The Politicization of Ethnicity as a Prelude to Ethnopolitical Conflict: Croatia and Serbia in Former Yugoslavia

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THE POLITICIZATION OF ETHNICITY AS A PRELUDE TO ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT: CROATIA AND SERBIA IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

by

Agneza Bozic-Roberson

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Department of Political Science

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, Michigan June 2001
THE POLITICIZATION OF ETHNICITY AS A PRELUDE TO ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT: CROATIA AND SERBIA IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Agneza Bozic-Roberson, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2001

This interdisciplinary research develops a framework or a model for the study of the politicization of ethnicity, a process that transforms peaceful ethnic conflict into violent inter-ethnic conflict. The hypothesis investigated in this study is that the ethnopolitical conflict that led to the break up of former Yugoslavia was the result of deliberate politicization of ethnicity. The model consists of three variables—ethnic entrepreneurs as actors, and mass media and political rhetoric as their tools for politicization of ethnicity. Ethnic entrepreneurs, with a conscious interest in mobilizing ethnicity, are given this opportunity in transitional societies in which politicized ethnicity has become the crucial principle of political legitimation.

Specifically, this study seeks to explain how political leaders may turn into ethnic entrepreneurs and then draw upon existing non-violent ethnic tensions and conflict (a phenomenon existing in every multiethnic society) to generate ethnopolitical conflict. The propositions of the model will be tested through a case study of Yugoslavia, specifically, a comparative study of the Yugoslav subunits Croatia and Serbia.

This research argues that it is necessary to conduct independent analyses of ethnic and political aspects of violent inter-ethnic conflicts. Only in recognizing the contexts in which ethnicity can be politicized and the mechanisms by which ethnicity
is politicized, can we recognize the true nature of the violent inter-ethnic conflict and then develop strategies for the prevention of such conflicts.
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For my husband, Jonathan K. Roberson,
and my parents, Jela and Vlado Bozic
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The errors which remain in this work are my responsibility.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Why did multi-national Yugoslavia\(^1\) fall apart in such violence and bloodshed?" is the question that will guide this dissertation research. While the focus of this study is on a specific conflict situation, it forms a part of a much broader inquiry: Why is it that some multiethnic and multinational states stay in one piece or divorce peacefully and others fall apart violently? The question of political stability has been on the agenda of political science since Aristotle's time. However, the social and political changes since the end of the Cold War, and the demise of communism, have focused the quest for stability in multiethnic societies, since they have suffered the most from these changes.\(^2\)

With the recognition that nationalist conflicts are often particularly violent and can become very dangerous for international security, there has also been a proliferation of literature dealing with new ways to resolve these conflicts through the

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\(^1\)This study is concerned with former Yugoslavia which existed from 1918–1991. It bears no reference to the rump Yugoslavia which, after Yugoslavia's disintegrations, consists of Servia and Montenegro.

\(^2\)Gurr and others would argue that ethnopolitical conflict has been prominent throughout second part of the twentieth century. However, Gurr's definition of "ethnopolitical conflict" does not allow us to see how politicization of ethnic or communal groups occur. To him groups are politicized if they are "politically salient," i.e., if they experience economic and political discrimination, and/or they have taken political action in support of collective interests. See Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993).
developments of new theories of conflict resolution. Yet, existing analyses of violent ethnic conflict, by giving excessive attention to the ethnic at the expense of the political dimension of such conflicts, do not contribute to the effective resolution of the Yugoslav, or other contemporary conflicts. Moving beyond the borders of the former Yugoslavia to the former Soviet Union, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, India, and Northern Ireland, to name just a few contemporary examples of such conflicts, one often is led to believe that in all these "ethnic" conflicts, there is an aspect of inevitability, because ethnicity is presented as sufficient and necessary as the cause of war and unimaginable atrocities. Ethnicity is promoted as the main malefactor of conflicts: as the source of irrationality, deep divisions and violence that lead to forcible transfers of people and, in general, to chronic instability within multi-ethnic societies.

This research argues that some politicians use ethnicity as a calculated, maximizing strategy if ethnic mobilization of their supporters offers a political opportunity or access to power. Specifically, this study seeks to explain how political leaders and entrepreneurs draw upon existing non-violent ethnic tensions and conflicts (a phenomenon existing in every multiethnic society) to generate ethnopolitical conflict. The mechanics of politicization and institutionalization of ethnicity may involve use of different kinds of tools available to political entrepreneurs. This study will explore to what extent the use of political rhetoric and manipulation of mass media may contribute to transformation of peaceful ethnic conflict into violent inter-ethnic conflict.

While a number of studies have contributed to our better understanding of many of the inter-ethnic conflicts, they often confused causality with inevitability and
thus leave us with inadequate tools to prevent, manage and resolve these conflicts. In the case of Yugoslavia, given the advantage of hindsight, many analysts were tempted to cast Yugoslav history in terms of an inevitable disastrous outcome.\textsuperscript{3} Such interpretations treated the issue of violent ethnic nationalism as something that gradually and even naturally developed, a phenomenon of substance rather than a practical and institutional category that is produced by political events and actions.\textsuperscript{4}

Yugoslavia, once celebrated as an example of a viable multiethnic state, became the subject of a growing body of literature dealing with the dangers of ethnic and nationalist conflict for international security in the midst of the demise of communism.\textsuperscript{5} The challenge still remains to determine how non-violent ethnic conflict became transformed into violent ethnopolitical conflict. This study is intended to contribute significantly to our understanding of how ethnic tensions are converted into much more structured forms of ethnopolitical conflict. If we better understand the elements and dynamics of such social change, we will be in a better position to try to develop measures to reduce or counteract such manipulative efforts in the future.

\textsuperscript{3} A good example of this type of work is Robert Kaplan, \textit{Balkan Ghost: A Journey Through History.} (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), which reportedly formed a major source of information for President Clinton during the early 1990s.

\textsuperscript{4} The argument about conceptual misuse of nationalism is best elaborated in Rogers Brubaker, \textit{Nationalism Reframed} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

The result of excessive attention to ethnicity as the major source of conflict is illustrated in the fact that the term *ethnic* has become the popular descriptive term for both violent and peaceful conflicts among ethnic groups residing within multiethnic states. Labeling violent inter-ethnic conflicts as ethnic is narrowly uni-dimensional and neglects not only the positive aspects of ethnicity, but also the inherent latency of its political nature. It is the contention of this research that labeling such conflicts as ethnic is misleading and inadequate to describe the true nature of conflicts which are frequently set in action by what Rothschild would term the "politicization of ethnicity."\(^6\) This study proposes that ethnicity becomes imbued with violent force through a process of deliberate politicization. In multiethnic societies burdened with economic and political problems, ethnicity provides a convenient instrument that is easily manipulated.

This study proposes the term *ethnopolitical* as a more appropriate term for a description of violent conflicts among ethnic groups since these conflicts involve a politics deliberately using ethnicity in the struggle for power and control over the territory or resources of certain states. This research thus utilizes ethnopolitical as a descriptive term for violent inter-ethnic conflicts because it implies interaction between the ethnic and the political aspects of inter-ethnic conflicts. Since ethnopolitical conflict is seen as the result of politicization of ethnicity, only through independent analyses of political and ethnic aspects of the conflicts is it possible to determine in what circumstances and how ethnic identity becomes politicized. Once ethnic identity and politicization are separately analyzed, they can be brought

together to determine the precise nature of a developing ethnopolitical conflict. Only by acquisition of this understanding can conflict management and prevention stand any chance of success.

At a time when numerous inter-ethnic conflicts are taking place, and new ones are threatening to emerge, there is a deficiency of theories that deal with prevention of ethnopolitical conflicts. The same excessive attention to ethnicity as the sole cause of ethnic conflict only adds to the perception of the ethnic phenomenon as non-rational and thus not conducive either to conflict management or to prevention of ethnopolitical violence. This study intends to fill the gap in the literature on the Yugoslav case and, on violent conflict in general, by providing insight into the mechanics of politicization of ethnicity—precisely, in what circumstances will political entrepreneurs use the tools of mass media and political rhetoric to achieve their political objectives. Once the conditions and mechanics of politicization of ethnicity are known, we should be able to develop strategies toward prevention of the occurrence of ethnopolitical conflicts.

Conflict prevention strategies should emerge from the focus on the two major goals of this research. The first is to develop an analytical framework for the study of ethnopolitical conflict. In this framework ethnopolitical conflict is seen as a result of politicians who deliberately use ethnicity in the struggle for power and resources of a state. We describe these politicians as ethnic entrepreneurs, since they use ethnicity to pursue and implement a political agenda structured around ethnicity. This framework identifies the factors that lead to politicization of ethnicity and singles out three elements—ethnic entrepreneurs as actors who use the tools of mass media and political rhetoric to capitalize on the changing socio-political environment and on the
vulnerabilities of ethnic identities. The second goal is to assess the relationship between and the relative influence of these three factors in the violent breakup of Yugoslavia.

Organization of the Dissertation

Yin proposes that the case study consists of two parts: a theoretical framework and its application on the specific case. Thus, this dissertation is organized into two major parts. The first, the theoretical part, consists of Chapter I as an introduction which explains the purpose and organization of this research. Chapter II elaborates on the design and method of this research, while Chapter III lays out the model for the study of politicization of ethnicity. In this chapter, I reflect on the literature on ethnic and political conflict and international security and assess their usefulness and limitations in the analysis and prevention of the Yugoslav and other ethnopolitical conflicts. In Chapter III, I offer a definition of terms through the discussion of the principal issues in literature on ethnicity, nationalism, ethnic entrepreneurship, mass media and political rhetoric. The literature on ethnicity and nation is intended as a section on conceptual clarification—to provide understanding of these two phenomena, often mistakenly identified with each other. In that section I also explain why ethnic identity is so salient in the contemporary inter-ethnic conflict. In this research ethnic identity is considered a contextual variable. The section on nationalism looks at existing theories and offers a new view of the phenomenon—that which involves politicization of ethnicity.

7Robert Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 2d ed. (Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage, 1994).
The literature from the field of political communication, especially mass media and political rhetoric, is intended to help us understand how communication, i.e., the use of political language through mass media and rhetoric, can be used strategically to influence public knowledge, beliefs and action on political matters. We are interested in finding the meaning of political messages and how this meaning leads to political consequences, in this case, violent inter-ethnic conflict. In its political dimension, communication can have serious consequences: it can be used both to induce conflict and cooperation, and it can cause both empowerment and marginalization.\(^8\) To what end communication tools, rhetoric and mass media, would be used is largely a function of ethnic entrepreneurs.

In order to fully understand the nature of ethnopolitics, one needs to examine the structure of power and political motivations of political actors. In this framework the type of political actors that I analyze are termed ethnic entrepreneurs. Ethnic entrepreneurs are defined as those individuals and leaders who in the times of change recognize the window of opportunity for their own self-promotion. We are interested in exploring who were the individuals inside the political structures and those outside of those structures who grabbed the opportunity to impose their “solution” to problems of ethnic conflict.

The second, empirical, part of this research is further divided into two sections. The first section, Chapters IV and V, provides the context for the emergence of ethnic entrepreneurs. Chapter IV looks at development of Croatian and

Serbian ethnic identity. Chapter V describes the development of Serbs and Croats as constituent peoples of the Yugoslav state. This ethnic and institutional history of two ethnic groups should offer a reference point for understanding of the political language used by entrepreneurs, in the media and in the rhetoric of the period under investigation. The second section of the empirical research, Chapters VI and VII, uses the model of politicization of ethnicity to analyze politicization of ethnicity in Serbia and Croatia respectfully. Chapter VI focuses on the role of Slobodan Milosevic and how he used mass media and rhetoric as his tools to politicize the Serbs. Chapter VII focuses on Franjo Tudjman, as an ethnic entrepreneur who politicized the Croats, and his uses of rhetoric and mass media. Each of these chapters begins with an immediate context in order to uncover the major issues of ethnic identity, as well as social, economic and political circumstances that might have provided a window of opportunity for the emergence of ethnic entrepreneurs.

Chapter VIII summarizes the findings and makes an appeal for more scholarly attention to the issue of politicized ethnicity. I suggest that only in recognizing the contexts in which ethnicity can be politicized and mechanisms which politicize ethnicity, can we recognize the true nature of the violent inter-ethnic conflict and develop strategies for the prevention of such conflicts.
CHAPTER II

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Method and Design

The hypothesis to be investigated in this study is: The conflict that led to the breakup of the former Yugoslavia is the result of a deliberate politicization of ethnicity, thus, the concept of ethnopolitical conflict. In many ways this research remains faithful to Rothschild’s views on ethnopolitics: ethnic assertiveness and violence are not the result of some primordial aspect of ethnicity, but rather is the product of ethnic entrepreneurship. These ethnic entrepreneurs, with a conscious interest in mobilizing ethnicity, are given this opportunity in transitional societies in which politicized ethnicity has become the crucial principle of political legitimation and delegitimation of systems, states and regimes. Ethnic entrepreneurs may choose which ethnic markers to sacralize and politicize and thus mobilize an ethnic group either to high militancy against others or to lead it to peaceful coexistence within a multiethnic society. In order to assess how the energies of ethnicity can produce devastating violence, this research develops a model of ethnopolitical conflict.

This model consists of three variables—political entrepreneurs as actors, and mass media and rhetoric as their tools of politicization of ethnicity. Ethnic entrepreneurs have a wide variety of tools and mechanisms at their disposal by which

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they can accomplish the task of politicization of ethnicity. In this research I focus on communication, specifically, mass media and political rhetoric. The assumption behind this choice is that communication is central to politics. Strategic uses of communication to influence public knowledge, beliefs and actions, represent an essential part of politics. Mass communication is of interest in this study because of the role it played in the course of political transition from Communism. O'Neil claims that institutions such as mass media can shape the process of political change and the prospects for democratization. However, there are cases in transitional systems, largely unexplored, where mass media did not necessarily lead to the collapse of authoritarianism. Although not directly, this work hopes to shed some light on that subject as well. Through the above variables I investigate how and what entrepreneurs communicate to their public, and with what effect.

The goal of this research is to offer a framework for analysis which helps account for the Yugoslav conflict but which also helps us understand other contemporary violent inter-ethnic conflicts. The intention of this research is to develop an analytical model attractive to future scholars to evaluate its applicability to other violent inter-ethnic conflicts.

Lijphart and many other critics of the case study method claim that case studies can make little contribution to theory building and comparative politics generally because of the “small-n, many variables,” over-determined outcomes,

inability to eliminate alternative explanations, etc. 11 In order to avoid the traps of old-fashioned case studies and to create a model that will be useful for future scholars, this analytical model focuses only on three variables. This research strives to contribute to theory-building by identifying particular factors which can be applied to other cases. Here I accept Eckstein’s claim that case studies are most valuable at that stage of theory building at which theories are tested. 12 Analyzing Yugoslavia with all of its structural and ethnic complexities offers a very useful methodological exercise.

The overall research design of this interdisciplinary work is that of a case study as developed in Yin and his notion of an embedded research design of a case study. 13 An embedded research design, as designed by Yin, allows for the comparison between subunits within a case, which offers an opportunity to use the comparative method. Such a design is well suited to the Yugoslav case since it allows the author to use several approaches in order to enhance the study’s theoretical and empirical significance. This study unites the advantages of an in-depth country study with the benefits of a comparative approach facilitated by the embedded research design which allows for intra-country and across-variable comparison.


13 Yin, Case Study, pp. 42–44.
The case study as a research strategy appears to be most appropriate for an inquiry which seeks to explain complex causal links in major historical events, since a deep understanding of contextual conditions is critical for such explanation. The underlying philosophy that guides this research is that only in the search for the causes of conflict, can we begin to develop strategies to prevent its occurrence. This is in line with Eckstein’s argument that objectives of a case study are actions that strive to correct a certain condition.\textsuperscript{14} However, recognizing the theoretical limitations of the case study, usually criticized for thick description and too many variables whose relative importance cannot be evaluated, this research chooses to look at three variables in hope that they will be regarded as questions to be considered in other analyses of violent inter-ethnic conflict. Such use of these variables may help in future theory building.\textsuperscript{15}

To describe how and why violent inter-ethnic conflict occurred in the former Yugoslavia, this case study uses an embedded research design which consists of a unit and its subunits. The inclusion of subunits is necessary due to the federal structure of former Yugoslavia. The unit of analysis is a country, Yugoslavia, with two subunits, two out of the six former republics. Croatia and Serbia appear to be most relevant for this study, allowing for the most meaningful comparative analysis. These two subunits are selected, first, because of their historical role. Croatia and Serbia and the relationship between Serbs and Croats played a critical role in the

\textsuperscript{14}Eckstein, “Case Study,” pp. 92–93.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
Yugoslav national question. Second, these two federal units played a primary role in the contemporary political developments in the crucial period between 1986 and 1991.

The research will focus on the period between 1986 and 1991. In 1986, two developments of a contrary nature occurred: the first bold strides toward civil society appeared in Slovenia, which affected, with some delay, the Croatian Communist party leadership. At the same time the Memorandum of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) began wide circulation. In 1991, the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) attacked Slovenia following Croatia’s and Slovenia’s declarations of independence. The explanation of the relationship among the three proposed variables in the two subunits should assist in explaining how politicization of ethnicity occurred and in turn later affected the violent inter-ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia.

The questions below will lead this research. Answers to these questions will allow examination of the hypothesis mentioned above.

1. How did Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia attempt to solve its question of ethnic diversity?

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2. What were some of the major economic and political factors influencing the crisis of the late 1980s?

3. How did the institutions of the federal government react to the crisis?

4. How did different republics and their leaderships react to the crisis?

5. How did they communicate with the people in the process of solving the crisis?

6. How did ethnic entrepreneurs become important leaders with high popular legitimacy?

This study relies mainly on printed sources published in the United States, Great Britain, Yugoslavia and later, Croatia and Serbia. These printed sources were supplemented by interviews. Interviews with intellectuals, journalists and politicians whose work and ideas played an important part in the process of change that enveloped former Yugoslavia will constitute an important part of the data for this research. Some of the intellectuals contributed to the decreased importance of the communist ideology, and the creation of a new system, some worked for adaptation of an existing system to a more democratic system. Some of them resisted the politicization of ethnicity, some capitalized on it. Aware that some of interviewees were more interested in their own self-promotion, I used those interviews as data, but presented them as individual opinion. In each step of the analysis, when able, I verified “facts” through the process of triangulation.

The research has been done in the United States, Croatia and Slovenia. Since I was a student at Zagreb University in the period 1986–1990, I used my notes and reflections regarding the individuals and processes under examination. I was not able to go to Serbia, as the Serbian Embassy refused to give me an entry visa in the fall of
1997. However, I interviewed several individuals from Serbia during their visits to the United States and through email.

Material collected through analysis of Croatian and Serbian presses is also essential for this study, not only because of the treatment of mass media as a variable, but also as one of the sources of data for the research. Journals and newspapers are listed in the bibliography.

There are several methodological problems with this approach. When I was conducting field work in Croatia, a few of my interviewees noted that they disagreed with the title of my dissertation, especially the “ethnopolitical” part of it. They suggested that nationalist would be better, because, the whole conflict was about a nation struggling to achieve its state. In their opinion ethnicity was not at the same level of importance as “nation.”

To those and others who may arrive at similar conclusions about this work, I offer the following explanation. While I am aware that Croatians, Serbs and other titular nations of the six former republics considered themselves nations, and ethnic minorities as nationalities, as in the Yugoslav constitution, I base my use of ethnopolitics on the following.

First, Yugoslav scholars themselves use the term *ethnic* to denote the nature of relationships among different nations and nationalities within Yugoslavia without

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17 Particularly sensitive to ethnopolitical in the title was Ante Beljo, one of the members of the Norval group, a Canadian emigre group who assisted Franjo Tudjman in coming to power. During the Tudjman regime, Mr. Beljo was the director of the Croatian Information Center. Personal interview, Zagreb, October 29, 1997. Dobroslav Paraga, the leader of a right wing Croatian Party of Right, had a similar comment. Personal interview, Zagreb, October 17, 1997.
ever questioning their political autonomy. Second, these groups strived to establish their own sovereign states, therefore prior to the formation of those units, their sense of nationhood seemed incomplete (even though they had their political and territorial unit, albeit within an existing state). Hence, for the sake of conceptual clarity, there is a notable difference between these “nations” as nations and as “ethnic groups.” Third, this study supports Smith’s argument that every nation has ethnic features. Ethnic entrepreneurs found that the use of ethnic or primordial elements strengthened emotional identification with the “national.” Thus they offered to their “nations” their notions of sovereignty as possible only on a “us” versus “them” type of exclusion, where “we” is defined as an ethnie, a common culture and history that can only be acquired through birth.

Fourth, some leaders would present economic, social and political problems by ethnic criteria, rather than giving a specific problem’s explanations rooted in its specific field. When the civic transactions, the rules and regulations that govern the relationship between the rulers and the ruled and the institutions through which these


transaction are performed, are illicitly transferred to the realm of ethnicity, the emotionality of ethnicity affects the decision making in a negative way.\textsuperscript{20}

For these reasons, this study sees this particular type of nationalism\textsuperscript{21} as a process of politicization of ethnicity. Some Yugoslav analysts referred to those tendencies as a formation of a nation-state based on an ethnic principle, which meant that nationalists strived to establish a political system based on an ethnic or cultural identity, and not on the principle of citizenship which French and American Revolutions inaugurated.\textsuperscript{22} Those nations were defined as the body of citizens whose collective sovereignty constituted them a state as the result of their political expression. Even though the nation as such defined involved citizenship and mass participation within democracy, it said very little about what exactly the sovereign people were. Definitions of nations from nineteenth century identified citizens with the territorial state, but had very little to say about national identification with

\textsuperscript{20} A good case differentiating between an ethnic and a civil realm is developed in George Schopflin, “Nationalism and Ethnic Minorities in Post-Communist Europe,” in \textit{Europe’s New Nationalism}, eds. Richard Caplan and Jon Feffer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).


characteristics, such as language, ethnicity, history, which would allow collective identification with a group.\textsuperscript{23}

In the next chapter, theories pertinent to analysis of violent-ethnic conflict are analyzed, with emphasis on their relevance to the study of politicization of ethnicity. An integral part of Chapter III is the elaboration of the model for the study of politicization of ethnicity.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnopolitical Conflict

Ethnicity provides nationalist and non-nationalist elites alike, and their individual leaders, with a foundation that can be utilized and manipulated for any number of ends. The political utilization of ethnicity, like conflict itself, may be both positive and negative, i.e., destructive. Positive uses of ethnicity in the political arena would include the assertion of ethnicity for a more equal distribution of resources or for improving the position of disadvantaged groups through various forms of cultural and political autonomy. The negative uses of ethnicity emphasize intolerance and exclusion among groups and result in destructive politics. Such negative utilization of ethnicity is evidenced in mass violence aimed at the members of other ethnic groups, in the forced expulsion of innocent people, and in the destruction of other groups’ cultural and religious sources of identity.

The goals, and mechanisms for the achievement of these ends, may range from peaceful coexistence and tolerance within one territorial unit to radicalism, exclusion, and violence in a struggle for the resources of either another group or of the state. The concern of this research is with the destructive side of ethnic politicization, thus the term ethnopolitical conflict in this work implies that violent inter-ethnic conflicts usually occur as the result of the deliberate use of ethnicity in the struggle for power and control over the territory or resources of a certain state.
The analysis in the following sections will focus on existing explanations of so-called ethnic conflicts, the essence of ethnicity and ethnic identity and those elements of politicization which utilize the most vulnerable aspects of ethnicity in pursuit of radicalism and open conflict with the members of other ethnic group. Each of the elements that are seen as central to the politicization of ethnicity—political entrepreneurs, the mass media, and political rhetoric—represents an essential part of this analytical framework for the study of ethnopolitical conflict. Consequently, the review of literature, by discussing central issues in the literature on ethnicity and nationalism, and by defining central concepts, will lay out a framework for the study of ethnopolitical conflict.

Ethnopolitical Versus Ethnic and Political Conflict

Most contemporary scholars of inter-ethnic conflicts agree that violent inter-ethnic conflicts, as a result of pervasive force of ethnicity, are widespread phenomena and that they present both domestic and international actors with unprecedented challenges in the issues of world security. Gurr’s “global view of ethnopolitical conflicts” supports such a conviction by providing empirical evidence about

pervasiveness of ethnically based conflicts in the contemporary world. Gurr's study deserves attention not only because it identifies various expressions of ethnic conflict throughout the world, but also because, unlike Vayrynen and Horowitz, he claims that few of these conflicts are intractable. Such attitude is in agreement with this study, which is ultimately concerned with prevention of violent inter-ethnic conflict.

While this research argues that referring to contemporary violent inter-ethnic conflicts as *ethnic* is inadequate and misleading, the concept *ethnic conflict* has become the popular descriptive term for conflicts among ethnic groups who reside in multiethnic nation-states. This needs to be addressed. These theories try to transcend the traditional theories of political conflict, but in the process, ignore important political aspects. A brief introduction of these theories is appropriate before we concentrate on the contemporary theories of inter-ethnic conflict. Traditional theories of political conflict, as represented by Davies and Gurr, advance a psychological explanation for political violence. They advance the idea of discontent and grievances as the main sources of aggressive behavior directed toward institutions of state. As a result of a sense of relative expectations or deprivation, these grievances


can be politicized by adding political motives to their demands. While this model has limited power for the explanation of ethnopolitical conflict—because it cannot address the problems that arise from the problems of identity—it does have certain strengths.

Davies, for instance, explains the importance of the political context, i.e., the nature of government: weak government will be replaced by the rebellious group, while strong government will force the frustrated group to live with its frustration in "quiet rebellion." Davies' "hatred of oppression [that] lingers and deepens . . . in the minds of momentarily silenced rebels" illustrates how the historical experience of a group may influence their perception of a group associated with the government. This type of perception, as part of the identity of a group, may provide a notable source of power for those looking for an opportunity to mobilize an ethnic group toward a certain goal.

Gurr's theory of relative deprivation provides an important element to the analysis—that of expectation, namely, what individuals perceive as rightfully owed to them. This perception of justice, of what is rightfully owed to individuals, may result from tradition and present social position—what their ancestors have enjoyed, what they had in the past or what they believe they had in the past, and what their position is in relation to others in society. This perception too, if used to mobilize an ethnic group against "others," can provide the potential for destructive politicization of ethnicity and justification for political violence.


29 Gurr, Why Men Rebel.
While Tilly's model of mobilization is known mainly for its focus on organization and resources needed by groups in pursuit of political power, this analysis finds Tilly's discussion of a revolutionary situation and the revolutionary outcome of particular utility in accounting for violent ethnopolitical conflict. A revolutionary situation or multiple sovereignty is the result of a long-run chain of events. This situation may result in a revolutionary outcome—the displacement of one set of members of a polity by another set. The critical sign of a revolutionary situation is the emergence of an alternative polity. This description could well be applied to the cases of groups who perceive secession as the only way to preserve their independent status. On the other hand, an alternative polity can be established by the members of a dominant group as well; their dissatisfaction with the government may originate from government's perceived tolerance of "secessionist" claims.

It seems that these major representative theory of political conflict and violence have several things in common: popular dissatisfaction over many issues usually predates violent acts of rebellion. However, in agreement with Chalmer Johnson's view of revolution—these acts "never occur as a result of forces beyond human control," but are testimony that "creative political action" was not recognized

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31 Ibid., p. 193.
or used. What are the forces that propel violent ethnic conflict? And what kind of “creative political action” is necessary to control them?

The “ethnic conflicts” literature in this field is reflective of the fact that there is not yet an established conceptual framework for analysis of inter-ethnic conflicts. Frequently ethnic and nationalist, peaceful and violent conflicts are identified by being labeled as “ethnic” conflict. The major reason for the inadequacy of the term *ethnic conflict* is that it does not differentiate between violent and non-violent inter-ethnic conflict. Most often, *ethnic conflict* is used as an umbrella term for identification of various manifestations, forms and expressions of different types of inter-ethnic interactions. Thus, a whole range of phenomena, from economic and cultural issues to violent conflicts arising between different ethnic groups, are termed *ethnic conflict*: from the largely peaceful “ethnic conflict” in Belgium between Walloons and Flemings and the issue of Quebec in Canada, economic complaints of the Welsh and Scots in Great Britain, cultural demands of Basques in Spain to the tribal conflicts in Nigeria and other African countries, wars of secession such as that in the former Yugoslavia, and religious “warfare” in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland.

This research argues that referring to the contemporary violent inter-ethnic conflicts as “ethnic,” contorts the conflicts into phenomena that are not conducive to effective conflict management. The works cited below help to illustrate both to which extent the concept of ethnicity is “stretched” as Sartori would say, and how present

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33 This is particularly obvious in an article authored by Lipset and Jalali, “Racial and Ethnic Conflicts.”
authorities in the studies of inter-ethnic conflict distort the notion ethnicity to the extent that it does not allow for effective conflict management.  

Klare and Thomas, for instance, introduce Horowitz’s article by referring to ethnic conflict as “one of the most widespread, and often intractable sources of political disintegration and violence in the contemporary world.” Horowitz discusses both peaceful and violent manifestations of ethnic conflict, and presents them both as equally formidable in public life. In his analysis it appears that any group that has a political goal will bring about conflict with neighboring ethnic groups. Jalali and Lipset lead us to believe that multiethnic polities are circumscribed by conflict since, they assert, interactions among diverse ethnic groups are often accompanied by intolerance. These authors, like Horowitz, subscribe to the belief that both nonviolent and violent inter-ethnic conflicts are equally dangerous. The above authors agree that conflicts among different groups are the result of groups’ advancement of political goals, and in different ways, recognize variations in the ways inter-ethnic conflicts manifest themselves. Nevertheless, faced with the ubiquitous, fluid and dynamic qualities of ethnicity, their analyses remain more of a lamentation


37 Jalali and Lipset, “Racial and Ethnic Conflicts.”
about the contemporary state of affairs in the world than an attempt to look at ways
in which these conflicts might have been foreseen and/or prevented.

It seems that the majority of the literature in the field emphasizes the ethnic
dimension, however defined, at the expense of political aspects of inter-ethnic
conflicts. This indiscriminate use of the concept of ethnicity reveals that the stretched
concept of ethnicity is acquiring a pejorative meaning. Moving beyond borders of the
former Yugoslavia to the Soviet Union, Rwanda, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and
Northern Ireland, to name just a few contemporary examples of, one is often led to
believe that in all these “ethnic” conflicts, ethnicity is to blame as the cause of war
and unimaginable atrocities. Ethnicity is promoted as the main reason for the conflict:
as the source of irrationality and deep divisions that lead to horrible bloodshed,
genocide, forcible transfer of people, and in general to chronic instability within
multi-ethnic societies. This view is narrowly uni-dimensional and neglects not only
the positive aspects of ethnicity, but also the inherent latency of its political nature.
Even Rothschild reinforces the myth of ethnicity by saying that ethnicity is an entity
that “may choose to be political,” rather than treating ethnicity as a primarily social
and universal attribute. 38 Politically, ethnicity is amorphous; the political form and
shape that it may take is contingent on the variables dealt with later in this analysis.
Only when we “demythologize” the concept of ethnicity, when we determine in
which circumstances and by which mechanisms ethnicity is manipulated or
transformed into political force, will we be able to deal effectively with the
phenomenon so inadequately termed ethnic conflict.

38 Joseph Rothschild, Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework (New York:
Efforts to differentiate between socio/psychological and political attributes of conflicts are visible in Gurr’s and Vayrynen’s analyses of inter-ethnic conflict. Gurr’s original concern with politicized communal groups or minorities attempts to overcome the conceptual predicament by differentiating between ethnonationalists and ethnoclasses from the rest of the national and minority peoples. His analysis of the mobilization of the groups adds politicization as an important addition to the analysis and resolution of inter-ethnic conflicts. Vayrynen maintains that any understanding of ethnic conflict has to consider the process and level of ethnic crystallization, that is “the consolidation of ethnic categories into communities.” He argues that due to the complicated process of crystallization “[e]thnic conflicts are often intractable and, at any rate, difficult to solve.” The only solution to the intricacy of ethnic conflicts, Vayrynen claims, is to change the focus from state-based or state-centric solutions to psychological and communal remedies which would “deconstruct” crystallized ethnicities into more flexible and variable intra- and intercommunal relations.

Gurr’s optimistic conclusion about the settlement of communal conflicts is oriented toward state policies. He argues that there are two keys to the constructive management of ethnopolitical conflict: one is to reconcile the interests of minorities and states, another is for the states and their leaders to begin the process of conflict

39 Gurr, *Minorities*.


41 Ibid., p. 19.

42 Ibid., p. 20.
management in the early stages of open conflict, that is before the groups “cross the
threshold of sustained violence.”43 Surprisingly, Gurr argues that states and political
leaders “rarely have the foresight and political will to preempt ethnic conflict before it
emerges, but they should be able to respond creatively to political mobilization and
protest by communal groups.”44

This study, on the other hand, maintains that prevention of the violent inter-
ethnic conflict is possible if both the ethnic and political dimensions of the conflicts
are fully understood early on. This research argues that it is necessary to
demythologize the burdened concept of ethnicity. In order to distinguish between the
ethnic and the political aspects of inter-ethnic conflict, this study proposes to analyze
in detail several variables which, based on the case of former Yugoslavia, appear to
be most instrumental in politicization of ethnicity. Such analysis should assist us in
determination of when and how ethnic identity becomes politicized. The nature of
ethnic identity in the present time provides fertile ground for radicalization, but it is
only through the factors of ethnic politicization that these identities become
radicalized and confrontational. Once identity and politicization are independently
analyzed, they can be brought together to determine the specific nature of developing
ethnopolitical conflict. Only by such means can conflict management and prevention
stand any chance of success. An elaboration of ethnicity and its politicization are
contained in the sections below.

43 Gurr, Minorities, pp. 312–13.

44 Ibid., p. 313.
What is Ethnicity?

Ethnicity can be seen as the oldest human community.45 *Ethnicity*, in the sense used in modern social science, is a term which surfaced in the 1950s. Its origin dates back to Classical Greek *ethnos* which described large, undifferentiated groups of people or animals. The modern meaning of *ethnicity* denotes "familiar groups of people sharing a culture, an origin, or a language."46 Ever since earliest civilizations, the meaning of *ethnos* implied a lack of individuation, the lack of internal differentiation within a group developed in response to the perception of "other." This meaning and function of ethnicity as a tool for classification of people into "us" and "them" has remained to this day. Ethnicity is seen as an entity whose major function is to stress and reproduce basic social similarities and differences among groups of people.47

Equally powerful, and perhaps a part of the "differentiation," is ethnicity's unique function as a provider of self-identity and a sense of belonging. In that sense, some describe ethnicity as primordial or primitive. While there is a debate as to the meaning of primordialism, this paper subscribes to Rothschild's treatment of


primordial feelings as those that denote identification with cultural symbols (religion, language), with symbolically significant physical attributes (as, pigmentation) and with communal or tribal membership. These are identities or self-perceptions people obtain before they acquire explicit political and economic identities and loyalties. Hobsbawm describes ethnicity as a form of social organization whose crucial foundation is cultural. In his words it is "something" that binds together, that provides bonds and a sense of collective belonging to people who may or may not live in the same territories and who may lack a common polity. Eriksen claims that ethnicity is an ideology which stresses the cultural similarity of its self-declared members and provides individuals with an expression of their basic cultural identity and most of their social status.

Smith offers the most systematic definition of ethnicity for the purpose of this research: while placing a similar emphasis on ethnicity as the communal identity of people who share common history, social customs and physical attributes, he also advances a set of the fundamental criteria of ethnicity: a name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, a common culture and economy, link with historic territory and a measure of internal solidarity. Some of these criteria will be very helpful in understanding how ethnicity becomes politicized. In learning about

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48Rothschild, Ethnopolitics, pp. 25–27.


ethnicity, it is easier to understand the modern importance of cultural/ethnic identity and why it is such an important part of reality. The appeal of ethnic identity is inherent in the conditions of modern life. It is a response to the immense changes occurring in the world, an attempt to maintain emotional gratification and support from membership in a special community of shared values and customs in an age of a mass society, industrial universalism, transient relationships and alienation. As it becomes increasingly difficult for individuals to find "satisfactory selfhood" in large entities, they become alienated from the larger whole, and begin to search for identity in smaller units. It is important to note that ethnicity is only one source of identity. As Hobsbawm argues, "people cannot choose collective identification as they chose shoes, knowing that one could put on [only] one pair at the time." People have several loyalties, several sources of identity, simultaneously: the family, class, religion, professional and political organizations and associations, related to various aspects and problems of life. Eriksen refers to this phenomena as "segmentary identities." Which one of those loyalties is going to be most prominent is largely dictated by the social context in which an individual happens to be part of.

In an attempt to determine what seems to be the mysterious character of ethnicity that produces emotionally grounded and politically significant solidarity (why do people identify and mobilize along ethnic rather than class, ideological or


residential lines in such a great variety of societies), ethnicity as an "identity provider" appears to be an answer. According to Smith, ethnicity can shape individual identity and self-respect because of the "myth-symbol" complex which endows ethnicity with special qualities and durability. Myths and symbols are the historical memories and central values of ethnic groups which are transmitted to future generations. Equally important is ethnicity's simultaneous existence with other aspects of everyday life and sources of identity. This makes ethnicity particularly vulnerable to mass appeal by those who decide to present economic, political and social issues as a threat to their ethnic group. The next section on politicization of ethnicity will elaborate on that issue.

Politicization of Ethnicity

The preceding analysis helps us understand what ethnicity is. Armed with that and in order to complete the task of conceptual clarification, we need to stress that ethnicity is not nationalism, a conflation often appearing in journalistic jargon and in scholarly works dealing with "ethnic conflict." These authors operate within a conceptual predicament which endows ethnicity with a political power and

55 Smith, Ethnic Origins, p. 15.

destructiveness that ethnicity alone simply does not have. Furthermore, conflating ethnicity with nationalism risks confusion with the modern political organization, the nation-state.

Ethnicity, however, is not impotent or passive. On the contrary, the psychocultural appeal with which ethnicity often successfully competes for loyalty among other sources of identity testifies to its immense potential power. But the power of ethnicity is latent and thus not inherently destructive. The relationship between ethnicity and nationalism is an interesting one. Throughout history nationalists used ethnic history in the creation of nations. In this sense revived ethnicity serves as a bond between the forces of progress and an ethnic folk, and it provides a powerful tool against assimilation. However, such positive view as promoted by Hutchinson warrants a counterpoint regarding the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism.

Through the process of politicization the power of ethnicity can be turned into a source of hatred, of stereotyping and ultimately can be mobilized into particularly confrontational nationalism. Brubaker claims that nationalism is not engendered by nations, or collectivities, but that it is produced by “political fields.” His claim is acceptable in the sense that he treats ethnic nationality as a social

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57 In order to handle the confusion with concepts of ethnicity, nation and nationalism, some analysts, Walker Connor in particular, of inter-ethnic conflict decide to label it “ethnonational” or ethnic nationalism. If nationalism is using ethnicity as a justification for establishment of a state, this concept may represent a productive compromise, especially since contemporary nationalism differs from, what Miroslav Hroch terms, classic nationalism of the beginning of the century. Both works are cited in the Bibliography.

category that can be institutionalized by regime's policies. The following is an attempt to describe how nationalism can exploit ethnicity and transform its power into a destructive force.

Nationalism

The way in which we have usually heard about ethnicity over the last few decades, most frequently in the context of an ethnopolitical conflict, is in the relation to the state or to the part(s) of which certain ethnic groups claim to be rightfully entitled to control. In light of the fact that the modern bureaucratic state represents the most powerful actor in the domestic and international arena, this is not surprising. This paper is concerned with the "domestic" aspect of the salience of the state, that is, its capacity to enforce its rule on all the different groups under its territorial jurisdiction.

In the most general sense nationalism could be described as an ideology which "builds on the idea of the nation and makes it the basis for action." Nationalism in politics would be supporting a nationalist party, demanding home rule or national independence. Nationalism can also be non-political, such as cultural nationalism or nationalism in sport. However, even the latter can become political if they produce

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apparent political effects. Cultural nationalism is important for it supports and heightens national consciousness, without which political nationalism would not succeed.62

The modern state is seen as an entity which controls the scarce resources and values for which members of society have to compete.63 The resources that the modern state controls and distributes, such as participation in politics and access to the offices, and its role as the ultimate guarantor of cultural status and economic opportunity make it understandable why any group would want to have the resources of the state at its own disposal.64 Preoccupation with the state, however, does not bear a natural and immediate connection with ethnicity.

Ethnicity, as described above, has no direct historical relationship to the formation of a nation-state, but can be used for that purpose. Hobsbawm is quick to deny ethnicity any role in the formation of nation states. According to Hobsbawm, until recently very few modern national movements were actually based on a strong ethnic consciousness. Most of the successor states created after World War I, supposedly through application of Woodrow Wilson's criteria of self-determination, were not the product of the primordial aspirations of the people who had been under

62Ibid.


64Motyl, “Modernity of Nationalism,” p. 313.
the foreign rule, but were usually constructs of intellectuals who studied abroad.\footnote{Hobsbawm, \textit{Nations and Nationalism}, pp. 64–65.} However, one has to keep in mind that these intellectuals used ideas of cultural nationalists. In agreement with Kohn and Gellner, Hutchinson claims that the role of cultural nationalists is valuable for their educational function in a society provides a basis for later political nationalist movement.\footnote{John Hutchinson, “Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration,” in \textit{Nationalism}, eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 127–28; Hans Kohn, \textit{The Idea of Nationalism}. (New York: Macmillan, 1945); Ernest Gellner, \textit{Nations and Nationalism} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).} Cultural nationalists promote visions of their nations’ development as progressive, independent communities. They build their visions on ethnic historical memories and distinctive cultural attributes. In order to accomplish these visions, they often revive ethnic remains from the folk, since these communities represent repositories of national tradition.\footnote{Zupanov, “Etnicnost i Kultura,” p. 176.}

Indeed, “nation-states” are often in fact not nation-states, that is, the geographic boundaries of the ethnic group that supposedly created the state \textit{(Staatvolk)}, and the territorial borders of the state rarely coincide. Ra’anan cites Iceland, Norway and Portugal as the rare exceptions of the congruence between the boundaries of the ethnic group and the state (although he does not provide criteria for why that is the case).\footnote{Uri Ra’anan, “The Nation-State Fallacy,” in \textit{Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies}, ed. Joseph Montville (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989), pp. 5–20.} The state is usually either larger or much smaller than the area inhabited by its \textit{Staatvolk}, or its corresponding nation. This simply means that

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the modern world is dominated by the multi-ethnic states. Misconceptions about the concept of “nation” and its frequent use in place of “ethnicity” require closer examination of the concept.

Hobsbawn argues that imprecise use of the word “nation” has made the task of finding a consistent definition of a nation, a difficult, almost impossible task.\textsuperscript{69} For the sake of some conceptual clarity, this paper will use a political definition of a nation as suggested by Gellner, Anderson, Hobsbawm and Kohn, which treats the nation as a recent invention, an artifact or “imagined community” resulting from the modernization of society, but having roots in the distant past.\textsuperscript{70} In this view, a nation is a recent historical phenomenon fostered by the technological and economic developments of modernization such as printing, mass literacy, modernization, capitalism and education. The nation is a product of nationalism. “It is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the nation-state.”\textsuperscript{71} This means that both “nation” and “nationalism” have meaning only in relation to the nation-state.

Gellner’s definition of nationalism as “a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent” appears to be one of the most accepted

\textsuperscript{69} Hobsbawn, \textit{Nations and Nationalism}, p. 5.


\textsuperscript{71} Hobsbawn, \textit{Nations and Nationalism}, pp. 9–10.
definitions of the phenomenon. However, Gellner's definition of nationalism leaves one with uncertainty as to the role of ethnicity in the formation of the "national unit." Because of his ambiguity about the role of ethnicity in the formation of a nation-state, the role which is often expressed as a cause of contemporary conflict, this paper will accept as stipulative definitions of nationalism those offered by Eriksen and Ben-Israel. According to these two authors, nationalism is an ideology that is adopted to justify the notion that cultural and ethnic groups implicitly hold political rights that should be actualized in a state. In this sense we can stipulate that the nation is an artificial creation that draws on ethnicity politicized to the extent that it presumes the right to the territorial state, that is, it has political goals.

The ideology of nationalism can be described as a union of the idea of popular sovereignty and ethnic solidarity. This set of beliefs, rooted in the Enlightenment principle of the sovereignty of people, extended the democratic right of self-determination to a national grouping created to justify the right to a state. But nationalism does not necessarily seek to express this principle through democratic means. In order to achieve the proclaimed goals of a nation, some nationalist leaders do not hesitate to use violence even when the majority of the people oppose such. As to the source of the rights of a nation, the argument of nationalists is tautological.

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The rights of an entity, that is, a nation, do not stem from the collective will of its adherents, but from its very existence as a nation; they are presented as inherent.\textsuperscript{74} Ben-Israel claims that there is a striking correlation between the extent to which ethnicity is stressed and the propensity for making war because of the unifying force of ethnicity.\textsuperscript{75} This particular type of nationalism, by treating nation as the supreme object of devotion, can justify the worst crimes and atrocities in the eyes of nationalists as long as they serve the supposed national ends.\textsuperscript{76} When this type of nationalism exerts resource claims on another group, it becomes confrontational and as such it provokes ethnopolitical conflict. The former Yugoslavia is such an example. However, this kind of nationalism does not represent a permanent feature of a nation.

Ben-Israel claims that it may be just a stage in the life of a nation when nationalism produces a struggle for political power and often a reliance on war and violence either as a strategy or as an unintended consequence.\textsuperscript{77} Sometimes, as the consequence of this conflict, violence becomes a permanent feature of the conflict between ethnic groups. To prevent conflict from reaching that stage, it is necessary to deal with the mechanisms which confrontational nationalists use to politicize ethnic groups toward destructive ends. It is necessary to point out that while nationalism is

\textsuperscript{74}Ben-Israel, “Nationalism,” pp. 372–74.

\textsuperscript{75}Ibid., pp. 395–97.


\textsuperscript{77}Ben-Israel, “Nationalism,” p. 369.
competitive by nature, it does not always involve reliance on violence and the negative use of ethnicity. Some nationalist movements do not even claim the right to the independent statehood. While there are very few modern cases of nationalism which do not politicize ethnicity toward destructive ends, it is necessary to recognize their existence. For the sake of clarity, we refer to the type of nationalism that does not exert resource claims on another group as benevolent or benign. Historically, this was the case with Slovenia and Croatia when they decided to join the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia in 1918. Eriksen illustrates that type of modern nationalism with the example of Mauritius. A multi-ethnic state, Mauritius bases its integrational nationalism on inter-ethnic compromise. It consciously promotes national symbols that emphasize Mauritian nationalism based on cultural uniformity and keeps ethnic identities outside of the educational, political and economic systems. 78

Many scholars emphasize the dual nature of nationalism. Geopolitically, nationalism is an ambiguous ideology. It can be aggressive and expansionist both within and outside state boundaries. At the same time it can serve as a truly peace-keeping and culturally integrating force in a nation-state or a region. This latter universalist nationalism, in line with the principles of the Enlightenment, emphasizes equality and individual human rights. Particularist nationalism, on the other hand, denies non-citizens or supposedly culturally different citizens full human rights and, in extreme cases denies them membership in the community of people. Thus, depending

on the social context nationalism may have socio-cultural integrating as well as disintegrating effects.\textsuperscript{79}

This discussion of nationalism suggests two important points regarding the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism. First, the ideology of nationalism is different from ethnicity, which is more precisely described as a subjective feeling of belonging to a specific group. The second point responds to the argument advanced by Eriksen who claims that the difference between nationalism and ethnicity is one only of a degree, because they both appear as “ideologies which stress the cultural similarities of their adherents.”\textsuperscript{80} His justification of a difference—that many political movements are both ethnic and nationalist in character—does not recognize the fact that ethnicity is often used as an instrument for nationalist aspiration: setting up the state based on a specific culture.

The case of former Yugoslavia poses an inevitable question: why is it that the Communist attempt to provide identity with the proletariat or working class lost to the identity with a nation. Dunja Melcic insists that one explanation could be that the nation is a genuine space of communication and self-interpretation. It is an interpretation of collective identity that links present, past and future. The working class, on the contrary, is not a communicative category; its language is derived and therefore it is in service of communist ideology. This communicative national project can be successful only if it respects communication with other members of the community about most pertinent political decisions and institutional arrangements.

\textsuperscript{79}Eriksen, Hobsbawm, and Ben-Israel are in agreement on this point.

\textsuperscript{80}Eriksen, “Ethnicity,” p. 264.
The communicative national project fails if one group concentrates all the powers in their hands and promotes their interpretation of national interest as the only one. When the communicative national project fails then it is perverted into aggressive, racist and expansionist nationalism. Melcic's theory is important because it implicitly intertwines the role of ethnicity, and of communication. With this lead in, we move on to the next section to examine how communication variables, namely, mass media and rhetoric, can be used in politicization of ethnicity.

**Elements of Politicization**

The elements that appear to be particularly salient in the analysis of modern ethnopolitical conflict are ethnic entrepreneurs as actors and initiators of politicization of ethnicity. Ethnic entrepreneurs use mass media, and political rhetoric as tools by which they achieve their goals. The entrepreneurs typically capitalize on the difficult socio-political environment and vulnerabilities of ethnic identity. These elements represent important factors whose visibility allows for early diagnosis and advanced prevention of ethnopolitical conflict. That is, their appearance might contribute to an early warning system and allow for preventive actions.

**Ethnic Identity**

An understanding of inter-ethnic conflict within multi-ethnic states and, in the context of the pervading violence and ultimate demise of multi-ethnic states, is incomplete without consideration of the character of ethnic or national identities (for

those nations that did have their autonomy and political units in some form of political unit). The notion of ethnic identity as elaborated in the earlier sections incorporates culture, religion, any state traditions and various historical events that are reflected in the popular values and political myths and symbols, often represented in national heroes or epic events and/or literature. They shape the character and aspirations of the ethnic group and inevitably influence how these are going to be politicized. No less important is the fact that they also shape and color the perceptions of their neighboring groups which they can see as either contenders for power or as legitimate sharers of that power.

The psychological nature of ethnic identity of some ethnic groups, its emotionally grounded solidarity, its capacity to arouse and engage the most intense and private emotional sentiments, may lend itself to politicization or radicalization. In the cases of radical nationalism, politicization directs an ethnic group to build boundaries between itself and other groups. In those instances, the differentiating role of ethnicity is imbued with intolerance and exclusionary relations to other groups. Those are the cases when segmentary identities, people’s loyalty to several communities simultaneously, which in normal times facilitate peaceful coexistence of different groups within polity, turn into binary identities with clear boundaries between “us” and “them” and may ultimately come into conflict with one another. Whether the ethnic groups will resort to conflict depends largely on the historical and

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present political environment and whether such context offers an opportunity for emergence of ethnic entrepreneurs and the way these entrepreneurs utilize rhetoric and mass media. Thus, ethnic identity with its primordial characteristics and potential for differentiation between “us” and “them” is a necessary but insufficient cause for the mobilization of ethnic groups into militant political actors. Both ethnic identity and certain historical events that mark the development of ethnic groups and relationship between ethnic groups are considered an important context which might provide an opportunity for emerging ethnic entrepreneurs.

Historical and Political Context

The political, social and economic context, as noted by the analysts of nationalism and political and ethnic conflict, is important to the extent that it describes the characteristics of the regime within which ethnic groups reside. It is accepted by theorists of nationalism that times of social strain and instability lend themselves to the ideologization of ethnicity, which turns primordial or cultural markers of an ethnic group into an intense differentiating value. A chapter on history will deal in more detail with major social, economic and political processes in Yugoslavia. In this section I will briefly comment on one important issue in Yugoslav historiography.

The role of history in the violent breakup of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia is a very complicated one, made even more complex by those who use false historical arguments to claim that ancient ethnic hatreds lay behind the destruction of
Yugoslavia. Such mono-causal claims made it difficult to understand the actual interests involved in the conflict that developed into the bloodiest war in post-World War II Europe. There is another problem with historical analysis, and this one originates from the advantage of hindsight. This problem contributes to the methodological dilemma that Jill Irvine refers to as “the temptation to recast the whole period in terms of its outcome.” Thus, many analyses of Yugoslav catastrophe focus only on those elements that contributed to the demise of the state.

The purpose of Chapters IV and V is to look at the development of ethnic groups and at history of the former Yugoslavia in a more productive way that allows us to gain better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the multi-ethnic state, and with it, the reasons that might have contributed to violent inter-ethnic conflict, or provided good instruments or motifs to be used by political entrepreneurs. Very often these entrepreneurs used myths and symbols of ethnic groups as the essence of their appeal and saw historical events and circumstances as an opportunity to impose themselves as their true leaders. Since the history of different ethnic groups was frequently evoked in order to justify poor political choices and atrocities

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84 Such arguments are particularly difficult to accept since commonly acclaimed historians of Yugoslavia such as Ivo Lederer, Ivan Banac and Gale Stokes, claim that ethnic groups which comprised first Yugoslavia of 1918: Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Montenegrins and Slovenes developed independently of each other and with minimal contacts. See, Ivo J. Lederer, “Nationalism and the Yugoslavs,” in Nationalism in Eastern Europe, ed. Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), pp. 396–438; Ivan Banac, The National Question in Yugoslavia (London: Cornell University Press, 1984), and Gale Stokes, Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

committed in the name of history, the section on ethnogenesis of the Serbs and
Croats\textsuperscript{86} is meant to demystify the role of history and to aid in understanding of the
origins of the diversity of population that characterized Yugoslavia.

Determining whether or not Yugoslavia was to stay as one state is not the
purpose of this analysis. This research is more concerned with a manner in which the
disintegration of the state occurred. It is led by the hypothesis that Yugoslavia’s
disintegration in such a brutal manner was not inevitable. The premise here is that in
order to understand the crisis that brought a violent inter-ethnic conflict, it is neces­
sary to examine crucial political and social events and institutions that preceded the
crisis. In this respect, this chapter should provide a frame of reference for the analysis
of Yugoslav ethnopolitical conflict. In order to avoid the risk of mistaking causality
with inevitability, the challenge here is to bear in mind Irvine’s counsel because closer
examinations of Yugoslav history, especially in the period after World War II,
suggest that those elements that contributed to cohesion and stability to the multi­
ethnic state in its earlier period might function later as sources of its violent
breakup.\textsuperscript{87}

\footnote{86}{The role of other ethnic groups or “nations” (Slovenes, Macedonians,
Montenegrins, Bosniaks,) and “nationalities” (mainly Albanians and Hungarians) as
Yugoslav official language referred to these groups, will be dealt with as they relate
to the developments of the groups under investigation in this work.}

\footnote{87}{This argument is well illustrated in the contributions to the volume by
Melissa K. Bokovoy, Jill A. Irvine, and Carol S. Lilly, eds. \textit{State-Society Relations in
of the main political trends and processes by Bilandzic contributes to this argument as
well. See Dusan Bilandzic, \textit{Historija Socijalisticke Federativne Republike
Yugoslavije, [History of SFR Yugoslavia]}, (Zagreb: Skolska knjiga, 1985).}
The complicated task of presenting Yugoslav history becomes even more difficult today, because lately so many participants in that history demand that a "new" history be written. The Communist regime that ruled Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1990, as with its monarchical predecessor, insisted intensely on the heroic presentation of historical events. In postwar Yugoslavia, the history of the interwar Communist movement, the Second World War, and the civil war which occurred during the World War II, was written under the supervision of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Aleksa Djilas states that in spite of the party's "historiographic orthodoxy," many Yugoslav historians have not been ready to misrepresent historical events.88 They, however, kept quiet about events that were, from the party's point of view, particularly "sensitive," that is, events that called attention to the problems of nationalism. This troubled relationship between the Communist Party and history resulted in a large amount of "dissident literature" published abroad that dealt mainly with the issues about which Yugoslavs had to remain silent. For example, Ivan Supek's book *Krunski Svjedok Protiv Hebranga*89 was literally smuggled across the Yugoslav-Italian border, and much of Milovan Dijlaš's later work was only published abroad. Tudjman's career as a historian was devoted to proving the historical errors of the Communist leadership.90


90 Franjo Tudjman, *Bespuca Povijesne Zbiljnosti: Rasprava o Povijesti i Filozofiji Zlosilja [Wilderness of Historical Reality: An Essay on History and* (continued...)

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Since the death of President Tito in May 1980, the consequent liberalization of intellectual life has brought many serious challenges to the official “Titoist” interpretation of modern Yugoslav history. However, it seems that rewriting of history in different republics encouraged intolerance and forces of destruction, just like former dissidents who assumed positions of responsibility in the new regimes practiced the same type of political control and prejudice they endured from their Communist persecutors.

Due to the fact that Yugoslavia was a country with a complex ethnic and national make-up and intricate history, to present an objective and complete history of Yugoslavia is a challenge indeed. Sensitive to this issue, and aware that this analysis, due to the research subject, will inevitably be incomplete, all the author can do is to take into account different views on most problematic political issues and events in describing Yugoslavia’s past.

**Ethnic Entrepreneurs**

Identity and behaviour are partly genetic, but they are also shaped by context and choice. In politics they are resources waiting to be used by politicians and their supporters for their own advantage. Human nature provides the “necessary” condition for ethnocentric behaviour, but politics converts this into the “sufficient condition for nationalism as we understand it today.”  

The potential for conflict between ethnic groups gives rise to leaders (either in pursuit of their own opportunistic goals or because they truly believe in the cause of

(...continued)


the "nation") who recognize the circumstances in which the potential psychological intensity of ethnic identities, anxieties and aspirations can be made pertinent and a source of political legitimacy, and thus, power.

Politicians who operate in the context of ethnic cleavage can use those cleavages as a calculated, maximizing strategy either to stay in power, or to persuade their ethnic constituency about the need to elect this particular politician to represent them. This most often happens, when these politicians argue about inadequacy of existing institutions. Such deliberate calculations about representation of an ethnic group can lead to fundamental disagreements about institutions. This type of an entrepreneur will mobilize voters to perceive opportunities and constraints in different institutions and, thus, put forward those institutional preferences that advantage his or her access to power.92

The instrumental manipulation of ethnic allegiances by politicians for individual goals, has been noted by African scholars. Mboya argued that "some leaders have revived these old hostilities for their own personal reasons. When a leader feels himself weak on the national platform, he begins to calculate that the only support he may have will come from his own tribe; so he starts to create an antagonism of this sort, to entrench himself as at least a leader of his tribe."93

The role of ethnic entrepreneurs and their desire to maintain themselves in power is especially dangerous if in their rhetoric they choose to instigate fear of


others. If we recall Gurr's hypothesis that "the greater the frustration, the greater the quantity of aggression against the source of frustration," fear as a stronger emotion, can induce radicalization and militant mobilization against the threat. This is especially the case with ethnic groups whose major myth is the myth of chosen people, or "ethnic election," chosen to live and fulfill its destiny. When there is a danger that such myth may be jeopardized, there is justification for the people to defend themselves. Since ethnic problems usually exist in the context of economic and political crisis, the leader has a choice whether to deal with the problems or to create fear and hate and direct major frustrations of his people against specific groups.

While, Kingdon does not specifically touch on ethnic policies, his theory of entrepreneurs is applicable in a complex context of ethnic cleavages. An ethnic entrepreneur, much like business or policy entrepreneur, rather than bargain for common solution in a difficult situation, will present a problem in such way, so that his proposal appears as the acceptable one. Entrepreneurs offer their solutions in the hope of future return, one of which can be personal aggrandizement. Ethnic communities are particularly vulnerable to these types of individuals since they often

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94 Gurr, Why Men Rebel, p. 9.


present their policies as motivated by the advancement, of their own identity group, to as Smith puts it, enable them to take "their place in a world of nations." 98

In multiethnic societies, the leaders can choose whether to talk their ethnic group into embracing the larger, i.e., federal state, or to reject such association. Depending on their own rational calculations about access to power, they propagate acceptance or instigate rejection of the larger community. Ndegwa has noted that opportunist politicians can draw their legitimacy from an ethnic group if they are perceived as fulfilling particular material and nonmaterial needs of members in that group. 99 Particularly interesting is the fact that ethnic or other identity groups offer authority to those leaders who can offer the group a supposedly absolute memory by which they can appear as "one of the group." Success of those kinds of leaders, regardless of their activities, is seen as an enrichment of their own community.

Gurr and Davies point to the importance of a regime's ability to proportionately allocate its resources to alleviate the relative deprivation of different groups and its legitimacy, i.e., the feeling of different groups that their needs are met. If demands articulated through conventional channels of communication lead to responses that the discontented find inadequate, they are increasingly likely to use demonstrative, sometimes violent actions. 100

100 Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives (Washington, D.C.: National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1969); Davies' article "J curve" is one of the contributions to the volume.
The leadership of the state has a powerful role in organizing its economy. In multi-ethnic states the underlying dynamics of inter-ethnic relations is a constant resource competition. Whether the resource competition will result in pluralism, cooperation, or conflict is largely determined by the political influence of leaders. Frequently, various ethnic boundaries are associated with "economic production niches." In some cases, the leaders deliberately use economic differences as delineated by ethnic boundaries to perpetuate exploitation and exclusion of subordinate ethnic groups.

The economic dimensions of inter-ethnic relations provides leaders with a mechanism to distribute resources either on the basis of ethnic segregation or on a more equal basis. In cases of the former, the power of resource allocation allows the leadership of the state to perpetuate inter-ethnic hostility. Ethnic groups who suffer discrimination, or perceive themselves as being discriminated, can use their position to strengthen their solidarity and eventually rise in violent opposition against the status quo.

Rothschild points to the leaders as the most important actor in deciding whether the politicization of ethnicity is going to take militant or peaceful ways toward the achievement of the goal. In that regard, leaders do not hesitate to transform powerful myths and symbols into sorts of experience that can be utilized for political purposes. Reference to historical events and victories, even defeats that need to be corrected, usually lead to a win-lose situation and the view that the

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solution to the "problem" can be achieved only through force and deception. The reason for choosing the term political entrepreneurs rather than ethnic or political leaders is due to the conclusion of the researcher that individuals formerly not actively involved in leadership positions, emerged at the critical point and asserted their nationalistic appeal. Their leadership serves opportunistic and self-promoting purposes at the expense of emotionally vulnerable populations.

Mass Media

Most people learn about politics through mass media, especially television. Sometimes, it is their only source. In that sense, mass media serve the role of a mediator between politics and the people. The mass media are thus the most direct link that most people have to politics. In the process, however, great amounts of political phenomena must be summarized, condensed, and simplified—leaving only vague outlines and symbolic representations of complex political events. The power of the media is not only in their role to survey the events of the day and make them focus of public and private attention. They also interpret the meaning of the events, put them in the context, and speculate about their consequences. Since people are


selective not only to the type of things they pay attention to but also to the sources upon which they rely, they most often choose the ones that offer views most agreeable to their own. Because of various factors, many people have ready access to only one daily newspaper and thus much of what they know and understand about contemporary politics often depends upon what and how that paper chooses to report. Recently, television news has been a major source of political information, but those who spend a lot of time watching television, tend to be poorly informed.

The power of media, therefore, lies in their role as the mass communicator of news and ideas, and in their ability to penetrate large numbers of people and influence their belief systems. Modern societies have created and used mass media for dissemination of political information rapidly to a large number of people. Many governments either own or control the mass media because they firmly believe that their ability to govern is closely related to the nature, quality and quantity of information disseminated to the public.

When it comes to the relationship between media and government, there are two models of media power. Marxist materialist and critical theory endorses the dominance model, while the pluralist model is upheld by schools of individual and structural functionalism. In the dominance model, mass media are considered by the


ruling class or the dominant elite to be means serving the institutions of the ruling class. The pluralist model, with its diversity and predictability, however, is impossible in a society dominated by a unified elite and can only be introduced into a society which is open to changes and democratic control, in which competing political, social and cultural interests and groups exist.109 Yugoslavia, like all other Communist regimes subscribed to the dominance model. One Yugoslav author argued that "public diffusion of information belongs to the realm of social labor which is increasingly described . . . [as] 'the consciousness industry.'”110

The role of media in multi-ethnic societies is of particular importance. Hobsbawm argues that the mass media is one of the most significant characteristics of modern nationalism. The mass media became the means by which popular ideologies not only became standardized and easily transmitted, but also exploited for the purposes of deliberate political propaganda—deliberate use of the mass media to create malevolent impression of "other." Moreover, the mass media has become an instrument which transmits national symbols as part of the everyday life of individuals and has thus reinforced ethnic identification.111 In contemporary multi-ethnic societies media can serve as an instrument in reinforcing stereotypes, "hostile

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attitudes and over-sensitivity to differences [which] lead to distorted views that may intensify and perpetuate conflict.”  

Political Rhetoric

Rhetoric, as Hegel puts it, “addresses of peoples to peoples, or orations directed to nations or princes,” is an integrant constituent in history. Rhetoric, therefore, is a force in history, and just like other forces in history—economic, social, political, or psychological—can provide significant insights about certain historical phenomena. According to McGee, all of history happens within a “rhetorical matrix.” With acceptable arguments great masses of people can be convinced to accept changes of all kinds, social, political, and technological. Throughout history, important issues have been and are argued publicly.

Rhetoric is the art of using language as a symbolic means so as to persuade or influence humans who by nature respond to symbols. Through rhetoric, speakers

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voice feelings of those they address. This striving for social control is vividly expressed in political discourse. It is this which makes politics and political rhetoric a serious matter of interest.

Political rhetoric serves the art of politics at every turn, both as a mode of thought and as an instrument of expression and action. All of its functions rhetoric performs through the use of language. The basic function of political language is to convey a message. Political language articulates all the things we think of as political. In its political dimension, language is used to influence public knowledge, beliefs, and action on political matters. Accordingly, language can be used to produce both conflict and consensus; it can cause both empowerment and marginalization, “language reproduces and reinforces exploitation, inequality and other traditions of power.” Ultimately, the power of the public person lies precisely in deciding what purpose to use rhetoric for.

The Nazi interest in rhetoric was solely political. According to Hitler, rhetoric was an instrument; the best channel to win the broad base of mass support was public speaking. Part of his conviction was that no man could be a true leader of his people if he did not have genuine ability to move them by his words. Hitler’s theory of rhetoric is well elaborated in Mein Kampf:


I know that one is able to win people far more by spoken than by the written
word, and that every great movement on this globe owes its rise to the great
speakers and not to the great writers. . . . All great movements of the people
are volcanic eruptions of human passions and spiritual sensations, stirred
either by the cruel Goddess of Misery or by the torch of the word thrown into
the masses.119

Each political message has a meaning which leads to political consequences.
These consequences may be as large as the preservation of the state and the well
being of each and every citizen, or as small as a single individual’s wealth. Symbols
are the most important aspect of the political communication process. They represent
the focal objects of political opinions and attitudes and are used to define the
procedural and substantive affairs of government. Symbols are important part of the
political heritage and traditions that define the political culture of a community. To
understand what a speaker communicates to his audience, it is necessary to take into
consideration the symbols that characterize their political culture, the way they are
used and how people relate to them.120

Because words have power to influence people’s thinking and behavior,
political rhetoric should ideally follow Aristotelian prescription for public speaking.
He argued that rhetoric is about persuasion through logical reasoning— in
influencing citizens the speaker should not use disreputable tactics and appeals which


120 Edelman, Symbolic Uses; Charles Elder and Roger Cobb, The Political
play on irrelevant emotions in the hearers. \textsuperscript{121} Unfortunately, in contemporary political discourse, the Aristotelian ideal type represents only one possible way of communicating, and is rare. Graber refers to it as “statesman’s oratory.” Depending on the appeals political speakers use to convey their messages Graber classifies rhetorical styles as statesman’s, charismatic, and demagogic.

The essence of “statesman’s oratory” is to appeal to reasoned argument and intellectual explanation of the issues at hand. The salient issues are presented clearly and in moderate language without emotionally charged distractions. Speakers who use this type of speaking avoid appeals to emotions, simplistic explanations and slogans. \textsuperscript{122} This rhetoric is the most ethical since it strives to provide truthful and relevant information that makes rational, significant choice possible. \textsuperscript{123}

“Charismatic oratory,” by contrast, appeals to deeply held emotions and ideas shared by large numbers of people. Charismatic leaders and speakers derive their legitimacy from the fact that the public perceives them as people endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. \textsuperscript{124} They are skillful in using the historical situation to create a value order that is

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{123} James Jaksa and Michael Pritchard, \textit{Communication Ethics: Methods of Analysis} (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1994).
\end{itemize}
expected for the time. The charismatic speaker seizes upon diffuse, and intense, but unarticulated sentiments and articulate ideas and emotions in ways that make their audience feel they have a spokesperson. The audience identifies with such speakers and has faith in whatever they plead for. In turn, the charismatic speaker becomes a symbol of public values.\textsuperscript{125}

"Demagogic" rhetoric also appeals to emotions, but on a baser level, with clear intent to stir prejudice, hatred, and bigotry. The appeals used by demagogues are opportunistic; their main goal is to make people believe what they want them to believe, thus leaving little room for truth and fairness. Johannesen describes a demagogue as an unethical communicator who enjoys popular support, and who exerts his influence primarily through the medium of spoken word. A demagogue relies heavily on propaganda, i.e., "intentional use of suggestion, irrelevant emotional appeals, and pseudoproof to circumvent human rational decision-making processes." A demagogue is the speaker who uses available social problems to advance his or her own personal position or goals.\textsuperscript{126}

In modern times traditional statesmen's oratory has become rare.\textsuperscript{127} Its place is now taken by a mixture of charismatic and demagogic rhetoric. Many contemporary politicians use rhetoric to manipulate people's beliefs for their own


political ends. This is especially true for individuals who speak out in a time of crisis. These rhetors seize the circumstances in which they and their fellows struggle and interpret and express them in such a way as to demonstrate leadership. In situations in which speakers want to guide their audience to action, they take advantage of myths and other symbols whose power in creating and reinforcing social identity and sense of belonging cannot be stressed enough. Myths can serve as preparation for political action by unifying individuals into collectivities which share perceptions of a common heritage and common destiny.

While any rhetorical act is a complex, interrelated whole, four parts can be separated as analytically distinct: context and audience, speaker, message/speech, and consequences. The context of the speech is contained in historical, political, social and cultural factors or events that made it possible/necessary for a speaker to address an audience. Social and cultural values pertain to a speaking situation. People speak in order to solve problems, or to compel action because there is something going on in the world around them that is in need of modification or is threatened and must be defended. The potential for conflict between ethnic groups gives rise to leaders (either in pursuit of their own opportunistic goals or because they truly believe in the cause of the “nation”) who recognize the circumstances in which the potential

psychological intensity of ethnic identities, anxieties and aspirations can be made pertinent and a source of political legitimacy, and thus, power.

Context also involves the audience of the rhetorical discourse. This audience is both immediate—those who actually witness the speech, and potential—those who may hear or read the speech. Speeches are by nature audience centered. Understanding the nature of audience helps the speaker in development of his purpose—what can and cannot be reasonably accomplished. Speakers tailor their messages to fit audience needs and perspectives. According to Hitler, the role of the audience was instrumental, its support was needed in order to achieve power. “Only one who knows the suffering and struggles of the people will know how to coin expressions that are right for the people.”

The speaker (or rhetor, or orator) is the authority who delivers the speech, hoping to accomplish a specific goal. In analyzing the speaker we ask if the rhetor is someone interested in resolving the problem or an individual who sizes up the circumstances in which he and his fellows struggle and interprets and expresses them in such a way as to demonstrate leadership? The effective speaker is one who is able to accomplish his or her rhetorical purposes. The speaker strategically selects verbal symbols that represent his attitudes and which he feels will be effective in inducing “identification” with his audience.


130. The notion of identification with an audience is the leading motive for rhetors. Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives.
The third element of a rhetorical act is the speech itself—the collection of and connection between words. The rhetorical message is always purposive; its aim is to get a response from an audience. What arguments and language do speakers use that best fit their purposes and audiences expectations? The language of the message will reveal the rhetorical motives of the speaker. Unlike any other language, basic function of which is to convey the message, language used by politicians, becomes political language. Graber describes political language as a separate entity, a language that that possesses special potency. That potency comes from the context in which the information is disseminated and the function the political language performs. One of the functions of political language is to interpret the scene in the process of calling attention to situations, people, and events. This function of political language enables political elites to create reality through linking their own actions to acceptable motives, goals and developments.¹³¹

The final element of a rhetorical act is its consequences or effects. This element is best expressed in the question: “What potential did the message have to influence what audience in what ways?” The major concern of this study is the effects of Tujman’s and Milosevic’s political rhetoric on politicization of ethnicity.

In times of a perceived threat to the ethnic group, the power of rhetoric based on ethnic appeal is immense. Not only do such leaders manage to persuade their ethnic kinsmen to perceive their destiny in ethnic rather than in individual or class terms but their power of mobilization is particularly important. It is at such moment that peoples’ identity may shift from a “segmentary” status (multiple sources of

identity) into a “binary” status (ethnicity as the predominant source of identity).\textsuperscript{132} This power of a rhetor stems from his knowledge of what his followers perceive as the most serious threat to their security, self-esteem and physical well-being.\textsuperscript{133} Demagogues with rhetorical skills can persuade people to organize themselves into communities with a strong sense of solidarity, perceived as the only way to preserve their values, customs, uniqueness and survival in the midst of real or imagined dangers coming from (an)other ethnic group(s). The promise to address the injustices incites the people to follow their leader unconditionally, even to the point of desecrating the graves and raping women.

This model for the study of politicization of ethnicity will be used for the analysis of politicization of ethnicity in Serbia, Chapter VI, and in Croatia, Chapter VII. The following chapters, Chapters IV and V, are empirical analyses of contextual variables, ethnic identity and historical events. Chapter IV offers a description of the development of Serbian and Croat national identity. Chapter V provides historical background to the units of analysis. Particular attention will be paid to those historical events that were later utilized by ethnic entrepreneurs in Croatia and Serbia.

A brief methodological note is in order prior to moving to the empirical analysis. In this research ethnic identity and historical events represent important contextual variables, but cannot be considered as the single determinant of the outcome, in this case violent inter-ethnic conflict. As Isaak points out, it is seldom possible to find one necessary and sufficient condition that leads to a certain political

\textsuperscript{132}Rothschild, \textit{Ethnopolitics}; Eriksen, “Ethnicity.”

\textsuperscript{133}Deutsch, “Subjective Features.”
outcome. More often, it is a combination of factors that play the role of partially sufficient conditions.\textsuperscript{134} This is the case with this research. Contextual variables, together with three variables of the model for the study of politicization of ethnicity, provide a combination of partially sufficient factors that may cause violent ethnopolitical conflict.

CHAPTER IV

ETHNOGENESIS

Genesis and Development of Ethnic Identity Among Croats and Serbs

The term *South Slav* or *Yugoslav* was first used by Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer of Croatia in the nineteenth century during the time of national revival. Yugoslavism then connoted the idea or rationale for the formation of a South Slav state based on the belief in the ethnic, linguistic and cultural unity of the South Slavs. The ancestors of contemporary Serbs and Croats were Slav migrants who...

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136. While the term *South Slav* refers to all the South Slav peoples of the former Yugoslavia (Croats, Macedonians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Bosnian Muslims, (continued...))
in the period between sixth and seventh century raided and then colonized southeastern Europe. The lands the Slavs first entered bore material remnants of Roman civilization, and were populated by the early inhabitants of the former Roman provinces and of the Byzantine Empire, the successor of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. The Slavs migrated from their homeland in the Ukraine southward to the Carpathians in scores of disassociated tribes, but powerful enough to cover the entire Balkan peninsula. Because they were scattered about in many small communities, they were not strong enough to retain the expanse of territory they had settled by the end of the seventh century. By the end of the eighth century most of the area of the former Yugoslavia had been colonized by separate and independent Slavic tribes, to the extent that Byzantine writers referred to this territory as Sclavinias, best translated as “the lands of the Slavs.” Due to the Slav invasion, the indigenous inhabitants of the Balkans, the Illyrians (whose present day descendants are the Albanians), Latinized provincials (later to be known as Vlachs and Rumanians), and Greeks were pushed into the mountain regions in the west and to the coast in the south of the Balkan peninsula.

Thus, although the Slavs established themselves as the dominant ethnic group, ethnic minorities continued to live in the region and their influence was most noticeable in the border and mountain areas. Since the Slavs were mainly rural

(...continued)
Slovenes, and Yugoslavs), this study will focus only on the development of Serbs and Croats, and will deal with others only as they concern the development of the two nations under investigation.

While the designation Balkan has been a matter of controversy, in this work it is seen as a geographic and territorial category, divided not only by natural characteristics, but also among several states.
people, the towns came to be inhabited largely by Germans in the continental area and Venetians on the coast. An essential part of the Balkan history has been the continuous movement of populations which continued throughout the centuries of Ottoman domination. Consequently, the ethnic structure of the former Yugoslavia is a complicated one—different peoples settled and mixed with each other and were always open to external influences, adding to that complexity in economic, political, social and religious spheres of life. The most salient example of the complexity of the South Slav history is the fact that the dividing line which separated the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Empire, later Byzantium, run through their lands.

The South Slavs share the Balkan region with the Magyars, Bulgars and Greeks, whose cultural influences are still felt, but the influences of German, Italian and Turkish cultures also penetrated through centuries of occupation. Borders among different peoples, however, were not fixed, reflecting the expansionist moves of different groups and kingdoms as well as the continuing migrations of peoples. In the eight and ninth century the non-Slavs, the Magyars of Hungary, the Germans of Austria, the Romanians of Wallachia separated the South Slavs in the Balkans from their kin, the West Slavs (Czechs, Slovaks and Poles) and the Eastern Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians). Even though the Slavs were one of a score of peoples (such as the Goths, the Avars, the Lombards, the Huns, the Franks) who raided the Roman world, they were among the few who were transformed from “raiders to settlers” and thus preserved their identity, but, mostly in the Balkan peninsula. The Slavs were not assimilated because they retained their tribal rural institutions, centered around division of labor in the extended family or zadruga. The settlement of the Slavs in the Balkans and their resistance to assimilation was possibly
due to their sedentary nature. Their economy was based on agriculture and stock-rearing—which allowed for the preservation of early institutions, but which made them less of a threat to the Byzantine rulers.

Because of their geographic position and diverse ethnic structure, the South Slav lands played an important part in the historical development of their neighbors. The South Slav people have been drawn into and affected by the game of power politics played by the great powers. The territorial expansion of the powerful European countries infringed upon the independence of the South Slavs and subjected them to long periods under foreign regimes. It is believed that the division among the Christian states facilitated the Ottoman conquest of the south-east Europe. The conflict among the European powers and their fears of the Russian expansion, allowed for the prolonged rule of the Ottomans. Some argue that the new state of Yugoslavia created after World War I was the creation of big powers. While the role of external and international actors was important throughout history of the Croats, Slovenes and Serbs, this study will focus only on those international events which contribute to an understanding of more contemporary events.
Religious Diversity

Two centuries before the definitive rift between Rome and Byzantium in 1054, two Christian confessions, the Eastern church based in Byzantium and the Western church based in Rome, began to battle for control of the Slavs. This conflict initiated a division by ecclesiastical jurisdiction which to this date runs through the land of South Slavs, and is commonly referred to as the “dividing line between East and West.” The Croats of Dalmatia were converted by missionaries from Rome during the early seventh century, but in the eight century the Byzantine emperor challenged Frankish expansionism and with it papal primacy in the Balkans and Adriatic littoral. The result of this was that Dalmatia was relegated to Byzantium. The Slovenes and some Croats had been converted during the time of Charlemagne, the great king of the Franks who allied himself with the Pope (at the turn of the ninth century) and his goal to spread Christianity in the conquered areas. To the Serbs and Macedonians, Christianity came from the east, under the influence of the Byzantine

emperors, who were the rulers of the Slavs in the southern Balkans until the formation of the medieval South Slav states.

The leaders of some Serbian tribes might have recognized Christianity as early as the seventh century, but the real beginnings of Christianity in this area date from the last decades of the ninth century and are associated with the "Apostles of the Slavs," the brothers Constantine-Cyril and Methodius. The brothers were sent at the request of the Byzantine emperor, who intended to restrain the influence of the Frankish clergy. Constantine and Methodius were to instruct the Slavs in the Christian faith through the use of the Slavonic language. The brothers devised an alphabet, the Glagolitic, and translated some of the most important books for the religious service. This language, which formed the basis of Old Church Slavonic, spread throughout the Balkans and into central Europe as far as southern Poland.

In Croatia, the position of Church Slavonic was relatively insecure. In the later half of the eleventh century, the Croatian king Zvonimir recognized the supreme authority of the pope and in return received protection from other papal adherents like Normans of southern Italy. Croatians thus fell under papal jurisdiction. The papacy opposed the use of old Slavic in the liturgy, but ran into resistance from many local priests and Dalmatian bishops. In Croatia, the struggle against the imposition of liturgical Latin and for the use of the old Slavonic liturgy long characterized the religious and political life. In the northeastern Adriatic area both the Old Church Slavonic language and Glagolitic script became the official mode of communication outside of the church and in time became enriched with the elements of Croatian vernacular. This practice set the ground for the growth of a Croatian literary language and literature in Dalmatia and Dubrovnik. For a long time, the Croats were
culturally divided even though they belonged to the Roman Catholic tradition. In some areas of Croatia and Dalmatia the use of the Glagolitic script and Church Slavonic was encouraged by Catholic monks as a weapon against Greek Orthodox influences and for that reason it was tolerated by the popes. In some areas, however, the churches used the Latin liturgy and persecuted the users of the old Slavonic liturgy. Thus, beside the existence of old Latin bishoprics in the Dalmatian towns, new, purely Croatian bishoprics were formed inland at Nin, Skradin, and Knin, and Sibenik and Biograd on the coast, and in these towns the Croatian clergy used the old Slavonic liturgy. During the Habsburg times of intensive magyarization and germanization, the Croats used Latin to resist foreign influences.

In the ninth century, in its home area of Macedonia, the Cyrillic alphabet had replaced Glagolitic. During the next two centuries the alphabet spread throughout the lands of the Byzantine (Eastern Rite) Church. Within the sphere of the Orthodox Church, adjustments were made in the Cyrillic alphabet in order to incorporate the distinctiveness of the different evolving Slavonic languages: Bulgarian, Serbian, Macedonian and Russian. In the Eastern Orthodox zone the position of Church Slavonic was more secure. In 891, the Serbs were officially placed under the jurisdiction of Byzantium by the zupan (ruling prince) of the Serbian principality of Raska, today’s Kosovo. During the next three centuries, the Serbs were pawns of the struggle between Rome and Byzantium, but the Eastern Church finally prevailed during the reign of the Serbian ruler Stephen Nemanja in the late twelfth century even though Stephen’s older son was crowned the first Serbian king by the Pope in 1217. Since the measure of state power in Orthodox lands was at the time reflected in the possession of an autocephalous, separate church organization, in 1219, Stephen’s
brother, the priest and later Orthodox Saint, Saint Sava, sought and won an imperial decision from the Patriarch of Byzantium to establish an autocephalous archbishopric for the state under the Serbian king and Nemanjic dynasty. This change was fervently but ineffectively opposed by the Macedonian archbishop of Ohrid, who thus lost ecclesiastical power over Raska. Saint Sava, the first Bishop of the new autocephalous Serbian Church, set up a number of new bishoprics and trained a domestic clergy and church hierarchy. The creation of a separate church organization was instrumental in consolidating the several parts of the Nemanjic state and, in time, merging them into a whole. As in other lands of Eastern Christianity, in Serbia too the sacred and secular coexisted, or more accurately, the state was conceived as both a religious and a political community. In essence, the first Serbian rulers, founders of both an independent state and church, made political history that was closely interwoven with church tradition. This enabled the Serbian church to carry an important integrating function and to maintain the continuity of historical national consciousness, even through centuries of Ottoman control.

During the reign of Tsar Dusan in the fourteenth century, a Serbian patriarchate was established at Pec, in southern Serbia. Although the patriarchate was annulled and then restored again on several occasions during the Ottoman occupation, it was not finally abolished until 1766. Pec, which lies in a remote corner of southeast Yugoslavia, close to the Albanian border, in the Albanian-speaking province of Kosovo, is still the spiritual center of the Serbian Orthodox Church although the Serbian patriarchate was much later reestablished in Belgrade. The creation of an independent Serbian archbishopric altered the boundary between the Eastern and Western Churches, since the expansion of the Orthodox bishoprics in
Dalmatia and Bosnia undermined papal jurisdiction. However, the boundaries between Catholic and Orthodox religions did not remain permanent, changing under the influence of political and religious events and processes. This was especially the case during the Ottoman occupation, when the leaders of the Serbian Church could take advantage of Islam’s tolerance toward non-Muslim subjects and stay under the Ottomans, rather than to join the all-Christian European Coalition led by the Austro-German house of Habsburg.

One of the significant factors in the religious history of the South Slavs, even before the Turkish occupation of the Balkans in the fourteenth century, was the existence of the Christian church of Bosnia and of the Bogumil dualist heresy which appeared at the close of the twelfth century. Bogomilism was a manifestation of a neo-Manichean movement, dating back in particular to the Roman Empire, which penetrated into southern and western Europe between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. In South Slav territories, this movement first appeared in Macedonia during the tenth century as a reaction by oppressed Macedonian peasants to the imposition of feudalism by the Bulgarian emperors. Since Bogomilism spread to Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dalmatia during eleventh and twelfth centuries, and both Byzantium and Rome attempted to suppress its followers. In Bosnia and Herzegovina their persistence alarmed the Roman Curia. In dealing with the heretics in Bosnia the pope drew support from the Hungarian kings, for whom this meant winning territory for themselves and souls for Rome.\(^{139}\)

When an independent Bosnian state emerged under Ban (Vice-Roy) Kulin (1180–1204), Kulin abandoned Rome and adopted Bogomilism as a state religion. For three centuries the Roman Curia attempted to reform the Bosnian diocese along the model of the Roman Church, but all that resulted were massive revolts and several wars between the Hungarian army and domestic forces led by Bosnian Bans. The Catholic church failed to attain its goal, the “heretics,” who saw themselves as Christians, took control of the old Bosnian diocese and transformed it into the “Bosnian church.” This unique native Slav church supplemented the political framework of the Bosnian state and provided both political and spiritual boundaries from other South Slavs. It also saved Bosnia from political encroachment of both Roman Catholic Hungary and Orthodox Serbia.140 Some maintain that the voluntary acceptance of Islam by the members of this church, when the Ottoman Empire conquered Bosnia in the mid-fifteenth century meant the preservation of the Bosnian state under a new governor.141

In the fifteenth century when the Ottomans conquered the Bosnian state, many Bosnians voluntarily converted to Islam, and after the Bosnian Church disappeared, a native-born Slavic Muslim population came into existence. It was only in Bosnia and Albania (in the seventeenth century) that Islam succeeded in extending its spiritual influence. Islamic law did not promote the idea of subjecting a conquered population to its religion. In most cases mass conversions were motivated by


141 E.g., Murvar, *Nation and Religion*; Sidak, however, calls into question any possibility of mass conversion on the premise that there was not any data available to support the claim, p. 149.
economic rather than spiritual considerations. In other territories occupied by the Ottomans, i.e., Serbia and Macedonia, the Muslim populations consisted of a small number of Turkish immigrants; Muslim landowners and administrators ruled over the Christian peasants.

Although there were some examples of forcible conversion, and Christian subjects were subjected to social and economic disabilities, the legal code of Islam, Shar’ia, allowed the native religious communities to administer to their populations through the system of millets (nations). On the other hand, because acceptance of the Islamic faith was directly connected with extensive rights and privileges, such as complete exemption from taxes and the right to carry arms, there were strong incentives for conversion.

The Ottomans were not involved in the internal affairs of the individual millets. They left the religious communities under the supervision of their respective religious leaders, who were responsible for maintaining order, administering justice and collecting taxes within their community and in general, most civil law, as well as canon law. The religious communities were left alone provided that they paid their taxes and did not cause problems. The close involvement of religious leaders with the civil affairs of their followers had important consequences during the nineteenth century, when the declining Ottoman empire faced the rising waves of Slav nationalism. Orthodoxy and national identity became closely intertwined, and through this process, religious leaders became the spokesmen of national revolts.

In time, the lines of religious demarcation in southeastern Europe under Turkish rule delineated the areas of political and national self-determination. The influence of the Orthodox church was extended to areas of Hungary, Croatia-
Slavonia, and the Military Frontier between Croatia and Serbia where Serbs migrated from Ottoman-held territories. The Orthodox communities in these areas pursued a shadow struggle against the attempts of the Catholic Church, the Habsburg dynasty, and the Hungarian and Croatian estates to impose Roman Catholicism on the Orthodox population. In this struggle the Serbs found inspiration in the political and spiritual splendor of the cults of Orthodox saints who extended from the royal Nemanjici lineages and the post-Kosovo 1389 line of Serbian despots. It seems that even though Catholicism and Islam did affect national traditions in the Slovene, Croat and Bosnian lands, the influence of these religions was not nearly as strong as Orthodoxy was among the Serbs whose religious affiliation helped to shape their national identity. Both Islam and Roman Catholicism and universalistic religions. Wherever they exercised jurisdiction, Serbian church organizations promoted Serb nationhood.

Histories of the Serbs and Croats

In the course of time, the groups of undifferentiated Slavs consolidated into distinct and recognizable groups whose names will be later reflected in the titles of the six constituent republics of Yugoslavia: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.

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142 Ivo Banac, “The Insignia of Identity: Heraldry and the Growth of National Ideologies Among the South Slavs,” *Ethnic Studies* 10 (1993): 215–37. After the Ottoman defeat of the Serbian king at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the Serbs lived under a succession of “despots” until the last remnants of the medieval Serbian state were finally extinguished.
The Croats143 settled the area between the Drava river, the Danube and the Adriatic sea. During the eighth century, two main settlements developed, Pannonian Croatia (consisting of Croatia and Slavonia) to the north and Dalmatian Croatia, along the Adriatic coast. Byzantine documents referred to this territory as Croatia, but the Holy See and Venetian Republic used the name Slavonia. At the end of the eighth century, the northern Croats were subordinated to Frankish rulers while Dalmatia fell to Byzantium. Frankish rulers introduced intensive conversion to Christianity and drew the Slav tribes of Croatia and Slovenia into the sphere of Latin Western Christianity and culture. The Croatian territory, organized into a multitude of old traditional tribes, zupa, or tribal counties, remained under the rule of the local princes, dukes, bans (governors) and zupans (court notables). The kings, dukes (usually the king’s brothers or sons), bans and court zupans deliberated at the Kings Council, while the representatives of the tribes and towns met at the Sabor, legislature. (Sabor is still used to denote the Croatian legislature). Gradually the tribal system was penetrated by Frankish and Latin influences and developed into a feudal system. The most influential tribal organization consisted of twelve tribes which were

the bearers of Croatian statehood. The representatives of these tribes ruled the
country jointly with the king.

In the tenth century, Tomislav, a *zupan*, united the Dalmatian and Pannonian
Croats and established a kingdom free from both Frankish and Byzantine rule. In 924
Rome sanctioned prince Tomislav's royal title and thereby gave prestige to the newly
formed Croatian state. During the reign of King Tomislav Croatia experienced a
period of development and expansion which continued through the tenth and eleventh
centuries. During that time the Croatian borders expanded all the way to the Danube,
to the Hungarian border, and to the Drina valley in the south, to the border of the
Byzantine empire, and to the Serbian principality of Raska.

The Kingdom of Croatia came into existence in the border territory between
the Eastern Empire and the Frankish Empire which continued its efforts to conquer
Croatia. Consequently, Croatia was involved in the struggle between the eastern and
western empires, and was able to build its independence based on their weaknesses.
But the strengthening of Venice and Hungary, presented a challenge to Croatia's
independence, especially since internal struggles for the throne of Croatia began at
the turn of eleventh century. Even open declarations of papal support could not save
the Kingdom of Croatia and Dalmatia from the two expanding powers. Following the
internal struggle for rulership of Croatia, in 1000, the Dalmatian cities fell to the
Venetians. After the death of King Peter Kresimir IV (1058–1074), who regained the
extent of Tomislav's Croatia, his successors could not maintain the territorial stability
of the kingdom. The most significant threat from within was the struggle that
developed between the proponents of Latin liturgy and Old Slavonic liturgy. The
initial clerical squabble soon assumed the proportions of a political struggle between
the supporters of the court and those who supported the popular representatives. The King, the court and high nobility supported the Latin Synod. The small nobility and the representatives of the twelve tribes sided with the Croatian clergy. This struggle, coupled with papal interference and violence of the First Crusade, exhausted the country and brought an end to medieval kingdom of Croatia.

A pro-Hungarian group among the Croatian aristocracy offered the crown of Croatia to the king of Hungary. In a systematic military campaign, the Hungarian king and his successor, Koloman of the Arpad house, conquered Croatia and broke down local resistance to Hungarian rule. After negotiations between the Croatian aristocracy and the representatives of the twelve tribes, a union between the Hungarian and Croatian kingdoms was established by the treaty in 1102. By the resulting document, *Pacta Conventa*, the Croatian nobility recognized the king of Hungary as ruler of Croatia, who controlled foreign affairs and defense. From the Croatian point of view, however, the union was only personal and provided for considerable autonomy; the king was represented by a viceroy, a ban, who resided in Zagreb. The Croats retained their identity and the King accepted the existence of the Croatian assembly, the sabor, and its meetings in all matters concerning national interest. The treaty also protected the privileged positions held by the hereditary Croatian aristocracy who were declared free of land taxation. But from then on Croatia's destiny was closely linked with that of Hungary and, hence later, with that of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg monarchy.

After the *Pacta Conventa*, the three historical Croat lands of Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia continued their parallel existences, but under different political rule and cultural influences. The Hungarian influence was most evident in Slavonia,
where the Hungarian kings exercised direct royal authority and appointed separate Slavonian Bans. In Croatia proper, the princely dynasts were free from royal prerogatives and continued to exist as a separate political entity, while Dalmatia was exposed to Venetian influences through the eighteenth century.

The Ottoman expansion into Croatia in the fifteenth century combined with internal instability split the Croatian territories into three parts, one coming under the Venetians, another under the Ottomans, and a third was the small remnant of Croatia closely tied with Hungary. The sixteenth-century Ottoman conquests reduced the territory of unoccupied Croat lands to the extent that Croatian nobles accepted the rule of the Habsburgs in exchange for the defense from Ottoman invasions. In 1552, the Habsburg dynasty established a border defense zone—the Military Frontier—to protect the Habsburg lands against the Turks in Bosnia and Serbia. This crescent-shaped zone, at its greatest extent, ran northward from the Adriatic across Croatia and Slavonia, and then eastward through Srem and Banat to Transylvania. Initially, this military territory Vojna Krajina, was to be protected jointly by the King’s forces and Croatian feudal lords. Since the King did not provide financial support to the Croatian nobility, they surrendered their feudal lands and towns on the border to the King. In sixteenth and seventeenth century, this depopulated area was colonized by the peoples of the Orthodox faith from Thrace, Macedonia and southern Serbia, who were frequently referred to as Vlachs. At the invitation of the Habsburg generals, these groups moved across the vacated Croatian territory and settled on the frontier facing the Ottomans. In exchange for their military services against the Ottomans, the King granted these Vlachs special privileges such as religious freedoms and the right
to elect their own authorities and judges. This zone came under the direct rule of the Habsburgs and was exempt from the authority of the Croat Civil authorities.  

The joining of Croatian lands to the Habsburg provinces occasioned internal political and cultural changes. Moreover, the Protestant Reformation spread to Croatia from neighboring Habsburg lands. By the end of the sixteenth century many noblemen, citizens of several large cities, and the former Bishop of Senj, had accepted the new faith. Protestantism was popular because it promoted the Croatian language, publications in Glagolitic, and permitted priests to marry. At the height of the Reformation the first printing press was brought to Croatia. The popularity of Protestantism alarmed the Roman clergy and nobility who directed the Sabor to enact a law by which only Roman Catholicism was permitted in the country. With the help of the Jesuit order, which took over the schools, the Counter-Reformation inhibited Protestantism in Croatia. While the Reformation was not as instrumental in forging national unity as it was in Slovenia and elsewhere in central Europe, the literary efforts of its propagators stimulated the development of literature in the vernacular even as Roman Catholicism prevailed.

While Protestantism attracted nobility and citizenry because the movement criticized the wealth and power of the church, it did not appeal to the peasants since the new religion too demanded subordination to the landlords. Imposition of heavy dues and mistreatment of Croatian peasants by Croat, Hungarian and Austrian feudal lords resulted in peasant migrations to Turkish, Hungarian and Slovene areas. The

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144 The Military Frontier was dissolved in 1881, when the area fell under the authority of the Croatian Ban. However, this handover happened more than a century after the Turkish danger passed, and caused frustration of Croats with both Habsburgs and Serbs.
culmination of peasant dissatisfaction was the mass uprising in the sixteenth century, but peasant rebellions continued throughout seventeenth and eighteenth century. In a 1754–55 rebellion, the peasants demanded to be included in the Military Frontier since that would eliminate their liabilities (obligations to the king and local lords). The Croatian nobility wielded similar oppressive treatment of their peasant-serfs as the Hungarian nobility, but in the seventeenth century, as Hungary asserted more power in the monarchy, conflict ensued between the two groups, mainly because of the reduction in the autonomy of Croatia. At the end of the century, the post of ban was given to Hungarian nobles who were subservient to the Viennese court and, after liberation from the Ottomans, promoted the Hungarian cause. Despite the successful operations against the Turks in southern Croatia, the freed territories there were absorbed into the Military Frontier or ceded to the Ottomans and Venetians. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Hungarian Diet deprived the position of the Sabor was severely undermined by the Hungarian diet. In 1779, Croatia was put under the control of the Hungarian government. The Imperial acts of Joseph II, which imposed germanization and abolished all existing constitutions, brought about a revival of national spirit in Croatia and other non-German nations of the empire. His successor tried to pacify his subjects, but Hungarian nationalism won over the divided and weak Croatian nobility. This time Croats became subjected to magyarization. The victorious wars of Napoleon over Austria after the French Revolution brought another influence to Croatia at a time when Croatian nationalism began to reemerge. Croatian nationalism was first associated with warding off Habsburg and Hungarian attempts to impose their language and cultural influence. A desire for self-determination was engendered by the creation of a short-lived state in the north-
western Balkans in the brief Napoleonic era. In 1809, Napoleon had united the Slovene areas and parts of Croatia and formed a political entity, the “Illyrian provinces,” with Ljubljana as its capital. It only lasted till 1815, but it produced significant results: the first periodical written in Croatian was published, general education introduced, serfdom was abolished and legal equality instituted. From this union of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, however temporary it may have been, there grew up a movement among the Croats embodying the ideals of the French Revolution plus the ideas of the German romantics as represented in the ideas of the pan-Slavism whose aim was full political unification of the South Slavs based on their linguistic similarity.145

The first effective spokesman for this “Illyrian movement,” later to be called the “south Slav movement,” was the Croatian writer Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872). In his Short Principles of Croatian-Slav Orthography written in 1830 he advocated reform of the Croatian alphabet to bring the language into line with the Serbian language reforms of Vuk Karadzic in order to develop a common Serbo-Croatian literary language and establish a closer union between the two nations. In general, the mission of the Illyrian movement was the creation of modern Croatian ideology.146


146 The Croatian ideal of an “Illyrian Kingdom” was in direct opposition to the Serbian dream of a “Greater Serbia” (e.g., Vuk Karadzic’s writings of the time promoted the idea of inclusion into the Serbian state of all lands speaking the Slavic language) and against Habsburg centralization. The Serbs were more opposed to merging of the various south Slav peoples than Slovenes who worked on unification of the Slovenes. For the Serbs, larger Illyrian or Yugoslav union meant loss of the Serbian name and glory they began to achieve with the successful rebellions against (continued...)
The bishop of Djakovo, Josip Juraj Strossmayer, accepted the Illyrian idea, but he used the geographical term *Yugoslav*, which was derived from Vienna's official language by which the South Slavs, Croats, Slovene and Serbs, were differentiated from the Northern Slavs within the empire. By founding the “Yugoslav Academy” at Zagreb in 1867, he showed that he favored the campaign for the unification of the southern Slavs. However, his initial hopes for transformation of the Habsburg empire into a federal union and granting concessions to all nationalities were to become more and more unrealistic. Harsh experience throughout the nineteenth century taught the Croats that such concessions could never be obtained without first reaching a settlement with the Hungarians. In 1868, in the document called *Nagodba* or *Compromise*, the Hungarians recognized Croatia as a political nation consisting of its three historical lands and sanctioned the country as the Kingdom of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia. This triune kingdom was to have independence in internal administration, education and religion, and its official language was to be Croatian. In spite of the agreement, Dalmatia and the Military Frontier were left out of the Croatia’s jurisdiction, and Hungarian government still decided on all important state questions related to Croatia’s development. The Hungarians recommended to the King who was to fill the office of *Ban*, the head of Croatia’s government. Consequently, the *Ban* was seen as a representative of the Hungarian power.

In the context of these developments Croatian nationalism of nineteenth century was represented by two opposing ideologies. An exclusivist ideology that argued for an independent state based on traditions of the medieval Croatian state

(...continued)

the Ottomans in 1804–1830.
was represented by Ante Starcevic and his *Hrvatska Stranka Prava*, the Croatian Party of Rights. Starcevic advocated a Greater Croatian state, independent of Vienna and Budapest, which would extend to cover Serbian lands. At the same time Croatia was home of the pan-Slavic idea of Yugoslavism which attracted large number of followers. The advocates of Yugoslavism held that cultural integration of the South Slavs would bring about the integration of the Croat lands and, in time, political sovereignty and progress to Croats and each separate nation in a federal political unit based on equality. Their insistence on culture was a reflection of fear that political appeal would not bring Serbs and Croats together because of their different state traditions. At that time, the state was not seen as the basic prerequisite for the preservation and development of the Croatian nation. The idea of Croatian self-abnegation for the sake of the South Slav union was the continuation of Gaj’s Illyrian idea which led to the decision to accept the stokavian dialect as the literary language of Croatia because the majority of the South Slavs and the Serbs in Habsburg empire spoke stokavian.

The rigorous twenty-year rule of Count Khuen-Hedervary (1883–1903), appointed by Budapest as *Ban* in order to “pacify” and wherever possible magyarize Croatia, did not cause the proponents of these two Croatian national movements to rally together. Further damaging was the Hungarian policy of playing Croats and Serbs of the Monarchy off against each other in order to advance Hungarian control. This policy, capitalizing on the Croatian Party of Rights’ hostile attitude toward Serbs, did much to provoke mutual distrust between the majority Croats and minority Serbs. By the end of the nineteenth century the Croats showed both admiration and resentment for Serbia (independent since 1830) which, despite numerous changes in
foreign policy, had made impressive gains and was becoming the political center of the south Slav world. The Serbs living in Croatia and other Austro-Hungarian lands began to look to Serbia as the new center for realization of Yugoslav idea.

At the turn of the twentieth century a new generation of Croats came to play a significant role in bringing about a reconciliation between the Croats and the Serbs. The attempts at rapprochement, however, were discouraged by Ban Khuen-Hedervary whose actions still inflamed Serb-Croat relations. After his resignation in 1903, a window of opportunity opened and new efforts led to a Serbo-Croat rapprochement. In 1905 the Croat and Serb leaders unified in opposition to Hungarian rule and negotiated a program for political cooperation which resulted in the formation of the Hrvatsko-Srpska Koalicija, Croatian-Serbian Coalition. The Coalition remained the leading political force in Croatia until 1918, despite numerous efforts by Vienna to discredit it. The Coalition’s program advocated unification of the South Slavs and was sympathetic to Serbia and Montenegro, and attracted both Serbian and Croatian parties.

The issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, became the controversial issue in Serbo-Croatian affairs. The territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was at different times conquered by both Croatian and Serbian rulers in the time of their medieval empires. The region was inhabited by both Serbs and Croats, and was a source of ethnic and confessional conflicts between the Croats and the Serbs. Both Austria and Hungary exploited the differences between the Croatian and Serbian nationalism and capitalized on their conflict. Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the cards they used to foster disunity of the South Slavs. When Austro-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, and annexed it in 1908, most Croats

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welcomed the occupation on the basis of the “Croatian historical right,” and in hopes that it would lead to an eventual union with Croatia. The Serbs, however, objected to the occupation and annexation because they wanted the territory incorporated within Serbia.

The political opinion in Croatia was divided until the formation of the Yugoslav state. Those Croats who sought closer cooperation with Belgrade supported Serbo-Croat Coalition. They were opposed by those in the Party of Rights and in Stjepan Radic’s Croatian Peasant Party who feared Serbian expansionist policies as advocated by Ilija Garasanin and Nikola Stojanovic. The Serbo-Croat Coalition continued its legal activities within the monarchy and it supported the Yugoslav Committee, an organization which was set up in exile by Croatian politicians such as Frano Supilo, Ante Trumbic, and Ivan Mestrovic. The Committee advocated the destruction of the monarchy and formation of a South Slav state on federal lines. To that end, one of the goals of the Yugoslav Committee was to force the Serbian leadership to reject the idea of a Greater Serbia. The formation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 marked the victory of Yugoslavism in Croatian political life. Other movements, whether traditional nationalism of the Party of Rights or Austro Slavism of the Peasant Party, lacked the diplomatic force to achieve their goal of independent Croatia.
The Serbs had settled the area east and southeast of the Croats. During the centuries of the great migrations they became scattered over a wide area between the Danube and the Adriatic. The Serbs occupied the heart of the Balkan peninsula, where they encountered a Byzantine civilization and culture. Along the Adriatic coast they found elements of Roman tradition. During much of the eighth to the eleventh centuries, the Serbs were subordinated to Bulgar and Byzantine rulers. By the ninth century the Serbs had converted to Christianity. The original territory settled by the Serbian tribes was Raska, the territory centered in southern Serbia.

During the period of Byzantine decline, strong tribal leaders formed the Serbs into two independent states, Zeta (roughly, contemporary Montenegro) and Raska (contemporary Kosovo). In the late twelfth century Stefan Nemanja, at the time a great zupan of Raska, united Zeta and Raska into a Serbian Kingdom. Together with Stefan Prvovjencani, his son and the “first crowned” king of Serbia, Stefan Nemanja conquered the lands to the east of Raska as far as the Morava valley, as well as the

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littoral from the Cetina to the mouth of the Drin river (modern Montenegro). Stefan Prvovjencani obtained his royal crown from the pope, but his brother Rastko, later to become the Orthodox Saint Sava, promoted an independent Serbian church in order to unite the disagreeing tribes. Rastko established an independent Serbian Orthodox church in 1219, and as the first Serbian archbishop, he bequeathed to Serbia a lasting Orthodox orientation based on the Byzantine principle that church and state should work together to shape public policy.

Under the succeeding Nemanjic rulers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Serbia expanded farther to the east and stretched from Macedonia, in the south, to the Danube in the north, but at this time Serbia lost Hum (contemporary Herzegovina) to the expanding Bosnian state. At the time Byzantine empire was in decline because of the Turkish invasion. While the Serbian emperors advanced into former Byzantine territory, the tribal leaders who had become feudal lords retained so much authority that they were able to deny the rulers their support.

The greatest Serbian ruler, Stefan Dusan (1331–1355), brought the medieval Serbian state to the height of its power. He controlled a vast empire that included all of modern Albania, Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly. In 1346 he was crowned the Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks with the capital in Skopje (modern Macedonia). Serbia thus became the strongest state in the Balkans, a position it held for the next 200 years. This period of Serbia's greatness is manifested in the legacy of a sophisticated legal and political system and the proliferation of Serbian Orthodox churches. Nevertheless, there were no central institutions capable of suppressing local rebels. After Dusan's death, rebellious nobles brought an end to the empire and
Serbia broke up into many dynastic principalities, and as a consequence it made itself vulnerable to the Ottomans.

In the middle of the fourteenth century the Ottomans advanced against the Serbs. On June 28, 1389, the famous St. Vitus day, Vidovdan, Serbian princes together with their Bosnian, Albanian, and Bulgarian allies, confronted the Turkish forces in southern Serbia. In spite of their severe losses, the Turks won. This event, the Battle of Kosovo Polje, retained special significance in Serbian oral epics as a defeat to be vindicated some day. The Ottoman conquest of Serbia was completed in 1459. Most of the Serbian lands came under Turkish rule which lasted for more than 450 years, and most Serbs refer to that period as their “dark age.” The Ottomans liquidated the old Serbian ruling class, and the Serbs assumed the role of a peasant people; cut off from the outside world.\(^{148}\)

In spite of Serbia’s subjugation, Ottoman administration was not as oppressive as in other lands under their control. Like other subjects of the Ottoman Sultan, the Serbs were ruled by cavalry officers or spahis who were granted land and the peasants to till it in return for military service. The Ottoman millet system divided the empire’s subjects according to religious affiliation, and gave authority in civil government and law to religious leaders. Certain communities, because of livelihoods, locations, military service or other reasons, retained more autonomy than

\(^{148}\) This is in direct contrast to the Croats, and to a lesser degree Slovenes, who with a seafaring tradition and access to the Dalmatian coast looked outward. The differences are reflected in migration patterns, the Croats and Slovenes immigrated to the New World during the era of migrations, while the Serbs remained landlocked, and when migrating spread northward or East, with the exception of the Serbs of Croatia and of Herzegovina, who joined into the migrations to the Western Hemisphere.
others. Border communities which provided soldiers for the Ottoman army had a
greater degree of self-rule than the peasant population in the villages whose leaders,
_knezovi_, were not allowed to bear arms. Generally, the Serbs were prized as soldiers
and were employed both by the Ottomans and by the Habsburgs on the Military
Frontier.

The new Ottoman rulers also allowed the reconstruction of the Patriarchate in
Pec in 1557. As part of their overall policy toward the conquered Christian peoples,
the Ottomans shifted almost all civil authority of the former Serbian state to the
patriarch in Pec. As the representatives of the Serbs, the patriarchs of Pec thus were
not only given all the prerogatives of the spiritual station, but also much of the
authority that had been wielded by the medieval Serb kings. Ottoman rule only
became oppressive when its central authority began to break down and by the late
sixteenth century, the subject populations suffered under brutal landowners,
freebooting soldiers and corrupt tax collectors.

The patriarchate expanded its jurisdiction over Serbia, Montenegro, and all
Serb settlements in Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia and Hungary. Another
Serbian population came under Habsburg rule as a result of migration, impressed
military service or Habsburg expansion. To some extent the Serbs were granted
privileges from Vienna, which were not given to the local nobility. But in spite of the
inclusivity of the Habsburg doctrine, the Serbian church served as a gathering place
for the people, and it sustained the idea of Serbian identity and unity. The church
elevated the consciousness of the Serbian nation and national traditions not only
survived but were extended to communities where they had never before existed.
When the Turks abolished the Patriarchate in Pec in 1766 (after the Serbian clergy
supported Austria against the Ottomans), the center of Serbian spiritual life shifted to the Serbian communities within the Habsburg empire. Thus, the first centers of the Serbian national movement developen in Novi Sad (Vojvodina) and Karlowitz (the Croatian Military Frontier) under Habsburg rule.

In the fourteenth century, Turkish occupation caused great migrations of Serbs north and west. This flight accelerated during the sixteenth and the beginning of seventeenth centuries when Ottoman rule became more abusive. The greatest Serbian concentrations developed in southern Hungary and in the Military Frontier, both parts of the Habsburg empire. While the Serbs never united into a territorial union inside the empire, they nevertheless, were united through their church organization, a bastion of Serb culture and expression. Moreover, the chief cultural element which, much like the church, connected the Serbian past to subsequent generations was Serbian oral epic poetry. The epic poems kept alive the greatness of medieval Serbia and the spirit of resistance following the defeat at Kosovo. The most famous cycle of this poetry is the Kosovo cycle, which recounts the monumental battle and calls for struggle and sustained sacrifice. Some analysts compare this cycle and its role to the collective remembrance of the Serbian past to Homeric epic poems.149

Vojvodina emerged as the center of Serbian religious and educational life, as well as the most economically and socially developed Serbian community, and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it became the principal location of the Serb national awakening. It was from this environment that Serbia’s poets, the leaders of

the Serbian literary revival, notably Vuk Karadzic and Dositej Obradovic, emerged. Karadzic’s orthographic work laid the foundation for modern Serb literature and national language. In compiling a Serbian grammar and dictionary, Karadzic chose the Herzegovinian, i.e., sto dialect, as the purest and therefore the best. The sto dialect subsequently developed into the standard Serbo-Croatian language. Through the language reforms that he promoted and those that Gaj advanced in Croatia, the Serbs and Croats began to develop a common literary language and some Yugoslav enthusiasts hoped that this would lead to the formation of one nation. Karadzic’s ideal, based on the teaching of the German romanticists, envisioned a Serbian land wherever the sto dialect was spoken, regardless of the religious or ethnic identification of the people. In this respect, Croats saw Karadzic as a champion of Serbian nationalism rather than a proponent of broader Illyrian and later Yugoslav union.

The first significant challenge to Ottoman rule in Serbia came in 1804, when Karadjordje, a Serbian peasant, staged a revolt against the maladministration and oppressive rule of the local Turkish officials. A second revolt led by Milos Obrenovic in 1817, gained Serbs a considerable amount of autonomy, but it also marked the beginning of the struggle between Karadjordjevic and Obrenovic families which long influenced the nature of Serbian politics. In 1830, with the pressure from Russia, the Ottomans established Serbia as an independent principality. In 1878, through the Treaty of Berlin, Serbia achieved complete freedom from Turkish domination and became an independent kingdom in 1882. While in Croatia where nationalist ideas were promoted by an intellectual minority, Serbian independence was created by peasant masses, the class that was denied any educational benefits. When the Serbs
established their government in 1817, much of the leadership was provided by educated émigré Serbs from Vojvodina. The Serbian leadership was burdened with internal conflicts provoked by dynastic plots, which were frequently exacerbated by Russian and Austrian influences in order to keep Serbia’s position weak. From 1815 to 1903, there were eight changes of rulers in Serbia between Obrenovics and Karadjordjevics.

At the time when the Yugoslav movement was gaining ground in Croatia, the Serbs made plans for the creation of an independent state. In 1847, the minister of internal affairs of Serbia, Ilija Garasanin, publicized the Nacertanje. This program called for a large Serbian state that included Bosnia, Herzegovina and northern Albania. Following the publication of Nacertanje, young political activists from Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Serbia, were consumed by the idea of creating a common language and new Yugoslav nation. In the Kingdom of Serbia, however, the Yugoslav idea did not have a strong appeal. Prominent Serbian politicians of the time, such as Nikola Pasic and Ljubomir Stojanovic, saw the Yugoslav idea only as a cultural phenomenon, and less significant than the liberation of the Serbs from Ottoman and Habsburg rule. Serbian goals and activities, therefore, brought it into direct conflict with these empires, especially with Austro-Hungary.

As a result of Balkan wars in 1912 and 1913 against Turkey and Bulgaria, respectively, Serbia occupied the territories inhabited by the Albanians and Macedonians, and suddenly Serbia was perceived as the center of the South Slav world. The territory of Serbia doubled between 1817 and 1905. The official policy for Yugoslavia reflected the awareness that such policy would demand the breakup of the Habsburg Empire, a decision which the other great powers were willing to accept.
and support. The change of the attitude toward Yugoslavia was reflected in Serbian nationalism—Yugoslavia became one particular aspect of Serbia's destiny, and the liberation of the Habsburg South Slavs, both Serbs and non-Serbs, a national responsibility. But to Croat and Slovene nationalists, Serbian interest in Yugoslavism seemed a cloak for territorial expansion.

Pro-Yugoslav Croats and Slovenes began to share sympathies for Serbia largely due to the anti-Habsburg feelings of Serbs in Serbia and a hope that a strong Serbian state could liberate them from foreign rulers. A thirty-year chain of discouraging developments, including annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary, reinforced Serbian nationalist determinations to make of Serbia the "Piedmont" of the South Slavs. Serbia became the center of various societies, revolutionary and ultranationalist, some open, some secret and paramilitary. They all shared one thing in common: hatred for Austro-Hungary and the vision of an eventually united Yugoslav state. For significant groups of the youth, the Serbian officer corps and numerous intellectuals and politicians on both sides of the Habsburg-Serbian frontier, Yugoslavism became a revolutionary conviction. The momentum of nationalist violence grew, especially in Bosnia where martial rule and economic exploitation by Vienna aggravated the South Slav groups.

In early 1914, the followers of a revolutionary organization, Mlada Bosna, Young Bosnia, plotted the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and carried it out on June 28, 1914. This caused Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia. During the war many Serbs in Austria-Hungary helped Serbia by engaging in subversive activities and joining its army. The assassination in Sarajevo set loose the larger European tensions and, through the conflict that ensued, made possible the
formation of an independent and unified Yugoslav state. Yugoslavia was created after negotiations between the Yugoslav Committee, which represented the Croats, Slovenes and Serbs from Austria-Hungary, and Serbian delegation, led by Nikola Pasic. Pasic was known as a great Serbian patriot whose Great Serbian conception of Yugoslavia did not allow for a federative agreement envisaged by the Yugoslav Committee. Under the pressure of the Serbs who supported Yugoslavia, the collapse of Russia, and pressure from the Allies, Pasic decided to accept the Yugoslav formula. At the end of World War I, the Yugoslav Committee was transformed into National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, rushed to accept a joint state with Serbia because of the threat of the Italian occupation. Serbia accepted the representatives of the National Council and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed on December 1, 1918. For the Serbs, this union meant a great sacrifice; renunciation of Serbian national sovereignty and independence, since the Kingdom of Serbia disappeared from the map.
CHAPTER V

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

From Yugoslavism to the Yugoslav State

On December 1, 1918, the Unified Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed in Beograd, the capital of Serbia. Even then, this first common South Slavic State, was unofficially referred to as Yugoslavia, land of South Slavs, the name it officially assumed in 1929. The idea of South Slavic integration, *Yugoslavenstvo*, had evolved in the 1860s under the leadership of the liberal Bishop of Zagreb, Josip Juraj Strossmayer. The proponents of Yugoslavism, mainly of Croatian nationality, recognized Serb and Slovene nationhood.

Until united into the state Kingdom as the result of the post-World War I Versailles treaties, the South Slavs had never lived together in one state. They had started learning about each other only in the late eighteenth century. Until then their social structures, economic developments, and political and cultural activities were shaped and governed by the imperial interests of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires.150 Over the course of the eighteenth century, largely due to the changes in

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the international environment and especially within both empires, the South Slavs had begun to develop their independent national awareness.

Tendencies toward sovereignty existed among Croats and Serbs prior to the formation of the Kingdom. The desire for sovereignty among Croats arose chiefly in response to the external dangers of Habsburgs, while the Serbs wanted to free themselves from the long occupation by the Ottomans. The emergence of the modern Serbian state is associated with agrarian and social revolts of 1804–1830 which forced the Ottoman landowners out of Serbia. Both Lederer and Stokes agree that the development of a strongly centralized Serbian state led to the formation of Serbian nationalism.\textsuperscript{151} Serbian nationalism, closely tied to the Serb Orthodox Church, included the mission to incorporate all Serbs, but since a large number of Serbs lived outside of the newly Serbian liberated state, elements of Serbian national ideology came to include irredentism aimed at liberating the rest of their kin. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, Serbia was the first independent South Slav state and thus was seen as the center of the South Slav world. Sympathies for Serbia among Croats and Slovenes were due, in large part, to the anti-Habsburg feeling of Serbs in Serbia.

While Serbs, encouraged by their military victories, held an expansionist vision of their future state, the Croats and Slovenes, subdued in the Austro-Hungarian lands and threatened by assimilation from Magyars and Austrians, focused more on how to achieve some degree of political autonomy or sovereignty that would protect their national culture. Just as with Serbian, Croatian nationalism too

\textsuperscript{151}Ibid., pp. 403–07.
developed in response to external forces and pressures. Croatian nationalism of the
nineteenth century was represented by two contrasting ideologies. One, exclusivist
ideology, that argued for an independent state based on traditions of the mediaeval
Croatian state, was propagated by Ante Starcevic and his Croatian Party of Rights,
Hrvatska Stranka Prava. At the same time, Croatia was home to the pan-Slavic
Yugoslav movement which remained the prevalent nationalist ideology in Croatia.
Even though it was idealistic in its nature, the Yugoslav movement established a
foundation for the formation of the first Yugoslavia. The proponents of Yugoslavism
held that the cultural integration of the South Slavs would bring political sovereignty
and progress to Croats and to each individual nation in a federal political unit based
on equality. Their insistence on culture was a reflection of the fear that political
appeals would not bring Serbs and Croats together because of their different state traditions.152

Stokes argues that early instances of Serbo-Croat 1860s cooperation did not
indicate a joint Serbo-Croat ambition to form a Yugoslav state but that such
dialogues were built on Serbian Realpolitik and Croatian weakness, not primarily
Yugoslav sentiments. Michael Obrenovic, Serbian prince and leader in 1860s,
jettisoned his Croatian partner, Bishop Strossmayer, as soon as he sensed that

cooperation with Hungary might achieve his aims, the creation of a larger Serbian state which would encompass Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.\textsuperscript{153}

The Slovenes, like the Croats, had a strong sense of Slavic reciprocity, but no state history, except for a brief period in eighth century. The strongest factor supporting national integration throughout their history was their separate linguistic tradition.\textsuperscript{154} Because of their lack of state tradition and because the Slovenes lived divided among four different provinces of the Habsburg Empire, in the beginnings of the national awakening of the nineteenth century Slovene leadership focused on two goals, first, to preserve their language through control of their schools and second, the unification of their people into one administrative unit, preferably within Austro Hungary.\textsuperscript{155} Since their national awakening, the Slovenes were politically divided over how to counter Italian irredentist designs and Austrian cultural repression. In the 1870s, Slovene Yugoslavism begin to develop, calling for joint political-cultural action of South Slavs within the Habsburg empire. Only after the attempt to form a common political unit within Austro-Hungary failed, did the Slovene intellectuals become interested in association with Serbia and the ideas of Pan-Slavism.\textsuperscript{156}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{155} Charles Jelavich, \textit{South Slav Nationalisms—Textbooks and Yugoslav Union Before 1914} (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990).
\end{thebibliography}
It may be hypothesized that national ideologies formed in response to the external threat provided the foundation for an oppositional, xenophobic orientation toward any perceived, potential hegemonic threat. This hypothesis requires some variation in the case of the Serbs, since they were the first of the South Slav nations to attain independence and thus had an opportunity to include their neighbors into their national ideology. And, both the Serb and the Croat populations were geographically dispersed throughout the area rather than being concentrated as were the Slovenes.

Yugoslavia emerged as the result of the changing international situation of the early twentieth century, which was used by a relatively limited number of Croat, Serb and Slovene intellectuals and leaders who were pro-Yugoslav. Because of the foreign threats, both Croatia and Slovenia perceived that their sovereignty could be achieved only in some kind of South Slav union; in achieving that they relied heavily on Serbia as a key actor due to its independence and its position in the Balkans. The Croats, suffering from a lack of unity in their national programs, “did not persuade the Serbs to embrace the idea of South Slav state in the spirit of Yugoslavism.” The Serbian government of Nikola Pasic also promoted the cause of Yugoslav unification, even though its position was less clear and enthusiastic. However, the belief that Yugoslavism meant respect for the nationhood and independence of each South Slav nation was not as universally accepted among the Serbs as among the Croats. Banac

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158 In essence, Pasic only paid lip service to the Yugoslav formula. His Serbophile vision of the new state did not allow for compromise with Croat and Slovene vision for federal state. See Stokes, *Three Eras*, p. 70.
explains that it could not have been otherwise because the national ideologies were extremely different. The Serbs had an independent national state with a history of expansion and assimilation, while the Croats and Slovenes had few modern state traditions.159

The official Serbian version of a South Slavic state, as advocated by the Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pasic at the time of World War I, was bound up with visions of Serbian expansionism. The first South Slav state was proclaimed in 1918, amid tensions and a fundamental mutual misunderstanding between the Serbian representatives and the Yugoslav Committee (Jugoslavenski odbor) which represented the Croats, Slovenes and Serbs who had been the citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Even though the Yugoslav Committee won public support of Entente leaders for the creation of a South Slav federal state, in the rush of events committee members could not prevent the creation of Yugoslavia that was dominated by the Serbs. Even though the Serb nationalists in power at the base faithful to the ideal of expansionism, the changing fortunes of World War I, which came to include the dissolution of the old empires, and the increasing number of diplomats who supported a unified Yugoslavia convinced the Serbian political representatives to promise that they would help free their fellow Slavs.

The unification engineered under the aegis of the Versailles agreements, did not establish any guarantees against the dominance of the Serbian monarchy, whose troops were already occupying former Habsburg South Slavic possessions and Montenegro. Thus the new state realized the age-old dream of Serb unification.

159 Banac, National Question, pp. 70–76.
Given the role of the Serbian state in the construction of Yugoslavia and the actual if not formal continuation of Serbian state institutions after the unification, the Serbs could adjust to the new circumstances without a feeling of loss, without feeling deprived of their sense of national individuality.160

For Croats and Slovenes, however, unification was not so simple. Barely a month after the end of their long subordination to the Habsburg Monarchy, they were now bound into a unitary state, a constitutional monarchy under the Serbian royal house, with Serbia and Montenegro. Moreover, the decision to unite with Serbia was made for them in such circumstances by a group of men who, according to Banac, did not know how to establish and use political power.161

The sense of Yugoslav unity may have had some meaning to bourgeois, professional politicians, lawyers, and intellectuals who promoted the idea of a South Slav state, but it had not penetrated deeply into the consciousness of the mass of the peasantry who constituted more than 80 percent of the population.162 None of the South Slavic nationalities, including the Serbs, had an opportunity to express their preferences by means of popular referenda, or plebiscite, as were carried out in other parts of central Europe as part of the peace process.

Once the monocratic characteristics of the new state were firmly established, various forms of domestic opposition arose in all non-Serbian areas, even among the

160Ibid., p. 138.

161Ibid.

educated and wealthy classes which were considered strongly unitarist in 1918. The leaders of the Kingdom of the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs attempted to impose from above, on a heterogeneous mixture of different social, ethnic and cultural groups, a common set of rules and a common political and economic order, all under Serbian dominance. The "founding fathers" of Yugoslavia pretended that a Yugoslav nation already existed. They ignored the existence of Slovene as a language separate from Serb and Croatian. They disregarded the differences in world views which had evolved during centuries of life under different regimes. No consideration was given to the great numbers of the non-Slavic population (17 percent of the total) who did not have any reason to identify themselves with the Kingdom.  

In 1918 in Yugoslavia there were two governments (Montenegro and Serbia), six custom areas, five currencies, four railway networks using three different gauges, three banking systems, and the remnants of four legal systems which had to be assimilated into a common code of law. The first general elections for the Constituent assembly (*Ustavotvornu Skupstinu*) were held on the whole territory of the new state in 1919. They resulted in the following: Radicals, 27 percent; Democrats, 17 percent (both Serbian parties); Croatian Peasant Party, 14 percent; and Communists 12 percent. A Serbian Radical-Democrat coalition decided that the constitutional document would be passed by a simple majority, which meant that the input of the Croatian Peasant Party would be obviated from the beginning. This led to a Croatian Peasant Party boycott on the grounds that the electoral arrangements were rigged to favor the Serbs and to eliminate any notion of federalism. Thus, since the inception of

\(^{163}\)Ibid.
Yugoslavia, the Croatian cause was severely crippled. Pavlowitch describes the Constitution of 28 June 1921 as, in effect, the Serbian constitution simply adapted to the needs of a greatly expanded Yugoslav unit. It merely updated the old Serbian structure of a parliamentary government under the Serbian monarchy, keeping the triple name of the state as a concession to non-Serbian feelings.  

The fact that the constitution was declared on June 28 served as another reminder that The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was in reality Greater Serbia. That day is Serbia’s national day, Vidovdan (St. Vitus day in the Serbian Orthodox Church Calendar), the day on which the fate of medieval Kingdom of Serbia had been decided at Kosovo Polje in 1389 and on which in 1914 in Sarajevo the Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, marking the beginning of World War I. This imposition of a slightly modified Serbian constitution only aggravated the tensions between the Serbs and their Slavic cousins in Croatia and Slovenia. To them, the Vidovdan constitution “marked the conquest of the centralist Serbian experience over the Austro-Hungarian tradition of constitutional complexity.”

During the first decade of the life of the Kingdom an attempt was made to operate a parliamentary democracy based on the model which had evolved in Western Europe during the nineteenth century. The experiment in parliamentary democracy failed because the dominant political culture did not support it and

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165 Ibid., p. 3.
because the social conditions for its survival did not exist.\textsuperscript{166} The Serbs’ centralist conception of the state and their numerical domination as the plurality population caused a radical increase in Croatian nationalism. Between the two world wars, the Serbian political, bureaucratic, and military elites, together with the Serbian monarchy, dominated Yugoslav political life.\textsuperscript{167} The majority of Croatian political parties charged that Yugoslavia was under “Serbian hegemony,” demeaning of Croatian national identity. The support for a united South Slav state which had been considerable among Croatian politicians since the beginning of the twentieth century, and which had become prevalent among young and educated strata of Croats at the end of World War I, almost completely disappeared. Consequently, during the interwar period, many Croats called for independence of some kind, ranging from limited autonomy to complete separation.\textsuperscript{168}

King Alexander’s Declaration and Death

The first confused decade of Yugoslav history culminated in King Alexander Karadjordjevic’s autocratic proclamation of January 6, 1929, which dissolved the Parliament, \textit{Skupstina}, suspended the \textit{Vidovdan} constitution, appointed a new government which relied heavily on the Serb dominated army, and renamed the

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Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Behind this act was the intent of the regime to integrate the Serbian, Slovenian, and Croatian separate identities into one state-based patriotic identity for Yugoslavia, which already existed with the Serbs. This effort would result in failure. The pragmatic notion of Yugoslavism was confronted with several primordial forms of identity that had developed before Yugoslavia was conceived and were only strengthened through tensions after its formation.

While most Serbian politicians were willing to accept, at least temporarily, the establishment of King Alexander’s dictatorship because it preserved the unity of Yugoslavia in time of growing economic and political crisis, to the Croats it appeared as a way of getting them to accept Serbian-style centralism. The dictatorship increased the Croatian emotional separation from the government in Belgrade. This was spurred by the assassination of Stjepan Radic. Radic, the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party (*Hrvatska seljacka stranka-HSS*) enjoyed the wide support of the Croatian population. Radic had fought in parliament for a federalist constitution, seeing this as the best way to ensure the autonomy and protection of the national entities. His murder on the floor of the Parliament in 1928, by a member of an extreme Serbian organization, generated disquiet among Croats and was an immediate cause for the institution of royal dictatorship in which the normal interplay of party politics was suspended.

Thus, the national problem remained constitutional, but turned tragic because dictatorship prevented any further debate between different conceptions of the state.

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169 Primordial identities are those where loyalties are based on traditional connections to kinship and ethnicity, e.g., religion, culture, language.
advanced by political parties and ethnic groups. At this time of what was perceived among non-Serbian groups in the Kingdom as a progressive “Serbianization,” militant and secessionist movements grew strong, especially in Croatia and Macedonia, whose terrorist branches, Croatian Ustasha and IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization), organized and with the help of European (Italian) Fascists executed the assassination of King Alexander on a state visit to France in October of 1934. The King hoped to get the support of the French in Yugoslavia’s resistance to the mounting threats from Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. There was genuine grief in Yugoslavia when the news of the King’s death was received. Although many of his opponents detested his methods, they all feared that his removal might cause an uncontrolled disintegration of the state, which could only be to the advantage of Yugoslavia’s enemies.

The Regency

After the King’s murder his cousin, Prince Paul Karadjordjevic, took his place as Regent until Alexander’s son would come of age in September 1941. Prince Paul worked on two main objectives: defending Yugoslavia’s independence against pressures from Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, and Hungary and liberalizing the regime to bring about a reconciliation between Serbs and Croats in order to prevent the dissolution of Yugoslavia from inside.\footnote{Bilandzic, 
\textit{Historija}, pp. 9–11.} The prince regent was careful to choose cabinets that would comply with his goals. After two changes in the government, in June 1935 Milan Stojadinovic became Premier. He convinced the prince regent that

\footnote{Bilandzic, \textit{Historija}, pp. 9–11.}
he genuinely believed in a parliamentary system on Western lines and that he could effect a reconciliation with the Croats. In that direction he signed a Concordat with the Vatican. Although Stojadinovic signed the Concordat on the behalf of the Yugoslav government and although the Concordat was based on the one which existed between the prewar Serbian Kingdom and the Vatican, its ratification was refused in 1937 by the Parliament after the Serbian Orthodox Church threatened to excommunicate any Serb who voted for it. The plan did not succeed, but the fact that Stojadinovic made it was seen by Croats as a conciliatory move. An equally encouraging sign was the amnesty that was granted to the thousands of political prisoners, many of them Croats. 171

The opposition, led by Vlatko Macek, Radic's successor as the head of the Croatian Peasant Party, was pulling its strength together. The opposition called for a national government to work out transitional arrangements leading to a new constitution which would satisfy a majority of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Its activity caused a wave of enthusiasm. Pavlowitch concludes that Serbo-Croat relations at popular levels had never been so close. In leading the opposition block, Macek had the support of the Serbian Agrarians, the Democrats, and the Muslims of Bosnia, in addition to his Croat Peasants. The opposition coalition made much progress in general elections—more than 37 percent of the votes in 1935 and almost 45 percent in 1938, in spite of an electoral system designed to favor the government. 172

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171 Bilandzic, Historija, p. 21.
172 Pavlowitz, Improbable Survivor, p. 7.
In the late 1930s, both the government and the opposition agreed on the need to solve the Croatian problem before a European crisis placed Yugoslavia in danger. Eventually, in August of 1939, the Croat Peasant Party came to an agreement with the regency-appointed Minister, Dragisa Cvetkovic. The Croat Peasant Party thus broke its alliance with the Serbian opposition parties. While the Premier, Stojadinovic, who had employed some of the mass “street politics” of fascism, was enjoying the hospitality of Hitler and Mussolini and assuring them of his devotion to fascism, his regent, Macek, and Cvetkovic were working hard to create the conditions necessary for national unity. They feared that the country would fall apart under the growing pressure of the Axis unless the Serbs and Croats found a basis for living and working together.

The legislature was dissolved August 20, 1939. Stojadinovic was removed, and a new government was formed under Cvetkovic. Prince Paul chose him because he felt that Cvetkovic was the person most likely to win the confidence of the Croats and to bring the negotiations with Macek to a successful conclusion. Macek became vice premier in the new government, popularly known as the Cvetkovic-Macek government. As a result of the Cvetkovic-Macek talks, a self-governing and expanded province of Croatia, Banovina Hrvatska was established on the basis of the Crown’s emergency powers. Banovina Hrvatska was the only autonomous political territorial unit in the Kingdom. Thus, this was not a true federalism. Macek’s close ally, Ivan Subasic, became governor, Ban, of the Province which covered most of the historic units of Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia, plus some of the Croatian-speaking

\[173\] Bilandzic, Historija, p. 25.
areas of the Vojvodina, Srem, and Bosnia. The Banovina enjoyed autonomous control over its internal affairs. Croatian extremists criticized this concession as only a half measure, far short from the independence they demanded. The establishment of Banovina led to dissatisfaction among Serbs both in Serbia and Croatia. Serbs from Serbia perceived the compromise as a grant of privileged status to the Croatians and responded with their own Greater Serbian plans for the formation of “Serbian lands” that would involve Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vojvodina and Montenegro. Serbs in Croatia saw themselves cut off from Serbia and subjected to the Croatian rule. Neither Croats nor Serbs were concerned with the interests of other national groups or with Yugoslavia.174

World War II

In 1936, the regency government decided on a policy of neutrality in international affairs. Such a decision was the result of a feeling that regional alliances could not protect Yugoslavia against the Axis powers without adequate support from Britain and France, whose attitude toward Yugoslavia was at best ambivalent.175 But the situation in which Yugoslavia found itself at that time was not favorable to Paul’s plans, which were ultimately based on a Western orientation.

The Yugoslav economy was heavily dependent on Germany; during the 1930s Germany had become the predominant trading partner. The growing strength of Germany and Italy, added to the benefits of the German economic connection, made

174 Ibid.

175 Pavlowitch, Improbable Survivor.
real neutrality almost impossible. The beginning of World War II increased Yugoslavia's dependence on the Reich. It made it plain to everyone how perilously isolated and weak was its position. As German pressure grew, on 25 March 1941, Yugoslavia signed the Tripartite Pact in Vienna.176

Huge protest demonstrations occurred in Belgrade and in other cities as a response to the Pact. Although this may be seriously questioned, the Communists later claimed responsibility for organizing the demonstrations.

Yugoslavia was attacked by the Fascists without a declaration of war on April 6, 1941. The country was stunned, already in a state of confusion, and was quickly overwhelmed. By the time of the capitulation of its armed forces on April 18, 1941, King Peter and his government had already gone into exile in London, leaving Yugoslavia's people to struggle with unsolved problems. Royal Yugoslavia ceased to exist, although its shadow lived on in exile in London. Pavlowitz describes the end of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

It had taken a world war for it to come prematurely into the world at the end of 1918 and, however shaky its state of health in the spring of 1941, it took another world war to destroy the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which to all intents and purposes came to an end between 6 and 18 April of that year.177

Following the attack by the German Fascist military on April 6, 1941, the country, already in a state of confusion, was quickly put out of action. The German and Italian occupying forces played on existing ethnic tensions and helped the domestic fascist forces to establish collaborationist regimes in Croatia and Serbia in order to combat resistance. The German invasion initiated the first violent conflict

176Singleton, Short History.

177Pavlowitch, Improbable Survivor, p. 9.
among the nations of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was soon divided into a German and Italian zone. The Croatian Ustaschas had set up a nominally independent state, the Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska (NDH), the Independent State of Croatia, which ended up being under the Italian protectorate, but after the Italian collapse of 1943 the German control over the Independent State of Croatia was absolute. But, the fiction was maintained that the Independent State of Croatia was an independent state with its own army, police and administration. In reality it was not independent; almost half of its population were not Croats, and its economy was subordinated to the needs of German war machine. Its international status was not even recognized de jure by the Vatican, which has frequently been accused of supporting the Independent State of Croatia, and its government could act only with the approval of the occupying powers. In any case, Ante Pavelic, the leader (Poglavnik) of the Croatian state, succeeded in dishonoring even the name of Croatia by the appalling atrocities for which his regime became notorious. His regime declared that one of its chief objectives was to “purify” Croatia of alien elements, especially the Serbs. The number of Serbs who were killed during the regime is not known. Such research was not allowed during the Communist regime; the figure of 750,000 as given by the Serbians was accepted as official. Denitch’s research shows that the real losses for all wartime

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179 Singleton, *Short History*. 

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casualties were around one million. The political rhetoric in Serbia still turns to this powerful myth of massive extermination of their countrymen and today’s Croatian government is compared to that of World War II as being fascist and genocidal.

The NDH’s savage policy toward Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies served to obscure the contribution of Croat Communist-led partisans in freeing the biggest chunk of the territory in the western part of Yugoslavia with the wide support of the Croatian population, who fought for the freedom of the country and “for a better tomorrow” only to realize that all turned against the people. These events in the history of Yugoslavia, which were disguised and removed from public eyes, continue to be important today.

The Ustasha’s ferocious racism in the Independent State of Croatia encouraged in Serbia pro-Allied enthusiasm at the time of Hitler’s invasion of Russia, and resulted in rebellions against the Germans, who retaliated ruthlessly. In the fratricidal civil war that followed the Ustasha massacres, in which Serbs killed Croats and Moslems, and Moslems killed Serbs, Communist devotion to national equality increasingly attracted people from the different nations of Yugoslavia.

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181 Supek, *Krunski Svjedok*. 

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There were two major “rebellious” groups that fought against the occupation. Both of them had far broader goals than “just defending” the country. One group, the Chetniks, a faction of a larger Chetnik resistance movement, was under the Serbian Colonel Draza Mihailovic. His aim was to build an underground movement that would take power and restore the Serbian monarchy when the fortunes of war turned against the Axis. He was a standard-bearer for Greater Serbia and for the House of Karadjordjevic. He eventually made contact with the government-in-exile and in September 1941 a joint Yugoslav-British mission was sent out to talk with him. In October, the British government, on advice from Yugoslavs in London, decided to recognize Mihailovic as the leader of the Yugoslav resistance movement. His Chetniks were credited with many acts of sabotage which were, in fact, carried out by Tito’s Communist-led Partisans. The British and the London government-in-exile built up Mihailovic’s reputation and underestimated the role of the Partisans.

The Partisans were the other major insurgent group. Under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito and Communist party cadres, they saw the Axis destruction of Yugoslavia as the opportunity to advance the cause of the socialist revolution and to establish a new Yugoslavia on the basis of national freedom and equality.


The Yugoslav Communist Party

The Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY) was established in 1919 as a Bolshevik party. Its communist orientation had forced it to operate illegally during most of the interwar period, because the regime outlawed it in August 1921. At the time of Axis occupation the CPY emerged as the only all—Yugoslav political force which called the peoples of Yugoslavia to arms, stressing in its Proclamation of July 4, 1941, the anti-fascist and liberating character of the fight against the enemy rather than its former anti-imperialistic and anti-capitalist emphasis that Bolshevism dictated. In the short period of time from Yugoslav occupation till Germany launched an attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, the CPY prepared politically and militarily to resist the enemy.\textsuperscript{184}

The name of Josip Broz Tito is irrevocably connected with the life of CPY. In 1937 he was appointed secretary-general of the party. During the four years that remained before the Axis invasion Tito built up the illegal Communist Party into a highly effective revolutionary avant garde. Its membership increased and it included people from all walks of life and from all national groups within Yugoslavia. Milovan Djilas, his former second in command, sees Tito’s personality, his drive and energy, and his unswerving loyalty to the policies of Comintern as those that gave a sense of purpose and direction to the Party which, prior to Tito’s accession to leadership, was

\textsuperscript{184}Bilandzic, \textit{Historija}, pp. 139–49.
torn by internal dissensions and factional fighting.\textsuperscript{185} When the old regime disintegrated under the pressure of war, under his leadership the CPY was able to rise to the occasion and create a national movement, and in turn to weld the resistance movement into an instrument of social revolution.\textsuperscript{186}

As Martin observes, it is misleading to explain what happened in Yugoslavia during World War II as the product of a two-sided struggle between the Partisan resistance movement on the one hand and the occupying powers and their collaborators on the other hand. He sees four major conflicts taking place: first, there was the religious-political war launched by the quisling Ante Pavelic and his so called “Independent State of Croatia” against the Serbian people living in its borders. As previously explained, this conflict was marked by massacres and counter massacres. Second, there was the conflict between the occupying powers and the two major resistance forces—the Mihailovic movement, which was essentially nationalist and dynastic, and the Partisan movement that was committed to a communist Yugoslavia. Third, there was the conflict in Serbia between the forces of General Mihailovic and the collaborationist “Chetnik” forces of Kosta Pecanac, and intermittently, the forces of General Milan Ljotic, the Axis appointed governor of occupied Serbia. Finally,


there was the civil war that the Tito and Mihailovic forces waged against each other, alongside or within the framework of the resistance movement.\textsuperscript{187}

The Allied policy toward Yugoslavia was of great import for the future of this small Balkan country. During 1941 and 1942 and the first part of 1943, the Allies gave all-out support to General Draza Mihailovic as the only leader of the Yugoslav resistance. By the end of 1943, Mihailovic was abandoned because his forces were inactive against the enemy and he had collaborated with them. At this point Britain and the United States, which had conceded British primacy in determining Balkan policy, began to give their support to the Communist resistance movement.\textsuperscript{188}

At the Teheran Conference which took place between November 28 and December 1, 1943, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin agreed to support the Partisans as the only effective Yugoslav resistance movement. There were still formidable obstacles for Tito’s forces to overcome, but at the beginning of 1944 it was becoming increasingly obvious to all concerned that Germany was losing the war and that the future government of Yugoslavia would be dominated by the Communists. The official surrender of Germany (May, 1945) did not stop the killing in Yugoslavia. Thousand of Croats and Slovenes who were retreating with the Germans were

\textsuperscript{187} Martin, \textit{The Web of Misinformation}.

\textsuperscript{188} Jukic blames the political leaders of both the Yugoslav government in exile and the Allies, and their procrastination, for creating all the horrors and hardships for the innocent people. The ultimate blame Jukic, and Martin put on the Allies and their war leadership. Both authors take Mihailovic’s side and see the switch in the Allied policy toward Yugoslavia as the most dramatic change that occurred during World War II. See Ilija Jukic, \textit{The Fall of Yugoslavia}, trans. D. Cooke (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974) and Martin, \textit{The Web of Misinformation}. 

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rounded up by the British forces in Austria and brought back to Yugoslavia, many of them were subsequently murdered by victorious Partisans.189

This part of Yugoslav history was kept in secret until the late 1980s. Then, the stories about the Partisans' cruelties began to get out. Among the most bitter experiences of that time was the exodus of Croatian and Slovene soldiers and people. They were driven back to Yugoslavia from Italian and Austrian camps along what is now known as the “Bloody Path to Bleiburg.” In the town of Bleiburg, Austria, they were slaughtered by Partisans and buried in huge pits.190

The Communist Rise to Power

The outcome of the World War II led to a unified Yugoslavia, even though, once again, there was no all-national consultation. In May 1945, the Yugoslav Communist Party, at the head of the victorious Partisan army, proceeded to consolidate its power. The Partisans presented themselves as the sole unifying force in Yugoslavia because they led simultaneous campaigns against occupiers, collaborators, and Croatian, Serbian and other national extremists. This campaign appealed to a large number of non-communists, especially those who had been radicalized by the upheavals of the war.191 While the government in exile was con


190 Ibid.

191 The Communist Party of Yugoslavia was the first truly Yugoslav party in the history of the country. Part of the success in attracting large number of peasants (continued...)
templating the dangers of Communism in Yugoslavia, it was not able to fight for a return to the status quo before the war. The old elites were eventually destroyed in the course of the civil war. As Axis forces withdrew, the Communists ascended to power. The Communists seized power and never allowed free elections to challenge their hegemony.\footnote{Sabrina Ramet, \textit{Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991}, 2d ed. rev. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p. 42.} The Tito-Subasic government, which came into existence in March, 1945, as a result of political maneuvering among Tito, the Yugoslav government in exile and the British government, was intended by the same subjects to be a caretaker administration set up to govern the country during the difficult period of war reconstruction.

Elections to a Constituent Assembly in November 1945, were held under a new electoral law which gave equal rights to men and women over the age of eighteen and to ex-Partisans under that age. The right to vote was withdrawn from 250,000 people alleged to have been collaborators. By the time of elections, any political party or candidate who was unwilling to run on the CPY National Front Slate had been eliminated. Although some prewar, non-communist groups were permitted to run on the National Front slate, there were no contested seats. Such a discriminatory electoral law resulted in the victory of the People’s Front (a newly

\(...)\text{continued}

from different ethnic groups was that the Party leadership did not attempt to persuade Partisans that they were Yugoslav rather than Croat, Serb or Slovene. In an atmosphere of tolerance, each group was allowed its own national identity in order to free itself from foreign rule. On the other hand the party leadership was clearly thinking in Yugoslav terms. This devotion to Yugoslavism would show only when the first conflicts between “provincial,” i.e., nationalist, and Yugoslav interest emerged. See Paul Shoup, \textit{Communism}, and Bilandzic, \textit{Historija}.
formed Communist organization) with 90 percent of the votes cast. On November 29, 1945, the Constituent Assembly approved the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia (Federativna Narodna Republika Jugoslavija—FNRJ). 193

Enthusiastic Communists, enchanted by the Marxist ideology, were proud of their achievements during and after the war. They never questioned that postwar federalism and Yugoslavism would solve the national question for good, because they believed in the strength of national freedom and justice. That image was maintained in post-war works of the intellectuals. The work of Franjo Tudjman, later President of Croatia between 1990–2000, may serve best to illustrate the official picture and ideology concerning the role of the Communists during World War II. The People's Liberation Movement was described as the principal factor of all developments in Yugoslavia during the Fascist occupation of 1941–1945, so that its growth within the general framework of the Second World War resulted not only in the overthrow of the occupation system, but also in liquidation of the bourgeois monarchy and the establishment of a new federated socialist commonwealth of Yugoslav peoples. 194

The results of the first elections well illustrated that the CPY was committed to the abolition of all other political parties. There were two ideological motives for the CPY's rejection of political pluralism. First, Marxism regards political parties as a part of a "superstructure" of the capitalist social and economic order whose purpose is the perpetuation of that order. In the building of a socialist society, the CPY saw a


194 Tudjman, Okupacija, p. 309.
multi-party system as unnecessary and regressive. Secondly, Leninism maintains that a monopoly of power by a communist party is a prerequisite for the revolutionary transformation of society. The CPY leadership was united in their belief in the need for the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” that is, their party’s monopoly of power.\textsuperscript{195}

Since the CPY legitimacy rested on its claim to represent all the Yugoslav peoples, federalism appeared as the logical option in order to satisfy the diverse population and thus solve the national question. However, since the Communists were preoccupied with consolidating power, their decisions about internal borders and the treatment of individual ethnic groups were arbitrary, without full consideration for the potential consequences.\textsuperscript{196} Some of the controversy regarding territoriality issues and national question is illustrated by looking at the first 1946 Constitution and the subsequent three institutions of 1953, 1963 and 1974, each of which established the varying federal structures.\textsuperscript{197}

The first constitution of the post-World War II Yugoslavia was promulgated on 31 January 1946. The Constitution sanctioned the country’s new structure as a multinational federation of eight units (six republics and two autonomous provinces) based on both ethnic and historic criteria. The intention was to establish balance


between the units and to avoid the division of territory with ethnically mixed populations. The establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate republic, for instance, was intended to obviate the contention between Croats and Serbs on the origin of the Muslims. Contrary to the Communist own principle “to each nation its own territorial unit,” the largest republic, Serbia, was divided into three elements—Serbia proper, the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the autonomous province of Kosovo-Metohija.\(^{198}\) The justification of this division of Serbia, other than ethnic reasons, was that it would dispel fears of revival of Serbian hegemonism which dominated in pre-war Yugoslavia. However, similar proposals for other units, namely to form autonomous region of the heavily Serbian inhabited areas in Croatia, were treated as “reactionary” and rejected on the ground that it would lead to division of other Yugoslav nations.\(^{199}\) While none of the republics was ethnically homogeneous, they quickly became identified as the national and territorial homelands of their titular nations, with exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina which was always described as consisting of Serbs, Croats and Muslims.\(^{200}\)

The Constitution sanctioned equality of nationality, race and religion. All Yugoslav citizens had equal rights and duties; all six republics were also proclaimed

\(^{198}\) Forty years later, this division of Serbia will be the major cause for Serbian intellectuals to demand a unified state in their Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. This document will serve as a blueprint for the Serbian leaders who created constitutional crisis since 1988.


\(^{200}\) South Slav Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina were not recognized as a nation, although they were often mentioned as a separate group.
equal, which meant that no republic dominated any other, and that their equality rested on their sovereignty. In reality, the republics were not sovereign.\(^\text{201}\) The Constitution of 1946 provided each nation with a separate national unit and representative assemblies, government, courts, anthems, flags and other signs and symbols. But, as Stanovcic warns, one should not overestimate the importance of these signs and symbols because the system in general was centralized. The economy was under the control of the central government and the monolithic Communist Party enjoyed a monopoly of political and ideological power.\(^\text{202}\)

The standard monolithic totalitarianism featured complete nationalization of industry, centralized economic planning, a single communist front organization, and elimination of all opponents. Thus, during the period 1945–1952, the FNRJ was modeled after the USSR in both structure and operation.\(^\text{203}\) Bilandzic refers to that period as the period of administrative centralism, while Cohen calls it hierarchical or "bolshevik-type" federalism.\(^\text{204}\) The federal principle remained to a great extent

\(^{201}\) Not only were the republics ruled by the Communist Party, but the Constitution limited their sovereignty. Articles 9 and 11, respectively, delineated that certain rights belonged only to FNRJ, and that the republics constitutions conform to the federal Constitution. See Djilas, *Contested Country*, pp. 160–61.


\(^{203}\) In 1948, however, the break with the Soviet Union and Eastern European Communist parties occurred as a consequence of the Yugoslav habits of autonomous decision making and lack of submission to Stalin, who wanted overall control over the new Communist party states of Eastern Europe.

theoretical, except that both houses of the *Skupstina*, federal assembly, had equal powers. *Skupstina* initially was the only bi-cameral legislature among the East European “parliaments.” It consisted of two houses, Federal Assembly, *Savezno Vijece*, which was elected by universal suffrage and the Council of Nationalities, *Vijece Naroda*, which was made up of equal number of representatives from the six republics and the two autonomous units.\textsuperscript{205}

Despite the facade of this “federal” structure, Bilandzic maintains that the whole system was one absolute monolith on the top of which was the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPY with ten members, each of them in charge of certain part of the system.\textsuperscript{206} The close interlocking of party and state functions was also symbolized by Tito’s position as head of government, army and of the party. This system of “administrative socialism” resulted in poor economic performance and disillusionment with people who were waiting for proclaimed equality to occur.\textsuperscript{207}

Centralism, that is, state monopoly over the means of production, was against the principles of national equality, especially in economic matters. In addition to a highly controlled centralized structure, the fact that capital and major institutions were located in Beograd led some individuals in other federal units to believe that the

\textsuperscript{205}Bilandzic, *Historija*, 118.

\textsuperscript{206}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{207}The level of economic development of the regions to become constituent units of Yugoslavia was so disparate that the regions were divided into “developed” north and “underdeveloped” south. For more detailed analysis of these differences in labor efficiency 1965–1977 and per capita social product of the republics 1947–78. See Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism*, pp. 142–43, and Singleton, *Short History*, p. 211.
Serbian nation was favored and that little had changed compared to the pre-WW II state.\textsuperscript{208} The ruling CPY distanced people from power and weakened the cooperation that had developed during the liberation war. The only support for the centralist policies of the state came from those who argued for the unitary aspect of nationalism.\textsuperscript{209} The first signs of intra-national conflicts, especially over the arbitrary redistribution of "centralized income" and investment funds, emerged to the big surprise of the CPY which strongly believed that "national question" was resolved through federal structure and formation of a big "socialist community" ignorant of particular differences among its constituent peoples.\textsuperscript{210}

In the 1950s, in order to win the confidence of the population, the party launched the "four Ds" policy with the aims of democratization, decentralization, deetatization and debureaucratization in hopes that it would dispel centralist and etatist tendencies.\textsuperscript{211} The well-known features of the Yugoslav system, self-management and local government, reflected this orientation and grew out of it. As the CPY realized the need for change, as was common to communist states, a new

\textsuperscript{208}Branko Horvat, renowned political economist, and the director of the internationally recognized Yugoslav Institute for Economic Research from 1963–1968, lamented the destiny of that institute which was located in Beograd, the capital of both Serbia and Yugoslavia. Horvat was persecuted by Rankovic, the director of UDBA (secret police). As a result the federal Institute for Economic Research, just like other four federal Institutes, closed and immediately became Serbian institution, under the control of the Republic of Serbia even though it claimed federal character. Personal interview, October 14, 1997.

\textsuperscript{209}Bilandzic, \textit{Historija}, pp. 210–211.

\textsuperscript{210}Ibid., pp. 135–36, 143.

\textsuperscript{211}Ibid., pp. 164–75.
constitution was written to bridge the gap between the constitutional myth and regime reality.

In 1953 the constitution was drastically modified, so that it became in effect a new one. The Constitutional law of 1953 reflected the cautious steps toward decentralization. It took into account the development of self-management under the 1950 manifesto “factories to the workers” and the reforms in local government which occurred in 1952. At the Sixth Congress the CPY officially changed its name into the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, supposedly to reflect its avant guard role rather than ever-present administrative mechanism of control. This change was done with intention to win the confidence of the population. The local government reforms gave a degree of autonomy to the basic units of local government, communes (opstine), which were to oversee the economic, social, and cultural life of the areas under their administration.\(^{212}\)

The law also changed the structure of the Federal and republics’ assemblies which now acquired the Producers’ Councils, Vijece proizvodjača. The Federal Assembly was made up of Federal Council, Savezno Vijece, which “incorporated” former Council of Nationalities (elected by the representatives of the republics and autonomous provinces) and Council of Producers. The question remains: why did the communists eliminate/change Council of Nationalities if the principle of election remained the same? To some analysts the answer lies in the fact that elimination of

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the Chamber of Nationalities was consistent with ideological expectation that the republics, before the state would disappear, would “wither away.”

The position of the president of the republic was created and its first (and only, since the post was eliminated in 1980, after his death) incumbent was Josip Broz Tito. As a supreme executive body and effective government of the country, Federal Executive Council (Savezno Izvršno Vijece), was created. The members of this body were elected by the Federal Assembly. The first FEC consisted of thirty-eight members, thirty-six of whom were members of the Central Committee of the CPY.

During the period between 1953–1962, the grip of the communists was somewhat loosened, although they still represented the only organized political force in the society and, despite proclaimed and factual liberalization of the society, the party still had an option to exercise total control if necessary. Cohen describes this period as “quasi-federalism” in one-party moderate centralization. Bilandzic best describes the gap between theory and practice through the case of one of the closest allies of Tito, Milovan Djilas. He was removed from his office because he strayed

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214 The president, who is also commander in chief of the armed forces, promulgates federal law by decree, proposes the election of the judges of the Constitutional Court, appoints ambassadors, grants pardons for criminal offenses, and if Federal Assembly is unable to meet, declares war. During a state of hostilities or in the event of an immediate threat of war, the president may pass decrees with the force of law on matters within the Assembly’s jurisdiction. On this see Staar, Communist Regimes, pp. 194–45.

215 Bilandzic, Historija, p. 177. See also Singleton, Short History, p. 229.
from the party line by arguing for second socialist party that would compete with the LCY. His removal testified that rhetorical changes would not lead to the LCY's abandonment of political power over the society.

Liberalization occurred in economic sector toward establishment of another unique characteristic of Yugoslavia "market socialism." The powers of taxation were gradually transferred to the republics and to local units of government which could now plan their own policies of economic development. But this transfer of power contributed to greater inequality in the economic development among the constituent units of Yugoslavia, and would become a major issue in inter-republican affairs.²ⁱ⁶

More than ideological, the need for a more efficient economy drove this change which occurred in the midst of a great debate between economists and politicians, especially with those fearful of market reforms which could undermine the socialist basis of economy. Those that opposed economic reform came largely from the southern underdeveloped regions—who were afraid that the market would benefit the already prosperous areas of Yugoslavia disproportionately—but also from influential institutions such as the Army and the Police, both dominated by the Serbs and Montenegrins who feared that decentralization would erode the Serbian dominance in government and the LCY.²¹⁷


²¹⁷ Ibid.
The third Yugoslav constitution, adopted in April 1963, formalized the changes made in the Yugoslav system since 1953; at the same time it provided a framework in which the movement for democratic reform could expand. It departed from its predecessor, the 1953 Fundamental Law, in several basic respects. The former People’s Republic was now named the *Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*, Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ). Decentralization was advanced as best elaborated in the concept of self-management, which was now to expand to all forms of the society. The Federal Assembly, *Skupština*, now included five chambers: Chamber of Nationalities would meet when certain constitutional matters affecting the relations among the republics were discussed. The remaining chambers, the Chambers of Sociopolitical, Economic, Education and Culture and Social Welfare and Health, were indirectly elected to represent the functionally specific interests of the workers in different occupations.  

The government, the Federal Executive Council (FEC), *Savezno Izvršno Vijece*, elected by the Federal Assembly, was responsible for coordinating and supervising the federal administration. The FEC, the source of legislative proposals, was the most important governmental body so far as the character of day-to-day government operations was concerned. Its thirty-three members constituted what in fact was a cabinet. The most important consideration, a stipulation pushed by Tito, regarding the composition of the council was that it should reflect the various nationalities of the country. A new institution, a Council of the Federation, *Savjet*

Federacije, was established. Its role was that of chief advisory to the President. Its members, usually distinguished former ministers, ambassadors, party officials, soldiers and artists, were nominated by the president.

The 1963 constitution introduced two concepts. First, a system of rotation in office, whereby members of public bodies may not be re-elected to a second consecutive term. Second, it forbade simultaneous occupancy of the leading political offices in both state and LCY, except in the case of Tito, who was president of the republic for life. Another significant feature of the 1963 constitution includes acknowledgment of the LCY and the communist-front Socialist Alliance as the only political groups with legal status.\textsuperscript{219}

The inauguration of the 1963 Constitution led to developments of a disparate nature. While the Constitution introduced a real measure of decentralization, the control of the federal government was still firmly in the hands of the party (through the president of the federal republic who now enjoyed enlarged powers). The "federalization" of politics, as part of decentralization, took place through the devolution of power to the republics during the time which coincided with the period of economic reform of the 1960s.\textsuperscript{220}

This decentralization, which occurred both at the state level and in the LCY, fostered a closer association between nationality and territory since each republic and the two provinces was constituted as the "home" of a titular nationality. The extent

\textsuperscript{219} Bilandzic, \textit{Historija}, pp. 296–99.

\textsuperscript{220} The economic reform was officially inaugurated May 20, 1964 through "Resolutions on the basic directions for the further development of the economic system." The Federal Assembly’s Resolutions reflect the decisions of the Fifth Congress of the Federal Trade Union Council \textit{[Peti Kongres Saveza Sindikata]}. 

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of democratization was manifested through Party’s renouncement of Yugoslav consciousness, or Yugoslavism, which had been so prominent in the fifties. At the Eight Congress of LCY in 1964, the up to that moment taboo, the national question, was addressed as an “open question,” open for debate and a new approach. The ideology of Yugoslavism would be replaced by republican/national equality along the lines of self-management. Self-management would be the device used to constrain particularistic nationalism, while assuring the continuation of party control.

Because the republics were territorially defined by ethnicity, the loosening of central control and the separation of the LCY from the state machine gave an opportunity for more republican assertiveness. This assertiveness eventually would be identified as nationalism. A growing chorus of discontent from the republics came at the end of the 1960s. The representatives of less developed republics, led by Bosnia-Herzegovina, which called for an unprecedented meeting of the Chamber of Nationalities in 1967, complained about unfair distribution of federal funds for economic development. The increasingly liberal representatives of more developed republics, Slovenia and Croatia, on the other hand, complained about abuse of the same and other federal funds (social security, in particular) and wanted to abolish

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221 See Djilas, *Contested Country* for good description of differences between “old” Yugoslavism of King Aleksandar and “new” Yugoslavism as promoted by the Communist Party, pp. 179–180.

them. At the same time nationalist discontent was visible in the cultural arena, especially with issues of language and the treatment of minorities.223

Throughout all this, each republican party developed internal divisions, of liberal and conservative groups. In an attempt to diffuse these nascent revolts, nineteen constitutional amendments that gave wider powers to the republics were prepared and passed by the Federal Assembly in 1967–68. These amendments not only reduced the prerogatives of the federal government, but they also granted the autonomous provinces Kosovo and Vojvodina near parity with the republics. They also corrected the mistake committed in 1953 by reintroducing The Council of Nationalities as the upper chamber of the Skupstina.224 But, the constitutional changes did not achieve the desired effect of dampening the determination of the nationalist leaders for further autonomy and control. They claimed that their requests reflected resolutions reached at Eighth Congress LCY. Yugoslavism was forced to retreat further under the growing pressure from local, but this time Party, leadership.

The key turning point of the 1960s was the major economic reform. The reform was intended by Tito and the Party as an attack on economic inefficiency, corruption, unprofitable enterprises, distorted prices and other detrimental effects of central planning. In reality, the reform was the result of the decentralization:

“Centrally planned investment [had become] impossible in Yugoslavia because it was

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no longer possible to agree politically about such planning." Remington describes this period of Yugoslav history as "Perestroika the Yugoslav way" because it was marked by the Yugoslav economists' struggle with the question of how to reform the country's still largely command economy. The economic boom of the early 1960s convinced liberal economists from successful sectors of the economy that the time to push ahead had come. For them, the real problem with self-management was the ratio of principle to practice. Their choice was efficiency and real market socialism (capital intensive selective development) instead of token market socialism, and this was achievable only through decentralized political power. The reform of 1965 included planning on the enterprise level, group ownership of the means of production, removal of the state control over banks, a greater role for prices and, in general, for the market.

The tug of war between "economic realists," usually identified with Croatia and Slovenia, and conservative "political realists," usually identified with Serbia, who were more interested in preservation of their power basis was reflected in the removal of Aleksander Rankovic in 1966. Aleksandar Rankovic, a Serb, was Tito's closest ally, and since 1963, Vice-President of Yugoslavia and the head of the State Security Service, UDBA. When the economic reform began to take ground, and with it the process of decentralization of the federal administration, Rankovic took the side of unitarists and centralists because the implications of reforms were in direct opposition

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to the political and administrative interests of Serbian unity. The policy of
discrimination toward Albanians in Serbia and Kosovo and Hungarians in Vojvodina
by Rankovic’s men was seen as unconstitutional and a conscientious effort at
undermining decisions of the Eighth Congress.\textsuperscript{227} Some analysts think that Rankovic
was just a scapegoat for struggles that were taking place in the leadership of the
country as well as the way to get rid of him.\textsuperscript{228} It is important to note, however, how
Rankovic’s disgrace was perceived by Serbs at the time:

Serbs reacted to Rankovic’s fall as though the Serbian nation itself had been
defeated. \textit{Borba} of September 15, 1996, cited lamentations that LCY policy
had become anti-Serb and that the Serbs no longer had anyone to defend their
interests. UDBa itself was shaken up, and many key security personnel were
transferred to large trading corporations in Belgrade.\textsuperscript{229}

However, in other parts of the country, Rankovic was seen as the leader of a
coalition which was impeding the needed economic reform, so his removal
strengthened the pro-reform liberal coalition even though the alliances did not
necessarily represent best economic choices. Naturally, the chief opponents of the
reform, the centralists, were those who would be left out in the shift to selective
development. The conservative leadership of Serbia, as the main proponent of
centralist tendencies, was hoping to establish itself as the leader of the block of
underdeveloped countries. Such a bloc would isolate Croatia and Slovenia, permit the
concentration of industries in Serbia, and support centralization of the political

\textsuperscript{227}Bilandzic, \textit{Historija}, pp. 331–32.

\textsuperscript{228}For different views of Rankovic’s disgrace, see Pavlowitz, \textit{Improbable
Survivor}, and Ramet, \textit{Nationalism and Federalism}.

system and reassertion of Serbian hegemony within the federal context. The expected alignments on the economic grounds did not materialize because Slovenian and Croatian liberals were able to capitalize on the fears of Greater Serbian Chauvinism and to solicit southern liberals to accept market mechanisms in the economy even though it was not to their economic interest. It appears that the Croat and Slovene leadership transformed economic issues (decentralization, decreasing of aid to unprofitable enterprises in the south), into political issues, i.e., liberalization as opposition to the Serbian hegemony.230

This example illustrates the claim that after decentralization took place, the balance of power between communal republican and federal institutions was never definitely resolved. This balance usually displayed itself through the power struggle between centralist or conservative forces—that argued for unity at any cost, and a liberal stream—that leaned more toward democratization through decentralization.231 The reformers, who were joined by advocates of party democratization and liberalization in the cultural sector, got the support and blessing of Tito and federal party leaders. Tomc claims that 1960s initiated the trend that would color the rest of Yugoslavia’s destiny: the diminishing role of the party state.232 After Rankovic’s removal in 1966, the level of political liberty was significantly expanded but those liberties lasted only until 1971–72, when Tito

230Ibid., p. 98.


decided they were harmful to the national security. The balance of power between liberals and conservatives changed at that time because the far-reaching reforms the leadership of Croatia pushed went beyond desires of its coalition partners.

In the late 1960s, faced with first the Croatian demands for revisions of Yugoslav economic system, Serbian declarations about Kosovo, Slovenes' accusation that the federation discriminated against Slovenia, and other acts of republican and provincial assertiveness, the institutions of Yugoslav federation and LCY proved to be incapable of dealing with changes inaugurated by economic and political reforms which generated frequent crises in the functioning of the federal institutions. What happened was that even though republics were given a green light to independently formulate their policies, the real executive power still rested with federal institutions and Tito. All the executive power resided within federation which

233 Democratization brought a lot of changes in previously highly controlled political space, e.g., new political forces critical of Communist policies, from anarcho-liberal to conservatives were allowed to function; political freedoms were at its highest since establishment of SFRJ, the Yugoslavs were permitted to travel to other countries and tourists from abroad were encouraged to come to SFRJ. Foreign media were sold at the newsstands. See Bilandzic, Historija, p. 339.

234 Some believe that the culmination of republican assertiveness was the "Deklaracija," a statement signed by leading Croatian intellectuals in March 1967, asking for the separate existence of a Croatian linguistic and literary tradition and denying the validity of Serbo-Croatian as an historic language. Underlying this assertion was the fear with some Croatians that Serbianization of Croatian language was taking place.

235 Interestingly, the first proclamations about the importance of Kosovo for Serbia and how the character of Kosovo was to be determined by its history and not by its democratic makeup, came from Dobrica Cosic, a member of the Central Committee of the LC of Serbia, at its Fourteenth Plenum on May 29, 1968. See Miller, "Reconstituting Serbia," p. 298.

236 This crisis is popularly known as Slovenian road affair ("cestna afera").
was not prepared to deal with republican demands. For instance, when different republics would put their requests, that would be put for negotiations and decisions made would reflect coordinated effort from all republican representatives who frequently conflicted with each other. Because of the lack of institutional means of coordination, republican assertiveness came to be seen in an increasingly negative light. Yet, in order to change the federal institutions, all the republican leaders would have to arrive at such decision by consensus.\footnote{Bilandzic, \textit{Historija}, 368–69.} As institutions lagged behind proclaimed principles, it was increasingly obvious that the Yugoslav economy was not strong enough for true economic reform. Severe economic conditions, the rise of unemployment and the decrease in the standard of living induced rising discontent in the population. The student demonstrations of 1968 pointed to the salience of the crisis. The students demanded jobs for Yugoslavs. They objected to the party privileges and wanted knowledge and technical training to count for more than political connections or military record. They requested a more meaningful democratization of party life, less corruption, and a return to socialist morality. The demonstrations accused the LCY of being incapable of dealing with the growing problems in the Yugoslav society.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 305–20.} Nevertheless, at the Ninth LCY Congress in 1969 Tito decided to further the political reform. The LCY confirmed its own devolution of powers. The Congress endorsed the principle that the League was made up of eight constituents bodies, one each for the republics and one each for the
two autonomous provinces. Instead of two dominant blocks, the balance of Yugoslav politics will now have to be between nine of them, the ninth representing federal institutions.

Nationalism was the product of several factors: of the growing regional inequalities and differences which did not correspond with the notion of Socialism as the society of equals, of the growing power of the republican/provincial party elites and consequently of the increasing emancipation of the society from the party and from the state. Tome sees the national movements in Yugoslavia as the new social actors that filled the social space vacated by the party in the 1960s.

The 1970s: Nationalism

The period between 1963 and the last, 1974, constitution can best be described as "cooperative" federalism among central, republican and local authorities. The dynamics between state and party was somewhat paradoxical, but reflective of the tendencies that were plaguing the country: nationalist tendencies were counteracted by unitarism and hegemonism, all equally dangerous for the unity of Yugoslavia. The processes of further decentralization and regionalization of the

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239 McCrea claims that LCY, despite Lenin's strictures, permitted meaningful federalization, with the result that its party politics may be fairly described as federalized. Barbara McCrea, The Political Dynamics of Federalism in a Marxist-Leninist Setting: The League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Notre Dame, 1992.


country and of the LCY, were mixed with attempts toward recentralization of the party.\textsuperscript{242} While the Party was committed to structural and territorial federalization in order to satisfy national emotions, it did not give up its own monopoly and political power remained highly concentrated in the highest organs of the Party.\textsuperscript{243} National rivalries which developed because of decentralization illustrated a trend that would color the future of Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{244}

By the beginning of the 1970s, the most vocal and articulate demands for further decentralization, meaning greater congruence between republic and nation; and democratization, i.e., greater space for independent expression of social movements, came from Croatia.\textsuperscript{245} What the political elite in Croatia wanted above all was reform of the banking, foreign trade and foreign currency system so as to implement their own policies within their republic, which meant going beyond the power to veto decisions of the federal government. The request on the part of the Croatian League of Communists that money should be at the disposal of those who earn it, rather than going to the center in Belgrade and then being distributed as the

\textsuperscript{242}Indicative of this is Tito’s decision at the Ninth Congress of LCY in 1969, to form a strong institution at the top of LCY. He created Izvrsni biro Predsjedni\v{z}ta SKJ, Executive Bureau of LCY Presidency. See Bilandzic, Historija, p. 369.

\textsuperscript{243}Shoup, Communism, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{244}Zdravko Tomac, University of Zagreb professor and Vice President of the Croatian Social Democratic Party (formerly Communist Party of Croatia), sees the end of the 1960s as the time when conflict in Yugoslavia actually started. At that time of decentralization and liberalization, “nationalism was beginning to be used as a means of mobilization” in various republics. Personal interview, Zagreb, Croatia, October 14, 1997.

\textsuperscript{245}Tomc, “Classes,” p. 69.
federation decided, was interpreted by the Belgrade press as a growing wave of nationalism in Croatia.

The movement, popularly known as "Croatian Spring," enjoyed popular support in Croatia. In this short period, many ideological, national, and sociological aspirations were verbalized, but within these two basic ideas, or visions of the Croatian state dominated: the national and liberal-democratic. The public supported further democratization within the socialist system of Yugoslavia. However, reading between lines of some written documents and in some incidents, it was possible to discern a demand for complete independence, based on Croatian exclusionism, and continuation of the tradition of the NDH. Goldstein claims that even though there were some inappropriate anti-Serbian incidents, anti-Serbian feelings did not play a major role in the "Croatian Spring." Most Serbs, Croatia's largest ethnic minority were wary of the movement. In some villages, remembering the tragic events of the World War II, they even obtained weapons.246

The mass demonstration of students on the streets of Zagreb in December 1971 ended with the army and police moving into Zagreb and the arrest of student leaders and the prohibition of Matica Hrvatska, the traditional Croatian cultural

organization that was revived during the period of liberalization. There followed the purge of republic and provincial leaders who were accused of being “nationalistically minded,” but who also were liberal and reformist. Following the purge of Croatian Party, to be even-handed, Tito purged the liberals of the Serbian Party too.

The 1971 Croatian crisis along with upheavals in Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo raised fears with the LCY leaders that any radical change in the federal framework would threaten the unity of Yugoslavia. Tomc describes the reaction of the core party leadership to the crisis that ended the 1960s period of liberalization as twofold: It severely reduced the degree of possible political democracy while at the same time it delegated greater power to republican and provincial party elites. Thus, the counter-reform had aspects that were anti-

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248 The 1971 Croatian Party leadership was frequently referred to as the triumvirate: Mika Tripalo, Savka Dabcevic-Kucar and Pero Pirker.

249 Serbian liberals, such as Latinka Perovic, the secretary of the LC of Serbia, and Marko Nikezic, the president of the Central Committee of the LC of Serbia were purged in 1972. The essence of their position seems to have been that forces of democratization in Serbia should be used to dispel Great Serbian nationalism (and prevalent identification of Serbia with Yugoslavia) and to focus on its own development. Latinka Perovic, Closing Cycle—The Outcome of the 1971–2 Split (Sarajevo, 1991), quoted in Branka Magas, The Destruction of Yugoslavia (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 351–55.
democratic and aspects that were confederalist, although the growing confederate character of Yugoslavia was not admitted.  

One inevitably wonders what was the reason behind this process of de facto confederation. The idea of confederation, especially the accompanying popularity which some of the regional elites enjoyed among their people, was not acceptable to key elements of the Party. One can speculate that the reason for this was that the party elite thought it had armed itself with the ideology of self-management, and therefore could allow greater powers to federal units. This ideology of self-management was intended to hold the country together with the sheer strength of belief. Ideology became the main integrating factor, which was supposed to be capable of withstanding demands for both political decentralization and national unity.

Developments in the 1970s proved that this hope was in vain. The Constitutional Amendments in 1971 passed in March were intended to complete the reform of the federation. The Amendments were seen as an instrument which would strengthen the self-managing system in opposition to the forces of etatism. The Communist were proud to announce that their federation defied any existing definition of federation because it was built on the “theory and practice of self-managerial society,” which means that all the decision-making was to be done through the process of collective accommodation (usuglasavanja). Yet the effects of these Amendments was only to strengthen the position of the republics. Amendment 20 assigned to republics the status of “states” that are carriers of sovereignty. The

federation is to exercise its powers in foreign affairs, defense, foreign trade, the common currency, and to ensure functioning of one united Yugoslav market. But regional party elites, paying lip service to “brotherhood and unity,” used the ideology of self-management to promote their own particular political interests and thus to create political legitimacy and power bases in their home republics. The 1971 Croatian national crisis along with the upheavals in Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo raised the fear with the LCY leaders that any radical change in the federal framework would threaten the unity of Yugoslavia.

Consequently, the Party focused on how to return Yugoslav politics to more direct party control. As the only universal factor of unity, Tito decided to firmly hold on to the army and police. Was this a sign that the country could have been kept together only by force? The resurrection of the wartime “triumvirate” of party-army-state was only one safeguard Tito attempted to build into the system to keep the country together. Self-management and the delegate system were another safeguard, the later proclaimed as a mechanism of direct election/participation, basically reintertwined the party and the government from the Basic Units of Labor and community to the federation. In a weird, Yugoslav way, this is how reassertion of the party’s control was to occur. Perhaps the mechanism which most reflected Tito’s awareness of the nationality problem was the creation of a collective Presidium at the

LCY level and a collective State Presidency, each with one representative from the eight units, at the federal level as Tito’s successors.\(^{252}\)

Developments in the 1970s proved that this hope was in vain. Klein and Klein maintain that the Croat crisis of 1971 was the logical result of the Yugoslav system: first, the Yugoslavs could freely travel to other countries and were able to compare the conditions in their country to those of other countries. In that situation it would be difficult to prevent criticism. Second, the system was based on “contested elections,” although opposing political parties remained illegal, elections were contested by more than one candidate. Third, the republics have a freedom to dispose of investment funds that they generated. To them, local politicians acted like any power brokers within the political and economic market place. In order to mobilize their constituencies they had to represent themselves as proponents of their constituents’ aspirations. If they wanted to enlarge their constituency across narrow Party lines, they had to appeal to the entire population of the republic on a nationalist basis.\(^{253}\) In essence, regional party elites, paying lip service to “brotherhood and unity,” used the ideology of self-management to promote their own particular political interests and thus to create political legitimacy in their home republics, which became the only meaningful source of legitimacy.

Since the Croatian movement of 1971–72 was seen as a threat the leadership of Yugoslavia, under the firm hand of Tito, decided to do whatever was necessary to

\(^{252}\) Inaugurated as part of the 1971 Constitutional reform, Amendment 36; see Bilandzic, *Historija*, p. 373. At Tito’s death, the President of the Presidency was to rotate annually, according to the Constitutionally-determined rota, as indeed occurred upon Tito’s death in 1980.

preserve the unity of the state. The reaction of the core party leadership to the crisis was twofold: They severely reduced democratization at the price of decentralization, which was acceptable to most ambitious republican party leadership. Political democracy was decreased while at the same time greater power was delegated to the republican and provincial party elites. Both tendencies were visible in the Resolutions of the IX and X Congresses of the LCY, held in 1969 and 1974, respectively. The Congresses served the function of gathering party officials for long discussions about the problems of the country and future developments, which were meant to serve as blueprints for changes in the whole country. The Tenth Congress of the LCY, held in May 1974, attempted to establish the Party as a “state-building” force despite the proclaimed commitment to the equality of the nations and to the principles of workers self-management. The Congress demanded return to Party discipline (which was denounced at the Ninth Congress) and condemned phenomena such as “liberalism,” “pluralism,” “spontaneity,” and “federalization of the Party,” all keywords for the loosening of Party control. Thus, the counter-reform had aspects that were anti-democratic and aspects that were confederalist, although the confederate character of Yugoslavia was not admitted.254

The next step in the counter-reform was the constitution that was introduced in 1974 which replaced the 1963 constitution as amended in 1967 and 1971. The 1974 Constitution delineated a completely new set of executive and legislative institutions and a new way of decision making. Cohen, and even Elazar, cogently

describe the evolution of the system toward confederation. In Yugoslavia, however, politicians and scholars respectively referred to this new development as “polycentric federalism” or “contractual federation.”

In introducing the 1974 Constitution, Tito stated: “A determined break has been made with all the remnants of so-called representative democracy which suits the bourgeois class.” This was in response to the “sectarian” behavior of the representatives to the Federal Assembly, who increasingly argued for the interests of their constituency rather than for federation as a whole. The most important institutions promulgated by the 1974 Constitution were the indirect system of elections, delegatski system, and the structure and decision-making of the Federal Assembly. The system of elections was promoted as Tito’s way of ensuring the unity of the country. The elaborate and complicated system of workers’ supposed participation was difficult to achieve. The delegatski system never fulfilled its

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257 The 1974 Constitution is one of the longest and most complicated of any in the world. It covers every single aspect of social and political relations and describes in detail the rights and duties of Yugoslav citizens. (It covers matters such as protection of the environment, national defence, freedom of movement and of the press, family planning, minority rights, etc.

258 Cited in Singleton, Short History, p. 261.
promised function as a form of direct democracy. Gruenwald’s description of the fallacies of the system demonstrates that it, as with every other political innovation, suffered from party’s inability to give up its monopoly of power. “In reality, the Yugoslav system is a quest for totalitarian democracy,” despite the window-dressing of workers’ self-management.

The Federal Assembly consisted of two chambers, a Federal Chamber and a Chamber of Republics and Provinces, Vijece republika i pokrajina. The Federal Chamber, which decided on the questions of interest to the federation, consisted of 220 delegates (30 delegates from each socialist republic and 20 from each socialist autonomous province, all elected from the basic administrative units, communes). The Chamber of Republics and Provinces, in charge of republican and provincial issues which did not require consent of the republics and provinces, consisted of 12 delegates from the assemblies of each of the six republics and eight from the assemblies of each of the two autonomous provinces.

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260 Gruenwald, Yugoslav Search, p. 173.

261 The Federal Assembly is the only body theoretically competent to amend the constitution, pass national laws, adopt federal plans and budgets, call a referendum, ratify international agreements, decide upon questions of war and peace, alter the boundaries of the Yugoslavia, lay down the foundation for internal and foreign policy, and supervise the work of the federal executive and administrative bodies. See Staar, Communist Regimes, p. 197).

According to Kostunica, because of equal representation of the constituent units in both chambers, the two chambers of the federal unit differed from one another only in the mode of voting—Federal chamber decided by majority vote, and the second chamber by unanimous consent. He claims that Yugoslav federal system was unique because of the emphasis on required consensus of all the federal units for all kinds of amendments: “Any constitutional amendment shall be deemed passed only when the text adopted by the federal chamber has also been adopted by the legislative assemblies of all the federal units.” This provision granted an effective regional veto over federal policy to each of the republics and provinces. The most sensitive provision of the Constitution was the raising of the autonomous regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina to a status equivalent to that of republics, which included a position, equal to that of the republics in a newly created nine-person collective federal presidency.

Since the adoption of the 1974 Constitution, the Yugoslav decisionmaking process was marked by a constant tension between federal authority with responsibility for all-Yugoslav policy and regional powers to obstruct its preparation, adoption, or implementation. The 1971 Amendments and 1974 Constitution established a complex system of delegates and consultations at all levels of government, while the 1976 Law on Associated Labor decentralized all economic enterprises, even hospitals and charitable organizations, into Basic Organizations of Associated Labor (BOALs), Osnovne organizacije udruzenog rada (OOUR), which were to be the fundamental units for negotiation in each self-managing enterprise.

The architect of the 1974 Constitution, Edvard Kardelj, characterized the complex new system as "pluralism of self-managing interests." As Stokes argues, this all sounded good, but in practice the new laws made it almost impossible for the federal government to pursue a consistent economic program, since each republic now held a suspensive veto of federal legislation. It was difficult for enterprises to run themselves efficiently since each BOAL held its own mini-veto of enterprise process.\textsuperscript{264} Another consequence of the 1974 Constitution that will influence prospects for politicization of ethnicity is the fact that from this time on, each republican Communist hierarchy had sole control over the media in their respective republics.

The 1980s: An Eye Opener

The system appeared to function reasonably effectively as long as Tito was alive. Through his ability to transcend conflicts and to enforce compromises in which all the parties assented whether they liked them or not, Tito acted as the ultimate mediator. After his death in May 1980, there was neither the instrumentality nor agreement on the criteria for the resolution of conflicts. Cross-national conflicts became everyday phenomena. Tomc regards them as an outlet used in the absence of other means to express national aspirations.\textsuperscript{265} As economic conditions worsened, federal decision making became extremely difficult and ineffective as the result of the growing reluctance of the republics and provinces to compromise their short-term economic interests in exchange for uncertain long-term gains. The perhaps


\textsuperscript{265} Tomc, "Classes," pp. 72–73.
unintended consequence of self-management was to hinder any possibility for an all-
Yugoslav market.\(^{266}\)

In general, developments since Tito’s death had strengthened the assertiveness of regional structures, as the policy of the central leadership had continued to balance ethnic groups against each other. Political tensions realized themselves in Croat bitterness against Belgrade; they stimulated emotional reactions among the Serbs and brought into the open the issue of Serbia as an unequal state; they surfaced in an Islamic assertion in Bosnia and Herzegovina.\(^{267}\)

The eighties were characterized by an overwhelming decline of confidence of the Yugoslav society which was the result of the growing popular disenchantment with the party, socialism and self-management, all of which in popular public opinion did not live up to their promises. The major cause that contributed to the sense of general crisis was the economic deterioration, whose roots lie in the strategy of over borrowing, popularly known as “buy now, pay later.”\(^{268}\)

Besides economic factors, Ramet lists several other factors that encouraged the growing popular discontent with the system, such as political paralysis,


\(^{267}\) Aleksandar Tijanic, Tajni Zivot Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca [Secret Life of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes] (No place, No publisher, 1989).

demographic changes that affected the ethnic balance, and the breakdown of traditional society and the displacement of the old norms by a widespread relativism.\textsuperscript{269} These factors also exacerbated nationalist passions. As Schopflin attests, the party's initial analysis that nationalism would fade away once the economic inequality was eliminated, was flawed.\textsuperscript{270} The roots of nationalism were deeper. Uneven economic development was, at most, one factor among many accounting for the survival and revitalization of nationalism. As Banac asserts, the nationality question does not derive from religious differences, cultural diversity or unequal economic development, but was shaped by the different structure and goals of various national ideologies.\textsuperscript{271} It is thus important to consider how Communist ideology reshaped, used or ignored those ideologies.

In the mid eighties, after numerous attempts to hide from the public the size of the foreign debt, the party finally admitted that Yugoslavia was in economic crisis. The party, still in ultimate charge of economics, launched several emergency programs for the purpose of stabilizing the economy, but the failure to tackle the problems in time resulted in serious difficulties.


The three federal institutions, the Chamber of Republics and Provinces, Collective Presidency and federal cabinet, FEC, were not able to restore to the federation the formal powers it had lost as the result of constitutional reforms which shifted power to the republics and provinces. The Chamber of Republics and Provinces, with its provision that decisions must be made by consensus, reflected this power given to the constitutional units. This severely affected any attempt to arrive to common solution. Because the delegates to the Chambers represented a bloc, and each delegate from the federal unit was required to adhere to the policy agreed on by the home republic or province, there were often cases of alliance formation and logrolling and lagging of negotiations in controversial areas (e.g., assistance to less developed areas).272

The collective Presidency, which served as the collective executive head, brought together one delegate from each of the federal units. After Tito’s death in 1980 they rotated annually according to the Constitutional rota in the office of “president of the presidency.” Even though Tito envisioned this body as the mechanism of party control over federation, the members of the presidency were responsible to their respective units (which elected them) and thus lacked a common vision and loyalty to the federal union. The decision-making mechanism of the presidency was severely endangered by exercises of regional loyalties. Eventually,

272Burg, “Elite Conflict.”
this endowed Milosevic with the ability to produce deadlocks in the presidency and served as catalyst for Slovenia and Croatia to announce their separation.273

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the Federal Executive Council served as broker in negotiations among the representatives of the federal units and the federal center. By the late 1970s, the FEC became the most important decision-making body outside of the party and a significant actor in inter-regional negotiation. But, even these characteristics could not bring back the powers that federation enjoyed before decentralization began. Because of the great powers given to the republics and provinces, most federal policies reflected, in effect, compromise between nine conflicting positions, eight units and one “all-Yugoslav,” FEC. Similar to the processes in the Chamber of Republics and Provinces, the agreements on policy were regularly inhibited by objections from the federal units until the last moment. Even when the policies were passed they were often reduced to general policy statements and subject to different interpretations in individual federal unit. Units were now subject to little effective and institutionalized means to comply with uniform interpretations once Tito died.

Even a short review of Yugoslavia’s history, especially its post-World War II developments, demonstrates that the most important institutions to consider in answering why and how Yugoslavia descended into violent inter-ethnic conflict were the role of CPY, later LCY, and its attempts to resolve the nationality question

273 Gruenwald, Yugoslav Search, pp. 200–01.
through federal arrangement.\textsuperscript{274} Federations that consist of constituent units identified with particular ethnic groups, or ethnic federations, have shown strong tendencies toward comprehensive decentralization. Pressures from ethnic groups identified with the constituent polities have been accommodated by federal governments through the decrease of federal control and the encouragement of additional activity, regulation, and control by the constituent units themselves—all in effort to limit secessionist tendencies and increase satisfaction within the federation so as to preserve its political integrity.\textsuperscript{275}

At the core of Yugoslav problems was the unresolved national question. The ruling dogma in Communist Yugoslavia, which was often echoed in similar terms in other Communist regimes of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, is that nationalism, if allowed, will naturally and necessarily lead back to the horrors of inter-ethnic strife experienced in the Second World War. In order to justify such thinking, League of Communists represented itself as being the only force able to rise above national particularisms, to secure both a harmonious state and the overthrow of the bourgeois class. They argued that nationalism is divisive, while communism unifies, that nationalism is internally unstable, whereas communism offered internal institutional stability. Part of the myth became the argument that nationalism was unable to defend Yugoslavia against external aggression, while communism has done so. However, as Allcock observes, the main objections to this argument are that it does not fit the


\textsuperscript{275}Elazar, \textit{Exploring Federalism}. 

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observed facts of history, and that it was unable to bear the theoretical weight of explanation which is often placed upon it.\textsuperscript{276}

The theoretically simple opposition between nationalism and communism was, as argued by Communist theoreticians, not justified. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) had a conflicting relationship with nationalism. It used it for the political purposes. But it suppressed it, as well. The LCY has promoted itself as the defender of national differences, and institutionalized its “good will” toward diversity of the nations and nationalities in all post-war constitutions, and in the federal framework. The political structure of the country, the six republics and two autonomous provinces, was created as a solution to the post-war problem of creating a legitimate alternative to the Serbian hegemonism and unitarism. The self-determination of nations and nationalities was a fundamental component of the regime’s self-definition. Thus, despite the officially sanctioned Yugoslav view of nationalism and frequent attacks on “chauvinism,” “irredentism,” and “nationalism,” the regime itself elevated the republics and provinces to the status of the only legitimate bearers of competing interests within the system. In this way the LCY itself created the contradiction. As Paul Shoup argues effectively, the LCY was never able to develop a coherent theoretical position with regard to nationality. Characteristically, it dealt with the question through \textit{ad hoc} responses to tactical needs; and despite the proclaimed respect for national identity in Yugoslavia, the

LCY chose to remove the issue from intellectual debate rather than to undertake a proper analysis of the problem.\textsuperscript{277}

\textsuperscript{277}McCrea, Political Dynamics; Shoup, Communism.
CHAPTER VI

POLITICIZATION OF ETHNICITY IN SERBIA

The Context

In 1981, the year following Tito's death, the Serbian communist party leadership faced serious economic crisis coupled with escalation of tensions between Albanians and Serbs in the province of Kosovo, following the mass demonstration of Albanians demanding the Province's transformation into a Republic. The demonstrations were violently suppressed, but periodic violence continued throughout the 1980s. Subsequently, the establishment of Socialist Republic of Serbia used methods of repression including official prohibition of all non-socialist forms of ethnic participation and punishment of any extreme or vocal expressions of nationalism, and the dispatchment of police and army reinforcements. With all those measures in place, the Kosovo problem was containable within the province, but the Serbs and Montenegrins of Kosovo continued to leave the province they had controlled until 1967. From 1967, they referred to Kosovo as undergoing period of Albanization.

The riots in Pristina affected the relationship between the mass media and official Communist establishment. The Kosovo riots caused turmoil in the Yugoslav leadership for several reasons. The event cast doubt that the national problem was solved through socialism and self-management. It also threatened the stability of the leadership already overwhelmed by economic crisis and rising republican
assertiveness. Rather than reveal the gravity of the situation, the leadership imposed censorship on reports about the province. Even though the first demonstration started on March 11, 1981, the public was not informed about them until March 26, and then only through a report on the session of the Presidium of the Pristina Communal Socialist Alliance Conference at which the main topic was "Fulfilling the Socialist Alliance's tasks in economic stabilization and in solving certain currently important socio-economic problems of the commune." A report on the Kosovo riots was included in the agenda, but it was made to look like something of secondary importance.\textsuperscript{278} Politika, which was a paper not subsidized by the regime, dared to publish the discussion about the problem of limited and directed information channeled to the journalists.\textsuperscript{279} In their article, Zejneli and Nesic claimed that "insufficient information may create the impression that the struggle against enemy activities in Kosovo is not a serious issue."\textsuperscript{280} By the mid-eighties Kosovo was in constant crisis, and a major factor of instability in Yugoslavia. The Kosovo crisis


\textsuperscript{279} In Titoist Yugoslavia each republic had its own media published in its predominant tongue, and at least one daily that was an official mouthpiece of republican communist party. Exceptions were Tanjug, national news agency, and Borba daily. The government's control over information collection and distribution was minimal and informal rather than centrally structured, as in the Soviet Union. In addition, most popular newspapers and magazines were self-managed enterprises which competed for readership and advertising revenue. Gertrude Robinson, Tito's Maverick Media: The Politics of Mass Communication in Yugoslavia (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

involved questioning the relationship between Serbia and the federation, and the very
destiny of Yugoslavia as a unified state. To the Serbs, the issue of Kosovo meant the
pressures of Albanian nationalism. According to Pavlowitz,281 ethnic harassment of
Serbs and consequent Serbian emigration had been a persistent phenomenon since
1966, but the authorities had not wanted to acknowledge them until 1981.

Even after the demonstrations of 1981, the Serbian Communist leadership
could not agree on the best way to deal with the problem. Ivan Stambolic, former
president of the Central Committee of the LC of Serbia (CCLCS) and President of
the collective Presidency of Serbia, claims that such timid policies regarding Kosovo
were due to the fears that more assertive policies could be interpreted as a call to
Serb nationalists and supporters of Rankovic to square old accounts.282 The Serbs
and Montenegrins felt that their nation was in danger of extinction by Albanians who
had pretentions to the sacred birthplace of the Serbian nation, where its greatest
historical battles had been fought. Kosovo was the region central to Serbian history
and mythology, the source of Serbian heroic pride.283 Even though the region was
home to multiple political and economic crises, ethnic and national issues began to
dominate and subsume all others. The constitutional process of decentralization and

281 Stephen Pavlowitz, The Improbable Survivor (Columbus: Ohio State
University Press, 1988).

282 Ivan Stambolic, Put u Bespuce [The Road into Wilderness] (Beograd:
B92, 1995).

283 Dennison Rusinow, “To Be or Not to Be? Yugoslavia as Hamlet,”
University Field Staff Reports 18 (1990–91): 1–13; Aleksandar Tijanic, “Najveca
Avantura Yugoslavije [The Biggest Yugoslav Adventure],” Danas, 25 August 1987,
pp. 12–14.
strengthening of self-managerial units under Tito was a general tendency as all the republics were gaining independence in relationship to the center, especially after the 1974 Constitution. In Serbia, however, the constitutionally affirmed independence of the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, and the concomitant lost power of the Serbian leadership to appoint provincial officials, was an emotional issue—perceived by many Serbian nationalists as a deliberate policy of destroying the Serbian national state.\textsuperscript{284}

In 1986, radical Kosovar Serbs started a campaign against Kosovo’s Albanian communist leadership. Their delegations went to Belgrade where they made emotional pleas for protection against the allegedly widespread politically motivated rapes of Serbian women by Albanians. Over the next four years, they would act as Milosevic’s strongest tool.

The Kosovo Polje Committee organized so-called meetings of solidarity in which they told tales of suffering, of rapes and harrassment and of being forced to move under pressure. They demanded protection from Albanian separatists, but their ultimate goal was to bring both autonomous provinces under Serbia’s direct control. The most prominent leaders of the Kosovo Serbs were Kosta Bulatovic, Miroslav Solevic, and Bosko Budimirovic. While they held secret talks with Serbian party leadership, Pristina’s League of Communist accused them of “consciously manipulating justified dissatisfaction of Serbs and Montenegrins by encouraging national divisions and conflicts.” Solevic refused to call their activities...

nationalistic. They criticized the inefficiency of the present leadership and demanded that Kosovo province be put under control of Republic of Serbia, to “prevent creation of Greater Albania.” To the Albanian population these requests meant suspension of their constitutional rights.

The crisis in Kosovo continued to test the already divided Serbian leadership. The major divisions were about the position of Serbia in relation to the federation and how best to solve that problem. Ivan Stambolic, leader of the moderate line, was increasingly discredited because of his moderate approach. The inability of the Serbian leadership to deal with persistent economic, political and ethnic problems deepened dissatisfaction within both the general population and the ranks of the Serbian intelligentsia.

The most indicative document that revealed a broad strand of how Serb intellectuals perceived the Yugoslav crisis was The Memorandum of SANU (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts). The day when the draft of this document was published, on September 24, 1996, in Vecernje Novosti, a Belgrade daily, the potential effects were labeled a “political earthquake,” and a “political bombshell.” Written in “trenchant [and] hysterical language,” the document came out of a 1985 SANU annual meeting in which members decided to organize a commission for writing of a memorandum that would express SANU’s thinking about the current

situation in Yugoslavia. Shortly after, the members of the commission and the writers of this document openly stated that this document provided the first definition of the Serbian national program. To Milosavljevic that meant that they were one of the groups which contributed to the faster disintegration of Yugoslavia. After the publication of the Memo, the members of SANU openly supported Milosevic's policies giving public opinion the impression of complete congruence between the new government and intellectual elite. Many analysts argued that Milosevic did not have a program of his own, but that he has actually taken over the basic assumptions of the Memorandum, "the document of greatest importance to an understanding of the Serbian national movement and political processes in Kosovo, Serbia and Yugoslavia."  

While the document dealt with problems of Yugoslavia as a whole, its primary focus was on how historically Serbs were in an "unequal" position in post World War II Yugoslavia, so much so that their existence as a nation was threatened. The Memo accused Tito and all non-Serb nations of consistently discriminating against the Serbs and Serbia. The document insisted that Serbia was a victim of the

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Tito-Kardelj coalition which "imposed federalism on Serbia and divided it in three parts."\(^\text{289}\) This anti-Serb coalition sponsored only Slovene and Croat economic development and "prevented Serbia's development . . . kept Serbia under constant surveillance . . . [i]ed by the idea 'weak Serbia, strong Yugoslavia.'" Instead of being rewarded for the greatest military contribution and sacrifice in the last two wars, Serbia was punished because of its "unitarism" and "centralism." "The worst historical defeat in the peace cannot be imagined."\(^\text{290}\)

Especially disturbing were parts of the Memo pertaining to the position of the Serbs in Kosovo and Croatia. The language was derogatory to the Albanians, calling them "racist, those who kill, burn, rape, desecrate . . . who terrorize, who are privileged." The Memo claims that the Serbs of Kosovo have been victims of Albanian terror and violence and have been leaving Kosovo at an increasing rate.

The exodus of Serbs in Socialist Yugoslavia in its scope and character is worse than in all earlier stages of the big exodus of Serbian people . . . [a]ccording to all evidence, faced with a physical, moral and psychological reign of terror, they seem to be preparing for their final exodus."\(^\text{291}\)

The Memorandum was equally alarming regarding the position of the Serbs in Croatia who "are a victim of refined and efficient policy of assimilation . . . all in order to disassociate Serbs of Croatia culturally, economically from their homeland."\(^\text{292}\) Then the Memo claims:

\(^{289}\) Edvard Kardelj, a Slovene Partisan hero, was Tito's chief ideologist.

\(^{290}\) "Memorandum SANU," pp. 149, 151-153.

\(^{291}\) Ibid., pp. 154-55.

\(^{292}\) Ibid., pp. 155-56.
Except for the time under the (NDH) Independent State of Croatia, the Serbs in Croatia have never before been as endangered as they are today. A resolution of their national status is a question of overriding political importance. If solutions are not found, the consequences might be disastrous on many levels, not only for relations within Croatia, but for the whole of Yugoslavia.293

This kind of language from such a dignified body as the Serbian Academy had never been heard before in communist Yugoslavia. For this group, legitimate grievances became matters involving supposed genocide—Croatia was compared to the wartime fascist quisling state, the NDH, and Serbia’s leaders were described as Communist apparatchiks unable to fight for what Serbia deserves. In the conclusion, the document called for more assertive definition of Serbian national interests and constitutional changes which would integrate two autonomous provinces into Serbia and therefore allow Serbia to protect its citizens and stop the genocide in Kosovo.294

Ivan Stambolic, President of the collective Presidium of Serbia during the time of publication of the Memo, termed the document “an obituary for Yugoslavia.” To him and other similarly minded Serbian politicians, the Memo was a formidable manifestation of Serbian nationalism. The Memo’s indictment of Yugoslavia as the reason for all the problems of the Serbs to Stambolic meant that the Serb nationalists strove to create a Greater Serbia through disintegration of Yugoslavia and conflict with other Yugoslav nations. In his opinion, the nationalists failed to see that Yugoslavia represented the only solution to the Serb question.295

293Ibid., p. 157.

294Ibid., p. 162.

In April, 1987, the Kosovo Serbs signed a petition denouncing their situation as an oppressed minority, demanding action and warning the authorities that they would no longer tolerate what they termed “genocide” being carried out against their community.

Milosevic was invited by Kosovo Serbs as the representative of the top party Serbian officials to address the communists and elected citizens. As President of the Serbian League of Communists Central Committee Presidium (CC SLC), Milosevic traveled to Kosovo Polje to explore Serbian grievances about mistreatment by Communist Albanian authorities, and to prevent the masses from marching to the capitol. The crowd of 15,000 Serbs and Montenegrins protested against alleged harassment by members of the ethnic Albanian majority, who they claimed had forced them to resettle in other parts of Yugoslavia, mainly in neighboring Serbia. In Kosovo Polje, Milosevic spoke the words that transformed his image “from faceless bureaucrat to charismatic Serb leader.”

There is another version of this event and the relationship between Milosevic and Kosovo Serbs, a version supported by Tim Judah, Laura Silber and Allan Little, and Darko Hudelist. According to these authors, rather than being used by Milosevic, the Kosovo Polje Committee used Milosevic, that is, “Milosevic was made for order and if it had not been him, then probably someone else would have taken his place.” At any rate, the Committee authored the rhetorical concepts later used by Milosevic

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such as “differentiation,” “amending the Constitution,” etc. Milosevic willingly accepted the call of the Kosovo Serbs, and prepared well for the occasion—including the presence of Television Belgrade, even though such events were usually covered by the local television. Dusan Mitevic, Deputy Director of TV Belgrade described how he introduced Milosevic as the leader of the Serbs: “We showed Milosevic’s promise over and over again on TV. And this is what launched him.”

Slobodan Milosevic

Prior to his speech of April 24, 1987, in Kosovo Polje, when Milosevic found his “populist voice,” Milosevic’s career was not different from any other careerist who joined the Communist party in Yugoslavia. His political position could be described as that of a hard-line communist, a “true believer” in the cause of Communism. On the other side, people who worked close to him said that this “true believer” behavior was a pose, and that he used Communism, as did everybody else in Yugoslavia, primarily to gain power.

At the Eighteenth Session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, held on November 1984, the most sensitive proposal the Serbian party leadership offered at the session dealt with the relations between Serbia


299 Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, p. 39.

and its provinces. Serbians openly insisted on greater jurisdiction over the provinces, and called for more decision-making powers for federal organs, but refused to call their stand on the issue a plea for centralism or unitarism. It is at this session that Slobodan Milosevic, who just recently entered the political arena, became associated with the Serbian cause, and won the approval of the conservative faction in the LC Serbia. Both Hopken and Bilandzic cited the excerpts from Milosevic’s speech at the session to justify the unappreciative response of the delegates from the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Milosevic, a member of the Central Committee asserted:

We must free ourselves of the complex of unitarism. Serbian Communists have never been champions of unitarism. On the contrary, we have throttled every attempt at such a policy. The Serbian communists have long been saddled with a complex about unitarism, and unjustly so, and made guilty for a relationship with the Serbian bourgeoisie.301

Milosevic talked as a representative of all Serbs who were tired of being labeled “unitarists” whenever they actually strove for “unity.” Another important aspect of this speech revealed Milosevic’s pledge for a market economy and prosperity, that are possible only in an “undivided Yugoslav market,” that is, where the federation is stronger than the republics. After stating that “[e]very citizen can see that the Yugoslav market is less and less united,” Milosevic attacked the existing autarchic (republican and provincial) economies of Yugoslavia by saying that “national economies” can realize “economic interests of nations only ostensibly.”302

After this session, Milosevic’s name was associated with free-market economic

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principles. His characterization as an "ideologue of reforms" reflected his desire toward radical changes for the political and economic systems of Yugoslavia.  

This talk, in which he revealed his position on the issues at hand, served to establish his credibility with the Serbian audience, and affected the receptivity of his speech delivered in Kosovo Polje in April 27, 1987.

As President of the Serbian League of Communists Presidium, Milosevic traveled to Kosovo Polje to explore Serbian grievances about mistreatment by Communist-Albanian authorities, and reportedly to prevent the masses from marching to the capitol. The crowd of 15,000 Serbs and Montenegrins protested against their alleged harassment by members of the ethnic Albanian majority, who they claimed had forced them to resettle in other parts of Yugoslavia, mainly in neighboring Serbia.

Milosevic skillfully used Ivan Stambolic, his major political patron. Stambolic generously helped Milosevic by offering him positions that he was leaving. In 1984, Stambolic, chief of the Communist Party of Serbia appointed Milosevic head of the party’s Belgrade organization. In 1986, he succeeded Stambolic, who became President of the Presidency of Serbia, as Communist Party chief (President of the Central Committee of the Serbian LC [CC LCS]) in 1986.  

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Stambolic assumed that Milosevic was a good team player and that as a representative of the younger generation, unburdened by the legacy of the past, he would help him in finding a moderate resolution to Serbia’s internal problems. In the period 1981–86, it seemed that way—just as was Stambolic, Milosevic was an ambitious politician, and his rhetoric was that of a follower of Titoist communism and bitter enemy of nationalists.

When Milosevic became president of CC LCS Presidium things started to change. The event of Milosevic appointment to the top Serbian party position was very controversial as well. Per Milosevic’s request, Stambolic recommended only Milosevic for the position, despite expectation for multiple candidates, which the party started to embrace in an effort to present itself as a more democratic institution. At that time, Stambolic considered this demand as another one of Milosevic’s ambitious tantrums and therefore asserted undemocratic methods in order to put his protege in that position. Only a year later, Stambolic would realize what he had done.305

The first card to be played by Milosevic was Kosovo. Knowing the importance of Kosovo in modern Serb mythology, Milosevic successfully used the grievance of Kosovo’s small Serbian minority against the ethnic Albanian majority. He became the first postwar communist leader to overcome his fear of the masses and to use the masses for his own purposes. In order to use the masses, Milosevic

(...continued)


embraced nationalism, and by doing that, paradoxically he reinvigorated the Communist party. Since he presented himself as a leader who fought for national goals, his opponents, both communists and nationalists, had very few political tools to use against him.\textsuperscript{306}

The Tools: Rhetoric and Media

Milosevic's Kosovo Polje speech of April 24, 1987\textsuperscript{307} is important for several reasons. At the meeting before his address, Milosevic ordered police to stop beating people, "No one has the right to beat the people!" That gesture appeared as an encouragement to a Serbian crowd to take on an official police structure, which was mostly Albanian. The sentence alone was very significant because Yugoslav leaders of Milosevic's rank did not encourage demonstrations of one ethnic group against another in such obvious terms. Milosevic not only took a stand against the police, who were attempting to stop the demonstrations, but also exonerated the Serbs of any ideological deviations in their attempts to undo the autonomy of Kosovo. "Very briefly, he said, "such gatherings are not the gatherings of nationalists. Such gatherings are not gatherings of enemies." He also threatened Albanian separatists:

Albanian separatists and nationalists have quieted down a little. They are counting on time, and the circumstances work for them, as well. They should know, however, there will be no tyranny on this soil any more. That will not


\textsuperscript{307}This speech is published in Milosevic's \textit{Godine Raspleta}, pp. 140–147. Translation is available in FBIS-EEU-87; Full citation: Milosevic Address. (25 April 1987). \textit{Belgrade Domestic Service in Serbian}. Translated by FBIS-EEU-87; 27 April 1987. All the quotations are from this speech, unless noted otherwise.
be allowed by the progressive people of Kosovo, it will not be allowed by Serbia, and it will not be allowed by Yugoslavia.

Instead of calming things down, Milosevic added fuel to the fire, and it was all broadcast on the main Serbian news at 7:30 p.m. Milosevic became a popular Serbian hero overnight.

The speech Milosevic delivered in Kosovo Polje would later be characterized as legendary. He was able to identify and express emotions his Serbian public was feeling at the time. By saying, “Comrades, it is clear to all the people all over Yugoslavia that Kosovo is a great problem in our land and that it is being slowly solved,” Milosevic uttered aloud the words that were until then only whispered. He criticized the leadership of the Federation and the League of Communists as being indifferent to the Serbian issue. “In solving all these problems the League of Communists unfortunately has not always been united and, therefore also could not be sufficiently effective.” He identified himself with the Kosovo Serbs by claiming that the “emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins under economic, political, and simple physical pressures constitutes probably the last tragic exodus of a European population.” He compared the emigration to that which occurred during the Middle Ages. His party vocabulary was interwoven with emotionally charged nationalistic statements which were aimed at assuring people that he was aware and understood the seriousness of the problems affecting Serbs in Kosovo:

The spirit of separatism and often of counterrevolution is still present in the process of education and training, and in cadre policy. The emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins under economic and political and simple physical pressure constitutes probably the last tragic exodus of a European population.

308 Jajcinovic, “Suspicious.”
The last time such processions of desperate people moved was in the Middle Ages.

Realizing that Kosovo's political problems reflected the feeling of abandonment fostered in Serbs and Montenegrins and that these problems had become psychological problems, Milosevic touched something that was a taboo topic for many years: Serbian national pride. Milosevic said that "it has never been in the spirit of the Serbian and Montenegrin peoples to give up before obstacles, to demobilize when they should fight, to become demoralized when the going is difficult." These words provoked in his countrymen remembrance of their traditions of statehood and military prowess, particularly on the Allied side in both world wars. This heroism entitled them, the majority of Serbs believe, to a position of at least "first among equals" in Yugoslavia.

Milosevic called on the Serbs to remain on their land where their fields, their gardens, and their memories were. By saying, "Surely you will not leave your land because it is difficult to live there and you are oppressed by injustice and humiliation," Milosevic reminded Serbs of their historical duties because with their departure they would "disgrace [their] ancestors and disappoint [their] descendants." And by leaving, they would implicitly validate Albanian claims to Kosovo as an Albanian


land. Milosevic skillfully verbalized the emotions and grievances of his fellow Serbs at this time, and for that reason he was declared “the leader of all Serbs.”

One of the most important consequences of this rhetorical event was the meteoric rise of Milosevic as a proponent of the “Serbian initiative.” The Serbs had finally found their long-desired political leader who promised to deal with their problems. He became the most popular and celebrated Serbian politician, recognized as a truly charismatic leader. The power his audiences granted to Milosevic was one of the necessary prerequisites for the changes in the political and social system he wanted to inaugurate. In this speech he encouraged stereotypes of Albanians as separatists and irredentists. Such tactical moves were in the service of his immediate political solution—the revision of the 1974 Serbian constitution and a sharp reduction in the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina.

Tijanic ascribes Milosevic’s political success and his becoming the Serbian leader to the deep changes that were taking place in the minds of many Serbs who, for the first time in postwar history, put Serbia ahead of Yugoslavia, to discontent with federal impotency over Kosovo, to frustration with the fact that every initiative from Serbia was labeled as a “unitarist fraud of Beograd,” and resentment of the notion, carried by many in Yugoslavia, that it was sufficient to be Serb in order to be

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suspected of unitarism. Milosevic was able to identify such feelings and to remove from Serbs' consciousness the burden of historical guilt. In his rhetoric he chose to exchange it with the thesis of "victimization," and the sense of grievance which were more appealing to Serbs and their perception of history. Milosevic astutely realized that for the Serbs these were not times that would tolerate sluggishness and delicate nuances, and that this was not a period in which every debate necessarily meant espousing democracy.

This rhetorical event left a profound impact on Milosevic. Those who knew him said that he came back as a different person. He began to carry out the promises made in Kosovo Polje. Upon return, he requested the firing of the Kosovo chief of police, an Albanian. Soon after making this speech, Milosevic openly accepted Memorandum SANU as his program of action, imbuing the document with powers it did not have prior to his utilization of it. To all the critics of nationalism in Serbia and western Yugoslavia, the "Memorandum was a fire of Serbian nationalism, fueled by Milosevic." In Kosovo Polje Milosevic must have sensed an opportunity in seizing on Serbian fears. After experiencing the potential force of Serbian ethnic grievances, he saw them as offering a politically rich opportunity. Milosevic obviously decided to use nationalism as a political weapon. Milosevic embraced nationalism and contrary to Stambolic, did not think of inter-ethnic problems of Kosovo as a sensitive problem whose resolution takes patience, time and work within the legal and constitutional

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313 Tijanić, Tajni, p. 42.

314 Djukic, Kako, pp. 120–21, 124–27.
framework and in partnership with all the constituent units of Yugoslavia. These fears of others would be a constant topic that he would deploy in his communication with his people.

Five months after Kosovo Polje, Milosevic used the institutions of Serbian LC to get rid of his opposition. The Eighth Session of Central Committee of the Serbian LC was a shocking surprise for Stambolic but not to others who criticized Milosevic’s use of nationalism since Kosovo Polje. At the Eighth Session, Dragisa Pavlovic, a moderate, was removed from his position in the Serbian Party Presidium, because earlier that month he criticized those who were using the media to exploit Serbian nationalism. He was openly wondering whether the media [Politika and Politika Ekspres] could do that without someone’s patronage. Three months following the Session Stambolic was replaced as president of Serbia’s collective presidency. This Eighth Session is regarded as the moment when the charismatic Slobodan Milosevic took complete control of Serbia, thus legitimizing greater Serbian nationalism as a dominant ideology.

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317 Dragisa Pavlovic, Olako Obecana Brzina [Lightly Promissed Quickness] (Zagreb: Globus, 1988). Pavlovic used the Session to chastise Milosevic for always speaking about party “unity,” while taking measures which encouraged dissent in the LC. Some think that this was the major reason why Milosevic removed him from the position of the President of the Belgrade LC.

318 Aleksandar Nenadovic, “Politika u Nacionalistickoj Oluji [Politika in the Nationalistic Storm],” in Srpska Strana Rata: Trauma i Katarza u Istorijском Pamcenu [Serbian Version of the War: Trauma and Catharsis in Historical](continued...)
Although Milosevic promised to solve the problems of his people, the period between April 1987 and October 1988, the next big rhetorical event, his speech at the Seventeenth Session of the CC LCY, it was a period of deepening crisis for the Yugoslav federation. Conditions in Kosovo worsened—the tension between the majority ethnic Albanians and the minority Serbs and Montenegrins could scarcely improve under the strong one-sided propaganda of the Serbian media. Kosovo became a paradigm for the unsolved problems and decay of the Yugoslav legal, political, and economic system.

For the first time in modern Yugoslav history, the masses on the streets were guiding the country. Numerous strikes of workers were becoming commonplace in Yugoslavia. Another type of mass behavior, the so called “solidarity meetings,” orchestrated by Milosevic’s supporters, presented the Yugoslav leadership with the most serious threat because they proved the leadership’s inability to deal with the inflammatory political situation. Milosevic would stage these meetings on public squares. Hundreds of thousands of people waving flags and shouting slogans, such as “As long as Slobodan walks the earth the people will not be slaves to anyone,” represented the “will of the people” and no one could oppose it.  

(319) This is one of the slogans chanted during the demonstrations of the Serbs and Montenegrins in behalf of Serbian party leader Slobodan Milosevic to protest Vojvodina’s rejection of Milosevic’s proposed constitutional amendments, which call for more direct control by Serbia of two autonomous provinces Kosovo and Vojvodina. Milan Andrejevich, “New Protests in Yugoslavia,” Radio Free Europe, Situation Report, Yugoslavia, 9 September 1988, pp. 3–7.
Amid the general crisis of Yugoslav society, and of the Communist party, Yugoslavia’s only unifying force, and in the midst of the war of words that was taking place among the republican leaderships, the 188 representatives of the republican and provincial Central Committees gathered together at the Yugoslav level for the seventeenth session of the Central Committee of LCY. The session, which was held in Belgrade on October 17, 1988, was aiming at unifying the party and searching for a solution to the crisis.

The seriousness of the political situation in Yugoslavia demanded that the members of the Central Committee (CC) display the highest level of logic and understanding in order to arrive at solution to the country’s problems. Statesman’s oratory appeared to be most appropriate for a member of LCY CC, because it appeals to reasoned argumentation and clear presentation of the issues at hand. However, demagogic rhetoric prevailed in Milosevic’s address, thus implying that his intentions were not so much the preservation of Yugoslavia as the advancement of Serbian initiatives and his own goals.

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320 The LCY Central Committee was the most authoritative body in Yugoslavia’s communist-party system. The most significant resolutions and decisions were issued in the name of The Central Committee, and they served as a guideline for the future actions of its members. The public interest in this plenum indicated that the expectations among people were high. People hoped that the Central Committee at its 17th Plenum would adopt decisions of crucial importance for the fate of the country. See Lovric, “Sudbonosni.”
In the speech Milosevic expressed the expectations of the Serbs, "From this session Serbia expects changes that are necessary not to overcome the crisis but to resolve it." Through this speech Milosevic revealed a dogmatic attitude toward the changes that would supposedly pull Yugoslavia out of crisis. He displayed ethically highly questionable arguments, especially in that part where he justified the "solidarity meetings." The purpose of the whole speech appeared to justify the policies he inaugurated as the president of the Serbian League of Communists.

Much of the speech is devoted to the topic with which Milosevic became identified—criticism of existing leadership: "[T]he leadership continue their marathon and sclerotic sessions while the citizens continue to be poorer and poorer, the peoples more divided, and the Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo exterminated." He asserted that the Serbs have understood "this session as an end to a number of sessions that did not succeed" in solving a problem that has resulted in "the great, perhaps irretrievable migration of Serbs and Montenegrins from their land, and for the last genocide in the twentieth century." He scolded the leadership for wanting to address other problems first:

Maltreatment, rape, and the humiliation of people cannot wait until inflation is bridled, unemployment is reduced, exports are increased, the standard of living is raised, democratic centralism is applied, and the relations between the class and national elements are discussed . . . in the political and generally in the spiritual sense, the people have outgrown their leadership.

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321. This speech is published in Milosevic's Godine Raspleta, pp. 264–271. Translation is available in FBIS-EEU-87; Full citation: Milosevic Addresses Plenum. (17 October 1988). Belgrade Domestic Service in Serbian Translated by FBIS-EEU-88-201; 18 October 1988. All the quotations are from this speech, unless noted otherwise.
Milosevic's oversimplification of the complex Kosovo situation (explaining it only in terms of violence and crime committed by Albanians, and describing the Serbs only as victims of the crime) intentionally reinforced the stereotypes of "bad Albanians." Although he did not use that term, one could not accuse him of being ambiguous because the political context of his speech made his message clear. The speech was an appeal to hatred toward Albanians, or in Milosevic's emotionally charged language, to "[t]hose who exiled the whole nation from its territory"

As much as Milosevic presented himself as the promoter of the changes toward a "socialist democratic country," the evidence he presented appeared rather as pseudo-proof. The speech as a whole provides a good basis for an assessment of Milosevic's ethos as that of a demagogue, and for the claim that he was using demagogic as opposed to statesmanlike rhetoric. In the dogmatic move toward monolithic ideological unity, Milosevic did not tolerate any dissent; he even rejected the "pluralism of interests" which was the only legal way to express different opinions in the Communist party, because

[t]hose who exiled the whole nation from its territory do not have an equal position in this pluralism of interests with those who were exiled...their interests are based on the exploitation and humiliation of other people and they do not represent a part of pluralism of self-managing interests, but constitute injustice and shame.

The part of the speech that is most indicative of his opportunistic, and thus demagogic political attitudes is that where he undertook the task of informing "the comrades outside Serbia who, because of divisions in the media are not well or sufficiently informed...about the situation in Serbia." First he defended the meetings of solidarity with Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins:
Comrades, these are held against the inability of the existing institutions and some individuals in them to stop the terror in Kosovo. . . . This kind of public reaction is not incompatible with our social system. On the contrary, it is fully in the spirit of our socialist and self-managing system, whose essence lies in the fact that all working people should manage society.

The strategic use of his rhetoric becomes apparent when one sees that each “fact” Milosevic earnestly presented was followed by an attack on those opposing the constitutional changes he offered. So the “fact” about the meetings is followed by the following statement:

In this respect, the condemning or banning of citizens’ gatherings in our society is not acceptable. Nobody has the right to do this if these meetings are rallies for socialism and Yugoslavia and are held with the aim of stimulating institutions to take actions to protect and develop socialism, which is something they are not doing at present.

Milosevic’s audience at this Session consisted of representatives from all parts of Yugoslavia. His appeal to their understanding of “the real face of the meetings . . . [as] something sacred” did not find a responsive audience. It was difficult for the representatives to trust him because the media in other parts of Yugoslavia were disclosing that “the real face” of the meetings was not what Milosevic wanted them to believe, but the instrumental use of the discontented masses for particularistic political ends.322 One of the organizers of the meeting of solidarity in Novi Sad, Scepanovic, reveals that the removal of the Vojvodina government was planned and “programmed . . . [i]t took only somebody to . . . direct the events.”323

322 For example, see Danas, 1 March 1988; Danas, 11 October 1988.

Milosevic's public discourse, of which the above is an example, propelled his reelection as Presidium President of Serbia's League of Communists Central Committee. To the Serbs, his rhetoric provided justification for the actions he undertook in this period, actions whose dogmatic nature only added fuel to a country already burning with problems. One of these actions was the takeover of media.

Aware of the power of mass media in politics, right after Eighth Session, 23–25 September 1987, Milosevic took control over the most influential Serbian media, the major TV network, Radio Televizija Beograd, RTB, and the largest newspapers. One of the publications was especially important, the daily Politika. Long-term correspondent for the paper Aleksandar Neneadovic argues that Politika coverage ensured popular support and political legitimacy. The public trusted Politika more than any other publication. The paper already had a great influence on public opinion, if not of entire Serbian nation, than on the most educated political and cultural elites. That explains, Nenadovic argues, why there was so much conflict over ownership of the paper as well as abuse of the paper’s media power. However, after Milosevic took over it, this power also made Politika especially responsible for “spreading the epidemy of demagogic populism and aggressive nationalism.”

From 1980 to 1987, Radio Television Belgrade (RTB) was an example of objective reporting from Kosovo and strong anti-nationalist orientation. After the Eighth Session in 1987, things started to change in this medium. The editorial policy, led by Dusan Mitevic, was to show all the events pertaining to Milosevic’s ascent to power as well as the meetings of solidarity, the symbol of inefficiency of the federal

\[324\] Nenadovic, “Politika,” p. 608.
government in solving Serbia’s problems. The news reports recalled myths and history which could provoke passions of its viewers. The programs of RTB became the means by which most militant and nationalistic actors transmitted their messages to the people of Serbia and inflamed nationalistic passions. “We want arms!” “Death to Vlasi! (Chief of LC in Kosovo),” “We are all Serbs!” are some of the messages broadcast on RTB. The effect of these messages was powerful since no official leader or institution publicly opposed any of these militant events. The RTB played an important role in transmitting messages that reinvoked old myths, reminded people of Serbia’s victimhood throughout history, showed Tito in a negative light, heated the dilemma about whether Yugolavia was the right choice for the Serbs and the possibility of reconciliation between partisans and Chetniks.325

The event that played a crucial role in releasing nationalist passions of the Serbs was the celebration of the six-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje. TVB devoted much time to the event, broadcast it alive and repeated Milosevic’s speech several times. The speech delivered in Gazimestan was the most obvious evocation of Kosovo myth in building the unity of the Serbs.326 The most cited sections of the long speech sent disturbing message to other parts of Yugosavia.

Addressing over one million people at a central celebration commemorating the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, and of Serbia’s new constitution


326 The speech of Gazimestan is my translation from Politika’s (29 June 1989, pp. 1–3) transcript of the speech. All the subsequent quotations are from this speech, unless noted otherwise.
proclaimed amid demonstrations and bloodshed in Pristina in March 1989, Milosevic exclaimed:

Due to the forces of history and destiny, in the year in which . . . Serbia, after many decades, regained its state and its dignity, it also celebrates the six hundredth anniversary of this historic event, which carries powerful historic and symbolic significance for Serbia’s future.

The occasion of the speech gave Milosevic the opportunity to yet again revive the myth of Kosovo, but this time, since his charisma was so complete, to criticize the disunity of the Serb leadership in 1939, and to use it as an allegory for contemporary problems.

If we lost the battle, it was due not only to the Turkish military superiority, but also to the tragic discord of the Serbian state. The discord, the evil fate, followed the people throughout its history . . . and later, in socialist Yugoslavia, when the Serbian leaders remained divided, prone to compromises at the expense of their people.

This message can be understood as a justification for removals of many officials from the Serbian leadership who did not agree with his hard-line policies in the creation of a unified Serbia: . . . “today we are in Kosovo to say . . . that such disunity does not exist.” Additionally, it constituted open criticism of Titoist federalism, which divided Serbia and left 20 percent of its population outside of the Serbian republican border.327

The part of the speech that would send the most serious threat to the leaders of other Yugoslav republics was where he explicitly mentioned the possibility of war:

"Six centuries later, we are in battles again. And facing new ones. They are not armed battles, though such battles should not be excluded yet."

Some authors interpret this as Milosevic’s threat to Kosovar Albanians. The TV spectacular at Gazimestan was designed to promote and strengthen the myth of Kosovo as the cradle of Serbian medieval culture and a foundation of Serbian national identity. The TV reporters reminded the Serbs how the territory which belonged to Serbia until 1974, was unjustly taken from Serbia. They commented how Albanians would sooner or later remove Kosovo from Serbia and unite it with Albania. Serbia, therefore, had to reestablish its authority over Kosovo. Once again, Milosevic appealed to self-evident, justified and painful grievances of the Serbs, now victims in the heart of their own ancestral land, denied by Albanians their historic right to live where they belonged. By suggesting that he would stand up for the Serbs, Milosevic essentially appealed to justice. Thus, when shortly after the Gazimestan celebration, the Serbian army and police were sent to Kosovo to abolish its political and cultural autonomy, many of Milosevic’s TV viewers believed that he was doing what had to be done to restore justice. Looking straight into TV cameras, Milosevic appeared as a real hero.328

The decision of RTB to write subtitles in cyrillic for the programs intended for all-Yugoslav broadcast, was received negatively in the rest of Yugoslavia. After 1989, RTB was not allowed to air any programs that examined political situations in a critical manner, or to host any academics or politicians who were critical of the

regime in power. It became an instrument of propaganda of one man, one party, and
Serbian nationalism, with the mission to provoke hatred by showing Serbian people
the danger coming from others, first Albanians, then Slovenes, then Croatians, and
later Europe. One of the programmatic decisions was to promote unity with all the
Serbs who live outside Serbia in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and to include
their TV programs in TVB. When the war started in Croatia between Serbian
paramilitaries and the Croatian army, the news reports talked about "endangered
Serbs," "massacres committed to the Serbs," "Serb refugees." The victims of Serbian
violence were never mentioned. Since the TVB adopted the realization of Greater
Serbia, it openly supported Serbian paramilitaries and celebrated war criminals as
heroes. 329

Milosevic fired and replaced directors and editors of the main publications:
Politika and Politika Ekspress, Vecernje Novosti and Duga, and of RTS—Radio
Television Serbia. They, according to Djukic, did the dirty jobs for Milosevic by
promoting hatred and fear of other peoples. Duga, for example, wrote about the
Slovenes' exploitation of the South, of Albanians poisoning their own children and
blaming the Serbs. The magazine also wrote highly emotional articles about Slovene
chauvinism toward the Serbs and about Croatian genocide of Serbs in the NDH in
1941, all of which forced the Serbs to "defend their pride." The paper elevated
Milosevic for being the first one to understand to what extent Albanians degraded

heroic Serbian people.\textsuperscript{330} The editorial policy of these publications became a tool for Milosevic's quest for arbitrary power, all under the guise of populism and national reawakening in Serbia. In their writing, they discredited leaders of other nations and nationalities and promoted Milosevic as the only legitimate leader, since "the people" loved him. The president of Politika Publishing Board, Zivana Oblina, resigned in September 1987, because "Politika was losing its identity."\textsuperscript{331}

Milosevic's team would inform the editors what to put on the front page, sometimes even sent articles to be published in their papers. Since the editor of Politika claimed in 1988, that "no [paper] can think differently than the people," the papers lost their professionalism and credibility. Milosevic found that the most efficient method of conquering the media was to appoint journalists into various party commissions and give them authority and trust that only party functionaries enjoyed. This joining of professional and political power resulted in greater power of the media than the old Titoist communist had.\textsuperscript{332}

The fact that Dragisa Pavlovic, Belgrade LC president, was purged (at the Eight session) for criticizing the burgeoning nationalism of Politika and Politika eskpres, Duga and Intervju, proves the strategic importance of these to Milosevic. A

\textsuperscript{330}Zoran Markovic, "Nacija—Zrtva i Osveta [Nation—Victim and Revenge]," in \textit{Srpska Strana Rata: Trauma i Katarza u Istorijском Pamcenuj [Serbian Side of the War: Trauma and Catharsis in Historical Memory]}, ed. Nebojsa Popov (Beograd and Zrenjanin: Republika, 1996), pp. 646–60.


\textsuperscript{332}Slavoljub Djukic, "Izmedju Slave i Anateme [Between Fame and Anathema]" (Beograd: Filip Visnjic, 1994), pp. 70–73, 90; also see Nenadovic, "Politika," pp. 589–91.
few weeks later, the director-general of Politika, editor of NIN and editor-in-chief of
news at TV Belgrade were removed for not supporting Milosevic. In Kosovo,
almost all Albanian journalist lost their jobs at TV Pristina and the Albanian language
daily Rilindja. In Vojvodina, after the removal of the provincial government in fall of
1988, Milosevic’s people first ousted the management of Radio-Television Novi Sad
and the major daily Dnevnik and replaced them with his loyalists.

After Milosevic discredited his opponents in Serbia, the media were in charge
of demonizing Albanians. Not only did they call them thieves, rapists, illiterate,
murderous, irredentists, secessionists, but they also created an atmosphere where the
Albanians would be viewed as second class citizens. The Serbian media took on itself
the task of revealing the alleged violence Albanians committed, the purported
desecration of graves and churches, and the resulting exodus of Serbs. The picture
presented was one-sided, placing all the blame on the Albanians, while the economic
reasons for leaving the poorest region in Yugoslavia were seldom stressed. The
Serbian media regularly depicted Albanians as irredentists, separatists, and terrorists.
Such stereotyping only deepened the dissention between Albanians and Serbs.

After the Albanians, the victims of Serbian propaganda became Slovenes and Croats.

333 Mark Thompson, Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia

334 Jasmina Kuzmanovic, “Media: The Extension of Politics by Other Means,

335 Agneza Bozic, Kosovo kao Problem Komunikacije [How the Kosovo
Problem Can Be Interpreted as a Problem of Communication. Unpublished Diploma
paper, University of Zagreb, Croatia, 1990.
Djukic describes how *Politika*’s editor, Zivorad Minovic, Milosevic’s good friend, used a particularly tragic situation to inflame Serbian feelings and provoke revengeful feelings toward Albanians.

The event was a killing in one of the Army barracks in Paracin, September 1987. Aziz Keljmendi, an Albanian soldier, killed four soldiers and wounded six. Even though it was clear that Keljmendi was mentally ill, and that his motivations had nothing to do with anti-Serb sentiments (in his illness he did not choose the “target”: two Muslims, one Serb, one Croat; among the wounded were three Muslims, two Croats and one Slovene), Minovic saw it as “perfect for our situation” and decided to capitalize on this situation rather than to provide objective information. Belgrade press gave enormous publicity to the event, the headlines and letters to the editors were heated and fanned anti-Albanian feelings. *Politika* alone devoted four pages to this event for several days, including the first page. In other parts of Yugoslavia, Milosevic was criticized for reducing the once respected *Politika* publications into bellicose pieces of propaganda. The editors of the media who could not ethically accept “Stalinist dictatorship,” or who opposed the imposed view from above were forced either to resign or to accept lower positions.\(^{336}\)

When Croat and Slovene authorities refused to accept Milosevic’s policies of domination, Milosevic used the media to incite national hatreds and fears. As a strategy to forge and consolidate public support for his aggressive policy, Milosevic’s media campaign had no precedent in post-1945 Europe. The Kosovo campaign

created a media model which was extended to incorporate other targets of the Serbian leadership. This model identified and stigmatized a national enemy, rallied and homogenized Serbs against this threat, and called for resistance. After the Albanians in Kosovo, the enemies were Slovenes and Slovenia, then Croats and Croatia, then Bosnia and its Muslim population. Simultaneously, there were accusations against foreign targets such as CIA, the Germans, the Masons, the Vatican, the Jews and the United States.337

Media propaganda enabled the Serb authorities to encourage all Serbs to see themselves as the tragic blameless victims in an international conspiracy to destroy the Serb people and their homeland. In Belgrade, communist methods adopted the nationalist ideology, have from the start of the conflict deliberately incited Serbian fears of “ustasa hordes” in Croatia and of “Muslim fanatics” in Bosnia. “Politika Ekspres” of October 23, 1991. published a testimony of a Serb soldier about the brutality of the ustashas. This information was taken by the Military Museum in Belgrade as part of the exhibition on crimes committed by the Croats. Mr. Lozo wrote to the Military Museum to say that his statement was taken out context and as such made of him “a propagator of hate.” He demanded that his complete testimony contained the description of the crimes committed by the Serbs, “many crimes for which we the Serbs should feel ashamed and sorry for.”338 In the old days, arguments were between liberals and conservatives, even Stalinists; now all debate

337 Thompson, Forging War, pp. 55–56.

was reduced to ethnicity. Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) was one of the Belgrade
government’s most powerful instruments of war.³³⁹

Since the media became government mouthpieces, they played an active role
in bringing on the war.³⁴⁰ From late 1987 to spring 1990, Serbian state-controlled
media published and aired a number of materials that evoked events from the Second
World War, in particular the crimes committed against Serbs by Croatian Ustasha.
Duga published five serials on Ustasha crimes during those months. Brana Crnceanic,
Duga’s columnist, wrote about an alleged “inherently genocidal nature” of Croats.
Other typical stories in Duga or the daily Politika ekspres dealt with the topics of
Croat and Slovene exploitation of the Serbian economy for the last fifty years or
longer. The media encouraged anti-Croat and anti-Slovene feelings, with generous
help from prominent writers and academics. Serbian poet Matija Beckovic coined a
phrase about Serbs as “remnants of a Slaughtered people.” Before elections in
Slovenia and Croatia, in spring 1990, the media demonization of the non-Serbs,
especially Croats, was at its highest. Politika and Duga referred to most of Croatia’s
new parties as “ultra-nationalist” or “Ustasha-like.”³⁴¹

In Serbia, the Milosevic regime had done its best to limit if not destroy
independent media by imposing crippling taxes, restricting access to more powerful
broadcast transmitters and cutting supplies of newsprint and fuel to the independent

³³⁹William Shawcross, “Preface,” in Mark Thompson, Forging War: The

³⁴⁰Kuzmanovic, “Media,” p. 93.

³⁴¹Ibid.
media. The official media constantly propagated the lie that the opposition and the independent media, not the government and its allies, are responsible for all the hardship of the nation. In May 1992, Stojan Cerovic of *Vreme* wrote accurately that the director general of RTS, Milorad Vucelic, “can now calmly invite the opposition to say whatever it wants on television, because he knows that . . . anybody who explains the truth can do so only at his own cost. Reality sounds like the blackest anti-Serbian propaganda, and anyone who describes it will frighten people and turn them against him.”

Milosevic also led an “anti-bureaucratic revolution” which was directed towards removing leaders in provinces and republics other than Serbia. The object was to remove those “incapable of obeying the people’s will.” In other parts of Yugoslavia, this was seen as Milosevic’s attempt to extend his sway over all of Yugoslavia. Milosevic also sponsored “meetings of solidarity” because they

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344 The “meetings” were massive demonstrations, usually of 20,000 to 30,000 Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo, who protested the League of Communists’ inability to formulate and carry out policies for calming the ethnic conflict in Kosovo. They were also an expression of support of Serbia’s drive to change its constitution. The height of mass rallies was in the summer of 1988. They were organized throughout Serbia proper, Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Serbian-populated Montenegro. In the fall of 1988, at one of the meetings of solidarity, the government of Vojvodina was removed.
imbued him with new energy and self-confidence.\textsuperscript{345} Slovene officials publicly blamed Milosevic for open encouragement of the nationalist-inspired rallies and pressure tactics which “reminded many people of central Europe in the 1930s” when Hitler was rising to power.\textsuperscript{346}

Both the meetings and the Serbian media elevated Milosevic to the skies.\textsuperscript{347} But since he did not deliver many of his promises, and in awareness of the propaganda they were fed, the Serbs began to develop opposition against Milosevic. The first large protest was staged in March 1991. The chief request of the demonstrators was to liberate Radio-Television Belgrade from Milosevic's hands.\textsuperscript{348} This time Milosevic did not cave to the grievances of his people but sent tanks against them. At this point he was becoming the source of fear.\textsuperscript{349}

Judah describes Slobodan Milosevic as an opportunistic and cynical leader who was interested only in power.\textsuperscript{350} For Milosevic nationalism, that is politicization of ethnicity, was one of the chief ways to achieve and solidify his power. He astutely

\begin{footnotes}
\item Djukic, \textit{Izmedju Slave}, p. 112.
\item Djukic, \textit{Izmedju Slave}, p. 126.
\item Judah, \textit{The Serbs}, p. xii.
\end{footnotes}
understood the socio-cultural and political environment and administered his appeals in a way that was appealing to both working class and intellectuals. His speeches are a great example of communist orthodoxy, Serbian patriotism and calls to war. Something for everyone. And when he sensed that a new style would produce better results, he was also willing to sacrifice those who in the past were his friends and allies.

Warren Zimmerman, the last America’s ambassador to Yugoslavia best describes the effects of Milosevic’s policies:

Whatever Milosevic may have contributed to the restoration of Serbia’s self-confidence, he has done major damage to the unity of Yugoslavia, to tolerance among its peoples, and to the Serbian democratic tradition itself . . . Milosevic seems compelled to move by creating crises in which he defines his own security and that of his republic by the insecurity of everybody else . . . In the longer term . . . Milosevic’s divisive tactics could encourage Slovene separatism and Croatian nationalism and ultimately split the country.351

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CHAPTER VII

POLITICIZATION OF ETHNICITY IN CROATIA

The Context

The purge of the leaders of Croatian mas-pok (mass movement) leaders in 1971 left a bitter legacy in Croatian political and cultural life. Some analysts have compared the effects of the purge to the effects the “Prague Spring” of 1968 had on Czechoslovakia. Put under the leadership of orthodox Communists, led by Vladimir Bakaric and Stipe Suvar, the republic became known for its continued political repression toward any type of “nationalism,” or perceived criticism of the Communist authorities. The Republic of Croatia was ruled by Communists whose actions earned them the title of the bearers of ideological dogmatism in Yugoslavia. The repression caused widespread resignation and apathy among the population. Croatia soon earned the nickname the “silent republic.” One of the consequences was that Communist Party slowly lost its legitimacy. In the period between 1971 and 1981, Croatians had the lowest rate of entry of the new members in the LCY, while

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Serbs continued to be overrepresented. In particular, young people and women were increasingly absent in party ranks.\textsuperscript{354}

At the beginning of the 1980s, Croatia, as the rest of Yugoslavia, was experiencing serious economic crises. In the first two years after Tito’s death, the population was dealing with the scarcity of items such as coffee, sugar, detergent, oil, medicines and gasoline. Until 1983, the Party leadership did not do much to alleviate the economic crisis, and, indeed, they did not even acknowledge the crisis. When the Party finally acknowledged that the country was in crisis, the problem of internal divisions in the Party undermined the search for a solution. One observer discerned five schools of thought concerning the direction Yugoslavia should take if and when reforms came.\textsuperscript{355}

Closer to the mid 1980s, when many of the deficiencies of the system came into the open, there begun open criticism of the regime for its inability to deal with the deteriorating economy. Together with demands for democratization of the Communist party, the rise of exclusivist nationalism in various parts of Yugoslavia became pronounced as well.\textsuperscript{356} The response of the Croatian authorities was in line with their ideological proclamations and the “struggle against nationalism.” By the


\textsuperscript{356} In Serbia there were reports of Serbian students singing Chetnik songs, wearing Chetnik emblems, and assuming the names of leading Chetnik figures. Croatian youth have been reported to have sung fascist \textit{Ustashe} songs. Pedro Ramet, “Apocalypse Culture and Social Change in Yugoslavia,” in \textit{Yugoslavia in the 1980s}, ed. Pedro Ramet (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 10–11.
end of 1980, several Croatian nationalists who had been imprisoned for their activities in 1971 were taken to court and jailed again for spreading anti-Yugoslav propaganda. Franjo Tudjman, specifically, was jailed for giving interviews to Western media, in which he complained that the Croatian people continued to be politically, economically, and culturally oppressed in socialist Yugoslavia, that the oppression of 1971 had been causing a massive brain drain and strong anti-Yugoslav feelings among younger population, that the number of victims in the Croatian Ustasha concentration camps was much lower than official figures show, that exaggeration of the number of victims burdened the Croats with endemic collective guilt. 357 This was the biggest trial held after Tito’s death. The obvious message was to warn those who were seen as most dangerous to the constitutional order of the country. 358

In the 1980s the Croatian media begun to break free. The first alternative radio station appeared, and the first newspapers that were not directly under direct Party control. Especially known for their high professional standards were weekly *Danas*, established in 1982, biweekly *Start* and weekly *Nedjeljna Dalmacija*. *Danas* was known for its critical reporting about the conditions in Yugoslavia, and it quickly became the most controversial publication in the country. The LCY frequently accused it of anti-Communist views. The fact that *Danas* was published by the *Vjesnik* publishing house, an official mouthpiece of the Communist regime, testifies

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to the fact that even major publishers did not have a coherent, established publishing policy. The same events would be covered differently in different publications. *Nedjetjna Dalmacija* was often criticized and served with court orders because of the writing in the *Feral* section, edited by Split students who in humorous ways criticized individuals and the establishment.359

The conservatives in the LCY found it difficult to deal with the growing criticism of the present policies and demystification of the myths and heroes of the Yugoslav state, since the leadership succeeding Tito used them as their source of legitimacy.360 In March 1984 the Information and Propaganda Center of the Central Committee of the League Communists of Croatia (LCC) issued a document “Concerning some Ideological and Political Tendencies in Art, Literature, Theatre and Film Criticism, and the Public Declarations by a Number of Cultural Figures that Contain Politically Unacceptable Messages.” This document, known as “White Book,” was authored by Stipe Suvar and his team, and criticized about 200 cultural leaders all over Yugoslavia. It included quotations, interviews and aphorisms they published, accusing them of fermenting “cultural counterrevolution.” For this Suvar

359 The editors of this page would start their own paper, *Feral Tribune*, which would be equally annoying to the new Croatian regime as it was to its Communist predecessors. Gall, Zlatko, “Sto je Vise Kleveta i Lazi Feral Nam je Drazi [The More Slander and Lies, the More We Like and Adore Feral],” *Start*, 27 October 1990, pp. 46–48.

360 The most important were “founding myths”: first, the legend of the National Liberation Struggle of 1941–1945 that created the new Yugoslavia, second, defiance of Stalin from 1948–1953, third, self-management as Yugoslavia’s unique road to communism. Important as well was the ideology of non-alignment. Needles to say, Tito was a charismatic and undisputed leader, but also, an important element of each one of these myths.
lost the trust of the liberals and non-communists. In 1984, Ivo Skrabalo, professor at the Croatian Film Academy, published *Povijest Hrvatske Kinematografije [History of Croatian Cinematography]*. That was the last book that was sharply attacked by the Croatian LC Central Committee as “non-Marxist and nationalistic.” The author claims that such violent political criticism of his book was due to the title. Had it been *The History of Cinematography in Croatia*, he would have not been attacked. The reason is that despite federalism and other concessions to the national question, it was not acceptable to emphasize identity of nations.

Despite efforts such as the “White Book” to maintain party monopoly, there were also significant forces within the Croatian LC who argued for the democratization of public life. The deterioration of the economic situation since the beginning of the 1980s opened the debate about possible solutions. Through the debate the divisions between the forces of ideological dictatorship and those who argued for change within the party began to surface in public. Compared to the Slovene LC leaders who openly opposed Serbian proposals for recentralization and more decision-making powers for federal organs, the Croatian leadership was more reserved. Stipe Suvar argued for the status quo worried that any change in the

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361 Goldstein, *Croatia*, p. 196.

362 Ivo Skrabalo was member of the editorial board of *Hrvatski Tjednik* in 1971, a paper that was closed as part of the purge. He was not imprisoned for his activities in 1971, but was prohibited from any public political activity. As a candidate on a HSLS list, he was elected a mayor of Zagreb, Croatia’s capital in 1997, but Tudjman revoked his election. Personal interview, Zagreb, October 17, 1997.
political system might undermine the entire evolution of Yugoslav development since 1972.\textsuperscript{363}

There were also individuals within the LC Croatia who argued that change was needed. Jure Bilic, Croatian LC member, a conservative, admitted: "We have to change things; otherwise chaos will prevail."\textsuperscript{364} Along with the existing ideological polarization, important differences emerged between more economically developed Slovenia and Croatia and the rest of the country. The joke of the time was that the only thing the Party could agree on was that something needed to be done. As to what exactly needed to be done, there was no consensus among the parts of the disintegrating center.

On the eve of the Thirteenth Party Congress, in 1986, the eight constituent regional party organizations held their own Party congresses. In Croatia and Slovenia, their Tenth Congresses marked the end of an era, as younger, more liberal Communists replaced the conservatives.\textsuperscript{365} Even though there was a lot of talk about democratization, Croatian Communists were not ready to give up their monopoly. One of the ways in which they proved their hold on power was through the trial of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{365}In Slovenia, Milan Kucan, who would become independent Slovenia's first elected President, was elected as Slovene party secretary. In Serbia, at their party congress held in 1986, Milosevic became president of Serbian party. See Sabrina Ramet, \textit{Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the War for Kosovo}, 3d ed., rev. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999), p. 17.
\end{itemize}
Andrija Artukovic, the Minister of Interior, Justice, and Religious Affairs in the fascist Independent State of Croatia (NDH) during World War II. The 84-year-old Artukovic was extradited from United States in February 1986. The trial was held in Zagreb where he was charged with deliberate murder of about 230,000 Serbs, Croats, Gypsies, Jews and other Yugoslav citizens. He was sentenced to death, but his execution was postponed because of his falling health. This trial provoked mixed reactions among the Croatian Serbs. For those Serbs who remembered World War II, the trial opened old wounds, revived old memories, and stirred old hatreds. For some Serbs, this trial served to “prove the genocidal nature of the Croatian people.”

In 1987, after the Eight Session of the Serbian LC CC, during which Milosevic established himself firmly in control of Serbian political scene, Slovene and Croatian media began to write with worried criticism about developments in Serbia. The Croatian politician and theoretician, Dusan Bilandzic, expressed his fears of “destructive tendencies which use pressure and street methods in politics . . . as if the old Balkan mentalities are awakening.” The name of Slobodan Milosevic was not mentioned. In 1988, Start published an analysis of authoritarian charisma and how damaging it could be “especially if it takes an exclusive, specific ethnic orientation.” Muhic asserted: “[I]n our circumstances this . . . may be regarded as an attempt at

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forcible imposition of monolithic ideological and political unity.” Again, no names were mentioned, but from the text it was clear that the only person who could fit this description was Slobodan Milosevic.

In 1988, Milosevic’s methods of street politics and the mass “happening of the people” did not find a receptive audience either in Croatia or Slovenia. While the Slovene media were publishing freely without much supervision on behalf of the Communist elite, Croatian communists were still holding on to old cliché and methods. When, for example, Danas published an article about Milosevic and described him and his “anticonstitutional radicalism” as “the greatest danger to postwar Yugoslavia,” the Croatian Central Committee Presidium was quick to criticize the weekly as confrontational, “digressing from the platform of the Sixteenth LCY CC plenum and as “editorial mistake for which political responsibility must be established.” The Belgrade media was already describing journalists and writers who wrote critically about developments in Serbia as “Serbophobic scribes . . . who fish in muddy waters.” The article by Brkovic was characterized by Politika comentator as “an unbelievably blunt, uncivilized, and above all anti-Serbian text.”

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371 Andrejevic, “Croatian CK.”
As inflammatory speech from Serbia intensified in the late 1980s, the Communists of Croatia and Slovenia began to defend themselves against Serbian attacks. At the same time, Croatian intellectuals begin to organize secret meetings to discuss ways to break “the shameful, demeaning Croatian silence,” and to follow the changes taking place in other East European countries. Skrabalo claims that these meetings were also the reaction to the fact that there was no one political leader in Croatia who would stand up to Milosevic’s policies.

In February of 1989 about 10,000 Croatian Serbs took part in demonstration against the alleged support of the Zagreb leadership for Croatian and Albanian nationalism, and in support of Serbia's constitutional amendments, which were aimed to abolishing autonomy of autonomous provinces. This time, worried that these ethnic-related protests could lead to terrible consequences, the Croatian LC reacted. During the plenary session of the Croatian CC on May 22, Celestin Sarderlic, a moderate, accused Serbia of provoking Serbian nationalism in Croatia, by giving the Serbian population orders to resist the policies of Croatia’s Communists. He also accused Serbia of portraying Croats as genocidal people:

Hundreds of articles have been published that systematically promote the argument that Croats are by nature genocidal, anti-Serbian, and anti-Yugoslav . . . This not only spurs nationalistic tendencies but provokes feelings of

\[\text{372} \text{ Hudolist, Darko. } \text{Banket u Hrvatskoj [Banquet in Croatia], 2d ed.} \text{ (Zagreb: Globus International, 1999), p. 11.}\]

\[\text{373} \text{ Skrabalo, Interview.}\]
anxiety and fear among the citizens of Croatia and objectively increases the opportunity for Croatian nationalism and anti-Serbian feelings.\textsuperscript{374}

On July 9, 1989, in Knin,\textsuperscript{375} Croatian Communists organized a celebration of the six-hundredth anniversary of the battle of Kosovo. While the meeting was supposed to be usual official show of Communist rhetoric about brotherhood and unity within Yugoslavia, Jovan Opacic and his group of Serbs disrupted the program and told the crowd that they should relinquish the myth about Yugoslavia and focus their energies into strengthening the Serb political and spiritual identity. Some people in the crowd wore Chetnik attire and chanted “This is Serbia,” and “Slobo the Serb.”

*Srpska Borba*, the Serb emigre paper, published “Proposal for Creation of a Serbian District in the areas of Northen Dalmatia, Lika, Kordun, Banija, Slavonia and Baranja” to be deliberated and possibly adopted during the commemoration of the six-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo. The document states the following reasons for establishment of the Serbian District, which would be a new federal unit in Yugoslavia:

*The fact that in this century, in particular during World War II, genocide was practiced against the Serbs of these districts by Croatian Ustashi and Domobrans* . . . that the language spoken by Serbs and Croats is actually the


\textsuperscript{375}Knin is one of the 11 municipalities in Croatia with an absolute Serb majority and one of the old Chetnik strongholds. Even though majority of the Croatian Serbs identified with Communist regime, the areas around Knin, Obrovac, and Benkovac were more receptive to Milosevic’s policies. See Tanner, Marcus. *Croatia: a Nation Forged in War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 218–29.
Serbian language [which was stolen [from them] in the process of Catholicization of the Serbs . . . No attention should be paid to the tales of Croatian megalomaniacs about Dalmatia as the old homeland of Croatism, since if we follow that logic we can lay claim to the territories of certain Balkan and even central European states.376

The Croatian authorities arrested and jailed fourteen instigators for disturbing the public meeting and incitement of inter-nationality hatred. Opacic’s arrest, largely the result of the coverage by Belgrade media, helped to make him a Serbian hero, a victim of “endangered Serbdom.” The Belgrade media portrayed his case as that of “the man whose head has been put on the block in Croatia just because he is of Serbian nationality.”377

Opacic’s persecution resonated with Serb nationalists throughout Yugoslavia. In Croatia, however, the question of “unequal justice” arose. How is it possible that Serbs who rallied in Kosovo were not detained by Serb authorities?378 The Intellectuals of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU), especially, the patron of Serb nationalism in Belgrade, Dobrisa Cosic, adopted Opacic as their mascot and demanded from the federal authorities his release. The SANU group became involved in the issue of Serbs in Croatia, describing their position to Milosevic’s regime as deteriorating, and calling for an autonomous province for

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them.\(^{379}\) The Serbs from Kninska Krajina, many of whom had joined the nationalist Chetniks in World War II, took the Croatian government’s harsh reaction to their protests as a signal that it intended to suppress Serbian culture and deny all rights to the Serbian community in Croatia.

In an interview in \textit{NIN}, Belgrade weekly, the Metropolitan of the Orthodox church of Zagreb and Ljubljana, Jovan Pavlovic, claimed that “no one should have been arrested [after the celebration of the six-hundredth anniversary of the battle of Kosovo in Croatia] . . . since [no one] committed any misdemeanor or crime.” He stated that Serbs in Croatia did not have an equal status because many of the conditions necessary for nationalities to nurture their cultural, ethnic and religious identity, were lacking in Croatia. The Metropolitan specified:

The Serbian nationality in Croatia must have schools with instruction in its own spoken and written language; where they would study their own tradition, literature, and culture; that they have their own press, and finally, if I may be allowed to say it, their own free church . . . It is also illogical for their justified demands to be interpreted maliciously, most often as an outburst of Serbian nationalism. Serbs in Croatia have been literally deprived of many things.\(^{380}\)

To the question if present troubles in Croatia and Serbia are driving the Serbs to think about moving out, the Metropolitan answered:

\(^{379}\)Tanner, \textit{Croatia}, p. 219; Also see Laura Silber and Allan Little, \textit{Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation}, rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1997, pp. 94–95. This reputation helped Opacic in becoming one of the founders of Serbian Democratic Party. The party was founded in Knin, February 17, 1990. The leader of the party, on recommendation of Dobrisa Cosic, was Jovan Raskovic. The mission of the party was to provide means of expression of the national interests of the Serbs.

The last thing I would want to do as a human being is to pour oil on the fire that is already raging. Fleeing from the truth, when people talk about the relations between Serbs and Croats in their joint state of Croatia, is one of the most frequently practiced ways of inflaming ethnic passions. As a boy in my village, I saw the peasants being converted, the Orthodox Church turned into Catholic Church, I saw it demolished, people fleeing to Serbia... Even today, people speak in whispers about moving out. We are second-class citizens in our own homeland.381

From above paragraphs, it is obvious that Serbian Church indeed poured oil on a fire that was already burning. The Serbian population in Croatia was reading exclusively Belgrade publications, thus the effects of the Metropolitan’s memories of the past injustices could not be perceived but as an affirmation for the fear among the Serbs, already inflamed by the content of Memorandum and other writings. Nenad Ivankovic, who covered the Serbian Orthodox Church for Danas, claims that the Church played one of the most destructive roles in inflaming passions of the Serbs in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, in effect, influenced the content of the Memorandum.382

As nationalisms mutually incite and feed off each other, the aggressiveness of Serbian nationalism aroused Croatian nationalists. Horvat asserts that Croatian nationalism, provoked by Serbian, lagged behind Serbian for two to three years.383 The Croats saw events in Knin as a provocation, and even though entire Yugoslavia was critical of the Serbian nationalists, the main damage has been done in Croatia.

381 Ibid., p. 22.

382 Nenad Ivankovic, Zagreb, Croatia. Personal interview, 31 October 1997. See also Ramet, Nationalism, p. 251. She claims that Serbian Orthodox Church helped Milosevic in mobilization of the Serbs.

*Danas* commentator, Jelena Lovric, reflected on nationalistic incidents among Croats and Serbs of that summer, and lamented that they transformed the nationality and the republic “which up to now have been able to look the entire country frankly in the eye, to be ashamed.” The most difficult issue, however, as Lovric argued, was that in the situation of the time, the rise and penetration of Croatian nationalism could not have been prevented, because of inadequate political measures.\(^{384}\)

In 1989, many different political groups formed in Croatia. They functioned illegally, as they were not allowed to register under the existing system. Frequently, however, their representatives held public discussions, or *Tribina*, where they openly debated their programs and the future of Croatia and Yugoslavia. By December 1989, there were fifteen alternative groups and associations, twelve of which were politically active, such as the Croatian Social Liberal Alliance [*Hrvatski Socijalno Liberalni Savez*] (HSLS), Croatian Party of Rights [*Hrvatska Stranka Prava*] (HSP), Croatian Peasant Party [*Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka*] (HSS), Croatian Democratic Alliance [*Hrvatški Demokratski Savez*] (HDS), Croatian Democratic Union [*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica*] (HDZ), etc. One of the few that did not embrace nationalistic program was UJDI, the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative.

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Their program did not stand a chance in the context of the highly assertive national programs.  

Under the coordination of the Croatian Society for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, Thirteen groups formed *združenu hrvatsku opoziciju*—Untied Croatian Opposition. Their first public act involved request for internationally recognized political rights and freedoms, legalization of political parties, free elections for *Sabor* (Croatian assembly), handed in to the government of Republic of Croatia on December 8, 1989. On the day of their demonstrations, December 10, 1989, the headline of the main news program on TV Zagreb at 7:30 p.m. was that the Central Committee on its thirty-second session “recommended holding of general elections in January of next year. This initiative is with intention to speed the processes of political pluralism as inevitable in the processes of democratization of political developments in the Republic.”

The opposition saw this news as a great victory, confirmed at the eleventh party congress of the LCC, held from December 11 to 13. At the congress, the

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385 The founders of UJDI were well known intellectuals such as Branko Horvat, Zarko Puhovski, Ivan Prpic and Nebojsa Popov. They wanted to be an all-Yugoslav independent organization working on the urgent and necessary democratic reconstruction of the Yugoslav community. Their request to register as a citizens’ association was rejected on several occasions. Branko Horvat, Interview.

386 The list of the groups is in Hudolist, *Banket*, p. 155.


388 However, the historical decision of the LCC to give up its monopoly of power was equally, perhaps even more, influenced by internal divisions and struggles within the members of the LCC on how best to react to Milosevic’s attempts to (continued...)
LCC called for promotion of democratic socialism, the establishment of market economy, and the encouragement of multiparty pluralism. Croatia was the first republic in Yugoslavia to embrace Western-style parliamentary democracy in which Communists would compete openly with other political parties. The first major step toward developing a new multiparty system was to be the election in April 1990 of delegates to Croatia's Republican Assembly. Andrejevich claims that three factors explain the reformist move in Croatia. First, nationalism, namely problems with Serbian minority in Knin, representatives of which described Croatian policies toward Serbs as discriminatory. Underlying this problem is the relationship between Croatia and Serbia. Croatia's critics had labeled Milosevic's type of socialism as populist, neo-Stalinist, anti-Yugoslav, or fascist. The response from Serbia was equally blunt, accusing the Croats of separatism and nationalism. 389 Second, the debate about the future and the shape of political pluralism, and third, the call of Serbian State President Milosevic to cut all economic ties with Slovenia. 390 To this one needs to add the serious economic crisis reflected in hyperinflation.

The LCC, under new leadership of Ivica Racan, a reformer, proved their commitment to democracy by resisting Milosevic's anti-pluralist and dogmatic policies at the fourteenth extraordinary Congress of LCY that took place in January

(...continued)

undermine Tito's Yugoslavia and destabilize Croatia. See Hudolist, Banet, especially chapters 7 and 8.


1990. After being outvoted on crucial reform measures, the Croatian delegation walked out with the Slovene delegation. That move, supported by Bosnian, Macedonian and Yugoslav Federal Army delegations, in effect, marked the end of Communist Party and showed the growing strength of the republican leaderships.

The death of the only all-Yugoslav force for many meant the end of Yugoslavia. The Serb members of the LCC were not satisfied with the behavior of the Croatian communists at the congress because as they expressed it, “We do not see any future for the Croatian LC outside of the LCY.” And while the Croats approved of the delegation since they did not want to be “in a unitarist party together with Milosevic,” the Serbs were beginning to leave the LCC because they did not want to be in an “ethnic Croatian party.” The Serbs in Croatia were devoted to the party, because in World War II it saved them from Ustasha, and in the post war Croatia provided an integrating institution for them.

The elections were set for April, first round, and May 1990, second round. The LCC changed its name into League of Communists-Party of Democratic Change to accommodate its new program. In February 1990, the Serbian Democratic


Party was formed in Knin, the Krajina region. Its founders, Jovan Opacic and Jovan
Raskovic, said that goals of the party were to prepare for the upcoming elections,
fight for the equal status of Croatian Serbs in a united federal Yugoslav community
and support the formation of Serbs’ autonomous province if the people decide so at a
referendum. Judah makes the connection between Milosevic’s “There’ll be war, by
God!” pronounced four days before the formation of the SDS alluding to Milosevic’s
response to Croatia’s Communists purported “separatism.”

The communists in power devised a two round majoritarian electoral system
with single member-districts, as in France and Great Britain. As Communists
expected to win a plurality, the system was intended to maximize their representation
in the new parliament and to ensure the prolongation of their power after the first free
elections. They did not consider the outside money that had begun flowing from
Croatian emigrants, mostly in the U.S. and Canada, to Tudjman’s Croatian
Democratic Union or the outside political expertise that would create his effective
nationalist electoral campaign. The populist national party HDZ—*Hrvatska
Demokratska Zajednica* [Croatian Democratic Union] of Franjo Tudjman won the
elections. Because of the electoral system, with 42 percent of the votes, they won 58
percent of the seats in parliament, 205 out of 356. The Communists of SKH-SDP

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395 Ivan Grdesic claims that LCC-SDP’s electoral law unintentionally gave the
first free elections to HDZ as a gift. Personal interview, Zagreb, Croatia, 15 October
1997.
received 73 seats; the Coalition of National Accord, 11; and Serbian Democratic Party, 5 seats.  

Franjo Tudjman

Comparing Milosevic and Tudjman, former United States Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman, describes the former as driven by power and later as a person obsessed with Croatian nationalism. As a young adult, Tudjman fought with Tito’s Partisans in Croatia and became a member of Communist Party of Croatia in 1942. His diligent work in the National Liberation War, the NOB, and adoption of Communist ideals, Tudjman justified by his beliefs that “freedom to Croatian people can bring only Croat people themselves.” Tudjman considered Pavelic’s NDH a fascist quisling entity contrary to the teachings of Stjepan and Pavle Radic. Tudjman quickly progressed within Partisan officer corps, because of his ability to mobilize Croats from northwest regions (known for their anti-Yugoslav feelings and beliefs in Radic’s program) into the NOB, believing that Communist Party would indeed solve the national question in Yugoslavia. He often advised

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officers of the NOB to approach this population by emphasizing Croatian interests before Yugoslav.\textsuperscript{399}

After the war, Tudjman wanted to continue his education, but since the JNA Joint Chiefs of Staff in Belgrade needed a cadre from Northwest Croatia to fulfill its policy of equality of nations in the military, Tudjman was required to remain on duty. He would spend ten years working in the Ministry of National Defence. His first conflict with Serbian and Montenegrin generals, already defined as centralists by many, came in 1953, when he argued against independence of the Army from the government which was proposed as part of the Constitutional amendments. He started his academic work in the 1950s on the topic of military history and role of territorial defence in NOB, and published several books and papers. During his tenure at the Ministry of Defence, he also served as assistant editor of the “Military Encyclopedia,” for which he wrote a contributing article about the history of the NOB in Croatia. The generals so disliked his article that the Chief of Staff, General Ivan Gosnjak, decided to involve Tito. Tito did not have any comments. Those at the Military History Institute argued that Tudjman’s numbers did not correspond to the reality. Tudjman referred to their view of history as politicized.\textsuperscript{400}

\textsuperscript{399}Ibid., pp. 32–34.

\textsuperscript{400}Ibid., pp. 41–47. See also Franjo Tudjman, Bespuca Povijesne Zbiljnosti: Rasprava o Povijesti i Filozofiji Zlosilja [Wilderness of Historical Reality: An Essay on History and Philosophy of Violence] (Zagreb: Nakladni Zavod Matice Hrvatske, 1990). Here, Tudjman notices that those who wrote on Slovenia, Macedonia and Serbia did not have any reviewers, his article beside his name as an author, included names of fourteen reviewers, article on Bosnia’s NOB included names of six reviewers, and article on Montenegro five names, pp. 31–32.
In 1960 Tudjman was promoted to the rank of JNA General. In 1961 he retired from military and established the Institute for the History of the Labor Movement of Croatia, under the auspices of the Central Committee of the LCC. While at the Institute, Tudjman devoted himself to research. The major subject of his research was the contribution of Croatian revolutionary movement to the NOB, which centralist circles in the LCY tended to marginalize. During his directorship at the Institute, Tudjman stood up to such treatment of Croatia’s contributions and challenged authenticity of their research. In 1964, his commentaries to the History of SKY, challenged the Party’s version of the Cvetkovic-Macek agreement by describing it as “a step forward compared to the earlier situation” and that the agreement “solved the national question of one of the most oppressed nations-Croatia.” For this, Bakaric and Berus openly criticized Tudjman as a Croatian nationalist. He promised to Bakaric that his Institute would not open “forbidden” questions. He broke the promise several months later. In his lectures Tudjman relativised the crimes of Ustashas over Serbs. Serious historians considered Tudjman a “quasi-historian and charlatan with clear political ambitions.” Dr. Jaroslav Sidak refused to serve on Tudjman’s dissertation committee, and Ljubo Boban accused him of plagiarizing his dissertation. Tudjman responded by branding those who challenged him exponents of Rankovic’s conspiracies.

The biggest issue was his research about the victims of World War II and especially the victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp established by Ustasha,


[402] Ibid., pp. 44–45.
and known as “the biggest cemetery of Serbs in Yugoslavia.” The list of the victims was compiled in 1964 by the Republican Statistics Institute, as part of the research for the purpose of gaining war reparations from Germany. The statistics turned out to be several times less than the official figures proclaimed in 1945, and were never made public. Tudjman accepted the figures of the Republican Statistical Institute as official, and wanted to use them in his attempt to revise existing accounts of the NDH. Bakaric and Croatian Central Committee strongly opposed Tudjman in this effort and decided to eliminate Tudjman from the public life of Croatia. For the immediate cause Bakaric used the affair around Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika, Declaration Concerning the Name and Position of Croatian Standard Language. Tudjman resigned from the Institute just before he was removed from LCC. 403 This was the beginning of Tudjman’s life as a dissident, which he used to write for the rights of small nations for their national freedom and against supra-national ideologies, among which he counted pan-Slavism and Yugoslav unitarism. 404

During the “Croatian spring,” Tudjman did not have significant leadership position. He used his position as member of editorial board of Matica Hrvatska to try to remove the Croatian leadership. He was more radical than the leaders of Croatian spring, and argued for inclusion of parts of Bosnia to create Greater Croatia, but he could not find much acceptance for his ideas. Miko Tripalo, one of the mas-pok 1971 leaders later revealed that Tudjman’s vision of Greater Croatia included division of

403 Kruselj, “Franjo Tudjman,” pp. 80–82.

404 Hudolist, “Dr. Franjo Tudjman,” p. 46.
Bosnia and “human transfer.” Tudjman was imprisoned in 1972 for his activities in *Matica Hrvatska*, while real leadership was only replaced. Later released, he was imprisoned in the 1980s for giving interviews to the foreign press. These prison sentences earned him the position of martyr who sacrificed for Croatia. In the 1970s Tudjman started to make contacts with Croatian immigrants. Their role would be crucial in his election campaign and will help him in winning first democratic elections in Croatia.

The Tools: Rhetoric and Media

The speech Tudjman delivered to the First General Assembly of HDZ, held in Zagreb February 24–25, 1990, is important to this analysis not only because he spoke as the president of the party, declaring its election campaign program, but also because of the conflictual nature of the speech. The rhetorical situation appeared especially delicate because, for the first time in the socialist republic of Croatia, at Tudjman’s invitation, the Croatian emigration returned to the republic. The reputation of Croatian emigration in Yugoslavia was that of “Ustashe members,” “butchers of Serbs” and of world terrorists. Although this was a useful stand for the Communist Party, there was some truth to this, since many Ustashe members did flee abroad. However, this obviously did not apply to the entire Croatian diaspora, which also included supporters of the old Peasant Party, and other political groups as well as many who simply emigrated for monetary reason. Tudjman saw Croatian diaspora

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405 Ibid., pp. 50–52.

406 The speech is published in *Glasnik HDZ*, (March 1990): 17–20. All the citations below are from this speech, unless noted otherwise.
as one part of the Croatian nation that needed to be reunited with the homeland. He
had foreseen their potential importance, and counted on them in his campaign. He
admitted that the decision to invite the emigration back and arrange for them to get
visas, was a “turning point in my life in terms of decision making.”

He opened his speech by declaring:

This meeting as historical, because it is the first meeting of one Croatian
democratic party after full half of a century of one party totalitarianism, even
more because it is the first display of spiritual unity of homeland and Croatia’s emigration.

Tudjman argued that formation of HDZ was a result of the need to respond to
the historical process of democratic change and to defend Croatia against “greater
Serbian expansionism” and accusations about “genocidal nature of Croatianism.” To
these attacks, HDZ responded that it “argued for the right of every nation, including
Croatian, to permanent, inalienable, and complete right to independence to secession”

In this speech, Tudjman began the tactic of attacking those who disagree with
him or those who “do not have any ideas about historical and geopolitical factors
which influence the destiny of certain people.” To those who purportedly “adhere to
hegemonic-unitaristic or Yugoslav greater state beliefs and see the program of HDZ
as nothing but renewal of Ustasha NDH,” Tudjman replied:

They forget that NDH was not just “quisling” creation and “fascist crime” but
also the expression of historical aspirations of Croatian nation for its
independent state and the realization on behalf of the international actors, in
this case of government of Hitler’s Germany, which created the New
European order on the ruins of Versailles. Consequently, NDH did not
represent just a whim of the Axis powers, but was a consequence of
predetermined historical factors.

407 Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, p. 85.
This strategic move of "positive affirmation of NDH," Hudolist claims, was the result of the agreement Tudjman made with the so called "Norval circle." In 1987, when Milosevic took over Serbia, a group of Herzegovinan priests invited Tudjman to Norval, Canada. Among the members of the emigre group were Anto Beljo, Vinko Grubisic and Gojko Susak. The "Norval circle" fostered the idea of conciliation between Ustasha and Partisans as the way to fight for an independent Croatian state. In Tudjman they saw a man who could carry the message back home. During the next two visits to Canada, in 1988 and 1989, they finalized the program. The Norval group became the chief financial provider of the HDZ. In a sense, as Hudolist puts it, the Norval priests, "bought" Tudjman. Gojko Susak, the leader of the group, later became Tudjman's Minister of Defense.

In the speech, Tudjman revealed the expansionist nature of HDZ program and its territorial aims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, again arguing historical determinants:

We ask for territorial integrity of Croatian people in its historical and geopolitical borders . . . because we realize that Bosnia and Herzegovina is according to its Constitution, the national state of Croatians. Our request is expression and continuation of the views of Croatian politicians of the last century, of "the father of the nation" Dr. Ante Starcevic, Mihovil Pavlinovic, Dr. Ante Trumbic and Stjepan Radic. They talked about Bosnia and Herzegovina with respect to its geopolitical unity with Croatia and the West.

To be true to the Norval program, Tudjman included in his speech the part about AVNOJ and ZAVNOH, and how they positively contributed to development

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408 The chief components of the Norval program were: (1) independent and self-reliant Croatia; (2) unity of partizans and Ustashe in the war against Serbs; (3) Serbs reduced to the ethnic minority, i.e., ethnically clean Croatia; and (4) division of Bosnia and Herzegovina whose Croatian parts would be later attached to Croatia. Hudolist, "Dr. Franjo Tudjman," p. 53.

409 Hudolist, Dr. Franjo Tudjman, p. 53.
of Croatian nation since, if the Croats had not been on the side of the winner “they would not avoid Chetnik, (i.e., Serbian) genocide.”

Since its formal establishment in June 1989, HDZ already had offices in almost all of the Croatian cities. Such wide support, Tudjman claimed, was due to the fact that the HDZ demanded realization of the right of Croatian people for “independence within its historic borders.” Tudjman stated that part of the HDZ program is to request “that internal relations in SFRJ be based on confederal principles.”

For the many in the audience, especially emigres, this assembly served as an opportunity to voice their grievances about cruel treatment of Croats by the diplomatic corps and Yugoslav secret service. They expressed their gratitude for acceptance as part of Croatian nation. Others used the opportunity to complain about Croatia’s exploitation within Yugoslavia and the negative presentation of HDZ by the media in Croatia, especially by Television Zagreb.410 In an interview in Vjesnik, Tudjman claimed that HDZ had the most democratic, and the “most Croatian” program which derived from all the positive experiences of Croatian political past. With 200,000 members, the paper described HDZ as the largest political organization in Croatia.411

The response of the Serbs to this event and Tudjman’s controversial speech was the mass rally in Petrova Gora, Krajina, in March. The HDZ assembly was


decorated with Croatian traditional symbols. However, the traditional Croatian flag and Croatian coat of arms were last used during the 1941–45 Ustashe dictatorship. Such symbols contributed to the resurrection of this frightful period in the minds of Serbs. Even though the checkerboard pattern on the Croatian flag goes back to medieval times, and should be politically neutral, this could not dispel the anxieties and fears, fed by Milosevic’s propaganda, among Croatia’s Serbs.

Speakers at the rally labeled the HDZ a radical nationalist group intent on disrupting the country. Some protesters carried portraits of Slobodan Milosevic and called for a ban on all parties that advocated Croatian secession. The military made their opinion known in their weekly publication in which they condemned HDZ for accepting into its membership “pro-fascists and chauvinists” and “for closely cooperating with Ustasha emigre groups.” The paper called for a ban of HDZ and other Yugoslav parties with similar orientation. The Defense Minister, General Veljko Kadijevic, openly threatened to retaliate against any political party which called into question Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity. There were attempts by the military to persuade Croatian Communists to ban HDZ, but Croatian Party head Ivica Racan responded that democratization Croatia was inaugurating was not the force that was breaking Yugoslavia apart. It was, in his words, “Milosevic and [JNA’s] refusal to resist him.” Such JNA threats only bolstered Tudjman’s popularity.

The Croatian election campaign was characterized by nationalist passions and heated discussions. The question of Croatia’s relationship to the Yugoslav state


413 Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, pp. 89–90.
dominated the 1990 election. All other issues—including that of the introduction of the market economy—took second place. Without explicitly calling for independence and the immediate dismantling of Yugoslavia, as some others in the campaign did, Tudjman made it clear that, if he were elected, Croatia would function on an independent basis within a Yugoslavia that would be reorganized into a confederation or “alliance of states.” The most controversial features of the campaign were Tudjman’s statements about the Serbian minority in Croatia “All people are equal in Croatia, but it must be clear who is the host and who is the guest,” he criticized the preponderance of Serbs in administrative positions in Croatia and hints at the possible partition of Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia. Most helpful to Tudjman’s campaign was the fact that he gave priority to Croatian national interests in the face of “Serbian neo-expansionism” and “Bolshevik totalitarianism.” The victory of the HDZ in Croatia in the First elections was a combination of assertive Croatian nationalism and a kind of “anti-communist plebiscite,” since the Communists were blamed for both suppressing basic civil rights and leading the country to economic ruin.414

A few weeks before the elections in Croatia, convinced that HDZ, or Ustasha, as General Kadijevic labeled them, would win, the JNA in a joint effort with Milosevic, took away weapons from the arms depots of the territorial defence units from Croatian cities and distributed them to the Serbs in the Knin region.415


415Territorial defence (TO) was part of the concept of Total National Defence, which meant that apart from the military, each republic had reserve forces (continued...
Krajina Serbs received additional military supplies in another action, when a train carrying arms was looted of its cargo in the Knin region and the JNA did not find it necessary to conduct an investigation into the matter. The action of arming the Serbs in Croatia was a thought out strategy between Milosevic and General Kadijevic. Both of them believed that the old federation was finished and that the future lay in a smaller Yugoslavia that would unite all Serbs in one state.416

Milosevic’s plan was to allow Croatia and Slovenia to secede, but that municipalities of Lika, Banija and Kordun, which have created an association, stay on our side, and let people of these regions decide through referendum whether they want to stay or leave [Yugoslavia]. He demanded that Croatia and Slovenia be excluded from the vote on that issue since they do not represent the part of Yugoslavia which makes this decision.417

In July Drnovsek and Suvar, the respective representatives of Slovenia and Croatia in the Federal Presidency, asked for a plan of action (or exercise) of the military in 1990/1991, because there were rumors that the Army planned an operation against Croatia and Slovenia. Jovic decided that they could only look at plans in the presence

(...continued)

distributed in various cities, to call upon the event of the war. In some cities and villages, the TO arms were under direct control of municipality and in others, parts of police headquarters. Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, pp. 117–118; Judah, The Serbs, pp. 168–173.


of a general and not take any notes. Both Drnovsek and Suvar were insulted and dropped the request. Kadijevic, on the other hand, was happy to "destroy" them. 418

Croatia's Serbs (12 percent of the total republic population) voted either for the reformed communists or for the small Serbian Democratic Party lead by Dr. Jovan Raskovic, a Zadar psychiatrist. Opinion polls held during the campaign showed that the majority of Croatian Serbs strongly opposed plans for converting Yugoslavia into a loose confederation, and that they rejected the very idea of Croatia's independence. Among Croat voters, an important factor militating in favor of the idea of a loose confederation was resentment at the Serbian political and propaganda offensive, then in full swing, initiated by Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic. That resentment grew rapidly into an overwhelming massively pro-independence referendum in Croatia in May 1991, which closely matched a similar Slovene referendum held in December 1989.

On May 30, 1990, deputies in the first multiparty Croatian assembly elected Tudjman as the republic's President. All five members of Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) boycotted the session. Raskovic, the leader of the SDS, refused Tudjman's conciliatory offer that Raskovic or another member of the SDS accept the title of the Vice-President of the Croatian assembly. The speech 419 Tudjman delivered for the occasion represents his reflections on the historical importance of the first free Croatian elections in which

418 Ibid., pp. 171—174. Jovic's diary reveals that the newly elected governments of Croatian and Slovenia are identified as enemies, conspiring with the "foreign forces" against Yugoslavia.

419 The speech is published in Glasnik HDZ, 11 June 1990, pp. 16–20. All the quotations are from this speech, unless noted otherwise.
Croatian people chose the party whose program most clearly emphasized their century-long aspirations to be free and master of its faith... [The nation chose] to have unrestrained right to national independence and uncurtailed right to self-determination, which implies the right to sovereign, independent state, and secession from other nations and states; or to join other—according to its vital interests.

He repeated the promise that there would be no discrimination or any revanchism. The speech was critical of the legacies of old regime and introduced some of the changes that the new government was to work on. Among those was a need for a new constitution and reconstitution of Yugoslavia, and integration with Europe. He argued: “The only way to preserve state sovereignty of Croatia—while in union with other nations, can only be within a confederation, only as an negotiated alliance of sovereign states, a confederation of independent states.”

As one of the amendments to the Constitution, the new regime accepted the Croatian coat of arms to be put in place of the former communist symbols. The coat of arms was the historic red and white checkboard in which the top left corner is white. For the Croats, this coat of arms was an affirmation of their 900-year link to their hero-king, Tomislav and thus to their own nationhood. The new government spent a lot of time on post-electoral triumphalism—celebrations including the presence of the Catholic church, parades and new symbols of status and power all to affirm Croatian “statehood.” During those celebrations throughout Croatia, a large number of Partisan war memorials were demolished, and there was an emphasis on Croatian national symbols. It did not do anything to alleviate the fears which the combination of regime change and the upsurge of Croatian nationalism evoked in those who felt excluded from the new system, particularly of the Serbs in Croatia. Plestina argues that HDZ’s failure to do so in the crucial first six months of power
left the window of opportunity open for Raskovic, Babic and Opacic who skillfully manipulated symbols to increase fear and widen the cleavage between Croats and Serbs in Croatia.\footnote{Dijana Plestina, “Democracy and Nationalism in Croatia: The First Three Years,” in Beyond Yugoslavia, eds. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubisa S. Adamovic (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), p. 132.}

In the speech\footnote{The excerpts of the speech are published in Glasnik HDZ, 28 June 1990, pp. 9–10. All the quotations below are from this speech, unless otherwise noted.} delivered to the HDZ assembly in June 1990, on the first anniversary of HDZ founding, Tudjman used the opportunity to reflect on the problems facing the new government and offer ways in which he proposes to solve them. The chief enemy of the new government was a “resistance of old structures which, on pretense of their professionalism, are trying to hide behind the rule of law.” Tudjman especially noted how Radio TV Zagreb “continued their business as if nothing had happened.” He threatened the director of RTZ, who refused to vacate his position, even though he was one the leaders of the previous party in power. Tudjman promised to him, and others who behave in similar way, to take different steps within the rule of law. He repeated that the professionals from the old system can continue with their work, but the leaders from the old system cannot stay. “That is a principle, and there is nothing more to discuss about it.” He informed the representatives that he was working on establishment of a Croatian news agency. Tudjman also identified a new enemy, those who thought that Tudjman was a temporary solution for Croatia, because things should be done in a different way. To those who argued for more radical approach to solving Croatia’s problems, Tudjman said “not to play with the destiny of Croatian people,” because “their politics would
create enemies from allies.” This speech is also important because it offers an illustration of how HDZ was dealing with the problem of the Serbian minority. Tudjman reacted to the document printed in Cyrillic and disseminated to the municipality with majority Croatian population, after Serb Democratic Party broke relations with the Croatian Assembly. Tudjman stated that “in sovereign and democratic Croatia, the official language is Croatian and Latin alphabet. Where there is majority Serb population, cyrillic is used as well, but not solely.” He was greeted with a long applause.

Soon after, Tudjman proved that despite his talk about democratic government, he did not have much respect for democratic values. He took over the media and punished those accused of an anti-Croatian slant, i.e., those that did not obey his vision of Croatia’s developments. Serious violations of the rights of Serbs began. They were fired from work, required to take loyalty oaths, and subjected to attacks on their homes and property. Zimmerman remembers how he sat several times at Tudjman’s lunch table and listened to his ministers berate Serbs in the most racist terms. Tudjman did not join in, but he didn’t stop them either.422

The media situation in Croatia was favorable before the elections. Censorship was almost nonexistent, many new independent radio and television stations were beginning to flourish. What censorship existed was post-publication, and a rather lengthy process. Frequently, when a publication was banned, it had already sold out before the decision to ban. Danas enjoyed the reputation as the most independent weekly in the country. Despite the promise of democracy and freedom of press in

422 Zimmerman, Origins, p. 75.
democratic Croatia, the HDZ showed that it was not going to honor its promise. The means of controlling and disciplining the media included: Replacing media personnel, especially those in charge of radio, television, the Hina news agency and Vjesnik, the main national daily, by HDZ faithful. Through the privatization laws, the HDZ steered publicly-owned media companies either into state ownership or into the hands of chosen businessmen. The HDZ established monopoly of the airwaves and tolerated paramilitary means to intimidate journalists.

Things became especially difficult when the war started in 1991. Open propaganda in Croatia began in summer of 1991 with an action by army commander Branimir Glavas, to "destroy Serb terrorists" in Osijek.\(^{423}\) Tudjman wanted its version of the war's origins, course, and purpose to be uncontested. In wartime, Tudjman and his party seized the chance offered by the Serbian aggression to discredit his critics as unpatriotic and self-serving. By assuming a monopoly of the Croatian national interest, the HDZ cynically used the war as the ultimate pretext to bridle independent media.\(^{424}\)

In spring 1990, during and after the first elections, several privately owned periodicals were started in Croatia. Two of them, Slobodni Tjednik and Globus, survived the first months and built circulations of 100,000 and more. After three years of national hysteria in most of the Serbian media, national passions were now running high in Croatia. Danas magazine, which tried to hold to an objective and calm perspective, experienced a decline in circulation from 180,000 at the time of the


\(^{424}\) Thompson, *Forging War*, pp. 132–33.
1990 elections to 60,000 just before the war, a year later. The state controlled media, Vjesnik, Radio and TV Zagreb adapted to the new regime almost overnight. Within two months of the elections, through the Croatian Ratio-Television Act, the assembly changed Radio-Televizija Zagreb into Croatian Radio-Television, HRT, declaring it as a public broadcasting organization, but instead of transforming itself into public television, it soon became the mouthpiece of the party in power.

The purge in television was finished by 1991.425 HDZ’s director of the new Croatian agency Hina, referring to the anti-HDZ press: “Many of these journalist are of mixed origins, one Croat parent, one Serb. How can such people provide an objective picture of Croatia? . . . They hate Croatia . . . The only place you can read about President Tudjman is Hina news.” Antun Vrdoljak, the director-general of HRT, described Croatian Television as a “cathedral of Croatian spirit.”426 Through 1990 and 1991, journalists came under intense pressure not to criticize or even question the government. This pressure came from the ruling party, both openly and behind the scenes, and also from other journalists. Malicious attacks on “disoriented,” “unpatriotic,” and “Yugonostalgic” journalists became standard in the government controlled media. As in Serbia, new journalists, without much experience, were quickly promoted. In Thompson’s opinion, they became arbiters of the conflict for most of the population. These reporters did not try to verify allegations or to report the other sides view. When the war started a journalist “who [did] not lie for the homeland [was] a traitor and enemy.”


426 Thompson, Forging War, pp. 147–55.
*Slobodni Tjednik*, notorious for being the tabloid version of national politics often run unverified and completely concocted stories depicting all Serbs in Croatia as self-evident suspects for treason. In *Slobodni Tjednik*, and to some extent the weekly *Globus*, the Milosevic-controlled Serbian press found a sparring partner on its own level.\(^427\)

Tudjman was unable to achieve cooperation from Raskovic, leader of the Serbian Democratic Party. Raskovic demanded that the Serbs be defined as a constituent nation in the new Croatia along with the Croats and not be reduced to the status of national minority of the Serbs from Knin. Raskovic recommended that Tudjman not rush with the new Constitution, whereas Tudjman considered the new Constitution as the affirmation and declaration of the sovereign Croatian State, and insisted that debate on Constitution begin. Amendments to the Constitution were adopted in July. A week later, the Serbs, led by Opacic, adopted their Declaration on Sovereignty and Autonomy of Serb nation. Since Raskovic apparently was not militant enough, Milan Babic emerged as a self-proclaimed leader of Croatian Serbs, surpassing Raskovic and working tightly with Belgrade. Babic asked Belgrade to make sure that the Croatian flag would not fly above Knin, that Croatian police would never enter Krajina, and that Serb policemen would not wear new uniforms. On August 17, several days after the meeting between Babic and Jovic, Babic declared a state of emergency in Knin and placed obstructions on all roads leading to Knin. In the Croatian media this event was described as *balvan revolucija*, the tree-

trunk revolution. The blockade in Knin was accompanied by a referendum on the question of autonomy.

With this act, the leaders of the Serbs of eleven municipalities declared themselves an autonomous region of Krajina. The radical Serbs in Serbia staged a meeting in Stara Pazova, in support of Croatian Serbs, and offered to send volunteers to fight with them. The irregulars repeatedly cut rail and road links between continental Croatia and the coast. Tudjman’s government declared the referendum as illegal and contrary to the Constitutional order.

This event represented the first open challenge to Tudjman’s authority. He called the extraordinary session of the Croatian parliament in August 1990.

Croatia, and new democratic government is facing the conspiracy to overthrow, to destabilize, to Kosovize Croatia, to overthrow democracy in Croatia, and in Slovenia, against democratic transition in whole of Yugoslavia . . . we are facing emergency situation. What we in Croatia experienced in the last 8 days is not only civil disobedience, it is the announced rebellion. First rebellion without arms, which, as you see, culminated in open armed rebellion in something that international law calls not only violence but terrorism . . . In these eight days Croatia was put in a great test.

In the speech, Tudjman voiced frustration over the fact that he could not find anybody from Krajina to communicate with. He spoke with Raskovic on several occasions, even though his party had only five members in the parliament, “because those radical extreme Serbs, and especially in Serbia, did not consider Communist

428 Jovic, Poslednji, p. 179.


430 The speech is published in Glasnik HDZ, 31 August 1990, pp. 10–12. All the subsequent quotations are from this speech unless otherwise noted.
representatives as their representatives.” Wanting to act as true democrats, Tudjman continued

wanting to ensure sovereignty of Croatian people, we gave all the rights to the Serbs and told them “Please, we offer you, who consider yourself a true representatives of Serbian people . . . the position of the Vice-president of Sabor.” However, those talks with Raskovic did not yield results.

Tudjman argued that his government did not endorse any discrimination, but that they wished to guarantee all citizens and national rights, yet his proposals fell on deaf ears. When he called Belgrade to get an explanation about what was happening in Krajina, Jovic refused to admit any implication, even though he received the delegation from Knin. In his diary he noted that “Serb rebellion is a consequence of [Tudjman’s] ascent to power.”

In his speech Tudjman identified the enemy as the leadership of SDS (Serbian Democratic Party) “with assistance of greater Serbian, hegemonistic and unitarian mass media, messengers, agitators, etc.” He only added oil to the fire by once again explaining why it was necessary to fire Serbs from important positions.

Wanting to establish equality of the Croatian person, such equality so that he can be equal in very delicate services, from police, to finances, television, this and that, etc. We wish to ensure such equality of the Croatian person in Croatia, while the Serbs were 3, 4, 5, 6 times more represented in these most responsible services, compared to their percentage in population. The Serbs in Croatia must understand that that was momentary, maybe useful for an individual, but as a whole, damaging even to that Serb and to the Serbian population, because this did not create conditions for longer mutual coexistence on the Croatian territory.

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432 Jovic, Poslednji, p. 179.
These words, illustrate Tudjman’s insensitivity towards the Serbs at such a critical time. It certainly helped Milosevic and the JNA gain initial credibility in the eyes of the outside world for their claim that they were acting to protect the Serbs of Croatia from another round of genocide like the one in World War II.

Many Croat politicians and analysts believe that Tudjman came to power thanks to Milosevic. Racan, for example, observes:

Milosevic’s aggressive policy was the strongest propaganda for Tudjman. Milosevic was sending his gangs to Croatia, where they were dancing and singing “This is Serbia” which provoked and liberated the national pride and the nationalist reaction of Croats, which was effectively used by Tudjman.433

By the time of the first Croatian elections in the spring of 1990, the Croatian press was saturated with reports of the speeches and news reports of Milosevic and his allies. While Milosevic and Tudjman mutually reinforced each other, the population on both sides were subject to manipulation, and inflammatory media.

In the Serbian community in Croatia, the perception of an acute, palpable, and imminent danger hovered like a dark cloud over the home of each individual Serb in Croatia. The lack of police investigation or court actions in actual cases of violence against individual Serbs or their property was another factor making the Serbian community feel that it was under attack and unprotected.434

These people were an easy prey for someone like Milan Babic, who used the vulnerability of Serbian population to impose himself as their leader. A few chronological details about proclamation of autonomy of the autonomous region

433 Ivica Racan, as quoted in Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, p. 84.

Krajina testifies to that effect. The referendum on autonomy requested by Milosevic and carried out by Babic and Opacic took place several months before the Croats declared themselves in favor of confederation in October 1990. Similarly, the Serbian vote for secession in March 1991 predated by several months the Croatian declaration of independence, which was voted on in June 1991. This could be interpreted as an argument that the Serb separatist movement in Croatia was not primarily a reaction to Croatian separation from Yugoslavia, but result of the manipulation by skillful ethnic entrepreneurs in Jovan Raskovic, Milan Babic and Jovan Opacic greatly assisted by Milosevic in his attempts to preserve his power.  

However, the rhetoric of Tudjman and the HDZ provided fertile ground for the separatists.

Knin remained the sore point for Tudjman. He hoped until the last minute to avoid civil war, but he could not stop the influx of Serbian volunteers who came to help their Serbian kin. JNA showed that they indeed found a country to defend—mini Yugoslavia including all the Serbs, so even before the official outbreak of the war in Croatia, following its declaration of independence, the JNA was fighting alongside Serbian irregulars, under the pretense of keeping the two sides apart. Only in 1992 did Army generals admit to cooperation with Serbian volunteer forces in Knin, because the Serbian Minister of Defence was confronted with a question of what to do with so many returnees from the war. He claimed that Serbian volunteers who joined the JNA to fight in Knin have the same rights and duties as any soldier. This included particularly vicious groups such as Draganović, Seselj’s White Eagles,

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Arkan’s group, etc. Nincic concluded that the JNA was never this permissive toward Croatian volunteers.\textsuperscript{436}

Radicalism was on the rise among the Croats. There were many volunteers who were willing to fight the enemies of independent democratic Croatia. Some of the most radical Croats criticized Tudjman for his “Gandhi-type of politics” and “retreat in the face of more and more aggressive Yugoslav monster.” These groups argued that “to terror and killing, the state needs to respond adequately.” Just as radical Serbs from Serbia wanted to “liberate” Serbs in Croatia, so the majority of the radical Croatian groups wanted to help their Croatian kin in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{437}

Kuzmanovic, a media analyst argues that the war between Serbia and Croatia has from the start also been a war for interpretation: the interpretation of what is going on, who is defending and who is attacking, and what is the “truth.” Some journalists have clearly violated the international code of ethics for war reporters. Duga’s Nebojsa Jevric repeatedly wrote how he took part in fighting and looting on the Serbian side near Knin in Croatia, while researching his story. Duga’s editorial board praised Jevric and another reporter for having taking part in that action. Croatian reporters would report from the battlefield without any regard for the Serbian victims.\textsuperscript{438} As part of the war of interpretation, one of the most crucial media issues was naming the enemy. The Serbian electronic media used “Ustasha forces”


\textsuperscript{437} Kruselj, Zeljko, “U Boj, U Boj [To the Battle, To the Battle], \textit{Danas}, 4 December 1990, pp. 19–20.

\textsuperscript{438} Kuzmanovic, “Media,” p. 94.
and "Tudjman's black legions." As for the Serbian irregulars, the terms "reserve forces" and "defenders" were the terms of choice in the state controlled media in Serbia. In particular situations where the JNA and Serbian irregulars were besieging a city or area with a clear Croatian majority, paradoxes took place. "The defenders of Mirkovci [a Serbian village] have encircled Osijek," Belgrade TV reported in October 1991. Later, when Serbian irregulars attacked the Croatian city of Zadar and fought a battle near Maslenica Bridge, the TV reported that "defenders of the bridge are progressing toward the city."  

The Croatian media first dropped the word "Yugoslav" in talking about the JNA. Croatian TV eventually decided on the expression "Serbian-Chetnik Army," sometimes adding the modifier "occupational." Other Croatian media used "Chetniks," "terrorists," "rebels," "fighters for Greater Serbia," and "Serbian Army." The war over interpretation was also a war for radio frequencies. It had started in spring 1991, when the first illegal Serbian radio station began broadcasting in Petrova Gora (Radio Petrova Gora). Illegal Serbian stations later appeared in Mirkovci, Celarac, and Sveta Nedjelja, Croatia. The Croatian TV transmission tower on Sljeme above Zagreb was twice hit by army rockets in fall 1991.

The following example testifies the extent to which Serb and Croat media saw and interpreted horrible events of the war in Croatia: Borovo Selo was a municipality with a majority Serbian population, that, just like many other Krajina and Slavonia regions used roadblocks to prevent Croatian authorities from entering. On May 1,

439 Ibid.

440 Ibid., p. 95.
1991, two Croatian policemen in a marked police car entered Borovo Selo without permission. They were immediately arrested. The next day, the Croatian authorities sent some twenty policemen to liberate them. Their vehicle was met by a shower of gunfire from Serbian irregulars, some local, some from Serbia. The Croatian authorities then sent 150 policemen in buses as reinforcement. Seventeen people were dead after a fierce armed confrontation.

The report of the Hina, the Croatian news agency, was: Croatian policemen numbering 150 had come to Borovo Selo for a meeting agreed to by both sides. They encountered a barrage of gunfire from the local population and terrorists from Serbia. Twelve “guardians of law and order” and fifteen residents were killed on the spot. Belgrade TV broadcasted tape by the Chetnik commander Vojislav Seselj and showed it several times. According to this version, fourteen of Seselj’s men had led the battle against “the Ustashe.” Seselj reported that one civilian and one hundred Croatian policemen died.441

By 1991 and the outbreak of the actual fighting, the rhetoric of both Tudjman and Milosevic, aided by mass media, had created two separate “realities,” each convinced the “others” were coming to kill them.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Kingdon argues that in times of political change, certain problems arise that open windows of opportunity for the pursuit and implementation of political agenda. If the policy entrepreneurs do not recognize that opportunity and are not ready to push for their proposals as solutions to the problems, the opportunity passes them by. In the second half of the 1980s, Yugoslavia was experiencing deep social, political, and economic problems that institutions of the weakened federal center seemed unable to solve. Demonstration of popular discontent became a commonplace, all demanding solutions to existing problems. Nationalism was only one of these manifestations of discontent, but one that appeared easy to capitalize on for an emerging ethnic entrepreneur.

However, in multinational and multiethnic states, what might present a solution to the problem of one community, might present a new set of problems for another community, and the need for entrepreneurs in that community to offer their solutions to the problems. The analysis of politicized ethnicity in Serbia and Croatia shows that that was the case in Yugoslavia. The study of the Yugoslav historical and political context illustrates that the act of politicization of ethnicity is only one of the many complex reasons which contributed to the Ethnopolitical conflict, but perhaps

the most important one that explains the brutal violence toward "other" ethnic group. Political communication through mass media and rhetoric were of crucial importance in spreading nationalistic panic. Both Milosevic and Tudjman endorsed and used such political communication.

In 1987, a window of opportunity opened in Kosovo Polje where the bitterness and aggravation of nationalist passion of Serbs caused by the Albanian challenge to Serbian suzerainty, presented itself as a problem in need of immediate solution. Milosevic offered to the Serbian community what they wanted to hear: that he will protect and unite all the Serbs. Milosevic thus seized on the plight of the Serbs in Kosovo and established himself as an undisputable leader of the Serbs.443

His rhetoric offered understanding of their situation, and he promised solutions the Serbs wanted to see realized. In his rhetoric Milosevic invoked national myths of the large empire and Serbia’s greatness, heroism and courage. In the context of meetings of solidarity these myths were given more potency through national symbols, some of them Chetnik. For guidelines, Milosevic used blueprint prepared by the Serbian intellectuals in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Memorandum. For tools, besides his inflammatory rhetoric, Milosevic used mass media. Each major phase of development of the Milosevic’s regime has been accompanied by the takeover or destruction of some important media outlet. His rise to power an the path to war against Croatia were eased by the takeover of the

newspaper *Politika*, the weekly magazine *NIN*, and the state radio and television network RTS.

Milošević's solutions included abolishment of autonomy in Kosovo and Vojvodina, two autonomous provinces whose autonomy, by limiting Serbia's sovereignty, made Serbia unequal in comparison to other federal units in Yugoslavia. Thus, the supposed problem of inequality of the Serbs in Serbia was solved. However, the Serbs were dispersed in other federal units of Yugoslavia, so that presented the next problem Milošević needed to solve: “United Serbs.” To that end Milošević employed media content of which was to incite hatred and fear of other nations and ethnic groups. Milošević demanded for Serbian minority in Croatia rights he brutally took away from Albanians and other minorities in Serbia.

In multiethnic communities, such as Yugoslavia, what might present solution to one nation, might appear as a problem to another. Once Milošević's skillful use of crowds and tactics to intimidate his enemies began to spill over in other parts of the country, anti-Serbian sentiment began to form. Resentment against Croatians was skillfully conveyed to the Serbs in Croatia. In Croatia, Milošević's attempts to impose his power resulted in manipulation of the Serbian minority, which in turn gave prominence to ethnic entrepreneurs such as Babic, Raskovic and Opacic, who in the new crisis sensed the window of opportunity for their own view of solutions to the problems. They followed Milošević's example of use of crowds and spreading of hatred and fear of Croatians.

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444 All the steps in this action are well elaborated in Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).
But Milosevic also contributed to Tudjman’s rise to power in Croatia. This
nationalistic leader of a center-right HDZ, however, made that window of
opportunity particularly suited for him through help of those interested in solving
Croatian national question. His blueprint for creation of an independent Croatia was
drafted by emigres from Herzegovina, a strongly nationalist region in the south of
Bosnia and Herzegovina. Once Tudjman came to power, his proposed solutions to
the Croatian question involved firing, demotion and other violations of the civil rights
of the Serbs. His intolerance of Serbs allowed other more radical groups to take
things into their own hands and abuse an already frightened population.

Before Tudjman came to power in Croatia, in his rhetoric he appealed to
Croats in 1990 to look on him as the true champion of Croatia in her struggle to
reject the various anti-Croat “black legends” of recent history, especially the one
about the Croats as a “genocidal people” publicized by certain Serb churchmen and
intellectuals. Tudjman brought out and legitimized many of Croatia’s symbols which
were until them forbidden, some of which were used by Ustasha. He also appealed to
Croatian national pride, and presented the Croatians as a unique nation, one of the
oldest in history, which was able to preserve its distinctive cultural values to
accomplish a fully independent national state. At that moment in time, Tudjman
appeared as the only one able to resist Milosevic’s aggressive moves.

Just as Milosevic was helped by hard-line Communists who wanted him to
lead Serbia, Tudjman was helped by an electoral system Croatian Communists
designed. From a relative majority it created an absolute which resulted in arrogance
of the new president and his ruling party. In the new Constitution the powers of the president were elevated to the point, that Tudjman’s system was referred to as Latin American type of authoritarianism. Tudjman also took over the media and held them in a tight grip. Those media and journalists who did not give in to his vision of Croatia’s independence, he charged with treason to the Croatian cause. For Tudjman patriotism served as a means of repression.

Milosevic’s and Tudjman’s legacy of media manipulation continued in the Bosnian war. The participants of the conference “Making War and Peace in the Balkans: The Role of the Media” held at the Center for Russian and East European Studies, University of Michigan in October, 1995, contend that the multi-ethnic Bosnian society was destroyed by a war inflamed and fueled by a sophisticated use of radio and television by political entrepreneurs for political goals expressed in ethnic terms. Tom Gjelten, National Public Radio correspondent in Bosnia, claims that the capture of a Bosnian television tower in 1991 was crucial to Serbian nationalists’ strategy in the Bosnian war. Control of Bosnian television allowed the Serbs to air anti-Muslim propaganda in order to instill fear and suspicion among the non-Muslims.

It is obvious that neither Milosevic or Tudjman operated in a vacuum. A lot of their success originated from their ability to take advantage of the Communist system. Part of the reason they could control the media is because they inherited from

its Communist predecessor a large state-controlled publishing and broadcasting enterprises, which were based in and controlled by the respective republics. They, however, outdid their predecessors in using the media openly for political purposes.

Another legacy of the Communist regime, which Tudjman and Milosevic used with great success was to focus on enemies. The old Yugoslav regime fought “bourgeois” nationalism as the “class enemy” or as examples of the “backward thinking.” The nationalism found enemies in the nationalisms of other Yugoslavs. Other nations were projected as revanchist, separatist, aggressive, and genocidal, but Croatian nationalism and Serbian nationalism, projected themselves as a defensive response respectively to “unitarist-hegemonist” and “Serbophobia” on the part of other nations. As nation replaced class as the fundamental ideological principle, opponents of the regime became enemies of the nation.

In an attempt to find a connection between Communist regime, which tried so hard to solve national question, and the nationalism of Tudjman’s and Milosevic type, both Melcic and Zimmerman agree that the problem was in the fact that Yugoslav national project as realized in the federation did not have any connection with democracy. The nationalism of Milosevic or Tudjman’s type did not have many other alternatives from which people could freely choose. In Zimmerman’s words, “The two leaders combined the worst features of communism and nationalism.”

To the grave problems that challenged the very survival of the federal state, they offered solutions that benefited only them and their narrow circle of helpers.

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Their “solutions” created even larger crisis that only fortified their positions of power.

This purpose of this study was to present an analysis in which both ethnic and political dimensions of the potential violent inter-ethnic conflict would be analyzed with equal attention. Part of the reason for such effort was to demythologize the burdened concept of ethnicity. This was done by differentiating between ethnic and violent inter-ethnic conflict. The other reason was hope that with knowledge about things political, which capitalize on vulnerability of ethnic identity, we can prevent another similar tragedy. Yugoslavia provides us with a case of continued ethnic conflict, conflict that is so often present in almost every multi-ethnic and multi-national community.

Ethnic conflict can become violent. Turning ethnicity from a peaceful phenomenon involves a deliberate political act, as was illustrated by both Milosevic in Serbia and Tudjman in Croatia. Actions of these two ethnic entrepreneurs, their abuse of media, and through deliberate propaganda, of their own ethnic groups, offers good case studies of how politicization of ethnicity occurs. What makes communication variables especially useful in efforts of conflict prevention, is their visibility, which is the result of new technology of broadcasting and the internet. Surely, there will be as much knowledge about similar occurrences in other parts of the world. Let us hope that that knowledge will be put to better use than what was known about Yugoslavia’s slow and painful destruction through hatred and fear.
Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
Date: 23 June 1997

To: Alan Isaak, Principal Investigator
    Agneza Bozic, Student Investigator

From: Richard Wright, Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 97-03-19

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Ethnopolitical Conflict: The Yugoslav Case" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 23 June 1998
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