

MADE IN YUGOSLAVIA: GOODS FROM THE «SUNNY SIDE»* OF COMMUNISM

INTRODUCTION

The post 2nd WW Yugoslav development was marked by violent political and socio-economic change that had lasting effects on its various nations and populations in decades to come. Established communist regime has put its citizens, based on etatistic homogenization inside the communist / socialist Yugoslav state, through process of social transformation¹. Citizens were therefore reprogrammed / re-socialized and prepared for the life in the society in continuous making and permanent socio-economic / political crisis. Legitimized by the communist ideology, new socialist social relations developed in such society have therefore relied heavily on improved industrialized economy and management system. However, to prove itself as an only legitimate force behind progressive transformation of dominantly agrarian pre-war society, socio-political elite has introduced revolutionary state regime strongly supported, what was believed to be, the most advanced state economy: self-managed socialist centrally planned economy. Thereby, socialism has become new «modernization strategy», or what I. Rogić calls «paradoxical modernization» greatly dependable on industrialization process². Yugoslav communism³, namely sophisticated

* The phrase «sunny side» was borrowed from: Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A history of tourism in socialism (1950s–1980s) / Ed. by H. Grandits and K. Taylor. Budapest; New York, 2010.

¹ Cvikić S. Vukovar u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća: Društveni uzroci nasilja. Doktorska disertacija. Zagreb, 2016. S. 2–3 (URL: <https://repozitorij.hrstud.unizg.hr/islandora/object/hrstud:940> (last visited – 5 March, 2020)).

² Rogić I. Tehnika i samostalnost. Okvir za sliku treće hrvatske modernizacije. Zagreb, 2000. S. 410–491.

³ For more information on Yugoslav communism and various issues related to totalitarian nature of communism see: Roberts D. D. The totalitarian experiment in twentieth century Europe: Understanding the poverty of great politics. New York; London, 2006; Mihaljević J., Miljan G. Was Tito's Yugoslavia not totalitarian? // Istorija 20. veka. 2020. Vol. 38. No. 1. S. 223–248;

violence within⁴, is deeply rooted in modernization process of industrialization since Croatian economy was marked by socially constructed human nature and morality thus rendering atomized and isolated individuals in the framework of their normative functionality – inside its collectivized working place (jobs) and social agency (society).

Namely, industrialization has managed to collectivize socialist working force in an integrated framework of workers/owners whose professional qualification structure and competences were socially engineered to match organizational principles of centrally planned economy and self-management socialism⁵. Even though it was done to, above all, firmly secure socio-political elite's survival and stability in the socialist society, centrally planned economy and self-management have, nonetheless, introduced innovative ways to develop, what was believed, a more productive and democratic economy. However, industry is state owned and ensures material and cultural wealth of the new socialist society, while the state becomes an instrument in the hands of workers – a liberated class of self-managers. Despite the liberating effect it had on the growing working class of self-managers / owners of the means of production and company productivity outputs, development of workers self-management inside socialist centrally-planned economy was transformed over the time into social function of paradoxical work and production system thus having its entrepreneurial function still firmly fixed in the hands of the socio-political elite⁶. Therefore, liberated class of self-managers became inseparable part of the paradoxical modernization experiment – modernization process which in its totalizing existence is transformed into permanent crisis of the socialist society in making⁷.

Klanjšek S., Flere R. Was Tito's Yugoslavia Totalitarian? // *Communist and Post- Communist studies*. 2014. Vol. 47. P. 237–245; *Kolakowski L.* Male rasprave o velikim stvarima. Zagreb, 2013; *Barrot J.* Introduction // *Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes* / Ed. by P. Jambreč. Ljubljana, 2008; *Rašeta B.* Komunizam. Hrestomatija: Ključni tekstovi o ideologiji, njezinu usponu i padu. Zagreb, 2017; *Mihaljević J.* Komunizam i čovjek. Odnosi vlasti i pojedinca u Hrvatskoj (1958.–1972.). Zagreb, 2016. – On Yugoslav communist / socialist economy see: *Woodward S. L.* Socialist Unemployment: The political economy of Yugoslavia, 1945–1990. Princeton, 1995; *Horvat B.* Politička ekonomija socijalizma. Zagreb, 1984; *Farkas R. P.* Yugoslav economic development and political change: The relationship between economic managers and policy-making elites, New York, 1975.

⁴ The idea for the concept «sophisticated violence within» comes from Hannah Arendt and her assessment of totalitarianism. See: *Arendt H.* Izvori totalitarizma. Zagreb, 2015.

⁵ *Cvikić S.* Vukovar u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća... S. 226–240; *Cvikić S., Žebec Šilj I.* Centrally-planned economy's social influence in socialist Croatia – Vukovar Case Study // *Ekonomika teorija u periodu 1958–2018* / Ur. B. Drašković, J. Minović, A. Hanić. Beograd, 2018. S. 397–425.

⁶ *Cvikić S.* Vukovar u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća... S. 226–240.

⁷ As indicated by Roberts, none of the totalitarian experiments in 20th century history were developed as such in a way that their creators knew that totalitarianism would become the result of their endeavor, since «no one knew what totalitarianism was – because it was just coming to be for the first time». Therefore, «totalitarianism» of the Yugoslav modernization experiment is approached in this paper much in the manner proposed by Roberts when he states that: «The key is to probe totalitarianism not as a form of rule or set of extreme outcomes but as a historically specific dynamic, which grew from aspirations that became possible only at a particular moment from within the ongoing modern political experiment, and through which certain extreme and unforeseen outcomes came to be». See: *Roberts D. D.* The totalitarian experiment in twentieth century Europe... P. 17.

Nonetheless, even though industrialization emancipatory trials represent liberalization efforts to decentralize and fragment socialist economy replacing true democratization of economic relations with workers self-management; those efforts, however, have become a new form of economic democracy that functions inside associations of working people and citizens in self-management of production resources and company's income. Thereby, liberalization of socialist economic relations through workers self-management has had indeed a profound impact on economic growth and socialist development even though this newly implemented type of democratic economy was still a very sophisticated regime mechanism to rule over workers. Such paradoxical modernization experiment, therefore, on one hand, has improved working peoples' and citizens' standard of living, while on the other hand, it has increased their personal consumption even though, the time will show, their needs will be in constant disproportion with the level of economy production. Nonetheless, maintained balance of the socialist economic relations inside democratized economy of the self-management system was achieved through opportunistic means of normative regulations – social agreements contracted by the Party and the working people. Increased individuation through liberalized consumers sovereignty produced by newly established self-management economic relations in 1960s has thus, continued to thrive and grow despite numerous challenges it represented for practical implementation of contracted normative regulations that tried to merge democratization with self-management on the level of economic strategy. Therefore, liberalizing properties of the industrialization process most prominently featured by the «top-down» economic reforms in the 1960s and onwards have had indeed democratization effects on the socialist society until its violent disintegration in 1991. This however was lively debated and researched among scholars of the West, since at the time of Yugoslav 1960s self-management economic «miracle», socialist economy has stirred the imagination of economists and policymakers around the world⁸. It could be argued, that in a way self-management of the socialist economy has become an innovative «knowledge» produced by the scientific socialism and exported to the capitalist West.

In practice however, this idea of self-managed socialist economy by collectivized working class has had unexpected outcome⁹. Namely, rationalized and controlled liberalization through self-management restructuration of socialist companies into organizations of labor associations (so called OOUR) – autonomous companies with workers as direct producers of goods – has introduced a concept / an idea of «interests» in company's management and production¹⁰. Democratizing effect of such reconceptualization of the socialist economic production relations has thus, resulted in decentralized socialist economic system and market with individualized and competing interests of the companies, as well as in collectives' decision-making process. This however, will prove to be extremely challenging in future economic development as it becomes increasingly difficult to face the standing issues coming from reformed rewarding system that was to enable more just and equal re-distribution of working organizations' income, namely workers' wages in line with

⁸ For information on this subject see: *Bockman J.* Market in the name of socialism. Left-wing origins of neoliberalism. Stanford, 2011; *Zaccaria B.* The EEC's Yugoslav policy in Cold War Europe, 1968–1980. London, 2016.

⁹ *Cvikić S.* Vukovar u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća... S. 226–240.

¹⁰ *Woodward S. L.* Socialist unemployment... P. 196.

their work productivity¹¹. Thereby, this liberal idea of interest inside self-managed socialist centrally planned economy as a rational agency directive will bring about:

- increase in workers' wages – used as a method to mobilize/motivate direct producers to accomplish planned development goals;
- increase in general consumption and workers' purchasing power;
- mismanagement of payment funds – due to arbitrary increased wages of workers in company collectives;
- in a long term, such collective company decisions inside new normative framework of remuneration (payment) per product unit would progressively hamper further realization of the five-year economic development plans¹².

Therefore, economic reorientation towards improvement of the living standards of working people and citizens in 1960s (and onwards), represented a milestone in political re-direction of newly established socialist economic relations, since the affirmation of the workers self-management is positioned on a higher level, as a functional part of overall economic development and market. However, artificially created simulative interests of workers as direct producers of goods to improve productivity of work and production will gradually decrease over the time under the pressure of economic problems produced by the system of decentralized socialist economy, and due to overestimated professional capabilities and potential of the working force to deal with issues that are above all political (self-management implementation), and then economic in nature. Thereby, socialist economy in making was continuously unable to manage its production deficit and to resolve standing economic issues through stabilization measures/directives and measures of social intervention, since self-management social basis and socialist economic relations were always insufficiently developed. It was evident over the time, that numerous economic system weaknesses (as a result of its contradictions) have become a new system of work – which will not substantially change until its violent disintegration in 1991. Namely, properties of the new work system were related to its subversive nature, its co-habituated character and deviant social character of interest driven fraternalized working class, bureaucracy, and communist elite¹³. Nonetheless, legal and normative properties of the socialist self-managed centrally planned economy have ensured in the 1970s and 1980s liberalized and democratized workers legal rights, thus reaffirming their role as direct producers of goods in the framework of extended production and socialist self-management demanding following system changes (since 1963 Constitution):

- to liberalize market and prices
- to stabilize socialist social relations on the market, in production and out of it
- to maintain functional, systematic and methodological production planning as working tools and functional element of the direct producers of self-management
- to harmonize general consumption with real possibilities and available communal / local means
- to rationally increase investments, intensive production, specialization, and cooperation

¹¹ Cvikić S. Vukovar u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća... S. 226–240; Cvikić S., Žebec Šilj I. Centrally-planned economy's social influence... S. 397–425.

¹² Woodward S. L. Socialist unemployment...P. 196.

¹³ Cvikić S. Vukovar u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća... S. 226–240.

- to have full sovereignty of Croatian national control and management of its income and production based on the principle of distribution per work and self-management
- to decentralize means of extended production
- to foster economic and financial power of banks, and
- to reinforce independence of companies.

The paradox of such socialist modernization experiment is therefore marked by divergent outcomes¹⁴. Namely, despite its liberating economic efforts and reforms, centrally planned economy and workers' self-management were created based on political and subjective reasons – to manipulate with material gains and benefits of atomized individuals (consumer emancipation and liberalized consumption); while the underline problem of continuous political and economic crisis created by the socialist system was to be found in the structural and ideological / political dependence of the economy on the totalitarian character of the Yugoslav regime¹⁵. However, one must acknowledge the fact that its liberalization continuously regulated by the socio-political elite until late 1980s (thus controlled on the level of self-management legislation), has nonetheless, democratized socialist economic relations inside and outside collectives and companies fostering increased public consumption/ individual consumerism and market diversification.

FROM STAKHANOVISM TO CONSUMERISM

As indicated in previous chapter, the development of workers self-management inside socialist centrally planned economy has been transformed over the time into social function of paradoxical work and production system. However, it is also important to understand the transition from «Stakhanovism to consumerism»¹⁶ not only in everyday life of ordinary people but, in this case, in industrial production.

The starting point of this transition was obviously the Information Bureau's Resolution and the subsequent Soviet Bloc's economic boycott of the FPRY¹⁷. Further on, the transition could be traced in partially implemented national economic development plan – the first Yugoslav Five-Year Plan (1947–1951)¹⁸. Namely, after several prolongations the Plan was dismissed under the allegations that it created the suspension system of the role of the market through particular consumption restriction which manifested itself as a deformation of the producer, who is indifferent to the demands of consumption¹⁹. Nonetheless, the industrial investments

¹⁴ *Farkas R. P.* Yugoslav economic development and political change... P. 13.

¹⁵ *Cvikić S.* 1) Vukovar u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća... S. 226–240; 2) Vukovarsko poslijeratno društvo 1945–1951. // *Borovo Naselje 1945.–1950. Studija društvenih, demografskih, gospodarskih i političkih prilika / Ur. P. Elez, D. Živić.* Vukovar, 2018. S. 39–60; 3) Opći okvir modernizacije poslijeratnog vukovarskog društva 1945.–1952. // *Borovo Naselje 1945.–1950...* S. 183–214.

¹⁶ Stakhanovism or *udarništvo* was highly present and valued in basic and heavy industries in Yugoslavia during late 1940s, and therefore is contrasted to consumerism which was introduced with the prioritization of light / consumer goods industries.

¹⁷ Very detailed, description of this period through month by month documentation is given in: *Woodward S. L.* Socialist unemployment... S. 121–160.

¹⁸ *Horvat B.* Privredni sistem i ekonomska politika Jugoslavije. Problemi, teorija, ostvarenja, propusti. Beograd, 1970. S. 17.

¹⁹ *Hadži Vasilev M.* Mistifikacija nagrađivanja prema radu u sistemu socijalističke svojine // *Komunist.* 1961. Br. 64. S. 8.

were still allocated to the basic and heavy industries (81 %) and only 19 % to consumer goods industries, where supply was unable to meet demand. Aside from the rather low investments, consumer goods industries regardless have shown increase in employment and eventually would expand and resurface as the priority in allocation of investments in the span of few years²⁰. Therefore, so called, transitional period in Yugoslav economy was marked, as some critics pointed out by irrational projects, lack of any coordination and serious planning or, as renown weekly magazine *Ekonomaska politika* put it: «Yugoslavia had started the production of diesel locomotives but had to import needles and nails which could easily be produced at home»²¹. Obviously a process which demanded to distance from the Soviet type of economy however was not exempt from the previously made mistakes inside centrally planned economy and continuous search of Yugoslav authentic way of development. The situation improved to some extent when the new creditors²² of the Yugoslav economy did not approve further investments in heavy industry and key capital projects. As well, the production under the western technological licenses commenced which brought visible improvements (until it became a «mania for licenses»²³), even though such technology transfer was limited because purchased licenses were for outdated technology²⁴. However, consumer goods production has substantially increased until 1953 when the growth of both sectors – capital and consumer goods – doubled its outputs. Therefore, in 1962 production of metal goods and textiles represented the largest manufacturing sectors based on its added values, next to the rapid expansion of new industry branches – production of chemical and electrical goods²⁵.

In the period 1953–1965 Yugoslav economy has been credited as the fastest growing in terms of output and total factor productivity growth rates²⁶. As indicated by some authors, this was due to the foreign loans, which were used directly to finance the import of investment goods (new technologies) and semi-finished products²⁷. Others though strongly advocate the role of self-management. B. Horvat stressed that self-management «accelerated growth of output and technical progress beyond anything known before»²⁸. Also, some argued that other factors could have attributed to the growth. D. A. Dyker pointed out «the first five-year plan, failure though it was, had bequeathed to Yugoslavia many grand projects which were only finally brought on stream in the middle 1950s»²⁹. According to Yugoslav statistics in the period 1956–1960 gross national product total value grew at an average compound rate of

²⁰ *Hamilton F. E. I.* Yugoslavia: Patterns of economic activity. London, 1968. P. 221.

²¹ *Sirc Lj.* The Yugoslav economy under self-management. London, 1979. P. 24.

²² After the deterioration of relations, the previously granted credits by USSR abruptly ended, and Yugoslavia received aid and loans from Western Europe and USA. In the period 1949–1955 Yugoslavia has received \$ 1,2 billion from USA alone.

²³ *Sirc Lj.* The Yugoslav Economy... P. 24.

²⁴ *Chittle C. R.* Direct foreign investment in a socialist labor-managed economy. The Yugoslav Experience // *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*. 1975. Vol. 111. No. 4. P. 770–784.

²⁵ OECD Economic Surveys: Yugoslavia 1962. Paris, 1962. P. 8.

²⁶ *Sapir A.* Economic growth and factor substitution: What happened to the Yugoslav Miracle? // *The Economic Journal*. 1980. Vol. 90. No. 358. P. 294.

²⁷ *Gnjatović D.* Uloga inostranih sredstava u privrednom razvoju Jugoslavije. Beograd, 1985.

²⁸ *Horvat B.* Yugoslav economic policy in the Post-War period: Problems, ideas, institutional developments // *The American Economic Review*. 1971. Vol. 61. No. 3. P. 92.

²⁹ *Dyker D. A.* Yugoslavia: Socialism, development and debt. New York, 2011. P. 96.

12.6 % per year, while the industrial output / production total value increased at rate of 14 %³⁰! Years of Yugoslav economic miracle, or industrialization era, as some authors (and economic experts) call this period, were however burdened with many issues. If the first Five-Year Plan has gone overboard by prioritizing heavy and basic industry, the second five-year plan, (the Social Development Plan for Yugoslavia 1957–1961) has gone in opposite direction. The paramount goal of this plan was the expansion of consumer goods industries³¹.

Alongside with the industrial production growth gradually coming to the fore was an issue of improving a living standard, and consumption of the population. Since the mid-1950s, the federal annual plans, and especially the Social Development Plan for the FPRY 1957–1961 have provided guidelines to improve population's living standard, that is, to increase population's consumer power³². The same was affirmed at the Seventh Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia held in Ljubljana in 1958 whose set tasks gave impetus to the growing consumer goods industries³³.

In such environment Jugoplastika was founded and gradually its products became indispensable part of every household in Yugoslavia making everyone's summer vacation memorable, and childhood happy. While at the same time, in continental Croatia, in the city of Vukovar, a prewar Bata Factory, renamed now Borovo, was to evolve from an utopian into the socialist self-management experiment trying to «reach the Moon» all over again, when subsequently its post-communist production has managed to do so figuratively with Borovo's brand Startas advertised in the Vogue Magazine in 2015³⁴.

PLASTIC IS FANTASTIC

«Jugoplastika» was founded as an autonomous manufacturing entity in Split in 1952 seceding from the parent company Jugovinil – the «pioneer» in manufacture and processing of plastic mass from the PVC in Yugoslavia³⁵. The unbundling of Jugoplastika from Jugovinil was a strategic move, even though not perceived as such by its executers at that moment, because the Yugoslav market was «hungry» for plastics – material still considered «exotic» in 1950s³⁶. In the first years Jugoplastika consisted of a four small scale workshops producing garments, footwear and plastic ware made from the PVC produced by the former parent

³⁰ Vanek J. Yugoslav economic growth and its conditions // The american economic review. 1963. Vol. 53. No. 2. P. 556–557.

³¹ Horvat B. Yugoslav economic policy... P. 89.

³² Savezni društveni plan za 1956 sa propisima za njegovo izvršenje i objašnjenjima / Prir. M. Mihailović, V. Bošković. Beograd, 1956. S. 6; Društveni plan privrednog razvoja Jugoslavije 1957–1961. Ekspoze – Zakon – Elaborat / Ur. D. Knežević. Beograd, 1957. S. 9–33.

³³ Sedmi Kongres SKJ. Beograd, 1958. S. 371.

³⁴ A phrase «to reach the Moon» has its origin in the 1930s when management of the Bata Factory in Borovo boasted about the quantity of their production stating that literally it could reach the moon if all the shoes were lined up next to each other. More about see: Žebec I. Kako nam cipela može promijeniti život. Tvornica Bata u Borovu kraj Vukovara // Hrvatska revija. 2007. Vol. 7. No. 4. S. 80–85.

³⁵ More about Jugovinil see: Gasperčić I. Prilozi za povijest industrije plastike u Hrvatskoj: Proizvodnja poli(vinil-klorida) // Polimeri: Časopis za plastiku i gumu. 2010. Vol. 31. No. 2. S. 77–79.

³⁶ Pavičić J. Slava Jugoplastici. XXZ Regionalni portal. URL: <https://www.xxzmagazin.com/slava-jugoplastici> (last visited – 9 November, 2020).

company Jugovinil which gave essential character to the Jugoplastika's goods. Those years of Jugoplastika were symbolically embodied in windbreaker jacket *šuškavac* which became a total hit among the consumers in Yugoslavia. Since Jugoplastika's first production years (1952–1957) were marked by indecisive search for right production program inside vague vision of the development, finding its recognizable range of products in the market literally meant 'win or break' for the future of Jugoplastika. Also, the retail network taken over from Jugovinil was a motor of further development and creator of physiognomy of the Jugoplastika's products³⁷. In the Jugoplastika retail section the consumer «dictate» was imposing what is needed and therefore would be produced. To satisfy the ever so great demand at the end of the second period (1958–1963) and during the third period (1964–1970) Jugoplastika took over 10 different factories and also founded five new facilities. These integration processes did not only incapacitated it to become a *kombinat*³⁸ (multiplant) in the full sense of its meaning, but also to grow out of the locally oriented economy. Geographically, Jugoplastika's facilities were located (besides those in Split which functioned as the center) all over the Dalmatian region, often situated in underdeveloped, rural areas. The *kombinat* consisted of five major labor organizations – RO [*radna organizacija*] and retail network which in the 1970s were functioning in 31 basic associated labor organizations – OOUR [*osnovna organizacija udruženog rada*]³⁹. With the Yugoslav economy reorganization in 1988, *kombinat* Jugoplastika had even more OOURs service sectors and working communities, 34 in total⁴⁰. Employment proportionally followed the growth of the *kombinat* Jugoplastika – in 1953 there were 450 workers and by the 1980s it increased to 12 000 employees. In other words, Jugoplastika employed 25 % of industrial workers in Split and the Dalmatian region, out of which 80 % were women⁴¹. In rural and particularly insular areas, where some of Jugoplastika's facilities were located, high percentage of female workers meant not only the certain opportunities for women emancipation, but also the significant factor in reducing some of demographic tendencies, namely de-ruralization and de-agrarization⁴².

The commodities Jugoplastika's workers produced could easily be categorized as the representatives of the specific Yugoslav way of living, marked by the «esprit of

³⁷ Snažnim koracima napred // *Komunist*. 1970. Br. 709. S. 13; Dvadeseta obljetnica Kombinata Jugoplastika / Ur. J. Ivelić. Split, 1972. S. 5.

³⁸ Large-scale enterprise (common in socialist countries), in which enterprises of closely related branches of industry are united in terms of production. *Kombinat*. Hrvatski leksikon. URL: <https://www.hrleksikon.info/definicija/kombinat.html> (last visited – 4 November, 2020).

³⁹ *Kombinat Jugoplastika Split // 200 najvećih: Ekonomska politika – Specijalno izdanje*. Beograd, 1975. S. 158–159; *Kombinat Jugoplastika Split: 1952–1977 / Ur. A. Fabjan*. Split, 1979. More on the basic associated labor organizations in: *Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije // Službeni list SFRJ*. 1974. Vol. 30. No. 9. S. 209–265.

⁴⁰ *Složena organizacija udruženog rada Kombinat Jugoplastika*. Split, 1983. S. 5–31.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* S. 3.

⁴² More about female workers in Jugoplastika see: *Jambrešić Kirin R., Blagaić M.* The ambivalence of socialist working women's heritage: A case study of the jugoplastika factory // *Narodna umjetnost*. 2013. Vol. 50. No. 1. S. 40–73. – The grave consequences of the depopulation of rural areas, particularly in Croatia during the socialist era are presented in: *Puljiz V.* *Eksodus poljoprivrednika*. Zagreb, 1977.

westernization»⁴³. Even in the company name, a phrase plastic does not necessarily mean only the material used in production. Something new, modern, from the «other side» is emphasized, but it still consisted of the prefix *Jugo* to determine its origin. Beach utensils, pedal boats, inflatable boats, plastic bath sandals, slide shoes, swimming belts, arm rings and beach air mattresses, all of it produced in Jugoplastika's *RO Galanterija* contributed to experience and to even sweeten more the sunny side of Yugoslavia⁴⁴. Tourism – a vital economic activity and one of the most important industries have entailed not only domestic guests but guests with the hard currencies in their pockets⁴⁵. It is worthwhile to mention that the main actor of the Yugoslav *la dolce* (or *la sole*) *vita* – a flirting local seagull⁴⁶ entertaining foreign tourists was also Jugoplastika's company logo. Next to its beach program, Jugoplastika's raincoats, windbreakers (*šuškvac*) and all sorts of garments for more casual occasions, leisure time and sports activities were produced in its garment department (*RO Konfekcija*). As well, buttons for Jugoplastika's garment products and for 70 % of domestic garment industry were produced in Jugoplastika's facility on the Island of Hvar. The rest were exported to USSR, Belgium, Bulgaria and Switzerland⁴⁷. Furthermore, in Jugoplastika's facility in Komiža on the Island of Vis using the extrusion technology boats were produced. These boats (brand name *Marjan*) were not only used for romantic trips by above mentioned frolicking seagulls. The first Croatian in Yugoslavia who sailed around the world, Joža Horvat, carried it on board «Besa» vessel⁴⁸ as a craft boat⁴⁹. In the third insular Jugoplastika's facility, in Grohote on the Island of Šolta dolls, «every girl's the best friend» were produced, among other toys⁵⁰. These dolls were the first Jugoplastika's exported know-how project. Namely at the exhibition held in Moscow in February 1989, company Vapo from Volzhsk made a deal with Jugoplastika to buy the technology for their toy company. The contract was signed in 1990 and Jugoplastika's doll makers, engineers, designers prepared the documentation, purchased and installed the machines and finally put into production «plastic Russian dolls under the Split license» in 1991⁵¹. The exhibition in Moscow was one among numerous fair trades where Jugoplastika presented its products. At one in Tripoli in Libya Jugoplastika was helping Yugoslavia developing the budding relationship among Non-Aligned nations. It occurred to management that the above mentioned plastic bath sandals, slide shoes and beach utensils could be produced all year long (and not just during summer season), if offered to

⁴³ *Kolanović M.* Udarnik! Buntovnik? Potrošač... Popularna kultura i hrvatski roman od socijalizma do tranzicije. Zagreb, 2011. S. 78.

⁴⁴ Izlozi naših prodavaonica u mjesecu turizma // Jugoplastika: Informativni list kombinata. 1966. Br. 9. S. 6.

⁴⁵ Further on history of tourism in Yugoslavia and Croatia see: *Duda I.* Adriatic for All. Summer holidays in Croatia // Remembering utopia: The culture of everyday life in socialist Yugoslavia / Ed. by B. Luthar, M. Pušnik. Washington, 2010. P. 289–311; Yugoslavia's sunny side...

⁴⁶ In Croatian, in colloquial speech «a seagull» is a metaphor for a flirtatious man that seduces foreign female tourists. See: *Anić V.* Galeb // Veliki rječnik hrvatskoga jezika. Zagreb, 2003. S. 339.

⁴⁷ Složena organizacija udruženog rada Kombinat Jugoplastika... S. 12.

⁴⁸ The adventures of Joža Horvat and his family on the trip around the world on the sailboat «Besa» are described in his novel «Besa: brodski dnevnik» which, since its first edition in 1973, has undergone 10 editions and translations in foreign languages.

⁴⁹ Naš čamac Marjan s Besom oko svijeta // Jugoplastika... 1966. Br. 9. S. 7.

⁵⁰ *Jambrešić Kirin R., Blagaić M.* The ambivalence... S. 41.

⁵¹ Ruske bebe prema Splitskoj licenci // Slobodna Dalmacija. 1991. Br. 14556. S. 9.

the right market – to Non-Aligned countries – where summer never ends⁵². Doing business with companies from the West was also desirable and encouraged by the political (and ideological) actors. Therefore, from early years Jugoplastika was often a subcontractor that manufactured various articles. The first and widely known such deal (in Yugoslav context) was made with Adidas for sports equipment items production and later with Citroen and VW for plastic interior production⁵³. For special merits and successes achieved for the country's economic progress J. B. Tito awarded Jugoplastika a high recognition of the Order of Labor with Red Flag⁵⁴. The Jugoplastika's subcontracting jobs were not only activities linked to the international companies. A promising deal was also made with *Zavodi Crvena Zastava* (Red Flag Factories), Yugoslav automobile industry in Kragujevac (Srbija) in 1971. Even the (in) famous Yugo⁵⁵ had the inner side of the doors, roof linings, blinds, upholstery, carpets and seat protections made in Jugoplastika⁵⁶. Another fruitful cooperation was achieved under the umbrella of *kombinat* Jugoplastika, although this one had nothing to do with production and everything to do with promotion. In January 1968 *Kombinat* made a decision to sponsor the basketball club Split which has since been named Jugoplastika⁵⁷. It would mean a little if this club did not win the European Championship title in 1989, and in two subsequent years, 1990 and 1991⁵⁸. But as the basketball players departed for Rome where the championship league was held the Jugoplastika, «giant on the plastic legs»⁵⁹ was losing the game – a battle with transforming of ownership and privatization in 1991. «Wind of change» from the *Scorpions'* self-title ballad did not bring the promised «future's in the air» but the «memories buried in the past forever»⁶⁰. In the mentioned process in 1990s *kombinat* Jugoplastika was first renamed in Diokom Holding, than fragmented, filed for bankruptcy and finally removed from the Registry. The products and workers became dispensable and almost (or mostly) forgotten if they have not, just for few days, resurfaced at the exhibition «Groundwork Jugoplastika» in

⁵² Jugoplastika na sajmovima u inozemstvu // Jugoplastika... 1966. Br. 1. S. 2.

⁵³ Turning to foreign markets began in 1954 after registration in the Foreign Trade Register. See: *Kombinat Jugoplastika Split: 1952–1977...* S. 11.

⁵⁴ *Kombinat Jugoplastika Split: 1952–1977...* S. 4; Složena organizacija udruženog rada *Kombinat Jugoplastika...* S. 1.

⁵⁵ Yugo was a first (and last) brand of car that *Crvena Zastava* launched to US market, starting in 1985. Export business though didn't last long. The bankruptcy of the Yugo America project was announced on January 29, 1989. (*Milić Jakovlić D., Marušić Ž. Prije 34 godine počela prodaja Yuga na američkom tržištu. Glas Istre. URL: www.glasistre.hr/automoto/prije-34-godine-pocela-prodaja-yuga-na-americkom-trzistu-595858* (last visited –26 February, 2020)). At that time George Bush Sr. was elected president and had been avoiding the public appearance for a short time. In Yugoslavia a joke was made that he had to take an unexpected leave of absence due to mechanical problems with his Yugo.

⁵⁶ *Splitski Galeb po svijetu // Slobodna Dalmacija. 1978. Br. 10441. S. 25; Privredni div od plastike // Slobodna Dalmacija. 1982. Br. 11697. S. 22–23.*

⁵⁷ *Košarkaši sada pod patronatom Jugoplastike // Jugoplastika...* 1968. Br. 14. S. 11.

⁵⁸ *Povijest kluba. Košarkaški klub Split. URL: https://kk-split.com/povijest-kluba/* (last visited –27 February, 2020).

⁵⁹ *Vujisić S. Jugoplastika postaje Diokom // Večernji list. 1991. Br. 9929. S. 22.*

⁶⁰ *Meine K. Wind of change // Crazy World [CD]. Hilversum, Los Angeles: Vertigo and Mercury, 1990.*

2011 in Split and during the action «Jugoplastika + supporting the memory» held in the eve of Jugoplastika's would be 60th anniversary in 2012 in Split⁶¹.

BOROVO EN VOGUE

In December 2015, among many «must have» items pink high top Borovo Startas sneakers with unicorn print designed by Iva Ćurković Spajić were included in the online edition of the fashion magazine *Vogue*⁶². Advertisement in this prestige magazine was accompanied by numerous writings in Croatian media and social networks. They highlighted, as the main advantages of this Borovo brand, the 40 years long tradition and handmade production all under the motto «With love from Vukovar». Although launched on the US market for the first time in 2015, Startas, as the manufacturer points out, is one of the most recognizable Borovo's brands, which was manufactured on the same principle since 1976⁶³. Even though this international success is good enough material to be proud of, it neglected the fact that Borovo was a multi-plant factory of the world renown Bata concern founded on the banks of Danube river, near Vukovar in 1931 in the peak of the Great Depression and one of the biggest factories in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia⁶⁴. Namely, on those foundations grew socialist giant – *kombinat* Borovo.

By a Decree of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bata company name was changed to Borovo, Yugoslav Rubber and Footwear Multiplant (Kombinat), on December 31, 1946. Until 1950, *kombinat* Borovo's post-war development and production is marked by divergent normative settings and plans, large number of untrained and unskilled workers, political dissatisfaction of professional staff, economic deprivation and poor housing conditions of fluctuating labor force⁶⁵. However, a gradual normalization and improvement in Borovo was accompanied by the «historic act of handover of a rubber and footwear factory from the hands of the state to the hands of workers» on August 30, 1950, enacted by the Law on Management of Government Business Enterprises and Economic Associations by Workers' Collectives⁶⁶. With the growing standard of Yugoslav population, Borovo mass footwear production has gradually satiated consumers peculiar tastes. In the late 1950s, footwear with vulcanized soles was introduced as a new technology process of production which meant an entirely new assortment of footwear. Instead of forged, glued footwear and moccasin footwear were introduced in 1960. Also, in the 1960s, new, PVC direct injection molding technology

⁶¹ Radni teren (Rt) Jugoplastika. H-Alter. URL: www.h-alter.org/vijesti/radni-teren-rt-jugoplastika (last visited – 27 February, 2020); Jugoplastika, podrška sjećanju. Kulturpunkt.hr. URL: www.kulturpunkt.hr/content/jugoplastika-podrška-sjećanju (last visited – 27 February, 2020).

⁶² *Zalopany C.* Can This Lisa-Frank-Approved Trend Work for Grown-Ups? // *Vogue*. URL: www.vogue.com/article/unicorn-date-night-outfits (last visited – 3 March, 2020).

⁶³ Ikona od 1976. Startas®. Borovo. URL: www.borovo.hr/hr/brand/startas (last visited – 3 March, 2020).

⁶⁴ Bata–Borovo (1931.–2016.). *Povijesno naslijeđe i perspektive* / Ur. D. Živić, I. Žebec Šilj, S. Cvikić. Zagreb; Vukovar, 2019; *Balaban M.* Podnikání firmy Baťa v Jugoslávii. Zlín, 2018.

⁶⁵ *Elez P., Živić D.* Kombinat Borovo i Borovo naselje u prvim godinama nakon Drugog svjetskog rata u svjetlu arhivskih izvora Državnog arhiva u Vukovaru // *Bata–Borovo (1931.–2016.)...* S. 127–154.

⁶⁶ *Markotić B.* Tvornica je postala svojina radnika // *Borovo tjednik Jugoslavenskog kombinata gume i obuće*. 1976. Br. 2446. S. 1.

was applied in production of the soles and upper of the shoe, and in the 1970s the production of injection molded footwear began⁶⁷. Until 1970 Borovo retail network increased to figure of 600 stores located all over Yugoslavia. In the same year the *Kombinat* has employed 11 409 workers commuting from 34 surrounding villages⁶⁸. In June 1981 when complex associated labor organization [SOUR] Borovo celebrated its 50th anniversary the factory was organized in 30 basic associated labor organizations [OOUR], 15 working organizations [RZ], 9 working associations on the level of OOUR, 3 working associations on the level of SOUR and internal bank. That same year Borovo employed over 19 000 workers and had a retail network with 611 stores⁶⁹.

Although Borovo has produced a wide range of fashion footwear since 1931, the biggest Yugoslav rubber and footwear factory was perceived by public and customers as a synonym for occupational footwear. The words «the comfort that no woman can resist» are used to describe the blue-periwinkle lace-up sandals – Borosana the women's occupational shoe. Those were especially designed for women whose job consisted of standing or constant walking. Borosana was designed by a team of experts led by orthopedist Branko Strinović in 1968⁷⁰. The men's version of the work footwear was well known as Relax⁷¹. However, the question remains as to what is the story behind Startas sneakers? When did the production start? In two weekly newspapers published by Borovo (*Borovo tjednik Jugoslavenskog kombinata gume i obuće* and *Prodavač, informativno-instruktivne novine Radne organizacije Prodaja SOUR Borovo*) the term «Startas» did not appear until 1980s. From 1976 until 1981 Borosana, Relax and Bodo (short from *Borovo dječja obuća* – Borovo childrens footwear) are the types of shoes heavily advertised in their weeklies, but Startas definitely was not. Namely, Startas shoes were produced but under specific serial number or simply as Borovo Sports footwear brand. The largest quantities were sold during the so-called «school action» in August, before the beginning of the new school year⁷².

In the 1981 Borovo catalog, a small label, a picture of a table tennis bat and a ball can be spotted on one of the series. This particular label indicates the origin of the sneakers Startas. The beginning of Startas can be linked to the 1974 European Table Tennis Championship in Novi Sad. Namely, Borovo has had numerous and varied sports sections ever since the Bata, and just continued that tradition. According to Mgr. I. H. retired Borovo employee (oral testimony given to the authors on May 31, 2017), Borovo representatives came to this championship to see what kind of sneakers the competitors were wearing, what nowadays is considered as industrial espionage. They even got a pair of the sneakers which were later disassembled to the smallest part... and so begin the history of rubber sole sneakers, later known as Startas.

⁶⁷ Duić A. Borovo i Borovo: Sedamdeset godina zajedno // Hrašće. 2000. Vol. 22. No. 4. S. 95–106.

⁶⁸ 18 262 dana // Prodavač, informativno-instruktivne novine Radne organizacije Prodaja SOUR Borovo. 1981. Br. 11. S. 4.

⁶⁹ Duić A. 50 godina moćnog kombinata na Dunavu – SOUR Borovo // Vinkovački list. 1981. Br. 29–30. S. 7; «Borovo» slavljenik // Vukovarske novine. 1981. Br. 20. S. 1.

⁷⁰ Borovo's shoe brand Borosana went through the same process as Startas when it was redesigned during 2000s. Although its popularity is growing, Borosana brand however, has not achieved similar status and it was not internationally promoted like Startas sneakers.

⁷¹ Po Borosani poznati širom zemlje // Borovo tjednik... 1976. Br. 2449. S. 4.

⁷² Školska akcija može početi, moramo prodati 360.000 pari obuće // Prodavač... 1980. Br. 14. S. 5.

In the oral testimony given by J. B., PhD, also retired Borovo employee given to the authors on June 1, 2017, he points that Startas sneakers were modelled after the ones worn by table tennis players from Japan, but unlike those Japanese, Borovo introduced an innovation using the so-called butterfly outer sole, still recognizable today on Startas canvas sneakers. Engineer M. V., a retired Borovo technologist, pointed out in her statement given on May 7, 2015, «the Startas model, manufactured in 1976 as a new product, did not have the name Startas. Initially it had a printed table tennis bat and the name Borovo. The logo Startas (originally StartAS) was created by Borovo's Design department, to be more precise by Dragan Mlinarević (in 1979/1980). On some models of Borovo sports footwear, were affixed satin stitched labels with that logo. So, in the beginning, this type of sneakers was called a *polutrampka* (the caption was used for low sports shoes, while a *trampka* for high top sports shoes). Later on, as a 370 model, and when it became popular and got its final look it was known as a 183 model. Today, designers give names to models according to print design therefore many models do not even have a numeric code».

In the early 1980s, this type of sports footwear became more and more popular, but not only among schoolchildren. Perhaps the increase in sales was crucial for this type of footwear to finally get its name. Anyway, the Design department named it Startas, and the logo started to appear in the Borovo weekly newspapers at the end of 1982. In addition to sports footwear, Startas brand also included sportswear and bags. From March 15, 1983, all of the above could be purchased with Diners and American Express credit cards⁷³. The peak of the Startas sale was in 1987, when Borovo sponsored and co-organized the Universiade in Zagreb⁷⁴. An unofficial source mentioned a figure of 5 million pairs of Startas' sneakers produced and sold. Especially for that event, canvas sneakers were designed in the colors of the Universiade, which became part of the official clothing worn by the volunteers⁷⁵. About how popular they were in 1980s tells the testimony of a saleswoman in Borovo store P. N. (oral testimony given to the authors on October 4, 2017), who recalls that people were waiting in line outside the store, in the street to buy their own pair of Startas sneakers. The success on Yugoslav market prompted Borovo to try to launch Startas sports shoes, especially the rubber canvas program, on the international market as well. The first experimental launch on the international market was at the Bordeaux fair trade in 1987, where it caught the attention of one French department store with which the Borovo representatives negotiated the sample sale of rather modest quantity of 50 000 pair of Startas sneakers⁷⁶.

Startas canvas sneaker is the only product from the Startas brand that has survived to this day. Namely, the basic line of Startas did not cease production even during the 1991–1995 war and exile, but remained largely unnoticed on the market. Its revival is owed to Mauro Massarotto who designed the new line of Startas sneakers. The newfound reputation of Startas is evidenced by the fact that they have found their place in the popular Baedeker tourist guide.

⁷³ Dajners kartice u našim prodavaonicama obuće // Prodavač... 1983. Br. 6. S. 13.

⁷⁴ Doprinos uspjehu Univerzijade'87. // Borovo tjednik... 1987. Br. 2992. S. 1.

⁷⁵ Startasice se proizvode ručno — svaka je gotovo unikat. Poslovni.hr. URL: www.poslovni.hr/domace-kompanije/startasice-se-proizvode-rucno-svaka-je-gotovo-unikat-309412 (last visited – 2 March, 2020).

⁷⁶ Pekić L. J. Šansa startasa uz jedno ali // Borovo tjednik... 1987. Br. 2992. S. 3.

In separate section of Baedeker called «Jugo-Kult Schuhe» a brief history of the Startas sneaker is presented and the designer who brought it back to life⁷⁷.

Shortly before its 40th birthday, in 2015, Startas first appeared in the US online edition of *Vogue* and for the second time in its 40th anniversary year, in 2016. Unlike childhood nostalgia, in second *Vogue* promotion, sailor stripes version of the Startas was selected as the perfect choice for the picnic to celebrate American Independence Day⁷⁸. Also, the Startas sneakers have appeared on the pages of the *New York Times Style Magazine*. In the article «A Playful Sneaker Brand – With Plenty of History» Startas sneakers are presented as the symbol of the desire to revitalize the war-stricken Vukovar and the Borovo factory⁷⁹. Beside American market Startas sneakers were introduced to the consumers in France. However, unlike in the US, here they are presented as a retro product of exotic socialism, or «original non-aligned sneakers» as it is stated on the pages of a French distributor⁸⁰. This globetrotter, idyllic side of the Borovo Startas story is marred by the fact that after more than 80 years, the very first factory store of Borovo, located in the Borovo Naselje (part of Vukovar) has closed its doors in 2016. The explanation states that due to the crisis, lower purchasing power and insufficient production of quality footwear, the Administration was forced to close the doors of the Borovo store⁸¹.

CONCLUSION

From «dictatorship over needs» towards «consumerism», the economy of socialist Yugoslavia was separated from its Western capitalist counterparts by peculiar sense of ownership, emancipation and liberation whose progressive capacity for democratic change has developed market of commodities and goods beyond the realms of the «socialist modest necessity». Its unique geo-political position arbitrating with benefits gained from its non-aligned strategy however has enabled Croatian consumer goods produced by Jugoplastika and Borovo to cross-over the boundaries of communist-capitalist divide and introduce to the West the ‘sunny side’ of socialist Yugoslavia. In post socialism the products of these factories became either the artefacts of the bygone era, heavily draped with nostalgia or the successful remakes due to the commodification of past.

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Информация о статье

Авторы: Жебец-Шиль, Ивана – доктор истории, старший научный сотрудник, Институт социальных наук имени Иво Пилара, Загреб, Хорватия, Orc ID 0000-0001-5041-9537; e-mail: ivana.zebec@pilar.hr; Цвिकич, Сандра – доктор социологии, экспертный сотрудник, Институт социальных наук имени Иво Пилара, Региональный центр в Вуковаре, Хорватия; e-mail: sandra.cvikic@pilar.hr

⁷⁷ *Wengert V.* Baedeker Reiseführer Istrien, Kvarner-Bucht. Ostfildern, 2013. S. 265.

⁷⁸ *Ontman V.* Fourth of July and Chill: The best BBQ-Ready looks, Right Here // *Vogue*. URL: www.vogue.com/article/best-fourth-of-july-date-night-outfits-barbecue-style (last visited – 2 March, 2020).

⁷⁹ *Ajudua C.* A Playful Sneaker Brand – With Plenty of History // *The New York Times Style Magazine*. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/20/t-magazine/fashion/startas-sneakers-croatia-relaunch.html> (last visited – 2 March, 2020).

⁸⁰ Startas, a Non-Aligned brand since 1976. Startas Shoes Com. URL: www.startas-shoes.com/en/content/15-startas-universe (last visited – 2 March, 2020).

⁸¹ *Matić I.* Zatvara se trgovina Borovo u gradskoj četvrt Borovo naselje. Press 032. URL: <http://press032.com/zatvara-se-trgovina-borovo-u-gradskoj-cetvrti-borovo-naselje/> (last visited – 2 March, 2020).

Заголовок: Made in Yugoslavia: Goods from the «Sunny Side» of communism [Сделано в Югославии: Потребительские товары с «солнечной стороны» коммунизма]

Резюме: За переменами, вызванными введением в Югославии в 1950-е годы так называемой «новой экономической системы», последовали действия по улучшению уровня жизни, а затем и рост потребительского общества. В частности, с середины 1950-х годов все более заметными в федеральных годовых планах, особенно в пятилетнем плане социального развития (1957–1961), становятся две общие директивы – улучшение уровня жизни и увеличение потребления со стороны рабочего населения. В то же время экономическая политика и экономическое планирование были теперь сосредоточены не на тяжелой промышленности, а на развитии легкой промышленности и, следовательно, увеличении производства потребительских товаров. В центре внимания настоящей статьи находятся потребительские товары, изготавливавшиеся двумя крупнейшими югославскими предприятиями – производителями резины «Borovo» («Борово») и полимеров «Jugoplastika» («Югопластика»), а также дальнейшая судьба их изделий. Комбинат «Борово» (ранее – «Бата») в Вуковаре (Хорватия), основанный в 1931 г., продолжает работать и сегодня, хотя в сокращенном объеме. В межвоенный и социалистический периоды название «Борово» было синонимом обуви для работы, досуга и спорта. Боровский бренд «Startas» («Стартас») является одним из любимых брендов, особенно среди молодежи. Комбинат «Югопластика» был одним из символов югославской послевоенной индустриализации. Он был основан в 1952 г. в Сплите (Хорватия) в то время, когда промышленное производство в Югославии начинает следовать запросам специфического югославского (гибридного) консьюмеризма. Изделия «Югопластики» стали неотъемлемой частью счастливого детства, летних каникул, гардероба и даже знаменитого автомобиля «Yugo» («Юго»). В 1990-х гг. комбинат Югопластика был сначала фрагментирован, затем объявили о его банкротстве, после чего он был удален из Торгового реестра. Изделия комбината стали заменяемыми и почти забылись. О комбинатах и их товарах вспомнили на выставке «Рабочая площадка Югопластики» в Сплите в 2011 г. и в проекте «Югопластика + поддержка памяти», состоявшемся накануне 60-й годовщины создания «Югопластики» в Сплите в 2012 г.

Ключевые слова: Югославия, Борово, Югопластика, хорватская промышленность, потребительские товары, история экономики

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The information about the article

Authors: Žebec, Šilj Ivana – PhD in History, Senior Research Associate, Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Zagreb, Croatia, Orc ID 0000-0001-5041-9537; e-mail: ivana.zebec@pilar.hr

Cvikić, Sandra – PhD in Sociology, Research Associate, Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Regional Centre Vukovar, Croatia; e-mail: sandra.cvikić@pilar.hr

Title: Made in Yugoslavia: Goods from the «Sunny Side» of Communism

Summary: The changes caused by the introduction in Yugoslavia in the 1950s of the so-called «new economic system» were soon followed by the quest for improvement of living standard and then finally, by the rise of a consumer society. Namely, since mid-1950s two general directives became increasingly evident in federal year plans, especially in the five-year social development plan (1957–1961) – the living standard improvement and the increase in spending power of working population. At the same time development of heavy, basic industry was not more in the focus of economic policy and the economic planning, but a development of light industry and consequently an increase of production of consumer goods. The paper focuses on the consumer goods (and their afterlife) produced in *kombinat* Borovo and *kombinat* Jugoplastika, the Yugoslav largest producers of rubber (Borovo) and polymere (Jugoplastika) consumer goods. Borovo (previously Bata) situated in Vukovar, Croatia, was founded in 1931 and is still operating in smaller scale. In the interwar as well in the socialist era it was a synonym for footwear, especially work, leisure and free time footwear. Today, Borovo's brand Startas is one of the favorites particularly among young people. Jugoplastika, on the other hand was one of the crests of Yugoslav postwar industrialization. It was founded in 1952 in Split, Croatia, at a time when industrial production in Yugoslavia was starting to conform to a sort of hybrid consumerism. The Jugoplastika's products were the indispensable part of happy childhood, summer vacations, wardrobe and even the famous Yugo automobile. In the process of transition and reform in 1990s *kombinat* Jugoplastika was first fragmented, filed for bankruptcy and finally removed from Registry. The products became dispensable and almost forgotten if they have not, just for a few days, resurfaced at the exhibition «Groundwork Jugoplastika» in 2011 in Split and during the action «Jugoplastika + supporting the memory» held in the eve of Jugoplastika's would be 60th anniversary in 2012 in Split.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Borovo, Jugoplastika, Croatian consumer goods and industry.

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