

## Interview: Marko Veselica



# Croatia is reaching out to rejoin western civilization

Dr. Veselica is president of the Croatian Democratic Party and president of the Democratic Club for Central and Eastern Europe. He was interviewed, speaking through an interpreter, by Umberto Pascali and Christopher White in Washington on Sept. 18.

He was born on Jan. 9, 1936 in the village of Glavice, in Croatia. He obtained master's and doctoral degrees in economic science at the University of Zagreb, where he worked as an assistant professor of economic theory. Dr. Veselica gradually assumed a leadership role in Croatian political, intellectual, and cultural life. He was a member of the Federal Parliament in Belgrade, an official of the Trade Union of Croatia, and a member of the executive board of Matiza Hrvatske (the cultural association for the Croats of the diaspora).

With the downfall of the 1971 "Croatian Spring," Veselica, a leading figure in the movement, was tried on charges of having conspired against "state and people," sentenced to seven years of harsh imprisonment, and barred from appearing in public for four years more. While serving his sentence, he was proclaimed "prisoner of conscience" by Amnesty International. In 1981, Dr. Veselica was again tried for having "misrepresented the political situation in Yugoslavia" because of an interview he gave to *Der Spiegel*. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison and four years of not appearing in public. Following an international outcry, he was released early.

In the discussion on Sept. 18, Veselica's translator described him as "one of the best economists Croatia ever had." He reported that the Croats are going to set up a team to study new concepts of economy at the University of Zagreb, and will organize international conferences to which experts from abroad will be invited.

"The present war which is waged against Slovenia, Croatia, and other sovereign states, especially Albania in Kosovo (they don't allow any human rights in Kosovo), is being pressed by the Serbs, and the Federal Army is only a

tool in their hands," Veselica told *EIR*. "The army is only Yugoslavian in name. It was always a Serbian army because the majority of officers were always Serbian. And now this army plays the role of a Serbian hardline communist army. Their goal is to take Croatian land, and also the land of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia and Montenegro, and the autonomous regions which have never been Serbian land. These evils are a result of a wrong construction of this artificial community."

He explained the history: "This state of Yugoslavia which was created in 1918, was pushed by the great European powers at Versailles. The Croatian people have never been in a position to decide whether or not to live in that state. The Croatian nation historically was and is against that state. This state was imposed on us by lies and violence. Croats are a western nation with deep democratic roots. We are Roman Catholics. We're very different from the Serbs. We defended all of Europe against the Turks, and the Serbs were under the Turkish Army. Croats and Serbs are from two different worlds. It is crazy to impose sharing of flags between these two nations, because they are very different.

"From 1918 to 1941, the Croatian people struggled against the Serbs. The Croats never accepted Yugoslavia as their own state. The Croats between the two wars were repressed. Every Croatian who said something against Yugoslavia was imprisoned and tortured in the prisons of old Yugoslavia. Old Yugoslavia was a typical Serbian country. There was a big exodus: Almost half of the Croatian nation today lives outside of Croatia.

"During the peace between the two wars, about 30,000 Croats were killed by Serbian policemen and soldiers. This was how they kept peace, how they kept Yugoslavia. Many thousands of Croats were imprisoned. The peak of all of these events was the murder in 1928 of Pavle Radic, the nephew of Stjepan, the leader of the Croatian party. He was killed in the Yugoslav Congress in Belgrade by order

of the Yugoslav King Alexander, the father of the present pretender to the Serbian throne, Alexander in London. Some other prominent Croatian parliamentarians were also killed there, including Djuro Basaricek. Others, including Stjepan Radic, were severely wounded and died of those wounds. Stjepan was the representative of the Croatian people in Belgrade, the leader of the National Party, which was supported by 95% of the Croatian people. From this background, you can see why we were fighting each other during the Second World War.

“In World War II the communists won, and reimposed a federal Yugoslavia. Again the Serbians had the power. The communists succeeded in taking power because they killed hundred of thousands of Croats in a very brutal way. That is the biggest human rights violation and crime in World War II. Three hundred thousand Croats, or possibly more, including a large majority of civilians, women and children, had escaped before Tito’s advancing army; they gave themselves up to the British in the Austrian city of Bleiburg. But the British let Tito’s army enter Austria and capture all the refugees. Many were killed on the spot, others were taken in a horrifying march from Slovenia to the border with Bulgaria, and most of them were killed along the way or died of fatigue, especially children.

“Of course it was forbidden to speak about these events. People knew, but if anyone tried to talk about this, they were imprisoned and tortured. The method by which these people were killed was to take off all their clothes, to cut their throats, and to push them into big pits. Near every Croatian city or village there are these big holes or caves, with the bones of their countrymen. Now, 45 years after the war, we are free to speak about this.”

**EIR:** There was silence from both sides, East and West?

**Veselica:** Yes. East and West. They were silent because they supported Tito’s politics. They didn’t care about all of these crimes in Croatia. That was the biggest mistake of western politics.

Unfortunately today some parts of western Europe have illusions about Yugoslavia, and these illusions are very dangerous, both for Croats and for the other Yugoslavian people. There is only one way to maintain the Yugoslavian state: violence, prisons, murders. And I am one of those people who traveled this very painful road. I was sentenced twice to hard labor in prison, for a total of 26 years. I was imprisoned for 11 years and 46 days because international public opinion helped to reduce my sentence. Both times I was supposed to be killed by the secret police in prison. But miraculously I avoided that end. All of this only because I was in favor of a free, democratic, and independent Croatia. There were many other Croatian intellectuals who suffered as I did. So now you can see what the basis of Yugoslavia is. Unfortunately the western powers helped a lot to maintain this dictatorship.

**EIR:** What are the deeper reasons that the West allowed this?

**Veselica:** At first Yugoslavia was a product of western powers. They supported Tito and Yugoslavia because they hoped that Yugoslavia would stop Russian expansionism toward the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean Sea has always been a target of the Russian Orthodox Church. Then the Communist Party took over that goal from the ROC.

The second reason is that Tito’s partisans won in World War II. And the western powers considered Tito anti-fascist. That was the same mistake that the western powers made when they took the Soviet Union as their ally. After World War II they realized how dangerous the Soviet Union and its expansionist politics were. Unfortunately it was too late because the western countries had given to the Soviet Union half of Europe. Half of Europe was under the Soviets for 40 years.

The third reason is that Yugoslavian embassies and envoys all over the world were about 90% Serbian. The few Croats were Serbian-oriented. If you tell something to someone for 40 years, you expect them to believe it. You couldn’t hear the Croatian position.

**EIR:** Britain’s Lord Carrington, Dutch Foreign Minister Van den Broek, and French President Mitterrand are all pro-Serbian. Before World War I, Britain, France, and Russia formed the Triple Entente, and started World War I against Germany. Through the Versailles Treaty, Britain put Hitler in power. So there are more than 100 years of warfare from Britain and its allies against Croatia, Germany, and Poland. The people in power from the outside will rule by such imperial arrangements as Yalta. The target of this is the economic integration of Germany, Russia, the Balkan area. Since the Congress of Berlin in 1885, western opposition to the development of the independent nation-state is very deep. And now we have Lawrence Eagleburger; it’s not “capitalism.”

**Veselica:** Some western countries are interested in keeping the old order in Europe, because they are scared of a new order in Europe where it will be possible for new nations to exist and be independent. Some western nations are very scared of the possibilities which can result from declarations of independence by small countries. It seems that many countries in the western world are afraid of a new Europe which will be made of free nations that are making some sort of economic union. This free Europe, these free nations, are not very convenient to some people in the West. Because if little nations in Europe succeed in getting independence they will become a new factor in policymaking. They will bring with them their energy and their new views, and this can be very dangerous for some traditional western countries and politicians who want to keep the *status quo*. So it is not strange that many western countries are not very happy with these events in the Soviet Union. For many countries in the West, it is not convenient that the Soviet Union is destroyed

as the imperial Soviet Union. And it is not very convenient that little nations be struggling for independence.

In our opinion the liberation of these little nations and the nations in the Soviet Union will result in a higher quality for the whole world. This new Europe will bring together the traditional elements and some new ones. A new Europe must be a union of free nations which are coming together of their own free will. The power which will unify them is the common market, technological progress, the exchange of ideas and peoples, and the determination to find what is common and essential for central and western Europe, but without violence. And now, against these developments in Europe, there are the western traditional policies and the eastern communist leaders. For example, some of Great Britain's politicians are attempting to rule Europe in the wrong way, and in our opinion it is not in the interest of Great Britain to have that attitude. But we cannot convince them.

The East has gone through a process of change; now the West must go through a similar process.

**EIR:** Do you agree that the key question is the question of economic policy? One needs an economic order in which both the freedom of the individual, and the freedom of the state in which the individual is organized, are recognized as fundamental rights. . . .

**Veselica:** It is a complementary process. The Croatian people need a state. We are fighting for economic reforms, for democracy, human rights. I want to recognize the ethnic differences in Croatia, to extend full rights to the minorities in Croatia. Different persons must be motivated to work for the state.

**EIR:** In the West we have two traditions. One is of the self-governing citizen, in which the state is a creation of the citizens and represents the citizens. The other is the International Monetary Fund and all that it stands for.

**Veselica:** The International Monetary Fund is very dangerous, and it is a source or base to keep the old structures. Unfortunately they have an interest to keep pathological structures reproducing themselves, structures which are the instrument of certain forces that are not productive and creative enough to form a new structure in the East and establish a rational and productive democracy. This instrument must be radically changed, but I am afraid that in these institutions there are forces that are against any change. On that line was, for example, the prime minister of Yugoslavia, Ante Markovic. Markovic is a very dangerous person. He is not going to create a good basis for democratic changes, especially in the economy. With the support of the IMF, he wants to keep a fiction of Yugoslavia that no longer exists. He is dangerous, because he has certain international forces behind him.

**EIR:** Is it true that certain forces in the West want to keep

Yugoslavia to make sure that they get their money back?

**Veselica:** That is a big illusion. If the world accepts Croatia as an independent state, I am proposing that Croatia will take all its debts on its own shoulders and that will be very convenient for Croatia. Because so far the cost of the war is \$12 billion. If it continues like this, it will go to who knows what sum—without counting all the victims. The atrocities committed right now make me deeply sad, and I cannot believe that I live in such a civilization. I almost cannot believe it, but we have to go on living.

**EIR:** The President of Lithuania, Vytautas Landsbergis, proposed to convene a new Nuremberg Tribunal to try the crimes of the communists. Do you support such a move?

**Veselica:** The proposal is all right. The crimes of communism are three times bigger than the crimes Hitler committed. The Soviet Union killed 90 million people. They did it in peacetime. We believe people who are making war against Slovenia, Croatia, and Kosovo—Milosevic, General Adzic, Kabivic, Abramovic . . . they are war criminals already now. They didn't just commit crimes against Croatia, Kosovo, and Slovenians. They committed crimes against humanity.

These crimes represent a shame for civilization, not just for the Yugoslavian and eastern European people, but for western civilization. We are surprised that the West and its media remain passive, except for a few exceptions like you—which I appreciate very, very much. We Croatians feel we are part of western humanism, which we consider as universal values. Croatia always fought for the West, and Croatia was the nation that stopped any invasion of western Europe. Croatia paid with its own blood for its membership in the West, and we are so surprised that the West is giving more support to the Serbian East than to us. It is a tragedy not only for the Croatian people, but for the whole West. But we hope that things will change.

**EIR:** There is a powerful Serbian lobby in this country, like Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger. What can be done?

**Veselica:** I do not want to mention names, but I know the Serbian lobby is working here—Congresswoman [Helen] Bentley [R-Md.] and certain circles in American politics which are connected—and they must be exposed, because they are working against the American nation. There are also American congressmen working for truth and justice, and who think that helping Croatia is in the interest of the United States. I have just come from talking to two of them, and will continue talking with others. Croatia must multiply such contacts, because we strongly believe that the United States is democratic, there is a public, and eventually at the end, the truth will come out, because we believe that it is the interest of any democratic nation to discover the truth.

Every democratic society has to learn something from history. You cannot avoid it, if you want to make your own

contribution to the progress of humanity, to the creative path of history.

**EIR:** The people who support Serbia also happen to be the people who jailed the founder of our magazine, Lyndon LaRouche. They created trumped-up charges. From his jail cell, he created a policy to reconstruct Europe: the Productive Triangle policy, to use the industrial capabilities from France, Germany, and Austria, etc., to create infrastructure, transportation, food supply along the historical lines of economic development in central and eastern Europe, and to do this on the base of a monetary reform.

**Veselica:** Of course we are for that solution. We are in favor of reconstruction of all Europe, especially central and eastern Europe, which were the objects of Soviet and Serbian communist tyranny.

Reforms are needed in that part of the world, and those reforms are possible only if the states are free. In that case, on the basis of their own interests, those free states will enter into a kind of integration, because there is no freedom without it. That's why I see the necessity of an instrument such as you are describing, a European-wide bloc. This would greatly contribute to the wealth of Europe, and we want to work on that; but first we need freedom, we need to free the productive capabilities so that we can reconstruct. We have to create financial institutions through which we can communicate with others. But we must remove terror and tyranny which is shameful and an obstacle to any progress.

**EIR:** We think that once half of Europe has been freed from communism, it must not be given to the IMF.

**Veselica:** Yes, I am aware of that; this is not acceptable and we are watching it very carefully.

**EIR:** Polish President Lech Walesa recently was interviewed by *Le Monde*, and he criticized the shock therapy associated with the IMF. There were other voices from the Catholic world, for example the weekly *Il Sabato* in Italy, that strongly attacked the policies of Jeffrey Sachs and the IMF.

**Veselica:** The International Monetary Fund needs a certain restructuring. The IMF needs a radical change in the direction of a new economic order. It is impossible to keep the financial, monetary structure as it now exists. It is necessary to invent a new structure, which would allow others to get more adequate resources in order to satisfy their own needs.

**EIR:** When you issued the appeal in July, which was published in *EIR*, did you receive many answers?

**Veselica:** Some, but not many. We didn't find the proper base for placing our own ideas, but we believe that we will find the opportunity. . . . Each day I am making more contacts with journalists and politicians, with scientists all

over Europe and the world, with many universities. I was at the Pan-European meeting in Dresden in July, where I gave a report on the place of the Croatian people in the future and the role of Catholicism in this process.

I wrote a book in prison, *The Economic Adventure of the West*. This book is the result of deep studies of the western economic system. When I was in jail, I studied more than a thousand books, from many disciplines, history, economics, anthropology, sociology. I think we should change the philosophy of the economy. We cannot accept western pragmatism and mechanism, because the western system has many diseases. Too great a worship of money can jeopardize the way of life in western civilization. So Europe should realize that there are some pathological elements in its approach, and most probably in the IMF there is a lot of pathology.

**EIR:** Yes. Once this disease was well known and identified. It was called usury.

**Veselica:** Exactly. Unfortunately today usury has become a way of life. We should change our views on the development of civilization. And of course it is not possible to do this with communist methods. It is possible only with the democratic approach. The western countries must engage in self-criticism of their system and mistakes, because it is very important if the West wants to survive.

**EIR:** Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said there must not be any difference between economics and morality; instead today these are considered opposite concepts.

**Veselica:** Morality and economy must go together, of course. Today they do not. It's understandable that there are some conflicts between the two, but it is necessary to keep them together. Without morality, economics is becoming a criminal activity. The result is the establishment of rich mafias, power groups, powerful lobbies that have very great influence and that, for the sake of their money, are ready to destroy the basic values of civilization and of humanity. And if humanity becomes heartless and sick out of lust for money, how can the society survive? This is the origin of western frustrations. They are trying to solve this frustration with drugs. So we should fight. We should look deeper than what is usually considered economic science. The problems of drugs, organized crime, and so on must be solved, but we must go to the roots, not like President Bush did, by invading Panama or Colombia.

It is very difficult to achieve development and progress without suffering for that development. For a good result in whatever one is doing, it is necessary to have love, and of course if you want to have many people who can be productive, you must create the right environment. A balance between rationality and inspiration must be created. Sometimes we may have a conflict, but we will be able to overcome it. The role of creative individuals and modern politicians should be to solve this problem.