

Spotkania Under Martial Law

A number of members of the editorial board and people associated with *Spotkania (Encounters)*, the unofficial Catholic journal published since October 1977 (see *RCL* Vol. 9, Nos. 3-4, p. 155) were arrested while many others went into hiding. In a statement issued from hiding which reached the West in February, *Spotkania* representatives condemn "the irresponsible and illegal introduction of the so-called 'state of war.' . . . It is absurd to wage war against oneself." Recalling five years of *Spotkania* activity and their goal for "national unity and the acceptance of Poland's rightful place in a free, united and Christian Europe", they state that: "this goal is all the more important in the face of political and physical terror", and that they "intend to continue their work in a spirit of Christian love and truth". Also in February *Spotkania* No. 16 reached the West, the first notable *samizdat* journal published under martial law, despite the heavy penalties being imposed for minor offences against the military rule.

Primate's Appeal for Prayer of Gratitude for Christian Aid

To express gratitude for aid which has constantly flowed from the West, the Polish bishops declared 2 February as a Day of Prayer for all people who had sent aid to Poland, and special masses were said in churches throughout the country. On 13 March, the Polish section of Vatican radio broadcast a message from Archbishop Glemp asking that more prayers of gratitude be said for the aid given by Christians to the Polish nation. The Archbishop said: "The deep moral and economic crises . . . the imposition of martial law have caused many families to suffer deprivation, but these difficulties are being alleviated by aid which is flowing in a broad stream to our country from abroad". This was not just material aid but "the goodwill of the great Christian family" expressed in unceasing prayer in churches and unity of spirit.

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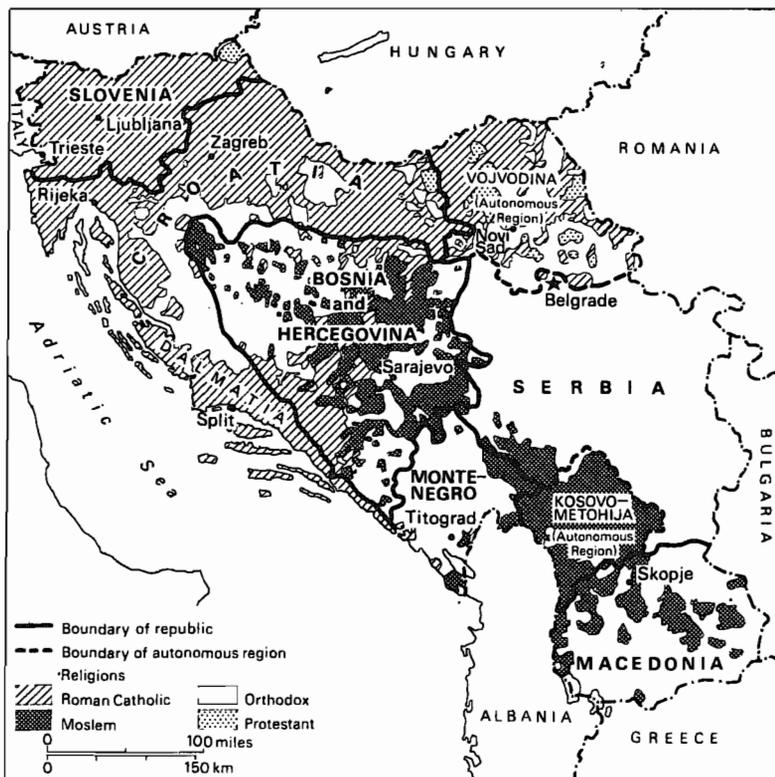
The National and Religious Background of Yugoslavia

The occasional articles and more frequent brief news items about Yugoslavia which appear in *RCL* are difficult to understand without some knowledge of the complex jigsaw of religions and nationalities which make up modern Yugoslavia and the history of conflict and changing allegiances which lie behind them.

Yugoslavia is a federal union of six socialist republics living in a communist one-party state, with a considerable amount of local devolution and varying degrees of tolerance and repression. Religion is closely identified with nationalism: Croatia and Slovenia in the north and west are Catholic; Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia to the east and south-east are Orthodox (Serbian and Macedonian); and Bosnia Hercegovina in the centre is a mixture of Orthodox (the majority), Muslims (next in size, who are ethnically Slav) and Catholics, most of whom are of Croat descent. The line dividing Latin Christianity from eastern, Byzantine Christianity goes right through modern Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia is also a country of minorities. There are the national minorities, of which the most important are the Hungarians in the Vojvodina, north of Belgrade, and the Albanians, in the Serbian autonomous province of Kosovo and western Macedonia. The main nationalities also form minorities in other republics. Croatia has an important minority of Orthodox Serbs settled along its eastern borders and on the Dalmatian coast; and there are many Catholics, most of them Croats, living in Serbia. There are also Albanian Muslims in southern Serbia, next to Kosovo. Moreover, recent internal migration from the south and east to the more prosperous northwest has brought Muslims and Albanians to Slovenia.

Today's tensions between Catholic Croatia and Orthodox Serbia go back to the founding of the state of Yugoslavia after the first world war, when Serbs thought of Yugoslavia as simply an extension of the former Kingdom of Serbia, while Croats thought of it as a union of equal nations. The Muslims tend to side



Map 1. Religious distribution of the population. (This is only approximate and follows ethnic distribution. There are small numbers of Catholics in the Vojvodina, Serbia, Kosovo-Metohija and Macedonia.)

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with the Catholic Croats against their historic Serbian foes, historic because Islam was brought to the Balkans by the invading Ottoman Turks who held the Serbs in subjection for nearly five hundred years. And even this description is an over-simplification.

The communist régime in Yugoslavia has attempted to solve these intractable contradictions by reversing the so-called "Great Serbian" policy of pre-war governments and giving equality to all nations, but Croats and now the Albanians of the Kosovo feel that they have not gone nearly far enough towards real equality. There is freedom for every people to speak its own language and be educated in it: for example, there are both Hungarian and Serbian language schools in the Vojvodina; Kosovo has Albanian language

schools and now its own Albanian-language university in Priština; and in the small north-eastern district of Slovenia where Slovenes and Hungarians live in a harmonious mixture, schools are bi-lingual and each nationality learns the language of the other. But old loyalties die hard; Kosovo is also the heartland of historic Serbia and houses its most sacred religious monuments, the Patriarchate at Peć, and the monasteries of Dečani and Gračanica, and Serbs find it hard to be a rapidly diminishing minority. Until 1966 the Albanian population of Kosovo was severely repressed by the Serbian police, but now they are turning the tables on the Serbs, and the Patriarchate in Belgrade has recently issued a heartfelt appeal for protection for its rights and physical safety in Kosovo.

The Catholic Church in Croatia has over the last ten or fifteen years undertaken a programme of religious renewal with the celebration of historic anniversaries. There are eucharistic congresses, pilgrimages to shrines within Yugoslavia and to Rome, and in 1971 an international Marian and Mariological congress was held in the Croatian capital of Zagreb. These have inevitably fed Croatian nationalism, and although the communist authorities tolerate them and even, in the case of mass pilgrimages lend their assistance, the joint upsurge of religion and nationalism gives them cause for anxiety.

The Slav Muslims of Bosnia Hercegovina are the descendants of inhabitants of the region who converted to Islam under the Turks. They thought of themselves as either Muslim Serbs or Muslim Croats, although after the war many described themselves simply as "Yugoslavs", and both Serbia and Croatia laid national claim to them. The problem was finally resolved in 1968 when a new "Muslim" nationality was affirmed, giving the Muslims a new feeling of national identity. This coincided with the general resurgence of Islam in the Arab world and the Middle East and was fed by it; the authorities soon began to show their disapproval of manifestations of Islamic "chauvinism". On the credit side is the renewal of Muslim religious education, which had been of very low quality. The first Muslim theological faculty

was opened in Sarajevo with the help of gifts from Arab countries, and the first *madrasa* (school) for girls appeared.

The government above all wants to maintain the unity of the country, its "brotherhood and unity", to use the war-time Partisan slogan, especially with the ever-present threat of the Soviet Union in the background; it knows how important the support of believers and the churches is. It repeatedly assures believers that they are not second-class citizens and that "self-management socialism" cannot be built without them. But any manifestation of nationalism which goes beyond the tight bounds set by the government—and these can differ in different parts of the country—is immediately and severely punished; *RCL* has reported a number of cases of priests sentenced to terms of imprisonment. The fact that in many cases the sentences are later shortened does not receive the same publicity as the original trials.

Any dialogue between Christians and Marxists has been confined almost entirely to the Catholic Church, and has been sporadic. Dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox Christians has been even rarer and is almost entirely confined to two-yearly joint conferences between the two Catholic and one Orthodox theological faculties and a certain amount of local friendly intercourse.

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