

# Secularization of Ideology: The Yugoslav Case

Kjell Magnusson

## *Myths and rituals*

Yugoslav socialism derives its legitimacy mainly from three sources. It is connected with three ideological themes or mythological structures.

One is the role of the Party in the successful War of Liberation and the struggle for independence in the late forties.

The second is the solution to the national question and the Party's continuing position as the guarantee of societal cohesion and political stability.

The third aspect, which is intertwined with the other two, is a specific version of Marxism, that is, the Yugoslav project of self-management as an alternative to both Western capitalism and Eastern bureaucratic socialism.

These ideological constructs are symbolized in different ways, and on various levels; ranging from the formalized, sometimes quasi-sociological discourse of official Party documents, to the heroic and emotional language used on memorial days, or the more idyllic representations to be found in children's literature.

The mythological themes are appearing both as "legends" or "sacred histories", with their heroes and cowards, and as a distinct ideological style dominating political life.

Although in Yugoslavia literature and the arts were, at an early stage, liberated from the models of socialist realism,<sup>1)</sup> and although there have not been any large scale attempts to create *rites de passage*, as in the Soviet Union or East Germany, there still are rituals, in important ways similar to those found in Soviet-type societies.<sup>2)</sup>

These rituals are mainly connected with the memory of the War, and tied to special anniversaries, such as the 29th of November, The Day of the Republic, or to the Days of Uprising in the different Republics, or again, to celebrations like the Day of the Army, or the Day of the Security Forces.

On these occasions the press usually devotes its pages to the reiteration of the "legend" or "sacred story". What happened in *illo tempore*, to use the words of Eliade,<sup>3)</sup> is reenacted today. At meetings the past is evoked through speeches, patriotic songs and the recitation of poetry. Children are assembling together with war veterans.

grammatically and lexically, but also the notion of the *enemy*. According to Yugoslav authors, the idea of the enemy is one of the most important aspects of the political culture of socialism.<sup>18)</sup>

The enemy was generally understood and described as – in a platonic sense – being always and everywhere present. Only putting on different clothes, as it were. He would be a nationalist, a technocrat, a liberal or anarcho-liberal, or, again, a Stalinist. According to the laws of dialectics, the different emanations of the enemy would sometimes join forces in seemingly unlikely combinations, such as Croatian and Serbian nationalists, or liberals and Stalinists plotting together to weaken to the strength of the social order.<sup>19)</sup>

The more dangerous the situation, the more the need for the party, the greater its role. Once again there was a struggle in which the old virtues from the heroic war could be of use.

The problem today is that this scenario does not function any more. For one thing, the conference debates are becoming less stereotypical, and conflicts are openly manifested. But above all, there is no action.

Due to internal differences within the leadership, resolutions are often very vague, and they are as a rule interpreted in totally different ways. There is sniping among the leaders and the mobilizing effect is simply lost. Nothing is happening. Examples of this are the endless discussions of the economic problems, the character of the federation, or the Kosovo issue.<sup>20)</sup>

Another point is that it is difficult to argue convincingly that the ills plaguing society are mainly the results of enemy activity. If people are reminded not only of what happened 30 or 40 years ago, but also of who said what ten, six, or five years ago, it is easy to lose credibility.

And nowadays it is openly admitted by political leaders that self-management, at least as it has been carried out in practice, is to be blamed for the economic difficulties. It has promoted irrational behaviour and the waste of resources, and many politicians agree with the social scientists, that political and economical life should be freed from the tutelage of ideological thought. That is, politics should be secularized.<sup>21)</sup>

It is also admitted that nationalism to a very large extent must be seen as a consequence of the political system. In a society where discussions outside the ideological framework are not wanted, and where, on the other hand, the only legitimate arenas of conflict are those along republican, that is national, lines, almost every issue is potentially also a national issue, and national differences and animosities are thus constantly remaining salient.<sup>22)</sup>

In general, then, the most important feature of the present situation, is the creation of a new language, replacing (or in the process of replacing) the old political discourse. Confronted with parallel accounts of historical and present-day problems, the typical language of ideology is being relativized, is losing credibility.

It is interesting to note that, when some politicians are trying to revive the old model of the political meeting followed by a campaign, they have not been

Perhaps the most important event of this kind has been the traditional celebration of the Day of Youth (*Dan mladosti*), that is, the official birthday of the late president, Josip Broz Tito, on the 25th of May.

On that day the president would receive delegations of pioneers, accept their gifts, listen to their songs and tell them about the great tradition, encouraging them to follow in the footsteps of earlier generations. There were, later on, similar meetings with students and young workers in the Belgrade House of Youth. And in the evening there was the “concluding manifestation”, a mass rally at the stadium of the Yugoslav People’s Army, where Tito would receive the *Štafeta Mladosti*, or “Relay of Youth”, which had been carried through Yugoslavia by youth of different nations and ethnic groups, symbolizing the brotherhood and unity of the partisan war.

So, even though there are differences, there are to be found the same *kinds* of myths and, to a lesser extent, rituals similar to those in other socialist countries.

It is further characteristic that some of the legitimizing myths are easily integrated into traditional Yugoslav culture. The story of the war hero, the partisan who is struggling for liberty, at the same time as he shows compassion and tolerance, is a variation on the concept of *čojstvo*, or manliness, heroism, as expressed in traditional oral literature.<sup>4)</sup>

It is interesting to note that the songs glorifying Tito and his comrades-in-arms were based on the patterns of older folk songs. According to Vladimir Dedijer, Tito was himself very conscious of this fact, and is said to have acted as to satisfy what he understood as a popular need of a hero.<sup>5)</sup>

Another aspect of the compatibility between ideology and tradition is the stress on equality prevailing during the earlier period of Yugoslav socialism. It was very much in line with traditional values of the patriarchal village, especially in the southern parts of Yugoslavia.<sup>6)</sup>

It is true, though, that a specific feature of Yugoslav socialism has been the coexistence on a public level, in the media, of different value systems and cultural patterns. Traditional world views, influences from the West, and different conceptions of socialism have been living more or less side by side.<sup>7)</sup>

### *Demythologization and routinization of charisma*

Sometimes this cultural mixture will lead to unexpected and rather strange expressions. The author remembers watching on Yugoslav TV some ten years ago the 30th Anniversary of the Security Forces. The celebration took the form of an oratorium, with symphony orchestra, choir and soloists. They were dressed in black tie and white dresses, as if visiting a night-club or formal dance. The music being played was of the kind performed every year on our television at the Eurovision Song Contest, while the lyrics were those of classical patriotic poetry, glorifying the courage and sacrifices of the Security Police.

Other examples of this kind are some of the films produced during the seventies, in order to let the world know about Yugoslavia’s struggle for independence.

Actors such as Richard Burton, Yul Brunner or Curt Jurgens replayed the drama of the famous battles of Neretva or Sutjeska, in a most typical Hollywood manner.

What has happened in Yugoslavia during the last four or five years, is that fundamental aspects of the ideological structure have been questioned. Using the language of protestant theology, one would say that we are witnessing a process of “de-mythologization”, reaching all areas of political life.

This process of secularization concerns both the content of ideology and the forms and language of ideology. It touches upon all three sources of legitimation referred to earlier, as well as on the “semiotics of political action”.

Since 1981, or 1982, there is a formidable flood of literature, novels, memoirs, historical works, treatises in economy, political science or sociology, questioning important aspects of Yugoslavia’s past and present, and challenging both indirectly and directly the ideological monopoly of the party.

This new literature deals, for example, with the life of prisoners on Goli Otok, the “Naked Island” in the Adriatic, where real or imagined Stalinists were imprisoned under the most severe conditions.<sup>8)</sup>

Another example is the “Dachau processes”, that is the execution or life imprisonment of communist veterans and former inmates of the German concentration camp, who were said to have collaborated with the Nazis.<sup>9)</sup>

Other topics treated in the more scholarly type of literature is the war with its mistakes and excesses, the interwar period and the dubious position the party took on many issues. Sensitive problems, like the liquidation of the top party leaders, the support of the Stalin-Hitler pact, contacts with the enemy during the war, are discussed. So is the taking of power after the war.<sup>10)</sup>

In all these cases the party and the societal system it has created has been seen from another side than the usual one. It has been showed that sometimes the party acted in ways which seem contrary to its very basic beliefs and claims on moral authority. Another aspect is that on some of these issues the personality of the former president is brought into focus.

The new literature is being published in a very specific situation. Socialist Yugoslavia is going through its most difficult period since the war, with a severe economic crisis, social and national tensions and a general paralysis of political life.

The riots in Kosovo 1981 not only showed that the national question was not solved once and for all, it also triggered a cultural development that was very difficult to control. After initial hesitation and silence, the press was allowed to write more openly about the Kosovo problem, in order to avoid rumours and growing unrest in the population.<sup>11)</sup>

This, however, very soon meant that newspapers and magazines started to discuss any cultural and political problem with the same frankness. The new literature and the new journalism thus reinforced one another.

Another important factor was the growing activity of professional associations in articulating social problems. Sociologists, historians, political scientists and writers, started to discuss the social and political situation with an openness that

surpassed even the period of the late sixties.<sup>12)</sup>

In short, almost every aspect of ideology is under fire: revolutionary history, the actual practice of “brotherhood and unity”, self-management and the functioning of the political system.

In this cultural revolution the party has found itself very much on the defensive. Due to serious internal conflicts it has been unable to act or to reaffirm the legitimacy of ideology.

And indeed, it is difficult to point to the virtues of self-management in a situation where there are more than one million unemployed and an additional 700,000 workers living in Western Europe; where inflation is reaching the level of 80 %; where there are shortages of food and other necessities; and when real incomes have lost 40 % of their value since 1979.

More and more there are signs that the patience of ordinary people is tried hard. The number of strikes is rising<sup>13)</sup> and sociological investigations show that people, including party members, are losing confidence; and that there is widespread political indifference, especially among young people.<sup>14)</sup>

The influential Belgrade weekly NIN writes in this connection:

The symptoms and numbers are alarming. The activist core of the youth organization is becoming increasingly smaller. Party organizations at the universities which earlier counted 20–30 % of the students as their members, in some cases now organize no more than 4–5 %. On joint meetings with young people and war veterans, one might listen to bitter words such as: “You have practically ruined our society, making all these mistakes. You should be forbidden to die until you have cleaned up the mess you created.”<sup>15)</sup>

Another example of declining legitimacy and ideological fatigue is the heavy criticism made of the celebration of the Day of Youth, Tito’s birthday. The youth organization, especially in Slovenia, wanted to abolish the rally at the stadium calling it a vulgar, kitsch-like social-realist manifestation, which would have negative effects on youth.<sup>16)</sup>

### *The semiotics of political action*

The second aspect of the secularization process has to do with what could be called the “semiotics of political action”.

Traditionally, Yugoslav politics has been conducted, on a public level, at the political meeting or party conference. These occasions have some distinct ritual dimensions in common. There would be a fairly long introductory speech or *govor*, followed by a varying number of shorter speeches (depending on the nature of the conference), which provided variations on the main theme, illustrated the problem with concrete examples, and so on.<sup>17)</sup>

A resolution would then be passed, and the message of the conference was studied and discussed all over the country, republic or borough, whatever the case may be. The function of the meeting was thus to act as a mobilizing force.

Central to this structure was not only a highly stereotypical language, both

grammatically and lexically, but also the notion of the *enemy*. According to Yugoslav authors, the idea of the enemy is one of the most important aspects of the political culture of socialism.<sup>18)</sup>

The enemy was generally understood and described as – in a platonic sense – being always and everywhere present. Only putting on different clothes, as it were. He would be a nationalist, a technocrat, a liberal or anarcho-liberal, or, again, a Stalinist. According to the laws of dialectics, the different emanations of the enemy would sometimes join forces in seemingly unlikely combinations, such as Croatian and Serbian nationalists, or liberals and Stalinists plotting together to weaken to the strength of the social order.<sup>19)</sup>

The more dangerous the situation, the more the need for the party, the greater its role. Once again there was a struggle in which the old virtues from the heroic war could be of use.

The problem today is that this scenario does not function any more. For one thing, the conference debates are becoming less stereotypical, and conflicts are openly manifested. But above all, there is no action.

Due to internal differences within the leadership, resolutions are often very vague, and they are as a rule interpreted in totally different ways. There is sniping among the leaders and the mobilizing effect is simply lost. Nothing is happening. Examples of this are the endless discussions of the economic problems, the character of the federation, or the Kosovo issue.<sup>20)</sup>

Another point is that it is difficult to argue convincingly that the ills plaguing society are mainly the results of enemy activity. If people are reminded not only of what happened 30 or 40 years ago, but also of who said what ten, six, or five years ago, it is easy to lose credibility.

And nowadays it is openly admitted by political leaders that self-management, at least as it has been carried out in practice, is to be blamed for the economic difficulties. It has promoted irrational behaviour and the waste of resources, and many politicians agree with the social scientists, that political and economical life should be freed from the tutelage of ideological thought. That is, politics should be secularized.<sup>21)</sup>

It is also admitted that nationalism to a very large extent must be seen as a consequence of the political system. In a society where discussions outside the ideological framework are not wanted, and where, on the other hand, the only legitimate arenas of conflict are those along republican, that is national, lines, almost every issue is potentially also a national issue, and national differences and animosities are thus constantly remaining salient.<sup>22)</sup>

In general, then, the most important feature of the present situation, is the creation of a new language, replacing (or in the process of replacing) the old political discourse. Confronted with parallel accounts of historical and present-day problems, the typical language of ideology is being relativized, is losing credibility.

It is interesting to note that, when some politicians are trying to revive the old model of the political meeting followed by a campaign, they have not been

successful. A famous example is the affair with the so called “white book” in 1984. Certain party leaders in Croatia made a frontal assault on a large number of “enemies of socialism” among writers, sociologists, historians, and others, in a typical conference setting. Some years ago this would have resulted in sanctions. Now it was even criticized by other party leaders, notably in Slovenia and Serbia, from where most of these enemies happened to come. And the whole matter only led to embarrassment for the people involved.<sup>23)</sup>

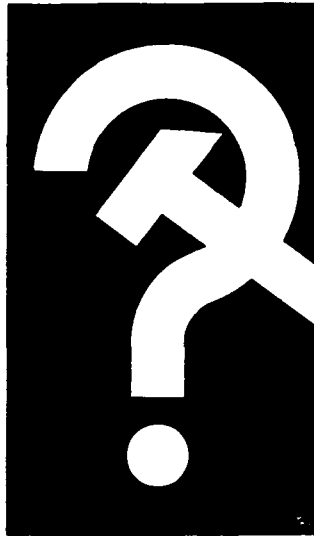
ис били „љвачкаши“. а  
н“?

а на Едварда Карде  
љеној традицији, сва  
ом јавура одржавају  
јстак расправа.“ Сед  
тав скуп, одржан по  
е недеље у Новом Са  
ећен теми „Радничка  
комуниста данас.“ Ме  
т се баве друштвеним  
се занимају за ову  
поменута тема с ра  
вала завидно интересо  
— то може да звучи  
ксално — током по  
а, чак деценију или  
угославији било опро  
ју мало, тек неколико  
чних истраживања  
и организовања само  
радика, расправа пл  
у Новом Саду био,  
лика да се потраже  
илици тако потребни  
гања на која асоцира  
елова „формула.“

#### ЦИЈАЛИСТИЧНОГ ИЗВОЈА

а овогодишњим „Кар  
та“ у расправама о  
и Савезу комуниста  
и неки од оних ју  
аучника који су се  
ком у последње време  
вили, (Ј. Жупанов, И.  
ић). Овај скуп — у  
угословенског центра  
лаксу самоуправљања  
и, Политичке школе  
из Тито“ из Кумровца  
политичке студије и  
образовање ПК СКВ

саопштења, мада ни у једном  
од њих очито није отривено  
ништа што би до сада  
било непознато



измичу контроли (субјективних) со  
цијалистичких снага. Утицај несоци  
јалистичких „философија живота“  
идеја и идеологија расте, док се ви  
зије социјалистичког устројства чине  
све мање привлачним и битним за

Нек  
било  
денте  
Радни  
талас  
ниња,  
ковао  
био у  
образ  
живот  
класи  
литич  
покре  
покре  
пре си

Ист  
југосл  
очиги  
свома  
јање  
класу  
не“) к  
лицом  
своим  
поист  
радик  
равањ  
свома  
трати  
славна  
„непр

Са :  
но и :  
варак  
ћом в  
енски  
јавно  
то по  
-полит  
друшт

Illustration featuring an article in the Belgrade weekly *NIN*, February 2nd 1986, discussing the ideological crisis and the party’s problem of legitimation.

At the same time as the official ideology is in crisis, there are signs of what is sometimes referred to as a religious revival.<sup>24)</sup>

In Bosnia, for example, thousands of believers are, week after week, travelling to the small village of Čitluk, Medjugorje, where a few years ago the Mother of God appeared before a group of Catholic youth, urging them to repent and work for the renewal of faith. This Yugoslav would-be Lourdes (not recognized by the church) draws pilgrims even from abroad.<sup>25)</sup>

In Bosnia there is also a strong Moslem community with growing self-consciousness and specific religio-political aspirations that are difficult to handle in the Yugoslav context.

Among the Serbian Orthodox as well, there are signs of a religious mobilization, partly connected with the situation in Kosovo.

All the three dominant religious traditions are able to gather tens of thousands of believers in public celebrations.

I think, however, that it would be premature to speak of a large-scale religious revival as a *political* alternative to secular ideology. With some exceptions, there does not seem to be any large number of new people attracted by the faith, but rather a growing self-consciousness among religious people, and, this should be noted, a greater possibility to manoeuvre, at least in some republics.

On the other hand, Yugoslav sociologists of religion have pointed to the potentially dangerous situation when, in a time of crisis, a religious proletariat consisting of peasants and lower urban strata, the majority of the population, are confronted with an atheist middle class, representing the official ideology, as well as economic and political power.<sup>26)</sup>

In a situation where the prestige of politicians is diminishing, where there are daily press reports of corruption and fraud, the representatives of the religious communities, if nothing else, constitute a moral alternative. But at present there is no sign of a development of the Polish, or for that matter, Iranian type.

In the long run, there is in Yugoslavia an on-going process of secularization, which in my opinion is affecting both institutionalized religion and ideology.

### *Secularization of ideology*

I have been discussing the secularization of ideology in a short-term perspective. The problem, however, is not new, and there are socio-structural, as well as immanent reasons for the problems affecting official ideology.

Every time there was a major political crisis in Yugoslavia, it was found that young people were not embracing Marxism. The standard solution was always to reform the educational system, to make the teaching of Marxism better and more efficient.<sup>27)</sup>

When, however, these efforts are investigated as to their effects, the findings are not encouraging. It has been found in recent surveys of high-school students that there is a shocking lack of knowledge about even the basic aspects of Marxism, as being taught in the schools. In one study, students would, at best, give correct answers to fifty percent of the questions posed, more often to only ten percent.

Moreover, it has turned out, in a number of investigations, that people, young and old alike, simply do not understand the esoteric language of ideology. Even party activists who have been enrolled in ideological schools have great difficulties in explaining central concepts of theory, as well as day-to-day ideological usage.

And generally, according to the surveys conducted, pupils and teachers seem to

think that the teaching program is on the whole irrelevant to their lives.<sup>28)</sup>

This has led some people to ask the heretical question whether it is really necessary to study Marxism as a school subject, when its transformation into that mode usually has disastrous effects, and, however undogmatic the intentions, it eventually turns out to be some kind of catechism.<sup>29)</sup>

In fact, this illustrates a general problem confronting any ideology, religious or otherwise, which in a modern situation aspires to give an all-embracing (rational) interpretation/explanation of the world.

This problem could be discussed in the light of the theoretical perspective developed within sociology of knowledge and sociology of religion by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann.<sup>30)</sup> In this context, two ideas are of special interest to us. One, that any world-view, any identity, any conception of reality, be it every-day reality or the world of religion or philosophy, in order to be real, must be acknowledged as such by the people with whom the individual interacts. If your *significant others* behave as if what you think is real *were* real, then it *is* real, until further notice.

The other point is that modern society in important respects differs from traditional, agrarian, society. The complexity and extreme social differentiation of modern society means that there is no longer a homogeneous cultural universe. In any typical modern society there is a multitude of ideas and cultural patterns existing side by side, and those held in common by a large number of people are often very vague and unbinding.

In such a situation institutional religion, traditional church religion, which strives to give an explanation of the world in its totality, is but one of a number of (specialized) social institutions, whose very existence relativizes the religious universe. This makes it increasingly difficult to uphold a religious world view.

These assumptions have important consequences. One is that it is normally quite difficult to change the view of reality into which an individual has been born, with which he has identified during primary socialization. For example, to foster an ideology (only) by means of the school system.

Yugoslav research illustrates this very well. The countryside is still (40 years after the Revolution) overwhelmingly religious, while in the urban areas large portions of the population have left religion behind. They have done so, however, more as a result of general social processes, than because of atheist-Marxist upbringing. In fact, the school system seems to be rather inefficient in the sense that it does not produce Marxists of pupils in secondary school. Those who are religious usually keep their religious faith, while the majority of those professing a Marxist outlook on life were brought up in homes where the parents were already party members.<sup>31)</sup>

The other point is that the problems facing religion are perhaps even greater for a secular religion,<sup>32)</sup> because of the concrete nature of its pronouncements about reality. If, for example, every new legislation, social institution or organizational change, is proclaimed to be a logical outcome of true ideology, which is the case in Yugoslavia, then if the system does not work, the failure will hit back on ideology

itself, in this case Marxism, and render it less credible.

Or, if the ideal world described by ideology turns out to be something else in reality, the same problem will appear. In general, at least under certain conditions, it is easier for a religious tradition than a secular one to generate new faith.

Finally, I would like to make the remark that although there might be certain similarities between religion and secular religion, this does not automatically mean that ideology would serve the same function as religion, supposedly, does, or, for that matter, any function.

The similarities in mythological structure and ritual practice might simply be a consequence of the fact that there are not that many possibilities for ideas to be socially and culturally present. Every organization and every system of ideas, whatever their purpose, will have certain features in common. Moreover, one must distinguish between those ideological structures that are really assimilated by individuals or groups, and those that are "empty", existing on a formal level, but not influencing attitudes and behaviour.<sup>33)</sup>

The Yugoslav case shows, that in a socialist system, with *some* degree of pluralism, the ideological model might be faced with serious problems of legitimacy in a situation where contradictions between ideal and reality are becoming too obvious.

## Notes and References

1. Sveta Lukić, *Savremena Jugoslovenska literatura (1945–1965)*, Rasprava o književnom životu i književnim merilima kod nas., Beograd, 1968.
2. One reason that secular equivalents to rituals connected with various stages of life, have not been created in Yugoslavia, is maybe that, as a result of the Cominform conflict, the Yugoslavs comparatively early referred to Soviet ideology as a quasi-religion. See K. Magnusson (a), *Theoretical Perspectives in Yugoslav Sociology of Religion*, Manuscript, Department of Sociology, University of Uppsala, 1986.
3. M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*, New York, 1961.
4. See G. Gesemann, *Čojstvo i junaštvo starih Crnogoraca*, Cetinje, 1968, (Original title: *Heroische Lebensform. Zur Literatur und Wesenskunde der Balkanischen Patriarchalität*, Berlin, 1943) and J. Brkic, *Moral Concepts in Traditional Serbian Epic Poetry*, The Hague, 1961.
5. V. Dedijer, *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita*, Knjiga II. Liburnija, Rijeka/Mladost, Zagreb, 1981.
6. The leading Zagreb sociologist, Josip Županov, referred to this set of attitudes by the concept "the egalitarian syndrome", which has been much debated in Yugoslav sociology. For a summary of his views see J. Županov, *Sociologija i samoupravljanje*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1977. Further sources are given in K. Magnusson (b), *Jugoslaver i Sverige: Invandrare och identitet i ett kultursociologiskt perspektiv* (Yugoslavs in Sweden: Immigrants and Identity in a Cultural-Sociological Perspective), Doctoral Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Uppsala, 1986.
7. K. Magnusson (b), *op. cit.*
8. The most well-known novels dealing with this problem are "Moment II", *Tren II*, by Antonije Isaković, "Night until morning", *Noć do jutra*, by Branko Hofman, "The Silent Orchestra", *Molčeći orkestar*, by Fredo Godina, and "Leap-year", *Prestupna godina*, by Žarko Komanin. For a discussion of this literature, see L. Scheffler, "Goli otok. Das Jahr 1948 in den jugoslawischen Gegenwartslitteraturen", *Südosteuropa*, (33), Heft 6, 1984, pp. 352–377.
9. The "Dachau Trials" are discussed in the autobiographical novel "Death by Installments", *Umiranje na obroke*, by Igor Torkar. A short background is given by J. Reuter, "Die 'Dachauer Prozesse' in Jugoslawien. Produkt des Stalinismus oder verhängnisvoller Justizirrtum?", *Südosteuropa*, (33), Heft 7/8, 1984, pp. 402–405.
10. Among the books recently published could be mentioned: Dedijer's two volumes of "New Contributions to the Biography of Josip Broz Tito", (V. Dedijer, *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita. Knjiga II. Liburnija, Rijeka/Mladost, Zagreb, 1981; Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita*, Knjiga III. Rad, Beograd, 1984), which were heatedly debated. Or the books by Nesović & Petranović and Milanović giving a partly different account of the war, especially of the Četnik movement, (S. Nesović & Branko Petranović, *AVNOJ i revolucija*, Narodna knjiga, Beograd, 1984; N. Milanović, *Kontrarevolucionarni pokret Draže Mihajlovića 1–2*, Rad, Beograd, 1984.) The most controversial study of the war was written by professor Veselin Djuretić, "The Allied and the Yugoslav War Drama". The book was banned as giving a distorted picture of the partisans, who allegedly by cunning and deceit misled the Western powers and the Yugoslav population, (V. Djuretić, *Saveznici i jugoslovenska ratna drama I–II*, Balkanološki institut SANU/Narodna knjiga, Beograd, 1985). Another very controversial book was Vojislav Koštunica's and Kosta Čavoški's "Political Pluralism or Monism", (recently published in English), which deals with the period 1944–1949. The authors discuss the problem of democracy as understood by the communists and their liberal adversaries. The picture emerging is one of a movement which let the end justify the means. (V. Koštunica & K. Čavoški, *Stranački pluralizam*

*ili monizam: Društveni pokreti i politički sistem u Jugoslaviji 1944–1949*, Centar za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, Institut društvenih nauka, Beograd, 1983).

11. K. Magnusson (c), "Nationalitetsproblem i Jugoslavien. Krisen i Kosovo" (National Problems in Yugoslavia. The Crisis in Kosovo), *Bidrag till öststatsforskningen*, Vol. 9, Nr. 2, 1981.
12. See especially the discussions at the 1983-meeting of the Yugoslav association of sociology in Portorož: *Integracioni i dezintegracioni procesi u jugoslovenskom društvu*, Zbornik referata. Sociološki susreti, Portorož, 9.–12. novembar 1983, Jugoslovensko udruženje za sociologiju i Raziskovalni institut Fakultete za sociologiju, politične vede in novinarstvo Univerze Edvarda Kardelja, Ljubljana, Knjižnica FPSN, Ljubljana, 1983. Or the report from the 9th congress of Yugoslav authors in 1985: *IX Kongres Saveza Književnika Jugoslavije. 18–20. april 1985. Dokumenta*, Književna zajednica Novog Sada, 1985.
13. See *Intervju*, 6.12.1985, pp. 20–22; *NIN*, 29.12.85, pp. 20–21.
14. See *NIN*, 28.7.1985, pp. 20–23, and the investigations reported in V. Goati et al, *Političko angažovanje u jugoslovenskom društvu*. Uporedjenje Članova CKJ, nečlanova i bivših članova, Marksistički centar CK Srbije/Institut društvenih nauka/Mladost, Beograd, 1985; and V. Milič, *Socijalni portret partije*. Prilog proučavanje slojevitosti Saveza komunista Srbije, Marksistički centar CK SK Srbije/Mladost, Beograd.
15. *NIN*, 28.7.1985, p. 21.
16. See *Danas*, 2.4.84, and *NIN*, 8.4.84.
17. The sociological, semantic and sociolinguistic aspects of political life in Yugoslavia were discussed in a widely read book by Slobodan Inić: *Govorite li politički?* ("Sprechen Sie politisch?") *Esej iz sociologije "političkog jezika"*, Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije, Beograd, 1984. See also the essays by V. Dimitrijević, "Čime se odaje staljinist", *NIN*, 24.6.1984, pp. 16–17 and Lj. Kljakić, "Ideologija vanrednog stanja i inteligencija", *Književnost*, god. XXXI 1984, Sv. 12, pp. 2272–2293.
18. See for example K. Čavoški, *The Enemies of the People*, The Centre for Research into Communist Economies, London, 1986; Dimitrijević *ibid.*; Kljakić *ibid.*; Inić *ibid.*; S. Stojanović, "Staljinistička partijnost i komunističko dostojanstvo", *Praxis*, god. X, 1973 br 5–6, pp. 679–696; T. Kuljić, "Kako zamišljamo neprijatelja", *NIN*, 19.8.1984, pp. 18–19. A more sophisticated example of the preoccupation with the enemy is represented by Muhić's book "LCY and the Opposition" (F. Muhić, *SKJ i opozicija*, Radnički univerzitet "Veljko Vlahović", Subotica).
19. This way of reasoning was particularly common during the political crisis in the beginning of the seventies. See D. Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948–1974*, London, 1977.
20. The most obvious example is the controversies about changes in the economic-political system. Whereas in the economic "Long-Term Program", adopted a few years ago, reforms were deemed necessary, those politicians responsible for the equivalent study of the institutional system are apparently not interested in changes. (See the ongoing discussion in the Yugoslav press during the spring of 1986).
21. There is a growing literature on the Yugoslav crisis, in books, scholarly journals and mass-media. In magazines such as *Danas*, *NIN*, or *Intervju*, politicians and scholars are giving extensive interviews. The basic issues are perhaps best treated in J. Županov, *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi*, Globus, Zagreb, 1983.
22. The view that fundamental aspects of the institutional system give rise to nationalism has been strongly argued by the professor of political science Jovan Mirić. See his book *Sistem i kriza*. Prilog kritičkoj analizi ustavnog i političkog sistema Jugoslavije, Centar za kulturnu djelatnost, Zagreb, 1984.

23. See for example T. Andjelić, "Zagrebačke demistifikacije", *NIN*, 3.6.1984, pp. 29–31; M. Vučelić, "O Šuvarizaciji kulture", *Književnost*, god. XXXX, 1–2, 1985, pp. 121–128; G. Marinković & J. Lovrić, "O stvarima, ne o ljudima", *Danas*, 29.5.84:19–22.
24. On the religious situation in recent years, especially its relation to ethnicity, see K. Magnusson (d), *Religion och nation i Jugoslavien (Religion and Nation in Yugoslavia)*, *Bidrag till öststatsforskningen*, Vol. 10, 1982, Nr. 1, pp. 1–85; K. Magnusson, *Nationella spänningar i Jugoslavien (National tensions in Yugoslavia)*, *ÖU-rapporter*, 2, 1983, (Uppsala) and P. Ramet, "Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslavia", (ed.) Pedro Ramet; *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, Durham, N.C., 1984.
25. See the articles by Richard West in the *Spectator*, 2.6., 9.6., 16.6.1984.
26. See for example M. Kerševan, *Industrijski delavci in religija*, Center za proučevanje religije in cerkve, Fakulteta za sociologijo, politične vede in novinarstvo, Ljubljana, 1970; M. Kerševan, "Odnos komunistov prema religiji", *Naše teme*, XXX, br. 5, 1975, pp. 885–898; S. Vrcan, "Religija kao oblik tradicionalne svijesti", *Sociologija*, XV, 2, 1975, pp. 211–236.
27. This was very clear in the beginning of the 1970s. Sociological investigations had shown a widespread lack of Marxist identification among youth. This, coupled with social unrest and ethnic tensions, was of great concern to the party. Consequently a comprehensive and large-scale program of Marxist education was introduced. Which however did not seem to have the desired effects. (For sources see K. Magnusson (b), *op. cit.*
28. See K. Magnusson (b), *op. cit.*
29. S. Inić, "Hej, deco, volite li Marksa?", *NIN*, 6.12.1985, pp. 18–20.
30. Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, Garden City, New York, 1969; Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Garden City, New York, 1967; Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion. The Problem of Religion in Modern Society*, New York, 1972.
31. K. Magnusson (b), *op. cit.*
32. M. Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion*, London, 1970, p. 113.
33. This has been discussed by the Slovene sociologist Marko Kerševan. See his *Religija kot družbeni pojav*, Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, 1975.



# SYMBOLS OF POWER

THE ESTHETICS OF POLITICAL LEGITIMATION IN  
THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE

**ALMQVIST & WIKSELL INTERNATIONAL**

# Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 5

INTRODUCTION 7

Lars Erik Blomqvist

## *Part I*

THE ORIGINS OF SOVIET RITUAL STYLE: SYMBOL AND  
FESTIVAL IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION 23

Richard Stites

SYMBOLS AND RITUALS IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACIES  
DURING THE COLD WAR 43

Anders Åman

RITUALIZED LANGUAGE: THE POLISH OBITUARY AS A  
SIGNAL OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL VALUES 61

Leonard Neuger & Bronisław Świdorski

SECULARIZATION OF IDEOLOGY: THE YUGOSLAV CASE 73

Kjell Magnusson

## *Part II*

FROM IDEOLOGY TO POLITICAL RELIGION: RECENT  
DEVELOPMENTS IN SOVIET BELIEFS AND RITUALS IN THE  
PATRIOTIC TRADITION 87

Christel Lane

LAW AS AN ORNAMENT OF POWER 99

Anders Fogelklou

SOVIET TV NEWS: "SOBORNOST" SECULARIZED 113

Kristian Gerner

ICONS AND SOVIET ART 141

Ulf Abel

THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL "SONG TO ROMANIA": MANIPULA-  
TION OF SYMBOLS IN THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE 163

Anca Giurchescu

SYMBOLS, RITUALS, AND POLITICAL LEGITIMATION:  
SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS 173

Daniel Tarschys

INDEX OF PERSONS 179

PICTURE CREDITS 181

PRESENTATION OF AUTHORS 184

Symbols and symbolic acts or rituals are manifestly typical of political life in Soviet-type societies. Deeply rooted in Eastern Christian tradition, these symbols of power form part of a political style, in many respects alien to the Western mind. Pre-revolutionary Russian symbols have been adapted to a new context, rituals with a strong appeal to emotion and intuition are staged to forge a bond of identity between rulers and ruled. In Soviet-type societies symbols and rituals take on a legitimizing function.

This collection of essays – originally presented at a symposium in Uppsala, Sweden, 1985 – explores previously under-researched aspects of political culture and furnishes data for a theoretical analysis of political socialization in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe.



**ALMQVIST & WIKSELL INTERNATIONAL**

ISBN 91-22-00843-8

Magnusson, K. 1987. "Secularization of Ideology: The Yugoslav Case." Pp. 73-84 in *Secularization of Ideology: The Yugoslav Case.*, edited by Claes Arvidsson and Lars-Erik Blomqvist. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.