

THE PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION AS REFLECTED
IN YUGOSLAV PEASANT BIOGRAPHIES

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Modernization is most meaningfully assayed in terms of the lives of particular individuals. It is also a continuing process of adaptation to an ever evolving technology, as inhabitants of the most developed industrial states have discovered. Further, it has been unevenly manifested and has impacted differently on various age, sex, nationality and occupational groups. A Slovene farmer reacts differently than does one in Serbia, but there are certain agricultural areas in Slovenia which have a lower standard of living than some of the more prosperous regions of Serbia. Then there is a question of the particular ecological and geographical setting. The problems of a pastoral community in Montenegro are different from those of a wheat growing area in the Vojvodina, but these may be overbalanced when a marginal farmer is located near a growing industrial complex, while a wheat farmer on the plains may have a long way to go to town over dust-clogged roads. The problems of a Serb peasant of a half-century ago adapting to changes in cultivation and market techniques are different than those of the Albanian student of rural origin today. A Croat peasant grandmother has had different problems than those which currently face a young Macedonian shepherdess. It is essential that we generalize if we are to be able to understand the problems of economic and social development of contemporary nation states, but we forfeit the richness of the kaleidoscope of human reality if we fail at the same time to be conscious of the grand diversity of human experiences.

With this in mind, on the following pages are presented abbreviated autobiographies by diverse Yugoslavs, all of them sharing in common a rural origin. It should be stressed that these accounts have not been chosen from a rigorously selected cross-section of the population according to specific methodological criteria designed to focus on a particular problem for investigation. On the contrary, the selection has been somewhat random but with the specific purpose of presenting a variety of experiences focusing around the general theme of modernization as exemplified in the rural-urban transition, as viewed by ordinary people connected in one way or another with rural life. With the exception of the three concluding accounts by women, in soliciting these narrations no attempt was made to guide them along particular lines, although there has been selectivity in editing (e.g. war experiences, often related in enormous detail, have generally been deleted since they shed little light on the principal subject).

Autobiographical Sketches

As a prologue to these selections a condensed extract from an article entitled "The Soil and the Peasant" is presented below. It reflects the sentiments of a contemporary Yugoslav writing in an official publication (Mladenović 1958:134-141).

. . . We were, and still are, in many respects a peasant country, with peasant habits, customs, relations, ways of husbandry and, above all, peasant ways of thought.

. . . What did the nineteenth century--the golden age of rapid industrial development in the countries of Western Europe, the age of political revolutions and revolutionary discoveries in science and technics--mean for us? It was the beginning of a national rebirth, ushered in the First and the Second Insurrection in Serbia; the first strides in the grand march to attain what had been lost during five centuries. The first steam engine appeared in Slovenia . . . in 1833, in Croatia in 1835, in Serbia in 1849, and in Montenegro as late as 1912, and in some remote areas even later; so that it may be said that remnants of almost every social stratum known in history were found in the countryside after the second world war and the Revolution.

. . . It was Lenin who said that the peasant has two souls--the soul of the small holder and conservative: the owner; and the soul of the revolutionary and progressive: the producer and toiler, whose whole life is one long struggle with the elements of Nature and with hostile social forces.

. . . The most certain way to [socialist transformation of the countryside] is by socialist cooperation between socialist and agricultural organizations (the rural cooperative, the socialist state farm and the peasant producers' cooperative) and the individual farmer. In this process the rural cooperative, as the fundamental form of cooperation, operates primarily with the aid of instruments designed to modernize agricultural production, without affecting property relations and private ownership, while gradually altering the old-fashioned methods. To separate the peasant as a landowner and the peasant as a producer is the aim of our policy in the countryside. This is the long-sought form which will help us to win over the real, revolutionary socialist soul of the peasant, that martyr and slave of the land, who hitherto has neither known the way nor had the means to emerge from his centuries' old darkness and ignorance.

But change in the countryside is inevitable, irrespective of forms of government. The first biographical sketch recounts some of these changes as they impressed a very old peasant from Orašac, central Serbia, during the course of his long life.¹

(1) I was born in 1868. There were two of us brothers and four cousins together [in the zadruga].

We used to eat less than we do today. Our clothes were not good. We went without pants.² There was no doctor, no railway, and there were dense forests all around. We used to cultivate with wooden plows. It wasn't until the reign of King Peter I³ that we had iron plows and wagons, better houses and all the rest.

I remember as a youth when Prince Milan Obrenović [1872-1889] came to our village in a horse-drawn carriage. He got out and walked through the village and talked to the people. At that time we paid one ducat for taxes on our property, which amounted to thirty hectares. There were only three stores in town then. We had no beds and used to sleep on the dirt floor around the hearth.

I took part in three wars, first in 1885, against the Bulgarians; second, the Austro-Hungarian War, with my two sons, one of whom fell; and third, the terrible war in 1941, when the Serbs killed each other, one brother burning the home of another. My youngest son became an invalid.

I used to go to the fairs in Milanovac on foot [about 40 miles from the village]. I remember six rulers, the best among all being Peter I, who liberated Yugoslavia and enlarged it.

In the old days, when I was twenty, I used to plow with six oxen. At that time we had a wooden plow, while today we use a steel one with two cows. We did not have brick houses, nor did we know how to build them. A recruit used to go on foot to serve in the army while today they all go by train. Until 1905 we all went everywhere on foot.

We used to eat corn bread, and nobody ever smoked or cursed. People were healthier than they are today. Holy things were respected and kept. Today all is different. A new life is coming, when one has to work more and harder to have less.

With the example of the coming of the steam engine to various parts of Yugoslavia the magazine article quoted above has illustrated the sequential regional nature of modernization. Present conditions even in a remote area cannot duplicate those of the past, but because of the unevenness of development due to the differential historical impact of the industrial revolution, the next account does give an idea of some of the problems encountered by past generations. It was written by a young man who is an Albanian Moslem from a village near Struga in a border region of Macedonia. Because of the conservative nature of the area and ethnic and religious group from which he comes, he simultaneously faces matters connected with life in a large zadruga and student life at the University of Skoplje.

(2) I was born on the fifth day of the seventh month in 1938. At present I am a fourth-year student at the Science Faculty in Skoplje. I come from a peasant family of medium circumstances. I remember quite well that when I was young our household consisted of only seven members: my grandfather, my father, my mother, my three unmarried uncles and myself. Today there are twenty-nine members. My grandfather who is now 68 is a farmer and is head of the household. My father, who is 43 and works as a clerk in the village office, is the eldest of his four sons. My mother is 40. They have five children, three boys and two girls, of whom I am the eldest. My brother is in the third year of a teachers' training school. One sister is in seventh grade at the elementary school, my other sister is five and my little brother is three.

The second son is forty and a farmer and his wife is thirty. They have four daughters and a son. The oldest child is twelve.

The third son is thirty-seven and employed by a tobacco company in Ohrid; his wife is thirty-four and they have six children, four boys and two girls. The eldest son is thirteen.

The fourth son is thirty-four and a farmer. His wife is thirty and they have four children, three daughters and a son. The oldest child is eight. All members of my family were born in the village where they now live.

As a child my grandfather herded cattle and oxen and sheep as well. He used to take his flock to the mountain in the fall and return with them to the village in the winter. While he was a shepherd he quarreled several times with shepherds from nearby villages. From 1921 to 1937 he worked transporting goods from the railway station in Struga, using his own cart. In 1916 he married a girl from the village and lived with her for twenty-three years until her death. He did not remarry, since he did not want to bring another wife and have his children suffer from a step-mother. In 1918 he served in the Bulgarian Army for eighteen months. This was during the time of the Salonica Front. He suffered as a soldier since it was wartime. He has been a farmer most of his life, although he has had a difficult time without his wife. All the members of the family respected him and they still do. According to him, he is satisfied with his life and says that now our fields yield more than they did before.

My father was born in 1919 and began school at the age of seven. Even though the language used in the school was Serbo-Croatian he finished elementary school on time. In 1931 my grandmother died, and later apparently because of this he married very young, at 17. A few years later Yugoslavia was occupied by the Germans, and he participated in the War of Liberation in various places in southern Macedonia in 1944-46. In 1950 he worked in Struga as a laborer but became ill. He went to doctors and then to a spa. In 1953 he became a clerk in the village council where he has been very successful in his work. In 1959 he built a separate house for his own wife and children.⁴

Since I was the only son all the members of the household loved me very much, especially my grandfather. So I always slept with my grandfather and uncles and never with my mother and father. But by the age of five I had to take the livestock out to pasture. I was very little. The cows were enormous beasts, and I had a lot of trouble with them. When I was seven in 1946 I began school. Although I did not have enough free time to study I was a good student and received prizes. But I will never forget the slap my teacher gave me. I was very embarrassed in front of my friends and especially hurt because a man from our village was present at the lesson. Before going to school in the morning I took the livestock out. On winter evenings the family made me sing and recite poems for them. In addition to this, I remember as if it happened today how father taught me military regulations and saluting so that when guests came to visit, and especially the neighbors, I was obliged by my parents to perform according to their wishes.

Upon completing the school I continued to pasture the livestock, together with an older cousin who forced me to do the herding alone while he wandered. Frequently I had to defend both the sheep and myself from the wolves, with the help of the dogs. Generally speaking I had bad memories of my childhood because I never had enough sleep. I always had to go to sleep late and get up early.

In 1950 I was registered in the fifth grade of the eight-year school in Struga, because our village school had only four grades. There were five students from our village in the fifth grade. I have no nice memories of this part of my life either, because there was no students' dormitory and we had to walk to town and back [about ten miles each day]. This was too much for us. But nevertheless we were glad that our families did not make us work in the field or pasture the livestock. In the winter it was even worse because we often had to walk in deep snow up to our knees while the wind was blowing and we were poorly dressed. We used to arrive for our lessons completely soaked. Sometimes the teachers would let us warm up near the stove. Since we did not have watches, several times it happened that we came either too late or too early. All this was not very easy, because it was not one day but four years. Despite all these difficulties we were the best students in the school, and we often used to receive prizes from our teachers.

During the summer vacations, in addition to work in the fields I frequently went with a member of the family to the mountains to gather wood. The place we went to was a twelve-hour hike up from our village. This was the hardest work I ever did. There were so many people there that the mountain was swarming with them. People came with their ox-carts from many villages. As we cut wood boulders used to roll, and frequently there were deaths of a man or an ox.

In 1955 I registered for highschool. I first went to Struga because we had been told that an Albanian gymnasium would be opened there. I stayed there a week and this did not happen so I went to Skoplje with one of my cousins who was entering his second year of highschool. This was the first time I traveled outside my district. We went by train. I was puzzled by the speed of the train, about which I had heard for a long time. When we arrived in Skoplje I could not orient myself, I was so busy looking at the big buildings. We arrived at eight in the evening, and I was surprised by the number of people promenading. I registered for the gymnasium but received a letter from home telling me to switch to the Albanian teachers' school because our district was offering a scholarship. When I went to my lessons for the first time I was very scared. It was difficult for me but I gradually got used to it. The school had a dormitory, and there were several boys from my own village and nearby villages. Our life was pleasant and satisfying because the school frequently organized different shows, concerts and sports competitions. In addition to this we used to go into town for the evening promenade, theatre, movies, and sports events. I enjoyed music and from the first participated in the choir and orchestra.

In 1959 I was appointed as a village teacher with a second grade class of seventy pupils in two shifts. A year later I decided to continue my education and to study economics at the university. When I attended lectures for the first time it was very difficult for me because I could barely understand them. All of my previous education had been in my native Albanian. I knew little Macedonian and even less Serbo-Croat. I put forth a great deal of effort and have so far succeeded in passing all my courses. I was very happy with my success. I have gotten along well with my roommates and friends, and student life has been the sweetest part of my past because in it a person is within the framework of

his own wishes. My plans for the future are to finish the university and then my army service and after that to begin working. I will work in an area near my native district from which I have received a scholarship. I will probably be a teacher in a highschool.

Since I have spent all of my school years except for four years of elementary school in the town, and during my winter and summer vacations I have continued to live in the village, I am familiar with the life of both village and city. If someone were to ask where life is better and what the differences are between city and village, I would answer: It is understandable that life in the city is better because there are better conditions for diversion and for study, conditions which do not exist in the village. But on the other hand one lives more cheaply in the village and in any case he can receive help from his family or other relatives. For city life one needs more money because he has to purchase everything. Generally speaking life in the city is better than in the village, yet looking at my village the life there is not so bad, since lately things have begun to improve under the influence of educated people.

A Montenegrin shepherd whose children have all left the village dictated the following:

(3) I am now seventy-six years old. My family settled here [a village near Žabljak] in 1916. Before there were only meadows and winter homes for shepherds up here. My brother and I divided our joint household in 1925 after we had both married. Our women could not live in harmony so we split to prevent quarrels among ourselves.

All my life I have spent herding and farming. I have five children. All of them are now settled, but they do not live with me in the village. One son finished the technical highschool and works as a surveyor in Pljevlje. He is married and has a daughter. He often comes to visit me. I send him milk, cheese, and meat, and he gives me money to pay taxes and buy clothing.

My second son studies in Belgrade. He does not have a scholarship and I support him. During the summer he comes home and helps me with my work. One daughter has finished teachers' training school and now works in a nearby village. The second daughter married into that village after she finished the eight-year school. My youngest daughter finished the technical school and is now working in Pljevlje.

I have twelve meadows and sheep and cows, but since I have no one to work for me and am too old to work myself I rent out the land and pay a friend to take care of the sheep. When there is plowing to be done I hire a man with his team. Most often in the winter I go to my son in town.

In 1950 with the help of my sons and the peasant working cooperative which I then belonged to I succeeded in building my present house.

This account is by an old but vigorous Macedonian peasant and former migrant worker who has had wide experience beyond his marginal upland village.⁵ Today he is a farmer and head of a household that includes four generations.

Despite his relative worldliness three generations of women in his household, including his grandson's young wife, wear the same traditional folk dress and cook together over an open hearth.

(4) My household today consists of my son who is fifty and lives with me in the village and teaches school. He and his wife have a son who is studying law, another who is now serving his army term and is married--his wife and infant son live with us--and a third son who is a school boy. They also have a daughter going to teachers' training school. My other son is a chemical engineer living in the Vojvodina. His wife teaches highschool, and they have a small son. One daughter is married in Belgrade, and she comes with my grandchildren during summer vacation.

In 1902 when I was eight and had already started school in our village my father took me to Belgrade where he owned a *kafana*. My father feared the unsettled times in the village. From Belgrade my father later took me to a town in Bulgaria where my uncle lived. Since he had no children I was able to stay with him during my childhood and finish two years of highschool there. Then I returned to Belgrade, and in 1909 I returned to the village and my mother. She insisted that I come back since I was her only son and she did not want the house to be without a man. That year I became engaged to a girl from the village at the age of fifteen. Then I left again for my uncle in Bulgaria. I stayed with him until 1912, and at the outbreak of the Balkan War I returned to Belgrade, and then to my village to get married. In the spring of 1913 I was forced to go to Belgrade again to earn money. I stayed there six months working in a *kafana* owned by a relative. In the fall of that year my uncle sent me money from Bulgaria, and I returned home to the village. I then took a four months' course in bookkeeping in the town of Ohrid.

The same year I was mobilized and after a two-month training period was sent to fight the Austrians. I was later taken prisoner and spent ten months in a prisoner-of-war camp in Czechoslovakia. In 1916 I was handed over to the Bulgarians with a group of other Macedonians, we were taken to Sofia and taken into the army. Later I deserted and was able to join my former unit in the Serbian Army. I remained with them until my discharge in the Vojvodina in 1918. I then returned home and spent some time as a bookkeeper and worked on my land. Once a year I travel to Belgrade to visit my relatives and friends from the village who now live there as well as my son in the Vojvodina. I have also recently been to visit a sister in Bulgaria.

It is nice that even though I have a pension my sons and daughters help me. As a matter of great pride members of our family help each other. This is the custom in our area. Even today I share the agricultural work with my son and grandsons.

The following two accounts were written by Croats from a village between Zagreb and Sisak. The first traces events that forced a craftsman to turn to farming, and the second is by a peasant-worker who commutes daily to the city.

(5) I was born in 1922. My father was a trained cartwright. After finishing four grades of elementary school I began to learn his craft.

I worked with him until he died in 1950, and then I continued on my own for another two years. I married in 1943 and have two children, a son of fifteen who is attending the eight-year elementary school, and a daughter of ten who also goes to school. I should like to see my son trained as a mechanic, which is also his wish. I would also like to give my daughter further education.

Before the war cartwrights did well. Private people had woods, and it was easy for us to obtain timber. It frequently happened that we gave a cart or parts of a cart in exchange for a certain amount of timber which we had cut up at the sawmill.

High taxes compelled me to give up my craft. One year they rated me with the largest farmer in terms of the amount of tax I had to pay. After the war they tried to collectivize us village craftsmen. An enterprise was founded, but a few years later ceased to function because of large losses. Finally in 1952 I was unable to continue my trade,⁶ and I took up farming. I was able to do this because I had seven jutra of land.

With regard to farming, practically nobody in the village makes calculations estimating in advance all expenses and possible losses. People do not do this because of poor climatic conditions, small holdings and inherited tradition. In the present conditions, even if someone did make such an estimate, it would demoralize him and he would have to run away from the land. If I could, I would first of all buy farm machinery, for instance a small tractor. I think that farming can no longer be profitably done with an animal-drawn plow. The plow is outdated, and the work should be done by a tractor. But nowadays it is impossible for the peasant to acquire any major capital which would enable him to introduce more advanced farming methods. For instance, there is no special profit if I get 200,000 dinars for fattened pigs, on which I have spent 100,000 dinars for feed plus the work in looking after them. Young people in the village increasingly realize today that farming cannot give them what the town can, so they leave.

By no means could I pay for all my expenses and taxes out of my farming. That is why I also work as a common carrier. For this purpose I have strong horses and a large wooden cart with rubber wheels and a large space for goods. Mostly I transport timber from the woods to the railway station for various firms.

(6) I am forty and my wife is thirty-one. My father, mother and my brother and myself came to this village in 1937. We had sold our land in a village the other side of Zagreb and were able to buy a larger amount of land here for a cheaper price. We farmed while my brother studied veterinary science. But in 1942 he was put in a concentration camp. At the beginning of the war a Partisan took refuge in our house, and for this reason my family was persecuted by the fascists, for my parents were also imprisoned. To help them I joined the home guard. Later on they were released and my brother was exchanged for some captured Ustashi. At the end of the war the whole family lived in liberated territory. After the war my brother and I were demobilized; he continued his studies and I returned home to help my parents with the

farm work. But we had suffered greatly from the war and were robbed of nearly everything. This made it difficult for us to start after the war, and we still feel some of the consequences.

For the past eight years I have worked in a factory in Zagreb. Every day I travel to work by train and return home in the afternoon. I leave for work at 6:30 in the morning and return at 3:00 and then often help my parents in the fields. I would like to move to the city and work there and also find a job for my wife, but I have old parents and a son who goes to school here.

For much of the farm work we hire laborers whom we pay on a daily basis with meals. I own a harrow and a mower. I sometimes lend these machines to other people in the village and they repay by helping with our work during the season. I pay the Cooperative to do my plowing with a tractor.

I want my son to obtain a university education, for since I could not get academic training he at least should have it. If I had other children I would not let a single one work the land. There is no future in farming.

A Bosnian Serb in his early thirties who has become a skilled worker in the paper products factory in Maglaj wrote the next account. He retains strong ties to his upland village, which is located in the same district.

(7) My parents and grandparents all originated from the same village where I was born. Up to 1938 I remained in the village where I finished two grades of elementary school. But after my father died I went to Sarajevo where I got a job as a servant. I returned in 1941 and we divided the household between my brothers and me and the sons of my step-mother. In 1945 I joined the Partisans and later entered the Maglaj police force, remaining with them until 1953. Then I got a job at the paper mill and sold my land in the village, half to my brother and half to my wife's brother. Between 1945 and 1953 I completed the eight-year school. I became a skilled worker and several months ago a gate-keeper. I am a member of the Workers' Council at the factory and also of the veterans' organization. My wife completed the course for illiterates in 1948.

My daughter has completed four grades of highschool. She now works in the commune council offices and will soon go to Belgrade to study law at the university. She will have a scholarship from the commune. She is active in youth organizations, and my wife is a member of the women's organization.

Seven years ago I took out credit from the factory to build my own house. In addition I used the money which I obtained from the sale of my land and also obtained wood from my village. A year later the house was finished. It has three rooms upstairs, where we live, and a lower level where I have three roomers. They are workers in the factory who have not yet received apartments. I have a sewing machine, television and furniture, all of which I have bought on credit. I also have a bicycle which takes me to and from work. Around my house is a garden 800 meters square where I grow onions, lettuce, tomatoes, peas, peppers

and grapes. I also have plum, pear and apple trees, as well as a flower garden which I enjoy very much.

For our yearly vacation we return to the village but I don't work in the fields, although my wife sometimes does. I help my relatives in the village by taking care of various affairs for them, as in the case of their business with the commune administration. I also do some shopping for them, buying things such as coffee, sugar, chocolate or lemons. My brother-in-law visits at our house when he comes to town on market day and often sleeps over. He usually brings us fresh produce from the village.

I enjoy reading very much and have a library of 300 books. Recently I read Tolstoy's War and Peace and now I am reading the book about Eisenhower's invasion of Normandy. We have taken a vacation at the factory's hotel on the coast and would like to do so again.

With a childhood background similar to that of the preceding writer, the next informant has achieved considerable formal education and an important managerial position in the factory.

(8) My father was born in the village [a Serbian village near Maglaj]. My grandfather was also born there. Father was one of eight brothers and sisters, and all lived together in a zadruga although there were only six hectares of land. One brother married a girl from a nearby village and went to live with his wife's family. Another brother settled in the Vojvodina on land confiscated from the Germans.

My father had nine sons and two daughters. Two sons and one daughter were killed during the war. My father, who was a farmer, wanted to educate all his children, but before the war none was able to go beyond the four-year village school. As my older brothers grew up they worked mostly cutting timber in the woods. After the war my father got a job in the store operated by the agricultural cooperative [in the town]. This was in 1946. He used to come home once a week, since it was a three-hour walk over hilly trails.

I started school in 1939 and finished the first two grades before war broke out. In 1947 I was able to complete the other two years of school in one year. While still in the village I became a member of the Communist Youth, and in 1949, when I was seventeen, I got a job working for the district government. That year my father returned to farming in the village, since the going back and forth was too much for him. He has no pension.

In 1955 I started working at the paper factory. I became a mechanic and studied to become more skilled, going to Belgrade to take special training. Two of my brothers also work in the factory, and one of them is also studying to improve his qualifications. Another brother is working as a skilled worker in Ljubljana. He comes home two or three times a year, and when he gets married he will return for good. Another brother who is also unmarried is serving in the army, and the youngest brother is in school. Only an unmarried sister remains at home in the village. Two of us have flats in the new apartment buildings in town,

and one is building his own house. The brother who is now in the army will remain on the land, and I will turn over my share to him.

When I first worked as a clerk I was able to give my father more money than I do now. My father sends me cheese, meat and eggs from the village, and my father-in-law [his wife is from the same village] brings things like beans, bacon and potatoes and other items when he comes to town for the market. He is a prosperous man, with ten hectares of land. I give him presents of coffee, sugar and other things. He has an adopted son who lives with him in the village and who will inherit a third of his land. My wife and her sister will get the other two-thirds.

I am a member of the District Council and secretary of the district committee of the Socialist Alliance. In 1960-61 I was President of the Workers' Council. I am interested in continuing my studies at the Faculty of Law and am thinking about enrolling as a correspondence student at Belgrade University this fall. I wish to continue living in Maglaj because of family ties.

The next autobiographical account is by an urban intellectual who is two generations removed from the village.

(9) Our family history is a typical case of the evolution from village to town. My father's father left his village in central Serbia [Orašac] and set up a small kafana in a nearby town, and there he married. His village is well known since every peasant household there has produced two or three intellectuals. My grandmother also came from a village. It is interesting that both their families trace descent to the same lineage in Montenegro. This lineage has provided famous generals.

My father was born soon after, and they moved to another small town where my grandfather also had a kafana. My father attended school there and later went to Belgrade to study law. As a student he lived at my grandmother's brother's home in the city.

After I was born we still maintained close ties with grandfather's village, and I remember that when I was little we spent the summer there every year or every other year. When my father became an official posted in a nearby town I remember going to the village every month, where we were always warmly received. The people in the village were proud that one of their fellow villager's sons had attained a position of importance.

My mother was born in Belgrade. Her father was a technician who came to Belgrade from the Vojvodina, which was at that time under Austria-Hungary. Her mother was from Prague, of mixed Czech, German and French descent.

Now I no longer have contacts with the villages from which my paternal grandparents originated. I would like to go during the summer to visit the town where my father used to live, since there is a nice spa there. However, we haven't gotten around to doing this. Nevertheless, I will remember my father's many stories and also those of my grandfather.

The next three selections are based on interviews with women. Because of their more restricted experiences, unlike the men they do not feel they have a life story to narrate, and it was therefore necessary to use a relatively formal interview schedule.

The first of these illustrates the ways in which the urban influences impinging on Yugoslav villages have been maximized in the lives of particular individuals even though on the surface they may appear quite traditional. This is illustrated by the following narration by a woman from Orašac, now in her late seventies. Her life story is atypical in many ways but does help show the influence of the city within the village. Baba Verka began life under difficult circumstances, as a girl eloping with a bachelor from a prosperous family after becoming pregnant, aborting and later marrying the son of a poor household, and after much hardship and the subsequent inability to bear children, enduring to a relatively prosperous and comfortable old age; her story indicates both the hardships of rural life and the possibilities open to an aggressive individual who, though illiterate, uses modern institutional means for traditional ends.

(10) There were nine of us. Father, mother, and seven children. In our home we slept together like little pigs, one bed, two benches with boards. Not one or two but all together. One brother died in the army, another died at seventeen, and a sister at six. Four of us children remain. We two sisters married in neighboring villages, Gila in Vrbica, me in Orašac. One brother went to work in Zaječar and another in Valjevo.

I first saw my husband in church where he sang with the priest. He was sixteen then. He began school at twelve and finished fourth grade at sixteen. I wed a poor one, but he was handsome. When we married I had no šifonjer like today nor even a tablecloth, only a dress and blanket and a scrap of rag rug, some socks which I knitted for my husband and a chest to keep them in. My husband had a bed for us to sleep in which his older brother had made. In my new home there was my father-in-law and mother-in-law and my husband's brother.

I was twenty-two when I came to my husband's home. There was little land and he worked as a miner. Two years after I arrived he bought me a sewing machine. I am illiterate. I am nothing. But after he bought me the machine, I began to sew and people brought me beans, corn, flour, all of which we needed. As a girl I had learned to sew all sorts of things.

Then my husband and brother-in-law went to war [1913-14]. I had to take care of my paralyzed father-in-law and my mother-in-law. In the second year of the war he died. I had to bury him and give the necessary funeral feast. All these things went through my head. My husband had told me before we married, "I won't force you to work on a stranger's land." But it was wartime and I had to hoe. It was a living death. I had to have bread to eat. If you don't have it no one will give it to you. I worked a neighbor's field. It yielded 2,200 kilos of wheat, 1,100 for him and 1,100 for me. It was my burden that I didn't have my own land to sow. We ate soup without lard or meat, and cornbread for breakfast, cornbread for lunch, and cornbread for supper. It crumbled like a spider's web.

After the war we moved near the mine. But I wanted to live near the road. We prepared 30,000 bricks. My husband had to go to the mineral springs for treatment for twenty-one days. I found house-builders. We agreed on the price. In twenty-one days a building seven meters by four and a half was to be ready. When my husband returned there were only two tiles to be put in place on the roof. A friend met my husband on his way home and said, "Go home, Dušan, and see what your Verka has done." He came and stood before the house-builders and didn't say anything. The builders called me and asked, "Who is that? What do you have to do with him?"

But he liked it. During the winter we lived in the one room. When spring came he asked me to find the house-builders so that an addition could be made. "What, I find the builders? What am I, a widow? You sit at home and I'm supposed to do that. What a disgrace." But then he wanted to know how was I able to do it the first time? I told him that that was the way I wanted to do it but that now I didn't want to do it again and that he should do what he knew how to do. So he went out and found the builders. They took apart an outbuilding and used the bricks to make another room five and a half meters long and three meters wide. In it we fitted two beds, a big table and a small one, a chest, a stove. There was also a small kitchen and a place to store wood and tools. Finally there were four rooms in all and see, that is the way it stands today.

At Christmas it will be twenty-four years since my husband died. Nine years I lived without a pension. For four and a half years I received 1,000 dinars each month, after that I got 4,800 and then bit by bit it increased to 12,000 and now finally it is 40,000. When my brother-in-law died, my nephew and I went to court and we divided. The court told us to divide in half and of my half, half was to go to my nephew since I have no children. I didn't need anything more and didn't ask for anything. Now I have a nice garden and 500 vines in my vineyard. I have four pigs and a few sheep.

For my nephew I took out a credit and bought 45 ares. He returned the money to me as he was able. Three years ago I bought another 45 ares and turned it over to him. Just recently I bought a hectare for his little son who is now three. The land is in the little one's name. My neighbor a retired miner sold me the land. He took the high road to town. The land is in a nice place, near the road, the Cooperative Home, the church, the school, everything is there. I paid 600,000 dinars for this hectare. I gave 300,000 and still have 300,000 to pay, half this year on Saint Dimitri's Day and half next year on Saint George's Day. But I can't wait that long. I have already set aside 200,000 and I will sell some livestock. For the first 300,000 dinars I was lucky; I won 400,000 in a lottery. I spent 200,000 here and there, but added from my pension and so it came to 300,000. I had 80,000 in the bank and then it was only necessary to sell a sow. There were others who wanted to buy the land, but what they were able to pay, so was I.

My nephew lives down the hill there, in his house, with his wife, mother and two children. Beside working the land he gets a little private income as a carpenter. My nephew is so happy with the land he

planted corn and hoed it three times. He is as happy as if he had gotten a mare. He used to complain that he didn't have enough land and now he complains it is hard to work so much land.

I don't ask for anything more and I don't need anything more.

Many aspects of Baba Verka's life seem more characteristic of town than village, such as her working as a seamstress in her early marriage and later living off her husband's mine pension for a period. Also somewhat unusual was her husband's taking the cure at a spa, rare for peasants even today. Her handling of money and property is uncommon in what even in urban areas, continues to be, in a social but not a legal sense, predominantly a male-dominated society. Rural values are, of course, apparent in her concern with land and livestock. Baba Verka continues to walk to town to market garden produce. Her satisfaction with her house near the road, and her desire to acquire land near the center of the village are today widely shared values.

The last two selections are taken from interviews with two young matrons born in Orašac and married to workers. Their responses provide a contrast between the relative stability of ideas and values in a village-oriented life and the problems of a village woman adjusting to an urban setting.

(11) I was born in 1930 here in the village. In 1955 I married a peasant from a neighboring village who was also born in 1930. The marriage was arranged by the village marriage broker, who also happens to be a distant relative of mine living in my husband's village.

There were five children in our family, two brothers and three younger sisters. I am the youngest. The brothers died as children. Now my two sisters are married in nearby villages. When I got married it was decided that my husband and I would live with my parents. My husband has a brother who has remained on his parents' land.

My husband is a farmer with four grades of elementary school. I have not been to school and am illiterate. My husband works as a laborer in a construction company in Arandjelovac and earns 20,000 dinars a month. From savings he is building a new house in the village and has also taken out credit. We will have electricity in the new house. He spends his yearly vacation working in the fields. Before getting married he served in the army, in Slovenia. Our household has two hectares and 30 ares. Fifteen years ago my father bought one of these hectares with savings. My father is the head of the household. He holds the money and makes all the decisions.

I have two boys, the older five and the younger three. They were born at home, with the help of a village midwife [untrained]. Since our godfather died a new godfather who is a friend of my husband's, from his village, was chosen. He christened the children. I would like my sons to be musicians. I love music. My husband will decide about their schooling. I would like to see them go to live in town.

We celebrate our family slava, and relatives and neighbors come as guests.

I like to work in the fields better than housework, because then I do only one kind of work all day. I have never been to Belgrade, but as

a maiden I visited fairs in the market towns near the village. Sometimes my husband takes me to the movies. I love it.

(12) I was born in 1937. Now I live in Mladenovac. I was married in 1957. My husband was born in 1936. We met in a neighboring village, at my aunt's, but we had known each other since childhood. We went to the village council in my husband's village to register our marriage but didn't have a ceremony in the church, since my husband is a member of the Party. As a dowry I received a bedroom set and some household supplies. I went to live with my husband and his family in his village. They had four hectares. There were his father, his mother and his brother. My husband then left to serve in the army in Belgrade. We corresponded personally.¹⁰ When he returned we remained with his parents for six months. Because of a dispute with his father, who wanted him to work on the land, we left their home and went to live in town.

We each have four grades of elementary school. He got a job in the asbestos factory. He began with a salary of 9,000 dinars a month and now gets 16,000. My husband immediately bought a bicycle on credit. After a few years we took out a credit of 90,000 dinars to buy a plot and build a house. Recently we took out additional credit to build on an additional room and a pantry and to buy some things for the house. My husband is satisfied with his work. From the time we came to live in town he has worn city clothes, and so have I. On the first day of the month he gives me his pay, and then we decide how to spend it. I keep the money. My husband smokes and goes to soccer matches, but doesn't go to the kafana. He spends his vacations at home. Last year we thought we might go to the seaside, but we had to build the house. We haven't yet been able to buy a radio, but I go once a year to the hairdresser for a permanent wave. I go into town with my husband only to buy things, since I have two small children whom I can't leave alone.

My daughter is three years old, and I have a son nine months old, and both of them were born at the maternity center. They were given their names by a friend of my husband. I didn't want those names but he did. The children weren't christened in church. I would like my daughter to be an engineer and my son a professor in a gymnasium.

We don't celebrate our slava, but we have celebrated our little girl's birthday.

Before I was married I went to visit my cousin in Belgrade, and as a married woman I spent fifteen days there in a hospital, because my daughter had an infection and a bad cough. If I had the money I would like to go visit other cities in Yugoslavia and also the coast. I would also like to see America and learn American. I would like to have qualified as a clerk, to have a salary and in this way to be an equal of my husband, for only if a woman works can she be equal. I would also like to be a member of the Party.

If I had money I would buy furniture, utensils, enough food, and also an electric stove, radio, television set, a toilet in the house and piped water.

Complexities of Modernization in Yugoslavia

Throughout this discussion considerable stress has been placed on the ethnic diversity of Yugoslavia. The foregoing autobiographical sketches point up some of the problems shared by all groups regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation. They illustrate aspects of the breakdown of the extended family, showing how at the same time existing kin ties promote movement from rural to urban areas. They provide examples of the extensive periodic migrations of both agriculturalists and industrial workers, of the problems involved when the peasant-worker commutes daily to his job and of the negative orientation toward agriculture found on the part of most young people and their parents as well, resulting in part from the administrative mechanisms designed to ensure the ultimate socialization of the land. They also depict in terms of individual careers some of the complexities involved in the modernization process.

In casual accounts of modernization the temptation is to present a picture of the untouched village as contrasted to the dynamic town. But the village has been the scene of enormous change. One need not go from village to town to feel its impact. Obviously there is more continuity with the past if we are speaking of peasants with small holdings whose families have lived in one area for generations than in a new industrial settlement. Yet the degree of change cannot be overlooked. In Orašac, for example, over a period of a century and a half there has been a sequence of five distinct house types. Not only do these house types reflect changing patterns of need, comfort and planning (the most recent follows a standardized plan devised by urban architects and utilizes concrete and steel reinforcing rods) but they reflect drastically altered ecological patterns such as the virtual disappearance of the forests in central Serbia. Within the past decade sheet-metal wood stoves made by a tinsmith in the market town are being replaced by manufactured wood stoves of enameled metal containing superior features. Similar transformations have taken place progressively in household furnishings and the construction of wells, privys and other outbuildings for storage and stock.

In the period 1951-1960 total dwelling space in rural areas rose by eleven percent. In proportion to the number of inhabitants housing construction has grown faster in the countryside than in towns (in absolute terms, however, in urban communities it has progressed at a greater rate than in rural areas because since 1949 the urban population has increased by over two million while the rural and farming population has decreased by about a half million) (Marković and Kostić 1964:34).

Along with increases in electrification or literacy, these are types of changes which are relatively easy to measure. However, an aspect of change which is not measured by statistics but which does come out in the autobiographies and which is a potent factor, if not in modernization itself then at least in attitudes toward modernization, is that it appears to be the rare peasant in Yugoslavia who has had a career concerned exclusively with farming.

Military service both during a war and in peace-time training has been almost universal. For many peasant men, including those who were prisoners-of-war, this has been a high point in their lives, a dramatic

although often brutal and punishing experience. Because of the large number of army units based throughout Yugoslavia today as in pre-war times, most peasant recruits gain an opportunity to see places remote from their homes. Since the units are often mixed the village youth meets young men from widely varying regions. Few village men are lacking in some degree of knowledge beyond the confines of their own district. Particularly those from poorer regions become keenly aware of differences in living standards and possible alternatives.

In addition to the very important influence of the new political ideology on the peasant soldiers and the innovation of women fighting alongside them in the Partisans, those who were taken prisoner in Germany after the last war came back with broadened horizons, as did their fathers from Austria-Hungary after World War I. Although this does seem to have had some effect on their farming techniques, perhaps of even greater importance is that they did return impressed with the possibilities of technological innovation and more receptive to change than they might have been otherwise.

Also recorded in the autobiographical selections is the not insignificant amount of agricultural labor performed during the summer and on week-ends by people living in urban areas. A student helps on his father's farm over summer vacation. A married brother or sister returns with immediate family to the parents in the native village "so that the children can breathe some fresh air" and to visit and participate in the agricultural chores.

The autobiographies provide examples of some of the numerous non-military means by which a man might put aside farming. Instances where individuals became apprentices, miners, merchants, carters, are documented. Large numbers of men from Macedonia went to Turkey for varying periods and from Croatia to work in the United States. Other than by personal narrative there is no record of these sequential occupations, nor are there formal records of the numbers of workers who resume farming. Thus the peasant-worker is not new, and the process is not exclusively one-way.

From the point of view of the socialist state, an interesting feature is the necessity for hired farm labor, often women; this results when the rural government employee such as clerk, worker or pensioner who has no one else to work his land must hire hands. Here state-derived income has begun to play a real role in social status in the countryside. The government is aware of this situation and is attempting to eliminate the duality implicit in peasant-worker status so that either one becomes a full-time occupation. Economy and society are caught up in a circular process. Combined with many difficulties and few incentives to invest (in machinery, tools, fertilizer, to say nothing of land) in one's agricultural estate is the tremendous emotional drive for peasant youth to leave the farm, supported by the education system and general value system of a "workers' state." On the other hand, there is a real attachment to the land. Undoubtedly part of this is sentimental, but there is also the important aspect of security. It represents a haven after lack of success in the city, a refuge in the event of war and a place of retirement in old age. As automation and economic reforms make a growing impact on Yugoslav industry, life in the village may become more attractive.

ENDNOTES

¹This account has been previously published in A Serbian Village, Columbia University Press, New York, 1958:205-206. A second bibliography contained in the same publication, pp. 206-209, is also relevant. In it an old Serb villager recounts his youth and young manhood as a merchant's apprentice, soldier and miner, during which time he retained all his village ties.

²They wore long linen shirts over underdrawers.

³The liberal king who ruled until the end of World War I. His brief reign in the period immediately preceding the war is looked upon as something of a golden age by almost all of the older generation in Serbia.

⁴The two houses are adjoining and are regarded by family members as well as the rest of the village as one household. The division appears to have been founded more on reasons of personal living space and budgeting than on patterns of social cooperation. In 1962, when this biography was written, there were several zadrugas of comparable size in this village.

⁵The village is located near Struga, Macedonia, and is composed of Macedonian Serbs and Macedonian speaking Moslems. The speaker is a Macedonian Serb.

⁶The Croat jutro is approximately an acre.

⁷The following two accounts, 8 and 9, have been previously published in "Peasant Culture and Urbanization in Yugoslavia," Human Organization 24: 169-170.

⁸The following autobiography has been previously published in a new paperback edition of A Serbian Village, Harper Colophon Books, Harper & Row, New York, 1967, copyright all rights reserved. In the same publication other relevant autobiographical material is also published for the first time.

⁹This is a better than average wage for an unskilled laborer in 1962. Prior to the 1965 currency reform the rate was 750 dinars to the dollar.

¹⁰Traditionally a man away from home writes to his father and sends regards to other members of the household, including his wife.

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