



# Jakša Kušan's Forgotten Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Croatia\*

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Croatian journalist and writer Jakša Kušan (1931–2019) was one of the most prominent Croatian émigré dissidents. By editing and publishing the non-partisan magazine *Nova Hrvatska* (New Croatia), he tried to inform the global public about the suppression of human rights and civil liberties in socialist Yugoslavia, even under constant threat of being attacked by the Yugoslav secret police. After the fall of communism, he returned to Croatia and continued his work in the media and the civil sector for a brief time. In this article, I offer an overview of the most relevant of Kušan's oppositional activities during the period of communist rule in Croatia and Yugoslavia and consider the roles and impact of his activities. I also venture some explanation as to why his life and work have mostly been forgotten in today's Croatia. One possible answer to this question could be his complex relationships with the Croatian dissidents who won the first multiparty elections in Croatia in 1990. My discussion is based on the findings of the COURAGE project (*Cultural Opposition – Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries*), oral history sources, and archival documents of the Yugoslav secret police.

Keywords: Jakša Kušan, Croatian émigré, dissent, socialist Yugoslavia, Croatia, democracy, COURAGE project, Yugoslav secret service

## *Introduction*

The life of Jakša Kušan is a relevant topic in the history of dissent and non-conformism in the former socialist countries of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. Kušan, who spent much of his life in exile, was one of the most prominent journalists and publishers of the Croatian diaspora. From 1955 to 1990, he propagated a vision of a democratic and pluralistic Croatia. By publishing the non-partisan newspaper *Nova Hrvatska* (New Croatia), he sought to inform not only the Croatian emigrants but also the Yugoslav and Western public about the suppression of human rights and civil liberties in socialist

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Yugoslavia and to emphasize the precarious position of the Croatian nation in the federal Yugoslav state. The communist authorities in Yugoslavia attempted to hinder his activity in exile by creating an extensive network of agents and informants around Kušan. Despite the efforts of the Yugoslav State Security Service (UDBA/SDS),<sup>1</sup> however, Kušan managed to publish the journal for more than three decades. The journal earned the epithet of the most respected political magazine among Croatian émigrés. Although Kušan was emotionally attached to the idea of creating an independent and sovereign Croatia, he believed that in the political struggle, one should avoid indulging in the emotions that led many Croatian émigrés to political radicalism. He believed that Croatian émigrés would not gain the support of the Western world if they showed any willingness to use terrorist methods.

Croatian political emigration would significantly contribute to Croatia's independence from Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. In the 1970s and 1980s, Kušan strongly supported many of the Croatian dissidents and oppositional figures who eventually won the first multi-party elections in Croatia in 1990. However, Kušan's connections with the people who formed the new government were severed very quickly, and he found himself on the margins of political life. Although he performed some public duties in the 1990s, mostly in the civil and NGO sector, Kušan did not participate actively in political life, and he wrote less and less and stopped publishing. Gojko Borić claims that Kušan was marginalized from the moment of the establishment of the Republic of Croatia as an independent state and that today he has been almost completely forgotten and his legacy has become a matter of debate.<sup>2</sup>

This paper has two main goals. The first is to emphasize the most relevant of Kušan's oppositional activities during the period of communist rule in Yugoslavia and consider the roles and impact of his activities. The second is to venture some explanation as to why his life and work have mostly been forgotten in today's Croatia. The discussion is based primarily on the findings of the COURAGE project (Cultural Opposition – Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries),<sup>3</sup> oral history sources (interviews), and

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1 Until 1966, the official name of the Yugoslav secret service was the State Security Administration (in Serbian, Uprava državne bezbednosti, or UDBA). From 1967, its name was State Security Service (in Croatian, Služba državne sigurnosti, or SDS).

2 Borić, "Veliki emigrantski novinar Jakša Kušan."

3 The COURAGE project was an EU funded project on the legacy of cultural opposition in the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It explored and compared collections on cultural

archival documents. The COURAGE project researched Kušan as a significant oppositional figure to socialist Yugoslavia, describing his private collection of books, photographs, and letters related to the activities of Croatian émigrés.<sup>4</sup> As part of this project, two long interviews were conducted with Kušan in 2016 and 2018.<sup>5</sup> For this article, a dossier (intelligence file) on Kušan created by the notorious UDBA (the secret service of socialist Yugoslavia) was also analyzed. Files of the Croatian branch of the UDBA, including the file on Kušan, are held today at the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb and recently became available to researchers.<sup>6</sup> In this research, I have used various books from the fields of history, political science, and diaspora studies, as well as various articles from scientific and other journals and online sources.

### *Kušan's Life before Exile*

Kušan was born in Zagreb on April 23, 1931 to a middle-class family. During World War II, when he was still a boy, his family did not sympathize with the Ustasha regime in the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, or NDH), which was a fascist puppet state supported by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Kušan's family was Western-oriented, appreciating parliamentary democracy and liberalism. They listened to Western radio stations, such as the BBC.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, hopes for the establishment of democracy were dashed after the end of the war. After the overthrow of the fascist regime of the NDH, another form of totalitarianism, the communist one, rose to power in the new Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (Federativna Narodna Republika Jugoslavija, or FNRJ).<sup>8</sup>

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opposition and dissent. For more on the project see the project's webpage COURAGE: Connecting Collections.

4 Mihaljević, "Jakša Kušan Collection."

5 Bing and Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan; Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

6 The file on Kušan was created by the Croatian branch of the UDBA/SDS (the official name of the Croatian branch was State Security Service of the Republic Internal Affairs Secretariat of the Socialist Republic of Croatia). The Service monitored all persons whose activities were assessed as a threat to the state's political and security system. See HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša.

7 Klemenčić, "Jakša Kušan: Deficitarni smo u idealizmu i idealima," 5–6; Bing and Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan; Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, 161.

8 The 1963 constitution officially renamed it the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija, or SFRJ).

Kušan finished high school in 1950 in his hometown. As a high school student, he corresponded with members of the International Friendship League.<sup>9</sup> He also came into conflict with philosophy professors over the issue of ideology, and similar conflicts arose when he pursued the study of law at the University of Zagreb. Unlike most of his colleagues, who wrote essays and seminar papers based on texts by Karl Marx, Kušan took an interest in subjects associated with the works of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky, authors who were not widely promoted at the time. Due to his nonconformist views, he soon came into conflict with the communist party nomenclature at the university.<sup>10</sup>

During his student days in Zagreb, he was part of a circle of young intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the political situation in Yugoslavia, especially with the oppressive methods used by the regime and the lack of cultural ties to the Western world. In 1953, they began to hold regular gatherings, and they started entertaining the idea of establishing a political organization, which was prohibited by law. In 1954, they organized an illegal organization called the Croatian Resistance Movement (*Hrvatski pokret otpora*, or HPO).<sup>11</sup> They illegally procured newspapers published by Croatian emigrants, but they were disappointed by these publications, which did not meet their expectations or standards. In their assessment, the Croatian émigrés were uninformed and did not have close enough ties with their homeland. Kušan felt that the émigrés were more concerned with relations among the Croatian émigré communities (and the differences that divided these communities) than they were with the fate of the people in Croatia. The first proclamation made by the HPO, which was written in 1954 and bore the title “Message of the Croatian youth from the homeland to Croats in exile,” was an appeal to Croatian emigrants to set aside their petty disputes and problems and work together for the sake of Croatia.<sup>12</sup> Kušan was the main founder of HPO and also the person who authored all the organization’s documents.<sup>13</sup> The group was also dissatisfied with the attitudes of

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9 Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, 164. The International Friendship League is a voluntary non-profit organization founded in 1931 which aims to enhance understanding and friendship between peoples of all nations through the development of personal friendships between individuals of different countries. International Friendship League, “About Us: The story of the IFL.”

10 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

11 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 5. The group included students Stanko Janović, Ivo Kujundžić, Tvrtko Zane (alias Branimir Donat), and Zorka Bolfek. On HPO, see Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*.

12 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 37–49.

13 Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, 160.

the Western states, many of which supported Josip Broz Tito and his communist regime in Yugoslavia because of his dispute with the Soviets. They therefore decided that someone from the group should go to the West and engage in journalistic work there. Kušan volunteered to be that person, in part because he was already under police surveillance.<sup>14</sup> Kušan had caught the attention of the authorities because he had defended a friend, a student at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, at the Disciplinary Court of the University of Zagreb. His friend had been accused of having publicly expressed political beliefs that were not in line with party propaganda.<sup>15</sup> The case turned into a strong demonstration against the communists, who led the student organization at the faculty.<sup>16</sup> Partly in response, at the beginning of 1954, students who were members of the party organizations began to take revenge on Kušan and forbade him to attend lectures and exams. They soon initiated disciplinary proceedings against him at the Faculty of Law. As a consequence of these proceedings, Kušan was given a comparatively lenient punishment for having “exceeded his right to defense,” but this meant that he was subjected to police interrogations and also received death threats. Kušan decided to move to Belgrade to continue his law studies. According to him, the atmosphere in Belgrade was completely different, and he was not under the same strict control that he had been put under in Zagreb.<sup>17</sup>

### *Fleeing Yugoslavia and Founding the Magazine Nova Hrvatska*

In Belgrade, while pursuing his studies, Kušan worked as a tourist guide for English-speaking groups of tourists. At the end of April 1955, he received a Yugoslav passport, and he left Yugoslavia in May. He crossed the border with Austria and traveled to Italy, where he stayed for a short time before moving to The Hague via Rome, where in 1955 he received a scholarship at the Academy of International Law. One of the judges of the Hague Tribunal, Dr Milovan Zoričić, helped him obtain the scholarship. In early 1956, he settled in Great Britain, where he was given political asylum. In London, he continued his education at the London School of Economics and Political Science from 1957 to 1961, but he did not complete his studies because he was too busy working as a journalist

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14 Bing and Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

15 Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, 168–72.

16 Vlašić, “List Nova Hrvatska 1958–1962,” 292–93.

17 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

and editor.<sup>18</sup> In 1956, HPO, his organization in Croatia, was discovered by the Yugoslav authorities. Its members were arrested and, in 1957, were sentenced to prison.<sup>19</sup>

In 1958, Kušan received a scholarship from the Free Europe University in Exile (FEUE), which had been founded in 1951 by the American National Committee for Free Europe.<sup>20</sup> At this university, especially during its summer seminars held in Strasbourg, respectable members of the liberal academic community from the United States, as well as many prominent European emigrant intellectuals gave lectures. At the same time, it was a gathering place for refugee students from countries under communist rule, who were educated at the institution in a liberal democratic spirit. The Yugoslav communists contended that it was a school for CIA informants.<sup>21</sup>

In Strasbourg, Kušan connected with many young intellectuals from Europe, and especially with his compatriots. He began to cooperate with some of them in efforts to further the political education of society as a whole and to call attention to the harmfulness of totalitarian rule in Yugoslavia. Kušan continued to maintain contacts with like-minded people from his homeland, and he soon created a network of associates to work together on efforts to inform the public. In 1958, he founded the magazine *Hrvatski bilten* (Croatian Bulletin) in London.<sup>22</sup> In 1959, the magazine was renamed *Nova Hrvatska* (New Croatia, or NH). The primary goal of the periodical was to inform the Croatian public abroad about the events in their homeland and to reveal the truth about the undemocratic practices of the communist regime in Yugoslavia. One of the aims of the magazine was to set aside the ideological differences within the Croatian émigré communities and work together for Croatian independence. The desire to unite the various political currents in the Croatian diaspora is clearly evident from the slogan at the top of the front page of the first issue of the magazine: “Croats of all parties, unite!”<sup>23</sup>

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18 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

19 Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, 222–36.

20 On the Free Europe University in Exile, see Durin-Horniyk, “The Free Europe University in Exile Inc. and the Collège de l’Europe libre (1951–1958)”;

21 Mihaljević, “Summer Courses of the Free Europe University in Exile, 1957. Brochure.”

22 In addition to Kušan, who was the editor-in-chief, the members of the editorial board were Tihomil Rađa, Gojko Borić, Tefko Saračević, Marijan Radetić, Đuro Grlica, Ante Zorić, and Stjepko Šesnić. Vlašić, “List Nova Hrvatska 1958–1962,” 291–92.

23 Vlašić, “List Nova Hrvatska 1958–1962,” 296.

From the mid-1960s, NH became the most influential polemically oriented magazine in which discussions concerning solutions to the Croatian question were held. It was initially published monthly, but from 1974 until it was discontinued in 1990, it transitioned to a bi-monthly publication schedule. In the beginning, it was distributed through its trustees, and later it was sold in public places.<sup>24</sup> It had the largest circulation of publications among the Croatian diaspora (some editions ran up to 20,000 copies). As an editor-in-chief, Kušan advocated democracy and the freedom of the individual and freedom of peoples. He believed that only a politically informed and educated individual could be an active factor in his social environment, and he saw this principle as a shield against political manipulation of individuals and political parties.<sup>25</sup> About Kušan's work as editor-in-chief, Borić said that he adhered to the principle of objectivism, which meant drawing a strict distinction between information and commentary and taking into account different views on the contents of his reporting. That was an especially hard task, because it was difficult to gather reliable information from totalitarian Yugoslavia.<sup>26</sup> According to Gojko Borić, one of the founders of NH, the magazine differed significantly from other Croatian émigré publications, which tended only to report on news from the homeland that confirmed their political views.<sup>27</sup> Kušan's main goal was to educate Croatian emigrants politically, in part to make them less susceptible to the false promises made in the propaganda of some radical Croatian emigrants.

The NH often published news that the Yugoslav government did not want to get out, and the comments NH gave when interpreting certain news and events were negative towards the communist regime in Yugoslavia. The editorial also received confidential information, mostly from anonymous senders, and that information was published or rejected, depending on the assessment of its credibility. The editorship was always at risk of falling prey to false claims, which happened in some cases, which is why some Croatians in exile criticized the magazine and declared such rare failures as hoaxes contrived by the Yugoslav secret services.<sup>28</sup>

The correspondence with associates from the country was handled through encrypted messages. Thus, for example, in correspondence with one of his

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24 Ibid., 293.

25 Kušan, *Bitka za Novu Hrvatsku*, 8.

26 Borić, "Veliki emigrantski novinar Jakša Kušan."

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.



friends and associates who he did not know was a UDBA informant with the code name Rajko,<sup>29</sup> Kušan wrote at the end of 1964 that he was interested in the Congress of Lawyers in Belgrade, which meant the Eighth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (Savez komunista Jugoslavije, or SKJ). Kušan also wrote that he “expects a baby in a few days,” which was a coded message to indicate that he was expecting a new issue of NH.<sup>30</sup> For the transmission of messages and information, the editorial board of NH used people who occasionally traveled from Yugoslavia to the West. The NH associates and informants were most often people from the closest family circle of the NH journalists.

The Yugoslav authorities were also bothered by the fact that NH was smuggled to and illicitly distributed in Yugoslavia. Kušan also sent NH to his homeland by mail to the many ordinary citizens whose addresses had been made public, for example, as part of some prize games in the newspapers. Through secret channels, a pocket-size edition (14.5 x 10 cm) of the magazine the articles in which could only be read with the use of a magnifying glass was usually sent to Yugoslavia.<sup>31</sup> Kušan also sent NH to numerous political leaders in Croatia, such as members of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia.

The Yugoslav secret services constantly followed the writing of NH and tried to prevent the publication of the magazine, which is evident from the UDBA file on Kušan. As early as the beginning of 1958, the UDBA learned from Tihomil Rađa's conversation with a UDBA informant that in the summer of 1957 in Strasbourg Kušan and Rađa had agreed to launch *Hrvatski bilten*.<sup>32</sup> In the mid-1960s, the UDBA stated in its reports that “the editorial office of this paper is one of the main centers of subversive-propaganda and anti-Yugoslav activity.”<sup>33</sup> The UDBA tried to gain access to Kušan's store of documents and the magazine's archives, which included files on contributors and associates. They never succeeded, although they managed to get some of the documents.<sup>34</sup>

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29 Informant Rajko was Kušan's old friend, a lawyer Drago Dominis.

30 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 210.

31 *Ibid.*, 201.

32 *Ibid.*, 82.

33 *Ibid.*, 10.

34 *Ibid.*, 1005–10.



*Kušan's Political Views and His Activities in the Diaspora: A Thorn in the Side of the Yugoslav Communist Regime*

Throughout his life in exile, Kušan continuously raised the question of Croatian national independence and spoke openly about the suppression of human and civil rights in socialist Yugoslavia, which is why he was constantly under the surveillance of the Yugoslav secret services.<sup>35</sup>

From the documentation of the UDBA, one can learn a lot about Kušan himself. According to the reports from the early 1960s, Kušan initially worked under difficult conditions. This is clear from the report of UDBA's informant Rajko, who visited Kušan in London in 1964. He states that Kušan was not making any profit from NH and that the Kušans lived off the salary of his wife, Zdenka:

He worked day and night, ate almost nothing, and looked like a biblical ascetic—thin, pale, bloodshot eyes, badly in need of a shave, hollow. Usually, they don't eat enough: they drink tea in the morning, and then she goes to work, and he works in the apartment, and they take the main meal only when she comes and prepares it around 6 o'clock, and even that meal is less than our average lunch.<sup>36</sup>

Another UDBA informant (code name David) offered similar reports concerning the difficult living conditions of Jakša Kušan in October 1965. He reported that Vinko Nikolić, one of the most prominent Croatian émigré intellectuals, said that Kušan lived under comparatively modest, even meager circumstances and that he edited his magazine on an old-fashioned typewriter.<sup>37</sup> He also noted that another Croatian emigrant, Jure Petričević, had said that Kušan lived in poverty and that he depended mainly on the help of some Englishmen.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, in the second half of the 1960s, Kušan was better off financially because he got a job as an associate to Viktor Zorza.<sup>39</sup> In September 1967, Rajko talked to Kušan's brother, Zlatko. They touched on Jakša's activities in London. Zlatko told him that Jakša had secured regular employment with the prominent English liberal newspaper *The Manchester Guardian* and that he worked

35 In his private collection, there is also a copy of a video (VHS) of an interview Kušan gave to Australian television in 1979 in which he spoke about the situation in Yugoslavia and Croatia's struggle for independence. Mihaljević, "Jakša Kušan Collection."

36 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 186–87.

37 On Vinko Nikolić, see Bencetić and Kljaić, "Nikolić, Vinko."

38 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 242.

39 Ibid., 302.

as a close assistant to the editor for Eastern Europe, the Polish Jew Victor Zorza, one of the most respected journalist experts on Eastern European politics and a man with strong ties to the Liberal Party in Britain. Kušan allegedly collected and systematized news and data on which Zorza wrote his articles and comments.<sup>40</sup> The UDBA's agents considered him a man close to the British Foreign Office. Consequently, it was assumed that Kušan was also leaning on the British secret services.

Kušan sympathized with the left in Britain. Thus, one UDBA informant reports that Kušan, as an English citizen, consistently voted for the Labor party.<sup>41</sup> From his youth, Kušan had been a sympathizer of the Western form of political rule, especially the British. However, when he left Yugoslavia as a young man in 1955, he was not against socialism. He considered that, due to the character of the regime, it was impossible to expect the introduction of pluralism, but that a big step would also be to allow a faction within the Party.<sup>42</sup>

From the very beginning of his activities in London, Kušan stood out as someone who espoused different views regarding the realization of Croatian independence. Although he harshly criticized the communist regime in Yugoslavia, he thought that the liberalization process within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia could expand the space of freedom in the country.<sup>43</sup> He advocated for reconciliation between nationalists and communists and felt that the radical methods used by some organizations in the Croatian diaspora were not good or effective as means of fulfilling Croatian goals. He claimed that terrorism was unacceptable both to the Western and the Eastern blocs, which were already inclined to preserve Yugoslavia. He advocated a strategy of gradually building democratic consciousness and cooperation among Croatian emigrants with the liberal wing of Croatian communists. In this sense, in the second half of the 1960s, one of the missions of his journal was to encourage democratization processes within the League of Communists of Croatia and to promote the Croatian reform movement (Croatian Spring) in the West in the hopes of gaining foreign sympathy and support.<sup>44</sup> He believed that through the

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40 Ibid., 288–89. Zorza was one of the most respected Western commentators on the communist countries and China, and he was among the first to notice and write about the conflict between the USSR and China. On Zorza, see Wright, *Victor Zorza: a life amid loss*.

41 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 304.

42 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

43 Ibid.

44 Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, 54. On the Croatian Spring, see Batović, *The Croatian Spring*.

liberalization of the regime in Croatia, the situation in the whole of Yugoslavia could be liberalized. He believed that the League of Communists of Croatia could eventually turn into some kind of socialist or social democratic party. In such a democratic environment, Croats would then be free to decide in a referendum whether to stay in Yugoslavia or secede.<sup>45</sup> Because of his conciliatory attitudes towards the communists, Croatian émigrés with more right-wing leanings were suspicious of Kušan, and some of them even called him a communist and a UDBA man.<sup>46</sup>

Kušan was constantly under surveillance by the UDBA through its numerous agents, collaborators, and informants,<sup>47</sup> and his correspondence was secretly controlled. Due to his activities in exile, the District Court in Zagreb opened an investigation into his activities in February 1965.<sup>48</sup> The Yugoslav Embassy in London invited him several times and sought to persuade him to stop his political activities in exile while promising him some privileges. Kušan refused, although he had to bear in mind that his family (parents and brothers) still lived in Yugoslavia, and they were also under surveillance by the UDBA.<sup>49</sup> Zlatko was arrested in 1959 and charged because he had corresponded with his brother. He defended himself at the hearing, saying that maintaining a written relationship with his brother was not a criminal offense.<sup>50</sup> He was forced to explain the way in which they corresponded. They sent messages encrypted in Braille, and Zlatko received the letters from his brother at the address of one of his friends who was blind, and he would send a letter to Jakša addressed to one of Jakša's English friends.<sup>51</sup> Zlatko was later invited by the UDBA to take part in "informative interviews" several times, and in 1972, he was even detained and interrogated for 10 days.<sup>52</sup> The UDBA also conducted "informative interviews" with Jakša's other brother, Petar, in 1975, and his passport was confiscated because he once visited his brother Jakša during his travels abroad.<sup>53</sup> In 1977, they confiscated

45 Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, 54.

46 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 146–47.

47 Under his supervision, the UDBA used more than 20 informants whose code names were Bodul, Majk, Kokić, Rajko, Jusufi, Putnik, Ivo, Špica, Branko, Max, David, Marijan, Forum, Joško, Boem, Janko, Leo, Lovro, Grbavi, Prizma, Maja, Lula, Olja etc. HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 8, 12–27, 182, 235, 974–979.

48 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 4, 214–28.

49 *Ibid.*, 154–55.

50 *Ibid.*, 97.

51 *Ibid.*, 98–107.

52 *Ibid.*, 15, 20, 450–52.

53 *Ibid.*, 20.

the Jakša's mother's passport, and they only returned it seven years later, in 1984.<sup>54</sup> The return of the passport was just another UDBA setup. They gave her passport back, but in return, during her visit to London, she was expected to try to persuade Jakša to stop his anti-Yugoslav activities.<sup>55</sup> The UDBA failed in its endeavor.

The UDBA speculated that Kušan had maintained contacts with the British intelligence service while still a student in Yugoslavia, because during his stay in Italy in 1955, he had received a British visa “in an unusually short time” and “some photos and other published materials in *Nova Hrvatska* indicate that Kušan has access to British diplomatic and intelligence sources.”<sup>56</sup> The UDBA suspected that the British intelligence service was providing scholarships offered by Kušan to young and talented students abroad who had distinguished themselves through their hostile activity against Yugoslavia.<sup>57</sup> However, after reviewing all the documents in his UDBA file, I did not come across any documented evidence of his alleged collaboration with the UK services. The only thing the UDBA had were reports submitted by its informants, who said that some of Kušan's associates had said that he had connections to the British services.<sup>58</sup> In an interview for the COURAGE project, Kušan pointed out that his choice of London as a place to work and publish was a complete success because it was an open environment that received refugees from all around the world and provided him with full protection from the Yugoslav secret services. “The UDBA did threaten us,” he said, “but the English authorities always gave police protection whenever we reported threats. That is why the authorities in Belgrade often said that we were collaborators with some British secret services, and in the end, they never touched us.”<sup>59</sup>

The editorial office of NH was originally located in a small basement room in London and was constantly struggling with a lack of money for publishing. Moreover, in the second half of the 1960s, the periodical almost went out of publication, because Kušan himself was too busy with his work as an analyst for *The Guardian*. In 1969, no issues of NH were published. In 1970, one regular issue and one double issue were published, and in 1971 only one was released.

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54 Ibid., 22–25.

55 Ibid., 182, 1030–31.

56 Ibid., 6.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., 135, 229, 326.

59 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

In addition to financial difficulties and lack of time, the reason for the reduced publication is that Kušan himself wondered if NH was needed at all. Kušan believed that, in the more liberal atmosphere in Croatia in the late 1960s, and early 1970s, the local magazines and newspapers were freeing themselves from the shackles of communist censorship and were presenting the situation in the country more and more objectively.<sup>60</sup> During the Croatian reform movement, better known as the Croatian Spring (1967–1971), Kušan nurtured sympathy for the movement because it was a process he had hoped for.<sup>61</sup> Jakša was delighted with Većeslav Holjevac, a former high-ranking partisan officer and long-time mayor of Zagreb, who, since the mid-1960s, had advocated in support of cooperation between the homeland and Croatian émigrés. Kušan described Holjevac's book *Hrvati izvan domovine* (Croats Abroad), which was published in 1967, as the first real step towards building ties with the Croatian émigré communities, and he noted that Holjevac had enabled several associates of the Emigrant Foundation of Croatia to come into contact with Croatian émigré organizations, including associates of NH.<sup>62</sup> Kušan believed that during the Croatian Spring, especially within the League of Communists of Croatia, a process of democratization was taking place that would eventually lead to the disintegration of the communist regime and, ultimately, the democratization of the whole of Yugoslavia. He was more than disappointed when the Croatian reform movement was suppressed in late 1971 and early 1972.

Although he was disappointed with the collapse of the Croatian spring, this event meant new life for Kušan's magazine. Communist censorship once again shackled the media in Croatia, so NH became more important. Ironically, communist censorship indirectly saved the journal. Censorship in Croatia reached such a level that the *Hrvatski pravopis* (Croatian Orthography) written by Stjepan Babić, Božidar Finka, and Milan Moguš, published in 1971, was banned by the Yugoslav authorities for political reasons shortly after it went into print. The Yugoslav authorities destroyed the entire print run of 40,000 copies. Only a few internal copies were preserved. This act of censorship was part of the Yugoslav authorities' confrontation with the Croatian Spring at the end of 1971, because the Croatian orthography was created within the Matica hrvatska, the most important cultural-oppositional institution in socialist Croatia. However, the editorial board of NH, headed by Kušan, managed to get a copy and publish

60 Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, 52.

61 *Ibid.*, 53.

62 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 305.

it in London in 1972. For many years, this book was a best-seller in the Croatian diaspora because it was a symbol of the Croatian Spring.<sup>63</sup> The financial success of this book, as well as the contributions from about 20 friends of NH who donated money, enabled the editorial board of NH to buy a house in London which provided a new home for the editorial office. According to Kušan, it was the best investment in the history of NH.<sup>64</sup>

Kušan and NH constantly reported on fabricated lawsuits against Croatian intellectuals who were tried after the collapse of the Croatian Spring. NH tried to make news of these people's fates reach the Western public and the Croatian émigré communities. In this regard, they also worked closely with Amnesty International, which they provided information and from which they also received information.<sup>65</sup> Kušan also maintained contacts with and published articles and books by Croatian dissidents and oppositionists who could not publish in their homeland. UDBA informants reported that Kušan said that this way a "Croatian Solzhenitsyn could be created."<sup>66</sup> Kušan may have seen some kind of Croatian Solzhenitsyn in Franjo Tuđman, a Croatian historian and communist dissident who was expelled from the party in 1967. Kušan was involved in the publication of Tuđman's book *The National Question in Contemporary Europe* in 1981,<sup>67</sup> and Kušan's wife Zdenka translated into English the court documents from Tuđman's trial, which were also published in London in 1981.<sup>68</sup> For the promotion of Croatian dissident writers, Kušan did the most, working together with Vinko Nikolić, when they decided to exhibit together at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Nikolić was the editor-in-chief of the cultural magazine *Hrvatska revija* (Croatian Review) and the head of the publishing house that bore the same name. Since 1973, they had been exhibiting in Frankfurt every year, and their exhibition stand was always well attended, although they knew that UDBA agents and informants were among the visitors.<sup>69</sup> Yugoslav authorities even used the diplomatic apparatus in their attempts to ban Kušan's participation in the

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63 Mihaljević, "Stjepan Babić, Božidar Finka, Milan Moguš. Hrvatski pravopis (Croatian Orthography), 1972. Book."

64 Kušan, *Bitka za Novu Hrvatsku*, 103.

65 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 1038.

66 *Ibid.*, 505.

67 Čosić, "Franjo Tuđman i problemi objavljivanja knjige Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi."

68 Palić-Kušan, *Croatia on trial*. Kušan also published the Croatian edition of the book in the same year. See *Na sudu dr. Tuđmanu sudilo se Hrvatskoj*.

69 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan; HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 18, 954–57, 1066–68.

Fair,<sup>70</sup> but they did not succeed. Moreover, Kušan and Nikolić expanded their exhibition stand every year.

In addition to his connections with Croatian dissidents, UDBA's informants also talked about Kušan's connections with dissidents of other nationalities, such as the famous Milovan Đilas.<sup>71</sup> Because he cooperated with Đilas, other Croatian émigrés criticized Kušan.<sup>72</sup> In his work against the communist government in Yugoslavia, Kušan also collaborated with Serbian and Albanian dissidents and émigrés, and he took part in some anti-Yugoslav demonstrations organized in European cities.<sup>73</sup>

The collapse of the Croatian Spring and police clashes with the liberal and national currents in Croatia gave additional impetus to those in exile who believed that Croatian national goals could only be achieved by violent means.<sup>74</sup> To acquaint the Western public with the position of Croats in Yugoslavia and to gain international support for the overthrow of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, a small number of Croatian émigré organizations advocated terrorism and were particularly active in the 1970s.<sup>75</sup> Kušan believed that the terrorist actions did more harm than good to the Croatian struggle for independence, and in that sense, he also commented on the terrorist actions that some Croatian emigrants carried out in Germany and other European countries.<sup>76</sup> He had no sympathies for the action of the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood (Hrvatsko revolucionarno bratstvo, or HRB), a Croatian revolutionary organization founded in 1961 in Australia that used terrorist methods, and their guerrilla incursion into Yugoslavia in June 1972. He believed that such actions were doomed to failure and would lead to unnecessary bloodshed, and he felt that the Croatian émigré communities would thus get a bad reputation in the world.<sup>77</sup> The Croatian terrorist actions worked in favor of the Yugoslav government. The Yugoslav missions abroad and the secret services worked continuously to create a negative image of Croatian émigrés, trying to portray them as fascists and terrorists. The Yugoslav security

70 Kušan, *Bitka za Novu Hrvatsku*, 123.

71 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 7.

72 Ibid., 417–18.

73 Ibid., 6–7.

74 Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, 173.

75 On the terrorist actions of Croatian radicals in exile see Tokić, *Croatian Radical Separatism and Diaspora Terrorism during the Cold War*, 2020.

76 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 497.

77 Ibid., 1036–37.



and intelligence apparatus occasionally encouraged the radicalism of Croatian extremists in exile to discredit the political émigré community as a whole.<sup>78</sup>

The collapse of the Croatian Spring also affected numerous Croatian émigré organizations and individuals who were increasingly convinced that they had an obligation to take up the fight for Croatian interests and unite for this cause. In this sense, there were more attempts to unite all Croatian émigré organizations, which was accomplished with the establishment of the Croatian National Council (Hrvatsko narodno vijeće, or HNV) in 1974 in Toronto. It was an umbrella association of the Croatian diaspora which coordinated various émigré organizations that sought to present the case for Croatia independence to the international community.<sup>79</sup> In 1975, some of the most prominent magazines published by members of the Croatian émigré community, such as *Hrvatska revija*, *Nova Hrvatska*, and *Studia Croatica* joined the HNV. In 1975, Kušan also became a member of the HNV's Congress and the Head of its Press and Advertising Department (1975–1977, 1979–1983).<sup>80</sup> During the preparations for the elections for the Third Congress of the HNV, which were to be held in Australia in 1979,<sup>81</sup> Kušan visited Australia and gave an interview for the national television there in which he spoke about the current case of the so-called Croatian six, who were six Australian citizens of Croatian descent who had been accused of attempting to carry out several terrorist attacks in Sydney in early 1979, which involved putting poison in the city's water supply and planting a bomb in a theater. After a long trial, six Croatian-Australian men were sentenced to 15 years in prison in 1981 for a conspiracy to conduct terrorist attacks. The whole case was the result of the operation organized by the Yugoslav state security service to portray the Croatian-Australian community as extremists using Australian intelligence and police services as its tools.<sup>82</sup> It was one of the methods of operation of the Yugoslav secret services, which sought to discredit the Croatian political émigré community. Before the trial was over and many years before the setup was revealed, Kušan told Australian television that it was a setup by the Yugoslav secret services.<sup>83</sup>

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78 Perušina, "Hrvatska politička emigracija," 29.

79 Banac et al., "National Movements, Regionalism, Minorities," 546.

80 Miočević, "Hrvatsko narodno vijeće od 1974. do 1990."

81 The Australian government banned the HNV meeting, so elections were held in January 1980 in London. Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

82 McDonald, *Reasonable doubt*; Horner and Blaxland, *The secret Cold War*; Daley, "Catholic extremism fears in 1970s Australia made Croats 'the Muslims of their time'."

83 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.

Since the late 1970s, Croatian émigrés had increasingly focused on calling attention to human rights violations in Yugoslavia.<sup>84</sup> After the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975 at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), in which the communist countries pledged to respect human and civil rights, the issue of violation of these rights became one of the main means with which to exert pressure on the communist regimes in Europe. Croatian émigré organizations had increasingly warned Western institutions and the public about the position of political prisoners in Yugoslavia, and they had emphasized the right of Croats to national self-determination. In this sense, they were especially active during the CSCE in Belgrade (June 1977–March 1978) and Madrid (November 1980–September 1983). The UDBA noted Kušan's particularly strong anti-Yugoslav activity during these conferences.<sup>85</sup> Kušan always sought to portray the issue of human rights violations against Croats within the Yugoslav communist regime as an integral part of a transnational problem.

### *Return to the Homeland and Displacement to the Margins*

After the fall of communism in Croatia in 1990, the editorial board of NH felt that there is no reason to publish the journal abroad. They planned to transfer the journal to Croatia and publish it from there. However, by returning to Croatia, Kušan became aware of the numerous problems in a society that suffered the consequences of almost half a century of communist rule. The prevailing spirit of materialism and the lack of idealism stunned Kušan. In his memoirs, he spoke about the atmosphere in which inherited habits and the mentality of censored journalism prevailed.<sup>86</sup> In the newspaper business, he faced theft, corruption, and embezzlement, and he soon gave up publishing his journal.<sup>87</sup> The Serbian uprising and open aggression against the Republic of Croatia in 1991 had an additional negative impact on the development of the media in Croatia at the time.

Nevertheless, in late 1990, Kušan decided to return to his homeland permanently and continue his struggle for a better society. In 1993, he became a chairperson of the board of directors of the Open Society Institute of Croatia. Given that the society was funded by Hungarian-American billionaire

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84 Čulo, "Ljudska prava u hrvatskoj emigrantskoj misli (1945–1990)."

85 HR-HDA-1561, SDS RSUP SRH, Intelligence Files, 229528 Kušan Jakša, 903–7.

86 Kušan, *Bitka za Novu Hrvatsku*, 313.

87 *Ibid.*, 309–13.

George Soros, Kušan was criticized by the Croatian right and the conservatives. However, Kušan responded to his critics, saying that Soros gave more money for humanitarian purposes than for political purposes.<sup>88</sup> In 1995, Kušan was a co-founder of the Association of the Homeland and Diaspora for a Democratic Society. This association was renamed the Association for a Democratic Society, and Kušan was its president in 2004.<sup>89</sup>

In the 1990s, Kušan was disappointed by political developments in modern Croatia. He did not participate actively in political life. Moreover, in the public sphere, he was largely marginalized and has practically been forgotten in today's Croatia. One of the main questions this paper raises is why he was marginalized. It is difficult to give a precise and clear answer to this question. Relevant historical sources, such as archival documents from the period after 1990, are still unavailable, so I can only venture tentative answers based on data concerning his political views until 1990, his memoirs published in 2000, and statements made by some of his close contemporaries.

Historian Wollfy Krašić considers Jakša Kušan the first Croatian intellectual to sketch the idea of so-called Croatian reconciliation or the all-Croatian peace.<sup>90</sup> It is the idea of the necessity of cooperation among former enemy sides from World War II, Ustasas and Croatian partisans, and their descendants in the creation of an independent Croatian state. At the time of the fall of communism, the aforementioned former communist dissident Franjo Tuđman achieved great political success and won the first multi-party elections in Croatia in 1990. Although Tuđman's idea of reconciliation generally coincided with Kušan's vision, after the independence of Croatia, the two of them had practically no mutual relations. Perhaps the relationship between Kušan and Tuđman was a crucial factor in the process of Kušan's marginalization in Croatian public life. After the death of Kušan in 2019, Vladimir Pavlinić, his long-time close associate and also one of the editors of *Nova Hrvatska*, said that Tuđman was the one to blame. He claimed that Tuđman had begun to establish secret contacts with Kušan's circle in the mid-1970s. Tuđman had sent documents concerning his trials and his new books to the editorial board of *Nova Hrvatska*, and they had published and translated them into English so that the global public would be able to read about him and his case.<sup>91</sup> However, Pavlinić believes Tuđman shifted

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88 Borić, "Veliki emigrantski novinar Jakša Kušan."

89 Hameršak, "Kušan, Jakša."

90 Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, 13–18.

91 Pavlinić, "Jakša Kušan."

his circle of confidants in exile to Canadian-Australian radical organizations in the late 1980s. According to Pavlinić, Tuđman discarded the once very useful Kušan even before Kušan returned to Croatia. Pavlinić says that Tuđman invited Kušan from London to Zagreb in June 1990 to talk about founding a Croatian news agency and that at one point he had asked Kušan why he was writing hostilely about him and his political party, Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica, or HDZ).<sup>92</sup> Tuđman referred to an article Kušan had published in *Nova Hrvatska* in March 1990. Kušan had commented extensively in the article on the First General Assembly of the HDZ, which had just been held. Kušan had claimed that the assembly had not touched on real political issues and that the gathering had resembled communist congresses, where it was not important what was said but only who was speaking.<sup>93</sup> Kušan had been critical in the article of the HDZ, perhaps even more so because he advocated that the anti-communist opposition in Croatia act together as a united coalition. As the HDZ decided to run in the elections on its own, Kušan sympathized with its rival, the Coalition of People's Accord (Koalicija narodnog sporazuma, or KNS). Pavlinić believed that Kušan's libertarian thinking was enough for Tuđman to label Kušan an enemy of the people and that this had been a stigma that Kušan had carried until his death.<sup>94</sup> Another one of Kušan's former associates, Gojko Borić, had a similar view. He believed that any members of the émigré communities who had not been close to Tuđman had suffered great disappointment and failed in anything they had undertaken after the collapse of communism in Croatia.<sup>95</sup>

A few years before his death, Kušan mentioned that the change in his relations with Tuđman took place after the founding of the HDZ in June 1989.<sup>96</sup> It is difficult to say what disrupted the relationship between the two. Perhaps the answer to that question lies in another question: why did Tuđman turn to Canadian-Australian circles of the Croatian émigré world?

If we observe the development of Kušan's attitudes regarding the struggle for Croatian independence, a certain evolution of attitudes is noticeable. Although Kušan advocated the necessity of Croatia's exit from communist Yugoslavia, in the 1980s his attitudes softened, and on several occasions, he said that Croatia could remain in Yugoslavia if Yugoslavia were to become a real liberal democracy.

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92 Ibid.

93 Kušan, "Nakon saborovanja HDZ," 4; Pavlinić, "Jakša Kušan."

94 Pavlinić, "Jakša Kušan."

95 Borić, *Hrvat izvan domovine*, 79.

96 Kušan, "Najveći borci za Hrvatsku došli su upravo iz bivših udbaških redova."

One of the reasons why Kušan was marginalized in the 1990s may be that, while supporting the struggle of all dissidents in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, he insisted less on Croatian independence and more on the democratization of Yugoslavia. Perhaps this shift, the milder approach of Kušan's circle to the question of the existence of Yugoslavia, was why Tuđman turned to the Canadian and Australian part of the Croatian émigré world, which was more nationalistic and hardline. Perhaps Tuđman turned to the émigrés in Canada and Australia because they were also wealthier than those from Kušan's circle, and he hoped to get stronger financial support from them for his political activities.

On the other hand, Kušan was disappointed with the achievements of democratic Croatia in the first decade of its existence. He believed that the ideals that he and other émigrés gathered around *Nova Hrvatska* had fought for had not been realized.<sup>97</sup> Kušan was also disappointed with the new government's attitude towards the Croatian émigré communities. He believed that the government had embraced members of these communities who had never had much influence and who, in his assessment, had no real grasp of the true values of freedom and democracy.<sup>98</sup> He believed that the HDZ's policy was guided by short-term goals and that the émigré communities were important to the party only as a source of financial and material resources with which the party would be better positioned to win elections and resist Serbian aggression. He believed that the UDBA in Croatia had changed sides overnight and joined the new government. In his memoirs, he expressed these concerns:

In this way, human rights violators from the previous regime, including notorious criminals, were not brought to justice. In return, and for balance, mostly extreme elements from the émigré world were brought home, and they were given high political, military, and police duties. The former UDBA agents and “the greatest Croats” found themselves side by side in many places... Essentially, this only confirms what we often emphasized, namely that there was never a significant difference between totalitarian communists and national extremists.<sup>99</sup>

Kušan believed that this was why many respectable Croatian émigrés distanced themselves from the new government. He believed that the HDZ had chosen this path to facilitate its consolidation and because of a lack of democratic sense at the top of the party. Furthermore, the political inexperience of voters and

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<sup>97</sup> Kušan, *Bitka za Novu Hrvatsku*, 5.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

the apparent weakness of the domestic media, both as a direct consequence of the half-century one-party system and the war that soon followed, facilitated the undemocratic practice and delayed democratization processes.<sup>100</sup> According to Kušan, these negative developments had psychological causes. The high degree of materialism which prevailed in all post-communist societies had further accelerated the spread of corruption and the overwhelming alliance between tycoons and politicians.<sup>101</sup>

This hypothesis requires further study, which will only be possible when archival sources from the 1990s are fully available. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the personal archive of Franjo Tuđman, which is still inaccessible to the public. It would also be useful to see and research the editorial archive and correspondence of the magazine *Nova Hrvatska*, which Kušan handed over to the National and University Library in Zagreb. Unfortunately, although more than a quarter of a century has passed since Kušan turned these documents over, they are still inaccessible to the public. This can also be seen as an indication that Kušan is a forgotten figure in Croatian political and cultural history. On the other hand, Kušan's private collection, which he kept in his apartment in Zagreb, is also important for future research. According to his wishes, his private collection will be handed over to the Franciscan monastery in Visoko in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, it is a telling fact that only after Tuđman's death did Kušan become more present in public life, and he also performed some public duties. This was the time of the new left-liberal coalition government, which ruled Croatia for several years after the death of Tuđman. From 2000 to 2004, Kušan was a chairperson on the board of directors of the Croatian Heritage Foundation, and from 2001 to 2002, he was a member of the Council of the Croatian Radio and Television.<sup>103</sup>

## *Conclusion*

Although most of the East European diasporas which originated from areas that were subjected to communist rule were antagonistic towards communism and were preoccupied with the question of national identity and national

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100 Ibid., 314–15.

101 Ibid., 315.

102 Mihaljević, "Jakša Kušan Collection."

103 Hameršak, "Kušan, Jakša."

independence,<sup>104</sup> within these diasporas, there was a diversity of ideas and political views. One of the atypical representatives of the Croatian political diaspora was journalist and publicist Jakša Kušan.

Kušan distinguished himself from the majority of Croatian political emigrants through his persistent endeavors to broaden his network of resistance. Already as a student at the Free Europe University in Exile, he encountered and connected with various intellectuals, including the renowned writer Czesław Miłosz.<sup>105</sup> He maintained a long-standing collaboration with the distinguished journalist Viktor Zorza, and through his journalistic and editorial work, he established connections with various democratically oriented intellectuals and organizations, such as Amnesty International. In building his network of resistance, he collaborated with other ethnic and national groups, not only those originating from the Yugoslav region but also with Poles and Estonians, for instance.<sup>106</sup> Through years of participation at the Frankfurt Book Fair, he emphasized the importance of culture as a primary form of resistance against authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Alongside democracy and freedom, he regarded culture as one of the main pillars of the new democratic Croatia.

This article presented the most important of Kušan's activities during the period of communist rule in Yugoslavia, bringing to light new information concerning his life and work. The archives of the Yugoslav secret services are a fascinating source of data which can fill numerous lacunae in our knowledge of Kušan's oppositional activities. This article shows that Kušan was a ubiquitous figure in the Croatian émigré world who was involved in many of most important events and organizations in Croatian diaspora, such as the Croatian National Council, and who was also important transnationally. In the diaspora, he stood out because of his constant struggle for democratic principles and pluralism, as well as the idea of reconciling the Croatian right and left, which, he felt, was a prerequisite for the creation of a modern democratic and pluralistic Croatia. In that sense, he had a significant influence on numerous actors in the émigré world and among dissidents and oppositional figures in Yugoslavia. Recent historiography has already noted that the idea of all-Croatian reconciliation, first outlined in the mid-1950s by Kušan, was eventually advocated by communist dissident Franjo Tuđman, who in the late 1980s became one of the main representatives of the opposition to communism in Croatia and won the first democratic multi-

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104 Apor et al., "Cultural Opposition Goes Abroad," 474.

105 Mihaljević, "Summer Courses of the Free Europe University in Exile, 1957. Brochure."

106 Mihaljević, Interview with Jakša Kušan.



party elections in 1990 and became the first president of the newly independent Croatia. Kušan may have been somewhat surprisingly marginalized after his return to Croatia in the early 1990s in part because of his relationship with Tuđman. It is possible that in the context of the struggle for political power in Croatia, Kušan, who had been a long-term supporter and promoter of Tuđman, became a political enemy. Although this hypothesis requires further study and substantiation with sources which remain inaccessible, it certainly does not seem implausible. In the 1990s, Kušan was close to Tuđman's political opponents, and he wrote critically about the new democratically elected government.

Kušan was thus not simply an archetypal representative of the transnational struggle against communist dictatorships but also a non-conformist who persisted in the fight for democracy and human rights even after the communist dictatorship had fallen. He continued his "Battle for a New Croatia," which was also the title of his memoirs published in 2000.<sup>107</sup>

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