

Yugoslav Secret Police. This had resulted in a sentence of 15 years imprisonment for attempted murder. This programme point to a campaign of assassination conducted against Croatian nationalists living outside of Yugoslavia by agents of the Yugoslav Secret Police. This had not been reported in New Zealand.

The complainant summarised his complaint as follows:

- “1. The programme is prejudiced and misleading.
2. The programme is neither impartial nor objective.
3. The programme is racist.
4. The programme is inaccurate.
5. The programme is malicious and has potential to cast suspicion of guilt on any Croatian emigrant.
6. In the programme, allegations are presented as facts.”

Television New Zealand's Findings

On 4 October 1989 Television New Zealand Ltd. informed the complainant that the complaint had not been upheld. It acknowledged the complainant's genuine concerns which it said were fully recognised and respected by the TVNZ Committee.

Television New Zealand's findings comprised more than 6 pages of detailed analysis of the complaint.

TVNZ noted the reasons why 2 persons had been identified and the case of 1 of them examined. TVNZ referred to the historical antagonism between Croatian and Serbian communities in the Balkans going back many hundreds of years and said that in 1918 they became unwilling fellow-citizens when the allies established the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under Alexander I. The country was named Yugoslavia in 1929. It seemed that, during the period between the wars, the Serbs dominated Yugoslavia economically and culturally and that their old adversaries, the Croats, were considerably disadvantaged. When Hitler's Germany invaded the Balkans in April 1941, it kept a promise to the Croats by setting up a separate Croatian state. But the regime installed represented only a minority Croatian faction known as the Ustasha led by Ante Pavelic.

Television New Zealand said that, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the Ustasha “turned Croatia into a state on the model of the most extremist National Socialist Party formation, the SS, or Schutzstaffel, into which only the most dedicated and racially pure Germans were admitted. The Ustasha persecuted and killed many thousands of Orthodox Serbs, Jews and Muslims.”

The Ustasha lasted 4 years and were replaced at the war's end by a government led by Tito—a government in which once again the Serbs were dominant. Television New Zealand acknowledged that the retribution turned on Croats by Serbian “Chetniks” was brutal and savage, involving torture, mass murder and infamous death marches. It was during that period that Croats became refugees and sought new lives abroad.

Given the legacy of hatred and bitterness between Croats and Serbs over a long period, the committee believed they could better appreciate why the complainant and his fellow signatories related to a programme which profiled a fellow Croatian as a likely war criminal. However, Television New Zealand believed the complainant may have misunderstood the purpose of the programme and did not recognise the very valid reason why Srečko Rover was highlighted.

Television New Zealand pointed out that the main thrust of the programme was the internal debate going on in Australia over whether the war crimes trials should go ahead at all. It did not single out the Croatian community. It highlighted one Australian resident who happened to be a Croatian suspected of war crimes. There was no suggestion that all, or the majority of, the 250 suspects were Croats. The ethnic background of the other named suspect, Conrad Kolayse, was

not mentioned but as his alleged crimes occurred in Latvia it seemed highly unlikely that he would be of Croatian descent. TVNZ did not consider that any inference could legitimately be drawn from the programme that all Croatian migrants to Australia and New Zealand could be terrorists.

It was not suggested that the references to King Alexander had anything to do with the war crimes and they were shown as part of the historical background.

As to the alleged historical inaccuracy—that King Alexander was assassinated by a Macedonian—Television New Zealand said all historical references stated that the assassination was carried out by order of a group of Croatian nationalists who used the Macedonian as a “hired gun”.

It was not necessary for the brief historical package to have made reference to the assassination of 3 Croatian parliamentary leaders in the Yugoslav Parliament.

As to the claim that, in regard to the bombing of the Yugoslav Consulate in Sydney in the early 1970s, allegations were presented as fact, Television New Zealand noted the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's belief that a Croatian Liberation Organisation with links to Ustasha was responsible and referred to a *New Zealand Herald* item in December 1988 which concluded that Croatian nationalism was responsible.

As to the film in the programme of the shooting in 1968 in Sydney of an Australian boy from a Croat background by a Yugoslav Consulate staff member, it was true that no ethnic group was mentioned as having committed this act; but the shooting was used to illustrate the theme running through the programme that ethnic rivalries, born of experience overseas and in a distant time, had been imported into Australia along with the migrants. There was an implied fear that if individuals faced war crimes trials, ethnic violence would overflow again.

TVNZ said that the programme did not pick on 1 suspect because he was a Croatian but because Rover had been named publicly in connection with the suspected war crime. There was nothing in the programme to lead a thinking viewer to the conclusion that, because an Australian called Srečko Rover had been named as a possible war criminal, New Zealanders of Croatian descent should also come under suspicion.

The scenes of the Croatian club where Pavelic's picture hung alongside the Queen's were shown in the context of developing a profile of Rover. They showed he was comfortable in surroundings which seemed to honour a wartime leader whose actions were described as “genocide”. Had the person named been a Serbian Chetnik, then it might have been appropriate to show the Canberra statue of Draža Mihajlovic, the Chetnik leader, who was guilty of horrifying crimes against Croats.

The programme did not portray all Croats as anti-Semitic. It did state the well-documented fact that the Pavelic regime was responsible for the extermination of 40 000 Jews. The Hitler regime in Germany was responsible for killing millions of Jews but that was not to say that all Germans—as a people—were anti-Semitic.

As to the allegation that the programme was racist by raising the issue of collective reputation, the programme did not suggest that all 250 individuals being investigated belonged to 1 ethnic group. The impression was given that they could come from any of the large number of migrant parties that arrived in Australia after the Second World War.

The complainant had supplied newspaper clippings and a tape which chronicled events in Scotland, Germany, Australia and elsewhere where Yugoslavs, other than Croats, were portrayed as committing crimes against Croats and circumstances in which Croats may have been wrongly accused of crimes (specifically the bombings in Australia) at the instigation of such people. TVNZ said the programme was not about ethnic violence in Australia. It was about the tracking down of people who were now Australian residents who may have been guilty of war crimes and about the debate