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# Marshal Tito's shattered legacy

Sir Fitzroy Maclean, who spent last week in Yugoslavia, reports on a state in mounting turmoil

At the bottom of Yugoslavia's troubles lies the strong mutual antagonism which has developed between Serbs and Croats. Yet, after close on half a century's experience of Yugoslavia and its peoples, I am unable to tell a Serb from a Croat. What is more significant is that they themselves cannot readily tell each other apart.

Only when he has discovered where the man sitting next to him in the railway carriage was born and what his religion is (or would be if he had one), can an Orthodox Serb or a Catholic Croat tell whether he is talking to a friend or an enemy. And even then, after more than 70 years of intermarriage, he may find he has encountered a Serbo-Croat, in other words, a Yugoslav.

Nor do the similarities stop there. Talking to the political leaders of the six republics over the past few years, I have found their aims to be almost identical: a multi-party system, a market economy, a united Yugoslavia and early entry into Europe. Ideological differences, in so far as they exist, are unimportant.

Almost all the political leaders of the republics began their careers, as they were bound to, in the old communist party. Some of them, notably the Croats and Slovenes, now denounce "bolshivism" more emphatically than others, while all recognise, with refreshing realism, that communism does not work.

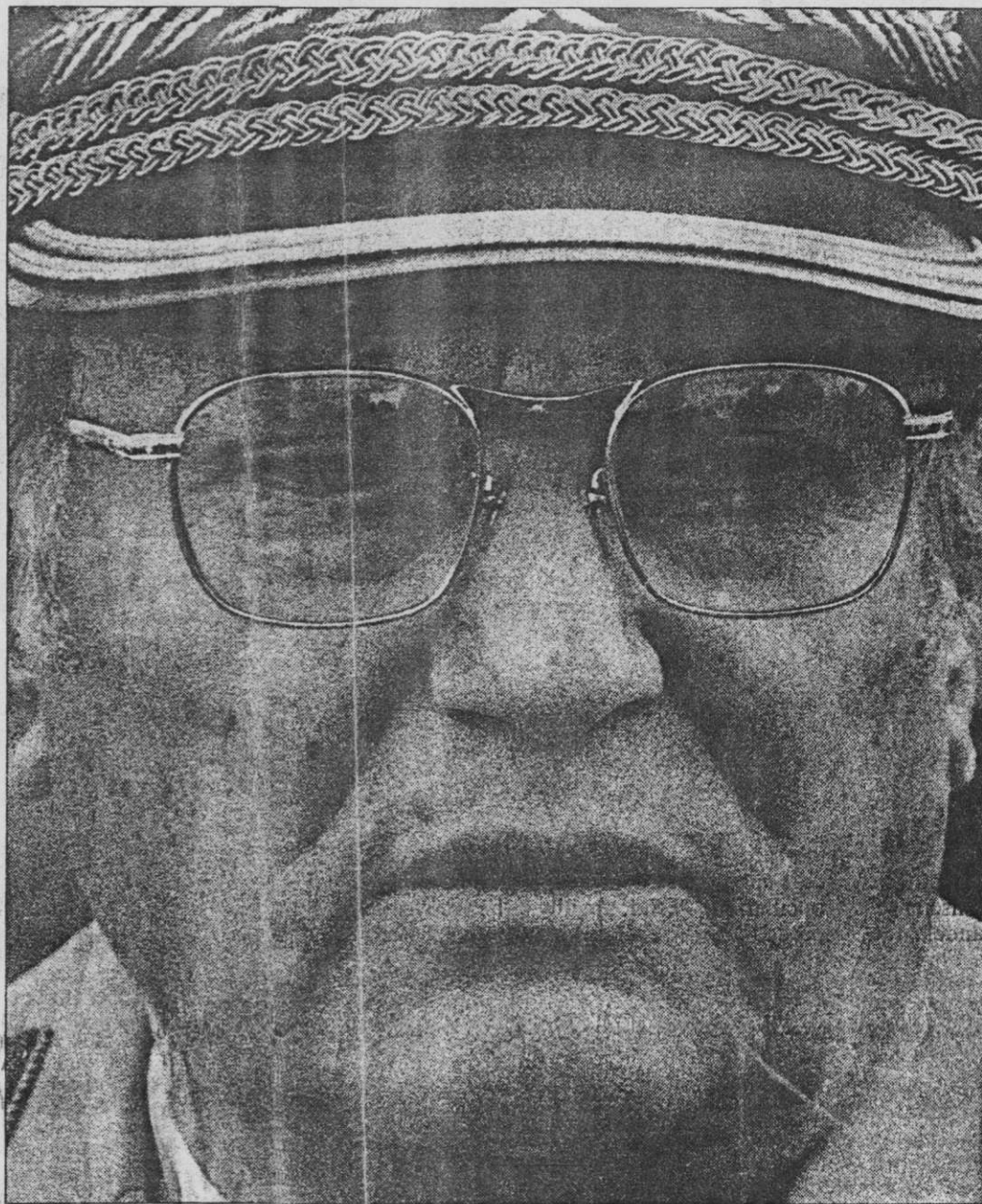
The differences between Serbs and Croats remain historical and tribal. The two nations were united amid general rejoicing after the first world war, which had been fought, among other objectives, to bring them together. Once together, they found that they liked each other less than they had expected. During the second world war they fought side by side in Tito's Partisans, a memory which helped unite them during the post-war years. Tito himself, it should be remem-

bered, dealt firmly with any signs of nascent nationalism.

Inevitably, a serious complication in the present confusion is the power-vacuum at the top. This could be filled by the federal army, with its mainly Serbian officers and communist indoctrination, although almost certainly at the cost of further bloodshed. Just who took the decision to send the army into Slovenia is, amazingly, still unclear. For his part, the federal prime minister declared that he first heard of the move on television. It seems likely that the army acted on its own initiative, claiming as justification that it was its duty under the constitution to uphold federal law and secure Yugoslavia's frontiers.

Today, without Tito's unifying influence, Western mediators have encountered two apparently irreconcilable points of view. Under Slobodan Milosevic, their vehemently nationalist leader, the Serbs, whose republic is the largest of the six, are holding out for a closely knit federal, united Yugoslavia, ruled from the Serbian capital of Belgrade and in effect under Serbian hegemony, as was the pre-war kingdom of Yugoslavia. In this they are strongly supported by the neighbouring Montenegrins, now more Serbian than the Serbs.

The recent declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia and the Yugoslav federal army's subsequent intervention dramatically aggravated an already serious situation. The sight on television of fighting Yugoslavs, of tanks moving into action and aircraft strafing and bombing "enemy" positions has been deeply emotive to people with the folk memories of the Yugoslavs. After a ceasefire had been negotiated and the army had agreed to withdraw, the Slovenes (or so the army said) continued to harass them, drawing from General Adzic, the chief of staff and a Serb whose family was killed by Croat quislings in the second world war,



Strongman: Tito dealt firmly with signs of nationalism. Without him Yugoslavia faces bloodshed

an angry outburst to the effect that if the Croats and Slovenes wanted a real war they could have one.

Although determined to retain their hard-won independence, for which both secured an overwhelming majority in free elections, they have in principle agreed to a looser Yugoslav confederation, negotiated be-

tween sovereign states, as have Bosnia and Macedonia, the two remaining republics.

Why should not the six republics, if they do not want to stay together, simply split up more or less amicably on the lines of their present frontiers? The trouble is that Mr Milosevic's ethnic and territorial demands are by no means limited to his own republic

of Serbia. They include the 10 per cent Serbian ethnic minority in Croatia, scattered, to make things worse, all over the country, and the million-plus Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moreover he has made it abundantly clear that, if necessary, he will fight for what he regards as his people's rights. And when a Serb (or any other Yugoslav) says fight, he means it.

Violent clashes are already occurring throughout Croatia between Croat militia and local Serbs using the wartime name of Chetnik, and egged on by Belgrade.

Moreover, if Mr Milosevic were for any reason to disappear, his place would promptly be taken by another ultra-nationalist. In Croatia, likewise, any alternative to President Tudjman would be as much of a nationalist as he is, if not more so. The two nationalisms feed on each other.

Some internal frontiers will probably need to be shifted and, where this proves impossible, firm guarantees given of minority rights. It has been suggested that the republics might be further sub-divided within their boundaries into administrative regions on roughly ethnic lines. What degree of acceptance any such settlement might win is open to doubt, but it would at least avert or postpone bloodshed.

Europe's new interest in Yugoslav affairs is a welcome development, as is the ready response it has evoked from the Yugoslavs, who have been uneasily poised between East and West for the past 40 years, and who now recognise that their best hope of salvation lies in Europe.

For Yugoslavia's ethnic troubles have served to distract attention from the most pressing problem of all: the state of the national economy. With its exceptional human and natural resources Yugoslavia could, having shaken off the shackles of socialism, be one of the most prosperous countries in Europe. However, at a time when they should be concentrating on recovery, the Yugoslavs are, by their internecine feuding, ruining their chances of attracting the foreign help and investment they so badly need, and are seriously prejudicing their hopes of ever getting into the European Community. For Yugoslavia to relapse into civil war and turmoil would be a disaster for all.

Sir Fitzroy Maclean was the brigadier commanding the British military mission to the Yugoslav partisans, 1943-5. His books include *Eastern Approaches* and *Tito*.