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Od: **Mijo Potkrajac** <mijopotkrajac@gmail.com>

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Subject: Hrvatsko Francusko vjen anje u Parizu 31 srpnja 1965.

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HRVATSKO FRANCUSKO VJEN ANJE U PARIZU 31 SRPNJA 1965.

MARIAGE FRANCAIS CROATE À PARIS LE 31 JUILLET 1965.

CROATIAN FRENCH WEDDING IN PARIS, JULY 31, 1965.

Croatian / French wedding in Paris, July 31, 1965

<https://ljubuski.net/16190-hrvatskofrancusko-vjencanje-u-parizu-31-srpnja-1965>

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Petra Boban Gabri 's house in Bobanova Draga served the "people's authorities" after World War II for forcibly summoning locals to their meetings where people were "brainwashed" about their "national liberation struggle", founding "working cooperatives", ordering free man work per day per household for the construction of the "People's Halls", Stalin's style of preparation of a "five-year plan", all in the spirit of carrying out the "socialist communist revolution" for the preservation and consolidation of Yugoslavia.

Picture of Petar Boban Gabri 's house.



As a child under ten, I sat in one corner of the house between the wall and the stove, listening and watching people arguing with those who represented the "people's government", with those who interpreted the new Stalin era, the new beginning of everything, etc., etc. Thus, in my boyhood development, I began to search for the truth and steel myself to be what I should be, and that is to be an honest man and a good Croat.

As I grew stronger and bigger day by day, I did physical work with the adults in the field, and I had the opportunity to hear many stories - from then still living witnesses - from the near and distant past. Oznaši / Udbashi cruised the village, arrested and took people to prison for the slightest report. There were more and more "Oznaški and Udbaški" informants day by day, because to them the job was promised and privileges were given. My brother Jerko (1935-) was forced to enroll in SKOJ, the "Union of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia", at school. My father found out about it before my brother came home. The father asked his son Jerko why he joined that unfaithful communist organization. Brother Jerko, crying, said that he had to, because the "comrade teacher" pulled him by the ears until the ears bled, when brother Jerko showed his ear behind which a nail scar and blood could be seen. This angered my father so much that he immediately went to the village of Vlašići where the school was located and looked for that "comrade teacher". So it started in my house, with my father, my mother, and my family; and I watched, saw, remembered and remembered everything.

Coming Wednesday, May 31, 1950, my father Petar Baban, Gabri , and I were sprinkling our vineyard in a field called Padina below the village of Bobanova Draga. At around 6:00 in the evening, three "militiamen" from the "Narodna Milicija" "People's Police" station in Sovići / Gorica came to us. The sharp question was: Are you comrade Petar Boban Gabri . In response, yes, they jumped on him and tied his hands with a wire. They did not even allow him to come home to change, but he was taken to the "People's Militia Station" in Sovići, so dirty and with torn pants.

He was accused and the indictment charged him - along with other "intolerances" as they used to say - and he was tried for sowing corn in his field, not cotton as "the people's authorities demanded". At that time, then communist "people's government" called corn a BANDIT/BRIGAND that should not be sown so that, as they thought and interpreted, the "squeakers", ie the Crusaders, could not be fed. We children, next to each other, and the mother became pregnant, we were left alone and cultivated the property as much as we could and knew. I am growing and starting to defy, and that defiance has intensified me more and more day by day, and I would say it has got me into trouble; with whom, with those representatives of the "people's government."

Friday, June 29, 1956, St. Peter's Day, in our country the feast of St. Peter and Paul, party, joy, pleasure! My cousin - now deceased - Ante Grugiši , Luki , and I sang a ganga and a song at the party: "My mother taught me, sing, son, long live the Croats". As soon as the militia heard about it, they jumped on us. It didn't take long, there was a fight. Thanks to the sobriety of the people who calmed the situation, everything went without a major incident. But tomorrow, Saturday, June 30, here they are to me where I was digging up tobacco. He showed me an invitation that I had to go to the "People's Station" with them. I told them that I knew where the "Narodna Stanica" ie "People's Station" was and that I would get there without them taking me 5/6 km. through the village with my hands tied up with a wire. With a little strain and rebuke, they agreed. They left in their own way and I left in my own way. My journey took me to Slovenia, Mislinja, Slovenj Gradec, Dravograd, then Koper, Trieste, Milan, Turin, Cuneo, the Italian-French Alps, Nice, a city in France, to finally arrive in Paris.

In Paris, I first had to ask for a residence permit. The French authorities granted and issued a temporary residence permit to all those who could prove that they had been politically and nationally persecuted and abused in communist Yugoslavia. It was not difficult for me to prove it, so I got a three-month stay with a job and an apartment, and that in order to extend my stay, I have to have a certificate that I work and have an apartment. That is how I started my life in Paris, and before and after me many others, both Croats and non-Croats.

The first thing I noticed was: ignorance of the French language. I knew I would be "blind" with my healthy eyes if I didn't speak and read French. So I enrolled almost immediately in the very and world-famous French school for learning French "Alliance Francaise" 101 Boulevard Raspail, Paris. Even though it's over half a century behind me, I still - and very well - remember sitting on the Marne River one occasion and writing homework. The Marne River was east of the city of Paris and joins the Seine River which flows through the city of Paris. Many people swam there or came there after work to rest. So I was there too, swimming, resting and writing my homework along the way. My school bag is there, the books are there, the French-Croatian dictionary "Valentin Putanec", the school book Zagreb, 1957, and the Croatian-French dictionary J. Dayre - M. Deanovi - R. Maixner, Zagreb 1960. I say all this because I am with this school bag, books and dictionaries on the beach and I was noticeable to many, especially the three girls. They started asking me something and I answered in Croatian and pretended not to understand French. The more they ask me, the more I search for the words in the dictionary and so I started communicating with them. Soon I started speaking French with them, which surprised them how quickly I learned French. So it started, and these three girls were sisters, one of them being my dear now 50 year old wife Annie.

I will never forget the song I sang many times along the ganga in my village in Bobanova Draga: "My little one, if you were in Paris, you would seem close to me." Whether it is a mere coincidence or my destiny given to me by God, I do not know. All I know is that in this young French lady I saw one of God's creatures destined for me. I did not hesitate to fall completely in love with this young French lady. She, on her part, also felt the same way, and we together agreed to tell her parents our intention. They agreed and the engagement was on May 9th 1965. On that engagement day I met a large family of my fiancée Annie's parents. They wanted to know a lot about me, so there were questions from all sides, about me, my family, why I ran away, in a word, that everyone wanted to know who their daughter, sister, cousin, such a young girl, was marrying. All my answers reflected Croatian feelings, which meant little or nothing to those presents, because, as they themselves say, they had never heard anything about Croatia before, but everything about Yugoslavia. Dr. Miljenko Dabo Perani was there with me as my designated wedding best man. The two of us politely, composedly, calmly and with a historical side explained the connection between France and Croatia in the past. There, on that day of the engagement, the wedding day was set for Saturday, July 31, 1965. Here is a picture of our engagement.



Standing: Dr. Miljenko Dabo Perani , his wife Marija, my father-in-law Pierre Robert, his wife Genvieve, Annie, Mile, Yolande, Anita, Miljenko and Maria's daughter, Brigitte.

After the wedding, a little before noon, at the exit of the town hall where the city wedding took place, we took pictures on the stairs. Marica Boban, Kuki , Jerko's wife, took out of her purse and put the Croatian tricolor flag over our chests, and put it over my chest and my wife's Annie. Numerous guests, photographers and curious people took pictures, while passers-by stopped and watched a French / Croatian wedding. Several Croatian flags were also flown there, which certainly attracted the curiosity of passers-by. A bus with over 80 seats was waiting in front of the municipality. When we all boarded the bus and sat down in our seats, three of my Croatian friends who were in charge of it opened the window and hung our Croatian flag through it, our flag: **Crven, bijeli plavi, to je Hrvat pravi, tko se pod njim vije kukavica nije** = Red white blue, that is the real Croat, who howls under it, a coward is not. From the east side of the city of Paris to a place that is very well known for the world attraction **Montmartre** where there will be a Reception, in the even more famous Restaurant for such occasions "La bonne franquette", you had to go through the whole city of Paris. As we were passing through the very touristy resort area of Pigalle and Moulin Rouge, there the police stopped us and asked us why we hung the flag of a foreign country that France does not recognize. We struggled a bit and in those struggles we explained to the French police the importance of the Croatian wedding custom with the Croatian flag. They understood everything and approved everything, but we had to pull the flag inside the bus. This was not difficult for us, because we were almost on the spot and the entrance to the Restaurant "La bonne franquette" and the Croatian flag performed once again, its national duty in a world metropolis Paris.

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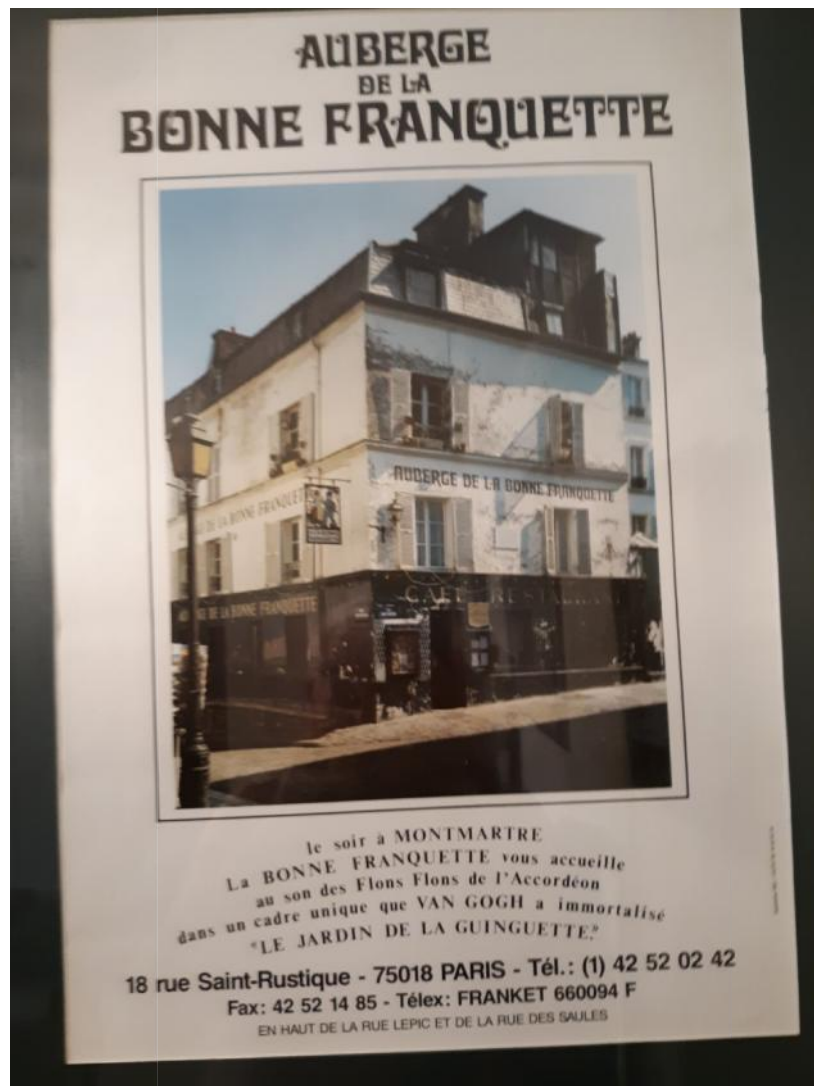
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Exactly at two o'clock after midnight, Sunday morning, August 1, 1965, the doors of the restaurant "L'auberge de la Bonne Franquette" closed and it was the official end of the French-Croatian Wedding in Paris. Here is an actual picture of that Auberge.



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