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Venezia



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ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

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***Encountering Cold War East Asia:
Yugoslav Experiential Writings from the Long 1950s***

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Laura De Giorgi

Assistant Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Harald Fuess

Graduand

Jovana Bogojević

Matriculation Number 997888

Academic Year

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Work is love made visible.
Kahlil Gibran

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree or professional qualification. Except where stated otherwise, by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

Abstract

This thesis looks at Yugoslav firsthand journalistic and travel writings about East Asia between 1950 and 1961, a period marked by great socio-ideological transformation in Yugoslavia. Through an analysis of historical newspapers, travel books, and archival materials, this thesis represents the first scholarly attempt at mapping experiential knowledge production about East Asia in Yugoslavia during the long 1950s.

Offering the first-ever overview of individuals who traveled and wrote about East Asia at the time also fills scholarly gaps in historical awareness of the interactions between the two regions. Furthermore, these writings are examined from the transcultural perspective, revealing relational, processual, and contextual dimensions that speak to Yugoslav nation-building and meaning-making in the 1950s. Thematically, this thesis focuses on the four most important and recurring topics found in their writings.

The first is the Korean War and its profound impact on Yugoslavia's foreign policy and its connections with (East) Asia. The second is how Yugoslavs used East Asia as an educational example through which they made sense of the Cold War as well as sharpened ideas and values that would become the basis of Yugoslav Non-Alignment. The third is how writing about East Asian countries, among others, became proof of Yugoslav exceptionalism and cosmopolitanism. The fourth is how they negotiated their Yugoslav-ness and European-ness in relation to the region. This thesis argues that East Asia, as reported on by journalists and travelers, played a significant role in the Yugoslav transformation during the 1950s.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, East Asia, Cold War, Knowledge Production, Experiential Writing

Dedicated to my husband Pim and our son Leo.

Abbreviations

AVNOJ – Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia

DSIP – State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs in Yugoslavia

FPRY – Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (until 1963)

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

CCTFC – Commission for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries

CPY – Communist Party of Yugoslavia (before 1952)

IPU – Inter-Parliamentary Union

LCY – League of Communists of Yugoslavia (after 1952)

NAM – Non-Alignment Movement

NOB – People's Liberation Struggle in the Second World War

PRC – People's Republic of China

TANJUG – Telegraphic Agency New Yugoslavia

U.N. – United Nations

A note on transliteration and translation

In experiential writings about East Asia, Yugoslavs included the names of people they met along the way. The few records of Chinese and (to a much lesser degree) Korean names in Serbo-Croatian were often far removed from what could be a name in standard pīnyīn or Romanization. Sometimes, additional clues left in the texts provided enough biographical information to identify the person they were referring to. In other cases, when the names were simply impossible to identify, they were omitted, or Serbo-Croatian versions were used. This was not an issue with Japanese names.

Some sources were obtained in Belgrade (Serbia) and some in Zagreb (Croatia). In the case of Borba articles, versions printed in Serbian Cyrillic and Croatian Latin scripts were both consulted, depending on availability in visited archives and libraries. If, when referenced, the titles of some Borba articles are written in Serbian *ekavica* and some Croatian *(i)jekavica*, this is the reason.

Lastly, when translating original sources, an effort was made to keep them literal and close to the original. In the 1950s, the prevalent writing style in Serbo-Croatian included heavy use of the third person and passive voice, as well as the habit of writing long sentences, sometimes as long as an entire paragraph. Only when complete adherence to the original structure impeded comprehensibility in English were changes intentionally made to the text.

Please note, unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The upper right side of a mustardy-yellowed page in a 1953 travel book, *Encounters in Asia* (Susreti u Aziji), bears a sketch of its author, *Jakov (Jaša) Levi*. Wearing a United Nations cap, his head turned toward the subtitle *To Panmunjom!* Levi is drawn above a neatly organized sequence of sixteen news excerpts about major developments in the Korean War, dated 25 June 1950 to 1 November 1951.¹ The list is dominated by the so-called Big Four press agencies: the United Press International, Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, and Reuters.² Within the first two pages of Levi's travel book, the reader is aware of three things: where Levi is headed, by what means will he reach the destination, and where the news came from.

His articles written from the Korean peninsula, Japan, Hong Kong, and several other Asian countries were not typical news briefs. They provided more context into the on-the-ground situation for the Yugoslav public's consumption. The same was true for his travel book. '[Now we can] acquaint ourselves with the main political problems of that, today's most troubled, part of the world,' noted his editor in 1953.³ It is not surprising that *Borba*, Yugoslavia's most prominent daily, featured a book review that underlined this very point.

We remember the journalistic reports from the Korean battlefield that Jaša Levi sent to his "Borba" paper as its special correspondent. We read them as testimonies of *our* man, who went to that distant, war-ravaged world to see and understand something beyond what was conveyed to the world by [press] agencies, in their often incredulous and neurotic announcements about the Korean conflagration. A real war was raging there. A conspiracy against world peace was at work there [...] and, the worried interest and anxiety with which that Far Eastern conflict was followed in our country were quite understandable. Jaša Levi brought a handful of memories and testimonies from there, collected in a beautifully organized book [...] In it are fragmentary pictures of Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and other places this journalist passed through.⁴

This exemplifies three key logics driving Yugoslav relations with East Asia in the 1950s. First, Levi's credibility is conditioned by his Yugoslav-ness ('our man') and unmediated experience of East Asia. Second, news reported by global press agencies is seen as exaggerated and less trustworthy. Third, Yugoslavs were emotionally invested in the Korean War ('worried interest and anxiety').⁵ From Levi onward, there were a dozen other Yugoslavs who visited and wrote about one or multiple East Asian countries in the 1950s.⁶ Their long-forgotten travelogues and articles, now collected and systematized for the first time, evidence burgeoning Yugoslav relations with

¹ Jaša Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, Zagreb: NIP, 1953, pp.5-7. Levi's book cover somewhat stylistically reminds of Marguerite Higgins, *War in Korea: The Report of a Woman Combat Correspondent*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1951.

² The first reference to these four major press agencies as the so-called 'Big Four' started in 1980. For more information, see Clara Galzerano, *Il ruolo di Reuters e AFP nello sviluppo delle relazioni Sino-Europee (1954-1979)*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Trieste, 2022, p.8, note 4.

³ Jaša Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, cover page, summary.

⁴ Č.K., "Jedan doživljaj savremene Azije," *Borba*, 19.05.1953, p.5. Emphasis was added.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ For more biographical information about them, see Appendix 1.

East Asia and how it negotiated its emerging new identity during its most transformational decade. One might wonder why this matters at all. The Cold War ended, Yugoslavia no longer exists, and East Asia has undergone significant changes since the 1950s. Yet what remains is the ever-elusive realm of beliefs, perceptions, imagination, and ideas.⁷ Consequently, this thesis focuses on bringing attention to what was written about East Asia and answering its main research question: what does Yugoslav experiential writing about East Asia in the long 1950s reveal?⁸

This thesis has seven chapters. The Introduction weaves together a literature review on Cold War historiography and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, highlighting the questions of identity and knowledge production.⁹ Additionally, it offers a practical overview of the Yugoslav press system and the roles of journalists, high-ranking officials, and other individuals as knowledge producers. The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this thesis are discussed in Chapter 2, while the following four chapters deal with the most important findings. Divided thematically, they cover the Korean War, Non-Alignment, new East Asia (as understood in Yugoslavia), and the Yugoslav self-perception (as curated in relation to East Asia). The thesis is rounded off by a brief conclusion that offers suggestions for future research.

1.1. Turning In-Between-Ness Into an Asset: New Yugoslavia and the Cold War

Drawing on a constructivist reading of the Cold War, this thesis views it as a system created and sustained by individual and collective action, rather than a historical necessity.¹⁰ It was not only a global phenomenon but a globalizing one, making the world more integrated.¹¹ Its global dimensions and versatility mean there exist myriad avenues for scholarly inquiry.¹² Yet it is only

⁷ For more information, see Subchapter 1.1. Also see Chapter 2 for the theoretical reflections on the connections between knowledge, beliefs, and truth.

⁸ The term long 1950s includes the years before and after the 1950s, covering the thesis' timeframe of 1950-1961.

⁹ The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia's official name changed to Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1963.

¹⁰ Though this seems logical, there is a stream of scholarship emphasizing the Cold War's constructed nature, hence why it is emphasized here as well. See Hajimu Masuda's exquisite book *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015 and Stefano Guzzini, "The Cold War is What We Make of It: When Peace Research Meets Constructivism in International Relations," in Stefano Guzzini and Dietrich Jung (eds.) *Contemporary Security Analysis and Copenhagen Peace Research*, London & New York: Routledge, 2003, pp.40-52. The latter was inspired by Alexander Wendt's famous constructivist essay "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, Vol.46, No.2, 1992, pp.391-425. In Chapter 2, the link between interactionism and constructivism is mentioned as part of this thesis' theoretical underpinnings.

¹¹ Hyung-gu Lynn, "Globalization and the Cold War," in Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp.584-602. For a case study that speaks to this integration, see Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2003.

¹² It has fascinated researchers ever since its nascent days, making any attempt at a brief literature review Sisyphean. This prompted Pierre Grosser to write that researching it presents 'a never-ending task' with only a potential to one day bring us to 'the Holy Grail of a total history of the Cold War.' See Pierre Grosser, "Looking for the Core of the Cold War, and Finding a Mirage?," *Cold War History*, 2015, Vol.15, No.2, pp.246. ¹² Some bigger volumes that could be of interest in exploring the Cold War include Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume I. Origins and Volume II. Crises and Détente*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010 and Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. In recent years, the *Routledge Studies in Cultures of the Global Cold War* has yielded some interesting works. See, as well, Andrew Hammond (ed), *The Palgrave Handbook of Cold War Literature*, London:

in the past few decades that Cold War historiography grew more diverse, stepping beyond the narrow U.S.–Soviet Union, West–East binary. Some scholars, such as Bhakti Shringapure, now call for an entirely ‘renewed postcolonial Cold War historiography’ that would finally ‘centralize the postcolonial dimension.’¹³ The Cold War would then be seen as a continuation of the imperial colonial project and not a new phenomenon. While decolonization and the Non-Aligned Movement (predominantly comprising countries from the Global South) have been studied extensively, Shringapure proposes a more radical lens: the Cold War as an oppressive, violently imposed system.¹⁴ In the late 1940s, 1950s, and beyond, this is precisely how Yugoslav leadership and intellectuals related to the Cold War.¹⁵ Historical experiences under Western and Ottoman empires, as well as the two world wars, intensified local fear of and visceral antagonism to foreign domination.¹⁶ To the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), the Cold War politics of spheres of influence were merely a continuation of these past times.¹⁷ The U.S.–Soviet Union dynamics shaped a world order that pressured smaller countries to participate in their competition, often at the expense of peace and national autonomy.

After the traumatizing Second World War, the CPY initially joined the socialist camp and nurtured close relations with Moscow.¹⁸ In 1947, the headquarters of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers’ Parties (Cominform) opened in Belgrade. Despite this, tensions with the Kremlin brewed in the background. Soviets expected subordination (especially in foreign policy matters), which Belgrade avoided. In 1948, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform. The Tito-Stalin split became a significant event in the Cold War. Internationally, it demonstrated that the Soviet-led bloc was not a monolithic entity. Domestically, it shook the Yugoslav society to its

Palgrave Macmillan, 2020 for insights into how the Cold War was negotiated in literary works across the globe, or even the Saki R. Dockrill and Geraint Hughes (eds.), *Palgrave Advances in Cold War History*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, with an overview of where academic research on the Cold War was in the mid-2000s

¹³ Bhakti Shringapure, *Cold War Assemblages: Decolonization to Digital*, New York & London: Routledge, 2019, p.191.

¹⁴ For insight into Non-Alignment, see, for example, Lorenz M. Lüthi, “The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Fall 2016, Vol.18, No.4, pp.98-147. Or, for something more extensive, Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné, and Nada Boškowska (eds.), *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War. Delhi - Bandung - Belgrade*, New York & London: Routledge, 2014.

¹⁵ For more information, see Subchapter 4.1.

¹⁶ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to even attempt to address the complex history of Yugoslavia and the Balkans. For a diverse set of valuable contributions from some of the region’s most respected historians that might help shed some light onto the two Yugoslavias at least, see “Yugoslavia from a Historical Perspective,” Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017.” Produced by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, the editorial board featured Latinka Perović, Drago Roksandić, Mitja Velikonja, Wolfgang Hoepken, and Florian Bieber. This is an interesting starter read.

¹⁷ For more information, see Vladimir Dedijer, “The Evolution of the Concept of Spheres of Influence,” in Vladimir Dedijer, Bipan Chandra, Malcolm Caldwell, James F. Petras, H. Michael Erisman, Charles Mills, Edward W. Said, *Spheres of Influence and The Third World*, Nottingham: The Spokesman Books, 1973, pp.3-23.

¹⁸ The psychological imprint of the Second World War was immense in Yugoslavia, with many battling anxiety, flashbacks, and other trauma-induced effects. An interesting example is the record of Branko Savić’s who, while abroad, found himself in a life-threatening situation: ‘I felt cold sweat running down my back, and [a sense of] bitterness appeared in my mouth. In my mind popped up associations of the past [II World] war, raids, police curfew...’ See “Branko Savić: Probio sam blokadu, ali...,” *Tanjug – Pola veka (’43-’93)*, pp.149-150. For other accounts of Yugoslav mental health crisis following the Second World War, see Subchapter 4.1. For an excellent history of CPY, with particular attention paid to the question of ethnic groups, see Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia: Tito, Communist Leadership and the National Question*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012.

core.¹⁹ Some of the country's highest-ranking officials in 1980, serving as editors of Edvard Kardelj's posthumously published memoir, described this period as a 'monstrous psychological, political, military and economic pressure of Stalin on Yugoslavia and Tito,' leaving them fighting for survival by 'gather[ing]' around the Party and Tito as its core gravitational pull.²⁰ CPY first began rooting out alleged domestic Stalinists, suspecting and questioning many working for the government and the press.²¹ Many were sent to the infamous reeducation camp, Goli Otok, among others.²² Simultaneously, the country braced itself for a possible Soviet military attack.²³ The fear of Moscow, alongside intense political and economic isolation, also drew Yugoslavia closer to the West. The U.S. not only helped Tito politically survive during this period, but also helped many in Yugoslavia physically survive.²⁴ For this reason, a renowned historian, Tvrtko Jakovina,

¹⁹ To grasp the seriousness of 1948 and its impact, here are some glimpses into how journalists and politicians remembered it. The common themes are disbelief, fear, and pressure. For example, journalists at the Belgrade headquarters of the Telegraphic Agency New Yugoslavia (Tanjug) recorded receiving with fear a dispatch about it from their Czechoslovakia-based colleague, Zora Gavrić. Nikola Vitorović recalls this moment with awareness of what was yet to come: '[w]e could sense something big is happening, but not at all that this long teleprinter text from Prague would change the destiny of Yugoslavia and thousands of people from its core.' Gavrić's translation of the Resolution was taken directly to Tito's close ally, Milovan Đilas. Though he became Yugoslavia's most infamous dissident less than a decade later, at this time, Đilas was one of the country's most powerful political figures, now tasked with coordinating Yugoslav anti-Soviet propaganda. His close associate was none other than Jakov Levi, who depicted vividly this period in his memoirs. "In 1948, I was summoned to a top-secret Communist Party meeting and informed of the impending break with the Cominform [...] I received my assignment for Borba's mountain hideout, where I was to report in case of a Soviet attack. [...] At the same time, I was appointed editor of Borba's new, massive two-page center spread, dedicated to our running polemic with the Soviets. Entitled "Against Calumny and Misinformation," it ran for two full years, until the pressure and the danger of invasion subsided. [...] With Milovan Djilas [Đilas], the government's minister in charge of the break with Stalin, I embarked on close daily cooperation." See "Nikola Vitorović: Rezolucija informacionog biroa," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, Belgrade: Tanjug, 1993, p.44; "Kako smo primali rezoluciju," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.44; and Jasha M. Levi, *The Last Exile: The tapestry of a life*, 2009, Kindle, Ch.36.

²⁰ Edvard Kardelj passed away before he could finish his autobiography. His audio tapes were used by Dr Vladimir Bakarić, Stane Dolanc, Stevan Doronjski, Fadilj Hodža, Lazar Koliševski, Sergej Kraigher, Cvijetin Mijatović, France Popit, Petar Stambolić, and Vidoje Žarković and edited into this memoir. For more information see Edvard Kardelj, *Sećanja: Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944-1957*, Belgrade: Niro radnička štampa, 1980, p.11.

²¹ For an account of journalists being questioned and/or arrested, see "Nikola Vitorović: Rezolucija informacionog biroa," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.44.

²² Many Yugoslav journalists had family members and friends imprisoned in Goli Otok. Some wrote about the impact of this on their lives. See, for example, Boža Rafajlović's brief account of Dida De Majo's 'horrible torture' and subsequent death, following release from the camp in "Boža Rafajlović: Put u Tanjug," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.175. For a list of other camps, see Goranja Ognjenović, Nataša Mataušić, and Jasna Jozelić, "Yugoslavia's Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of 'Absolute Modernity,'" in Gordana Ognjenović and Jasna Jozelić (eds.) *Titoism, Self-Determination, Nationalism, Cultural Memory*, 2016, p.16.

²³ In his second memoir, Levi writes that 'the menace of Soviet invasion became obvious' almost immediately and that, as a security measure, an entire 'network of mountain and underground positions was established in order for the government to continue functioning' and that he had his 'orders' so that 'Borba was to continue operations.' See Jasha M. Levi, *Requiem for a Country: A History Lesson*, 2011, Kindle, p.82.

²⁴ For the U.S., offering Yugoslavia support and assistance was a pragmatic decision to 'keeping Tito afloat' instead of having another Soviet satellite in Europe. The same author, Tvrtko Jakovina, has written extensively on Yugoslavia-U.S. relations (among other topics) but for a quick overview of their relationship during the Cold War, see Tvrtko Jakovina, "It's Either Tito or the Soviet Apparatchik: Tito's Yugoslavia and the United States of America (1945-1991)," in Gorana Ognjenović and Jasna Jozelić (eds.), *Revolutionary Totalitarianism, Pragmatic Socialism, Transition. Volume One, Tito's Yugoslavia, Stories Untold*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.99-138.

appropriately named his volume assessing Yugoslavia's shift Westward as "*Socialism on American Wheat*."²⁵

Yugoslav position in relation to the two superpowers was further affected by the Korean War. A conflict of global significance, the Korean War served as a stark reminder of the fragility of peace.²⁶ Superpowers' atomic weapons and the Second World War bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki weighed on everyone's mind.²⁷ There was an understanding that the world could slip into a new war or even mutually assured destruction (or MAD, as Donald Brennan fittingly abbreviated it).²⁸ Though in contemporary times a larger number of countries possess such weapons, it is generally believed that no state or leader is *mad* enough to use them. In the 1950s, however, this was not a given.²⁹ The Korean War revealed something of extreme importance: "[that] there could be a bloody and protracted conflict involving nations armed with nuclear weapons—and that they could choose not to use them."³⁰ This highlighted peace as a matter of active choice.

The Korean War held another special significance for the Yugoslavs. They understood it as a proxy conflict initiated by the Soviets to test whether the U.S. would protect its allies, especially as they continued to fear a potential Soviet attack.³¹ The Soviet involvement in the Korean War expanded Yugoslav blame for the Cold War from only the U.S. to Moscow as well.³² Yugoslav anti-Soviet rhetoric was toned down only after Joseph Stalin's death and Nikita Khrushchev's accession to power, when the two countries repaired their relationship, albeit it remained uneasy.³³

In the end, there was no Soviet invasion, and Yugoslavia successfully negotiated its survival, thriving by the 1960s. Meanwhile, the CPY framed 1948 as an empowering and 'history-making *no* to Stalin.'³⁴ It also grew more comfortable and secure in its position of in-between-ness in the Cold War dynamics and its emerging new *non-aligned* identity. After the Second World War and the Tito-Stalin split, the Korean War was what ultimately opened Yugoslavia to the world beyond

²⁵ Tvrtko Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici (1948-1963)*, Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2002.

²⁶ Masuda, *Cold War Crucible. The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World*, 2015.

²⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History Book*, London: Penguin Books, 2005, pp.40-41. Gaddis pierces the historical detachment from the emotionality of that time by offering a fictionalized yet plausible account of the Korean War in this book. He tells a story of how the conflict quickly escalated and atomic weapons were dropped on Busan and Inchon, Vladivostok, Shenyang, and Harbin, as well as Frankfurt and Hamburg. None of this happened, but it could have happened, and many feared and believed that it would happen.

²⁸ As mentioned in Daniel Deudney, *Whole Earth Security: A Geopolitics of Peace*, Worldwatch Paper 55, Washington D.C.: Worldwatch Institute, 1983, p.79, note 47.

²⁹ These anxieties somewhat subsided after the Korean War, only to peak again in the early 1960s. See Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr., "MAD and U.S. Strategy," in Henry D. Sokolski (ed) *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*, Washington D.C.: United States of America War College Press, 2004, p.143.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Darko Bekić captures this well in his chapter 'Korean, Instead of a Balkan War!' in *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu: Odnosi s velikim silama 1949-1955*, Zagreb: Globus, 1988, p.167.

³² For more information, see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

³³ The 'general state of emergency' that the state was operating in since 1948, due to fear of a Soviet invasion, was only 'called off' in 1953 after Stalin's death and the end of the Korean War. See Goranja Ognjenović et al., "Yugoslavia's Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of 'Absolute Modernity'," p.16. For a detailed account of the two country's relations in the 1950s, see Svetozar Rajak, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War: Reconciliation, Comradeship, Confrontation, 1953-1957*, New York & London: Routledge, 2010. For more information about Yugoslav anti-Sovietism, see Chapter 3.

³⁴ An interesting case of this is recorded in "Tihomir Stanojević: Istorijsko „ne“ Staljinu," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43- '93), p.45. Emphasis was added.

Europe and the U.S., marking its first steps toward Non-Alignment.³⁵ For the superpowers, this made Yugoslavia and Tito an ‘uncomfortable ally.’³⁶ For the Yugoslavs, on the other hand, this in-between-ness helped them regain a sense of agency and freedom.

In sum, the long 1950s testify to a process of Yugoslav adaptation to the Cold War. This decade shows how their understanding of this new global order was a direct result of historical experiences, the Second World War, the 1948 Cominform, and the Korean War.³⁷ Yugoslavia’s past not only shaped Yugoslav frames of reference but motivated and legitimized its role in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement.³⁸ Yugoslav growing presence in East Asia, as this thesis will show, is a big departure from the world of monarchist Yugoslavia that was enmeshed with ‘the world of Eurocentrism’ and had little official contact with East Asian states.³⁹ In fact, East Asia was an essential part of its nation-building during the Cold War and development of Non-Alignment.

1.2. The New Yugoslav: From Isolation to Cosmopolitanism

Post-World War II Yugoslav nation-building was an ideological process. It required a new identity for its people that was informed by socialist ideas and values. The Soviet-style socialism that had prevailed before 1948 had to change after Yugoslavia’s expulsion from the Cominform. This event and subsequent isolation on the international scene motivated the country’s leading ideologue, Edvard Kardelj, to reinterpret Marxist-Leninist classics following Tito’s vision. His interpretation gave rise to the Yugoslav version of socialism called self-management.⁴⁰ The title tellingly reflected the mental state of the Yugoslav leadership at the time, which saw taking matters into their own hands as the only way forward. Self-management granted workers in enterprises more decision-making power, advocated for state decentralization, and supported a foreign policy of independence and self-reliance, counterbalancing Cold War bloc politics.⁴¹ It was envisaged as a

³⁵ The link between the Korean War and Non-Alignment was first noted by Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970, p.33. In recent years, other scholars have mentioned it as well. See, for example, Zvonimir Stopić, Robert Niebuhr, and David Pickus, "Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 2021, pp.1-14; Kim Chul-min, "The View and Understanding of Yugoslavia on the Korean War: An Analysis through Illustrations," *International Area Review*, Winter 2009, Vol.12, No.3, p.54; Jovan Čavoški, "Jugoslavija i Azija (1947-1953)," in Slobodan Selinić, Radmila Radić, Dragan Bogetić, Vladimir Cvetković, Dragomir Bondžić, and Aleksandar Životić (eds.) *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950-1961*, Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008, p.533.

³⁶ Jeronim Perović, "Josip Broz Tito," in Steven Casey and Jonathan Wright (eds.), *Mental Maps in the Early Cold War Era, 1945-68*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p.134.

³⁷ Researchers Steven Casey and Jonathan Wright employed the (theoretically problematized) concept of mental maps to analyze how different leaders related to the Cold War and found that those leaders most haunted by the specter of those earlier wars, their Cold War mental maps tended to be fixed [...] [and that] they tended to view the new Cold War period through the existing frames of reference.' In their volume, Jeronim Perović's chapter about Josip Broz Tito proves the same in the Yugoslav case. See Steven Casey and Jonathan Wright (eds.), *Mental Maps in the Early Cold War Era, 1945-68*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 and for Perović's chapter, pp.131-159.

³⁸ Bojana Videkanić, "Nonaligned Modernism: Yugoslav Culture, Nonaligned Cultural Diplomacy, and Transnational Solidarity," *Cambridge Nationalities Papers*, 2021, Vol.49, No.3, p.506.

³⁹ Čavoški, "Jugoslavija i Azija (1947-1953)," p.526.

⁴⁰ Ognjenović et. al., "Yugoslavia's Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of 'Absolute Modernity'," pp.9-36.

⁴¹ Yugoslav Marxist humanism is far too often academically analyzed in isolation, when, in fact, it developed in dialogue with leading French philosophers of that era. For an important assessment of this interaction, see Una Blagojević, "Phenomenology and Existentialism in Dialogue with Marxist Humanism in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s," *Studies in East European Thought*, 2022, Vol.75, pp.417-436.

means of ultimate individuation, not just toward radical autonomy but also modernization.⁴² This idea quickly spread through all layers of society, with self-management reshaping even the practice of psychiatry in the country.⁴³ This process was, however, plagued by ‘severe contradictions’ between Yugoslav socialism and the one-party system.⁴⁴ Gertrude J. Robinson recorded that in the 1970s, many Yugoslavs felt that self-management ‘was not allowed to evolve out of its factory setting and penetrate the society as a whole.’⁴⁵ The fervor for self-management in the 1950s had gradually worn off. When it was theorized, however, it was adopted with gusto and laid the roots for a new Yugoslav identity that revolved around an expanded notion of freedom.⁴⁶

Yugoslav conception of freedom first took shape through the idea of Yugoslavism in the mid-19th century, in response to centuries of colonization and occupation.⁴⁷ This political and ideological movement sought freedom through an envisioned unified state in the Yugosphere that would provide its many peoples the right to a dignified national existence, free from foreign rule.⁴⁸ Although formally achieved after World War I with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (renamed Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929 alongside a prompt shift to dictatorship), it remained, as Bojana Videkanić noted, ‘a client state or under an indirect rule of several Western powers.’⁴⁹ This meant that for the CPY, the interwar period, the Second World War, and even the Tito-Stalin split were primarily about freedom *from* foreign domination. Through the 1950s, their concept of freedom evolved to include a freedom *to* (rather than just from); a freedom *to* make authentic choices and a freedom *to* reinvent themselves from being Europe’s ‘savage’ into a modern, cosmopolitan, and even exceptional state.⁵⁰

What earned Yugoslavia the label of exceptionalism, domestically and internationally, were primarily the events that followed the Tito-Stalin split. This included their geopolitical survival after breaking with the Kremlin, the promulgation of Yugoslav self-managing socialism, and the

⁴² Ognjenović et. al., “Yugoslavia’s Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of ‘Absolute Modernity’,” pp.9-36.

⁴³ Ana Antić, “The Pedagogy of Workers’ Self-Management: Terror, Therapy, and Reform Communism in Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin Split,” *Journal of Social History*, 2016, Vol.50, No.1, pp.179-203.

⁴⁴ Gertrude Joch Robinson, *Tito’s Maverick Media: The Politics of Mass Communications in Yugoslavia*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977, p.226.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.227. Cf. Antić, “The Pedagogy of Workers’ Self-Management: Terror, Therapy, and Reform Communism in Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin Split,” pp.179-203.

⁴⁶ For an overview of this process, see Ognjenović et. al., “Yugoslavia’s Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of ‘Absolute Modernity’,” pp.9-36.

⁴⁷ For more information about Yugoslavism, see Vesna Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia: A Transnational History*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Additionally, please note that in this thesis, whenever a reference is made to the region before it was known as Yugoslavia or after its collapse in the ‘90s, Tim Judah’s term Yugosphere will be used. This is by no means an ideal solution, but with a lack of a better alternative, it is pragmatic and meant to ease referencing. Yugosphere, naturally, does not do justice to a region as versatile in demographics and historical experiences as this side of the Balkans is. The name reduces it by either linking it specifically to South Slavs (which risks negating minority and other groups) or consistently connecting it to a country that was viable for not even a century. For more information, see Tim Judah, “*Yugoslavia is Dead. Long Live the Yugosphere*,” LSE Research on South Eastern Europe, 2009.

⁴⁹ Bojana Videkanić, “Nonaligned Modernism: Yugoslav Culture, Nonaligned Cultural Diplomacy, and Transnational Solidarity,” *Cambridge Nationalities Papers*, Vol.49, No.3, 2021, p.516, note 2. For more information about this controversial time that continues to inspire ultranationalist discourses today, see Dejan Djokić, “Nationalism, Myth and Reinterpretation of History: The Neglected Case of Interwar Yugoslavia,” *European History Quarterly*, 2012, Vol.42, No.1, pp.71-95.

⁵⁰ See the chapter “*Imagining Savage Europe and Inventing Yugoslavia: 1850-1914*” in Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia: A Transnational History*, pp.22-62.

birth of Non-Alignment as an alternative to the Cold War bloc politics. The underlying premise for its exceptionalism can be summarized as follows: Yugoslavia differed from other socialist states.⁵¹

The notion that Yugoslavia was exceptional was also cultivated in the West.⁵² Even anticommunist papers from the U.S., such as the *Reader's Digest*, played a role in elevating the international image of Tito and Yugoslavia.⁵³ They did so by comparing Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union and its satellites. Scholar Peter Wright finds that this image of Yugoslav 'internationalism, independence, and cosmopolitanism' developed in a western-centric manner and rhetoric, 'against an immobile or provincial "East",' resulting in Yugoslav arrogance toward Eastern Europe.⁵⁴ What exacerbated a sense of superiority was the former's higher standard of living in the long 1950s.⁵⁵

What it meant to be Yugoslav in the 1950s also developed in relation to the West. Throughout the 20th century, there was a pervasive sense of 'catching up with [Western] Europe.'⁵⁶ The West had, for a long time, viewed this part of Europe as primitive or not European enough, fostering a sense of inferiority in the Yugosphere.⁵⁷ Often, like in a study of pre-Cold War Britain, the West would shift back and forth between perceiving the area as backward or a 'sympathetic victim' of historical circumstance.⁵⁸ CPY partially embraced but reframed these dynamics of difference. Experiential writings on East Asia show how Yugoslavs highlighted themselves as morally righteous white Europeans unlike Western colonizers.⁵⁹ This legitimized the Yugoslav role in founding and leading the emerging Non-Alignment Movement. Throughout the Cold War, Yugoslavia continued to promote the independence of colonized people, which perpetually 'irritated' the West.⁶⁰

⁵¹ A British tourist visiting Croatia in 1958 noted that Yugoslavia was 'the only communist country in the world that allows everyone to stick their noses in its borders in order to see how Marx works in practice.' See Ognjenović et. al., "Yugoslavia's Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of 'Absolute Modernity'," p.21.

⁵² See Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia: A Transnational History* and Jelena Čulibrk, "Moulding and Mutilating: Newsreels, the British State, and Yugoslav 'Exceptional' Socialism, 1946-1961," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 2021, Vol.41, No.3, pp.477-494. Also referenced by Peter Wright, "New Histories of Socialist Internationalism and the Challenge to Yugoslav Exceptionalism," in Theodora Dragostinova and Veneta Ivanova (eds.), *Re-imagining the Balkans: How to Think and Teach a Region: Festschrift in Honor of Professor Maria N. Todorova*, Amsterdam: De Gruyter, p.268, note 5.

⁵³ Even pictures of Tito were different to those of other communist leaders. He is smiling, while the others are 'stony', as Joanne P. Sharp describes it in *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, pp.117-118.

⁵⁴ Wright, "New Histories of Socialist Internationalism and the Challenge to Yugoslav Exceptionalism," pp.268-269. Wright compares the late 1960s Bulgaria to 1950s Yugoslavia failing to recognize that it was the events during and after the Tito-Stalin split alongside the Yugoslav development of its authentic socialism that earned it this label in the first place. Cf. Ognjenović et. al., "Yugoslavia's Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of 'Absolute Modernity'," pp.9-36.

⁵⁵ Ognjenović et. al., "Yugoslavia's Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of 'Absolute Modernity'," p.19.

⁵⁶ An interesting reflection on this is Igor Duda, "Everyday Life in Both Yugoslavias," in *Yugoslavia from a Historical Perspective*, Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, pp.391-408.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Samuel Foster captures this in a case study of British imagination constructing the Yugosphere before Tito's era. Foster centers the concept of a Yugoslav peasant whose view in Britain persistently oscillated. At times, a 'sympathetic victim' of historical circumstance and at others, a reminder of the region's (non-European) backwardness. See Samuel Foster, *Yugoslavia in the British Imagination: Peace, War, and Peasants before Tito*, London, New York & Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021, pp.152-153.

⁵⁹ See, among others, Boškov, *Aziska turneja*, p.16.

⁶⁰ Videkanić, "Nonaligned Modernism: Yugoslav Culture, Nonaligned Cultural Diplomacy, and Transnational Solidarity," p.507.

The Yugoslav new identity was born in interaction with both the East and the West. It was shaped through seeking differences and similarities with both sides. This led to the dynamics of superiority and inferiority that helped hierarchically situate the new Yugoslav self.⁶¹ If they could show they were better than the East, they could justify their nonbelonging to the Soviet-led socialist bloc, their freedom to be different, and celebrate their progress. If they could not be wealthier or more developed than the West, they could at least highlight their moral superiority, circumventing feelings of inferiority. Because their dynamics with each side were different, their behavior toward them was also different.⁶² Moreover, the Western relationship toward Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav relationship toward Eastern Europe illustrate the nuanced mechanisms of othering and orientalizing. Though both the Balkans and Eastern Europe have been extensively studied in scholarship as the Other of Western Europe, researchers have also shown these spaces were, of course, capable of doing the same to others (particularly well theorized in Milica Bakić-Hayden's concept of nesting orientalisms).⁶³

The case of Yugoslav relations with East Asia was different. While dynamics of othering and orientalizing existed, East Asia was a more neutral ground to sharpen the edges of the new Yugoslav identity. First and foremost is that the very act of traveling to the region—of having access to it—reaffirmed Yugoslav progress to itself. It was also easier to claim worldliness, that is cosmopolitanism when speaking about Japan from Japan, for example. Geographical distance, in this case, created the space to erase Yugoslav doubts over its European-ness and their profound sense of inferiority. When in East Asia or outside of Europe, Yugoslavs felt most comfortably European. Experiential writings about East Asia also provided a space to observe the Cold War from a distance and reaffirm Yugoslav righteousness at all steps. This could be called implicit

⁶¹ Vesna Goldsworthy's reflections sum up these dynamics well: 'My sense of myself as a Yugoslav was primarily shaped on travels abroad. When Yugoslavs of my generation remember Yugoslavia, the freedom to travel is often high on the list of what we mention most fondly. Unlike Westerners, however, we felt that travel was a privilege rather than an entitlement. The freedom felt so precious because in this respect, as in so many things, we looked Eastward rather than Westward for comparisons although we did not automatically feel inferior to Westerners. Travelling abroad from Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s, I felt luckier than Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Russians, but I did not particularly envy Italians or the Greeks.' See Vesna Goldsworthy, "Yugoslavia. A Defeated Argument," in Radmila Gorup (ed.), *After Yugoslavia: The Cultural Spaces of a Vanished Land*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013, pp.46-47. Also quoted in Wright, "New Histories of Socialist Internationalism and the Challenge to Yugoslav Exceptionalism," p.268.

⁶² Compare, for example, of how folklore was perceived and used in relation to the West and East. Ivan Hofman, "'Folklore diplomacy' - the role of musical folklore in Yugoslavia's foreign policy 1949-1971," in Ivana Vesić, Vesna Peno, and Boštjan Udovič (eds), *The Tunes of Diplomatic Notes: Music and Diplomacy in Southeast Europe (18th-20th century)*, Belgrade and Ljubljana: Institute of Musicology (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts) and Faculty of Social Sciences (University of Ljubljana), 2020, pp.203-226. Cf. For how it was used in relation to China, see Jovana Bogojević, "Through Mistrust, Resistance, and 'Spring Tide': A Brief History of Sino-Yugoslav Cultural Cooperation in the 1950s," in Anastas Vangeli and Dragan Pavličević (eds.) *Yugoslavia and China: Histories, Legacies, Afterlives*, pending publication by Routledge, 2025 and Bogojević, *Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980)*, pp.32-38.

⁶³ Some of the most famous examples were published in the 1990s, including Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994 and Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1997]. The latter was very clearly nudged into creation by global discourses on the Yugoslav Wars, which slipped into stereotypization ever so easily. Also see the seminal Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. For nesting orientalisms, see Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review*, Winter 1995, Vol.54, No.4, pp.917-931 and Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert M. Hayde, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics," *Slavic Review*, Spring 1992, Vol.52, No.1, pp.1-15.

propaganda. Experiential writings about East Asia, among others, served as a canvas on which this new Yugoslav identity was refined from a safer distance. Especially its choice to be in-between, to go the third way. That is, finding an alternative to bloc politics. Historically, being at the crossroads of empires victimized it, but in the Cold War, it became a space of freedom. Though it distrusted both the East and West, it now leveraged its in-between-ness for political autonomy and economic advantage, gaining access to both markets.⁶⁴ Being a Yugoslav in the Cold War meant retaining freedom and self-determination by ensuring that relationships with larger powers were not inherently unequal or unfavorable to Yugoslavia.

In sum, the Cold War environment gave rise to a new Yugoslav identity revolving around the concept of freedom but framed in the idea of exceptionalism. This Yugoslav identity, like others that preceded it, was formulated relationally, in interaction with the East and West. This revealed complex dynamics of a perpetual comparison between them and a superiority-inferiority cycle. To be a new Yugoslav was to embody freedom, cosmopolitanism, and in-between-ness. Yugoslav experiential knowledge production on East Asia helped develop these values by providing a neutral ground where the Yugoslav identity could be refined.⁶⁵

1.3. Cutting the Intermediary: Yugoslav Experiential Knowledge Production on East Asia

1.3.1. Sourcing Information: Windows into Asia Before and After 1945

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, before the Tito-Stalin split, Yugoslavia imported Soviet knowledge *en masse*. Students and military personnel sent abroad for education went primarily to the USSR.⁶⁶ Monarchist Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was Western-centric, educating its intellectuals in European metropolises and absorbing ideas from imperial Europe at a gulp (including, often unwittingly, imperial rhetoric).⁶⁷ CPY sought to rectify that, shifting from Western to Soviet-produced information. The exception was France, whose leftist intellectuals (especially Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir) and ideas were continuously of great importance to the Yugoslavs.⁶⁸ At this time, knowledge in French, alongside Russian, connected

⁶⁴ Ognjenović et. al., “Yugoslavia’s Authentic Socialism as a Pursuit of ‘Absolute Modernity,’” p.19.

⁶⁵ For more information, see Chapters 3-6.

⁶⁶ For more information see Miroslav Perišić, *Od Staljina ka Sartru: formiranje jugoslovenske inteligencije na evropskim univerzitetima: 1945-1958*, Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2012.

⁶⁷ Ibid. In the first Yugoslavia, many admired Western Empires and viewed them as advanced societies, with Great Britain as a prime example. An issue of *Nova Evropa* (New Europe) magazine, dated 16 February 1930 and dedicated to Great Britain and the Society of Friends of Great Britain in Yugoslavia, aimed to connect the Empire to its readers. To illustrate Great Britain’s sensibility, the authors compared its use of East and West with that in Yugoslavia. They noted, ‘When we speak of East and West, we think of the posthumous worlds of Western and Eastern Roman Empires, Rome and Byzantium, the latter with its appendix, Islamic Turkey. For England today East and West are foremost geographical concepts: »Near East« [...] our Levant, and »Far East«, East Asia.’ For Yugoslavs, these were emotional concepts burdened with historical baggage that kept the region stuck in a sense middle-ness and powerlessness. The article implied the British were rational and that adopting a broader worldview and associated language is an important part of that. Though how the notion of the Far East entered Yugoslav vocabulary warrants deeper investigation, the *Nova Evropa* example serves as an interesting case of Yugoslavs adopting Eurocentric imperial rhetoric in the name of progress. See “Velika Britanija i Nova Evropa,” *Nova Evropa*, 16.02.1930., p.82.

⁶⁸ Interestingly, the first group of Yugoslavs to study abroad at this time did not go to the Soviet Union but France. Ibid. For an engaging interview with Simone de Beauvoir from 1968, during her third visit to Yugoslavia, see Dara

them with China, intermediating translations of literature or direct conversations.⁶⁹ It was only after the Tito-Stalin split, alongside the birth of self-management, that it became imperative for Yugoslavia to be as self-reliant as possible in producing its own knowledge and to minimize dependence on intermediaries.

These shifts and processes are reflected in Yugoslav experiential writings on East Asia in the 1950s. They referenced primarily Pearl S. Buck and French authors Pierre Loti (Louis Marie-Julien Viaud), Paul Morand, and Marc Chadourne, as literature that shaped their initial ideas about the 'Far East.'⁷⁰ Often (but not always), Yugoslavs in the 1950s attempted to step away from exoticized notions about East Asia.⁷¹ Nada Marinković, the only Yugoslav woman to publish a book about China in the 1950s, did so most vocally. In her travelogue, she narrates encountering an acquaintance at the airport in Belgrade who asked her to bring him a Buddha as a gift. She replied, as noted in her book, "No! [...] I am going to China with no lotuses, with no [Pierre] Lotis and Buddhas." (I am not sure about this but I love that I said so).⁷² The expectation in new Yugoslavia of new China and East Asia required a novel way of relating to the region; it required a partial or complete rejection of ideas born through colonial discourses or absorbed from the Soviets. Moreover, it called for a reevaluation of East Asia through direct contact and, in doing so, created new knowledge about the region in Yugoslavia. Direct contact for unmediated knowledge

Janeković, *Susreti s poviješću*, Zagreb: Prometej, 2000, pp.245-255. This volume also includes Janeković's interviews with Zhou Enlai in 1971 and Deng Xiaoping in 1981 on pp.137-177.

⁶⁹ Lu Xun's 'The True Story of Ah Q' and other novellas were translated by Desanka Maksimović from Russian and published in 1950, while Lao She's 'Camel Xiangzi' was translated from French into Serbo-Croatian in 1959. For more information, see Jovana Bogojević, *Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980)*, Master's Thesis, Yenching Academy of Peking University, 2020, p.40 and, for a reference on French language in direct conversations, see Nada Marinković, *Kina*, Belgrade: Agencija Tea Books, 2016 [1958], Chapter Tajna uhvaćenih trenutaka.

⁷⁰ Though there is no research into which specific foreign literature or authors shaped Yugoslav perceptions of East Asia in pre-Cold War times, something can be deduced from the Yugoslav writings in the 1950s, where these authors are continuously referenced as sources of initial impressions of China, for example. See especially the above-mentioned travel book by Nada Marinković. On another note, Pearl S. Buck was incredibly popular in both pre-Cold War and Cold War Yugoslavia, with a 1959 *Borba* article calling her 'our good, old acquaintance.' Her depictions of China and womanhood were important avenues through which Yugoslavs understood questions of bound feet and the position of women in pre-socialist China. Her 'Chinese trilogy' books were available in multiple languages in Yugoslavia before World War II and in Serbo-Croatian since 1941. She was hailed as a 'bridge between East and West' in a *Pravda* article from 1939. In a 1952 *Borba* article, she was called an artist of a great gift that brought to the West 'the true image of China.' Her works were performed in theaters as well as added to mandatory readings in elementary schools across Yugoslavia. Radio Belgrade also featured her work in its programs for the young and television programs did the same. In a 1961 interview survey with youth from multiple major cities in Yugoslavia, looking into their wishes of who they'd want to be like, answers included, among others, Pearl S. Buck, and in brackets, in quotes was placed: '[she] brought closer to us the far, unknown part of the world.' In *Vreme*, on 22 May 1940, they wrote that the value of her work in Yugoslavia was the fact that it brought 'the spirit of adventure, but in service of great moral values and meaning for broader masses, with feeling for their soul [...].' See G.V., "Staro poznanstvo," *Borba*, 26.07.1959., p.10; "Perl Bak je treća žena koja je dobila Nobelovu nagradu," *Pravda*, 07.02.1939., p.12; "Nove knjige i časopisi," *Borba*, 31.12.1952., p.6; J. I., "Somborsko narodno pozorište u novoj sezoni," *Borba*, 01.09.1953., p.2; "Repertoar pozorišta u Pančevu," *Borba*, 04.07.1954., p.7; K.Č., "Sto pet pretstava [sic] Cetinskog pozorišta," *Borba*, 09.08.1954., p.4; "Bioskopi prikazuju," *Borba*, 06.01.1959., p.10; "U 1955 godini najviše su u svetu prevedeni Tolstoj, Šekspir i Andersen," *Borba*, 12.02.1955., p.5; D.M., "I učenici su nezadovoljni uspehom," *Borba*, 28.03.1956., p.7; "Radio Beograd," *Borba*, 13.10.1967., p.12; "Ponedjeljak, 3 avgust," *Borba*, 31.07.1957., p.8; Feliks Pašić, "Želeo bih da budem..." *Borba*, 31.12.1961., p.5; and "„Amerikanka“ nova knjiga Perl Bak," *Vreme*, 22.05.1940., p.10.

⁷¹ This is more thoroughly discussed in

⁷² Ibid, Chapter U sivom jutru prevrćem listove atlasa.

production was not isolated to East Asia. Official Belgrade's narratives about India and Myanmar, for example, 'departed drastically from Soviet interpretations' in the 1950s as well.⁷³ In both cases, the Korean War forced Yugoslavia to open to and learn more about these areas, and, in the process, recognize how much it relied on both the West and Moscow for information.⁷⁴ This coincided with Belgrade's increasingly strengthening political relations with London and Washington, amidst the Soviet threat.⁷⁵

It is noteworthy that, although the 1950s marked the beginning of intensified interactions between Yugoslavia and East Asia, connections between these regions existed before. They are just poorly documented. With the opening of the Suez Canal in the 19th century, the number of travelers from the Yugosphere to East Asia increased.⁷⁶ These were mainly men, but women traveled as well. Jelena Dimitrijević is one notable example. (She is often called the 'Serbian Pierre Loti,' demonstrating the strong French influence.⁷⁷) There is now also a growing awareness of other Yugoslavs who traveled, lived, and worked in the region, though information remains scant.⁷⁸ A good example is the first correspondent from Yugoslavia in Japan, Branko Vukelić. He was sent

⁷³ Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.35.

⁷⁴ Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije, 1956-1961*, p.42 and Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.24. Also see Chapter 3 for an elaborate discussion of the impact the Korean War had on Yugoslavia.

⁷⁵ Tvrtko Jakovina, *Budimir Lončar: From Preko to the Top of the World*, 2nd Edition, Zaprešić: Fraktura, 2020, p.62.

⁷⁶ This is noted by Tomasz Ewertowski for travelers from Serbia specifically in his "The Tropics and the East-Central European Gaze: The Natural World of Southeast Asia in Polish and Serbian Travel Writings," *Wacana*, 2022, Vol.23, No.1, p.4. It is likely that this opened East Asia and other spaces to more travelers from the Yugosphere in general. Not just Serbia. For more information about Serbian travelers to China before the Cold War, refer to Tomasz Ewertowski's articles referenced in the bibliography.

⁷⁷ Though many of Dimitrijević's writings are publicly available, her notes from East Asia have not been published. For more information, see Svetlana Tomić, "The Travel Writings of Jelena J. Dimitrijević: Feminist Politics and Privileged Intellectual Identity," in Jelena Bogdanović, Lilen F. Robinson, and Igor Marjanović (eds.), *On the Very Edge: Modernism and Modernity in the Arts and Architecture of Interwar Serbia 1918-1941*, pp.115-135; Marija M. Bulatović and Biljana Milovanović Živak, "Srpska Pierre Loti iza sedam mora i tri okeana," *Treća*, 2021, Vol.33, No.1, pp.259-265 and Vladimir Đurić, "Jelena Dimitrijević et Pierre Loti: l'Orient et l'Occident en contact," *Neohelicon*, 2021, No.48, pp.281-297. Also see Vladimir Gvozden, *Srpska putopisna kultura 1914-1940: Studija o hronotopičnosti susreta*, Službeni glasnik, 2011, p.9.

⁷⁸ An interesting case is that of Viola Nocić, who married Rene Sung, a KMT diplomat stationed at the League of Nations in Switzerland, in the mid-1930s. They moved to China, and Viola lived there until 1953 and then escaped to Taiwan with her children. She documented her experiences in a book published in Taipei in 1953. Though she was quite known in KMT circles, there is no mention of her in Yugoslav historiography. There are likely other women who somehow ended up in the region with no exact record. Ewertowski, for example, found evidence of 'a Serbian girl' cabaret dancer in Harbin around this time whose story, too, remains a mystery. There was also apparently a significant group of Yugoslavs in China during the Japanese invasion, with most based in Tianjin and one living in Yan'an. Citing Chinese sources, Jovan Čavoški notes that the latter was a man who 'assisted the CPC and wanted to meet with Mao Zedong.' See Nataša Đurić, "Po bijelom svijetu * Stari Beograđanin pronašao je svoju kćerku na Formozi," *Borba*, 1-3.01.1954., p.12. Utmost gratitude to Prof. Vincent K. L. Chang who helped identify the Chinese names of Viola and her husband, Rene. She went by two Chinese names, either Luō Wěidá (罗玮达) or Sòng Wěidá (宋玮达), and his name was Sòng Xuǎnquán (宋选铨). In Taiwan, Viola's book detailing her experiences in mainland China from 1949-1953 can be found as Sòng Wěidá, *Hóng jié yúshēng (fēi qū shēnghuó huíyìlù)*, Dà Zhōngguó túshū yǒuxiàn gōngsī yinxíng, 1953. Here is the original reference in traditional Chinese characters: 宋瑋達, 紅劫餘生 (匪區生活回憶錄), 大中國圖書有限公司印行, 1953. Also see Tomasz Ewertowski, "Northeast China as a Contact Zone in Polish and Serbian Travelogues, 1900-1939," *Colloquia Humanistica*, No.6, 2017, p.38. and Čavoški, "Jugoslavija i Azija (1947-1953)," p.528, note 3.

by the *Politika* daily to report from Tokyo in the 1933-1940 period.⁷⁹ Though his primary objective had to do with espionage (he was a member of Richard Sorge's group in Japan), he sent 56 dispatches back home.⁸⁰ Vukelić's articles mark the first wave of experiential knowledge production on East Asia in Yugoslavia via newspapers. The far more versatile second wave began in the 1950s.

1.3.2. Reporting with Authority: Yugoslav Technicians of Knowledge

This thesis draws on the experiential writings produced by a heterogeneous group of Yugoslavs who traveled or lived in East Asia in the 1950s. This group includes (in chronological order of their visit): Jakov (Jaša) Levi, Zoja and Miša Levi, Kosta Timotijević, Dragi Stamenković, Vljeko Begović, Vlado Teslić, Živko Milić, Vladimir Baum, Vujadin Boškov, Nada Marinković, Ivo Andrić, Vojin Šantić, Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, Đorđe Bogojević, Branko Bogunović, Vasil Magdeski, Dragutin Šolajić, Aleš Bebler, and Jože Smole. With a few exceptions, most have faded from contemporary historiography. Their connection to East Asia was mainly (and accidentally) discovered through newspaper articles and forgotten travel books. Mapping their timelines and the contexts behind their trips was challenging, with varying degrees of success. Most information was drawn from the primary sources directly and then cross-referenced with archival documents and secondary literature, if available. For biographical information (laid out in Appendix 1), books *Who is Who in Yugoslavia* published in 1957 and 1970 were essential.⁸¹

In the process of compiling their biographies, patterns began to emerge. Most were men.⁸² Some participated in the Spanish Civil War, several graduated from the famous yet briefly in existence Higher School for Diplomats and Journalists in early Cold War Yugoslavia, and many were friends. Most (if not all) were linguistically gifted and employed by the state right after World War II as journalists, officials, diplomats, or even researchers. Their careers were often versatile. For example, journalists who worked in various media, including newspapers and radio, sometimes transitioned to take on political positions or work as diplomats later. On the other hand, officials oversaw and participated in leading key newspapers and publishing companies. All gravitated around the U.N. at different points in their career (sometimes even fully transitioning to work for it). And all traveled prolifically and wrote about their cosmopolitan lifestyles. Most importantly, they all knew each other, and many (not all) had forged these connections through their difficult times together. Indeed, from illegal activities in monarchist Yugoslavia to participation in the Spanish Civil War or the People's Liberation Struggle in WWII (NOB), these Yugoslav communists established lifelong friendships that became the network behind the creation of a new

⁷⁹ James Gannon, *Stealing Secrets, Telling Lies: How Spies and Codebreakers Helped Shape the Twentieth Century*, Washington D.C.: Potomac Books Inc, 2001, p.134 and p.140. 'Special correspondent' is the term used by Yugoslav newspapers when describing a journalist who traveled to report from abroad.

⁸⁰ These were gathered by his son and published a decade ago. See Hiroshi Yamasaki-Vukelić (ed.), *Branko Vukelić: Pisma iz Japana*, Novi Sad: Dnevnik, 2014.

⁸¹ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji: biografski podaci o jugoslovenskim savremeniciima*, 1st Edition, Beograd: Sedma sila, 1957 and *Jugoslovenski savremenici: ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, Belgrade: Hronometar, 1970.

⁸² Though women traveled to East Asia in the 1950s, the very first female Tanjug correspondent in East Asia was Sonja Badel, in Beijing, in 1980. See: "Rad domaćih i stranih novinara," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, pp.123-124. For personal accounts of sexism toward female journalists in the 1950s, see "Vesna Prlja-Jovanović: „Za koji list radi Vaš suprug“," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, pp.166-168.

state in 1945.⁸³ This made most of them reliable in the eyes of their fellow CPY members by default, giving them the space to produce knowledge for the general public.

This heterogeneous group did so to different extents. The prolific writing of Đorđe Bogojević stands in stark contrast to a single article written by Zoja Levi. This discrepancy naturally reflects their different positions, one being a correspondent journalist and the other the spouse of a Yugoslav diplomat. This thesis considers all Yugoslav experiential writings as complementary streams shaping the broader Yugoslav understanding of East Asia, itself, and the Cold War during this period. The authors were part of a network that co-created and upheld the new Yugoslav state, and their contributions to the Yugoslav experiential knowledge production on East Asia are best understood as a web of thought, rather than individual ideas. Their writing contributed to the evolving Yugoslav identity, serving an educational purpose.

The scope of people in the Yugoslav establishment, whose role was to educate the masses, was wide. Officials and journalists had a special standing in the public and their position legitimized their opinions. This prompted a renowned Serbian historian of Yugoslav cultural politics, Miroslav Perišić, to state that ‘an intellectual was replaced by a “technician of knowledge” [...] the most reliable support[er] of new Yugoslavia’ and a ‘reflection’ of what Yugoslavia aspired to become.⁸⁴ The concept of technicians of knowledge is not the same as that of a state intellectual. The latter typically refers to intellectuals and academics who adapt their scholarly output to the ideology of the state. Technicians of knowledge are often regarded as respected experts, although they may not possess the formal credentials to claim such expertise. If anything, the very name technicians of knowledge signals practicality. In Yugoslavia at the time, who better to fulfill the practical role of educating others about foreign countries than officials or journalists, particularly those who have had the chance to travel to these distant lands? Additionally, they embodied the politico-ideological frames of reference of the Yugoslav communist state, rendering them—often immediately—as trustworthy.⁸⁵

⁸³ A useful resource to sense just how intimately weaved was the web of their interpersonal connections were is Lordan Zafranović, Ivan Goldstein, and Mirjana Šušar, “TITO – Posljednji svjedoci testamenta,” 2012, HRT (docu-series).

⁸⁴ Perišić, *Od Staljina ka Sartru: formiranje jugoslovenske inteligencije na evropskim univerzitetima: 1945-1958*, p.56 and p.64.

⁸⁵ There were few academics working on East Asia in Yugoslavia at this time. Sonja Dapčević-Oreščanin, for example, focused on China but did not speak the language, nor is there evidence she visited China at all. Even so, she published primarily for the academic audiences, but also popular books and newspaper articles for the broader public. Non-experiential knowledge production about East Asia, however, was not considered did not just publish for academics but also for the broader public with popular books and sometimes newspaper articles. Her case suggests that scholars produced primarily non-experiential knowledge about the region, hence why their work isn’t analyzed in this thesis. It is also noteworthy that the Yugoslav educational system didn’t have cadres for Chinese and Japanese languages until much later in the Cold War. Systematic academic learning about East Asia had only begun at the Oriental Philology Department of the University of Belgrade (and likely across Yugoslavia) only in the mid-1970s. Before that, Yugoslavia sent students to China and Japan (from the mid to late 1950s) to learn the language, but some had attended Chinese classes in India, for example. See Dapčević-Oreščanin’s articles about China’s agrarian reform in *Borba* on 18. and 19.05.1955., p.4 and Sonja Dapčević-Oreščanin and Puniša A. Pavlović, *Kina*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1960. Also see Anđelka N. Mitrović, “Dvadeseti rođendan katedre za orijentalistiku,” *Reči*, 2015, pp.216-220, Bogojević, *Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980)*, p.38, and Perišić, *Od Staljina ka Sartru: formiranje jugoslovenske inteligencije na evropskim univerzitetima: 1945-1958*, p.375 and p.377.

This means that high-ranking Yugoslav officials wrote extensively about their trips abroad for the general public.⁸⁶ They did so primarily through the newspapers, due to ‘their potentially broadest readership circle’ and ‘the underdevelopment of other media.’⁸⁷ Print-language, as Benedict Anderson calls it, is an essential tool of nation-building after all.⁸⁸ This practice of officials writing about their travel abroad appears to have begun after the Tito-Stalin split, possibly to justify what could be perceived as elitist behavior to an impoverished society while simultaneously framing the travel as a collective experience.⁸⁹ Veljko Vlahović, a high-ranking official, reflected on this new trend and wrote in 1953 the following:

It has become a habit that, when a delegation or an individual travels abroad, they write something about their impressions for the public. This [practice] has its good and bad sides. It is good that a wider circle of readers gets to know, in more detail, the world in which we live; [the world] with which we meet and cooperate; that they [readers] get to know other countries and people, their difficulties and achievements. The downside is that, regardless of how experienced [in life] the visitors of certain countries may be, particularly the shorter stays still give a one-sided picture and can often lead an uninformed observer to wrong conclusions. Writing about a country and its problems, especially when spending merely ten days in it, is not easy at all.⁹⁰

The articles produced in the circumstances Vlahović describes might have been, as he admits, superficial, but nevertheless fulfilled their educational and nation-building purpose. Their privileged travel, written as a shared experience, created a sense of ‘a deep, horizontal comradeship’ despite ‘the actual inequality’ within the state itself.⁹¹ Moreover, officials’ writing was ‘mostly directive’ and, alongside that of journalists, espoused their position as ‘teachers’ of the public.⁹² Their articles served, in effect, as mediums that interpreted the world to Yugoslavs in a way that

⁸⁶ In some cases, articles of high-ranking officials, regardless of the topic, were unsigned, marked with a pseudonym, or had partial or full initials of the author. The same is observed by Rubinstein in *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.52.

⁸⁷ Katarina Spehnbjak, “Uloga novina u oblikovanju javnog mnijenja u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1952.,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Vol.25, Iss.2-3, 1993, p.166.

⁸⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London & New York: Verso, 2006 [1983], pp.34-35, p.44, and pp.133-141.

⁸⁹ Rubinstein called the Yugoslavs ‘inveterate travelers’ and their traveling ‘the lifeblood of Yugoslav diplomacy’ that saw ‘Africa, Asia, and Europe a vital constituency to be nurtured in expectation of tangible political return.’ See Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World*, p.187.

⁹⁰ Veljko Vlahović, “Susreti u Izraelu,” *Borba*, 19.07.1953., p.4.

⁹¹ This is what Anderson argues is how a nation is imagined. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, p.7.

⁹² Katarina Spehnbjak, “Uloga novina u oblikovanju javnog mnijenja u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1952.,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Vol.25, Iss.2-3, 1993, p.167 and p.169 and Carol S. Lilly, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953*, Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, p.4.

felt right to the Yugoslav state.⁹³ In doing so, they played a crucial role in shaping internal realities and serving Yugoslav foreign policy interests.⁹⁴

Given the importance of the press for the state, it is unsurprising that in the long 1950s, the ‘national government and party bureaucracies ran the media through a variety of censorship procedures and content was primarily defined in terms of official political goals.’⁹⁵ For many scholars, this was simply state propaganda.⁹⁶ Katarina Spehnjak argued in 1993 that the system was set up in a way that everyone who ‘acted in public and all the statements expressed in public, were in service of legitimizing’ the Yugoslav regime.⁹⁷ For Branka Doknić, some individuals even actively engaged in ‘conscious’ lying and thus fostered ‘false consciousness’ and a collective ‘delusion’ about the country.⁹⁸

In the Cold War, loyalty to the CPY was an integral part of how journalists were selected for employment.⁹⁹ The party sought not mere newsmen but true believers in Yugoslavia and its socialism. Nina Žnidaršič found that many journalists were ‘actively, committedly, and perhaps even activistically [sic] contributing to the development and emergence of the new socio-political order, namely, the socialist community based on self-management,’ showing that the situation on the ground was far more complex than the mere narrative of propaganda (which she does not deny existed).¹⁰⁰ Žnidaršič’s acknowledgment of the multifacetedness on the ground is reassuring as it

⁹³ In these newspaper articles, officials could often educate and instruct their audiences at the same time. In 1960, for example, Dr. Aleš Bebler wrote about Japan following his visit and argued that Yugoslav school textbooks should expand beyond their European scope to include information about, among others, Japanese shoguns. See Aleš Bebler, “Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost,” *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

⁹⁴ This extends beyond making their foreign policy ideas known to the public. Anđelko Vlašić found that ‘Yugoslav leaders imposed their own views on the Yugoslav public through propaganda in [the] newspapers and then justified their [political] demands [in the international arena] by relying on the public opinion that they created in the first place.’ See Anđelko Vlašić, “Changes in the Attitude of the Yugoslav Press Towards the Trieste Crisis, 1945-1975,” *Zgodovinski časopis (Historical Review)*, Vol.157, Iss.1-2, 2018, p.253.

⁹⁵ Gertrude Joch Robinson, *Tanjug: Yugoslavia’s Multi-Faceted National News Agency*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Ph.D. Thesis, 1968, p.224.

⁹⁶ Ljubodrag Dimić argued, for example, that the CPY operated with a belief that ‘[h]istorical consciousness about the past and contemporaneity was built upon political conclusions’ as well as that Yugoslav communists believed ‘history is made “on the go” and that it alone has the right to interpret it.’ See Ljubodrag Dimić, “Istoriografski putokazi: Istoriografsko nasleđe o spoljnoj politici Jugoslavije u Hladnom ratu,” in Slobodan Selinić, Radmila Radić, Dragan Bogetić, Vladimir Cvetković, Dragomir Bondžić, and Aleksandar Životić (eds.) *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950-1961*, Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008, pp.26-27.

⁹⁷ Spehnjak, “Uloga novina u oblikovanju javnog mnijenja u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1952.,” p.168.

⁹⁸ Doknić, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1946-1963*, p.12.

⁹⁹ As reported by Lilly, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953*, p.216. Vlašić also noted that the CPY placed their people on editorial boards to ensure compliance with the regime. This likely affected hiring practices as well. See Vlašić, “Changes in the Attitude of the Yugoslav Press Towards the Trieste Crisis, 1945-1975,” pp.233-234.

¹⁰⁰ Nina Žnidaršič, “The Journalist’s Action in Socialist Yugoslavia: Understanding the Formulation “Journalist as a Socio-political Worker”,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 2022, Vol.62, No.1, p.95. In general, the 2022 issue of *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* is the most comprehensive and recent single resource on journalism in Yugoslavia. For varied perspectives, see articles of scholars Slavko Splichal, Sašo Slaček Brlek, Melita Poler Kovačič, Nina Žnidaršič, Igor Vobič, Kristina Milić, Ana Milojević, Jernej Kaluža, Jernej Amon Prodnik, Ilija Tomanić Trivundža, Jurij Hadalin, and Marko Zajc.

makes space for experiences that transcend either-or logic. She thus observes these journalists as socio-political workers, whose job extended beyond mere news sharing.¹⁰¹

A good example of this ideal type of journalist was Jakov (Jaša) Levi. His self-published memoirs offer insight into the complexity of individual experiences when navigating personal beliefs and values with careers and the charged Cold War environment. Having left Tito's Yugoslavia after the imprisonment of dissident Milovan Đilas and, for him, official Belgrade's insufficiently harsh reaction to the Soviet intervention in Hungary, he writes: '[m]y disappointment, my sorrow was painfully real. [...] I'm not sorry I grew up believing that a fairer world could exist—a world just to all, even-handed, righteous. [...] My ideals were pure, and it wasn't I who soiled them [Tito did].'¹⁰² Levi also admits to adjusting his reports in service of his beliefs, even if that meant inserting fictionalized stories (lying) in support of his argument.

In retrospect, I had been a propagandist for my beliefs, as much as a reporter of events. In my dispatches, the distinction between other people's opinions and mine was blurred at best. I took my cues from foreign colleagues and quoted invented taxi drivers and sundry to speak for me. I was mimicking the slanting, eroding journalism of the West as well as the East. But I wrote from the inner conviction that my cause was right.¹⁰³

He justifies his lack of ethics by citing the righteousness of his beliefs and the fact that lying was a standard practice in journalism across the Cold War divide. What this tells us is that any analysis of Yugoslav journalism that reduces it unquestionably to a byproduct of direct or indirect censorial violence and propaganda dismisses a key potentiality: individuals' fervent and sincere championing of communism.¹⁰⁴ Intentionally propagandistic or not, the fact remains that Yugoslavia lacked information about much of the world and experiential knowledge production, including officials' writings, was one way of addressing that gap.¹⁰⁵ The press played arguably the most critical role in ensuring information was gathered, linguistically and ideologically translated, and then disseminated to the public.

1.3.3. Disseminating Information: The Yugoslav Press System in the 1950s

At the core of the Yugoslav press system was Tanjug, the country's press agency. Borba and Politika, which had existed in Yugoslavia for decades, were its leading dailies.¹⁰⁶ The press was intertwined with the state, with some scholars calling Tanjug Tito's 'brainchild.'¹⁰⁷ Tanjug was

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² See Levi, *Requiem for a Country: A History Lesson*, p.114.

¹⁰³ Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 43.

¹⁰⁴ Even in the 1970s, many intellectuals passionately believed in communism but in a format that did not resemble what Yugoslavia managed to create and sustain in the country. Their ideology, now often at odds with the state, can be felt well in Mihailo Marković and Gajo Petrović (eds.), *Praxis: Yugoslav Essays in the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Dordrecht, Boston, and London: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979.

¹⁰⁵ Even in the 1960s, 'incomplete knowledge of local conditions [in other NAM countries]' affected Yugoslav business dealings abroad negatively. See Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.224.

¹⁰⁶ This system expanded rapidly with 13 dailies in mid-1940s to 26 by the mid-1970s. See John C. Merrill and Harold A. Fischer, *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers*, New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1980, p.90.

¹⁰⁷ Christian Vukasovich and Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Whatever Happened to Tanjug? Re-loading Memory for an Understanding of the Global News System," *The International Communication Gazette*, 2012, Vol.74, No.8, p.694.

founded in Jajce on 5 November 1943 at the critical 2nd session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ), which laid the institutional foundations for socialist Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁸ It was tasked with bringing news to the global audience about World War II in Yugoslavia and its parallel Chetnik versus Partisan conflict. Initially, it broadcast news in Serbo-Croatian, English, and Russian but expanded to eleven more languages within a year.¹⁰⁹ The Yugoslav leadership was eager to take control of the narrative not just at home but also abroad. This continued after the Second World War.

In the 1950s, the official Belgrade started a paper called *Yugoslav Survey. A Record of Facts and Information*, in Serbo-Croatian and English. The intention was to acquaint domestic and international (primarily Western) audiences with the situation in Yugoslavia. Articles were written by high-ranking officials, using official data issued by governmental institutions.¹¹⁰ In both cases (Tanjug and Yugoslav Survey), the Yugoslav leadership sought to tell the story about itself, countering any narratives abroad perceived as negative or untrue.¹¹¹ This was primarily aimed at the West and its press agencies (the Big Four), which had and continue to have dominion in this field.

By 1955, Tito envisaged Tanjug as a global disseminator of a different, non-aligned perspective.¹¹² While Yugoslavia established closer bonds with the Global South, Tanjug grew and later took a leading role in the creation and operations of the Non-Aligned News Agency Pool (NANAP). This not only strengthened South-South information relations during the Cold War but also contributed to the formation of the U.N.'s New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which advocated for a less monopolized global information system, thereby challenging Western domination in this realm.¹¹³ By this time, Tanjug had become the eighth-largest news provider in the Cold War, despite having less funding.¹¹⁴ The fact that several of its foreign correspondents

¹⁰⁸ At this point, FPRY's predecessor, the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, was officially established. In subsequent years, the Yugoslav leadership frequently referenced the conclusions from the 2nd AVNOJ session, known as the AVNOJ Decrees, in their discussions. See Sergej Flere, "The Authenticity of the Founding of Tito's Yugoslavia as a Federation," *Sociološki pregled / Sociological Review*, Vol.4, 2018, pp.1115-1146; "U oslobodilačkom ratu, u Jajcu. Moša Pijade: Stvaranje novinske agencije Tanjug," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.1 and "Mehmedalija Bojić: Ko je osnovao Tanjug," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. Also see "Olga Humo: Pet meseci u Drvaru," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.6. Humo oversaw translating the news into English alongside Aleksandar Tepavčević Englez (nicknamed English for his language skills), who was killed in Drvar, and Nikita Bakov, a Soviet citizen, in charge of translating them into Russian.

¹¹⁰ Doknić, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1946-1963*, op.cit.

¹¹¹ Yugoslav leadership and journalists often took the time to call out specific foreign newspaper articles in their writings to debunk them. In Levi's travel book, for example, he mentioned that the news on Yugoslavia came to Japan primarily through the U.S. American Reader's Digest. He then introduced 'one impossible sensationalistic article of this American magazine, which just came out in Japanese' to seemingly achieve two things: 1) brush it off as capitalist propaganda and 2) showcase that the U.S. was not a trustworthy friend to the country. He does not, however, reference any Yugoslavia-positive articles in the same paper that year. See Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.75 and "Hard Facts about Yugoslavia," *Reader's Digest*, 22.11.1951.

¹¹² Christian Vukasovich and Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Whatever Happened to Tanjug? Re-loading Memory for an Understanding of the Global News System," *The International Communication Gazette*, 2012, Vol.74, No.8, p.694.

¹¹³ For an in-depth study of this process, see Pedro Aguiar, *Sistemas internacionais de informação sul-sul: do pool não-alinhado à comunicação em redes*, Ph.D. thesis, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, 2010.

¹¹⁴ *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, cover page and "Jovan Marinović: Među osam vodećih novinskih agencija u svetu," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.20.

broke significant international news enhanced Yugoslavia's global relevance and a sense of national pride.¹¹⁵

Throughout the Cold War, Tanjug supplied newspapers with information. All news was gathered at the 'Desk' at Tanjug's HQ in Belgrade, read, checked, and sent to newspapers upon the editors' approval.¹¹⁶ The Desk was open 24/7.¹¹⁷ This included reports from permanent correspondents stationed around the world.¹¹⁸ Their articles were not mere news briefs. Their job was to contextualize and explain to the public the events abroad.¹¹⁹ For daily news, Tanjug initially relied on reports from the Big Four but gradually decreased this reliance over the years (from 68.3% in 1963 to 37.4% in 1978).¹²⁰ Yugoslav newspapers subsequently acquired content from Tanjug, edited and adapted it for publication. Many would then reach their audiences through a state-imposed subscription model. This meant that *Borba*, among others, was always available in federal institutions.¹²¹ This naturally suggests that the primary readership of some newspapers (especially *Borba*) was the CPY.¹²² What is worth mentioning is that, for political questions, *Borba* was often highlighted as a leading daily newspaper and a favorite, especially of Tito.¹²³ For this reason, this thesis primarily analyzed articles published in *Borba*.¹²⁴

Tito's complaints about Yugoslavia having too few correspondents outside the U.S. and Europe in the early 1950s led to Tanjug and other dailies sending journalists to, among others, East Asia.¹²⁵

¹¹⁵ Key moments pertaining to China include: 1) Branko Bogunović reporting in 1960 on the departure of Soviet experts from China, signaling a definitive split in Sino-Soviet relations; 2) Bogunović covering the removal of Peng Zhen and Liu Shaoqi in 1966, alongside the rise of Lin Biao; 3) Mihailo Šaranović relaying news from Beijing about the Fall of Saigon in 1975; and 4) Božidar Đurica announcing the fall of Hu Yaobang in 1987. See Miodrag Žiko Avramović: *Prvi među agencijama*, "Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)", p.184. Other noteworthy cases include Mirko Aksentijević, the 'last man with Patrice Émerie Lumumba /1960/ [to] spend last moments of his freedom [with him],' and Jovan Mirić, the first to report from Cuba about the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion. See "Mirko Aksentijević: U Kongu in a Bliskom Istoku," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.83 and "Jovan Mirić: Tanjug javlja...za ceo svet," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, pp.88-90.

¹¹⁶ Merrill and Fischer, *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers*, p.94.

¹¹⁷ "Slobodan Obradović: Informacije za najširi krug građana," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.193.

¹¹⁸ Branko Bogunović, Tanjug's correspondent in China, had his articles published in *Borba* during the late 1950s and 1960s. For a list of his articles, see Appendix 4.

¹¹⁹ "Slobodan Obradović: Informacije za najširi krug građana," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.194.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ The mentioned sales model was criticized by Milovan Đilas. Lilly reports that in 1950, he 'and others worried about [the] distribution of the press, noting that some papers were being artificially forced on readers by party organizations who required subscriptions along with party dues and by the leaders of mass organizations who went door-to-door promoting their own particular organs [i.e. institutions].' For example, *Borba* was 'an organ' of the CPY until 1954 when it became 'an organ' of the Socialist Alliance of Workers of Yugoslavia. Lilly also reports that in 1950, 'the failure of Yugoslav citizens to buy newspapers in the [CPY] expected quantity' angered the CPY. See Lilly, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953*, p.207; Merrill and Fischer, *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers*, p.90 and p.92; and Nenad Vujić, Jelena Lazić, and Janko M. Cvijanović, "Specifičnosti oglasnih novina u Srbiji," *Industrija*, Iss.2, 2010, p.200.

¹²² Apparently, in December 1951, CPY membership totaled 704 617 people. See Fred Warner Neal, "The Communist Party in Yugoslavia," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.51, No.1, March 1957, p.98.

¹²³ In a November 1949 *Borba* frontpage news article 'Conversation of Comrade Tito with Tanjug Correspondents About the Obligations and Tasks of Yugoslav Journalists', Tito is quoted as saying: 'I now with great interest follow all our press, starting with "Borba" onward.' See "Razgovor druga Tita sa dopisnicima Tanjuga o dužnostima i zadacima jugoslovenskih novinara," *Borba*, 12.11.1949., p.1 and Jože Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994, p.111.

¹²⁴ For more information see Chapter 2 and Appendix 4.

¹²⁵ "Boža Rafajlović: Prva zamisao o nesvrstavanju," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.119.

Actually, Jakov (Jaša) Levi was the first Yugoslav to visit East Asia after the Second World War, and its first (short term) correspondent in the region. In the following years, Tanjug, Borba, Politika and Vjesnik all had correspondents in Beijing or Tokyo. It is their experiential writing that, when observed as a collective web of thought, consistently contributed to the Yugoslav nation- and identity-building at this critical time. Of course, it also provided the first ever as extensive a resource on East Asia in the history of Yugoslavia and its predecessors (the Yugoslphere).

In sum, the new Yugoslav state relied on the press and the experiential writings of primarily officials and journalists from abroad to address historical knowledge gaps and create the new Yugoslavia of the 1950s. From the reliance on knowledge produced in the West and the Soviet Union, this decade marked a shift towards more self-reliance in the realm of knowledge production. This thesis will demonstrate exactly how this was done in relation to East Asia.

1.4. Toward Epistemic Continuity: A Contribution to New Yugoslav Historiography

In recent years, a new wave of historians expanded the study of Yugoslavia to include new avenues, from soccer, tourism, and music to psychotherapy, science, and racism.¹²⁶ This versatile and growing body of interdisciplinary, intersectional literature not only investigates under-researched scholarly avenues but complements and builds upon the large and dominant volume of scholarship on Yugoslav Cold War international relations.¹²⁷ Established narratives of Cold War non-binarism and non-alignment in Yugoslavia are reassessed through lenses that integrate the political and the non-political. A phenomenal example of this is Ana Antić's 2022 book *Non-Aligned Psychiatry in the Cold War: Revolution, Emancipation and Re-Imagining the Human Psyche*.¹²⁸ Yugoslav Non-Alignment continues to attract the most scholarly attention, not just as part of the Yugoslav historiography but as a venue to explore the Cold War beyond the superpower paradigm. Jovan

¹²⁶ See for example Richard Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018; Hannes Grandists and Karin Taylor (eds.) *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)*, Budapest & New York: Central European University Press, 2010; Nemanja Radonjić, *Slika Afrike u Jugoslaviji (1945-1991)*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Belgrade, 2020; Ana Antić, "The New Socialist Citizen and 'Forgetting' Authoritarianism: Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Revolution in Socialist Yugoslavia," in Wynter R., Wallis J., Ellis R. (eds) *Memory, Anniversaries and Mental Health in International Historical Perspective*, Mental Health in Historical Perspective Book Series, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, pp.65-88; Vedran Duančić, "Lysenko in Yugoslavia, 1945-1950s: How to De-Stalinize Stalinist Science," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 2020, No. 53, pp.159-194; Peter Wright, "Are there Racists in Yugoslavia?" Debating Racism and Anti-blackness in Socialist Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review*, Vol.81, No.2, Summer 2022, pp.418-441 and Catherine Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region: Postsocialist, Post-conflict, Postcolonial?*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018; Vesić et al., *The Tunes of Diplomatic Notes: Music and Diplomacy in Southeast Europe (18th-20th century)*, 2020. Also see chapters by Sabina Mihelj and Dean Vuletic in Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith, and Joes Segal (eds.) *Divided Dreamworlds? The Cultural Cold War in East and West*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012.

¹²⁷ See, for example, Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat: Ogledi o spoljnoj politici Josipa Broza Tita (1944-1974)*, Belgrade: Arhipelag, 2014; Slobodan Selinić et al. (eds.) *Jugoslovenska diplomatija 1945-1961*. Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2012; Tvrtko Jakovina, *Treća strana Hladnog rata*, Zagreb: Faktura, 2011; Slobodan Selinić, Radmila Radić, Dragan Bogetić, Vladimir Cvetković, Dragomir Bondžić, and Aleksandar Životić (eds.), *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950-1961*, Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008; Dragan Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije 1956-1961*, Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2006 and Tvrtko Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici (1948-1963)*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2002.

¹²⁸ Compare Martin Previšić (ed), *Breaking Down Bipolarity: Yugoslavia's Foreign Relations during the Cold War*, Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2021 and Ana Antić, *Non-Aligned Psychiatry in the Cold War: Revolution, Emancipation and Re-Imagining the Human Psyche*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Čavoški's 2022 seminal book *Non-Aligned Movement Summits* reconstructs the development of NAM and the ideas that came to shape it.¹²⁹ Another valuable example is Paul Stubbs' edited volume *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Imaginaries* (2023).¹³⁰ With each new scholarly contribution, we glimpse the complexity of the Cold War, socialist Yugoslavia, and the Non-Aligned Movement. We see how ideas shape and imagine societies at the national and international levels. And we see how these processes penetrate people's everyday lives and are then sustained and reinforced in return.

These new insights come alongside statements that suggest a connection between ideas, beliefs, and perceptions formed in socialist Yugoslavia and today's Yugosphere. Historians hailing from former Yugoslav spaces often reference the persistent continuity of Yugoslav ideas in their work. '[T]here exists a strong system of values and cultural patterns inherited from communism,' noted Branka Doknić in her book on Yugoslav cultural politics.¹³¹ She sees this as an obstacle that prevents historians from engaging with the country's past more objectively. Konstantin Kilibarda, on the other hand, showcases that the legacy of non-alignment shaped 'nascent Balkan subcultures of both accommodation and resistance to global capitalist modernity.'¹³² Jovan Čavoški concludes that the work of Wu Xiuquan, the first ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Yugoslavia in the 1950s, set 'firm foundations of mutual trust and cooperation that we witness today,' referring primarily to Serbia and China.¹³³ While there exists no comparative or *longue durée* study explicitly mapping this continuity (yet), it is not surprising that socialist Yugoslavia left a deep mark on the societies it once governed. It is even less surprising that its most profound legacy lies in the realm of belief systems and knowledge.

In the case of Yugoslavia and East Asia, a sense of epistemic continuity does not exist, leading many in the Yugosphere to assume transregional connections existed only in negligible amounts. Through primary sources and references to meaningful works of many fellow scholars, this thesis addresses this lack of awareness. It presents itself as a resource that evidences historical content and epistemic continuity, even if it is continuity through fragments.¹³⁴ Moreover, it recognizes socialist Yugoslavia as part of a greater continuum, with a past and a future, analyzing where a certain idea was at this time in history.¹³⁵ It zooms in on a specific moment to see what can be

¹²⁹ Jovan Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2022.

¹³⁰ Paul Stubbs (ed), *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023.

¹³¹ Branka Doknić, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1946-1963*, Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2013, p.15.

¹³² Konstantin Kilibarda, "Non-Aligned Geographies in the Balkans: Space, Race and Image in the Construction of New 'European' Foreign Policies," in Abhinava Kumar and Derek Maisonville (eds.) *Security Beyond the Discipline: Emerging Dialogues on Global Politics*, New Orleans: York University Centre for International and Security Studies, 2010, p.28. One interesting example of this beyond the political is the case of African drumming music in Serbia: Iva Nenić, "'Imagined Balkans' Meets 'Imagined Africa': The Contemporary Practice of *Jembe* Drumming in Serbia," *Etnomusicology Forum*, 2022, pp.1-20.

¹³³ Jovan Čavoški, "Politička i diplomatska karijera Vu Sjućuena, prvog ambasadora NR Kine u Jugoslaviji," in Slobodan Selinić et al. (eds.) *Jugoslovenska diplomatija 1945-1961*, Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2012, p.407. Also quoted in Bogojević, "Through Mistrust, Resistance, and 'Spring Tide': A Brief History of Sino-Yugoslav Cultural Cooperation in the 1950s," (pending publication by Routledge), 2025.

¹³⁴ An interesting example is how Vojin Šantić's 1961 book *Japan* is still used as one of the few books originally written in a Yugoslav language by the students of Japan from the region today. See Appendix 1, section XII for more information. Vojin Šantić, *Japan*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1961.

¹³⁵ This thesis, relying on newspaper articles and travelogues as literary means to create connections and disconnections with the East Asian Other, contributes thoughtfully to Cultural Cold War historiography. The ways in which the Cultural Cold War has been studied influenced the research methods and ideas in this thesis. Here is a list

learned from it. Given that most primary sources used in this thesis are—for the first time—gathered, organized, and presented publicly, a deliberate effort was made to offer extended excerpts of their original texts. Hopefully, this spurs curiosity and attracts more scholarly (and other) attention to the legacy of writings on and ties with East Asian countries during the Cold War.

of personal favorites which is a list by no means exhaustive: Victoria Phillips, *Martha Graham's Cold War: The Dance of American Diplomacy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020; Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg (eds.), *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; James Lewis Hoberman, *An Army of Phantoms: American Movies and the Making of the Cold War*, New York & London: The New Press, 2011; Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015; Harm Langenkamp, *Cosmopolitan Counterpoint: Overt and Covert Musical Warfare and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War, 1945-1961*, Ridderkerk: Ridderprint BV, 2014; Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam (eds.), *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960*, London & Portland (OR): Frank Cass, 2003; Cultural Cold War: Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, New York: The New Press, 2000. For great readings into the Cultural Cold War in Asia, see Sangjoon Lee, *Cinema and the Cultural Cold War: US diplomacy and the Origins of the Asian Cinema Network*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2020; Esmail Haddadian-Moghaddam, "The Cultural Cold War in the Middle East: William Faulkner and Franklin Book Programs," *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 2020, Vol.15, No.3, pp.441-463; Hye-jung Park, *From World War to Cold War: Music in US-Korea Relations, 1941-1960*, Ph.D. thesis, The Ohio State University, 2019; Nicolai Volland, "Inventing a Proletarian Fiction for China: The Stalin Prize, Cultural Diplomacy, and the Creation of a Pan-Socialist Identity," in Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat (eds.), *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 93-111 and the famous Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2003.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This thesis is a story about stories told eight decades ago. Newspaper articles and books now resting in secluded parts of archives, libraries, and antique stores throughout the Balkans were once windows into East Asia for Cold War-era Yugoslavs. In the 1950s, they connected geographically distant regions in ways that informed the Yugoslav public about China, Japan, and the Koreas, all the while helping shape the Yugoslav emerging new sense of self. The theoretical foundation of this thesis regards these texts as essential insights into the required, continued, and complex negotiations of sameness and difference. Or, as Nada Marinković pondered, ‘do we travel to seek *the same or the opposite [from us]*?’¹³⁶ It speaks to how travel was translated into a story, adopted as knowledge, and ultimately influenced nation-building processes and collective understanding of East Asia, the Cold War, and the self in Yugoslavia. From interactionism to knowledge, identity, and nationalism, at each step, the approach is grounded in the transcultural perspective. This means that primary sources are read in a way that seeks to understand what they reveal about the relations, processes, and contexts of the society in which they were produced.

2.1. Theoretical Underpinnings: From Story to Nation to Culture

Remembering that we humans are, at our core, ‘a story-telling animal,’ academics turned more acutely toward studying narratives during the Cold War.¹³⁷ Stories were increasingly seen as threads that weave together the very texture of the realities we live in.¹³⁸ Famed anthropologist Clifford Geertz said in the 1960s that culture itself is essentially ‘stories we tell ourselves about ourselves.’¹³⁹ The so-called narrative turn in the Humanities legitimized texts as mediums of individual and collective sense and meaning-making.¹⁴⁰ Their significance extended beyond their

¹³⁶ Nada Marinković, *Ljubav i smisao: susreti i putopisi*, Belgrade: Agencija Tea Books, 2016 [1956], Introduction.

¹³⁷ This was famously remarked by philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre some years before the narrative turn. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, p.201. Also quoted in Frederick W. Mayer, *Narrative Politics: Stories and Collective Action*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p.1. Jerome Bruner remarks the same in his “Life as Narrative,” *Reflections on the Self*, Vol.54, No.1, 1987, pp.11-32. For an interpretation of this Bruner’s work, see Matti Hyvärinen, “‘Life as Narrative’ Revisited,” *Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, Vol.6, No.2, 2008, pp.261-277.

¹³⁸ There is significant conceptual discussion over what narrative is and what it is not that is too wide to delve into in this thesis. While scholars have not yet been able to agree on one definition, I agree with Matti Hyvärinen’s suggestion that pushing for a singular conceptualization might be ‘counter-productive’ – the versatility of the term seems to be quite beneficial as different disciplines can explore it for varied analyses. For more information, see his “Analyzing Narratives and Story-Telling,” in Pertti Alasuutari, Leonard Bickman, and Julia Brannen (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Method*, 2008, p.448. For a brief overview of different schools of thought in narrative theory, see Jonathan Culler, “Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative,” in Mieke Bal (ed.), *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, 2004, pp.117-118. Also see Marie-Laure Ryan, “Texts, Worlds, Stories: Narrative Worlds as Cognitive and Ontological Concept,” in Mari Hatavara, Matti Hyvärinen, Maria Mäkelä, and Frans Mäyrä (eds.) *Narrative Theory, Literature, and New Media: Narrative Minds and Virtual Worlds*, London: Routledge, 2015, pp.13-28; and Hyvärinen, “Analyzing Narratives and Story-Telling,” p.449 where he mentions that in literary theory, the narrative turn began already in the 1960s.

¹³⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p.448. Marie-Laure Ryan, “Narrative,” in Imre Szeman, Sarah Blacker, and Justin Sully (eds.), *A Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2017, p.526.

¹⁴⁰ Barbara Hardy’s poetic conceptualization of narratives recognizes their embeddedness in nearly everything humans touch: ‘[W]e dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative. In order to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future.’ See Hardy is here speaking about

contents, offering a glimpse into worlds they emerged in and helped (re)shape.¹⁴¹ In this thesis, the term narratives is regarded and used interchangeably with stories, that is

an account to self and others of people, places, and events and the relationships that hold between these elements. [...] It is through narratives, both “grand” or “master” and personal, that we have understood and communicated our knowledge and interpretations of our past and our present worlds and are able to speculate about our future.¹⁴²

Related scholarship concluded time and time again that narratives were ‘always already entangled in webs of narratives’ and, by nature, ‘relational, processual, and contextual.’¹⁴³ This finding matched those of academics across different disciplines. Symbolic interactionists (sociology) had already emphasized the relational and processual nature through which the self and society are formed.¹⁴⁴ It convincingly showed that we are all shaped through social interaction, and by interpreting it, we find meaning and base our actions on it.¹⁴⁵ Observing how individuals and all human systems and structures emerge in relation to the world around them, led sociologists to acknowledge society as ‘always in a state of flux, in the process of being created and recreated through the interpretations, definitions, and actions of individuals in situations.’¹⁴⁶ The interactionist lens was then adopted across other disciplines, essentially becoming a ‘broad landscape of approaches’ to the study of the self and human-made structures, such as international

narratives in fiction-writing, calling them ‘a primary act of mind transferred to art from life.’ See Barbara Hardy, “Towards a Poetics of Fiction: 3) An Approach through Narrative,” *NOVEL: A Forum on fiction*, Vol.2, No.1, 1968, p.5.

¹⁴¹ Anna de Fina, “Who tells which story and why? Micro and macro contexts in narrative,” *Text & Talk*, Vol.28, No.3, 2008, pp.421-422. Also see Hyvärinen, “Analyzing Narratives and Story-Telling,” p.447.

¹⁴² Margaret S. Barrett and Sandra L. Stauffer, “Narrative Inquiry: From Story to Method,” in Margaret S. Barrett and Sandra L. Stauffer (eds.), *Narrative Inquiry in Music Education: Troubling Certainty*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2009, p.7. This is naturally not only the case with narratives/stories. Iver B. Neumann remarks this for all phenomena in general. See Neumann, *At Home with the Diplomats: Inside a European Foreign Ministry*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012, p.4.

¹⁴³ Hanna Meretoja, *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History, and the Possible*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, p.2.

¹⁴⁴ The origins of the theory can be found in the works of Chicago pragmatists of the late 19th and early 20th century. Decades later, Herbert Blumer, a sociologist, developed symbolic interactionism (SI) drawing predominantly from the work of George Herbert Mead. For more information about the Chicago Pragmatists, see Frithjof Nungesser, “Pragmatism and Interaction” in eds. Dirk vom Lehn, Natalia Ruiz-Junco, and Will Gibson’s *The Routledge International Handbook of Interactionism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2021, p.25. For a complete overview of thinkers who influenced and contributed to the development of the SI paradigm, see Norman K. Denzin, *Symbolic Interactionism and Cultural Studies: The Politics of Interpretation*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, p.9 (also see pp.25-36). For more information about SI, see Michael Hviid Jacobsen, *The Interactionist Imagination: Studying Meaning, Situation and Micro-Social Order*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, Chapters 2 and 3; and, perhaps most importantly, Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986. In recent years more academics are opting for the broader term of interactionism, which allows the incorporation of other streams of scholarship which were influenced by but developed beyond the Blumer-Mead tradition (e.g. Harold Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology). See Dirk vom Lehn, Natalia Ruiz-Junco, and Will Gibson (eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Interactionism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2021, p.7.

¹⁴⁵ Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, p.5.

¹⁴⁶ Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, p.34.

politics, inspiring the theorization of constructivism, one of IR's three main paradigms (mentioned in the Introduction).¹⁴⁷ Moreover, the interactionist lens yielded novel insight into our psychology. Seminal works, such as Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, brought to light many unrealized or unobserved parts of human behavior.¹⁴⁸ Interactionism, through emphasis on relationality, paved the way to more nuanced analyses of identity formation, with identity theory adopting the view that the reality we live in is a byproduct of 'an elaborate system of mutual influences between characteristics of the individual and characteristics of society.'¹⁴⁹ Even in philosophy, thinkers such as Judith Butler noted this interconnectedness, stating that '[t]he norms by which I recognize another or, indeed, myself are not mine alone.'¹⁵⁰ Narrative theory and (symbolic) interactionism have underlined the relational, contextual, and processual nature of how we, individuals, and everything around us form. They demonstrate that the laws that govern individuals also govern society and cultures. Benedict Anderson noted the same in *Imagined Communities*, stating that '[a]s with modern persons, so it is with nations' that 'the need for a narrative of "identity"' persists.¹⁵¹ And while interactionist Norman K. Denzin argued in favor of 'an interactionist theory of culture' toward the end of the last century, in a different part of the academic bubble emerged something like that indeed—*transculturality*.¹⁵² As a concept, transculturality originates in *transculturation* but is sometimes confused with *transculture*. For definitional clarity, here comes a brief overview of the three terms.

Transculturation—the oldest of the three concepts—was first coined in 1940 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz.¹⁵³ He argued that Cuban culture was a byproduct of 'extremely complex transmutations' that occurred in relationship to others, resulting in 'intermeshed transculturations' which he called '[t]he real history of Cuba.'¹⁵⁴ He departed from the popular academic views of his era (such as acculturation, i.e., 'the process of transition from one culture to another' as he described it), showcasing for the first time that porousness and a state of flux defined culture-making.¹⁵⁵ While retaining the notion of separate cultures, from then on, many scholars argued that a sphere-like view of (at least two) cultures (or two distinct entities) in interaction is necessary, alongside consciousness that their continued intermingling is mutually transformational.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁷ Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "The Social Self in International Relations", *ERIS*, Vol.3, Iss.3, 2016, p.28. Also see Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "Conclusion: Relationalism: why diplomats find international relations theory strange," in Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B. Neumann (eds.) *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp.284-308.

¹⁴⁸ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956, p.132.

¹⁴⁹ Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, pp.3-4.

¹⁵⁰ Judith P. Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2005, p.24.

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, p.205.

¹⁵² Denzin, *Symbolic Interactionism and Cultural Studies: The Politics of Interpretation*, p.95.

¹⁵³ Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, transl. by Harriet de Onís, New York: Vintage Books, 1970 [1940]. For an overview of what prompted the introduction of transculturation (in which the self and Other coexist with porous boundaries, constantly influencing and reshaping each other), see Miguel Arnedo-Gómez, "Fernando Ortiz's Transculturation: Applied Anthropology, Acculturation, and Mestizaje," *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, Vol.27, No.1-2, 2022, pp.123-145.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp.97-98.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁶ Often, adopting such a view would lead to utopian inclinations that imagine 'a future where openness and sharing are valued over ownership and preservation,' and neglecting the very real anxieties that interaction can bring. As John McLeod finds, such a view dominates postcolonial scholarship that is only now awakening to the reality that enmity,

Several decades after Ortiz, in Soviet Russia, emerged *transculture*. Drawing from the work of philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, Mikhail Epstein theorized transculture as a self-liberating process where one moves beyond the bounds of one's native culture by distancing from it and looking at it from the perspective of the other (foreign culture).¹⁵⁷ Epstein argued in favor of such distancing because of his belief that '[o]ne can never understand oneself from within without taking another's point of view into full account, even if this "otherness" is only fixed in one's own consciousness.'¹⁵⁸ The required self-reflection he speaks of is what all theories whose foundations rest on analyzing the Self and the Other find. The value of transculture is the highlighting of the many complex dynamics that exist in how an individual relates to their native culture. It is not just a question of acceptance and embeddedness but a push-and-pull dynamic of engagement and disengagement, embracing and withdrawal, leading to questioning and potential transcendence of it.¹⁵⁹ Transculture and transculturation both embraced relationality and the need to observe more rigorously processes in which the individual and societies form.

difference, resistance, misunderstanding, and border-making are as universal as are their opposites. Yugoslavs in the 1950s were battling this dynamic already, navigating the effects of emerging globalization, their openness for contact and, equally, jadedness about that contact and how to control it. See Robert Bernasconi, "Transculturation and the porosity of cultures: Fernando Ortiz," *Diogenes*, Vol.65, 2024, p.169 and John McLeod, "Sounding Silence: Transculturation and its Thresholds," p.5.

¹⁵⁷ Mikhail Epstein, "Transculture: A Broad Way between Globalism and Multiculturalism," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol.68, No.1, 2009, pp.330-331.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.331. Epstein's definition of transculture is almost as elusive as that of culture: 'Transculture then is "being beyond" in relation to the entire cultural realm as an advantageous situation for its understanding. Transculture is the sphere of all possible differences from existing cultures inasmuch as we cognize them and distance ourselves from them. Transculture cannot be described in positive terms, as a set of specific cultural symbols, norms, and values; it always escapes definition. It is an apophatic realm of the "cultural" beyond any specific culture or cultural identity. It is the most radical of all possible cultural "beyonds." It does not "have place" anywhere; it is the force of displacement. As soon as we try to define transculture, it recedes further into the area of "being beyond." Thus we can describe many stages of transcultural movement but not the ultimate Transculture that permits us to see and describe everything that it is not, but not to see and describe what it is.'

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, pp.327-332. Epstein juxtaposes transculture to multiculturalism, which 'extols "pride" in any single culture (and especially of cultural minorities)' explaining that to transcend culture is to become aware of inherent global interconnectedness – '[of] "interference," [and] of "dispersion" of symbolic values of each culture in the field of all others.' This is where the transculture he speaks of touches Ortiz's transculturation: through the idea of the enmeshment and mutual transformation of all cultures. Some outlines of these ideas and relying on the physics term of *interference* to elaborate on cultural relations existed in Yugoslavia in the 1950s. At the time, the country was formulating its cultural diplomacy and growing official cultural ties with many countries. Marko Ristić, a writer and diplomat, became the first President of the Commission for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (CCTFC) and spoke publicly about the value and necessity of official cultural exchange, publishing an essay in 1958 titled *Culture and Coexistence*. In his discussion of culture, he holds a view similar to Ortiz and Einstein's, which, as a starting point, sees cultures as distinct from one another but destined to interact and experience transformation. Ristić explains that ancient civilizations/cultures 'were born, independently from one another, developed distantly from one another, without contact in [geographical] space [...]' but that contemporary culture is an opening towards something more 'international, universal, human [opšteľjudska]'. He is sensing and alluding to the effect of globalization that the Cold War brought forward more intensely than ever before. Optimistically, Ristić sees these interactions as building blocks of a universal culture and a counterweight to the Cold War binary, assisting to defuse tension through amity. This view is (akin to that of Bernasconi) aspirational but limited in as much as it emphasizes solely the positive side of growing cultural contact with the Other. In a sense, Ristić's essay and interview with the newspapers that preceded it showcase a need to explain or justify this new development to the broader public. It not only underlined the cosmopolitan spirit the new Yugoslavia was embracing but justified cultural interaction as a tool to achieve peaceful coexistence (one of the country's main foreign policy objectives) and further reaffirm Yugoslavia internationally. Ibid, pp.334. Also see Marko Ristić, *Kultura i koegzistencija, in Politička književnost (za ovu Jugoslaviju) 1944-1958*, Sarajevo:

In the 1990s, when Wolfgang Welsch began theorizing *transculturality* (inspired by Ortiz but as a concept in its own right), he argued that rigid, culturally bounded groups were a thing of the past. In a globalized world, fluidity, porosity, and mutual influence were the norm.¹⁶⁰ The image of interaction between clearly delineated cultures/entities was replaced by web-like imagery of global cultural interconnectedness. In this vein, and identical to the findings in narrative theory at this time, Afef Benessaïeh explained cultures as ‘relational webs and flows of significance in active interaction with one another’ instead of ‘fixed frames or separate islands neatly distanced and differentiated from one another.’¹⁶¹ Unity and mutualness (instead of difference and disconnection) in the local and global were now presumed. Welsch’s more recent works evolved into a claim that ‘cultures were de facto transcultural’ since the dawn of the Anthropocene and that we, as individuals, ‘have always been transcultural.’¹⁶² This effectively meant that difference was not the starting point but a learned result of various processes.

Observing and theorizing transculturality not as a more recent globalization-related phenomenon has been at the core of extensive, interdisciplinary scholarship produced at the Heidelberg Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies in the past decade, taking Welsch’s concept as a starting point.¹⁶³ Though linked to transculturalism and crafted in opposition to multiculturalism (like transculture), transculturality is the first one to take a definitive and radical step toward the claim that the origin of everything we call culture is transcultural rather than the other way around. To observe culture is to acknowledge its processual and relational nature. Culture is man-made. Transculturality is thus a process of continuous ‘interaction, circulation and reconfiguration [...] through contact and exchange beyond real or perceived borders’ upon which we construct systems we refer to as our individual, boundary-defined cultures and societies.¹⁶⁴ The implication of such a claim is the inevitable paradox (‘in order to point to the transcultural, one first has to assume separate cultures, while simultaneously negating their existence’), which Heidelberg scholars have attempted to resolve through the observation of, again, processes that form experiences of difference and boundary.¹⁶⁵ For example, nation-building is an ironically transcultural process as well. How creating differences or borders across societies is ‘performed, acted and discussed’ is

Oslobodenje, 1977, pp.249-262. He also spoke with the newspapers. See, for example: “Naše kulturne veze s inostranstvom: Izjava Marka Ristića,” *Borba*, 05.02.1955., p.3.

¹⁶⁰ Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (eds.) *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, London: Sage, 1999, pp.194-213.

¹⁶¹ Affef Benessaïeh, “Multiculturalism, Interculturality, Transculturality,” in Affef Benessaïeh (ed.) *Amériques transculturelles – Transcultural Americas*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010, p.11.

¹⁶² Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality in literature: A phenomenon as old as it is current,” *World Literature Studies*, Vol.14, No.3, 2022, p.5. Also see Wolfgang Welsch, *We Have Always Been Transcultural: The Arts As an Example*, Leiden: Brill, 2024.

¹⁶³ Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, and Susan Richer (eds.), *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p.xv. See also case studies provided in, for example, Antje Flüchter and Jivanta Schöttli (eds.), *The Dynamics of Transculturality: Concepts and Institutions in Motion*, Cham: Springer, 2015; or Gerrit Jasper Schenk (ed.), *Historical Disaster Experiences: Towards a Comparative and Transcultural History of Disasters Across Asia and Europe*, Cham: Springer, 2017.

¹⁶⁴ For a theoretical elaboration of what transculturality is see Laila Abu-Er-Rub et al., *Introduction: Engaging transculturality*, in their edited volume *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p.xxiii.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

similar worldwide.¹⁶⁶ This means that there is no need to ‘deny what has been a real and defining element for human perception and human action – the nation, the ethnic group, the tribe’ but rather engage with it from a new ‘container concept of culture’ that is rooted in observations of processes through which cultures as distinct (difference-emphasizing) entities have been cultivated.¹⁶⁷ Transculturality is this thesis’ central theoretical underpinning. By utilizing Yugoslav experiential writings on East Asia in the 1950s, it documents the process by which knowledge-making about the other resulted in nation-building and culture-making for the new collective self.

What passes as knowledge in a society, however, is broad and pluralistic.¹⁶⁸ Each and every know-how aids in the continuous co-creation of what Peter Burke calls our collective knowledge systems.¹⁶⁹ The main contributors to the knowledge systems are those with the authority on the subject, that is, those deemed trustworthy. In Yugoslavia, this was anyone the state approved of and regarded as loyal to the regime.¹⁷⁰ However, like in all societies, not all knowledge producers held the same level of authority.¹⁷¹ Often, Yugoslav publishing houses admitted as much and

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Epstein locates the same paradox plaguing transculturality at the heart of postmodernist thought: the contradiction of deconstructionism and multiculturalism. He explains that deconstructionist finding that social constructs (such as culture and language) can have no (original) origin is at odds with multi-culturalist insistence on the importance of (original) origin. This tension between plausible non-origin and underlined essentialism Epstein sees as theoretically solvable: ‘transculture arises from the internal paradox of postmodernity, not as a denial of this paradox but as an attempt at its conscious resolution.’ Interestingly, these are not necessarily uncomplimentary even if contradictory. It is not one or the other – but both. This thesis embraces the paradox as not something that needs resolving, per se, but is rather an acknowledgment of the complexity and multi-layered nature of reality. See Mikhail Epstein, “Transculture in the Context of Contemporary Critical Theories,” in Ellen E. Berry and Mikhail N. Epstein (eds.), *Transcultural Experiments: Russian and American Models of Creative Communication*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999, pp.80-81.

¹⁶⁸ Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000, pp.13-14.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p.2 and p.15.

¹⁷⁰ This is why Miroslav Perišić coined the ‘technicians of knowledge’ term (see the Introduction) to better reflect the voices of authority on the ground. This collective construction of the new Yugoslav culture meant that—as Ivo Andrić’s most recent biographer, journalist Michael Martens, described 1950s Yugoslavia—this was ‘a time when life outside politics is impossible,’ where even ‘the first writer of Yugoslavia’ feared the state. The state required every person of public authority to align with the regime’s vision of new Yugoslavia and the new (wo)man of that Yugoslavia. Through public propagation and raising awareness of what this ‘new man’ might look like, various individuals (including Andrić) gained standing (and safety) with the new regime but also helped co-create it. Perišić’s ‘technicians of knowledge’ should then be observed as a term best fitted the ones embedded into the political system, whose level of authority to share their knowledge corresponded to their ranking in the political structure of the new state. The way in which the Yugoslav system function can be observed through the lens of social network theory. Behavioral scientists use it to analyze individuals and entire groups in ‘the context of structured relationships,’ i.e., zooming out to see individuals as embedded into entire systems of people, in order to find new insight into how humans organize themselves and the society. See: See Section 1.3.2. or Perišić, *Od Staljina ka Sartru: formiranje jugoslovenske inteligencije na evropskim univerzitetima: 1945-1958*, p.56 and p.64.; Michael Martens, *U požaru svetova: Ivo Andrić – jedan evropski život*, (transl. Valeria Fröhlich), Belgrade: Laguna, 2020, p.214 and pp.185-187.; and Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp.4-8.

¹⁷¹ Soccer player Vujadin Boškov’s travelogue was not commensurate with journalist Jakov (Jaša) Levi’s accounts from East Asia. Similarly, not all journalists were of equal status in the country, some being much more famous names than others (Jakov Levi in comparison to Vladimir Baum, for example). Officials writing about East Asia after short trips abroad had the authority based on the office they held. Dr. Aleš Bebler’s writings from Japan in 1961 were not substantial, yet his status in Yugoslavia and international standing as a diplomat have rendered his opinions extremely valuable and trustworthy. Jože Smole even mentions Bebler’s ‘extremely interesting’ writings from Japan in his

explained that the value of certain writings was in the simple fact that so little was known about East Asia in Yugoslavia.¹⁷² They helped fill a deep knowledge gap, and their credibility was derived from the author having traveled to East Asia and not their expertise. As mentioned in the Introduction, the most trust was assigned to the writings of high-ranking officials and journalists.

Journalism has been generally regarded as one of 'the most influential knowledge-producing institutions in modern society,' and is 'often associated with high claims of providing authoritative, accurate, and verified knowledge about current events.'¹⁷³ Communication scholars extensively analyzed the profession's epistemological value and credibility, constantly reaffirming the trust societies place in journalistic knowledge production.¹⁷⁴ The same is true of travel journalism.¹⁷⁵ In fact, in Cold War Yugoslavia, journalists were the most prolific producers of travel articles and literature.¹⁷⁶ Their writings and those of officials and other travelers to the region always reflected

memoir decades later. Their standing in Yugoslavia and the authority with which their writings were accepted did not always correspond to their expertise on the subject, indeed, but many, such as Vojin Šantić did hold significant knowledge and expertise on the topic they wrote about. Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, p.127.

¹⁷² Vujadin Boškov's publisher disclaimed in the preface of his travelogue that '[t]his book was written by a sportsman' and emphasized that '[t]his is not a book written by a historian or ethnographer, economist or art connoisseur, publicist or journalist.' Though written by someone of limited authority to speak about Asia, this book was valuable for society at large. See: Vujadin Boškov, *Aziska turneja: Burma, Indonezija, Kina*, Novi Sad: Progres, 1956, Foreword.

¹⁷³ Mats Ekström and Oscar Westlund, "Epistemology and Journalism" *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, 2019, p.1; Verica Rupar, a former *Politika* journalist and now scholar based in New Zealand, reflected on the question of journalistic authority through a very particular example. She writes that even in times of great political upheaval in Yugoslavia in the '90s, journalistic authority was 'frequently challenged' given the political climate under Slobodan Milošević, but that journalism nonetheless retained its credibility and that 'journalists [continued to] enjoy the status of "experts" in writing about events and issues beyond the readers' experience.' See Verica Rupar (ed.), *Journalism and Meaning-Making: Reading the Newspaper*, New York: Hampton Press, 2010, pp.7-8.

¹⁷⁴ John Hartley sums this up well: '[t]he most important *textual* feature of journalism is the fact that it counts as true. The most important component of its *system* is the creation of readers as publics, and the connection of these readerships to other systems, such as those of politics, economics, and social control.' John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture*, London: Hodder Education Publishers, 1996, p.35, emphasis in the original. Also quoted in Elfriede Fürsich and Anandam P. Kavoori, "Mapping a critical framework for the study of travel journalism," *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol.4, No.2, 2001, p.149. For an overview of different views on the topic, see, for example, Eduardo Meditsch, "Journalism as a Form of Knowledge: a qualitative approach," *Brazilian Journalism Research*, Vol.1, No.2, 2015, pp.121-136. For an engaging overview of more recent journalistic practices and credibility, see Bob Franklin and Matt Carlson (eds.), *Journalists, Sources, and Credibility: New Perspectives*, London & New York: Routledge, 2013.

¹⁷⁵ When in the early 2000s Elfriede Fürsich and Anandam P. Kavoori argued for more scholarly attention to travel journalism, they did so because it 'functions much like international news to provide both information and cultural frames for "others",' making them worthy of more in-depth study. To inspire more research into the field, they offered an extensive list of potential theoretical lenses to study it. From postmodernism and cultural imperialism to ideology, nationalism, power, and identity theory, they underlined varied ways in which travel journalism (and travel writing) is part of the constant meaning-making (re)definition at different levels in society vis-à-vis the self/us and other/them.¹⁷⁵ The depth at which this happens differs per author, and, if we extend it from travel journalism to travel writing more broadly, it differs per the sort of traveler. See Fürsich and Kavoori, "Mapping a critical framework for the study of travel journalism," p.153.

¹⁷⁶ An interesting example is the 1962 Fadil Hadžić's edited volume *A Journey Around the World: Travelogues* (Put oko svijeta: putopisi), which gathered travel writings from Yugoslav journalists with experience reporting from abroad. For him, the traveler-journalists used 'imagination and observation [skills] of a good journalist' to produce not just articles but 'truly picturesque and literarily valuable travelogues.' See Fadil Hadžić (ed). *Put oko svijeta: putopisi*. Zagreb: Stvarnost – novinarska izdavačka kuća. 1962, pp.5-6.

their beliefs and backgrounds that they often remained unaware of.¹⁷⁷ This lack of awareness is well-documented in psychological research. Some (if not most) of our beliefs are deeply buried in our subconscious, and though we rely on them for our understanding of the world, we most often remain oblivious to them.¹⁷⁸ In reality, beliefs, truth, and knowledge are felt as the same thing. There is a broader consensus that if we hold a belief we regard it as true and as something that ‘needn’t involve actively reflecting on it.’¹⁷⁹ These ‘attitudes which are so fundamental that people do not know they hold them’ but accept them as unquestionable truths, have been a point of inquiry for sociologists of knowledge from the early 20th century onward.¹⁸⁰ Michel Foucault, in a 1976 interview for *Politique Hebdo*, referred to such societal beliefs as ‘regime[s] of truth’, emphasizing his well-known argument that the truth is (as all else) implicated in power.¹⁸¹ Here, the regime of truth links beliefs (and knowledge) to the political regime and power dynamics within a nation-state.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Travel writing most often does offer insight into the ‘national, social, and professional background of the individual traveler.’ This is why Corinne Fowler opens her *Chasing Tales* book about British ideas about Afghanistan by informing the reader that her work ‘is not about Afghanistan’ but the ‘cultural forces that shaped [it]’ for the British public. What Afghanistan became for the British is what the British could see and produce about Afghanistan. See Ewertowski, “The tropics and the East-Central European gaze: The natural world of Southeast Asia in Polish and Serbian travel writings,” pp.6-7 and Corinne Fowler, *Chasing Tales: Travel Writing, Journalism and the History of British Ideas about Afghanistan*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007, the acknowledgment page and p.3.

¹⁷⁸ Psychologist and neuroscientist duo Michael H. Connors and Peter W. Halligan theorized a four-layered ‘functional perspective on belief’ to bring to light the processes we are mostly unaware of. The first layer Connors and Halligan devised is that beliefs serve as ‘**consistent and coherent representation of a subject’s world** and the subject’s place within it.’ Once something is a belief, its purpose isn’t just to make sense of the world but to assist the individual in formulating their behavior accordingly. From then on, ‘[e]very action that we take is grounded in an elaborate web of beliefs and goals.’ Second, beliefs are interconnected and offer an ‘**explanatory framework** for interpreting the world and processing incoming information’ – especially when the beliefs are somehow challenged. This is especially true if ‘the coherence of the collective framework’ is ‘threaten[ed]’ which leads the ‘subjects [to] typically attempt to resolve inconsistencies by seeking to restore the overarching sense of meaning.’ Beliefs thus merge past beliefs with new ideas, proving their malleability to external stimuli. However, as Connors and Halligan point out, even though ‘collective representations [as beliefs] can evolve over time in response to new experiences, yet [they] still represent the subject’s pooled understanding based on the past.’ The third layer is observing beliefs as an ‘interpretive “lens” that shape our experience of the world’ and the fourth is the understanding that ‘beliefs serve important **social functions**’ especially when they grow into ‘[s]hared beliefs [that] help define group norms and values.’ See Michael H. Connors and Peter W. Halligan, “A cognitive account of belief: a tentative road map,” *Frontiers in Psychology*, February 2015, Vol.5, Article 1588, pp.2-3 and Alexa M. Tullet, Mike S. Prentice, Rimma Teper, Kyle A. Nash, Michael Inzlicht, & Ian McGregor, “Neural and Motivational Mechanics of Meaning and Threat,” in Keith D. Markman, Travis Proulx, and Matthew J. Lindberg (eds.), *The Psychology of Meaning*, Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, p.402. Also quoted in Connors and Halligan, “A cognitive account of belief: a tentative road map,” p.3.

¹⁷⁹ Eric Schwitzgebel, “Belief,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), Available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/belief/> (accessed December 2023)

¹⁸⁰ Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, p.3.

¹⁸¹ He defines them as ‘the types of discourse it harbours and causes to function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining the truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.’ See Michel Foucault, “The Political Function of the Intellectual,” (excerpts from *Politique Hebdo*, No.247, 29 November 1976) translated to English by and published online in *Radical Philosophy*, No.16, pp.12-14, Available at https://www.radicalphilosophyarchive.com/issue-files/rp17_article2_politicalfunctionofintellectual_foucault.pdf (accessed April 2024)

¹⁸² Though a popular concept with the academic community, Foucault gave it very little space in his large opus, practically all within this newspaper interview. This differs from the Foucauldian concept of the problematic of truth that permeates his work. For more information, see Lorna Weir, “The Concept of Truth Regime,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, Vol.33, No.2, 2008, pp.367-389.

Travel writing is also far more complex than the act of travel that precedes it. While travel is an encounter with different beliefs, norms, and value systems, a travelogue is a story about that encounter, with information that surpasses a mere introduction to foreign lands.¹⁸³ What this leads to is an understanding that the sources analyzed in this thesis will reflect something more profound than a mere accumulation of new knowledge, but a process of co-creating a new culture. Or, following the above-mentioned thread of logic, a co-creation of a new felt truth.

As time progresses, a text might lose its importance, but the idea of this felt truth and potentially the invoked emotion it carried somehow continue to live on in the societal webs of narratives, thought, and understanding.¹⁸⁴ While this thesis does not delve into the long-term consequences of Yugoslav experiential writings on East Asia, it does acknowledge that once ideas become part of (written) discourses, their embeddedness in the broader society can be assumed.

This theoretical framework is built upon an understanding that Yugoslav experiential writings about East Asia evidence relational processes that guide not just travel but knowledge, identity, culture, and nation-building. Consequently, by employing the transcultural perspective, this thesis shows new ways in which Yugoslav history can be observed and analyzed.

2.2. Methodology: From Source to Meaning

This thesis has been driven by a simple question: what does experiential writing about East Asia in the long 1950s reveal? The first year of this research project was spent in archives, libraries, and antique stores across former Yugoslavia. It was an exploratory phase needed as so little information existed about Yugoslavia-East Asia ties in the Cold War. To understand what might have transpired,

¹⁸³ It is a story of personal transformation and reflection. Those who decided to write and publish a book or multiple about their travel to East Asia were likely the ones who indeed found this experience to be deeply meaningful. Vujadin Boškov, for example, only ever wrote this travel book, though he traveled extensively during his lengthy, international career. Dragi Stamenković as well. Yet from all the Yugoslavs who ventured to East Asia and recorded their experiences, perhaps the most evident sense of a transformation-through-travel, bordering on the spiritual, can be found in the writings of the journalist Nada Marinković. In fact, the meaning of travel is the main topic of her first book (her second being the travelogue about China), called *Love and Meaning: Encounters and Travelogues*. Here, Marinković ponders on the human need to travel and argues that the very impulse to seek is ‘an insatiable desire of a man to grab as much as possible, to cheat a life limited and ephemeral, so that in his corner, he could slowly nibble at the crumbs begged from the table of Eternity.’ Marinković, *Ljubav i smisao: susreti i putopisi*, Introduction. Please note that at this time, writing about a third-person singular in Serbo-Croatian was predominantly done through the usage of he/his. Here, the translation of the original text is verbatim, though the more appropriate translation to English we use today would be with the usage of they/them. Also see: Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.10; Ewertowski, “Northeast China as a Contact Zone in Polish and Serbian Travelogues, 1900-1939,” p.25; In recent years, some tourism scholars have argued that, when observed through the lens of positive psychology, travel is a process that offers a person a greater sense of well-being and growth. See Sebastian Filep and Jennifer Laing, “Trends and Directions in Tourism and Positive Psychology,” *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol.1, No.12, 2018, pp.3-6.

¹⁸⁴ Ryan calls these mental representations and asks ‘[i]f a narrative is a text that brings a story to mind, a story, conversely, is a mental representation formed in response to the clues provided by a text. Is this connection between text and story necessary, or can stories exist as purely mental images?’ See Ryan, “Narrative,” p.518 and “Texts, Worlds, Stories: Narrative Worlds as Cognitive and Ontological Concept,” p.11. Simon Koschut finds that emotions also have a history and are ‘patterned and socially recognized’ having been repeated in discourses. This implies that texts (among others) carry emotions and can have a life beyond the time they were created in. See Simon Koschut, “Emotions, discourse, and power in world politics,” in Simon Koschut (ed) *The Power of Emotions in World Politics*, London and New York: Routledge, 2020, pp.12-13.

archival research at the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade proved to be an invaluable venue to locate information on political and cultural relations between the countries in question across three decades. A total of 65 folders were analyzed.¹⁸⁵ Though most were not used in the writing stage of this thesis, having done such extensive research provided essential contextual information on how the Yugoslav new state operated and who the people actively building and sustaining it were. The first names of journalists and travelers (officials and others) to the region were found in these folders which allowed the investigation to continue beyond the confines of this archive.

It goes without saying that the investigative, on-the-ground work took many detours and resulted in many dead ends. This is all too common in doctoral research projects, where thoroughness is essentially an elimination process. Several semi-structured interviews that were conducted or even the brief investigation of Qing dynasty furniture in Tito's personal working area were abandoned as simply too broad for this thesis. (If researchers were to pick these up in the future, all gathered information would be gladly shared!) The biggest breakthrough occurred when hundreds of East Asia-related newspaper articles were found. They were first located in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Zagreb at the National Library of Serbia, the Library of Matica Srpska, and the "Božidar Adžija" library.¹⁸⁶ Here, physical copies of the *Borba* newspaper (in both written Serbo-Croatian scripts) were examined page by page for the 1950-1959 period. Around the same time, digitalized *Borba* issues became available in an online database of the "Svetozar Marković" Library at the University of Belgrade, which extended the scope from 1945 to the late 1960s.¹⁸⁷ Briefer research was conducted at the Croatian State Archives in search of *Vjesnik* newspaper (and Vladimir Baum's articles), the *Politika* archives in Belgrade, as well as the Historical Archive of Belgrade that holds the private papers of Nada Marinković.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, missing information about Yugoslavia-Korea relations was located at the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia.¹⁸⁹ *Jugoslovenski pregled* (Yugoslav Survey), on the other hand, was read at the Historical Institute of Montenegro.¹⁹⁰ Numerous sources, including articles from the *New York Times*, *Time*, *Pravda*, *Vreme*, and others, as well as U.N. Resolutions, CIA documents, Lordan Zafranović's docu-series, and a video of Leo Mates stored at the National Archives and Records Administration

¹⁸⁵ Some of the investigated fonds include: AJ-114, League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia (Savez socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije); AJ-130, Federal Executive Council of Yugoslavia (Savezno izvršno veće); AJ-141, Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia (Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije); AJ-145, League of Students of Yugoslavia (Savez studenata Jugoslavije); AJ-507, League of Communists of Yugoslavia (Savez komunista Jugoslavije); AJ-559, Federal Commission for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (Savezna komisija za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom); and AJ-837, President of the Republic's Archives (Arhiv Predsednika). They are held at the Archives of Yugoslavia (Arhiv Jugoslavije), Vase Pelagića 33, Belgrade 11000, Serbia.

¹⁸⁶ National Library of Serbia (Narodna biblioteka), Skerlićeva Road, 1, Belgrade 11000, Serbia; Matica Srpska Library, Matice Srpske Road, 1, Novi Sad 21000, Serbia; "Božidar Adžija" Library, Kralja Petra Krešimira Square, IV 2/1, Zagreb 10000, Croatia.

¹⁸⁷ Historical Newspapers Database (*istorijske novine*), University of Belgrade, "Svetozar Marković" Library, Available at <https://pretraziva.srb/pregled/borba> (accessed March 2023).

¹⁸⁸ Croatian State Archives (Hrvatski državni arhiv), Marka Marulića Square 21, Zagreb 1000, Croatia; *Politika*, *Politika* Square 1, Belgrade 11000, Serbia; Historical Archive of Belgrade (Istorijski arhiv Beograda), Palmira Toljatića 1, Belgrade 11000, Serbia.

¹⁸⁹ Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia (Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Republike Srbije), Kneza Miloša 24-26, Belgrade 11000, Serbia.

¹⁹⁰ Historical Institute of Montenegro (Istorijski institut Crne Gore), Bulevar Revolucije 5, Podgorica 81000, Montenegro.

(NARA) in the U.S., among others, were located online. Soon after, original copies of travel books were traced to different antique stores and one was available in an e-format online.

Starting from fragments, a rocky yet thrilling investigation yielded a certain coherence of sources. Though heterogeneous, they could be divided into two broader groups: travel and journalistic writings. The selection was then limited to the long 1950s. From the Korean War to the 1961 Belgrade Conference, this previously isolated state, with little awareness of the world beyond Europe and the U.S., transformed itself into a global leader of anti-imperialism and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Its international standing grew exponentially from the 1948 Cominform, and by 1961, Yugoslavia was globally regarded as 'in fashion.'¹⁹¹ This decade has attracted other scholars for the same reasons. Slobodan Selinić and colleagues, whose edited volume is about Yugoslav foreign politics in the 1950s, justified their chosen timeframe as a pivotal time when Yugoslavia 'transcended regional borders and became part of the Cold War division of the world, discovering for it previously unfamiliar people and countries.'¹⁹² Limiting the temporal scope made the quantity of sources more manageable. Moreover, identifying experiential writings as the most authoritative texts on East Asia in Yugoslavia of the 1950s further narrowed the scope and sharpened the methods used to analyze them.

The total number of analyzed articles varies per author. In *Borba* alone, there were 71 articles by Jakov Levi, 54 by Kosta Timotijević, 82 by Vlado Teslić, 163 by Đorđe Bogojević, 31 by Jože Smole, 13 by Vlajko Begović and Dragi Stamenković, and 1 by Ivo Andrić, among others. The speeches of Tito and other high-ranking officials, as well as reports on the Korean War and various other articles published in this daily, were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the broader context within which Yugoslav correspondents in East Asia operated. The same was done with a much smaller pool of articles from other papers' correspondents in the region, such as Živko Milić (*Politika*), Vladimir Baum (*Vjesnik*), and Branko Bogunović (*Tanjug*, as republished in *Borba*). In the end, for context, approximately 1500 articles from the 1930-1967 period were read and analyzed. In this group, nearly 400 were written by correspondents, out of which fewer than 300 were sent from the region directly. In this thesis, 291 articles in total are referenced. Each article was read at least twice. The first time was before the theoretical framework was established, and the second once the theory was in the making. The same was done with travel books.

Yugoslav writings on China, Japan, and the Koreas fluctuated significantly in number. From 1953 to 1955, Timotijević's articles from Japan dominated East Asia-related content in *Borba*. There were no experiential writings on China during this period. After the establishment of diplomatic relations with Beijing, however, this changed. An unprecedented number of Yugoslav delegations and correspondents were sent to China, producing an exceptional volume of articles and travel books about it. On the other hand, after 1953, the Koreas nearly faded from Yugoslav awareness. Such unevenness in content will be visible in the following chapters as a direct reflection of the different levels of attention that Yugoslavs afforded to these countries throughout the 1950s.

Each source was first analyzed for broader content and divided into groups based on dominant themes: the Korean War, emerging Non-Alignment, depictions of new East Asia, and Yugoslav exceptionalism and cosmopolitanism. They reflected Yugoslav nation-building processes in the 1950s and how engaging previously little-interacted-with spaces became a pathway to a new

¹⁹¹ Martens, *U požaru svetova: Ivo Andrić – jedan evropski život*, p.221.

¹⁹² Selinić et al., *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950-1961*, p.21.

identity and understanding of the Cold War. The written word became the invisible thread weaving a new Yugoslav community and identity in the Cold War.¹⁹³ From Levi to Bogunović, each article and book, though different in content, testified to an emerging collective new discourse about East Asia, the Cold War, and the new Yugoslavia. The second reading and cross-referencing with secondary sources clarified connections beyond broader socio-cultural contexts, such as their interpersonal relations and even childhood dreams, aiding in the formulation of the thesis's main finding that writing about East Asia was also writing about new Yugoslavia.¹⁹⁴

In sum, this thesis analyzes its sources through a transcultural perspective, focusing on the relational, processual, and contextual dimensions in which they arose. Research into the past eight decades of theories on narratives, identity, culture, and nation-building reaffirms the transcultural lens as a unifying approach. It convincingly shows that how individuals form is how broader societal structures form. Employing this lens provides a fruitful blueprint for engaging with Yugoslavia and the Yugosphere. It serves here not just as a theoretical underpinning for this specific thesis but a model for a new, more interdisciplinary and diversified historiography of Yugoslavia.

2.2.1. Limitations and Invitation for Future Research

Although much has been done in recent years to assess Yugoslavia-China relations—primarily from a political perspective—this thesis represents a valuable but initial step into a fertile, broader new direction.¹⁹⁵ Some of its limitations are good avenues for future research into Yugoslavia/Yugosphere-East Asia transregional and transnational relations, as well as Yugoslav experiential knowledge production, the work of its correspondents abroad, and travel literature in general. A further examination of this thesis' topic, that is, Yugoslav experiential knowledge production on East Asia in the 1950s, would also be beneficial. Especially since the lack of digitized primary sources and their general scatteredness across the Yugosphere sometimes resulted in unintended imbalances.

For example, the number of referenced Borba articles far outweighs those of other newspapers, partly as a result of a conscious choice (it was the most important daily) but partly because of its easier accessibility. Navigating Politika's archives, for instance, was especially time-consuming. The way its issues were archived resulted in far fewer articles collected in the end. Another imbalance is the volume of articles per author which required a mindful selection of articles for analysis. Some were prolific writers, producing hundreds of texts, while others contributed one or two. In the case of the former, with limited time in mind, a selection simply had to be done. Branko Bogunović's decade-long opus from China is an extreme example. Favorably, the timeframe of this thesis did not require a full analysis of all his articles in the first place but the realization that not everything was read and analyzed remains a thorn. It would be, therefore, positive if this thesis inspired further research into the work and lives of individuals mentioned here.

¹⁹³ For information on how books and newspapers are used for nation-building purposes, see the well-known argument in Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, pp.34-35, pp.44, and pp.133-141.

¹⁹⁴ During the writing stage of this thesis, the sources were consulted whenever the need arose, leading to some being in full or in part reread a few more times. This just reaffirmed the finding on how their ideas build upon one another.

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, Anastas Vangeli and Dragan Pavličević (eds.) *Yugoslavia and China: Histories, Legacies, Afterlives*, pending publication by Routledge, 2025.

Lastly, and in full awareness of this, despite all efforts to gather all experiential written accounts of East Asia from the long 1950s, it is entirely possible some travel books are still waiting to be discovered. This thesis is the first synthesis of fragmented data on East Asia in the Yugosphere. It is therefore the hope that its limitations are simultaneously an inspiration for fellow researchers to continue investigating this topic in the future.

2.2.2. *Situating the Self*

During this four-year-long project, Peter Burke's statement that 'anyone who argues that knowledge is socially situated is surely obligated to situate him- or herself' weighed on my mind.¹⁹⁶ It feels necessary to use this space to briefly contextualize some of the unintentional biases that might arise in this thesis. Hailing from the Yugosphere, I lived and studied in China for seven years while traveling extensively in the region. I am also related (in ways still unclear) to one of the Borba correspondents in the region (Đorđe Bogojević). While in China, I developed a particular and unsurprising interest in all things related to Yugoslavia and East Asia. The goal was to find context to Yugoslav goods in antique markets or films/songs mentioned in conversations with taxi drivers. It was often hard to find information on political relations (this thesis provides the first ever overview of Yugoslavia-North Korea connections in the 1950s), not to mention cultural ties. My master's thesis first mapped cultural relations with China and this thesis expanded my focus to the entire East Asian region and the realm of knowledge, identity, and nation-building. The way it was written is also a reflection of personal preferences. I subscribe to Natalie Zemon Davis' view that history is 'a form of literature' which guided how I narrate my research findings.¹⁹⁷ The entertaining realization that the processes I study (Yugoslav stories about East Asia) are the same processes I am now contributing to does not escape me. I am not separate from the subjects I research but, in many ways, continuing their work.

¹⁹⁶ Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, p.10.

¹⁹⁷ Natalie Zemon Davis, "Narrative as Knowing: Stories and the Hunger to Know", *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 1992, Vol.5., No.2, p.163.

Chapter 3: The Korean War and Yugoslavia

On 25 June 1950, Jože Smole, a Tanjug correspondent in the U.S., heard on the car radio that North Korean soldiers crossed the 38th parallel.¹⁹⁸ He immediately informed Tanjug. Leo Mates, a close associate of Foreign Minister Edvard Kardelj, learned about it on the Sunday morning news.¹⁹⁹ He passed the information further up. Soon after, officials from Belgrade (including Tito) telephoned Yugoslav missions in Washington and New York.²⁰⁰ They could only reach one diplomat, Đuro Ninčić.²⁰¹ Most others were out together by the Hudson River that Sunday.²⁰² Anxieties grew in Belgrade. The U.N. scheduled an emergency session of the Security Council (of which Yugoslavia was elected a non-permanent member in October 1949).²⁰³ Having not been able to contact Aleš Bebler, the Head of Mission at the U.N., Ninčić was tasked with attending the session.²⁰⁴ This episode in Yugoslav diplomatic history went down as chaotic. Yet, Belgrade demonstrated that despite or precisely because of its anxiety, it would tread carefully on this question. Bebler said that, at the time, '[n]o one knew how to react. The Americans claimed it was North Korea that attacked the South. Others did not have any information.'²⁰⁵

Yugoslav cautiousness is well observed in their initial voting patterns at the Security Council. Wary of any rash reactions, Yugoslavia abstained during the U.N. Security Council Resolution 82 vote on 25 June 1950.²⁰⁶ The Resolution called for 'North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the 38th parallel' and requested an 'immediate cessation of hostilities.'²⁰⁷ Two days later, Yugoslavia voted against the U.N. Security Council Resolution 83, recommending the United Nations assist South Korea against North Korea and 'restore international peace and security in the area.'²⁰⁸ For the 7 July 1950 U.N. Security Council Resolution 84, calling countries intent on militarily supporting South Korea to do so through 'a unified command under the United States of America'—Yugoslavia, Egypt, and India abstained.²⁰⁹ Yugoslavia was the only one abstaining during the 31 July 1950 U.N. Security Council Resolution 85 vote, asking the United Nations to

¹⁹⁸ Smole, *Priповed komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, p.39 and Jakovina, *Budimir Lončar: od Preka do vrha svijeta*, pp.72-74.

¹⁹⁹ Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu: Odnosi s velikim silama 1949-1955*, p.161.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. Also see Jakovina, *Budimir Lončar: od Preka do vrha svijeta*, pp.72-74.

²⁰¹ Ibid. Ninčić was, among other things, the brother of Olga Humo, Tito's close ally and one of the key people behind the establishment of Tanjug. Đuro and Olga were also the children of Momčilo Ninčić, a monarchist politician and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's exiled government in London during World War II.

²⁰² The only other diplomat not at the Hudson River was Aleš Bebler but he was unreachable for other circumstantial reasons. Ibid, p.73.

²⁰³ The Soviets were attempting to block this. See Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici*, p.37. Also see Péter Vukman, "The British Foreign Office on the Possibility of a Soviet Military Attack against Yugoslavia. Analysis of British Archival Documents, 1948-1953," *Öt Kontinens*, Vol.1, 2009, p.521.

²⁰⁴ Jakovina, *Budimir Lončar: od Preka do vrha svijeta*, pp.72-74.

²⁰⁵ Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu: Odnosi s velikim silama 1949-1955*, p.161.

²⁰⁶ For more information on the Yugoslav voting pattern at the U.N. at this time, also see Stopić et al., "Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951," pp.7-8.

²⁰⁷ U.N. Security Council, *Resolution 82*, 25.07.1950., United Nations Command, Available at [https://www.uncmil/Portals/46/Documents/Historic%20Documents/S_RES_82\(1950\)_E.pdf](https://www.uncmil/Portals/46/Documents/Historic%20Documents/S_RES_82(1950)_E.pdf) (accessed September 2024).

²⁰⁸ U.N. Security Council, *Resolution 83*, 27.07.1950., United Nations, Available at <https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/064/96/pdf/nr006496.pdf> (accessed September 2024).

²⁰⁹ U.N. Security Council, *Resolution 84*, 07.07.1950., United Nations, Available at <https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/064/98/pdf/nr006498.pdf> (accessed September 2024).

respond to any future calls of the Unified Command ‘for the relief and support of the civilian population of Korea.’²¹⁰

For some scholars, Yugoslav voting at the U.N. signaled an unwillingness to translate verbal anti-Sovietism into meaningful action.²¹¹ Yugoslav cautiousness was, however, more complex than mere anti-Sovietism. Official Belgrade distrusted the West as a source of truthful information and consistently called for all involved parties to be given a chance to speak at the U.N. (at the time, only the South Korean delegates were present). In doing so, it espoused solidarity with emerging (socialist) regimes while signaling wariness of the Western Red Scare. Indeed, Yugoslavia was never against the U.N. taking action. It even went so far as to propose its own resolution drafts.

At the first session, on 25 June 1950, Ninčić proposed a draft ‘calling for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of forces in Korea and inviting the government of North Korea to state its case before the Security Council.’²¹² Neither this nor subsequent Yugoslav Korea-related resolutions garnered support from other members. In the case of the first U.S.-proposed resolution, Yugoslav abstention should also be observed more nuancedly. Yugoslavia agreed with ‘the sentence for the cessation of hostilities’ but refrained from explicitly assigning blame.²¹³ Belgrade wanted more information. Bebler’s speech at the 27 June Security Council meeting perpetuated the call to hear from Pyongyang directly, but remained alone in those calls.²¹⁴ Reaffirming its stance that all nations had the right to speak at the U.N., it voted in favor of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 88 on 8 November 1950, inviting the representatives of the People’s Republic of China to discuss their participation in the Korean War.²¹⁵ This came ‘just a little over a month after Edvard Kardelj’s public support for the PRC’s admission to the UN.’²¹⁶

In parallel to the events in Korea and at the U.N., Yugoslav anxieties over a potential Soviet attack intensified. Since its expulsion from the Cominform for ideological apostasy, its security was threatened.²¹⁷ Starting in 1949, Soviet satellites (primarily Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania) had increased their military presence on Yugoslavia’s borders, consistently provoking incidents.²¹⁸ The CIA found a Soviet attack on Yugoslavia improbable while the British saw the mentioned incidents as a Soviet-orchestrated ‘war of nerves’ or psychological pressure on Belgrade.²¹⁹ The pressure was exacerbated when the Korean War erupted. Bebler is recorded to have spoken to John Foster Dulles at the U.N. mere weeks after the North Korean soldiers crossed the 38th parallel. Though Yugoslavs apparently did not previously believe an attack was imminent, Bebler at this time

²¹⁰ U.N. Security Council, *Resolution 85*, 31.07.1950., United Nations, Available at <https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/064/98/pdf/nr006498.pdf> (accessed September 2024).

²¹¹ Ibid, p.8.

²¹² “Security Council,” *International Organization*, August 1950, Vol.4, No.3, p.435.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Jakovina, *Budimir Lončar: od Preka do vrha svijeta*, pp.73-74.

²¹⁵ U.N. Security Council, *Resolution 88*, 08.11.1950., United Nations, Available at <https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/064/98/pdf/nr006498.pdf> (accessed September 2024).

²¹⁶ Stopić et al., “Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951,” p.8.

²¹⁷ The schism with Moscow began months earlier with Soviet advisors leaving Yugoslavia back in March that year. See Vukman, “The British Foreign Office on the Possibility of a Soviet Military Attack against Yugoslavia. Analysis of British Archival Documents, 1948-1953,” p.515.

²¹⁸ Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu: Odnosi s velikim silama 1949-1955*, p.167.

²¹⁹ Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici*, p.34 and Vukman, “The British Foreign Office on the Possibility of a Soviet Military Attack against Yugoslavia. Analysis of British Archival Documents, 1948-1953,” p.518.

expressed ‘how alarming, the concentration of satellite armies was,’ questioning whether this could be more meaningful than mere provocations or psychological torment.²²⁰ An additional stressor was the overlap of narratives in the Eastern bloc relating to Yugoslavia and Korea. Yugoslavia was allegedly painted in the Eastern European press as a servant to ‘Anglo-American imperialists’ planning to ‘provoke an incident of the Korean kind.’²²¹ This heightened local anxieties as Yugoslav leadership was fully aware that the North Korean invasion of South Korea was framed in the Soviet-led camp as a response to or a preemptive strike against a South Korean invasion of the North. The Soviet threat was so intensely lived in Yugoslavia that the Korean War was intimately felt as a Balkan one *that never happened*.²²²

Though anxieties lingered for years, some scholars argue that the Soviet Union never planned an actual attack on Yugoslavia and that its growing military presence in states around Yugoslavia was defensive in nature, aimed at repelling a potential attack from the West.²²³ Stalin allegedly only ever seriously considered attacking in early 1951, but gave up the idea some months later.²²⁴ This coincides with the height of anxieties in Belgrade. Even Tito shared his concerns with foreign dignitaries at this time.²²⁵ Yugoslavia, however, did not just sit idly awaiting a confrontation. On 14 October 1951, Yugoslavia joined the Mutual Defense Aid Program (MDAP) and started receiving military aid from the U.S.²²⁶ It also took other steps to secure its safety, from seeking verbal reassurances from Western allies that they’d come to its aid in case of a Soviet attack to founding a Balkan Pact with Greece and Turkey in 1954.²²⁷ Though the potentiality of this attack was heavily analyzed in both Yugoslavia and other countries, for the most part, an actual attack was not read as plausible. It was seen as most probable only in the period coinciding with the first half of the Korean War.²²⁸

While Yugoslavia initially reacted incredibly cautiously to the Korean War, mere months later, it became more vocal and explicit. This shift is most noticeable in its official and press narratives. For example, while Washington saw the North’s attack on South Korea as orchestrated by Moscow from the get-go, Yugoslavia only embraced this narrative when China joined the war.²²⁹ The Soviet Union was no longer just the ‘agent behind all attacks’ on Yugoslavia, but a destabilizer of world peace and the driving force behind the Korean tragedy.²³⁰ The Korean War inadvertently served as both an example and a reminder in Yugoslavia. On the one hand, it showed what fate awaited if the superpowers had their way and what the Cold War entailed. On the other hand, it reminded Yugoslavs of their geopolitical fragility and limitations, especially in terms of security and

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Đorđe Radenković and Dragan Stojiljković, *Koreja*, Belgrade: Glas, 1950, p.38.

²²² Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu: Odnosi s velikim silama 1949-1955*, p.167.

²²³ Vukman, “The British Foreign Office on the Possibility of a Soviet Military Attack against Yugoslavia. Analysis of British Archival Documents, 1948-1953,” p.515.

²²⁴ Ibid, p.516.

²²⁵ Ibid, p.524.

²²⁶ In the 1952-1953 period, it apparently received nearly 300 million dollars in military aid from the U.S. See Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici*, p.38 and p.40.

²²⁷ Ibid, p.41. Also see Vukman, “The British Foreign Office on the Possibility of a Soviet Military Attack against Yugoslavia. Analysis of British Archival Documents, 1948-1953,” pp.525-526.

²²⁸ Vukman, “The British Foreign Office on the Possibility of a Soviet Military Attack against Yugoslavia. Analysis of British Archival Documents, 1948-1953,” pp.525-526.

²²⁹ Masuda, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World*, p.63.

²³⁰ Stojić et al., “Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951,” p.7.

information. With the outbreak of the Korean War, it became clear that Yugoslavia relied heavily on foreign press agencies (primarily those in the West). From the moment Borba announced the Korean War began, the vast majority of news came from the Big Four and (less) from the Soviet TASS and Chinese Xinhua agencies. Due to the Korean War, it also became clear that Yugoslav journalists abroad played an incredibly valuable role in bringing breaking news to not just their readership, but the state leadership itself.²³¹

The Korean War occupied much of official Belgrade's attention, especially in the first year, with the press reflecting this obsession.²³² The first article announcing that '[a]n armed conflict erupted' included an introduction to the peninsula itself in a smaller font, similar to a lengthy footnote.²³³ Korean geographical size, population, history, and ideological division were summarized and accompanied by a sketched map of the divided country. The local lack of knowledge about Korea(s) was now to be rectified in the press, in the wake of this conflict. The announcement of the war made front-page news, with a continuation on page three, that is, the international news section. Texts sourced via Tanjug from global press agencies were usually grouped in a column named 'On the war in Korea' or, later on, 'On the armistice in Korea' and often placed on the cover.²³⁴ These generally started with a telling sentence—'[a]s foreign agencies are reporting'—signaling Yugoslav reliance on foreign news.²³⁵ Their lack of firsthand information was a lack of access to East Asia.²³⁶

Jakov (Jaša) Levi managed to visit Japan and Korea in late 1951 and early 1952, but Borba's (and Yugoslav in general) first long-term correspondent in the region was Kosta Timotijević. He was sent to Tokyo in June 1953, around six months after Yugoslavia established a diplomatic presence in Japan.²³⁷ Subsequent subchapters focus on Levi's and Timotijević's experiential writings from Korea and their educational purpose. They also highlight the efforts made to separate socialism from the Soviet Union in an attempt to cleanse it from moral corruption caused by the Kremlin's warmongering.²³⁸

²³¹ Smole notes in his memoir that the diplomats 'underestimated' tensions on the Korean peninsula and did not take the news of war 'seriously.' In contrast, Yugoslav leadership in Belgrade approached the matter with much anxiety. Smole, *Priopred komunističke novinarstva (1945-1980)*, pp.38-39. Also see Jakovina, *Budimir Lončar: od Preka do vrha svijeta*, pp.72-74.

²³² Stopić et al. also rightfully called the coverage of the Korean War in Yugoslavia 'unprecedented.' A further testimony to this, beyond the sources in Serbo-Croatian or Slovenian, can be found in the summaries and translations of Yugoslav press clippings on the topic gathered in the CIA depository available online. For example, see the CIA-RDP83-00415R006300190001-0 file. Also see Stopić et al., "Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951," p.6.

²³³ "Izbio je oružani sukob između Severne i Južne Koreje," *Borba*, 26.06.1950., p.1 and p.3.

²³⁴ "Oko primirja u Koreji," *Borba*, 03.01.1952., p.1. In *Politika*, these were grouped in a column called the 'Korean Problem' and placed most often on the cover as well. See "Pregovori u Panmunđomu stoje na mrtvoj tački," *Politika*, 21.01.1952., p.1.

²³⁵ Observable already in "Izbio je oružani sukob između Severne i Južne Koreje," *Borba*, 26.06.1950., p.1 and p.3.

²³⁶ Levi underlines this point in the first chapter of his *Encounters in Asia* book. See Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, pp.5-7.

²³⁷ There is very little research into Yugoslavia-Japan Cold War relations. In the only larger and recently published scholarly work on their bilateral ties, the Korean War is completely ignored. See Jelena Glišić, *Japanese-Yugoslav Diplomatic Relations in the Cold War, 1952-1980*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Tsukuba, 2016.

²³⁸ The same was observed by Stopić et al. in their analysis of general news in Yugoslavia at the time. See Stopić et al., "Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951," pp.6-7.

3.1. Korea as a Warning I: USSR and the North's Corrupt Communism

This thesis opens with a story about Jakov Levi and the Korean War, not without reason. Though Yugoslavs had tried to send journalists to the region before, Levi was the first to make it there.²³⁹ He was highly esteemed in the country and led the Yugoslav anti-Soviet press campaign following the Tito-Stalin split.²⁴⁰ Having attended the 5th U.N. Assembly Session in the U.S. (mainly dealing with the Korean War) and published a book about it, he was a figure of particular authority to speak about Korea and the Cold War milieu.²⁴¹ Somehow, his newspaper *Borba* managed to obtain the necessary permits through the U.N. Command and General Matthew B. Ridgway for Levi to attend the Korean Peace Talks.²⁴²

Levi's reports from Korea began in December 1951, but he announced his trip on 16 November.²⁴³ This was big news that set the tone and logic of his reporting. His main argument was that the Korean War was Moscow's doing. In this and a few subsequent articles, Levi first mentioned North Koreans as aggressors and only then assigned Moscow a supervisory role, criticizing them both for destabilizing world peace. In later articles, however, he skips Pyongyang and goes directly for Stalin. A good example is this statement: 'Day after day, for more than five weeks now, Korea is awaiting peace. The peace taken from it by Soviet tanks a year and a half ago.'²⁴⁴ This conviction in Soviet culpability was an inextricable part of the Yugoslav narrative about the Korean War, repeated endlessly in the press.

Levi's antagonism to Moscow and the entire socialist bloc (a mutual sentiment) came to the fore in another article. Depicting an 'encounter at the 38th parallel,' Levi narrated his interactions with other socialist journalists in Panmunjom.²⁴⁵ While the Chinese correspondent apparently avoided him, Eastern Europeans behaved 'in a more-or-less limited, Cominform way.'²⁴⁶ His criticism aimed to label Eastern European journalists as puppets of their aggressive governments. The North Korean correspondent, on the other hand, was marked as 'better' than the rest of the socialist group even though he and Levi disagreed about 'the basic fact: who is the aggressor.'²⁴⁷ Before China joined the Korean War, Belgrade was reluctant to assign blame; now, the opposite was true. With whom the culpability lay was no longer questioned. The Soviet-led camp was the aggressor. This is why this seemingly underwhelming encounter with socialist correspondents graced *Borba's* front

²³⁹ Half a year earlier, The New York Times (NYT) announced an attempt by *Politika* to send Steven Sindelić to Korea. (The exact individual's name could not be confirmed. It was, however, more likely to have been Stevan or Stefan and not the anglicized Steven.) The NYT noted that for *Politika* to send Sindelić to 'that theatre' in East Asia was a big undertaking financially. *Politika* had to recall all its other journalist correspondents abroad back to Belgrade 'so it would have money enough' to support Sindelić. It is unclear why *Politika* failed to send their correspondent, but Levi was the first and seemingly only Yugoslav to travel to the region in 1951. See "Yugoslav to Go to Korea," *The New York Times*, 25.05.1951. and Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.8.

²⁴⁰ Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 36.

²⁴¹ Jakov Levi, *Oblaci nad svijetom: Putem Ujedinjenih Nacija*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost 1951. Mentioned in Suzana Veličković et al. (eds.), *Katalog knjiga na jezicima jugoslovenskih naroda: 1868-1972 - 6*, Belgrade: Narodna biblioteka SR Srbije, 1979, p.538 and "Nova izdanja „SVJETLOSTI“," *Borba*, 19.12.1951., p.4.

²⁴² Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.8.

²⁴³ Jakov Levi, "Dopis iz Atine: Na putu za Koreju," *Borba*, 16.11.1951., p.3.

²⁴⁴ Jakov Levi, "Susret oko trideset osmog uporednika," *Borba*, 03.01.1952., p.1.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

page.²⁴⁸ Borba intentionally highlighted Levi's interactions with the Eastern bloc to offer its audiences a clear example of the bloc's hostility toward Yugoslavs abroad. Levi recalled this episode decades later in his memoir, noting that his sheer presence 'provoked endless, heated debates.'²⁴⁹ In the memoir, he also added a photograph of himself surrounded by a dozen men. The image carried the caption: 'Eastern Journalists Object.'²⁵⁰

This encounter was entertaining for international audiences as well.²⁵¹ 'At Panmunjom, U.N. correspondents flocked eagerly around to watch Titoist Levi meet the Red reporters covering the truce talks,' reads *Time* magazine, in a belittlingly titled 'Domesticated Communist' article.²⁵² All sorts of insults were waged against Levi, from calling him a pretend communist to a fascist—none of which he mentions in his article for Borba. The Chinese correspondent, Chu Chiping, is quoted to have said 'to [the] Americans: "I enjoy talking to you. I know who you are and where you stand. But this man [Levi] is neither fish nor fowl."' "²⁵³ Yugoslav in-betweenness in international matters made it particularly untrustworthy in a binary Cold War setting. Levi, the 'first Red newsman accredited to the U.N. forces' to report from the Koreans, as *Time* called him, truly lived, witnessed, and wrote the international conflicts of his time.²⁵⁴

Though his message from the Korean peninsula continuously circulated around Soviet culpability, he reported heavily on the devastation and destruction of war. This often sounded as nothing less than a warning to his fellow Yugoslavs—all still recovering individually and as a society from the Second World War. On 6 January 1952, his article 'War Images in Korea' was published.²⁵⁵ It was written out of Seoul and focused predominantly on painting two pictures: the effects the war had on children and the destruction of infrastructure. '[A] bunch of shaggy, slant-eyed children' found themselves, as Levi described in the article, either dead, orphaned, or cleaning shoes on the streets of war-ravaged Seoul because of the 'Russians' and their 'Ural cannons and tanks [that] brought new suffering [...] to the entire [Korean] nation, North and South of the [38th] parallel that unnaturally divides [Korea] in two.'²⁵⁶ Offering vivid images of reality in Korea, Levi intertwined destruction and international politics, then weaved the Yugoslav context into the Korean one:

²⁴⁸ Foreign news covered several pages in the paper or about 20 percent of all news 'on a typical day' at Borba. Expectedly, the cover featured the most important news. See Merrill and Fischer, *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers*, p.94.

²⁴⁹ Levi, *Requiem for a Country: A History Lesson*, p.110.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p.109.

²⁵¹ International interest in Levi and his interactions with other socialist journalists, as trivial as that might be, was likely because it 'provided temporary relief from quotidian boredom.' Levi reported that '[t]here was no hard news to write about on this trip, except awkward encounters in Panmunjom with correspondents from the Soviet sphere of influence.' The correspondents would, according to Levi, 'from time to time' relieve boredom 'by flying on a chopper over the 38th parallel or hopping on a flight for a few nights in Tokyo, for a shave-cum-head-massage by Japanese barbers in the PX, and evenings of drinks with Hawaiian music in the Press Club.' Some of Levi's first articles about Japan were written around the 1952 New Year when he was supposed to have been in Korea. These were published only in late January 1952. See Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 39.

²⁵² "The Press: Domesticated Communist," *Time*, 17.12.1951.

²⁵³ Ibid. On the interactions of journalists across the two camps, see John Jenks, "Consorting with the Enemy: American Reporters and "Red Sources" at the Korean Truce Talks, 1951-1953," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol.22, No.2, 2002.

²⁵⁴ "The Press: Domesticated Communist," *Time*, 17.12.1951.

²⁵⁵ Jakov Levi, "Ratne slike u Koreji," *Borba*, 06.01.1952., p.3.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

Together with their experts, especially military ones, Russians imported into North Korea aggression as well. This just brought the Koreans new suffering and war, destruction and poverty. That is precisely why one of the first questions a Korean will ask a Yugoslav is: “How did you save your independence?”²⁵⁷

This independence—believed to have always been under attack—is something to be safeguarded from foreign interference. Levi’s attempts to delineate socialism from the Soviet Union go as far as to portray North Korea no longer as an aggressor, but a victim tricked into destroying itself. Aggression was imported. Levi argued that the North Korean communist regime was not the problem because it was the Soviets who compromised its communism.²⁵⁸ The subtle shift from referring to the Soviets as Russians was a subtle retying of Soviet Moscow to the Russian imperial past, implying its continued imperialism. Further weaving the Korean story through Yugoslav logic, Levi wrote that Koreans would tell him, in improvised Seoul restaurants amidst ruins, that

[t]he Koreans are left with no choice. They had to pick a side of either the aggressor [from the North] or the South, which has the good side that the United Nations support it against the aggression [it faces]. But, if they chose the South—they did so just because they are against aggression, and not because [the South] provides a better regime than that in the North. “Korea is looking for a third exit [option]—they say—[our] own, Korean exit, [with our] own Korean independence. That does not mean isolation or enmity with other people. Just freedom.”²⁵⁹

Evidently, Levi’s writing was primarily about Soviet culpability and North Korea. This ran the risk of suggesting to his audiences that the capitalist South was the morally righteous party in this conflict. Reassigning blame from Pyongyang to Moscow was intended to absolve socialism of ethical corruption (Soviet socialism had already been branded imperialistic in Yugoslavia anyway). Levi thus takes space in later articles to introduce the South as not just a victim, but a state governed by a harmful regime.²⁶⁰ This, however, is nowhere as explicit as the criticism of the Soviet Union and North Korea.

His 1953 book *Encounters in Asia* and the chapter *At the Censor’s* might explain why.²⁶¹ During Levi’s brief 1952 New Year trip to Japan, he was summoned to the ‘big stone palace of Radio-Tokyo, on the second floor’ where the ‘damn censors’ were, to answer for having some articles sent ‘without censorship’ back to Yugoslavia.²⁶² Discussing how the U.N. Command’s censorship

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Anderson notes that socialists (and others) often read a revolution as ‘something fundamentally pure’ and that sacrificing one’s life for it came with ‘an idea of purity, through fatality.’ This is why, for the Yugoslavs, Soviet warmongering soiled the purity of the socialist revolution and, consequently, soiled North Korean efforts. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, pp.144-145.

²⁵⁹ Jakov Levi, “Ratne slike u Koreji,” *Borba*, 06.01.1952., p.3.

²⁶⁰ For example, Jakov Levi, “Pesma 38 uporednika,” *Borba*, 15.01.1952., p.5.

²⁶¹ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.26.

²⁶² Ibid. For clarification purposes, a significant part of the U.N. Command operational apparatus was based in Japan during the Korean War. This included the leadership of units handling, among other matters, censorship.

operated, he emphasized in his book that they would ‘cut out directly from my Serbo-Croatian original all that they did not like.’²⁶³ To absolve himself from a potential misunderstanding, he then ends the chapter with a statement: ‘I also wrote against Syngman Rhee!’²⁶⁴ Though the military censorship might have removed some parts of his criticism of Syngman Rhee, Levi loudly championed a third-way option for the Koreans, arguing that neither the North nor the South were good political options for the people.

In his writing, Korea was a warning for the Yugoslav public, but post-1948 Yugoslavia was also an example for the Korean people to follow. This transferability of experience was not limited to current affairs. Levi empathized with the Koreans and their suffering at the hands of the Japanese and Chinese empires throughout history, writing that the Koreans

are a people that, after everything they lived through in all those years, managed to preserve their national symbol[s], language, system of writing, [and] culture; [Koreans are] people that even today know their place [in the world], in anticipation that future circumstances will be more favorable to them than now.²⁶⁵

His admiration was genuine. Korean historical circumstances were something Yugoslavs could relate to, drawing from their own experiences. Levi’s argument that Koreans seek a liberating, morally righteous third option between compromised communism and corrupt capitalism dominates most of his (especially later) writing from the Peace Talks. The Korean situation was framed not just as a warning of what happens in the Cold War milieu, but as a reaffirmation of the Yugoslav choice to be non-aligned (or non-engaged, as they called it at the time).

3.2. Korea as a Warning II: On the Ceasefire and the Oppressive South

Nearly a year and a half after Levi left Korea, Kosta Timotijević arrived as *Borba*’s correspondent in Japan.²⁶⁶ One of his first tasks was traveling to Korea to report on the signing of the historical Korean Armistice Agreement. In his *letter from Panmunjom* titled ‘How was the truce in Korea signed,’ Timotijević described the Chinese, North Koreans, and Western allies in detail.²⁶⁷ Even their means of arrival in Panmunjom were taken to carry symbolic meaning. The communists arrived in ‘black Russian-made [...] jeeps, which [even though] completely new looked like wrecks from World War I,’ while, as stated by a British journalist, the West used helicopters to ‘blind the lowbrow’ Eastern side.²⁶⁸ Timotijević counterweighs this powerplay with depictions of ‘rice fields turned into minefields’ and how former enemies in ‘no man’s land’ are now moving toward peace. Yet, there is nothing joyous about the occasion. The signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement was anticlimactic. In another *letter from Korea*, Timotijević writes:

all those who expected from truce signing a big spectacle of reconciliation, friendly handshakes, and public festivities, the

²⁶³ Ibid, p.28.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. Syngman Rhee served as the first President of South Korea from 1948-1960.

²⁶⁵ Jakov Levi, “Ratne slike u Koreji,” *Borba*, 06.01.1952., p.3.

²⁶⁶ His approximated time of arrival is based on his first published article in *Borba*, which seems to be Kosta Timotijević, “Tokio, grad na hiljadu kvadratnih kilometara,” *Borba*, 10.06.1953., p.4.

²⁶⁷ Kosta Timotijević, “Kako je potpisano primirje Koreji,” *Borba*, 09.08.1953., p.4.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

ceremony of signing in Panmunjom, short and cold, was just an intro to the ceremony of signing in Munsan [which was equally cold].²⁶⁹

Syngman Rhee and his regime in South Korea did not attend the signings. Timotijević clarified that despite this, due to allied pressure, Rhee ‘promised to respect’ the Agreement.²⁷⁰ The North Korean and Chinese leaderships chose to sign the papers in Pyongyang and did not attend the Panmunjom or Munsan signings in person.²⁷¹ In his accounts, the general mood in Korea is clearly that of uncooperativeness, highlighting that the long-awaited peace remains fragile. He juxtaposed political distance with a quick reference to journalists on both sides who regularly trespassed these boundaries. Timotijević humorously remarks that ‘[t]hese encounters were a lively opportunity for an unhindered exchange of information and insults’ despite there being extreme measures in charge of ‘watching carefully that there is no accidental “fraternization” or similar mishaps between the “colleagues” accredited in Seoul and Pyongyang.’²⁷²

In his article about the returning prisoners of war (POW), Timotijević offered Yugoslav audiences insights into different reports.²⁷³ This, in a sense, served as another point of comparison between the involved parties. He invoked imagery of camps from Yugoslavia during the Second World War to bring the reality of these POW camps closer to the Yugoslav public. He then wrote that there were many contradictory accounts. The British POWs praised their Chinese captors, while the Americans did the opposite. The Turkish were treated the worst.²⁷⁴ In his effort to locate the truth, he cross-referenced accounts and fixated on finding any exaggerations or underreporting. He argued, for example, the Chinese knew that ‘the loudest will echo those first accounts’ of the POWs and that people abroad were not likely to investigate further.²⁷⁵ This meant that he suspected the conditions in Chinese camps were not as good as the first POWs reported, but rather part of Chinese propaganda. His distrust is not only of the Chinese, but also others, and perhaps most of all, the South Koreans. ‘[The POWs are] all going home [...] all but the South Koreans’ who, once returned to the South, were treated with great suspicion, held in unspecified locations for observation, and prevented from going home. These returnees, Timotijević reported, painted the North Korean captors as terrible and the conditions in the prisoner camps as horrid. Timotijević doubted their accounts the most. Reports of ‘day and night physical and mental torture,’ he argued, could have been ‘exaggerated’ to appease their conditions following repatriation.²⁷⁶ His doubt here is not a judgment of the POWs but the South Korean regime.

While Levi’s Korea articles focused on Soviet culpability, Timotijević was committed to analyzing the South Korean regime and lived experience on the ground. His first article from the country, titled ‘What they think about Korea’ begins with ‘[i]t is widely, and mostly correctly believed that the situation in Korea [...] is better understood from Tokyo than Seoul,’ but that some things make

²⁶⁹ Kosta Timotijević, “Kako i zašto je general Klark potpisao sam primirje u Munsanu,” *Borba*, 16.08.1953., p.4.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Kosta Timotijević, “Kako je potpisano primirje Koreji,” *Borba*, 09.08.1953., p.4.

²⁷³ Kosta Timotijević, “Povratak s mrtvog koloseka,” *Borba*, 06.09.1953., p.4.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. The question of the POWs was important worldwide. Other Yugoslav correspondents covered it from their respective stations as well. On the question of the Turkish POWs, see Zdravko Pečar, “Devet turskih vojnika vratilo se iz severnokorejskog zarobljeništva,” *Borba*, 16.08.1953. p.4.

²⁷⁵ Kosta Timotijević, “Povratak s mrtvog koloseka,” *Borba*, 06.09.1953., p.4.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

sense only when one is in Seoul.²⁷⁷ The first thing he points to is street chants calling for an attack on the North. He tried to speak to ‘a few [Koreans on the streets] who somewhat spoke or barely knew English’ to assess whether people truly wanted to prolong the conflict.²⁷⁸ He even ‘talked to ten-ish South Korean’ military men who (all but one) opposed the war and were ‘reasoning more soberly.’²⁷⁹ The second thing he describes is the extreme brutality of Syngman Rhee’s right-wing regime. To make it additionally egregious for the Yugoslav public, he explains that a general in Rhee’s cabinet ‘calls himself, in moments of humor, “Korean Himmler”.’²⁸⁰ His many findings about Rhee and his regime’s behavior towards other politicians and Korean people, as well as plans to attack the North lead Timotijević to state: ‘[i]f anyone today wants a World War III [...] it is undoubtedly Syngman Rhee.’²⁸¹

While Levi linked the North Korean regime to Moscow, Timotijević connected the morally corrupt South Korean leadership to the U.S.²⁸² One of the photographs in his article carries the sarcastic title: ‘[t]wo good friends: Syngman Rhee and [Douglas] MacArthur.’²⁸³ Rhee’s interactions with his Western allies led Timotijević to conclude that ‘Syngman Rhee is a shameless liar and schemer.’²⁸⁴ Further elaborating on Rhee’s moral corruption, Timotijević forcefully writes:

Some believe that Rhee is unscrupulously craving power and is a complete cynic—the kind of cynics who do not trust themselves when they say “good morning” to anyone—and there are some, again, who are convinced that the senile president has been seized by messianic madness and that his politics lately is a byproduct of sheer [mental] unaccountability. But the majority of those who deal with figuring out the “Eastern puzzle” of Rhee’s personality believe that all his actions, from the most cunning to seemingly most desperate and irrational, constitute a single, thought-out and, in all possible effects, calculated “real politic,” with fanaticism as the driving force.²⁸⁵

He also observed Rhee from a regional perspective, cautioning against his activities abroad (especially in Taiwan).²⁸⁶ From the standpoint of Korean-Japanese bilateral relations, Timotijević highlighted Rhee’s maritime expansionism and stated that ‘no government ever tried to claim for its territorial waters a seawater surface three times bigger than the surface of its land.’²⁸⁷ With the Japanese imperial past in mind, Timotijević contextualized the South Korean distrust of Tokyo but remained highly critical of Seoul’s actions. The Japanese are presented as mature, with ‘diplomatic

²⁷⁷ Kosta Timotijević, “Šta misle o Koreji,” *Borba*, 28.07.1953., p.3.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² An interesting investigation of American complicity in building up Syngman Rhee can be found in Oliver Elliot, *The American Press and the Rise of Authoritarianism in South Korea 1945-1954*, Ph.D. thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2016.

²⁸³ Kosta Timotijević, “Šta misle o Koreji,” *Borba*, 28.07.1953., p.3.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Kosta Timotijević, “Sing Man Rijeve „linija“,” *Borba*, 27.09.1953., p.4.

patience,' while Syngman Rhee is portrayed as an irrational madman.²⁸⁸ Yet, the main fault was with the Western backers of Rhee for Timotijević because, as he explained to the Yugoslav public:

Essentially, the thing is that regimes such as that of Syngman Rhee, like some other regimes on the globe, cannot survive without artificial miracles and submissions [of others].²⁸⁹

Timotijević's writing about Syngman Rhee and South Korea remained unchanged throughout this period. On the other hand, his writing about North Korea was peripheral. In previous Korea articles, he discussed the North Korean appearances and approach to the truce, but on 29 October 1953, one of his *letters* was about North Korea specifically.²⁹⁰ He called it a complete 'unknown' and informed the public that '[a]ll that is reliably known is that North Korea was a Russian satellite until 1950 and that it became a Chinese satellite during the [Korean] war.'²⁹¹ Timotijević concluded that this was the consequence of the enormous Chinese contribution to the Korean War, as 'they alone bore almost the entire weight of the war.'²⁹² China's repositioning of leadership over the North Koreans 'pushed the Russians out.'²⁹³ The transformation of how Yugoslavs read political dynamics in East Asia during the Korean War is perhaps best observable in how they saw Sino-Soviet relations now as full of tensions. They also believed that China's 'muffled struggle against the USSR is not a struggle between different political conceptions but a struggle for hegemony in Asia.'²⁹⁴ North Korea was thus merely a pawn in the power struggle between the Soviets and the Chinese, with the two countries both 'indifferent toward the interests of Korea itself.'²⁹⁵

Timotijević continued reporting on the Korean peninsula in 1953. His articles sometimes focused on retrospectively analyzing global dynamics and making sense of why and how the war happened. Sometimes, they were focused on ongoing political discussions about the future of Korea.²⁹⁶ Skeptical that there can ever be 'a permanent solution' to the Korean question, he explained that 'talks and boredom' will not solve anything until there is genuine interest on both the U.S. and Chinese sides.²⁹⁷ He also clarified for his readership that neither of the two dictators in North or South would ever easily relinquish their power. He even asked, 'How can free elections be held in a country where in the past twenty years it has only known violence and where the impulse for violence is now greater than ever?'²⁹⁸ Similar to all his earlier writings, his main concern was Syngman Rhee and his potential escalation of the situation on the ground.²⁹⁹ From here on, Timotijević barely mentioned Korea in his later dispatches.

²⁸⁸ Đorđe Bogojević reported (less passionately) on this in 1960, reaching similar conclusions. See Đorđe Bogojević, "RIBE-kamen spoticanja," *Borba*, 01.05.1960., p.6.

²⁸⁹ Kosta Timotijević, "Sing Man Rijeve „linija“," *Borba*, 27.09.1953., p.4.

²⁹⁰ Kosta Timotijević, "Šta se zbiva sa Severnom Korejom," *Borba*, 29.10.1953., p.4.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Kosta Timotijević, "Civilna repriza u Panmundžomu," *Borba*, 24.11.1953., p.4.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

This followed the general trend of decreasing Korea-related press coverage in Yugoslavia. Even the 1954 Geneva Conference for the Far East, which aimed to resolve both the Korean situation and the conflicts in Indochina, had primarily focused on the latter. Vlado Teslić, who would become Borba's first correspondent from China a year later, was present at the Conference. His Geneva reports showcase well this redirection of global interest from Korea to Indochina.³⁰⁰ Asian issues remained of great interest in Yugoslavia and many of Teslić's reports made the cover.³⁰¹ Journalists from all over, including Timotijević from Japan, contributed articles on the Geneva Conference.³⁰² Similarly to Timotijević's findings in Korea, Teslić argued from Switzerland that the West and the Soviets are closing their eyes and preparing to leave the question of the Far East behind.³⁰³ This made the entire Korean War appear senseless in the end, making the case for independence from both blocs stronger in Yugoslavia. In later years, the Korean War was mentioned rarely and peripherally in experiential writings from the region.³⁰⁴ In a milieu of far more pressing matters, Yugoslav attention shifted elsewhere and their engagement with the Korean Peninsula stood frozen until the 1970s.

3.3. The Korean War in Context: A Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated just how important the Korean War was in Yugoslavia. It inadvertently incentivized it to open to a world beyond Europe and the U.S. by becoming more aware of potential allies in the decolonizing world. It was thus the unexpected trigger of their subsequent non-alignment (an argument expanded in Chapter 4). The Korean War also became a warning to the Yugoslav leadership and people. Watching Korea become a 'pawn' of the superpowers made Yugoslavs feel uneasy.³⁰⁵ Dušan Timotijević, a renowned journalist and Kosta Timotijević's father, argued on 5 July 1950 (just ten days after the war erupted) that small powers should balance against the hegemonic tendencies of the U.S. and the Soviet Union by grouping together.³⁰⁶ In the eyes of the Yugoslavs, this was the only way to have a chance of survival in the Cold War environment. The Korean War did not just have this influential of an effect on Yugoslavia. It reshaped the Cold War milieu in general. On the one hand, it 'transformed the Cold War into a militarized competition.'³⁰⁷ On the other hand, it incited smaller nations to seek an alternative, or 'third way' forward.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁰ Vlado Teslić, "Dalekoistočni problem i Ženevska konferencija," *Borba*, 20.04.1954., p.3.

³⁰¹ See, for example, Vlado Teslić, "Tri izjave, tri tona i tri sadržaja," *Borba*, 26.04.1954., p.1.

³⁰² He opens it as follows: 'With mixed emotions of indignation, hope, worry and satisfaction, the Japanese are following the development of the Geneva conference.' See Kosta Timotijević, "Ženevska konferencija iz japanske perspektive," *Borba*, 16.05.1954., p.4.

³⁰³ He writes that '[e]ven though the goal of the conference is the discussion on the unification of Korea and the cessation of war in Indochina—it will be revealed, and is already being revealed, that the core of the issue actually lies in the acceptance of changes, that is, in closing eyes in front of the reality in the Far East.' See Vlado Teslić, "Dalekoistočni problem i Ženevska konferencija," *Borba*, 20.04.1954., p.3.

³⁰⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, "„Snežni čovek“ u očima Baj Sina," *Borba*, 16.02.1958., p.4.

³⁰⁵ Kim, "The View and Understanding of Yugoslavia on the Korean War: An Analysis through Illustrations," p.47.

³⁰⁶ Dušan Timotijević, "Stvaranje ratne psihoze i borba za mir," *Međunarodna politika*, 05.07.1950., No.3, pp.7-9, as quoted in Kim, "The View and Understanding of Yugoslavia on the Korean War: An Analysis through Illustrations," p.51.

³⁰⁷ Samuel F. Wells Jr., *Fearing the Worst: How Korea Transformed the Cold War*, Woodrow Wilson Center Series, New York: Columbia University Press, 2020, pp.487-488.

³⁰⁸ Kim, "The View and Understanding of Yugoslavia on the Korean War: An Analysis through Illustrations," p.47.

This chapter's overview of how Yugoslavia responded and narrated the Korean War also showed just how intimately and personally Yugoslavs had experienced it. This is evident in Bebler's 1950 confrontation with Wu Xiuquan, the PRC's delegate to the U.N. in New York (and later the first Chinese ambassador to Yugoslavia) during a discussion on China's involvement in the Korean War. Bebler reportedly said that 'by involving itself in [the] Korean War the "government of PR China participated, and is still actively participating in an aggressive Soviet campaign against *my* country.'"³⁰⁹ While at the U.N., his 'main concern was resistance against the pressure of the USSR' hence why he read the Chinese participation in the Korean War as a direct attack on Yugoslavia.³¹⁰ This chapter also presented how the Korean War provided the Yugoslavs a practical example of Soviet imperialism and aided their efforts to conceptually separate socialist ideology from the USSR. The Korean War had also cemented the role of Yugoslav correspondents abroad as truth-bringers. Their firsthand accounts were taken as authoritative and more trustworthy than those of foreign press agencies. This aligned with Yugoslav self-managing socialism and a push for self-reliance.

Levi's writings and those of other renowned journalists were seen as relevant to the general public. The Slovenian translations of his 1953 book (divided into two) were part of a *Books for Everyone* series and framed as works of 'one of our most popular and capable journalists' reporting 'about the main political problems of the most troubled part of the world today.'³¹¹ By making the Korean War part of the Yugoslav daily life and integrating it in local narratives and meaning-making processes, the Korean War helped to frame the Cold War and explain how the world worked. Here, the Cold War became more than a political construction, but also a symbol or an imaginary through which the state could 'restore and maintain order and harmony at home.'³¹² Ultimately, this chapter's main contribution is to reposition the Korean War as a pivotal event in the shaping of Yugoslav historiography.

³⁰⁹ As quoted in Stopić et al., "Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951," p.8. Emphasis was added.

³¹⁰ Aleš Bebler, *Kako sam hitao—sećanja*, Belgrade: NIRO »Četvrti jul«, 1982, p.257.

³¹¹ The first dealt solely with Korea and was published immediately in 1953 and the second was about the rest of Levi's trip across Asia and published a year later. Jaša Levi, *Jugoslovan v Koreji: reportaže jugoslovanskega novinarja s poti po Koreji*, transl. Franc Šrimf, Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1953 and Jaša Levi: *S poti po Aziji (knjiga za vsakogar)*, transl. Dušan Mevlja, Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1954, p.3. See also Veličković et al., *Katalog knjiga na jezicima jugoslovenskih naroda: 1868-1972 - 6*, pp.538-539.

³¹² Masuda, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World*, p.8.

Chapter 4: Toward Non-Alignment

The Korean War turned Yugoslavia toward the countries beyond Europe and the U.S.³¹³ It made Belgrade acutely aware of Asian events and their importance for European security and stability. It also inadvertently laid a basis for Yugoslav cooperation with India and Egypt—all three countries were elected non-permanent U.N. Security Council members for 1950-1951.³¹⁴ In the early 1950s, Yugoslav engagement with Asia progressively deepened. With virtually no diplomatic presence in East Asia at the time, Yugoslav officials tried to assist in resolving the Korean War at the U.N. and take proactive steps elsewhere. One of the first Europe-Asia initiatives they started was the 1951 Zagreb Conference of Asian and European Socialists, where they discussed potential solutions to the Korean question, albeit unsuccessfully.³¹⁵ Yugoslavia opened an Embassy in New Delhi in 1950 and started official diplomatic relations with Burma in 1951, opening an Embassy in Rangoon in 1952.³¹⁶ The latter became ‘an observation post’ from where Yugoslav diplomats could gather information and analyze Asian politics, with a focus on China, India, and Vietnam.³¹⁷ The same is true for the Diplomatic Mission of Yugoslavia opened in Tokyo in late 1952. The reports of the Head of Mission, Maksimilijan (Maks) Baće, show that their interest spanned beyond Japan to cover the entire East Asian region.³¹⁸ Tokyo was a novel and necessary observation post for this part of Asia. In January 1953, Aleš Bebler and Milovan Đilas attended the Asian Socialist Conference (ASC) in Rangoon as delegates of the ‘fraternal’ CPY, forging closer ties with Asian socialist parties.³¹⁹ Yugoslavs partook in other ASC events in the following years.³²⁰ Yugoslavia also assisted Burma in 1952-1954 by sending weapons for their fight against the Karen rebels and,

³¹³ Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.33; Kim, “The View and Understanding of Yugoslavia on the Korean War: An Analysis through Illustrations,” p.54; Čavoški, “Jugoslavija i Azija (1947-1953),” p.533.

³¹⁴ In his memoir, Bebler described the Korean War as making the three delegations ‘over time, closer and friendlier’ with one another. Bebler, *Kako sam hitao—sećanja*, p.254.

³¹⁵ Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.34; Aleksandar Životić and Jovan Čavoški, “On the Road to Belgrade: Yugoslavia, Third World Neutrals, and the Evolution of Global Non-Alignment, 1954-1961,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol.18, No.4, 2016, p.80.

³¹⁶ Jovan Čavoški, “Ruka pružena preko sveta: jugoslovenska podrška Burmi u borbi protiv spoljne agresije 1951-1954,” *Tokovi istorije*, Vol.2, 2018, p.145 and p.147. Please note that any reference to Burma or Rangoon in this thesis is strictly historical.

³¹⁷ Čavoški, “Jugoslavija i Azija (1947-1953),” p.539.

³¹⁸ Baće sends monthly reports covering the situation in Korea, the Soviet and Chinese approaches to Japan, Japanese internal anti-Americanism, and various trade and political entanglements in the region. He does this in response to Josip Derđa’s instructions, sent via an encrypted letter to Tokyo, stating that for Yugoslavia, ‘external-political problems of Japan and the Far East’ would be of ‘a particular interest.’ The list he supplies includes: Japan-the U.S. (government’s attitude towards and/or opposition to the U.S.); Japan-Asia (USSR., China, Southeast Asia; ANZUS [Australian, New Zealand, and the U.S. pact], and Nehru’s Asian politics); Japan-the U.K. (specifically British politics in Asia); Japan-Europe (incl. NATO and the European Defense Community); and Japanese economy (foreign trade, the link between its economy and foreign policy, etc.). See Josip Derđa, “Šifrovano pismo,” 31.01.1953, Belgrade, DASMIP, PA, 1953-43, 41251; and Baće’s reports, such as, among others Maks Baće, “Neki podaci o unutrašnjem i spoljno-političkom životu Japana,” 15.06.1953, Tokyo, DASMIP, PA, 1953-43, 48586, Doc.No.124 or Maks Baće, “Pregled podataka, misljenja i komentara o Koreji,” 26.06.1953, Tokyo, DASMIP, PA, 1953-43, 48585, Doc.No.130.

³¹⁹ Jovan Čavoški, “Ideološki prijatelj iz daleka: Jugoslavija i Azijska socijalistička konferencija,” *Istorija 20. Veka*, Vol.1, 2019, pp.139-160.

³²⁰ Timotijević partook in some as well, while in Asia as Borba’s correspondent. See Kosta Timotijević, “Razrađuju se preporuke Birou Aziske socijalističke konferencije,” *Borba*, 27.05.1954., p.3.

in particular, scattered Chinese nationalist troops (KMT).³²¹ Within a few short years, Yugoslavia was actively partaking in Asian affairs through political, ideological, and even military means. From the Korean War onward, the story of Yugoslav relations with East Asia and the region more broadly was inextricably linked to the development of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and the Yugoslav non-aligned identity.

4.1. Engaging the Cold War: NAM and the Imperialist Spheres of Influence

The Non-Aligned Movement officially began in 1961 during the Belgrade Conference.³²² There were 25 participating and three observing countries, as well as 40 delegations of ideologically left-leaning or liberation movements.³²³ The conference's main aim was to collectively condemn the Cold War political environment (i.e., the superpowers) and issue an appeal for peace—which they both did.³²⁴ The Belgrade Conference was important politically for Yugoslavia but it was also a moment that centered and affirmed Yugoslavia in a way never experienced before. The New York Times reported, 'The Yugoslavs, a proud people, appear elated at their capital's role as an international center.'³²⁵ The media frenzy accompanying this six-day-long event contributed to a sense of internationalism and cosmopolitanism in the country. Tanjug stated that it alone 'emitted for six days of the Belgrade conference's duration, over 900,000 words, that is, over 3,000 typed text pages in all parts of the globe.'³²⁶ Correspondents from all participating and many non-participating countries covered the conference, totaling 1,100 journalists on the ground. All major press and radio agencies were present, such as the Big Four, TASS, different American radio companies, and Radio Tokyo.³²⁷ This data, gathered by Tanjug, evidenced the success of the conference and the global interest in non-bloc states and their initiatives, including a spreading sense of a new Yugoslav position in the world. The efforts to arrive at this moment were long in

³²¹ For a fascinating account of this episode in Yugoslav-Burmese relations, see Čavoški, "Ruka pružena preko sveta: jugoslovenska podrška Burmi u borbi protiv spoljne agresije 1951-1954," pp.143-176.

³²² The Belgrade Conference was originally referred to as the 'non-bloc conference.' When Jawaharlal Nehru coined the term Non-Alignment in Colombo during a 28 April 1954 speech, Yugoslavia referred to its third-way politics as non-engagement. Tito apparently first used this term in a speech at the Rangoon University in January 1955. Other countries preferred other terms, such as neutrals or positive neutrality, among others. The official name Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was included in formal documents only in 1975, even though in international papers, such as The New York Times, the Belgrade Conference in 1961 was already called the conference of the Non-Aligned. See Paul Hofmann, "Conference Is a Triumph for Tito And a Paradise for Cameramen," *The New York Times*, 02.09.1961., p.2; "Text of the Final Declaration of the Belgrade Conference of Nonaligned Countries," *The New York Times*, 07.09.1961., p.8; Pawan Mathur, "The Non-Aligned Movement and The United Nations: Reform of the United Nations Security Council," *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, Vol.20, No.2, 2016, p.13; Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, p.171. For information about non-engagement term and Rangoon, see "Boža Rafajlović: Prva zamisao o nesvrstavanju," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.119.

³²³ Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, p.56.

³²⁴ Valuable accounts about the 1961 Belgrade Conference through the lens of journalists are gathered in Tanjug's 50th Jubilee book. See especially the testimony about the two-time panic in Tanjug's 'Hamlet basement' "Boža Rafajlović: Hamlet u podrumu," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, pp.121-122 or entertaining moments recorded in "Živorad Vučić: Ko bez snimka, ko bez džepa," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.123.

³²⁵ Paul Hofmann, "Conference Is a Triumph for Tito And a Paradise for Cameramen," *The New York Times*, 02.09.1961., p.2

³²⁶ "Rad domaćih i stranih novinara," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.123.

³²⁷ Ibid.

the making and not just in Yugoslavia, but across the globe. Indeed, for this reason, many scholars consider the famous Bandung Conference to be the birthplace of NAM.³²⁸

In 1955, six African and 23 Asian decolonized nations gathered in Bandung, Indonesia.³²⁹ They discussed ‘the risk of war between the great powers and the persistence of colonialism’ as well as ‘a well-founded fear’ that in the event of a conflict between the superpowers, smaller countries ‘would become theatres of conflict, regardless of how remote they were from the main belligerents.’³³⁰ Indonesian President Sukarno noted in his opening speech on 18 April that while African and Asian nations had little international reach and power, they still had the means of influencing global politics.

We can inject the voice of reason into world affairs. We can mobilize all the spiritual, all the moral, all the political strength of Asia and Africa on the side of peace.³³¹

Nine days later, Tito told Radio Belgrade that Bandung was ‘completely in harmony with our conceptions’ of the world.³³² Yugoslav journalists Jože Smole and Jurij Gustinčić were at Bandung and, with their reports, confirmed for the government in Belgrade that this Afro-Asian Conference showed ‘anti-bloc politics’ was feasible.³³³ Bandung provided evidence of global dissatisfaction

³²⁸ Some scholars see the Yugoslav championing of NAM as an appropriation of Bandung and evidence of Belgrade’s ‘pragmatism and opportunism’ instead of solidarity. Given the differences between the two in their statements, scope, and goals, other scholars debunked such conclusions. Bandung was incredibly influential but not necessarily as a direct predecessor of NAM. In broad strokes, their stances on the Cold War binary and the rights of the decolonizing world aligned, but in many other questions, they differed. One example is Bandung’s focus on bi-continentalism and Afro-Asianism (‘the expression of a non-Western, non-white identity’), while NAM was more inclusive. In the early 1960s, Yugoslavia and India on one side and China on the other competed for influence in the Third World through the ideals of NAM and (Second) Bandung as two different, opposing concepts. This reflected the complex political relations of Yugoslavia and India with China at this time, as well as the fundamental differences between NAM and Bandung. For an extensive comparison between the two, see Peter Willetts, “The Foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement: The Trouble with History Is That It Is All in the Past,” in Paul Stubbs (ed), *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Imaginaries*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2023, pp.59-83. For scholars arguing Yugoslavs appropriated Bandung, see Subotić and Vucetic, “Performing solidarity: whiteness and status-seeking in the non-aligned world,” p.724. For more information about the Bandung Belgrade competition in the 1960s, see Jovan Čavoški, “Drugi Beograd ili drugi Bandung? Jugoslavija i borba za prevlast unutar Trećeg sveta (1962-1965),” *Tokovi istorije*, Vol.2, 2021, pp.87-117. As an additional resource, see Jeffrey James Byrne, “Beyond Continents, Colours, and the Cold War: Yugoslavia, Algeria, and the Struggle for Non-Alignment,” *The International History Review*, Vol.37, No.5, 2015, pp.912-932.

³²⁹ Willetts, “The Foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement: The Trouble with History Is That It Is All in the Past,” p.60.

³³⁰ Donald Greenlees, *The Origins of Nonalignment: Great Power Competition and Indonesian Foreign Policy 1945-1965*, Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 2018, p.113.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² As quoted in Subotić and Vucetic, “Performing solidarity: whiteness and status-seeking in the non-aligned world,” p.723 and mentioned in Stubbs, “Introduction: Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Contradictions and Contestations,” p.5.

³³³ Many scholars make a mishap that Smole and Gustinčić were official diplomats of Yugoslavia in Bandung. Though Smole had political and diplomatic roles later in life, in 1955, the two men served as journalists. Even so, the notion that Yugoslavia was officially represented at Bandung has become a historical myth. Even Jovanka Broz, Tito’s wife, is reported to have made this mistake. See Stubbs, “Introduction: Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Contradictions and Contestations,” pp.7-8; Subotić and Vucetic, “Performing solidarity: whiteness and status-seeking

with the superpower conflict and the spheres of influence practice. It also opened a space for diplomacy without the great powers at the table.³³⁴ For a state already actively choosing (and in some ways benefiting from) a 'marginal position between the East and West,' confluence with the attitudes expressed at Bandung ushered hope.³³⁵ Yugoslavia would not be alone.

Yugoslavs were already forming close bonds with governments in India and Burma and attending different Asian events related to socialism since the Korean War. Tito himself made his first official trip to these two countries in late 1954 and early 1955, stopping also in Egypt on his return journey.³³⁶ Boža Rafajlović, a journalist accompanying Tito on this trip, records Tito's call for a journalistic 'contribution' to the new Yugoslav foreign policy, specifically to generate a tremendous amount of articles about these countries.³³⁷ In order to facilitate a proper bonding of Yugoslavs and to them relatively unknown countries, more information needed to be made available. This led Rafajlović to suggest that this particular trip seeded the idea for NAM.³³⁸ These increasingly close relations solidified in July 1956 with the Brioni Declaration of Tito, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the President of Egypt, and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. This Declaration provided 'the doctrinal foundations of the evolving worldwide movement' that would eventually evolve into NAM.³³⁹ The Yugoslavia–India–Egypt tripartite partnership was then galvanized during the Suez Crisis in 1956. The three countries cooperated closely in the U.N. to resolve the issue, and even enjoyed the backing of the U.S. and the Soviet Union.³⁴⁰

Yugoslavia's new reputation on the international stage allowed further connections to other Asian and African countries. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Tito's official trips to the two continents aided in forming a more direct and friendly relationship, laying the foundations for the institutionalization of NAM.³⁴¹ In 1960, when relations between the superpowers significantly deteriorated after the American U2 spy plane was shot down over Soviet territories, Tito and the Yugoslavs had forged enough trust with the decolonized world that a joint action for peace was feasible.³⁴² The 15th U.N. General Assembly, starting in late September 1960, was their first podium. In New York, Tito met with Nasser, Nehru, Sukarno, and Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), the leaders known at the time as the 'neutrals.'³⁴³ The five proposed a resolution aimed at de-escalating tensions. Though their initiative did not pass, the act itself was considered a success. It forced far more powerful states 'to listen to their grievances and take their objections into serious

in the non-aligned world," p.723, note 2; cf. Wright, "“Are there Racists in Yugoslavia?” Debating Racism and Anti-blackness in Socialist Yugoslavia," p.428, note 42.

³³⁴ Willetts, "The Foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement: The Trouble with History Is That It Is All in the Past," p.63.

³³⁵ Tvrtko Jakovina, "“Non-Alignment is not for Socialism”. Yugoslav Non-Alignment during Détente," in Petra Mayrhofer and Oliver Rathkolb (eds.), *Diplomacy in Southeastern Europe: Interactions during Détente*, Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2022, p.34.

³³⁶ This trip was recorded by journalist Jože Smole in *Tito u Aziji*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1955.

³³⁷ "Boža Rafajlović: Prva zamisao o nesvrstavanju," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.119.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Životić and Čavoški, "On the Road to Belgrade: Yugoslavia, Third World Neutrals, and the Evolution of Global Non-Alignment, 1954-1961," p.87.

³⁴⁰ Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, p.46.

³⁴¹ From December 1958 to March 1959, Tito visited Indonesia, Burma, India, Ceylon, Ethiopia, and Sudan, with a lengthier stop in Egypt. In February to April 1961, he visited eight West and North African countries.

³⁴² Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, p.47.

³⁴³ Jack Raymond, "Tito Presses Bid for Neutral Bloc," *The New York Times*, 27.09.1960, p.19.

consideration.’³⁴⁴ It was also ‘the first joint action of the non-aligned.’³⁴⁵ When Tito returned to Yugoslavia, large crowds awaited at Belgrade’s Marx and Engels Square to welcome him. Borba’s former China correspondent, Đorđe Bogojević, described the scene as full of elation and pride.³⁴⁶ The cloth banners read, ‘Peace—a demand of all people of the world’ and ‘We greet Tito, the fighter for peace and socialism.’³⁴⁷ Tito’s image was transformed. From protecting and fighting for Yugoslavia, he was now a humanist fighting for the rights of all peoples of the world.

At this time, Bebler was in Tokyo for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Conference, which overlapped with the first weeks of the U.N. General Assembly. He reported that, at first, the IPU Conference reflected the East-West division of the world, but ‘over time, that topic was exhausted, so the voice of reason came more clearly to the fore.’³⁴⁸ This sobering ‘voice of reason’ was made of the ‘forces of reconciliation, the forces of the third current, the current of non-engagement or, how it is often said, the non-aligned, in the [IP] Union itself, and the advent of the same current in the United Nations.’³⁴⁹ This group of (as Yugoslavs called them) progressive, peace-loving nations were now standing together against what they perceived as the irrational behavior of the U.S. and the USSR, the arms race, and anything destabilizing global security.³⁵⁰ In 1960, this loose identity based on a sense of moral righteousness, togetherness, and radical new anti-imperialist politics became the cornerstone of efforts to formally institutionalize the alliance a year later at the Belgrade Conference.

Non-Alignment, as an organized movement, emerged in response to Cold War pressures, but the ideas that shaped it had been developing for decades.³⁵¹ Edvard Kardelj, who theorized Yugoslav self-managing socialism, discussed non-alignment as part of a historical continuum of global resistance to the domination of a powerful few. This is how he explains it in the mid-1970s, that is, the height of NAM:

It is about the most widely present aspiration of the people and their active struggle to achieve complete national freedom, to ensure the right to develop according to their own choice, not be or cease to be an economic or political appendage of the great world powers, that is, the centers of military, political, and economic power, to secure for themselves in that process [independence] from external domination and exploitation and be able to influence the development of international relations from those positions [of independence]. In other words, those and such tendencies, which today are some of the bases of Non-Aligned politics, *were not only consequences of but also the cause and driving force* of how the

³⁴⁴ Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, p.48.

³⁴⁵ Willetts, “The Foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement: The Trouble with History Is That It Is All in the Past,” p.68.

³⁴⁶ Đorđe Bogojević, “Radosni i ponosni pozdrav Beograda,” *Borba*, 13.10.1960., p.3.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Aleš Bebler, “Susret u Tokiju i sa Tokiom,” *Borba*, 16.11.1960., p.3.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Contemporary historians often disagree on the beginnings of NAM. This is a byproduct of different methodologies. Some look at it from the perspective of official documents, such as joint declarations, and some from the origins of ideas through which NAM emerged and was shaped into a movement and an identity over the years.

Second World War developed. In this sense, the Non-Alignment Movement always meant more than just the politics of opposing the bloc division of the world, and [something] even more than [the politics of sheer] neutrality [...].³⁵²

For Kardelj, World War II was an essential part of Non-Alignment. This period was, at the same time, the most impactful for the formation of communist Yugoslavia. Yugoslav resistance and victory in the Second World War became a critical component in Belgrade's shared narrative with Asian allies as an experience compatible, if not comparable, to their anti-colonial revolutions. Josip Đerđa, the first Yugoslav ambassador to India (1950-1951) is credited with advising Belgrade to seek allies in the decolonized world, writing about this potential connection for the *Borba* newspaper under a pseudonym.³⁵³ In 'The End of Colonialism in Asia' article, Đerđa spoke in broad terms about the historical evolution of anti-colonial movements in Asia and the key events that shaped them.³⁵⁴ Noting the First World War and the interwar period, he also mentions the October Revolution and socialist movements that left 'an instructive and interesting stamp on the entire development of the anti-colonial struggle in Asia.'³⁵⁵ The final blow to the colonial enterprise, as Đerđa saw it, was in the aftermath of the Second World War, with anti-colonial movements across Asia achieving independence for their countries. Underlining that decolonization was far from over, with many territories (such as Hong Kong) under colonial rule, he warned that colonial systems depend on extreme 'unequal relations' and, in the wake of worldwide liberation movements, represent 'a continued source of danger for [world] peace.'³⁵⁶ Đerđa's articles from the early 1950s show how Asian anti-colonialism was seen in Yugoslavia as entirely compatible with socialism and, in its essence, 'imbued with socialist and pro-socialist elements.'³⁵⁷

This reflected official Belgrade's understanding of decolonization as an avenue for mutual understanding and camaraderie with many newly independent Asian countries. In effect, Yugoslavs linked the Cold War bloc politics to the colonial project and the concept of 'the spheres of influence.' One of the most interesting writings on this topic was Vladimir Dedijer's "The Evolution of the Concept of Spheres of Influence," published in the *Spheres of Influence and the Third World* book in 1973.³⁵⁸ Dedijer explains that the term, rooted in the colonial project, was based on

³⁵² Edvard Kardelj, *Istorijski koreni nesvrstavanja, Marksističke studije*, Belgrade: Komunist, 1975, p.6. Emphasis was added.

³⁵³ His penname was Đorđe Jerković, as recorded in Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.36, note 50. For more information about Đerđa's role in the establishment of Non-Alignment, see Paul Stubbs, "Introduction: Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Contradictions and Contestations," p.7. It is also valuable to mention that Đerđa coordinated the establishment of the Yugoslav Mission in Tokyo in 1952-1953 and was the point of contact for the Japanese charge d'affaires ad interim in Belgrade, Nakamura. See, for example, Josip Đerđa, "Zabeleška o razgovoru sa japanskim otprvnikom [sic] poslova, Nakamurom, u DSIPu, 31.VII.1953.," 31.07.1953, Belgrade, DASMIP, PA, 1953-43, 410600, p.1.

³⁵⁴ Đorđe Jerković, "Kraj kolonijalizma u Aziji," *Borba*, 01.05.1952., p.6.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Đorđe Jerković, "O nekim problemima savremenog razvitka Azije," *Borba*, 18.05.1952., p.3.

³⁵⁸ It included papers of noted contemporaries, including one of the founders of postcolonial thought Edward W. Said, and the British Marxist Malcolm Caldwell. These individuals were all active with the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal – with Dedijer as its President – and the papers published in the said book were originally presented at the

the principle that some states are destined to be subjects of international relations and the other states and nations mere objects whose destinies are decided by great powers without their participation in these decisions and against their basic interests.³⁵⁹

Having agency in international affairs was a fundamental premise of NAM. In Dedijer's historical and legal analysis of the concept's evolution (referencing mostly the Yugoslav International Law expert and member of the United Nations International Law Commission, Milan Bartoš), he argues that the forces of imperialism act from the shadows through 'the means of secret, black diplomacy, hiding its content not only from the other great powers but often from their own parliaments.'³⁶⁰ Imperial powers do this 'to solve all international issues among themselves, even those dealing with the future of small, but formally independent states' overpowering and subjugating them into obedience.³⁶¹ They enact this under the 'pretext for creating buffer states on the borders of great powers' and establishing (especially economic) 'pattern[s] of reliance.'³⁶² For Dedijer, the imperialists were 'the great Allied powers' of the West and the Soviet Union, whose World War II actions have shown a 'distinctive imperialist character' despite the fact that it was a socialist country.³⁶³ Moscow's subsequent actions toward Yugoslavia, interventions across Eastern Europe, and conflict with China are listed as simultaneous examples of both Soviet imperialism and socialist resistance to imperial subjugation.³⁶⁴ The U.S. is described as a state that took part in colonialism 'from its beginning.'³⁶⁵ In an overview of who the victims of imperial domination were, Dedijer mentions, among others, the Balkans and 'Indochina, Korea and China' and commends China and other anti-imperialist movements in Asia for their resistance against foreign domination.³⁶⁶ The progressive forces in the world, or NAM, are described as a moral counterweight to imperialism.³⁶⁷

The question of immorality and untrustworthiness of imperial powers dominate Yugoslav texts. Yugoslavs distrusted the West partially because of the tenets of their socialist ideology but much more so because of their experiences during the Second World War. High-ranking officials spent significant portions of their memoirs discussing how the West behaved toward Yugoslavia at this time. Allied forces supported the Chetniks (a monarchist army turned paramilitary) even when reports of their collaboration with fascists surfaced and, as Kardelj writes, the West focused 'on destroying the people's liberation movement and the influence of the Communist Party in

Bertrand Russell Centenary Symposium in Linz (Austria), in September of 1972. (Dedijer and Russell also knew each other personally.) These articles seemed to have been broadly sought after as the Editorial Board of *The Spokesman* noted that these papers were originally published in *Spokesman* journal (no.26/27) but that they 'have reprinted its contents in this [book] form in order to ensure that the continuous demand for these articles can be satisfied.' For more information, see Vladimir Dedijer, Bipan Chandra, Malcolm Caldwell, James F. Petras, H. Michael Erisman, Charles Mills, Edward W. Said, *Spheres of Influence and The Third World*, Nottingham: The Spokesman Books, 1973—especially the Acknowledgements, p.1 and p.7.

³⁵⁹ Dedijer, "The Evolution of the Concept of Spheres of Influence," p.3.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, p.3.

³⁶¹ Ibid, p.5.

³⁶² Ibid, p.13 and p.17.

³⁶³ Ibid, p.13.

³⁶⁴ Ibid, p.22.

³⁶⁵ Ibid, p.12.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, pp.14-16.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, p.3.

Yugoslavia, [rather] than the fight against Germans.³⁶⁸ The Yugoslavs were particularly pained by the fact that communist victories were often credited to Chetniks in the Western press.³⁶⁹ They did not shy away from discussing Soviet relations with the Third Reich and continued attempts by great powers to advance their interests and agendas despite the danger of the German regime.³⁷⁰ Even when Yugoslavs actively collaborated with the Allied forces, there was fear that, once the war finished, communist Yugoslavia would not be internationally recognized.³⁷¹

In the aftermath of a traumatizing Second World War, Yugoslavia also dealt with ‘pressure and economic blockage [...] first from Western, and then Eastern European countries,’ which cemented its distrust and anti-bloc, third-way politics.³⁷² The regime in Belgrade was aware of the ‘anti-communist hysteria’ in the West and calls for ‘throwing an atomic bomb on Belgrade.’³⁷³ Carol S. Lilly writes that ‘long after the war had ended some people still ran for cover when Yugoslav planes passed overhead,’ showcasing the internal fragility and anxieties.³⁷⁴ The intensity of Yugoslav ‘fear of imminent war’ with the U.S. and then the Soviets dominated the first half a decade after the Second World War ended.³⁷⁵ When Yugoslavia turned Westward in 1949, it continued to tread carefully. Belgrade closely followed U.S. anti-communism campaigns in the country and abroad, which graced the pages of Yugoslav newspapers.³⁷⁶ While it recognized the necessity of functional relations with the West, Belgrade wanted to remain independent. It also found ways to differentiate socialism (and thereby itself) from the Soviet Union by linking the latter to imperialism. Both superpowers were now branded imperialist and Yugoslavia stood in opposition to that as truly anti-imperialist.³⁷⁷

As evidence of its anti-imperialism and, more broadly, unique socialist identity, Yugoslavs leaned heavily into the legacy of the Second World War NOB (National Liberation Struggle). Newspapers were instrumental in this process as NOB remained a frequent topic for decades after the war. In one example of this, a 1957 *Vjesnik* article reads, ‘The liberation struggle is an eternal example of the indomitability and strength of our people.’³⁷⁸ Again, such narratives and partisan warfare

³⁶⁸ Kardelj, *Sećanja: Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944-1957*, p.29 and pp.35-36.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, p.36.

³⁷⁰ Leo Mates, *Nonalignment Theory and Current Policy*, Belgrade: The Institute of International Politics and Economics and New York: Oceana Publications, 1972, pp.18-20.

³⁷¹ Kardelj, *Sećanja: Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944-1957*, p.26.

³⁷² Ibid, p.15. Also see Antić, “The New Socialist Citizen and ‘Forgetting’ Authoritarianism: Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Revolution in Socialist Yugoslavia,” p.65.

³⁷³ As noted in Dimić, “Istoriografski putokazi: Istoriografsko nasleđe o spoljnoj politici Jugoslavije u Hladnom ratu,” p.27. Though I could not find additional substantiations of Dimić’s claim, other scholars have commented on the fear of the U.S. that went as far as anxieties ‘that America had invented a gas that would put the entire population of the country asleep for 24 hours.’ In this period, Yugoslavia was dealing with ‘a virtual epidemic of war neurosis’ of former partisan fighters, many of whom were ‘given important political responsibilities’ after the war. What the literature suggests is that the state in which Yugoslavia found itself in the 1945-1950 period was riddled by not just political instabilities but serious collective suffering. See Lilly, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953*, p.31 and Antić, “The New Socialist Citizen and ‘Forgetting’ Authoritarianism: Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Revolution in Socialist Yugoslavia,” pp.71-72.

³⁷⁴ Lilly, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953*, p.31.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ See, for example, Jaša Levi, “Makartijeve lomače,” *Borba*, 05.07.1953., p.4.

³⁷⁷ Dimić, for example, finds that Yugoslavia saw itself as ‘the most consistent antiimperialist exponent toward the West.’ See Dimić, “Istoriografski putokazi: Istoriografsko nasleđe o spoljnoj politici Jugoslavije u Hladnom ratu,” p.27.

³⁷⁸ “Oslobodilačka borba vječan je primjer nesalomljivosti i snage našeg naroda,” *Vjesnik*, 05.07.1957., p.1.

against fascism were read as symbolically comparable to anti-colonial movements.³⁷⁹ Yugoslavs also continuously referred to themselves as a former semi-colony.³⁸⁰ Both narratives served to frame Yugoslav historical experiences but also to connect them with decolonizing nations across the world on the basis of mutual solidarity and shared narratives. Solidarity formed the core of Yugoslav theorization of both self-managing socialism and Non-Alignment.³⁸¹ From the Yugoslav point of view, NAM was a body of states in solidarity with one another on issues related to Cold War spheres of influence and security, decolonization and anti-imperialism, and broader egalitarianism in world politics. These elements and narratives concerning their evolution and coherence of the Yugoslav Non-Aligned politics can all be found in firsthand accounts of East Asia from the 1950s.

4.2. Projecting Yugoslav Hopes Abroad: For a Third Way in East Asia

4.2.1. *Cheering for a Third Korea: A Freedom from the Superpowers*

On the cover of *Borba*'s 8 January 1952 issue was Levi's article 'In the "Kimchi-express" from Seoul to Busan.'³⁸² It made the front page for its political implications. The article opens descriptively. Levi begins his story on the 'second-class wagon no.85' which he shared with his fellow passengers—a Canadian and two Korean men, one of whom was a member of the South Korean Army. The soldier was described as irrational, ranting about armed civilians who attacked the Seoul-Busan train to steal food and weaponry. Contextualizing the attacks, Levi informs the readers that it was unclear whether this partisan-like behavior of the rebel civilians was an attempt to help the North or express resistance to the South. He then streamlines the narrative with a subsection, 'For a third Korea.'³⁸³ The Canadian man is depicted as disinterested and the South Korean soldier as an increasingly hateful and irrational persona (both a symbolic representation of Levi's reading of their countries). With this build-up, he introduces the other Korean passenger, a quiet civilian, who approached him in the train hallway and, 'as he leaned against the window, started a long monologue.'³⁸⁴

You see me here, on this side—me, who was over there until ten months ago, above the [38th] parallel, even though I realized much earlier that my place is not there. I waited for an opportunity to run across, and I did when, in March, they were evacuating Seoul for the last time. I didn't even cross, actually, but simply stayed in the city. Don't think I did so because I love Syngman Rhee more than Kim Il Sung! No. No Korean democrat will approve of the regime in

³⁷⁹ Stubbs, "Introduction: Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Contradictions and Contestations," p.5.

³⁸⁰ While scholars like Wright question such interpretations, others defend it, showcasing different ways Yugoslavia experienced foreign domination militarily and economically. See Wright, "'Are there Racists in Yugoslavia?'" Debating Racism and Anti-blackness in Socialist Yugoslavia," p.429. Cf. Bojana Videkanić, "Nonaligned Modernism: Yugoslav Culture, Nonaligned Cultural Diplomacy, and Transnational Solidarity," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.49, No.3, 2021, p.516, note 2.

³⁸¹ Edvard Kardelj, *Samoupravljanje i društvena svojina*, 2nd Edition, Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1979, pp.30-31 and pp.43-44; *Pravci razvoja političkog sistema socijalističkog samoupravljanja*, 2nd Edition, Belgrade: Komunist, 1978, p.133; Istorijski koreni nesvrstavanja, p.60.

³⁸² Jakov Levi, "U „Kimči-ekspresu“ od Seula do Fusana," *Borba*, 08.01.1952., p.1.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

Busan, the same way they will not approve of the regime in Pyongyang.

The war for us is loss of life and destruction. It's suicide. Are we going to be uniting our graves? After all, we certainly stand for a union [of Koreas], [and] that is the [main] question of our lives—but we would never agree for two parts of Korea to be connected by the actions of others' satellites. I tell you: we now have a choice between two Koreas, and most of us have chosen a side against the one that is the aggressor [North Korea]. But, if you ask me if I am for one or the other Korea, I will reply: I am for a third one, the independent and Korean one.³⁸⁵

The monologue continues for a few more lines, revolving around the claim that Koreans want a third way out. The narrative strikingly aligned with the Yugoslav perception of the world at the time. Levi, in fact, admitted in his memoirs to fabricating entire conversations in his journalistic reports when he believed his 'cause to be right.'³⁸⁶ While this casts doubt over his entire journalistic opus, Levi made specific admissions about his *Encounters in Asia* book.

I described the truth of what my critical eyes saw in Southeast Asia as graphically as I knew how to, but, unfortunately, the conversations were either secondhand or fictional. I can attest to the utter misery of reporting from countries whose languages one neither speaks nor understands. The eyes, though, are a trusty witness.³⁸⁷

Mentioning Southeast Asia was a misnomer for several reasons.³⁸⁸ First, his book primarily dealt with Korea and Japan, and second, his admission was part of a chapter titled 'An Asian Panorama,' which examines his entire Asia trip in 1951-1952, from Korea and Japan to Pakistan. Interestingly, he even adds at some point that after Hong Kong, when he went to Southeast Asia, '[t]he rest of the trip home was a blur, condensed, quick and uncomfortable.'³⁸⁹ It is also relevant to mention that, out of 28 Borba articles, merely seven dealt with South and Southeast Asia combined. Levi's admissions, in any case, warrant that the authenticity of each quoted monologue and statement attributed to locals in his writings from Asia be questioned. And, especially so, when it comes across as a projection of Yugoslav and Levi's beliefs. The article's placement on the cover of Borba signals how firsthand accounts from East Asia served to solidify Yugoslav beliefs at the time.

Levi was not the first to advocate for a third Korea. In the early months of the Korean War, the press was full of Korea-related content. On 19 August 1950, a satirical newspaper Jež, published an article 'to help our readers orient themselves in the complex problems connected with Korea.'³⁹⁰ North Koreans, who 'like drinking vodka [while] cursing all the OTHER imperialists' were equated with Russians, and the South Koreans, who 'drink [...] Coca-Cola, they drive about in

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 43.

³⁸⁷ Ibid, Chapter 40.

³⁸⁸ He made the same mistake a few times in this memoir. Ibid, Chapter 39.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, Chapter 40.

³⁹⁰ Jež newspaper's original issue in Serbo-Croatian could not be found. The article's English translation can be found in CIA-RDP83-00415R006300190001-0 file, p.194.

Jeeps and go to the movies,' with Americans.³⁹¹ In stark opposition stood a '[c]entral Korea whose inhabitants indulge in fishing, growing rice—and dying from air attacks' whose opinions remain unknown 'because no one asks them for it.'³⁹² Given the nature of the paper, the article was full of ridicule, but the message was clear—there was a true Korea somewhere between the Soviet-backed North and the U.S.-backed South, being entirely ignored. All Korea-related articles in the Yugoslav press tended toward this same logic, and Levi's writings from the ground zero simply strengthened them. When the Korean War ended, so did hopes for a Third Korea, and with it any further Yugoslav writings about Korea(s) in the long 1950s.

4.2.2. *Looking for a Third Japan: Neutralism and the U.S.*

In the case of Japan, Yugoslavs eagerly discussed the possibility of its neutralism. Each year, they would publish articles predicting when and how Japan would free itself from Washington's grip.³⁹³ At the same time, they wrote extensively about the country's imperial past and militarism, and its implications for the future.³⁹⁴ The two were linked. Levi's initial reports from Japan painted a picture of a society awakening to its entanglement with global politics and searching for a solution moving forward.³⁹⁵ From there on, nearly every Yugoslav to visit Japan would comment on internal discussions on neutralism and how that could be achieved. By 1960, when Bebler followed the Japanese rightist and leftist circles analyzing this question, he weighed in and stated that for the Yugoslavs, '[neutralism] means a request for a greater and more independent role of Japan in the world.'³⁹⁶ It did not necessarily mean a complete rejection of its Western allies but a space in which Japan could choose its foreign politics without the U.S. influence.

From the outset, Yugoslav reporting on Japan was concerned with the interference of both superpowers in Japanese internal affairs. Similar to his writings on Korea, Levi's Japan articles dealt directly or indirectly with the Soviet Union. He detailed Moscow's maneuvers and highlighted that '[t]his is not the first time in history that Russia, i.e. the USSR in recent times, tries to use Japan for its diplomatic game and plans for penetration into Asia.'³⁹⁷ In one of his articles, he reported on the negative experiences of the Communist Party of Japan and the pressure it sustained from the Cominform and Moscow to 'reduce all its activities in line with a foreign government, going beyond interests of its own people.'³⁹⁸ This, again, served as an example mirroring Yugoslav experiences to showcase what happens when the Soviets have their way. Levi's primary objective was unveiling Soviet imperialism in East Asia, especially as he saw the Japanese 'like many other Asian people' as 'not entirely clear about the real aims of Soviet politics' but seduced by the Kremlin's propaganda.³⁹⁹ The fact that he, a Yugoslav correspondent, observed and disentangled Soviet actions subtly suggested that Yugoslavs could see the true nature of the Soviet

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Even from the 1951 Peace Agreement, they anticipated Japan 'to act as a strong and, mostly independent, power' from there on. See Đorđe Jerković, "Japan posle ratifikacije Ugovora o miru," *Borba*, 20.05.1952., p.3.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Jakov Levi, "Sindikati u Japanu i zamršena stvarnost zemlje i njenih ljudi," *Borba*, 23.02.1952., p.3.

³⁹⁶ Aleš Bebler, "Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost," *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

³⁹⁷ Jakov Levi, "Sovjetska politika ponovo uzima „kurs na Japan“," *Borba*, 10.02.1952., p.4.

³⁹⁸ Jakov Levi, "Linija KP Japana po moskovskom vetrokazu," *Borba*, 12.02.1952., p.5.

³⁹⁹ Jakov Levi, "Sovjetska politika ponovo uzima „kurs na Japan“," *Borba*, 10.02.1952., p.4. In a different article, he writes: 'In its expansion in Asia, the USSR is not only skillfully playing but also counting on others' weaknesses, attempting to use them to win over people who are unaware of the true character of its politics.' See Jakov Levi, "Linija KP Japana po moskovskom vetrokazu," *Borba*, 12.02.1952., p.5.

Union while others could not. Though Yugoslav experiential writings from the region acknowledged different foreign forces at work in Japan, the emphasis moved from the Soviets to the U.S. once the Korean War ended.⁴⁰⁰ This coincided with the Yugoslav rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

In mid-May 1954, Timotijević published an article titled 'Japan—an ally or Japan—a hireling,' arguing that Japan was now 'the actual center of conflict between [different] forces in the Far East.'⁴⁰¹ Having offered a brief overview of Japanese history, he focused on the Japanese 'urge' to lead its own, independent politics, separate from foreign powers. The Chinese, the Soviets, and the U.S. were influencing Cold War Japan, but the country's internal political polarization was 'primarily on the line of pro or anti-Americanism.'⁴⁰² Timotijević saw the 'American pressure' exerted on Japan as an attempt to convert this country 'into an American lieutenant for East Asia' thereby subjugating it entirely to its military agenda.⁴⁰³ Levi was the first to frame this issue through his interview with Takeo Muto, the President of Sōhyō (a Japanese confederation of syndicates) in 1952.⁴⁰⁴ He explained how the U.S. interference subjugated Japan and influenced not just its internal affairs but broader regional dynamics. 'A Battle for Japan' article, as Levi symbolically titled it, is restrained in open criticism of the U.S. but leaned into the angle of Washington's alleged political myopia:

For that, I return again to my notes from Tokyo in which, as the synthesis of all Japanese problems for me, was the question: can Japan be a reliable ally if that allyship is holding onto something that [Japan] considers a violation of its pride and rights? Or is it better to have in [Japan] a friend and always an ally based on the principles of the UN Charter?⁴⁰⁵

Levi grew more vocal in his book *Encounters in Asia* the following year. Through an example of a Japanese family and their internal discussions of current affairs, he quoted the father as saying that the U.S. 'needs to leave here' but also that the Soviets 'should not come' and how only 'then, everything would be all right.'⁴⁰⁶ He also used the opportunity to bring in the Yugoslav experience into the picture, as the morally righteous one, citing the father to have said:

We are not Titoists, nor do we want to be. We are only interested in how Tito created and maintains the independence of your country. That is what we need.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁰ Timotijević's articles in the 1953-1956 period rarely deal with the Soviet interference in Japan. He mentions their illegal 'diplomatic' activities in the country and covers the Soviet-Japanese negotiations over the South Sakhalin and Kuril Islands but does not devote it the attention nor fervor of argument as Levi. Over the years, others kept analyzing Japan-USSR relations and potentials for diplomatic ties (though they haven't visited the region firsthand). See Kosta Timotijević, "Teritorijalni spor u postojbini Ainu plemena i „podanika severnih bogova“," *Borba*, 05.08.1956., p.5 cf. B.L., "Japan i SSSR," *Borba*, 18.01.1956., p.3. Also see Šantić, *Japan*, pp.77-81.

⁴⁰¹ Kosta Timotijević, "Japan – saveznik ili Japan – najamnik," *Borba*, 17.05.1954., p.3.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ Jaša Levi, "Borba za Japan," *Borba*, 07.05.1952., p.3.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.75.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Japanese (and East Asian) affairs and their ability to navigate the Cold War milieu in pursuit of independence provided fertile examples for an external reaffirmation of Yugoslav foreign policy choices. It became a practice for those supplying articles or travelogues from abroad to tell the Yugoslav public of foreign support and admiration for its achievements.⁴⁰⁸ This simultaneously consolidated Yugoslav budding NAM identity and helped its nation-building efforts.

Returning to the Yugoslav writings about the U.S. in Japan, the main issue was the rearmament. Yugoslavs wrote quite often about Japanese former 'fanaticism' and 'myths' of invincibility, always concluding that, apart from some niche rightist parts of Japanese society, these ideals were mostly abandoned after the Second World War.⁴⁰⁹ Rearmament, however, under the pressure of foreign powers and Japanese rightists, represented a dangerous potential for Japan to return to its old, militant ways.⁴¹⁰ Timotijević explained that the U.S. was the force to blame for this development as they had 'imposed on Japan a "demilitarized" constitution' only to change policy when needing a military ally in the region.⁴¹¹ He added that 'the American occupation government, which gave themselves the task of teaching the Japanese their democracy,' was uncomfortable with just how well these ideas were accepted in Japan.⁴¹² He read their call for rearmament partly as 'fear that the Japanese democracy would turn into socialism or some similar "God forbid" [system of governance].'⁴¹³ This leaned into the U.S.'s anti-communism sentiments. In other articles, Timotijević covered the 1954 U.S. and Japan Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement and argued again that the U.S. was making out of Japan 'its armory in the Far East.'⁴¹⁴ This process did not come without its ups and downs. The U.S. pressured Japan to rearm faster while Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida asked for more funds and a large number of Japanese parliamentarians visited China.⁴¹⁵ In that moment, the U.S., which Timotijević continuously described as 'fickle' and led solely by self-interest, was on the verge of losing Japan to China or 'neutral politics.'⁴¹⁶ Timotijević's (wishful) reading of the situation was not necessarily correct but did center Japan as a 'gravitational center in the Asia-Pacific region' as far as Yugoslavia was concerned.⁴¹⁷

Yugoslav experiential writing on the U.S. in Japan covered three main topics: subjugation, rearmament, and protests. The last was consistently written about. On the one hand, the articles showed the importance of removing U.S. military presence from Japan for its people.⁴¹⁸ On the

⁴⁰⁸ It was also a practice to mention negative news about Yugoslavia found abroad and challenge or counter them. See Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.75 and "Hard Facts about Yugoslavia," *Reader's Digest*, 22.11.1951. cf. Q. Reynolds, "Yugoslavia Stands Resolute," *Reader's Digest*, 01.1951., p.105, as referenced in Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War*, p.190.

⁴⁰⁹ Levi cautioned in his articles that Japan's 'former ideologues' still 'spread their ideas' and that this is not harmless. See Jakov Levi, "Hirošima – novi grad na mestu gde je 1945 godine bila pustoš," *Borba*, 27.01.1952., p.5. Timotijević was concerned about this, as well. See Kosta Timotijević, "Oko japanskog naoružanja," *Borba*, 12.07.1953., p.4.

⁴¹⁰ Jakov Levi, "Hirošima – novi grad na mestu gde je 1945 godine bila pustoš," *Borba*, 27.01.1952., p.5.

⁴¹¹ Kosta Timotijević, "Nova dijeta za Dijetu," *Borba*, 17.06.1953., p.4.

⁴¹² Kosta Timotijević, "Oko japanskog naoružanja," *Borba*, 12.07.1953., p.4.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Kosta Timotijević, "MSA i član deveti japanskog ustava," *Borba*, 24.05.1954., p.3.

⁴¹⁵ Kosta Timotijević, "Jošida u Vašingtonu – gledan iz Tokija," *Borba*, 10.11.1954., p.3 and Kosta Timotijević, "Hodočašće, ekskurzija ili pečalba," *Borba*, 07.11.1954., p.4.

⁴¹⁶ Kosta Timotijević, "Oko japanskog naoružanja," *Borba*, 12.07.1953., p.4 and Kosta Timotijević, "Hodočašće, ekskurzija ili pečalba," *Borba*, 07.11.1954., p.4.

⁴¹⁷ Kosta Timotijević, "Hodočašće, ekskurzija ili pečalba," *Borba*, 07.11.1954., p.4.

⁴¹⁸ Timotijević reported on, for example, villagers protesting the U.S. military exercises on their soil, as it harmed local farming and lifestyle. See Kosta Timotijević, "Nova dijeta za Dijetu," *Borba*, 17.06.1953., p.4.

other, they captured the intertwined anti-Americanism and hopes of remaining demilitarized. Levi read the protests as anti-white, anti-American, and part of the global anti-colonial movement (failing to differentiate between a military occupation and colonialism).⁴¹⁹ In 1960, Bebler saw Anpo protests as a continued battle of Japan against the U.S. subjugation.⁴²⁰ Dragutin Šolajić regarded it as ‘[t]he most difficult confrontation, without precedent, in the political history of Japan’ that ultimately led to a collective resignation of the ruling government.⁴²¹ Yugoslav general sentiments about this had not changed throughout the decade. Each protest simply served to reaffirm the struggle of the broader Japanese public against the U.S. and their collective sense of national humiliation.⁴²² Hiroshima and Nagasaki were also frequently alluded to when discussing the U.S. in this context.⁴²³

Nearly all Yugoslavs visiting Japan took the time to visit Hiroshima and convey the reality on the ground to the Yugoslav public.⁴²⁴ Curiosity about the two cities and the aftermath of atomic weapons existed in Yugoslavia already.⁴²⁵ Yet it was the U.S. hydrogen bomb test near Bikini Island in March 1954 that fueled interest in the U.S.’ continued presence in Japan.⁴²⁶ The test harmed several Japanese fishermen and contaminated fish stocks.⁴²⁷ The U.S. raced to prevent anyone (especially Soviets) from obtaining the ‘precious dust’ that could reveal data on the hydrogen bomb.⁴²⁸ The Yugoslavs read the U.S. reaction and subsequent containment of the issue as immoral and unfair.⁴²⁹ Timotijević added that with this event, it seemed as if the Japanese were ‘fated to be atomic victims’ and U.S. Americans the perpetrators.⁴³⁰ In the following months, Timotijević reported on all news pertaining to the incident.⁴³¹ He sympathized with the Japanese and sharpened his criticism of the U.S. in a way that would appeal to the Yugoslav sensibilities. One of the fishermen who died was a working-class man, ‘whose only intention was to live till retirement and then dedicate himself to [being] a florist.’⁴³² He also cited a letter allegedly penned by an unnamed U.S. person who wrote that the Japanese

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, p.66.

⁴²⁰ Aleš Bebler, “Susret u Tokiju i sa Tokiom,” *Borba*, 16.11.1960., p.3.

⁴²¹ Dragutin Šolajić, *Stogodišnji Japan*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1968, pp.50-51. *Borba* did not have a correspondent in Japan from 1956 to 1961. It is likely that the Anpo Protests were one of the reasons behind *Borba*’s renewed presence on the ground in Japan.

⁴²² Mentioned in Branko Bogunović, “Da li u osnovi svega leži Hirošima?,” *Borba*, 02.07.1960., p.3.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid. For more articles, see from Jakov Levi, “Hirošima – novi grad na mestu gde je 1945 godine bila pustoš,” *Borba*, 27.01.1952., p.5 to Jože Smole, “„Molimo, nikakvih grešaka više, molimo!“,” *Borba*, 12.06.1962., p.3.

⁴²⁵ The papers occasionally published short articles about Hiroshima with updates on the rising death toll. See, for example, “Hirošima,” *Borba*, 01.01.1958., p.11. More extensive reports about Hiroshima were usually sourced from secondary sources and written in a novel-like style. See “Kada je svetu zastajao dah: Napad atomskom bombom na Nagasaki,” *Politika*, 23.07.1954., p.8. Yugoslavs also sometimes interviewed Japanese visitors in Yugoslavia about this. See, for example, D. Simić, “Eksplozija bez zvuka,” *Borba*, 21.07.1957., p.4.

⁴²⁶ This was a big event. Yugoslav correspondents from other cities reported on it, as well. See Vlado Teslić, “Čerčilov odgovor,” *Borba*, 06.04.1954., p.3. The incident was referenced even in non-political news, such as this sports article: M. Stamenković, “Šampioni iz Vemblija,” *Borba*, 01.05.1954., p.13.

⁴²⁷ Kosta Timotijević, “Radioaktivne ribe na političkoj sceni,” *Borba*, 06.04.1954., p.3.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Kosta Timotijević, “Prve žrtve hidrogenske bombe,” *Borba*, 02.11.1954., p.4.

⁴³⁰ Kosta Timotijević, “Radioaktivne ribe na političkoj sceni,” *Borba*, 06.04.1954., p.3.

⁴³¹ See also Kosta Timotijević, “Novi podaci o „radioaktivnim“ ribama u Japanu,” *Borba*, 16.05.1954., p.4.

⁴³² Kosta Timotijević, “Prve žrtve hidrogenske bombe,” *Borba*, 02.11.1954., p.4.

should be helped to realize the advantages of our [American] way of life and our understanding of the global strategy so they stop sulking, yapping and hysterically reacting to the historically necessary [things] such as, for example, experimentation with nuclear weapons.⁴³³

Bogojević, in his coverage of Hiroshima during his second time in Japan in the mid-to-late 1960s, also took the time to counter the narrative of a U.S. journalist attempting to downplay the legacy of Hiroshima, exclaiming that Japan would never forget its suffering.⁴³⁴ So did Jože Smole, noting that the U.S. shared propaganda that ‘all children born after the atomic attack were normal and healthy,’ which he called ironic and something ‘one cannot believe [with] their eyes.’⁴³⁵ In the end, the image of the U.S. that Yugoslavs painted was not flattering. It was also clear that they eagerly supported Japan’s neutralism. In 1960, even Bebler, who believed Japan to be fully subordinate to the U.S., read into U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright’s statement that U.S. close relations with Japan were possible even if the latter turned more neutral.⁴³⁶ In doing so, he pointed out that Japan’s alliance with the U.S. no longer prevented it from exercising its foreign policy independently and added that

[w]e discuss and think about this great country and its people. Can such people stay long in the shadow of any other nation, even one much more powerful than itself? Clearly, it cannot.⁴³⁷

On a separate note, Bebler attributed the success of the agenda of the ‘neutrals’ at the IPU Conference in Tokyo to ‘the general atmosphere in Japan’:

Japan is, at the same time, the only country that experienced bombardment with atomic bombs—at the end of the last war—and the country that was the only one to have human victims of post-war atomic experiences. It is only natural that these people feel fearful of atomic, that is, nuclear war.⁴³⁸

This meant that the Japanese could be an ally in Yugoslav and NAM’s attempts to de-escalate global tensions brought about by the two superpowers. In a sense, his finding confirms that Yugoslav experiential writings all along alluded to the expectation that Japan could be neutral.

4.2.3. *Assessing China: Is There a Future Beyond Soviet Influence?*

Yugoslav experiential writing about Korea and Japan included a significant amount of the call to neutralism or a third way forward. With China, the most populous socialist country and Moscow’s firm ally, this was different. Complex Sino-Yugoslav relations and ideological strife primarily linked through and influenced by Moscow did not open a space for such hopes.⁴³⁹ In that sense,

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, “Nije zaboravljeno,” *Borba*, 01.08.1965., p.7. For his other writings on Hiroshima, see, for example Đorđe Bogojević, “Posle dvadeset godina,” *Borba*, 29.07.1965., p.3 and Đorđe Bogojević, “Poruka Hirošime,” *Borba*, 06.08.1967., p.16.

⁴³⁵ Jože Smole, “„Molimo, nikakvih grešaka više, molimo!“,” *Borba*, 12.06.1962., p.3.

⁴³⁶ Aleš Bebler, “Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost,” *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Aleš Bebler, “Susret u Tokiju i sa Tokiom,” *Borba*, 16.11.1960., p.3.

⁴³⁹ Ross A. Johnson, *The Sino-Soviet Relationship and Yugoslavia 1949-1971*, Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation,

Yugoslav interest from the beginning was the potential of China's independence from the Soviet Union.⁴⁴⁰ Yugoslavs tried to aid China by uncompromisingly supporting it for its seat at the United Nations, even when relations between the two countries were hostile.⁴⁴¹ They often discussed its international position as impossible, stretched between U.S. pressure (economic blockades) and Soviet bullying. China's past, as a victim of colonial expansion, was also regularly noted. Đerđa specifically mentioned 'Tsarist Russia, Japan, England' in explaining how parts of China were continuously taken, including Tibet, Outer and Inner Mongolia, and Manchuria.⁴⁴² Conversely, Yugoslavs noted that China was no longer a weak player. Levi informed that Hong Kong, though a Chinese city colonized by the British, was now an important 'element for pressure on British politics in the Far East' where Beijing exerted influence due to its many relations (including smuggling) within HK.⁴⁴³

The first and biggest wave of Yugoslav criticism of China was triggered by the country's entry into the Korean War.⁴⁴⁴ Yet, even here, the most prominent critics would find justifications and eventually solidarity with China's international position. Levi is a good example. Some eight months after his dramatic Korea reports, he offered an absolution for the Chinese.

[B]efore the Chinese intervention in the Korean War came a blockade of Formosa—that is, a Chinese territory—and MacArthur's offensive toward the Manchurian border and the centrals on the River Yalu (accompanied by statements that were everything but friendly and peace-loving toward China). This does not have to justify the Chinese entry into Korea, but it partially explains their reasons, among which is definitely the one of a young revolutionary power's sensitivity toward threats [...].⁴⁴⁵

His apologetic tone is matched by a repetition of his long-standing criticism of the U.S.'s handling of the China question. Such a narrative was common across Yugoslav newspapers at the time.⁴⁴⁶ Claiming that Mao's China was so firmly in Soviet arms was, Levi argued, a myopic U.S. political view that focused solely on changing the leadership in Beijing and not on stabilizing the region and limiting Soviet reach.⁴⁴⁷ In September 1952, when Levi published his China analysis, the Korean War was still ongoing. If the U.S. changed its politics toward the People's Republic of China, it may have reduced Beijing's 'growing addiction' to Moscow and offered it a way out of the Soviet embrace.⁴⁴⁸ This, Levi argued, would not only allow China to be independent but usher in a path for an 'independent Asia' which Levi saw as 'perhaps a determining factor' for 'world

1971 and "Yugoslavia and the Sino-Soviet Conflict: The Shifting Triangle, 1948–1974," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol.7, Iss.1-2, 1974, pp.184-203.

⁴⁴⁰ Jakov Levi, "Politička budućnost Kine iz hongkonške perspektive," *Borba*, 26.02.1952., p.5.

⁴⁴¹ During a brief period of good relations (1955-1958), Yugoslav writings from the region noted China's appreciation for Belgrade's support of its right to gain representation at the United Nations. See, for example, Đorđe Bogojević, "„Osećajte se kao kod svoje kuće“ Kina toplo pozdravlja pretstavnike Jugoslavije," *Borba*, 29.09.1957., p.5.

⁴⁴² Đorđe Jerković, "O nekim problemima savremenog razvitka Azije," *Borba*, 18.05.1952., p.3.

⁴⁴³ Jakov Levi, "Luka na kineskom moru," *Borba*, 24.02.1952., p.5.

⁴⁴⁴ See especially Jakov Levi, "U logoru zarobljenih severnokorejskih i kineskih vojnika," *Borba*, 14.01.1952., p.1.

⁴⁴⁵ Jaša Levi, "Kineski znak pitanja," *Borba*, 18.09.1952., p.3.

⁴⁴⁶ See, for example, P.M., "Diskusija na Zapadu o Dalekom Istoku," *Politika*, 03.02.1952., p.2.

⁴⁴⁷ Jaša Levi, "Kineski znak pitanja," *Borba*, 18.09.1952., p.3.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. For the same conclusion, see Jakov Levi, "Razgovori o Aziji," *Borba*, 16.01.1952., p.4.

peace.’⁴⁴⁹ Timotijević argued the same. He wrote that ‘[t]he Chinese care the most about getting a seat at the United Nations, because that is their only way to somehow pull out of Moscow’s embrace’ and that China was essential for regional stability.⁴⁵⁰

There was a similar logic in Vlado Teslić’s writing before his appointment in China. From the Geneva Conference for the Far East in 1954, he sent an article on the *Spheres of Influence* in which he discussed the Chinese question thoroughly.⁴⁵¹ He commended Mao and the Chinese communists for winning despite ‘the known resistance of [both] Moscow and Washington.’⁴⁵² In the case of the Soviets, Teslić found their support of Chiang Kai-shek’s ‘bankrupt’ regime as ‘stabbing in the back the Chinese communists and another betrayal of the Chinese revolution.’⁴⁵³ The Chinese experiences at each point were observed through the Yugoslav prism, always paving the way to solidarity. Their hope for China remained the same as the hope for Yugoslavia, that is, independence. Leo Mates, while on duty as the Yugoslav Permanent Representative at the United Nations in the U.S., discussed China during an interview at CBS’s Longines Chronoscope.⁴⁵⁴

Our recognition of China was a declaratory act. I mean a unilateral act, on our side. It was prompted by the belief that the present regime in Peking is the government, on the continent, mainland of China. [...] I think it is rather safe to say that China is not likely to become or to remain a satellite of Moscow. I suppose that China, being a great nation, will probably strive to find her place in the World. And this, I think, in association with the present Russia, would be impossible. I think it would be very difficult to imagine that the present regime in Russia could maintain so close relations on the basis of equality, and that’s what I think the Chinese will ultimately seek. Now, in what way this cause of friction, in general, will develop in the relations between the two countries is very difficult to predict. But their friction, there is beneath the surface and will increase in the future, I am firmly convinced [sic]. [...] The position of the Russian satellites in Europe is considerably different from the position of China. Not only because of [the] size of the nations, but the whole background, and many other considerations, and geographical position, not least. I don’t believe we should expect any dramatic changes in the next phase or [the] very next future. But it would be, of course, extremely depressing if we would come to the conclusion—and I cannot come to it—that the present state of affairs has to be perpetuated. I think that the whole experience of history gives sufficient proof that such kind of relationship that the

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Kosta Timotijević, “Dva bloka ili...?,” *Borba*, 06.12.1953., p.4.

⁴⁵¹ Vlado Teslić, “Interesne sfere,” *Borba*, 21.04.1954., p.3.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Longines Chronicles with Leo Mates, CBS, 15.02.1954, No.200LW462. It is interesting to note that Leo Mates, too, worked at Tanjug toward the end of the Second World War, first checking translations of foreign news, and then, from December 1944, as editor-in-chief of its Foreign Politics editorial. He was in fact one of the people who organized Tanjug in its post-war transition. For this information, see “Prvi redakcijski kolegijum. Leo Mates,” *Tanjug – Pola veka* (’43-’93), p.13.

Russians have imposed on countries which are under their domination will not last.⁴⁵⁵

Before rapprochement with the Soviets, Yugoslav writing on these issues was highly critical of the Soviets. 'Does China understand the danger of Soviet politics of domination to its independence and freedom, [to] its revolution?' Levi even exclaimed at one point.⁴⁵⁶ From 1955 onward, this rhetoric was toned down. The same Teslić, as *Borba* correspondent from Beijing, provided articles on the Chinese approach to international relations which were never critical.⁴⁵⁷ China was presented as an anti-colonial force, perpetuating the Bandung spirit and aiming for the 'unity of Asian countries and their friendly cooperation.'⁴⁵⁸ Teslić also noted that for the Chinese, Cold War tensions were the fault of the U.S. and framed as the main force against peace.⁴⁵⁹ In contrast, the Chinese praised the Soviets for their peace-making efforts and for improving relations with different Asian countries.⁴⁶⁰ Though the Yugoslavs still held a different view on the topic, their experiential writing from China remained respectful of the Sino-Soviet alliance.

This is particularly noticeable in articles written by Teslić before and after his appointment in China. For the opening of the Beijing-Ulaanbaatar-Moscow railroad, Teslić quoted Zhou Enlai, Yumjaagiin Tsendenbal, and Soviet representatives who described it as a move 'strengthening the "camp of peace, democracy and socialism",' and 'an important path for the development of friendship, peace, economic and cultural relations between the people of European and Asian countries.'⁴⁶¹ This is interesting to observe as Teslić had made intense remarks on Soviet imperialism, Mongolia, and China in an article less than two years prior.⁴⁶² Discussing spheres of interest (or influence) in preparation for the Conference on the Far East in Geneva in 1954, Teslić wrote about Moscow's betrayal of the Chinese and the overtaking of 'outer Mongolia' for a buffer zone.⁴⁶³ Stalin expanded his socialist state into Asia even more than 'tsarist Russia' did, argued Teslić. He read the success of Stalin's actions as a concession the Americans made to have an ally in the region at the height of the war with Japan. He deduced that the U.S. wanted 'economic, political, and military leadership in Chiang Kai-shek's China and, second, that there existed a complete agreement and trust between the USA and USSR in relation to the Chinese question.'⁴⁶⁴ In 1956, Teslić abandoned such anti-Soviet rhetoric and continued only to openly criticize U.S. politics. Freeing China from the Soviets was no longer mentioned. USSR was again distinguished from tsarist Russia, and expansionism into Chinese territories was the latter's fault.⁴⁶⁵

In the following years, Sino-Yugoslav relations deteriorated due to ideological differences. The publication of a liberal draft program for its 7th 1958 LCY Congress in Ljubljana (22-27 April) was the final straw. It was read by the Soviet camp—and China in particular—as fundamentally anti-socialist. The Chinese reacted intensely, charging that 'Yugoslavian revisionism is a product

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. This was transcribed verbatim.

⁴⁵⁶ Jakov Levi, "Politička budućnost Kine iz hongkonške perspektive," *Borba*, 26.02.1952., p.5.

⁴⁵⁷ Vlado Teslić, "Pogledi Kine na međunarodnu situaciju," *Borba*, 18.01.1956., p.3.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Vlado Teslić, "Pekinška novogodišnja hronika," *Borba*, 22.01.1956., p.4.

⁴⁶¹ Vlado Teslić, "Peking – Ulan Bator – Moskva," *Borba*, 23.01.1956., p.3.

⁴⁶² Vlado Teslić, "Interesne sfere," *Borba*, 21.04.1954., p.3.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ See Đorđe Bogojević, "Čelik i jabuke," *Borba*, 09.10.1957., p.3.

of imperialist policy.⁴⁶⁶ Khrushchev personally took issue with the fact that the draft did not solely blame the capitalists for global tensions. In line with Yugoslav readings of the Cold War, from the Korean War onward, the driving force of global instability was placed on the hegemonic tendencies of both sides and their spheres of influence politics. It also clearly implied that imperialism was not just reserved for capitalism but existed in the communist bloc as well.⁴⁶⁷ In response to Khrushchev, Tito reportedly stated that '[t]he entire LCY Program is based on the contradictions between the capitalist system and the socialist one, on the inevitable collapse of capitalism and on the victory of the socialist social relations.'⁴⁶⁸ This showed that Yugoslavs had a hard time navigating their own ideopolitical in-betweenness. On one side stood their genuine hope to see socialism prevail as a global ideology they equated with progress and egalitarianism. On the other stood the reality of Soviet violence in different countries and Yugoslavia's emerging non-aligned foreign politics. Ideopolitical contradictions were common in the Yugoslav system in this period, with discrepancies in statements recorded even between Tito and the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs.⁴⁶⁹

Following the above-mentioned draft resolution, embassies in Beijing and Belgrade were reduced to the level of charge d'affaires. Moreover, China ignored Yugoslavia bilaterally while engaging in a heavy press campaign against it. This, however, opened the space for previously censored articles to see the light of day. A good example is Baum's 'The Chinese and the Cult of Personality' article, critically discussing Stalin and his China policies.⁴⁷⁰ Written in 1956 and in reaction to the events following the Secret Speech and its reception in China, Baum opened it with

It must be clear to the ones who somewhat know the history of the Chinese revolution that the Chinese communists do not have any particular reason to be grateful to the deceased autocrat.⁴⁷¹

He praised Khrushchev for 'daringly speaking up' but found issue with the Chinese leadership who read Stalin's crimes as 'character weaknesses' and 'mistaken views.'⁴⁷² Referring to the memorialization of Stalin in China, he equated all personality cults with 'evil.'⁴⁷³ In reaction to their praise of Stalin for helping socialist countries, he sarcastically added, 'In Yugoslavia, at least, this needs no comment.'⁴⁷⁴ His paper *Vjesnik* chose 'not to publish in hopes of avoiding offering any opportunities for worsening relations among socialist countries.'⁴⁷⁵ After 1958, that was no

⁴⁶⁶ For the quote and a detailed overview of the Chinese reaction to the LCY Program, see Stopić, *Sino-Yugoslavian cooperation and divergences in the Cold War context: mutual relations within the Communist Bloc, the Third World and the United Nations (1948-1971)*, pp.31-42. For insights into Yugoslav-Soviet communication surrounding the draft program and the criticism of the socialist bloc, see Sanda Borsa and Mihai Croitor, "A Soviet-Yugoslav ideological war: the exchange of letters of April-June 1958," *International Journal of Humanistic Ideology*, Vol.2, 2015, pp.97-105.

⁴⁶⁷ Tito's response to this was interesting, as he did not forcefully defend the Yugoslav stance but stated that this was a draft and could be modified, reiterating that peace and socialism were understood to stand against war and capitalism ('that is to say imperialism'). See Borsa and Croitor, "A Soviet-Yugoslav ideological war: the exchange of letters of April-June 1958," pp.99-100.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.102.

⁴⁶⁹ Perović, "Josip Broz Tito," p.132.

⁴⁷⁰ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.199.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.197.

⁴⁷² *Ibid*, p.198.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp.198-199.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.199.

longer an obstacle. Baum's article was published in full the following year in his travel book about China.⁴⁷⁶

From then on, Yugoslav correspondents in Beijing addressed sensitive questions with more freedom. They reported with interest on the Tibet question, Dalai Lama seeking refuge in India, and the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1959.⁴⁷⁷ China was now in direct conflict with one of Yugoslavia's most important allies. The following year, Tanjug's correspondent, Branko Bogunović, captured the first signs of Sino-Soviet deteriorating relations.⁴⁷⁸ Belgrade's long-anticipated break between Beijing and Moscow happened at the height of the Chinese Anti-Yugoslav Campaign.⁴⁷⁹ The country they hailed as keeping the Bandung Spirit alive (despite its precarious international position) was no longer a potential ally.⁴⁸⁰ In an ironic turn of events, it became their direct competitor in the decolonized world. Reacting to the former's founding at the 1961 Belgrade Conference, Beijing sent a telegram to congratulate Asian, African, and Latin American countries but entirely ignored Yugoslavia, the host.⁴⁸¹ China ultimately pursued a politics officially independent of the two blocs.

4.3. 'Asia Should be Free of Foreign Influence'⁴⁸²

Yugoslav writings about individual East Asian countries were always linked to their regional and global embeddedness.⁴⁸³ Bilateral and multilateral relations were regularly cross-referenced with the country's historical context, contemporary interests, and foreign colonial/imperial involvement.

⁴⁷⁶ Baum, p.199. Interestingly, Baum faced accusations of being a Stalinist after the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948. He was simultaneously suspected of being 'an imperialist spy.' This cost him. He was relocated from Belgrade to Zagreb, and his wife left him. In an ironic turn of events, his article criticizing Stalin got him censored. For more personal information about his life, as told by Baum himself, see Tanja Eckstein, Interview with Vladimir Baum, September 2004, *Centropa*, Available at <https://www.centropa.org/de/biography/vladimir-baum> (accessed December 2023).

⁴⁷⁷ Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, p.46. For an account of how the Yugoslavs learned about the Sino-Soviet conflict in the press, see "Kinesko-sovjetski sukob," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, pp.145-146.

⁴⁷⁸ Branko Bogunović, "Upućivanje rukovodilaca u proizvodnju: veliki broj sovjetskih stručnjaka napušta Kinu," *Borba*, 13.08.1960., p.4.

⁴⁷⁹ For a brief overview of this see Stopić, "Pisani odnosi s NR Kinom: što su, kako i kada Kinezi pisali o Jugoslaviji i Hrvatskoj," *Historijski zbornik*, Vol.17, No.1, 2017, pp.139-142.

⁴⁸⁰ Yugoslavs discussed the PRC's political isolation, spearheaded by the U.S., as a case of continued Western bullying of the Chinese. Yugoslav experiential writings about China featured prominently the subject of Western Imperialism and the Century of Humiliation. Pre-1949, Westerners in China were primarily depicted as thieves with no morals. In contrast to that stood, as Marinković vividly depicted, 'patient, skinny hands of millions of yellow people.' Post-1949 U.S. writings about socialist China were read as propaganda and Washington as unreasonable. In the 1955-1958 window, Yugoslavs reported whenever U.S. citizens came to the PRC. For example, when some youngsters joined the 1957 Youth Festival in China, Bogojević explained that the U.S. Americans '[c]ame despite [their] government's ban' and exclaimed: 'Youth and the desire for the truth!' *Vjesnik* put on its cover page the news about the pending visit of U.S. journalists to the PRC, noting that the support of Washington's negative China policies was decreasing in the country. Through such narratives, China was presented as a historical and contemporary victim of the U.S. and Western Imperialism and, thus, Yugoslavia's natural ally. See Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Srušeni Babilon and Chapter Na rikši prema staroj četvrti; Đorđe Bogojević, "Susreti u Šangaju," *Borba*, 03.11.1957., p.5; Đorđe Bogojević, "Autogram na gitari," *Borba*, 30.09.1957., p.3; "40 omladinaca iz USA doputovalo u Kinu," *Vjesnik*, 24.08.1957., p.3; and J. Šćekić, "Američki novinari putuju u NR Kinu," *Vjesnik*, 24.08.1957., p.1. For China keeping the Bandung Spirit alive, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Festival aziskog filma," *Borba*, 22.09.1957., p.7.

⁴⁸¹ Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, p.56.

⁴⁸² Jakov Levi, "Razgovori o Aziji," *Borba*, 16.01.1952., p.4.

⁴⁸³ This would include transcontinental relations as well. For example, India-China relations were of interest throughout this decade. See Đorđe Jerković, "Današnji odnosi između Indije i Kine," *Borba*, 08.06.1952., p.3.

The overarching logic was that the evident foreign interference in East Asian affairs in the 1950s had its roots in the colonial project as much as Cold War bloc politics. The latter was considered a continuation of the former. This is why small things, such as finding U.S. editions of Bibles in Japan, would be immediately criticized as a remnant of colonial practices.⁴⁸⁴ However, regardless of how extensive the analysis became, there was a certain humility and attempt to warn against rash conclusions. Timotijević, for example, wrote that any attempt at a ‘classification, systematization, and all formulas that begin with the misused sentence: “The situation boils down to...”’ about East Asia will be inaccurate.⁴⁸⁵ The one thing they did agree on from the beginning was that foreign interference, primarily that of imperial powers, was harmful to the region and the continent.

In Levi’s article, ‘Conversations about Asia,’ the focus was on the political discussions of foreign correspondents at the Munsan press train.⁴⁸⁶ Levi explained to the public that although ‘Korea is just a small, negligible part of Asia [...] the Korean War is part of larger, general Asian politics.’ (for Levi, East Asia’s central powers were China and Japan).⁴⁸⁷ Yugoslav interest in the conflict was primarily motivated by the knowing that the situation in Korea was part of something more complex. This was a space to observe foreign powers and assess them. The West was presented as myopic for their ‘[i]solation of China, negative politics [...] toward the spontaneous movements of independence, and support for the regimes of Chiang Kai-shek, Bao Dai, and Syngman Rhee.’⁴⁸⁸ This allowed Moscow to gain the upper hand in parts of Asia, which Yugoslavs were keen to follow for their potential implication on European and, more specifically, Yugoslav security. Levi wrote that

[t]he USSR either hoped for a quick victory and capture of another [geographical] position, or Korea was just a trial on one peripheral dot; a tryout for potential military campaigns on other sides [of the globe] in case there was no reaction from the rest of the world.⁴⁸⁹

In a separate article, puzzled by Sino-Soviet relations, he argued that China’s position is a byproduct of other regional events and deserving a more thorough investigation.

One has to wonder what the reasons behind the fact that enormous China, in a series of questions of utmost importance, capitulates in front of Soviet pressure are. The fact that China is isolated and that, in its isolation, it is directed solely toward the USSR does not, in itself, answer that question. The answer is given in the events in the Far East (and not only there) seen in their entirety.⁴⁹⁰

In addition to this, Levi depicted U.S. American reporters as tone-deaf, rude to the locals, and holding the belief that Japan should observe the U.S. as their occupier and not a friend.⁴⁹¹ This was valuable because journalists were portrayed as proxy representatives of their home countries and

⁴⁸⁴ Religious teachings were generally seen as the oppression of the masses. See Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, pp.10-11.

⁴⁸⁵ Kosta Timotijević, “Dva bloka ili...?,” *Borba*, 06.12.1953., p.4.

⁴⁸⁶ Jakov Levi, “Razgovori o Aziji,” *Borba*, 16.01.1952., p.4.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Jaša Levi, “Kineski znak pitanja,” *Borba*, 18.09.1952., p.3.

⁴⁹¹ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.69.

belief systems. The main point was that superpowers could never be true friends to smaller nations. This is a departure from Yugoslav post-WWII writings on East Asia. In 1945, *Borba* published an article on Korea and Japanese imperialism, praising the Red Army's penetration into the peninsula. Soviet interference was considered productive and helpful, ushering in an era of a 'free and independent' Korea.⁴⁹² The enemy, it was argued, was not external but internal.

By 1952, when Levi published his articles, he passionately argued in favor of Asia's right to self-determination and a full stop to 'the politics of great powers.'⁴⁹³ This was echoed in Teslić's reports on Korea and East Asia from the 8th U.N. General Assembly in 1953—the main argument being that Asian issues should be resolved in Asia by Asians.⁴⁹⁴ Other Yugoslav correspondents stationed in different locales argued for '[m]ore rights to Asian people' during this time, echoing the official Yugoslav foreign policy.⁴⁹⁵ Timotijević also argued fervently against bloc politics, as well. Using East and Southeast Asia as examples, he explained to the *Borba* readership, layer by layer, the economic, political, and other interests of superpowers and their effect on the regions.⁴⁹⁶ Teslić did the same, arguing that with Korea—the war, its subsequent division, and the ceasefire—one could observe an 'evident example of the disrespect of the right of Asian peoples to be independent,' that is, self-governed.⁴⁹⁷ At this time, relations with India and Egypt grew closer, so the Yugoslav press often quoted Nehru's statements, such as that 'the struggle against foreign interference' came hand in hand with the 'request to ensure greater rights to Asian people in deciding on Asian questions.'⁴⁹⁸ Josip Đerđa wrote about this as well.⁴⁹⁹

Soviet and Western (U.S. and otherwise) influence were seen as the most significant obstacles to Asia's prosperity. Yet Yugoslavs were aware that the situation in Asia was, in reality, far more complex than just the bloc division of the world. Timotijević explicitly mentioned as much, stating that '[t]he relations in Asia are by no means reducible to the so-called antagonism of the two blocks.'⁵⁰⁰ The actions of each East Asian country should be viewed with an understanding that, in Asia, '[t]here are for the very least as many powers as there are countries, and blocs as many as one can find or construct through mutual affinity and antagonism.'⁵⁰¹ Moreover, this showed that Asian politics transcended the capitalist versus socialist enmity. Timotijević gave a clear example. The case of South Korea makes it appear as if with 'America [...] [and South Korea] make one bloc, and nearly all others (Russia, China, India, Japan, Churchill...) [are] the "enemy" block.'⁵⁰² The boundaries between the two blocs were more 'practical' and porous. Individual interests of countries motivated state behavior, and, in many ways, each country acted as independently as possible in navigating the Cold War binary to its advantage. Timotijević thus wrote:

From the para-fascist regime in South Korea, the right-wing government in Japan, predominantly leftist [leadership] in Indonesia

⁴⁹² "Koreja – prva žrtva japanskog imperijalizma," *Borba*, 02.09.1945., p.4.

⁴⁹³ Jakov Levi, "Razgovori o Aziji," *Borba*, 16.01.1952., p.4.

⁴⁹⁴ Vlado Teslić, "Početak Osmog zasjedanja Generalne skupštine UN," *Borba*, 20.09.1953., p.5.

⁴⁹⁵ One such example is L. Bruner, "Više prava aziskim narodima," *Borba*, 04.10.1953., p.5.

⁴⁹⁶ Kosta Timotijević, "Dva bloka ili...?", *Borba*, 06.12.1953., p.4.

⁴⁹⁷ Vlado Teslić, "Interesne sfere," *Borba*, 21.04.1954., p.3.

⁴⁹⁸ L. Bruner, "Više prava aziskim narodima," *Borba*, 04.10.1953., p.5.

⁴⁹⁹ Đorđe Jerković, "Japan posle ratifikacije Ugovora o miru," *Borba*, 20.05.1952., p.3.

⁵⁰⁰ Kosta Timotijević, "Dva bloka ili...? II," *Borba*, 07.12.1953., p.3.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

and socialist in Burma, to the Cominform [-led] satrapy in North Korea (where the symbolic beginning and end of the Asian vicious circle is located) the leitmotif is the same: independence.⁵⁰³

Analyzing any single country in 'the Far East' was to observe a yearning for independence and see it as a connecting thread of the entire continent and the world.⁵⁰⁴ From foreign interference through the spheres of influence politics and the Asian struggle for independence, Yugoslavs found the adhesive to be in economic modernization. They argued that a 'true emancipation' of former colonies, subjected historically to the needs of the 'metropole,' was economic.⁵⁰⁵ Yet this could only be achieved if the continent were at peace so that the focus could be on prosperity.⁵⁰⁶ After Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, a high-ranking Yugoslav official (primarily working on Yugoslav economy and trade), toured a dozen Asian and African countries in 1957, he shared his impressions with the public.⁵⁰⁷ He first noted that decolonized Asian countries faced national unity issues due to former colonizers' pervasive interests and ongoing bloc politics.⁵⁰⁸ His observations did not focus on Korea and Vietnam 'because that is quite known' in Yugoslavia.⁵⁰⁹ Imperial powers continued to limit the economic development of their former colonies—which was already stifled by its 'inherited colonial character.'⁵¹⁰ He thus argued that Asian true freedom could only be achieved once decolonized countries pull themselves out of economic 'backwardness' and achieve more economic power.⁵¹¹ Vukmanović-Tempo did not mention economic modernization in Japan's case but other Yugoslavs consistently argued that for Japan's prosperity trade relations with China were essential.⁵¹²

Given that the logic of Non-Alignment was mostly sharpened through criticism of the superpowers in Asia, with the one directed at the Soviet Union significantly reduced after 1955, it is unsurprising that Yugoslav writings come across as primarily anti-American. This likely dominated the press (not just East Asia-related articles) as Yugoslav officials were confronted on the matter in the U.S. throughout the 1950s. Leo Mates offered a telling response to CBS's *Longines Chronicles* on the topic. Doubting the show hosts would trust an explicit denial, he said:

you can hardly open a paper in Yugoslavia, you can hardly hear a statement by a government representative or a political figure, who would not mention [...] our firm belief in the increase of friendly relations with the United States and a recognition to the assistance

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Đorđe Jerković, "O nekim problemima savremenog razvitka Azije," *Borba*, 18.05.1952., p.3.

⁵⁰⁶ Đorđe Jerković, "Današnji odnosi između Indije i Kine," *Borba*, 08.06.1952., p.3.

⁵⁰⁷ For an interview with Vukmanović-Tempo about his expectations of this trip, especially potential trade with Asian countries, see "Proširenje prijateljske suradnje s Azijom: Intervju sa S. Vukmanovićem uoči polaska u prijateljske azijske zemlje," *Vjesnik*, 07.08.1957., p.1. and p.4.

⁵⁰⁸ Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, "Utisci sa puta po Aziji i Africi: Politički odnosi i privredni razvitak," *Borba*, 10.11.1957., p.3.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Aleš Bebler, "Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost," *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

Yugoslavia has received in economic, finance, and military field from the United States and is still receiving [sic].⁵¹³

China was the only East Asian country that, in the view of Yugoslavs, was specifically rid of Western Imperialism. Marinković celebrated that ‘colonial kings left’ and the fact that ‘China went to the Chinese, the land [went] to the people that work on it.’⁵¹⁴ When she wrote this, Yugoslav writings no longer discussed Soviet presence in the country in a negative light. Depictions of China’s success and progress were seen as evidence that once a foreign oppressor leaves, the country prospers.

4.4. East Asia and Yugoslav Non-Alignment: A Conclusion

In the 1950s, East Asia was a critical space through which Yugoslavs formed and sharpened their non-alignment. This essentially spiritual idea, brimming with talk of elevated consciousness, progressive forces, and moral righteousness, was bolstered with examples from the Asian continent. It began with the Korean War, and from then on Yugoslavs could argue that the Soviets were imperialists and separate true socialism from Moscow. This provided them with indisputable evidence that their expulsion from the socialist bloc and Moscow’s criticism was not due to the failings of Yugoslav communism. It was instead an example of Soviet imperialism in practice before the Korean War. At the same time, U.S. behavior in the region could serve as an additional reaffirmation that U.S. Americans and the West at large could not be trusted. Through the events in East Asia, Yugoslav experiential writings confirmed that the two superpowers acted solely with their own interests in mind, disregarding the plight of smaller nations for peace, independence, and progress. Accumulatively, over the 1950s, the more examples were given from East Asia (and elsewhere), the more it strengthened Belgrade’s case in front of domestic audiences that a third way was the only morally righteous way. Moreover, it solidified the legitimacy of Tito and CPY’s leadership.

When the concept of the Cold War emerged, Yugoslavs showed great interest in deciphering what it meant in practice. In 1953, *Borba*’s correspondent from Berlin, Slobodan Glumac, published a series of articles on the concept.⁵¹⁵ He concluded early that the Cold War was essentially an information war. Yugoslav leadership had already realized the need for firsthand information by then. It began expanding its journalistic network and diplomatic presence worldwide, that is, beyond Europe and North America. This expansion began with Asia. In reality, the events in East Asia were the very reason behind it. By 1955, Tito ‘articulated the need for a non-aligned news agency,’ now fully aware that one needed more direct access to information to navigate the modern political environment better.⁵¹⁶ This would not just diminish reliance on the superpowers but grant Yugoslavs and their allies power over their own narratives. This meant aligning the events with one’s beliefs, as well as domestic and foreign policy agendas. Yugoslav experiential writings from East Asia testify as to how the story of East Asian countries, the Cold War, and colonialism were framed in ways that reaffirmed Yugoslav existing perceptions. They also show how the Yugoslav

⁵¹³ NARA, Longines Chronicles with Leo Mates, CBS, 15.02.1954, No. 200LW462.

⁵¹⁴ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter *Srušeni Babilon* and Chapter *Berači zvezda*.

⁵¹⁵ See, for example, S. Glumac, “Akcija balona,” *Borba*, 09.05.1953., p.4.

⁵¹⁶ Vukasovich and Boyd-Barrett, “Whatever happened to Tanjug? Re-loading memory for an understanding of the global news system,” p.694.

idea of the Non-Alignment Movement evolved in relation to its perceptions of East Asia over the course of this transformational decade.

Chapter 5: New East Asia

In the 1950s, Yugoslavia was actively gathering information about foreign countries. The objective was to increase understanding of spaces about which it had little knowledge. In 1955, at Tito's departure from South Asia, he 'openly' admitted 'we barely knew them at all,' finding India and Burma a 'discovery.'⁵¹⁷ Journalist Boža Rafajlović, who had spent two years in India in the early 1950s, recorded Tito's request to increase the volume of articles about the country to at least one per day and gather 'as much information as possible.'⁵¹⁸ Moreover, Tito apparently complained that many correspondents of Yugoslav papers 'sit in London and Paris' but 'in India, we still just have one, from Tanjug.'⁵¹⁹ It was now largely up to the journalists to fill in the information gap. Rafajlović produced more than 300 India-related articles in the 1952-1954 period alone, with nearly 100 published in *Borba* each year.⁵²⁰

The same logic was employed with East Asian countries—some of which Yugoslavs regarded as complicated riddles.⁵²¹ The aim was not to rely on data from foreign books and other secondary sources.⁵²² Recycling old information about East Asia from foreign sources had already caused the Yugoslavs minor diplomatic incidents in the early 1950s.⁵²³ The preferred method was to travel

⁵¹⁷ As quoted in Kilibarda, "Non-Aligned Geographies in the Balkans: Space, Race and Image in the Construction of new 'European' Foreign Policies," p.29.

⁵¹⁸ "Boža Rafajlović: Prva zamisao o nesvrstavanju," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.119.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ See Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, pp.7-9 and Aleš Bebler, "Japanske zagonetke," *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3.

⁵²² This doesn't mean secondary sources were fully abandoned. Yugoslav diplomats and their spouses, for example, continued to send foreign books and brochures from abroad to their friends and colleagues back in Yugoslavia. See, for example, the friendly letter of Vanda Novosel, Maksimilijan Baće's wife, to Ivo Frol at the CCTFC. Vanda Novosel, "Dragi Ivo...", 28.01.1953, Tokyo, AJ, 559, 58-129, p.1.

⁵²³ On 11 November 1954, Novi List newspaper from Rijeka published an article titled 'An Eternal Smile on the Face of the Unhappiest Woman: On the Life of Women in Japan.' Japanese women were depicted as having little to no agency, spending their lives as 'a servant and a toy in the hands of a man [...] to submit to [his] will, desires, and tastes.' Sadao Hirose, the newly appointed Japanese Head of Mission in Yugoslavia, sent a formal complaint to the editor-in-chief, Milan Slani, inquiring about the article's sources and offering quantifiable data about the improved position of women in Japanese society in the 1950s. He concluded that the paper's depiction of a Japanese woman was medieval and that, should they have an interest in 'the subjective feeling of a Japanese woman,' they should contact the Japanese Mission in Belgrade and speak to the wives of diplomats directly. Hirose sent the same letter to Marko Ristić, the Head of CCTFC. In continuation, Ristić reached out to Slani and pleaded with him to smooth things over with the Japanese for 'foreign politics and diplomacy' reasons by republishing an article that 'would satisfy the Japanese Envoy.' Slani explained that he obtained the article from a January 1954 issue of *Žena u borbi* newspaper, published in Zagreb, but that there was no ill intent and that they had already published a rebuttal article, titled 'The Political, Social and Economic Position of Women in Japan.' The original article in *Žena u borbi* copied a text written by Helena Mościcki (in the paper cited as Helena Mošicky), wife of a Polish chargé d'affaires in Tokyo, Michał Mościcki, in the 1933-1936 period. It is unclear why the paper printed a knowingly outdated text without any time-related context regarding the original. See Sadao Hirose, "Komisiji za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom," 18.11.1954., Belgrade, AJ, 559, 15-33, Doc. JCD No.309, Attached file: "Vječni smiješak na licu najnesretnijih žena: O životu žene u Japanu", p.2 (With the attached file: "Gospodinu Milanu Slani, odgovornom Uredniku "Novog Lista", Rijeka", p.4); Marko Ristić, "Drug Milan Slani, odgovorni urednik "Novog Lista" Rijeka," 10.12.1954., Belgrade, AJ, 559, 15-33, Doc.No.7423; Milan Slani, "Drug Marko Ristić, predsjednik Komisije za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom," 15.12.1954., Rijeka, AJ, 559, 15-33; Marko Ristić, "Poštovani gospodine Poslaniče...", 18.12.1954., Belgrade, AJ, 559, 15-33. The original article was "Iza vječnog smiješka kriju se najnesretnije žene," *Žena u borbi*, 01.1954., p.4.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

to these regions and assess the realities of each country directly, then report back to the Yugoslav polity and public. The task primarily fell to journalists, officials, and short-term travelers who were part of official cultural or sports delegations.⁵²⁴ In the case of Japan, wives of two Yugoslav diplomats joined the effort by publishing articles or books upon their return to Yugoslavia.⁵²⁵ In addition to written texts, many Yugoslavs lectured about East Asia in events open to the broader public.⁵²⁶

It is, however, necessary to clarify that for the Yugoslav communists, East Asia was not a complete *terra incognita* before the 1950s. This was especially true for China.⁵²⁷ The development of the Chinese communist revolution was followed with great interest.⁵²⁸ Yugoslav officials and the press took care to emphasize this point.⁵²⁹ Some even mentioning it in their memoirs.⁵³⁰ Secondary literature and firsthand accounts about East Asia, however scant, were also available in Yugoslavia before the Cold War. Some were even used as references for Yugoslav experiential writings from the 1950s.⁵³¹ Most often, however, older texts were seen as outdated or not truly reflecting the reality of post-World War II East Asia.⁵³² Seeing the region firsthand was an absolute necessity.

⁵²⁴ See Appendix 2 for a list of identified Yugoslav correspondents in East Asia thus far.

⁵²⁵ The first one was Zojica Levi, Miša Levi's wife. She published an article in *Borba* about Japanese tea ceremonies. Jože Smole noted that Klara Kos 'thoroughly studied Japanese culture' while in Japan with her husband, Franc Kos, the Yugoslav Ambassador in the 1958-1962 period. She published a book about the Japanese Ikebana art in the late 1960s. See Zojica Levi, "Ceremonija čaja u Japanu," *Borba*, 31.07.1955., p.7; Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, p.128; and Klara F. Kos, *Ikebana*, Ljubljana: Centralni zavod za napredek gospodinjstva, 1968.

⁵²⁶ Here are some examples of this practice: Jakov Levi delivered a lecture 'Impressions from Asia' at the Riunione Palace in Belgrade on 28 March 1952; Miša Levi delivered a lecture 'Impressions from Japan' at the People's University in Belgrade on 20 December 1954; Vojin Šantić delivered a lecture 'In the Land of the Rising Sun' next to a film screening and playing of music records from Japan on 6 October 1959; and Vasil Magdeski and Dragutin Šolajić participated in a panel discussing the 'Chinese Phenomenon in the Contemporary World' on 5 February 1965. See "Danas u Beogradu," *Borba*, 27.03.1952., p.6; "Obaveštenja," *Borba*, 19.12.1954., p.8; "Sledeće nedelje u Beogradu," *Borba*, 03.10.1959., p.11; and "Kineski fenomen u savremenom svetu," *Borba*, 05.02.1965., p.12.

⁵²⁷ This was partly due it being a workers' movement and partly because questions regarding Spain and China were widely discussed in late 1930s Europe. In an interview for a docu-series about Tito, Olga Humo (the sister of diplomat Đuro Ninčić, mentioned in Chapter 3) talked about the 'leftist and antifascist' atmosphere at the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Dans la Vie Moderne* in Paris, where the events in Spain and (to a lesser degree) China were a popular topic. See Olga Humo's testimony in Lordan Zafranović, Ivan Goldstein, and Mirjana Šuvar (producers), HRT docu-series "TITO – Posljednji svjedoci testamenta," 2012, Episode 1: Prologue.

⁵²⁸ Jakov Levi even delivered a public lecture 'The Struggle of Chinese People' on 26 February 1948. See "Predavanja," *Borba*, 25.02.1948., p.7. Yugoslav communists had also printed a brochure about the Chinese Long March in the late 1930s. For more information, see "Zabeleška o poseti Ministra kulture Narodne Republike Kine, Huang Džena Jugoslaviji, 14.-27. oktobra 1979.," 1979, AJ, 465, 2924. Also mentioned in Bogojević, "Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980)," p.18.

⁵²⁹ Yugoslavia's first Ambassador to China, Vladimir Popović, highlighted that Yugoslavs 'followed [China's] heroic struggle for freedom and independence [...] with admiration' during his presentation of the *letter of credence* to Mao Zedong in Beijing. "Ambasador Popović predao akreditivne predsjeđniku Mao Ce Tungu," *Borba*, 02.07.1955., p.3. The same was noted in "Godišnjica Narodne revolucije u Kini," *Borba*, 01.10.1955., p.3.

⁵³⁰ Dragi Stamenković, *Između ideala i politike – lično kazivanje i svedočenje*, Belgrade: Stručna knjiga, 2002, p.135.

⁵³¹ Šantić, for example, primarily consulted Japanese publications translated into English but also referenced Pukovnik M.J. Marinković's Japan i Japanci 1935 in his book on Japan. See Šantić, *Japan*, Bibliography.

⁵³² See, for example, Aleš Bebler, "Japanske zagonetke," *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3; Jakov Levi, "Hirošima - novi grad na mestu gdje je 1945 godine bila pustoš," *Borba*, 27.01.1952., p.5; and Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Pirinač. Marinković made terminological mistakes, referring to, for example, sex workers in Shanghai as geishas and Chinese traditional dress as kimonos. She is by no means the only Yugoslav journalist or traveler who had mishaps. This was likely a byproduct of general unfamiliarity with the region despite their best efforts to read and learn about it as much as possible in a short period.

Following their trips, Yugoslavs (especially journalists and officials) would not just submit reports to the state but often, in the case of important visits, even brief Tito directly.⁵³³

The Yugoslav push to contextualize anew tended toward a before-and-after binary. For them, the end of the Second World War marked the border between the old and new East Asia. This was not meant to ignore historical continuity but rather to emphasize it. Their primary focus was to depict the life of ordinary people (workers and peasants) and cover details about domestic and foreign politics. To do so effectively, they used the past (often as they imagined it) to contextualize the present. This chapter, as the first scholarly overview of Yugoslav knowledge about East Asia in the 1950s, offers valuable information for the study of Yugoslavia and its relationship with new East Asian countries in the Cold War.

5.1. Retelling Korea: A Land in Ruins

On 28 October 1948, Belgrade sent a telegram officially recognizing the newly established Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but Pyongyang did not respond.⁵³⁴ North Korea's attempts to engage with Yugoslavia only began in March 1955, after Belgrade established diplomatic relations with Beijing. Throughout the year, North Korean diplomatic personnel across the Soviet-led camp reached out to the Yugoslavs to foster contact and assess the possibility of the two countries forging official ties.⁵³⁵ Yugoslavs were restrained. On 28 October 1955, seven years after the Yugoslav telegram, the North Korean Ambassador in Moscow visited his Yugoslav counterpart and expressed 'regret that major events in Korea and other circumstances prevented earlier establishment of said [diplomatic] relations.'⁵³⁶ Following instructions from the Yugoslav State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs (*Državni sekretarijat za inostrane poslove*, DSIP), the Yugoslav envoy responded that Belgrade has chosen to 'wait with the establishment of diplomatic relations, regardless of having recognized DPR Korea' to avoid 'creating precedents' in a challenging international environment.⁵³⁷ Despite this restraint on the Yugoslav side, some direct bilateral contact was facilitated between 1955 and 1958. Tito and Kim Il Sung met briefly in Moscow, the North Korean Youth Delegation attended an event in Yugoslavia, and several Yugoslav artists performed in North Korea.⁵³⁸ North Korean efforts were halted after the socialist camp reacted negatively to the 7th LCY Congress's liberal draft program.⁵³⁹ The two countries had no official contact until 1970 when Yugoslavia initiated it, ushering in a new era in their bilateral relations.⁵⁴⁰ In contrast, socialist Yugoslavia did not maintain official relations with South Korea throughout the Cold War. This means that in the 1950s no direct diplomatic or political relations existed between Yugoslavia and the Koreas; Yugoslav interest in Korea specifically was linked to

⁵³³ Stamenković, *Između ideala i politike – lično kazivanje i svedočenje*, p.137.

⁵³⁴ "O odnosima FNRJ sa Vladom i KP NDR Koreje," A CK SKJ IX65/I-10 [st.signat. IX 12-II/5], 28.09.1957., AJ, 507, 13-15.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid. See also "Zabeleška o razgovoru sa III sekretarom Korejske ambasade u Tirani Pan Hak Su, 31.III.1958 g.," A CK SKJ IX65/I-8 [st.signat. IX 12-I/4], 31.03.1958., AJ, 507, 13-15.

⁵³⁹ This event was also mentioned in the context of its impact on Sino-Yugoslav relations in Section 4.2.3. and Subchapter 5.3.

⁵⁴⁰ For a detailed overview of this process in the 1970-1972 period, see A CK SKJ IX65/I-15, "Informacija o Demokratskoj Narodnoj Republici Koreji i jugoslovensko-korejskim odnosima u vezi sa posetom ministra inostranih poslova DNR Koreje Ho Dam-a Jugoslaviji, od 26. februara do 1. marta 1972. godine," 20.02.1972., AJ, 507, pp.13-15.

the Korean War and its immediate aftermath. This interest, prior to the 1970s, was brief (1950-1954) but intense. In this short period of time, Levi and Timotijević supplied information from the ground, offering some insight into what wartime Korea and Koreans were like.

Levi tended to praise the beauty of Korean mountains but also focused on a land in ruins.⁵⁴¹ Half a world away, Yugoslavia was still recovering from the Second World War. Coverage of internal ‘reconstruction, construction and organization of the new shared country,’ pushed as an attempt to ‘treat deep war wounds,’ dominated the press since 1945.⁵⁴² Levi’s depictions of infrastructural destruction and fields stripped bare in battle offered more than just an account of Korea on the ground.⁵⁴³ His descriptions of people on dirt roads, military vehicles passing, women with children strapped to their backs, and life in challenging conditions were geographically distant yet experientially familiar to the Yugoslav public. Levi deliberately sought to connect contemporary Korea to a recent Yugoslav past both in print and in pictures.⁵⁴⁴

The most potent images were those of Korean children—for Levi, the most lamentable victims of the conflict. The first time *Borba* featured an image of a Korean child on its cover was on 8 January 1952.⁵⁴⁵ Alone in the middle of the road and looking directly at the camera, the caption read: ‘Refugee children in Busan.’⁵⁴⁶ In a front-page article about Chinese and North Korean POWs in Geoje, Levi attached a distressing image of three small children in worn-out clothes on a dirt road, explaining that they are ‘[c]hildren–refugees, a grave accusation against the aggressor.’⁵⁴⁷ In its proximity stood the ‘On the Armistice in Korea’ column with another photograph of peace negotiators, titled ‘[o]ne of the long discussions that, until now, did *not* bring peace to Korea.’⁵⁴⁸ The two images juxtaposed suggested Korean children’s suffering was perpetuated by the lack of progress in the Peace Talks. Another image *Borba* featured was of a timid-looking girl named Sun Woon, photographed peeling soybeans in front of a dugout that served her family’s home.⁵⁴⁹ Levi’s *Encounters in Asia* book also featured a photograph of two orphaned boys on the cover as well.⁵⁵⁰ The older is smiling and carrying a confused-looking younger one in the middle of the road while adults walk away in the background, their backs turned to the camera and the children. In his memoirs, Levi described the book as a collection of his ‘glimpses’ from East Asia and that this image of two brothers ‘in tatters’ profoundly affected him.⁵⁵¹ Levi added later that the decision to write extensively about ‘the beauty of nature and misery of the ordinary people of Korea’ was due to the lack of ‘hard news’ from Panmunjom.⁵⁵² His turn to, as he called it, ‘social tourism’ was a turn to a more human side of the Korean War. It stood in stark contrast to other political news about

⁵⁴¹ See, for example, Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.18.

⁵⁴² “Tihomir Stanojević: Istorijsko „ne“ Staljinu,” *Tanjug – Pola veka* (‘43-’93), p.45.

⁵⁴³ Jakov Levi, “Ratne slike u Koreji,” *Borba*, 06.01.1952., p.3.

⁵⁴⁴ Though this thesis primarily focuses on textual storytelling, Levi specifically used a combination of text and visuals to strengthen his argument. In this sense, when discussing Korea, images served as evidence of his reports and often as a substitute for things he did not articulate explicitly.

⁵⁴⁵ Jakov Levi, “U „Kimči-ekspresu“ od Seula do Fusana,” *Borba*, 08.01.1952., p.1.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁷ Jakov Levi, “U logoru zarobljenih severnokorejskih i kineskih vojnika,” *Borba*, 14.01.1952., p.1.

⁵⁴⁸ “Okolo primirja u Koreji: Još jedan neplodan dan pregovora u Panmunđonu,” *Borba*, 14.01.1952., p.1. Emphasis was added.

⁵⁴⁹ Jakov Levi, “Pesma 38 uporednika,” *Borba*, 15.01.1952., p.5.

⁵⁵⁰ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, cover.

⁵⁵¹ Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 39 and Levi, *Requiem for a Country: A History Lesson*, p.110.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*

the conflict featured daily on Borba's pages. Levi's reporting style, with a flair for the dramatic, made the ruins of Korea an essential part of the imagery of the new East Asia:

Such is Korea! Nothing in it is simple [...] Because life wrote
heavier dramas here than any [literary] genius could ever express.
Such is Korea in Asia!⁵⁵³

Timotijević did not follow suit. His focus was on the political, recording the brutality of the South Korean regime (and a note that North Korea was the 'complete unknown').⁵⁵⁴ From their writings, however different, the image that arises is of people's suffering and a land in ruins.⁵⁵⁵ However, a lack of interest and a lack of political relations with either Korea meant that experiential writings about the peninsula stopped by the end of 1954. In Yugoslav memory, this left this part of East Asia frozen in the shadow of conflict until the 1970s.

5.2. Describing Japan: A Land of Contradictions

Following the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, Yugoslavia and Japan reestablished relations in April 1952 by exchanging *note verbales*.⁵⁵⁶ By August, the Japanese chargé d'affaires ad interim, Nakamura, arrived in Belgrade.⁵⁵⁷ In November, his Yugoslav counterpart, Miša Levi, landed in Tokyo and commenced setting up the Yugoslav Mission.⁵⁵⁸ Not long after, the Head of Mission, Maksimilijan Baće, reached Japan, and the first Yugoslav diplomatic post in the region started operating in January 1953.⁵⁵⁹ Borba covered Baće's appointment on its front page from his announcement to the presentation of the *letter of credence* to Emperor Hirohito. This signaled the

⁵⁵³ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.42.

⁵⁵⁴ Kosta Timotijević, "Šta misle o Koreji," *Borba*, 28.07.1953., p.3; Kosta Timotijević, "Sing Man Rijeve „linija“," *Borba*, 27.09.1953. p.4; Kosta Timotijević, "Šta se zbiva sa Severnom Korejom," *Borba*, 29.10.1953., p.4.

⁵⁵⁵ In Yugoslavia, caricaturists added a visual dimension to the Korean War. A notable example from 1952, created for Politika, portrayed a field filled with countless graves. The image was titled 'Korean Intermezzo.' Although it may not directly correlate, it aligns with Levi's reports of Korea published in Borba during the same period. See Z. Džumhura, "Korejski intermeco," *Politika*, 13.01.1952., p.1.

⁵⁵⁶ "Jugoslavija i Japan," *Jugoslovenski pregled*, 10.1959., p.401 and Jelena Glišić, "Balancing Among Superpowers: Japan-Yugoslavia Relations during the Cold War," *Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies*, Vol.8, March 2016, pp.145-146. For information about pre-Cold War Yugoslavia-Japan relations, see Boštjan Bertalančič, "Exploring the Origins of Japanese-Yugoslav Relations during World War I through the Case of Yugoslav POWs in Japan," *The Electronic Journal of Central European Studies in Japan*, Vol.1, 2020, pp.1-15 and Nobuhiro Shiba, "A New-Formed State, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and Japan in the Early Interwar Period: Focusing on the Question of the Recognition of the New State," in Evgeniy Kandilarov and Martin Dimitrov (eds.), *Japan and the European Southeast: Over a Hundred Years of Political, Economic, Cultural and Academic Interactions*, Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2021, pp.81-92. For an interesting account of diplomatic relations between the Independent State of Croatia and Japan during WWII, see Željka Križe, "Diplomatski odnosi Nezavisne Države Hrvatske i Japana," *RADOVI-Zavod za hrvatsku povijest*, Vol.37, 2005, pp.311-323.

⁵⁵⁷ Borba published an article a day after Nakamura's arrival, quoting the envoy on alleged Japanese admiration of Yugoslav 'courage and diligence.' See "Japanski narod divi se hrabrosti i radinosti Jugoslovena—izjavio je japanski otpravnik poslova u Beogradu g. Nakamura," *Borba*, 27.08.1952., p.4.

⁵⁵⁸ "Jugoslavija i Japan," *Jugoslovenski pregled*, 10.1959., p.401. and Miša Levi, "Telegram: Naše predstavništvo u Japanu," 14.12.1952, Tokyo, DASMIP, PA, 1953-43, 4366. Levi moved to Japan with his wife Zoja and daughter Marica (Mara). For a firsthand account of their arrival to Japan, see the interview with Mara Čabrić (née Levi)—Mira Adanja Polak, *Ekskluzivno: ispred vremena*, 08.11.2020., RTS 2, Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNvxpm7hUy4> (accessed June 2022)

⁵⁵⁹ Maksimilijan Baće's had multiple nicknames, such as Maks and Milić. See Miša Levi, "Telegram: Naše predstavništvo u Japanu," 14.12.1952, Tokyo, DASMIP, PA, 1953-43, 4366.

importance of opening a Mission in Japan.⁵⁶⁰ In 1957, during Lazar Latinović's mandate as envoy, the two countries elevated relations to Embassy level.⁵⁶¹ This was likely incentivized by prospects of increased trade relations.⁵⁶² Diplomatic ties led to an influx of Yugoslav experiential writing about Japan in the long 1950s and beyond.

The broader focus in Yugoslav writings about Japan was a comparison between the past and the present. They wrote about modern Japan, comparing it to the imperial era, and emphasized differences and continuities. In 1960, for example, Bebler expressed interest in gaining a better understanding of 'Tokyo and Japan, contemporary technology and Shintoism, militarism and antimilitarism, conquering foreign countries before and current subordination' in an article from Japan.⁵⁶³ This dualism and Japan's integration of tradition and Western modernity fascinated the Yugoslavs. Within these themes, they narrowed in on domestic politics (especially the position of socialists and Japan's workers' movement), Japan's international position, its rearmament, and the question of Hiroshima. Their writings were grounded in the binary of pre- and post-WWII Japan.

5.2.1. *Making Sense of Japan: The Past, the Present, the Old, and the New*

Rarely in any country in the East will a traveler from the West find himself in such a quandary as in Japan. Because in almost none of them do old understandings and old habits intertwine with new ones as much as it is the case in Japan.⁵⁶⁴

– Vojin Šantić, 1961

Yugoslavs found the apparent contradiction of the old and the new in Japan in nearly every aspect of Japanese life. Their depictions of cities, primarily Kyoto and Tokyo, painted the image of two temporal opposites that also, paradoxically, seamlessly overlapped. Levi begins and ends his article on Kyoto with a sentence: 'It's a wonderful city, Kyoto.'⁵⁶⁵ Its meaning, however, shifts throughout his text. Though he at first marveled at the city's beauty and preserved culture, he found its 'feudal

⁵⁶⁰ "Maks Baće odlazi za poslanika u Tokio," *Borba*, 22.11.1952., p.1; "Maks Baće razrešen dužnosti i postavljen za našeg poslanika u Japanu," *Borba*, 26.11.1952., p.1; "Poslanik FNRJ u Japanu Maks Baće otputovao za Tokio," *Borba*, 09.12.1952., p.1; Photograph "Maks Baće otputovao za Tokio," *Borba*, 10.12.1952., p.3; and "Maks Baće predao akreditivne caru Hirohitsu," *Borba*, 30.12.1952., p.1.

⁵⁶¹ "Jugoslavija i Japan," *Jugoslovenski pregled*, 10.1959., p.401. Yugoslav Heads of Mission/Ambassadors in Japan in the long 1950s were: Maksimilijan Baće (1952-1954), Lazar Latinović (1955-1958), and Dr. Franc (Franček) Kos (1958-1962).

⁵⁶² The year 1957 was eventful. Japan signed its first trade agreement with a communist country—the Soviet Union. In contrast, Yugoslavia, the first socialist country to establish diplomatic ties with Japan after WWII, only managed to secure the Trade and Maritime Agreement between the two countries in 1959. Japan did, however, loan funds to Yugoslavia to build a Loznica-based viscose factory, opened in 1957. The same year, Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo visited Japan, which was seen as beneficial for fostering closer ties. See Glišić, *Japanese-Yugoslav Diplomatic Relations in the Cold War, 1952-1980*, p.116, p.125, and p.130. Šantić also featured an image of Vukmanović-Tempo receiving an award in Japan in his otherwise non-political book *Japan*. See Šantić, *Japan*, an innumerate page with photographs between p.88 and p.89.

⁵⁶³ Aleš Bebler, "Japanske zagonetke," *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3. He visited Japan as part of the Yugoslav delegation for IPU's Conference in Tokyo alongside a fellow delegate, former Yugoslav envoy to Japan, Maksimilijan Baće. The two had already represented Yugoslavia together at an IPU event before. See "Delegacija jugoslovenske grupe Interparlamentarne unije odlazi u Varšavu," *Borba*, 25.08.1959., p.1.

⁵⁶⁴ Šantić, *Japan*, p.5.

⁵⁶⁵ Jakov Levi, "Kjoto - grad drevne japanske kulture i neobičnih lepota," *Borba*, 23.01.1952., p.3.

patina' off-putting.⁵⁶⁶ The geishas of Gion were a symbol of the past adapted to modern times that he objected to, stating that 'the cruel destiny imposed on these creatures is part of Kyoto, more ancient and gloomy in its soul and breath than appearance.'⁵⁶⁷ The more he saw, the more uneasy he got. Even his language changed throughout the article to include words of significant physical distress, such as 'mental fog' and 'suffocation.'⁵⁶⁸ In later articles, he described even Japanese homes as reeking of 'patriarchal and perhaps feudal patina,' while also admiring the beauty of Japanese art hanging on the walls.⁵⁶⁹ Photographs attached to his articles featured appealing Japanese traditional architecture but warned the reader that '[t]hese are the only nice memories of Japanese feudalism.'⁵⁷⁰ Levi took an intensely critical stance on the Japanese past, yet his genuine awe and appreciation of the country's tradition were evident. However, it was as if simply enjoying Japan conflicted with his socialist principles, prompting him to rein himself in—and the reader as well. His writings were cautionary inasmuch they reminded the public in Yugoslavia of vigilance to what lurks beneath the surface of beauty inherited from feudal and imperial times.

Similarly to Kyoto, Tokyo was both marveled at and criticized. For Levi, it was a symbol of inequality as 'the Europeanized center and the Japanese periphery reflected the conditions in its economy and society' where 'contemporary Western influence [was] suppressing Japanese tradition.'⁵⁷¹ While preservation of the latter was read elsewhere as a sign of conservatism and staunch patriarchy, in Tokyo, the issue in this piece was over-Westernization. In particular, Levi linked Tokyo's Ginza district to pre-1949 Shanghai, which he described as 'a foreign stronghold on the lost land of China' created for the 'exiled representatives of white continents.'⁵⁷² Ginza exemplified Western domination and not merely Japanese Westernization. In contrast, Bebler stated that 'Tokyo is an Asian city.'⁵⁷³ He meant it pejoratively and went as far as to warn the reader not to be misled by modern accounts of Japan, writing:

Japan is an Asian country, an overcrowded country with low per capita income. Its industrial strength, past military potential, international role, literacy [rates], and culture gave us a somewhat wrong idea from afar, an idea of a higher standard, of higher [levels of] prosperity.⁵⁷⁴

In his view, in Tokyo 'people have to work like ants' and live in a chaotic, disorganized environment 'common with all the Asian cities' he visited.⁵⁷⁵ Contradictorily, elsewhere he

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Jaša Levi, "Slika u Japanskoj sobi," *Borba*, 30.03.1952., p.8.

⁵⁷⁰ Jakov Levi, "Japanski levi i desni socijalisti," *Borba*, 17.02.1952., p.5.

⁵⁷¹ Jakov Levi, "Sindikati u Japanu i zamršena stvornost zemlje i njenih ljudi," *Borba*, 23.02.1952., p.3.

⁵⁷² Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.66.

⁵⁷³ Aleš Bebler, "Japanske zagonetke," *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ '[Tokyo] has in common with all the Asian cities I have seen until then or will have seen on this journey, which differentiates it from European [cities] those, for our frames of reference, overcrowded streets with low, for human beings scant little houses, an infinite number of open small stores and craft workshops on the street. And, behind those lines of open houses, behind their back, [there was] a conglomeration of small, mainly wooden, residential little homes with small yards and gardens, built with no order, no urban planning, and therefore with crooked, narrow little streets, without street names through which cars cannot or just barely pass.' See Aleš Bebler, "Japanske zagonetke," *Borba*,

applauded Japan's industrial development and modern trains, describing them as 'better than the European.'⁵⁷⁶ His criticism was not that Japan failed to modernize but rather that parts of it failed to de-Asianize. Bebler's remarks come across as a peculiar mixture of socialist idealization of modernization (for Bebler this meant better standards of living) and European colonial rhetoric. When Bebler viewed something as negative, he compared Japan to Asia, and when he viewed it as positive, he compared it to Europe. This mimics Yugoslavia's own practice of situating itself through comparison with Western and Eastern Europe. In either case, ironically, capitalist modern Western Europe is taken as the norm.⁵⁷⁷ The Yugoslav understanding of the world along these lines was so deeply entrenched that it permeated most published narratives of Japan. Politika's correspondent Šantić, whose time in the country preceded that of Bebler, expressed his admiration for Japan in an equally Eurocentric manner.

Those who saw a lot of the world claim that the new and the old nowhere collide as fiercely as in Tokyo and that the old nowhere resists the incoming new as convulsively as in [...] Tokyo. [...] Yet [...] nowhere does that struggle yield more positive results than in Tokyo, and Japan in general, the only Asian country that can measure up to the West in many ways.⁵⁷⁸

Centering the West as the norm and superior to the rest of the world exemplifies the contradictions and inconsistencies that plagued Yugoslavia. Their depictions of Japan were often equally conflicting. Dragutin Šolajić mentions the evolving Yugoslav perception of Japan in a book written at the height of the Japanese economic boom in the 1960s.

In the multitude of [Yugoslav] texts and discussions about modern Japan, it was almost mandatory until recently to remind that Japan is no longer an old-fashioned Far Eastern country, an archipelago of sacred mountains and paper houses, archaic rickshaws, tea ceremonies and hard-working peasants who subsist on a daily two bowls of rice. The description of today's Japan takes place in the opposite direction—by presenting data on enormous economic development, data on a country that in the very near future will reach

18.11.1960., p.3. In contrast, Šantić mentions differences between Japanese and Western cities (including Yugoslavia) without sounding judgmental. See Vojin Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, Belgrade: Savremena škola, 1963, p.60. Calling Tokyo, Asian spaces, or any crowded area an 'anthill' was common in Serbo-Croatian. It did not necessarily carry a negative connotation. For usage of the same in China's case, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Od Pekinga do Kantona (usputne impresije)," *Borba*, 16.12.1958., p.3.

⁵⁷⁶ Aleš Bebler, "Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost," *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

⁵⁷⁷ This reminds of Benedict Anderson's comment about how socialist states related to the capitalist West in a contradictory manner. He writes that, 'capitalism and Marxism, are *inventions*, on which patents are impossible to preserve. They are there, so to speak, for pirating. Out of these piracies and *only* out of them, comes this well-known anomaly: societies such as those of Cuba, Albania, and China, which, insofar as they are revolutionary-socialist, conceive of themselves as "ahead" of those of France, Switzerland, and the United States, but which, insofar as they are characterized by low productivity, miserable living standards, and backward technology, are no less certainly understood as "behind." (Thus Chou En-lai's melancholy dream of catching up with capitalist Britain by the year 2000.)' See Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, p.156.

⁵⁷⁸ Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, p.50 and p.52.

the most developed industrial powers of the world, and, in due time, even surpass them in many branches of industry.⁵⁷⁹

Though something profound changed in Yugoslav narratives of Japan throughout the 1960s, other writings published around the time of Bebler's articles found Japan and Tokyo to be a positive combination of East and West. What left Yugoslavs puzzled or critical would simultaneously leave them awestruck. Bogojević wrote that what seemed irreconcilable to him, to 'a Japanese, a man of practical spirit,' was not unusual.⁵⁸⁰ What he perceived as moving 'from one extreme to the other' was the norm in this country.⁵⁸¹ Even Bebler admired the Japanese for their 'brilliant trait' to 'adopt the foreign if it proves itself beneficial' and adapt it to local needs and context.⁵⁸² Moreover, the Japanese could perfect what they adopted, influencing the West in return (especially with their competitive products on the market).⁵⁸³ Japan, a land of contradictions, fascinated them.

Over the course of this decade, a dozen experiential authors produced a multitude of observations and conclusions, often contradictory and paradoxical. In many ways, these Yugoslav Japan narratives underlined profound internal inconsistencies in Yugoslavia. While vocally anti-Western, Yugoslavs held the West in high esteem, looking up to their modernization model as the ultimate path to progress. Moreover, while their socialist anti-imperialism may have led to outspoken and consistent criticism of Western colonialism, they also unquestionably embraced Eurocentric worldviews and rhetoric on progress and modernization. The same debates manifest in these writings, where the authors' European-ness was consistently reaffirmed in relation to non-European spaces, such as Japan and East Asia.

5.2.2. *Analyzing Internal Affairs: Japanese Politics and the Workers' Movement*

Throughout the 1950s, Yugoslavs traveling to Japan expressed a deep interest in its politics. They described its internal affairs as complex but divisible into parties that supported the U.S. (and the associated security treaties) and those that didn't.⁵⁸⁴ How each party navigated this and other questions was part of Yugoslav journalists' interviews with Japanese party leaders on multiple occasions.⁵⁸⁵ After the Korean War ended, they discussed primarily Japanese domestic politics, rearmament, and Sino-Japanese relations, indicating what Belgrade found most relevant.⁵⁸⁶ From Timotijević onward, they also asked about Yugoslavia-Japan ties.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁷⁹ Šolajić, *Stogodišnji Japan*, p.3. For more information about the Japanese economic miracle in this period and the U.S. role in it, see Michael Beckley, Yusaku Horiuchi and Jennifer M. Miller, "America's Role in the Making of Japanese Economic Miracle," *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 2018, Vol.18, pp.1-21.

⁵⁸⁰ Đorđe Bogojević, "Dva lica Tokija," *Borba*, 29.05.1960., p.7.

⁵⁸¹ Bogojević was both mystified and impressed by the Japanese mixture of kabuki and Western movie styles in their film industry. See Đorđe Bogojević, "Priča o poljupcu i ostalom," *Borba*, 16.05.1960., p.6.

⁵⁸² Aleš Bebler, "Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost," *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

⁵⁸³ D. Šolajić, "Ofanziva japanskih kamera na Evropu," *Borba*, 22.02.1963., p.3.

⁵⁸⁴ Jakov Levi, "Razgovori o problemima savremenog Japana," *Borba*, 20.02.1952., p.3; Kosta Timotijević, "Japanski vodeći političari o problemima svoje zemlje," *Borba*, 29.12.1953., p.4; Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, p.247.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ The most elaborate reports came from Timotijević, who spent three years in Japan as *Borba*'s correspondent (1953-1956). His first article on Japanese politics was Kosta Timotijević, "Nova dijeta za Dijetu," *Borba*, 17.06.1953., p.4.

⁵⁸⁷ Timotijević specifically asked them the following: 'Do you think that Japan and Yugoslavia have common interests and aspirations, and if so, in what way?' See Kosta Timotijević, "Japanski vodeći političari o problemima svoje zemlje," *Borba*, 29.12.1953., p.4.

Yugoslavs were particularly curious about the Japanese socialists' division into the Leftists and Rightists and the subsequent changes to their parties.⁵⁸⁸ How each faction was received by other Asian socialist parties and groups was of interest to them as well.⁵⁸⁹ This is likely because they were looking for a compatible ally in Japan. Shortly after the socialists divided into two parties, Levi noted that the Leftists were crafting their foreign policy approach 'akin to the [...] Indian socialists' and as part of the 'expanding neutral bloc that India is suggesting in Asia.'⁵⁹⁰ He also quoted his Left Socialist interviewee as saying that their choice of foreign policy came after the realization that 'neither of the two blocs can leave Asia out of their calculations' because of 'Asia's potential in population and resources.'⁵⁹¹ Yugoslavs appreciated Left Socialists' foreign politics and stance on the question of Japanese rearmament. In 1954, Timotijević reported that Left Socialists were the main party 'energetically against all [and any] rearming.'⁵⁹²

Yugoslavs also paid special attention to the Japanese workers' movement, emphasizing forces at play against it. Timotijević reported that the 'Japanese bourgeoisie were, and basically remained, one of the cruelest oppressors and stiflers of the workers' movement.'⁵⁹³ Levi, on the other hand, emphasized the 'working people of Japan, in their everyday struggle for life,' awakened and were moving past the narratives that shaped their country before capitulation.⁵⁹⁴ Japan's domestic and foreign issues, as well as the 'abnormal conditions [...] on the Asian soil' with the superpower tug-of-war, were read as having had a disintegrating effect on the Japanese labor movement.⁵⁹⁵ This was discussed at length in their interviews with the leadership of Sōhyō, '[t]he biggest existing alliance of syndical federations' in the country.⁵⁹⁶ Interestingly, it was only in extensive, later texts, such as Šolajić's 1968 book on Japan, that Yugoslavs acknowledged that 'the right of workers for syndical organization was guaranteed' for the first time in Japan under the U.S. occupation.⁵⁹⁷ Sōhyō was its direct result.

When speaking with political figures and Sōhyō's leadership, Yugoslavs inquired extensively about trade prospects with Mao's China and potential for Sino-Japanese political relations.⁵⁹⁸ In 1960, Bebler even reported that during their short stay in the country, his delegation 'asked numerous times in all our conversations with Japanese politicians in Tokyo' about Japan's relations with the PRC.⁵⁹⁹ Intraregional dynamics, especially as influenced by the U.S. presence in Japan, were followed with interest in Belgrade.

⁵⁸⁸ These differed from the Japanese Communist Party that was also covered by the Yugoslavs in their writings. See Jakov Levi, "Krivudavim stazama Kominforma: Linija KP Japana po moskovskom vetrokazu," *Borba*, 12.02.1952., p.5.

⁵⁸⁹ Vlado Teslić, "Dve socijalističke partije Japana," *Borba*, 17.01.1953., p.4.

⁵⁹⁰ Jakov Levi, "Japanski levi i desni socijalisti," *Borba*, 17.02.1952., p.5.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Kosta Timotijević, "Akutna kriza i tekući poslovi," *Borba*, 14.03.1954., p.4. His article was announced on the cover page, "Borba u ovom broju donosi," *Borba*, 14.03.1954., p.1.

⁵⁹³ Kosta Timotijević, "Pomeranja u sindikatima „Sohio“ u Japanu," *Borba*, 17.08.1953., p.3.

⁵⁹⁴ Jakov Levi, "Hirošima – novi grad na mestu gde je 1945 godine bila pustoš," *Borba*, 27.01.1952., p.5.

⁵⁹⁵ Kosta Timotijević, "Pomeranja u sindikatima „Sohio“ u Japanu," *Borba*, 17.08.1953., p.3.

⁵⁹⁶ See articles from Jakov Levi, "Sindikati u Japanu i zamršena stvarnost zemlje i njenih ljudi," *Borba*, 23.02.1952., p.2 to "Prolećna ofanziva japanskih sindikata," *Borba*, 24.04.1962., p.3.

⁵⁹⁷ Šolajić, *Stogodišnji Japan*, pp.14-15.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Aleš Bebler, "Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost," *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7. For an overview of Sino-Japanese relations (or lack thereof) under U.S. occupation of Japan and after, see Šantić, *Japan*, p.65 and pp.82-85.

5.2.3. Modern Japan in Context: Before and After Hiroshima

Writing about 1950s Japan required contextualization in Yugoslavia. For this reason, experiential writings included brief historical overviews or the author's personal reflections.⁶⁰⁰ Most often, explanations started with the Meiji Restoration, but sometimes went further into the past, mentioning even the Dutch trade with the Tokugawa Shogunate.⁶⁰¹ Historicizing modern Japan provided greater clarity and context for the Yugoslav public. Moreover, their articles were purposefully organized to depict the dualism of imperial and post-imperial Japan, as well as the transition that occurred. This was a byproduct of the Yugoslav obsession with comparing the past and the present, the old and the new, the backward and the progressive. In Japan's case, they used the bombing of Hiroshima as a moment of delineation between the two. This event was a source of modern Japanese people's 'deeply ingrained fear of war' as well as 'nuclear destruction and atomic radiation.'⁶⁰² Yugoslavs also saw it as an event that put a stop to 'Japanese fanaticism' of the imperial era.⁶⁰³ The Japanese imperial past, as Levi narrated it, was 'military clique[s]' tricking the subjugated masses and leading them into oblivion.⁶⁰⁴ His classist analysis effectively absolved the masses by assigning blame to a select few at the top. In the following years, the Yugoslav narrative on Japan evolved beyond this dualism to include (extensive) information about everyday life, ranging from home decorations and eating habits to educational systems and books.⁶⁰⁵ By 1961, forceful, ideology-driven articles about Japan were rare. Yugoslav fascination with Japan, a land of contradictions, grew in new ways.

5.3. Documenting China: A Land of Progress

New Yugoslavia rejoiced at the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.⁶⁰⁶ Shortly after, Belgrade sent a telegram of recognition, however, Beijing did not respond.⁶⁰⁷ The 1948 Tito-Stalin split hindered any prospects of the two countries establishing bilateral ties. China was firmly

⁶⁰⁰ See, among others, Jakov Levi, "Hirošima – novi grad na mestu gde je 1945 godine bila pustoš," *Borba*, 27.01.1952., p.5.

⁶⁰¹ See, for example, Aleš Bebler, "Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost," *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

⁶⁰² Branko Bogunović, "Da li u osnovi svega leži Hirošima?," *Borba*, 02.07.1960., p.3.

⁶⁰³ Kosta Timotijević, "Oko japanskog naoružanja," *Borba*, 12.07.1953., p.4.

⁶⁰⁴ 'Yes, all people [in the world] are friends, but they often need great strength to lead their countries on the path of friendship with others and the path of peace and cooperation. The Japanese did not have that strength in the past war. They believe they will have it in the future.' Levi argued the same in Korea over the culpability (or lack thereof) of North Korean and Chinese soldiers. See Jakov Levi, "Hirošima – novi grad na mestu gde je 1945 godine bila pustoš," *Borba*, 27.01.1952., p.5 and "U logoru zarobljenih severnokorejskih i kineskih vojnika," *Borba*, 14.01.1952., p.1.

⁶⁰⁵ See, for example, Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, op.cit.

⁶⁰⁶ Jovan Čavoški found that the first direct contact between the Chinese and Yugoslav communists occurred in 1947. After meeting with envoys from Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, Tito chose not to recognize Republican China and to wait for the Chinese Civil War's outcome, hoping for a communist victory. See Jovan Čavoški, "Overstepping the Balkan Boundaries: The lesser known history of Yugoslavia's early relations with Asian countries (new evidence from Yugoslav/Serbian Archives)," *Cold War History*, 2011, Vol.1, No.4., pp.557-577. For information about Chinese communist writings about Yugoslavia following this episode, see Stopić, *Sino-Yugoslavian cooperation and divergences in the Cold War context: mutual relations within the Communist Bloc, the Third World and the United Nations (1948-1971)*, pp.15-16, note 8.

⁶⁰⁷ Vladimir Popović, the future first Yugoslav ambassador to China, undersigned this telegram: 'The people of our country know that this event is of historic importance, that it is the result of magnificent victories of the Chinese people, that it means the realization of a genuinely free, truly democratic and independent China and that it represents an invaluable contribution to world peace.' As recorded in Stopić, *Sino-Yugoslavian cooperation and divergences in the Cold War context: mutual relations within the Communist Bloc, the Third World and the United Nations (1948-1971)*, p.59.

in the Soviet-led bloc, criticizing Yugoslavia.⁶⁰⁸ The Korean War further exacerbated differences between the two countries, leading to charged interactions during rare encounters in the international milieu.⁶⁰⁹ Only after the Belgrade–Moscow rapprochement of 1954, at the instigation of Khrushchev, were concrete steps made to establish Sino-Yugoslav relations.⁶¹⁰ Their diplomatic ties were forged on 2 January 1955, and within a matter of months, the ambassadors arrived at their new posts: Wu Xiuquan in Belgrade and Vladimir Popović in Beijing.⁶¹¹ A three-year window of extensive political, cultural, and economic cooperation began.

For a moment, it seemed like Yugoslavia and China had moved past their differences. The first Yugoslav journalist in Beijing, Živko Milić, asked Zhou Enlai in a 1955 interview whether unresolved ideological issues between (unspecified) socialist countries could hinder their ties. This indirectly pointed to perceived incompatibilities between Yugoslav and Chinese socialism. Zhou noted that the two sides should focus on similarities rather than differences. Answering a separate question, he also praised the Belgrade Declaration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union (that is, their rapprochement) as a significant step for the ‘reduction of tensions and peaceful coexistence among peoples’ in the world.⁶¹² In doing so, he touched on the well-known Chinese stance at the time that Moscow had and should have a leading position in the socialist bloc.

The development of relations between Yugoslavia and China was shaped by the Soviet Union from the outset. It created a dynamic of a political triangle between the three countries.⁶¹³ Yugoslavs, however, resisted Moscow’s intermediary role. In their writings about the PRC, whether experiential or not, they attempted to build a shared narrative with China directly. Ambassador Popović is recorded to have said prior to his departure to China, that ‘though spatially distant, what connects us is the struggle for independence, freedom, and the construction of a better life.’⁶¹⁴ Yugoslav articles from Beijing quoted Chinese officials who pointed to the same, such as the two countries having ‘a similar history’ and shared objectives for the future.⁶¹⁵ At home, Yugoslav China-related texts highlighted their enduring admiration of the Chinese ‘struggle for liberation

⁶⁰⁸ Stopić, “Pisani odnosi s NR Kinom: što su, kako i kada Kinezi pisali o Jugoslaviji i Hrvatskoj,” pp.139-142.

⁶⁰⁹ See Chapter 3 for accounts of Levi’s encounters with the Chinese correspondent in Panmunjom and Aleš Bebler’s interaction with Wu Xiuquan at the U.N. in New York. For the latter, also see Stopić et al., “Toward Nonalignment: The Improbable and Fateful Intersection of Yugoslavia and China in the Early Cold War, 1948-1951,” p.8.

⁶¹⁰ See Stopić, *Sino-Yugoslavian Cooperation and Divergences in the Cold War Context: Mutual Relations Within the Communist Bloc, the Third World and the United Nations (1948-1971)*, p.25. Also referenced in Bogojević, *Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980)*, p.21.

⁶¹¹ For more information about Wu’s account of Sino-Yugoslav relations in 1955-1958, see Wǔ Xiūquán chuán biānxiě zǔ, *Wǔ Xiūquán chuán*, Beijing: Contemporary Chinese Publishing House, 2016, pp.178-193. For excerpts from Vladimir Popović’s China diaries, see Marko Špadijer, *Vladimir Popović Španac: 1914-1972: biografska priča i sjećanja savremenika*, Zagreb: Skaner studion: Nacionalna zajednica Crnogoraca Hrvatske, 2012.

⁶¹² Živko Milić, “Intervju kineskog premijera Ču En Laja saradniku „Politike“: Jugoslovenska politika unapređenja mirne koegzistencije uživa našu podršku,” *Politika*, 13.11.1955.

⁶¹³ When Zhou Enlai sent a response to the Yugoslav 1949 telegram of recognition in late 1954, Tito was on a state visit to India. In his private conversations with Nehru, he discussed Moscow’s influence over Beijing and the prospects of its independence from Soviet control. See Rajak, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War: Reconciliation, comradeship, confrontation, 1953-1957*, p.102.

⁶¹⁴ “Izjava ambasadora Vladimira Popovića pred odlazak u Peking: S Kinom nas povezuje borba za nezavisnost i izgradnju boljeg života,” *Politika*, 08.06.1955., p.4.

⁶¹⁵ Vlado Teslić, “Priateljski osećaji,” *Borba*, 27.09.1955., p.3.

and development.⁶¹⁶ They also recorded that the Chinese reciprocated.⁶¹⁷ Bogojević highlighted China's admiration for Yugoslav heroism and credited the success of their bilateral cooperation to the 'unlimited sympathies and compassion' between the people of the two countries.⁶¹⁸ Through a growing number of texts, Yugoslavs were cultivating an image of an unmediated relationship with China. In 1955, Teslić had already argued that Moscow was no longer relevant in Sino-Yugoslav bilateral relations. He wrote that

[n]ow and then, a thesis is developed that the improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia means a great victory for the so-called peace-loving democratic camp and that it is an important guarantee for the development of friendly cooperation between China and Yugoslavia. More frequent are, however, the views that do not limit the perspectives of Yugoslav-Chinese cooperation [by tying it to Moscow] and that stem from the conviction that only the politics of Yugoslavia, both foreign and domestic, is the most important guarantee of close relations and versatile exchange of experiences between our two countries.⁶¹⁹

Teslić's paragraph outlines the differences between the Chinese and Yugoslav understanding of their relations. The first part reflects how the Chinese related to Yugoslavia, insisting perpetually that 'Yugoslavia return[ed] to the fraternal family' of socialist states, under the auspices of Moscow.⁶²⁰ The second is what Yugoslavs aimed for, yet China was simply not ready to entertain: bilateral relations beyond the confines of the socialist camp and Moscow. Their desired unmediated political relations could not simply be written and imagined into existence. Teslić was, however, partially right. Yugoslav internal and foreign affairs were, in the end, what affected their bilateral relations with the PRC most. Official Belgrade's reaction to the 1956 Polish October, the Soviet intervention in Hungary, and refusal to take part in the Moscow Meeting of All Communist Parties the following year, made Beijing wary.⁶²¹ At each step, Yugoslav independence, foreign politics, and unorthodox practice of socialism irritated the Chinese. The 1958 liberal draft program for the

⁶¹⁶ In a brief article titled 'The Anniversary of the People's Revolution in China,' the new era of Sino-Yugoslav relations was affirmed: 'Twenty-five years lasted the persistent and arduous struggle of the Chinese people for the country's independence from feudalism and colonialism. [...] PR China is fighting to overcome a thousand-year-long backwardness. [...] Our working people and the entire nation followed the struggle for liberation and development of the People's Revolution in China, [and] with joy salute its success, especially this final, great victory.' See "Godišnjica Narodne revolucije u Kini," *Borba*, 01.10.1955., p.3 and Dragi Stamenković, *Sa puta po Kini*, Belgrade: Prosveta, 1956, Instead of a Preface.

⁶¹⁷ Vljeko Begović, "Bilješke o suvremenoj Kini," *Borba*, 23.06.1955., p.3.

⁶¹⁸ Dorđe Bogojević, "„Osećajte se kao kod svoje kuće“ Kina toplo pozdravlja pretstavnike Jugoslavije," *Borba*, 29.09.1957., p.5.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ See Jovan Čavoški, "Shaping Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment: The Sino-Yugoslav Struggle for Leadership in the Third World during the 1950s and 1960s," in Martin Previšić (ed.), *Breaking Down Bipolarity: Yugoslavia's Foreign Relations during the Cold War*, Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 202, p.82. Also referenced in Bogojević, "Through Mistrust, Resistance, and 'Spring Tide': A Brief History of Sino-Yugoslav Cultural Cooperation in the 1950s," pending publication by Routledge, 2025.

⁶²¹ For more context, see Aleksandr S. Stykalin, "Soviet-Yugoslav Relations and the Case of Imre Nagy," *Cold War History*, Vol.5, No.1, 2005, pp.3-22 and Shen Zhihua (ed.), *A Short History of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1917-1991*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp.189-207. Note that this was not the only time Yugoslavs declined the invitation to attend such a meeting in Moscow. They refused to participate in the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties in Moscow as well. China did not participate then either.

7th LCY Congress marked the tipping point.⁶²² The Chinese subsequently unilaterally stopped all cooperation with Yugoslavia.⁶²³ This meant that the position of Yugoslav correspondents in Beijing changed from 1958 onward. They had less access to events and had to readapt their writings to fit this new reality.⁶²⁴ The PRC also began then a rampant anti-Yugoslav campaign that persisted for a long time, with the two countries only and reservedly normalizing relations in the early 1970s. Entertainingly, their rapprochement was a byproduct of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, recentering Moscow as part of their bilateral dynamic.

From the moment Yugoslavia and China established relations in 1955, Yugoslavs wrote prolifically about the PRC. Their experiential articles were published across major domestic newspapers. Within a three-year window of favorable relations, with many Yugoslavs visiting the country, a high number of travel books graced the shelves of Yugoslav bookstores. These writings (articles and books) were thematically structured to highlight differences between the old and new China. Although they took a similar approach in their writings on Japan, they saw the Chinese tendency to relinquish, reimagine, and reframe the old rather than integrate it with the new as more closely aligned with their socialist perspectives. Consequently, China was read not as a land of contradictions but a land of progress.

5.3.1. Pre-1955: A Guessing Game

Sino-Soviet relations were Yugoslavia's primary regional concern in the early 1950s. This was documented well in Levi's and Timotijević's writings from the region before the two countries established relations. Though they never visited the PRC, their China-specific texts are included in this chapter to provide a clearer overview of how Yugoslav narratives about it evolved through the 1950s. Levi's first direct story about the Chinese was published following his visit to the Geoje POW camp on the Korean peninsula. He called the imprisoned men, many suffering from considerable bodily injuries, 'one deceived generation of the Chinese people's fighters.'⁶²⁵ He then narrowed in on one man, named Chu.

Chu is Chinese. He was a farmer and loved his rice field: [it was] small, but for him, it meant everything. He loved the authorities who promised and gave him that land. And he fought for it in different [military] units from his native area. Then, last November, they [the authorities] ordered him to move with his entire unit. In Kaiyuan, they were put in wagons. They left them in Korea. They told them they were fighting Chiang Kai-shek, who was on his way to return

⁶²² These key events, contributing to the Sino-Yugoslav deterioration of relations, were also mentioned in the previous chapter (see Section 4.2.3.).

⁶²³ For an account of Sino-Yugoslav deterioration of relations from the perspective of cultural relations at this time, see Bogojević, *Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980)*, pp.52-54. For information on political and trade relations, as well the refusal to grant Ambassador Popović a return visa, see Stopić, *Sino-Yugoslavian cooperation and divergences in the Cold War context: mutual relations within the Communist Bloc, the Third World and the United Nations (1948-1971)*, p.33.

⁶²⁴ This is observable in their reporting. While until Spring 1958 they featured many interviews with Chinese citizens, politicians, and public figures, from here on, Yugoslav correspondents mostly relied on Chinese press publications as sources for their articles. Stopić also found in Yugoslav archives that Bogojević was 'sent away by Xinhua' from an event in 1958. Details remain unclear but Bogojević stayed in Beijing for another two years, supplying *Borba* with articles on a regular basis. See Stopić, *Sino-Yugoslavian cooperation and divergences in the Cold War context: mutual relations within the Communist Bloc, the Third World and the United Nations (1948-1971)*, p.33.

⁶²⁵ Jakov Levi, "U logoru zarobljenih severnokorejskih i kineskih vojnika," *Borba*, 14.01.1952., p.1.

the land to landowners. To others—like his neighbor in the hospital, for example—they said that they were going to defend China from “American imperialists that want to conquer it.”⁶²⁶

This paragraph reveals how Levi imagined China: poor rice field farmers gaining a humble piece of land through their communist revolution after a long struggle against Chiang Kai-shek and the bourgeoisie. In this mixture of his political beliefs and stereotypes of Chinese peasants, his lack of new information is evident. He attempted to gather further insights in British Hong Kong, which he called ‘the observatory of China.’⁶²⁷ Though he reported on the smuggling across the Sino-British border and speculated on Sino-Soviet relations, ‘the most fundamental issue of the Far East,’ he uncovered no concrete answers or news concerning life in mainland China itself.⁶²⁸ This led him to spell out ‘the question of utmost importance,’ as he perceived it: ‘What are the actual relations between Moscow and Beijing, that is, what and how deep are their undoubtedly existent contradictions and disagreements?’⁶²⁹

For years, Yugoslavia tried to gain insight into this relationship, anticipating a rift in Sino-Soviet relations. But they had no access to mainland China to confirm their musings. Hence during the 1954 British Labor delegation’s visit to the PRC, Yugoslav journalists followed with intense interest. Timotijević reported on the visit from Japan, reminding the readers just how little he felt was known about China and that both ‘[pro-]Chinese and anti-Chinese propaganda’ were rampant in global discourses about the country.⁶³⁰ Some members of the British delegation reported that ‘no visible signs of Soviet domination could be found’ and that Beijing was uninterested in ‘playing second fiddle’ to Moscow, yet Yugoslavs remained unconvinced.⁶³¹ Timotijević even warned that all reports should be taken with a pinch of salt as people ‘with [their] different eyes and different reasons see some and overlook other things.’⁶³² The guessing game ended in 1955.

5.3.2. *Post-1955: Idealizing New China*

With great interest and honest sympathies, our people follow significant revolutionary changes taking place in China. About that distant Asian country, with which we established formal relations just recently, little has been written in our [land]. The information we found about China was, until not long ago, very scant and insufficient.⁶³³

— Dragi Stamenković, 1956

When Yugoslavs finally reached the PRC in 1955, their foremost fascination was the ideological and infrastructural building of new China. They traveled far and wide across the country, mostly on trips organized by the Chinese state.⁶³⁴ They also gathered information about nearly every

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ Jakov Levi, “Politička budućnost Kine iz hongkonške perspektive,” *Borba*, 26.02.1952., p.5.

⁶²⁸ Ibid. Also see Jakov Levi, “Luka na kineskom moru,” *Borba*, 24.02.1952., p.5.

⁶²⁹ Jaša Levi, “Kineski znak pitanja,” *Borba*, 18.09.1952., p.3.

⁶³⁰ Kosta Timotijević, “Izveštaj o Kini,” *Borba*, 21.09.1954., p.4.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Kosta Timotijević, “Laburisti u Japanu,” *Borba*, 22.09.1954., p.4.

⁶³³ Stamenković, *Sa puta po Kini*, Instead of a Preface.

⁶³⁴ See, among others, Vlado Teslić, “Kantonska škola,” *Borba*, 29.11-01.12.1955., p.7 and Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Grad na ušću Jangceckjanga.

aspect of the country's daily life, including numerous articles about sports and Chinese cultural activities.⁶³⁵ Marinković, in particular, tried to convey even the smallest details, from people she passed, stores, products, and children to Chinese hutong homes, narrow streets, and much more.⁶³⁶ This style of reporting started with the written accounts of first group of Yugoslavs visiting China in the spring of 1955. After a one-month stay in the country, Dragi Stamenković published a series of diary-like articles in *Politika*, while Vlado Begović shared his in *Borba*.⁶³⁷ Decades later, Stamenković noted that *Politika*'s director, Danilo Purić, never asked permission to share his diary publicly.⁶³⁸ In other words, experiential China-related content was in demand. Stamenković's *From a Road Across China* (Sa puta po Kini) travel book was published the following year.⁶³⁹

From Stamenković and Begović onward, Yugoslav experiential writings covered China's development in the minutest detail. The overarching theme, however, was progress. China was presented as a state moving fast from feudalism into the modern age.⁶⁴⁰ The starting point of China's progress, as Teslić noted, was their 'revolution [that] just bit into and hinted at' all that needed to be done.⁶⁴¹ The 1950s brought new roads and bridges alongside new norms and other improvements, which stood as evidence of the country's march forward. Yugoslavs even noted the notorious Chinese rivers being tamed under socialism.⁶⁴² Yugoslavs praised China shedding the

⁶³⁵ For a beautiful article about everyday China and its relationship with water—its rivers, really. See Đorđe Bogojević, "Beskrajni vodeni putevi," *Borba*, 1-3.05.1958., p.7. For an article on a trivial topic, see Đorđe Bogojević, "„Snežni čovek“ u očima Baj Sina," *Borba*, 16.02.1958., p.4. For an article about archeological findings, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Iz tame vekova," *Borba*, 02.06.1957., p.7. For 'everyday' stories from China, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Mogle bi to i priče biti," *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.4. For sports, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Pola metra za 5 godina," *Borba*, 05.12.1957., p.8. Some articles reported on Sino-Yugoslav exchanges from China. E.g. for the visit of the Yugoslav basketball team to the PRC, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Zanimljive i uzbudljive borbe," *Borba*, 17.03.1957., p.11. For the visit of the Branko Krsmanović Folklore Ensemble, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Prve pretstave i prvi uspesi," *Borba*, 03.12.1957., p.5.

⁶³⁶ This impulse to grasp and document China in its entirety, as she perceived it, is reflected best in a chapter of her travel book that she chose to publish in full in literary and art magazines. See, for example, Nada Marinković, "Između osećanja i misli," *Polja*, 1957, No.3, p.3.

⁶³⁷ See Dragi Stamenković, "U Pekingu," *Politika*, 20.06.1955., p.3; Dragi Stamenković, "Na proslavi," *Politika*, 22.06.1955., p.3; Dragi Stamenković, "U Šangaju," *Politika*, 23.06.1955., p.3; Dragi Stamenković, "Razgovor s gradskim rukovodiocima," *Politika*, 24.06.1955., p.3; Dragi Stamenković, "U severoistočnoj oblasti," *Politika*, 25.06.1955., p.3; Dragi Stamenković, "Poseta Kantonu," *Politika*, 26.06.1955., p.4; Dragi Stamenković, "Jedinstvo kineskog naroda," *Politika*, 27.06.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Bilješke o suvremenoj Kini," *Borba*, 23.06.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Borba za industrijalizaciju," *Borba*, 25.06.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Transport u Kini," *Borba*, 27.06.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Još o transportu," *Borba*, 28.06.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Moderna i stara tehnika građenja," *Borba*, 29.06.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "O trgovini i snadbevanju," *Borba*, 03.07.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "O životnom standardu," *Borba*, 04.07.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Ekonomska struktura," *Borba*, 05.07.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Društveni sistem," *Borba*, 06.07.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Nekoliko opštih zapažanja," *Borba*, 07.07.1955., p.3; Vlado Begović, "Borba između reka i ljudi u Kini," *Borba*, 20.07.1955., p.4; and Vlado Begović, "Žuta Reka," *Borba*, 21.07.1955., p.4.

⁶³⁸ This actually resulted in a high-ranking official, Veljko Mićunović, calling Stamenković to remind him that 'some things need to be presented in a more careful manner.' See Stamenković, *Između ideala i politike – lično kazivanje i svedočenje*, p.137.

⁶³⁹ Stamenković, *Sa puta po Kini*, 1956.

⁶⁴⁰ Vlado Teslić, "Menja se lik zemlje," *Borba*, 20.11.1955., p.4 and Vlado Teslić, "Velika svečanost u Pekingu," *Borba*, 16.10.1955., p.4.

⁶⁴¹ Vlado Teslić, "Kinezi o svom putu," *Borba*, 1-3.05.1956., p.11.

⁶⁴² Vlado Begović, "Borba između reka i ljudi u Kini," *Borba*, 20.07.1955., p.4; Vlado Begović, "Žuta Reka," *Borba*, 21.07.1955., p.4; Đorđe Bogojević, "Okovi »Reke hiljadu ogorčenja«," *Borba*, 12.05.1957., p.5; Đorđe Bogojević, "Od kamene sekire do gigantske hidrocentrale," *Borba*, 16.06.1957., p.5; Đorđe Bogojević, "Dve pobjede," *Borba*, 27.10.1957., p.5.

old to make space for the new, only in rare cases regarding a coexistence of its past and present as beneficial.⁶⁴³ Pages and pages of Yugoslav experiential texts exuded a sense of complete captivation with this new socialist country. The extent of this idealizing is almost humorous in hindsight. Baum called a line of factory chimneys in China's Northeast (Dongbei) province 'the romantics of industrialization' while Bogojević asked: 'Isn't [a story about the electro-energetic industry] also an exciting story, filled with poetry at least as much as the old legends?'⁶⁴⁴

In their overwhelmingly positive accounts of Mao's China, Yugoslavs noticeably refrained from any criticism. Stamenković's disclaimer in his book offers insight into a far more cautious approach to reporting on China than what Yugoslavs exhibited in Korea and Japan until that point.

The reader may expect to find more critical remarks and stances about contemporary China in this book. But that necessitates a far greater knowledge about this country with remarkably rich historical traditions and a glorious revolutionary past. A few weeks or a few months are too short a period for a broader and more detailed analysis of revolutionary changes and socioeconomic and political reality for a more complete understanding of the path and perspectives of Chinese development. I want to note that, in this book, if some occurrences are commented on, judgments stated, remarks added, or questions asked—it was done with good intentions coming from honest and friendly impulses.⁶⁴⁵

The authors were well attuned to socialist states' sensitivity to negative press and its impact on political relations.⁶⁴⁶ This does not mean their praise was disingenuous. Their support of China was explicit across all experiential writings in the three-year window of good relations, only toning down after 1958. It just signifies that they were unlikely to clearly state issues in China, fearing its consequences for the official relations between Belgrade and Beijing.

5.3.3. *Narrating a Story of Rebirth: The Old and New China Compared*

China's rebirth through socialism was recorded in Yugoslav experiential articles on various topics, from poverty alleviation and industrialization to technological innovation and literacy rates.⁶⁴⁷ This was described as evidence of China's awakening from a centuries-long feudal slumber and

⁶⁴³ For example, the combining of the Chinese Traditional Medicine with Western/modern medicine was seen as beneficial in treating diseases such as encephalitis. Vlado Teslić, "S kineskom medicinom protiv encefalitisa," *Borba*, 08.05.1956., p.7. Also see Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, pp.112-116.

⁶⁴⁴ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.134 and Đorđe Bogojević, "Mogle bi to i priče biti," *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.4. Also see Đorđe Bogojević, "Čelik i jabuke," *Borba*, 09.10.1957., p.3. It is also noteworthy that Vukmanović-Tempo reported that China, alongside India, was the only modernizing economy among the Asian states he visited, with ongoing industrialization and agricultural production improving from its former 'primitive condition[s].' See Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, "Utisci sa puta po Aziji i Africi: Politički odnosi i privredni razvitak," *Borba*, 10.11.1957., p.3.

⁶⁴⁵ Stamenković, *Sa puta po Kini*, Instead of a Preface.

⁶⁴⁶ For a personal account of this, see "Branko Bogunović: Na meti svetskih obaveštajaca i dobrih prijatelja," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43-'93), pp.178-179.

⁶⁴⁷ For writings about illiteracy, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Crni dani za miševе i vrapce," *Borba*, 26.01.1958., p.4 and Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, pp.105-111. For infrastructural progress, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Dve pobede," *Borba*, 27.10.1957., p.5. For technological innovation, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Susreti u Šangaju," *Borba*, 03.11.1957., p.5. For agricultural plans, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Posle dve godine," *Borba*, 22.11.1957., p.4.

oppression.⁶⁴⁸ It was celebrated as ‘the most potent example’ of broader trends in Asia, with Boškov writing that ‘the influence of the Communist Party of China is so strong that the rebirth of people is felt at every step.’⁶⁴⁹ Yugoslavs narrated China’s shift from the old to the new visually by emphasizing China’s youthfulness.⁶⁵⁰ They wrote about young people’s energy and the omnipresence of children.⁶⁵¹ The country’s rebirth was literal and comparable to how Yugoslavia saw itself.⁶⁵² Socialism was the means of progress that would ensure that even the orphans encountered on China’s streets ‘would live better’ one day.⁶⁵³ Teslić was elated about the changing ‘face’ of China ‘through the bright, strong, and eager-for-knowledge youth.’⁶⁵⁴

The man Yugoslavs credited and praised for this leap forward—the true face of new China—was, of course, Mao Zedong.⁶⁵⁵ Whenever they met him, they noted it in their writings.⁶⁵⁶ Marinković spoke about Mao in the superlative, sharing verses of his poems in her travelogue.⁶⁵⁷ Bogojević did as well.⁶⁵⁸ Following the old versus new narrative, Mao’s image in Yugoslavia was cultivated in parallel to the negative image of the ‘immoral’ Chiang Kai-shek.⁶⁵⁹ They depicted him as a betrayer of the Chinese people, mainly because of his violent approach to the workers and socialists in the interwar period.⁶⁶⁰ Yugoslavs also compared Chiang with Draža Mihajlović, the leader of the Chetniks, both demonizing him and cultivating a shared narrative with Chinese socialists of their comparable revolutionary and wartime experiences. According to the Yugoslavs, the Chinese

⁶⁴⁸ Marinković found some parts of it still ‘not fully awoken,’ but trusted that, under CCP’s leadership, China would move in the right direction. See Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Pirinač.

⁶⁴⁹ Boškov, *Aziska turneja*, p.64.

⁶⁵⁰ In rare cases, China’s growing population was discussed in the context of its negative impact on the economy. See Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, “Utisci sa puta po Aziji i Africi: Politički odnosi i privredni razvitak,” *Borba*, 10.11.1957., p.3. By the early 1960s, Yugoslav correspondents were reporting on new Chinese measures to control natality rates for this exact reason. See Vasil Magdeski, “Kontrola priraštaja stanovništva,” *Borba*, 03.10.1963., p.3.

⁶⁵¹ Children left the ‘main impression’ from China on Marinković during her travels. She found her first ten days in China packed with superficial politeness and distance, which distressed her. Only after an encounter with Beijing’s children did she feel embraced by this new, unfamiliar country she found herself in: ‘All red doors of China are opening. Gently, with children in my arms, I entered through open doors; I entered the city [of Beijing] for the first time.’ Moreover, she noted that children’s openness toward her emboldened her to seek friendship with her French-to-Chinese translator, Mei-mi. This story was highlighted in Nada Marinković, “Između osećanja i misli,” *Polja*, 1957, No.3, p.9. Also see Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter *Svet u kapljici rose*.

⁶⁵² See, for example, this article on Yugoslavia as ‘the land of young people’: “Jugoslaveni u brojka: Zemlja mladih ljudi,” *Vjesnik*, 18.08.1957., p.3.

⁶⁵³ Vlado Teslić, “Razgovor s kantonskim trgovcem,” *Borba*, 16.01.1956., p.3. For an account of children in the communes, see Đorđe Bogojević, “Intelektualac s lopatom,” *Borba*, 15.12.1957., p.4. Everything the CCP did was seen as beneficial for China’s youth until the late 1950s and early 1960s, when Yugoslavs subtly began expressing concern over the impact of some policies on children. See Đorđe Bogojević, “„Neka svaki čovek sakuplja đubrivo,”” *Borba*, 01.02.1959., p.7 and Vasil Magdeski, “Vaspitavanje dece u klasnom duhu,” *Borba*, 22.02.1963., p.3.

⁶⁵⁴ Vlado Teslić, “Menja se lik zemlje,” *Borba*, 20.11.1955., p.4.

⁶⁵⁵ His speeches were analyzed and discussed, showcasing Yugoslav familiarity with Mao’s ideological output. For early examples, see Vlado Teslić, “Zadrugarstvo u Kini,” *Borba*, 08.11.1955., p.4; Vlado Teslić, “Kazalište koje je sam narod stvorio,” *Borba*, 18.11.1955., p.8; Vlado Teslić, “Kantonska škola,” *Borba*, 29.11-01.12.1955., p.7.

⁶⁵⁶ Baum, for example, noted that he ‘shook Mao Zedong’s hand twice, [and] twice spoke with Zhou Enlai.’ Half a century later, Baum shared in an interview that he recalls Mao’s handshake as ‘unpleasantly soft.’ See Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.9 and Tanja Eckstein, *Interview with Vladimir Baum*, September 2004, Centropa.

⁶⁵⁷ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Berači Zvezda.

⁶⁵⁸ Đorđe Bogojević, “Mogle bi to i priče biti,” *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.4 and Đorđe Bogojević, “Dve pobjede,” *Borba*, 27.10.1957., p.5.

⁶⁵⁹ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Berači zvezda and Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.193.

⁶⁶⁰ Đorđe Bogojević, “Susreti u Šangaju,” *Borba*, 03.11.1957., p.5.

side embraced this narrative.⁶⁶¹ Baum reported that Mao himself also referred to Chiang as China's Mihajlović at the 7th Congress of the CPC in 1945.⁶⁶²

Though initial Yugoslav accounts of Mao were overwhelmingly positive, this gradually shifted as they began openly discussing the cult of personality around him in the 1960s.⁶⁶³ Regardless of China's domestic issues and the trajectory of Sino-Yugoslav relations, Yugoslavs held the conviction that China was infinitely better under Mao than his predecessor, Chiang. Even at the height of Chinese criticism of Yugoslavia, during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, they wrote supportively of the PRC.⁶⁶⁴ Despite their differences, in these matters, Yugoslavia always stood firmly with socialist China. They did so not just because of socialist solidarity but because they genuinely believed Mao's regime had transformed the country by, among others, ending the 'evil' of the opium epidemic and elevating the position of women.⁶⁶⁵

Moving from addiction to empowerment, from bound feet to strong feet, and from prostitution to dignified work were all comparisons used as critical distinguishers between the vice-ridden, ill, old China and pure, healthy, new China.⁶⁶⁶ Social issues associated with old China were well documented in Yugoslav experiential writings, sometimes stemming from their socialist morality and at other times from exoticized imaginings of Asia.⁶⁶⁷ For many of China's past problems, Yugoslavs blamed Western colonialism and its associated immorality. To demonstrate this Western

⁶⁶¹ Burmese problems with Chiang Kai-shek's forces additionally irritated Yugoslavia who supported Burma militarily and at the U.N. Čavoški, "Ruka pružena preko sveta: jugoslovenska podrška Burmi u borbi protiv spoljne agresije 1951-1954," pp.143-176 and Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, pp.45-46.

⁶⁶² Interestingly, this was omitted in the 1951 edition of Mao's complete works, which Baum hoped would appear in the next one as the bilateral relations of the two countries had improved. On 13 June 1958, when Sino-Yugoslav relations soured again, he adds a postscript to the book: 'That was probably premature optimism on my part. Today it seems to me again that the passage will not appear.' See Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.201.

⁶⁶³ Lou Zanga, "Comments on China by Expelled Tanjug Correspondent," *Radio Free Europe Research*, 01.06.1967, p.5. The question of physical strength of Mao Zedong was associated with his famous swim over Yangtze, recorded in Đorđe Bogojević, "Dve pobjede," *Borba*, 27.10.1957., p.5.

⁶⁶⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, "Blokirani Kvemoj," *Borba*, 05.10.1958., p.6.

⁶⁶⁵ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, pp.183-186 and p.13.

⁶⁶⁶ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter *Srušeni Babilon* and Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, pp.183-186. Also see Marinković' lamentation over an old lady's 'broken painful feet' in Chapter *Žuta Talijska*. Others, such as Stamenković, made a reference to bound feet ('that looks terrible') in his diary published in *Politika*. See Dragi Stamenković, "U Pekingu," *Politika*, 20.06.1955., p.3.

⁶⁶⁷ Yugoslav experiential writings from Asia never failed to address the opium question. Ladislav Bruner even visited an opium den in Bangkok in 1955, calling it a place where 'decency and shame' no longer exist. Yugoslavs writing from China never saw one but mentioned opium often in the context of old China's immorality. Interestingly, opium was no stranger to the Yugoslavs. Apparently, opium production boomed in pre-World War II Yugoslavia. While its export was still internationally legal, Macedonian high-quality opium (with a much higher morphine percentage than the Chinese) was exported to the U.S., with a small portion to Japan. Some Yugoslav opium was illegally smuggled to the 'Far East' in the 1930s, with cases of failed smuggling attempts to China and Japan (packed in sardine fish tins) recorded. Moreover, officials in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia widely believed that the same tunnels used for smuggling drugs in Yugoslavia were used to smuggle communist propaganda materials. For a fascinating historical account of Yugoslav opium production in this period, see Vladan Jovanović, "Jugoslavensko-američka opijumska suradnja 1929.-1941. Godine," *ČSP*, No.1, 2018, pp.35-65 and Vladan Jovanović, *Opijum na Balkanu: Proizvodnja i promet opojnih droga 1918.-1941.*, Zagreb: AGM, 2020. See especially pp.273-281. Also see Ladislav Bruner, "Pušionica opijuma," in Fadil Hadžić (ed). *Put oko svijeta: putopisi*. Zagreb: Stvarnost – novinarska izdavačka kuća. 1962, pp.312-314. For mentions of opium in Korea, see Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.39.

lack of morals, Marinković mentioned some Frenchmen lamenting the bans on prostitution in Shanghai.⁶⁶⁸

Though Yugoslavs visiting the PRC did not have firsthand experience of pre-1949 China, they regarded British Hong Kong as an example and ‘contemporary [imperial] fossil that sustains itself on Chinese soil.’⁶⁶⁹ Baum noted it as a space where one can find not just colonialism but KMT soldiers, opium, and prostitution.⁶⁷⁰ Yugoslav disgust with Hong Kong was usually made explicit only after they visited socialist China. This change of opinion is observable in Boškov’s two accounts of Hong Kong, one from before and one after his time in socialist China. At first, he did not criticize it at all:

We knew something about Hong Kong [...] from cheap, exotic, criminal films. It’s a free port, which means, in other words, a port for smuggling, trade, criminal, [and] prostitution, as is the case with almost all free ports in Asia. Everything is on sale here, and probably something of it is being bought. [...] It would be, however, excessive to talk about Hong Kong only negatively. [...] Hong Kong leaves the impression of a contemporarily built city. In a certain sense—when the Chinese, who represent a significant part of the population, are abstracted—[Hong Kong] is a true European city.⁶⁷¹

Yet, after visiting the PRC, he expressed his dismay with Hong Kong forcefully:

All the chaos of Hong Kong, its spirit of selling anything and everything, uncomfortable contrasts of “Cadillacs” and torn-clothed residents that sleep on the sidewalks, humiliating prostitution—all that became heavier and more disgusting for us after visiting Shanghai, for which they claim was, before the Chinese revolution, like the city of Hong Kong.⁶⁷²

How Yugoslavs documented China’s rebirth, past, and Hong Kong was relationally constituted. The logic of their writing was partly a result of their own ideology and frames of reference, and partly the existing narratives in the PRC. Through direct contact with China, their opinions shifted and changed in ways that often not only adjusted narratives about the present but also about the past. An amusing example is how Yugoslavs wrote about Chinese traditional arts, as something of the people, by the people, and for the people, that is, completely separate from the influence of the former Chinese elites.⁶⁷³ If a specific form of art was viewed as a remnant of oppression, it was reframed as something that now served the masses.⁶⁷⁴ Teslić wrote that the Chinese Classical

⁶⁶⁸ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter *Srušeni Babilon*.

⁶⁶⁹ Baum, *Pod nebom jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.35.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid, pp.35-36.

⁶⁷¹ Boškov, *Aziska turneja*, pp.60-61.

⁶⁷² Ibid, p.63.

⁶⁷³ Vlado Teslić, “Kazalište koje je sam narod stvorio,” *Borba*, 18.11.1955., p.8 and Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter *Tajna uhvaćenih trenutaka*.

⁶⁷⁴ Vlado Teslić, “Pekinška opera,” *Borba*, 20.11.1955., p.7.

Theater ‘was created by the people—writers and artists from the masses’ and saw all influences from the elites as dirtying the art form’s purity.⁶⁷⁵ He also added:

As the people themselves were the authors, they couldn’t *not* realistically consider both their position and the world in which they lived. They created personalities they loved and admired [...] from life experiences or created them in their image [...] As a rule, these personalities and heroes are oppressed, persecuted, unprotected, and honest.⁶⁷⁶

For Milić, the Chinese Classical Theater was a revelation, presenting it as superior to Western art.

I did not, I admit, expect anything special. For the very least that I will, in a few moments, feel the joy like Columbus, that I will discover one of the most beautiful fantasies of this atomic century, old no more [and] no less than a thousand years. [...] In the future, whenever I find myself in the cinema or when I see the fantasy world Walt Disney created on the screen, I will always remember China. Even here, it was ahead of the world.⁶⁷⁷

These articles sent from Beijing were meant to contextualize the visit of the Chinese Classical Theater in Yugoslavia—part of the first cultural exchange between the two countries in late 1955—which *Borba* hailed as ‘[o]ne of the most important [cultural] visit of the season.’⁶⁷⁸ They needed to explain Chinese arts to the Yugoslav public, which was, as they noted, ‘accustomed to the European stage.’⁶⁷⁹ Moreover, Yugoslavs were aware of how art and culture were in service of the ideopolitical in China and sometimes even referenced Mao’s famous Yan’an speech.⁶⁸⁰ They also reported on how cultural performance was mobilized for political purposes, including measures to improve industrial production by engaging and motivating the workers, as well as generally supporting domestic policies.⁶⁸¹ During this cultural exchange, commonly made mistakes or mishaps were explained to the Yugoslav reader. For example, the difference between theater and Beijing Opera (often used interchangeably even in official documents).⁶⁸² Teslić, for example, also took it upon himself to even explain the Chinese custom of greeting each other with the ‘have you eaten already’ (*chīfānle ma*) question, digging deep into the everyday culture in the country.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁵ Vlado Teslić, “Kazalište koje je sam narod stvorio,” *Borba*, 18.11.1955., p.8.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid. Due to double negation in the original, for differentiation purposes, the emphasis is mine.

⁶⁷⁷ Živko Milić, “Kroz ceo svet: Pozorište senki – Volt Dizni pre hiljadu godina,” *Politika*, 11.09.1955., p.10.

⁶⁷⁸ M.J., “Prvi susret s Kineskim klasičnim kazalištem,” *Borba*, 13.11.1955., p.6.

⁶⁷⁹ See, for example, Vlado Teslić, “Simbolika u kineskom kazalištu,” *Borba*, 19.11.1955., p.7.

⁶⁸⁰ For references to Mao’s speech, see Vlado Teslić, “Kazalište koje je sam narod stvorio,” *Borba*, 18.11.1955., p.8 and Đorđe Bogojević, “Protiv »politike samoubistva«,” *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.7.

⁶⁸¹ Đorđe Bogojević, “„Neka umetnost služi proizvodnji“,” *Borba*, 12.05.1959., p.9; Đorđe Bogojević, “Festival aziskog filma,” *Borba*, 22.09.1957., p.7; Đorđe Bogojević, “„Opitno polje“ stihova,” *Borba*, 01.06.1958., p.8. With steadily growing issues in the country, Yugoslavs kept reporting on how those working in the cultural field were expected to support (at this point often contradictory) policies. For a plea of local writers, asking the CCP for more guidance, see Branko Bogunović, “Ponovo o kontradikcijama,” *Borba*, 10.04.1960., p.7.

⁶⁸² Vlado Teslić, “Kazalište koje je sam narod stvorio,” *Borba*, 18.11.1955., p.8. Also see Bogojević, “Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980),” p.36, note 104 and “Mesečni izveštaj za novembar 1955 godine,” *AJ*, 559, 10-23; “Plan i program za 1956. godinu / Kina / razno,” *AJ*, 559, 10-24; “Kulturna saradnja Jugoslavija- Kina 1955-1956,” *AJ*, 559, 58-128.

⁶⁸³ Vlado Teslić, “Jesi li već jeo?,” *Borba*, 05.05.1956., p.4.

Bogojević commented on the Chinese habit of drinking warm water.⁶⁸⁴ Notable personalities, such as Mei Lanfang, were written about multiple times and always with praise and admiration.⁶⁸⁵ Ding Ling, a notable female author, was also often mentioned.⁶⁸⁶ China's literature and film were discussed on many occasions, especially when contextualizing the country's development.⁶⁸⁷ In interviews with artists, like other Chinese people in general, their life stories were often presented similarly—from shambles of life in pre-1949 China to prosperity in this new communist utopia.⁶⁸⁸ The shift from the old into the new was spoken about even through accounts of architecture, with some imperial buildings eroding and new modern spaces being built. For Bogojević, such changes were 'a picture of an old life growing into a new one.'⁶⁸⁹ Communist disruptions to the elaborate Chinese family structures were explained and praised.⁶⁹⁰ Yugoslavs in China did not find any of these measures as problematic, perhaps because similar ideas dominated Yugoslav nascent psychotherapy, enwrapped in the narratives of self-managing socialism.⁶⁹¹

Though the story of China was tended to in the old versus new binary, Yugoslavs did often specify that the reality on the ground was much more complex. An interesting example is how they narrated Chinese cuisine. They made attempts in their experiential writings to explain or normalize certain things that they or the readership back home did not understand or even caused disgust. For example, Marinković described how the Cantonese monkey brain delicacy was served for 'guests from faraway lands.'⁶⁹² Each step, from the cage, feast preparation, the tying of the monkey and opening its skull, to then eating its 'hot fresh brain' while the animal is still alive she depicted vividly and in great detail, provoking growing empathy for the tortured creature. Once the narrative reached its emotional peak, Marinković detached. 'Undoubtedly, the custom is very old and its executioners have a routine,' she concluded.⁶⁹³

To draw a comparison, Marinković also described her encounter with an elderly man with a bamboo hat, sleeping next to his merchandise in cages, live crickets.⁶⁹⁴ With tenderness, she talked about the crickets and wove a story of how passers-by stopped and purchased them by leaving the

⁶⁸⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, "Poezija u brašnu: susret s jednim osobenim umetnikom," *Borba*, 04.08.1957., p.7.

⁶⁸⁵ Vlado Teslić, "Pekinska opera," *Borba*, 20.11.1955., p.7; Vlado Teslić, "Pekinska novogodišnja hronika," *Borba*, 22.01.1956., p.4; Đorđe Bogojević, "Sa kineske scene „Pijana lepotica“," *Borba*, 23.06.1957., p.7.

⁶⁸⁶ Đorđe Bogojević, "Okovi »Reke hiljadu ogorčenja«," *Borba*, 12.05.1957., p.5; Đorđe Bogojević, "Protiv »politike samoubistva«," *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.7; Đorđe Bogojević, "Protiv „desnih“," *Borba*, 15.09.1957., p.7.

⁶⁸⁷ See, for example, Đorđe Bogojević, "U svetlu jedne pozne kritike," *Borba*, 21.12.1958., p.6. For an interesting article on poetry in the public realm during a difficult time for artists and intellectuals, see Đorđe Bogojević, "„Opitno polje“ stihova," *Borba*, 01.06.1958., p.8.

⁶⁸⁸ This is the first article in which Bogojević romanticized China's development in ways in which other Yugoslavs did often. Đorđe Bogojević, "Poezija u brašnu: susret s jednim osobenim umetnikom," *Borba*, 04.08.1957., p.7. On the improvements in life for the 'ordinary man,' see Đorđe Bogojević, "Posle greha," *Borba*, 24.12.1957., p.4.

⁶⁸⁹ Đorđe Bogojević, "U šest po podne," *Borba*, 11.08.1957., p.5.

⁶⁹⁰ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.194.

⁶⁹¹ Yugoslav psychiatrists were dealing with 'the issue of authoritarian family relations, aiming to liberalize and democratize society by democratizing the family.' For more information, see Antić, "The Pedagogy of Workers' Self-Management: Terror, Therapy, and Reform Communism in Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin Split," p.193.

⁶⁹² Nada Marinković, "Punkt i kontrapunkt: i prodavac crvčaka ili pekinško leto," *Letopis Matice srpske*, 133, 1957, Vol.379, Iss.6, p.594.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

required funds without ever disturbing the sleeping old seller. The crickets bring joy to all those in 'new China,' Marinković noted, admiring the people.⁶⁹⁵ In the end, she concluded:

[Monkey brain] followed me and emerged whenever some contrast in the nature and customs of this immense and, above all, wondrous country revealed itself. That story forced me to think about the extremes in human beings and nature, about relativity, about habits and customs as justifications and negations of cruelty. [...] Beijing crickets were China, but the Cantonese monkey was China as well. Between these two poles stretched a world full of shades and halftones, a dense consonance whose deep content surpasses little shocks that flash and carry with their cynicism and their poetry.⁶⁹⁶

Other authors also tried to normalize China for the Yugoslav readership. Milutin Velimirović made an effort back in 1930 to compare Chinese dishes unusual for Europeans with equally unusual ones in Europe.⁶⁹⁷ Even if the transcultural experience was lost on them, Yugoslavs offered explanations. Baum found dishes in Canton mind-boggling and unpleasant but principally a legacy of old China, that is, imperialism and the perversion of the elites. It was the Cantonese 'elites' that slurped the monkey's brain while the animal was alive and 'screaming,' Baum noted.⁶⁹⁸ He reported that this 'barbaric' practice was forbidden in new China and that its cruelty belonged to bygone times.⁶⁹⁹ For all other food he regarded as problematic, he found an explanation and a justification in the suffering of the Chinese masses, exclaiming in bewilderment: 'What the Chinese didn't eat when hunger pressed them! And what pleased them, they remembered and did not show any disgust.'⁷⁰⁰

5.3.4 From Support to Restraint: China's Internal Affairs

Yugoslavs were intensely interested in the inner workings of the CCP, their campaigns, announcements, and changes in policy and course.⁷⁰¹ They also extensively wrote about China's implementation of the socialist developmental model. Most importantly, they covered the question of cooperatives (the first efforts to collectivize the economy).⁷⁰² Yugoslavs in China referenced Mao's speeches on this topic while papers back in Yugoslavia discussed it in interviews with the

⁶⁹⁵ She does not mention or is possibly unaware that cricket-keeping was a hobby in imperial China, often associated with cricket fighting spectacles.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid, p.595.

⁶⁹⁷ Milutin Velimirović, *Kroz Kinu*, Belgrade: S.B. Cvijanović, 1930, p.31. Also mentioned in Ewertowski, "Northeast China as a Contact Zone in Polish and Serbian Travelogues, 1900-1939," p.39.

⁶⁹⁸ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.168.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Also see Vlado Teslić, "Zasjedanje nacionalnog odbora Kine," *Borba*, 07.07.1956., p.4; Đorđe Bogojević, "Ovih dana u glavnom gradu Kine lepeze u Parlamentu," *Borba*, 14.07.1957., p.5; Đorđe Bogojević, "Posle dve godine," *Borba*, 22.11.1957., p.4; and Đorđe Bogojević, "Razračunavanje s „nepoželjnim elementima“," *Borba*, 09.06.1958., p.3. They even covered the Four Pests Campaign. See Đorđe Bogojević, "Crni dani za miševе i vrapce," *Borba*, 26.01.1958., p.4.

⁷⁰² Some of Teslić's early articles on the topic include Vlado Teslić, "Zadrugarstvo u Kini," *Borba*, 08.11.1955., p.4; Vlado Teslić, "Stanje na selu," *Borba*, 09.11.1955., p.3.

visiting Chinese high-ranking officials.⁷⁰³ In some cases, Yugoslavs engaged with the cooperatives directly in chaperoned, Beijing-organized visits. Following such trips, their articles were always overwhelmingly positive.⁷⁰⁴ They were presented as the means of lifting China out of poverty. Marinković even argued that under communism, ‘no one is going to be entirely full, [but] no one will die out of hunger’ either.⁷⁰⁵ By mid-1957, Bogojević was reporting that the Chinese were ‘discussing very much and seriously the inadequacies in work’ and critically engaging with their progress.⁷⁰⁶ Despite evident economic issues, he continued to praise the country’s ‘undeniable’ progress.⁷⁰⁷ The ‘apparent illogicality’ of China’s reported production growth but lack of goods on the market Bogojević explained, referencing the Chinese press, as a byproduct of the people’s rapidly growing purchasing power.⁷⁰⁸ In other words, it was still progress.

Yugoslav curiosity was particularly piqued when they learned about the Chinese state working with capitalists from old China in joint state-private ownership schemes. They interviewed multiple people on this topic in the mid-1950s. Teslić spoke to a merchant in Canton, Bogojević interviewed another in Shanghai, and Baum met with Jian Rilín, the General Manager of the Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company, in November 1956.⁷⁰⁹ In their lengthy conversation, Jian recounted the struggle against Western domination in the tobacco market in China (especially B.A.T., British American Tobacco) and explained how co-owning the company with the state worked in practice.⁷¹⁰ Though Baum empathized with Jian over past struggles with the West, he still judged him as a symbol of the Chinese bourgeoisie, an oppressor of the masses. This showed that for Baum (and the Yugoslav state), class struggle was the central issue and predetermined the development of systems such as imperialism. They saw these issues in a hierarchical manner.

Alongside economic questions, Yugoslavs also reported on internal mass socio-political campaigns from the Hundred Flowers Campaign onward. This is where their support and reluctance to criticize the Chinese leadership can be best observed. When the CCP vowed to root out ‘bureaucratism, sectarianism, and subjectivism’ as well as the ‘suffocating’ behavior of officials toward the masses, Yugoslavs followed attentively.⁷¹¹ Criticism and self-criticism became part of

⁷⁰³ Vlado Teslić, “Kinesko selo i industrijalizacija,” *Borba*, 13.11.1955., p.4 and “U preobražaju kineskog sela postignuti su veliki uspjesi. Intervju »Vjesnika« s ministrom poljoprivrede NR Kine Liao Lu Yenom,” *Vjesnik*, 09.08.1957., pp.1-2.

⁷⁰⁴ Teslić once even delivered a speech in a collective near Beijing and shared that his brother, back in Yugoslavia, was part of a collective while his father wasn’t. Yet ‘it appears to me that my brother lives better,’ concluded Teslić. In the same article, he added that in China, now ‘everyone is living better, and they expect further improvements from the collectives.’ Vlado Teslić, “Miting u selu Kaopitjen,” *Borba*, 09.01.1956., p.3.

⁷⁰⁵ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter *Grad na ušću Jangcejkjanga*.

⁷⁰⁶ Đorđe Bogojević, “Od kamene sekire do gigantske hidrocentrale,” *Borba*, 16.06.1957., p.5.

⁷⁰⁷ Đorđe Bogojević, “Ekonomski uspjesi i teškoće Kine,” *Borba*, 01.04.1957., p.3.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁹ Vlado Teslić, “Razgovor s kantonskim trgovcem,” *Borba*, 16.01.1956., p.3; Đorđe Bogojević, “Susreti u Šangaju,” *Borba*, 03.11.1957., p.5; and Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, pp.192-196.

⁷¹⁰ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, pp.192-196. For more information on the history of this company, see Henry Ren Jie Chong, *The Inter-relation of a Chinese Family Firm and a Chinese Family: The Case Study of the Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company and the Jian Family*, Ph.D. Thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2015. See especially pp.239-246.

⁷¹¹ Đorđe Bogojević, “Aktuelne kineske teme: Bez straha,” *Borba*, 30.06.1957., p.5. Vlado Begović actually predicted some of these issues back in 1955. He wrote: ‘From our point of view, looking at it from [the perspective of] our conditions and having in mind our experiences, it seems to us that in future development of the social system in China there is a danger of developing bureaucratism that could inhibit economic development and the development of socialist democracy. [...] [W]e trust that the leadership of today’s China, that has extensive experience in leading a

China's collective daily routine (Bogojević cited the People's Daily instructing the public to view it as 'face washing').⁷¹² Though Bogojević initially asked if such campaigns had practical value, he still concluded that honest assessments of the CCP's policy by a wide variety of people opened the door to 'genuinely versatile discussions.'⁷¹³ It also revealed that the CCP's first Five-Year Plan (1953-1957) was unrealistic and that all criticism would help the Party construct a better next one.⁷¹⁴

By July 1957, however, the CCP changed course. All criticism (especially about China following the Soviet developmental model) was read as malicious.⁷¹⁵ The CCP issued a call 'to everyone for a "firm ideological battle" against' what they now referred to as 'right[ist] elements' thereby launching the notorious Anti-Rightist Campaign.⁷¹⁶ Bogojević found this turn challenging to explain. At first, he conceded that some criticism was 'clearly not very connected either with good intentions or socialism,' adding that those accused of maliciousness were 'prominent members of democratic parties, high[ly positioned] intellectuals or former capitalists.'⁷¹⁷ This was meant to rationalize China's leadership. Bogojević also noted that the Party's ideological call to arms rallied the military and citizenry firmly behind it, legitimizing the need for the Anti-Rightist Campaign further. Yugoslavs generally believed that China had internal enemies and never questioned the objective to root out 'harmful elements.'⁷¹⁸ They were also used to the Chinese leadership openly asking them to offer constructive criticism.⁷¹⁹ Moreover, despite their often opposing views, they found the Chinese side receptive to open, friendly discussions.⁷²⁰ This might explain why when a Peking University professor was branded a rightist for his earlier statement that '[t]he result of the eight-year-long rule of the communists is the fear of people to speak,' Bogojević questioned whether such criticism came from a good place and not whether the reaction to it was proportional.⁷²¹ Only when several writers he personally held in high esteem were branded rightists, did Bogojević concede that criticism of the CCP

fundamentally kept positive tendencies of democratization in all areas of social life, [which] abruptly and, for foreign observers quite unexpectedly, dwindled, to make space for a very intense campaign against "the rightist elements".⁷²²

country and resolving economic and societal issues, will know how to find a solution for this question as well.' See Vlado Begović, "Društveni sistem," *Borba*, 06.07.1955., p.3.

⁷¹² Đorđe Bogojević, "Aktuelne kineske teme: Bez straha," *Borba*, 30.06.1957., p.5.

⁷¹³ Đorđe Bogojević, "Aktuelne kineske teme (II): „Umereni vetar i blaga kiša“, *Borba*, 03.07.1957., p.4.

⁷¹⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, "Aktuelne kineske teme (V): Prve laste," *Borba*, 13.07.1957., p.4.

⁷¹⁵ Đorđe Bogojević, "Ovih dana u glavnom gradu Kine lepeze u Parlamentu," *Borba*, 14.07.1957., p.5.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

⁷¹⁷ Đorđe Bogojević, "Desničari i partija," *Borba*, 18.07.1957., p.4.

⁷¹⁸ Akin to Bogojević, Tanjug's correspondent Vasil Magdeski never questioned whether there are truly 'harmful elements' in China. This was just assumed as a given. See Vasil Magdeski, "Teškoće u snabdevanju stanovništva poljoprivrednim i industrijskim proizvodima," *Borba*, 14.07.1961., p.3.

⁷¹⁹ Begović noted that the Chinese 'openly speak about their weaknesses and difficulties in work and ask for opinions and advice.' Vlado Begović, "Društveni sistem," *Borba*, 06.07.1955., p.3. The same was recorded in Đorđe Bogojević, "„Osećajte se kao kod svoje kuće“ Kina toplo pozdravlja pretstavnike Jugoslavije," *Borba*, 29.09.1957., p.5.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Đorđe Bogojević, "Desničari i partija," *Borba*, 18.07.1957., p.4.

⁷²² Đorđe Bogojević, "Protiv „desnih“,“ *Borba*, 15.09.1957., p.7. For his positive accounts on the first campaigns, see Đorđe Bogojević, "Aktuelne kineske teme (V): Prve laste," *Borba*, 13.07.1957., p.4.

Though this hints, between the lines, that he found the behavior of the Chinese state questionable, he never says it explicitly. By the time he wrote the paragraph above, he had been reporting for months on the intense political reactions against writers. His interest was piqued by the public polarization over Wang Meng's 'A Young Man Arrives at the Organization Department' (Zǔzhībù láile gè niánqīng rén), a story that showed just how widely spread bureaucratism was.⁷²³ Some agreed with Wang Meng, while others found his story preposterous, arguing that bureaucratism was not possible in socialist Beijing. Offering details on this case, Bogojević asked effectively for permission to continue reporting on it ('[s]o let this correspondent be allowed to refer to it in the next article'), which seemingly did not materialize.⁷²⁴ Soon after, Bogojević was reporting on Chinese intellectuals moving to rural areas and factories to learn ideology firsthand rather than from books.⁷²⁵ He also interviewed academics from Beijing's Renmin University on their way to become 'true peasants for three years.'⁷²⁶ One was a female professor leaving her husband and children behind that he explained to his readership as a voluntary choice. Though the 'question is pretty sentimental [...] at least here [in China], there are no particular problems [with it],' with the arrangement.⁷²⁷ He did write, however, that fixing China's issues 'could be achieved with other methods too, [but] the Chinese selected this one.'⁷²⁸ When urbanites began moving to rural areas *en masse*, Bogojević again attempted to rationalize it, mentioning that some people reported finding true joy and profound meaning in the villages.⁷²⁹ Without open criticism of the CCP, he simply noted that the process was profoundly disruptive.⁷³⁰

From the beginning of these campaigns, with each new development, Bogojević reported what the Chinese press wrote: everything was done voluntarily. Intellectuals were voluntarily reeducating themselves and capitalists were voluntarily learning different crafts to become better socialists.⁷³¹ When the Anti-Rightist Campaign spread to include all strata of society, Bogojević sent his reports without adding personal opinions or judgment.⁷³² Though it is difficult to assess whether he believed the official narrative and reasoning behind the Anti-Rightist Campaign before mid-1958, Bogojević's reports grew subtly critical after Sino-Yugoslav relations abruptly deteriorated.⁷³³

⁷²³ For more information about Wang Meng's case in China, see Sio-choo Ang, "The Path of Wang Meng: Life and Works," *China Report*, 1991, Vol.27, No.1, pp.15-26.

⁷²⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, "Velika diskusija oko jedne priče," *Borba*, 06.04.1957., p.7. There was no one specific article on the topic that followed, but Bogojević did mention the issue in Đorđe Bogojević, "Protiv »politike samoubistva«," *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.7.

⁷²⁵ Đorđe Bogojević, "Protiv »politike samoubistva«," *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.7.

⁷²⁶ Đorđe Bogojević, "Intelektualac s lopatom," *Borba*, 15.12.1957., p.4.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Đorđe Bogojević, "Intelektualac s lopatom," *Borba*, 15.12.1957., p.4.

⁷²⁹ Đorđe Bogojević, "Pioniri pustih predela," *Borba*, 25.12., 1957., p.4.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Đorđe Bogojević, "Na poziv sedamnaestorice," *Borba*, 16.03.1958., p.4.

⁷³² When the Anti-Rightist Campaign spread to include people across all strata of society, Bogojević reported on an exhibition of a peasant who was saved from going down the wrong path. In summary, once a fierce supporter and member of the CCP, this man initially embraced rightist views but was ultimately rescued by fellow peasants who reminded him of the party's benefits. Through this process, he was struggling in different ways (a distressing drawing depicts him with his head in his hands pressed into the mattress). Ultimately, the story concludes with the man recognizing and admitting his mistakes. While at the exhibition, with the man sharing his tale with interested audiences in front of the drawings, Bogojević never explicitly questions the performance's validity. He does end the report with: 'And so, the story travels. People listen to it. Maybe it saves someone from potential, similar temptations.' Đorđe Bogojević, "Posle greha," *Borba*, 24.12.1957., p.4.

⁷³³ Compare his earlier writings with Đorđe Bogojević, "U znaku opšte kontrole," *Borba*, 11.03.1959., p.3.

He rarely openly expressed disagreement but framed his articles in a suggestive manner—for the public to read between the lines. The reports on the developments in the Anti-Rightist Campaign no longer featured rationalizations of the CCP. The focus was now on the suffering and displacement of the intellectuals. For example, when a poet's minor text calling for more 'trust' and 'honesty' got him vilified, Bogojević no longer asked if the intentions behind the poet's words were good.⁷³⁴ Soon after, he reported that China was no longer just hunting the rightists and 'harmful elements' but anyone who criticized it, despite their good intentions for the country's socialist development.⁷³⁵ He was especially wary of trial-like public shaming sessions at Peking University, where a large part of the student body was accused of treason and had to demonstrate loyalty.⁷³⁶ In early 1959, when the CCP admitted to some of their measures and understandings being 'incorrect,' Bogojević inserted that the 'stubborn practice and facts cannot be stretched at a subjective will,' even that of a socialist party.⁷³⁷ Yet, he never overly criticized the CCP and always reminded that many of its policies benefited China and its people.⁷³⁸

Parallel to the Anti-Rightist Campaign, China implemented extreme austerity measures and called on its people to prevent wastefulness. When factories mismanaged resources, Bogojević found the CCP's call for action justified.⁷³⁹ When it came to individuals, however, he drew a line. Even while Sino-Yugoslav relations were good, public criticism of everyday people for their alleged spending excesses provoked Bogojević to engage with the subject more vocally. One such case was of a woman vilified for purchasing 'a face cream and hair oil' and not depositing the funds in the bank to help 'the country develop industrially and, in general, socialistically.'⁷⁴⁰ Bogojević offered the logic of those criticizing the woman but uneasily asked: 'Doesn't a man strive to live better, [and] cannot someone who works hard all year afford themselves the satisfaction of purchasing a tin of pomade?'⁷⁴¹ In the same vein, he objected to public criticism of a student purchasing better quality pens and, in doing so, allegedly standing out from the rest of the student body.⁷⁴²

During China's collectives-to-communes transition and after, *Borba's* Bogojević and Tanjug's Bogunović and later Magdeski covered these events in minute detail.⁷⁴³ From their militaristic organization to the question of ownership and even the food in the canteens, everything was discussed.⁷⁴⁴ In this period and on this topic specifically, Yugoslavs engaged more critically. Bogojević noted that, while the Chinese press consistently emphasized that the communes were

⁷³⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, "Jedan pesnik se kaje," *Borba*, 23.06.1958., p.2.

⁷³⁵ Đorđe Bogojević, "Na Pekinškom univerzitetu," *Borba*, 24.06.1958., p.3.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ Đorđe Bogojević, "Tvrdoglave činjenice," *Borba*, 19.01.1959., p.3.

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Another article dealing with the question of wastefulness is Đorđe Bogojević, "Vosak na suncu," *Borba*, 09.02.1958., p.4.

⁷⁴⁰ Đorđe Bogojević, "Da li je Huan Suin kriva?," *Borba*, 25.01.1958., p.5.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

⁷⁴² Đorđe Bogojević, "Na Pekinškom univerzitetu," *Borba*, 24.06.1958., p.3.

⁷⁴³ See some of their articles from the 1958-1961 period: Đorđe Bogojević, "„Narodna komuna“ na principima vojne organizacije," *Borba*, 29.09.1958., p.3; Đorđe Bogojević, "Rad i naknada u „narodnoj komuni“," *Borba*, 19.10.1958., p.7; Vasil Magdeski, "„Trostepeni sistem“ vlasništva u kineskim narodnim komunama," *Borba*, 13.03.1961., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, "Dve kategorije kadrova u komunama," *Borba*, 10.07.1961., p.2; and Vasil Magdeski, "Nova reorganizacija u Kini," *Borba*, 11.08.1961., p.3.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid. Also see Vasil Magdeski, "Kupus ribanac na 13 načina," *Borba*, 17.04.1961., p.3.

the way to move forward economically, the people were overworked and underpaid or unpaid.⁷⁴⁵ When there was dissent in the communes, he empathized with the people.⁷⁴⁶ He thus welcomed early 1959 discussions of the government to provide more food and rest to Chinese people across the country and exclaimed

[O]rdinary human desires and needs cannot be forgotten like it was,
as is now admitted to be the case here [in China]—in the interest of
communism!⁷⁴⁷

The Chinese peasant was ‘deprived’ of many things by joining the commune—one of which was their personal freedom.⁷⁴⁸ Not only were they overworked, but they were also denied private ownership (which he consistently regarded as their great suffering) and had insufficient alimentation.⁷⁴⁹ The people were praised if they put their big life events (such as weddings) in second place to their commune work.⁷⁵⁰ This suggested that the way China was now developing its socialism was going against the very people it was developing it for.⁷⁵¹ In addition, while the state mobilized the entire society to smelt iron for its Great Leap Forward Campaign, Bogojević kept reporting on food rationing in communes and the general scarcity of all kinds of goods in the country.⁷⁵² From then on, different campaigns were started in succession—from mass actions to

⁷⁴⁵ Đorđe Bogojević, “Rad i naknada u „narodnoj komuni“,” *Borba*, 19.10.1958., p.7; Đorđe Bogojević, “Tri stava o nagrađivanju radnika,” *Borba*, 10.12.1958., p.3.

⁷⁴⁶ Đorđe Bogojević, “Narodna komuna »Sputnjik«,” *Borba*, 02.11.1958., p.7.

⁷⁴⁷ Đorđe Bogojević, “Nova prava Vang Lija,” *Borba*, 11.01.1959., p.7. On lack of food in the communes despite claims of increased production, see Đorđe Bogojević, “Najesti se, ali po planu,” *Borba*, 01.02.1959., p.7.

⁷⁴⁸ Đorđe Bogojević, “O ličnoj slobodi člana komune,” *Borba*, 27.01.1959., p.3.

⁷⁴⁹ ‘When the communes were being founded, the most beautiful, unseen perspectives were attributed to them here’—wrote Bogojević in 1959, adding that what was presented as a ‘dream of a Chinese villager’ was the narrative that persisted throughout the period, despite all issues that were clear with the communes. He then proceeds to state that ‘today, we hear different’ narratives in China. Many things formerly stated as true, like that people were satisfied in the communes with the way they were paid, have changed. This includes also the fact that the general standard of living in the communes was lower than those in the collectives that preceded them and the government did not present facts previously but now changed course and was admitting to a certain degree the truth. Đorđe Bogojević, “Juče i danas,” *Borba*, 15.02.1959., p.7. Also, see the question of people getting paid based on how much they do in discussions moving from being accused as bourgeoisie to being proletariat see Đorđe Bogojević, “Za samo tri meseca,” *Borba*, 17.02.1959., p.3. By 1961, the Chinese state was addressing the question of ownership in the communes. See Vasil Magdeski, “„Trostepeni sistem“ vlasništva u kineskim narodnim komunama,” *Borba*, 13.03.1961., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, “Dve kategorije kadrova u komunama,” *Borba*, 10.07.1961., p.2.

⁷⁵⁰ Đorđe Bogojević, “Novo vreme – novi običaji,” *Borba*, 27.07.1958., p.8. Also see Đorđe Bogojević, “„Svako piše“,” *Borba*, 22.02.1959., p.7.

⁷⁵¹ Bogojević’s most explicit statements on the reality in China were in reaction to the story of a rickshaw driver from Nanjing, who was praised for arguing for a reduction in the prices of his services when it’s raining. He was first ridiculed by his fellow rickshaw drivers and opposed, but then they joined forces to follow the man’s proposal and ‘forgot about personal interests.’⁷⁵¹ Bogojević then writes: ‘In China, the following is very often and gladly stated: “Our Party’s style of work is to adhere to the line of the masses. This means—one should respect the masses, start from the masses, reflect their will, [and] dignifiedly represent the interests of the masses.” So it is claimed [in China]. But when one reads [...] [the] letter [of the rickshaw puller] one cannot help but think about some things [...] [It] is quite strange that other rickshaw pullers were not “conscious enough” to emulate old [...] [rickshaw puller but] only two or three months later everyone changes their mind and follow in his footsteps? Isn’t that where the method of persuasion and voluntariness gave way to the method of commanding? If that’s so [...] [it] makes it clear enough how it really is [in China].’ Đorđe Bogojević, “O jednom pismu, jednom rikšadžiji i jednoj politici,” *Borba*, 18.01.1959., p.7.

⁷⁵² Đorđe Bogojević, “Čelik i ljudi,” *Borba*, 04.11.1958., p.3; Đorđe Bogojević, “Od Pekinga do Kantona (usputne impresije),” *Borba*, 16.12.1958., p.3; Đorđe Bogojević, “U svetu računice,” *Borba*, 01.03.1959., p.7; Đorđe Bogojević, “Kineski čelik,” *Borba*, 03.03.1959., p.3; Đorđe Bogojević, “Štednja u hrani,” *Borba*, 17.03.1959., p.3; and Đorđe

collect fertilizer to mass migration of the urban population to the rural areas to focus on agricultural production.⁷⁵³ The early 1960s articles increasingly depicted Chinese internal developments as hectic.

Over this period, the Chinese press was waging an intense anti-Yugoslav campaign. Bogojević's first article reporting on the two countries' deteriorated ties was published months after the fact, in mid-June 1958.⁷⁵⁴ Anti-Yugoslavism was officiated at the 2nd Assembly of the 8th CCP Congress with the main accusation being that Yugoslavia sold itself to the U.S. and was, therefore, not a true socialist country.⁷⁵⁵ The language the Chinese used was described as 'rude and cursing,' with narratives from the 1948 Cominform being recycled and expanded.⁷⁵⁶ Yugoslavs read China's campaign as exerting tremendous political pressure on a fellow socialist nation without leaving any space for dialogue. Bogojević thus concluded that 'the anti-Yugoslav campaign, considered the main task in China today, tellingly depicts the deformation in [China's] understanding of [what are] the interests of socialism.'⁷⁵⁷

The three correspondents reporting from China in the 1958-1963 period accumulated much information about a country immersed in intense internal ideological conundrums. Over time, Yugoslavs grew freer to criticize what they observed but always remained respectful, acknowledging the positive sides of socialism in China.⁷⁵⁸ In a sense, their reports and demeanor laid the basis for the Yugoslav state's easy dismissal of Chinese criticism of FPRY as wholly unreasonable. For years, after all, reports from China documented Beijing's irrationality in an objective-sounding manner.⁷⁵⁹ By the mid-1960s, there was no doubt that China was an independent socialist state, but all Yugoslavia's initial hopes and praise were overshadowed by the realities of the Cultural Revolution. At the end of his lengthy stay in China, Tanjug's longest China-

Bogoević, "Najesti se, ali po planu," *Borba*, 01.02.1959., p.7. In 1961, Vasil Magdeski reported on general scarcity and food in the communes as well. See Vasil Magdeski, "Nedovoljno artikala široke potrošnje," *Borba*, 13.02.1961., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, "Kupus ribanac na 13 načina," *Borba*, 17.04.1961., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, "Teškoće u snabdevanju stanovništva poljoprivrednim i industrijskim proizvodima," *Borba*, 14.07.1961., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, "Više hrane onome ko više radi," *Borba*, 11.09.1961., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, "Racioniranje industrijske robe u Kini," *Borba*, 28.04.1962., p.3.

⁷⁵³ See Đorđe Bogoević, "„Neka svaki čovek sakuplja đubrivo“," *Borba*, 01.02.1959., p.7; Branko Bogunović, "Svim raspoloživim snagama pomoći razvitku poljoprivrede," *Borba*, 27.07.1960., p.3; Branko Bogunović, "Zasejavati i šume," *Borba*, 29.08.1960., p.2; Branko Bogunović, "„Natrag u selo“ mobilisanje svih nacionalnih snaga u velikoj kampanji za razvoj kineske poljoprivrede," *Borba*, 07.09.1960., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, "Kinezi se vraćaju na napuštena imanja," *Borba*, 26.05.1962., p.3. For other socio-political campaigns that happened in this period, see Vasil Magdeski, "Oživljavanje tradicije," *Borba*, 10.05.1961., p.3; Vasil Magdeski, "Nova kampanja u Kini: „Očistiti svaki ćošak!“,," *Borba*, 24.04.1962., p.3.

⁷⁵⁴ Đorđe Bogoević, "Borba protiv socijalističke Jugoslavije – osnovna tema kineske štampe," *Borba*, 15.06.1958., p.2.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁸ Yugoslav press at home was more openly critical. "„Dobrovoljno evakuisanje“ stanbenih prostorija u Kini," *Borba*, 10.12.1958., p.3.

⁷⁵⁹ Of particular note were Magdeski's writings at the height of the Chinese Anti-Yugoslav Campaign, which reported on Beijing's growing trade with Western European countries and attempts at concealing them from the Chinese public. See Vasil Magdeski, "Sve jača orijentacija Kine na trgovinu sa zapadom," *Borba*, 24.10.1963., p.3. Bogoević reported about it from Tokyo in 1965 as well. See Đorđe Bogoević, "Kina sve više kupuje na Zapadu," *Borba*, 29.07.1965., p.3.

based correspondent, Bogunović, was quoted as describing the PRC as ‘often illogical, performative, paranoid.’⁷⁶⁰

5.4. Socialist Romanticism: The Ordinary People of East Asia⁷⁶¹

Traveling to East Asia also resulted in many descriptions of locals. Yugoslav authors were rarely interested in the physical or superficial accounts of Koreans, Japanese, and Chinese, and focused on their ‘characters’ and everyday lives.⁷⁶² They aspired, due to their socialist romanticism, to locate the ordinary in the people they interacted with. They were looking for the new man of post-WWII East Asian states, parallel to the new man of Yugoslavia.⁷⁶³ In many ways and attempts, what they finally described was an idea rather than a specific reality on the ground. The most elaborate, in-depth observations were recorded about the Chinese. Of wartime Koreans and 1950s Japanese, there were far fewer reflections.

In Levi’s accounts from the Korean Peninsula, he detailed stories that portrayed Koreans in a relatable manner. Despite the war, they still fell in love, navigated everyday struggles, and fought for independence.⁷⁶⁴ His attempt, even with North Korean soldiers, was to humanize the person without justifying their ideology and behavior.⁷⁶⁵ He did the same when discussing the Japanese, whom he described as less confident and deeply ashamed because of WWII.⁷⁶⁶ Otherwise, these were ordinary people, ‘peaceful and not very excitable.’⁷⁶⁷ Other Yugoslavs found the Japanese welcoming, kind, and practical.⁷⁶⁸ They were also described as adaptable, hard-working, and diligent.⁷⁶⁹ Yet, there was a lingering sense of insurmountable difference between the Yugoslavs and the Japanese. Levi even noted that, in the end, despite his best efforts, ‘[a]bout the psychology of the Japanese, I finally did not discover anything. I thought they were the same as us. But they are, however, different.’⁷⁷⁰

It was difficult to point out where the difference was. Šantić wrote how the Japanese were ‘nationally very prideful and sensitive [...] [and] can be unrestrained chauvinists if necessary for the prosperity of the nation.’⁷⁷¹ He was touching upon the idea of previous Japanese fanaticism that Yugoslavs discussed often when writing about imperial Japan. Sometimes, Yugoslavs also

⁷⁶⁰ As quoted (in English) in Lou Zanga, “Comments on China by Expelled Tanjug Correspondent,” Radio Free Europe Research, 1 June 1967, pp.3-4.

⁷⁶¹ The subchapter draws inspiration from one subject all Yugoslav experiential writings covered—the ordinary man. When referring to ordinary people in Serbo-Croatian, authors used male, third-person singular. The direct translation of their ‘običan čovjek’ [or čovek] would then be ‘ordinary man.’ Given that the phrase was supposed to convey collectivity and shared experience, I opted to use ‘people’ instead. Throughout the subchapter, people and man will be used interchangeably, denoting the same, non-gender-specific concept.

⁷⁶² For some depictions of physical appearance, for example of observations of Japanese physical appearance, see Jakov Levi, “Japan se sprema za Olimpijadu,” *Borba*, 19.02.1952., p.7.

⁷⁶³ Communism itself, as Branka Doknić argued, relied on ideology to ‘create a “new man” which would match the requirements of the existing existential conditions.’ See Doknić, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1946-1963*, p.12.

⁷⁶⁴ See for example the stories in Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, pp.21-24.

⁷⁶⁵ Jakov Levi, “U logoru zarobljenih severnokorejskih i kineskih vojnika,” *Borba*, 14.01.1952., p.1.

⁷⁶⁶ Jaša Levi, “Borba za Japan,” *Borba*, 07.05.1952., p.3 and Jakov Levi, “Sindikati u Japanu i zamršena stvornost zemlje i njenih ljudi,” *Borba*, 23.02.1952., p.3.

⁷⁶⁷ Jaša Levi, “Borba za Japan,” *Borba*, 07.05.1952., p.3.

⁷⁶⁸ Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, p.64 and Đorđe Bogojević, “Dva lica Tokija,” *Borba*, 29.05.1960., p.7.

⁷⁶⁹ Aleš Bebler, “Japanske zagonetke,” *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3 and Aleš Bebler, “Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost,” *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

⁷⁷⁰ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.64.

⁷⁷¹ Šantić, *Japan*, pp.171-172.

noted differences in habits and manners. Šantić explained that it was customary for the Japanese to smile out of politeness or ‘polite lie’ to avoid the discomfort of stating an ‘opposite opinion.’⁷⁷² Bebler wrote that, ‘as most foreigners,’ he found Japanese ‘[u]tmost discipline and extreme politeness,’ even when explained, senseless.⁷⁷³ He then cautioned that

[f]rom our dynamic point of view, Japanese discipline and politeness could be one of the most beautiful examples of high culture, but only if discipline does not turn into blind obedience and politeness does not turn into servility.⁷⁷⁴

Their narratives made the Japanese sound much more enigmatic and different than perhaps the authors intended. In contrast, the Yugoslav approach to the Chinese in the 1955-1958 period yielded, at least perceptually, a sense of closeness and similarity. When comparing the Japanese and the Chinese, Bebler called the former ‘strongly individualistic.’⁷⁷⁵ This was either relative, given the extreme case of collectivism in China at the time, or an observation mimicking assumed differences between capitalist and socialist states. Yugoslavs in China approached their inquiry into the Chinese collective character ideologically. The aim was to speak with workers and peasants to bring to the Yugoslav public the perceived unfiltered reality of who the true Chinese people are. Two months in, Teslić apologetically reported to his audiences that he was planning to address this topic as soon as the opportunity presented itself:

I also plan to write to you about the people. But do not expect much. With the ordinary people [...] I had the least contact. I can only tell you about the conditions and external manifestations under which their transformation is occurring. Not speaking the [local] language is an insurmountable difficulty, and the nature of the trip is such that contacts were more or less limited to cultural workers, state and political officials, and youth activists. [...] [I]t would be a mistake not to mention the incredible natural talents of the people and the high degree of general culture, the roots of which are deeply societal. [...] [E]verywhere can be felt the hand of the people-artist.⁷⁷⁶

Within a few months, he delivered an interview with Chéng Shírén, a worker whose name literally translates to ‘honest man.’⁷⁷⁷ This was amusingly symbolic as many Yugoslav experiential writings recorded the Chinese as honest.⁷⁷⁸ Teslić’s article covered Chéng’s life in detail, introducing his family, the clothes he wore, the food he ate, as well as details of his vocation, salary, and leisurely activities. At the end of the article, Teslić added:

I presented to you an ordinary Chinese—a man of new China that is being built. Perhaps not everything is most ordinary about him but

⁷⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁷³ Aleš Bebler, “Japanske zagonetke,” *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Aleš Bebler, “Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost,” *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

⁷⁷⁶ Vlado Teslić, “Menja se lik zemlje,” *Borba*, 20.11.1955., p.4.

⁷⁷⁷ Vlado Teslić, “Kako žive i rade poštteni Čjen i njegova porodica,” *Borba*, 08.01.1956., p.4.

⁷⁷⁸ See, for example, Đorđe Bogojević, “Poezija u brašnu: susret s jednim osobenim umetnikom,” *Borba*, 04.08.1957., p.7.

the fact he wants to be and remains honest is enough to characterize him as ordinary.⁷⁷⁹

His reports highlighted relatability. When talking about peasants, Teslić emphasized sameness: ‘They joke like our peasants, teasing each other; they are cheerful, smiling profusely.’⁷⁸⁰ In contrast to these simple and honest people, who reminded the authors of the people back home, stood the wealthy, Westernized Chinese of old China. The latter ‘irritated’ them.⁷⁸¹ They admired the ordinary people for their collective ‘rectitude, righteousness, honesty, altruism, patriotism, and wisdom.’⁷⁸² They were disciplined, hard-working, and resilient.⁷⁸³ For Marinković, even Beijing’s rickshaw pullers were philosophers embodying the elevated consciousness and calmness of the collective.⁷⁸⁴ To be able to see this in the ordinary man in China or East Asia in general, many Yugoslavs (especially Marinković) believed they needed to strip away prejudices and see beyond the confines of their geographical and mental boundaries.⁷⁸⁵ Šantić also recognized that to engage meaningfully with Japan, he first needed to resolve his prejudices that ‘everyone from the West is burdened with.’⁷⁸⁶ Baum warned that China cannot be observed through Yugoslav frames of reference and that it must be approached open-mindedly.⁷⁸⁷ In a more practical example, Teslić stated that once rid of prejudice in China, ‘a man actually encounters rarely simple, unassuming, understandable, and close [to him] people.’⁷⁸⁸

Yugoslav interest in the ordinary people of East Asia was part of broader socialist phenomena. The 1957 Asian Film Festival in Beijing, featuring movies made in Japan, Burma, Indonesia, North Korea, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Soviet Tajikistan, and China, as well as documentaries from Mongolia, Cambodia, and Vietnam, had the ordinary man of Asia as its theme.⁷⁸⁹ This featured imagery of ‘a peasant from rice fields, a fisherman, a worker for hire, a low-level civil servant or a dignitary who came from the people.’⁷⁹⁰ Observing these films, dealing with socialist and anti-colonial themes, Bogojević noted:

⁷⁷⁹ Vlado Teslić, “Kako žive i rade poštteni Čjen i njegova porodica,” *Borba*, 08.01.1956., p.4.

⁷⁸⁰ Vlado Teslić, “Miting u selu Kaopitjen,” *Borba*, 09.01.1956., p.3.

⁷⁸¹ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.193.

⁷⁸² Vlado Teslić, “Kazalište koje je sam narod stvorio,” *Borba*, 18.11.1955., p.8. Also see Nada Marinković, “Između osećanja i misli,” *Polja*, 1957, No.3, p.9 and Đorđe Bogojević, “Mogle bi to i priče biti,” *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.4.

⁷⁸³ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Svet u kapljici rose.

⁷⁸⁴ Nada Marinković, “Između osećanja i misli,” *Polja*, 1957, No.3, p.9. Bogojević was fascinated by the latter, noting: ‘In general, rarely anyone here is in a rush, excited, yelling. Two cyclists collided there on the street. Bicycles fell, [and] they [two] sat on the ground too. Anger, yelling, cursing? Nothing like that. They are sitting and smiling at one another, like they just cracked a good joke. Then they got up and – both went their way.’ Đorđe Bogojević, “U šest po podne,” *Borba*, 11.08.1957., p.5.

⁷⁸⁵ See especially Nada Marinković’s reflections on this in Nada Marinković, *Smisao i ljubav: susreti i putopisi*, Zagreb: Seljačka sloga, 1956. When Marinković was in Beijing, she at some point victoriously announced: ‘Misunderstandings that emerge will be natural and real, those are difficulties worth fighting. But prejudices, they are dead... That is always the most important, to get rid of preconceptions, [and] clear up complexes. The truth is simple and beautiful; the truth that is not just mine or yours, but one and only pure truth, indifferent and autonomous, INVINCIBLE.’ See an excerpt from her book published in Nada Marinković, “Između osećanja i misli,” *Polja*, 1957, No.3, p.9.

⁷⁸⁶ Šantić, *Japan*, p.7.

⁷⁸⁷ Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, p.9.

⁷⁸⁸ Vlado Teslić, “Menja se lik zemlje,” *Borba*, 20.11.1955., p.4.

⁷⁸⁹ Đorđe Bogojević, “Festival aziskog filma,” *Borba*, 22.09.1957., p.7.

⁷⁹⁰ Bogojević noted the amateurism of some films and simplistic theme development. He did also state that he was not remarking this in order to be judgmental but as ‘a well-meaning spectator attempting to be objective.’ Ibid.

So, by painting with a lot of honest love and understanding the life of an ordinary man, his suffering and worries, sacrifices and hopes, the Asian film [industry], judging by what has been shown in Beijing, is striving toward letting that man, who is awakening every day more and more and growingly becoming his own, [know] that his path is not in lectures and dreams about abstract happiness, but that his destiny and future are in his hands [...]⁷⁹¹

The ordinary people of Asia, and East Asia specifically, were empowered, awakened, and free. Even when this did not reflect the reality on the ground, it was the image Yugoslavs wanted to see. The ordinary man they were looking for in Asia was always a worker or a peasant—someone previously oppressed but now living a better, new life. This is why Yugoslavs most easily located that new man in communist China. Even during difficult times in Sino-Yugoslav bilateral relations, in search of such a story, Bogunović requested that the Chinese authorities allow him to speak with an iron smelter. He specifically looked to interview ‘an elderly worker, one of those Beijing veterans who could, based on experiences from his personal life, best draw a parallel between the life of a worker in old and today’s China.’⁷⁹² Though his request was granted, his interlocutor was a young man with a difficult past in old China and a hopeful, positive present in new China. Bogunović accepted. It was still the ordinary he wanted to record.⁷⁹³ This situation is telling. Yugoslavs consistently sought the same stories to share with their audiences. For them, even during poor political relations, finding such stories was easiest in China.

5.5. New East Asia in the Eyes of New Yugoslavia: A Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated how Yugoslavs observed the region of East Asia, and China and Japan in particular, through the lenses of modernization and revolution. They searched for quantifiable and visible evidence of progress and reported on it. Above all, they looked at the relationship between things, events, and ideas that symbolized the old and the new and, through this, based their judgment about these countries. This was part of their ideological conditioning, that is, the frame of reference through which they observed the world. Commenting on socialism in general but with the Yugoslav case in mind, Branka Doknić noted that a revolution needs a ‘break with all existing [norms] as a precondition for its own realization.’⁷⁹⁴ Having this as a base of their worldview influenced how Yugoslavia related to, among others, East Asia in the 1950s.

Yugoslav experiential writings about China and Japan provide a fine comparative example. China’s break with its past and embracing of the new is saluted with elation, while Japan’s blend of the two is observed with confusion or even judgment. Moreover, Yugoslav writings showed that, especially after 1955, it was more acceptable to criticize Japan and the U.S. than China and the Soviet Union. Yugoslavs knew they needed to tread carefully to avoid damaging fragile inter-socialist relations. Contrastingly, experiential reports on Japan showed little attempt to choose words carefully or tone down criticism. This is particularly noticeable when compared to reports on China in the 1958-1963 period. Despite the poor state of Sino-Yugoslav relations, these writers

⁷⁹¹ Ibid.

⁷⁹² Branko Bogunović, “Bio sam kuli,” *Borba*, 01.05.1960., p.10.

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁴ Doknić, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1946-1963*, p.10.

often remained restrained in their opinions on the PRC, creating a distinct divide in the public perception of these East Asian countries.

This chapter also documented the Yugoslav search for a very specific story of the ordinary people of new East Asia. It was a story of progress, moving from the regressive old into a progressive new. The same binary was used in their many similar reports from around the world at the time. When *Borba* featured Teslić's article on the 'honest man' from China, right alongside it stood Jože Smole's article about changing Africa. The narrative was the same: the old was being left behind, 'slowly making way for a different, new Africa.'⁷⁹⁵ This showcases how Yugoslav experiential writings from around the world used the same format to describe different regions, building in Yugoslavia a collective idea about the Cold War world.

⁷⁹⁵ Vlado Teslić, "Kako žive i rade pošteni Čjen i njegova porodica," *Borba*, 08.01.1956., p.4 and Jože Smole, "Menja se "Crni continent"," *Borba*, 08.01.1956., p.4.

Chapter 6: Yugoslavs in East Asia

In the 1950s, Yugoslav writing from East Asia covered various topics. However, regardless of the length of their stay in the region, they invariably all covered one particular story—their own. Yugoslavs narrated individual experiences in ways that offered the reader insight into their most intimate thoughts. Usually, these reflected a newfound sense of prosperity and conundrums relating to their identity (most prominently their European-ness). The former was firmly linked to the state and all the ways socialist Yugoslavia advanced the position of its people at home and abroad. This chapter provides an overview of how Yugoslavs used East Asia in their experiential writings to aid in the narrative construction of the new, cosmopolitan Yugoslavia with significant global reach and a position of importance in international relations for the first time.

6.1. A New World for New Yugoslavs: From Childhood Dreams to Reality

In the 1950s, new Yugoslavia and its shifting foreign politics opened horizons otherwise deemed too distant and inaccessible. This brought about a reconfiguration in the collective consciousness of what constituted boundaries and limitations—of what was perceived as possible.⁷⁹⁶ Foreign spaces were consistently featured in the press, including the content created for the nation's children.⁷⁹⁷ Yugoslavs who managed to travel to East Asia reported the experience as a childhood dream coming true.⁷⁹⁸ In experiential writings, at the beginning or when describing times of solitude and deep reflection, Yugoslavs recognized this travel to (East) Asia as a sign of personal elevation in life. For some, it was a profoundly spiritual experience.⁷⁹⁹ For others, including prolific travelers, it was the one voyage they decided to textually record.⁸⁰⁰ Traveling on a boat from Nanjing to Shanghai, Bogojević spoke to himself in a self-congratulatory manner:

There you are, traveler, from a faraway land, on the back of the Yangtze River. There is the fulfillment of a quiet desire that already excited your imagination in childhood.⁸⁰¹

Being in East Asia—be it for weeks, months, or years—brought these writers a sense of personal expansion and achievement. This feeling did not belong to them alone. Their entire communities and the country were sharing in it. Reflecting on the beginning of his voyage to first Japan and then other countries, Bebler recorded the following:

⁷⁹⁶ Later on, Yugoslav Airlines (JAT) became a powerful symbol of this transformed consciousness and Yugoslav cosmopolitan and non-aligned identity. See Jelena Subotić, “JAT—More Than Flying: Constructing Yugoslav Identity in the Air,” *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, Vol.32, No.4, 2018, pp.671-692.

⁷⁹⁷ For a poem about a boy Raka traveling the world (including China and Japan), see Nikola Drenovac, “Tamo amo po svetu,” *Borba (našoj deci)*, 02.03.1953., p.8.

⁷⁹⁸ ‘Is it possible [that it’s happening]?! – I asked myself, thinking about those dreams of mine from the time of my early childhood. I remembered how I was full of disbelief they would ever come true and filled with envy, malice, and hatred toward those fortunate in life to see that distant, almost unreachable land in which I would soon find myself.’ See Vojin Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, Belgrade: Savremena škola, 1963, p.5.

⁷⁹⁹ Marinković in particular argued that traveling offers one a chance to experience love and meaning at new depths. Nada Marinković, *Smisao i ljubav: susreti i putopisi*, Zagreb: Seljačka zadruga, 1956. Also underlined in a review of her book, T.I., “U knjižarskim izlozima,” 12.02.1957, *Borba*, p.5.

⁸⁰⁰ This is particularly true for Vujadin Boškov. As a famous soccer player and then coach, he traveled widely but only ever published one travel book—the one about Asia (Burma, Indonesia, and China). See Boškov’s *Aziska turneja*.

⁸⁰¹ Dorđe Bogojević, “Niz široke vode zlatne reke,” *Borba*, 27.04.1958., p.7.

It is no wonder that the company at the airport was excited. Both the ones who will travel and those whose husbands or fathers will travel to so many and so faraway countries. Everyone's hearts are beating faster. Japan, Indonesia, Ceylon, India, Egypt: beautiful countries full of Sun and old temples with hundreds of millions of human beings, yellow, bronzed, and black, who live under the palms, amidst bananas and papayas, with elephants, buffalos, monkeys, and parrots... and toward them, the Easterners, the Pacific-Oceanites, Asians, and Africans, we travel through Paris! And from there, through nowhere else but the North Pole! The shortest journey by air from Europe to Japan [...] ⁸⁰²

Even for him, a particularly well-traveled Yugoslav diplomat and high-ranking official, Asia was an adventure. This romanticizing was wrapped in the exoticized imaginings of Asian spaces, deemed inherently unfamiliar and different from their native Yugoslavia and Europe. Like Bebler, Levi was excited to experience 'Asian exoticism' but reported that 'there was no exoticism [...] it was suffocated by the cruel and inexorable reality of Asia, the continent on which global conflicts continued after the Great War.' ⁸⁰³ In contrast to Bebler and Levi, others expressed determination to de-exoticize their imagination and look for Asia beyond the colonial stereotypes. This was especially true for Marinković, who voiced that her trip to China was an exercise in challenging Western depictions of it. ⁸⁰⁴ Doing so required higher levels of self-awareness and much preparation before the trips. While the former is too abstract and complex to assess, the latter is not. In their writings, Yugoslavs reported reading extensively about their destination countries. For Boškov, having done 'previous study' made new environments 'no longer that unfamiliar'—he could now even assess whether the texts were correct. ⁸⁰⁵ Yugoslavs often found secondary literature (mainly from the West) different from the reality on the ground. ⁸⁰⁶ This further highlighted the value of firsthand accounts, that is, seeing the region with their own eyes. ⁸⁰⁷ In this process, it was not just childhood dreams that were fulfilled. Entirely new horizons opened.

Those fortunate enough to travel to East Asia (especially officials and journalists) were expected to share their experiences upon their return. Yet this was no easy task. They were no experts. Many had a difficult time offering in-depth analyses. They shared impressions of what they witnessed and commented on what aligned with Yugoslav perceptions of the world and foreign politics. In the end, however, many conceded that offering anything more substantial was impossible. Some more confident individuals (usually officials) found value in their short engagements with foreign

⁸⁰² Aleš Bebler, "Ni na nebu ni na zemlji," *Borba*, 13.11.1960., p.7.

⁸⁰³ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.8.

⁸⁰⁴ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter U sivom jutru prevrćem listove atlasa. In a book review of Marinković's book *Meaning and Love*, Svetlana Velmar Janković rightfully notes that Marinković 'does not want to remain only on the outer, conventional image of people and countries [...] [but] is far more interested in their essence [naličja].' ⁸⁰⁴ Marinković was read as a traveler and an observer who assigned meaning to the actions of ordinary people and interpreted them for her audiences. Svetlana Velmar Janković, "Nada Marinković: Smisao i ljubav," *Letopis Matice srpske*, 133, 1957, Vol.380, Iss.3, pp.265-266.

⁸⁰⁵ Boškov, *Aziska turneja*, p.34.

⁸⁰⁶ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.23.

⁸⁰⁷ Tito himself called for direct engagement with Asia and not secondary sources and narratives. For an example of this, see Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije, 1956-1961*, p.322.

spaces.⁸⁰⁸ What most agreed on, however, was the complexity of (East) Asian countries. There were historical, contemporary, internal, external, and many other forces at play, molding the meta-issues of that part of the world. This is why, for many (especially those on short-term visits), the objective was to understand the everyday life unfolding before them. This was not always comfortable. For Marinković, it invoked a sense of ‘restlessness’ but simultaneous joy for being ‘amidst sights that go beyond all expectations and possess [me] with their dynamic, their folklore, something primeval’ that she is failing to grasp, yet.⁸⁰⁹ Engaging with the locals made them feel less distant. Marinković visited a home and met the family of her rickshaw puller, and Boškov wrote about his encounter with a Burmese family on the street in his *Asian Tour* book.⁸¹⁰ In the seemingly mundane moments, they found the paths to understanding and familiarity between them and the Other. In the transcultural or the underlying universal, there was relief and promise of a greater human community to which everyone belonged.⁸¹¹ Ivo Andrić reflected on it as well:

[A man] is really looking for only one thing: that which, in the endless variety and apparent contrast of forms, is common to all people of all times and all geographical latitudes. These are the moments of complete understanding when a new and unfamiliar environment suddenly surprises us with something familiar and allows us to feel the intimate closeness and great community of human existence on Earth. Such moments, which leave a profound mark on us and a lasting echo, came across China on the way, always unexpectedly and in completely different places. Sometimes in front of a single verse, written over the house of a long-dead courtier, and sometimes in front of a child's smile in a kindergarten, where today's new China raises new people of a new society.⁸¹²

In essence, what is communicated is that even in the perceived completeness of mutual difference and separation, there was something shared and universal. This narrative had political value. In the 1950s, Yugoslavia rapidly expanded contact and exchange with many new countries, which needed to be explained to the public. In the mid-to-late 1950s, CCTFC President Marko Ristić argued that growing cultural relations built mutual understanding and thereby eased anxieties.⁸¹³ New Yugoslavia was cosmopolitanizing and, in doing so, adopted the view that all cultures, despite differences, had something universal in common. Experiential writings from East Asia confirmed

⁸⁰⁸ ‘A man who comes to a foreign country for the first time should not judge too quickly. But impressions can also be correct precisely because [he] sees this country for the first time, and measurements are live ideas of other countries. He can compare more easily. That is why, about certain countries, most often write those who were there for a very short period in time or those who stayed there very long. And between those two extremes are people who stay in a foreign country for a few years. It is the hardest for them to write. Their first impressions paled, and studying the life and tradition of other people [tuđi narod] reveals to them new problems every day, [problems] to which they are not finding an answer...’ See Aleš Bebler, “Japanske zagonetke,” *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3.

⁸⁰⁹ Nada Marinković, “Između osećanja i misli,” *Polja*, 1957, No.3, p.3.

⁸¹⁰ Marinković, *Kina*, 2016 [1958], Chapter *Na rikši prema staroj četvrti* and Boškov, *Aziska turneja*, pp.18-19.

⁸¹¹ In the press, back in Yugoslavia, it was not uncommon to find such narratives as well. A *Vjesnik* author, discussing the Japanese kabuki in a non-experiential article, claimed that such art forms bring ‘something universally human that connects the furthestmost countries and people.’ Marko P., “Azuma Kabuki balet: Susret s plesačima Carstva izlazećeg sunca,” *Vjesnik*, 03.09.1957.

⁸¹² Ivo Andrić, “Susret u Kini,” *Borba*, 1-3.05.1957.

⁸¹³ Ristić, *Kultura i koegzistencija*, pp.249-262. Also see “Naše kulturne veze s inostranstvom: Izjava Marka Ristića”, *Borba*, 05.02.1955., p.3.

this and did not just aid the cultivation of a cosmopolitan new Yugoslavia but a sense that the state opened an entirely new world for its citizens.

6.2. Tito's Yugoslavia in East Asia: An Image of Global Importance

Yugoslav cosmopolitanism was narrated for domestic audiences in many different ways. One of the most potent avenues was how Yugoslavia and Tito were received and perceived abroad. They often emphasized that people in Asia *knew* of Yugoslavia (correspondents noted even minor praise or recognition of Yugoslavia in the region).⁸¹⁴ To be known was to be reaffirmed and legitimized as important. This was particularly highlighted in articles covering visits of high-ranking officials. A good example was Bogojević's 1957 report about the Yugoslav Parliamentary Delegation in China:

Yugoslavia is thousands of miles away from here, but they know of it here; they value and love it here. That is a warm feeling of sympathy of one people—who knew how to courageously fight for and achieve freedom. And the fact that Yugoslavia, in this post-war era, so openly and consistently rises to defend and demand respect for the legal and legitimate rights of China—that is just one more reason for friendship and trust.

That is why every Yugoslav is welcome here. That is why every step of his across this country is followed by cordiality and attention. That is why you should not be surprised that in Beijing today there are young women who dance the Yugoslav [traditional] kolo [dances], that people remember fondly each and every one of our cultural or sports teams. And do not be surprised if in Beijing you hear Chinese [people] singing our song “Oj, more duboko” because it is a very popular [music] hit here. And, because of all that, when they tell you they wish you feel at home in China—believe them, because they will indeed do everything so you truly feel like that.⁸¹⁵

Notably, Bogojević first stated that the Chinese knew about Yugoslavia and had fond feelings for it. Second, he drew a causal line between this open acceptance of the country and Yugoslav foreign politics. In doing so, he reaffirmed the idea that Yugoslav behavior in international relations was morally righteous. Lastly, he offered details on how exactly Yugoslavia was known and appreciated, invoking a sense of camaraderie and closeness. In the same article, he added a section about Vukmanović-Tempo's Asian tour (including Japan and China) in a subsection titled: ‘Entire Asia salutes Yugoslavia.’⁸¹⁶ Each and every Yugoslav visitor in East Asia personified the country. How they were welcomed, greeted, and hosted was not just read as individual experiences but collective ones. Vukmanović-Tempo explains it as such:

We visited these distant countries for the first time in order to get to know them more closely, to consider and talk about the possibilities of further development of [our] friendly cooperation. We did not

⁸¹⁴ Đorđe Bogojević, “Susreti u Šangaju,” *Borba*, 03.11.1957., p.5.

⁸¹⁵ Đorđe Bogojević, “„Osećajte se kao kod svoje kuće“ Kina toplo pozdravlja pretstavnike Jugoslavije,” *Borba*, 29.09.1957., p.5.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*

know how much they knew about us, and how they welcomed us was often beyond all expectations. In Japan, for example, as we passed through Tokyo, people on the streets blocked aisles. Merchants even closed their shops and ran to see us. Thousands of people gathered and greeted us, so we had a hard time pushing our way through the crowd.

Over two hundred thousand people welcomed and greeted us warmly [and] spontaneously in Hanoi, as they did in general throughout Indonesia as well. In short, wherever we arrived, the welcome was unusually friendly and warm. They were not greeting us, the delegation, they were welcoming Yugoslavia in us, as they themselves told us. Comrades, one should go to those distant countries and see how much Yugoslavia means and is respected in that part of the world.⁸¹⁷

Through such accounts, Yugoslavs cultivated a sense of recognition abroad and self-importance. Though most official visits to the region were greeted ceremonially and grandly, Yugoslav experiential writings took it a step further. They narrated these events as if entire countries had stopped momentarily to acknowledge the Yugoslav arrival. In these exaggerations, the narratives on East Asia (and Asia in general) built up Yugoslav international importance. To further strengthen this image, East Asian officials were quoted whenever they praised the country and its 'hard-working and brave peoples.'⁸¹⁸ Or, when they stated something aligned with the Yugoslav official narratives and self-perception.⁸¹⁹

The fact people in East Asian countries knew of Yugoslavia was attributed to the Tito-Stalin split in 1948.⁸²⁰ Tito's own cult of personality was somewhat shaped by experiential writings from East Asia. Levi, for example, created an article for Tito's birthday titled 'Tito in Asia' and wrote:

I encountered him on the streets, houses, and trains of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka; in silent nights of calm [ceasefire] in Korea; in conversations in dugouts in Seoul and Busan; and in the winding alleys of Hong Kong island, in the Singaporean port, on Malayan plantations, in Burma, in India—everywhere.

I encountered him in the people of Asia, who heard of him because they heard about Yugoslavia and its freedom. I encountered Tito there, where they were proud to say they know of him: "You are from Yugoslavia? Ah, yes, we know! Yugoslavia, Tito!"⁸²¹

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ Đorđe Bogoević, "Peng Čen podneo izveštaj Stalnom komitetu Svekinške narodne skupštine o poseti parlamentaraca nekim evropskim zemljama," *Borba*, 03.04.1957., p.3.

⁸¹⁹ 'Yugoslavs suffered from all kinds of foreign oppressors and fought for their freedom first against the Ottoman Empire, and then against Austro-Hungary, later on against Nazism, and in recent times against the Soviet Union. From all those struggles, the people of Yugoslavia emerged as winners and today are unanimous with all the free people of the world.' Kosta Timotijević, "Japanski vodeći političari o problemima svoje zemlje," *Borba*, 29.12.1953., p.4.

⁸²⁰ Even in internal diplomatic correspondences, this was noted. See, for example, Maks Baće, "Neki podaci o unutrašnjem i spoljno-političkom životu Japana," 15.06.1953, Tokyo, DASMP, PA, 1953-43, 48586, Doc.No.124.

⁸²¹ Jaša Levi, "Tito u Aziji," *Borba*, 25.05.1952., p.9.

Levi's article created the sense that Tito was not only known and celebrated in East Asia but omnipresent. Belonging to new Yugoslavia was to proudly belong to Tito. Boškov contributed to Tito's image but in a different context. During his pre-China stay in Burma, he noted that the ordinary people he met on the streets and could not converse with (neither side spoke a common language) reacted positively to the word Tito. Their subsequent hospitality he said he 'owed to the international character of soccer, but far more to the fact I am Yugoslav, that is, a good man from Tito's land.'⁸²² Yugoslav experiential writings used East Asia (and Asia more broadly) as fertile ground to ground Yugoslav nascent cosmopolitan identity and a sense of global importance while uplifting Tito's image at home.

6.3. Embracing and Escaping European-ness: On Yugoslav Identity

The way Yugoslavs in East Asia related to the Koreans, Japanese, and Chinese was not uniform. It had common traits and themes, but their different responses (even within this small pool of privileged individuals) reflected the heterogeneity of Yugoslav society. In the recent decade, as mentioned in the literature review (see Chapter 1), Yugoslav participation (or lack thereof) in the colonial project and associated discourses has been up for debate.⁸²³ For some historians, the Yugoslav link to colonialism stopped at 'cognitive' and 'consumerist' levels, mostly associated with the times preceding the Second World War, and for others, it was much more pervasive.⁸²⁴ The one thing there is agreement on is that Yugoslav belief systems were likely influenced by colonial discourses even if their actions and narratives were not motivated by racism.

In experiential writings on East Asia, Yugoslavs reflected on their belief systems and prejudice, often citing inherited rhetoric from specific Western (most often French) writers and thinkers. Yet there were instances where exoticization and racist notions were blatant. Bebler, for example, found that some newly decolonized Asian countries had less success with economic growth than post-war Germany because of a perceived lack of *vaspitanje*, that is, education associated with good upbringing and manners.⁸²⁵ For him, only proper modernization and factories can give a population discipline and habits that would make it a productive workforce. Moreover, he absurdly ignored all other historical differences between decolonized states and Germany that would have impacted their economies. Other Yugoslavs took a far more critical approach, going in the opposite direction. They read most, if not all, issues in Asia as a consequence of colonialism and oppression.

Many were outspoken about their awareness, discomfort, and fear of inadvertently approaching Asia as the West approached the Yugosphere, that is, by orientalizing it. Sead Saračević, Vjesnik's 'special reporter from the areas of the Far East and Southeast Asia' in the early 1960s, professed his internal conundrum in his 1965 book *Encounters with Asia*.⁸²⁶ He embarked on his trip in March 1961, and during a flight, 'a thought occurred' to him:

I remembered those journalists and writers who arrived from the West in Sarajevo or Skopje in the first postwar years. Impressed by mosque minarets and the bazaar's picturesqueness, many did not see

⁸²² Boškov, *Aziska turneja*, p.19.

⁸²³ For a brief summary, see Radonjić, *Slika Afrike u Jugoslaviji (1945-1991)*, p.14.

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Aleš Bebler, "Ni na nebu ni na zemlji," *Borba*, 13.11.1960., p.7.

⁸²⁶ Sead Saračević, *Susreti s Azijom*, Zagreb: Epoha, 1965.

anything else in those cities. And, in order to keep their »oriental« impression as long as possible, their interest was limited exclusively to the bazaar, mosques, Sevdah songs, and baklavas. They were full of the Orient, not seeing anything else: the stratification of a semi-feudal society, the break with the old and backward, and the emergence of something new, in fact, [something] much more noticeable and significant, bringing our cities and provinces out of the oriental primitivism of the past. Thinking about it, I swore to myself that I would be careful not to make the same mistake. Wanting it or not, in relation to the places I visited, I too was a journalist coming from the West.⁸²⁷

Like Saračević, Yugoslavs were particularly aware of being Western and European in East Asia.⁸²⁸ The prejudice they carried (and were proclaiming in most cases to be actively attempting to break) was linked to this belonging to Europe.⁸²⁹ East Asia (and Asia in general) confirmed their European-ness in ways the West denied it. There, as Saračević noted, regardless of their self-identity, they were always people from the West. Marinković similarly struggled with this. She was aware of her European-ness but found it hard to accept its association primarily with colonialism and whiteness. In her book *China*, at some point, she exclaimed (in all capitals): ‘NOT ALL PEOPLE ARE THE SAME. NOR ARE ALL WHITE PEOPLE THE SAME.’⁸³⁰ This was a response to the gazes of Chinese passengers on a busy train from Hangzhou to Canton (Guangzhou) as she and fellow Yugoslavs made their way to the restaurant car. Reading into the way she was observed, Marinković felt it was racially charged and wrote: ‘[W]e are hurrying [pass them] guilty for all white people that for centuries walked this land.’⁸³¹ She then placed the blame for this uncomfortable experience on the ‘greed of white people’ from the West that created such dynamics with people in Asia.⁸³² She was simultaneously reluctant to bear the responsibility for the colonial project. Scholars found similar accounts in Yugoslav travel writings from Africa. Oskar Davičo, too, felt both shame and discomfort with a perceived sense of responsibility for the actions of the imperial West.⁸³³ He thus wrote:

It doesn’t make sense, but I can’t help it, I feel shame. The nation to which I belong and the class whose son I am have never coerced, never enslaved, never murdered. For centuries we were slaves ourselves.⁸³⁴

⁸²⁷ Ibid, p.5.

⁸²⁸ In an interview with a Chinese sportswoman and a world record-holder, Zheng Fengrong, Bogojević speaks of their mutual excitement or nervousness for meeting. He attributes her feelings to his European-ness. [F]or the first time one European journalist is asking her questions. She, of course, does not suspect that to this journalist, this is the first time to interview a world record-holder and that it is not easy for him either. See Đorđe Bogojević, “Pola metra za 5 godina,” *Borba*, 05.12.1957., p.8. (In the original he records the name as Čen Fen-Žun. The information he offers about the sportswoman matches that of Zheng Fengrong)

⁸²⁹ Šantić, *Japan*, p.7.

⁸³⁰ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Pirinač.

⁸³¹ Ibid.

⁸³² Ibid.

⁸³³ His travel book is Oskar Davičo, *Crno na belo*, Belgrade: Prosveta, 1962.

⁸³⁴ Linking this to the debate on Yugoslav participation in the colonial project, while Nemanja Radonjić reads Davičo’s writing as an attempt at ‘seeking similarities,’ Peter Wright reads it as evidence of Davičo ‘reinforcing the ostensible

Moreover, what Yugoslavs felt was their shared experience with the formerly colonized people—a history of enslavement and subjugation—was denied by the color of their skin and geographical belonging to the European continent. This dance between guilt and anger, being European but not *that* European, orientalizing yet being orientalized, paints a good picture of a Yugoslav identity. It was an identity of in-betweenness—of being simultaneously both but neither fully—an entangled knot of everything.⁸³⁵ For this reason, Marinković's dramatic responses to the legacy of colonialism in China could be read in many different ways with speculation about her intentions. On the one hand, her travel book writing often self-reflexively highlighted whiteness and European-ness ('That white woman is quite funny!' is just one of the inserts referring to herself through this one specific part of her identity).⁸³⁶ On the other, she celebrated that 'colonial kings have left' China and vigorously made it her point to criticize what imperialist Europeans did there.⁸³⁷ Moreover, in all comparisons of the Chinese and Westerners, she stated the former's superiority. Yet even here the narrative is not simple. When praising the wisdom of ordinary Chinese people, she does so in challenge to her personal (and perhaps collective Yugoslav) 'intellectualist preconceptions.'⁸³⁸ Though intended as an avenue to elevate the Chinese as superior, it also unintentionally underlined her higher education and belonging to intelligentsia in Europe. Others too have managed to simultaneously praise East Asians for their different-to-Europe ways of being yet reiterate, peripherally, European modernism as the way of progress. In these cases, Yugoslavs were firmly European. In an example of an interaction with a Japanese man in a kimono, Levi recorded thinking:

How one-sided we are, us Europeans! Shouldn't it be strange to the Japanese when they see us sitting in chairs and not on silk cushions scattered on the knitted raffia floor? And according to what is kimono a sign of backwardness, but our pants a reflection of modernist understanding? [...] But why do the Japanese themselves not wear kimonos in public? Perhaps to them, too, the Twentieth Century and that costume somehow do not go together?⁸³⁹

If, however, the discussion was about European colonialism, Yugoslavs leaned into the difference.⁸⁴⁰ Their shifts between embracing and escaping European-ness are evident across their experiential writings from East Asia. Scholar Tomasz Ewertowski observed the same in the case

immutability of his white identity.' See Wright in "Are there Racists in Yugoslavia?" Debating Racism and Anti-blackness in Socialist Yugoslavia," p.430 for the translation of Davičo's quote and mentioned different views.

⁸³⁵ Kilibarda identified dichotomies that permeated Yugoslav or even Balkan consciousness with 'shifting boundaries between 'white' / 'not-quite,' 'European' / 'non-European,' and 'developed' / 'underdeveloped worlds' in the Balkans.' See Kilibarda, "Non-Aligned Geographies in the Balkans: Space, Race and Image in the Construction of new 'European' Foreign Policies," p.28.

⁸³⁶ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Na rikši prema staroj četvrti.

⁸³⁷ Marinković, *Kina*, Chapter Berači zvezda.

⁸³⁸ Nada Marinković, "Između osećanja i misli," *Polja*, 1957, No.3, p.9.

⁸³⁹ Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, p.72.

⁸⁴⁰ The Burmese treatment of Yugoslav soccer players makes Boškov reflect on how, contrastly, they treated the British: '[the Burmese] do not smile so kindly to the English as they do to us. In this moment I feel how it is not pleasant to be English, even if a man is an entirely innocent grandson of a former colonizer.' See Boškov, *Aziska turneja*, p.16.

of Serbian and Polish China travel writings in the pre-1945 period.⁸⁴¹ In many ways, these narratives testify to how complex Yugoslav identity was vis-à-vis Europe. It also shows that their understanding of themselves was challenged in East Asia, leading to more profound reflections. Their narratives, of course, can be read in different ways as their words often sounded as both boundary-making and boundary-breaking. Yet this extractable plurality of meaning represents the lived reality at the time and that the Yugosphere continues to live in many ways today.

6.4. The Exceptional New Yugoslavia: A Conclusion

Traveling, experiencing, and then reporting from East Asia for the few Yugoslavs who did was often a dream come true. It was not only a sign of personal success but an attestation of the depth of access of new Yugoslavia. At both individual and collective levels, it evidenced Yugoslav burgeoning cosmopolitanism, which supported the collective notion of Yugoslav exceptionalism. Narratives on East Asia helped legitimize Yugoslav foreign politics and craft a specific image of the country for its domestic audiences. From the idea that Yugoslavia was known abroad and important to being a morally righteous actor in the world under Tito's leadership (e.g., in its fight against imperialism), East Asia served as a space through which the story of new Yugoslavia was solidified. This story was inextricably linked to its new identity, which struggled to reconcile its belonging or lack thereof to Europe. East Asia thus challenged Yugoslavs to confront their internal identity tensions and revealed a nuanced dance between them embracing and escaping European-ness. It did not just represent a European country but one with many different experiences, able to find common ground and a shared narrative with people across East Asia and the world. In this lies the great value of Yugoslav experiential writings from the 1950s as they record the many ways in which the story of new Yugoslavia was crafted.

⁸⁴¹ Ewertowski, "Northeast China as a Contact Zone in Polish and Serbian Travelogues, 1900-1939," p.29. He focuses on Milutin Velimirović's book *Through China*. Velimirović also authored a travel book about Japan and Mongolia. See Milutin Velimirović, *Po Japanu i Mongoliji*, Belgrade: Francusko-srpska knjižara A.M. Popovića, 1939.

Chapter 7: Concluding Remarks

The 1950s were a time of great transformation in Yugoslavia. In a little over a decade, the state grew from international isolation into a leader of an emerging global movement (NAM). What facilitated this shift was an expansion of contact with a growing number of countries, particularly in the Global South. In the process, Yugoslavia opened diplomatic missions, sent press correspondents to locations worldwide, and cultivated its new identity shaped by the notions of exceptionalism, cosmopolitanism, and global importance. Yet, this grand transformational unfolding started with and because of the events in Korea and East Asia. From then on, the region became and remained part of the Yugoslav story.

Stories were central to this process. The first experiential writings from and on East Asia emerged in this sea of second-hand reports, analyses, and foreign-sourced press clippings about the Korean War. They were immediately accepted as more valuable and truthful. They were the result of firsthand engagement and were written by Yugoslavs themselves, making them more trustworthy in the eyes of the regime and the people. The individuals who ventured to the region in the 1950s brought along their ideology, beliefs, and ideas of how the world worked. Their prized eyes (which Levi called a ‘trustworthy witness’) were filtered through existing frames of reference. East Asia was primarily read through notions of progress and idealized modernity, tied to their socialist worldview. Yet their role in shaping the image of new East Asia back in Yugoslavia was pivotal.

Judging by their biographies, Yugoslavs in East Asia were a heterogeneous group. They were all part of the same network of individuals, unified in ideology and building a new Yugoslavia together. Their shared sense of belonging to this Yugoslavia was marked by everything that preceded it. In contrast to this new state stood old Yugoslavia, in which they were born and against which they actively took arms. This established a sense of a binary in their worldview that extended to binaries beyond the old versus new. It also included seeing the world through backward versus progressive, capitalist versus socialist, and oppressive versus liberating lenses. It is thus unsurprising that they transported these same views onto their narratives of East Asia. In both cases, the Second World War stood as an essential boundary between the old and the new and the most critical reckoning that fundamentally changed the global order. Yugoslav experiential writings on East Asia thus must be observed in context and through awareness of all the multilayered processes that shaped the society and the people who wrote them. In their direct interaction with East Asia, their beliefs were often sharpened but sometimes challenged, underlining the fluid, relationally determined nature of presumptions and conclusions.

In East Asia, Yugoslavs tangibly engaged the Cold War. Reports on inter-regional relations, in particular, crafted the story of what the Cold War was in practice. The intersection of foreign influences (from nuclear and colonial powers), regional leadership, and their collective effect on the ordinary people—especially workers and peasants—provided fertile ground for the Yugoslavs to offer compelling arguments against the Cold War global order and spheres of influence politics. This reaffirmed the righteousness of their in-betweenness and legitimized their political search for allies among more neutral states. Through experiential writings on East Asia, Yugoslavs actively sharpened narratives of what later grew into the Non-Alignment Movement.

In the early days of the 1950s, still struggling domestically and internationally, Yugoslavia was undergoing a rebranding of its socialist ideology. The press was charged with actively separating socialism from the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was crafting its own socialism. This was no easy task. The Korean War and reports on Soviet expansionism into Chinese territories before 1949 provided direct examples of Moscow's imperialism. To be imperial implied not being socialist. Through this, Yugoslavs could reclaim socialism while subtly but effectively suggesting that intense post-1948 Soviet criticism of the CPY was not just invalid but imperial. Later on, such narratives about the USSR were toned down, but Yugoslavs continued to view the superpowers as destabilizing to world peace. This became one of the key principles of the emerging Non-Alignment—a movement crafted in a true socialist fashion through alliances of the formerly oppressed masses.

Yugoslav camaraderie with the occupied, formerly colonized, or semi-colonized Asian countries began in the 1950s. They did not just solidarize with Asians but built a shared narrative based on perceived historical similarities, such as that of foreign oppression and domination. Yet, direct engagement with East Asia brought to the fore the contested nature of Yugoslav European identity. Here, Yugoslavs were firmly people from the West. When writing about the region and particularly China, several Yugoslavs reported anguish over their skin color. Whiteness and European-ness were now boundaries, preventing them from being at one with those they saw as their true comrades. Simultaneously, whenever their European-ness was not associated with colonialism but progress, modernization, and intellectualism, they embraced it. Experiential writings from the region featured such identity negotiations in detail, offering the broader Yugoslav public more insight into the boundaries of their belonging to the European continent. At the same time, the Yugoslav identity of in-betweenness was further consolidated.

It would be wrong to assume that all this was happening in relation to a static East Asia. On the contrary, Yugoslavs recognized and emphasized the region's multilayered versatility and dynamism. Over a span of a decade, they recorded shifts in individual countries and East Asia at large, constantly grappling with its political, cultural, and demographic complexities. As many examples in this thesis have shown, Yugoslavs were fundamentally reshaped in their interactions with East Asia. In return, Yugoslav experiential writings influenced the region since they informed political opinions in Yugoslavia and influenced Belgrade's actions toward the region. This would likely be more easily observable in an extended timeframe, with a particularly interesting example being Yugoslav close ties with North Korea in the 1970s.

The theoretical framework underpinning this thesis rests upon one unifying premise—everything is relational and processual in nature. Observing Yugoslav experiential writings authored by different people across a span of more than a decade and crafted in vastly different settings, styles, and lengths of their stay, one does notice a certain commonality and coherence. Even when these are collectively compared to Edvard Kardelj's politico-ideological writings and memoirs of Yugoslav officials from the latter part of the last century, there is continuity of thought. From pre-World War II and World War II events to the subsequent Tito-Stalin split and the Cold War binary, all writings reflected how global events shaped them and vice versa. Yugoslav engagement with East Asia in the 1950s was embedded in a web of processes that preceded and superseded this short timeframe. These processes created webs of meaning. Yugoslav personal experiences with the West during the Second World War influenced their perceptions of the U.S. in Japan. Their personal experience with the USSR influenced their perceptions of Moscow-Beijing relations.

Their personal experience of oppression influenced how they related to the people in East Asia. The list is long.

At the same time, direct engagement with East Asia onset new meaning-making processes in the 1950s. Sheer access to the region helped reshape the country from one of few global connections to one of many, thereby cosmopolitanizing it. It reconfigured the very idea of what was deemed possible for Yugoslavs themselves. At the same time, with a growing volume of autochthonously produced knowledge, the region was increasingly approached from a place of familiarity. To be in and write about East Asia was normalized as part of new Yugoslavia and its global outreach. At the center of this stood transcultural dynamics of meaning-making and storytelling. From ideas and narratives, concrete identities were relationally formed and reformed throughout the 1950s and beyond. Yugoslavs who founded the new socialist state were a heterogeneous group gathered around shared ideas of Yugoslavism and socialism. Before they could form a political system, they embarked on the creation of stories that developed these ideas into concrete calls for action. This continued after 1945 and in moments when the country was defining and redefining its socialism. At each step, Yugoslavia was shaped in relation to something outside of itself through a search for difference and sameness. Experiential writings about East Asia aided this process, crafting simultaneously the stories of new East Asia and new Yugoslavia, with their differences and sameness emphasized at each step.

The question that guided this doctoral research project is: What does Yugoslav experiential writing about East Asia in the long 1950s reveal? It was purposefully kept broad with hopes it would offer space for various findings and conclusions that the sources might lead to. Practical examples provided in the four content chapters answered this question—they revealed an interconnectedness of seemingly disconnected regions and ways in which writing about East Asia shaped Yugoslavia. The primary contribution of this thesis lies in raising awareness of these historical connections that have been obscured in contemporary discourses. Secondly, it provided insights into a crucial aspect of Yugoslav identity formation and transformation during the Cold War, drawing on a previously unconsulted pool of primary materials. This thesis should, however, be regarded as just the first step into a fertile field of historical inquiry. Future research avenues could be expanded to include experiential writings on South and Southeast Asia, taking into account broader timeframes or even narrowing in on writings contributed specifically by female journalists and travelers. Each of these topics would be of great scholarly value.

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Appendix 1: Biographical Data

In the following pages, all those whose writings were considered in this thesis are introduced biographically with as much detail as possible based on available secondary resources. Though it helps contextualize the findings in this thesis' chapters, these biographies are a contribution to Yugoslav historiography on their own, as they might aid another researcher in piecing the puzzle of the country (and region) that, in many ways, remains underexplored today. The following list is organized in chronological order and with a focus on their relation to East Asia.

Jakov (Jaša) Levi

December 1951 – March 1952

Visited Japan, (South) Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, and India

Jakov Levi, nicknamed Jaša (anglicized as Jascha), was a popular Foreign Affairs Editor at *Borba* and a correspondent from abroad several times. After World War II, Levi's communist zeal and linguistic capabilities led him into the world of journalism, with him reporting from the Peace Conference in Paris in 1946.⁸⁴³ His popularity influenced his professional rise, and he (in his own words) was regarded as a 'foreign policy guru' in Yugoslavia at the time.⁸⁴⁴ This was cemented when, in his mid-20s, he 'was summoned to a top-secret Communist Party meeting and informed of the impending break with the Cominform.'⁸⁴⁵ Soon after, he worked closely with Milovan Đilas, one of Tito's closest associates, 'the government minister designated to guide the official battle with the Kremlin' and later on, Yugoslav most famous dissident.⁸⁴⁶ Not only was he tasked with writing the anti-Soviet 'two-page center spread' in *Borba*, but if a war with Belgrade's former ally erupted, Levi was 'to head for the mountains' where a printing press awaited and guerilla warfare could commence yet again on Yugoslav soil. Though there was a sense a war was bound to erupt, most of the battling against the Soviet Union was in the realm of the written word. Levi took this task to heart, as anti-Sovietism permeated his writing from then on. In this period, he began publishing books, most of which handled international questions as he observed them during his time at home and abroad.⁸⁴⁷ He was sent abroad as *Borba*'s correspondent at the U.N. twice. The first was the Fifth General Assembly of the U.N. in New York and then again from 1954 to 1956. Meanwhile, he had the privileged opportunity to go to East and Southeast Asia in 1951-1952 for (around) three months. He was, in fact, the first citizen of socialist Yugoslavia to visit Japan and the Korean peninsula and the first one to report on the Korean War and Peace Talks. In late 1956, disillusioned with Tito's reactions to Soviet interventions in Poland and Hungary, he decided to abandon his 'lifelong faith' - he sought asylum in the U.S.⁸⁴⁸ From then on he worked in the U.S.

⁸⁴³ Levi, *Requiem for a Country: A History Lesson*, p.95.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 36.

⁸⁴⁶ Levi, *Requiem for a Country: A History Lesson*, p.105.

⁸⁴⁷ See the following titles: Jakov Levi, *Zločin protiv pravosuđa: o antijugoslovenskom i antidemokratskom budimpeštanskom procesu Rajku i ostalima*, Belgrade: Jugoslovenska knjiga, 1949; Jakov Levi, *Oblaci nad svijetom: Putem Ujedinjenih Nacija*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1951; Jaša Levi, *Susreti u Aziji*, Zagreb: NIP, 1953.

⁸⁴⁸ Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 43.

and in his final years self-published two memoirs which proved invaluable resources for the contextualization of his work for this thesis.⁸⁴⁹

Zojica Levi and Miša Levi

November 1952 – late 1954

Japan

Miša Levi worked as a Yugoslav diplomat, and he was dispatched as the first person to Japan in late 1952 to help set up the Yugoslav Mission in Tokyo.⁸⁵⁰ He relocated to Japan with his wife Zojica and daughter Marica (Mara).⁸⁵¹ Though from Mara's interviews later on in life, it is clear that the Levis shared their experiences of Japan with their immediate friends (in the circles of political and intellectual elites in Yugoslavia), Miša and Zojica also shared about it publicly. Zojica published one article in *Borba* about tea ceremonies in Japan, in 1955, over a year since their return from Japan.⁸⁵² Miša, on the other hand, held lectures, such as the 'Impressions from Japan' lecture at the People's University in Belgrade on 20 December 1954.⁸⁵³

Kosta Timotijević

June 1953 – September 1956

Correspondent from Tokyo, Japan

Visited South Korea and Burma during this time as well

Kosta Timotijević was the first *Borba* and Yugoslav Cold War correspondent from Tokyo. His first *letters from Japan* (as *Borba* called them) were published in June 1953, with seemingly no other articles for *Borba* prior to his Japan station.⁸⁵⁴ In 1952, a philosophy student called Kosta Timotijević sent comments to the *Borba* editorial, which, if it is indeed the same person, reaffirmed Timotijević was not employed in *Borba* before 1953.⁸⁵⁵ Kosta was the son of a renowned Yugoslav journalist and party member, Dušan (Duda) Timotijević. His father was the first *Politika* correspondent in Ethiopia from 1932 to 1935 and later in Germany, who, after imprisonment during the Second World War, occupied many positions of importance in the new Yugoslavia. He served as editor of *Politika*, *Glas*, *Borba*, and other newspapers, dean of the Journalistic and Diplomatic School in Belgrade (1948-1953), and, from 1959, the Director of the Yugoslav Institute of Journalism.⁸⁵⁶ Dušan was called 'a legend of Yugoslav journalism' by Tanjug's correspondent

⁸⁴⁹ The two books are: Jascha Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, 2009; and Jascha Levi, *Requiem for a Country: A History Lesson*, 2011, Kindle. Both are written in English and available on Amazon.com.

⁸⁵⁰ Miša Levi worked as a Yugoslav diplomat, and he was dispatched as the first person to Japan in late 1952 to help set up the Yugoslav Mission in Tokyo.

⁸⁵¹ For an interesting overview of this process, see his daughter Mara Čabrić's recollection as recounted in an interview in 2020. Interview with Mara Čabrić (né Levi)—Mira Adanja Polak, *Ekskluzivno: ispred vremena*, 8 November 2020, RTS 2, Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNvxpm7hUy4> (accessed June 2022)

⁸⁵² Zojica Levi, "Ceremonija čaja u Japanu," *Borba*, 31.07.1955., p.7.

⁸⁵³ Miša Levi, "Utisci iz Japana," *Borba*, 19.12.1954., p.8.

⁸⁵⁴ Kosta Timotijević, "Tokio, grad na hiljadu kvadratnih kilometara," *Borba*, 10.06.1953., p.4.

⁸⁵⁵ "Pisma uredništvu," *Borba*, 11.05.1952., p.2.

⁸⁵⁶ Dušan Timotijević, *Etiopija juče i danas*, Belgrade: Novinsko-izdavačko preduzeće udruženja novinara Srbije, 1954; Dragomir Bondžić, *Novinarska i diplomatska visoka škola u Beogradu 1948-1953*, Belgrade: Institut za

Boža Rafajlović, who wrote in awe how, as a high school student, he read Timotijević's reports from Abyssinia, i.e. Ethiopia.⁸⁵⁷ This was not the only important link between Kosta and the world of journalism and the Yugoslav elites. He was also the son of Olga Pops Timotijević and grandson of Dr. Fridrih Pops, who led the Jewish Community in occupied Belgrade.⁸⁵⁸ His familial background, proficiency in multiple languages, and relevant educational credentials rendered him a trustworthy choice for the job in Japan and, later, the United Kingdom. His last dispatches from Tokyo were sent in September 1956, after which he was relocated as Borba's correspondent to London.⁸⁵⁹ In the 1950s, he was the only Borba correspondent to live and work in Japan for an extended period of time.⁸⁶⁰

Dragi Stamenković

April – June 1955

Visited China as part of an official, syndical delegation led by Vlado Begović

Dragi Stamenković was a worker before World War II and became a member of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1937, joining NOB in 1941.⁸⁶¹ After the war, he held many different political positions but focused on working for the Alliance of Syndicates of Yugoslavia (Savez sindikata Jugoslavije) and the Alliance of Syndicates of Serbia (Savez sindikata Srbije).⁸⁶² From 1965, he acted as President of the Executive Council of Serbia within Yugoslavia.⁸⁶³ His book *Kina* was the first book on China published in the new Yugoslavia by a Yugoslav author who went to China in person.⁸⁶⁴ In 2002 he published his memoir titled *Between Ideals and Politics – a Personal Telling and Testimony* in which he details his life and the workings of the Yugoslav system (especially through the lens of interpersonal relations across the top echelon of power in the country).⁸⁶⁵

Vlado Begović

April – June 1955

Visited China as a leader of Yugoslavia's first official (syndical) delegation

savremenu istoriju, 2013, op.cit.; and the CIA-RDP80T00246A011800130001-6 file, p.2. Also see information available in *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji: biografski podaci o jugoslovenskim savremenima*, 1st Edition, Beograd: Sedma sila, 1957, p.724.

⁸⁵⁷ "Boža Rafajlović: Put u Tanjug," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43-'93), p.174.

⁸⁵⁸ Kosta Timotijević, "O ratnom skrivanju dra Fridriha Popsa i žene mu Ružice i o ljudima koji su mu u tome pomogli," *Jevrejski pregled*, Iss.5-8, 1988, pp.7-15. More information about Olga Timotijević Pops can be found in *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji: biografski podaci o jugoslovenskim savremenima*, Prvo izdanje, Beograd: Sedma sila, 1957, p.724.

⁸⁵⁹ From Tokyo: Kosta Timotijević, "Tanjiri gospodina Kurušime," *Borba*, 09.09.1956., p.5; from London: Kosta Timotijević, "Batlerovo preuzimanje dužnosti," *Borba*, 23.11.1956., p.3.

⁸⁶⁰ Apart from Timotijević, from 1961-1963, Dragutin Šolajić was Borba's correspondent from Tokyo. Information about this can be found in: Jože Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994, p.127; and Dragutin Šolajić, *Stogodišnji Japan*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1968, p.3.

⁸⁶¹ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.656.

⁸⁶² Ibid.

⁸⁶³ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.971.

⁸⁶⁴ His book, though published in 1956, was not mentioned in the *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji* 1957 book.

⁸⁶⁵ Dragi Stamenković, *Između ideala i politike – lično kazivanje i svedočenje*, Belgrade: Stručna knjiga, 2002.

Vlajko Begović was educated in Prague and Moscow and joined the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1930. Due to his political activities in monarchist Yugoslavia, he was convicted in absentia to 12 years in prison, which he spent abroad in the Czech Republic, France, and the USSR (1927-1936). He then joined the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and was imprisoned in France for a few years before joining the French resistance movement (1943-1945). In 1945, he became an economist in Yugoslavia, began working in publishing (including Borba newspapers), and served as director of the Institute for International Politics and Economy.⁸⁶⁶ By the 1970s, he held positions such as director of the Institute for Social Studies and the director of the Higher School of Political Science in Belgrade.⁸⁶⁷ His biography dropped the economist part, and he was regarded in public predominantly as a publicist.⁸⁶⁸

Vlado Teslić

September 1955 – September 1956

The First Borba's Correspondent from Beijing

Vlado Teslić finished Gymnasium in Sisak and was interned during the Second World War in Hungary. After the War, he graduated from the famous ideological Higher School for Journalists and Diplomats during its brief existence (1948-1953) before starting at Borba in 1950.⁸⁶⁹ His reporting focused on foreign affairs.⁸⁷⁰ Vlado Teslić arrived in China in September 1955, seemingly alongside the Yugoslav "Kolo" folklore ensemble.⁸⁷¹ He was one of the most visible Borba journalists in charge of reporting on international issues. His analyses were most often published as part of the column *Today in the World* (Danas u svetu) or as individual articles. His background and expertise made him the prime choice for the first Borba correspondent in Beijing. He was a prolific writer but one of his first books ever published was *The Chinese Revolution and Moscow* (Kineska revolucija i Moskva) in 1953.⁸⁷² In addition, his broader focus extended to cover East and Southeast Asia, as well as Eastern Europe.⁸⁷³ For this reason, in 1954 he was selected to report on the Geneva Conference on the Far East for Borba, which contextualized the 'Far-Eastern problem' for the broader readership, often as front-page news.⁸⁷⁴

Like Levi, Teslić held lectures in Yugoslavia. Upon his return from Geneva, it was announced in *Borba* on 22 March 1954 that Teslić would give a lecture at the Worker's University in Belgrade,

⁸⁶⁶ Mentioned biographical information can be found in *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.49.

⁸⁶⁷ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.65.

⁸⁶⁸ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.65.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.722. Though more will be written about the said institution in the Introduction, for additional information see: Dragomir Bondžić, "Novinarska i diplomatska visoka škola u Beogradu 1948-1953," *Tokovi istorije*, No.3, 2007, pp.80-95.

⁸⁷⁰ This was reported as his specialty in *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.1074.

⁸⁷¹ Vlado Teslić, "Priateljski osjećaji," *Borba*, 27.09.1955., p.3.

⁸⁷² Vlado Teslić, *Kineska revolucija i Moskva*, Belgrade: Rad, 1953.

⁸⁷³ For Japan, see, *inter alia*: Vlado Teslić, "Dve socijalističke partije Japana," *Borba*, 17.01.1953., p.4 and "Izbori u Japanu," *Borba*, 01.03.1955., p.3; for China, before his time in Beijing, see for example: "Formoza," *Borba*, 27.01.1955., p.3 and "Konferencija KP Kine," *Borba*, 06.04.1955., p.3; for regional questions, see: "Sovjetsko-japanski razgovori," *Borba*, 27.06.1955., p.3 and "Kinesko-vijetnamska deklaracija," *Borba*, 11.07.1955., p.3.

⁸⁷⁴ See, for example, Vlado Teslić, "Dalekoistočni problem i Ženevska konferencija," *Borba*, 20.04.1954., p.3; and "Izloženi uglavnom stari predlozi Seula i Pjongjanga za rešenje korejskog pitanja," *Borba*, 28.04.1954., p.1.

and the lecture was titled ‘The Asian Problem and the Geneva Conference.’⁸⁷⁵ He remained in East Asia from September 1955 until August 1956, after which he returned to Belgrade. It is not clear if there were plans for his return to Beijing, but as someone fluent in Hungarian, he was mobilized by *Večernje Novosti* newspapers to cover the Soviet intervention in Hungary in October 1956.⁸⁷⁶ His Budapest reports were published in *Borba* daily as well, including the highly emotional escape from Hungary back to Yugoslavia.⁸⁷⁷ His time in China coincided with Timotijević’s time in Japan, but the fact they both left the region around the same time, left *Borba* without a regional correspondent for half a year. This would suggest that the plan for Teslić to remain in Yugoslavia and work on the Hungarian crisis was abruptly made.

The book *Yugoslav Contemporaries* notes that he was *Borba*’s correspondent in China in the 1955-1956 period and from London in the 1959-1962 period.⁸⁷⁸ In 1958, for the 1 January issue, Teslić published one more article about China based on his experience in Beijing.⁸⁷⁹ Here he displayed a protective attitude about China and the way it was perceived globally – something that will become evident in the subsequent chapters. This changed by 1962, when at the height of the Chinese anti-Yugoslav campaign and during the Sino-Indian War, he decisively criticized it.⁸⁸⁰ By 1966, Teslić had assumed the role of a Party spokesman and remained a highly celebrated journalist in the country.⁸⁸¹ He also held editorial positions at *Borba*.⁸⁸² He wrote multiple books (mostly booklets for *Borba*), especially on topics related to the Non-Alignment Movement. These include the following booklets: *Tito, The Statesmen of Our Era* (1980), *Non-Aligned from Belgrade to Delhi* (1983), and *A Quarter of a Century of Non-Alignment (The Non-Aligned from Belgrade to Harare)* (1986).⁸⁸³ In 1990, he published an interesting article for *Borba*, titled ‘*I’m Non-Aligned, But I Like to Live*’ (Nesvrstan sam, al’ volim da živim).⁸⁸⁴ Discussing political shifts in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Cold War binary, Teslić questioned the Yugoslav Non-Aligned future, weighing the pros and cons of leaving or staying in the Non-Alignment Movement and referencing the Ninth Non-Aligned Summit in Belgrade. The choice seemed to have been staying in NAM and retaining a position of influence in Europe, acting as NAM’s force on the continent, or abandoning NAM, and embracing Europe as just one other country, ‘on the periphery of [European] integrations and alliances.’⁸⁸⁵ In some manner, his logic danced around this statement: ‘because if we are not in the World [Non-Aligned], we will not be in Europe either.’⁸⁸⁶

Živko Milić

September 1955 – (unspecified) 1957

⁸⁷⁵ “Danas u Beogradu,” *Borba*, 22.03.1954., p.7.

⁸⁷⁶ Jože Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994, p.100.

⁸⁷⁷ Vlado Teslić, “Povratak iz Mađarske,” *Borba*, 11.11.1956., p.5.

⁸⁷⁸ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.1074.

⁸⁷⁹ Vlado Teslić, “Kinezi slave Novu godinu u znaku psa,” *Borba*, 01.01.1958., p.11.

⁸⁸⁰ Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.295.

⁸⁸¹ Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned World*, p.305.

⁸⁸² *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.1074.

⁸⁸³ Vlado Teslić, *Tito državnik naše epohe*, Belgrade: *Borba*, Aktuelna politička biblioteka, 1980; *Nesvrstani od Beograda do Delhija*, Belgrade: *Borba*, Aktuelna politička biblioteka, 1983; *Četvrt veka nesvrstanosti*, Belgrade: *Borba*, Aktuelna politička biblioteka, 1986.

⁸⁸⁴ Vlado Teslić, “Nesvrstan sam, al’ volim da živim,” *Borba*, 30.11.1989.-02.01.1990., p.7.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid.

The First (Freelance) Correspondent for Politika in Beijing

Živko Milić joined NOB in 1943 and began his journalist career soon after.⁸⁸⁷ Though he worked in multiple Yugoslav papers (including Borba, where he was employed as an editor since 1957), he was in China as a freelance correspondent for Politika from August 1955 until 1957.⁸⁸⁸ In one of his articles, he mentions that he was the first Yugoslav journalist in China.⁸⁸⁹ In 1956, he published a small booklet on *Algiers* and the following year, his travel book *Footsteps over Fire: Travelogues* offered personal insights from various African, South, and Southeast Asian states.⁸⁹⁰ He traveled widely as a journalist and worked for Borba as a correspondent in the U.S. for a long time.⁸⁹¹ In 1970, in the *Yugoslav Contemporaries* book, he is recorded as editor-in-chief of ELLE-ONA women's magazine.⁸⁹²

Vladimir Baum

September 1955 – (unspecified month) 1957

Student at Peking University-turned-Correspondent for Vjesnik and Radio Zagreb

The Yugoslav Ministry of Information employed Vladimir Baum until the Tito-Stalin split, after which he worked for the Institute for International Politics and Economics in Belgrade.⁸⁹³ It seems that he, in his own testimony, was constantly under suspicion from his fellow Yugoslav socialists because '[h]e speaks too many languages, he has contacts with the West, he is not sufficiently vigilant!' – and was suspected simultaneously 'a Stalinist and an imperial spy' after the Tito-Stalin split.⁸⁹⁴ After he was expelled from the Communist Party and his first marriage collapsed, Baum moved to Zagreb and joined Radio Zagreb before embarking to Beijing as a scholarship holder of the People's Republic of China in 1955. In his 2004 interview with Tanja Eckstein, he said that while in Zagreb, he 'was looking for a way out of the situation I was in [in Yugoslavia] and I found it: in 1955 I became a correspondent and an exchange student in China.'⁸⁹⁵ In a brief biography supplied for his book *There is but one Middle Kingdom* (*Jedno je carstvo sredine*), published in 1958, he writes that as a student in China, he simultaneously worked as a correspondent for newspapers and radios in Yugoslavia.⁸⁹⁶ In this capacity, he observed the 8th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in September 1956, sending reports back home. While in China, Baum's movements can be somewhat tracked by looking into other literature written by a relatively small

⁸⁸⁷ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.452.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid. The mention that he was a freelance reporter for Politika can be found in *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.657. Also see his article written Živko Milić, "Kroz ceo svet: Pozorište senki – Volt Dizni pre hiljadu godina," *Politika*, 11.09.1955., p.10.

⁸⁸⁹ Živko Milić, "Intervju kineskog premijera Ču En Laja saradniku „Politike“: Jugoslovenska politika unapređenja mirne koegzistencije uživa našu podršku," *Politika*, 13.11.1955.

⁸⁹⁰ Živko Milić, *Alžir*, Belgrade: Kolarčev narodni univerzitet, 1956; *Koraci po vatri: putopisi*, Belgrade: Kosmos, 1957.

⁸⁹¹ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.657; Živko Milić, "Izgubljen process protiv monopola," *Borba*, 18.10.1959., p.6; Živko Milić, "Ka ugovoru o zabrani svih nuklearnih proba," *Borba*, 29.01.1965., p.3.

⁸⁹² Ibid.

⁸⁹³ This information can be found in his interview with Tanja Eckstein, Interview with Vladimir Baum, September 2004, Centropa, Available at <https://www.centropa.org/de/biography/vladimir-baum> (accessed December 2023).

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁶ Vladimir Baum, *Jedno je carstvo sredine*, Zagreb: Naprijed, 1959, p.200.

amount of foreign students in China at the time. For example, looking at Vladimir Baum's time-stamped diary entries (as published in his book on China), his visit to Qingdao corresponds to that of Morris Willis in 1957, who was there with a 'Yugoslav student' as Beverley Hooper writes in her book *Foreigners Under Mao*.⁸⁹⁷ It is also interesting that Baum, in his interview with Eckstein, said multiple times that he did not feel like he could stay in China for more than two years, and mentioned that for this reason he embarked to Vietnam at some point.⁸⁹⁸

Baum reported from Vietnam in this period too and wrote a book, *War on the Red River* (Rat na crvenoj rijeci, 1959).⁸⁹⁹ He contributed two chapters on Vietnam for Hadžić's edited volume *A Journey Around the World: Travelogues* (1962).⁹⁰⁰ The fact there was no chapter on China could have been politically motivated, as relations with the Chinese Communists were at an all-time low in this period. Hadžić also helped edit Baum's book on Vietnam, the *War on the Red River*. From Jakov Levi's memoirs, the story of where Baum went after this becomes a bit clearer. Baum was a 'friend from law school in Zagreb' of Levi's wife Slava, whom he describes as 'quite a young English-speaking press secretary in Tito's war government, and now at the UN [acting] as director for social and economic affairs, a top rank below secretary. Like all other UN posts, Vlado's was sponsored by his government, but he had been utterly natural to Belgrade.'⁹⁰¹ Levi reports that Baum 'had a Chinese girlfriend while studying in Peking, but the authorities ended the union.'⁹⁰² Upon marrying in Yugoslavia for the second time, he was first sent to Bangkok as a diplomat and then to New York.⁹⁰³ Baum had a successful career in the U.N. (Department of Economic Affairs) working on topics related to energy, with publications in academic journals later on.⁹⁰⁴

Vujadin Boškov

Winter 1955

One of the Soccer Players in the Yugoslav Youth Team

Vujadin Boškov was a student and a soccer player during his trip to China in the Winter of 1955.⁹⁰⁵ In the book *Who is Who in Yugoslavia*, Boškov's sports engagements and his *Asian Tour* travelogue (1956) are both mentioned.⁹⁰⁶ While he would later achieve global fame as a soccer star and coach in Italy, in the 1950s, he was still relatively unknown. Boškov's *Asian Tour*, with reflections on Burma, Indonesia, and China, seems to be his only travel book ever published.

⁸⁹⁷ Beverley Hooper, *Foreigners under Mao: Western Lives in China, 1949-1976*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016, p.62.

⁸⁹⁸ Eckstein, Interview with Vladimir Baum, 2004.

⁸⁹⁹ Vladimir Baum, *Rat na crvenoj rijeci*, Zagreb: NIP (Novinarsko izdavačko preduzeće), 1959.

⁹⁰⁰ See Vladimir Baum's chapters "Aerodrom" (pp.308-311) and "Vijetnamci su pošli u škole" (pp.351-356) in Fadil Hadžić (ed.), *Put oko svijeta: putopisi*, 2nd Edition, Zagreb: Stvarnost – Novinarska izdavačka kuća, 1962.

⁹⁰¹ Levi, *The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life*, Chapter 43.

⁹⁰² Ibid, Chapter 44.

⁹⁰³ Ibid. Levi mistakenly records it as Burma. Bangkok is mentioned by Baum in his interview with Eckstein in 2004.

⁹⁰⁴ See, for example, Vladimir Baum, "Aluminum Smelting in Search of Cheaper Energy: Shutdowns in Japan – Opportunities in the Middle East?," *Energy Exploration & Exploitation*, Vol.3, No.4, 1985, pp.265-268.

⁹⁰⁵ This time specification is mentioned in Richard Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018, p.110.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.73.

Nada Marinković

Summer 1956⁹⁰⁷

Journalist at Radio Belgrade and a Novelist, Visited China as a Spouse of Aleksandar Marinković, an Opera Singer on Tour with a 21-person Ensemble to China

Nada Marinković was a journalist and a novelist. Following her studies, while Belgrade-Moscow relations were at their height, she first worked on the Yugoslavia-USSR magazine and then transitioned to the cultural section at *Politika*, followed by a position as a reporter at Radio Belgrade.⁹⁰⁸ Her first book, published in 1956, was a book of reflections on traveling and a collection of essays about her voyages through Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and France. Symbolic of her love for travel, the book was titled *Meaning and Love: Encounters and Travelogues*.⁹⁰⁹ In 1956, she visited China as a spouse of the opera singer, Aleksandar Marinković who was on tour there.⁹¹⁰ In 1958, Marinković published her travel book *China*, and then continued to write novels and essays such as *Cruel Years* (1962) and *A Clear Meadow* (1963).⁹¹¹ Marinković's personal papers are part of her archival fond at the Historical Archive of Belgrade (Istorijski arhiv Beograda). Many of these papers include documents and information about China and her trip there, as well as numerous photographs.⁹¹²

Ivo Andrić

September-October 1956

Part of the First Yugoslav Literary Delegation to China for the Occasion of the 20th Anniversary of Lu Xun's Passing

Ivo Andrić was a monarchist diplomat, novelist, and a 1961 Nobel Laureate in Literature.⁹¹³ The book *Who is Who in Yugoslavia* emphasizes his literary career, barely mentioning his diplomatic one. Moreover, it entirely omits his appointment as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's Ambassador to the Third Reich while emphasizing his student 'revolutionary' activism in Austro-Hungarian Bosnia, for which he spent most of the First World War on house arrest.⁹¹⁴ The 1970 edition, *Yugoslav Contemporaries*, does mention all the cities where he held diplomatic functions but

⁹⁰⁷ AJ-559-11-25 II, "Gostovanja jugoslovenskih umetnika na temelju razmene."

⁹⁰⁸ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.417.

⁹⁰⁹ Nada Marinković, *Smisao i ljubav: susreti i putopisi*, Zagreb: Seljačka sloga, 1956.

⁹¹⁰ For more information about him, see *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.416. For more information about the tour he partook in, see Bogojević, "Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy," pp.45-46, and note 159.

⁹¹¹ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.604.

⁹¹² Some of the archival boxes investigated include: K2, III-1 (Kina-putopisi); K9, III-4 (Putovanja); K10, III-5 (Eseji, prikazi, tekstovi, putopisi); K27, VI 1,2 (Fotografije, katalozi, prospekti); K29, VI 4,5,6 (Isećci iz štampe, rebusi, razno).

⁹¹³ Given the general availability, details, and immense variety of Ivo Andrić's biographical information, only parts relevant to East Asia in some way or form are noted. For more information on this prolific and versatile individual, see Čedomir Minderović, "Ivo Andrić: The Chronicler of Bosnia," *Indian Literature*, October 1957, Vol.1, No.1, pp.27-31; Celia Hawkesworth, *Ivo Andrić: Bridge Between East and West*, London and Dover: The Athlone Press, 1984; Wayne S. Vucinich (ed.), *Ivo Andrić Revisited: The Bridge Still Stands*, Berkeley: University of California, 1995; and Michael Martens, *U požaru svetova: Ivo Andrić – jedan evropski život*, Transl. Valeria Fröhlich, Belgrade: Laguna, 2020.

⁹¹⁴ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.10.

skillfully distills his biography with a focus on his literary opus.⁹¹⁵ He visited China in 1956 with fellow novelist Filip Kumbatović for the 20th anniversary of Lu Xun's death.⁹¹⁶ In 1957 he wrote an article for *Borba* called *An Encounter in China*.⁹¹⁷ His interest in China and Japan can be sensed in seemingly random fragments from his personal and professional lives. After World War I, he wrote *A Story from Japan* for his *Restlessness* (Nemiri) book which carries a message Edward Dennis Goy sees through his later opus as well: 'Poetry had to do with suffering and struggle. It seeks the battle but avoids its fruits.'⁹¹⁸ In Andrić's private letters to Milica Babić (later his wife), he undersigns himself as 'Mandarin.'⁹¹⁹ She apparently gave him the nickname 'before his travels to China.'⁹²⁰ In one 1958 letter to her, Andrić writes: 'remember the little Mandarin and his mandarin words too.'⁹²¹

Vojin Šantić

(Unspecified month) 1957 – (unspecified month) 1958

The First Correspondent for *Politika* in Japan during the Cold War

Vojin Šantić spent a little bit over a year in Japan, as *Politika*'s correspondent.⁹²² He published multiple works on Japan, East Asia, as well as other countries. The most prominent one is *Japan* (1961), regarded as the first history of Japan in the Serbo-Croatian language.⁹²³ His book was published as part of a *Political Library* (Politička biblioteka) series of Belgrade's Kultura publishing house in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The series included monographs of primarily journalists (and in the case of China, academics) who wrote about Japan, China, the U.S., Italy, Egypt, and Algeria. In 1963, he published a book *Over the Eastern Seas* (Preko Istočnih mora).⁹²⁴ It was also translated to Slovenian by Albert Širok and published by Mladinska knjiga in Ljubljana, in 1964.⁹²⁵ Interestingly, in Jože Smole's memoir, Šantić's time in Japan is not mentioned. Smole only lists two correspondents in Tokyo (and both from *Borba*): Kosta Timotijević (1953-1956) and Dragutin Šolajić (1961-1963).⁹²⁶ As *Politika*'s correspondent, apart from Japan, he reported from Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Yemen, UAR, Greece, Italy, Finland, Sweden, and

⁹¹⁵ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.17.

⁹¹⁶ Bogojević, "Sino-Yugoslavian Bilateral Relations from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy (1955-1980)," pp.39-40. For more information about their visit, see the original source, "Izveštaj za 1956 / Izdavaštvo / Pisci u inostranstvu," *AJ*, 559, 11-25.

⁹¹⁷ Ivo Andrić, "Susret u Kini," *Borba*, 1-3.05.1957.

⁹¹⁸ Edward Dennis Goy, "The Work of Ivo Andrić," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, June 1963, Vol.41, No.97, p.305. (pp.301-326)

⁹¹⁹ Michael Martens, *U požaru svetova: Ivo Andrić – jedan evropski život*, (transl. Valeria Fröhlich), Belgrade: Laguna, 2020, pp.200-201.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.* p.201.

⁹²¹ *Ibid.* p.202.

⁹²² Vojin Šantić, *Japan*, 1961, Belgrade: Kultura, Introduction.

⁹²³ *Ibid.* See also Karlo Kimer, *Meiji restauracija i modernizacija Japana do 1889. godine*, Master's Thesis, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, 2019, p.2.

⁹²⁴ Vojin Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, Belgrade: Savremena škola, 1963.

⁹²⁵ Vojin Šantić, *Japonska*, translated by Alber Širok, Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1964. Interestingly, this edition of Šantić's book was included in the Bibliography of Asian Studies 1965, in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.25, No.5, September 1966, p.88.

⁹²⁶ Jože Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994, p.127

Norway (including Spitsbergen).⁹²⁷ In the *Yugoslav Contemporaries* book, foreign affairs was noted as Šantić's specialty.⁹²⁸

His works have served as foundational sources for students of Japan across various disciplines in Yugoslav successor states.⁹²⁹ His accounts of Japan, especially the 1961 book, are the main reference point for Japanese culture and everyday life in bibliographies of various students of Japan in the Yugosphere (most often the only referenced book written in a Yugoslav language as well). Karlo Kimer explains in his master's thesis that there are virtually no academic books dealing with the history of Japan in the former Yugoslav spaces and that the very first, non-academic book that dealt with the topic was Šantić's 1961 *Japan*. At the same time, the intent of the book was not to serve as an academic resource but 'to bring Japan closer to the broader public.'⁹³⁰ This showcases that some works written in the socialist Yugoslav period remain primary reference points for the study of East Asia. It also shows that the voices of some Yugoslav journalists remain the most relevant to the study of or familiarization with East Asian spaces. Interestingly, Šantić's own bibliography for this *Japan* book references works in the English language (including publications from Japan or by Japanese authors), and three in Serbo-Croatian—one from the interwar period and two from the 1950s.⁹³¹

Šantić was also the author of the following books: *How-why* (1957), *Whose is the Cosmos?* (1962), *Racism in Rhodesia* (1965), *Kenia in Turmoil* (1966), and *A View into the World: Asia, Australia and Oceania* (1979).⁹³² Šantić contributed two chapters on Japan, one on British Hong Kong and one on Singapore to Fadil Hadžić's edited volume *A Journey Around the World: Travelogues* (1962) as well.⁹³³

⁹²⁷ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.1016.

⁹²⁸ Ibid.

⁹²⁹ Serbian Japanologist Dr. Divna Tričković references Šantić for questions on religion in Japan in her work "Amaterasu – kult boginje sunca u japanskoj mitologiji," *Philologia, Kultura i društvo*, No.3, 2005, pp.157-164. Karlo Kimer references Šantić in both his undergraduate and master's theses: *Japan u razdoblju Sengoku*, Undergraduate Thesis, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, 2017 and *Meiji restauracija i modernizacija Japana do 1889. godine*, Master's Thesis, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, 2019. For recent works in Slovenian language, citing Šantić throughout, see Marija Micevska, *Vpliv culture na Japonski Management*, Undergraduate Thesis, University of Maribor, 2015.

⁹³⁰ Kimer, *Meiji restauracija i modernizacija Japana do 1889. godine*, p.2. Kimer's recent *Japan za vladavine šoguna* can be considered an addition to the epistemic heritage of writing for broader audiences about foreign countries in the region. See: Karlo Kimer, *Japan za vladavine šoguna*, Zagreb: Durieux, 2023.

⁹³¹ Pukovnik M.J. Marinković, *Japan i Japanci*, Belgrade, 1935; *Japan*, Sedma sila, Novinsko-izdavačko preduzeće Udruženje novinara Srbije, Belgrade, 1957; and *Istorija diplomatije*, III, u redakciji akademika V. P. Potemkina, *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke*, Belgrade, 1951. See Šantić, *Japan*, p.238.

⁹³² Vojin Šantić, *Kako-zašto*, Subotica: Minerva, 1957; *Čiji je Kosmos?*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1962. (This book was included in the Yugoslav bibliography on Cosmonautics, gathered by Mladen R. Tišma in "Prilozi domaćoj bibliografiji kosmonautike: kosmička tehnika, kosmičko pravo, vojni aspekti kosmosa," *Vojno delo*, Vol. 67, No.3, 2015, pp.343-366.); *Rasizam u Rodeziji*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1965; *Kenija u previranju*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1966; *Pogled u svijet: Azija, Australija i Oceanija*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1979.

⁹³³ See Vojin Šantić's chapters *Japansko cveće* (pp.296-299), *Japanska porodica* (pp.336-339), *Hongkong – dva lica jednog grada* (pp.343-346), and *Šarenilo »lavljeg grada«* (pp.347-350) in Fadil Hadžić (ed.), *Put oko svijeta: putopisi*, 2nd Edition, Zagreb: Stvarnost – Novinarska izdavačka kuća, 1962.

In his *Over the Eastern Seas*, Šantić writes how he spent time in Tokyo with a Yugoslav painter who was both ‘happy and sad’ as his departure home approached.⁹³⁴ Though Šantić does not name the individual in question, it was likely Bojan Golija. Aided by Saburo Kurata, Golija went to Japan for less than a year to learn Japanese painting techniques, making him the first Yugoslav artist to live in Japan after World War II. At the time, the Yugoslav Head of Mission in Japan, Lazar Latinović wrote to the Commission for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (CCTFC) in Belgrade, informing them of the diplomats’ ‘pleasant surprise of his [Golija’s] perseverance’ as the man traveled for three months to reach Japan and was assisted by Saburo Kurata and partially also Nobuya Abe. While Latinović’s telegram was cordial and positive about Golija, Ivo Frol (from the CCTFC) was much more restrained and negative. Golija’s departure to Japan was not done according to CCTFC’s expectations; he did not inform the CCTFC nor the Department for International Relations of the Federal Executive Council (DIR of the FEC) of his departure. Frol thus informed Latinović that the CCTFC was not able to assist Golija in his financial plans there, nor that Latinović should involve the CCTFC in any matters related to Golija.⁹³⁵ This story matters because it confirms Šantić was in Japan at the same time as Golija, i.e. 1957 and 1958.

Svetozar Vukmanović (Tempo)

6 August – 20 October 1957

Led the Parliamentary Delegation to several Asian and African countries

At the time he was the Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council (FEC)

Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo began his communist activity in 1933 as a student, upon which, as the book *Who is Who in Yugoslavia* notes, he became ‘a professional revolutionary.’⁹³⁶ He was a prominent actor in the organization of NOB and assumed the highest positions in the Yugoslav government after the Second World War ended. His career was prolific and, as one of the highest-ranking actors in socialist Yugoslavia, information on it is widely available. He wrote many books during his time in office, such as *Economic Issues of Yugoslavia* (1954), *Our Economic Politics: Expose About a Social Plan for the Year of 1956* (1956), *Current Issues of Integration* (1965), *Economic Laws and Workers’ Self-Management* (1966), *Working Units* (1968), etc.⁹³⁷ He wrote a dozen books about syndicates, with many being collections of his speeches and newspaper articles.⁹³⁸ When it comes to politics, he wrote a book in 1950 called *About the People’s Revolution in Greece*, and then *Struggle for the Balkans* (1990) and *Why and How Did Yugoslavia Fall Apart*

⁹³⁴ Vojin Šantić, *Preko istočnih mora*, Belgrade: Savremena škola, 1963, p.65.

⁹³⁵ See Lazar Latinović, “Nota o dolasku Bojana Golije na studije u Japan gdje mu pomaže Saburo Kurata,” 12.09.1957., Tokyo, AJ, 559, 82-185, File number:1042/57; and Ivo Frol, “Odgovor Latinoviću o Bojanu Goliji u Japanu,” 03.10.1957., Belgrade, AJ, 559, 82-185, No.4339.

⁹³⁶ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.786.

⁹³⁷ Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Ekonomski problem Jugoslavije*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1954; *Naša privredna politika: ekspeze o Društvenom planu za 1956 godinu*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1956; *Aktuelni problem integracije*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1965; *Ekonomske zakonitosti i radničko samoupravljanje*, Belgrade: Radnička štampa, 1966; *Radne jedinice*, Belgrade: Radnička štampa, 1968.

⁹³⁸ Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Sindikati u novim uslovima*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1962; *Problems of Unity in the International Trade Union Movement*, Belgrade: Confederation of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia, 1966. The version in Serbo-Croatian was published the same year. See *Problemi jedinstva u međunarodnom sindikalnom pokretu*, Belgrade: Služba za Informacije i dokumentaciju Centralnog veća Saveza sindikata Jugoslavije, 1966. Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Sindikati i privredna reforma*, Belgrade: Služba za Informacije i dokumentaciju Centralnog veća Saveza sindikata Jugoslavije, 1966; *Sindikati u novim uslovima: govori i članci*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1967.

(1996).⁹³⁹ Most of his books were translated into multiple languages, including Russian, English, German, Italian, and French. He also issued several volumes of memoirs and autobiographies: *A Flowing Revolution: Memoirs*, I-IV (1971), *Letters from Reževići* (1983), and *My family* (1998).⁹⁴⁰ A useful book for researchers is also Milan Vučinić's book *What Does Tempo Say After Everything* (1997), based on his conversation with Vukmanović.⁹⁴¹ He visited Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Japan, China, Mongolia, Burma, India, Ceylon, Pakistan, and Ethiopia, leading a delegation consisting of Vladimir Velebit (state undersecretary for foreign affairs) and Vojin Guzina (governor of the People's Bank). Unofficially they also visited Egypt as guests of President Nasser.⁹⁴² After his trip he published one article in *Borba* which was an economic assessment of the countries they traveled through, which was used as one of the primary materials for this thesis.⁹⁴³

Dorđe Bogojević

March 1957 – February 1960

Borba's Correspondent in Beijing and then Hong Kong and Tokyo

Dorđe Bogojević was a journalist, educated in Belgrade, who also studied at the Higher School for Journalists and Diplomats.⁹⁴⁴ Bogojević sent his first reports from Beijing in mid-March 1957.⁹⁴⁵ For his position as *Borba's* Beijing correspondent, he was included in the 1957 book *Who is Who in Yugoslavia*, which inventoried Yugoslav socialist elites and meaningful personalities.⁹⁴⁶ He stayed in the country until his abrupt expulsion from China in February 1960, after which for the next few months he lived in Japan and Hong Kong.⁹⁴⁷ He was a professional journalist and had actively participated in the cultural life in Yugoslavia. It appears he had written film scenarios on the side.⁹⁴⁸ In 1950, he wrote articles about the foreign press 'fabricating' ill stories about Yugoslavia and later had his own column called *Images and Occasions* (*Slike i prilike*).⁹⁴⁹ The stories he published in his column were social anecdotes, from everyday Yugoslav life, with some educational message hidden within for the reader. He returned to Yugoslavia in the fall of 1960 but continued to publish articles on China under the *Noted in China* or the *Chinese notebook* columns

⁹³⁹ Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *O narodnoj revoluciji u Grčkoj*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1950. See also his *Struggle for the Balkans*, London: Merlin Press, 1990. A version in Serbo-Croatian was published in 1981. See *Borba za Balkan*, Zagreb: Globus, 1981. And *Zašto se i kako raspala Jugoslavija*, Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ, 1996.

⁹⁴⁰ Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Revolucija koja teče: Memoari, I-IV*, Belgrade: Komunist, 1971. This volume of books did get republished in several editions later on. See also his *Pisma iz Reževića*, Belgrade: Nova knjiga, 1983; *Moja porodica*, Novi Sad: Prometej, 1998.

⁹⁴¹ Milan Vučinić, *Šta posle svega kaže Tempo*, Belgrade: Prometej, 1997.

⁹⁴² Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, "Utisci sa puta po Aziji i Africi: Politički odnosi i privredni razvitak," *Borba*, 10.11.1957., p.3.

⁹⁴³ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁴ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.67.

⁹⁴⁵ See, for example: Dorđe Bogojević, "Zanimljive i uzbudljive borbe," *Borba*, 17.03.1957., p.11.

⁹⁴⁶ See *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957.

⁹⁴⁷ Presumably, his final article from Beijing was: Dorđe Bogojević, "Festival lutaka," *Borba*, 22.02.1960., p.5. His first articles from Hong Kong and Japan appear to be: Dorđe Bogojević, "Svetlosti i senke Hongkonga," *Borba*, 05.04.1960., p.3 and Dorđe Bogojević, "Kad trešnje cvetaju," *Borba*, 17.04.1960., p.6.

⁹⁴⁸ Mentioned in V., "Nova imena na Pulskoj areni," *Borba*, 21.07.1957., p.6.

⁹⁴⁹ As captured in the CIA-RDP83-00415R006300190001-0 file, pp.182-184. For the said column, see, for example: Dorđe Bogojević, "A šta misli Ngo Din?," *Borba*, 12.04.1955., p.4

in the following years.⁹⁵⁰ From Belgrade, however, he mostly covered domestic news and revived his *Slike i prilike* column.⁹⁵¹ In 1965 he became *Borba*'s correspondent in Tokyo, from where he covered the region for a few years again.⁹⁵² Bogojević appears to have also written a thesis on the Sino-Soviet split in 1966 to graduate.⁹⁵³ After this period, little is traceable of Bogojević's career.⁹⁵⁴

Branko Bogunović

1957 – 1960 and 1963 – 1967

Tanjug's Correspondent from Beijing, China (he also sent some reports from Japan)

Branko Bogunović studied theology and philosophy before joining NOB, which launched his journalistic and editorial careers. In 1957, he was known in Yugoslavia as a journalist and Deputy Director of »Omladina« newspaper.⁹⁵⁵ This same year, he moved to Beijing as Tanjug's correspondent, staying there for ten years with some interruptions. According to *Time* magazine, Bogunović wrote '2,500 stories from Peking since 1957' until his expulsion from China in 1967, at the height of the Cultural Revolution.⁹⁵⁶ After his return to Yugoslavia, he became editor-in-chief and director of Tanjug,⁹⁵⁷ a promotion *TIME* alluded to in their article about Bogunović.⁹⁵⁸ In 1961, he was an editor of Tanjug's foreign affairs editorial office.⁹⁵⁹ He should thus be seen as a two-time correspondent from China.⁹⁶⁰

Regarded as an expert 'China-watcher,' AP also commissioned three articles from him during his time in Beijing.⁹⁶¹ Various Western European and American newspapers republished his articles,

⁹⁵⁰ See Đorđe Bogojević, "Dečak s lampionima," *Borba*, 11.12.1960., p.8 and Đorđe Bogojević, "Kako se jedan kapitalista prevaspitao," *Borba*, 22.01.1961., p.7.

⁹⁵¹ For example, Đorđe Bogojević, "Radosni i ponosni pozdrav Beograda," *Borba*, 13.10.1960., p.3 and, about the Skopje earthquake, Đorđe Bogojević, "Odgovor srcem," *Borba*, 02.08.1963., p.3.

⁹⁵² See his writings about China from Tokyo: Đorđe Bogojević, "Kina sve više kupuje na Zapadu," *Borba*, 29.07.1965., p.3; and about Japan: Đorđe Bogojević, "Poruka Hirošime," *Borba*, 06.08.1967., p.16.

⁹⁵³ Information about this is available in the *COBISS* digital inventory of libraries across Serbia and other Yugoslav successor states. Interestingly, while this thesis is invoiced, its whereabouts are unclear. For more information see: Đorđe Bogojević, *Koreni i posledice sukoba Kina-SSSR : diplomski rad*; Beograd; 1966, *COBISS.SR-ID* – 514959191.

⁹⁵⁴ He was also not included in the *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970 book.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.67. His theologian studies are not mentioned in the *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970 edition. Other information about him can be found on p.97.

⁹⁵⁶ "Reporters: Fall of a China-Watcher," *Time*, 21.06.1967. The full article is available at <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,941549-1,00.html> (accessed March 2024)

⁹⁵⁷ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.97.

⁹⁵⁸ Some of the earlier expulsions included: "Vasko Ratković: Uzrok – istina o Staljinovom guverneru," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.111 (1949, expulsion from Poland); "Radosav Bajagić: Iz Praga tek posle intervencije Jugoslovenske vlade," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, pp.111-112 (1950, leaving Czechoslovakia due to fear of arrest); "Branko Vasiljević: Javna diskreditacija," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.112 (1949, expulsion from Bulgaria); "Pero Ivačić: Izvinjenje preko odlikovanja," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.113 (1961, expulsion from Czechoslovakia). For the expulsion from a non-Eastern European country, see "Ninoslav Opačić: Traže promenu načina pisanja," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.111. This records his expulsion from Italy in 1948. In the late 1960s onward, there were many more. For more information, please consult the book *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*.

⁹⁵⁹ This is mentioned in "Mirko Aksentijević: Mozaik Bliskog Istoka," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.83.

⁹⁶⁰ "Branko Bogunović: Lažna osuda," *Tanjug – Pola veka ('43-'93)*, p.113.

⁹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.114.

as well.⁹⁶² When Beijing did not extend his permit to stay in China as a correspondent, Bogunović left on 16 April 1967.⁹⁶³ The Chinese side suggested that an article found in a Hong Kong newspaper, *Ming Pao* (明報), under Bogunović's name, was the reason for not prolonging his permit to stay. The newspaper, known for its hostility to Beijing, was regarded by Bogunović as a 'meaningless Taiwanese paper in Hong Kong.'⁹⁶⁴ Though Bogunović argued he did not write the article, reiterating 'that all he knows and what he publishes – he publishes in his own agency Tanjug and additionally in some Yugoslav newspapers, and not in foreign ones,' the article was shared 'across the entire World' because of Bogunović's international reputation.⁹⁶⁵ Later, the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong apologized for reposting the article, and even the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, in the Summer of 1985, apologized for how 'the Gang of Four' treated him in 1967.⁹⁶⁶ Upon return to Yugoslavia, *Time* magazine did an interview with him, sending 'a special reporter to Belgrade.'⁹⁶⁷ Tanjug's 50th Jubilee book quotes *Time* writing the following:

Bogunovic's ouster is a loss for China-watchers everywhere—capitalist, Titoist, Moscow-revisionist. They had come to rely on him for perhaps the most accurate and detailed dispatches out of China. [...] What he surmised often turned out to be fact.⁹⁶⁸

To Bogunović, the editor-in-chief of Tanjug Rudi Štajduhar wrote a letter apparently on 24 April 1959, writing the following:

Your reports gave complete insight into the course, content, and extent of the monstrous campaign against our country, in which the Communist Party of China took on a special role. Your writings, articles, reports, and information were published in prominent columns in our press and received a significant place on Yugoslav radio stations' broadcasts. That is why we happily discussed certain articles [of yours] here [in Tanjug], as well as with our colleagues in [other] newsrooms, especially in "Politika," where comrades in charge share our views on the results of your work.⁹⁶⁹

Interestingly, the Yugoslavs often referred to praise earned in the West or from Western colleagues to showcase their success. This is partially because the press agencies and newspapers with the

⁹⁶² Ibid. Also see "Communists: The Frigid Friends," *Time*, 29.08.1960. The article is available at <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,939183,00.html> (accessed March 2024)

⁹⁶³ "Branko Bogunović: Lažna osuda," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43-'93), p.113.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid, p.115.

⁹⁶⁷ "Branko Bogunović: Lažna osuda," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43-'93), p.114 and "Reporters: Fall of a China-Watcher," *Time*, 21 July 1967, pp.1-2. Available at <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,941549,00.html> (accessed March 2024)

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁹ "Branko Bogunović: Lažna osuda," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43-'93), p.114.

biggest international impact were in the West and partially likely due to individual ambition to finally catch up with it.

In late 1969, after Beijing and briefly Belgrade, Bogunović was based as a correspondent in Washington for a while.⁹⁷⁰ In Tanjug's 50th Jubilee Book, he records encounters with two American spies there and how his retelling them his China experiences was somehow for the benefit of China. He writes that his agenda there was to tell the Americans 'hands off China!' and help them in 'assembling a mosaic of a somewhat different and more realistic image of China from the one their administration stuck to for nearly quarter of a century.'⁹⁷¹ Excerpts of his reports from China (and those of other Yugoslav correspondents in communist countries) can now be found in the CIA's online database.⁹⁷² While Americans were obviously aware of him, Bogunović believed that his account of China to the spies 'John and Peter' contributed a little to the subsequent U.S. shift toward China during the Nixon administration, with Kissinger as the Secretary of State.⁹⁷³ Bogunović founded and led Tanjug's 'Informational Bureau' in New York from 1980 to mid-1983 'to spread the truth about Yugoslavia' and as a space of gathering for people of Yugoslav origin or citizenship.⁹⁷⁴ He also reported from Japan briefly, during his travels there in 1960.⁹⁷⁵

Vasil Magdeski

October 1960 – October 1963

Tanjug's Correspondent in Beijing, China⁹⁷⁶

Dragutin Šolajić

(Unspecified month) 1961 – mid-1963

Borba's Correspondent in Tokyo, Japan

Dragutin Šolajić began his journalistic career in 1948, only to transition to work for Borba in 1955. From late 1956 and early 1957, he served as Borba's correspondent from Poland. From 1961 to mid-1963, he worked as a correspondent in Japan.⁹⁷⁷ In fact, Jože Smole noted in his memoir book *The Story of a Communist Journalist* that after Timotijević, Šolajić was the second correspondent of Borba from Japan.⁹⁷⁸ In the mid-1960s, he transitioned into a research role at the Institute for the Study of Worker's Movements in Belgrade (Institut za izučavanje radničkog pokreta), where his focus was on China, Japan, and the 'Far East' more broadly.⁹⁷⁹ His findings were published in articles in various magazines and multiple books. As part of the *Sedma Sila* publishing house's

⁹⁷⁰ "Branko Bogunović: Na meti svetskih obaveštajaca i dobrih prijatelja," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43- '93), p.178.

⁹⁷¹ Ibid.

⁹⁷² See, for example, the CIA Bi-Weekly Propaganda Guidance in their assessment of the Sino-Soviet tensions: CIA-RDP78-03061A000300060001-3, p.4. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-03061A000300060001-3.pdf> (accessed March 2024)

⁹⁷³ "Branko Bogunović: Na meti svetskih obaveštajaca i dobrih prijatelja," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43- '93), p.178.

⁹⁷⁴ "Branko Bogunović: Širenje istine o Jugoslaviji," *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43- '93), pp.160-162.

⁹⁷⁵ Branko Bogunović, "Da li u osnovi svega leži Hirošima?," *Borba*, 02.07.1960., p.3.

⁹⁷⁶ Unfortunately, during this research project no further information from reputable secondary sources could be gathered about Vasil Magdeski.

⁹⁷⁷ His biographical information can be found in Dragutin Šolajić, *Stogodišnji Japan*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1968, p.3.

⁹⁷⁸ Jože Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994, p.127.

⁹⁷⁹ Dragutin Šolajić, *Stogodišnji Japan*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1968, p.3.

Documents of Today (Dokumenti današnjice) series, Šolajić published in 1968 his book *A Hundred-Year-Old Japan* (Stogodišnji Japan).⁹⁸⁰

Aleš Bebler

September-October 1960

Part of the Yugoslav delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 49th Conference

Dr. Aleš Bebler, a member of the Yugoslav Communist Party from 1929, was educated in Ljubljana and Paris and spent time in the USSR in the 1933-1935 period. He joined the Spanish Civil War and, upon return to Yugoslavia in 1939, spent a year in prison.⁹⁸¹ He joined NOB in 1941. From then on, he rose through partisan ranks, only to emerge after World War II as one of the highest-ranking officials and diplomats of the new Yugoslav state.⁹⁸² During the War's final year, he was editor-in-chief of the *Ljudska pravica* paper.⁹⁸³ He attended the 1946 Peace Conference in Paris, represented Yugoslavia in the U.N. Security Council in New York in 1950 (when the Korean War erupted), became a State Undersecretary for International Relations in 1952, and was the Yugoslav Ambassador in Paris from 1955-1957.⁹⁸⁴ In 1954, he published his first travelogue book, *Travels Across Sunny Lands*.⁹⁸⁵ This publication followed his trip to the Asian Socialist Conference in January 1953, where he participated as the Yugoslav representative alongside Milovan Đilas and Anton Blažević.⁹⁸⁶ Later, he was appointed ambassador of Yugoslavia to Indonesia and then India.⁹⁸⁷ His memoir, *How I Hurried*, published in 1982 was a great source of information about the Korean War and beginnings of Non-Alignment.⁹⁸⁸

Smole praised Bebler in his memoir for writing 'an extremely interesting series of articles about Japan' after his return from the area with the parliamentary delegation.⁹⁸⁹ Not to be confused with the Yugoslav parliamentary delegation visiting Japan, led by Svetozar Vukmanović (Tempo). Bebler went to Japan in 1960 to attend the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 49th Conference. Held from 29th September to 7th October 1960, Bebler went alongside the former (and first) Yugoslav Head of Mission to Tokyo, Maks Baće, and other Yugoslav officials, Veljko Vlahović, Đurica Jojkić, Emerik Blum, and the group's secretary, Marjan Osolnik.⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁸¹ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.62.

⁹⁸² He is also considered one of the most important actors in the Slovene Liberation Movement. His military and political decision-making is explored in Vladimir Prebilič and Jelena Juvan, "Med političnim in vojaškim odločanjem: Aleš Bebler," *Studia Historica Slovenica*, Vol.2, No.3, 2013.

⁹⁸³ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.62.

⁹⁸⁴ Mentioned biographical information can be found in *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.48.

⁹⁸⁵ Aleš Bebler, *Putovanja po sunčanim zemljama*, Belgrade: Udruženje novinara Srbije, 1954.

⁹⁸⁶ Jovan Čavoški, "Ideološki prijatelj iz daleka: Jugoslavija i Azijska socijalistička konferencija," *Istorija 20. veka*, Vol.37, No.1, 2019, pp.147-149. (pp.139-160)

⁹⁸⁷ *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.62.

⁹⁸⁸ Aleš Bebler, *Kakos am hitao-sećanja*, Belgrade: NIRO »Četvrti jul«, 1982.

⁹⁸⁹ Jože Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994, p.127.

⁹⁹⁰ Aleš Bebler, "Ni na nebu ni na zemlji," *Borba*, 13.11.1960., p.7. For more information about the 49th Inter-Parliamentary Union's Conference, with information on all proceedings (including remarks of the Yugoslav delegation), see "Report of the Australian Delegation to the Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union," Canberra: Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1960, Available at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2769291445/view?sectionId=nla.obj-2789146924&partId=nla.obj-2771414037#page/n0/mode/1up> (accessed March 2024). Additionally, it is valuable to add extra biographical information about Veljko Vlahović, one of the highest-ranking Yugoslav officials who led this delegation

Jože Smole

(Unspecified month) 1962

Visited Japan for ten days but traveled extensively in South/Southeast Asia in the 1950s

(Anton) Jože Smole was a journalist, Tanjug's correspondent from Athens and New York, and then foreign affairs editor at Borba in the second part of the 1950s.⁹⁹¹ He was also the editor-in-chief of Delo in Ljubljana.⁹⁹² He held political positions in the country and, in the 1969-1970 period, acted as cabinet chief (of staff) for President Tito.⁹⁹³ He was known for publishing brief, informative booklets (often considered brochures): *What Did Slovenes Youth Get in New Yugoslavia* (1946), *Tito in Asia* (1955), *Awakened Africa* (1956), *How Was a Singular World Divided? Military Pacts—Between War and Peace* (1961), and *The Pressure on Cambodia* (1962).⁹⁹⁴ He also contributed four chapters on the U.S. to Fadil Hadžić's edited volume *A Journey Around the World: Travelogues*.⁹⁹⁵ He spent 10 days in Japan in 1962, at the invitation of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and wrote a series of articles for Borba about it.⁹⁹⁶ His memoir *The Story of a Communist Journalist* (Pripoved komunista novinarja) was exceptionally useful for the mapping of timelines and events in this thesis.⁹⁹⁷

What about others?

This list of 19 individuals and their writings about East Asia does not mean they were the only Yugoslavs who traveled to and wrote about the region during the Cold War. Yet this group wrote about it in the period I refer to as the long 1950s or the transformational decade. Other Yugoslavs and their writings about East Asia or just generally the Cold War milieu were extensively

to Tokyo. Having participated in the Spanish Civil War and was one of the People's Heroes because of his activities during NOB, After the Second World War, he assumed many influential positions within the country and as Yugoslav representative abroad. Bebler described him in the above-referenced article for Borba as the most prepared one with notebooks for recording travel impressions. Vlahović was a prolific writer who published extensively in the newspapers and multiple books. A book titled *Consciousness and Real Life* (Svijest i stvarni život) was published in 1975 after his passing. Four volumes with collections of his writings on topics from the Spanish Civil War and the Battle for Free Yugoslavia to the Socialist Self-Management and the International Worker's Movement were published in 1981. In 1998, a book of his unpublished diary entries from the 1955-1958 period was published under the title *Highly Confidential* (Strogo pov.). See Veljko Vlahović, *Svijest i stvarni život*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1975; Veljko Vlahović, *Španski građanski rat*, Volume I; *Borba za slobodnu Jugoslaviju; Savez komunista u sistemu socijalističkog samoupravljanja*, Volume III; *Savremeni svijet i međunarodni radnički pokret*, Volume IV, Belgrade: Komunist and Titograd: Pobjeda, 1981; and *Strogo pov. 1955-1958. Neobjavljeni rukopis Veljka Vlahovića*, Belgrade: Stručna knjiga, 1998.

⁹⁹¹ *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 1957, p.647.

⁹⁹² *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 1970, p.956.

⁹⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁴ Jože Smole, *Kaj je dobila slovenska mladina v Novi Jugoslaviji*, Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1946; *Tito u Aziji*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1955; *Probuđena Afrika*, Belgrade: Kultura, 1956; *Kako je podeljen jedinstveni svet? Vojni paktovi — između rata i mira*, Belgrade: Sedma sila, 1961; *Pritisak na Kambodžu*, Belgrade: Sedma Sila, 1962.

⁹⁹⁵ See his chapters *U »posljednjoj državi Divljeg zapada«* (pp.193-196), *Politički život u malom gradu* (pp.265-267), *Indijansko pleme »Crna noga«* (pp.268-270), and *Beograd u Montani* (pp.271-273) in Fadil Hadžić (ed.), *Put oko svijeta: putopisi*, 2nd Edition, Zagreb: Stvarnost – Novinarska izdavačka kuća, 1962.

⁹⁹⁶ Jože Smole, *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*, Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994, p.127.

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid.

researched as well, though not named in the above-offered list. This included archival research, various testimonies, and secondary sources on diplomats in Japan and China during the 1950s (apart from the mentioned Zojica and Miša Levi): Maksimilijan (Makso) Baće and Vanda Novosel, Lazar Latinović, and Vladimir Popović. The edited volume by Fadil Hadžić, *A Journey Around the World*, was also analyzed (as noted in biographies above) as well as later works by individuals such as Sead Saračević, Džemal Hatibović, Dara Janeković, Mihailo Šaranović, Jovan Šćekić, and others. Apart from the autobiographies and memoirs of the people on the list, theoretical books and memoirs of Edvard Kardelj, Veljko Mićunović, Leo Mates were consulted. Their names are noted here for reference as many of them are never considered as potential resources of information on East Asia in Cold War Yugoslavia.

Appendix 2: Correspondents in East Asia

*A List of Correspondents in East Asia during the Cold War*⁹⁹⁸

TANJUG⁹⁹⁹

Japan

1. Branko Vasiljević (18.09.1964.-30.04.1966.)
2. Drago Buvač (1.03.1977.-1.08.1981.)
3. Žarko Modrić (1.09.1981.-30.06.1985.)
4. Miodrag Radović (15.02.1985.-30.06.1989.)
5. Dragan Milenković (1.04.1992-[...])

China

1. Branko Bogunović (16.04.1957.-1.11.1960.)
2. Vasil Magdeski (11.10.1960.-10.10.1963.)
3. Branko Bogunović (10.10.1963.-30.04.1967.)
4. Mihailo Šaranović (21.01.1967.-9.10.1969.)

5. Stjepan Pucak (1.10.1969.-4.07.1973.)
6. Mihailo Šaranović (25.08.1973.-8.07.1976.)
7. Aleksandar Novačić (1.08.1976.-31.08.1980.)
8. Sonja Badel-Rabrenović (1.09.1980.-30.06.1983.)
9. Božidar Đurica (1.09.1983.-30.04.1987.)
10. Zoran Đorđević (1.05.1987.-31.01.1991.)
11. Aleksandar Novačić (1.02.1991.-30.07.1993.)
12. Zoran Đorđević (1993-[...])

BORBA

Japan¹⁰⁰⁰

1. Kosta Timotijević (1953-1956)
2. Đorđe Bogojević (1960)
3. Dragutin Šolajić (1961-1963)
4. Đorđe Bogojević (1965-[...])

China

1. Vlado Teslić (09.1955.-09.1956.)
2. Đorđe Bogojević (03.1957.-02.1960)

POLITIKA

Japan

1. Vojin Šantić (1957-1958)

China

1. Živko Milić (08.1955-1957)

VJESNIK

China

1. Vladimir Baum (09.1955.-1957)

⁹⁹⁸ This is an incomplete list. Information on Borba, Politika, and Vjesnik was gathered through the collection and analysis of primary sources, most of which have not been digitized. It is my hope that future research will yield additional insights into who was in the region and at what time during the Cold War.

⁹⁹⁹ Information provided in the book *Tanjug – Pola veka* ('43-'93), pp.278-279.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Jakov Levi was a short-term reporter from Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and then South and Southeast Asia in the December 1951 to March 1952 period.

Appendix 3: Referenced Newspaper Articles

Below is a list of all newspaper articles referenced in this thesis. Subsections are organized alphabetically, while the articles within each subsection are arranged chronologically.

Bebler Aleš

Aleš Bebler, "Ni na nebu ni na zemlji," *Borba*, 13.11.1960., p.7.

- Aleš Bebler, "Susret u Tokiju i sa Tokiom," *Borba*, 16.11.1960., p.3.
- Aleš Bebler, "Japanske zagonetke," *Borba*, 18.11.1960., p.3.
- Aleš Bebler, "Izlet u prošlost i pogled u budućnost," *Borba*, 20.11.1960., p.7.

Begović Vlajko

- Vlajko Begović, "Bilješke o suvremenoj Kini," *Borba*, 23.06.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Borba za industrijalizaciju," *Borba*, 25.06.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Transport u Kini," *Borba*, 27.06.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Još o transportu," *Borba*, 28.06.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Moderna i stara tehnika građenja," *Borba*, 29.06.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "O trgovini i snadbjevanju," *Borba*, 03.07.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "O životnom standardu," *Borba*, 04.07.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Ekonomska struktura," *Borba*, 05.07.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Društveni sistem," *Borba*, 06.07.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Nekoliko opštih zapažanja," *Borba*, 07.07.1955., p.3.
- Vlajko Begović, "Borba između reka i ljudi u Kini," *Borba*, 20.07.1955., p.4.
- Vlajko Begović, "Žuta Reka," *Borba*, 21.07.1955., p.4.

Bogojević Đorđe

- Đorđe Bogojević, "A šta misli Ngo Din?," *Borba*, 12.04.1955., p.4.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Zanimljive i uzbudljive borbe," *Borba*, 17.03.1957., p.11.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Ekonomski uspjesi i teškoće Kine," *Borba*, 01.04.1957., p.3.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Peng Čen podneo izveštaj Stalnom komitetu Sveskopske narodne skupštine o poseti parlamentaraca nekim evropskim zemljama," *Borba*, 03.04.1957., p.3.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Velika diskusija oko jedne priče," *Borba*, 06.04.1957., p.7.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Okovi »Reke hiljadu ogorčenja«," *Borba*, 12.05.1957., p.5.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Iz tame vekova," *Borba*, 02.06.1957., p.7.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Od kamene sekire do gigantske hidrocentrale," *Borba*, 16.06.1957., p.5.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Sa kineske scene „Pijana lepotica“,” *Borba*, 23.06.1957., p.7.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Bez straha," *Borba*, 30.06.1957., p.5.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "„Umereni vetar i blaga kiša“,” *Borba*, 03.07.1957., p.4.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Mogle bi to i priče biti," *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.4.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Protiv »politike samoubistva«,” *Borba*, 07.07.1957., p.7.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Prve laste," *Borba*, 13.07.1957., p.4.
- Đorđe Bogojević, "Ovih dana u glavnom gradu Kine lepeze u Parlamentu," *Borba*, 14.07.1957., p.5.

- Đorđe Bogojević, "Desničari i partija," *Borba*, 18.07.1957., p.4.
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