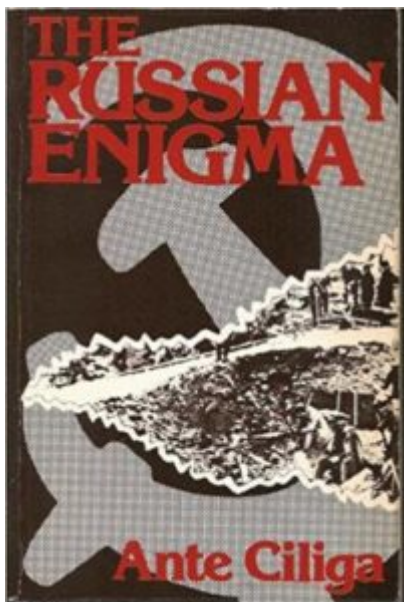


Ante Ciliga -The Russian Enigma PDF and biography by Stephen Schwartz



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ANTE CILIGA (1898-1992)

A Life at History's Crossroads

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

The death of the Croatian and South Slavic political commentator Dr. Ante Ciliga, aged 94 when he expired on October 21, 1992 in Zagreb, went unremarked by such major Western as newspapers **The New York Times**. This was curious, for only four years before, in the pages of **The New York Times Book Review**, [\(1\)](#) an analyst of Communism and long-time U. S. official, Abraham Brumberg, wrote about Ciliga in what might have passed for an obituary:

*“Half a century ago, the appearance of a slim book called **Au Pays du Grand Mensonge (In the Country of the Great Lie; in English The Russian Enigma)** created a minor sensation in*

*Europe's left-wing circles. Its author; Anton Ciliga, was a Yugoslav Communist who had spent 10 years in the Soviet Union, nearly six of them in prisons, camps and Siberian exile as a member of the Trotskyite opposition. He succeeded in gaining freedom and departing for the West just as the Soviet Union was about to be swept into the maelstrom of Stalin's purges, and his book was one of the first in what has since become known as 'the literature of disillusionment,' as well as one of the earliest to disclose the hell of the Stalinist gulag ... Not surprisingly, Ciliga was raked over the coals by West Europe's Stalinists and soi-disant 'progressives.' Nonetheless, **The Russian Enigma** has stood the test of time. To this day, it remains a penetrating and powerful account of Stalin's monde concentrationnaire, and of the men and women whose dreams (and bodies) were interred within its vast domain."*

Ciliga's passing was noted in certain small journals of an extreme leftist persuasion in France and Spain. The semi-scholarly quarterly **Cahiers Léon Trotsky**, which addresses topics in the life and works of Trotsky as well as the eponymous movement, published a brief, unsigned and uncharacteristically irritable notice, stating, "Arrested (in Russia) in 1930, he was imprisoned in the isolator at Verkhneuralsk where he participated in the life of the 'Bolshevik-Leninist collective' of which he offered a caricatural description after he was freed. He proclaimed that the USSR was 'state capitalist' and broke with the Trotskyists ... When (Ciliga) broke with Trotsky and his associates. this 'leftist' evolved rapidly toward the right while passing through social-democracy. In 1940, he cut off any link with Marxism and the labor movement." [\(2\)](#) It seems quite probably that this unfortunately hasty and excessively severe judgement was delivered by the editor of the **Cahiers**, the historian Pierre Broué.

Notices of a more sympathetic tone appeared in Spain. A

Barcelona journal of a generally anarchist bent, **Etcétera**, memorialized Ciliga in a warm if somewhat exaggerated manner, commenting, "Ill, he returned to Zagreb two years (before his death), hostile to the leadership in Croatia and still hoping for the fall of both (Croatian president Franjo) Tudjman and (Serbian leader Slobodan) Milošević. His denunciation of the great impostures of this century led him first to prison in the USSR and Siberian exile (1930-35), and afterward to the death camp at Jasenovac (in the year 1941, denounced by the Yugoslav Communist Party to the Ustaša police). Before the denunciation of the gulag became commercially profitable (sic!!!) Ciliga had said almost everything necessary about Bolshevism in **Au Pays du Grand Mensonge** which ... narrated his experience over ten years in Soviet Russia. But Stalinism is still very strong among the European intelligentsia and his chapter on Lenin was mutilated." In a footnote, the editors pointed out that the "chapter on Lenin," titled *Lenin, Also ...* had been finally included in a later French edition of the book, and had been translated and published in Spain in 1973, with other selections from the volume, by an anarchist publisher. Most significantly, the same issue of **Etcétera** published, in Spanish, a short autobiography Ciliga wrote in 1983. [\(3\)](#)

Another Spanish periodical, the journal **Generació** which appears in Barcelona with articles in both Castilian and Catalan; presented by far the most interesting appreciation of Ciliga yet published, written by a French historian of the extreme left, Philippe Bourrinet. Titled *An Ambiguous Itinerary: Ante Ciliga (1898-1992)*, Bourrinet's remarks are a thorough analysis of the importance of Ciliga, generally underestimated (and largely unknown, it seems, even among the Croatian public). Ciliga was a major figure in the evolution of attitudes toward Soviet Russia and Stalinism on the part of certain radical intellectuals – both in the 1930s and; perhaps surprisingly, after 1977, when **Au Pays ...** saw its third and most complete edition in French, issued by the anti-Stalinist

publishing house Champ Libre, directed by Guy Debord. [\(4\)](#)

The presence of Ciliga in 20th century political thought is thus as ambiguous as his itinerary may be judged to have been. But what may be said without reservation is that although knowledge of him was and is often contradictory and fragmentary, Ante Ciliga was one of the most remarkable and influential figures to emerge from modern Croatian society.

While the **Cahiers Léon Trotsky** treated him with disdain, and the authoritative, enormous volume **International Trotskyism**, by Robert J. Alexander, utterly ignored him, as well as other Trotskyist elements in the CP of Yugoslavia [\(5\)](#), he and other South Slavs with whom he shared the experience of anti-Stalinist Communism have a great deal to teach the historians and other intellectuals that have come after him. There is much about the history of the Russian Communist Party that without Ciliga might have been lost. For the historian, that is tribute enough.

But all who are concerned with Croatian, South Slavic, and middle-European political history will find lessons from this man's life.

Ante Ciliga was born in Šegotići, a small village near Pula in Istra, in 1898. [\(6\)](#) The region was then under Habsburg rule. His family were Croatian peasants; his grandfather had involved the whole family in the national cause, against both the German-speaking Austrian bureaucracy that ruled and the Italian-speaking urban bourgeoisie that dominated commerce in Istra.

In autumn 1905, at the age of seven, he was sent to live with his uncle, a veterinarian, in Mostar, capital of Hercegovina. He remained nine years there, until the summer of 1914, the assassination in Sarajevo of Franz Ferdinand, by a Serbian nationalist conspiracy, and the beginning of World War I.

Ciliga was a remarkable example of a personality fully formed in early youth. He wrote that his understanding of the relationship between the liberation of the Croatian nation and that of Balkan Slavdom in general began during the Balkan Wars, in 1912. At 14, he began defining himself as a Croat of Yugoslav tendency, a stance that, according to him, he never abandoned. "I was fourteen that autumn, when I began participating in street demonstrations against the Austro-Hungarian regime," he wrote. "It was the awakening of my interest in politics and literature."

His first great influence was the "rebel" Croat writer Antun Gustav Matoš (1873-1914), living in Paris at the turn of the century and contributing articles on French intellectual life to the Croatian press. Matoš's writings on Baudelaire and Rimbaud so won Ciliga to French literary ideals that Parisian intellectuality would permanently attract and inspire him; this passion would achieve extraordinary fulfillment in the continuing impact on French intellectuals, even two generations later, of his chronicle of the Soviet tragedy, first published in French.

In addition, as Ciliga himself wrote, "the South Slavic movement against Austrian rule took French democracy as its model and sought for ideals in the Great French Revolution." Thus Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot as well as Marat, Danton, and Robespierre became Ciliga's personal models.

He noted that no less a personage than Stjepan Radic, the outstanding Croat politician of the modern epoch, had graduated from the Institut des Sciences Politiques in Paris and called France "the second fatherland" of all European democrats. The whole of these feelings explains why, as Ciliga touchingly notes, he "went running to enroll" in a French language course in his high school, at 15.

At 16, in the same school, he wrote an essay on "Mostar, Cultural Center of Hercegovina." "Yes," he wrote. "Mostar is a

center of the culture of the empire ... surrounded by four military camps, a large jail, an impressive courthouse, and schools whose teachers are more interested in their promotion and in privileges dispensed by the royal and imperial Austro-Hungarian government than in providing a free-thinking and nationally-minded education to their charges." He would have been expelled from the school but for the intervention of a Bosnian legislator.

But he was expelled a few months afterward, following the Sarajevo assassination. He returned to Istra but was expelled from school again for introducing his schoolmates to Renan's **Life of Jesus**.

The youth of Ante Ciliga conforms to a pattern of idealism, and protest that was extraordinarily common in his generation, both among Christians and Jews; and particularly in the marginal, peasant-radical societies of Mediterranean and Slavic Europe: Spain, Italy, Russia, and the Balkan countries. It is a kind of development that is reminiscent of the fictionalized personalities presented in the brilliant volume of Danilo Kiš, **A Tomb for Boris Davidovich**.

The entry of Italy into World War I led to the deportation of Ciliga's entire village from Istra to Southern Moravia. He finished school in Brno. There he encountered an entirely new world: that of a developed society that, unlike Istra and Hercegovina, was dominated by industry and modernity. Although living in a Czech peasant village (Klobuky u Brna), he encountered "the social question:" It was the only element lacking in the biography of the young rebel, and presented itself in the form of the division between rich and poor peasants in the culturally-united. Czech-speaking countryside.

Two things then intervened to make up his mind about the character of modern society: first; although profoundly wedded to the Croat national cause, he had become equally committed to the internationalist doctrines of the socialist movement.

Second, he discovered that while the rich, Protestant Czech peasants in Southern Moravia professed undying hatred for the Habsburg order and were ultra-nationalist in their public devotion to Czech culture, they betrayed the national cause by refusing to help the poorer, Catholic Czech peasants, many of them landless agricultural laborers, in time of famine. The rich, nationalist peasants preferred to sell their surplus grain to the imperial authorities in Vienna than to assist their national compatriots.

Ciliga learned that, in his words, "the poor Catholic land workers exploited by their Protestant neighbors, notwithstanding the medieval heritage of their Church, responsible for the Inquisition and for the trial of Galileo, attracted my socialist sympathies. One could therefore, I felt, be progressive on one level and reactionary on another." (It should not be necessary to belabor the remarkable effect of such comments, coming as they did from one who had been thrown out of high school for proclaiming the anticlericalism represented by Renan; and which comments, further, were approvingly translated and published in Spanish by anarchists who dedicated their whole lives to combatting Catholic obscurantism.)

At 19, Ciliga was undergoing military service in the Austro-Hungarian forces when the Russian democratic revolution of February 1917 took place. The Bolshevik coup in October, which occurred while he was in a military hospital, captured Ciliga's sympathies by its protagonists' demand for an immediate end to the war and a peace without annexations or indemnities, but he also underwent "many doubts which created many unsolved enigmas" in his mind.

The next year Ciliga returned to his studies in Croatia, joined the Social Democratic Party, and when the Habsburg empire fell at the end of October 1918, he participated in the brief exercise of political power by a revolutionary regime.

However, Ciliga learned quickly that the fall of the empire would not guarantee South Slavic freedom, since the establishment of what would become the Yugoslav state placed several peoples – Slovenes, Croats, Bosnian Muslims, Montenegrins, as well as large numbers of Macedonians, Albanians and Hungarians – under the rule of a new hegemony, that of the former Serbian monarchy. The “birth trauma” that accompanied the creation of the new state was not limited in expression to the disaffected non-Serbian masses, but also encompassed, at least at the beginning, a strong movement of social protest in Serbia, which elected 14 of the 53 Communist deputies to the November 1920 Constituent Assembly.

At the beginning of 1919 the Croatian Social Democrats held a congress in Zagreb at which Ciliga was the most radical exponent of the left. At the end of the congress his supporters constituted themselves in an autonomous left faction that soon became the base of the Croatian section of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, coming together in finished form in the first half of 1920.

Ciliga left Croatia almost immediately, intending to go to France to continue his education; but he got no further than Vienna, when he decided to go to Hungary where the Red revolution of Bela Kun was in full swing. He remained a month there, first in Budapest and then with a detachment of South Slavic revolutionary volunteers on the border of Hungary and Slavonia. The collapse of Bela Kun’s revolution was, Ciliga judged, caused by its failure to offer immediate land redistribution to the peasants; Kun’s regime had maintained the large estates, under their former owners, as state property.

Ciliga joined the Communist Party, returning to Yugoslavia in May 1919 to pursue Communist work. He spent six months assisting in the establishment of the Communist organization in Slovenia; but then began a series of peregrinations through Central Europe as a Communist functionary.

He went to Prague in late 1919 and resumed his formal studies, then to Italy in 1920, during the period of factory occupations there, before going back to Vienna for two years. In autumn 1922, the CPY Politburo sent him to Zagreb with responsibilities in the party apparatus including editorship of **Borba**, the party's central organ. He remained in the Croat metropolis for three years.

In 1923, he later wrote, the Bulgarian Communists launched a struggle within the apparatus of the Communist International or Comintern, condemning that body's alleged policy of ignoring the national struggle of the minority nations, above all the Macedonians and Croats in Yugoslavia. The anti-Belgrade nationalists argued that this line constituted *de facto* support for Serbian rule in the South Slavic state. Grigory Zinoviev, the top Comintern functionary, called for discussion in the CPY of "the national question." The party right argued for a limited and lukewarm autonomy for the non-Serbian nations; the left merely affirmed that socialist revolution would resolve all national claims.

Ciliga, at the center of the party's leadership, proposed a more radical solution: the constitution of a federated Yugoslavia made up of seven republics, namely, Slovenia; Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia, as five nationally homogenous units; with two as mixed entities, Bosnia-Hercegovina and Vojvodina.

His proposal met with considerable enthusiasm in the CPY's non-Serbian ranks, although it stood in opposition to the position of party leader Sima Markovic, architect of a clearly centralist, pro-Serbian position. Ciliga was named to the party's central committee. Meanwhile, the Comintern in Moscow issued a declaration condemning the CPY right and supporting a scheme that recognized the demands of the main anti-centralist communities but did not address the fatal problem of mixed territories; that is, it called for the complete independence and sovereignty of Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia.

This was, of course, the period in which Radic, leader of the Croat Peasant Party, journeyed to Moscow in search of support, and some believed they could recruit Radic and his followers into the Comintern wholesale. (Trotsky wrote, a bit cruelly, that Radic had travelled "from Green Zagreb to Red Moscow only to end up in a ministry in White Belgrade.") In addition; the Macedonian liberation movement, at times actively supported by Bulgaria; had a long history of revolutionary terrorism that many believed could be assimilated into the Communist movement.

Ciliga foresaw the pitfall in Moscow's destructive "solution;" the independence of three new states, however intrinsically satisfactory to the three nations in question, would not resolve the basic problems of Serbian imperialism, in its domination over Bosnia-Hercegovina, Vojvodina, and Montenegro. We have lately learned this lesson in the most acute way, as the politically "prepared" independence of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia, without adequate preparation in or protection for Bosnia-Hercegovina, encouraged a barbaric Great Serbian assault on B-H that has horrified the world.

From 1923 to 1926, the CPY officially supported the Moscow line of independence for the three leading national movements while its regional groupings in B-H, Montenegro, and Vojvodina, without full authorization, nonetheless also affirmed the right of self-determination of those territories. Ciliga as editor of **Borba**, agitated for this position: in one of his major articles, titled *Nine Million*, he described the nine million non-Serbian citizens of Yugoslavia as "slaves" of the three million Serbs. In the winter of 1924 he was elevated to the CPY Politburo.

Belgrade, for its part, employed the passage of Istra to Italian rule in 1919, at the end of World War I, as a pretext to expel Ciliga from Yugoslavia in spring 1925 as an Italian subject and therefore, a foreigner. He spent a year in Vienna as CPY delegate to the Balkan bureau of the Comintern before

going to Russia in late 1926 to serve at a higher level in the Comintern and as an instructor of CPY cadres at the Communist University for National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ). On his arrival his membership was transferred to the Russian Communist Party.

He remained in Russia almost 10 years, departing only in 1935, and the experience transformed him, lifting him from a life as an obscure, if brilliant revolutionary activist to that of a world-historical personality.

Ciliga's Russian odyssey would encompass three years in Moscow, near the ultimate heights of Communist power, followed by one year in Leningrad, three years in the political prison (known as an "isolator") in Verkhneuralsk, and two and one half years in Siberian exile.

This chronology was determined by a single relevant fact: Ciliga pursued the left radicalism that had characterized his work in the CPY and in the Comintern and became a supporter of the Trotskyist opposition. As he wrote, "I knew what I was losing and what awaited me when I chose the camp of the adversaries of triumphant Bonapartism, the camp of the popular masses which, for the moment, was the camp of the vanquished. But my choice was attended by no heroic effort, it was dictated to me by an internal evolution. I should have liked combat ... Before my eyes rose the picture of my old compatriots and neighbors, the Istrian peasants. Could I betray them? Could I forget them and think merely of my own petty interests? All these workers of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, to whose organization I had belonged after the World War, and whom I had spurred on to fight for a better society, the peasants of the Krijevac region, whose hopes and expectancy I had shared from 1918 to 1919 – had I incited them to 'fight the palaces' merely to go and live there myself, leaving my comrades-in-arms outside?" [\(7\)](#)

It seems unnecessary to recapitulate here, in detail, the phases and lessons of Ciliga's Russian itinerary. However; it is worthwhile to note the role of the "Yugoslav left," i.e. the tiny group, among the 120 Yugoslav Communists in Russia, that represented a left opposition within the CPY to the Comintern general line, and which Ciliga joined. As emphasized by Bourrinet in his study, Ciliga revealed no knowledge of the other Left oppositions in the European Communist parties, such as that represented in Italy by Amadeo Bordiga or in Germany by Karl Korsch.

Ciliga wrote as follows: "The Yugoslav Left ... distinguished itself ... by limiting its interest to Yugoslav affairs. It neither wished nor knew how to coordinate its action with that of groups of the Left in the other sections of the Comintern". This "left" had begun by criticizing the Comintern for its failure to pay sufficient attention to the national struggles of the Croats and other nations against Serbian imperialism.

But by the end of the 1920s, in line with the posture of the Trotskyist Opposition, the "Yugoslav left" criticized the Comintern leadership for having so accommodated themselves to Radic and the Macedonian revolutionaries that the Communists were threatened with becoming lost in the nationalist milieu: "Dalmatia had brought about an alliance between the Croatian tricolor and the red flag of the revolution, of the *Internationale* and the national anthem *Lijepa Naša*," Ciliga wrote.

It should be noted here that although Trotsky and his partisans swung over in the late 1920s to criticism of the Communist political subordination to Croat, Macedonian, and other "bourgeois nationalists," this did not imply opposition *per se* to the revolutionary claims of the small and stateless nations. In 1931, Trotsky defended the Macedonian national movement and warned his temporary allies, the Greek Communist faction of Archio-Marxists, of the primary danger of "chauvinism among the Greek workers" in dealing with Macedonia

and Epirus. In 1937, he warned that Czechoslovakia was an "internal colonial power" in which the Slovaks and others suffered national oppression, and the following year he daringly called for an independent socialist Ukraine, to great confusion among certain of his followers even today.

The internal contradictions of Croatian and Yugoslav Communism were, like those of the Yugoslav state, subject to profound stress with the rise of Great Serbian monarchist reaction culminating in the Belgrade coup of 1929 and the dissolution of all political parties. Amid this crisis the CPY leadership inside the country effectively collapsed; this was not the first time one of the young Comintern sections had undergone, and failed, such a test. Indeed, a series of such incidents had occurred, beginning in Bulgaria in 1923 and repeated in Poland, China, and other places. This ineluctable challenge to the political authority of the Comintern leadership briefly strengthened the position of the small left faction in the CPY.

A full-fledged Trotskyist group was created in 1929, after a general meeting of Yugoslav Communists in Moscow voted 90 to 5 to condemn the party's leadership. A central body of six was formed, consisting of Ciliga, Mustafa Dedic, former party secretary in Hercegovina, Stanko Dragic, and Stjepan Heberling from Vojvodina, along with two Russians, Viktor Zankov and Oryest Glibovskii. It should be noted that, as also pointed out by Bourrinet, Pelagea Denisova-Belousova, the first wife of the later dictator Josip Broz (Tito), was a member of the group and remained one until she was purged by the Stalinist apparatus. [\(8\)](#)

Ciliga and his circle were not the only critical elements from the CPY to play a role in the internal Comintern debates. In 1927, at the eighth plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, meeting in Moscow, the Serbian Communist Voja Vujovic, former secretary general of the Communist Youth International (succeeding the famous Willi Münzenberg) and a

supporter of Zinoviev against Stalin, delivered an extraordinarily prophetic speech in which he courageously denounced Stalin's policy in China, which had led to massacres of the Chinese Communists.

Stalin's view of such massacres, Vujovic declared, was that "there have been such and there will be more of them." Vujovic, one of three brothers famous in the history of Communism while still young, disappeared in Russia after the murder of S.M. Kirov in 1934 and a brief period in the same prison through which Ciliga passed, at Verkhneural'sk. [\(9\)](#)

After undergoing the imprisonment and exile that he knew awaited him, as it did other Oppositionists, in 1935 Ciliga successfully used his Italian citizenship to escape the Soviet universe, and landed in February 1936 in Paris, the place of which he dreamed since he was a youth. He brought precious news to the small community of anti-Stalinist activists in Western Europe, centered around the person of Trotsky himself, in Norway, and of Trotsky's son Leon Sedov, in Paris.

Trotsky at first welcomed Ciliga and published his revelations about the Russian prisons and camps in his Paris based Russian language organ **Byulleten' Oppozitsii (Bulletin of the Opposition)**; issue number 27, dated January 1936, carried Ciliga's article *Stalinist Repression in the USSR* on its front page. But Ciliga's relations with the Trotskyists were quickly strained beyond the breaking point. We shall examine the development of this break; but first, it should be noted that the differences that emerged between him and the Trotskyists were expressed after the break in **Au Pays du Grand Mensonge**, a book that still had an exceptional impact on the anti-Stalinist milieu, and that it is clear from his narrative that the discrepancies between Ciliga's views and those of the Trotskyists were an unavoidable outcome of Ciliga's experience in Russia.

Au Pays ... translated into English and published as **The Russian**

Enigma, cannot be capsulized; it must be read in full to absorb its full significance. But one must note that **Au Pays** ... offered a devastating critique of Stalinist society and its repression of the worker and peasant masses in Russia. In this regard it dramatically corroborated the fundamental Trotskyist criticism of the regime. It also recounted the struggle of the Trotskyist dissidents who had been imprisoned *en masse* after 1929. Nevertheless, it stunned anti-Stalinist circles in the West by showing that the Trotskyists, courageous and independent as many of them were, were viewed by the combative proletarian elements among the Russian masses as little more than disfranchised former bureaucrats, whose basic program and outlook did not significantly differ from that of the Stalinist machine.

More, it showed that a considerable sector of Russian society viewed the entire Soviet structure as state capitalism rather than any kind of socialism, and that many dissidents from among the masses supported more radical groupings almost completely unknown in the West, such as the Democratic Centralists, led by Timofey Sapronov and Vladimir Smirnov, the Workers' Opposition of A.G. Shlyapnikov, and the Workers' Group of Gavriil Myasnikov (like Ciliga and Vujovic, Sapronov and Shlyapnikov, as well as Zinoviev, would pass through Verkhneural'sk).

These were, indeed, revelations; none of this was publicly discussed, in the 1930s, by party-line Communists outside the USSR, much less among "liberal" sympathizers of Moscow – and Ciliga's account was rigorously accurate. To these disclosures; Ciliga added "his own" insight, which surprisingly enough was entirely new for many radical leftists at that time: he traced the counter revolutionary, repressive policies of the Stalin regime to the founding father, Lenin.

In reality, this "breakthrough" was not his alone: the analysis of Lenin as the architect of a caste dictatorship based on state capitalism, and related theories, had been

expounded between the triumph of Bolshevism in 1921 and the emergence of the Stalinist order in 1933, by a series of "ultra-leftists," anarchist, and social-democratic commentators, whose influence among the broader international leftist strata was unfortunately very small.

Parallel to the "Yugoslav left" to which Ciliga and others belonged, German and Dutch ultra-left Communists, represented by such individuals as Korsch, Otto Rühle, Hermann Gorter, and Anton Pannekoek, published cogent analyses of the negative character assumed by the Bolshevik regime. But these were addressed almost exclusively to the most sophisticated revolutionary minority and fell into a void. Perhaps more importantly, the revolutionary martyr Rosa Luxemburg had condemned Bolshevik dictatorship in unequivocal terms, but like the theses of the "German left", most of her words were not translated out of German and widely published for decades. [\(10\)](#)

Various anarchists had also printed scathing attacks on the Bolshevik dictatorship, which likewise remained unread in broader circles, except in Spain where, uniquely in Europe, anarchism dominated the labor movement. [\(11\)](#)

Finally, much of the critique of the Bolshevik single-party dictatorship had been articulated from the very beginning of Lenin's rule by the vanquished Russian Mensheviks, Yuli Martov and Fyodor Dan, and had been more thoroughly developed by German and Austrian social democrats such as Karl Kautsky and Rudolf Hilferding. But these were considered "renegades" outside the pale by revolutionary Marxists of the time, and their commentaries were ignored or condemned by most leftist intellectuals, although they were widely read by the rank and file Social-Democratic workers. Trotsky and his followers were particularly harsh in attacking any leftists who seemed to echo Menshevik arguments. [\(12\)](#)

Ciliga, who had come out of the Russian penal system in which

all “politicals” suffered equally under the lash of the Bolshevik secret police, could no longer hew to Trotsky’s claim of unique revolutionary infallibility. For him, no barrier stood between the left opposition and the critique advanced by the Mensheviks, and soon after his articles appeared in **Byulleten’ Oppozitsii** he also submitted articles to the Menshevik organ in exile, **Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik (Socialist Courier)**. For this reason, his relationship with the Trotskyists was destined to end quickly.

The development of Trotsky’s attitude toward Ciliga is mainly revealed in two sets of letters; which have been translated and published in English. One set of seven letters begins on December 16, 1935 when Trotsky wrote to one of his collaborators, a Czech named Jan Frankel with whom Ciliga had made contact. Trotsky expressed interest in Ciliga but noted that one had to ask certain questions of him as of other recent escapees from Russia: “How did this man get out of the country? Who helped him escape? Who is he in contact with here? What does he mean when he says he intends to liberate his comrades ‘by any means necessary’?” [\(13\)](#)

The latter comment, with its hint at South Slavic passions, bears the authentic imprint of Ciliga, whose instincts were always toward bold action. Trotsky was soon convinced of Ciliga’s *bona fides*, and was anxious to involve him in a broader effort to assist revolutionary political prisoners in Russia. With considerable insight, Trotsky noted in one letter of that moment that “it is the greatest disgrace of our time that the workers’ organizations remain silent about the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is only the other side of the tendency to capitulate to fascism.”

In a letter dated January 2, 1936, addressed to Ciliga himself, Trotsky refined and emphasized one of his most significant comments: “Stalinism is the syphilis of the international workers’ movement.” He emphatically advocated a worldwide campaign of solidarity with Russian prisoners.

However, almost immediately, differences emerged

On January 24, Trotsky wrote again to Jan Frankel, complaining that "Comrade Ciliga interpreted my last letter as if, so to speak, I 'gave him the right' to negotiate individually with Mensheviks and Left SRs (members of the populist Socialist Revolutionary party which had been ruthlessly suppressed by the Bolsheviks – SAS) ... it would be nonsense for Ciliga to ally himself with the Mensheviks merely because they have a few dozen old comrades in the USSR in exile."

Although Trotsky and his **Byulleten** continued to recognize the importance of Ciliga's reports on prisoners in Russia, the journal ceased to publish his work after number 49 (April 1936). [\(14\)](#)

Trotsky discussed Ciliga again, soon afterward, in a series of letters to the Russo-Belgian novelist, memoirist, and long-time anti-Stalinist, Viktor Lvovich Kibalchich, known as Victor Serge. Like Ciliga, Serge had left Russia after being internally exiled for his involvement with the Trotskyist opposition. Serge had arrived in Belgium in April 1936 and was welcomed into the Trotskyist circle in Europe but also soon developed differences with the "old man" at the head of the movement. [\(15\)](#)

In a letter to Serge of April 30, 1936, most of it dedicated to attacks on Menshevik and other "non-revolutionary" leftist critics of Stalin. Trotsky commented, "Ciliga had departed from his ultra-left positions and he too, has been derailed into the road of friendship with the Mensheviks. His reasoning is approximately as follows: The USSR is not a workers' state but a Bonapartist state of the capitalist type; democracy would be a step forward for the USSR; the Mensheviks are in favor of democracy; hence the Mensheviks are our allies. It is no use to try to make sense out of this ..."

Five weeks later, on June 3, 1936, Trotsky wrote to Serge, "It

is ... hard to imagine a more stupid act than Ciliga's having his article published by the Mensheviks ... immediately after his letters, I decided (Ciliga) was no more than a hot-headed Menshevik." Two days later, he returned to the topic, writing in a footnote, "Ciliga says: if you can ally yourself with (French socialist Léon) Blum against the fascists, why can't you do the same with (Fyodor) Dan against the Stalinist reaction?"

Such a position was wholly inadmissible for Trotsky; who as architect of the Bolshevik coup of 1917 and founder of the Red Army continued, as late as summer 1936, to declare that in a choice between the Mensheviks and the Stalinists he "would obviously have to pick the Stalinists." (!)

These comments signal that Trotsky had ceased to view Ciliga as a political ally, and now saw him as an opponent, if not an outright enemy. In a final comment, dating from July 3, 1936, he consigned Ciliga to "the wrong side of the barricades."

But while Trotsky was designated never again to fight on barricades, Ciliga continued his "career" of political struggle wherever it would carry him.

It was in the aftermath of this encounter that **Au Pays** ... was written, with its revealing ninth chapter, *Lenin, Also ...*, in which Ciliga offered a historical summary of proletarian opposition to the Bolshevik regime.

Ciliga recalled that Trotsky had become, in the face of Stalinism, a rigid defender of Lenin's work in its entirety, even though Trotsky had come to the Bolsheviks late and had long before authored some of the most severe, effective, and prophetic criticisms of Leninism. Trotsky's later posture on Lenin was expressed in his acceptance, during the 1920s, of Zinoviev's proposal that the title "Bolshevik-Leninist" be adopted by their Opposition factions in the Russian CP.

By contrast, among the imprisoned Russian oppositionists, the

Democratic Centralist faction, who ironically enough originated within the Bolshevik party's old guard, argued that Lenin himself, and not just Stalin, had departed from the original Bolshevik program. Unlike the Trotskyists, who persisted in defending the Soviet regime as a "workers' government" that had lately taken a reactionary turn but rested on a sound ideological basis, the *Decemists*, as they were known, believed the Soviet government had become "state capitalist" once Lenin erroneously handed control of the economy over to the government bureaucracy, which became a new oppressive power over the workers. The *Decemists* thus proposed a far more radical critique of the regime than that advanced by the Trotskyists.

Further, as Ciliga pointed out, the working-class struggle waged by the *Decemists* against Lenin's "betrayal" was anticipated by the efforts of two other, labor-based factions in the Bolshevik Party, active even while Lenin was alive, and still present in the prisons 10 years later. These were the Workers' Opposition of 1920 and a tendency that originated in the left wing of the Workers' Opposition, founded in 1922 under the name Workers' Group.

These elements had gone even further than the *Decemists*; they argued not that Lenin had begun correctly and strayed from the correct path, but that Bolshevik policies altogether had been wrong from the start. While the *Decemists* concentrated their fire on the issue of who, workers or state officials, would administer the economy, the Workers' Opposition argued over who authentically represented the workers and denounced Lenin for imposing outside control over the Russian trade unions. But Ciliga noted, "The Workers' Group went even farther and attacked the political regime and the single party."

The Workers' Group thus offered a criticism of Soviet rule far beyond anything put forward by the Trotskyists or *Decemists*. The Trotskyists called for a change in line by the ruling party, to better support the world revolution, while

the *Decemists* called for a radical alteration in state economic policy, to bring the workers to the fore of society. But the Workers' Group condemned both these factions as elements of the ruling class and demanded, in effect, a new and fully-proletarian revolution from below: for production to be directed by the rank-and-file workers; for control of the state and party by the rank and-file workers; for the right of the workers to choose between competing parties, and for a break with the "cult of the leader."

The most radical elements among the Workers' Group reproduced the work of other analysts who held that Bolshevism had nothing in common with socialism or the labor movement, but pursued a "revolution of the intelligentsia" that was an expression of the bureaucratization and statification of modern society also represented, later, by fascism and the Rooseveltian 'New Deal'. The bases of this argument had been anticipated by a number of 19th century writers, before the emergence of Bolshevism as a movement.

For the Trotskyists and *Decemists*, the freedom of the workers to choose between parties was an unacceptable concept. These two Bolshevik tendencies insisted on rejection of party pluralism, if for no other reason than because such had been advocated, in the revolution of 1917, by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries.

In reading this chapter of Ciliga's book it is important to realize not only the impact these "revelations" had on the anti-Stalinist milieu of the 1930s, but also the more recent influence they would have in the aftermath of the 1960s revival of the radical left. Ciliga's description of a Russian working-class movement that rejected the Leninist dictatorship and viewed the Trotskyists as part and parcel of a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy eloquently answered the questioning and yearnings of certain young revolutionaries of an anarchist and ultra-leftist persuasion in France, Spain, and elsewhere, as is reflected in Bourrinet's study.

Ciliga had arrived at a paradoxical position. In struggle against Stalinist repression, he – like the Workers' Group – had come to embrace the critique of single-party rule, thus effectively accepting the Menshevik view that the Bolsheviks had gone too far in radically changing the political system. At the same time, again like the Workers' Group, Ciliga condemned Lenin for a "Menshevik moderation" in economics, which was believed to have led the Russian leader to embrace state capitalism in place of proletarian communism; that is, to act with insufficient radicalism in changing economic relationships. In reality, both the Leninist policies of one-party rule and nationalized property were expressions of a single statist impulse, a centralization of political and economic authority leading inexorably to a totalitarian regime.

Such was the dialectic that individuals like Ciliga sought to elucidate, to themselves and to others. For the remainder of his life Ciliga would grapple with the continuing "difficulties of history" that made his itinerary, in Bourrinet's description, "ambiguous."

Au Pays ... was published in 1938. Ciliga remained in France, completing the second volume of his Russian memoirs (later published under the title **Sibérie, Terre de l'Exil et de L'Industrialisation**) in August 1941. [\(16\)](#) He had an opportunity to leave for America, once World War II had begun, but he declined it; he returned to Croatia in December 1941.

This decision, at the beginning of a period of wanderings across Europe, would prove controversial, the subject of slanders from the later dictatorship of Tito, and still troubling today for such commentators as Bourrinet. Since April 1941, Croatia had been under the rule of the Axis regime of the nationalist-revolutionary *Ustaša* (Rebels), headed by Ante Pavelic.

It is hardly necessary to recount, in this context, the entire history of the *Ustaša* or the government it administered. However, it should be noted that as a movement it had points in common with other radical nationalist trends in the "stateless" nations of the period. Like, for example, the Irish Republican movement, the *Ustaša* had a history of alliances both on its left and its right. In the early 1930s, in the prison cells of monarchist Yugoslavia, the *Ustaša* operated in a *de facto* political alliance with the CPY, as the IRA did with the Communist Party of Ireland during the same decade. With the coming of World War II, again like the IRA, which accepted German aid in its war on Britain, the *Ustaša* allied with the Axis to fight what it saw as its primary enemy, Serbian imperialism.

Soon after his arrival in Croatia, Ciliga was arrested by the *Ustaša* police and, as in the case of the Croat Communist Andrija Hebrang. was visited in jail by the *Ustaša* leader Pavelic. In June 1942, Ciliga was sent to the concentration camp at Jasenovac under death sentence. He was imprisoned, in total, a year, being released from Jasenovac on January 1, 1943.

His release was due, he believed, to the publication of **The Russian Enigma** in Britain late in the 1930s. This gave him an Anglophile reputation, and once the debacle of the German armies at Stalingrad in 1942 made clear the strong possibility of an Axis defeat, the *Ustaša* authorities, which included a pro-Allied faction, carried out a number of actions intended to show their democratic orientation. Among these were the release from Jasenovac of Freemasons and other "pro-allied" elements, Ciliga included.

He collaborated for some time thereafter with the *Ustaša* controlled press, which led, after the war, to slanders by the Tito government. claiming he had become a full-throated follower of Pavelic. Bourrinet has interpreted his activity during this period as evidence that he had

completely abandoned Marxism and become a "pro-Allied Croat nationalist." Certainly, Ciliga had a reputation as aligned with pro-British elements in the *Ustaša* administration; as noted in a recent interview by two friends of Ciliga, Ivo and Vera Vucicevic, his articles mainly appeared in the Zagreb weekly **Spremnost (Readiness)**, which was considered a "quality" journal of liberal tendency, and pro-Allied. [\(17\)](#)

The Vucicevic couple developed a close acquaintance with Ciliga, who they met during the war. Vera Vucicevic heard him lecture on Russia at the University of Zagreb in 1943, where she says his presentation was serious and non-propagandistic. In 1944 he met Ivo Vucicevic, who was working in Berlin as a newspaper correspondent (under, it should be added, constant surveillance and warnings from his superiors because of acts of intellectual and journalistic independence including reporting of Nazi atrocities in Poland). Ciliga had left Zagreb soon after the Allied invasion of Europe in June, and arrived in Berlin by way of Vienna. His intention in leaving Croatia was multiple; he had long nurtured the hope of touring Europe and analyzing conditions everywhere on the spot, and he was curious about the social relations existing in Germany, between the National Socialist state and the masses.

But, above all, he anticipated that the fall of the Axis regime in Croatia was near, and that a newly-reconstituted Yugoslavia would be ruled by the CPY, now under the iron domination of Tito, which would see in Ciliga a dangerous "Trotskyite" marked for execution. That this was not an idle imagining is shown by the liquidation during and after the war of hundreds of real Trotskyists, in such countries as Greece (by the "partisan" forces there), as well as of individual anti-Stalinists by Communist-controlled armed detachments in Albania, Italy, and elsewhere.

However, the Vucicevic couple, fully conversant with the Croat national movement in its liberal, extremist, and reform-Communist incarnations, do not believe that Ciliga ever

abandoned his Marxism, regardless of the political camouflage he may have been compelled to assume in wartime conditions.

Says Ivo Vucicevic, "He remained a Marxist and Yugoslavist to the end. [After his youth] he was never a nationalist, although he realized that the problem of Serbs vs. Croats was the unresolvable issue in Yugoslavia. He believed the solution was a confederation of equal republics; only if that did not succeed, would separation be unavoidable."

He adds, "He had tremendous energy and drive, and a real zest for life. He was not seeking a comfortable position. He remained a Bohemian in spirit, who needed and used people but never maliciously, who always depended on the generosity of others to secure him a place to stay and food."

According to Vera Vucicevic, "He never abandoned his ideals. He was not acquisitive, or an opportunist, and never sought personal advancement: in fact, he never thought of himself He was consumed by his ideas, and was always concerned that he not compromise himself."

Vera Vucicevic recounts that at the close of his life Ciliga was almost entirely blind, and recruited friends to read aloud to him. Vera Vucicevic had lived in Sarajevo, and she often discussed Bosnian problems with him; he remained fascinated by the region. "He knew the area only in his youth, and, above all, the Croatian-majority area of Hercegovina," she says. "He did not know the Muslim people of Bosnia at all," and Vera Vucicevic, who knew many children of leading Muslim and other political figures in Sarajevo, provided him with background information. She also found him to be fascinated by religion, but not a "vulgar anti-clerical." Above all, "he was consumed with curiosity about everything in the world," she says.

The Vucicevic couple maintained their acquaintance with Ciliga until his death. In 1945, as the Russians approached Berlin, it was once more clearly time for him to move, for if it was

likely the Tito authorities would hunt him down, it was certain the Russians' would do so.

He fled first to an area of Bavaria near the Swiss border, then to the French occupation zone of Germany, to France, and to Italy. Both of the latter countries were under the powerful influence of Communist parties, and this worried him enough to keep him in transit back and forth, between Paris and Rome. He "had tremendous admiration for the US, and illusions about the willingness of America to act in the Balkans," according to Vera Vucicevic, but remained on the continent.

In 1950 his Siberian memoir was published in France, combined with a second edition of **Au pays ...** In his volume on Siberia he wrote lyrically to his fellow "pioneers:" "This mighty triangle – Krasnoyarsk, San Francisco, the North Pole ... this is your world, this is the atmosphere you breathe." [\(18\)](#) The next year a Spanish translation of **Au pays ...** appeared in Argentina. Books continued to flow from his pen; **La Yugoslavie sous la Menace Intérieure et Extérieure (Yugoslavia and the Internal and External Threat to It)** in 1951, and in 1954, a memoir, **Sam Kroz Evropu u Ratu (Alone Across Europe in War)**.

He settled finally in Rome, in straitened circumstances. Vera Vucicevic recalls that "At the end he lived in two rooms, one with a bed, the other filled with books and papers. Because of his blindness, his mobility was limited, but he managed to feel his way through the streets to buy groceries. He received about \$100 per month from an Italian media firm, which he used to pay a woman who came to read to him. In the late 1980s the Croat Communists invited him back, and he could have lived well, but he remained in Rome where he was free to write."

The year 1955 saw publication in Chicago, an intellectual center, of the nationalist movement within the Croat diaspora, of a symposium by 17 writers, including Ciliga, on *The Croatian Nation in its Struggle for Freedom and Independence*. Ciliga's contribution, a 29-page essay, presents one of the

most concise statements of his view of Yugoslavia as well as a remarkably clear warning of the tragedy we have seen in the 1990s.

In Ciliga's essay, *Tito Failed to Solve the National Question in Yugoslavia*, he wrote with greater perception than the great majority of commentators of the time, aside from a handful of dissident Trotskyists (including, remarkably enough, Trotsky's widow Natalya Sedova), on the menacing character of the Tito regime; even after its change in orientation toward the West. "As Stalin's Moscow succeeded the imperialism of the Tsars, so Tito's Belgrade succeeded the imperialism of Pašić and King Alexander," he wrote.

Further on, he argued "As a matter of fact. Belgrade wanted and still wants *imperialistic* equality with Moscow: *The Tito regime accepted the domination of the Great Russian Imperialism over the peoples of the USSR, and wanted for itself the recognition of domination of the Great Serbian Imperialism over the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Balkans* (emphasis in original) ... The disagreement and conflict among the Communistic regimes of Sofia, Belgrade, and Moscow, is the conflict and quarrel among three imperialistic robbers, a great one and two smaller ones, over the distribution of the booty." Elsewhere in the same essay he noted that the Serbs did not "possess those numerical, geographical, economical; technical, cultural, or political advantages which ... the Russians have over the peoples of USSR. The Serbs and the outsiders who see in Tito's Yugoslavia a 'little USSR,' do not perceive well enough the weaknesses of this state." [\(19\)](#)

Ciliga also wrote with rare understanding of the critical nature of the Kosovo issue in Yugoslavia. As he pointed out, Tito himself in 1939 admitted the existence of an overwhelming Albanian majority in the province ("a quasi-compact majority of 900,000 Albanians ... only 300,000 less than the entire population of Albania itself"). [\(20\)](#) Ciliga described how the use of the term "Šiptar" by Serbs, rather than Albanian, to

describe the Kosovar majority, was intended to alienate the Kosovar Albanians from their natural identification with the Albanian state, and to make them a mere tribe living under Yugoslav authority.

In concluding, Ciliga declared "the author of this article belongs to that group of Croats, today probably a small minority, which is convinced that the ultimate solution lies in one ... democratic federation with equal rights, or the Confederation of all Southern Slavs, the peoples of the Balkans, and the Danubian Basin in general."

Peace and agreement between the Croats and Serbs, he continued, would require a sovereign Croatian state, status within it for the Serbs as a national minority rather than as a dominant ethnicity, sovereignty for Bosnia-Hercegovina as well as political rights for the Bosnian Muslim population, and recognition of the rights of Croats in Montenegro and Serbia. (As Ciliga indicated, the Tito regime constitutionally protected the Serbs in Croatia but never extended such guarantees to non-Serbs living within the official borders of Serbia, including Croats, Albanians, Hungarians, and others.) For Ciliga such an agreement was, above all, dependent on "*the reestablishment of a separate, and, in fact, sovereign democratic State of Croatia and a democratic State of Serbia . . . Croatia, also, must first liberate itself from the Serbian yoke, and only then can become eventually a friend and ally of Serbia*" (emphasis in original). [\(21\)](#)

Finally, he insisted that Macedonia, also, could not be surrendered to Serbian imperialism. To these comments nothing need be added today, after nine years of the new Balkan wars.

In September 1969 Ciliga came to the United States for his only visit. He attended a symposium at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, and also spoke at a small conference of mainly-young Croats, in New York.

His commitment to his research and writing was further expressed in his publication of a series of small periodicals, including the **Bilten Hrvatske Demokratske i Socijalne Akcije** (Bulletin of Croatian Democratic and Social Action), and the printed journal **Na pragu sutrašnjice** (On the Threshold of the Future), which appeared in Croatian in Rome and then in Sweden, beginning in 1974 and in which he published fascinating documents on the history of the CPY and on Croatian and South Slavic politics. He became prominent, in this period, in the political life of the Croat diaspora.

His works continued to appear and to be reprinted. Most importantly, a new edition of his classic, retitled **Dix Ans au Pays du Grand Mensonge Déconcertant**, appeared in 1977, in Paris, to contribute to the political development of a new generation.

Near the close of his life Ciliga became embroiled in unfortunate and unnecessary debates, in Croatia, over comments he had made in **Sam Kroz Evropu ...** on the conduct of Jews in the infamous camp at Jasenovac. The comments were cited in **Bespuca povijesne zbiljnosti**, a controversial work of Franjo Tudjman, later president of the newly reborn Croatian Republic: they included a description of Jewish management of the camp. [\(22\)](#)

Ciliga ascribed this assignment of responsibility, which violated Nazi racial laws adopted by the *Ustaša* state, in effect to the involvement of such Jewish figures as the Christian convert Josip Frank in the origins of the *Ustaša* movement. He also charged that Jews in charge of the camp had robbed Gypsy prisoners of hidden gold.

Ciliga commented on the difference between his experience in the Russian prisons and camps, on one hand, and in Jasenovac, on the other, by arguing that the Bolsheviks, like the Serbian terrorist *Chetniks* and the Tito Partisans, were mainly concerned with "destroying the dignity and moral integrity of the victims," something in which, he said, the *Ustaša* were not

primarily interested. This argument cannot be defended, in that the *Ustaša* terror against Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina during World War II showed all the worst characteristics of radical terrorism. Indeed, the *Ustaša* were criticized by the German patrons for the extremism of their anti-Serb "revolution." The *Ustaša* campaign against Serbs was no less nihilist than Nazi anti-Semitism or Stalinist persecution of political enemies.

Ciliga went on to blame the conduct of Jews in Jasenovac on "Jewish nationalism" and separatism toward non-Jews, dating back to the time of Moses. According to Tudjman, these comments placed Ciliga "inadvertently" among anti-Semites. Croatian Jews who supported the proclamation of the Croatian Republic in 1991 nonetheless expressed considerable resentment at these remarks.

However, it should also be noted that in **Sam Kroz Evropu ...** Ciliga wrote that "the means and manner with which anti-Semitism from Charles Maurras to Adolf Hitler, to limit myself to the anti-Semitic ideologues of modern times, conducted its struggle against Jews was and remains for me a moral and intellectual monstrosity." (23) One might wish these confused thoughts of Ciliga, which left a small stain on his memory, had been kept to himself, but it must also be admitted that such attitudes, particularly in recent times, have never been wholly absent from the Marxist discourse, and that anti-Semitism was anything but a central issue in his work.

Ante Ciliga died at one of the worst moments in the terrible Serbian wars of the 1990s. The bloody footsteps of the aggressor were marked in Croatia and in Bosnia-Hercegovina with the names of martyrs in Vukovar, Bijeljina, Zvornik, Prijedor, Sarajevo, and so many other places. Mostar – Ciliga's Mostar – was in ruins. Thousands were dead or in flight. Everywhere, historic buildings, churches and mosques had been destroyed. The West had learned of the mass rapes of Bosnian Muslim, Croatian, Hungarian, and other women by

the *Chetnik* terrorists in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Yet for those who understood and sympathized with the trajectory of Ante Ciliga one of the lowest points in the terrible experience was reported in the world press on October 21, 1992, the very day he died: the outbreak of fighting between Croats and Bosnian Muslims in the Bosnian town of Vitez, northwest of Sarajevo. Such was an outcome Ante Ciliga would have detested and which he fought against through his entire political life.

He left a son, from a Bulgarian or Macedonian wife of whom little is known, since the marriage ended before he went to Russia.

He was a man who had lived at history's crossroads. If there is a statement that is appropriate as an obituary for Ante Ciliga, it is that of his friend Ivo Vucicevic: "Ciliga believed if he could not write the truth he should not write at all."

Notes

[1.](#) *The New York Times*, September 18, 1988

[2.](#) *Ante Ciliga (1898-1992)*, **Cahiers Léon Trotsky** (Grenoble, etc.), no.51, 1993.

[3.](#) *Ante Ciliga*, **Etcétera** (Barcelona), no.20, December 1992.

[4.](#) Philippe Bourrinet, *Un itinerario ambiguo: Ante Ciliga (1898-1992)*, **Generació**, no.5, 1993. Write to **Generació**, c/o Muntaner 415, 4^o-2^o, 08021 Barcelona. The text has appeared in German in **Archiv fur die Geschichte des Widerstandes und der Arbeit**, published in Bochum, Germany, and was scheduled to appear in 1995 in an extended version with considerable extra material on Balkan issues in an Italian edition from Graphos

(Genoa). On Guy Debord, see Stephen Schwartz, **San Francisco Chronicle**, January 10, 1995.

[5.](#) Robert J. Alexander, **International Trotskyism, 1929-1985**, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1991, does not include a single mention of either Ciliga or the “left” in the CPY during the 1920s, although Ciliga and a Serbian anti-Stalinist Voja Vujovic, played inarguably significant roles in the history of anti-Stalinist communism, as we shall see.

[6.](#) The autobiographical details reproduced here are taken from Ciliga’s 1983 essay, cited in note [\(3\)](#). On Kiš, the reader is directed to my essay, *Five Yugoslav Classics*, in **The New Criterion** (New York), May 2000.

[7.](#) Ante Ciliga, **The Russian Enigma**, New York Routledge, 1989, contains the full text of the original book, including the chapter titled *Lenin, Also ...* along with Ciliga’s second Russian memoir on Siberia.

[8.](#) Bourrinet, **op. cit.** Dr. Svetlana Broz, the granddaughter of Pelagea Denisova-Belousova, told the author of this text in a recent interview that her grandmother had been exiled to Siberia for several years but was allowed to return, eventually, to Moscow, where she died in old age.

[9.](#) The 1927 speech of Voja Vujovic, a truly amazing document, appears in Leon Trotsky, **Problems of the Chinese Revolution**, New York, Pioneer Publishers, 1932. This and other works on Trotsky, Vujovic, and the Chinese Revolution have been reprinted and translated into other languages.

[10.](#) The best introduction to the work of the anti-Leninist, Communist Left is Paul Mattick, Jr., **Anti-Bolshevik Communism**, Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1979.

[11.](#) A classic anarchist work on Bolshevism is Alexander Berkman, **The Russian Tragedy**, 1922, reprinted in 1989 and distributed by Left Bank Books, Seattle, Wa.

[12.](#) Selections from the works of the Menshevik critics of Bolshevism, as well as from Luxemburg, Trotsky, Victor Serge, and others are included in Julien Sternberg, ed., **Verdict of Three Decades**, New York Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950, unfortunately out of print. Many of the works of Luxemburg and Trotsky are widely in print; those of social democrats such as Martov and Hilferding remain extremely rare.

[13.](#) *Letters About Anton Ciliga, December 1935–January 1936,* in Leon Trotsky, **Writings, Supplement (1934-40)**, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1979.

[14.](#) See notes to *Letters About Anton Ciliga*, **ibid.**

[15.](#) *Eleven Letters to Victor Serge*, in Trotsky, **Writings. Supplement (1934-40)**, **ibid.**

[16.](#) Ciliga's memoir of Siberia is included in the recent English edition of **The Russian Enigma**, **op. cit.** (see [note 7](#)).

[17.](#) Interview with Ivo and Vera Vucicevic, San Francisco, July 9, 1994.

[18.](#) Both **Au Pays ...** and **Sibérie, Terre de l'Exil et de l'Industrialisation**, were reviewed by Karlo Mirth in **Croatia Press** (Madrid), vol.IV, no.60, May 30, 1950, leading to a correspondence, visits and friendly relations between Ciliga and Mirth.

[19.](#) In A.F. Bonifacic and C.S. Mihanovic, eds., **The Croatian Nation in its Struggle for Freedom and Independence**, Chicago, "Croatia" Cultural Publishing Center, 1955.

[20.](#) As quoted by Ciliga from Tito, *Fascism Threatens Yugoslavia*, published in the Comintern organ **International Press Correspondence**, issued in Moscow, London, etc., May 1939.

[21.](#) Ciliga, in Bonifacic and Mihanovic, eds., **op. cit.**

[22.](#) Franjo Tujman, **Bespuca povijesne zbifjnosti**, Zagreb, Matica hrvatska, 1989.

[23.](#) Ante Ciliga, **Sam Kroz Europu a Ratu**, definitive edition, Rome; Na pragu sustrašnjice, 1978, p.280. I am informed that a French edition of this work is in preparation.

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