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Music and cultural diplomacy: Presentation of the “new Yugoslavia” in France after 1945*

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Cultural diplomacy was a powerful tool even after the WWII, which brought a new political composition in the world and a redistribution of power. It is believed that France managed to remain an important international actor in this period due to well-developed cultural diplomacy.¹ Also, the new Communist rule in Yugoslavia, in addition to consolidating power in the country, sought to develop propaganda abroad, and especially, in the countries of the Western Europe. It was a setting for the new Yugoslav diplomacy and a place in international relations that Tito's Yugoslavia needed following the split with the USSR and the Cold War conflicts. Instruments of cultural diplomacy were not only intellectual and scholarly relations, lectures, translating books, but also art exhibitions, plays, films and music. The department dealing with foreign relations counted primarily on folklore ensembles (in form of cultural and artistic societies—*kulturno-umetnička društva*) as the most representative, and also supported performances by amateur choirs. Music was considered a suitable means of showing the cultural level of a state, which also goes for the new socialist Yugoslavia. The aim was to introduce the new country and to improve its international reputation. State-building, organization of the system of the government, consolidation of power and participation in international relations called for specific and complex tasks of the Yugoslav diplomacy. Therefore, there are also specifics in the field of cultural diplomacy, including the use of music, which are typical of the Yugoslav use of *soft power*.

France—as a Western European country where Yugoslav communists cooperated with the Communist Party of France (KPF) in spreading propaganda in the diaspora and in presenting the new country to the world—was particularly relevant

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¹ Fransoa Šobe, Loren Marten, *Međunarodni kulturni odnosi* [International Cultural Relations] (Belgrade: Clio, 2014), 16.

to the new Yugoslav regime.² Moreover, collaboration between the French and the Serbian (Yugoslav) intellectuals,³ which had a history of more than a century, entered a new phase after the WWII, marked by party affiliation from the period of the Spanish Civil War, when the Yugoslav National Committee for Assistance to Republican Spain operated in Paris until the occupation of France and the French resistance movement.⁴ The first Yugoslav diplomats were also selected from the ranks of non-communists, especially in the countries of the West, primarily due to a shortage of communist staff.⁵ It was also believed that these individuals would contribute to building of a positive image of the new Yugoslavia in a period of strained relations with Western powers due to the northwestern borders of the country and relations with the Soviet Union, considering the turnaround enacted by the Cominform Resolution of 1948 and later in the Cold War.⁶ These relations

² Aleksandra Kolaković, “Présentation de la nouvelle Yougoslavie en France de 1945 à 1973. Diplomatie et culture [Presentation of the new Yugoslavia in France from 1945 to 1973. Diplomacy and culture],” in *La France et la Serbe: Les défis de l'amitié éternelle*, edited by Aleksandra Kolaković, Sacha Markovic (Belgrade: Institut za političke studije, 2020, forthcoming).

³ Fadil Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina Jugoslovena u Francuskoj. La Presence Yougoslave en France depuis 100 ans* (exposé préliminaire, thèse et chronologie succincte) [The Presence of Yugoslavs in France in the Last Hundred Years (opening statement, thesis and chronology)] (Paris: Yougo–France, 1981), 30–34; Slavenko Terzić (Ed.), *Jugoslovensko–francuski odnosi: povodom 150 godina od otvaranja prvog francuskog konzulata u Srbiji* [Yugoslav–French Relations: On the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Opening of the First French Consulate in Serbia] (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 1990); Mihailo Pavlović, Jelena Novaković, *Srpsko–francuski odnosi 1904–2004* [Serbian–French relations 1904–2004] (Belgrade: Arhiv Srbije, 2004); Dušan T. Bataković, *Une alliance atypique. Les relations franco-serbes 1878–1940* [An Atypical Alliance. Serbian–French Relations 1878–1940] (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, 2010); Dušan T. Bataković, “Francuski uticaji u Srbiji 1835–1914. Četiri generacije Parizlija [The French influence in Serbia 1835–1914. Four generations of Parisians],” *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 57 (1997): 73–95; Stanislav Sretenović, *Francuska i Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca 1919–1929* [France and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes 1919–1929] (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2009); Aleksandra Kolaković, *U službi otadžbine: saradnja francuskih i srpskih intelektualaca* [In the Service of the Homeland: The Collaboration of French and Serbian Intellectuals] (Belgrade: Institut za političke studije, 2016); Aleksandra Kolaković, “War and Propaganda in 1915: French Intellectuals and Actualization of Serbian Issues,” in *The Great War in 1915*, edited by Dalibor Denda, Christian Ortner (Belgrade, Vienna: Institut za strategijska istraživanja, 2017), 330–352.

⁴ Savo Pešić, “Komunistička partija Jugoslavije i španski građanski rat [The Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Spanish Civil War],” *Vojno-istorijski glasnik* 2 (1986): 261–276; Hervé Lemesle, “Les volontaires yougoslaves en Espagne républicaine: des sources pour une étude prosopographique [Yugoslav volunteers in republican Spain: sources for a prosographic study],” *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps* 123/124 (2017): 50–58.

⁵ Slobodan Selinić, *Partija i diplomatija u Jugoslaviji 1945–1952* [The Party and diplomacy in Yugoslavia 1945–1952] (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju, 2013), 63–91.

⁶ *Le cas Yougoslave: intéresse l'opinion publique* [The Yugoslav case: the examination of public opinion] (Toulouse: Association des jeunes des brigades en Yougoslavie, 1948); Vladimir Dedijer, *The battle Stalin lost: memoirs of Yugoslavia 1948–1953* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1972); Čedomir Štrbac, *Jugoslavija i odnosi između socijalističkih zemalja: sukob KPJ i Informbiroa* [Yugoslavia and the relations between socialist countries: the conflict between the CPY and Cominform] (Belgrade:

were achieved through Yugoslav participants in the French resistance movement and played a role in the 1948 crisis.⁷ At the same time, efforts were made to collaborate with prominent individuals from the cultural sphere in France, primarily literature, such as Louis Aragon.⁸ Also, the new Yugoslavia put great importance on the power of the press. Therefore, it sought to place affirmative information on Yugoslavia and Tito, not only through French newspapers but also by supporting the publication of newspapers, in French and Serbo-Croatian, for the Yugoslav diaspora and the French public.⁹ The use of soft power depended on diplomats in Paris and official authorities in Yugoslavia. However, key diplomatic actions, including those involving the use of music, were designed in Belgrade and then carried out in France. It is important to explore the objectives of cultural diplomacy, as well as the achievements of thus designed public diplomacy. In this paper, we will limit ourselves and focus on research concerning the use of music in the cultural diplomacy of the new Yugoslavia in France in the period from 1945 to the founding of the Yugoslav Cultural Center in Paris, which was part of a new strategic plan for Yugoslavia's cultural diplomacy.

Music of new Yugoslavia in Paris: The first tones of cultural diplomacy

The importance of France is evident from the fact that in April 1945 Marko Ristić was made ambassador—he was a French student, surrealist poet, and great expert in French culture and art. Since the interwar period, Ristić and his wife Jelica Živadinović (Ševa Ristić) had been well known in artistic salons of Paris.¹⁰ As a

Prosveta, 1984); Dragan Bogetić, “Saradnja Jugoslavije i zapada u vreme sukoba sa Kominformom (1952–1955) [The collaboration of Yugoslavia and the West during the conflict with the Cominform (1952–1955)],” in *Velike sile i male države u Hladnom ratu: slučaj Jugoslavije*, edited by Ljubodrag Dimić (Belgrade, London: Filozofski fakultet Beograd, Katedra za istoriju Jugoslavije, Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, Centar za istraživanja hladnog rata LST, 2005), 43–62.

⁷ Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 18.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Aleksandra Kolaković, “Serbian Press in France during the 20th Century: Among the Cultural Diplomacy and the Information on the Diaspora,” *Les Cahiers balkaniques* 47 (2020): 139–154.

¹⁰ The first encounter between Marko Ristić and André Breton, as well as other surrealists Paul Éluard and Louis Aragon, took place in Paris in 1926. This year was also a turning point for surrealism, as it expanded into political engagement. Surrealists began to react to the political order and fight against colonialism, responding to social, artistic and philosophical developments, phenomena and processes of the time. When Breton gathered a surrealist group in the Parisian cafe Prophet in 1929, Marko Ristić was invited. It is also worth noting that this point in French surrealism marked the beginning of the era of *Surrealism in the service of the revolution*. See: Marko Ristić, *Književna politika: članci i pamfleti* [Literary politics: articles and pamphlets] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1952); Marko Ristić, *Politička književnost (za ovu Jugoslaviju) 1944–1958* [Political literature (for this Yugoslavia) 1944–1958] (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1977); Marko Ristić, *Diplomatski spisi* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1996).

friend of prominent French figures, Marko Ristić was a suitable person for diplomatic activities in France. As a non-Communist ambassador, Ristić went through tribulations that stemmed from relations with embassy employees who did not always understand how cultural exchange and cooperation with the French work. These circumstances were also often considered potentially dangerous—for fear of espionage. This reflected in the nature and reach of his initiatives. Ristić was ambassador to France in the difficult first post-war period of 1945–1951. Upon his arrival in France, he said that he was honored and proud to be the ambassador to France, “a country that has always been dear to us [...], the richness of its culture and the freedom of its people—it was a source of hope, encouragement and inspiration [for the Serbian and Yugoslav people].”¹¹ Ristić’s idea was to pay special attention to cooperation with prominent French intellectuals.¹² This was also the approach pursued in the cultural diplomacy of the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.¹³

In addition to Ristić, Vuk Dragović, press advisor and former journalist of *Politika*, also influenced the implementation of cultural diplomacy in those first post-war years.¹⁴ Thanks to Ristić and Dragović, whose wife Marina Olenjina Dragović was a prima ballerina at the Belgrade National Theater, Yugoslav propaganda in France reemerged and began to use music for diplomatic purposes. The use of sound in diplomatic activities in France started as one would expect, with folk music and dancing. Already in 1947, a 15-strong girls’ folk group of Yugoslav expatriates was founded in Paris, led by Marina Olenjina Dragović.¹⁵ The group was also sponsored by the ambassador’s wife Jelica Ristić. In January 1948, the group performed at an event at the Hôtel Lutetia.¹⁶ The hotel, whose architectural style went from *Art Nouveau* to *Art Déco* since it opened in 1910, was a regular

¹¹ Miladin Milošević, “Dolazak u Pariz prvog ambasadora Nove Jugoslavije [First ambassador of new Yugoslavia comes to Paris],” in *Srpsko-francuski odnosi 1904–2004* (Belgrade: Društvo za kulturnu saradnju Francuska Srbija, Arhiv Srbije, 2005), 123–131; Slobodan Selinić, “Ambasador nekomunista i partijska diplomatija. Marko Ristić u Parizu 1945–1951 [A non-communist ambassador and party diplomacy. Marko Ristić in Paris 1945–1951],” *Tokovi istorije 2* (2012): 144–145.

¹² Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia [Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Republike Srbije (DAMSPRS)], 1948, France, 48, 12, VII, 48/172, confidential No. 1169, telegram, Ristić, Embassy–MFA, Paris, April 14, 1948.

¹³ Aleksandra Kolaković, “Kultura i diplomatija: Francuska i Srbija [Culture and diplomacy: France and Serbia],” in *Kulture u dijalogu – Cultures in Dialogue, Cultural Diplomacy and Libraries*, Vol. 3, edited by Aleksandra Vraneš, Ljiljana Marković (Belgrade: Filološki fakultet, 2013), 101–122.

¹⁴ Selinić, *Partija i diplomatija*, 218–239.

¹⁵ Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 67.

¹⁶ How prestigious it was to present Yugoslavia at this hotel, where exhibitions, events and lectures were often organized, could be illustrated by the fact that general de Gaulle was a regular guest there. He spent his honeymoon in this building, as well as the night before leaving for England, when he even forgot his luggage, and the suitcase was kept until his return. See Pierre Assouline, *Lutetia* (Paris, Gallimard, 2005).

gathering point for artists, intellectuals, politicians and diplomats. Picasso and Matisse were guests, as well the famous Josephine Becker, and the hotel became a bastion of jazz music in France.¹⁷ With all this in mind, it is obvious that very much was expected from the idea of introducing the new state through music.

In June 1948, the same girls' folk group also performed at the Yugoslav Evening as part of the art exhibition of the International Federation of Women. This is a good example that shows how Paris served as venue of cultural diplomatic activities within the framework of international organizations. Music spoke a universal language in the sphere of cultural diplomacy, especially in a city like Paris, where different cultures merged. In the same year, the Choir of the Serbian Students' Association in France participated in a festival in Paris (June 27, 1948), and later in the well-known French tourist resort of Aix-le-Bains (July 25, 1948).¹⁸ In addition to the capital, cities in inland France were also selected for the promotion of Yugoslav music. Also, it can be noted that already in 1948, new Yugoslav diplomacy combined tourism with music in the context of cultural diplomacy. Furthermore, the aforementioned choir also collaborated with l'Alliance française (the French Alliance) in whose events it participated.¹⁹ This expanded the Yugoslav front of propaganda. It was of particular importance that Radio Paris broadcast Serbian songs performed by the choir on September 29 and October 28 that year.

Most cultural events, which initially involved folk groups and choirs formed in France (not groups coming from Yugoslavia), were aimed at the children of Yugoslav expatriates in France, but also formed the basis of further activities for performing cultural events, which were also supported by the France–Yugoslavia Association, established by both the French and the Serbs. This association was banned after the Cominform Resolution, but after 1949 several other associations were formed to pursue a similar mission.²⁰ In addition to Yugoslavs, French participants also attended these cultural events, although documents do not record precise information as to their number. Certainly, there was noticeable propaganda activity in 1948, which could be directly linked to the Cominform Resolution. Moreover, inland France was also a field of numerous operations through the France–Yugoslavia Association. And again, the presentation of folk music and dancing was the primary activity. Nevertheless, diplomats were not always satisfied

¹⁷ Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 38.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁹ L'Alliance française was as an auxiliary actor in French cultural diplomacy. It specifically targeted countries where the official state activities of cultural diplomacy and cultural cooperation had not provided satisfactory results. See Šobe, Marten, *Međunarodni kulturni odnosi*, 157–160.

²⁰ Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (AMAE)], Z Europe Yugoslavia [Europe Yougoslavie], 1944–1949, Z 510–1, Yugoslavs in France; DAMSPRS, 1948, France – 9, 6, 47/247, telegram, No. 426688, Simić MFA – Embassy Paris, January 2, 1948; *ibid.*, 47/248, confidential telegram, No. 645, February 26, 1948.

with these activities, which can be seen from the dispatch of the Consulate General of the People's Republic in Marseille from 1948, which reports on a party held by a branch of the Franco–Yugoslav Association in Lyon. At the party, which was supposed to have “the character of a manifestation of friendship between Yugoslavia and France, and be an opportunity to speak about Yugoslavia,” no one from the audience, consisting exclusively of younger working women, knew who the organizers were nor did they know at least that it was a France–Yugoslavia event. Instead, they came to the party to have fun, as the usual audience of this place does. It was assessed that such an event “does not fit the reputation” of the Association, “that the aim is missed,” and “that the Association must take a different direction.”²¹ The lack of funds invested in cultural diplomacy and poor affiliation with important figures were the main problems of these activities. Also, music was only one aspect. Moreover, it was not easy for cultural diplomacy of the new Yugoslavia to achieve results given the complicated bilateral and multilateral relations and international circumstances.

A new period in diplomatic relations: Music and Tito's first official visit to France

During his service in Paris between 1950 and 1955, the next Ambassador of Yugoslavia to France, Srđan Srđa Prica—a lawyer by education, a member of the Communist Party since 1925, and a veteran of the Spanish Civil War resident in the United States who joined the Yugoslav diplomacy at the suggestion of Edvard Kardelj—also used the *tunes of diplomatic notes*.²² Yugoslavia's national holidays were a special occasion for events with a musical program. These events were organized by Yugoslav emigrant associations, but with the assistance of the Yugoslav Embassy. One such noteworthy manifestation was held on Republic Day, November 29, 1950, prepared by the Brotherhood and Unity Association. It took place in the heart of Paris, near the Grand Palais at the beginning of the Champs-Élysées fields, where one of the most luxurious boutique hotels, La Maison des Centraliens, stands today. At the end of the same year, the Yugoslav Singing and Support Society Jadran held a performance in Freyming-Merlebach, on the German border in northeast France.²³ By 1952, Yugoslav cultural propaganda partly contributed to the creation of general conditions for the first guest appearances of prominent Yugoslav artists and musicians in France.

²¹ DAMSPRS, 1948, France, 50, No. 359, Annual report of the Consulate General in Marseille.

²² *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* [Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia], Vol. 6. (Zagreb: Jugoslovenski leksikografski zavod, 1965); “Ambasador Srđa Prica srdačno dočekan u Lionu [Ambassador Srđa Prica warmly greeted in Lyon],” *Politika* (June 11, 1952): 5.

²³ Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 78.

Clearly, culture was the chosen as a path to warm up the Franco–Yugoslav relations strained by several elements: the presence of nearly 14,000 Serbian political emigrants in France (monarchists, supporters of the Karađorđević dynasty, former members of the Chetnik movement, Draža Mihailović’s sympathizers and dissidents), the relationship between de Gaulle and Tito, as well as the Cominform Resolution, when mistrust between the French and Serbian communists came into the spotlight. Yugoslav diplomacy believed that music was one of the means by which relations between France and Yugoslavia could be improved. From July 15 to 17, 1952, the Ballet of the Belgrade National Theater performed in Paris for the first time (with 76-member ensemble). The prestigious venue of the Palais de Chaillot itself was enough to attract a French audience. The French press enthusiastically wrote about this guest appearance, and the quality of the performance made it possible for another group to visit the same year, from October 3 to 12, when 45 musicians and dancers arrived, whose performance was rated by the media as a *Slavic Rhapsody*.²⁴ This performance was so notable that the Yugoslav artists extended their stay to perform again from October 18 to 28. Two years later, on November 23, 1954, singer Miroslav Čangalović performed a concert at the Paris Conservatory of Music. The appreciation of Čangalović can be seen from the fact that he was awarded best singer of the season (for his role of Mephistopheles, 1959) by the International Jury of Critics at the Theater of Nations Festival in Paris.²⁵

These performances had a significant resonance with the public and contributed to the promotion of Yugoslavia. In addition to the guest performances of prominent artists in Paris, which were used at this stage of Yugoslavia’s cultural and diplomatic activities in France, other manifestations in other parts of the country also took place, featuring folk groups and choirs, where the target group was younger. For example, Poitiers was, and still is today, a particularly significant place for education, and therefore a very convenient place to promote a country that is less well-known in the world.²⁶ The Zagreb-based Jože Vlahović folklore troupe performed there on April 6, 1954, as guests at the event *Compagnons de la Claire Fontaine*, dedicated to the traditional music, song and dance. The group performed for an audience composed mainly of foreign students. In February 1955, young Slovenian violinist Igor Ozim, who had a promising international career in front of him, held two concerts at the Salle Gaveau and the Cité internationale universitaire in Paris. The Salle Gaveau, which was also the headquarters of the

²⁴ Ibid., 96–97; “Novi veliki uspeh Ansambla narodnih igara Srbije [The novel great success of the Ensemble of Folk Dances of Serbia],” *Politika* (July 17, 1952): 4; “Uspelo gostovanje Ansambla narodnih igara Srbije u Engleskoj, Holandiji i Francuskoj [The successful guest performance of the Ensemble of Folk Dances of Serbia in England, the Netherlands and France],” *Politika* (July 17, 1952): 4.

²⁵ Mirjana Odavić, *Miroslav Čangalović (1921–1999)* (Belgrade: Muzej pozorišne umetnosti, 2002).

²⁶ Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 78.

French piano manufacturer Gaveau (one of the three largest piano manufacturers in France), was (and still is) a prestigious place for great pianists. The second venue—the Cité internationale universitaire—was a center of student life for the future French elite, but also for students from other countries, who were able to take with them the image of Yugoslavia to their own countries. Yugoslav artists also took part in musical competitions in France, such as the VI Besançon Music Festival (Festival de musique de Besançon Franche-Comté). In a competition of 40 orchestra conductors, Igor Đarov and Krešimir Šipuš from Zagreb won first place.²⁷ Yugoslav diplomacy in this time sought to be represented in France by famous musicians from all Yugoslav republics. All the examples above testify that the cultural diplomacy of Yugoslavia in France sought to extend its influence further than only the French. As a hub of ideas and people of different nationalities, France was a great place for Yugoslav diplomacy in context of the global promotion of the new Yugoslavia. This was also in line with the opening of Yugoslavia to the West.

It can be said that the cultural diplomacy of Yugoslavia, in which music became very important, also prepared the political atmosphere for Tito's first official visit to France. In January 1955, French President René Coty invited the Yugoslav leader to France, but the official visit was delayed until 1956. At that time, the Yugoslav embassy in Paris was led by Aleš Bebler, a communist and Spanish Civil War veteran who studied law in Paris, where he occasionally lived in exile between 1931 and 1939.²⁸ The same year, the Belgrade Opera performed again at the Champs Élysées Theater in mid-April, starring Miroslav Čangalović, Dušan Popović, Valerija Heybal and Melanija Bugarinović in the lead roles.²⁹ At the same time, the French and Yugoslav press wrote about the expectations from the upcoming visit, about Yugoslavia, Tito, the common history and fight against the enemy in the two world wars. Guy Mollet, French Prime Minister and socialist, who had visited Yugoslavia in 1952, told the Sarajevo-based paper *Oslobođenje* (Liberation): "I will be happy to greet the President of Yugoslavia in Paris." On the other hand, Josip Broz Tito told *Le Monde* reporters: "I'm looking forward to visiting France, where I haven't been since 1939."³⁰ The second interview with Tito in the prestigious newspaper was published on May 5, 1956. Tito's visit (May 7–12) was accompanied by increased cultural activities of Yugoslavia in France, which continued in the subsequent

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Aleš Bebler," in Petar Kačavenda, Dušan Živković, *Narodni heroji Jugoslavije*, Vol. 1 (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1982), 66.

²⁹ Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 102.

³⁰ "Poseta predsednika Tita Francuskoj biće koristan doprinos jačanju međunarodne saradnje [President Tito's visit to France will contribute to the strengthening of international cooperation]," *Politika* (May 5, 1956): 1; "Prijateljski Pariz svečano dočekaao predsednika Tita [Friendly Paris solemnly welcomes President Tito]," *Politika* (May 8, 1956):1.

period, only at lower intensity.³¹ At the end of May 1956, the Ensemble of Folk Dances and Songs of the Peoples of Yugoslavia performed at the Huyghens Hall in the 14th district in Paris, which was a well-known exhibition space for Parisian painters in the interwar period. Twice, in 1956 and 1957, Paris hosted top soloists from Zagreb, sisters Olga and Marija Mihajlović, who held a recital at the École Normale de Musique as part of their second visit.³² At the end of March 1957, the Theater de Nation hosted the Belgrade Opera again, which raised great interest and respect among the French audience. As a result, Oskar Danon, conductor of the Belgrade Opera, was invited to conduct the Philharmonic Orchestra in Nice in 1958 as part of the Summer Music Festival.³³

While the famous French singer Josephine Becker performed in Belgrade, the ballet ensemble of the Belgrade National Theater performed at the Théâtre de l'Étoile. Cultural exchanges and visits by musicians were well developed at the time when Radivoje Uvalić,³⁴ another former law student in France and Spanish Civil War veteran, was appointed as the next Yugoslav Ambassador to France in 1957. While the new Yugoslav state started its cultural diplomacy in the first years after 1945 with folklore, folk groups and choirs, classical music took center stage in the 1950s, and famous Yugoslav musicians “spoke the language of diplomacy.” The place of music within the framework of Yugoslavia’s cultural diplomacy was much more clearly defined and it was used much more intensively than only ten years earlier, when only folk groups and choirs built the image of Yugoslavia. Classical music was on the diplomatic throne, and world-famous musicians, such as Čangalović and Ozim, were used to promote the culture of the country that broke free from the influence of the USSR and was getting closer to the West. Yugoslav cultural diplomacy was not limited to Paris and also penetrated into other parts of France. Poitiers hosted a number of Yugoslav musicians and artists, and one such example was the guest performance of the Slovenian Quartet at the end of 1960. We should note, however, that Yugoslav cultural diplomacy relied heavily on the French Alliance at that time, where we can see long cooperation extending back to the time of the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

³¹ “Le Maréchal Tito: nos conversations avec les représentants de la France seront heureux et utiles [Marshal Tito: our talks with the French representatives were cordial and useful],” *Le Monde* (May 8, 1956): https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1956/05/08/le-marechal-tito-nos-conversations-avec-les-representants-de-la-france-seront-heureux-et-utiles_2254503_1819218.html; Momčilo Stefanović, *Svet i Tito* [The world and Tito] (Zagreb, Novi Sad: Globus, Matica Srpska, 1988). See also *Marshal Tito On State Visit To Paris*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZQAc6zwGtQ> (accessed on April 20, 2020).

³² Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 103.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Venceslav Glišić, “Radivoje Uvalić,” in *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, Vol. 8 (Zagreb: JLZ, 1971), 448.

Silenced tones:
Disruption of diplomatic relations and attempts
at cultural diplomacy in the 1960s

Numerous performances by Yugoslav musicians and artists in France created an atmosphere of improving relations between France and Yugoslavia, but 1960 came with a turnaround. After President Coty, who was even less active than his predecessor in trying to influence policy, France and Yugoslavia began growing apart, and cultural diplomacy, even music, could do little to help. Coty's presidency was troubled by the political instability of the Fourth Republic and the Algerian question. With the deepening of the crisis in 1958, Coty appealed to Charles de Gaulle, the "most illustrious of Frenchmen," to become the last Prime Minister of the Fourth Republic. Coty had threatened to resign if de Gaulle's appointment was not approved by the National Assembly. The period of the French Fifth Republic began with de Gaulle, which—in addition to major changes in France and particularly the war in Algeria—also influenced international politics. However, serious problems existed in the Franco-Yugoslav relations already before (the relations between de Gaulle and Tito, the political emigration of Serbs and Croats (the Ustasas) to France, the war in Algeria, decolonization, the Non-Aligned Movement, etc.). Charles de Gaulle, who grew up on monarchist beliefs and believed in the power of the law, considered the fate which Tito served general Mihailović to be unacceptable.³⁵ Moreover, he believed the Yugoslav federation as such to be a highly fragile state structure.

Another shadow was cast on the Franco–Yugoslav (Serbian) relations by Tito when he received Algerian Prime Minister Ferhat Abbas in Belgrade, which was, of course, not a welcome move for Paris.³⁶ However, it seems that French diplomacy wanted to maintain firm ties with Belgrade. For a new French Ambassador to Yugoslavia, France proposed the son of Franchet d'Espèrey, a famous general and commander of the Allied army that penetrated the Southern Front and liberated Serbia in the Great War. But his credentials were rejected by the Yugoslav side because of his strong ties with Serbian political émigrés in Paris. In response, de Gaulle organized an official reception for former Yugoslav Queen Maria Karađorđević, Prince Regent Paul Karađorđević, Bogoljub Jevtić, former

³⁵ Jean-Christophe Buisson, *Héros trahi par les Alliés, le général Mihailović (1893–1946)* [Heroes Betrayed by the Allies, General Mihailović (1893–1946)] (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1999).

³⁶ Dragan Bogetić, "Podrška Jugoslavije borbi alžirskog naroda za nezavisnost u završnoj fazi alžirskog rata 1958–1962 [Yugoslav support in the battle of Algerians for independence in the final phase of the Algerian War 1958–1962]," *Istorija 20. veka* 3 (2012): 147–162; Vojislav Pavlović, "La guerre d'Algérie et la quête d'une nouvelle politique étrangère de la Yougoslavie de Tito [The Algerian War and the adoption of a new foreign policy of Tito's Yugoslavia]," in *La guerre d'Algérie et le monde communiste*, edited by Hervé Bismuth, Fritz Taubert (Paris: EUD Histories, 2014), 119–138.

President of the Royal Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs, recipient of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, Dragiša Cvetković, former Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and Prince Michael Petrović-Njegoš, pretender to the throne of Montenegro.³⁷ After Yugoslavia recognized the Algerian government in 1961, the Yugoslav ambassador left Paris upon request of the French government. The local press wrote that Tito's regime assisted the opposing side in the war by sending weapons. They even mentioned a donation of \$55 million for the Algerian Liberation Front. After that, cultural exchanges and guest appearances by Yugoslav musicians and artists became increasingly rare. Music within the framework of cultural diplomacy fell silent.

The cultural diplomacy of Yugoslavia in France was revived with the fall of de Gaulle from power. A new wave of representation of Yugoslavia began gradually from 1968, but without a clear plan and guidelines, and mostly related to the activities of the diaspora. An attempt was made by establishing a club (Club of the Yugoslav Embassy),³⁸ but the results could not be seen immediately, especially after a bomb attack on the club in 1968 organized by Yugoslav political emigrants.³⁹ Therefore, Yugoslavia acted through informal channels. One of them was a bookstore called Yougo–France, owned by Fadil Ekmečić, who collected numerous testimonies on Yugoslav citizens in France, as well as about relations between France and Yugoslavia after 1945. In April 1968, Yougo–France organized a fair at the Porte de Clignancourt, selling Yugoslav books and products, particularly popular music records. Also, a Grand Yugoslav Week (Grand Semaine Yougoslave) was held at the Palaiseau House of Youth and Culture (Maison des jeunes et de la culture de Palaiseau) in May 1968. The event was organized by the bookstore, but Yugoslav Ambassador Ivan Vejvoda⁴⁰ was present at the opening ceremony.

The Grand Yugoslav Week included painting exhibitions by Petar Lubarda, Milo Milunović, Ivan Generalić, Marko Čelebonović and others, as well as a folklore and entertainment program, in which popular Yugoslav music pop star Tereza Kesovija appeared. This period was followed by a resurgence of concerts by singers of popular Yugoslav and folk music, which were partly supported by the Yugoslav Embassy. However, The purpose of these manifestations was not cultural diplomacy,

³⁷ "Tito et de Gaulle [Tito and de Gaulle]," *Le Monde* (May 26, 1980): https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1980/05/26/tito-et-de-gaulle_2822508_1819218.html; Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 125.

³⁸ DAMSPRS, 1965, France, Note: Le Club de l'Ambassade de Yougoslavie.

³⁹ "France: Paris Bomb Explosion In Basement Of Yugoslav Embassy," *British Pathé* (February 18, 1968): <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/VLVACSEKFBGP69GI3ZQ84KCVSLGAG-FRANCE-PARIS-BOMB-EXPLOSION-IN-BASEMENT-OF-YUGOSLAV-EMBASSY/query/Embassy>.

⁴⁰ Aleksandar Životić, "Ivan Ivo Vejvoda," in *Srpska enciklopedija*, Vol. 2 (Belgrade, Novi Sad: SANU, Matica srpska, 2013), 180.

and they were addressing more the Yugoslav diaspora. One of them was a concert by Esmā Redžepova and the Stevo Teodosievski Ensemble at the Syndicat du livre. Apart from the bookstore Yougo–France, the second organizer of Yugoslav concerts in France was the Brotherhood and Unity Association of Yugoslav Emigrants. The Oro folk group performed at the celebration of Republic Day in 1970, and this event was organized by the Brotherhood and Unity Association, not the Yugoslav Embassy. In addition, we should mention the work of the folk dance group called *Folliane* (from Issy-les-Moulineaux), consisting of young French people who performed a Yugoslav dance program.⁴¹ The founder was choreographer Vivienne Chloquet. In addition to folklore as a means of cultural communication, a new wave of twinning French and Yugoslav towns was also attempted, encouraging alliances and lasting friendship, and concerts were held within related festivities. Manifestations called “Meetings with singers” were also organized in cooperation with Yugoslav record labels (RTV, Diskoton, Jugoton). At that time, Yugoslav performers in France included successful pop musicians Kornī Group and Arsen Dedić, but also folk singers Safet Isović, Predrag Živković Tozovac, Gvozden Radičević and Andrija Ojdanić performed in Paris, but mostly only for the diaspora. In February 1971, Inex – France was established as an exclusive importer of Yugoslav records and a concert organizer for Yugoslavs.⁴² The diaspora, especially the bookstore Yougo–France and the Brotherhood and Unity Association, took over most of the cultural promotion of Yugoslavia, and thus the program shifted from ballet, opera and classical music in the direction of popular Yugoslav singers. Such events were organized in order to animate the diaspora for Yugoslavia, as well as to achieve unity in the diaspora and its attachment to the new state, especially with a wave of economic migration in those years.

Conclusion

After 1945, new Yugoslavia and its communist rule emerged on the international stage, seeking to present itself to the entire Western world. This implied a break with the legacy of the French–Serbian relations, which also affected the content of the cultural and diplomatic package of Yugoslavia in France. Contemporaries recognized that “in the post–WWII period official politics destroyed the bridges of previous friendly French–Serbian cooperation.”⁴³ Cultural diplomacy tried to smooth the open issues in diplomatic relations between France and Yugoslavia

⁴¹ Ekmečić, *Poslednjih sto godina*, 132.

⁴² *Journal-export: specijalni broj posvećen francusko-jugoslovenskim odnosima* (1956 –1984) (Belgrade, 1983).

⁴³ Dragan Nedeljeković, “Srpska dijaspora u Francuskoj posle Drugog svetskog rata [The Serbian diaspora in France after the World War II],” in *Danica, srpski narodni ilustrovani kalendar za 1994 godinu* (Belgrade: Vukova zadužbina, 1994), 278–279.

(poor relations between de Gaulle and Tito, Yugoslav political emigrants in France, cooperation between the Communist Parties, Tito's support in the Algerian War). Music in the framework of the cultural diplomacy of Yugoslavia in France from 1945 to 1970 passed a long path, from an important aid in representing the new state to a forgotten tool of diplomatic activity. Official activities lacked a systematic approach despite initial sporadic successes, firstly with choral performances in 1948, as well as the great success of Yugoslav classical musicians in 1952, and again in 1956, at the time of Tito's official visit. Already before the interruption of diplomatic relations between France and Yugoslavia in 1960, problems had arisen in coordination of cultural-diplomacy activities between the Embassy and Yugoslav associations in France, along with enormous insecurity and distrust in Franco-Yugoslav cooperation (between the Yugoslav and French communists, as well as between the Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). All of this also applied to the use of music for soft power purposes.

De Gaulle's departure from power and the arrival of Georges Pompidou in 1969 created the conditions for the thawing of relations between the two states. Cultural diplomacy once again served as an important link in the normalization of relations.⁴⁴ The lack of sufficient activity in France in this field of public diplomacy is also evident from the occasion of Tito's next official visit to France. Although, of course, international circumstances had changed, it was noticed that Tito's visit to Paris, during which he met French President Georges Pompidou (October 23, 1970) gained less attention in the public than the previous one.⁴⁵ In the 1960s, the tones of music became forgotten in the pursuit of Yugoslav diplomatic goals, and instead Yugoslav popular music was used to keep the diaspora together. Classical music and performers with a high reputation around the world were present within the framework of cultural exchange, but insufficiently visible for the purpose of Yugoslav diplomacy toward France. But the cultural diplomacy of Yugoslavia in France also went through certain changes. These changes are reflected in the establishment of the Culture and Information Center of Yugoslavia in 1974.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁴ Arnold Suppan, "La politique culturelle yougoslave durent d'ère Tito [The cultural politics of Yugoslavia in Tito's era]," in *Culture et Guerre froide*, edited by Jean-François Sirinelli, Georges Henri Soutou. (Paris: Presses Paris Sorbonne, 2005), 183–205.

⁴⁵ "Tito u Parizu [Tito in Paris]," *Politika* (October 24, 1970): 1; Gilles Troude, "La Yougoslavie titiste vue par les diplomates français (1955–1974) [Tito's Yugoslavia from the perspective of French diplomats (1955–1974)]," *Balkanica* XL (2009): 167–181.

⁴⁶ Kolaković, "Kultura i diplomatija: Francuska i Srbija," 101–122; Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović, *Kulturna diplomatija i identitet Srbije [Cultural Diplomacy and the Identity of Serbia]* (Belgrade: FDU, CLIO, 2014), 203–205; Branislav Pantović, Nina Aksić, "Instrumentalizacija institucija kulture u međunarodnom ambijentu na primeru Kulturnog centra Srbije (Pariz) i turskog kulturnog centra Junus Emre (Novi Pazar) [Instrumentalization of cultural institutions in international affairs on the example of the Serbian Culture Center in Paris and the Turkish culture center Junus Emre (Novi Pazar)]," *Zbornik Fakulteta dramskih umetnosti* 31 (2017): 163–179.

new course of using soft power marked by the Culture and Information Center of Yugoslavia in Paris, however, never fully justified the high expectations, but this is already a different topic. Based on the analysis of the cultural diplomacy of post-war Yugoslavia in France, we can state that music was not used sufficiently as a tool of diplomatic activity. More efforts were made to make an impact with lectures, exhibitions and translations, but none of these, apart from fine arts, achieved a high reach. In Yugoslavia's cultural diplomacy, music was underutilized, although it can speak a universal language in diplomatic activities as well as fine arts.

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