

Yugoslavia and eurovision song contest

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Yugoslavia did not participate in the Eurovision until 1961, but this was not related to the country's own policies, but due to the fact that televisions were only introduced in 1956, despite its booming economic growth. International tourism was mostly an aspect of the Yugoslav economy, but also a way for the government to display the benefits of the country's political rule. Yugoslavia experienced a tourist boom in the early 1950ies and the number of foreign visitors grew from 70 000 to 873 000 yearly visitors between 1950 and 1960. The tourist mass primarily consisted of Western sightseers, but the late 1950ies and 1960ies also saw normalization efforts with other communist countries coming into fruition, with Czechoslovak tourists making up most visitors from this region. However, strengthening the tourist potential in Czechoslovakia proved difficult as it was always dependent on Czechoslovak policies. As the majority of tourists hailed from the West, Yugoslav authorities focused all their efforts on promotional campaigns in Western countries. Even though the focus on the economic benefits of international tourism had been strongly advocated since the 1950ies, it was only in the mid 1960ies that it was really put on the agenda, prompted by the fourth plenum of the Communist League of Yugoslavia where Tito proclaimed that the tourist sector had been left behind and stressed the need for improving the road networks, constructing hotels and creating emotional bonds among foreign tourists to the Adriatic Sea. This economical aspect did not interfere with the country's political stance, as it tied quite well into Tito's „ come and see the truth” policy that had already been introduced in 1949, where the belief was that if other nationals visited the country and witnessed what Yugoslavia had accomplished already, they

could not help it but be impressed by Yugoslav workers, regardless of their views towards the regime.

The Eurovision Song Contest provided the country a big, international stage where it could promote itself to a primarily Western audience. Although it cannot be claimed that Yugoslavia participated in the Eurovision to promote itself as a tourist destination, the Eurovision did present the country an opportunity to define itself as such. Many of the Yugoslav contributions perpetuated the idea of a beautiful holiday destination by the sea, often intertwined with a love story. The prime example is the song “ Džuli” by Daniel that represented Yugoslavia in the Eurovision in 1983 and finished fourth, the best placing since 1962. The popular song was about a summer fling with a vacationer (stigla je sama sa ljetom, prišla i rekla “ helo”) which ended as abruptly as it began (kao i sve ljetne snove, i nju mi je odnio dan). Although the summer romance did not last, the song did go on to become a European hit song and was also released in English. The accompanying music video features Daniel on the beach by the sea in the tourist destination Sveti Stefan in Montenegro, with shots from the characteristic former island and from other towns, landscapes and tourist attractions along the coast.

Another Yugoslav Eurovision song set on the Mediterranean coast with love as the main theme would concurrently spark controversies due to its music video. “ Ciao Amore”, sung by Vlado and Izolda, was also set on the Montenegrin coast, with the same visuals as “ Džuli”: Helicopter video shots of islands, beautiful landscapes, smooth coastal rock slopes, the sea, boats, a couple in love and shots by the swimming pool of a holiday resort. These

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imageries were all contributing to the idea of Yugoslavia as the ideal vacation spot for summer. What made the video contentious was that it displayed Izolda topless through several of the music video scenes. None of the clips actually showed any frontal nudity, as she is shot from the side or the back with Vlado's arms around her, however, it is evident that she is not wearing a bikini top. Although this was a reflection of the country's tolerance towards nude bathing, it led to some uproar with Turkey refusing to air the video.

Most of Yugoslavia's entries between 1961 and 1992 were about love, ranging from songs about fleeting summer romances to ballads about unrequited love and regret. There were, however, a small number of exceptions where the Yugoslav Eurovision entries wished to reach out to the world with a message of peace, understanding and fraternity. Being the only country singing in a Slavic language, meant that it would result more difficult to convey an international message through song than for most other competing countries that would at least sing in a language that could be understood by their neighbours to some degree. The song " Pozdrav svijetu" by Ivan & 3M participated in 1969 and most of the lyrics consists of the greeting " Dobar dan" translated into eight languages, English, German, Dutch, Spanish, French, Italian, Finnish and Russian. The song is about everyone being brothers and sisters regardless of where they are from. Even though the title of the songs sends a greeting " to the entire world", there is no language chosen that does not belong to Europe. However, as the viewers of the Eurovision would primarily be on the European continent, it would make sense to reach out to the actual listeners of the song. Additionally,

including terms in other languages might help in getting more votes, as understanding parts of the lyrics helps establishing a bond between the listener and the artist. An interesting aspect is that the song writers have chosen to sing “ Dobar dan” translated into Russian, as the Soviet Union never participated in the Eurovision. For a song written and performed during the Cold War to include both Western European languages and Russian, only emphasizes the dual connection Yugoslavia had between the East and West and peace and brotherhood being an answer to the uncertain times we are living in.

The Croatian Spring refers to a social movement that started in 1967 with a group of linguists calling for equality between the Croatian and Serbian language variants. This sparked resonance and soon other topics would be brought up, like the cultural difficulties of Croatians living in other Yugoslavian republics, the problem of the over-representation of Serbian nationals in leadership positions, economic modernization and better opportunities to earn money in an attempt to bring work emigration to a halt. Yugoslavia’s federal nature would be underlined in changes in the constitution in 1971, resulting in Croatian reforms and a strengthening of the social movement. Despite Tito’s declaring that a national separatist movement would not suppose any dangers, conservative forces within the Croatian party leadership solicited Tito to quash the movement and ultimately, he did, publicly denouncing the movement as “ chauvinistic, nationalistic, and counter-revolutionary. Many of those involved in the movement faced consequences and the liberal leaders of the Croatian party resigned shortly afterwards.

In the aftermath of the purge of both Croatian and other republics' liberal politicians, the party leadership decided to compel pop and rock artists to sing about Tito, multinational unity and the Partisan movement. An example of this is the rock band Kornji Grupa, which participated in the Eurovision in 1974 with the song " Moja Generacija". The song deals with the generation born during the hardships of the Second World War and compares how life was during the war and for the parents' generation and how much life has improved since then.

It is clear that the song was promoting the development of the country and as it was the only one-party socialistic state participating in the Eurovision, it implicitly states that life under the socialist regime is prosperous. Not all Eurovision artists would go on to support the regime, Vice Vukov who had performed twice in the Eurovision would go on to front the Croatian Spring as their bard and was not allowed to perform publicly in Yugoslavia again until 1989. He avoided arrest as he happened to be touring in the Croatian migrant community in Australia at the time of the quelling of the Croatian Spring and chose to go to France instead of Yugoslavia after his tour ended.