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Uspostava komunističke propagande, nadzora i otpora u Dubrovniku 1946. godine: Primjer Opće bolnice Dubrovnik

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Sažetak: Rad na temelju neobjavljenoga primarnog gradiva iz arhiva stare bolnice u Dubrovniku analizira metode i domete komunističke propagande, indoktrinacije i društvenoga nadzora tijekom ključne, konsolidacijske 1946. Pomoću analize sačuvanih originalnih letaka, proglasa, pjesama i proznih crtica, rad prikazuje kako je Opća bolnica Dubrovnik preoblikovana iz zdravstvene ustanove u politički poligon lokalnih partijskih ćelija i sindikalnih podružnica. Istraživanje mapira ključne propagandne narative poratnoga razdoblja: ritualizaciju masovnih proslava (Prvi svibnja i Dan pobjede), geopolitičku mobilizaciju uslijed Tršćanske krize, privrednu obnovu omladinskih radnih akcija te sustavnu difamaciju Katoličke Crkve. Poseban naglasak stavljen je na mehanizme socijalnoga inženjeringa i uvođenja ozračja straha na radnome mjestu, gdje su se pomoću literarnih i alegorijskih motiva „troskota“, „bolesti“ i „kukavica“ patologizirali i uklanjali neistomišljenici. Konačno, rad dokumentira i oblike pasivnoga otpora bolničkoga osoblja (noćno skidanje plakata), kao i humor te duboke egzistencijalne tjeskobe pojedinca uhvaćenoga u procjepu između službenoga kolektivističkog optimizma i osobne nesigurnosti. Mikrosvijet dubrovačke bolnice tako se potvrđuje kao paradigmatska slika rane poslijeratne Jugoslavije.

Ključne riječi: Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, komunistička propaganda, Agitprop, 1946., Tršćanska kriza, Katolička Crkva, pasivni otpor, socijalni inženjering

The Establishment of Communist Propaganda, Surveillance, and Resistance in Dubrovnik in 1946: The Case of General Hospital Dubrovnik

Abstract: Based on unpublished primary source material from the archive of the old hospital in Dubrovnik, this paper analyses the methods and reach of communist propaganda, indoctrination, and social surveillance during the crucial year of consolidation, 1946. Through

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an analysis of surviving original leaflets, proclamations, poems, and prose sketches, the paper shows how General Hospital Dubrovnik was transformed from a healthcare institution into a political testing ground for local Party cells and trade union branches. The study maps the key propaganda narratives of the post-war period: the ritualisation of mass celebrations (May Day and Victory Day), geopolitical mobilisation prompted by the Trieste Crisis, economic reconstruction through youth work actions, and the systematic defamation of the Catholic Church. Particular emphasis is placed on the mechanisms of social engineering and the imposition of an atmosphere of fear in the workplace, where dissenters were pathologised and removed through literary and allegorical motifs of "troskot" (a weed), "illness", and "kukavica" (cuckoo). Finally, the paper documents forms of passive resistance among hospital staff (the nocturnal removal of posters), as well as humour and the profound existential anxiety of the individual caught between official collectivist optimism and personal insecurity. The microcosm of the Dubrovnik hospital is thus confirmed as a paradigmatic image of early post-war Yugoslavia.

Keywords: General Hospital Dubrovnik, communist propaganda, Agitprop, 1946, Trieste Crisis, Catholic Church, passive resistance, social engineering

INTRODUCTION – THE CONTEXT OF AGITPROP AND SOVIETISATION (1945–1948)

The year 1946 marked a crucial period in the consolidation of early communist rule in the new Yugoslav state. To consolidate its political monopoly, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) employed a systematic and pervasive apparatus of agitation and propaganda (Agitprop).[1] Propaganda permeated every sphere of social and political life, with its thrust directed towards shaping public opinion, indoctrinating the population and neutralising real or imagined enemies of the regime.

This process of imposing totalitarian control on society was also visible at the micro level of public institutions. During 1946, General Hospital Dubrovnik was transformed from an institution devoted exclusively to healthcare into a political testing ground. In Dubrovnik, a traditionally bourgeois and religious milieu, the authorities intensified surveillance and integration through local institutions such as the hospital.

By analysing surviving original leaflets, proclamations, poems and prose sketches from the archive of the old Dubrovnik hospital, this paper seeks to illuminate both the mechanisms through which the local Party cell attempted to establish absolute ideological control and the forms of passive resistance among hospital staff and patients. The study draws on primary source material from the Dubrovnik hospital archive (1880–1941) held at the State Archives in Dubrovnik. A key challenge was the analysis of the fonds entitled “Bolnica – nesređena građa”,[2] which had been damaged by years of storage in damp and exposed areas of the old hospital. Because the documents are fragmentary and unprocessed, standard statistical and graphical methods often cannot be applied to this material. Nevertheless, a detailed examination of more than 400 boxes of unprocessed records extending chronologically beyond 1941 identified valuable documents from 1946 that enabled an analysis of conditions in the hospital during the early communist period.

[1] Spehnjak, 2002, pp. 90–102.
[2] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Unprocessed records.

THE RITUALISATION OF CELEBRATIONS AND MASS MOBILISATION: MAY DAY AND VICTORY DAY

The establishment of the new order required a redefinition of public space and the introduction of new state rituals. Collectivism and mass events served to suppress undesirable individualism and create an impression of universal popular unity. An interesting local phenomenon in Dubrovnik was the instrumentalisation of traditional decorative elements. *Standali*,[3] traditional wooden poles that for centuries had been used exclusively to decorate the city for the Festivity of Saint Blaise, were used for celebrations of the new regime in May 1946.

A directive issued for the May Day celebrations in 1946 required all institutions, branches and associations to decorate their buildings and shops with flags, greenery, slogans and portraits of Josip Broz Tito and Josif Visarionovič Staljin. Special provision was made for displaying the names of workers who had excelled in the so-called May Day competition. The organised procession, which set off from the historic centre towards the railway station in Gruž, was coordinated by the Local Trade Union Council through appointed marshals, and participants had to chant precisely prescribed slogans:

"Long live May Day, the day of workers and peasants... Long live Comrade Tito, the creator of our unity... Long live the brotherhood and unity of our peoples... Long live Soviet Russia, the land of shock workers... Long live Generalissimo Staljin, the liberator of the oppressed... Long live Yugoslav Trieste and the Julian March."[4]

A similar pattern was repeated on 9 May 1946 to mark Victory over Fascism Day. From a historiographical perspective, the KPJ monopolised the anti-fascist struggle and made it a matter of dogma, equating anti-fascism exclusively with communism.[5] The celebration in Dubrovnik was carefully choreographed: a brass band, soldiers and young people set off from Lapad station, joined the Gruž procession and arrived at Pile under the coordination of the city's trade union organisations. Documents from the hospital archive testify to the rigidity of the celebration, as evidenced by a list of explicitly imposed slogans praising the Red Army, Staljin, Slavic brotherhood and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as the "organiser of the

[3] "The city of Saint Blaise at that moment, eyewitnesses report, presented a magnificent sight. Tall, imposing standali (wooden poles) adorned the entire Stradun." Radelj, 1993, p. 163.
[4] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box R114. Letter from the Local Trade Union Council in Dubrovnik, no. 904/46, dated 10 April 1946.
[5] Spehnjak, 2002, p. 95.

struggle and victory over the occupier and domestic traitors."[6] To ensure mass participation in this public holiday, the authorities also applied economic incentives: demonstrators received their regular daily wage, while those who had to remain at their workplaces were guaranteed a 50% higher wage.

GEOPOLITICAL PRESSURES AND THEIR LOCAL REPERCUSSIONS: THE TRIESTE CRISIS

In spring 1946, Yugoslav diplomacy faced difficult negotiations over the fate of Istria, the Julian March and Trieste. Domestic politics mirrored these tensions through mass protest rallies across the country under the slogan "Trieste is ours".[7] The repercussions of these high-level geopolitical developments are clearly discernible in proclamations addressed to the staff of the Dubrovnik hospital.

For a large protest rally held beneath the city bell tower on Stradun on 16 May 1946, trade union officials issued instructions requiring participants to bring Yugoslav flags and slogans directed against the Western Allies and in support of Soviet proposals for demarcating the border: *"Leaving Trieste to Italy would be the greatest injustice. / The proposed corridor in Istria would threaten the security of the new Yugoslavia. / We want an undivided Istria with Trieste! / Long live the USSR, the protector of peace and democratic rights! / We protest against the unjust proposals of the American, English and French delegates! / We firmly demand the annexation of Trieste to Yugoslavia! / All the peoples of Yugoslavia stand behind Comrade Kardelj's proposal!"*[8]

This narrative served to homogenise the local population by emphasising an external threat, while the glorification of Josip Broz Tito's name systematically built a cult of personality that would become a key integrative factor, but in the long term also the most vulnerable factor in the stability of the Yugoslav federation. In 1946, this iconography represented the embryonic phase in the construction of Josip Broz Tito's personality cult, which in later decades would

[6] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Letter from the Local Trade Union Council in Dubrovnik (illegible number), dated 7 April 1946.
[7] Tenca Montini, 2021, pp. 32–34.
[8] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Letter from the Local Trade Union Council in Dubrovnik, no. 925, dated 16 May 1946.

take on elements of a secular religion, deeply rooted in every aspect of social life, including sport.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE "INTERNAL ENEMY"

While the Partisan movement was glorified without any critical scrutiny or analysis of war crimes or repression of dissenters, the Catholic Church represented the only real institutional opposition to the communist regime during this period. The authorities perceived it as a key ideological adversary and sought systematically to destroy its reputation among the population by associating the clergy with fascism and collaboration through propaganda.[9]

A striking example of such defamation is found in a pamphlet entitled "Proljeće 1946 g.", signed by an author using the pseudonym "Komesar R. M." The text directly attacks the clergy and uses the then-recent narrative of the suffering at Široki Brijeg to justify the campaign against the Church: *"Today, these traitors cannot find shelter among the people, but they find it among their like-minded associates who hide beneath the cassock, concealing traitors in churches and convents... The clergy have shown themselves to be the educators of butchers... Let us remember the bereaved fathers and mothers who lost their sons at Široki Brijeg, falling under a hail of bullets coming from the windows of the friars' monastery. These villains felt no shame before 'God's punishment' and took up a machine gun instead of the cross... The working people enjoy all the rights that belong to them, and our young FNRJ flourishes in every respect like a spring rose... With Tito, For Tito!"*[10]

This discourse served to legitimise the post-war persecution of priests and members of religious orders by portraying the Church as a direct threat to the flourishing of the new socialist homeland.[11]

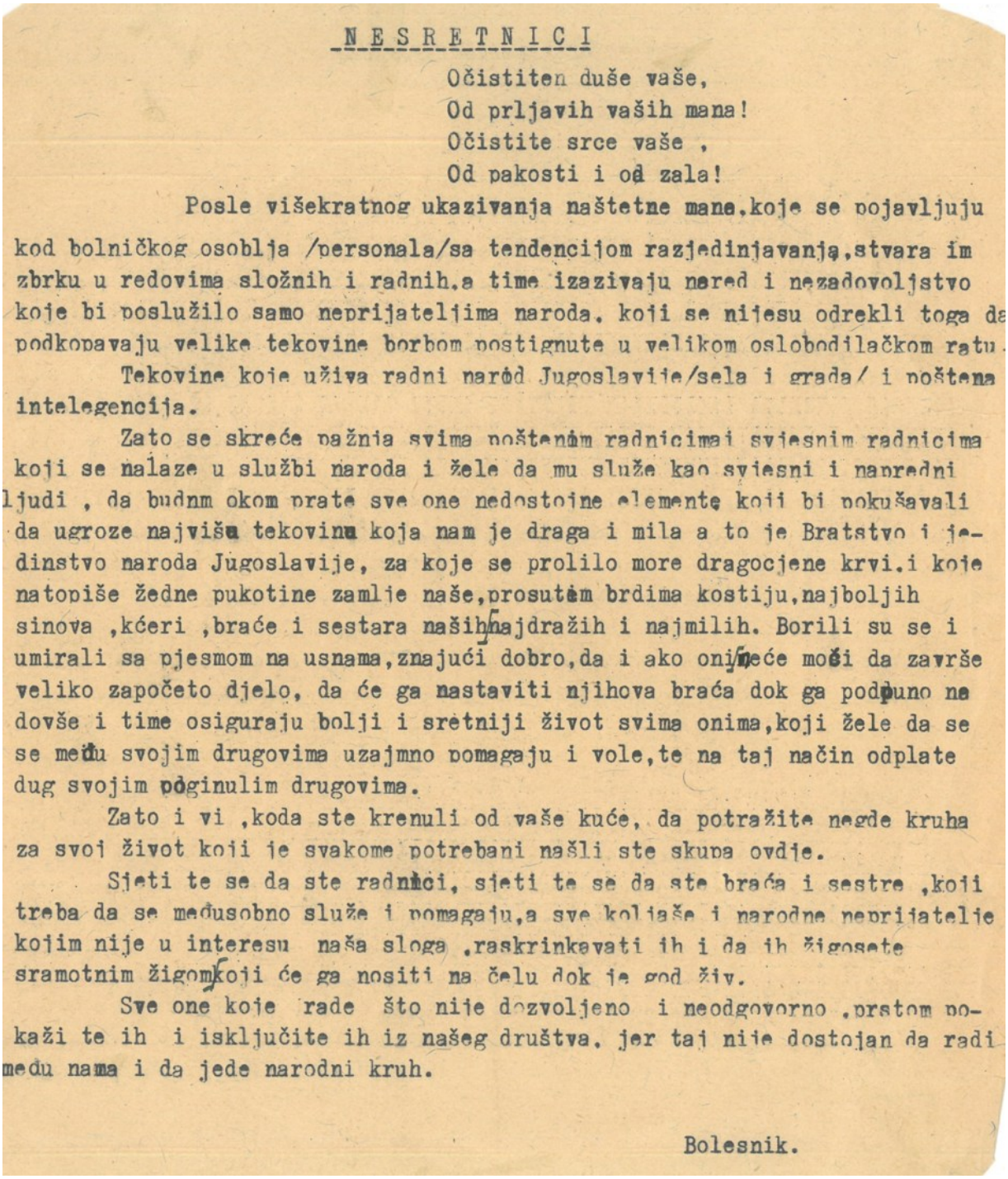
[9] Jurčević, 2020, pp. 28–43.
[10] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records.
[11] Jurčević, 2020, pp. 28–43.

MECHANISMS OF SURVEILLANCE AND IDEOLOGICAL CLEANSING: THE CASE OF THE LEAFLET "NESRETNICI!", A "CULTURE OF DENUNCIATION" AND TOTALITARIAN SURVEILLANCE

The anonymous leaflet at the end ("Nesretnici...") exemplifies the practice of political vigilance and the creation of a "culture of denunciation". Alongside mobilisation over foreign policy and attacks on the Church, the regime imposed strict internal differentiation within institutions. The most vivid example of the creation of an atmosphere of fear and encouragement of informing ("cinkarenje") among hospital staff is an anonymous leaflet signed "Promatrač", which paradoxically draws, in its style and rhetoric, on religious motifs of purification (of "sin"), but in the service of Party ideology: *"Unfortunates! Cleanse your souls of your filthy faults, cleanse your hearts of malice and evil! After repeated warnings about your harmful faults, which manifest themselves among hospital staff in a tendency to sow division, creating confusion in the ranks of the united and hardworking, thereby causing disorder and discontent that could serve only the enemies of our people... All those in the service of the people... are reminded... to keep a watchful eye on all those unworthy elements who might attempt to threaten the greatest achievement – brotherhood and unity [...] Point the finger at all those who do what is forbidden and act irresponsibly, and exclude them from your company, for such a person is unworthy to work among you and eat the people's bread."*[12]

This proclamation vividly demonstrates the intention to introduce total surveillance ("Oči i uši"), whereby any departure from the collectivist norm was declared to be hostile activity against the achievements of the People's Liberation Struggle.[13]

[12] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records, wall newspapers, 1946.
[13] Radelić, 2006, pp. 98–110.



N E S R E T N I C I

Očistiten duše vaše,
Od prljavih vaših mana!
Očistite srce vaše ,
Od pakosti i od zala!

Posle višekratnog ukazivanja naštetne mane,koje se pojavljuju kod bolničkog osoblja /personala/sa tendencijom razjedinjavanja,stvara im zbrku u redovima složnih i radnih,a time izazivaju nered i nezadovoljstvo koje bi poslužilo samo neprijateljima naroda, koji se nijesu odrekli toga da podkopavaju velike tekovine borbom postignute u velikom oslobodilačkom ratu.

Tekovine koje uživa radni narod Jugoslavije/sela i grada/ i poštena intelegencija.

Zato se skreće pažnja svima poštenim radnicima i svjesnim radnicima koji se nalaze u službi naroda i žele da mu služe kao svjesni i napredni ljudi , da budnim okom prate sve one nedostojne elemente koji bi pokušavali da ugroze najvišu tekovinu koja nam je draga i mila a to je Bratstvo i jedinstvo naroda Jugoslavije, za koje se prolilo more dragocjene krvi,i koje natopiše žedne pukotine zamlje naše,prosutim brdima kostiju,najboljih sinova ,kćeri ,braće i sestara naših najdražih i najmilih. Borili su se i umirali sa pjesmom na usnama,znajući dobro,da i ako oni neće moći da završe veliko započeto djelo, da će ga nastaviti njihova braća dok ga potpuno ne dovše i time osiguraju bolji i sretniji život svima onima,koji žele da se se među svojim drugovima uzajmno pomagaju i vole,te na taj način odplate dug svojim poginulim drugovima.

Zato i vi ,koda ste krenuli od vaše kuće, da potražite negde kruha za svoj život koji je svakome potrebani našli ste skupa ovdje.

Sjeti te se da ste radnici, sjeti te se da ste braća i sestre ,koji treba da se međusobno služe i pomagaju,a sve koljaše i narodne neprijatelje kojim nije u interesu naša sloga ,raskrinkavati ih i da ih žigosate sramotnim žigom koji će ga nositi na čelu dok je god živ.

Sve one koje rade što nije dozvoljeno i neodgovorno ,prstom pokaži te ih i isključite ih iz našeg društva, jer taj nije dostojan da radi među nama i da jede narodni kruh.

Bolesnik.

Figure 1. The leaflet “Nesretnici”[14]

[14] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Wall newspapers, 1946.

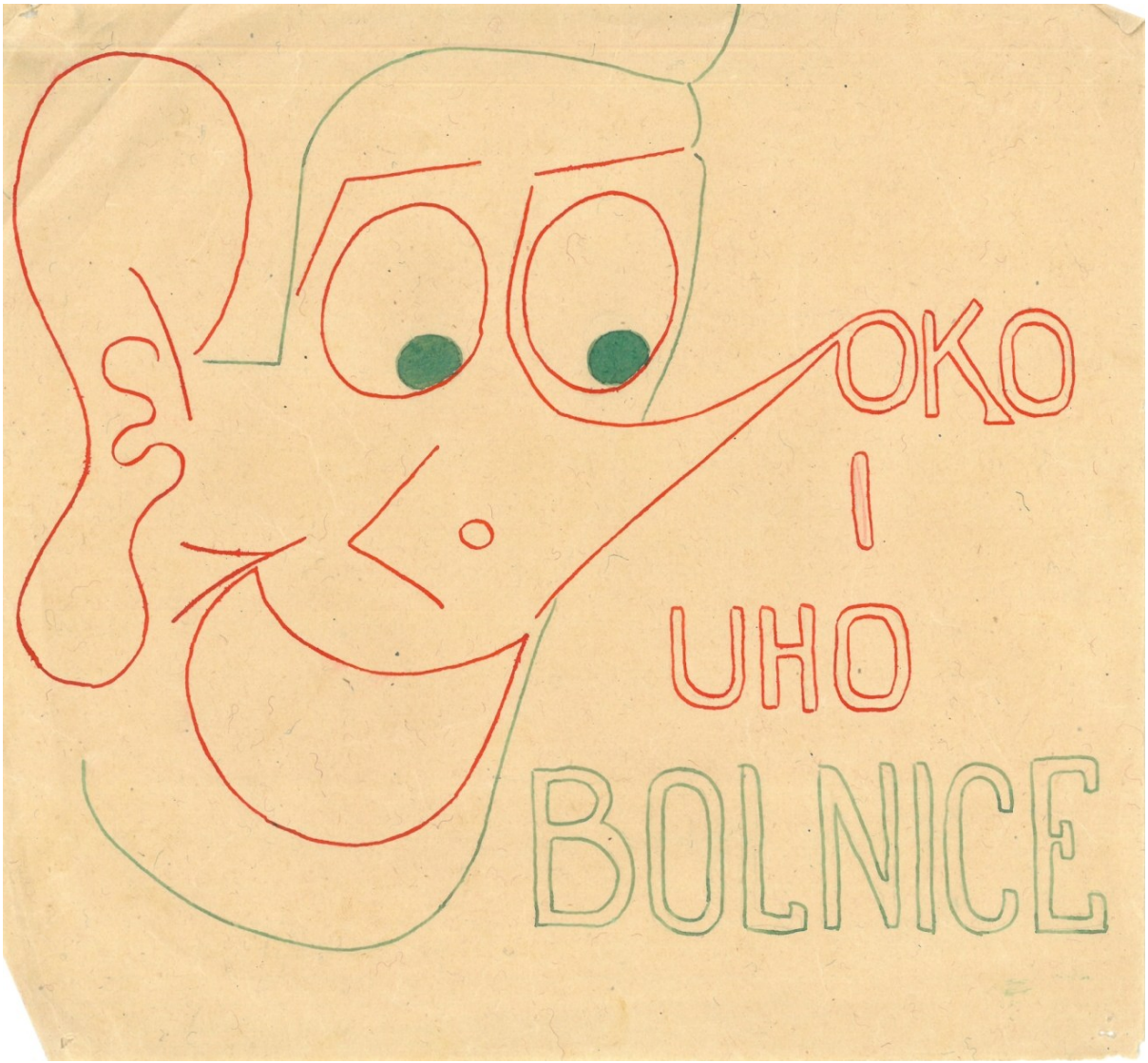


Figure 2. The leaflet “Oko i uho bolnice”[15]

[15] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Wall newspapers, September 1946.

PASSIVE RESISTANCE AND THE ROLE OF WALL NEWSPAPERS: "SABOTEURS" IN HOSPITAL CORRIDORS

Despite aggressive attempts at indoctrination, analysis of the hospital records reveals the existence of active and passive resistance within the institution itself. This resistance most often manifested itself in the destruction or removal of official propaganda posters and wall newspapers. The clash of opinions in the hospital corridors was recorded in a leaflet signed "Bolesnik", which responds to the nocturnal removal of proclamations and explicitly mentions the removal of a text entitled "Badnja noć" (suggesting simmering religious and anti-regime sentiments among some members of staff or patients):

"Wake up, it is dawn! Some are still fast asleep, although day has already broken. [...] they sleep and rise in their sleep like sorrowful sleepwalkers, like apparitions, groping along the walls and noticeboards in the corridors, irresponsibly removing articles that strike them as inadequate, such as the article on the wall newspaper board entitled 'Badnja noć'... This must indeed be a terrible illness... Therefore, everyone who feels healthy should make it their task to help those who are ill in every way... later they will be grateful that you woke them to free them from these undesirable things, that you did good to your neighbour. Then, when they recover, they too will joyfully exclaim to their comrades: Wake up and get up, dawn broke long ago!"[16]

Propaganda proclamations and wall newspaper clippings in the hospital often diverted attention from the pressing social and economic problems of the post-war period.[17] The authors frequently used obscure, allegorical language to convey warnings to those who did not bow to the Party line, as illustrated by a text bearing the initials Ž. I.:

„Oluja! zatvaraj sva jedra, grmio je glas kapetana kroz urlik oluje i prasak valova. [...] Na krmi zaostao mlad mornar pa se nekud plaho i začudno zagledao u demonski ples valova. Neka znade svaki pojedini koji uđe u ples da ga mora isplesati ili ne ići u ples."[18]

[16] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records.
[17] Radelić, 2006, pp. 98–110.
[18] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records, wall newspapers, 1946.

*S*OCIAL ENGINEERING IN THE WORKPLACE: "UPROOTING TROSKOT AND CUCKOOS"

In an environment that idealised togetherness, individualism, freedom of expression and critical thought were systematically suppressed. The literary works of local activists had a clear pragmatic role: to encourage the denunciation of colleagues who did not follow official doctrine and to justify their immediate dismissal.

The word weed was used as a metaphor for politically undesirable workers, as illustrated by the didactic story "Baštovan i troskot", signed "V. Č.*": „Ovako ima štetnih radnika koje bi trebalo da se izbaci iz radnih masa, da ih se iščupa, jer škode i upropašćuju radničku klasu, uništavaju dobre namjere pravih radnika kao što je troskot grickao kupus.*"[19]

This tendency towards re-education or complete exclusion from the working class is also evident in the text "Personalna bolest" (signed "B. A."), in which critical thought is treated as a medical and pathological problem affecting the hospital staff themselves: *"Unfortunately, our hospital staff have not yet sufficiently recovered from an undesirable and dangerous illness: old harmful views, gross faults, mutual contempt, disagreement and intolerance... In analysing all these shortcomings, we must tear them out by the roots from our hearts and drown them in the deep sea of oblivion..."*[20]

Finally, in the short poem/sketch "Kukavica", the author draws a clear distinction between acceptable and unacceptable workers within the hospital. Critically minded individuals are compared to invisible yet constantly present cuckoos that disrupt the harmony of the Party's progressive "nightingale" voices:

„Dočim u krugu naše bolnice kukaju po cijelu godinu. Kukavicu nitko ne vidi da kuka. Samo se čuje da kuka, a ne vidi se... htjele bi naše kukavice da i slavuji kukaju, ali im to nigdje neće biti jer kukavica ostaje kukavica, a slavuj ostaje ptica pjevica."[21]

[19] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records, wall newspapers, 1946.
[20] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records.
[21] Ibid.

ECONOMIC MOBILISATION: WORK ACTIONS

Alongside parades and political proclamations, federal work actions were a specific instrument of communist propaganda and economic reconstruction.[22] Following the completion of the Brčko–Banovići railway, intensive preparations were made during 1946 for the construction of the Šamac–Sarajevo railway.[23] Mobilising proclamations circulated in the hospital sought to link economic progress (the opening of mines and the connection of the hinterland with the Adriatic Sea) with the romantic enthusiasm of young people, often using folk decasyllabic verse to facilitate reception among the masses, as illustrated by a poem by Mile Tomić:

„Viče vila s Mosor planine i dozivlje braću dalmatine! / Vrličane, kršne Cetinjane i junake iz Ravnih Kotara! / Nije ono sa Mosora vila već dozivlje naša zemlja mila! / Da idemo izgraditi prugu ispuniti obavezu drugu! [...] Naša zemlja to od nas pita da viknemo živio nam maršal Tita!"[24]

BETWEEN THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL: HUMOUR, COMRADESHIP AND EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY

The first departure from the formal tone of propaganda appears in satirical poetry by an unknown author circulating within the hospital collective. The poem explores the relationship between the People's Liberation Army (NOV) and everyday hospital life:

> *„Sastali se svi baš jesmo ko što prije rekli bjesmo...*
> *Komesar je žrtva prva, nije ni on baš od drva...*
> *Na sastanku on naglašava, kritika se odobrava,*
> *Ali drugovi mudro šute komesara da ne ljute.*
> *Ozdraviti baš ne žuri, jer i tako vrijeme juri.*
> *Zabušant se nama smije, ko umije njemu dvije."*[25]

From a historiographical perspective, this poem is a valuable source for understanding the phenomenon of "controlled criticism", or simply harmless internal humour that served as a

[22] Šarić and Lučić, 2017, pp. 325–338.
[23] Ibid., pp. 325–338.
[24] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records.
[25] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records.

safety valve for tensions within the collective. The author draws on the tradition of wartime Partisan comradeship to poke fun at key figures of the new order – embodied in the same person, the ailing commissar and hospital administrator (a shirker). Of particular analytical interest is the line "drugovi mudro šute komesara da ne ljute", which, despite its humorous tone, precisely identifies the atmosphere of fear and awareness of the limits of permissible criticism that had begun to become embedded in society as early as 1946.

EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY AS THE ANTITHESIS OF SOCIALIST REALISM: THE POEM "SUDBA"

A complete contrast to both official optimism and the internal humour discussed above is provided by the poem "Sudba", signed with the initials P. B. and likewise preserved in the hospital archive:

> *„O! kruta sudbo što zjaš, lice mi kistom tamnim...*
> *Da vrištim i cijučem, da pacov izgledam – blijed...*
> *A opet nekad remen snažni / I hladno ošinu, i bjeh ko led.*
> *Nejako i prozirno zurim, rumori život - plaši mi ćud:*
> *I hlepim i srčem, u isto veće, i gledati mogo nijesam svud*
> *skupiti bar zrno ili mrlju sreće..."*[26]

At a time when culture and propaganda were dominated by socialist realism – a movement that demanded the exclusive depiction of a victorious mentality, construction, strength and collective enthusiasm – the appearance of a poem such as "Sudba" represents a radical aesthetic and psychological departure.

Analysis of the poem reveals the following elements:
extreme individualism and powerlessness**:** The author does not identify with the progressive collective ("mi", "we"), but speaks from the position of a deeply traumatised and isolated individual ("ja", "I").
Metaphors of violence and fear: Expressions such as "kruta sudba", "pacov blijed" and "remen snažni", which "hladno ošinu", suggest deep existential anxiety, fear of uncertainty and potentially also the experience of wartime or post-war trauma.

[26] Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DADU), fonds 186, Opća bolnica Dubrovnik, 1880–1941. Box 157. Unprocessed records.

The search for "mrljom sreće": The longing to gather "zrnca ili mrlje sreće" stands in complete opposition to the proclaimed general social happiness promised by the new system.

The discovery of such a text in the archive of a healthcare institution (a hospital) testifies to the fact that the process of indoctrination in 1946 was not entirely monolithic. Beneath the surface of mass demonstrations, May Day processions and unanimous chanting on Stradun were individuals whose inner world consisted of fear, resignation and attempts to preserve their privacy in the face of the sweeping politicisation of everyday life. The identity of the author who signed with the initials P. B. remains unknown for now, raising the question of whether this was a patient, a doctor or another member of the hospital staff. In the context of 1946, however, this anonymity and the use of initials alone can also be interpreted as a conscious act of self-protection. In an atmosphere of heightened surveillance, "political vigilance" and calls for denunciation within the hospital (as also evidenced by the leaflet "Nesretnici!"), expressing such dark, deeply individual and non-socialist feelings under one's full name would have posed an enormous existential and political risk to the author. Hiding behind the initials P. B. therefore probably testifies to an instinct for self-preservation at a time when private thought had become suspect.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the primary, unpublished archival material from the archive of the old Dubrovnik hospital dating from 1946 offers valuable historiographical insight into the mechanisms by which the early communist totalitarian system was established and operated at the local micro level. Through the coordinated action of trade union branches and local Party cells, the hospital was transformed in the post-war months from an institution devoted exclusively to healthcare into a major political and ideological testing ground.

The study shows that communist propaganda in the hospital environment was exceptionally multilayered and covered a wide range of topics – from aggressive geopolitical homogenisation (the Trieste Crisis) and the severe defamation of the Catholic Church (associating the clergy with fascism and collaboration) to economic mobilisation through federal work actions. To embed the new ideology in the consciousness of citizens, the regime parasitised traditional elements (decorating Stradun with *standali*) and paradoxically

employed a rhetoric of purification and brotherhood rooted in Christian values while simultaneously imposing rigid social engineering.

The key contribution of this paper lies in mapping the methods through which the Party sought to suppress critical thought and individualism within the work collective. Through literary and allegorical forms, undesirable workers and critics of the system were dehumanised and pathologised through motifs of “troskot”, “illness” and “kukavica” (cuckoo), which served as a direct justification for their denunciation and exclusion from the working masses.

However, the documents also testify that the process of indoctrination in Dubrovnik did not proceed without resistance. Phenomena such as the nocturnal removal of posters with religious allusions (“Badnja noć”) demonstrate the existence of passive resistance in the hospital. At the same time, the appearance of satirical verses about the commissar and hospital administrator, as well as the deeply anxious, existential poetry of an individual (such as the poem “Sudba”), clearly indicates that, despite proclaimed collective optimism, the individual in the early phase of communism remained trapped in fear and insecurity in the face of the regime’s repressive apparatus. The archival material analysed shows that, despite strong pressure, the totalitarian apparatus did not entirely succeed in erasing the individual sphere. Examples of satirical poetry about commissars and deeply anxious, intimate lyric poetry signed P. B. reveal that space remained within the hospital walls for human humour, but also for the individual’s profound existential crisis, forming a quiet aesthetic and psychological antithesis to the imposed optimism of official communist propaganda. The microcosm of the Dubrovnik hospital in 1946 is thus confirmed as a faithful and paradigmatic image of the macrocosm of early post-war Yugoslavia, in which brutal methods of control and ideological cleansing were skilfully concealed behind a façade of popular enthusiasm, comradeship and economic reconstruction.

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