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**NATIONALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ILLIBERAL MULTINATION STATE:
THE CASE OF SERBIA**

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Political Science

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
January 14, 2000
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**NATIONALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ILLIBERAL MULTINATION STATE
THE CASE OF SERBIA**

submitted by

Dejan Guzina, B.A. Hons., M.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Chair, Department of Political Science

Thesis Supervisor

External Examiner

Carleton University
January 14, 2000

Carleton University

Abstract

**NATIONALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF AN
ILLIBERAL MULTINATION STATE:
THE CASE OF SERBIA**

by Dejan Guzina

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Piotr Dutkiewicz
Department of Political Science

This dissertation examines those currents in Serbian nation-building that have aimed to create an ethnically homogenous nation-state, despite the ethnic and cultural diversity of Serbian society. Special attention is paid to the role of the national intelligentsia in fostering Serbian ethnic identity, and to the Serbian state's mimicry of genuine democratic transformation in the 1990s. The responses of major opposition parties and the reactions of ethnic minorities to the Serbian regime's state- and nation-building policies are also analyzed.

Contemporary liberal and communitarian theorizing about the phenomenon of nationalism is critically evaluated so as to provide a broad theoretical framework within which the Serbian example can be studied. Among the tensions examined in this context are those between nationalism and modernity, civism and ethnicism, and self-determination and the principle of state sovereignty. For the purposes of the dissertation, both civic and ethnic aspects of nationalism have been understood primarily as distinctions within each nationalist movement rather than as features distinguishing one state from another.

The analysis of Serbian nationalism presented here proceeds from the view that both liberal and ethnic aspects of Serbian nationalism can only be understood against the background of

a careful presentation of the interplay between the actions of different political actors on the one side, and the specific economic, social, ideological, cultural and political matrices of society on the other. On the basis of such a situational approach to nationalism, the dissertation points to some crucial factors that fostered the development of a mono-ethnic identity in Serbia in the late 1980s. These were related to Serbia's ambiguous constitutional position vis-à-vis both its own provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, and other former Yugoslav republics. With the rise of Milošević to power in Serbia in 1987, an increasingly vocal movement favoring non-institutional means of integrating Kosovo and Vojvodina within Serbia emerged. After Serbia was united with its provinces in 1990, constitutionally supported nation-building policies emerged that could be only interpreted as minority-destroying. The policies adopted in relation to Kosovo ultimately endangered the social unity and territorial integrity of Serbia as a whole.

The dissertation concludes that Serbian society can overcome its fascination with the myth of an ethnically homogenous nation-state only if it finally recognizes and accepts its own ethnocultural diversity. In other words, any potentially successful reform of the Serbian society and state will have to recognize liberal-democratic requirements for political equality, and acknowledge multiethnic diversity as a cultural framework within which the various Serbian national groups can enjoy democratic self-government.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARFY – Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia

BCHR – Belgrade Center for Human Rights

CAS – Civic Alliance of Serbia (Građanski savez Srbije – GSS)

CMVH – Civic Movement of Vojvodina Hungarians

DC – Democratic Center (Demokratski centar)

DCVH – Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians (Demokratska zajednica vojvodanskih Mađara – DZVM)

DP – Democratic Party (Demokratska stranka – DS)

DPS – Democratic Party of Serbia (Demokratska Stranka Srbije)

DRPM – Democratic Reform Party of Muslims

FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

HCHR – Helsinki Committee of Human Rights in Serbia

HLC – Humanitarian Law Center, Belgrade

KLA – Kosovo Liberation Army (Ushtria Çlirimatare e Kosoves – UÇK)

LDK – the Democratic League of Kosovo

LVH – League of Vojvodina Hungarians (Savez vojvodanskih Mađara – SVM)

MNCS – the Muslim National Council of Sandžak (Nacionalni savet sandžačkih Muslimana)

ND – New Democracy (Nova demokratija)

OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation

PAFS – Party of the Alliance of Farmers of Serbia

PDA – Party of Democratic Action (Stranka demokratske akcije)

PDAY – Party of Democratic Activity

PY – Party of Yugoslavs

RDPV – Reform Democratic Party of Vojvodina

RTS – Radio Television Serbia

SANU – Serbian Academy of Science and Art (Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti)

SFRY – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

SPS – Socialist Party of Serbia (Socijalistička partija Srbije – SPS)

SrDP – Serbian Democratic Party

SRM – Serbian Renewal Movement (Srpski pokret obnove – SPO)

SRP – Serbian Radical Party (Srpska radikalna stranka – SRS)

Together (coalition of opposition parties – Zajedno)

YUL – Yugoslav United Left (Jugoslovenska udružena levica – JUL)

Introduction

NATIONALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ILLIBERAL MULTINATION STATE:

THE CASE OF SERBIA

*We had fed the heart on fantasies
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love. W.B. Yeats¹*

Within Serbia's² current territorial borders, Kosovo(a)³ Albanians, Hungarians in Vojvodina, Muslims from Sandžak (Bosniaks) and other ethnic groups account for almost thirty-five percent of its population.⁴ Serbia might therefore seem a typical state for the contemporary world; a world in which the principles of liberal democracy and the recognition of diversity are increasingly becoming the norm, and ethnic homogeneity and authoritarian government an exception to a global mixing of religions, cultures and nations.

¹ W.B. Yeats, *Meditations in Time of Civil War*.

² Serbia, together with Montenegro, is a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that emerged out of the ashes of the old, socialist Yugoslavia in 1991. Given the complexities involved in the relationship between the two federal units, in the dissertation I will be concerned primarily with the various aspects of the politics of nationalism in Serbia. Throughout the dissertation, the terms "post-socialist" and "post-communist" will be used interchangeably, while the term "regime" will be used as shorthand for "Milošević's post-socialist government."

³ A certain terminological clarification is needed. While Serbian authors write about Kosovo, Albanians from the region are using the term Kosova (or Kosovë). Western scholars are opting for one version over the other, depending on their political stand as to whether Kosovo should be part of Serbia, or Kosova should be granted a full territorial autonomy. I think both terms are fully legitimate and simply reflect the conflicting nature of the national groups' claims to the same territory. Accordingly, I will use both terms interchangeably.

⁴ According to 1991 Census, Serbs represented 65.9% of the Serbian population, Albanians 17.1%, Hungarians 3.5%, Muslims 2.5%, Romanians 1.4, Montenegrins 1.4%, Croats 1.1%, etc. For the complete demographic structure of Yugoslavia and Serbia, see Appendix 1, Tables 1-5.

Yet the process of political transformation in the post-socialist Serbia has largely taken the form of **mimicry of genuine democratic processes in society** on one side, and the **ethnicization of politics** on the other. Such mimicry has resulted neither in the full emergence of new political subjects, nor in complete preservation of the old socialist system. Instead, the main purpose of the quasi-new subjects (a façade parliamentary system, state-controlled media, the Constitution, the loyal opposition parties) is to provide the Serbian state and its political regime with a **semblance of legitimacy**. At the same time, however, the Serbian post-socialist élite has been engaged in socially engineering support for an ethnically homogenous nation-state. Techniques used by the Serbian regime to reduce or limit ethnocultural diversity range from curbing territorial autonomy, restricting the language rights of ethnic groups and capping state-sponsored multicultural programs to intimidation, terror, and forced expulsion of populations (ethnic cleansing).

These policies have provoked a stalemate in democratization of the country, economic chaos, political uncertainties, disregard for human and national minority rights, and finally, excommunication of Serbia from the international community. The pressing question is what might be the alternatives to the regime's politics of creating an ethnically homogenous nation-state. This leads to further quandaries: What other means are available for "legitimizing" the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a Serbian state? What type of nation-building policies dominates the post-socialist Serbia? What type of identity is the regime trying to foster? What is the role of intellectuals and media in identity-creation in Serbia? To what extent does Serbia's political system mirror its constitutional

(institutional) design? And, finally, what are the social and political alternatives to Milošević's unchallenged hold over Serbia since 1987?

In dealing with these questions, I argue that the contemporary literature, though rich in empirical findings on the consequences of ethnic politics worldwide, frequently lacks a theoretically grounded understanding of nation-building policies. Its principal assumption is that the best alternative to existing policies is a strong differentiation between individual (civic) and collective (ethnic) rights, overseen by an impartial, liberally minded state. Actual policies and performances are then judged by this yardstick.

On one level, the liberal arguments in favor of state neutrality and separation of group and individual rights in the case of Serbia are hard to resist. In the Serbian context, the state itself emerges as the most active promoter of the myth of superiority of the "founding" Serbian nation over any other ethnic group in the country. On the other, however, the Serbian ruling élite has been able to exploit not only the politics of national homogenization, but also some of the main liberal arguments in favor of the principle of the state impartiality and individual rights. The latest example is Kosovo, where police brutality and military action have been defended not only by appeals to state sovereignty and the inviolability of state borders, but also by painting the secessionist claims of the Kosovar Albanians as an anti-liberal and anti-democratic attempt to promote collective rights at the expense of individual ones. For these reasons, I maintain that not only openly nationalist policies but also the blanket application of ostensibly "impartial" policies quite

often serve the ideological function of justifying the ways of life of the dominant groups in society as against those of minorities.

In order to analyze nation-building in Serbia that is based on the mimicry of democratization processes on the one side, and perpetuation of injustices for minorities on the other, I apply in particular:

- Liah Greenfeld's historical and sociological conceptualization of various situational constraints (that is, economic, social, cultural and political structural factors) leading to, or impeding, certain forms of nationalism;
- conceptual and normative insights from the current liberal-communitarian debate in regards the issues of nation-building policies in the context of multinational states; and
- contemporary liberal and communitarian theorizing in regards to the assessment of the issues of national self-determination and secession.

These approaches provide both conceptual and normative foundations for evaluating nation-building policies, and hopefully identify ways in which these policies are necessarily biased towards the language and culture of the dominant Serbian nation, despite the legislative claim to promote principles of political liberalism.

At a methodological level, the analysis of Serbian nationalism combines "a sensitivity to specific historical or cultural contexts with theoretical generalization."⁵ The collection of data and evidence is not guided by a mono-causal logic of precisely

operationalized variables, but by the belief that interpreting a phenomenon as complex as Serbian ethno-nationalism requires equal weight to be given to economic, cultural, social and political structural factors. The final aim is not a set of context-free generalizations of the Serbian case that can be somehow applied worldwide, but rather some limited generalizations whose wider validity will ultimately depend on the similarity of the context.

At the heart of this approach is the researcher's understanding of "an ever-present tension between *agency*, the fluid-social action and changing social reality, and *structure*, the fixed regularities and patterns that shape social actions and perceptions."⁶ Accordingly, social reality is perceived as both constantly created and changed by people and, at the same time, as something that imposes and restricts human choices.

Finally, the nature of the topic requires extensive recourse to all available factual data, including books, articles, legislative documents, reports of local NGO's, as well as the work of foreign and domestic analysts. It goes without saying that the dissertation is not conceived as a definitive account of the situation in Serbia. Ultimately, the analysis that is offered to the reader is open to reexamination by readers. Its ambition is to join an increasingly important dialogue about the causes and consequences of the ethnicization of politics in the contemporary context of a multinational state.

⁵ See W. Lawrence Neuman, "Historical-comparative Research," in *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1997), 388-389.

⁶ W. Lawrence Neuman, 390 [my italics]. Also, see Colin Hay, "Structure and Agency," in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, eds. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 189-208.

The dissertation is organized in the following way. In **Chapter One**, I evaluate contemporary liberal and communitarian theorizing on nationalism. Section One of the chapter develops a situational approach to nationalism that sees the classic civic/ethnic dichotomy rather as a distinction to be drawn within each nationalist movement than as a criterion for distinguishing “Western” from “Eastern” nationalism. Section Two is based on an evaluation of the possible links between liberalism and nationalism. It demonstrates that under certain conditions nationalism need not be inconsistent with respect for individual autonomy and ethnic and cultural diversity. Finally, in Section Three, I discuss the question of national self-determination and the various circumstances which might justify secession according to liberal and communitarian criteria.

In **Chapter Two**, which is based on the situational approach to nationalism developed in the first chapter, I contextualize Serbian nationalism against the background of various economic, social, ideological and cultural constraints present at different periods of Serbian history. Section One emphasizes the relationship between nationalism and modernity within the context of the Balkans. In Section Two, the focus is on state- and nation-building policies in nineteenth-century Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941). The final section of the chapter discusses the same policies in the context of the socialist Yugoslavia, providing the background within which Serbian ethnic nationalism emerged as predominant. The aim of this historical and sociological exploration of Serbian nationalism is to emphasize that both civic and ethnic models of nationalism could be found within the Serbian state.

Chapter Three offers an analysis of the institutional and political development of Serbian nationalism in the context of the post-socialist Serbia (1990-1998). It discusses the mechanisms which the Serbian regime has used to mimic liberal-democratic national principles. My approach is informed by the discussion of the normative and institutional foundations of liberal nationalism presented in Chapter One. The first section of the third chapter presents an analysis of the constitutional foundations of the Serbian ethnicized pluralist system. Section Two analyzes the role of the state-controlled media in justifying the politics of ethnic homogenization. Finally, in the third section, the focus is on the similarities and differences in the programs and activities of major Serbian political parties

In **Chapter Four**, I discuss majority-minority relations in post-socialist Serbia. From the perspective developed in the sections on liberal nationalism and national self-determination in Chapter One, I argue that liberal nationalism may well be consistent with individual autonomy and cultural diversity. But the failure of the Serbian regime to protect either individual rights or cultural diversity shows that its nation-building policies are, in fact, minority-destroying and democracy-mimicking policies. The first section of this chapter provides the reader with an overview of internationally recognized standards for the protection of national minority rights. Section Two evaluates the state- and nation-building policies applied in the cases of Vojvodina and Sandžak. Finally, the third section discusses the regime's policies of systemic discrimination against the Kosovar Albanians and rejection of their claims to sovereignty.

The dissertation concludes that the only barrier to ethnonationalist frenzy may well lie in a politics based on the equality of each and every member of a societal culture. In the words of Iris Marion Young, this requires “establishing or re-establishing layers of heterogeneous publics that guarantee respect for the cultural specificity and needs of different groups, and which compensate disadvantaged groups, institutionalizing means of ensuring their voice and perspective to be heard.”⁷ In other words, tolerance in contemporary societies should take the form of a democratic cultural pluralism that allows culturally differentiated groups to mutually respect one another and to achieve their equality by affirming one another in their differences.⁸

The Serbian regime of President Milošević rejected these policies in favor of creating an ethnically homogeneous nation-state. The consequences of this attempt to eliminate the **original condition of Serbian ethnic diversity** are by now all too obvious. Insisting on the supposed superiority of the “chosen” Serbian people inevitably led to the perpetual marginalization of national minorities, within an increasingly ethnicized political scene in Serbia. As long as this continues, national minorities in Serbia will be forced to develop politically alienated subcultures oriented either against mainstream state institutions, or against the members of the privileged majority group in society. At least in Kosovo, the development of interlocking ethnic nationalisms between the Serbs

⁷ Iris Marion Young, “Together in Difference: Transforming the Logic of Group Political Conflict,” in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, ed. Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 170-171.

⁸ On the politics of cultural pluralism, see Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 163.

and the Kosovar Albanians has proved tragically detrimental to not only the Kosovar Albanian community, but also to the Serbian society and the state.

Chapter 1

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NATIONALISM

*I have seen, in my times, Frenchmen, Italians and Russians. I even know, thanks to Montesquieu, that one may be a Persian; but as for Man, I declare I have never met him in my life; if he exists, it is without my knowledge. De Maistre*¹

*[T]he barriers of nationality which belong to the infancy of the race will melt and dissolve in the sunshine of science and art. G. Lowes Dickinson*²

Introduction

Only a decade ago it seemed that the words of G. Lowes Dickinson, written a century ago, fully grasped the mood of our era. The question up to then was simply whether the days of sunshine for the human species would come faster under a liberal or a Marxist ideology. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 seemed to decide this question in favor of liberalism. However, jubilation over the end of the Cold War did not last long, and the current spate of conflicts between various national groups make Dickinson's words look extravagant in their almost religious faith in progress.

By contrast, De Maistre's remark, from the second half of the nineteenth century, encapsulates a new dogma of our generation. Many policy analysts and academic writers have seen it reflected most infamously in the secessionist wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Decades of communism, they say, could not break peoples' links to "land and soil" mythologies. The journalistic "insight" that equates a former communist

¹ Quoted in Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 13.

² Quoted in Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 38.

system with a big refrigerator that temporarily put nationalist feelings on ice became a basis for endless works on the re-emergence of nationalism in the region and worldwide. Still, the metaphor of a “big refrigerator” is deeply flawed.

At the empirical level, nationalism has been a driving force of the twentieth century. The colonial struggles of many African and Asian nations can hardly be understood without nationalism, and it also predated, and to a certain extent provoked, the collapse of the communist federations of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. At the analytical level, many authors have paid due attention to the phenomenon of nationalism, despite often-heard claims that scholars had blindly followed popular ideas about the obsolescence of nationalism.

The so-called instrumentalist-ethnicist debate in the 1980s about modernity of nationalism has prepared us for the major revival of public interest in nationalism in the 1990s.³ This debate still rages. On one side, the instrumentalists pile up evidence of how our identities have been molded, constructed, “invented” or “imagined.”⁴ In equally ingenious fashion, the ethnicists highlight continuous communal awareness of a common culture, language or foundation myth as proof that ethnic communities have “naturally,” “inevitably” or “innately” developed into today’s nation-states.⁵

³ See John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana Press, 1994), xi-xiv.

⁴ See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983); and Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*.

⁵ See Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*; and John Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

For these reasons, I suggest that nationalism can best be understood as an essentially contested concept.⁶ We must carefully differentiate the various definitions of nationalism in order to understand all the subtleties and idiosyncrasies of many distinct approaches towards nationalism. This can also help us avoid confusion arising from use of the same terminology to mean different things, and let us see the types of questions that can be raised, or which will remain hidden, when we embrace one approach rather than another.

This chapter provides a critical evaluation of some of the most important challenges which nationalism poses for political analysts. The unsettled normative and empirical dilemmas about how to achieve the most productive synthesis of nationalism and modernity, as well as civic and ethnic identities, are the focus of the first section of the chapter. The relationship between nationalism and liberalism is explored in Section Two. Finally, the third section deals with the seemingly irreconcilable questions of national self-determination and state sovereignty. All these issues are also at the heart of the politics of Serbian nationalism, a detailed case study of which will be presented in the subsequent chapters.

⁶ William E. Connolly defines an essentially contested concept in the following manner: "When the disagreement does not simply reflect different readings of evidence within a fully shared system of concepts, we can say that a conceptual dispute has arisen ... when the agreed and contested rules of application are relatively open, enabling parties to interpret even those shared rules differently as new and unforeseen situation arises, then the concept in question is an 'essentially contested concept.'" Such concepts "essentially involve endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users." See *Terms of Political Discourse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 10.

Nationalism, Modernity and the Civic/Ethnic Question

The nineteenth century has been inseparably linked to the idea and practice of the nation-state, on one side, and different forms of nationalism that justify these links, on the other. And yet, as Isaiah Berlin rightly asserts, no great social or political prophet of the last century anticipated the significance of nationalism.⁷ Quite the contrary, as Eugene Kamenka reminds us, it has been more than one hundred years now that “the death of nationalism has been predicted by good people confidently – and erroneously.”⁸ In this regard, there has been little difference between the liberals and the Marxists.

Not only did liberalism and Marxism falsely assume the collapse of nationalism, but they also did so for essentially similar reasons. Both schools of thought arose from the Enlightenment project, and both understood history in Hegelian terms as a progressive unfolding towards justice and freedom. Both retain a full faith in the supreme role of Reason, and both are materialist philosophies in the sense that they hold a fully industrialized and wealthy society to be a condition *sine qua non* of human progress.⁹

⁷ See Isaiah Berlin, *The Bent Twig*: “On the Rise of Nationalism,” in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: John Murray Publishers, 1990), 238-261.

⁸ Eugene Kamenka, “Nationalism: Ambiguous Legacies and Contingent Futures,” *Political Studies*, XLI (1993): 78.

⁹ See Torbjørn Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 206. Ernest Gellner maintains that “the logic of liberalism and Marxism was impeccable.” Modernization turns cultural differences into political and social ones, leaving nationalism without the material to work on (cultural differences). Yet, history did not follow this route. As Gellner says, “[T]here was a third partner in the game, eventually more powerful than either of the other two [liberalism and Marxism] – romantic nationalism.” See “Introduction,” in *Notions of Nationalism*, ed. Sukumar Periwal (Budapest: CUP, 1995), 1-8.

Thus, in words of Tony Judt, although equally disdainful of each other, liberalism and Marxism share a “curiously similar understanding of nationalism.”¹⁰

In similar fashion, John Dunn argues that the Enlightenment way of thinking perceives nationalism as an essentially irrational and anti-modern phenomenon, contrary to universalistic concepts of natural law as understood by secular rationalism.¹¹ Nationalism runs counter to the modernist idea that the fundamental ethical unit (and the proper conceptual unit of analysis) can only be an individual human being. Instead, it “has boldly espoused the claims of the parochial, of cultural idiosyncrasy and localism, of the folkway.”¹² Furthermore, once such “cultural” nationalism has been linked to the idea of the right of the nation to self-determination, folklore becomes the yardstick for nationalist political actions, leading to an increase of “just wars among self-righteous tribes” for territory. This is done in the name of the principle that each nation must have a protective state of its own.¹³ Thus, in an often-quoted statement, Dunn asserts that nationalism can only be described as “the starkest political shame of the twentieth century.”¹⁴

Given the abundance of “just” wars in the twentieth century – the latest being fought in, or rather for, Kosovo – Dunn’s analysis seems extremely attractive. Yet, little is new in his examination of nationalism. In fact, he repeats many arguments put forward by

¹⁰ Tony Judt, “Review of Literature on Nationalism,” in *New York Review of Books*, 26 May 1994, 44-51.

¹¹ John Dunn, “Nationalism,” in *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*, Canto Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, 60.

¹³ On the links between the rise of nationalism and the right to self-determination see Elie Kedourie’s classic study *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1966).

¹⁴ Dunn, 57.

nineteenth-century liberals and Marxists. His view of nationalism differs little, for example, from that of John Stuart Mill, who expressed in the following terms his disdain for those in small non-recognized communities who clung to their cultural distinctiveness:

Nobody can suppose that it is not more beneficial to a Briton or a Basque of French Navarre to be ... a member of the French nationality, admitted on equal terms to all the privileges of French citizenship, sharing the advantage of protection and the dignity and prestige of French power than to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times, revolving in his own mental orbit, without participation or interest on the general movement of the world.¹⁵

Mill was also openly doubtful of the capacity of non-European peoples to develop their distinct society and culture. He maintained that non-European societies could progress only with the help of the modern European states ("If they are ever to be farther improved, it must be by foreigners."). Such sentiments should not surprise us. Mill's understanding of nationalism is deeply imbued with the nineteenth-century liberal approach towards nationalism; an approach that was based on the distinction between the civilized Europe, on one side, and the barbaric rest of the world, on the other.¹⁶

A similar line of thought can be discerned in Marx's division of European nations into the historic and the non-historic ones (mainly smaller Slavic nations).¹⁷ Being a man of the Enlightened Europe, as Sidney Hook asserts, Marx's ethical ideal was a society "in

¹⁵ J.S. Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government," in *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*, ed. H. Acton (London: J.M. Dent, 1972), 363-364.

¹⁶ Bhikhu Parekh maintains that the nineteenth-century liberal "obsessive anti-traditionalism" has served the purpose of justifying the superiority of modern European nations vis-à-vis their colonies. See "Decolonizing Liberalism," in *The End of Isms? Reflections on the Fate of Ideological Politics after Communism's Collapse*, ed. Aleksandras Shtromas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 183-204.

¹⁷ For an excellent overview of Marx's and Engels's understanding of the national question, see Ephraim Nimni, "Marx, Engels and the National Question," in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, ed. Will Kymlicka (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 57-78.

which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all. Ultimately the test of all institutions was the extent to which they made possible for all persons the full and rich development of their personalities.”¹⁸

For Marx and Engels, class war provides the engine for progressive social change. To continue the analogy, the French model of a homogenous nation-state represents a train that can carry us to a better future. In this perspective, nationalism among the smaller non-historic nations was a disturbing element, a “temporary phenomenon which, generated by the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, is one of the self-sustaining weapons against the proletariat.”¹⁹

Marx’s contempt for the Balkan nations – and Mill’s – can best be explained by their trust in reason. For Marx, the deep-seated attachments to ethnic affiliations in the Balkans and among other “non-historic nations” are directly linked to the conditions of appalling ignorance that characterize those masses compared to “civilized European nations.” The dogma that nationalism was a temporary phenomenon continued in all subsequent schools of Marxism.²⁰ Paradoxically, it remained so even after the international

¹⁸ Quoted in William Pfaff, *The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Furies of Nationalism* (New York: Simon, 1993), 64.

¹⁹ Berlin, 249.

²⁰ Despite his approval of the right of nations to self-determination, the same can be said for Lenin. A close analysis of the basic precepts of Lenin’s national policy as expressed in his famous political slogan – “national in form, socialist in content,” reveals the same trust in reason shown by Marx and Mill. Walker Connor is certainly right when he asserts that “Lenin could readily conceive of nationally aroused people acting in opposition to their best economic interests by fighting for independence. But with nationalistic suspicions laid to rest by the [communist] offer to independence [the right to self-determination], economic motivation would win out.” See *National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 38. Still, it has to be said that Lenin developed a thoroughly primordialist and essentialist definition of the nation, according to which culture and language

socialist movement, supposedly firmly rooted in the western European working class at the beginning of twentieth century, split along national lines in 1914, providing an early sign that socialists, despite their internationalist rhetoric, were not immune to nationalism.²¹

Will Kymlicka rightly reminds us of the conventional distinction in nineteenth-century thought between the “great nations” (France, Italy, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Spain, England, Russia) and smaller “nationalities” (Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Slovenes, Croats, Basque, Welsh, Bulgarians, Scots, Romanians). The “great nations” were thought of as the sole bearers of progress, while the “nationalities” were perceived as historically incapable of independent social and cultural development. So, as Kymlicka asserts, “some

serve as **objective** means of group differentiation. Since this definition was universally accepted by communist states, it is not surprising that despite its rhetoric, the Party always nurtured the primordialist aspects of nationalism. In fact, it can be argued that this peculiar Leninist blend of instrumentalism and primordialism led to the ethnicization of politics in Eastern Europe well before the collapse of communism in the region.

On the other side, Austro-Marxists argued for a more nuanced and culturally specified class analysis. Bruno Bauer and Karl Renner, as the most vocal representatives of the Austro-Marxist school in the early twentieth century, had tried to accommodate the Central European ethnic differences by emphasizing that distinct historical developments of particular ethnic groups with their own languages and traditions necessarily lead to the development of separate national identities (or, in their terminology, “national characters”). In addition, they envisioned a democratic transformation of the Habsburg Empire that would be based on the full recognition of cultural autonomy of many diverse nations-members of the Austria-Hungary. Unlike Lenin and Stalin, however, Bauer and Renner did not support the idea of national separatism and, instead, they advocated the ideal of supra-national state as a more advanced stage of political development to that of the nation-state. With the collapse of Austro-Hungary, the ideas of the Austro-Marxists also lost their appeal. Finally, despite their rather contemporary emphasis on the cultural roots of nationalism, their influence in Eastern Europe had been completely lost with the creation of the Marxist regimes based on the ideology of official Marxism-Leninism. See Dušan Janjić, *Nacija: Šta je to?* (Beograd: Radnička štampa, 1993), 57-62; and Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 174-175.

²¹ See Dunn, 57-58.

nineteenth-century liberals endorsed national independence for great nations, but coercive assimilation for smaller nationalities."²²

A dismissive attitude towards smaller (non)European nationalisms as innately reactionary and anti-modern has also permeated post-World War II liberal thought. It can be recognized not only in Dunn, but also in Hans Kohn, one of the most influential liberal historians of the mid-twentieth century. Kohn differentiates between two types of nationalism: an enlightened type in the West and an irrational strain in the East. According to him, "authentic" nationalism only occurs in countries in which a state-building tradition preceded the growth of nationalism, and where the emergence of liberalism has paralleled the rise of nationalism.²³ He then posits a derivative type of eastern nationalism, characterized by an emphasis on collective rather than individual rights.

Peter Sugar has further developed such understanding of the eastern-European nationalism. While the rise of nationalism in the West coincided with the rise of the nation-state within pre-existing state structures, in the "Other" Europe nationalism came as the reaction to foreign rule, and as such, preceded the formation of the future nation-states. Accordingly, as Sugar maintains:

²² Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 53. Kymlicka, however, maintains that, despite such "ethnocentric denigration of smaller national groups," there has been a much wider range of views on the minority rights in liberal tradition. He approvingly quotes Lord Acton and Alfred Zimmern as defenders of the virtues of multi-nation states; a belief that run against the commonplace of the time that only a nation-state can be a free state.

²³ See Ernst B. Haas, "Nationalism, an Instrumental Social Construction," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 22, no. 3 (1993): 518-519. Kohn wrote extensively on nationalism, but of particular relevance for our topic are his *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) and *The Age of Nationalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

[T]he frontiers of an existing state and of a rising nationality rarely coincided; nationalism there grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern – not primarily to transform it into a people's state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands.²⁴

In other words, since in Eastern Europe there were no clearly defined national borders, nationalism tended towards justifying particular territorial claims in the name of the membership of the group, perceived as "objectively" identifiable through its distinctive way of life, history, culture, language, etc. However, this meant that the individualistic national principle, based on citizens' fundamental equality, was transformed into the collectivist principle that emphasizes the uniqueness of a people. At the end of the process, the links between democracy and nationalism were severed.²⁵

So, distinct social and political factors operating in Western and Eastern Europe created different concepts of nationalism: one grounded in a liberal understanding of citizens' rights, the other on messianic notions of the will of a people. The first shared Hegel's trust in reason progressively unfolding towards justice and freedom; the other understood history in romanticist and evolutionist terms, seeing the possession of a homeland (*Volkstaat*) as the precondition for national fulfillment. Finally, the first was a natural development of already existing states; the other aimed at the "invention" of nation-states.²⁶

²⁴ Peter Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism," in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter Sugar and Ivo Lederer (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1969), 10.

²⁵ See Peter Sugar, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter Sugar (Santa Barbara: A.B.C. Clio, 1980), 1-20.

²⁶ For a full-blown historical overview of the rise of Eastern European nationalism, see Peter Sugar *Nationality and Society in Habsburg and Ottoman Empire* (Brookfield: Variorum, 1997); and Charles

The more recent literature has tried to address some of the flaws of conventional liberal and Marxist approaches, in particular their lack of readiness to deal with the modernity of (Eastern European, ethnic) nationalism. Most contemporary authors adopt a critical approach to traditional accounts of nationalism, and reject nineteenth-century primordialist conceptions of a perpetual process of self-realization of nations embedded in human nature. However, they differ in their understanding of the links between modernity and nationalism.

According to the instrumentalist camp, it is a paradox to talk about the prevalence of nation-states while deprecating nationalism as an irrational and anti-modern force. They perceive nationalism as essentially an aspiration towards the achievement of an independent state, and thus inextricably linked to distinctively modern notions of popular will and sovereignty.²⁷ Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson also view nationalism as a distinctively modern political technology in that it legitimated a shift in the locus of power to the newly created modern nation-state.²⁸

The ethnicists reply that although the nation is a modern institution, its foundations have been laid in the past. For these reasons the nation-building projects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can best be described in terms of ethnic revival, i.e., by claiming

Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977).

²⁷ For a penetrating discussion of the links between nationalism and distinctively modern notions of popular will and sovereignty, see Charles Taylor, "Nationalism and Modernity," in *The Morality of Nationalism*, ed. Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 31-55.

²⁸ See footnote 4.

descent from ancient communities.²⁹ To a certain extent their reading harks back to the nineteenth-century primordialist arguments of nationalist historians and linguists about the natural character of nation-states. But their position is best described, as John L. Comaroff and Paul C. Stern put it, as “a neo-Weberian hybrid that tempers primordialism with careful measure of constructionism [instrumentalism]. ... From this perspective, collective identities are not ‘things’ in or for themselves, but an imminent capacity that takes on manifest form in response to external forces.”³⁰

So, while the instrumentalists tend to perceive the nation as the product of nationalist intelligentsia’s “invention” and “imagination,” the ethnicists try to strike a balance between the pre-modern character of nationalist sentiments and the modern character of the nation-state. In other, words, they perceive nationalism as the road to modernity that is never fully incorporated into modernity itself. These differing views of nationalism have important practical implications. For they bear on questions of the nature of social identities, our relationship to the past and the extent to which “national conflicts can or cannot be managed.”³¹

Nonetheless, despite the *differentia specifica* between the instrumentalists and the ethnicists regarding the links between nationalism and modernity, they have similar

²⁹ See footnote 5.

³⁰ John L. Comaroff and Paul C. Stern, “New Perspectives on Nationalism and War,” *Theory and Society* 23 (1994): 39. The authors also maintain that primordialism can best be understood according to Weber’s *Stände* (status groups), based on three premises: people who share a culture share an identity; loyalties are always connected with strong sentiments; and these sentiments are the basic principles around which group interests are organized. Constructionism, on the other side, treats collective awareness as a response to historically concrete practical circumstances, implying that nationalist consciousness is an entirely situational matter, and as such in no way related to the empirical confirmation (p. 38).

perspectives about the character (ethnic or civic) of nationalism. Basically, both camps implicitly accept Kohn's distinction between the original nationalism of the West and the derivative nationalism of the East.

Ernest Gellner, author of one of the most influential sociological studies of nationalism in the 1980s, could not resist appropriating the distinction between the Western, supposedly liberal, and Eastern, supposedly illiberal, types of nationalism. However, unlike Mill and Marx, Gellner sees the main reason for development of an exclusionist eastern European nationalism in the region's lack of a pre-existing, well-defined and codified high culture, capable of pursuing the ideals of modernization. For Eastern Europe to catch up with the West, a great deal of forceful cultural engineering was necessary:

In many cases it was bound to involve population exchanges or expulsions, more or less forcible assimilation, and sometimes liquidation, in order to attain that close relation between state and culture which is the essence of nationalism. And all these consequences flowed, not from some unusual brutality of the nationalists who in the end employed these measures (they were probably no worse and no better than anyone else), but from the inescapable logic of the situation.³²

³¹ See John Hutchinson, 2. Comaroff and Stern demonstrate the vigor of primordialist explanations among politicians confronted with examples of resurgent nationalism: "[t]he dissolution of the Soviet empire is repeatedly said to have taken the lid off a cauldron of fermenting nationalist feeling among groups that had been suppressed – but had remained essentially unchanged – for generations; a corollary being that an ethnically diverse Russia, Georgia, or Bosnia-Herzegovina should be carved into cantons to give political recognition (and power) to groups whose ethnic identities and geographies are assumed to be stable. If, however, the identities of Ossetians or Bosnians are not primordial, if they have been created and constantly reshaped by generations of political interaction and struggle, of interstate conflict and ideological debate, of national policy and local economic processes, different conclusions and recommendation follow (p. 42)." Given the cantonization of Bosnia along ethnic lines that was sealed by the signatures of the main participants in the Bosnian conflict in Dayton in 1995, it seems that Comaroff's and Stern's concerns about the politicians' primordialist bias have proved prophetic.

³² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 100-101. In the context of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the mass pogroms of one million ethnic Albanians from Kosovo in the spring of 1999, Gellner's words in a curious fashion seem to legitimize such "policies" as the only ones that can lead the region to

“The inescapable logic of situation” may tell us more about Gellner’s own sociological determinism than about why some nationalist movements take a liberal form while others do not. After all, other countries with little in the way of “high culture” have not developed highly illiberal forms of nationalism (e.g. Finland), whereas some of the most highly elaborated cultures in human history produced Nazism and Fascism. It seems here that Gellner is trying to fit nationalism with his own understanding of the industrial requirements of the modern age, despite the fact that nationalism in the Balkans preceded the emergence of industrialization and mass education.³³ Thus, he gives a correct description of some of the features of Eastern nationalism, but fails to get at the root of the differences between nationalisms.

While Gellner finds modern, “enlightened” nationalism unimaginable without industrialization, Benedict Anderson sees the dynamics of print-capitalism as the vital ingredient for the rise of imagined communities. He opens his analysis by observing that nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in political life of our time,³⁴ defying Marxist and liberal predictions about the end of nationalism in our enlightened world. The

its better future. It would seem that the very forces of cultural homogenization are at work and that the best thing is to leave them to quickly finish their job.

³³ See Miroslav Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully Formed Nation, *Marxism in the World* (1993): 3-20. Similar point is being raised in the literature dealing more explicitly with the Central European experiences. For example, Ivan Berend and Gyorgy Ranki approach the question of the failed modernization policies in Central Europe and the subsequent rise of exclusionist, mutual competing nationalism in the region by emphasizing the relationship between the European “core” and the “periphery.” See their *The European Periphery and Industrialization, 1780-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Similarly, Andrew Janos offers a very subtle historical and sociological analysis of the state-sponsored nationalism in the Hungarian context, which largely is valid for most of the region. See *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary: 1825-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

³⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3.

paradoxes of nationalism remain unexplained: the objective modernity of nations vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists, the formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept, and the political power of nationalism vs. its philosophical poverty.

In considering these paradoxes, Anderson urges a Copernican spirit that will go beyond conventional modernist accounts. His point of departure is that nationality, nation-ness and nationalism are cultural artifacts created at the end of the eighteenth century. In the course of history they became modular, i.e., capable of being transplanted to a great variety of social terrains with corresponding political and ideological constellations.³⁵

The ingenuity and attractiveness of his thesis lies in its simplicity. Anderson maintains that imagined communities are the result of the combination of general conditions (the immortality of community *vis-à-vis* single individual, persistence of linguistic identity) and specific, conjunctural social factors (the dissolution of sacred universal religions and dynastic empires, the new conception of progress through time, and the emergence of print-capitalism, e.g. the novel, newspapers).

The most important consequence of the emergence of print-capitalism is the collapse of Latin as the universal and sacred language. Thus, peoples' search for immortality *via* religion has been transformed under the conditions of modernity to imagining modern forms of togetherness (nations) that could satisfy another central condition of humanity - its linguistic diversity. In other words, what made new communities (nations) imaginable is "an explosive interaction between a system of

production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print) and the fatality of human linguistic diversity.”³⁶ In the final analysis, the birth of the nation-state is precipitated by the development of print-capitalism that allowed a new way of meaningfully linking together fraternity, power and time.³⁷

Anderson never explicitly defines culture. From his emphasis on the importance of the novel and newspapers, it seems that these are the sole criteria for acceptance into the realm of modern culture. But, if we concentrate on these forms of modern culture, then, as Anthony Smith maintains, the nation emerges as a “kind of modern text,” parts of which can be deconstructed and replaced at the behest of our imagination. Thus, we end up with a highly subjective definition of the nation. It precludes questions about the limitations that previous ethnic ties, or even present structural conditions, might place on our imaginative efforts.

In addition, Anderson’s understanding of modernity as a radical break with the past and his essentialization of the links between the print-capitalism and nation(alism) can hardly explain the rise of nationalism in central Europe and the Balkans. Nationalism, rather than class-consciousness, already characterized the political culture of these regions in the early nineteenth century, before either industrialism or capitalism significantly affected them.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

Also, despite the attractiveness of Anderson's idea of the modularity of nationalism, it seems unlikely that nationalist intellectuals would have been able to "pirate the [nationalist] patent" unless they were able to draw on more fundamental forces of social transformation such as classes and state institutions. In other words, in order to succeed, national consciousness has to be transformed into institutions and movements. The bases of nations and their respective nationalisms are not solely in print languages but in the interplay between powerful social classes (as Chatterjee maintains), and/or political units and equally potent communal entities (as Smith asserts). Lastly, the role of the war in fostering national identities and drawing distinctions between "us" and "them" cannot be underestimated (a point repeatedly made by Charles Tilly). After all, the most important outcome of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the emergence of separate, ethnic identities based on a denial of common memories of joint life in not the so recent past.³⁸

Thus, despite his excellent points about the significance of the politics of identity in forging fully functional and meaningful modern societies, Anderson ultimately follows most liberals and Marxists in reifying differences between the two types of nationalism: one, faithful to the ideals of the Enlightenment, and the other as a modular derivation from the original. The question remains as to how to combine his potentially fruitful concept of the modularity of imagined communities with a credible explanation as to why some nationalist movements are liberal while others are not.

³⁸ See Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*; Anthony Smith, *Ethnic Revival*; and Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*.

Most recently, Liah Greenfeld reaffirms a distinction between ethnic and civic nationalisms in a rather powerful way. Not unlike Kohn and Sugar, she maintains that the original idea and practice of nationalism is inseparably linked to the rise of modernity in the eighteenth-century Western Europe (in England, it goes back to sixteenth century). However, unlike Gellner and Anderson, she maintains that nation-building (that is, the imposition of high culture on masses) is not just a functional requirement of modernity. Instead, she points out that it was the other way around – first came nationalism, then modernity.

Greenfeld maintains that the character of nationalism (and a nation-state) is to a great extent determined by its responses to more contingent factors, such as, in the West, pre-existing state structures and new concepts of legitimacy and sovereignty based on the will of the citizenry. Thus, in the emerging Western nation-states, nationalism was not only perceived as interrelated with the ideals of liberalism and democracy, but also, in Greenfeld's memorable phrase, as "the form in which democracy appeared in the world, contained in the idea of the nation as a butterfly in a cocoon."³⁹

Different "situational constraints"⁴⁰ prevailed in Germany and other parts of Eastern Europe, where the rise of nationalism preceded the formation of the future nation-

³⁹ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 10.

⁴⁰ See Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. "Situational constraints" are all the internal and external economic, political and socio-cultural factors at work in one society at a particular point of time. However, they cannot be understood solely as impeding the full realization of some ideas in the material world; they also have to be understood as conditions that favor certain type of outcomes at the expense of others.

states. Since there were no clearly defined borders of these states-in-progress, nationalism served to justify particular territorial claims in the name of group membership, which could be “objectively” defined by a distinct way of life, history, customs, traditions, language, etc. The national principle here was not based on ascertaining the general will of a citizen body, but on forging people’s sense of their uniqueness, the consequence of which was the break up of the links between democracy and nationalism.⁴¹

In depicting civic and ethnic nationalisms, Greenfeld offers a sophisticated conceptual approach that allows room for escaping essentializing the differences between the two. Following Weber, she maintains that images and perceptions of reality should be contextualized within the prevailing situational constraints. Social order (the overall structure of society) represents a materialization of the images people possess of themselves, although these images (whether nationalist, communist, liberal, etc.) are not capable of completely shaping broad economic, political and cultural expressions of a society.

Thus, there is never a “perfect” match between the terms we are using to describe, define, and prescribe certain reality and the reality itself. Also, given the constantly shifting “nature” of societal relationships, which is partly the result of the endless interplay between the situational constraints and the images of society, not only the images but also the current social reality eventually become obsolete and, as such, replaceable with new images and corresponding realities.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9-12.

However, even though her approach assumes society to be an “open system,” Greenfeld seems to reify differences between civic and ethnic nationalism to an extent that virtually precludes re-definitions of contemporary national identities. Hence, the reader is led to believe that Germany and Russia will always remain inherently authoritarian societies, while Britain and the USA will stay democratic. This would imply that contingent factors of the past cannot be overcome in the present, a conclusion which goes against Greenfeld’s own sophisticated neo-Weberian methodological framework.

In other words, her conclusion fits her implicit trust in the conventional liberal distinction between the civic, liberal nationalism of the West and the ethnic, authoritarian nationalism of the East better than it fits her concepts of the contingency of nationalisms. It also leaves the stubbornness of modern nationalisms essentially unexplained. The problem here is not so much in the civic/ethnic distinction *per se*, but whether or not, using it, we can explain, or at least describe, why people value their national identities so much.⁴²

What are the reasons for such persistent insistence on the civic-ethnic dichotomy? Partha Chatterjee maintains that the conventional liberal distinctions between “good” and “bad” nationalism are constructed to justify and explain how the liberal idea of the right to self-determination, which links enlightened nationalism to democracy, could be distorted to produce such illiberal movements and regimes as twentieth century’s exclusionist nationalisms and Nazism. According to Chatterjee:

⁴² On this point, see Will Kymlicka, “Misunderstanding Nationalism,” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (New York: SUNY, 1999), 137.

This gives the liberal rationalist his paradigmatic form in which nationalism goes hand in hand with reason, liberty and progress. The special type emerges under somewhat different historical circumstances. It is, therefore, complex, impure, and often deviant; it represents every difficult and contradictory historical process that can be very “disturbing.” ... There is nothing in it, the liberal-rationalist would argue, that is necessarily illiberal. But being a special type, operating in unfavorable circumstances, it can often be so.⁴³

To save the liberal-rationalist paradigm, maintains Chatterjee, these deviations have to be explained and classified to show that the “irrational and regressive features [of nationalism] are only a hangover of the past,” that will be overcome once the impediments to progress have been removed.⁴⁴ However, he questions whether such a rigid dichotomy between supposedly “good” and “bad” nationalism can be applied in practice.

At the heart of such conventional, modernist understanding lies the distinction between the *Gesellschaft* view of the nation as an inclusive society of like-minded people, on the one side, and the *Gemeinschaft* view of nation as an exclusive community of blood, race and closely knitted culture, on the other. In itself, this is not an inaccurate description of two principal versions of nationalism. However, it becomes problematic when it reifies France and the USA as models of the *Gesellschaft* state, and Germany (and Eastern Europe) as a model of the *Gemeinschaft* state.

A growing number of authors, I believe, rightly assert that the two perspectives cannot be used only to differentiate between the countries, but also within them. R. D. Grillo astutely observes that “[I]f one [model] tended to prevail, as in France or the United

⁴³ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books Ltd. for the United Nations University, 1986), 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

States, or in Britain, it was always in dialogue and contestation with the other.”⁴⁵ He offers an excellent analysis of such a dialogue in the nineteenth-century France between the proponents of “nation as association”, such as Ernest Renan, and those who understood French nation in terms of “community”, such as De Maistre, Barrès and Maurras.

For Grillo, the evolution of French perceptions of their national heroine, Joan of Arc, epitomizes these two visions: “the Joan of Arc cult which began as an enterprise in the service of a revolutionary conception of France, became by the late nineteenth century a centerpiece of the alternative [conservative, nationalist] perspective.”⁴⁶ The Dreyfus Affair of the late nineteenth century that pitted two visions of France against each other for many years galvanized these changes.⁴⁷ At the heart of Dreyfus Affair was the extent to which a Jew can become a French citizen. On one side of the debate were those who, like Renan, argued that nation cannot be defined by language, culture, race or any other “objectively” identified criterion. Instead it is constituted by a “daily plebiscite,” a “spiritual principle,” based on a “rich legacy of memories, and, above all, by the wish to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage.”⁴⁸ On the other side, Barrès and Maurras argued that the

⁴⁵ R.D. Grillo, *Pluralism and the Politics of Difference: State, Culture and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 15.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁴⁷ The affair dominated French political life from 1870 to 1914. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew and a captain in French army, was accused of selling military secrets to German army. He was tried and sentenced to Devil’s Island. Eventually, and only after a great public debate that divided France, he was pardoned. The affair decisively shaped French attitudes as to whether a Jew or any other “foreigner” can be rightly accepted as a member of the French nation. See Grillo, 134-138.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 123. Renan stipulates that this “rich legacy of memories” should be supported only where it favors living together as equals, and urges that more unpleasant and potentially fractious elements of nation’s past be forgotten: “Getting the history wrong is part of being a nation.” Quoted in Judith Lichtenberg, “Nationalism For and (Mainly) Against,” in *The Morality of Nationalism*, eds. Robert McKim and Jeff McMahon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 164.

greatest threat to France came from Jews and others who live in France, but are foreign to the nation. From their perspective, it was clear that Jews could never be French.⁴⁹

Something similar can be said for the USA. Despite the famous dictum in the United States Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, some races have been more equal than the others – even on a legal plane – for much of American history. Thus, as Robert Hayden writes, an inferior political and social status had been constitutionally sanctioned on the basis of race for American-born citizens from 1787 until 1866 (13th, 14th and 15th amendments), and from 1892 until 1954. Such second-rate citizenship was finally outlawed by the Civil Rights Act in 1964.⁵⁰ Hayden soberly concludes that American democratic premises of society as “a polity of equal citizens [that] should include nearly all permanent residents within the state, and that all should be eligible for citizenship, constitute dramatic departures from American practice for most of the first two centuries of the Republic.”⁵¹ His views also undermine the traditional perception of the United States as the paradigmatic example of a civic nation.

In similar vein, Johan Arnason maintains that the Western and Eastern types of nationalism are both complementary and at the same time alternative directions of every nationalism, the balance between which is influenced by different positions within the global context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century economy and politics. What is

⁴⁹ Grillo, 136.

⁵⁰ Robert Hayden, “Constitutional Nationalism and the Logic of the Wars in Yugoslavia,” in *Ethnicity in Post-Communism*, eds. Stefano Bianchini and Dušan Janjić (Belgrade, Institute of Social Science, Forum for Ethnic Relations & International Network Europe and the Balkans), 93.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

perceived and essentialized as the civic nationalism of the West or the ethnic nationalism of the East has to be contextualized within the social realities of particular nation-states, and not according to abstract liberal-rationalist or Marxist schemes.⁵²

Therefore, although we may talk about predominantly civic or ethnic components of nationalism, or predominantly democratic or authoritarian nation-states, both aspects are equally fundamental to our understanding of nationalism and its relationship to modernity. Moreover, one cannot base understanding of nationalism solely on particular ideologies. Without emphasizing context within which nationalism (but also liberalism) is situated, one can at best offer a one-sided understanding of nationalism that essentializes differences between its ethnic and civic components.

With changes in situational factors, the context itself will be transformed, provoking mutations in both nationalism and the structure of the nation-state. These changes may resemble a more civic or ethnic understanding of nationalism, or a more democratic or authoritarian state structures. In the final analysis, nationalism is a product of the precarious balance among different political actors and their competing ideologies, responding to local as well as global economic, political, social and cultural conditions dominating in a particular moment of a particular nation-state.⁵³

⁵² Johan Arnason, See "Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity," *Theory, Culture and Society* Vol.7 (London: Sage, 1990), 207-221. Also, see Montserrat Guibernau, *Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

⁵³ The word "nationalism" thus is best defined as an umbrella term. It covers both *ideologies* organized around certain political principles (civic, ethnic) and designed as often as not to justify congruence between the nation and territory, and the *sentiments* of communal identity prevailing under social, cultural, political and economic matrices of society. These two aspects of nationalism are inter-related,

This **situational approach to nationalism** overcomes the trap of historical and sociological determinism that pervades much of the current literature on nationalism. Such an approach is particularly relevant in the case of Serbia because it undermines the dominant conventional matrix that identifies the roots of political authoritarianism and ethnic nationalism in Serbia solely in the existence of a rigid, traditional and pre-modern political culture. In the conventional perspective, particular layers of the Serbian past usually emerge as the all-powerful explanatory variable of the Serbian present. This view sees the years of communism in Serbia, followed by Milošević's post-socialist era, as simply building on the pre-modern authoritarian character of Serbian political culture so that in the end it becomes almost impossible to envision any change to it.⁵⁴

In contrast to such a perspective, the situational approach to nationalism in general, and the Serbian case in particular, allows room for a more nuanced analysis of the interplay between various economic, social, political and cultural factors in contemporary Serbia. It also sensitizes the reader to more contextualized views on modern-day questions about the modernity and persistence of national identities, conflicts within and between national groups, and the potential sources of difference between liberal and illiberal forms of

implying that, for example, liberal nationalism is but one of the possible combinations of various institutional, ideological, cultural and ethnic aspects of nationalism.

⁵⁴ For a classic essentialist view of the anti-democratic and proto-ethnic character of the Balkan peoples, see George F. Kennan, "The Balkan Crisis 1919 and 1993," in *The New York Review of Books*, 15 July, 1993, 3-7. Also, see Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

nationalism.⁵⁵ Finally, prescriptive elements of the nationalist project are brought to notice. Thus the following section addresses the question of the extent to which nationalism and liberalism can be reconciled within the context of a multination state.

Evaluating (Liberal) Nationalism

If one takes the civic/ethnic dichotomy at face value, the rejection of nationalism in favor of liberalism seems the only reasonable choice. For at least in popular use, "civic" consciousness must be liberal, while nationalism usually has an unpleasant "ethnic" overtone. In such a context, the possibility of liberal nationalism would appear to be an oxymoron and counterintuitive to common sense.

Yet quite a few contemporary authors believe that the conventional differentiation between individual liberalism and nationalism based on group rights is too rigid to meet the demands of contemporary multicultural and multination states. Ronald Beiner gives two reasons for attempting to marry liberalism and nationalism. First, given the power of nationalism as a sentiment if not an ideology of the contemporary world, liberalizing it would "take the illiberal string" out of it. Secondly, recent reevaluations of nationalism "combat dogmatic rejections of nationalist politics *tout court*, thereby facilitating (sometimes necessary) accommodation with nationalism."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ An excellent survey of the issues involved in theorizing nationalism can be found in Jocelyne Couture, Kai Nielsen and Michel Seymour, eds., "Rethinking Nationalism," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplementary Volume 22 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1998).

⁵⁶ Ronald Beiner, "Introduction," in *Theorizing Nationalism*, 7.

Authors like Yael Tamir, Joseph Raz, Avashai Margalit, Charles Taylor, David Miller, Michael Walzer and Will Kymlicka argue that we can understand individual freedoms and rights only in the context of membership of a certain national culture.⁵⁷ Even such a hard-core individual liberal as John Rawls insists that “people are born and expected to lead a complete life “within the same society and culture”⁵⁸ – a fundamentally cultural, rather than political vision. If this holds for the members of the majority nation, why not also as Kymlicka asserts, for the “national minorities’ desire to live and work in their own culture!”⁵⁹ Invoking a “myth of ethno-cultural neutrality” to deny national minorities their rights to cultural membership in multination states denies their rights to equality and privileges members of majority cultures or nations.

Iris Marion Young further challenges the liberal notion of impartiality, which in her view marginalizes certain groups through the exclusion of difference. She claims that the myth of homogeneity can be sustained only by forcing the members of oppressed groups (whether defined by gender, race, class, or ethnicity) to put their partial needs aside. However, to the extent that they “accept” the myth of homogeneity, those groups reinforce their own inferior position in society. Young maintains that the idea of impartiality

⁵⁷ See: Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Avashai Margalit and Joseph Raz, “National Self-Determination,” in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, ed. Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 79-93; David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

⁵⁸ Quoted in Will Kymlicka, *States, Nations and Cultures* (Spinoza Lectures at the University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam: Van Gocum, 1997), 36.

⁵⁹ See Will Kymlicka, “The Sources of Nationalism,” in *The Morality of Nationalism*, eds. Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 61.

“legitimizes bureaucratic authority and hierarchical decision-making processes [...and] reinforces oppression by hypostatizing the point of view of privileged groups into a universal position.”⁶⁰ Thus an indiscriminate application of the idea of impartiality can serve the ideological function of justifying the ways of life of the dominant group in society against those espoused by minority groups.⁶¹

Young’s point is certainly well taken. But to what extent can recent theorizing about minority rights within western democracies be relevant to former communist states, particularly having in mind that East Central European and the Balkan nations have been traditionally perceived as illiberal? The question seems extremely relevant, given the role nationalism played in the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995, as well as the simultaneous NATO intervention against Serbia and the Serbian regime’s expulsion of over one million of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo in spring of 1999. Under such conditions, should not we assume that the talk about liberal nationalism might just be an excuse to continue with old-fashioned nationalist policies?

Sabrina Ramet maintains that an increasing acceptance of the doctrine of collective rights in many post-socialist states represents the biggest threat to the democratization and stabilization of the region. According to her, the only way out of the nationalist conundrum is the full and unqualified acceptance of the doctrine of individual rights over group

⁶⁰ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 111-112.

⁶¹ Adeno Addis makes a similar point in a very succinct way: “The dominant cultural understanding and experience of a society tends to universalize itself as the inevitable norm for social life, marking the

rights.⁶² Ramet's analysis is certainly extremely important and her fears of the rise of nationalist and religious intolerance in Eastern Europe are fully justified. But the extent to which nationalist grievances throughout the region can be resolved solely by insisting on the primacy of abstract liberal principles of individual rights remains open to question.

Ramet is wrong in her unqualified rejection of group rights in the context of multinational states in the region. In fact, such a rejection is likely to further aggravate the problem, for two principal reasons: one related to normative questions of liberal nationalism and the other to the empirical validity of the liberal principle of state neutrality. Firstly, I will address the issues of liberal nationalism.

Ramet rejects Eastern European ethnic nationalism as distinctively irrational and tribal. In many instances it is. However, given the very strong persistence of national identities in the region (and elsewhere), can we really hope these countries can renounce nationalist aspects of their identities and, instead, embrace individual liberalism? In other words, instead of denying the significance of nationalist sentiments, would not it be more prudent to explore a middle ground; that is, a liberal-nationalist vision of politics that will cut through our individual rights and group identities?

Yael Tamir's *Liberal Nationalism* represents a first philosophical attempt to tackle these issues from an openly normative perspective. She justifies a prescriptive account of

culture of the marginal as the 'Other,' either to be excluded or 'normalized.'" See "Individualism, Communitarianism, and the Rights of Ethnic Minorities," *Notre Dame Law Review* Vol. 67 (1991): 619.

⁶² Sabrina Ramet, *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 1-17.

nationalism on the following grounds: “unlike historians or sociologists, the concern of political theorists is not to give ‘plausible accounts of our world’ as it is, but as it should be. In fact, political theorists are motivated to formulate their approaches because of their unease with the reality they face. Hence, such theories are to some extent always subversive, conveying discomfort with things as they are and calling for change.”⁶³

The sources of Tamir's dissatisfaction are certainly related to horrors people are ready to commit in the name of their nation. However, being a liberal with appreciation of the cultural context in which people live, she is not ready to join the ranks of those who dismiss nationalism because of its apparent irrationalism and tribalism. Instead, she recognizes that the nation is a fundamental basis of our cultural lives, and that the real question is not liberalism vs. nationalism, but what type of nationalism is responsive to liberalism? Moreover, even though she explains her position as that of a political theorist, she makes an extremely important empirical remark – people do live together in multinational states, no matter how much we like to push them into the nineteenth-century conceptual straightjacket of a homogenous nation-state.

Tamir also suggests that there is a possibility of an “ideal marriage” between a “liberal tradition with its respect for personal autonomy, reflection, and choice” and a “national tradition with its emphasis on belonging, loyalty and solidarity.”⁶⁴ Hence, in the tradition of Herder, Mazzini, and, more recently, Isaiah Berlin, Tamir presupposes a

⁶³ Yael Tamir, *The New York Review of Books*, 26 May 1994, 64.

⁶⁴ Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 6, 140.

“contextual individual,” for whom the importance of membership to particular culture would go hand in hand with a commitment to individual rights and pluralism.

Moreover, she believes that the tension between the liberal and the nationalist aspects of our identities is irreconcilable only in the case of an organic, essentialist understanding of nationalism that assumes that individual identity is totally constituted by national membership. As an antidote, Tamir posits a cultural reading of nationalism that is based on individuals' conscious choice to become members of a national community. Thus, the starting point in liberal nationalist theory is a contextualized individual living in a community with other individuals with whom he or she shares a sense of belonging.⁶⁵

Tamir also differentiates between the right to self-determination and the right to self-rule, i.e. political sovereignty. Being a liberal, she perceives both rights on an individual plane. The **right to national self-determination** is “the right of individuals to a public sphere, thus implying that individuals are entitled to establish institutions and manage their communal life in ways that reflect their communal values, traditions and history – in short, their culture.”⁶⁶ The **right to self-rule** is a distinctively political right of individuals to participate in the political life of their countries. Of course, countries that recognize differences between the right to self-determination and the right to self-rule are by definition liberal. Such countries will protect the various cultural choices of their citizens, leading to the development of a plurality of cultures within state borders. But can

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

illiberal forms of nationalism be transformed into Tamir's version of liberal nationalism, or does she obscure many of the negative features of nationalism that are so distressingly evident nowadays?

The simple fact that Tamir does not address the reasons for illiberal forms of nationalism does not undermine her case, since *Liberal Nationalism* tries to suggest how the world should be, and does not pretend to offer an empirical account of nationalism. But her attempt to reconcile liberalism with the nationalist understanding of the community rests on a questionable assumption that nationalists are highly sensitive to the primacy of individual over collective rights. To this extent, one might argue that she offers an account of a non-national nationalism, since it is hard to claim somebody is a nationalist if he or she accepts the primacy of individual over collective rights.

Furthermore, I share Anthony Smith's concerns that unless cultural rights are fully integrated into political ones, the result will be a highly idealistic, not necessarily normative, understanding of nationalism that undermines the Janus-like character of nationalism. This is not to say that I disagree with Tamir's emphasis on the communal character of our identities, but simply point out how the development of one's culture is often posited against somebody else's culture. Particularly in a multination state, cultural politics is inseparably linked to competition for limited state resources and quickly becomes a manifestation of the political contest for power and domination.

Tamir also suggests that the nation be understood as a voluntary society for the expression of individual cultural preferences. But can our identities be perceived solely in

terms of our own choice? They are at the same time shaped by the structural conditions of the particular time and place in which we live. Accordingly, at least a part of our identities is distinctively non-individualistic in character, something that Tamir's theory does not address.

Nevertheless, even though *Liberal Nationalism* does not explicitly deal with the key question of the mechanisms leading to the politicization of cultural nationalism, Tamir's philosophical approach forces us to think about nationalism in a new way. In her efforts to conceptualize the links between nationalism and liberalism, she rightly points out the artificiality of the existing differences between the liberal and the communitarian discourses. Even if not fully persuasive in her account of liberal nationalism, she suggests a promising avenue towards a better understanding of contemporary multinational states.

Similar concerns are present in the work of Will Kymlicka. He also understands nations in terms of societal cultures; that is as "territorially-concentrated cultures, centered on a shared language which is used in a wide range of societal institutions, in both public and private life (schools, media, law, economy, government, etc.) covering the full range human activities including social, educational, religious, recreational and economic life."⁶⁷ However, he is not concerned to offer a full-fledged normative theory of liberal nationalism. Instead, he starts from the opposite direction – that of exploring the empirical reality of nation-building in contemporary western democracies. Questioning the prevalent

⁶⁷ Will Kymlicka, "Ethnic Relations and Western Political Theory" (University of Ottawa, photocopy, 1997), 2.

dogma of the neutrality of state policies in liberal democracies, Kymlicka maintains that every state uses nation-building measures to promote the social integration of diverse populations into a dominant societal culture. In other words, such state acts are necessarily biased towards the language of the dominant group in society.⁶⁸

Of course, what is perceived as integration from the perspective of the dominant culture is usually seen as assimilation by national minorities. The conventional, universalistic conception of the self presupposes the absence of boundaries among different cultures. Every individual of any societal culture easily interrelates with whomever he or she wants. But, what is left of such a principle in the case of, for example, the aboriginal people of Australia, who were, throughout most of modern Australia's history, brutally subjugated by their colonial masters?⁶⁹

Government nation-building policies can easily undermine the capacity of minority groups, such as the aboriginal people in Australia or Canada, to enjoy their culture. Some may see these examples as peculiar to the Australian and Canadian historical contexts, and thus too peripheral to an assessment of the validity of the individualist principle of state neutrality. However, they are only the latest examples that we are ready to acknowledge of injustices committed in the name of state neutrality, and in principle they differ little from

⁶⁸ There are many ways in which Rawls' conception of justice could be skewed, leading to the misallocation of fundamental rights and duties in favor of majority nations. They all concern nation-building policies rarely examined by liberal theorists till Kymlicka's *Multicultural Citizenship*. Wayne Norman offers a list of policies that have been avoided by liberal theory, despite their significance for the creation of national identities: national military service, education system, state-controlled radio and television, etc. See "Theorizing Nationalism (Normatively)," in *Theorizing Nationalism*, 59-63.

⁶⁹ See Adeno Addis, "Individualism, Communitarianism," 644.

the nineteenth-century French language policies based on the informal rule – “Spitting and Breton forbidden.”⁷⁰

For these reasons, Kymlicka rejects the liberal idea of state neutrality by showing how nation-building models have emphasized active state involvement in shaping citizens’ identities. In his view, traditional liberal theory does not have the conceptual tools to deal with the normative and empirical issues of secession, nationalism, immigration and multiculturalism. The conventional emphasis on distinguishing individual and group rights inhibits serious analysis of these issues,⁷¹ throwing us back on a moral indignation with the realities and practices of ethnic nationalism and/or any other form of fundamentalism that stigmatizes efforts to conceptualize group rights.

Kymlicka, however, emphasizes the moral responsibility of contemporary democracies to protect the rights of (national) minorities; a responsibility that emanates from the basic liberal principle of “undominated equality.” This allows him to address the issues of democracy, nationalism and minority rights from a radically different perspective. As he maintains, “the question is no longer to justify departing from a norm of neutrality, but rather do majority efforts at nation-building create injustices for minorities?”⁷² Also, “why should national minorities not have the same powers of nation-building as the

⁷⁰ For this and other examples of language policies in western democracies, see Anthony H. Birch, *Nationalism and National Integration* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 10, 11, 44–46.

⁷¹ Kymlicka, “Ethnic Relations,” 9.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 7.

majority?”⁷³ Finally, can national minority rights be accommodated within the framework of a multination state, without disrupting its social unity?

These questions are also close to heart to Robert Hayden, but he approaches them from a different perspective. Kymlicka is concerned that the liberal emphasis on principles of state neutrality leads to nation-building policies favoring the members of the majority nation. Hayden highlights dangers from the other direction – from the emphasis of the collective aspects of our identities, as it became a constitutional norm throughout Eastern Europe.⁷⁴

This is also the crux of Lidija Basta’s insightful analysis of the role constitutional arrangements have played in post-socialist Central and East European countries. She rightly insists that the role of constitutions is not just to provide a state with a set of basic precepts to bind together its legal system, but also to help forge the identity and ideology of a society. Accordingly, a constitution is not just a supreme act of the state. It is rather a guidepost that informs the members of a community how they should live, which principles they will obey, what is just, and finally, what is morally wrong.⁷⁵

What type of identity is being forged by Eastern European constitutions? The prevailing principle in the preambles of these constitutions is that of nationalist democracy (ethnocracy); i.e., democracy for the members of the majority nation, but not for those

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁴ Robert Hayden, “Constitutional Nationalism,” 79-97.

belonging to national minorities. In Hayden's lucid phrase: "government of one kind of people, by that kind of people, for that kind of people, at the expense of all others in the state who are not so fortunately situated."⁷⁶ A vision of national identity that is based on the "permanent domination and inequality, of, by and for the majority 'nation,' ethnically defined." A vision, however, that is, whether we like it or not, rooted in the cherished principles of a modern state system – that of the popular sovereignty and the right of nation to self-determination.

Robert Hayden makes an extremely important point here. However, I believe it needs a further clarification vis-à-vis the criteria that have to be used to separate liberal from illiberal states. Most of the countries of the region are to a greater or a lesser extent multination states. But the few that are (relatively) ethnically homogenous (Slovenia, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic) have clearly outperformed the others with their transformation policies. This suggests that the concept of ethnicity as politics that prevailed in Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, etc. proved to be a brake on the democratization processes,⁷⁷ even though it was only in some of these cases (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) that the state was at war with those of its own citizens who happened to be members of national minorities.

⁷⁵ Lidija Basta, "Uloga ustava u zemljama tranzicije centralne i istocne Evrope," in *Lavirini krize: preduslovi demokratske transformacije Jugoslavije*, eds. Slobodan Samardžić, Radmila Nakarada i Đuro Kovačević (Beograd: Institut za evropske studije, 1998), 55-57.

⁷⁶ Hayden, 79.

⁷⁷ See Laslo Sekelj, "Nacionalizam i demokratija: tri tipa transformacije u Istočnoj Evropi," (Beograd, photocopy, 1999).

So, what might be the criteria that separate liberal from illiberal states? In the case of Eastern Europe, the ethnic character of its constitutions is certainly first on the list. The **ethnicization of politics** can only be understood in relational terms. For the very real sense of ethnic solidarity to emerge, “we” must be distinguished from the external “they” that are perceived, rightly or not, as “strange, threatening and competitive outsiders.”⁷⁸ But, the politics of ethnicity is also circular. Inasmuch as “we” describe “them” as threatening, “they” also perceive “us” in the same manner. Hence, Hayden is on the right track in insisting that an ethnic conflict appears to be immanent in multinational societies defined by **constitutional nationalism**.

We may argue about the extent to which national identities appear as “imagined,” “constructed” or “invented,” and/or based on myths and intellectual dreams of the national “paradise on earth.” Still, the conflict between ethnic groups is real and, in the end, ingrained in the institutional foundations of the state. Moreover, such a politics inevitably emerges as a paramount political conflict: a conflict for control over territory, participation in political institutions, endless, passionate and increasingly violent debates on the level of autonomy and/or complete separation, status of minority cultures, languages, etc.⁷⁹

In other words, the “proprietary” claims of majority nations enshrined in Eastern European constitutions push towards tight control over “public space.” But is this not also true in western liberal democracies? Germany’s citizenship law (at least until very recent

⁷⁸ Milton Esman, *Ethnic Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 13.

⁷⁹ Esman, 23. Also, see Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

modifications) defines the country in ethnic terms, and yet nobody would argue the illiberal character of the state. Similarly, Israel's politics is thoroughly ethnicized, but this does not lead the various Israeli governments to deny the legitimacy of Palestinian claims to self-government and self-determination. Quite the contrary, public space is defined by very passionate debates as to how to deal with these difficult questions without undermining both the liberal and ethnic character of the Israeli state.

Thus, some other criteria are required to clarify differences between liberal and illiberal forms of modern polities.⁸⁰ First, the **degree of coercion** used to promote a common national identity. At least in the case of Eastern Europe, the "generous" use of coercive measures is related more to its not-so-distant communist past than to the ethnic definitions of national boundaries *per se*. In other words, the problem is the **lack of a more inclusive democratic political culture** rather than an ethnic understanding of political community. After all, Switzerland and Belgium have ethnically defined cultural boundaries, and yet they remain liberal, despite certain communal tensions.

Kymlicka rightly observes that it is not the complete absence of ethnic aspects in nation-building policies that distinguishes contemporary liberal democracies from their own past and from present-day Eastern European countries. Rather, it is their self-imposed limits on the promotion of "thick" national identities in multinational states. This leads us to a second criterion. If the expression of ethnicity is legitimate, how should it be allowed?

⁸⁰ I have tried to interpret some of Kymlicka's arguments better to fit Eastern European experiences. See Will Kymlicka, "Territorial Boundaries: A Liberal Egalitarian Perspective," (presented at the Ethicon conference on *Ethics and Boundaries*, New York, September 1997): 14-17.

Modern multination democracies relegate ethnicity to the “private sphere,” where differences may flourish. However, this may not be sufficient, as the distinction between individual and group rights cannot always be maintained. A third criterion has to be related to the **principle of “differentiated citizenship.”**⁸¹

At the heart of this principle is understanding that members of minority groups (whether based on ethnicity, gender, race, religion, class) should have the right to express their differences. These groups have been exposed to various forms of “oppression” ranging from exploitation and marginalization to harassment motivated by group hatred. For these groups to be fully recognized, they should first be granted special rights. The Canadian government, for example, is using this principle to address historical injustices against the aboriginal people.

In the context of ethnic definitions of political community in Eastern Europe, this principle could serve as a corrective to the superior position of titular nations by constitutionally addressing not only the privileges (rights) of majority nations, but also clearly identifying national minority rights. In other words, constitutions would be based not only on the principles “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité,” but also on the principles “Sécurité, Diversité, Solidarité.”⁸² Or, to put it differently, a fair and liberal approach to multination states involves recognizing that ethnic groups can and should legitimately mobilize in pursuit of their minority rights.

⁸¹ One of the most influential theorists who argue for cultural pluralism and the need for “differentiated citizenship” is Iris Marion Young. See “Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal

Hence, what I argue is that there are different forms of recognizing ethnicity and one should differentiate between the “**politicization of ethnicity**” from the “**ethnicization of politics**.” The former is the view that ethnicity matters and must be publicly recognized and accommodated. The latter, on the other side, is based on the understanding that politics is about “us” and “them” and that, in the context of the multinational state, politics is all about a zero-sum game between ethnic groups, in which every gain for “us” is a loss for “them,” and *vice versa*.

The final criterion that I would like to mention concerns the blatant **prohibition of freedom of media** and other means of public discourse. Again, it is important to realize that this is not necessarily related to the ethnic character of the state. Illiberal, non-democratic states, whether or not they are multinational in character, inhibit public discourse in order to promote a certain type of national identity. But these policies arise not so much from ethnicity, but from the lack of liberalism and democracy. Ethnicity only further aggravates the problem but it does not create the situation in such societies.

If all the above criteria are lacking, people end up living in an extremely illiberal society.⁸³ What is left then in such a society, as in Serbia, is a notion of a “true” nationhood as a justificatory principle for essentializing common myths, language and religion as the only legitimate vessels of conducting politics – power politics reduced to its

Citizenship,” in *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: SUNY, 1995), 175-208.

⁸² Basta, 70.

⁸³ On the other side, a lack of some of the criteria on the list may lead to peculiar outcomes. The history of the United States is the history of modern liberalism, and yet, from the African-American perspective.

worst. "Ethnic" politics in a form of illiberal non-democratic politics, thus is well defined by the political principles of Carl Schmitt, who delineated politics solely in "friend-enemy" terms, and rejected outright the principles of political liberalism.⁸⁴

But this may not be the whole story. Ethnic solidarity within the same group can at least permit liberal discourse among the members of the "chosen" nations. Accordingly, even though the political discourse of liberalism in the context of ethnic politics is but mimicry of democracy, the political space within one's ethnicity allows pockets of genuine democratic discourse. The more nation-states become ethnically homogenous, the stronger these pockets may become, although the price may be expulsion and pogroms.⁸⁵

Are we prepared to pay such a price for an eventual and uncertain rise of democracy in future? Can we instead offer a critical appraisal of constitutional nationalism and nation-building in Serbia (and elsewhere) that steers between the Scylla of abstract liberalism and the Charybdis of the essentialization of ethnicity as politics?

In this regard, two scenarios appear possible in Serbia and similar states. The first would see a continuation of the processes of ethnic cleansing and the creation of an

much of it is a history of enslavement and segregation. One can say that in this respect race in the USA history has played the role ethnicity has assumed in Eastern Europe.

⁸⁴ On the relevance of Carl Schmitt's antidemocratic and anti-liberal philosophy for understanding political events in Serbia, see Dragan D. Lakićević, "Antropologija i politika," in *O haosu i bezumlju* (Beograd. Radio B 92, 1996), 16-23.

⁸⁵ The Czech Republic and Poland offer an excellent example of former multination states that, as a result of the forced expulsion of millions of Germans after WW II, have become ethnically homogenous nation-states. The contemporary example is Bosnia and Herzegovina. The most disconcerting aspect of Dayton peace agreement is that it tries to "put Humpty Dumpty back together," but at the price of creating three ethnically homogenous regions that in no way resemble the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural reality of the pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, the American architects of the agreement appear tacitly to have accepted the logic of ethnic nationalism as the only way out of war and towards peace and democracy!

ethnically homogenous nation-state in which the majority nation will account for more than 85% of the population. In the case of Serbia it is at present uncertain whether this would include Kosovo or not. The second scenario emphasizes nation-building of a different kind that currently prevails in the region; one that tries to adapt the above criteria of a truly liberal multinational state to the context of Eastern European politics and accommodate minority nationalisms, not combat them. In the remaining part of this section, I offer a critical evaluation of Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights that could help us view Serbia's case from the perspective of this second scenario.

Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights (multicultural citizenship) rejects the dichotomy between individual and group rights in favor of the notion of **group differentiated rights**: self-government rights, polyethnic rights and special representation rights.

Self-government rights represent national minority claims to some form of political autonomy or territorial jurisdiction that allows for the full and free development of their (sub)cultures within the dominant societal cultures. It is important to recognize that the members of national minorities always perceive these demands as "inherent" and thus permanent.⁸⁶ In the Serbian context, the national groups that require self-government rights are Kosovar Albanians, Bosniaks from Sandžak and Vojvodinian Hungarians. These groups claim certain rights to self-government not only for historical reasons but also based on their territorial concentration and institutional arrangements in the former Yugoslavia

that granted them various degrees of territorial autonomy and local self-government. Milošević's regime has denied these rights throughout the 1990s, creating a very unstable and politically explosive situation in the country.

Polyethnic rights are not intended to promote self-government but a full integration in the society by fair public funding or recognition of the cultural practices of immigrant ethnic and religious groups. Although these rights were designed to facilitate full integration in immigrant societies, I believe they can be applied to Serbian ethnic groups as well. Vojvodina could serve as an example. It is the most ethnically diverse region of the country. The population is 55% Serb and 18% Hungarian, with many other smaller and widely dispersed ethnic groups (Croats, Montenegrins, Slovaks, Romanies, Romanians, etc.), whose political demands can summed up as a genuine wish to be politically fully incorporated into Serbian society while maintaining their cultural distinctiveness.

Finally, **special representation rights** are the rights of many ethnic and non-ethnic groups (based on gender, class, religion, etc.) for better (proportional) representation in the legislature. Unlike the previous group rights, they are best perceived as temporary state measures in response to, as Kymlicka puts it, "some systemic disadvantage or barrier in the political process which makes it impossible for the groups' views and interests to be

⁸⁶ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 27, 30.

effectively represented.⁸⁷ Once “affirmative action” removes these disadvantages, the needs for special representation rights are eliminated.

Kymlicka is fully aware that the conventional dismissal of “collective” rights has been usually done on the basis of endorsement of individual rights. He is also aware of the consequences of an indiscriminate endorsement of group rights. However, he believes we need to distinguish between two types of claims that ethnic and national groups might make: “the first involves the claim of a group against its own members; the second involves the claim of a group against larger society.” Claims against a group’s own members – “**internal restrictions**” in Kymlicka’s terminology – aim to protect the group from internal dissent by individuals wanting to break away from its traditions and mores. Claims against society (“**external protections**”) are designed to protect members of the minority group against oppressive economic and political decisions by the larger society.⁸⁸

According to Kymlicka, “internal restrictions” cannot be perceived as just from the perspective of individual rights. However, group claims to “external protection” are fully justified by liberal principles of equality and the right of choice. As such, they do not clash with individual rights. Quite the contrary: they can help increase society’s respect for individual rights within a certain societal culture. So, Kymlicka’s societal cultures (nations) are to be understood as intrinsically open to influences from other cultures. For this to work, however, an individual has to have the right to reject the values of his or her

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 35–45.

culture if it becomes too illiberal. In other words, Kymlicka's understanding of the role of societal cultures emphasizes providing a context of choice, instead of being vehicles of identity creation.

Nevertheless, even though group differentiated rights are justified from the liberal egalitarian perspective, we have to be aware that their claims can be and sometimes are destabilizing for society. This is particularly true for claims to self-government rights, which can take the form of calls for separation and thus challenge or threaten state policies of social integration within the dominant societal culture. Even so, we cannot reject group (differentiated) rights as illiberal, as conventional liberal theory has often done. Instead, they should force us to rethink what might be the basis of social unity in a multinational state.

As Kymlicka maintains, the "missing ingredient" required for social unity "seems to be the idea of shared identity," and a "fundamental challenge facing liberal theorists [and state practitioners] is to identify the sources of unity in a democratic multinational state."⁸⁹ This is even more so for societies currently undertaking transformation policies. In other words, claims for self-government will not perish just because state authorities opt to dismiss them as illiberal and potentially destabilizing to social unity. The very denial of their legitimacy also involves destabilization and, at the same time, encourages resentment and even secessionist tendencies, as the case of Kosovo demonstrates.

The following section deals with the question of self-determination in a more elaborate way. Its purpose is to offer to the reader an overview of the arguments for and

against the principles and practices of self-determination, including secession. Thus, the section provides the ground for a more theoretically nuanced understanding of all the issues involved in the case of the majority-minority relationships in the post-socialist Serbia.

National Self-Determination and the Morality of Secession

The principle of self-determination, including secession, poses very difficult choices for international law and politics. Can the principle of self-determination be understood in an either/or way; that is, as a distinctively liberal right, or as a strictly nationalist claim? Even if national self-determination can be defended from a liberal perspective, do we have a moral right to do so, if we know that war and destruction usually precede any successful secessionist movement? How should the principle of self-determination be coordinated with the most important tenet of international relations – that of the inviolability of state borders? Should the principle of national self-determination be tied to state territory, or are there “weaker” visions of the principle, envisioning some forms of political autonomy as a halfway house between full-fledged sovereignty along ethnic lines, and minorities enjoying various forms of local autonomy within a multination state, etc.?

A traditional liberal defense of the nation-state model may provide a useful point of departure in addressing these questions. John Stuart Mill saw a nation-state as having clear advantages over its competitor – a multination state. He famously asserted that cultural diversity in a nation-state impedes its chances for a stable and democratic development:

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 186, 192.

Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities... Among a people without fellow-feelings, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the workings of representative institutions cannot exist... [I]t is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the *boundaries of governments should coincide with those of nationalities* (italics by D.G.).⁹⁰

Consequently, a task of nation-building is to achieve congruity between cultural and political membership, between the nation and the state. To the extent that this is not possible, nations should have a right to leave a dominant culture and a state. Hence, Mill openly affirms that both the right to national self-determination and secession are legitimate rights, for they work towards the creation of a new state that will be politically much more representative of the interests of its citizens than the previous one. Or, as Mill puts it, "[the right to secede] is merely saying that the question of government ought to be decided by the governed. One hardly knows what any division of the human race should be free to do if not to determine which of the various collective bodies of human beings they wish to associate with."⁹¹

Today, Mill's liberal arguments seem to be more often pressed by die-hard nationalists than by liberal authors, and there are many reasons to treat his arguments with caution. Despite all the techniques of modernization, including the wars fought to achieve a clear match between the nation and the state, only a few full-blown nation-states can claim such a congruity within its territorial borders (Iceland and Japan come to mind). The overwhelming majority of states incorporate within their territorial borders different

⁹⁰ J.S. Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government," in *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (London: J.M. Dent, 1972), 230-233.

⁹¹ Mill, 392.

national and ethnic groups. All of them speak their own distinct languages, believe in their own gods, have their own peculiar local traditions and habits and, finally, wish to have certain autonomy in organizing their local communities.

Accordingly, as a rule, national minorities in contemporary multination states are quite often culturally and linguistically distinct to the extent that they are not fully integrated into the political community of a dominant nation. Under such conditions, the nationalist principle that each national group should have its own state can easily provoke instability in the international state system, rather than the liberalization and democratization that Mill hoped for. Moreover, under global conditions of territorial intermixing of nations, indiscriminate application of the principle of national self-determination would often require untangling various nationalities from each other.

Twentieth-century European history contains many instances where indiscriminate application of the national principle has had catastrophic results, forcing Ernest Gellner to conclude that “[I]t follows that a territorial political unit can only become ethnically homogenous, in such cases, if it either kills, or expels, or assimilates all non-nationals.”⁹² For similar reasons, Elie Kedourie, a most astute critic of the nationalist principle, rejects the notion of national self-determination altogether. He states that “the only criterion capable of public defense is whether the new rulers are less corrupt and grasping, or more

⁹² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2.

just and merciful, or whether there is no change at all, but the corruption, the greed, and tyranny merely find victims other than those of the departed rulers.”⁹³

Kedourie is very conscious that the creation of any new nation-state leads to the emergence of a new ruling élite. In his view, the nationality of the ruling élite cannot be used to assess the legitimacy of the state, which is rather determined by the extent to which rulers are responsive to the needs of their citizens. Mere nationality is not a valid criterion for assessing whether a new state is likely to govern legitimately. A new state may be democratic, or it may not. In either case, the act of state-creation, based on the principle of self-determination, is already over.

The question thus still remains open: what criteria justify the principle of national self-determination itself? So far, we only know that it is desirable that a new state be responsible to its citizens. Accordingly, we can raise a normative claim that national self-determination, including the right to secession, is legitimate to the extent that it is justified on the grounds of liberalism and democracy.

On the other side, we can hardly claim that this is more than a necessary condition. What if a national group that wants to exercise its right to self-determination already lives in a liberal and democratic state? Also, do we have a moral right not to support a national group because it is illiberal, even where we know, for example, that this results from the group being exposed to appalling economic, cultural and political oppression by the

⁹³ Quoted in Ronald S. Beiner, “National Self-Determination: Some Cautionary Remarks Concerning the Rhetoric of Rights,” in *National Self-Determination and Secession*, ed. Margaret Moore (Oxford: Oxford

majority nation? In the remaining part of the section I will first explore these and previously mentioned issues from the perspective of domestic politics, that is, what can be done to prevent these concerns to be raised in the first place. Secondly, various normative arguments in favor of self-determination will be presented and examined in the context of principles of international law.

The principle of self-determination is usually perceived in a twofold sense: first, as the right of a nation to attain statehood, and secondly, as a general right to political autonomy. Both variants are concerned with the relationship between the nation and the state, but at different levels. The right of nations to statehood is a powerful claim that can de-legitimize every multination state on the basis of the nationalist principle. Political autonomy, however, may not infringe upon the external state borders, serving rather to legitimize national minority claims for some form of self-administration and free development of their (sub)cultures within the dominant societal culture of a multination state. In this sense autonomy comes close to what Kymlicka terms self-government rights (as explained in the previous section).

However, the problem is not so much in defining claims for autonomy, but in engineering institutional arrangements that will hold a state together. In other words, as John McGarry says, in states facing secessionist movements, the solution is not in further pursuing “Jacobin forms of centralized governments,” but in the “establishment of

(evolving) institutional arrangements based on the concept of multinational partnership.”⁹⁴ Of course, two immediate questions are, first, why should a dominant cultural group agree to share its privileges with minority groups, and secondly, what type of policies are most beneficial?

There is no clear-cut answer to the first question. Change of heart in relationships between two or more groups depends on context; there may be a precarious balance between an already tense situation and the élite’s understanding that the only alternative to compromise may be a slide into chaos. This may imply that Mill was right after all in asserting that national homogenization is a prerequisite for a liberal and open nation-state. Yet, as Arendt Lijphart observes, despite claims to the contrary, there are “numerous cases of plural societies where democracy has worked reasonably well.”⁹⁵ This leads us to the second question of appropriate policies for containing centrifugal tendencies in plural societies.

Lijphart maintains that in the case of deeply divided (plural) societies, traditional concepts of democracy as majority rule have to be amended in accordance with principles of consociational (power sharing) democracy. The reason is obvious: insistence on the majority principle in a multination state can only lead to resentment on the part of

⁹⁴ John McGarry, “Orphans of Secession: National Pluralism in Secessionist Regions and Post-Secession States,” in *National Self-Determination and Secession*, 225.

⁹⁵ Arendt Lijphart, “Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination of Ethnic Minorities in Power Sharing System,” in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, ed. Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 277.

minorities.⁹⁶ Accordingly, decentralization of political decision making processes and institutionalized autonomy based explicitly on respect for ethnic differences are the most important democratic requirements of multinational societies.⁹⁷

In his study of the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and other consociational democracies, Lijphart identifies four basic principles of group-based political representation: a grand coalition, segmental autonomy, proportionality and minority veto. Their function is to diffuse the political decision-making process from the center, which is usually controlled by a majority nation. There are many ways to envision these principles, so they should be accepted only as broad guidelines, application of which ultimately depends of the context in a particular state. Thus, a state may become a federation, or a highly decentralized nation-state with an elaborate system of autonomous regions. What is important, however, is that each group is represented in a cabinet or the President's office, and that, wherever possible, decision-making on matters of special group interests is devolved to those groups. Proportionality serves to improve political representation and foster a more equitable allocation of public funds, while the minority veto right is the ultimate "weapon" for protecting the most vital minority interests.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁹⁷ Lijphart is fully aware that societal groups (or segments, in his terminology) can differ from each other in many ways: religion, language, race, and ethnicity. Nonetheless, he uses ethnicity more often than any other term because he believes that ethnicity incorporates other differences as well (cultural, linguistic, etc.).

⁹⁸ Lijphart has written extensively about the consociational democracy. His classic works include: *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); and *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

The idea of these principles is to give national minorities more power to govern themselves separate from the central legislature. However, Lijphart is aware of potentially destabilizing effects such arrangements might have. Thus, he also suggests various techniques for “linking” segments of society within a central legislature with each other and with the political center. These include organization of separate (ethnic) political parties that will, on the basis of proportional representation, gain access to the central legislature to promote their interests. Being based on proportional representation, these parties will be “naturally and continually self-adjusting” to the structure, needs and interests of the groups they represent.⁹⁹

However, a word of caution is necessary at this point. Perhaps more often than we realize, the walls of division between groups in society are already practically insurmountable. Even though Lijphart’s points about consociational democracy are extremely relevant, the implementation of a more decentralized system of autonomous segments in deeply divided societies cannot be regarded as a panacea. Context and timing are crucial. If crucial opportunities are missed, we are back to the question of the national right to self-determination, understood in its stronger sense.

The 1990s represent such times. The break-up of the former communist federations of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, and the resurgence of national sentiment elsewhere have brought to the fore the issues of national self-determination and secession. Politicians, philosophers and social

⁹⁹ Lijphart, “Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination,” 285.

scientists have been forced to confront these historical challenges: to philosophically evaluate arguments for and against national self-determination and secession, while at the same time trying to judge whether suggested solutions are institutionally judicious and workable.

In principle, almost all contemporary authors support national self-determination, including secession. But their approaches differ in three important ways. First, we can differentiate between the so-called Primary Rights (“ideal”) and Remedial Right Only (“non-ideal”) theories of national self-determination.¹⁰⁰ Second is the distinction between individualist, liberal perspectives and communitarian ones. Finally, varying restrictions are attached to the principle of secession, making the principle of self-determination a qualified right, not a free-for-all.

The “ideal” theories deal with the question of whether rights to self-determination and secession are warranted from the perspective of a liberal (justice) theory. These theories justify secession on normative grounds, not on political considerations about the feasibility of achieving independence in a particular case. They generally follow Mill’s arguments in favor of self-determination.

As already noted, Mill believed that congruity between the nation and the state was the prerequisite of a truly liberal society. According to him, individuals belonging to

¹⁰⁰ This distinction is borrowed from Allen Buchanan, “The International Institutional Dimension of Secession,” in *Theories of Secession*, ed. Percy B. Lehning (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 227-256. Remedial Right Only theory allows secession only where a group has suffered certain injustices. Primary Right theories grant a right to secession in the absence of injustices.

different cultures and speaking different languages have a right to their own state, a right which is in the end identical to the right of the governed to decide who is going to represent them politically. This line of reasoning makes for an individualist, liberal argument in favor of self-determination.

Such arguments remain attractive, and form the core of contemporary liberal theorizing on national self-determination. Harry Beran, for example, argues that liberalism's commitment to individual freedom is necessary for justifying the right to self-government, including self-determination. In other words, he shares Mill's understanding that government is legitimate only if individuals (or "the governed," in Mill's terminology) consent to it.¹⁰¹ He also emphasizes that self-determination and secession should be tied to the concept of popular sovereignty: "To ascribe political sovereignty to the people is to claim that moral rights of rulers can be derived only from the creation or at least voluntary acceptance of certain political arrangements by the people. It is to claim that there can be no political authority without the consent of the governed."¹⁰²

Beran's last requirement for the legitimacy of self-determination and morality of secession is based on the democratic idea of "majority rule." This idea also plays a prominent role in the work of Daniel Philpott, who offers a sort of a "choice theory" of secession – a majority in a certain area, if it expresses a desire to secede, has a moral and legitimate right to do so. Accordingly, a plebiscite on secession is perceived as an

¹⁰¹ This presentation of Beran's ideas is based on Simon Caney, "National Self-Determination and National Secession," in *Theories of Secession*, ed. Percy B. Lehning (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 151-157.

instrument of legitimization of the will of the majority. Of course, the underlying thread of the argument is the idea of autonomy – individuals are free to choose who is going to represent them and in what state they want to live.¹⁰³

These theories would seem to be rather loose in their justification of the right to self-determination and secession, and this is how they are usually interpreted. Donald Horowitz, for example, is of opinion that current philosophical arguments about secession misinterpret a principle of self-determination with the “free-flowing right to secede,” irrespective of very delicate empirical questions that have to be raised prior to any normative statement in favor of ethnic self-determination.¹⁰⁴

Horowitz’s approach has its weak points. It would be a great mistake to eschew normative theorizing on the ground that it does not fit well into the messy world that self-determination and secession usually produce. If we ask ourselves to what extent these theories can be used to provide clear-cut criteria for deciding for or against secession in particular cases, then we should conclude that they are hopelessly inadequate. But this is not their aim. As Yael Tamir has said of her own work, “political theorists are motivated to formulate their approaches because of their unease with the reality they face. Hence, such

¹⁰² Quoted in Caney, 154.

¹⁰³ See Daniel Philpott, “Self-Determination in Practice,” in *National Self-Determination and Secession*, ed. Margaret Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 79-102.

¹⁰⁴ Donald Horowitz, “Self-Determination: Politics, Philosophy, and Law,” in *National Self-Determination and Secession*, ed. Margaret Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 197.

theories are to some extent always subversive, conveying discomfort with things as they are and calling for change.”¹⁰⁵

Moreover, Horowitz is wrong to assume that these theories are put forward without stringent qualifications. On a literal reading of the liberal argument, the right to self-determination, including secession, is moral and legitimate only in the context of a liberal and democratic multination state, within whose borders where there exists an equally liberal and democratic minority that is territorially concentrated in a particular area where it represents a very comfortable majority. Only a few candidates around the world would fully satisfy these requirements (Quebec might be one).¹⁰⁶

Horowitz is on firmer ground when he points out how liberal ideas of secession are based on the notion of a “clean break.” Such a neat separation will rarely be possible in today’s multination states, where ethnic groups are scattered or intertwined and ethnically homogenous regions (such as Kosovo, for example) are rare. In fact, contemporary states’ ethnic make-up can often be compared to a crystal, since, in the words of I. Brac, “when a crystal is cut into smaller pieces, those smaller pieces reproduce the same (molecular) structure as the original; the size, not the structure, has changed.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ See Tamir, *The New York Review of Books*, 64.

¹⁰⁶ For instance, Daniel Phillipot argues in favor of secession by using a hypothetical example of a group called Utopians. They are nationally homogenous, territorially concentrated with a fully developed and integrated public opinion (Mill’s well-known criteria). It is no surprise that, under such conditions, the choice of many individuals fully corresponds to the right of a Utopian group as a whole. There are simply no other groups in Utopia whose interests and rights might be impaired by the results of a plebiscite on secession. See “In Defense of Self-Determination,” *Ethics* 105/2 (1995): 352-385.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Addis, “Individualism, Communitarianism,” 626.

In other words, only rarely do we have fully ethnically homogenous regions without the presence of “annoying” minorities. Also, we should be aware that the nationalist criterion implies that, potentially, whenever a minority is concentrated in one region, it tends to behave as a majority in regards to its own local minorities. Secession is thus often followed by a worsening of ethnic relationships and increasing interethnic conflicts both in the rump and in the seceding state.¹⁰⁸

There is also a tendency for normative theorizing to make the right to self-determination absolute. However, David Miller, writing from a communitarian perspective, very persuasively suggests that the **principle of nationality should be understood as a legitimate claim, rather than as a right**. He prudently maintains that there are many equally legitimate, but competing, claims and that only by contextualizing and comparing them can we come closer to answering the question of the morality of secession. In other words, Miller rejects abstract normative theories in favor of a case-by-case assessment of the relevant criteria.¹⁰⁹ But what criteria does he offer?

Miller starts by rejecting numerical criteria for the reasons mentioned in my critique of the notion of the “clean break.” Qualitative judgements, not quantitative ones, should

¹⁰⁸ Horowitz, 190-200. Horowitz maintains that, in nine cases out of ten, secession will create a new set of problems. Yugoslavia’s disintegration seems to support his claim: in Bosnia, minorities are everywhere. Croatia “has to” expel Krajina Serbs. Serbia is on the verge of collapse because of its inability to deal with the minority questions, etc.

¹⁰⁹ David Miller, “Secession and the Principle of Nationality,” in *National Self-Determination and Secession*, ed. Margaret Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 63-78). Ronald Beiner makes a similar claim: “Think of what a ‘right’ of national self-determination rigorously applied would do to states like India, China and Russia (to say nothing of various African states with their colossal ethnic-tribal heterogeneity and arbitrary state boundaries)!” See “National Self-Determination: Some Cautionary Remarks Concerning the Rhetoric of Rights,” 160.

guide us in our decisions about how secession could affect national minorities in the resulting rump and seceded states. These judgements need to be based on principles of nationality, human rights, equality, (distributive) justice, and so forth.

The principle of nationality represents a legitimate claim to political self-determination to the extent that it is raised by “a territorially compact nation, which is currently subject to rule by outsiders.”¹¹⁰ What makes this claim legitimate is that it is put forward by a group that shares a common attachment to each other and aspires to political autonomy; in other words, by a group that perceives itself as a nation. Nonetheless, this is clearly not enough. Such a claim should be compared with an equally legitimate claim by the majority nation not to be deprived “of part of the territory, which they and their ancestors have helped to shape, and which they quite naturally think of as theirs.”¹¹¹ Under such conditions, concerns about justice and human rights should decide which claim has a greater weight. In final analysis, Miller concludes, it is always better to try other forms of political autonomy (consociationalism, federalism, local autonomy), before deciding for outright secession.¹¹²

The discussion on the principle of national self-determination may be closed by exploring Allen Buchanan’s arguments in favor of a morally just secession. He shares Miller’s circumspect approach of evaluating each case of secession within its own context. Nevertheless, Buchanan believes that certain criteria can be elaborated for assessing

¹¹⁰ Miller, 65.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

whether a claim to secession is morally justified or not. These are at the heart of his 1991 book on self-determination and secession that has shaped much of the recent discussion on these issues. In his latest articles, Buchanan tries to link his arguments in favor of a **qualified right to secession** to principles of international law. He is particularly concerned to strike a balance between his own theory and the cardinal international law principle of the inviolability of state borders. Buchanan also examines the impact that the burgeoning international conventions on the protection of human and national minority rights might have on the theory and practice of national self-determination.¹¹³

Buchanan, like Miller, Philpott and others, maintains a clear differentiation between the right to self-determination in a weaker sense as a right to political autonomy, and the right understood in its stronger sense of a right to statehood. His main concern, however, is that a general, unqualified right to secession might not only disrupt the international state system, but also increase injustices and lead to violation of the human rights of minorities in both a parent and a newly emerged secessionist state. Accordingly, Buchanan posits his own Remedial Right Only theory that sets very strict criteria before secession should be accepted as morally just and politically legitimate.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 75.

¹¹³ See Allen Buchanan's *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991); "Self-Determination, Secession, and the Rule of Law," in *The Morality of Nationalism*, ed. Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 301-323; and "The International Institutional Dimension of Secession," in *Theories of Secession*, 227-256.

These criteria address two distinct but related questions. First, when ought a group to be recognized “as having a *prima facie* right to secession?” and second, how should the right to self-determination be brought under the principles of international law?¹¹⁴

Buchanan rejects the nationalist principle outright. He reiterates Gellner’s practical arguments that, since the very many nations in the world are ruled by a limited number of states, implementation of the principle that each nation should enjoy its own state would have a perverse effect on the stability of the international system. Nevertheless, Buchanan believes that certain injustices against national minorities justify a right to secession.¹¹⁵ These are: threat to culture, genocide, prolonged gross violation of civil and political rights based on a group’s ethnic identity, (internal) colonialism and regional exploitation, unjust appropriation of territory (occupation), etc.¹¹⁶

These criteria do not have equal weight. They should all be carefully assessed against the particular conditions in each and every state and secession should be a last resort. Nevertheless, Buchanan seems to favor secession in cases of a prolonged regional exploitation and an unjust appropriation of territory (the case of Baltic states vis-à-vis the former Soviet Union). He also seems to countenance secession in cases of a complete breakdown of trust between two communities, resulting from a long history of violation of human and minority rights.

¹¹⁴ Buchanan, “Self-Determination, Secession and the Rule of Law,” 308-309.

¹¹⁵ Buchanan, *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce*, 48-50.

¹¹⁶ See *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce*, 52-74; and *Self-Determination, Secession and the Rule of Law*,” 309-318.

In more general terms, Buchanan believes secession to be justified in terms of Locke's theory of revolution, according to which "the people have the right to overthrow the government, if, and only if, their fundamental rights are violated, and more peaceful means have been to no avail." In the case of secession, the political aim is not to overthrow an illegitimate government, but to "sever government's control over the portion of the territory," where control is justly perceived as illegitimate. Thus, as with the right to revolution, the right to secession is the right of individuals to defend themselves from serious injustices.¹¹⁷

Finally, Buchanan insists that the issues of self-determination and secession cannot be looked at separately from the real world, the problems of which they address in the first place. Accordingly, any theorizing that does not take into account a pillar of international state system, that of territorial integrity of existing states, is hopelessly inadequate. Thus, he also tries to link the qualified right to secession to certain procedures that should guide the process of secession, once a claim to self-determination is recognized by the international community as morally just and politically legitimate. In his view, the international community should develop procedures to achieve: "(1) an equitable settling of boundaries; (2) a fair division of national debt; (3) the continuation, renegotiation, or dissolution of treaties with third parties; (4) adjudication of claims of compensation for private property, lost or devalued as a result of changes in property rights systems; (5) measures to avoid disruption of national defense and security; and, above all, (6) credible

¹¹⁷ See Buchanan, *The International Institutional Dimension of Secession*, 231.

guarantees of the rights of minorities in both the seceding area and in the remainder state.”¹¹⁸

Buchanan seems to think that since these procedures do not violate the principle of inviolability of state borders, they will make the international relations more peaceful and orderly. However, this is a rather dubious suggestion. It is based on an overt trust in the power of legal norms, that is, on legalism. In sharp contrast to our expectation, principles, whether philosophical, political, legal, or otherwise, are only one side of the story.

For example, Buchanan’s criteria of respect for democracy, liberalism, and protection of human and national minority rights are in principle already fully integrated into the international system.¹¹⁹ Yet, in the case of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, political considerations had a greater weight than these principles. As early as 1991, the European Community (its so-called Badinter Commission) set forth criteria based on principles of liberalism and protection of national minority rights, for recognition of seceding regions from the former Yugoslavia. These criteria were reasonable given that Yugoslavia disintegrated in the first place because of its inability to deal with the question of national minority protection. Only Slovenia qualified under them for recognition as an independent state. Neither Croatia nor Bosnia and Herzegovina satisfied the criterion of

¹¹⁸ “Self-Determination, Secession and the Rule of Law,” 308.

¹¹⁹ It is hard, indeed impossible, to disagree with Horowitz that there is no shortage of formal provisions to protect minorities. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969), the Genocide Convention (1951), the General Assembly of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Minorities (1992), and the Final Document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Copenhagen, 1990) all affirm respect for the right of persons belonging to national minorities and insist on the autonomy and participation necessary for protecting these rights. Yet people persist in killing each other

protecting their respective national minorities. This, however, did not stop Germany officially recognizing Croatia as a fully independent state.¹²⁰ In this case, even given its pragmatism, Buchanan's theory seems to have fared just as poorly as any other normative account on the right of nations to self-determination.

One may conclude that decisions on the legitimacy of a new state will be always presented as being in accord with the prevailing legitimizing principles of international relations. At present, these are the principles of liberalism and democracy. However, *realpolitik* considerations very often blur the legitimizing principles of political liberalism. This is not to say that we should stop theorizing about the national right to self-determination from the perspective of those principles. But one must be careful not to deify the normative and empirical criteria in assessing the morality of secession. Ultimately, individual state decisions on recognizing the right to national self-determination will turn on questions of interest as well as principle.

Conclusion

The chapter has briefly surveyed a variety of theories and conceptions of nationalism and national rights. These have been presented and evaluated in terms of their descriptive clarity, normative plausibility and conceptual consistency. What I have tried to show is that the conceptual issues arising out of our interest in the challenges of

in order to protect the rights of their respective national groups. See Horowitz, "Self-Determination: Politics, Philosophy, and Law," 202-204.

nationalism cannot be addressed in an either/or way; that is, we cannot have purely empirical or normative theories of nationalism. Moreover, the concepts we choose, and the names we give to those concepts, as well as the supporting examples selected, are all part and parcel of the same endeavor. In the words of Wayne Norman, “obviously, our conceptual decisions are not in any way philosophically or empirically neutral. They must be informed by our sense of nationalist movements in history, as well as by our sense of some of the normative questions we want our concepts to help clarify.”¹²¹

The central argument in the first section of this chapter was based on a critical reinterpretation of the almost universally accepted distinction between the so-called original matrix of “Western” liberal nationalism and a derivative, illiberal, “Eastern” nationalism. Without denying the validity of the insights made by both camps in the recent ethnicist-instrumentalist debate about the modernity of nationalism, I have argued that in thinking about nationalism it is more fruitful to approach the so-called civic/ethnic (liberal-illiberal, modern/anti-modern, rational/irrational) distinction between the “West” and the “East” as a distinction within each nationalist movement.

Based on Liah Greenfeld’s notion of situational constraints and Benedict Anderson’s insightful analysis of the modularity of nationalism, I have maintained that the civic nationalism of the West and the ethnic nationalism of the East should always be

¹²⁰ For an elaborate presentation of Yugoslavia’s disintegration from the perspective of the international law, see Thomas D. Musgrave, *Self-Determination and National Minorities* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 113-124, 200-207.

¹²¹ Wayne Norman, “Theorizing Nationalism (Normatively),” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: SUNY, 1999), 52.

contextualized within the economic, social, political and cultural conditions prevailing in a particular nation-state. In other words, nationalism always emerges as a product of an ever-changing balance among different political élites and their corresponding ideologies, on the one side, and the various economic and social structural factors, on the other. From such a perspective, the story of Serbian nationalism cannot be reduced solely to the description of its own anti-modernity and irrationality. It should rather be interpreted, as I try to do in the following pages, as an interplay between ethnic and civic elements within the Serbian national movement and the state.

Of course, this approach to Serbian nationalism does not deny the dominance of the ethnic aspects of nationalism over the more civic ones in Serbia in the 1990s. Nevertheless, as will be shown in the following chapter, the situational approach to nationalism allows for a more nuanced analysis of the various factors at work in Serbia, showing that the practice of ethnic hatred is not the only social force present.

The second section of this chapter evaluated liberal nationalism from the perspective of the current liberal-communitarian debate. One of the most important insights from this on-going debate has been that (liberal) nationalism need not be inconsistent with respect for individual autonomy and cultural diversity. Putting this another way, I have emphasized that an increasing number of contemporary liberal and communitarian authors (Iris Marion Young, Yael Tamir, Will Kymlicka) have rejected the liberal myth of ethnocultural neutrality in the context of a multinational state, because of the

danger that it will implicitly justify the ways of a dominant group in a society against those of the minorities.

The question of state neutrality, as I tried to show, has further been complicated in those post-socialist Eastern European states that have constitutionally enshrined not only the principles of the newly discovered liberal democracy, but also of the ethnic ownership of the state. In ethnically diverse post-socialist countries such as Serbia, the question has emerged as to what extent a liberal democratic emphasis on individual rights and the principle of state neutrality could provide a barrier to discrimination against the non-titular nations present in such a state. This section took issue with the idea that state neutrality could be a viable political option in the context of an ethnicized post-socialist, multiethnic state. Instead, I argued for a more nuanced understanding of differences between the political recognition of ethnicity and the ethnicization of politics. The former is based on acknowledging that ethnicity matters in a multinational state and should be accommodated by providing minority groups with appropriate choices within a broader, ethnically diverse society. The latter, by contrast, reduces politics to a struggle between “us” and “them.”

To put it differently, the extent to which a post-socialist society fails to recognize legitimate minority claims to their own language, information and cultural protection is to be understood as the extent to which such societies, despite their liberal rhetoric, are becoming increasingly illiberal. This recognition will underpin later discussion which, given the Serbian regime’s emphasis on an ethnicization of politics cloaked in the rhetoric of liberal democracy, will analyze the Serbian constitutional, media and party system from

the liberal national perspective that all ethnic groups within a society have legitimate claims to protect their culture and pursue their economic and political decisions within a larger societal framework. This will show that Serbian state- and nation-building policies have been based on mimicking liberal democracy while pursuing minority-destroying policies.

The third section of the chapter provided an overview of the principles and practices of national self-determination, including secession. In many ways, this section represented a continuation of the discussion of liberal nationalism in the previous section. This time, however, the focus was on the extent to which social unity could be achieved in a multination state. This question has been of the utmost importance for the post-socialist Serbia throughout the 1990s, because the legitimacy of the state has not been (fully) recognized by the members of various groups in Serbian society. At least in the case of Kosovo, the mutually irreconcilable claims by the Serbian and Kosovar Albanian communities have threatened the very territorial foundations of the Serbian state. Thus, this section on national self-determination aimed to provide conceptual guidelines for approaching issues of self-determination and secession without succumbing to an either/or logic opposing the principle of state sovereignty against that of national self-determination.

Throughout the section, I emphasized that the principle of national self-determination should not necessarily be tied to the territory. I pointed out that many contemporary authors (Arendt Lijphart, Donald Horowitz, David Miller) have argued in favor of a “weaker” version of the principle that would allow certain forms of political

autonomy for the members of the minority cultures within a multination state. However, although Arendt Lijphart's principles for consociational democracy are worth exploring in the context of deeply divided societies, I also recognized that national minorities' powers to govern themselves separate from the central legislature may not be sufficient to deal with the problems posed by the lack of a social unity in such a state. In other words, in societies in which deep-seated cleavages are already perceived as insurmountable, the principle of national self-determination could and indeed is quite often reduced solely to the question of the (morality of) secession.

Drawing on the work of contemporary political philosophers on the issues of self-determination (particularly that of David Miller and Allen Buchanan), I have argued that under certain conditions secession could be seen as morally just. Thus my analysis later in this dissertation of majority-minority relations in Serbia, particularly between the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs, will be guided by the insight that the principle of nationality should be understood as a potentially legitimate claim, rather than as an absolute right. The principles to be used in assessing the legitimacy of such claims include those of nationality, human and minority rights, internal colonialism, etc.

To sum up, this chapter has paid particular attention to those conceptual issues that will be relevant to key questions about nationalism in Serbia, such as: What is the character of Serbian nationalism? To what extent does it represent a continuation of regional historical trends? To what extent can it be framed in ethnicist terms? What are the historical, institutional, political and cultural situational constraints leading to the

nationalist explosion in the late 1980s? Can we hope for the rise of a more benevolent, liberal nationalism in Serbia? What preconditions would promote such a development? How does Serbia fit into the model of a nation-state? Given Serbia's multicultural and multiethnic character, what type of institutional arrangements can be used to alleviate conditions of mistrust in the region?

These issues will be dealt with in the subsequent pages. In Chapter Two, I explore questions about Serbian national ideology and identity using a situational perspective on nationalism. Chapter Three provides a political map of Serbia, analyzing the Constitution, party programs, the Serbian multi-party system and the decisive role played by the media in the nation-building policies of the Serbian regime throughout the 1990s. Finally, Chapter Four discusses the position of national minorities in the Serbian post-socialist system. It includes case studies of Vojvodina, Sandžak and Kosovo in which all the issues and aspects previously discussed can be seen at work in practical examples.

Chapter 2

THE IDEOLOGY AND IDENTITY OF SERBIAN NATIONALISM:

SERBIA BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

[The enemy is] the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specifically intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case, conflicts with him are possible. These [conflicts] can neither be decided by a previously general norm nor by the judgement of a disinterested and therefore neutral third party. Carl Schmitt¹

Introduction

This chapter attempts to show that certain “defining” features of Serbian nationalism can only be understood if they are contextualized against the background of economic, social, political, cultural and normative constraints at work in different periods of Serbia’s history. Thus it applies the situational approach to nationalism developed in the previous chapter during the discussion of nationalism, modernity and the civic/ethnic question. Particular emphasis will be given here to the analysis of Serbia’s main situational constraints (in the terminology of Liah Greenfeld) and the discourse used by Serbian intellectuals in imagining the Serbian nation.

Section one of the chapter offers a further contextualization of the phenomenon of nationalism presented in the previous chapter. This time the emphasis is on the relationship between nationalism and modernity in the context of the Balkans as a broader space within

¹ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 27.

which a modern Serbian state and nation emerged. Then I present state- and nation-building policies in the context of the nineteenth-century Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941). The third section takes the analysis of these policies in the completely different setting of the socialist Serbia within federal Yugoslavia. Throughout the chapter, the focus is on various attempts of the Serbian intelligentsia and the ruling élites to define Serbian identity and its national goals not only within Yugoslavia, but also in relation to Europe.

The chapter concludes by arguing that even though the rhetorical devices and the policies applied throughout the entire period appear to be the same, different contexts in each of sub-periods concerned yielded entirely different results, effectively demonstrating the limitations of approaches to Serbian nationalism that are based on an overtly schematic differentiation between civic and ethnic, or modern and anti-modern types of nationalism. In fact, an exploration of Serbian nationalism demonstrates the usefulness of the two models of nationalism (ethnic vs. civic) in analyzing the currents of a single nationalism, rather than as labels for differentiating the nationalism in one country from another. In this respect, Chapter Two is primarily an examination of the “dialogue” between the ethnic and civic nationalism within a single state – Serbia.

Nationalism and Political Modernization in the Balkans

Contemporary literature on nationalism and modernization treats both liberal nationalism and western-type modernization policies (based on the ideals of the French revolution, the industrial revolution and *laissez-faire*) as incongruent with East European

conditions. In this view, nationalism served mainly to justify, or compensate for, the region's unsuccessful efforts to catch up economically and politically with the core European countries.² In other words, modernization in Eastern Europe, and particularly in the Balkans, is perceived primarily as a superficial type of Europeanization, a mere façade for the undemocratic, pre-modern and authoritarian politics that characterized the region in the nineteenth century. Gale Stokes presents such attitude towards the Balkan modernization policies in a most poignant way:

Balkan élites in the nineteenth century used the ideology of nationalism and the instrument of the state to serve their own interests rather than to forward economic development. ... Indeed, one of the tragedies of Southeastern Europe in the nineteenth century was that nationalism acted as a substitute for economic development. Forced to use newly introduced electoral processes to get or maintain control of the powerful state apparatus, the contending members of the state class in each country found nationalism to be their most useful tool. For this very reason, however, they had difficulty in using the state directly to effect socio-economic change, because the ideology of nationalism has very little social or economic content.³

Stokes links the rise of nationalism in the Balkans to a peculiar type of skewed modernization that led to a development of a satellite relationship with the northern (western) countries. Political dependency within the Ottoman Empire was only replaced with economic dependency on core European countries (first Austria, then France and Britain, finally, in the years preceding WWII, Germany). In the long run, this triggered the

² See: Andrew Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary: 1825-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); I.T. Berend and G. Ranki, *The European Periphery and Industrialization 1780-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Gale Stokes, "The Origins of East European Politics" (part I of the book), in *Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1-67.

³ Gale Stokes, "The Origins of East European Politics," 3, 4-5. Stokes is a leading American historian of a nineteenth-century Serbia.

development of an exclusionary type of nationalism in the region; one that would be based on the rejection of European values of modernity and liberalism.

At the beginning of the process of the Europeanization of the Balkans, however, Western intellectual influences were of decisive importance in the fight against the Ottomans:

The Balkan peoples, however, were under no ideological restrictions; in fact, quite the opposite. They had always known that the Ottomans were their conquerors. While they resented this, they could accept it until the ideas of popular sovereignty, constitutionalism, civil liberty and social equality taught them that Ottoman rule was not justified by natural law, that it was not inevitable. Once they discovered this idea, they were well armed to pursue political ends at the expense of what suddenly seemed to be an outmoded empire.⁴

Accordingly, under the conditions of dependency of the entire region to the Ottomans, the idea of social progress became closely related to the idea of national revolution. The general belief was that once independence was achieved, that is, once nation-states were founded in the Balkans, development could finally proceed (more or less) according to the Western model. Moreover, through the process of political liberation, the conditions for internal freedoms and a full economic and social development would also be created.

This, as we all know, did not happen. The reasons are manifold. Modernization theory has identified the problem as a lack of the economic and social preconditions for the full development of modern economies according to *laissez-faire* principles. However, the Balkan economies did not have the same opportunities as others to integrate into the world

economy. From the start they were forced to develop those industries that were of interest to the European core countries (primarily agriculture, and extraction of raw materials).⁵

Under such conditions, both Balkan conservatives and liberals were aware that their societies lacked the ability to compete with the most advanced European countries, so they argued in favor of protectionism, instead of free market principles. To put it another way, as much as the rise of nationalism in Western Europe was part of the process of market-building, in the Balkans (and Eastern Europe) nationalism was more closely related to the economic policies of protectionism. But the whole region was economically too weak to develop more equitable and “just” relations with the West. At the end of the nineteenth century, a distorted social development and insolvent economies characterized the Balkans. Moreover, many (liberal) intellectuals responded to the extreme pressure on peasants to pay ever-increasing taxes to cover the expenses of the corrupted centralized state bureaucracies by rejecting Western ideas of progress. From the end of the nineteenth century they turned towards far more radical ideologies and, eventually, policies.

These were based on the nativization of liberal nationalism. As result, Balkan nationalism increasingly became identified with the spirit of the people, the roots of which

⁴ Gale Stokes, “Dependency and the Rise of Nationalism in Southeast Europe,” in *Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, 31.

⁵ For a concise description of Balkan and Central European economies at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, see Ivan Berend, *Decades of Crisis* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998), 3-40. For an excellent overview of the Balkan economies, see J. Lampe and M. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History: 1550-1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

could be found in the “heroic” past of each and every Balkan nation.⁶ For these reasons, development in the Balkans prior to World War I brought fruit only in the political sphere. In terms of economic and social development, the Balkans remained as backward as at the beginning of the process of national liberalization and modernization. Consequently, the Ottoman hierarchical structure of society was preserved under the tutelage of the strongest – and for a long time the only – political class in the region: the state bureaucracy itself.⁷

However, not all would agree with the above description of the nineteenth-century nation-building in the Balkans. Diana Mishkova argues that the newly emerged Balkan states did indeed perform an active modernizing function comparable with similar processes elsewhere in Europe. She also maintains that empirical analysis of state- and nation-building policies in the region belies the predominant view of the façade character of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Balkan parliaments.⁸

Yet, Mishkova rightly maintains that “one should beware of exaggeration and the unwarranted assumption that matters had developed very differently in the West,” and that

⁶ See Roumen Daskalov, “Ideas about and Reactions to Modernization in the Balkans,” *East European Quarterly* XXX, No. 2 (June 1997): 143-180. Daskalov maintains that the first signs of negative response to modernity and the emergence of populist, Slavophile, organic, and romantic ideas emerged in works of fiction. These first national novels were based on the idealization of peasant life and admiration for traditional values as against “crass individualism and egoism, greed for money and its dehumanizing influence” (p. 162). These values of a patriarchal life, however, were already severely distorted by the intrusions of modernity, allowing intellectuals to create their own idyllic picture of the “world-gone” (p. 163). Serbia today shows interesting parallels to this mid-nineteenth century situation in which provincial intellectuals, responding to the failures of modernization, vilified urban culture and idealized the “common people” and their long-gone traditions.

⁷ See Gale Stokes, “The Social Origins of East European Politics,” in *Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, 57-64.

⁸ Diana Mishkova, “Modernization and Political Elites in the Balkans before the First World War,” *East European Politics and Societies* 9, no. 1 (Winter, 1995): 63-89.

in the Balkans the state and nation were somehow created before the modern economy. As she reminds us, even England was hardly a paragon of free market principles from the beginning. Only after a hundred years of mercantilism (that is, state-sponsored trade development), when the process of integrating nation, state and economy was complete, did England finally embrace *laissez-faire*.⁹

Still, Mishkova agrees that the Balkans, unlike some other parts of Europe, lacked the prerequisites of successful modernization on the English model. Under conditions of economic backwardness, modernization could only be achieved by splitting its economic and political aspects. To the extent that we take a mono-linear view of the modernization process, this will be perceived as an aberration from the original model of western modernization. However, what happened in the Balkans is something that keeps reemerging throughout the non-Western world in the twentieth century. This is a model of modernization that tries to fit the indigenous conditions of countries concerned.

In the case of the Balkans, the state was the only social force capable of introducing and undertaking policies that might promote modern development. As such, modernization in the Balkans has some differences but also similarities with the conventional western model of development. The greatest difference is certainly the starting level of economic development between the two regions. The differences in the early stages of political development were less marked. The Balkan élite engaged in “state-promoted political and cultural integration (acculturation) through schools, military service, and political

⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

participation” just as other European countries of the time did. Their final objective was the same: to create a sense of national identity and promote the national unity that was deemed necessary for a modern nation-state to function. Or, in the words of Mishkova:

[i]n political terms, the late developing societies were as “modern” as the developed ones. It is inadmissible, therefore, to brand political institutions and practices in these countries as merely emulative, socially irrelevant, and counterproductive. No one forced on the Balkan political leaders, and no “Western” model or “international legitimization” required the acceptance of, say, universal suffrage (introduced at the time only in Germany, France and Spain). Universal suffrage was desirable, however, if national unity was to be forged quickly under conditions of tenuous and slowly progressing economic integration through roads, railroads, and the circulation of money and goods.¹⁰

This suggests that we should not so quickly dismiss the integrative potential of nationalism and modernization policies in the nineteenth-century Balkans as conventional Western literature on nationalism and modernization has done. After all, as Eugene Weber explains, the process of using state- and nation-building policies to turn peasants into Serbs, Bulgarians, etc., was not specific to the backward conditions of the Balkans. A far more developed country, France, used similar policies to promote French national identity at around the same time as the Balkan state-élites did.¹¹

The purpose of nationalism in the region thus was not simply to justify the territorial borders of newly emerged nation-states, or find a culprit in the West for the development of dependency in the region. Its role was also to support state efforts to develop and integrate their economies with the West, modernize the bureaucracy and provide mass education. The impact of these structural changes has been twofold. First,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

the nations in the Balkans became identified with new forms of social and political integration, the legitimizing basis of which was the ideology of liberal nationalism. Secondly, the fusion and stabilization of these changes (i.e., creation of the modern state apparatus and the modernization of economy) simultaneously required a reliance on the principle of ethnicity. At the end of the process, **both civic and ethnic elements became equally important for stabilizing Balkan nation-states.**

Still, what remains different from the Western European experience is that the backwardness and underdevelopment in the Balkans meant that the ideologies of liberalism, romantic nationalism and socialism all found their way into the region well before the appearance of the institutions and classes they represented.¹² As Veljko Vujačić lucidly asserts, liberalism started there without the bourgeoisie, socialism without the working class, and nationalism without literacy.¹³

In the absence of fully developed modern capitalist and working classes, the intelligentsia and the state apparatus assumed an importance they never had in the West. Now the educated Balkan élites faced a dilemma. They strongly suspected that the only way out of poverty might be in imitating the West. On the other hand, they were acutely aware of the historical and social conditions in the region; conditions that required boosting the role of the state even at the expense of some individual rights. In other

¹¹ See Eugene Weber's classic study *Peasants into Frenchmen* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979).

¹² See Andrew Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary*, 90-92. In this classic study Janos differentiates between the economic and social modernity on the one side, and the political modernity, on the other.

words, they saw the tensions between the so-called internal, individual rights to protection from the state and the state's external freedom vis-à-vis belligerent neighbors, especially after the disappearance of former masters of the region (Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire) left a power-vacuum.

Intellectuals differed in their responses to this dilemma. Thus, as Zygmunt Bauman explains:

[t]he intelligentsia in East and Central Europe, especially further towards the east or south, has become irrevocably split (into factions or deep in the souls of each of its members) between the *Zweckrationalität* of the West and *Wertrationalität* inherent in "collectivism"; between the idea of hastening the downfall of the *ancien régime* and the need to build a new rational order directly based on old-time institutions and in a form substantially different from the cold, competitive and atomized world of capitalism. Intellectuals have based their request for participation in power on both perspectives.¹⁴

Contemporary accounts on nationalism in Eastern Europe (particularly in the Balkans) tend to neglect the "dialogue" between the so-called "westernizers" ("modernizers") and the "authenticists" ("nativists"). For example, Liah Greenfeld puts too much emphasis on the notion of the *ressentiment*, which she defines (following Nietzsche) as a psychological state based on feelings of envy and hatred of that which is being unsuccessfully imitated. Since the West is being copied, the inability to close the gap between the West and the Rest leads to the "transvaluation of values" of the original,

¹³ Veljko Vujčić, "Communism and Nationalism in Russia and Serbia," (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1995), 4-6.

¹⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, "Intellectuals in East-Central Europe: Continuity and Change," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 1.2 (1987): 170. *Zweckrationalität* means reasoning based on objectives; *Wertrationalität* means reasoning based on values.

Western nationalism towards indigenous traditions that are usually hostile to the original matrix of Western, liberal nationalism.¹⁵

The very notion of “indigenous traditions,” however, is problematic, since both “westernizers” and “authenticists” appropriate these “traditions” according to their respective needs. Also, if Western values are deemed “foreign,” the same could be said for many of the “indigenous” traditions of Eastern European countries, which are inseparably linked to the political cultures of their former masters (Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire and Russia). In other words, both traditions are equally imaginary and open to appropriation. Nevertheless, “interpreters” of the national will (especially in the Balkans) are quite often understood solely in negative, anti-Western and collectivist terms leading researchers to deny the significance of the strong, modernizing pro-European factions that existed in every Balkan society from as early as mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶

In cases such as contemporary Serbia, researchers are tempted to emphasize only those elements in the past that fit the complete *anomie* of present-day society.¹⁷ However, if we have in mind a continuing tense dialogue between distinct intellectual factions in a society, then different questions should be asked: What might be the reasons

¹⁵ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 14-17. Of course, Greenfeld’s notion of the *ressentiment* is a very fruitful one and can help us see the events in a contemporary Serbia in a radically different perspective. However, one should be aware not to emphasize it too much, for there is nothing deterministic in the development of the *ressentiment* type of nationalism in the Balkans or elsewhere.

¹⁶ In *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Greenfeld writes about the *ressentiment* of the German and Russian nationalisms. But in an article, written together with Daniel Chiriot, she also applies the same concept to the Balkans. See “Nationalism and Aggression,” *Theory and Society* 23 (1994), 79-130.

¹⁷ The latest example of such analysis of the Serbian nationalism is Branimir Anzulovic’s *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide* (New York, NYUP, 1999).

for the break-up of a dialogue between “authenticists” and “westernizers”? Why do the majority of Serbian intellectuals seem to have opted for illiberal nationalism? Does this imply that “indigenous” intellectuals have been more numerous than those who have advocated “cosmopolitanism” and “mondialism”? Or did they prevail because of their links with the state and “national” intellectual institutions? What is the role of the media in supporting traditionalists against modernizers?¹⁸ Finally, what were the answers to these and similar questions in the past?

In the end, political actors and the intelligentsia, competing ideologies, and political, economic, social and cultural conditions are all equally important for understanding the travails of Eastern European nations and nationalisms. The following pages deal with some of these issues in the case of the Serbian national identities and politics. The focus is particularly on the role of intellectuals and political élites in the twin process of nationalization and modernization of the Serbian state.

State- and Nation-Building in Serbia

The birth of the Serbian nation-state and, eventually, Yugoslavia, was part of a broader nineteenth-century Eastern European process of Slavic people “discovering” and imagining distinctive national identities vis-à-vis the great powers of the day, under whose tutelage they had lived for centuries. In this respect, the creation of Serbia and Yugoslavia

¹⁸ These are the questions that are put forward by Vojin Dimitrijević, an astute analyst of Milošević's regime. See “‘Europe’ as Serbian Ideal and Anti-Ideal,” in *Serbia between the Past and the Future*, ed. Dušan Janjić (Belgrade: Institute of Social Science and Forum for Ethnic Relations, 1997), 11-19.

“required” the destruction of the Habsburg and Ottoman multi-nation empires that, as Dimitrije Đorđević maintains, “impeded the emancipation of Yugoslav nationalities.”¹⁹

Even though the rise of the South Slav nationalisms proved to be detrimental for the multi-nation empires of the day, South Slav life up until the late eighteenth century was essentially non-national.²⁰ This is not to say that a sense of ethnic bonding did not exist, or had not yet been developed. But in pre-modern times, feudal status played a larger role in shaping identity.²¹ Even the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottomans in 1804 started more as a social revolt against appalling peasant conditions than as protest against foreign rule. Peasant rebellion turned into national revolution only through the material help and intellectual guidance of the Austrian Serbs of Vojvodina (then Southern Hungary), who, living in the economically and “culturally” richer Habsburg Empire, were already imbued with a modern sense of national identity. Furthermore, throughout this period the nascent Serbian merchant class and intellectuals from Vojvodina not only acted as “an established

¹⁹ Dimitrije Đorđević, “Yugoslav Unity in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Creation of Yugoslavia 1914-1918*, ed. Dimitrije Đorđević (Santa Barbara, California: Clio Books, 1980), 3.

²⁰ See Ivo Lederer, “Nationalism and the Yugoslavs,” in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter Sugar and Ivo Lederer (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969). Lederer observes that throughout the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans, not a single school or factory was developed. Even in the Austrian-held territories, the situation was far from satisfactory. Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century the population of Slovenia (always economically the most developed region in former Yugoslavia) was largely illiterate, uneducated and uninterested in “the call of blood” or the “power of an idea”, that is “the raw material of which...nationalities are formed (400-403).” Also, see Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); and John Lampe and Marvin Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1555-1950: From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

²¹ The current nationalist emphasis on the continuity of the Serbian and Croatian mediaeval kingdoms serves to justify land claims in the former Yugoslavia’s territorial conflict. As E.A. Hammel astutely observes, the Serbs base their claims “on the fullest dispersion at the height both of the Nemanjić expansion and the Diaspora occasioned by the Turks, turning both victory and defeat into territory”. The Croats, on the other side, claim “natural borders” with Serbia at the river Drina on the grounds of “their”

transmission-belt of ideas ... into the Pashalik of Beograd”, but also became “an active reservoir of administrative, political and intellectual leadership for ‘Serbia’.”²²

In 1830, the Sultan granted the Serbs autonomy and by the mid-nineteenth century Serbia (then within the boundaries of the Belgrade Pashalik) was already *de facto* an independent state while still *de jure* under Turkish tutelage (Serbia finally won independence at the Congress of Berlin in 1878). With the withdrawal of the Ottoman overlords, the land remained the property of the peasants. At that time, Serbia was a socially undifferentiated country that consisted of an overwhelming peasant majority (more than 95%) with a very thin stratum of merchants and state bureaucrats. The literacy rate was one of the worst in Europe: only 1% in the early nineteenth century.

Such conditions were slow to change and, by the end of the century, Serbia had only two cities with more than 10,000 people. The country entered the twentieth century with only 571 kilometers of railroad, 4,000 industrial workers and literacy rates of 50% for males and 23% for females.²³ Despite this very slow economic and social restructuring over the century, the growth of a Serbian state followed a western European pattern. As early as 1873, corporal punishment was abolished, and, at the end of the nineteenth century, Serbia could be described as a typical European-style state with its own parliamentary

mediaeval presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. See “The Yugoslav Labyrinth,” *The Anthropology East Europe Review*. Special Issue: War Among the Yugoslavs 11.1&2 (Spring & Fall 1993): 41.

²² Lederer, 400. Also, See Đorđević, 7.

²³ See Gale Stokes, “Introduction” and “Conclusion” to *Politics as Development: The Emergence of Nineteenth-Century Political Parties in Serbia* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1990).

system, independent court, political parties, competitive elections and freedom of press. How was this possible?

One theory highlights power political aspects of state control. The underlying idea is that in an undifferentiated society without the existence of a developed capitalist and a landowner class, the state emerged as the most important source of influence, prestige and wealth. Under such conditions, the Serbian intellectual élite found their rewards in politics by playing out the rhetoric of political legitimacy they learned during their student days in Western foreign universities.

Stokes thus insists that whatever economic and social change occurred in Serbia (creation of the army, railroad building) was “carried out for purposes of enhancing its [state’s] own power and authority, thereby benefiting the state class that was conducting political affairs without changing socioeconomic structures.”²⁴ Still, although Stokes’ conclusion might help us understand the internal, political struggles in Serbia, it seems to neglect the international aspects of state- and nation-building policies in nineteenth-century Serbia.

No matter what type of a “party” or a ruling élite was in control of the state, the primary task was the same. They all had to deal with two pressing questions. First, how to secure the independence of the fledgling Serbian state against the power politics of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary and Russia; second, which type of nation-building policies should be pursued so as to foster a sense of national identity. For

answers to these questions, the Serbian state class could only look westward, which in the end explains the modern European look of the Serbian state. Also, barring an economic restructuring of society, only classical state- and nation-building policies could be pursued.

Moreover, the dilemmas the Serbian intellectuals had to deal with were interrelated. The frontiers of the emerging Serbian nation-state did not coincide with those of the Serbian nation.²⁵ Accordingly, every Serbian national project since Ilija Garašanin's *Načertanije* (Outline) of 1844 looked to unite Serbs living in Austrian, Magyar and Ottoman territories with Serbia proper; a program which could be accomplished only by actively undermining the dominant positions of Austria and the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans.²⁶

The significance of *Načertanije* can hardly be overestimated. First, many of its main objectives and methods kept informing the actions of Serbia's ruling élite until as late as 1939. Secondly, *Načertanije* has always been a bone of contention among Serbian and former Yugoslav historians and politicians, who have seen it variously as the first program

²⁴ Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 306.

²⁵ The widespread dispersion of the Serbian Orthodox population is related to Turkish pressures westward; pressures that have created several waves of Serbian migration into what was then Southern Hungary, as well as Slavonia, Dalmatia and central Croatia. From 1578 these areas were known as the Military Frontier (Krajina). Krajina was created to prevent further Turkish advances and it played a vital role in the Habsburgs' defensive system. It was under direct military rule from Vienna, its population (half of it Orthodox, half Catholic) enjoying special privileges in return. It was incorporated into Civil Croatia only in 1881. From today's perspective, it is important to note that once national affinities replaced religious ones, the stage was set for an ethnic contest as to whether Krajina was more Serbian or Croatian. The 1995 Croatian victory over the Croatian Serbs in Krajina seems to have finally settled this question by creating an ethnically pure Croatian state, at the cost of ending 400 years of coexistence between the Serbs and the Croats in the area.

²⁶ Ilija Garašanin, one of the most influential Serbian statesmen in the mid-nineteenth century, is generally perceived as the first to formulate a national program of Serbian unification. On his activities as the

for a “Greater Serbia,” or of Yugoslav unification. Most recently the document has been compared with the 1986 *Memorandum* of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, currently perceived as the new *Magna Carta* of Serbian nationalism. It is worth taking some time to examine a document that has provoked such passionate debates over more than one hundred and fifty years.

In nutshell, *Načertanije* calls for the creation of one state in which all Serbs living in the Ottoman Empire would finally live together.²⁷ At that time, only one third of all Serbs lived within the borders of the Serbian principality. Another third lived in other parts of the Ottoman Empire (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandžak) and one third was under the control of Austria-Hungary. The aim of uniting all Serbs in one state was not necessarily anti-Yugoslav, since it could perhaps have been achieved through a (con)federation with other Slavic people in the Balkans where Serbs could have enjoyed, as they did in the former Yugoslavia, equal rights with other nationalities. After all, Ilija Garašanin himself was a Serbian politician who actively promoted pro-Yugoslav policies. In 1866 he agreed in principle with the Croatian Catholic Bishop Strossmayer, the founder of the Yugoslav idea, on collaboration between the Croats of the Triune kingdom (Civil Croatia, Dalmatia

architect of the Serbian national program, see David MacKenzie, *Ilija Garašanin, Balkan Bismarck* (New York: Columbia University Press, East-European Monographs No. 181, 1995).

²⁷ See Ilija Garašanin, *Načertanije* (Beograd: Studio 104, 1998), 69-102. It is very important to note that Garašanin wrote *Načertanije* under the direct influence of the Czech František Zach, who, as an emissary of Polish exile Prince Adam Czartoryski, spent some time in Belgrade. The aim of the Polish Prince was to promote South Slav unity independent of both Austrian and Russian influence with the idea that the eventual emergence of the strong South Slav state in the Balkans could benefit the Polish struggle for independence against Prussia, Austria and Russia. Garašanin remained faithful to many of Zachs's suggestions throughout his political career, although parts of *Načertanije* clearly emphasize the interests of Serbia rather than those of South Slav unification. See “Introduction” to *Načertanije*, 3-68.

and Krajina) and Serbia towards the creation of a Yugoslav state independent of both the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires.²⁸

Thus, the key question in assessing the character of *Načertanije* seems to be what type of state Garašanin preferred – a Greater Serbia, or a kind of union of South Slavic nations in the Balkans? Different parts of the document seem to offer different answers to such a question. On one side, Garašanin insists that “only in cooperation (alliance) with other neighboring Slavic nations” Serbia can sustain its future; on the other, he maintains that the main goal of the Serbian politics is to unite all the Serbs in the Ottoman Empire.²⁹ In other words, inasmuch as Garašanin recommends a pro-Yugoslav politics of the Serbian principality, at the same time he legitimizes the central role and the Piedmont-like character of the Serbian state in the Balkans. He does this in particular by emphasizing Serbia’s historical right to re-create the glory of the medieval Serbian Kingdom.³⁰

Garašanin’s ideas about uniting the Serbs in the fold of an expanded nation-state were fully in accordance with other integrative nationalist projects in Europe during the early nineteenth century (Italian, German, Czech, etc.). Throughout *Načertanije* Garašanin advocates cooperation among Slavic nations, irrespective of religious differences. This implies that Garašanin combined a modern, linguistic definition of

²⁸ See Gale Stokes, “Yugoslavism in the 1860s?” in *Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), 86.

²⁹ *Načertanije*, 71.

nationhood with a more traditional emphasis on the historical right of the Serbian people to a state of their own. However, at that stage, there was already a clear tension between these two markers of national identity: one based on the historical rights, and the other on language. The markers also suggested different routes for extending the Serbian state. The principle of historic rights pointed south (Macedonia and Kosovo), while language pointed west (Bosnia and Herzegovina and parts of present-day Croatia). Also, given the linguistic similarities among the South Slavic people, particularly between the Serbs and the Croats, Garašanin seemed to have been rather vague about the increasingly developing distinct national identities among them. Nevertheless, given that *Načertanije* professes cooperation among the South Slavs, it is fair to conclude that Garašanin was the first Serbian politician to put forward the idea of “the Balkans to the Balkan people.” After all, he did advocate the right to a state not only for the Serbs but also for other Slavic peoples in the region.³¹

Even so, *Načertanije* has rightly become synonymous with Greater Serbian pretensions, for its ultimate goal was the creation of a Serbian kingdom **through the annexation** of Bosnia, old Serbia (Kosovo and Macedonia) and Montenegro.³² In other words, the problem with *Načertanije* was not so much in its principal political aim, but in

³⁰ It should be no surprise that Garašanin emphasized the notion of historical rights, given that *Načertanije* was written before the European Revolution of 1848 that finally legitimized the notion of the nations' rights to their own state.

³¹ This is how Serbian historian Slobodan Jovanović interprets Garašanin's work. See “Spoljašnja politika Ilije Garašanina,” in *Političke i pravne rasprave* (Beograd: Bigz, 1990), 344-352.

³² Vasa Čubrilović provides an unsurpassed critique of *Načertanije* and the politics and ideology of a Greater Serbia. See *Istorija političke misli u Srbiji .XIX veka* (Beograd, Narodna knjiga, 1982), 126-148.

the method advocated. Even though Garašanin was fully aware that Serbia could never become a strong state without the active cooperation of other South Slav nations, he also firmly believed that the best way of achieving this was through the **extension of Serbia**. For example, while writing about Bosnia and Herzegovina in *Načertanije*, Garašanin seemed to be as unaware as many of today's Serbian nationalists that the differences between the Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Moslems were not only religious but also increasingly national. By advocating a full incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into Serbia, Garašanin inadvertently prepared the ground for a political dispute with the ideologues of a Greater Croatia over the question whether Bosnia is more Serbian or Croatian.

A lack of sensitivity for the complex ethnic fabric of Bosnia and Herzegovina (to say nothing of Macedonia and Kosovo) can partially be explained by Serbia's political successes in the early nineteenth century. Achieving independence at a relatively early stage in the nineteenth century, as Gale Stokes rightly observes, "gave the Serbs little reason to doubt that their nationalism was a viable ideology and no reason to turn to other unifying notions, such as the Yugoslav idea."³³ Thus, most of the Serbian ruling élite perceived the Yugoslav idea as useful before World War I only to the extent that it facilitated Serbia's principal goal of uniting all Serbs in one country.

³³ Stokes, "Yugoslavism in the 1860," 84. Stokes also makes the point that both Croatian Yugoslavism and Serbian nationalism emerged as "appropriate reactions to different situations" and that "it is unhistorical to describe Croatian Yugoslavism as particularly good, or Serbian nationalism as bad," 92.

Accordingly, when the Serbian liberals emerged on the political stage in the mid-nineteenth century, they did not in any way challenge Garašanin's ultimate political aims or methods. What they contested, however, was Garašanin's dismissive attitude towards the principle of the rule of the people. Being educated in the post-1848 Europe, they could not accept to base the legitimacy of the Serbian state solely on the application of the conservative tenet of historical rights. For them, Serbia's independence should be based on the right of nations to govern themselves. In other words, they introduced in the Serbian context the legitimizing principle of the nineteenth-century liberal nationalism. By doing this, they also tied the notion of the Serbian independence to the idea of political freedoms of the Serbian people, something that was never raised by conservative Garašanin.

It was Vladimir Jovanović who played the most decisive role in introducing liberal nationalism in Serbia. Being educated abroad, he was well acquainted with the ideas of German, French and English liberals. However, he was also aware that a successful introduction of the notions of liberalism and constitutionalism in the context of an illiterate Serbian peasant society required a particular reinterpretation of Western-style ideas according to Serbian traditions. He proved worthy of this task and no one explains the magnitude of his work better than Stokes:

Their [Serbian liberal] ideas did not emerge in a political system in which the power of the king was already limited by a constitution, they had to introduce that idea. They did not live in a land in which rule by law was an established custom, they had to insist on legality. They did not inherit a Whig tradition of history from the seventeenth century, they had to invent one. They were not born with a right to participate in politics, they had to establish that right. They did not experience the

industrial revolution, they had to create the conditions that would make that revolution possible.³⁴

Jovanović argued for the “democratic spirit of the Serbian people” which he traced back to the “primitive democracy” of the old patriarchal peasant institutions of *skupština* (assembly), *zadruga* (extended family) and *mesna samouprava* (local self-government). According to him, these old patriarchal institutions were based on notions of liberty and equality, which together are instrumental in producing social harmony.³⁵ Thus, combining the discourse of liberalism with language understandable to the Serbian people, he offered a powerful critique of the hierarchical structure of the Serbian state in the first decades of its autonomy. The emphasis on local traditions, such as the rule that chiefs of *zadruga* should be elected by its members, as Slobodan Antonić rightly observes, was instrumental in legitimizing a liberal stand that the true foundation of sovereignty was the people, not the prince. Far from offering a kind of organismic society, as many of his critics later implied, Jovanović and other liberals started a long struggle for a legislature and constitutionalism in Serbia that would put the state bureaucracy under the control of a liberal state.³⁶

However, while Jovanović represented a fledgling liberal and democratic Serbia and, as such, was an astute critique of Serbian conservatives, he was much less critical of Garašanin on foreign policy issues. Jovanović saw Serbia’s allies in Western progressive parties, not in aristocratic Europe, but he seemed to share Garašanin’s confusion in regard

³⁴ Gale Stokes, *Legitimacy through Liberalism: Vladimir Jovanović and the Transformation of Serbian Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), 225-226.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

³⁶ Slobodan Antonić, “Društveni sklopovi, politički delatnici i demokratski poredak” (University of Novi Sad, photocopy, 1999): 42-44.

to Serbian aims. Not unlike Garašanin, he wanted both cooperation among Balkan Slavic nation-states, and creation of an extended Serbia that would somehow be justified not only in terms of the right of nations to govern themselves, but also in terms of Serbia's historic rights.³⁷

Moreover, even though not himself a religious man, Jovanović emphasized the significance of the Serbian Orthodox Church as necessary for strengthening the national identity of the Serbs. Throughout his long life he casually wrote about the "will" and the "spirit" of the Serbian people and was full of praise for Serbia's cherished traditions.³⁸ In doing this, he implicitly supported the ethnicization of the liberal nationalism he helped introduce in Serbia. In hindsight, we can say that the strong ethnic leanings in this type of liberal nationalism proved to be highly detrimental for contemporary Serbia. Liberal nationalists who accepted Jovanović's brand of nationalism could not help but embrace the concept of a Greater Serbia as well. For, in Jovanović's understanding of the ethnic character of the Serbian people there was the same lack of sensitivity for the traditions of other Slavic and non-Slavic peoples in the ethnically mixed regions of the Balkans; insensitivity that had already been present in Garašanin's political program.

The Serbian Radicals, the first truly modern party in the Balkans, added a final element in a symbiotic relationship between the Serbian proto-democracy and nationalism. On one side, the Radicals were instrumental in introducing a pro-western, liberal type of

³⁷ Čubrilović, 191-195.

³⁸ Stokes' book on Vladimir Jovanović, *Legitimacy through Liberalism*, offers an excellent analysis of many contradictory strands of Serbian liberal nationalism of the time.

constitution in Serbia in 1888; on the other, they extended populist rhetoric into the Serbian elitist, though nationalist, discourse of the time.³⁹ The Radicals, led by Nikola Pašić, the most influential Serbian politician of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, fully supported the idea of a parliamentary system with a representative government. They maintained that the only legitimizing principle in the state was that of national sovereignty. They were not against the monarchy but their ideal was the British monarchical system in which the monarch's rights were limited by the Parliament, as the only true representative of the people.⁴⁰ Hence, at a time when many Serbian politicians believed that a freely elected parliament could not work in the context of an uneducated and illiterate Serbian society, the Radicals emerged as the voice of the Serbian peasantry against the state bureaucrats.⁴¹

However, by insisting that they were the only true voice of the people, and that the Serbian peasantry *was* the people, the Radicals introduced a strong populist rhetoric into the Serbian nationalist discourse:

³⁹ The People's Radical Party was founded in 1881 as a broad popular movement. Although at the beginning its roots were in the ideas of people's socialism, as developed by Svetozar Marković, the greatest Serbian nineteenth-century socialist, the party eventually turned towards the right. In essence, Radicals were in favor of people's state that would be based on direct links between the party and its leaders, on the one side, and the Serbian masses, on the other. Thus, in its first stage, the party leaders were more interested in imposing a firm party discipline on their members than in being concerned about modernizing the Serbian state. However, the party evolved and, once in power, it adopted a more liberal interpretation of constitutional parliamentarism. See Dubravka Stojanović, "Party Elites in Serbia 1903-1914," <http://www.udi.org.yu/Founders/Stojanovic/Elites.htm> (28 September 1999). Also, on the role of the Serbian Radical Party, see Gale Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 217-291.

⁴⁰ See Milan St. Protić, *Uspori i pad srpske ideje* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 1995), 127-132.

⁴¹ With the 1888 Constitution, Serbia became a parliamentary monarchy. The Constitution granted a right to free elections, political and citizenship rights, multi-party system, compulsory elementary education and a full differentiation between the executive, the legislature and the judicial branch of government.

In Europe there is not a people that deserves to be the unlimited sovereign in its state more than the Serbian people, because in Europe there is not a single state created by the ordinary people themselves.

Gunjac and opanak [peasant jacket and shoes] liberated this land from the powerful Turkish rule!...

Gunjac and opanak left the mouths he was responsible to feed and in a hungry and barren year let the judges dispense justice to him, let the army teach him the military arts and to arm himself with better weapons, let the cultured people train the young in knowledge, respect, work and patriotism,...

Gunjac and opanak ... is the Serbian nation that built and created this state, and by right and reason, through work and sacrifice, [it] ought to be the supreme ruler in its own land.⁴²

Accordingly, the Radicals completely identified peasantry with Serbia itself. Not surprisingly, in doing so they built their own electoral support that consisted of the peasants that, in the words of Gale Stokes, learned from the Radicals what it meant to be a Serb.⁴³ In long run, however, the price for the Radicals' political success was extremely high. Their deliberate manipulation of anti-intellectualism developed into a *ressentiment*-type of populist rhetoric against the "West" that eventually became an important ingredient of Serbian nationalist discourse up to the present day.

A clear view of Radical discourse at this stage is important, especially given the strong populist, anti-intellectual overtones of the Serbian nationalism that re-emerged in a radically different setting in the 1990s. As we shall see later, many components of current Serbian nationalist discourse were already present at the beginning of this century. If Pašić and his Radicals are to be praised as the creators of a first modern,

However, this was not full-scale popular sovereignty. According to the Constitution, the political system was based on dual sovereignty – that of the people and that of the king. See Milan St. Protić, 133-134.

⁴² Nikola Pašić, quoted in Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 250.

proto-democratic party in Serbia, they are also responsible for extending the notion of “Other” westwards, something that had not been done by either Garašanin or the first generation of Serbian liberals. But how did a party whose program favored the British parliamentary system also manage to present the “West” as a culture dangerous to authentic Serbian values?

Radical anti-western rhetoric should be looked at in the context of the limited modernization of late nineteenth-century Serbia. The old, Serbian patriarchal society had declined, but there had been no sweeping development of the economy. Now Pašić offered the Serbian peasant a sense of belonging to something greater than himself – a Serbian nation. A very important aspect of this sense of belonging to a nation was a feeling of pride, that is, that Serbian people should not be ashamed of their “gunjac and opanak.” Finally, this directly led to the *ressentiment* of the “West” and those who represented it in Serbia – a fledgling Serbian urban class and their political parties.⁴⁴ In

⁴³ Stokes, 257.

⁴⁴ For the links between Serbia’s political élites and their attitudes towards modernization, see Latinka Perović, “A Lesson from the Past: The Political Élite and Modernization in the First Decade of Independence of the Serbian State,” in *Serbia between the Past and the Future*, ed. Dušan Janjić (Belgrade: Institute of Social Sciences, 1997), 101-114. It should be noted that the most important controversy among Serbian historians in the 1990s is over the “real” character of the Serbian Radicals and their role in modernizing Serbia. On the one side of the debate, Milan St. Protić presents Radicals as the first truly modern party that used populism only at the level of phraseology, while being deeply faithful to the ideal of western modernization in the Serbian context. See his *Radikali u Srbiji, ideje i pokret 1881-1903* (Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1990). On the other side, many authors, of which the most prominent is Latinka Perović, are emphasizing populism of the Serbian Radicals as their distinctive feature. The debate is not only academic, for while Protić emphasizes the years of communism in Serbia as the most responsible for the rise of Milošević’s regime, Perović maintains that Milošević’s populism has predecessors in Pašić and other leading members of the Serbian Radical party. Hence, Serbian contemporary nationalism is not an illegitimate child of the main currents of the Serbian history, but its legitimate product. See Perović’s *Srpski socijalisti 19. veka* (Beograd, Službeni list, 1995). This is the third volume. The first two volumes were published in 1985. Also, see Perović, *Nikola Pašić, pisma, članci, govori* (Beograd, 1995); and M. Subotić, *Sricanje slobode* (Beograd, 1992).

other words, Serbian Radicals salvaged a “patriarchal mentality” in a society that was already undergoing social transformation, the first victims of which were the very institutional foundations of such a mentality (*zadruga*, *mesna samouprava*, *lokalna skupština*).

At the level of everyday politics, such a mixture of populist rhetoric and patriarchal mentality took the form of a peculiar discourse of fear that Serbia may “turn into a Western-like mini-state.” Hence, in order to escape such a “disaster,” Serbian Radicals emphasized deep moral values of the Slavic culture and civilization against the “egoistic struggle of Western culture.”⁴⁵ An excellent example of such a discourse could be found in the Serbian parliamentary debate between the Radicals and the other Serbian parties over building the first railway line in Serbia (in the 1880s).

During these debates two radically different concepts of state emerged: that of the populist state with its basis in a patriarchal society, and that of a modern, legal state. From the perspective of the Serbian Radicals, the acceptance of railway contracts would have consequences comparable with the defeat of the Serbs in Kosovo in 1389, or that of the Indians in America:

Serbia may suffer the fate of the Indians following the discovery of America. ... By discovering America, Columbus introduced European culture and with it also the chains of slavery for the tribes and aborigines of America. ... That destiny may also befall our people with the so-called culture forcibly imposed on us by the West.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Perović, 105.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Perović, 107.

Radicals lost the debate to the pro-European parties (Liberals and Progressive party) led by politicians who recognized that the only way for Serbia was westward. Any other way, as a leading pro-European politician of the time, Stojan Novaković said, would lead to Serbia being perceived as “an oddity among nations – something others will avoid and run away from.” Somewhat later, Jovan Skerlić, a leading Serbian critic of the time, warned his fellow Serbs that:

The fate of Serbia depends on the eradication of patriarchal conservatism and reactionary demagogy, which are the source of all that is harmful not only in radicalism, but in our entire political life. From that point of view, one could say that democracy in Serbia will be European or else there will be none.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, although the Radicals lost their battle over the railroad, they won many others, since at the beginning of the century they emerged as the most powerful party in Serbia. Not surprisingly, in foreign policy, the Radicals accepted the idea of an extended Serbia as a (potential) Piedmont of South Slavs, just as Serbian conservatives and liberals had done previously. This did not, as already stated, directly imply a Greater Serbia. Still, the Radicals’ insistence on a modern, efficient and centralized state would hardly have been consistent with an eventual unification of South Slavs (with all their different religions, cultures and political traditions) in one state.

Still, the idea of Serbia as the Piedmont of South Slavs in the Balkans was not the only national concept in Serbia. The great nineteenth-century Serbian socialist Svetozar Marković argued that the Serbian political system represented a mixture of Oriental

⁴⁷ Quoted in Perović, 110.

despotism and the (then not so untypical) European conservative police state. For these reasons, he opposed Garašanin's project of uniting the Serbian and, eventually, other Slav areas of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires on the ground that this would only exacerbate the bureaucratic, anti-liberal character of the Serbian state. In other words, Marković believed that without internal liberties, a struggle for national liberation was meaningless.⁴⁸

Furthermore, at a time when the politics of a "strong and united Serbia" started attracting both liberal and conservative politicians and intellectuals, Marković anticipated the potentially detrimental consequences of such a national program. He argued that creation of a Greater Serbia was anti-Serbian in its core because it could only create animosities in the Balkans and pit Serbia against the peoples with whom it shared the same traditions, language and interests:

[w]hich of these peoples would accept to be annexed by the Serbian monarchy? ... Where and what are the boundaries of the "united Serbs" – their new Serbian state? ... This is very hard to do without coming into the conflict with the other [Balkan] nations. The Serbian nation does not have any geographic or ethnographic boundaries that would define its space. In order to create such a state ... the Serbian people will have to take the role of a conqueror.⁴⁹

Marković is also a staunch believer in the right of nation to self-determination, but only to the extent that such right does not impede the right of other nations to their own state. Given that the Balkans, in his own words, is "the mosaic of the peoples," he

⁴⁸ See Miroslav R. Đorđević, *Srpska nacija u građanskom društvu* (Beograd: Narodna knjiga, 1979), 113. Also, on Marković's influence on the development of the socialist ideas in the Balkans, see Woodford McClellan, *Svetozar Markovic and the Origins of Balkan Socialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).

⁴⁹ Svetozar Marković, *Srbija na istoku* (Novi Sad: Srpska narodna zadružna štamparija, 1872), 143.

advocates internal democratic transformation of the Serbian state and the creation of a Balkan (con)federation based on equality and mutuality of all Balkan nations. Anything less would only lead to an imitation of Austria-Hungary's policies, and a repetition of the problems that were plaguing the Habsburg Empire at the time.⁵⁰

Marković was also quick to criticize Jovanović and his liberal circle for relying too much on chimeras such as the "spirit" and "will" of the Serbian people. For him, undermining the significance of the social conditions, as liberals did, could only exacerbate the lack of freedom in the name of abstract notions of the will of the people. Marković took a stand radically at odds with Jovanović's romanticized understanding of a Serbiahood that "one generation somehow inherits from the other":

[e]verything is malleable, material conditions, terms by which we define society, law, freedom, religion, social and political institutions, customs and a character of the people, each of these elements influences the other and all of these is mutually interrelated.⁵¹

Although Marković's ideas for a Balkan federation gained support among Serbian intellectuals on the eve of the First World War, his approach to the national question was never fully accepted in Serbia up till the end of World War II.⁵² In that period, Belgrade emerged as the cultural and political center of groups advocating a Greater Serbia. It also became a center for intellectuals and liberal politicians (geographer Jovan Cvijić, historian and politician Stojan Novaković, politician Ljuba Stojanović, literary critic Jovan Skerlić, etc.) who believed that a Yugoslav federal state could solve the Serbian

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 141-160.

⁵¹ Quoted in Moroslav Đorđević, 110.

national question in particular, and that of South Slavs in general.⁵³ As Čubrilović points out, this current of opinion was an important corrective to official Serbian policy based on Garašanin's *Načertanije*, and helped maintain political and cultural links among the Serbs in Serbia and the Croats and Serbs in Croatia and Vojvodina in the years preceding World War I.⁵⁴

With the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I, the Old World order collapsed. The door for the creation of the Yugoslav State was finally open. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed in Belgrade on December 1, 1918, along the lines advocated by Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić.⁵⁵ The Serbian ruling élite to a great extent followed Ilija Garašanin's design in internal organization of the state. In other words, they advocated a centralized model appropriate for an ethnically homogenous state, such as Serbia was up till 1913, when it expanded its borders to incorporate Vardar Macedonia and Kosovo through victories in the Balkan wars.⁵⁶

⁵² See Čubrilović, 203-236.

⁵³ See Ljubinka Trgovčević, *Naučnici Srbije i stvaranje Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Narodna knjiga, 1986).

⁵⁴ Čubrilović, 292-294.

⁵⁵ It is important to highlight that at the time pro-Yugoslav and pro-Serbian sentiments were gaining momentum in Croatia. However, from the very beginning, the approach of two leading Croatian politicians of the time, Frano Supilo and Ante Trumbić, were in favor of a polycentric, or even fully federalized Yugoslavia; an approach that Nikola Pašić rejected in favor of a centralized, parliamentary system. See, Wayne Vučinić, "The Formation of Yugoslavia," in *The Creation of Yugoslavia 1914-1918*, ed. Dimitrije Đorđević (Santa Barbara: Clio, 1980).

⁵⁶ Thus, even before the creation of the first Yugoslavia in 1918, Serbia became a multination state, given that local population of Macedonia and Kosovo did not identify themselves with the Serbs. This also implies that even if Yugoslavia had never been created, Serbia would still have had to come to terms with the radically changed ethnic structure of its population.

Thus, when the only recently created multination Serbia found itself part of an ethnically very complex multination state, Yugoslavia, Nikola Pašić remained in favor of a strongly centralized state. His confidence that Serbia's political traditions and fledgling parliamentary democracy would work well in the context of Yugoslavia was, however, unfounded from the very beginning. Serbia in 1912 was a country with less than three million people. In 1918, Yugoslavia incorporated almost 12 million people over an area five times larger than that of Serbia.

One could argue that the official policy of "integral Yugoslavism" was based on trust that the newly integrated Serbs outside Serbia proper could play the role of a bridge between Serbia and other Yugoslav nations.⁵⁷ In reality, however, the politics of "integral Yugoslavism" reflected the Serbian political élite's inability to grasp the extent to which various Yugoslav peoples were already fully aware of their cultural and ethnic distinctiveness, and unwilling to trade their national identities for the ideological concept of official Yugoslavism. Moreover, a continuing insistence on presenting Serbia as the Piedmont of South Slavs in the period between 1918 and 1939 substantially altered Croatian and Slovenian perceptions of living in a joint country with the Serbs.

⁵⁷ Belgrade's centralized policies alienated Croatian Serbs as well. In 1927, Svetozar Pribičević, a leader of the Croatian Serbs, rejected such policies and entered into the "Peasant-democratic Coalition" with the most influential Croatian politician Stjepan Radić. The coalition advocated a federalized Yugoslavia that would consist of the following federal units: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojvodina, Montenegro and Macedonia. See Milan St. Protić, 287, 299-301.

Yugoslavia became increasingly understood as the product of greater Serbian ambitions, disguised under the banner of official Yugoslav unitarism.⁵⁸

Desimir Tošić, an astute critic of Serbian nationalism and Milošević's regime, maintains that 1918 marked the greatest political error in Serbian national politics: not understanding the extent to which Yugoslavia was radically different from Serbia. According to him, the creation of Yugoslavia was understood by leading Serbian politicians primarily as the extension of Serbia and Montenegro. This confusion was based on a false belief that the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were one and the same people – an idea promoted by integral Yugoslavism. The popular analogy of the time with the unification of the German and Italian people was historically inaccurate, for it was based on the denial of the Croatian perception of the continuity of their state under the auspices of Austria-Hungary.⁵⁹

It is no surprise that immediately after the creation of Yugoslavia, major differences in national programs were already present. Latinka Perović has encapsulated them in the following manner: "The Serbs responded to the permanent crisis of the first Yugoslavia with a question: why did we go to war? The Croats and Slovenians had

⁵⁸ See Čubrilović, 401-425. Of course, the Serbs do not have a patent on exclusionist behavior. A similar lack of political tact could be found in the behavior of other ethnic groups, that is, of their representatives. Standard overviews of the nationalist policies in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia are Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Aleksa Đilas, *Osporavana zemlja* (Beograd: Književne novine, 1990).

⁵⁹ Desimir Tošić, "Zablude i greške srpske nacionalne politike," *Stvarnost protiv zabluda: Srpsko nacionalno pitanje* (Beograd: Nova, 1997), 251-254.

another question: why should we have less within new Yugoslav state framework than we did within Austria-Hungary?"⁶⁰

These questions were, however, never pushed to the point of rejecting the state altogether by the most prominent Croatian and Slovenian politicians. In the 1930s, especially after the assassination of King Alexander in 1934 by radical Macedonian nationalists, the main Serbian opposition parties came to accept the federal option. At the initiative of the Serbian Democratic Party, leading Yugoslav opposition parties reached a national agreement in October 1937. This agreement was a clear recognition by these parties of Croatia's and Slovenia's distinct status in Yugoslavia. It also called for a new constitution to be adopted only by majority vote of each of the constituent nations of the first Yugoslavia – Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.⁶¹ Thus, while it may not have lived up to the high hopes of some, the Yugoslav federal framework appeared to have gained acceptance in the late 1930s.

In 1939 Serbian officials finally jettisoned Garašanin's and Pašić's old idea of a unitary state and accepted Croatian demands to create a separate unit, the *Banovina of Hrvatska* (Croatia). On the eve of the World War II, on August 26, 1939, Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković and Croatian Peasant party leader Vladko Maček signed *Sporazum* (an agreement) on the internally autonomous Croatian unit (*Banovina Hrvatska*). The region

⁶⁰ Latinka Perović, "Yugoslavia was Defeated from Inside" in *Yugoslavia: Collapse, War, Crimes*, ed. Sonja Biserko (Belgrade: Center for Anti-War Action, 1993), 60. Aleksa Dilas sees the main dispute in the First Yugoslavia rather as a sort of "duel" between two centrist conceptions - one Serbian and the other Croatian. He maintains that the Croatian nationalists never accepted the idea of federal Croatia, or plan to grant Serbs and Italians local autonomy. See *Osporavana zemlja*, 259-260.

was, however, as multi-national as Yugoslavia. It consisted of 4.4 million people, including two major ethnic groups: 68,000 Muslims and 866,000 Serbs. One of the first consequences of the *Sporazum* was that Zagreb's control over the Serbs in Croatia became official. This provoked confusion among many nationally oriented Serbian intellectuals, because for the first time they realized that Yugoslav state could not be identified with Serbia.⁶²

In reaction to *Sporazum*, they founded a Serbian Cultural Club (*Srpski kulturni klub*) which debated about how best to respond to the creation of Croatia. By rejecting the principle of integral Yugoslavism, Serbian intellectuals in principle accepted the creation of an autonomous Croatian unit. At the same time, however, some of its members, as Audrey Helfant Budding rightly observes, started using language "strikingly similar to that heard in 1990-91" in Serbia. At the club's meetings, a variety of suggestions were heard, from the creation of a Serbian autonomous unit according to the principle "Wherever there are Serbs – that is Serbia," to solving the Kosovo problem through mass deportations of Albanians.⁶³

Still, not all members of the Serbian Cultural Club had such openly nationalistic perceptions of the federal rearrangement of Yugoslavia. A Serbian historian and one of the most influential members of the club, Slobodan Jovanović, attempted to redefine the Serbian interests in Yugoslavia. He recognized that overtly centralized Yugoslavia had

⁶¹ See Tošić, "Zablude i greske srpske nacionalne politike," 253-254.

⁶² Audrey Helfant Budding, "Serb Intellectuals and the National Questions, 1961-1991," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1998): 26.

⁶³ Budding, 26.

reached an impasse and that it had to be replaced with something more sensitive to the needs of all Yugoslav peoples. In other words, Jovanović suggested that the solution for Yugoslavia's predicament lay not in "national egoism and fanaticism" but in a state where member nations would feel at home.⁶⁴ Or, as Jovanović says:

"[t]he attempt to use the power of the state to create, in as short time as possible, a single Yugoslav nationalism which will stifle Serb or Croat nationalism has not succeeded. If Yugoslavia as a national idea has met with difficulties in Serb and Croat nationalism, that does not mean it must necessarily encounter the same difficulties as the state idea."⁶⁵

The Second World War cut this experiment short. When Yugoslavia once more emerged on 29 November 1943, it was under the tutelage of Tito's communists. This guardianship stopped a fratricidal war in 1941-1945. Yet, by the 1980s, it was obvious that "national egoism and fanaticism" had once more resurfaced in Yugoslavia and that, somewhat paradoxically, the most responsible for such an outcome are communists themselves. This metamorphosis will be explained in the following section, but the focus will be on Serbia.

⁶⁴ Veljko Vujačić, "Institutional Origins of Contemporary Serbian Nationalism," *East European Constitutional Review* (1996): 61.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Lenard Cohen, *Broken Bonds: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia* (Boulder, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993), 19. Slobodan Jovanović was a son of Vladimir Jovanović and is perceived as the greatest Serbian twentieth-century historian and a political writer. He was also a Prime Minister of the Yugoslav government-in-exile during the Second World War. After the War the communists sentenced him to twenty years of prison. However, Slobodan Jovanović lived at the time in London. Thus, instead of him, his books have been banned and "imprisoned" for more than 45 years. They have been finally published in Serbia in 1990.

State and Nation-Destroying in Serbia

The gruesome death of Yugoslavia in 1990-1992 seems to represent the ultimate proof of the central thesis of Ivo Banac's classic study, *The National Question in Yugoslavia* (1984), about the inevitability of the collapse of the nineteenth-century integrative idea of the state of the South Slavs in the Balkans. His book marked a clear break with an earlier western literature supportive of the existence of Yugoslavia: a country he suggested to be a "firm citadel that could be maintained only by human sacrifice."⁶⁶ According to Banac, the original Serbian aim was to unite all the Serbs living under the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires into one independent state. Only when they realized that a Serbian state was impossible did they choose the Yugoslav option instead. Similarly, the Croats were interested in Yugoslavia as a means of regaining independence from Austria-Hungary and to reclaim large parts of Croatia from Italy. The author thus implies that Yugoslavia emerged merely to serve the short-term interests of the Serbian and Croatian élites. Once the political situation would allow, this "interim station" could be abandoned in favor of independent nation-states. In short, the distinct national agendas that were crystallized in the mid-nineteenth century are to be understood both as the causes of Yugoslavia's creation and of its eventual disintegration.

⁶⁶ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1984). Banac's book does not cover the period of the socialist Yugoslavia; nevertheless, he concludes the book with a pessimistic note on the possibility of the existence of any type of multinational Yugoslavia: "[The national question] was reflected in the internal, external, social, economic, and even cultural affairs. It was solved by day and unsolved by night. Some days were particularly bright for building, some nights particularly dark for destroying. One horn of the dilemma was that a single solution could not satisfy all sides. Was the other that a firm citadel [Yugoslavia] could be maintained only by human sacrifice (p. 415-416)?" For a critique of this view, see my "Inside/Outside Imaginings of the Balkans: The Case of the Former Yugoslavia," *Balkanistica* Vol. 12 (1999): 39-67.

In the 1990s, when Yugoslavia itself became a part of history, such an understanding of Yugoslavia's history became the standard view on the subject. Yet, Jacques Rupnik, an astute observer of East European politics, is very critical of the idea that Yugoslavia's disintegration simply represents the final stage in the ethnic homogenization of the Balkans that started with the disintegration of the Austrian and Ottoman empires. The idea of the inevitability of Yugoslavia's disintegration, Rupnik maintains, justifies ethnic cleansing as a means of achieving the idealized homogenous nation-state that Gellner sees as the only vessel within which citizens can enjoy the fruits of stability and democracy.⁶⁷

Rupnik reminds the reader that the "inevitability" of Yugoslavia's dissolution is linked to the very special model of state- and nation-building policies that arose in the region. These result from the combination of an ethnic model of a nation (based on historic, linguistic and religious criteria) with the French centralized model of the state, to which one should also add the role of socialist ideology. In the multi-ethnic context of the former Yugoslavia (and the present Serbia), such a combination keeps proving a recipe for disaster. Hence, instead of supporting the ideal of (ethnic) homogeneity, Rupnik contends that the recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity of the region represents the most important precondition for creating an "open society" that would enable the region to enter the contemporary European integrative processes.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Jacques Rupnik, "Evropa u balkanskom ogledalu," *Republika* No. 196 (Beograd, 1998): 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

In other words, Rupnik implies that the unreflective assertion of the inevitability of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia (and, most probably, Serbia within its current borders) betrays an inability to differentiate the problems caused by one particular model of the state from those arising from the idea of the multinational state itself. This, however, leads to the series of relevant questions for our analysis of Serbian nationalism. Under which assumptions can we claim that, once the principle of (ethnic) homogeneity prevails, nothing can prevent the break-up of a multinational state? What led many leading Serbian intellectuals in the 1980s to betray the ideal of Yugoslavia as a multinational state in which all Serbs could live together with the members of other ethnic groups? What were the political and cultural factors that provoked the reemergence of Garašanin's *Načertanije* call for a unified Serbian state in a radically different context at the end of the twentieth century? These questions are the focus of this section.

From its origins, the new socialist Yugoslavia had to confront two formidable challenges that eventually proved insuperable. The first related to **modernization policies** in a country whose modest economic basis had been destroyed in World War II. The other was the consequence of the bloody **ethnic strife** that raged simultaneously with the national-liberation struggle against the German and Italian occupying forces. The partisan victory in war brought to power a communist leadership that was overtly optimistic about the prospects for solving these interrelated difficulties by faithfully applying two Leninist recipes of social and national organization. The first one, the policy of democratic centralism, was deemed necessary to maintain a strict control over "revolutionary course"

of society; while the famous Leninist method for dealing with the nationalities question in multination communist states – "national in form and socialist in content," was perceived as instrumental in gaining the support of various ethnic groups on the road to a "glorious" future.⁶⁹

Yugoslavia seemed to be a perfect candidate for such policies. Its ethnic and social complexities required that the communist system be organized along ethnic lines. Accordingly, the country that had emerged from the ashes of its own destruction in World War II was established as a federal, communist state. The first Yugoslav Constitution (1946) has formalized this principle by proclaiming the rights of peoples to self-determination, including secession (Article 1), and by emphasizing that all national minorities should be granted the right to their own language, culture and identity (Article 13).⁷⁰

Consequently, each nation was organized into a separate federal unit (except Bosnia and Herzegovina because of its multi-ethnic configuration), with assemblies, governments, and courts, anthems and other symbols of equal standing in the federation, irrespective of

⁶⁹ Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 38. In the context of communist federations, these two policies had to be firmly integrated. This meant that although every communist federation was based on the right to national self-determination (from various measures of territorial autonomy to the right to secession), the communist party had to remain centralized and free from nationalism. In reality, however, such policies eventually led to a broadening of the legitimacy principle of nationalism at the expense of the integrative role of the communist ideology and the party. The process was completed by the late 1980s, by which time so few people still believed in the unifying role of the party that there was, in effect, nothing left to keep communist federations together. Of course, each communist federation dissolved differently, according to their own economic, social and political conditions. Nevertheless, they all disintegrated, so that, in the end, "national form" triumphed over "socialist content"

size and population. Still, at that time, the party dictatorship had a full control over society, and inter-republican borders were perceived simply as administrative arrangements. This essentially centralized and highly bureaucratized model, in which all-important decisions came from Belgrade, was abandoned in the early 1950s in favor of a less stringent political and economic system.

The new system was based on the idea of self-management, which remained a trademark of Yugoslavia's "distinctive" socialism until its very end. Tito, an undisputed leader of the party and the state until his death in 1980, and his inner circle believed that decentralization of the decision making process could help achieve the key objectives of greater social and national harmony. Accordingly, the central ministries were obliged for the first time to transfer their economic powers to the regional authorities.⁷¹ The federal center, however, retained authority over fiscal instruments, foreign exchange and trade. Still, without the institutions for a market economy, an unintended consequence of such changes was that the republican bureaucracies emerged as competitors for scarce centrally allocated resources. Given the ethnic character of Yugoslavia's republics, it is not surprising that this "economic" competition soon took on national colors.

The party responded to the reemergence of "national" voices in a new socialist Yugoslav society by maintaining tight control over the process of national differentiation.

⁷⁰ Iraj Hashi, "Regional Polarization in Postwar Yugoslavia and the Impact of Regional Policies," in *Why Bosnia? Writings on the Balkan War*, eds. Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz (Stony Creek, Connecticut: Pamphleteers Press, 1994), 306.

⁷¹ Paul Shoup, "Crisis and Reform in Yugoslavia," *Telos: A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought* 79 (Spring 1989), 130.

Thus, in the 1953 Constitution, all references to self-determination were deleted (this remains the only Yugoslav Constitution without any reference to self-determination). Moreover, in the 1950s, the party opted for an ideological campaign of a supra-national, socialist patriotism that would transcend cultural, linguistic and economic differences in the country (so-called “Yugoslavism”).⁷² The politics of official Yugoslavism, however, could not last long. In the economically more developed republics (Croatia and Slovenia) it came to be seen as an impediment towards full modernization, which even at that stage of economic and social development required more thoroughgoing decentralization. Moreover, even though it had been decreed by the top party echelon – controlled by Tito, a non-Serb – Yugoslavism became perceived as a Serbian attempt to blur the distinction between Yugoslavia and Serbia at the expense of the interests of other republics. This perception was assisted by the fact that Aleksandar Ranković, a top ranking Serb in the party, was a leading proponent of a strong centralist Yugoslavia.⁷³

The potential explosiveness of the issues involved in the Yugoslavism debate was, however, best demonstrated in an intellectual duel that took place in 1961-62 between a Slovenian philosopher, Dušan Pirjavec, and a well-known Serbian novelist and future “spiritual father” of Serbian nationalism in the 1980s, Dobrica Ćosić. From today’s perspective, this can be seen as an early sign of the reawakening of certain elements of Serbian and other Yugoslav nationalisms that had lain dormant since the pre-World War II debates on national questions that had ravaged the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Of course, in

⁷² Connor, 224, 434-437.

the early 1960s, both participants defended a socialist Yugoslavia, but from entirely different perspectives that were to resurface in a radicalized form in the 1980s.

The debate was over the question of the role of republics in the Yugoslav cultural and political system. Ćosić criticized Serbian Yugoslavism as a means of “establishing the privilege of their [Serbian] language and the assimilation of smaller nations; unification for them is never the superseding of their own Serbdom.”⁷⁴ He, however, believed that socialist Yugoslavism could not be identified with the Serbian Yugoslavism, for in the former case, we are dealing with a social, while in the latter, national category. In other words, the only barrier against nationalism and republican particularisms, as Ćosić sees it, is the development of socialism that will lead to the transvaluation of all national identities in favor of a unified, socialist Yugoslavism, the basis of which is the full appreciation of an individual, irrespective of his or her nationality.⁷⁵

Pirjavec, however, took the stand that Ćosić’s (socialist) individual could not escape membership of his or her nation. By advocating an abstract socialist individualism, Ćosić inadvertently favored the privileges of the members of a larger (in the Yugoslav case, Serbian) nation over smaller ones (such as the Slovenian). The free development of (national) individuals could not be guaranteed by socialist Yugoslavism, but only by republics that, “as clearly formed national organisms... [were] untouchable like every

⁷³ Rusinow, “Nationalities Policy,” 134-135.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Audrey Helfant Budding, “Serb Intellectuals and the National Question,” 74.

⁷⁵ See Dobrica Ćosić, “O savremenom nesavremenom nacionalizmu,” *Delo* 7.12 (December 1961): 1400-1426.

organism... ." Accordingly, Yugoslavia cannot be organized along centralized, or unitarist principles. Instead, in order to exist, Yugoslavia can be based only on the principles of "democratization," "decentralization" and a socialist "self-management."⁷⁶

Tito eventually changed his stand on the politics of an integrative Yugoslavism and lent his support to the proponents of economic and political decentralization of the country. As a result, in July 1966, the Serbian conservative and centralist Aleksandar Ranković and his followers were purged from the party. From the perspective of our theme on Serbian nationalism, it is important to note that Ranković was accused, among many other things, of being a "unitarist", "centralist" and, finally, a "Great-Serbian chauvinist." Whether he was a proponent of a greater Serbian interests or not is a moot point. Nevertheless he was perceived as such not only by his party opponents, but also by Serbian nationalists. Accordingly, his fall from grace was understood as a "Serbian national defeat," while in 1983, more than one hundred thousand people attended his funeral in Belgrade, which became the first mass expression of a populist wave of rising Serbian nationalism in the 1980s.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Quoted in Budding, 72, 75. In a very lucid analysis of the debate between Čosić and Pirjavec, Budding neatly observes how it foreshadowed much of the Yugoslav rhetoric on the eve of the country's demise: "The polemic's most striking omen of future disagreements between Slovenes and Serbs was the conflict between Čosić's claim that he stood for the individual against the nation, and Pirjavec's insistence that such a stance could only serve the interests of larger over smaller nations... [In the 1980s] the Serbs espoused the principle of 'One man, one vote,' which the Slovenes believed would condemn them to be permanently outvoted... Čosić implicitly advocated a majoritarian model of politics, in which the individual is the basic unit and the largest aggregate of individuals rules. Pirjavec, on the other hand, advocated a consociational system, in which the nation is conceived to be the basic political unit (p. 77)."

⁷⁷ Vesna Pešić, "Rat za nacionalne države," in *Srpska strana rata*, ed. Nebojša Popov (Beograd: Republika, 1996), 35.

At first, it seemed that the fall of Ranković had opened a new chance for reformist economic and political policies in Yugoslavia and, in particular, Serbia. However, these policies were short-lived and already in 1971/72 their proponents had been defeated in a series of party purges throughout the country. In retrospect, the crushing of reform policies and the reintroduction of bureaucratic, yet highly decentralized, socialism proved to be the most decisive cause of Yugoslavia's disintegration and Serbia's slide into xenophobic nationalism. For these reasons, a closer look at the policies advocated by the Serbian liberal communists – and even more, a fuller understanding of what kind of political discourse replaced them – can help us understand the rationale behind the Serbian intellectuals' inability to resist the siren song of nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Serbian “liberals” were party reformists (headed by Marko Nikezić and Latinka Perović) that gained prominence in Serbia after the fall of Ranković, and were in control of the Serbian party from 1968 till 1972. Their perception of national identity was in many ways closer to that of Pirjavec than of Ćosić, for they fully understood the interrelatedness between the questions of Serbia's nationalism and centralism, on one side, and between modernization and democratization policies, on the other. Still, they resented an overtly communitarian understanding of the role of republics in Yugoslavia, arguing that the national question in Serbia (and elsewhere in Yugoslavia) should primarily be treated as a democratic question and that it should not take a precedence

over concerns for a democratic development of society.⁷⁸ In nutshell, their national program followed in its basic elements the formula that had been first espoused by the great nineteenth-century Serbian socialist Svetozar Marković – that internal liberties and external freedoms are connected and that Serbia's prime task is to take care of its own affairs, not to play out the role of guardian of Yugoslavia against its own peoples.⁷⁹

The focus of their national policy was on the modernization of Serbia, understood to incorporate not only market reforms but also cultural policies of improving education and reducing the gap between the city and the country. They were also profoundly aware of the dangers of identifying Serbia with Yugoslavia, and, accordingly, they were critical not only of conservative Serbian nationalism, but also of its socialist variant as integral Yugoslavism. Hence, instead of taking up the rhetoric of Serbdom popular among nationally-oriented Serbian intellectuals, they tried to subordinate the Serbian national (ethnic) principle to the recognition of Serbia's own multi-ethnic diversity. As Audrey Helfant Budding cogently explains, their vision of modern Serbia was “an attempt to build a non-national republican [Serbian] identity.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Aleksandar Nenadović, *Mirko Tepavac: Sećanja i komentari* (Beograd, Radio B92, 1998), 105-106.

⁷⁹ For in-debt accounts of Serbian liberal policies, see Latinka Perović, *Zatvaranje kruga: ishod političkog rascepa u SKJ 1971-72* (Sarajevo: Svijetlost, 1987); Slavoljub Đukić, *Slom srpskih liberala: tehnologija političkih obračuna Josipa Broza* (Beograd: Filip Visnjić, 1990), and Aleksandar Nenadović, *Mirko Tepavac: Sećanja i komentari* (Beograd: Radio B92, 1998). The extent to which the main architects of the Serbian “liberalism” remained anti-nationalist is highlighted by the fact that none of them supported Milošević's policies in the 1980s. Quite the contrary, even though they had by then left the political center-stage, they all joined the anti-Milošević civic movement in Serbia.

⁸⁰ Budding, “Serb Intellectuals,” 115-126.

The so-called technical intelligentsia and the educated urban élite supported the Serbian liberals' efforts to modernize society. The humanistic intelligentsia, however, in Latinka Perović's words, remained "by its very nature tied to myth or to theories which are either traditionalist (obsession with the past...) or doctrinaire (critique of consumerism and technocratism)."⁸¹ To put it another way, they remained faithful to their, in Liah Greenfeld's phrase, role of the interpreters of the national will. These nationally inspired humanistic Serbian intellectuals later became instrumental in the rise of Milošević. Their critique of the Serbian liberals started from a perception of the potential dangers of an "a-national" politics deliberately limited to Serbia proper, when one third of Serbs were living outside its borders. Thus even in this early stage in the rise of Serbian nationalism in socialist Yugoslavia, there was a clearly identified gap between (then) a majority favoring internal liberalization and democratization of Serbia (of course, within the constraints of the communist system) and others who perceived the democratic question in Serbia to be related to the status of all the Serbs living in Yugoslavia.⁸²

⁸¹ Perović, *Zatvaranje kruga*, 110.

⁸² See Nenadović, 104. Dobrica Ćosić and others revived the critique of Serbian liberal politics as "a-nationalist" during Milošević's rise to power. According to him, the Serbian liberals' lack of interest in the Serbian national question (their cosmopolitan blindness) represents one of the causes of the "historical defeat of the Serbian people in the second half of the twentieth century" (Q. in Nenandović, 103). Similarly, Branko Petranović, a historian, asks himself: "In the case of [the Serbian liberals in 1971] a big question is to what extent they understood that the democratization of Yugoslavia and Serbia had to incorporate the Serbian national question. ... Were they ready to lose Kosovo and Metohija? Did they understand that the Serbian national question also included a so-called Western Serbdom [Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina]? Could it be that their global liberal-democratic universalization of the questions of the economy and democratic system was also understood as a solution of the [Serbian] national question? Could it be that, from such a perspective, [they understood] Kosovo to be demographically lost [to the Albanians] by the [Serbian] withdrawal towards the North. ... [t]his approach for us remains unacceptable." See Branko Petranović, *Jugoslovensko iskustvo srpske nacionalne integracije* (Beograd: Službeni list, 1993), 118.

But it was opposition from within the party, rather than critiques from budding nationalists, that brought down the Serbian reformists. For the Serbian liberals wished to replace Titoist policies of socialist self-management with both political and market-oriented economic reforms. As Vesna Pešić observes, this vision of modernization pointed inevitably towards the real centers of political power in Yugoslavia – Tito and the army. Reformist communists in other parts of the country shared the Serbian liberals' concern over Tito's increasingly bureaucratized control of society. Tito and party conservatives responded to such "unthinkable" thoughts by purging reform-prone republican élites in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia.⁸³

In Serbia, after 1972, over 6,000 people lost their jobs in the fields of politics, the economy, the media and the cultural institutions. Their places were quickly filled with party apparatchiks loyal to old-fashioned communist values: the revolutionary role of the party, egalitarianism, cohesion, conformity, the rhetoric of brotherhood and unity, etc. Hence, what had started as a genuine modernization towards "socialism with human face" ended up as a Serbian version of the Chinese cultural revolution, and eventually prepared the stage for the development of a strong anti-liberal, populist option in Serbia in the 1980s.

Once the political reshuffling of the republican élites was over, Tito returned to Lenin's formula – "national in form, socialist in content" – by furthering political decentralization – this time, however, "correctly" understood not in terms of

⁸³ Pešić, "Rat za nacionalne države," 24.

modernization, democratization and liberalization of party policies, but as furthering the socialist interests of the Yugoslav “working peoples.” The result of this process was the 1974 Constitution that substantially altered the character of the Yugoslav federation by giving federal republics and Serbian provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina) the status of nation-states on their own, while the powers of the federal center were reduced to foreign policy, defense and a minimum of economic instruments.⁸⁴

In theory, the new Constitution was founded on the dual sovereignty of the working people (working class) and the nations and nationalities (substantial national minorities such as Hungarians and Albanians living in Serbian provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo). But the channels through which working people were supposed to enjoy their rights operated within republican and provincial structures, practically doubling the authority of these structures at the expense of (increasingly residual) federal institutions. Moreover, tying self-management directly to the community of nations and nationalities (republics and provinces) vitiated its role in asserting the rights of the working people.⁸⁵

In fact, this constitutional arrangement gave Yugoslav republican élites both the form and the substance of national existence and political power. The resulting changes in the opportunity structure in Yugoslavia radically undermined links between the republics and the federation. Lacking a multi-party system and the integrative forces of market economy, regional leaders had no reasons to look for advancement in the central

⁸⁴ Rusinow, "Nationalities Policy and the National Question, " 136.

government apparatus. Instead, they created new opportunities in their republics and provinces, within their respective ethnic contexts.⁸⁶ At the same time, federal appointments came to be increasingly understood as “foreign” posts, the role of which was to further the “diplomatic” interests of the respective republics and provinces.

Of course, both Tito’s supra-institutional authority and Yugoslavia’s international standing in a world divided by the Cold War served as brakes on the ever-growing centrifugal forces in all Yugoslav republics. But Tito’s death in 1980, followed by a severe economic crisis and fiscal collapse in 1981, finally unleashed the disintegrative tendencies of the Yugoslav constitutional system.⁸⁷ The effect of the politics of failed modernization can hardly be overestimated. The high standard of living in the 1970s came to an abrupt end in 1981 when Yugoslavs finally learned the truth about their economy. In the period between 1974 and 1980, Yugoslavia borrowed 16,433 million dollars from the IMF, western governments and a great number of Western commercial banks. Inflation reached an annual rate of 45%, and unemployment rose to 800,000, while almost two million people became a so-called “technological surplus”. By 1984, the standard of living had already fallen back to the level of the 1960s. Under such conditions, the republican

⁸⁵ For a more extensive treatment of the Party’s policies of “socialist content” and “national form” see my “Yugoslavia’s Disintegration: an Interpretation” (M.A. thesis, Carleton University in Ottawa, 1995), 60-82.

⁸⁶ Klaus von Beyme, “Regime Transition and Recruitment of Elites in Eastern Europe,” *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* 6.3 (July 1993), 413. Yugoslav sociology in the late 1980s kept repeating about the potentially detrimental effects of the re-bureaucratization of Yugoslav politics, within the context of an increasing decentralization of the system that was not followed by the democratization. But it was to no avail. See Zagorka Golubović’s classic study *Kriza identiteta savremenog jugoslovenskog društva* (Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 1988).

⁸⁷ Antičić, 19.

leaderships started blaming each other for the failures of Yugoslav economic and social policies. In doing so they could only target the (con)federal constitutional frame, since in practical matters their individual veto rights allowed them to pursue their own interests against those of other republics and provinces without fear of any repercussions.⁸⁸

Not all, however, “enjoyed” the benefits of the 1974 Constitution to the same extent. While Slovenian communists and its intellectual élite emerged as its most ardent defenders, their Serbian counterparts proved to be its staunchest critics. Some echoes of the Pirjavec-Ćosić debate could be heard. The Slovenian (and other smaller republican) voices were repeating Pirjavec’s warning that the emphasis on abstract individual rights in the context of a multination Yugoslavia could only undermine the position of the smaller nations in the federation. But the Serbian case was more complicated, as they had to consider both their relationship with other republics, and, especially since the 1974 Constitution, the question of Serbia’s relationship with its own provinces – Kosovo and Vojvodina. Ultimately, neither the Serbian leadership nor the Serbian dissident “opposition” (fully) accepted the 1974 Constitution. In fact, most Serbs felt that it had been imposed on them (just as the Serbian ruling élite had imposed the 1921 Constitution on the Croats in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), and as a foundation for arranging Serbia’s affairs, it was always viewed with suspicion. The background to this is worth examining in some detail.

⁸⁸ Anton Bebler, “Yugoslavia’s Variety of Communist Federalism and Her Demise,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 26, no. 1 (March 1993), 81.

To begin with, the 1974 Constitution was based on principles already included in the 1968 and 1971 constitutional amendments to the previous 1963 Constitution, which itself was the result of a compromise between the two conceptions of federation: a centralist one, in which sovereignty resided in the Federation, and a consociational one, which identified sovereignty with the republics (that is, their titular nations). Thus, on one side, the Federal Chamber (House of Citizens) of the Yugoslav Assembly was organized as the voice of all Yugoslav citizens irrespective of their nationality, while on the other, the republican and provincial assemblies were the highest authorities of government at local levels. This was so, for the representatives had to be elected by direct, secret ballot (direct, secret elections were, however, by 1974 abandoned). Also, the question of provincial autonomy was relegated to the republics, that is Serbia, since, in practice, it was the only republic with the autonomous provinces in the country. Accordingly, the question of the territorial, political and functional principles of the relationship between the Republic and its provinces was defined by the Serbian Constitution. Autonomous provinces could organize their internal structure based on their statutes, but these had to be in accordance with the Serbian Constitution.⁸⁹

The fall of the Serbian strongman Ranković in 1966 broke the stalemate between two factions, leading to the victory of a “consociational” current in Yugoslavia. The constitutional amendments that soon followed represented the full formalization of a consociational arrangement of Yugoslavia, albeit within the context of an authoritarian

⁸⁹ For a very informative overview of the constitutional arrangements in two former Yugoslavias, see

party-state system. The most important changes concerned the relationship between the Federation and the republics, on one side, and between Serbia and its provinces, on the other.

The 1968 amendments extended sovereign rights to the republics. Accordingly, a new chamber was introduced into the Federal Assembly – the Chamber of Peoples (to be named the Chamber of Republics and Provinces in the 1974 Constitution) that very soon gained a central role in the Assembly. From then on, republics assumed the form of full-blown nation-states, implying that Yugoslavia could only be understood as the “community of its republics and provinces,” instead, as was the case up till 1968, as a centralized type of a federal state.⁹⁰ This also meant that consensus became the most important political principle in the country. After Tito’s death in 1980, the republics and provinces regularly exercised their veto rights against each other to the point when federal structures became thoroughly paralyzed in the late 1980s.

The amendments defining a new relationship between Serbia and its provinces – Kosovo and Vojvodina, proved to be equally consequential. The 1971 amendments elevated provinces to the status of constitutive elements of the Federation, while still remaining parts of Serbia. Under these changes, Serbian nationalities (that is, Hungarians and Albanians) almost became equated with the titular nations in Yugoslavia in their rights as constitutive members of the federation. The only difference – although it turned out to

Miodrag Zečević, *Jugoslavija 1918-1992* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1994), 196-197, 222-223.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

be a crucial one – was that only titular nations enjoyed the right to self-determination, including secession, while nationalities could not claim a constitutional right to secede from Yugoslavia.⁹¹

With the introduction of the amendments, Serbia lost prerogatives to regulate on its own the status of the autonomous provinces. Since 1971, it was obliged to coordinate the provincial status of Vojvodina and Kosovo in cooperation with the provincial authorities and a Federal Assembly.⁹² Finally, in 1974, the provinces were granted their own constitutions, which regulated economic, social, cultural and political affairs of the provinces independently of the Serbian Constitution. In reality, this led to the situation in which Serbia could not exercise control over its own territory, even though the provinces remained a legitimate part of Serbia. Thus, in the 1980s, neither Vojvodina nor Kosovo were integrated into the legal system of the Serbian federal unit that they (officially) belonged to. For example, laws approved by the Serbian parliament had to be confirmed in the provincial parliaments, while provincial legislation did not need to be confirmed in Serbia proper. In principle, the provinces could block the passage of Serbian laws, while Serbia proper (Serbia without provinces) did not enjoy a reciprocal right. Moreover, the court of appeal beyond the Supreme Court of Kosovo was not the Serbian but the Federal

⁹¹ This particular feature of the Yugoslav Constitution has been accepted as the basis for the international community's dealing with the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Hence, in 1991-92, Slovenia, Croatia and other former Yugoslav republics had been granted a status of independent nation-states on the basis of their federal arrangements in Yugoslavia, while the status of the Serbian province of Kosovo had never been fully discussed until Spring 1999.

⁹² Slobodan Inić, "Potraga za državom: Republika Srbija u DF/FNRJ/SFRJ Jugoslaviji," *Republika*, 16-31 December 1995, 6.

Supreme Court. Finally, both provinces enjoyed a veto right over any Serbian attempt to change its own constitution.⁹³

Given the extent of the proposed changes, neither party members, nor Serbian intellectuals were happy with the constitutional amendments. Still, the reasons for their discontent were different. At that time, Serbia was still represented by a reformist wing in the Party who did not have any motives not to accept suggested proposals for relegating sovereignty from the federal to the republican level. After all, this was in accordance with their own policies in the context of Serbia. However, they (as well as more conservative members of the party) had mixed feelings about the elevated status of the provinces within Serbia, and about the introduction of a consensual decision-making process at the federal level. In principle, they favored the changes, but they also thought that the proposed solutions were not good enough and that they leave room for mutually contradictory interpretations.⁹⁴

If the Serbian party and state representatives grudgingly accepted the amendments, Serbian constitutional and legal experts were much less polite. In a public debate organized by the Law Faculty at the Belgrade University in 1971, the majority of speakers adamantly rejected the amendments. The gist of their arguments was not anti-Yugoslav or pro-Serbian, but pro-Yugoslav in a sense that they favored a concept of an integrated federation over the proposed consociational model. In other words, their main concern was

⁹³ See Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 93-94.

⁹⁴ Inić, 7.

that, in the words of Audrey Helfant Budding, “the republican and provincial veto right ... [would] undermine Yugoslavia’s federal system by introducing elements of confederalism.”⁹⁵

Even though most speakers expressed their dissatisfaction with the amendments from the perspective of their concern for Yugoslavia (albeit through the lens of Serbia’s interests), the meeting was remembered for the speech of Mihailo Đurić, a philosopher and a very influential figure among the Serbian intellectual élite. His speech is renowned not only for what he said, but also because almost a year later he was arrested and sentenced to two years’ jail for undermining the “brotherhood and unity” of the peoples in Yugoslavia (he was released after nine months). Also, many of the speakers who did not wholeheartedly support the amendments were expelled from the Law Faculty.⁹⁶ So, what earned Đurić two years in prison and, eventually, the status of a Serbian prophet and a martyr?

First and foremost, while all other speakers argued from the perspective of their (Serbian or socialist) Yugoslavism, for Đurić Yugoslavia was already just a “geographic entity [where] several independent and opposing nation-states have been established.”⁹⁷ In other words, the starting point in his analysis was that Yugoslavia did not function as a state any more. From such a perspective, the most important question to be asked is what might be (the best) Serbian response to such a situation.

⁹⁵ Budding, “Serb Intellectuals and the National Question,” 182.

⁹⁶ On the case of Mihailo Đurić, as well other political trials in the former Yugoslavia, see Rajko Danilović, *Upotreba neprijatelja: politička suđenja 1945-1991 u Jugoslaviji* (Valjevo: Agencija Valjevac, 1993).

⁹⁷ Mihailo Đurić, “Smišljene smutnje,” *Anali Pravnog Fakulteta u Beogradu* 3 (1971): 231.

Đurić starts by arguing clearly that it is a tragedy that we should be concerned with the (Serbian and Yugoslav) national question, for these are the “questions of our fathers and grandfathers.” He explicitly states:

I refuse to accept belonging to a nation or a state as essential markers of our identities. Neither the national question, nor the question of state formation possesses the epochal significance it once used to have. These questions are not the important questions of our times. There is something deeply disconcerting that we are caught in the net of nationalisms and that we have to deal with it [nationalism], even though it cannot in any way be our most important, let alone our only, preoccupation.⁹⁸

Yet Đurić himself quickly becomes entangled in this net. A radical decentralization of Yugoslavia’s federal powers puts the Serbs outside Serbia in grave danger, he asserts. By elevating republics to the status of nation-states, the architects of the constitutional amendments are promoting state-based nationalisms that act primarily against the interests of the Serbs, of whom almost 40% live outside the borders of Serbia proper. Hence, even though the national question is not the question of our time, it is forced upon the Serbs, because, in the situation of an increasingly weak (disappearing) Yugoslavia, the question of Serbian national unification is re-opened. With it, however, everything else is also opened up:

It is obvious that the borders of the present Socialist Republic of Serbia are neither national nor the historic borders of the Serbian nation. ... The Serbian nation lives in four of the five other republics, but not in one of these republics can it live its own life. ... In a moment when the Serbian people ... must again establish its own nation-state, can the Serbian people be indifferent to its other parts outside the present borders of the Socialist Republic of Serbia?⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 232.

In less than three pages of the text, Đurić thus moves from rejecting the national question altogether to proposing a program for the change of republican borders in Yugoslavia. In this passage, one can hear the echo of the nineteenth-century Serbian national program for the unification of Serbia. Since Yugoslavia is effectively being replaced with increasingly independent nation-states, Serbs are disintegrated in five distinct states in which, apart from Serbia proper, they are being treated in an assimilationist way. So, it would seem that the Serbs are once more forced to fight, just as their “fathers and grandfathers” did, for a state in which all of them could once more live together.

But, Đurić’s speech, and those of other participants, raised very serious questions for the state and party apparatchiks: can decentralization alone secure the equality of the Yugoslav peoples? What are the constitutional guarantees that the cultural rights of the Serbs outside Serbia can be protected? What are the constitutional instruments that will regulate the relationship between Serbia and its provinces? And last, to what extent can Yugoslavia function efficiently, if the most important working principle at the federal level becomes that of consensus, exercised by the republics and provinces with their veto powers? All of these questions are legitimate, and yet the official state response was draconian. The journal of the Law Faculty in which the speeches were published was banned, the most vocal professors lost their jobs, and Đurić was sentenced to prison.

In hindsight, one can say that the questions being raised, and the solutions being offered, could not be swept under the carpet. Quite the contrary, for the failure to address the legitimate concerns put forward not only by the Serbian legal experts, but also by the

leading party members of the time, meant that these questions were bound to reemerge again, but in a far more radicalized form. In the late 1980s, the rhetoric of “our fathers and grandfathers” grew ever louder, so that by the early 1990s no other option could be heard.

Still, throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the Serbian party élite kept addressing these questions using existing federal institutional channels. Thus, in 1977, many of the concerns that had been heard in 1971 at the Law Faculty found their way into an internal party document, the so-called *Plava knjiga* (Blue Book). Whereas in 1971 the experts at the Belgrade’s Faculty of Law had talked in anticipation of what might happen if the amendments were put into practice, *Plava knjiga* was concerned with what already happened; that is, of the “persistent tendency of the regional élites of Kosovo and Vojvodina to coordinate their efforts at the expense of Serbia proper.”¹⁰⁰ The document was dismissed as “nationalistic” at the federal level and for this reason it only became public in 1990.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, it lacked the public resonance of the 1971 debate on the constitutional amendments. Nevertheless, it is significant in showing the development of the Serbian party’s stand on the nationalities question in Serbia. It also shows again the inability of the former Yugoslavia’s inflexible institutions to deal openly with such a contentious question as the relationship between Serbia and its provinces.

The central claim of the Blue Book was that the 1974 Constitution left Serbia without any mechanisms to coordinate the relationship with its provinces, either internally

¹⁰⁰ Veljko Vujčić, “Serbian Nationalism, Slobodan Milosevic and the Origins of the Yugoslav War,” *The Harriman Review* (December 1995): 26.

within Serbia or as regards Serbia's status *vis-à-vis* its provinces at the federal level. The former was a problem of Serbia's lack of ability to participate in law-making at the provincial level (for example, 90% of the laws for Serbia proper were passed in Serbia's Assembly in which provincial representatives enjoyed a full right of vote, while Serbia proper did not enjoy the same reciprocal right in passing provincial laws). The latter was the question of equal representation of Serbia and the provinces at the federal level. Given that the provinces had been directly represented in the federal structures, the Serbian delegation did not have any means of coordinating its work with the provincial delegates. So Serbia's delegation was effectively reduced to representing the interests of Serbia proper. From the perspective of the Blue Book, this was in violation of the Yugoslav Constitution, for the provinces were primarily defined as the integral parts of Serbia.¹⁰²

It is important to note that the crux of the argument presented in the Blue Book was not directed against the Serbian or Yugoslav constitutional system as such. The emphasis was rather on certain loopholes that needed to be addressed in order to enable Serbia to enjoy equal status with other Yugoslav republics. Thus one could argue that their concerns were similar to those already put forward by the Serbian liberals in 1971. However, the Serbian party program of that time was based on a full and unambiguous rejection of any kind of a national rhetoric that would somehow imply that the question of the Serbian state

¹⁰¹ The text was finally published in Mirko Đekić, *Upotreba Srbije: optužbe i priznanja Draže Markovića* (Beograd: Beseda, 1990), 123-174. Draža Marković was a top Serbian party official at the time.

¹⁰² Mirko Đekić, "Plava knjiga," 131-135, 164-168. Also, a good overview of a Serbia's position in regards to the 1974 Constitution can be found in Milorad Zečević's *Jugoslavia 1918-1992*, 223-226. Zečević was one of the original authors of the Blue Book.

could be reduced to the question of the Serbian nation, nor would Serbian liberals raise their concerns solely in the name of the national identity of the Serbian people, without simultaneously linking this question to the well-being of all the peoples living in Serbia. To what extent was the Blue Book free from such (national) rhetoric?

Although the language of the document is extremely mild (in a sense of being very cautious to develop arguments from within the current constitutional system), the conclusion is surprisingly ambiguous. It problematizes the extent to which “the Serbian people had achieved their historical right to a nation-state within the framework of a Yugoslav federation ... on equal terms with the other peoples of Yugoslavia.”¹⁰³ Before commenting on this statement, however, I would first present Dobrica Ćosić’s most quoted passage from the speech (titled “Literature and History Today”) he delivered at the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts at around the same time that the Blue Book was presented to the top Yugoslav state and party officials (March 1977):

Today it is hard not to ask oneself, was not the Serbian people in the twentieth century – in its immeasurable sacrifices for free, democratic, and common Yugoslav goals – often deceived; did it not intoxicate itself and blind itself with tasks that were beyond its power? ... What sort of a people are we [the Serbs], what kind of human beings that in wars we die so much for freedom, and then remain without it in victory? How can someone among us, someone in our house take away what even a stronger enemy could not? How can people who are so dignified, proud and great in war agree in peace to be humiliated and obedient?¹⁰⁴

The speech clearly represents Ćosić’s farewell to lost hopes of his generation and to the “young” Ćosić himself; the one that in 1961 had vigorously defended the virtues of

¹⁰³ Đekić, 172.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Budding, 256.

socialist Yugoslavism. In 1977, such a Yugoslavia was far from being a solution to the Serbian national question, it was rather the main problem and a target of his critique. In an almost mythical and emotionally powerful way, Ćosić asserts that the Serbs had been deceived. Their sacrifices for freedom and democracy were in vain, for “someone in our house” had stolen away the fruits of our (Serbian) labor from us. Accordingly, Ćosić does not recall his love of individual rights from 1961. Instead, the emphasis is on the nouns “We” and “Us” against “someone in our house”; the signifiers that denote an ethnic monolith facing the homogenous “other,” who hideously manages to rob the Serbian nation of its own “house” (the state). This “someone,” as it turned out to be in the early 1990s, are the Croats, the Bosnian Muslims, the Albanians, and we should not forget, the West.

Ćosić’s remarks can easily be discarded as nationalist, but behind its emotional appeal, one can still discern the same rationale present in Đurić’s denunciation of Yugoslavia in 1971, or, in a milder form, in the Blue Book’s problematization of Serbia’s achievements in the Yugoslavia of 1977. In more general terms, what unites Ćosić’s and Đurić’s stand with that of the Serbian party in the mid-1970s, despite all their differences, is the same lack of trust in the consociational model of Yugoslavia. The party arguments were presented from a generally favorable view of the 1974 Constitution, but its underlying concern was that a radically decentralized model cannot work to the benefit of all the Serbs in Yugoslavia. Of course, the Serbian party officials of the time still believed that some kind of balance could be struck between the consociational model and a more traditionally

understood federal arrangement of the country, while nationally oriented intellectuals had already given up on Yugoslavia at that time.

The gap between the two Serbias: one perceived as a united socialist Serbia in a federal Yugoslavia, the other as an independent state altogether, was finally bridged in the (in)famous *Memorandum on the Position of Serbia in Yugoslavia* of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SANU) in 1986.¹⁰⁵ This document cannot be seen as instrumental in reopening the Serbian national question as it is usually presented. It came at the end of a very complex process of national revival in Serbia, the roots of which can be traced back to the fall of Aleksandar Ranković and his centralist conception of the state. However, the document has, with perhaps more justification, been seen as helping legitimize the rise of Slobodan Milošević to the top of the Serbian communist party and the state. The Memorandum is also habitually identified with a well-known nineteenth-century document on the Serbian national question – *Načertanije*, and, accordingly, is usually understood favoring the creation of a Greater Serbia. For all these reasons, it is very important to offer a closer analysis of its content. Also, all these comparisons should not make one lose sight of the context in which the document arose.

In the late 1970s, the Serbian nationalist movement was still elitist in character, reduced to a handful of nationally minded intellectuals. In 1981, an event changed that overnight – the Kosovo Albanian student demonstrations broke out in the spring of that

¹⁰⁵ For the original text, see Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krestić, *"Memorandum" odgovori na kritike* (Beograd: SANU, 1995), 99-149.

year. Even though one could argue that a very important cause of the violent student outburst was the appalling economic and social conditions in the Yugoslav poorest province, the main slogans that could be heard on mass rallies were ethnic in character and in favor of a “Kosovo Republic.” Such a claim was unacceptable to both Serbian officials and nationalist intellectuals for a straightforward reason. Given the ethnic character of the Yugoslav constitutional definition of the nation, yielding to the Kosovo Albanian claims could only mean that the Albanian national minority would be elevated to the status of a nation, with the right to self-determination, including secession. Accordingly, in its final consequence, it would amount to Serbia’s surrender of part of its sovereign territory.¹⁰⁶

At that time, Yugoslav authorities opted to subdue the student demonstrations with military and police force and label them as “antisocialist” and “counter-revolutionary.” In hindsight, one can say that, in the severe economic and social crisis in the early 1980s, the federal structures were already politically incapable of addressing such a potentially explosive issue in any meaningful way. So, not only was the Kosovo question continuously postponed, but Serbia’s initiatives to change its illogical position vis-à-vis its own provinces through institutional channels were simultaneously depreciated by the representatives of other republics. How can such continuous political blunders be explained, without yielding to the conspiracy theories favored by Serbian nationalists?

¹⁰⁶ Kosovar Albanian perspective on the 1981 demonstrations is extensively analyzed in Chapter Four of the dissertation, section on Kosovo.

Afraid of the re-emergence of Serbia as a Yugoslav hegemon, the republican bureaucracies had only managed to provoke it. Fifteen years of failure to address Serbia's (and Kosovo Albanians') legitimate concerns about its status in the federation and with the provinces had finally yielded "results": increasing dissatisfaction of the Serbian nationalist élite with the Serbian party reformers, and the rise of the Serbian nationalist sentiments on mass scale. Veljko Vujačić explains the phenomenon of the unintended consequences of the federal Yugoslav politics in the following way:

The very remedy which was intended to satisfy the legitimate demands of peripheral nationalities and to force the dominant national group to exercise "self-restraint" gives rise, perversely, to another type of "malady" – acute dissatisfaction of the dominant group with the prevailing institutional arrangement. Under conditions of radical state decentralization, it turns out, the dissatisfaction of the dominant national group can reach an extreme pitch, especially if the disintegration of the state under the pressure of centrifugal forces is widely perceived to be imminent.¹⁰⁷

Despite these conditions, however, Belgrade in the 1980s (together with the Slovenian capital Ljubljana) emerged as the center of new alternative response to the crisis in the country. Throughout the period, pro-democratic activities were gaining prominence in Belgrade through the activities of independent intellectuals and forums that started to emerge as in other parts of Eastern Europe. From a political perspective, they ranged from those advocating socialist humanism on the left of the spectrum to those more concerned with the destiny of the "people," on the right. What they had in common, however, was

¹⁰⁷ Vujačić, "Institutional Origins of Contemporary Serbian Nationalism," *East European Constitutional Review*, 52.

their understanding of the illegitimate character of the Yugoslav socialist political system. They accordingly aimed at establishing “civil society” in parallel to the regime.¹⁰⁸

In 1984, a Committee for the Protection of Freedom and Public Expression had been founded. The Committee united all factions of the Serbian intelligentsia: members of the Praxis group of the neo-Marxist intellectuals known for their opposition to Titoist regime in the 1970s; intellectuals belonging to the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts; and finally a younger generation of intellectuals arguing from an openly liberal perspective. The Committee started writing petitions to the highest Serbian and Yugoslav authorities in which they “represented” citizens targeted by the regime for “indiscreet” public expression of political ideas at variance with the official socialist self-management ideology. Also, in their first address to the Yugoslav public, the Committee announced that they would publicly defend the citizens’ and human rights laid out in the Yugoslav Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹⁰⁹

In January 1986, the Committee responded to an ever-increasing problem of the 1980s – the plight of the Kosovar Serbs, who kept urging the Yugoslav authorities to address the problem of the Serbs leaving the province as the result of alleged Kosovar Albanian pressures against them. Given the Committee’s diversity, it is not surprising that

¹⁰⁸ See Zoran Avramović, *Drugo lice demokratije: Srbija, Jugoslavija, svet 1980-1994* (Beograd: Filip Visnjić, 1998), 44-56.

¹⁰⁹ Avramović, 45. Documents of the Committee have been regularly published in *Književne novine*, national-liberal, dissident weekly of the Serbian intellectuals. Some of the most important “manifestos” of the Committee are republished in Aleksa Đilas, ed., *Srpsko pitanje* (Beograd: Politika, 1991), 257-288. These documents are without a proper title, but for the purposes of clarity, Đilas termed each of these documents according to their basic political claims: “Request for the Constitutional System in Kosovo,”

their document on Kosovo went to extremes. On one side, for the first time in a public document the unfortunate word “**genocide**” was used to depict the severity of the situation of Kosovo Serbs, without substantiation; on the other, the only solution envisaged for the increasing national animosities between the Serbs and the Albanians in Kosovo was seen in the full application of the principles of legitimacy and law. At the same time, the document fully recognized the democratic rights not only of Kosovo Serbs, but also of Albanians and other people living in Kosovo.¹¹⁰

In hindsight, one can say that this petition was the first sign of a future split among dissident Serbian intellectuals over the Serbian national question. Still, in the fall of the same year (October 1986) the Committee issued another petition in which it urged the Yugoslav Federal Assembly to consider a program of radical political reforms as the only way out of the crisis. At the heart of this program were the following suggestions: the elimination of the one-party monopoly in the country, introduction of an independent court system, the elimination of discretionary state prerogatives to decide on citizens’ rights without the control of an independent judiciary, elimination of so-called verbal offenses from the criminal code, etc. In short, it looked at the time as if pro-liberal voices in the Serbian opposition were starting to dominate overtly national elements, and that the

“Suggestions for the Constitution of Democracy in Yugoslavia,” “Suggestion for the Introduction of the Rule of Law in Yugoslavia,” “Serbia and Democracy, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,” etc.

¹¹⁰ The document is published with a full list of signatories in Aleksa Đilas, *Srpsko pitanje* (Beograd: Politika, 1991), 260-268. The famous paragraph reads: “The pogrom of the Serbian people from Kosovo and Metohija lasts for three centuries. Only the protectors of despots changed: instead of the Ottoman Empire, Habsburg Empire, fascist Italy and Nazi Germany – Albanian state and the ruling institutions of Kosovo. Instead of forced islamization and fascism – Stalinist chauvinism. The only new addition [in

Committee's activities might mark the beginning of a Serbian civil society that would not be dominated by an obsession with the national wellbeing of Serbia, but aim mainly at the introduction of the rule of law, a multi-party system and open media in the country.¹¹¹

However, one event cut short the expectations of the Serbian fledgling opposition in 1986. Only one month before the Committee for the Protection of Freedom and Public Expression published its program of liberal and democratic reforms in the country, *Memorandum* had appeared on the political stage of Serbia and Yugoslavia, provoking a lasting split in the Belgrade pro-democratic movement; a division from which it has still not been able fully to recover.¹¹² The document consists of two parts: the first explains the reasons for the economic and political crisis in the country; the other deals with the unresolved position of Serbia and the Serbian people within Yugoslavia. What strikes a reader of the first part of the document today is not its openly nationalist content, but rather a thoroughly old-fashioned "Marxist" analysis of the main causes of the Yugoslav systemic crisis. Even in the mid-1980s, when both Yugoslavia and Serbia were paralyzed from the

this politics of pogroms of the Serbs from Kosovo] is a link between a tribal hatred and genocide, masked behind Marxism (hyphenated by D.G.)."

¹¹¹ See "Dokument broj 4 (Suggestion for the Introduction of the Rule of Law)," published in Aleksa Đilas, 270-273.

¹¹² In 1985, the SANU commissioned a working group consisting of well-known Serbian writers, economists, philosophers and historians to address the very serious economic, political and identity crisis of the Yugoslav society in general and Serbia in particular. However, the draft "leaked" into the media before the *Memorandum* was completed and immediately sparked a passionate debate on the Serb national goals. The draft remained unfinished, but was always referred to in the media as if it were a complete document. The reasons for this are many but the most important is that the Academy itself in many instances referred to the document as if it were finished. Accordingly, I have also followed this practice and treated it as a "finalized" document. On history of *Memorandum*, see Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krestić, 14-17.

consequences of the failed project of socialist modernization, the authors never challenged the socialist character of the system itself.

Accordingly, full-scale market-based economic reforms, supported by the political principles of liberalism, are never mentioned in the document. On the other hand the authors suggest that the solution to the crisis is in the “restoration” of the principle of “rationality”; that is, in creating a unified and centralized system in which each element will be coordinated according to the same rules. Of course, under the conditions of the decentralized Yugoslav economic and political system this cannot be done. Hence, the authors argue that the only “true alternative” to the chaos of Yugoslav polycentrism is “a democratic, integrative federalism” to be based on the principle of autonomy of the system’s various parts, however, within the unifying “whole.”¹¹³

From such a perspective, the overly decentralized, political system of Yugoslavia was not only irrational, but also extremely expensive and, in the final analysis, conducive to bureaucratic manipulation and republican nationalisms. Still, it did not need be that way. If only we could return to the “golden years” of the Yugoslav socialism, the authors seem to maintain, everything might end up differently. In support of their thesis, the authors are full of reminiscences of the successes of the Yugoslav system in 1950s until the “fatal” changes took place in 1965 when the “individual and group interests prevailed over general ones, and when the materialistic aspirations of the middle class and more developed

¹¹³ *Memorandum SANU*, 125, 112.

republics prevailed over democratic reforms.”¹¹⁴ Of course, not all would agree with such a choice of golden years in Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, one may conclude that *Memorandum*’s plea for a strong, integrative type of Yugoslav federalism says more about the authors’ ideological biases than about their nationalism (even though it certainly shows the lack of sensitivity for Yugoslavia’s diversity).

What made the authors of *Memorandum* the intellectual fathers of contemporary xenophobic Serbian nationalism is the analysis of the Serbian national question in the second part of the document. In the very first paragraph, the authors claim that Serbia faces three grave obstacles that make its position much more difficult than that of any other Yugoslav republic: first, its laggardly economic development compared to Slovenia and Croatia; secondly, the unresolved constitutional arrangements of Serbia’s relationship with its own provinces and other republics, and finally, the politics of **genocide** against the Serbs in Kosovo.¹¹⁵

Each of these claims is based on “evidence.” Economic discrimination against Serbia, for example, is traced to a Comintern (Communist International) dogma from the 1920s according to which Serbia had been responsible for economic and political oppression of other Yugoslav nations in the period before the Second World War.¹¹⁶ It is

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 126. The authors do not substantiate their emotionally loaded claim about genocide against Serbs in Kosovo. The extremely tense situation of the Kosovo Serbs did not justify the use of the term by the authors of *Memorandum*, which only aggravated the difficulties of communication between the two communities in Kosovo.

¹¹⁶ The Comintern had advocated the dissolution of Yugoslavia between 1924 and 1935; that is from its Fifth Congress, when it called for the separation of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia from a centralist-run

thus explained that the continual rejection of Serbia's proposal for economic reforms throughout 1970s and 1980s represents a deliberate policy of punishing the Serbian people for the oppressive policies of the Serbian regime more than half a century ago. *Memorandum* further portrays Serbia's continued underdeveloped position compared to Slovenia and Croatia as a sign of capitulation by the Serbian representatives in the federation: "[Contemporary] Serbian politicians have proved to be inadequate to the historical task that has been imposed on Serbia by an increasingly tense situation in the Yugoslav society. The historical moment has required them firmly to reject the [federal] practice of replacing those politicians that were raising the question of Serbia's equality [in federation]."¹¹⁷

The problem of Serbia's economic exploitation is closely linked with what *Memorandum* identifies as the source of the "ultimate evil" in Yugoslavia – the 1974 Constitution, whose main purpose is seen as restraining Serbia by restricting its economic growth, and preventing it from exercising control over its territory. Accordingly, Serbia is the only republic that cannot exercise its own prerogative as a nation-state. Moreover,

Yugoslavia. This stand was indeed justified by the endless attacks on the Serbian bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, such a stand changed with the rise of Nazi regimes, when Stalin understood that the Soviet Union might be attacked by Germany. Since mid-1930s, the idea of undermining Yugoslav territorial integrity was rejected in favor of creating a popular front against the Nazi Germany. In addition, the legendary Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito became a party leader only in 1937, that is after the change in the Comintern's policy vis-à-vis Yugoslavia. Hence, it is hard to understand the literal obsession of many Serbian national intellectuals with the Comintern conspiracy against Yugoslavia and Serbia. On the question of the Comintern policies in regards Yugoslavia, see Ivan Avakumović, *History of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia* (Aberdeen: The Aberdeen University Press, 1964), Vol I (the only that ever appeared); and Paul Shoup's classic study, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

¹¹⁷ *Memorandum SANU*, 131.

the Serbian diaspora in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is not allowed fully to enjoy the fruits of its own language and culture. Their language and cultural institutions have been continuously banned throughout the post-1945 period with the ultimate aim of their assimilation. These anti-Serb policies are based on the idea – “weak Serbia-strong Yugoslavia,” and its main executives are the bureaucracies of Slovenia, Croatia and Vojvodina.¹¹⁸

On top of everything is the extremely grave situation of the Serbian people in Kosovo:

In spring of 1981 [the date of Kosovo Albanian demonstrations], an open, very special and total war had been forced upon the Serbian people. ... It is being organized using various methods and tactics, with the passive and active support of various political centers in the country. ... Physical, political, legal and cultural genocide against the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija is the gravest defeat in the history of Serbian national liberation struggles from 1804 to 1941. The responsibility for the defeat lies in the Comintern-type [anti-Serbian] national politics of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, ... and the political opportunism and ignorance of the post-1945 generations of Serbian politicians, that have always been on defensive and more interested in what others had to say about Serbia, instead of being guided by objective facts in deciding the future of the Serbian people.¹¹⁹

Memorandum concludes with the strong message to the “others” of Yugoslavia.

Under the conditions of a severe crisis in the country, without the equal participation of the Serbian people and the Serbian state in deciding the future of Yugoslavia, its very existence as a democratic and socialist community would be at stake. Serbia’s insistence on the integrative, federal arrangement of Yugoslavia can only lead to the equality of all

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 132, 137-138.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

of its peoples.¹²⁰ But could members of the other republics and provinces take the authors' Yugoslavism seriously?

The rhetoric of *Memorandum* revolves around the following concepts: integrative federation, socialism, self-management, Serbia, genocide, oneself as a victim, the other as an enemy, the Comintern, conspiracy, betrayal, and renegade politicians. Throughout the text, Yugoslavia is indeed persistently defended as the authors' first choice, but it is a "Yugoslavia" on "our" own terms. The political goals, methods and opponents in creating a new "Yugoslavia" are already decided: first, replacement of the 1974 Constitution with a "new" one (based on the 1950s model of integrative federalism); secondly, decisive political measures to stop "genocide" in Kosovo; thirdly, re-integration of Vojvodina with Serbia; then destruction of an anti-Serbian coalition; and, finally, introduction of a cooperative federal regime that would allow Serbia a greater say in the affairs of the Serbian people living in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The only uncertainty at the time of writing was the question of the leadership; that is, when and how the program would come to fruition; and through whom?

Many critics of *Memorandum* maintain it lacks originality. After all, it contains nothing not previously heard in Ćosić's or Đurić's speeches or read in numerous party documents about the vices of the Yugoslav constitutional system. However, the significance of *Memorandum* is in drawing together all these different strands of Serbia's discontent into a single document. In other words, *Memorandum*'s achievement is not in

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

extending the content of the nationalist rhetoric, but in fusing nationalism with “conservative” socialism to the extent that it became hard to differentiate one from the other. This does not mean that the authors of *Memorandum* invented nationalism. The Yugoslav system had always been based on the skillful application of nationalism for the purposes of legitimizing the socialist regime. Still, it was always possible to differentiate between the two, inasmuch as there were always intellectuals who belonged to a liberal, national liberal, or conservative anti-Communist camp.

After *Memorandum*, these distinctions were harder to identify. In a sense, the document worked on its readers as Rorschach test of ink blots usually does; its hybrid character allowed people to project their own socialist, liberal or nationalist reading onto its content. Accordingly, extreme anti-Communists were not concerned so much with the document’s rigid pro-socialist bias, for they saw a Greater Serbia behind. Conservative members of the party, on the other hand, were exhilarated with its emphasis on the “good old days” of a strong, federal, socialist Yugoslavia, without realizing that what they embraced as a reawakened patriotism was for others just a sign of Serbian nationalism. Many liberal intellectuals were also caught by the spell of *Memorandum*. They kept focusing on its few scattered references to the need for democratic reforms and the protection of human rights, without comprehending that the suggested reforms never reached the point of completely disowning state socialism.

Still, Serbian society did not become infected with the *Memorandum* virus overnight. The then president of the Presidency of Serbia, Ivan Stambolić, was still in

position to choose from two rather distinct projects of Serbia's transformation at that time. Stambolić was certainly not a nationalist, but he was not a liberal either in the sense that the Serbian party reformists of the early 1970s had been. Hence, he chose to oppose both of Serbia's political options in the mid-1980s, arguing for "creative constitutional engineering as the best strategy for deflecting anti-Communist and anti-regime criticism in Serbia."¹²¹

In fact, such an approach had already been thoroughly discredited on two accounts. First, other republics were not ready seriously to contemplate changes to the constitution, for the fear of a united Serbia. Secondly, Stambolić's efforts to preserve the image of a reform-minded communist who still operates within the limits of the socialist system only estranged Serbian pro-liberal intellectuals. A final nail in the coffin of Stambolić's moderate and anti-nationalist policies was the backlash against the Serbian communist party's rather crude campaign against *Memorandum*: at this point Stambolić started to become a symbol for the ordinary public of the Serbian bureaucracy's inability to fight for Serbian interests in the Federation.

Needless to say, Milošević's position on *Memorandum* was markedly different, although it was some time before critics of his policies recognized that his public remarks about *Memorandum* at the time of the party campaign against it were at best lukewarm compared to Stambolić's frontal assaults on the nationalist content of the SANU document. Being a conservative communist and a staunch anti-liberal, he recognized in *Memorandum*

¹²¹ Lenard J. Cohen, "'Serpent in the Bosom': Slobodan Milošević and Serbian Nationalism," in *State-society Relations in Yugoslavia, 1945-1992*, eds. Melissa K. Bokovoy, Jill A. Irvine and Carol S. Lilly (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 320.

the arguments that would not only legitimize his rise to power but also provide him with a political agenda that would look reformist to the communists and patriotic to the nationalists.

The first opportunity for Milošević to start ascending the ladder towards supreme power in Serbia came in 1987, when one event made him a national icon. In the role of a top Serbian party official, he went to Kosovo to investigate yet another round of mutual hostilities between the Serbs and the Albanians. In 1986, Stambolić had urged both sides in Kosovo to calm their emotions for fear that inflammatory language could only aggravate the situation. This time it was different. In an incident in which the Kosovo Albanian police allegedly started beating Serbian demonstrators, Milošević became a "national savior" by "protecting" a group of Kosovo Serbs in front of TV cameras with words that not only became a part of contemporary Serbian folklore but also transformed a party apparatchik into the leader of the masses: "No one has the right to beat the people." Speaking to Kosovo Serbs, Milošević then emulated the populist genius of Nikola Pašić's famous speech on *gunjac* and *opanak*:

We cannot and we do not want to divide people into Serbs and Albanians but we must draw the line that divides the honest and progressive people ... from the counter-revolutionaries and nationalists on the other side. ... This is your [Kosovo Serbian] country: your homes, your fields, your gardens, your memories are here. Surely you will not leave your land because it is difficult to live there and you are oppressed. ... You should stay here because of your ancestors, and because of your descendants. Otherwise you should disgrace your ancestors, and disappoint your descendants.¹²²

¹²² Quoted in Cohen, 324.

Within a few months, repeating the arguments from *Memorandum* about the inability of the Serbian party apparatus to address Serbian "grievances" at the federal level, but at the same time always maintaining a federal Yugoslavia as his first choice, Milošević had organized a party coup to depose Ivan Stambolić and thus become the undisputed leader of the Serbian party and state.¹²³ Milošević's "supporters" then quickly took over all the positions in the party and the state, including the most important media outlets. In 1988-1989, the regime orchestrated marches of Kosovo Serbs throughout Serbia. The idea was to channel the frustration of the people with the harsh economic and social crisis in the country towards a more nationalist direction of gaining full control over the autonomous Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. In the course of events, those marches turned into mass rallies held across Serbia under the slogans of "street democracy," "the happening of the people" and "the anti-bureaucratic revolution."¹²⁴

The peak of these marches was reached with the one-million-people rallies in Belgrade (in the autumn of 1988) and Kosovo (on June 28, 1989). The messages Milošević sent from these "rallies of truth" to the "people" and the rest of Yugoslavia, as Olivera Milosavljević lucidly observes, always had two layers. The one, for the "people," and the other, for the "others." The people thus learned that Milošević is for "dignity," "brotherhood and unity," "federal Yugoslavia," "reformed socialism," "progress," "strong

¹²³ The Eighth Session of the Serbian Central Committee, that was held in Belgrade on September 24, 1987, represented a full political victory of Slobodan Milošević and his faction against the opposing reformist faction led by then president of the Presidency of Serbia Ivan Stambolić.

¹²⁴ For an extensive account on Milošević's rise to power and the "happening of the people," see Slavoljub Đukić, *Kako se dogodio voda* (Beograd: Filip Visnjić, 1992).

and united Serbia.” The “others” learned “what is acceptable, and what is not,” that a reawakened Serbia is against the 1974 Constitution, “separatism, particularistic nationalisms and conservatism.” Moreover, that only “educated, angry people can move things from their place,” and that a “[Serbian] calm head in the past did not protect, but stirred rapes, humiliation and mass exodus [from Kosovo]” by its irresolution.¹²⁵ To put it differently, Serbia’s political agenda is history in making, a political struggle against the “bureaucratized leaderships” and “the enemies of the [Serbian] people.”¹²⁶

The peculiar mix of socialist rhetoric and nationalist sentiments that had existed in Serbia since Ćosić’s early defenses of socialist Yugoslavism and Serbism, had finally founded its torch – Slobodan Milošević. The more reluctant the other provinces and republics were to negotiate with Milošević, the more belligerent he would become. Slogans such as “homogenization,” “differentiation” and “mobilization” soon became rallying cries in his speeches, while the word “unity” served to unite the party with the people in anticipation of the upcoming struggles against Serbia’s enemies.¹²⁷ The climax came at the Kosovo Polje demonstration to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the battle of Kosovo. On that occasion, Milošević, ruminating on the importance of Kosovo in the history of the Serbs, announced to more than one million people present that “we are

¹²⁵ Olivera Milosavljević, “Jugoslavija kao zabluda,” in *Srpska strana rata*, ed. Nebojša Popov (Beograd: Republika, 1996), 75. All the references in Milosavljević’s article are taken from the collection of Milošević’s public speeches titled *Godine raspleta* (The Years of Anticlimax).

¹²⁶ Quoted in Milosavljević, 78.

¹²⁷ See Nebojša Popov, *Srpski populizam: od marginalne do dominantne pojave*, 21.

again engaged in battles. They are not military ones, yet even such cannot be excluded."¹²⁸ Thus, in 1989 everything was acceptable in the name of the "people," even the public announcement of upcoming wars.¹²⁹

As events turned out, the "happening of the people" proved to be a full-scale success in the cases of the Serbian province of Vojvodina and the republic of Montenegro, where party bureaucrats "voluntarily" resigned under the pressure of mass demonstrations organized in Novi Sad and then still Titograd (Montenegrin capital returned to its old name after 1990, Podgorica). It should be noted, however, that the majority of the population is Serbian in origin in Vojvodina, and pro-Serbian in Montenegro. A completely different situation existed in Kosovo, with a 90% Albanian majority. Under such circumstances, Kosovo Albanians perceived the "happening of the people" not as the "anti-bureaucratic revolution," but as a new wave of the Serbian state-provoked nationalism directed against the autonomy of the province. As a way of responding to the rising Serbian pressure, Albanians organized rallies on their own in support of their party leadership and the existing autonomy of Kosovo. Milošević then used the demonstrators' insistence on the republican status of Kosovo as a pretext for ousting the Kosovo party leadership. Finally, in September 1990, the Serbian Parliament adopted a new constitution, according to which

¹²⁸ Quoted in Popov, 21.

¹²⁹ The date of Milošević's speech (June 28, 1989) can be seen as the date of Yugoslavia's demise. From that date it was hardly possible for other republics to contemplate the continuation of the Yugoslav federation with Milošević in power in Serbia. The actual process of Yugoslavia's agonizing end, however, started in January 1990, when the Slovenian communists walked out of the Congress of the League of the Communists of Yugoslavia and thus put an end to its existence. In January 1992, Slovenia and Croatia had been officially recognized by the EC as sovereign states, while the war in Bosnia and

the autonomy of both Vojvodina and Kosovo were subordinated to the central Serbian authorities. A few months earlier (January/February 1990), at the mass rallies in Kosovo against curbing the province's autonomy, more than twenty Albanian demonstrators had been killed.¹³⁰

In retrospect, the "street democracy" enabled Milošević to by-pass the other republican and provincial oligarchies to veto any constitutional changes they judged detrimental to their own interests. Under the conditions of a severe *anomie* of the Yugoslav society, he deliberately played on the card of a legitimacy crisis of the Yugoslav socialist system, since the "happening of the people" emerged as the only "true" source of the legitimacy of his government. In other words, by destroying the constitutional foundations of the Yugoslav state, Milošević became the Serbian Caesar whose autocratic powers resided in the "people's" daily plebiscite in favor of his political program.¹³¹ From that perspective, it seems that the "anti-bureaucratic revolution" was

Herzegovina among the Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Moslems started on April 7, 1992, a day after the EC officially recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent sovereign nation-state.

¹³⁰ See *Human Rights in Yugoslavia*. The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (Belgrade, 1998). 367. Chapter Four of the thesis deals explicitly with the Kosovo issue. Here it suffices to say that the years of living in the united post-communist Serbia, 1990-1999, show that Albanian Kosovars never accepted post-communist Serbia as their legitimate home. It could have hardly been otherwise, since the strong rule of the Serbian president brought the full colonialization of all aspects of social life in Kosovo. Furthermore, in the situation where neither side would give up its maximalist proprietary claims on Kosovo, it is certain that all the ingredients for another violent explosion in the Balkans were actively present from as early as 1989. Perhaps the only reason why Kosovo did not suffer the destiny of Bosnia and parts of Croatia in the mid-nineties is that the most influential political party of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, the Democratic League of Kosovo, opted for a peaceful boycott of the Serbian rule. However, in spring 1998, a spiral of violence finally broke out in Kosovo. It exploded into full-scale war in 1999, and was followed by the NATO intervention against Serbia and the establishment of international "guardianship" over Kosovo, an experiment the consequences of which still cannot be anticipated.

¹³¹ See Slobodan Antić, "Vlada Slobodana Miloševića: Pokušaj tipološkog određenja," *Srpska Politicka Misao* 1 (1995): 96.

intended to be a policy of *fait accompli*, a policy designed to force the others in Yugoslavia to accept Serbian “legitimate” resolve to gain control of its own affairs. Instead, the “happening of the people” effectively blocked any possibility of a democratic solution to Yugoslavia’s crisis.¹³² What followed were war policies for a strong, united, independent would-be nation-state of Greater Serbia, which eventually dismally failed.

Still, despite the predictable failures of the “happening of the people,” Milošević’s policies certainly fascinated the Serbian national intelligentsia. Throughout the period, Ćosić and many other nationally conscious intellectuals became exhilarated with the prospect of the unification of all Serbs in one state. They acted as Milošević’s personal apparatchiks with the task of tuning public consciousness to the idea that Yugoslavia no longer satisfied the interests of the Serbian people. Hence, if there was any doubt about the real intentions of the authors of *Memorandum*, the early 1990s showed that nationally minded Serbian intellectuals were not only in line with the politics of Slobodan Milošević but that they actually surpassed the “leader” in their enthusiastic embrace of war-mongering rhetoric.

As always, it was Ćosić who cleared the path that was eventually followed by other national intellectuals of a lesser stature. In his “Theses of the New Politics,” prepared in March of 1991 for the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SANU), Ćosić discussed the politics that would later become known in the world as ethnic cleansing:

¹³² Of course, Milošević’s political course is certainly the most important proximate cause of Yugoslavia’s demise. However, many other factors need to be taken into consideration. The focus of the thesis is, however, solely on the Serbian nationalism.

“The aim is not ethnically clean Serbia. Rather, [the aim is] to be free of those who in a common life with the Serbs do not feel free and who are limiting and *polluting* their [Serbian] freedom [italics mine].”¹³³ A year later, March 26 1992, in a letter to the First Congress of the Serbian Intellectuals in Sarajevo he wrote: “We wish to have a state wherein the entire Serbian nation will be ensured freedom of existence and creativeness; it is our wish to build a state which all nationalities and confessions will consider their own.” In the same letter, there is, however, another wish expressed by Ćosić: “We, Serbs, Muslims and Croats, in view of the history and present state of affairs among us, *must ensure the prompt and fairest possible division and delimitation between us, so as to eliminate the reasons to hate and kill each other* and to enable future unification in everything we may find rational and beneficial with the least obstacle (italics mine).”¹³⁴

The First Congress of the Serbian Intellectuals will not be remembered only for Ćosić’s letter. In the unanimously accepted Declaration, the principles of the future carving up of Bosnia and Herzegovina were laid out: “the Serbian people found it unacceptable to live in a state ‘determined’ by the interests of great powers, European catholic clericalism and awakened pan-Islamism, but sought one such as would stem from the ethnic and historical right of every nation on earth (Paragraph 2);” Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be “the tripartite state where the Serbs would sovereignly stand on their

¹³³ Ćosić, *Srpsko pitanje* (Beograd: Politika, 1992), 237.

¹³⁴ Ćosić, *Promene: izbor tekstova*, ed. Milorad Vučelić, (Novi Sad: Dnevnik, 1992), 234-235. Ćosić’s epistle of peace came too late, for the war broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina on April 7, 1992.

borders (Paragraph 3)."¹³⁵ In regard to this Declaration, it is important to note that even though it is generally assumed that the Bosnian Serbs lost the war in 1995 when peace finally returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dayton Peace Agreement "envisioned" a new Bosnian state (49% of its territory belonging to Bosnian Serbs) along the criteria specified in Paragraph 3 of the Declaration.

In the papers presented at the Second Congress of Serbian Intellectuals held in Belgrade in April 1994, the mood was less festive than at the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two years of failed attempts to carve out a Greater Serbia made it difficult for Serbian national intellectuals to explain the reasons for the failures of the regime's war-mongering policies. Thus, most of the papers were written in an openly anti-western mood. The predominant understanding was that once again in Serbian history the great powers had decided to stop Serbia exercising its historical right to unification. On this 1994 list of those most responsible for Serbia's troubles are the Vatican, the USA, Germany, Turkey, the Freemasons (Trilateral Commission), etc.¹³⁶ Still, such claims pale in comparison to prominent historian Veselin Đuretić's passionate defense of the idea of Serbdom in 1992. According to him, the most nefarious of Serbia's enemies are the West, the Vatican, the Comintern and, above all, their "agents" among the Serbs ("Serbian rudiment," "rootless cosmopolitans," "anti-Serbs," "domestic aliens" etc.). Ceasing to be so considerate towards others should reinvigorate Serbia. Its Phoenix-like rise is a

¹³⁵ Quoted in Dušan Janjić, "Serbia between an Identity Crisis and the Challenge of Modernization," in *Serbia between the Past and the Future*, 33.

¹³⁶ Nebojša Popov, "Jedinstvo i smrt," in *Republikanac* (Zrenjanin: Građanska čitaonica, 1994), 159-162.

“historical turning point” for all Christian Orthodox Slavic people in their just fight against the corrupt West.¹³⁷

This overview of the Serbian nationalist litany can be concluded with the presentation of the philosophical defense of the idea of Serbian nationalism offered by the one of the most prominent Serbian philosophers, Mihailo Đurić. As already related, in 1971 Đurić perceived nationalism primarily as the question of our “fathers and grandfathers;” one that does not have any epochal significance for our own times. Nevertheless, despite his serious doubts about nationalism, he also argued that the Serbs could not escape raising the national question again, because the very process of disintegration of Yugoslavia imposed such a question on them. In the 1990s, “the philosopher of heavenly Serbia” once more returned to the fray of public life with his “Dionysian passion” for Serbian national identity and interests. This time, however, the philosopher developed what is probably the first full-blown post-modern theory of – *ressentiment* nationalism that is, at the same time, written from the perspective of a practitioner.¹³⁸

Mihailo Đurić rightfully claims that, despite its economic and political underdevelopment, Yugoslavia had always been a distinctively European country. In fact, Yugoslavia represented what is best in Europe, for it was an experiment in supranational engineering that took part against the background of an immense national, cultural,

¹³⁷ Quoted in Popov, *Srpski populizam*, 18.

linguistic and religious diversity of its peoples, and aimed specifically at erecting a strong barrier against the alternative of “nationalist insanity.” Yugoslavia’s ultimate task was, thus, to achieve “unity within diversity,” allowing all its parts to achieve a full and untrammelled development. Given the scope of what Yugoslavia stood for, its demise can only be perceived as the defeat of the very ideal of a new Europe. By not supporting Yugoslavia in times of its crisis, and even more, by actively undermining Yugoslavia’s existence, the European Community acted against its own values and the ideals that it supposedly stood for.¹³⁹ I fully agree with Đurić’s remarks on Yugoslavia; however my disagreement starts with his answer to the question as to what might be the reason for the anti-European behavior of Europe?

Đurić seems to offer a two-layered answer to such a dilemma. His first response is furnished according to his perception of the real political considerations of the new European masters. Real politics has turned into the “wicked monster.” Serbian people can no longer stand the “hypocritical behavior of various European power-brokers in their cynical calls for democracy and human rights,” which is simultaneously supported by their “arrogant rejection” of the right of the Serbian people to self-determination. As Đurić says, “we have understood that Europe does not serve its own interest, but the Islamic ones, and

¹³⁸ Articles are collected in Mihailo Đurić, *Iskustvo razlike* (Beograd: BIGZ, 1994). Critical references to Đurić’s cult status as “the philosopher of heavenly Serbia” are taken from Obrad Savić, “Speed Memories” *Thinker on the Stage*, *Belgrade Circle Journal* No. 0 (1994): 227-228.

¹³⁹ Đurić, *Iskustvo razlike*, 122-123.

that, after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the unification of Germany, Europe has accepted to play the role of a cat's paw for American planetary imperialism."¹⁴⁰

These claims-accusations are by now all too well known and represent just a commonplace among Serbian nationalists. But the other avenue that Đurić explores is much more original. Being a philosopher, he tries to reach a deeper understanding of Europe's own weaknesses and its inability to resist American domination. Following Nietzsche, Weber and Heidegger, Đurić maintains that at the heart of the contemporary crisis of the "European being" lie modern philosophical notions of universalism and instrumental rationality. Their greatest sin is that they are posited against a "richness and diversity of the human existence," that, at least in our times, is primarily defined through belonging to a nation. In fact, the calls of modernity for universal liberation, based on the notion of an abstract individual, are just a cover up for the politics of enslavement. For, they (modern, universalizing Europeans) are for us (the Serbs) just "miserable grave-diggers of one, for a long time now, spiritless and faceless world."¹⁴¹

The name for the European disease is by now obvious. Europe suffers from an acute form of nihilism. Its most perfidious symptoms are socialism and democracy. These ideologies and political practices are hopelessly limited in dealing with the question of European being and are filled "with the spirit of revenge, the spirit of self-punishment of man," in their efforts to impose long-gone ideals of abstract humanity on mankind's road

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

towards a better future. In one phrase, both socialism and democracy are “planetary ideologies of conquest,” and at the same time “frightening temptations” that the contemporary world is forced to encounter in its efforts to overcome the challenges of nihilism.¹⁴²

But, if we can no longer trust projects of liberation based on principles of abstract individualism, and if we cannot believe that an individual is capable of independently organizing his or her own affairs, what kind of avenue is then left for individuals in the late twentieth century? Đurić’s answer to this question is distinctively Heideggerian, for he urges us to “return to the place of birth” which is “usually experienced as practically the only true human liberation.”¹⁴³ Đurić’s place of birth is Serbia, so, according to this philosophy of national humanism, Đurić’s moral responsibility is primarily to Serbia and the Serbian nation (just as Heidegger’s responsibility was to Germany and to the German nation). In a time of great nihilistic crisis for the Serbian people, which has provoked disastrous schisms, Đurić offers the following program of national self-redemption:

The true and only way to ensure our spiritual survival can, therefore, only be the road of overcoming the existing division of the Serbian people. With this aim, we must start from the beginning, we must first educate the people itself in the national spirit. We must cultivate the consciousness that the *national belongs to the sphere of highest human responsibility*, that we owe our allegiance and *devotion of a special kind to the nation*, that national belonging and national feeling are original, primary human characteristics, and that *the national interests and the national good enjoy an uncontested advantage and dominance over all other earthly interests and considerations* (italics mine).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 184–185.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

At the heart of the new Serbian national-humanism is the education of the people, for the Serbs have been for such a long time “uprooted,” de-Serbized”, and removed from the “essence of the people we [Serbs] belong to.” The impediments to the Serbian national revival are, however, formidable and it will take hard work and persistence to eradicate the consequences of the previous type of education based on the false ideals of “socialist humanism.” For, as the philosopher says:

”[a]mong us, a very special kind of people has dangerously grown, the supra-national nomads of the present world, among which a very special place belongs to the so-called independent intellectuals and the so-called humanist intelligentsia. For this kind of people, there are no secrets or obstacles, they do not know or accept historical ways of life, through which a human being can only truly become conscious of himself as an individual, they [Serbian nomadic, cosmopolitan intellectuals] are unsurpassed masters in the art of adjusting to each and every situation they encounter.¹⁴⁵

Thus spake a Serbian Zarathustra, a philosopher with almost cult status among Serbian nationalists. On the one hand, my focus on Đurić’s philosophizing can be criticized as a poor example of the mood of the Serbian public in the years of the “happening of the people” and beyond. After all, who had time in Serbia to read philosophy books while “history [was] in making,” not to mention the appalling economic conditions in the country? On the other hand, many of Đurić’s ideas kept resurfacing in the Serbian media throughout the 1990s. Thus, although the general public did not read him,

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 116-117. In the original Serbian, Đurić uses the word “namnožiti se”, which means “increase in number, multiply,” but which is usually used for rats and insects, not for people. Hence, in the passage, he openly alludes to the sub-human character of the cosmopolitan intelligentsia in Serbia.

there were many Serbian journalists and populist intellectuals that served as a transmission belt between “the philosopher” and the “people.”¹⁴⁶

The other and much more important reason for my emphasizing Đurić, however, is that he offers a complete list of all the necessary ingredients of Serbian nationalism in an almost ideal-typical form: understanding of the nation as a monolith, rejection of individualism, anti-liberalism, anti-democracy, *ressentiment* of the West, a recognition of (national) differences as the only true marker of our times, the role of nation-building and state-sponsored education policies in the creation of a new nationally enlightened individual, the ethics of national humanism, etc. For these reasons, Đurić (together with Ćosić) represents an *ideal type* of a “collectivist intellectual” that, with the help of the state-sponsored media, emerged as dominant in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Serbia.

In addition, what “fascinates” in this philosophy of national humanism is its close proximity to the ideal of the so-called socialist nationalism, espoused by Dobrica Ćosić. They both perceive the nation in monolithic terms, while any sign of the crack in the monolith (nation) appears to be the greatest of all evils. Accordingly, they both reserve their harshest words for the “intellectual renegades,” who, in reality, are just trying to

¹⁴⁶ A Belgrade by-weekly “Duga” is an excellent example of providing the reader with the popular version of a Đurić’s type of nationalism. One of its leading columnists is a leading Serbian pro-fascist intellectual Dragoš Kalajić, whose main idea is that only a restored Russia and a pro-Slavic, anti-Western and anti-Atlantic Germany can create an authentic home for all Europeans. A good overview of Kalajić’s ideas can be found in his article “Politička priroda Evrope,” *Srpska politička misao* 2-3 (1995):107-133. The article is a frontal attack on any kind of the politics of multiculturalism. The author argues that only a clear demarcation of the “other” as an enemy can allow a state to flourish. In a telling example, Kalajić contemplates that the Roman Empire’s collapse is related to their policy of extending citizenship rights to everybody in the state. This was, as Kalajić argues, in sharp contrast to the golden days of the Roman

escape a “stupefying” embrace of the national.¹⁴⁷ At the conceptual level, however, the emphasis on unity explains the reasons for a successful merger between these two types of nationalism in Serbia in the 1990s; that is, between socialist and rightist nationalism. They are, we can finally say, both products of the same communitarian anti-individualist discourse that efficiently blocks any reform efforts based on the recognition of difference from a more equitable perspective of the protection of human and national minority rights.

Still, even though Serbian nationalists continued with their homilies well into the late 1990s, it is fair to say that the first stage of Milošević’s populist regime was over in 1990 with his acceptance of the multi-party system. At that time, the process of ethnification of politics was almost complete and Serbian national intellectuals gradually started to lose the Augustinian role of the “interpreters” of the national will in Serbia. However, in the 1990s Serbia was not short on national voices. The leaders of the Serbian nationalist parties soon emerged as the new “interpreters” of the Serbian nation, state, as well as its spirit and interests.

Conclusion

The most intriguing feature of political life in Serbia is the seeming persistence of influences from the past. This would suggest that an essentially unchanged authoritarian

Empire when the laws defended an undisputed authority of the Romans against the aliens (*adversus hostem aeterna auctoritas*), 127.

¹⁴⁷ For Ćosić’s homily against liberal and pro-democratic intellectuals in Serbia (or “NATO pacifists” in his telling phrase), see *Šta je stvarno rekao Ćosić*, ed. Milan Nikolić (Beograd: Izdavačka agencija Draganić, 1995), 287-294. Here, an excerpt will do: “We are dealing with a well thought and unscrupulous cooperation with the enemies of the Serbian people ... with the only one aim” to prove Serbia’s responsibility for the war (p. 290).”

type of political culture runs throughout the history of modern Serbia and that the key to understanding contemporary extreme Serbian nationalism lies in realizing that it has always dominated Serbian state and society. The Serbian past and present, however, as much as those of any other country, can best be understood as the constantly evolving relationship between Serbia's continuities and discontinuities. They cut through the national collectivities, allowing various competing narratives to struggle for a dominant (hegemonic) position in the state. If a more extreme discourse is successful in marginalizing other narratives in a society, the price a (Serbian) society has to pay is in the dominant discourse's violation of the rich and complex fabric of the very society it strives to represent.

Such a situation emerged in Serbia in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The monopolization of the public space by, in the words of Liah Greenfeld, "interpreters of the national will," blurred the extent to which apparently similar motifs and policies to those applied throughout modern Serbian history inevitably yielded entirely different results when put in different contexts. Thus nineteenth-century Serbian policies directed towards the creation of an independent state in which all Serbs should live together were appropriated by late twentieth-century Serbian interpreters (national intelligentsia and former communists-turned socialists) as justifications for their completely different political purposes. In order to highlight the differences and similarities between the two, I elaborated on the significance of various social, cultural and political situational constraints at work in Serbia throughout the modern period. This situational approach to nationalism

was informed by Liah Greenfeld's notions of the context within which nationalism emerges; the conceptualization of the idea of *ressentiment* as an answer to failed modernization; and Benedict Anderson's insightful remark about the nations as "imagined communities," and the role intellectuals play in such imaginative endeavors.

The nineteenth-century ideal of unifying all the Serbs in one state and the early efforts at political modernization in an autonomous Serbia were rational responses to the historical demands of a time in which Serbian society was formally under the control of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the legitimization patterns used in the Serbian struggle for the national independence were based on European principles of historical rights and liberal nationalism. Of course, certain negative developments were already present in the nineteenth century, which saw the first signs of the destruction of the old patriarchal Serbian institution and clear evidence that Serbian society could not simultaneously achieve economic transformation with political modernization. As a result, a *ressentiment* type of nationalism emerged in Serbia which, however, never managed to seriously challenge or dominate the efforts of Serbian intellectuals and politicians to modernize their society according to the Western model.

The integrative features of Serbian nationalism are plain from the fact that the Serbian élite has been open to different solutions that would satisfy the condition that all Serbs should live together. The one that eventually emerged in 1918 was a common state of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes; a result that clearly demonstrates the integrative features of the South Slav nationalisms of the time.

One should point out the difficulties that emerged during the short life of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Its political experiences already revealed a powerful current within the Serbian political and intellectual élite that never accepted the multiethnic character of the Yugoslav state, but instead insisted on a unitarist, centralized Yugoslavia that was perceived by other groups in the country as imposing the interests of the Serbian nation over those of any national group. Still, these animosities never reached the point of rejecting the country altogether. The political process of negotiating a more decentralized (if not federal) Yugoslavia was stopped by World War II.

With the emergence of the socialist Yugoslavia in 1945, a strong, unified federal system was imposed in the country. However, it proved short-lived and already in the 1960s, a peculiar consociational model was introduced in the country. The peculiarity of the model was its authoritarian character. The 1974 Constitution identified two legitimate pillars of such an arrangement; the one based on the understanding of the people as the “working class,” and, the other, based on the people understood as belonging to an ethnically defined nation. What united these two pillars was their anti-liberal, collectivist bias.

Such an arrangement proved to be the most formidable social and political situational constraint in shaping the politics in Serbia and the former Yugoslavia. Although it was initially praised as the ultimate achievement in regulating the national question in a (socialist) multination state on an equitable basis, the decentralization of the institutional set up of Yugoslavia turned into its opposite. The consequences of a failed

model of power-sharing are still present in Serbia, where only a few intellectuals are ready to engage in debate about the advantages of such a model for Serbian multiethnic society. However, what is often forgotten is the anti-democratic character of the former Yugoslavia's consociational model. In essence, it was always based on the interpretation of the old Leninist idea of the leading role of the Communist party in a multiethnic society.

Closely related to this, consociational arrangement in Yugoslavia was never based on political trust, because the system was never fully supported by the biggest Yugoslav republic, Serbia. Also, its integrative powers resided solely in the supra-institutional authority of Tito. So, the drama of the socialist Yugoslavia and Serbia, in particular, was the drama of constantly shifting back and forth between two communitarian arrangements: the one based on the ideology of socialism, the other on ethnicity. Given the character of the ideology, a truly consociational model that would try to incorporate democratic principles could not be tried, for it would lead to the disintegration of the system, and more importantly of the "representatives" of such a state; that is, the Communist party itself.

When the consequences of the politics of failed modernization in Serbia and the former Yugoslavia finally emerged in the 1970s, there was no institutional mechanism present that would allow overcoming mutual republican mistrust. Under the conditions of political paralysis in the 1980s, and as the result of the continuing failures of the Serbian party to address the question of Serbia's ambiguous position vis-à-vis its own provinces,

the road was finally cleared for an option based on the rejection of Yugoslavia as a framework within which all Serbs could live in one state. Under the conditions of a grave crisis of socialist system, and an extremely harsh economic reality, this current reinvented the arguments from the past.

Thus, instead of offering a program based on democratic reforms and the acceptance of Yugoslavia's diversities, the Serbian conservative socialists from the party and the nationalist intellectual élite in the SANU offered a program based on the most important nineteenth-century question – that of the external freedoms of the Serbian people. By doing this, they not only provoked a populist nationalism that successfully legitimized their program, but also undermined any hope of achieving internal liberties in society in the period of the ultimate disintegration of communism throughout Eastern Europe. The long-term consequences of such a choice are by now all too obvious: not only has Yugoslavia disintegrated, but also the liberal intellectuals and the opposition parties that argued from the perspective of democratization of the state have effectively been marginalized. In final analysis, the reinvention of the nineteenth-century pro-European Serbian national program could not but end by being thoroughly disintegrative and anti-European, for the very context of the late-twentieth century was radically different from the one that was present in the region a century ago.

To conclude, the most important characteristics of the Serbian national ideology developed by national interpreters in the late 1980s and early 1990s will be recapitulated:

- In the case of an imminent threat to the national interests, the state has the right to suspend internal liberties;
- The state is above the morality and law, because abstract humanistic concerns, supported by the debilitating powers of legal procedures, undermine the unity and the strength of the nation and the state. Or, we could simply paraphrase a famous German saying – *Serbien über alles*;
- The role of nation-building policies is to prepare a “citizen” as fully aware of the virtues of his or her nation (Đurić’s so-called national-humanistic education);
- State-building policies are primarily concerned with protecting the state from internal traitors and external enemies (Schmittian definition of politics);
- Two principles of international relations dominate the world: the right of the nation to self-determination and the principle of state-sovereignty; and
- When these two principles are in conflict with the competing claims of other states based on the same principles, the state may resort to war to “protect” itself. There are no other “higher” moral criteria (such as protection of human rights and the extension of national minority rights) on which such a conflict could be addressed.

With these principles firmly ingrained, Serbia entered its post-socialist stage in the 1990s. This is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 3

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN POST-SOCIALIST SERBIA 1990-1998

One very smart man went for a walk in the woods where he got lost. Danil Harms

Introduction

Post-communist development in Serbia in the 1990s represents the continuation of the very politics of ethnic nationalism that has legitimized Milošević's ascent to power in 1987. Such a politics underlies ethnicity as the most important "objective" marker between different national groups. As such, it has remained distinctively anti-liberal and anti-democratic in its denial the equal status to the members of non-Serbian groups in the country. Surprisingly, however, the peculiarity of Serbia's transformation policies is that they have taken a form that resembles policies based on the principles and institutions of constitutional, liberal democracies.

Thus, when the post-socialist pluralist system in Serbia emerged in 1990, the formal structures of any democratic regime were present: a diverse press, a mushrooming of new TV stations, a multi-party system, elections, emphasis on constitutional principles of parliamentary democracy, etc. Yet, the substance of such policies was missing, for there were no formal mechanisms that would allow for regular alternation of power in the government. One of the reasons for such a mimicry of liberal national principles in Serbia was that communism collapsed in Serbia only after nascent post-socialist, pluralist institutions had already been taken over by former communists-turned nationalists. Thus

the political objective of such mimicry of democratization processes was the mutation of the old monistic, communist type of authoritarianism into a semi-pluralist authoritarianism. In other words, the institutions of Serbian pluralist political system, no matter how democratic they might appear, represent neither a genuine fresh start, nor a strict preservation of the old communist system. Their functions simulate the roles such institutions play in contemporary democracies, while essentially keeping the power-monopoly of the Communist-turned-Socialist party intact.

The analysis of the post-socialist institutional and political development in Serbia will be informed by the work of those authors who reject the conventional differentiation between individual liberalism and nationalism based on group rights. As presented in the section on liberal nationalism, in Chapter One, these authors (Kymlicka, Tamir, Marion Young, etc.) hold that, just as the members of the majority nation desire to live and work in their own culture, the same should be recognized for the needs of national minorities. In a multination state, which is based on the overtly abstract principles of liberal democracy (decision based on majority) such politics can only lead to a situation in which the ways of life of the dominant group are celebrated as the only ones, irrespective of the needs espoused by minority groups. Thus, the evaluation of Serbian state- and nation-building policies will be based on the recognition that such policies are in every multination state inherently biased in favor of the dominant group in society. In addition, the Serbian case is complicated by the very process of mimicking liberal democratic processes. Accordingly, it is very important to unmask the real principles hidden behind a veil of superficial support

for liberalism and democracy. For these reasons, the evaluation of Serbian politics in the 1990s also will be based on Hayden's and Basta's critique of constitutional nationalism in post-socialist multination states (also explained in Chapter One in the section on liberal nationalism).

The aforementioned approaches thus will guide the evaluation of the Serbian constitutional and institutional system, on the one side, and the political actions and programs of leading Serbian political parties, on the other. Finally, particular attention will be paid to the role of the media in a post-socialist Serbia. In the 1990s, the media emerged as the central institution (a sort of transmission belt between the masses and the "leader") in imposing a "thick" understanding of national identity on Serbian society. Accordingly, its main purpose was to justify both the constitutionally sponsored nationalist policies and the monopolistic role of Milošević's Socialist party in the post-communist transformation processes in Serbia. This was done by presenting (legitimizing) openly nationalist policies by reference to the very principles that deny such policies, those of liberalism and social democracy.

The first section of the chapter deals in detail with the ethnicized liberal democracy defined by the Serbian constitution. The second section explains the fundamental role the state-controlled media play in justifying Milošević's politics of ethnic homogenization. The third and final section focuses on the programs and activities of the major Serbian parties, examining the ways in which they combine elements of political liberalism with an ethnic understanding of the Serbian political community. Given the scope and complexity

of the issues involved in majority-minority relationships in Serbia, actual state policies towards Serbian national minorities and their responses to them will be considered in Chapter Four.

Constitutional Foundations of Serbian Ethnic Nationalism

Why are constitutional reforms so important in post-socialist countries? The answer to this question is closely related to the need of the newly emerged post-socialist regimes to differentiate themselves from the symbolism and institutional order of the former communist systems. From the very beginning of the transformation processes in post-communist East and Central European countries, new constitutions were perceived as emblems of political liberation. At the same time, as Jon Elster and Ulrich Preuss have pointed out, “they were [simultaneously] rediscovered as symbols of the renaissance of these countries as independent sovereign nations.”¹ In fact, constitution making became a shortcut for former communist countries to present themselves as free, democratic and sovereign national entities.

This constitution making was a highly political process. Against the background of a complete overhaul of economic, social and political institutions in former communist countries, it emerged as a vital political instrument for achieving democratic consensus on the character of new, post-socialist and supposedly democratic Eastern European political communities. In judging the genuineness of such consensus, it is just as important to look

¹ Jon Elster and Ulrich Preuss, “Constitutional Politics in Eastern Europe,” in *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea*, ed. Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63.

at the process used to hammer out the new constitutions as to consider their final texts. For if constitution making were a seriously collaborative project of both political élites and counter-élites in a particular country, then one would expect the resulting document to come close to expressing a consensual societal vision of its future. Conversely, where the process became the act of one party against the interests of other elements in society, any democratic identity claimed by a newly emerged post-socialist political community would likely be a sham.²

Thus an evaluation of constitution making in post-socialist Serbia necessitates opening **the question of its procedural legitimacy**. The key issue is the extent to which Serbia's Constitution is a product of consensual understanding by all relevant political and national groups in society about the identity and character of a Serbian state. To a certain extent, this will be apparent from the answers to some fundamental questions about the final Constitutional text. What normative definition of society does it offer? What is the scope and character of the institutions envisaged (e.g. presidential or parliamentary democracy)? Does it provide for the protection of individual and national minority rights? What checks and balances are proposed to limit the power of the executive branch of government? etc.

² On Eastern Europe's constitution making experiences see: Jon Elster, Claus Offe and Ulrich K. Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies*, 63-108; J.J. Hesse and N. Johnson, eds., *Constitutional Policy and Change in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and M. Rosenfeld, ed., *Constitutionalism, Identity, Difference and Legitimacy: Theoretical Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). Also, *East European Constitutional Review* regularly publishes articles on the issue of constitutional reforms and parliamentary democracy in Eastern Europe.

With respect to the issue of procedural legitimacy, it must be recognized that the Serbian Constitution was accepted in dubious political circumstances during the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, and without adequate public debate. It was formally adopted on September 28, 1990 by a republican Assembly composed solely of communists under Milošević's complete control. A few months earlier, the fledgling opposition parties had called for round table talks on Serbia's political future, but Milošević, fearing these would water down the achievements of his so-called "anti-bureaucratic" revolution, instead organized a referendum about what should come first – elections or a new constitution. Not surprisingly, given his popularity at the time, the overwhelming majority of those who cast their vote supported his suggestion that Serbian statehood should be consolidated before the first multiparty elections could take place. This gave him and his acolytes a free hand to tailor the fundamental law of the Republic according to their needs. At the same time, they could claim the whole endeavor was legitimate, since it was the "people" who had voted in favor of adopting the constitution before holding multiparty elections. As a result, Serbia did not hold multiparty elections until December 1990, by which time all other former Yugoslav republics had already elected their first post-socialist governments.

Similarly, approving a new federal constitution led to a bizarre paradox. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), or the so-called third Yugoslavia, officially came into existence with the adoption of its constitution on April 27, 1992. By then, four of the six former Yugoslav republics had already proclaimed their independence (Slovenia,

Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia).³ Nevertheless, the official Serbian and Montenegrin stand was that these republics unilaterally seceded from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Thus only Serbia and Montenegro could claim the right to legal continuity with the former Yugoslavia, and so it was the Serbian and Montenegrin delegates of the old Federal Chamber of the SFRY Assembly who formally adopted the new Constitution. In other words, the founding document of the third Yugoslavia was enacted by the “ghost” parliament of a state which no longer existed.⁴

Furthermore, only 73 Serbian and Montenegrin delegates (of the original 220 delegates of the socialist Yugoslavia) were present at the 27 April 1992 session of the Federal Chamber of the SFRY. They did not constitute a quorum under the rules of that Chamber, and in any case their mandates had all expired in 1990. Hence, one can only agree with Kosta Čavoški, a Serbian law professor, that “from the perspective of the *continuity* with the old constitutional [former socialist Yugoslav] system, the new Constitution is void and non-existent.”⁵

³ Croatia and Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia on June 25, 1991; Macedonia on September 9, 1991; and Bosnia and Herzegovina on October 16, 1991.

⁴ The legal issues surrounding the process of Yugoslavia’s disintegration are still unresolved. From the Serbian and Montenegrin perspective, the other Yugoslav republics seceded from the country. From the perspective of the latter, however, Yugoslavia’s disintegration represented the process of the country’s dissolution. In practice, the international community has accepted the latter view, though not all legal experts agree. At the time of the creation of the third Yugoslavia, the European Community’s stand vis-à-vis Yugoslavia’s crisis was guided by the opinions of the so-called Badinter Arbitration Commission. On December 7, 1991, this Commission suggested that Yugoslavia was in a process of dissolution, and on January 11, 1992, it further suggested that European Community members officially recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent and sovereign states. See Thomas D. Musgrave, *Self-Determination and National Minorities* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 200-210.

⁵ Kosta Čavoški, *Ustav kao jemstvo slobode* (Beograd: Institut za filozofiju & Filip Višnjić, 1995), 129.

Not surprisingly, despite the regime's insistent claims that the third Yugoslavia is the legitimate successor to the old Yugoslavia, the constitutional organization of the federation has never been publicly debated.⁶ Instead, as in the case of the adoption of the Serbian Constitution, the voices of many emerging political parties and representatives of numerous national minorities in Serbia have been completely marginalized. The reasons for the regime's unwillingness to open public debate are quite transparent. Lidija Basta rightly points out that any constitution that lacks procedural legitimacy is just an instrument of those in power, instead of providing a legitimate limitation of that power. In the case of Serbia, the sole purpose of constitution making was to mask the authoritarian and ethnonationalist character of Milošević's political regime and a state.⁷

The lack of procedural legitimacy, however, very soon mutated into two separate but related **legitimacy crises** – that of the **political regime** and that of the **state** itself. What does this mean? The legitimacy crisis in the communist world did not affect each and every state equally. The collapse of communist regime did not have any effect on the legitimacy of the most ethnically homogenous states (Hungary, Poland).⁸ Once the communist regime collapsed, new constitutions emerged after public debate to envision

⁶ The situation in Montenegro was different because its government had organized a referendum on whether it should be an independent state or join a federation with Serbia. A majority favored federation with Serbia. Serbian citizens were never asked whether Serbia should be an independent state or part of a federation.

⁷ See Lidija Basta, "Uloga ustava u zemljama tranzicije centralne i istočne Evrope," in *Lavirint krize: preduslovi demokratske transformacije Jugoslavije*, eds. Slobodan Samardžić, Radmila Nakarada i Đuro Kovačević (Beograd: Institut za evropske studije, 1998), 55-75.

⁸ Basta, 64-66.

and legitimize a new liberal order; an easy task when compared to the one Serbia had (and still has) to face.

Inasmuch as Serbia is a heterogeneous nation-state, its structural conditions are similar to those of many other post-communist states (Russia, Slovakia, Macedonia, etc.). However, what makes Serbia's position extremely difficult is that it is the only multination post-communist state in which the former *nomenklatura* managed almost completely to preserve its power over society. Under such conditions, the new Serbian and Yugoslav constitutions emerged as appropriate instruments for formalizing Milošević's post-communist regime.⁹

Still, at face value, both the 1990 Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and the 1992 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia define Serbia and Yugoslavia as democratic states in which citizens' rights (to freedom, privacy, property, etc.) are fully constitutionally protected.¹⁰ Both constitutions emphasize that every member of Serbia's and Yugoslavia's numerous national minorities is first and foremost a citizen, and only then a member of a distinct ethnic group. Article 11 of the Serbian Constitution, for example, restates the famous liberal dictum that the liberties and rights of citizens can only be limited by the liberties and rights of other citizens. Article 13 guarantees equality and protection to all citizens, regardless of ethnic, religious, gender and social differences. Article 8 of the Yugoslav Constitution repeats a famous democratic dictum – citizens are

⁹ Slobodan Antonić, "Yugoslav Federalism: Functioning of the Federal and Republican Parliaments," in *Election to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia*, 53.

sovereign and exercise their sovereign powers through their freely elected representatives. Thus, despite a lack of the procedural legitimacy, the Serbian and Yugoslav constitutions seem to incorporate the classic premises of a liberal parliamentary democracy.

Here one should keep in mind Vojin Dimitrijević's warning that ethnonationalism does not leave too many traces in written statutes and constitutions and that "it will try to woo allies by preserving a decent image, and democracy and human rights are parts of that image."¹¹ Even so, a close analysis of the two constitutions shows that a lot can be said about the supposed democratic image of the Serbian constitution.

Serbia represents more than 95% of the population and 86% of the territory of Yugoslavia. Where Serbian and Yugoslav laws conflict, Serbian law prevails. This makes large parts of the federal Yugoslav constitution redundant, despite its elaborate wording requiring republican constitutions to be in line with it.¹² In fact, the primary purpose of the federal constitution is to protect the position of tiny Montenegro vis-à-vis its "older" and bigger brother – Serbia. Granting Montenegro veto powers in the federation does this. But the years of joint life in the third Yugoslavia have strained the relationship between the Serbian and Montenegrin ruling élites. As Slobodan Samardžić rightly asserts, Serbia's refusal to adjust its constitution in accordance with the federal one has forced Montenegro

¹⁰ See *Ustav Savezne Republike Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1/1992), and *Ustav Republike Srbije i Ustav Republike Crne Gore, drugo izdanje* (Beograd: Službeni list, 1997).

¹¹ Vojin Dimitrijević, *The Insecurity of Human Rights After Communism* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, Publication No. 11, April 1993), 32.

¹² Article 115 of the Federal Constitution clearly states that "the constitutions of the republics, members of the Federation, federal laws, republican laws and other legal statutes and acts have to be in accordance

to do likewise, thus opening the question of whether it should remain in the third Yugoslavia at all.¹³

Still, the unresolved relationship between Serbia and Montenegro is only a minor part of the “democratic deficit” in the third Yugoslavia. The Serbian regime’s lack of democratic legitimacy reaches to the very foundations of the state – the Serbian constitution. Three key issues stand out here: human rights safeguards, the relationship between the executive and legislature, and the protection of national minorities.

On human rights safeguards, the Belgrade Center for Human Rights criticizes the Serbian Constitution as openly authoritarian. Despite its emphasis on citizens’ rights, the Constitution lacks a credible and effective mechanism to ensure full protection of basic human rights. Article 12 envisions the possibility of introducing special laws to prescribe how human rights should be protected. In practice, however, this opens the door to serious, constitutionally sponsored violation of the human rights. This is so because there is no mechanism to block republican laws that might lead to a limitation of human rights instead of their protection. This means that the government, rather than the Constitution, becomes

with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.” See “Ustav SR Jugoslavije,” in *Novi Ustavi na tlu bivše Jugoslavije* (Međunarodna Politika: Beograd, 1995), 32.

¹³ Slobodan Samardžić, “Ustavni problemi demokratske transformacije Savezne republike Jugoslavije,” in *Lavirinti krize*, 83. In 1997 the Montenegrin Democratic Party of Socialists (former communists) split between reformists and those faithful to Milošević. The reformist leader, Milo Đukanović, won the presidential election in the fall of 1997. From that point, the relationship between Serbia and Montenegro started to resemble the squabbling between Serbia and Slovenia before the demise of the socialist Yugoslavia, especially as regards the trade and media war that Serbia opened against Montenegro. During the NATO air campaign against the third Yugoslavia (March-April 1999), Đukanović’s open critique of Milošević’s Kosovo policy completely severed the relationship between the two parts of the federation. For all these reasons, one could argue that since March 1999, the third Yugoslavia has practically ceased to exist.

the final arbiter of human rights protection. If the framers of the constitution had really wanted to safeguard human rights, they should obviously have included in the Constitution provisions designed to ensure that the state did not misuse its powers against its own citizens – but they did not do so.¹⁴

The second major flaw in the democratic legitimacy of the Constitution concerns the relationship between the executive and the parliament. According to the Constitution, the Serbian government represents a hybrid between a presidential and a parliamentary system. For constitution makers such as Ratko Marković, the Serbian government represents a parliamentary system modeled on the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, but “rationalized” to “fit” Serbian conditions. Hence, unlike its British model, it allows for the existence of a strong president whose principal function is to arbitrate between the Parliament and the Prime Minister and his cabinet.¹⁵ In reality, however, the Constitution granted the Serbian Parliament only a marginal role, while the president was given magisterial political powers, and is extremely difficult to impeach.

According to the article 88 of the Serbian Constitution, the Parliament does not have the right to impeach the president. It can only initiate an impeachment procedure by a two-thirds majority vote. Then the matter is put to a referendum. A majority of all registered voters is required to remove the president from office. But on the other side of the coin, the president has the right to dissolve Parliament (article 89), as well as almost

¹⁴ See *Ustavne pretpostavke za demokratsku Srbiju* (Beograd, Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 1997), 8-12.

¹⁵ Ratko Marković, “Predgovor,” *Ustav Republike Srbije*, (Beograd: Savremena administracija, 1992), III.

unqualified powers to declare a state of emergency during which his decisions have the force of law (article 83). In addition, the constitutional court cannot challenge presidential acts, nor must the President's decisions be on the advice of ministers. Hence, as long as the President's party enjoys a majority in Parliament, the Serbian "parliamentary" system acts as full-blown presidential system, in which, as Vladimir Goati maintains, the President enjoys absolute superiority over parliament.¹⁶ In short, far from being a system of rationalized parliamentary democracy, the Serbian constitutional system was "modeled on the person of Slobodan Milošević, and as such it has practically legitimized the establishment of his personal regime."¹⁷

Finally, the Serbian regime is completely unwilling to recognize Serbia's multinational character. This makes the Serbian state itself radically unstable and as vulnerable to violent disintegration as was the former Yugoslavia. The problem is, of course, not so much that Serbia is a multination state, but that it is constitutionally defined first and foremost as the state of the Serbian people, and only then of everybody else. The Preamble of the Serbian constitution leaves no doubt about the intentions of Serbia's "founding fathers":

Proceeding from the centuries-long struggle of *the Serbian people* for independence, from its freedom-loving, democratic and state-forming traditions, from its historic development and common life with *other peoples and nationalities* in Serbia,

¹⁶ Quoted in Antonić, "Yugoslav Federalism," 59.

¹⁷ Pavle Nikolić, "Parlamentarni sistem u Jugoslaviji i njegova izvitoperenost," *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke*, Vol. 80.2 (Beograd 1994): 6.

Determined to establish *a democratic state of the Serbian people in which the members of other nations and nationalities will be guaranteed national rights ... the citizens of Serbia enact the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia* (italics by D.G.).¹⁸

These words define Serbia primarily as a national state – a state of the Serbs, by the Serbs and for the Serbs. The members of other ethnic groups in the country are guaranteed equal rights, but their constitutional status is reduced that of the “bearable” other.

The problems that emanate from such an understanding of political community are manifold. The first and the most important one is a sort of hierarchy that exists between two types of legitimacy. On one side is a **formally proclaimed democratic principle in Article 1 of the Constitution** that defines Serbia as a democratic state of all of its citizens, on the other is **normatively proclaimed ethnic principle in the Preamble** of the document.

Second, even though Serbia is defined as a democratic state, many constitutional articles leave no doubt about the primacy of the ethnic principle over the civic one. For instance, Article 8 defines the Cyrillic alphabet as the only official alphabet in the country. The official use of Roman script is recognized, but it is up to lawmakers to define the circumstances in which it will be allowed. Thus, the Supreme Act of the country offers a rigid definition of the Serbian language, tying it solely to the Cyrillic alphabet, even though most Serbs use both alphabets indiscriminately. Moreover, since the Serbian national

¹⁸ See “Preamble,” *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*, 6.

minorities generally use the Roman alphabet, such a constitutional advantage for Cyrillic is bound to create tensions between them and the majority.

Third, minority rights are never spelt out in the Constitution. They are vaguely present throughout it, but never fully explained. It is true that in Articles 8 and 49 minorities are guaranteed the freedom to use their language. Article 49 even states that Serbia's citizens should not be forced into expressing their national identities. However, given the ethnic character of the state in the first place, this can be best understood as part of a **constitutionally sponsored assimilationist policy**, rather than an indication of respecting citizens' rights.

Finally, the Constitution recognizes the existence of the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina in the north and Kosovo and Metohija in the south of Serbia. The justification for the creation of autonomous provinces is found in specific historic, cultural and ethnic characteristics of these regions. Nonetheless, even though these two regions are primarily populated with various national minorities, the Constitution does not set out how national minority rights in Vojvodina and Kosovo are to be protected.

Instead, it leaves this potentially contentious question of minority rights protection to be settled by the statutes of the provinces. Bearing in mind that 45% of Vojvodina's and 90% of Kosovo's total population are non-Serbs, such a constitutional solution allows minority rights to be openly manipulated, if not disregarded altogether.

The ethnicization of the Serbian constitutional system has dramatic consequences for the legitimacy of the state itself. The risk to social unity posed by ethnic nationalism in a multination country cannot be overstated. The lack of a full constitutional protection for Serbia's minorities forces all political allegiances and voting behavior patterns to take explicit ethnic colors.¹⁹ In a paradoxical fashion such a constitution openly promotes disloyal and even secessionist behavior by ethnic minorities, as the case of Kosovo demonstrates. In a society defined by ethnic nationalism, the operation of the normal "rules of the game" becomes conditional on how well "national" interests may be served. Not surprisingly, if national survival itself is at stake – which appears to be a rather "normal" condition in Serbia in the 1990s – the questions of political participation and pluralism are constantly being postponed to some other, more benevolent time.

Moreover, Milošević's politics of ethnic activism constantly requires its own justification in the eyes of the "people," because, as in the case with every other populist regime, it can sustain itself only as long as it manages to manufacture full support from the population. For these reasons, throughout the 1990s, the state-controlled media have been given the task of influencing the Serbian people in the spirit of the Serbian Constitution and Milošević's policies. This is the focus of the following section.

¹⁹ See Vojin Dimitrijević, "The Fate of Non-Members of Dominant Nations in Post-Communist European Countries," *Jean Monnet Chair Papers 25* (San Domenico, Italy: The Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute, 1995): 7-30.

The Media in Serbia

The first part of this section explains the status of the media in society according to federal and republican regulations and laws. It also emphasizes the formal and informal mechanisms of control of the Serbian media. The second part considers the consumers of the media messages and their social and cultural status. Finally, the content of the media messages is analyzed.

Regulation of the Freedom of the Media in Serbia

There are over 2,550 publications in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which 2,400 appear in the Republic of Serbia and 160 in the Republic of Montenegro. Also, more than 400 radio and 120 TV stations broadcast regular programs, even though there are only 23 fully licensed TV stations. According to the Federal Secretariat for Information, most of daily papers, news periodicals and electronic media are in private hands, which reflects the important shift in the ownership structure of the Yugoslav economy since 1991.²⁰

There is no official government newspaper, which is fully in accordance with the constitutional principles of the freedom of the media in Serbia and Montenegro. In the area of the rights of minorities to public information in their own language, all international standards seem to be fulfilled to the extent that throughout the 1990s more than 50 newspapers and periodicals have been regularly published in Albanian. Thus, at least from

²⁰ See *The Media in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* (Belgrade, Federal Secretariat for Information, 1997), 1-18. The information of the European Institute for the Media is different. At the end of 1997, Serbia had 320 radio and 90 TV stations. Of these, 100 radio stations operated with a license, while 58 TV stations operated without license. There were only 10 privately owned radio stations, and 3 privately

the perspective of the Federal Secretariat for Information, it would seem that the media in Yugoslavia observes high standards of press freedom and avoidance of censorship, both of which are enshrined in the Yugoslav constitution and the constitutions of the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro. For example, article 46 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia states that:

[T]he freedom of the press and other public information media is guaranteed. ... Publication of newspapers and dissemination of information by other means is accessible to everyone without seeking permission, but subject to registration with the competent body. Radio and television broadcast organizations shall be established in accordance with the law.

Censorship of the press and other public information media is prohibited. No one may obstruct the distribution of printed matter and dissemination of other information, except where a competent Court judges that they advocate the overthrow by force of the order established by the Constitution, violate the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Serbia, violate the guaranteed freedoms and rights of citizens, or incite national, racial or religious intolerance and hatred.²¹

The western reader may well be tempted to dismiss out of hand these constitutional guarantees as mere shibboleths without any influence on the real status of the media in Serbia. However, a large number of people in Serbia who are influenced by the pro-government daily papers (*Politika*, *Borba*, *Večernje novosti* and *Politika ekspres*) and the state-owned television and radio network (RTS), would perceive this official line as truthful. For these reasons, the question of institutional and non-institutional mechanisms of mimicking of free media is extremely important. Statements about Milošević's iron hand over media do not satisfactorily explain all kinds of formal and informal mechanisms

owned TV channels that operated with a valid license. See *Media in Serbia: Final Report* (Dusseldorf: January 1998), 19-20.

that are at the state's disposal to by-pass the constitutional principles of the freedom of media in Yugoslavia.

For most of the 1990s, the media regulations have seemed to be liberal and in accordance with the constitution of the country. According to the *Law on Public Information* (which was replaced by new legislation in 1998), the only requirement for setting up a new daily or weekly was the registration of the new company in the city civil court. If the company did not hear anything from the administration about its registration within two weeks, it could start publication. However, on numerous occasions, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia has argued that this relative freedom has never guaranteed equal treatment for all in the Serbian media market.²²

A flagrant example of discriminatory treatment was the takeover of the independent daily *Borba* in 1994.²³ The new stockholding company *Borba d.d.* has been registered in September 1991 at the Belgrade civil court, following the procedures set out in the Law on Public Information. However, in November 1994, three years after the original registration, the civil court annulled it and removed *Borba d.d.* from the judicial register, rendering the further existence of the company illegal. The court based its decision on unsubstantiated claims that the transfer of the former daily *Borba* into private hands represented a case of theft of social and state property.

²¹ *Ustav Republike Srbije i Republike Crne Gore*, 18-19.

²² *Situation in Media: Soft Repression* (Belgrade, 11 October 1994): 1-3.

²³ A full account on the takeover of *Borba* and the rebirth of the first independent daily in Serbia under the new name *Naša borba* can be found in Eric D. Gordy, *Orientalism, Politics, Culture: An Approach to Everyday Life in Serbia* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1996), 149-163.

In fact, the underlying motives for the regime's attack on *Borba* lay in its persistent and stubborn critique of the regime's policy. Not surprisingly, editorials in the state-controlled media (*Večernje novosti*, *Politika ekspres*, *Dnevnik*) were supportive of state action against the daily. *Dnevnik*'s columnist Dragan Radević, who argued that the journalists of the former *Borba* have been united in their "hatred of Serbia," best expressed their view. According to him, the case of *Borba* clearly showed that the "so-called" independent media worked according to the principle that "the more independent media is, the more anti-Serbian it becomes."²⁴ Nevertheless, the journalists of the former *Borba* have survived the takeover of their paper and managed to continue publishing the most influential independent daily in Serbia under the new name *Naša borba*. Only in 1998, under the new media legislation, was *Naša borba* finally shut down.

Another very effective instrument of the regime's control of the media concerns the allocation of frequencies for radio and television stations. Even though this formally falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of federal agencies, the *Serbian Law on Radio and Television* granted the right to the Serbian government. The republican authorities continue to ignore a 1991 decision by the Yugoslav Constitutional Court which barred them from allocating electronic frequencies.²⁵ Throughout the 1990s, they have allocated frequencies so as to strengthen "alternative" state-influenced media that attract spectators with low-quality entertainment programs, films, sport and the like, with the ultimate aim of creating

²⁴ See: "Videnja kroz nacionalnu prizmu," *Borba* [Beograd] 15 December 1994, p. 4; and "Okrugli sto: mediji i odgovornost," *Borba* [Beograd] 13 April 1996, p.8.

²⁵ Slobodan Vučetić, *Privatizovana država* (Beograd: Fond za otvoreno društvo, 1996), 146-148.

a politically indifferent public (*Radio TV Pink, TV Palma*). Hence, despite the existence of more than 120 TV stations, none of them can be described as fully independent of state influences and, with the exception of the state-run RTS (Radio Televizija Srbija – Serbian Radio and Television), none can be seen throughout Serbia.²⁶

The situation with the allotment of radio frequencies and TV channels further deteriorated in 1997 and 1998, when local radio and TV broadcasters were obliged to submit the necessary documentation to the state authorities for receiving an operating license. This proved to be next to impossible for most local radio and TV stations, but not for state-controlled electronic media outlets. The state authorities have deliberately created a legislative maze of many incoherent and contradictory republican and federal acts and regulations applying to the electronic media. For example, the Serbian legislation on public information requires a valid license for broadcasters to be registered, while the Federal Ministry insists on registration before it will grant a license. This catch 22 has allowed the state effectively to ban any radio and TV channel which it deems anti-regime. As a consequence, throughout 1997 and 1998, the equipment of many local radio broadcasters and TV stations was confiscated, while in July 1997 (on the eve of the republican elections), more than 55 radio and TV stations across Serbia were closed under the pretext that they were operating “illegally.”²⁷

²⁶ See Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, *Updated Report on Media* (Belgrade, 21 February 1996), 1-3.

²⁷ See *Human Rights in Yugoslavia 1998*, The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (Belgrade: 1999), 128-135; and *Media in Serbia, Final Report*, European Institute for the Media (Dusseldorf: January 1998), 20-21.

A further restriction on freedom of media in Serbia arises from the *Serbian Criminal Law*. Its Articles 98 and 218 provide very rigid tests for proving libel against high officials, as well as severe penalties (up to three years' jail) for those whose "inflammatory" statements tend to provoke disrespect for the law or to foment disorder in the country.²⁸ There is no doubt that these articles are not only in flagrant disagreement with the Serbian and Yugoslav Constitutions, but also with European standards on the freedom of press. Their main purpose is to enforce a sort of self-censorship upon the opponents of Milošević's regime. Even though the legal provisions are only rarely used, they create a climate of what may be called "soft repression."²⁹

The Serbian authoritarian government, as Branislav Milošević aptly observes, does not want openly to destroy the independent press in the country. Its main aim is to marginalize independent dailies and periodicals. By doing this, the regime achieves two related goals. First, it presents itself as "open" and pro-democratic; and second, it provides the Serbian people with a "choice" between the state-run media and the independent media, a "choice" loaded in the state's favor, since it controls the most important media outlets in the country.³⁰ The strategy is underpinned by the instrumentalization of the judicial system of the country, as the cases of *Borba* and the allotment of radio and TV frequencies

²⁸ Vučetić, 148.

²⁹ In 1996, Miroslav Radulović, editor of the local "Borske Novine", was sentenced to 6 months in prison because he published a photomontage in which the leading Yugoslav politicians were presented without clothes. See Vladan Radosavljević, *Pištaljke i jaja: Mediji u Srbiji 1996* (Belgrade: Medija centar, 1996), 15-16.

³⁰ Branislav Milošević, "Sofisticirana represija novih staljinista," *Naša Borba* [Beograd] 23 March 1996, 3.

demonstrate. However, the regime also has at its disposal various elaborate mechanisms of indirect control over the media.

At first sight the press in Yugoslavia seems to be guided by the principle “anything goes.” No matter how critical some dailies or weekly magazines may be, they will almost never be openly banned. Instead, the regime will try some technical or commercial machination to block their influence. For example, the sphere of influence of *Naša borba* and *Vreme* (the most influential independent daily and weekly magazine respectively during the 1990s) has been effectively reduced to Belgrade, Novi Sad and some other urban centers. “Influencing” the Serbian distributors of the press not to sell independent papers does the trick here. Independent dailies and periodicals have to rely upon a limited distribution network of 350 selling points, mostly in Belgrade and other major cities. But the state-controlled dailies and periodicals, *Politika*, *Politika ekspres*, *Večernje novosti*, *Duga*, etc. can be bought at more than 2000 outlets throughout Serbia and Montenegro.³¹

Second, only one factory produces newsprint in Yugoslavia, the *Matroz* plant at Sremski Karlovci. Through most of the 1990s, this company has sold its paper on a system of parallel prices; one for the state-controlled papers, and the other for the independent press. *Matroz* supplies the state-controlled publishing house *Politika* with the paper at 30% to 40% less than it charges independent dailies and periodicals such as *Naša borba*, *Vreme*, and *NIN*.³² This damages the competitive position of the independent press, and reduces

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³² See *Situation in Media: Soft Repression*, 2.

the salaries they are able to offer. Not surprisingly, many of the best journalists in the independent press have left for more lucrative jobs.

A third means of indirect control derives from the funding arrangements for television. Radio Television Serbia is financed through a tax on the electricity bills. But local TV stations have to rely on advertisements to finance their programs. The many enterprises which are “close” to the regime are “encouraged” to advertise their products and services only on “politically correct” stations.³³ Fourth, despite claims that media outlets in Serbia are almost exclusively in private hands, most of the media are joint-stock companies, which are influenced in their work by stock-holders who are close to the regime.

Fifth, the regime has means to get around democratic obstacles to its media control. This was shown when the opposition coalition *Zajedno* (Together) won a majority in the biggest urban centers in Serbia at the last local elections in November 1996. The republican government responded by transferring many decision-making powers from the level of municipalities to the republican level. One of the consequences was that, in many cases, control over local media outlets ended up in the hands of the republican bureaucrats, rather than those who won the elections.³⁴

Finally, the Serbian Parliament passed a new *Public Information Act* on October 20, 1998. The new legislation came after a year-long campaign against the independent media

³³ *Situation in Media*, 2.

in Serbia,³⁵ which culminated at the beginning of October 1998, when NATO military strikes against Serbia became a distinct possibility. Its draconian character was anticipated by a decree, *Special Measures to Meet Threats to our Country from Armed NATO Attacks*, published in the Official Gazette of Serbia on October 8, 1998. This placed the media under strict government control, prohibiting it from “spreading defeatism and acting contrary to the resolutions of the Federal Assembly and the People’s Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.”³⁶ Those who spread “western propaganda” were liable to have their operations suspended or their equipment permanently confiscated. Thus was “preventive censorship” introduced into the Serbian information system, in direct violation of the republican and federal Constitutions.³⁷

The new *Public Information Act*, which was adopted under the rules of urgent procedure and without any public debate, further tightened media regulations, e.g., by banning the rebroadcast of foreign programs with a supposed propaganda or undesirable political content. The Belgrade Center for Human Rights explains the purpose of this legislation as follows:

Administrative proceedings against the media have been compared to summary trials. ... In the proceedings, there is a presumption of guilt of the accused, who is

³⁴ Dragoš Ivanović, “Deset najgorih godina: Vladavina Slobodana Miloševića 1987-1997,” *Republika* (Belgrade, No. 171): 17. Internet address: http://vurope.com/zines/republika/arhiva/97/172/171_17.HTM.

³⁵ Mirjana Marković, Milošević’s spouse and also a leader of the Yugoslav Left, a sister-party of the Milošević’s Socialists, set up a pace of the campaign. In *Duga*, one of the most nationalist papers in Serbia, Marković called for the public identification of all those media outlets that are being financed from abroad, or in her own words, “who was paid to act as a fifth column in their own country.” Quoted in Gordy, 154.

³⁶ Quoted in *Human Rights in Yugoslavia 1998*, 123.

³⁷ *Human Rights in Yugoslavia 1998*, 124.

not allowed to prove the veracity of the statements she has published. If the magistrate [who is not a judge but a government official] imposes a fine, the convicted person is given only 24 hours to pay – after that, his property or that of his media outlet will be impounded. This property will be auctioned within 7 days. Taking into account that the fines prescribed by the Act are generally very high (especially in view of the sorry state of Serbian economy), it is clear that the purpose of pecuniary punishment is to put dissident media out of business.³⁸

This has not been an exhaustive list of all possible formal and informal mechanisms of state control over media. Still, it should be sufficient to indicate the scope and nature of the power game the political regime plays in order to keep communication channels closed to the voices of dissent.³⁹ We shall shortly come to the question of how the regime fills media outlets with messages that justify or legitimize actions it has taken to maintain its grip on power. To understand this process, however, it will first be useful to consider some important aspects of the media audience in Serbia.

The Media Audience in Serbia

Mark Thompson maintains that the media alone could not have provoked the rise of nationalism in Serbia. As he puts it, the “media did not inject their [Serbian] audiences with anti-Muslim prejudices or exploitable fear of Croatian nationalism. The prejudice and fear were widespread, latently at least; there was a predisposition to believe ‘news’ which

³⁸ *Human Rights in Yugoslavia*, 126. Because of these draconian measures, several independent dailies and periodicals were put out of business at the end of 1998: *Naša borba*, *Dnevni telegraf*, *Danas*, *Evropljanin*, etc. The owner of *Dnevni telegraf* and *Evropljanin*, Slavko Ćuruvija, was heavily fined. He re-registered the papers in Montenegro and continued to publish them. In early 1999, he was killed in what appeared to be a politically motivated assassination. This finally put an end to *Evropljanin* and *Dnevni telegraf*.

³⁹ Tactics such as manipulating the prices of state-controlled dailies and periodicals, laying off politically incorrect journalists, and the use of threat and violence are well described in Vladan Radosavljević, *Pištaljka i jaja: mediji u Srbiji* 1996.

elicited and exploited the prejudice.”⁴⁰ Thus Thompson takes the media audiences in the former Yugoslavia as a given, and his otherwise excellent account of the manipulation of the media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina fails to deal adequately with the process by which nationalist media audiences were created.

Eric Gordy, a perceptive observer of the politics of everyday life in Serbia, relates the audiences for regime-controlled and independent media to existing social divisions in Serbia. His bases his account of the destruction of information alternatives in Serbia in the early 1990s largely on the differentiation between Belgrade and the country. In Belgrade, “a choice of information sources, however precarious and limited, exists,” while the Serbian provinces are limited to one-sided information provided almost exclusively by the state-controlled media. However, even in Belgrade, where alternative sources of information exist, Gordy asserts that a substantial share of the population prefers the regime-controlled media. He therefore suggests that the consumption habits and opinions of people in Serbia have somehow to be related to institutional and structural factors in society.⁴¹

However, Gordy does not further pursue this route. Instead, he focuses on the emotional functions that independent and state-controlled media fulfill for their consumers. Here he distinguishes between an information-seeking and an information-accepting public. The former values independent sources of information, while the latter represents

⁴⁰ Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Article 19: International Centre Against Censorship, May 1994), 128.

⁴¹ Gordy, 164-166.

“those people who are inclined to be satisfied with the information which is readily available to them from regime-controlled sources.”⁴² In other words, on one side of the social divide, the independent media is perceived as a source of objective information and an important tool in developing and maintaining a sense of independence. On the other side, the regime-controlled media offers a “sense of authoritarian comfort and security, giving its audience a sense that the interpretations and opinions they receive through these media were not only shared by influential and powerful people,” but also by a broad majority.⁴³

Gordy’s account of the emotional functions of media in Serbia helps us understand mechanisms which erect psychological boundaries between the authoritarian core of the society and the marginalized dissent voices in Serbia. But the question of the institutional and structural conditions that provide the basis for the regime’s exploitation of social divisions in society is too important to be left unanswered. Unless we can identify structural reasons for the dominance of the nationalist discourse in the society we are left with Thompson’s fatalistic and somewhat circular argument that “[I]n a society unaccustomed to any independence in the media, many people may not *want* independent information.”⁴⁴ This argument allows a shift in political responsibility from Milošević and his ruling party to the Serbian “people,” and leaves us without an adequate explanation of

⁴² *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁴⁴ Thompson, 128.

why so many people sincerely believe in the truthfulness of the information provided by the state-controlled media.

In searching for the structural roots of this cleavage in attitudes to information in Serbian society, it may be instructive to return to the economic and political circumstances in the early 1960s when the former Yugoslavia faced a dilemma in its attempts to solve its modernization crisis. The first quantitative stage of modernization (urbanization plus industrialization) was over. Economic demands were pushing the former Yugoslavia towards educational reforms to enable society to deal with the requirements of new technologies and the world market economy. If these reforms had been properly carried through they would logically have led to a gradual decentralization and de-bureaucratization of social and political life. But at the time, the top party echelon perceived the modernization crisis primarily as a problem of limited economic restructuring. The “solution” to this was found in an import-substitution model of development. The Yugoslav socialist self-management system introduced in the economic reforms of 1961 and 1965, as well as the constitutional reforms of 1971 and 1974, never diluted the party monopoly of political power in Yugoslavia. As such, it was never capable of completing the modernization process in the country.

Instead, the 1981 census showed that more than 70% of the Serbian population had only elementary education. Seventy-five per cent of the working population worked in the non-agricultural sector: 31.7% of the workforce were industrial or construction workers, while 19.8% were white-collar workers. These occupational ratios were the reverse of

those in the West (in the USA close to 50% of active population are white collar workers, in France 38.8%, etc.), supporting the view that Serbia's politics of partial modernization was based on the mass employment of an uneducated manual working class.⁴⁵

The long-term consequences of this partial modernization proved to be detrimental to Serbia in the late 1980s. A severe economic crisis and hyperinflation in the late 1980s and early 1990s eroded the benefits enjoyed by the numerous worker-peasant "class." These manual workers had left their villages in the 1970s, but the economic hardships of the 1980s and 1990s forced them to combine their city jobs with work done privately in the country in order to survive. According to Srbobran Branković, this has led to the development of certain forms of duality, "an eclectic blend of the traditional and the modern, of lifestyles and patterns, and therefore a duality in observation, value systems and treatment of political issues."⁴⁶

The "economics of destruction" continued throughout the 1990s, when Serbia continued with a lax fiscal policy in order to finance the wars of its ethnic brethren in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to deal with the international economic blockade of the country. From a political perspective, the regime achieved full success and it still enjoys stable support from a relative majority of the population. However, from the

⁴⁵ Srbobran Branković, *Serbia at War with Itself* (Sociological Society of Serbia: Belgrade, 1995), 26-28. 1991 census results on the educational structure of the Serbian population are slightly better. One third of the population was recorded as not having finished elementary school, 25% had only elementary school, one third secondary school, and only 8.5% of the population had a college or university degree. See Ivan Ivić, "Transformacija obrazovanja," in *Lavirinti krize*, 395-397.

⁴⁶ Branković, 188.

economic and social points of view, the results are catastrophic, as can be seen from Yugoslav economic indicators for the 1990s.

Data show that the economies of Serbia and Montenegro have managed to achieve positive growth rates since 1993, implying that like other Eastern European countries they have successfully overcome the challenges of the first stage of transition policies. However, the Serbian economy still has a long way to go to recover even the levels of real GDP it enjoyed around 1990. Official statistics show that its real GDP in 1995 was only 40% of the 1990 level, while industrial production was only 35% of that in 1989. Moreover, in addition to the official unemployment rate of 30% in 1996, there are at least 800,000 people on “forced vacation”. This means that Serbia’s actual unemployment rate is close to 40% of labor force.⁴⁷

Published data on the structure of the Serbian economy are somewhat perplexing. In 1993 almost 40% of economy was recorded as already privatized. Yet data for 1994 showed that only 2% of state capital was in private hands. This situation had not changed in early 1998. What lies behind this apparent restatization (resocialization) of private property?

In 1994, the Parliament of Serbia passed the Property Transformation Reevaluation Act that enabled the government to annul privatization in more than 1500 enterprises,

⁴⁷ Mladen Lazić and Laslo Sekelj, “Privatization in Yugoslavia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 49.6 (1997): 1069-1070.

employing 80% of the labor force in Serbia.⁴⁸ The rationale offered for this move was that hyperinflation had enabled the conversion of social property at negligible prices. Thus, the state emerged as the savior of social capital from unscrupulous private entrepreneurs who had tried to take advantage of hyperinflation to get rich overnight.

The real reason for the restatization of the Serbian economy, however, was not the ruling élite's concern for social justice. Quite the contrary, it lies in the regime's efforts to secure political control over economy, or in the words of Lazić and Sekelj, to resume "full control over big enterprises and ... the clientelism of the previous communist period."⁴⁹ The new 1997 Law on privatization continued the regime's policy of postponing *sine die* the privatization of social capital, making the whole process optional. In other words, it was left to the managers of social enterprises to decide whether their companies would be privatized or not. Given that the socialist *nomenklatura* is under the complete control of the regime, it is evident that the privatization of large Serbian enterprises is going to be a very slow process. This has fundamental political consequences. The leading Serbian economist Ljubomir Mađar has observed that the ruling élite has an enormous advantage over any alternative social and political forces in the country and that it will most probably continue to be in power as long as it successfully blocks the process of privatization of social property.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1064.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1069.

⁵⁰ Mađar, "Sta sprečava demokratizaciju," http://www.yuorpe.com/zines/republika/arhiva/98/182_1.html.

All this should not be taken to mean that Serbia's economic and political regime has returned completely to the principles and practices of the communist period, or that it does not allow any kind of private property. From the very beginning of post-socialism in Serbia, the private economic sector blossomed. Moreover, with Serbia's loss of wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the implementation of the UN sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, the ruling élite started actively to support development of private import companies trading with oil, strategic raw materials and spare parts.⁵¹

The main task of these new private companies was to reduce the impact of the UN sanctions and allow the state-run enterprises to continue with their work. The companies did succeed in alleviating external economic pressures on Serbia and helped it avoid complete bankruptcy. However, the political and social costs were tremendous, since these "private" companies were heavily involved in illegal businesses. The final consequence of the state actively supporting the criminalization of economy has been the development of personal links between state bureaucrats, socialist *nomenklatura* and Mafia capitalists that still remains the predominant characteristic of the Serbian economic and political regime.⁵²

The "economics of destruction" in the country, whether provoked by the catastrophic economic policies of the government or by the UN sanctions, is also reflected

⁵¹ Lazić and Sekelj, 1066-1067.

⁵² In a few extreme cases, the same people are simultaneously members of the Serbian government, top managers of the biggest Serbian companies and owners of some of the biggest private enterprises in the country. For excellent accounts on the links between the state, Mafia and *nomenklatura*, see: Mihail Arandarenko, "Serbia in the Nineties: Previous Accumulation or Political Capitalism?," *Nova Srpska Politička Misao (English version)*, 1-2/1996; and Mladen Dinkić, *Ekonomija destrukcije: velika pljačka naroda*, četvrto izdanje (Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 1996).

in the rapid increase in the poverty rate. Thus, while in 1990 only 6% of population were below the poverty line, in the mid-nineties, almost 40% the urban population did not earn enough income to buy necessary food.⁵³ These figures show the extent to which galloping poverty in the post-socialist Yugoslavia has robbed the urban middle class of the privileges it enjoyed throughout 1970s and 1980s. The result, in Branković's words, is:

[a] rather amorphous society, to a large extent composed of solitary, disempowered individuals and narrow groups. This may be said to be favorable ground on the one hand for political voluntarism by the government, to engage in manipulation and usurpation, and on the other, for a surprisingly loyal attitude on the part of the political majority, despite huge poverty and constant threats to its very existence.⁵⁴

Surveys of public attitudes towards human and national minority rights organized in the summer and fall of 1996 by the Fund for Open Society (the former Soros Foundation) and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia corroborate Branković's analysis. Their results reveal that the Serbian population had become increasingly anti-democratic and authoritarian. In response to one question, 57.6% of 570 respondents said that following the "the brave and tireless leader of the people" was more important than having a functional legal system in the country. One third supported State Security officials unlawfully entering people's apartments, and the police illegally opening citizens' mail.⁵⁵

The attitudes revealed towards national minorities' rights were equally worrying. Responses here were sharply polarized. Almost half believed that Serbs should enjoy

⁵³ See Aleksandra Pošarac, "Pauperizacija stanovništva u Srbiji," in *Potisnuto civilno društvo* (Beograd: Eko centar, 1995), 329-369.

⁵⁴ Branković, 41.

⁵⁵ See Mikloš Biro, "Koliko je protest 96/97 promenio političku svest građana Srbije," *Košava* (Beograd, Internet address: <http://vurope.com/zines/kosava/arhiva/3233/biro.html>).

greater constitutional rights than the national minorities living in Serbia, while 41% saw a need to increase minority rights. What was most disturbing was that more than 30% of participants believed that national minorities should be “stimulated” to leave the country, while only 6% favored giving some form of territorial autonomy and dual citizenship to the members of ethnic minorities in Serbia.⁵⁶

The impoverishment of a large “hybrid class, half-way between village and city,” the low educational level in the country and the continuing economic and political crisis provide a structural context for understanding the development of the authoritarian climate in society.⁵⁷ These factors also help explain a low readership rate of dailies in Serbia in the 1990s. For instance, in the mid-1990s only 3 per cent of the population regularly bought a newspaper (the European average is 40 per cent), while one third never bought a newspaper. On the other side of the information pendulum is the electronic media, where

⁵⁶ Biro, 32-33. Throughout the 1990s, many Serbian analysts and sociologists regularly measured the “level of authoritarianism” in the population, including their attitudes towards liberalism, democracy, nationalism, etc. The results imply that the average Serbian citizen is torn between his or her support for authoritarianism on one side, and liberal democracy on the other, a split that closely follows the distinction between the Serbian city and the country, as well as between the better educated and less educated strata. See: Srećko Mihailović, ed., *Između osporavanja i podrške* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Institut Društvenih nauka: Beograd, 1997); and Zagorka Golubović, ed., *Društveni karakter i društvene promene u svetlu nacionalnih sukoba* (Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju: Beograd, 1995).

⁵⁷ My emphasizing of the role of peasant urbanites is not an attempt to essentialize this stratum as non-cultural and inauthentic. Rather, their position in a twilight zone between the village and city is being perpetuated by Milošević’s regime in order to maintain itself. For more on the cultural characteristics of a peasant urbanite see Marko Živković, “Stories Serbs Tell Themselves: Discourses on Identity and Destiny in Serbia since the mid-1980s,” *Problems of Post-Communism* Vol. 44.4 (July/August 1997): 22-29.

the state-controlled RTS is regularly watched (and perceived) as the main source of information by at least 75% of the population.⁵⁸

To conclude this section, Milošević did not create the amorphous political audience in Serbia. Nevertheless, he skillfully used it to legitimize the new post-communist era in Serbia. The lack of a strong media alternative in the country allowed the state-controlled media outlets to fulfill the authoritarian expectations of the semi-educated Serbian population for stability and order in times of uncertainty and disorder. Let us now deal more directly with the content of the state-controlled media messages.

The Mediatization of Hatred

The downward spiral of events in the 1980s in Yugoslavia (the ascent of Milošević to power in Serbia in 1987, Serbia's violent crushing of Kosovo's *de facto* status as one of the constitutive units of the Yugoslav federal system, the break-up of the federal communist regime and its replacement with competitive nationalist republican regimes, etc.) would not have been possible without the republican élites' ability to influence the media. While TV viewers in Serbia were presented with pictures of Kosovo Serbs being persecuted and thrown out of their homes, TV channels in the other republics were presenting the same events in a way that was sympathetic to Albanian cause, showing total disregard for the difficulties of Kosovo Serbs. In the end, as Bette Denich aptly observes,

⁵⁸ See Vesna Radivojević, "Srpska štampa na istočnoevropskom talasu," *Nаша borba* [Beograd] 14-15 Juni 1997. On the newspaper front, the daily circulation of the state-influenced dailies *Politika* and *Večernje novosti* are 100,000 and 180,000 copies respectively. Independent tabloids such as *Blic* (100,000) and *Dnevni telegraf* (80,000) also enjoy a high daily circulation, while independent dailies targeting a more

“[Serbian] viewers who otherwise had never supported Communism or the Party, nevertheless identified with the [media] attack on the Serbian party on the part of the other republic leaders, while viewers in Croatia and Slovenia identified with their leaders as standing up against the threat embodied by the Serbian party.”⁵⁹

Thus, the main effect of the media manipulation in the former Yugoslavia was the further incitement and polarization of the population, leading to the situation in which “[e]ach side consistently presented itself as victim, or potential victim, the Other as threat or potential threat, so that neither party responded to the Other directly, but only to its own projections of the Other.”⁶⁰ It is this pattern of ethnic mobilization based on a sense of victimization and understanding of the other as a threat that remains the constant defining characteristic of the Serbian regime’s media policy.

What differentiates one period from the other is the regime’s choice of an enemy. In the middle of the 1980s, the enemies were the Serbian and Montenegrin party bureaucrats (“chair-warmers”) that, according to the leaders of the “anti-bureaucratic revolution,” were proving themselves incapable of defending Serbian interests in the former Yugoslav Federation. From 1987 to 1990, the enemies became neighboring republics, in particular Slovenia and Croatia. During the war years 1990-1994, Bosnian

educated readership (*Naša borba*, *Danas*, *Demokratija*) have daily circulation between 10,000 and 25,000 sold copies. See *Media in Serbia, Final Report*, 52-59.

⁵⁹ Bette Denich, “Unmaking Multi-Ethnicity in Yugoslavia: Metamorphosis Observed,” *The Anthropology of East Europe Review: Special Issue: War Among Yugoslavs* 11.1&2 (Spring and Fall, 1993): 55.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

Muslims and Croats appeared on the hate list, together with the “global enemies” of the Serbian dream of having all Serbs live in one state – the USA and Germany.⁶¹

Finally, throughout this period, the Serbian regime’s favorite target has been the enemy within, the “national traitor,” the “head-in-the-clouds pacifist,” and so on. The sign of such “cosmopolitan, rootless” individuals is that they go about complaining about the consequences of the political regime’s military and political failures. They are, therefore, represented as “foreign mercenaries,” working for the “decadent West” in a “special war,” which is “far more dangerous for the interests of the country than the military actions of its enemies.”⁶²

The end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina placed an interesting external constraint on this strategy of the regime, since it has had to justify its acceptance of the Dayton peace agreement, which represented the defeat of the regime’s great promises of a Greater Serbia. Still, even in this context, the regime succeeded in justifying both its previous war-mongering policies and its military defeats. It did so by propaganda attacks on two fronts – against those peace activists who had opposed the war from its very beginning, and against the radical nationalists. Such a policy allowed the state-run media

⁶¹ See Ivan Torov, *Sunovrat srpskog novinarstva: 1987-1995* (Beograd, Medija Centar, 1996), 5-6.

⁶² The language used by the state-controlled media is widely examined and documented by a number of researchers. See: Ivan Torov, *Sunovrat srpskog novinarstva*; Snježana Milivojević & Jovanka Matić, *Ekranizacija izbora* (Beograd: Vreme knjige, 1993); Borislav Džuverović, Srećko Mihailović & Slobodan Vuković, *Izborna upotreba medija* (Beograd, Institut društvenih nauka, 1994); *Govor mržnje* (Beograd: Centar za antiratnu akciju, 1994); and Lazar Lalić, *Tri TV godine u Srbiji* (Beograd: Nezavisni sindikat Medija, 1995).

to present Milošević as the only real political choice in a country supposedly torn between the extremes of the incompetent, democratic opposition and radical nationalists.

The single most important media outlet given the task of presenting Milošević as the man of the political center has been RTS. Such a choice is not only related to the fact that the state television is the only media whose programs can be watched throughout Serbia.⁶³ It is also because RTS, in the words of the Serbian Minister of Information Milivoje Pavlović, has ensured “that there is a valuable degree of spiritual unity among all Serbs in a world in which neither justice nor truth prevail, but are made to order, and poisoned by Serbophobia and other products of the creators of the new world order.”⁶⁴

In the name of “spiritual” unity among Serbs, as Jovanka Matić maintains, the opposition was constantly presented as “something bad, unnecessary, wrong, disabling, foreign, and hostile.” In other words, by relying on a friend-enemy matrix of representation, RTS placed the opposition on the far end of the political spectrum – a position from which it only wants to “undermine, stir up, incite, accuse, and falsely present Serbia to the world in the most untruthful way, in the interests of foreign powers and against the interests of its own people.”⁶⁵

⁶³ The circulation of dailies carrying political news in Serbia amounts to half a million copies a day, while the news programs of the state-controlled TV network are watched by about 3.5 million people a day. See Jovanka Matić, “The Role of the Media: Media Portraits of Government and Opposition,” in *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) 1990-1996*, ed. Vladimir Goati (Sigma: Berlin, 1998), 109.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Thompson, “Forward” by William Shawcross, p. ix.

⁶⁵ Jovanka Matić, “Sistematska satanizacija neistomišljenika,” *Naša Borba* [Beograd] 11 January 1997: II-III. In 1998, however, the state-controlled media adopted another strategy against the opposition. Throughout that year, *Politika*, *Borba* and the state-controlled TV channels “informed” the public in such

The most important characteristic of this either/or representational logic is its flexibility in terms of its easily replacing one type of target with another. What always remains the same is the language of accusation, based on a dichotomous differentiation between what is “not acceptable” and what is “ours.” Accordingly, in the post-Dayton era, from 1995 onward, RTS commentators simply turned their ire on nationalism instead of anti-westernism, focussing on new targets that happened to be among their former favorites – the Bosnian Serbs’ leaders Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, and the leader of the Serbian radicals, Vojislav Šešelj (the latter one only until 1997, when, after the elections, he re-emerged on the Serbian political stage as the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia). Of course in late 1998, with the internationalization of the Kosovo question, the West once more emerged as the principal enemy of the Serbian “people” and the state.

A further reason for the full success of the regime’s post-Dayton policy (in terms of maintaining its control over society) can be found in the confusion in the opposition and independent media as to how to respond to the role of Milošević as a peace-broker. The case of the NTV Studio B, the only independent local TV station in Serbia in the period from 1991 to February 1995, points to some of the obstacles that independent media in Serbia have to overcome in order to achieve a full professional status. Being caught between the domination of state-controlled media and the constant economic pressures for

a way that the opposition was rarely, if ever, mentioned. In other words, they completely ignored anything that had not been previously sanctioned by the state and the ruling coalition, creating the impression that other political voices in the country were either too weak or openly non-patriotic and therefore did not deserve to be covered by the media. See *Odsutne partije: Slika političkog života u državnim medijima mart-oktobar 1998* (Centar za slobodne izbore i demokratiju: Beograd, 1998), 7-8.

survival, at a time when state-run TV had given up on Karadžić, Mladić *et al.*, NTV Studio B embraced the official either/or matrix of representation, but with RTS's targets inverted. Thus, throughout 1994 NTV Studio B was constantly shifting from an independent, professionally run TV station to an opposition station, where Šešelj and his ilk continued their pro-war speeches. Finally, in February 1995, after two years of economic and management crisis in NTS Studio B, the Belgrade Assembly proclaimed this TV station to be the property of the city, which promptly ended its independence.⁶⁶

Given the extent to which the state monopolizes the content of media, and, at the same time, marginalizes the voices of the independent media, can we really talk about the existence of "the media" in new Yugoslavia? Miroljub Radojković maintains that the media exists only if different media currents (in terms of media content) are interdependent and interrelated through the strong integrative communicative network. Accordingly, for the media to exist, political choices in society have to be based on the equal access of various actors in society to the same media outlets. However, in Serbia there exist two

⁶⁶ The case of the state's taking control of NTV Studio B, the only independent TV station in Yugoslavia, is researched by Zoran M. Marković, "Uspon i pad Studija B," *Republika* 1-15 September 1996, 15-22; and Jovanka Matić, "Odgovor na monopol državne TV," *Naša borba* [Beograd] 24. February 1996. For a brief period in 1997, the NTV Studio B operated as an independent TV station again. This was due to the fact that the joint opposition *Zajedno* (Together) won the Belgrade city elections in November 1996. However, in September 1997, everything returned to "normal." After the split in the *Zajedno* coalition, Zoran Đinđić, Belgrade's first independent mayor and the leader of the Democratic Party, was forced to resign. Control of Belgrade passed to a newly created "informal" coalition of Serbian socialists, radicals and the members of the Serbian Renewal Movement. The coalition's first decision was to replace Lila Radonjić as editor in chief of NTV Studio B with Dragan Kojadinović, a pro-regime journalist.

parallel media currents with their respective media outlets – the media controlled by an all-powerful-state on one side, and a much weaker independent media on the other.⁶⁷

One of the most negative consequences of the lack of an integrated media in Serbia is the absence of social consensus over basic social and political values in society. In the conditions of constant crisis in the Serbian state and society, the independent media is quite often not only the target of the political regime but also of the opposition trying to influence it with its own visions of political correctness.⁶⁸ This fixation on the power of the media undermines genuine social transformation and popular participation. Political actors remain obsessed with influencing and controlling society, using different media channels to disseminate messages that have already been pre-defined as “public issues” by the regime and the opposition, but without any active participation of the public. The final consequence of this instrumentalization of the media is the successful mimicking of its roles, leading to the full passivization of the Serbian public.

To put it differently, media policy represents one of the crucial instruments in allowing the Serbian socialists to remain in power despite the catastrophic results of Milošević’s rule in the 1990s. One can expect, however, that once the public tires of the

⁶⁷ Miroljub Radojković, “Mogućnost konstituisanja demokratskog javnog mnjenja u Srbiji,” in *Potisnuto civilno društvo*, ed. Vukašin Pavlović, (Beograd, ECO centar, 1995), 396-397.

⁶⁸ The independent press tries to avoid being co-opted by the opposition parties. However, sometimes this leads to confusion about the role of the independent media and its professional standards. In her analysis of the independent press during November 1996 elections, Olivija Rusovac came to the conclusion that the independent dailies and weekly periodicals failed to present the elections in an analytical way. Instead, *Blic*, *Dnevni telegraf*, *NIN* and other independent papers presented political contenders according to the principle “they are all the same”, while the most important political question of the elections – who is for and who is against the politics of transition in the country – was not even addressed. See “Nezavisni mediji pred izbore,” *Republika* No. 153-154 (Beograd, 1-31 December, 1996): 17-18.

simulated reality of the Serbian state-controlled media and focuses exclusively on the facts of economic hardship, political uncertainties and international isolation, the regime will lose one of the most important mechanisms at its disposal for justifying its power position. Even then, however, the social and cultural context that has been established is likely to perpetuate the predominance of authoritarian political attitudes over marginalized democratic ones. If that is ultimately the case, the single most important question will not be whether, and if so how, Milošević's political regime falls, but whether the democratic opposition will be strong enough to hinder the emergence of yet another nationalist and ethnocentric regime.⁶⁹ In the context of media policy, the question is whether the media matrixes inherited from the previous communist system and further developed throughout the 1990s will disintegrate with the fall of Milošević or remain as a powerful means of justifying yet another authoritarian identity narrative.

In conclusion, the ultimate purpose of the state-controlled media is to justify Milošević's constitutionally sponsored politics of authoritarian rule and the creation of an ethnically homogenous Serbian nation-state, in which more than 85% of population will be ethnic Serbs. Can we envision another scenario in Serbia that would favor nation-building of a different kind than that currently prevailing in the region – one that tries to accommodate minority nationalisms, not to combat them? Given the political record during Milošević's rule, one cannot expect any such change from the current political regime. The main Serbian opposition parties might provide an alternative to Milošević's

⁶⁹ The question is not academic one. Throughout the 1990s, the second largest party in the country has been

ethnic politics. But how radically does their vision of Serbia differ from the one being sponsored by the Serbian post-communists and extreme nationalists? In the following section, I turn to this question.

Serbia's Party System: Exaltation of Ethnicity

The terms radical, liberal, moderate, conservative and reactionary are very often used in political science to present a more nuanced understanding of the left-right spectrum in the political discourse of modern, consolidated democracies. The attitudes of the various parties are assessed according to their political values and the urgency with which they see the need for political change. Those farthest to the left or the right are extremely dissatisfied with the status quo, but for different reasons. Radical left parties advocate revolutionary changes and perceive private property and the untrammelled operation of free markets to be at the root of all social evils. The reactionary right, on the other side, wants to turn back the wheels of history and restore the institutions of previous eras.

Liberals and conservatives share the center of the political spectrum. Liberals represent its left wing, while conservatives are more on the right. They are united in their consensual understanding that modern societies are based on the principles of a free market economy, private property and notions of human equality and rights. However, contemporary liberals desire to improve social conditions through social experimentation and active involvement of the government. Contemporary conservatives, on the other side, doubt the efficacy of perpetual social experimentation as a solution to all problems.

the Serbian Radical party, headed by the extreme nationalist Vojislav Šešelj.

Moreover, while liberals emphasize the role of individuals, conservatives are more concerned with the communitarian aspects of our identities.⁷⁰

What heuristic value, if any, has such a left-right classification of political attitudes in the case of Serbia's political experiences in the 1990s? The political spectrum in post-communist states has crystallized around issues posed by the collapse of communism: communism vs. anti-communism, neo-liberalism vs. social reform policies, state vs. market, and nationalism vs. cosmopolitanism.⁷¹ Depending on their attitudes towards these polarized options, parties in former communist states can be divided into the post-communist left, center and right. For the right, "the Promised Land" is in the past – the pre-communist period of authoritarian rule, which they somehow depict as the golden years of democracy. The post-communist left emphasizes its role as the protector of working class against the newly discovered vices of neo-liberalism. Finally, parties of the political center favor liberal and democratic phraseology in their discourse. While they preach the need for radical economic and political reforms, they also try to present themselves as protectors of those hardest hit by transition policies.

Post-communist parties generally followed the patterns established in the consolidated democracies. In the case of Serbia, the left-right spectrum comprises six major parties. Slobodan Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and its "twin sister" party headed by President's wife Mirjana Marković, the Yugoslav United Left (YUL), are

⁷⁰ On the left-right spectrum, see Leon P. Baradat, *Political Ideologies, Sixth Edition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 12-43.

the parties of the left. Vojislav Šešelj's Serbian Radical Party (SRP) is on the far right. Vuk Drašković's Serbian Renewal Movement (SRM) is somewhere between the center and the far right. Finally, Zoran Đinđić's Democratic Party (DP) shares Serbia's political center with Vojislav Koštunica's Democratic Party of Serbia (DPS), Đinđić's party being more liberal, and Koštunica's more conservative.⁷²

Such a classification seems to be supported by analysis of party programs. The Socialist Party defines itself as the party of the "modern left," primarily concerned with the interests of all working people in Serbia. Its role is to protect workers' interests in times of economic crisis and social uncertainty. At the same time, it calls for a more equitable society based on the values of various indirect, but even more, direct forms of democracy, social justice and positive freedoms. The party does not deny the role of private property and a free market economy in a modern society; still, its program is primarily directed towards justifying a very active role for the state and social property in order to protect workers' interests.⁷³

Parties of the right emphasize "old" democratic traditions of the Serbian people. These are programmatic visions full of historic reminiscences of the glorious and heroic

⁷¹ See Mira Bogdanović, "Levica u Evropi: smisao i perspektive s osvrtom na Srbiju," *NSPM* 1 (Beograd, 1998): 13-14.

⁷² Of course, depending of the criteria used, different parties might be assigned to the left or the right. For example, Aleksandar Molnar emphasizes party attitudes towards the past as the crucial criterion for Serbia, that is the extent to which Serbian parties would like to return to the "good old days of communism." From such a perspective, the YUL and the Socialist party emerge as the parties of the right, for they want to restore many elements of the previously existing communist system (the role of the state, direct forms of democracy, so-called social property, etc.). See "Istorija pojmova i srpski slučaj," *NSPM*, No. 1 (1998): 73-78.

⁷³ See *Osnove programa SPS* (1992).

past of the Serbian nation and the state. Their main political aim is the creation of a strong state as the only “guarantor of democratic Serbia” (SRM), or of a Greater Serbia incorporating parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia (SRP). Despite their openly nationalist phraseology, both parties simultaneously espouse the principles of liberal democracy and a free market economy.⁷⁴

Parties of the center use the contemporary political discourse of human equality and rights to present their view of democratic and modern Serbia; a view based on the principles of a free market economy, private property, social protection and parliamentary institutions. The solutions to questions of national minority rights in Serbia are seen in the full democratization of society and the application of the “highest international standards” (a much-beloved phrase in Serbian party programs) in protecting the rights and freedoms of Serbian national minorities.⁷⁵

This analysis of party political programs supports a fairly straightforward positioning of the parties along the left-right continuum. However, such a differentiation of the Serbian parties is of rather dubious heuristic value. Slobodan Samardžić maintains that terms such as “the left” and “the right” are devoid of meaning within a Serbian context. They work at the level of simulacra, as surrogates, and their only purpose is to legitimize a so-called multiparty system that can be best described as “the system of cynical

⁷⁴ See *Program SPO* (1994); and *Program SRS* (1997).

⁷⁵ See *Politički program DS* (1990); and *Politički program DSS* (1992).

pluralism.”⁷⁶ In similar vein, Vladimir Goati, a leading Serbian political analyst, argues that Serbia’s multiparty system represents a classic case of a system of “polarized pluralism,” and that the SPS’s intolerance of the opposition parties had “profound negative effects on political life” in the country. Not being a part of the constitution making processes in 1990 and 1992, the opposition parties never fully accepted the constitutional order then established. Instead, a situation of a “deep cleavage between the government and the opposition” had been created. The situation was further complicated by the existence of “extreme animosities” not only between the opposition and the ruling Socialists, but also among the opposition parties.⁷⁷

Hence, the Serbian polarized multiparty system, as Goati asserts, is defined by the existence of three political blocks: the regime parties (SPS, YUL), a cooperative (loyal) opposition (the Radical Party throughout most of the 1990s and some other smaller parties such as New Democracy) and a non-cooperative, fractured anti-systemic opposition (DP, DPS, SRM – the last one only till 1997, when it turned into a loyal party, etc.). There is also a fourth block that consists of the Kosovar Albanian parties. These are openly secessionist parties, for they do not recognize the Serbian state and they have never co-operated with any other party from Serbia.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Slobodan Samardžić, “Levica i desnica kao politički surogati,” *NSPM* Vol 5.1 (Beograd, 1998): 82-83.

⁷⁷ Vladimir Goati, “Introduction,” in *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments*, 27.

⁷⁸ The question of Serbia’s policies vis-à-vis its own national minorities will be explored in the following chapter. Here it suffices to say that Albanian parties never considered themselves a part of the Serbian political system and the state. Paradoxically, such an openly secessionist stand has been fully supported by the major Serbian opposition parties that have tried to engage in dialogue with the leading Kosova Albanian representatives only when “pressed” by the international community (the USA). In that regard,

At the heart of this system of “cynical pluralism” is an “illogical” coalition between disparate allies, the radical left Socialists and the extreme right Radicals. This **left-right (red-black) coalition** advocates the status quo and it has against itself a **fractured opposition** representing a rather weak political center. To understand why and how it was possible and almost inevitable for the radical left to unite with the extreme right, we have first to understand that Serbian national unification has had an overriding priority on Serbia’s list of post-communist challenges. The issues of economic reform, political transformation and democracy, even though extremely important at the level of rhetoric in the process of mimicking transformation policies, have to date not had a decisive influence on the Serbian political agenda or the electorate. The unifying thread that runs through all Serbia’s major parties is the question of nationalism, and specifically the question of the state’s territorial boundaries.⁷⁹

Here it will be useful to take a closer look at the major Serbian parties’ national policies. For the same ambiguity which the Serbian Constitution displays in its

the situation is different with the Vojvodinian Hungarians and Bosniaks from Raška (Sandžak). The representatives of these communities do recognize Serbia, but want their cultural rights to be recognized and better protected.

⁷⁹ These developments in Serbia support Claus Offe’s hypothesis that the consolidation of post-socialist plural societies is accomplished only when the main political actors in the system stop appealing to “sacred causes” or “higher reasons.” Until this stage is reached, cultural cleavages (based upon ethnicity, language and/or religion) and political conflicts over the character of the political system (democratic vs. authoritarian rule) will prevail over socio-economic cleavages. Moreover, “the legacy of strong ideological conflict [political loyalties to the “old” regime vs. the support for the democratic reforms], as well as the presence of the strong ethnic and nationalist commitments and hostilities, renders it particularly difficult to agree on rules that become, once adopted, effectively binding to all, or to institute well-protected and demarcated spheres of autonomous action within civil society.” From this perspective, Serbia can hardly be described as a society in transition. See Jon Elster, Claus Offe, Ulrich K. Preuss, “Consolidation and Cleavages of Ideology and Identity,” *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies*, 250, 252.

simultaneous adoption of democratic and ethnic principles is also at the root of the Serbian opposition's failure to take a principled stand against Milošević's political regime. It is no coincidence that the Socialist party program repeats the constitutional solutions to the national minority question in Serbia. On one side, it professes to be a party of all citizens of Serbia, no matter their national or religious identity. On the other, however, national minorities are granted all internationally recognized cultural rights, but not the right to political autonomy. Given the almost absolute predominance of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, it is hard to imagine that any Albanian would have an interest in supporting a party that denies the Albanian minority the right to political and territorial autonomy.

Moreover, the Socialist program advocates a centralized Serbia, a concept that is hardly suitable for the regions in which an overwhelming majority of the Serbian national minorities live – Vojvodina, Kosovo and Metohija and Sandžak. In other words, the Socialist program denies the fundamental reality of Serbia's ethnic and cultural diversity. But at the same time, the Socialist party's official stand is that the international community (that is, the USA) has disregarded principles of international law in denying Serbs living outside Serbia the right to unite with the "motherland."⁸⁰ Hence, the idea of all Serbs living in one (extended) Serbian state – the idea many believe to be the principal cause of Yugoslavia's disintegration – although not explicitly mentioned in the program, is still part and parcel of the normative Socialist agenda.

⁸⁰ *Osnove programa SPS*, 26, 79, 84.

If the Socialists are discreet about their greater Serbianism, this cannot be said for Serbian Radicals. Not only is their official newspaper called *Greater Serbia*, but their program openly calls for the unification of the Serbian lands in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with Montenegro and Serbia. This enlarged Serbia would have a unicameral parliament and be much more centralized than at present. Macedonians are free to join; in which case the new state would be organized as a federation of two republics of ethnically very close peoples. Otherwise, Greater Serbia would be organized according to the classical democratic principle of “one person-one vote,” which in a multination Serbia is a recipe for fomenting animosities between the Serbs and Serbia’s numerous national minorities.

Not surprisingly, the program of the Serbian Radicals (adopted in 1994) does not contain any reference to special rights for national minorities. Still, the program insists that national minorities will be granted all the internationally recognized rights to language, culture and education. Even so, it strikes an ominous note when its authors recall that in the communist Yugoslavia it was the minorities that were privileged, not the Serbs. They also leave it up to the private initiative of national minorities to finance their schools, universities and information agencies independently of the state. Thus, under the guise of the principle of state neutrality, the program essentially promotes an assimilationist policy.⁸¹

⁸¹ *Program SRS*, 2, 6, 21. In fact, Article 13 of the program calls for open hatred against Albanians, for it calls for laying off the Kosovar Albanians who do not have a full citizenship status in Yugoslavia, taking

From the normative perspective, the regime's fragile legitimacy is based on the ideology of ethnic nationalism (monoethnicity), supported by both the Constitution and the Serbian socialist and radical party programs. In these circumstances, it would appear politically prudent for the opposition parties to counter the left-right governmental coalition by pinpointing the failures of the "red-black" coalition's openly nationalist policies. But despite the catastrophic results of Milošević's and Šešelj's extreme nationalist positions, opposition leaders have never seriously challenged them, nor paused to consider their own responsibility in sparking Serbian nationalism. Quite the contrary, they have often tried to outbid Milošević and Šešelj at their own nationalist game. Thus despite the liberal and democratic rhetoric of the Serbian democrats' party programs, their simultaneous unabashed support of an ethnic Serbian political community made them indistinguishable in one very important respect from the programs of their principal opponents.

The program of the Serbian Renewal Movement, a leading opposition party in the 1990s, is certainly paradigmatic in this regard. Serbia is imagined as a strong, democratic state that can act as a guarantor of the Serbian people, no matter where they live. Moreover, the programmatic ideal of the party is democratization and a peaceful integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Vardar Macedonia into one country. However, while the Christian Orthodox population in Macedonia is recognized as a separate national group (Macedonians), the Bosnian Moslems (Bosniaks) are seen as people of the same "national fountain" as the Serbs. A further problem arises

away passports from those Albanians who have been engaged in separatist activities abroad, supporting a

from the party's explicit identification of the Serbian people with the Christian Orthodox religion of St. Sava, a historical figure perceived by the Church as the spiritual father of the Serbian nation. This makes it hard to envisage that anyone of a different ethnic origin, who would normally not share St. Sava religious tradition, joining the party. Thus the SRM, like the other major parties, fully supports an ethnic concept of a Serbian state, where national minorities with their different cultures, languages and traditions can hardly be accepted on equal terms with the Serbs. Moreover, while its program emphasizes the need for national reconciliation among the Serbs, there is no mention of the need for reconciliation between the Serbs and other ethnic groups living in and outside of Serbia.⁸²

A similar ethnic understanding of Serbia pervades the program of the leading liberal party in the country – the Democratic Party. This program is written in a clear and modern language and it sees the solution for the crisis in Serbia in simultaneous processes of decentralization, regionalization and democratization. Yet, when it addresses the national question in Serbia, the program suddenly resembles that of the Serbian Socialists and Radicals. The emphasis is placed on the right of the Serbian nation to self-determination and unification – yet another way of advocating that all Serbs should live in one (enlarged) state. The program also recognizes that current international conditions might work against the Serbian unification. So until the international situation changes, the program explicitly envisions political and cultural policies directed towards protecting all Serbs living outside the Serbian motherland.

program of mass Serbian colonization of Kosovo, etc.

In accordance with its name, the Democratic Party program grants national minorities full rights to their language and culture. However, minority rights are closely tied to the concept of individual rights, while the party openly denies territorial rights to minorities.⁸³ To put it differently, the party defends a classic liberal stand that the question of minority protection is not a territorial question. Instead, it should be treated as the question of fully extending the political principle of equality to all members of Serbian society, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, language, etc. But, this means that Serbian democrats reduced the question of the territorial status of Kosovo and Metohija to the question of the Serbian state's internal organization. It would seem that Kosovar Albanians would not have any say in the province's status, and that somehow they would be ready to accept this in exchange for a full political equality in the country. A suggestion that seems highly dubious, even in the context of a fully democratized Serbia, let alone a post-socialist one. Hence, in a somewhat paradoxical fashion, the program of the Democratic Party in the country seems to be practically identical to that of Milošević's Socialists and Šešelj's Radicals. Thus, it can be better understood as a part of the problem, rather than a solution to Serbia's national drama.

Why have major opposition leaders accepted and even nurtured an ethnic understanding of democracy? At an abstract level of analysis, Laslo Vogel provides a plausible explanation for the opposition's choice of a majoritarian (one person-one vote)

⁸² *Program SPO*, 4, 7, 8.

model of democracy based on a centralized, homogenous Serbian nation-state. In his view, most Serbian liberals are former Marxists who have never emancipated themselves from the ideas they imbibed in their youth about the primacy of collectivist aspects of our identities over individual ones. Ultimately, their rejection of Marxist formulae after 1989 only led them to abandon one form of collectivist consciousness based on class for another based on ethnicity. Accordingly, despite Serbia's multiethnic and multicultural diversity, the "new-born" Serbian liberals have leapt back into the Serbian past to embrace those elements of the nineteenth-century political tradition that were in favor of a homogenous, centrally organized nation-state.⁸⁴

By exalting centralism over any other element of their supposedly democratic programs, the **Serbian liberals have rejected the right to otherness**, despite the abstract universalist and supposedly civil values they rediscovered in nineteenth-century model of government. Or, in Vogel's words:

In that respect, new-born liberals (who in most cases happen to be former neo-Marxists) and those in power utilize a surprisingly identical language: both claim that at the heart of their concern is the citizen, regardless of ethnic identity. So, while the regime continues to oppress political and national minorities in the country, marginalized liberal groups, in the name of a critique of "ethnocentrism," advocate a politics of monolingualism in the multination community. This has given birth to a peculiar *Centaur-like liberal citizen* [in contemporary Serbia] who

⁸³ *Politički program DS*, 8, 10. In 1997, however, the Democrats softened their stand on the national question. Since then, their primary concern has been the democratization of Serbia and the protection of cultural and political rights of the Serbian national minorities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁸⁴ Laslo Vogel, "Šezdeset osma – hronika," *NSPM* Vol 5.1 (Beograd, 1998): 33. Vogel's analysis is completely in accord with the elaboration of liberal nationalism, as presented in Chapter One, the section on liberal nationalism. Also, see Chapter Two of the dissertation for a more elaborate analysis of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century programs of Serbian unification.

believes that everybody in society should speak only one language (italics by D.G.).⁸⁵

Moreover, continues Vogel, stressing abstract individual rights and freedoms without also trying to limit the privileges of the majority groups in society can only be equated with the politics of oppression of minorities. This lesson seems constantly to escape the Serbian liberal opposition. In their struggle against the regime, they keep finding themselves entrapped in a paradox they themselves helped to create. On one side, they keep criticizing the political regime, but on the other, they never try to challenge the **centralist foundations** of Milošević's rule, for the very reason that this centralism is also at the root of their own programs. Accordingly, the Serbian liberal opposition ends up in mistaking the disease for the cure. Vogel's conclusion is that, **within the context of Serbian ethnic diversity, those in favor of centralism** (and, one might add, the unification of all Serbs in one state) **cannot be identified as genuine liberals**. In the final analysis, the "centralist opposition" has simply enriched, rather than challenged, the theoretical foundations of autocratic rule in Serbia.⁸⁶

At a more empirical level, however, the tragedy of the Serbian opposition is closely tied to an unfortunate chronology of events in the late 1980s. More specifically, this refers to the full-blown success of the first stage of the "anti-bureaucratic revolution" that allowed

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 37-42. Vogel is fully aware of the broader Eastern and Central European context of the Serbian example, and his conclusions can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to other proponents of so-called "centralized liberalism" throughout the region. On the historical roots of this "centralized liberalism", see a classic study by a great Hungarian political scientist, Istvan Bibó "The Distress of the East European Small States," *Democracy, Revolution, Self-Determination*, ed. Karoly Nagy (East European Monographs, No. CCCXVII) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 13-89.

Milošević to emerge as the undisputed leader of the Serbian “nation” two years before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In the purgatory of the “anti-bureaucratic revolution,” the old Serbian communist party managed to emerge completely unscathed from the events that toppled other communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe. In the process of the revolutionary events in Eastern Europe, the rejuvenated Serbian communists-turned socialists successfully traded their old communist slogans for the rhetoric of nationalism and social justice. Nevertheless, at the same time, as Latinka Perović observes, they kept intact a “complete ruling structure: party, state, police, media, and judiciary.” What emerged was a “symbiosis of Stalinist socialism with Serbianism [the ideology of a Greater Serbia].”⁸⁷

Another astute observer of the Serbian politics, Dubravka Stojanović, makes a similar point when arguing that in the early 1990s Serbia’s post-communist socialists came into the unique position of being both the government in control of Serbia’s affairs and the “national opposition” to the communist parties of other former Yugoslav republics.⁸⁸ Thus, playing the trump card of nationalism and assuming the role of a great protector of the Serbian people outside Serbia, Milošević successfully implemented *Memorandum’s* main ideas, leaving his main political opponents without a competing program.

Viewed in this perspective, the socialist victory in the first multiparty elections in Serbia in December 1990 came as a surprise only for members of opposition parties who

⁸⁷ Latinka Perović, “Jugoslavija se podelila i pre formalnog raspada,” in *Radikalizacija društva u Srbiji* (Beograd: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava, 1997), 103.

had expected a snowball effect in Serbia from the collapse of former communist regimes in the rest of Eastern Europe. Instead, thanks to the genuine public support at the time for Milošević's policies of unifying the Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina with Serbia, and a carefully designed electoral law, the Socialists managed to win 48% of the total votes cast, entitling them to 77.6% of seats in Parliament. A leading opposition party, the SRM, gained only 7.6% of the seats in Parliament with 15.8% of the total vote. Thus was the first "democratic" Serbian parliament dominated by 194 Socialists, against 56 from all the other parties who between them had won 52% of the vote (see Table 6).⁸⁹

Given the huge discrepancy between parties' shares of the vote and the number of seats won in the parliament, opposition parties headed by Drašković's SRM demanded radical changes in electoral procedures and removal of state control over the media. The peak of their discontent was reached at huge mass rallies in Belgrade (March 9, 1991) that forced Milošević for the first time (but not the last) to send military and police troops against the protestors. This was a clear sign that the era of the "happening of the people" was over and that the newly legitimized elected government would not allow such "unruly" behavior.

At the time, however, Serbia was still part of the former Yugoslavia. In an extremely tense situation in the country, and facing the first crisis of his rule in Serbia, Milošević opted to strengthen his position vis-à-vis his Yugoslav counterparts and the

⁸⁸ Dubravka Stojanović, "Traumatični krug srpske opozicije," *Srpska strana rata*, ed. Nebojša Popov (Beograd: Republika, 1996), 502.

⁸⁹ For a detailed presentation of Serbian election results in the 1990s, see Appendix 2.

Serbian opposition by adopting a war-mongering approach. At a series of meetings at the federal level about the future of the former Yugoslavia in March and April of 1991, Milošević took an “uncompromising” stand: the rest of Yugoslavia could either accept the Serbian proposal for a “strong, centralized federation,” or there would be no Yugoslavia. In the latter case, however, newly independent states would have to be carved out according to the ethnic principle (which implied that parts of Bosnia and Croatia would have to be integrated into Serbia).

Not surprisingly, such an inflexible stand was matched by an equally obstinate response from the representatives of other republics that defended the principle of the confederalization of Yugoslavia within existing republican borders.⁹⁰ This period is also remembered for the first armed clashes between the ethnic Serbs and the Croatian police, which effectively ended the process of homogenization of the political scene in the former Yugoslavia along ethnic lines. Under such conditions, the Serbian opposition shifted its own rhetoric from criticizing the non-democratic character of the Serbian government towards defending Serbian national interests. This only helped Milošević regain his position as the undisputed leader of the Serbian people, which had been shaken by the March demonstrations in Belgrade.

In early 1992, the international community had already recognized Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as independent states within their former republican

⁹⁰ On various republican approaches towards the Yugoslav crisis, see Aleksandar Molnar’s excellent book *Osnovna prava čoveka i raspad Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Visio Mundi, 1994); and Dejan Guzina, “The Self-

borders. Under such conditions, Serbia and Montenegro opted for the creation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as the only “legitimate” heir to the former Yugoslavia. The main opposition parties in Serbia and Montenegro were never given a chance to participate in the “public” constitutional talks on the identity and institutional set-up of a third Yugoslavia. Hence, they boycotted the first federal elections in May 31, 1992. According to official figures, more than 43% of Serbian and Montenegrin citizens abstained, while 10% of the ballot papers were invalid. Nevertheless, in Serbia, Milošević’s Socialist party won the elections with the 43% of the votes cast, followed by the ultra-nationalist party of Vojislav Šešelj, which gained 30% of the vote.⁹¹

Under pressure from a dissatisfied opposition and facing increasing international isolation, the regime could hardly claim much of a mandate. After all, less than half the electorate had cast a valid vote, and of these, more than half were cast against the government. Milošević found an ingenious way out of this new crisis by appointing, on June 15, 1992, a founding father of contemporary Serbian nationalism, Dobrica Ćosić, as the first president of the new Yugoslavia. He also installed Milan Panić, an American businessman of Serbian origin, as federal Prime Minister. Unexpectedly however, Panić, “spoiled” by his American upbringing, started openly advocating pro-democratic policies: working with the international community to stop civil wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Destruction of Yugoslavia,” *The Canadian Review for the Study of Nationalities* (Winter, 2000): forthcoming.

⁹¹ See Vladimir Goati, *Stabilizacija demokratije ili povratak monizmu*, 81-82. It is important to note that the subsequent federal elections in the new Yugoslavia essentially repeated the republican elections, largely because, apart from Šešelj’s Radicals, no federal party had a significant presence throughout Serbia and Montenegro.

and Croatia; creating a multiethnic society in Yugoslavia; democratic transition; and freedom of the media. The federal government also promised new federal elections to be held simultaneously with the republican ones in December 1992.⁹²

Both elections once again proved disappointing for parties of the democratic block, this time united in the Democratic Movement of Serbia (DEPOS), headed by the SRM. The real winners were the Socialists and the Serbian radical nationalists. Together they won 51.4% of the vote at the republican elections, which translated into 70% of parliamentary seats. DEPOS and the Democratic party (which was not officially part of DEPOS), only managed jointly to attract slightly more than 20% of vote, giving them only 23% of parliamentary seats (see Appendix 2, Table 7). The proportions were very similar in the federal elections. Thus, instead of democratizing the state, the 1992 elections helped the Socialists legitimize their regime.

Since on this occasion the Socialists did not have an absolute majority in the Republican parliament on their own, they entered into a tacit coalition with the Radicals. At the federal level, the first victim of this coalition was Prime Minister Panić. His pro-democratic government was toppled at the initiative of the Radical members of the Federal Parliament on December 29, 1992. On March 31, 1993 Dobrica Ćosić was also forced to resign. By his support for Panić's openly democratic policies, he had proved to be too soft

⁹² See Srećko Mihailović, "Političke stranke u izborima za republički parlament," *Partijski mozaik Srbije*, 51-52.

– in fact, an armchair nationalist, whom Milošević could no longer support. The initiative for his replacement again came from the Radicals, but the Socialists orchestrated it.⁹³

Analysis of opposition initiatives over this period reveals additional reasons for its defeat at the 1992 elections, reasons still present on the Serbian political scene. When war began in Bosnia and Herzegovina on April 7, 1992, the opposition parties were forced to take a clear stand on the broadening of the war in the former Yugoslavia. An intriguing metamorphosis occurred in the SRM. Vuk Drašković, previously portrayed by the state-controlled media as the principal extreme nationalist in the country, turned out not to be such a radical nationalist after all. Instead, he became one of the rare Serbian politicians publicly to denounce the horrors of the war in Croatia, particularly the razing of Vukovar. In addition, from the very first day of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he publicly called for an international peace initiative. This forced the regime-controlled media to rework his previous image of a “dangerous extremist” towards a new one of “national traitor.”

However, the real problem with Drašković’s peace policies was his reluctance to give up those elements of SRM’s program that supported the creation of Serbia within its ethnic borders. Thus, however much he has opposed the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, he has remained faithful to the ideal of a Greater Serbia that was the prime cause of the war in the first place. As Dubravka Stojanović aptly observes, despite its

⁹³ Montenegrin representatives were not happy with these developments, and their refusal to support them can be seen as the first sign of the split between Serbian and Montenegrin socialists about the character of the third Yugoslavia.

public critique of the war, the SRM did not have strength to give up its own program and become the first truly modern political party of Serbian citizens. Instead, it remained trapped within its own nationalist image; no matter how anti-war its policies have been, Drašković has never fully renounced its nationalist image as the defender of Serbianism.⁹⁴

On the other side, the situation with DP was radically different, for it found it much harder to adjust to the increasingly volatile situation in the early 1990s. The confusion among leading party members was related to their inability openly to criticize not only the violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia but also the regime's politics of uniting all Serbs in one state. In fact, the central problem over which party members could not find the same language was the question as to what comes first – transition to democracy or defending Serbian national interests? Eventually, on several occasions, depending on the priority they gave to these two issues, dissatisfied party members would leave the party and create a new one, usually to the right of the political center, which had an even smaller influence on the Serbian public than their original party.

During the first republican elections in December 1990, the party still campaigned for the democratization of the country, following their party slogan that “the national question in Serbia is first and foremost a democratic question.” However, if the SRM was

⁹⁴ Stojanović, 528-529. Also, see Ognjen Pribičević, *Vlast i opozicija u Srbiji* (Beograd: Radio B92, 1997), 42-45. The best example of Drašković's confusing stand over the question of democratization is the organization of the so-called democratic gathering on June 28, 1992. The gathering was organized by DEPOS, in which Drašković was the most influential figure. At the gathering, the opposition leaders demanded the organization of new elections in Serbia and free access to the state-controlled media. Despite their call for democracy, they seem not to notice that date chosen for the gathering was the St. Vitus' Day, the most sacred holiday in the Serbian religious calendar – the date of the Kosovo battle. This

criticized by the regime as openly extremist and nationalist, then the Democrats became a target for their supposed lack of patriotism. With the heightened national feelings in the country they did not do well in the first elections, which forced them to accept the dominant mantra of Serbian political discourse that all Serbs should live in one state.⁹⁵ Still, not all members of the party were satisfied with the speed of the turn to the right.

First, in September 1990, a group of party founders led by well-known Serbian intellectuals Nikola Milošević and Kosta Čavoški formed the Serbian Liberal party (SLP), which however, never managed to secure a significant place on the Serbian political scene. Also, the party was liberal in name only, for its program was a cross between the SRM and that of Šešelj's Radicals. After the opposition demonstrations of March 1991, there came another split in the party between those who advocated a strategy of short-term agreements with the regime and those who opposed this. The latter wing was led by Vojislav Koštunica who decided to leave the party and create the Democratic Party of Serbia (DPS). Over time, this party also took a more nationalist stand. Finally, at the beginning of 1994, a new split occurred in the DP between the then party president Dragoljub Mićunović, and Zoran Đinđić, who wished to broaden nationalist identity of the party, but without succumbing to the politics of open nationalism. In the end, Đinđić's faction won,

symbolism was hardly likely to inspire members of the numerous Serbian national minorities to support DEPOS's program of democratization.

⁹⁵ Vladimir Goati, *Stabilizacija demokratije ili povratak monizmu*, 68.

whereupon Mićunović left the party to create the leftist Democratic Center (DC), which so far has had little impact on the Serbian political scene.⁹⁶

The general trend has been for the Democrats to broaden their party base at the expense of tarnishing their democratic image. Analyzing the moves and the counter-moves of the party in the 1990s, Laslo Sekelj has pointed out that this seemingly modern, democratic party constantly oscillated between modernism and nationalism, market oriented reforms and social demagogy, centralism and decentralism, peace and support for the radical nationalist leadership in Bosnia, and finally, support of international peace initiatives and rejection of them.⁹⁷ In other words, the democratic principles spelled out in their program have always been put on hold in the name of attracting the vote or sympathy of the average nationally-minded Serbian citizen.

The activities of the major Serbian opposition parties in the early 1990s help explain the confusion of the Serbian political scene in the mid-1990s. This confusion was triggered when the ruling Socialists shifted towards embracing international initiatives to end the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As early as 1993, Milošević's regime showed signs of being ready to negotiate its original stand on ethnic borders as demarcation lines of new nation-states on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Milošević then slowly started to emerge as the "broker" of any peace settlement for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia: first, by his conditional support for the Vance-Owen plan in early 1993, then by

⁹⁶ A thorough history of the Serbian parties can be found in Dijana Vukmanović, "Nastanak političkih partija," *Partijski mozaik Srbije 1990-1996* (Beograd: Beogradski klub, 1997), 27-48; and Ognjen Pribićević, *Vlast i opozicija u Srbiji*, 11-70 and 111-131.

supporting the Owen-Stoltenberg proposal in mid-1993, and finally by signing up to the Dayton peace plan in November 1995.⁹⁸

The change of heart in Serbia, that is, the regime's acceptance that all Serbs could not be united in one state, is the direct result of the catastrophic economic and social situation in the country. In January 1994, annual inflation in Serbia reached the astronomical figure of almost five hundred billion percent, while its gross social product had shrunk by two thirds compared to 1989. The average monthly wage was just above 10 German marks.⁹⁹ In this situation of complete economic collapse that could easily have led to political chaos, Milošević had no choice but to start bending to international pressure. At the same time, however, he skillfully played up the socialist elements of his program, promising that no one would lose job because of hyperinflation.

In reaction to these new policies, Šešelj broke his tacit alliance with the Socialists. Since the Socialists did not command a majority on their own in the Republican parliament, Milošević then dissolved it and announced early republican elections for December 1993. In the campaign, all opposition parties except DEPOS advocated openly nationalist

⁹⁷ Laslo Sekelj, "Partije i izbori: promene bez demokratske transformacije," in *Lavirinti krize*, 156.

⁹⁸ On the complicated diplomatic negotiations in regards to each of these peace proposals, see Steven L. Burg & Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 189-388. In short, each of these proposals can be interpreted as a stepping stone towards the carving up of Bosnia and Herzegovina into three loosely united ethnic regions. Inasmuch as Dayton agreement has brought peace to the region, it also represents a compromise between republican and ethnic points of departure for organizing new states on the ashes of the former Yugoslavia. After the four long years of war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, peace was sealed with the Erdut Agreement between Croatia and the Croatian Serbs on November 12, 1995 and Paris Peace Agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on December 14, 1995 (prepared by the Dayton peace agreement of November 21, 1995).

policies. Instead of denouncing the regime's war policies, the other main parties (DP, DPS, SRP) concentrated on whether the Socialists knew how to wage war. They thus posed no threat to the Socialists. On the contrary, the state-controlled media were able to dismiss their programs as "war-mongering", while the Socialists were presented as supporting peace and protecting those hurt most by the transition process (pensioners, unqualified and semi-qualified workers, housewives, etc.). Once again, the Socialists emerged as the winners, gaining 36.7% of votes, which gave them 49.2% of seats in the Parliament. They immediately entered a coalition with the small, previously opposition party, the New Democrats, so as to retain their majority in the Serbian Parliament (see Table 8).

Hence, in a paradoxical fashion, the end of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia did not bring hard times to the Socialists. Quite the contrary, it turned out to be the opposition that did not know how to respond to the post-Dayton era in Serbia. After a year of confusion, the Serbian democrats finally returned to the question of democratization of the country. On the eve of the federal and local elections in November 1996, the DP, DPS, SRM and a smaller urban party, the Civic Alliance of Serbia (CAS), founded a new opposition coalition *Zajedno* (Together). Their new platform was not dissimilar to that of 1990, that is, that democratization was the only answer to Milošević's policies of neo-communism and ethnic nationalism. Given their previous record of mutual accusations and constantly shifting policies, it is no surprise that they lost to the so-called *United Left* (SPS, YUL, ND), which won 42% of the vote and 64 out of the 108 seats in the Civic Chamber

⁹⁹ Sekelj, 159. Also, see Mihail Arandarenko, "Ekonomska stvarnost Srbije devedesetih" (Beograd,

of the Federal Parliament. Still, with 22% of the vote and 22 seats, they at least beat the Serbian Radicals (18% of the vote and 16 of the seats).¹⁰⁰

However, the real surprise came in the local elections where *Zajedno* managed to win in 41 of the 189 municipalities in Serbia, including Belgrade and six other large Serbian cities. Milošević accepted the results at first, only to retroactively annul them in the largest cities (Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac, etc.). The so-called third round of the local election was scheduled for November 17, 1996. Instead, *Zajedno* organized protests throughout Belgrade and other large cities that eventually turned into massive street rallies, sometimes attracting over 200,000 participants in Belgrade.¹⁰¹

The civic and student protests lasted until February 11, 1997, when the political regime was finally forced to accept the results of the local elections, covering this by passing a *Lex Specialis* through the Serbian Parliament which accepted the preliminary results of the 1996 local elections as final. This proclamation was ironic in that part of the justification for it was supposed to be the report of an OSCE mission (headed by Felipe Gonzales), which had investigated the local election results at the request of the Socialist government. The real reason for finally accepting the election results was that the months

photocopy, 1999): 1-15.

¹⁰⁰ As with previous elections, the electorate law was tailored to the needs of the Socialists. This time the number of electorates was increased from nine to twenty-seven, but without improving fairness. On average, the Socialists won their seats with 29,000 votes, while *Zajedno* needed 44,000. In the elections for Vojvodinian parliament, the Socialists won an astonishing absolute majority of seats (67% of the seats) with only 23% of votes. See Pribičević, *Vlast i opozicija u Srbiji*, 123.

¹⁰¹ For a complete chronology of the civic and student protests in Serbian cities, see *Lex, pištaljke i laži* (Beograd: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava, mart 1997). Milošević reasons for not accepting the results of the local elections were mainly symbolic, since local autonomy in Serbia had already been curtailed by

of mass rallies on the streets of Serbia had shown that the regime had to deal not just with *Zajedno* but with an increasingly broad civil movement.¹⁰²

In other words, what started as protest against electoral fraud eventually turned into a mass call for radical changes in society. The recognition of the election results was certainly the most important initial demand, but it was increasingly followed by calls for radical changes in Serbia, including Milošević's resignation, freedom of the media and democratization of the country.¹⁰³ The regime could have responded by violently crushing the demonstrations as it had in March 1991. This time, however, the protests were throughout Serbia, so the regime decided to back off.

In retrospect, although the 1996/97 protests represent the democratic opposition's only victory so far against the regime, it also underlined that opposition's continuing inability to surpass the deep social, educational and cultural divisions in Serbia by reaching beyond the cities out to the Serbian countryside. The protest was confined to students and the urban middle class, whose educational level was far above the country's average. Of those taking part, just 3% had only elementary education, while in the country at large,

the regime in the early 1990s. The electoral results did not in any way represent a threat to the Socialists and their strong hold over society.

¹⁰² See Goati, "Introduction," *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments*, 30-31.

¹⁰³ See Ajmo, *ajde svi u šetnju, građanski i studentski protest 1996/97* (Beograd: Medija Centar, 1997), 34-36. Also, for a well-researched and informative account on ups and downs of Serbian politics during mass rallies, see Robert Thomas, *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

almost 60% have only elementary education. Only 6% of the demonstrators were workers, while 80% lived in the city centers (half of these had a higher education).¹⁰⁴

Thus the protests showed how in a country with only a small middle class, a party with a program attractive to semi-educated workers and peasants can count on success. This has been the secret of the Serbian Socialists' success, in contrast to opposition parties, including Drašković's populist SRM. Moreover, the *Zajedno* coalition has been unable to enjoy the fruits of its own success. Due to internal wrangling over leadership and an inability to agree on a joint platform for the subsequent republican election, the coalition collapsed almost immediately after *Lex Specialis* had recognized the election results, leaving the opposition in disarray. How was this possible?

The first signs of strain in the coalition came with the announcement that Milošević might become the new Yugoslav president, since the Serbian Constitution barred him from serving a third mandate as president of Serbia. This put the spotlight on the election for a new Serbian president. According to an internal agreement between the main opposition parties, the coalition candidate was supposed to be Vuk Drašković. But for some time the coalition had been pressing the regime to accept three additional conditions for the upcoming republican parliamentary election which had been recommended in the OSCE mission's report: a more equitable and proportional electorate system, free access to the media and international supervision. The opposition leaders had agreed that *Zajedno* would only contest the election if these three criteria were met.

¹⁰⁴ See *Ajmo, ajde svi u šetnju*, 163-164.

This had not been the case, which implied that *Zajedno* would boycott the elections. Drašković, however, decided to run for President of Serbia, which gave an aura of legitimacy to the 1997 elections, even though they were boycotted by other opposition parties (DP, DPS, Citizen Alliance of Serbia, etc.).¹⁰⁵ Drašković failed to attract enough votes to be a serious threat to the socialist candidate, or even to beat Šešelj. Similarly, both the Socialists and the Radicals defeated his party, which won only 19% of the total vote. Šešelj's Radicals received 29% of the votes, while the Socialists once more emerged the winners with the 34% (see Table 9). After months of parliamentary paralysis, a "new" coalition government emerged on March 24, 1998. Once again it was a coalition between the radical left and the extreme right, between Milošević and Šešelj. Hence, the Socialists once more entered coalition with the Radicals to retain full, formal control over Parliament.

As in 1992, the new coalition radicalized society, for it again whipped up a nationalist frenzy in society as a substitute for policy. Moreover, in 1998 the opposition proved too weak to counter the many governmental actions that further curtailed the already limited freedom of the media and the University.¹⁰⁶ These actions could be seen as the revenge of the other Serbia – the Serbia that did not participate in the student and civil protests of the previous year. Finally, 1998 marked the end of any pretext of legality about Milošević's regime, since although his new office of President of Yugoslavia is supposed

¹⁰⁵ On the collapse of the coalition *Zajedno*, see Dušan Pavlović, "Srpska demokratska opozicija u 1997," *NSPM* Vol. 5.1 (Beograd, 1998): 113-130.

¹⁰⁶ On the new University law that destroyed its autonomy, see "Univerzitet u Srbiji," a special edition of *Nova Srpska Politička Misao* (Beograd, 1998).

to be largely ceremonial, he remains alpha and omega of Serbian politics (however, with a limited access into Montenegrin internal affairs).

Summing up the period from 1990 to 1998, one can say that the major Serbian opposition parties remained faithful to the highly dubious premises of their own programs which assumed that the Serbian national question could be separated from the question of the democratization of Serbia. Thus, they inadvertently supported Milošević's politics of mimicking transition by criticizing him not so much for failing to democratize society as for failing to unite all Serbs within the boundaries of a single Serbian state. They, like him, fell prey to the delusion that "all Serbs must live in one state," before the process of Serbia's democratization could begin.

Conclusion

The post-socialist Serbia represents a continually constituting and yet never fully constituted state. At the heart of its predicament is the lack of legitimacy. This should be understood in a threefold sense. Firstly, there is a lack of procedural legitimacy; secondly, Milošević's political regime is under constant crisis; and, finally, the state itself is not recognized as legitimate by all of its members.

The lack of procedural legitimacy and subsequent, perpetual legitimacy crisis of the Serbian political regime arise from the fact that the constitution-making process in Serbia became the act of one party against the interests of all other elements in society. In fact, the main purpose of the "constitution-making" process in Serbia was in mimicking genuine

reforms of the Serbian state and society. Consequently, a full and unobstructed democratic development of the Serbian multiparty system and the media became arrested by the mimicry of transformation processes, the only aim of which is to maintain the power-monopoly of Milošević's Socialists.

In addition, the Serbian constitutional system and nation-building policies are necessarily biased not only against the democratization processes, but also in favor of the language, culture and politics of the dominant ethnic group in society. The ethnicization of politics in Serbia is so pervading that it cuts not only through the normative, constitutional foundations of the Serbian state, but also through all of the programs and activities of the major Serbian parties. What is left then in such a society is a notion of a "true" nationhood as the only remaining "legitimate" vessel of conducting politics; a vessel that necessarily reduces all aspects of the political to its only one dimension – that of political struggle between "us" and "them."

In conclusion, Serbia can best be described as Janus-faced. One face looks forward with an insistence on the supposedly liberal character of the Serbian state; the other looks back to the "glorious" past of the Serbian people. The second face has thus far been decisive in Serbia's imbroglio. It is the face that stares at Serbian society from many pages of various party programs. It can also be recognized in the Serbian media and Parliament. It is the face that effectively undermines any effort at creating an alternative national program not based on the ethnicization of politics. It is the face that can be recognized not only in Milošević and his most trusted accomplice, Šešelj, but also, though less clearly, in

Đinđić, Drašković and Koštunica. Hence, at the end of this decade, Serbia faces the same dilemma as it did in 1989 – democratization of society or a continuing slide into the chaos of ethnic animosities, and eventual disintegration of the current Serbian territorial borders.

Chapter 4

MAJORITY – MINORITY RELATIONS IN THE POST-SOCIALIST SERBIA

As a rule, anyone that advocates human rights of the members of their own nation, especially collective rights of a people or minority, should be scrutinized very carefully to find out whether they treat human rights as a goal, as an independent, substantive value, or a modal value, an instrument to achieve national goals, such as independence, sovereignty, etc. Vojin Dimitrijević¹

On the ideological level, at least, we are trying to combine what we regard as the better parts of both terms of the alternative: we want equality without its compelling us to accept identity; but also difference without its degenerating into superiority/inferiority. Tzvetan Todorov²

Introduction

This chapter emphasizes the interlocking character of the Serbian nationalism. It will be shown that the extent to which the Serbian regime failed to recognize the rights of various minority groups in Serbia largely determined the extent to which those minorities denied the legitimacy of the regime and the state. This logic of majority-minority relationships in the post-socialist Serbia obliges us to return to notoriously contentious questions of the requirements of liberal nationalism and the right to self-determination and secession.

In Chapter One it was argued that liberal nationalism is consistent with individual autonomy and ethnocultural diversity. Following Young and Kymlicka, I emphasized the extent to which every state uses nation-building to promote the integration of diverse

¹ Vojin Dimitrijević, "Kosovo and Human Rights," (Beograd, photocopy, 1996), 2.

² Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America; the Question of the Other* (New York: Harper, 1984), 252.

groups into a dominant societal culture. Given that such nation-building is necessarily biased towards those who speak the official language of the country and who attend schools and workplaces which operate in that language, the liberal emphasis on state neutrality was rejected as a criterion for evaluating the post-socialist Serbia's nation-building policies. I opted instead to analyze majority-minority relations in Serbia by following Kymlicka's questioning as to why national minorities should not have the same powers of nation-building as the majority, and applying this to issues of social unity in an ethnically diverse (Serbian) state.

Accordingly, instead of subordinating collective rights to a conventional endorsement of individual rights, I shall here proceed from the liberal national perspective that we are always born into a particular society and that liberal goals can only be achieved through a liberalized societal culture or nation. In other words, the principles of liberal nationalism exemplified in Tamir's concept of liberal nationalism and Kymlicka's of multicultural citizenship will serve as normative guidelines for evaluating both the regime's nation-building and the minorities' responses to it.

The analysis of Serbian majority-minority relationships in this chapter is also informed by the interpretation presented in Chapter One of the contemporary debate about the character of claims to national self-determination. There it was argued that the principles of consociational democracy were worth exploring in the context of deeply divided, multination societies. It needed, however, to be recognized that the question could emerge as to what extent the principle and practice of secession should be regarded as

politically acceptable and morally just. In responding to this question, I have been influenced by the work of those contemporary political philosophers who argue that the demand for national sovereignty should be understood primarily as a potentially legitimate claim rather than as an absolute right, and that mutually opposing claims should be evaluated on the basis of qualitative criteria such as those of nationality, human and minority rights, internal colonialism, etc.

The chapter is organized in the following way. The first section presents an overview of internationally recognized standards for the treatment of minorities. Section Two discusses nation-building issues in the cases of Vojvodina Hungarians and Sandžak Muslims (Bosniaks). The final section analyzes the Serbian state's politics of systemic discrimination against the Kosovar Albanians.

International Standards for Treatment of Minorities

Ideally, self-determination is understood to represent the right of the peoples to freely determine their own political status and to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.³ The problem, however, emerges with defining the term "peoples." Depending of our understanding of who or what peoples are, we may end up with radically different interpretations of the concept of self-determination.⁴

³ This is how self-determination is being defined in the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). See the full text of the Covenant in Micheline R. Ishay, ed., *The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches, and Documents From the Bible to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 433-440.

⁴ For a more elaborate presentation of both theoretical issues and pragmatic consideration vis-à-vis the question of the self-determination, see Chapter One of the dissertation, the section on self-determination and morality of secession.

On one side of the conceptual divide, the representative government theory of the right to self-determination imagines a “people” as citizens of a certain state irrespective of their religious, cultural, racial and ethnic differences. In this case, the right to self-determination is understood only in terms of popular sovereignty of the entire population within a certain state. This understanding of the principle of self-determination underpins the liberal-democratic creed that the “duty owned by the state is to ensure the periodic exercise of popular sovereignty, which results in representative government.”⁵

This perspective tends to dissociate the question of self-determination from the right to secession. The former is defined as the right of all citizens in a state to become engaged on equal terms in democratic processes, including the right to opt for various forms of economic, social and cultural autonomy within a state, while the latter is concentrated solely on the question of territoriality. The representative government perspective is also fully integrated with the key principle of the International Law – the inviolability of state borders. For its underlying assumption is that a free pursuit of political status and economic, social and cultural development should take place within the boundaries of a given state, not against them.

On the other side of the conceptual divide, however, “people” are defined according to certain supposedly objective criteria: race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, geography, territorial concentration, etc. What unites these traits, as explained by the International Commission of Jurists in their study of the events leading to secession of East

⁵ Thomas Musgrave, *Self-Determination and National Minorities* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 151-154, 178.

Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh in 1972, is one primarily ideological and historical characteristic of the people – “a people begins to exist only when it becomes conscious of its own identity and asserts its will to exist.”⁶

Once this happens, that is, once a people becomes conscious of its distinctiveness, it has the right to determine its own affairs. Since territoriality is one of the criteria for identifying the “people” in this perspective, national self-determination tends to be construed narrowly as the right of a particular ethnic group to its own state. So, the right to self-determination in this case incorporates the right to secession as well. Where, as is often the case, many ethnic groups share the borders of a single state, such an ethnic understanding of the right to national self-determination invariably creates tensions over the question of the “ownership” of the state – to whom does the state belong? As a rule, those ethnic groups not in the fortunate position of being the predominant nation are pre-defined as “national minorities,” a status that implies that they live in a “foreign” state. But, is there any objective demarcation between the people and the minorities?

Definitions of a “national minority” often seem rather arbitrary. Francesco Capotorti famously described it as:

[a] group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion, or language.⁷

⁶ Quoted in Musgrave, 163.

⁷ Quoted in Musgrave, 169. Of course, Eastern Europe has made a special “contribution” to such conceptualizations of minorities with its (in)famous emphasis on the role of history. For example, the 1993 Hungarian Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities requires that such groups to have

This common understanding of national minorities reflects an ethnic concept of “the peoples.” The difference between peoples and minorities becomes simply the smaller number of those with minority culture, language, religion, etc. Still, such a numerical criterion for establishing who are “peoples” has enormous political consequences, because as long as state borders are deemed sacred in international relations, only peoples (that is, titular nations) are granted the full right to self-determination, that is, a state of their own. National minorities at best have to be satisfied with various forms of protection of their rights.

The historical record here is not encouraging. Hitler’s instrumental use of German minorities throughout Central and Eastern Europe contributed to the post-Second World War situation in which minority rights were treated with suspicion and effectively ignored in favor of individual ones (at least in the international documents).⁸ The notable exception to the post-1945 trend is Article 27 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) that clearly states the principle that “[I]n those States in which ethnic,

lived in Hungary for at least a century (!) and to differ from the rest of the population “in terms of their mother tongue, cultures and traditions, and who prove to be aware of the cohesion, national or ethnic, which is to aim at preserving all these and at articulating and safeguarding the interests of their respective historically developed communities.” Quoted in Tibor Varady, “Minorities, Majorities, Law and Ethnicity in Yugoslavia,” in *Ethnic Conflict Management*, ed. Dušan Janjić (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1997), 137.

⁸ Of course, an additional reason for the ultimate failure of national minority standards in the pre-World War Two Europe was the imposition of those standards almost exclusively on emerging Central and Eastern European countries. Victorious Western European countries did not deem it necessary to apply the same standards within their own territories, believing that this would represent direct interference into their own internal affairs: “The countries involved in any of these [League of Nations] procedures, and over which the League exercised some sort of supervision as regards the treatment of minorities within their jurisdiction, were: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rumania, Turkey and Yugoslavia.” See Rodolfo Stavenhagen, “Human Rights and Peoples’ Rights”, *Interculture XXII*, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 4. The liberal principles of popular sovereignty and representative government were used to justify such asymmetry in the League of

religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.”⁹

With the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, minority rights reemerged on the international stage. Throughout the 1990s, the international community has tried to codify those rights, using Article 27 as a guideline on minimum standards of protection.¹⁰ Interestingly, one of the reasons for the Article’s renewed influence lies in its ambiguity. On one side, the wording “persons belonging to minorities” can be explained from the perspective of individual human rights; on the other, however, the formulation “in community with the other members of their group” emphasizes a distinctively collective flavor of national minority rights.

The difficulty in differentiating between individual and collective rights is nicely caught by Steiner who argues that “[R]ights of members of minorities to use their own language, to practice their religion, or to associate, are necessarily exercised by individuals. In this respect, such individual rights have an inherently collective character.”¹¹ The ambiguity of Article 27 has in fact proved very fruitful. Activists for both individual human rights and for collective rights have found it important to support Article 27, and its

Nations. See Helmut Ritsig, “Prava manjina ili ljudska prava?,” in *Nacionalne manjine u medjunarodnom i jugoslovenskom pravnom poretku*, 355-356.

⁹ The full text is in Ishay, ed., *The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches, and Documents From the Bible to the Present*, 424-432.

¹⁰ See Hugh Poulton, *Minorities in Southeast Europe: Inclusion and Exclusion* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1998), 6-7.

¹¹ Quoted in Varady, 152.

wording has thus found its way into many of the regional declarations dealing with national minority rights that have been adopted throughout the 1990s.¹²

The most significant of these documents is the Council of Europe's *Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities*. It is the first legally binding document that aims at protection of national minorities (signed on February 1, 1995 and entered into force on February 1, 1998). At its core is, as Hugh Poulton put it, "new thinking" according to which "the preservation of different cultures is seen as positive, and now the new international minority instruments call on the states to overcome the corrosive effects of 'benign neglect' and take active steps to allow minority cultures to develop."¹³

Given that *Framework Convention* provides standards of behavior for European countries, the articles of particular interest for the national minority protection will be quoted here:

Article 7

The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 8

The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organizations and associations.

¹² For example, the 1990 *Copenhagen Document of the CSCE* (Article 32, para. 3), the 1992 *UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, the 1991 *Recommendation 1201 of the Council of Europe* (Article 3, para. 2), and the 1995 *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (Articles 7, 8, 9, 17). For an overview of these declarations, see Jennifer Jackson Preece, *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 123-177; and Zoran M. Lutovac, *Manjine KEBS i jugoslovenska kriza* (Beograd: Institut za medjunarodnu politiku i privredu, 1996), 27-87.

¹³ Poulton, *Minorities in Southeast Europe*, 6.

Article 9, Paragraph 1

The parties undertake to recognize that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

Article 17, paragraph 1

The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.¹⁴

These and other instruments show that national minority rights are becoming increasingly firmly established in modern international relations. The international community is also making an effort to balance both approaches to the interrelated questions of the relationship between majority and minority groups and the right to national self-determination. The liberal approach (representative government theory) is being upheld particularly through the continued emphasis on the inviolability of the state borders. At the same time, however, instruments of minority protection are addressing those national minority characteristics that loom large in every ethnic definition of the term (emphasis on collective rights such as the protection of minority languages, religions, cultures, etc.).

¹⁴ "Okvirna konvencija za zaštitu nacionalnih manjina, Strazbur (1995)," *Nacionalne manjine u medjunarodnom i jugoslovenskom pravnom poretku, dokumenti* (Beograd: Medjunarodna politika, 1997), 173-182. It is interesting to note that on December 3, 1998 the FRY Assembly had adopted a law whereby it ratified the *Framework Convention*, even though Serbia/Montenegro is not a member of the Council of Europe, nor did it receive any invitation from the Ministerial Committee of the European Council to do so. After all such an invitation would have been impossible in the case of Serbia and Montenegro because the FR Yugoslavia's membership in the OSCE was suspended in 1992. Yugoslavian officials have found the pretext for such a move in the country's adherence to the principles of human and national minority rights. However, whatever the reasons for such an action might be, Yugoslavia's official acceptance of the *Framework Convention* allows the country's policies vis-à-vis national minorities to be evaluated and judged from the perspective of the *Framework's* principles on the protection of national minority rights.

However, not all would have a positive view of the contemporary development of instruments of national minority protection. We should not allow the encouraging developments in protecting minority rights to make us forget the continuing dominance of the ethnic principle in many parts of the world. One potentially detrimental consequence of applying this principle is to relegate minorities to the status of the “other,” in relation to the majority nation. In other words, there are many mono-ethnic states that are primarily defined as states of their dominant ethnic group, that is, states whose prime role is to protect and further the identity and interests of the titular nation.

In those countries, the debate between proponents of individual and collective rights is not a theoretical exercise, but has significant political consequences. The logic leading these groups to diametrically opposing stands is well explained by Tibor Varady. Supporters of collective rights perceive opposition not as an argument in favor of universal, liberal principles, but as “an attempt to suppress and eliminate the distinct culture which defines their group.” On the other side, the advocates of majority rights perceive collective rights to language, culture and religion as a “disguised opening gambit towards secession.”¹⁵

Serbia presents a powerful example of a state in which there is an ongoing tension between “us” and “them,” between the Serbian “people” on the one side, and all other ethnic groups living in Serbia, on the other. The roots of this tension, as explained in the previous chapters, lie both in the openly nationalist, constitutionally sponsored policies of

¹⁵ Varadi, 148. For the overview of liberal and communitarian arguments for or against the collective rights, see the dissertation’s Chapter One in the section on liberal nationalism.

the Serbian state and in its mimicking of liberal principles for the purposes of justifying a Serbian mono-ethnic regime. The following sections of the chapter will examine the consequences for minority rights of the ethnification of the Serbian politics. The focus will be on the dynamic relationship between state policies and minorities' responses. Two particular cases will be considered: first, the position of ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina and Bosniaks in Sandžak (Raška); second, that of the Kosovar Albanians.¹⁶

National Minorities in Serbia

Neither the 1974 Constitution of the SFRY nor the Serbian constitutional regime of the same year contained the term "national minority." Instead, the word "nationality" (*narodnost*) was used to identify those national groups that were parts of nations that had established their own states outside Yugoslavia. These were Albanians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Romanians, Slovaks, Italians and Turks. In this sense, the term "nationality" was designed to identify non-Serb citizens of Serbia. These national groups enjoyed significant political and cultural rights, and one should agree with Vojin Dimitrijević who maintains that the term "nationality" was introduced "in the belief that it would be less offensive to minorities, not implying inferiority of any kind."¹⁷

¹⁶ The focus on the position of ethnic Hungarians, Bosniaks and Albanians in Serbia should not be taken to imply that the status of Serbian Romany population, Romanians, Slovaks, Bulgarians, etc., was resolved according to the principles of the full appreciation of human and minority rights. I have focussed on the unresolved status of Hungarians, Bosniaks and, particularly, Albanians, who, because their larger numbers and territorial concentration, were capable of threatening the social unity and territorial integrity of the Serbian state. This is not the case with other ethnic groups in Serbia.

¹⁷ Dimitrijević, "Kosovo and Human Rights," (Beograd: photocopy, 1996), 15. Still, despite the emphasis on the equality among nations and nationalities, Romanies (Gypsies), Wallachians and other groups that were not part of a larger nation having a state on its own were left outside the framework of the Yugoslav legal system. Hence the level of the protection of their cultural rights was significantly less compared to the one enjoyed by nationalities.

Furthermore, Serbia was the only former Yugoslav republic that was organized according to the principle of territorial autonomy. The existence of separate provincial constitutional systems with their own independent political, legal, cultural and educational systems was justified on the principle of brotherhood and unity; that is, on the ideal of the progress of each and every nation and nationality in the country. Hence, the existence of very significant territorial, political and cultural autonomy in the Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina reflected ethnic considerations rather than socialist ones. The rationale for the effective territorial division of Serbia was the fact that Albanians, even though a minority on the territory of Serbia, were the majority in Kosovo. In the case of Vojvodina, even though Serbs represented more than fifty percent of population, the region was populated by more than twenty different ethnic groups. Territorial autonomy was seen as a way of promoting the full and equitable development of each of these groups.

With the constitutional amendments introduced in the Serbian parliament in 1989, and finally, with the new Serbian Constitution in 1990, the old system of national minority protection was destroyed. The new one, however, replaced the system of common existence with the mono-ethnic ideal of the superiority of the dominant titular nation over other ethnic groups.¹⁸ The former Serbian “nationalities” woke up in a new Serbia as “national minorities,” whose previous political, language and cultural rights had been

¹⁸ The Serbian increasingly negative responses to the 1974 Constitution and the development of constitutional nationalism in the context of the post-socialist Serbia have already been explained in detail in Chapters Two and Three and need not be repeated here.

significantly curtailed.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, this constitutional “solution” to the problems of unifying the Serbian state immediately opened a Pandora’s box of mutual accusations and counter-accusations between “representatives” of different “national” and “minority” views about the “real” cultural and political status of national minorities in the new Serbia.

The following presentation of actual practices in the field of national minority protection in Serbia is based on reports by the following local non-governmental organizations: the Humanitarian Law Center in Belgrade (HLC), the Helsinki Committee of Human Rights in Serbia (HCHR) and the Belgrade Center for Human Rights (BCHR). These accounts are largely incommensurable with official state accounts of the status of national minorities in Serbia, which insist that Serbian minorities have been constitutionally granted rights that far surpass internationally recognized standards, a claim that effectively precludes any serious debate of the issues.²⁰

The Politics of Curtailment of Minority Rights in Vojvodina

Vojvodina has not seen the open and straightforward legal discrimination against ethnic groups attempted in some other parts of Serbia.²¹ Instead, the regime took a low-key

¹⁹ Interestingly, the 1990 Serbian Constitution still uses the old fashioned socialist term of nationalities to describe national minorities. However, after 1992, in the Serbian political and legal literature one can only find references to national minorities.

²⁰ See, for example, “Komentar Vlade SRJ na Izveštaj specijalnog izvestioca Elizabet Ren o manjinama koji se odnosi na SRJ,” *Nacionalne manjine u medjunarodnom i jugoslovenskom pravnom poretku*, 316-324. This regime-inspired commentary on the UN Committee Report on minority rights in former Yugoslav republics (1996) suggests that it is “known that members of national minorities in Vojvodina ... enjoy all the constitutionally protected human rights and freedoms,” and that they actively participate on an equal footing in political, economic, social and cultural life of the province (p. 320).” The Full UN Report is published in the same edited collection *Nacionalne manjine*, 271-315.

²¹ A glaring exception to this rule was the situation of the Vojvodinian Croats. In the early 1990s, many Croats were forced to leave the country. The Helsinki Committee estimates that out of 100,000 of Serbian Croats (75,000 in Vojvodina), almost 40% left or was forced to leave. Animosity towards the

approach to dismantling previously “granted” minority rights; employing, in effect, a **politics of creeping assimilation** of Vojvodina’s minorities. Not surprisingly, the main targets of such politics have been those areas in which minorities are most vulnerable: education, official use of the minority languages and alphabet, preservation of minority cultures and local self-government.

To begin with the official use of minority languages. In the socialist Serbia all laws were published in Serbian, Albanian and Hungarian. In addition, in the case of Vojvodina, a *Special Act on Means of Securing the Equality of Languages* (1973) had made official the principle of multilingualism. This implied that minority languages would enjoy equal status with Serbian in those local communities in which minorities lived (where the minorities were at least 10% of the populations of the municipality). Hence, not only Hungarian, but also Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian were accepted as equal in Vojvodina. Moreover, provincial and local authorities were obliged to provide training in minority languages for public servants, so that they could communicate in them in their day-to-day activities.²²

This is no longer the case. Even though the new Serbian Constitution recognizes the official use of minority languages in areas where minorities live, the 10% threshold was no longer mentioned, thus leaving it up to legislatures to decide where minorities were large enough to warrant special language provisions. In the case of Vojvodina, its *Statute*

Croats moderated after the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995. For detailed information on the status of ethnic Croats in Serbia, see Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, “Izveštaj o položaju Hrvata,” *Izveštaj o ljudskim pravima u Srbiji za 1997 godinu* (Beograd, januar 1998), 105-122.

²² Varady, 147.

on the Official Use of the Language and the Alphabet (1991) delegated this decision to municipalities.

Not surprisingly, in the words of Varady, "it was unlikely that majority-dominated local assemblies [one should not forget that Serbs enjoy a simple majority in most of Vojvodina's municipalities] would vote in favor of minority language rights at a time when tolerance had not support in either political considerations or prevailing cultural precepts."²³ Hence, whereas before 1990 the official use of Hungarian was recognized in 34 local communities in Vojvodina, by 1996 this had fallen to 29 municipalities. And even where the official use of minority languages continues to be recognized, the local authorities increasingly opt to Serbianize Hungarian, Slovak and Ruthenian place names, i.e., to spell them only in the Serbian language and alphabet, and not also in their original language and script. Finally, there is a tendency, especially in the capital, Novi Sad, to replace multilingual public signs with monolingual Serbian signs, even though this violates provincial laws.²⁴

The situation is similar in regard to minority access to the media. Throughout the 1990s, minority programs on TV and local radio stations were gradually dropped. This was ostensibly in response to the harsh economic crisis in the country. But in fact, local TV and radio stations (most of them under direct influence of the regime) blossomed

²³ *Ibid.*, 142-143.

²⁴ Helsinski odbor za ljudska prava, "Izveštaj o položaju Mađara," in *Izveštaj o ljudskim pravima u Srbiji za 1997, 90*.

during this period. This situation gives credence to the view of the Association of Slovaks, Romanians and Ruthenians in Yugoslavia that:

Under the pretext that information in the languages of minorities is “above European and world standards,” many programs have been abolished – those in particular which have contributed most to the preservation of national identities and which have been the most popular. If, in time of general economic crisis, it is minority rights that suffer first, this cannot be called economy, but discrimination.²⁵

The most corrosive manifestations of the regime’s policies of creeping assimilation, however, have been in the field of education. The education system has been thoroughly centralized, allowing republican officials to have the final say not only on school curricula but also in appointing school principals. The consequence in the social sciences is that minorities tend only to be exposed to official interpretations of Serbian history at the expense of more nuanced and multicultural interpretations of the recent past.²⁶

In addition, the number of minorities attending schools in their own language dropped dramatically in the past ten years. For example, while in the late 1970s 36,000 students attended Hungarian elementary and high schools in Vojvodina, in the mid-1990s this had dropped to 26,000, representing only 6% of the students in Vojvodina (even though 17% of Vojvodina population are Hungarians).²⁷ Moreover, since the early 1990s,

²⁵ Quoted in Dimitrijević, “Kosovo and Human Rights,” 17.

²⁶ A Serbian historian, Dubravka Stojanović, has analyzed the new history textbook for elementary and secondary schools. She came to the conclusion that children are being taught not to trust Croats, Albanians and Bosnian Muslims. These groups were habitually presented as treacherous and sinister in regard to the interests of the Serbian nation. Such collectivist interpretations of recent historical events will have negative effects not only on minorities but also on young Serbian generations as well, who are being taught not to trust members of other ethnic groups. From this perspective, it would seem that one of the most pressing tasks in a post-Milošević’s Serbia would be a complete overhaul of Serbian school programs. See Dubravka Stojanović, “Construction of Historical Consciousness,” (1999). <http://www.udi.org.yu/Founders/Stojanovic/conscious.htm> (September 28, 1999).

²⁷ For a detailed information on the number of Hungarian students in elementary, secondary and high schools, see *Izveštaj o položaju Mađara*,” 86-89.

a new request has to be presented every year for the continuation of education in minority languages. If a minority-language-speaking teacher cannot be found, a Serbian-speaking teacher will be hired.²⁸ These provisions have led to a major erosion of the principle of multi-linguism in the province.

At first sight, the nationality structure of the municipal workforce in Vojvodina might suggest that positive discrimination was being applied and that there was no reason to fear that national minorities were being less well treated. Of the 4,488 public employees in local municipalities, 64% are Serbs, 4.8% Montenegrins, 15% Hungarians, 3% Slovaks, 2% Rumanians, 4% Croats, etc.²⁹ Nevertheless, a closer look shows that in almost all of province's municipalities, the leading positions are disproportionally held by Serbs. Thus, in many municipalities in which Hungarians are in the majority (Ada, Bečej, Bačka Topola, etc.), the commander of the local police is almost always a Serb. Serbs also virtually monopolize the top managerial positions in state-controlled companies.³⁰

The politics of national homogenization in Vojvodina may look mild or even benevolent compared to the policies in Kosovo. However, the majoritization of the province has triggered the homogenization of the various Vojvodinian ethnic groups according to the same mono-ethnic principle. And just as the major Serbian parties are organized around the national principle, minority organizations have also tried to present themselves as "interpreters" of their respective national interests. They have nevertheless

²⁸ Varady, 146.

²⁹ The figures are from the *Komentar vlade SRJ na izveštaj specijalnog izvestioca Elizabet Ren*, 321.

³⁰ "Izveštaj o položaju Mađara," 100-103.

been ineffective in countering the state's policies of "soft" abuses of human and minority rights in the province.

At the heart of their activities is an effort to decentralize the political, social and cultural life of the province, in order to recover some of the lost autonomies the province enjoyed until 1990. None of the Serbian minorities in Vojvodina have challenged the territorial integrity of Serbia in the 1990s. Instead, their main effort has been to try to convince state officials that various aspects of minority autonomy in the province could be allowed in a way that was fully compatible with the political administrative system of Serbia as a whole. The initiatives of Hungarian political organizations provide an excellent example of such a political engagement.

The first Hungarian organization emerged on March 31, 1990, when the Democratic Community of Vojvodinian Hungarians (DCVH) was created. In an organizational sense, the DCVH did not represent a classic party. It was more of an umbrella organization, the main purpose of which was to provide a forum for discussion among ethnic Hungarians about how best to protect their cultural and political rights in Vojvodina. By this open and democratic process, the members of the DCVH believed that it should be possible to agree on a political platform that could legitimately claim to represent the political interests of all ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina.³¹

Even though the DCVH did not perceive itself as a party, its leaders regularly stood in Serbian and Yugoslav elections. As a result, thanks to the ethnic Hungarian vote, they

would always win a few seats in the provincial, Serbian and Yugoslav parliaments. For example, in 1990 the DCVH won eight seats in the Republican parliament, while in 1993 it gained five seats. Moreover, from 1990 till 1996, its victories in local elections allowed the DCVH to control those municipalities in which ethnic Hungarians represented a majority of population (in northern Bačka). Thus, throughout the most of the 1990s, the DCVH was the only minority party with sufficient profile to make a public issue of its struggle for ethnic autonomy in Vojvodina within the existing Serbian and Yugoslav institutional framework.³²

According to Šandor Pal, one of the leading members of the DCVH, its program for Hungarian autonomy and self-rule in Serbia represents a compromise between two equally legitimate claims: the right to self-determination (including secession), and the principle of the state sovereignty. As Pal puts it, ethnic Hungarians are willing to give up their legitimate claims to self-determination and secession in return for recognition of their equally legitimate collective rights to education, information, culture, language and self-rule.³³

In other words, instead of opting for maximalist claims of either secession or full Serbian territorial sovereignty, Pal insists on the principle of "limited sovereignty." Pal finds support for his aims in the principles spelled out by the Committee of the European

³¹ See Zoran Lutovac, "Političko organizovanje nacionalnih manjina u SRJ," *Položaj manjina u SRJ* (Beograd: SANU, Odeljenje društvenih nauka – knjiga 19, 1996), 206-211.

³² *Ibid.*, 206-208.

³³ Šandor Pal, "Koncept manjinske samouprave Demokratske zajednice vojvodanskih Mađara," *Položaj manjina u Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji*, 438.

Union on Yugoslavia's dissolution (the so-called Badinter Committee). These include the inviolability of former Yugoslav republican borders (therefore, the inviolability of current Serbian borders), while at the same time they emphasize the responsibility of the newly emerging states to protect national minorities on their territory. It is within these parameters, Pal maintains, that the DCVH has developed its own concept of three-pronged local, territorial and personal autonomy.³⁴

In fact, however, the **concept of three-pronged autonomy** really derives from an almost identical program developed in another region with a substantial Hungarian minority – Erdelj (Transylvania) in Romania. The concept has been further elaborated within Hungary itself.³⁵ In addition, it should be noted that the roots of such a concept of minority protection go back far beyond the work of the Badinter Committee, and are already present, for example, in the work of the early twentieth century Austrian Marxists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. They promoted the idea that people living in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire could be simultaneously both citizens of the Empire and members of ethnic associations striving to protect the identity and culture of their respective ethnic groups. Such protection might often require a certain measure of territorial autonomy within the Empire. Their central inspiration was to overcome ethnic conflict by accepting

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 439–440.

³⁵ For example, Ferenc Glatz, a leading Hungarian historian, in his study on the ethnic tension in East Central Europe has developed the most elaborate concept so far of three-pronged autonomy, incorporating both liberal principles of human rights protection and the communitarian principles of the national minority standards. See his *Minorities in East-Central Europe* (Budapest: Europa Institut, 1993). A good summary of Glatz's work is Attila Pók, "A Recent Hungarian Plan to Address the Minority Issue," *Položaj manjina u Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji*, 573–577.

ethnicity as a strong political factor that could be mitigated and channeled through various forms of autonomy within the Empire's borders.³⁶

What is the solution of the Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians to the ethnic antagonisms in Serbia? At its heart is indeed the old Austro-Marxist idea that in true democracies, citizens are both constituents of the state and members of a distinct ethnic community. If a state consists of more than one ethnic group, certain relationships between the majority nation and ethnic minorities develop. Within democratic rules of conduct, these relationships should be cultivated on the basis of a recognition that both majority and minority nations are equal members of a given state. However, for minority ethnic groups, this principle of equality further requires certain collective rights to be recognized; rights that will allow them to protect their distinct ethnic identity from being undermined by the majority nation.

The DCVH program follows these precepts for safeguarding ethnic identity and operates, as its name suggests, on three levels. **Personal autonomy** is based on the idea of collective legal and political standing of the Hungarian national minority. This means the right of self-government for Vojvodina Hungarians, in the sense of the right of ethnic Hungarians to elect their own political, cultural and interest organizations. The most important bodies of self-government would be a Hungarian ethnic assembly (parliament), a council of self-government and a president. Through direct talks between the Council as the legitimate representative of Vojvodina Hungarians and the Serbian parliament, certain

³⁶ On Benner's and Bauer's ideas of three-pronged autonomy, see Helmut Rützig, "Prava manjina ili ljudska prava," 353-354.

key collective rights of ethnic Hungarians should be identified in the areas of minority education, official languages, information and protection of religious and cultural identity. The recognized collective rights would then be protected under the Serbian Constitution and defined in a way that would not undermine the sovereignty of Serbia.³⁷

Local autonomy is a political right to exercise local self-administration in places where ethnic Hungarians are in the majority, but which are not contiguous with other Hungarian villages or municipalities. In other words, the emphasis is on the situation of those Hungarian villages or counties surrounded by members of other ethnic groups. Within these “islands” of Hungarian ethnicity, the local autonomy principle would provide safeguards against the politics of assimilation, by granting those villages a full administrative and linguistic autonomy.

Finally, **territorial autonomy** represents a full political, administrative, linguistic and cultural autonomy for those municipalities in which Hungarians are in the majority. Moreover, areas where there are several communities with more than 51% Hungarians will have the right to create regional minority autonomy. The document *Hungarian Autonomy – an Initiative for Achieving Self-Rule in the Republic of Serbia*, adopted at the DCVH’s conference on March 11, 1995, envisions the creation of a so-called “Hungarian Autonomous Region”, comprising the municipalities in the northern region of Vojvodina, known as northern Bačka, with Subotica as its territorial, cultural and political center.³⁸

³⁷ Pal, 441-442.

³⁸ Pal, 440-441. Also, see “Izveštaj o položaju Mađara.” 94.

From the mid-1990s, new Hungarian parties have developed other visions of solving the minority question in Serbia. As a result of friction within the DCVH over the question of “internal liberties,” a group of influential Hungarian intellectuals organized the League of Vojvodina Hungarians (LVH). Their main critique was that the DCVH had relapsed into classic, party rules of procedure under which the diverse voices of its members could not be heard. Eventually, the LVH managed to attract a majority of Hungarian votes, so that by 1996 it was the only Hungarian party to win seats in the Serbian and Yugoslav parliaments – three seats in the Yugoslav parliament and four in the republican parliament. At the local elections the LVH also won in most of municipalities previously controlled by the DCVH.³⁹

Nevertheless, the differences in the national programs of the DCVH and the LVH are formal rather than substantial. The LVH has opted for a more pragmatic approach, being willing to compromise certain elements of territorial autonomy for gains in personal and local autonomy. Many Hungarian intellectuals have moved away from the ethnic parties with a clear national program. For example, unlike the two parties already mentioned, the Citizens’ Movement of Vojvodina Hungarians (CMVH) insists on the preservation of Hungarian national identity “in accordance with the existing legislation in Serbia and Yugoslavia.” They see democratization of Serbia as the best way of protecting

³⁹ “Izveštaj,” 93.

minority standards in Vojvodina. Accordingly, they have a less ethnic-centered approach to solving the national minority question than the other Hungarian parties.⁴⁰

In addition, many Vojvodinian intellectuals have provided elaborate critiques of the concept of territorial autonomy and the idea of creating an autonomous Hungarian region. Ištvan Bošnjak (István Bosnyák), for example, asserts that there are subtle similarities between the idea of the homogenous nation-state in post-socialist Eastern Europe and the previously legitimizing concept of the one-party state. Both are based on a monistic logic that denies any right of being different; the older version outlawed ideological differences; the present one represses ethnic ones. In this view, the emphasis on an ethnic territory leads its “owners” to deny to members of other ethnic groups that happen to live on the same territory the right to an equitable share of the land.⁴¹

In other words, Bošnjak seems to imply that the DCVH in its program accepted the very logic of the superiority of the majority nation that was being advocated by Serbian nationalists. For its concept of territorial autonomy (although not those of local and personal autonomy) was based on a denial of Vojvodina’s ethnic, cultural, confessional and linguistic diversity. Hungarian regional autonomy, as envisioned by the DCVH, would incorporate the municipalities of Ada, Bečej, Bačka Topola, Kanjiža, Senta, Mali Idoš, Temerin and Subotica. These municipalities cover the northern region of Vojvodina (Northern Bačka), which consists of around 350,000 inhabitants. However, not more than

⁴⁰ Zoran Lutovac, “The Participation of Minorities in Political Life,” *Election to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia*, ed., Vladimir Goati (Berlin: Edition Sigma, 1998), 137.

⁴¹ Ištvan Bošnjak, “Mogućnosti i problemi uspostavljanja manjinske lokalne samouprave i personalne autonomije u Vojvodini,” *Položaj manjina u Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji*, 447.

55% of the inhabitants are ethnic Hungarians. The population of Subotica, the biggest city in the region and the would-be capital of Hungarian autonomous region, is only 42% Hungarian, the “rest” comprising Serbs, Croats, and many other ethnic groups.

This demographic picture poses serious questions about the DCVH’s project. Why should such a multiethnic region with only a slight Hungarian majority be defined as a Hungarian autonomous region – a name with distinctively mono-ethnic flavor? Could Hungarians enjoy the majority status in the region without further undermining the status of the other ethnic groups there? Would it only mean that members of other ethnic groups would have to cope with two majorities instead of one – Hungarian as well as Serbian? Would the “personal autonomy” accorded to the roughly 50% of Hungarians in Vojvodina who live outside Northern Bačka give them equal status to that envisioned for Hungarians living in the Hungarian autonomous region? Finally, to what extent would the creation of Hungarian territorial autonomy lead to a *de facto* minority position for the Serbs, who otherwise belong to the majority nation in the country?

Although there are no easy answers to such questions, it would seem at least possible that a principle of territorial autonomy based on an overtly mono-ethnic logic of self-representation could be seen more as a part of the problem than of a potential solution. Moreover, an unintended consequence could be to territorialize the potential conflict between the majority nation and the Hungarian minority. This is, after all, not hard to envision. Throughout the 1990s, the Serbian regime did everything to make any suggestion based on the principle of territorial autonomy unacceptable, not only to radical

nationalists, but also to those Serbs who were otherwise in favor of positive discrimination vis-à-vis national minorities.⁴²

This does not necessarily mean that any effort at conceptualizing territorial autonomy would have negative consequences. While territorial autonomy based on the principle of the ethnification of politics has obvious dangers, the same cannot be said for the concept of multiethnic territorial-administrative autonomy. Such autonomy aims to safeguard the internal liberties of the members of a single minority against its own “representatives,” while at the same time protecting minority collective rights (Kymlicka’s “external protections,” as explained in Chapter Two) vis-à-vis the majority nation. Approaching territorial autonomy on the basis of the recognition of the demographic and ethnic diversity of Vojvodina (which the idea of a Hungarian autonomous region fails to do) would seem to offer a better chance of reconciling the seemingly divergent principles of individual and collective rights.

Recently, such a plan was designed by the Belgrade Center for Human Rights. In their vision of constitutional pre-conditions for the development of democratic Serbia, the authors suggested a full-blown political territorial decentralization of Serbia to be based on principles of proportionality, consociationalism and subsidiarity. Thus although liberal democracy would be the main organizing constitutional principle of the state, the corrective mechanisms of consociationalism and subsidiarity – including fully explicated constitutional guaranties for the protection of minority rights – could allow for the

⁴² Bošnjak, 448.

emergence of autonomous regions based not on the principle of mono-ethnicity but rather on the recognition of mutuality. In short, the model aims to develop conditions for a politics of constitutional patriotism and civic ethnicity, rather than accepting the principle of ethno-nationalism.⁴³

In the final analysis, the three-pronged concept of autonomy – just as any other of the proposals discussed above – can be shown to have inconsistencies. Nevertheless, as a basis for a broader dialogue on the future of a multiethnic Vojvodina it certainly merited public scrutiny. The fact that it received virtually none is certainly not due solely to its deficiencies. As with other failed reform efforts in Serbia, the principal responsibility for not entering dialogue about the cultural and territorial autonomy in Vojvodina lies on the other side; that is in the deafness of the official “representatives” of the Serbian nation and the state. Given Serbia’s political experiences in the 1990s, it is safe to conclude that as long as Milošević’s regime prevails, any program of Vojvodinian autonomy, no matter how civic or multicultural it may be, will remain at the level of political fantasy.

The Politics of Non-Recognition of Sandžak Muslims (Bosniaks)

If policies of creeping assimilation represent the main problem for Vojvodinian ethnic minorities, the Muslims in the Serbian part of Sandžak (the Raška region)⁴⁴ are faced

⁴³ See Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, *Ustavne pretpostavke za demokratsku Srbiju* (Beograd, 1997), 34-36.

⁴⁴ Both terms Sandžak (used primarily by Muslims) and Raška (the official name of the region) are loaded with historical “memories.” For Serbs, Raška symbolizes the place where the medieval Serbia was founded. Sandžak, on the other side, recalls a military, administrative and territorial unit of the Ottoman Empire. Hence, it is not surprise, as Dušan Janjić asserts, that both terms are subject to numerous disputes and that they act with the force of political myth. Except for two years of the Second World War, 1943-45, the region has never constituted a single political and territorial entity. Once known as the Sandžak of Novi Pazar, it is split in two parts: the municipalities of Novi Pazar, Tutin, Sjenica, Prijepolje,

rather with the regime's open rejection of their claim to the status of a distinct ethnic group. This was in drastic contrast with the previous socialist line, which from 1971 had recognized Yugoslav Muslims as having the status of a founding Yugoslav nation (their ethnic identity having been recognized in 1961). The official Serbian stand since 1991, that is since the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, has been to disregard the Muslims' claims to a distinct national status. Instead, both the state and the Serbian national intelligentsia keep representing the Muslim population in Serbia primarily as Serbs who in the past converted to Islam.⁴⁵ At the same time, Serbian Muslims are increasingly calling themselves Bosniaks (since 1995, the officially recognized name of the Muslim nation in Bosnia) in order to emphasize their historical and cultural links to their kin-state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁶

Nova Varoš and Priboj are attached to Serbia, while Bijelo Polje and Pljevlja are in Montenegro. The 1991 Census showed that of the 258,000 people living in the Serbian part of the Sandžak, 60% were Muslim; while Muslims comprised 40% of the 182,000 in Montenegro. This means that Muslims form 52% of the total population of the two areas, and Serbs and Montenegrins 48%. Straddling Serbia and Montenegro, and between Kosovo, Bosnia and Albania, the Sandžak is of key strategic importance in maintaining the territorial unity of the two Yugoslav republics. See Dušan Janjić, "Report on the Political, Juridical, Sociological and Political Aspects of the Nationality Politics and Minority Protection in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" (Belgrade: Forum for Ethnic Relations, 1993): 4 (footnote 7); and Zoran Lutovac and N.D.A. Arvanites, "Politics and Geopolitics of the Raška Region," *Eurobalkans* No. 25 (Winter 1996/97): 26-29.

⁴⁵ A typical example of the anti-Muslim bias in the writing of many Serbian intellectuals can be found in Miroslav Jevtić, "Muslimankse manjine na Balkanu," *Položaj manjina u SR Jugoslaviji*, 743-749. In the article, the Muslim question is reduced to a kind of "clash of civilizations" thesis. According to the author, Muslim minorities have been targeted by various Muslim countries trying to use the minority question to interfere in the internal Balkan affairs and thus spread Islam.

⁴⁶ In Serbian, the word "Muslims" denotes ethnic identity, while the same word written without a capital letter – "muslims" – denotes a religious affiliation. Thus, throughout the 1990s, in a war over a capital letter, the Serbian official press constantly addressed the Muslim population in Raška as "muslims." In this context, the term "Bosniaks" might have been more appropriate. However, it should be noted that, contrary to public opinion, the term "Bosniaks" is rather old. It was used both by the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century and by Austria-Hungary in the late nineteenth century as a political device to promote an (ethnic) identity for Slavic Muslims distinct from the ethnic identities of the Christian Orthodox and Catholic Slavic population in Sandžak and Bosnia. See Ejup Mušović, "Položaj Muslimana u Srbiji," *Položaj manjina u SR Jugoslaviji*, 752.

The relationship between the Serbian regime and the Sandžak's Muslims has been envenomed by the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina between the Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Serbs. The reaction of the Serbian regime has been to label its whole Muslim population as potentially treacherous – aiming to secede from Serbia and join Muslim dominated Bosnia and Herzegovina. The leading Muslim party (the Party of Democratic Action or PDA) played into the regime's hands by constantly shifting back and forth between requests for cultural autonomy and claims for full-fledged territorial autonomy for Sandžak, including possible secession from Serbia.

When the PDA was founded in Novi Pazar on August 11, 1990, it was organized as an affiliate of the Muslim party of the same name based in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Thus, from the very beginning, the party linked its political program to that being developed in Sarajevo. In the severe political crisis in the former Yugoslavia, the PDA affiliate in Novi Pazar accepted that demanding changes in the borders between the former Yugoslav republics could only end in bloodshed. Instead it promoted the idea that educational and cultural autonomy for the Muslim population in Sandžak could be achieved within Serbia and Montenegro. The PDA therefore participated in the first multiparty election in Serbia in December 1990, winning three seats in the Republican parliament.⁴⁷

However, the collapse of Yugoslavia soon re-opened the question of the legal and political status of Muslims in Serbia. As the Serbian political scene became increasingly

⁴⁷ Lutovac and Arvanites, 30.

radicalized, and recognizing that the formerly administrative internal boundaries between Yugoslav republics would become the external borders of independent nation-states, the PDA and the Muslim National Council of Sandžak (MNCS – a non-party coordinating body of all Sandžak Muslims) organized a referendum on the autonomy of Sandžak (October 1991). This time, the rhetoric and the character of the PDA's political claims were decisively different.

In the campaign preceding the referendum, the Muslim leaders emphasized that they had a legitimate right, as any other nation in the former Yugoslavia, to full political and territorial autonomy, including the right to join one of the former Yugoslav republics (namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina). According to MNSC estimates, 70% of eligible voters in Sandžak went to the polls, and cast their votes almost unanimously (99% of voters) for full autonomy. Serbian officials reacted by branding the referendum as “illegal, unnecessary and senseless.” They also argued that such a move towards independence was contrary to the Helsinki principles on the inviolability of state borders.⁴⁸

The conflict between the Sandžak Muslims and the Serbian regime deepened when the PDA decided to boycott the republican elections in December 1992. This was a clear message to Belgrade that the main Muslim party did not perceive Serbia as a legitimate home for the Muslim community. The antagonism between the two sides reached its zenith in mid-June 1993, when the PDA and the Muslim National Council adopted a *Memorandum on the Establishment of Special Status for Sandžak*. The document proposed

very loose (con)federal relations with Serbia and Montenegro. For example, according to the *Memorandum*, Sandžak should enjoy the following: a regional parliament as a lawmaking body, a governor and a cabinet as the executive body, full authority over the educational, social and health systems, independent cultural and media policy, a judiciary completely independent from the Serbian state, local police, and the right to independent international contacts – all these rights to spelled out in detail in a Sandžak Constitution.⁴⁹

The *Memorandum* further proposed the unification of the Serbian and Montenegrin municipalities that were historically part of the Sandžak of Novi Pazar, even including three Montenegrin municipalities with a Muslim majority that had never been part of the Sandžak (Ivangrad, Plav, Rožaje). However, as Lutovac has pointed out, Muslims were only in the majority in five of the eleven proposed municipalities of the Sandžak autonomous region.⁵⁰ Rather paradoxically, the Muslim national representatives were repeating the same “mistake” that promoters of various Serbian national memorandums (or, should we call them manifestos) had made before them. Their exclusive emphasis on a mono-ethnic logic of representation was possible only at the price of misrepresenting the region as ethnically homogenous, when it had throughout the twentieth century been a home shared equally by Serbs, Montenegrins and Muslims.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Milan Andrejevich, “The Sandžak: a Perspective of Serb-Muslim Relations,” *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, ed., Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 170, 175.

⁴⁹ *Memorandum o uspostavljanju specijalnog statusa za Sandžak* (Novi Pazar: Muslimanski nacionalni savet Sandžaka, 1993), 2–4.

⁵⁰ Lutovac and Arvanites, 32.

The official state response was to prohibit further publication of the *Memorandum*, dismissing it as openly secessionist and anti-Serb. Also, given the ethnic character of the war in neighboring Bosnia, this stand of the Sandžak Muslims on their political status only helped state officials to present their leaders as extremists intent on provoking hatred and religious intolerance in the region. The only result was a continuation of the state-sponsored “politics of fear” in the region, leading to an almost complete disruption of Serbian-Muslim relations throughout Serbia. There followed years (1991-1994) of official intimidation, harassment, arbitrary police conduct in Muslim houses, periodic abductions of Muslims living close to Bosnian border, blackmail, robberies, and, finally forced emigration designed to change the demographic picture of the region.⁵¹

The “silent ethnic cleansing” of Sandžak abated in 1994, and since the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement the Muslims have stopped being the target of attacks by regular Serbian police forces as well as various Serbian nationalist militias and paramilitaries from neighboring Bosnia. Also, the peace in Bosnia has allowed voices of discontent with the *Memorandum*’s proposals to emerge among Muslim’s top politicians and intellectuals. In fact, as early as 1993, many prominent Muslim writers rejected the document for its openly collectivist bias. They doubted that a democratic and equitable solution to the ethnic animosities in the region could be found by any sort of repetition of the policies of national

⁵¹ Cases of flagrant violation of the human rights of Sandžak Muslims are well documented by the Humanitarian Law Center, an independent NGO in Belgrade. See Report No. 2, *Discrimination and Harassment of Muslims in the Sanjak* (February 1993); Report No. 11, *Police Repression Against Muslims in the Sanjak* (March 1994); the 1997 Annual Report of the Humanitarian Law Center, 17-19; and its 1998 Annual Report, 36-39. It is still hard to estimate how many Muslims left their homes in the 1990s and went to Turkey or other countries in Europe. The Belgrade Center for Human Rights’ 1998 Report quotes the International Crisis Group as mentioning a figure of 80.000 Muslims, which suggests that almost every second Muslim left, or was forced to leave, the Serbian part of Sandžak.

homogenization that were dominating Serbia. The Montenegrin Muslim intellectual Šerbo Rastoder epitomized their view that the very idea of an autonomous region of Sandžak was based on dubious historical and ethnic arguments that perpetuated an obsolete ideal of the nation-state. Accordingly, “by their nature [such programs] cause an inevitable conflict, which vitiates the basic aims of the initiators.” In the end, the victims of such maximalist national programs “are precisely those on whose behalf [national liberators] act.”⁵²

Discord has also arisen within the ranks of the most influential Muslim party – the PDA. Throughout the mid-1990s, Rasim Ljajić, general secretary of the party, was trying to distance himself from a maximalist party line that emphasized the state-like characteristics of the would-be autonomous region of the Sandžak. Instead, he advocated a policy of reestablishing trust at the local level, that is at the level at which both communities (Serbian and Muslim) live and work together. Eventually, many new Sandžak parties mushroomed with different ideological and national platforms. Still, what unites them all is the acceptance of the Serbian borders and a program for cultural and educational autonomy based on the recognition of the region’s diversity and the ethnic identity of the Muslim population in Serbia.⁵³

Muslim (Bosniak) political representatives have come a long way from advocating cultural autonomy for the region, through various concepts of territorial autonomy,

⁵² Quoted in *N/V*, Beograd, 26 August 1994, 21.

⁵³ Zoran Lutovac, “The Participation of Minorities in Political Life,” 132-134. Interestingly, Sulejman Ugnjanin, the most influential Sandžak’s politician and one of the principal architects of *Memorandum*, has also, as of 1996, rejected the maximalist national program in favor of solving the Muslim national question using democratic means within the institutional channels of the existing Serbian system. As

including secession from Serbia, towards accepting Serbia as their legitimate state within which they could – at least potentially – democratically resolve questions about the economic, cultural and political development of the region. However, the Serbian political regime still refuses to engage in an open dialogue about the possible means of achieving various forms of cultural and possibly territorial autonomy for the Raška region. At the end of the decade, as it was at the beginning, Serbian official policy is based on the non-recognition of Muslims as a distinct ethnic community. It is difficult to envisage substantial change in relations between the Serbs and the Muslims as long as Milošević's mono-ethnic regime remains in power in Serbia.⁵⁴

Kosovo or Kosova – Could It Be Both?

To the frustration of outside observers, virtually everything seems to represent a bone of contention between the Serbian and Kosovo Albanian communities. Caught between two Truths on Kosovo – the Serbian one and the Albanian one – the analysts, more often than not, seek refuge, as Julie Mertus has poignantly asserted, in three types of rhetoric: complexity, denial and Balkan primordialism. When integrated, they offer a

result of this change, he participated at the 1996 elections, in which his party won one seat in the Federal Parliament. It also won majority in the municipal assemblies of Novi Pazar, Sjenica and Tutin.

⁵⁴ Even though the Serbian regime does not openly support gross violations of human rights, as was the case in the early 1990s, the regime still has at its disposal all kinds of discriminatory, administrative techniques against the Muslims in the region. For example, an interim administration was imposed in Novi Pazar on July 10, 1997, even though the List for Sandžak – Dr. Sulejman Ugljanin won absolute majority of seats in the municipal council. That was done under the pretext that the flag of another state (Bosnia and Herzegovina!) is displayed in the offices of the Town Hall of Novi Pazar. In 1998, in another Sandžak municipality, Tutin, the Serbian Ministry of Local Self-Government ordered the town council to stop using Latin script typewriters and to write official documents in Cyrillic script, using ekavian (Serbian) dialect. The Muslims from the region, as well as many Serbs, use ijekavian dialect (typical for Bosnia and Montenegro). Finally, it should be noted that out of 75 judges in both Serbian and Montenegrin parts of Sandžak only 24 are Muslims. All quoted examples are from the 1998 Report of the Humanitarian Law Center, *Spotlight Report No. 28*, 37-39.

powerful “vision” that nothing ever changes in the Balkans: people simply keep killing each other for unknown and utterly unintelligible reasons that are buried deep in the past.⁵⁵

The situation becomes even more “complex” if one tries to take account of the “contributions” of local national historiographies towards understanding the Kosovo issue. Their primary aim is to “enlighten” foreign observers in their version of Truth of Kosovo, and thus build sympathy for their particular exclusive claims to the territory. But their constant references to historical events in Kosovo – the battle between the Serbs and the Ottoman Turks in 1389, the Serbian Exodus from Kosovo in the 1690s, the Albanian League of Prizren in 1878, the Serbian *Reconquista* (or, from the Albanian perspective, invasion) of Kosovo in 1912, etc. – only reinforces the Western political myth of Balkan complexities.⁵⁶

And yet, the Kosovo crisis can and needs to be addressed from a different perspective; a perspective that is not burdened by mythical accounts of the respective Serbian and Albanian pasts.⁵⁷ Such a viewpoint would not deny the significance of the key

⁵⁵ Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 5.

⁵⁶ Recently, however, several historical and sociological monographs and lengthy essays on Kosovo have been published that challenge both the Western myth of Balkan primordialism and the overtly mythical and nationalistic representations of the region. See Christine von Kohl and Wolfgang Libal, “Kosovo, the Gordian Knot of the Balkans,” ed., Robert Elsie, *Kosovo in the Heart of the Powder Keg* (Boulder: Columbia University Press, East European Monographs, 1997), 3-104; Dušan Janjić, “Nacionalni identitet, pokret i nacionalizam Srba i Albanaca,” ed. Dušan Janjić and Škeljzen Maliçi, *Sukob ili dijalog: Srpsko-albanski odnosi i integracija na Balkanu* (Subotica: Evropski građanski centar za rešavanje konflikata, 1994), 111-164; Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); and Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: History of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

⁵⁷ In this regard, one Serbian Kosovo myth has played a formidable role in the work of nationalists of all kinds (writers, historians, poets, journalists, politicians) to engineer popular support for the constitutional changes in Serbia in 1990. It is no accident that Milošević’s famous speech on Kosovo Polje, when he announced the possibility of war for a united Serbia, was given on the 600th hundredth anniversary of the

markers of both Serbian and Kosovo Albanian histories, but would avoid instrumentalizing these events as compelling evidence for one side over the other. Instead it would realize the extent to which national history was being used by both sides as one of many rhetorical devices to legitimize their respective claims to the territory. From such a standpoint, the main question is not whether this or that group can show that its presence in the region has somehow been more historically significant. The emphasis should rather be on the contemporary reasons for the conflict over Kosovo.⁵⁸

Before looking in detail at the origins of the present crisis, it will be instructive to clarify a couple of points about the designations used for the territory and its inhabitants. As from 1990, the official name of the province is "Kosovo and Metohija" (or Kosmet in an abbreviated form) and this is the name used by state officials and in the regime-controlled media.⁵⁹ However, the former name of the province, "Kosovo," is still widespread in the independent Serbian media and until recently, it was the most popular

Kosovo Battle. However, the Serbian nationalist appropriation of Kosovo rhetoric should not be allowed to drown the symbolism of the Kosovo myth, which, as any other great epic deals with eternal themes: love, betrayal, dead, sacrifices, good, evil, etc. On the symbolism of Kosovo myth, see Thomas A. Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha: Kosovo, 1389* (New York: Columbia University Press, East European Monographs, 1990); and Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Devastating Victory and Glorious Defeat: the Mahabharata and Kosovo in National Imaginings," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1997); and a classic Serbian critical historiography of the nationalist appropriation of the Kosovo myth: Miodrag Popović, *Vidovdan i časni krst* (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 1998). Popović's book, in which he brilliantly anticipates the possible consequences of the literal nationalist reading of the Kosovo myth, was first published in 1976.

⁵⁸ Or, to put it differently, people do not kill each other for something that happened two hundred years ago, but because of something that is currently taking place.

⁵⁹ The region had also been officially called Kosovo-Metohija between 1945 and 1968. However, with the constitutional amendments in 1968 granting a greater autonomy to the region, the Albanian communist leaders requested the name to be changed to "Kosovo." The toponym "Metohija" originates from the Greek word "metoh" – the land of the monasteries. This part of the province contains the most historically and culturally important Serbian monasteries. The word "Kosovo" designates the area where the mediaeval Serbian army fought the Ottoman Turks in 1389, which effectively put an end to the

term abroad. Nowadays, the Albanianized version of the term – “Kosova” (which can also be written as Kosovë) – is gaining popularity in foreign accounts of the situation in the region – a practice that can be interpreted as showing sympathy with the plight and political objectives of Kosovo(a) Albanians.⁶⁰

There is similar terminological confusion in the name for the inhabitants of the region. After 1945, in pursuit of a policy of national equality, the Communist party designated the Albanian community as “Šiptari” (Shqiptare, in Albanian), the term used by Albanians themselves to mark the ethnic identity of any member of the Albanian nation, whether living in Albania or elsewhere. This was a forward step, as it replaced older, pejorative Serbian terms such as “Arbanasi,” and “Arnauti” (a word of Turkish origin). However, in the late 1960s, with the increased territorial autonomy of Kosovo, the Albanian leadership requested that the term “Albanians” be used instead, thus opting for a term that emphasized the national, rather than ethnic, self-identification of the Kosovar population. The term “Albanians” was accepted and included in the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution.

In the process, however, the Serbian version of the Albanian term for ethnic Albanians – “Šiptari” – had acquired an openly pejorative flavor, implying cultural and racial inferiority. Nowadays, even though in the documents of the post-socialist Serbia the term “Albanians” is accepted as official, many state and opposition party leaders use the

independence of the great Serbian Mediaeval State. It comes from the Serbian word for a blackbird – kos. Oddly enough, Sqiptare, the Albanian name for Albania, means “land of eagles.”

⁶⁰ The Belgrade Center for Human Rights, *Human Rights in Yugoslavia 1998* (Belgrade, 1999), 356-357.

term “Šiptari” indiscriminately in an effort to relegate the Kosovo Albanians to the status of one among many minority groups in Serbia. Thus the quarrel over the terms used to identify the region and its inhabitants has acquired a powerful emotional and political significance for both communities.

At the heart of these disputes is the **question of identity**, that is the extent to which Kosovar Albanians are, or are not, recognized as a fully sovereign national group in Serbia and Yugoslavia. From this “primordial” disagreement over the question of identity, other political disagreements follow. If Albanians are “only” a minority, should not the Serbian regime have the right to protect territorial integrity of the Serbian state? On the other side, if Albanians are a (sovereign) people, should they not be granted full rights to national-self-determination, including the right to a state on their own? Who has the legitimate right to diagnose (that is, to decide on) the status of a particular national group as a minority or a majority? How should the repression by the Serbian regime be qualified: as a gross violation of human rights, or as a violation of group rights, etc?

These dilemmas are the focus of the following pages. The first part presents an overview of the autonomous status of Kosovo province in the socialist Yugoslavia. The second part discusses the regime’s politics of systemic discrimination against Kosovar Albanians. It also explores various forms of political resistance by Kosovar Albanians against the Serbian regime.

Kosovo's Autonomy, 1945-1989

In hindsight, and especially in the light of the armed Serbian-Albanian conflict in Kosovo in 1998 and the NATO military intervention against Serbia in March 1999, it is hard to argue with the oft-repeated truism that Kosovo has always been a place of two irreconcilable claims to sovereignty. This argument emphasizes the fact that Albanians perceive Kosova as the birthplace of modern Albanian nationalism, but which was not incorporated into Albania due to Serbian occupation of the region in 1912. Serbs, however, perceive Kosovo as the crucible of Serbian nationhood, justly liberated and reintegrated with Serbia in 1912, ending five centuries under the Ottoman Turkish "yoke." Neither narrative leaves space for the existence of the other in the region. Kosovo, or Kosova, could be either Serbian or Albanian, but could not have it both ways.⁶¹

And yet the communist élite tried to reconcile these two claims within the framework of the socialist, federal Yugoslavia: Kosovo remained a part of Serbia, while being an integral part of the federation as well.⁶² This was done by gradually enhancing not only Kosovo's territorial autonomy, but also the status of Kosovo Albanians. In the end, under the 1974 Yugoslav constitutional system, Kosovo emerged as a *de facto* seventh federal unit, while formally still being a part of Serbia. In addition, Kosovo Albanians

⁶¹ Hugh Poulton and Miranda Vickers, "Kosovo Albanians: Ethnic Confrontation with the Slavic State," in *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, eds., Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 139-144.

⁶² Andrew March and Rudra Sil, "The 'Republic of Kosova' (1989-1998) and the Resolution of Ethno-Separatist Conflict: Rethinking 'Sovereignty' in the Post-Cold War Era," (University of Pennsylvania, photocopy, 1999), 3.

were elevated to the status of a nationality (*narodnost*), just one step short of being accepted as one of Yugoslavia's "constitutive" nations.⁶³

This policy of brotherhood and unity, however, failed dismally. Among the very first signs that the Yugoslav socialist paradise was in crisis were Kosovo Albanian demonstrations in 1981 and the (interpretation of) census results of the same year. Given the political emancipation of Kosovo between 1968 and 1981, it may seem difficult to understand, let alone explain, the mass student protests there in 1981. Over this period, Kosova Albanians were in full control of the political, social and cultural affairs of the province. The year 1969 marked the opening of the University of Priština (capital of Kosovo), while the Kosovo Academy of Sciences and Arts was founded in 1978.

The period also will be remembered for the development of strong cultural ties between Kosovo and Albania, which had been frozen for most of the time since 1945.⁶⁴ Moreover, as a result of the so-called "national key" policy (a Yugoslav socialist version of affirmative action), Albanians took over many top managerial positions in the region formerly reserved for Serbs, while at the same time leading federal posts were regularly filled with Kosovo Albanian politicians. The culmination of Kosovo Albanian achievements came in 1978-79, when a leading Kosovo Albanian politician, Fadil Hoxha, became a vice-president of the Yugoslav Presidency. Thus it seemed as if Kosovo Albanians had finally reached the point of being fully recognized on equal terms with the

⁶³ For a more elaborate presentation of the 1974 Constitution, see Chapter Two of this dissertation, the section on nation-destroying in Yugoslavia.

⁶⁴ Bernard Zeneli, "Albanian Nationalism Revisited," (presented at the Fourth Annual Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, New York, April 1998): 12.

members of Slavic nations in the country, and that they might eventually be granted the long-coveted status of the one of Yugoslavia's nations.⁶⁵

Yet the economic development of the province did not keep pace with its political and cultural progress, and by 1981 its economy was in dire straits. Despite huge federal financial injections during the 1970s and 1980s, all initiatives to develop the region failed dismally. Paradoxically, the very nature of the Yugoslav socialist, planned economy effectively undermined all federal economic incentives. The gap between the high prices of industrial goods and low prices of raw materials and agricultural produce trapped the least developed regions in Yugoslavia, of which Kosovo was the outstanding example, in poverty.⁶⁶ Of course, a strategy of investing in labor-intensive industries might have reduced unemployment and helped spark the economy, but this would have required economic reasoning to prevail over the administrative logic of the socialist model of self-management and directive development.

During the late 1970s, provincial economic and social conditions deteriorated almost by the month, creating a vicious circle of constant high unemployment (27.5% in 1981), hyperinflation and increasing poverty. Moreover Kosovo's health and social services were far below the Yugoslav average, and its educational system proved

⁶⁵ Julie A. Mertus, 17. This scenario might seem fanciful today. Yet other nations had already been granted such status. Yugoslavia between the wars had officially been a state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1945, Macedonians and Montenegrins were recognized as constitutive nations, and in 1971, Muslims were also recognized as a nation. So Kosovar Albanians had good reasons to believe that eventually they would be recognized as a sovereign nation.

⁶⁶ Hivzi Islami, "Demografska stvarnost Kosova," in *Sukob ili dijalog: Srpsko-albanski odnosi i integracija Balkana*, eds., Dušan Janjić i Škeljezen Malići (Subotica: Evropski gradjanski centar za rešavanje konflikata, 1994), 30-31.

hopelessly inadequate to deal with the failures of the communist model of modernization. Thus, during the 1970s, Priština University specialized almost exclusively in Albanian history, literature and arts, while training in modern, technical disciplines was neglected. A large number of young people enrolled mainly in order to postpone the shock of being unemployed. By 1981 Priština had the highest ratio of students of any Yugoslav city.⁶⁷

This mass of young Albanian liberal arts graduates eventually became the backbone of the Albanian nationalist movement in the 1980s.⁶⁸ Their nationalist “baptism” occurred on March 11, 1981, when they organized demonstrations on the streets of Priština. The first demonstrations represented, in the words of Helen Lindholm, “mainly a peaceful outburst of despair and frustration,” provoked by the rapid economic and social deterioration of the province.⁶⁹ However, the intervention of the special federal police forces sharpened the students’ demands for republican status and the possibility of uniting with Albania. Finally, on April 1 and 2, police repression provoked a mass revolt of people throughout the province; a revolt that was finally quenched by Yugoslav army troops.⁷⁰

Hence, what started as peaceful student rallies against Kosovo’s social and economic problems turned into a mass uprising of the Kosovo Albanian population for rights they thought to have already gained in 1974. In 1981, however, it was painfully

⁶⁷ Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1991), 61. Kosovo’s ratio of students was 274.7 per 1,000 inhabitants, while the Yugoslav national average was 195. For a detailed picture of Kosovo educational system, see A. Pipa and S. Repihsti, *Studies on Kosova* (New York: Columbia UP, 1984), 111-114, 144.

⁶⁸ Mertus, 29.

⁶⁹ Helen Lindholm, “Kosovo – Intifada Tomorrow?,” *Republika*, Special Issue No. 9 (Belgrade, 1994): 14.

⁷⁰ Shkëlzen Maliqi, “The Albanian Movement in Kosova,” *Kosova Separate Worlds Reflections and Analyses 1989-1998* (Prishtina: Dukagjini PH, 1998), 20.

obvious that being a member of a *narodnost* (nationality) did not imply equal status with the members of *narodi* (nations). Caught by surprise by discontented Albanian students, the federal communist leadership could not think of anything else but to proclaim the 1981 demonstrations as counter-revolutionary; a slogan already devoid of any meaning, but which allowed police and the state-controlled judiciary to “discover” more than two hundred “hostile and counter-revolutionary groups.”⁷¹ In a series of mass show-trials in which there was no chance of independent monitoring, 226 students and younger workers were sentenced to up to fifteen years in prison for counter-revolutionary and irredentist activities.⁷² The socialist Yugoslav regime hoped that such draconian measures would preclude any further demand for self-determination. In fact, as would become abundantly clear in the following years, such politics only provoked further homogenization of Kosovo Albanians around the struggle for the status of a constitutive nation.⁷³

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷² Mertus, 43. Between March 11 and November 6, 1981, more than one thousand communist party members were expelled, while eleven party units in Kosovo were shut down. Finally, the provincial leadership was replaced with a new one that was supposed to keep Kosovo in Yugoslavia. However, these “loyal” Albanians came under severe attack by the end of the 1980s, when Milošević took complete control over all Serbia’s affairs. In 1989, several Kosovo leaders, including the top Kosovo Albanian party official Azem Vllasi, were arrested for supporting the strike of Albanian miners at the Trepča mining-industrial complex in Mitrovica. The arrest effectively put an end to the Kosovo’s communist party. Vllasi spent a year in prison. See Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian*, 241-243.

⁷³ Given the ambiguous constitutional status of Kosovo in Yugoslavia, the decision was made at the federal level that the federal police force would monitor the province, not the Serbian one (a situation that continued until 1990 when first Slovenia and then Croatia pulled their troops out of the region). This decision demonstrates the inability of the federal Yugoslavia to deal with the nationality question in the 1980s. For the federal representatives were not prepared either to challenge the Serbian claim for greater control over the province, or to support publicly the Kosovo Communist leadership’s efforts to preserve Kosovo autonomy. Instead, the Yugoslav Presidency (the ruling body in the former Yugoslavia) opted for a compromise consisting of brutal repression of Kosovar Albanians on one side, and blocking Serbian representatives’ attempts to open the question of reintegration of Kosovo in Serbia on the other. In the late 1980s this played into Milošević’s hands, when he used it to justify his resort to non-institutional means of reintegrating Kosovo within Serbia.

The 1981 Albanian demonstrations and the harsh governmental response not only radicalized the Albanian population; they also fostered the rise of the Serbian nationalist movement. From the Kosovo Serbs' perspective, the extension of Kosovo's autonomy in 1974 was at the expense of their political, cultural and economic status in the province. The Kosovar Serbs feared that, even though Kosovo remained officially part of Serbia, they had been effectively relegated to the political status of a minority in their "own" state. The uprising of 1981 and the "discovery" of irredentist activities in the province seemed to fulfil their fears that they had become second-rate citizens in Kosovo. Further proof seemed to be provided by the 1981 census results, which immediately sparked heated debate over the possible causes of the declining number of Serbs in the province compared to the soaring number of Albanians.

These results showed that by 1981, 77.5% of the Kosovo population was Albanian (1,226,736), and only 13.2% Serb (210,000). The remaining nine percent consisted of Muslims, Romanies (Gypsies), Turks and Croats. These results confirmed a declining trend in the number of Serbs, which had already been apparent at the 1971 census. From 1948 to 1961, the ethnic structure of the population been stable at around 67% Albanians and 23.5% Serbs. Thus the 1981 results showed a marked change.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ See Nada Raduški, "Demografska slika Kosova," (Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka, 1998): 3. The Albanian population boycotted the 1991 census, but the Federal Bureau of Statistics estimated that the trend continued in the 1980s. According to their 1991 estimates, the population was 82% Albanian (1,596,072), and 10% Serb (194,190). Albanian scholars put the number of Albanians even higher, at about two million (90% of the total). For an excellent statistical overview of Serbo-Albanian Relations, see Srdan Bogosavljević, "A Statistical Picture of Serbo-Albanian Relations," *Republika*, Special Issue No. 9 (Belgrade, February 1994): 18-20.

Serbian nationalist intellectuals quickly linked Kosovo Albanian “irredentist” policies to the province’s demographic trend. At first hesitantly, then later in the 1980s in a flood of articles and interviews, leading Serbian national figures tried to portray the Kosovo Albanians’ birth rate – the highest in Europe – as an anti-Serbian plot, aimed ultimately at making the province an ethnic Albanian paradise. They also used the 1981 census results to show that increasing numbers of Kosovo Serbs were leaving the province for central Serbia. Without a shred of evidence, the Serbian migrations from Kosovo were branded with the terms **pogrom** and **genocide**.⁷⁵

In 1990, a group of independent Yugoslav intellectuals finally reacted to Serbian policies based on attributing “genocidal” motives to Albanians in Kosovo. Although their analysis was long overdue, it passed unnoticed as the socialist system neared collapse and Serbian populism raged. Yet it is worth careful consideration, because it still represents the most complete report on the Kosovo crisis, or as they put it, the Kosovo knot.⁷⁶

So who, or what, was most responsible for the ethnic shift and the emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo? The report commenced its answer to this question

⁷⁵ In Chapter Two, the content of *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art* had been analyzed. This document effectively legitimized the rhetoric of genocide in the Serbian media in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Typical examples of such rhetoric were found by an analysis of articles in the most influential daily in the country, *Politika*, in 1990, which showed that Albanians were habitually presented as “wild,” “enemies of all colors,” “separatists and terrorists,” “fanatics,” “rapist of Serbian women,” “selfish and egotistical” and endowed with the “virus of insanity.” See *Izveštaj nezavisne komisije, Kosovski čvor: drešiti ili seći?* (Beograd: Chronos, 1990), 113-126.

⁷⁶ See *Izveštaj nezavisne komisije, Kosovski čvor: drešiti ili seći?* (Beograd: Chronos, 1990). The Independent Commission Report was written for the first non-communist political groups in Yugoslavia, the Union for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative and the Yugoslav Forum for Human Rights. Its members were from all parts of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo. However, they were treated with suspicion throughout the country, for their political aim was to preserve Yugoslavia as a democratic federation. Their work for civil liberties and human rights was in vain, as they soon found themselves amidst

by stating that of the three possible models of organizing relations among different groups – coexistence, assimilation, and domination – domination has always characterized the situation in Kosovo. This cultural-historic pattern has been repeated by both Serbs and Albanians, and has its roots in the history of the region. Thus, whichever political group emerged as victorious in a particular period it would always insist on putting their own people in charge. The ethnic differences in the region then meant that the authoritarian character of government was confused with the ethnicity of the oppressor. Immediately after 1945, the Serbs, being far more numerous in Communist Party ranks than Albanians, dominated the administration. Although this was essentially just the expression of an anti-democratic order, the Albanian population perceived it as primarily the product of a Serbian regime.⁷⁷

In the mid-1960s, the fall of the Serbian strongman Aleksandar Ranković was followed by genuine reforms in Kosovo, leading to an extension of its autonomy vis-à-vis Serbia. These sweeping changes not only enhanced the status of the Albanian population in the province; they also allowed the full Albanization of Kosovo's communist party. Just as Serbs had previously controlled the party, in the 1970s it was the Kosovar Albanians' turn. In full accordance with the 1974 Constitution, their rule was based on the politics of nurturing Kosovo's "internal sovereignty." By then, the ethnic principle seemed more legitimate than it had been in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the ideology of socialism still prevailed over that of nationhood. In any case, the underlying model of

increasingly powerful ethnic movements throughout the former Yugoslavia. The authors of the report were Srđan Popović, Ivan Janković, Vesna Pešić, Nataša Kandić and Svetlana Slapšak.

domination remained essentially the same, but this time it was the Serbs who were pushed out of their previous favored position into increasing subordination.⁷⁸

Moreover, as a result of the genuine ethnification of the Yugoslav political system, in the 1970s people started migrating to their “kin-republic.” Serbs from Croatia migrated to Serbia, Croats from Vojvodina to Croatia, Serbs and Croats from Bosnia to Serbia and Croatia, Muslims from Croatia and Serbia to Bosnia, and, most importantly, Serbs and Montenegrins from impoverished Kosovo to Serbia and Montenegro. In other words, the trend of peoples being drawn towards their kin “state” was not some special characteristic of the migratory processes in Kosovo. Instead, the Kosovo migrations were part of a general Yugoslav trend, although they were given special impetus by the extremely backward economic and social conditions prevailing in the region.⁷⁹ To put it differently, despite the various forms of ethnic pressure against Serbs, the Serbian and Montenegrin migrations from Kosovo in the 1970s were more the result of the complex economic, political, social and cultural factors at work there than of any “devious” Albanian plan.⁸⁰

The rise of Milošević in late 1980s brought a new twist to the model of domination in Kosovo. Inflammatory anti-Albanian rhetoric in the Serbian media and by prominent Serbian intellectuals served to justify a new round of Serbian domination in Kosovo. This

⁷⁷ *Kosovski čvor*, 8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 15-18. Also, see Dušan Janjić, “Nacionalni identitet, pokret i nacionalizam Srba i Albanaca,” 128-133.

⁷⁹ Branko Horvat, *Kosovsko pitanje* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988), 109.

⁸⁰ *Kosovski čvor*, 26. Also, see an incisive article by Marina Blagojević, “Iseljavanje Srba sa Kosova: trauma i/li katarza,” in *Srpska strana rata: trauma i katarza u istorijskom pamćenju* (Beograd: Republika, 1996), 232-264.

“recapture” of Kosovo was legitimized by claims that the individual human rights of the Serbian and Montenegrin population were being grossly violated through intimidation by local police, forcing the local Serbs to sell their property and, finally, systematic rapes of Serbian women as an instrument of ethnic repression.

And yet, none of these accusations were ever fully substantiated. In fact, all available information suggests that throughout the period of the so-called Albanian terror in the province, it was Albanians who remained the primary target of repression by the Yugoslav political system. For example, Albanians continued to provide the greatest number of political prisoners in the country. Similarly, available data on the frequency of inter-ethnic rapes support a rather different conclusion, as the rate of such crimes was steadily declining.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s one could talk about an almost complete break in contacts between the two ethnic communities in Kosovo – Serbian and Albanian. For both Serbs and Albanians, it simply became difficult to come into contact with the other side, while intermarriages were almost non-existent.⁸¹ Thus, if there was any “crime” committed by the Albanians in the 1970s, it was the same as that committed by the Serbs before 1966 and after 1989. The situation simply reflected total inaction on the part of the

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37-47, 143-147. On the turning points in cementing separation between the two Kosovo communities in the 1980s, see also Julie Mertus, *How Myths and Truths Started a War*. Her emphasis is on opposing Serbian and Albanian interpretations of four events that shaped their respective public opinions: the 1981 Kosovo demonstrations, the 1985 Martinović case (when a Kosovar Serbian peasant was allegedly impaled on a bottle by his Kosovar Albanian neighbors), the 1987 Paraćin massacre (when a Kosovar Albanian soldier, while serving his term in the Yugoslav army, killed four other soldiers in a dormitory) and the alleged poisoning in 1990 of Kosovar Albanian schoolchildren. These four cases became symbols of the two communities moving away from each other, until by 1990 almost all contacts between them had stopped.

Kosovo ethnic élites in the face of the accelerating separation of the Serb and Albanian communities. Then, just as throughout the 1990s, the only solution to the Kosovo knot would have been the rejection of the domination model of common life in favor of one based on the coexistence of different ethnic groups sharing the same territory.⁸²

By 1990, such political suggestions could only fall on deaf ears. For by then socialist Yugoslavia was in disarray, while the Serbian regime was celebrating the adoption of the new constitution of the (finally) united Serbia. Not surprisingly, in an attempt to stop the process of political self-identification by the Kosovar Albanians, the previous substantive autonomous status of Kosovo was reduced to that of an administrative region within Serbia. But it was already too late. The period 1974-1989 successfully imbued the Kosovar Albanians with an ever-stronger sense of national consciousness and memories of considerable recent territorial autonomy with region's own territorial boundaries, history and symbols. "This genie [of self-determination]," as Andrew March and Rudra Sil nicely explain, "once let out of bottle, prohibits the Kosovo question from ever being viewed as a matter of greater or lesser minority rights granted or revoked by Serbia."⁸³ This is the lesson that the Serbian regime had to learn over and over again in the 1990s, at the price of great sacrifices by the Albanian population.

The Republic of Kosova – a State within a State, 1990-1998

In 1990, the struggle for the unification of Serbia seemed to be over. The former Yugoslav constitutional "politics" of keeping Serbia separated into three parts was in ruins

⁸² *Ibid.*, 156.

(and, also, Yugoslavia itself), and it seemed that time had come for the Serbian regime to engage in active policies that would legally and institutionally incorporate Serbian provinces into a new centralized system of government. Such a task, however, required, in the words of Muhamedin Kulaši (Muhamedin Kullashi), surgical cuts into Kosovo's institutional and legal system to root out any traces of provincial autonomy.⁸⁴

This legal "operation" started with the adoption of the *Program for the Attainment of Peace, Freedom, Equality and Prosperity in Kosovo* by the then still socialist Serbian Assembly (March 1990). The *Program* provided the ideological and legal framework of new rules of political correctness in the country. Under the pretext of protecting all national communities in Kosovo (Serbs, Montenegrins, Muslims, Turks, Romanies, and Croats), and pointing out that Albanians enjoyed rights "unparalleled by any other national minority in the world," it claimed that Serbia, as a legal state, had legitimate right to stop Albanian separatism. Also, that in order to protect "endangered nations and nationalities" in Kosovo from further menace, "all means of the legal state" should be used. Accordingly, the *Program* included the possibility of introducing "specific measures for preservation of order, peace, freedom, equality, and the constitution and integrity of Serbia." Finally, it authorized the Serbian Assembly to annul all laws and decrees of the then still functioning Assembly of Kosovo that were supposedly in conflict with the *Program*.⁸⁵

⁸³ March and Sil, "The 'Republic of Kosova' and the Resolution of Ethno-Separatist Conflict," 3.

⁸⁴ Muhamedin Kulaši, "Kosovo i raspad Jugoslavije," ed. Dušan Janjić, *Sukob ili dijalog*, 171.

⁸⁵ See Janjić, "Report," 39-40.

New republican laws and regulations soon mushroomed. Within a year more than twenty new laws were adopted. Their primary aim was to wipe out any trace of the formerly recognized nationality rights in Kosovo in the spheres of education, health care, self-government, information, economy, culture, sport, etc. It is worth highlighting some of the measures. First, the *Law on Actions of the Republican Administration in Exceptional Circumstances*. This law allowed “temporary” (that is, emergency) measures to be introduced in the province. Using this law as a legal shield, the Serbian government replaced the entire ruling Albanian political and managerial élite with Kosovar Serbs. This law, in coordination with the *Law on Labor Relations in Exceptional Conditions* (adopted with the internal instruction that the law should be used only on the territory of Kosovo), created a “legal framework” for dismissing of more than 100,000 Albanians from their jobs.⁸⁶ These draconian acts were justified by reference to alleged “serious violations of public interest,” “failure to fulfill legal obligations,” and “severely disrupted self-management relations.”⁸⁷

The *Law on the Termination of the Work of the Assembly and the Executive Council of Kosovo* was adopted in July 1990. This law prepared the ground for the imposition of “colonial” administrative rule of the province. At the same time, a new *Law on Information* effectively usurped the rights of the Albanian population in this sphere: the regime quickly banned the most influential Kosovar Albanian daily, *Rilindja*, and took over Kosovo Radio and Television. The most important Kosovar Albanian cultural institutions

⁸⁶ Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, “Izveštaj o ljudskim pravima u Srbiji za 1997,” 52.

⁸⁷ Humanitarian Law Center, *Spotlight Report No. 24* (February 1998), 2-3.

were also closed down – the Kosovo Academy of Science and Arts, the Kosovo Institute for History, the Institute for Albanian Studies, the Kosovo Bureau for Textbooks, etc.⁸⁸ Viewed from Belgrade, these institutions were hotbeds of Albanian nationalism which could not be tolerated.

On August 7, 1990, the Serbian Parliament also cancelled all the special provincial aspects of educational system, including special programs in history, the Albanian language, geography, arts and music. Instead, the Serbian legislature mandated uniform elementary and secondary school programs for all schools in Serbia, including those in Kosovo, Vojvodina and Sandžak, irrespective of special cultural needs of the members of various Serbian national communities. Albanian teachers refused to implement the new school curricula in social sciences and humanities. The response of the Serbian authorities was swift: they stopped funding Albanian schools in Kosovo.⁸⁹

The enrollment of Albanians in secondary schools was also restricted. Whereas practically all Serbian children went to secondary school, the ratio for Albanian youngsters fell to about one in three. The situation deteriorated further at the beginning of the 1991/92 school year, when the Serbian authorities banned Albanian teachers and students from using their school buildings unless they agreed to follow the Serbian curricula. Similar administrative measures had been already introduced in 1990 in all the departments at the Priština University, including the Kosovo Textbook Publishing Company and the

⁸⁸ Helsinški odbor, 52-53.

⁸⁹ Humanitarian Law Center, *Spotlight Report No. 24* (Belgrade, February 1998), 3. The report is almost entirely dedicated to the problem of education of Kosovar Albanians.

University Student Center. The *Law on Labor Relations in Exceptional Conditions* legalized these actions, and allowed the authorities to dismiss 18,000 teaching and non-teaching staff, many for reasons such as “arriving late for work, leaving work without the permission of the dean” and the like.⁹⁰

A legal keystone of the new, united Serbia was laid on November 27, 1992, when the Serbian Parliament adopted the *Declaration on Human Rights and Rights of Members of National Minorities*. Given the very name of the declaration, it merits further attention. In its first section, the emphasis is on the statement that the Republic of Serbia is a “state of equal citizens living in it,” and that discrimination against citizens on the basis of their national affiliation is prohibited. To support this claim, the *Declaration* deals explicitly with the case of Kosovar Albanian national minority, whose rights, as it is said, are “far above international standards.” These rights are then enumerated in section two: the use of their mother tongue, the right to health protection, free profession of their religion, free access to information in the Albanian language, organization of constitutionally established territorial autonomy, etc.⁹¹

⁹⁰ *Spotlight Report No. 24*, 4. In January 1992, this situation in education finally prompted Kosovar Albanians to start self-organizing in private homes and other places that were beyond police control. This paved the way for the creation of a parallel Albanian-language education system in Kosova. By 1997, more than 1500 “classrooms” (private rooms, garages, storage areas, empty buildings, etc.) were hosting 65,000 high school students, and 12,000-15,000 undergraduates. See March and Sill, 12. On September 1, 1996, under the auspices of the Italian organization St. Egidio, Milošević and Kosovar Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova had signed an agreement on the normalization of education in Kosovo. Although this raised hopes that the Albanians might return to the schools, the situation remained essentially the same throughout 1997 and 1998. See *Spotlight Report No. 24*, 10.

⁹¹ A full text of the *Declaration* is published in Dušan Janjić, *Report on the Juridical, Sociological and Political Aspects of the Nationality Politics*, 88-94.

However, from section three to the end of the document, the language changes and instead of elaborating basic principles of human and minority rights protection, the legislators provide readers with a perfected version of the arguments in the infamous 1986 *Memorandum* of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art. For example:

- The present situation concerning civil rights and freedoms as well as the rights of members of national minorities in Kosovo and Metohija is said to have “resulted from the forced change, unparalleled in the developed democracies in the past few decades, of the ethnic composition of the population by the **Albanian separatist movement**.”
- “The history of Serbia and history of Kosovo and Metohija are the history of **continuous ethnic cleansing of Serbs** from these areas” [data on the number of Serbs expelled from 1878 until 1991 are then presented].
- “The process of Albanization of Kosovo and Metohija which has been going on for decades represents the greatest ethnic cleansing in Europe, pursued for purposes of detaching Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia and Yugoslavia and creating a **Greater Albania**. **Uncivilized and forced change of ethnic composition** led to numerical differences between Albanians and Serbs and other nations on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija.”
- “The separatist movement is abusing that fact [the fact of their numerical superiority] to claim that the Albanians are **not a national minority but a nation**. From this flow **unacceptable requests** by the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija for the creation of their own state.”⁹²

In a nutshell, what was labeled as a declaration of human rights, in fact depicted the Kosovar Albanians as an uncivilized people. For the past century and half, they had supposedly been continuously engaged in ethnic cleansing against the Serbs in order to change the ethnic composition of Kosovo by force, and thus create a greater Albania.

These claims-accusations followed a typical pattern, but this time they came from the highest representative body of a (supposedly) democratic country. In 1986, this had

⁹² *Report*, 90-91 (highlighted by D.G.).

been the line of the nationalist intelligentsia. By 1989-91 it had become the Constitutional position, and formed the basis of the programs of the most influential Serbian parties, although the voice of ethnic monism had still been muffled to a certain extent by a simultaneous emphasis on basic liberal and democratic principles. With the 1992 *Declaration* we finally see the full articulation of the idea of segregation. For its main purpose is not to protect human and minority rights, but to justify the politics of keeping "certain ethnic groups separate, unmixed and ranked in a hierarchical position."⁹³

Thus, from the beginning of the unified Serbia, a formal depreciation of the status of Kosovar Albanians permeated all Serbian laws and regulations governing economic, social, cultural and political life in Kosovo. The politics of oppression was, moreover, fully institutionalized. It thus took on systemic characteristics, amounting, in the words of Đerd Rrapi, to formal, ideological and informal discrimination against the Albanian population on the basis of their ethnicity.⁹⁴ Formal and informal discrimination was practiced on a day-to-day basis by the Serbian police in Kosovo, who used physical violence, open threats, insults and other forms of intimidation against the Albanian population.⁹⁵ Rrapi describes as ideological discrimination the attitude of those Kosovar Serbs who supported

⁹³ Patrick Thornberry. Quoted in Dušan Janjić, *Report*, 45.

⁹⁴ Đerd Rrapi, "Kosovo danas," (Priština, photocopy, November 1997), 8. A similar point is also made by Bajram Keljmendi, "Institucionalizovana diskriminacija," *Srpsko-albanski dijalog* (Beograd: Helsinški komitet za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 1997), 91-94.

⁹⁵ All these are well documented in the Humanitarian Law Center reports. See *Spotlight Report* No. 6, "Repression of Albanians," 61-82; and *Spotlight Report* No. 16, "Crackdown on Kosovo Albanians," 199-256. Just the section subtitles in these reports give a good summary of the nature of discrimination in Kosovo: political arrests, arbitrary searches, abuse of investigation interviews, advocacy of ethnic hatred, appropriation of property, repression of political rights, political trials, etc.

the politics of Serbianization of Kosovo based on the idea of Serbian “sacred land” and ethnic superiority of Serbs vis-à-vis Kosovar Albanians.⁹⁶

In what follows, the Kosovar Albanian response to the Serbian takeover of Kosovo will be presented. As the Serbian political scene became increasingly pluralized in the late 1980s-early 1990s, the same process was repeated in Kosovo. However, unlike in Serbia, where former communists emerged as dominating socialist nationalists, the Kosovar Communist party had been politically liquidated by the Serbian regime. Under such conditions, the first kernels of pluralism occurred in 1988 in the ranks of the Association of Writers of Kosova and the Kosova Association of Philosophers and Sociologists. They, as much as Serbian intellectuals in the mid-1980s, were trying to raise the Kosovar Albanian question from a non-socialist (either communitarian-nationalist or more civic-democratic) perspective.⁹⁷

Also, in what seems to be another similarity with the Belgrade political scene, the process of pluralization was eventually taken over by the nationalist political parties, while democratic ones remained at the margins of the Kosova political scene. The marginalization of democratic alternatives in Kosova, however, should be interpreted from

⁹⁶ “Kosovo danas,” 10. In 1997, Belgrade’s Forum for Ethnic Relations and the Priština Institute of Philosophy had organized a joint project on the anatomy of Kosovo crisis. One of the subprojects dealt with the question of individual human rights in Kosovo. Research by Pajazit Nushi showed that two ethnic communities had radically different experiences. While Kosovar Serbs expressed satisfaction with the protection of their rights, almost 90% of Kosovar Albanians claimed that their rights were grossly violated. This supports Rapi’s thesis on the Kosovar Serbs’ assumption of their dominant position in society, as well as their lack of concern for the violation of basic human rights of their Albanian neighbors. See Pajazit Nushi, “Koliko se danas na Kosovu i Metohiji poštuju individualna ljudska prava,” (Priština, photocopy, 1997), 1-7. His paper also shows how the distinction between individual and group rights in Kosovo was blurred. For, although individual rights were being violated, this was on the basis of individuals being members of the “wrong” ethnic group.

the perspective of the Serbian regime's politics of suspending the autonomy of the province. The so-called civic option could never have lasted long in a situation viewed by the Kosovar Albanians as one of police and military occupation of Kosova. The civic parties' arguments in support of democratic processes both at the level of Kosova and Yugoslavia were quickly taken over by political groups that gave absolute priority to the question of the status of Kosova.⁹⁸

In other words, the experience of Serbian repression in the late 1980s made Kosovar Albanians determined to defend their claims for full territorial sovereignty and the status of sovereign nation for Albanians. In 1990, the Kosovar Albanian delegates to the banned provincial assembly were just as enthusiastic for their own state as any other group in the former Yugoslavia. In July, they adopted the *Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Kosova*. Then in September they met in secret in the Kosovar city of Kačanik. At this "session," Kosovar Albanians ratified the so-called *Kačanik Constitution*, the *Electoral Law* and the *Law on Political Association*. Finally, in September 1991, a referendum was held at which, according to Albanian sources, 87% of eligible voters supported the *Declaration* and sovereignty for the Republic of Kosova.⁹⁹

In the process of political pluralization, the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK) headed by Ibrahim Rugova emerged as the strongest national Kosovar Albanian party.

⁹⁷ Maliqi, 26.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 34. Civic groups emerged out of the Association of Philosophers and Sociologists, and their main representatives were Veton Surroi, Muhamedin Kullashi and Shkëlzen Maliqi. Supporters of the nationalist political platform came mainly from the Kosova Association of Writers. Ibrahim Rugova headed this current, and he soon emerged as the most important Kosova Albanian politician.

⁹⁹ Fehmi Agani, Nacija, nacionalna manjina i samoopredeljenje," in *Sukob ili dijalog*, 209.

Within months, the LDK claimed to have 700,000 registered members. Although this figure must be exaggerated, since it would include almost every adult in Kosova, the party had clearly established its claim to embody the Kosovar Albanian national will.¹⁰⁰

The LDK nurtured strong ties with the Albanian national parties in Macedonia and Montenegro. Thus, in October 1991, the *Coordinating Committee of Albanian Political Parties in Yugoslavia*, headed by Rugova, put forward a political platform that to a great extent still represents the Kosovar Albanian solution of the Albanian question. The platform set out the Albanian Kosovar position in three possible cases:

1. If the external and internal borders of the socialist Yugoslavia remained unchanged, ethnic Albanians within Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro should enjoy the status of a nation, not a national minority. This implies the elevation of the province of Kosovo to the status of a Republic.
2. If Yugoslavia's internal borders change, the Yugoslav Albanians have the right to unite into an Albanian Republic within Yugoslavia. Then Kosova would incorporate those territories in central Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia that were populated by Albanians.
3. If Yugoslav external borders were changed, that is, in the case of Yugoslavia's dissolution, Albanians should call for the unification of all of the Albanian lands in the Balkans. The unification of the Albanian people and the demarcation of the

¹⁰⁰ Maliqi, 30.

territory would be based on the principle of “ethnic boundaries,” as envisioned by the First Prizren League of 1878.¹⁰¹

These propositions demonstrated that by 1991 the Albanian nationalist movement was just a mirror image of the nationalist projects raging throughout the former Yugoslavia. In response to the projects of Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia, Albanian national leaders offered their own idea of a Greater Albania. As with the Serbian and Croatian nationalists, the legitimizing principle would be ethnic monism. But the unfolding of the Yugoslav drama soon forced Albanian parties in Macedonia and Montenegro to accept these former Yugoslav republics as their own home. Kosovar Albanians were left trying to establish a sovereign Kosova as their only feasible political aim for the foreseeable future. A consensus emerged that all other questions of democratic reform should be subordinated to achieving full-fledged territorial sovereignty. Or, in the words of Lutovac, their strategic commitment was pan-Albanian unification, while differences “arose only in tactical approaches to this strategic goal.”¹⁰²

However, in spite of their maximalist claims, the LDK opted for minimalist ways of achieving them; that is, for a Gandhi-like politics of non-violent opposition to “colonial” Serbian administration in Kosova.¹⁰³ All Kosovar Albanian parties undertook the politics

¹⁰¹ Predrag Simić, *The Kosovo and Metohija Problem and Regional Security in the Balkans* (Belgrade: Institute for International Politics, 1996), 13.

¹⁰² Zoran Lutovac, “The Participation of Minorities in Political Life,” in *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia*, 126.

¹⁰³ Rugova himself offered the most persuasive explanation for this mini-max approach: “We are not certain how strong the Serbian military presence in the province actually is, but we do know that it is overwhelming and that we have nothing to set against the tanks and other modern weaponry in Serbian hands. We would have no chance of successfully resisting the army.” Quoted in Vickers, 264.

of active, peaceful boycott of the Serbian administration of the province. As a result, a complete set of parallel institutions was created between 1992 and 1996, leading to total separation of the Serb-controlled Kosovo administration from the Kosovar Albanian-controlled society.¹⁰⁴

In an effort to respond to the regime's politics of full colonialization of the province, Kosovar Albanians organized their own parliamentary and presidential elections in May 1992. These were deemed illegal by the Serbian administration. These elections were the act, as Vickers puts it, of a "mini-state in the making."¹⁰⁵ Given that by then, the process of national homogenization of Kosovar Albanians was complete, it is not surprising that Rugova's party won a reported 99.5% of the vote, while Rugova himself was elected president of the Republic of Kosova with 95% of the vote.¹⁰⁶

A few months later, the Kosovar Albanians boycotted the December 1992 Yugoslav elections, on the pretext that Republic of Kosova was no longer part of Yugoslavia. At that time, however, there was substantial international pressure on the Kosovar Albanians to participate in the elections to support reform-minded federal Prime

¹⁰⁴ Many analysts define Serbian policies in Kosovo as the politics of apartheid. However, even though they were based on the formal legalization of the inferior position of Kosovar Albanians, once they were implemented, Kosovar Albanians did not challenge them. Unlike the South African blacks, who fought for full incorporation into the political community on a basis of equality, Kosovar Albanians opted to break all ties with a regime they perceived as colonizing and oppressive. So, in a somewhat paradoxical fashion, Kosovar Albanians turned Serbian policies to their own advantage, systematically cutting off all remaining contacts with the Kosovar Serbs. The Kosovar Albanian parties were guided not by an ideal of political equality, but by the ethnicized version of the principle of national self-determination, including secession.

¹⁰⁵ *Between Serb and Albanian*, 259.

¹⁰⁶ Slobodanka Kovačević and Putnik Dajić, *Chronology of the Yugoslav Crisis 1942-1993*, 72. Non-Albanian parties were also invited to participate at the elections; a call that was accepted by the Democratic Party (a Muslim party) and by the Turkish Peoples Party.

Minister Milan Panić in his fight against Milošević's openly war-mongering policies against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ultimate Kosovar Albanian decision was, nevertheless, to boycott the elections, the results of which (Panić's defeat) effectively foreclosed any prospect of a genuine democratic development in Serbia in the 1990s.

Many Serbian intellectuals regarded the boycott as ultimate "proof" of Albanian (extreme) nationalism. Thus Vladimir Cvetković, a Serbian (national) liberal philosopher, writes of the Kosovar Albanian minority's "continuous and almost fanatical boycotting" of all of Serbian and Yugoslav elections.¹⁰⁷ By contrast, Dušan Janjić, a sociologist and a *spiritus movens* of many informal contacts between Albanian and Serbian intellectuals in the 1990s, offers a more nuanced understanding of the reasons for the boycotts. He believes that the Kosovar Albanian leaders were confusing questions of the legitimacy of the Serbian state with the legality of various forms of political struggle against the inherently oppressive Serbian regime. In his view, participating in elections would not have implied accepting the legitimacy of the Serbian regime or the state, or preclude any future negotiations between the two sides. Accepting the elections would simply represent Kosovar Albanian recognition of basic democratic principles, which include participating in the elections. By renouncing democratic means of political struggle, they were left with options based on a strong communitarian bias, emphasizing collective Albanian rights

¹⁰⁷ See Vladimir Cvetković, "Bermudski trougao moderne politike: demokratija, multukulturalizam, nacionalizam," *Nova srpska politička misao* Vol. IV, 3-4 (1997): 9 (footnote 32).

instead of the individual rights of all inhabitants of Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic background.¹⁰⁸

Janjić's analysis is certainly correct, however it neglects one important factor. The Kosovar Albanian decision to boycott elections was the result not only of their ethnic bias in favor of the creation of an independent Albanian Kosova, but also of a correct reading of international public opinion at the time. Miranda Vickers explains the astuteness of Kosovar Albanian decision in the following way:

In reality, however, the million Albanian votes could undoubtedly have ousted Milošević [in 1992], but as the Kosovar leadership admitted at the time, they did not want him to go. Unless Serbia continued to be labeled as profoundly evil – and they themselves, by virtue of being anti-Serb, as the good guys – they were unlikely to achieve their goals. It would have been a disaster for them if a peace-monger like Panić had restored human rights, since this would have left them with nothing but a bare political agenda to change borders.¹⁰⁹

So in 1992, instead of developing a common platform with Serbian opposition parties against the common opponent, Kosovar Albanians opted (indirectly) to support Milošević. In return, despite continuing policies of harassment, Milošević's regime seems to have tolerated mushrooming of Kosovar Albanian parallel institutions. By the mid-1990s a status quo had emerged in which both sides were living side-by-side, believing in their ultimate victory: the Serbs because of their effective control of all the territory, the

¹⁰⁸ "Nacionalni identitet," 153-155.

¹⁰⁹ *Between Serb and Albanian*, 268. In addition, Kosovar Albanians could have responded to the accusations of their "fanatical" boycotting of Serbian and Yugoslav elections by pointing to the equally "fanatical" character of Serbian opposition party programs which rejected any negotiations to change the minority status of Kosovar Albanians. For an analysis of the content of the main Serbian party programs, see the dissertation's Chapter Three, the section on the Serbian party system.

Albanians because they had recreated all the autonomous institutions that had been taken over by the regime in 1989-1992.

Henceforth, given the LDK's popularity and its pre-eminence over other Kosovar Albanian parties, it assumed the rather ambiguous role of being simultaneously both a Kosovar Albanian movement and the legitimate representative of an underground Kosova state. It was organized more as a government than as a party. For example, various LDK advisory committees took on the functions of state ministries: foreign affairs, education, health care, economy, sports, culture, etc. All of these committees had subgroups reaching out into the remotest Kosova municipalities, allowing the LDK full control over Kosovar Albanian society.¹¹⁰

The very success of the LDK in overseeing a Kosova shadow state eventually became one of the sources of Rugova's loss of political influence in the late 1990s. Kosovar Albanians had been invigorated by establishing an underground state in Kosova, where a sort of inverted apartheid had developed in which it was the oppressed, rather than the "master" that did not want anything to do with the other side. Many wished to convert this accomplishment into a fully sovereign state, completely independent from Serbia, which had been part of the program from the beginning. Thus, in 1994, the first signs of Kosovar Albanian weariness with Rugova's status quo politics emerged. This led to a split

¹¹⁰ See March and Sil, 7-13. Certainly, the most fascinating example of Kosova Albanian self-organization is the work of the LDK's Central Financial Council whose "impossible" task was to finance the work of the underground Kosovar state. As March and Sil explain, there were two sources of revenue: first, Albanians in Kosova were paying between 5 and 10% of their income to the "government," and secondly, the Albanian diaspora abroad were paying 3% of their income. Once this money was transferred from abroad to Kosova, then the Financial Council would distribute it to the municipalities to fund Kosovar Albanian education, culture, health care, sport, social assistance, etc (pp. 9-10).

in the LDK (and also in other Kosovar parties) between moderates who had not completely closed off the option of Kosova being a third federal unit within Yugoslavia, and hardliners, who started to challenge Rugova's politics of non-violence.¹¹¹

The turning point was the 1995 Dayton Peace Accord that brought an end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By then it was obvious that whatever principle prevailed in that Accord would be used also to address the question of the status of Kosovar Albanians. Dayton turned out to be a political compromise between the ethnicized version of the national right to self-determination and the right of the sovereign state to protect its territorial integrity. Bosnian Serbs were denied the right to outright secession, but given their own entity with extensive privileges within the federalized Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus although Kosovo was not an issue in the Dayton agreement, its principles implied that Kosova could at best be elevated to the status of a constitutive part of Yugoslavia.¹¹²

After initial shock that they had "once more" been by-passed by the international community, Kosovar Albanians seem to have agreed that, in the words of Maliqi, "all diplomatic games are a farce obscuring the fundamental axiom of freedom and sovereignty – one must fight for freedom and sovereignty and they can be won only by making an enormous sacrifice and by waging a war."¹¹³ This reading of Dayton principles, however, provoked two diametrically opposing responses in the Kosovar Albanian community. On the one side were those who were ready to accept certain compromises in the way to their

¹¹¹ Vickers, 281.

¹¹² See Denisa Kostovičová, *Parallel Worlds: Response of Kosovo Albanians to Loss of Autonomy in Serbia, 1986-1996* (Keele University European Research Center, 1997), 56-7.

ultimate political goal of parting from Serbia. They believed that a second-best solution might be to reorganize Yugoslavia into a loose federation (or confederation) among Montenegro, Serbia and the Republic of Kosova. Such a solution would allow the recognition of Kosovar Albanians as a constitutive nation with *de facto* if not *de jure* territorial sovereignty.¹¹⁴

However, in the post-Dayton period, an increasing number of younger Kosovar Albanians rejected both Rugova's minimalist approach to the politics of creating an independent Kosova and the sanctity of Yugoslavian (Serbia-Montenegro) territorial borders. These hard-liners interpreted the international community's continuing acceptance of these borders as a policy of pushing Kosova back to Serbia. Seeing no room for compromise, they opted for active opposition to the Serbian regime's domination over Kosova. Thus it was that in the mid-1990s the Kosovar Albanians found themselves facing a choice between peace and war.¹¹⁵

The precarious balance between the two sides was upset in 1997 as the result of three interlocking factors. First, in spring 1997, the Albanian political system collapsed. Military command broke down, allowing many Albanians to sack military barracks. A

¹¹³ Maliqi, *Kosova, Separate Worlds*, 141.

¹¹⁴ See Gazmend Pulja, "Republika u refederalizovanoj SRJ," *Srpsko-albanski dijalog*, 132-138; and Adem Demaçi, "Albanci moraju biti priznati kao nezavisni subjekat," *Srpsko-albanski dijalog*, 114-119. Demaçi, known as the Albanian Mandela, is the most famous Albanian political prisoner, who, up till 1991, had spent 28 years in Yugoslav socialist prisons. Well known for his hard-line attitudes, he was nevertheless ready to accept a confederation between Montenegro, Serbia and Kosova that would also be open to other Balkan nation-states. He termed this would-be multinational confederation "Balkania."

¹¹⁵ Maliqi, 141. Throughout this period, the most vocal hard-liner was Rexhep Qosja. As early as 1993, this Albanian Čosić, the "father of the Albanian nation," as he is often called, criticized Rugova for his overtly peaceful policies, which he said could only harm the Kosovar Albanian cause by distracting Kosovar Albanians from their main political objective – the unification with Albania.

black market developed in light weaponry (particularly kalashnikovs). Most of these eventually found their way to neighboring Kosova where they ended up in the hands of increasingly dissatisfied young Kosovar Albanians, who started organizing themselves into militant underground groups. Finally, in an effort to restore “law and order” in Kosova, the regime responded in a terrorist-like manner, which galvanized the resolve of Kosovar Albanians to break with Rugova’s principles of non-violence.¹¹⁶

The relatively peaceful coexistence of the parallel worlds in Kosovo was totally destroyed in 1998. The previous year, the Kosovar Albanian insurgency, known as the Kosova Liberation Army - KLA (UÇK, or Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovë) – had orchestrated a series of guerilla actions that destabilized the province. These included taking civilian hostages and the summary execution not only of Serbian police officers but also of Albanians suspected of “collaborating with the Serbian authorities.” In February and March 1998, special Serbian police units, supported by the Yugoslav military, attacked the KLA stronghold in the Drenica region of Kosova in an openly terrorist fashion. Three villages were attacked with artillery, helicopters, and armed vehicles. At the end of the operation, more than eighty people had been killed, including twenty-four women and children.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ See Timothy Garton Ash, “Plači raskomadana zemljo,” *Danas* (Beograd, 1-12 February 1999).

¹¹⁷ The Serbian state gross violation of human rights and their policy of pacification of Kosovo between February and October of 1998, have been well documented by various local and international NGOs. Particularly relevant reports are by the Humanitaria Law Center, *Spotlight Report No. 28* and Human Rights Watch, *Humanitarian Law Violations in Kosovo* (New York, October 1998). According to these reports, in the process of regaining “law and order” in Kosovo, Serbian troops had been engaged in systematic destruction of civilian property, extra-judicial executions, attacks on humanitarian aid workers and forceful expulsion civilian Albanians from their homes. At the end of this campaign of terror, close to two thousand Albanians had been killed, while estimated number of displaced persons ranged

After Drenica, the KLA grew into a mass liberation movement, enjoying wide support from the Kosovar Albanian population. The Drenica massacre thus achieved exactly the opposite of the regime's intention. Instead of pacifying the insurgency in the province, it undermined the remaining influence of those in Rugova's LDK who still hoped for a non-violent way out of the Kosovo crisis. Milošević's politics of a "firm stand" in 1998 turned out to be not only the best recruiter for the Kosovar insurgency but also instrumental in the KLA's metamorphosis from a relatively obscure terrorist organization in late 1996 into a full-fledged national liberation army in 1998. Finally, in October 1998, the international community recognized the KLA as a political factor to be reckoned with. That is, the KLA, not Rugova's LDK, was increasingly accepted as the legitimate representative of Kosovar Albanians in any possible peace talks between Serbian and Kosovar representatives. Despite (or perhaps because of) all the destruction and human losses, 1998 ended in a full victory of hard-liners on both sides.¹¹⁸

somewhere between 240,000 (estimates of international NGOs), 300,000 (estimates of the Belgrade Humanitarian Law Center) and 545,000 (estimates of Kosovar Albanian NGO). See The Belgrade Center for Human Rights, *Human Rights in Yugoslavia in 1998*, 376. International and Serbian NGO have also reported about the UÇK's actions against the local Serbian population, but the number of such openly terrorist actions are miniscule compared to the data on the atrocities committed by the governmental Serbian forces.

¹¹⁸ In 1999, which is not covered in this exploration of the Kosovo crisis, the situation only became worse. After the failure of the Rambouillet peace talks, the USA and the EU, as the sponsors of the talks between the two sides, finally decided to take sides and NATO military intervention against Serbia followed on March 25, 1999. It lasted less than three months and ended in a complete withdrawal of Serbian government forces from Kosovo. The final outcome of this military intervention is still hard to predict. At the time of writing, a sort of the UN protectorate had been formed, but a political solution to the Kosovo crisis seemed as elusive as ever. In some ways, the NATO victory just recreated the old Catch 22. On one side, Kosovar Albanians are increasingly in control of the province, while on the other, the legal basis for UN administration of Kosovo is a UN resolution referring to the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." This would imply that the UN's vision of the future Kosovo to grant it the status of a republic within Yugoslavia; however, anything short of full independence is a non-starter for the KLA, which is the only real political and military force of Kosovar Albanians in 1999.

Conclusion

This brief analysis of the majority-minority relationships in Serbia has uncovered a whole cluster of ambiguities that cut across contemporary liberal and communitarian theorizing. For example, minority rights are essential for the protection of various ethnic groups who do not enjoy numerical superiority in a state, and yet those rights can lead to maximalist claims that would turn the minority into a majority in its own little area. In this way, policies designed to protect minorities may end up creating the need to protect the rights of a new minority.

Also, in societies characterized by the existence of more than one ethnic community, and yet regulated by the principles of a nation-state, as in Serbia, tension between individual rights and collective rights seem completely to blur any boundaries between the two. For, any organized human rights abuses in such a state will necessarily involve, or lead to, violation of one's rights to language, culture, free expression of religion, right to self-rule and the like. In other words, the target of such violations of human rights will not be some abstract individual, but an individual that is a member of a distinct national community. In many cases his or her only crime may be that s/he belongs to the "wrong" ethnic group. So, what may start as a case of violation of individual human rights can and indeed quite often does end up as a case of violation of collective rights.

The problem is further exacerbated by the existence of two distinctive traditions of the rights to national self-determination. One, emanating from the perspective of liberal democracy, tends to represent a nation in pluralist terms, where all ethno-cultural differences can be accommodated within the model of a representative government. Under

such a model, the right to self-determination is basically a democratic right to political participation in a state irrespective of an individual's ethnic, racial or other identity markers. Accordingly, since all members of the society are treated as equal, such a model does not require discussing questions of territory: the borders of a liberal democratic nation-state are effectively understood as pre-given and unproblematic.

Yet turning a blind eye to the phenomenon of powerful minority nationalisms in the contemporary world does not seem to be helpful in dealing with those ethnically diverse societies where more than one political community lives in the "nation," but where the institutions are tailored to the needs and size of the majority group. Under such conditions, the principle of self-determination necessitates a rather different interpretation. It cannot aim to paper over all differences in the state in the name of political equality. Instead, national self-determination emerges as a means of protecting these differences. This inevitably involves reinterpreting democratic principles so that they aim to protect minority identities in a state run by a majority that happens to have a different linguistic, cultural and religious makeup.

To put it differently, the rhetoric of nationhood tends to take over the classic liberal interpretation of the right to self-determination. Then the principle of national self-determination ceases to be related only to the question of the character of the political system. Instead, the issue becomes the extent to which the majority in a multination state is ready to recognize national minorities' claims to nationhood, and thus their status as peoples with distinct languages, cultures, religions, and so on. Accordingly, one of the

corollaries of the principle of nationhood in multination states is that questions about the social unity and territorial integrity of such states are always open and never fully resolved.

Yet this does not mean that multination states are time bombs bound to explode, as the Serbian example might suggest. The ideology of ethnic monism of the Serbian state, particularly in the case of Kosovo, certainly supports the hypothesis that the greater the pressure of the majority against the minorities, the more complete will be the disintegration of the social unity of the state. Still, nationality needs not be imprisoned by such interpretations. Forms of mutuality can equally be envisioned. Paradoxically, Serbia is also a good example of such (counter)policies in the efforts of Hungarian minority and, as of late, Bosniaks to show that both social unity and cultural distinctiveness can be possible to the extent that minorities are recognized for what they really are – societies with their own territory, languages, institutions and cultures which are nevertheless open to being integrated into the larger societal framework of a multination state that is not guided by the principle of simple majority.

To put it another way, both Vojvodina Hungarians and Sandžak Bosniaks perceive themselves as the members of their respective nations – Hungarians and Bosniaks. Yet, in the case of ethnic Hungarians, from the very onset of the post-socialist Serbia, they were looking for a solution for their minority status through the institutional channels of the Serbian state. Bosniaks reached their Rubicon in 1995 when they finally accepted that their political aims should not be state-like territorial autonomy but the status of a recognized national minority with substantive rights protecting its historic, religious and cultural

specificity. Since then, not unlike ethnic Hungarians, they have tried to interpret the question of national self-determination primarily as the question of various forms of autonomy that can legitimately be secured within the Serbian territorial boundaries. Hence, from such a perspective, it would seem that it is now up to the Serbian majority to respond to their suggestions.

A very different outcome emerged in the case of Kosovo Albanians who perceive themselves as a sovereign nation, with full rights to creating a state of their own. Their claims were always “radical” since substantive *de facto* autonomy between 1968 and 1981, though without *de jure* republican status, had imbued the Albanian movement with the feeling that everything short of republican status in a new Yugoslavia could not be accepted. That is, that any Serbian suggestion based on the non-recognition of Albanians on equal terms represented yet another Serbian plot to squeeze Kosovar Albanians into the Procrustean bed designed for minorities, a status that all Albanian parties adamantly rejected.

It would seem that, from the standpoint of liberal democratic principles based on the notion of equality, the self-perception of Albanian political community as a sovereign nation would require the Serbian state to address their claim in a thoroughly different way than heretofore. In short, the debate that never took place between the two sides should have been over experimenting with various models of a decentralized Serbia and Yugoslavia in which Kosovo should have been offered an asymmetrical status compared to the one enjoyed by other provinces in Serbia. The idea of a multination federation based

on the elevation of Kosovo to the status of one of Yugoslavia's constitutive republics could also have been explored. Nor should the option of an independent Republic of Kosova have been excluded, particularly if it was the outcome of mutual consent, democratic negotiations, etc. Paradoxically, all these options were seriously debated among independent non-nationalist Serbian and Albanian intellectuals; but these discussions were totally marginalized by the maximalist acts of both the Serbian nation-state officials and the leaders of the Kosova shadow-state.

In addition, one also has to emphasize the negative role played by the central Serbian opposition parties. They never understood that Serbian democracy could not survive by only being defended by their activities in Belgrade and other Serbian urban centers. The first line of defense of human rights and liberal democratic principles has always been in Kosovo as the site of the grossest violations of both human and national minority rights in the country. Instead, the opposition party leaders' implicit acceptance of the regime's politics of systemic oppression of Kosovar Albanians in the name of the ethnic myth of Serbian unification (and Kosovo as the cradle of Serbian civilization) effectively legitimized the apartheid-like rule of Milošević's regime. Thus, they not only helped Milošević ruin any chance of a possible integration of Kosovo within a reformed Serbia and Yugoslavia, but they also undermined the creation of a potentially effective democratic opposition to the official policies of mimicking liberal, democratic principles while pursuing the politics of ethnic homogenization.

Conclusion

THE POLITICS OF ETHNIC MONISM IN SERBIA

From a democratic point of view, a person's ethnic identity is not his or her primary identity, and important as respect for diversity is in multicultural democratic societies, ethnic identity is not the foundation of recognition of equal value and the related idea of equal rights. All human beings as bearers of universal human nature – as persons – are of equal value from the democratic perspective, and all people as persons deserve equal respect and equal opportunity for self-realization. Steven Rockefeller¹

A society with strong collective goals can be liberal, on this view, provided it is also capable of respecting diversity, especially when dealing with those who do not share its common goals; and provided it can offer adequate safeguards for fundamental rights. There will undoubtedly be tensions and difficulties in pursuing these objectives together, but such a pursuit is not impossible, and the problems are not in principle greater than those encountered by any liberal society that has to combine, for example, liberty and equality, or prosperity and justice. Charles Taylor²

This dissertation has described various interrelated and interlocking aspects of the politics of ethnic monism in the post-socialist Serbia, focusing on the period between 1987 (the year of Milošević's ascent to power) and 1998. Its central concern was to approach state- and nation-building in Serbia from the perspective of what may be called **Serbia's original condition of multiethnic diversity**. In other words, the key question throughout the dissertation was to what extent Serbia's national policies were failing to

¹ Steven C. Rockefeller, "Comment," in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Ann Gutman, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 88.

² Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, 59-60.

reflect the fact that one-third of Serbian population does not share the ethnicity of the majority nation.

Other questions inevitably followed: Which concrete policies of the Serbian state were aimed at creating an ethnically homogenous nation-state? What type of ethnic identity was nurtured in order to justify the limits put on freely expressing ethnocultural diversity in the country? To what extent was the role of the national intelligentsia instrumental in fostering an ethnic identity almost exclusively based on denial of the other? What was the nature and impact of the mimicry of genuine democratic processes in the country? What is the legitimacy basis of the Serbian political regime? What are the normative foundations of the Serbian constitutional system? How did the major political opposition parties respond to the regime's policies throughout the 1990s? And, finally, how did Serbia's minorities react to the regime's policies of curbing minority rights?

In dealing with these issues, special attention was paid to those theories and conceptions of nationalism and national rights that both (i) recognize multiethnic diversity as a cultural framework within which a choice can be exercised for democratic self-government and (ii) fully accept the liberal, democratic requirement for political equality at the societal level. In this context, a critical evaluation was presented of the normative and empirical dilemmas that are at the heart of contemporary theorizing about the phenomenon of nationalism: nationalism vs. modernity, the civic/ethnic question,

individual vs. group rights, the (im)possibility of liberal nationalism, the right to self-determination vs. the principle of state sovereignty, etc.

In other words, a broad conceptual net was spread to situate the Serbian example within a wider European context in relation to both the ideology and practices of (a rapidly changing) nation-state system. My essentially **situational approach to nationalism** has made use of insights emanating from the contemporary ethnicist-instrumentalist debate over the modernity of nationalism and the possibilities for using the so-called original matrix of civic nationalism as a reference point for evaluating all other ethnic nationalisms. Both aspects of nationalism, ethnic as well as civic, have been used not to differentiate between states, but rather to analyze trends within them.

In other words, a “dialog” (or contention) between ethnic and civic (or liberal and illiberal) strands of nationalism will usually show that both are to be found in any nationalism. Still, they need not be equally important. Depending on the context, or in the words of Liah Greenfeld, on the situational constraints, and – equally importantly – on political actors’ responses to them, different mixes may occur. The situational approach to nationalism thus tries to overcome the historical and sociological determinism of positing the modernity of civic nationalism against supposed anti-modernity of ethnic nationalism. It does this by emphasizing that these two aspects are interrelated and that neither liberal (western) nationalism nor ethnic (eastern) nationalism can be understood without a careful analysis of the interplay between the actions of

different political actors in a country, on one side, and the specific economic, social, ideological, cultural and political matrices of its society, on the other.

Such an approach has allowed me to offer a historically contextualized example of development of Serbian nationalism and to show the existence of different national narratives (ethnic, liberal and socialist) throughout the history of modern Serbia. After 45 years of socialism and 10 years of ethnic nationalism, I felt it particularly important to stress the largely forgotten liberal current in Serbian nationalism. Elements of this can be found from its earliest phases, even in Garašanin's *Načertanije*. The liberal current became clearer between the wars, often being expressed in pro-Yugoslavism, as when Serbian politicians and intellectuals made efforts to meet the demands of Croats and Slovenians for a greater say in running the country, and for more autonomy in their own areas. In the socialist period, the late 1960s and early 1970s offered renewed prospects of progress towards more liberal structures, but Tito's purge of the Serbian Communist party liberals Marko Nikezić and Latinka Perović put an early end to these hopes.

Crucial situational factors that emerged in Serbia in the late 1970s and early 1980s again damaged the liberal cause. These were related to Serbia's ambiguous constitutional position vis-à-vis its own provinces and in relation to other former socialist Yugoslav republics. Federal rigidity in addressing the Serbian question in the socialist Yugoslavia was instrumental in the emergence of an increasingly vocal movement favoring non-institutional means of integrating Kosovo and Vojvodina within Serbia. Writers and intellectuals who had always valued the dignity of the individual – Ćosić is

perhaps the most tragic example – lent their prestige to a nationalist project in which they still recognized the spark of their own idealism, and for which they became ready to turn a blind eye to repression and war-mongering. At the end of this process, the extreme nationalist option emerged as victorious, effectively monopolizing Serbian public space. Even the more liberal Serbian political parties found themselves joining the nationalist bandwagon (with the exception of Serbian democratic parties in Vojvodina), although it is hard to imagine that, if they had gained power, they would have dared to continue the unscrupulous and often brutal policies of the Milošević regime. In recent years the liberal current has had to survive largely outside party politics – in the work of bodies such as the Belgrade Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Center, the Belgrade Circle of anti-regime intellectuals, various independent journals and institutes, and the local assemblies of those cities that are not under the regime's direct control – and as a result its champions are practically unknown to the public or the outside world.

Meanwhile, many influential members of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art had become manufacturers of Manichean historical imageries. Their message to the public was that history is a conflict of collective, homogenized actors whose identity is formed and sustained by resilient collective memories. In the name of the glories of the Serbian past, the Serbian public was to forget the realities of their common life in a multinational Yugoslav state. In a paradoxical and historically inaccurate fashion, Yugoslavia was presented as a castle in the air, to be replaced – despite Serbia's own national and cultural diversity – by an ethnically homogenized Greater Serbia.

In 1990, when the multiparty system emerged in Serbia, the process of the ethnification of politics was over. An unfortunate chronology of events that allowed Milošević to emerge as the leader of the Serbian people in 1987, two years before the collapse of the Berlin Wall, still haunts Serbia. By passing through the purgatory of the “anti-bureaucratic revolution,” the old Serbian communist party managed to survive unscathed the events that toppled the communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe. In the process, the rejuvenated Serbian communists-turned-socialists successfully traded their old communist slogans for the rhetoric of nationalism. They proved too strong for the liberals around Panić, who were unable to repeat Cvetković’s success just before the second World War in arriving at constitutional reforms acceptable to Croatia.

Moreover, by playing the ethnonationalist card and assuming the role of the great protector of the Serbian people outside Serbia, Milošević and his cronies not only successfully sparked a nationalist frenzy in Serbia, but also left his main political opponents without a competing national program. In a way this is not surprising, as I have argued, given that Milošević’s national program had originally been designed in the Serbian Academy of Science and Art by former dissidents-turned politicians. They therefore had no option but to support it. Even when the creation of the Serbian state “in its natural historic and ethnic borders,” did not bring a Greater Serbia, the main opposition parties failed to question the premises of their own nationalist dreams. Quite the contrary, throughout the 1990s, they have maintained the line in various Serbian manifestos that all Serbs must first live in one state before Serbia’s democratization can begin.

Ultimately, however, Milošević's successful implementation of the *SANU Memorandum* in the 1990s proved to be Serbia's greatest political defeat. Thus, the "united" Serbian state that emerged out of the ashes of the former Yugoslavia is a state in which, for the first time in the 150 years of Serbia's modern history, the Serbian nationalist intelligentsia has managed to marginalize all those intellectuals looking westward for guidance and inspiration. The nationalist vision that dominates Serbian public space in the 1990s represents a turning away from modernization and democratization towards the ideal of a closed, ethnically purified society.

Politically, however, the price has been too high. The constitutionally enshrined insistence that Serbia belongs to Serbs as members of an ethnic community, rather than of a political community of people who are equal irrespective of their ethnic background, inevitably led to the marginalization of Serbian national minorities as permanent residents without access to full political and cultural equality. Thus throughout the 1990s minority groups have been exposed to various forms of nation-building that they interpreted primarily as minority-destroying, forcing them, in extreme cases, to develop politically alienated subcultures oriented either against mainstream state institutions, or against the members of the privileged majority group in society.

In this particular respect, post-socialist developments in Serbia in the 1990s are but a continuation of the politics of ethnic nationalism that legitimized Milošević's ascent to power in 1987. At their heart is the same **mono-ethnic logic of representation** that denies minorities the right to be culturally different and yet enjoy the same political rights as any

member of the majority group. Accordingly, nation-building in Serbia has assumed distinctively anti-liberal and anti-democratic characteristics. At the same time, however, Serbia's transformation policies throughout this period were cast in a form resembling policies based on the principles of constitutional, liberal democracies.

Accordingly, my analysis of the post-socialist institutional and political development of Serbia in general, and of majority-minority relations in particular, has aimed to show those policies for what they really are – anti-liberal and non-democratic. In order to do this, I rejected the conventional differentiation between individual liberalism and nationalism based on group rights. Instead, I opted to follow the lead of those authors (Kymlicka, Tamir, Marion Young, Miller, etc.) who hold that just as members of a majority nation have a legitimate desire to live and work in their own culture, the members of national minorities deserve to have their similar aspirations recognized. Moreover, that in a multination state, the abstract principles of liberal democracy (especially decision-making by majority) could lead to a celebration of the ways of life of the dominant group over the ways, and the needs, of minority groups. To put it differently, the guiding thread in my analysis of Serbian majority-minority relationships was the recognition that nation-building policies in every multination state are inherently biased in favor of the dominant group in society.

The authoritarian character of the Serbian regime exploited and exacerbated this inherent bias in the nation-building process. For, in the case of Serbia, these policies took the particular form of imposing the logic of ethnic monism at the expense of Serbia's

diversity, necessarily targeting people's right to language, culture, free expression of religion, local self-rule, etc. Since, however, the rights of individuals to education, religious observance and information in their own language cannot be treated as abstract individual rights, but can only be realized within the context of national cultures, the violation of such rights necessarily took the form of an open denial of minority rights.

In this respect, there were some differences in the regime's treatment of Serbia's largest minority groups – Vojvodina Hungarians, Sandžak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians, which led to varying responses from these respective groups. In the case of Vojvodina, the regime seemed to opt for, in my terminology, the **politics of creeping assimilation**. At its heart was a formal recognition of internationally recognized minority standards, while pursuing policies which undermined such standards in the very areas in which minorities were most vulnerable (minority education, language, information, self-rule). In response to this effort at the “soft” homogenization of Vojvodina, ethnic Hungarian parties tried to maintain the Hungarian community as a distinct society, but within the larger Serbian dominated society. Thus, they tried to regain some of the autonomies Vojvodinian minorities had enjoyed in the previous, socialist Serbia, but in a way that did not challenge the territorial integrity of Serbia.

In the case of Sandžak (Raška), the regime pursued more belligerent policies based on the **rejection of the Sandžak Muslims' national minority status**. In reaction to the war between the Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs, the regime opted for the politics of labeling its whole Muslim population as potentially treacherous and planning ultimately to

secede from Serbia. Muslim representatives responded by promoting politics that were a mirror image of those of the Serbian regime. That is, they called for the creation of an autonomous Sandžak, the justification of which was found by misrepresenting the region as ethnically homogenous. Still, after the end of the war in neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new consensus emerged among Sandžak Muslims, advocating policies to meet distinct Muslim educational and cultural needs, but within the institutions of the Serbian state. Hence, since 1995, the Serbian Muslim community has focused on achieving the status of a recognized national minority with distinct ethnocultural rights that could be secured in a legitimate fashion within Serbian territorial borders.

Finally I considered the case of Kosovo. I showed that at the heart of the conflict between the Serbian and Kosovar Albanian communities is the **question of identity**. That is, **are Kosovar Albanians a sovereign nation**, as they claim, **or should they be recognized only as a national minority**, which is the official Serbian stand? The question should not be treated as simply an academic one, because it has extremely important practical consequences for the unity and territorial integrity of the Serbian state. This is because if Serbia recognized the Kosovar Albanians as a sovereign nation, they would have full rights to national self-determination, including secession from Serbia.

In considering this dilemma, I was guided by an understanding that the territorial concentration of the Albanian population in Kosovo, and the history of the previous status of the province as a constitutive unit of both Serbia and the former Yugoslavia, had been instrumental in legitimizing Kosovo Albanian claims to be a distinct political community

with the right to self-determination. From that perspective, it would seem that the principles of democracy would have required the Serbian state to respond by reorganizing Serbia along lines that would allow the demand for self-government of the Kosovar Albanian political community to be fulfilled. In principle, this might not necessarily have led to outright secession. In practice, however, the context of interlocking ethnic nationalisms on both sides, Serbian as well as Kosovar Albanian, reduced the politics of self-determination to only one of its elements – that of control over territory.

Paradoxically, Serbian insistence on rejecting any negotiations over the question of Kosovar Albanian self-identification as a sovereign nation did more to undermine the social unity and territorial integrity of the Serbian state than any Kosovar Albanian policies. Accordingly, Serbian nation-building ended in a total failure not only to democratize society but to secure the bonds of social unity in the country. Here it should be once more emphasized, as I did in the dissertation, that the Serbian regime is not the only culprit for the disintegrative tendencies of the Serbian state. One should not forget the implicit acceptance by the leaders of some of the central Serbian opposition parties of the regime's policies of systemic oppression of Kosovar Albanians throughout the 1990s. By not challenging the principles of ethnic monism, they (the Democratic Party of Serbia and the Serbian Renewal Movement) effectively undermined their own chances of creating a stronger democratic block against Milošević's policies of ethnic homogenization and mimicry of democratic transformation policies.

To sum up, it would seem that the only way for Serbian society to overcome its fascination with the myth of an ethnically homogenous nation-state may be if it finally recognizes that all people living there are politically equal and yet in many respects different. As long as the myth of ethnic homogeneity continues to influence Serbian politics, any new constitutional model envisioned, no matter how liberal in outward form, would still be based on the denial of the very principles liberal democracy stands for – liberty and equality. For the members of the Serbian minorities would continue to be denied liberty and equality solely on the basis of their inferior minority status. Thus, as was argued throughout this dissertation, Serbia can only embark upon truly democratic transformation policies if it stops rejecting its own original condition of ethnocultural diversity.

At the end, this thesis has made a detailed study of identity narratives and state- and nation-building policies in post-socialist Serbia. But I hope and believe that its conclusions have a significance that reach beyond the case of a particular Balkan state in the 1990s. For although the discussion presented here can and should be understood primarily within the economic, political and cultural context of the post-socialist Serbia, the questions informing my research were suggested by approaches that transcend specific cases. Moreover the Serbian drama itself inevitably raises broad normative and empirical dilemmas that multination states are liable to face in relation to liberalism, xenophobic nationalism, democracy and national minority rights. The tensions between modernization and nationalism, civic and ethnic nationalism, and communitarian and individual rights are not

unique to Serbia, regardless of how special the Serbian response to them may have been. By using the Serbian case to highlight the potential costs and benefits of various approaches to nation-building in the context of a multination state, I have aimed to contribute to a growing literature on problems that are of central concern to the international community.

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Periodicals

Blic, daily newspaper

Borba, daily newspaper

Danas, daily newspaper

Dnevni telegraf, daily newspaper

Duga, bi-weekly journal

Naša borba, daily newspaper

Nedeljni telegraf, weekly newspaper

NIN, weekly news magazine

Politika, daily newspaper

Politika ekspres, daily newspaper

Republika, bi-weekly journal

Večernje novosti, daily newspaper

Vreme, weekly news magazine

APPENDIX 1

Ethnic Structure of the Population

Table 1: Ethnic Structure of the Population in the FRY, 1991

		Per cent
Total ¹	10,394,026	100
Serbs	6,504,048	62.6
Albanians	1,714,768	16.5
Montenegrins	519,757	5.0
Hungarians	344,147	3.3
Muslims	336,025	3.2
Romanies	143,519	1.4
Croats	111,650	1.1
Slovaks	66,863	0.6
Macedonians	47,118	0.5
Rumanians	42,364	0.4
Bulgarians	26,922	0.3
Ruthenians	18,099	0.2
Wallachians	17,810	0.2
Turks	11,264	0.1
Slovenes	8,630	0.1
Germans	5,387	0.1
Ukrainians	5,090	0.0
Czechs	2,883	0.0
Russians	2,694	0.0
Poles	1,438	0.0
Jews	1,174	0.0
Greeks	1,018	0.0
Others	37,349	0.4
Did not state their nationality	367,473	3.6
Of these:		
Yugoslavs	349,714	3.4
Unknown	43,453	0.4

¹ Kosovar Albanians boycotted the census in in Kosovo and Metohia, and in the municipalities of Bujanovac and Presevo in southern Serbia, where Albanians are in a majority. For these areas estimates have been computed on the basis of the results of the 1981 census and data on birthrates for Albanian ethnic group.

Source: 1991 Census.

Table 2: Ethnic Structure of the Population in Serbia, 1991

		Per cent
Total	9,778, 991	100
Serbs	6,446,595	65.9
Albanians	1,674,353	17.1
Hungarians	343,942	3.5
Yugoslavs	323,555	3.3
Muslims	246,411	2.5
Romanies	140,237	1.4
Montenegrins	139,290	1.4
Croats	105,406	1.1

Source: 1991 Census.

Table 3: Ethnic Structure of Kosovo and Metohia, 1991

		Per cent
Total	1,956,196	100
Albanians	1,596,072	82.6
Serbs	194,190	9.9
Muslims	66,189	3.4
Romanies	45,746	2.3
Montenegrins	20,356	1.0
Turks	10,446	0.5

Source: 1991 Census.

Table 4: Ethnic Structure of Vojvodina, 1991

		Per cent
Total	2,013,889	100
Serbs	1,143,723	56.8
Hungarians	339,491	16.9
Yugoslavs	174,225	8.7
Croats	74,808	3.7
Slovaks	63,545	3.2
Montenegrins	44,838	2.2
Rumanians	38,809	1.9
Romanies	24,366	1.2
Ruthenians	17,652	0.9
Macedonians	17,472	0.9

Source: 1991 Census.

Table 5: The Muslim Population of the Sandžak, 1991

	Total	Muslim	%
Serbian			
municipalities	258,164	156,115	60.5
Nova Varoš	21,812	1,857	8.5
Novi Pazar	85,700	65,079	75.9
Priboj	35,888	10,828	30.2
Prijepolje	46,516	19,935	42.9
Sjenica	33,584	25,628	76.3
Tutin	34,664	32,788	94.6
Montenegrin			
municipalities	182,625	73,045	40
Bijelo Polje	55,145	22,970	41.7
Ivangrad	45,662	11,782	25.8
Plav	19,313	11,250	58.3
Pljevlja	39,628	6,999	17.7
Rožalje	22,877	20,044	87.6
Combined total	440,789	229,160	52

Source: 1991 Census.

APPENDIX 2

Serbian Elections Results 1990 – 1998

Table 6: National Assembly of Serbia, 1990 Parliamentary Election

	Number of votes	%	Number of seats	%	Difference	Votes for one seat
SPS	2,320,587	46.1	194	77.6	+31.5	11,961
SRM	794,786	15.8	19	7.6	-8.2	44,154
Independent	456,318	9.1	8	3.2	-5.9	57,039
DCVH	132,726	2.6	8	3.2	+0.6	16,590
DP	374,887	7.4	7	2.8	-4.6	53,555
PDA	84,156	1.7	3	1.2	-0.5	28,052
ARFY for Vojvodina	74,748	1.5	2	0.8	-0.7	37,374
PAFS	52,663	1.0	2	0.8	-0.2	26,331
PFP	68,045	1.5	1	0.4	-1.1	68,045
SrDP	32,927	0.6	1	0.4	-0.2	32,927
AYDI	24,982	0.5	1	0.4	-0.1	24,982
DLCV	23,630	0.5	1	0.4	-0.1	23,630
PDAy	21,998	0.4	1	0.4		21,998
PY	21,784	0.4	1	0.4		21,784
DRPM	3,432	0.1	1	0.4		3,432
Total	4,487,669	89.2	250	100		
Other parties	341,732	6.7	-	-		

Source: Vladimir Goati, ed., *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia (Serbian and Montenegro) 1990-1996* (based on Serbian Statistical Yearbook, 1991).

Table 7: National Assembly of Serbia, 1992 Parliamentary Election

	Number of votes	%	Number of seats	%	Difference	Votes for one seat
SPS	1,359,086	28.8	101	40.4	+11.6	13,456
SRP	1,066,765	22.6	73	29.2	+6.6	14,613
DEPOS	797,831	16.9	50	20.0	+3.1	15,956
DCVH	140,825	3.0	9	3.6	+0.6	15,647
DP	196,347	4.2	6	2.4	-1.6	32,724
Gr.cit.Z.R.A ^a	17,352	0.3	5	2.0	+1.7	3,470
FPS	128,240	2.7	3	1.2	-1.5	42,746
DP/RDPV	71,865	1.5	2	0.8	-0.7	35,932
DRPM	6,336	0.1	1	0.4	+0.3	6,336
Total	3,784,647	80.1	250	100		
Other parties	663,703		-	-		

Source: Vladimir Goati, ed., *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia (Serbian and Montenegro) 1990-1996* (based on Serbian Statistical Office, January 5, 1993: Table R-2).

^a Group of citizens Željko Ražnjatović-Arkan" (after this election renamed as a "party of Serbian Unity")

Table 8: National Assembly of Serbia, 1993 Parliamentary Election

	Number of votes	%	Number of seats	%	Difference	Votes for one seat
SPS	1,576,287	36.7	123	49.2	+12.5	12,742
DEPOS	715,564	16.6	45	18.0	+1.4	15,901
SRP	595,467	13.8	39	15.6	+1.8	15,268
DP	497,582	11.6	29	11.6	+0.03	17,158
DPS	218,056	5.1	7	2.8	-2.3	31,150
DCVH	112,456	2.6	5	2.0	-0.6	22,491
Coalition						
PDAy/DPA	29,342	0.7	2	0.8	+0.1	14,671
Total	3,744,754	87.1	250	100		
Other parties	386,862	8.9	-	-		

Source: Vladimir Goati, ed., *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia (Serbian and Montenegro) 1990-1996* (based on Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No.3, January 8, 1994).

Table 9: National Assembly of Serbia, 1997 Parliamentary Election

	Number of votes	% of votes	% of registered votes	Number of seats
SPS	1,415,456	34.25	19.69	110
SRP	1,159,868	28.07	16.13	82
SPO	793,224	19.20		45
Vojvodina	112,215	2.72	1.56	4
LVH	50,960	1.23	0.71	4
List for Sandžak	49,486		3	3
DK Preševo	14,179	0.34	0.20	1
DA	60,855	1.47	0.85	1
Social-democracy	104,000	2.54	1.46	0

Source: Laslo Sekelj, "Partije i izbori: SR Jugoslavija," in *Lavirinti krize*, ed. Slobodan Samardžić, 166 (based on the Report of the Republican Electorate Commission).