
Interview: Alexander Shiroka

'Croatia must be included in the Productive Triangle'

Alex Shiroka is the coordinator of the Croatian Information and Cultural Center in Montreal, Quebec. An art historian, Shiroka was during 1985-86 the artistic director of "Zagreb-Film" before the communist government started a campaign against him. He was accused of being anti-communist and a Croatian nationalist. He has been the curator of many cultural programs for Croatian television, an organizer and curator of approximately 40 exhibitions in galleries and museums of Yugoslavia, France, Canada, Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. A former publisher, Shiroka has written for the major magazines and newspapers in Croatia, including *Vjesnik*, *Danas*, *Vecernji List*, *Studio*, *Fokus*, and others.

He spoke to Umberto Pascali on Jan. 22, just before starting a tour in the United States organized by the Schiller Institute. The tour, including meetings, conferences, debates with the Croatian community and other groups, will focus on the second phase of the Croatian war of independence, the battle for economic sovereignty.

"On the economic battlefield in Croatia, the model of [Lyndon] LaRouche is facing the model of [Harvard Prof. Jeffrey] Sachs. This is more and more clear," explains Shiroka. "It would be only natural for Slovenia and Croatia to accept the Productive Triangle. The two republics are in fact the southern part of the Productive Triangle [the proposal by LaRouche for massive infrastructure investment in Europe to in turn spur global economic recovery]. There are not only economic reasons, but also cultural, historical reasons. Croatia is part of Europe. Our relation with that part of Europe has always been strong, very strong. What we need to concentrate on is industrial capital, investment in real wealth, in real production, starting with infrastructure, transportation above all. Yes, we were the victims of a terrible war, but if we go for this solution we could realize an economic miracle."

EIR: Can you tell us more about this economic debate in Croatia?

Shiroka: Actually, the discussion on the Productive Triangle is going on right now. Recently, for example, I discussed with some key people in Croatia the program of Lyndon LaRouche. The reactions are very positive. They are eager to know, they ask so many questions. I can see their minds working very fast. You must understand, that the Croatians

in general have been subjected to many shocks over the last months. At first they were confused, above all about the role of the United States. For many years, under communism, the U.S. was a dream, the land of democracy, the people that were helping us to fight dictatorship. Still, it's very hard for people to understand why the United States is against us. For many this would have been inconceivable.

EIR: And what about the Sachs shock therapy?

Shiroka: People who know understand that the Sachs shock therapy is more dangerous than the Serbians, in the long run. I want to emphasize this point: The implementation of that doctrine—the Jeffrey Sachs doctrine—is more dangerous than a war. This understanding clashes with the resistance to fight *directly* against what is presented as official U.S. policy. It is difficult to fight an official American doctrine. I fear that some politicians will be afraid to attack U.S. influence. So sometime they accept the pressure, like in Slovenia. As you know, the Slovenian government accepted Sachs as an official economic adviser. This, I think, does not mean a total adoption of the Sachs line, but still this is very dangerous in my opinion.

EIR: Sachs has a long history of affiliation with the Federal government in Belgrade. Like Kissinger Associates' Lawrence Eagleburger.

Shiroka: Yes. Already three years ago Sachs was an adviser to the Federal, i.e., communist, government. The deployment of Sachs in what was Yugoslavia is very revealing, revealing of the strategy of the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the international monetarist institutions. These institutions, acting through U.S. power, first decided to implement the doctrine of Sachs through the Federal government. So the line was to keep Yugoslavia together at any cost and to spread from the center, Belgrade, the Sachs therapy.

In this sense the last Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, Ante Markovic, was the key man. He was the man of the IMF and known as such. Markovic was supposed to break the push toward independence of Croatia and Slovenia and to make them swallow "economic reform." They did not succeed. So after that, all the weight of these international institutions went to support Greater Serbia. By sheer military and racial



Croatian spokesman Alexander Shiroka held up a tiny matchbox at a recent conference: all that remains of a 200-year-old match factory near Zagreb.

violence, all the republics were supposed to accept the Sachs doctrine. Again they failed. We fought against that.

Now what is their last resort? Pure destabilization, provocations of wars and confrontations, violence of any kind. Above all, the aim of the monetarists is to prevent our republics being integrated with Europe. They prefer to provoke a 30-year war. They are doing the same in Russia, in Africa. . . .

EIR: Mr. Shiroka, this is your first organizing tour with the Schiller Institute. What will be your message?

Shiroka: First of all my message is: Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid to think freely! We Croats have just come out from 45 years of a communist regime. For 45 years we couldn't speak, we couldn't express ourselves. We had to be careful about what we thought. Today we have a free country, a country recognized by the nations of the world.

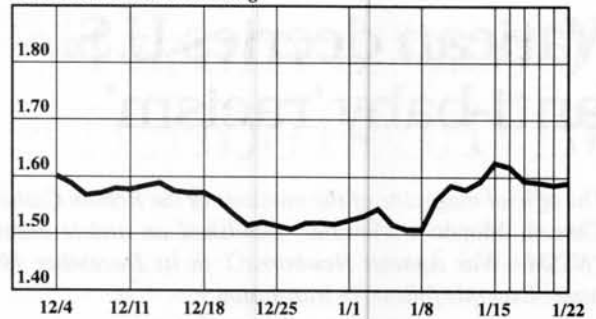
I tell my fellow Croats in Croatia and in North America: Don't think as if you were still under communism. Things are changing now. Why should we tolerate it when some official representatives of our country slander Mr. LaRouche? These things remind me of the old regime. Instead of being free, we allow these slanders against a friend of our country. Why should we still be victims of that fear? Haven't we fought enough? Didn't 10,000 Croats give their lives for our freedom today? We should honor that pledge and have the courage to be free. If the official U.S. policy is against Croatia, we must say so. We are not against the American people. Not at all. We just have the same enemies.

After having felt the taste of freedom, who will be so cowardly as to give that up for a new dictatorship?

Currency Rates

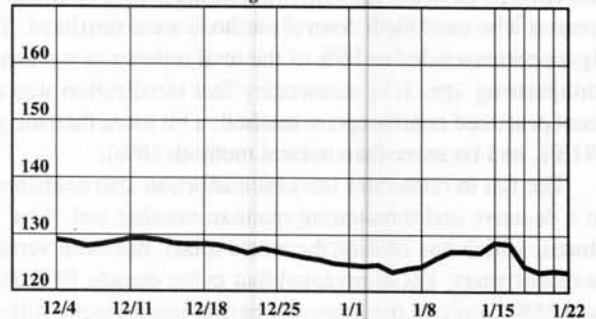
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



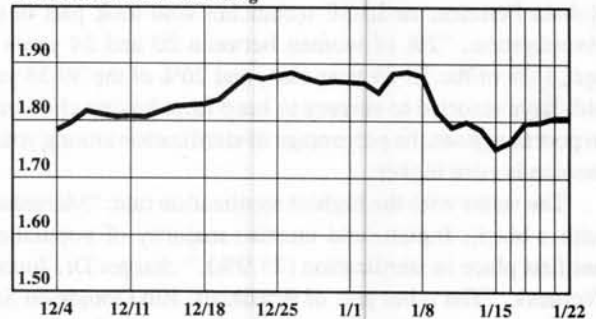
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

