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## ORGANISATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE YUGOSLAV COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA IN 1945–1950

### INTRODUCTION: THE COMMUNISTS IN POWER

During World War II, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia led a liberation movement and conducted a revolution at the same time. By the end of the war, it seized power and established new, federal Yugoslav state. Immediately after the war, the Communists started to create a new political, social and economic system based on the theory of Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party assumed absolute power, established a one-party political system and conducted nationalisation and deep social and economic changes through a thoroughly planned economy. Their pattern for the building of the state and implementing changes in its society, economy and culture was taken from the Soviet Union. In foreign policy, the new state found both support and a model from the Soviet Union as well, and perceived Western capitalist countries as ideological enemies.<sup>1</sup> But, during the postwar years, the internal and external policy of the Yugoslav State was evolving and changed according to the international situation and the attitudes of the Communist Party. In that respect, the conflict between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948 was a very important moment; after this clash, Yugoslav leadership started to look for new models of internal and foreign policy, attempting at the same time to maintain the total power of the Communist Party and the social and economic changes it had introduced.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, vol. 3 (Beograd: Nolit, 1988), pp. 29–78; M. Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku* (Beograd: Clio, 2013), pp. 213–252.

<sup>2</sup> J.L. Gaddis, *We Now Know. Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 48–49; W. Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time. A History 1945–1992* (Penguin Books, 1992), pp. 158–160; L.M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat. The United States, Yugoslavia and the Cold War* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pp. 1–120; B. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, vol. 3, pp. 195–321.

The basis of the new regime in Yugoslavia after World War II was the absolute predominance of a strong party organisation in all areas of the state and segments of its society. First of all, the Communist Party was in full control of the Army and the Police, especially the Secret Police/State Security Administration, which in the post-war years had an enormous power and was indeed a principal instrument of their control. The network of state authorities from the top of the Federation, through the Republics, to the lowest local authorities, was fully subordinated to the Party and composed primarily of loyal members of the Party. The Party organisation itself was branched and permeated the entire state and society, from the Government to the smallest villages, city districts, factories and schools. At the very top of the government was the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia – a handful of loyalists led by their undisputed leader, Josip Broz-Tito. In parallel with a network of state and party bodies, the Communist Party formed a network of so-called mass organisations. They were so-called “transmission belts”, completely subordinated to the Communist Party and playing the role of implementing party politics and ideology in the designated segments of population, such as the People’s Front, People’s Youth, syndicates, Antifascist Women’s Front, and the Children’s Organisation. Through such a system, the Communist Party completely shaped and controlled the state, society, economy, education, science, culture, and the everyday life and work of the entire population.<sup>3</sup> Significant methods of influence used by new government were repression, surveillance and constant political pressure, especially directed against the enemies and opponents of the new regime, as well as constant agitation and propaganda directed at all segments of the population.<sup>4</sup>

## THE AIMS OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

Propaganda had a crucial importance in establishing and strengthening Communist rule in Yugoslavia after the war. The general aim of propaganda was to concentrate the entirety of political, social, educational and scientific life into the hands of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and to impose its political and ideological attitudes and stances on all strata of the population. Marxism-Leninism was portrayed as the only permissible view of the world, said to lead into a society of equality and justice. The Communist Party

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<sup>3</sup> B. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, vol. 3, pp. 45–57. See more about Communist rule in Yugoslavia 1945–1950 [in:] V. Koštunica, K. Čavoški, *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam – zatiranje opozicije* (Beograd: Privredno-pravni priručnik, 1991); J. Vodoušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti 1944–1946* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1992); M. Obradović, *Narodna demokratija u Jugoslaviji 1945–1952* (Beograd: Inis, 1995); D. Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1999), pp. 204–272; B. Jandrić, *Hrvatska pod crvenom zvijezdom 1945–1952* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2005); Z. Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945–1991. Od zajedništva do razlaza* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest-Školska knjiga, 2006), pp. 151–198; I. Goldštajn, *Hrvatska 1918–2008* (Zagreb: Liber, 2008), pp. 414–424.

<sup>4</sup> More about Communist repression in Yugoslavia can be read S. Cvetković, “Represija komunističkog režima u Srbiji i Jugoslaviji 1944–1953. Sa osvrtom na iskustvo Istočne Evrope i Poljske” [in:] *Poljska i Jugosławia w stosunkach międzynarodowych po II wojnie światowej. Relacje wielostronne i wielopoziomowe*, ed. M. Pavlović, A. Zaćminski (Bydgoszcz: Uniwersytet Kazimierza Wielkiego, 2014), pp. 91–109.

was presented as the only force capable of implementing that ideology in practice. The purpose of such propaganda was to instruct the communists and others about the basic characteristics of the ideology of the Marxism-Leninism and socialism; to construct a new tradition of liberation struggle and revolution; to destroy the remainder of “bourgeois” ideology; to mitigate the impact of any hostile ideologies and policies; and to maintain the position of the Communist Party in the new regime. Propaganda had to persuade the population of a “heroic revolutionary past and an even brighter future” and to help in the “creation of the new socialist man”<sup>5</sup>

In particular, Party propaganda was tasked to explain and justify all of Yugoslav authorities’ the moves in internal and external policy. Thus, this propaganda had to explain the current conflict of the superpowers and the division of the world into two conflicting parts in the Cold War. An image was being created according to which “the new aggressive bourgeois imperialist tendencies” of Western countries “jeopardised peace in the world”, while the peaceful Soviet Union stood against them and protected peace and small and threatened countries. At the same time, propaganda had to justify Yugoslav zigzags, from the complete orientation of the Yugoslav leadership towards the Soviet Union and its confrontation and first open conflicts with capitalist countries of the West. A large amount of energy was spent on the explanation of the conflict with Italy over their northwestern borders and in persuading the population that Trieste and its surroundings should belong to Yugoslavia. This was also in preparation of the population for an eventual armed conflict that was barely avoided.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of Yugoslavia’s internal policy, propaganda had to explain the actions of the five year economic plan and glorify its achievements; to persuade the youth to accept voluntary mass physical labour; to popularise the accomplishments of government; to explain new legislation, the first constitution, nationalisation, agrarian reform, colonisation, and collectivisation in the villages. In the political sphere propaganda had to persuade the population to vote for the Communist Party in elections, to participate in conferences, meetings, and in various actions of local authorities and mass organisations. A special task of propaganda was to represent terror, political pressure, persecution and eradication of “reactionary forces” and opponents as inevitable and the rightful actions of the revolutionary Party.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> B. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, vol. 3, pp. 120–162; L. Dimić, *Agitprop kultura. Agitpropovska faza kulturne politike u Srbiji 1945–1952* (Beograd: Rad, 1988), pp. 28–30, 36–46; *idem*, “Ideology and Culture in Yugoslavia 1945–1955” [in:] *Great Powers and Small Countries in Cold War 1945–1955. Issue of Ex-Yugoslavia* (Belgrade: Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade, Archives of Serbia and Montenegro, Belgrade, Institute of Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade, Cold War Study Centre, London, 2005), pp. 303–305; Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archives of Yugoslavia; hereinafter: AJ), fund Centralni komitet Saveza komunista Jugoslavije (Central Committee of League of Communists of Yugoslavia; hereinafter: CK SKJ), 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/2-a-35, k. 1, Organizacija agitacije i propagande u KPJ, 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, IV-a-8, k. 34, Predavanje Veljka Vlahovića “Pitanje agitacije i propaganda”, 20 IV 1949.

<sup>6</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, IV-a-1, k. 34, Predavanje Milovana Đilasa o međunarodnoj i unutrašnjoj situaciji, 25 IX 1946; V. Novak, “Trinaestovekovna borba julijsko-krajiških Jugoslovena”, *Politika* 16 IX 1945, p. 1; A. Belić, “Oko Trsta”, *Politika* 17 IX 1945, p. 1. About Trieste Crisis see more B. Dimitrijević, D. Bogetić, *Tršćanska kriza 1945–1954, Vojno-politički aspekti* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, IV-a-1, k. 34, Predavanje Milovana Đilasa o međunarodnoj i unutrašnjoj situaciji, 25 IX 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, II/5-a-6, k. 26, Izveštaj o agitaciji i propagandi, 1949; *ibidem*, VIII,

In the sphere of education and culture, the Agitprop apparatus had to organise various cultural events, exhibitions, performances, concerts, and to engage the population to participate. At all levels of education, curricula and textbooks had to be adjusted to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the glorification of revolutionary tradition, the so-called “heroic past of Communist Party”, the development of the labour movement, and so on. Agitprop had to support large campaigns to spread literacy and encourage the illiterate to get involved in these campaigns and to enrol their children in the elementary educational system. Through these campaigns and schooling a set of propaganda messages was being constantly sent – about the Communist Party, the National Liberation Movement, Marxism-Leninism as the only one correct ideology, the personality cult of the Josip Broz-Tito, and so on. Let us mention that the final exam at a typical literacy course consisted of writing a letter to Josip Broz-Tito. Children had compulsory reading about partisans, the Soviet Union, workers and peasants, class distinctions, for instance. The principal aims of education were the amelioration of educational structure of population and the “creation of a new socialist intelligentsia”. Likewise, the main aims of their cultural policy were the dismantling of old cultural traditions and the creation of a new socialist culture for workers and peasants. Propaganda thus had to both spread Soviet impacts and models in culture and education as well as hinder any political and cultural influences from the western capitalist countries.<sup>8</sup>

After 1948, the reconsideration of the conflict between Yugoslavia and Cominform became a key topic in Party propaganda. Of course, that reconsideration was based on a premise that the Yugoslav leadership was fighting a just and successful struggle for the independence and sovereignty of the “small socialist country” and to build socialism in its own way. Imposing of the official interpretation of the conflict between Yugoslavia and Cominform became the main goal of all forms of agitation and propaganda: mass gatherings, lectures, political conferences in factories and state institutions, press, radio, schools, culture. Over time, their propaganda became increasingly hostile to the Soviet Union and other Cominform countries. Its main goal was to defend the Yugoslav leadership from their attacks and defamations.<sup>9</sup>

II/5-b-24, k. 26, Izveštaj o agitaciji na selu, March 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-a-9, k. 2, Direktivno pismo Agitpropa CK KPJ povodom novih mera Vlade za poboljšanje životnog standarda, 10 II 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-a-23, k. 2, Direktiva o agitaciji u izbornoj kampanji, February 1950; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-a-31, k. 2, Direktivno pismo Agitpropa CK KPJ o objašnjavanju političkih i ekonomskih mera, 20 XII 1950.

<sup>8</sup> “Osnovne smernice naše prosvetne politike, November 1945” [in:] *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1945–1952*, vol. 1: *Zbornik dokumenata*, ed. B. Doknić, M. Petrović, I. Hofman (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 2009), pp. 140–143; AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/8-a-19, k. 29, Izveštaj o kulturno-prosvetnom radu, 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/8-a-20, k. 29, Tekući zadaci i problem kulturno-prosvetnog rada, 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/8-d-35, k. 29, Informacija o zadacima vaspitanja i obrazovanja u našim školama, 1949; *ibidem*, VIII, II/8-d-53, k. 29, Nacrt predloga o tečaju marksizma-lenjinizma za prosvetnim radnicima, 1949; Arhiv Srbije (Archives of Serbia; hereinafter: AS), fund Centralni komitet Saveza komunista Srbije (Central Committee of League of Communists of Serbia; hereinafter: CK SKS), Uprava za agitaciju i propagandu, fasc. 1, O nastavi marksizma-lenjinizma na Univerzitetu, 1950. More about the principal cultural and educational aims and about Soviet cultural influence can be found [in:] L. Dimić, *Ideology and Culture in Yugoslavia*, pp. 306–316; *idem*, *Agitprop kultura*, pp. 162–188.

<sup>9</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/9–34, Izveštaj o agitaciono-propagandnom radu u vezi sa Informbiroom, 1949; *ibidem*, VIII, II/4-d-18, k. 24, Savetovanje u Agitpropu-borba protiv Informbiroa, 28 III 1949; AS, CK SKS, Uprava za agitaciju i propagandu, fasc. 45, Ideološko-vaspitni rad sa studentima, May

## ORGANISATION AND CADRES

Propaganda was managed directly by the Party centres at all levels – federal, republic, provincial, or lower Party organisations and departments. To that end, the Party established subcommittees for propaganda in all Party committees, from central to district committees, and also designated individuals in all Party cells for propaganda issues. As the propaganda area was broad, the departments dedicated to press and propaganda, theoretical work and lecturing, cultural activities, organisational, technical and pedagogical work and education were established. Propaganda departments existed in parallel in Party bodies, state administration and mass organisations (such as the People's Front, People's Youth, syndicates, Antifascist Women's Front), at all levels. The propaganda machinery and propaganda activities were based on directives and the approach was authoritarian. Every aspect of political, social, educational and cultural life was placed under the absolute control of the propaganda apparatus. The propaganda apparatus under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (Commission for Agitation and Propaganda, or Agitprop) was directing this propaganda machinery, creating and managing all propaganda activities at all levels through its directives and instructions sent to the propaganda departments of every party cell in the country. According to the nature of the Yugoslav political system after World War II, all instructions of Party propaganda apparatus immediately became obligatory directives for all state and local authorities and mass organisations. In the observed period, the propaganda apparatus changed its organisation and structure several times, but its aims, scopes and mode of work stayed similar all the time.<sup>10</sup>

The propaganda apparatus of the Central Committee was led by Milovan Đilas, one of the most important persons in the communist leadership, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee, main Party dogmatist and theoretician, and the closest co-worker of Josip Broz-Tito. He was subsequently the biggest Yugoslav dissident, political prisoner and globally known renegade from the communist regime. He studied literature and philosophy before World War II, showing literary ambitions himself. After the

1949; M. Đilas, *Izveštaj o agitaciono-propagandnom radu CK KPJ. Referat održan na V kongresu KPJ* (Beograd: Borba, 1948), pp. 31–36. For more about Agitprop in particular republics see A. Gabrić, *Slovenska agitpropovska kulturna politika 1945–1952* (Ljubljana: Mladika, 1991); Z. Knezović, "Obilježja boljše vizacije hrvatske kulture 1945–1947", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 1992, no. 1, pp. 101–133; K. Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945–1952* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2002); B. Kašić, "Politika kulture, ideologijsko mapiranje, zasjeci" [in:] 1945. – *razdjelnica hrvatske povijesti*, ed. N. Kisić-Kolanović, M. Jareb, K. Spehnjak (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2006), pp. 123–136; T. Šarić, "Djelovanje Agitpropa prema književnom radu i izdavaštvu u NR Hrvatskoj 1945–1952", *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta* 42 (2010), pp. 387–424; M. Najbar Agičić, *Kultura, znanost, ideologija, Prilozi istraživanju politike komunističkih vlasti u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1960. na polju kulture i znanosti* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2013), pp. 29–68.

<sup>10</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I-1–41, k. 1, O reorganizaciji agitacije i propagande, March 1945; *ibidem*, VIII, I/2-a-34, k. 1, Predlog za reorganizaciju odeljenja agitacije i propagande, 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, I/2-a-35, k. 1, Organizacija agitacije i propagande u KPJ, 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, IV-a-5, k. 34, Predavanje Mome Markovića "Osnovna partjska organizacija", 8 III 1949; M. Đilas, *Izveštaj o agitaciono-propagandnom radu*, pp. 24–30; *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1945–1952*, pp. 118–130; M. Najbar Agičić, *Kultura, znanost, ideologija*, pp. 30–41.

World War II and a successful Communist Revolution, Đilas, among other, created the Communist policy towards the intelligentsia, education, science and culture. His speeches and articles in the press and special brochures had the weight of Party directives and orders. They were analysed and studied in party propaganda departments at all levels and were obligatory literature for all communists.<sup>11</sup> The members of propaganda apparatus at higher levels (federal and republican Central Committees) were also educated and ambitious communist intellectuals, professors, teachers, writers, artists, loyal to the Communist Party and devoted to Marxism-Leninism and dialectic materialism in science, culture and art. They believed they had the task of imposing Party policy in the sphere of the human soul and of creating a “new socialist man”. Let us mention some examples: Veljko Vlahović, a revolutionary, fighter in the Spanish Civil War, Marxist theoretician, chief of the federal Agitprop; Vladimir Dedijer, a journalist, historian, publicist, member of the federal Agitprop in charge for the press; Radovan Zogović, a poet and revolutionary, member of the federal Agitprop in charge of culture, until 1948 when he joined to Cominform; Boris Zihlerl, a Slovenian communist and sociologist, revolutionary, member of the federal Agitprop; and so on.<sup>12</sup>

But, the lower levels of the Communist Party were struggling to find good personnel (cadres) to carry out the propaganda. In many local committees and communist cells, propaganda departments were not established or did not work anyway. It was hard to find educated and loyal people for confidential propaganda duties. The Communist Party often chose loyal, but not efficient enough cadres. Such Party propaganda cadres conducted ideological and political education, supervised the activities of writers, artists and scientists, took care of loyalty and morality, spread international and class awareness, cultivated revolutionary traditions, spread propaganda's influence in public life, and so on. The Communist Party was the only authority they bowed to, and party discipline was the highest law they knew. They worked as “soldiers of the Party”, just like at any other job given them by Communist Party. They introduced into propaganda the terminology of the revolutionary struggle: “the front”, “struggle”, “battle”, “enemy”, “victory”, “masses”, “mobilisation”, “army”, to name a few.<sup>13</sup> Agitators were provided with manuals for agitation which consisted of data, figures, reports, instructions and brief information about internal and foreign policy, economy, culture, and so on. These manuals were important guidance for Agitprop members in villages, city districts, factories, and across the entire country.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> A.V. Miletić, *Politička delatnost Milovana Đilasa 1944–1954*, doktorska disertacija (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2017); M. Đilas, *Izveštaj o agitaciono-propagandnom radu*; AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, IV-a-1, k. 34, Predavanje Milovana Đilasa o međunarodnoj i unutrašnjoj situaciji, 25 IX 1946.

<sup>12</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/2-a-37, k. 1, Spisak službenika Uprave propagande i agitacije, 14 II 1949; *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1945–1952*, p. 501; B. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, vol. 3, pp. 124–125.

<sup>13</sup> L. Dimić, *Ideology and Culture in Yugoslavia*, pp. 311–312; M. Najbar Agičić, *Kultura, znanost, ideologija*, pp. 42–50; AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/5-a-18, k. 26, Informacija o rukovođenju agitaciono-propagandnim radom.

<sup>14</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/5-a-2, k. 26, Informacija o priručnicima za agitaciju, 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/5-a-15, k. 26, Kratak izveštaj o priručnicima za agitaciju, 1948.

## THE AREAS OF ACTIVITY

As already mentioned, the “propaganda front” was broad, so it was divided into several areas and several departments in the propaganda apparatus. Until 1951 there were commissions (sections) for schools, culture, the press, villages, agitation, the theory and lecturing of Marxism-Leninism, and propaganda abroad.<sup>15</sup> All segments of culture and education went along “Party lines”: the writings of the press, publishing plans, literature, the approach to tradition, campaigns to spread literacy, science, exhibitions, cinema and theatre repertoires. These represented only the elaboration and popularisation of the Communist Party policy and dogma to which the propaganda apparatus strictly adhered. The Communist Party monopoly over both state and society determined the activity of the propaganda machine. Through culture the Communist Party propagated its political views and its ideology, effectively influenced people’s awareness, and attempted to explain and justify revolutionary changes. The Commission for Culture in the propaganda apparatus took care of the entirety of cultural life in the country. It considered the repertoire of theatres and cinemas, life and work of actors, radio program, literature, life and work of writers, orchestras, opera, concerts and musicians, exhibitions and artists, publishers and libraries. In addition, it organised and controlled cultural life in the villages, various performances, took care of folk culture, and so on. This commission had a crucial role in either permitting or forbidding and proscribing some book, movie, performance, exhibition, or other cultural artifact.<sup>16</sup>

Through its Commission for Schooling, the Party had full control over all schools, elementary schools, gymnasias, high schools and universities, plus scientific institutes. Members of this commission deliberated upon, for example, curricula and syllabuses, textbooks, the teaching of Marxism-Leninism, the professionalism and political attitudes of teaching staff, the behaviour and political activities of students. The school curricula and textbooks were in accordance with the official ideology and consisted of ideologically determined educational messages. They had the function of specific “transmissions” for shaping and spreading the desired social consciousness, through which schoolchildren were channeled in the desired direction.<sup>17</sup> According to assessments found in the official reports, quoted by Professor Ljubodrag Dimić, the Communist Party realised over 50% of its political propaganda through educational and cultural activities.<sup>18</sup>

The main channel of communist propaganda’s influence was the press.<sup>19</sup> All newspapers and periodicals were under the Agitprop’s and its press commission’s strict control. This

<sup>15</sup> *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1945–1952*, p. 102; AJ CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/2-a-35, k. 1, Organizacija agitacije i propagande u KPJ, 1946.

<sup>16</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/4-d-4, k. 24, Zapisnik sa savetovanja u Agitpropu po pitanju kulturno-masovnog rada, 20 I 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-a-12, k. 2, Direktive sa savetovanja u Agitpropu o izdavačkoj delatnosti, December 1948; L. Dimić, *Ideology and Culture in Yugoslavia*, pp. 304–309, 312–314.

<sup>17</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/8-d-62, k. 29, Informacija o radu partijskih organizacija po pitanju školstva, 1949; *ibidem*, VIII, II/8-d-52, k. 29, Materijal o radu partijskih organizacija na školama, 1949.

<sup>18</sup> L. Dimić, *Ideology and Culture in Yugoslavia*, p. 306.

<sup>19</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, IV-a-2, Predavanje Vladimira Dedijera “Uloga štampe i njeno mesto u partijskom radu”, 24 X 1947.

commission oversaw the political and ideological contents of newspapers, the organisation of publishers, the composition of editorial boards, journalists, printing offices and machines, paper procurement, distribution, and so on. Editors were trusted and skilful people, loyal to the Party, and naturally appointed by the Agitprop department. The new Yugoslav news agency TANJUG was completely under Agitprop control.<sup>20</sup> Nothing was left to chance – they regularly received instructions by Agitprop and the press commission. The press commission drew up a classification of all kinds of daily, weekly and monthly newspapers published in Yugoslavia and divided them into several groups: central, republican and local press; newspapers for youth, students, children, the economy, village and agriculture, national minorities, syndicates, religion, the army, and so on. Then the content of all kinds of newspapers was carefully analysed and a report was sent to the Agitprop. Members of the commission were examining the writing in all segments, internal and foreign policy, economy, culture, agriculture and were making sharp comments, remarks and suggestions, especially pointing to ideological failures and mistakes.<sup>21</sup> A mandatory segment of the daily press were Party documents, reports, resolutions, programs, pamphlets, speeches of Communist officials, documents from plenums, and other carefully selected reading material. The content of the daily press was monotonous, so some contemporaries said in jest that newspapers should not be printed every day, but only on 1 January. For the rest of the year only the date and weather report would be subject to change.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the press, an important medium after the World War II was radio. There were six radio stations in Yugoslavia at the end of the 1940s – Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje and Titograd. Undoubtedly, radio was easier and more efficient in sending propaganda messages, but its influence was limited by a low number of radio devices in country. However, Agitprop paid considerable attention to the programming of radio stations and regularly analysed, criticised and directed the contents of all radio shows (not only political and ideological, but economic, cultural, and for youth, peasants and children too).<sup>23</sup>

## THE CELEBRATIONS

Special occasions for propaganda activities were various manifestations and celebrations of state and Party holidays, festivals and anniversaries. Party propaganda

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, VIII, I/4-c-1, k. 23, Beleške sa sastanaka o TANJUG-u, November 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, I/4-c-2, k. 23, Zaključci sa sastanaka o TANJUG-u za Milovana Đilasa, May 1947.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, VIII, I/5-b-21, k. 26, Izveštaj o srpskim lokalnim listovima, 1947; *ibidem*, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/5-b-23, k. 26, Izveštaj o lokalnoj štampi, March 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, I/5-b-25, k. 26, Analiza o problemima naše štampe od oslobođenja do danas, May 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-a-19, k. 2, Direktivno pismo Uprave agitacije i propagande CK KPJ o problemima republičke štampe, 21 VII 1949; M. Najbar Agičić, *Kultura, znanost, ideologija*, pp. 50–53.

<sup>22</sup> B. Mihajlović Mihiz, *Autobiografija o drugima*, vol. 1 (Beograd: BIGZ, 1991), p. 198.

<sup>23</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/5-c-73, k. 26, Izveštaj o Radio-Beogradu, July 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, II/5-c-74, k. 26, Osnovni nedostaci, greške i propusti u programu naših radiostanica, 14 November 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, II/5-c-84, k. 26, Izveštaj o pitanjima sadržaja emisija marksizma-lenjinizma na Radio Beogradu, 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/5-c-80, k. 26, Pregled rada republičkih radiostanica, September 1950.



apparatus set the calendar of these dates and strictly determined how to celebrate them. Among the most important state holidays after the World War II in Yugoslavia were: 1 May (Labour Day), 9 May (Victory Day), 25 May (Tito's Birthday), celebrated as Youth Day, and 29 November (The Day of the Republic). All these occasions were used to send the new regime's propaganda messages, such as: glorifying the revolutionary past, highlighting the new regime's accomplishments in the economy, foreign policy, education and culture, justifying the Communist Party's internal and external policy (especially its implementation of social and economic changes) and predicting a bright future in the new socialist society. The entire flow and content of these celebrations were designed and determined by the propaganda apparatus at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Precise instructions were sent about the time of celebrations, schedule of events and participants, and about the shape and content of banners, slogans and photos.<sup>24</sup>

Let us take the example of celebrating 1 May. The celebration of Labour Day assumed a new significance, form and role after the World War II. In post-war Yugoslavia the international holy day of the working class became a national holiday and a large-scale politico-propagandistic ritual of the ruling Communist Party. The idea was to present the domestic and international political achievements of the Party and the state, as well as to display results in the post-war reconstruction and development of the country, in carrying out social, economic and cultural reforms, in strengthening the country's international position and military security. The organisation and course of the celebration was overseen by the Party through its Agitprop apparatus. Preparations took weeks and were tightly supervised: the Party specified the form and content of the parade, the number, arrangement and roles of the participants, scenography, slogans and banners, and cultural, artistic, athletic and entertainment programs. Various state and party bodies, and local mass organisations, received detailed instructions, and the directives were followed strictly. An important role was played by the press, conveying the party directives in advance of the event, and then pompously reporting on its course, form and significance. The backbone of the celebration was a parade involving workers, peasants, youth members, pioneer and student organisations presenting the results of their work according to a strictly prescribed order, singing and chanting, and an important role was assigned to the Yugoslav Army. Banners and photographs of the leadership were carried in the parade, the whole city was lavishly decorated, and cultural, athletic and entertainment programs went on throughout the day. The central Yugoslav celebration was held in Belgrade, but similar manifestations were held in all capitals of the republics, as well as everywhere throughout the country. Labour Day celebrations were generally alike in the first five post-war years, but certain alterations reflected the changing domestic and international political situation and the country's central issues: the fight against fascism was a key topic in 1945; reconstruction and

<sup>24</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, CK KPJ, 1945/297; AJ, CK SKJ, 507, VIII, II/1-b-46, Direktiva za proslavu 9 V 1945; AS, CK SKS, k. 1, br. 268, 6. maj 1946; AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/1-b-52, k. 2, Instrukcija o proslavi 29. novembra 1948; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-a-29, k. 2, Direktivno pismo Uprave agitacije i propagande CK KPJ povodom proslave 29. novembra, 11 XI 1950; etc. See also M. Mitrović, "Proslave i slavja u Srbiji 1945. godine", *Tokovi istorije* 3 (2006), pp. 106–115.

development in 1946; the five-year plan in 1947; and in 1948, as a result of the conflict with Cominform, the Soviet Union and friendship with the Eastern European “popular democracies” ceased to be glorified. The Party surveilled and critically analysed each past event, and used the freshly gained experience to lay down the directives for the next one. Such manifestations were the best opportunity for expressing the propaganda abilities of the Party’s Agitprop apparatus, as well as the best example of its organisation, goals and operating modes.<sup>25</sup>

It should be mentioned that important occasions for propaganda activities included some special anniversaries with political and ideological content. The Agitprop apparatus paid great attention to such occasional celebrations. Some of them were: the 10th anniversary of the death of Maxim Gorky, a great Soviet writer, in 1946; the 100 anniversary of the birth of Svetozar Marković, the first Serbian socialist, in 1946; the 25th anniversary of Lenin’s death in 1949; the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1947; the 10th anniversary of the 1951 Uprising in Serbia (and in Croatia too); and so on.<sup>26</sup>

## CHANGES AFTER 1948

The conflict between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948 caused a strong shock in the entire Yugoslav state, regime and Communist Party. It led to gradual and limited changes in Yugoslav foreign and internal policy, state, economy, society, culture, education, arts and also in Agitprop itself and in its propaganda activities. The relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and Cominform countries had deteriorated and the Yugoslav leadership began gradual approach and cooperation with Western countries. So, Yugoslav propaganda ceased to glorify and celebrate the Soviet Union, Soviet Party, Red Army and Joseph Stalin. After 1948, Yugoslav propaganda did not highlight the situation in the Soviet Union as an example to follow. The main task for the Yugoslav party was to explain theoretically and practically the conflict with “big brother” and the deep changes that had arisen. The tasks of all kinds of propaganda were to analyse the policy and economy of the Soviet Union and other Cominform countries, to investigate their mutual relations, to describe the structure and work of communist parties in Eastern Europe, and so on. Journalists were asked for more serious, detailed and extensive articles and analyses, filed with data and figures. Initially, the conflict caused a centralisation of cultural policy, agitation and propaganda, and Party control was intensified. The

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<sup>25</sup> AJ, CKSKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/1-a-3, k. 1, Uputstvo za proslavu 1 maja, 3 April 1946; AS, CK SKS, Uprava za agitaciju i propagandu, fasc. 2, 28. mart 1947; AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/1-b-51, k. 2, Uprava za agitaciju i propagandu CK KPJ dostavlja Plan proslave, 1 V 1948. See more [in:] D. Bondžić, M. Bondžić, “Prvomajske proslave u Beogradu 1945–1950”, *Godišnjak grada Beograda* 54 (2007), pp. 289–308. Compare with: D. Bondžić, “The Communist Party and Celebrations of the Victory Day (9 May) in Yugoslavia 1945–1955”, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2019, vol. 1, no. 33, pp. 345–355.

<sup>26</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, Ideološka komisija, 507, VIII, I/1-a-4, k. 1, 16 V 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, I/1-a-5, k. 1, 1 VII 1946; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-a-15, k. 2, Direktivno pismo Agitpropa povodom 25 godišnjice Lenjinove smrti, 10 I 1949; *ibidem*, VIII, II/1-b-49, k. 2, Instrukcija Agitpropa CK KPJ u vezi sa proslavom 30-te godišnjice Oktobarske revolucije, 13 IX 1947.

“systematic struggle against hostile influence” was proclaimed as basic aim of propaganda. But, over time, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia began to change its “old” management methods and to introduce decentralisation and democratisation of culture and education, to create new state organs of government and to reorganise its propaganda machine.<sup>27</sup> The reorganisation of the Agitprop apparatus started in June 1950 and was continued later during the 1950s.<sup>28</sup>

So, it can be concluded that by the beginning of the 1950s, the one period of development of the Agitprop apparatus and its agitation and propaganda in Yugoslavia finished. That period was crucial for the consolidation of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia’s power and fulfilled with important events, phenomena, processes and turning points in the internal development of Yugoslavia and in international relations. How effective was the Yugoslav propaganda system in this period? In the absence of elections, free press, opinion polls or other means of expression of political attitude, it is difficult to discern. However, the ease with which Yugoslav leadership made huge shifts from East to West in foreign policy and equally dramatic manoeuvres in internal policy would not have been possible without considerable public support, doubtlessly galvanised by both ruthless repression and skilful propaganda.

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<sup>27</sup> L. Dimić, *Ideology and Culture*, pp. 315–319; *idem*, *Agitprop kultura*, pp. 245–265; A. Gabrić, “Preokret kulturno-političke linije KPJ posle rezolucije Informbiroa”, *Istorija 20. veka* 2000, no. 1, pp. 101–106; AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/4-d-18, k. 24, Savetovanje u Agitpropu-borba protiv Informbiroa, 28 III 1949; *ibidem*, VIII, I/4-c-5, k. 23, Sastanak sa urednicima spoljnopolitičkih rubrika održan u Agitpropu, 22 IV 1950.

<sup>28</sup> AJ, CK SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, I/1-a-26, k. 1, O reorganizaciji agitacije i propagande, 22 VI 1950; *ibidem*, VIII, I/1-a-21, k. 1, 14 X 1950.

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## **Organisation and activities of the Yugoslav Communist Propaganda in 1945–1950**

The article deals with the organisation and activities of the propaganda apparatus of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the so-called Agitprop, in the first five years after World War II. The Agitprop apparatus was a very important part of the Communist Party's structure, and it had crucial tasks in strengthening its power. Through different forms of activities, Agitprop created a desirable public image of the Communist Party and its policy and ideology. Agitprop worked in everyday ordinary situations in factories, schools, institutions, state bodies, party meetings and special subordinated organisations, syndicates, youth organisations, women's organisations, etc. Besides this, special mass gatherings, meetings, celebrations, parades were organised at various occasions. Great significance was attached to propaganda's influence in educational system and culture. The main form of Communist propaganda influence was the press that was completely under the control of the Agitprop. The contents of propaganda in the observed period changed in accordance with the internal and international political situation and the main political goals and needs of Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The article is based on archival sources, published documents, press articles and relevant literature.

### **KEYWORDS**

Yugoslavia, Communist Party, Agitprop apparatus, propaganda, ideology, power

## **Organizacja i działania jugosłowiańskiej propagandy komunistycznej w latach 1945–1950**

Artykuł przedstawia organizację i działania aparatu propagandowego Komunistycznej Partii Jugosławii, tzw. Agitpropu, w pierwszych pięciu latach po zakończeniu II wojny światowej. Aparat propagandowy stanowił niezwykle ważną część struktur partii komunistycznej, odpowiadającą za kluczowe zadania związane z utrwalaniem jej władzy. Agitprop podejmował szereg działań dla budowania pożądanego wizerunku publicznego partii komunistycznej, jej polityki i ideologii. Propaganda funkcjonowała w zwykłych, codziennych okolicznościach w fabrykach, szkołach, instytucjach, organach państwowych, na spotkaniach partyjnych oraz w powiązanych z partią zrzeszeniach i organizacjach młodzieżowych, kobiecych itp. Oprócz tego przy różnych okazjach organizowane były specjalne wiece, obchody świąt, spotkania i pochody. Wielkie znaczenie przywiązywano do wpływu propagandy w szkolnictwie i kulturze. Główną formą wpływu propagandy komunistycznej była prasa, pozostająca pod całkowitą kontrolą Agitpropu. Propagandowe treści w badanym okresie zmieniały się w zależności od krajowej i międzynarodowej sytuacji politycznej oraz głównych celów i potrzeb Komunistycznej Partii Jugosławii.

Artykuł opiera się na źródłach archiwalnych, opublikowanych dokumentach, artykułach prasowych oraz stosownej literaturze naukowej.

#### SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Jugosławia, partia komunistyczna, aparat propagandowy, Agitprop, propaganda, ideologia, władza

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