

**THE ROAD TO MADNESS:
DECENTRALIZATION AND COMPETING OLIGARCHIES IN
YUGOSLAVIA,
1960-2000**

THESIS

**Presented to the Graduate Council of
Southwest Texas State University**

**in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements**

For the Degree

Master of ARTS

By

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**San Marcos, Texas
May 2001**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their assistance and encouragement during this project. I would especially like to thank the fellow Instructional Assistants for their technical assistance.

This thesis was submitted to committee on April 2, 2001.

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ACRONYMS

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

EU – European Union

FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal Yugoslavia

IFOR – Implementation Force

JNA – Yugoslav People's Army

KLA – Kosovo Liberation Army

LCY – League of Communists of Yugoslavia

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

RS – Republika Srpska

SDS – Serbian Democratic Party

SPS – Socialist Party of Serbia

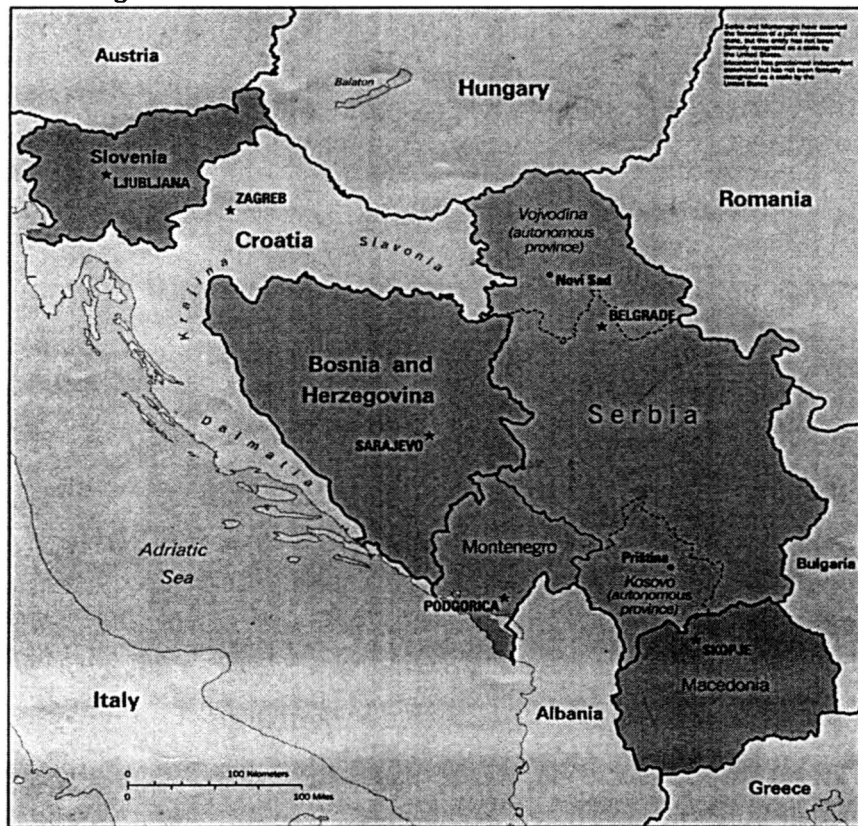
TO- Territorial Defense of Slovenia

UDBa – Secret Police

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

MAP OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA AND SUCCESSOR REPUBLICS

Former Yugoslavia



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CHAPTER 1

THE CHANGING TIDE - 1960-1980

It has been said that the Brankoviches of Erdely count in Tzintzar, lie in Wallachian, are silent in Greek, sing hymns in Russian, are cleverest in Turkish, and speak their mother tongue-Serbian-only when they intend to kill.

Milorad Pavic

After 500 years of Turkish suzerainty and two World Wars, Yugoslavia emerged as a Communist state led by partisan hero Josif Broz Tito. Once the new government officially formed, Tito became Premier and Marshal of Yugoslavia. On January 31, 1946, the first Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was ratified.¹ In the aftermath of World War II, Tito effectively silenced the issue of war crimes by insisting communist ideology would hold the ethnicities together. However, this did not make the people forget but simply left the wounds unhealed. No effort was made to reconcile the nationalities. The question of nationalities was disguised from the beginning of Tito's reign and only emerged during the debate over economic reforms. Communism was unable to conceal the divisive effects of decades-long factionalism. The constitutional debate over a centralized system, favored by the Serbs versus a federalist system favored by Croats, Slovenes and Bosnians that followed

¹ Robert J. Donia. Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) , 286.

wreaked havoc on this most progressive communist country and ultimately destroyed a generation.

Following the war, Marshal Tito proposed to create a South Danubian Confederation with the annexation of Albania, Bulgaria and Greece to create a solid, strong communist bloc state. This was a practical solution for the Balkans and possibly could have increased the prestige of international communism. However, these expansionist ideas put him at odds with Stalin and on June 28, 1948, Tito was expelled from the Cominform. This action convinced leading Yugoslav theoreticians, particularly Milovan Djilas, that the Soviet model would become an obstacle to the country. By 1950, Yugoslavia settled into its role of political, economic, and social engineering for the non-aligned world. During July 1950, the People's Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia transferred the management of economic enterprises and associations from state control to workers' councils.²

In an effort to give each republic limited sovereignty within the Yugoslav federation, the Communist Party was transformed into the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) in 1952. The voluntary nature of this body led to the decentralization of political power. Tito appears to have favored the policy of a weakened Serbia. In order to make the federation work effectively and prevent Serb dominance of the developing country, any assertion of dominance through nationalism was discouraged, as it would undermine Yugoslavia and Communism.

² Gojko Vuckovic. "Failure of Socialist Self-Management to Create a Viable Nation-State, and Disintegration of the Yugoslav Administrative State and State Institutions," East European Quarterly 32 (Fall 1998) : 364.

In 1954, the chief intellectual of Yugoslavia, Milovan Djilas, the Vice-Premier and President of the National Assembly, argued to end communism in favor of pluralism. A series of articles and books, most notably The New Class, provided a broadly accurate depiction of life under Communism.³ This attack on the party was impossible to be ignored; Djilas was forced to resign and Tito imprisoned him for several years. Djilas concluded that the ethnic divisions of Yugoslavia would only be successfully contained within a pluralistic system.

During the early 1960s, experimentation within the political model continued to evolve as the leaders tested theories created by Djilas and Edvard Kardelj. Tito allowed de-collectivization and socialist self-management to replace the Soviet-style model. Ordinary citizens were allowed to make manufacturing decisions in factories, farmers could own land, and each Yugoslav was given a voice in his respective self-management council. Through the republican governments, workers' councils, and unions, this new system brought greater freedom and economic prosperity, especially to the northern regions. Yugoslavia opened its borders and became the most liberal of all Communist regimes. However, the economic gap widened between the north and underdeveloped south. This decentralized approach to socialist development became known as Titoism.⁴ The pluralism adopted in the early 1960s would lead to a shocking but not unexpected crisis by the close of the decade.

³ Milovan Djilas. The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System (London: Praeger, 1957) clearly indicated the failures of Communism and the future problems that Yugoslavia would experience. His memoirs and accounts of the Yugoslav Civil War and World War II provide further analysis and research into the difficulties inherent in the Balkans.

⁴ Brian Hall. The Impossible Country: A Journey Through the Last Days of Yugoslavia (New York: Penguin, 1994) , 224. The gradual decline of the leadership capabilities has been argued to have started with the advent of Titoism.

In 1961, the Yugoslav economy began to slow down. The theoreticians were puzzled on what to do; to pursue more radical reforms or to stay with existing policies. By this time, Yugoslavia had developed strong ties with the West primarily through gastarbeiters in Austria and Germany. The revenue sent home to families was crucial to the development of a modern society, despite external claims of success from self-management. New generations of Yugoslavs, particularly Slovenes and Croats, looked north with enthusiasm for the modern conveniences that capitalism offered them. By 1963, Tito abandoned previous economic platforms in exchange for new investment strategies, including application of price controls while stressing the process of economic integration to establish closer contacts between the republics.⁵

Ethno-national divisions were quickly uncovered to the dismay of Tito. The Serbs favored a central, planned economy while the Croats and Slovenes favored a free market system. Issues regarding economic reform and ethnic balance circulated among the party leadership. These included debates over instituting the radical reform of self-management; division over a central or federal plan; and finally, implementation of the plan without antagonizing ethnic divisions within the republics.⁶ Self-management originally meant workers themselves should manage the business affairs at the local level.⁷ Led by Kardelj, the highest-ranking Slovene and primary Yugoslav theoretician, economic

⁵ "Yugoslavia in 1962": Report of the Federal Executive Council (Belgrade: Review of International Affairs) , 1963.

⁶ Joseph Rothschild. Return to Diversity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) , 184.

⁷ Gale Stokes. Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) , 115.

liberalization coincided with political pluralism. Slovenia and Croatia were the leading economies of the federation; as former subjects of the Habsburg Empire these regions had the benefit of a solid infrastructure. Serbia lacked such an industrial base; being under the Ottoman yoke, it did not participate in the Renaissance, Age of Enlightenment, or the Industrial Revolution. Serbian leaders felt money should be invested in their republic to construct such an industrial base.

Economics and Modern Yugoslavia

Throughout the country, Yugoslavs enjoyed privileges that other East Europeans only imagined. During the 1960s, Belgrade was the only East European city with a parking problem.⁸ As the vanguard country of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia

re-established the market as the nexus of economic activity. To ensure that the market would...at least have socialist trappings, workers' councils were established in each enterprise. Tito seems to have realized that if, in the context of a less overtly repressive dictatorship, and with the memory of wartime ethnic sectarian atrocities still fresh, he was to keep control he would have to compromise with nationalism.⁹

In the initial phase of Titoism, investments were found largely in the local-level communes rather than in the republics themselves, so that devolution should not take too explicit an ethnic-regional form. However, the regional divisions had already been firmly established.

⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁹ David Dyker and Ivan Vejvoda. Yugoslavia and After: A Study in Fragmentation, Despair and Rebirth (London: Longman, 1996), 54.

The federalization of the Communist Party itself, now renamed the League of Communists, began in earnest. One policy focused on the establishment of stable financial institutions. Using Western models, Tito shifted control from the political sphere and placed it in a banking system operating on commercial principles. However, this change simply exasperated non-Serbs since most of the banks had their corporate offices in Belgrade, which was not only the federal capital but also the capital of Serbia. It came as no surprise that the banks were perceived in the other republics as Serb enterprises, and operating with only in Serb interests in mind. Now that they were free to pursue profit-oriented policies, Croats particularly felt threatened and viewed the changes in terms of “economic exploitation of the non-Serbian periphery.”¹⁰ These views of exploitation would continue to reverberate for the remainder of Yugoslavia’s existence.

The Role of Intellectuals

During an interview in January 1961, two leading intellectuals discussed ideas involving cultural collaborations between the various republics when the troublesome subject of nationalism surfaced. Serbian writer Dobrica Cosic “envisioned an improved collaboration aiming for a more suitable cultural exchange between the republics.” Cosic added the caveat- “as long as the republics exist.” Slovenian writer Dusan Pirjevec responded by questioning Cosic’s notions of dissolution by stating, “It is not too far to conceive the wicked thought that everything will be solved, including the passivity in the inter-republic dealings, when these very republics cease to exist.” Pirjevec appears to

¹⁰ Ibid., 55.

have been concerned over a revival of nationalism and referred to nationalists as vampires. He emphatically stated that nationalism was a “legacy of the past and inseparable from the unjustified notions of supremacy.” Pirjevec maintained that isolation and chauvinism were linked to class, specifically petit bourgeois.

The heated discussion continued on the role of special privileges for the party elite, the new class, and the issue of loyalty among party members. Cosic acknowledged Pirjevec was indeed correct that a rise of nationalism was occurring among some Yugoslav youth. Cosic elaborated that “nationalism presented the forces of a reactionary bourgeois society and nationalists supported fascism, racism, anti-communism, and war.” Cosic argued that Stalin permitted the subjugation of other nations after having destroyed the international principles and foundations of Marxism.

Both Cosic and Pirjevec agreed on the “recognition of the value of respective national identities, advocating the right for free and creative choices.” These two men “supported the building of national cultures, literary creations, which managed to be sanctioned by the Communist Party, allowing for more freedom in creative choices.”¹¹

In 1966, Tito declared that Croatia and Slovenia would become the target areas of investment. This indicated a clear shift in policy to Serb leader

¹¹ Jelena Milojkovic-Djuric. “Approaches to National Identities: Cosic’s and Prijevec’s debate on ideological and literary issues,” *East European Quarterly* 30 (Spring 1996) , 92. This debate was the first of many intellectual criticisms during the transformation to self-management. The cultural issues within Yugoslavia were deeply embedded in a strong literary tradition. As a late bloomer on the world stage, Yugoslavs searched for a historic time and space nostalgia for a past in which to belong. Milovan Djilas referred to this crisis as pseudo-romanticism by a new state surrounded by countries with a solid sense of their place in the world.

Alexander Rankovic, who quietly began moving against Tito and Kardelj. The purges that would follow of Serbian and Croatian nationalists throughout the Yugoslav government occurred in order to keep a balance and to prevent a national crisis. The country was plagued by problems of low productivity and investment failures. The republics continued the nationalistic tendencies, which Tito had desperately tried to eliminate.¹² In order to stabilize the Federation, Tito realized drastic changes to the system were necessary.

The country was unprepared for the transition to a market system. The resulting economic problems, including unemployment only exacerbated the growing problem of nationalism. By 1966, party infighting in Belgrade between Croats and Serbs led to an increased demand for further devolution of power to the republics. The LCY gave greater control to the republics and this action made the federal government unable to control the economy.¹³

As a whole, Yugoslavia was unprepared for the ramifications of pluralism, specifically the economic advances of the Croats and Slovenes. The regional disparities between rich and poor, urban and rural, remained under Titoism. Belgrade had failed to address the issues of underdevelopment and unemployment in the other regions.¹⁴ These problems were impossible to solve

¹² Tim Judah. The Serbs (New York: New York University Press, 1998) , 148.

¹³ Stokes, 115.

¹⁴ Rothschild, 186.

with inaction; yet economic prosperity for the northern republics continued, mainly from Western financed loans from the United States and Great Britain.¹⁵

Balkan scholar Nenad Popovic argued that Yugoslavia developed an internal power shift from the Party to the nucleus of Party command. He explained, "self-management is actually a device by which responsibility is decentralized and shifted to all who participate in social processes."¹⁶ The participants, Yugoslavs, were given new freedoms by this flexibility. While Kardelj was in charge of media, foreign policy, and legislature, Rankovic monopolized federal security forces and the party apparatus. In Slovenia, the police forces remained loyal to Kardelj, not the federal state. Popovic argued Kardelj was not necessarily in favor of liberalization, simply communist flexibility. Both Kardelj and Rankovic fought over what position to take the economy. Tito favored Kardelj, but gave the appearance of supporting Rankovic, who had risen in power and prominence. However, Tito doubted the leadership ability of Rankovic to steady the ethnic divisions, given his centralist approach, and more likely, his Serb heritage.

Popovic further observed that the leading members did nothing to discourage their appearance as national representatives from their republics. By 1966, ethno-national pressures were interfering with the country's progress by advocating nationalistic agendas.¹⁷ The national question persisted as a

¹⁵ Danica Fink-Hafner. Making a New Nation: The Formation of Slovenia (Dartmouth: Dartmouth University Press, 1997) , 25.

¹⁶ Nenad Popovic. Yugoslavia: The New Class in Crisis (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968) , 62. These financial schemes were used to support Yugoslavia against the Soviet Union.

¹⁷ Ibid., 72.

dangerous threat to Yugoslavia's stability. During this critical time, Tito remarked, "How much it cost to put this country together and how little it would take to wreck it."¹⁸ Tito attempted to use the economy to resolve ethnic problems. Tito appears to have concluded that economic success would lessen ethnic tensions and encourage prosperity by disarming nationalistic elements, "self-management and decentralization were the most promising way to create a more stable commonwealth."¹⁹

Regional interests practically destroyed the unity of Tito's party and revived his well-founded fear of nationalism. Achieving religious and national equality could only help to preserve brotherhood and unity. Kardelj stated that "self-management logically leads to political pluralism."²⁰ However, this pluralism would undermine the foundation of the regime. The launching of economic reforms confirmed the demise of the central planning system. These progressive reforms were unacceptable to devout Marxists.²¹

The senior Croatian party leader Vladimir Bakaric supported liberalization and adopted a platform for a radical overhaul of the economy, including implementation of self-management. Croatia and Slovenia, the northernmost republics, favored greater local control for social policies, specifically financial resources. The inherent conflict of interest between ethnic

¹⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁹ Dusko Doder. The Yugoslavs (New York: Random House, 1978) , 101.

²⁰ Ibid., 106.

²¹ Vojin Dimitrijevic. The Road to War in Serbia (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1996), 400.

groups arose during the economic reform debates among party officials.²² Inevitably, this decision led to mounting interregional tensions. However, a southern coalition evolved between Macedonia and Kosovo, which welcomed the modern reforms favored by the Croats and Slovenes.²³ This policy crisis was a serious threat to the political structure of the Communist party. It was a particular threat to Serb leader and Vice-President, Alexander Rankovic, who persisted in blocking economic reforms that would weaken Serbia.

Tito was forced to openly disgrace Rankovic in exchange for economic liberalization. While speaking at a party meeting in Belgrade, Tito stated that "Rankovic hindered the building of socialism, without the purge from our ranks of those elements which do not belong to our Party...it cannot successfully lead to our socialist development."²⁴ Since Yugoslavia was an experiment, adjustments were to be expected as an integral part of the process of development.

Rankovic, Vice-President and head of the Department of State Security, was expelled after rumors of internal corruption were uncovered during an investigation of the secret police apparatus, UDBa, (Uprava drzavne bezbednosti) which Rankovic supervised. Rankovic had electronic listening devices installed in the homes of leading Yugoslav officials. Tito would later dispute the claim that his own residence had been bugged. Tito cited numerous reasons that Rankovic had abused his power and threatened the stability of the

²² Stokes., 115.

²³ Misha Glenny, The Balkans (New York: Viking, 1999) , 581.

²⁴ Ibid., 65.

federal government, including arbitrary arrests, secret trials, a pro-Serbian stance, and the use of listening devices. His dismissal on July 1, 1966 allowed Tito to implement full-scale economic liberalization without opposition from the Serb delegation.²⁵ According to evidence revealed at his hearing, Rankovic had “wanted to encourage the development of a Yugoslav consciousness in the ethnic sense.”²⁶ This act was in direct violation of the state policy of brotherhood and unity. Rankovic, alongside other purged leaders, enjoyed a quiet retirement and state-funded pension for the rest of his life.²⁷

Tito approved the alliance but two problems remained; the dilemma of reforming the party and the pressures of regional economic rivalry. Simply put, Croatia and Serbia were unable to agree on the most basic terms. Yugoslav historian John Lampe explains, “only the further devolution of Communist power to the republic or local level could create a sense of democratic reform on which both sides could agree.”²⁸ Tito’s longevity “allowed Kardelj to continue elaborating an incomprehensible electoral framework that made sense only as a device to prevent the organization of any rival to Communist power on the local, republic, or federal level.”²⁹ Lampe supports the idea that pluralism within the country could have silenced the ethnic grievances. The 1974 Constitution would

²⁵ Ibid., 583.

²⁶ Sabrina P. Ramet. Balkan Babel (Boulder: Westview, 1996) , 176.

²⁷ Vejvoda, 14.

²⁸ John Lampe, Yugoslavia As History: Twice There was a Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) , 285.

²⁹ Ibid., 293.

be created in response to internal and external party opposition during the period of 1968 to 1972.

After Rankovic fell from grace, a relaxed political and social climate enveloped the country. In 1967, Matica Hrvatska, the Croatian cultural organization demanded recognition of a separate Croatian language. The issue focused on which alphabet to be used within the republic, Latin or Cyrillic. This language debate launched the Croatian Spring. This turn of events caused Kardelj and Tito to counteract the democratic features of the movement to prevent further development of Croatian nationalism.³⁰

In 1968, the first open opposition in the relaxed atmosphere occurred at Belgrade University by neo-Marxist students that supported the Zagreb journal *Praxis*. This Croatian journal examined the failures of self-management and its implications on Croatia and Yugoslavia. These students protested over lack of university facilities and an enhanced role in student affairs. Instead of suppressing the students, Tito embraced the movement with a zealous attitude, praising the revolutionary spirit.³¹ The same behavior was reflected in China in regards to Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution.

In 1969, crisis arose in Slovenia over a disputed World Bank loan of \$30 million dollars for highway road funds after a Serb-dominated finance committee unexpectedly diverted the money to other republics. These motorways would have given greater Western access and economic

³⁰ Ibid., 299.

³¹ Ralph Pervan. Tito and the Students (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1978), 10.

development for Slovenia and the entire country. Slovene leader Stane Kavcic was concerned with the economic ramifications. Contrary to other republican leaders, nationalism was not his primary political goal.

By 1970, a constitutional crisis had erupted due to continuous amendments and outright confusion of republican leaders. The previous Constitution had been amended nineteen times. Within a year another twenty-one amendments were added. These amendments allowed further devolution as individual republics could control not only their earnings of foreign exchange but also rule on their social plans before the federation could analyze them. In early 1970, Croat Milos Zanko began to attack liberal Croats with accusations of promoting nationalism. Many Croats had seized upon the subject of economic reform as a way to prove superiority over Serbs. While not a fervent nationalist, liberal Croat Mika Tripalo had the support of nationalists within his party.³²

Tripalo and Savka Dabcevic-Kucar were the personally appointed successors to Croat leader Vladimir Bakaric. Shortly thereafter his tirade, Zanko was forced out of his position for attacking the new leadership. The new liberal leaders were now in a difficult position as nationalistic demands for constitutional reforms rapidly surpassed their political agenda. For example, Matica Hrvatska went so far as to suggest a separate bank, army, and United Nations representation for Croatia. Such demands struck fear in the heart of Tito and Kardelj, challenging their leadership functions and the party apparatus.³³

³² Dimitrijevic, 400.

³³ Lampe, 301.

During the summer of 1970, Tito authorized plans for the collective presidency devised by Kardelj. At roughly the same time, the collapse of conservatives occurred in Serbia. The president of Serbia's Central Committee, Petar Stambolic, was held personally responsible for his failure to quash the Belgrade protests two years earlier by Tito. After dismissing Stambolic, Yugoslav Foreign Minister Marko Nikezic, the former Yugoslav ambassador to the United States, took over the position. Latinka Perovic assumed the role of party secretary alongside Nikezic; both had no involvement with the disgraced Rankovic and were considered safe choices by Tito to serve on the Serbian Central Committee. The goals of the Serbian liberals included a market economy, modernization, liberation from Serbian dogmatism, support of the technocrats, and increased cooperation between the republics.³⁴ However, these goals would soon clash with Tito.

Constitutional amendments passed in June 1971 turned Yugoslavia into something very close to a confederation. As the year progressed, nationalist sentiments in Croatia intensified. The initial reaction of the authorities in Belgrade was accommodating. As the crisis continued, President Tito, himself a Croat, decided he had enough and initiated purges of those with "fascist-totalitarian tendencies." The pivotal question regarding control of the national interest, of Yugoslavs, would be placed within the party. In December 1971, Tito forced Tripalo and Dabcevic-Kucar to resign as well as over one thousand members of the Croat party after Croatian students held widespread demonstrations in Zagreb. The following month, Matica Hrvatska was banned.

³⁴ Ibid., 303.

Slovene leader Stane Kavcic was purged following criticism of his interpretation of the market economy and too much emphasis on Western Europe, particularly neighboring Italy, Austria, and West Germany, the historic trading partners of Slovenia.³⁵ As not to be objectionable, Tito purged various ethnic nationalists and reminded citizens that they were Yugoslavs, not their ethnicities.

In October 1972, Tito responded with equal force to nationalistic Serbs after forced resignations of Nikezic and over one thousand members from the Serb party. Nikezic had opposed Tito and Kardelj on issues of economic reform, constitutional amendments, the forced resignation of the liberal Croats, and the reestablishment of central party authority.³⁶ The liberal coalition of Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Serbs challenged Tito's authority. If left unchecked, this alliance could have achieved pluralistic reforms. The Croatian purge was troublesome. In order to balance and appease the ethnicities, Tito had to weaken Serbia and Croatia and strengthen the smaller republics by a series of checks and balances. This would be legitimized under the 1974 Constitution.

Tito replaced the liberals with the older partisan generation. Tito recognized the need for drastic changes to the political structure in order to prevent further destabilization. However, the purges of liberal communists left hard-liners in place, particularly in Serbia. This led to the eventual return to

³⁵ Ibid., 304.

³⁶ Ibid., 305.

power of partisan leaders Petar Stambolic, Draza Markovic, and their children.³⁷ These two families represented the growing political elite that Milovan Djilas had previously referred to in his book, The New Class. Markovic's young niece, Mira, was married to a businessman, Slobodan Milosevic. The young couple's best friend was Petar's nephew, Ivan Stambolic, a rising political figure in Serbia.

The liberal alliances throughout the country had come to an abrupt halt by 1972. However, the liberals continued to criticize the complex and seemingly impossible tenets of Kardelj's constitutional ideas.³⁸ As a final attempt to provide ethnic stability, and as a precursor in preparation for his death, Tito issued a new Constitution in 1974. As one of the longest constitutions in the world, with 406 articles, the document declared Tito president for life and established a rotating collective leadership from the six republics that would come into effect following his death. Tito recognized that Kosovo and Bosnia would create serious problems in the future. The Constitution gave autonomous status to the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. He hoped that providing equal political power would enhance negotiations between the republics and provinces. This would, presumably, create an effective solution to the centuries long problem of religion and intolerance.

According to the 1974 Constitution, the State Presidency would provide nine members, eight equal representatives from the six republics and two provinces, and one President of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. This system would become known as the ethnic key, the most elaborate quota system

³⁷ Dimitrijevic, 401.

³⁸ Ibid., 402.

in the world. As a result, the republican governments would emerge as the only relevant seats of power in Yugoslavia.³⁹

The major flaw in the Constitution was the unanimous agreement in the republic and provincial representation. This institutional weakness between the federal and republican governments would lead to disintegration as communism waned in 1989. With Tito's death, the new leadership was faced with challenges of a stalemate in the State Presidency and an uncertainty of what measures to act upon without antagonizing the republics. Tito failed in offering constructive change to his country and was unable to satisfy the republics through internal reforms. It would become seemingly impossible to cater to each of the ethnic groups without one becoming dominant over the others. Tito did accomplish much during his tenure in office. However, the failure to create lasting fundamental policies and no consensus on how to solve problems left Yugoslavia in a precarious position. As the Iron Curtain crumbled in the decade following Tito's death, ambitious Serbian politicians revived historic regional animosities.

³⁹ Bogdan Denitch. Ethnic Nationalism (London: Univesity of Minnesota Press, 1994) , 109.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS 1970-1975

We would not be realists, if we did not recognize that our system of self-management democracy contains elements of political pluralism and a one-party system.

Edvard Kardelj

This chapter will provide an account of events during 1970-1975, specifically the 1974 Constitution. The political purges of Serb and Croat party leadership occurred in preparation for the new constitution. As a whole, Yugoslavia was unprepared for the ramifications of pluralism, specifically the economic advances of the Croats and Slovenes. The transition to a market system was difficult and the resulting economic problems, including unemployment, only exacerbated the national question as each republic attempted to create a strong industrial base. By 1974, decentralization led to the crucial component of the new Constitution, that each republic and province had a virtual veto over federal government decisions. Instead of the federal government delegating power to the republics, the republics and provinces did so to the federal structure. The party, League of Communists of Yugoslavia, would play the role of the government. As time passed, the structure weakened and extremists became political leaders. Despite the best intentions of Tito and Kardelj, the political institutions they spent a lifetime developing would ultimately fail.

The strong foundation of the Communist experience of Yugoslavia allowed its initial success. The Comintern had urged the formation of separate Communist parties among the Balkan nations from the onset. In 1937 Slovenia established its party with Tito at the helm; the following year Croatia joined the revolutionary movement. Only after World War II did Serbia and the other future republics form communist parties with what was considered the “promise of a bright future.”¹ The establishment of these separate organizations contributed to the inherent ethnic tensions of the republics. Following World War II, the national parties were purged which removed any individuals believed possibly tainted by fascism during the wartime struggle. The 1948 showdown with Stalin only reinforced the legitimacy and popularity of Tito and Yugoslavia.

The political crises which Tito avoided through the extensive purges were formally addressed by the government. Following the purges, members of central party organs still were chosen by regional decision. The 1974 Constitution was written to settle the republican differences and to create a stable system for the future. It had three essential aims: to decrease the control of government over the economy and over worker self-management; to reframe the Yugoslav federation; and to provide a constitutional solution for the problem of succession to power.² The grievances of the individual republics meant some level of devolution was necessary within the federation. The Constitution was a struggle to balance social unity, economic, and ethnic diversity.

¹ Vejvoda, 12.

² Vuckovic, 375.

Tito and Kardelj chose to devolve

administrative, economic, social and some political power, while retaining all decision-making over foreign, military, and key external trade affairs in their own hands; they handed the rest down to the republics and autonomous provinces, thus producing a de facto confederalization of the country.³

The six republics, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia were defined in Article 3 of the 1974 Constitution as 'states based on popular sovereignty.' In addition, Articles 398, 400, 402 stated that any constitutional changes required the consensus between all federal units: the six republics and the two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo.

The new Constitution did take the devolution of power and empowerment of federal units to unparalleled heights. All federal units were permitted to vote their own constitutions, to have presidents, collective presidencies, parliaments, ministries - including foreign affairs. They were also granted a great deal of latitude in economic policy, social welfare, and education. While most of the republics were pleased with the final results, Serbia remained a source of tension since it held the two autonomous provinces within its sphere. This grant of de facto veto power prompted debates throughout the federation.

This created an unavoidable conflict, since the Serb assembly "could only change its own constitution with the assent of the assemblies of the autonomous provinces, which thus had the power of veto, while the autonomous provinces could change their own constitutions without the Republic's consent."⁴ This resulted in a weakened central power; Yugoslavia also disappeared de facto from

³ Vejvoda, 15.

⁴ Ibid., 16.

constitutional order of the country, as it became only what the federal units decided by consensus, it would be. The viability of the system was further complicated by the unanimity principle.⁵

Further complications arose over the functions of the Federal Assembly. The Constitution defined the Assembly as being both the highest expression of the self-management system and the supreme organ of power within the framework of federal rights and duties. Nationality would still be taken into account in the composition of certain institutions, but participation in those institutions was now to be defined in terms of territorial, not national, identity.”⁶

Tito, considered the supreme arbiter of any Yugoslav entanglement, represented the only effective functioning institution of the country. The 1974 Constitution stipulated Tito would rule until his death. He had the ability to resolve any conflict presented to him by the Yugoslavs. However, his heirs political agendas resulted in stagnation and government ineptitude. The multiculturalism of Yugoslavia inhibited the federation from reaching agreements. The ongoing process of reinterpretations of socialism led to a number of what can only be described as inconsistencies.

Gojko Vuckovic argued that the constitutional changes during Tito’s rule failed due to the decentralization of the political institutions. Since the self-management associations were placed in the context of creating a utopian society, the unresolved issues were ignored.

⁵ Ramet, 67.

⁶ Vuckovic, 373. See also Steven Burg, Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia. Political Decision Making Since 1966 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 250-1.

Vuckovic stated

there was no evidence that the concept of socialist self-management could protect the unity of Yugoslavia. To the contrary, there was more evidence that the utopian nature of socialist self-management along with the decentralization of the political system were only leading to disintegration.⁷

Much of the 1974 Constitution was based upon various socialist theoretical and practical experiences, including Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's ideas of federalism and 1871 Paris Commune. Kardelj, the chief architect of the document, was heavily influenced in his theories by Rousseau, Mill, and Cole, particularly their ideas of political participation at the local level. Vuckovic notes that while Kardelj was adamant that the Yugoslav model was an original invention, it was remarkably similar to Cole's model of Guild Socialism in Great Britain.⁸ The 1974 Constitution and the 1976 Law on Associated Labor were the culmination of Kardelj's studies of Cole. The concept of associations that Kardelj introduced would only further weaken the political and administrative institutions. These institutions would prove incapable of transferring to the associations, since

in order to protect and further reinforce their positions in their regions, regional political leadership pursued more and more ethno-national policies in an effort to keep working class citizens divided along ethnic cleavages rather than eliminating them.⁹

Two recent scholars that advocated the Yugoslav model of self-management include Carol Pateman and Ichak Adizes. However, they both clearly overlooked and underestimated the problems of ethno-nationalism.

⁷ Vuckovic, 373.

⁸ Ibid., 357.

⁹ Ibid., 362.

Pateman discussed the validity and viability of decentralization while Adizes viewed the model as a successful step towards conflict resolution. Vuckovic stated Pateman and Adizes “even argued that decentralization actually helped curb nationalism.”¹⁰

Titoism had given workers some meager degree of empowerment at the workplace level. However, it was ultimately a façade for the actual decision-making going on at the highest levels of power. By the early 1970s Titoism was plagued with problems and conflicts that lacked any clear solution. The ordinary citizen who lacked a voice in the decision-making process grew increasingly disenfranchised with the federation. As time passed and animosity grew between the republics, the nomenklatura became increasingly uncompromising. As a result, the various republics and two provinces began to develop largely within their own particular frameworks and followed their own national interests. The republics and provinces became self-centered and gradually unwilling to work in the interests of the entire country. “The constitution invested each Yugoslav republic and province with theoretical statehood and it effectively created a semi-confederative political structure in which powerful sectional leadership emerged.”¹¹

The weak nature of Tito and Kardelj’s final legislation “proved only too easy to exacerbate when a real crisis of conflict of interest arose between the republics.”¹² An example of the schizophrenic attitude of the Yugoslavs

¹⁰ Ibid., 359.

¹¹ Leonard Cohen, Political Cohesion in a Fragile Mosaic, The Yugoslav Experience (Boulder: Westview, 1983) , 33.

¹² Vejvoda, 17.

regarding each other can be clearly demonstrated in the fact that the motorway between the two biggest cities, Belgrade and Zagreb, was never fully completed, while motorways linking cities in their respective republics were completed. In his later years, as his health declined, so did Tito's role in the daily operations of the country.

Consensus rule meant that any change in the constitution, and therefore any recasting of the federation, would be a long and complicated process. Regarding the issue of federal elections, any major political change would have clearly involved free elections with multiplicity of political parties founded on the basis of freedom of association to make a constituent assembly, consisting of representatives of the electoral body and representative rights of national minorities and majorities. The 1974 Constitution and 1976 Law on Associated Labor effectively codified decentralization with the removal of central political control.

Every proposal for holding elections at the federal level put forward by the last federal government was systematically obstructed by Slovenia, Serbia, and Croatia. The parts were able to dictate the rules to the whole. Republics successfully stopped the federation from re-legitimizing itself through federal elections and proceeded to reinforce their own legitimacy by holding republic level elections. The national question was a constant struggle. Each group maintained they had a distinct identity; nation-building processes during inter-war years as well as socialist statehood consolidated this belief by the 1970s. The

drive to constitute fully blown nation-states on the basis of the republics became a pivotal factor in breaking the federation.

The power struggle issues of the new class included maintaining as many political and economic privileges as possible. Regional political leaderships held support by national sentiment and ethnic homogeneity. All criticisms were placed on the neighboring republic. The government bodies, which were intended to oversee civil and political order, disappeared. Since the republics were left in a vacuum, most of their leadership felt absolved of all sense of responsibility or duty to their country.¹³

A reassertion of the party, buttressed by the reintroduction of a formalized system by the LCY, where committees of candidates for all key jobs would occur. Instead of building national consensus, political elite concentrated on building autarkic little empires and found willing allies among local business leaders eager to cut out any actual or potential competition from other republics.¹⁴ The ramifications of the new structure were apparent as “the principle of power without responsibility had far-reaching consequences at the level of the government of Yugoslavia. By creating a “liberum veto situation at the level of the federal government...all sorts of vital government functions were simply turned on their heads.”¹⁵

The most telling problem remained the uncontrollable economy. The state had been heavily funded through Western loans. After Tito's death, Western

¹³ Dyker, 19.

¹⁴ Ibid., 56.

¹⁵ Ibid., 56.

states increased interest payments. Instead of taking this situation seriously, the federation remained silent. The bitterness between the republics only intensified as finances further complicated their relations. The lack of strong leadership only accelerated the crisis. The political compromises of Tito's declining years, as well as the country's unique ethnic problem destroyed the economy in the 1980s. Republican politicians continued to borrow, secure in the knowledge that they would not ultimately bear responsibility for repayment to the West. Yugoslavia found itself in the precarious position of having no control over the deficit on balance of payments, as the regional leaderships of 1970s "vied with each other to see who could get away with running the biggest deficit, while the federal government and the National Bank stood helplessly by."¹⁶

¹⁶ Ibid., 56.

CHAPTER 3

THE END OF AN ERA – A CRISIS BEGINS 1980-1987

THE ROLE OF THE PARTY & KOSOVO QUESTION

l'Etat et le parti, c'est moi

Tito

The death of Tito ushered in a number of crises for Yugoslavia. The continual decline in leadership and leadership abilities accentuated the problem. The system of rotation at the federal level remained inefficient and unstable throughout the next decade. The economic failures of self-management were apparent to the casual observer as the country never recovered financially following the foreign debt crisis of 1982. The widening north-south gap between the republics permitted ethnic nationalism to flourish. The weakening of the political system was articulated by several well-known accounts of republican dissidents in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. These episodes were given a pro-Serb stance with the publication of the 1986 Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences Memorandum. The political career of Ivan Stambolic came to an abrupt halt after his friend and colleague, Slobodan Milosevic, carried the flag of Greater Serbia in his ascension to power. Optimistic Yugoslavs believed the ethnic antagonisms would be transcended through Communism. However, the situation turned into the precisely the opposite movement as “the society of the

Second Yugoslavia ended up internally atomized, fragmented, and thus utterly unprepared and disabled in the face of the challenge of the end of communism.”¹

Kosovo

The most contentious issue for Yugoslavia has remained the ethnic Albanian majority in the province of Kosovo, which has sought unsuccessfully for independence since Tito's death. The disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can be directly traced to the issue of Kosovo. The provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina had autonomous status guaranteed under the 1974 Constitution until Milosevic revoked these rights in 1989.

The migrations of ethnic Albanians into Kosovo and Serbia began during the Ottoman expansion in the 14th century. The bulwark mentality still penetrates the Serbian mind today, as Serbs maintain a sense of superiority in having protected Christian Europe from the Muslims while they suffered from this sacrifice with blood. Serbs have viewed themselves as defenders of Western civilization against the Turks for the last 500 years. As the southernmost province of Yugoslavia, Kosovo had a 90% ethnic Albanian population with the highest unemployment and highest birthrate of the federation. The economic and social problems escalated in 1981 when riots broke occurred in the provincial capital of Pristina amid fears of military intervention and rising unemployment.

A relatively small Kosovar Albanian independence movement was established at this time. The Kosovars essentially wanted greater status within the federation, as a republic, instead of an autonomous province. This change would have guaranteed greater equality for the ethnic Albanians against the Serb

¹ Vojvoda, 13.

contingent. The implications should this actually come to fruition were shocking to the Serb minority population. The Serbs believed Kosovo to be their spiritual center and wanted to maintain absolute political and economic control over the territory. Even though the Battle of Kosovo Polje was fought on June 28, 1389, modern Serbs speak as if it happened during their lifetime. Located near the provincial capital of Pristina, the battle site is symptomatic of the problems of today.

A growth of ethnic nationalism swept the region over the next few years. The first public awareness of the critical situation occurred in 1984, as the world was preparing to watch Sarajevo host the Olympics. Vojislav Seselj, a rising politician and outspoken writer went on trial facing charges of advocating Greater Serbia ideas and undermining the federal government. Smaller incidents throughout the region sparked the flames of hatred among dissatisfied Yugoslavs. Nationalists jumped on the bandwagon to incite violence between the Serbs and Kosovars. This turn of events resulted in considerable debates among the other republics over how to confront the delicate issue of toleration. Since the introduction of self-management, Serbs had migrated to Belgrade and other republican capitals for economic purposes.² Since so many left behind the agricultural life, the Kosovar economy only further weakened. After a housing shortage in the 1970s increased land values, many Serbs sold their property to Kosovars and moved to larger cities, such as Belgrade.³

² Hall, 225.

³ Judah, 157.

As the cracks began to appear during the 1980s, no clear figure took control of the country. The revolving door policy of the federal leadership placed Yugoslavia in limbo. Nationalists began advocating increased devolution to the republics – only later did they openly allude to independence. The Yugoslav political establishment, unable to agree on most topics, did reach a consensus that the political system was in a critical situation. The main reasons for the lack of cooperation were the decentralized political framework and the loss of the symbol of national unity, Tito. The issues that Tito had so carefully held together drew all the more pronounced after his death. The collective presidency could only superficially manage the problems. In 1981, eight amendments were added to the Constitution. These were intended to consolidate the policies of the collective presidency. Regional stalemates continued between the centralizers and decentralizers with the party. Serbia began to advocate a strong federal government while Slovenia and Croatia maintained that regional autonomy would solve the country's problems. The republican and provincial governments were the only relevant seats of power as the eight bodies failed to cooperate in the 1980s.⁴

The eight organizations of the LCY began challenging the legitimacy of the federal party. Cohen referred to this as the dual legitimacy crisis; regional challenge as a horizontal crisis; vertical challenge, the citizens' loss of confidence in the party leadership. The legitimacy of the party in the eyes of working class of Yugoslavia had disappeared by 1987- due to continued debates over the proposed changes to the constitution. The inadequacies of the self-management

⁴ Gregory Hall. "The Politics of Autocracy: Serbia under Slobodan Milosevic," East European Quarterly 33 (June 1999) : 234.

system revealed - as demonstrated by a two- month long miners strike in Croatia. The miners were in fact, Bosnians, in deplorable conditions, who were upset at the “unprofitable investment by the republican government” in regards to the mining operation.⁵

By 1986, the Yugoslav Presidency had agreed to authorize the preparation of amendments to the federal Constitution. In January 1987, a coordinating group came out with its preliminary proposal for minimal changes, including strengthening the unity of the Yugoslav economy, at the expense of the economic sovereignty of the individual republics. In Slovenia and Croatia, however, these amendments ran into trouble immediately.⁶

The publication of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences Memorandum in 1986 by leading intellectuals, particularly Dobrica Cosic, reintroduced the concept of Greater Serbia to the masses. This document, originally only circulated among the echelon of Serb society, became a rallying cry for a disgruntled generation. This revisionist tone in academic circles and by influential authors would be reflected by other East European states at the close of the Cold War. The blatant nationalism reflected a growing sense of urgency and change. In Serbia, the scope of intellectual critique changed dramatically, in that it “reached beyond the usual complaints about the suppression of political and artistic liberties to challenge the Party’s entire historic legitimacy – and, in the process, also the revolution itself.”⁷ The disaffected welcomed the change;

⁵ Branka Magas. The Destruction of Yugoslavia (London: Verso, 1993) , 105. This is only one example of workers’ complaints regarding the economic investments made following Tito’s death.

⁶ Vuckovic, 375. These two republics were unwillingly to provide further monetary aid to their fellow countrymen as the quality vs. quantity debate continued at the federal level.

⁷ Magas, 199.

fear, insecurity, distrust- all of these problems dictated a need for enemies to take the blame for the country's ills.

The idea of Belgrade becoming a fourth Rome placed an emphasis on religion. Greater Serbia required an enemy; "the other," would be represented by the foreigners, the Muslims. The media provoked fear of Turkish domination and reinforced religious stereotypes on the public. Serb leadership used the media to orchestrate a reaction to prove themselves correct in their preposterous theories on race and attitudes. Serb leaders and journalists were openly racist. Even higher education in Serbia advocated the hatred of all non-Serbs. Orthodoxy was used as an effective weapon to manipulate the masses.

After initially condemning the paper, new nationalist and populists politicians, including Milosevic, embraced the idea to use ethnic hatred and religion as a base of appeal for thousands of disenchanted Serbs. Milosevic recognized its value in legitimizing his rising political career.⁸ The document criticized Tito and his fellow political elite for economic, political, and cultural discrimination against the Serbs. It should be noted that this was never sanctioned as an official publication, but the title gave all Yugoslavs the impression that the Serb republican leadership approved it. This document of propaganda contained lists of intellectual grievances, which included the role of economics and perceived acts against Serbia and Serbs.⁹ The idea of Greater Serbia emerged as a potential answer to solve Yugoslavia's problems. Intense criticism of not only Tito, but the entire Partisan generation is displayed

⁸ Judah, 133.

⁹ Stokes, 275.

throughout the document. In discussion of the constitutional changes of 1974, they are stated to have “led to a permanent situation of mutual veto by republics on all significant proposals for change.” Serbs advocated new legislation to protect Serbian rights.¹⁰

At the same time Milosevic became head of the Serbian League of Communists,

by playing upon Serbs’ fears of the situation in Kosovo, their discontent with Yugoslavia’s worsening economic conditions, and very importantly, their perception that the federal political structure worked against Serbia to the benefit of the autonomous provinces and other republics, Milosevic seemed to offer something for all Serbs.¹¹

There appears to be a high probability that he never believed in Greater Serbia, that he was merely an opportunist. Milosevic’s role as an opportunist has been noted by several intellectuals. Aleksa Djilas described Milosevic as an ideological eclectic; Obrad Kesic referred to him as neither ideologist nor idealist.¹² The Serb leader remained indecisive on key political issues. “Milosevic was not a definite supporter of a multi-party system, and his republic was the last in the former Yugoslavia to accept such an arrangement.”¹³

In light of changing relationships within Europe, including Gorbachev’s policies of perestroika and glasnost, a sense of urgency swept the political elite. Cracks began to appear within the Serb republican leadership over the future of

¹⁰ Donia, 266.

¹¹ G.Hall, 236. See also Cohen, 52-54.

¹² Aleksa Djilas. “A Profile of Slobodan Milosevic,” *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (Summer 1993) : 94. See also Obrad Kesic. “Serbia: The Politics of Despair,” *Current History*, 92 (November 1993).

¹³ G.Hall, 237.

Yugoslavia within a post-Cold War scene. The fundamental divide within Yugoslavia remained the character and role of the party. Milosevic was successful, against a background of economic crisis, working-class unrest, and nationalist agitation-due to the growing sense of insecurity throughout the Serbian party apparatus: the appeal to unity behind a strong leader proved “irresistible for the majority of top and middle-rank cadres.”¹⁴

SANU Memorandum

The Memorandum’s xenophobic nationalism would earlier have elicited a swift condemnation from the Serbian party. Had Tito been alive, it never would have been revealed. The postwar generation lacked the understanding and respect of what the war time heroes dealt with regarding nationalism.

This time, however, the counter-attack was never mounted, since the leadership was split over how to deal with domestic nationalism. Stambolic, president of the republic, and Pavlovic, head of the Belgrade party, publicly condemned the Memorandum. However, at Milosevic’s insistence, the fact that the Serbian party presidency and Central Committee also formally condemned it, was kept from public knowledge. The silence of the highest political authority spoke louder than words. For not only did it suggest tacit support, it also inhibited public discussion of the Memorandum at the time when it was most needed.¹⁵

This party split failed in reconciliation as points of view grew all the more extreme as time progressed.

Milosevic seized on the opportunity to take control on April 27, 1987, at Kosovo Polje, where he launched his bid for power in the League of Communists of Serbia. In his speech, he spoke of the injustice and humiliation of the Serbs

¹⁴ Magas, 197. Serbs appeared to welcome the often chauvinistic Milosevic, after years without a political strongman.

¹⁵ Ibid., 200. The lack of response was detrimental to relations between Serbia and the other republics as the media and intelligentsia began to endorse all or parts of the document.

against their oppressive neighbors and of their duty to their descendents. As he listened to the speech, Pavlovic saw 'an idea turned into a dogma, the Kosovo myth becoming a reality.'¹⁶

Milosevic endorsed the idea that the Serb nation was at war with its countrymen, and offered the nationalists support. In reality, nothing had happened; the speech was an opportunity to provoke the new enemy to respond. With a few well chosen words, Milosevic was able to destroy years of trust between the republic and province. The Serbs absolved themselves from the jurisdiction of the provincial authorities and the existing constitution. As head of the League of Communists of Serbia, Milosevic spoke not on behalf of the party, not on behalf of the republic's working class, but on behalf of the Serb nation in Yugoslavia. His direct challenge of the defining principle of the Yugoslav federation, brotherhood and unity, endorsed the nationalism contained in the SANU Memorandum: 'The establishment of the full national and cultural integrity of the Serb nation, irrespective of the republic and province in which it finds itself, is its historic and democratic right.'¹⁷ This statement modernized self-determination and would affect each republic and province in a distinct and often brutal manner in a matter of months.

Two factions emerged in Serbia- one led by republican Prime Minister Ivan Stambolic of which Pavlovic belonged, and the other was led by Serbian party leader Milosevic. The main difference between the two factions was their

¹⁶ Magas, 202. Pavlovic, who attended the occasion, was shocked at the response of the Serbs to Milosevic's nationalistic speech. After returning to Belgrade, Milosevic sought authorization for the speech and argued it had nothing to do with politics, simply sovereignty.

¹⁷ SANU Memorandum.

approach to the Kosovo problem - should these be tackled with or without the collaboration of the Kosovo provincial leadership, or by more drastic means including reliance on Serb nationalism?

The rebirth of Serb nationalism instilled fear in the head of the Belgrade party, Dragisa Pavlovic, who during that spring and summer watched the media transformed into an instrument of the power struggle within the party leadership as Albanians were portrayed as dangerous, primitive, and anti-Yugoslav. As the leading Serb critic of Milosevic, Pavlovic warned that the repressive forces of the Rankovic era were being rehabilitated. He also cautioned Yugoslavs that the historic legacy of the LCY was being put on trial by political extremists.¹⁸ Serb nationalists saw the solution to Kosovo in terms of national confrontation. Their continual rallies in Kosovo and in Belgrade were growing violent, advocating a state of emergency for Kosovo.

Pavlovic denounced the press for talking about Kosovo "in words reeking of lead and gunpowder, revenge, and the renewal of the suicidal Vidovdan myth."¹⁹ By this time, key positions in media were controlled supporters of Milosevic. Pavlovic clearly envisioned the dark future of Yugoslavia in his statement,

If a nation adopts the right to be angry, how can it deny the same to another? A confrontation of two nations leads to a war. Instead of redirecting anger towards a rational understanding of problems and their solutions, the appeal to anger serves to strengthen the authority of the speaker.²⁰

¹⁸ Magas, 203. Pavlovic, unlike other Serb politicians, refused to be silent on this issue. An intellectual, he remained on the fringes of Serb politics.

¹⁹ Ibid., 204. Vidovdan is the Serbian term for St. Vitus' Day, June 28, considered one of the holiest days by the Serbian Orthodox Church.

²⁰ Ibid., 204. Pavlovic theorized that the government structure would collapse if the concept of Greater Serbia gathered momentum.

Pavlovic's warnings were ignored to the detriment of not only Serbia, but the entire Balkan region.

The public and now bitter political infighting of the Serbian party signaled that a purge was long overdue. As the largest party organ, the Belgrade party numbered 250,000. After a two day conference, the Central Committee of the Serbian party began dismissing party officials, well aware that this was only the first stage of an extensive purge to achieve their nationalistic aims.

Milosevic accused Stambolic and Pavlovic of bringing disunity into the Serbian party, and demanded clarification on the issue of support for the party line in relation to Kosovo. At this meeting, which launched his political demise, Pavlovic argued that "nationalism is the final instrument, the last defense of dogmatism. In my opinion, the key problem lies in the unwillingness to confront Serb nationalism."²¹ His unrelenting criticism of the growing nationalism within the media and the dangers presented by Milosevic and nationalism forced his removal from power. Dragisa Pavlovic, the head of the Belgrade party was dismissed overnight.

After successfully crushing his Serb opposition, Milosevic now turned to the business of unifying the Serb nation, in order to prepare for a final onslaught on the two barriers to constitutional revision: the leaderships of Vojvodina and Kosovo, and the Federal party leadership itself.²² Nationalist rallies spread

²¹ Ibid., 204. In hindsight, Pavlovic appears to be a rare case in recent Serbian political history by his refusal to submit to nationalistic pressure, when the majority of Serb leaders followed Milosevic blindly.

²² Aleksa Djilas, 87.

throughout Serbia during 1988. A dangerous link was emerging, which Pavlovic had warned against, between militant nationalism and the Rankovic period.

The state of the Serbian economy, which was officially admitted to be on the point of collapse, had produced a fear of popular demonstrations in Belgrade where one quarter of the republic's industry was concentrated. However, Milosevic offered no alternative program for solving either the national problem in Kosovo or the disastrous state of the Serbian economy. Instead, he insisted on "unity" and unquestioning respect for the authority of the party leadership. He effectively, and with precision, silenced his critics.

Milosevic was criticized by Slovene weekly magazine *Mladina* for his blatant nationalism and neo-Stalinism; Zagreb weekly *Danas* also announced reservations to the new political rhetoric; Belgrade *NIN* editors publicly expressed disapproval. The Serbian journalists were soon also replaced with more acceptable editorial staffs.²³ A significant voice was missing from these crises, the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and its executive branch. The authority enjoyed by Tito was never transferred to the federal party organs following his death. The Central Committee also kept silent on the issue of revisionist history, which was sweeping the republics.

Defense Minister Admiral Branko Mamula warned in September 1987 that members of the international community feared the Yugoslavs were losing control of their country. He also criticized the LCY for their apparent ignorance at the gravity of the situation. Mamula, like Pavlovic, was one of the few critics speaking publicly. In December 1987, Milosevic was able to seize power from his

²³ Magas, 111. The replacements were, for the most part, not intellectuals.

friend and mentor, Ivan Stambolic, and then purged the Serbian Communist Party of not only his critics, but all non-Serbs. Milosevic used the Greater Serbia concept in two main categories, first, to control the police, judicial system, and economy in Kosovo and Vojvodina and secondly, to increase Serbia's political and constitutional strength within the federation. Milosevic's quest for power has been compared to The Prince, as a leader whose only goal is the acquisition and maintenance of power.

CHAPTER 4

PRELUDE TO WAR 1987-1991

The Central Committee of the League of Communists has reached the bottom line of its incompetence and powerlessness, and if it had any moral dignity it would simply have dissolved itself, transferring its power to a parliament.

Jelena Lovric, *Danas*, Zagreb, 7 February 1989.

Milosevic's rise to power coincided with the collapse of the Iron Curtain. The most liberal communist country became one of extremism and conservatism in 1989. As the federalist structure and the republics began the process of disintegration, the last federal Prime Minister, Ante Markovic, attempted to stabilize the economy but Milosevic and his followers reasserted regional control to stop the progress. Shortly thereafter, dismantling of the state was initiated following the failed coup of March 1991. By June 1991, the most prosperous republic, Slovenia, declared its independence; followed by Croatia. At the same time, the Yugoslav National Army was purged of all non-Serbs. The fall 1990 ouster of Kosovo's communist leaders and the adoption of a new republican Constitution in Serbia, which strictly curtailed the powers of the provinces, accomplished Milosevic's objectives of political control of the province.

The liberation of Eastern Europe affected Yugoslavs in varying degrees. While some welcomed the democratic changes, liberties, and freedoms, the more hardened communists feared the loss of their privileges, however slight they were. The problem of liberation has been reflected more by the actions of the

West to the East. A clear division has been formed between the Europeans regarding who constitutes a European. The widespread changes of the European Union theoretically opened borders on the Continent. The people of ex-communist countries have been faced with another border – that of the border crossings. Croatian author and literary critic Slavenka Drakulic, is representative of the few writers that refused to be drawn into the nationalism battle. Her adamant stance against fascism and nationalism has argued the Balkan wars were inevitable given the environment that the postwar generation was raised.

When faced with the opportunity of a strong leader, citizens were swept up in the nationalistic tide. The inability of the majority of Yugoslavs to view themselves as individuals, instead of a collective body, was an inherent by-product of the ideology. If an individual did question the authorities, he or she was labeled a traitor. This happened to Drakulic, who refused to submit to editorial and personal pressures on the subject of national homogenization.¹ As a result, she was deemed a traitor. Drakulic considers herself a patriot for maintaining her convictions and not taking sides in the conflict.

The shift from a Yugoslav sensibility to the individual nations occurred as the republics began to pull apart, each in a separate direction. The economic progress of Slovenia and Croatia prompted moves towards democracy several years before Milosevic came to power. Social changes regarding individual liberties and rights were developing in Slovenia and Croatia. The stagnation of other regions was dulled by the millions of tourists that flooded Adriatic resorts each summer, providing a significant injection of currency. The reliance on

¹ Slavenka Drakulic. *Café Europa* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996) , 4.

tourism would be revealed as the wars drew on during the past decade. The lack of ingenuity on the part of Serbia to take action, instead of reaction, to the needs of the country as a whole signifies a detachment from social reality.

The political decentralization of the country had conceived an entirely new set of problems as the leaders found themselves incapable of communicating with each other. The economy of Yugoslavia was in shambles. The ideology had become an albatross and was recognized as a failure. There was no clear future in sight for a generation accustomed to the benefits of the third way between the East and West.

Some European leaders did recognize a potential crisis,

the western press reported the concern of France and West Germany that Yugoslavia may actually disintegrate, both economically and politically. The main problem, according to foreign ministers Delors and Genscher, is that the central government in Belgrade is simply too weak to tackle the problems of an insolvent economy.²

This concern would be overshadowed the following year by the impact of German Reunification, Soviet Union, and negotiations over the Maastricht Treaty.

Postwar Yugoslavia was built on a consensus between two main forces: the working class and the Party. By the spring of 1988, that consensus no longer existed in practice. The legitimacy of the postwar state, however, was built upon national equality and working class sovereignty. The existing institutions were proving themselves incapable of expressing or resolving pertinent issues. The role of political compromise, often taken for granted in democracies, did not belong to the Yugoslav representatives, at the republic or federal level. Instead,

republican oligarchs held negotiations from their firms and organizations.³ Throughout the year, criticism of the government continued as the economy steadily declined.

The growth of Milosevic and his power base in Serbia was an issue of concern for the other republics. The leaders from Slovenia and Croatia did nothing to halt the Serb onslaught. Despite protests against the Serbian party and leadership for inciting violence and for violating the country's constitution, no action was taken. However, the northern republics did respond when issues regarding the economy surfaced, particularly in cases of workers' complaints.⁴ The divisive stance allowed the republican infighting to continue over perceptions of financial stability and exploitation.

Milosevic's objective was to gain political control over the provinces, while keeping their separate representation in the federation. This would provide three automatic votes out of eight at the federal level. If Serbia could also win control over Montenegro and Macedonia it would then be in a position to suspend decision-making at the federal level. These actions would allow the Serbian bureaucracy to mold the federation according to Milosevic's whims and desires. The ramifications over the issue of democracy and the national question only further complicated the already delicate political structure. The fear of instability and revolution became a likely scenario.

² The Guardian, London, March 7, 1988.

³ Kenneth Basom. "Prospects for Democracy in Serbia and Croatia," East European Quarterly 29 (January 1996) : 512.

⁴ Magas, 140.

Slovene party leader Milan Kucan discussed the pending crisis and urged changes at a meeting on March 29, 1988, regarding the problems of Slovenia and the whole of Yugoslavia stated

We are no longer dealing with stagnation, but with regression and with a whole series of economic, social and political problems which are causing, unfortunately, also intra-national tensions. The state must begin to function like a real state, hence must free itself from political and bureaucratic volunteerism and pressure.⁵

When Slovene President Stanovnik stated publicly that the Slovenes wished to be left to conduct their own affairs without any outside interference, just as the Serbs wished to be 'masters in their own house', this outraged the Croats. The Croatian liberals held a majority and had been supportive of Slovenia up to that instance.⁶ Slovenia represented a struggle for democracy while Serbia represented an anti-democratic force. The ongoing quarrels over national exploitation prevented the leaders from any successful mediation.

The differences between Slovenia and Serbia can be viewed in terms of their ideas over statehood. While the Slovene nation embraced democratic elements, including human rights, the Serb nation viewed democracy in terms of military power and state expansion. The process of democratization was gradual in the case of Slovenia. In Serbia, the corrupted ideas of democracy effectively destroyed the state. The Slovenes were unique in Yugoslavia due to their position as an ethnic nation within territorial borders. The Serbs, divided as a

⁵ Ibid., 142.

⁶ Ibid., 147.

result of conquerors and war, were scattered in virtually every other republic.

The Serb leadership and “national mobilization needed enemy nations.”⁷

The problems faced by Yugoslavia and the ruling party were not unique as they formed part of a more general pattern of change throughout Eastern Europe. The LCY crumbled during 1988 as Milosevic refused to acknowledge the directives they proposed regarding halting street demonstrations in Serbia. The Serb protests had grown out of frustration over the economy. During 1987, a government and financial scandal had implicated several politicians. In late 1988, Prime Minister Branko Mikulic resigned after he failed to reduce inflation. Socialist self-management was disintegrating along with the political framework of Yugoslavia. The issue over the fate of Yugoslav workers presented a clear crisis, as “nothing in particular was being put in its place to stabilize the relationship between the workers and the state.”⁸ During the turbulent debates of the post-Tito decade, the political system failed to produce a leader who commanded respect of all the factions.

YUGOSLAVIA VIEWED AS AN ARTIFICIAL CONSTRUCTION

The architects of postwar Yugoslavia apparently viewed it as only a transitory construction. There were those at the highest level of government who did not truly believe in its viability or longevity. Edvard Kardelj, the main party ideologue, stated in private in 1957 to a carefully selected working group writing the Communist Party program:

Yugoslavia is a historically temporary creation. It is a phenomenon and result of the imperialist epoch and the ensuing constellation of international relations in the epoch. With the development of world

⁷ Ibid., 148.

⁸ Ibid., 152.

integration processes and the withering away of the imperialist epoch its peoples will be able to go and join new association and integration following civilization and spiritual affinities, and Yugoslavia will thus inevitably be recomposed as a state. In that sense we Slovenes will be understandably be with the Italians and Austrians, and the Serbs with the Bulgarians or with other historically close Orthodox peoples.⁹

An even more telling incident occurred in 1946, when Albanian leader Enver Hoxha visited Belgrade. Tito informed him that "Kosovo and other regions inhabited by Albanians belong to Albania and we shall return them to you. But not now, because the Great Serb reaction would not accept such a thing."¹⁰ Yugoslav officials have since argued that this exchange never occurred. These ideas reverberated through the already volatile country and confirmed many suspicions. The Serbs felt justified in their opinion that the leadership of Tito and Kardelj had subjugated them for nearly half a century.

The individual nation-states were all afraid of the new post-communist world of pluralistic politics. There was concern over the path of transition regarding Europe. The world dynamic they had grown accustomed to shattered. They feared "each other and each others' secret goals. When Serbia decided to move on the constitutional issue, it sent a veritable shock wave through the country."¹¹ The existence of Yugoslavia now

cried out for political legitimization. That legitimization was provided in the postwar period by a communist ideology that thrust Yugoslavia on to center stage, as a buffer country between two Cold War blocs- but without changing its essentially peripheral position. The territorial reality was coupled by the reality of generations being born and socialized in a country, that, notwithstanding its communist garb and

⁹ Vejvoda, 249. See Dobrica Cosic, "Uslovi demokratske buducnosti," in Knjizevne Novine, December 15, 1987.

¹⁰ Magas, 46. Editorial of Zeri i Popullit, May 17, 1981. This was revealed at the outset of Pristina riots.

¹¹ Jill Benderly. Independent Slovenia (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) , 37.

largely because of its growing international prestige, gave its citizens a sense of belonging to a stable European country. This lulled many into the illusion it was enough to be geographically on European soil and that somehow the invisible hand of progress would do the job, irrespective of the institutional and political realities.¹²

Slovenia placed the blame on the country's disintegration on Serbian shoulders.

The inaction of Slovene leadership was simply ignored.

THE YEAR OF TRANSITION - 1989

Not only was 1989 remarkable because of the events throughout Eastern Europe, but dramatic changes swept through Yugoslavia, beginning on March 28, when the Serbian Assembly adopted a new constitution which revoked the autonomy of the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. On May 9, Milosevic was elected as president of the Serbian republic. On May 15, the new Federation president of the rotating collective leadership took office, a Slovene, Janez Drnovsek. On June 28, the 600th anniversary of the lost battle of Kosovo, Milosevic used this occasion to propel his cause and embarrass party leaders from other republics that attended the ceremony including Drnovsek, with openly nationalistic comments that would have been unheard of a decade before.¹³ Similar to Hitler, Milosevic used mass rallies to gain the support of Serbs, first in Belgrade, then spreading throughout Serbia and Serb enclaves in neighboring republics. Serb nationalists suggested that Kosovo was Serbian territory even if not a single Serb resided there.

Janez Drnovsek, the former president of Yugoslavia's collective presidency from May 1989 – May 1990 and former Prime Minister of Slovenia

¹² Vejvoda, 249.

¹³ Misha Glenny. The Fall of Yugoslavia (New York: Viking, 1992), 35.

faced a multitude of problems when he assumed the federal post. When he entered the position he advocated dialogue, tolerance, economic efficiency, and most importantly, European integration. Drnovsek initiated talks with the Council of Europe regarding membership. Milosevic violently opposed these proposals. He installed Serbian-controlled puppet regimes in the Republic of Montenegro and the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. When the Kosovar Albanians did protest, after their autonomy was revoked, violence erupted with an unknown number of injuries and deaths.¹⁴ The federal presidency introduced martial law in Kosovo to calm the situation.

In May 1990, Drnovsek's term in the rotating presidency was over; he was replaced by a Serb, Borislav Jovic. The change in policy and tone was swift. Jovic advocated a harsh stance against the Albanians. Jovic followed the Milosevic led coalition's line that all Serbs must be protected from persecution by other ethnicities. In a matter of days, the Serbian regime "dissolved the Kosovo parliament and revived police repression. In a secret meeting of their assembly, the Albanians of Kosovo responded by declaring their own republic."¹⁵

Not surprisingly, Albanians organized informal parallel institutions alongside the Serbian controlled ones. For most of the decade, the Albanian community followed Ibrahim Rugova, a moderate politician who advocated a policy of passive resistance. The Albanian language was forbidden and replaced with Serbian as the official language. Throughout the province, Albanians were purged from their jobs. While Serbs controlled offices of power in education,

¹⁴ Drnovsek, 59.

¹⁵ Ibid., 61.

health care, and government, Albanians withdrew into a closed society, becoming the separatists they had been accused of by Milosevic.¹⁶

Ante Markovic

Ante Markovic was the last federal Prime Minister, who took office on January 19, 1989. He honestly attempted to set the country on a new path toward democracy and a market economy. He has been often overlooked in light of Milosevic's personality and the wars of the past decade. His plan to radically transform Yugoslavia was due in part to the fear that Yugoslavia would be left behind the rest of Europe. He instituted negotiations with the European Union and International Monetary Fund. Since nothing was being done to stop the economic problems, Markovic took it upon himself and launched an economic stabilization program, which led to sharp criticism by Serb centralists. This plan went into effect January 1, 1990, after Markovic had already pegged the Yugoslav dinar to the Deutschmark. Markovic, a moderate from Croatia, was criticized for his inability to stop inflation immediately. The economy and the crisis in Kosovo grew worse during his first few months in office.

Markovic boldly declared that the government would function independently of LCY influence. He also encouraged multiparty elections and called for pragmatic reforms. As Milosevic's power base opposed the Western economic models, political infighting soon destroyed Markovic's program. The tension heightened when it was discovered that Milosevic sabotaged the economic reforms by stealing a large portion of the federal budget. In August 1991, Markovic resigned his post in disgust at the level of ineptitude shown by

¹⁶ Ibid., 61.

the leadership. As a final act in office, he revealed the collaboration between Milosevic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic by releasing a telephone recording of their war aims.¹⁷

January 20, 1990 marks what many scholars recognize as the actual disintegration of Yugoslavia. As communism withered nationalist sympathies intensified. The right to secession soon became a reality as concepts regarding self-determination and nationalism accelerated following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The Yugoslavs were defined by nationality; ethnicity emerged as a defining factor for many citizens. The final meeting of the LCY was intended to establish a modicum of democratic practices in the country. The Serb delegation introduced a plan for free but not multiparty elections, which the Slovenes rejected. The Slovenes attempted to introduce legislation, with the intention of protecting the basic rights of Kosovars and weakening the authoritarian tactics of Milosevic. However, when Milosevic and the Serbian delegates refused to permit discussion of the controversial matter, the Slovenian delegation simply walked out in protest. After negotiations continued to fail, the remaining delegations from Bosnia, Croatia, and Macedonia also staged a walkout. The Serbs used their four votes, including Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro to pass their political agenda at the meeting.¹⁸

The idea was to gain control over the provinces, but to keep their separate representation in the Federation, gaining in that way three automatic votes out of eight at the Federal level. And if Serbia could also win control over Montenegro and bend Macedonia to its will, it would then be in a position to suspend consensual decision-making at the

¹⁷ Noel Malcolm. Bosnia : A Short History (New York: New York , 1994) , 225.

¹⁸ Charles Bukowski. "Slovenia's Transition to Democracy: Theory and Practice," East European Quarterly 33 (March 1999) , 180.

Federal level. This would allow the Serbian bureaucracy to remake the Federation – that is, the apparatus of power at the Federal level – according to its needs and desires.¹⁹

The failure of the communists meant the failure of the entire country and Yugoslavia ceased to exist. In response of Serb criticism, the republics justified their actions by focusing on Article 1 of the 1974 Constitution, which states,

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a federal state having the form of a state community of voluntarily united nations and their Socialist Republics.

Drnovsek explained that by the end of 1990 and during the spring of 1991, Slovenia and Croatia were still discussing the option of a new confederation. But they were confronted with the Serbian idea of a centralized federation. Milosevic then stated emphatically that should such a confederation be launched, Serbia would move to annex Serb territories in Croatia and Bosnia.²⁰ The independence movements of the northern republics had gained momentum, especially in response to the brutalities unfolding in Kosovo.²¹

The six republics of Yugoslavia each held their first multiparty elections in 1990 and all elected former Communists, who legitimized themselves by advocating new constitutions with strong presidential powers. The tensions continued to mount and isolated fighting began in villages along the Serbian and Croatian border. Croatia elected Franjo Tudjman, and Serbia elected Milosevic. In 1990, no federal multiparty elections were held. The two largest republics had ruling parties in parliament with absolute unrivalled majorities within the

¹⁹ Bogdan Denitch, 92.

²⁰ Malcolm, 223.

²¹ Janez Drnovsek. "Riding the Tiger: The Dissolution of Yugoslavia," World Policy Journal 17 (Spring 2000) : 61.

framework of presidential systems. Tudjman and Milosevic were now in a position virtually independent of parliamentary control.

One of the first acts when Franjo Tudjman became President of Croatia was the return of the Ustasha flag, a symbol of the fascist government of World War II. To make matters worse, he openly joked about killing Serbs on television. This outraged Milosevic and other Serb officials due of the large number of Serbs living in the Krajina region of Croatia. During the conflict, all sides used propaganda. News footage from World War II was shown on the evening news to remind Yugoslavs of what each side had done in the past and was allegedly threatening to do now.

These events inevitably fed the growing nationalist hysteria and were used by nationalist politicians to further their aims...an alleged continuity between Ustasha and Croatia's newly elected government of Tudjman.²²

In 1990 each Yugoslav republic began to move in its own direction. None of them had the ability to compromise or mediate the myriad of issues they faced, socially, economically, or politically. The democratic elections following the collapse of the communist system brought nationalist and independence-minded governments to power in the three key republics, Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. While the individual leaders of the republics were unifiers among their nations, overall, they were divisive to the collective body. Essentially,

there was no more a political force and viable state institutions and administrative state to keep Yugoslavia together. Nor was there a political party that had the strength or desire to save Yugoslav unity.²³

²² Judah, 133.

²³ Vuckovic, 376.

CHAPTER 5

INDEPENDENCE AND WAR

CONSOLIDATION AND POWER

We will do our utmost to crush their race and descendents so completely that history will not even remember them.

Arkan Zeljko Raznjatovic

Milosevic consolidated his power base by mobilizing Serbs in other republics to demand for secession and union with Serbia by appealing to the use of nationalism. Milosevic insisted that Serbs in the other republics were being threatened. This was used to justify the legitimacy of the party. The controversial issue of redrawing territorial borders loomed as the nationalist rhetoric spilled into Croatia and Bosnia. He raided the Yugoslav National Bank to finance his election campaign, by taking \$1.5 billion dollars under the guise of a loan approved by the Serbian Assembly. This money was used to pay salaries and pensions for Serbs shortly before the elections. This money was earmarked for the federal budget of Yugoslavia, not Serbia. In protest of their democratic movement, Milosevic instituted a republican boycott of all Slovenian products. However, the most critical and problematic issue was his refusal in May 1991 to the election of the new federal President, a Croat, Stipe Mesic. The departing

President, Borislav Jovic was Serbian. As a result, the Yugoslav presidency ceased to function as the supreme commander of the army.¹

The military became an independent organ as the country began to collapse. Milosevic counted on fear in order to maintain power. He was able to charm the party cadres and military branch in the same manner. The army was the last link with Tito. It transformed from a protector of the entire country into a protector of the Serbian nation. The rhetoric Milosevic used appealed to the honor and dignity of the army officers. Aleksa Djilas described the army as “the most antidemocratic and reactionary institution” in Yugoslavia. The JNA also approved, though unofficially, the failed coup against Gorbachev in 1991. By 1993, the JNA armed forces were under the control of Dobrica Cosic, the intellectual responsible for the SANU Memorandum.²

The same decentralization that permitted some political practices conducive to democracy simultaneously encouraged the growth of nationalism. In the case of the Yugoslav state most top federal officials held those positions at least partly as representatives of their republics. Many could return to power bases in their respective republics if the federation fell apart. The main state officials whose power relied on the continued existence of the federal state were military officials. The military played an increasingly independent role as civilian politicians moved towards the dissolution of the federation.³

As the situation escalated, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence on June 25, 1991, but maintained the notion of being partial to a Yugoslav confederation. The JNA immediately invaded Slovenia because of its international borders with Italy and Austria. Slovenia surprised the JNA and

¹ Drnovsek, 62.

² Djilas, 92.

³ Basom, 513.

Milosevic by fighting back using Slovene Territorial Defense and taking over the federal munitions storage facilities. The Slovenes had never been known for their military prowess; they were more likely to be poets than warriors. The JNA invaded to gain control of Slovenia's customs posts, which were a crucial source of income for Yugoslavia. When JNA troops met effective resistance, it abandoned Slovenia after a ten-day war. It shifted from being the defender of Yugoslavia to a defender of the Serb minority in Croatia and Bosnia. The Yugoslav civil war had begun.⁴

The only unifying element left of Yugoslavia was the JNA. However, over two-thirds of the officers were Serbian. The JNA was given orders to keep peace among the republics by firing upon fellow Yugoslavs to prevent their secession from the federation. The JNA began to collapse as a vast majority of non-Serbs fled and other young men hid from their conscription notices. It became clear that most of the Croats, Macedonians, Bosnians, and Albanians serving in uniform did not want to fight the Slovenes. Paramilitary troops soon spread throughout the Serb enclaves in Croatia and Bosnia in preparation for war.⁵

Serbia soon abandoned Slovenia, partly because it was a purely homogeneous Slovene state and possibility of pre-arranged deal with Slovene leader Milan Kucan.⁶ As this initial crisis was unfolding, leaders of each of the six republics and two autonomous provinces "vied for power and for portions of

⁴ Ibid, 512.

⁵ Ramet, 225. See also Drnovsek, 62.

⁶ Ibid., 226.

federal programs.”⁷ Milosevic urged Serbs in other republics to remain loyal, and prevent further disintegration of the country. However, the situation in the Krajina region of Croatia deteriorated rapidly. The Krajina Serbs had the open support of the JNA forces. From June to December 1991, the Krajina Serbs had gained nearly one-third of Croatian territory. The motto of “Only Unity Can Save The Serb” emerged in these early days of disintegration. This slogan would be used as graffiti on non-Serb residences and buildings throughout the former Yugoslavia for the remainder of the wars and even to the present day. Ethnic nationalism became the primary unifying element in the midst of disintegration of their country.⁸

A bloody civil war broke out to the shock of the West, who should have noticed the signs of trouble but were preoccupied with the consequences of German Reunification, transitional problems of Eastern Europe, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Yugoslav situation was greatly underestimated by world leaders. It was as if fifty years had been erased and Yugoslavia was still fighting the three-way civil war of World War II. The problems associated with Balkan history were a source of misconceptions, as Western powers feared Balkan entanglements and wished to avoid direct involvement. The Bush Administration announced it would not support a break up of Yugoslavia under any circumstances. The JNA, now under Serb command, assaulted Dubrovnik and other tourist cities on the Dalmatian coast and then the interior of Croatia.

⁷ Basom, 513. Politicians attempted to receive their allotted funds before the administration completely collapsed.

⁸ David Rieff. Slaughterhouse (New York: Touchstone, 1995) , 97.

Serbia wanted to clearly designate its borders and maintain control of its territory.

In September 1991, the UN Security Council also instituted a strict arms embargo on the entire country. In November 1991, the European Union instituted sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro. In January 1992, the United Nations negotiators led by Cyrus Vance landed in Croatia with UN troops to mediate the situation. This led to a cease-fire agreement and the deployment of UN peacekeepers. At this time, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic appealed for a preventive deployment of peacekeeping troops but was denied and instructed to apply for recognition by the European Union.

The conventional wisdom was that such diplomatic recognition would ultimately lead to full-scale war. Germany used its newfound political power and granted recognition of Slovenia and Croatia before much of Europe was aware of the extent of the Yugoslav crisis. The Badinter Commission had been studying the implications regarding constitutional law and sovereignty.⁹ Early intervention by the EU, NATO or UN could have occurred, but many countries were hesitant of how to react to such a situation, as the other East Europeans had handled the transition relatively well. In January 1992, the European Community formally recognized Slovenia and Croatia. The status of Bosnia was postponed until an independence referendum was held.

During March, the Bosnians voted overwhelmingly, sixty-three percent, in favor of independence. However, the Bosnian Serbs boycotted the referendum and declared an independent Serbian Republic within Bosnia. This separate area

⁹ Anatolii Utkin. "Behind the Scenes of the Yugoslav Tragedy : Permanent Borders and Self-Determination," Russian Social Science Review 41 (March – April 2000) : 59.

would become Republika Srpska, and Pale, located near Sarajevo, proclaimed the capital. On April 6, European Union Foreign Ministers announced the recognition of an independent Bosnia. The United States followed suit and recognized Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia. This same day, the siege of Sarajevo began. Ironically, on this day in 1941, the Nazis had invaded Yugoslavia.

The Milosevic controlled media contributed to the violence among the Yugoslavs. He accused Bosnian politicians of belonging to an Islamic fundamentalist plot to subjugate Serbs by forcing religious conversion on them. The Bosnian Muslims were descendents of the Ottomans or had simply converted during the centuries long occupation. After the formal recognition, Milosevic and Tudjman had apparently met to discuss the partition of Bosnia between their countries based on ethnic divisions.¹¹ In May 1992, the UN admitted Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia into the world community.

The process of ethnic cleansing-killing or forcing people out of their homes- also began in earnest. During the summer months, a group of British journalists discovered a concentration camp at Omarska.¹² Reports of mass executions, rape, and torture soon brought the attention of the global community. In August, rump Yugoslavia was expelled from the United Nations. By November, UN peacekeeping troops were sent to protect the humanitarian effort, not the citizens of Bosnia. The uproar over the gravity of the situation and the failure of UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) would only

¹¹ Jasminka Udovicki. Burn This House (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) , 174.

¹² Rieff, 116.

intensify in the following months as the atrocities were displayed daily on the news.

American Interests in Yugoslavia

The approach of the Bush Administration was simple: Bosnia is in Europe, therefore, it is their problem. Throughout 1992, Democratic Presidential candidate Bill Clinton sharply criticized the Bush Administration for failure to act decisively to end the bloodshed in the region. On the campaign trail, Clinton pledged to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnians and launch air strikes against the Serbs. During the transition to the White House, the issue of Bosnia and Yugoslavia was apparently forgotten. Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic assumed American support in maintaining the sovereignty of his state. Clinton wished to avoid direct confrontation in the region, particularly without a clear exit strategy.

In January 1993, the first attempt at a peace was introduced in the Vance-Owen Peace Plan and the War Crimes Tribunal was established to investigate incidents of rape, torture, disappearances and murder. The Vance-Owen Peace Plan was rejected in May 1993 after the United States felt it could not be fully implemented. The cantonization of Bosnia created unenforceable borders. Washington also viewed that the Bosnian government should not accept a plan that rewarded ethnic cleansing. The Bosnian Serb stronghold at Pale intensified its attacks on the civilian population of Sarajevo. Until March 1994, there had been no NATO action against the Serbs. However, in response to a February

bombing of a breadline that British journalists filmed and revealed to the world, the West finally acted.¹³

The world's first UN protected civilian safe area, Srebrenica, was established in 1993 by the UN commander in Bosnia, French General Philippe Morillon. He acted without UN permission to protect an estimated 60,000 Muslims against Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces. David Rohde offers an intensive analysis of this episode in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, Endgame. Srebrenica, only ten miles from the Serbian border, was taken by the Bosnian Serbs in July 1995 after repeated requests by UN peacekeepers for NATO airstrikes against an advancing Serb force. Over 7000 Bosnians were killed that day as the Serbs used perfidy to attack the unarmed civilians.¹⁴

The problems of the war did touch Milosevic, as he lost support of many students and intellectuals during 1991. In fact, outright oppositions and a near coup in March 1991 shook the party. However, the lack of unity in the opposition groups kept Milosevic in power. In 1993, the Parliament in Belgrade called for a no confidence vote. The Parliament was quickly dissolved and new elections were held in December 1993. Milosevic formed a "rubber stamp government" under Mirko Marjanovic, allowing himself and his loyal men to remain in power.¹⁵

The Clinton Administration faced a number of crises concerning the Yugoslav drama. The inaction can be traced to protecting his domestic agenda

¹³ Ibid., 270.

¹⁴ David Rohde. Endgame (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997) , 5. This book highlights the details of a ten-day battle, considered the Serb endgame to win Bosnian War in 1995.

from foreign policy issues. The rejection of the Vance-Owen Plan by the Washington Declaration of May 1993 allowed the civil war to continue instead of deploying troops. This led to strain among NATO allies and Russia.¹⁵ The Western powers simply wanted a solution, rather than an intervention, to the problem. All of the solutions presented were focused on ethnic divisions to which the Bosnian government met with disapproval. While the UN disapproved of Izetbegovic's resistance to the plans, he was viewed as a man of deep convictions. The Bosnians refused to have their country carved into cantons to appease Serbia, Croatia, or the world. However, the ethnic partition would be inevitable in the months to come.

¹⁵ Djilas, 95.

¹⁶ James Gow. Triumph of the Lack of Will (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 217.

CHAPTER 6

RECONCILIATION & REFORMS

THE RAMIFICATIONS OF DAYTON

KOSOVO

We make no apology to those who would find it more convenient if we would just disappear rather than serve as a constant reminder to them of their betrayal of principles.

Muhamed Sacirbey, Bosnian Foreign Minister

In December 1995, the Dayton Peace Accords were signed in Paris after intensive negotiations by Richard Holbrooke. The agreement reached sealed the fate of the Bosnian dream of utopian society and a multiethnic Yugoslavia. Under the plan, Bosnia would be divided into a Muslim-Croat Federation with fifty-one percent and Republika Srpska would hold forty-nine percent of territory. The government structure would consist of a three-member presidency. NATO troops landed in Bosnia to maintain peace and stability. The United States sent ground troops to for the NATO implementation force. This became the first test of a NATO army in a peacekeeping mission.¹ Another crisis was looming for NATO- when would the troops leave? The original intent of NATO had been a short mission of just a year. However, it soon became evident that would be impossible. France and Great Britain threatened to withdraw their troops if the

¹ Joyce Kaufman. "A Challenge to European Security and Alliance Unity," *World Affairs* 161 (Summer 1998) : 28.

Americans left. The issue of the mission itself was questioned, as certain provisions of the agreement were being ignored. The most obvious violation was the failure to capture indicted war criminals. The commander of NATO forces, U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith argued that action would place troops in possible armed confrontations, which was unacceptable in his eyes.²

On June 19, 1996, United Nations ended four years of arms embargo on the region. In August, the Sarajevo airport reopened. The following month, elections were held in Bosnia with nationalist parties winning, sadly continuing the ethno-national division. In January 1997, the new Bosnian government held its first formal meeting with the primary goal of peacefully rebuilding the country. However, a problem remained, in that

the war stopped, not because one side had won, but through a peace which had been imposed from outside. The warring parties were unable to sort it out themselves. In the end, they had to seek intermediaries to lead them out of the chaos they had, with varying degrees of responsibility, plunged themselves into. This plea for intervention was, in fact, very much in line with the nineteenth and twentieth century history of these territories. They have always been fenced around in one way or another by the great powers, never left to themselves, always dependent on the broader constellation of the state system prevailing at the given point in time.³

Kosovo

The continued presence of Serbian military forces in Kosovo during 1997 led to widespread fear of a military offensive and civil war. This fear was confirmed in the fall of 1998, as the crisis in Kosovo drew international attention, as the focus was once again placed on Serbian aggression and domination.

² Ibid., 30.

³ Dyker, 258.

Armed confrontations between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and Serb military reopened Western fears of yet another Balkan civil war. Guerrilla attacks and reprisals continued for several months before NATO reacted in October 1998, forcing Serb troops to leave the province. Perhaps the KLA believed bringing the West and NATO into the involvement would win international support for their independence movement.

Kosovo was fought to defend a party to a civil war within a state. Numerous critics have since appeared in regard to the West's virtual war in Kosovo. Another aspect has been the indecisiveness of governments to support their principles. In 1998, the Serbian government officials were all democratically elected by their constituents, yet they were a coalition of factions at war with each other.⁴ The question of Kosovo placed Milosevic in an impossible situation. The legitimacy of his rule would be tested over his reactions to international diplomacy.

The sixteen members of the Kosovar delegation at Rambouillet had never met before the flight to Paris. At the meeting, the Serb and Kosovar delegations never saw each other either. For their part, the Serbs spent most of the time isolated at the hotel. The only pertinent discussions were held between the Kosovars and Americans.⁵ The Rambouillet Accords of 1999 were a draft settlement to guarantee autonomy for Kosovo under a NATO protectorate. However, Milosevic would not agree to the presence of NATO troops or autonomy to the province. The Kosovar delegation did sign the settlement. The

⁴ Michael Ignatieff, Virtual War (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000) , 51.

⁵ Ibid., 56.

Rambouillet Accords left no room for negotiations. The subsequent NATO air strikes and the bombing of Belgrade resulted in widespread ethnic cleansing and refugees pouring into neighboring countries, which was exactly the scenario the West had attempted to avert. The eleven -week bombing campaign during spring 1999 damaged much of Serbia and was plagued by missed targets and embarrassing mistakes by US intelligence, namely the bombing of the Chinese Embassy.

The actions of NATO have now been recognized as a violation of the UN Charter. All of Serbia's neighbors supported NATO demands, including that Serbia restore autonomy to Kosovo, end ethnic cleansing against the Albanians, and agree to NATO occupation of the province. The bombing campaign only exacerbated the volatile situation even further. In June 1999, Milosevic eventually capitulated and the fragile negotiations have so far withstood. The situation in Kosovo will likely remain unresolved until democratic measures are enacted.

Milosevic was indicted for war crimes, specifically, crimes against humanity, by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague in May 1999. Milosevic became the first sitting head of state to be indicted on such charges. This has led to the freezing of his foreign assets and inability to travel.⁶ Milosevic urged the international community to withdraw the KFOR peacekeeping force out of Kosovo and return control of the province to Serbia.

⁶ Ibid., 120.

Political Opposition to Milosevic

During the 1996 election, opposition parties were victorious throughout Serbia and Montenegro, which led to civil disorder by the Serbian hard-liners. Milosevic found himself politically isolated as criticism mounted. The leader of one opposition party, Democratic Party, Zoran Djindjic, had been an outspoken critic in his disapproval of the Milosevic regime, citing ten years of disaster for the country. Djindjic was mayor of Belgrade until September 1998 when Milosevic ousted him from the government.

Serbian Prime Minister, Mirko Marjanovic, promised rapid economic growth, which coincided with Milosevic's slogan "Reconstruction, Development and Reforms." Milosevic was in the guise of a reformer after Yugoslavs witnessed a decade of destruction and international sanctions. Despite ongoing calls for his resignation, as the only candidate for his party, Milosevic was promptly re-elected as President of Yugoslavia in February 2000.⁷ Former Serb Deputy Prime Minister, Vojislav Seselj, leader of the Radical Party, an ultra right nationalist, is considered to be even more dangerous than Milosevic, especially in regards to the Bosnian Serb settlements. Another opposition leader, Vuk Draskovic, has also become a menace to the ruling elite by his continued criticism of Milosevic.

Montenegro – The Silent Partner

In Montenegro, a drive towards democratic reforms placed the Montenegrin President, Milo Djukanovic, at odds with Milosevic. Djukanovic, who was the youngest Prime Minister in Europe when he took that position in

⁷ Institute for War and Peace Reporting, London, website, www.iwpr.net.

1989, has emerged as an unlikely thorn in Belgrade's side. The small republic of Montenegro has suffered from the continued economic sanctions imposed upon Yugoslavia. Since taking office in 1997, Djukanovic has been outspoken in his desire to leave the federation if Milosevic remains in power. The possibility of Montenegrin independence will be another instance where the West will be unwillingly to take a cohesive action. Djukanovic took considerable risk after publicly condemning the Milosevic regime on its behavior in Kosovo and withdrew Montenegrin troops from Kosovo without Serbian permission. Djukanovic also permitted the UNHCR to enter the country to help with influx of Kosovar refugees, to the ire of Milosevic.⁸

Opposition Movements 1997-2000

In the Serbian elections of 1997, Milosevic lost and refused to accept the outcome. The election results were annulled causing three months of mass demonstrations by university students and pensioners, who had grown tired of the authoritarian rhetoric. Milosevic later bowed to international pressure and allowed the newly elected officials to take office. The leading opposition movement in Yugoslavia, OTPOR, or Resistance, was launched in the fall of 1998 by University of Belgrade students after several dozen professors were fired and others jailed for anti-Milosevic activities. Using the former Yugoslav symbol of unity, the fist, the students are risking their lives to promote what they referred to as "The Second Political Generation."⁹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ OTPOR website, www.otpor.com.

The group originally wrote a manifesto of the future political system entitled, "Declaration for the Future of Serbia," which was signed by student organizations, trade unions, and opposition parties throughout Serbia. While many of the students were outspoken, others remained underground in fear of retaliation by the government. The frustration and distrust of the government and politicians is reflected in its popularity. One issue of concern to the youth is that the opposition leaders have kept the citizens divided and have failed to form a consensus to initiate any fundamental changes. The students realized removing Milosevic from power would not change the country; that the problem is the actual system in place. The political goals of OTPOR remain a change in the system and returning Serbia to the world community. The group has become highly organized and has grown in popularity among the youth and their parents. Most members are between 17-25 years old, dissatisfied with the current state of affairs and aching for change.

OTPOR challenged the Milosevic regime and the "irrational acts of the international community," chiefly the NATO bombing.¹⁰ The students attempted to remove Milosevic and his regime from power. Members have been jailed, beaten, and killed for their activities. OTPOR has used some of the same techniques that the Slovenian youths used in the early to mid 1980s. During the New Year's Eve celebrations over 30,000 people gathered at the Square of the Republic in the heart of Belgrade. Instead of millennium cheer, they held a candlelight vigil for the lives lost during the last nine years of war against their

¹⁰ Ibid.

former countrymen. This activity was recorded on a documentary of the movement, The Winter of Discontent.¹¹

On April 14, 2000, an anti-Milosevic rally was held in Belgrade. Milosevic had attempted to keep citizens at home by showing pirated Hollywood films on the state run television station. However, over 100,000 demonstrated in downtown Belgrade and demanded the resignation of Milosevic. Even more remarkable, was the fact that this was the first show of unity between the opposition parties. The two opposition leaders, Vuk Draskovic of the Serbian Renewal Party and Zoran Djindjic of the Democratic Party shook hands amid shouts of "Down with Milosevic."¹²

Vuk Draskovic met with new Russian President Vladimir Putin, who supported the opposition movement against Milosevic. Putin has also been a vocal supporter of Montenegrin Djukanovic in his efforts to push for reforms and stability in the region. The role of Russia in a new government in Yugoslavia is evident in recent actions by Putin, who sent the Yugoslav ambassador, Borislav Milosevic, brother of Slobodan, home to Belgrade to solve the Kosovo crisis and cooperate with the West in May 1999. Putin has also stated, "Russia has no wish to support the regime in Belgrade."¹³

¹¹ The Winter of Discontent aired on both ABC News and BBC World News in February 2000.

¹² OTPOR.

¹³ Institute for War and Peace Reporting.

CHAPTER 7

YUGOSLAVIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

THE CHANGING FACE OF SERBIA

During the February 2000 meeting of the Fourth Congress of the Socialist Party, Milosevic opened by praising his supporters, on their loyalty to Serbia. Milosevic was certainly surprised in September 2000 when he lost to Vojislav Kostunica. The new leader of Yugoslavia is free of corruption and a respected constitutional lawyer. While Milosevic was an opportunist, Kostunica gives all indications of being a true believer in nationalism, albeit in a different vein. Kostunica was supported in his bid by a coalition of eighteen parties. According to Belgrade insiders, Kostunica was reluctant to even run for office when approached by Democratic Party leader Zoran Djindjic.¹ Unfortunately, Kostunica has a weak political base. His staunch refusal to compromise his principles is remarkable in Yugoslavia, where most politicians have relished in carving out personal fortunes and oligarchies. Kostunica must consolidate his position before he can address the pivotal crisis in Yugoslavia, the collapsed economy.

Shortly after the election, Milosevic refused to resign, but later capitulated. He referred to Kostunica as a traitor and then disappeared from public view. The world leaders welcomed and expressed support for the new leadership. The

widespread celebrations in Belgrade signaled the end of the old regime. As Milosevic contemplated his next move, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov met and formally recognized Kostunica as the leader of Yugoslavia. Ivanov later met with Milosevic, who refused to admit defeat. The demise of Milosevic in April 2001 has led to an entirely new set of questions. The extradition of Milosevic to the Hague for prosecution is currently on hold as charges of corruption have placed him in a Belgrade jail cell. The likely scenario remains for him to be tried and jailed in Yugoslavia, as Kostunica is reluctant to turn him over to the War Crimes Tribunal. If a trial does occur in Serbia, with cooperation from the Tribunal, this would signal a new course for Serbia in the world community. It would also offer justice to hundreds of thousands of Yugoslavs who suffered under the rule of Milosevic. The situation remains volatile as the country remains plagued by instability.

The future of Yugoslavia remains an unknown. It is reasonable to conclude that Vladimir Putin will push for a greater role for Russia to play in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Balkans, as Washington struggles with transition to a new administration. The possibility of troop withdrawal is uncertain as certain areas remain volatile, particularly the fragile government in Bosnia and the Kosovar Albanians.

The disintegration of any country occurs not by one instance, but through gradual episodes of change. The most devastating result of the Yugoslav conflict of the past decade has been the destruction of the civilization itself. The basic foundations of society were destroyed through the combined efforts of

¹ Institute for War and Peace Reporting, London.

nationalism and self-determination. The political and administrative leaders were forced to accept defeat in the wake of Tito's death and the collapse of Communism. Yugoslavs blamed each other for the economic and political troubles instead of cooperating to mediate the situation. Oligarchs feared losing their privileges. The structure that Tito and Kardelj had so carefully designed to keep Yugoslav intact was unable to survive without the chief architects.

The idea of unification of Yugoslavia could eventually become an attractive idea once again, however, not within our generation. The functionalist approach, which is spreading throughout Europe, will have to be considered if Yugoslavia intends on eventually becoming a member of the European Union and accepted back into the world community. The likely position is that Serbia and the countries it has been at war with will not be economically viable for several generations. In order to maintain stability in the region, outside powers will be forced to take a long -term stance in the Balkans. After centuries of struggle between empires and kingdoms, the ultimate fate of the Yugoslavs still remains in the hands of outside powers.

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