conservative, devoted to family values, respectful of the patriarchal husband's last word. That's what you'd get today. That's how society brings up children today. And back then we had a gift belonging to a completely different culture, religion, race. This shows the openness of the Yugoslav society back then, as opposed to the four or five small ethnic communities that we live in today, unfortunately. Today there would be a completely different gift, in line with the new values in society.

Božena Jelušić, 1956

Professor of literature

Object: Scale model of a classroom, gift from the elementary school
Čurug, May 21, 1957

Recorded in Budva, August 12, 2016

Duration: 4' 47"

Since I first entered a school classroom as a first-grader, to this year when I intend to leave it, more than 50 years have passed. My first classroom was a safe haven for me. It had a wood-stove that we all cuddled around that somehow was its soul. The benches were made of wood. All things were "organic" as many like to say today. You were somehow sure that from that classroom you would move straight up. It was certain you'd be advancing, leaving behind a modest life for a better one. Obviously, there was a large four-part picture on the wall, the classics of Marxism along with Tito. It was a safe world. Parents didn't tell us much about those Marxist classics nor about Tito. One could have made a slip, and it was easier to let the kids live in the safe world. Every year, on May 25th we'd raid the flowerbeds of Budva, and wait for the Youth Baton. It was a kind of Easter in our former country. We never wondered why and whether this should be so. A teacher was almost a national hero figure, honored, revered, important. Best proof that things were different is the fact that my primer did not begin with the letter A. It started from the letter O. I never discovered why letter O was put first. How did they get the idea of starting the alphabet from "O". But that's how it was. As time passed, the furniture was changed. My classroom today has scraped radiators and all the benches are mostly made in poor veneer, bad furniture from the 90's. It no longer has the stove as its soul. Naturally, no Marxist classics on the wall, national emblems have replaced them. I guess they have crosses in Croatia, and Stepinac might be put up there. Maybe they'll put "Uncle Draža" in Serbia. Who knows what else will happen. This might be a world with more space for freedom and different interpretations, but it's surely a world where good hallmarks are disappearing.

As things were changing for the worse, so did the iconography of the classroom. Marxist classics slowly disappeared, and were replaced by a single Tito's picture. Then something strange happened. In the primer that my son used in the 80's, letter "M" stood for "Mother", and letter "T" was paired with Tito and not with Tata (Daddy). It was strange, as Tito was now a substitute for father. All things seemed to be getting worse and there was less and less certainty that this was a world we wanted to belong to completely. There were more and more western stations available to look elsewhere from the security of your classroom. But there was still vertical mobility. Then in the 90's "Tito's Pioneer" swapped the national hero on its pages with the first saint. Marxist classics and Tito slowly turned into saints, into church, and one totalitarianism was replaced by another.

What was left unchanged in the classroom of today? Well, children and youths! Because no matter how they change, and they do change according to the values you provide, no matter how stern or loose they might be, there's something that makes up youth and childhood, and there is always a way to get closer and feel the joy of youth. So, although the classroom is no longer "organic" as it once was, the kids still are "organic" and it's a joy to be in a classroom.

Elizabeta Šeleva, 1961

Literary critic and theorist

Object: Coffee set, Bulgaria, gift to Tito, workers of Varna, June 15, 1948

Recorded in Skopje, September 30, 2016

Duration: 6' 36"

A coffee set containing six cups and matching saucers - there were as many republics in former Yugoslavia. This set, which exists in the museum no longer exists in life. It is now a fragmented or broken set, mismatched.

Yugoslavia is linked to memories, linked to nostalgias or nostalgia. But it can't remain restrained to that single register. Because there used to be, and there still are, so many connecting points in cultural experience, creative cooperation in human relations, ties and needs to keep friendships alive and to create new ones. So there's an interesting and also touching fact that regardless of the breakup of Yugoslavia, intended as a system in a formal sense, at the level of substantial and essential you still find examples of multicultural cooperation, mutual respect and dialogue.

I'll take my personal example taking part in a project that I'm proud of. It also gives me faith that after all that destruction something worthwhile is left, worthy of attention and also of being preserved. I'm talking about the literature magazine "Sarajevo Notebooks". It appeared just after the end of the fratricidal wars and it was based in Sarajevo. In the city most affected by the wars and most destroyed. The cooperation in "Sarajevo Notebooks" included, and still includes, editors from all former cultural and literary national units. Something that's broadly supported in the EU and is even advertised in the public space, the value of multi-culturalism, acknowledgment of others, general de-territorialisation, celebration of mobility. Well, it all already existed in some degree or form even then. And it just must inspire, in my case, a kind of feeling that, back then up to the '90s, in some regards we were ahead of our time. Despite all the complex and sometimes unfair things that certainly took place, I still believe that the essence of the idea of conceptual unity was profoundly noble.

Now, Yugoslavia is just utopia. By definition utopia is a place that doesn't exist in this world. On the other hand we have a need for utopia, to be able to continue making sense of our lives. To know that we are heading to some point in the future. A point not to be equated with the present, and let alone with the past! A colleague from Croatia noted that what surprised and startled her is the realization that at the time of the so called "single minded" system, we actually had a lot of these different utopias and that in the multi-minded democratic society today, all those utopias are missing and no longer exist. Something similar was noted by one wonderful Russian literature professor. She said that the 20th century began with utopia and ended with nostalgia. It started with hope of a better future and a better world and ended up in a "retro" trend. A return to what was better and nobler than the present. And to finish, what happened after the disintegration of the entity mostly undermined the notion of identity. It was, and still is, a reduction of the so-called multiple origins. People were made to choose. Either I'm this or that. I'm either black or white. This is

Elizabeta Šeleva continued

to the detriment of the cultural wealth that we had. That's what I call reduction of our identities. It is what Croatian writer Dubravka Ugrešić stressed, that she can't strictly define the identity block she belongs to because such a thing doesn't exist in her case. She's inclined towards a hybrid and multiple identification. That's what I think was important in this project. Not only the awareness, but the relief and the blessing of having more than one forcibly ascribed identity.

Katarina Pejović, 1962

Dramatist

Object: A plaque – 100 Years of Croatian National Theatre and Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad

Recorded in Zagreb, January 28, 2017

Duration: 7' 09"

The artifact you've confronted me with provoked a whole range of associations in me. They rush in concentric circles, in a spiral or in a staccato... It's hard to determine the form of a recollection. This plaque dedicated to the centenary of two large theaters: the Croatian National Theater in Zagreb and the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad, inevitably brings back memories, almost spanning over my entire life. I was born a year later. Honestly, associations did not come in a linear way, just as they never do. The first association, strangely enough, or perhaps not, was that of "Croatian Faust". Probably because the idea of combining with a single plaque the centenary of two theaters from the former country immediately brings to mind a hiatus, a schism, a split that occurred. It was a big part of my life, certainly its key moment before and after which nothing was the same any more. That's probably why "Croatian Faust" came to mind. It marked the first time I became aware of a hiatus in the Yugoslav cultural space. "Croatian Faust" premiered at the Yugoslav Drama Theater in 1982, and that same year it was staged by the Croatian National Theater in Split. It has never been performed in the theater house where it actually takes place - namely, the plot of Slobodan Šnajder's play takes place at the Croatian National Theater in Zagreb, but to this day it was never staged there. The drama itself probably carries the answer to the question why. I sit here in Zagreb in 2017, a day after the celebration of Holocaust Day, marked by the boycott of the official ceremony in Croatia by the representatives of the Coordination of Jewish Communities in Croatia. As they explained, their absence from the official ceremony was prompted by the rise of Ustasha ideology that they feel is being spread in the Croatian public space and I feel dread as I recall that almost 35 years ago some indications of such unclarified, unexplained, subtle and never completely purified tension surfaced in the Yugoslav cultural space.

This plaque was awarded to the two theaters in a year that in Yugoslavia was marked by the spirit of progress and the beginning of the greatest flowering of the Yugoslav culture. When someone mentions the 1961 Non Aligned Summit in Belgrade I think of the fact that in that same year Ivo Andrić won the Nobel Prize in Literature. Thus, the future seemed bright. Instead here we are today. And there's the special addition from the time of Yugoslavia, "Under the sponsorship of Comrade Tito". They were like some magical words that meant something was at the highest level, something untouchable, beyond any category and out of range. Again the first thing that came to my mind was the break-up. Images of Sarajevo on April 6th 1992, with people standing, waiting, and watching... And us realizing only later that it was the live broadcast of the beginning of the war in Bosnia. National leaders taking turns, holding speeches... There's even Rade Šerbedžija trying to say something sensed. Then miners from Zenica appear and excitement takes over the crowd reflecting the feeling that miners were the defenders of the idea that we must stay together, miners from Zenica walking in a tight formation. Heading them is a

Katarina Pejović continued

miner that carries a large image of Tito like some kind of a shield or a talisman. So, "Tito's sponsorship" always brings back the memory of the prevailing feeling that existed in Yugoslavia, that Tito was a talisman and the protector of the country. That same attitude existed abroad as well. Wherever I traveled I was immediately asked: "What will happen when Tito dies?" It seems he really was a talisman, and we failed to create magic without this talisman.

Going back to the plaque and the two theater companies, I must stress that not all depends on the system. Some things depend somewhat on individuals. Presently, the Serbian National Theater and the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb are managed by men that want to communicate, and are looking for dialogue and cooperation. They are willing to share their productions and to create some new, producing a common cultural space again. I just wish that this plaque might serve as a positive voodoo marking the present and allowing people to act against the system, and generate a dynamic that will always bring about something better, something open and something new.

Sonja Lokar, 1948

Sociologist, member of the delegation of the League of Communists of Slovenia at the 14th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1990

Object: "A Woman from Novo Mesto (Woman who gives the golden heart)", unknown author, the heart was made from wedding bands that women donated, gift from the women of Novo Mesto

Recorded in Ljubljana, January 31, 2017

Duration: 5' 47"

The exhibit you gave me really moved me, a golden heart given to Tito by the women of Novo Mesto. It's unclear when was the gift made, roughly in the 50s or 60s. It's interesting that this heart was made from wedding bands which women gave in order to make a present for Tito. My first thought was very negative. I remembered that similar gifts were given to other leaders that I'm not sympathetic to. Take Mussolini, who persuaded the Italian women to give him their gold with which he bought weapons for attacks on Eritrea and other countries. That was the first, and really negative, impression. The second was more of a thought that such a gift symbolizes what was really wrong in socialism. In fact, it speaks about the personality cult and about ordinary people who give up important things so to make a gift to the leader. And they do that since they think he is the one who knows better how they should live, what's best for them, for he is the one who will solve all their problems. This isn't something socialism can be proud of. In fact, it shows how this experiment certainly didn't lead to the liberation of the people.

There was also a positive surprise about this gift. What does it actually mean that women waive their rings? They thus say something very important. That they're aware of important things brought on by socialism. Say, the right to divorce when they decide to. It also gave them the right to attend school and to choose whatever profession they want, the option to get a job and be economically independent. It removed the aura of mortal sin from being a single mother with an illegitimate child, something they were stigmatized for by the society and persecuted for by their community. Their children will not be bastards, but equal to all other children. These are major and important things. I think that this gift somehow symbolizes the gratitude for all this happening. But, they weren't aware that this did not happen by itself and that women had fought and won it. It wasn't Tito's gift to them. They had won it all being Partisans that died side by side with men, as nurses or commissaries. Tito didn't give them that. The rings given up to give the leader a heart-shaped gift shows a lack of awareness that they have already won that and that they have every right to it. What's missing is the same thing that troubled us at the time when socialism was exiting the historical scene. The question "What next?" What will happen to women's equality in the new country? Everything seemed settled in the new state. However, it turned out not to be so. So much fighting was needed to preserve what we had already won.

This symbolic gift reminded me of something else. I work a lot with women all over the world, in Ukraine for example. Right at the time when the war started in Ukraine I was there holding a seminar about gender equality to Ukrainian youths.

Sonja Lokar continued

We all know that this war was organized by two tycoon clans that clashed with each other. These are a handful of very wealthy people. The whole of Ukraine is very poor. These rich men who have pushed the country into a war are telling women to help their poor government and pay for their husbands need to be sent to the war in the occupied territories. The women, who have miserable wages or are unemployed, are selling their valuables to buy to their husbands shoes, flak jackets and helmets to protect them from the worst. I thought how tragic it is that nothing has really changed. We're still at the very beginning of the fight for a society where women will be equal and war won't be a normal condition for mankind.

Žarko Marić, 1949
Entrepreneur

Object: A robot for counting the multiplication table, gift from the students of the school from Litija, Loznica, for Tito's birthday, 1960

Recorded in Zenica, December 8, 2016
Duration: 5' 04"

I'm a Yugoslav. Officially that country no longer exists, but neither does the one I should now be a citizen of. They can't agree on how it should look like. Thus, I'm still inspired by my homeland Yugoslavia. For example, there's still a Museum of Yugoslavia. Its exhibits are the gifts that workers and the young people gave to Tito. Back then a gift to Tito was like a tribute to Yugoslavia. For us they were one and the same. It was back in 1956 and mainly the young took part in this life that suited them and gave them security. So this was the way they expressed themselves because they had a motive. Those were the pioneering days of this country when we all wanted to take part in the life of our country. It was somewhere around 1956 that I began to understand my surroundings. To memorize what's important. I realized that there was a hierarchy in society, that there was organization and that it was best to respect it. I still remember my first days in elementary school, the first grade. The teacher asked us about our nationalities. I was shocked, not knowing what she was asking me. Luckily, just before me on the roster was my neighbor and my best friend Kemal. When asked, he said he was "undetermined". I felt relieved knowing what to answer. When the teacher called out my name, I said "undetermined". If Kemal was "undetermined" so was I. This sense of unity accompanied us throughout our life. Yugoslavia was a beacon telling us where and what we were. And so was our president, Marshal Josip Broz Tito. We participated in Youth Day rallies on May 25th, which also marked the birthday of our Tito. The celebrations encouraged us to partake, to feel the unity and the power. We were so happy to fulfill what was expected of us. Today, older people like myself can't manage their way in this system, because our president Tito is now called a dictator by those who couldn't understand where was Yugoslavia going. It's evident now that they just minded their own interest and worked on provoking the dissolution of the country. Tito was powerful because he was followed by many. He was a charismatic embodiment of a Yugoslav. Tito could have had billions, and no one would have prevented him from leaving it all to his children. And he did leave a lot to all his children... Good upbringing and a good education.

Žarko Puhovski, 1946

Philosopher, political analyst

Object: A stylized star with dedication, Muštra Ivica, student of the Railway School Center of the General secondary school in Zagreb, 1972

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 4' 53"

This artifact is a very good illustration of the nature of totalitarianism. On the one hand, by a personal decision of a young man, it celebrates one of the landmark events in the final two decades of Yugoslav existence. It marked the beginning of a series of showdowns with dissenting Party members that Tito first encouraged but then decided to discipline them, to show others in the Party and in the country how to behave. On the other hand this young man offers a demonstration of his love for the great leader and that's always forgotten even in serious discussions about the essence of totalitarianism, the fact that totalitarianism is based on love. Unlike dictatorship that relies on fear. It's normal and logical to fear the one who has all the power, the dictator. Totalitarianism is based on the fact that the one who has the most power is not an object of fear but of love. The essence of totalitarianism isn't the concentration camp as it is often wrongly thought. Even the US has a concentration camp in Guantanamo, but not even Chomsky would call US a totalitarian regime. Its essence lies in the love of the masses for the leader, a relationship abolishing the distinction of society and state, private and public. Private feelings go public and become part of the "public" and "political" discourse. Thus the power of the leader is cemented. This is the love displayed by the young man so impressed by Tito's speech with which he cut down the Croatian nationalist leadership. Nationalist can be left without quotes depending on the interpretation. He is so thrilled about the head chopping in Karadjordjevo, that he sends Tito a token of his love. A star made of hundreds of matches, actually, as many as the words pronounced by Tito in his closing arguments. On the one hand the head-cutting is only symbolic which is a step forward compared to earlier times. No one was beheaded. On the other hand, it was a political liquidation of a number of people who were leading the Croatian alternative nationalist policy. Slovenian dissenting leaders were eliminated earlier, and then the so-called Serbian liberals. What was left was a formal state and Party management. They were an amalgam, one and the same. All this took place in Karadjordjevo on December 1st and 2nd 1971. Yugoslavia was making its last attempt to restructure.

Speaking in ideological terms there were two politically perverse types of processes. As perverse as the love of this young man for the grand old leader who decided to get rid of all those obstructing the unique Yugoslav self-management socialist way to a better future. What were these two perversions? Nationalism, which first evolved as a party nationalism, but was then also accepted by many others outside the party. Because they thought time had finally come for the nations to go back into the game in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia! After its failure to deal with the students in 1968 the Party realized it was faced with a leftist critique. For the first time its positions were criticized by the leftists, so the Party quickly opted for the reserve grounds of its legitimacy and it was nationalism. It turned to a nationalist

Žarko Puhovski continued

weft for its political activities. Some took this task a bit too seriously and were disciplined. Having dealt with the Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian nationalists the Yugoslav leadership, Tito, Kardelj and Bakarić, drafted the 1974 Constitution which undermined Yugoslavia. It became a sum of nation-states and nationalist policies. The circle was closed.

Comrade Stalin used to say: "Personnel policy is the basis of any policy!" If you check the Internet, you'll find a man bearing the same name as the young man from Zagreb that sent this artifact back in 1972. He is one of the leading HDZ politicians in Trogir, a resolute fighter against communism. It's hard to say whether they are one and the same person but it's not impossible, since many have made a somersault in that period.

Marjan Šantić, 1960

Seaman, mountaineer, fisherman

Object: The charter to J. B. Tito, an honorary admiral of the Boka Kotorska Navy, Kotor, January 5, 1973

Recorded in Kotor, August 12, 2016

Duration: 4' 08"

In 1973 Tito was made honorary member of the Boka Navy. This was in recognition of what he did, not only during the war but after the war as well. He rebuilt the country that was in ruins. He built schools, hospitals, airports, power plants. He raised the country from the ashes. And we owe him gratitude. Sure, he did make some mistakes, but then, every man does. Look at what's been happening after the death of this man who was respected by the entire world, a moral debasement of this society. And such moral decay is approved by the current government, though not by all. By some people who have most of the power. They allow the spreading of drugs, the spreading of crime and shootings all over Montenegro. Today, it's those that have a lot of money that are important. And they use that money to fulfill their aspirations. Not just to get all they need, but to show their power over ordinary people, peaceful, fair, honest, average people. And ordinary people are fighting with spooks, with windmills. Nothing can be done without relying on connections. The moral debasement is such that the country is in chaos.

I like Montenegro, it's a wonderful country, but I can't understand why there's no more respect for what people gave their lives for. People died for honor, for saving face. Today, being a criminal, not to say scum, is what makes one appreciated and respected in this society. Unfortunately, it's these people that govern our country. The situation in my town is disastrous. People are moving out, all those who have some honor and integrity left. These people are leaving. They want peace, and they want things to be as they used to be. What's left to govern the city is scum working with local authorities that are also corrupt. A city with such historical might, beauty and strength, a city known throughout the world as a city of mariners, as a city of fighters, a city of admirals, philosophers, and scientists, men that did something for this world of ours. Today, our public figures are just world-known criminals. The world is aware of it. They fear them just like locals do. People are afraid to live in such a city. Nobody wants a city like this. I regret that in this city people who should be preserving the moral values are joining the evil people. Thus corrupted they're doing things that men with an education and some respect should never do.

Ivan Čolović, 1938

Ethnologist, anthropologist, founder, editor and publisher of the "Biblioteka XX vek"

Object: Presentation of the Second Session of AVNOJ (miniature figurines in a bottle), Mata Dorić from Banova Jaruga, Croatia, November 29, 1979

Recorded in Belgrade, November 23, 2016

Duration: 2' 25"

The mastery of building objects in a bottle, items that just can't go through the bottleneck, is a kind of popular model building, a folk art one might say. Things that are most often assembled in bottles are ships with sails and all. A Serbian brand sold by ethno-souvenirs shops today are brandy bottles with a wooden cross inside. There are masters today who can put a parachute, a cross, or a heart inside the bottle. In any case, one can check on the Internet how widespread this "ethno-zipping" is today. The AVNOJ meeting in a bottle testifies that this kind of popular modeling was widespread at the time when people wanted to show they loved Tito. It's also proof that AVNOJ in a bottle was a suitable gift for Tito's birthday. This gift joined other similar gifts: models of various devices, tools, weapons, tanks, cars, airplanes, locomotives. What made all these models suitable for a present to Tito, including this AVNOJ-themed one, was the fact that they were handwork, made by the people that offered them as a gift. This mockup of the AVNOJ meeting is a proof that it was a gift made by hand by an ordinary man. Being a handmade gift by an ordinary citizen it could serve as a testimony of the spontaneous devotion of the people to Tito and to Yugoslavia founded at the AVNOJ conference.

Ilina Jakimovska, 1971

Ethnologist

Object: Socks for men, gift from the best man, Risto Kalevski, 1955

Recorded in Skopje, September 29, 2016

Duration: 5' 02"

I want to talk about gifts made to our former leader not as an attempt to corrupt or gain a reciprocal gift, but as a way of becoming close with him. That's hard to imagine today in connection with a political figure or head of the state. It's not about presents Tito got from rulers as himself that had to be reciprocated, at least in equal measure. Some were bizarre like the gift by the Ethiopian Emperor Selassie that gave him 50kg of dry prunes as an aphrodisiac. It's about gifts he received from "ordinary people", from farmers, factory workers, schoolchildren and such, one-way gifts not requiring reciprocity on his part. In this regard, an ethnologically very interesting gift is woolen socks he got from Ohrid, Macedonia in 1955. These socks are one of two pairs he got from Macedonia. Why are socks ethnologically interesting? It is customary not only in Macedonia but also in the wider region not to give woolen socks to a blood relative, but to someone who's an important member of the extended family, and in a ritual context such as wedding or baptism. They were probably given to Tito in this context. In this way, the one who makes the gift establishes a certain spiritual relationship, which in this case wasn't even an individual but a collective. It's known that the socks came from Macedonia and quite possibly Tito's associates or Tito himself, took note from which Republic did gifts come and how many were coming. Probably some statistics were kept because if there were no gifts from some part of Yugoslavia, this could be indicative that something was wrong.

I too almost established such a close relationship with Tito. In fact, when I was little, we lived for five years in Athens. My father was the "Nova Makedonija" correspondent at that time. At one point, I think it was 1977 or 1978, news came that Tito would come to the reception at our embassy. Everyone was very excited about welcoming him and the kids were given the task to prepare a gift for him. I remember I embroidered his name on a piece of cardboard. Aesthetically it was clumsy and poorly made, but the effort was obvious. When time came for me to give him the gift in all the confusion that was created around him, I just didn't want to and wouldn't approach him. Unlike other parents who forced their children to do it, my parents just gave up and didn't insist on it. Later I realized that they could have gotten in trouble for that. Their child didn't want to give a gift to Tito. Their child avoided having a picture taken with him. But even if it was so, they never told me. I held on to that cardboard for years. Now I couldn't find it, but I asked myself whether my child would make someone such a gift as an assignment or simply emotionally. I just can't imagine such a situation and I wonder if this is good or bad. Emotional attitude towards our political representatives doesn't have to be something bad, something that's linked to the personality cult. In the case of Tito it was a mitigation of the personality cult because when you give someone socks and treat him like family, this means that he's on the same level as your neighbor, as your relative or fellow citizen. Gifts are probably still given to politicians as part of protocol or as some kind of clientelism, to reciprocate services or other goods.

Tarik Haverić, 1955

Political scientist

Object: A Plaque, Tobacco Factory Sarajevo, March 10, 1980

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 9, 2016

Duration: 3' 15"

At the time, Tito was already ill. Get-well wishes were sent to him from across the country albeit there was a sense that his biological end was approaching. The workers of the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory, as many others, sent him this plaque. The actual number of such plaques and charters sent by collectives will never be known. Today, we can look at this from two different angles. As objective observers looking at an ideologically integrated political system, where everyone is led to think the same way and to express the same emotions. On the other hand, we can look at this from our own experience. My experience is positive, and I'm not ashamed of that. Especially when you consider that in Central Asia there are 18 major monuments to Genghis Khan that killed 40 million people. Yet there are those who think he should be celebrated. Our praise and memories of a historical figure such as Tito are more benign in this respect. Especially if we compare our experience of those times to the life we live in the present. These two approaches are necessary and complementary. Neither Austria-Hungary was a democratic paradise, but when it broke up some people mourned it. Why should I feel remorse or shame for having good memories of a time we lived in? If the price for it was that all the workers from Kavadarci, from Velenje or Travnik occasionally expressed good wishes and support to Tito, it's a small one for the good period we had lived in. For the many years of relative peace and prosperity we enjoyed and which certainly made us what we are today. And like everyone else, we like ourselves just the way we are.

Latinka Perović, 1933

Historian

Object: A silver hip flask, gift from Todor Živkov, 1972,
for Tito's 80th birthday

Recorded in Belgrade, March 1, 2017

Duration: 5' 54"

Tito's charisma really existed and has its own history. It started in the 1920's during First Yugoslavia where he was sentenced to five years in prison for his illegal work. It grew stronger during the WWII when he led the National Liberation Army and was a symbol of unity for the peoples who were clashing, determined to destroy each other in a bloody war. His slogan "brotherhood and unity" was quite effective. The charisma solidified after the WWII as the new state was being built. It was, of course, modeled on the USSR. In 1948 the charisma grew both nationally and internationally because of the conflict with Stalin and the consolidation of independence of a small country that sought its path, balancing between the East and the West, remaining true, thanks to Tito, to the ideals of the revolution: social justice and freedom of the peoples. But as Tito's power grew, primarily within the party and the country, as his international reputation expanded with the Non-Aligned movement, the charisma started to be identified with this power and authority. Through its intensity Tito measured his standing in the party and in the country. I know that on one of his many trips across Serbia in the 70's he asked the leading figures in Serbia how many people would greet him. When they said there would be several hundred thousand people he noted it was too little. He used the power of that charisma as a measure of his power and authority.

What's left of this charisma today? Well, parts of its entirety. He's still someone who secured a good life for those generations, who ensured independence by balancing between the East and the West. According to one historian he became a sort of world leader, as the man who first spoke to the people of Africa where his charisma still lives on. There are still disgruntled people from the past and from the present who believe that there would have been no war, no slow development of their country, no back-turning on Europe without Tito's communist rule. Though inevitable, current deconstruction of Tito's charisma starts from the end quoting the fact that his country fell apart, that it generated brutal mutual conflicts, and most importantly that its parts still fail to consolidate. As far as historical studies of the charisma are concerned, they are based on historical sources and documents about the beginnings with Tito's taking over the party, followed by the war, the postwar period, up to its long finale. What was restrictive in the charisma is certainly Tito's arbitrary role that probably blocked the development of a new generation capable of assuming responsibility and generating rational solutions that could have prevented the worst outcome for Yugoslavia. Charisma remained a need for these societies that are non-pluralistic both socially and politically, and seek a man to unify the country from within, putting it thus united against those who are politically seen as an external threat. Thus you still have, as a dominant model, the authoritarian rule rallied around a single figure. It's a part of our tradition, of the history of our society. It's a part of our perception of democracy. It's not liberal but populist. It's focused on the individual, on the leader.

Lazar Stojanović (1944-2017)

Movie and theater director, publicist, peace activist

Object: Gramophone record with a book "Songs about Tito" and a letter, Jugoton, May 26, 1972

Recorded in Belgrade, January 13, 2017

Duration: 6' 27"

When children sing, when someone expresses their feelings with spontaneous songs, it's much more believable than written words, more than movies, more than giving flowers or other expressions of love. It's because the emotion in singing is so articulate that it's thought impossible to fake. This is a prejudice, and this record before us doesn't express spontaneous great love that all children had for Josip Broz the "leader of the Yugoslav peoples and nationalities". It illustrates something else: an intentional effort designed to increase and encourage the personality cult which was one of the important levers for implementing the new communist rule in Yugoslavia after the World War II. In western democracies this provokes nausea, surprise and certainly political aversion. However, in democracies it is also seen from time to time. When this occurs in socialist countries or in empires or kingdoms before socialism, it serves as a tool to bring order using authority in an environment resistant to any kind of political argument. It's usually an illiterate society. No wonder that in the Russian and the Chinese revolution, then in the Korean revolution, almost all actions to establish a government after the revolution were closely related and even based on the development of the personality cult. In the French revolution, or with Cromwell in England this was not the case. Judging by some political changes in democratic countries, it seems that the personality cult is not inevitable. In retrograde societies it's the only available leverage for a rapid and effective implementation of government. Hence, I am not among those that reproach Josip Broz for building his personality cult. Particularly interesting are the twists that occurred in relation to political changes. Take music, for example! You had the song "With Tito, Stalin, heroic sons", and after the row with Stalin the song title was changed to "With Marshal Tito, heroic son". Stalin, was thrown out. There was also the song "All the tracks are finished but it's not enough, we want Belgrade to be like Moscow". After 1948 the song was dropped. Our propaganda, music and tactics for the personality cult were constantly changing. But this didn't bother our peoples and the dictator was buried with tears and honors. With singing and crying worthy of those who had implemented effectively their personality cult. Thus, Tito could be an example for many political leaders, living and dead.

With regard to the personality cult there's a relatively small number of suitable carriers or media. After the death of Josip Broz Tito and after the failure of the personality cult of Slobodan Milošević, all attempts fell flat. Today, the profile of the country's president or prime minister could hardly appear on a banknote, postage stamp, a billboard or on some consumer product packaging. There's a major obstacle for anyone trying to build a cult of personality and wanting to shape his charisma. Whenever you have a leader, even if it's the leader of a guerrilla movement, this is where a personality cult usually begins since guerrilla is impossible without a cult of the leader, we constantly wonder about our leader, is he going to China, Korea, Russia, America or the EU? Where is he going, where will he

Lazar Stojanović continued

lead us to? This question can be imaginary. If you have an ISIS member, he will say his leader will take him to heaven. But this must be stated in a clear and definitive way. We can't say that and that's why the personality cult can hardly work here. With Josip Broz this problem didn't exist. He was the one leading us towards workers' ownership of factories, towards self-management, to the Non-Aligned movement which opposed to all wars, all forms of violence and any colonialism. Leading us to happiness and socialist self-awareness unlike any other in history. Though it's quite naive, people believed in that because the objective was complete and defined. Today, no government in this country is able to offer such a goal you could embrace, one that would allow creating and politically building a personality cult.

Tanja Petrović, 1974

Linguist and anthropologist

Object: Record “Tito Loves Pioneers” by Zoran Rambosek and children’s choirs, 1979

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 1, 2017

Duration: 5’ 12”

As I travel through what we now call “region” I have the impression that Tito’s images have returned to certain spaces though there are also many they had never disappeared from. No longer are they only found in nostalgia-themed restaurants and perhaps in some private areas. It seems that today they are increasingly present in auto repair and other shops, as well as in other semi-private semi-public spaces where people who work there somehow still forge their own destiny. I’ve seen those same portraits of Tito when I worked in a completely different space, the Jagodina Cable Factory. A failed, huge factory that was once the largest project of the first five year plan in socialist Yugoslavia. The workers, still present in the deserted halls and offices, decided to take the pictures out of the dumpsters and hang them back on the walls. This can be easily interpreted as a form of personality cult. This is frequent even among those thinkers of Yugoslavia that have a fairly positive stand regarding this country. The explanation is that Yugoslavia actually disappeared with the death of the patriarchal father of all its nations that was, paradoxically, also their greatest son. With him, the connective tissue was lost, along with some sort of control and clear family structure that somehow kept all these nations together. However, I think it’s very important to consider the phenomenon from various perspectives. What the cable factory workers said fully justify this. Talking about Tito, they were actually talking about themselves. There’s even a linguistic parallelism. They say “Tito built roads”, adding “we built them with carts and shovels”. “Tito built a factory” and “we voluntarily worked as students”. “We took part in labor drives” and so on. Such parallelism is practically unthinkable today when it comes to any of the current politicians. No one will talk about what Mr. Palma is doing in Jagodina or Mr. Vučić in Serbia, or any politician in other parts of ex-Yugoslavia, and include himself/herself while talking about them.

Today, factory workers and many others in this region are primarily objects of a very crude biopolitics which typically occurs in colonial periphery. They are made to wear diapers at work. Their medical records are checked before an investor decides to open a factory in some town in the Balkans. They’re nothing but labor resources to be exploited. There’s absolutely no possibility of them becoming stakeholders not only in social processes, but practically in their own lives. That’s the main thing we have to bear in mind when we think about what Tito symbolizes and what do Tito and his time represent for people, having a positive or emotional attitude about him. The complexity of the issue is well illustrated by the record “Tito Loves Pioneers”. There’s a strong suggestion of personality cult there - “Tito loves pioneers”, “Pioneers love Tito”. But if you consider the lyrics of the songs on that record, you realize that many of them provide inter-generational bonding along with currently very important ideas of anti-fascism and readiness for an unbending struggle against fascist ideas. But why Tito? Why not some other historical or mythological hero of the past? There are many and many have surfaced lately. Precisely because

Tanja Petrović continued

it's about Tito's era that people still have memories based on their own experience. That is also why the objects and artifacts that link us to that experience are so very important. It's important not to isolate these objects from the stories, from the empirical, sensory, emotional, affective aspects. From this entire world that somehow establishes a link between people and objects. Otherwise you face a very troublesome syndrome today: namely that Tito's bust as an object is readily placed alongside the bust of Draža Mihailović or other historical figures reduced to mere objects.

Mladen Miljanović, 1981

Artist

Object: A Wreath of Thousand Cranes, students of Suginami English Language College, Tokyo, 1980 (during illness)

Recorded in Banja Luka, December 7, 2016

Duration: 4' 51"

What can one say about the gesture of the people of Japan who sent a wreath made of a thousand cranes to Comrade Tito when he, the Yugoslav president, was ill. For them this is a way of honoring a person. But also a way of sending wishes of a quick recovery. The artifact made of a thousand cranes evokes the myth of continuity embodied by a thousand cranes. This implies a healing element. I find all this very interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, I see this gesture as a myth in its own right. You see, I was born a year after Tito's death. Then, there's the unusual fact that the people of Japan, a country nowhere close to Yugoslavia, found it appropriate to send such a gift which underscores the importance of a statesman. It also implies an effort to ease what's becoming apparent that this man is simply dying.

Also, the vision and the analysis of a period marked by the personality cult of Tito as the president and supreme commander, is for me a utopia that I've taken on from my parents. I have no direct experience of that period. My experience refers to the period of my boyhood, just before the end of Yugoslavia in the early 90's. I was about 10 years old when the discontinuity started. The times of a good life that I hear talk of simply came before that, a harmonious country in terms of social justice, of care for social strata and the working class. All those things that are lacking today not only in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, but throughout the region as well. There was also the inter-ethnic tolerance, which suffered a radical destruction in the 90's, after all that was built post World War II.

Maybe I'm affected by the context of this period, as well as by the act and this artifact. The Thousand Cranes to heal Tito. Perhaps this highlights the necessity in today's society to consider some modern artifact providing healing to the sick national particularities that are making sparks in a highly flammable society. From a period which is just a memory and a construct for me, we need to draw lessons that might be used to determine a course for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because even 10, 15, 20 years after the war its society is still very much divided. I think we should turn back to the people of Japan and ask for another string of a thousand cranes to heal not just one man, but the entire society.

Oto Luthar, 1959

Historian

Object: "For freedom", Djordje Andrejević Kun, 1938
(2 papers from the map, woodcuts, 36x26 cm),
gift from Dj. A. Kun, 1946

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 1, 2017

Duration: 5' 08"

Of course, works by Djordje Andrejević evoke social realism at the first glance. When you see them you can immediately determine their place in the art history. Their communication value lies in the same context: the resistance movement, the National Liberation War, the partisan experience, the role of men, the role of women. In short, everything that we usually meet in such art production.

As a classical historian, I find it hard to judge all that. That would be an easier task for someone coming from the field of the art history. However, at the first glance one can establish that this is a production of a very high quality. Thus, the content takes on a whole different meaning, and to a man of my generation it brings to mind all the messages linked to this art production along with what latter happened to them. As a historian, I can't think outside the chronological arc. With each presentation of Andrejević's works, one wonders what happened to those messages, those symbols: camaraderie, solidarity, uprising.

If I try to overlay those messages with their current meaning and especially the meaning of the common state, speaking as a historian again, I think that the Slovenian experience is very sad. For several years now, we see a differentiated attitude towards the memory of this common state, as well as its comparison with the previous joint state, namely the Habsburg monarchy. Some 80-90 per cent of interpretations display a single attitude: "We are interested in Central Europe, we are interested in our Habsburg past, we avoid the Yugoslav past." Much of what is associated with it is now equated to Yugo-nostalgia. If it is at all possible within this thematization, this period is simply avoided. That's the average, and there are differing trends - the conservative, right-wing, nationalist discourse strives to shape the national mythology in a way to make the Yugoslav period appear as the most difficult, and the previous period as a golden age. No substantial difference is thus made between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, along with the State of S.H.S. that was shaped by Slovenes as well, and the socialist Yugoslavia. The official, curricular historiography usually reduces this to a list of years and periods, and to the lack of freedom and all the rest of that repertoire. Within the historical interpretation, we hardly find a broader, objectified thematization. It is often the practice in culturology, anthropology and sociology. Colleagues from these areas began much earlier to deal with the concept of the welfare state and with the economic aspects of the former joint state while the range of anthropological thematizations is even wider.

Bojan Ivanov, 1958

Art historian

Object: Model of partisan graveyard in Prilep by Bogdan Bogdanović, gift from the Marble Plant Prilep to Josip Broz Tito for his 70th birthday, May 23, 1962

Recorded in Skopje, September 30, 2016

Duration: 5' 48"

The model of the monument by Bogdan Bogdanović in Prilep was a sketch for the one called "Mogila of the undefeated". Thus mogila, mound or tumba or grave, stands here as a symbol of victory. It is very interesting that a grave symbolizes victory - social, national and historical victory. The monument building practice was to a great extent treated as a matter of ritual ceremonies. Once a year or during important jubilees political and cultural elite – called social elite at the time - rallied there. These spatial and historical points were marked to represent the common struggle, to create and preserve the cohesion of the Yugoslav project. On the other hand, the creation of monuments had a deep effect on everyday life. Much of the architectural, decorative, technological and operational resources were used in rebuilding cities throughout Yugoslavia as a stencil for urban planning, architecture and construction. In some ways, this monumentalist practice provided a visual homogenization for what defines modern space. Modern space not only in the city, but also in homes and in an intellectual environment. The effects osmotically permeated everyday life and that may be the reason why they passed unnoticed, why they were not appreciated enough, why they were not given enough importance. To some extent they were even taken for granted.

What was the fate of all these spaces strewn with signs that marked events, great figures and even "epic" content? They were outbursts of expectations and aspirations, not only national but also class-defined, of a community that essentially aspired to be a political community. That was the aspiration of the Yugoslav totality. Well, at one point they were swept aside, in sync with the completion, so to speak, of the Yugoslav political project. Pushed aside because they were a reminder of a stage in which economic processes, political processes and cultural integration revealed different dynamics. Someone felt left out, others felt forgotten. And a mass flowing in with the new liberal discourse even felt eclipsed by a political and also cultural practice, believing that these monuments and memories must be removed or left to crumble under the weight of time.

The main message of this whole practice and engagement that sought to penetrate deep into the pores of society, now is the message of antifascist orientation that under these circumstances has shown to be a unique moral and ethical guideline. I hope it will be confirmed as a political marker as well for the right attitude in public space, in the relations and values that we aim to build or preserve, or to provide them with lasting importance within self-realization and self-fulfilment. That's the message of Yugoslav monumentalism.

Elma Hašimbegović, 1977

Historian

“Miners of Husina”, Ivan Sabolić, sketch, gift from the Miners of Kreka, May 23, 1956

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 10, 2016

Duration: 5' 31”

I was 15 when Yugoslavia broke up with the bloody conflict and the siege of Sarajevo. Well, these 15 years is not enough of experience to talk about life in Yugoslavia. But I've been working for 15 years now in an institution that really bears the stamp of Yugoslavia. I work in the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was called differently when it was founded after the formation of Yugoslavia, and which saw its golden years in that country. It didn't disappear with it but it did see some hard times. Hence, I am in daily contact with lots of exhibits that speak of Yugoslavia, like the stained glass window by Vojo Dimitrijević, or Augustinčić's sculpture of Tito. They are all related to Yugoslavia just like this drawing that I'm trying to comment upon. They are all examples of what Yugoslavia wanted to project - not only its history, but also an impression for the contemporaries and the future generations. There are tens of thousands of items similar to this one, all related to miners, workers, Tito's portraits. Not only the objects but also the descriptions are part of this image. Compiled by Museum workers over a period of fifty years they speak about the phenomenon of Yugoslavia. All this data, texts and exhibits at the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina talk about that period and define our important mission regarding this legacy. Thus our mission is not only to preserve, but to convey to future generations the various phenomena related to Yugoslavia. We keep these items for the sake of present young generations and generations to come.

Regarding the “Husina Miner” by Ivan Sabolić two things come to mind. First is a photo regarding the post-Yugoslav period marking the beginning of the breakup of Yugoslavia, which is the initial photo at the exhibition “Besieged Sarajevo” permanently displayed at our History Museum. The photograph in question is done by Ron Haviv and depicts the anti-war protests in April 1992 with hundreds of thousands gathered to protest against the war in Sarajevo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among them you can see numerous men with helmets, while some of them are carrying Tito's portraits and Yugoslav flags. It's a very symbolic illustration of the attitude miners had towards Yugoslavia. That period was a prelude to an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, but on the other hand it reflected the longing of those miners with the flags not for Yugoslavia that ceased to exist, but for the values it represented. We try to explain to the visitors of the exhibition that these people were against the war, but in favour of brotherhood and unity and other values that Yugoslavia promoted in the course of its existence. Another thing that the “Husina Miner” reminds me of is an exhibition by the Museum of History held in 2014. We hosted an exhibition from Tuzla called “Husina Rebellion”, a topic seemingly obsolete that made us wonder whether there will be any visitors and interest for it. Still we wanted to bring over the miners of the Kreka Mine that gave Tito the draft sketch used for the “Husina Miner”. We hosted them at the Museum to honour a profession, a group of people remembered only on Miners' Day that is

Elma Hašimbegović continued

in fact celebrated in memory of the Husina Rebellion. Only then do they get some attention. By hosting them at the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina we wanted to honour them and show that we think of them. It was a really nice event, and on that occasion the miners from Kreka donated the very statue we're speaking of to the Museum.

Bojana Piškur, 1970

Art historian

Object: "Peace", Antun Augustinčić, 1952, sketch for a monument in front of the UN building in New York

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 4' 12"

The exhibit I've been given to think about, rather its description, is a sketch by Antun Augustinčić for his sculpture "Peace". It is a sketch from 1952, which later served as a template for the monument in front of the UN building in New York. What intrigued me about this draft design of the monument is the fact that this was made in the '50s in Yugoslavia. With that in mind, I'd like to add a few observations and some reference points. The early '50s in Yugoslavia were marked by the break in relations with the Soviet Union, and hence with a very specific way of acting and thinking, of policies and orientation. In Yugoslavia, we were suddenly confronted with a new situation in all the spheres. The period is marked by many interesting experiments, as well as new ideas and projects. Enormous progress was also achieved in the economy. In fact, the 1950s were a time of incredible economic progress in Yugoslavia. This was paralleled in cultural policy as well. In the early 1950s the so-called cultural policies were introduced with a goal to involve all of the citizens. In other words, people were no longer just consumers of something that was previously considered to be elite culture, but actively participated in the creation of this culture. Furthermore, the professionals, if I may call them that, artists and those working in the museums, got a new title: "cultural workers". Our Ljubljana Modern Art Gallery started to expand in 1952, with the period of modernist abstraction. Since there were no modernist works that given artists could use as an inspirational model, "didactic exhibitions" were introduced to solve this issue. As soon as 1952 the first such didactic exhibition was held. A large number of people had seen it, while the event was accompanied by lectures.

Coming back to the monument by Antun Augustinčić and the message his 1952 sculpture carried, it is important to keep in mind that it is a monument dedicated to peace. It was the post-war period, a time after the United Nations were created in 1945. Yugoslavia was one of the first signatories of the UN Charter, and the main topic discussed throughout the world was peace. I wonder what can all that mean to us in today's context when peace is an abstract and rather utopian idea.

Dragan Markovina, 1981

Historian

Object: Metaphor of social standard, Zenica, 1954

Recorded in Zagreb, January 28, 2017

Duration: 4' 49"

The "metaphor of social standard" is the kind of phrase that young people today would hardly understand. They might grasp the meaning of the individual words but put together they would be unclear for them. That's my first association.

The second is that this refers to the first half of the 1950s when there was a general social optimism and faith that there was a society and that this society was being built. Not built on an identity, but on standards and some sort of economic concepts. All things considered, it's humiliating for today's post-Yugoslav societies that back in 1954 this country, its people and its society were at a higher level of development and awareness than they are today. As we follow this line of thinking a walk through present-day Zenica reveals the fact, regardless of traces that can be linked to this exhibit, that it is provincial Bosnian backwater in the mental sense. That's just how it is. Although, with some pockets of resistance that stem from those times of admitted progress. I guess that this metaphor of social standard will be diversely seen by future generations - as a rallying symbol by a small share of them, and for a greater part it will be as incomprehensible as Swahili.

How can Yugoslavia be analysed in today's terms? As a mere nostalgic recollection? As a cause for hatred? As something that should be completely deleted from memory? Or, alternatively, as a place and an idea of political resistance. Not in the sense of building a new political framework thus dubbed, but rather as a word, a concept and a set of meanings formulated way back then and supporting a new idea of resistance to local hermetic, conservative, clerical-nationalist parties. I believe it can, and the key way to achieve this forecast of mine is to use a vocabulary that's closer to the new generations. We can not address them with an incomprehensible vocabulary that this metaphor would imply. A second path is to try deconstructing local nationalist post-Yugoslav societies using their own terminology. If you have a social setting, paradigm and discourse based on quotes of tradition, and all sorts of heritage, than isn't the industrial heritage of socialist Yugoslavia a "heritage" in it's own right? Especially in places like Zenica, Kakanj, Vareš and such. Places that no longer exist or are just dying. Like Split is ultimately. How can you live in such places where you do live in the first place because some ancestor of yours came to work in the factories there while believing in building a new society, better living standard, how can you now live among those eerie residues completely unaware of their meaning and without any emotional ties with that period? If we manage to explain how is possible that there really is a huge segment of the society that has no emotional link with their own ancestors let alone with the heritage of their city and local society, we might then find a way of rehabilitating that heritage and use it to re-propose a new vision of a modern society.

Iva Čukić, 1983

Architect, activist

Object: Photo album with the photographs of projects by the builders of Belgrade gifted to President Tito, 1960

Recorded in Belgrade, November 23, 2016

Duration: 6' 15"

The exhibit I was given to comment on reminds me of the architectural heritage of this period. It reminds me of the mid-fifties, or the mid-sixties, a period of extremely layered architectural and representative works that were then built in Yugoslavia. Interestingly, the architecture and urban planning of the period offers a clear view of political ideology of a state and society based on collectivism, egalitarianism, equality and even internationalism. It should be stressed that the 1960's came after a period of rather anonymous architecture intended to rebuild destroyed housing, to merely provide shelter. The architect had a socially responsible role and was stripped of any individual or artistic creation. So, you had monotype buildings, functional, standardized residential buildings, like the ones in Cvijić St. The creative potential of architects came to the fore in the mid-1950's. Interestingly, still a big part of the architectural heritage was focused on the construction of housing, but a large part of creativity was directed at various public buildings. This period is characterized by projects like the Belgrade Airport, the Tašmajdan Sports Centre, the JNA Stadium, the May 25th Museum, the General Staff Headquarters by Dobrović, the Press Hall at the Republic Square and, of course, by the New Belgrade project, which was a true city within a city representing the centre of the future transnational creation and marked by the ideas of equality, collectivism, solidarity, local community or commune. Obviously, there was a turn towards internationalism. It's quite interesting that this is the period when a building like the Federal Government was erected, along with it the Museum of Contemporary Art, Hotel Yugoslavia, a large number of residential blocks, I and II block, the apartment block around Tošin Bunar. The 1950's zoning plan clearly traced all this along with urban headings and the course that architecture should follow. In spite of the individual approach by each of the authors, they sent a joint message about what this country strived for at that time. Before the mid-1950's it balanced between East and West, between the Soviet and pro-US design. Later it defined its own concept in architecture and urbanism.

We don't know enough about the value of these projects and that of urban planning concepts that emerged during this period, and that is the sad truth. This is visible in the attitude we have towards this heritage. The Contemporary Art Museum was closed for years. The General Staff building was bombed during NATO air-strikes, and left totally ignored. Now it's being reconstructed largely by demolition. The disregard for the free space in New Belgrade, with construction taking place in the green areas and on the perimeter of this space. The Beobank building by Milica Štelić is now an empty skeleton visible from every part of the city. That's the devastating truth. What worries even more is the disregard for the representative role of architecture. Architecture always served as an expression of the power and ideology of a country. Today we witness the construction of shopping centres and

Iva Čukić continued

commercial venues as the embodiment of the will of investors without considering what the community needs or what the needs of the citizens are.

In college we learn to respect the spirit of the place and the context in which something is built. We learn about urbocide, about the importance of the community. About the role of citizens in the urban planning process. About what the needs of the users are. And when one walks in the streets the impression is that all we have been taught is senseless. Reality now consists of betting shops, casinos, shopping centres, and commercial facilities at every corner, some sort of luxury housing that no one knows who is it for. But we must be aware that space is the physical manifestation of the values of a community. It's something we must take great care of. Errors in urban design and architecture are intolerable because they are eternal, and one day will cost us enormously.

Jelena Vukasović, 1976

Journalist

Object: "The Sun above the Boka Bay", Petar Lubarda (tempera on canvas), gift from the National Board of Pljevlje, 1959

Recorded in Kotor, August 12, 2016

Duration: 5' 34"

I've spent my childhood in Yugoslavia, and my memories are somehow related to these symbols that at that time embodied all our childhoods. They somehow served to point to what was best in those times. As far as I remember, and from what I've heard from my parents that lived in Kotor and Bay of Kotor, as well as from friends and relatives, Kotor was a regional center and treated much better by the administration both in Podgorica and in Belgrade. It had a far better standing than the one we witness today.

Speaking about Kotor we often hear that Kotor and the Bay have a high percentage of cultural heritage, both movable and immovable. That Kotor and the Bay of Kotor preserve and hide the cultural heritage of Montenegro, and that this is very important. However, there's no trace left of the cultural center we once had. Kotor was a city with a National Theatre - founded in 1949. It worked for a decade with 10 premiers each year. The dishonored actors and directors, those that might have collaborated with the occupying forces and were banished to the province, came to our city and we had a professional theater that paid the directors and the people who ran the repertoire. The citizens of Kotor are still very proud of all those years of theatrical tradition. In Kotor we also had a proper theater designed by architect Dragiša Brašovan who specialized and became famous for his cultural venues. Today we have no theater, not even the building survived. At the times of Yugoslavia we also had a symphony orchestra which added to the substantial progress of this region. Now we only have a Music school, but students show little interest to enroll. We have, however, a very important music festival, Branko's Days of Music, and we have Kotor Art and the Kotor Festival of Children's Theatre, but as institutions all these events are uncertain, since the state and the society offer no stable support or funding.

I'm talking about culture, but I must also note that Kotor had at least 7.000 workers in various factories - "Riviera", "Bokeljka", the "Foundry", "Jadran Perast". When you think of 7.000 workers, just imagine how many families were involved. Today, none of these factories are working and there is almost no industry. We've turned to tourism, and this is fine, but on the other hand there's no major hotel in the city. Kotor was at the top of the 2016 "Lonely Planet" list but with the annotation: "Visit Kotor before it crumbles". A place to visit before it's too late. How can it be too late? Well, it might. At the time of Yugoslavia we had ferry lines that connected almost all the major towns in the Bay of Kotor. Today we have no maritime traffic at all. All we have is a single road that goes by the Old Town, with huge bottlenecks in the summer when it is unbearable to spend an hour driving across town.

It just seems to me, my peers, and people I talk to that once things were given greater priority. Today we are solely focused on tourism. In the Old Town you have

Jelena Vukasović continued

hundreds of gift shops and just three or four shops where you can buy bread or milk. So, all you have in Kotor today is for the tourists. For the visiting foreigners and for profit. There's no support for locals to stay in Kotor. No effort to work with the young, to develop the city or its culture. If we could do it back then, maybe we could do it again. But maybe this city no longer has such cultural needs.

Luka Mesec, 1987

Activist, politician (Slovenian party United Left)

Object: The Statue of a blacksmith holding a hammer in his left hand, red star in his right, gift from the Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia, III county Maribor

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 4' 05"

In Slovenia Yugoslavia is treated as a recent history. It's a right-wing discourse on Yugoslavia - history that isn't yet finished and which is still there to haunt us. The problem that I see as a leftist and socialist democrat is that we've given the right ownership over the story of Yugoslavia. Every day we hear new stories about the State Security's mischiefs, the postwar mass killings or totalitarianism, whilst all positive achievements of Yugoslavia are forgotten, repressed and stored in a place that the right calls history. It being recent or incomplete are facts that right-wing warns of. In my opinion, we must take the right-wingers seriously and open the Yugoslav story as incomplete, taking from it all the positive things that we can use in the political struggles present and future.

I see the importance of Yugoslavia in three points. First, we need to open up an honest debate about our past saving it from the right-wing revisionism. Second, Yugoslavia is an important lesson for the present as the story of a federation of six fraternal republics which were united in blood during the WWII and disjointed in blood 45 years later. Today in Europe there's a similar federation with 28 republics, facing the same challenges as Yugoslavia did 25 years ago. In Europe we have witnessed an economic crisis which turned into a political crisis of the European institutions, now imbued with the spirit of renewed nationalism already ravaging Europe. The first member state, Great Britain, has already de facto withdrawn from the Union. It's only a matter of time when will another withdrawal happen and what implications will this have. Will Europe end up as a new Yugoslavia? I hope not, and that's why it's important to reopen the debate about the breakup of Yugoslavia, about the dangers of nationalism and the causes that bring them about if we want to save Europe. The third alarming point is our future. It's been a month after the inauguration of Trump, and the future does not look good. We're being entangled again in the contradictions of capitalism which we faced back in the 1930s. I wish we could skip the agonizing episode between 1933 and 1945 and get straight to the post-war period. Simply bypassing this episode to come to the point where people got wiser, realizing that we're all brothers that should build the future together and with solidarity if we want it to be better. I think that this is the point where we have to rely on the Yugoslav experience and above all learn from the practice of solidarity, cooperatives, self-management, democracy in economic terms, reduction of inequality, gender equality and, perhaps most importantly, brotherhood and equality of nations. These are the messages that any serious Left should embrace from Yugoslavia and try to realize them in the present, in order to save the future.

Svjetlana Nedimović, 1974

Political activist

Object: "Onslaught", Ismet Mujezinović (oil painting), gift from Mining and Chemical Plant Tuzla, 1964

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 9, 2016

Duration: 11' 28"

I can't help feeling that many people, particularly, but not exclusively, young people, would think that this description of a museum exhibit sounds like somewhat familiar but still distant language. You could look up the meaning of words in the dictionary, but the sense of the whole somehow escapes you. Then I wondered would they understand even the individual words, not only their direct meaning, but the meaning they used to have. Take the word "combine". Is there any chance of someone from our time understanding the notion of merged companies or an association of factories based on joint activities, joint production, cooperation, solidarity all aimed at general social welfare? From the present perspective of ruthless market competition could we understand what it meant for those factories to pool forces and work for the good of others and their own good? How can we interpret today this historical attempt, magnificent in its failure, to overcome privatization? Maybe even overcome aspirations towards private ownership, given the fact that we experience private ownership as a space of unlimited freedom and self-expression? Unlike back then when private ownership was seen as a limitation for the collective existence, for our common freedom, for the joint creation of a world for all of us. How can we explain the fact that the combine as a glorious attempt was soon after revoked? Than it had to be understood that this experiment called Yugoslavia had a brief history but was extremely dynamic, involving a lot of work, a lot of changes, a lot of errors, repair, shifts, with constant turmoil of a living revolution and struggling with institutional, bureaucratic ossification. Hence, turmoil, self-criticism and self-achievement running side by side. We must realize that Yugoslavia survived and lived through so many parallel lives in its brief history. It is quite a different experience from the one we live today with strictly national political trends that are devastatingly linear and painfully predictable.

Now, the "Combine" is from Tuzla. What did Tuzla represent back then? It was a city that proudly bore the development of an entire republic on its shoulders. It suffered from the consequences of this development, but still was very self-conscious in its role of an industry pillar. An industry now completely destroyed and looted. That's why we must bear in mind with regard to this image that it's Tuzla that the Husina miners came from, those same miners that during the WWII the Ustasha tried to recruit giving them uniforms and weapons. They took those uniforms and weapons and marched out of Tuzla flying a red flag, and singing the Internationale. They marched off to fight the liberation war, and eventually almost all of them died in it. When you say Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina today, what comes to mind is a town of impoverished workers. Of cheated, deceived, disenfranchised workers. A town full of displaced persons trapped in a vacuum of transitional justice that hardly reaches beyond the courts. A town that still preserves islands of industrial economy, again for the benefit of all, but also at the expense of all that live there and are poisoned by the industry.

Svjetlana Nedimović continued

So, the Tuzla mining and chemical combine was donating artwork. How can we explain why did an economic collective give works of art, without stepping out of the narrative which is dominant today, that back in those times art was subordinated to the objectives of political propaganda? Can we put aside our dilemmas - the elitist view that culture, including the art, which approaches the masses, is inevitably debased? And the principal opponent of such concept of art, advocating the market based view, shaped by market trends that are supposed to dictate artistic development. Do we still remember the fact that in those same 60's and 70's the workers of "Energo-Invest" from Sarajevo actually played with the Sarajevo Philharmonic right in their production warehouse where the philharmonic regularly held concerts? And that the home of the Philharmonic was built with funding provided by "Energo - Invest" workers, among others. From our present position, can we even grasp the unbreakable connection between art and social trends without the withered story about socially-engaged art? Can we comprehend the inextricable link between these two productions, base production and the production of social superstructure?

So the "combine" made a gift of a piece of art. To whom? It was a gift to the President of the country, to Josip Broz Tito. If we interpret this just as a proof of the personality cult, would the European Commission and certain parts of the non-governmental sector quickly brand this today as an ancient example of corruption? Or will the explanation be sought in a trendy formula, about this being a folkloristic, sentimental worship of Tito? Should we try to tell the young that it is not just the usual "complex personality that will be judged by history"? That this figure has a backdrop of a joint experience of resistance, of self-organization, of joint struggle, and ultimately, of personal courage of one man. In view of our experience are we at all capable of being the measure of things?

Who was Tito at the time? He was the president of a country called Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. What is behind that name in view of what is being said about Yugoslavia today? A totalitarian state, an artificial creation, a historical residue held together with dictatorship that fell apart as soon as it had withered? An attempt doomed to fail? Or is it the synonym of a bloody collapse? Has anything survived from Yugoslavia that this exhibit is connected to? Did it leave us anything relevant to the life that we live today? Is it anything more than the bogeyman for our governments? Instead of countering such interpretations with uncritical adulation or mere documenting (although, there is no "mere", neutral documenting), the opposite approach should be used. We should start with battles that are fought today, or at least those that should be and would be fought if we weren't systematically programmed either to forget or never to learn where to fight, why to fight, and how to fight. In the process of transition and democratization we were somehow reduced to an inconsequential, rather formalized civil society.

Svjetlana Nedimović continued

I guess I can offer an answer to this question just as someone who deals with social and political work. I can offer an answer how we may employ something deemed so dreamlike by the young, since they see Yugoslavia as a fairy tale in our socio-political work in these circumstances. How we can employ the experience of self-organization, resistance, of joining forces, showing solidarity, autonomy - I mean tangible solidarity and final autonomy. There's a space made by the struggle overlaying our living experience and the past as our heritage, our association, organization, and common struggle, with the present being our field and the future being our vision. The social role of the museums is not to just preserve testimonies of the past, rather they should usher and grant space to the practice of struggle, of socio-political activity. Only then would a museum, and especially the Museum of Yugoslavia that was dismantled find its place in our present.

Artan Sadiku, 1983

Philosopher, theorist, activist

Object: Wall cover, with motif of a map and names of cities Trieste, Belgrade, Sofia, Tirana

Recorded in Skopje, September 29, 2016

Duration: 8' 08"

When we think of the past today, especially when this consideration of the past regards a very interesting historical period for our region, one related to the, so called, "Yugoslav experiment" we mainly face two difficulties. One is due to the objective of the new ideological discourse to erase any heritage of that period. This is the reason why most of that heritage is in museums now. And there's another issue, namely, how long do we wait for social reality to get into a museum? It has to do with the perception of the heritage, whether it's still present, or it can be placed in the museum.

The wall decoration I'll comment is kept at the Museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. It's a map showing the cities of Trieste, Belgrade, Sofia and Tirana. This is a very interesting selection in itself because it comes from a period when three of these cities belonged to the Eastern Bloc countries. At different times they had various types of relations, finally turning into decades-long enmity. And there's a city from the Western Bloc, marked by liberal capitalism of the period. The very fact that these cities were presented together, on a single wall decoration, maybe speaks about the future in which all these ideologically defined territories might belong to a common area. Again, we are talking about ideological area. Today we witness the supremacy of the western ideology, and the failure of the real socialism project, while the end result of this competition now might seem expected. But we must bear in mind that during the period when Yugoslavia existed there were serious attempts to overcome issues seen as traditional inheritance, though during the existence of Yugoslavia these attempts were covered by a somewhat authoritative layer. Narratives of oppression were developed after Yugoslavia and used as a strong argument for the tragic Yugoslav wars.

Today, the legacy of Yugoslavia in Macedonia, where I live, generates little interest. But I believe that the Yugoslav model that included experimenting, trying out, numerous challenges, is a very relevant model for a number of reasons. One of the reasons is historical, because during the existence of this federation there were no wars. It's the period marked by the slogan "brotherhood and unity", a period of emancipation between two historical eras: the murderous Second World War and the tragic period of the Yugoslav breakup. I think not only this model has a historical relevance today, but resembles the competition within the European continent. Numerous tendencies can be identified. Which segment of the Yugoslav political and social attempts has the potential to be repeated today, albeit in a wider European context? What we can call a reactionary tendency within the Yugoslav model was the competition of national bourgeoisies in the federation in order to achieve domination over others, or to control forces within the federation. Isn't the same thing happening within Europe today? We have competing capitalist elites, with Germany representing one of these powerful tendencies inside the

Artan Sadiku continued

huge union that is trying to take control of the entire territory, of the whole space and all the areas within the continent. That's why it is important to re-evaluate policies of emancipation and revolution in Yugoslavia. Policies that sought to hinder tendencies of the bourgeoisie, which sought to build a parallel plan of emancipation, a common and international plan. Not only within Yugoslavia, but to promote it beyond its borders. This is made evident by the Non-alignment policy. Such political models and tendencies can be very important for the whole European concept today, and especially for its future. Sadly, we are witnessing that the capitalist elite, namely the bourgeois elite within Europe is retracing the bad tendencies in ex-Yugoslavia. And that's exactly what should raise the alarm in Europe. We can consider certain Yugoslav models and act politically along with other European groups. I don't believe that local problems can be solved by reviving some of the models that existed in Yugoslavia. I believe that a frame already exists in the European area, and the model within that frame should be an emancipation mode, the kind that existed in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, as I've already said, the visible tendencies of the capitalist elite in Europe, and the growing nationalist tendencies in all countries, especially in Western European countries indicate that there is a sad similarity between them and the post '80s tendencies in Yugoslavia. It is what should be warned against and also stopped considering the consequences.

So, this map covering the territory of several countries, and cities from different countries, can be revived and turned into a unification model map with a different function within this area: economic, political, cultural and social function. This doesn't mean that there will be or that we can hope for a drastic ideological change in the entire European space. But I believe that a counter-hegemonic vision can be built against the current economic dictatorship in Europe today, a dictatorship that is opposing any other form of sociability and culture.

Azem Vllasi, 1948

Lawyer, politician, President of the Student League of Yugoslavia from 1974 till 1978, President of the League of Communists of Kosovo from 1986 till 1988

Object: Youth Relay Baton 1974, author: Tome Andreeski

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 6' 17"

The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia or Tito's Yugoslavia, as we called it, was basically a multi-ethnic federative state, made up of six republics and two provinces that had a status almost equal to that of the republics. In a way it was like the European Union is today. Federal units had their capacity of government and authority regarding their main interests. Joint functions at the federal level included monetary policy, foreign policy, defence, currency and such. The fate of Yugoslavia was closely linked to what I'd call its central figure, one that embodied Yugoslavia. It was Josip Broz Tito. His name was celebrated in many ways. And so was his life's work, which was that very same socialist, federative, multi-ethnic, multicultural Yugoslavia.

Between 1974 and 1978 I was a chairman of the Youth Organization of Yugoslavia, which was involved in various public actions. One of these youth events was called the "Youth Relay". It was symbolically linked to Tito's name, and to Tito's birthday, officially marked on May 25th. For the occasion various cultural, sports and similar youth events were staged throughout Yugoslavia. This special relay crisscrossed the country for over a month. The arrival of the relay baton was celebrated in every town. The baton would arrive in Belgrade on May 24th and on May 25th the central ceremony was staged - a huge youth rally at the YPA stadium where young people came from all over the country. In today's perspective, some might think that young people were forced and drilled for such a thing, but it was not so. Those were youth events and cultural activities where young people from all parts of Yugoslavia participated gladly. Coming from all the republics and provinces for the central ceremony in Belgrade on May 25th was a special honour for any and all youths. The ceremony held on May 25th evening was almost always attended by Tito. As a chairman of the Youth Organization in a four-year term I've had the honour to be his host for several years.

Yugoslavia as such formally and practically ceased to exist in 1991. Unfortunately, it not only disappeared, but it was disintegrated in bloody wars and through great suffering. Radical changes had taken place at that time: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of a social model that we called "socialist" in Yugoslavia, or "communist" in other Eastern European countries where single party ruled. Today we might remember some values Yugoslavia embodied with nostalgia: multi-ethnic, inter-ethnic tolerance, a much wider economic space, a broader market, and so on. But without Tito, and without the single-party system it was not possible to preserve Yugoslavia. Nor is it possible to recreate it today on any grounds, or using whichever model. But if there had been no wars and no scars left by the wars among nations, republics and provinces, it would be possible to develop a better cooperation among the newly formed states from the region. In fact, we still feel close to each other.

We, the Slovenians, the Serbs, the Macedonians, the Croats... We feel much closer

Azem Vllasi continued

than with the peoples of the countries around us, with the Bulgarians, the Romanians, the Hungarians and so on. So it's possible to renew or create some forms of cooperation and ties as independent states. But it's not possible to restore a model to be called Yugoslavia, or country of South Slavic peoples, or Yugoslav community of new independent states.

Miran Mohar, 1958

Artist, a member of the IRWIN group and one of the founding members of NSK

Object: Youth Relay Baton, 1987, author: Vladimir Pezdirc

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 3' 04"

Together with my colleagues from the New Collectivism I was the co-author of the incriminated poster for Youth Day. The idea of the poster was to show that any personality cult is problematic. Be it in socialism or capitalism there isn't any particular difference. Although our effort was later interpreted as a nationalist action against Yugoslavia, it was exactly the opposite. Our critique was actually a demand for a more democratic socialism. The Youth Relay in 1987 was the last one held. By then, the event had somehow lost its magic. The Relay Baton we then proposed was Plečnik's Parliament as a symbol of democracy. Our project was rejected, stopped. The commission for the project went to another design studio and that year the baton was made by Vladimir Pezdirc, a good and renowned industrial designer. What was interesting about the relay batons is that they were becoming more modern, made with modern materials, resembling modernist mini-sculptures. One of them, authored by Milena Braniselj, was even a kinetic sculpture. But the Relay ritual and the personality cult had been becoming increasingly obscure.

I had to say something else about my experience of Yugoslavia. Socialism surely brought a lot of important things and it was essentially a humane society. However, my colleagues and me were bothered by the fact that others decided what's right. You were put in a situation of not being the subject, but forced to participate in something that others thought was best in the world. That's what I was most critical about then and still am now. The Relay baton and our project were actually criticism of this element of authoritarianism that was, in a way, part of the end of Yugoslavia.

Guner Ismail, 1951
Philosopher, publicist

Youth Relay Baton, 1964, author: Petar Hadži Boškov

Recorded in Skopje, September 29, 2016
Duration: 5' 19"

It was May of 1968. Our army skills professor came into our class and told us that the Youth Relay baton would be spending the night in Bitola. Back then I went to high school there. He said we would have to guard it. I found it interesting because it was a two-day event. We pitched tents outside of Bitola near the farming school. So, the baton arrived and we had a special tent for it - this object was there. I guess it was made of wood. I have no idea who was the author, but it's pertinent. So we lit a campfire and guarded the baton. We sort of fooled around actually. Secretly smoking cigarettes behind the tent and taking turns every hour to stand in the dark tent. Inside there was a table and "it" was on it. So I'd spend an hour inside together with a friend of mine. Of course, you just wonder why and how... Anyway, we did it. When the Neue Slowenische Kunst scandal broke out due to their interpretation of the Youth Relay it had already dawned upon us. I can't say that I was very smart, or that I understood or knew everything, but it occurred to me that it was just a massive gathering, although very strange and very unusual: we keep a guard of this little thing, it goes from hand to hand and then it's handed to this man, Tito, while he was still alive.

Once, the baton spent the night at the Youth Hall, now called the Youth Cultural Centre. It was in some room, I haven't even seen it. At the time we were quite active in the theatre domain. We had our group and performed a Galczynski inspired play. Galczynski was a Polish author. He had it with everything: with relays, icons, everything, at least in the Polish cultural environment. So our youth activists devised to do this play on the occasion of the baton layover. Staging it at the Hall, one floor up. It was my second encounter with the Relay baton. I had already embraced the NSK concept and the fascization of the mass events in general. Anyway, between this and that all sorts of things happen. You meet someone, hang out with someone, you just live. You read books, go to concerts. It's that strange kind of cartilage that connected us and is now probably missing. So, that window in my life was very important.

In miniature or laboratory conditions we actually still live in the same world. We are managed by people whose mental matrix was probably created out of pure or impure distillate of those ideas we grew up with, learned about in school, read about and so on. Thus, to think about Yugoslavia, beyond scrapbook relations or with a great deal of memory optimism is a very, very, serious and difficult task but at the same time a pleasant one.

Marko Perković, 1960

General Consul of SFRY in Montenegro

Object: Youth Relay Baton, 1972, author: J. Soldatović

Recorded in Tivat, August 12, 2016

Duration: 3' 28"

The Relay of Youth was simply an expression of best wishes for prosperity, for the future of Yugoslavia, for a long life and good health of President Tito. It was a part of us, a special ECG of this nation and its youth. Entwined with the baton were all the best wishes and messages of tolerance, prosperity, peace, love, characterizing Yugoslavia. The baton was sent to Belgrade, to the JNA Stadium where our beloved comrade Marshal Tito eventually received it. It symbolizes tolerance, peace, love and all that we lack today. It symbolizes brotherhood and unity as a natural relationship between our nations and nationalities. Sadly, with the deletion of the brotherhood and unity cliché a natural relationship between our nations and nationalities was unfortunately relegated to the background, and instead of general national pride that Yugoslavia and its anthem "Hey Slavs" inspired, nationalist trends came to the fore. The most despicable passions were aroused through nationalist fervour. Today people just feel cheated. They are threatened with the EU membership throughout ex-Yugoslavia in these banana states created in its stead. And one day when we shall travel without passports and borders from Mt. Triglav to Gevgelija, people will realize that we already lived in such a magical country called Yugoslavia.

I'm proud to say that the place where we are now is a place where Yugoslavia still lives. So when someone says in English, this being world's dominant official language, "Ex-Yugoslavia" I correct them and say "Not ex-Yugoslavia, for Yugoslavia exists". For many years the 15 embassies in Montenegro and the ambassadors heading them have been respecting the General Consulate of SFRY and myself as Consul and address me as Excellency, Mr Consul or "dear colleague". This means that Yugoslavia has not been removed from the international political scene, because it left certain values as a lasting mark on the world political scene. 3.5 billion people in the world followed its peaceful policy, which is unthinkable in today's geopolitical situation. All the conflicts taking place on the world stage call for Yugoslavia as a factor of stability and peace and for Tito's peace voyages. Because peace always came after Tito. He was a man that reconciled with words and authority. Whilst Tito was a peace traveller we were all citizens of the world. What was left in Yugoslavia's place is a black hole that nothing can fill.

Miroslav Minić, 1977

Professor of literature

Object: Literary works by pupils – participants of “Friendship Encounters” of the primary school “Ivo Lola Ribar”

Recorded in Podgorica, August 10, 2016

Duration: 3’ 04”

I belong to the generation that faced a trauma since the war started as we were still in primary school. Somehow everything became different. Although there was no war here, my town was full of soldiers. They came to take my relatives to the battlefield. I feared that my father and my brother would end up there too. Primary school came and went in a spirit of fellowship. We all went to the seaside resorts together, for two weeks or so. Then they’d take us all to the mountain. It didn’t matter whether you came from a rich or a poor family. We were all completely equal. Apartments had the same furniture. Everyone kept the front door open in the summer with forty degrees in Podgorica. You’d just knock and walk into your neighbours place. There was freedom and peace of mind. But as I read these essays, I feel strange. I just don’t belong to the generation that wrote essays on Tito. I know they used to write them before and they’d send them to various competitions. Everyone in the country wrote to him or about him. Mine was a carefree childhood. Then came high school and things changed. Until then we couldn’t tell someone’s religion or ethnicity by one’s name. We never cared which clan was one from. It’s very different now. I could never pick the president of Montenegro as the theme for an essay. I choose unusual and creative topics for my students, often using the title of a movie or a book for an essay.

There’s a project on entrepreneurship, which involves all the countries of former Yugoslavia. We take part in competitions, presenting our projects. It was great when we visited Slovenia once. After winning an award at this fair, my students decided not to go to college in Montenegro, but to go to Slovenia or Croatia or some other ex-Yugoslav republic. They said they prefer to be away from home in college, to be in some major city. I was really glad about it. I felt that the stories I had heard about Yugoslavia, about work rallies, traveling, socializing, falling in love, were only just beginning, and coming alive here and now.

Jeton Neziraj, 1977

Playwright

Object: Order of Brotherhood and Unity

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 4' 08"

I really remember little from that period, mostly parts of the stories. Some I've heard from others, some I have witnessed. What I do remember is a kind of trauma my grandpa had regarding the Serbs. I remember that before going to bed and locking the door he'd make us bring inside the axe that he kept in the yard, so that, if local Serbs come to kill us, they at least have to bring their own and not use ours to kill us. I also remember that during this period local Serbs were somehow privileged, those few who lived in the area. I didn't realize it at the time, but, for example, when we went on a field trip to Bečići, there was a Serbian boy with the rest of us. The teachers kept a vigil eye on him all the time. He was given special treatment. The teachers thought that if something bad were to happen, it should happen to some Albanian student, and not, God forbid, to Dejan. His name was Dejan. I also recall that when two Albanian kids from another school attacked with stones a Serbian lady teacher, they were immediately transferred to our school, where there wasn't a single Serb. But they were sent there as enemies. Albanian teachers treated them really badly. It was probably an attempt to show that everyone was against what the two of them had done. So, there was a kind of privileged treatment, a special treatment of the Serbian community. I don't know whether it was based on values of equality, or brotherhood and unity that were being promoted, or it was just fear of being punished by the political caste. For example, if you were a teacher you could face consequences, losing your job or being punished by the principal, and municipal authorities could punish a principal. Our relationship with our Serb teacher was the same. Back then I didn't realize it and didn't analyse those relations. I began to analyse them later. The concept of brotherhood and unity was indeed artificial, a concept that didn't work because it wasn't compatible with the actual needs and the reality. To paraphrase it all: at the time we were all equal, but the Serbs were more equal than others. Those are my memories and reflections from today's perspective. I might be wrong, but that's how I saw things as a boy. Anyway, the environment I grew up in, my family, everyone, they all realized the political mistakes in relations with the Serbs, in the inter-ethnic relations. So, if I'm expected to give an explanation about the breakup that occurred during the 1990s, I really can't give one. Everyone was cautious, but suddenly everything collapsed. I can't explain how it all happened so fast. Since I was a child, I only remember these little episodes. Maybe I could build an explanation based on them, but that's all I remember and all I can say about this period.

Ares Shporta, 1991

Cultural manager

Object: A plaque with charter of XXII Relay of Brotherhood and Unity of youth of Yugoslavia in Niš, May 26, 1977

Recorded in Prizren, October 27, 2016

Duration: 2' 19"

Nothing concrete comes to mind when we talk about brotherhood and unity. Maybe because I was born in the period when the echo of brotherhood and unity had died out. I was given the name of the god of war and it marked the beginning of a completely different period. On the one hand I feel rather ignorant because I just can't remember or come up with a better definition of it, with a better shaped idea. On the other hand I'm a good example of a generation and a society that lives in oblivion, in an epoch when all past is being rewritten along with the past that includes times when a major part of this society followed an idea, like the one of brotherhood and unity. So my attitude towards this idea is purely based on imagination, although I can hardly imagine how could such a huge number of people believed in it. How can you trust an idea, follow it, go out in the field for it, join it. How can there be thousands of you in favour of an idea that sounds good. Today we see certain people putting forward certain ideas in horrible ways. When I imagine this idea, I think it could bring peace, I think it is an idea containing solidarity and positive belief in a better future. And that's hard to imagine today. When I think of the future of a society without a vision that never discusses a social, but is limited, even though partially, to the economic sphere, I'm not sure if we should start from the ideas like that of brotherhood and unity. I don't know which idea could our society choose to start imagining our future.

Emilija Simoska, 1956

Sociologist

Object: Photo album, gift from the participants of pioneers visit
“Brotherhood and Unity” in NR Macedonia, September 1957

Recorded in Skopje, September 30, 2016

Duration: 7' 21”

The concept of the Pioneer Organization in ex-Yugoslavia is interpreted differently in each of the individual republics, especially if things are viewed from today's perspective. I speak from my own experience because I was a child then. As a girl I didn't critically think about the concept of Pioneers. I was a bit annoyed by the uniform, discipline and rules. But when you look at it from today's perspective, this concept has one or two very interesting dimensions. The first is the idea of activism, and the other is promoting tolerance towards others, of those who are different on ethnic, or religious grounds. Implementation of these concepts had different results in former Yugoslavia, they were achieved in different ways, and I would say Macedonia was rather specific in that sense. The principle of activism is very important to me, for there are very few children organizations where they learn that they can do something for the society they live in. Namely, at that age they are usually subject to the authorities, parental authority or that of their teachers. The Pioneer movement followed the idea of agency, which later influenced my own civic activism. And today, when we live in Macedonia in the era of protests, analyses show that the Pioneer generation is predominant in them. There are mostly people there who in their childhood believed that something could be changed in this society, that they were not just children whose voice isn't heard. I believe that this is a very important dimension. Even though we joked with the concept of Pioneer, and though it was used in cynical contexts, I think that a greater distance must be respected to better analyse this phenomenon. The concept of youth organization is not unknown. Youth organizations exist in other countries too, and today we have them in the form of the youth party organizations. Sadly, this is the opposite of the idea of unity and tolerance promoted within the Pioneer movement. Today's youth organizations operate on the principle of exclusion: not to love and tolerate other young people, but to exercise intolerance, exclusivity and intolerance towards those that differ in political ideas. If we compare the Pioneers and youth organizations today, it's clear that Pioneering bore a much more honest idea.

The second principle which was the basis of what the Pioneer organization insisted on was the so-called “brotherhood and unity”. This may sound like rather artificial motto, and from today's perspective it's something that didn't work, at least not the way it was meant. But there were parts of former Yugoslavia, like Macedonia, where this principle had successfully taken root. Unlike other former Yugoslav republics that had fresh and painful political memories of the WWII and even earlier times, Macedonia didn't have such a legacy to prevent the implementation of the brotherhood and unity idea, or the idea of “coexistence” as it is called today. There was coexistence in Macedonia. We don't have a historical problem with minorities in Macedonia. The problems that underlie inter-ethnic tensions in Macedonia were politically imposed with the formation of parties, when competition among political parties started within the majority and minority nations. Competition in who is more

Emilija Simoska continued

radical, more loyal, more nationally conscious etc. Thus, this beautiful idea came to life and functioned in Macedonia but it was later destroyed by politicization. Maybe the same happened in other Yugoslav republics, but we're still quite specific in this regard.

After all, we seem to be going in circles for 20 years. We're reintroducing ideas my generation was brought up on: how to live with others, how to meet others. How will this concept be implemented and developed depends on numerous factors. But I think that a lot of precious time was wasted on things we already had, since there was already a basic principle - integration. Sadly, the rights of ethnic communities today are based on the principle of disintegration. There is no space for different ethnic groups to meet and realize their cohabitation. We have ethnic kindergartens in ethnic communities' language. So are their primary schools, high schools, and colleges. I wonder whether they'd ever meet even at the workplace, and all of that only deepens ethnic distance. Alas, things in Macedonia went in a completely different direction, although some 60-70 years ago foundations were laid for this to work.

Saša Madacki, 1972

Comparativist and librarian

Object: Order of the Big Star of Friendship Between Nations, given to Tito on June 8, 1965 in Berlin

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 9, 2016

Duration: 4' 28"

My story about Yugoslavia is prompted by a medal that came to Yugoslavia in 1965 - the medal of the Order of the Grand friendship among nations. Now that we are in 2016 I'm trying to go back to those times, to see what friendship meant then and does it mean to us what it meant to those people. I'm afraid that in this present-day Yugoslav sphere, all this has a completely different connotation.

My view of friendship was always urban-centric. I'm a born Sarajevan, I spent the whole war in Sarajevo, I stayed in Sarajevo. So my perspective of friendship was always urban. I simply didn't know any people living out of the cities. I did have great friends from Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Skopje. These friendships were really wonderful, simple, creative. But after the war a change in friendships happened, a grading of friendships emerged. It made you realize that some friendships may not have been so strong, or not strong enough to survive. Yugoslavia was not to blame. The Yugoslavs who lived here were. Somehow we huddled up in our corrals, and started appreciating only what we had around us. Never looking beyond the fence.

I remember when I first felt ashamed after feeling triumphant. I remember the bombing of Belgrade in 1999, and like every other Sarajevan I was glad about those events. I was very glad that after what happened here in Bosnia finally something similar befell Serbia. I felt triumphant, though I worked at the Human Rights Center. What a joke! A sick one! But I was euphoric and triumphant. Then a colleague that worked with me said: "Forget rejoicing, some ordinary people live there! Let's send a package to the Belgrade Human Rights Center. At least we know what they need, as we were getting all sorts of useless things during the war in Sarajevo. Let's pack some spices, coffee, batteries, candles, chocolates, cigarettes. The kind of things you need when shortages start." That's when I first felt ashamed after feeling triumphant. And that's when you start thinking about friendship. These personal stories among little people are really great, but on the level of nations they become inapplicable. What this medal once meant for friendship among nations, with two collectives feeling affection and embracing, is unfortunately impossible today. It only grows if you actually see the people from inside. After my initial 20 friends from Belgrade, that have now become 150, I feel closer to the idea of friendship among nations much more than before. So this long path must start from the individual, then get to a small group, from a small group head to a larger one and then to nations. Because, when I consider Yugoslavia I never refer to the former Yugoslav republics. In all my speeches I emphasize that I have Yugoslavia in mind. My CV always states that I speak Serbo-Croatian. It's the language I learned and spoke in primary and secondary school and the university. So, only when you go through some kind of catharsis you're able to reflect on what used to be in a smarter way.

Without being pretentious I'll quote Camus who said: "Don't walk ahead of me, I might not be able to follow. Don't walk behind me, I might not be able to lead. Walk beside me and be my friend." So, all these Yugoslavs who walk beside me now are my friends.

Zdenka Badovinac, 1958

Curator and writer, director of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Ljubljana

Object: May 25th Museum, Birthday gift from the City of Belgrade, 1962, architect: Mihailo Mika Janković

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 4' 39"

The May 25th Museum inspires me in different ways. This museum is linked to our former common state of Yugoslavia. Therefore, I think of it as a museum associated with something common, with what kept us together in a single state. Primarily there was the idea of brotherhood and unity that I believe is still extremely important especially for Europe today, during the migrant crisis. It is a very inspiring idea worth coming back to. At the same time, the May 25th Museum embodies all the reasons for the disintegration of that common state.

Considering that this museum originated as a gift, which is in itself rather exceptional, or so it seems, I'd like to correlate it to another museum that was also created as a gift but under different circumstances. If Josip Broz Tito received May 25th Museum as a gift, since the museum was donated to the president of a country, I would make a connection to a museum created after the breakup of Yugoslavia which originated in circumstances that were in part caused by the Serbian aggression. It is the museum of solidarity in Sarajevo founded with the help of our Modern Art Gallery among others. The Ars Aevi Museum was formed solely on the basis of our gifts and those by other European museums and initiatives. Sadly, the collection of this museum is kept in the depots now, while the idea for the museum building, offered by Renzo Piano, is also still lying in some drawer. In other words, the tragic story of the museum continues. It should be noted, though, that when we talk about Yugoslavia, we also talk about its breakup. We are talking about the war. Talking about the solidarity that was, at least for me, the key word associated with Yugoslavia both in terms of ideologically and politically encouraged solidarity, and of solidarity that really existed. It was not false solidarity, but solidarity existed as a living element among the workers and nations. That's the energy that held together the country as a society. As Yugoslavia disintegrated, so did this idea and the society bonded by that idea. Paradoxically, when Yugoslavia disintegrated and when that bloody war started especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a museum of solidarity was created there in 1994. Thus, an idea from the previous country, that united that country into a society, was reactivated under tragic circumstances that were the result of conflicts that existed in Yugoslavia even before the war, but could not be deactivated in time to stop the bloody conflicts that erupted after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Eliza Hoxha, 1974

Architect

Object: Illyrian goddess – Prehistoric figurine from Vinča culture

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 1' 57"

“Goddess on the throne” is the symbol of the city of Prishtina today. During my childhood the symbol we have been seeing everywhere, on all sorts of logos or book covers, was the Monument of Brotherhood and Unity. During socialism it was the crown element of the main square. It was a period that brought development and modernization to Prishtina, to Kosovo and the entire society, although denying everything that came from tradition or from the past. However, in a different period, after the fall of socialism, the “Goddess on the throne” has become a figure bearing a different name and meaning in two different communities. After the war in Kosovo it became the main symbol of Prishtina, capital of Kosovo.

What comes to mind when I look at this figure is directly related to women. Of course, its name is “Goddess on the throne” and it represents divinity and the beauty of women. But also the role of women, both at home and in the general development of society. Since the period of socialism prompted an opening and general enlightenment of the society, women became a significant stakeholder in the public sphere, as well as in education and development, and today we enjoy the fruit of those achievements. For me “Goddess on the throne” is a symbol of women that now have the alternative and the opportunity to be part of the process, part of decision-making, part of the development of the city and of Kosovo.

Ljupka Kovačević, 1951

Psychologist

Object: Formal woman ethnic costume, Montenegro

Recorded in Kotor, August 12, 2016

Duration: 9' 07"

The Montenegrin female costume at the Museum of Yugoslavia as a tribute to Tito, as an expression of appreciation by the people of Montenegro. I think this Montenegrin female costume has been bestowed to show that the people of Montenegro have something to pride themselves of. In choosing to boast with or be proud of a woman it must involve an issue they deem important: the stern, untouchable, mighty Montenegrin woman, presented like that in public, and a working, diligent, loyal and obedient wife - at home. This duality is visible in the Montenegrin female costume. It is becoming cold, untouchable and closed. Thus no female erotic appeal is reflected in the costume. I guess that in Montenegro the highest level of prohibition concerned the sexuality of women. The dominant attitude was to treat the woman as a slave or as some sort of serf. It was dominant in the nature of women and dominant in the treatment of women in society. Instead of attractiveness in terms of female seduction, you had an introvert woman entirely devoted to motherhood, to the household and to her husband. And it is good that they donated this costume then! I think it should remain there. Maybe it was time, and maybe it was a sign of a break up with tradition in Montenegro when the female costume came to the museum. I think it's good it's there today. I fear though, with the trend of re-traditionalization, the Montenegrin folk costume might return to everyday life. I guess that would be quite devastating. For the time being it has not, it's where it is representing, in a positive sense, the pride, dignity and inviolability. But hiding behind it, like so many things in Montenegro, is the enslavement of women as it's evident in contemporary life. Even in Yugoslavia it was clear that women from Montenegro were somehow on the margins of the margins, though it's not apparent from this time distance when we consider the events during the Second World War, when Montenegrin women began struggling for emancipation, seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, a way out of denied education and the oppression. Thus their struggle and their role in the liberation war were even more important, for one of their goals was the emancipation of women here in Montenegro. But even during the existence of ex-Yugoslavia Montenegrin women were stereotyped as coarse, unfeminine, and only focused on work and family. That stereotype mostly defined them in the socialist era. But changes were taking place. Women really grabbed the chance of getting an education and getting a job. In Yugoslavia, a majority of women was employed, and many women became literate as opposed to the previous period. So there were major benefits for Montenegrin women. That was one aspect. The other was that the traditional influence, and the stereotypes in Yugoslavia that affected Montenegro halted emancipation of the Montenegrin women and their struggles for other forms of freedom. Hence they always remained withdrawn from the public. Brave, talkative, powerful, but within the family. Out of the family, that space was left to men, in spite of this big and significant wave involving economic independence and education. Also important was renouncing to the Montenegrin costume. At the time it was not desirable to boast or take pride in the Montenegrin female costume. It somehow represented a period that should be forgotten and left back there in the past.

Ljupka Kovačević continued

However, the rush and the advances made in the optimistic spirit of ex-Yugoslavia ended drastically in the 1990's. There was a drastic disruption of the emancipation and for a certain period the situation became even more difficult in these areas. New influences and new ways of shaping female energy that were coming from the West enabled the creation of small groups that fought for women's rights. The focus was now shifted from women's rights to violence against women. Whatever the scope or presence of violence against women, it had been a taboo for the Montenegrin public. It was shameful for men and women alike to publicly witness violence against women, albeit it was traditionally and culturally present in daily life. The issue of violence against women surfaced with the introduction of human rights, Western influence and non-governmental organizations. However, the class standing of women, their standing in education, in the labor market deteriorated. If you consider women's rights in Montenegro, you realize that there is no democracy, and that the situation is worse than it was in the 1990s. But when you consider the issue of women's rights, then you sense that something has been done. However, no matter how well institutions are developing, if this segment remains excluded both deliberately and maliciously, the position of Montenegrin women will remain difficult. A historical reference that comes to my mind, if Montenegrin women can find any foothold in history, it lies in their enduring and persevering a positive vision. The positive vision is no longer motherhood and it's no longer the myth of the household and of the famous quintessential mother. This discourse expands hatred and inequality in Montenegro, which is why it's so omnipresent. Women who will get an education or already have done so, are not likely to go back under the umbrella of rigid patriarchy which is still very strong thanks to the conjunction of patriarchy with this criminal government.

Venita Popović, 1964

Editor of the journal "Zeničke sveske"

Object: Embroidered towel with message for Tito,
The First Congress of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Recorded in Zenica, December 8, 2016

Duration: 4' 01"

The embroidered towel was an expression of creativity of women at a time when they had no other way of expressing it. Having no access to other fields of culture this is how they expressed themselves. Embroidered towels were donated on special occasions: weddings, baptisms, receiving or making special visits. So it's quite understandable that the First Congress of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented such a towel to President Tito. This should not be treated with sentimental nostalgia nor with disdain, because, for example, in present day Bosnia and Herzegovina the chapter dedicated to women in the brochure of one of the ruling parties offers as the most important quote a statement by the founder of the party - a man, of course. So, things haven't changed much since then.

Looking back at the times which I haven't experienced personally, but I've read a lot about, about the fascinating decade of activity of the Antifascist Front of Women (AFW), from the start of the national liberation struggle during the WWII until 1953 when AFW was dissolved or "self-abolished", one must note how this entire period was bursting with energy. It was by all means an emancipating potential when it comes to women's rights. Women began to speak, to conquer public space, to venture into spheres they were previously banned from. So when I compare that post-war decade and the 1995-2005 decade after these "third Balkan Wars", the situation is completely different. After the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the trend was completely retrograde with a profound retardation of women's rights. Again, women are relegated to the house. Again they are expected to play the role of housewife and mother, namely, all these roles expected of them by the patriarchal system. One of the slogans in the post-war period was that each Bosnian mother should bear five children: three for herself and two for Bosnia. So, this is a complete remission of the achievements in women's rights at the time of the hated socialism.

But what remains of the Yugoslav community, of the common cultural space, is female solidarity. It was shown by the non-governmental organizations during and after the war. I'm talking about the last war which, unfortunately, many of us survived and experienced. Female conversation survived throughout the conflict. Women continued to be active in an organized way building on the legacy of AFW. Having rape declared a war crime, linking women within the former Yugoslav space and working together to regain and reach a level of equality of women's rights that existed in former Yugoslavia, while trying to go beyond it as well.

Senad Šahmanović, 1982

Movie director

Object: Gusle made of white stone, gift from District Board of Socialist Alliance of Nikšić, 1956

Recorded in Podgorica, August 10, 2016

Duration: 4' 22"

The stone gusle that the Montenegrin people made as a gift to President Josip Broz represent an important element in Montenegrin history that we associate ourselves with. It was used to transmit the glorious history from generation to generation both through folk songs and its sound. Throughout a turbulent history the Montenegrin people strived to be independent, although many empires came to the Balkans to conquer it. So the gusle and folk poetry served to tell the glorious history. After the World War II, Montenegro gained full recognition, as a member of a large country such as Yugoslavia. In the early 20th century, it lost its independent status by being annexed to another kingdom, so this represented regaining independence for Montenegro. It reacquired the status of a state in this federation and faced reconstruction within a new order that was being built. These decorative reliefs embody the growth that occurred in Montenegro after the World War II.

I think that this project was nicely imagined. But like in all systems there was no ideal solution there either. Some problems always occur, especially here in the Balkans because of the turbulent history I mentioned. Consider the European Union now. We all strive towards the EU, and we will all find ourselves in this common area. Whatever happened twenty years ago was literally for nothing. Things will be as they were. Formally all will be the same, but substantially so different. After losing so much time, we will join the Union damaged. We've lost a lot of time chasing the wrong things instead of being focused on progress and development. Hopefully we'll continue along this path that might offer a different nation-building design, but it's now easy to advocate this and I'm saying nothing new.

You can't compare the progress back then with the present one. It's not the same time, not the same political situation. It's a different state structure. The communist or socialist system was quite different. Great care was paid to the unity of nations and nationalities. The country was being rebuilt, and people firmly believed in a better future. Today it's completely different. We live in a system that has not yet been defined. It's not socialism and it isn't capitalism. It seems to me that we lost our heading in this system, having grown up in the socialist era, and that we need a little extra time. It's a really interesting question, what could now be the symbols of progress and of what was then. I don't know. I guess it could be something... I have no answer to this question, what reliefs could be chosen except those that have already been used to represent the rocks and the geography of Montenegro, the harsh mountains where life always triumphed fighting with nature, and all sorts of adversities.

Ivo Banac, 1947

Historian

Object: Dolls dressed in ethnic costume from the area of Valpovo Slavonia, gift from the pioneers of Valpovo, May 17, 1968

Recorded in Zagreb, January 27, 2017

Duration: 2' 44"

Interesting dolls. They arrived in the year 1968, a period that Bakarić called federalization of the federation, thus there are some national elements on the folk costumes from Valpovo area. It is a part of the Slavonia breadbasket and a region that saw major social changes in the 20th century. In 1918 a peasant republic was formed in nearby Petrijevci, a sign of peasant radicalism after the latifundia period in this part of the Pannonian plain. It was not greatly affected by the Second World War processes, but after 1945 massive land reforms and changes came. Compulsive sales, followed by collectivization created exceptional tensions. Rural structures diversified and the population was displaced. The old village was replaced by new social structures that were only reminiscent of the traditional ones. That's why these dolls are somehow relics of the past. The creation of new labour structures was already victorious. In fact, traditional society was shattered. Hence, the folklore visible on these dolls is nothing but nostalgia. It was nurtured by the regime via official folklore organizations. Every republic had an official folk dance group: "Kolo" in Serbia, "Lado" in Croatia, "Tanec" in Macedonia. They were all modelled after the Soviet "Moiseyev" dance company that theatricalised authentic village folklore. Here too, we have an artificial memory which is, naturally, linked to the cult of "Comrade No. 1". It is an interesting remnant of a time, now completely irrelevant, because rural disintegration continued. Slavonia is currently in a very poor state, and suffers from acute population displacement.

Rafet Bushati, 1947

Craftsman

Object: Radio

Recorded in Prizren, October 27, 2016

Duration: 2' 54"

I was born in Prizren in 1947, so I'm not young. Once the radio was the main source of information. It provided music and everything else. But, with time, things changed. Some years later, around 1960, television appeared. But the radio... well it reminds me of my youth. Back then it was so enticing to listen to the radio. Not every family had it. With time the radios got better, and record players came out. A few years later television came. When TV took the stage, things changed along with it. TV series appeared, nationally produced. We waited for them on Saturday nights. Famous actors played in them, like Miodrag Petrović Čkalja and Mija Aleksić. It was exciting. We could hardly wait for Saturday to come. There were no other major events in everyday life. We also had parties, we were hanging out with friends and that's it.

I feel nostalgic about Yugoslavia. Life was good. Whilst comrade Tito was alive, there were no problems. We had security, warranted health care, free access to education. We lived well. I miss the old Yuga. Anyhow, it's all water under the bridge. The Balkans has gone through several wars, which should not have happened. War is not a good thing and should not have been allowed. I can't really say what led to those wars, but I think they shouldn't have happened. Had Yugoslavia survived, perhaps there would have been no wars. Perhaps we would have a better life now.

Dean Duda, 1963

Professor of Comparative literature, Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb

Object: Prototype of a technical toy “Pioneer electrician”
with 60 experiments in the field of electricity,
gift from the Zagreb Institute for Educational Tools

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 3’ 14”

The exhibit “Pioneer Electrician” implies several levels of considerations on Yugoslavia. The first level is about the status of education; the second level concerns the STEM domain covering science, technology, engineering, mathematics. The third level is about the effects of such endeavours over the past fifty years. You had an inclusive democratic educational system based on the choice that students should not feel class differences in the modernization project. In a country living intensely its modernization, the construction, electrical or any similar profession was important in this modernizing tidal wave and had to provide a certain set of bottom-up skills, i.e. starting from the youngest generation. That’s the first step in luring youths into certain professions and giving them certain skills needed to enable modernization and allow it to survive. Also interesting is the fact that its democratic distribution, especially through public schools, made class differences as little visible as possible. Changes began in the late 1970’s when the public infrastructure, both in education and in culture, could no longer follow the private sector standards. This marked the third wave of modernization, primarily with the IT. It was an indicator of the collapsing system. And this was one of the most important issues involved in the disintegration of Yugoslavia, these structural components that hindered the expansion of democratic processes. So when you live in the public sphere, and when the public sphere is above the standard of what you can have at home, you can socialize and engage in processes that today are reserved to the private sector. When what you have in kindergartens or schools is more intense, better, more numerous and accessible than what you have in the private sphere, you have a coherent system of education within the modernization process. But when the private sphere becomes better in standards, technology, and equipment than the public one, a serious crisis surfaces. One that Yugoslavia obviously did not know how to manage. The question is what is today’s relation between education and the attitude towards engineering and technology. IT is the fundamental factor promoted today as the curriculum that will prepare us for the 21st century, or at least for the sequel of 21st century. But the infrastructure position within the state organization that Yugoslavia had is now left to individual initiatives or the private capital sphere. Namely, it’s very little present in the public school system. The public school system that used to level class differences is re-tuned to promote class differences today. This implies a return to the long legacy of the 19th century, which is actually an exceptional consequence of the breakup of all modernization processes and of the crisis Yugoslavia faced in the 1980’s.

Rron Gjinovci, 1989

Political analyst, activist

Object: Table lamp with scale model of melting furnace and a figure of smelter, gift from the Railway men of Yugoslavia, on the occasion of completion of Five years plan

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 2' 23"

I was born in 1989, at the time when Yugoslavia began to disintegrate. But I grew up with the memories my parents and my grandmother had of it. Memories of the golden age of Yugoslavia, about it being a welfare state, a prosperous country that all the people living in it were proud of. Especially when they were traveling abroad, which is something they can't do today. When I think about this object representing a foundry worker along with the sense of might of a strong industrial state, I also think about the exploitation of Kosovo that generations talk about, especially regarding Trepča, mirrored in the saying: "Trepča makes, Belgrade takes!" That was the perception that evolved after I was born in former Yugoslavia, a perception about Kosovo and its citizens.

Today, when I see the foundry I think about all the things missing in my country, which were inherited from a country like Yugoslavia. All the industry that existed in Kosovo and was created during the existence of Yugoslavia is completely changed. After the privatization process it has become property of private parties and now has completely different purposes unrelated to production and to the development of my country. Facilities serve as depots, supermarkets and so on. And that's what evokes a sense of emptiness compared to what my country should have in terms of the economy and development in general.

Dejan Jović, 1968

Political scientist

Object: Lamp shaped as hammer and sickle, gift from the miners of Trepča mine, 1948

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 4' 39"

In terms of symbolism this item is quite interesting. The lamp representing light can be easily related to the idea of communism, prosperity and progress. As we know, communism and Marxist ideas of progress find their source primarily in the Enlightenment, which is linked to the idea of illumination, of illuminating a path to the future. This in turn relates to the other association to this object, namely the idea of avant-garde. Miners were the vanguard, the hard core of the working class. And the whole socialist project was based on the idea of the rule of the working class. The miners best represent the working class. It's the hardest profession, one that enjoyed special status within Yugoslav socialism as well. Just think of the symbolism of Alija Sirotanović, whose image was on a paper bill, think of work heroism associated with hard miners' work. This heroism of labour even generated some dilemmas within the Party and the state elite: should there be an additional avant-garde alongside the Party acting as a vanguard of the working class itself. Thus, work heroes were an impasse for Party ideology, and although it insisted that they be rewarded as the avant-garde and the most important part of the working class, the question remained whether the Party needed another elite within the framework of the working class. The third level of symbolism is related to the Trepča mines. They are among the biggest and oldest mines in Europe. Mining started way back in 13th century, and was revived within a socialist combine in Yugoslavia. It was linked to Kosovo, to the issue of development, to the creation of the working class and building socialism in the least developed region of Yugoslavia. A region that was quite specific due to the Albanian majority. After the WWII it was the only part of Yugoslavia where Slavs or Yugoslavs in the strict sense, were not the majority. Later on, in the turbulent and tragic breakup years, for example in 1989, events in Trepča Mine had a significant impact. The eight-day miners' strike was one of the key issues not only for the survival of socialism and of the socialist vision in Yugoslavia, but also for the issue of equality of the Yugoslav peoples and the so-called nationalities, especially the ethnic Albanians. Thus the object is also linked to the breakup of Yugoslavia as the miners demanded the preservation of the structures introduced with the 1974 Constitution, as well as of the Titoist, partly Marxist concept of Yugoslavia. Today all that seems quite unreal, but a more detailed look at the events in early 1989 reveals the symbolism. Finally it is the symbol of the hammer and sickle. Modern, rather revisionist interpretations of 20th century associate it with the so-called concept of totalitarianism even more directly than the five-pointed star that has multiple meanings. As a symbol it hasn't disappeared and it often surfaces in on-going debates. Somewhat forgotten, but directly related to the communist, workers' and Marxist movement, the sickle and hammer idea still provokes discussions, and as the review of the past and its symbols continues, it will subsist before our eyes in the present times.

Nensi Jasharaj, 1969

Lawyer

Object: Scale model of the airplane, hammer, sickle and red star, gift from the 5th Independent aircraft workshop of the Yugoslav Air Force, May 1, 1947

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 3' 56"

I'm expected to comment upon an object that includes the sickle and hammer. I'm glad about it because I've experienced this symbol both when it was dominant and when it became oppositionary. I was born and grew up in a country where this symbol represented a "common story". I could see my mother's Communist Party member card, the "School Pioneer" magazine was ubiquitous. Back then I had an abstract attitude towards this symbol. It was simply there. I grew up in a family and in an environment where this symbol was always present. In our home library we had a set of Engels' books, and the compilation of Marx that belonged to my mother. So, it was a well-known symbol to me, a symbol that was repeated everywhere. This attitude towards this symbol is linked only to the period whilst Tito was still alive. I remember nothing after that. Generally, it was an empty period followed by a very grim one. It's interesting that I've now returned to this same symbol. Today, the hammer and sickle represent the left for me, an idea that's revealed. They also make me think of underground, and alternative, something quite oppositionary. I think it might even make a sexy tattoo. So, this is a transition from my previous attitude to this symbol and the one I have today. What I actually like about this symbol is the fact that it's provocative and generates debate. I know a lot of people from Western Europe here whom I often provoke, without arguing, with this symbol. About what it used to be and what it is now. When I go abroad and people ask me where I'm from my having lived in a socialist country like Yugoslavia automatically makes me very exotic. I am immediately asked about what it was like. Those questions always relate to this symbol that represents a particular idea.

Yill Rugova, 1984

Graphic designer, activist

Object: Poster with a slogan "Youth! Do not allow corn to rot in Srem while there is a hunger in other areas!", 1945

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 4' 32"

I had not seen this poster, but based on the way the sentence is formulated, it seems that it contains optimism and hope. People are invited to help other people, in other regions and parts of the country. They are encouraged to take action and be agents of change. Such posters make little sense today. They were typical, perhaps, of late modernism when hope for a better future was much greater than today.

If we were to try to translate such a poster into Albanian and to coordinate it with current circumstances, the slogan would read: "Youth, do not let what you've harvested go to waste in France, whilst there's famine in other parts of Europe!" Something like that. This type of formulation is not seen on posters today. And that's normal. Something similar might exist on social networks, but the formulation still wouldn't be the same. The formulation differs. Today, the approach to the problem is different, and the difference, though it might seem small, is huge. The period of late modernism, when this poster was made, was a period of great optimism. One might say that today we are in a pessimistic modernist period. We long for a change again, we are committed to change, but at the same time aware that we can't bring that change. We feel trapped within the current circumstances even though the desire for change is great. There are similarities with modernism. Back then people were committed to a better future. This still exists, but we are trapped in the present. I think this is the greatest challenge we have, and it's not only the case of ex-Yugoslavia countries. It doesn't only affect the Balkans or Europe. This is a global problem, which came after modernism.

A word that has made a profound impression on me lately is "hyperstition".

It's a concept similar to Richard Dawkins' "meme", but the difference is that these are concepts or considerations aiming to be implemented after their first public appearance. They become public aiming to materialize and become reality.

They resemble the "meme" because they use "meme" mechanisms to self-materialize. It is some kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy. It seems that the posters from former Yugoslavia, but also posters from other socialist countries followed such a concept in all that was produced. They might seem like propaganda material, but the way they were formulated illustrates the way of thinking at that time and I believe that today on our posters, we might not need to use the same stylized language, but we do have a need for such concepts. We need to start thinking beyond the set limits and to engage in an idea, a vision of the future that might seem unrealistic, unusual and impossible. So we actually have a great need for ideas that might seem unreal.

Srdjan Puhalo, 1972

Psychologist, political analyst

Object: Scale model of radar, Rudi Čajevac, Banja Luka

Recorded in Banja Luka, December 7, 2016

Duration: 3' 30"

The term "radar" reminds me of the TV show "Permission to speak" which went on Sundays around 10 am. It was about the Yugoslav National Army (YNA) and all the events related to the Army. All presented in a fine form, and followed by a feature film, usually about the partisans. We children loved to watch this. It was also a unique occasion for us to see radar. The next thing this radar reminds me of is that I felt it was a military secret. You could see the soldiers, the trucks, the cannons, sometimes you could see a plane fly over, but the radar was something no one had seen although we knew it existed. For me and other children this was a huge mystery. Also, seeing that radar, an icon of high technology, you actually thought that Yugoslavia and its YNA was a match for all sorts of world powers. A match for the Warsaw Pact and NATO. You felt you were a match for these huge military alliances. Also interesting was the awareness that we were neither East nor West but capable of standing up to both.

If we draw a parallel with the present, it's all completely different. Today Bosnia and Herzegovina doesn't control its skies. Someone else is doing this. On the other hand, we don't make those radars any more. It's an indicator of where Bosnia and Herzegovina stands today. It is a proof that Yugoslavia I grew up in was a technological Eldorado compared to Bosnia and Herzegovina today. It simply imports everything and can produce nothing. Seeing this scale model of radar, it's also interesting that our foreign friends usually bring us scale models of various weapons but seldom actually really help us. That's the position of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina. We can play with toys, whereas in Yugoslavia we were at least seen as a respected player that could compete with other countries in the world.

Ivan Ivanji, 1929

Writer and translator

Object: Order of Karl Marx, German Democratic Republic, Berlin, 1974; Grand Cross Special Class of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn, 1974

Recorded in Belgrade, December 29, 2016

Duration: 4' 56"

In the fall of 1944, Stalin gave Tito a saber. It's decorated with countless diamonds, and it's one of the most valuable artifacts in the Museum of Yugoslavia. We should not forget that when Tito worked at the Comintern in the 1930's he could not have dreamt of meeting with Stalin. On December 21st 1941, on Stalin's birthday, the 1st Proletarian Brigade was established in Yugoslavia. But later on, when the 1st and 2nd AVNOJ conference were held, Stalin sent Tito a telegram saying that he's stabbing USSR in the back with leftist deviations like proletarian brigades and socialist revolution. So the conflict existed way back then. However, when Tito managed to win over almost all of Yugoslavia, when he flew to Moscow from the Isle of Vis to meet with Stalin, he was once again the favorite one, and Stalin praised him. There's ample evidence of it. He sent him to socialist countries like Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria to reaffirm people's democracy. Then, when Tito stopped listening to him in 1948, the final split occurred. Stalin's saber kept at the Museum is a reminder for us all.

Later developments were equally interesting. Although East European countries were defaming Tito, especially the German Democratic Republic that called him an "unleashed fascist dog", Tito stuck to his principles and recognized the GDR fully aware that the western, Federal Republic of Germany would sever diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. He took this risk as a matter of principle just as he refused the Marshall Plan in 1945. Such integrity of principles bore certain fruits. West Germany had to give in and, in 1974 Tito visited both West Germany and East Germany. He was awarded decorations and medals there, and it was again the triumph of his respect for principles.

Stalin's saber went missing after the bombing. With the arrival of the new government, after the ouster of Milošević, the saber was suddenly gone. I then wrote the book "Stalin's saber" with the assumption that it had been stolen. The Museum of Yugoslavia had the saber in its register but they never actually saw it. The book was published with the presumption that it was stolen when I got a call from the Museum of Yugoslavia: "We've got it!" - "What do you have...?" - "Stalin's saber!". It is there now though rarely exhibited, on special occasions. I must say that for me, it's the most interesting artifact.

If you look around today and see what's going on, you realize that there are no figures like Tito and Nehru or Willy Brandt and Olaf Palme. Such visionaries and cultured men are nowhere to be seen. On the other hand, my not seeing them means nothing. Old men lament over what they have experienced in life and think that times were better. But the world is certainly changing, the relations are different. There's a domination of the US, Russia, and now even China. This is a new triangle of power. On the other hand, what we used to call Western multi-party democracy seems to have come to an end. Because people voting for the far-right, and rarely for leftist parties, are in fact against this system. We are faced with something that's completely new. But since I wrote about Roman emperors Diocletian, Constantine and Julian, I realize that history always repeats itself.

Vladimir Milčin, 1947

Theater director

Object: "Lenin", Nebojša Mitrić (reconstruction of the original by I. Meštrović), given during the visit to Belgrade University on May 30, 1972

Recorded in Skopje, September 30, 2016

Duration: 5' 05"

Lenin was ideologically important in Yugoslavia for a while. He was used to set a boundary against Stalin and Stalinism. Leninism was a kind of softer, more humane variant of future communism. However, as years went by we began putting question marks around Lenin. Later, he had lost importance even more when the so-called real-socialism countries, namely the Warsaw Pact or the Soviet bloc countries, began to emphasize Lenin and started to demolish Stalin's monuments that were countless. I saw the remains of a Stalin monument. A huge Stalin statue was cut down to its knees. Statues of workers and peasants around the base were left. When they began to distance themselves from Stalin, Lenin became even less important to us. Self-management was introduced and our socialism was named "self-managing socialism". This difference further intensified when it became clear that Lenin was diffident, almost hostile, towards the intelligentsia, which was revealed by political scientists and philosophers in their books published mostly in Belgrade and Zagreb. Unfortunately, these books today, as general is the case with everything printed in Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Ljubljana, are terribly hard to read for the younger generation here. Only a small percentage of young Macedonian citizens, regardless of them being Turks, Macedonians, Albanians etc., speaks or reads Serbian or Croatian or Serbo-Croatian. Thus, the ties that could lead to a restoration of unity at least in terms of culture and society are now marginalized. They most often exist only on the social periphery. By "social periphery" I mean outside the mainstream media, beyond or outside institutions that are paid by the state. It's all delegated to the civil or NGO sector. Regardless of restrictions, this is extremely important.

Clearly, within Yugoslavia Macedonians experienced a complete affirmation of their national identity. They felt protected. With their Yugoslav passport they traveled everywhere, including Greece, though the procedure was more complicated. But when Yugoslavia broke up Macedonians realized that being recognized in Yugoslavia did not mean being recognized in the entire world, including Europe. Suddenly they faced the problem of the name of their country. Part of the population felt that they were safe, secure. We were not contested, or at least we didn't sense it. All of that is an advantage that cannot be forgotten. There is an inevitable task for the generation that still remembers, including myself, to preserve and perpetuate the recollection of the positive sides of Yugoslavia.

Marko Vrhunec, 1922–2019

Attorney, economist, politician, diplomat, chief of staff
for Josip Broz Tito

Object: Table set with photographs of prominent political figures,
gift from Military sanatorium Lovran for Tito's 60th birthday in 1952

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 1, 2017

Duration: 6' 04"

If asked what Yugoslavia historically represents today, I'd say that Yugoslavia was primarily created, obviously after the liberation in the WWII, as a result of five major achievements. And they're all recorded in history. The first achievement was the National Liberation War, and the victory of the Yugoslav peoples against Nazi-fascism. The second was socialism, intended as an intimate rule of the people which comprised all the strata of our nations. The third was the Yugoslav federalism. Yugoslavia consisted of 6 republics and it was inspired by Tito's motto of brotherhood and unity. Now, brotherhood meant the respect for differences among the Yugoslav peoples, in language, religion, history, and so on, and unity meant a common country. The next achievement was self-management. It was a socialist self-management and it made us a truly original country. No other country had such an original form of socialism, primarily because Bolshevik socialism ruled back then. And the fifth achievement was the Non-alignment movement. With it we had achieved so much. Within this movement, though Tito never allowed to be listed as its leader, he was de facto the leading figure because he was respected by all these nations. And today, the movement has 120 member-countries, though the Non-Aligned no longer have the role they used to. There, that's Tito's achievement and that was Tito's Yugoslavia. It was because of all this that for twenty years Yugoslavia was among the fastest developing countries, and for a whole decade it was among the 10 most respected countries in the world.

But suddenly new times came. Nationalism surfaced in all the republics. In Slovenia nationalism began to spread as we know. In Serbia there was Milošević's nationalism for Greater Serbia, in Croatia there was Tudjman's nationalism for Greater Croatia. So Yugoslavia disintegrated for internal and external reasons. The internal ones I've just listed. Among the external, capitalism was the primary cause. It just could not tolerate Yugoslavia, as it didn't accept the Yugoslav socialist self-managing system. Obviously, there is no turning back now. I've written an article about these things for the Belgrade "Istina" magazine. In it I've written that the Yugoslav pitcher is shattered. It cannot be put back together. Even though we wish all the best to our peoples, it makes no sense to invoke the return of something that's been liquidated. The pitcher is broken and we can't glue it together. What we can do is to turn a new page in history and work on all these achievements I've mentioned, as well as on the requirements of the new times. This can absolutely be done due to our historical heritage and geographic position. And just as the river Sava flows East, our Yugoslav nations are mutually linked and that should be preserved in these new conditions.

Budimir Lončar, 1924

Diplomat

Object: Wreath of welcome, Nehru, India, 1954

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 8' 08"

President Tito's visit to Delhi in 1954 was surely one of his first and most important steps after the conflict with Stalin and the split with the USSR. It was preceded by the encounter with Churchill in London. Then came the meeting with Nehru. With Nehru he discovered a whole new world, and planted the seeds of the future policy of non-alignment, which had become the most important political movement in the history of mankind. In India he discovered a new vision of the world. Through India he saw the potential of a future policy. So, this visit was the beginning of Tito's new foreign policy and the shaping of an international position after the visit to London a year earlier, in 1953. What followed two years later in 1956 was the Brioni meeting between Tito, Nasser and Nehru. That was the second step in the quest for a new common policy. The third was surely a meeting in New York in 1960, when five leaders met: Nkrumah, Tito, Nehru, Nasser and Sukarno. There their common views of the world were shaped in the context of the Cold War, which was then at its peak. There the idea of a joint effort was defined: the creation of a movement. At the preparatory meeting in Cairo in the summer of 1961 it was decided to hold the Non-Aligned Conference that same year in Belgrade. It's actually the event which laid the foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement, 55 years ago. The Movement has grown since, and now includes 180 members and 16 permanent observers.

In that important country which was in the first stage of decolonization, in the first phase of sovereignty, Tito appreciated all its values and potentials and left a deep mark himself. Today Delhi still has a Josip Broz Tito street, the largest in the entire multi-million city of Delhi. Within the Non-Aligned movement Tito had many collocutors. He had numerous meetings, because the movement was based on democratic principles, namely, on principles of equality. This was the precondition for this movement to fight for the democratization of international relations, for greater equality of all countries, naturally, within the framework of the United Nations. It must be said that India with its sheer size, its authenticity, with its philosophy and its rich culture, gave a special contribution to this idea being the largest country with a population far greater than all the other countries, especially in the first years of the Movement when it had 25 members and 8 permanent observers. Secondly, India gave the Movement an additional value since it is the most democratic country of that size. It's still called the largest democracy of the world. Of course, a movement fighting for democracy in the world and in international relations must have its own potential.

The non-alignment policy granted Yugoslavia great footing in fighting for independence and resisting to Stalin. It gave it special weight in cooperation with West and even in new relations, when Khrushchev came, and relations were normalized with the Soviet bloc. At the same time, the Yugoslav republics, the whole of Yugoslavia and its economy, relied on this policy. Thus Yugoslavia and all its resources advanced towards the world through the non-alignment policy. Economic, cultural and political cooperation was established. With the non-alignment policy all

Budimir Lončar continued

the Yugoslav regions grew closer to the world and the world got closer to them. It's an enduring legacy today. If businessmen or state officials want to go on a visit they, of course, need to stress where they are coming from: from sovereign Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Slovenia... quoting not only their geographic but historic background as well, because with those countries Yugoslavia had broad and developed cooperation. This global multilateralism based on non-alignment politics and philosophy had a positive effect and provided added support in the form of easy approach in our economic, bilateral and cultural cooperation with these countries and the world at large. Now we're still there as permanent observers, Croatia and all other republics, with the exception of Slovenia, which has the status of guest. Hence this tie is not in contrast with EU and NATO membership and the new orientation of Croatia and Slovenia. They'll be soon joined by others, as Serbia is in the accession process as well as others. Thus, the non-aligned policy initiated by Tito in Delhi, as evidence illustrates, preserves its relevance and constitutes a major legacy.

Bogdan Osolnik, 1920–2019

Diplomat

Object: Plaque of the First Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Belgrade in 1961, author: Vladeta Petrić

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 4' 28"

One of the major international events in our country was the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in Belgrade in 1961. That was really something special in a world that was so strictly divided. Creating a space between the blocks, the representatives of non-block countries met. They represented the interests of those who wanted to be independent and who wanted to be equal with other nations. The Non-Aligned made an effort to prevent the conflict between two giants, America and the Soviet Union, determined to preserve peace and to allow the world to turn to progress instead of devastation and destructive politics. It's really hard to imagine today what role Non-Alignment played in the world. But having been a diplomat at the time, I can say that it was with incredible pride that I took part in all international meetings. Though we were watched with diffidence from the West, and felt the constant pressure of the campaign from the East, we could proudly go towards them and meet with both sides representing in those contacts our true national interests. Certainly, the role of President Tito was paramount. He was the promoter of the fundamental ideas that this meeting, this conference was summoned for. And that was the essence of the reports about the event and the conference that were broadcast throughout the world. Today, people hardly remember non-alignment. But when you think of all that was projected back then... The evaluations, the impressions...The scientific reviews of the achievements of the event...Only then can you see how important non-alignment was and what role we had at the time among the Non-Aligned. How were we received, as Non-Aligned. How respected we were, precisely because we had stood up to such formidable block powers. It's impossible to imagine today that diplomats from our country could enjoy such trust and play such a role.

Tvrtko Jakovina, 1972

Historian

Object: Portrait of Richard Nixon, US president, with wife and children, with dedication thanking for the hospitality in Yugoslavia

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 4' 39"

US President Nixon came to Belgrade in late September. Many in Yugoslavia thought that the American proposal for the visit to Belgrade, Zagreb and Kumrovec, was due to the successful conference that was a Yugoslav feat, the 3rd Non Aligned Conference in Lusaka, Zambia. This is the rationale quoted by Yugoslav documents. Yugoslav analysts saw it that way and acted accordingly. However, if you consider US sources it was Henri Kissinger that suggested to President Nixon: "Make a mention of the Non-Aligned. They are unimportant, but so dear to his heart." It was the beginning of the renewal of the Movement, which saw its best days and had major influence in the 60's. But the most important aspect so appreciated by the US and especially by president Carter, who came at the end of the 70's, was Yugoslav independent position in the relation to the Soviet Union. The fact that in the middle of South East Europe you had what was referred to in the 50's as the "communist US ally". You had a country in the Eastern Mediterranean you could count on not to make problems for the West. That was the subject of debates in the late 60's and early 70's conducted, before and after Nixon's visit, by the State Department and Pentagon officials that visited the Yugoslav Army vacation camp in Kupari due to concerns about what might happen in the Eastern Mediterranean. If you consider today's situation, it was the time when the father of present President Assad came to power in Syria and when shortly after the Soviets established their base, still very active in the second decade of 21st century to the point that it helped Assad's side and his staying in power. That's why Yugoslavia was important. Not due to the Non-Aligned.

The Cold War was a period in world history that allowed small countries, and not only Yugoslavia, to play an important role in the international arena provided they were sufficiently ambitious. It was a time that shaped the mental profile of many figures in ex-Yugoslavia who continued to think that they and their country play a rather important and influential role. This was not completely arbitrary. President Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski noted that in the international relations in the post-war period three countries achieved an important position: the United States, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. It was a great compliment, and maybe exaggerated, but if you start from that premise and look at what we have today instead of a south Slavic federation, you notice an array of small countries that have a very vague or not completely clear picture of what international relations are, of what they want and what they can have within those relations. The Cold War no longer exists. Small countries can no longer affect the events or play with world politics in a way that was previously possible. What should have survived, however, was the ability to understand the world, to analyze the situation in the world, and to realize that the changes in Vietnam somehow affect events in Skopje, Ljubljana, Zagreb or Belgrade.

Hajrudin Somun, 1937

Journalist and diplomat

Object: Relief panel with images of six heads of states, participants of the First Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, gift from the Old People's Home from Travnik, October, 1961

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 9, 2016

Duration: 3' 13"

A basic rule of foreign policy of any country is that it reflects the domestic policy of that country. This should also apply to the states that emerged from former Yugoslavia. In the Yugoslavia that we grew up, enjoyed its benefits and become what we are today, this rule was somehow reversed. Internal policy was a reflection of the foreign policy. How did this happen? Precisely because of Tito's non-aligned policy which in its own way provided safety and stability as well as a nice life in Yugoslavia. Hence, domestic policy was a reflection of foreign policy.

What happened after the breakup of Yugoslavia is again something unusual and specific. Namely, some of these countries... I won't talk about those countries around Bosnia and Herzegovina, but Bosnia and Herzegovina has neither domestic nor foreign policy. There's no reflection of one on the other. There's no mutual motivation. No grounds for security and democracy in the country. There are countless examples. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are three presidents. It's a unique case in history, three presidents conducting their three foreign policies. One of them goes to the UN to hold a speech at the General Assembly and doesn't tell the other two what he will say there. One of them goes on an official visit to another country without discussing this at the Presidency session, or even informing the other Presidency members of it. So, there's a problem with the foreign policy of this country. It's less acute in other countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina this is very much present because the Dayton Agreement made this country dysfunctional and abnormal. I can quote hundreds of examples from my very long career as a journalist and diplomat. I attended some of the Non-Aligned summits. I was in Algeria. I've witnessed Tito's policy which gave former Yugoslavia what's most important, security and a good life based on deals and trade we had with the whole world.

Nina Rajić Kranjac, 1991

Theater director

Object: Album of children's watercolors inspired by Tito's visit to India, gift from the Pioneers of the primary school "Svetozar Marković" from Belgrade

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 1, 2017

Duration: 1' 44"

The exhibit I chose are some children's watercolor paintings, made on the occasion of Tito's trip to India. I've heard that it was in 1954, or sometime in the '50s. His trip was covered by radio reports, his trip to India onboard a ship. Children listened to them and made paintings for President Tito. Today those children are 64 years older. That's what spurred my curiosity about this object. They lived in a time I didn't get to know, a time that was depicted idealistically to me. I'd like to meet them and perhaps ask them two questions. The first is whether they would paint aquarelles for Tito again. I'd really like to see what they'd be like. The other question is whether Non-Alignment still exists.

I have no problem with paintings being made for the president but I do have a problem with misrepresentation, with the abuse of children's naivety and beauty for a falsified representation of a given reality or a president-like authority.

Zlatko Dizdarević, 1949
Journalist and diplomat

Object: Saber, gift from the President Hafez al-Assad, 1979

Recorded in Sarajevo, December 9, 2016
Duration: 4' 29"

It's quite painful for people of my generation to talk about what once used to be because sentiments and nostalgia are natural human qualities. Being confronted with today's reality from the perspective of the past is quite brutal because of generational reasons and memories. However, when we talk about how it used to be and how things are today there are some things you simply can't forget. They are facts regardless of various interpretations today. But these interpretations are based on a variety of interests. Being a journalist I had the opportunity to deal with the actual foreign policy of Yugoslavia. I had the opportunity to travel, even accompanying Tito as a young journalist on some of his great journeys. I was also a correspondent abroad at a time of Yugoslavia and I witnessed what it represented in the world. What first comes to mind when I think of those years is how respected we were. Not only at the conferences and in political contacts but in the streets of the cities we visited throughout the world. We were treated with utmost respect. I think it's normal that a man cares about his dignity. What I recall now is that we really had dignity, and felt it. We felt that we were associated with integrity by the people, especially in Arab countries where I spent most of the time. To get respect you only needed to say where you were from. That's how we saw it. It was completely different from how things are today.

I like to point out, seemingly as a joke, though it is not, that you would only show your passport at the airports and they'd let you go through, with all the others left waiting. Today all others are let through, and we have to wait. Anyone that says that this does not matter is a liar. On the world political scene we are now utterly unimportant. No matter how popular we think we are, we are nothing. It's not because it was a different system than today's. It's because there was a system back then. Today, we don't have a state. Not having a state, we have no domestic policy and no foreign policy. We might try to justify it all with the Dayton Accords but what's even worse and harder to bear is that we are growing accustomed to how things are. We are accepting that we are irrelevant. Back then we did not! We didn't because we had all the arguments against it. I guess that's essential from the human perspective. It's what I carry inside as a feeling and a realization. Regardless of what someone might think of it.

Miklavž Komelj, 1973

Art historian, poet

Object: Photographs of the First Proletarian Division from the National Liberation Fight, Soldiers of the First Proletarian Division, 1955

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 5' 12"

Seeing photos of the men of the 1st Proletarian Brigade, and considering what I was most involved in up to now, my first thought concerns legendary Brigade commander Koča Popović. He later wrote that of all things in life the 1st Proletarian was most important for him. I think that Koča Popović is the key figure for understanding the Yugoslav revolution. He was the man who, at the same time, was one of the key military figures in the WWII Partisan revolution, and a bit earlier, with Marko Ristić, the key theorist of the Yugoslav surrealist movement. Within the international surrealist movement Yugoslav surrealism is important because of that. I studied both of these phenomena and wrote books about each of them, about partisan art and about Yugoslav surrealists. In an international context, surrealism always stressed the idea of revolution. It firstly talked about the surrealist revolution, and then about surrealism in the service of the revolution linked to the communist movement. But only certain members of the Yugoslav surrealist movement united the two revolutions in practice, surrealist and socialist.

Koča Popović was a very special figure in all that. For him this union of revolutions implied an interruption between the two periods, which was not complete. He kept his identification with surrealism to the end. It's true that in the 1930s he obeyed the Party discipline and moved somewhat away from the movement, subordinating himself to the communist policy goals, but never as to deny his Surrealist period. On the contrary! Just before 1971, when he resigned from all functions, he was asked for an interview. Unwilling to take questions, he said: "You see, I am a surrealist. You understand?". This identification was key to him. In this sense it seems to me that the connection between the Partisan and Surrealist Revolution is very important not only for reflections on the Partisan revolution in Yugoslavia as an historical event, but from today's perspective as well.

The surrealists were, in fact, aware that a serious and profound social revolution cannot be carried out without radical changes of mental coordinates in which human practice is established. Surrealism talked about a revolution of the spirit, about some entirely new coordinates that need to be set. In this respect the link between these two revolutions is still inspiring today. Marko Ristić said shortly before his death that what he regrets most in life are the moments when he was not surrealist enough. In other words, when he was not faithful enough not only to the desire for social change, but to charting entirely new coordinates of the world, coordinates of human practice, life, death. This pairing of social action and liberation of the spirit is a major component of our present understanding of the 20th century revolutionary movement in Yugoslavia.

Nataša Nelević, 1961

Theater critic and theorist

Object: "Young woman on rifle range", Drago Djurović, 1959,
gift to Tito from the League of Communists Titograd, May 22, 1964

Recorded in Podgorica, August 11, 2016

Duration: 2' 10"

In Montenegro, just a few decades before the World War II, women could not be sentenced to face the firing squad simply because it was deemed an undignified death for women. Then came the communist ideology, and all of a sudden women went to war shooting range and battlefield, side by side with men, muzzles of enemy guns. Though we must admire the sacrifice made by these young women, we can't help feeling that the emancipation of women in the 20th century in this area was tragic and that the fruits of emancipation were bitter. Actually the society that women wanted to make their way into, and that they're still trying to break into, is bitter and harsh.

Today's women in ex-Yugoslavia have a huge debt to the women from the movement during the WWII and from the Women's Anti-Fascist Front (WAF) after the war for conquering women's rights. No revisionism, be it nationalist or neo-liberal, should taint the memory of women and their debt to women that created the space for emancipation back then. It is difficult to compare the standing of women in ex-Yugoslavia today with the position of women in SFR Yugoslavia, i.e. in socialist Yugoslavia after the war and during the second half of the 20th century. I think we can say that some of the issues raised by women through their movement, in the period after the war to the dissolution of WAF in 1953, can't be raised by today's women in ex-Yugoslavia since they don't know how to ask them, or maybe still don't dare to do so.

Pava Molnar, 1921-2019

Former concentration camp inmate and partisan

Object: "Room in concentration camp" (drawing), Miloš Bajić, 1943

Recorded in Zagreb, January 29, 2017

Duration: 5' 42"

With the arrival of the Nazis I was already an active member of partisans. I was a university student, and I covered all the tasks that were asked. I went to Zagreb on assignment. At the time, the border was in Zemun. Zemun was the outpost. It was difficult to travel between Zagreb and Belgrade but I was given the job to do so. This went on until a comrade was captured. All of us that worked together were arrested. After about four months in prison, we were taken to the concentration camp. I ended up in Gradiška. As I entered the Gradiška camp there was an Ustasha waiting. Croats went to one side, to the other went the Serbs. The Jews were already scarce by that time, many were already dead. There were no Gypsies at all anymore. So they sorted us immediately... Then in '42, when the offensive on mountain Kozara raged, Serbs were brought in en masse, countless children, old men, women, cattle... When the camp was full, they were liquidated. By that time, there were very little Jews left. They spared just the Jews they needed to do some work, like doctors and such. Croats had to work too. To put it in a single sentence: Ustasha rule meant hunger, disease and a bullet. That sentence says it all about life in the camp.

On the other hand I must say that we, the prisoners, were so well organized in the camp and that kept us alive. This common love, the struggle to survive, the idea that we must see the end of the war, that's what gave us strength. Look, the whole camp was infected with typhoid fever. It just swept in. With the fever half of them were delirious. No medicines or anything, obviously. But as I was sort of a nurse, I'd walk up to the sick person and do nothing but stroke his or her hair. There was nothing else I could do... But to the sick it meant a lot. When a package comes, I'd just look at it. Mother sent them, but it wasn't mine. The package belonged to all of us. And that's what kept us. I spent two years in that camp before being exchanged for some German soldiers. In a small town some 60 km from Zagreb such exchanges of prisoners took place. That's where our comrades greeted us. They'd say "Death to fascism", and the Krauts "Heil Hitler". It was the Krauts that made the exchange, not the Ustasha! The Krauts got onto the truck, and we got off. I was free! Whoever saw the war and survived it, never changed. It's something you just can't forget.

Look, whenever I go to Belgrade, I must meet with my fellow camp inmates. When I go to Mostar for example, I meet with a fellow detainee. I don't go there for the fun of it... We all kept track of each living fellow inmate. Up to this last war that's how it was. Those that passed away always got a funeral wreath from us. They all got a eulogy. You can't imagine our camaraderie and the closeness. And as we grew older and older...I kept visiting them all until they passed away. Now there's only me left, no one to see me off.

It's now a shame to say that you are an anti-fascist. As if it is dishonorable. All that you had fought for is now down to a few people. Just those few you can be in touch

Pava Molnar continued

and talk to. No one else... Look at the politics. Or just read the papers or listen to the news. You can only get angry and nothing else. We're completely helpless, unable to do a thing. No one can do a thing, not just me, an old woman. I sure can't do much, but even the young people are helpless, because the system is rigged. It favors just those who are crafty, people who are actually rotten and dishonest. A person without integrity cannot do much, struggle for progress or something, just cannot.

Vesna Kesić, 1948

Journalist

Object: Photo album depicting work and life of women of Zagorje, gift from the Antifascist Movement of Women from Zagorje to Tito, 1946

Recorded in Zagreb, January 30, 2017

Duration: 4' 27"

I remember that my mother, who was in the Resistance in Istria throughout the war and had ended up in an Italian prison camp in 1943, fled from it when the Germans came from the North in 1943. She was in a camp south of Rome, and fled North towards Rijeka. She had told me that she partly walked and partly smuggled herself on trains. It all sounded like the De Sica movies from 1943. She told me about finally reaching Ilirska Bistrica when she decided to contact someone from the Resistance because before that she was just hiding as the German offensive was advancing. She was confronted with great distrust. A woman coming from somewhere, claiming to have escaped from a prison camp! Only some women, from the Slovenian Women's Antifascist Front (WAF), heard her out and had shown some kind of trust. So they got her in touch with some fighting units. However she finally made her way home in Rijeka. That was the first mention of WAF I heard as a child. I remember a slight reservation my mother had in their regard. "Yes, they were OK for accepting me and showing trust...", but, although she was a feminist all her life, she couldn't see a need for women to be specially organized since they only did some rear guard assignments, anyway. She didn't elaborate on it but this might have been an initial suspicious attitude which I later changed when I got involved in the role of the women in the history of the progressive movements. Between the 1970's and the 1990's we all became more involved in the role of women in the National Liberation struggle, and in the post-war reconstruction.

What's important with all the ongoing revisions and transitions is avoiding any new mystification. The first WAF meeting was in the name of brotherhood and unity. The first big speech was delivered by some unit commander of the war-time Yugoslav movement, a man. After the war, the WAF was even accused of being too politicized. It's what feminists are also reproached for. The fact is that by the 80's the WAF turned into a massive, inert organization that was mostly orchestrated by the Party leadership to serve along with other large organizations as a substitute to the civil society. At the end of the 80's women had a tangible influence in the parliaments of the republics. This is a fact. But they had no autonomy, especially not political. That's why it is terribly important to realistically review the enormous contribution given by women. To check how much broader their involvement was than it is documented today, keeping, however, in mind that these women's conferences that evolved from the WAF had lost their political power, being largely controlled by the Party system and the Party hierarchy. It's important to validate all that very accurately.

Žarka Radoja, 1975

Journalist

Object: Order for Bravery, 1945

Recorded in Belgrade, November 15, 2016

Duration: 1' 31"

To describe the Medal for Bravery I will read what this medal represented in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia: "The Medal for Bravery was awarded to members of the armed forces of the SFRY that in fighting the enemy expressed personal courage or showed particular personal bravery on the battlefield." This is one of the decorations also awarded to civilians although it was a military medal. From today's perspective, the medal should be given to people who have to fight for things that other people already attained 70 years ago, those who received this medal seventy years ago. Today the Medal for Bravery should be worn by people who are prepared to defy the criminalization of aid and help migrants, giving them food, clothes and shoes. To people who are willing to speak openly about the poor conditions in which they work, to a Serbian journalist raising questions at press conferences and to people who are not afraid to openly call things by their proper names, especially in the process we are going through in 2016 and leading ever more towards fascism.

Miloš Vuksanović, 1986

Historian

Object: "Fighter on guard", Frano Kršinić

Recorded in Cetinje, August 11, 2016

Duration: 4' 39"

There is a historical truism, and it's not necessarily true, that nobody loved Yugoslavia more than the Montenegrins, and that nobody was less in favor of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia than the Montenegrins. The socialist period is recorded by 600 monuments and plaques, and the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and even the WWI are recorded by just a few. The attitude of the government and people of Montenegro in preserving so many memorials speaks about the position of Montenegro regarding anti-fascism and the Second World War. The foundations of modern Montenegro, even after 2006 and the restoration of independence, lie on anti-fascism and the WWII struggle.

Though most of the citizens still don't pay too much attention to, or don't even know what these monuments represent, what do municipal festivities linked to the WWII mean, the celebration of July 13th as Uprising Day continues in the form of Montenegrin Statehood Day. The fact that many municipalities still celebrate their local Liberation Day depicts the attitude of modern Montenegro towards it. In 1945 modern Montenegro was established. A Montenegro based on the equality of all and on multiculturalism and tolerance. Though its base was laid at the time of Kingdom of Montenegro, present-day Montenegro has its foundation in 1945. This explains the attitude towards the cultural heritage of that period and why all these monuments are preserved in Montenegro whilst they are mostly destroyed in other ex-Yugoslav republics.

Revisionism is not necessarily a bad historical process. History must always be revised, but the grounds for doing it are the main issue. If revisionism is comprehensive, logical and scientifically based, it's not necessarily bad because the WWII generation and the one that emerged during socialist Yugoslavia should be reviewed. But it being reviewed for sheer degradation in favor of other national forces or other factions that have been proven collaborationist leads to nothing else but creating divisions and deepening the discord that arose during the Second World War. A few weeks ago, a great caricature appeared in a Croatian newspaper. A Syrian refugee asks a Croatian emigrant: "What war are you fleeing from?" The response is: "From World War III!" That's a good example of what revisionism achieved. No effort was made to tackle the controversial history of the WWII using the scientific method. Instead the ideological revision was applied. Such ideological revision created a lack of understanding, and it then produced hatred which led to the destruction of cultural monuments from that period.

The notion of Yugoslavia will soon become intangible cultural heritage that unfortunately still generates many divisions. For some, Yugoslavia was a dark period when all their rights were suppressed, their wishes were ignored and their opinions discarded. On the other hand, for many others Yugoslavia represents a utopian illusion that obviously will never be attainable. I like talking about Yugoslavia from

Miloš Vuksanović continued

the perspective of my generation, a generation that grew up in an unstable system with Yugoslavia representing stability. A generation that grew up in a system not providing a future and talking about Yugoslavia and the time when your future was secured. Especially after 2008, and all the economic problems, I believe that the term Yugoslavia has come alive again, primarily due to the economic crisis and the hardships of life faced by the generation that is now 20-40 years old. All this has revived the idea of Yugoslavia marking a good era. The economic crisis has weakened all nationalist movements and revisionist ideas that spoke about Yugoslavia as something bad. So today's tough economic situation just adds value to Yugoslavia and all that Yugoslavia represented.

Olga Manojlović Pintar, 1966

Historian

Object: Dušan Džamonja, Model of the memorial monument on Mrakovica-Kozara

Recorded in Belgrade, November 15, 2016

Duration: 3' 42"

Dušan Džamonja is rather incomprehensible. Just as incomprehensible as any of the sculptors who marked public spaces and landscapes of socialist Yugoslavia. Also, incomprehensible is a monument in itself. Perhaps they can be interpreted through generational specifics that marked the generation of the sculptors like Antun Avgustinčić and Ivan Meštrović. Or the next generation which included Frane Kršinić and Vanja Radauš. And finally the third, and probably most important one, with Dušan Džamonja, Vojin Bakić and Bogdan Bogdanović. Their works mirrored what was referred to as special artistic spirit and understanding of history, an awareness of the community in which art is formed. At the same time, their works are shaped by clearly developed social mechanisms for conveying the system of values and shaping ideas. Thus, this monument must be viewed in a broader context of memorials erected throughout Yugoslavia in the late 60's and early 70's. This is when the new socialist identity of the Yugoslavs was being very clearly defined. It followed a clear federal structure.

The monument on Mrakovica Peak is now part of a number of destinations covered by blogs of the people that visit monuments in ex-Yugoslavia. They constitute a network of travelers going from one public monument to another. It's specific because it has a clear and intense standing within a new context, though with a completely changed meaning. All that such a monument stood for in socialist Yugoslavia, all that it celebrated in ex-Yugoslavia like the triumph of the partisans, the idea of Yugoslavia as a supranational concept providing the option to identify in other milieus, has been reduced today to a very banal national identification enabled by the modern and somewhat perverted life. Perhaps the 2016 celebration best illustrates this, the need of the community to focus on the names of the victims carved around the monument, presenting them in a completely new context as the basis of a new nationally-defined and unison community.

Benjamin Krnetić, 1991

Actor

Object: Ante Gržetić, Sketch for the Monument of pain and defiance

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 1, 2017

Duration: 3' 24"

Pain and defiance. Well, I'm an actor, and when I first worked professionally in a theater, I worked with a crazy but wonderful director, called Senka Bulić. I rebelled and opposed her back then. We didn't communicate too well... I was full on in the work process and in my performance. I was somehow struggling and fighting with all my impossibilities, possibilities, chills and pains. And when I would give up she would curse and yell at us. Once I was lying on the floor not wanting to work and sick of it all, and she was getting on my nerves and I had enough of it. She then told me that nobody likes actors who stop fighting. "No one likes to watch actors who do not fight. It's just not interesting! You need to fight, 'cause fight is interesting. Struggle is part of the drama, the essence of the scene and of being on stage". So from then on I saw this inner fight, deliverance and overcoming things as the essence of it all as I was running into things in professional acting.

But then again, I live in an environment where my favorite rappers that come from Croatia, have a line, a rhyme, that goes "Nigga', we're making bigger crap than Yugoslavia". Well I get the political context in which they grew up, and all those kids from downtown Zagreb. It's really interesting that a monument like "Pain and Defiance", built in a given system under certain politics, thinking and ideology, is then associated with that system and ideology. But then things and times change, and things happen that I have nothing to do with. I was just born into it, but there's a schism and schizophrenia, a strange brokenness. I know what my values are, what are my beliefs, and what drives me on stage, but on the other hand I see the movement of a political system and milieu, and why is it such, and what its values are.

Maksimilijana Ipavec, 1971

Journalist, member of the female choir Kombinat

Object: Nada Dimić (bust), Kosta Angeli Radovani

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 2, 2017

Duration: 4' 50"

At the end of November 2016, the Kombinat female choir performed in Šibenik at a big anti-fascist event. We visited, among others, the memorial park Šubićevac containing monuments by Kosta Angeli Radovani. As we stood in front of one of the monuments we spontaneously started to sing. We sang "Bilećanka". This was after the end of the official event and the laying of wreaths at the monuments. There was heavy rain, a real downpour, and people were fleeing from it. But at that point, they stopped and turned back. Suddenly there were three dozen people around us, probably from all parts of the former common country. We all sang the same song, each in their own language. It was one of the most beautiful moments on that trip, though there were many others, a moment that made us realize that we might think of anti-fascism as an idea which, admittedly, was noble, but belongs in a museum among all the monuments and stories of courageous men. But it's not so. If we have the illusion that fascism is dead I think we're fooling ourselves completely. Perhaps it no longer appears in the forms we encountered in history books. But I think that anti-fascism is a thin thread which still connects huge numbers of people from the former common country. On one side there are the nationalisms and along with them the relativisation of absolutely everything, including the National Liberation Struggle against fascism. On the other hand, there is anti-fascism which may not be as alive as we wanted to be, but we cannot say that it doesn't exist because that's simply not true. I think we need to hold on to all those thin threads that still connect people, to upgrade and nurture them, to overcome language barriers. Because anti-fascism is a very noble idea. In the world and society that strips man and woman of their dignity and in which we are subjected to all sorts of fascism, starting with the economic one, we must preserve nobility and humanity among us. That's how we see anti-fascism in our women's choir. It is an idea that should be talked about, re-exposing it and reconnecting with each other. In ex-Yugoslavia anti-fascism may have been the norm. Thus, it was somehow understood. But in these 25 years after the break-up we see in all these ruins that it is the basis of a human and civilized society. That's why we mustn't talk about it in the past, but rather in present and future tense!

Željko Volaš, 1971

President of the Organisation of Amputees UDAS of
Republic of Srpska

Object: "Crossing the Neretva river to Jablanice, cooper etching,
Dušan Kokotović, from the graphics map of the National Liberation
Army – following the traces of IV and V offensive, 12 original cooper
etchings, 1947

Recorded in Banja Luka, December 7, 2016

Duration: 4' 54"

The crossing of river Neretva in the 4th Offensive was a symbol of the incredible fight of those men. It was something surreal for me, something special. Something so full of energy, of power, of will, full of desire by all these people. I am talking about all the nations. For me, all of those brave people were one nation. There were no differences and nobody insisted on his ethnic herd. Those that dismembered Yugoslavia belong in a "herd". Those fighters had such strength. They have shown that you can defeat even an enemy that's many times stronger. The war that we were faced with was something that left a special mark on me. In this war we have split up and have shown that we are ready to destroy something that was good. And it was good. Maybe it should have been organized better or differently. But we weren't afraid of each other. We didn't feel fear or diffidence. We all had a lot of energy and strength, and we all thought about a better life and how to get there, how to achieve it first in your own family and then in the community and in the entire socialist society, as it was called then. Maybe we were living in a utopian time but it certainly gave us huge hopes, a great desire and passion for a success. The war destroyed it all. It destroyed all our hopes. From my personal perspective everything was destroyed.

Before the war I didn't know which herd someone belonged to, whether someone was Croatian, Muslim, Slovenian, Macedonian, Montenegrin or Serbian. I was young and had a happy life. I was young and felt very safe in that country until all that disappeared and a horrible war broke out, incredible. Murders started, great fear appeared. In fact it was generated on all sides. Everyone was afraid of the others. Everyone realized that there was a difference between us. In fact, the media and the political leaders created such a fear among the nations. At the time of Yugoslavia there was no such fear. We lived, slept and worked freely wherever we wanted. Today we are afraid thanks to the leaders, the politicians and the media. With the sudden fear everyone dreads the others. People began to hate all that's different and this has led to terrible incidents and to the terrible war that split us up. There's still fear and lack of confidence today.

Today we still live in our herds, unwilling to come out of them. Again thanks to the great political leaders, and the people who really want this to rule our lives. There are enthusiasts who want to overcome this situation. I hope they will find the strength to overcome, along with all of us, these barriers and these herds that exist, so that all the people might live in a single herd again. Because we all speak the same language, we understand each other well, we come from the same geographic area, and deep down we even love each other, I think.

Igor Štiks, 1977

Writer

Object: Order of Freedom, 1947

Recorded in Belgrade, February 6, 2017

Duration: 3' 57"

The Medal of Freedom awarded to Tito in 1947 meant exactly the same as the slogan "Death to fascism, freedom to the people". What did this freedom mean to the people? It primarily meant freedom from fascist occupation. Secondly, it meant social freedom for all, getting rid of the material shackles of class society that preceded the WWII. It also implied the ideal of social emancipation. But it also meant something else: that freedom will come to the people in the sense that it would have its own democratic government. This also implied the freedom of the nations of Yugoslavia, i.e. that the so-called national question would finally be properly solved. That the citizens, members of these peoples, the people of the new socialist Yugoslavia could turn to building socialism as a precondition to full freedom. What does this mean? It means that there is no freedom without material equality. That freedom based only on the legal protection is not truly a freedom. Or perhaps it is freedom, but for a smaller share of people. And if freedom is not universal then it just cannot be freedom.

For the past 30 years we have been taught just the opposite. Firstly, that freedom means only my own individual freedom, whatever that might mean. Secondly, that it's not related to material circumstances, but just to the legal protection, conventions and the respect of all the freedoms that I give myself. Unfortunately, it was also interpreted as the freedom of peoples to free themselves from socialist dictatorship and rule themselves democratically. Of course, we quickly realized the very undemocratic character of this kind of freedom due to the fact that democracy was understood as an absolute rule of the majority over the minority, as the creation of a space in which only members of one ethnic group have the right to a democratic system, making it necessary to change not only the essence of what socialist Yugoslavia was but also its internal administrative setup.

Today we are faced with a wall and with tragedies generated by such understanding of freedom. This ethno-national understanding of freedom, this neo-liberal or capitalist understanding of freedom informed us that public ownership as such, once the precondition of freedom, actually prevented our individual freedom. Today, we are confronted with the consequences of all that this freedom has brought us and we are now extremely suspicious of that word. What does it really mean, how is it to be understood, what should it represent if not the interest of the powerful? Freedom is another one of those words that we have to reconquer, that we have to retake from the neo-liberal or reactionary discourse as well as words like democracy, like participation, like equality or citizenship. So much like all those words that slowly lost their subversive and revolutionary potential.

Igor Toshevski, 1963

Artist

Object: Portrait of Tito, Djordje Andrejević Kun, oil painting, 1949,
gift from the State Security Administration, 1976

Recorded in Skopje, September 29, 2016

Duration: 5' 23"

The fact that the "Portrait of Tito" by Djordje Andrejević Kun, comes from the State Security collection is not so surprising. I would say that this is a paradigm of the general relationship between art and politics. Not only then but also today. Those works of art, since I suspect there are many more, as artifacts and symbols of power, were part of a body of works which were the iconography of a broader narrative built over a period of decades. It was the construction of a certain social system where art played an important role, of course. I'd say a propaganda role. Thus, we can say that the art of the time, not all but most of it, was in the service of that hegemonic system. In this relationship between aesthetics and politics, an important role was played by the museum as an institution representing a symbolic space where, through the presentation of these artifacts, an attempt was made to establish a connection with some sort of cultural or national identity. However, in my opinion it's a very delicate situation. Museums that have been previously manipulating these artifacts also generated a specific direction with these collections, namely a historical perspective. Perhaps this is the key problem with museums today. I suppose there must be a different way to review these relationships. I'd say that the disintegration of the grand narratives such as Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union, called into question the role of museums in the contemporary context because, as I said, setting the direction of viewing this cultural aspect, means in some way a kind of censorship in the name of creating a specific construct. However, today these artifacts, de facto become just a bunch of objects, items taken from a pile, from the dustbin of history. From today's perspective, they may have a different meaning, because they raise the question of how we look at our own identity compared to the past. But today we can't maintain such a naive view of these stands. Especially due to the emergence and expansion of mass media that in some way, according to Boris Groys, create a virtual museum that rivals today's museum. Therefore, at the present time, the museum must play a different role. This is already happening in some countries, and particularly applies to national museums. It's a role that no longer imposes a specific view of the world of what creates our cultural identity, but rather takes a more critical attitude toward history. A critical stand, in which we as the viewers assume an inquisitive rapport with the question of what makes our cultural and national identity today.

Slavko Goldstein, 1928–2017

Publicist

Object: Zlatko Prica, Map of drawings depicting people from Danica concentration camp, 18 pages, 1947, gift from the author

Recorded in Zagreb, January 29, 2017

Duration: 7' 32"

Zlatko Prica graduated at the Zagreb Art Academy in 1940, at the age of 24. He was a very diligent student. He had already exhibited his works from the academy years. In 1941, on the eve of the war he had an exhibition at the Art Pavilion in Zagreb. In 1944 he got hold of a copy of Goran Kovačić's poem "The Pit". "The Pit" is very impressive. If you let it it affects your very soul, hence was inspired to illustrate the poem. He was joined by Murtić in Topusko, and since they were friends, they agreed to work together. Murtić was more agile in sourcing materials for lithographic printing, and had it smuggled in from Zagreb. They got the material in '44, I don't know exact date but it was November. Having put together the tools for lithography they made 250 copies of Goran's "The Pit". Soon, there were none left. They kept on printing with the same tools and by the end of the war "The Pit" had been printed in about 20.000 copies. However, at a meeting held on December 19th 1944 the Party Central Committee in Croatia strongly condemned "The Pit". It was deemed contrary to socialist art which was intended for the masses, as a work appealing only to a small number of "connoisseurs". The conclusion was that the work should be illustrated in a way that the poem may be presented to the grassroots. Thus "socialist realism" had its beginnings in Yugoslavia. De facto, artists were expected to generate propaganda. It was called socialist realism, but promoted the idea that art should serve propaganda. Hence, artists mostly sought to avoid it. There was no open resistance, and in '45 there was already enough dictatorship in Yugoslavia that open resistance was impossible, but there was a lot of passive resistance that even Zlatko Prica was part of. It was a silent but quite widespread resistance. I witnessed it having enrolled to the university in 1947. There was resistance among students, and especially intellectuals. We devoured Krleža's prewar magazines in the archives of the University Library as they were polemic about the deviation of the Party and of the Left towards the viewpoint that art is propaganda. Liberalization came around 1951. Prica was granted a scholarship in 1952, and thus spent six months in India. He was a passionate artist. He easily adapted to the atmosphere or fell in love with the ambiance. That's what happened to him in India. Though he was a first-class graphic artist, convinced that graphics are the foundation of painting and that no good painting can exist without good graphics, he was overwhelmed by his experience of India and suddenly opted for color making his works free spirited. They were also broad, liberal, individual and original. With his paintings, he indirectly helped the expansion of freedoms. At the time, Djilas went too far in that same direction and ended up in jail. It was a signal for ending liberalization. There was no way back, the single party system remained, and self-management was added to it. But it could not function in the one-party system, since there is an inherent contradiction between the single party system and self-management. Still this level of liberalization was preserved and it permitted full artistic freedom for painters.

Dunja Blažević, 1944

Art historian

Object: Djordje Andrejević Kun, 20 original woodcuts
“Bloody gold” (1936), gift from the author

Recorded in Belgrade, October 10, 2016

Duration: 6’ 07”

I was always interested in the social and the political context within which art is created. In the 1970's, when I professionally and publicly started working as a curator and a critic, for me it meant putting art in a broader context. It meant reviewing the relationship of art and self-management. My thesis was that a new society or the new system inaugurated in Yugoslavia, since self-management existed nowhere else, needed to have an equivalent in art. The problem was that the government, although self-management was established as a system, did not acknowledge this need. Modernism was still dominant, along with what we were against. We were heirs of the historical avant-garde and that of the '60's and the '70's, which certainly correlated with social and political reality. There was a big problem... How not to impose this new art but at least promote it as something equivalent to new society. Sure, it was an idealistic view that couldn't evolve. This new art and new artistic practice stayed at the margins. Today, this is very important for those years: the 60's and 70's. We endorsed it. I use the plural because our group included people and artists who inherited the Russian and Soviet avant-garde. Every generation from 1950 onwards had artists or groups that referred in their works to the Soviet avant-garde. It was the model where art blended with the revolution and created a revolution in art. Not just following all the social revolutionary changes in USSR. The idea was that this was feasible, if we inaugurated and were building a new system and if we were living self-management. So self-management as a system should have recognized a different art instead of the high modernism that was mainstream at the time. It should have acknowledged its own art. But this did not happen. Still, we lived and live with this idea, though we're more objective towards historical references and what we previously ignored, especially our first post-war generation of colleagues. At the time we thought that the socialist realism was something to sweep under the carpet. Now it's being appraised and viewed differently, including the works by Djordje Andrejević Kun who lived within his art. He witnessed the revolution with his art. He was involved in pre-revolution before the WWII, volunteered in the Spanish civil war, finally taking part in the national liberation struggle. He did it all due to his beliefs and wasn't forced to do it. Such works include the masterful map of woodcuts “Bloody Gold”. As a graphic artist he made this highly expressive masterpiece, though his other graphic maps were equally expressive. It's not expressionism, but it's surely a very expressive form. Therefore, we now have a different and corrected insight into who actually lived his ideals through art and who did it for other reasons.

Svetlana Slapšak, 1948

Writer, anthropologist

Object: "Portrait of a girl (Bosnian)", Ljubo Lah, oily chalk on paper, gift from the tourist company "Europa", Sarajevo, 1961

Recorded in Ljubljana, February 1, 2017

Duration: 7' 11"

The drawing I saw is the work by an academy-trained artist, from a recognizable period that I didn't like then, but I do now from this time distance. It's what we called "artistic socialism". A period when art was formally rather free. On the other hand it was nicely wedged in the ideological frame and artists knew exactly what margins they shouldn't cross. And those margins were quite far away, so to speak. They were distant, and artists had a lot of space. This drawing of an emancipated, defiant, beautiful Bosnian woman made me immediately revive my memory of a 1954 film called "Legends of Anika" by Vladimir Pogačić. It's one of the most exciting feminist films ever made, especially in our country. It's a deconstruction of Ivo Andrić's misogyny in film form. The extremely misogynistic text is overcome by images originating from the Balkan folklore and from Pogačić's excellent knowledge of psychoanalysis. The lead role is played by beautiful Milena Dapčević, a woman I immediately connected with the drawing. The plot is about a woman unable to bear Balkan patriarchy. At the same time a lot of rebellious elements are used - from water, to shadows and plants that stand at her side, in her conquest of the miserable man's world. The film ends with an incredible symbolic scene in which one of Anika's lovers shoots into the water. This element remains intact because it overcomes everything. Water flows as he shoots, helpless and miserable. And she lives on.

Why is this drawing so associative for me? Because the folklore potential, the Bosnian potential of mixed cultures let the painter say what he might not have been able with a contemporary woman. He would have strayed into links of a completely different nature at the time when he drew this, if I remember well, in the '70s. But he used the potential of folklore, and the sense of rebellion. The impression of otherness. The idea of female rejection of patriarchy, that works unusually well in a few strong strokes, in several spots actually occurring, and in an illustrative ecstasy which mainly emphasizes her beauty, but also her audacity. A bold young woman who doesn't give in.

In the Yugoslav system there was no official censorship. Censorship was set up by the various bodies. Maybe publishing authorities, or control bodies. Or bodies like stage workers at the theater. If someone thought it up, he had the means and a population for censorship without an official framework. In other words, Yugoslav artists, thinkers, scientists, anyone willing to deal with social problems had to think twice before putting something on paper or on canvas. Or filming something. Defining boundaries was sometimes so tricky and risky. People sometimes made mistakes simply because they didn't calculate well. And sometimes they exceeded the boundaries simply because they were skilled enough to avoid the other side noticing the message addressed to those that could decode it, and it passed unobserved by those who simply failed to recognize it. To be quite clear, this playing with censorship strengthened the intelligentsia. Just as exile makes the

Svetlana Slapšak continued

intellectuals stronger. Like some other social situations strengthen them. And that's certainly missing today in the so-called total freedom of expression. First of all, there are various forms of censorship. Censorship is much ruder and less transparent. Censorship is materially oriented. It's commercial and thus much more disgusting than the one before we can call "refined socialist censorship" that you could play with on rhetoric grounds, or with the wits you built up in such censorship. That's the connection I see. I'm trying to imagine such a drawing today. Today it wouldn't have any particular significance. Actually it would be immediately classified as sweetened art that flatters the national. It's just not it any more. It's no longer an issue of community or resistance. It just doesn't exist anymore. Feminist thought exists no more. Nor do exist those that Julka Hlape Djordjević, a great Yugoslav feminist between the two wars, called "feminophile men". It's a population that's gone.

And there's another aspect that should not be forgotten. Back then culture was perhaps totalitarian culture, but it was above all a culture of totality. It communicated with all parties and all centers. In all the languages that existed in that country, which were official, which were used. One of the problems that occurred with nationalism is that the totality remained, but with everyone hating and attacking each other. That's the quality that has disappeared. That's the sphere, perhaps even market that also disappeared. I'm thinking of the social status of the artists. Under certain conditions an artist could count on surviving. If he made a certain agreement with the system. Today no such distinctions are valid. All the policies in the former common state, all the national policies of the new countries insist on this very objective, impoverishing education and culture as much as possible. So that on this empty muddy field thus created they can build the primitive visions that are embraced by equally primitive and stupid people who buy their words.

Petar Ćuković, 1954

Art historian

Object: "Birth house of J. B. Tito", Pedja Milosavljević, watercolor, 1956

Recorded in Kotor, August 12, 2016

Duration: 4' 12"

It is no wonder that the artists in the former Yugoslavia were tempted to make portraits of Tito, or his house. Some signs that can be read as ideological symbols have been interpreted by them in a way. Not only Pedja Milosavljević, of course, many others have been tempted, or under obligation, to try to move towards the authorities, to meet them half way. Including Petar Lubarda. It's little known that he too made a Tito's portrait, which he was unhappy with at the end. It's now part of the collection held by Filo's wife. These were specific times and it wasn't easy to resist such a temptation. Some held fast. Painter Stupica refused to sell a canvas to Svetozar Vukmanović, although he offered 300.000 dinars for it, having paid others no more than 100.000. But such cases were relatively rare. There's no doubt that this was an ideological society in which the Party had the means and the mechanisms to coerce. However, no pressure was involved in this case, but rather a voluntary consent or dancing with the devil by the artists themselves. This is a familiar theme in the history of art, the attitude of the artist towards the authorities. Back then it was a bit more acute, because we all knew that nothing could occur in society without some questioning about alignment with the Party course or thereabout. Today the situation is different of course. Today the relationship between the artist and the authorities is not structured in this way. There is no coercion, but there is some sycophancy by the artists. It is a case throughout former Yugoslavia as well. But there's no pressure. Nobody forces the artist to paint a portrait of a state official or some figure in power. But there are ways to induce them to do such improprieties. Take for example Dimitrije Popović painting Tadjman. He's not the only one, and others probably did as much. But he did it and does it for money. This could be interpreted as acceptance of the ideology of the person portrayed, though it's clearly due to the financial aspect. In the previous period money was certainly not involved. Though some trickled down because the artists were "good" and thus they painted Tito's house or Tito. But financial reasons now are greatly present here, perhaps even more important than ideological ones. An artist does portraits and he's commissioned one. The artist has a name, and it's good for him as he earned some money. It's good for the politician as he gets satisfaction from it. Times are different but the subtle ways used by the rulers to entice artists haven't disappeared.

Mehmet Behluli, 1962

Artist

Object: "Spain", Djordje Andrejević Kun, drawing, 1937

Recorded in Prishtina, October 26, 2016

Duration: 4' 19"

I think I am a member of the last generation of Kosovars or Albanians from Kosovo that don't see Yugoslavia as an abstract idea. I lived and worked in this Yugoslavia. I've spent my childhood and youth in that cultural environment. One cannot speak of Kun without mentioning the art structures. It would be incomplete. I was a student in the 1980's. I studied figurative art and painting at the Faculty of Art in Prishtina. Back then, the Prishtina Academy was modeled after the other academies in Yugoslavia, those in Belgrade, or Zagreb and Ljubljana. Artists like Djordje Andrejević Kun or like Božidar Jakac that we all thought were great and impressive were somehow linked to Tito and the system, with what was then considered Yugoslav leadership and elite.

To speak about Yugoslavia in Kosovo today is not at all easy. There are strong tensions. I differ from my own children. The very fact that I speak Serbian almost as well as Albanian indicates that I've evolved differently. After the '90s everything has changed, especially after the year 1999. It is very difficult to explain now how did we functioned within Yugoslavia at the time. I don't want to sound Yugo-nostalgic but I've spent my childhood and youth in that environment. Kosovo is very specific. Because with us Yugoslavia lives on in Kosovo, and I guess that with our disappearance Yugoslavia will disappear from here as well. We try to function in the present conditions but I'm sure that the new generation has to define Kosovo and the heritage with our subjective intervention and help. Along with what is carried inside by us that lived in Yugoslavia.

Veton Nurkollari, 1962

Photographer, director of Docufest film festival

Object: Bowl with lid, gift from Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton,
November 24, 1971

Recorded in Prizren, October 27, 2016

Duration: 3' 51"

The gift Elizabeth Taylor gave Tito made me think about that period. About the film "Sutjeska" and Richard Burton. Some images from the summer residence of Brioni also came to mind. Like the famous photo of Tito looking at Elizabeth Taylor. So many things were happening at that time. Why and how did celebrities like Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor or Yul Brynner, come to Yugoslavia. And so many other film professionals, as they were called. At that time Yugoslavia was one of the top three European countries in film industry. Maybe Tito had a plan to turn Yugoslavia into an Eastern Hollywood. Maybe... I remember Yugoslavia not only in terms of films. Not only because of Elizabeth Taylor. Not just because we had school trips to cinemas to watch "Sutjeska", "Neretva" or "Užice Republic", all those partisan resistance films that I grew up with. For me Yugoslavia is much more. I remember some special moments in late '70s and early '80s. I guess these were the best years for Yugoslavia, lots of music, lots of events. I recall that in 1991 I went to Nick Cave's concert in Belgrade. And many other concerts too. That's probably the only Yugoslav phase I miss. Now, I'm mostly indifferent to all the rest. Was it better, or was it worse... But if there was a good Yugoslav phase, to call it that, then it's the late '70s. Discovering pop bands like Azra, something that exists no more. I still have my copy of the LP "Paket Aranžman". It's probably one of my favorite records as far as music produced in Yugoslavia is concerned. Those are some of the things that disappeared. I don't know why and how, but they're gone. They were some of the best things that "second" Yugoslavia generated. I'm not too nostalgic for it breaking up, but I still feel a yearning for some of the things that were much better back then. Much healthier than the chaos which now rules not only in ex-Yugoslavia but further afield. Some lessons might be learned from those good things that ex-Yugoslavia offered back then, both in the sphere of film and in the world of music. And regarding human relations that are destroyed now.

Nikola Džafo, 1950

Artist

Object: Bus, tempera on paper, Nikola Džafo, May 27, 1963

Recorded in Novi Sad, March 23, 2017

Duration: 3' 03"

If it weren't for this video statement I wouldn't have realized that I lived in a system that worked. It all made me think and draw parallels. This revelation about an exhibit from the Museum of Yugoslavia concerns a drawing of mine that I'm not even sure when I drew and why. I learned just now that it was donated back in 1962. It might have been a group initiative or just mine. Or the working of our enthusiastic art teacher that sent the drawings from our art club called "Milan Konjević". Each year he sent such a gift to Marshal Tito. Back then we were Tito's pioneers and just about everyone unintentionally glorified him, making drawings that our teacher selected and sent. Now I know that the Museum of Yugoslavia has a registered drawing it had received at the time when that country existed. And that country I lived in, and which I am proud of, had everything from start to finish. Pioneers, youths, young communists, Tito's army... And the entire system functioned. True, it all ended in my life, some 30 years ago when something called Yugoslavianism ended in my life. I was then caught in a spiral of actual situations and coping. Now that I look back from this distance, I am glad that I lived in a system that worked for 30 years of my life. I guess I somehow managed afterwards and to this very day I face the reality and push on. The discovery that I'm in the Museum register as a young artist justifies all my efforts to become an old artist. I've found a connection and it's actually a useful one.