

**NATIONAL IDENTITY AND FOOTBALL:
THE CASE OF HAJDUK SPLIT***

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to delve into the intricate facets of national identity as manifested in the historical trajectory of Hajduk Split. It endeavours to scrutinize the interplay and evolution of diverse identity constructs, encompassing regional, national, and supranational dimensions. Furthermore, the research aims to dissect the influence of successive political regimes on the club and its responsive mechanisms, thereby offering a nuanced comprehension of the intricate dynamics shaping identity formation and evolution. The main findings of this article highlight the ability of Hajduk to navigate and maintain its distinct identity amidst the backdrop of shifting ideologies. Despite the prevailing ideological currents, the club managed to function relatively independently while preserving its identity. The analysis underscores the importance of discerning the nature and direction of external pressures and the club's capacity to resist them, particularly evident in the tension between Yugoslavism and pan-Croatian sentiments.

Keywords: Nationalism, Identity, Football, Hajduk Split, Yugoslavia.

* Study has been elaborated on the basis of chapter from the author's book *Československo a Juhoslávia: medzi ideologickými prienikmi, kultúrnou dynamikou a historickými interakciami* (Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia: between ideological intersections, cultural dynamics and historical interactions) being published in 2024. The book is going to be published in Slovak.

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OPEN ACCESS

MİLLÎ KİMLİK VE FUTBOL: HAJDUK SPLIT ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Hajduk Split'in tarihsel sürecinde tezahür ettiği gibi ulusal kimliğin karmaşık yönlerini incelemektir. Ayrıca bölgesel, ulusal ve uluslararası boyutları kapsayan çeşitli kimlik yapılarının karşılıklı etkileşimini ve evrimini de incelemeye çalışmaktadır. Araştırma ayrıca, birbirini izleyen siyasi rejimlerin kulüp ve tepki mekanizmaları üzerindeki etkisini incelemeyi ve böylece kimlik oluşumunu ve evrimini şekillendiren karmaşık dinamiklere dair incelikli bir kavrayış sunmayı da amaçlamaktadır. Bu makalenin temel bulguları, Hajduk'un değişen ideolojiler zemininde farklı kimliğini yönlendirme ve sürdürme becerisine ışık tutmaktadır. Hâkim ideolojik akımlara rağmen kulüp, kimliğini koruyarak nispeten bağımsız bir şekilde faaliyet göstermeyi başarmıştır. Analiz, özellikle Yugoslavizm ve pan-Hırvat duygular arasındaki gerilimde belirginleşen dış baskıların niteliğini ve yönünü ve kulübün bunlara direnme kapasitesini ayırt etmenin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Kimlik, Futbol, Hajduk Split, Yugoslavya.

Introduction

The social sciences addressing nationalism and identity generally acknowledge that sports constitute a significant ritual of popular culture and contribute to the theoretical concept of the nation as an “imagined community”. Scholars across various disciplines agree that sports hold social, cultural, and political significance in shaping collective identity at the local, national, regional, and global levels.¹ The utilization and focus of football, in particular have often been aligned with specific political, social, or economic objectives. Due to its growing potential for social impact and universal nature, football has been intricately linked to the political and economic spheres. As a result, political leaders have sought to leverage football to achieve or promote their own goals. The relative transparency of the game itself, however, has not always led to the expected outcomes in terms of propagandistic or ideological intentions. The autonomous nature of the game

¹ Laurence Cooley and Dario Brentin, “Nationalism and sport”, *The State of Nationalism. National Movements and Intermediary Structures in Europe*, (eds.) Eric Taylor Woods and Robert Schertzer, 2016, <https://stateofnationalism.eu/article/nationalism-and-sport/>, (17.02.2024).

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has also posed a threat to dictatorships that sought to ideologically monopolize people's leisure time, as football served as a means to alleviate the constant mobilization of the masses.² The intensity of ethnic and nationalist sentiments in the Balkans, coupled with the significance of sports in the region, makes the post-Yugoslav space a natural laboratory for researching the close interconnection between sports, religion, ethnicity, and nationalism.³ Research on the intersection of politics, ideologies, and football highlights the dynamic pathway through which football is engaged in the formation of collective identities, communities, and globalization.⁴ The academic debate surrounding the intersection of international politics and modern sports demonstrates that the separation of these two phenomena is neither possible nor acceptable. The ideological flexibility of sports as a social domain is best manifested by a statement made by the renowned scholar in sports and politics, John Haberman: "*sports can serve any ideology*".⁵ The primary aim of this study is to explore the multifaceted dimensions of national identity reflected in the history of the football club HNK Hajduk Split. It seeks to investigate how various forms of identity, including regional, national, and supranational (such as Dalmatian, Croatian, and Yugoslav), interacted, and evolved over time within the context of the club's history. Additionally, the study aims to analyse the impact of political regimes on the club and how it responded to these changes, thereby providing a broader understanding of the complex dynamics of identity formation and transformation.

It is crucial to indicate why the Croatian Hajduk Split should be the element through which the connection between ideology and sport can be explored. In the context of the entire Yugoslav space, it is the only club from the so-called "big four" that did not emerge after 1945, making it a natural and clear choice. While it would be possible to examine a less prominent club

² Christian Koller and Fabian Brandle, *Goal! A Cultural and Social History of Modern Football*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. 2015, p. 200.

³ Dario Brentin, "'A lofty battle for the nation': the social roles of sport in Tadjman's Croatia", *Sport in Society*, Volume 16, Number 8, 2013, p. 993.

⁴ Ekaterina Glorizova et al, *The Palgrave International Handbook of Football and Politics*, Palgrave MacMillan, London 2018, p. 6.

⁵ Dario Brentin and Dejan Zec, "From the Concept of the Communist 'New Man' to Nationalist Hooliganism: Research Perspectives on Sport in Socialist Yugoslavia", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Volume 34, Number 9, 2017, p. 713-728.

that existed already before 1945,⁶ the history of Hajduk Split is so emblematic that omitting it would be a scholarly suicide.

Concerning methods of our research, the key focus should be put on a comprehensive review of existing secondary literature on the history of HNK Hajduk Split, focusing on sources that discuss the club's interactions with various forms of identity, political regimes, and societal contexts. This involves analysing scholarly articles, books, and other relevant sources. Comparing and contrasting different historical perspectives and interpretations regarding the club's identity and its relationship with regional, national, and supranational identities. Within this perspective we shall highlight the most important events from the founding of the club until the final season of Yugoslav football in 1990/1991 and subsequently discuss their interpretations from ideological point of view (founding of a club, Comparison with the position of Grandjanski in interwar period, Hajduk as "the first free team in liberated territory" and founding of Torcida, national outbreak in the 80s' - Hajduk and Zvezda/Partizan games). This approach involves examining how different historians in different periods of its history have interpreted and analysed the same historical events and phenomena.⁷ Comparison with other "big four" clubs is very important since Partizan and Zvezda were highly affected by Serbian environment and policy.

Context analysis should be done by placing the history of HNK Hajduk Split within its broader historical, social, and political framework. This involves examining the socio-economic conditions, political developments, and cultural trends that influenced the club's identity and evolution over time. Most important from the point of view of the whole study is exploring the ideological frameworks and discourses that shaped the club's

⁶ Martin Blasius, "FC Red Star Belgrade and the Multiplicity of Social Identifications in Socialist Yugoslavia: Representative Dimensions of the 'Big Four' Football Clubs", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Volume 34, 2017, p. 783-799.

⁷ According to Frank L. K. Ohemeng "Comparative Historical Analysis" is concerned with explanation and identification of causal configurations that produce major outcomes of interest, concerned with historical sequences and the processes of history unfolding over time and scholars of comparative historical analysis engage in systematic and contextualized comparison of similar and contrasting cases. Frank Ohemeng, "Comparative Historical Analysis, A Methodological Perspective", *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, (ed.) A. Farazmand, Springer Nature Switzerland AG., 2020, p. 2.

identity.⁸ This approach involves analysing how political ideologies, nationalism, and other ideological factors influenced the club's identity formation and responses to political regimes.

Contemporary Croatia is the fifth state in which the club has been active - alongside Austria-Hungary, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later SHS and after 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.⁹ From a chronological standpoint, we have chosen to focus on the eighty years of the club's history, spanning from its foundation in 1911 to the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, and subsequently, the establishment of Croatia.¹⁰ The initiation of the research is evident, as for a comprehensive understanding of the development and interconnections of various political and ideological influences on the club, it is essential to examine the conditions

⁸ Identity is a complex and multifaceted concept with various dimensions, often encompassing contradictory aspects. In the realm of social sciences, it is imperative to acknowledge and grapple with the complexity inherent in the term "identity". It is intricately connected to themes of recognition, encompassing theories and explanations that aim to elucidate the interplay between individual subjects and collective meanings. Therefore, identity can be viewed as a crucial category of analysis, serving as a theoretical tool to enhance our comprehension of diverse phenomena. Gustavo Ruiz da Silva, "War? Another possible relation between Yugoslavia and its football", *Filos. e Educ.*, Volume 11, Number 3, 2019, p. 494-495.

⁹ During the Second World War and the Italian occupation of Split, or after the Italian capitulation in 1943, the Hajduk leadership decided not to continue its activities. Previous competitors such as Gradjanski Zagreb and HAŠK, Belgrade's BSK and SK Jugoslavija continued their activities within the framework of the collaborationist regimes in Croatia and Serbia. Ivan Djordjević, "The Role of Red Star Football Club in the Construction of Serbian National Identity", *Traditiones*, Volume 45, Number 1, 2016, p. 119-120. Benjamin Perasović and Marko Mustapić, "Carnival supporters, hooligans, and the 'Against Modern Football' movement: life within the ultras subculture in the Croatian context", *Sport in Society*, Volume 21, Number 6, 2018, p. 52.

¹⁰ In Croatian football during the 1990s, contrasting tendencies were evident. While the national team played a pivotal role in fostering Croatian unity, projecting Croatia's image internationally, and instilling a widely embraced sense of national pride, club football in Croatia became a platform for anti-government activism. Various movements emerged within club football, including those advocating for the preservation of Dinamo Zagreb's name and expressing regionalist sentiments against Zagreb, as championed by the Torcida fans of Hajduk Split football club. Dinamo Zagreb served as a focal point for one of Croatia's most vocal anti-government factions, notably represented by the "Bad Blue Boys", who were initially supporters of the political platform introduced by Tuoman in 1990. Moreover, the "Bad Blue Boys" actively enlisted in the newly formed Croatian Army (HV) at the outset of the war, highlighting their significant influence within Croatian society. Alex J. Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity, A Centuries-old Dream*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2003, p. 113.

of its establishment and the trajectory it took in its initial years. The limit for the end of the club's development was set for the year 1991 (including the 1990/91 season)¹¹ marking the fall of Yugoslavia and the emergence of modern Croatia, associated with a sharp increase in Croatian nationalism.¹² However, the ties between football, politics, and identity do not cease even after the successful establishment of Croatia's own football federation, championships, and clubs. On the contrary, the politicization of Croatian football was a recurring manifestation throughout the 20th century.¹³ This is not to suggest that ideological penetration into sports in the Croatian context concluded; perhaps quite the opposite. This is supported by numerous contemporary studies focusing on the period post-1991. Noteworthy among them are works by Dario Brentin, for instance - *Now You See Who Is a Friend and Who an Enemy. "Sport as an Ethnopolitical Identity Tool in Postsocialist Croatia* (2014),¹⁴ "Ready for the Homeland? Ritual, Remembrance, and Political Extremism in Croatian Football" (2016),¹⁵ Srdjan Vračar, *The*

¹¹ The decision to conclude the research in the given year encompasses several dimensions. Firstly, it largely entails the thorough examination of the issues surrounding Croatian football post the establishment of modern Croatia, as evidenced by authors such as Brentin and Tregoures (refer to end of introduction). Secondly, from our perspective, the breadth of the problem is notable - contemplating the study of the interaction between ideology and the functioning of Hajduk Split after 1991 would necessitate a separate inquiry, potentially constituting the second part of this endeavor. Lastly, the preceding period was marked by a relatively rapid succession of various regimes and the associated ideologies, which are no longer as prominently discernible after 1991. Consequently, the authors are committed to revisiting the topic and preparing a new study on Hajduk that extends to the present day.

¹² The first democratic elections in April and May 1990 marked the victory of Franjo Tuđman and his party, the Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica - HDZ), which won a two-thirds majority in parliament and laid the foundations for the president's political hegemony in the following decade. During his presidency, ethno-nationalist ideology became the prism through which Croatian identity was conceptualised and disseminated, leading to the dominance of nationalist narratives in almost all spheres of life and in everyday discourse. Tuđman claimed to be the spiritual leader of the Croatian nationalist movement and the "father of the nation" and acted as the main ideologue and sole political leader who ruled over Croatia in an increasingly undemocratic manner. Brentin, " 'A lofty battle for the nation': the social roles of sport in Tuđman's Croatia", p. 994; Roger East and Jolyon Pontin, *Revolution and Change in Central and Eastern Europe*, Bloomsbury, London 2016, p. 259-260.

¹³ Gloriovzova, *op.cit.*, p. 205-207; Jiří Kukul, *Zažit derby*, E-knihy jedou, Praha 2019, p. 29-31.

¹⁴ Dario Brentin, " Now You See Who Is a Friend and Who an Enemy. Sport as an Ethnopolitical Identity Tool in Postsocialist Croatia", *Comparative Southeast European Studies*, Volume 62, Number 2, 2014, pp. 187-207.

¹⁵ Dario Brentin, "Ready for the homeland? Ritual, remembrance, and political extremism in Croatian football", *Nationalities Papers*, Volume 44, Number 6, 2016, pp. 1-17.

Curious Drama of the President of a Republic Versus a Football Fan Tribe: A Symptomatic Case in the Post-communist Transition in Croatia (2002).¹⁶ Despite belonging to the so-called “Big Four” of Yugoslav football (Dinamo Zagreb, Hajduk Split, Red Star Belgrade, Partizan Belgrade),¹⁷ modern historiography has only partially addressed Hajduk Split. A comprehensive monograph in English that would map the entire history of the football club is notably absent. The most significant contribution has arguably been made by the English historian Richard Mills in his book *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State*,¹⁸ in which he dedicates two chapters to Hajduk and meticulously analyzes its role during World War II. Jurica Gizdić’s work, *Leksikon Hrvatskog nogometnog kluba Hajduk 1911-2022*,¹⁹ represents a unique and comprehensive endeavor. The book encompasses data from all generations of the club, football players, club leadership, Torcida (the club’s fan organization), and “Naš Hajduk”. It contains information and photos of a total of 1763 individuals from the club’s history. In the context of our research, its nature is more factual and statistical, and thus its potential is not fully utilized.

An integral part of the club’s history is the fan organization known as Torcida, founded in 1950, and this phenomenon has become the subject of research in numerous sociological, ethnographic, and historical works. For example, the work of B. Perasović and Marko Mustapić from the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar in Zagreb is a notable contribution in this regard - *Nogometni Navijači U Kontekstu Sociologije U Hrvatskoj: Istraživačke Perspektive 20 Godina Poslije, Torcida and Bad Blue Boys From hatred to*

¹⁶ Srdjan Vrčar, “The Curious Drama of the President of a Republic Versus a Football Fan Tribe: A Symptomatic Case in the Post-communist Transition in Croatia”, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Volume 37, Number 1, pp. 59-77.

¹⁷ Partizan as a military club was seen as a state project and as part of the official state system until the 1970s. Crvena Zvezda, on the other hand, was perceived as a true Belgrade team and to some extent as anti-system/regime and seen as a “Serbian” club, not “Yugoslav” like Partizan. Most of the Serbian population from the other Yugoslav republics prioritized support for Zvezda, interpreting this connection as one of the segments of their national identity. Ivan Djordjević, “The Role of Red Star Football Club in the Construction of Serbian National Identity”, *Traditiones*, Volume 45, Number 1, 2016, p. 119-120.

¹⁸ Richard Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia*, I. B. Tauris, London 2018.

¹⁹ Jurica Gizdić, *Leksikon Hrvatskog nogometnog kluba Hajduk 1911-2022*, Hajduk, Split 2023.

cooperation and back,²⁰ or work of Josip Glaurdić *Football activism as political contention: Contextual determinants of membership in the association of supporters of Hajduk Split*.²¹ Already mentioned Dario Brentin from Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz edited with Florian Bieber from the University of Graz work *Social movements in the Balkans: Rebellion and protest from Maribor to Taksim, Fan protest and activism: Football from below in South-Eastern Europe*.²²

1. Hajduk from Foundation to the Establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (1911-1941) – Transition from Croatian to Yugoslav?

The Croatian football club Hajduk Split was founded here in 1911 - an inscription precisely articulated this on the commemorative plaque installed in June 2001 at the Prague pub named U Fleků. The connection between the two renowned clubs (Hajduk and Slavia Prague) was further evidenced during a match on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Hajduk's foundation in 2011, in which Hajduk lost 2-0 to Prague's Slavia. The establishment of Hajduk Split in 1911 by two teachers and four students (Fabjan Kaliterna, Lucijan Stella, Ivan Šakić, and Vjekoslav Ivanišević), who considered themselves Croatian patriots in Prague following the model of Slavia Prague, is a widely recognized fact. In the interpretation of this act, B. Perasović suggested in his analysed works from the post-World War II period that it was an act of Yugoslav patriotism, while the 2011 monograph (*Sto godina Hajduka*) unequivocally points to an act of Croatian patriotism.

The context of the First World War and club's history is interpreted in relation to the development of Yugoslav thought, with the 2011 work lacking any political interpretation of the First World War.²³ The Austrian administration in the city of Zadar issued a permit for the club's

²⁰ Benjamin Perasović and Marko Mustapić, "Nogometni Navijači U Kontekstu Sociologije U Hrvatskoj: Istraživačke Perspektive 20 Godina Poslije, Torcida and Bad Blue Boys From hatred to cooperation and back", *Kineziologija*, Volume 45, Number 2, 2013, pp. 262-275.

²¹ Josip Glaurdić, "Football activism as political contention: Contextual determinants of membership in the association of supporters of Hajduk Split", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Volume 55, Number 8, 2020, pp. 1094-1115.

²² Florian Bieber and Dario Brentin, *Social movements in the Balkans: Rebellion and protest from Maribor to Taksim, Fan protest and activism: Football from below in South-Eastern Europe*, Routledge, London 2021.

²³ Benjamin Perasović and Marko Mustapić, "Football, Politics and Cultural Memory: The Case of HNK Hajduk Split", *Культура/Culture*, Number 6, 2014, p. 58.

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establishment, but it dealt a blow to the relatively strong Hungarian and Italian irredentism in the Istria and Dalmatia regions. In the context of Slavic national movements within Austria-Hungary at the end of the 19th century, football can be considered an element to demonstrate a specific Croatian identity in comparison to regional differences/identities, such as Istria, central Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia.²⁴

Paradoxically, Hajduk played its first match against an Italian team from Split, Calcio Spalato. It was the club's inaugural official match against another team, held on June 11, 1911, before an incredible crowd of nearly 3,000 spectators (considering Split had approximately 20,000 inhabitants at that time). The result was a convincing 9-0 victory for Hajduk. As hinted earlier, Hajduk emerged in opposition to Italian influence in the Split and Dalmatia region, yet initially, many Italian players were part of the team (e.g., Ermenegildo Rosseg, Ampalio Sitic, Roberto Salvi, Mario Righi, Pasko and Stipe Sisgoreo, Pero Machiedo).²⁵

The club's name "Hajduk" also signifies a certain rebellion, as in Balkan tradition, hajduks were symbols of resistance against Ottoman rule. Another interpretation could be linked to the visit of the famous Herzegovinian hajduk of Croatian origin, Andrijica Šimić,²⁶ who greeted the inhabitants of Split in 1902 after a long stay in an Austrian prison.²⁷ Hajduk

²⁴ Loïc Tregoures, "Croatia", *The Palgrave International Handbook of Football and Politics*, (ed.) Jean-Michel De Waele and Suzan Gibril and Ekaterina Glorizova and Ramón Spaaij, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2018, p. 206.

²⁵ The first official starting 11 was: Buchberger, Namar, Zupa, Murat, Rosseg, Fakač, Tudor, Leway, Šitić, Nedoklan, Rauning. Igor Kramarsich, "L'Hajduk, squadra simbolo della Dalmazia", *La voce del popolo*, Edition Dalmazia, Volume 14, Number 118, 2018, <https://lavoce.hr/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/dalmazia180407.pdf>, (20.02.2024).

²⁶ The year 1901 is also mentioned - his reception must have been particularly warm, as the crowd carried him in their arms from the harbour to Marjan Hill (today a recreation area and park above the town). For three days the old harambasha (the Ottoman term for rebel leader) was hosted and even came to claim a sum of money. John M. Pandžić, *The History and Heritage of the Pandžićs from Drinovci*, Dorrance Pub Co, Pittsburgh 2020, p. 151; Mijo Milas, *Hrvatski narodni junak hajduk Andrijica Šimić*, Logos, Split 1996, p. 197; Mijo Milas, *Hajdučka legenda Andrija Šimić*, Split 2015; Mirko Lesko, *Andrijica Šimić: Zadnji hrvatski hajduk*, List Marija, Split 1979, p. 206.

²⁷ In general, the word Hajduk means renegade, pariah or renegade from the Turkish homeland, respectively thief, murderer. An armed bandit fighting against Ottoman rule. The word hajduk is believed to be of Arab-Turkish origin. According to some interpretations, the word hajduk passed into Turkish and Serbian from the Hungarian language. However, Dušan J. Popović emphatically rejected this hypothesis. Miodrag Stojanović presented another hypothesis about the etymology of the word Hajduk, which stems from the Sanskrit form aydh, translated to

was a product of pro-Croatian residents of Split, Croatian unionists, known as “puntari”. Hence, the club carried the name “hrvatski nogometni klub” (Croatian football club), and the Croatian checkerboard was the basis of its emblem.

After the formation of the Kingdom of SHS, Hajduk joined the Yugoslav league in 1923, losing its first and only match of that season against NK SAŠK Napredak Sarajevo. Apart from the national competition, Hajduk also participated in the so-called Dalmatian Cup, winning all but one between 1920 and 1936. The club’s involvement in this competition indicates a kind of dual or even triple identity - Yugoslav, Croatian, and Dalmatian - during that period, with the order being interchangeable to some extent (a similar phenomenon is observable in Spanish football, e.g., FC Barcelona, Bilbao, and others).²⁸ In the Serbian context, Serbian and Yugoslav identities of clubs were often identical. An excellent example is the team Jugoslavija Belgrade, whose matches were attended by King Alexander. The club was established before World War I as Velika Srbija, demonstrating that for a part of the Serbian political elite, Greater Serbian and Yugoslav identities were synonymous. In the Serbian environment, the club boasted being among the first to adopt the name Jugoslavija ten years before the official state name change.²⁹

Hajduk Split experienced its first major era at the end of the 1920s, winning the Yugoslav League twice (1927 and 1929).³⁰ This period coincided with significant changes in the country,³¹ and the Dalmatian coast, including

fight, to defend, which could by metathesis lead to the form ayduh (ajduk) meaning warrior, opponent. The Hajduk movement in the Balkans, represented a revolt against foreign invaders, but also against Turkish oppression and levies, but its so-called “thieving” dimension, not only the “liberation” one, must also be legitimately distinguished. For further information Dušan J. Popović, *O hajducima*, Narodna štamparija, Belgrade 1930, p. 96-97; Miodrag Stojanović, *Hajduci i klefci u narodnom pesništvu*, Srpska Akademia nauka i umetnosti, Belgrade 1984, p. 34; Radoš Ljusić, *Vožd Karadžordže knj.*, Štamparija Zagorac, Belehrad 2000, p. 35; Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottomane Empire*, Facts On File, Inc., New York 2009, p. 252; Vojtech Dangel and Vojtech Kopčan, *Vojenské dejiny Slovenska (1526 - 1711) II*, MO SR, Bratislava 1995, p. 86-90.

²⁸ Shmuel Nili, “The Rules of the Game-Nationalism, Globalisation and Football in Spain: Barça and Bilbao in a Comparative Perspective, Global Society”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations*, Volume 23, Number 3, 2009, p. 245-268.

²⁹ Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

³⁰ <https://hajduk.hr/povijest/1921-1930>, (20.02.2024).

³¹ The political crisis in the country reached its peak after the assassination of *The Croatian Peasant Party* members P. Radić, Dj. Basariček and the leader S. Radić himself on 20 June

Split, was not spared. Croatian resentment, as a response to the assassination of Radić, manifested itself in mass demonstrations in Zagreb. It also emerged during the match between Hajduk and Jugoslavija Belgrade, where home fans attacked referees and players of the Belgrade team. Only police intervention helped restore order.³² Therefore, in early 1929, King Alexander Karađorđević resorted to a radical and often interpreted as the only possible solution: on January 6, 1929, he issued a manifesto that dissolved the parliament, suspended the validity of the Vidovdan Constitution from 1921, and established that the government would be directly responsible to the king alone. The king justified the establishment of a dictatorship as an attempt to end the prolonged political crisis in the Kingdom of SHS and presented himself as the protector of national interests and the saviour of state unity.³³ In addition to significant interventions in the Sokol movement, football underwent a key change. Due to disagreements among representatives of individual sub-organizations within the JNS, the federation was dissolved, and a new one was established in Belgrade on March 16, 1930, as the Fudbalski Savez Jugoslavije.³⁴ The change from “nogometni” to “fudbalski” reflects the de-Croatization of the federation, as the term “nogomet” is more commonly used in Croatian than Serbian (today Fudbalski savez Srbije vs. Hrvatski nogometni savez).³⁵

In the interwar period, Croatian football teams represented the avant-garde of Croatian identity. The checkerboard was often used as a symbol for clubs like Hajduk, Gradjanski, and many others. Gradjanski had a close

1928 by a member of the *National Radical Party*, P. Račić, on the floor of the Parliament itself. The event shook the foundations of the state as such. The peasant-democratic coalition of the *The Croatian Peasant Party* and S. Pribičević (a representative of the *Democratic Party* of the so-called Transdanubian Serbs from the territory of the former R.U. monarchy) left the parliament, demanded the resignation of the government, the dissolution of the parliament and new elections. Maroš Melichárek, “Jeden král, jeden národ, jeden štát...? Juhoslávia v období medzi dvoma svetovými vojnami”, *Od bouře k bouři: Československo, Evropa a svět mezi dvěma světovými válkami (1918-1939)*, (eds.) Jakub Drábik and Jakub Rákosník, Academia, Prague 2022, p. 381-399.

³² Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

³³ Christopher Bennet, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences*, New York University Press, New York 1997, p. 38-39.

³⁴ The author interpreted the transfer of the seat from Zagreb to Belgrade as a great victory for Belgrade. The transfer was agreed on 28 October 1928 and the sub-unions from Osijek, Sarajevo, Skopje, Subotica voted in favour of the proposal. Milorad Sijić, *Fudbal u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji*, Zavičajni muzej Župe Aleksandrovac, Aleksandrovac 2014, p. 15.

³⁵ Alex J. Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity A Centuries-old Dream*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2003, p. 144.

relationship with Stejepan Radić and HSS (Hrvatska seljačka stranka), with Radić even delivering a speech at the stadium opening in 1924.³⁶ Yugoslav identity was formally presented, often under pressure, with the term “Yugoslav” being adopted, as was the case with Hajduk Split changing from Croatian football club to Yugoslav football club. Between 1923 and 1940, these teams managed to win the Yugoslav League 10 times out of 17 seasons (5 Gradjanski, 2 Hajduk, 2 Concordia, and 1 HAŠK), but their players often boycotted the Yugoslav national team.³⁷ The Croatian football federation was re-established in 1939 in connection with the Cvetković-Maček Agreement or “Sporazum”. Ivan Šubašić (1892-1955) became its head, appointed by the government. The autonomous assembly (never elected) under his authority covered all competencies except military matters, foreign policy, and trade. Croats gained extensive territory, including Srijem, Dubrovnik, part of southern Bosnia to Travnik and Fojnica, although it was ethnically diverse (the banovina was home to 866,000 Serbs and 164,000 Muslims, with their status not clearly defined). This system remained in place until the Axis powers occupied the region in 1941.³⁸ At that time, an unofficial Croatian team played four matches.³⁹

2. Hajduk during the time of the Second World War (1941 - 1945): “the first free team in liberated territory”

On the ruins of Yugoslavia, with the assistance of Italian and German allies, the Independent State of Croatia (Croatian: Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH) was declared in Zagreb on April 10, 1941, under the leadership of Ante Pavelić, who had previously been in Italian exile. However, it is crucial to note that one cannot, in any case, speak of an independent state, as it was a puppet state fully subservient to Germany and Italy. The territory of the NDH was divided by a demarcation line into the German and Italian spheres of interest, with both powers deploying their units in the mentioned territory. A significant part of Bosnia and Herzegovina was

³⁶ Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 16. The publication of M. Sijić states already at the founding of the club in 1911 name only “jugoslovenski”. The publication of M. Sijić states already at the founding of the club in 1911 name only “jugoslovenski”. Sijić, *op.cit.*, p. 312.

³⁷ At the World Championships in 1930, the national team in Uruguay was composed of players from Serbian clubs. Although the Yugoslavian team finished in 4th place, they managed to beat the extremely strong Brazil 2-1. James Mangan, *Sport in Europe. Politics, Class, Gender*, Frank Cass, London 1999, p. 239.

³⁸ Melichárek, “Jeden král, jeden národ, jeden štát...? Juhoslávia v období medzi dvoma svetovými vojnami”, p. 381-399.

³⁹ Tregoures, *op.cit.*, p. 208.

included in the newly created territory of the NDH, which the Croats had an interest in even before the war (the claim to Bosnia and Herzegovina represented an essential pillar in the Greater Croatian idea),⁴⁰ viewing the local Muslims as part of the Croatian ethnic corpus.⁴¹

During the Italian occupation of Split and the subsequent administration of Split within the NDH, the club's representatives decided not to continue the club's activities and to halt all activities. Despite Hajduk being perceived as a symbol of Croatian and Dalmatian identity (its Yugoslav dimension was formal), the players decided to resist, join the resistance, and become the flagship of the anti-fascist struggle under the leadership of J. B. Tito.⁴² After the Italian surrender, partisan units utilized the power vacuum and seized the strategically significant island of Vis (its location between the Dalmatian coast and the eastern shores of Italy presented an interesting point for communication with the Allies). Vis⁴³ became the seat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and the newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija*⁴⁴ was also published on the island. Among the partisans on the island were former stars of Hajduk and other clubs from Dalmatia, such as Jozo and Frane Matošić. Their 26th division formed a team and began organizing matches with Allied soldiers on the island.⁴⁵ The idea of creating a partisan football team emerged in the minds of leading representatives of the Croatian Football Federation in February 1944. In a letter to A. Ranković, they suggested that if players were exempted from military duties, they could participate in a tour of Italy. Hajduk Split was not precisely a "workers'" club in the interwar period, but its stance towards events after the start of the occupation played in its favour. Former Hajduk player and Yugoslav representative Šime Poduje, serving in the 8th Corps of Tito's army, received

⁴⁰ Petr Stehlík, *Bosna v chorvatských národně-integračních ideologiích 19. Století*, Masarykova univerzita, Brno 2013, 217 p.

⁴¹ Maroš Melichárek, *Dejiny Balkánu po druhej svetovej vojne*, Šafárik Press UPJŠ, Košice 2021, p. 14-15.

⁴² J. Rodin said in his speech on the island of Vis when the club's activities were resumed: "I never knelt down and allowed sport to serve Italian fascists, German bandits and any form of domestic traitors... Maček's Gradjanski and HAŠK clubs served the Ustashe". "Hajduk stayed with his people..."", Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 56; Tregoures, *op.cit.*, p. 208.

⁴³ N. 2 Commando, commanded by Jack Churchill, also operated on Vis - the main task was to enable the defence of the island and launch attacks on German-controlled territory from there. In the summer of 1944, the allied troops managed to establish a small airport on the island. Heather Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans. The Special Operations Executive and Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*, Hurst, London 2003, p. 219-220.

⁴⁴ <https://slobodnadalmacija.hr/>, (20.02.2024).

⁴⁵ Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

an order from the regional command: “*Comrades from ZAVNOH (The State Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia) have decided to restore Hajduk Split with its former players as soon as possible. The team’s task will be to travel abroad and represent the emerging sport (in Yugoslavia, author’s note)*”.⁴⁶ This was indeed a challenging mission, as many players operated within territories controlled by the NDH, such as Split, Dubrovnik, and Zagreb. On April 23, 1944, at 11:00, a group of 14 players and officials set out from Split to the free territories. After 10 days, Poduje could inform the National Liberation Committee of Split that they had arrived at the port on the island of Vis. On May 7, 1944, the official restoration of the club took place at the Croatian House on the island of Vis. Janko Rodin, in an emotional address, commemorated all the slain athletes who sacrificed their lives in the fight against occupiers and domestic “degenerates” (collaborators, author’s note).⁴⁷ He indicated Hajduk’s nature as a revolutionary force. The effort to fight for a common cause demonstrates the functionality of the Yugoslav idea, albeit transformed, as a dynamic force from “below”, and conversely, the dysfunctionality of attempts to implement such a sense of solidarity or identity from “above”, as in the case of King Alexander I’s Integral Yugoslavism.

The innovative approach of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) to the national question enabled the fight for both free Croatia and a free Yugoslavia simultaneously. Hajduk played its first match in the restored form against the British Queens Regiment, in front of hundreds of partisans and British soldiers, with a result of 7:1 in favour of Hajduk. Before touring Italy, a party unit consisting of 6 KPJ members, 5 candidates, and another 6 members of the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia SKOJ was installed in the club. Their task was to profile the team as a bearer of the message of the national liberation struggle beyond the borders of Yugoslavia. Although originally restored as HNK (Croatian football club), the suffix NOVJ (People’s Liberation Army of Yugoslavia) was subsequently added, and the red star replaced the “checkerboard”.⁴⁸ Hajduk footballers moved to Italy, specifically to Bari, in early June 1944. The highlight of the Italian tour was the match, as advertised by British posters, between the British Services XI and the Yugoslav National Liberation Army XI on 23 September 1944 at the Stadio della Vittoria (paradoxically a jewel of Italian fascist architecture).

⁴⁶ Mills, *ibid.*, p. 53-54.

⁴⁷ Mills, *ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴⁸ Mills, *ibid.*, p. 58.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND FOOTBALL: THE CASE OF HAJDUK SPLIT

Although the 7-2 result was not entirely flattering for the “Yugoslavia” team, that was not the point at all, because the ideological message was far-reaching and massive. The Yugoslav tricolour bearing the five-pointed star (petokraka) waved over the packed stands, and tears appeared on the faces of even the toughest partisans during the anthem “Hey Slaveni”. Andjelko Marušić, a former national team and Hajduk player whose career was ended by German bullets in the Dalmatian mountains, recalled the match: “*Never before or since have I felt more pride at having been born in a time so close to Tito’s future Yugoslavia, and at being a Yugoslav... The moment of the flag rising and the notes of the anthem was a key moment. /.../ In front of 50,000 witnesses of all races and nationalities, Tito’s Yugoslavia was officially recognized*”.⁴⁹

RAF planes dropped NOVJ newspapers on the liberated territories, and the photograph of the embarked Yugoslav team reached thousands of readers. It was a symbolic act which, in international terms, indicated equality between the Yugoslav and British teams. The aforementioned football match attained considerable success, and a subsequent rematch was scheduled in the soon-to-be liberated city of Split. During its subsequent travels to various locations, including Malta, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, Hajduk NOVJ participated in 65 matches, registering only 7 losses.⁵⁰ The historical period encompassing World War II is depicted with profound sentimentality in the annals of the club, particularly during Tito’s Yugoslavia. The club’s abstention from participation after the year 1941 was construed as an expression of anti-fascism and engagement in communist activities. Emphasis was placed on players’ involvement in the resistance movement, the journey from Split to the island of Vis, and the adoption of the team’s new emblem, the five-pointed star. Hajduk’s role in representing Tito and the Yugoslav communist leadership during matches, as well as in the media in both France and the United Kingdom, was notably underscored.

Nevertheless, the presentation of the Free France Honorary Team Award by General De Gaulle⁵¹ in 1944 became an event that resonated, as

⁴⁹ Mills, *ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵⁰ <https://hajduk.hr/povijest/1941-1950>, (20.02.2024).

⁵¹ The hundred-day tour ended with a match against the Lebanese national team in Beirut on 27 May 1945. Just before leaving Lebanon, the Hajduk leadership was invited to meet with the commander-in-chief of the French forces in the area, General Humboldt. On this occasion, high-ranking French officers presented Hajduk with a plaque declaring that Hajduk had become “the honorary sports team of Free France”. Since 2015 (the 70th anniversary), this plaque has been on display at the Poljud Stadium. <https://hajduk.hr/eng/article/hajduk->

highlighted in the 2011 publication, which tended to downplay other activities while accentuating non-political aspects and placing a greater focus on sporting achievements.⁵² Logically, this event can be construed as the acknowledgment of a global leader without inherent political connotations, and a positive interpretation is feasible in both contextual frameworks.

Upon returning home, Hajduk engaged in its inaugural match against the First Dalmatian Brigade on the training field of the Stari Plac stadium,⁵³ drawing an audience of 4,000 spectators, with Hajduk emerging victorious by a scoreline of 6-1. The return match against the British Army, captained by the experienced international Andrew Beattie, a longstanding player for Preston North End, transpired on December 25, 1944, marking the first international match in liberated Yugoslavia.⁵⁴ In the year 1944, the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) found itself in complete international isolation and an intractable predicament. By spring 1945, Croatia remained the last German ally, and the newly reorganized Yugoslav Army (JA), comprising 63 divisions (of which 122,000 were from Croatian territory, constituting 61% Croatians), initiated a massive offensive towards the line controlled by German armies C and E (Pomorje-Osijek-Sarajevo-Mostar). Yugoslav units occupied Zagreb on May 8, 1945, leading to the exodus of remnants of Ustasha units and civilians (135,000 individuals). The impossibility of protection within Croatian territory stemmed from the great powers' assurance to Tito that their forces would not enter Yugoslav territory or provide assistance to representatives of the NDH.⁵⁵ Following the war, a new task for Hajduk emerged - to traverse the liberated homeland. Matches in Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia outlined the contours of the new state. Hajduk's footballers attracted a large audience, laying the foundation for nationwide multiethnic support.⁵⁶ The return home to Split was made more

awarded-as-the-honorary-team-of-free-france-70-years-ago/4496>, (20.02.2024); Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

⁵² Perasović and Mustapić, "Football, Politics and Cultural Memory: The Case of HNK Hajduk Split", p. 58.

⁵³ The Stari Plac Stadium was the venue for home matches from 1911 to 1979. The last goal came on September 5, 1979, when Mišo Krstičević scored in a league derby against Dinamo Zagreb. Many interesting historical photos can be found at <https://hajduk.hr/eng/history/stari-plac>, (20.02.2024).

⁵⁴ Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 67.

⁵⁵ William Bartlett, *Croatia: Between Europe and the Balkans*, Routledge, London 2006, p. 23-24; Jan Rychlík (ed.), *Dějiny Chorvatska*, NLN, Prague 2007, p. 312-316.

⁵⁶ Between 1945 and 1948, 34 players wore the Yugoslav jersey, including 22 Croats, 10 Serbs, 1 Hungarian and 1 Slovenian. The statistics obviously do not reflect the Muslim population of

pleasant for the footballers with a new team “bus”, a Dodge truck awarded for exceptional services during the war. Tito planned to relocate the club to Belgrade to maintain its role as a team of armed forces, but club representatives diplomatically rejected this proposal. They pointed out the catastrophic consequences of such a move, emphasizing the loss of many Dalmatian residents as potential supporters of the new regime.⁵⁷ The club no longer operated as Hajduk NOVJ but transformed into a civic entity - Fiskularno društvo, FD Hajduk. The military leadership of Hajduk’s final step was a telegram to the “leader of our nations and creator of the democratic federative Yugoslavia”, Marshal Tito: “[...] *in peacetime, we will work on the reconstruction of our country, supporting, on every occasion, the most significant achievement of the liberation struggle - the brotherhood and unity of our nations*”.⁵⁸ This message holds particular importance, as the ensuing period, not only in the club’s history but also in the entire Yugoslavia, was characterized by the spirit of brotherhood and unity among the nations of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav identity, whether formal or real, persisted in this position for at least the next 40 years.

3. In Tito’s Yugoslavia: From Brotherhood and Unity to Croatian Nationalism

In the decades following the Second World War, sports played a crucial role in the construction of socialism, with the development of sports infrastructure being indicative of this phenomenon, as it played one of the most significant roles within the overall reconstruction. Many sports facilities built during this era are still in use today.⁵⁹ Despite certain ideological differences between Yugoslavia and other socialist countries and the promotion of the “third way” through the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslav society remained significantly under ideological control. Social activities and cultural practices took place under regime control, having to align with the

Bosnia and Herzegovina. From an ethnic point of view, and thus from the 1948 statistics, the distribution of the national team was disproportionate as 42% of the population was made up of Serbs and 24% of Croats. Christos Kassimeris, *The Politics of Football*, Routledge, London 2023, p. 99; Perasović and Mustapić, “Football, Politics and Cultural Memory: The Case of HNK Hajduk Split”, p. 58.

⁵⁷ Neven Andjelić, “The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia: Politics and Football in the Service of the Nation(s)”, *Südosteuropa. Zeitschrift für Politik und Gesellschaft*, Volume 62, Number 2, 2014, p. 111.

⁵⁸ Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

⁵⁹ Jelena Djureinović, *Partisans on the Pitch*, 2021, <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2021/06/partisans-on-the-pitch>, (20.02.2024).

ruling ideology, and sports were no exception.⁶⁰ In May 1945, the main executive body overseeing Yugoslav sports was established as the Committee for Physical Culture of Yugoslavia - Fiskulturni odbor Jugoslavije (the Yugoslav Football Federation was reinstated in September 1948). Sports had clearly defined roles, including being a key pillar in youth leisure, contributing to the building of “brotherhood and unity” among the nations of Yugoslavia, improving the ability to work and defend the country, and lastly, confirming the positive impact of Yugoslav socialist transformation on the international competitive stage.⁶¹ Hajduk continued its football journey under these new conditions, and in the 1948/49 season, they visited Australia, becoming the first Yugoslav team to play on all continents. During the tour, Hajduk played a friendly match against Northern Districts at Cessnock Sportsground and won 8-2 on September 4, 1949.⁶²

In 1950, Hajduk Split won the Yugoslav league without a single defeat, a feat that no team could replicate until the dissolution of Yugoslavia 40 years later. The year 1950 marked another crucial milestone in the club’s history. On October 28, 1950, a day before the match with their biggest rival, Red Star Belgrade, the official fan organization named Torcida was founded. It consisted of Hajduk fans originally from Dalmatia, studying in Zagreb. The name of the organization, which brought a completely new level of support to the football club, originates from Portuguese (in Brazil, such groups are

⁶⁰ Brentin and Zec, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

⁶¹ Brentin and Zec, *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶² Australia became home to many Croatian migrants after the Second World War, all of whom struggled with the problem of anchoring their identity in Australia. Croatian football clubs were the first institutions founded by migrants (Hajduk Melbourne /formed just after the 1949 ‘tour’/, Melbourne Croatia now operates as Melbourne Knights FC), which played an important role in the formation of their own concepts and views between 1950 and 2000. The Australian Croatian community was highly polarised as most were of anti-communist persuasion, and one can think similarly of Hajduk as they were not explicitly anti-communist, but neither were they anti-communist. Tito’s statements about Hajduk players who were flocking to the partisan side contributed to this. Extremist fans of Croatian immigrant clubs such as Sidney Croatia were highly nationalistic and subscribed to a certain version of Croatianness, with a view on Croatian history based mainly on oral traditions, which the fans often took over from fathers or uncles. Roy Hay and Nick Guoth, “No single pattern: Australian migrant minorities and the round ball code in Victoria”, *Why Minorities Play or Don’t Play Soccer*, (ed.) Kausik Bandyopadhyay, Routledge, London 2013, p. 823-842; Roy Hay, “Croatia: Community, conflict and culture: The role of soccer clubs in migrant identity”, *Immigrants & Minorities - Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, Volume 17, Number 1, 1998, p. 49-66; Tea Sindbæk Andersen, “Football and Memories of Croatian Fascism on Facebook”, *Disputed Memory: Emotions and Memory Politics in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe*, (eds.) Tea Sindbæk Andersen and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Berlin, Boston, De Gruyter 2016, p. 300.

known as ultras - for example, Torcida Jovem Fla and Raça Rubro-Negra for Flamengo, Gaviões da Fiel for Corinthians, Torcida Independente and Dragões da Real for São Paulo FC, Mancha Verde for Palmeiras, etc.) and drew inspiration from the enthusiastic fan culture during the 1950 World Cup in Brazil. A group of Hajduk supporters travelled from Zagreb to Split by train, displaying various banners and chanting choruses as they arrived in front of the hotel where the visiting team was accommodated. Troubles began when the core of Torcida attempted to enter the match (the Stari plac stadium was packed with over 20,000 people), but they were deprived of their “equipment” for cheering upon entry. The party newspaper *Borba* described the atmosphere as follows: “*It was like a cauldron. The happenings on the field were accompanied by the frenzied roar of the crowds /.../ players and fans fought together*”.⁶³ The match ended with a score of 2-1 in favour of Hajduk, and Torcida supporters gathered in the city centre, where one of them read a mocking obituary for the defeated Red Star from a balcony. Such conspicuous and extravagant behaviour did not go unnoticed even at higher levels of the party, and *Borba* condemned the actions of the “exotically” named group: “*Members of this group brought so much rebellion into cheering that it can eventually transform into an uncultured and obscene form - if not immediately, then in the foreseeable future, fostering hatred between clubs*”.⁶⁴

One of the key figures in the Communist party, Milovan Djilas, was behind the reactions of the Belgrade press, and in line with the Communist Party of Croatia’s communiqué, he demanded an investigation. However, the results of the investigation did not yield the expected outcome, as 50% of the organization’s members held party credentials, and the majority of the club’s administration were party officials and partisans. Frane Matošić, a player at the centre of the investigation, was a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) and a veteran of the famous wartime tour, embodying the connection between football and communism. Despite the conclusions, Torcida was considered a threat to society from the party’s perspective. Upon returning to Zagreb, Torcida members were welcomed by other Hajduk supporters, as well as fans of Dinamo, among whom were “stragglers and pro-Ustasha elements”.⁶⁵ The chants of Hajduk - Dinamo, Zagreb - Split hinted at Croatian unity and could, with a certain amount of imagination, foreshadow

⁶³ Mills, *op.cit.*, p. 116-117.

⁶⁴ Mills, *ibid.*, p. 117.

⁶⁵ Mills, *ibid.*, p. 117.

Croatian resentment. Hajduk received congratulations from various regions of Yugoslavia, some of which could be interpreted as a victory of Croatian football over Serbian. Torcida organizers were accused of chauvinistic behavior, not only because they used the letters “h” and “T”. The second of the pair symbolized Torcida, which was relatively fine, but the “h” was supposed to symbolize Croatia (Hrvatska) rather than Hajduk. Representatives of Torcida rejected these accusations. Yugoslav works, according to B. Perasović, interpret the emergence of Torcida very briefly, while a publication from 2011 offers a detailed description of the organization’s formation and the punishment of one of its founders, Vjenceslav Žuvela,⁶⁶ for “nationalism”.⁶⁷ The club’s website does not address the events after the match at all.⁶⁸ In the late 1970s, a new generation of Hajduk fans took over the process of new subculturalization, and Torcida was reestablished. For the first time since 1950, their flag appeared on September 16, 1981, at Poljud Stadium in a match against Stuttgart in the UEFA Cup.⁶⁹ In 1986, the fan organization of Dinamo Zagreb known as BBB (“Bad Blue Boys”) was established, marking a new chapter in the rivalry between Split and Zagreb.⁷⁰ The rivalry between Dinamo and Hajduk represents a division that has become significantly pronounced over the last two decades. After the establishment of independent Croatia, these two teams symbolize two main regional identities that essentially exist in opposition to each other: the “Zagreb” pan-Croatian identity and the “Split” coastal identity of Dalmatia and the Croatian South.⁷¹ Torcida uses the Confederate flag from the American Civil War as a manifestation of the “rebellious south”, associating it with the Dalmatian coastline. Hajduk represents an ideological manifestation of the South Croatian identity, with the Dalmatian regional

⁶⁶ Žuvela, a student from Korčula, was sentenced to three years, later his sentence was reduced to 3 months. The checkerboard was removed from the club emblem for 50 long years. Torcida was banned and although it was active for only one match, had a huge impact on the culture of cheering in Yugoslavia and throughout Europe. James Montague, *1312: Among the Ultras. A Journey with the World’s Most Extreme Fans*, Ebury Publishing, London 2020, p. 416.

⁶⁷ Perasović and Mustapić, “Football, Politics and Cultural Memory: The Case of HNK Hajduk Split”, p. 58.

⁶⁸ <https://hajduk.hr/klub/navijaci>, (20.02.2024).

⁶⁹ Montague, *op.cit.*, p. 416.

⁷⁰ Benjamin Perasović and Marko Mustapić, “Torcida and Bad Blue Boys: From Hatred to Cooperation and Back”, *Football Fans, Rivalry and Cooperation*, (eds.) Christian Brandt, Fabian Hertel and Sean Huddleston, Routledge, London 2017, p. 109.

⁷¹ Dustin Tsai, “A Tale of Two Croatias: How Club Football (Soccer) Teams Produce Radical Regional Divides in Croatia’s National Identity”, *Nationalities Papers*, Volume 49, Number 1, 2021, p. 129.

identity⁷² perceived differently by members of Torcida compared to the Croatian identity.⁷³

Yugoslavia successfully qualified for the 1974 FIFA World Cup in Germany, and its management system mirrored the state model. The team was led by a coaching staff comprised of two Serbs, two from Bosnia, and one Croat. The principles of self-management socialism were applied to football, reflecting both economic and administrative aspects. Under the guidance of the “head” coach Miljan Miljanić, the team consisted of eight players from Red Star Belgrade, seven from Hajduk Split, one from Slovenia, five from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and another from a different Serbian team. The policy of brotherhood and unity operated relatively smoothly in this sphere.⁷⁴ Although it is challenging to compare the demise of J.B. Tito and Alexander I due to their different historical contexts, the departure of the prominent leader served as a unique binding factor for the nations of Yugoslavia, whether it was in 1934 (attended by around half a million people)⁷⁵ or in 1980,⁷⁶ under significantly different circumstances. Arguably, the last grassroots surge of the ideology of brotherhood and unity was witnessed in the match between Hajduk Split and Red Star Belgrade on May 4, 1980. Following the announcement of J.B. Tito’s death, the entire stadium spontaneously started singing the song⁷⁷ “Druže Tito Mi Ti Se Kunemo”.⁷⁸

⁷² The link between the club and Dalmatia is clearly demonstrated by the picture which shows where in Croatia the largest number of members of the Nas Hajduk group (a civic/fans' association founded by the Torcida Fan Club with the aim of holding democratic elections to the Supervisory Board of HNK Hajduk, currently with around 90,000 members) are registered. Josip Glaurdić, Football activism as political contention: Contextual determinants of membership in the association of supporters of Hajduk Split, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Volume 55, Number 8, 2020, p. 1094-1115; <https://nashajduk.hr/>, (20.02.2024).

⁷³ “A lot of people in Dalmatia just really don’t like Zagreb and the other way around. I think we are pretty divided as Croats...you see a lot of hatred between us in the country...between the regions. It’s not just about football—it’s really the way we think about each other”. (Interview with a 23-year-old, male Hajduk fan in Rijeka, October 2017). Tsai, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

⁷⁴ This is also documented by the case of S. Žungul, a football player of Hajduk and the national team, who emigrated to the USA and was thus declared a traitor to Hajduk, Dalmatia and the whole of Yugoslavia. A favourite of Hajduk fans (even compared to Gerd Müller), he became a victim of violence in the 1990s when his nightclub was burnt down because of his Serbian origin. In the 70s this fact was irrelevant. Andjelić, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

⁷⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtYQhzm6ddE>, (20.02.2024).

⁷⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpJRsvZY26k>, (20.02.2024).

⁷⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpJRsvZY26k>, (20.02.2024).

⁷⁸ After hospitalization and subsequent surgery, Tito was in a coma for 4 months. The situation in the country seemed to have calmed down - many young people met at railway stations and

This scene was repeatedly broadcasted on state television in all republics, clearly driven by propagandistic motives.⁷⁹

After Tito's passing, specifically on May 9, 1980, the leadership of Hajduk, headed by Ante Skataretik, proposed to the Socialist Association of Croatian Workers (SSRNH) to rename the Poljud Stadium to "Tito". The document stated: "*The naming of the stadium after Comrade Tito is, first and foremost, an expression of deep love, gratitude, and respect for the most significant son among us, from the side of Hajduk. Similarly, for what he did for Hajduk and our socialist society*". During the same meeting, the club's leadership also suggested the possibility of an annual replay of the match against Red Star on May 4 - however, this never happened.⁸⁰

It is not surprising that the book from B. Perasović's analytical publication makes no mention of such a manifestation of "brotherhood and unity".⁸¹ Despite the proclaimed unity at the match in Split, ethnic tensions gradually dominated Yugoslav stadiums in the 1980s. The decline of communism as a global force in the 1980s, coupled with the death of J.B. Tito, created a lethal cocktail and a point of no return for Yugoslavia. After the loss of the unifying force and ideology, traditional religious and national identifications began to reaffirm their strength within individual Yugoslav republics.⁸² The socio-economic system of Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, and the situation in football mirrored the dark atmosphere of the crumbling state.⁸³ Less than a decade after the mentioned match between Hajduk and Red Star, claims began to surface on television, such as "I hate Hajduk

other public places where they sang, among other things, the famous partisan song. The country has come together in a strange mode of unity, and even here one can see the real message of the proclaimed "brotherhood and unity". The premonition of the end was very difficult for many, and a general sadness stemming probably from the uncertainty of what would happen after Tito's fall swept the whole country. Sabrina Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias. State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, New York 2006, p. 328.

⁷⁹ Andjelić, *op.cit.*, p. 115.

⁸⁰ Davor Kovačić, "Yugoslav Football from Tito's Death to the Breakup of Yugoslavia: Situation and Problems in the Climate of Political Conflict", *Football in the Balkans I: Internal Views, External Perceptions*, (eds.) Darius Wojtaszyn and Maroš Melichárek, Peter Lang, New York 2023, p. 57-79.

⁸¹ Perasović and Mustapić, "Torcida and Bad Blue Boys: From Hatred to Cooperation and Back", p. 109.

⁸² Allan. L. Sack and Zeljan Suster, "Soccer and Croatian Nationalism: A Prelude to War", *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, Volume 24, Number 3, 2000, p. 309.

⁸³ Kovačić, *op.cit.*, p. 57-79.

because they are Croats”, or a fan of Partizan expressing his unabated desire to “beat up Hajduk fans” in a televised documentary.⁸⁴

The force of nationalism manifested within football culture through new alliances, where age-old rivals found common ground through shared ethnicity, as indicated by a fan in Zagreb stating: “I support both Dinamo and Hajduk - we are Croatian brothers”. Football stadiums in Yugoslavia became arenas for demonstrating the successful homogenization of various ethnic groups in the country. From a Yugoslav perspective, there are several milestones that mark the end of the period of Yugoslav football after World War II. Perhaps the most significant was the match between Dinamo and Red Star on May 13, 1990, often considered the beginning of the military conflict due to its aggressive nature. The significant impact of the match is further discussed by the compilation of papers authored by six Serbian scholars, examining hate speech in Serbian print media from 1987 to 1991, titled “The War Began on Maksimir”. The title derives from a paper penned by Srećko Mihailović (1997), included in this collection. However, the authors posit that the outbreak of war did not occur on May 13, 1990, at the stadium in Zagreb; rather, they argue that the peace concluded at the Maksimir stadium on that day.⁸⁵ In the context of the history and interpretation of Hajduk Split’s functioning, a crucial match was against Partizan Belgrade, a team that metaphorically replaced Hajduk on the pedestal of Yugoslav football. In September 1990, the match was interrupted by Torcida supporters, who first drove Partizan players off the field and subsequently burned the Yugoslav flag.⁸⁶ Interestingly, all of this occurred ten years after, with a population of around 200,000 in Split and a stadium capacity of 40,000, likely involving the same individuals. Newspapers in Split suggested the following: “*The overall sociopolitical development is reflected through football as if through a crystal ball like never before.../.../ war, real war, was on the horizon, as the smell of gunpowder was already in the air*”.⁸⁷ The final notable match in Yugoslavia occurred on May 8, 1991, in Belgrade, where Crvena zvezda and Hajduk faced off in the finals of Marshal Tito’s Cup. The match took place six days following the tragic killing of twelve Croatian police officers in Borovo Selo. Hajduk’s supporters and Torcida were barred from attending the match. Despite the tense atmosphere, Hajduk emerged victorious with a sole goal by

⁸⁴ Andjelić, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

⁸⁵ Marin Galić and Dražen Lalić, “Uses and Abuses of Nationalism in Contemporary Croatian Football”, *International Relations and Diplomacy*, Volume 9, Number 10, 2021, p. 423.

⁸⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WnIQInnV2, (20.02.2024).

⁸⁷ Andjelić, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

Alen Bokšić. This triumph was celebrated not only by Hajduk's fans but also by the broader Croatian public as a significant victory, transcending the realm of sports. The trophy, now a cherished artifact, remains in Hajduk's possession⁸⁸ and is prominently displayed in a showcase in a Hajduks' museum at Poljud.⁸⁹ Based on the aforementioned matches, it is evident that due to the widespread and to a considerable extent "wild" wave of nationalism spreading throughout Yugoslavia, there was a certain convergence of Yugoslav as well as Dalmatian ideology associated with Hajduk Split in previous periods, overshadowed by Croatian national identity.⁹⁰ This is clearly supported by Da Silva who claims that: "*The (re)construction of identities in the Balkans is being created considering the exclusion of an identity that had once supported the Yugoslav State (FRY)*".⁹¹

Conclusion

After studying available sources and materials, it is evident that football and ideology cannot be separated. While confirming or refuting this postulate is not necessary, the crucial question lies in the extent, interest, and will involve. The case of Hajduk Split illustrates that even within different ideologies, it is possible to function relatively independently and maintain one's distinct identity. It is also crucial to understand the source and direction of pressure, whether towards one side or the other, and whether there is the will and strength to resist (between Yugoslavism on one side and the pan-Croatian idea, as indicated by the Dalmatian perspective).⁹²

In the interwar period, from the perspective of the penetration of Yugoslav ideology into the functioning of Croatian football, particularly

⁸⁸ Trophy may be seen at: <https://hajduk.hr/sadrzaj/stadion/virtualna-setnja/>

⁸⁹ Kovačić, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

⁹⁰ As stated by Kovačić "*Hajduk went on tour to Australia on 30th May 1990, although their jerseys still had the coat of arms with a red five-pointed star. Shortly before the first match on the tour, the Hajduk footballers, to the delight of Croatian emigrants, took off the coat of arms with the red five-pointed star on their own initiative and played the tour in plain white jerseys*". This also clearly signalled the breakup with the Yugoslav "heritage" of the club. Kovačić, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

⁹¹ Da Silva, *op.cit.*, p. 495.

⁹² D. Lalić brought research that revealed that it was Hajduk (Torcida) fans who used the national flag (Croatian) most often compared to others - usually against Serbian teams. Thus, it is not possible to label Hajduk as unambiguously Yugoslav, socialist, Dalmatian or Croatian. Galić and Lalić, *op.cit.*, p. 415-432.

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Hajduk Split, it is observed that Croatian football clubs retained their predominant Croatian character (although formally they had to present their “Yugoslav” identity, for instance, through their names - as happened with the change of name for Hajduk Split from a Croatian football club to a Yugoslav football club). The post-World War II period appears more complicated for Hajduk Split. This period became a bit complicated also for other clubs from the “big four” since being ‘socialist’ or ‘nationalist’ is closely related to whether Yugoslavia is ‘socialist’ or ‘nationalist.’ As stated by Develi:

*“It is pretty challenging to make an objective interpretation of this because the sui generis formation can ironically be answered as either ‘both’ or ‘neither.’ The fact that the ideological transformation experienced by the clubs can be proved in practice confirms them ‘both’ but at ‘different times.’ On the other hand, a consensus point of reference is the basic chronological reference where this transformation began in 1980 when Tito died”.*⁹³

Hajduk began as a showcase for the new regime but gradually, not entirely by its own doing, found itself in a kind of opposition. Indications of Croatian nationalism, or questions (such as the emergence of Torcida in 1950, events in the 70s, and later in the late 80s), came “from below”, not as an initiative of the club or its players.⁹⁴ Football fans were subject to political instrumentalization, serving as a means to promote specific ideological agendas or advance socio-economic interests. Concurrently, they emerged as active participants in shaping new realities, challenging existing norms, and playing a significant role in preserving tradition while fostering community cohesion. The behaviour of football fans, influenced by the legacy of communism and a unique football tradition in the Balkans, including a

⁹³ Orkum Develi, “Nationalism and Football at First Glance: The Case of “Eternal Derby”, *Mavi Atlas*, Volume 10, Number 1, 2022, p. 316.

⁹⁴ In the Croatian environment, fears of Serbian influence on power persisted and the deep antagonisms of the past did not disappear. After the language issue, the economic issue came to the fore, and Croatian leaders disagreed with the situation in foreign trade. They argued that much of the profits were from tourism on the Dalmatian coast and 80% of Yugoslav foreign trade went through Croatian ports, so 30% of Croatia's profits went to less developed parts of the country. An important part of the Croatian Communist Union (Chor. Savez komunista Hrvatske) sympathized with these theories (Miko Tripalo and Savka Dabčević-Kučarová) and called for stronger decentralization and reforms in the financial sector. Croatian “national” feeling (or Hrvatsko proljeće) reached its peak in late 1971. The Croatian Matica also played a decisive role. Tito closely followed the events in Croatia and appealed to the Croatian communist leaders whether they “wanted to go back to 1941?”. After the warnings, Tito reacted more resolutely, and after his speech of 2 December, Tripalo and Dabčević-Kučar were forced to resign. Melichárek, *Dejiny Balkánu po druhej svetovej vojne*, p. 30.

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tolerance for certain negative behaviours such as corruption and hooliganism in stadium settings, plays a pivotal role in defining the distinctive characteristics of Balkan football.⁹⁵ The gradual change in the social and political climate also meant a shift in the perception of Yugoslavia and its fundamental ideology, both in Zagreb and Split.

Hajduk became an interesting example of the existence of a football club that retained its Croatian/Dalmatian identity but also embraced the new Yugoslav/socialist/partisan identity. It cannot be said that the club was significantly anti-regime (given party figures in the club's leadership, proposals for renaming the stadium, etc.). An entirely ideal symbol for the club would be the combination of the checkerboard pattern with the red star (checkerboard-pentagram). Hajduk Split's role in Yugoslav society was broad, encompassing aspects of national identity, politics, football culture, and fan passion. Hajduk became a symbol and representative of Croatia within Yugoslavia, and its history is a significant testimony to the complex relationships between football and society during the examined period.

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⁹⁵ Wojtaszyn, Dariusz and Maroš Melichárek, "Conclusions", *Football in the Balkans I. Internal Views, External Perceptions*, Peter Lang, New York, 2023, p. 169-170.

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