

lin between the first and second meeting (Molotov's first appointment with Stalin). On this occasion, Molotov and Stalin agreed that Joachim von Ribbentrop might visit Moscow on 26 and 27 August, providing an economic agreement between the USSR and Germany was signed by that time. At his second meeting with Schulenburg at 16:30, Molotov provided the German ambassador with the draft for a pact on which Stalin himself had worked during the afternoon (*Documents of German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*, ed. P. R. Sweet et al., series D, vol. 7 [London, 1956], 132–33, 158). Not only does this provide evidence of what Stalin was doing between 13:55 and 17:15, when he did not have appointments, but one can also ask whether it is likely that the cautious Stalin would make an “irrevocable decision” with policy being in such a fluid state? This adds strength to Teddy Uldricks's case and is strong evidence that Suvorov's thesis is incorrect.

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To the Editor:

I read Nicholas Miller's article “The Nonconformists: Dobrica Ćosić and Mića Popović Envision Serbia” (*Slavic Review* 58, no. 3). It was gratifying to observe scholarly interest in Yugoslav and Serbian cultural history since this is not a frequent occurrence. Miller explored the cultural life of Serbia from the 1970s up to the unraveling of Yugoslavia in the beginning of the 1990s. He chose to observe the overall political and social situation by discussing the work and ideas of two prominent personalities—Dobrica Ćosić and Mića Popović. I studied the same two men in my paper “Approaches to National Identities: Ćosić's and Pirjavec's Debate on Ideological and Literary Issues,” *East European Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1996).

In his introductory paragraph about Popović, Miller states that Popović was a marginal painter until the early 1970s. According to Miller, Popović became prominent due to his scathing critique of Yugoslav socialism expressed in his *Scenes Paintings* of the late 1960s.

Contrary to Miller's assertion, Popović established a national and international reputation as an outstanding artist soon after his first one-man exhibit in Belgrade in 1950. His paintings gradually gained recognition and were included in prestigious artistic events throughout Europe and North America. During the 1950s his paintings were presented in the Musée Municipal d'Art Moderne in Paris; the *27me Salon du Sud-Est* in Lyon; the exhibit *60 Tableaux de la Peinture Moderne Yugoslav* in Nancy, Marseille, Bordeaux, Metz, St. Anna-hof, and Stuttgart. In 1956 Popović presented a one-man exhibit of his paintings in Zagreb. In 1961 Popović's painting were selected and included in the exhibit *L'Art Contemporaine en Yougoslavie* at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris and at the Tate Gallery in London. In 1964 Popović participated in the *XXXII Biennale Internationale d'Arte* in Venice. In 1966 Popović's paintings were included in the exhibit *Art in Yugoslavia-Contemporary Trends* at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. This exhibit was also shown at the Art Center in Fresno, the Art Museum in Denver, and the Art Center in Milwaukee. In 1967 he presented his paintings at the Adria Art Gallery in New York and in the Yugoslav Pavilion, EXPO 67 in Montreal. His paintings were included in the exhibit *Proizvedenija suvremenog umjetništva* in Moscow in 1967. (Miodrag Pavlović, “Introduction,” *Nove slikarske godine Miće Popovića* [Belgrade: Merkur, 1979]).

During the war years, Popović, a youth of nineteen, was forced into mandatory labor like the rest of his generation, digging ditches and even working in the mines of Bor. In spite of dire living conditions, which resulted in deteriorating health, Popović continued with his paintings and extensive readings. In 1944 he joined the liberation struggle. Popović's independent spirit and readiness to express his opinion resulted in his incarceration immediately after the liberation, and he served a prison term for his privately expressed critique of the communist regime.

Acceptance of the doctrine of socialist realism soon became an absolute measure of loyalty to the new regime. Popović was among the first to raise his voice against this blatant disregard for the very nature of creative work. His first one-man exhibition in 1950 became an uproar of a sort. In his introduction to the catalogue of exhibited works, Popović tried to explain to the cultural arbiters of the ruling party the difference between literature and the visual arts. The text of Popović's introduction was received from the start as

an important document reflecting the state of mind of many who shared similar views. It was included in Lazar Trifunović's anthology of critiques in 1967.

Although living and working abroad for many years, Popović closely followed the situation in Yugoslavia. Like Nikolai Gogol' who could only fully appreciate Russia when living far away from its borders in Italy, Popović realized that he could not extricate himself from his homeland.

Popović and his generation perceived Yugoslavia as a sum that was larger than its parts. Popović and his peers acknowledged the vision of their forbears and the numerous fighters who sacrificed their lives for this goal. The Yugoslav idea was brought forth by the Croatian intelligentsia but was gradually embraced by all the South Slavs; it seemed to provide a solution to the intricate mosaic of ethnic enclaves dispersed throughout the land.

Miller's conclusion about the rise of nationalism in the 1980s shows that he is unaware that the discussion on national identity has been in the center of public debate since the late 1950s in all the republics of the former Yugoslavia. This is not a recent event and is not limited to Serbia alone as he suggests.

Starting in 1945, the quest for national identity was suppressed but grew in opposition to the official policy of Tito's government, which promoted the Marxist doctrine of the international solidarity of communists. The united proletarians should aim to liquidate the capitalist system of exploitation of the working classes around the world.

Miller asserted that the Yugoslav intelligentsia traveled a path from socialism to nationalism. In reality, there was no transition from socialism to nationalism, since so-called socialism was in fact the dictatorship of Tito and the Communist Party. The historian Dimitrije Djordjević wrote about this period of Serbian history as a witness and victim of both fascism and Tito's regime in his memoir *Scars and Memory* (1977). After the end of World War II any attempt to organize a democratic front was severely prosecuted and suppressed. Djordjević and a number of men who shared his views tried to establish a democratic forum, but they were soon imprisoned. There was no other political party and "voting" consisted of casting a vote for only one slate of candidates. Even a private critique could result in a prison sentence, as was the case with Popović, Djordjević, and two outstanding writers Borislav Pekić and Dragoslav Mihailović, among others. In the book *Goli Otok* (1990), Mihailović describes how dreadful prison is.

The conclusion of Miller's paper is disconcerting. While acknowledging the positive contribution of his two subjects, he draws a dubious comparison between the nascent fascism in Germany of the 1930s and the present situation prevailing in Serbia.

Adolph Hitler wrote his political manifesto *Mein Kampf* and proceeded to win parliamentary elections in the Reichstag since he was clearly accepted by the majority. The intellectual elite was silenced or chose to emigrate like Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Arnold Schönberg, Theodor Adorno, and many others.

Presently in Serbia there are no leaders with a coherent political manifesto. The fifty-year dictatorship of the Communist Party, the ensuing gulag system, in addition to economic hardship and emigration, have depleted the Serbian people of potential leaders. Slobodan Milošević does not enjoy widespread support, but neither does the political opposition. The democratic opposition is incapable of producing a unified platform that would guarantee voters' support.

Miller's article would have been more valuable if it had evaluated developments discussed within the broader historic context of the former republics. Yet the constituent republics of former Yugoslavia, and in particular Croatia, affected the policies of the Serbian leaders to a great extent. Most of all, there remained the unresolved situation of some 400,000 ethnically cleansed Serbs from Croatia and Slovenia.

Shortly before his death in 1996, Popović walked with painters, sculptors, and their students from the Fine Arts Academy, joining other concerned citizens in one of the largest peaceful protests against Milošević and his government.

Popović's paintings, scholarly writings, and most of all his personal integrity and humanitarian concern will continue to draw attention and appreciation. Horace's verses in Aleksandr Pushkin's translation come to mind: "Unto myself I reared a monument / A path trod thereto by people shall never overgrow with grass."

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