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The Communist Legacy of the Former Yugoslavia in Photographs

RICHARD MILLS

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TRAVEL THROUGH the former Yugoslavia without constant reminders of the region's recent past. Socialist-era buildings retain their prominent city centre locations in the capitals of all of the successor republics, whilst the countryside remains littered with monuments honouring the achievements of Tito's victorious Partisan Army. There is also no escaping Yugoslavia's violent dissolution, with many villages, towns and cities still struggling to come to terms with the physical damage inflicted by war. The following photographic selection attempts to offer a brief insight into those relics of the past which, through their physical presence, continue to have an impact upon the present day. These photographs were taken by the author between 2007 and 2009.

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FIGURE 1. A DECAYING COAT OF ARMS OF THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA
(*SOCIJALISTIČKA FEDERATIVNA REPUBLIKA JUGOSLAVIJA*) IN A NIŠ PARK, SERBIA 2009



FIGURE 2. VISITORS WALK BENEATH A PARTISAN MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF SECOND WORLD WAR FASCISM, FRUŠKA GORA NATIONAL PARK, VOJVODINA 2009



FIGURE 3. THE SHATTERED REMAINS OF BUILDINGS IN CENTRAL VUKOVAR, A TOWN THAT IS STILL RECOVERING FROM ITS 1991 SIEGE, CROATIA 2007



FIGURE 4. THE REPUBLIKA SRPSKA PARLIAMENT IN BANJA LUKA IS A CONSTANT REMINDER THAT BOSNIAN SERBS SUCCESSFULLY SEIZED CONTROL OF A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA, REPUBLIKA SRPSKA 2009



FIGURE 5. SHELL-DAMAGED FRANJO TUĐMAN STREET IN ZAGREB EVOKES MEMORIES OF CROATIA'S HOMELAND WAR, CROATIA 2007



FIGURE 6. TITO'S STATUE, WHICH ONCE OCCUPIED THE MAIN SQUARE OF TITOVO UŽICE, HAS SINCE BEEN RELOCATED TO THE CITY'S MUSEUM. UŽICE, WHICH DURING THE SOCIALIST PERIOD HAD BEEN RENAMED IN HONOUR OF THE PRESIDENT, HAS ALSO REMOVED TITO FROM ITS NAME, SERBIA 2009



FIGURE 7. A RUINED OFFICE BLOCK TOWERS ABOVE THE FORMER FRONTLINE IN MOSTAR, BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA 2009



FIGURE 8. BELGRADE'S TWO PRINCIPAL FOOTBALL CLUBS RETAIN THEIR SOCIALIST ERA NAMES—PARTIZAN AND RED STAR (*CRVENA ZVEZDA*). THE BANNER BEHIND THEM BOLDLY DECLARES 'KOSOVO IS SERBIA', SERBIA 2009



FIGURE 9. THE REVERED PORTRAITS OF ALLEGED WAR CRIMINALS, MANY OF WHOM ARE HELD BY THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA (ICTY), ARE PROUDLY DISPLAYED IN SHOP WINDOWS AND CAFES ACROSS THE REGION. ANTE GOTOVINA'S PICTURE IN ZADAR, CROATIA 2009



FIGURE 10. WAR-DAMAGED APARTMENT BLOCKS AND THE MINARETS OF A REFURBISHED MOSQUE
POINT TO THE SKY IN SARAJEVO, BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA 2008



FIGURE 11. THE PARTISAN SLOGAN 'LONG LIVE THE ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLE' SCRAWLED ACROSS A WALL IN PULA, ACCOMPANIED BY COMMUNIST SYMBOLS, CROATIA 2009



FIGURE 12. NATO FORCES WERE UNABLE TO TOPPLE NOVI SAD'S TELEVISION TOWER DURING THEIR 78-DAY BOMBING CAMPAIGN OF THE RUMP YUGOSLAVIA IN 1999, BUT THE SCARS REMAIN, VOJVODINA 2009



FIGURE 13. A PARTISAN MEMORIAL TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR VICTIMS OF FASCISM IN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA, REPUBLIKA SRPSKA 2009



FIGURE 14. THE EMPTY SHELL OF MOSTAR'S HOTEL BRISTOL, WHICH IS LOCATED IN A PART OF THE CITY THAT WAS TENACIOUSLY DEFENDED BY THE CITY'S MUSLIM INHABITANTS, BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA 2008



FIGURE 15. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY IN SREMSKA MITROVICA PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO REMEMBER BOTH THOSE WHO FELL DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE MORE RECENT CASUALTIES OF THE 1990S. THE MEMORIAL STILL BEARS THE RED STAR OF SOCIALISM, SERBIA 2009

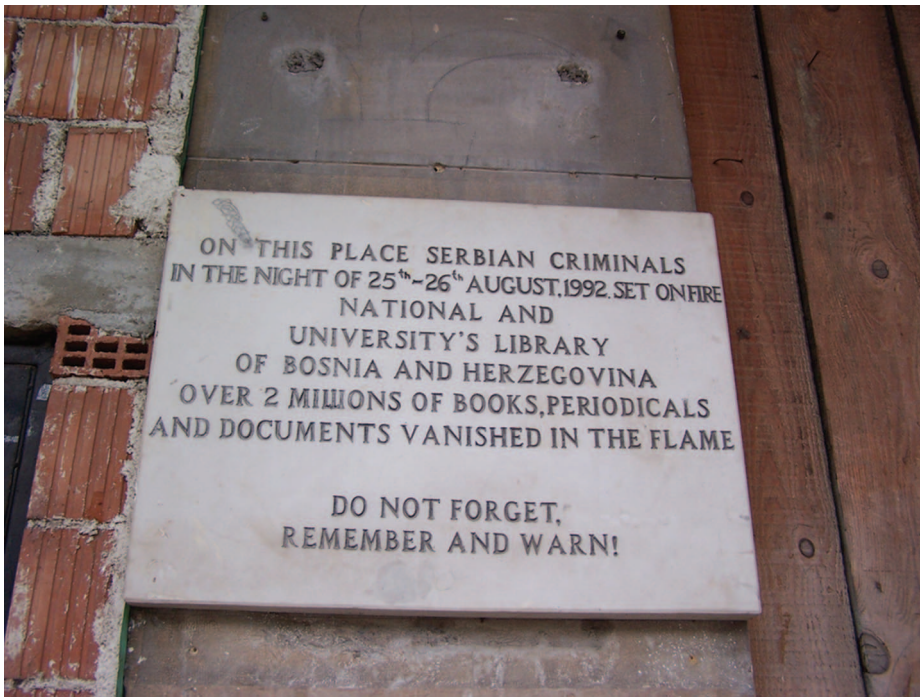


FIGURE 16. PLAQUES IN BOTH SERBO-CROAT AND ENGLISH STRESS TO VISITORS WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF SARAJEVO'S UNIVERSITY LIBRARY DURING THE 1990S' SIEGE OF THE CITY, BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA 2009



FIGURE 17. THE NATO BOMBING CAMPAIGN OF 1999 DESTROYED MANY BUILDINGS IN CENTRAL BELGRADE. THE REMAINS OF THE YUGOSLAV ARMY HEADQUARTERS CONTINUE TO REMIND THE CITY'S INHABITANTS OF A DARK PERIOD IN THEIR HISTORY, SERBIA 2008



FIGURE 18. A WREATH LAID AT THE PARTISAN WAR MEMORIAL IN FRUŠKA GORA, VOJVODINA 2009



FIGURE 19. LIFE CONTINUES IN WAR-TORN EASTERN SLAVONIA AS CAFES OPEN FOR BUSINESS IN VUKOVAR'S PARTIALLY RECONSTRUCTED MAIN STREET, CROATIA 2009